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TEHRAN HAS RECEIVED 'CONTRADICTION SIGNALS' FROM TRUMP



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MP HAYEF DEMANDS OFFICIAL STATEMENT OVER 'ABDALY CELL'

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Islamist opposition MP Mohammad Hayef yesterday called on the interior minister to issue a statement as soon as possible about the reported escape of 14 members of the so-called pro-Iran "Abdaly cell". News reports on Sunday said 14 of the 26 members of the cell fled Kuwait hours after the court of cassation overturned their acquittals and sentenced them to various jail terms. The men reportedly fled to Iran by sea and are believed to be living in the Islamic republic. The government has remained silent over the reports.

Hayef said that it is unacceptable that the Kuwaiti people do not know the whereabouts of 14 convicts of the cell, which was convicted of plotting attacks in the country. "The ministry of interior must clarify whether the men are in Kuwait serving their jail terms or are outside the country," he demanded. Hayef called for quickly apprehending the 14 convicts and those who are hiding them or who helped. Continued on Page 11



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump swings a Marucci baseball bat in the Blue Room during a "Made in America" product showcase event at the White House on Monday. — AFP

WASHINGTON: The US slapped fresh sanctions on Iran yesterday over its ballistic missile program, just hours after Washington admitted the Islamic Republic was complying with a landmark nuclear deal signed two years ago. Iran's parliament retaliated by voting for extra funding for the missile program, a move that speaker Ali Larijani said would show the Americans that Iran "will resist them with all its power".

The heightened tensions came after President Donald Trump was forced to back off from a key campaign promise to withdraw from a 2015 nuclear accord with Tehran, which eased sanctions in return for limiting its ability to produce material for atomic weapons. Trump had described it as "the worst deal ever" and accused Iran of continuing to back terrorism in the Middle East.

But on Monday, the White House admitted that the Islamic Republic was sticking to the nukes agreement. It noted, however, that while Iran might be meeting its requirements on paper, it was "unquestionably in default of the spirit" of the accord. In announcing the new sanctions against 18 individuals and entities in Iran, the State Department said it "remains deeply concerned about Iran's malign activities across the Middle East which undermine regional stability, security, and prosperity."

It cited Iran's support for Hezbollah, Hamas, the regime of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and Houthi rebels in Yemen fighting a US-backed coalition led by Saudi Arabia. In addition to earmarking an additional \$260 million for its ballistic missile program, Iran's Continued on Page 11

ERDOGAN TO VISIT KUWAIT, GULF

EGYPT ENDS VISAS ON ARRIVAL FOR QATARIS

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will this month visit Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which are locked in a deep diplomatic crisis, his office announced yesterday. Erdogan will also visit Kuwait, the main mediator in the Qatar crisis, during his July 23-24 tour. Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said Ankara would continue to play a "constructive and active" role to help solve what he described as a "pointless" crisis. Yildirim added Erdogan's visit would be part of this effort.

Erdogan is expected to visit Saudi Arabia then Kuwait on July 23 followed by Qatar on July 24, according to pri-

vate news agency Dogan. Turkey is a key ally of Qatar, which has been diplomatically and economically isolated by its Gulf neighbors over allegations it supports terrorism. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain last month cut diplomatic ties with Qatar and issued 13 wide-ranging demands to lift the blockade, including the closure of a Turkish military base in the emirate. The crisis has put Turkey in a delicate position as Qatar is its main ally in the Gulf but Ankara does not want to antagonize key regional power Saudi Arabia. Continued on Page 11



ANKARA: This photo taken on July 15, 2017 shows Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan waving to an F-16 fighter jet while travelling from Ankara to Istanbul. — AFP

US HEALTHCARE REFORM COLLAPSES

SAUDI WOMAN IN ONLINE MINISKIRT VIDEO ARRESTED

RIYADH: Saudi police said yesterday they were questioning a woman who appeared in an online video in a miniskirt and crop top walking through a historic site in the ultraconservative kingdom. A series of videos, initially posted over the weekend to the Snapchat account of "Model Khulood", show a young woman in a high-waisted miniskirt walking through a fort in Ushaiqer, outside the capital Riyadh, playing with sand in the dunes and turning towards the camera for a close-up, her long hair uncovered. The videos have since been uploaded to YouTube and tweeted by different users.

Saudi media, including the main dailies Sabq and Okaz, yesterday quoted a spokesman for police in Riyadh as saying the woman was being questioned. Continued on Page 11

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump blasted congressional Democrats and "a few Republicans" yesterday over the failure of the GOP effort to rewrite the Obama healthcare law, and warned, "we will return". Trump's early morning tweet unleashed a barrage of criticism at Congress over the collapse of the GOP's flagship legislative priority. For seven years, the party has pledged to repeal President Barack Obama's law. "Most Republicans were loyal, terrific & worked really hard," Trump tweeted yesterday morning, but said, "We were let down by all of the Democrats and a few Republicans." He added, "As I have always said, let ObamaCare fail and then come together and do a great healthcare plan. Stay tuned!"

Two GOP senators - Utah's Mike Lee and Jerry Moran of Kansas - sealed the measure's doom late Monday when they announced they would vote "no" in an initial, critical vote that had been expected as soon as next week. That meant that at least four of the 52 GOP senators were ready to block the measure - two more than Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., had to spare in the face of unanimous Democratic opposition.

"Regretfully, it is now apparent that the effort to repeal and immediately replace the failure of ObamaCare will not be successful," McConnell said in a late evening statement. Continued on Page 11

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



CAIRO: Kuwait's Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Egypt's President Abdel-fatah Al-Sisi in Cairo on Monday. —KUNA

SISI APPRECIATES AMIR'S EFFORTS TO SOLVE GULF ROW: SPOKESMAN

SHEIKH SABAH AL-KHALED MEETS UN YEMEN ENVOY IN CAIRO

CAIRO: Egypt's President Abdel-fatah Al-Sisi has expressed his appreciation of Kuwait's good efforts led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, reflecting keenness on boosting the Arab solidarity and consensus. Sisi made his remarks on Monday during a meeting with the visiting Kuwaiti Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Presidential Spokesman Alaa Yousef said in a statement.

The meeting was attended by Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shukri, and Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for the Office of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, and the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Egypt Mohammad Al-Thuwaikh.

The Egyptian President asked Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled to convey his greetings to His Highness the Amir, highly appreciating Kuwait's "unforgettable" supportive stances by the side of Egyptian people. Egyptians will always hold good and love sentiments towards the Kuwaiti people and His Highness the Amir who represents a major Arab value and wise leadership, said Sisi. He also affirmed Cairo's keenness on continuing consultations and coordination with Kuwait on various regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Non-interference

The Egyptian foreign policy's constants are based on several principles, including non-interference in the internal affairs of any country, and striving to preserve the Arab national security, as well as disallowing interference in Egypt's affairs, Sisi mentioned. He also stressed the importance of standing decisively against policies that support terrorism and foiling attempts to destabilize the Arab states



Kuwait's Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the UN special envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Sheikh Ahmad.

or tamper with people's destinies. Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister conveyed His Highness the Amir's regards to Al-Sisi, affirming his country's keenness on boosting ties with Egypt on all levels, said Yousef. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said Kuwait is looking forward to hosting the Kuwaiti-Egyptian higher committee's meeting to discuss ways of enhancing bilateral cooperation. He reaffirmed his country's keenness on Egypt's security and stability, noting that the Arab North African country is a pillar of stability in the Arab region, and that Kuwait is to continue intensive coordination and consultations with Cairo in the forthcoming period. The two sides discussed a number of regional issues, notably the ongoing dispute between Qatar and a number of Arab countries, the Presidential spokesman noted, adding that Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled pointed out that Kuwait's efforts aim at solving the cri-

sis and preserving the unity of Arab states.

Yemen

Separately, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also met with the UN special envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Sheikh Ahmad. During the meeting, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled reiterated Kuwait's support to the UN envoy's efforts to conclude a solution to the Yemeni crisis. The envoy, meanwhile, reviewed the latest developments on the Yemeni scene. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Office of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Egypt Mohammad Al-Thuwaikh, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Arab World Affairs Ambassador Aziz Al-Daihani, Kuwait's Permanent Delegate to the Arab League Ambassador Ahmad Al-Bakr, and senior officials from the Kuwaiti foreign ministry. — KUNA



Members of the Kuwaiti National Assembly committee pose with the Kuwaiti Ambassador to France Sami Al-Sulaiman and embassy staff.—KUNA

COMMITTEE VISITS KUWAITI HEALTH OFFICE IN PARIS

PARIS: Members of the Kuwaiti National Assembly committee tasked with inquiring about healthcare violations held meeting yesterday with the staff of the Health Office in Paris. The committee discussed with the head of the office Dr Fahad Al-Rashidi, the members of the bureau, issues connected to Kuwait's

general state budget, particularly the Health Ministry's finances, head of the parliamentary delegation MP Salah Khorshid said.

The members of the committee also met with a number of Kuwaiti patients in Paris, adding that they praised the cooperation of the Health Office and the Embassy of Kuwait in

Paris, he said. The delegation of the parliamentary inquiry committee is due to leave for Frankfurt today as part of a tour of Health Ministry offices abroad. The delegation includes MPs Sadoun Hammad, Osama Al-Shaheen, Omar Al-Tabtabai and Faisal Al-Kandari. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Ambassadors of Guyana (top) Dr Shamir Ally and the Netherlands Frans Potuyt (above) visited Kuwait Times yesterday and met separately with Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

MOGHERINI IN KUWAIT SUNDAY TO UNDERLINE MEDIATION EFFORTS SUPPORT

BRUSSELS: European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini will visit Kuwait on Sunday to express EU support of mediation efforts assumed by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to find solution to the Gulf crisis.

"I will be visiting Kuwait, the mediator that we support and accompany and with whom we are constantly in touch. So I will visit Kuwait next Sunday," she told a press conference after a meeting of EU foreign ministers Monday evening. Meanwhile, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian briefed his EU counterparts on the outcome of his visit to Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates on

July 15 and 16.

Mogherini said she had discussed with Le Drian during her visit to Paris last week the messages he would have brought before his travel to the Gulf region. "We agreed on messages to be passed beforehand and he told me today about his contacts he has had," said Mogherini.

"We discussed in particular the need to avoid tensions in the Gulf," she said noting that it has negative repercussions on the crisis in Libya which is a top priority for the EU. "This is a consistent message that all EU ministers who had contacts in the Gulf region but also the heads of states in the Gulf are passing," she added. — KUNA



European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini

PUBLIC AUTHORITY OF INDUSTRY WINS INT'L AWARD FOR GIS APP

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Public Authority Of Industry (PAI) announced yesterday that it had won a distinguished achievement award in the field of geographic information systems (GIS). The award, described by PAI as a "great achievement," was presented by the leading international company, 'ESRI', at its annual conference held recently in San Diego. Engineers Younis Al-Khilaifi and Eman Fairoz briefed the audience at the conference on the Kuwaiti application. The application, which has a large and integrated database, provides information in a precise, easy and flexible manner to employees and industrial investors. It provides decision makers with research, statistics, reports and indicators to support them in gaining the best results at the lowest cost. —KUNA



Engineer Eman Fairoz

ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF MEETS AUSTRALIAN MILITARY OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: Chief of General Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Lt Gen Mohammed Al-Khedr held talks yesterday with Australian Defense Attache to Saudi Arabia, Col Brad Robertson, on issues of common interest.

The meeting dealt with military aspects and ways to develop them, said Kuwait's Defense Ministry in a statement. Khedr praised the deep bilateral relations shared between two countries. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Chief of General Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Lt Gen Mohammed Al-Khedr meets with Australian Defense Attache to Saudi Arabia Col Brad Robertson. —KUNA



HEAT WAVE STRIKES KUWAIT, MIDDLE EAST

KUWAIT: A record heat wave struck Kuwait and the Middle East region, bringing the maximum temperatures to over 50 Degrees Celsius. The heat wave will last for 52 days, from mid-July until late-August. The term 'Jamarat Al-Gaith', roughly translated to heated coal, usually describes the unbearable weather during this time of the year. —KUNA

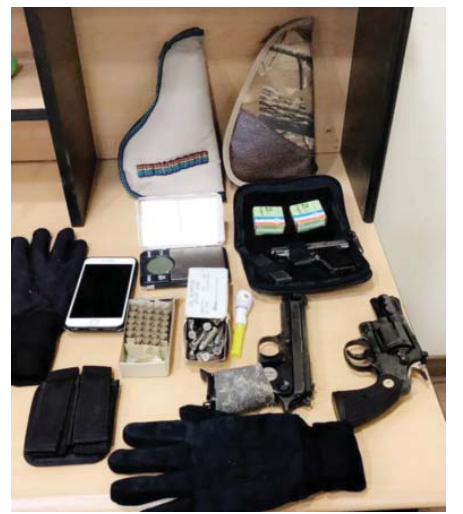
AMIRI PARDON FOR PRISONERS IN 2017

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Justice Minister and State Minister for National Assembly Affairs Faleh Al-Azb said an Amiri decree was issued for releasing and commuting prisoners' sentences for 2017. Azb said His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah issued the decree based on article 75 of the constitution and article 239 of the procedures law. He said this article of the procedures law says "the Amir can, after a sentence is rendered against a certain person, and before implementing it, or during implementation, issue an order to pardon the sentence or reduce it." He said that some inmates will be released immediately, while others will have their sentences commuted to half. Some will be relieved of judicial deportation, while others will have their fines dropped.

Multipurpose hall reclaimed

The Social Affairs Ministry reclaimed a multipurpose hall from the Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies (UCCS). It said the reason for this action was due to many violations, including the hall being used for conferences by the union. It said the hall was turned into a multipurpose facility without receiving the necessary licenses. A statement said current and previous union administrations used to rent the hall to an investor and used it as a commercial outlet in a clear violation of an administrative decision that regulates the use of halls and sets the fee at KD 100 in the general interest of citizens. Citizens also complained they were forced to deal with the investor. The hall was seized in the presence of a police force.



MULTIPLE DRUG-RELATED ARRESTS MADE AROUND KUWAIT

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Farwaniya security directorate officers arrested an Arab man with possession of 26 envelopes suspected of containing shabu (meth), along with 107 Tramadol pills and three envelopes of chemical; a variation of 'Spice' (synthetic marijuana) with added chemicals. The man was taken to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) to face charges. In another case, Hawally security arrested a citizen in an abnormal condition who was obstructing traffic. Police found four butts of cigarettes suspected of containing drugs in the man's possession. Meanwhile, three Asians were arrested for brewing liquor. Police found 2,300 bottles and 50 drums. Also, Ahmadi security arrested a citizen with herbal material, along with remnants of a cigarette. He was found wanted on debt cases. Separately, Capital police arrested a citizen in an abnormal condition with

eight pills suspected of being Lyrica. Another citizen was found wanted to serve a five-year jail sentence. He is also wanted for using and trading in drugs.

Crackdown

Mubarak Al-Kabeer security arrested six indebted people, six absconders and a roaming vendor. Six vehicles wanted by authorities and three other vehicles were impounded, and 20 people were given humanitarian assistance. Separately, General security personnel set up several checkpoints, resulting in the arrest of 13 persons including seven citizens and six expats with drugs. A citizen was found wanted on a debt case.

Detour

The Traffic Department announced the opening of a detour on the Sixth Ring Road at the intersection with Al-Ghous Street. The traffic light will be removed today morning.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality inspectors disconnected electricity from five violating buildings during a crackdown carried out yesterday in Abu Al-Hassaniya in Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate.

DOMESTIC HELP COMPANY OPERATES IN SEPTEMBER

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Chairman of Ishbelia Cooperative Society Bussam Al-Mutairi said the Al-Durra Domestic Help Company will start work in September, adding that the society will provide all possible facilities to organize the process of bringing in workers. Mutairi said he held a technical meeting with the company's operations director Ahmad Al-Fares in the presence of co-op secretary Saad Al-Rasheedi. Some Asian countries were approved for bringing in domestic help, including Philippines, India, Madagascar, Nepal and Sri Lanka. He said it was also agreed to apply to hire helpers electronically to help the elderly and those with special needs. He said the period for a helper to arrive will be a minimum of two months from the date of the application, adding that the guarantee will be for six or three months as agreed. As for returned workers, the company will take them back without

a fee and possibility of a refund, provided that a six-month period has not elapsed.

Report ready

A report on the resignation of former chairwoman of Kuwait Airways Rasha Al-Roumi will be ready by the start of the next term of the National Assembly, the parliamentary investigation committee said in a statement. The committee will hold a meeting today with Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah to ask him where the Civil Aviation Department belongs - to the interior ministry or the state ministry for economic affairs.

Defensive plan

MP Nayef Al-Merdas said the government is using a defensive plan against proposed laws. He said although it should take the initiative and have discussions with the executive authority, it is always confronting laws tabled by MPs, the latest of which is the

salaries and military allowances law that it returned to the Assembly on the last working day before Eid. He said the fatwa and legislation department, social security, the finance committee and concerned ministers did not oppose it.

Premier's grilling

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh said the government fully cooperates with the committee studying aspects of the prime minister's grilling, and it is ready to present all necessary information. She said she attended the committee's meeting and presented everything related to the issues brought up in the grilling. The committee held a meeting to discuss the grilling of the prime minister in the presence of Sabeeh and to discuss the demographic structure and the high unemployment rate, but a lack of quorum prevented the meeting.



KUWAIT: Shoppers gather at the main fish market in Sharq seeking a good bargain during a daily auction yesterday. The fishing season for Zubaidi (silver Pomfret) opened this week after a fishing ban imposed by local authorities to allow the marine species to reproduce in territorial waters. Kuwaiti Zubaidi fish are considered one of the most expensive fish in Kuwait, where the price of one kilograms is KD 15 equivalent to \$45.— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

In Brief

FLIGHT FROM KUWAIT MAKES EMERGENCY LANDING

KUWAIT/BUCHAREST: A KLM flight from Kuwait to Amsterdam made an emergency landing in Romania yesterday. The Airbus A330 plane, traveling with 298 people onboard, requested an emergency landing at the Henri Coanda Airport after one of its engines began consuming extra fuel. Airport authorities instituted standard emergency procedures, reported the National Company of Bucharest Airports.



KUWAIT OIL PRICE UP TO \$45.88 PB

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went up 50 cents to \$45.88 per barrel Monday as opposed to \$45.38 pb last Friday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. At the global level, the prices were up due to the increase in the number of oil rigs in the US and the surge in crude oil demand at Chinese refineries. The price of the Brent crude was up to \$49.02 per barrel, the same case with the Texas West Intermediate, which was at \$46.64 pb. — KUNA



US DOLLAR RATE STABLE AT KD 0.302

KUWAIT: The US Dollar exchange rate was stable at KD 0.302 while the euro went up to KD 0.348, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) yesterday. The CBK indicated the Sterling Pound remained unchanged at KD 0.396, whereas the Swiss Franc was to KD 0.315. The Japanese Yen was firm at KD 0.002. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A bird is perched on a dry twig of a leafless tree during a hot afternoon in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT GIVES IMPETUS TO DEVELOPMENT

KUWAIT: It is imperative to provide an environment that is conducive for business and in turn, would encourage development projects and help diversify the economy, an official said yesterday.

Speaking at a panel discussion, Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan noted that the Ministry of Commerce was eager to facilitate procedures related to small and medium-sized development projects.

Roudhan, who doubles as Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs, revealed that the ministry has set up an ad hoc committee tasked with ensuring a proper environment that would lure

entrepreneurs and eliminate any impediments to fledgling businesses. Roudhan also spoke of a growing penchant among many young Kuwaitis to dabble in small and medium-sized development projects, which have become increasingly significant.

Moreover, he added that many entrepreneurs are often deterred by certain legislation that need to be amended, or else, pursuing such projects can be a daunting task. The panel discussion, attended by bodies from across the government spectrum, detailed the intricacies behind small and medium-sized development projects, including the private sector's contributions to such endeavors. — KUNA

DEAF SPORTS CLUB GRATEFUL AFTER SUSPENSION IS LIFTED



ANKARA: Members of the Kuwait Sports Club for the Deaf pose for a group photo. — KUNA

ANKARA: Head of Kuwait Sports Club for the Deaf Aidan Al-Shali yesterday expressed his gratitude to those who contributed to the lifting of Kuwait's membership suspension of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD).

Shali said that Kuwait's participation in the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD) conference comes after lifting the suspension on Kuwait sanctioned by the Asia-Pacific Deaf Sports Confederation. He endorsed the efforts exerted by Kuwait's club chairperson and members to

lift the suspension. The conference is tackling a number of issues concerning deaf athletes across the organization's 168 member states.

The 2017 Summer Deaflympics kicked off yesterday in Samsun city, northern Turkey, with the participation of 3,000 athletes representing 97 countries. The first championship for the deaf was launched in Paris, France in 1924. The United States of America is the most decorated country in the event, having amassed 987 medals, including 350 gold. — KUNA

KUWAIT BEACH CLEANUP CAMPAIGN NEARS END



KUWAIT: Kuwait is wrapping up an environmental cleanup campaign through protecting the Bay of Kuwait and making sure that its beaches are kept pristine. Speaking at a press conference yesterday, Abdulaziz Al-Shatti, who heads the campaign, noted that the endeavor aims to stave off pollution caused by waste that could sully

the bay, which is a major fish habitat in a country with a profound maritime tradition. He added that numerous government bodies have joined forces to pick up heaps of trash strewn across Kuwait's beaches, which collectively stretch over 814 sq/km.

Meanwhile, Manal Al-Thifeeri, a campaign member, recalled

that the previous two phases of the beach cleanup were successfully held in the last two years. Amna Al-Refai, an official from the Environment Public Authority (EPA), pointed out that sewage and waste have wreaked havoc on the Bay of Kuwait and that EPA has initiated a plethora of measures to protect this environmental landmark. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) sponsored a ceremony organized by the ambulance department in Jahra recently to honor distinguished emergency medical technicians.

الرسائل **Al-Rai**
**POETRY AS
 A MEDIA TOOL**

By Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

And the poets (only) the deviators follow them (224). Do you not see that in every valley they roam (225). And that they say what they do not do? (226). Except those (poets) who believe and do righteous deeds and remember Allah often and defend (the Muslims) after they were wronged. And those who have wronged are going to know to what (kind of) return they will be returned (227). (Holy Quran: Ash Shuara)

Several sayings about the meaning of these verses include that two men, one of them from the Ansar (Supporters), duelled with poetry, so people came to the support of their man. Those supporters who listened to the poetry and spread it are the people who are astray, that Almighty Allah mentioned. Poetry has lost its strength as a media tool in our era and replaced by satellite channels and social media that play the same role poets used to play in the past.

Media men or 'Tweeters' who do not have any fear of God in our era roam every valley, lie and post information they make up, which are received by others, who in turn repost them. All these are deviators who not only publish, but also participate in spreading strife and corrupt the system of values, which is the pillar of social peace among individuals and people.

If you look left or right today, you will find poets everywhere who roam every valley, and you will also see large crowds of deviants, and you barely see the exception that came in the verse "Except those (poets) who believe and do righteous deeds and remember Allah often and defend (the Muslims) after they were wronged." These have become a rare commodity. Today, every person, even if he is not a media man, has the tools attributed to poets who are astray. Every one of us relays information without making sure about it and without knowledge of the harm it may cause to human relationships that link the region's peoples.

The strange thing is that the astray get nothing out of what they are doing other than release grudges and entertain gossip, besides some media people who are making a living out of differences and gain from nations' tragedies. We in the Gulf today are on top of a volcano, and the circle of strife is getting wider, so we all must understand and think about the ending of the previous verse: "And those who have wronged are going to know to what (kind of) return they will be returned," which refers to those who do not heed the warning of Almighty Allah, stop harming others and avoid publishing destructive messages under any title.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



**MAN ATTEMPTED
 TO SELL DEAD BODY**

KUWAIT: An Egyptian man whose job is to transport dead bodies to Kuwait International Airport was arrested and taken to state security after he was caught with the body of a Bangladeshi man that was supposed to be shipped out. The suspect took advantage of a document showing that the official at the airport received two bodies, but delivered only one body. He told authorities that he was about to sell the body to students at the college of medicine. Al-Anbaa local daily said the inspector who gave him the receipt of two bodies and did not make sure they were onboard was questioned. He claimed that the hot weather caused him not to follow the matter personally. The second body was discovered at the outer gate when inspectors saw the coffin.

Fight
 A fight between a citizen and a detective ended with both injured, and one of them had to undergo surgery. Police had responded to a call about a fight and broke it up. Police are questioning both to find out the cause of the fight, as they are neighbors.

'Too much money'

The electronic crimes department is carrying out investigations to identify a person who uploaded a video on YouTube bragging about being rich and lit a cigarette with a KD 10 note. A source said detectives are determining the authenticity of the clip, and whether the currency note he used is real or fake. The man boasted he is rich and pitied those who wait for their salaries at the end of the month, claiming he has too much money and lights cigarettes with it.

Jail riot

Central prison administration sent a report to the interior ministry's assistant undersecretary for reform institutions and sentence implementation affairs Maj Gen Abdullah Al-Muhanna about events in ward 7 that ended with several policemen and inmates injured. A security source said that prison guards decided to raid ward 7 following information about banned substances there. When prisoners were told to leave the place, several of them refused and attempted to take the money they had with them. The source added that inmates attacked policemen, who fought back and brought the prisoners under control.

Threats

A Palestinian man filed two complaints at Zahra police station, one against his brother-in-law, who threatened to harm him, relying on his relations with an influential person; and the other against an unidentified person who called his home several times. He gave police the caller's phone number. A man lodged a complaint against his daughter, who is in her 20s, accusing her of damaging the floors of his house. Police will summon her for questioning. He told police that she poured a liquid on the floor to damage it deliberately.

Assault

An Egyptian woman was beaten badly by a compatriot, and lodged a complaint against him at Jabriya police station. She told police that she came across the Egyptian with whom she had earlier differences, and he attacked her in public and did not let go of her until passersby intervened. Police will question the man, who faces legal action.

Mugging

A man who posed as a policeman in Jabriya robbed a Filipina. The woman said that the suspect stopped her near a taxi office claiming to be a policeman and stole her money, IDs and ATM cards. Hawally detectives are working on the case. — Translated from the Arabic press

**KFH PARTICIPATES IN
 KFSD ANNUAL CEREMONY**



KUWAIT: Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media at KFH Yusef Al-Ruwaieh receiving honor from KFSD's Director General Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Mikrad.

KUWAIT: Director General of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Mikrad commended Kuwait Finance House (KFH) for its unlimited support to the firefighters, expressing appreciation for the bank's Chairman and Board of Directors, and the executive management in recognition of KFH's support to the efforts and initiatives of the country's institutions, indicating this reflects the pioneering role of KFH in the social responsibility. Mikrad's statement was made during the annual ceremony of KFSD in honor of media practitioners at the Regency Hotel.

Meanwhile, Public Relations Department at KFSD Director Colonel Khalil Al-Ameer said that KFH has a proven track record of social contributions, which affirms the bank's efficient strategy in the field of social responsibility.

Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media at KFH Yusef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh reiterated the bank's commitment towards supporting all initiatives that serve the society and contribute in achieving comprehensive development.

He added, during his speech at the ceremony, that KFH attaches great attention to the KFSD representatives and the security personnel in all sectors in recognition of their important role in the peace and security of the country. He affirmed that the bank is keen on honoring media practitioners who support KFSD and focus on the role of firemen in protecting the society.

News

In Brief

**AGREEMENT ON REDUCING
 EXPATRIATES' NUMBERS**

KUWAIT: Fees that expatriates in Kuwait pay for public services could double in the near future as local authorities mull ways to cut the number of foreigners living in the country and rebalance the state's demographics in favor of locals. There is understanding between the government and parliament over the need to increase Kuwaitis' percentage in the total population from around 31 percent today to 40 percent within a few years. This can happen through a number of procedures that include increasing the number of national manpower in the private sector (where over 90 of workers are expats), increasing fees of public services offered to expats and limiting government subsidies on products and services exclusively to Kuwaitis, government sources said. — Al-Qabas

12,000 visitor's visas renewed

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Residency Affairs General Department renewed nearly 12,000 expired visitor's visas for Syrian nationals in Kuwait, and collected around KD 900,000 as delay fines in the process. Each visa was renewed for a three-month renewable period, security sources said, adding that a KD 10 fine was collected for each day of delay beyond the visa's expiration date. — Al-Rai

1,150 face legal action

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Defense started procedures to take legal action against Kuwaitis who failed to subscribe for conscription after the end of the two-month period stipulated by the law to join military service. Head of the National Service Authority at the ministry Major General Ibrahim Al-Omairi said. The total number of people expected to face legal action is 1,150 out of 2,300 citizens eligible to join conscription, Omairi added. — Al-Rai



KUWAIT: Daily cleaning works are ongoing at the historic Mubarakiya Market, reflecting commitment to taking care of the site that is considered one of the most popular tourist attractions in the country, Kuwait Municipality's public relations department announced in a statement yesterday.

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A Wonderful World



Duterte seeks martial law extension in south

ROHINGYA MUSLIMS: CORNERED BY POVERTY, STALKED BY VIOLENCE

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SEOUL: This photo taken on May 24, 2017 shows social workers caring for babies at the Jusrang Community Church in southern Seoul. — AFP

S KOREA CHILD LAW SEES MORE BABIES ABANDONED

‘TEENAGERS GIVE BIRTH IN EMPTY HOUSES OR PUBLIC TOILETS’

SEOUL: The young woman labored up the steps, past brightly decorated walls akin to a child's nursery, her daughter in her arms. Opening a hatch in the wall, she put her inside, turned around and walked away. She ran her hands over her head but did not look back, surveillance camera footage showed. She may never see the girl again.

South Korea has risen from the ruins of war to become Asia's fourth-largest economy and a member of the OECD club of developed countries. It was for a time one of the world's biggest sources of unwanted children, driven by poverty, a light regulatory touch, and a culture of racial purity, family bloodlines, and shame. Around 110,000 South Koreans have been adopted to the United States alone since the 1950s but numbers have fallen in recent years.

Birth rates have plummeted to the world's lowest with factors such as high child-rearing costs and a workaholic culture affecting the situation. But the number of abandoned babies has jumped in recent years in the wake of a law intended to protect children.

Now more changes are mooted, for similarly

well-intended reasons that campaigners say could make the situation even worse.

Buried alive

The woman in the video footage was among the latest of more than 1,000 to have made their way to a house in a working-class neighborhood on the outskirts of Seoul. Converted into a shelter by a small Seoul church, a temperature-controlled chamber built into the wall functions as a baby box, enabling unwanted newborns to be taken in without parents having to identify themselves.

New arrivals—almost 200 last year, an average of nearly four a week—are deposited covered in blood, wrapped in material, sometimes with the umbilical cord still attached. Pastor Lee Jong-Rak of the Jusrang Community Church set up the facility after hearing reports of babies being abandoned in the open air or in public restrooms, where they risked dying of hypothermia. “Some teenagers give birth to babies in empty houses or in public toilets. They wrap them in old shirts or towels and bring them to us,” he told AFP. On one occasion, a young couple brought in a baby covered in

dust. The father had been planning to bury it alive, he explained. “When the father started shovelling earth over it, the mother could not bear it any more and rescued the baby.”

Social stigma

In 2010, its first year of operations, just four babies were placed in the box. At the time, South Korean women who wanted to give up unwanted babies were obliged to give adoption agencies their written consent, but often gave false details or no records, and operators looked the other way.

But two years later the country adopted a law banning adoption agencies accepting undocumented babies, in line with the Hague Convention, which aims to give adoptive children the right to trace their birth parents. It also required all adoptions to be court-approved. In 2013, 224 babies were abandoned at the centre by parents desperate to hide their identities.

Almost all who do so are poor single women. More unmarried mothers are keeping their children in South Korea, but face social ostracism and struggle to find husbands will-

ing to accept such a past. Even employment checks often go into family background, and would show that a woman had had a child and given it up. The box operates in a legal grey area. Authorities are fully aware of it, and the welfare ministry—which has a specific category for it in its statistics—neither supports it nor opposes it as, according to official Kim Hye-Ji, “it saves the lives of newborn babies”. But the Gwanak district office has repeatedly urged Pastor Cho to shut it down. “We see the baby box as an illegal facility that encourages baby abandonment,” said local official Min Seo-Young.

Blank sheet

The shelter looks after new arrivals for a few days until they are moved to orphanages to await new families. But a stigma remains around adoption in Korea, where a focus on preserving family bloodlines makes the idea of raising someone else's child anathema to many. It also has a long history of taking pride in its racial homogeneity—many of the first international adoptees were the mixed-race children of American servicemen and Korean

mothers. International adoptions slumped by three-quarters in the wake of the 2012 law—which tightened requirements from natural and prospective adoptive parents—going from 916 the previous year to 236 in 2013.

Now Seoul says it aims to ratify the Hague Convention, which says children should preferably be adopted by families in their home country, by the end of the year. Officials say that will see authorities regulate all stages of the adoption process, including the reasons children are given up, the qualifications of adopting parents, and ensuring that as adults, adoptees will be able to trace their birth families.

Pastor Lee's colleague Cho Tae-Seung is concerned that the regulations resulting from the convention could backfire by driving women to abandon unwanted babies illicitly and dangerously. “It's very hard to strike a balance between reality and international adoption norms,” he said. Instead the group wants mothers to be legally allowed to give birth and give up their children anonymously. Next to the hatch in the wall, a form enables parents to state a child's name, date of birth, and vaccinations. The mother in the video left it blank. — AFP

SEPARATED BY CONFLICT, IRAQI CHILDREN WAIT FOR PARENTS

DEBAGA: Adel, 15, hasn't seen his parents for the past nine months, but that was the price to pay to escape the brutal rule of Islamic State group jihadists in his northern Iraqi hometown. “I miss my family, nine months is too long,” said the teenager, among hundreds of youngsters separated from their parents because of IS and the months-long battle that has expelled the jihadists from Mosul, the main city of northern Iraq.

Adel remembers the long trek on foot out of Hawijah—a town in Kirkuk province that is still held by IS—as he and others made their way to Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region. “We walked all night, around 14 hours,” said the teenager. He now lives in a camp for the displaced in Debaga region, southeast of Mosul, where he has been reunited with one of his brothers and some cousins. Adel is not from the area, but the battle for Mosul has displaced hundreds of thousands of other civilians, many of whom now reside in camps near Iraq's second city. According to the UN's chil-

dren agency, UNICEF, more than 1,000 children under the age of 18 have been separated from their parents. Adel is cared for by the Terres des Hommes Italia, a children's aid organization, and is among 17 teenagers being sheltered by the charity, which organizes English and computer science classes and sports activities. “The teachers treat us well. It's like I'm at home here now,” said Adel.

Tracing families

In the common room, boys wearing T-shirts took turns to play ping pong or table football. Others lay on mattresses in the dormitory next door busy with their mobile phones, while in the background Arab music blared out at full volume. In the kitchen, three teenagers were helping the head cook prepare the day's lunch, and they were learning how to bake bread. Six months after Adel fled Hawijah, his parents also left for a camp for the displaced in Kirkuk province. “The only way to contact them is by phone and sometimes on

Facebook,” said Adel. He hopes to go visit them after September, when he is due to resit his school exams after failing at a first attempt.

“There are just over 1,000 children who are separated and unaccompanied,” UNICEF's Maulid Warfa said after a tour of the Mosul area. His visit to eastern and western Mosul came after the Iraq government declared the city “liberated” from the jihadists who overran it three years ago.

“Separated means they are with relatives, but not their parents. Unaccompanied means they are all alone, and this group is our top priority,” said Warfa. He said UNICEF was working to trace the families. “If we can't find them, the courts will put them in a state institution.”

The UN official said he had met a boy of around seven whose left hand had been badly damaged in an explosion. “He was clearly very distressed, not talking or interacting, even when we gave him a small ball to play with, he didn't touch it. We were told his parents were killed in the blast,” he said. — AFP



DEBAGA, Iraq: Iraqi youth, who were separated from their families during the fighting between Iraqi forces and Islamic State (IS) group jihadists around the city of Mosul, sit in a room at the headquarters of the Terres des Hommes Italia, a children's aid organization. — AFP

ISRAEL PM PRAISES HUNGARY FIGHT AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM

BUDAPEST: Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday praised Budapest for "standing up for" the Jewish state, at talks with Hungarian premier Viktor Orban who is under fire at home for allegedly stoking anti-Semitism. "I want to thank you for standing up for Israel in international forums, you have done this again and again," Netanyahu said at a press conference with Orban in Budapest.

He added that Hungary, as the birthplace of modern political Zionism founder Theodor Herzl, was "at the forefront" of countries fighting anti-Zionism. Netanyahu is the first Israeli prime minister to visit Budapest since the fall of communism in 1989. The landmark trip brings together two right-wingers enamored of US President Donald Trump and with a disdain for the left-leaning liberal global order bankrolled, as they see it, by the likes of US billionaire George Soros.

"The (Israeli) prime minister is a great patriot and success belongs to those who are patriots, who don't push national identity and interests aside," Orban said yesterday. "Israel's history teaches that we will lose the things we don't fight for." The headline policies of the pair—described as "spiritual brothers" by Hungarian media—have sparked tensions with Brussels. But in eastern and central Europe, the muscle-flexing has found

fertile ground. Netanyahu will today meet premiers of the Visegrad Group—Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic plus Hungary—whose nationalistic stances have also increasingly placed them at odds with the rest of the EU. "All these states are very pro-Israel," Israeli analyst Raphael Vago told AFP. "They vote in our favor at the European Union and the United Nations." Netanyahu will attend Budapest's Great Synagogue with Jewish community leaders, before departing Thursday.

Anti-Soros graffiti

The trip comes at a sensitive time for Orban who faces a backlash over his virulent crusade against Soros, a Hungarian-born Jewish emigre. Some posters daubed with graffiti have attacked the financier for his alleged support of mass immigration.

Many in Hungary's 100,000-strong Jewish population—one Europe's largest—have accused Orban, in power since 2010, of turning a blind eye to anti-Semitism or even encouraging it to stave off growing support for the far-right. Orban however has insisted the billboards were not about Soros's Jewishness but the "national security risk" posed by his supposed wish to "settle a million migrants" in the EU. — AFP

US AND BRITISH VOLUNTEERS BATTLE IS IN SYRIA'S RAQQA

TEARING OUT THE 'HEART OF DARKNESS'

RAQQA: Hunkered down on the top floor of an abandoned building, two Americans and a British volunteer face off against Islamic State snipers in the Syrian city of Raqqa. The trio, including two who served in the French Foreign Legion and the war in Iraq, have made the war against IS their own.

They are among dozens of Western volunteers who have battled the Islamic State group in Iraq, and now in Raqqa, the city in northeastern Syria that the militants declared the capital of their self-proclaimed caliphate. The men joined US-allied Syrian militias for different reasons—some motivated by survivors' accounts of brutality at the hands of the extremists. Others joined what they see as a quest for justice and a final battle to tear out the "heart of darkness."

Taylor Hudson, a 33-year old from Pasadena, California, compares the fight for Raqqa to the 1945 Battle of Berlin in World War II that ended the rule of Adolf Hitler. "This is the Berlin of our times," said Hudson, who doubles as a platoon medic and a sniper in the battle against the militants. For him, IS extremists "represent everything that is wrong with humanity."

Deepening conflict

Syria's war, now in its seventh year, has attracted foreign fighters to all sides. Extremists from Europe, Asia and North Africa have flocked to IS as well as local Al-Qaeda-linked groups. Shiite Iranian and Lebanese militias have sided with the Syrian government, deepening the sectarian nature of the conflict that has killed over 400,000 people and displaced over 11 million, half of Syria's pre-war population. A much smaller number of Western volunteers fight alongside the US-allied Kurdish militia known as the People's Protection Units, or YPG. The US military has developed a close relationship with the YPG and its extension, the Syrian Democratic Forces, in the war against IS.

Before that, dozens of Westerners joined Iraqi Kurds fighting IS, spurred on by Kurdish social media campaigners and a sense of duty many feel after Iraq, the target of a decade-long US-led military campaign, collapsed under an IS offensive within days in the summer of 2014. Some Western volunteers have died in battle. Earlier this month, the YPG announced that 28-year-old Robert Grodt, of Santa Cruz, California, and 29-year-old Nicholas Alan Warden, of Buffalo, New York, died in the battle for Raqqa.

Since launching the push on Raqqa on June 6, the U.S.-backed forces have taken a third of the city. Hudson, who has been fighting in Syria for the past 13 months, said he was moved to tears by media reports of Iraqi Yazidi women enslaved by IS. A pharmacy student who learned combat medicine in the field, he said he



RAQQA: In this Monday, July 17, 2017 photo, Kevin Howard, a 28-year old former US military contractor from California, who fights with an Assyrian militia, that is part of the US-backed forces battling Islamic State group militants, gives an interview to The Associated Press. — AP

had treated some 600 wounded ahead of the march onto Raqqa. The presence of Western anti-IS volunteers in Syria has created something of a conundrum for their governments, which have often questioned them on terrorism charges. "I am not a terrorist," said

Former broker

Macer Gifford, a 30-year former broker in London, who came to Syria three years ago to volunteer first with the Kurdish militia. Now he is fighting with an Assyrian militia, also part of the US-backed forces battling IS. "I am here defending the people of Syria against terrorists," he added. Gifford has been questioned by British and US officials. At home, he has written and lectured about the complex situation in Syria, offering a firsthand account of IS' evolving tactics. "The Islamic State is actually an exceptional opponent," Gifford said. "We can't negotiate them away, we can't wish them away. The only way we can defeat them is with force of arms."

For Kevin Howard, a 28-year old former US

military contractor from California who fought in Iraq in 2006, the war is more personal. A skilled sniper who boasts of having killed 12 IS militants so far, Howard said he is doing it for the victims of the Bataclan theatre attack in France, where the sister of one of his best friends survived. The Nov 13, 2015 attacks, claimed by IS, killed 130 people at Paris cafes, the national stadium and the Bataclan, where 90 died.

"This is a continuation of that fight. I think if you leave something unfinished, it will remain unfinished for a lifetime," he said, showing off his 1972 sniper rifle. On his forehead and neck, he has tattooed "life is pain," as well as "Rien N'empêche" - or "Nothing Prevents" - from the song of the French Foreign Legion in which he served. "For me this is a chance to absolutely go to the heart of darkness and grab it and get rid of it," he added. From his sniper position on Raqqa's front line, he peeked again through the rifle hole. For Howard, the orders to march deeper into the IS-held city can't come soon enough. — AP

LEBANON ARMY TO ACT AGAINST MILITANTS NEAR SYRIA BORDER

BEIRUT: Lebanese security forces will launch an operation against militants near informal refugee camps in the country's east after coming under attack there, Lebanon's prime minister said on yesterday. Saad Hariri's announcement came as the country's president warned against rising anti-refugee rhetoric after Lebanese troops were attacked around Aarsal, a town near the Syrian border. "The Lebanese army will carry out a planned-out operation in Jurud Aarsal and the government gives it freedom (to do so)," Hariri said in comments quoted by the official National News Agency.

Jurud Aarsal refers to the mountainous border region around Aarsal, and is home to thousands of refugees from neighboring Syria living in informal camps. Lebanese troops carrying out arrest raids in two of those camps in late June were met with a string of suicide attacks and grenades. A girl was killed and seven soldiers wounded in the attacks, and the army subsequently arrested dozens of people.

Days later, the army said four of the detainees had died of pre-existing medical

conditions, but rights groups urged an independent investigation after allegations that the men had been tortured to death. Lebanese security forces have come under attack in Aarsal before, and in 2014 jihadists kidnapped 30 soldiers and policemen after clashes in the area.

Renewed tensions

Four of the hostages were killed and a fifth died of his wounds, while 16 were eventually released in December 2015. Another nine hostages are still being held. The latest incident in Aarsal has created renewed tensions in a country of just four million people hosting more than one million Syrian refugees. Lebanese President Michel Aoun warned yesterday that anti-refugee rhetoric was dangerous for both sides.

"If we are working for the return of the refugees, it is because Lebanon is no longer able to carry the burden," Aoun said at a meeting with local officials, and in a post on his official Twitter account. "But the spread of hatred and incitement are rejected, and their consequences are severe for both peoples," he added. — AFP



CARACAS: Opposition activists block an avenue during a protest. — AFP

TRUMP THREATENS VENEZUELA WITH 'ECONOMIC ACTIONS'

CARACAS: US President Donald Trump threatened Venezuela with swift "economic actions" on Monday if its leader pushes on with an unpopular bid to change his country's constitution amid mounting condemnation. The warning came as Venezuela's opposition coalition called a nationwide strike for Thursday to kick off a "final offensive" aimed at forcing President Nicolas Maduro from office through early elections.

Maduro, Trump said in a statement, was "a bad leader who dreams of becoming a dictator." "The United States will not stand by as Venezuela crumbles," he said. Trump did not specify what measures could be taken. But the warning dramatically raised the stakes and scope of the long political and economic crisis that has been battering Venezuela.

Nearly 100 people have died since April, when street protests against Maduro turned violent. Trump's stance explicitly sided with Venezuela's opposition, which accuses Maduro of trying to accumulate dictatorial powers to hang on to the reins. It risked fueling Maduro's frequent allegations that he was the victim of a plot by a colluding right-wing opposition and the "imperialist" United States. There was no immediate reaction from the Venezuelan president.

Separately, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos was in Cuba - a close ally of Venezuela - on Monday for meetings with President Raul Castro. Colombian Foreign Minister Maria Angela Holguin said the Venezuelan crisis was discussed, but she denied reports that Santos traveled to convince Castro to act as a mediator.

Nationwide strike

Venezuela's opposition coalition has called a nationwide, 24-hour strike for Thursday to add pressure to Maduro following an unofficial week-end vote it held that rejected the leader's plan. That plan, which Maduro has shown no sign of deviating from, entails a citizens' body-called a "Constituent Assembly"—being elected on July 30 to redo the constitution.

Maduro says that path is the only way to secure peace and economic recovery in Venezuela. His government has dismissed the opposition vote against it as illegal. But Trump said that, "if the Maduro regime imposes its Constituent Assembly on July 30, the United States will take strong and swift economic actions."

Venezuela, with the largest proven oil reserves in the world, is almost entirely reliant on its crude exports. The United States imports around 270 million barrels of oil a year from Venezuela, according to the US government's Energy Information Administration — a volume in decline by about a third compared to a decade ago.

'Final offensive'

Venezuela's opposition is intent on a "final offensive" ultimately aimed at toppling Maduro through early elections. On Sunday, more than a third of Venezuela's 19 million voters took part in the opposition ballot, giving an overwhelming rejection to the election of a Constituent Assembly and backing a presidential election before Maduro's term ends in 2019. The poll was lauded by the European Union, the United Nations, the US, Brazil and other countries. However Maduro,

backed by a loyal military, has up to now shrugged off the opposition tactics and the international criticism leveled at him. Despite growing public anger at food and medicine shortages under a spiralling economic crisis that has swelled the opposition movement, authorities in Caracas portray the efforts against them as illegitimate and fomented by the US.

'Demand for political change'

One leader in the opposition coalition, Freddy Guevara, said the strike this week was a "mechanism for pressure and to prepare for the definitive escalation to take place next week." A total of 7.6 million Venezuelans turned out for Sunday's vote, at home and abroad, the opposition said.

That figure—though disputed by the government—was more than a third of Venezuela's total 19 million voters, undermining legitimacy for Maduro's future Constituent Assembly. Brazil's foreign ministry said in a statement "the high turnout in the plebiscite... was an unmistakable sign the Venezuelan people want democracy quickly restored."

Political analyst John Magdaleno told AFP that "there is evidence of a persistent and durable demand for political change." According to the opposition, the final turnout figure was enough to overturn Maduro's mandate should there be a recall referendum, because it exceeded the 7.5 million votes that put the president in power in 2013. To lend weight to the vote, a group of former Latin American presidents, including Mexico's Vicente Fox, who was declared "persona non grata" by the government, took part as observers. — AFP

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UKRAINE REBELS ANNOUNCES PLAN TO CREATE NEW 'STATE'

KIEV: Russian-backed rebels fighting against Kiev announced yesterday a plan to create a new "state" they said would take the place of Ukraine and have its capital in their territory. Ukraine's pro-Western authorities immediately ridiculed the idea as a Kremlin project that they would never allow to get off the ground. The separatists said the proposed country would be founded after a referendum and called Malorossiya, a tsarist-era name meaning "Little Russia" that once described most of the area covering modern-day Ukraine.

A constitution presented by rebel leader Alexander Zakharchenko said his self-declared Donetsk People's Republic, neighbouring rebel-held Lugansk and other regions had agreed to "declare the establishment of a new state, which is the successor of Ukraine." The document released by the separatists' news agency said rebel bastion Donetsk would become the capital, while Kiev would be reduced to the status of a "historical and cultural centre".

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin quickly derided the plan on Twitter as another "show" by the insur-

gents "Kremlin puppet masters." "We and our partners will not let this happen," he vowed. The proposal seems to stand no chance of gaining traction and even the insurgents appeared unable to agree on it. The press service for Lugansk rebel chief Igor Plotnitsky said he had not been consulted on the project.

A 'violation'

The surprise announcement of Malorossiya could, however, further dent an already stalled peace process that has failed to end more than three years of

fighting that has claimed the lives of some 10,000 people. A deal brokered by the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany in Minsk in 2015 has hit a wall but is still viewed by those involved as the only way of unwinding Ukraine's war.

France's foreign ministry called on Moscow "to denounce" the rebel announcement, which it described as a "violation" of the peace deal. "Russia has to intensify its efforts to put an end to this conflict," a statement said. The proposal by the rebels echoed language used by the Kremlin in the early days of the conflict that

promoted fears Russia was looking to annex swaths of mainland Ukraine after its seizure of the Crimea peninsula. Moscow used the tsarist-era name "Novorossiya" (New Russia) to refer to the areas the rebels had seized, but the term was later dropped. Ukraine and the West insist that Moscow has funneled troops and arms across the border to fan the flames of the war in Europe's backyard. Moscow has denied the allegations despite overwhelming evidence that it has been involved in the fighting and its explicit political support for the rebels. — AFP

ROHINGYA MUSLIMS: CORNERED BY POVERTY, STALKED BY VIOLENCE

MAUNG HNAMA, RAKHINE: Hemmed in by Myanmar security forces and menaced by abductions and killings, Rohingya Muslims in a conflict-scarred corner of Rakhine State say fear is one of the few constants in their lives. Last week foreign media were given partial access to the isolated wedge of the northwestern state for the first time since security forces launched a months-long operation to root

tary operation has abated but the area remains in lockdown, with sporadic killings by military patrols still intent on rooting out "terrorists".

The UN believes hundreds may have died in what may be the bloodiest chapter of Buddhist-majority Myanmar's years-long persecution of the Rohingya Muslims.

The minority are widely reviled as illegal migrants from



This photo taken on July 13, 2017 shows a Muslim family at Maung Hnama village, Buthidaung township in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state. —AFP

out militants who attacked border police posts.

The UN wants to establish if that campaign amounted to ethnic cleansing after accounts of mass rape, killing and arson emerged from Rohingya who fled to neighboring Bangladesh. For those left behind in the rattan-walled frontier villages the violence and insecurity is unrelenting, locals told reporters, under the watch of Myanmar border forces who steered the visit.

"Our husbands are on the run. They left us because they are afraid of border guard police," one Rohingya woman told AFP, requesting anonymity for safety reasons. "They burned our house. We have no home and nothing to eat. Our husbands are hiding somewhere." The large-scale mili-

Bangladesh, although many Rohingya families say their ancestors have lived in the area for generations. Now a new peril has emerged: scores of local men have been abducted and murdered by unknown gangs of knife-wielding men, with state media reporting they are dressed in black and often wearing masks.

Authorities say the assassins are targeting leaders from the Muslim minority and anyone perceived to be a state collaborator. They blame Rohingya militants for the murders. International Crisis Group analyst Richard Horsey says some 60 people may have been targeted in a "systematic" campaign "to take out Muslims who are in some way connected to, or perceived to be connected to, authorities".

Mysterious killings

In an area stained by mistrust and rumour it is unclear who is behind the attacks and the fear is intensifying in the face of almost daily reports of killings. Earlier this month unidentified men dragged father-of-six Athu Suwan from the bed he was sharing with his wife in Maung Hnama village. They stabbed the 44-year-old, who occasionally worked as a translator for local officials, and carried his body into the darkness, his family and friends told reporters on the government-run press trip.

"I haven't even been able to eat since they took my son," his elderly mother Moeyeyan Khatu said, her face etched with sadness. On Monday state media reported his body had been found abandoned in a nearby creek. "We are fearful it (the killings) will happen again," his neighbour, 67-year-old Hanumyar, told AFP. The government blames the attacks on the self-styled Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), a newly formed Rohingya militant group.

The group denies any involvement, instead accusing the military in statements issued through an unverified Twitter account. They do however claim the raids on police border posts last October. The raids sparked the months-long "clearance operation" by the military which sent more than 70,000 fleeing into Bangladesh.

Rohingya escapees shared harrowing accounts of security officers slaughtering babies, burning people alive and gang-raping women—abuses UN investigators said may amount to crimes against humanity. The army denies the claims and says its response was proportionate in the face of terrorist interlopers. But the crackdown sparked global opprobrium and the UN has commissioned a fact-finding mission to probe the violence.

Rock and a hard place

Myanmar has refused to cooperate with the probe, denying the investigators visas. Unable to leave because of travel restrictions and abject poverty, Rohingya villagers say they are trapped between an oppressive state and vengeful militants. Adding to the climate of fear, death threats and fatwas (Islamic religious rulings) have circulated on social media aimed at anyone who dares to stand against the militants, according to several analysts and Rohingya sources. On the media visit, officials sought to play down the military's campaign and the murders. Police Brigadier General San Lwin, chief of Rakhine's state police, said some of the killings might relate to "personal grudges" and not militancy. But locals say they are now frightened to take official posts in case they too become targets. A 35-year-old Muslim man, recently appointed as a household head in Tinmyar village, said his predecessor was killed in April after talking to local reporters. "I do not sleep at home," he added, requesting anonymity. "I sleep at a police outpost with security." — AFP

News

in brief



KARACHI: Pakistani rescue workers move the body of a victim from the rubble of a collapsed three storey building in a residential area. —AFP

Building in Pakistan collapses, killing at least 5 residents

KARACHI: A dilapidated, three-storey building in a poorer neighborhood of Pakistan's port city of Karachi collapsed before dawn yesterday, killing at least five people and injuring 14, a rescue and senior police official said. Several hours into the day, rescuers were still working and pulling more bodies from under the rubble, according to Rizwan Edhi, a top official for Pakistan's largest private ambulance service, Edhi. "Rescuers are using heavy machinery with utmost care as we can still hear voices of people trapped in the rubble," he said. Up to two people were still believed to be trapped under the rubble.

Singapore voids a marriage after husband's sex change

SINGAPORE: Singapore has voided the marriage of a couple after the husband underwent a sex change, making their partnership a same-sex union that contravened the city-state's laws, a report said yesterday. The couple married as man and woman in 2015 but the husband underwent a sex change operation and updated his national identity card to read "female". But when the unidentified couple tried to buy a government-built apartment, they had to inform the authorities. Married couples receive state grants for first-time purchases of government apartments. The marriage was voided several months later, making them ineligible to buy the apartment they wanted.

Suspected rebels, Indian soldier killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Two suspected rebels and an Indian soldier were killed yesterday in disputed Kashmir along the de facto border with Pakistan, where the two sides traded fire for a second day. Army spokesman Colonel Rajesh Kalra said Indian soldiers exchanged fire with unknown combatants as they tried to cross the Line of Control (LoC) into Indian-administered Kashmir. "Two bodies and three weapons were recovered from the site of the firing," Kalra told AFP. In a separate incident an Indian soldier shot and killed his senior officer at a frontier post in Uri following a dispute between the two, Kalra said.

Malaysia leader challenges PM to attend 1MDB meet

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia's former leader Mahathir Mohamad urged the prime minister yesterday to attend a town hall meeting focusing on a massive financial scandal, heaping fresh pressure on the scandal-hit premier. The saga surrounding the 1MDB state investment fund has rocked Prime Minister Najib Razak's government, with claims the premier took part in the alleged looting of huge sums from the fund. Mahathir, 92, has come out of retirement from politics, formed his own party and joined forces with his old foe Anwar Ibrahim in an opposition alliance that aims to unseat Najib at elections due by 2018. He has exonerated Najib over 1MDB, saying that Malaysia is "controlled by thieves".

Swiss couple found on glacier 75 years after disappearance

GENEVA: A couple that disappeared in the Alps 75 years ago has been found preserved in a receding glacier, ending decades of uncertainty for their seven children. The bodies were found lying near each other in the Diablerets massif in southern Switzerland, along with backpacks, a bottle, a book and a watch. The head of the Glacier 3000 ski resort, Bernard Tschannen, told Le Matin that the bodies were found last Thursday. "It was a man and a woman wearing clothes from the last (world) war", Tschannen was quoted as saying. "The ice preserved them perfectly and their belongings were intact".

6.4 earthquake hits Peru: UGS

LIMA: A 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck just off Peru's southern coast Monday, the US Geological Survey said, with no immediate reports of injuries or damage. The quake hit at approximately 9:05 pm local time with a depth of 44 kilometers. It occurred some 220 kilometers west of Arequipa, Peru's second most populous city. Though there was no initial evidence of damage the tremor provoked alarm among Peruvians, with the Mayor of the southern town of Caraveli saying residents there had taken to the streets. "The tremor has been very strong here in Caraveli," Mayor Santiago Neyra said. "It has generated fear in the population."

547 BOYS WERE ABUSED AT GERMAN CATHOLIC CHOR SCHOOL: INVESTIGATOR

MUNICH: At least 547 boys at a German Catholic choir school suffered sexual or physical abuse in what victims have likened to "prison, hell or a concentration camp", said an investigator releasing a final report yesterday on one of the country's worst such scandals. The Regensburg Domschatzen ("Cathedral Sparrows"), a 1,000-year-old cathedral choir in the southern state of Bavaria, was in 2010 dragged into the massive sexual abuse and paedophilia scandal plaguing the Catholic Church around the world.

Many victims remembered the world-famous choir school in the town of Regensburg as "the worst time of their lives, marked by fear, violence and helplessness", said lawyer Ulrich Weber, who was commissioned two years ago by the diocese to look into the cases. Presenting his final report on abuses between 1945 and the early 1990s, Weber said he had uncovered 67 cases of sexual abuse and 500 cases of other physical violence, with some former singers having fallen victim to both.

Rape, severe beatings

This more than doubled the 231 reported abuse cases by school clergy and educators Weber had uncovered through interviews by January 2016, when he said victims had spoken of rape, sexual assaults, severe beatings and food deprivation. Weber, who was not able to speak with all former students, said he estimated the true number of victims at around 700.

The investigator pointed to a "culture of silence" that aimed to protect the reputation of the renowned choir of boys and young men that has made many recordings and performed around the world. He placed part of the blame for the situation on the school's former choir master

Georg Ratzinger, the elder brother of former pope Benedict XVI.

As head of the choir from 1964 to 1994, Georg Ratzinger could be "blamed for looking the other way and failing to intervene" on the physical violence, said Weber, who added there was no evidence Ratzinger knew of the sexual violence. Ratzinger, 93, has denied knowledge and said that the alleged sexual abuse was "never discussed" while he ran the choir. Weber also charged that the Regensburg cardinal, Gerhard Ludwig Mueller, had failed to sufficiently clear up the decades of abuse or engage in dialogue with the victims.

'All made mistakes'

Weber said the attacks were concentrated in the boarding schools' primary section, but also occurred in the secondary section. He said that 49 alleged perpetrators had been identified, but that they were not expected to face criminal charges as the alleged crimes took place too long ago.

The known victims are now expected to receive 20,000 euros (\$23,000) each in compensation. The diocese apologized in a statement and said that "we all made mistakes and we have learnt a lot". Weber agreed in a press conference that the diocese had rectified organizational weaknesses, and that there was a "heightened awareness" about the past abuses.

The abuse scandal is one of several to have rocked the Catholic Church in recent years, notably in Ireland where one priest admitted sexually abusing more than 100 children. Several German institutions have also been engulfed by the scandal, including an elite Jesuit school in Berlin which admitted to systematic sexual abuse of pupils by two priests in the 1970s and 1980s. — AFP



Smoke and flames rise from a fire in the village of Podstrana, near the Adriatic coastal town of Split. —AFP

WILDFIRES RAGE IN EUROPE FROM CROATIA TO PORTUGAL

ZAGREB: Firefighters battled to douse wildfires on the Adriatic coast of Croatia and Montenegro yesterday, as blazes also raged in Italy, France and Portugal. About a dozen wildfires had broken out late Sunday in the villages surrounding Split, a popular tourist destination, but firefighters managed to control the blaze on the outskirts of Croatia's second largest city.

Late Monday the fire spread to the suburbs of Split where a shopping centre had to be evacuated and several cars were burned. The city waste dump caught fire, while the town was covered with thick black smoke, but the blaze was put under control overnight. "It seems that the worst is behind us... Split has been saved," mayor Andro Krstulovic Opara told HRT state-run television.

Local media reports however said some parts of Split were without electricity or water on Tuesday as Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic arrived to take stock of the situation. According to initial estimates some 4,500 hectares of land, mostly pine forests, bushes and olive groves, were destroyed. Houses were burned but there were no casualties.

In neighboring Montenegro, where the forest fires forced the evacuation of more than a hundred campers on the Lustica peninsula, the situation was slightly better yesterday. Fires however were still active in several municipalities further inland but were all under control, an interior ministry statement said.

Under control

The cause of the fires in the two countries at the height of the summer tourist season is still

not known. In Italy, authorities said a blaze in a pine forest at a popular park outside Rome, now under control, was deliberately set and that a suspect has been arrested. But fires continue burn in southern Italy in parts of the Calabria region and in the outskirts of Naples where one person died on Monday after falling off his roof where he went to look at how the forest fire was progressing not far from his home.

Winds, high temperatures and dry conditions prompted fires to break out the past several days in southern France and the Mediterranean island of Corsica. More than 450 firefighters were still battling a forest fire at Castagniera, north of Nice, which has destroyed some 100 hectares but appears not to be spreading further, authorities said. On Monday fire swept through around 200 hectares of scrubland near Bonifacio in southern Corsica. On Europe's Atlantic coast nearly 1,400 firefighters supported by water-bombing planes and helicopters have battled three major blazes in northern Portugal since Sunday. Civil protection authorities say firefighters have managed to mostly bring the fires under control and the weather on Tuesday was cooperating as temperatures dropped from 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit) to 30 C.

Last month Portugal battled a giant fire in the central region that raged for five days, killing 64 people and injuring more than 250, with many trapped in their cars by the flames. Following the tragedy, experts said Portugal is likely to see more massive forest fires because the country is highly exposed to global warming's climate-altering impacts. — AFP

DUTERTE SEEKS MARTIAL LAW EXTENSION IN SOUTH

CRITICS WARN THAT COUNTRY EDGING TOWARDS DICTATORSHIP

MANILA: President Rodrigo Duterte plans to extend martial law in the southern Philippines to defeat Islamist militants who have seized a major city, his administration said yesterday, as critics warned the country could be edging towards a dictatorship. Duterte had imposed military rule for 60 days in the Mindanao region, home to 20 million people, after gunmen waving black Islamic State flags occupied Marawi city on May 23, triggering clashes that have killed more than 550 people.

While the military said at least 60 militants continued to hold out against government forces nearly two months later, critics expressed surprise by Duterte's request for a martial law extension until December 31. "I have come to the conclusion that the existing rebellion in Mindanao which has prompted me to issue (the martial law proclamation), will not be quelled completely by 22nd July 2017," Duterte said in a letter to Congress.



MANILA: Protesters hold placards to protest the extension of martial law on Mindanao island in southern Philippines. —AP

Congress is to convene Saturday to discuss an extension after Duterte met with its leaders late Monday, presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella told reporters. The president also asked Congress to suspend a constitutional safeguard against warrantless arrests. "This is not only a step back, but several steps back for our democracy," opposition lawmaker and prominent martial law critic Edcel Lagman told AFP, calling Duterte's request illegal.

Lagman and Senator Antonio Trillanes, a fellow critic, also warned of a potential repeat of human rights abuses under the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, whose 20-year rule was ended by a bloodless popular revolt in 1986. Trillanes, a retired naval officer, also accused Duterte of using martial rule as preparation for installing a revolutionary government that would allow him to stay in office beyond his six-year electoral mandate. "Once he feels that there is not enough opposition to a nation-

wide martial law declaration, he will go for it," Trillanes told AFP. The country's constitution allows the president to impose martial law for up to 60 days, as well as allowing authorities to detain suspects for up to three days without charges to suppress invasion or rebellion. Beyond two months, the president can extend it "for a period to be determined by the Congress".

'Extraordinary measure'

But Duterte's allies dominate Congress, and House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez said yesterday he saw no obstacle to approving an extension. Duterte had initially consulted the military and police on extending martial rule. His spokesman would not say if the plan to extend by five months was their idea. In May, Duterte said he had made the move to stamp out an attempt by militants, including foreign fighters, to establish an IS caliphate on Philippine territory. — AFP

INDONESIAN ISLAMISTS PROTEST ATTEMPTS TO CURB RADICALS

JAKARTA: Conservative Islamic groups protested yesterday in the capital of Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, denouncing President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo's attempt to ban radical organizations. Demonstrators from an alliance of Islamic groups waved flags and held up banners calling the government tyrannical and repressive. The crowd, which swelled to an estimated 2,000 people, was divided into separate rows for men and women and was mostly peaceful, said Jakarta police spokesman Argo Yuwono.

A decree signed by Jokowi last week that amends a law regulating mass organizations will give the government almost unfettered power to ban groups it deems contrary to the country's constitution. Parliament has one year to reject or approve it. It is likely that Hizbut Tahrir, a group that campaigns for Indonesia to adopt Shariah law, is among the targets of the decree, with the government announcing in May that it planned to ban the organization.

"Jokowi's anti-Islam decree is proof this is a dictatorial regime," a rally coordinator, Kholilulloh Al-Habsyi, told the crowd from a truck. Rights groups have criticized the decree as a draconian and anti-democratic measure and say governments could easily abuse its power. Jokowi's measure followed months of sectarian tensions in Jakarta that shook the government and undermined the country's reputation for practicing a moderate form of Islam.

Hizbut Tahrir, along with groups such as the violent Islamic Defenders Front, was behind a series of massive protests in Jakarta, the capital, against the city's minority Christian governor, an ally of Jokowi who was accused of blaspheming Islam. He subsequently lost a bid for reelection to a Muslim candidate and was imprisoned for two years for blasphemy despite prosecutors downgrading the charge to a lesser offense. Hizbut, a global organization that is already banned or cir-

cumscribed in some countries, is estimated to have tens of thousands of members in Indonesia.

Major graft case

Meanwhile, Indonesia's anti-corruption agency has named the country's speaker of parliament as a suspect in a major graft scandal which is estimated to have siphoned around \$170 million out of government coffers. The Corruption Eradication Commission named house speaker Setya Novanto as a suspect late Monday in the giant graft case that has also implicated other senior politicians, including the justice minister, ex-interior minister and several governors.

The head of the commission, Agus Rahardjo, said Novanto "allegedly abused his authority and position for personal gain or for the interest of a corporation". Investigators allege that Novanto was among many politicians who received kickbacks from funds earmarked for a government project to issue new ID cards to the country's 255 million inhabitants. "The accusations are all untrue," Novanto told a press conference yesterday.

Indonesia's special anti-corruption court has said that more than one-third of the 5.9 trillion rupiah (\$443 million) fund was embezzled by a network of politicians and businessmen in a scheme that allegedly ran from 2009 to 2015. Novanto, who is also the chairman of the ruling coalition party Golkar, is the fourth suspect announced in the case, which could turn into a test of President Joko Widodo's willingness to take a tough stance against corruption since many of those implicated are government officials. Novanto was previously named a suspect in another corruption case which forced him to quit as speaker in 2015 when he was accused of extorting a stake from US mining giant Freeport-McMoRan in exchange for extending the company's right to operate in the archipelago. —Agencies



JAKARTA: Indonesian Muslims gather during a rally. —AFP

MACRON PUTS FRANCE TOP OF 'SOFT POWER' RANKINGS

PARIS: France has leapfrogged the United States and Britain as the world's top so-called soft power, helped by the election of President Emmanuel Macron, a study of countries' non-military global influence showed yesterday.

While France has risen, Donald Trump's ascent to the White House has seen the US slip from the top last year to third place in the Soft Power 30 study, compiled by PR company Portland Communications and the University of Southern California. Soft power measures a country's ability to secure international alliances and influence others through its attraction and appeal.

The study uses polling in 25 countries and digital data to measure a country's influence. It takes into account factors such as the ability of countries to attract foreign students to its universities and tourists, as well as its cultural allure. France's rapid rise from fifth place last year, when it was in the doldrums under unpopular ex-president Francois Hollande, is partly due to the centrist Macron's election in May. But the country's diplomatic reach also played a key role.

"France's greatest strength lies in its vast diplomatic network," the study says. "It is unrivalled in terms of membership to multilateral and international organisations, as well as in its diplomatic cultural missions.

"With Macron having long campaigned for cooperation and integration, it is not unreasonable to expect France's global engagement and influence to grow."

France also remains the world's top tourist destination, the report said. The terror attacks that have cost the lives of more than 230 people since 2015 "have not stopped tourists flocking to France and enjoying its rich cultural offering, cuisine, and lifestyle," the report says. The top five countries by order are France, Britain, US, Germany and Canada. Japan has risen to sixth place from seventh, Switzerland is seventh and Australia slips to eighth.

The survey attributes the US decline-it has slipped from first last year to third-to a deterioration of "global sentiment" as a result of Trump's "America First" policy. The US was still "unrivalled" in higher education, technological innovation and the production of film, music and TV, it pointed out.

Meanwhile, the report's authors warn that Britain's fall-it was top of the rankings last year-"should serve as a warning of what is likely to come for post-Brexit British influence". With negotiations under way for Britain to leave the European Union within two years, the report says: "It is hard to imagine the direction of travel for British soft power... will be upwards in the future." — AFP

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Focus

COULD IT BE KASOWITZ IS ACTUALLY VOICE OF RESTRAINT FOR TRUMP?

By Alison Frankel

Over the weekend, Axios and Bloomberg ran stories about a shakeup in President Donald Trump's legal team, reporting that longtime Trump lawyer Marc Kasowitz of Kasowitz Benson Torres is expected to play a diminished role as the president responds to investigations of his campaign's ties to Russia. Kasowitz spokesman Mark Corallo told me in an email on Monday that the Axios and Bloomberg stories are incorrect and that Kasowitz remains the head of Trump's outside legal team.

Kasowitz's role as outside counsel is distinct from that of newly-hired special counsel Ty Cobb. Cobb will work from within the administration to coordinate its response to Russia inquiries. Kasowitz has savored and even promoted his reputation as Donald Trump's legal pit bull, a lawyer as pugnacious as his most famous client. When Trump needed a lawyer during the campaign to threaten the New York Times with litigation, after the newspaper published accounts of women who claimed Trump had sexually harassed them, Kasowitz was his man.

When the president wanted to counter testimony by fired FBI director James Comey, he had Kasowitz announce plans to file a Justice Department complaint against Comey. It may be hard to think of Kasowitz, who relishes his tough-guy reputation, as a force of moderation. But if you look at the record of the client relationship between Trump and Kasowitz, there's a notable streak of restraint. Trump and Kasowitz, for instance, never followed through with libel suits against the Times - or against any other news organization in the last 30 years. (Kasowitz did represent Trump in his unsuccessful libel suit against Trump biographer Timothy O'Brien and O'Brien's book publisher.)

Nor did Kasowitz file the threatened DOJ complaint against Comey. According to Bloomberg, the Trump team decided the wiser course was to stop attacking the integrity of the Russia investigation being conducted by Special Counsel Robert Mueller. In fact, the New York Times has been reporting that the president is chafing under Kasowitz's advice to keep quiet on Twitter and elsewhere about the Russia case - advice almost every defense lawyer would endorse.

Early Battles

The best example of Kasowitz's relatively measured approach to litigation for Trump may be an enormous case Kasowitz handled early in his relationship with the president. In a prolonged battle against Hong Kong real estate partners whom Trump accused of underpricing West Side real estate, Trump replaced Kasowitz after he lost a key motion. Once Kasowitz was out, Trump pursued tactics so aggressive that they nearly cost him and Kasowitz's replacement a sanction finding.

The litigation stemmed from a 1994 deal in which Trump sold a 70 percent majority interest in residential-zoned real estate in midtown Manhattan, along the Hudson River waterfront, to a consortium of Hong Kong billionaires. They maintained the property for 11 years, then reached a deal to sell it in 2005 to a joint venture of the Carlyle Group and Extell Development Company. The sale price was \$1.76 billion, at the time the highest publicly-disclosed amount ever paid for residential property in New York.

Trump insisted it wasn't enough. Represented by Kasowitz, he sued in both federal and state court, offering evidence that New York developers, including Trump friend Richard LeFrak, might have paid \$3 billion for the property. The case ended up being litigated in state court before New York State Supreme Court Justice Richard Lowe. Trump asserted both direct and derivative claims, alleging among other things that certain of the Hong Kong majority partners had received kickbacks in exchange for agreeing to undervalue the property.

Judge Lowe put enough early credence in Trump's side of the story to issue an order attaching \$1 billion in proceeds from any sale of the property. But the judge eventually came to believe the Hong Kong partners had sold at a fair price. In 2006, he dismissed all of Trump's claims except for a request to examine his majority partners' books and records. Up to that point, with Kasowitz representing Trump, the litigation had been fierce but not outside the bounds of convention.

After Trump lost the 2006 dismissal motion, however, he replaced Kasowitz with his appellate counsel, Jay Goldberg. With Kasowitz out of the case, the litigation skipped well beyond those bounds. — Reuters

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OFFICIALS FUME AS PHILIP MORRIS EYES YOUTH

SK Arora spent more than three years trudging through the Indian summer heat and monsoon rains to inspect tobacco kiosks across this sprawling megacity, tearing down cigarette advertisements and handing out fines to store owners for putting them up. But as fast as he removed the colorful ads, more appeared. The chief tobacco control officer at the Delhi state government, Arora asked the major cigarette companies to put a stop to the cat-and-mouse routine. In official letters and face-to-face meetings, he told them India's tobacco control laws barred such public advertising and promotion of cigarettes.

That included the Indian arm of Philip Morris International Inc, the world's largest publicly traded tobacco company. Early last year, Arora said, he met with a Philip Morris director for corporate affairs in India, a man named R Venkatesh, and told him the signs were an unequivocal violation of Indian law. Like other tobacco companies, Philip Morris kept up its ad blitz.

Venkatesh says Philip Morris is doing nothing wrong. In response to questions from Reuters, he said the company's advertising is "compliant with Indian law" and that Philip Morris has "fully cooperated with the enforcement authorities" on the matter. But Indian government officials say Philip Morris is using methods that flout the nation's tobacco-control regulations. These include tobacco shop displays as well as the free distribution of Marlboro - the world's best-selling cigarette brand - at nightclubs and bars frequented by young people.

In internal documents, Philip Morris International is explicit about targeting the country's youth. A key goal is "winning the hearts and minds of LA-24," those between legal age, 18, and 24, according to one slide in a 2015 commercial review presentation. As with the point-of-sale ads at kiosks, public health officials say that giving away cigarettes is a violation of India's Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act and its accompanying rules.

Philip Morris' marketing strategy for India, which relies heavily on kiosk advertising and social events, is laid out in hundreds of pages of internal documents reviewed by Reuters that cover the period from 2009 to 2016. In them, Philip Morris presents these promotions as key marketing activities. In recent years, they have helped to more than quadruple Marlboro's market share in India, where the company is battling to expand its reach in the face of an entrenched local giant. Reuters is publishing a selection of those documents in a searchable repository, The Philip Morris Files.

'Within Walking Distance'

The company's goal is to make sure that "every adult Indian smoker should be able to buy Marlboro within walking distance," according to another 2015 strategy document. In targeting young adults, Philip Morris is deploying a promotional strategy that it and other tobacco companies used in the United States decades ago. A study published in the American Journal of Public Health in 2002 found that during the 1990s, "tobacco industry sponsorship of bars and nightclubs increased dramatically, accompanied by cigarette brand paraphernalia, advertisements, and entertainment events in bars and clubs."

With cigarette sales declining in many countries, Philip Morris has identified India, population 1.3 billion, as a market with opportunity for significant growth. "India remains a high potential market with huge upside with cigarette market still in infancy," says a 2014 internal document. According to government data, India has about 100 million smokers. Of those, about two-thirds smoke traditional hand-rolled cigarettes. Tobacco use kills more than 900,000 people a year in India, and the

World Health Organization estimates that tobacco-related diseases cost the country about \$16 billion annually.

Philip Morris is not alone in using marketing methods that Indian officials say are illegal. The country's largest cigarette maker, ITC Ltd, uses similar tactics, such as advertising at kiosks. British American Tobacco Plc and Indian state-run companies have large, passive stakes in ITC, which controls about 80 percent of the market. Tobacco-control officer Arora, a short, mustachioed man with a gruff demeanor, sent a letter to Philip Morris and other tobacco companies in mid-April, giving them until the end of the month to remove all advertisements. "Legal action will be initiated against the company" if it did not comply, he wrote in the letters, copies of which were reviewed by Reuters.

Cigarette Raid

A day after Arora's deadline passed, he and his team conducted a raid in an affluent area of cafes and coffee shops in New Delhi that showed his letters did not have the desired effect. On that hot afternoon in May, the team cut down about a dozen advertisements for Marlboro and various ITC brands. As word of the raid spread, worried vendors covered their ads with newspapers or took them down.

One kiosk owner, Rakesh Kumar Jain, removed his Marlboro ads before Arora's team arrived. Jain said the signs had been put up by Philip Morris representatives. In return, he said, he received free cigarettes each month worth about 2,000 rupees (about \$30). Jain knew that putting up the posters was illegal, but they helped

tobacco products are clearly and categorically permitted," ITC said in response to questions from Reuters.

Arora, however, said all advertising is prohibited - "There are no two ways about it," he insisted - but he can't start legal proceedings until getting further guidance from the federal government. He has yet to receive an answer. Federal health officials say in interviews that the ads are out of bounds. Amal Pusp, a director for tobacco control at the health ministry, told Reuters that "there is no confusion": All advertisements - inside and outside shops - are illegal.

'Innocent Minds'

The 2003 law allows tobacco companies to advertise at shops, but subsequent rules issued by the government prohibit it. In 2004, India became one of the first countries to ratify the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) treaty. The pact has 181 members and contains a raft of anti-smoking provisions, including tobacco taxes, warning labels on cigarette packs and advertising bans. The country enacted its national tobacco control law the year before ratifying the FCTC, and since then the government has added rules to strengthen the law in line with FCTC treaty provisions.

The health ministry published rules in 2005 that banned any display of brand names, pack images or promotional messages. The rule specified that tobacco retailers could only display a 60-by-45 centimeter board, roughly 24 by 18 inches. The sign can have a description of the type of tobacco products sold - such as cigarettes

several people in this group, including Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda, and Amit Shah, president of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. Modi and the other politicians didn't respond to requests for comment. Philip Morris International also didn't comment on the plan.

Marlboro Parties

The tobacco giant's efforts to fend off anti-smoking steps have had limited impact so far. Last year, for instance, India ordered manufacturers to cover 85 percent of the surface of cigarette packs with health warnings, up from 20 percent. The rule, which is still being challenged in a state court by the tobacco industry, including Philip Morris' India partner, was implemented by order of the Supreme Court. Marlboro has just a 1.4 percent share of the almost \$10 billion cigarette market in India. The industry is dominated by ITC, which has a strong grip on distributors and retailers.

One major method Philip Morris is deploying to gain ground, the marketing documents show, is the free distribution of cigarettes at bars and nightclubs - known as Legal Age Meeting Points, or LAMPs, in company jargon. The hiring of young women and men to work at these gatherings is outsourced to event management companies, according to people with knowledge of the gatherings. Some of the recruiting takes place online. "Hey girls...We are searching A++ Hot & Gorgeous girls for the Marlboro pub activity...Pay: 2000/day...Work: Promotion in clubs in Delhi," read one post on a Facebook public group in June last year. There was no company name attached to the ad.

At several parties attended by Reuters in Delhi and Mumbai, young women dressed in the colors of the latest Marlboro variant handed out packs of cigarettes. During one party at a nightclub in a Delhi hotel, a young woman walked around with a tablet showing an ad that highlighted Marlboro features. A television screen played a video promoting the brand: "For trendsetters, for forward thinkers, a smooth and balanced smoking experience."

In many ways, it was right out of the Philip Morris 1990s playbook. The American Journal of Public Health study, drawing on previously secret industry documents, found that Philip Morris ran bar promotions in 1990 using racing jackets, and added "neon message boards and cocktail trays" in 1991. The study described methods for collecting names for a company database "to generate smoker profiles, direct mailing campaigns, and conduct telephone research studies after the bar events". At the parties in India, people who took the Marlboro packs were asked their names, ages and preferred brands. Philip Morris calls this distribution of free cigarettes "sampling", which it says in an internal document is allowed under the law.

Brief Respite

The company has spent millions of dollars on these activities. In 2014, for example, Philip Morris estimated it spent \$1.6 million on LAMP events and sampling at kiosks in India, according to the 2015 commercial review presentation. The company planned to use LAMPs in 2015 to generate 30,000 "trials," or samplings of cigarettes. And it planned to generate another 500,000 trials that year through sampling at cigarette shops and kiosks, according to the 2015 strategy document. The company instructs employees to watch their words. An undated training manual for market researchers says: "Do not say this is a 'PROMOTION' or 'ADVERTISING'."

Indian health ministry officials say that anyone who hands out free cigarettes, whatever the circumstances, is breaking the law. — Reuters



improve sales, he said. About a dozen kiosk owners interviewed by Reuters said that tobacco companies paid them a monthly fee for advertisements and product displays, with the amount determined by factors such as location, volume of business and type of promotional material. In payment receipts seen by Reuters, Philip Morris' India unit promised to pay 500 Indian rupees (\$7.50) a month to a cigarette seller with a small roadside kiosk in New Delhi for putting up Marlboro ads. The receipts were signed by a company representative.

During the raid, fines were issued to some vendors, many of them repeat offenders, and they were threatened with court action if the ads went up again. Like Philip Morris, ITC says that it is in full compliance with India's 2003 tobacco control law. If it wasn't, the company said in a statement to Reuters, then "the relevant government authorities would have initiated action".

Since Arora's threat of legal action in April, there are fewer Philip Morris advertisements outside cigarette shops in the capital. But both Philip Morris and ITC say that advertising inside a shop is allowed. "Advertisements of tobacco products at the entrance and inside the shops selling

or chewing tobacco - but cannot include any brand advertising and must carry a large health warning.

The health ministry's rules were challenged in court by a group of cigarette distributors and put on hold by a state-level High Court for seven years. They finally came into force in 2013 on orders of India's Supreme Court. The High Court had overlooked the fact that advertisement of tobacco products "will attract younger generation and innocent minds, who are not aware of grave and adverse consequences of consuming such products," the Supreme Court said in its ruling.

Philip Morris has lobbied against the passing of stricter tobacco control rules by the Indian government. In documents detailing the company's plans for the biennial FCTC treaty convention in India last November, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emerges as a prime target. A key goal: to pre-empt Modi from taking "extreme anti-tobacco measures" before delegates were to gather from around the world for the treaty meeting, according to a 2014 corporate affairs PowerPoint presentation.

The company planned to gain Modi's ear through those close to him. It identified



A man looks at the setting sun on Monday near Hanover in northern Germany. — AFP

SAUDI WOMAN IN ONLINE MINISKIRT VIDEO...

Continued from Page 1

and had confessed to visiting the site with her male guardian. Saudi Arabia's guardianship system mandates accompaniment by or written permission from a male relative - usually a father, husband or brother - for women to study, work or travel. The woman denied that she had uploaded the clips and that the Snapchat account was hers, the spokesman said.

The case has now been referred to the public prosecutor's office, which will decide whether to prosecute the woman. The local government of Riyadh had issued a memo saying authorities were searching for the woman who had been "walking around... in indecent clothing". The clips have sparked heated debate, with social media users in the region and beyond weighing in on questions of gender and rights in the kingdom, where women are

required to wear long black abaya robes and cover their hair in public.

Many have come to the defense of the young woman, pointing out the privileges afforded to Western women by Saudi authorities. US First Lady Melania Trump and Ivanka Trump, daughter of the president, did not cover their hair when they visited Saudi Arabia in May. "If it were Trump's daughter, we would have braced ourselves for the flood of compliments and love poems," read one tweet. "Problem solved," tweeted Shahd bint Fahd alongside a picture of the model with Ivanka Trump's face superimposed over the original. Others expressed outrage and derided those speaking out in support of the model. "These are the demands of the liberal ignorant community: a naked woman, a co-ed movie theatre, and music and dance. That's progress to them! Not health care and not education," read one tweet. — AFP

MP HAYEF DEMANDS OFFICIAL STATEMENT OVER...

Continued from Page 1

Members of the cell, consisting of 25 Kuwaitis and one Iranian, have been convicted of hiding large quantities of arms and ammunition including explosives, having links with Iran and Lebanese Hezbollah and plotting attacks in Kuwait. The main suspect was sentenced to life, while 20 others were sentenced to

between two and 15 years in jail. Two were acquitted and three others, including the Iranian, remain at large. Hayef said that he remained silent for a long time until the final verdicts were issued, and now after the ruling was passed, the ministry must inform people about the measures it has taken or plans to take against the members, especially those who have allegedly fled the country.

US SANCTIONS IRAN DESPITE NUCLEAR DEAL...

Continued from Page 1

parliament also agreed yesterday to allot a similar amount to the Revolutionary Guards' foreign operations wing, the Quds Force, accused by Washington of fomenting unrest across the region.

The Pentagon has also repeatedly voiced concern over a string of high-profile incidents in waters off Iran involving Iranian vessels. It has accused the Revolutionary Guards of conducting risky maneuvers around US warships in the Gulf, some of which resulted in the Americans firing warning shots. "These sanctions target procurement of advanced military hardware, such as fast attack boats and unmanned aerial vehicles, and send a strong signal that the United States cannot and will not tolerate Iran's provocative and destabilizing behavior," said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. Washington is also concerned about the fate of Xiyue Wang, a 37-year-old Chinese-American researcher at Princeton University who was recently sentenced to 10 years in Iranian prison.

While the US complained about Iran's defiance of the spirit of the nuclear accord, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said he would make his own complaints about US non-compliance when representatives of the five nuclear powers - China, Russia, France, Britain, the United States - plus Germany meet in Vienna on Friday to take stock of the deal. Zarif accused the Trump administration of failing to lift sanctions in line with the deal. Zarif said the International Atomic Energy Agency, "which is hardly a sympathizer for Iran," has verified its compliance with the agreement.

The key issue with the US, he said, is over sanctions against Iran that the agreement requires to be lifted and the sanctions that remain on Iran over human rights, ter-

rorism and other issues. Zarif said that for the United States "it's more important to maintain the sanctions that remain" on Iran "rather than remove the sanctions that have been lifted". As a result, he said, the Office of Foreign Asset Control "has been reluctant to provide straightforward answers to those who want to do business with Iran because it was worried that a straight-forward answer would undermine the sanctions" that haven't been lifted.

Zarif said this "creates the impression in Iran that the United States' hostility toward Iran will never end." But he left open the possibility of changing that perception, saying: "I think that can be remedied." Responding to a question about whether Iran has received any signals from the Trump administration, positive or negative, Zarif said: "We receive contradictory signals. So we don't know which one to interpret in what way. But it's very clear that Iran is serious about the nuclear deal and we believe that the nuclear deal can lay the foundation, not the ceiling."

Zarif said he had no communication with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, in stark contrast to his predecessor John Kerry, with whom Zarif negotiated the groundbreaking nuclear deal. "It doesn't mean there can't be. The possibilities for engagement... have always been open," said Zarif in New York, where he was attending a UN forum on development. He said he was willing to discuss Wang's case "on humanitarian grounds" but stressed that Iran's courts were independent of the government.

Trump and his top security officials have always taken a tough line on Iran: His defense secretary, Jim Mattis, fought Iranian-backed militias during the US occupation of Iraq while serving as a Marine general, and memories are still fresh of Hezbollah's attack on the Marine Corps barracks in Lebanon in 1983. — Agencies

UBER-STYLE APP 'CAREEM' GOES OFF BEATEN TRACK IN WEST BANK

RAMALLAH: Careem, a Middle Eastern rival to Uber, has become the first ride-hailing firm to operate in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Dubai-based Careem, whose name is a play on the Arabic word for generous or noble, launched in Ramallah in June, aiming to bring digital simplicity to the Palestinian territory. There is certainly a market for easier ride-hailing among the nearly 3 million Palestinians living in the West Bank, but the fact the mobile network is still 2G, that electronic payments are not the norm and that Israeli checkpoints are common, make using the service somewhat cumbersome.

Yet Careem is optimistic about the potential. "We are planning to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars within the coming year in the (Palestinian) sector," Kareem Zinaty, operations manager for the Levant region said. "After the investment, it is also an opportunity to create jobs."

Careem, which launched in 2012 and now operates in 12 countries and more than 80 cities across the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, has said it aims to provide work for one million people across the region by 2018.

Careem's Captains

While a version of Uber and Israeli app Gett already operate in Israel, they do not venture into Palestinian territory. Drivers are excited to work with Careem, which they hope will help boost their incomes, especially with unemployment in the West Bank running at nearly 20 percent. "It's a very wonderful opportunity," said one of the more than 100 new drivers, known as "captains" by Careem. "Most of the people who use it are young and happy with the price."

Palestinians have limited self-rule in parts of the West Bank, which they want for a future state alongside East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Israel

captured those areas in the 1967 Middle East war. It withdrew from Gaza in 2005, but still occupies the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Under interim peace accords, Israel still controls 60 percent of the West Bank, where most of its settlements are located. Careem's drivers have Palestinian license plates, meaning they usually cannot enter Israeli-controlled areas.

In 2015, Israel and the Palestinian Authority agreed to expand 3G mobile access to the West Bank by 2016, but have yet to implement the agreement. In the meantime, the Ramallah municipality has set up public Wi-Fi in parts of the city center, allowing Apps like Careem to be used more easily. Despite 2G's slower service, Zinaty said their model was an opportunity for telecommunication companies to look into expanding services and technologies to better serve Palestinian startups and businesses. — Reuters

US HEALTHCARE REFORM COLLAPSES

Continued from Page 1

that essentially waved a white flag. It was the second stinging setback on the issue in three weeks for McConnell, whose reputation as a legislative mastermind has been marred as he's failed to unite his chamber's Republicans behind a health overhaul package that's highlighted jagged divides between conservatives and moderates. In late June, he abandoned an initial package after he lacked enough GOP support to pass.

The episode has also been jarring for Trump, whose intermittent lobbying and nebulous, often contradictory descriptions of what he's wanted have shown he has limited clout with senators. That despite a determination by Trump, McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan to demonstrate that a GOP running the White House and Congress can govern effectively. Now, McConnell said, the Senate would vote on a measure the GOP-run Congress approved in 2015, only to be vetoed by Obama - a bill repealing much of Obama's statute, with a two-year delay designed to give lawmakers time to enact a replacement. Trump embraced that idea last month after an initial version of McConnell's bill collapsed due under Republican divisions, and did so again late Monday.

"Republicans should just REPEAL failing ObamaCare now & work on a new Healthcare Plan that will start from a clean slate. Dems will join in!" Trump tweeted. But the prospects for approving a clean repeal bill followed by work on replacement legislation, even with Trump ready to sign it, seemed shaky. Trump and party leaders had started this year embracing that strategy, only to abandon it when it seemed incapable of passing Congress, with many Republicans worried it would cause insurance market and political chaos because of uncertainty that they would approve substitute legislation.

McConnell's failed bill would have left 22 million uninsured by 2026, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, a number that many Republicans found unpalatable. But the vetoed 2015 measure would be even worse, the budget office said last January, producing 32 million additional uninsured people by 2026 - figures that seemed likely to drive a stake into that bill's prospects for passing Congress.

That would seem to leave McConnell with an option he described last month - negotiating with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer. That would likely be on a narrower package aimed more at keeping insurers in difficult marketplaces they're either abandoning or imposing rapidly growing premiums. "The core of this bill is unworkable," Schumer said in a statement. He said Republicans "should start from scratch and work with Democrats on a bill that lowers premiums, provides long-term stability to the markets and improves our health care system."

Similar to legislation the House approved in May after its own setbacks, McConnell's bill would repeal Obama's tax penalties on people who don't buy coverage and cut the Medicaid program for the poor, elderly and nursing home residents. It rolled back many of the statute's requirements for the policies insurers can sell and eliminated many tax increases that raised money for Obama's expansion to 20 million more people, though it retained the law's tax boosts on high earners.

Besides Lee and Moran, two other GOP senators had previously declared their opposition to McConnell's bill: moderate Maine Sen Susan Collins and conservative Rand Paul of Kentucky. And other moderates were wavering and could have been difficult for McConnell and Trump to win over because of the bill's Medicaid cuts: Alaska's Lisa Murkowski, Cory Gardner of Colorado, Rob Portman of Ohio, Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia and Dean Heller of Nevada, probably the most endangered Senate Republican in next year's elections.

The range of objections lodged by the dissident senators underscored the warring viewpoints within his own party that McConnell had to try patching over. Lee complained that the GOP bill didn't go far enough in rolling back Obama's robust coverage requirements, while moderates like Collins berated its Medicaid cuts and the millions it would leave without insurance. McConnell's revised version aimed to satisfy both camps, by incorporating language by Sen Ted Cruz of Texas allowing insurers to sell skimpy plans alongside more robust ones, and by adding tens of billions of dollars to treat opioid addiction and to defray consumer costs. His efforts did not achieve the intended result. — AP

ERDOGAN TO VISIT KUWAIT, GULF

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Egypt will end visa-free entry for Qatari nationals with some exceptions, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said on Monday, the latest measure taken against Doha. "It does not make sense to keep making exceptions for Qatar and giving it privileges in light of its current positions," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmed Abu Zeid. Qatari nationals will now have to apply for a visa in order to enter Egypt. Qatari nationals with Egyptian mothers, those married to Egyptians, and

Qataris studying in Egypt will be exempt from having to apply for a visa, he added.

Sources at Cairo International Airport told Reuters the decision would be implemented from tomorrow, which the Qatari Foreign Ministry later confirmed on Twitter. Foreign workers make up around 1.6 million of Qatar's 2.5 million population, and hundreds of thousands of them are Egyptians, making them one of the biggest foreign contingents in the Gulf country. So far no action has been taken against them. — Agencies

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BARCA '200%' CERTAIN NEYMAR WILL STAY

BARCELONA: Barcelona vice-president Jordi Mestre insisted yesterday that Brazilian star Neymar will be staying in Spain despite rumours linking him with a move to Paris Saint-Germain. Asked during a press conference if he could confirm Neymar would remain at Barca ahead of the 2017-18 season, Mestre replied: "200 percent". Reports in Spain have suggested PSG are looking to lure the 25-year-old to the Parc des Princes after snapping up Neymar's international teammate Dani Alves on a free transfer. "PSG want to finalise the signing of Neymar this summer", wrote Catalan daily Sport, while the Madrid-based AS newspaper led with the headline "Neymar flirts with PSG". PSG are reportedly attempting to take advantage of Neymar's desire to step out of Lionel Messi's shadow, with the French club prepared to build a team around the Brazil forward. "In the background of Neymar's annoyance there's always a concern, which has to do with his role in the team and his wish to become a leader," wrote Sport. — AFP

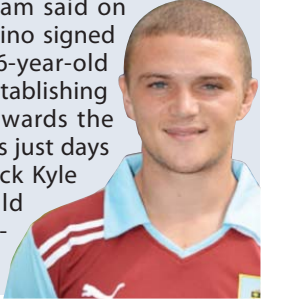


BORO SMASH CLUB TRANSFER RECORD FOR ASSOMBALONGA

LONDON: Middlesbrough have broken their transfer record to sign striker Britt Assombalonga from second-tier Championship rivals Nottingham Forest for a fee in the region of £14 million (15.8 million euros, \$18.2 million). Boro, who were relegated from the Premier League last season, are believed to have met a buyout clause in the 24-year-old's contract. Assombalonga scored 14 goals in 33 games for a struggling Forest side last term and had also attracted the interest of Burnley, but Boro have got their man after outbidding the Premier League club. The fee surpasses the £12.7 million paid by the north-east club to Dutch side Heerenveen for Brazilian striker Afonso Alves in January 2008. "I can't wait to get started and train with the boys," Assombalonga told Middlesbrough's club website. "There's a good feeling around the place. From the minute I walked in it felt right." —AFP

TRIPPIER PENS NEW SPURS DEAL

LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur defender Kieran Trippier has signed a new five-year deal, the Premier League club announced yesterday. The England full-back, who made his international debut in the friendly defeat to France in June, will remain with Spurs until the summer of 2022. "We are delighted to announce that Kieran Trippier has signed a new contract with the club," Tottenham said on their website. Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino signed Trippier from Burnley in June 2015, and the 26-year-old has made 41 appearances over two seasons, establishing himself as the club's first-choice right-back towards the end of last season. Trippier's new contract comes just days after Tottenham sold another England right-back Kyle Walker to Manchester City for a fee that could reportedly rise to £54 million (\$70 million, 61 million euros). — AFP



CYCLING

ROAD TO TOUR SALVATION STARTS

LE PUY-EN-VELAY: Le Puy en Velay is the starting point of the 'Via Podiensis' pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain but it will see off the Tour de France peloton on the road to yellow jersey glory. On paper, the 165km 16th stage to Romans sur Isere should be one for sprint king Marcel Kittel to claim a remarkable sixth victory this year. But for the overall contenders, including race leader Chris Froome, there are potential perils.

With less than 30 seconds separating the top four and another three riders within a further 90 seconds, this is the tightest Tour race in years. From Wednesday, two daunting Alpine mountain stages loom but for Ireland's Dan Martin, the biggest dangers lurk elsewhere on this year's enthralling Grand Boucle.

"Anything can happen in the Tour. If you have a bad day, especially with the potential for crosswinds (on Tuesday) and on Friday, the Tour could be decided on the flat, similar to Rodez (stage 14) rather than in the mountains where everybody expected it to be decided," said the 30-year-old Quick-Step rider, lying fifth at 1min 12sec.

"You have to be concentrated until the finish and so far I'm really proud of the way I've ridden in terms of the focus and concentration I've maintained since the start."

With the top riders largely neutralising each other on the toughest climbs, it has been elsewhere that they have had to look to try to make small gains. And Italian Fabio Aru, who held the yellow jersey for two days last week before relinquishing it back to Froome when he was caught out by the lightning fast run-in to Rodez on Saturday, believes the contenders are going to have to get creative.

"In my opinion, you have to be inventive on the bike. You can come up with all the possible tactics but it's in the race that you find out if you've got the legs or not," said the Astana leader, second overall at 18sec. Following Monday's second rest day it promises to be a fast start out of the beautiful, historic and UNESCO World Heritage Site of Le Puy en Velay, known for its Notre Dame de l'Annonciation Cathedral, Corneille rock and Notre Dame de France statue of the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus. It's relatively short at 165km and pretty lumpy to start with, which should encourage strong breakaway riders.

But the sprinter's teams, especially Kittel's Quick-Step, will want to control the break to set up their man for the sprint finish. He's been almost unbeatable in that department this year and his rivals such as Andre Greipel and Alexander Kristoff will need some divine inspiration if they are to steal a march on the German powerhouse. —AFP



BUDAPEST: Members of gold medal winner Team Russia pose with their medals during the awarding ceremony of women's team technical final routine competition of FINA Swimming World Championships 2017 in the City Park, in Budapest, Hungary, yesterday. — AP

SWIMMING

RUSSIAN TEAM CLAIMS GOLD IN SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING AGAIN

BUDAPEST: Russia won its sixth straight women's team technical synchronized swimming title for its fourth gold medal of the world championships yesterday. The team of Maria Shurochkina, Veronika Kalinina, Daria Bayandina, Anastasia Bayandina, Maryna Goliadkina, Darina Valitova, Polina Komar, Vlada Chigireva performed last and maintained the team's unbeaten record in the event with 96.0109 points.

Chinese swimmers Wang Qianyi, Wang Liuyi, Guo Li, Xiao Yanning, Tang Mengni, Feng Yu, Liang Xiping and Yin Chengxin claimed silver with 94.2165, followed by Japan on 93.1690 for its first medal of the championships.

Chigireva and Shurochkina equaled Daria Korobova's three gold medals in this event. Only Russian compatriots Aleksandra Patskevich, Alla Shishkina and Angelika Timanina have more with four.

Meanwhile, Chinese duo Chen Aisen and Yang Hao cruised to gold in the men's synchronised 10m platform at the world aquatics championships in Budapest on Monday.

The duo scored perfect 10s in the six-dive final, earning 498.48 points, well ahead of Russian pair Aleksandr Bondar and Viktor Minibaev on 458.85 points.

The title, China's fifth diving gold so far in

Budapest from seven events, was the 21-year-old Chen's second world 10m synchro gold. "We are glad to win with this new formation. There were strong pairs, so we should be delighted with this result," said Chen, who switched partner to Yang, 19, after winning gold in Rio last year with Lin Yue.

The 2013 world champions from Germany, Patrick Hausding and Sascha Klein, who finished second behind the Chinese duo at all four FINA World Series meets this season, came third (440.82). Britons Thomas Daley and Daniel Goodfellow, Olympic bronze medallists in Rio, finished fourth (418.02). —Agencies

GOLF

ROSE LOOKS TO RECREATE MAGIC OF '98 AT BIRKDALE

SOUTHPORT: After Justin Rose finished fourth in the British Open at Royal Birkdale as a 17-year-old amateur in 1998, it seemed inevitable that he would soon go on to win the Claret Jug. But he returns to the Southport links for this week's championship having never subsequently managed to match that performance as a professional.

It is little wonder that Rose, now 36, spoke of "unfinished business" yesterday as he prepared for Thursday's first round, when he will go out in a group with former Open champion Louis Oosthuizen of South Africa and Justin Thomas.

"It surprises me after all these years that it is still the best finish," he said of his performance in miserable weather in 1998, when Mark O'Meara eventually won the title in a play-off against Brian Watts. Rose equalled the record low score for an amateur at The Open with a second-round 66, and there was a huge roar when he holed a pitch from the rough at the 18th on the Sunday for a birdie to secure a tie for fourth place.

"I don't want to say that if I don't win this it's going to be a huge sort of hole in my career, but it was the one tournament that

even before I finished fourth here as an amateur, I got to final qualifying at the age of 14 and created a bit of a story then.

"It's definitely been a championship that I've had great moments in. And to win it would kind of close the book in a way on my Open Championship story." Rose—who warmed up at Birkdale by attending Roger Federer's victory over Marin Cilic in the Wimbledon final on Sunday—has had mixed results since winning Olympic gold in Rio last year.

He was runner-up to Sergio Garcia at the Masters in April but missed the cut at the recent US Open. Having only ever won one major, at the US Open in 2013, Rose admits he still uses his 1998 display as a model.

"The freedom I had that particular week, the confidence I had in my short game, the innocence in which I played the game, I think, is kind of still a model. "But, yeah, when I do look back I do marvel at how I was able to compete so closely down the stretch, and finished within two shots of winning an Open Championship at the age of 17. "I guess for me it was a glimpse into what my potential is. And hard work will create another chance here and there." —AFP



ROYAL BIRKDALE: Britain's Justin Rose plays a shot on the 10th hole during a practice round ahead of the British Open Golf Championship, at Royal Birkdale, Southport, England yesterday. — AP

TOYOTA, GLOBAL INSTITUTE FOR MOTOR SPORT SAFETY LAUNCH JOINT RESEARCH PROJECT USING THUMS VIRTUAL HUMAN MODEL

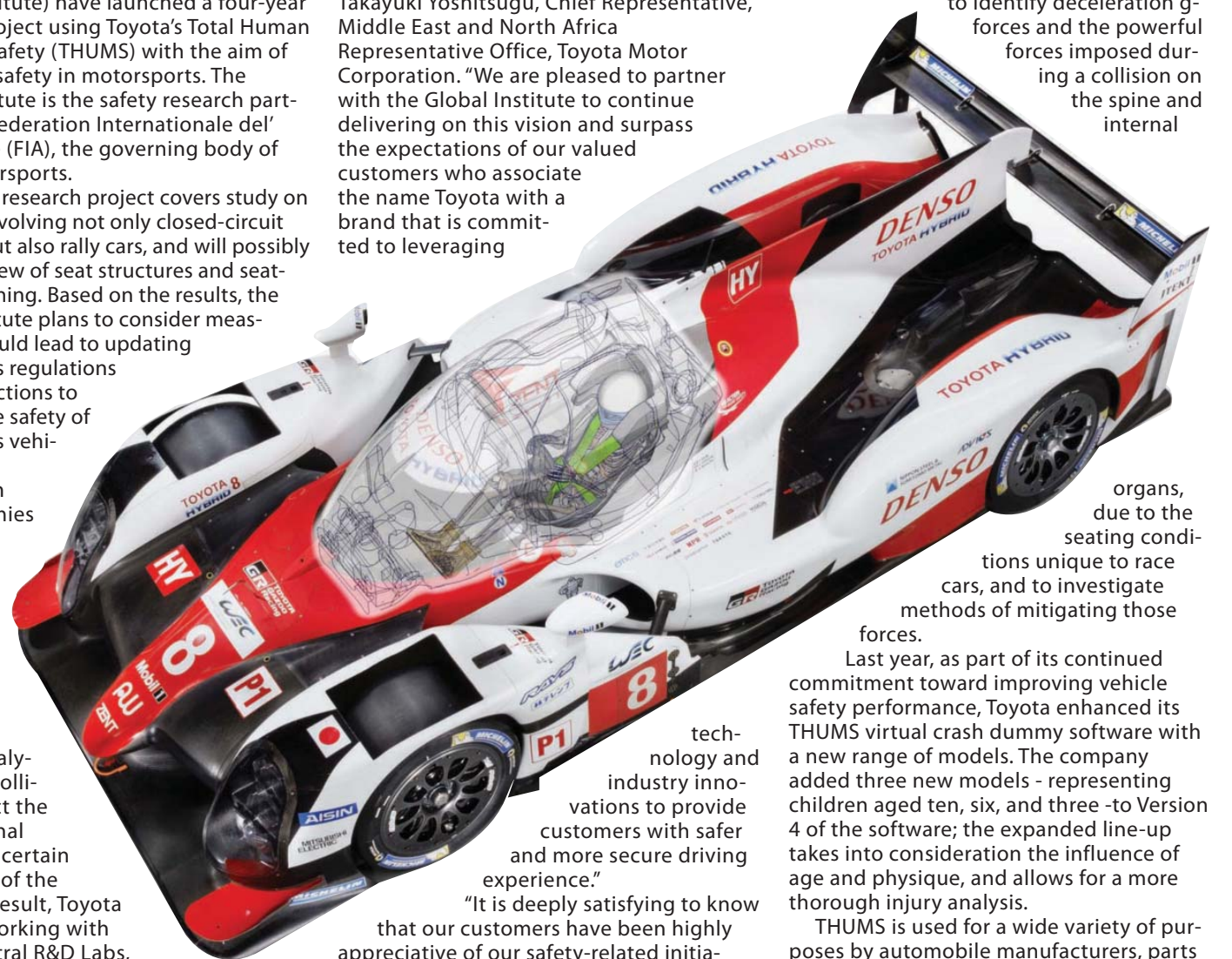
TOKYO: Toyota Motor Corporation and the Global Institute for Motor Sport Safety (Global Institute) have launched a four-year research project using Toyota's Total Human Model for Safety (THUMS) with the aim of enhancing safety in motorsports. The Global Institute is the safety research partner of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the governing body of world motorsports.

The joint research project covers study on collisions involving not only closed-circuit race cars, but also rally cars, and will possibly include review of seat structures and seat-belt positioning. Based on the results, the Global Institute plans to consider measures that could lead to updating motorsports regulations and other actions to enhance the safety of motorsports vehicles.

Although crash dummies are commonly used in vehicle collision tests, they do not allow for easy and detailed analysis of how collisions impact the brain, internal organs and certain other parts of the body. As a result, Toyota has been working with Toyota Central R&D Labs, Inc. since 2000 to develop THUMS, which allows for computer simulation and analysis of actual conditions during a crash and of the mechanisms of injury occurrence, including that of injuries to internal organs and other parts of the body. "Since its founding, Toyota has dedicat-

ed itself to producing vehicles that are safe and provide complete peace of mind," said Takayuki Yoshitsugu, Chief Representative, Middle East and North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation. "We are pleased to partner with the Global Institute to continue delivering on this vision and surpass the expectations of our valued customers who associate the name Toyota with a brand that is committed to leveraging

National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing), Toyota has also been using THUMS to identify deceleration forces and the powerful forces imposed during a collision on the spine and internal



organs, due to the seating conditions unique to race cars, and to investigate methods of mitigating those forces. Last year, as part of its continued commitment toward improving vehicle safety performance, Toyota enhanced its THUMS virtual crash dummy software with a new range of models. The company added three new models - representing children aged ten, six, and three - to Version 4 of the software; the expanded line-up takes into consideration the influence of age and physique, and allows for a more thorough injury analysis.

THUMS is used for a wide variety of purposes by automobile manufacturers, parts manufacturers, and universities, both in Japan and overseas. It contributes to research on safety technologies not just at Toyota, but also by organizations all over the world. The ultimate desire of a mobile society is to advance towards the goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and injuries.

technology and industry innovations to provide customers with safer and more secure driving experience." "It is deeply satisfying to know that our customers have been highly appreciative of our safety-related initiatives, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to them for their continued support over the years," Yoshitsugu added. Since 2007, Toyota has been using THUMS not only for general automobiles, but also to analyze injuries due to crashes in motorsports. In response to a request from the FIA and NASCAR (the US-based

HOUSTON ROCKETS OWNER ALEXANDER IS SELLING TEAM

HOUSTON: The Houston Rockets are going up for sale. Rockets CEO Tad Brown made the announcement Monday, hours after owner Leslie Alexander made the decision. "It's been my great joy and honor to own the Houston Rockets for the past 24 years," Alexander said in a statement. "I've had the incredible opportunity to witness true greatness through the players and coaches who have won championships for the city, been named to All-Star and All-NBA teams, enshrined in the Basketball Hall of Fame, and done so much for our franchise and our fans."

Alexander took over as owner on July 30, 1993, and the Rockets went on to win back-to-back titles in 1994-95

behind the likes of Hakeem Olajuwon and Clyde Drexler. In 24 seasons under Alexander, the Rockets have won 56.9 percent of their games, fifth-highest in the league.

Brown said the 74-year-old Alexander had been approached over the years by potential buyers, but never considered it until very recently. "I think it's been something he's been thinking about a little bit," Brown said. "It can wear on you after so many decades and he's tired. There are passions in his life now that are becoming more and more clear. His family, certainly, and his philanthropic efforts, what he'll be able to do with his additional time and his resources on a global scale is some-

thing that he's very much looking forward to."

Brown emphasized that Alexander is healthy and his health was not an issue in this decision. NBA Commissioner Adam Silver raved about Alexander. "Leslie Alexander is a true competitor who always searched for the right move to make his teams better," Silver said in a statement. "Well-respected around the league, he has been an active and influential owner whose vision helped to grow the game globally, especially in China."

Brown will be working with the league office while the Rockets look for a new owner and there were no plans to hire an outside firm to help. There is

no set timetable for the sale, but Brown said they want to find the right buyer and won't rush things. "We're going to make sure that it is the right buyer," Brown said. "Leslie has the latitude of time based on our resources and his resources and everything associated with the team right now."

Brown would not say how much they expect to get in the sale. Forbes named Houston the eighth-most valuable franchise, worth an estimated \$1.65 billion, in its annual valuation of NBA teams in February.

"There's a range that we feel people are going to understand and we'll continue to go from there," he said. "Whatever's bandied about in Forbes or

other locations, it may or may not make a difference in the overall valuation."

Brown said he had spoken to James Harden, Chris Paul and Trevor Ariza before the announcement and that he planned to call the rest of the players. Included in the sale will be Clutch City Sports and Entertainment, which puts on non-basketball shows and concerts at the Toyota Center.

"It's a nice opportunity to have that rolled into one asset," Brown said. During his time as owner of the Rockets Alexander has been active in the community and through his Clutch City Foundation he has given more than \$35 million to charities throughout the city. — AP



MINNEAPOLIS: New York Yankees' Clint Frazier beats the tag of Minnesota Twins second baseman Brian Dozier for a double during the eighth inning of a baseball game Monday, in Minneapolis. The Twins won 4-2. — AP

BASEBALL

SEAGER, VALENCIA HIT HRs TO LIFT SEATTLE OVER ASTROS

HOUSTON: Kyle Seager and Danny Valencia hit back-to-back homers in the 10th inning to lift the Seattle Mariners to a 9-7 win over the Houston Astros on Monday night. The wild back and forth game was tied at 7 entering the 10th when Seager, who finished with three hits, connected off Tony Sipp (0-1) on a shot to the seats in right field. Valencia added an insurance run when he launched a slider to center field three pitches later. Mike Zunino and Nelson Cruz also homered for the Mariners as they tied a season high with four homers to win their fifth straight game. Yovani Gallardo (4-7) allowed a hit and two walks in a scoreless ninth for the win and Edwin Diaz struck out two in a scoreless 10th for his 17th save. Cruz tied it in the seventh and Zunino put Seattle on top with his homer in the eighth. A sacrifice fly by George Springer scored a run to tie it at 7-7 in the bottom of the eighth. Jake Marisnick and Carlos Beltran both homered for the Astros on a night when All-Star shortstop Carlos Correa left in the fourth inning after jamming his left thumb on a swing.

TWINS 4, YANKEES 2

Eddie Rosario had two RBI doubles and Eduardo Escobar added the go-ahead, pinch-hit single in the eighth inning to help Minnesota over New York. Brian Dozier had two hits and Adalberto Mejia gave up one run

and struck out four in 5 1/3 innings for the Twins, who were tied 2-2 when Escobar delivered a base hit to left field off left-hander Caleb Smith (0-1). Rosario followed with his second double of the game, and Brandon Kintzler picked up his 26th save as light rain turned into a steady downpour at Target Field. Yankees star slugger Aaron Judge went 0 for 3 with an intentional walk and is 1 for 21 since his electric performance in the All-Star Home Run Derby. Taylor Rogers (5-1) pitched 1 1/3 innings of scoreless relief for the win.

CUBS 4, BRAVES 3

Jon Lester (6-6) bounced back from the shortest start of his career by allowing only one run in seven innings and Chicago stopped Atlanta's ninth-inning comeback. The Cubs led 4-1 before Atlanta scored two runs in the ninth off closer Wade Davis and loaded the bases with two outs. Davis allowed one-out singles to Brandon Phillips and Freddie Freeman before Phillips scored from third on a wild pitch. Matt Kemp followed with a run-scoring single and pinch-runner Lane Adams stole second and moved to third on Tyler Flowers' flyball to the warning track in center field. Following an intentional walk to pinch-hitter Matt Adams, pinch-runner Dansby Swanson stole second, leaving runners on second and third. Davis walked Sean Rodriguez, playing in his first game of the season, to load the bases.

Johan Camargo's fly ball to shallow left ended the game, giving Davis his 18th consecutive save this season. Julio Teheran (7-7) allowed two runs and five hits and four walks in six innings.

INDIANS 5, GIANTS 3

Josh Tomlin struck out five and pitched into the eighth inning to win back-to-back starts for the first time this year, and Cleveland capitalized on two costly errors to beat San Francisco. Tomlin (6-9) allowed six hits and three runs without walking a batter in 7 1/3 innings. Cleveland snapped a season-high four-game skid with its first victory against the Giants in the last seven tries. San Francisco starter Matt Moore (3-10) hit an RBI single in the third before a wild throw did him in, and the Giants dropped their fourth straight home game. Cody Allen finished for his 17th save as the defending AL champs improved to just 4-11 in interleague.

BLUE JAYS 4, RED SOX 3

Steve Pearce hit a solo homer, then added the go-ahead single in the eighth inning in Toronto's victory over Boston. The Blue Jays led 3-0 after two innings but Boston scored three in the seventh. Toronto went back in front in the eighth when Pearce singled to score pinch-runner Ezequiel Carrera from third. Ryan Tepera (5-1), who started the eighth, was credited with the victory even though Leone was the pitcher of record when the winning run scored. Baseball rule 9.17 (c) instructs the official scorer not to award a victory to a reliever who makes a short, ineffective appearance. Roberto Osuna pitched the ninth for his 23rd save. Heath Hembree (1-3) took the loss.

NATIONALS 6, REDS 1

Ryan Zimmerman set the Nationals' career home run record with a solo shot, and Bryce Harper connected again as Washington powered its way to a victory for a four-game sweep of Cincinnati. Zimmerman's 235th career homer moved him ahead of Vladimir Guerrero for most in Expos and Nationals history. Stephen Strasburg (10-3) recovered from his shortest start of the season by fanning 11 in seven innings and allowing four hits, including Eugenio Suarez's homer. Scott Feldman (7-7) lasted only one inning. He gave up a double, a single, Harper's three-run homer and Zimmerman's solo shot in his first 12 pitches. Feldman left after facing nine batters and giving up five runs on 33 pitches.

RAYS 3, ATHLETICS 2

Jake Odorizzi and two relievers combined on a two-hitter, helping Tampa Bay beat Oakland. Steven Souza Jr. hit his 19th home run, Evan Longoria also went deep and reached base three times while Adeiny Hechavarria added two hits for the Rays, who won for the third time in four games since the All-Star break. Odorizzi (6-4) bounced back from his worst start of the season and went seven innings while striking out five and walking two. Alex Colome retired three batters for his AL-leading 27th save. Daniel Gossett (1-5) allowed three runs in seven innings, including the homers to Souza and Longoria.

ROCKIES 9, PADRES 6

Charlie Blackmon's fourth leadoff homer of the season hit the facing of the third deck, hard-throwing rookie German Marquez tied a career high with nine strikeouts and scuffling Colorado beat San Diego. Trevor Story added a two-run double as part of a five-run third to help the Rockies win back-to-back games for the first time in nearly a month. Marquez (7-4) allowed three runs over 6 2/3 innings. He perplexed the Padres by effectively mixing in his curve with a 98 mph fastball. Greg Holland got Matt Szczerz to ground out following a two-out double in the ninth to earn his 29th save in 30 chances. San Diego starter Luis Perdomo (4-5) had his three-game winning streak halted after surrendering seven runs, five earned, over 2 1/3 innings.

TIGERS 10, ROYALS 2

Nicholas Castellanos and Mikie Mahtook went deep, Jordan Zimmermann smothered the Royals with strikes and Detroit proceeded to trounce Kansas City to open a four-game series. Ian Kinsler added three extra-base hits for the Tigers, who knocked American League wins leader Jason Vargas (12-4) from the game after 2 2/3 innings in his first start since the All-Star break. Zimmermann (6-7) allowed one run and seven hits without a walk in 6 2/3 innings, throwing 79 of 97 pitches for strikes. His dominance was partly a result of first-pitch strikes to 24 of the 28 batters he faced, which helped the right-hander win for the first time since June 3.

PIRATES 4, BREWERS 2

Gregory Polanco doubled twice, drove in two runs and threw out a potential go-ahead run at the plate to lead surging Pittsburgh over Milwaukee. Brewers catcher Stephen

Vogt left the game in the fifth inning after a collision with Pirates pitcher Chad Kuhl at the plate. Vogt caught an incidental elbow to the head from Kuhl, and both players were down for several minutes. Kuhl remained in the game, but Vogt had to be helped to his feet and left to be evaluated for a neck strain and left knee strain. Vogt held onto the ball and Kuhl was called out. Polanco finished 4 for 4 and is hitting .446 this month. Francisco Cervelli added two hits for the Pirates, who pulled within six games of the first-place Brewers. Daniel Hudson (2-4) picked up the win in relief of Kuhl when Polanco nailed Manny Pina at the plate in the sixth to preserve a tie. Polanco drove in Josh Bell in the bottom of the inning off Josh Hader (1-1) to put the Pirates in front. Felipe Rivero retired the last four batters for his seventh save.

CARDINALS 6, METS 3

Paul DeJong homered against New York for the fourth straight game and Adam Wainwright hit an RBI double while winning his fourth consecutive start. With runners at the corners in the bottom of the ninth inning, slugger Yoenis Cespedes grounded into a game-ending double play on a 3-0 pitch from Brett Cecil. Tommy Pham capped a six-run sixth with a three-run homer on Hansel Robles' second pitch since returning from the minors. Michael Conforto and Lucas Duda homered off Wainwright (11-5), who beat scuffling starter Zack Wheeler (3-7) for the second time in 10 days.

ORIOLES 3, RANGERS 1

Seth Smith hit a tiebreaking homer in the seventh inning and Baltimore used a strong performance by its struggling pitching staff to beat Texas. Smith connected off Andrew Cashner (4-8) to make it 2-1, Baltimore's first lead since the All-Star break following a three-game sweep by the Chicago Cubs. Chris Tillman allowed one run and two hits over six innings. Richard Bleier (2-1) pitched a scoreless seventh, Mychal Givens had a perfect eighth and Brad Brach completed the three-hitter for his 16th save.

MARLINS 6, PHILLIES 5, 10 INNINGS

Giancarlo Stanton homered twice and Dee Gordon hit an RBI single with two outs in the 10th inning that sent Miami over Philadelphia. Gordon lined a single to right-center off Mark Leiter Jr. (1-2) for the Marlins' fourth walk-off win of the season. Drew Steckenrider (1-1) pitched a scoreless 10th. — AP

MLB Results/Standings

Cleveland 5, San Francisco 3; Tampa Bay 3, Oakland 2; Colorado 9, San Diego 6; Detroit 10, Kansas City 2; Minnesota 4, NY Yankees 2; Seattle 9, Houston 7 (10 innings); Chicago Cubs 4, Atlanta 3; Miami 6, Philadelphia 5 (10 innings); St. Louis 6, NY Mets 3; Toronto 4, Boston 3; Pittsburgh 4, Milwaukee 2; Baltimore 3, Texas 1; Washington 6, Cincinnati 1.

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division				
W	L	PCT	GB	Washington	Atlanta	Miami	NY Mets	
Boston	52	42	.553	-	56	36	.609	
Tampa Bay	50	44	.532	2	42	49	.462	
NY Yankees	47	44	.516	3.5	41	49	.456	
Toronto	43	49	.467	8	30	61	.330	
Baltimore	43	49	.467	8				
Central Division				Central Division				
Cleveland	48	43	.527	-	Milwaukee	52	43	.547
Minnesota	47	45	.511	1.5	Chicago Cubs	47	45	.511
Kansas City	45	46	.495	3	St. Louis	45	47	.489
Detroit	42	49	.462	6	Pittsburgh	45	48	.484
Chicago White Sox	38	52	.422	9.5	Cincinnati	39	53	.424
Western Division				Western Division				
Houston	62	31	.667	-	LA Dodgers	64	29	.688
Seattle	47	47	.500	15.5	Arizona	53	39	.576
Texas	45	47	.489	16.5	Colorado	54	41	.568
LA Angels	46	49	.484	17	San Diego	40	52	.435
Oakland	42	51	.452	20	San Francisco	35	59	.372

MANAGER KLOPP BACKS STURRIDGE TO FIRE FOR LIVERPOOL

HONG KONG: Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp plans to unleash an injury-free Daniel Sturridge in the new season with the England striker back training fully fit and focused. "It's the best condition he has been in since I have been here," Klopp told reporters in Hong Kong yesterday ahead of his second full campaign as Liverpool manager.

Sturridge has been troubled by a spate of injuries since joining the Reds from Premier League rivals Chelsea in 2013 and hip problems restricted his impact to just seven goals from 27 appearances last season. The 27-year-

old has recently been linked with a big-money move to China, but Klopp insisted Sturridge was going nowhere, backing him to return to the kind of form that almost helped bring Liverpool a league title in his first season on Merseyside.

"He has been part of a full pre-season so far so that is very positive," Klopp said before Liverpool take part in the Premier League Asia Trophy also involving Leicester City, Crystal Palace and West Bromwich Albion. "It has been quite intense what we have done and he has pretty much been part of each session so that is good. He is in

good physical shape." Amid fanfare over the arrival of record signing Mohamed Salah to Liverpool, signed from Roma last month for an estimated \$45 million, Klopp said his primary focus was on seeing his club improve on last season's fourth-place finish.

"Sometimes (the news) is all about bringing in new players but the main thing is how do we improve the players we had last season," said the former Dortmund coach, currently playing a waiting game on key transfer targets Naby Keita and Virgil van Dijk.

"The good thing is we did not lose any player that we want and I expect a

lot of improvement from the players we have." Salah is one of two new signings Liverpool have brought with them to Hong Kong.

The Egypt international has hit the ground running with the Reds, scoring in his first friendly against Wigan last week, while striker Dominic Solanke will also be looking to impress his new boss following the 19-year-old's free transfer from Chelsea. But Klopp refused to be drawn on Leipzig midfielder Keita or van Dijk, the Southampton defender.

"It is what it is and the transfer market is open until the (August) 31st," said

the German, whose team kick off their Premier League campaign at Watford on August 12. "I am not easy to frustrate. It's the transfer market-sometimes things work out, sometimes they don't. I have all the players I want, until now. I'm still relaxed."

Meanwhile, Liverpool arrived in Hong Kong on Monday to a deluge of rain and flood warnings. "You have to make the best of the circumstances," said Klopp. "We come from England so we are used to a little bit of rain but yesterday was a little bit too much. Situations like this are like football-you always need to find solutions." — AFP

CELTIC HOPE FOR TROUBLE FREE LINFIELD VISIT

GLASGOW: Celtic will hope the focus is solely on football when the Scottish champions host Linfield in the return leg of their Champions League second round qualifier today. The Hoops have one foot in the next round following a 2-0 victory over the Northern Ireland title holders at Windsor Park thanks to first-half goals from Scott Sinclair and Australian international Tom Rogic. However, the first leg in Belfast was marred by nasty scenes with the Linfield fans - who are drawn from Northern Ireland's Protestant community - giving a hostile reception to Celtic, who are historically seen as a Catholic side.

Their unruly behaviour during and after the game has led to UEFA charging David Healy's side for objects being thrown from the crowd and a field invasion by supporters.

The Glasgow giants - who had a small pocket of supporters in the stadium after the club refused its official allocation - are also the subject of disciplinary action with Europe's governing body charging them with improper conduct after they picked up more than five bookings. One of the players booked was Celtic striker Leigh Griffiths, who was the target of the home support on a number of occasions. The Scotland international was forced to remove objects from the field including coins and a bottle as he prepared to take a second half corner kick, earning himself a yellow card for time-wasting from Spanish referee Alejandro Hernandez - a booking described as bizarre by Celtic's Northern

Irish manager Brendan Rodgers.

Griffiths then sparked crowd disorder at the end of the game when he tied a Celtic scarf to a goal-post, with riot police deployed to stop a pitch invasion and the striker subsequently charged by UEFA for provoking spectators. Those scenes have led to Police Scotland issuing a statement urging fans to focus on the football as extra officers are drafted in to deal with the anticipated 1500 Linfield supporters who are making the trip to Glasgow. Despite the off-field issues, Celtic will be pleased to have registered a win in Belfast as they avoided a repeat of the embarrassment of the 1-0 defeat they suffered against Gibraltar minnows Lincoln Red Imps at the same stage of the competition last season.

The Hoops will now be keen to put on a show for their supporters as they attempt to seal their spot in the third round where they could face either Rosenborg or Irish champions Dundalk.

Irish winger Jonny Hayes knows Celtic - who finished last season unbeaten domestically - will be overwhelming favourites to take a step closer to the lucrative group stages but insists they will be fully focused on finishing the job against Linfield. "Linfield will have to come and play and look for a goal or two so hopefully it might make for a more exciting game," the summer signing from Aberdeen said. "We would maybe have liked another goal, but credit to Linfield they sat in and were well organised but we were definitely the happier side to have come away with a 2-0 win." — AFP



BREDA: Leonie Maier (R) of Germany vies with Kosovare Asllani (L) of Sweden during the UEFA Women's Euro 2017 football tournament between Germany and Sweden at Rat Verlegh Stadium in Breda city on Monday. — AFP

SOCCER

GERMANY HELD BY SWEDEN, RUSSIA STUN ITALY AT WOMEN'S EURO

BREDA: Holders Germany were held to a goalless draw by Sweden while underdogs Russia stunned Italy as Group B opened at the women's Euro tournament in the Netherlands on Monday. In Breda, Sweden picked up their first point in 12 competitive encounters with Germany, who have by now won the European title six times in a row and eight times overall.

Earlier in Rotterdam, first-half goals from Elena Danilova and Elena Morozova handed Russia a surprise 2-1 win over Italy. In a reprise of the Olympic final from Rio, Germany kept Sweden under pressure in an uneventful first half but they failed to create scoring chances against solid defence.

Their dominance continued in the second half, with substitute Mandy Islacker the biggest threat for the Swedish goal. In the 65th minute, she flicked a low cross from Carolin Simon just past the post.

Sweden then demonstrated their strength on the counter-attack but Stina Blackstenius failed

to deliver following a superb run as her weak shot was blocked by keeper Almuth Schult who also stopped Lotta Schelin's breakaway effort two minutes later.

Seven minutes before the end, Islacker flicked a low pass from captain Dzsenifer Marozsan under the crossbar, but Chelsea keeper Hedvig Lindahl cleared the ball over the bar. "In the first half we had a little bit too much respect for Sweden but we can be happy with the second half," said Marozsan, an Olympique Lyon midfielder. Sweden coach Pia Sundhage said she was happy with the result and "especially the way we defended."

"It was a good start into this tournament, for us it has been crucial to get a good start." In Rotterdam, Russia's Danilova struck nine minutes into the game with a low shot from outside the box that took Italian keeper Chiara Marchitelli by surprise at her left post.

On 26 minutes, Morozova headed in Ekaterina Sochneva's corner to give Russia a 2-0

lead which Italy merely reduced through Ilaria Mauro's 88th-minute consolation goal. Russia were avenging three 2-0 defeats from Italy at previous Euro tournaments, as well as a 3-0 loss in a friendly last December. Russia's high pressing kept Italy at bay most of the time, and when that failed, their 19-year-old keeper Tatiana Shcherbak came to the rescue. Shcherbak cleared a long-range left-foot blast from Marta Carissimi in the first half and then forced out a vicious long-range shot from captain Melania Gabbiadini, curling into her top corner.

Two minutes from the end, Shcherbak failed to react to a random pass which Mauro barely touched and which ended up in the Russian net. But she produced another superb save in stoppage time, sending Elisa Bartoli's header onto the crossbar and the goal line, from which the Russian defence managed to clear it.

"We were too deep," Italian defender Elena Linari told UEFA's website. "They were able to get players in whenever they wanted to." — AFP

MOURINHO PLEASED AS LUKAKU OPENS ACCOUNT

SALT LAKE CITY: Romelu Lukaku bagged his first goal in a Manchester United shirt on Monday as the 10-man Premier League giants labored to a 2-1 victory over Real Salt Lake in Utah. Lukaku, who joined the Red Devils from Everton in a reported 75 million pound (\$98.2 million) transfer last week, fired United ahead on 38 minutes, latching on to a low cross from Henrikh Mkhitaryan.

The 24-year-old Belgian international striker had also been involved in United's equalizer scored by Mkhitaryan in the 29th minute after Luis Silva had given Salt Lake a shock early lead. Lukaku used his strength and physical presence to hold off the Real defense to feed Jesse Lingard, who provided the pass for Mkhitaryan to score.

United manager Jose Mourinho was pleased with Lukaku's display, saying the former Chelsea player was now a "top striker." "It's just nice for him, not important for me," Mourinho said of Lukaku's first United goal. "Before he scored the goal I told him I love everything you do on the pitch. Don't be worried about scoring or not scoring. He gets behind people, works and presses well. Like everything he does."

"It's easy to feel it because he was my player four years ago his evolution has been great. He's now a top striker. The goal is just a detail, not important."

RED CARD WOE

United's win was marred by the second-half dismissal of Antonio Valencia for a reckless lunge on Sebastian Saucedo. Valencia was given his marching orders after a lengthy consultation between the match referee and Mourinho. "The referee asked me to change the player and I didn't because I don't agree with the card," Mourinho said, before appearing to suggest Saucedo was to blame.

"(He) was really aggressive in the second half. That's what happens. Some other actions were a bit dangerous," Mourinho said. "It's young people with enthusiasm playing against Manchester United but it's a friendly match and it's a different mentality. But it's preseason so no problem. It is good experience or us to play with one player less."

The United goals were the rare highlights of a disjointed first half performance from Mourinho's side, who had travelled to Utah earlier Monday from their Los Angeles training camp.

For much of the opening half United were second best, with their defense being given a torrid time by a team who are languishing near the foot of Major League Soccer's Western Conference.

The lively attacking trio of Luis Silva, Joao Plata and Jefferson Savarino often left United's defense scrambling to get into position, with Phil Jones finding the movement of the Salt Lake front too hard to deal with. A surging run from Savarino set up Silva's opening goal on 23 minutes.

United however responded swiftly with Mkhitaryan's equalizer just before the half hour mark. Real coach Mike Petke, with one eye on his team's MLS fixture in Portland on Wednesday, withdrew his entire starting line-up at the 30-minute mark, and United capitalized to take the lead through Lukaku. Mourinho also fielded a new starting XI for the second half, with Marcus Rashford and Anthony Martial leading the line for United. United again struggled to impose themselves however, and their frustration boiled over when Antonio Valencia was sent off for a reckless lunge on Sebastian Saucedo midway through the second half. United will face Manchester City in Houston on Thursday in the third game of their US tour. — AFP



SANDY: Manchester United forward Romelu Lukaku, right, scores against Real Salt Lake goalkeeper Lalo Fernandez during the first half of a friendly soccer match Monday, in Sandy, Utah. — AP

ARSENAL SEEKING FRESH BLOOD BUT SANCHEZ STAYS: WENGER

SHANGHAI: Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said yesterday he wants to make more new signings before the season begins next month and batted away fresh doubts about the future of Alexis Sanchez. Wenger is under pressure after the Premier League side failed to qualify for the Champions League for the first time in 20 years, and he is also dealing with persistent doubts about several of his star players. Chief among them is the future of attacker Sanchez, who has a year left on his Arsenal contract but is stalling over an extension. Wenger said that rather than sell his best players, he is in the market to add to his squad.

"We are still open to strengthening our team with players coming from outside," the Frenchman, who has already signed defender Sead Kolasinac and striker Alexandre Lacazette this summer, told the Arsenal website. "We are very active in the transfer market and have already realised two incomings."

"We have to keep a balance as well, that you don't destabilise the team too much by bringing in too many players. But we are still active in the transfer market so let's see what kind of opportunities we can find."

Separately, speaking at a Shanghai press conference on the eve of a friendly with Bayern Munich, Wenger said he paid little attention to more media reports linking Sanchez with a move away from Arsenal. The 28-year-old was quoted in Chilean media at the weekend as saying he wanted to play Champions League football.

Wenger said he had not spoken to the player since the quotes emerged and Sanchez

is not on the tour in China as he takes time out on holiday. But Wenger added: "I do not give too much importance to things that are translated. "From that interview what I got was that he didn't really mean that (about leaving Arsenal to play Champions League football).

"The main focus for us is the Premier League and the Premier League for me today is more important than the Champions League. "We played 20 years in the Champions League — 17 years before Sanchez arrived and three with him-so he can get us back in it." — AFP



SHANGHAI: Arsenal's forward Alexandre Lacazette kicks the ball during a training session ahead of the International Champions Cup football match between Bayern Munich and Arsenal in Shanghai yesterday. Arsenal will play against Bayern Munich in Shanghai today. — AFP

Sports

Russian team claims gold in synchronized swimming again



Germany held by Sweden, Russia stun Italy at women's Euro



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SEAGER, VALENCIA HIT HRS TO LIFT SEATTLE OVER ASTROS Page 14

SRI LANKA PULL OFF RECORD CHASE TO BEAT ZIMBABWE



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan cricket captain Dinesh Chandimal poses with the trophy after victory in the final day of a one-off Test match between Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe at the R Premadasa Cricket Stadium in Colombo yesterday. — AFP

COLOMBO: Niroshan Dickwella and Asela Gunaratne guided Sri Lanka to a record 388 target to beat Zimbabwe by four wickets yesterday in a pulsating end to their one-off Test. A crucial 121-run sixth-wicket stand between Gunaratne (80 not out) and Dickwella (81) secured Sri Lanka's best-ever run chase. Sri Lanka's previous best was against South Africa in 2006, when they achieved a 352-run target. Yesterday's chase was also the highest in Asia and fifth best in Tests.

Man-of-the-match Gunaratne anchored the chase to perfection after Dickwella's departure, putting on an unbeaten 67-run partnership with Dilruwan Perera (29 not out) to take Sri Lanka to victory. The win in Colombo was a boost for new Test captain Dinesh Chandimal and eased Sri Lanka's pain after a shock defeat in the one-day series against the minnows.

"It's always tough when you're batting in the fourth innings but I told the team that they should play their normal game and they played some outstanding innings, especially Dickwella and Asela," Chandimal said.

"It's always challenging as a captain but it's about doing the right things on and off the field," said Chandimal, who took over after Angelo Mathews quit because of the ODI loss. Zimbabwe skipper Graeme Cremer claimed four wickets with his leg-spin to return overall figures of 9-275 at the R. Premadasa Stadium.

But Gunaratne, who played most of the Test as a batsman after injuring his hamstring in the first innings, tackled the Zimbabwe spinners with

ease during his 151-ball stay. Wicketkeeper-batsman Dickwella rode his luck to reach 81 before being caught behind off left-arm spinner Sean Williams while attempting an audacious reverse sweep. Dickwella survived a stumping chance from Sikandar Raza's off-spin on 37 and was then dropped by wicketkeeper Regis Chakabva on 63.

The stumping reprieve cost Zimbabwe dearly. It was referred to the third umpire, who ruled him not out despite replays showing his toe was on the crease — a case where the batsman can be given out.

HERATH EFFECT

Earlier, Cremer sent overnight batsman Kusal Mendis trudging back to the pavilion for 66 after Sri Lanka resumed on 170-3. Cremer struck again with his leg-spin to have Mathews caught and bowled for 25.

The visitors scented victory, but it was not to be for the 10th-ranked side.

"Credit to them...but the way the guys fought and got the runs on the board and pushed Sri Lanka till the last day was great," said Cremer. "The one-day series is a high point for us, we brought that confidence into the Test match and it gave us the belief that we could push the big teams."

For Sri Lanka, veteran left-arm spinner Rangana Herath also stood out with five wicket hauls in each innings. He got the man of the series award for his overall match figures of 11-249. Zimbabwe batsman Craig Ervine's 160 in the first innings and allrounder Raza's 127 in the second essay were also notable performances in the match.

Sri Lanka host the number-one ranked India for three Tests, five one day internationals and a single Twenty20 later this month. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

COLOMBO: Completed scoreboard on the fifth day of the one-off Test between Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe in Colombo yesterday.

Zimbabwe 1st innings 356 (C. Ervine 160; R. Herath 5-116)	A. Gunaratne not out	80
Sri Lanka 1st innings 346 (U. Tharanga 71, D. Chandimal 55; G. Cremer 5-125)	D. Perera not out	29
Zimbabwe 2nd innings 377 (S. Raza 127, M. Waller 68; R. Herath 6-133)	Extras (b9, lb8, w2)	19
Sri Lanka 2nd innings (target 388, overnight 170-3)	Total (6 wickets; 114.5 overs)	391
D. Karunaratne b Williams	Still to bat: R. Herath, S. Lakmal, L. Kumara	
U. Tharanga c Moor b Cremer	Fall of wickets: 1-58 (Tharanga), 2-108 (Karunaratne), 3-133 (Chandimal), 4-178 (Mendis), 5-203 (Cremer), 6-324 (Dickwella)	
K. Mendis c Williams b Cremer	Bowling: Raza 13-1-58-0; Williams 43.5-2-146-2 (w2); Cremer 48-6-150-4; Waller 4-0-10-0; C. Mpofu 6-3-10-0.	
D. Chandimal c Masakadza b Cremer	Result: Sri Lanka won by four wickets	
A. Mathews c & b Cremer	Man-of-the-match: Asela Gunaratne	
N. Dickwella c Chakabva b Williams	Man-of-the-series: Rangana Herath	



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Kuwait Times ^{55th Anniversary} BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2017

Global, GCC bond yields mixed in 2017

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ECB's Draghi to tiptoe to stimulus exit

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EMERGING STOCKS JUMP, US SHARES LOWER

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GS8 obtains 5-star safety ratings

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Employees of French auto parts manufacturer GM&S, threatened with liquidation, hold CGT French union flag as they block a site of their supplier Renault, yesterday in Villeroy, central France. Around 280 jobs are on the line at the site, a supplier to Peugeot Citroen and Renault, that was placed in receivership in December. — AFP

AIR INDIA EYES BUMPER STAFF BUYOUT

CARRIER CUTS COSTS, HOLDS FLEET EXPANSION AHEAD OF PRIVATIZATION

NEW DELHI: Air India is drawing up a proposal to offer voluntary buyouts to just over a third of its 40,000 employees, a senior company official said, one of the largest such offers in India's state sector, as the carrier slashes costs ahead of a 2018 sale. The official, who could not be named as the plans are not public, said the state-owned airline had also put fleet expansion on hold, scrapping a proposal to lease eight Boeing 787 wide-body aircraft. Air India's board approved the proposal in April but nothing further had been done. India's flag carrier is on the block after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet last month approved plans to privatize the loss-making airline - selling part or all of the company and ending decades of state support. Founded in the 1930s and known to generations of Indians for its Maharajah mascot, Air India has a complex fleet, too many staff relative to its peers and \$8.5 billion in debt. Since 2012, New Delhi has injected \$3.6 billion to keep it afloat.

An official in Modi's office said the leader, under pressure to cut spending and boost basic infrastructure like ports and roads, is in "no mood" to provide fresh monetary assistance to any loss-making public sector company. The official said that top bureaucrats in the civil aviation ministry and at Air India had been asked to present a report on how a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) could be offered to about 15,000 of Air India's 40,000 staffers, including contractors.

"Nothing has been finalized but our aim is to make the strategic sale as simple as we can," said a second top official in New Delhi, involved in the airline's daily operations, adding that any fresh investments would be put on hold.

Previous attempts to offload the airline have failed mainly because of the scale and complexity of problems at Air India, as

well as its influential unions. If Modi can pull the privatization off, it will buttress his credentials as a reformer brave enough to wade into some of the country's most intractable problems.

In its heyday, Air India boasted of a talent pool that newly founded airlines dipped into. The government will, however, need to convince seven trade unions to accept the plan to make the company attractive to potential buyers, including buyouts and other efforts to slash costs. Their initial response was not positive. "The government will propose a VRS scheme and we will throw their proposal in the dustbin," said J.B. Kadian, leader of a union that represents 8,000 non-technical staff of Air India. Kadian said a joint forum of unions representing Air India employees will launch "an agitation" in August if the government pursues its plans to privatize the national carrier.

A committee of five senior federal ministers, led by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, is expected to meet this month and begin ironing out the finer details of the privatization plan. In the meantime, Civil Aviation Minister Ashok Gajapathi Raju said he wants Air India to begin cutting at all levels.

Earlier this month, the airline decided to stop serving non-vegetarian meals in the economy class on domestic flights, in a bid to save up to 100 million rupees (\$1.6 million) over 10 months. The action provoked uproar on social media and was belittled by aviation experts, who argue Air India management needs a massive structural overhaul, tackling thornier issues like fleet and staff, not meals. The airline is also working to reduce the time its planes are not flying and launching direct flights to new international destinations. In July, Air India started a direct flight to Washington. It will start flying to Stockholm, Copenhagen and Los Angeles later this year. — Reuters

NBK OFFERS CUSTOMERS TAP & PAY TECHNOLOGY

FIRST IN GCC TO OFFER SECURE PAYMENT INSTRUMENT

KUWAIT: NBK is the first bank in the GCC region to bring yet another innovative payment technology to its customers. NBK Tap & Pay Service is now available on wristbands and stickers creating a new, up-to-date payment instrument. Carrying a wallet or a banking card has just become obsolete. Whether you are running errands, jogging or just living life, you always have a way of paying for everyday items with your NBK Tap & Pay wristband or sticker.

Contactless payment technology has been embedded in the wristbands and stickers enabling a new innovative way of paying for everyday purchases. Using an NBK Tap & Pay wristband, sticker or card is as simple as tapping it on the NBK Tap & Pay enabled POS terminal without entering the PIN or signing the receipt for payments up to KD 10. As for the payments from KD 10.001 to KD 100, clients can use NBK Tap & Pay by entering the PIN only. NBK Tap & Pay is truly a way of making every day transactions quicker and easier - for consumers and merchants alike.

With more than 4,000 NBK Tap & Pay enabled terminals, NBK has the largest POS network in the country, accepting contactless payments. This wide network gives NBK customers choice and an opportunity to use their NBK Tap & Pay wristbands, stickers, credit, debit or prepaid cards at merchants ranging from lifestyle and fashion to dining.

"NBK is excited to be the first in the GCC to offer its customers the ability to pay using innovative wristband payment technology," Hanadi Khazal, NBK's Assistant General Manager-Consumer Banking Group noted. "NBK implements the latest innovative banking technology while continuing to provide the highest security and privacy for customers."

The innovative service translates NBK's drive to introduce the best-in-class banking products and services that match the highest industry standards while using cutting-edge technology for the ultimate banking



Hanadi Khazal

experience without comprising on security to fulfill customers' needs. NBK's Tap & Pay Service adheres to the highest international security standards, further supporting NBK's position as one of the safest 50 banks around the world.

Khazal invited customers to visit their nearest NBK branch to get their wristband, or sticker to enjoy the fastest, easiest and most convenient way to pay. NBK offers a wide range of innovative banking solutions and products that satisfy customers' ever-changing needs and lifestyle requirements.

Customers will earn NBK Rewards Points for using their NBK Tap & Pay wristband, stickers and cards at more than 700 rewards partner outlets. NBK Mobile Banking and NBK Online Banking allow customers to bank anywhere at any time, in addition to the SMS Banking through which customers are notified of any changes on their account or card balance, the WhatsApp service for queries and questions, international toll-free access through the NBK call center from 8 different countries, ATMs and CDMs and more.

AL-TIJARI REPORTS OPERATING PROFIT OF KD 53.2M FOR H1 2017

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced its financial results for the half year ended 30th June 2017. Commenting on the financial results, Ali Al-Mousa, the Bank's Chairman said that the Bank's total assets reached KD 4,164.0 million at the end of June 2017 (compared with KD 4,137.9 million at the end of June 2016) and operating income increased to KD 74.3 million from KD 70.7 million for the 1st half 2016.

Al-Mousa explained that the Bank witnessed a growth in the fee income by 8.9 percent and 8.0 percent in the interest income resulting in operating profit of KD 53.2 million for the six months period of 2017 up by 4.5 percent compared with KD 50.9 million for the same period in 2016.

Al-Mousa emphasized on the Bank's prudent & conservative policy of building the required provisions, with provisions amounting to KD 141.06 million with coverage of 1207 percent for NPL. Building such buffers will help to absorb any shock resulting from the volatile economic, geopolitical situation in the

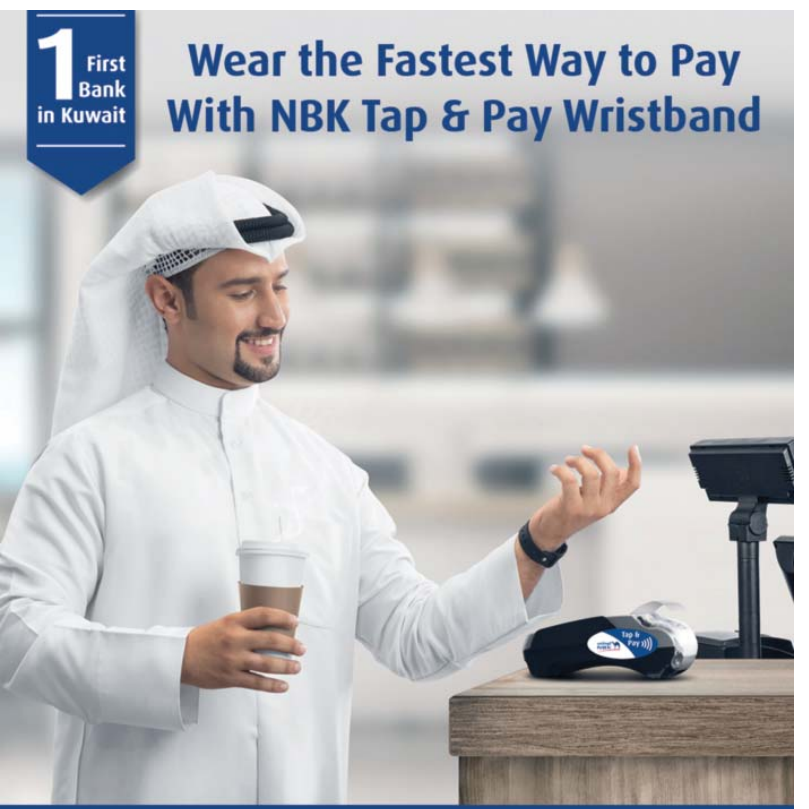


Ali Al-Mousa

region and any adverse conditions. The net profit after allocation of provisions was KD 2.0 million compared to KD 11.5 million for the same period last year, decreasing by 82.7 percent.

Al-Mousa referred to the other strong financial indicators at the end of June 2017 where the Bank continues to maintain a lower NPL ratio which reached 0.49 percent a much lower than the industry average, capital adequacy ratio stood at 18.39 percent, the leverage ratio stood at 10.4 percent, liquidity coverage ratio stood at 175.0 percent and Net Stable Funding Ratio stood at 106.4 percent comfortably exceeding the minimum require-

ment set by the Central Bank of Kuwait. The Bank continues to demonstrate its cost leadership with operational efficiency, a competitive advantage for the Bank which continues to maintain one of the lowest cost/income ratios among Kuwait banks at 28.5 percent for the period ended 30th June 2017.



1st Bank in Kuwait

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GLOBAL, GCC BOND YIELDS MIXED IN 2017

KUWAIT: Global and GCC yields were mixed in 2017 as markets reacted to a more optimistic economic outlook, low inflation, and geopolitical risks. Issuance in the GCC was strong but slightly slower than in 1Q17, led again by sovereigns. Oman and Saudi were the only sovereigns to issue internationally. The ongoing rift with Qatar has increased the region's riskiness and has applied some pressure on Qatar's liquidity. GCC primary debt market activity is expected to be healthy in the second half of 2017.

International benchmark yields were range-bound, trading within a 28-35 bps window in 2Q17. Investors balanced geopolitical uncertainty and stubbornly tepid inflation expectations against a gradually more positive global economic backdrop. Overall, yields trended downwards for most of the quarter, jumping up twice throughout: once in mid-May on the back of strong economic data, and again towards quarter's end on hawkish remarks from global central banks (ECB, BOE, BOC). A fully priced Fed rate hike had little impact on markets, with most GCC central banks following suit in support of their USD pegs. Other major central banks stood pat.

US treasury yields drop

US government 10-year Treasury yields were down in 2Q17, finishing 9 bps lower at 2.35 percent, in spite of the Fed's rate hike in June. Downward pressures emerged from weak to moderate economic data, from little progress on healthcare and tax reform, and from political/media shenanigans surrounding the White House. This has underpinned skepticism over future inflation momentum and the government's short-term pro-growth policies. US 10-year yields experienced their largest daily drop in almost a year (11 bps) on 17 May when President Trump was rumored of having interfered with an FBI investigation.

Yields on 10-year German Bunds were up 14 bps in 2Q17, registering at 0.47 percent following the French presidential election and hawkish ECB statements. The emergence of pro-EU reform minded Emmanuel Macron as France's president saw investors unwind risk-off positions throughout the quarter, helping 10-year Bund yields rise. But weaker than expected inflation data, which favored policy inaction during two ECB meetings held during 2Q17, tempered the rise in yields and pressured them downward. 10-year Bund yields would later experience their largest increase since the US presidential election, jumping by 10 bps on 27 June, following remarks made by ECB president Draghi. Markets interpreted his comments as surprisingly hawkish and further affirmed what is now seen as a change in tone in the ECB's outlook.

NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

Table 1: Gross GCC Issuance by sector (USD billion)

	3Q15	4Q15	1Q16	2Q16	3Q16	4Q16	1Q17	2Q17
Public	21.2	20.8	15.8	27.0	18.5	23.5	20.0	18.2
Financial	0.6	4.3	2.1	5.6	3.3	1.4	4.7	1.7
Non-Financial	2.0	1.0	1.0	3.5	0.3	2.3	1.5	0.5
Total	23.7	26.1	18.9	36.2	22.1	27.2	26.1	20.4

Table 2: Gross GCC issuance by country (USD billion)

	3Q15	4Q15	1Q16	2Q16	3Q16	4Q16	1Q17	2Q17
Bahrain	1.5	1.5	0.0	1.2	0.8	2.8	1.1	0.0
Kuwait	1.2	0.9	2.1	4.6	2.5	4.4	11.6	3.2
Oman	0.9	0.9	0.4	3.3	2.0	0.3	5.0	2.9
Qatar	2.9	3.0	1.7	12.6	4.3	1.0	5.1	3.5
KSA	17.2	18.1	12.8	6.4	11.5	17.5	0.0	9.5
UAE	0.2	1.6	2.0	8.1	1.1	1.3	3.4	1.3
GCC	23.7	26.1	18.9	36.2	22.1	27.2	26.1	20.4

Source: Zawya, Thomson Reuters Eikon, Central Bank of Kuwait, press

Qatar, Oman shine

Qatari and Omani yields jumped following increased geopolitical risks for the former and financial risks for the latter. The rest of the GCC sovereign yields were down or little changed as they tracked US Treasuries.

Qatar's rift with neighboring countries saw yields on Qatari sovereign bonds maturing in 2021 breach 3 percent and finish the quarter at a record high of 3.12 percent, up 45bps. The regional ostracism of Qatar also resulted in Moody's revising its outlook to "negative".

Oman's downgrade to lower than investment-grade by S&P, on the grounds of weaker financial buffers, saw the yield on Omani paper due in 2021 jump up 40 bps in 2Q17. The latter was exasperated by weakening oil prices during the quarter and a still large financing deficit.

The Federal Reserve remained the only major central bank tightening its monetary policy, as it hiked its policy rate again in 2Q17. The Fed increased its target federal funds rate by 25 bps to 1.00-1.25 percent in June. This was its second rate hike this year and occurred despite somewhat weaker national data. The Fed's rate outlook, for now, still sees only three hikes in 2017. Markets expect the

next move to happen in December with close to 50 percent certainty.

ECB, BoE hawkish

The ECB and the BOE turned hawkish late in the quarter in spite of dovish announcements early on. The ECB's official dovish policy stance in 2Q17, supported by weaker than expected inflation data, came at odds with record setting PMLs and healthy GDP growth. Remarks by the ECB at its 8 June policy meeting and by ECB president Draghi on 26 June at an ECB conference, however, revealed a gradual acceptance of a more optimistic outlook. Investors interpreted the newly positive tone as a primer for monetary tightening. Meanwhile, the BOE surprised by coming very close to hiking its policy rate, with 3 of its 8 members voting in favor, on the grounds of rising inflationary pressures. This was later substantiated by hawkish comments made by BOE governor Carney.

GCC central banks followed the Fed, raising their policy rates by 25 bps, with Oman and Kuwait being the exceptions. The moves were in line with the need to support USD pegs. As for Oman, this is the third time it passes on hiking its policy rate, despite its peg to the dollar, and the first for

Kuwait. However, their central banks did hike repo rates, as they sought to protect their pegs without hurting domestic credit growth.

GCC issuance eases

GCC debt issuance eased in 2Q17 as the quarter coincided with the holy month of Ramadan but remained strong nonetheless. Total new issuance amounted to \$20 billion compared to \$26 billion in 1Q17, driven almost entirely by sovereign activity. Private sector activity was relatively weak in 2Q17; with banks accounting for most of it. Total outstanding debt was up a healthy 11 billion, to rest at \$394 billion.

Sovereign activity stayed strong during 2Q17 with \$18 billion in new issuance, chiefly driven by Saudi Arabia and helped by Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait. Oman and Saudi were the only two to tap international markets for a \$2 billion sukuk and a \$9 billion sukuk, respectively. The offerings were well received, even with Oman's downgrade to below investment grade, reflecting the still strong attractiveness of GCC debt. Qatar and Kuwait issued domestic debt totaling \$3.5 billion and \$2 billion, respectively.

The riskiness of investing in the region has risen following the dispute between Qatar and four Arab allies. CDS rates rose across the board as investors digested the fallout. Qatar was the worst hit, with its CDS rate rising to 118 bps, up 48 bps from the quarter and the highest it has been in a year. As for the rest of the tracked GCC sovereigns, their CDS rates were up between 5 and 13 bps.

Qatar liquidity

The rift has also stressed Qatar's liquidity, with its 3-month interbank rate jumping 50 bps in 2Q17, as regional institutions in the concerned countries, both private and financial, shied away from dealing with Qatari banks. As for the rest of the GCC, interbank rates rose to accommodate the June Fed hike, increasing between 5 and 18bps.

GCC debt issuance is expected to remain healthy for the rest of 2017, as sovereigns continue to seek cheap deficit financing, but will increasingly face growing risks. The geopolitical rift with Qatar has already weighed on investor confidence, and may hamper future regional issuance activity, especially if the dispute escalates or is drawn-out. The volatility in current oil prices stands as another risk, with oil prices failing to firm up following an extension to the OPEC agreement. The pick-up in global growth and the expected relative cheapness of the dollar may also divert investors' interests to other debt markets.

JOHNSON & JOHNSON TOPS Q2 PROFIT FORECASTS

NEW YORK: Higher spending on marketing, production and research pushed down Johnson & Johnson's second-quarter profit 4.3 percent despite slightly higher sales for the health care products giant. But with its biggest acquisition ever just completed, bringing it multiple new prescription medicines to sell, J&J raised its financial forecasts for the year.

The maker of blood thinner Xarelto, Tylenol and other pain relievers, and medical devices yesterday reported net income of \$3.83 billion, or \$1.40 per share, down from \$4 billion, or \$1.43 per share, a year earlier. Adjusted results, excluding one-time charges, amounted to \$5 billion, or \$1.83 per share. That topped Wall Street per-share expectations of \$1.79, according to a survey by Zacks Investment Research.

Revenue was \$18.84 billion, just shy of analyst expectations for \$18.89 billion.

"We are optimistic that the investments we are making will accelerate our sales growth in the second half of this year," CEO Alex Gorsky said in a statement. "The Actelion acquisition establishes a new therapeutic area as well as another engine for growth." J&J, based in New Brunswick, New Jersey, closed that \$30 billion deal in June, gaining Actelion's three drugs for treating high blood pressure in



In this Sept 13, 2016 file photo, a selection of Johnson & Johnson brand first aid products are shown in Surfside, Fla. Johnson & Johnson reported financial earnings yesterday.—AP

the lungs, other marketed products and some experimental drugs in late-stage testing.

The company's prescription drugs business, its largest segment, saw sales dip 0.2 percent to \$8.64 billion, while sales of consumer health products such as Johnson's baby care items edged up 1.7 percent to \$3.48 billion. Meanwhile, sales of medical devices and diagnostic products

climbed 4.9 percent to \$6.73 billion, indicating the restructuring begun a year ago is turning around problems in the segment.

J&J said it now expects full-year earnings in the range of \$7.12 to \$7.22 per share, up from its April forecast of \$7 to \$7.15 per share. It forecast revenue in the range of \$75.8 billion to \$76.1 billion, up from \$75.4 billion to \$76.1 billion.—AP

ERICSSON STEPS UP RESTRUCTURING ON NEW QUARTERLY LOSS

STOCKHOLM: Weaker than expected second-quarter sales and profits in a poor growth climate prompted Swedish telecoms giant Ericsson to announce fresh cost-cutting measures yesterday, prompting a plunge in its share price. Ericsson posted a fourth straight quarterly loss in unveiling April to June figures of 1.0 billion kronor (105 million euros/\$121 million) on sales dropping eight percent to 49.9 billion kronor, dipping beneath analysts' forecasts of 50.5 billion.

The company said it saw "increased risk of further market and customer project adjustments with an estimated negative impact on operating income of three to five billion kronor for the coming 12 months."

"We are not satisfied with our underlying performance with continued declining sales and increasing losses in the quarter," said CEO Borje Ekholm, as the share price dropped 10 percent in Stockholm. Following those

comments, shares in the firm dropped by 10.3 percent mid-morning to 54.65 kronor in Stockholm trading.

"Execution of our focused business strategy is gaining traction. However, in light of current market conditions, we are accelerating the planned actions to reduce costs." Those cost cuts, to include notably unprofitable service contracts, will amount to at least an annual 10 billion kronor by 2018 with the goal to double operating margins of 2016, a year which saw net profit slump 86 percent.

Since then, Ericsson has seen a slowing of investments in networking equipment, its core business, and now anticipates a market contraction of between five and nine percent across 2017 rather than an initial forecast of a two-to-six percent drop. The group's uneven performance so far this year saw ratings agency Moody's downgrade it a notch to Ba1 in May, noting rising restructuring charges and provisions.—AFP

NEPALIS, SADDLED WITH BANNED INDIAN RUPEE NOTES, RISK LOSING SAVINGS

KATHMANDU: Nepalis stand to lose millions of dollars held in high-value Indian bank notes that India banned last year and has yet to exchange, a Nepali central bank official said yesterday.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November banned 500 rupee (\$7.77) and 1,000 rupee bank notes as part of a drive against unaccounted wealth in India that has also hit Nepal where Indian rupees are widely used. People holding the notes in India were given a little less than two months to exchange them at banks.

In March, officials from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) visited Nepal and

promised to allow every Nepali citizen to exchange 4,500 Indian rupees (\$70) worth of the old notes for new ones.

"That was only a verbal assurance but no formal decision from India has come to us," said Chinta Mani Shivakoti, a deputy governor of the central Nepal Rastra Bank. "Even if this amount was exchanged, individuals holding more than 4,500 Indian rupees risk losing the excess," Shivakoti said. Nepal depends heavily on funds from workers in India, who sent home \$640 million in 2016, or about 3 percent of its gross domestic product. The Indian central bank declined to comment. An Indian finance

ministry spokesman also declined to comment, saying it was a central bank matter. India fears that if it agrees to Nepal's demand to allow Nepalis to exchange unlimited amounts, a large number of Indians may launder their ill-gotten old notes through Nepal.

Shivakoti said Nepal's banks hold 78.5 million Indian rupees worth of the old notes, while business officials estimate that up to 10 billion in old Indian rupees (\$155 million) may be held by individuals in Nepal's informal sector. Another NRB official, Bhisma Raj Dhungana, said the delay in resolving the issue was causing concern.—Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.699
Indian Rupees	4.712
Pakistani Rupees	2.882
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.973
Nepali Rupees	2.950
Singapore Dollar	222.620
Hongkong Dollar	38.912
Bangladesh Taka	3.733
Philippine Peso	6.000
Thai Baht	8.975

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.027
Qatari Riyal	83.550
Omani Riyal	789.111
Bahraini Dinar	806.830
UAE Dirham	82.727

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.800
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.880
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.220
Tunisian Dinar	125.520
Jordanian Dinar	428.760
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.024
Syrian Lira	2.165
Morocco Dirham	31.963

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	303.650
Euro	350.260
Sterling Pound	399.910
Canadian dollar	241.090
Turkish lira	86.390

Swiss Franc	317.130
Australian Dollar	239.880
US Dollar Buying	302.450

GOLD	
20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.750
Canadian Dollar	236.435
Sterling Pound	393.310
Euro	347.925
Swiss Frank	294.490
Bahrain Dinar	805.645
UAE Dirhams	83.095
Qatari Riyals	84.315
Saudi Riyals	81.895
Jordanian Dinar	428.335
Egyptian Pound	16.990
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.976
Indian Rupees	4.713
Pakistani Rupees	2.891
Bangladesh Taka	3.761
Philippines Peso	6.003
Cyprus pound	167.630
Japanese Yen	3.660
Syrian Pound	2.415
Nepalese Rupees	2.949
Malaysian Ringgit	71.550

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.110
Thai Bhat	9.895
Turkish Lira	84.300

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.390577	0.400577
Czech Korune	0.005314	0.017314
Danish Krone	0.042689	0.047689
Euro	0.342241	0.351241
Norwegian Krone	0.032987	0.038187
Romanian Leu	0.076094	0.076094
Slovakia	0.009065	0.019065
Swedish Krona	0.032418	0.037418
Swiss Franc	0.308133	0.319133
Turkish Lira	0.081005	0.091305

Australasia	BUY	SELL
Australian Dollar	0.228846	0.240846
New Zealand Dollar	0.216093	0.225593

America	BUY	SELL
Canadian Dollar	0.2343350	0.243335
Georgina Lari	0.137144	0.137144
US Dollars	0.299550	0.303970
US Dollars Mint	0.300050	0.303970

Asia	BUY	SELL
Bangladesh Taka	0.003423	0.004007
Chinese Yuan	0.043315	0.046815
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036828	0.039578

Indian Rupee	0.004235	0.004923
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002609	0.002789
Kenyan Shilling	0.002914	0.002914
Korean Won	0.000259	0.000274
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067199	0.073199
Nepalese Rupee	0.002939	0.003109
Pakistan Rupee	0.002686	0.002976
Philippine Peso	0.005935	0.006235
Sierra Leone	0.000038	0.000044
Singapore Dollar	0.216204	0.226204
South African Rand	0.017238	0.025738
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001604	0.002184
Taiwan	0.009873	0.010053
Thai Baht	0.008643	0.009193

Arab	BUY	SELL
Bahraini Dinar	0.798336	0.806836
Egyptian Pound	0.015171	0.021079
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000190	0.000250
Jordanian Dinar	0.423674	0.432674
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.019723	0.043723
Nigerian Naira	0.000392	0.001027
Omani Riyal	0.782281	0.787961
Qatar Riyal	0.079115	0.084055
Saudi Riyal	0.079887	0.081187
Syrian Pound	0.001287	0.001507
Tunisian Dinar	0.121757	0.129757
Turkish Lira	0.081005	0.091305
UAE Dirhams	0.081248	0.082948
Yemeni Riyal	0.000987	0.001067

CHEVROLET ALGHANIM SIGNS NEW DEAL WITH KGL CAR RENTAL

AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE A FLEET OF 2017 CHEVROLET IMPALA VEHICLES

KUWAIT: Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons Automotive (Chevrolet Alghanim), the exclusive distributor of Chevrolet vehicles in Kuwait, signed a new partnership agreement with KGL Car Rental, a subsidiary of Kuwait & Gulf Link Transport Company (KGL), a pioneer establishment providing integrated Supply Chain Management services in Kuwait, the Gulf region and the Middle East.

Robert Boustani, CEO of KGL Car Rental acknowledged: "Chevrolet Alghanim has provided KGL Car Rental with more than 450 Chevrolet Impala 2017 vehicles." He noted that, "KGL Car Rental follows a strategy that places the customer at the center of its operations, which has enabled the company to win many Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) tenders. On behalf of KGL Car Rental, I express my deepest appreciation to KOC's officials and emphasize the significance of the relationship between us throughout the years". This tender is a new milestone and will commence this month and end after the contracted duration of three years."

The new partnership goes in line with Chevrolet Alghanim's commitment to providing all customers with the best performance, highest safety standards and top quality of Chevrolet vehicles. Impala



offers a powerful and efficient powertrain with a 3.6L V-6 that is the most powerful naturally aspirated six-cylinder engine in the segment. Output for the engine is rated at 305 horsepower (227 kW) and 264 lb-ft of torque (358 Nm). Lightweight features support a more balanced driving experience and include an integrated cylinder head/exhaust manifold design that saves approximately 6 kg per engine.

Safety technology
The 2017 Impala offers one of the most comprehensive safety packages in the full-size car segment. It employs advanced technologies, including several alert systems for collision evasion. Visual and audio alerts help drivers identify potential crash situations and even intervene when a crash threat appears more imminent. The alerts



help identify potential threats with sufficient warning to give the driver time to react and make changes.

An available Driver Confidence package on LT models offers Forward Collision Alert, Rear Cross-Traffic Alert, Lane Departure Warning and Side Blind Zone with Lane Change Alert. In addition, an available Safety package offers Rear Park Assist and Rear Vision

Camera which helps even more to avoid accidents.

Exterior design
The Impala's exterior styling honors the design elements that have distinguished the classic nameplate for decades. It has that timeless Chevy sedan presence in a modern and edgy style.

News

in brief

OPEC basket stable at \$46.80 pb

VIENNA: OPEC daily basket price stood at \$46.80 per barrel (pb) on Monday after climbing by 40 cents, compared with \$46.40 pb last Friday, said the international organization yesterday. The basket's annual price for 2016 was at \$40.76 pb, it added. OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), Iran Heavy (Iran), Basra Light (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Qatar Marine (Qatar), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE), Merey (Venezuela), Girassol (Angola), and Oriente (Ecuador). A gathering between OPEC oil ministers and their counterparts from outside the organization have reached an agreement last May to continue the decrease of production for additional nine months to end by March of the year 2018 with 1.8 mbpd.

Goldman Sachs profits flat amid weak trading results

NEW YORK: Global financial services giant Goldman Sachs reported flat second-quarter earnings yesterday as gains in investment management offset a steep drop in trading revenues due to weak volatility. Net income was essentially unchanged from the comparable quarter last year at \$1.6 billion, while revenues dipped 0.6 percent to \$7.9 billion. "A mixed operating environment persisted into the second quarter as conditions continued to support underwriting and mergers and acquisitions, while constraining certain market-making activity," Goldman chief executive Lloyd Blankfein said.

Vodafone Qatar struggles to fix large-scale telecom outage

DUBAI: One of Qatar's two telecommunications companies is struggling to bring its network online following a widespread outage. Vodafone Qatar said yesterday on Twitter that network engineers have arrived in the tiny Gulf country to fix the outage that began on Monday. It says that "all hands are on deck" to fix the problem. Vodafone competes against Ooredoo, formerly known as Qtel. Both companies are partly owned by government-linked entities. The outage happened as Qatar remains locked in a dispute with four other Arab countries that have cut diplomatic ties and severed air, land and sea links. They have threatened to intensify their isolation of Qatar if it does not give in to their demands.

NISSAN, UAW AGREE ON UNION VOTE AT SOUTHERN US AUTO PLANT

DETROIT: The United Auto Workers and Nissan said Monday that they reached an agreement to let workers at a Nissan plant in the southern state of Mississippi to vote on whether to unionize.

Controversy over unionization at the largely African-American plant in the town of Canton, which opened in 2003 and employs 6,400 people, has raged for years. In May the UAW labor union filed a complaint with the federal National Labor Relations Board claiming that Nissan was using deterrence tactics against workers who showed signs of unionizing.

"We do not believe that UAW representation is in the best interest of Nissan Canton and the people who work here," Nissan said in a statement.

"However, it is ultimately up to the employees to decide." The NLRB will supervise the August 3-4 vote, the UAW said. "Over the past six days, Nissan has made it abundantly clear that it does

not respect its Mississippi employees' rights to vote in a free and fair election," UAW official Gary Casteel said in a statement. Nissan "is running one of the most aggressive anti-worker campaigns that we've seen in modern US history," Casteel claimed.

Many manufacturers, particularly automakers, have set up plants in the US south where unions are not as ingrained in the social fabric.

In March, one-time US presidential contender Bernie Sanders spoke in favor of unionization in Canton in an appearance that doubled as Democratic Party outreach.

Sanders was accompanied by actor Danny Glover and officials from the NAACP, the largest African-American advocacy group in the United States.

Organizers demanded that the company halt what they said was "ongoing harassment of African-American workers who are organizing to form a union." They allege that Nissan threatened to illegally shut down the facility and terminate employment if workers unionized, and unlawfully interrogated workers.—AFP

UK INFLATION UNEXPECTEDLY FALLS, EASES RATE-HIKE FEARS

ECONOMY WILL ADJUST OVER TIME TO WEAKER STERLING: HAMMOND

LONDON: Inflation in Britain unexpectedly fell in the year to June, official figures showed yesterday in a development that's likely to ease market expectations that the Bank of England will raise interest rates soon. The Office for National Statistics said consumer prices were 2.6 percent higher in the year to June, down from 2.9 percent the previous month. The consensus was that inflation would rise to 3 percent, which would have been a full percentage point higher than the Bank's target rate.

The surprise fall, the first since last October, was largely due to falling gas prices at the pump as lower wholesale crude prices were passed on to drivers. Despite the fall, living standards in Britain are still falling as price increases outpace wage rises.

Inflation has risen sharply from last June's 0.5 percent largely because the country's vote to leave the European Union triggered a 15 percent drop in the value of the pound. Though a lower pound may help exporters sell their wares in international markets, all other things being equal, it makes imported goods such as food and energy more expensive.

The spike in inflation over the past year has caused concern among some rate-setters at the Bank of England. Last month, three of the eight members of the bank's Monetary Policy Committee voted to increase the benchmark interest rate by a quarter-point from the record low of 0.25 percent. The rest thought, while acknowledging the inflation spike, thought a rate hike could be counterproductive for



Philip Hammond

crashing out of the bloc with no deal, which could result in tariffs being slapped on British goods.

The pound fell sharply after the inflation data as traders priced in a lower interest rate profile. By mid-morning London time, the pound was 0.3 percent lower at \$1.3019. Earlier it had hit a 2017 high above \$1.31 as traders bet that the inflation data would be higher than anticipated and potentially force the hand of the bank to raise interest rates soon. Ben Brettell, senior economist at stockbrokers Hargreaves Lansdown, said easing inflation, if sustained, could help shore up the British

the British economy, which grew by less than any other Group of Seven country in the first quarter of the year. The main uncertainty surrounding the British economy relates to Brexit and what trading relationship the country will have with the EU after it leaves the bloc in March 2019. The British government has only just started full-scale Brexit discussions with the EU and there are fears that the country could end up

economy in the months ahead as economists had expected real incomes to continue to fall with negative repercussions for retail sales.

"If this fails to materialize the economy could see a stronger second half to the year," he said. Economists remain split as to how inflation will pan out over the coming months largely because there's uncertainty surrounding the value of the pound. However, if the currency stabilizes then the impact of last year's depreciation will start to drop out of the annual comparison and that could see inflation fall back toward target and help support the economy. But as with almost everything about Britain, Brexit will remain the driver.*

Weaker sterling

Over time Britain's economy will adapt to changes in the value of sterling, finance minister Philip Hammond said yesterday when asked by a lawmaker about the impact of the fall in the pound since the country voted to leave the European Union. "The short run effect of a depreciation of sterling would be expected to be a decline in our trade balance performance as we suck in more expensive, in sterling terms, imports," Hammond said.

"But over time, and there's signs the economy is doing this now, the economy will adjust, with exporters increasing their output to take advantage of weaker sterling and their greater competitiveness in international markets." — Agencies

ECB'S DRAGHI TO TIPTOE TO MONETARY STIMULUS EXIT

FRANKFURT, Germany: European Central Bank head Mario Draghi is likely to tread softly tomorrow as the bank inches toward bringing an end to its monetary stimulus efforts.

Analysts think it's a near-certainty that the ECB, the monetary authority for the European Union's 19-country euro currency union, will start scaling back its 60 billion euros (\$69 billion) in monthly bond purchases after their earliest termination date at the end of the year.

But they don't expect Draghi to provide the road map for the exit at tomorrow's news conference, which will follow the regular meeting of the bank's 25-member governing council at the bank's Frankfurt skyscraper headquarters. The bank is expected to leave its interest benchmark unchanged at zero. More clarity on the timing of the stimulus withdrawal is expected at the Sept. 7 meeting.

The reason why little is expected right now: Draghi and top bank officials want to avoid a sudden market reaction that could prematurely send business and government borrowing costs higher before the phase-out starts. The caution may be understandable given the reaction to

Draghi's speech on June 27 in Sintra, Portugal, where he talked about the "strengthening and broadening" eurozone recovery but signaled no definite shift in the bank's stance.

Markets reacted sharply anyway, helping to send the euro higher - it's recently pushed above \$1.15 for the first time since May 2016 - and bond prices lower. The sudden moves suggested that some market participants were still unprepared for an end to the stimulus, which the bank says has played a big role in shoring up the economic recovery in the eurozone by keeping a lid on market interest rates.

The market reaction echoed the so-called "taper tantrum" that followed remarks by then US Federal Reserve head Ben Bernanke in May, 2013. US government bonds prices sagged after Bernanke indicated that the economic recovery would mean the Fed could taper off its own bond-purchase stimulus.

That program has since been ended and the Fed has started raising interest rates. Draghi is expected to underline the need for caution in withdrawing the stimulus, even while pointing out the eurozone's

strengthening recovery. A raft of indicators in recent months has raised expectations that the eurozone recovery has gained momentum and that growth will come in stronger than anticipated. Many economists are predicting that growth will be north of 2 percent this year.

Inflation remains the main problem confronting the ECB. The primary purpose of the bank's stimulus efforts is to get inflation up to its goal of just under 2 percent. In the year to June, it was only 1.3 percent.

"We expect Draghi to refer to the need for 'patience' and 'prudence' as well as the need for 'persistent' monetary policy support in a bid to signal that normalization will be gradual," Ben May, lead eurozone economist at Oxford Economics, said.

He added that the ECB "is unlikely to provide any firm guidance" on what will happen to the bond purchases next year. Market watchers will focus on the bank's standing promise that it could increase the purchases in size or duration if the outlook worsens. Dropping that promise from the post-meeting statement would be a small move toward announcing a phase-out of the stimulus. Several analysts however think Draghi won't go even that far.

The ECB's bond purchases began in March, 2015 in an effort to raise inflation and avoid a crippling downward price spiral. The ECB purchases the bonds with newly created money, pushing that new money into the financial system and the economy. Printing money can in theory cause higher inflation, but prices have responded only slowly.

Analysts think the ECB will have to end the program by the end of next year in any case because it will run out of available bonds to purchase. The bank has restricted itself to purchasing no more than a third of the bonds issued by any country. That is to avoid charges that it is dominating the market for that country's debt and propping up government finances, something it is legally restricted from doing.—AP



FRANKFURT: In this April 21, 2016 file photo president of European Central Bank, ECB, Mario Draghi speaks during a news conference after a meeting of the governing council in Frankfurt. Draghi said yesterday the bank's stimulus efforts need to be "persistent" even as the economy recovers.—AP



This July 18, 2016 file photo shows a Bank of America ATM in Woburn, Mass. Bank of America Corp. reports financial results yesterday.—AP

RIISING INTEREST RATES BOOST BOFA PROFITS

NEW YORK: Consumer banking giant Bank of America reported a 10 percent rise in second-quarter profits yesterday as gains from higher interest rates were more than enough to offset a drop in trading revenue. The Charlotte, North Carolina-based bank said it earned \$5.27 billion, or 49 cents per share, compared with \$4.78 billion, or 43 cents per share, in the same period a year earlier. The results beat analysts' forecasts of 43 cents a share.

Like its competitors, Bank of America benefited from rising interest rates. The Federal Reserve has raised interest rates three times since December, which has allowed banks like BofA to charge higher interest rates to borrowers when they take out loans.

Because of its large consumer banking division, Bank of America's fortunes, as the nation's second-largest bank by assets, are often more directly tied into interest rates than its rivals JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup and Goldman Sachs, who have much larger trading divisions and are less exposed to short-term interest rates. Bank of America's net interest income increased 9 percent in the quarter compared to a year ago to \$10.99 billion.

"Against modest economic growth ... we had one of the strongest quarters in our history," said BofA CEO Brian Moynihan in a statement.

BofA did experience some difficulty on its trading desks this quarter, however. The bank's trading division reported profits of \$830 million in the quarter, down 25 percent from a year earlier, largely due to a slide in trading revenue. Other major banks have said that last quarter's quieter market conditions kept traders on the sidelines, which in turn kept a lid on bank trading revenues. The pain was particularly felt in BofA's fixed-income trading division, where revenue fell 14 percent.—AP

EMERGING STOCKS JUMP, US SHARES LOWER

NEW YORK: US stocks opened lower yesterday, weighed down by earnings reports from some big names and concerns over President Donald Trump's ability to push through his pro-growth policies, following a setback to the healthcare bill.

Shares of Bank of America slipped 0.8 percent, while Goldman Sachs was down 0.9 percent after reporting quarterly results. Last week, shares of JPMorgan, Wells Fargo and Citigroup had taken a beating after their quarterly results and forecasts failed to excite investors.

Harley-Davidson slumped 9.6 percent after the motorcycle maker cut its 2017 shipments forecast.

The healthcare sector will be under scrutiny after the Republican healthcare bill to replace Obamacare sank in the Senate, with news that two Republican senators would not support the latest version of the bill.

The healthcare bill failure spelled uncertainty for President Donald Trump's agenda of tax reform and an infrastructure overhaul, leaving the president without any major legislative accomplishments six months into his tenure.

News on the healthcare bill sent the US dollar to a 10-month low against a basket of major currencies. "Investor sentiment is pessimistic this morning," said Naem Aslam, chief market analyst at ThinkMarkets UK. "The fiasco of the healthcare bill means that the tax reforms or the so called infrastructure spending plan are in jeopardy."

UnitedHealth Group fell 0.2 percent, while Johnson and Johnson fell 0.4 percent.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 61.69 points, or 0.29 percent, at 21,568.03, the S&P 500 was down 5.71 points, or 0.23 percent, at 2,453.43. The Nasdaq Composite was down 16.48 points, or 0.26 percent, at 6,297.95.



NEW YORK: Trader Andrew Silverman (right) works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange yesterday. Stocks opened slightly lower on Wall Street, led by declines in phone and technology companies. — AP

Eight of the 11 major S&P 500 sectors were lower, with the healthcare index's 0.50 percent fall leading the decliners. As the earnings season gets under way, the market will be keeping a close eye on corporate results to see if the high valuations are justified in the face of mixed economic data, tepid inflation and policy gridlock in Washington.

Analysts are estimating an 8.2 percent rise in second-quarter earnings for the S&P 500 companies from a year earlier. This follows a robust first quarter when US companies posted their best

earnings since 2011.

IBM, United Continental Holdings, CSX and Navient are among the companies scheduled to report results after the bell. Netflix jumped 8.8 percent after the streaming-television pioneer's added more subscribers than expected in the second quarter.

Emerging stocks

Emerging stocks flirted with 27-month highs yesterday while currencies firmed a touch as the

dollar traded at 10-month lows after the collapse of a key US healthcare bill raised doubts about President Donald Trump's reform agenda. MSCI's benchmark emerging stocks index held at levels not seen since end-April 2015, still underpinned by Monday's solid Chinese economic growth data, which beat consensus forecasts and showed firmer exports and production.

Chinese mainland shares rose 0.3 percent after falling 1.4 percent on Monday due to a sharp selloff in small caps, and Hong Kong gained 0.2 percent.

Russian dollar-denominated stocks also rose 0.4 percent, helped by higher oil prices. But gains were offset by losses in other markets. Turkish stocks fell 0.5 percent and Indian shares slipped 0.6 percent from the record highs hit in the previous session. Higher taxes on cigarette makers clobbered index heavyweight ITC.

Both the South African rand and Turkish lira held near two-week highs. On Monday Turkey extended emergency rule for another three months, almost a year after it was imposed in the wake of last July's failed military coup. The Hungarian forint was steady against the euro ahead of a central bank meeting at which it is expected to keep rates on hold at record lows of 0.9 percent.

The International Bank of Azerbaijan, the country's biggest state-run bank, will announce full voting results from creditors on its proposed \$3.3 billion debt restructuring after a claimants' meeting later in the day.

Meanwhile President Trump has threatened "strong and swift economic actions" if Venezuela goes ahead with plans to create a Constituent Assembly with powers to rewrite the constitution and annul the opposition-led legislature. — Reuters

TRUMP FAILURE ON HEALTHCARE SENDS DOLLAR TO 10-MONTH LOW

LONDON: The US dollar sank to a 10-month low against a basket of major currencies yesterday, as the collapse of President Donald Trump's latest healthcare bill eroded confidence in his ability to legislate to boost growth.

The Australian dollar was by far the biggest beneficiary, jumping 1.8 percent to more than two-year highs after minutes from a Reserve Bank policy meeting showed it turning more upbeat on the economy. In four weeks dominated by doubts over the Federal Reserve's ability to raise interest rates further, and signs that other major central banks are finally turning more hawkish, the dollar is now down more than 3 percent.

At 94.650 yesterday, the dollar index was down 8.8 percent from the 14-year peak of 103.82 hit on Jan. 3. The euro rose 0.7 percent to \$1.1564, its strongest since May last year. "Clearly anything that comes along at the moment just corroborates the market's negative attitude to the dollar," said Neil Mellor, senior FX strate-



A woman walks past an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei 225 index at a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. — AP

gist with Bank of New York Mellon in London.

"There's just not enough inflation at the moment. And anything like this (defeat for Trump) is liable to push it lower." Two more Republican

Senators, Jerry Moran and Mike Lee, announced their opposition late on Monday to a revised Republican healthcare bill, leaving efforts to pass the legislation in chaos.

"If the bills won't pass, there will

be no money for tax cuts. The implementation of his fiscal policy will be difficult," said Bart Wakabayashi, Tokyo Branch Manager of State Street.

Friday's weak reading on US inflation and retail sales also fanned speculation the Fed may not have justification for another rate hike by the end of this year, despite policymakers' projection for such a move. Money market instruments price in less than 50 percent chance of a rate increase for the rest of the year.

In contrast, central bank policymakers in the euro zone, Britain and Canada have recently signaled they could adjust their policies, with the Bank of Canada raising rates last week for the first time since 2010.

But the latest signs from New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom all point in the opposite direction. British inflation surprised by falling for the first time since October, knocking a whole cent off the value of the pound against the dollar and weakening it 1 percent against the euro. — Reuters

DROWNING FOR SAND: MINERS RISK ALL FOR INDIA'S BUILDING BOOM

MUMBAI: At dawn on a sultry summer morning, Balamar Route stood on a boat bobbing in a murky creek outside Mumbai, waiting for the sun to light up the water so he could dive in to dig sand. Minutes later he was neck-deep in Vasai Creek where untreated chemicals and industrial waste float - and, at times, the corpses of fellow workers.

While Indian authorities and mining officials deny the existence or the dangers of an illegal sand mining industry, a Thomson Reuters Foundation investigation found miners are dying to meet rising demand from a booming construction sector. Although there is no official data, studies estimate illegal extraction of sand in India generates about \$150 million a year with the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra the main hotspots.

An investigation in Mumbai, the nearby city of Thane, and villages in the neighboring district of Palghar over two months found evidence of at least two deaths in the past year and more in the past few years - none of which were reported.

"I don't feel scared," said Raute, 27, wiping the water from his eyes. "My only worry under water is to find good sand." Raute is among about 75,000 men, many from India's poorest areas, who work illegally as sand miners along Vasai Creek, diving 40 feet (12 metres) into pitchblack waters clutching just a metal rod for balance and an iron bucket to fill with sand. Although manually mined creek sand by cheap laborers plays second fiddle to the large quantities of sand extracted legally by suction pumps from rivers, it is in high demand in a nation of 1.3 billion people with fast growing cities.

The sand is used across the construction industry, in the flooring of upmarket apartments in Mumbai and Thane and to plaster the walls of cheap, illegal homes in distant suburbs where people are moving as space tightens in the cities. Sand mining has been declared illegal in most parts of India with countless court petitions highlighting the danger it poses to coastlines, marine life, and sand reserves.

Uneven depths in creeks and rivers caused by illegal sand mining can spark currents and whirlpools, posing a danger not just to miners but anyone using the rivers, with multiple drownings across India blamed on the black market for sand.

"INDIA'S GOLD"

The crackdown has helped make sand so valuable it has been dubbed "India's gold", with mining dominated by criminal gangs. The so-called "sand mafia" is a network of businessmen, transporters and also criminals who often enjoy political patronage and are unafraid to use violence. Despite the danger involved, divers keep on working, making 1,000 Indian rupees

(\$15) for a boat-full of sand and gravel, much higher than the average daily wage in India of about 270 rupees. Their employers sell the sand for up to 5,000 rupees to be sieved, washed, and bagged for building projects.

But the potential rewards and depleting reserves have intensified the risks, with frequent reports of opponents attacked and even murdered. Officials and bureaucrats have been arrested over the past year and corruption is rife. In June alone, a police inspector in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh was seriously injured and another policeman crushed to death in the northwestern state of Rajasthan for taking on the sand mafia - the latest in a string of attacks.

A district head in the southern state of Karnataka was attacked in a raid on an illegal sand mining site in April - the same month in which a policeman in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh was run down by a sand truck he tried to stop. Employers who identify themselves as Mumbai's native fishermen want the state government to legalize manual mining, arguing it does not harm the environment like suction pumps. Critics, however, say the real reason for seeking a legal stamp is to insulate them from hefty fines levied each time officials seize trucks filled with illegally mined sand. But there is virtually no discussion about the threat to human lives among the authorities or builders, although miners speak of death as a common occurrence.

"I have seen people fall and drown. There is no count of the number of people who have died here," said Radheshyam Sahni, who has been mining sand from the creek bed for 15 years and said he has seen at least five deaths himself.

DENIALS AND CORRUPTION

Local police denied miners were dying in the creeks. "We have registered cases of theft of sand and also violations of environmental norms but there are no cases ever of drowning," said S D Jadhav, a senior police inspector with the local police station, when asked about the deaths. Sandeep Khakha, a migrant worker from Chattisgarh who works on one of nine sand ports on a 16 km (10 mile) stretch of the Vasai Creek, said he saw two divers lose their lives last year. For the creek bed is not smooth but has sand dunes measuring 1.5 to 2 metres in height and scooping out sand loosens these structures. The work can be fatal if a sand dune falls on a miner, burying him if he fails to right his balance. "I never lose my grip on the metal rod. If I lose my balance, I am gone," said Khakha.

"It is pitch dark under the water. I just feel a wall of sand. I have to dig my feet in it, balance myself and push the bucket into it to fill it." Other workers at Vasai

Creek said deaths go unreported, with hundreds of boats in the creek nightly, and they only find out when the body of a drowned diver floats to the surface a day or two after disappearing or they find it buried on the creek bed. "There have been so many times when I have gone down for sand and touched a body," said Shiva Shahni, 35, a worker at a sand port in Bhiwandi, Thane, who migrated from the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Shankar Meghwali's son Mahesh is one of the miners who died.

Outside the family's mud house in Mohokhurd village in Vikramgad - a little over 100 km from Mumbai - is a holy basil plant where Meghwali and his wife buried the ashes of their son who drowned in Vasai Creek five years ago. He was 22, just married and with a baby girl. "He went down once and came up. The second time he went inside the water, he didn't come up," Sanguna, Mahesh's grandmother, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Mahesh's body was found floating in the water a day later. "My son would accompany me to the creek as a child and by the time he was 15 he joined the work himself," Meghwali said.

GRIM REMINDER

The father-son duo worked 20 days a month, bringing back earnings that helped them build a house that they painted blue and emblazoned with a boat to indicate their profession. The sculpted boat is now a grim reminder of their lost son. "I don't go sand mining anymore. My son lost his life working there. I feel uneasy going to the creek," Meghwali said.

About a dozen people from Meghwali's village worked as sand miners, but the numbers fell after his son died. Activists opposed to sand mining have been shocked by the deaths and suffering accompanying the surge in demand for sand. "I could never have imagined all these new buildings and beautiful constructions you see in Mumbai would have this terrible back history of human suffering," said Sumaira Abdulali, a leading voice against sand mining in India and founder of the environmental advocacy group Awaaz Foundation. "Even if people see (the creek), they would think these are fishing boats and not imagine that people are dying, suffering to produce construction (material)," said Abdulali, who has been attacked twice by the sand mafia for opposing mining. Campaigners fear the number of deaths will only get worse with the construction boom set to continue and demand for sand forecast to double by 2020 as the government pursues a "housing for all" program. They want workers to be given alternative and legal ways to make a living which will mean they have social security cover and compensation in the event of an accident or death. — Reuters

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report								
At 02:00 PM Previous Day								
Global Stock Indices								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Dow Jones	21,637.74	21,629.72	-8.02	▼	-0.04	9.45		
NASDAQ	6,312.47	6,314.43	1.96	▲	0.03	17.30		
S&P 500	2,459.27	2,459.14	-0.13	▼	-0.01	9.84		
Financial Times	7,404.13	7,399.31	-4.82	▼	-0.07	3.59		
DAX	12,587.16	12,480.18	-106.98	▼	-0.85	8.70		
CAC 40	5,230.17	5,200.12	-30.05	▼	-0.57	6.95		
Swiss	9,038.65	9,061.63	22.98	▲	0.25	10.24		
Nikkei 225	20,118.86	19,999.91	-118.95	▼	-0.59	4.63		
Topix	1,625.48	1,620.48	-5.00	▼	-0.31	6.71		
Hang Seng	26,470.58	26,524.94	54.36	▲	0.21	20.56		
Straits Times	3,298.24	3,306.08	7.84	▲	0.24	14.76		
MENA Stock Indices								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Kuwait	6,800.91	6,813.11	12.20	▲	0.18	15.48		
Saudi Arabia	7,288.89	7,249.71	-39.18	▼	-0.26	1.09		
Dubai	3,602.46	3,578.14	-24.32	▼	-0.68	2.03		
Abu Dhabi	4,575.61	4,571.91	-3.70	▼	-0.08	0.64		
Bahrain	1,315.34	1,314.94	-0.40	▼	-0.03	7.78		
Qatar	9,436.08	9,393.73	-42.35	▼	-0.45	-9.59		
Oman	5,073.29	5,063.85	-9.44	▼	-0.19	-12.27		
Lebanon	1,148.20	1,158.00	9.80	▲	0.85	-5.32		
Jordan	2,166.29	2,161.46	-4.83	▼	-0.22	-0.18		
Egypt	13,956.32	13,836.32	-120.00	▼	-0.86	13.05		
Morocco	12,288.89	12,277.19	-11.70	▼	-0.10	5.44		
Tunisia	6,212.44	6,174.01	-38.43	▼	-0.62	13.18		
Global Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwaiti Dinar		12.2782	3.2879	2.8449	2.5252	3.1363	368.44	4.1461
Saudi Riyal	0.08145		0.2678	0.2317	0.2057	0.2554	30.01	0.3377
US Dollar	0.30415	3.7344		0.8653	0.7680	0.9539	112.06	1.2610
Euro	0.35151	4.3158	1.1557		0.8879	1.1027	129.52	1.4580
Sterling Pound	0.39600	4.8622	1.3020	1.1263		1.2424	145.91	1.6422
Swiss Franc	0.31885	3.9149	1.0483	0.9069	0.8049		117.50	1.3220
Japanese Yen	0.00271	0.0333	0.0089	0.0077	0.0069	0.0085		0.0113
Australian Dollar	0.24119	2.9614	0.7930	0.6859	0.6089	0.7564	88.86	
MENA Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30415	3.7344	0.3743	3.6265	0.3835	3.6574	17.8600
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2879		12.2782	1.2306	11.9234	1.2607	12.0250	58.7210
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08145		0.1002	0.9711	0.1027	0.9794	4.7826
Bahraini Dinar	2.6717	0.81258	9.9770		9.6888	1.0244	9.7713	47.7157
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08387	1.0298	0.1032		0.1057	1.0085	4.9249
Omani Riyal	2.6079	0.79319	9.7389	0.9761	9.4576		9.5381	46.5771
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08316	1.0211	0.1023	0.9916	0.1048		4.8833
Egyptian Pound	0.0560	0.01703	0.2091	0.0210	0.2031	0.0215	0.2048	
Global Interest Rates								
Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year			
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.19	1.50	1.75	2.00	2.31			
US Dollar	1.18	1.22	1.30	1.45	1.73			
Euro	-0.40	-0.39	-0.37	-0.30	-0.18			
Sterling Pound	0.23	0.25	0.28	0.42	0.63			
Swiss Franc	-0.79	-0.78	-0.72	-0.64	-0.49			
Australian Dollar	1.57	1.65	1.61	1.64	1.72			
Japanese Yen	-0.04	-0.04	-0.01	0.00	0.11			
Global Bond Yields								
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year				
United States	1.35	1.84	2.29	2.88				
Europe	-0.65	-0.15	0.55	1.29				
United Kingdom	0.24	0.60	1.21	1.85				
Commodities								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Kuwait Oil	45.95	45.96	0.01	▲	0.02	-15.80		
Brent	47.72	47.59	-0.13	▼	-0.27	-14.54		
West Texas	46.07	45.97	-0.10	▼	-0.22	-16.67		
Gold	1233.90	1237.76	3.86	▲	0.31	6.65		
Silver	16.07	16.17	0.10	▲	0.62	0.82		



GS8 OBTAINS 5-STAR SAFETY RATINGS

GAC VEHICLE WINS HIGHEST SCORE OF C-NCAP IN MEDIUM AND LARGE-SIZED SUV

KUWAIT: On July 3, China Automotive Technology & Research Center (CATRC) held the second Group, 2017 C-NCAP results announcement in Tianjin. With an excellent performance of 57.7 points, GS8 obtained 5-star safety ratings and outperformed its counterparts, becoming the "safety champion" of medium and large-sized SUVs since adoption of new test standards by C-NCAP and setting a safety benchmark of the medium and large-sized SUV.

C-NCAP is the highest assessment standard in China's automobile safety sector. In particular, CATRC, since adoption of C-NCAP Management Regulation (edition 2015) and collision standard, has put forward stricter requirements to the safety of products to be tested. In the second batch of collision test in 2017, GS8 lived up to expectations and obtained 5-star safety ratings with an outstanding performance of 57.7 points, which is the highest score among medium and large-sized SUVs since implementation of the Management Regulations (edition 2015) and exceeds that of counterparts such as Highlander (55.5 points), EDGE (56.5 points), Changan CS95(54.1 points) and Haval H7 (57.4points). That manifests GAC MOTOR's system strength in insistence on forward development and international quality standard to manufacture vehicles in an all-round manner.

The moment of GS8's 100% front collision against a rigid wall

In the test of 100 percent front collision against a rigid wall, GS8 got a high score of 16.37 points: front cabin crumpled due to energy absorption and airbags popped up normally; column A incurred no obvious deformation; four doors could be opened normally; passengers were fully protected. In the strictest 40 percent front offset collision test, GS8 won a high score of 16.73 points: front anti-collision steel beams fully transmitted collision energy, front cabins crumpled due to energy absorption and airbags popped out normally; Column A incurred no obvious deformation and four doors could be opened normally.

In the side collision test, GS8 got a full score of 18.00 points: side air curtains and airbags popped out correctly; Column B incurred no obvious deformation; side anti-collision steel beams ensured the safety of passengers. GS8 performed well in the seat whiplash test, obtaining 3.57 points. Three items for awarded scores (3 points): reminder



Never before has the interior space been so intelligible



of side seat belts for front passengers, side airbags and air curtains and ESC device. In the front collision test: the dummy in the car was fully protected and doors could be opened normally.

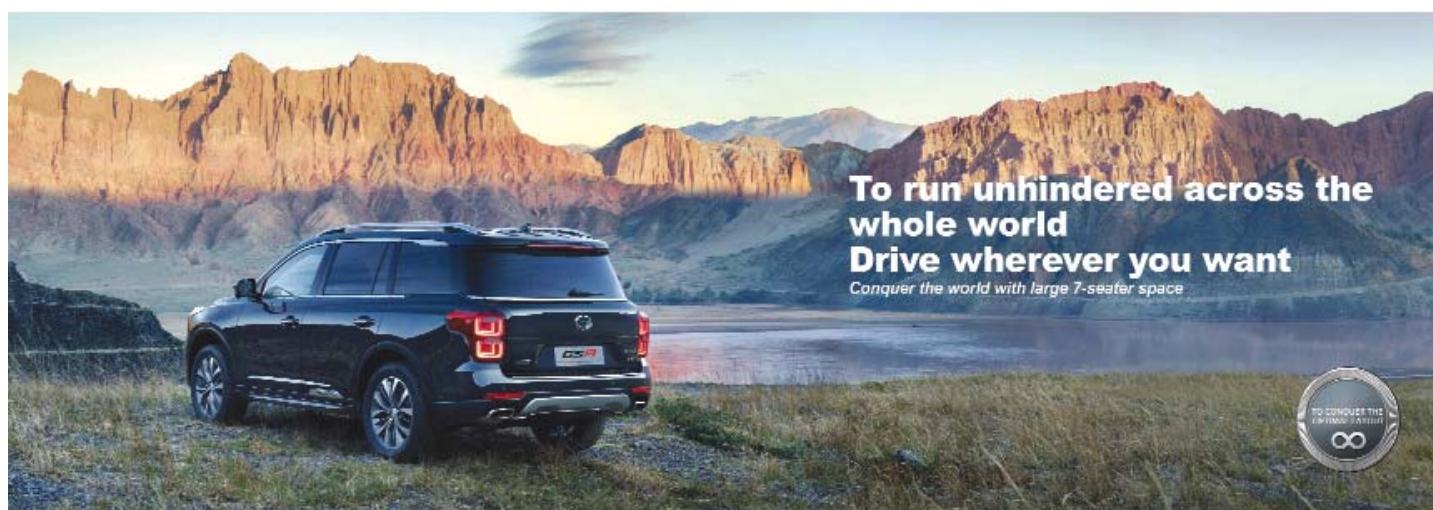
High-tech 5-star safety ratings provide you with safe travel

GS8 was designed according to the standard higher than 5-star safety ratings. And it takes 5 years to develop GS8 based on G-CPMA. The second-generation GAC (geometric absorption control) technology tested on multiple models is adopted for GS8 with utilization ratio of high-strength steel in passenger compartment exceeding 95 percent and compressive strength on the roof and maximum pressure of resistance to extrusion at side doors far higher than regulatory requirements. Meanwhile, GS8 is provided with

Bosch's nine-generation ESP 9.1 and 8 airbags, ensuring driving safety in a comprehensive manner.

High-strength steel security body of GAC 2.0

By virtue of product value beyond users' expectations, GS8, with supply failing to meet demands since its launch, has exceeded 10,000 units in sales for two consecutive months. Limited by insufficient supply of transmissions, GS8 achieved total sales of over 43,500 units from January to May, creating the best sales among Chinese luxury flagship SUVs. GS8 obtained C-NCAP 5-star safety ratings with a high score, reaching win-win results in market and brand with increasingly mature quality. Mutawa Alkazi Company is the sole agent of all GAC vehicles in Kuwait including the GS8.



EQUATE RESUMES OPERATIONS AT ETHYLENE UNIT IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: The EQUATE Group, a global producer of petrochemicals, announced the successful restart of its Ethylene Unit 2 (EU2) in Kuwait, following a brief shutdown for technical reasons during last week.



Mohammad Husain

EQUATE Group's President & CEO Mohammad Husain said, "Operations at our EU2 have resumed normally in record time following repairs. Both the Ethylene Glycol (EG) and Polyethylene (PE) plants in Kuwait have returned to the usual production levels as they were impacted by the temporary shutdown of EU2."

The EU2 has a production capacity

of 850,000 metric tons annually (MTA) and is owned by The Kuwait Olefins Company (TKOC), part of the EQUATE Group.

The dedication and efforts of EQUATE Group's employees were lauded by Husain as operations were resumed within a timeframe less than the originally planned two weeks and in absolute abidance to safety standards. The EQUATE Group is a global producer of petrochemicals and the world's second largest producer of Ethylene Glycol (EG).

The Group has industrial complexes in Kuwait, North America and Europe that annually produce over 5 million tons of Ethylene, EG, Polyethylene (PE) and Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET). The products are marketed throughout Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The EQUATE Group's shareholders include Petrochemical Industries



شركاء في النجاح
Partners in Success

Company (PIC), The Dow Chemical Company (Dow), Boubyan Petrochemical Company (BPC) and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC). The Group is a leading enterprise that pursues sustainability wherever it operates through partnerships in fields that include the environment, economy and society.

The EQUATE Group includes EQUATE Petrochemical Company (EQUATE), its subsidiaries and The Kuwait Olefins Company (TKOC).

ABK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF ITS FIRST 'SPEND AND WIN SKYWARD MILES' DRAW

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its first 'Spend and Win Skyward Miles' monthly draw on 12 July, 2017 at the Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce.

The winners this month are:

- 1) Fahad Jassim Abdullah, Khaitan Branch, Winner of 500,000 Skywards Miles.
- 2) Mohammad Khalifah Abdullah, Qurain Branch, Winner of 300,000 Skywards Miles.
- 3) Bawader Barak Abdulmohsen, Jabriyah Branch, Winner of 200,000 Skywards Miles.

To take part in one of the three monthly draws, ABK Emirates Credit & Prepaid cardholders need to spend a minimum of KD 100 during the following transaction periods: 1 June - 30 June, 1 July to 31 July and 1 August to 31 August, to win the first,



second or third prize of 500,000; 300,000 or 200,000 Skywards Miles respectively each month; a total of 3 Million Skywards Miles to be won during the promotion period.

The more points earned by ABK cardholders the higher the chances to win. Cardholders that win in any of the draws are qualified to participate

further in subsequent draws, giving customers the chance to win more than once! The Bank's next draw will be held on 9 August, 2017 where three new lucky winners will be announced. All winners will be contacted personally and a weekly announcement will be made through the media with the winners' names.

ALI AMER TO LEAD CISCO'S GLOBAL SERVICE PROVIDER BUSINESS IN MEA

DUBAI: Cisco announced yesterday that Ali Amer has been appointed Managing Director for Global Service Provider Sales in the Middle East and Africa at Cisco.

In his new role, Ali will be responsible for helping telecommunications service providers transform their networks, businesses and customers' experiences to capture the opportunities created by the digital era. In addition to driving the segment's sales strategy and growth across the Middle East and Africa, he will also focus on streamlining business operations, including sales and channel strategy, business development and customer support.

Amer will report to Peter Karlstromer, Senior Vice President for Global Service Provider Sales, Cisco EMEA. He will work closely with the regions' mobile operators to develop their digital transformation roadmaps as they evolve their



Ali Amer

business and revenue models to meet the growing demand for data services and financial and commercial services.

"It gives me great pleasure to announce Ali as the new leader for our Service Provider business in the Middle East and Africa," said Karlstromer. "Ali is a highly regarded leader known for his close working relationships and deep understanding of the telecoms industry landscape. His expertise and ability to build high performance teams will undoubtedly accelerate our momentum in delivering the digital ecosystem and network infrastructure that our customers need to capture rising opportunities."

Amer joined Cisco in 2013, most recently serving as Managing Director for Cisco's Service Provider segment in the Middle East and Turkey. He brings to the role over 25 years of industry

experience and was previously the Senior Telecom and IT Consultant in the same unit, advising multinationals and start-ups on market entrance and go-to-market strategies in the region. Prior to Cisco, Amer spent fifteen years at Motorola Networks rising to the position of Vice President and General Manager for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, where he ran an organization of 2,500 employees and business professionals with annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion.

"I am excited to take on this expanded role within our Service Provider business as Cisco continues to push the envelope with solutions, technologies and a vision that drives exponential value and success for our customers and partners," said Ali Amer, Managing Director, Global Service Provider Sales, Cisco Middle East and Africa. "With its significant growth potential, a rapidly expanding population, and increasing smartphone penetration, the telecommunications market in the Middle East and Africa is at an important junction. Cisco's technology capabilities and strong partner-

ships will play a pivotal role in enabling SPs to become truly intelligent network operators that are able to unlock opportunities, enhance business agility, and drive service innovation and customer-experience enhancement."

The next phase for the Middle East and Africa telecommunications sector will be defined by an explosion in data demand. The annual Cisco Visual Networking Index (VNI) forecast projects a 12-fold increase in Middle East and Africa mobile data traffic from 2016 to 2021, a compound annual growth rate of 65 percent. By 2021, the Middle East and Africa will have 2.4 billion networked devices (up from 1.7 billion in 2016) and 1.4 networked devices per capita, while 75 percent of all networked devices will be mobile-connected in 2021. Across the Middle East and Africa, strong growth in mobile users, smartphones and Internet of Things (IoT) connections combine with network speed improvements and growth in mobile video consumption to significantly increase mobile data traffic over the next five years.



ASPEN: Michael Dell, CEO of Dell Technologies, speaks at the Fortune Brainstorm Tech conference in Aspen, Colorado on Monday. — AFP

MICHAEL DELL TAKES LONG VIEW WITH 'DELL 2.0'

ASPEN, United States: His first company became the world's largest maker of personal computers. Now Michael Dell says he is building a broader technology firm with similar ambitions. Dell Technologies is the result of the private buyout of the original Dell computer firm, bolstered by the massive \$67 billion deal for computer storage firm EMC and other software and services acquisitions.

Interviewed at the Fortune Brainstorm Tech conference Monday in Aspen, Colorado, Dell said the private model allows his firm to take a longer-term focus to grow the company. "Right at the moment we went private, we started gaining (market) share," Dell said. "We shifted our focus for more three-year, five-year, 10-year (plans), we invested heavily in R&D and innovations ... we stopped thinking about the short term as much."

Dell described the new firm—which some refer to as Dell 2.0—as "the essential infrastructure company" for information technology which can offer an array of business services and products.

The new Dell includes EMC, which was the world's largest computer storage firm, as well as cloud computing unit VMware and a stake in the software group Pivotal. While Dell declined to name his main competitors, he said that "none of them have the unique set of capabilities or the breadth that we have now."

He noted that Dell Technologies can be a key player in a variety of sectors because of its strengths across the board—in data, software and hardware. Asked about artificial intelligence competitors, Dell said, "When you have no data to put in AI, it doesn't do anything. Then you need the computing devices."

The new Dell won regulatory approval last year for the record buyout of EMC, accelerating its move into the cloud and mobile computing market. In 1984, Michael Dell founded the personal computing maker, which struggled amid a shift into smartphones and tablets.

He won the backing in 2013 of private-equity firm Silver Lake Partners to buy out other shareholders to take the company private. — AFP

SAMSUNG TO RECOVER RARE METALS IN GALAXY NOTE 7S

RECOVERY OF COMPONENTS TO REDUCE WASTE

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics plans to recover gold and other metals and components from recalled Galaxy Note 7 smartphones to reduce waste.

The South Korean company said yesterday that it expects to retrieve 157 tons of gold, silver, cobalt, copper and other metals from millions of smartphones that were recalled and discontinued last year after their batteries were found to be prone to catching fire. It didn't say how it would use the retrieved metals.

The phones' display modules, memory chips, camera models and other components will be separated from the Note 7 for sale or recycling, Samsung said in a statement. In another effort to reduce waste, Samsung has begun selling 400,000 units of Galaxy Note FE phones in South Korea made from unused parts

of recalled Note 7 smartphones. The Note 7 crisis was one of the biggest black eyes in Samsung's recent history, costing the company more than \$5 billion. Airlines banned passengers from carrying Note 7s on flights due to safety concerns and millions of smartphones were shipped back to Samsung.

The phone recall fiasco prompted Greenpeace to urge the South Korean tech giant to sell longer lasting electronics products that are easier to repair and upgrade. Environmentalists fault smartphones for increasing the amount of tech waste, though some experts note that by replacing other appliances they may actually decrease the amount of high-tech-related rubbish overall. Samsung is the world's largest smartphone maker. — AP



SEOUL: A man passes by advertisements of Samsung Electronics Galaxy Note Fan Edition at a mobile phone shop in Seoul yesterday. — AP

CHINA USERS REPORT WHATSAPP CHAOS AMID CENSORSHIP FEARS

BEIJING: Users of WhatsApp in China and security researchers have reported widespread service disruptions amid fears that the popular messaging service may be at least partially blocked by authorities in the world's most populous country.

WhatsApp users in the country reported yesterday on other social media platforms that the app was partly inaccessible unless virtual private network software was used to circumvent China's censorship apparatus, known colloquially as The Great Firewall.

WhatsApp, which is owned by Facebook and offers end-to-end encryption, has a relatively small but loyal following among Chinese users seeking a greater degree of privacy from government snooping than afforded by popular domestic app WeChat, which is ubiquitous but closely monitored and filtered.

Questions over WhatsApp's status come at a politically fraught time in China. The government is in the midst of preparing for a sensitive party congress while Chinese censors this week reved up a sprawling effort to scrub all mention of Liu Xiaobo, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate who died Thursday in government custody.

A report this week by the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab detailed how Chinese censors were able to intercept, in real time, images commemorating Liu in private one-on-one chats on WeChat, a feat that hinted at the government's image recognition capabilities.

It appeared that pictures were also the focus of the move to censor WhatsApp. Late yesterday, users in China could send texts over WhatsApp without the use of VPNs, but not images. Nadim Kobeissi, a cryptography researcher based in Paris who has been investigating the WhatsApp disruption, said he believed The Great Firewall was only blocking access to WhatsApp servers that route media between users, while leaving servers that handle text messages untouched.

Kobeissi said voice messages also appeared to be blocked. But there was no evidence to suggest that Chinese authorities were decrypting WhatsApp messages, he added. A Chinese censorship researcher known by his pseudonym Charlie Smith said that authorities appeared to be blocking non-text WhatsApp messages wholesale precisely because they have not been able to selectively block content on the platform like they have with WeChat,

which is produced by Shenzhen-based internet giant Tencent and legally bound to cooperate with Chinese security agencies.

Because WhatsApp content is encrypted, "they have moved to brute censor all non-text content," Smith said in an email. "It would not be surprising to find that everything on WhatsApp gets blocked, forcing users in China to use unencrypted, monitored and censored services like WeChat."

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said he had no information on the issue when asked by reporters. Facebook, which owns WhatsApp, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

WhatsApp is one of the world's most widely used messaging services, with over 1.2 billion users.

In 2015, China blocked Telegram, another encrypted messaging service, after it became a popular platform for activists and dissidents to share information. China has also blocked Twitter, Facebook and YouTube for years, with officials arguing that foreign social media services operating beyond their control pose a threat to China's national security. — AP



TOKYO: This general view photo shows a 3.4-meter-high and 2.6-meter-deep dome-type widescreen where people can sit (at right) and experience 8K video images projected via a new virtual reality (VR) motion ride system, during a press preview in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP photos



TOKYO: A journalist looks at 8K video images projected on a 3.4-meter-high and 2.6-meter-deep dome-type widescreen as they experience a new virtual reality (VR) motion ride system, during a press preview in Tokyo yesterday.

JAPANESE ENGINEERS DEVELOP HEADSET-LESS VR SYSTEM

TOKYO: A virtual reality "space ride" in which viewers feel as if they are flying through the air inside a giant glass ball has been developed in Japan. Unlike conventional VR systems, the "8K:VR Ride"—which resembles a cross between a theme park ride and a miniature IMAX theatre—does not require users to wear any headset.

Instead they are placed on two swivelling, elevated

chairs just in front of a semi-spherical screen which entirely engulfs their field of vision. "Unlike the conventional flat screen, you can see images coming closer to you physically in this dome screen," said Makoto Nakahira, an engineer at Wonder Vision Techno Laboratory.

"This is a system in which you can experience visuals that you have never seen before."

The experimental technology was unveiled to Japanese media for the first time yesterday before a scheduled showing at Japan's Digital Content Expo 2017 in October. Its name refers to the screen's super-high definition 8K technology, which is 16 times more detailed than most current HD images. Wonder Vision co-developed the system with Japan-based NHK Enterprises and NHK Media Technology

both affiliated with public broadcaster NHK and RecoChoku Labo. The space ride was first showcased at SXSW 2017, a major conference on convergence in the interactive, film and music industries, in Austin, Texas in March. The system features a hemispherical theatre known as Sphere 5.2—a screen 5.2 metres (17 feet) wide, 3.4 metres tall and 2.6 metres deep. — AFP

FEARSOME T-REX WAS A PLODDER, NOT A SPRINTER, RESEARCHERS SAY

LONDON: Line up Usain Bolt at the starting blocks with a Tyrannosaurus rex and the dinosaur would be left behind in the sprinter's dust, according to computer-assisted research that turns long-held assumptions on their head. While the running ability of T-rex has been hotly debated among palaeontologists for decades, the consensus from previous biomechanical models was that the Cretaceous-era

carnivore could manage speeds of up to 45 mph (75 kmh). That's more than half as fast again as the quickest man in history. But because of its size and weight, the predator would actually have broken its legs had it tried to break into a sprint, the University of Manchester research showed.

"The muscles need to be able to generate sufficient power to allow high-speed locomotion, but at the same time the

skeleton has to be able to cope with the loads generated by the high speed," said Professor William Sellers from the university's School of Earth and Environmental Sciences "...This is where it fails. T-rex's skeleton is simply not strong enough for running locomotion," he told Reuters.

Researchers used an engineering technique called multibody dynamic analysis, coupled with machine learning, to pro-

duce what they say is the most accurate simulation of T-rex's gait and biomechanics to date. They concluded that T-rex was limited to walking speeds of about 5 meters/second, equating to 12 mph (18 kmh) — less than half the speed of Usain Bolt's personal best of 27.8 mph.

A study published in Royal Society journal Biological Sciences in 2007 suggested an at that time conservative top speed of

18 mph — still fast enough to chase down top runners over longer distances. Sellers said his study had forced a re-think on how T-rex caught its prey. "It certainly would not have been able to chase down faster-moving prey animals," said Sellers. "That leaves other hunting options such as ambush, and of course it means that (discredited) ideas such as 'T-rex the scavenger' have to be reconsidered." — Reuters

ISRAELI 'MENTAL FIRST-AID' METHOD OFFERED TO ATTACK VICTIMS ABROAD

TEL AVIV: An Israeli who developed an unorthodox model for treating mental trauma and preventing post-traumatic stress disorder during his years in the military is now sharing it with first responders in other countries. Moshe Farchi says Israel's decades of conflict have afforded it "lots of experience" in dealing with trauma, leading to effective and science-based models of work. "We made many mistakes and are learning from them," the head of stress, trauma and resilience studies at Israel's Tel-Hai College told AFP.

Farchi's model was developed during his years in the Israeli army, where he served as a mental health officer. He saw shortcomings in such treatment because it "failed to reduce the element of anxiety and perception of the event as traumatic." Farchi, a clinical social worker by training, also uti-

said. Activating the person includes asking concrete and factual questions, giving him or her the ability to make decisions—initially easy ones, such as if they want to drink a glass of water or take a break.

The idea of "resetting" a person who underwent a traumatic event using Farchi's method can have both immediate and long-term positive effects, according to the psychiatrist who currently heads the clinical branch in the Israeli army's mental health department. "The two main goals are to quickly return a person to being functional in a way that would reduce the risk of getting killed, and reducing the risk for more serious disorders" in the future, such as PTSD, said Lieutenant Colonel Dr Ariel Ben Yehuda.

People in life-threatening situations tend to feel confused, lonely, frozen or disoriented, said Ben Yehuda, and "Farchi's method addresses these issues."

"This isn't psychiatric treatment, rather something very focused. You can do it in two minutes, but the idea is to 'reset' the person," Ben Yehuda noted. The system is currently being implemented as part of soldiers' medical training, and takes just a few hours to teach.

'Not left alone'

One place where Farchi has taken his method is the British city of Manchester where a suicide bombing killed 22 and wounded more than 100 on May 22. The attack came as Dov Benyaacov-Kurtzman, a Scotland-born social worker who had lived in Israel for years, was working in Manchester on establishing a centre to provide emergency response for stress and trauma. Benyaacov-Kurtzman had planned to launch his organization, called Heads Up, in six months. But the Manchester attack galvanized him into starting work and reaching out to Farchi to help with training the group's professionals and volunteers.

"At that moment they called and said 'come,'" Farchi said recently in Tel Aviv before flying to Manchester. Farchi has already trained local professionals who can carry out a "cultural translation" of the method in countries such as Germany, the Philippines and Argentina.

He was also set to travel for training in London. A key aspect of Farchi's method is that it should not be reserved for professionals, but spread to as many people as possible. The 2014 conflict between Israel and Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip was an opportunity to examine Farchi's method.

Residents in Ofakim, an Israeli town that was subject to heavy rocket fire from Gaza, underwent Farchi's intervention, showing no occurrence of PTSD in the months following the war, Farchi said. "The chance that a person (experiencing trauma) will be next to a professional is very small, but that a layman will be next to him is very high," Farchi said. — AFP



TEL AVIV: Israeli Moshe Farchi, the founder and head of the Stress, Trauma and Resilience Studies at Tel-Hai College, speaks during an interview with an AFP journalist in the city of Tel Aviv. — AFP

lized his experience as a volunteer first responder in emergency medical organizations. His principles are simple, easily applicable and, to the layman, possibly counter-intuitive. They are employed in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event such as an attack, serving as mental first-aid. "One thinks that a person in distress should be contained, held," he told AFP. But providing emotional support activates the recipient's emotional part of the brain at the expense of the area responsible for the ability to think and make decisions, he said.

'Resetting' the brain

Thinking and making decisions are what the person needs to do in order to be freed of a "sense of helplessness." "The given is that we can't stop the threat—the rocket has hit, the event has taken place," he said. "What we can do is stop the helplessness." "The opposite of helplessness is effective action. That's why first of all we need to activate the person, to diminish the helplessness," Farchi



SAN RAFAEL, Ecuador: Scientists work at the amphibian conservation center Jambatu, in the locality of San Rafael, southeast Quito. — AFP photos



SAN RAFAEL, Ecuador: View of a marsupial frog (*Gastrotheca Orophylax*) at the amphibian conservation center Jambatu.



SAN RAFAEL, Ecuador: View of a Cristal del Sol frog (*Hyalinobatrachium aureoguttatum*).

SELLING \$600 FROGS-TO SAVE THEM FROM POACHERS

QUITO: Poachers in Ecuador have long known the hefty prices their country's rare frogs can fetch. But now environmentally conscious firms are starting to sell the amphibians too—to try to save them from the black market and threatened extinction. In San Rafael, just outside the capital Quito, the scientific company Wikiri is raising 12 species of frog. Some are native only to Ecuador, while others are at risk at disappearing from their natural habitat elsewhere. After being raised in hundreds of terrariums, they are sent to Canada, the United States, Japan and various European countries for up to \$600 each.

That high value "gives you an idea just how profitable that activity (frog poaching) can be," Lola Guarderas, manager of the facility, told AFP. To illustrate her point, Guarderas showed a glass frog, with translucent skin through which its organs and beating red heart could be seen, as it moved along the edge of its container. On the company's grounds — 5,000 square meters (54,000 square feet) made up of big gardens alongside a river—the frogs are reproduced in labs, so as not to affect local fauna.

They are then put into an "ethical bio-trade" circuit that is the opposite of the poachers' illegal smuggling and sales. "It's totally different from the illegal trade in species, of those who go directly into areas to catch all (the frogs) they can to then export them, to the detriment of the animals in the forest," Guarderas said.

Breakthrough lab reproduction

As well as running the frog farm, she is a coordinator for the Jambatu Center, which researches and preserves amphibians, and is hosted by Wikiri. Ecuador, a relatively small South American nation, is home to one of the biggest displays of biodiversity on the planet. It holds more than 600 species of frogs, of which nearly half can be found only in



SAN RAFAEL, Ecuador: View of a 'diablito' frog (*Dendrobates sylvaticus*).

the country. According to Ecuador's environment ministry, 186 of the species are at risk of becoming extinct.

Authorities have banned the capture and sale of all wild animals. But that hasn't stopped the illegal trade from the Amazon-sprawled across Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Guyana and Suriname. The activity is estimated to have brought in \$1.3 billion for those involved between 2005 and 2014, ecological associations say. Recently, the Jambatu Center announced something of a breakthrough: The reproduction in captivity for the first time of *Atelopus ignescens*, or the Quito stubfoot toad. The black amphibian used to be widespread in Ecuador's Andean regions but was thought to have become extinct three decades ago—until a tiny population was found last year. Forty-three of the toads were taken to the Jambatu Center which, after several tries, managed to procure 500 tadpoles from one couple.

Illegal trafficking is 'big'

In total, the research facility works on around 40

species typically found in Ecuador or otherwise native to several other South American countries. A dozen are offered for export, including the *Agalychnis spurrellii*, or gliding tree frog; the *Cruziohyla calcarifer*, or splendid leaf frog, with its striped yellow belly and long legs; and the *Hyalinobatrachium aureoguttatum*, which has a translucent body dotted with yellow spots. Around 500 frogs per year are sold, adding to an annual flow from other Latin American countries that amounts to as many as 7,000, sent everywhere in the world.

The hope is to undermine the black market trafficking of the animals. "Illicit trafficking in amphibians in the world is a very big activity," biologist Luis Coloma, director of the Jambatu Center, told AFP. That activity adds to other dangers faced by the frogs, some species of which risk sudden extinction as their habitat is wiped out by encroachment, pollution or climate change. According to Ecuador's environment ministry, 18 frog species have already apparently disappeared, robbing the country of some of its rich biodiversity. — AFP

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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
ر. فهد علي المخيزيم

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KUWAIT MARRIOTT HOTELS OFFER HOT SUMMER DEALS



KUWAIT: Nestled in the heart of Kuwait city, JW Marriott Hotel Kuwait City, Courtyard by Marriott Hotel Kuwait City and Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait City are offering special summer packages for locals and residents in Kuwait, as well as visiting families from other GCC countries. The special summer deals offer guests discounts of up to 15% on rooms for Marriott Rewards Members and 10% for non-members.

Guests can enjoy delicious buffets and a la Carte menu at the Courtyard by Marriott's Atrium restaurant and the renowned Indian restaurant Soul and Spice, offering the perfect blend of Indian spices in a contemporary presentation. The restaurant offers a new a la Carte menu featuring authentic Indian dishes. An exciting buffet at the JW Marriott Kuwait's main restaurant eCrossroads will

be provided, featuring mouth-watering delicacies and an open kitchen for freshly cooked dishes. Moreover, Blendz restaurant, located at the lobby of Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait City, offers its guests a unique flavor of modern recipes in a very relaxed ambience making it a perfect place to spend time with family and friends.

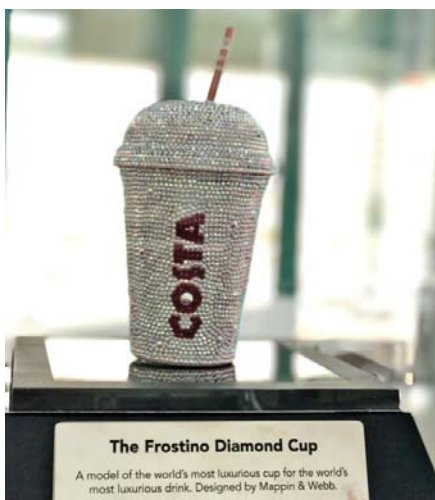
Guests residing at the hotels can also

benefit from a 30% discount in all restaurants. For those with kids aged 12 years and under, they will receive 50% off on meals. Free valet parking and shared airport transfers will also be available along with early check-in and late check-out subject to availability. It is also worthy to note that JW Marriott Kuwait and Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait have a direct exclusive entrance to Salhiya and Arraya

Shopping Malls, where guests could shop between an array of world-class retail brands. Mr George Aoun, Cluster General Manager at Kuwait Marriott Hotels said, "With everything from value-oriented hotels to the finest dining and ultimate shopping experience under one roof, our goal is to make vacationing easy, affordable, and as memorable as possible for our guests."



WIN AN EXCLUSIVE COSTA COFFEE FROSTINO CUP DESIGNED BY THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND'S JEWELER



KUWAIT: Costa Coffee launched its "Stars of Summer" campaign which revolves around glamour and indulgence, with three exclusive and cooling Frostino flavors. This campaign allows Costa Coffee customers to vote for their favorite Frostino flavor for a chance to win the Frostino Cup. The prize, valued at GBP 1500, is encrusted with crystals, and designed in partnership with the Crown Jeweler and senior craftsmen at Mappin & Webb.

The newly introduced Frostino flavors are the ideal drinks to cool off in the heat of the summer. The Banoffee Frostino is made with banana and toffee, blended with cream and crunchy biscuits with a drizzle of caramel for a real indulgent treat. The Caramel Crunch Frostino; is a blend of caramel and cream topped with chocolate sauce and some more crunchy biscuits, specially made for caramel lovers. Finally, the Tiramisu Frostino; is made with our Mocha Italia coffee blended with cream and biscuits, finished with a dusting of chocolate. Each Frostino flavor is endorsed by our social media heartthrobs: Bibi Alabdulmohsen, Fatma Almomen and Yacoub Boshehri.

The crystal encrusted cup is one of the five models available around the world. They are modeled after the actual Frostino Diamond cup, which is designed with 13,000 stones, of which 167ct are diamonds, 12,200 diamond stones, 7ct rubies,

and 530 ruby stones. The Cup is also made of 1.5kg of platinum and 100g of rose gold, valuing it at a staggering GBP 1.5 million.

Costa continuously strives to introduce new food options to its customers. As part of the "Stars of Summer" campaign, lighter options were added to Costa's food menu. The introduction of the new Low Fat Banana Cinnamon Muffin topped with crunchy cornflakes, quickly became a morning favorite. Costa also added a light lunch option, The Gourmet Chicken Salad, a mix of red and white quinoa, grilled teriyaki chicken and broccoli topped with peanut dressing and white Chinese noodles. Lastly, a delicious Healthy Turkey Baguette, consisting of layered turkey, fresh pesto, rocca, tomato and emmental cheese in a brown baguette, also made it to the wide and varied Costa menu.

Through its "Stars of Summer" campaign, Costa Coffee, part of Alghanim Industries Food and Beverage portfolio, continues to bring quality, care and exclusive tastes to customers, ensuring that they enjoy every moment of their experience at its stores. Costa Coffee guarantees a different and unique taste every time, enabling coffee lovers to savor irresistible flavors and intrigue their taste buds with its wide range of food menu. Costa is the UK's favorite coffee shop, having been awarded "Best Branded Coffee Shop Chain in the UK and Ireland" by Allegra Strategies for seven years running since 2010.

AL MULLA EXCHANGE HOSTS CONCERT FOR PHILIPPINES

KUWAIT: Al Mulla Exchange organized a musical event for the Philippines community in Kuwait on the 14th and 15th of July. HE Ambassador of the Philippines to Kuwait, Renato PO Villa was the chief guest at the event on 14th July. The following day the event honored Hengie Vargas Taton RN, the president of Pinoy Nurses Association Kuwait, as the chief guest.

Musical sensations, Aia de Leon and Joshua Desiderio, were hosted to provide their fans in Kuwait a wholesome entertainment for two days. The duo belted out songs that were dear to the audience and had them swaying as they stole the thunder on the stage. Aia is the former vocalist of the band Imago, popular for their timeless hits such as Akap, Sundo, Taralets, and Anino. Aside from providing the distinctive vocals on their tracks Aia de Leon is also a songwriter whose songs combine truth and vulnerability. Her words and melodies have captivated thousands of her fans.

After leaving the band, she continued to enthrall her fans with scores like "Tao Lang." She later went on to team up with indie music artists Carlos Castano and Edward Enriquez to produce her new record. Joshua Desiderio is a composer, known for Flames: The Movie (1997), Malakas! Using ABCD for the Design of Sustainable Cities (2010) and Party Pilipinas (2010) among others. He is a well-known face in the Philippines and abroad. The main sponsor of the event was BDO (Banco de oro), along with Philippine Airlines the



travel partner, City Van the logistic partner and German Press the print partner.

Speaking to the media, Rakesh Joshi General Manger Al Mulla Exchange, thanked all the sponsors for making such a wonderful event possible, and added that the Philippines community in Kuwait have offered their valuable

patronage to the company for a long time. "Al Mulla Exchange has organized several shows in the past to provide our customers entertainment with a homely flavor. The Filipino expatriate community are part of our strong and loyal customer base, and events of this nature are a token of our gratitude to them."



ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:45 Animal Cops Philadelphia
- 01:40 Guardians Of Rescue Tanked
- 02:35 Wildest Middle East
- 04:15 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 05:02 Big Fish Man
- 05:49 Guardians Of Rescue
- 06:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 07:25 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 08:15 Guardians Of Rescue
- 09:10 Wildest Middle East
- 10:05 Tanked
- 11:00 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 11:55 Animal Cops Philadelphia
- 12:50 Guardians Of Rescue
- 13:45 Big Fish Man
- 14:40 Wildest Middle East
- 15:35 Tanked
- 16:30 Big Fish Man
- 17:25 The Bronx Zoo
- 18:20 Insane Pools: Off The Deep
- End
- 19:15 Tanked
- 20:10 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 21:05 The Bronx Zoo
- 22:00 Insane Pools: Off The Deep
- End
- 22:55 Wildest Middle East

- 21:10 Love The Way You Lie
- 22:00 Murder Calls
- 22:50 Murder Comes To Town
- 23:40 Grave Secrets



- 00:00 Hank Zipzer
- 00:25 Alex & Co.
- 00:45 The Hive
- 00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
- 01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:30 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:55 Hank Zipzer
- 03:15 The Hive
- 03:20 Hank Zipzer
- 03:45 Alex & Co.
- 04:10 Alex & Co.
- 04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:25 Binny And The Ghost
- 05:45 The Hive
- 05:50 The 7D
- 06:00 Jessie
- 06:25 Jessie
- 06:50 The Adventures Of Disney Fairies
- 07:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 07:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 07:45 Disney Mickey Mouse Shorts
- 08:00 Compilations
- 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 Camp Rock 2: The Final Jam
- 12:20 Jessie
- 12:45 Jessie
- 13:10 Girl Meets World
- 13:35 Austin & Ally
- 14:00 Austin & Ally
- 14:25 Lolo
- 14:50 The Zhuzhus
- 15:15 Whisker Haven Tales With The Palace Pets
- 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 Cracked
- 20:40 Alex & Co.
- 21:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 21:30 Stuck In The Middle
- 21:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 22:25 Bunk'd

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 The Jail Atlanta: 60 Days In
- 01:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 02:00 I Didn't Do It
- 03:00 It Takes A Killer
- 03:30 It Takes A Killer
- 04:00 The Jail Atlanta: 60 Days In
- 05:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 06:00 Evil Up Close
- 06:30 The First 48
- 09:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 10:00 Crime Stories
- 14:00 The First 48
- 15:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
- 16:00 Evil Up Close
- 17:00 Homicide Hunter
- 18:00 Homicide Hunter
- 19:00 The First 48
- 20:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 21:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
- 22:00 My Haunted House
- 23:00 Psychic Kids: Children Of The Paranormal

Discovery Family

- 00:30 The Big Brain Theory
- 01:20 The Next Great Magician
- 02:10 World's Funniest
- 03:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 03:25 Destroyed In Seconds
- 03:50 Ultimate Survival
- 04:40 How It's Made
- 05:05 How It's Made
- 05:30 Dirty Jobs
- 05:30 Mythbusters
- 07:00 Doki
- 07:25 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 07:50 Bad Dog
- 08:40 How It's Made
- 09:05 How It's Made
- 09:30 The Big Brain Theory

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- 20:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
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- 22:00 My Haunted House
- 23:00 Psychic Kids: Children Of The Paranormal

- 00:00 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 Johnny Kapahala: Back On Board
- 13:30 Milo Murphy's Law
- 13:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty

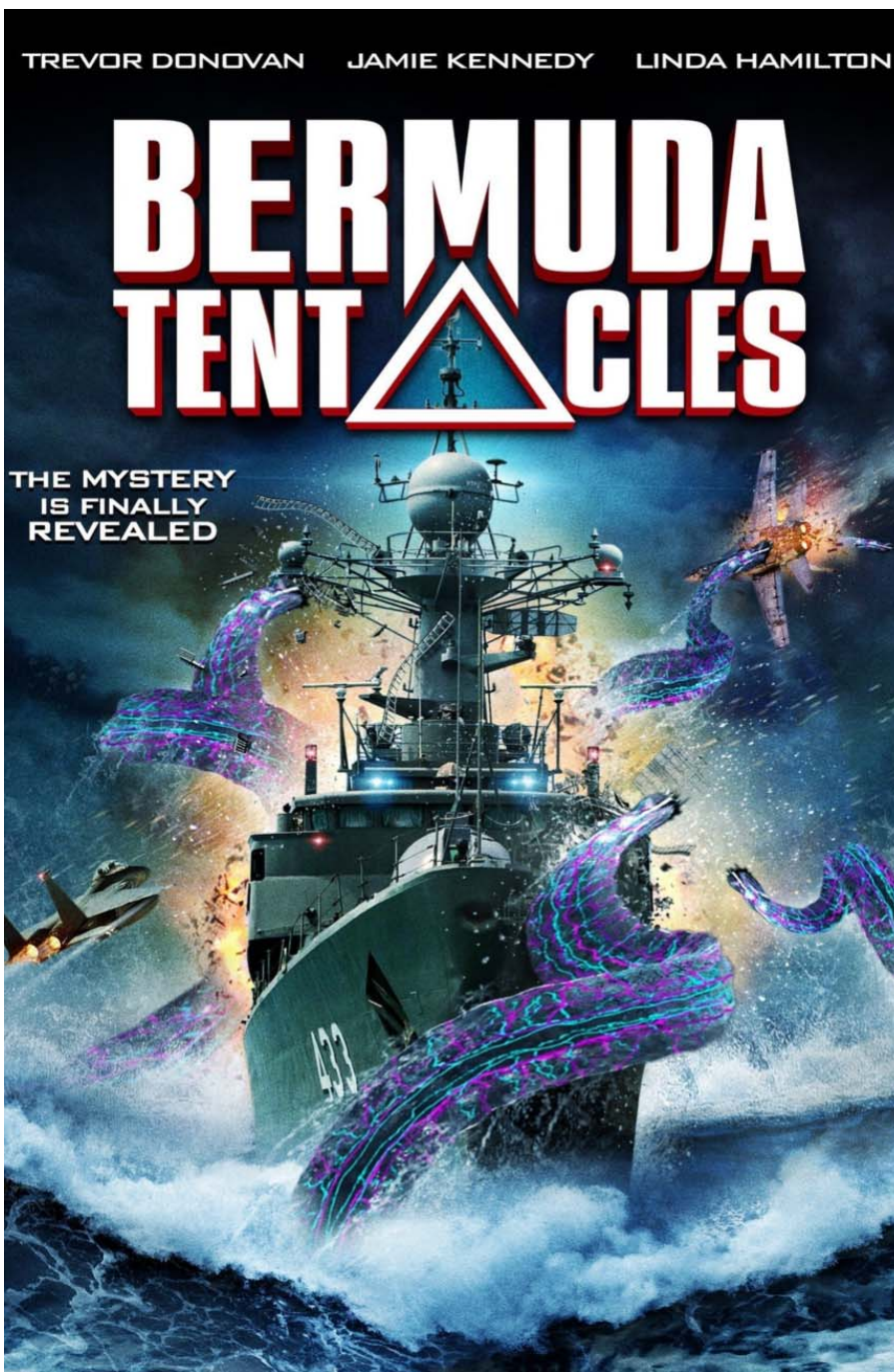
- 16:00 Disney Lights, Camera, Lex!
- 16:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse: Super...
- 16:50 PJ Masks
- 17:05 Doc McStuffins
- 17:35 The Lion Guard
- 18:05 PJ Masks
- 18:35 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 19:05 Sofia The First
- 19:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 20:05 The Lion Guard
- 20:35 Mickey Mouse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

Discovery Channel HD

- 00:20 Wheeler Dealers
- 01:05 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 01:50 The Wheel: Survival Games
- 02:35 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
- 03:20 Fast N' Loud
- 04:05 Mega Shippers
- 04:50 Gold Rush
- 05:35 How Do They Do It?
- 06:00 Gold Divers
- 06:45 Wheeler Dealers
- 07:30 Fast N' Loud
- 08:15 Mega Shippers
- 09:00 Storage Hunters
- 09:25 How Do They Do It?
- 10:10 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 10:55 The Wheel: Survival Games
- 11:40 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
- 12:25 How Do They Do It?
- 12:47 Storage Hunters
- 13:10 Gold Rush
- 13:55 Mega Shippers
- 14:40 Gold Divers
- 15:25 Fast N' Loud
- 16:10 Wheeler Dealers
- 17:00 How Do They Do It?
- 17:25 How Do They Do It?
- 17:50 Storage Hunters
- 18:20 Storage Hunters
- 18:50 Mega Shippers
- 19:40 How Do They Do It?
- 21:00 Blowing Up History
- 21:50 Strip The City
- 22:40 Made By Destruction
- 23:05 Made By Destruction

Discovery XD

- 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
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- 12:00 Johnny Kapahala: Back On Board
- 13:30 Milo Murphy's Law
- 13:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty



BERMUDA TENTACLES ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 16:15 WAGs Miami
- 19:00 E! News
- 20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 21:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 22:00 Famously Single
- 23:00 E! News

- 11:50 Royal Recipes
- 12:45 Emmerdale
- 13:45 Coronation Street
- 14:15 The Chase: Celebrity
- 15:10 Royal Recipes
- 16:00 This Is England '88
- 16:55 Lewis
- 17:50 Tonight At The London Palladium
- 18:45 Emmerdale
- 19:45 Coronation Street
- 20:10 Royal Recipes
- 21:00 This Is England '88
- 21:55 Lewis
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:10 Emmerdale
- 23:40 Coronation Street

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 01:15 Attila
- 02:40 Bermuda Tentacles
- 04:15 Echo Effect
- 06:00 Fast & Furious 7
- 08:20 The Tower
- 10:30 Echo Effect
- 12:05 Age Of Tomorrow
- 13:40 Fast & Furious 7
- 16:00 Beyond Redemption
- 17:30 Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials
- 19:45 Blackhat
- 22:00 I Am Number Four
- 23:55 Assassins Tale

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 00:00 Hocus Pocus
- 01:40 Lego DC Comics: Justice League Cosmic Clash
- 03:00 The Odd Life Of Timothy Green
- 04:45 Scooby-Doo! And Kiss: Rock And Roll Mystery
- 06:10 Hocus Pocus
- 07:50 Lego DC Comics: Justice League Cosmic Clash
- 09:10 Further Adventures Of Professor Branestawm
- 10:15 Chicken Little
- 11:40 The Odd Life Of Timothy Green
- 13:25 Hercules (1997)
- 15:00 The Good Dinosaur
- 16:35 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws
- 18:20 Inspector Gadget
- 19:45 Marvel's Iron Man & Captain America: Heroes United
- 21:00 Hercules (1997)



LAST ACTION HERO ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 10:20 Mythbusters
- 11:10 Incredible Food Race
- 12:00 Incredible Food Race
- 12:50 Incredible Food Race
- 13:40 Incredible Food Race
- 14:30 Doki
- 14:55 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 15:20 Bad Dog
- 16:10 The Big Brain Theory
- 17:00 Bondi Vet
- 17:50 Kings Of The Wild
- 18:40 Troy
- 19:30 How It's Made
- 19:55 How It's Made
- 20:20 Mythbusters
- 21:10 Bondi Vet
- 22:00 Kings Of The Wild
- 22:50 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:15 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:40 Ultimate Survival

Disney Junior

- 00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:15 Calimero
- 00:30 Art Attack
- 00:55 Zou
- 01:05 Loopdidoo
- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 Calimero
- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Art Attack
- 02:30 The Hive
- 02:40 Loopdidoo
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:10 Art Attack
- 03:35 Loopdidoo
- 03:50 Calimero
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:45 Zou
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Loopdidoo
- 06:00 Zou
- 06:15 Calimero
- 06:30 Loopdidoo
- 06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:00 Sofia The First
- 07:25 PJ Masks
- 07:50 The Lion Guard
- 08:15 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 08:40 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
- 09:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 09:35 Disney Lights, Camera, Lex!
- 09:40 Welcome To McStuffinsville
- 10:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 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 Toy Hospital
- 13:35 PJ Masks
- 14:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 14:30 The Lion Guard
- 14:55 Unbungalievable
- 15:00 Goldie & Bear
- 15:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers

- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:30 Chopped
- 04:00 Chopped
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 06:30 Barefoot Contessa
- 07:00 The Kitchen
- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 09:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 10:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 10:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 11:00 The Kitchen
- 12:00 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 Chopped
- 21:00 The Great Food Truck Race
- 22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 23:00 Chopped

EHD

- 00:05 WAGs Miami
- 00:55 WAGs Miami
- 01:50 E! News
- 02:50 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:20 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:50 So Cosmo
- 04:40 So Cosmo
- 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 06:00 La Clippers Dance Squad
- 06:55 E! News
- 07:10 La Clippers Dance Squad
- 08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
- 09:10 WAGs Miami
- 10:05 WAGs Miami
- 11:00 WAGs Miami
- 12:00 E! News
- 12:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 13:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 14:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 15:00 Goldie & Bear
- 15:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 15:15 E! News: Daily Pop

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- 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
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- 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 Chopped
- 21:00 The Great Food Truck Race
- 22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 23:00 Chopped

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:15 Wineroads
- 00:45 Places We Go
- 01:10 What's For Sale?
- 01:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
- 02:35 Maximum Foodie
- 03:00 Maximum Foodie
- 03:30 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 03:55 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 04:25 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 04:50 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 05:20 Island Hunter
- 06:15 What's For Sale?
- 06:40 What's For Sale?
- 07:10 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
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- 13:35 Maximum Foodie
- 14:00 Maximum Foodie
- 14:30 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 14:55 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 15:25 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 15:50 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 16:20 Island Hunter
- 17:15 What's For Sale?
- 17:40 What's For Sale?
- 18:10 Cruise Ship Diaries
- 18:35 Cruise Ship Diaries
- 19:05 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 19:30 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 20:00 Island Hunter

itv HD CHOICE

- 00:10 The Chase: Celebrity
- 00:10 Emmerdale
- 01:30 Coronation Street
- 02:30 Royal Recipes
- 03:25 Grantchester
- 04:20 Doc Martin
- 05:15 Tonight At The London Palladium
- 06:10 The Chase: Celebrity
- 06:10 Emmerdale
- 07:05 Royal Recipes
- 08:00 Grantchester
- 09:00 Doc Martin
- 10:00 Tonight At The London Palladium
- 10:55 The Chase: Celebrity
- 11:55 The Chase: Celebrity

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:35 Rocky v
- 03:20 D-Tox
- 05:00 Amelia
- 07:00 Rocky v
- 08:50 Win A Date With Tad Hamilton!
- 10:30 War Of The Worlds
- 12:30 Last Action Hero
- 14:45 Rocky Balboa
- 16:30 Dick Tracy
- 18:20 Casino Royale
- 20:50 Unbroken
- 23:10 Straight Outta Compton

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 01:25 Bill
- 03:00 Can't Buy Me Love
- 04:40 Accidental Love
- 06:20 Helicopter Mom
- 07:50 Other Plans
- 09:20 Can't Buy Me Love
- 10:55 Accidental Love
- 12:40 Helicopter Mom
- 14:10 Oscar
- 16:00 Clifford
- 17:35 Take Care
- 19:10 7 Chinese Brothers
- 20:25 Growing Up And Other Lies
- 22:00 Road Trip
- 23:35 My Man Is A Loser

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 00:25 In America
- 02:15 Experimentor
- 03:55 A Country Called Home
- 05:30 Ronaldo
- 07:05 Eyes Of An Angel
- 08:40 The Wave
- 10:30 Experimentor
- 12:10 Memories
- 13:45 Eyes Of An Angel
- 15:20 The Joy Luck Club
- 17:40 Young Ones
- 19:25 Rudderless
- 21:15 Charlotte's Song
- 22:50 Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

- 00:45 A.R.C.H.I.E.
- 02:15 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder
- 03:45 Memory Loss
- 05:05 Outback
- 07:00 The Tigger Movie
- 08:20 The Heart Of The Oak
- 09:40 Ducktales: The Movie
- 11:00 The Fairy Tales Tree
- 12:15 A.R.C.H.I.E.
- 13:50 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder
- 15:20 Pet Pals In Windland
- 16:45 Ducktales: The Movie
- 18:05 Marco Macaco
- 19:25 Ratchet And Clank
- 21:05 Pet Pals In Windland
- 22:35 The Heart Of The Oak
- 23:55 Marco Macaco

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

- 00:15 The Middle
- 00:40 The Middle
- 01:05 High Maintenance
- 01:30 High Maintenance
- 02:00 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 George Lopez
- 05:15 Two And A Half Men
- 05:40 The Bernie Mac Show
- 06:05 New Girl
- 06:30 Mom
- 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 George Lopez
- 10:15 Two And A Half Men
- 10:40 Mom
- 11:05 Men At Work
- 11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 12:20 Seinfeld
- 12:45 Seinfeld
- 13:10 The Middle
- 13:35 The Middle
- 14:00 George Lopez
- 14:25 Two And A Half Men

- 14:50 Mom
- 15:15 The Bernie Mac Show
- 15:40 New Girl
- 16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 17:00 Seinfeld
- 17:30 Seinfeld
- 18:00 The Middle
- 18:30 The Middle
- 19:00 The Last Man On Earth
- 19:30 The Last Man On Earth
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring

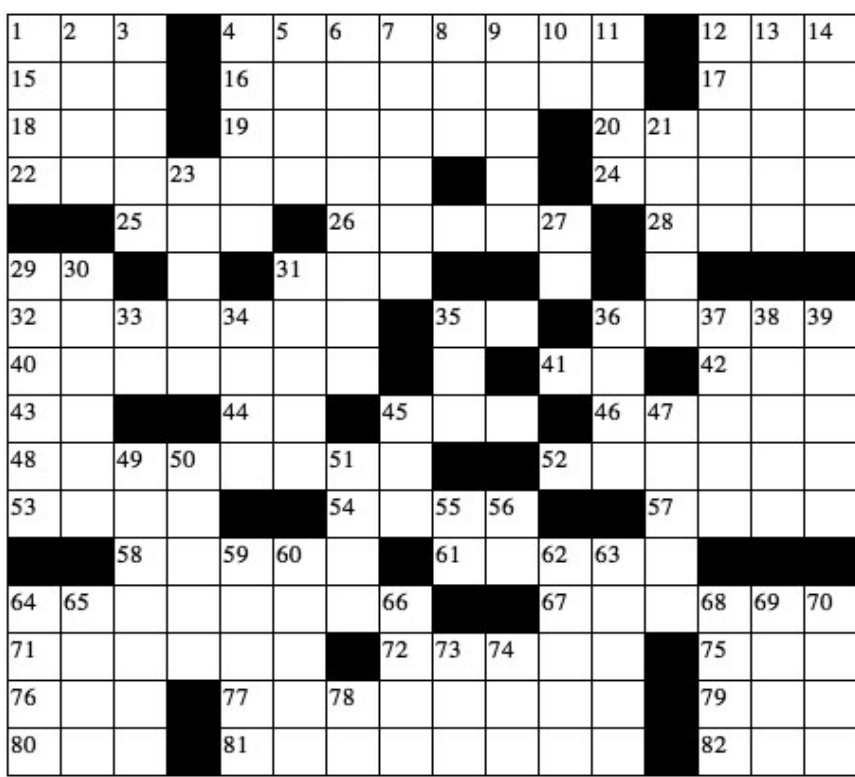
Discovery Science

- 00:30 How Do They Do It?
- 00:55 Food Factory
- 01:20 Man v Expert
- 02:10 Extreme Engineering
- 03:00 Weird Or What?
- 03:48 Mythbusters
- 04:36 How Do They Do It?
- 05:00 Food Factory
- 05:24 Man v Expert
- 06:12 Extreme Engineering
- 07:00 How Do They Do It?
- 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 Man v Expert
- 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 Man v Expert
- 16:14 Mythbusters
- 17:02 Extreme Engineering
- 17:50 Weird Or What?
- 18:40 Mythbusters
- 19:30 Invent It Rich
- 20:20 How Do They Do It?
- 20:45 Food Factory
- 21:10 Extreme Engineering
- 22:00 Invent It Rich

nick jr

- 00:02 Max & Ruby
- 00:26 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 00:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 00:46 The Day Henry Met
- 00:51 The Day Henry Met
- 00:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 01:20 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 01:42 Zack & Quack
- 02:04 Team Umizoomi
- 02:26 Olive The Ostrich
- 02:31 Olive The Ostrich
- 02:36 Paw Patrol
- 02:59 Little Charmers
- 03:11 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 03:23 Dora The Explorer
- 03:45 Max &

CROSSWORD 1663



ACROSS

- Electronic warfare undertaken under direct control of an operational commander to locate sources of radiated electromagnetic energy for the purpose of immediate threat recognition.
- Someone who lives in the same camp you do.
- A doctor's degree in dental surgery.
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- Semi-parasitic herb with purple or white or pink flowers.
- A reproach for some lapse or misdeed.
- A humorous anecdote or remark.
- An authoritative command or request.
- Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- Saber-toothed tigers.
- Remove a bar from (a door, for example).
- An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
- A narrow gorge with a stream running through it.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- The unit of frequency.
- Worker in a railway yard.
- In a nimble or agile manner.
- A doctor's degree in religion.
- Lacking in rigor or strictness.
- A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- Not having or receiving news or information.
- Serving as an essential component.
- Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing.
- Young of domestic cattle.
- A flat float (usually made of logs or planks) that can be used for transport or as a platform for swimmers.
- The basic unit of money on Sao Tome e Principe.
- A dialect of Chinese spoken in south-eastern China.
- In former classifications a major division of Mammalia comprising all hoofed mammals.
- From 40 million to 58 million years ago.
- The capital of Nationalist China.
- Australian operatic soprano (1861-1931).
- Time for Earth to make a complete rotation on its axis.
- The act of using.
- Characterized by lightness and insubstantiality.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- The state of matter distinguished from the solid and liquid states by.
- A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
- Type genus of the Muridae.

DOWN

- Oval reproductive body of a fowl (especially a hen) used as food.
- A fraudulent business scheme.
- Possessing or using or characteristic of or appropriate to supernatural powers.
- A heavy wooden pole (such as the trunk of a young fir) tossed as a test of strength (in the Highlands of Scotland).
- Advanced in years.
- Wood of any of various mahogany trees.
- An enclosed space in which the air pres-

- sure is higher than outside.
- (prefix) Bad or erroneous or lack of.
- Ludicrously odd.
- A light strong gray lustrous corrosion-resistant metallic element used in strong light-weight alloys (as for airplane parts).
- (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.
- Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus *Draba* having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scapose or leafy stems.
- Any of various hard resins from trees of the family Dipterocarpaceae and of the genus *Agathis*.
- Thin and fit.
- Something twisted and tight and swollen.
- United States tennis player (born in Czechoslovakia) who won several singles championships.
- A hemoprotein composed of globin and heme that gives red blood cells their characteristic color.
- The capital of Croatia.
- A city in the Saxony region of Germany on the Saale River.
- A state in New England.
- The food served and eaten at one time.
- Liquid containing proteins and electrolytes including the liquid in blood plasma and interstitial fluid.
- The sixth month of the civil year.
- Tropical American tree grown in southern United States having a whitish pink-tinged fruit.
- Valuable fiber plant of East Indies now widespread in cultivation.
- Praise, glorify, or honor.
- North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
- English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
- A shoe with a wedge heel.
- An archaic drinking vessel.
- Singing jazz.
- A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary.
- The syllable naming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in solmization.
- A short high tone produced as a signal or warning.
- An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Sluggish tailless Australian arboreal marsupial with gray furry ears and coat.
- An independent agency of the United States government responsible for aviation and spaceflight.
- A primeval personification of air and breath.
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
- (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- An unfledged or nestling hawk.
- A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
- Flower arrangement consisting of a circular band of foliage or flowers for ornamental purposes.
- A period of time equal to 1/24th of a day.

Yesterday's Solution

S	H	A	H	A	T	A	K	A	P	A	U	S	A	
C	O	C	O	C	A	R	A	M	E	L	T	O	R	
U	B	Y	K	H	L	I	K	E	D	M	A	F	A	
T	O	L	U	A	L	I	B	I	A	H	A	B		
		S	C	U	P	A	C	I	D					
T	A	M	A	R	A	O	A	N	A	C	O	N	D	A
A	R	U	I	K	I	D	D	B	N	A	I	L		
B	I	T	A	N	I	M	A	E	N	R	O	L		
I	S	O	B	A	R	L	A	P	P	A	I	D	E	
S	E	N	I	T	I	A	N	I	L	S	O	L		
		F	A	A	T	E	E	M	N	E				
C	L	O	A	K	A	E	S	C	U	L	U	S		
Y	A	C	C	A	R	K	E	R	O	S	E	N	E	
C	R	E	E	P	S	L	A	I	O	N	I	A	N	
A	G	A	A	E	G	A	T	E	S	U	N	D	O	
D	E	N	N	A	I	V	E	L	Y	D	E	A	L	

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Work seems intense today but you possess a powerful, persistent drive and are a hard, steady worker. Some people find you deep, with a sense of mystery. You are willing to do work today that others would not go near, quietly putting an end to some difficult problems. Later today you might be helping others to learn technical techniques so that you will eventually not be so overburdened. You are able to direct others in your business and this may lead to a leadership position. You busy yourself this afternoon in some project that you had been putting off for some time. You will be creating a new form or format for presentation to some very important people. Some people may wonder how the business could ever get along without you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are friendly and encouraging today. You somehow manage to find a creative environment or the creative in any environment, so as to provide the most beneficial area in which to work or play. Others want to join you in this project. You have a built-in sense of what the public wants and can always come up with just the right image. You find it easy to work with the emotions and feelings of others and with great imagination. You are great with kids and big on animals, sports and the outdoors. You are an instant umbrella of warmth, friendship and self-expression. Clear decisions affecting others could be made easily at this time. These are the attitudes and circumstances in which you find yourself teaching others.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There are lots of energy and action this day. Your dreams and imaginings keep bumping into the real and the actual. You quickly pick up on what is expected of you, and you are accountable. You are learning to plan ahead as you see your goals begin to develop. You do the best you can in every situation that you experience. It takes judgment to make the choices that best benefit a situation. Consider this: your powers of perception are particularly sharp at this time, and you would do well now to work out the details of any plans that you have previously made. This evening, you may feel focused and even a bit radiant. You are either entertaining company or being entertained yourself tonight. The snacks are low calorie and nutritional-good for you!



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may realize that you may have been stagnating lately. There are opportunities today to rise above the mundane. Saying or writing with style comes naturally as you seek to write a program or progress report. It may seem that you are always writing technical material, and just now there is a desire for variety with some of your work. You may find yourself at a used book store reading all types of subjects. You may even find yourself involved with two books at once. Increasing your vocabulary expertise can be a fun ongoing activity, and you could find a friend to join you. Your ability to discriminate real breakthroughs and to spot new trends makes you able to work in areas at the very fringe of technology these days-more technology to write.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Before work begins this morning, conversations with co-workers could be in the religious realm or at least, spiritual. You have little interest in spirituality that is rampant these days. You could probably bring imagination and religious understanding to physical and scientific studies. Opportunity for further thought regarding the spirit tends to crop up during the day-you are open to new ways of thinking. Continued success on the career level may point to your abandoning some of your dreams. This afternoon, family matters tend to take precedence and you may have to help a young person to understand the word-concentration. You may even think of some fun exercise or game to play with the kids that will help with concentration.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You enjoy working hard and being organized and you exercise skill and discipline in anything that affects your career and reputation. You have the perfect combination to be in a management position at this time. If you think you are ready, this time may be best for pushing through any changes you may want to make in your career. You have good insight into all social activities that are around you and if you are not careful, you may find yourself involved in many club or social group responsibilities. You like to facilitate, compromise and otherwise show your talents-like a coat of many colors. New and creative projects help you to change that feeling of being in a rut. Chatting with neighbors or siblings this evening will help you to relax.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

An emphasis on discipline with regard to work and health is a keynote of the cycle now dawning in your life. Procedures, scheduling, details: you may become weak in some areas unless you take steps to correct any deficiencies. Deficiencies may only be when you fail to meet a deadline. You can do this... You will be pleased with your progress. Otherwise, you will have to run faster just to avoid falling behind. A desire for variety marks this phase and this especially applies to romantic experience and artistic taste. The latter tend to focus on literature and poetry. Communication with distant family members is possible this afternoon. A sociable, congenial, slightly frivolous orientation sets in this evening. A social involvement can be enjoyable.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is a good time for promoting yourself and for letting others know what you have to offer. Right now, the key to career moves involves attending to nagging details-whatever you have neglected before. This is a time during which you may be able to move ahead with your ambition and your general life's purpose. You would make an excellent teacher of philosophy or religion-you cannot help but communicate these subjects to others and enchant all who come to know you. Your understanding of the unity behind appearances, along with the ability to put these thoughts into words, is a rare and valuable gift. You would make a good director, photographer, choreographer, etc. You like working with mental images.



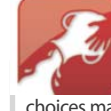
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You might like to ignore responsibilities and do some socializing, but realities demand you tend to business and forget your friends for the moment. This is one of the best times to make progress, push forward and rise to prominence. It will be hard for you to do wrong-all the cycles are working in your favor. Your career seems to get the support you need and this is one area of life that runs smoothly. You seem to understand what the public wants and mass marketing could be a natural for you. This is also a time when you may marry or take on a new role in the community or with other people. Your mind is ever on communication, how you present yourself, especially when negotiating. Enjoy cooking a new recipe tonight.



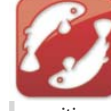
Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Independence on the part of people or events somehow challenges your authority today. Also, the forces of change assert themselves now and again, managing to overrule and overturn whatever you have managed to secure. Observing others, you will find that some people just naturally deal well with upheavals and adjustments-yet others may find much difficulty. You have great discipline and may find it enjoyable to teach young people how to solve difficulties they may uncover. You can demonstrate a good sensitivity and understanding about the needs of others. You know just the right words that will communicate positive messages. This could involve political issues. If not community politics, possibly club politics.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Opportunities may go against your own sense of responsibility. Career choices may require that you temporarily neglect the home. This is a tough call, and some compromise is perhaps the best way to a workable solution. This is a perfect time to be assertive and to move forward in your career decisions. You are driven when it comes to fulfilling your ambitions and carving out a career. There is no lack of energy or drive here, and nothing can stand in your way. Everything is poured into making the right moves-the correct decisions. You are outgoing, enthusiastic and always diplomatic-everybody's favorite. Politics or some other public career seems inevitable. Some experienced politician may tutor you in this process if that is what you want.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You enjoy working with whatever is psychological-the hidden, vulnerable, sensitive areas of the mind and self. You can handle material that is sensitive or taboo without batting an eye. This interest in all that is psychological makes you an excellent teacher. You also have a natural grasp for writing and after you worked with research, reports and projects, you may decide to go in a different direction. The different direction is what today is about. Where could you apply your talents and be the happiest you drive in the area of psychology, meditation, renewals of direction or perhaps, concentration on a focus to improve, may mean an advice column. If you are not with a mate, this may be a time you will meet someone very special.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Marine Life

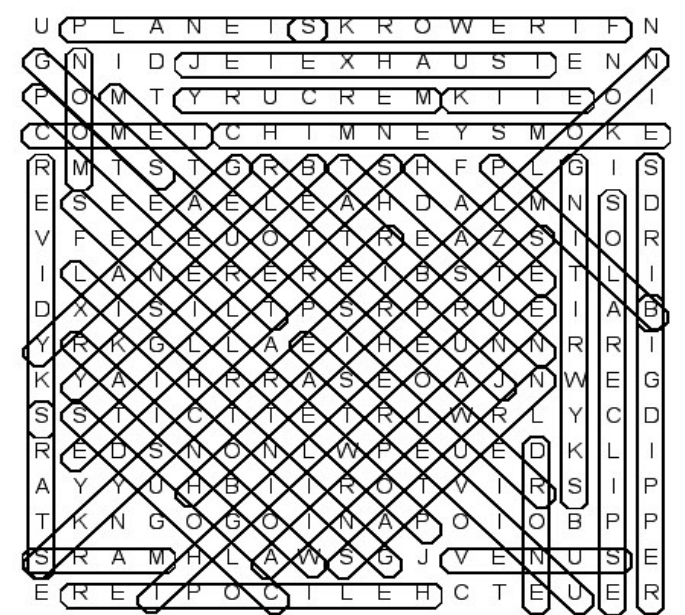
Find and circle all of the listed words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a sea animal.

S H S E A L S D M D T G H R E
T S P A L C P A O U I S D O C
I I T O R T R O B L I U W H S
N F R A L L R I R F P S Q P E
G Y B E I L L U N P T H E S A
R L O N T A A W T A O N I W L
A L C I H S O C R A G I H N I
Y E T D A L B F S U E A S Y O
R J O R C N I O I I L S T E N
E S P A E S U N L E N W A R P
T P U S H E E T A N A M M P M
S O S S B A R R A C U D A M I
Y N H S I F L L E H S H L A R
O G A R R E T T O A E S C L H
K E A N C H O V Y W A L R U S

- ANCHOVY
- BARRACUDA
- CLAM
- CLOWNFISH
- COD
- CRAB
- DOLPHIN
- HALLIBUT
- JELLYFISH
- LAMPREY
- LOBSTER
- MANATEE
- MARLIN
- OCTOPUS
- OYSTER
- PENGUIN
- PORPOISE
- PRAWN
- SARDINE
- SCALLOP
- SEA LION
- SEA OTTER
- SEA TURTLE
- SEALS
- SHELLFISH
- SHRIMP
- SPONGE
- SQUID
- SQUIDFISH
- STINGRAY
- TUNA
- WALRUS
- WHALE

Yesterday's Solution

Look Up!



- AIRPLANE
- BIG DIPPER
- BIRDS
- BLIMP
- BLUE SKY
- CHIMNEY SMOKE
- CLOUDS
- COMET
- DRONE
- FIREWORKS
- GALAXY
- HAZE
- HELICOPTER
- HOT AIR BALLOON
- JET EXHAUST
- JUPITER
- KITE
- LIGHTNING
- MARS
- MERCURY
- METEOR SHOWER
- MOON
- PLANETS
- POWER LINES
- RAINBOW
- SATELLITE
- SATURN
- SKYDIVER
- SKYSCRAPER
- SKYWRITING
- SMOG
- SOLAR ECLIPSE
- STARS
- STREET LIGHT
- THE SUN
- TREETOP
- UNIVERSE
- VENUS

The hidden message is: UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT

Daily SuDoku

3				8	
	7	2	3	9	4
1	4	5			
9	2				8
		4	5		
5				6	2
6	9		1	3	9
		5			1

Yesterday's Solution

8	3	1	2	7	6	5	4	9
9	2	4	1	8	5	3	6	7
6	5	7	3	4	9	8	2	1
2	1	5	9	6	3	7	8	4
3	4	8	7	5	2	1	9	6
7	6	9	8	1	4	2	3	5
4	9	2	5	3	1	6	7	8
5	7	6	4	2	8	9	1	3
1	8	3	6	9	7	4	5	2



People watch the seventh season premiere of US TV show "Game of Thrones" at the Mayakovskaya metro station in Moscow early yesterday. "Game of Thrones" returned for its season seven premiere on July 16, ending a longer-than-usual wait for fans craving its unique weekly offer of sex, violence and dragons. — AFP

Jury: Railroad to pay \$3.9M for train death of film worker

A railroad owner must pay \$3.9 million to the family of a movie worker killed on a Georgia railroad trestle in 2014, a jury decided Monday in civil verdict that found the company shared in the blame for the deadly freight train collision even though the film crew was trespassing. The parents of Sarah Jones sued CSX Transportation in Chatham County State Court, saying the railroad shared blame for their daughter's death. The 27-year-old camera assistant died in the crash Feb. 20, 2014, during the first day of shooting "Midnight Rider," an ill-fated movie about Gregg Allman of the Allman Brothers Band.



In a file photo, Richard and Elizabeth Jones, speak with reporters outside the Wayne County Courthouse, in Jesup, Ga. — AP

"This trial disclosed a number of exceptionally poor judgments and ignored opportunities by CSX Transportation to prevent this tragedy," Jones' parents, Richard and Elizabeth Jones of Columbia, South Carolina, said in a written statement. CSX plans to appeal the jury's decision, said Rob Doolittle, a spokesman for the Jacksonville, Florida-based company. "CSX is deeply sympathetic to the terrible loss suffered by the family of Ms. Sarah Jones, but respectfully disagrees with the conclusions reached by the jury today," Doolittle said.

The film's director, Randall Miller, served a

year in jail after pleading guilty to involuntary manslaughter and criminal trespassing charges. Jones' parents said CSX also failed to take precautions that could have averted the crash on a trestle spanning the Altamaha River near Jesup in southeast Georgia. Jones' family had also sued Miller, his fellow production managers and several other defendants. All of them except for CSX settled or otherwise resolved their cases out of court. The jury Monday found \$11.2 million to be the total value of Jones' life as well as her pain and suffering. Jurors decided CSX - the only defendant on trial - bore 35 percent of the responsibility for Jones' death, making the railroad's share \$3.9 million.

Jones was run over

The jury in Savannah heard testimony during the civil trial that two CSX trains rolled through while the movie crew stood on both sides of the tracks within an hour before the crash, but the operators of those trains never called dispatchers to alert them. Jurors also were shown a CSX policy that train operators are expected to immediately report trespassers on its tracks and rights of way. Jeffrey Harris, the Jones family's attorney, also noted that the train's brakes weren't applied until after the locomotive struck a hospital bed the filmmakers had placed across the tracks. Actor William Hurt, hired to play Allman, had been lying in the bed before the train came upon the crew at 53 mph (85 kph). Hurt escaped unharmed. Six crew members were injured by flying shrapnel from the bed. Jones was run over. Hurt appeared in Savannah and sat outside the courtroom during the trial's first day last week. But the actor was never called to testify in the case. CSX attorneys blamed the crash entirely on the filmmakers. CSX officials had twice sent production managers emails denying them permission to shoot on the bridge. Three of Jones' co-workers testified that production managers never told the rest of the crew members, who went onto the railroad trestle unaware they were trespassing.—AP

India's 'Lipstick Under My Burkha' to finally hit screens

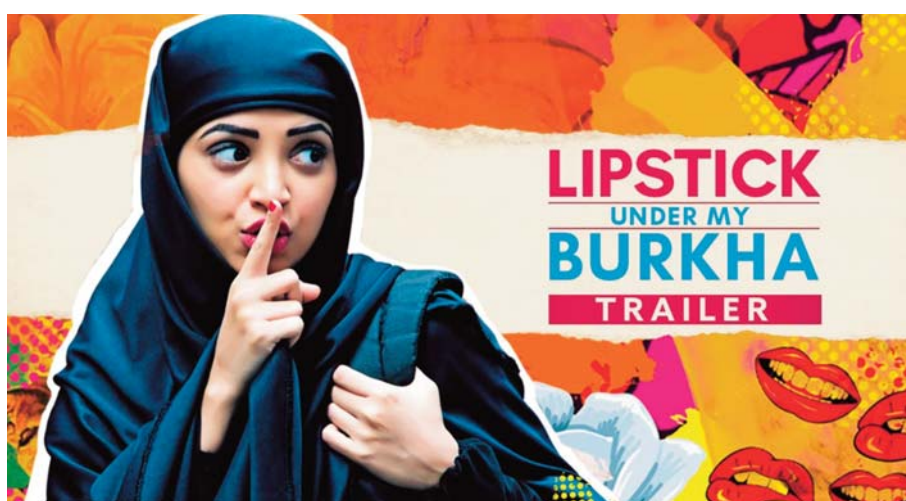
The release of a Hindi movie exploring female sexuality in India this week after a battle with the country's film censors is a victory for women's rights, its director said. "Lipstick Under My Burkha" will hit screens on Friday, five months after the country's notoriously prudish and much-maligned censor board refused to certify it for being "lady oriented". The movie tells the story of the secret lives and desires of four women including a college student who wears a burkha, and a 55-year-old who rediscovers a sex life after the death of her husband.

"I feel that the release is not just about 'Lipstick' but is also a victory and celebration that women can tell their stories," director Alankrita Shrivastava told AFP on Monday. "It's not just about my film and our cast and crew. If it had not released (then) that would have set a precedent that it's okay to gag 50 percent of the population," she added. India's censor board, the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), sparked uproar in February when it blocked the movie, saying it was "lady oriented, their fantasy above life". The ruling was widely mocked on social media.

The board, which has a history of barring movies it deems too racy or at risk of causing

religious offence, complained of "sexual scenes, abusive words, audio pornography (phone sex)". It also implied the film might offend Muslims. Critics, however, pointed out the board regularly approves adult comedies containing derogatory jokes about women that are directed by men and target India's predominantly young, male cinema-going audience. Shrivastava was outraged at the decision and challenged it at an appeals tribunal, which in April cleared the film for release, albeit with a few cuts, such as reducing the length of some sex scenes.

The Film Certification Appellate Tribunal ruled that "Lipstick Under My Burkha" was suitable for anyone aged 18 or over and should be given an adult rating. The film has aired at more than 35 film festivals worldwide, including the Tokyo International Film Festival where it won an award last year. Shrivastava said she was "excited, happy and also a little nervous" about the movie finally showing in cinemas in its home country. "It always makes you wonder what people are expecting but that's only until Friday and then it will be clear what the film is and how ridiculous all this drama was," she said. — AFP



Nolan got personal to summon his miracle of 'Dunkirk'

History-some of it intensely personal-leaned heavily on Christopher Nolan when he was making his wartime epic "Dunkirk", which got ecstatic reviews from critics yesterday. The English-born director of the "Batman" movies had longed for years to tackle the story of how a kind of victory was pulled from Britain's worst defeat of World War II. And given its string of five-star reviews it was worth the wait, with the Hollywood Reporter calling it "an impressionist masterpiece", The Guardian deeming it "his best film" while Variety-blown-away by its "vertebrae-rattling" pace-simply declared, "What an achievement it is!"

Yet the film's setting could not be more sombre. With the cream of the British army trapped by a lightning German advance into northern France in May 1940, the country's new leader Winston Churchill was told they would be lucky to get 30,000 men out alive. But in nine days more than 10 times that number of British, French and Canadian troops were evacuated in what became known as the "Miracle of Dunkirk". Many were plucked from the beaches by a flotilla of "little ships" crewed by civilians who answered the call to cross the Channel.

Their courage came home to Nolan and his wife, producer Emma Thomas, when they crossed the same stretch of water in a small boat in what he described as "one of the most difficult and frankly dangerous experiences of my life." "It drove home to us how heroic this was," Thomas told AFP. "And no one was shooting or dropping bombs on us." "I grew up in a household where the war was very important," Nolan added.



Emma Thomas and Christopher Nolan pose for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the movie "Dunkirk", in Dunkirk, northern France, Sunday. — AP

Grandfather's grave

"My grandfather (Francis Thomas Nolan) was a navigator on a Lancaster bomber and he died near here in 1944. While we were shooting the film I took the children to see his grave. Seeing my own grandfather and the rest of his crew in a communal grave, you realise the concept of entertainment and war is a very tricky thing." Which is why "Dunkirk"-despite its relentless high-octane score and action scenes-is not "really a war film", he said. Indeed Nolan wanted to turn it into a "survival story... and to create a different feeling and rhythm to what people have ever seen or experienced before in a cinema."

"The leads at the heart of the film are kids," he told AFP, including the pop star Harry Styles of One Direction fame. "You are not expecting them to take on the German army. When you see the young soldier played by Fionn Whitehead at the beginning (fleeing German fire) you just want this guy to be OK. You don't have a problem with him dropping his rifle and running. Because that is what you would have done."

For a while, Nolan—who is known for his technical and narrative daring toyed with even making "Dunkirk" "almost as a silent film", driven by "pictures and sound effects rather than dialogue".

Brexit bombshell

"I was looking for ecstatic truth of what happened" to the hundreds of thousands of men left stranded like sitting ducks on the beach. "I was trying to make pure cinema," he said, using huge IMAX cameras and shooting with 70mm film—twice the size of the usual format—to make the "experience overwhelmingly real". Rather than relying on special effects, Nolan shot on, above and off the very beaches where the evacuation took place with real World War II planes and warships. Some of the original "little ships" which picked the soldiers up were also pressed back into service.

The gargantuan production starring Cillian Murphy, Kenneth Branagh and Mark Rylance even involved rebuilding the one kilometre-long (1,093-yard) breakwater called The Mole, from which thousands of troops were taken onto larger ships. "I think we had the largest marine unit ever used in a film," Nolan added. "At one point we had 60-plus boats in the water," including three former minesweepers, a destroyer and a hospital ship. Storms played havoc with the "arduous" shoot, ripping chunks out of The Mole. But Nolan said they also gave him "incredible images that you couldn't plan or fake."

And then as filming reached its climax last year came the Brexit bombshell. Suddenly the prospect of another retreat from Europe gave the film an unexpected and unwanted political resonance. Nolan said that "like most British people we didn't think Brexit would happen". With the idea of Britain alone against the world again in the air, he warned against "the Dunkirk spirit" being abused. "Dunkirk is always being used by politicians as a symbol of something. But whenever anyone tries to link it with contemporary politics they are flying in the face of the fact that it happened in 1940," he said. — AFP

'Apes' swings to top of US box office

"War for the Planet of the Apes" won this weekend's battle of the box office in North America, riding on strong reviews and ever more natural-looking apes to take \$56.3 million. The Fox/Chemin Entertainment production managed to outdraw "Spider-Man: Homecoming," which fell by more than

half from its opening three-day weekend to pull in \$44.2 million, website Exhibitor Relations reported. "War," directed by Matt Reeves, tells the continuing story of how intelligent primate Caesar (Andy Serkis) and other apes battle the forces led by an evil human dictator (Woody Harrelson). The film, made for \$150 million, has a 95 per-

cent approval rating on the Rotten Tomatoes website, which collates reviews.

Sony-Marvel collaboration "Spider-Man," which draws a similarly strong 92 percent on Rotten Tomatoes, stars Tom Holland as a young Peter Parker, ably mentored by Robert Downey Jr. as Iron Man as he takes on bad guy Vulture (Michael Keaton). Far behind on \$19.4 million was Universal's animated sequel "Despicable Me 3," starring Steve Carell as the voice of bad guy-turned-protagonist Gru and his twin brother Dru, and Kristen Wiig as Gru's wife Lucy. The film has done much better overseas than at home, according to Hollywood Reporter, which says its global gross of \$519.4 million includes a whopping \$113.6 million from viewers in China.

Placing fourth was Sony's heist thriller "Baby Driver," with Ansel Elgort ("The Fault in our Stars") front and center as a gifted getaway driver with a hearing problem. It netted \$8.7 million. And in a surprising fifth place among the big-studio blockbusters was independent rom-com "The Big Sick" from Lionsgate, taking in \$7.5 million in its first week in wide release. "Sick" stars Kumail Nanjiani in the semi-autobiographical role of a Pakistani-American stand-up comic who resists his parents' insistent efforts to find a wife for him, and instead falls in love with comedy-club customer Emily, played by Zoe Kazan. The film, co-written by Nanjiani and the real-life Emily, his wife, rates a resounding 97 percent on Rotten Tomatoes and is credited by the New York Times with no less than "revitalizing an often moribund subgenre with a true story of love, death and... everyday comedy." — AFP



MUSIC & MOVIES

Radiohead set for Israel concert despite calls to boycott

Radiohead is set to defy calls from prominent artists to cancel its concert today in Israel over the occupation of Palestinian territory, the latest controversy related to a campaign to boycott the country. Radiohead singer Thom Yorke has responded to artists such as Pink Floyd's

Roger Waters and director Ken Loach calling on the pioneering rock band to cancel, saying such demands have been patronizing.

In a Twitter post last week, Yorke said "playing in a country isn't the same as endorsing its government". "We've played in Israel for over 20 years through a succession of governments, some more liberal than others. As we have in America. We don't endorse (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu any more than (US President Donald) Trump, but we still play in America." He added that "music, art and academia is about crossing borders not building them, about open minds not closed ones, about shared humanity, dialogue and freedom of expression." A boycott campaign over Israel's five-decade occupation of Palestinian territory has been under way for years, but Radiohead's concert has received particular attention due to the British band's reputation for political activism.

Band members have spoken out in favor of environmental causes and against what they see as unfair global trade rules. Radiohead's 2003 album "Hail to the Thief" was seen in part as a response to the George W Bush presidency in the United States. Beyond that, it remains one of the world's biggest rock bands, lauded by critics for stretching the boundaries of the genre after first coming to prominence in the 1990s.

'Choice is simple'

Loach, the widely lauded director of politically engaged films such as "The Wind That Shakes the Barley" and "I, Daniel Blake," wrote recently that "if they go to Tel Aviv, they may never live it down". "Radiohead need to decide if they stand with the oppressed or with the oppressor," he wrote in an opinion piece in Britain's Independent. "The choice is simple." Israelis tend to rally around artists who defy such boycott calls and the same has been the case with Radiohead. There have been calls for



Israelis to buy tickets in support-though at 484 shekels (\$135, 117 euros), it's a steep price to pay. Concert organizers Naranja say 50,000 tickets have been sold so far for the show at Tel Aviv's Park Hayarkon out of some 51,000 available.

David Brinn, the managing editor of Israel's The Jerusalem Post newspaper who has written extensively on music, said the band already had a large fan base in Israel, so it is difficult to know if the controversy affected sales. "I don't think that there will be that many people that are going to buy tickets to the show just because Radiohead made a decision to come to Israel," he said, adding that the band's music was "an acquired taste."

The movement behind calls for Radiohead to cancel is known as BDS-Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions-and says it is inspired by the campaign that targeted South Africa's apartheid regime. It is

seeking an end to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and activists say bands such as Radiohead essentially cross a picket line when they play in Israel.

'Radiohead's double standard'

Israel sees BDS as a strategic threat and accuses it of anti-Semitism-a claim activists firmly deny, calling it an attempt to discredit them. A number of politically active musicians have called off shows in Israel, including Lauryn Hill and Elvis Costello. But a range of others have performed. On Saturday night, Guns N' Roses played to an estimated crowd of around 60,000 in Tel Aviv, while others including Britney Spears and Elton John have also performed recently.

Omar Barghouti, a leader in the BDS movement, however spoke of "Radiohead's double standard"



Radiohead singer Thom Yorke.

in deciding to play. "They have supported human rights causes elsewhere, but when it came to the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality, they decided to stubbornly ignore our voices and our appeals, thus helping Israel's propaganda machine to cover up its denial of our human rights," he said.

But for Yorke, it was "patronizing in the extreme" to presume Radiohead is unfamiliar with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, pointing out that guitarist Jonny Greenwood's wife was born in Israel. "It's really upsetting that artists I respect think we are not capable of making a moral decision ourselves after all these years," Yorke recently told Rolling Stone magazine. — AFP



Fans cheer for British band Coldplay performing at the Stade de France Arena in Saint Denis, on the outskirts of Paris. — AFP photos

Coldplay salutes US immigrants in new video

Coldplay hailed the contributions of immigrants to the United States as the English rockers released a video for a new song, "Miracles (Someone Special)." Without any explicit reference to President Donald Trump and his crack-down on immigration, Coldplay made clear that the history of the United States goes beyond people of European heritage. The video starts with a wall of old photos. The shot zooms in to show immigrants arriving at Ellis Island, the station in New York Harbor through which 40 percent of Americans trace lineage.

The videos intersperses black-and-white pictures of European immigrants with new Americans of other backgrounds, starting with a family of turbaned Sikhs. "You could be someone special / You've got fire in your eyes, I see Heaven inside / You'll go further than we've ever gone," frontman Chris Martin sings on the mid-tempo pop track led by keyboards. Rapper Big Sean contributes a verse in which he speaks of the struggle to earn a stable living in contemporary America. The video opens and closes with a child lying in a bosom of the shape of the Statue of Liberty, which is within sight of Ellis Island.

The video came out over the weekend after the song appeared on Coldplay's EP, "Kaleidoscope," which was released Friday. It is the second song to raise social issues from the five-track EP by Coldplay, which has long been active on humanitarian causes. Coldplay earlier this month released the track "Aliens" after performing at the Global Citizen concert against global poverty on the sidelines of the Group of 20



Lead singer of British band Coldplay Chris Martin (right) with guitarist Jonny Buckland perform at The Stade de France Arena in Saint Denis.

summit in Hamburg. The band said proceeds from "Aliens" would support a charity that rescues migrants attempting the perilous trip across the Mediterranean into Europe. Coldplay, one of the most successful rock bands of the early 21st century, released "Kaleidoscope" two years after "A Head Full of Dreams," which the band had hinted could be its final full-length album. — AFP

R&B singer R Kelly denies holding women captive

R&B star R Kelly on Monday denied explosive allegations that he was holding women in virtual slavery with control over all aspects of their lives. The 50-year-old singer-whose smooth voice has produced years of hits including "I Believe I Can Fly"-said he was "alarmed and disturbed" by the charges. "Mr Kelly unequivocally denies such accusations and will work diligently and forcibly to pursue his accusers and clear his name," his lawyer, Linda Mensch, said in a statement.

BuzzFeed News earlier Monday published a report saying that six women lived in a house near Atlanta and a studio in Chicago where Kelly held power over their diets, clothing and sexual encounters, which he would record. The parents of one alleged victim held a news conference outside the residence near Atlanta and said their 21-year-old daughter had cut off contact. "My daughter is severely brainwashed," mother Jonjelyn Savage said. "We just want him to release her and let her go on with her life," she told reporters.

The daughter, Jocelyn Savage, denied coercion in a video interview



This file photo shows singer R Kelly attending the Ovidia & Sons front row during New York Fashion Week: Men's S/S 2016 at Skylight Clarkson Sq in New York City. — AFP

with gossip site TMZ. "I only want to say that I am in a happy place with my life and I'm not being brainwashed or anything like that," she said, while declining to answer more detailed questions about her conditions. She said that she had not spoken to her parents as their allegations had caused a rift. Kelly-who lives partially at the Trump Tower in his native Chicago-is one of the most successful R&B singers of recent years but

has been repeatedly hit by scandal.

In 2008, he was acquitted of charges of child pornography after the Chicago Sun-Times reported that it had a video of the singer involved in sexual acts with an underage girl. BuzzFeed News, which quoted people close to Kelly, described him as a cult-like figure and said that women allegedly under his spell included aspiring musicians. Kitti Jones, said to be a former member of Kelly's inner circle, said the singer once held her against a tree and slapped her outside a restaurant of the sandwich chain Subway after he felt she was too friendly with the cashier.

Cheryl Mack, described as Kelly's former personal assistant, said the singer insisted that the women wear jogging suits and face the wall when other men could see them. Kelly "is a master of mind control," Mack was quoted as saying. But the report said that police have looked into allegations and not taken action as the women are of legal age and are seen as in consensual relationships. — AFP

Mayer on changing his live shows: 'I want to be competitive'

John Mayer never relied on multicolored lighting, confetti and pyrotechnics to help him during his live shows, like some of his peers. But the singer-songwriter-guitarist wanted to step up his game, and he said watching Drake perform live encouraged him to beef up his stage production and take more risks during his concerts. Mayer will launch the second leg of his Search for Everything World Tour yesterday in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The new live shows have been a departure for the Grammy winner, who now performs with a colorful and futuristic L.E.D. wall and floor. "I wanted to have a really big show. I want to be competitive. I want to be in the world where people are creating bigger and better shows," Mayer said. "I think there's a healthy competition involved in it. I went and saw Drake's show and ... real artists say, 'Wow!' And then they go, '(Expletive) Right? Because you see something that wows you and as an artist yourself you go, 'I want a little of that.'" The 39-year-old recently wrapped a tour with Dead & Company, his supergroup with Grateful Dead's Mickey Hart, Bill Kreutzmann and Bob Weir. His summer tour wraps Sept 3 in Noblesville, Indiana.

But Mayer isn't only playing big arenas: He announced Tuesday that he will join the Dive Bar Tour with Bud Light for a show in Los Angeles on July 26. In a recent interview with The Associated Press, Mayer talked about stepping it up with his live shows, attending Grateful Dead University and enjoying new albums by DJ Khaled and Calvin Harris.

AP: The production level for your new live shows has really changed. What's that process been like?

Mayer: We have an L.E.D. wall and a L.E.D. floor. In a way it's really minimal ... but from there you can go anywhere you want to go. It can be abstract. It can be superminimalist. It can also be super-real. ... I even want to go further with it. ... I have an idea maybe next year to do like a 2.0 version of it where it really goes down deep into my dream, but that's a lot more trucks and buses. I'd go broke from that tour but it would be incredible. It would almost be Broadway-like. I want to be modern day and I want to play by modern-day rules and excite people, but I also want to do it the way I would do it. Everything that I've ever picked up that was a technology in some way or another, I've always found, I think, my own voice with it. And so I'm doing the big, bad L.E.D. show, but in a way that tells a story about me.

AP: Your album "The Search for Everything" was released in April and it's been four years since your last release. Why so long?



John Mayer

Mayer: Well, when I turned 30 (in 2008), I looked at my 30s that were coming up and I said, "I want to make as much as I can in my 30s; so I started to ... The Search for Everything" would have come out, and I haven't done the math on this, it would have come out in 2015, but then this beautiful opportunity of Dead & Company showed up at my doorstep. And I've never pressed pause on a solo career before, but I knew that this was worth pressing pause for. And that's been really interesting because the (new) songs are really powerful, but I'm also two years removed from the emotion of it, so it's a very interesting thing to go out on tour with songs that have been gestating for three years.

Artistic response

AP: What have you learned from performing in Dead & Company?

Mayer: It seemed to me almost like taking a break to go back to school, right? It was like, "Take a break from this solo thing and go back to the university." And I'm getting my degree from Grateful Dead University. That's all I ever wanted was musical experience that equated to becoming a better musician. ... It's a little boring to be a solo act for like 50 years. For me personally, I'm way too fidgety.

AP: Who else would you like to collaborate with?

Mayer: My next collaboration, I think, is going to be more on the producer side than on the artist side. I'm very interested in and intrigued by the idea of working with certain producers. ... I also like the idea of the ensemble record; I see where that's going. The (DJ) Khaled record, the Calvin Harris record - that's like a life hack that's taking place before our eyes. And it's a thoughtful, artistic response to the industry going the way it's going, which is like supergroups. ... So I see that working, too, like "John Mayer Presents..." - where I'm a little less the singer and the upfront guy, and more the guy making tracks and saying, "I really can hear this voice here."



In this file photo, Pink performs during the Festival d'été de Québec in Quebec City, Canada. — AP

Pink, Coldplay, Harry Styles to perform at iHeartRadio fest

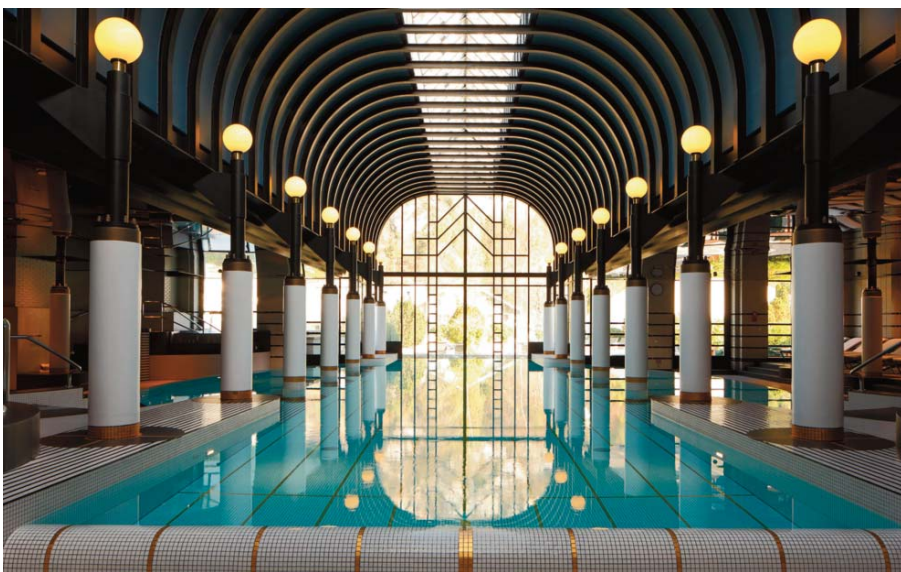
Pink, Coldplay, The Weeknd, DJ Khaled, Miley Cyrus and Harry Styles will perform at the 2017 iHeartRadio Music Festival this fall. iHeartMedia announced yesterday that Keshi, Chris Stapleton, Lorde and David Guetta will also take the stage Sept 22-23 at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas. Tickets go on sale July 28. Ryan Seacrest will host the two-day festival, which will also feature performances by Kings of Leon, Big Sean, Thirty Seconds to Mars, Niall Horan and Thomas Rhett.

The CW Network will livestream both nights of the festival on its website and app, and will air a two-night TV special on Oct 4-5. The festival will also include its daytime event dubbed, "Daytime Village," on Sept 23. It will include performances from Migos, Halsey, Kelsea Ballerini and others. — AP

TRAVEL



Interlaken: A traditional resort town in the heart of Switzerland



Indulge yourself luxurious days in the holiday destination Interlaken. Whether regional products, classy jewellery or trendy accessory: In Interlaken you will find guaranteed everything you want and pass an unforgettable shopping-trip. However, shopping is not only in Interlaken, but also in Thun a great experience. The historic lanes of the City of Zahringen are home of traditional as well as innovative shops.

Interlaken is, due to its location between Lake Thun and Lake Brienz, the ideal starting point for unforgettable excursions in the whole region. Take off and fly over the white mountain summits and glaciers of the Bernese Oberland. Do you feel attracted by the water? Glide during a boat excursion on one of the two lakes through the deep blue water and let ensorcell you. Experience even more highlights on a trip to Schilthorn or Jungfrauoch, where you can enjoy a spectacular view to mountain peaks, lakes and glaciers.

Luxurious holiday experience with a touch of glamour

The holiday region of Gstaad is considered one of the most luxurious destinations in Switzerland. Visitors to this region experience top quality and diverse services in all areas. Alpine authenticity, proudly maintained traditions and a touch of glamour give the destination a special flair. In spite of the brand's enormous prestigious value, Gstaad has remained down-to-earth.

In spite of its rural flair, Gstaad boasts a series of tourism-related advantages that can be experienced discretely. Excellent service is always the main guiding principle in this respect. Luxury feels right at home in Gstaad.

Gstaad's diverse range of leisure activities and enjoyable experiences also includes gems of particular splendour. For example, the car-free promenade with a variety of high-end boutiques, galleries and fine restaurants is the perfect place for a peaceful stroll and relaxing. Branches of world-famous luxury brands entice people in the village and in the hotels to have an exclusive shopping experience.

Bern - luxury meets UNESCO

The Swiss capital enchants with its wealth of culture, fun and relaxation - deluxe hotels, exclusive boutiques, exquisite restaurants and a Grand Casino. Bern is considered to be an urban jewel, one that has been honored as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The international airport and direct connections to the high-speed trains TGV and ICE make Bern a true hub out of the city. Thanks to its central location, Bern is ideal for outings and trips throughout Switzerland and is commonly known as the gateway to the alps.

Accommodation

The completely renovated five star superior hotel Schweizerhof Bern is a fusion of grand tradition with contem-

porary flair, noble design and exclusive service with Cigar Lounge, an exclusive 500m² wellness area and the unique Sky Terrace. It belongs to the Katara Hospitality Ltd Doha and caters especially for guests from the GCC regions.

Located in the heart of the Old Town, the five star superior Hotel Bellevue Palace radiates the unique atmosphere of a grand hotel. The hotel is the official Guest House of the Swiss Government. Besides its statesmanlike discretion in service, it offers inspiring views of the Aare river and the Alps from completely renovated suites.



Personal tip

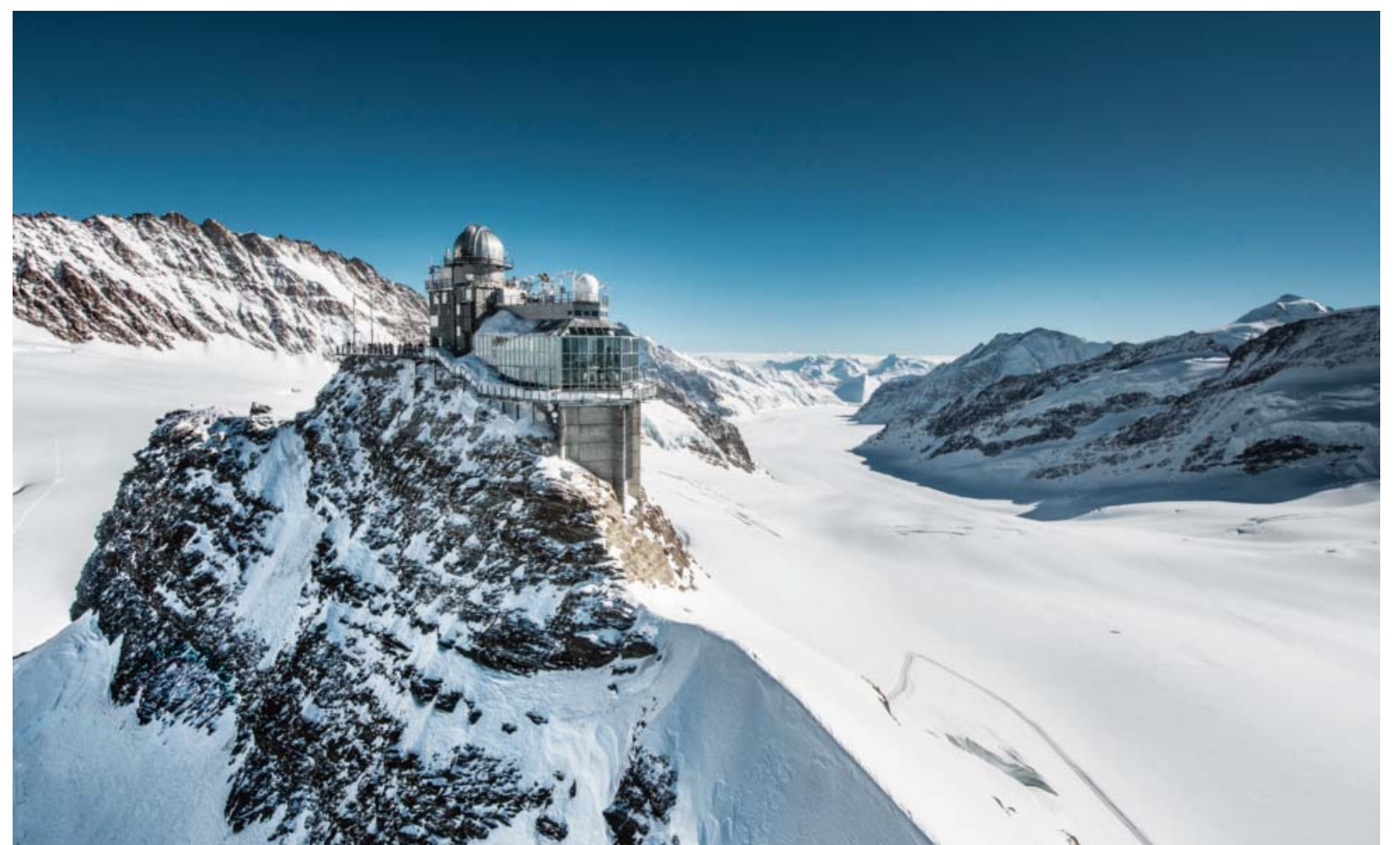
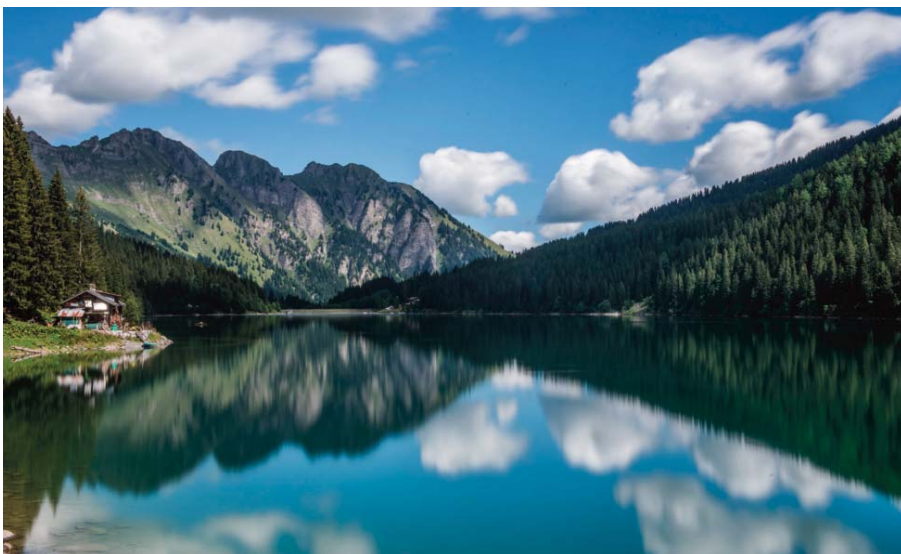
Shopping - with 6km of arcades, Bern has one of Europe's longest covered shopping promenades.

The Rickshaw - iPod AudioGuide Tour.

Get to know Bern at a leisurely pace from the comfort of a three-wheeled rickshaw with your personal driver.

Relax where the majestic triumvirate kisses the sky The Jungfrau Region with its breath-taking mountain ranges is located centrally in Switzerland and is easily reachable from all the main airports.

This region stands out due to its diverse opportunities to experience the beauty of the Swiss alps in catered or self-catered apartments. In the different villages, a great range of restaurants with halal is offered. A perfect place to relax and experience the swiss quality.



TRAVEL

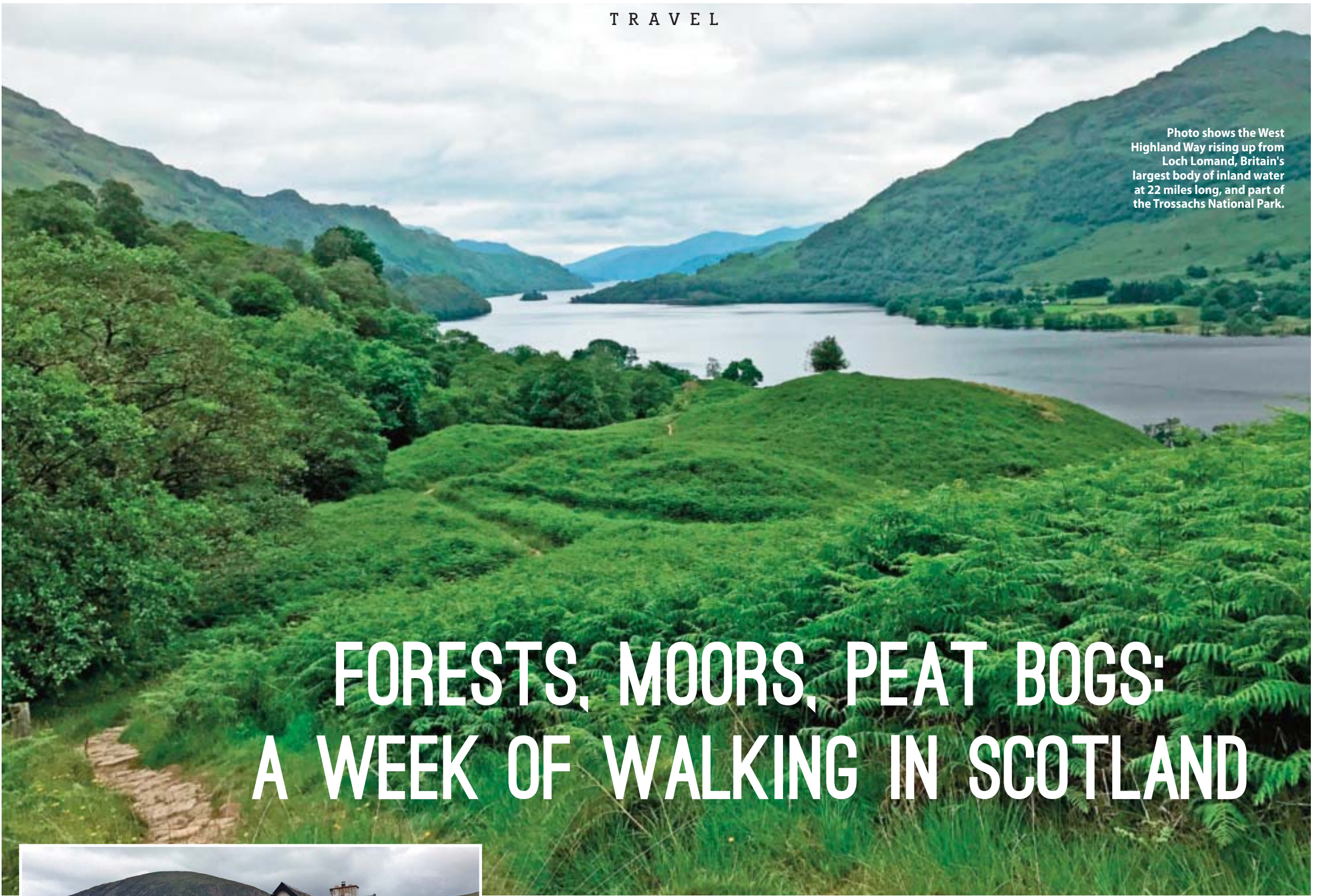


Photo shows the West Highland Way rising up from Loch Lomond, Britain's largest body of inland water at 22 miles long, and part of the Trossachs National Park.

FORESTS, MOORS, PEAT BOGS: A WEEK OF WALKING IN SCOTLAND

'We sense the enormous presence of the surrounding mountains'

By Lynn Dombek

Scotland has more than two dozen official long-distance trails through moors, peat bogs and forests. We chose one of the most popular, the West Highland Way. As first-time walkers in Scotland, my companion and I used a travel company to plan our route, book accommodations and arrange baggage transfers. But we met others who used baggage services and booked their own lodging, along with folks who camped out.

Like the wildly variable Scotland landscape, there's no end of ways to enjoy the walks. Walkers we met were a disparate bunch: young Swiss backpackers; mountaineers from Virginia; a Swedish mother with teenage daughters; a Scottish couple, world travelers but out to see more of their own country; an extended family from England ages 16 to 50; and a Louisiana couple celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. We were mid-50s professionals out for adventure.

We took lots of walks at home to get ready. Knowing June could be rainy and cold, we tested gear beforehand. Our essentials were good boots, breathable rain jackets, rain pants or shorts, and wool or suitable base layers (no cotton!). A runner recently set a record walking the West Highland way in under 14 hours. We did the standard itinerary: 95 miles (150 km) in seven days.

The daily itinerary

Day One: Milngavie to Drymen
12 miles (19 km)

Our first, lovely day transitions from Milngavie, a small town north of Glasgow, into a pastoral landscape dotted with sheep and cows, mossy stone walls and livestock gates. The peaceful walking is on mostly well-worn trails and roads. We stop into Glengoyne distillery for a wee dram, then on to Drymen. We eat that night at the Clachan Inn, licensed in 1734, seated next to a couple who reappear on Day Three to save us in an uncertain moment. We're soundly asleep by 8 p.m.

Day Two: Drymen to Rowardennan
14 miles (22.5 km)

It's pouring rain through moors and forests, then up and steeply down Conic Hill on the boundary fault separating lowland Scotland from the highlands. In good weather it has glorious views of Loch Lomond (loch means lake). We lunch in Balmaha, a popular resort town, and continue on the rocky lakeshore path toward the Rowardennan Hotel, a rustic lodge. The pub, with its corner fireplace, serves as both restaurant and meeting place for walkers. We exchange stories, and stumble off to bed.

Day Three: Rowardennan to Inverarnan
14 miles (22.5 km)

It's overcast but no rain. We're now firmly in Rob Roy country (he's an 18th century highlands folk hero). We're still on the loch's shore where the path is a challenging mix of roots and boulders. Guidebooks describe it as "torturous," despite extraordinary ferns, waterfalls and forests. Six hours in, we convince ourselves a turn was missed and wearily head back. Then the Day One couple appears. The man pulls out his GPS to show we're on track. I sheepishly pocket my map and we're on our way. We share dinner with our new Scottish friends, Stephen and Jane McNaughton, at the Drovers Inn, established in 1705.

lakes and sky, surrounded by heather and mountains. We're smitten. The wind is fierce but rain holds off. For most of the day we see no one else, save our Scottish friends. Guidebooks say this point is as far from civilization as any place on the Way. It feels like it.

Day Six: Kings House to Kinlochleven
9 miles (14.5 km)

We start in sunshine near Glencoe, feeling like tiny blips on the massive glen floor surrounded by towering peaks. Soon we're cloaked in heavy mist on the Devil's Staircase, a zigzag ascent to the Way's highest point at 1,800 feet (550 meters). We again miss views of high peaks as clouds dip lower, but there's a soggy beauty. We sense the enormous presence of the surrounding mountains.

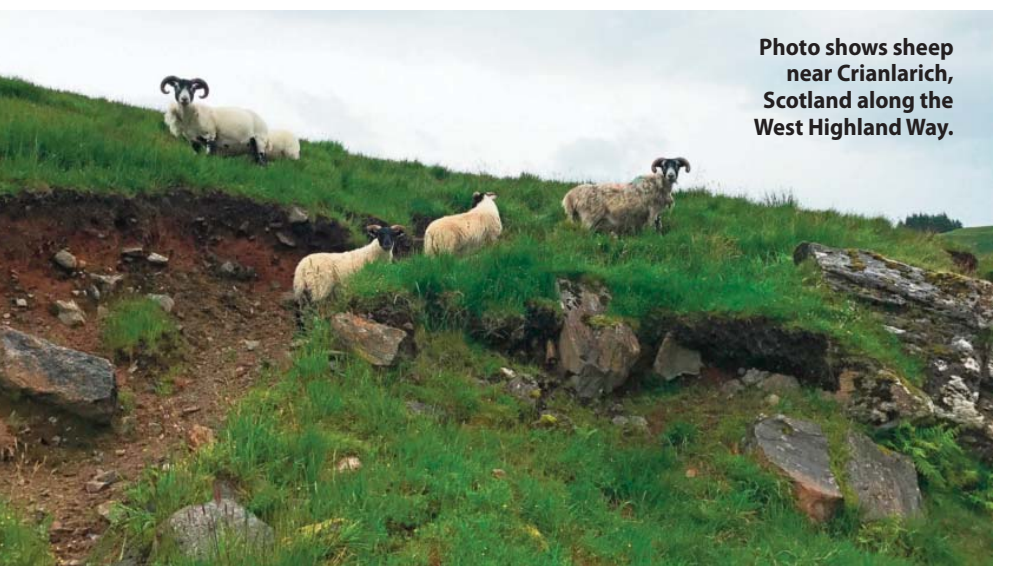


Photo shows sheep near Crianlarich, Scotland along the West Highland Way.

Day Four: Inverarnan to Tyndrum
13.25 miles (21.25 km)

We hit old military trails as yesterday's rigors are forgotten. The rain is back, as are the sheep. We move from farmlands to a thickly wooded conifer plantation, and happily eat lunch on a hillside, the mountaintops shrouded in mist. Nearing Tyndrum we walk through heather, bog myrtle and pinewoods. It's a peaceful end to the day, despite having trekked in earshot of busy route A82.

Day Seven: Kinlochleven to Fort William
15 miles (24 km)

Our last day brings excitement, along with torrential rain and wind. By the time we cross the gorgeous but unforgiving expanse of the valley Lairig Mor, we're soaked. Walkers in ponchos and rain gear flutter in the distance as we splash through mud. The peak of Ben Nevis, the United Kingdom's tallest mountain, is obscured by clouds as we make our final descent into Fort William. We feel elated nonetheless, and lucky to have experienced a week of such awesome beauty. — AP

Day Five: Tyndrum to Kings House
18.75 miles (29.75 km)

Our longest, favorite day. The path starts on the glen floor, zigzags up through woods and descends through spectacular moorland toward Loch Tulla. A few more miles and we're out on Rannoch Moor, a landscape of peat bogs and small



Photo shows Kings House Hotel in Glen Coe, Scotland. — AP photos

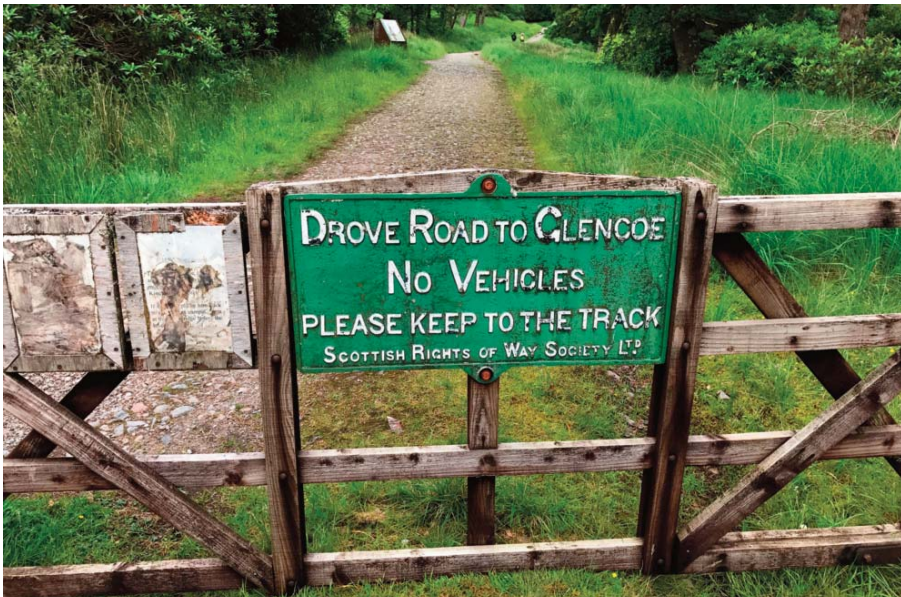


Photo shows a gate to the old Glen Coe road, along Scotland's oldest long distance path, the West Highland Way.



This June photo is of Doone, Scotland, which lies shortly past Loch Lomond, Britain's largest body of inland water at 22 miles long.



Photo shows a hiker on the shore of Loch Lomond walking Scotland's oldest long distance path, the West Highland Way.



Photo shows Glengoyne Distillery, established in 1833, located in Dumgoyne, Scotland.



Photo shows the West Highland Way rising through the valley of Lairig Mor, just north of Kinlochleven, Scotland.



A Kuwaiti man walks by baskets of freshly-caught fish displayed for sale at the main fish market in Kuwait City yesterday. Fishing for Zbaidi, a very popular item in the Kuwaiti cuisine, opened this week after several months of ban imposed by local authorities to allow the marine species to reproduce in territorial waters. Zbaidi's price reached KD 14 (nearly \$50) per kilogram yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Syrian displaced by IS fight paints his heartache

Under the Islamic State group's rule, Syrian farmer Faysal was forced to hide his sketches and paintings, but displaced by fighting he has finally been able to resume his beloved hobby. He sought refuge with his family at the Ain Issa camp in northern Syria three months ago, fleeing the battle for jihadist stronghold Raqa, some 50 kilometers (30 miles) away. The 47-year-old struggled to find art materials in the desolate camp so he meticulously made his own, tying threads pulled from a pillow case to a piece of wood to fashion a paintbrush.



He even gathered cigarette butts to use as charcoal for sketches depicting everything from portraits of his favorite singers to the daily life of the displaced. "I've been drawing for 15 years and I would keep all the pictures for myself," he told AFP. "I'd forgo other things so I could buy paintbrushes and oil paints." "When the Daeshis came in, I wouldn't dare draw," he said, using an Arabic term for IS members. "I hid all my pieces on top of the closet and covered them up with a ton of other things. They considered drawing to be haram (religiously forbidden)." Faysal is among tens of thousands of Syrians displaced by fighting since a US-backed offensive to capture Raqa began last year.

He fled his home northeast of Raqa city around three months ago with his wife Sinaa and seven of their eight children. The slender, tanned farmer did not want to give his real name or the location of his village because he was forced to leave behind a son, imprisoned three years ago by IS. He was reluctant to share much about the arrest, saying only that his son was accused of working for the Syrian government and is being held along with Faysal's nephew.



Syrian farmer Faysal, who fled his home northeast of Raqa following an offensive to capture the city from Islamic State (IS) group fighters, shows his paintings at the Ain Issa camp in northern Syria. — AFP photos

Arab divas, and camp life

Life at the camp is hard, with little shelter from the relentless sun. Between pulling out sketches from his portfolio, Faysal tried to soothe his youngest daughter, who was suffering intense tooth pain that has gone untreated at the camp. Like most of the displaced, Faysal arrived in Ain Issa with little, and to resume his artwork he initially used whatever he found around him. One day, a camp worker saw his pieces and brought him paper and coloured pencils, requesting a portrait to memorialise his son, a Kurdish fighter.

The resulting artwork on a huge white posterboard shows a young man in a military-style uniform with the yellow badge of the Kurdish People's Protection Units. Faysal has other portraits, including some of the region's most famous Middle Eastern divas, like Lebanese singer Fairuz and Egyptian Umm Kulthum. "This is Warda Al-Jazairia, I like to listen to her," he says, gesturing to his rendition of the famed Algerian singer in her youth.

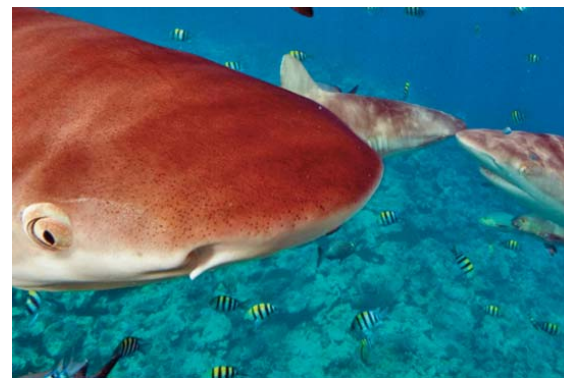
Other pieces depict what has become his daily life, including a coloured sketch of a man atop a stack of the thin sponge mattresses common at displacement camps in the region. "During the month of Ramadan, they did not give us as much food as we expected. No one helped us," Faysal said, gesturing at the sketch. "We had nothing in the camps beside sponge mattresses."

Drawing an execution

Another pencil sketch depicts a family in front of a tent, an old man leaning on a cane, and other people sitting on the ground. "I was looking out from my tent and I saw them, so I drew them," Faysal explained. But the most painful of Faysal's pieces depict life under IS, and particularly the experiences he fears his son may be enduring. He holds up a sketch of two young men in jail—one of them leaning his head back on the concrete wall behind him, and the other with his head between his knees.

"I imagine this is my son's situation in jail," he said. The image caused tears to stream down Sinaa's face. "I love all his drawings," she said. "But the dearest to my heart is the one of my son." Inside his tent, Faysal put the finishing touches to a pencil rendition of a gruesome scene he witnessed in Raqa city while he waited for a doctor's appointment. He recalled seeing IS jihadists drag a handcuffed and blindfolded man from a car, stifling the detainee's screams with a piece of cloth. When Faysal entered his doctor's office, he heard four gunshots. His pencil drawing shows a blindfolded young man, his head thrown back. "This is my pain. Everything that happened to us, not just to my son and nephew." — AFP

Bizarre News



Teenager escapes shark attack

A teenager was attacked by a great white shark but survived. A 13-year-old schoolgirl named Zoe Steyn was booted into the Indian Ocean when she was surfing in South Africa after a 10 foot sea predator clamped onto her surfboard and catapulted her into the sea just missing her leg, the Mirror Online has reported. Speaking about her near death experience, the youngster said: "I just saw this huge black eye looking straight at me and a huge bang as it took my board and began shaking it. "It latched on with its jaws just missing my leg and it tipped me backwards and I fell in and I just saw the black shape of it in the water and panicked. "I heard another surfer screaming at me to get back on my board and I pulled myself onto it but was terrified of where the shark was and what to do." Zoe made it to the shore unharmed after being aided by fellow surfer and photographer JP Veaudry, and she was "relieved" to make it to safety. She explained: "I have never been so relieved to get on a beach in my life and JP told me I was very lucky. They reckon it was at least ten feet long, maybe bigger. "It was the first time I have ever seen a shark in three years of surfing and my memory of it is this big black eye looking straight at me - I was so, so scared." And just one day after the ordeal Zoe took to the waves again, although she has vowed never to surf solo in the future. She said: "I can't thank JP enough for risking his life to paddle out and save me and get back to shore. It has taught me never to surf alone ever again."

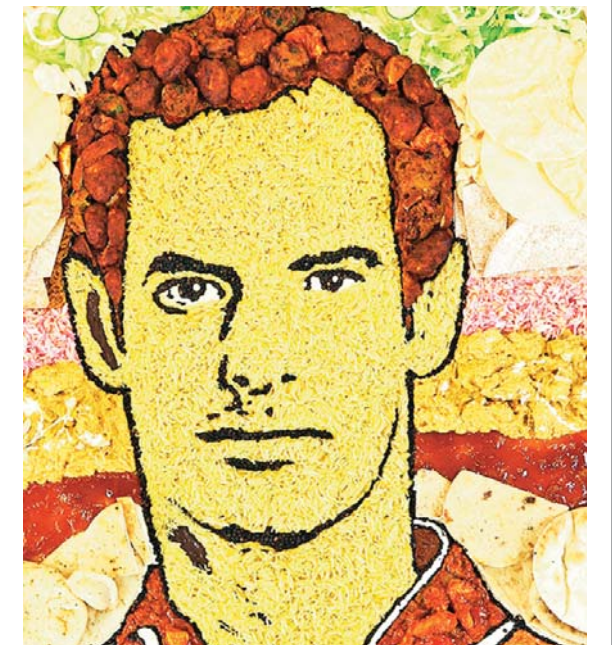


Artist carves people from avocado stones

An artist has created sculptures from the stones of avocados. Irish artist Jan Campbell has been busily forging a name for herself in the art industry by carving the pit of the fruit into tiny ornaments. And the creative mastermind has uploaded images of her designs to her Instagram page. Speaking about her latest venture, Jan wrote: "I found Dagda and his magic harp inside an avocado stone when the Dagda played his harp he could make anyone who heard it giggle with joy, cry with sorrow, or fall instantly into the softest sleep. The playing of his harp made the seasons come in the correct order I want to make a small ensemble of musicians next I will carve a Viol de Gamba player - let me know if you have any suggestions of other instruments you'd like to see.(sic)"

Writing your name can help with fear of turbulence

A pilot gave some advice for people who are afraid of turbulence. Captain Ron Nielsen appeared on 'The Today Show' and told a volunteer with a severe fear of flying to take a pen and try writing your name with the opposite writing hand. According to Captain Nielsen, doing this acts as a distraction and it crosses over motor function in the brain which is a disruption for your thought process. The producer of the show Joyanna Billington put the method to the test and admitted she felt much better doing it.



Artist creates portraits of Wimbledon stars out of takeaway foods

A food artist has created three portraits of three of the nation's favorite tennis stars. Prudence Staite collaborated with the online food ordering platform hungryhouse.co.uk and created Andy Curry, Caroline Teriyaki and Novak Djoko-chips, after the popular Wimbledon stars and used various ingredients from takeaway meals. The food artist said: "I have created a lot of food art over the years, but I've never taken up a takeaway challenge like this before. "After a grueling two weeks on the tennis courts at SW19, these sporting starts certainly deserve a tasty treat." These are not the first celebrities to be turned into food portraits by the artist who also include Denzel Washington out of popcorn, a cupcake Queen, and a life-size replica of Dita Von Teese from cheese.

Stretching first thing in the morning makes your day better

Stretching first thing in the morning can help make your day better, a Harvard University psychologist claims. Amy Cuddy believes having a stretch in your bed in the best way to start the day and making your body stretch as long as possible as soon as your alarm goes off tells your brain that you have a lot of confidence, the Metro reports. This is known as power posing and Amy claims when you pretend to be powerful, you are more likely to feel it.

Man gets Costa cup tattooed on his arm

A Costa coffee addict got a tattoo of one of the franchise's coffee cups. Sam Cooper, 29, from Essex, believes he has spent more than £5,000 on coffee over the space of four years and now he has branded himself one of the biggest fans of the franchise with the life-like tattoo on his forearm. He said to the Mirror Online: "It embodies my love of Costa. You could say I'm an addict, I probably go there at least once a day and have done for the last four years. "I thought, I've just got to do it. The thing with me is, I don't do anything by halves." The coffee fan showed his tattoo to the staff at his local branch and joked he may get a bacon sandwich tattooed next. — Bang Showbiz