

Oil producers' compliance with output cut pact good: Marzouq



Spicer out, Scaramucci, Sanders rise in Trump shakeup



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Kuwaiti FINA official reelected after scandal denial



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## QATARI LEADER APPRECIATES AMIR'S MEDIATION EFFORTS

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### KUWAIT PROTESTS TO LEBANON OVER HEZB

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait has protested to Lebanon over the alleged training by Hezbollah of 21 members of the so-called "Abdally cell" convicted last month on charges of forming a "terror cell" in the state. It demanded that pressure be put on the group, which has ministers in the Lebanese government, to ensure there was no repetition. The protest follows Kuwait's expulsion of 15 Iranian diplomats on Thursday over Tehran's alleged links to those convicted.

The letter delivered by Kuwait's ambassador in Beirut late on Friday said the state's cassation court had found that "Hezbollah took part in contacts, coordinating meetings, paid funds and provided arms and military training in Lebanon" for the defendants. It called on Lebanon to take "the necessary measures to curb these disgraceful practices" by Hezbollah as it is a partner in the government, ambassador Abdulaal Al-Quenai told the official KUNA news agency. He stressed Kuwait's keenness on maintaining and

promoting distinguished brotherly relations with Lebanon.

Kuwaiti authorities busted the "Abdally cell" with ties to Iran in Aug 2015 and seized large quantities of arms, ammunition and explosives. Cell members were convicted of working for Iran's Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah. They were also convicted of smuggling explosives from Iran. The only Iranian member of the cell was sentenced to death in absentia by the lower court early last year.

Kuwait on Tuesday said 14 convicts were on the run while a local newspaper said they had fled to Iran by sea. The cell was convicted by a lower court early last year but acquitted on appeal months later and set free. The supreme court, whose rulings are final, overturned their acquittal on June 18 and sentenced them to between five and 15 years in prison. Unlike neighboring powerhouse Saudi Arabia, Kuwait maintains diplomatic relations with Iran. But sectarian issues remain sensitive. Shiites make up around one third of Kuwait's population. — Agencies



DOHA: Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani speaks late Friday in his first televised speech since the dispute between Qatar and three Gulf countries and Egypt. — AP

DOHA: Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani highly commended on Friday HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's mediation efforts to resolve the Gulf crisis. In a televised address, the Qatari emir said his country had supported Kuwait's mediation efforts from the very beginning, hoping that such efforts would bear fruit.

"We are open to dialogue to resolve the outstanding problems," so long as Qatar's "sovereignty is respected," Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani said in his first public comments since Saudi Arabia and its allies severed ties with the gas-rich emirate. "Any settlement of the crisis must be based on two principles," he said. Sheikh Tamim insisted that any deal "must not take effect in the form of diktats but rather through mutual commitments undertaken by all the parties. We are open to dialogue to find solutions to lingering problems within the framework of respect for the sovereignty and will of each state as mutual undertakings and joint commitments binding all," he said.

On June 5, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt cut ties with Qatar accusing it of backing extremism and fostering ties with their rival Iran. Doha denies the claim. In his speech, the emir said Qatar was "fighting terrorism relentlessly and without compromises, and the international community recognizes this".

Sheikh Tamim hailed the solidarity and resolve that Qataris have shown in the face of the crisis, and said it would make the tiny country, which will host football's World Cup in 2022, even more resilient. "We are open to dialogue to iron out all the pending issues, not only for the benefit of our peoples and governments, but also to spare our region the pointless efforts to dissipate our gains," he said.

Continued on Page 11

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CAIRO: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah (right) and Egyptian President Abdel-fatah Al-Sisi (left) attend the ceremony. — Amiri Diwan photos



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and other officials attend the opening of Mohammad Najeeb military base and the graduation ceremony of military officers.

## AMIR'S ENVOY ATTENDS OPENING OF EGYPTIAN MILITARY BASE

CAIRO: Envoy of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attended yesterday the opening of Mohammad Najeeb military

base and the graduation ceremony of military officers held in Matrouh governorate's El-Hamam City, Egypt.

The military base, hailed as "the biggest in the Middle East and African region," is named after Egypt's first president after its

1952 revolution. The ceremony, which was attended by a bevy of Arab and Egyptian officials, also feted a diverse class of graduating cadets, with around 70 Kuwaitis among them.

The new fortress compound is the Arab

world's most populous nation's first full-fledged military base and contains 1,155 buildings, including a nuclear station, an official military spokesman noted. He also pointed out that the edifice houses a vast array of military equipment.

Earlier yesterday, Sheikh Mohammad delivered a written letter to Egyptian President Abdel-fatah Al-Sisi. The letter focused on developing bilateral ties and also touched on recent regional and international developments. —KUNA



Military officers perform during the ceremony.



Egyptian President Abdel-fatah Al-Sisi and GCC officials attend the ceremony.

# Kuwait Times

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## TURKISH PRESIDENT IN KUWAIT TODAY

KUWAIT: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visits Kuwait today where he will be holding official talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Erdogan's visit is the first stop of a tour of the Gulf region as part of his country's efforts to support a solution to the regional dispute between Qatar and a number of GCC countries plus Egypt. In addition to Kuwait, the President will be visiting Saudi Arabia and Qatar during his tour.

Turkey, as well as other leading nations, lauded His Highness the Amir's mediation role in mending fences between the parties involved in the crisis. Erdogan held various talks via phone with leaders in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and the US to coordinate efforts to end the difficult situation.

Kuwait itself was the focal point of high-level visits by world leading figures such as US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, UK counterpart Boris Johnson,



President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

and others, a fact showing the GCC country's integral role in mediation efforts. The three GCC states of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, in addition Egypt cut ties with Qatar last month. The Arab countries also provided a 13-item-demand list to Doha on May 22 to end the diplomatic crisis. — KUNA

## OIL MINISTER TOUTS OPEC CUT CONFORMITY

SAINT PETERSBURG, Russia: OPEC member states' output cut conformity is "historic and unprecedented," Kuwaiti Minister of Oil Essam Al-Marzouq said on Friday. Upon arrival in Saint Petersburg in Russia to attend a joint ministerial monitoring meeting, Marzouq, who doubles as Minister of Electricity and Water, said he was satisfied with OPEC members' abidance by the recent oil output cut resolution. This time, cut conformity is unprecedented compared to previous times when commitment hardly hit 60 percent, Marzouq added.

"The current production cut conformity rates are so good and encouraging that they hit 106 percent by OPEC member states, and 80 percent by non-OPEC states," he said. He said he is here to attend a meeting of the Joint OPEC-Non-OPEC Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC), headed by the State of Kuwait, which is due tomorrow. The Joint OPEC-Non-OPEC Technical Committee (JTC), a technical sub-committee of the JMMC, will also convene during the coming couple of days to review production cut conformity.

On oil relations between Kuwait and Russia, the Kuwaiti minister said Kuwait has technical cooperation with some Russian oil companies, and that both sides would sign gas import agreements. OPEC and non-OPEC members will mainly look into a report of the Joint OPEC-Non-OPEC Technical Committee (JTC), a technical sub-committee of the Joint OPEC-Non-OPEC Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC), on the compliance of OPEC



Kuwaiti Minister of Oil Essam Al-Marzouq

and non-OPEC members with output cut levels for June 2017. OPEC and non-OPEC members had signed a Declaration of Cooperation in Vienna in December 2016.

During a meeting in Kuwait in March, the Joint OPEC-Non-OPEC Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) had recommended the extension of an oil output cut for more six months to keep the global oil market stable. At a meeting in December, 11 non-OPEC oil producers cooperated with the 13 OPEC member countries in a concerted effort to accelerate the rebalancing of the global oil market through an adjustment in combined production of 1.8 million barrels per day. The State of Kuwait chairs the Joint OPEC-Non-OPEC Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC), which comprises Venezuela and Algeria as OPEC members, and Russia and Oman as non-OPEC members. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The 'Al-Wafra' aircraft, the newest addition to Kuwait Airways' fleet.— Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

In my view

## ONLY IN KUWAIT - PART 12

By Talal Al-Ghannam



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# KUWAIT AIRWAYS RECEIVES 9TH BOEING 777-300ER

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Airways, the official national carrier, announced on Friday the delivery of the 'Al-Wafra' aircraft of the family of long-range twin-engine jets, the Boeing 777-300ER. In a press statement, Kuwait Airways Chairman Sami Al-Rasheed said it was the ninth plane of a 10-aircraft deal of the same family.

He added that four aircraft have been sold and re-leased to the ALAFCO company in a financing partnership. He extolled cooperation of the company's management in fulfilling this partnership to be in favor of interest of the two companies, indicating that it is the first cooperation in its kind with Kuwait Airways.

In a similar statement, Adel Al-Banawan, deputy CEO of ALAFCO, said it is the first deal between ALAFCO and the national carrier. The deal will have positive repercussions that will contribute to the prosperity of the national economy, he noted. The passenger plane is part of a 10-aircraft deal expected to be completed by the third

quarter of 2017. Established in 1953, Kuwait Airways is one of the carriers in the Gulf region. The State of Kuwait owns all company's stocks. ALAFCO is a plane-leasing company established in Kuwait in 2000 and enlisted in Boursa Kuwait in 2006. It is jointly owned by the Kuwait Finance House and Kuwait Airways. — KUNA



## KFH TAKES PART IN RECRUITMENT FORUM AT MGRP

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) took part in the recruitment forum held at the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program's (MGRP) headquarters. This emanates from the bank's endeavors to support the Kuwaiti youth in the labor market, while effectively strengthening partnership with the

government institutions in an attempt to achieve the common national goals and the comprehensive economic development.

The recruitment forum included a presentation form KFH to demonstrate the available positions and vacancies in the bank. Also, a specialized recruitment

team from KFH was accessible at the MGRP Headquarters to receive recruitment applications, conduct interviews with applicants, and proceed with the recruitment procedures once candidates meet all recruitment.

KFH is considered among the first banks to cooperate with the MGRP in the

recruitment and training fields. MGRP praised the fruitful collaboration with KFH that offers its job opportunities to the job seekers and those registered in the program. KFH has a proven track record of excellence in the field of employing and training national labor. It received several awards in this regard.



KFH staff receive recruitment applications.



Group photo of KFH's human resources team.

**G**ood morning my dear and honorable brothers and sisters. In this column, I continue my 'Only in Kuwait' series in which I attempt to touch on wrongdoings in the Kuwaiti society that need more attention from the government or people themselves.

Only in Kuwait when there is a road accident, the entire road becomes like a maze where everyone wants to snap a picture to share it with others, even if the accident took place on the other side of the highway.

Only in Kuwait recruiting a housekeeper can be more expensive than a three-month house rental, going on a vacation to Europe or even buying a used car.

Only in Kuwait, a rich country, your car gets damaged by deep potholes on recently-constructed roads, and you have to fix the front end and windshield twice a month. We all do appreciate the efforts being exerted by the relevant authorities in fixing up the roads in line with the state's development plan, but what makes you furious is the justification made by those authorities or the main contractor when they say that these are temporary roads and people must be patient till the project is finally completed. But sir, having to tolerate a bumpy, broken and intolerable road does not mean that people's cars become like junk because they have to wait for the project to be completed. Also, having a temporary road does not mean that the contractor should use the cheapest materials and have the people accept the situation no matter what the consequences might be.

Only in Kuwait fires keep occurring in the country's most gigantic projects, while blame is always put on the harsh hot weather, without taking into account other factors that might be the real cause.

Only in Kuwait you see many families being angry and annoyed when going out for dinner, as if there was an invasion against the country.

Only in Kuwait many families are seen distancing their maid from their table at a restaurant and make her sit alone to eat instead of making her share the table with them. My advice to those families is to take Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the best example, who used to sit with workers and share his meal with them, besides helping them with their chores.

Only in Kuwait the word 'thank you' to housemaids is almost forgotten by many sponsors, and yet they expect good treatment from them at all times.

Only in Kuwait it is a nightmare for an expat to get a driving license, while some expats working in certain job categories can get it easily without wasta (connections). Don't ask me why.

Only in Kuwait fish prices are like the stock exchange - they go up one day and down on another. Imagine that you buy a fish weighing a kilogram for KD 15 for your family. But one fish is not enough to feed your whole family, so you must buy at least two kilograms, which means the total amount will be KD 30 for a single meal. But who cares?

Until the next article insha Allah

## CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT READY FOR HAJJ SEASON

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Director General of the Customs Department Jamal Al-Jalawi said the department has working plans for all seasons, especially during hajj and summer. He said the department is ready at all its posts by increasing the number of male and female inspectors in order to ease the procedures for those returning from summer holidays. Jalawi said there is a plan to ease procedures for pilgrims and their return to the country either through the airport or land border outlets.

Meanwhile, Jalawi said Kuwait has a very strict law to fight money laundering, so all travelers must declare any amounts over KD 3,000 according to law 106/2014 either upon arrival and departure. He said Kuwait has no restriction on money carried by citizens and expats, but must it be declared. He warned citizens and expats against carrying luggage that does not belong to them.

# NEW CAMERAS RECORDED 1,500 TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS IN ONE WEEK

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Acting Interior Ministry Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Maj Gen Fahad Al-Shuwaihi said the ministry is using the most modern equipment for the safety of motorists. He said the new traffic control cameras recorded 1,500 violations in one week. He said the cameras contribute to raising the safety level of traffic on the road network around the country. The camera records violations on the main lanes in addition to the left and right shoulders. It also checks trucks that are on the road during banned hours. He asked citizens and expats to comply with traffic officers' instructions and traffic laws. Separately, the traffic department carried out several campaigns to deter violators, resulting in issuing several tickets and impounding several vehicles due to reckless driving.

### Fires

Fire broke out in a power transformer in Abdullah Al-Mubarak Street. Ardiya fire center backed by Jleeb fire center responded, and it took them one hour to control and put out the fire. Meanwhile, a Surra transformer also caught fire, and Salmiya, Hawally and Industrial Shuwaikh centers battled the blaze for two hours. No injuries were reported in both fires.

### Inspections

The fire department closed down two facilities for not meeting preventive conditions. One of the buildings is a medical facility in Hawally, and the other is a warehouse for kitchen and hotel equipment in Shuwaikh. Separately, fire inspectors issued warnings to five industrial facilities in Jahra, Subhan, Shuwaikh and a basement in Hawally.

### Crackdowns

Farwaniya municipality carried out an inspection campaign on Ardiya cafes with police backup. The campaign resulted in issuing nine citations for not complying with technical conditions and using the place for sleeping. Separately, Mubarak Al-Kabeer municipality carried out a campaign at Aswaq Al-Qurain, resulting in the discovery of a warehouse containing large quantities of expired food (8.267 tons), in addition to the store owner operating it before receiving a health license from the municipality. In other news, Acting Director General of Kuwait Municipality Asad Emadi said 729 transactions for real-estate ownership were issued by electronic correspondence with the authentication department at the justice ministry in one month. He said the electronic link reduced the documentary cycle and simplified procedures.



KUWAIT: Firefighters tackle a transformer's blaze.



A vehicle impounded during a recent crackdown carried out by the traffic department against reckless drivers.



Firefighters close down a building for failure to adhere to fire safety conditions.



Kuwait Municipality trucks carry large amounts of expired food discovered inside a warehouse during a recent crackdown in Aswaq Al-Qurain.

In Brief

**KUWAIT CONDEMNS ISRAELI ACTS IN AL-AQSA MOSQUE**

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait on Friday strongly condemned Israeli acts against Palestinian worshipers in Jerusalem, calling on Israel to completely open up Al-Aqsa Holy Mosque. An official source at the Foreign Ministry, in a statement, called for removing all obstacles preventing Palestinians from performing their prayers and practicing their rights, and for the Israeli authorities to respect relevant international charters, as well as stop provoking Muslims around the world. —KUNA



**KUWAITIS IN GREECE SAFE AFTER QUAKE**

**ATHENS:** Kuwait's Ambassador to Greece Saud Al-Duwaish stressed on Friday that all Kuwaitis in Greece are safe, after the earthquake that hit several coastal areas of the country earlier the same day. The ambassador contacted the local authorities and the Mayor of Kos Island to make sure that all Kuwaitis had not been affected by the quake, Kuwait Embassy in Athens said. The envoy urged Kuwaitis in Greece to cooperate with local authorities and call at : 6943010301 or 2106743593 for any help. —KUNA



**KUWAIT OIL PRICE DOWN 33 CENTS TO \$46.18 PB**

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil was down by 33 cents to \$46.18 per barrel Friday as oppose to \$46.51 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. The price of the Brent crude for September delivery was down by \$1.24 to \$48.06 per barrel, the same case with the West Texas Intermediate's price for August delivery, which was down by \$1.15 to \$45.77 pb. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait City as seen from Al-Shaheed Park. —KUNA



**ICE CREAM STREET VENDORS, HEROES OF THE SUMMER**

**KUWAIT:** Riding on their bikes throughout the streets, Kuwait's ice cream street vendors are considered as saviors and heroes, providing delicious and cool 'goodies' during the unbearable heat of the summer. No matter how young or old a person is, those vendors are welcomed with open arms and smiling faces. —KUNA



**BUCKETS OF MERCY PROVIDE WATER TO BIRDS, ANIMALS IN KUWAIT**

**KUWAIT:** While people in Kuwait are trying to escape the current heatwave by staying at their air-conditioned homes and drinking cool and refreshing fluids, there are birds and animals that have no other option but to survive

the scorching heat. Bearing that in mind, many households have decided to leave buckets and pots of water outside so that birds and animals may have a source to quench their thirst. —KUNA

Crime

Report

PROBE INTO YOUNG MAN'S DEATH IN SHARQ

**KUWAIT:** Capital detectives are investigating the death of a Kuwaiti young man who fell from a tower in Sharq. Detectives are investigating whether the man fell from the building, if he was thrown, or if he threw himself from the 20th floor. A security source said the possibility that he committed suicide is very slight.

Drunks fight

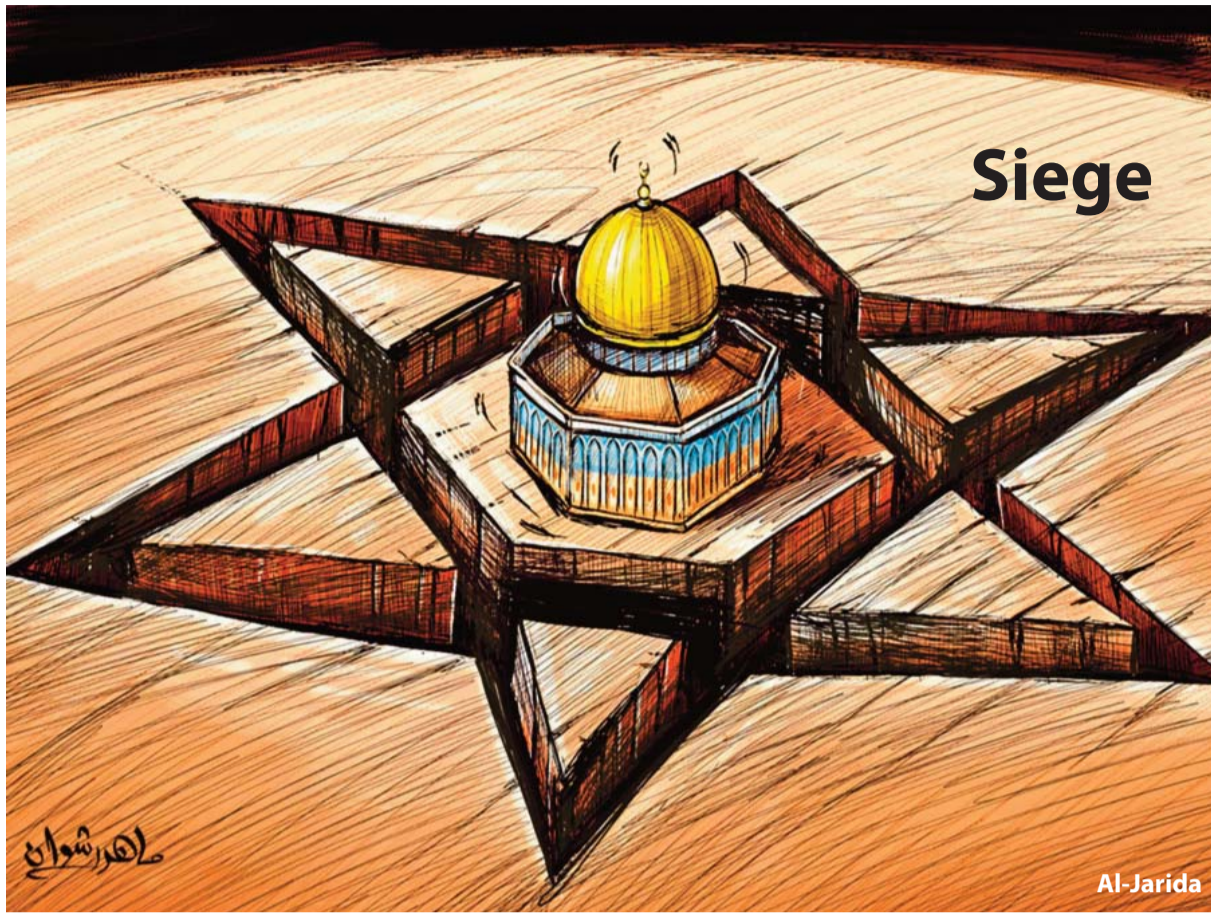
A fight broke out between seven drunk men competing over a girl in Jahra desert. One of the men suffered fractures in the hand and skull, while another attempted suicide by ingesting 40 epilepsy tablets. The suspects were having a party in a farm with men and women present, and the drunk men started competing over a girl and broke into a fight. Police received a call about the scene and arrested the men at the farm. The injured man was taken to hospital under guard. The girls disappeared. Meanwhile, the man who took the pills lost consciousness, so he was taken to Jahra hospital where he went under gastric lavage. The suspects are being sent to the public prosecution.

Theft

A female citizen told Jabriya police that she was robbed by an unknown person after she withdrew KD 500 from an ATM. The person snatched the money and escaped in his car. Detectives are working on the case.



**KUWAIT:** Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah welcomed poet and media personality Abdulkareem Al-Enezi, who presented him a copy of his Master's thesis, for which he earned his degree from Al-Yarmouk University of Jordan.



الجريدة

Al-Jarida

THE WISE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

By Dr Bader Al-Daihani

The heated events that are going on around the world, and in our region in particular, should not keep us from attending to our problems and issues including our internal worries. The first of these issues, as we have said many times, is comprehensive democratic-political reform, which must be done so that the economic and financial defects we suffer from can be reformed, besides reforming education and enhancing the health and social services, then we can talk about the ambitious sustainable humanitarian development plans. The lack of serious work on reforming the political system and developing it means the continuation of the institutional political corruption which is the main reason for other types of corruption. As a result, the serious defects our national economy is suffering from will continue, the budget deficit will increase and public debt will accumulate as well as what follows in economic, social and political repercussions. Public problems that are there today will get worse in education and health, or using national human resources and developing them, and this is what will increase public anger, and reduce public confidence in the government's policies and actions.

In other words, we are facing difficult and highly complicated challenges that need a good and aware political system that is free of corruption, bearing in mind that time is not in our favor, because the political situation around the world and the region is troubled and unstable, the capitalistic world economy is suffering from highly complicated structural problems, and its situation is not assuring. Oil prices are fluctuating, and will not return to what it was before its drop, that apart from the fact that the importance of oil itself as an energy source at a global level began to decline in favor of oil shale and clean energy alternatives.

Therefore, there is a need for a general administration that is wise and good, and is able to face difficult challenges both current and future ones. It should have high ability and confidence to manage crises and deal with general problems. The good and wise general administration is the one that makes long term development plans, and the one that makes policies, and sets the type of required general programs, then asks the economic and administrative sectors to implement them under its supervision and inspection.

But to continue with the consumed government rhetoric about the ability of the private sector to deal with general problems like unemployment, education, health, housing, social services and management of economic and financial crises is an empty talk, as we have said many times. This is because the responsibility of reforming the general situation, fighting corruption of all its types and management of public crises, as well as solving society problems is that of the government, apart from which the private sector itself is in constant need, due to its welfare and parasitic nature, of the government intervention to rescue it from its repeated structural crises.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

النبا

Al-Anbaa

FOOD SAFETY

By Mohammad Ghareeb

The issue of inedible meat and restaurant violations has increased, and the municipality has shown total negligence towards following up on the issue. The reason behind it is the inability of many municipality inspectors to carry out their jobs as they are supposed to. Most of them lack experience and are recent graduates, despite the importance of the issue on the health of the society. While the municipality is more interested in buildings than spoiled food and the cleanliness of laborers who work in restaurants, storage rooms where meat and other food stuff are refrigerated remain under filthy conditions without any supervision and we see most of the foodstuff including canned goods like chickpeas, beans, etc that are stored there have passed their expiry date.

Frozen food that comes from abroad isn't cooled for hours, which causes it to dry up, and after it has melted it is frozen again. Inspectors must have vast experience in exam-

ining and inspecting food arriving from abroad, as this is very critical for our health. There has also been an increase in rates of shisha smoking, especially at restaurants near the beach. Restaurants serving shisha are supposed to have an isolated cafe or space for shisha alone, but many patrons and beach goers say that this condition is not fully applied.

Inspectors must have vast experience in examining and inspecting food arriving from abroad

I hope that municipality employees explain the violation from a legal point, and not to be temperamental. I wish the municipality hurries in making decisions in regards to spoiled meat and restaurants violations, because such legal cases take a lot of time, and the restaurant owner uses this period to commit tens of violations until the cassation verdict is issued. There is also another phenomenon we are dealing with which is the expiry of nuts in cooperative societies and grocery stores, and most of them are spoiled, but are repackaged with new dates.

—Translated by Kuwait Times



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Philippines to extend martial law

## MINNEAPOLIS CHIEF RESIGNS AFTER SHOOTING OF AUSTRALIAN WOMAN

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WASHINGTON: In this Jan 21, 2017, file photo, White House press secretary Sean Spicer, flanked by images of then President-elect Donald Trump arriving during the 58th Presidential Inauguration at the US Capitol, speaks in the White House briefing room. — AP

# WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN SPICER OUT

## PRESS SECRETARY ABRUPTLY RESIGNS IN PROTEST OVER SHAKE-UP

WASHINGTON: White House press secretary Sean Spicer abruptly resigned Friday in protest at a major shake-up of Donald Trump's scandal-tainted administration, as pressure mounted from a broadening investigation into the Trump campaign's ties to Russia. Spicer quit after Trump named Anthony Scaramucci, a Wall Street financier and one-time critic, as the new White House communications director-a role Spicer had hoped to play. "It's been an honor & a privilege to serve @POTUS @realDonaldTrump & this amazing country. I will continue my service through August," Spicer tweeted.

In a written statement, Trump said he was "grateful" for Spicer's work and praised his "great television ratings"-a reference to Spicer's keenly watched, combative and oftensitized news briefings. "Spicer is a wonderful person who took tremendous abuse from the Fake News Media - but his future is bright!" Trump tweeted. Spicer was replaced by deputy press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders. In an interview with Fox News, Spicer said he stepped aside to "not have too many cooks in the kitchen" to convey Trump's mes-

sage. Spicer's resignation marked an escalation of tensions within an administration that has seen its legislative agenda falter at the same time it has been buffeted by an investigation into alleged collusion with Russia.

The Washington Post reported late Friday that Attorney General Jeff Sessions, contrary to his prior testimony, discussed campaign-related and policy matters with Russia's ambassador to Washington, citing intelligence intercepts. The report will heap pressure on Sessions, who already was on the receiving end of a tongue-lashing by Trump over the Russia probe. The president suggested Sessions had betrayed him in stepping away from the investigation.

And in another blow, Mark Corallo-who was coordinating the Trump legal team's public response to the Russia crisis-told AFP that he, too, had stepped down. After months of denials, the White House was recently rocked by emails showing Donald Trump's eldest son and two top aides met with a Russian lawyer in the belief they would get dirt on the Republican billionaire's 2016 election rival, Hillary Clinton. In response, Trump aides have

floated the idea of pre-emptive presidential pardons and Trump himself has warned investigators not to look into his family finances. Spicer's decision appears to have happened quickly, with neither he nor Sanders giving any indication of changes afoot when they had drinks with a group of journalists on Thursday evening. Spicer had "no regrets" on his way out the door, he said on Fox late Friday.

Yet he angrily lashed out at US media, claiming they were "obsessed" with Russia after US intelligence agencies said that Moscow was involved in meddling with the US presidential election Trump won. "I was increasingly disappointed in how so many members of the members here in the media do their job, or rather, don't do their job. The bias which they come from it at," Spicer said. And it is no exception, he stressed.

### 'On track'

"The majority of folks that are now in this-in the briefing room, that are going into journalism. They're not there for the facts and the pursuit of the truth. Rather, they're trying to figure out, how do I get on TV, how do I

become a YouTube star. And that's disappointing." In addition, in terms of staffing, Spicer explained: "I thought it would be a bit confusing having additional people at the top. And so I wanted to move on to give both Anthony and Sarah that clear lane in each of their respective areas."

Scaramucci dismissed reports of infighting when he took questions from the press for the first time. "I think the White House is on track," he told reporters. Spicer had been a close ally of chief of staff Reince Priebus, and his departure will likely weaken both Priebus and the bridge between the White House and the Republican Party establishment.

In an expansive interview with The New York Times earlier this week, Trump plunged his White House into fresh crisis when he attacked special counsel Robert Mueller, and warned him against looking at Trump family finances. Mueller is examining whether Trump or his aides colluded with Russia's apparent efforts to help tilt the 2016 presidential election in Trump's favor.

With the probe apparently extending to financial transactions, US media reported that

Trump allies were looking for ways to discredit Mueller's investigation. Trump himself has suggested that Mueller - a widely respected former FBI director - may have a conflict of interest. The White House has pointedly refused to rule out the possibility that Trump would fire Mueller-an act that would prompt a political firestorm and perhaps a constitutional crisis.

### 'Crossing a line'

Republican House Homeland Security Committee chairman Michael McCaul warned Trump would face a "tremendous backlash response from both Democrats but also House Republicans" if he were to sack Mueller.

"Trump cannot define or constrain Mueller investigation. If he tries to do so this creates issues of constitutional and criminal dimension," said former attorney general Eric Holder. Trump has already fired his FBI director James Comey over the Russia investigation. The top Democrat on the Senate's intelligence committee, Mark Warner, warned that pardoning anybody who may have been involved in potential collusion "would be crossing a fundamental line." — AFP

# GREEK HOLIDAY ISLAND BATTLES TO RECOVER FROM DEADLY QUAKE

KOS: The Greek holiday island of Kos yesterday was struggling to recover from a quake that killed two people and injured hundreds, with tourists facing flight delays and the damaged main harbor closed for a second day. The 6.7-magnitude tremor also left hundreds more injured in the Turkish resort of Bodrum, about 20 kilometers across the sea from Kos. "Given the amount of people outside at the time, having only two victims is a miracle," deputy Kos mayor David Yerasklis told Kathimerini daily. The undersea quake struck at 1:31 am Friday (2231 GMT Thursday) between Kos and Bodrum.

At the time, tourists in both places were out enjoying the nightlife. On Kos, the upper facade of a two-storey nightclub collapsed on people outside, killing a 22-year-old Swede and a 39-year-old Turk. Another 120 people were hurt, seven of them seriously, while some 360 people were injured in Bodrum-many after jumping out of windows. The badly injured on Kos were flown

to hospitals in Athens and Crete, including two men from Sweden and Norway who are in critical condition.

The hospital on Crete yesterday said the 23-year-old Norwegian-who had lost his lower leg early on-had to have his other leg amputated. The 21-year-old Swede has serious head injuries and broken bones. Police on Friday had given their nationalities in the inverse order. Another 20 people remained hospitalized in Turkey, said Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim, who sent his sympathies. "Hardship, like joy, is shared where neighbors are concerned," Yildirim said. Kos is one of Greece's top travel destinations, and particularly popular with British, German and Scandinavian tourists.

### No 'dramatization'

The quake struck at the height of the tourism season, and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras on Friday warned against "dramatizing" the issue.

"Creating a climate of exaggeration and dramatization does not help restoring normality in daily life on the island," Tsipras' office said in a statement.

Government officials and expert divers yesterday were inspecting Kos's harbor, which was cracked by the tremor and has been declared unsafe for use.

But the rest of island's infrastructure network including roads is mostly intact, they stressed. Ferries have been rerouted to the smaller port town of Kefalos in west Kos until repairs are made. "All scheduled ferry services are now running from Kefalos, both incoming and outgoing," a Kos coastguard operator said.

Many people spent the night outdoors as a precaution, setting up tents in parks and squares, but officials noted that the majority of hotels were unaffected by the quake. Deborah Kinnear, a 35-year-old psychologist from Glasgow, said her family initially thought of returning home but no flights were available. — AFP



KOS: People look at a car crushed under rubble near the port of the Greek island of Kos following a 6.5 magnitude earthquake which struck the region on July 21, 2017. — AFP

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## HUNGARY'S LEADER SAYS FENCES WILL STOP MUSLIM MIGRATION

**BUDAPEST:** European Union leaders and Hungarian-American billionaire George Soros are seeking a "new, mixed, Muslimized Europe," Hungary's anti-migration prime minister said yesterday. Prime Minister Viktor Orban said during a visit to Romania that Hungary's border fences, supported by other Central European countries, are the barriers to the EU-Soros effort to increase Muslim migration.

Orban also said that while Hungary opposed taking in migrants "who could change the country's cultural identity," he said that under his leadership Hungary would remain a place where "Western European Christians will

always be able to find security." Orban, who will seek a fourth term as prime minister in April 2018, said Hungary's opposition parties were no match for his government.

"In the upcoming campaign, first of all we have to confront external powers," Orban said at a cultural festival in Baile Tusnad, Romania. "We have to stand our ground against the Soros mafia network and the Brussels bureaucrats. And, during the next nine months, we will have to fight against the media they operate."

Soros has become a key target of Orban and his government. Recent legislation seeks to close or expel the

Budapest-based Central European University, founded by Soros in 1991. There are also new rules about non-governmental organizations funded at least partly from abroad. Critics say that the new regulations stigmatize the NGOs, many of which are backed by Soros' Open Society Foundations, and are meant to delegitimize them.

### 'Migrant invasion'

Orban reiterated his charge that Soros-funded NGOs want to weaken Hungary's security with their advocacy for asylum-seekers, while Hungary had managed to stop the "migrant invasion" with the fences protected by razor-wire

built on the borders of Serbia and Croatia. A recently ended anti-Soros billboard and poster campaign was criticized by local and international Jewish groups for its anti-Semitic overtones.

Asked about choosing between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, Orban initially answered with a joke about a Pole being asked in the communist era to choose between Hitler and Stalin. "He answered that he chooses Marlene Dietrich," Orban said with a laugh. "What I want to say with this is that you can't give a good answer to a bad question."

Orban first expressed his support for Trump, then a presidential candidate, a

year ago at the same event in Romania, while Putin has visited Hungary twice in two years. Hungary is expanding its energy ties with Moscow, including Russia's construction of new reactors at Hungary's only nuclear power plant.

Orban said "Hungarian interests" would be the "guiding star" of the country's foreign policy, not "Trump, Putin or (German Chancellor Angela) Merkel." Orban said Hungary's low birth rate made the country an "endangered species," and that the government was using taxes on multinational companies in Hungary to fund social policies and spur families to have more children. —AP



**JERUSALEM:** Palestinian worshippers run for cover from teargas fired by Israeli forces outside Jerusalem's Old City in front of the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, after Israeli police barred men under 50 from entering the Old City for Friday Muslim prayers. —AFP

## FEARS OF MORE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN VIOLENCE OVER SENSITIVE HOLY SITE

TENSIONS HAVE RISEN THROUGHOUT THE PAST WEEK

**JERUSALEM:** Stabbings and clashes that left six people dead raised fears yesterday of further Israeli-Palestinian violence as tensions mount over new security measures at a highly sensitive Jerusalem holy site. Friday's violence-a stabbing attack that killed three Israelis and clashes which left three Palestinians dead-was among the most severe in recent years.

There were concerns over whether it would spark wider unrest as Israeli officials grappled with how to ease tensions over the Haram Al-Sharif mosque compound, known to Jews as the Temple Mount. The site in Jerusalem's Old City that includes the revered Al-Aqsa mosque and Dome of the Rock has been a rallying cry for Palestinians. In 2000, then Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon's visit to the compound helped ignite the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising, which lasted more than four years.

Tensions have risen throughout the past week because of new Israeli security measures at the compound following an attack nearby that killed two policemen on July 14. The measures have included the installation of metal detectors at entrances to the site, which Palestinians reject since they view the move as Israel asserting further control over it.

Israeli authorities say the July 14 attackers smuggled guns into the holy site and emerged from it to shoot the policemen. Friday's main weekly Muslim prayers-which typically draw thousands to Al-Aqsa-brought the situation to a boil. In anticipation of protests, Israel barred men under 50 from entering the Old City for prayers, stoking further Palestinian anger. Clashes broke out between Israeli security

forces and Palestinians around the Old City, in other parts of annexed east Jerusalem and in the occupied West Bank.

### Abbas freezes contacts

Three Palestinians between the ages of 17 and 20 were shot dead. The Palestinian Red Crescent reported 450 people wounded in Jerusalem and the West Bank, including 170 from live or rubber bullets. In the evening, a Palestinian broke into a home in a Jewish settlement in the West Bank during a Sabbath dinner and stabbed four Israelis, killing three of them.

The 19-year-old Palestinian was shot by a neighbor, an off-duty soldier, and was taken to hospital. The Israeli army said he had spoken of the Jerusalem holy site and of dying as a martyr in a Facebook post. The Israelis killed in Neve Tsuf, north of Ramallah and also known as Halamish, were a grandfather and two of his children, an Israeli military official said. The grandmother was wounded.

Israeli soldiers raided the Palestinian's nearby village of Kobar overnight and arrested his brother, an army spokeswoman said. Preparations were also being made to demolish the attacker's home, a measure Israel regularly employs because it views it as a deterrent, although human rights groups say it amounts to collective punishment. Amid mounting pressure to respond to the dispute over the mosque compound, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas announced late Friday he was freezing contacts with Israel. There was no immediate public reaction from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

### 'For all Muslims'

"Violence is likely to worsen absent a major policy shift," said Ofer Zalzberg, a senior analyst at the International Crisis Group. "Netanyahu's mistake was installing the metal detectors without a Muslim interlocutor. It is the coercive character more than the security measure itself that made this unacceptable for Palestinians."

Yesterday, entrances to Jerusalem's walled Old City were open, but heavy security was in place. The metal detectors also remained at the entrance to the mosque compound. "Al Aqsa-that's for the Muslims, not for the Jewish," said Mohammad Haroub, a 42-year-old souvenir shop owner. Like hundreds of others, he prayed outside on Friday instead of passing through the metal detectors. He added that it was not only an Israeli-Palestinian issue.

"Al Aqsa is not for Palestinians. It is for all Muslims," Sharon Kopel, a 46-year-old Israeli tour guide leading a group in the Old City, said he felt the metal detectors were unnecessary and politically motivated, but also criticized Palestinians for "lies" about Israel trying to take over Al-Aqsa. "I don't think it's really effective anyway," he said of the new security measures. "But on the other hand... they brought guns into a holy place." The Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount is central to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It lies in east Jerusalem, seized by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed in a move never recognized by the international community. It is considered the third holiest site in Islam and the most sacred for Jews. —AFP

## 10 YEARS LATER, BULGARIAN NURSES LEAVE THEIR LIBYA ORDEAL BEHIND

**PAZARDJIK, Bulgaria:** Bulgarian nurse Valentina Siropoulo was once condemned to death in Moamer Kadhafi's Libya. Ten years after she and four colleagues were released and allowed home, appreciation of their freedom overwhelms memories of their harrowing ordeal. "My busy day-to-day life lets me forget the abuse. I have learnt to better appreciate my health, my freedom, my family," says the 58-year old.

She has resumed her work at the hospital in Pazardjik, a small town in southern Bulgaria which seems a million miles away from chaos-riven Libya. The five nurses were jailed in 1999, along with a Palestinian doctor, for allegedly infecting over 400 children with HIV-tainted blood at a paediatric hospital in the eastern city of Benghazi. They were tortured while in detention and twice sentenced to death. Tripoli only agreed to commute their death sentences to life imprisonment in 2007, after which they were flown back to Bulgaria.

"I was abducted one evening in 1999," Siropoulo recalls with a shudder. "Men taped up my mouth, then tortured me for months, with electric shocks, batons and threats of being attacked by dogs. The rest of the time I was lying alone in a cell waiting for death." She had enjoyed the work on a paediatric ward, where she was much better paid than back home. But the foreign medics were held responsible for tainted blood transfusions and accused of deliberately infecting 438 children with HIV.

### 'Long match'

Their savior came in the form of Cecilia Sarkozy, wife of the then French president Nicolas Sarkozy, who visited Libya twice in July 2007 for talks with Kadhafi. Despite an official French inquiry, Cecilia's precise role remains unclear, but the freed medical workers have no doubt she was instrumental in their release.

"When Cecilia came to bring us back I saw her like the Virgin Mary," says Valya Tchervenyachka, now in her sixties. One of those close to the ordeal is Bulgaria's for-

mer foreign minister Solomon Passy, who describes a tangled web of negotiators including British intelligence agents, and UN and EU officials. "It was a long match played by the international community, then President Sarkozy pops up in the 90th minute to score the winning goal," Passy tells AFP.

France and the European Union officially thanked Qatar for its role in securing the nurses' freedom, prompting intense speculation that a large amount of cash had been involved. Despite repeated denials of a ransom, a slew of contracts was signed between Paris and Tripoli in the years following the release and Kadhafi made an official visit to France in 2007.

### Simple life

Last November, a French magazine published documents appearing to exonerate the medical workers and suggesting that the children were in fact injected with tainted blood by Libyan intelligence and special forces commanders. The testimony was found in a diary belonging to Shukri Ghanem, who served as Kadhafi's prime minister from 2003 until 2006.

The diary, which had reportedly ended up in the custody of French magistrates, suggested the infections were an act of hostility against Benghazi, a stronghold of opponents of the then-Libyan dictator. For Kristiana Valtcheva and her fellow inmates, the entire ordeal is in the past. The 58-year-old spends her days serenely working on her hobby: painting wooden wagons built by her doctor husband, who also spent time in a Libyan jail after travelling there to look for her.

Palestinian doctor Ashraf al-Hajuj now lives with his family in The Netherlands, while two other nurses live in houses close to each other donated by a Bulgarian philanthropist. The biographies, films and intense media attention have gradually faded and former nurse Valia Chervenyashka says she's done with looking back. "Our sentences will always exist, whereas Libya as a state has ceased to be," she says. —AFP



**BYALA SLATINA, Bulgaria:** Bulgarian nurse Valia Chervenyashka holds a kitten in the yard of her house. —AFP

## GERMAN JIHADI GIRL ARRESTED IN IRAQ

**BERLIN:** A German 16-year-old girl suspected of joining the Islamic State jihadists in Iraq was arrested last week in Mosul, a German judicial source said yesterday. "The Dresden prosecutor confirms that Linda W was identified in Iraq," where she is receiving German consular assistance, said the prosecutor's office in Dresden, near the teen's eastern hometown of Pulsnitz.

German media earlier reported Iraqi soldiers had captured the teenager last week along with several other suspected IS 'brides' in a tunnel where they had taken refuge and where weapons and explosives belts had also been uncovered. Linda W disappeared last year after apparently making contact with IS

members via internet messaging and reportedly converting to Islam. German weekly Der Spiegel reported yesterday Linda W had been detained in Baghdad with three other German women and that they had been questioned following the liberation of Mosul from IS control which Iraq reported on July 10.

Spiegel said the Iraqi authorities handed the German embassy a list of names of German women in the area "at the start of the week" and added consular officials had since visited four of them at a prison at Baghdad airport. The magazine said one of the four was of Moroccan origin and that another was believed to be of Chechen origin but had a German passport. —AFP

## MAIDUGURI: A HUMANITARIAN HUB DEEP IN BOKO HARAM TERRITORY

**MAIDUGURI:** Mangoes and watermelons, prayer mats and Chinese-made utensils are again filling the stalls of Maiduguri's markets, as they recover after years of Boko Haram violence. Traders sweating behind wheelbarrows overloaded with goods fight their way through the crowded alleyways in northeast Nigeria's biggest city. But in the birthplace of Boko Haram, appearances are often deceptive.

The eight-year insurgency has brought the Borno state capital to its knees, after centuries as a commercial crossroads between the Sahel and central Africa. The historic trading hub has been transformed into a centre of humanitarian aid. Life runs according to the rhythm of the aid agencies that have flocked there in the last year. But Modu Kolo Dunoma, the head of the Monday Market-the city's biggest and a frequent target for Boko Haram's bombs and bombers-told AFP: "We face a difficult situation.



**MAIDUGURI:** This file photo taken on July 4, 2017 shows a man looking at potatoes displayed on a stall at the Monday-Market, one of the biggest markets. —AFP

"Farmers still can't go back to their farms and most of the food items are imported from other states. Prices have really gone up." A sack of rice that once sold for 8,000 naira (\$25, 22 euros) now goes for 17,000 naira as a result of food shortages, spiralling inflation and an economy in recession.

"People just can't afford to buy food," said Dunoma.

### Aid-dependent

On the edge of the city, never-ending lines of lorries spend days waiting to take their cargoes to Dikwa and beyond to neighboring Cameroon. Maiduguri's main

source of revenue-the transport of goods to land-locked countries such as Chad, Central African Republic and Sudan-is struggling to take off again.

The army has reopened some main roads but ambushes still happen frequently and vehicles are not allowed to travel without a heavily armed military escort. Maiduguri's needs remain huge, however, with the population having doubled since 2009, as more than one million people sought safe haven from Boko Haram attacks. Confined to camps or living among the local population, they survive on external aid.

According to the United Nations, nearly two million people in the northeast region are currently suffering from severe acute malnutrition and 5.5 million are in need of food aid. The international community belatedly realized the scale of the humanitarian crisis in northeast Nigeria and most of the NGOs now in Maiduguri only arrived from mid-2016. —AFP

## TRUMP TO HOST LEBANESE PM

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump will meet Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri in Washington next week for talks on issues including refugees and combating terrorism, the White House announced Friday. Analysts also anticipate US aid will be high on the agenda of the July 25th talks at the White House, which has made clear its intent to slash its aid budget for Lebanon, on grounds that national forces there have not adequately applied US military support towards reining in Hezbollah.

"The two leaders will discuss issues of mutual concern, including the fight against

terrorism, the economy, and refugees," the White House said in a statement. "This meeting will serve as an important opportunity to strengthen the bilateral relationship," the statement said, adding that the talks "will encourage other international and regional partners to support Lebanon as it faces a wide range of challenges."

The announcement comes days after US Ambassador Nikki Haley accused the Lebanon-based Hezbollah of amassing weapons and urged the international community to dial up pressure on the powerful paramilitary organization to disarm. —AFP



## CONGRESSIONAL TRADITION ALLOWS MCCAIN TIME TO BATTLE CANCER

**WASHINGTON:** Sen John McCain's treatment for brain cancer could keep him out of Washington for weeks, perhaps months, and yet it's unlikely anyone will challenge his extended leave. Congress has a long tradition in which no one questions ailing lawmakers taking time to recover. For starters, it's just poor form. And, frankly, it's up to the stricken member of Congress and their doctors to decide when - or even if - they return to work. Some have recuperated away from the Capitol for a year or more.

It's an unwritten courtesy that often doesn't extend to the real working world where employees are forced to file for medical disability or take unpaid leave. Julie Tarallo, McCain's spokeswoman, said Friday that "further consultations with Sen McCain's Mayo Clinic care team will indicate when he will return to the United States Senate."

McCain had taken to Twitter on Thursday promising a quick return. "Unfortunately for my sparring partners in Congress, I'll be back soon, so stand-by!" said the six-term Arizona Republican and 2008 GOP presidential nominee. The 80-year-old McCain was diagnosed with glioblastoma, an aggressive type of brain cancer, according to doctors at the Mayo Clinic in Phoenix, who had removed a blood clot above his left eye last Friday. He and his family are weighing his treatment, including radiation and chemotherapy.

In the immediate aftermath of McCain's diagnosis, Republicans wouldn't speculate about what the temporary loss of McCain's vote would mean. But McCain's absence complicates Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's plans for a Senate vote on a GOP health care bill to erase much of the Affordable Care Act. A vote is possible on

Tuesday, but GOP defections plus McCain's likely absence could sink any chance even to get started. McCain wouldn't be the first lawmaker this year to miss votes, hearings and other legislative action. Republican Sen. Johnny Isakson remained in Georgia for several weeks earlier this year as he underwent two back surgeries and recuperated. Isakson missed the vote on confirming Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch.

### Razor's edge

In January 2012, then-Sen Mark Kirk, R-Ill. suffered a major stroke and didn't return for almost a full year, making a dramatic entrance by climbing the steps of the Capitol on the opening day of the following Congress. In a lawmaker's absence, congressional staff keep the office operating, send out news releases - one from McCain on

Thursday blasted the Trump administration's Syria policy - and respond to constituents. Absences can leave the margin of control on a razor's edge.

The month after Democrats won back the Senate in 2006, South Dakota Democrat Tim Johnson had a near-fatal episode of bleeding in his brain that, at the time, threatened to shift the Senate's margin from 51-49 Democratic to 50-50 GOP control with Republican Vice President Dick Cheney the deciding vote. Johnson recovered but was away from the Senate for almost nine months. McCain is battling the same form of cancer that claimed the life of Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., in August 2009. Kennedy was away from the Senate for extended stretches but returned on occasion to vote.

"There were times when Senator Reid had to juggle things because he had two senators

absent, Senator Kennedy and Senator Byrd," said longtime former Senate aide Jim Manley, who worked for both Kennedy and then-Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev. "Having said that, it really never, with a handful of exceptions, proved to be that big of a problem."

Kennedy also delegated some of his responsibilities as chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee by farming out responsibility for bills before the panel to colleagues such as then-Sens. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., and Barbara Mikulski, D-Md. McCain has had Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., handle his duties as Armed Services Committee chairman. Unclear is whether Inhofe will steer the sweeping defense policy bill if the Senate begins debate in August. And, if legislative necessity should dictate that McCain return for a crucial, dramatic vote, there's precedent for that. — AP

## VENEZUELA'S POWER STRUGGLE HEATS UP

**CARACAS:** The opposition-controlled congress named a slate of new judges Friday to replace the government-stacked Supreme Court, which wasted no time in rejecting the move as an ongoing power struggle heats up between President Nicolas Maduro and his foes. Emboldened by a 24-hour national strike that paralyzed much of the country the previous day, the National Assembly named the 33 magistrates to replace the entire Supreme Court, which Maduro opponents argue does his bidding and continually violates the constitution. Many of the current court's justices were hastily appointed shortly before the ruling party lost its majority in congress.

"Today our justice system has been hijacked. It is at the service of the regime," congresswoman Sonia Medina said at ceremonial swearing-in of the magistrates. "The judges have removed themselves from submitting to the rule of law, from the honor of judicial power, to repress, pursue, torture and jail." The Supreme Court promptly moved to block the newcomers, declaring the appointments to be in violation of the constitution.

### 'Respect the rules'

Jose Mendoza, head of the court's constitutional branch, said offenses punishable by both the civilian and military penal codes had been committed, and authorities should take unspecified actions in response. "It is time for them to respect the rules of the game," Mendoza said. The National Assembly has the power to install members of the Supreme Court, but Mendoza said there are no vacancies and any judges appointed would be illegally usurping authority. The National Assembly and the Supreme Court have been at odds since the opposition gained a majority in 2015 legislative elections. The court's constitutional chamber voided eight laws passed by the National Assembly between January and October 2016, after just one such ruling in the previous 200 years, legal experts say.

In late March a Supreme Court decision stripping the National Assembly of its remaining powers unleashed the current wave of political unrest. Though the decision was later reversed following a backlash of domestic and international criticism, protests erupted in which at least 97 people have been killed in nearly four months.

Demonstrators are demanding that presidential elections scheduled for 2018 be held immediately as the country slides further into

triple-digit inflation, food shortages leave families hungry and corruption runs rampant. President Maduro is pushing a July 30 vote for a special assembly to rewrite the 1999 constitution crafted under the late President Hugo Chavez. Maduro claims the constituent assembly will promote dialogue and resolve the standoff, but the opposition has refused to participate in what it considers an attempt by Maduro to further consolidate power.

The constituent assembly could do away with the National Assembly entirely and cancel the 2018 presidential vote. Venezuela is facing mounting international pressure to suspend the upcoming election of the special assembly. The Mercosur trade bloc on Friday asked Maduro to halt the plan and offered to facilitate talks between the government and the opposition.

### Leftist governments

Venezuela became a member of the trade group in 2012 when South America was dominated by leftist governments, but was suspended last year over what other members said was its failure to comply with commitments to democracy and human rights. "We call on the government and the opposition not to carry out any initiative that could further divide Venezuelan society," Mercosur leaders said in a statement following a meeting in Mendoza, Argentina.

Maduro and his allies are nonetheless pressing forward with the vote, heightening their rhetoric in recent days against the opposition and warning that the constitution rewrite will ensure they face justice. "No one can mess with the constituent assembly," Maduro told supporters Friday in a speech that hailed the yet-to-be-written document as a solution for the country's economic woes.

The military announced it was deploying 185,000 troops to "guarantee the security and peace of the people during the electoral process." Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez said the initiative was being launched much earlier than planned due to the unrest. He added that the military would help make sure "the country can return to how it should be." Opponents are escalating protests ahead of the vote. Thursday's one-day strike, when four demonstrators were killed, left many parts of the capital, Caracas, desolate. The opposition called for another mass protest Saturday. "At stake is our existence. At stake is the country," opposition leader Andres Velasquez said. "And that's why no one can be indifferent." — AP



MINNEAPOLIS: Protesters carry signs as they march against police violence from Loring Park to City Hall. — AP

## MINNEAPOLIS CHIEF RESIGNS AFTER SHOOTING OF AUSTRALIAN WOMAN

'PUT THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE FIRST'

**MINNEAPOLIS:** Minneapolis police Chief Janee Harteau says she is "willing to step aside to let a fresh set of leadership eyes" be in charge of the department, which has been criticized in the wake of last weekend's fatal police shooting of an unarmed Australian woman who had called 911. Harteau's resignation Friday came at the request of Mayor Betsy Hodges, who said she lost confidence in the chief's "ability to lead us further." She said she asked Harteau to step down after assessing where the department needs to go.

"For us to continue to transform policing - and community trust in policing - we need new leadership at MPD," Hodges said. Harteau, who worked her way up from the bottom of the department to become the city's first female, first openly gay and first Native American police chief, said Friday that she was proud of the work she accomplished and honored to serve as chief. But she said the shooting of 40-year-old Justine Damond by one of her officers and other incidents "have caused me to engage in deep reflection."

The chief, who once successfully filed a discrimination and sexual harassment complaint against the police force along with her partner, said she must "put the communities we serve first" despite the department's accomplishments under her leadership. Harteau was out of the city on personal time for nearly a week following last Saturday's shooting of Damond, a life coach and bride-to-be who was killed by an officer responding to her 911 call of a possible rape.

The state is investigating the shooting. In her first remarks on the case Thursday when she returned to work, Harteau defended the training of Mohamed Noor, the Somali-American officer who shot Damond, but was sharply critical of him. Still, some City Council members called for a change in leadership. Linea Palmisano, who represents the ward where Damond died, told fellow council members that she was "done with image control and crisis management" and that it's "time for

action." After Harteau's resignation, Palmisano said she looks forward to the start of changes that she feels the department needs to make.

Shortly after the announcement, Hodges nominated Assistant Chief Medaria Arradondo to be the next chief. Nicknamed "Rondo," he served as the department's public face after Damond's shooting while Harteau was out of town. Arradondo, who is African-American, has been with the department since 1989.

### 'Bye-bye Betsy'

Later Friday, Hodges called a news conference at City Hall to elaborate on Harteau's departure, but she was interrupted by a few dozen protesters who entered the room and demanded that she resign, too. They chanted "Bye-bye Betsy" while waving signs that said "Messy Betsy" and "You are next." Hodges eventually walked out as they surrounded her at the podium, but she returned later to take questions from reporters.

She said she understands and shares the public's frustrations, but "I will not be resigning." Harteau, who started as a beat cop in 1987 at age 22 and was appointed chief in 2012, had become a political liability for Hodges, who faces several challengers in a tough re-election fight. Their relationship was strained, particularly after the fatal shooting of 24-year-old Jamar Clark during a confrontation with two white police officers in 2015. The black man's death, amid heightened tensions around the US, sparked protests citywide that included an 18-day occupation outside the police station on the city's north side. A US Department of Justice review faulted poor communications between the mayor and chief.

Harteau and Hodges clashed again in April when Hodges blocked Harteau's promotion of Lt John Delmonico to lead the Fourth Precinct, after the chief had already made the public announcement. Delmonico had been a critic of the mayor when he headed the police union. And it didn't help that Harteau was out of town when Damond

was killed. Harteau, who said she was backpacking in an area with limited cellphone reception, told reporters Thursday that it would have been "challenging" to return but that she had kept in touch with her command staff.

### 'Beyond disappointed'

Police union president Bob Kroll said Harteau's resignation is a much-needed change for the department and that she handled Damond's shooting poorly. He said after being gone for days, she returned and "basically throws the whole department under the bus." He said he agrees with protesters that Hodges should be next to go, adding that the move against the chief was a political one for Hodges.

The mayor rejected that notion, saying she made the decision because she's making the city a priority. Harteau and her longtime patrol partner, Holly Keegel, were featured in a 1990 episode of the reality TV series "Cops." The partners endured years of harassment from some male colleagues, and it escalated to the point where they felt endangered because they weren't getting help when they would call for backup. The Minnesota Department of Human Rights upheld their discrimination and sexual harassment complaint, which led to discipline against some officers and changes in training.

Harteau and Keegel got married in 2013 after gay marriage became legal in Minnesota. Harteau told the Star Tribune a year later that they had separated amid the strains of her being chief.

The chief was honored as grand marshal of the city's annual Pride Parade three years ago. But in June, organizers asked law enforcement to minimize their participation due to tensions over a suburban Minneapolis police officer's recent acquittal in last summer's fatal shooting of black motorist Philando Castile. Harteau said she was "beyond disappointed" that she was not consulted beforehand, but later persuaded organizers to welcome LGBT officers after all. — AP



CARACAS: A National Guard points his weapon during clashes with anti-government demonstrations in the streets. — AP

## FOR SANDERS, PATH TO PRESS SECRETARY BEGAN IN ARKANSAS

**WASHINGTON:** New White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders was schooled in hard-scabble politics - and down-home rhetoric - from a young age by her father, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee. Her way with a zinger - and her unshakable loyalty to an often unpredictable boss - are big reasons why she became a rising star in President Donald Trump's orbit. She'll take over for Sean Spicer, who abruptly announced Friday that he's resigning, effective at the end of August.

Sanders steps into what has been deemed the most difficult job in Washington. Her responsibilities are not just to do combat with a feisty White House press corps but to try to please a mercurial president who fancies himself his own best spokesman. Trump often presents his own thoughts directly on Twitter in the early hours of the morning and is known to closely follow his surrogates on television, assessing their performances. He has been happy with Sanders' advocacy, says Kellyanne Conway, a counselor to the president.

"She understands America. She understands the president. And she understands how to connect the two," Conway told The Associated Press in March. "The president has a great deal of trust in Sarah." Sanders, in her debut briefing

after the announcement of her promotion, promised to "be as open, honest and transparent with you all as humanly possible." Her low-key approach, which came after a 37-minute charm offensive from new communications director Anthony Scaramucci, was in stark contrast to Spicer's debut in the role. Spicer, in his first briefing, berated reporters about underestimating the size of Trump's inaugural crowds and refused to take questions.

### Diffuse problems

Sanders, who will be the third female press secretary in history, credits her larger-than-life dad with helping her learn how to deliver a message. Huckabee, a frequent political commentator, has long been famed for his pithy rhetoric.

The two speak most days before 6 am. "I'll call and say, 'What do you think if I say this?' He'll say, 'That's really good. You might try to say it a little bit more like X,'" she said.

But while she often opts to diffuse problems with some down-home Southern charm, she can also be combative. Last month, she got into a heated exchange with a reporter who accused the White House of trying to antagonize the press corps and snapped, "I

think it is outrageous for you to accuse me of inflaming a story when I was simply trying to respond to his question." On advocating for the unconventional Trump, Sanders admits

that even in the press office, they don't always get a heads-up before Trump tweets. But she says part of Trump's appeal is that he "directly communicates with the American people on a



WASHINGTON: Sarah Huckabee Sanders who has been named White House press secretary walks to the podium during the press briefing in the Brady Press Briefing room of the White House. — AP

regular basis." And now she is thrust into the role that made Spicer a household name and the butt of "Saturday Night Live" skits. Sanders, too, has been portrayed on the long-running show, and now she is who most Americans will see when they get news from the White House - if the administration returns the briefing to an on-camera format.

### Outsider attitude

Arkansas-raised, Sanders is married to a Republican consultant and moved her young family to Washington to be part of the administration. She joined the Trump campaign not long after her father's second presidential bid - which she managed - fizzled out in the 2016 Iowa caucuses. She said she was drawn to Trump's message of economic populism and his outsider attitude.

Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton - a former first lady, senator and secretary of state - was seen by many as the ultimate insider. "One of the big things my dad was running on was changing Washington, breaking that cycle," Sanders said last spring. "I felt like the outsider component was important and I thought he had the ability to actually win and defeat Hillary." — AP

## HAWAII PREPARES FOR 'UNLIKELY' NORTH KOREA MISSILE THREAT

**HONOLULU:** Hawaii is the first state to prepare the public for the possibility of a ballistic missile strike from North Korea. The state's Emergency Management Agency on Friday announced a public education campaign about what to do. Hawaii lawmakers have been urging emergency management officials to update Cold War-era plans for coping with a nuclear attack as North Korea develops nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles that can reach the islands.

Starting in November, Hawaii will begin monthly tests of an "attack-warning" siren the state hasn't heard since the end of the Cold War in the 1980s. The

wailing siren will be tested on the first working day of each month, after a test of an "attention-alert" steady tone siren with which residents are already familiar.

Informational brochures, along with TV, radio and internet announcements will help educate the public about the new siren sound and provide preparedness guidance. "If they're not educated, they could actually be frightened by it," agency Executive Director Toby Clairmont said of needing several months to introduce the new siren. Because it would take a missile 15 minutes - maybe 20 minutes - to arrive, the instructions to the public are simple:

"Get inside, stay inside and stay tuned," said Vern Miyagi, agency administrator. "You will not have time to pick up your family and go to a shelter and all that kind of stuff. ... It has to be automatic."

### Tourism is danger

He stressed that his agency is simply trying to stay ahead of a "very unlikely" scenario, but it's a possibility that Hawaii can't ignore. Hawaii is an important strategic outpost for the US military. The island of Oahu is home to the US Pacific Command, the military's headquarters for the Asia-Pacific region. It also hosts dozens of Navy ships at Pearl Harbor

and is a key base for the Air Force, Army and Marine Corps.

The Hawaii Tourism Authority supports preparing for disasters, but it is concerned that misinformation about bracing for a North Korea attack could scare travelers from visiting the islands, spokeswoman Charlene Chan said in a statement. "The effect of such a downturn would ultimately be felt by residents who rely on tourism's success for their livelihood," she said. With that in mind, Miyagi reiterated, "Hawaii is still safe."

Hawaii residents, who already face hazards including from tsunami and hur-

ricanes, are familiar with disaster preparedness. Because it's currently hurricane season, residents should already have an emergency kit that includes 14-days of food and water. "It also works for this type of scenario," Lt Col Charles Anthony, spokesman for the Hawaii State Department of Defense.

Hawaii officials surveyed 28 US states and cities about what they're doing for the North Korea threat. "They think it's too soon," Clairmont said. But counterparts in California have contacted him asking for guidance now that they are starting to look at a similar effort, Clairmont said. —AP

## News

in brief

### Driver held for public masturbation in India

**NEW DELHI:** An Indian chauffeur was arrested yesterday after a German woman accused him of masturbating in front of her in an upscale New Delhi neighborhood, police said. Police arrested 32-year-old Tarun Kumar from neighboring Haryana state after the doctorate scholar accused him of unzipping his trousers and masturbating while she was walking her dog in a public park on Friday afternoon. The 33-year-old woman, who is studying at a premier Delhi university, gave chase to the accused before taking pictures of his car as he fled the scene. The driver had dropped off his employer's wife at a shopping complex before engaging in the indecent act, the investigating officer said.

### Poland's senate approves controversial court reform

**WARSAW:** Poland's senate approved a controversial reform of the Supreme Court early yesterday, despite warnings from the European Union, appeals from Washington and massive street protests against the measure. The legislation, which was pushed through by parliament Wednesday, was approved by 55 senators, with 23 opposed and two abstentions. During the 15-hour debate thousands of demonstrators took to the streets nationwide to protest the law, which reinforces political control over the Supreme Court. The reform of the Supreme Court, which supervises lower courts, still needs to be signed by President Andrzej Duda, himself from the ruling conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party, to become law.

### East Timor votes for parliament

**DILI:** East Timor headed to the polls to elect a new parliament yesterday as Asia's youngest democracy battles economic challenges 15 years after gaining its independence from Indonesia. About 760,000 people were expected to cast their votes for candidates from 21 parties in the tiny half-island nation, in the first parliamentary election since the departure of United Nations peacekeepers in 2012. The polls come at a tough time for the country, with key oil reserves running dry while the government struggles to resolve a long-running row with Australia over lucrative energy fields. But despite fears of violence, there were no reports of unrest in the run-up to the election and on election day.

### Italy hits back over migration security

**ROME:** Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni has warned Rome will not accept either "lessons" or "threats" from neighbors on border security amid tension over Europe's migrant crisis. "We shall not accept lessons and still less threats such as those we have heard from our neighbors in recent days," said Gentiloni. "We are doing our duty and expect the whole of Europe to do the same alongside Italy," Gentiloni said late Friday in a clear reference to demands by some neighbors that Italy close its borders. Italy summoned Austria's ambassador after Vienna threatened to send troops to the border, open as part of Europe's Schengen passport-free zone, to stop migrants entering. —Agencies

## ARMY KILLS KASHMIR MAN DURING ANTI-INDIA STRIKE

**SRINAGAR:** Indian soldiers fired at worshippers outside a mosque in disputed Kashmir on Friday, killing one man and wounding another after some threw rocks, police and residents said. Police said soldiers on patrol were pelted with rocks near the main mosque in Beerwah town, where worshippers had gathered to offer Friday prayers. A firecracker was hurled toward the soldiers, who mistook the loud noise for a grenade and retaliated, police said in a statement.

Residents, however, said only a few rocks were thrown and none hit any soldier. Witnesses said the soldiers fired indiscriminately after some rocks hit the iron shutters of shops that were closed because of a general strike against Indian rule in Kashmir. The slain man, a tailor in his mid-20s, was hit by multiple bullets and died on the way to a hospital. The wounded man was reported to be in stable condition.

The killing triggered anger and widespread protests in the town. Police fired tear gas, fearing the funeral procession would turn into larger protests in the area as thousands carried the man's body to a graveyard for burial while chanting slogans against Indian rule. Some threw rocks at police, who fired shotgun pellets to quell the protest. No one was reported injured.

### Tight curfew

Shops, businesses and schools were closed in most parts of the region because of the general strike, called by separatists who challenge India's sovereignty over Kashmir. The separatists also called for a march to the United Nations office in Srinagar, the region's main city. Authorities imposed a tight curfew in downtown Srinagar and areas near the UN office in anticipation of the march and anti-India protests. Armed police and paramilitary soldiers in riot gear patrolled streets and blocked roads with razor wire and steel barricades.

Later Friday, scores of people led by a top separatist leader, Mohammed Yasin Malik, defied the security lockdown and tried to hold a protest march in Srinagar. However, police detained Malik and several other activists. Nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan each administer part of Kashmir, but both claim the Himalayan territory in its entirety. — AP

## PHILIPPINES TO EXTEND MARTIAL LAW SET TILL END OF YEAR TO DEFEAT ISLAMIST GUNMEN

**MANILAL:** The Philippine Congress yesterday voted to extend President Rodrigo Duterte's declaration of martial law in the south until the end of the year to defeat Islamist gunmen. In a special joint session of the House and the Senate, legislators overwhelmingly backed Duterte's bid to have martial law remain in force in the Mindanao region until December 31.

The vote came as troops continued their two-month long fight to wrest back the southern city of Marawi from Islamic State-inspired militants. Duterte first declared martial law in Mindanao on May 23 shortly after the gunmen, waving the black flags of the IS group, occupied parts of Marawi, triggering weeks of bloody fighting. The vote was largely a foregone conclusion as Duterte enjoy majorities in both houses of Congress. But opposition lawmakers dragged out the debate, questioning why martial law was needed for the whole of Mindanao when the fighting was limited to only one city.

"I fear that the plan to extend the martial law in Mindanao will pave the way for a Philippines-wide martial law," said Senator Risa Hontiveros ahead of the vote. A slide presentation accompanying Duterte's request, seen by AFP, compared the Marawi crisis to the Islamic State takeover of the Iraqi city of Mosul. Marawi itself could now become a magnet for foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria, it said.

Most of the militants' leaders remain at large, the presentation added, while about 90 of the gunmen have slipped past security cordons and can link up with other armed groups in the region to mount similar widescale attacks. At the hearing, defence and security officials justified the extended martial law, saying that aside from Marawi, Islamist militants were planning attacks in other parts of Mindanao.

They said almost a thousand pro-IS militants, holding 23 hostages, were still active elsewhere in the south. In Marawi, the military said only about 60 gunmen were left in a 49-hectare (121-acre) area of Marawi, but Duterte said he needed martial law powers to rebuild the city and ensure the war did not spread elsewhere.

"I cannot afford to be complacent," Duterte told reporters Friday, adding the military would be conducting further "mopping up operations" even after they recapture Marawi. "If there is a spillage it will not be as bad if you have this stopgap," he added. Duterte imposed 60-day martial rule-the maximum period allowed by the constitution-over the Mindanao region on May 23 within hours of



**MARAWI:** Philippine Marines walk past a mosque during a patrol along a deserted street at the frontline. — AFP

the gunmen beginning their rampage. On Monday he asked Congress to extend it until the end of the year, along with the continued suspension of a constitutional safeguard against warrantless arrests.

### 'Never again'

Martial law allows the military to establish control with measures such as curfews, checkpoints and gun controls in a country where civilians are authorized to keep licensed firearms in their homes. However, any martial law extension must be approved by Congress.

The subject remains sensitive in the Philippines, decades after the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos put the country under military rule for part of his 20-year term.

Thousands of critics, political opponents as well as communist guerrillas were killed, detained or arrested during the period, according to historians. About a dozen protesters in the gallery interrupted yesterday's hearing, chanting "never again, never again to martial law" before being escorted out.

Duterte had already beaten back a Supreme Court petition to declare martial law in Mindanao illegal. "Once he feels that there is not enough opposition to a nationwide martial law declaration, he will go for it," Senator Antonio Trillanes told AFP on Tuesday. This is part of a bid to stay in office beyond his mandated six years, he warned. Duterte, 72, insists he has no plan to stay in office beyond his term. —AFP



**HELMAND:** Afghan security personnel sit on atop an armored vehicles amid an ongoing battle with Taliban militants in the Gereshk district. —AFP

## 16 AFGHAN POLICE KILLED IN US STRIKE

**KANDAHAR:** A US airstrike has killed 16 policemen in Afghanistan, officials said yesterday, the latest setback to Washington's efforts to bring peace to the war-torn country. The incident took place in Helmand province on Friday as Afghan security forces attempted to clear a village of Taliban militants, Salam Afghan, a police spokesman, told AFP. "In the strike, 16 Afghan policemen were killed including two commanders."

Two other policemen were wounded," he said. The strike hit a compound in Gereshk district in Helmand, large parts of which are under Taliban control. "A US-supported (Afghan security) operation...resulted in the deaths of... friendly Afghan forces who were gathered in a compound," NATO's mission in Afghanistan said in a statement. "We would like to express our deepest condolences to the families affected by this unfortunate incident," the statement said, adding there would be a probe into what happened.

An interior ministry spokesman, Najeeb Danish, said a ministry delegation had been sent to the area to investigate and

help families of the victims. Helmand for years was the centrepiece of the US and British military intervention in Afghanistan. But the Taliban now effectively controls or contests 10 of Helmand's 14 districts, blighted by a huge opium harvest that helps fund the insurgency.

In April, some 300 US Marines returned to the province as embattled Afghan security forces struggle to beat back the resurgent Taliban. The surge helped Afghan security forces, backed by US air strikes, recapture Nawa district in Helmand six months ago. The operation came as Pentagon chief Jim Mattis finalized plans to present a new Afghanistan strategy to President Donald Trump in a bid to reverse what US generals call a "stalemate" at best.

In February, a US airstrike in Sangin killed at least 18 civilians, mostly women and children. Last November 32 Afghan civilians were killed in a US airstrike in the northeastern province of Kunduz. In October 2015, a US air strike hit a hospital run by Medecins Sans Frontieres, killing 42 people and sparking international outrage. — AFP

## CHINESE POLICE GUARD LATE DISSIDENT'S HOME

**BEIJING:** At a small park outside the Beijing home of late Chinese Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo, security officers sat around a stone table surrounded by shrubbery, scrutinising everyone who neared the gate they guarded. More than a week after the Nobel Peace Prize winner succumbed to liver cancer in custody, four agents stood watch on the stoop of the apartment where his widow, the poet Liu Xia, has largely been kept under house arrest since 2010.

Her presence contradicts official claims last weekend that Liu Xia, 56, is "free". She appeared in a government-released video on July 15 showing her husband's sea burial in the coastal city of Dalian, but close friends have been unable to reach her and believe that she is under police control in southern Yunnan province. But the medley of uniformed and plainclothes officers outside her home on Friday were undeterred in their surveillance-even if they may have been guarding an empty apartment.

"Where are you going?" a man wearing a "special duty" uniform asked two middle-aged women who approached. "We live here," one of them retorted, as if accustomed to the question. On the other side of the gate, a uniformed officer sat in a chair parked outside the entrance to Liu Xia's apartment. Three other men sat inside the dark entranceway, including one eating a bowl of noodles. They all stood up when an AFP reporter approached.

"What are you doing here? You don't live in this neighborhood," said the uniformed officer, gesturing for the reporter to leave. Outside the gate, security agents talked among themselves as they waited for their lunch break. "Yesterday there were five to six reporters who came," a middle-aged man said to the group. He wore a black T-shirt, the preferred attire of plainclothes agents. "Those foreigners just come here to

make trouble. They want to take photos of everything. Lunch time is rush hour for them, then things die down after 7 p.m."

### Business as usual

Earlier that day, a four-person foreign television crew had come through one of the complex's main gates. They were soon surrounded by officers in both black and green uniforms. "Do you know who Liu Xia is?" one of the journalists asked a guard, who barked back: "Never have I met anyone as rude as you!" At around the same time, an AFP photographer was held by police who asked him to delete three photos he had taken of the apartment exterior. He did not comply, and was shortly released.

All was calm on the riverfront boardwalk that Liu Xia's apartment overlooked, as joggers, bikers and fishermen alike appeared to be unaware of the commotion on the other side of the gate. The Chinese government has erased virtually all mentions of Liu Xiaobo, a 1989 Tiananmen Square protest veteran, from the internet and domestic media.

Liu was sentenced to 11 years in prison in 2009 for "subversion" after co-writing Charter 08, a petition calling for democratic reforms in the Communist Party-ruled country. The following year, he became the first Chinese person to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, but was not allowed to attend the ceremony in Oslo. "I don't know who (Liu Xia or Liu Xiaobo) is," said a young woman who lived in the apartment complex. "Many government employees live in this compound. The guards are here for their safety," she said. An elderly man collecting trash on the boardwalk said he believed it was the building's proximity to Beijing's main thoroughfare that brought increased security. "And I think (Chinese President) Xi Jinping was here?" — AFP



**BEIJING:** The apartment building where Liu Xia, the wife of late Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo, lives is seen in Beijing. —AFP



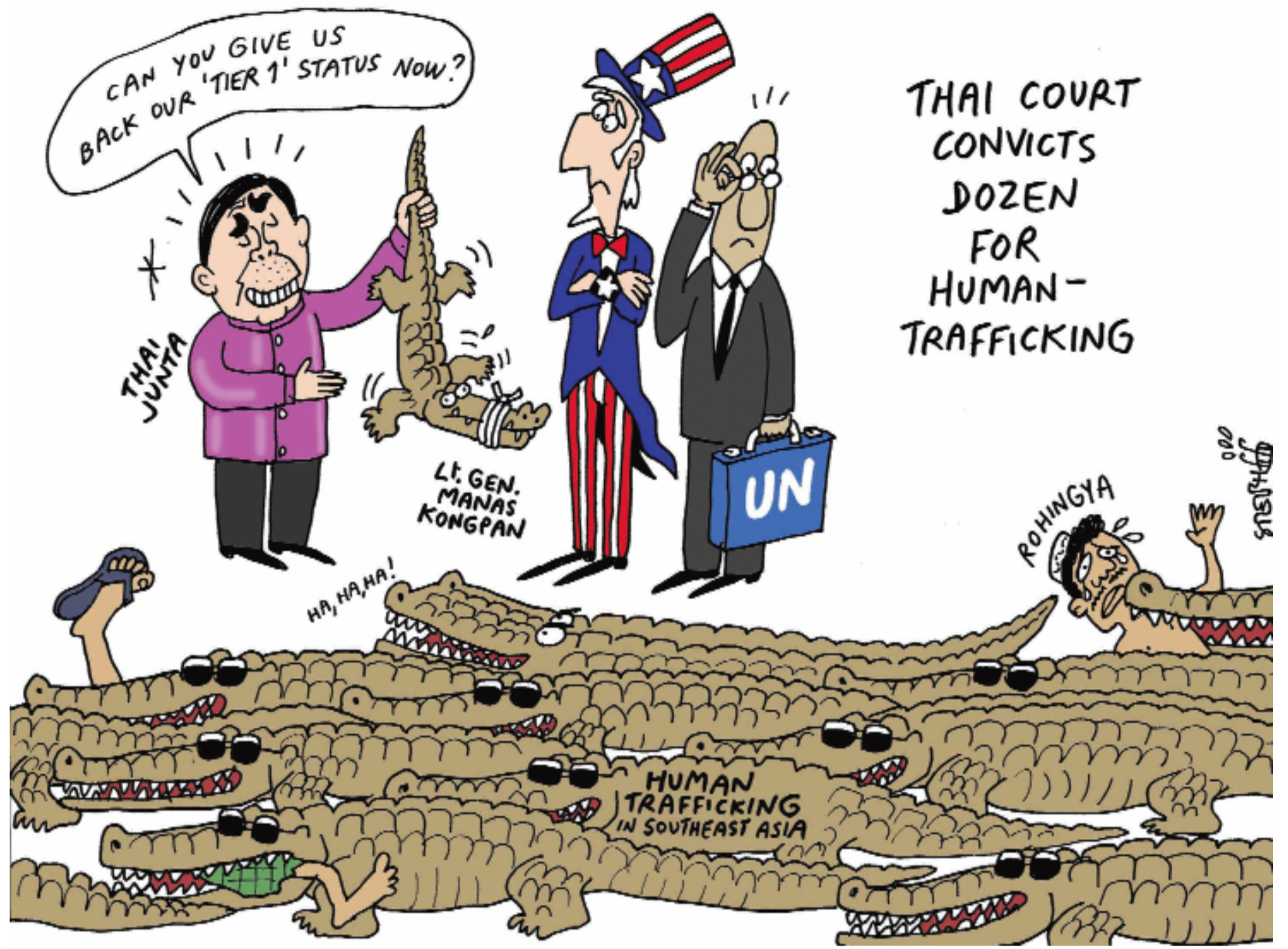
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Focus

**VENEZUELA CRISIS: TRUMP WAVES STICK BUT COULD BACKFIRE**

Facing a crisis in Venezuela, US President Donald Trump has threatened to inflict "swift and strong" economic sanctions unless President Nicolas Maduro backs away from a plan to rewrite that nation's constitution. But the American president seems sure to face a backlash from Caracas, where charges of US "imperialism" have been the socialist government's favorite retort to pressure from the North. Trump, like his predecessor Barack Obama, confronts the difficult task of managing the long-toxic relationship between the two countries. The two have not had ambassadors in each other's capitals since 2010.

But while Obama's Democratic administration succeeded in at least slightly lowering tensions, the relationship has dramatically soured since billionaire Republican Trump came to office in January. "All options are on the table," senior White House officials said late Tuesday, underscoring the toughly worded warning Trump himself had issued a day before. "The United States will not stand by as Venezuela crumbles," Trump said in a statement Monday. "If the Maduro regime imposes its Constituent Assembly on July 30, the United States will take strong and swift economic actions."

'Becoming a dictator'

The American president called his Venezuelan counterpart a "bad leader who dreams of becoming a dictator". And senior administration officials who briefed reporters Tuesday denounced what they called the "dictatorial" regime in Caracas and demanded a "re-establishment" of democracy. In the US Congress, Republican Senator Marco Rubio recently demanded "the full restoration of the democratic order and respect of basic rights in Venezuela as the regime of Nicolas Maduro continues its assault on the Venezuelan people and the country's democratic institutions."

Pro- and anti-Maduro demonstrations in Venezuela have left nearly 100 people dead since April 1, amid the near-collapse of the oil-rich nation's economy and steps by Maduro that opponents say amount to a power grab. Both the White House and several American lawmakers expressed support for the symbolic vote last weekend in Venezuela, sponsored by the opposition, that saw 7.6 million people demand an end to plans for a Constituent Assembly - which Maduro's opponents say would be set up to favor him - to draw up a new constitution.

Moises Rendon, an analyst with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, wrote in a recent paper that "the single most important action for the United States, regional countries and the world is not to recognize the government that comes out from the illegitimate Constituent Assembly," which he described as "Soviet-style."

But some analysts warn that too hard a line from the United States could backfire. Geoff Thale, with the lobbying group Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), told AFP he was "very skeptical that unilateral US sanctions (would be) effective. They are more likely to make the government feel they have no option but to resist, and they offer the government a nationalist rallying cry against the US."

'People will starve'

David Smilde, a Venezuela specialist at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, said, "I believe it is possible that the Venezuelan government will be strengthened by US sanctions. There is no way to apply economic sanctions now in Venezuela without making the humanitarian situation much worse. People will starve to death." US sanctions, he added, "would unleash enormous resentment among the Venezuelans" and would "never be well received by other countries in the region."

US involvement in Latin America carries enormous luggage. The United States has long been accused of interventionism - even "imperialism" - in what Washington has sometimes viewed as its "backyard". Maduro, for his part, has threatened a "very firm" response to the "imperial threat" from his American counterpart. His foreign minister, Samuel Moncada, denounced what he called "the insolent threat of a xenophobic and racist empire."

But even as the diplomatic temperature between the two countries hovers near zero, economic relations have long been close: The United States remains the leading importer of Venezuelan oil, and several American multinationals, including automaking giant General Motors, have invested heavily for decades in what they viewed as a southern El Dorado. The White House officials who briefed reporters on Tuesday seemed aware of the potential impact US economic sanctions could have on American business. — AFP

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Washington Watch

**OVERCOMING DIVISIONS TO FORM A COMMUNITY**

By Dr James J Zogby

During the past century, Arab Americans have faced significant obstacles on the way to securing our place in the political mainstream - from pervasive media-projected negative stereotypes to the political pressures used by some groups to deny us a seat at the table. In addition to these external factors, Arab Americans have also faced internal obstacles that we had to overcome as we worked to build and empower our community. In many instances, these problems were carry-overs - the impact of competing identities and loyalties that Arab immigrants brought with them as they made their way to the New World. There were village and family rivalries, or disputes between political ideologies or competing interests based on country of origin. There were also issues of sectarian identification.

In order to form a community, all of these had to be surmounted, reconciled, or simply put in their rightful place for Arab Americans to grow and prosper. To a remarkable extent, we have been successful - more successful than the Arab world has been in healing its multiple divides. I love telling the story of how a few years back, at our annual Khalil Gibran "Spirit of Humanity Awards" dinner, we presented a public service award, named after a Syrian American, Najeed Halaby (the father of Jordan's Queen Noor), to a Palestinian American who had served as US Ambassador to UAE and Syria. The presenter was a Lebanese American former Congressman who served as Secretary of Transportation. When I later reflected on that night I realized that what we had done could not have happened in the Arab World.

At the height of the Lebanon civil war, an Arab ambassador visited my office. He began with a question: "How do you organize your staff?" I responded by pointing out where the field organizing unit had their desks, and in turn

where the communications, research, finance, and administrative staffs were seated. He asked again: "No, I mean how do you organize them?" When I repeated "by function", he came back with "what I mean is: That young man sitting out front, he's Shia, isn't he? How many other Muslims and Christians, etc?": I said, "If you mean Ram? I have no idea what his religion might be, I never asked him".

I wasn't being disrespectful. I honestly didn't know. In all the years we've been working to build a community, we've not paid attention to where folks were from or the sect to which they belong. We were building a community that was based on a shared heritage, and we were holding it together by providing services, networking, and empowering people. Over the years, I have seen evidence of this "sense of community" manifesting itself in many different settings: Whether it was Lebanese American businessmen contributing the resources to help us open a social service center for Yemeni farmworkers, or a predominantly Palestinian community providing the support needed to bring Lebanese victims of war to the US for medical treatment. A generation ago Jesse Jackson offered sage advice to the community when he told us: "do not import the divisions of the Middle East, instead you must export the lessons of cooperation and coexistence you have learned in America." And we've tried to do just that.

Struggles

I've learned two lessons in my 40 years of doing this work. As Chair of the Democratic Party's Ethnic Council, I've learned that every ethnic community shares the same internal pressures. Arab Americans may hail from 22 countries, making our situation a bit more complex, but even communities that appear to be less complicated have their internal divisions (based on generation, religion, region, ideology, etc) to overcome. Whether Italian, Ukrainian, or Armenian - all have had to work to

build and sustain a sense of community. I've also learned that the struggle is never-ending. In each new era, new obstacles arise that must be overcome. The Lebanon civil war threatened to rupture us based on sect and Lebanese versus Palestinian loyalties. Similarly, with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the community was once again tested - with more recent immigrants sometimes lining the sides taken by their countries of origin. Now it's the Arab Spring, the upheavals that followed, and the emergence of political Islam and the rise of islamophobia that are testing our sense of community and our ability to maintain a shared identity.

To some extent, these internal pressures have been magnified by the rather large numbers of Arab immigrants (over 600,000) who have come to the US since the turn of the century. Many came fleeing war or fear of persecution: Syrians, Iraqis, Somalis, Egyptians, and Yemenis. They bring with them the wounds of war and, like every wave that preceded them, they may their feet planted in America, but their heads and hearts are still "back home".

In some quarters, these factors are understandably driving the agenda. There is a fracturing on the grounds of religious identity. In other instances, the fissures are based on loyalties derived from country of origin - whether for or against this or that regime.

While we must be sensitive to these pressures and concerns, we continue to focus on the long-term community building enterprise. We fight the "Muslim ban" and Islamophobia; defend Chaldeans threatened with deportation; work with Copts to protect their right to claim asylum; bring together diverse groups of Syrian Americans to engage in constructive dialogue; while, at the same time, supporting an amazingly diverse field of Arab American candidates for public office.

**NOTE:** Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

**TRUMP REMARKS SHOW PENCHANT FOR SHAMING**

The art of humiliation appears to be a key operating principle for US President Donald Trump, and his remarks about Attorney General Jeff Sessions are the latest example of the ease with which the president is willing to air grievances about members of his team. Trump took on Sessions in an interview Wednesday with The New York Times, criticizing the former US senator and early Trump campaign supporter for recusing himself from the FBI investigation into possible ties between Trump's campaign and Russia.

Trump called Sessions' decision to step aside "very unfair to the president" and added that he would have chosen someone else to lead the Justice Department if he'd had any inkling that Sessions would take such a step. Sessions, who said Thursday he has no plans to resign, has plenty of administration company to compare notes with. A look at other team members and supporters Trump has taken shots at:

James Comey

Trump fired Comey as head of the FBI on May 9 over the Russia probe. Trump sent an aide to the Justice Department to deliver a notification letter to Comey, but the director was in California for a previously scheduled appearance and learned of his dismissal on TV. The following day, during an Oval Office meeting with top Russian government officials, Trump described Comey as a "nut job" and said his dismissal relieved "great pressure" from the investigation, the Times later reported. In a separate NBC News interview, Trump said Comey was a "showboat" and "grandstander" who was doing a bad job at the FBI.

Steve Bannon

In an interview with the New York Post in April, as Bannon's public profile was rising, Trump downplayed his chief strate-

gist's role in the campaign by claiming Bannon didn't become involved "until very late". Bannon took over as campaign CEO in August 2016. At the time of the interview, Bannon was also a central figure in rampant White House infighting. Trump played down Bannon's role by telling the newspaper, "I'm my own strategist."

Reince Priebus

Back in March, Trump's beleaguered chief of staff joined the president at the table for a meeting of auto company CEO's in Michigan. Trump marveled at Volvo, Kia and other companies that were represented, then said: "And then I look at Reince," drawing scattered laughs with a tone that suggested Priebus was a less impressive presence. "He should run a car company. Probably will end up doing that in a long

time," Trump said of Priebus, who has survived endless speculation that he is close to being fired. Trump quickly added that Priebus has "done a great job".

Sean Spicer

Trump dealt a blow to his embattled press secretary during a visit with Pope Francis at the Vatican during the president's first foreign trip in May. Trump excluded Spicer, a devout Roman Catholic, from the group of White House staff who got to meet Francis. The group included first lady Melania Trump, daughter Ivanka Trump and her husband, Jared Kushner, both of whom are Jewish and also work in the White House.

Nikki Haley

Trump recently opened a lunch meeting with ambassadors of countries on the UN

Security Council by asking everyone seated in the State Dining Room whether they liked Haley, the US ambassador to the UN. "Because if you don't, otherwise, she can easily be replaced," Trump said to awkward laughter, including from Haley, most recently the governor of South Carolina. "No, we won't do that, I promise. We won't do that. She's doing a fantastic job." Haley has been one of the most outspoken members of the Trump administration, with tough talk on Russia, Syria and North Korea.

Sen John McCain

McCain, the former Navy aviator and Vietnam prisoner of war recently diagnosed with brain cancer, supported Trump's candidacy even after Trump insisted that McCain wasn't a war hero. "He's a war hero because he was captured. I like people that weren't captured, OK?" Trump said at an event in Iowa last year. McCain later broke with Trump after the release of a video in which the presidential candidate made lewd comments about women. McCain said he would not vote for Trump.

New Jersey Gov Chris Christie

Trump poked fun at the overweight Christie last year while helping the New Jersey governor pay off debt from Christie's failed bid for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination. At the New Jersey event, Trump mentioned that a Nabisco cookie plant was leaving Chicago for Mexico. He pointed to the governor and told the audience that Christie would stop eating Nabisco cookies. "I'm not eating Oreos anymore. Neither is Chris," Trump said, drawing laughter from the crowd. Trump had also put Christie in charge of the presidential transition team. But soon after winning the election, Trump replaced the governor with Mike Pence, then the vice president-elect. — AP



US President Donald Trump examines US-made products from all 50 states, including a Stetson brand hat in the East Room of the White House in Washington on July 17, 2017. — AFP

## DAY BREAKS AT BRITISH OPEN WITH THIRD-ROUND 65

**SOUTHPORT:** Australia's world number six Jason Day shot up the British Open leaderboard yesterday after firing a fine 65 in the third round at Royal Birkdale. Day, the PGA champion in 2015, was one of a host of players to profit from the benign early conditions that contrasted sharply with the miserable weather late on Friday. Day had five birdies and not a single bogey in his five-under-par round that saw him rocket up to even par for the championship. He had only just made the cut on five-over after a dreadful round of 76 on Friday. He was five-over through his last three holes in his second round. Day's compatriot Scott Hend produced the best consecutive run of birdies this week as he had five in a row from the 13th en route to a 65, the joint-best score of the week. Hend is level-par for the championship, as is South Africa's Shaun Norris, who went out on his own in the first tee time of the day at 9:20am (0820 GMT) and also shot 65. —AFP

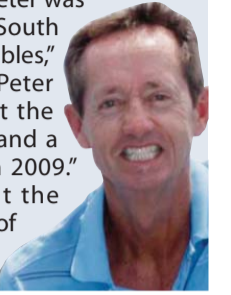


## YAO MING ROCKETS DEAL RUMOURS FIZZLE OUT

**BEIJING:** Former NBA star Yao Ming has scotched rumours he was interested in buying his old team the Houston Rockets, saying he was too busy to consider the possibility. Yao, who played for the Rockets from 2002 to 2011 before retiring, told the official Xinhua news agency on Friday he was dedicated to his role as president of the Chinese Basketball Association. "I have no time to consider anything else (including buying Houston Rockets)," said Yao, who was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame last September. His comments came after long-time Rockets owner Leslie Alexander put the club up for sale last week. The Chinese centre's strong ties to the club had fuelled speculation about his possible interest in buying. He was feted by the Rockets earlier this year when they retired the groundbreaking Chinese player's number 11 jersey. Yao, who averaged 19.2 points and nine rebounds for the Rockets, became a global ambassador for the sport during his eight NBA seasons. —AFP

## AUSTRALIA'S DOOHAN DIES AFTER SHORT ILLNESS

**SYDNEY:** Australian Peter Doohan, who famously upset Boris Becker at Wimbledon, has died at the age of 56, Tennis Australia said yesterday. Doohan, dubbed the 'Becker Wrecker' after defeating two-time defending champion Becker at Wimbledon in 1987, passed away from motor neurone disease diagnosed just nine weeks ago. Doohan reached a career-high world ranking of 43 and won five titles. "Peter was unbeaten in Davis Cup representation. He won the South Australian Open singles title and reached No.15 in doubles," TA said in a statement. "Following his retirement, Peter coached in the United States, after first studying at the University of Arkansas, where he was all-American and a NCAA champion. He returned to live in Australia in 2009." Becker paid tribute to Doohan, who knocked out the German defending champion, 7-6, 4-6, 6-2, 6-4 in one of the biggest upsets in Wimbledon's history. —AFP



### SWIMMING

## SUN-HORTON CLASH, LEDECKY KICK-OFF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

**BUDAPEST:** Australia's Mack Horton and China's Sun Yang will resume their bad-tempered rivalry in the pool when the swimming section of the world aquatic championships starts today. Horton ended Sun's four-year domination of the 400m freestyle event in spectacular style at last year's Rio De Janeiro Olympics after branding Sun a 'drug cheat' in the build-up. Sparks are expected to further fly with both also registered to swim over 200m, 800 and 1500m freestyle in Budapest and Horton took another dig at Sun on Friday. "I think it's a rivalry between elite athletes and athletes who have tested positive, but there should be some good races," Horton said when asked about facing his rival. Horton and Sun, who served a three-month ban in 2014, will be battling to be the fastest from today morning's 400m heats into the evening's final and their grudge 'War in the Water' rematch will take star billing at Budapest's Duna Arena. Also racing today is the USA's gold-medal and record-breaking machine Katie Ledecky, the star attraction in the women's freestyle heats and finals. Ledecky faces a punishing schedule of six events—the 200m, 400m, 800m and 1500m freestyles, plus the 4x100m and 4x200m freestyle relays. It means, including heats and finals, she will potentially swim a total of 6,300 metres in Budapest. "I can't wait to race," said Ledecky. "I know how to handle that and manage it to have good energy throughout the whole week." Expect Ledecky to challenge her own 400m, 800 and 1500m freestyle world and she could end up breaking the women's record of six gold medals at a world championships set by Missy Franklin in 2013.

punishing schedule, but her priority will be defending her 200m and 400m medley crowns. Expect fireworks over the longer distance after Hosszu took two seconds off the world record over 400m when she struck Olympic gold in Rio last year. "By (the time of the world championships) I will know each and every little stone of the Duna Arena," said Hosszu. "This pool is so beautiful, that it also puts a little pressure on us Hungarians though. It's up to us, now we all have to swim fast." China, third in the medals table in swimming events in 2015 in Kazan, will also look to backstroker Fu Yuanhui to defend her 50m title. A hilarious video went viral of Fu's reaction after discovering she had won joint bronze over 100m at the Rio Olympics and the 21-year-old will be hoping for more goofy smiles in Budapest. The USA, a powerhouse in the pool, will bring a young team—with an average age of 22 — shorn of stars Michael Phelps, who has retired again, and Franklin, who sits out Budapest after surgery on both shoulders last year. Teenagers Regan Smith, 15, and 17-year-olds Robert Finke and Dakota Luther will race in the backstroke, freestyle and butterfly respectively. Britain's Adam Peaty looks to be a shoo-in for the 50m and 100m breaststroke titles—and also wants to lower his own world records in both events. Peaty is threatening to be the first under the 57 seconds barrier over 100m with South Africa's Cameron van der Burgh pushing him hard. There promises to be a battle royal in the women's 100m freestyle with Sweden's Sarah Sjöström having narrowly missed Cate Campbell's world record of 52.06secs. Australia's Campbell is sitting out Budapest, but her sister Bronte is the reigning world champion. However, the names to beat are Simone Manuel of the USA and Canada's Penny Oleksiak, who tied for gold in Rio last year. "I'm super excited and I have been trying to control my energy for when I race," said Manuel. "Sarah has had a great year, but there are so many others who will be tough to beat." —AFP

### HOSSZU'S IRON GRIP

Hungary's 'Iron Lady' Katinka Hosszu will be out to maintain her grip on the 200m and 400m individual medley events she has dominated in recent years. Hosszu has entered six individual events, including the 100m backstroke—one of three events in which she won Olympic gold last year—in a



Katie Ledecky

## CHINA STRIKE GOLD, DALEY'S GRAB SILVER

**BUDAPEST:** Li Zheng and Wang Han held off Britain's Grace Reid and Tom Daley to earn China's eighth diving gold of the world aquatic championships in yesterday's 3m synchro springboard final. China's Li and Wang took gold with 323.70 points after a battle with the British pair who led after the first and third rounds, but settled for silver with 308.04 pts. Chinese divers have now won eight of the ten diving events in Budapest with only the men's 10m platform yesterday evening—where Britain's Daley competes again—to come. Canada's duo Jennifer Abel and Francois

Imbeau-Dulac took bronze with 297.72 pts. Wang, who defended the world title she won two years ago with a different partner, and Li were only joint fourth after the first round. However, their near-immaculate dives saw them lead after each of the last three rounds and claimed victory in the fifth with two half somersaults with a twist pike. Daley, 23, who won the 10m platform gold at the 2009 world championships, hugged the sobbing Reid when their final dive, a three-and-a-half somersaults pike, gave them silver ahead of Canada. —AFP



**BUDAPEST:** Britain's Thomas Daley, left and Grace Reid look at the scoreboard after their performance at the mixed 3m synchro springboard diving final at the 17th FINA World Championships 2017 in Budapest, Hungary, yesterday. —AP



**MONACO:** Jamaica's Usain Bolt (C) dances with pom-pom girls as he celebrates winning the men's 100m event at the IAAF Diamond League athletics meeting in Monaco on Friday. — AFP

### ATHLETICS

## BOLT ON RIGHT PATH TO WORLD 100M DEFENCE

**MONACO:** Jamaican sprinting legend Usain Bolt insists he is on the right path as he targets the defence of his 100m crown at next month's world championships in London. In his swansong season, the 30-year-old has struggled to light up the track. In his outings over the blue riband event so far this season, Bolt had clocked 10.03sec in Kingston and 10.06 in Ostrava against relatively weak opposition before finally dipping under the 10sec barrier at Friday's Diamond League meet in Monaco. A season's best of 9.95 seconds to win at a packed out 17,000-capacity Stade Louis II was just the tonic, the towering Jamaican said of his second appearance in Europe in his farewell season. "I'm going in the right direction, although there is still a lot of work to do," he said after running a time that now moves him up to joint seventh on a 2017 world list headed by Christian Coleman of the United States with 9.82. "Running sub-10 is always good. It was an

exciting race, there was lots of energy." As in Ostrava, Bolt suffered a sluggish start before opening up and easing through the line ahead of American Isiah Young by 0.03sec. Bolt, winner of eight Olympic and 11 world gold medals, will bring down the curtain on his glittering career at August's world championships in London.

### EMOTIONS HIGH

And he acknowledged that his final season on the track was an emotional one. "I am always here for the fans, and of course I will miss the vibe around the track," he said. "There are mixed emotions always - happy for my career, sad that it is ending." When asked what his plans were after the world championships, Bolt was unwilling to disclose too many details. "I'm planning to chill with my family after London," he said. "And my plan after this season? I'm not sure."

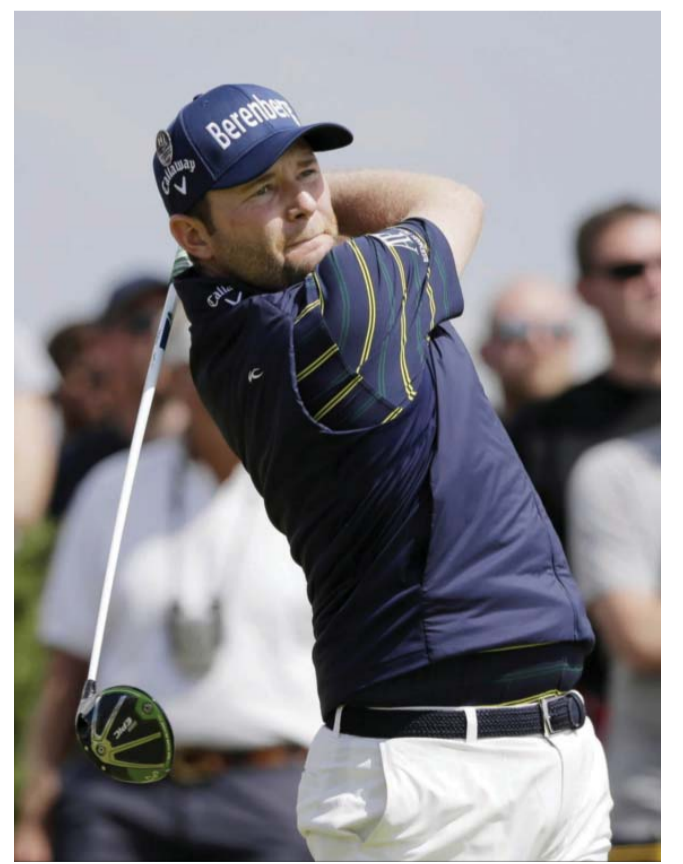
Bolt said he was touched by the efforts meet organisers had gone to to make his farewell appearances special. Monaco's Prince Albert II presented the Jamaican with a giant golden figure of Hercules after video clips of his medal-winning career were shown on the stadium's big screens following his victory. That came after Bolt had delighted hordes of screaming fans by joining in a synchronised cheerleading dance, which ended with his trademark pose. One of Bolt's main rivals for the 100m crown in London will likely be Canada's Andre de Grasse. But De Grasse only raced the 4x100m relay in Monaco—his Canadian team failing to complete the lap—and was moved to play down ideas that Bolt had asked organisers that he not race the 100m. "I can state that stories about me competing here in the 100m are just rumours. It was never in our plans," De Grasse insisted. —AFP

### GOLF

## GRACE SHOOT'S FIRST EVER MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND OF 62

**SOUTHPORT:** Branden Grace made history yesterday when he became the first player ever to shoot a round of 62 in a major in the third round of the British Open at Royal Birkdale. There had been 31 rounds of 63 in the previous 441 major championships, with 10 coming in the British Open including Phil Mickelson and Henrik Stenson in last year's British Open at Troon, but never a 62. The South African's eight-under-par round, featuring eight birdies and no dropped shots, saw him rocket up the leaderboard to four under par overall, two behind leader Jordan Spieth's halfway total of six-under. Grace, who narrowly made the cut as he sat at four over par at the tournament's halfway stage, also broke Jodie Mudd's course record of 63, set in the final round of the Open in 1991. Grace had five birdies on the front nine to go out in just 29 before three more coming home, at the short 14th and back-to-back at 16 and 17. He risked missing out on history when he sent his approach to the 18th long, but a fine putt from the very back of the green allowed him to rescue par. The 29-year-old from Pretoria, ranked 35th in the world, has previously had four top-five finishes at majors, including a third place at the PGA Championship in 2015. He equalled the record for the lowest ever round on the European Tour when he shot a 12-under-par 60 at Kingsbarns

in his 2012 victory at the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship. Meanwhile, England's Tommy Fleetwood made the most of perfect early conditions to shoot a four-under-par 66 in the third round of the British Open at Royal Birkdale yesterday. Fleetwood, who hails from the coastal town of Southport and used to sneak onto the Birkdale course as a youngster, had four birdies and a fine eagle at the par-5 15th as he climbed to one over par in total. Playing alongside fellow Englishman Justin Rose, the pairing attracted a large following around the course in benign, mild conditions that were in stark contrast to the miserable weather on Friday afternoon. Rose finished fourth here as a teenage amateur in 1998 but has not been able to get into contention this week—he shot a 69 to creep to four-over. The pleasant conditions enabled some low scoring elsewhere in the morning, with South Africa's Shaun Norris shooting a five-under 65 to go back to level par overall after going out on his own in the first tee-time at 9:20am (0820 GMT). Jordan Spieth leads the championship at six under par, two shots ahead of fellow American Matt Kuchar. They tee off in the final pairing at 3:55pm. England's Ian Poulter, runner-up here to Pdraig Harrington in 2008, and current US Open champion Brooks Koepka, are both three-under. —AFP



**SOUTHPORT:** South Africa's Branden Grace plays a tee shot during the third round of the British Open Golf Championship, at Royal Birkdale, Southport, England, yesterday. —AP

CRICKET

# HISTORY AWAITS INDIA IN WOMEN'S WORLD CUP FINAL

**LONDON:** India have the chance to alter the course of cricket history when they face hosts England in the Women's World Cup final at Lord's today. Since the tournament's inception in 1973 — two years before the men's World Cup started — it has been dominated by England and Australia, with New Zealand, in 2000, the only other country to have won the event.

The final sees this year's edition come full circle, with India having upset the form book to beat England by 35 runs in the tournament opener in Derby on June 24. "It isn't going to be easy for

England," promised India captain Mithali Raj after her side's stunning semi-final win over six-times champions Australia in Derby on Thursday.

A 36-run victory over the title-holders was built on Harmanpreet Kaur's stunning 171 not out. An innings full of correct yet powerful shots ought to have banished any remaining stereotypes about 'demure' women's cricket in general and the India team in particular. Certainly there was nothing 'lady-like' about the fiercely competitive Kaur's angry reaction towards batting partner Deepti Sharma after almost

being run out on 98.

For Raj and India pace bowler Jhulan Goswami, the leading run-scorer and wicket-taker in women's one-day international history respectively, this could be the last chance the two 34-year-olds have to win the World Cup. But the significance of the day goes far beyond what it means to their cricket careers.

India's win in the 1983 men's World Cup final at Lord's turned the country on to limited overs cricket and led the world's second-most populous nation to become the sport's financial powerhouse. An India win today could have

equally far-reaching consequences, as Raj acknowledged.

"It's an opportunity for the Indian team to make it big in India," Raj, appearing in her second World Cup final 12 years after her first, told ESPNcricinfo. "Everybody will be glued to the television today," she added while recalling how India's 98-run defeat by Australia in the 2005 final at Centurion, South Africa, was not even broadcast.

"If we can pull it off, there will be nothing like it. It will help the future of women's cricket." One pleasing aspect for India of this World Cup is that they

have not been over-reliant on Raj and Goswami, who nevertheless produced the delivery of the tournament to bowl Australia captain Meg Lanning for nought in the semi-final. The likes of Smriti Mandhana, Punam Raut and Sharma have also stepped up when needed. England, since their opening defeat by India, have had the potentially useful experience of winning two close games, defeating Australia by three runs in pool play before seeing off South Africa by just two wickets in a semi-final where they stumbled chasing a modest target of 219 in Bristol on Tuesday.— AFP



SEATTLE: New York Yankees outfielders Aaron Judge, right, and Clint Frazier leap after the Yankees defeated the Seattle Mariners 5-1 in a baseball game, Friday, in Seattle. —AP

BASEBALL

# GURRIEL, FIERS LIFT ASTROS OVER ORIOLES

**BALTIMORE:** Astros rookie Yuli Gurriel had a career-high four hits, including a home run, and Houston received a gritty pitching performance from Mike Fiers in an 8-7 victory over the Baltimore Orioles in Friday night baseball. Colin Moran hit his first major league homer and first triple for Houston, and Brian McCann also went deep. The Astros took an 8-2 lead into the ninth before Adam Jones hit a two-run double off James Hoyt, and Jonathan Schoop homered with two on against Chris Devenski. After Chris Davis was thrown out trying to bunt against the shift, Ken Giles struck out Mark Trumbo to earn his 21st save. Working in 90-degree temperatures on a steamy night at Camden Yards, Fiers (7-4) threw 105 pitches over seven innings. The right-hander struck out nine, including Jones three times, and allowed one run. Coming off a four-game sweep of Texas, the Orioles hoped to continue their surge against baseball's other team from the Lone Star State. Instead, Baltimore fell behind 5-0 in the second inning and dropped four games under .500. Ubaldo Jimenez (4-6) gave up six runs and 10 hits in 5 1/3 innings. Houston finished with 16 hits, at least one from every starter.

**YANKEES 5, MARINERS 1**

Aaron Judge hit a colossal three-run homer that nearly soared out of Safeco Field, and CC Sabathia won on his 37th birthday as New York beat Seattle. Judge's 31st home run in the fifth inning was memorable and nearly

historic. The big slugger clobbered a hanging curveball from starter Andrew Moore (1-2) into the second deck in left field, with the ball landing three rows from the top of the stadium. No one has hit one out of Safeco during a game since the ballpark opened midway through the 1999 season. Judge came close and continued to emerge from a post-All-Star break slump thanks to his first home run since July 7. He finished with four RBIs, including a sacrifice fly that gave the Yankees a 2-1 lead. Clint Frazier had an RBI double and a diving catch for New York. Sabathia (9-3) allowed one run in five-plus innings.

**CARDINALS 11, CUBS 4**

Paul DeJong hit a tiebreaking, two-run double in St. Louis' nine-run eighth inning as the Cardinals cooled off Chicago. The Cubs carried a 3-2 lead into the eighth, looking for their seventh consecutive win. But St. Louis sent 14 batters to the plate in its highest-scoring inning of the season, taking advantage of a combined six walks by three relievers while improving to 4-4 since the All-Star break. Carl Edwards Jr. (3-2) was pulled after the first three batters reached. Hector Rondon then walked Jedd Gyorko, tying it at 3, and DeJong followed with a drive into the ivy in right-center for a ground-rule double. Carson Kelly hit a two-run double in his first game since being recalled from Triple-A Memphis. Tommy Pham's two-run single made it 11-3 as 11 consecutive batters reached safely to begin the

inning. Willson Contreras hit a two-run homer for Chicago, and Jake Arrieta pitched six effective innings. Third baseman Kris Bryant sat out with a sprained left little finger. Randal Grichuk homered for the Cardinals in his return from a lower back injury. Matt Bowman (2-3) got the final out of the seventh.

**BRAVES 12, DODGERS 3**

Braves pitcher Jaime Garcia hit a grand slam off previously unbeaten Alex Wood to highlight Atlanta's victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers. Garcia, the subject of trade speculation lately, limited Los Angeles to three runs over seven innings as the Braves won their second straight at Dodger Stadium. The NL West leaders hadn't lost two in a row since June 5-6 against Washington. They've been outscored 18-6 in the first two games of the series. It was the Dodgers' most lopsided defeat of the season. Wood (11-1) got knocked around by his former team. The All-Star left-hander gave up nine runs — seven earned — and nine hits in 4 2/3 innings, tying his shortest start since joining the rotation April 21. He struck out four and walked four. Wood allowed season highs in runs and hits while throwing a season-most 100 pitches. He hadn't lost at home since Sept 22, 2015.

**PIRATES 13, ROCKIES 5**

Pittsburgh rookie Josh Bell had a career-high four hits, Andrew McCutchen had three hits and reached base five times as the surging Pirates beat Colorado. Rookie starter Trevor Williams (4-4) overcame a rough first to pitch 6 2/3 solid innings for his first win in more than a month. Pittsburgh has won a season-best six straight and 12 of 14 to move a game above .500 for the first time since opening 3-2. The Pirates (49-48), who tied a season high with 18 hits, are within two games of first-place Milwaukee in the NL Central. Pittsburgh jumped on Rockies starter Jeff Hoffman (6-2) and chased him three batters into the fourth. Bell had an RBI single in the first and a three-run double in the second to finish with a season-high four RBIs.

**RED SOX 6, ANGELS 2**

Chris Sale pitched six scoreless innings and the Boston Red Sox rode a five-run first inning to this victory over the Los Angeles Angels. Sale (12-4) allowed four hits and struck out nine to push his major league-leading total to 200. He walked one and lowered his American League-best ERA to 2.48. He has won 11 of his last 13 decisions. Sale improved to 6-0 against the Angels with a 1.23 ERA in seven starts (nine games). Boston jumped on erratic

Angels starter Ricky Nolasco (4-11) in the first, with six of its first seven batters collecting a hit. Nolasco went four innings and allowed all six runs on nine hits and a walk. The Angels avoided a shutout when Martin Maldonado hit a solo home run off reliever Kyle Martin in the seventh.

**DIAMONDBACKS 6, NATIONALS 5**

The Arizona Diamondbacks opened the game with three straight home runs off Washington Nationals ace Max Scherzer and ended it with Brandon Drury's bases-loaded single in the bottom of the ninth inning to hold on for this narrow win. The home runs by David Peralta, A.J. Pollock and Jake Lamb started the Diamondbacks on the way to a 5-0 lead. The feat was the first in the majors since Baltimore did it against Texas in the bottom of the first on May 10, 2012. It was the first time in Nationals history (2005 to present) that an opposing team has hit back-to-back-to-back home runs. The Diamondbacks last hit three straight homers on Aug. 11, 2010, when they had four in a row at Milwaukee. It was the most runs allowed by Scherzer in a first inning since July 2, 2011, against San Francisco, when he gave up five. Scherzer's five runs allowed tied for the most he's given up in a start this season, and the five innings tied for his shortest outing of the season. Arizona sent nine batters to the plate in the four-run first and the Diamondbacks made it 5-0 in the second on Lamb's RBI double.

**ROYALS 7, WHITE SOX 6, 10 INNINGS**

Whit Merrifield's sacrifice fly in the 10th inning lifted Kansas City over skidding Chicago. Merrifield's game-ending fly scored Alcides Escobar, who led off the inning with a single. The Royals, who trailed 5-1 after two innings, got their third walk-off victory in five days. The White Sox have lost seven straight and 10 of 11. Alex Gordon had three hits and drove in three Royals runs, while Merrifield also had a two-run double in the fourth. Mike Moustakas hit his 26th home run. Neftali Feliz (1-0), the seventh Kansas City pitcher, threw seven pitches in a scoreless 10th. Tyler Clippard (1-6), acquired in a trade Tuesday with the New York Yankees, took the loss in his White Sox debut. Top prospect Yoan Moncada had four RBIs in his second game with Chicago, including a bases-loaded triple.

**PHILLIES 6, BREWERS 1**

Aaron Nola tied a career high with nine strikeouts in seven sharp innings and Freddy Galvis hit a two-run homer to help Philadelphia beat reeling Milwaukee. Nola (7-

6) allowed one run and five hits. He has six straight quality starts, going 4-1 and lowering his ERA from 4.76 to 3.38 in that span. The NL Central-leading Brewers have lost six in a row and their lead over the World Series champion Cubs is only one game. The Phillies have won three straight for only the third time this season but still have the worst record in the majors. Brewers starter Matt Garza (4-5) gave up two runs and three hits in five innings.

**INDIANS 13, BLUE JAYS 3**

Edwin Encarnacion homered and drove in four runs against his former team, and Cleveland broke open a close game with an eight-run seventh inning to pull away from Toronto. Encarnacion, who played the last six seasons with the Blue Jays before signing a three-year, \$60 million contract with Cleveland in January, hit a leadoff homer in the second, broke a 3-all tie in the fifth with a two-run double and added an RBI single in the seventh. Abraham Almonte hit a three-run homer and rookie Bradley Zimmer added a two-run single in the seventh as the Indians won for just the second time in eight games. Trevor Bauer (8-8) allowed three runs in five innings following a dreadful outing in his previous start. Marco Estrada (4-7) gave up five runs in 4 2/3 innings and hasn't won since May 27.

**METS 7, ATHLETICS 5**

Michael Conforto hit a pair of two-run homers and Jerry Blevins rescued the Mets' bullpen with a five-out save as New York held off Oakland for its third straight victory. T.J. Rivera put the Mets ahead in the sixth inning with a two-run single that turned into a Little League home run. Rivera came all the way around to score on the play after third baseman Matt Chapman, trying to get Rivera at second, threw the ball away into right field for a costly error that made it 5-3. Conforto's second homer made it 7-3 in the seventh. Oakland rallied for two in the eighth, but Blevins replaced closer Addison Reed with the bases loaded and got five straight outs against his former team for his fifth major league save and first this season. Blevins went at least 1 2/3 innings in a game for the first time since 2014 with Washington. He retired All-Star slugger Yonder Alonso on a foul pop-up and struck out Kris Davis to escape the eighth-inning jam. Yoenis Cespedes had three hits and Hansel Robles (5-1) struck out two in a scoreless inning. Marcus Semien had four hits and two RBIs for the Athletics. Rookie starter Paul Blackburn (1-1) gave up four runs over 5 1/3 innings.—AP

MLB Results/Standings

San Diego 12, San Francisco 9 (11 innings); Atlanta 12, LA Dodgers 3; NY Yankees 5, Seattle 1; Boston 6, LA Angels 2; Arizona 6, Washington 5; Pittsburgh 13, Colorado 5; Kansas City 7, Chicago White Sox 6 (10 innings); Detroit 6, Minnesota 3; Miami 3, Cincinnati 1; NY Mets 7, Oakland 5; Texas 4, Tampa Bay 3 (10 innings); Cleveland 13, Toronto 3; Houston 8, Baltimore 7; Philadelphia 6, Milwaukee 1; St. Louis 11, Chicago Cubs 4.

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division					
W	L	PCT	GB	W	L	PCT	GB		
Boston	55	43	.561	-	Washington	57	38	.600	-
NY Yankees	50	45	.526	3.5	Atlanta	47	48	.495	10
Tampa Bay	51	46	.526	3.5	NY Mets	44	50	.468	12.5
Baltimore	46	50	.479	8	Miami	43	51	.457	13.5
Toronto	44	52	.458	10	Philadelphia	33	61	.351	23.5
Central Division				Central Division					
Cleveland	49	45	.521	-	Milwaukee	52	47	.525	-
Minnesota	48	47	.505	1.5	Chicago Cubs	49	46	.516	1
Kansas City	48	47	.505	1.5	Pittsburgh	49	48	.505	2
Detroit	44	51	.463	5.5	St. Louis	47	49	.490	3.5
Chicago White Sox	38	55	.409	10.5	Cincinnati	40	56	.417	10.5
Western Division				Western Division					
Houston	64	32	.667	-	LA Dodgers	66	31	.680	-
Seattle	48	50	.490	17	Arizona	56	40	.583	9.5
LA Angels	47	51	.480	18	Colorado	56	42	.571	10.5
Texas	46	50	.479	18	San Diego	42	54	.438	23.5
Oakland	43	53	.448	21	San Francisco	37	61	.378	29.5

## DEMPSEY ONE GOAL AWAY FROM RECORD AS US IN GOLD CUP SEMI

**ARLINGTON:** Clint Dempsey is back in his home state of Texas, one goal away from a national scoring record for the United States team that is one win from playing in another CONCACAF Gold Cup final. The Americans played a semifinal game yesterday night against Costa Rica in a stadium synonymous with American football - the home of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys, the Cotton Bowl and where the first College Football Playoff championship game was played three seasons ago.

That is only about 180 miles from Dempsey's hometown of Nacogdoches.

"It's always great to be home and play in front of family and friends, especially for a big game," Dempsey said Friday. "I have a lot of great memories of playing in Dallas as a kid, and I'm proud to represent Nacogdoches. Being from there made me who I am today."

Dempsey, one goal from matching Landon Donovan's American record of 57 national team goals, wasn't part of soccer's only Gold Cup games at the \$1.2 billion AT&T Stadium. In a 2013 semifinal game there when the Americans were on the way to their fifth Gold Cup championship, they beat

Honduras 3-1. Donovan scored twice in that game - his 55th and 56th goals for the national team - and assisted on the other goal. About two months later, Donovan scored his final goal in a World Cup qualifier win over Mexico.

Within a week after Costa Rica beat the US team 4-0 in World Cup qualifying last November, Jurgen Klinsmann was out as the US coach and Bruce Arena was rehired to the position he had been fired from a decade earlier. Costa Rica coach Oscar Ramirez said Friday that Arena has seemingly had a positive impact on the US team. "They look

more relaxed in terms of what they're doing on the field," Ramirez said through an interpreter.

### ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY

This US roster for the Gold Cup knockout rounds also is much different than the one that played in Costa Rica eight months ago - not just the change at coach. Only five players from that game that are set for this semifinal game - Michael Bradley, Jozy Altidore, Matt Besler, Omar Gonzalez and Graham Zusi.

"That's in the past," Gonzalez said. "I

don't think about that game. ... This is just another game. It's another opportunity for us to see what we're made out of." Altidore, Dempsey, Bradley, Darlington Nagbe, and goalkeeper Tim Howard were all added to the lineup before a 2-0 win over El Salvador in the quarterfinal on Wednesday night in Philadelphia.

Dempsey set up Eric Lichaj's goal in extra time before halftime to make it 2-0 against El Salvador. Dempsey also fed Gyasi Zardes for a breakaway, though that apparent goal didn't count after he was ruled offside. —AP

## NO SIGNINGS, NO PROBLEM, SAYS CONFIDENT ERIKSEN

**ORLANDO:** Christian Eriksen is adamant Tottenham Hotspur's lack of action in the transfer market this summer will not hamper manager Mauricio Pochettino's push for the Premier League title. While Manchester United, Manchester City and Chelsea have all spent vast amounts in the last few weeks, Tottenham have brought in no fresh faces to boost a squad who've gone close to landing the championship for the past two campaigns.

Indeed, the North London side have been left weaker with England full-back Kyle Walker signing for City coach Pep Guardiola last week in a £50 million (\$65 million) deal while Eric Dier, the English international, continues to be courted by Manchester United.

Yet Danish midfielder Eriksen, who has seen great upheaval of playing personnel over his five years at Tottenham, believes the Argentine manager is cleverly and patiently building a squad who are aiming to go one better when the Premier League season starts next month.

"I don't think you need to spend to win anything," said the 25-year-old former Ajax midfielder ahead of today's International Champions Cup game against Paris St. Germain at the Camping World Stadium. "It's just a matter of how you see a team, how the players are - only Walker has left in our team and we know what we did last season so I can't see why we shouldn't be able to do hopefully even better. "I think it will be very close this season because everyone is in Europe and everyone has to think about two or three tournaments and the top sides will want to win everything so the key is to try and keep everyone fit and sharp." Manchester United have already

spent £100 million while Chelsea have just paid Real Madrid £58 million for striker Alvaro Morata.

### SPENDING 'AN ENGLISH THING'

But Eriksen added: "It's an English thing where you have to spend money to win something apparently. "But also I read something from the gaffer where he said our club are just different compared to other clubs in that we don't spend as much money as them. "When I came (to the club) there were seven new players at the same time and you saw how that ended and now the last few seasons we haven't bought as many players and it's changed around. "Of course you have to have a philosophy. You need a plan and it looks like we have one."

Pochettino, along with chairman Daniel Levy, have tied down star striker Harry Kane to a long-term deal while England midfielder Dele Alli also sees his immediate future at Spurs despite growing interest from across Europe. A young, talented side is bristling with self-belief and confidence ahead of what promises to be a fascinating campaign.

Eriksen added: "We as a team are very young and everyone has a long contract, no-one has to go away they are happy where they are. Of course it's something we can improve and help on because when you are young you learn and that's what we are doing now. "Everyone knows we have been very close the last two seasons so I think in that time something has been brewing and now this is the third season with the manager to become even better than we were. "It's the same lads trying to become better, help each other and that makes it easier. —AFP



**BEIJING:** Arsenal's Per Mertesacker, center, tackles the ball away from Chelsea's Michy Batshuayi, right, during the first half of their friendly soccer match in Beijing, yesterday. Chelsea beat Arsenal 3-0. —AP

### SOCCER

# PEDRO BLOODIED AS CHELSEA BEAT ARSENAL

**BEIJING:** Chelsea forward Pedro was taken to hospital with a possible concussion after colliding with Arsenal's goalkeeper during the Blues' 3-0 pre-season win over their London rivals in Beijing yesterday.

The 29-year-old Spaniard was left reeling on the ground with a bloodied face inside the first half hour of the game after Colombian keeper David Ospina flew into him while clearing a long-ball with two fists. After receiving medical attention on the pitch for several minutes, Pedro got up and walked off with blood in his nose, lips and right ear. "For sure (he) should be okay but I think he had a concussion," Chelsea manager Antonio Conte told reporters after a Michy Batshuayi double sparked his side to an easy victory.

"For this reason our doctor preferred to bring him to the hospital and to check him in the right way," the Italian added. "It's a pity because in this period now it's not good to have this type of injury, but should be okay and I'm very happy for this." Conte said he did not know whether Pedro would have to spend the night in hospital, but if the Spaniard is better today he will travel with the team to Singapore to continue the pre-season.

The injury scare overshadowed a brilliant performance by Belgian forward Batshuayi before a crowd of 55,618 at the Bird's Nest in the Chinese capital.

### 'MEDIA IMAGINATION'

The victory gave the Blues some measure of revenge against their London rivals after Arsenal stunned Chelsea 2-1 in the FA Cup final in May to deny the Premier League champions the double. Batshuayi shone as Chelsea prepare to be joined by Spanish striker Alvaro Morata, who could make his debut against Bayern Munich in Singapore on Tuesday following his reported 80-million-euro (\$92.2 million) transfer from Real Madrid. Batshuayi scored the second of his two goals five minutes into the second half, latching onto a pass from Marco Alonso to fire a curling shot past Ospina from just outside of the area.

Arsenal's own star signing, former Lyon striker Alexandre Lacazette, had a low-key game. French international Olivier Giroud entered the game in the second half and provided some spark but his early shots were saved or wide. Willian opened the scoring in the 40th minute, beating Ospina with a low drive.

Two minutes later, Premier League player of the year N'Golo Kante fed Batshuayi, who beat Ospina again with a left-footed shot from the edge of the box. After the game, Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger brushed aside a question about rumours that Chile forward Alexis Sanchez could move to Paris St-Germain, saying: "It's only media imagination". —AFP

## PENSIVE NEYMAR STIRS RENEWED PSG FEVER

**PARIS:** Neymar's decision to post a photo of himself in thoughtful contemplation sparked a fresh wave of speculation that he is on the verge of sealing a world record 222-million-euro (\$256.8 million) move from Barcelona to Paris Saint-Germain.

The Instagram picture, even accompanied by a matching emoji, shows the 25-year-old Brazilian superstar stretched out on the pitch with his chin resting on his left hand. It garnered more than 1.5 million 'likes' within 12 hours of it being posted in the United States where Barcelona are on a pre-season tour. Three of the 'likes' came from PSG players-winger Angel Di Maria, goalkeeper Kevin Trapp and midfielder Marco Verratti. French newspaper Le Parisien fuelled speculation Friday with an uncorroborated report that Neymar had told several Barcelona teammates of his intentions to join PSG, adding that the transfer is considered a done deal by some Barcelona players.

That echoes media company Esporte Interativo's insistence that an agreement has been reached for Neymar to move to the French capital from Barcelona, where he has played since 2013.

On Tuesday, PSG skipper and fellow Brazilian-Thiago Silva gave a digital thumbs up to a mocked-up photo montage published by Esporte Interativo showing Neymar in a PSG shirt along with compatriots and prospective teammates in France.



**HARRISON:** Barcelona's Brazilian forward Neymar stretches during a training session at the Red Bull Arena in Harrison, New Jersey, on Friday, a day before their match against Juventus FC. — AFP

Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde described the ongoing saga as a "time of rumours". "We understand it's how it is. He is with us right now, one of us," said Valverde in East Rutherford where his team plays Juventus in a pre-season friendly late yesterday. That match will give Neymar a chance to display his coveted skills for the first time this summer. "He's a player we love and we want," Valverde said. "Not only football wise, but also for the things he brings to the locker room. "There's no need to worry about something we don't know if it's going to happen or not. If it happens in the future, we'll see." PSG skipper Thiago Silva told Le Parisien he had no idea if the Brazilian star was about to switch to the French capital.

"I don't know. I hear a lot from journalists and a player like Neymar would be an interesting addition to the PSG project," said Thiago, speaking in Florida-where the French club takes on Tottenham in a friendly on Saturday. "But, for the moment, it is especially important to prepare for the new season. After and if Neymar arrives it would be a good thing for the squad." Is Neymar going to sign? "Not yet," smiled the captain.

### 'THE FUTURE OF THE CLUB'

In Spain, it was reported by Catalan media group RAC 1 that "certain players" at Barcelona have already tried to convince Neymar not to accept the PSG offer which would dwarf the 105 million euros Manchester United paid Juventus for Paul Pogba. Javier Mascherano said Neymar was "the future" of Barcelona as the Argentine pleaded with the striker to stay put.

"In the case of Ney, obviously he is young, and I hope he's here with Barcelona for many more years," Mascherano told American sports network ESPN. "He is a really important player for the club. Because of his age, he's the future of the club, and we hope we can keep on counting on him." However, it's believed the Brazilian is being seduced by the immense wealth on offer to him from the Qatari owners of PSG and by the opportunity to have a team built around him.

The daily Sport newspaper also claimed that Luis Suarez has also attempted to persuade Neymar not to split up the MSN frontline at Barcelona made up of Lionel Messi, Suarez and the Brazilian star.

Catalunya Radio said that the deal is "95 percent complete". One of the keys would be the payment to Neymar's father and agent of a "premium exceeding the 40 million" paid when the player controversially moved to Spain from Santos. Other reports have claimed that Neymar senior has recently met with, or is about to meet, PSG sporting director Antero Henrique. However, Barcelona vice-president Jordi Mestre insisted Tuesday that it is "200 percent" certain that Neymar will stay at the club. In a public game of tit-for-tat pronouncements, PSG coach Unai Emery hailed the Brazilian. —AFP

## GERMANY EDGE ITALY, SWEDEN SINK RUSSIA AT WOMEN'S EURO

**DEVENTER:** Babet Peter's second-half penalty edged defending champions Germany to a 2-1 victory over 10-woman Italy at the women's Euro tournament in the Netherlands on Friday. In the other Group B game, captain Lotta Schelin and Stina Blackstenius powered Sweden to a 2-0 win over Russia.

In an eventful game in Tilburg, Germany drew first blood in the 19th minute when Josephine Henning headed home after Italian keeper Laura Giuliani spilled the ball following Dzsenerifer Marozsan's free-kick. Italy equalised from a counter-attack 10 minutes later as Ilaria Mauro nutmegged German keeper Almuth Schult after a pass from Barbara Bonansea who had sprinted down the whole length of the left wing. Peter scored from the spot on 67 minutes after Giuliani had brought down Anja Mittag in the box, and a minute later Italy were reduced to 10 players as defender Elisa Bartoli picked up a second yellow card. Germany hit the post twice-Sara Daebritz in the first half and Mandy Islacker in the second-while Bonansea saw her free-kick cleared by a diving Schult with 10 minutes to go as Italy were eliminated. "I think this was a great Italy," said Italy coach Antonio Cabrini. "We played on a par with a much better team than us. We had a great 70 minutes and believed in it to the very end."

In Deventer, Schelin scored Sweden's

opening goal on 22 minutes, heading in a superb free-kick taken by Magdalena Ericsson. Blackstenius made it 2-0 in the 51st minute as she picked up a poor goal kick by Russian keeper Tatiana Shcherbak, beat two defenders and fired a shot that Anna Kozhnikova only managed to deflect into the net off the post. "Three points, two goals, that's good," said Sweden coach Pia Sundhage. "I'm happy about the result and parts of the performance, especially in the first half."

Russia could have secured a quarter-final berth if they had won, following their surprising 2-1 win over Italy in the Group B opener. But they never got close as Sweden put them under heavy pressure from the start with Kosovare Asllani's long-range shot smacking the crossbar on 10 minutes.

It took Russia half an hour to threaten up front, but Elena Danilova missed from long range. At the other end, Schelin shot narrowly wide across goal and Linda Sembrant headed wide from a corner just before half-time. Sweden continued to dominate in the second half but squandered their chances, with Sembrant heading against the post five minutes from the end.

"Sweden were very strong when it comes to set pieces, there were a lot of them and this was something that didn't allow us to play well," said Russian coach Elena Fomina. — AFP



**DEVENTER:** Sweden's Stina Blackstenius (L) vies with Russia's Elvira Ziyastinova during the UEFA Women's Euro 2017 football match between Sweden and Russia at Stadion De Adelaarshorst in Deventer on Friday. — AFP

# Sports

**Bolt on right path to world 100m defence**



**Pensive Neymar stirs renewed PSG fever**



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HISTORY AWAITS INDIA IN WOMEN'S WORLD CUP FINAL Page 14



## COUTINHO STUNNER GIVES LIVERPOOL HONG KONG WIN

**HONG KONG:** A moment of Philippe Coutinho magic lifted Liverpool to a 2-1 pre-season victory over Leicester City in the final of the Premier League Asia Trophy yesterday. With Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp rejecting a big-money offer from Barcelona for Coutinho earlier this week, the mercurial Brazilian underlined his importance to the Reds with a flash of individual brilliance in Hong Kong. The 25-year-old picked the ball up on the left of the area on the stroke of halftime, jinked his way inside and let fly with a superb right-foot strike that proved to be the game-winner.

"Everybody knows that Phil Coutinho is a key player for us," Klopp told reporters. "He loves the club, he loves the city—he is a fantastic footballer. If he is able to play like tonight, in a very difficult moment of the pre-season after all the (training) sessions, that shows his big potential." Coutinho had earlier played the role of provider for new

signing Mohamed Salah, dinking the ball on to the Egyptian's head to cancel out Islam Slimani's 12th-minute nodded opener.

Klopp was involved in a heated exchange with referee Bobby Madley in the first half, the German revealing his anger had been sparked by some close attention Coutinho was receiving from the Leicester defenders. "These players make the difference. These players bring people to the stadium," said Klopp. "That's why have to look after them a little bit." Salah, meanwhile, again demonstrated that the club record \$45 million Klopp paid Roma for his services looks money well spent. His pace adding another dimension to Liverpool's attack, the former Chelsea winger gave Leicester's Christian Fuchs a torrid time until he was substituted on 65 minutes.

Klopp, whose side beat Crystal Palace 2-0 in midweek to reach the final, is still hoping to bring in Leipzig midfielder Nabi

Keita, with Liverpool set to return with a final offer of around \$97 million for the Guinea international. For now, it was a case of job done for Liverpool in the Far East. "It's really pleasing," said Klopp. "We've played two hard games in very difficult circumstances against very good opponents. "Winning both games is a big thing. The boys did well. "Yes we conceded a goal. But the line-up was my idea and it was clear that not everything in defence would work. We have big offensive potential but obviously we need to learn how to defend together." Palace won the third-place playoff earlier on Saturday, seeing off West Brom 2-0 in a testy affair that saw tempers flare as the players entered the tunnel at halftime.

The match was settled by Luka Milivojevic's sweetly struck free kick on 11 minutes and a deflected Bakary Sako shot that found the net with three minutes left in the first half. — AFP



HONG KONG: Liverpool FC players celebrates after winning the final match against Leicester City FC at the Premier League Asia Trophy soccer tournament in Hong Kong, yesterday. — AP

## SWIMMING BODY FINA RE-ELECTS OFFICIALS TO TOP 2 POSITIONS

**BUDAPEST:** Julio Maglione has been re-elected for a third term as president of swimming's governing body FINA, while Husain al-Musallam was confirmed for another term as its senior vice president despite allegations of bribery against him. The 81-year-old Maglione, of Uruguay, defeated the president of European aquatics federation LEN, Paolo Barelli, after FINA changed its rules to remove its age limit. It was an expected victory for Maglione at FINA's election congress on the sidelines of the world championships in Budapest, Hungary.

Barelli complained that he wasn't allowed to speak to the bureau before

the vote. He said that essentially ended any hopes he had of persuading the governing body to make a change at the top. "There is a lack of good governance. We need transparency," Barelli told The Associated Press in an interview before the vote was even completed. "Where it needed to be shown is during the congress. It is not easy for anybody to understand why the candidate cannot speak. This is unbelievable."

Maglione has been in charge since 2009. Al-Musallam ran unopposed after FINA cleared the Kuwaiti official on Wednesday for re-election despite fresh allegations made by British daily The

Times and German magazine Der Spiegel that he had sought payoffs from sponsorship deals through the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) in 2012.

Al-Musallam is next in line to take over the top position should Maglione be unable to fulfill his duties. FINA said "there was no breach of any FINA regulations" after Wednesday's allegations were made, much to Barelli's frustration.

"You cannot permit the infection to enter inside the organization," the Italian said. "FINA doesn't have any (mechanism) to protect themselves from the possibility that something really happened." — AP

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## EGYPT'S PAINFUL REFORMS BEAR FRUIT



CARACAS: People cheer as the judges named by Venezuela's opposition-controlled National Assembly for a parallel supreme court, swear in during a ceremony in Caracas on Friday. — AFP

## US WEIGHS SANCTIONS TO HIT VENEZUELA'S OIL REVENUE

### MOVE COULD RESTRICT THE OPEC NATION'S CRUDE EXPORTS

**HOUSTON/WASHINGTON:** The United States is considering financial sanctions on Venezuela that would halt dollar payments for the country's oil, according to a senior White House official and an adviser with direct knowledge of the discussions. The move could severely restrict the OPEC nation's crude exports and starve its socialist government of hard currency. Sanctions prohibiting any transaction in US currency by Venezuela's state-run oil firm, PDVSA, are among the toughest of various oil-related measures under discussion at the White House, the two sources told Reuters.

The administration aims to pressure socialist President Nicolas Maduro into aborting plans for a controversial new congress that critics say would cement him as a dictator. Venezuela's oil-based economy is in the grip of a brutal recession and a local currency crash, and Maduro has faced months of anti-government unrest that has claimed the lives of about 100 people. Sanctions on dollar transactions would make it even harder for Maduro's government to secure cash for debt payments and finance imports of basic goods.

The White House declined to comment on the sanctions under consideration. PDVSA and Venezuela's Oil Ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The US measures under discussion are similar to those that were imposed against Iran over its nuclear program - which halved Iran's oil exports and prevented top crude buyers from paying for Iranian oil.

The measures were seen as among the most effective economic sanctions ever imposed and paved the way for a deal that curbed Tehran's nuclear activity. Measures on financial transactions would give President Donald Trump's administration the power to escalate pressure on Venezuela by threatening punishment of any US firm doing business with PDVSA or US banks processing any of its transactions in dollars.

The financial restrictions have been "raised repeatedly" in recent discussions about options for actions against Maduro's government, said the senior White House official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The administration is also discussing a ban on US oil imports from Venezuela, but no final decisions have been reached, the official said. Sanctions on dollar transactions could be more punitive than an import ban because they would make it much more difficult for any refiner or trader to buy Venezuelan oil - not just customers in the United States.

The impact of sanctions on PDVSA would ripple across oil markets, forcing refiners to buy alternative supplies. The US could use crude from its Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to blunt the impact of any short-term supply shortage, the policy adviser told Reuters. The United States bought 780,000 barrels per day (bpd) of Venezuelan crude and refined products in the first four months of 2017, according to the Energy Information Administration, nearly 8 percent of total imports. PDVSA is a major supplier to Valero Energy, Phillips 66, Chevron Corp and PBF Energy.

PDVSA's refining unit in the United States, Citgo Petroleum, last month was the second largest recipient of Venezuelan crude. It is unclear how Citgo, being wholly owned by Venezuela, would be impacted by US sanctions. Citgo operates three refineries, pipelines and a fuel distribution network in the United States. The threat of sanctions against Venezuela was a key reason for talks this week between PDVSA and Rosneft, Russia's leading state-owned oil firm, which is already under US sanctions. The negotiations in Moscow, reported by Reuters earlier this week,

focused on a proposed swap of Rosneft's collateral stake in Citgo for a host of other Venezuelan oil assets - a move to avoid legal complications.

#### Barter deals

The White House said earlier this week that Trump's administration could take what it called "strong and swift economic actions" against Venezuela as soon as July 30. Other options under consideration by Washington include putting more Venezuelan officials and PDVSA executives on its sanctions list, the two sources told Reuters.

Maduro intends to create a superbody called the constituent assembly this year that would have the power to rewrite the country's constitution. It would supersede other institutions and replace the democratically elected National Assembly. Maduro has decried what he calls "imperialist meddling" by US officials.

Several governments in Latin America also have called on Maduro to abandon the assembly plan. But officials in neighboring countries also expressed concern that US economic sanctions would trigger famine in Venezuela, which is already reeling from shortages of food and medicine.

PDVSA's cash flow has plummeted in recent years, in part due to the Venezuelan government's deals to

barter its oil to other nations in exchange for fuels, services and loans.

Chinese and Russian entities currently take about 40 percent of all PDVSA's exports as repayment for more than \$50 billion in loans to Venezuela and its oil company in the last decade, according to a Reuters analysis of its sales. PDVSA also barter with Caribbean nations, Indian refiner Reliance and its unit Citgo. Almost all of PDVSA's cash-paying customers are in the United States and India, and the preferred currency for oil transactions worldwide is the US dollar.

PDVSA currently collects most payments from oil exports using China's Citic Bank, but customers making dollar transfers require a correspondent bank in the United States to guarantee the money arrives in China. The Venezuelan oil firm has been struggling to find correspondent banks in the United States since Citibank a year ago suspended providing that service. It would have even fewer options to collect dollars if the sanctions are levied.

The company could seek payment in euros through European bank accounts, or use other non-dollar denominated transactions. But the European Union could also take similar measures to prevent transactions in euros, following the lead of the United States.

#### US refineries

The crude import ban has been strongly opposed by oil companies and crude processors because of the impact it could have on the refining sector, especially on the US Gulf Coast. Administration officials have heard from US refiners on the hardships an import ban could have on their businesses and "are now measuring its potential impact on prices, market movement, inventories," the policy adviser to the White House told Reuters. Phillips 66 - the third largest buyer of Venezuelan crude in the United States this year - said on Thursday that the administration should "carefully consider" sanctions that would affect US refiners and not prevent the sale of Venezuelan crude elsewhere. Valero did not respond to a request for comment. Chevron declined to comment.

Chet Thompson, chief executive of trade group American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM), has been calling and writing White House officials, urging they consider something other than a Venezuelan oil import ban.

Some refineries get up to half their supply from Venezuela, he said in an interview Friday. "It's not easily replaced," he said, adding that the sanctions also may not have their intended effect. "Venezuela," he said, "will just sell it to someone else." — Reuters

## AUB KUWAIT ACHIEVED A NET PROFIT OF KD 26.5 MILLION FOR FIRST HALF OF 2017

**KUWAIT:** Ahli United Bank announced its results and financial statements for the first half ending on 30 June 2017, following the endorsement of the statements by the Bank's Board of Directors and the approval of the Central Bank of Kuwait. The Bank's net operating profit grew by 5 percent amounting to KD 39 million during the first half, up from KD 37 million recorded in the first six months of 2016.

The Bank recorded a net profit after tax of KD 26.5 million for the first half of 2017, an increase of 3.3 percent over the KD 25.6 million recorded for the same period last year. This profit is achieved following a conservative approach to provisioning and credit policies to mitigate the risks attached with the ongoing market volatility and geopolitical instability in the region.

Chairman, Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf, remarked that "The continuity of growth in AUB's profits for the first half of 2017 is further evidence and confirmation of the strength and soundness of the Bank's financial position, its prudent operational vision and successful strategy. With our wide client-base, branch network, the unique services we offer and the expertise of our staff, we will continue our success in attaining an increasing share of the domestic market through the promotion of Islamic Banking".

"The Bank has achieved a return on equity (ROE) of 13.6 percent and a return on assets (ROA) of 1.4 percent as at the end of June 2017, being amongst the highest profitability of banks announcing their results in the local market for the same period. The higher returns contributed in generating

earnings per share (EPS) of 14.7 fils. The Bank's total assets grew to reach KD 3.8 billion at the end of June 2017 up from KD 3.7 billion recorded at the end of last year. Total deposits reached KD 3.3 billion. The Bank has reported a sound capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of 17.4 percent being higher than the minimum regulatory required level of 13.5 percent."

The Chairman attributed these positive results for the period to the efforts of the Bank's management and staff who have provided distinctive services and integrated solutions for customers, maintaining customer confidence and enhancing the presence of the Bank in Corporate Banking, Retail Banking, Private Banking & Wealth Management, and Treasury. The Chairman stressed that the management's success has placed the Bank among the best and safest Islamic Banks, not only locally but also regionally.

The Bank has continued to receive high credit ratings from international credit rating agencies, such as Fitch, Moody's and Capital Intelligence. The Bank maintained a credit rating of "A+" on the long term and "F1" on the short term with stable outlook by Fitch Ratings Agency, and "A2" on the local currency with stable outlook by Moody's. Capital Intelligence affirmed the Bank's long term credit rating of foreign currency to "A+" and enhanced the short term



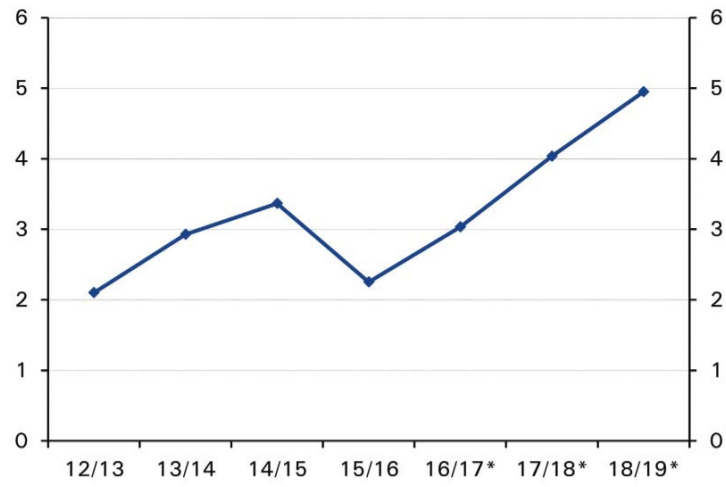
**Chairman  
Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf**

foreign currency rating to "A2". All these ratings confirm the credit standing, capital quality, and stability of the Bank for future growth. During the first of half of 2017 the Bank obtained the award for "Best Bank for Private Banking in Kuwait" from the prestigious international magazine, The Banker. In addition, the Bank obtained several awards during past year including the "Best Islamic Bank Award in Kuwait" for the fourth consecutive year, also from, The Banker, and the "Second Safest Islamic Bank in Kuwait and Fourth in the GCC" awarded by the Global Finance magazine.

Furthermore, the Chairman expects further progress in the Bank's performance with growth during the forthcoming period, notwithstanding the increased competition in the market. The Bank is committed to the continuous improvement in banking services, including the innovation of its services, products and financial solutions.

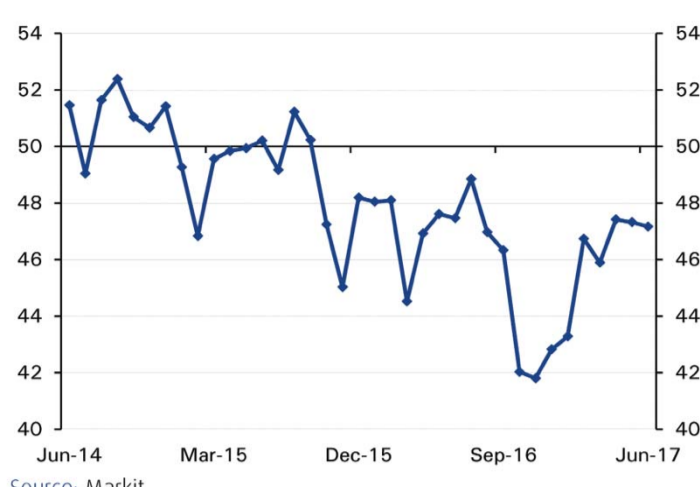
In concluding his statement, Dr Al-Mudhaf extended his thanks and appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait for valuable guidance, to the Bank's Board of Directors, to customers, to shareholders, and to management and staff for the confidence and support they have conferred upon the Bank. This has enabled the Bank to realize these continued achievements and maintain its preeminent position in the Kuwaiti banking sector.

Chart 1: Real GDP growth (% y/y)



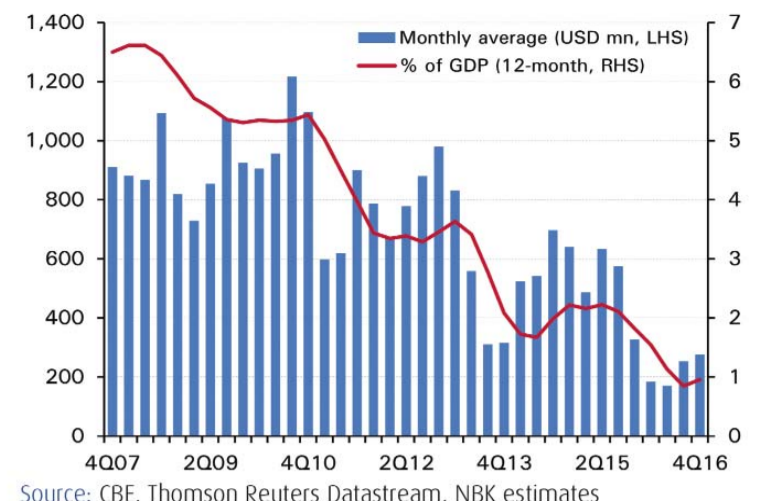
Source: MOP, TR Datastream, NBK estimates; \*estimate/forecast

Chart 3: Purchasing Managers' Index (index, seasonally adjusted)



Source: Markit

Chart 7: Tourism receipts



Source: CBE, Thomson Reuters Datastream, NBK estimates

# EGYPT'S PAINFUL REFORMS BEAR FRUIT

## NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

Egypt's economy has been in recovery mode following a considerable slowdown in 2016. A currency shortage that cramped activity last year was relieved with the decision to float the currency and the launch of a comprehensive reform program. A number of fiscal reforms implemented in 2016 are already having a positive impact on the deficit. A \$12 billion IMF loan agreement also helped inject a degree of confidence among investors. As a result, the country's foreign reserves have improved significantly over the last seven months.

With reforms expected to see fiscal and monetary policy tighten, growth will be largely driven by foreign investment, exports and tourism, all supported by a more competitive currency and by the prospect of an improved operating environment. This is already being felt, with exports and tourism improving in 4Q16 and 1Q17. Foreign investment is also up, in part benefiting from large pledges by multilateral institutions.

The key risk to the outlook is a lack of progress on reforms, though it has been relatively good so far. Indeed, the IMF recently provided a positive assessment as it approved the disbursement of the second tranche of its loan agreement. The IMF felt that the authorities had taken important measures that are likely to "place public debt on a declining path to sustainable levels". The latest fiscal figures also indicate that progress is being made.

Egypt's decision to join its GCC allies in cutting ties with Qatar is not likely to have a material impact on the Egyptian economy. Over 250,000 Egyptians living in Qatar have not been asked to leave, though they account for just 4-5 percent of remittances. While Qatar provided over 60 percent of Egypt's LNG imports in 2016, these shipments have not been halted during the crisis. Meanwhile, authorities in Egypt indicated that private Qatar investments will not be affected, though Qatar accounts for only 1-2 percent of FDI inflows.

### Economy bounces back

After slowing significantly during 2016, economic growth began bouncing back late in the year. Real GDP growth rose to 3.5 percent year-on-year (y/y) in 4Q16, compared to average growth below 2 percent during the first nine months of 2016. The improvement

came largely from the manufacturing sector, which grew 6.4 percent y/y in 4Q16. Growth in other sectors remained weak.

GDP growth appeared to improve further in 1Q17. The quarter saw a much awaited rebound in tourism. The number of tourist arrivals rose to a monthly average of 580,000 during the first three months of 2017. While this figure is well below potential, it is up 49 percent y/y. The improvement is reflected in a healthy bounce in the tourism component of the production index, which was up 81 percent y/y in March.

The sector continues to be weighed down by security concerns following the downing of a Russian commercial airline in October 2015 by terrorists. Indeed, a number of European countries maintain travel restrictions to the country as a result. Tourism, which has suffered since the Arab Spring in 2011, remains well below its full potential. Arrivals in 1Q17 were half their 1Q10 level.

percent and 5 percent in FY17/18 and FY18/19, respectively.

### Optimism

In January, the IMF published details of the reform program that was the basis of a \$12 billion loan approved in November 2016. It includes a number of fiscal reforms, including a VAT, cutting subsidies and reducing wage bill growth. The program also seeks deep structural reform to boost job creation, foreign investment and exports, including steps to improve the business environment with new laws governing investment, industrial registration and insolvency. Liberalizing the external account is also a key part of the program, including floating the currency and doing away with capital controls imposed since 2011. Many of these reforms have already been implemented. Indeed, floating the currency was one of the conditions of the IMF loan agreement and was seen as neces-

## Overview and outlook

- Growth should improve to 3% in FY16/17, before it accelerates to 4% and 5% in FY17/18 and FY18/19.
- The floating of the pound alleviated foreign currency shortages, but GDP growth recovery has been gradual.
- Fiscal deficit to narrow to 11% of GDP in FY16/17 and to 8-9% in FY17/18 and FY18/19 as fiscal reform stays the course.
- Double-digit inflation should ease in late 2017, and further in 2018, as monetary policy tightens, stabilizing the pound.

Markit's Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) also indicated growth may be returning, though by that measure the recovery appears to be relatively weak. The index rose from a low of 42 in November 2016 to 47 in June. Despite the improvement in the index, it remains at levels consistent with GDP growth of only 2 percent. Nonetheless, the index does indicate particular strength in exports; the new export orders component rose to a survey-high of 54.8 in May.

The economy is expected to continue to improve in 2017, despite headwinds from tighter fiscal and monetary stances. Growth in FY16/17 is expected to have averaged 3.0 percent, up from 2.3 percent the previous fiscal year. The pace is expected to accelerate to 4

sary to address the large external imbalances. The 50 percent decline in the value of the pound improved Egypt's competitiveness, which in turn helped boost non-oil exports by more than 29 percent y/y in 4Q16. The pound has since been relatively stable at around 18 EGP to the USD.

### Inflation

However, the large decline in the value of the EGP has fueled inflation, as the higher price of imported goods pushes domestic prices higher. Inflation accelerated to 30 percent by June 2017. The rate is expected to remain at those elevated levels throughout most of 2017, before cooling off in late 2017 and easing further in 2018. We expect infla-

Table 1: Key economic indicators

		FY15/16	FY16/17f	FY17/18f	FY18/19f
Nominal GDP	EGP bn	2,708	3,421	4,185	4,796
Nominal GDP	USD bn	326	236	226	253
Real GDP growth	% y/y	2.3	3.0	4.0	5.0
Inflation	% y/y	14.0	30.0	11.0	9.0
Budget balance	% of GDP	-12.1	-10.5	-8.8	-7.7

Source: CBE, MOF, MOP, NBK estimates

tion to ease to around 20 percent by the end of 2017 and to 10 percent by the end of 2018.

### Policy rates

In an effort to fight inflation, the CBE hiked its policy rates three times since the currency float. The first time, in November, the central bank lifted rates by 300 basis points (bps). Authorities had already raised rates by 300 bps in three moves over the previous 12 months. The CBE increased rates again in May and July, by 200 bps each time.

### Fiscal deficit

The key priority for the government has been addressing the large fiscal deficit, which is a key source of imbalance for the economy. Some progress has already been made in that regard. The government replaced its sales tax with a value-added tax (VAT) in 2016. There have also been efforts to control the wage bill and to reduce government subsidies. A financial stamp tax was also introduced, though its fiscal impact is expected to be limited.

The impact of these measures on the fiscal picture has already been felt. The deficit narrowed during the first nine months of FY16/17 through March 2017 to 11 percent of GDP. The improvement, around 1.1 percentage points, came largely from increased control of the wage bill and healthy tax revenue growth. Tax revenues increased by 27 percent y/y thanks to the new VAT. During this period, the primary deficit (excluding interest payments) more than halved to 1.5 percent of GDP. This improving trend is expected to continue over the next two years. The deficit should narrow to around 10 percent of GDP in FY16/17 from around 12 percent the prior year, and further to around 9 percent and 8 percent in FY17/18 and FY18/19, respectively.

### Debt market

In an effort to reduce reliance on domestic financing of the deficit, the government has tapped international markets. The government raised \$4 billion in USD bonds in January, an issuance that was more than 3.5 times oversubscribed. Pricing also came in more favorably than anticipated. The debt sale, which was Africa's largest ever, included 5-year, 10-year and 30-year tranches. Another \$3 billion was raised in May with similar maturities. Once again, appetite for the issuance was strong, with the size double what the government had targeted initially.

### Current account

The current account deteriorated in 2016 largely as a result of the collapse in tourism and lower remittances, but has since improved in 1Q17. Tourism receipts were more than halved to \$2.6 billion, as tourists stayed away

following the bombing of a Russian passenger airplane. Meanwhile, remittances fell by 9 percent to \$16 billion; an unfavorable official exchange rate had seen overseas workers increasingly use unofficial channels to repatriate their savings, which hurt remittances.

These negative trends, both of which we expect will begin to abate in 2017, were countered by more positive trends in the goods balance. The trade deficit actually narrowed by 5 percent thanks to strong export growth. Non-oil exports received a strong boost in 2016, increasing by 17 percent to \$14.5 billion. At the same time, import growth was flat in part thanks to a 17 percent drop in the oil import bill. Egypt continued to benefit from healthy levels of foreign direct investment (FDI), which continued to provide support to the balance of payments. FDI rose by 17 percent in 2016 and accounted for around 2.9 percent of GDP. FDI in 4Q16 alone saw a healthy jump to an annualized 4.2 percent of GDP, recording one of the best quarters in more than six years. The balance of payments saw trends improve strongly in 1Q17; the current account deficit shrank to its lowest level in over two years (to \$3.5 billion or 7.3 percent of GDP) and portfolio inflows skyrocketed, as the decline in the pound made Egypt an attractive destination. The current account continued to benefit from strong export growth, which topped 30 percent y/y in 1Q17. The quarter also saw tourism receipts and remittances bounce back. Meanwhile, net investment portfolio inflows shot up to \$7.6 billion during the quarter, possibly the largest such inflow ever recorded.

### Foreign reserves

Foreign reserves have risen significantly since the decision to float the pound. CBE reserves rose to their highest level in over six years in May to \$31.1 billion or an estimated 7.7 months of imports. This is more than 60 percent higher than their level on the eve of the decision and before the IMF finalized its \$12 billion loan to Egypt. The decision to float the currency relieved much of the pressure on reserves; these also benefited from inflows from a number of multi-lateral organizations, including the IMF.

### Currency float

The stock market has outperformed most markets since October 2016. The EGX30 index was up 10.9 percent thus far in 2017 through 12 July. This followed a gain of 57 percent in 4Q16, with most of that taking place in November. Despite the rally, gains have not been enough to counter the drop in the currency; the MSCI total return index in USD remains down by 16 percent from its level before the currency float.

## EXCHANGE RATES

### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.706
Indian Rupees	4.713
Pakistani Rupees	2.887
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.971
Nepali Rupees	2.953
Singapore Dollar	228.800
Hongkong Dollar	38.886
Bangladesh Taka	3.731
Philippine Peso	5.978
Thai Baht	9.052

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.974
Qatari Riyal	83.400
Omani Riyal	788.591
Bahraini Dinar	806.300
UAE Dirham	82.673

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.100
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.830
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.219
Tunisian Dinar	125.910
Jordanian Dinar	428.480
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.023
Syrian Lira	2.164
Morocco Dirham	32.111

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	303.450
Euro	351.400
Sterling Pound	399.190
Canadian dollar	241.120
Turkish lira	86.640

Swiss Franc	317.920
Australian Dollar	241.090
US Dollar Buying	302.250

GOLD	
20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.100
Canadian Dollar	240.555
Sterling Pound	395.155
Euro	354.530
Swiss Frank	289.630
Bahrain Dinar	803.920
UAE Dirhams	82.920
Qatari Riyals	84.135
Saudi Riyals	81.720
Jordanian Dinar	427.420
Egyptian Pound	16.954
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.972
Indian Rupees	4.715
Pakistani Rupees	2.877
Bangladesh Taka	3.746
Philippines Peso	5.976
Cyprus pound	167.275
Japanese Yen	3.710
Syrian Pound	2.415
Nepalese Rupees	2.950
Malaysian Ringgit	71.725

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.280
Thai Bhat	10.050
Turkish Lira	86.255

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
<b>Europe</b>		
British Pound	0.388332	0.398332
Czech Korune	0.017357	0.017357
Danish Krone	0.042850	0.047850
Euro	0.343465	0.352465
Norwegian Krone	0.033509	0.038709
Romanian Leu	0.076252	0.076252
Slovakia	0.009055	0.019055
Slovenia	0.032446	0.037446
Swedish Krona	0.310701	0.321701
Swiss Franc	0.081072	0.091372
<b>Australasia</b>		
Australian Dollar	0.231960	0.243960
New Zealand Dollar	0.216182	0.225582
<b>America</b>		
Canadian Dollar	0.234840	0.243840
Georgina Lari	0.137053	0.137053
US Dollars	0.299350	0.303770
US Dollars Mint	0.299850	0.303770
<b>Asia</b>		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003390	0.003974
Chinese Yuan	0.043319	0.046819
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036779	0.039529

Indian Rupee	0.004247	0.004935
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002619	0.002799
Kenyan Shilling	0.002912	0.002912
Korean Won	0.000259	0.000274
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067235	0.073235
Nepalese Rupee	0.002983	0.003153
Pakistan Rupee	0.002676	0.002966
Philippine Peso	0.005931	0.006231
Sierra Leone	0.000037	0.000043
Singapore Dollar	0.215993	0.225993
South African Rand	0.017354	0.025854
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001602	0.002182
Taiwan	0.009838	0.010018
Thai Baht	0.008667	0.009217
<b>Arab</b>		
Bahraini Dinar	0.797806	0.806306
Egyptian Pound	0.015158	0.021066
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000190	0.000250
Jordanian Dinar	0.423391	0.432391
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.019702	0.043702
Nigerian Naira	0.000392	0.001027
Omani Riyal	0.781762	0.787442
Qatar Riyal	0.079060	0.084000
Saudi Riyal	0.079833	0.081133
Syrian Pound	0.001286	0.001506
Tunisian Dinar	0.121146	0.129146
Turkish Lira	0.081072	0.091372
UAE Dirhams	0.081148	0.082848
Yemeni Riyal	0.000986	0.001066

## CREATING A RESILIENT COMPANY IN TIMES OF CONSTANT CHANGE

## NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

**KUWAIT:** Everything is subject to change, especially at work. Companies, big or small, goes are likely to go through changes such as promotions, new hires, budget cuts, geographical expansion, and many other events that are likely to happen frequently. However, the response to change and its results can vary greatly from company to company and from team to team.

While business leaders might be excited about change or simply accustomed to it, employees might not be as enthusiastic. If you want to create a company that not only accepts change but also thrives on it, then you must train, introduce change gradually, and create an atmosphere of safety for your staff.

According to the Bayt.com career experts, here is how you can create a company that welcomes change and successfully reaps its benefits:

**1. Keep your employees informed**  
Unless the change is completely unplanned, it's always a good idea to

take your employees through the entire process of change and to outline your plan in response. This can be made easier by passing on customized plans to various department heads who then explain it to their teams. The plan should also include a detailed description of how each department will transition into the change, gradually and in phases. A sudden change would most definitely increase anxiety. Therefore, you should mitigate the element of surprise whenever possible.

**2. Eliminate the fear of failure**

Change always brings with it the fear of failing and getting out of one's comfort zone. The need to learn new skills and be constantly alarmed brings a tense atmosphere to any team or department. As a result, managers must instill confidence in their employees that they would not be reprimanded for failure, especially during the transition stages. You must affirm to your employees that making mistakes during times of change will only lead to

an increase in learning and an improvement of processes. At the same time, don't allow change to be an excuse for complacency or for shying away from taking risks and trying out new techniques. On the contrary, empower your employees to experiment and strategize in order to adjust and grow.

**3. Be ready for emergencies**

Change can be very unpredictable, especially when it comes to external and uncontrollable factors in the market and the economy. As such, it's advisable for your company to prepare policies and cases for any sort of conceivable situations and likely trends. There are various types of trends such as hard trends (where the change is inevitable) and soft trends (where the change may or may not happen). Keeping this in mind, you must strategize with top managers on how to handle each type of trend and disseminate information to your staff so that they know how to act in case the change does take place.

**4. Protect your employee's status**

Certain change, such as downsizing or restructuring, can cause your employees to become highly wary of their position and status in the company. They might be afraid that their status is threatened, and hence might not be very productive, or speak badly about the organization behind your back. It's best to assure your employees that they will not be affected badly by the change, and will in fact benefit from it. If, in reality, the change necessitates terminating employment or re-staffing, then you must be honest and straightforward; explain to your employees what is happening and why. This will help you avoid bad publicity or harming your employer brand.

**5. Train your employees**

A great way for employees to accept and thrive on change is for them to be trained on the new skill-sets that will be required after the change. Employees are often too comfortable in their daily routine and their work is habitual. It's a good idea to ask managers to list down

the skill-sets that employees might need in the future and suggest ways to fill in the gaps through internal or external training.

**6. Perfect your hiring strategy**

Change will often impact the human element of your business. Whether you need to hire for your newly created positions, re-fill your old ones, or simply keep a talent pipeline for your predicted changes, you must have a good talent sourcing strategy in place. At first, you should widen your horizons by accessing larger and more diversified talent databases. For example, Bayt.com empowers recruiters and hiring managers by giving them access to over 28.5 million CVs. You can then easily move on to the next step of segmenting your talent needs, narrowing down your prospective employees, and identifying those who will be most fitting for your current and/or future openings. An array of powerful search, filtering, sorting, and organizing tools will make that step much smoother for you.

## RMBI REGAINING MOMENTUM

By Helen Wong

Renminbi internationalization seemed to have slowed in the past year, but behind the scenes China continues to enhance its financial infrastructure so as to increase the global usage of the renminbi. The cross-border use of the Chinese currency decreased significantly in 2016. According to SWIFT, a network that banks around the world use to send and receive money, the value of international renminbi payments fell by nearly 30 percent, and the renminbi is now the seventh-most active payments currency (it began 2016 in fifth-place).

Offshore renminbi deposits tell a similar story. The stock of renminbi deposits outside mainland China has been shrinking since the beginning of 2015. Renminbi deposits in Hong Kong, the world's largest offshore renminbi hub, totaled RMB 528 billion at the end of April 4 nearly 50 percent less than the peak of over RMB 1 trillion that were parked in Hong Kong at the end of 2014.5 The decline in the using and holding of renminbi was not unrelated to concerns over China's economic slowdown, the renminbi's depreciation, and the tightening of cross-border capital flow regulations. Yet against this backdrop, China ploughed ahead with renminbi internationalization, widening the range of domestic assets that foreign investors can buy and sell.

First, there is China's stock market. Announced last August 6 and launched within four months, the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Stock Connect allows international investors to trade the shares of smaller, more entrepreneurial companies, whose growth is a critical component of China's economic reform. Via Hong Kong, investors around the world now have direct access to most of the listed companies that are traded on the mainland - an opportunity that was unavailable only three years ago.

**Bond market**

Then, there is China's bond market. Last month 8 China announced the establishment of Bond Connect, a trading link that will connect China's bond market with the world. The formal launch of this latest breakthrough in the development of China's bond market looks certain to be the next milestone in the opening-up of China's capital markets.

China's rapidly expanding bond market is the world's third-largest, but foreign participation has been limited: international investors own less than 2 percent of China's government bond market, compared to 10 percent in Japan, over 25 percent in the UK, and nearly 50 percent in the US. The gradual opening-up of China's bond market will offer abundant opportunities to issuers, investors, and all the intermediaries in between.

The three Connect schemes - Bond Connect, Shenzhen Connect, and the Shanghai Connect that launched in 2014 - not only made the inclusion of mainland Chinese bonds and stocks in global indices a reality. (On 20 June 2017, MSCI announced that it would include A shares in its Emerging Markets Index.) They also serve as testimony that renminbi internationalization is a medium-to-long-term strategy, a view that was most recently reiterated by the People's Bank of China in March. Despite the decrease in the cross-border use of the renminbi in 2016, the fact remains that China is committed to implementing foreign-exchange and financial reforms; opening up China's economy and financial markets; and promoting the renminbi as an international currency. The offshore renminbi market may be facing short-term challenges - trade settlement has slowed down and deposits have shrunk - but it remains strategically important. Launching cross-border investment schemes such as Bond Connect will improve the breadth, depth and health of the offshore renminbi market, at the same time providing renewed momentum to renminbi internationalization.

Another catalyst comes in the form of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). An underlying force behind renminbi internationalisation has been China's growing trade - and its settlement in renminbi. Considering that China's trade with Belt-and-Road countries outperformed its overall trade in 2016, 12 BRI, by improving intra- and inter-regional connectivity, will in the long run boost trade along the Belt and Road as well as the use of the renminbi as a trade currency.

More importantly, BRI will increase the use of the renminbi for financing. Spurred on by the government, Chinese companies are actively participating in BRI projects. By operating in countries that are hosting BRI projects, these companies with their renminbi-denominated balance sheets will increase the local pools of renminbi liquidity. Because the countries that are hosting BRI projects consistently face liquidity shortages in all currencies - and because multilateral financial institutions may not be able to provide sufficient funding - renminbi has a competitive advantage as a financing currency. Therefore, by increasing the pool of offshore renminbi liquidity as well as the demand for renminbi-denominated bond issuance, the Chinese currency will become more appealing as a store of value. Furthermore, BRI-related infrastructure construction projects will increase the demand for renminbi hedging. Combined with the opening-up of China's onshore bond market, the cross-border use of the renminbi will increase.

Renminbi internationalization may have slowed in the past year, but China has continued to open up its capital markets. Furthermore, over time the Belt and Road Initiative will increase the use of the renminbi both as a trade and financing currency. Renminbi internationalization is regaining momentum.

**Note:** Helen Wong is Chief Executive, Greater China, The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited

## WARBA BANK POSTS A NET PROFIT OF KD 2.523 MILLION IN H1 2017

NET PROFITS INCREASED BY 455%, REVENUES REACHED KD 26.311 MILLION

**KUWAIT:** By the grace of Allah, Warba Bank, Kuwait's best investment bank and corporate consultancy institution, has announced that it has achieved remarkable financial results for the first half of 2017, reflected by its net profits which increased by 455 percent so as to reach KD 2.523 million compared to KD 0.455 million for the same period of the previous year. The increase in the bank's total revenues was driven by strong performance of all business units. Its overall revenues reached KD 26.311 million with an increase of 57 percent compared to the first half of 2016. Moreover, its operating revenues increased by 66 percent and amounted to KD 16.815 million at the end of the first half of 2017 compared to KD 10.109 million for the same period of 2016.

The total assets of the Bank increased due to its strategy of expansion in the local and regional markets and investments in high quality and low-risk assets with a value of KD 1.498 billion. Its financing portfolio witnessed a remarkable growth as it became KD 1.132 billion with an increase of 68 percent over the first half of 2016. As a result of the quality of the financing portfolio, the Bank's faltering funding Non-performing facilities is 0.56 percent - a percentage that is considered to be one of the lowest ratios in the domestic banking sector. The Bank's coverage ratio of provisions for funding faltering Non-performing facilities was 288 percent at the end of the first half of the year. Commenting on the Bank's results for the first half of 2017, its Chairman of the Board, Abdulwahab Abdullah Al-Houti said, "Thanks to Allah's Guidance, in the first half of 2017, Warba Bank achieved outstanding results and laid the foundation stone for the Bank's drive to establish itself as a leader in Islamic corporate and investment banking services in Kuwait, as well as providing advanced digital services to individuals.

Since the beginning of the year, the Bank has also expanded its investment base in promising emerging regional and international markets, enhancing its investment portfolio. That has provided a basis for investors' confidence in its performance.

Al-Houti affirmed that Warba Bank continues to innovate services and products that establish a developed era in the Islamic banking sector and also increases the spread of its branches in line with the ambition and requirements of its customers. He pointed out that the Warba Bank is expanding its investment plans internationally, especially following its achievements in the first half in this respect. The Bank is currently studying investment opportunities in Kuwait and abroad which, Al-Houti assures, will enhance the Bank's investment portfolio and provide profitable returns to investors. Al-Houti also pointed out that all indicators



Abdulwahab Abdullah Al-Houti

promise high-quality performance of the Bank at all levels and departments.

Warba Bank's CEO, Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, said that the Bank has made pioneering achievements in the finance and investment sector in the first half of 2017 in Kuwait and regional and international markets, confirming its position as an Islamic bank that offers regular and rewarding investment opportunities for investors. Al-Ghanem pointed out that this development follows the terms of its strategy to create unique investment opportunities for customers and to create exclusive financing solutions. It also aims to support the corporate and investment sector.

**Steady growth**

Al-Ghanem also said that the first half of 2017 witnessed the Bank's achievements in creating investment opportunities that provide viable and regular returns to investors. The first achievement was its peerless success in marketing its Sukuk issued at the beginning of the year with a value of \$250 million, and could cover the subscription 5 times more than the issued Sukuk in the amount of \$1.3 billion. Therefore, its Sukuk were listed on both NASDAQ Dubai and the Irish Stock Exchange.

The Bank also had a successful participation in arranging the issuance of \$400 million Sukuk by the Dubai-based, real estate development company Meraas Holding Company. Warba Bank participated in the deal with \$50 million.

In the same context, the Bank participated in a sharia-compliant, joint, multi-currency, financial deal of \$236 million for the Ziraat Participation Bank of Turkey. In partnership with a range of other banks, Warba Bank acted as the Lead Arranger and Subscription Manager of the deal.

In addition, the bank has entered into a real estate investment partnership with Bentall Kennedy company of the USA, one of the world's largest real estate consultancy firms, under which the latter acts as a delegated real estate adviser and a partner investor in the bank's commercial real estate property investments in the United States. The most important outcome of that new partnership is Warba bank's acquisition of the headquarters of Manpower Group, which is a 280,000-sqm office building in Milwaukee city, State of Wisconsin.

In addition, in the first half of 2017, Warba Bank acquired of a modern vehicle import and export establishment in the UK for GBP 9 million. The said establishment is



Shaheen Al-Ghanem

rented by KIA Motors under an irrevocable, long-term lease ending in 2037. Moreover, Warba Bank has signed a renewable agreement with Al-Mulla International Finance Company (AMIFC) whereby the Bank will increase the amount of acquiring financing portfolios from AMIFC so as to reach KD 50 million.

**A pioneering institution**

As a result of the rapid development witnessed by the digital structure of the Bank, it enhanced its website www.WarbaBank.com making it more interactive, user-friendly. This makes the website the first destination for customers and helps them to complete their transactions online extremely easily.

Al-Ghanem also pointed out that the services available on the website fall under the name of 'Express', including:

- 'Fatoura Express', which allows the customer to pay their mobile phone bills on a certain date and in a certain amount they set in advance.

- Customers can open an Express Account in five minutes only.

- Moreover, the Bank provides an Express service for making quick payments.

- The Bank also provides 'Al-Mustafeed Express' service, which allows the customer to add a Warba Bank beneficiary by entering their mobile number through Warba Online or by using Warba App for smartphones.

- Customers can also open online accounts such as Al-Sunbullah Account and deposits.

- Among the Bank's online services are Express Update and Express Chat.

Moreover, 'Cheques Express' service enables the customer to request a cheque book and choose the branch that they want to get it from.

- 'Express Share' service allows customers to send a transfer request to anyone to enable them to send a transfer request to anyone to enable them to pay using a link sent to their cell phone through an SMS.

- 'Eidiyah Express' service allows customers to request and receive their Eidiyah [Money Treat in Feasts] from any branch of their choice.

- To achieve more digital advances, the Bank has recently launched a WhatsApp mobile service to enable customers to communicate directly with the Bank employees, as well as Apple Watch service which enables customers to follow up digital banking through digital watches.

**Marketing Campaigns**

Al-Ghanem added that the Bank has recently launched the Visa Signature Credit Card within the Bank's strategy to provide customized banking solutions that offer exceptional, and exclusive benefits and rewards. In addition, the Bank launched a marketing campaign for its Al-Safwa Customers holding its Credit Card under the title: Jeep Cheap! The campaign offers Al-Safwa customers a package of features that culminates in entering a draw where they can win a Toyota Land Cruiser. The Bank also continues its salary transfer campaign launched earlier this year, which is in line with its strategy to provide an integrated system of Islamic products that meet its customers' expectations. It has also enhanced Al-Sunbullah Account by increasing the number of monthly winners to 13 offering prizes up to KD 30,000.

**Ramadan campaign inspires society**

As part of the Warba Bank's social activity during the first half of this year, Al-Ghanem stressed that the Bank's social responsibility campaign during the holy month of Ramadan has generated positive reactions among the Kuwaiti society community and a great deal of interaction from the entire community. Based on the slogan "How wonderful man is!", the campaign included many direct events in the Bank's booth at the 360 Mall. It featured influential figures who have overcome hardships to make achievements and succeeded in spreading inspiration among the young people in Kuwait. The campaign also included a TV ad of the Bank based on the same principle. The ad was a hit on websites. Furthermore, the Bank has exerted efforts to spread inspiration and to support young people through social media channels through video recordings of Kuwaiti innovators and creative minds who struggled to reach their goals.

**Quality awards**

Warba Bank's efforts in corporate and investment sector embodied by introducing innovative Islamic banking solutions were rewarded by winning two prestigious awards from Banker Middle East magazine: "Best Corporate Bank in Kuwait" and "Best Investment Bank in Kuwait" for 2017.

These awards are the result of the Bank's pursuit of a development strategy in the corporate and investment sectors and a result of its recent achievements in this regard.

Al-Ghanem concluded: "The first half of this year witnessed a growing development in Warba Bank's performance at various levels, especially in the investment and banking solutions sector. We promise that this achievement will have been doubled by the end of the year thanks to the confidence our investors put in us and our team's restless efforts to do their best to bring the Bank to the forefront."

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BIGGER EARNINGS FOR STOCK FUNDS

**NEW YORK:** This earnings season is off to a good start, and the encouraging run is expected to keep going. Instead of excitement, though, the reaction so far from Wall Street has been more like quiet relief, and funds that track the broad stock market have only edged higher since earnings reports began arriving in earnest last week. That's because the strong reports that are forecast would be more a justification for the big moves that stock prices have already made rather than reason for further gains.

Stock prices have risen more quickly than earnings in recent years, and the two tend to track with each other over the long term. Stocks even rose when profits were shrinking from mid-2015

into 2016, which has the market at more expensive levels relative to corporate profits.

Stock prices for companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 index are trading at close to 21 times their earnings per share over the last 12 months, for example. That's well above their average price-earnings ratio of 15.5 over the last 10 years, a period that includes both the Great Recession and the long run-up for stocks following it.

Of course, interest rates are still low, and investors are willing to pay a higher price for each dollar of earnings in stocks when bonds are offering small yields. But rates are expected to continue climbing modestly, as the Federal Reserve raises short-term interest rates and begins paring back its mas-

sive trove of bond investments. So, depending on how high interest rates climb and other factors, corporate earnings may need to keep rising just to keep stock prices where they are today. This reporting season, analysts are expecting S&P 500 companies to report a roughly 6 percent rise in earnings per share from a year earlier. That would be less than half the growth rate of the first three months of the year, but the slowdown is understandable given that the first quarter's growth rate was the fastest since 2011. Among the trends to watch for as companies report how they did from April through June:

**GLOBALISTS GLITTER**

Coming into this year, many expected President Donald



NEW YORK: Specialist Mario Picone works at his post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.—AP

Trump's "America First" policies to mean companies that do most of their business at home would be the biggest winners.

But the companies that get most of their sales from abroad may end up this earnings season's stars, now that Europe and devel-

oping economies around the world are showing more life after years of disappointment. Those economic upturns, coupled with a weakening dollar, spell stronger results for companies that sell a lot to customers in Asia, Europe and elsewhere.—AP

SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %
OIL & GAS	6,912,523	1.59%	342,511	0.47%
BASIC MATERIALS	2,686,298	0.62%	955,692	1.32%
INDUSTRIALS	18,679,698	4.29%	11,307,179	15.66%
CONSUMER GOODS	1,951,841	0.45%	975,970	1.35%
HEALTH CARE	33,887	0.01%	6,688	0.0093%
CONSUMER SERVICES	3,110,413	0.71%	931,551	1.29%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	17,368,658	3.99%	5,557,682	7.70%
BANKS	91,284,710	20.98%	27,839,994	38.56%
INSURANCE	503,579	0.12%	28,599	0.04%
REAL ESTATE	108,138,458	24.86%	7,974,610	11.05%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	183,442,047	42.16%	16,153,005	22.37%
TECHNOLOGY	963,090	0.22%	123,064	0.17%

SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE				
Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	1,009.07	1,036.75	-2.67%	29.26%
BASIC MATERIALS	1,239.18	1,236.07	0.25%	23.32%
INDUSTRIALS	1,894.60	1,909.36	-0.77%	40.96%
CONSUMER GOODS	1,073.22	1,085.89	-1.17%	-4.61%
HEALTH CARE	1,499.39	1,722.50	-12.95%	20.49%
CONSUMER SERVICES	1,042.72	1,042.61	0.01%	12.78%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	598.67	598.27	0.07%	-5.89%
BANKS	923.89	920.37	0.38%	10.35%
INSURANCE	1,005.53	1,010.17	-0.46%	1.13%
REAL ESTATE	955.82	945.06	1.14%	9.84%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	687.91	678.79	1.34%	15.22%
TECHNOLOGY	696.44	665.58	4.64%	14.71%

# BOURSA KUWAIT MIXED AMID PROFIT-BOOKING

## BAYAN INVESTMENT WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

**KUWAIT:** Boursa Kuwait ended last week on a mixed board. The Price Index closed at 6,781.02 points, down by 0.11 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index increased by 0.76 percent after closing at 407.70 points, whereas the KXS-15 Index closed at 931.35 points up by 0.98 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover increased by 21.01 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 14.44 million, whereas trading volume average was 87.02 million shares, recording an increase of 11.87 percent.

The three Boursa indices closed the week mixed compared to the previous week's closing, whereas the Weighted and KXS-15 indices were able to realize gains for the second consecutive week, supported by the continued purchasing and collection operations executed on the leading and operational stocks, especially in the Banks sector, while the Price Index went against the current and ended the week's trading in the red zone affected by the active speculations and the profit collection operations executed on the small-cap stocks, especially after the increases it realized during the previous period.

The market witnessed such fluctuation

amid a continued control of watch and cautious state over many traders, waiting for the listed companies disclosures of its financial results for the first half of the current year, especially that more than half of the legal period given for the listed companies to disclose its fiscal results have passed, which will end by the mid of the next month.

Moreover, the market capitalization for Boursa Kuwait reached by the end of last week around KD 26.96 billion, up by 0.91 percent compared to its level in a week earlier, where it was KD 26.72 billion. On an annual level, the market cap gains for the listed companies in the official market reached 6.12 percent compared to its value at end of year 2016, where it reached then KD 25.41 billion.

As far as the daily trading activity; the Boursa ended the first session of the week with a grouped increase for its three indices, as it was able to do so in light of the increased purchasing operations executed on many listed stocks in the market headed by the leading and operational, in addition to the quick speculation that the operations took as a type, and were executed on the small-cap stocks in particu-

lar, executed on the stocks being traded below its par value. The market performance during the beginning of week session came amid a relatively stable cash liquidity levels, whereas the value increased by 1 percent only, after it reached by the end of the session KD 9.15 million. The market witnessed in the second session a fluctuation in the three indices' closings, whereas the Price and Weighted indices ended the session in the red zone due to the profit collection operations executed on the small-cap stocks, while the KXS-15 Index was able to realize some gain affected by the continuous collection operations that targeted some leading stocks. Such fluctuation came amid a noticeable growth in the trading activity during the session on both levels, the volume or the cash liquidity, as the number of stocks being traded during the session increased by 54 percent, and the trading value grew by 62 percent.

On the mid-week session, the three market indices were able to return once again to close in the green zone, supported by the active trading and the collection operations that targeted many listed stocks headed by the leading stocks in the Banks sector, especially after it disclosed its half year financial results for the period ended on 30 June 2017, and were within the positive range.

On Wednesday's session, the three market indices diverted its direction downward to end the session in the red zone, as a result to the profit collection operations executed by the traders on many listed stocks of different sectors, which came due to the noticeable increases realized by the stocks in the previous sessions to make the profit collection operations a common sense action to rebuild new positions for the stocks. On the last session of the week, the market indices returned to fluctuate, as the Price Index continued in declining and losing points affected by the profit collection operations executed on some small-cap stocks to end the session losing all its gains realized since the beginning of the week, while the Weighted and KXS-15 indices were able to record growth, supported by the return of the purchasing operations on the leading stocks, enhancing by such its weekly gains.

For the annual performance, the Price Index ended last week recording 17.97 percent annual gain compared to its closing in 2016, while the Weighted Index increased by 7.26 percent, and the KXS-15 recorded 5.23 percent growth.

### Sectors' indices

Seven of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the green zone, while the other five recorded decreases. Last week's

highest gainer was the Technology sector, achieving 4.64 percent growth rate as its index closed at 696.44 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Financial Services sector's index closed at 687.91 points recording 1.34 percent increase. The Real Estate sector came in third as its index achieved 1.14 percent growth, ending the week at 955.82 points.

On the other hand, The Health Care sector headed the losers list as its index declined 12.95 percent to end the week's activity at 1,499.39 points. The Oil & Gas sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 2.67 percent, closing 1,009.07 points, followed by the Consumer Goods sector, as its index closed at 1,073.22 points at a loss of 1.17 percent. The Insurance sector was the least declining as its index closed at 1,005.53 points with a 0.46 percent decrease.

### Sectors' activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 183.44 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 42.16 percent of the total market trading volume. The Real Estate sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 24.86 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 108.14 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 27.84 million or 38.56 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Financial Services sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 16.15 million representing 22.37 percent of the total market trading value.

—Prepared by: Studies & Research Department - Bayan Investment Co.

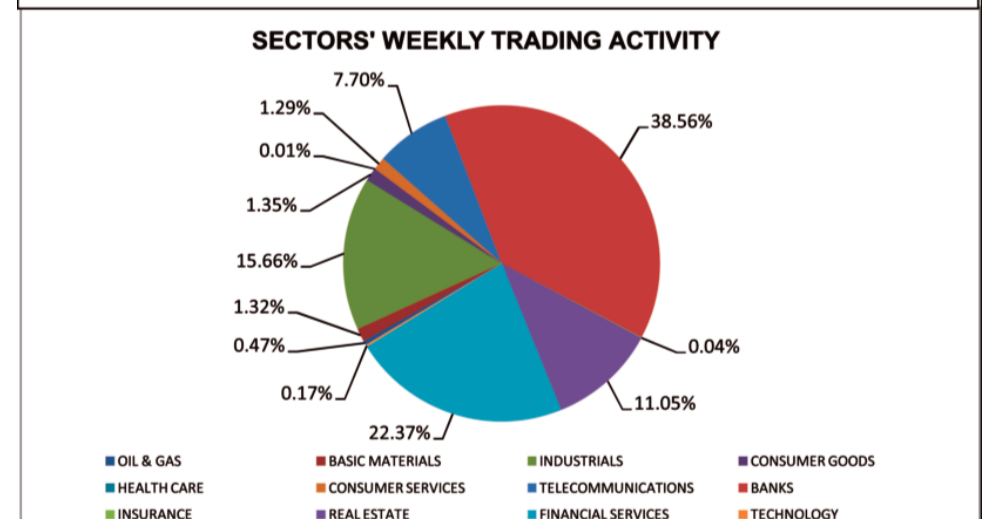
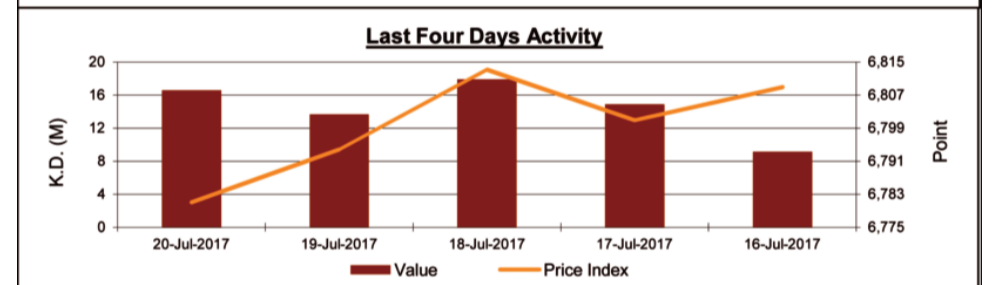
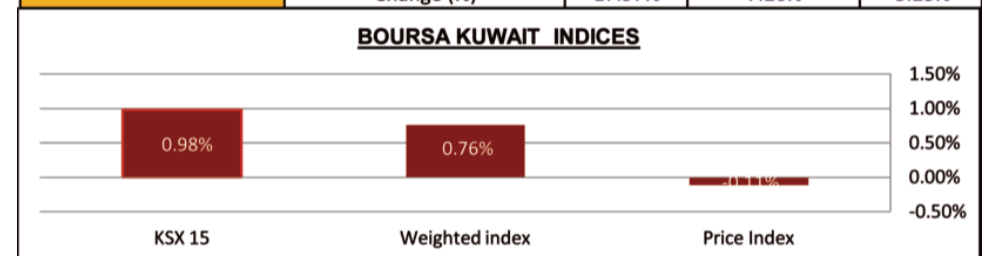
MARKET ACTIVITY			
	Last Week	Previous Week	Ch. %
Volume	435,075,202	388,924,169	11.87%
Value (K.D)	72,196,545	59,663,605	21.01%
Deals	15,862	15,176	4.52%

MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.)			
Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
26,961,602,931	26,717,153,467	0.91%	6.12%

TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
MRC	120.00	92.00	28.0	30.43%
ALMAL	17.80	15.00	2.8	18.67%
NIH	69.70	60.00	9.7	16.17%
SANAM	46.00	40.00	6.0	15.00%
AGHC	86.00	76.00	10.0	13.16%

TOP LOSERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
MHC	400.00	495.00	-95.0	-19.19%
NCCI	98.00	119.00	-21.0	-17.65%
AJWAN	69.90	80.00	-10.1	-12.63%
SCEM	76.00	84.00	-8.0	-9.52%
YIACO	164.00	181.00	-17.0	-9.39%

BOURSA KUWAIT INDICES				
	Price Index	Weighted index	KXS 15	
Weekly	Last week	6,781.02	407.70	931.35
	Previous week	6,788.48	404.62	922.29
	Change (Point)	-7.46	3.08	9.06
Annual	Last year	5,748.09	380.09	885.02
	Change (Point)	1,032.93	27.61	46.33
	Change (%)	17.97%	7.26%	5.23%



# US STOCKS DIP WITH ENERGY PRICES; EUROPEAN STOCKS SINK

## GLOBAL MARKETS WEEKLY ROUNDUP

**NEW YORK:** US stocks finished barely lower Friday as energy companies fell with oil prices and a 10-day rally for technology companies came to an end. But Wall Street mostly avoided the sharp losses that hit European stocks. The price of US crude oil fell 2.5 percent and pulled energy stocks lower. Technology companies slipped, ending their longest winning streak in more than two years.

Investors bought government bonds in the US and Europe, which sent prices higher and yields lower. With yields down, investors who wanted income bought shares in companies that pay big dividends, such as utilities and household goods makers. European stocks took sharp losses after Reuters reported that the European Central Bank will consider paring back its stimulus programs in late October. Indexes in France, Germany and Italy all fell, and so did the blue chip Euro Stoxx 50 index.

"Europe is the economy that makes people the most nervous," said JJ Kinahan, chief market strategist at TD Ameritrade. "It's one that is still being treated with caution."

The Standard & Poor's 500 index shipped 0.91 of a point to 2,472.54. The

Dow Jones industrial average dipped 31.71 points, or 0.1 percent, to 21,580.07. Earlier it shed as many as 108 points. The Nasdaq composite lost 2.25 points to 6,387.75. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks sank 6.52 points, or 0.5 percent, to 1,435.84. Still, all four indexes remain near record highs.

General Electric skidded after it disappointed investors by saying it expects to reach only the low end of its annual profit forecast range. GE said its power unit struggled in the second quarter and low oil prices are also hurting its business.

The stock fell 78 cents, or 2.9 percent, to \$25.91. It's down 18 percent this year. Also falling was oilfield services company Baker Hughes, which is combined with GE's oil and gas unit this month and is now mostly owned by GE. It shed 85 cents, or 2.4 percent, to \$34.12.

Baker Hughes was one of a horde of energy companies that fell with oil prices. Benchmark US crude lost \$1.15 to \$45.77 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, the standard for international oil prices, shed \$1.24, or 2.5 percent, to \$48.06 a barrel in London. Over the last few weeks investors have focused what

the European Central Bank will do as the European economy continues to improve. Kinahan, of TD Ameritrade, added that the central bank also hasn't done much to address the way the euro has risen over that time.

"The ECB didn't take an aggressive stand on the currency move that's

already happened," he said. He added that has left some investors thinking the euro will get even stronger, which would make European goods more expensive in other markets and affect the earnings and sales of companies based in the EU.

On Friday the euro rose to \$1.1677



**NEW YORK:** A Wall Street street sign outside the New York Stock Exchange. —AP

from \$1.1626. It hasn't been this strong compared to the dollar since the beginning of 2015. The German DAX lost 1.7 percent and France's CAC 40 shed 1.6 percent. The FTSE 100 in Britain shed 0.5 percent.

European bond prices jumped and yields tumbled. Investors also bought US government bonds, which sent prices higher. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note fell to 2.24 percent from 2.26 percent. Software giant Microsoft's fourth-quarter profit and sales surpassed Wall Street estimates as the company posted another round of strong results from its cloud computing business. However, its stock dipped 43 cents to \$73.79.

Also falling was chipmaker Texas Instruments, which lost 99 cents, or 1.2 percent, to \$81.70. E-commerce company eBay fell 57 cents, or 1.2 percent, to \$36.61. Payment processor Visa added \$1.49, or 1.5 percent, to \$99.60 after its latest report showed its purchase of Visa Europe a year ago is strengthening its business. Still, a 10-day run for the Nasdaq and technology companies came to an end. The S&P 500 technology index climbed more than 6 percent over

that time and reached record highs. The rally was assisted by the weakening dollar, which helps sales and earnings overseas. Investors also bet that technology companies would have another round of strong quarterly earnings.

Elsewhere, financial companies did relatively well after some solid quarterly reports. Credit card issuer Capital One Financial leaped \$6.93, or 8.6 percent, to \$87.94 after it beat Wall Street estimates in the second quarter. E-Trade Financial gained \$2.03, or 5.1 percent, to \$41.63 and Moody's added \$5.40, or 4.2 percent, to \$132.57.

In other energy trading, wholesale gasoline fell 4 cents to \$1.56 a gallon. Heating oil lost 3 cents to \$1.52 a gallon. Natural gas slid 7 cents to \$2.97 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Gold added \$9.40 to \$1,254.90 an ounce. Silver rose 11 cents to \$16.46 an ounce. Copper picked up 1 cent to \$2.72 a pound. The dollar slid to 111.04 yen from 111.99 yen.

In Asia, the Nikkei 225 of Japan slipped 0.2 percent and South Korea's Kospi rose 0.3 percent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng inched down less than 0.1 percent. —AP



## KFH ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-RABEH 5TH DRAW

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of two HSE 2017 Range Rover's and 3 KG of Gold biscuits of 24 carat with purity of 999.9 in the 5th draw that took place at KFH headquarters under the supervision of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The winners are: Mohammad Sulaiman Aldousary- 2017 HSE Range Rover, Latifa Khaled Mudwa- 2017 HSE Range Rover Silver color, and Ahmad Abdullah Alawaisy- 3 KG of Gold.

Al-Rabeh salary account is an investment savings account based on Mudaraba sharia principle that gives clients annual profit distributions. Clients can open this account at any of KFH 65 branches around Kuwait. It is noteworthy that the account is offered for clients wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts with the ability to save and invest. Al-Rabeh account is available for individuals in KD and it requires salary transfer as a prerequisite.

With regards to the prizes campaign terms and conditions, customers will have a chance to win remarkable prizes every three months along the year from KFH once they transfer their salary to "AlRabeh" account. KFH gives away two Range Rover's 2017 HSE for the first two winners and a 3KG of Gold biscuits of 24 carat with purity of 999.9 for the third winner in draws to be held in the months of January, April, July, and October, providing that clients should have deposited 3 salaries in the three months prior to the draw, yet their minimum monthly balance is not less than KD 50 by the end of each month, bearing in

mind that each KD 50 in the account entitles clients to one entry in the draw, thus more money in an account means more chances to win.

KFH is keen on improving its banking products and services in line with clients' requirement in efforts to achieve customer satisfaction and cater more closely for their needs. It endeavors to offer unique advantages and valuable prizes stemming from its continuing endeavors to offer outstanding products and services that address clients' requirements and meet their aspirations, yet consolidate Bank's prestigious status and excellence in offering products as per the highest standards of quality.

KFH was established in Kuwait in 1977 and is enlisted in the Kuwait Stock Exchange. KFH Group is a global pioneer in the field of Islamic banking services, where it offers a wide array of Islamic products and services, not to mention a high standard of innovation and client service.

KFH manages its operations in the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 480 branches, including KFH-Turkey, in order to offer services for the bank's clients in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Germany, Jordan, and Dubai.

KFH's mission is to achieve highest levels of excellence and innovation in the field of client service, while developing common interest for all those concerned with the financial institution. KFH's vision is to spearhead the global development in Islamic financial services, and to upgrade the bank into the level of becoming the most sustainable profitable Islamic bank in the world.

# BURGAN BANK SIGNS DEAL TO FINANCE DUBAI CITYLAND MALL

\$94.24M RETAIL PROJECT TO BE DUBAI'S FLAGSHIP SHOPPING DESTINATION

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank is pleased to announce that it recently concluded a strategic deal committing to finance Dubai's Cityland Group's flagship retail project - Cityland Mall to the tune of \$94.24 million. The landmark transaction, enabled by a consortium of banks, will accommodate the ongoing project construction costs of the 2.2 million square feet mall complex and world-class family destination. The deal reflects Burgan Bank's ever growing presence in the region as it solidifies its position as a regional financial powerhouse.

The \$142.74 million iconic project includes The Central Park, Cityland Mall's open-air garden and a hallmark attraction that makes it distinctive in the region and across the globe. The extraordinary garden will provide a multi-sensory experience from the mini version of the famed Miracle Garden, a 300-year old ancient Japanese tree garden along with a 500-meter jogging track, a children's waterpark, a roof-top garden, an amphitheater and other aquatic attractions. Cityland mall, a project by a UAE-based conglomerate, will be the only major destination mall opening in 2018 in Dubai.

Raed Al-Haqhaq, Deputy Chief Executive Officer-Burgan Bank Kuwait, said: "We are delighted to be one of the main banks financing the world's first "nature-inspired" shopping destination. This new venture reflects Burgan Bank's foresight in capitalizing on growth opportunities as they emerge and our commitment to constantly reinvent ourselves to accommodate diverse market needs, while contributing to the transformation of our region for the betterment of our communities."

Also commenting on the deal, Raed Al-Haqhaq said: "As a prime financier and a growing regional player, we are confident that

Cityland Mall is an attractive investment. Indeed, 30 percent of the available retail space has already been booked by big regional and international brand names that will make it a great success. Burgan Bank is pleased to have taken this pivotal step cementing a landmark deal that will propel regional growth."

With 29 branches in Kuwait and 186 branches across the Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey, Burgan Bank is the second largest conventional bank by assets in Kuwait and a robust regional financial institution. Its credit ratings has been considered as one of the highest in the region by Standard & Poor's, Fitch ratings and Moody's.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial Bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENA region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region.

Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. 'People come first' is the foundation on which its products and services are developed. The bank was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2008, making it the first bank in the GCC, and



the only bank in Kuwait to receive such accreditation for the third consecutive year. The Bank also has to its credit the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase

Quality Recognition Award for twelve consecutive years.

Burgan Bank, a subsidiary of KIPCO (Kuwait Projects Company), is a strongly positioned regional Bank in the MENA region.

## GULF BANK TAKES CUSTOMERS THROUGH CARDS SUMMER CAMPAIGN TOMORROW

SHOW LIVE ON 88.8 FM 'RABAA AL-DIWANIYA'

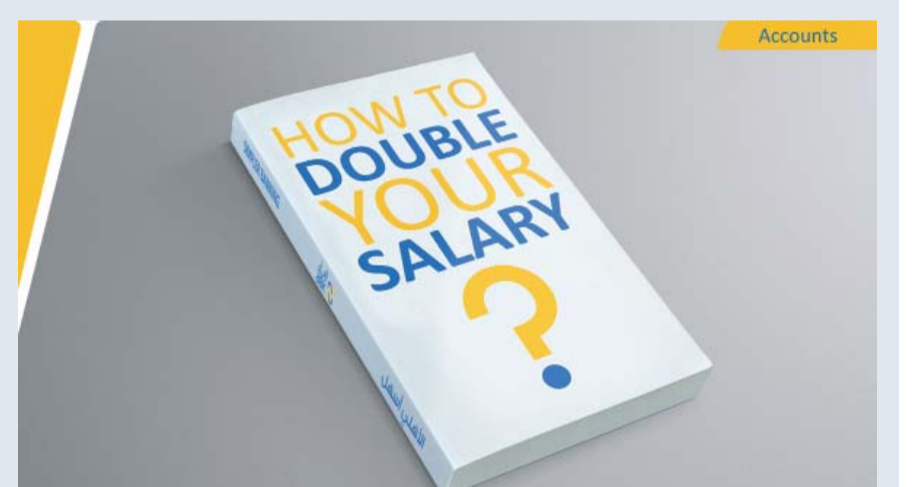
**KUWAIT:** Tomorrow, live on 88.8 FM 'Rabaa Al-Diwaniya', Gulf Bank's representatives will be taking customers through its summer campaign, which the bank has officially launched

on 15th May. Gulf Bank encourages customers to stay tuned, listen to the show and know more about the benefits of using their debit and credit cards locally and internationally dur-

ing this season.

Through Gulf Bank's summer campaign, credit and debit cardholders who use their cards locally and internationally will automatically be enrolled into a raffle draw for a chance to win one of Fifty (50) cash prizes. During the campaign period, customers will be getting one chance to enter the raffle draw for every KD 10 spent locally using their credit cards; while they will get three chances to enter the raffle draw for every KD 10 spent internationally using their Gulf Bank credit or debit cards.

The raffle draw is planned to take place on 28 September 2017, with 50 winners to be selected to receive the campaign's cash prizes. 47 winners will be receiving KD 1,000 each, one winner will be receiving KD 5,000, one winner will be receiving KD 10,000, and one lucky winner will take away the Grand Prize of KD 25,000. Gulf Bank is committed to providing its customers with best financial solutions, products and services, as well as the most exciting offers and promotions.



## ABK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 'DOUBLE YOUR SALARY' DRAWS

**KUWAIT:** Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its 61st 'Double Your Salary' weekly draw on 4th July, 2017 at the Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce, announcing the names of the winners. The promotion includes weekly draws, with two winners per draw. The campaign will run until 27th June, 2017.

**The winners are:**

- Hani Abdulhadi Ali Hajeyah, Sharq Branch
- Mahmoud Ibrahim Abbas Abu Hussain, Galleria Complex Branch

New customers who transfer their salary to ABK receive KD 100 and will automatically be entered into the weekly draws to double their salaries. Existing customers who are already transferring their salary to ABK are entered into a separate draw.

## AUB PROVIDES AN EXCITING RANGE OF FUN-FILLED SURPRISES AT THE AVENUES MALL

**KUWAIT:** Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced yesterday that it was present at The Avenues Mall from 10am to 10pm on the 20th-22nd July 2017. Through its "Al-Hassad" booth, AUB aimed to provide a range of fun-filled surprises and exciting games for everyone visiting the mall.

AUB aimed to launch an array of joyful surprises and activities through its Al-Hassad Islamic Savings Account promotion at The Avenues Mall. Visitors to the booth were invited to participate in two enjoyable and simple games, designed to elicit the most number of winners. First, if the participant guesses correctly the 4-digit code to unlock the iPhone, they instantly won a brand new iPhone 7. The second game was an exciting quiz based on the Al-Hassad Islamic Savings Account.

The Bank said in a press release, "This activity comes from the Bank's desire to reward its customers first, while raising awareness about the Al-Hassad Islamic Savings Account, which is considered the first reward program in Kuwait in line with Islamic sharia law. It offers annual cash prizes worth KD 3.4 million, which includes the grand quarterly prizes of KD



250,000, called the "Salary for Life", plus weekly prizes worth KD 50,000. Al-Hassad customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in these prize draws under our general terms and

conditions. We look forward to seeing many of our customers in The Avenues Mall and to meeting new, prospective customers over the two-day period."

## CHEVROLET ALGHANIM LAUNCHES UNBEATABLE OFFER ON THE LEGEND OF POWER: 2017 TAHOE

**KUWAIT:** Continuing its series of unbeatable offers launched throughout the year, Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons Automotive (Chevrolet Alghanim), the exclusive distributor of Chevrolet vehicles in Kuwait, returns in July with its strongest summer offer on the legend of power, the 2017 Chevrolet Tahoe.

The offer gives customers a cash gift of up to KD1,200, free three-year service contract, free window film and free paint protection when purchasing a Tahoe before the end of the month.

Known to empower drivers with an exhilarating performance, the Chevrolet Tahoe comes with the best in class standard features such as a 5.3L V8 engine with active fuel management, direct injection and variable valve timing, generating the strongest horsepower in its class of 355 HP. The Tahoe is also equipped with the Chevrolet MyLink 8-inch system with Apple CarPlay, six speakers, remote keyless entry, remote vehicle starter, head lamps projector type LED and tail lamps LED, fog lamps,

18" aluminum wheels, in addition to many advanced safety features that include the front corner assist system and rear with rear camera.

**Chevrolet Care Program "1 Care"**

All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Yusuf A. Alghanim & Sons benefit of the Chevrolet Care Program, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust. The Chevrolet Care is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yrs/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance for 4 years.

Customers can take advantage of the limited summer offer to own the car of their dreams by visiting any of Chevrolet Alghanim showrooms at the following locations: Shuwaikh, Al Rai (Safat Alghanim), Sharq, Fahaheel and Ahmadi.

## NC GOVERNOR ON TRUMP DRILLING PLAN: 'NOT OFF OUR COAST'

**ATLANTIC BEACH, NC:** Under pressure from US President Donald Trump, North Carolina's governor announced his opposition to drilling for natural gas and oil off the Atlantic coast, saying it poses too much of a threat to the state's beaches and tourism economy.

Up against a Friday deadline for comment from elected officials on the Trump administration's request for companies to perform seismic testing under Atlantic waters, Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper held a news conference at a coastal state park to

announce he'll be registering the state's opposition. "There is a threat looming over this coastline that we love and the prosperity it brings, and that's the threat of offshore drilling," Cooper said at the Fort Macon State Park in Carteret County, where he said he visited as a child and as a parent.

"As governor, I'm here to speak out and take action against it. I can sum it up in four words: 'not off our coast.'" State Republican leaders, including former Gov. Pat McCrory, have pressed for exploration both offshore and inland through hydraulic

fracturing. GOP legislators have passed laws laying the groundwork for collecting royalties from any oil and gas mined below the ocean surface.

In April, Trump signed an executive order to expand oil drilling in the Arctic and Atlantic oceans, reversing restrictions imposed by President Barack Obama, and the Interior Department is rewriting a five-year drilling plan. A federal agency is now seeking permits for five businesses to use seismic air guns to find oil and gas formations deep under the Atlantic, despite the harm environmentalists say

this technology does to marine mammals. Maryland GOP Gov. Larry Hogan also announced his opposition this month.

Cooper, who took office in January, said an oil spill could be catastrophic to commercial fishermen and the tourism industry, which provides more than \$3 billion in spending and 30,000 jobs in coastal counties. North Carolina Petroleum Council Executive Director David McGowan said offshore energy could bring thousands of new jobs and more local revenues. The governor disagreed. — AP

# IS A FACEBOOK SMARTPHONE IN THE WORKS

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Facebook could be working on a smartphone, according to paperwork recently spotted by cyber sleuths which the tech giant filed earlier this year. A Facebook unit devoted to hardware filed a patent application in January for a mysterious "modular electromechanical device" that could have speakers, cameras, microphones, touchscreens, and displays.

"A user can change the functionality of the modular electromechanical device based upon the different functional modules that are connected," read

the summary portion of the somewhat cryptic paperwork filed with US patent officials.

Speculation has swirled for years regarding whether the leading social network would try to capitalize on its popularity with its own smartphone. Facebook has repeatedly dismissed such talk as rumor, and declined to comment for this story. Facebook has a hardware team led by Regina Dugan, a former director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency — DARPA — the US agency tasked with identifying and funding break-

through technologies for national security.

Dugan previously headed advanced technology projects at Google, which dabbled with modular phones in a project call Ara. Google tested Ara but gave up on the project late last year.

Facebook in April launched a mission to sync smartphone cameras' windows with augmented reality, focusing on what people have in hand instead of waiting for high tech eyewear.

While kicking off an annual developers conference in the heart of Silicon Valley, chief executive

Mark Zuckerberg called smartphone cameras an initial and promising platform for augmented-reality features in applications tailored to synch with the social network. "I am confident now we are going to push this augmented-reality platform forward," Zuckerberg said. "We are going to make the camera the first mainstream augmented-reality platform." Previously, Facebook had been focused strongly on virtual reality as the next big computing platform, particularly using Rift headgear made by its Oculus unit. —AFP

# CHINA ANNOUNCES GOAL OF AI LEADERSHIP BY 2030

## CHINESE TECH FIRMS TO GET A SHOT IN THEIR ARMS

**BEIJING:** China's government has announced a goal of becoming a global leader in artificial intelligence in just over a decade, putting political muscle behind growing investment by Chinese companies in developing self-driving cars and other advances.

Communist leaders see AI as key to making China an "economic power," said a Cabinet statement on Thursday. It calls for developing skills and research and educational resources to achieve "major breakthroughs" by 2025 and make China a world leader by 2030. Artificial intelligence is one of the emerging fields along with renewable energy, robotics and electric

cars where communist leaders hope to take an early lead and help transform China from a nation of factory workers and farmers into a technology pioneer.

They have issued a series of development plans over the past decade, some of which have prompted complaints Beijing improperly subsidizes its technology developers and shields them from competition in violation of its free-trade commitments.

Already, Chinese companies including Tencent Ltd., Baidu Inc. and Alibaba Group are spending heavily to develop artificial intelligence for consumer finance, e-commerce, self-

driving cars and other applications. Manufacturers also are installing robots and other automation to cope with rising labor costs and improve efficiency.

Thursday's statement gives no details of financial commitments or legal changes. But previous initiatives to develop Chinese capabilities in solar power and other technologies have included research grants and regulations to encourage sales and exports.

"By 2030, our country will reach a world leading level in artificial intelligence theory, technology and application and become a principal world center for artificial intelligence innovation," the statement said. That will help to make China "in the forefront of innovative countries and an economic power," it said.

The announcement follows a sweeping plan issued in 2015, dubbed "Made in China 2025," that calls for this country to supply its own high-tech components and materials in 10 industries from information technology and aerospace to pharmaceuticals.

That prompted complaints Beijing might block access to promising industries to support its fledgling suppliers. The Chinese industry minister defended the plan in March, saying all competitors would be treated equally. He rejected complaints that foreign companies might be required to hand over technology in exchange for market access.

China has had mixed success with previous strategic plans to develop technology industries including renewable energy and electric cars. Beijing announced plans in 2009 to become a leader in electric cars with annual sales of 5 million by 2020. With the help of generous subsidies, China passed the United States last year as the biggest market, but sales totaled just over 300,000. —AP



**BEIJING:** Chinese students work on the Ares, a humanoid bipedal robot designed by them with fundings from a Shanghai investment company, displayed during the World Robot Conference in Beijing. —AP

## LYFT FORMS OWN AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE UNIT, TO OPEN NETWORK

**DETROIT:** Lyft said Friday that it is setting up its own unit to develop autonomous vehicle technology, but its approach will be different from other companies and partnerships working on self-driving cars.

The San Francisco-based ride-hailing service said it will open its network, inviting automakers and tech companies to use it to haul passengers in their self-driving vehicles and gather data. It may even share computer software and sensor technology. Raj Kapoor, the company's chief strategy officer, says Lyft is pursuing the open strategy as a way to bring the environmental and safety benefits of autonomous vehicles to market faster. Lyft brings network expertise to the table, he said.

"We believe this is inevitable where the world is going," he said. "We need to be playing this role."

Like other tech companies and automakers, Lyft has partnerships with companies like Google's Waymo autonomous vehicle operation and with General Motors. It does not

want to produce cars, but wants to make a standardized system for use on its network. At first, the network will be open to Lyft's current partners. Just how it would make money off the system is yet to be determined, but it likely would take a cut of passenger fares from everyone who uses its network or



**SEATTLE:** In this March 31, 2016, a Lyft ride-hailing service logo is displayed on a vehicle at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport in Seattle. —AP

shares its system. For example, General Motors, which has invested \$500 million in Lyft, would be invited to run its own autonomous vehicles on Lyft's network. Data gathered by GM and vehicles from other companies would be used to help build high-definition maps that are needed for the vehicles to navigate streets across the world. The data also would be used to develop computers that would make decisions to run the autonomous vehicles.

Lyft is calling its unit "Level Five," the industry term for fully-autonomous vehicles. It expects to have several hundred employees working on the vehicles in Palo Alto, California, by the end of 2018.

The company, which carries passengers in 350 cities worldwide, says even when autonomous vehicles are in operation, it will still have humans in the driver's seat. In many places, detailed maps won't be available to guide the autonomous vehicles, so humans will still be needed. —AP

# COPS WAGE PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE AGAINST ONLINE DRUG BAZAARS

**HOUSTON:** In an innovative blow to illicit internet commerce, cyberpolice shut down the world's leading "darknet" marketplace - then quietly seized a second bazaar to amass intelligence on illicit drug merchants and buyers.

AlphaBay, formerly the internet's largest darknet site, had already gone offline July 5 with the arrest in Thailand of its alleged creator and administrator. But on Thursday, European law enforcement revealed that Dutch cyberpolice had for a month been running Hansa Market. Like AlphaBay, Hansa operated in the darknet, an anonymity-friendly internet netherworld inaccessible to standard browsers. AlphaBay's users had flocked to Hansa, which is largely based in the Netherlands. The announcements Thursday on both sides of the Atlantic sowed panic among the sites' tech-savvy buyers and vendors.

### Darkness over the darknet

"The cryptomarket community (is) spooked," said darknet researcher Patrick Shortis, of Brunel University in London. "Reddit boards are filled with users asking questions about their orders." In Washington, US Attorney General Jeff Sessions deemed the operation "the largest darknet marketplace takedown in history." Darknet vendors are "pouring fuel on the fire of the national drug epidemic," he said, specifically citing cases of two US teenagers killed this year, one a 13-year-old Utah boy, by overdoses of synthetic opioids purchased on AlphaBay. More than two-thirds of the quarter million listings on the two sites were for illegal drugs, said Sessions. Other illicit wares for sale included weapons, counterfeit and stolen identification and malware. The police agency Europol estimates AlphaBay did \$1 billion in business after its 2014 creation.

### Dead in prison

A California indictment named AlphaBay's founder as Alexandre Cazes, a 25-year-old

Canadian who died in Thai police custody on July 12. The country's narcotics justice chief told reporters Cazes hanged himself in jail just prior to a scheduled court hearing. He'd been arrested with DEA and FBI assistance.

Cazes amassed a \$23 million fortune, much of it in digital currencies, according to court documents. He bought real estate and luxury cars, including a \$900,000 Lamborghini, and pursued "economic citizenship" in Liechtenstein, Cyprus and Thailand. A \$400,000 villa purchase in February had already bought him and his wife Antiquan passports, a US forfeiture complaint said. He used what he claimed was a web design company, EBX Technologies, as a front, the indictment said.

Just two other arrests were announced Thursday. Both were of Hansa system administrators in the German town of Siegen, who were taken into custody in June. Europol spokeswoman Claire Georges said they were not named under privacy law. The US indictment lists several AlphaBay co-conspirators by title but not name. They include a security chief, a public relations manager and moderators. A US attorney handling the case, Grant Rabenn, would not comment on whether additional arrests were expected.

### "Psychological warfare"

Nicolas Christin, a darknet expert at Carnegie Mellon University, called the one-two takedown punch "psychological warfare." "It is definitely going to create a bit of chaos," he said, though after takedowns in the past buyers and sellers move to other former second-tier sites after a few weeks of turmoil.

But this time, Dutch police have upped the ante by craftily tracking darknet users, and that's expected to yield future arrests. They began running the Hansa site on June 20, impersonating its administrators, collecting usernames and passwords, logging data on thousands of drug sales

and informing local police in nations where shipments would be arriving. Dutch cybercrime prosecutor Martijn Egberts said Dutch police had scooped up some 10,000 addresses for Hansa buyers outside Holland.

Running the site was a challenge, Egberts said, with police forced to mediate frequent disputes between buyers and sellers. "It turned out to be a lot of work!" he said. "The biggest effort for us was to get the site going on a way that nobody noticed it was us."

Egberts noted with satisfaction that online rumors about other darknet drug marketplaces possibly being compromised were already spreading. "This is the moment to show the world that you can't trust dark markets anymore, because you never know who is the admin," he said.

But seasoned buyers and sellers aren't likely to get tripped up, and will simply become more cautious, Christin said.

### Branches off the Silk Road

Darknet websites have thrived since the 2011 appearance of the Silk Road bazaar, which was taken down two years later. Merchants and buyers kept their identities secret by using encrypted communications and anonymity-providing tools such as the Tor browser. The darknet itself is only accessible only through such specialized apps. Cazes' own carelessness apparently tripped him up - not the underlying security technology AlphaBay used.

According to the indictment, he accidentally broadcast his personal Hotmail address in welcome messages sent to new users. And when he was tracked down and arrested in Thailand, Cazes was logged into the AlphaBay website as its administrator, it says.

Cazes also used the same personal email address - "pimp\_alex-91@hotmail.com" - on a PayPal account. —AP



**In this March 15, 2017 file photo, the four-ring logo of German car producer Audi is photographed at the headquarters after the annual press conference in Ingolstadt, Germany. —AP**

## AUDI TO UPDATE 850,000 CARS AS DIESEL RECALLS WIDEN

**BERLIN:** German automaker Audi says it will fit up to 850,000 diesel cars with new software to improve their emissions performance, following a similar move by rival Daimler as the auto industry tries to get ahead of public controversy over the technology.

Audi, the luxury brand of the Volkswagen Group, announced the voluntary retrofitting program on Friday. The company said in a statement that it "aims to maintain the future viability of diesel engines" and believes the program "will counteract possible bans on vehicles with diesel engines."

The free program, which will apply to Europe and other markets outside the US and Canada, applies to cars with six-cylinder and eight-cylinder diesel engines. The service action also applies to Porsche and Volkswagen models with the same types of engines. On Tuesday, Daimler said it will voluntarily recall 3 million Mercedes-Benz cars with diesel engines in Europe to improve their emissions performance.

Diesels have been under a cloud since Volkswagen admitted equipping vehicles with software that manipulates the level of emissions. In the US, the software turned on emissions controls during lab tests and illegally turned them off when the cars were on the road, to improve performance.

Separately, five German automakers - Mercedes-Benz, Opel and Volkswagen and its subsidiaries Audi and Porsche - last year agreed to recall a total of 630,000 diesel vehicles in Europe after it was found that real-world emissions often exceeded EU emissions standards.

There have been calls for bans on diesels in several German cities due to concerns about pollution levels, while the government in the large southern state of Baden-Wuerttemberg has said it would reject such demands if automakers came up with a way to adjust older vehicles to reduce emissions levels. Volkswagen has

admitted using illegal software in 11 million vehicles worldwide. It agreed to pay more than \$20 billion in civil and criminal settlements and penalties in the US and eight executives have been charged there. In other cases, engine control software turns off emission controls at certain temperatures to avoid engine damage, carmakers say. That exemption is legal but German regulators have questioned whether its use was always justified.

Auto executives and state and city officials will meet with Transport Minister Alexander Dobrindt at a "diesel summit" over the issue on Aug. 2 in Berlin.

Government officials say the purpose of the summit is to reduce diesel emissions and at the same to ensure that the technology can continue to be used in the future. The auto industry is a major employer in Germany and it's an election year, with a national election slated for Sept. 24.

Diesels have lower emissions of carbon dioxide, one of the greenhouse gases blamed by scientists for global warming. Automakers say diesel is therefore needed to meet stricter limits on CO2 emissions as part of fighting climate change. Expensive and cumbersome emissions controls are needed, however, to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxide, an air pollutant that harms health.

Stock prices of automakers fell Friday after a report in Der Spiegel magazine that they had colluded for years on holding down the cost of diesel technology and that information about the meetings had been given to German anti-trust authorities. Daimler shares were off 2.1 percent, while BMW shares fell 2.6 percent and Volkswagen dipped 2.8 percent.

The Spiegel report said companies had agreed on things like the size of the tanks that hold a urea solution injected into exhaust gases to control emissions of nitrogen oxide. The report could not be independently confirmed. —AP



**TOKYO:** A man plays a virtual reality (VR) game at the Bandai Namco game facility of VR Zone Shinjuku in Tokyo yesterday. —AFP

## TECH GROUP SIDES WITH APPLE IN QUALCOMM'S IPHONE BAN DISPUTE

**SAN JOSE:** A group representing major technology companies has aligned itself against Qualcomm Inc in its legal dispute with Apple Inc by calling on regulators to reject Qualcomm's bid to ban the import of iPhones. A lobbying group that represents Alphabet Inc's Google, Amazon.com Inc, Microsoft Corp and Facebook Inc filed comments with the US International Trade Commission.

They argued that barring Apple from importing foreign-assembled iPhones that use Intel Corp chips - as Qualcomm has requested - would cause "significant shocks to supply" for phones and would

hurt consumers. Qualcomm declined to comment.

Intel and Apple rival Samsung are members of the group, called the Computer & Communications Industry Association. Apple is not a member of the group.

"If the ITC were to grant this exclusion order, it would help Qualcomm use its monopoly power for further leverage against Apple and allow them to drive up prices on consumer devices," Ed Black, the CEO of the group, said in a statement. "What's at stake here is certainly the availability of iPhones and other smartphones at better prices." —Reuters

## 'MYSTERY' SIGNAL FROM SPACE IS SOLVED - IT'S NOT ALIENS

**MIAMI:** Astronomers have finally solved the mystery of peculiar signals coming from a nearby star, a story that sparked intense public speculation this week that perhaps, finally, alien life had been found. It hasn't. The signal, which has been formally named "Weird!" was interference from a distant satellite.

Of course, astronomers said all along that extra-terrestrials were quite far at the bottom of the list of possibilities for the signals detected from Ross 128, a dim star known as a red dwarf some 11 light-years away. To experts, the true mystery was that they couldn't figure out if the bursts were unusual stellar activity, emissions from other back-

ground objects, or interference from satellite communications.

"However, many people were more interested in the signals as potential proof of transmissions from an extraterrestrial intelligent civilization," wrote Abel Mendez, director of the Planetary Habitability Laboratory at the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo in a blog post Friday, revealing the true nature of the signals. After further fueling speculation by summoning the world experts in the hunt for life elsewhere in the universe-The SETI Berkeley Research Center at the University of California-the team issued its conclusion.

"We are now confident about the source

of the Weird! Signal," Mendez wrote. "The best explanation is that the signals are transmissions from one or more geostationary satellites." The signals only appeared around Ross 128 because it is located "close to the celestial equator where many geostationary satellites are placed," Mendez added.

### Study of people

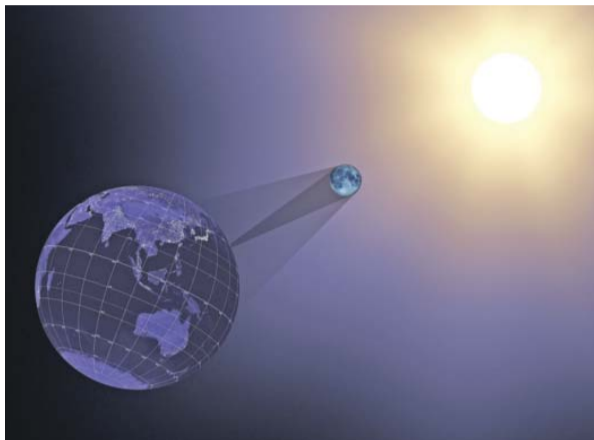
He also released the results of an informal survey that he had posted on his website, asking people to weigh in on what they thought the source of the signals was, and whether or not they were scientists well versed in the matter. "Nearly 800 people participated in this informal survey (including more than 60

astronomers)," he wrote. The whole group's consensus was that the signals were most likely coming from some story of stellar activity, or some kind of astronomical phenomenon. Most people discounted the possibility of radio interference or instrumental failures, saying these were least likely. This, Mendez explained, was hardly a scientific approach to the question.

"This is interesting since in the absence of solid information about the signal, most astronomers would think that these were probably the most likely explanation," Mendez wrote. Furthermore, about one quarter of respondents said "the most likely explanation of the signal was that of a com-

munication with an Extraterrestrial Intelligence (ETI)," he added.

"These results reflect the still high expectations the public maintains on the possibility of contacting ETI." Still, all was not lost in these last few weeks of speculation and tumult. "The Planetary Habitability Laboratory of the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo made many new friends from this experience," Mendez said, adding it had been a "great experience of open science. The lesson here is that we all need to continue exploring and sharing results openly. Some people prefer to only learn about the successes, but others prefer science in real-time, no matter the end result." — AP



This NASA file handout photo illustration from June 21, 2017 shows a visualization animation still image of the Earth, moon, and sun at 17:05:40 UTC during the eclipse. — AFP

## SOLAR ECLIPSE OFFERS MILLIONS A CHANCE AT CITIZEN SCIENCE

**MIAMI:** Millions of people, from students to rocket scientists, are poised to contribute to a massive scientific effort to study the total solar eclipse that will sweep across the United States August 21. The entire country will fall into shadow as the eclipse passes, though the darkest path, or "totality," will be contained in a 70-mile ribbon that moves from Oregon to South Carolina. And with technology everywhere, from smartphones to satellites, the eclipse will be captured as never before, and will offer scientists a wealth of new insights on how the Sun works.

"There has never been an event like this in human history where so many people could participate with such unique technology," Carrie Black, an associate program director at the National Science Foundation, told reporters Friday. "We are expecting millions of people to participate in this event, and images and data from this will be collected and analyzed by scientists for years to come."

One of the most popular projects is called Eclipse MegaMovie, a partnership between Google and University of California, Berkeley. Its goal is to assemble images snapped by students and other amateur observers along the eclipse path, in order to create educational materials depicting the 93-minute eclipse across the country. Another project, called the Citizen Continental-America Telescopic Eclipse (CATE) Experiment by the National Solar Observatory and the University of Arizona, will engage in a kind of relay race. Volunteers from universities, high schools and national labs will be spaced out along the path of the eclipse, using identical telescopes and digital camera systems to capture high-quality images for a comprehensive dataset of the event. Of course, amateurs are not the only ones involved. Experts from a host of US agencies and universities are leading the research. Government aircraft will be dispatched to follow the eclipse and take infrared measurements to determine the solar corona's magnetism and thermal structure.

Meanwhile, NASA plans to use a camera aboard its Deep Space Climate Observatory (DSCOVR), a satellite that sits in a distant orbit about 900,000 miles (1.4 million kilometers away), to capture the view of light leaving the Earth. Two other satellite tools aboard the Terra and Aqua satellites, launched in 1999 and 2002, respectively, "will provide observations of atmospheric and surface conditions at times before and after the eclipse," said NASA. This data should help scientists better calculate how much solar energy hits the top of our atmosphere, how much is reflected back to space and how much thermal energy Earth sends off into space. — AP

## IN REBEL-HELD UKRAINE, ACTIVISTS STRUGGLE TO CURTAIL HIV SPREAD

**DONETSK:** As clashes drag on in east Ukraine between government forces and Russian-backed rebels, health activist Natalia Gurova is fighting another battle of her own. Gurova manages a project in her insurgent-controlled home city of Lugansk handing out clean syringes and condoms to drug-users and sex workers who are most at risk from HIV and hepatitis.

That puts her at the forefront of the perilous struggle against the spread of infections as more than three years of conflict and rebel rule have hit vital treatment programs. "Everything has worsened," Gurova, from the All-Ukrainian Public Health Association, a charitable organization, told AFP. Getting supplies such as condoms, lubricants and hygienic wipes into rebel-held territory remains a constant challenge as they run the gauntlet of checkpoints to cross the tightly guarded frontline.

While Gurova still manages to keep these programs going, substitute treatments for drug addicts including methadone have stopped entirely. This has seen users who were being weaned away from injecting themselves turn to dangerous local alternatives-and bolstered the threat of the spread of diseases. "There are more cases of HIV infections among users and it is very difficult to make contact with them," Gurova said. Alongside this problem, activists say there has been a rise in the number of sex workers in the grey zone along the frontline.

### Battle for survival

Prior to the start of the conflict in April 2014, ex-Soviet Ukraine-especially in its eastern regions of Donetsk and Lugansk-was already battling one of the most severe HIV epidemics in Eastern Europe. But



**DONETSK:** A patient waits to be treated in the toxicology unit in a hospital treating drug users in the rebel capital. — AP

thanks to progressive policies the country was making progress and had managed to reduce the rate of HIV infections, most dramatically among young drug users. After the war flared up in 2014, experts soon warned that the conflict risked jeopardizing any gains that had been made.

As Kiev lost control over Donetsk and Lugansk, health services and key treatments for infections were hit. In 2015, international actors managed to stave off an imminent crisis by negotiating with Kiev and the rebels to keep supplying antiretroviral drugs to thousands of HIV positive people in the separatist territories. Emergency funds were provided and the United Nations now estimates that about 10,000 adults and children with HIV in

rebel-held areas are receiving the drugs.

### Prevention hit

But while negotiations have been successful in getting the most urgent treatments through for now, in terms of prevention the situation still looks dire. Doctor Igor Pirogov, who works at a hospital treating drug users in rebel capital Donetsk, said that the war has seriously disrupted attempts to curb addiction.

"Most of our patients put on a uniform, got a weapon and went off to fight" for the insurgents, Pirogov said. "Many even said openly that they were using more drugs during the war than when it was peaceful." The internationally approved opioid replacement treatments that had become

the norm in Ukraine have ended. Due to security restrictions the Ukrainian authorities say they are unable to deliver substitute drugs across the frontline. For their part the rebels seem to have followed in the footsteps of their backers in Russia-where methadone is banned-and turned the clock back on progressive treatments. Activist Gurova said that about 900 patients had lost access to the methadone program, leading many to turn instead to dangerous local alternatives. At the same time she said more women around the conflict zone have turned to prostitution-also putting them at greater risk. "There are no jobs, no work, no earnings-this is the only option for them-so it all leads to an increase in the number of sex workers," she explained.

### Problem for Ukraine

As it has waged war against the insurgents on the battlefield, the government in Kiev has shown a tendency to disown the health crisis in rebel regions. While the situation in areas under insurgent control has deteriorated, the rest of the country has continued to make headway tackling HIV as authorities have pushed on with the policies that were yielding results. "The decline in the rates of HIV epidemic growth is encouraging," Pavlo Skala from the Alliance for Public Health told AFP.

But experts warn that any improvements being made risk being undermined by a uptick of infections in Ukraine's rebel-held regions and that Kiev cannot turn a blind eye to the problems happening across the frontline. "Soldiers stand on the demarcation line between the two territories and they can control the border," Skala said. "But they cannot control the spread of epidemics." — AFP

## ANTI-ABORTION PROVISIONS IN HEALTH BILL IN JEOPARDY

**WASHINGTON:** The Senate parliamentarian added a new complication to Republican hopes for their floundering health care bill, ruling the GOP would need to win an all-but-impossible 60 votes to retain anti-abortion provisions in the measure, Democrats said late Friday.

Democrats said the parliamentarian decided another provision providing Medicaid savings for upstate New York counties would also need 60 votes to survive. Democrats said they believed that means other bill language benefiting Alaska and other states - which Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell put into the legislation to try winning support from those states' senators - is in jeopardy.

Republicans contested Democrats' description, saying the parliamentarian's views were guidance only. They said the legislation's wording was subject to change as leaders work behind the scenes to win over GOP senators, and said efforts would continue to craft the provisions in ways that would

pass parliamentary muster. Republicans have a 52-48 Senate majority, and at least one Republican said late Friday that the GOP is short of the votes to move ahead with Sen. John McCain in Arizona dealing with brain cancer.

"Without John McCain, we don't have 50 people to take that vote," Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma said at the Western Conservative Summit in Denver. Democrats have been unified in opposing the GOP repeal effort. Few Democrats would be expected to join them to retain anti-abortion provisions, and none would likely side with the GOP to retain the state-specific language. That means it seems certain Republicans would fall short of reaching 60 votes.

Republicans have said they plan to begin voting on their health care legislation Tuesday. That might be delayed if McConnell, R-Ky., is still hunting GOP votes. "The parliamentarian's guidance helps inform us as we write legislation

before going to the floor," said Eric Ueland, Republican staff director of the Senate Budget Committee. "We look forward to continued preparations for votes next week."

One abortion provision in jeopardy would block federal payments to Planned Parenthood for a year. Another would forbid individuals and small businesses from using the bill's health care tax credits to buy policies that cover abortion. The abortion provisions are important for conservatives. It is unclear what they would do if that language was removed from the bill.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-NY, said the ruling on the New York language "will greatly tie the majority leader's hands as he tries to win over reluctant Republicans with state-specific provisions. We will challenge every one of them." Sen Bernie Sanders, I-Vt, said the way Republicans wrote the bill is "a disaster," adding, "It is time for the Republican leadership to junk this bill." — AP

# CLINIC PAGE



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## Head of Bohra Community holds session in Kuwait



**H**is Holiness Dr Mufaddal Saifuddin, the head of Bohra Community, held a session in Al-Ardiya attended by all men, women and children members of Bohra Community residing in the State of Kuwait, who have been eagerly waiting for years His Holiness to come on visit to Kuwait. The session started with reciting verses from the Munificent Quran by Hussain Burhan Uddin, the son of His Holiness. He first praised our Messenger Muhammad (PBUH), reiterating the sacrifices of Imam Al-Hussain (May Allah Be Pleased with Him) in Karbala, to further stand on the learned lessons from

his sacrifices for maintain dominance of the Word of Allah, the Almighty, as well as preserving Islam, for the sake of which all members of the Prophet's Family sacrificed. He then reiterated the commendable characteristics of his later father, His Holiness Dr Mohamed Burhan - may his soul rest in peace - for spreading brotherhood and peace amongst the various peoples of the world and all Muslims. He reminded people of such intimate friendship between His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and himself.



His Holiness Dr Mufaddal Saifuddin, the head of Bohra Community, speaks during a session held in Al-Ardiya on Friday. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Moreover, he advised members of the Bohra Community in Kuwait to stick to the Islamic teachings, refraining from abominable acts, and better adhering to good behaviors enjoined by our Messenger (PBUH). He further advised them to live in Kuwait as their second home, and be always loyal to Kuwait and its regimes, contributing with their Kuwaiti brothers to achieving development and prosperity of Kuwait. In conclusion, he expressed his highest considerations to His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait, for His kind reception and hospitality upon receiving him at Bayan Palace. He prayed to Allah, the

Almighty, to grant His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, the leader of humanity, permanent health and long life. He thanked His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister, Minister of the Amiri Diwan, the Deputy the Prime Minister, Minister of Interior (MOI), all officials at the Amiri Diwan, and all MOI staff, for all support they provide for better maintaining security during his visit. He ended the session praying for the State of Kuwait to remain always the oasis of security, safety, prosperity and development, and for protecting Kuwait against all evils.



## Ooredoo awards volunteer participants



**O**oredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, concluded its training program for the participants of its official Ooredoo Volunteer Program in its third year, in an awarding ceremony that took place last week in its head office. The awarding ceremony was attended by representatives of Ooredoo's Corporate Communications department in addition to the participating volunteer groups and non-government entities.

In its third year, Ooredoo's volunteer program succeeded in attracting hundreds of participants who spearheaded a number of charitable initiatives, especially during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Volunteers managed the distribution of iftar meals via Ooredoo's iftar tent, in addition to the charity truck that delivered iftar to different locations across Kuwait close to the residence of workers. The volunteer program participants have also organized a number of iftar banquets to share with government officials who working during the iftar shift, such as the Kuwait Centre for Down Syndrome and Yarmouk Health Centre, in addition



to visits to the elderly care center.

The volunteers also visited children hospital wards in association with the Kuwait Association for Care of Children in Hospitals to celebrate the girgian and toys, spreading joy among the children.

In a statement to the press, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Social Responsibility and Sponsorship and Social Media Senior Manager Yousef Al-Shallal expressed his pride in all participants in the volunteer program, which underscore the company's leading position in the field of volunteerism. He noted that the program embodies Ooredoo's values of caring, connecting, and challenging, and come in tandem with the company's corporate social responsibility policy which gives great importance to youth.

Ooredoo's award-winning volunteer program was launched in 2015 in collaboration with Spread the Passion non-profit organization, with the aim of giving youth the necessary training before matching them with volunteering opportunities in Kuwait.





- 00:45 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 01:40 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 02:35 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 03:25 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 04:15 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 05:02 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 05:49 Big Fish Man
- 06:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 07:00 Call Of The Wildman
- 07:25 Lone Star Law
- 08:15 The Lion Queen
- 09:10 Wildest Europe
- 10:05 Dog Rescuers
- 11:00 Wildest Africa
- 11:55 Animal Cops Philadelphia
- 12:50 Wildest Middle East
- 13:45 Wildest Middle East
- 14:40 Wildest Middle East
- 15:35 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 16:30 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 17:25 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 18:20 Treehouse Masters
- 19:15 Lone Star Law
- 20:10 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 21:05 Lone Star Law
- 22:00 Treehouse Masters
- 22:55 Tanked
- 23:50 Tanked



- 00:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
- 01:00 I Was Possessed
- 02:00 Private Crimes
- 03:00 Escaping Polygamy
- 04:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
- 05:00 I Was Possessed
- 06:00 The First 48
- 07:00 Gangs Of Britain...
- 08:00 Babies Behind Bars
- 09:00 Evil Up Close
- 10:00 It Takes A Killer
- 11:00 It Takes A Killer
- 12:00 It Takes A Killer
- 13:00 It Takes A Killer
- 14:00 Homicide Hunter
- 15:00 Homicide Hunter
- 16:00 Crime Stories
- 17:00 Crime Stories
- 18:00 Crime Stories
- 19:00 The First 48
- 20:00 The First 48
- 21:00 Homicide Hunter
- 22:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 23:00 Killers: Behind The Myth



- 00:30 The Big Brain Theory
- 01:20 The Big Brain Theory
- 02:10 Dirty Jobs
- 03:00 Dirty Jobs
- 03:50 Ultimate Survival
- 04:40 Ultimate Survival
- 05:30 Ultimate Survival
- 06:20 How It's Made
- 06:40 How It's Made
- 07:00 Doki
- 07:25 Doki
- 07:50 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 08:15 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 08:40 How It's Made
- 09:05 How It's Made
- 09:30 How It's Made

- 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
- 05:25 Binny And The Ghost
- 05:45 The Hive
- 05:50 The 7D
- 06:00 Lone Star Law
- 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 The Zhuzhus S1
- 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 High School Musical 3: Senior Year
- 12:35 Welcome To The Ronks
- 12:45 Best Friends Whenever
- 14:50 The Zhuzhus S1
- 15:15 Bizaardvark
- 15:40 Elena Of Avalor
- 16:05 Descendants Wicked World
- 16:10 Liv And Maddie
- 16:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 17:00 Stuck In The Middle
- 17:25 The Suite Life Movie
- 19:00 Star Darlings
- 19:05 Best Friends Whenever
- 19:30 Liv And Maddie
- 19:55 Elena Of Avalor
- 20:20 The Adventures Of Disney Fairies
- 20:45 Bizaardvark
- 21:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
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- 22:00 Bunk'd
- 22:25 Bunk'd
- 22:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 23:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 23:35 Lolirock

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- 18:00 Crime Stories
- 19:00 The First 48
- 20:00 The First 48
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- 22:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 23:00 Killers: Behind The Myth

- 00:00 Supa Strikas
- 00:25 Supa Strikas
- 06:50 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister 6
- 07:15 Right Now Kapow
- 07:40 Walk The Prank
- 08:05 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
- 08:10 K.C. Undercover
- 08:35 Milo Murphy's Law
- 09:00 Disney11
- 09:25 Disney11
- 09:50 Disney11
- 10:20 Disney11
- 10:45 Disney11
- 11:10 Lab Rats
- 11:35 Mech-X4
- 12:00 Eddie's Million Dollar Cook-Off
- 13:30 Milo Murphy's Law
- 14:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 14:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:15 Milo Murphy's Law
- 14:40 K.C. Undercover
- 15:05 Lab Rats
- 15:30 Walk The Prank
- 15:55 Right Now Kapow
- 16:25 K.C. Undercover
- 16:50 Supa Strikas



- 00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:15 Calimero
- 00:30 Art Attack
- 00:55 Zou
- 01:05 Loopdido
- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 Calimero



THE LEGEND OF ZORRO ON OSN MOVIES HD

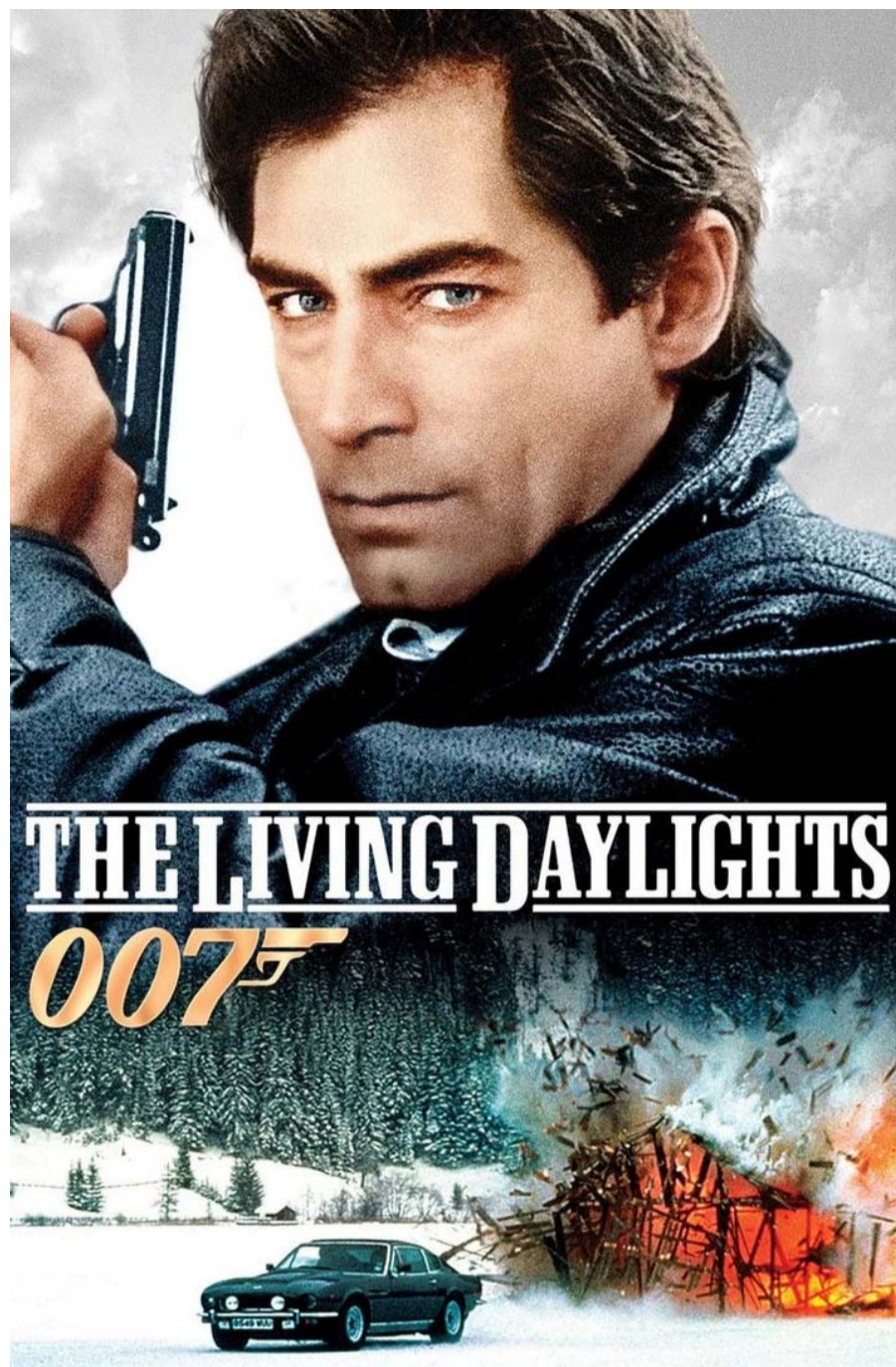
- 09:55 How It's Made
- 10:20 How It's Made
- 10:45 How It's Made
- 11:10 How It's Made
- 12:25 How It's Made
- 12:50 Ultimate Survival
- 13:40 Ultimate Survival
- 14:30 Ultimate Survival
- 15:20 Ultimate Survival
- 17:00 The Big Brain Theory
- 17:50 The Big Brain Theory
- 18:40 Breaking Magic
- 19:05 Breaking Magic
- 19:30 Prehistoric
- 20:20 Clash Of The Dinosaurs
- 21:10 David Baddiel On The Silk Road
- 22:00 Untamed & Uncut
- 22:50 Untamed & Uncut
- 23:40 Untamed & Uncut

- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Art Attack
- 02:30 The Hive
- 02:40 Loopdido
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
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- 03:35 Loopdido
- 03:50 Calimero
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:45 Zou
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Loopdido
- 06:00 Zou
- 06:15 Calimero
- 06:30 Loopdido
- 06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 07:25 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 07:50 Goldie & Bear
- 08:15 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 08:40 Doc McStuffins
- 09:05 PJ Masks
- 09:35 Sofia The First
- 10:00 The Lion Guard
- 10:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 11:00 PJ Masks
- 11:25 Goldie & Bear
- 11:55 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 12:25 The Lion Guard
- 12:50 Sofia The First
- 13:20 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 13:45 Doc McStuffins
- 14:10 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 14:40 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 15:05 PJ Masks
- 15:30 The Lion Guard
- 16:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 16:25 Sofia The First
- 16:50 PJ Masks
- 17:05 Goldie & Bear
- 17:35 Doc McStuffins
- 18:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 18:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 19:05 Sofia The First
- 19:35 The Lion Guard
- 20:05 Goldie & Bear
- 20:20 The Locator
- 21:10 Blood Relatives
- 22:00 Shadow Of Doubt
- 22:50 Murder Calls

- 17:15 Mech-X4
- 17:40 Milo Murphy's Law
- 18:10 Gravity Falls
- 18:35 Lab Rats
- 19:00 Supa Strikas
- 19:25 Milo Murphy's Law
- 19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
- 19:55 K.C. Undercover
- 20:20 Walk The Prank
- 20:45 Mighty Med
- 21:10 Walk The Prank
- 21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
- 21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 21:45 Lab Rats
- 22:10 Lab Rats
- 22:35 Phineas And Ferb
- 23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



- 00:00 Famously Single
- 00:55 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 01:50 El 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
- 06:50 El News
- 07:20 La Clippers Dance Squad
- 08:10 El News
- 09:05 Botched
- 09:55 Botched
- 10:45 Botched
- 11:35 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 12:25 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 13:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 14:15 Botched
- 15:10 Botched
- 16:05 WAGs Miami
- 17:05 WAGs Miami
- 18:00 WAGs Miami
- 19:00 El News
- 20:00 Botched
- 21:00 Botched
- 22:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 23:00 Botched



THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 00:00 Man Fire Food
- 00:30 Man Fire Food
- 01:00 Restaurant: Impossible
- 02:00 Mystery Diners
- 02:30 Mystery Diners
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:30 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 06:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin



- 12:20 Royal Recipes
- 13:15 Grantchester
- 14:10 Doc Martin
- 15:00 Inside Windsor Castle
- 16:00 Prince Harry In Africa
- 16:55 This Is England '88
- 17:50 Royal Stories
- 18:15 Royal Stories
- 18:45 Grantchester
- 19:45 Broadchurch
- 20:40 Prince Harry In Africa
- 21:35 This Is England '88
- 22:30 Victoria
- 23:20 Lewis



- 00:30 Sanitarium
- 02:30 Twixt
- 04:05 Forbidden Empire
- 06:00 Survivor
- 07:45 DCU: Justice League vs Teen Titans
- 09:10 Compadres
- 11:00 Judge Dredd
- 12:40 Survivor
- 14:20 Diggstown
- 16:00 Harlock: Space Pirate
- 17:55 The Living Daylights
- 20:10 Spooks: The Greater Good
- 22:00 Everly
- 23:40 Afterparty



- 00:20 JFK Classified: Hunting Oswald
- 01:10 Mountain Men
- 02:00 Counting Cars: Best Of
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 Pawn Stars
- 03:40 Pawn Stars South Africa
- 04:05 Storage Wars Texas
- 04:30 Storage Wars Texas
- 05:00 Grave Trade
- 06:00 Fifth Gear
- 06:50 Duck Dynasty
- 07:40 Counting Cars
- 08:05 Counting Cars
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 08:55 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 09:45 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 11:50 Duck Dynasty
- 12:15 Duck Dynasty
- 12:40 Counting Cars
- 13:05 Counting Cars
- 13:30 Ice Road Truckers
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Fifth Gear
- 16:00 Storage Wars
- 16:25 Storage Wars
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:15 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 18:30 Lost Worlds
- 19:20 Mountain Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 Pawn Stars
- 21:25 Pawn Stars
- 21:50 Storage Wars Miami
- 22:15 Storage Wars Miami
- 22:40 Detroit Steel
- 23:30 American Pickers



- 00:05 Someone Marry Barry
- 01:35 Peggoland

- 03:25 Don Verdean
- 05:00 Under The Tuscan Sun
- 06:55 Miss You Already
- 08:45 Don Verdean
- 10:20 Under The Tuscan Sun
- 12:15 Miss You Already
- 14:05 All About Christmas Eve
- 15:35 You Again
- 17:20 The Beautician And The Beast
- 19:10 Perfect Match
- 20:35 Dirty Work
- 22:00 Kill Your Friends
- 23:45 The Ladies Man



- 01:55 The Legend Of Zorro
- 04:10 Eight Men Out
- 06:15 Up Close And Personal
- 08:30 Just Married
- 10:10 Spectre
- 12:40 Ghostbusters
- 14:30 Ghostbusters II
- 16:20 Last Knights
- 18:20 Down And Out In Beverly Hills
- 20:05 The Walk
- 22:10 Black Swan



- 00:00 Fast Girls
- 01:35 The Witch
- 03:10 Another Earth
- 04:45 Manny
- 06:20 Fast Girls
- 08:00 Of Mice And Men
- 09:55 5 Flights Up
- 11:30 New York Stories
- 13:35 I Am Bolt
- 15:25 The Great Gatsby
- 17:50 Spotlight
- 20:00 Lorenzo's Oil
- 22:15 Bone Tomahawk



- 00:00 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
- 01:20 Bamse And The City Of Thieves
- 02:30 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 03:45 Song Of The Sea
- 05:20 Space Dogs 2: Adventure To The Moon
- 07:00 Lego DC: Justice League Gotham City Breakout
- 08:20 Outback
- 09:50 Cher Ami
- 11:20 Zodiac: The Race Begins
- 12:55 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
- 14:15 Bamse And The City Of Thieves
- 15:25 Bunny Tales
- 17:00 Cher Ami
- 18:30 Pooch's Heffalump Halloween Movie
- 19:40 The Swan Princess: Pirate Today, Princess Tomorrow
- 21:00 Bunny Tales
- 22:35 Outback



- 00:15 The Middle
- 01:05 Community
- 01:30 Saturday Night Live Syndicated
- 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 Young & Hungry
- 06:05 Young & Hungry
- 06:30 Mom
- 06:55 Community
- 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 Community
- 11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 12:20 Seinfeld
- 13:10 The Middle
- 14:00 George Lopez
- 14:25 Two And A Half Men
- 14:50 Mom
- 15:15 Young & Hungry

- 15:40 Young & Hungry
- 16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 17:00 Seinfeld
- 18:00 The Middle
- 19:00 Trial & Error
- 19:30 Making History
- 20:00 The Simpsons



- 00:30 Weird Or What?
- 01:20 Weird Or What?
- 02:10 Weird Or What?
- 03:00 Prototype This
- 03:48 How Do They Do It?
- 04:12 How Do They Do It?
- 04:36 How Do They Do It?
- 05:00 How Do They Do It?
- 05:24 Food Factory
- 05:48 Food Factory
- 06:12 Food Factory
- 06:36 Food Factory
- 07:00 How Do They Do It?
- 07:26 How Do They Do It?
- 08:14 Weird Or What?
- 09:02 Weird Or What?
- 09:50 Weird Or What?
- 10:38 Prototype This
- 11:26 Mythbusters
- 12:14 Mythbusters
- 13:02 Mythbusters
- 13:50 Mythbusters
- 14:38 Mythbusters
- 15:26 Food Factory
- 15:50 Food Factory
- 16:14 Food Factory
- 16:38 Food Factory
- 17:02 Food Factory
- 17:26 How Do They Do It?
- 17:50 How Do They Do It?
- 18:15 How Do They Do It?
- 19:30 Space Pioneer
- 20:20 Space Pioneer
- 21:10 Space Pioneer
- 22:00 Extreme Engineering
- 22:50 Extreme Engineering
- 23:40 Extreme Engineering



- 00:02 Max & Ruby
- 00:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 00:46 The Day Henry Met
- 00:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 01:41 Zack & Quack
- 01:51 Team Umizoomi
- 02:37 Olive The Ostrich
- 02:46 Paw Patrol
- 03:57 Shimmer And Shine
- 04:42 Rusty Rivets
- 05:06 Rusty Rivets
- 05:29 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 05:51 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 06:13 Paw Patrol
- 06:37 Dora The Explorer
- 07:00 Zack & Quack
- 07:21 Bubble Guppies
- 07:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 08:07 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 08:52 Nella The Princess Knight
- 09:13 The Day Henry Met
- 09:19 Paw Patrol
- 09:42 Rusty Rivets
- 09:55 Bubble Guppies
- 10:18 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
- 10:40 Zack & Quack
- 10:52 Team Umizoomi
- 11:15 Shimmer And Shine
- 12:00 Max & Ruby
- 12:23 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 12:44 The Day Henry Met
- 12:55 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 13:17 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 13:39 Zack & Quack
- 13:50 Team Umizoomi
- 14:36 Olive The Ostrich
- 14:45 Paw Patrol
- 15:55 Shimmer And Shine
- 16:18 Shimmer And Shine
- 16:41 Rusty Rivets
- 17:05 Rusty Rivets
- 17:28 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 17:51 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 18:13 Paw Patrol
- 18:37 Dora The Explorer
- 19:00 Zack & Quack
- 19:22 Bubble Guppies
- 19:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 20:07 Paw Patrol
- 20:30 Shimmer And Shine

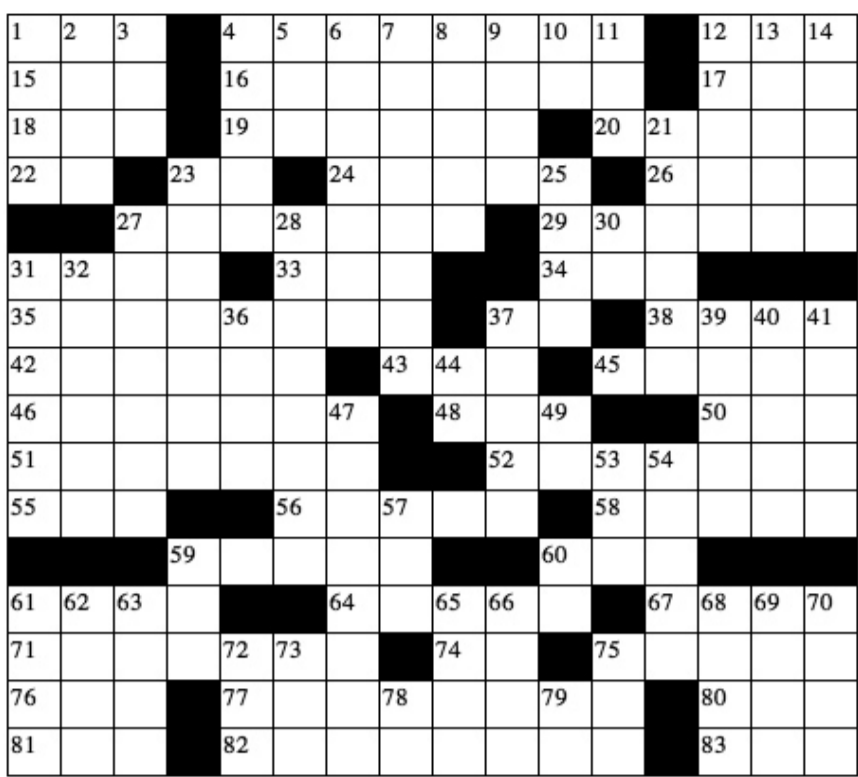


ANOTHER EARTH ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL



- 00:30 The Real Story With Maria Elena Salinas
- 01:20 Is O.J. Innocent? The Missing Evidence
- 02:10 Murder Calls
- 03:00 Murder Comes To Town
- 03:48 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 04:36 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 05:24 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 06:12 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 07:00 Blood Relatives
- 07:50 Blood Relatives
- 08:40 Blood Relatives
- 09:30 Blood Relatives
- 10:20 The Locator
- 10:45 The Locator
- 11:10 Florida's Craziest Crimes
- 12:00 Killer Confessions
- 12:50 Killer Confessions
- 13:40 Killer Confessions
- 14:30 Killer Confessions
- 15:20 The Locator
- 16:10 Nightmare Next Door
- 17:00 Beauty Queen Murders
- 17:50 Beauty Queen Murders
- 18:40 Beauty Queen Murders
- 19:30 Beauty Queen Murders
- 20:20 The Locator
- 21:10 Blood Relatives
- 22:00 Shadow Of Doubt
- 22:50 Murder Calls

CROSSWORD 1666



ACROSS

1. A flexible container with a single opening.
4. Indonesian wild pig with enormous curved canine teeth.
12. A female person who has the same parents as another person.
15. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
16. Youthful appearance in an old person.
17. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
18. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
19. A mountain in the Andes in Argentina (22,546 feet high).
20. A trade language widely used in Chad.
22. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
24. Something twisted and tight and swollen.
26. A correctional institution used to detain persons who are in the lawful custody of the government (either accused persons awaiting trial or convicted persons serving a sentence).
29. Wear away through erosion or vaporization.
31. (aeronautical) Pertaining to the tail section of a plane.
33. Late time of life.
34. A master's degree in business.
35. A genus of herbs of the family Cruciferae.
38. A metrical unit with unstressed-stressed syllables.
42. Small genus of erect balsam-scented herbs.
43. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
45. (Old Testament) The wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac.
46. An antibiotic (trade name Erythrocin or E-Mycin or Ethrill or Ilosone or Pediamycin) obtained from the actinomycete Streptomyces erythraeus.
48. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
50. A state of southwestern India.
51. Small toothless anteater with prehensile tail and four-clawed forelimbs.
52. A city and port in northern Jutland.
55. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
56. Tree (as opposed to shrub).
58. An oil port in southern Iraq.
61. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
64. A genus of Ploceidae.
67. An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
71. A short introductory essay preceding the text of a book.
74. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
76. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
77. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
80. Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
81. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
82. Low stinging nettle of Central and South America having velvety brownish-green toothed leaves and clusters of small green flowers.
83. A hormone produced by the anterior pituitary gland.

DOWN

2. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
3. An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.
4. An imaginary elephant that appears in a series of French books for children.
5. Gone by.
6. Of or relating to or characteristic of Bengal or its people.
7. A family of birds of the suborder Oscines.
8. A switch made from the stems of the rattan palms.
9. A person who makes use of a thing.
10. A complete metric system of units of measurement for scientists.
11. An associate degree in applied science.
12. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
13. A block of metal that is cast in a particular shape for convenient handling.
14. A wide scarf worn about their shoulders by women.
21. (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
23. A genus of Old World mints of the family Labiatae.
25. Young sheep.
27. A benign epithelial tumor forming a rounded mass.
28. A porch along the outside of a building (sometimes partly enclosed).
30. A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
32. (zoology) Pertaining to alulae.
36. (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.
37. Measuring instrument in which the echo of a pulse of microwave radiation is used to detect and locate distant objects.
39. An ancient city in southeastern Greece.
40. The Oceanic language spoken by the Maori people in New Zealand.
41. God of wealth and love.
44. An informal term for a father.
47. Of or relating to or characteristic of Europe or the people of Europe.
49. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
53. 36th President of the United States.
54. An emblem (a small piece of plastic or cloth or metal) that signifies your status (rank or membership or affiliation etc.).
57. The cry made by sheep.
59. An awkward stupid person.
60. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
62. The mother of your father or mother.
63. Queen of the Olympian gods in ancient Greek mythology.
65. Keep in mind or convey as a conviction or view.
66. An Iranian language spoken in Afghanistan.
68. A system of one or more computers and associated software with common storage.
69. (informal) Very tired.
70. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
72. Of southern Europe.
73. An accountant certified by the state.
75. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
78. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
79. Being nine more than ninety.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

There may be temptations to overextend your budget as short-distance travel is possible with friends today. Perhaps you will need to travel some distance to a popular entertainment attraction. Take time today to plan future time with your friends-it has been too long since you have been able to have long conversations and catch up on the news. Spending time with close, old friends can be rewarding. An outgoing and very expressive cycle of experience has begun for you. Now more than ever, you want to be admired by others, to do and create things that stir their hearts. This is child's play; this is romance; this is taking a chance. Really enjoy your companion this evening without being afraid to speak your feelings. Music can be most relaxing.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You should know there may be a few surprises this morning. The more you go with the flow, the more fun the surprises will become. This is really not the time to object; besides, your friends or family want an excuse to have a little fun with you today. There may be a little time this afternoon for making some desired personal changes... Perhaps your hair color, style or diet. You will be able to have your own surprise this evening. There is talk of visiting with some friends later today, perhaps taking a drive through the country or at the least, the outskirts of town. Be sure to stop at a roadside vegetable stand and purchase some of your favorite vegetables and fruits. You may want to add plants to your own garden.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may be able to enjoy your surroundings and the people that are in your life. You are happy and feel good about your place in the world at this time. You may even be ready to take on additional work or a new family member or some type of volunteer work. Talking with your family, you may even discover they are ready to take on some volunteer work as a group. You enjoy talking about history, the past and nostalgia with your friends. You can demonstrate understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others just now and you are in a good position to communicate concerning groups and society in general. You are driven to excel in any form of physical exercise or creative expression this evening-sports, theatrics, arts and crafts, etc.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have a natural aptitude for describing the most sensitive areas of the human psyche, a practical psychologist of the first order. You can manage touchy issues that others would not go near. Today brings about an opportunity to heal through speech. You may be the first or the last to give a speech that many will remember and be better for having heard it. You communicate with accomplished skill and others will find it stimulating just being with you. Your dreams have been quite clear lately-you may want to start a dream diary. It might be a good idea to write in this diary what you think might have inspired the dream as well as how your health was the day or evening before the dream. You may find some of your dreams are just fun.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You are intense, passionate and very personal today. You will find yourself rushing past the superficial right to the heart of any matter. Communication is high and you may enjoy some good solid conversation with neighbors this morning. Home, family and security have been on your mind lately, and you may find yourself teaching young people about fairness, evenhandedness, goals, roots and the importance of family. An insight about your support system, your mother or other females may be important. You have clearheaded and practical insights for most anything you choose to do today. This is a time of good fortune when things open up in a very natural way. Tonight you may meet a student that you can help or tutor.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

There are opportunities for success with money now that were not previously available. Lady luck may smile brightly on you during this time. Moving quickly is the secret to securing a tidy sum or gaining the end result of your desire. Perhaps you are going to a casting call or displaying your creative accomplishments. Whatever the case, you will be successful. Fun, a good sense of humor and the ability to get along with most folks put a smile on everybody's face. There is a desire to understand a loved one's psyche and there may also be an opportunity for a deep emotional talk this afternoon. Take the time to really listen to the one who needs you. There is an opportunity to take the time to show others how much they mean to you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may find yourself more than a little hungry today. Your current appreciation for just about everything may lead you to overspend or indulge too much. However, you will make some good choices as you seek a balance. You can expect some sort of major revision of your likes and dislikes, how and what you enjoy or appreciate about yourself and life-your value system. You may find that your appreciation for the quality of everything is stronger. Reappraisal is in order. Breakthroughs regarding relationships and the social life in general may be possible now. Unconventional approaches to partnerships and lovers are possible. An important relationship, perhaps to a younger person or someone in your near environment, may come into focus tonight.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You will prosper by pursuing your ideals and most deep-seated dreams of how life could be. Don't be afraid to project that image, create your path and make those dreams real. You will find that your mind and thoughts could be very intense. Keep your focus strong and you will see successful results. You can be very intuitive when it comes to expressing yourself and you will know just what to say. Periods of intense creativity allow you to go through changes and inner growth and give you time to think and plan. This creative intensity is good for music, poetry, art, etc. Your friends, partners and relationships mean a lot to you. They are a primary source of strength and you look to them for encouragement. Enjoy your friends today.



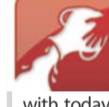
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is a good time to initiate a feeling or sense of easy going. The need for security, however, may dominate that easygoing nature you yearn for just now. Finding a new place to live and becoming comfortable in a professional position will help to alleviate much of your anxiety. List three things you can do now that will help you feel more secure and work in that direction-do not stagnate. A volunteer service can be most beneficial in your life. This can also be a way to express your talents and help others. Some of the ways in which you could feel quite useful would be in a medical, counseling or clergy type of organization. You may be teaching someone techniques of a sensible diet today. You will be pleased with the results of your plans.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Don't let a cranky person rule your morning; there may be more to his or her story than you know. Be attentive in your surroundings so that you catch any problems before they escalate. Keep your eye focused on new, renewed and better. Your statistical mind can be used to find better ways to improve, update or plan future goals that will help keep your family a strong unit. Today will certainly bring new inspiration. It is a good time to communicate. A new person will enter your life this afternoon and you may find some common beliefs or ideas that will promote a good friendship. You are warmly receptive and sympathetic toward particular causes and it may be the time to consider how you could help. Perhaps the family could work together as a group.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

There is a cornucopia of emotional vulnerabilities available for you to cope with today. Change is the easiest thing to do now. Acknowledge this, create a new and positive insight and then let the old and perhaps negative become a moth that flies away. Quick answers, great wit and a surplus of insights and solutions are obtainable. This is a good time to write with real zest and originality. Insert your good sense of humor as a tool to get through some of the sensitive areas that may have formerly tripped you. This is a time of new beginnings in your life. There is an urge to strike out on your own in a new direction, to take on new challenges no matter what the risks. You can be bold-perhaps headstrong; you go where angels fear to tread.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your personality and your mode of living appear to change at a moment's notice. Your attention is divided among numerous people and subjects. Be wise with your tendency to overexert your energies to help someone or to go in too many directions. Others may challenge your authority or the direction you are taking just now. Maintain a right mental attitude-the attitude of patience, sincerity and good cheer. To think rightly contributes to positive results. There is a chance to understand those around you and to have others understand you. The time is right for unexpected changes in the normal routine of family life. This evening there could be some special moments with someone you love. A sense of harmony creates a happy time.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Moods & Emotions 2

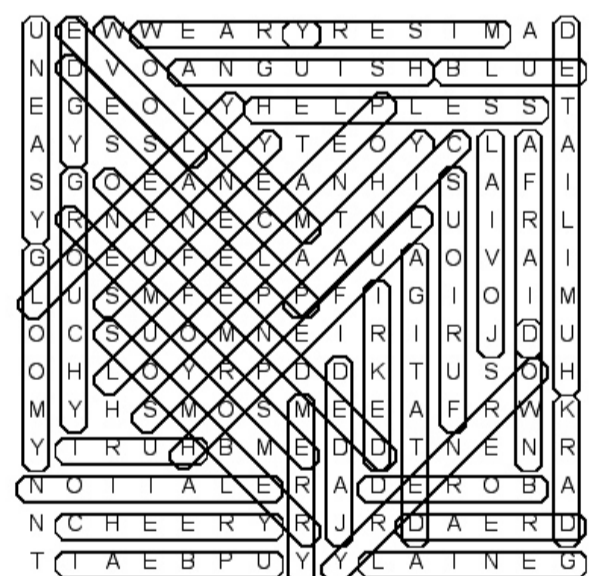
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 11 letters spell an additional word.

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

- |          |          |            |           |
|----------|----------|------------|-----------|
| AMUSED   | DISLIKE  | HORROR     | SHOCK     |
| ANNOYED  | DOUBT    | INFATUATED | SULKY     |
| ANTSY    | EMPATHY  | JOYOUS     | SULLEN    |
| ANXIOUS  | ENVY     | LEARY      | TERRIFIED |
| CARING   | EUPHORIA | PRIDE      | TRANQUIL  |
| CONTEMPT | GLUM     | RAGE       | UNCERTAIN |
| CONTENT  | GREED    | SAD        | UNHAPPY   |
| CONTRITE | GROUCHY  | SATISFIED  | WARY      |
| DELIGHT  | GUILT    | SERENITY   |           |
| DESPAIR  | HATRED   | SHAME      |           |

Yesterday's Solution

Moods & Emotions 1



- |          |            |          |          |
|----------|------------|----------|----------|
| AFRAID   | ELATION    | JADED    | PEACEFUL |
| AGITATED | FURIOUS    | JOVIAL   | PLEASED  |
| ANGUISH  | GENIAL     | LONELY   | REMORSE  |
| BLUE     | GLOOMY     | LOVE     | SOMBER   |
| BORED    | GROUCHY    | MELLOW   | SUNNY    |
| CHEERY   | HELPLESS   | MERRY    | SYMPATHY |
| DARK     | HOPEFUL    | MISERY   | UNEASY   |
| DOWN     | HUMILIATED | OFFENDED | UPBEAT   |
| DREAD    | HURT       | ORNERY   | WEARY    |
| EDGY     | IRKED      | PANIC    |          |

The hidden word is: ASTONISHMENT

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

# CLASSIFIEDS

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 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



## KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (20/07/2017 TO 26/07/2017)

SHARQIA-1	Time	FANAR-1	Time
CARS 3	11:45 AM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	12:30 PM
TISBAH ALA KHAIR	2:00 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	2:30 PM
CARS 3	4:00 PM	LONDON HEIST	4:30 PM
CARS 3	6:15 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	6:30 PM
LONDON HEIST	8:30 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	8:30 PM
TISBAH ALA KHAIR	10:30 PM	LONDON HEIST	10:30 PM
LONDON HEIST	12:30 AM	LONDON HEIST	12:30 AM

SHARQIA-2	Time	FANAR-2	Time
SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING	12:15 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	12:00 PM
SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING	3:00 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	2:00 PM
DESPICABLE ME 3	5:45 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	4:45 PM
BABY DRIVER	7:45 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	6:45 PM
BABY DRIVER	10:00 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	9:35 PM
BABY DRIVER	12:15 AM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	12:20 AM

SHARQIA-3	Time	FANAR-3	Time
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	1:00 PM	RAILROAD TIGERS	1:00 PM
DESPICABLE ME 3	1:45 PM	RAILROAD TIGERS	3:15 PM
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	3:45 PM	TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	5:30 PM
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	6:30 PM	MUNNA MICHAEL- Hindi	8:15 PM
SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING	9:15 PM	RAILROAD TIGERS	11:00 PM
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	12:05 AM	RAILROAD TIGERS	1:15 AM

MUHALAB-1	Time	MARINA-1	Time
TISBAH ALA KHAIR	12:20 PM	CARS 3	1:00 PM
SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING	2:20 PM	CARS 3	3:15 PM
FIDAA - Telugu	2:00 PM	CARS 3	5:30 PM
TISBAH ALA KHAIR	5:15 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	7:45 PM
SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING	7:15 PM	LONDON HEIST	9:45 PM
TISBAH ALA KHAIR	10:00 PM	SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING	11:45 PM
SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING	12:05 AM		

MUHALAB-2	Time	MARINA-2	Time
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	11:45 AM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	11:45 AM
CARS 3	2:30 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	2:30 PM
CARS 3	4:45 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	4:30 PM
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	7:00 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	6:30 PM
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	9:45 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	9:15 PM
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	12:30 AM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	12:05 AM

MUHALAB-3	Time	MARINA-3	Time
DESPICABLE ME 3	12:00 PM	SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING	12:15 PM
DESPICABLE ME 3	2:00 PM	SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING	3:00 PM
DESPICABLE ME 3	4:00 PM	BABY DRIVER	5:45 PM
BABY DRIVER	6:00 PM	BABY DRIVER	8:00 PM
BABY DRIVER	8:15 PM	BABY DRIVER	10:15 PM
BABY DRIVER	10:30 PM	BABY DRIVER	12:30 AM
BABY DRIVER	12:45 AM		

### FOR RENT

Flats for rent in Kheitan looks at airport road

- ◆ 3 bedrooms ◆ Saloon
- ◆ Kitchen ◆ 3 bathrooms

Free services for you and your family

Contact: 55517659 - 60414701

### URGENT!

A well-known Catering Company is hiring for the following vacancies immediately:

- Waiter
- Captain
- Head Waiter
- Location Manager

Contact: 97393038/94752333

#### CHANGE OF NAME

I, Yasmin daughter of Asmatulla Kha holder of Indian Passport No. K8489188 and Civil ID No. 293011501371 has changed my name to Yasmin Asmatullah Khan, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents.  
(C 5330) 21-7-2017

#### ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation available in Farwaniya Block 6, street 107, near Metro Center. Contact: 66625901. (C 5329)

Sharing accommodation For Filipino ONLY Farwaniya block 1, near gulfmart. Available on July 25, Contact 94418396 or 94033908 17-7-2017

#### PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	03:32
Shorook:	05:03
Duhr:	11:54
Asr:	15:30
Maghrib:	18:46
Isha:	20:14

### REQUIRED URGENTLY

#### FORMALITY REPRESENTATIVE مندوب

- Good knowledge in all works related to Sh'oun (Government and Private contracts), Baladiya, Immigration, traffic, Police and other government departments.
- Ability to read, write and speak Arabic and English fluently.
- Knowledge of MS office products

#### ACCOUNTANT

University Graduate in Accounts or commerce with minimum five years experience as accountant with a leading organization with exposure to MIS reports which includes:

- Acquaintance with Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivables, Asset Management, Payroll and Management reports
- Preparation of monthly financials (P&L, BS, cash flow), estimates and yearly budget
- Knowledge of Internal control, site audit and interaction with external Auditors
- Liaising with clients and attorneys on legal issues

Reviewing the Bid documents/contracts in Arabic and interpreting terms and conditions for the management.

#### WAITRESSES

- Good communication skills in English
- Minimum 3 years experience in catering and hotel industry.
- Filipino and Indonesian nationals are preferred.

#### ARABIC COOKS طبخ عربي

- Minimum 3 to 5 years experience in respective Bulk Cooking.
- Egyptian national preferred

Interested candidates having transferable visa may send CVs with recent photograph to the following contacts: Email: mailtotag@gmail.com or Fax: 24313152 Mobile: 60910171

### Do you have an idea for a project

## Commercial/Service/Industrial

And wish to implement it  
We offer you support

### Industrial/Commercial/Service/ Craftsman/Petrochemical

To connect to WhatsApp: 66871137

Arrival Flights on Sunday 23/7/2017				Departure Flights on Sunday 23/7/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:15	JZR	1540	Cairo	00:20
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	MSC	406	Sohag	00:30
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	MSR	2615	Cairo	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:55	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	KAC	677	Dubai	01:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	THY	773	Istanbul	01:40
JZR	539	Cairo	01:20	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:35
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	KKK	6505	Istanbul	02:55
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	AEE	943	ATH	03:15
JZR	553	Alexandria	02:10	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
QTR	1086	Doha	02:10	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:30
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	RJA	645	Amman	03:55
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	THY	753	Istanbul	04:00
AEE	942	ATH	02:25	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	QTR	1087	Doha	04:10
THY	752	Istanbul	03:05	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	417	Manila	04:20
RJA	644	Amman	03:10	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:25
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15	JZR	560	Sohag	04:45
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	RBG	550	Alexandria	05:00
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	KAC	103	London	05:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:45	QTR	1091	Doha	05:05
KAC	1544	Cairo	03:50	QTR	1077	Doha	05:35
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:50
QTR	1090	Doha	04:05	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
RBG	559	Alexandria	04:10	AE	874	Dubai	06:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	RJA	643	Amman	06:25
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	THY	771	Istanbul	06:25
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	QTR	8320	Beirut/Doha	06:50
THY	1414	TZX	05:05	JZR	238	Amman	07:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	FDB	070	Dubai	07:05
QTR	8320	Doha	05:20	JZR1	64	Dubai	07:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	501	Beirut	07:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	BAW	156	London	08:20
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50	KAC	177	Vienna	08:25
BAW	157	London	06:05	FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
KAC	678	Dubai	06:25	KAC	741	Dammam	08:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	KAC	773	Riyadh	08:35
KAC	1802	Cairo	06:35	KAC	513	Tehran	08:45
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	09:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	JZR	256	Beirut	09:00
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
JZR	1541	Cairo	07:10	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
KAC	354	Bangalore	07:50	KAC	117	New York	09:15
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	165	Rome	09:20
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	691	Muscat	09:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	JZR	534	Cairo	09:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:40
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	KAC	101	London	09:45
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
IRC	528	Ahwaz	10:25	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:25
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	153	Istanbul	10:30
SAW	703	Damascus	10:45	QTR	1071	Doha	10:35
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	MSC	416	Sohag	11:15
PAL	668	Manila	11:00	IRC	529	Ahwaz	11:25
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45	SAW	704	Damascus	11:45
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
JZR	239	Amman	12:25	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	12:45	VIZ	203	Dubai	12:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	PIA	205	Lahore	12:00

COMIC-CON FESTIVAL



Actor Sophie Turner walks onstage at Comic-Con International 2017 'Game Of Thrones' panel And Q+A Session at San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, California. — AP/AFP photos

## Thrones cast talk love as new trailer drops

"Game of Thrones" dropped a new trailer at San Diego Comic-Con Friday, showing the armies of the Seven Kingdoms gearing up for war, with an undead horde on the march. Queen Cersei warns the people in King's Landing to beware of the incoming Mother of Dragons, Daenerys Targaryen, who finally landed in Westeros in Sunday's season seven premiere. There were the usual battles, sweeping panoramas and politicking, as well as an appearance from Melisandre, who is seen counseling Daenerys that she may not be the only "chosen one."

"I believe you have a role to play, as does another," the Red Woman tells the Mother of Dragons at the close of the trailer. According to "Game of Thrones" mythology, a hero who saved humankind from the White Walkers thousands of years ago is destined to be reborn and save the world again. It is unclear who Melisandre is thinking of, but the most likely candidate would be Jon Snow, the newly crowned King in the North whom she met in season five. Since its debut in 2010, the fantasy epic has picked up 38 Emmys, more than any other fictional show, but showrunners David Benioff and D.B. Weiss announced last year it would finish with 13 episodes spread over a final two seasons.

The season seven trailer shows Petyr "Littlefinger" Baelish telling the eldest Stark daughter Sansa: "Every possible series of events is happening all at once." As this season started later than usual, it was the first ever "Game of Thrones" Comic-Con panel to take place with the show still on air and the premiere fresh in fans' minds. Nine cast members and Alfie Allen's tiny dog, Abby-took to the stage at the San Diego Convention Center, although fan favorites Peter Dinklage (Tyrion), Emilia Clarke (Daenerys) and Lena Headey (Cersei) were missing.

### Sansa is 'woke'

The conversation-moderated by Kristian Nairn, who played the tragic Hodor until last season-focused on how various romantic relationships might play out during the seven-episode penultimate season. Gwendoline Christie, who plays Brienne of Tarth, was asked how she feels about the amorous overtures from giant ginger wildling Tormund Giantsbane (Kristofer Hivju) towards her character. "What I love about Brienne of Tarth, I don't think at the forefront of her consciousness is a value system based on how men appreciate her," she said.

But she hinted that her character may be secretly enjoying the attention, despite the awkwardness. And on the subject of the "Thrones" women's attitudes to men, Sophie Turner, who plays Sansa, was asked if her character still harbored ideas of romantic love. "She's not like season one Sansa and looking for a relationship or love at the moment, she's done with that," she said. "She's always on the search for happiness but she doesn't see the world through rose-colored glasses now... She's woke now guys. She trusts no one now, man or woman, family member or not. And that's important if you play the Game of Thrones."

Jacob Anderson-who plays Grey Worm-was asked if there was the potential for a relationship with Daenerys's advisor Missandei (Nathalie Emmanuel). "There are things firing between them. I want those kids to be happy and find happiness between them, everything's so sad" he said. Season 7 premiered to record-breaking ratings-more than 10 million live tune-ins and a further six million streaming the show later. The last season averaged 25.7 million viewers per episode across all platforms, including delayed viewing, making it the most watched season of an HBO series on record. — AFP



Jobeth Wagner plays the part of Hela from the movie Thor Ragnarok during Comic-Con 2017.



Jordan Quinzon plays the character The Joker from the Batman series.

## David Lynch is the surreal deal, say 'Twin Peaks' cast

The cast of David Lynch's "Twin Peaks" revival show gushed Friday about how much they loved working with the enigmatic filmmaker and revealed some secrets about his unique directing process. Kyle MacLachlan, Naomi Watts, Tim Roth, Matthew Lillard and several others were joined for a panel on the surreal Showtime series by moderator Damon Lindelof, the showrunner for ABC's "Lost," at San Diego Comic-Con. All agreed that of all the questions they receive about the show from "Twin Peaks" fans and the media, they were most frequently asked what it was like to work with Lynch.

"He has this incredible sense of joy about him... He has this peace about him that is unlike anything I've ever experienced, and he has a vision of what he wants," Lillard said. "He's a fantastic human being," Lynch's famously surreal noir soap opera about murder in small-town America returned in May after 26 years away, for a new 18-episode run in perhaps the most eagerly anticipated television event of the year. Watts, who begged to be on the revival after starring in Lynch's 2001 neo-noir mystery "Mulholland Drive," confessed to still getting a little star-struck around him.

"You just kind of want to please him in everything you do," she said, before becoming slightly flushed and clarifying: "On set!" "He creates an incredibly imaginative world. It's so original and you just want to join that world at whatever cost," she added. "His belief in his process and his vision and his point of view is so profound and focused, and he inspires me that way because he follows this dream in his mind," added MacLachlan. "I find that inspirational in my life, to go after the thing I believe in the strongest."—AFP



Alex Waldron plays the part of Harley Quinn from the movie Suicide Squad.



Sigourney Weaver, from left, Elodie Yung, Deborah Ann Woll, and Jessica Henwick applaud on stage at the 'Marvel's The Defenders' panel on day two of Comic-Con International.

## MARVEL TV SHOWS 1ST EPISODE OF 'THE DEFENDERS' AT COMIC-CON

The head of Marvel Television surprised fans at Comic-Con Friday by showing the entire first episode of the new Netflix series "The Defenders." The show that unites superheroes Jessica Jones, Luke Cage, Daredevil and Iron Fist premieres next month. Sigourney Weaver plays the villain. Weaver and the rest of the cast, including Krysten Ritter, Mike Colter, Charlie Cox and Finn Jones, appeared during the presentation inside the San Diego Convention Center's largest exhibit hall.

Marvel Television's Jeph Loeb got a surprise himself: He received the Comic-Con Inkpot Award just as he was beginning the presentation. Comic-Con's programming director Eddie Ibrahim choked up as he presented Loeb with the award, saying his work in comics and television inspired his career path. The award recognizes achievements in sci-fi, fantasy and comics. — AP



A simulated burning of a 45-foot replica of a Viking long-ship publicizes the TV show Vikings.



(L-R) Actors Lennie James, Chandler Riggs, Danai Gurira, and Jeffrey Dean Morgan speak onstage at the "The Walking Dead" panel.

## 'Walking Dead' sets stage for war, and an elderly Rick

The zombie series "The Walking Dead" thrilled fans Friday with a preview of the all-out war to come between Rick's people and the malevolent Saviors in the hotly-anticipated eighth season. US network AMC debuted a five-minute trailer at San Diego Comic-Con showing Saviors leader Negan (Jeffrey Dean Morgan) in full swagger before cutting to all the major characters readying their weapons and troops to take him down once and for all. There was the usual feast of explosions, guns, hand-to-hand combat and zombies with axes in their heads-and a thrilling cameo by King Ezekiel's CGI tiger. Intriguingly, the teaser ended with an older, grayer version of Rick waking up in a hospital bed with a walking stick by his side, implying a huge leap forward in the narrative-or perhaps just a dramatic dream sequence. There were rousing speeches from Rick (Andrew Lincoln), Maggie (Lauren Cohan), and Ezekiel (Khary Payton), perhaps presaging a brighter future for the embattled apocalypse survivors.

"With everything we've beat, everything we've endured, everything we've risen above, everything we've become-no matter what comes next-we've won. We've already won," says Rick. Series co-creator Robert Kirkman, the man behind the comics on which the show is based, said he'd counted six explosions in the trailer alone.

### Swaggering psychopath

"We have all kinds of great stuff planned. Our next season will be very action-packed and very fast-paced," he told a packed 6,500-capacity Hall H at the San Diego Convention Center. Kirkman and his fellow executive producers were joined on stage by numerous cast members, including Melissa McBride, Lennie James, Chandler Riggs, Danai Gurira, Lincoln, Morgan, Cohan and Payton. The hall was treated to a compilation of moments from across the 99 episodes that have aired since 2010, provoking an emotional response from the panelists. "This has been the most incredible thing in my life. It's been the most incredible experi-

ence" said Lincoln, eyes welling up. Morgan was asked what he likes most and least about swaggering, psychopathic Negan, who dispatches his enemies with a baseball bat called "Lucille" covered in barbed wire. "What do I like most about him? I find him very amusing. I think he's got a great sense of humor. In these dark days a sense of humor will get you through," the 51-year-old actor responded.

"What do I like least about him? That he wears a leather jacket out in 120 degrees." Before the panel got going, showrunner Scott M. Gimple paid tribute to stuntman John Bernecker, who died after falling more than 20 feet (seven meters) on the set in Georgia earlier this month. Earlier, Hall H had observed a moment's silence for Bernecker during a Q&A for AMC's spin-off series, "Fear the Walking Dead."

### Bolder, bloodier

"Fear" is due to return from its mid-season break on September 10, finishing its third season on October 15, a week before the return of the main show. Co-created by Kirkman, the spin-off show takes place in California and Mexico from the very start of the zombie apocalypse whereas the main show started out at an unspecified later date, in Georgia. Kirkman hinted at a possible crossover between the two shows while admitting the time gap between them would be a problem. "It's really a question of timeline because 'Walking Dead' season eight is so far ahead in the timeline compared to 'Fear the Walking Dead' season three," he said. Fans have been speculating online since the spin-off show started that Daryl Dixon, a lead character in the main show played by Norman Reedus, is related to Madison Clark (Kim Dickens) from "Fear." Kirkman joked that the pair might be able to communicate via a "magical telephone."—AFP



Sydney Lang, 16, of Edmonton, Alberta, seated center, poses with cast members from "Teen Wolf" during a meet-and-greet arranged by the Make-A-Wish Foundation on day two of Comic-Con International.

## 'Teen Wolf' cast makes special appearance for Make-A-Wish

The stars of "Teen Wolf" made a special appearance at Comic-Con Friday for an audience of one. Nine members of the MTV show's cast sat down for a meet-and-greet with 16-year-old super fan Sydney Lang, who came to Comic-Con with her family thanks to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Sydney's parents, Kevin and Gwen, said it was their first family vacation together so far from home. The couple owns a small business that they closed for the first time in 26 years to come to the pop-culture convention with their daughter, who has Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Soft-spoken Sydney beamed and blushed as she walked into a room where Tyler Posey, Colton Haynes and other stars were chanting her name. The teenager's wish was to come to Comic-Con and attend the "Teen Wolf" panel, which she did on Thursday. Friday's meeting with the cast was a special surprise. She sat at a table with Posey, Haynes, Linden Ashby, Shelley Henning, Khylin Rhambo, Dylan Sprayberry, Charlie Carver, Cody Christian and Melissa Ponzio.

They chatted with Sydney about her favorite characters and episodes and asked her about her life back home in Edmonton, Ontario, Canada. Henning playfully inquired whether Sydney had

any personal connections to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and might make an introduction. Afterward, Henning said she was grateful for the chance to meet Sydney.

"It puts everything in perspective," the actress said. The Make-A-Wish Foundation brought 14 young people and their families to Comic-Con this year, curating special experiences for each. The organization says the emotional lift kids and their families get from their Wish experience often aids in healing by providing a renewed sense of hope.

Besides the Lang family's "Teen Wolf" experience, they planned to attend panels for such shows as "The Big Bang Theory" and "Doctor Who." They spent time on the convention center floor, where Sydney added to her collection of Pop! figurines. The family also zipped over to the nearby San Diego Zoo, which Sydney's younger brother, Ethan, was particularly excited about. Dad Kevin Lang said they've been on the move morning to night and having a blast. "They exceeded our expectations in the first half of the first day," Lang said of the Make-A-Wish crew. Sydney, meanwhile, was speechless. Her face-spanning smile said it all. — AP



An Iron Man modified as an Iron Renaissance Man, left, accompanies a Captain America character who became frozen in ice during the movie Captain America The First Avenger.

## MUSIC &amp; MOVIES

## Saigon brings exiles' loss and longing to the stage

A hugely moving debut drama about exile set in a Vietnamese restaurant has become a surprise hit at the world's biggest theatre festival, with standing ovations every night and the audience in tears. "Saigon" by Caroline Guiela Nguyen—whose family fled what is now Ho Chi Minh City in 1956—has been hailed for shining a light on the suffering and sacrifice of Vietnamese emigres, whose fate has long been enveloped in silence in the United States and France.

Despite playing in a small venue at the Avignon Festival in southern France, the near four-hour family saga has had critics reaching both for superlatives and their handkerchiefs. "This is a play like no other," the French daily Le Monde said, comparing its bitter-sweet melancholic nostalgia to Wong Kar-wai's classic film "In the Mood for Love." "The play ends with the line, 'This is the way we tell stories in Vietnam; with lots of tears.' Well, we love these tears that French theatre has been so long deprived of," it added.

"Saigon" tells the story of the heartbreak and longing of Vietnamese who were torn between France and their homeland when French colonial rule collapsed in the wake of military humiliation at the hands of the nationalists and communists of the Viet Minh at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. "The play is framed by two dates—1956 and 1996," Nguyen said.

## Foreign Vietnamese

"1956 was when the last of the French soldiers and colonists left Vietnam. But many Vietnamese who had French nationality left with them (below decks in steerage). They were called the 'Viet kieu', literally the foreign Vietnamese," she said. They would not be allowed back for another 40 years, having to wait until 1996 when the US lifted its embargo against Hanoi. When the teenage Nguyen went back a few years later with her mother she began to see the depth of her loss.

Bargaining with some fruit sellers in a Ho Chi Minh City market, the women could not stop laughing at the quaint way her mother spoke. Her Vietnamese no longer existed, a relic of an all but forgotten past. Like every one of her 17 cousins who



(From L) French actors Cyril Anrep, Laurent Joly, Valerie Keruzore and Martin Seve perform during a rehearsal of the play 'L'imparfait', by French director Olivier Balazuc, at the 'Chapelle des Penitents Blancs' in Avignon, during 71st Avignon international theatre festival. — AFP photos

grew up France, Nguyen does not speak Vietnamese. "Our parents so wanted to integrate that teaching their children Vietnamese was for them going backwards. They were afraid it would hold up our French." She remembers the divisions in her own extended family about whether to return or not. "Some of my aunts and uncles never wanted to go back, while others longed to end their days there."

## Haunted by lost world

Nguyen, who spent two years flying back and forth to Vietnam gathering stories, insisted that her own family history was "only a starting point" for her play. "We gathered testimony but also sounds, images and atmosphere, and from all that

our fiction was born." The play takes place in a Vietnamese restaurant in Paris in 1996. Some of the 11 actors speak Vietnamese and others French. All are haunted by a world that no longer exists.

Growing up, Nguyen said she was always aware of the gulf between Vietnamese parents and their children. Later while researching the play a Vietnamese-born mother told her, "My son is my Number One foreigner." Like the double agent hero of last year's Pulitzer prize-winning novel "The Sympathizer"—whose father was a French missionary priest—Nguyen's characters are caught between cultures, between pity and suspicion.

Unlike that scorchingly brilliant satire by her namesake Viet Thanh Nguyen, her subtle, elliptical script eschews politics,

even though her own family is almost a case study of French colonization in Asia. One of her mother's parents was Vietnamese, the other from Pondicherry, a former French outpost in southern India. Her father's side are "pieds noirs", French colonists in Algeria. "Clearly the question of colonization is always there, but to stop there would be a bit lame," Nguyen said. "What interested me was to look at people whose fates have been decided by colonization, to see what left in their bodies and in their hearts." — AFP



French actors Thomas Jubert, left, and Martin Seve perform during a rehearsal of the play 'L'imparfait', by French director Olivier Balazuc, at the 'Chapelle des Penitents Blancs'.



Syrian choreographer Ahmad Joudeh performs on the Human Rights Square in Trocadero, near the Eiffel Tower, in Paris. — AFP photos

## Syrian Billy Elliot dances his way to a new life

From Palmyra to Paris: "Syrian Billy Elliot" Ahmad Joudeh is set on showing the real image of his nation and erasing the horrors of the Islamic state group. Joudeh was invited to Paris by singer Sanga, his friend and admirer, for a special one-off performance, using a song specially written for him. Thursday's show at the Eiffel Tower was the first in what he hopes will be a series of collaborations, said the 27-year-old, savoring his first visit to the French capital.

"Actually I am trying my best to show the real image of the young Syrian people and not the fake one" projected by the Islamic State group, he explains in polished English over a beer. Joudeh has come a long way from his childhood as a Palestinian refugee growing up in a camp in Yarmuk, Syria. The story of Joudeh, who like the boy dancer in the 2000 Stephen Daldry film "Billy Elliot" realized his dream of becoming a dancer against the odds, is already well known far from his war-torn home.

He had his first break in 2014 in a television talent show "So you think you can Dance?" for young hopefuls from the Arab world. His profile rose further when, two years later, he was the subject of a Dutch television report that has clocked up millions of hits online: "Dance or Die." He has had those words tattooed in Sanskrit onto his neck, and they carry a special weight for him.

Footage of him dancing in the ancient Syrian city of Palmyra appears to have enraged the Islamic State group so much that they have threatened to kill him. The sight of him dancing in the ruins of the Roman city the Islamists captured and sacked—beheading, among others, the city's 82-year-old former head of antiquities was apparently too much for them. But the tale Joudeh told in the Dutch documentary, against a soundtrack of nearby gunfire and intercut with scenes of him dancing on rooftops, touched hearts around the world.

## Pursuing his dream

"Dance changed my life to get me from all the bad situations around me," he explained. "Even in Syria, I danced to feel free from all the chaos and destruction around me. I felt I was in a big jail." He was surrounded by the conflict, but as a refugee and a stateless citizen there seemed to be no way out. Even as a child he had to fight to pursue his dream, not least against the opposition of his own father, who could not accept his chosen path.

But for him, dance was the solution, not the problem. "When I dance, if I'm sad, I get it out. If I'm happy, I get it out." "They call me the Syrian Billy Elliot," he added. He trained for years with the main dance company in Syria at the Higher Institute for Dramatic Arts in Damascus. In his spare time, he gave dancing lessons to children. And he pursued his dream despite the war and the loss of loved ones. Each personal drama, each tragedy only fuelled his art, he said.

It was the documentary that led to the Dutch National Ballet inviting him over to join their company. While it was a wonderful opportunity, it has been difficult to adjust to life there knowing that his family was still back in Syria enduring very different conditions—especially his mother, with whom he lived until his departure for the Netherlands.

He has been training hard to catch up for the lost time during the conflict in Syria. But nine months after his arrival there, he says: "I feel guilty for being happy." But he also dreams of returning to Syria to help the people there, much as the actor Angelina Jolie has done, someone he admires for her humanitarian work. And one day, he said: "I will go back to Syria to create the Syrian national ballet." Because Syria needs art, not guns and conflict. — AFP

## Bieber not welcome to perform in China

Justin Bieber is not welcome to perform in China because of his "bad behavior," Beijing authorities have said, after the pop idol angered many Chinese in 2014 by visiting a controversial Japanese war shrine. The Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture revealed it was not a "Belieber" when it said the 23-year-old Canadian, who last played in the country in 2013, had a lot of growing up to do if he wanted to return. The statement came after Chinese fans posted comments on the agency's website demanding to know when their heart-throb would be allowed to perform in China again.

It is "inappropriate to introduce bad behavior into the performing arts" it said, calling the performer out for his antics and urging him to turn over a new leaf. "We hope Justin Bieber can improve his words and deeds in the process of growing up and become a singer people really like." The singer recently helped hit single "Despacito", originally released by Luis Fonsi in January before Bieber came out with a remix two months later, achieve 4.6 billion streams, according to the Universal Music Group. The Beijing cultural bureau did not specifically mention Bieber's 2014 visit to Tokyo's Yasukuni



This file photo shows Canadian singer Justin Bieber performing on stage at the AccorHotels Arena in Paris. — AFP

Shrine, which honors millions of mostly Japanese war dead, including convicted World War II war criminals. The shrine is seen across Asia as a symbol of Japan's perceived lack of remorse for its past imperialist aggression, under which China in particular suffered heavily. Shortly after his trip, the singer behind the hit song "Sorry" issued an apology to scandalized Chinese fans, saying he was "misled to

think the shrines were only a place of prayer."

But some have never forgiven him. "Anyone who knows and then visits the Yasukuni Shrine is annoying," a user called Qiao Ating wrote on China's Twitter-like Weibo website on Friday. Another Weibo post agreed: "It's good he's not coming. He is a bad boy." Fan Jiayi, a jewellery designer in Shanghai, told AFP she supported the authorities' stance, saying: "I do not think the government would reject him unless there was a big problem." Bieber is due to perform in Hong Kong in September as part of his "Purpose Tour".

Big-name Western acts have in the past been banned from performing in mainland China over political gestures. Maroon 5 cancelled a concert in 2015 after authorities refused permission because a band member had met the Dalai Lama, whom Beijing views as a separatist threat. Later the same year American rock group Bon Jovi—who have included imagery of the Dalai Lama in a show—abruptly scrapped two dates in Beijing and Shanghai.—AFP

## Cat Stevens channels Sufi poet for new folk album

Cat Stevens has channeled the Sufi poet Yunus Emre for a song about divine love as he announced his latest album since his return to Western folk pop. "See What Love Did To Me," released on Thursday, is the first single off "The Laughing Apple," which will come out September 15 and mark Stevens' fourth album since he ended a three-decade retreat from music following his conversion to Islam. The song is dominated by the gentle and joyous folk guitar that characterized the English artist's hits in the 1970s such as "Wild World," "Father and Son" and "Peace Train."

Yet Stevens, who also goes by the name Yusuf, adds in global influences. An African lute subtly accompanies his guitar around the chorus, while a bridge halfway through the song reaches into the synthesized string orchestrations of Bollywood. Stevens sings of love as he looks at the miracles of nature and the force of the divine. "I was a blindfolded bumble-bee / And now I see what God did for me / He made me see life flowery," Stevens sings.

In a statement, Stevens said the lyrics were inspired by verses from Yunus Emre, one of the classic poets from Islam's mystical movement of Sufism. Emre, who was born in the 13th century, had a formative influence on the development of Turkish, choosing to write in the language rather than in Farsi or Arabic, which were more common for Sufis. Born in London to a Greek Cypriot father and Swedish mother, Stevens won a wide international following in the early 1970s but said he felt a need for a greater spiritual path. Stevens, who turned 69 on Friday, converted in 1977 and changed his name to Yusuf Islam. He gave few concerts for the next three decades before returning with an album in 2006. — AFP



This file photo shows Yusuf Islam/Cat Stevens performing at the 2016 Global Citizen Festival in Central Park to end extreme poverty by 2030 at Central Park in New York City. — AFP

## Del Rey's still got summer blues, but lusts for life

Lana Del Rey emerged on the music scene as a haunting figure. She was "Born to Die," in the words of her breakthrough album, and darkness permeated her sound and worldview. Five years after "Born to Die," the prolific singer on Friday put out her fourth major-label album, whose title—"Lust for Life"—would appear to show the inverse mindset. Yet for the 32-year-old singer, sorrow and joy are intricately interconnected. On "Lust for Life," she enjoys the world's pleasures all the while feeling cursed by their ephemerality.

Del Rey carries the album through her quickly recognizable voice, breathy and coquettish yet sauntering with echoes of Nancy Sinatra. "Lust for Life" builds on Del Rey's signature cinematic style, melancholic with an aura of classic Hollywood, yet the album also shows touches of hip-hop swagger—most apparent in seamless appearances by rapper ASAP Rocky. The title track—no relation to punk icon Iggy Pop's classic "Lust for Life"—brings in emerging R&B superstar The Weeknd, who in his mellifluous falsetto at times reaches a higher range than Del Rey.

Even if the song celebrates life, it opens with a dark allusion to a Hollywood suicide before finding joy in the here and now. "Take off / Take off all your clothes," Del Rey intones, as The Weeknd sings, "They say only the good die young / That just ain't right." Del Rey teams up with other major names on the album. Stevie Nicks, her sandy voice smoothly complementing Del Rey's, joins for "Beautiful People, Beautiful Problems," while Sean Lennon brings a gentle beauty to "Tomorrow Never Came."

## Activism through melancholy

If "Lust for Life" largely stays true to the sound honed by Del Rey, the New York-born singer reaches into new territory as she speaks out, in her own way, on politics. Del Rey has hardly become a protest singer. But she becomes a quietly effective voice in turning her forlorn sound into a reflection on the America of Donald Trump. On "God Bless America - And All Beautiful Women In It,"

Del Rey's gloominess gives way to uplift as she finds solidarity in the masses of women who took to the streets after the shock of Trump's election.

"May you stand proud and strong / Like Lady Liberty, shining all night long," Del Rey sings. The often dour Del Rey is again startlingly optimistic as she reaches into history on "When the World Was at War We Kept Dancing." "Is it the end of an era? Is it the end of America? No, it's only the beginning. If we hold on to hope, we will have a happy ending," she sings. In a recent interview with Elle UK, Del Rey said it was impossible in the current moment to escape politics: "It would be weird to be making a record during the past 18 months and not comment."



This file photo shows Lana Del Rey on arrival for the ninth annual Grammy Week Event presented by The Recording Academy Producers & Engineers Wing in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Yet her lyricism more often takes up loneliness than community. The singer who scored an early hit with "Summertime Sadness" returns to similar territory on "Summer Bummer," while "13 Beaches" relates her struggles to find a quiet place in the sand away from paparazzi. Del Rey closes the album with "Get Free," a reflection on the clash between gloom and her outreach to the world. "Sometimes it feels like I've got a war in my mind," she sings. "I want to get off, but I keep riding the ride." — AFP

A R T



In this photo, artist Catalin Badarau speaks during an interview with the Associated Press in Bucharest, Romania.



In this photo, photographs of prisoners are projected on walls at a former communist prison in Pitesti, Romania.



In this photo, works not yet completed by artist Catalin Badarau sits in a glass enclosure in his studio.



In this photo, works not yet completed by artist Catalin Badarau hang in his studio.

## Art exhibit at Romanian ex-prison show horrors of communism

An art exhibition went on display Friday at a former Romanian prison where communists tortured and killed political prisoners in a gruesome re-education program. The collection of 11 sculptures at the Pitesti Prison, southern Romania, aims to remind visitors about the horrors that took place there from 1949 to 1951. The 3.5 meter-tall grey, polystyrene figures depict detainees who were tortured and humiliated to force them to become communists.

Several thousand prisoners who had fallen foul of the communist regime underwent what was known as "The Pitesti Experiment." Prisoners were forced to stare at lightbulbs, eat feces, given electric shocks and head butt each other. They were also encouraged to inform on each other and torture fellow inmates. About 100 died from mistreatment. Alexandru Bogdanovici, who was imprisoned because he'd been a member of the fascist Iron Guard, was co-opted to re-educate fellow prisoners.

But the prison commander later considered him disloyal and he was beaten, denied water and eventually died. For the exhibit, artist Catalin Badarau sculpted contorted, anonymous figures which lie in hallways or in former prison cells. One figure stands awkwardly on his head, others have their hands tied behind their backs or are covering their faces. Badarau says the oversized figures, of a mottled grey color which is similar to the prison walls and floors "show the fragility of human beings."

"They were strong people when they went into prison but they came out physical wrecks," he told The Associated Press. "But conversely, they became spiritual giants." Among the detainees that survived Pitesti are Romanian Orthodox priest Gheorghe Calciu-Dumitreasa who spent 21 years as a political



In these photos statues depicting a tormented prisoner is placed at a former communist prison.— AP photos



prisoner and Corneliu Coposu, an anti-communist politician and well-known dissident who died in 1995. An estimated 500,000 people, members of the pre-communist intellectual and political elite, were locked up in political prisons until a general amnesty was declared in 1964.

Similar art exhibitions will be held this year in other cities that housed political prisons or had anti-communist revolts,

sponsored by the Nasui Collection & Gallery and a government institute tasked with investigating crimes of the communist era. Badarau said his sculptures challenge people to ask themselves: "What would I have done? Would I have become a victim or a torturer, or both?" — AP

## Dali's trademark moustache intact at '10 past 10'

Surrealist master Salvador Dali's trademark moustache is in perfect shape in its "ten past ten" position, officials said Friday, a day after his remains were exhumed to settle a paternity claim. "I was very anxious about what I would see," said Narcis Bardalet, the forensic expert who embalmed Dali back in 1989 and who was at his grave the moment he was exhumed on Thursday night for DNA test.

"I was absolutely stunned. It was like a miracle...his moustache appeared at 10 past 10 and his hair was intact," Bardalet added during an interview with the public television station TVE1, referring to the positions of the hands on a clock. The arduous task of exhumation involved removing a slab weighing more than a ton that covered his tomb at the Dali Theatre-Museum in Figueras in north-eastern Spain where the eccentric artist was born. Bardalet was one of only a handful of people including a judge allowed to watch the removal of samples from Dali's remains.

"It was a moving moment for him and for us," Lluís Penuelas Reixach, the secretary general of the Salvador Dali Foundation, told a press conference, in a reference to Bardalet. DNA samples were taken from Dali's hair, nail and two long bones, he added. A Madrid court last month granted Pilar Abel a DNA test to determine whether she is Dali's child, as she claims. Abel, a 61-year-old who long worked as a psychic in Catalonia, says her mother had a relationship with the artist when she worked in Cadaques, a picturesque Spanish port where the painter lived for years.

If Abel is confirmed as Dali's only child, she could be entitled to 25 percent of the huge fortune and heritage of one of the most celebrated and prolific painters of the 20th century, according to her lawyer Enrique Blanquez. But the Dali Foundation's lawyer has indicated Abel could get a big bill if her claims are proven false. "If Pilar Abel is not Dali's daughter then we must ask this woman

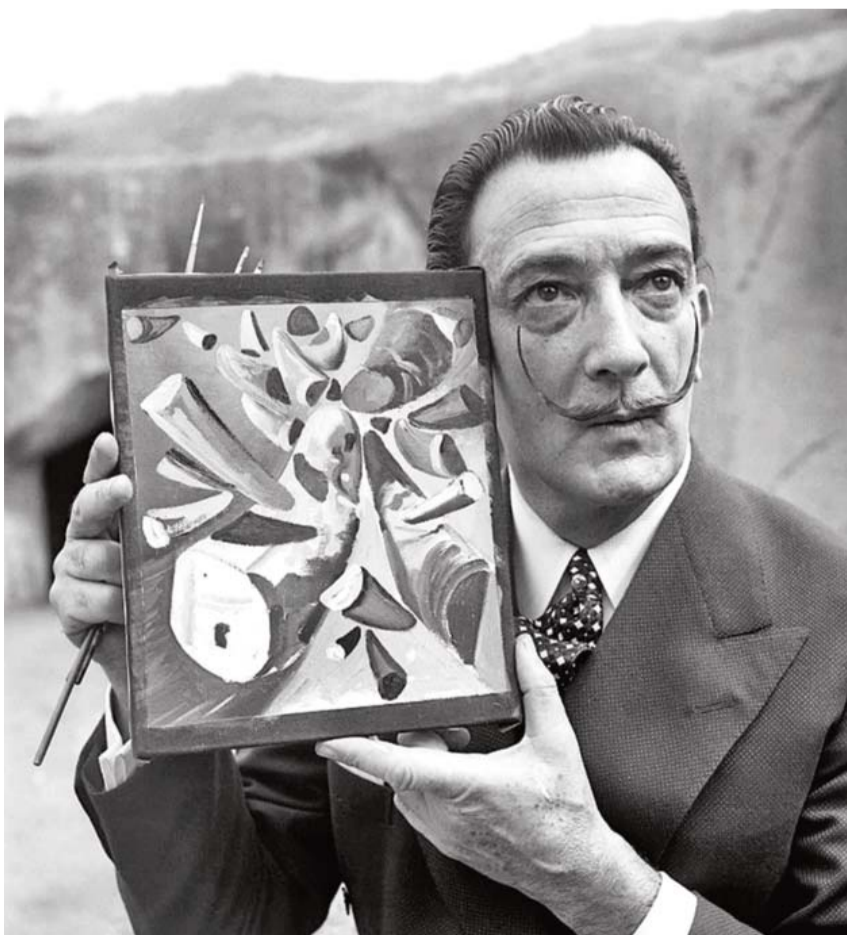
to reimburse the costs of the exhumation," said Albert Segura.

### Act of violence

Before work in the crypt began on Thursday, mobile phones were put in a deposit and a marquee was installed under the museum's glass dome to prevent any photography or video from drones. A crowd of onlookers gathered outside the elaborate museum of Dali's work to watch as police escorted the experts into the building, which is topped by a huge metallic dome decorated with egg shapes. Dali designed the building himself. The Dali Foundation had tried to fight off the exhumation with an appeal, but there was not enough time for all parties to present their case, a court spokesman said.

Penuelas, the secretary general of the foundation, said the exhumation was "almost an act of violence against a dead person." "The foundation will reopen the crypt in a private act to restore the integrity of Salvador Dali's body," he added. Abel has already provided a saliva sample for comparison and the results are expected within a matter of weeks. The foundation blasted the court's decision to order the exhumation, saying in a statement that it was based only on Abel's claim that her mother once had a relationship with Dali.

The foundations said that before carrying out an "invasive" exhumation of Dali's remains, Abel's DNA should have been compared to her brother's. If they both matched, it would mean they shared a common father, who was not Dali. "The court ruling that ordered the exhumation lacked any basis," the statement said. Dali's estate, which includes properties and hundreds of paintings, is entirely in the hands of the Spanish state. The foundation says it was worth nearly 400 million euros (\$460 million) at the end of 2016. — AFP



This picture shows Spanish painter Salvador Dali, one of the most popular painters of the 20th century, showing one of his painting few moments after finishing it in the Vincennes zoo, next Paris. — AFP



In this photo, Muhannad Khaled Omar, shaves an image of the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on the back of a customer's head.

## Syrian barber creates portraits on clients' heads

In a city full of hair stylists, Muhannad Khaled Omar stands out. Omar, 26, is a Palestinian-Syrian stylist known for shaving celebrity portraits into clients' hair. On a recent Friday at his Beirut salon, Omar shaved a portrait of US President Donald Trump into the hair of a young customer's head. With a painter's precision, he created the contours of the president's face, cutting at various lengths to give the image depth. A spray of gold hair coloring added to the effect.

"I started this profession when I was in 9th grade," Omar said. "I was studying at the same time, learning how to cut hair. I've had a talent since I was young, a talent for drawing." Omar was raised in the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus, Syria, but moved to Lebanon in 2011 after a crackdown against demonstrations in Syria grew violent. Omar said his vocation in hair styling is an extension of his passion for art. "I started my baccalaureate studies and I studied psychology. When I came here to Lebanon, I mixed psychology, cutting hair and drawing into one profession," he said.

Hair salons are a staple in every Middle East city, a place for friends to gather and gossip ahead of the weekends. They are usually segregated by sex. Omar manages his own salon in the Bourj al-Barajneh refugee camp in south Beirut, established in 1948 to accommodate Palestinians made refugees by the creation of the state of Israel. The camp's population has swelled with the influx of Syrian refugees - some of them also Palestinians - who have come to escape the violence of the war next door. The United Nations says Lebanon is home to 1 million Syrian refugees.

Syrians are vulnerable to workplace and housing abuses in Lebanon because they lack basic legal protections. Many find it easier to live and work in Palestinian camps. Omar said he hopes that someone will invest in his work one day and sponsor him to immigrate to Europe. "I want to start something new, but not in this area, something outside of the Arab world, to show that we are capable, we can produce things," he said. — AP

FEATURES



Kermit the Frog waves from his position at The Jim Henson Exhibition at the Museum of the Moving Image in New York. — AFP photos

A journalist plays with a puppet at The Jim Henson Exhibition.

Big Bird (L), Cookie Monster (2nd L), Elmo (3rd L), and Prairie Dawn Muppet are displayed at The Jim Henson Exhibition.

# NY museum honors Kermit the Frog and his creator

Jim Henson, the relentless innovator who gave the world Kermit the Frog and "The Muppet Show," is getting a permanent tribute in New York, nearly 30 years after his death. If rarely seen on camera, Henson lived and breathed television, hooking adult Americans on puppets, turning puppetry into prime-time entertainment and for 25 years gave life to Kermit, the world's most famous puppet.

ishingly breadth of his career. The exhibition brings together more than 300 objects, among them a Kermit the Frog, and more than 180 items bequeathed to the museum by the Henson family. When Henson came to see puppetry as a serious art form, inspired partly by a trip to Europe in 1958, puppets at that time in America were for children, said Barbara Miller, curator of "The Jim Henson Exhibition."

which ran from 1976 to 1981, defined a generation and inspired eight feature-length films from 1979 to 2014.

**'Innovate'**

But unusually, Henson walked away when the show was still in its prime, although he continued to give voice and movement to Kermit until his sudden death from pneumonia aged 53 in 1990. "He was worried he was going to start repeating himself. The last thing my dad would want is that Kermit just keeps doing the same thing," son Brian explained in a recent interview with The Hollywood Reporter. "My dad's number one thing was don't repeat yourself. Innovate. Do something new."

Henson demonstrated that innovation time and again with short, Oscar-nominated 1965 surrealist film "Time Piece," then with "Dark Crystal," "Fraggle Rock" and "Labyrinth" starring Davie Bowie. Each time, he created a new universe made possible by advances in technology. The purpose of the exhibition is not only to showcase his work but to illustrate "how things happened and what the creative processes were," Miller said.

"I wanted people coming in with an idea of who Jim Henson is and leaving with a more complex idea of who he is and maybe more questions than they had when they came in," she explained. A traveling version of the exhibition is on view at the Museum of Pop Culture in Seattle and will travel the United States and the world over the next five years. "We know 'The Muppets,' we know the characters on 'Sesame Street,' maybe a couple of other things-but one of the goals is to really deepen our understanding of Jim Henson as an artist, as a creative thinker, as an experimental filmmaker," said Miller. "And really see a bigger picture of him as a creator." — AFP



Miss Piggy is displayed at The Jim Henson Exhibition.

Not only did he create "The Muppet Show" and several of Kermit's contemporaries, he gave birth to Elmo, Big Bird, Bert and Ernie of "Sesame Street" fame, "Fraggle Rock" and movies "Dark Crystal" (1982) and "Labyrinth" (1986). On Saturday, the Museum of the Moving Image in Queens opens a permanent exhibition exploring Henson's work, challenging visitors to look beyond his most famous creations at the aston-

"The work and the projects that he developed-they were always fighting against this notion that puppets are just for kids," she said. "The Muppet Show" was obviously the most successful way that he broke that barrier. It was programmed as prime time on Sunday nights. It was family hour so it was everybody." Merging comedy, fantasy, poetry, music and song, it was a surprising blend of weekly US television show



Journalists get a preview of The Jim Henson Exhibition.



Melissa Andresko and Ross Mabon pose for their wedding photographer at the Second Bank of the United States in Philadelphia. — AP photos



Melissa Ihle holds her wedding dress as she leaves an entrance to the Second Bank of the United States.



A Revolutionary War re-enactor leads members of the public in a march in front of the Second Bank of the United States, as Melissa Andresko has wedding pictures taken.

# Something old: Historic bank's beauty lures brides-to-be

The Second Bank of the United States might not be Philadelphia's top tourist draw, having to compete with neighbors like Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell, but its regal architecture is luring a whole different type of visitor: wedding photographers and soon-to-be brides and grooms. The Greek Revival-style bank is one of the most popular places for wedding photos in the city, so much so that the National Park Service set up a permit office to accommodate wedding photo shoot requests.

Kaitlyn Daly, 25, of Vineland, New Jersey, thought the spot was perfect for her February wedding photos. But she had to convince her husband, Michael Daly, 29, who was pushing for pictures atop the Philadelphia Museum of Art steps, which Sylvester Stallone bounded up in the "Rocky" movies. "My husband is a huge Rocky fan," Daly said. "He was like 'we have to, we have to get a photo on the Rocky steps,' and I was not sold on the idea."

She came upon the bank while researching popular locations for wedding photo shoots, and her husband was persuaded. "It's a beautiful piece of history in Philly," she said. The Second Bank of the US served as the nation's financial hub, beginning in 1816 under a 20-year charter. It was designed by architect William Strickland, who based the design on the Parthenon. Construction finished around 1824.

It now houses the "People of Independence" exhibit, a collection of over 150 portraits of 18th and 19th-century leaders, including the country's earliest presidents. It's a staid counterpoint to the bustle and excitement of the portraits being taken outside. Independence National Historical Park issued over a dozen wedding shoot permits at the bank in June, its busiest month for wedding shoots and about 400 permits in 2016, according to park ranger Adam Duncan. But the number is likely much higher because not all couples apply for a permit. "Some people aren't aware that it is a part of the national park here," Duncan said.

On a recent Saturday, wedding parties filed onto the lawn of the south facade awaiting their photo op, while colonial re-enactors marched nearby, accompanied by fife and drum, and groups of tourists milled about. Melissa Andresko, 41, in a blush pink Maggie Sottero gown and her husband Ross Mabon, 43, a native of Scotland wearing a traditional kilt, posed on the steps as their photographer snapped away. The couple, who now live in Allentown, Pennsylvania, set out to find a location that matched their vintage Hollywood glam-themed wedding. The bank "just took our breath away," Andresko said. — AP

Yifat Ayalon and Andrew Weinstein in Philadelphia.



# Lifestyle

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MOSCOW: Visitors enjoy a wheat field with poppies installed during the Flower Jam Festival on the Revolution Square next to the State Historical Museum in downtown Moscow. — AFP

## Linkin Park's Bennington, Chris Cornell: Friends united in tragedy



In this file photo, Chester Bennington of Linkin Park performs during the iHeartRadio Live Series in Burbank, California.

Linkin Park frontman Chester Bennington killed himself on the birthday of his late friend Chris Cornell of Soundgarden, highlighting the close friendship between the two troubled singers. The coroner's office confirmed Friday that Bennington died by hanging himself, with an employee of his Los Angeles residence finding his body on a belt attached to his bedroom door. Bennington did not leave a suicide note but a half-empty bottle of alcohol was in the room when the employee arrived Thursday, the coroner's office said.

After the initial shock, a number of fans pointed out on social media that Thursday would have been the 53rd birthday of Cornell, who similarly died from hanging in May and like Bennington had spent his life combatting drug and alcohol problems. Bennington had toured with Cornell and sang Leonard Cohen's classic "Hallelujah" at his funeral. Linkin Park guitarist and songwriter Mike Shinoda, in an interview shortly after Cornell's death, said Bennington had been so affected that he could not keep his composure during a pre-concert sound-check.

"Chester couldn't even make it through the song. He was getting halfway through and getting choked up," Shinoda told Radio.com. After Cornell's death, Bennington said that the singer "inspired me in many ways you could never have known." "Your talent was pure and unrivaled. Your voice was joy and pain, anger and forgiveness, love and heartache all

wrapped up into one," he said in the tribute posted by Cornell's family on Facebook.

"I suppose that's what we all are. You helped me understand that," he said. Cornell's widow has cast doubt on whether the Soundgarden singer intentionally committed suicide, saying his judgment may have been impaired by his anxiety medication.

### Move to name 'Linkin Park'

Bennington died days before Linkin Park was set to tour, with the band set to join other bands of its era including Blink-182 next week at the Citi Field baseball stadium in New York. Promoter Live Nation said Friday that the tour was canceled, with tickets to be refunded. Linkin Park was one of the key bands in the movement of nu metal, blending Bennington's angst-ridden, raw vocals with pop structure and rapping by Shinoda.

The band won a runaway success with its debut "Hybrid Theory," which became the top-selling album in the United States in 2001. Band lore said that the rockers, after testing a series of monikers, named themselves after Lincoln Park in Santa Monica, California, changing the spelling to stand out on the internet. In the wake of Bennington's death, a fan petition asked the sun-kissed city on the Pacific Ocean to change the spelling formally.

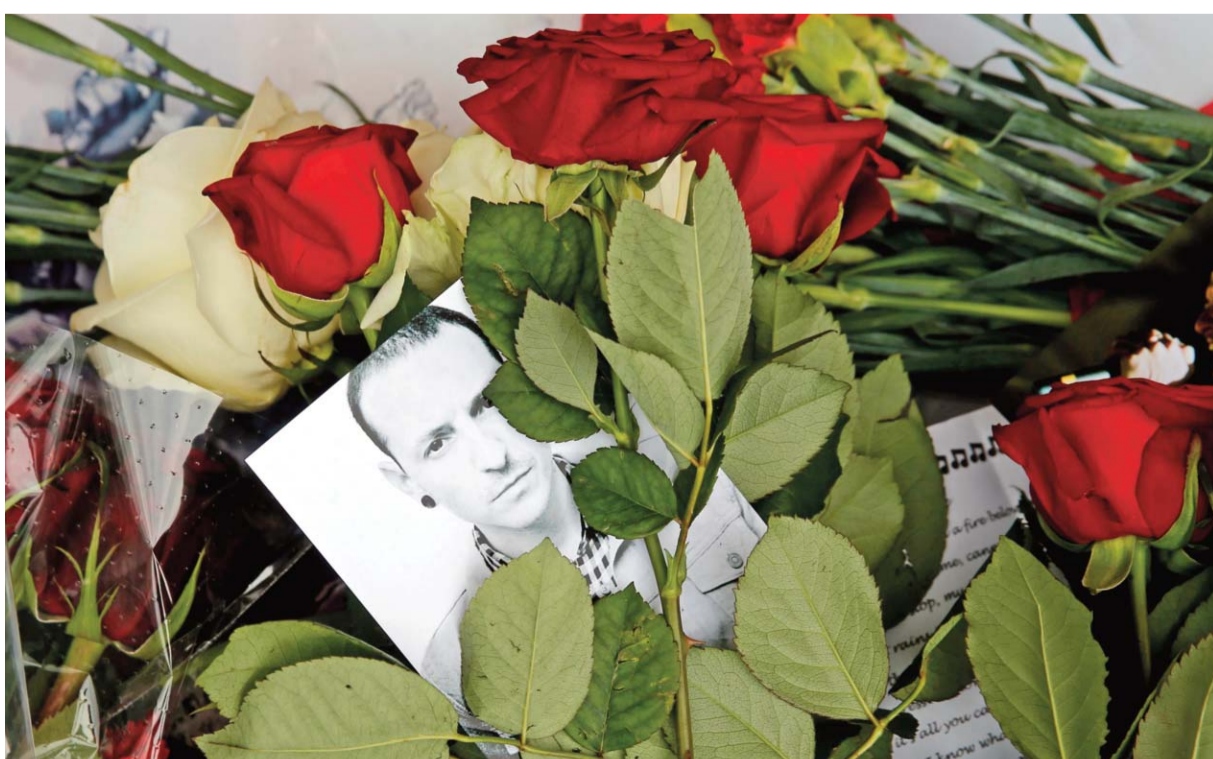
Petition leader Sarah Rose said she had listened to Linkin

Park in middle school to cope with bullying. "For a large faction of people in my generation, Linkin Park's music helped those who felt alienated find voice and strength," she wrote to the city council on petition site Care2, quickly nearing her goal of 5,000 signatures. She noted that plenty of other monuments already stood to the park's original namesake-Civil War president Abraham Lincoln.

### Ex-bandmates mourn

Among tributes to Bennington, baseball fans at the Los Angeles Dodgers stadium heard organist Dieter Ruehle play a rendition of one of Linkin Park's most recognizable songs, "Numb." Bennington had also known another major grunge singer, Scott Weiland, who died of an overdose in December 2015. Before Weiland's death, Bennington had temporarily taken over as frontman of his band Stone Temple Pilots.

While stunned members of Linkin Park were working on a band statement on Bennington's death, Stone Temple Pilots saluted him as "an incredible human being." "A beacon of light and hope is what you will always be to us," Stone Temple Pilots said in a statement. "We love you Chester. We will miss you. — AFP



A picture shows red roses and a picture of Linkin Park frontman Chester Bennington laid in front of the US embassy in central Moscow in memory of Bennington.



Banners showing photographs of singer Chester Bennington, the frontman for the rock band Linkin Park, are displayed on the front of the Warner Bros. — AP/AFP photos