

Qatar crisis puts spotlight on US military base



Turkey throws its support behind Qatar



Thiem knocks Djokovic out of French Open



Imsak Fajr Shorook Duhr Asr Maghrib Isha
03:03 03:13 04:48 11:47 15:21 18:46 20:18

GUNMEN, SUICIDE BOMBERS STORM IRAN'S PARLIAMENT

TWELVE KILLED; IS CLAIMS FIRST ATTACKS IN IRAN



Min 28°
Max 47°
High Tide 10:55
Low Tide 05:08 & 18:16



DUBAI: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrived in Dubai yesterday on a brotherly visit. Upon arrival, His Highness the Amir was received by the UAE's Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai and Minister of Finance Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum and other top officials. — KUNA

GULF RIVALS NOT SEEKING QATAR 'REGIME CHANGE'

AMIR SHUTTLES FROM UAE TO QATAR TO RESOLVE RIFT

DUBAI: A senior Emirati official insisted yesterday that Gulf Arab states were not seeking regime change in Doha, as tensions built in a bitter feud between Qatar and its neighbors. Speaking to AFP in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates' state minister for foreign affairs Anwar Gargash accused Qatar of being "the main champion of extremism and terrorism in the region". But he also said measures taken against Qatar this week by Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other Arab nations were not aimed at seeking new leadership in Doha.

"This is not about regime change this is about change of policy, change of approach," Gargash said. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE and Bahrain announced

on Monday they were cutting diplomatic ties and closing air, sea and land links with Qatar, giving Qataris within their borders two weeks to leave. The four countries have suspended all flights to and from Qatar, pulled their ambassadors from Doha and ordered Qatari diplomats to leave.

Riyadh and its allies accuse Qatar of supporting extremist groups and of serving the interests of regional arch-rival Iran, claims Doha has strongly rejected. The dispute has sparked the worst diplomatic crisis in the Arab world in years and raised fears it will cause further instability in an already-volatile region.

Continued on Page 13

TEHRAN: Gunmen and suicide bombers stormed Iran's parliament and the shrine of its revolutionary leader yesterday, killing 12 people in the first attacks in the country claimed by the Islamic State group. Dozens were injured in the attacks, which targeted two of Iran's most potent symbols: its parliament complex in central Tehran and the mausoleum of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini who led the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The standoff lasted around five hours before all the gunmen holed up in parliamentary office buildings were killed. IS released a video of the attackers from inside the building via its Amaq propaganda agency—a rare claim of responsibility while an attack was still going on. The Sunni jihadists of IS consider Shiite Iran to be apostates, and Tehran is deeply involved in fighting the group in both Syria and Iraq. The assaults began mid-morning when four gunmen burst into the parliament complex in the centre of Tehran, killing a security guard and one other person, according to the ISNA news agency.

An interior ministry official said they were dressed as women and entered through the visitors' entrance. One eventually exploded a suicide vest while the others were killed by security forces. At roughly the same time, two assailants entered the grounds of the Khomeini mausoleum, killing a gardener and wounding several other people. One detonated a suicide vest, while the other was shot dead. It was not clear whether the shrine attackers were women, as earlier reported, or just wearing female clothing. Iran's emergency services said a total of 12 people were killed in the two attacks and 43 wounded.

Continued on Page 13



TEHRAN: Iranian policemen evacuate a child from the parliament building in Tehran yesterday during an attack on the complex. — AFP

TABTABAI FUMES AS NA WINDS UP

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouk Al-Ghanem said yesterday the Assembly term will wind up today after debating the state budget and several other issues. He said that the Amiri decree to close the Assembly term has been signed and that lawmakers will be hosted at dinner by HH the Amir. Ghanem's statements came after the National Assembly failed to hold yesterday's session due to a lack of quorum amid

accusations by opposition MP Waleed Al-Tabtabai that the issue was deliberate to prevent debating a motion to reduce the price of petrol.

Tabtabai said that he and a number of lawmakers reject ending the Assembly term today before debating two motions calling to reduce the price of petrol by scrapping the latest hike and another calling to scrap interest on loans to pensioners from the social security agency.

Continued on Page 13

DEBRIS FROM MYANMAR PLANE FOUND

MILITARY PLANE WITH 120 ABOARD GOES MISSING

YANGON: Debris has been found in the sea near where a Myanmar military plane went missing with more than 100 soldiers and their families on board yesterday, a local official and air force source said. Navy ships and aircraft had been searching since the afternoon when the plane lost contact with air traffic controllers. Most of those on board were thought to be women and children who were travelling from the southern city of Myeik to Yangon.

"Now they have found pieces of the damaged plane in the sea 136 miles away from Dawei city," said Naing Lin Zaw, a tourism official in Myeik, citing the military and adding that they were still searching the sea. An air force source confirmed to AFP that a navy search and rescue ship had found debris in the sea an hour's flight south of Yangon, Myanmar's commercial capital. The commander in chief's office said the plane lost contact at about 1:35 pm off Myanmar's southern coast.

A spokesman from the military's information team said two-thirds of passengers on board were women and children. "Some were on their way for medical checkups and to attend school," the colonel in Naypyidaw said, refusing to confirm what rescuers had found and adding the search was ongoing.

There was conflicting information about the number of people on board. Giving an updated figure, the commander in chief's office said 106 passengers were on board—soldiers and family members—along with 14 crew. Several navy ships and air force planes were sent to search for the aircraft, which was flying at an altitude of more than 18,000 feet. It is monsoon season in Myanmar but there were no reports of bad weather at the time the plane went missing.

The plane was a Y-8F-200 four-engine turboprop, a Chinese-made model still commonly used by Myanmar's military for transporting cargo. The former military junta bought many of the aircraft from Myanmar's giant neighbor during their 50 years of isolated rule, when they were squeezed by Western sanctions. A former executive at the aviation ministry said many of the aircraft in Myanmar's fleet were old and decrepit. "Myanmar air force has (a) very bad safety performance," he said, asking to remain nameless.

However the army said the missing plane was delivered in March last year and had logged 809 flying hours. Soldiers guarding the military base at Yangon airport refused to speak to AFP journalists. — AFP



SITTWE: Photo shows a Myanmar Air Force Shaanxi Y-8 transport aircraft being unloaded at Sittwe airport in Rakhine state. The plane is similar to the aircraft carrying over 100 people that went missing between the southern city of Myeik and Yangon yesterday. — AFP

TRUMP TAPS WRAY FOR FBI

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump tapped respected lawyer Christopher Wray to be his new FBI director yesterday, on the eve of potentially explosive testimony on alleged Russian election interference by the agency's ousted Chief James Comey. The former federal prosecutor was nominated to fill the post left vacant one month ago by Comey, who is set to be grilled by lawmakers Thursday over allegations the president sought to interfere with the FBI's Russia probe before sacking him.

"I will be nominating Christopher A Wray, a man of impeccable credentials, to be the new Director of the FBI. Details to follow," Trump tweeted. Wray served as assistant attorney general in charge of the Justice Department's criminal division under president George W Bush, from 2003 to 2005, working closely with the FBI. He will have limited power to influence the agency's Russia investigation, which was placed in the hands of an independent prosecutor-former FBI director Robert Mueller-following Comey's dismissal.

Trump's announcement was timed a day ahead of Comey's highly-anticipated testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee on the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 US elections and possible collusion with Trump's campaign. Comey is expected to dispute Trump's claim that the then-FBI chief told him multiple times that he was not under investigation, CNN reported, citing sources familiar with Comey's thinking. But Comey will also be pressed over reports, citing private notes he wrote, that in three meetings and phone calls in January and February, Trump urged him to halt or ease up on the Russia probe's focus on his former national security advisor Michael Flynn.

In addition, media reports say he pressured several top officials, including Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, to intervene in the investigation on Flynn's behalf. Coats is one of three officials com-



Christopher Wray

ing under the spotlight in hearings taking place yesterday, along with National Security Agency head Mike Rogers and interim FBI Director Andrew McCabe. In a statement late Tuesday, a spokesman for Coats said he "has never felt pressured by the president or anyone else in the administration to influence any intelligence matters or ongoing investigations."

No definitive evidence of collusion between Trump's campaign and Russia has yet come to light, and there have not been any formal accusations that Trump sought to obstruct the investigation. But the allegations have drawn comparison to the 1970s Watergate scandal, in which president Richard Nixon, facing possible impeachment over obstruction of justice charges, was forced to resign. If his nomination is approved by the Senate, Wray will take hold of an agency generally dismayed at Trump's treatment of Comey and concerned about the possible politicization of the Russia investigation.

The FBI Agents Association had urged Trump to nominate someone who has worked in their ranks. Wray will also be partnered with Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

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KIDS AND RAMADAN

By Reham El-Sayed

Design Thinking is a human-centered process for solving big problems such as dealing with education, hunger, or providing shelter to the poor. The first step of Design Thinking is 'Empathy'. Empathy is not the same as sympathy, which is feeling sorry for others. Empathy means feeling what someone else feels. In practical terms, to build empathy we must learn to be great observers and to ask the right questions with the aim of defining problems and "ideating" finding solutions, testing them, then making changes to better serve the "user".

Ramadan is a great time to teach our children about empathy; fasting from dawn to sunset, feeling hunger, true hunger helps as a reminder of those who are less fortunate and to spiritualize our fight against hunger and poverty. The core of fasting according to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is not merely to give up self indulgence but also to feel the need of one's brother as your own, to gain sincerity and God-consciousness that translates to action.

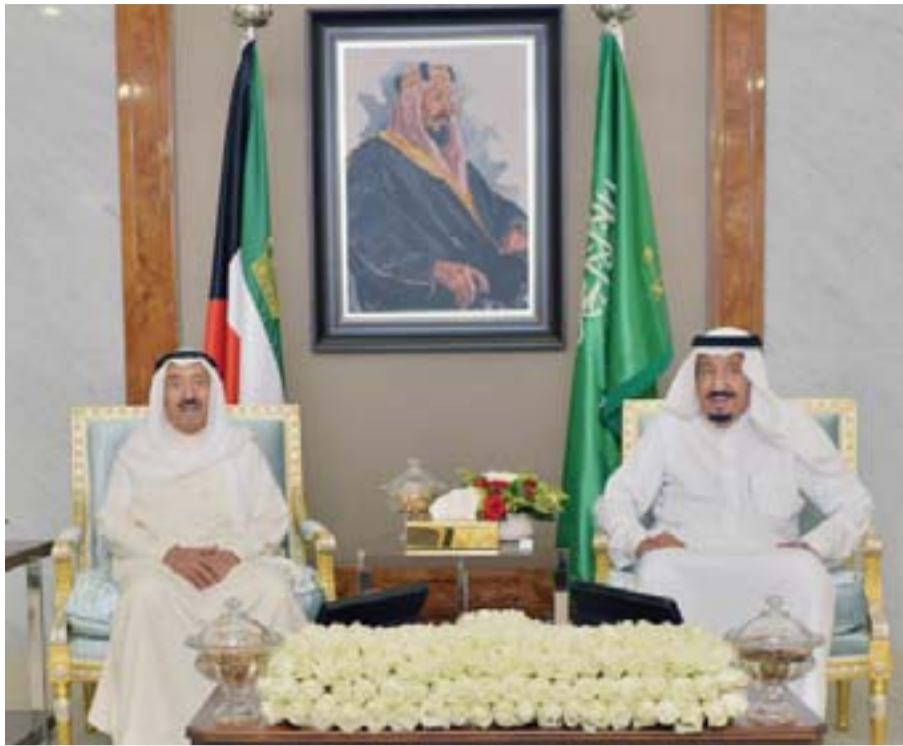
"The believer is not the one who eats his fill when the neighbor beside him is hungry" (Al-Bayhaqi). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the most generous of men at all times, but his generosity reached its peak in Ramadan(Al-Bukhari). So how can we make our children more empathetic and compassionate, towards current world and local problems, with the aim of contributing to solving them one day?

(1) Choose a problem and talk to them about it. For example, the hunger problem in Yemen. Lack of education, poverty etc.

(2) Encourage them to ask questions and search for answers either through personally observing the problem, such as visiting a needy person, going to a disability center, searching online, or interviewing people who may have more information, such as a friend. Of course, it is recommended that if your children are online, you should stay close in case of disturbing or violent images.

(3) Brainstorm solutions, write each on a post it note and stick it on an empty wall.

Continued on Page 13



JEDDAH: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on Tuesday. — Amiri Diwan photos



Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud bids farewell to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah before he left back to Kuwait.

MEETING WITH KING SALMAN SHOWS KEENNESS ON GCC MARCH: AMIR

KUWAIT/JEDDAH: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said his meeting with Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on Tuesday reflected common keenness to supporting GCC march. His Highness the Amir, in a cable to King Salman at end of his Saudi visit, said his meeting with the Monarch was held in a brotherly atmosphere, which reflected the "distinguished historic" relations between the Kuwaiti and Saudi people. He thanked King Salman for the hospitality during the visit.

During their meeting at Al-Salam Palace in the western Saudi city of Jeddah, His Highness the Amir and the Saudi Monarch reviewed the 'brotherly relations' between the two countries as well as the latest developments in the region. The talks were attended by Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, and senior officials from the delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir.

Attending from the Saudi side were Advisor to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and Makkah Governor Prince Khalid bin Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud; Minister of State, Member of the Cabinet and Advisor to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Prince Dr Mansour bin Miteb bin Abdulaziz; Minister of the National Guard Prince Miteb bin Abdullah bin Abdulaziz; Deputy Crown Prince, Second Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, and other senior officials in the Saudi Government. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with a group of the new officers. — KUNA

HOPES PINNED ON SECURITY MEN TO MAINTAIN SAFETY: SHEIKH MISHAAL

KUWAIT: Kuwait pins hopes and expectations on security personnel to maintain its safety and security, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said in a statement on Tuesday.

Receiving a group of the new officers; graduates of the 33rd bunch of the Saudi King Khalid Military Academy, to take the

oath before him, Sheikh Mishaal urged them to carry on with gaining more science and knowledge, and to get involved in training courses in all fields. Sheikh Mishaal conveyed to the officers greetings of the KNG Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah. He stressed that KNG is keen on keeping pace with the latest knowledge and technology of other military academies. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Omani Foreign Minister Youssef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah. — Amiri Diwan photos

AMIR RECEIVES OMANI FM

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Omani Foreign Minister Youssef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah. The Omani minister was escorted by Deputy Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Earlier, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Premier Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince met with His Highness the Prime Minister, as well as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Premier Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

UNRWA CHIEF: KUWAIT IS A TRUSTED PARTNER

BRUSSELS: The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Pierre Krahenbuhl will visit Kuwait and other Gulf countries later this week to inform them about the agency's current financial situation and discuss future support. "They (Gulf countries) have been very strongly on our side in our core activities and on supporting our Syria operations in recent year. We are very grateful for that. Kuwait is a generous and trusted partner," he said in an interview in Brussels yesterday.

He noted that UNRWA this year would spend \$715 million on its core activities, which cover education for 500,000 Palestinian students, healthcare for three million patients and on other relief and social services. "At this present moment we lack \$120 million for this year," he said. Krahenbuhl noted that he seeks to stabilize and increase the contributions to their core activities to allow the safe delivery of education services to 500,000 boys and girls.

"Having 500,000 students in our schools receiving education is an investment in dignity and regional stability and I think this is very important," he stressed. The UNRWA chief later today in Brussels will meet EU High Representative Federica Mogherini and EU Union Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn, to sign the new Joint Declaration on EU support to UNR-



Pierre Krahenbuhl

WA for the period 2017-2020. "This is a landmark agreement setting out the framework for the financial and political support of the EU to UNRWA for the next four years (2017-2020). It signals EU's strong support to UNRWA as an institution and its indispensable role for Palestinian refugees," he said.

During the signature ceremony, they will also announce the latest EU contribution of EUR 82 million (\$92 million) to UNRWA Program Budget.

He said that UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres recently organized in New York on request of the General Assembly the largest consultation of member states to identify new ways and means to support UNRWA in its longer term effort and to stabilize its financial situation for years to come. On the situation of the Palestinian refugees, he said, "both their personal and their political horizons are currently closed."

"There is really no identifiable structured peace process initiative. They have now been living for 50 years under occupation and for 10 years confronted with the blockade in Gaza and six years now with the conflict in Syria," he said. "Sixty five percent of youth in Gaza are unemployed. Anywhere in the world that would set off alarm bells beyond belief. This is a world record. The depth of psychological despair in Gaza is colossal," he lamented.

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some five million registered Palestinian refugees. Its mission is to help Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and microfinance. — KUNA

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HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT REMAINS KEY OBJECTIVE: SABEEH

ILO LAUDS KUWAITI ACHIEVEMENTS FOR PROTECTING WORKERS

GENEVA: Human resource development is the focal point of the Arab world's plan to achieve sustainable growth by the year 2030, a Kuwaiti official said yesterday. Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh made the remarks in a speech during the 106th session of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Conference, which runs until June 16th.

"Development and employment issues have taken precedence in the Arab world, as a stagnant economy has exacerbated poverty and unemployment," Sabeeh said. Moreover, the Kuwaiti official noted that Arab nations "stand in support of the ILO as it seeks to remedy increasingly significant labor issues," as she pointed out that, "no effort will be spared to bring all goals to fruition."

Meanwhile, Sabeeh said that sustainable development all across the world is highly contingent upon a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and that Palestinian laborers should be guaranteed full-fledged rights. She also heaped praise on a report submitted by the Arab delegation, which included studies and analyses over factors that contribute to social justice.



GENEVA: Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh delivers her speech during the session. — KUNA

On Tuesday, Sabeeh said that the ILO have extolled the achievements made by Kuwait for protecting workers. Speaking following a meeting with ILO Director-General Guy Ryder on the sidelines of the ILO annual conference, Sabeeh added that

the meeting discussed the developments made by Kuwait's Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) in terms of resolutions or laws to protect workers in Kuwait.

Ryder commended such developments and stressed the necessity of transferring them into GCC member states and all Arab countries, she noted. She said that there was a consensus between Kuwait and ILO on holding a bilateral meeting to strengthen joint cooperation to review all plans drawn up by PAM in favor of workers.

The minister stressed Kuwait's keenness on achieving excellence regarding the protection of workers' rights, including conducting permanent contacts with the embassies of countries providing workers to the State of Kuwait.

She also pointed to direct contacts with concerned bodies in these countries aiming to confront brokers of recruitment offices that exploit the citizens of low-income countries. Sabeeh affirmed that Kuwait has been giving a priority to support the Palestinian people for decades, pointing out that the Gulf state offers jobs for Palestinians. — KUNA

In my view

MENTIONING THE DEAD

By Labeed Abdal



local@kuwaittimes.net

I recently received a message from a smartphone application that was sold for \$11 billion, i.e. more than the estimated cost of reprising the systematic devastation and destruction of Syria and Iraq. This application actually makes us look as if we have turned into a post office where we classify, sort out and forward the mail we receive from friends and family on a daily basis to other groups of friends and family who are not less important to us.

We enjoy sending information, songs, images, jokes, wisdoms and things that we deem within expect would appeal to the taste of those we forward or re-tweet those messages to. Such messages even include the way we express condolences or mention the dead ones. Some people may say that the deceased used to 'communicate' with everyone and that he was always 'online' and never 'ignored' or 'blocked' anybody. That he never joined a group and remained silent to hunt things he likes to forward to others.

Moreover, the deceased was 'welcomed' in various groups and had never annoyed anybody with 'comments'. He was generous with 'likes' and always made 'share' to the rich and 'tag' to the poor. He died while exploring Facebook. How happy he was as he died with all his friends around him. Condolences were sent from all over the world from people he knew and others he never knew.

We can say that even if the website has a market value, this will pass down to heirs especially since Twitter, Instagram and Facebook accounts are often considered sources of income, be that legal or illegal. This period in mankind history will remain unprecedented in terms of violating privacy as digital data remains ambiguous except to specialized people. We can even say that as long as we have nothing to hide, we will have a new concept of privacy.



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem (second from left) is seen with ICM members during the ghabqa. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CAUSED SADNESS IN GCC: ICM

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The recent developments in the region have caused sadness to all people in the Gulf Cooperation Council, said Mohamad Al-Olaim, Secretary General of the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM). He made his statement during ICM's annual ghabqa held Tuesday evening at the diwaniya of former MP Nasser Al-Sane in Rawdha. The ghabqa was attended by ICM

members, ministers, lawmakers, representatives from various nongovernmental organizations and citizens.

Olaim also expressed hopes that the efforts exerted by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will succeed in bridging the gaps.

Meanwhile, MP Osama Al-Shaheen stressed that all citizens are fully behind the political leadership and that they support what he described as His Highness the

Amir's 'wise measures' and positive neutrality. He also expressed hopes that the crisis will be resolved soon. Deputy National Assembly Speaker MP Essa Al-Kandari also expressed hopes that His Highness the Amir's efforts will succeed in solving the GCC problems.

Home businesses

Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan said that the home

businesses licenses will be launched after the Eid Al-Fitr holiday, and stressed that the ministry is working on getting many important laws passed in that regard.

Hearing

The court of appeal is scheduled to convene today to hear the argument on the defense of 70 citizens, including 11 former MPs, accused of breaking into the parliament.



Officials attend the ghabqa.



Former Information Minister Mohammad Al-Sanousi greets ICM members.



Attendees gather for a group photo.



KUWAIT, UK EYE CLOSER MILITARY COOPERATION

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khoder met yesterday with visiting UK Defense Advisor for Middle East Lieutenant General Thomas Beckett. During the meeting, they discussed ways of developing military cooperation and several issues and matters that concern both sides, the Ministry of Defense said in a statement. The meeting was attended by a number of Kuwaiti high-ranking army officers. — KUNA

37 DISTRICT ATTORNEYS TRANSFERRED TO WORK AS JUDGES

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Supreme Judicial Council agreed to transfer 37 district attorneys to work as judges in the comprehensive court effective September 1, 2017. The decision was made as the court is currently understaffed after 34 judges concluded their tenures. Informed sources said that the district attorneys appointed as judges include the capital district attorney Abdullah Al-Ossaimi, Farwaniya district attorney Salem Al-Assoussi and Ahmadi district attorney Haitham Al-Munai. The sources added that the names of 55 new district attorneys who had just graduated from the judicial studies institute were submitted to Justice Minister Dr Faleh Al-Azb to appoint them.

Airport security

A delegation from IATA and US Aviation Safety Organization will visit Kuwait International Airport in July to assess the security measures followed and how far they match international standard safety standards that were conditioned to resume direct flights between Kuwait and the US as well as some European countries. This will be the last visit before a detailed report is made about security measures and how far the instructions made by both organizations were taken into consideration, including having an accredited international British company specialized in security inspection to do inspections at Kuwait International Airport. The conditions also included doubling the number of security agents at each gate to four, having more security agents at all sections and securing all flights.

In Loving Memory of



Jeanne Vaz

Born: 27th of December 1967 Expired: 9th of May 2017

It will be a month on 9th of June 2017 since Jeanne left us for the Heavenly Abode.

A Month's Mind Mass for her soul will be held on Friday 9th of June 2017 during the 9:15 a.m. Eucharistic Celebration in the Holy Family Cathedral, Kuwait.

In Grief:
Vaz Family, Relatives and Close Friends

KUWAIT

Heritage



Tent makers in old Kuwait. This picture shows a number of them working hard to complete one of those tents which were made specifically for sale to people who intend to go for Hajj (pilgrimage) every year. (Source: 'Kuwait, Miracle on the Desert' by David Cooke, New York, 1970. Prepared by Mahmoud Zakaria Abu Alella, heritage researcher, Ministry of Information)



ZAIN CELEBRATES GIRGIAN WITH CARE CENTERS

COMPANY PRESENTED GIFTS TO ORPHANS, SPECIAL NEEDS, ELDERLY

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, shared the joys of the blessings of the holy month and the tradition of girgian with orphans, the elderly, and people with special needs, by visiting the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's Care Centers. The initiative came under the company's extensive CSR campaign during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Every Ramadan, Zain is keen to reach out to the many segments of the community, including orphaned children, the elderly, and people with special needs to share the

joyful blessings of the Holy Month with them. Zain believes in the importance of embracing the beautiful values of the Islamic religion as well as the noble traditions of the Kuwaiti heritage, all year round and especially in the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Zain's team, consisting of staff and volunteers, participated in distributing gifts and girgian candy to care centers in an atmosphere filled with joy and happiness. The company believes the Holy Month of Ramadan is a special time of the year, and it

is always keen on sharing the blessings of this time with those who are less fortunate in the community. Zain's continuous participation with different segments of society is a testament to the company's belief that improving the lives of communities in which it operates is central to its overall activities.

Zain stressed that it has always been keen to organize a number of social and humanitarian initiatives during Ramadan to support the various sectors of the Kuwaiti society, and the company is keen on

reflecting the religious as well as traditional humanitarian values and principles to enrich the art of giving and to increase bonding between individuals.

The company further affirmed its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility campaign during the Holy Month of Ramadan, which includes an extensive array of programs that cover different areas. The initiatives and programs include humanitarian, voluntary, cultural, religious, sports, and recreational activities to cater to the different segments of society.



Samantha Claderia

BEING KIND IS CONTAGIOUS

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

Each of us can contribute to making Kuwait a better place for all of us to live. In our daily deeds and actions, we can find - if we choose to look - opportunities for improving Kuwait's environment. From not littering on the streets, to choosing to be kind and helpful to others, each individual here can have a positive impact on the society as a whole. Kuwait Times wants to know what can you do?

As soon as the idea of changing the world is proposed to the general public, most of people stammer and cannot think of themselves as a part of this change. Those who are swept over by world wars and disasters are filled with frustration and anger, though they might appear calm, living life day by day, and praying for humanity. Although that praying gives hope, God also encourages humans to work first on themselves in order to change the world. He also, reminds us in the holy book to not to be completely dependent on him. We are all required to do something to improve life on this planet.

Samantha Claderia, the founder of Purple Harvest, believes that there is always a way to make life better. "In order to be kind and make a difference, one does not necessarily have to be a member of a philanthropic organization although there is nothing wrong with that," she said. "Making people smile is not perplexed, it is so simple and can be incorporated into our daily lives. Also, being kind is contagious and our random acts of kindness towards people will propel them to act the same and pay it forward."

"It can be equally simple as helping an elderly person with their bags at the supermarket, a free meal to a homeless person, allowing a disabled person to pass before you, even though they would be slower in movement, ensuring that you do not litter in public and respecting the environment. Above all, give generously to those in need; either your money if you have it or your time," she added.

"When I travel to India, I spend time with orphaned children and children from the slums," she noted. "This world is full of hurting, suffering people. If we want to find people to help, there is always a way. In this country, there are workers who have been abused physically and mentally. They are constantly in need of emotional and financial support. What we do to make a difference may amount to just a grain of sand or a drop in the ocean, and we may think it is insignificant in the grand scheme of things but every grain and drop counts."

"In addition, simple acts of kindness have the power to dramatically change someone's life. We live in a world where most people are just rushing about, trying to go somewhere or get somewhere in life with no real destination and are therefore filled with a sense of emptiness. Make someone smile today and that emptiness will be replaced by fulfillment and a sense of purpose."



KFH CONTINUES 'FEED A FASTING PERSON' CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continued its 'Feed a Fasting Person' campaign by distributing iftar meals at Fatemah Al-Awadhi Mosque as part of its Ramadan program 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 3.' This step comes as part of KFH's charity activities that reinforce its firm commitment towards its social and humanitari-

an responsibility. KFH voluntary team distributes iftar meals at places that are teeming with fasting people such as Nayef Palace, Souq Al-Mubarakiya in addition to other places in Kuwait. KFH's efforts in Ramadan underline the bank's role in the field of social responsibility, and contributes in strengthening the social ties. KFH

voluntary team prepares and distributes over 600 meals daily until end of Ramadan.

KFH's Ramadan program includes various social and humanitarian events and activities stemming from the bank's endeavors to solidify its commitment towards the society, while supporting all social and humanitarian initiatives.



KUWAIT: Ahmadi Governorate's voluntary team continued its campaign to distribute iftar meals to drivers minutes before the Maghreb prayer at Ahmadi, Industrial Fahaheel, Mahboulah, Abu Halifa and other areas.

MAIS ALGHANIM HOSTS GHABQA FOR MEDIA



KUWAIT: The popular Lebanese restaurant Mais Alghanim held its annual ghabqa for media on Tuesday. Media representatives along with their families enjoyed a pleasant evening in a friendly atmosphere. Different traditional Lebanese dishes including appetizers, salads, main dishes, sweets, and shisha were served for the guests. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KAPF OFFERS FOOD SUPPLIES TO 15,000 LEBANESE, SYRIAN FAMILIES

BEIRUT: The relief committee of Lebanon's Dar Al-Fatwa (Fatwa House) on Tuesday announced a project to provide food aid during the fasting month of Ramadan, financed by the Kuwait Awqaf Public Foundation (KAPF), and under supervision of Kuwait's Zakat House.

The project will cover 15,000 Lebanese and Syrian refugee families nationwide, head of the committee Riyadh Itani said. He added that they started distributing the food aid in the capital Beirut, as the project has included 1,750 Lebanese families. Next week, food supplies will be offered to Syrian families in the Lebanese capital. Yesterday, the committee offered 1,000 food packages in the Bab Al-Tabbaneh neighborhood in

Tripoli, north, in cooperation with the Lebanese Army, Itani said. He highly appreciated Kuwait's leading role to help the Lebanese and the Syrians in Lebanon. The KAPF and the Zakat House, as well as other Kuwaiti benefactors, have been presenting aid to the Syrian refugees through the year since the eruption of the Syrian crisis in 2011. — KUNA



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Crime

Report

DOCTOR ASSAULTED IN HOSPITAL

KUWAIT: A citizen got angry at an Egyptian doctor, pulled him in an attempt to beat him, but nurses interfered. The doctor was making his rounds in a hospital when the citizen asked him to examine his sister, and the doctor said he will, but only when her turn comes. The citizen became angry, insulted the doctor verbally then attempted to hit him. The doctor lodged a complaint at Sharq police station.

Blackmail

A citizen was attracted to a woman's voice over the phone, and their relationship went further to exchanging photos and messages, but after that, the girl threatened to post his pictures over social media if he did not send her money. The man found it necessary to seek the help of criminal detectives and filed a complaint against the girl. Detectives are working on the case.

Theft

Investigations are ongoing to identify a man who broke into a car and stole cash and passports from inside. The car's owner, who had planned to travel for Umrah, told police that he parked his car outside a travel agency in Mirqab, but when he returned back to it, he discovered that the window was broken. An envelope containing four passports along with a wallet with KD 720 were missing. Police are investigating.

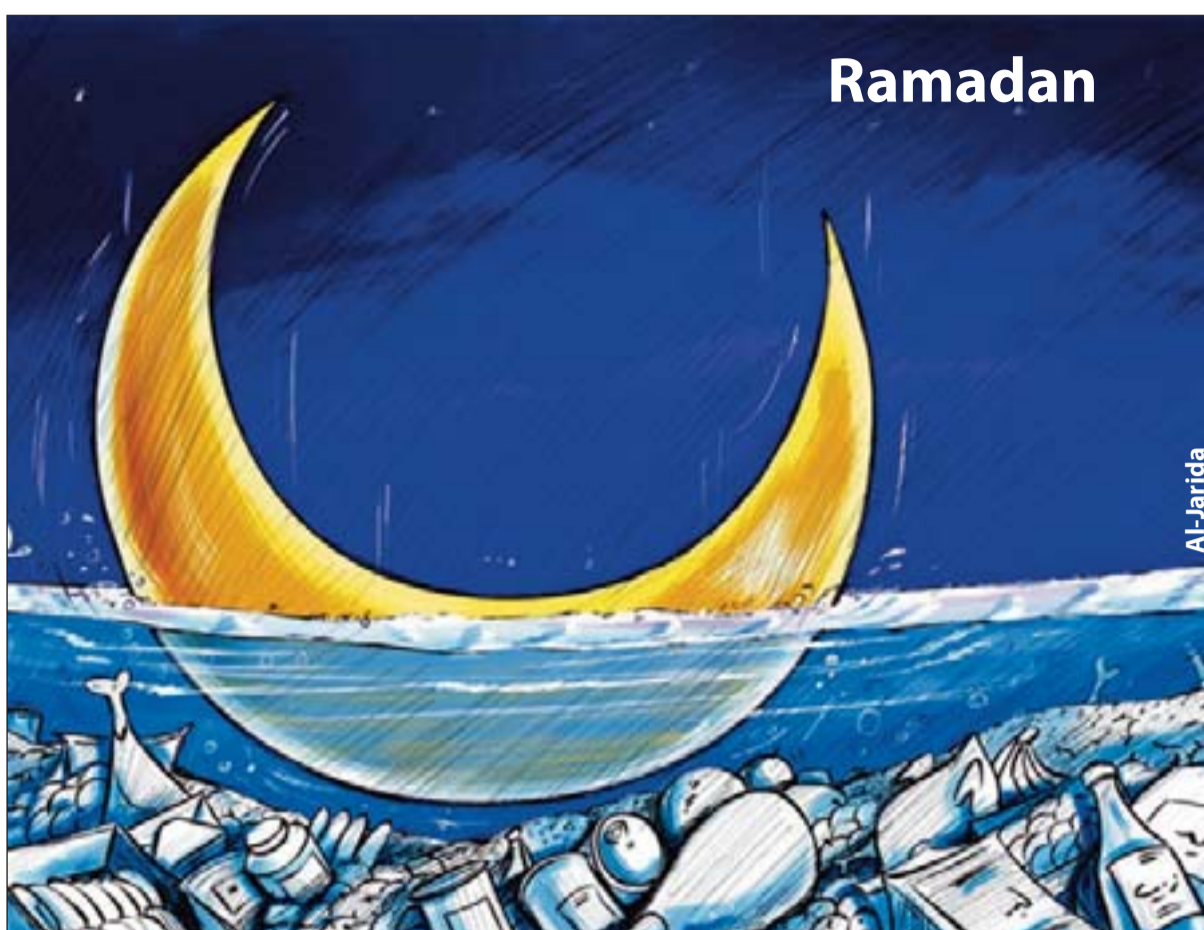
Car damage

A Jordanian woman accused a driver of a sports car of insulting her and damaging her vehicle following a dispute over the right of way. The Jordanian went to Maidan Hawally police station and lodged a complaint, claiming that the driver forced her to stop, verbally insulted her and then damaged her car before leaving. The woman gave police the license plate number, as detectives are asked to arrest him for questioning.

Sorcery

A man, who visited a family with plans to ask their daughter for marriage, discovered that she was not his type, though the girl liked him and wanted the engagement to go on. The girl's mother thought the only way to force him to marry her daughter was sorcery, so she went to a sorcerer who gave her materials and a special salt to bring love, he then asked her to throw it in places where he walks. However, the man saw her while throwing white material around his car and in front of the house, so he and his father caught her. The woman justified her action with claims that her daughter loves the man and wants him to be her husband. He lodged a complaint against them at the police station. Separately.

—Translated from the Arabic press



Ramadan

Al-Jarida



Al-Anbaa

MPS, STOP RECEIVING US IN DIWANIYAS

By Thaar Al-Rasheedi

Dear lawmakers, do not receive us at your diwaniyas to greet you on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan. Voters elected you to the parliament. It is you who have to go to their diwaniyas, houses, camps and ranches just the way you did during your electoral campaigns, when you invited voters over to campaigns to brief them about your agendas that was understood and accepted, but for you to invite voters over to your diwaniya to congratulate you, is not.

Such an invitation might be accepted if the host was a ruling family member, an iconic merchant, a dignitary or even a minister because those did not get there through voters' votes. So, it is improper to invite people who created your career asking them to come to your diwaniya to con-

gratulate you. So, dear lawmaker, wake up, beg for your voters' forgiveness and go over to congratulate them wherever they are.

I have no problem with receiving guests in lawmakers' diwaniyas during Ramadan but I am totally against texting all constituents concerning readiness to 'receive congratulators'. This is absolutely reversed, disgusting and nerve-breaking. MPs who have made such a mistake must repent and straighten things up. They have to stop looking down upon voters. If you ever call an MP and get so lucky that he

answers your call then he asks you to come over to his diwaniya, you better not because they make so many promises that they can never keep.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

It is improper to invite people who created your career asking them to come to your diwaniya to congratulate you



Al-Qabas

THE LABOR SUPPORT ALLOWANCE

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

The labor support allowance is the reward money given to those who chose to work in the private sector instead of working in the public sector, as a form of compensation for the relatively low salaries in companies, the nature of its hard work, strict attendance rules, short annual leaves and other things. Although the allowance may reach KD 600, choosing to work in the private sector went below the required level, although it was good at the start, and made many people to head for the private sector and leave the public sector job.

But the situation suffered a severe setback following the bad and catastrophic decision that was issued by former oil minister Mohammad Al-Busairi, the Muslim Brotherhood representative in the government at the time, when he increased the salaries of workers at the oil sector to unreal levels, followed by similar decisions made by other government entities. This created a wave of counter migration from the private sector to the government, and all that is the result of that bad decision and the government's silence towards it and the one who took it.

This led to the existence of more than one cadre for salaries, and the government is still unable to find a solution for the large discrepancies between the salaries of certain sectors, compared with others, and this is what got the Civil Service Commission, the labor support allowance, and the entire employment cadre in a maze that no one knows how to get out of.

There is no doubt that the idea of pushing the youth to work in the private sector is good, but the continued government's inability to change the negative view of the manual work, and for the idea of working in the private sector's activities, except for working in banks, may have emptied the idea of the allowance from its content and meaning, to a point that many will prefer to remain at home unemployed than working in the private sector and receiving the salary and rewarding support allowance.

Secretary general of the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program told Al-Jarida daily that the total job opportunities available at the co-operative societies sector is nearly 2,000, but the number of those who applied for those jobs among citizens is not more than five percent. This is a moral catastrophe before being an administrative problem, and I mean what I am saying, as through the past twenty years the labor support program sent tens of thousands of unemployed workers to meet officials of companies in the private sector.

But a scary percentage among them refused the generous offers and preferred to remain at home. The reason for that - other than them being spoiled - is because of the negative social view for those who work in a company that sells furniture or chicken for example. It became clear that the issue so far is not material, which means that any increase in the support allowance's amounts will not have the required effect; rather the issue requires new policies, the kind of which there are no room for here.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Summer blooms. — KUNA photo

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Brazil court begins session that could topple president

US-BACKED FORCE GAINS GROUND ON IS IN RAQQA

TURKEY THROWS SUPPORT BEHIND QATAR

ANKARA TO FAST-TRACK TROOP DEPLOYMENT, READY TO MEET FOOD AND WATER DEMANDS

CRISIS PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON US MILITARY BASE

DOHA: The diplomatic crisis over Qatar is shining a spotlight on a facility that few Qataris have ever visited - the enormous Al-Udeid airbase, America's biggest in the Middle East. A 45-minute drive southwest of the capital Doha, the base is off-limits to ordinary Qataris but central to the emirate's foreign policy. Home to some 10,000 US troops, it is a crucial hub for US military operations in the Middle East, especially the battle against the Islamic State group.

Which is why many were surprised to see US President Donald Trump publicly siding with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other Gulf states after their dramatic decision this week to break off ties with Qatar. In tweets on Tuesday Trump appeared to point the finger at Qatar as a financier of extremism, though his administration later changed gears and called for Gulf unity. Experts say that if the administration isn't careful, Trump risks damaging relations with one of Washington's most important allies in the region.

"Al-Udeid is part of the strategic value that Qatar provides to the US," says Kristian Ulrichsen, a Gulf analyst with the Baker Institute at the US-based Rice University. "It provides conditions that the US military cannot get anywhere else in the Gulf." Among these advantages is allowing the US Air Force to land B-52 bombers used in air strikes on Syria. "Al-Udeid is a massive base which is instrumental with all of (the United States') different campaigns," says Andreas Krieg of the Defense Studies Department at King's College London and a former advisor to the Qatari military. "It's involved in operations against ISIS, Syria, Somalia," he said, using an alternative acronym for IS.

Among those to have served at Al-Udeid since it opened in 2005 is current US Defence Secretary James Mattis in his role as head of US Central Command. The Pentagon moved quickly to smooth over any problems caused by Trump on social

media, praising Qatar's "enduring commitment to regional security". But such an episode exposed discrepancies in current US policy, Ulrichsen says. "Clearly, we have two wings in this administration - the presidential wing and the institutional wing," he says.

Trump sided with Riyadh after his recent trip to the Middle East, says Ulrichsen, because the Saudis "read the US president like a book". "They knew how to reach him, he was clearly flattered" at the attention he received on his trip to Riyadh, Ulrichsen says.

Effort to relocate base?

Al-Udeid was established 12 years ago as Washington looked for an alternative base in the region after the Saudis asked them to leave the kingdom in the wake of the Sept 11, 2001 attacks. At the time, the move served Saudi interests. It also helped the United States, as Al-Udeid provided Washington with a chance to spread risk across the region. For Qatar, the base provides security from any regional rivals and an insurance policy for US support - something it has no doubt been conscious of in recent days. "The Americans can provide something to Qatar that nobody else can," says Krieg.

But the pushing of Al-Udeid to center stage could reveal another major fault line in Gulf politics - are some of Qatar's rivals trying to replace Al-Udeid with an American airbase in their own countries? Krieg says Al-Udeid is eyed jealously by the UAE, which would love the base to be relocated.

"The long-term plan is to get the Americans to come to the UAE," he says. "Saudi and Emirati pressure (to move) is something that might come up, though I think it's unlikely in the short-term," says Ulrichsen.

"We may well be seeing the beginning of that process, even though you just cannot up sticks." — AFP

ANKARA/DOHA: Turkey threw its support behind Qatar yesterday, with officials saying it could fast-track troop deployment and provide crucial food and water supplies to the Gulf Arab country facing isolation from some of the biggest Middle Eastern powers. In the deepest split between Arab states for decades, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain severed relations with Qatar on Monday and closed their airspace to commercial flights, saying it was funding militant groups. Qatar vehemently denies the accusations.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has said isolating Qatar would not resolve any problems. Erdogan, who has long tried to play the role of a regional power broker, said Ankara would do everything in its power to help end the regional crisis. Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is visiting the region to discuss the standoff. Lawmakers from Erdogan's ruling AK Party and the nationalist opposition MHP on Wednesday proposed bringing forward approval of a draft bill that will allow Turkish troops to be deployed to Turkey's military base in Qatar, par-



ANKARA: Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addresses foreign ambassadors at a Ramadan dinner on Tuesday. — AP

ty officials told Reuters. Turkey has maintained good relations with Qatar as well as several of its Gulf Arab neighbours. Turkey and Qatar have both provided support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and backed rebels fighting to overthrow Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The Turkish parliament was also set to bring forward approval of a draft accord between the two countries on military training cooperation, the officials said. Both bills, which were drawn up

before the spat erupted, are expected to be approved by the Ankara parliament on yesterday. Turkey's lira weakened after the move.

Food and Water

Turkey's main exporting industry body said it was ready to meet food and water supply demands from Qatar, after a Qatari official said Doha was in talks with Iran and Turkey to ensure trade disruptions did not create shortages. Grain traders said Qatar

appears to have a comfortable immediate supply of wheat. "Qatar recently purchased about 20,000 tonnes of Russian milling wheat which according to my calculations has just arrived in past days or will arrive in coming days," one European grain trader said.

The president of Qatar's Chamber of Commerce was quoted yesterday by local media as saying Qatar had enough food stored in strategic reserves to last for a year. "There will be no shortage of food and other products as more than 95 percent of imports from Qatar arrive by air and sea," Qatari Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim Al-Thani said. Turkey set up a military base in Qatar, its first such installation in the Middle East, as part of an agreement signed in 2014. In 2016, Ahmet Davutoglu, then Turkish prime minister, visited the base where 150 troops are stationed, the Turkish daily Hurriyet reported.

In an interview with Reuters in late 2015, Ahmet Demirok, Turkey's ambassador to Qatar at the time, said 3,000 ground troops would eventually be deployed at the base, which was primarily to serve as a venue for joint training exercises. — Reuters

TRUMP THROWS TIES WITH KEY ALLY QATAR INTO CRISIS

WASHINGTON: In a series of morning tweets, President Donald Trump threw Washington's relations with Doha into deep crisis on Tuesday and raised doubts about the future of the largest US air base in the Middle East. Trump publicly accused key regional ally Qatar of funding extremism, while tacitly backing a blockade of the emirate, home to the Al-Udeid Air Base near Doha where around 10,000 US military personnel are stationed. The base is also the regional headquarters of US special forces and air force commands - two vital components of American military operations in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and beyond.

Trump's comments came after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other Gulf states broke diplomatic relations with their smaller neighbor. The US leader appeared to claim credit for Gulf states isolating Doha, a move he said could "be the beginning of the end to the horror of terrorism!" "So good to see the Saudi Arabia visit with the King and 50 countries already paying off," Trump said in a morning tweet. "They said they would take a hard line on funding... extremism, and all reference was pointing to Qatar," he said.

Trump's tweets mark a major departure in US foreign policy that could upend the balance of power in the Middle East, and left his administration scrambling to contain the damage. Just weeks ago Trump smiled and shook hands with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, saying "we are friends, we have been friends for a long time now." Pentagon spokesman Jeff Davis tried to quell concerns about the future of Al-Udeid, stressing there had been "no impact" on US military operations in Qatar "and we don't anticipate there will be."

Apparently contradicting Trump, spokesman Sean Spicer said the White House "wants to see this issue deescalated and resolved immediately." "The president had a very, very constructive conversation with the emir during his visit in Riyadh," Spicer added. "At that time, he was very heartened by the emir's commitment to formally joining the terrorist financing targeting center."

'Real talk'

Among diplomats and former US officials there was shock that Trump would so openly pick sides in what is effectively a dispute

between allies. Previous US administrations have expressed deep concern about the hundreds of millions of dollars that flow from Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to the likes of the Islamic State group, Al-Qaeda, Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood. But the White House has preferred to quietly coax those capitals into adopting tighter financial rules and cracking down on individual donations, while building invaluable intelligence and military cooperation.

That approach was epitomized by President George W Bush's approach to Saudi Arabia after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Fifteen of the 19 hijackers were Saudi citizens. Just hours before Trump's tweets, the US ambassador in Qatar Dana Shell Smith took to Twitter herself to stress the "great partnership" with Qatar and "real progress to counter terrorist financing."

Aside from providing a vital base for US troops, Qatar has garnered significant regional influence, from becoming a major player in Libya to dramatically influencing the stance of the Syrian opposition. Bob Corker, the Republican head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, appeared stunned when informed by journalists about Trump's tweets on Qatar. "Some of our Arab friends have different sensibilities relative to groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and others, and it's created some dissension, and it's been our policy that we work with everybody in the region in a way that's constructive," he responded.

But Trump's tweets may not come as much of a shock inside the White House. Officials say that the president and his top aide and son-in-law Jared Kushner have been impressed by Saudi Arabia's dynamic young deputy crown prince Mohammad bin Salman, who is vying to become the country's next king. In Washington there are growing fears that tacit support could now embolden Saudi Arabia and the UAE to pursue regime change in Qatar or make other demands that are so punitive they will stoke a crisis.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE have long been infuriated by Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood, for the Arab Spring which overthrew several autocratic regimes and for its tolerance of arch-rival Iran. Al-Jazeera - the Doha-based channel which has been highly critical of the Saudi royal family - has also been a thorn in their side. — AFP

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SQUEEZE ON QATAR LEAVES HAMAS FACING QUESTIONS

GAZA: Moves by Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other Arab states to isolate Qatar may have serious repercussions for Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist movement that rules Gaza and has long relied on the Gulf emirate for financial and political support. A powerful Arab group including the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain severed diplomatic ties and imposed a blockade on Qatar on Monday over the natural gas producer's alleged support for Islamist groups and Iran.

Hamas officials are tight-lipped about the pressure being put on Qatar, not wishing to draw attention to their own dilemma posed by the worst crisis among Gulf Arab for two decades. But Gaza-based analysts concede the situation is precarious. One potential fallout is a sharp cut in Qatari funding for Hamas, especially if the emirate wants to show the Saudis and others that it takes seriously the charge that it finances militant groups tied to the Muslim Brotherhood,

such as Hamas. If financial aid is cut - Qatar has paid out or pledged \$1.5 billion since 2012 to help build roads, houses, schools and clinics in impoverished Gaza - it will hurt Gaza's two million people - and could have ramifications for Israel as well. In the past, when Hamas has felt backed into a corner, it has led to conflict. Since 2007, when it seized control of Gaza from the rival Palestinian movement Fatah, Hamas's militant armed wing has fought three wars with

Israel, all producing a heavy death toll and severe destruction in Gaza.

"It will be difficult for Qatar to resume its financial support for Gaza now because of the assault against it," said Adnan Abu Amer, an independent political analyst in Gaza. "The political support to the entire Palestinian cause is going to be affected, not only by Qatar, but in the Gulf in general, and that may leave the Palestinians alone in the face of Israel." Equally, he said, Hamas is unlikely openly to kick up a fuss so as not to compound the pressure Qatar is under. "Hamas feels it owes Qatar gratitude because of its political and financial support all these years," he said.

In a sign that Hamas has been under pressure from Qatar to moderate its positions, the group unveiled a new policy document at an event in Doha last month, distancing itself from the Muslim Brotherhood. Hamas was formed in the 1980s as an offshoot of the pan-Arab Brotherhood but has more recently stressed its basis as a Palestinian liberation movement, in part to defuse Egyptian enmity and draw support from wealthy Arab states.

Hamas officials would not directly address the threats they face, but were critical of Saudi Arabia for leading the squeeze on Qatar, and in particular about comments by Riyadh's foreign minister calling on Qatar to sever relations with Hamas. "We in Hamas urge the brothers in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia to stop these statements that hurt the kingdom and hurt its positions towards the cause of our people and their legitimate rights," Hamas said in a statement. Those statements, it added, could spur Israel to "conduct more violations and crimes against our people, our land and our sacred sites and against the blessed Al-Aqsa mosque" in Jerusalem, Islam's third holiest site.

Egypt Opening?

As well as financial support, Qatar has long hosted exiled Hamas officials, including its former political chief, Khaled Meshaal. Meshaal was recently succeeded by Ismail Haniyeh, who remains in Gaza but is expected to move to Qatar's capital Doha. Reports in Arab media said Qatar planned to expel several Hamas officials, including Saleh al-Aruri, who is believed to be the leader of Hamas in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and who was previously kicked out of Turkey. But Hamas in Gaza denied any such expulsions had taken place. Meshaal remains in Qatar.

In a sign that Hamas is rapidly reassessing what the regional shifts mean, its new leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, is currently in Egypt for meetings. Egypt wants Hamas to cut ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, which Cairo considers a terrorist group, and adopt a more pragmatic regional stance. It is not clear what message Sinwar has taken to Cairo, but analysts believe the aim is to try to keep Egypt on side and show Hamas can be a partner. The question is whether it can work, and whether Hamas can afford to cold-shoulder Qatar.

"Things are foggy for Hamas now," said Ashraf Abouelhou, a writer and analyst for Egypt's Al-Ahram newspaper. "The fate of Hamas's leadership in Qatar is also in question. Will they leave Qatar? Where can they go? The Saudi position is very clear: Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood must leave Qatar." Abouelhou said he believed Hamas needed to distance itself from Qatar, and withdraw its officials from Doha, if it wanted to retain the support of other Gulf states. "If Hamas hesitates or acts too late or chooses the Iranian-Qatari camp it will face difficulties on all fronts," he said. "Hamas maybe the biggest loser of what is happening with Qatar." —Reuters



GAZA: Palestinian friends and family mourn during the funeral of Fadi Al-Najjar, 25, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. —AFP

GERMANY WITHDRAWS TROOPS FROM BASE IN TURKEY ROW

PERSONNEL TO BE MOVED TO JORDAN'S AZRAQ BASE

BERLIN: The German government decided yesterday to withdraw its troops from Turkey's Incirlik base near the Syrian border after last-ditch talks with Ankara failed to resolve an escalating row. The military personnel along with Tornado surveillance jets and other hardware - deployed as

one". With the decision now made to move troops out of Turkey, Berlin can now "concentrate on other points" in its negotiations with Ankara, she added. Germany has more than 250 troops stationed in Incirlik, flying surveillance missions over Syria and refuelling flights for partner nations bat-

by a Bundestag vote to recognize the Ottoman Empire's World War I-era massacre of Armenians as a genocide. A fresh row over lawmakers' visits to the air base erupted last month.

This time, Ankara was protesting the fact that Berlin offered political asylum to Turkish nationals accused

After the talks, Cavusoglu repeated that "we would not like to see members of FETO take shelter in friendly country Germany", referring to a movement led by US-based Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen, whom Ankara accuses of orchestrating the failed coup. Berlin has argued that it cannot deploy its soldiers in places which lawmakers are unable to visit, given that all military missions are mandated by parliament.

Von der Leyen said that Azraq in Jordan would be a new base for Germany's troops. The transfer will disrupt its air refuelling missions for two or three weeks, while Tornado surveillance flights will cease for two to three months, she said. "I will therefore immediately speak with the Americans (who lead) the international coalition against terror, on how the gaps can be filled so that there is no negative impact," she said, adding that "following that, we will draw up our time schedule".

The transfer will not require a new mandate from the German parliament, as the current one specifies the deployment site as the airspace over Syria and its neighboring countries, but does not specify the base, von der Leyen said. Ties between the NATO allies have been strained since the failed coup in Turkey, and tensions have worsened over multiple issues including a referendum campaign to expand Erdogan's powers. Relations plunged further after Turkey imprisoned Deniz Yucel, a German-Turkish journalist with Germany's Die Welt daily, on terror charges earlier this year. —AFP



INCIRLIK, Turkey: This file photo taken on Jan 21, 2016 shows German Tornado jets on the ground at the Incirlik air base. —AFP

part of the international coalition against the Islamic State group - will be moved to Jordan's Azraq base instead, Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen said.

Chancellor Angela Merkel sought to play down the dispute, saying she "views this issue as a very localized

ting the IS jihadists. But the deployment has become a bone of contention after Ankara repeatedly refused to allow German lawmakers to visit the base. Ankara had first denied German parliamentarians the right to travel to the site for several months last year, angered

of complicity in the attempted coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in July 2016. German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel travelled to Turkey on Monday to hold last-ditch talks with his counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu, but failed to sway Ankara.

IN SOUTH SUDAN'S WAR, SHELTER PROTECTS GIRLS FROM SELLING SEX

JUBA: Sixteen-year-old Stacey narrowly escaped what could have been a life of poverty and prostitution on the streets of South Sudan's capital Juba when she was taken into a shelter and offered safety and schooling. South Sudan's civil war, which erupted in late 2013, has uprooted a quarter of the population, shattered families and left thousands of orphans, abandoned children and runaways to fend for themselves in the city. With few options, sex work has become a form of survival for many girls and young women.

While there are no accurate figures to gauge the extent of child prostitution in the scrappy, low-rise city, the steady deterioration of South Sudan's security and economy has undoubtedly exacerbated the problem, say humanitarian workers. "Women and girls may resort to exchanging sex for food, shelter, or money to meet their daily living needs for themselves and their families in order to survive another day," said Jennifer Melton of the U.N. children's agency UNICEF.

South Sudan descended into civil war after President Salva Kiir fired his deputy, unleashing a conflict that has spawned armed factions often following ethnic lines. The United Nations has warned of a possible genocide, millions face famine and an estimated 3.5 million have fled their homes, 2 million of them

children. In December, a UN independent commission said sexual violence had reached "epic proportions" in South Sudan and that 70 percent of women in Juba had suffered some form of sexual assault since the end of 2013.

"During conflict, parents are unable to protect or care for their children, they get separated and children on their own despair and do not hesitate to use the only asset they have, which is selling their body to survive," said Cathy Groenendijk of Confident Children out of Conflict (CCC), an organisation caring for vulnerable children like Stacey. Groenendijk and her team of social workers, psychologists and nurses have been running a children's shelter in Juba for a decade: a cluster of small buildings behind a barbed wire wall and big metal gate.

Inside the tiny oasis, clothes hang to dry and energetic children play on swings, while older residents ready the younger ones for dinner. The children attend school in Juba and return to the shelter to sleep, eat and socialize. Stacey, the daughter of an absent father and alcoholic mother moved from her hometown of Terekeka to the capital with her mother and sisters when she was about eight years old. "Life in the village was dangerous and my mother and father were not good because he had two (more) wives," said Stacey, who did not

want to give her full name. But city life proved even more dangerous. "It was worse, because there are many boys and men who like to do bad things to girls, we were not safe," said Stacey, who recalls fending off an intruder who broke into her home and tried to rape her sister as she slept.

Red Light District

Living in poverty with a drunken mother in an unsafe neighborhood, Stacey could have followed other girls in her area and turned to prostitution for a steady income. "Many in the area where I was living (did this)," she said. "Young girls - 12 or 14." Most of her friends were either forced to marry young or moved to the squalid district of Gumbo, west of the Nile river, where women and girls sell sex to businessmen, traders and foreigners inside dingy metal shacks.

Fifteen-year-old Jenna is one of more than 200 women and girls - according to CCC - who live and work in Gumbo's warren of crowded, unpaved streets. "They were forced into prostitution and they know no other life. Their parents died during the war," said Groenendijk. "The conflict makes it difficult to bring stability to the girls' lives. Mothers often see (prostitution) as a last resort to provide for their children." —Reuters



HAZIMA, Syria: Members of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) stand in this village on the northern outskirts of the Islamic States (IS) group's Syrian bastion of Raqqa on Tuesday. —AFP

US-BACKED FORCE GAINS GROUND ON IS IN RAQQA

BEIRUT: US-backed fighters gained ground against the Islamic State group in the streets of Raqqa yesterday, a day after their months-long offensive finally broke into the jihadists' Syrian bastion. The Syrian Democratic Forces militia has spent seven months advancing on the city, with backing from the US-led coalition bombing IS in Syria and neighboring Iraq. Captured by the jihadists in 2014, Raqqa became synonymous with IS atrocities including beheadings and public displays of bodies, and also emerged as a hub for planning attacks abroad.

On Tuesday, the SDF's Arab and Kurdish fighters finally broke into the eastern Al-Meshleb district of the city. Early yesterday, they captured the neighbourhood and the Harqal citadel to the west of the city, the command of "Operation Wrath of the Euphrates" said. The citadel sits on a hilltop roughly two kilometres from the city limits. Fighting was also raging in a military complex around two kilometres north of the city, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said.

An activist with the Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently group said people in the city described non-stop bombardment. "The bombing has been going for two days and hasn't stopped for more than an hour, it's air strikes, artillery fire and sometimes rockets," Abu Mohamed told AFP. He said shops were barely open and that there were cuts in electricity and water supplies. The Britain-based Observatory said the US-led coalition had carried out heavy bombing raids to back the advance. One of Tuesday's air strikes inside the city killed eight civilians, including three children, Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP.

160,000 inside Raqqa

Reported civilian casualties in coalition air strikes have swelled as the SDF has ramped up its offensive. Late on Monday, at least 21 civilians were killed in a coalition strike as they tried to escape Raqqa by dinghy on the Euphrates River, the Observatory said. An estimated 300,000 civilians were believed to have been living under IS rule in Raqqa, including 80,000 displaced from other parts of Syria. But thousands have fled in recent months, and the UN humanitarian office said on Tuesday that it estimated about

160,000 people remained in the city. The International Rescue Committee said it was "deeply concerned for the safety of civilians in Raqqa" after a drop in numbers fleeing the city in the past week. That decrease could indicate that IS intends to use remaining civilians "as human shields," the aid group warned. The SDF has scored a series of victories since launching its operation to take Raqqa in November and on Tuesday announced the battle for Raqqa itself had begun.

Overthrowing 'caliphate'

Along with Mosul in Iraq, Raqqa was one of the twin pivots of the self-styled Islamic "caliphate" that IS declared nearly three years ago. US-backed forces are battling IS in Mosul too and have now confined the jihadists to a few neighborhoods around the Old City. Coalition commander Lieutenant General Steve Townsend said that defeating IS in Raqqa would "deliver a decisive blow to the idea of ISIS as a physical caliphate". The coalition began striking IS jihadists in Iraq in August 2014 and expanded its operations to Syria the following month.

In recent weeks, it has also targeted pro-government forces near Syria's border with Jordan. The coalition said on Tuesday that it had hit a regime convoy that was nearing the Al-Tanaf garrison, used by US and British troops to train Syrian rebels to fight IS. The coalition said the contingent was "well advanced" into the 55-km de-confliction zone, where any intrusion is considered hostile.

The Observatory said that at least 17 pro-regime troops were killed in the air strike. It was the second time in less than a month that the coalition had attacked pro-regime forces near to the garrison, and government ally Russia slammed the strike as a "act of aggression". Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the strikes "targeted those forces that are the most effective in fighting the terrorists on the ground".

Syria's foreign ministry in a statement yesterday accused Washington of "leading a coalition that practices terrorism," and warned of "the dangers of escalation." The Syrian army is eager to push east towards the Jordanian and Iraqi borders where some of the country's main oilfields lie before the area can be seized from IS by the SDF or Western-backed rebels. —AFP

HOW THE RACE TIGHTENED IN BRITAIN'S 'BREXIT' ELECTION

BLACKPOOL, England: When Britain's election campaigning began, Peter Anthony, a candidate for the Conservatives, was hopeful that he could win in Blackpool, a working class town on England's north-west coast. Though the seat he is standing for has been held by left-leaning Labour for 20 years, Anthony felt change was in the air. "I'm very optimistic," he said last month, adding that the response he was getting from voters was "completely different" from the election in 2015.

Early polls suggested the center-right Conservatives, led by Prime Minister Theresa May, could achieve an overall landslide, possibly even a majority as decisive as those held by Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first woman prime minister from 1979 to 1990. But in the past few weeks the Conservatives' lead - about 20 percentage points when the election was announced - has fallen. May's campaign stumbled over a U-turn on social care policy, and she declined to take part in televised debates with her opponents. Meanwhile, the main opposition Labour party, led by Jeremy Corbyn, proposed increases in public spending that grabbed the attention of voters.

On Saturday a van and knife attack that killed eight people in the heart of London shifted the focus to security. Corbyn criticized May's record as interior minister of cutting police numbers, and May said Corbyn was weak on terrorism. Recent surveys have shown the Conservatives ahead of Labour by between 1 and 12 percentage points. Different poll models give a wide range of projected results. Some predict May will increase her majority, but one projection suggests she could lose parliament.

seats. Pollsters warn that much still depends on the level of voter turnout.

Anthony remains optimistic. A key reason: Last year, he, like the majority of Britons, backed the campaign to take Britain out of the European Union. "It's very, very difficult to find someone who didn't support leaving the EU," said Anthony as a train on the city's landmark rollercoaster, the Big One, clattered around the tracks behind him.

His town is one of around 50 places where Labour's majority is small enough for Conservatives to target voters who wanted out of Europe. The Conservatives, long more eurosceptic than Labour, have the largest chunk of pro-Brexit support, studies have shown. In particular, the Conservatives have picked up votes from the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which got nearly 13 percent of the vote in the 2015 election. UKIP now languishes at about 4 percent in the polls.

As the June 8 poll approaches, Brexit has partly receded as an important divider between the main parties. Last week Corbyn set out Labour's approach to the issue, making plain that he, like May, sees no going back on Brexit. There was "no doubt," he said, that Britain would leave the EU. However, May has said she is willing for Britain to leave the EU without a deal if negotiations fail, while Corbyn has said he would not leave without an agreement.

May's Stumble

It was in Blackpool in 1968 that a young Margaret Thatcher gave a speech to the Conservative Party conference on the theme "What's wrong with politics?" Her answer -



A City of Westminster employee cleans the street outside of 10 LONDON: Downing Street, the official residence of Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May, is seen in central London yesterday on the eve of the general election. — AFP

too much government - came to influence Britain for decades. But May is no Thatcher. The launch of her party manifesto on May 18 was widely seen as nudging the Conservatives leftwards in a bid to seize the center ground. The manifesto adopted some of Labour's previous policy proposals, including a promised cap on energy prices and new rights and protection for workers in the gig economy. While Labour's campaign slogan is "For the many, not the few," May has promised a country that works, "not for the privileged few, but for everyone."

She has proposed new rules on business, including measures to restrict top-level executive pay, guarantee worker representa-

tion on boards, and new limits on "aggressive asset-stripping or tax avoidance" in takeovers. "We do not believe in untrammelled free markets," the Conservative manifesto says. "We reject the cult of selfish individualism." But in a bid to balance the nation's finances as well as be more inclusive, the Conservatives also floated one policy that caught voters' attention. The party proposed that more of the costs of caring for the sick elderly should come from the sale of their homes. The new plan was quickly dubbed a "dementia tax" in the media. There was a furore and May backtracked. While May had campaigned on a slogan of "strong and stable government,"

the spotlight turned onto her willingness to make U-turns. The party's "strong and stable" mantra was widely mocked on social media. At a press conference, May said "nothing has changed." A spokesman said: "Categorically, we haven't done a U-turn." But the Conservatives' lead in the polls began to erode.

Radical Outsider

Under Corbyn, Labour has moved away from the center ground once occupied by Tony Blair, who won three elections for the party between 1997 to 2005. A veteran from the trade union movement, Corbyn has a track record of radical activism, often voting against the government when Labour was in power, and he still presents himself as an outsider.

His manifesto promises include nationalization of energy and water supplies, investing £250 billion (\$320 billion) over 10 years in infrastructure, more staff for the National Health Service, police and fire services, an end to tuition fees for students, more free childcare, extra holidays, and higher taxes on business and the top 5 percent of earners. He has courted young people and won hundreds of thousands of followers on social media. Labour traditionally polls well among young people and about a million new voters aged 18 to 24 have registered to vote since the election was announced.

Turnout may prove crucial. Past experience indicates that the young are far less likely to vote than the elderly, who favor the Conservatives. Corbyn, 68, began the campaign lowly rated as a leader and potential prime minister by many voters - and even by some of his own party candidates. — Reuters



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May visits Smithfield Market in the City of London yesterday on the final day of campaigning ahead of the general election. — AP

EU WARY OF BREXIT TALKS WALKOUT WHOEVER WINS

BRUSSELS: The EU is steeling for a possible collapse of Brexit negotiations whoever wins Britain's increasingly close general election this week, officials and analysts say. While many in Brussels still bet on Prime Minister Theresa May's return to power, despite a fading poll lead, the real focus is on British threats to walk out when the talks start. European Union Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier says he is ready to begin immediately but has warned London of the risks of walking away without agreement on Britain's departure.

"A big punch-up or blow-up is not unlikely" after Brexit negotiations formally start, an EU source told AFP on condition of anonymity. "A 'no deal' is possible - absolutely." May and her Brexit minister David Davis have repeatedly warned that "no deal is better than a bad deal", particularly when it comes to a 100-billion-euro exit bill that Brussels is demanding. London is also still insisting on having talks on a future trade deal at the same time as negotiations on the actual divorce, something Brussels won't allow.

'Strong leader'

The EU is eyeing June 19, 11 days after Thursday's election, for the formal start of two years of tough talks, with informal contacts "soon" after the election result. While Brussels is officially neutral about national elections, European sources say they want a "strong leader in London" who can negotiate backed by strong support from the British electorate. While this might seem counterintuitive in an adversarial process, the idea is that if May, for example, increases her slim majority she would be less beholden to eurosceptics in her own party.

This, the reasoning goes, would make her able to make compromises on thorny issues such as the exit bill, and on safeguarding benefits and immigration rights

of EU citizens living in Britain. But the increasingly harsh tone on Brexit and the threats to walk away which have emerged during the election campaign have worried some in Brussels. Frenchman Barnier insisted when EU states gave him his formal mandate on May 22 that quitting talks was "not my option, my option is to succeed."

He strongly warned that if Britain does so he would "advise everyone to explain well what the consequences are", not least for a future EU-British trade deal. European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker has delivered a similar warning about the threats. "My experience in politics always was that those who are going out have to come back," he said. Andrew Duff of the European Policy Centre said that Britain and Brussels risked "diametrically opposed" positions, and urged the EU to draft a Brexit plan B. "If we go on like this, the probability is that the Article 50 talks will fail," he wrote in a commentary. However one European diplomat with experience in international negotiations said the election was just "noise", and that until Britain came to the table the EU wouldn't actually know what its strategy is.

'Everyone is waiting'

Analyst Amandine Crespy at ULB university in Brussels said within the EU "everyone is waiting" to see what emerges. If May wins "the discourse of hard Brexit shows her limits: if she's too hard she will be reproached because she'll have to give way on some points." If Corbyn wins the situation is more unclear, with the Labour leader remaining something of an unknown quantity on Brexit. He has pledged to uphold the result of last year's Brexit referendum, but has also talked about giving visas to European workers, in a more lax stance than May's. "It will be interesting if Corbyn wins - that could overturn all the cards," Crespy said. — AFP

BRITAIN INTO FINAL DAY OF TURBULENT POLL CAMPAIGN

3RD FRENCH VICTIM OF LONDON ATTACKS CONFIRMED

LONDON: Britain yesterday hit the final day of campaigning for a general election darkened by jihadist attacks in two cities, leaving forecasters struggling to predict an outcome on polling day. Eight people are now confirmed to have died in Saturday's attack in London, after police announced a body had been recovered from the River Thames in the search for a missing Frenchman. A 30-year-old man was arrested in east London earlier yesterday in connection with the attack, which also left 48 people injured.

Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May and main opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn were criss-crossing the country on Wednesday, targeting urban areas whose votes could be crucial. May aimed at the high-population English Midlands in her final dash, while Corbyn was to attend six rallies in England, Scotland and Wales, stretching from Glasgow to London, in a grueling last-day marathon.

The prime minister had stunned Britain on April 18 when she announced a snap election, hoping to transform a massive opinion-poll lead into an equally huge majority in the House of Commons where she holds a slim 17-seat advantage in the 650-member legislature. But the political ground began to shift under her feet, moving from EU membership - May's strongest card - to domestic policy and her own record on security, both of them favoring Corbyn.

Opinion polls - hampered by a poor reputation for reliability - predict a May win. But depending on polling methodology, victory could range from around 50 seats, to a loss of seats and even no majority at all. May is fighting to revive her message that she is a "strong and stable" leader compared with Corbyn, able to fight Britain's corner in Brussels, where formal Brexit talks are due to start on June 19. "Get those negotiations wrong and the consequences will be dire," May said yesterday.

Corbyn, a veteran socialist, made an eve-of-voting pitch on the National Health Service (NHS), a beloved institution. "The Conservatives have spent the last seven years running down our NHS, our proudest national institution. Our NHS cannot afford five more years of underfunding, understaffing and privatization," he said.

Corbyn gains?

Despite being seen as an unlikely leader - one who has faced off a rebellion by his own MPs - Corbyn has gained momentum during the election campaign and regularly attracts big crowds to his rallies. Labour gained a boost following the May 18 release of the Conservatives' manifesto, outlining elderly care costs which the tabloids dubbed the "dementia tax". The pledge hit the party's core supporters and May was forced to backtrack on capping the costs, prompting further criticism that she was unreliable.

Corbyn then found a valuable seam in attacking May on security, an area where the



COLWYN BAY, Wales: Britain's main opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn leaves after addressing supporters at a campaign visit in north Wales yesterday on the eve of the general election. — AFP

Conservatives traditionally are far stronger than Labour in voters' minds. A string of terror attacks have occurred since May became prime minister last July, and she was interior minister for six years before she rose to the top job. Corbyn attacked her for slashing police numbers during her ministerial spell, and vowed to hire more police for neighborhood patrols, a tactic that he said would provide a grassroots shield against jihadism.

"The expectations of the opinion polls are extremely divergent," said John Curtice, a professor of politics at Strathclyde University in Scotland. He said the outcome could hinge on the turnout among young voters, believed to be overwhelmingly pro-Labour. University of London professor Eric Kaufmann agreed, but noted that traditionally turnout among young people in British elections was low. "There's no obvious reason why that would rebound," he said. "I'm sort of with the general polls which suggest that the Tories will increase their majority by around 25 seats... a good majority, not as much as it looked it could have been at one point, but I think it's pretty solid." That would bring May's majority up to around 40.

Security questions

Questions are also being raised about the vaunted image of Britain's security services.

Three terror attacks have taken place since March, leaving 34 dead and around 200 injured, and all involved assailants who were known to the authorities. In the most recent attack, eight people were killed on Saturday when three men aboard a hired van ploughed into pedestrians on London Bridge and went on a stabbing spree before being shot by police.

French President Emmanuel Macron confirmed yesterday that a third citizen had died in the attack. London police said they had recovered a body from the Thames, but did not immediately confirm it was Xavier Thomas, a missing 45-year-old Frenchman. Attacker Khuram Shazad Butt was known to British intelligence services, while an Italian prosecutor said Britain was notified that one of his accomplices, Youssef Zaghaba, was a "possible suspect" back in March 2016.

Their rampage followed a similar attack next to the British parliament in March, in which assailant Khalid Masood was shot after killing five people. In the most deadly attack, Salman Abedi killed 22 people at a Manchester concert venue on May 22 when he detonated a suicide bomb. Police forces around Britain have reviewed security arrangements for election day. London's Metropolitan Police said there would be a "specialist and highly flexible operation in place that can deploy and respond as needed". — AFP

INDEPENDENCE DEBATE DOMINATES IN SCOTLAND

EDINBURGH: Scottish nationalists like to portray their nation as a progressive European outpost removed from right-wing politics, but today's general election could put that view to the test. While the campaign battle elsewhere in Britain is largely between Conservative Theresa May's right-wing hard Brexit stance and Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn's leftist socialist agenda, things in Scotland look rather different.

Independence remains the defining issue - nearly three years after Scotland voted by 55 percent to remain a part of the United Kingdom. The pro-independence Scottish National Party continues to dominate, despite being on the losing side in the 2014 referendum, and is pushing for a second independence vote, probably in spring 2019 - before Britain actually exits from the European Union. In last June's referendum on EU mem-

bership, Scottish voters by 62 percent chose to remain in the bloc. So SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon has also proposed a "compromise" which would respect the results of both referendums and keep Scotland in the UK and in the EU. This would grant Scotland a special status within the EU, enabling it to remain in the European single market even as the rest of Britain leaves. "We know Theresa May doesn't just want to take the UK out of the European Union, but she's intent on pursuing an extreme Brexit that will take us out of the single market as well," Sturgeon told AFP. "By backing those compromise proposals in this election, we can make sure that Scotland's voice is heard, and that jobs and investment in Scotland is protected," she said.

But ultimately, Sturgeon believes Scotland should have another vote on independence. "Scotland must have a choice about our

future, a choice between following the UK down the Brexit path or becoming an independent country."

'Damaging to Scotland'

For the SNP's opponents, Sturgeon's "compromise" would be just as bad as independence. Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson told AFP: "The differentiated deal that Nicola Sturgeon put forward... was damaging to Scotland because it would break up the UK internal market, which is worth four times more in terms of trade and five times more in terms of jobs to Scotland than the EU." The Conservative message appears to be resonating in some parts of Scotland, particularly along the border with England and in the rural Highlands. The Tories have emerged as the foremost defenders of the British union, with even some previously unshakeable Labour

supporters willing to lend them their votes to squeeze out the SNP. However, talk of a great right-wing unionist revival in Scotland may be premature, with opinion polls suggesting the nationalist bandwagon will be dented but not derailed. Most polls suggest the SNP will win around 50 seats in the London parliament - slightly down from their near clean sweep of 56 out of 59 Scottish seats in the last general election in 2015. The Conservatives are expected to be the biggest beneficiaries rising from one seat to seven.

Nicola McEwen, professor of politics at Edinburgh University, said Davidson has gone "some way to detoxifying the Tory brand in Scotland." "It's worth remembering that in the 2015 UK general election the Conservatives in Scotland polled their worst ever result," McEwen said in an election podcast for the Centre on Constitutional Change. — AFP



EDINBURGH: Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon speaks during First Minister's Questions at the Scottish Parliament yesterday. — AP

SPINNING ON EMPTY STOMACHS IN INDIA TEXTILE HUB

DINDIGUL, India: The pots and pans in Anandi Murugesan's home lie empty. A handful of vegetables litter the floor below. Dinner is far from ready. The last meal that 15-year-old Murugesan ate was some rice and leftover lentils. More than eight hours later, and there is still no freshly cooked food in sight. "There is rice and my younger sister will make some rasam (tamarind based soup)," she said from the cramped kitchen of her two-room home in Manjanaickenpatti village in Tamil Nadu. Back from a 10-hour shift at a spinning mill, she says she is "not very hungry anyway, just very tired".

Murugesan is one of up to 400,000 workers employed by some 1,600 mills in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, a major hub in India's \$40 billion garment and textile industry. Like most adolescent girls employed by the industry, she is overworked, underweight, anaemic and hungry at work, according to doctors who have been running health camps in the region. "More than 50 percent of the girls are hungry through the day,

skipping meals or barely eating in their rush to get to work," said Dr Bobby Joseph, head of the community health department at the Bengaluru-based St John's Medical College. In studying health in the garment sector, Joseph has mapped girls in Coimbatore, Dindigul, Tirupur and Erode districts. Nearly 45 percent are underweight, the study found, with most of the girls rarely eating fruit or veg.

An Egg a Month

The findings echo those of non-profit Serene Secular Social Service Society, which ran a health camp in Dindigul district that showed most of its young workers were also malnourished. "The meals they eat don't have sufficient calories," said S James Victor, whose Society works on labor rights. "We found that 65 percent of them have broiler chicken or an egg once a month and only 11.2 percent have greens in a month. What they eat is not enough for the work they do."

Murugesan's favorite vegetable is a variety of broad beans topped with grated coconut. But she can't remember the last time she ate it. "We don't eat vegetables like that, we just add a few pieces to the lentils and then eat it with rice and pickle," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. A large portion of her roughly 5,500 rupees (\$85) monthly salary goes on pain-relieving balms and medicines, not food, she added.

Murugesan gets up at the crack of dawn, gulps a cup of tea and boards the factory bus at 6 am for her 8 am shift. Her first meal of the day is at the spinning mill at about 10 am. It is an unpalatable meal but she forces herself to eat a few mouthfuls to see her through the day, she said. "Often the rice is undercooked, sometimes there is too little salt, sometimes more," she said. Since the management deducts a monthly canteen services fee of up to 750 rupees (\$12), she brings no food from home.

Some friends bring a small, steel lunch box, packed with rice and leftovers. But they still pay for

the canteen, too. "Even if the food was good, we just get 30 minutes, in which we have to queue up to use the restroom and also finish our food. Every minute that we are late, we are fined." A survey by non-profit Community Awareness Research Education Trust shows workers get less than 10 minutes to eat.

"Most girls use the toilets during this break and it takes them a minimum 10 minutes," said S M Prithviraj of the trust. "Another 10 minutes are spent in queuing up for plates, food, getting a glass of water and finding a place to sit. That gives each girl just about 10 minutes to eat her food, clear her plate and get back to the machine." So most eat a little, gulp water and head back to work. Murugesan is back home by 7 pm. Then she washes clothes, has a bath and eats a bit of dinner before sleeping. "I am very, very tired and it often feels like my body is like a machine," she said. "All I can think of at the end of the day is to sleep. I eat a little because my mother insists." — Reuters



BRUSSELS: European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini (left) and European Union Commissioner for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness Jyrki Katainen talk to the media about the future of the European Defense at the European Union Commission headquarters yesterday. — AFP

EU UNVEILS DEFENSE FUND US URGED TO STAY ON WORLD STAGE

BRUSSELS: The EU unveiled an unprecedented plan for common defense spending yesterday to help Europe stand alone as a global military power, while urging the United States under Donald Trump to remain on the world stage. The proposal by Brussels for a 5.5-billion-euro a year fund follows a Franco-German led bid to focus on security and defense to provide a new sense of purpose after the Brexit vote last year shook Europe.

But the incentive has grown stronger since the election of Trump, who berated his European partners on military spending at a raucous NATO summit in Brussels last month even as he pursues his "America First" policy. EU diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini said the bloc would continue to "encourage our American friends to stay engaged in the global scene - I know it sounds surreal to hear this from Brussels to Washington but that is the reality of facts".

But she said that there was a "growing need, desire to partner with the European Union, part of this might be linked to a certain unpredictability of positions on some issues our partners have seen in Washington." Her comments

echo those by German Chancellor Angela Merkel who said last week that the US was no longer a reliable partner and that Europe had to take its destiny into its own hands. The EU military plan would be a key part of this, Mogherini said, although insisting that it would not overlap the NATO military alliance.

"It's not about substituting neither the alliance nor the United States, but it's a matter of focusing on what we can do more for our own purposes, our own interests," she said. Adding to the sense of chaos, is a more assertive Russia and a series of deadly attacks claimed by Islamic State group in France, Belgium and Britain.

No 'EU army'

The new EU fund will consist of two parts. The first will help member states finance defense research into fields such as electronics, encrypted software, robotics and drones. A draft unveiled at the end of 2016 envisaged a research program with an annual budget of around 500 million euros after 2020. The fund's second portion will pool resources for big-ticket hardware purchases such as tanks, helicopters and drones.

This part would reach a budget of five billion euros a year once fully operational, with the commission arguing that member states waste 25 to 100 billion EU-wide when going alone. Big questions remain on how the EU budget will pay for the new defense plans. The bloc will soon face an estimated 10-billion euro hole with the exit of net contributor Britain.

European nations also need to meet Trump's demand that all NATO nations meet their commitment of spending 2 percent of GDP on defense. But France and Germany, the EU's powerhouses, have asked the commission to seize on Brexit as an opportunity for further defense cooperation given that Britain has always opposed closer EU defense ties.

London historically has feared that too much cooperation in Europe on military matters would diminish the centrality of US-dominated NATO to Europe's security. This opposition persists. EU member states last month agreed to set up a military command for training missions, but objections by Britain forced them to stop short of creating a full headquarters. Brussels has repeatedly denied that it is creating an "EU army". — AFP

KOSOVO, SERBIA DISPUTE MINING COMPLEX

STANTERG, Kosovo: Miner Islam Kurti breaks off from hammering at stones to express indignance that Serbia disputes the ownership of his workplace, the mineral-rich Stanterg mine, a rare economic asset in Kosovo. Nearly 20 years after the war between Serbian forces and Kosovo's ethnic Albanian pro-independence rebels, this 59-year-old is delighted that the Trepca mining complex - of which Stanterg is a part - was nationalized late last year. The mine, known as Stari Trig to Serbs, "was never Serbian and never will be," Kurti insists.

The legislative elections of June 11 will not call into question this takeover: Kosovo's Albanians do not care at all about the anger of Belgrade, which considers itself the true owner of Trepca. Mostly located in the ethnically-divided northern municipality of Mitrovica, Trepca was once one of the largest companies in Yugoslavia, at its peak employing 17,000 people, but now struggles to attract badly needed investment.

A shadow of its former self, with now roughly 4,000 jobs split between ethnic Albanians and Serbs, who work under separate but parallel management structures, the mines are still bitterly disputed by Kosovo and Serbia. Kosovo, a former province of Serbia, is predominantly ethnic Albanian, and Mitrovica is sharply divided between an Albanian south and a Serb-dominated north. The one thing the two sides have in common is high unemployment. Last year, there were 2,200 applications for 100 jobs at Trepca, according to Hilmi Haxha, Albanian chief financial officer at the mines.

Miners' struggle

Kurti is a veteran worker at Stanterg, which became a symbol of nationalism against Serbia in the late 1980s. Belgrade has never recognized Kosovo's independence, unilaterally declared in 2008 and since backed by more than 110 coun-

tries. In 1989, shortly before Yugoslavia began to tear apart into conflict, Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic suspended Kosovo's autonomy. Along with his colleagues, Kurti went on hunger strike. "After eight days and eight nights" they were arrested, jailed for two months, and then forbidden "to even approach the entrance to the mine," he explains.

Poles, Bulgarians, Bosnians and Montenegrins were brought to replace them. Kurti returned in March 2001, after the war and two years of rehabilitation of the mine, which, according to Albanians, had been flooded by Serbs as they fled the area. In support of its position on the mines' ownership, Belgrade points to its investments in the complex and the fact that Trepca was Yugoslav property. Trepca "belongs to

Serbia, there is no doubt about it," says Oliver Ivanovic, a Kosovo Serb politician in North Mitrovica. "Let them prove it," retorts the director of the mine, Bexhet Vinarci.

'Everyone's future'

In Stanterg, the miners are welcomed at the entrance to the shaft with the inscription "Good luck!" in Albanian while the Albanian flag flies overhead. When no private investors stepped forward when the mining company was looking to privatize, Pristina decided to officially take control of the capital and nationalised the company, becoming the main shareholder. Seven hundred miners work up to 800 m below ground in the 280 km of galleries - one of Kosovo's few economic assets. — AFP



STANTERG, Kosovo: Trepca miners are seen at the Trepca mine in this village near Mitrovica on May 5, 2017. — AFP

NIGERIA ADRIFT AS LEADER IN LONDON FOR TREATMENT

LAGOS: Nigeria, West Africa's economic and military powerhouse, is adrift as President Muhammadu Buhari has been in London for medical treatment for a month as of Wednesday, worrying many that his undisclosed health problems have left Africa's most populous country without strong direction. The president's prolonged absence has created "a vacuum," said Dapo Alaba Sobowale, the head of a small IT company in Lagos' sprawling Computer Village, where small shops and vendors line the streets selling mobile phones and computer gadgets. "A lot of people are relying on him," Sobowale said. He said he isn't bothered about who, exactly, is sitting in office. "I'm bothered about the person being there making the right choices," he said.

Buhari, 74, went on medical leave to the United Kingdom on May 7 for unspecified health problems. He had already been in London for nearly seven weeks earlier this year for treatment. He looked thin and frail when he returned to Nigeria, where he later missed three consecutive weekly Cabinet meetings. On his return, he said he'd never been as sick in his life.

Government officials and Buhari's family have sought to reassure Nigerians who have expressed their worry about his absence on social media under hashtags like #WhereIsBuhari and #MissingPresident. On Tuesday, Aisha Buhari, the president's wife, said her husband is "recuperating fast" after she returned to Nigeria from visiting him in London. "He thanks Nigerians for their constant prayers for his health & steadfastness in the face of challenges," she tweeted. Buhari's long absences this year have raised questions over whether the former military leader from northern Nigeria will be able to complete his four-year term that is up in 2019 and kicked off speculation over who might succeed him. This is especially important in Nigeria because an unwritten agreement maintains the presidency should alternate between the Muslim-majority north and Christian-dominated south. Nigeria's 170 million people are almost evenly divided between Christians and Muslims.

Buhari was elected in 2015 after defeating incumbent Goodluck Jonathan, a southerner, on campaign promises to battle corruption and crack down on Boko Haram extremists in the nation's northeast. Buhari's administration, which marked two years in office on May 29, has a mixed track record of fulfilling those promises, analysts say.

Although the military has dislodged Boko Haram from areas where it had declared a caliphate, Nigeria's homegrown Islamic extremists continue to carry out suicide bombings and attacks. A rail-thin Buhari welcomed 82 Chibok schoolgirls who were released by Boko Haram in May after three years in captivity and then he flew to London that night.



Muhammadu Buhari

This is not the first time Nigeria has experienced an ailing, absent president. In 2010 President Umaru Yar'Adua died after being out of the country for medical treatment for several months. Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, now acting president, is credited for bringing some momentum back to the government by easing tensions in the insecure, oil-producing Niger Delta and pledging to tackle an economy battered by the fall in global oil prices. "There was an element of fatigue when it came to Buhari," said Malte Liewerscheidt, senior Africa analyst for risk management firm Verisk Maplecroft. "He wasn't acting on the big macroeconomic issues." — AP



PARIS: French policemen point their weapons near the site of an attack at the entrance of Notre-Dame cathedral on Tuesday. — AFP

NOTRE DAME ATTACKER HAD PLEDGED ALLEGIANCE TO IS

PARIS: A man who attacked a policeman with a hammer outside Notre Dame cathedral in Paris had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in a video, it emerged yesterday, four days after an attack claimed by IS in London. The 40-year-old man was shot and wounded by police on Tuesday after lunging at the officer in a square full of tourists in front of the cathedral. The attack, which came with France on high alert after jihadists killed seven people in London on Saturday, caused panic at one of the country's top tourist attractions. Around 1,000 people were in the cathedral at the time.

The video in which the man pledges allegiance to IS was found by police who searched the apartment he was renting in Cergy outside the French capital, the source said. During the attack, the man had shouted "this is for Syria", Interior Minister Gerard Collomb said. France is part of the US-led international coalition fighting IS and has carried out air strikes against militants in Syria.

Documents found on the attacker identified him as a 40-year-old Algerian student doing a doctorate on the media at a university in eastern France. He had also been carrying kitchen knives, the interior minister said. The man was yesterday placed in custody in hospital, where he is being treated for a gunshot wound to the chest.

Government spokesman Christophe Castaner said the man had "never showed any sign of radicalization" before the attack. The 22-year-old police officer sustained minor neck injuries in the assault.

'Very quiet' man

A witness told AFP he had heard someone "shout very loudly". "Then there was a crowd surge and people panicked. I heard two shots and saw a man lying on the ground in a pool of blood," he said. Heavily armed elite police had searched his apartment on Tuesday night, an AFP journalist said. A tenant of the apartment building housing students described him as "very quiet". The suspect's thesis director at the University of Lorraine, where he enrolled in 2014, said he had showed "no outward sign of an excessive adherence to Islam."

"When I knew him, he had a pro-Western, pro-democratic outlook," Arnaud Mercier, who said he had not heard from the suspect since November, told the French television channel BFMTV. Notre Dame, which is situated on the banks of the Seine river in the heart of Paris, draws 13 million visitors a year. Pictures on social media showed people sitting in the pews of the cathedral with their hands in the air - apparently at the request of authorities and police. — AFP

VENEZUELAN EXILES: FIVE FACES OF CRISIS

MONTEVIDEO: Thousands of Venezuelans have fled their country to escape the hardship and violence of its economic and political crisis. From Brazil to the United States to Europe, here are the stories of five Venezuelans who have started new lives abroad in the past two years.

Jobless in Colombia

The last straw for cook Jairo Suescun, 30, was when thieves stole his kitchen knives. "That broke my heart," he says. He left his home city of San Cristobal five months ago for Colombia, since his mother was a Colombian national. "I thought I would be welcomed, but it hasn't been like that," he says. "When you arrive alone, this city gobbles you up." Unemployed and sleeping in a warehouse, he is hoping for money from a relative to get to Chile, where friends can help him find work. "I don't know which is worse, the situation I'm in or that of Venezuela. But both of them fill me with longing."

Actress in US

At demonstrations in Miami, fellow Venezuelans stop Carolina Perpetuo to ask for photos. She was a soap opera star in Venezuela. She says the television industry suffered as studios were shut down

under Venezuela's socialist reforms from the late 1990s. Now 54, she lives like many Venezuelan immigrants in the El Doral neighborhood of Miami. In her garage, she gathers dozens of boxes of donations for the anti-government protesters in Venezuela. "I am a citizen activist. I keep constantly up to date with what is happening in Venezuela," she says, in sunglasses and a black cap with a Venezuelan flag. "I love my country and will die loving it."

Asylum-seeker in Brazil

Carlos Escalona, 33, fled when he received threats after uncovering corruption in the Venezuelan public institution where he worked. He saved as much money as he could and moved last year to Brazil, where he is seeking asylum, staying in a refugee center in Sao Paulo. "In a way I feel much better than before," he told AFP. "I'm no longer afraid to come and go from my home, or afraid when I hear the sound of a motorbike, afraid



Jairo Suescun



Carolina Perpetuo



Carlos Escalona



Jairo Rojas



Xavier Losada

of the police. Or the uncertainty of wondering what I will be able to buy."

Poet in Uruguay

A published poet, Jairo Rojas, 36, studied literature and art history, but found no steady work in Venezuela's cultural sector under the socialist government. "Professional prospects were getting smaller in Venezuela because of politics," he says. "It is like a filter - if you do not belong to a certain ideology you cannot get a job." Rojas moved in April 2015 to Uruguay, which has relatively easy immigration procedures for Venezuelans. There he is studying for a master's degree and working in a bookshop. "I don't know when I will go back" to

Venezuela, he says. "It is easier to go to any other country than to live in Caracas."

Beer-seller in Spain

Xavier Losada, 38, was fed up with seeing his children "shut up indoors all the time... from home to school, school to home," for fear of violent crime. An engineer by training, he worked for more than a decade at Venezuela's biggest food manufacturer, Polar. In Sept 2015 he moved with his family to Spain and opened a craft beer and cheese bar with his wife in central Madrid. Life is "better, no question," but "there is an underlying sadness" about Venezuela, he says. "Sometimes you forget about it. But every time I see the news about what is happening, I feel impotent." —AFP

BEFORE COMEY TESTIFIES, US INTEL CHIEFS HAVE THEIR SAY

WASHINGTON: Top US intelligence officials were to be grilled by lawmakers yesterday about Russia's election interference and possible coordination with Donald Trump's campaign, ahead of a highly-anticipated appearance by sacked FBI director James Comey. The former Federal Bureau of Investigation chief is expected to dispute Trump's claim that Comey told him multiple times that he was not under investigation, CNN reported, citing sources familiar with Comey's thinking.

That potential bombshell testimony - in which Comey also may address whether Trump urged him to halt or ease up on an investigation into former national security advisor Michael Flynn and his ties to Russia

also known to have had discussions with Trump about the Russia investigations, and top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer said he looked forward to public, unclassified testimony Wednesday from Coats and Rogers.

"Classification shouldn't be used as an excuse not to make things public that the public needs to hear," Schumer told reporters Tuesday. "And the conversations that the president had with each of them about investigations are not classified in any way." Adding to the drama, a top secret NSA report leaked to online news outlet The Intercept shows that hackers from Russian military intelligence repeatedly tried to break into US voting systems before last year's presidential election. Keen to crack down on leaks, the Trump administration quickly announced the arrest of a 25-year-old intelligence contractor on charges she violated the espionage act.

'I wish him luck'

The interactions between Trump and his now-dismissed FBI chief will likely dominate Comey's Senate appearance Thursday. Observers will be closely watching to see whether the president, whose social media habits have been criticized even by his political allies, decides to respond via Twitter as Comey testifies. No definitive evidence of collusion between Trump's campaign and Russia has come to light. But the allegations have drawn comparison to the 1970s Watergate scandal that brought down president Richard Nixon.

Trump, a ratings-obsessed former reality television star, may not appreciate the worldwide attention paid to Comey's public testimony, which is being touted as the height of political drama. Trump weighed in Tuesday, even as the revelations could spell more bad news for his troubled administration. "I wish him luck," Trump said of Comey during a White House meeting with Republican congressional leaders. With Capitol Hill abuzz, at least three Washington bars were set to open their doors before today's hearing's 10:00 am (1400 GMT) start.

"Don't you like the suspense?" Senate Republican Marco Rubio, who is on the intelligence panel, asked a scrum of reporters. Comey's testimony will be his first public remarks since Trump abruptly fired him on May 9. Comey is said to have written detailed notes about conversations he had with Trump, which reportedly document the president's efforts to scuttle the FBI's Flynn probe. — AFP



James Comey

- comes Thursday before the Senate Intelligence Committee. But on Wednesday the spotlight will be on three intelligence chiefs - Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, National Security Agency head Mike Rogers and interim FBI Director Andrew McCabe.

Members of the intelligence panel no doubt will question Coats, a former senator, about a Tuesday night Washington Post report. Citing US officials, it said Coats had told associates that Trump asked him whether he could intervene with Comey to get the FBI to ease its probe of Flynn. Coats reportedly discussed that March conversation with other officials and decided that interceding with Comey, as Trump had suggested, would be inappropriate. Rogers is

BRAZIL COURT BEGINS SESSION THAT COULD TOPPLE PRESIDENT SECOND LEADERSHIP CRISIS IN A YEAR

BRASILIA: Brazil's electoral court started hearings Tuesday that could topple scandal-tainted President Michel Temer, plunging Latin America's biggest country into its second leadership crisis in a year. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) opened the first of four scheduled sessions to decide whether the 2014 reelection of president Dilma Rousseff and her then-vice president Temer should be invalidated because of corrupt campaign funding. If the seven-judge panel votes to scrap the election result, Temer - who took over only last year when Rousseff was impeached - would himself risk losing his office.

The conservative president, who faces a separate, potentially devastating corruption probe, says the election court will absolve him. "Temer should not have to pay the price for the history of corruption in Brazil," Temer's lawyer Gustavo Guedes said. But Nicolao Dino, a deputy prosecutor, said there had been "a clear abuse of economic power." If found guilty, Temer would be able to appeal. A judge on the TSE could also decide to adjourn the court hearings, scheduled to end Thursday, with the whole process potentially still dragging on for some time.

There was a heavy police presence at the election court in the capital Brasilia, with only a small protest by leftwing demonstrators outside. Temer cancelled a previously announced official event to watch the court session on television from the presidential palace, with several loyal ministers and congressmen for company, according to local media.

Parallel corruption case

The TSE had previously been considered something of a sideshow in Brazil's multi-level corruption scandals. At most, it was expected to put the blame for use of dirty campaign money exclusively on Rousseff. Since the unpopular leftist leader is already out of the picture - having been impeached for breaking government accounting rules in 2016 - Temer was widely expected to be allowed to finish his mandate through 2018.

But Temer's standing has been dramatically weakened by the revelation last month of a secretly made audio recording in which Temer is allegedly heard approving hush money from a meatpacking tycoon to a top politician jailed for



BRASILIA: Supreme Electoral Court (TSE) President Judge Gilmar Mendes (left), gestures during a session examining whether the 2014 reelection of president Dilma Rousseff and her then-vice president Temer should be invalidated because of corrupt campaign funding yesterday. —AFP

corruption. The opening of a probe into the hush money allegations has led to hopes among his opponents that the TSE will seize the opportunity to bring him down - even if the election case is unrelated.

Temer's lawyer Gustavo Guedes on Sunday claimed that Prosecutor General Rodrigo Janot - who heads the corruption probe - was leaning on the TSE "to find the president guilty." Temer came under renewed pressure from Janot late Monday when he was ordered to answer more than 80 questions in a written deposition by late Tuesday. The Supreme Court granted Temer's lawyers a request to extend that deadline to the end of the week.

Coalition in danger

If Temer is convicted by the electoral court, he can appeal, but he'd still face the ongoing parallel

corruption probe and his grip on power may become untenable. The key partner in his center-right alliance in Congress, the PSDB party, has indicated that it is waiting to hear the results at the election court before deciding whether to withdraw support for Temer. Without the PSDB, Temer's PMDB party would be highly unlikely to find the necessary support to enact a controversial pension reform that is at the center of Temer's policy for repairing Brazil's broken economy.

That would turn him into even more of a lame duck, just as the corruption probe intensifies. Janot could at any time request that the Supreme Court accept formal corruption and obstruction of justice charges against Temer, triggering a trial. And Janot could bring more compromising allegations against the president through plea bargains with other suspects. — AFP

TRAVEL INDUSTRY LEERY OF TRUMP EFFECT

NEW YORK: American tourism companies are seeing early signs that US President Donald Trump's still-young administration is hitting foreign visits and fear "destination USA" could suffer further in the years to come. Travel industry executives in particular expressed anguish over Trump's proposed travel ban on visitors from seven predominately Muslim countries, an issue the US president raised anew this week in the wake of the London attacks.

"When you hear words like 'travel ban' it puts a big chill" on business, James Murren, chief executive of MGM Resorts said Tuesday during a panel discussion at a travel industry conference hosted by New York University. Industry insiders also see Trump's tough "America first" talk as hostile to potential visitors. "We need to address the Trump administration and its policies," said Roger Dow, president of the US Travel Association in a news conference. "Many might be saying, 'I'm wondering if the US even welcomes us anymore.'"

Early figures suggest travel to the United States from all international markets is running about flat in 2017 compared with the year-ago period, said Marriott chief executive Arne Sorenson, adding that outcome is "not bad" considering the strong dollar. But the data also suggest declines of about 20 percent in visitors from the Middle East and Mexico, which Trump has harshly criticized. Sorenson, a critic of the travel ban, fears the US market will suffer in the next three to five years even as global travel continues to grow.

"The US share will decline because

we'll see more and more people go to Europe and other destinations where the reception seems to be warmer," Sorenson said. Jonathan Tisch, chief executive of Loews' hotels in Miami has had groups cancel because they had attendees from a travel ban country. Tisch also said Emirates airline has cut flights to some US cities and warned the US risked another "lost decade" of foreign visitors much as a visa crackdown and other policies after 9/11 led to the loss of billions of dollars in revenues from overseas travelers.

Growth engine

Internationally known US tourist destinations include an array of spectacular national parks in the western part of the United States, amusement parks such as the Disney World in Orlando, and major cities like New York and Los Angeles, which are embedded in global popular culture from Hollywood movies and television. International leisure travelers comprised 19.5 percent of the nearly \$1 trillion US travel market in 2016, well below domestic leisure travelers which accounted for 50 percent of the total, according to a report by IBISWorld.

But growth is expected to be faster among international travelers in the years to come, in line with rising global income, particularly in countries in Asia and South America. IBISWorld projected that the number of domestic trips taken by Americans is expected to grow at an annualized rate of 2.3 percent through 2021, half the rate of inbound international visitors over the same period. — AFP

TRUMP, CHRISTIE CENTER STAGE IN RACE THEY'RE NOT PART OF

TRENTON, New Jersey: US President Donald Trump and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie won't be on the ballot in New Jersey this fall, but the newly minted Democratic and Republican nominees for governor and their parties are transforming one of only two statewide gubernatorial contests in the country into a race about the unpopular leaders. Democrats nominated wealthy former Goldman Sachs executive and one-time diplomat Phil Murphy and Republicans picked Christie's top deputy, Lt Gov Kim Guadagno, in New Jersey's primary Tuesday, the only statewide contest this year

along with Virginia, which goes to the polls next Tuesday. Murphy and national Democrats immediately pitched him as a bulwark against Trump and promised a departure from Christie, while Guadagno and national Republicans have come out aggressively against Murphy, bashing him for his time as an executive with Goldman Sachs and comparing him with unpopular Democratic former Gov. Jon Corzine, a Goldman alum Christie defeated in 2009.

"The race will be a proving ground for Democrats to test their anti-Trump message

before the midterm elections," said Montclair State University political science professor Brigid Harrison. "(It's also) a microcosm of the struggle within the (Republican) party between forces loyal to President Trump and those who would chart a different more moderate course."

New Jersey and Virginia's elections come as national Democrats hope to deliver a blow to Trump ahead of the 2018 midterm elections when the US House and a third of the Senate will be on the ballot. The contest also gives Republicans an opportunity to carve out how to compete during the Trump era. Democrats are favored in New Jersey's general election, in part because of an 800,000-voter registration advantage and because of political headwinds stemming from Christie's and Trump's unpopularity. "We will stand up to this president with a steel backbone," Murphy said. "We are better than Donald Trump, and we are better than Chris Christie."

In Virginia, most of the attention has focused on the close Democratic primary between Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam and former Congressman Tom Perriello. Northam is a more traditional candidate, who stresses his pragmatic approach. Perriello is running a more liberal campaign, promising to raise taxes on the wealthy to pay for social programs to help the poor and middle class. He's received endorsements from US Sens Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren and large donations from billionaire super donors George Soros and Donald Sussman.

Former Republican National Committee Chairman Ed Gillespie is favored to win the GOP primary over a Trump's former state campaign chairman. In New Jersey, Guadagno has to contend with Christie's unpopularity going back to the George Washington Bridge lane-closing scandal and his failed presidential run. She has already begun contrasting herself with the twice-elected, term-limited incumbent. — AP



NEWARK, New Jersey: Phil Murphy poses for a selfie with a supporter after speaking during a Democratic primary election watch party at the Robert Treat Hotel on Tuesday. —AP

PHILIPPINES MILITANTS PLANNED TO SET UP ISLAMIST ENCLAVE

MARAWI CITY, Philippines: Islamist militants locked in an urban battle with troops in the southern Philippines had planned to carve out an enclave of their own, officials said yesterday after the emergence of a video showing their leaders in a secret strategy meeting. The footage, found on a mobile phone as government forces closed in on the fighters in Marawi City, showed a group of men in a room discussing how they would take hostages from a school, seal off roads and capture a highway into the lakeside town.

"There was indeed a bigger plan and it was supposed to wreak more havoc," military spokesman Restituto Padilla told a news conference after the video became public. The battle for Marawi has raised concern that Islamic State, on a back foot in Syria and Iraq, is building a regional base on the Philippine island of Mindanao that could pose a threat to neighboring Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore too.

Officials said that, among the several hundred militants who seized the town on May 23, there were about 40 foreigners from Indonesia and Malaysia but also fighters from India, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Chechnya. The military has said that the fighters are

increasingly penned in around a built-up area of the town, and troops have been clearing houses that the militants had defended with snipers for the past two weeks.

Philippine senators said members of the upper house were last week shown the video of the militants making their plans, a copy of which was obtained by Reuters yesterday. Seated at a table was Isnilon Hapilon, the leader of the Abu Sayyaf rebel group who was proclaimed by Islamic State last year as its "emir" of Southeast Asia. The US State Department has offered a bounty of up to \$5 million for his arrest. Hapilon has formed an alliance with the Maute group, a tactically smart, social-media savvy outfit, and at least two other factions that have lined up behind the ultra-radical Islamic State.

"It was clear that these terrorists, the Maute group, their end goal is to make Marawi ... independent, or to separate from the republic," Senator JV Ejercito told Reuters. "With a plan like this, this is already rebellion and a threat to national security, so declaration of martial law is justified," he said, referring to the martial law declared by President Rodrigo Duterte across Mindanao when the siege began. The Associated Press



MARAWI, Philippines: A soldier crawls through a hole through a door that he smashed during a house-to-house clearing operation against Islamist militants yesterday. — AFP

first reported on the video on Tuesday. Armed forces Chief of Staff General Eduardo Ano told the agency that the images showed an intention to dismember "a portion of the Philippine territory by occupying the whole of Marawi City and establishing

their own Islamic state or government".

'Not a Religious War'

The fighters prepared for a long siege, stockpiling arms and food in tunnels, basements, mosques and madrasas, or Islamic reli-

gious schools, military officials say. The Philippines is largely Christian, but Marawi City is overwhelmingly Muslim. Progress in the military campaign has been slow because hundreds of civilians are still trapped or being held hostage, some as human shields, the military said. A Catholic priest and about a dozen of his parishioners were taken on the first day of the battle by militants who burst into the town's cathedral and set it alight.

Military spokesman Padilla appealed to social media users not to circulate material - such as video images of the militants destroying religious statues and pulling down a cross inside a church - that may fan religious tension. "Let us not buy into the plan of these terror groups to inflame the feelings of our other religions," he said. "This is not a religious war." A four-hour ceasefire to evacuate residents trapped in the town was interrupted by gunfire on Sunday, leaving some 500 to 600 inside with dwindling supplies of food and water. Officials say that 1,545 civilians have been rescued. The latest numbers for militants killed in the battle is 134, along with 39 security personnel. The authorities have put the civilian death toll at between 20 and 38. — Reuters

INDIAN FARMERS STEP UP STRIKE AFTER SIX KILLED

MUMBAI: Indian farmers yesterday stepped up their agitation in the central state of Madhya Pradesh after six were shot dead in clashes the previous day, forcing the authorities to impose a curfew in some areas. The outburst of discontent in India's heartland farming states of Madhya Pradesh and neighboring Maharashtra poses a challenge for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has promised to double farmers' incomes over the next five years.

Farmers' leaders say the six were shot dead by police during a protest in the central city of Mandsaur, a version questioned by the state government which has ordered an investigation. "We will continue our protest until the government accepts our demands," said Sunil Gaur of the Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Sangh, or National Farm Workers' Union, which called Wednesday's state-wide shutdown. "The government has complicated the situation by killing six innocent farmers."

Farmers dumped vegetables and milk on the roads when the strike kicked off last week, demanding billions of dollars in debt forgiveness and better prices for their produce. Tension persisted in some parts of Madhya Pradesh, with a curfew imposed throughout the district of Mandsaur where the farmers died, a police officer said. "The curfew won't be lifted until the situation

becomes normal," said the officer, D Kavita.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan appealed to farmers to keep the peace and accused the opposition Congress party of being behind violence that broke out at the protests. "The government is with the farmers," he told television news agency ANI, a Reuters affiliate. "Some people want to ruin the atmosphere. Stay away from such people." Congress Vice-President Rahul Gandhi was expected to visit Mandsaur yesterday. "This government is at war with the farmers of our country," he said on social network Twitter.

In the past, ruling parties have lost elections in the eastern state of West Bengal, western Maharashtra and the northern state of Uttar Pradesh after farmers died at the hands of security forces. The Maharashtra farmers' strike entered its seventh day, despite an assurance from Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis that the state would waive distressed farmers' debts before Oct 31.

The prices of fresh produce have more than doubled in cities such as Mumbai, India's main financial center and the capital of Maharashtra. Two-thirds of India's population of 1.3 billion depend on farming for their livelihood, but the sector makes up just 14 percent of gross domestic product, reflecting a growing divide between the countryside and increasingly well-off cities. — Reuters



In this April 21, 2017 file photo, an airstrip, structures and buildings on China's man-made Subi Reef in the Spratly chain of islands in the South China Sea are seen from a Philippine Air Force C-130 transport plane of the Philippine Air Force. — AP

CHINA SLAMS PENTAGON REPORT ON OVERSEAS MILITARY BASES

BEIJING REFUTES US ASSESSMENTS

BEIJING: Beijing yesterday dismissed as "irresponsible" an annual US Defense Department report that predicted China would expand its global military presence, building overseas bases in countries like Pakistan. Published Tuesday, the Pentagon report estimated that China spent \$180 billion last year on its military - the world's largest - a figure well over the country's official \$140 billion defense budget. "China most likely will seek to establish additional military bases in countries with which it has a long-standing friendly relationship and similar strategic interests, such as Pakistan, and in which there is a precedent for hosting foreign militaries," the report said.

China's defense ministry refuted this assessment yesterday. "China is not doing any military expansion and does not seek a sphere of influence," it said in a statement. Foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying likewise said during a regular briefing that China "is firmly opposed" to aspects of the publication. "We have noted the report released by the US which made irresponsible remarks about China's national defense development in disregard of the facts," Hua said, declining to comment on "speculation" and noting that the "friendly cooperation (between China and Pakistan) does not target any third party".

As part of China's expansive Belt and Road regional infrastructure project, China and Pakistan are building an economic corridor aimed at linking northwest China to the Arabian Sea. India has voiced displeasure at the planned route, which cuts through Gilgit and Baltistan in Pakistan-administered Kashmir - disputed territory which India claims is illegally occupied. China started building its first overseas military base in Feb 2016 in the small nation of Djibouti, where it will be stationed just a few miles from a US camp. The outpost will support the country's UN peacekeepers in Africa, allow it to evacuate its nationals in a crisis and support anti-piracy activities off Somalia, according to China. The Pentagon report noted that the strategically-sited camp, "along with regular naval vessel visits to foreign ports, both reflects and amplifies China's growing influence, extending the reach of its armed forces".

James Char, a China analyst at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, told AFP that "it would not be surprising if the People's Liberation Army is working with its overseas counterparts on reaching formal agreements on basing arrangements". Such bases would probably be intended to send forces quickly to help Chinese nationals during humanitarian crises rather than wage war, Char said.

South China Sea

The Pentagon report said Beijing's actions in the South China Sea have caused regional concern over its long-term intentions. China has built reefs into artificial islands capable of supporting military facilities, some with airstrips. "As of late 2016, China was constructing 24 fighter-sized hangars, fixed-weapon positions, barracks, administration buildings and communication facilities" at three outposts in the Spratly Islands, the report said.

China claims nearly all of the South China Sea, despite partial counter-claims from Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam. Beijing and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations took a step in May towards easing friction, agreeing to a framework for a "code of conduct" to prevent incidents in the disputed waters. China has balked at US involvement in the dispute. "The US' intensification of deployment in the region - frequently sending navy vessels on reconnaissance operations - has created the tense situation," China's defense ministry said. Though China is engaged in a decades-long build-up and modernization of its once-backward armed forces, its military clout remains far behind that of the United States, whose annual defense budget totals around \$600 billion. — AFP



PIPALYA, India: Protesters sit with the body of an Indian farmer killed Tuesday during a protest yesterday. — AP

NO KOREA FAMILY REUNIONS: NORTH

PYONGYANG: A senior North Korean official yesterday ruled out any more reunions for families separated decades ago by war unless a group of citizens from the reclusive state are returned by South Korea. The North says the group of 12 were kidnapped while the South says they defected voluntarily. Pyongyang also wants a 13th citizen repatriated. The families separated by the Korean War, which ended more than 60 years ago, are the most emotional manifestation of the division of the peninsula.

With no direct contact between North and South, not even telephone links, many have no idea whether their parents, siblings or children are still alive. A series of highly charged meetings were held in recent years, when ties across the Demilitarised Zone were warmer, enabling around 4,000 of those in the South to see their relatives for the first time in decades.

But the last such reunion was in 2015 before inter-Korean relations were frozen amid North Korea's drive for nuclear weapons. Ruling and opposition parties in the South agreed earlier this week to seek a new reunion in August to mark the anniversary of the end of the Second World War. But Kim Yong-Chol, of the North's Committee for the Peaceful Unification of Korea, poured cold water on the proposal yesterday.

"At the moment another issue is more important and more urgent," he told AFP in Pyongyang, saying that the 12 workers who defected from a restaurant in China were "being detained by force in South Korea", along with Kim Ryon-Hui, a dressmaker who says she wants to go back to the North. "They should be returned immediately." The father of Ri Ji-ye, one of the 12, he said, "died with his eyes open and cursing the conservative elements who have detained his daughter". "Unless Kim Ryon-

Hui and 12 other women workers are returned immediately there can never be any kind of humanitarian cooperation. And this is our principled stand."

Pyongyang is accused of widespread human rights abuses, including by a United Nations inquiry, and campaign groups say defectors who are returned to the North face severe punishment. Around 60,000 members of divided families members are still alive in the South, but they are dying off rapidly without ever enjoying reunions. Hopes of a renewed reunion program were raised by the election last month of left-leaning President Moon Jae-In, who favors engagement with Pyongyang and has proposed offering reunions for all divided family members in exchange for humanitarian aid for the North such as hospital construction.

Moon's own family was divided when his parents fled the North, and he and his mother were themselves participants in a reunion in 2004, when they met his aunt. "I can relate to the refugees' pain better than anyone else," he said on the campaign trail.

The 12 waitresses at a North Korean state-run restaurant in the Chinese city of Ningbo defected to the South in April 2016, making headlines as the largest group defection in years. While Seoul said they fled voluntarily, Pyongyang claimed they were kidnapped by South Korea's National Intelligence Service and has waged a vocal campaign through its state media for their return. The waitresses were released from Seoul government custody last August but have never made public appearances.

Citing government sources, South Korean media have said the women - mostly in their early 20s - have enrolled in universities but remain under strict government protection provided to high-profile defectors. — AFP

EU TO SCREEN B'DESHI GOODS FOR EXPLOSIVES

DHAKA: The European Union has slapped new security screening on imports from Bangladesh, a move that is likely to make it costlier for businesses in the South Asian country to sell products to EU nations. Just over half of Bangladesh exports go to the European bloc, accounting for \$18.68 billion in revenues during the last fiscal year. Those shipments, by air or sea, will now have to be screened by bomb-detecting dogs and devices.

Bangladesh has none of these facilities, so cargo will have to be routed through a third country where security screening is possible. The move makes Bangladesh the 13th country designated as "high risk" for EU commerce. It was unexpected, according to Bangladeshi government officials, who said they were given no explanation when informed Monday of the change. The EU ambassador's office in Dhaka did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Last year, Britain, Germany and Australia banned direct cargo shipments from Dhaka's international airport, citing its poor security system. The country has suffered a string of deadly attacks in recent years claimed by extremists targeting perceived enemies of Islam, including bloggers, rights activists, atheists, religious minorities and foreigners. The government has blamed the attacks on home-grown extremists bent on re-establishing Islamic rule in the secular nation.

The government has offered little comment about the EU move. But Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon criticized Brussels for delivering the news as a surprise, and said the government would work quickly to

establish an adequate screening mechanism in the country. But getting everything in place could take months. Business leaders are worried about the possible delays in screening, when they are already scrambling to fulfill large orders on short notice despite frequent power outages that shut operations down.

Some air shipments from Bangladesh are already being routed through Dubai, Istanbul or Doha for screening, and some sea shipments are going through Colombo or Singapore. "Fresh screening will take at least 10 days, at a time

when we struggle to ship goods timely for many reasons," said Mir Mobasher Ali, who exports about \$50 million in garments to Europe and Canada every year. "We need to count extra amount for the screening in a third country. That's disastrous for us." Siddiqui Rahman, president of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters' Association, representing 70 percent of the textiles industry, also described the move as "disastrous." During fiscal 2015-16, the garment industry exported \$17.15 billion in goods to the EU - 60 percent of the industry's exports. — AP



DHAKA: A Bangladeshi artisan paints a colorful sari ahead of Eid-al-Fitr yesterday. — AFP

GULF RIVALS NOT SEEKING QATAR...

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait is leading efforts to find a mediated solution. Its Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held talks with Saudi King Salman on Tuesday but there were no immediate signs of progress.

Dangerous 'Trumpification'

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met Emirati officials in Dubai yesterday, a day after holding talks in Saudi Arabia aimed at resolving a diplomatic crisis with Qatar. The Amir held talks with Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, who is also vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, according to Emirati state news agency WAM.

UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and other senior officials attended the talks, WAM said, without elaborating on the discussions. Kuwait's official KUNA news agency said earlier that the Amir was going to Dubai for a "brotherly visit". Sheikh Sabah is expected to travel to Qatar after his UAE trip for talks with his counterpart in the Gulf emirate, according to reports.

The Kuwaiti ruler played a pivotal role in mediating a compromise in a 2014 diplomatic dispute between Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other Gulf states. The United States, France and Russia have called for dialogue while Turkey has defended Qatar and said it would further "develop" ties with Doha. US President Donald Trump waded into the dispute on Tuesday, but seemed to only muddy the waters. After first appearing to back the Saudi-led measures against Qatar on Twitter, he shifted gears and called for unity among Gulf Arab states.

Trump's Tuesday tweet-in which he said "all reference was pointing to Qatar" as a financier of extremism was especially surprising given Qatar's role as host of the largest US airbase in the Middle East. Al-Udeid, located in the Qatari desert, is home to some 10,000 US troops and is a crucial hub in the fight against Islamic State group extremists in Syria and Iraq. German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel accused the US president of fanning conflict in the Middle East and risking a "new spiral in arms sales" with his remarks. "Such a 'Trumpification' of relations in a region already susceptible to crises is particularly dangerous," Gabriel said in an

interview scheduled to appear yesterday.

Qatar has said it is open to talks to end the crisis but has also accused its neighbors of impinging on its sovereignty. Ali bin Smaikh Al-Marri, chairman of Qatar's national human rights committee, late on Tuesday accused Saudi Arabia and its allies of violating the rights of Qatari citizens with orders for them to leave Gulf countries. "We have moved from severing diplomatic relations to a comprehensive blockade of international conventions and human rights conventions," Marri told a press conference on Tuesday evening.

UAE warns Qatar sympathizers

The UAE meanwhile warned that anyone showing sympathy with Qatar could face jail time or fines. The UAE attorney general said yesterday that "any participation in conversation or social media or any other means that demonstrates sympathy to Qatar... may face a prison sentence of three to 15 years and a fine of no less than 500,000 dirhams (\$136,000)." The measures taken against Qatar have seen dozens of flights cancelled and huge problems for Qatar Airways, which has been banned from the airspace of Saudi Arabia and other countries.

The severing of land and maritime links have also sparked fears of food shortages in Qatar, which relies heavily on imports. The head of Qatar's business chamber sought to allay those concerns on yesterday, saying the country had enough food and other consumer goods to last a year. "There will be no shortage of food items and other materials," Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim bin Mohammed Al-Thani said. Qatar has an independent streak that has often angered its neighbors, attracting criticism for hosting the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, and supporting Islamist rebels in Syria.

Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies may have felt emboldened to move against Qatar by Trump's visit last month to Riyadh, which saw the president clearly align US interests with the kingdom and lash out at Iran. Riyadh has itself faced accusations of tolerating or even supporting extremists, in particular after the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States. Of the 19 hijackers of planes used in the attacks, 15 came from Saudi Arabia, also the birthplace of Al-Qaeda founder and attack mastermind Osama bin Laden. — Agencies

TABTABAI FUMES AS NA WINDS UP

Continued from Page 1

He said that it will be disappointing if the National Assembly ends its term without discussing those important issues. The lawmaker charged that the government and some MPs have collaborated to prevent holding yesterday's session to prevent debating important popular issues. He charged that some people want the national assembly to become a vehicle for approving the budgets only as they don't want to debate important issues. Tabtabai said that so far seven MPs will oppose closing the assembly term today. He demanded that the lost session be compensated and the closing session be moved to next week.

The lawmaker threatened to grill the Prime Minister after the three-month summer recess if he does not deal with issues like the Eurofighter warplanes deal, the petrol and electricity price hikes and operating Sheikh Jaber hospital and the new university.

TRUMP TAPS WRAY FOR FBI

Continued from Page 1

Sessions in carrying out Trump's call for a crackdown on violent crime and immigration, and taking a hard line against people who leak classified information. On Monday the Justice Department announced the arrest of 25-year-old intelligence contractor Reality Winner on charges she violated the espionage act by leaking a top secret report from the National Security Agency

on Russian election meddling.

Since leaving the Justice Department, Wray has worked on mostly white collar civil and criminal cases as a partner at King & Spalding law firm in Washington and Atlanta. He most notably represented New Jersey Governor and Trump ally Chris Christie in the 2013 scandal over the closure of a key bridge to hurt Christie's political rivals.

At King & Spalding, the Yale Law School graduate chairs a unit representing entities and individ-

uals in white collar criminal and regulatory enforcement issues, civil litigation and internal corporate investigations, according to the law firm's website. At the Justice Department, he helped handle corporate fraud scandals, served on Bush's Corporate Fraud Task Force and oversaw major fraud investigations including that of energy giant Enron. He also helped coordinate the agency's response to the September 11, 2001 attacks. — AFP

GUNMEN, SUICIDE BOMBERS STORM IRAN'S PARLIAMENT

Continued from Page 1

Iran's leaders sought to play down the attacks, with neither President Hassan Rouhani nor supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei making a statement by early evening. Parliament was in session as the violence unfolded and members were keen to show they were undeterred, posting selfies showing themselves as calm and continuing with regular business. Meanwhile, gunshots continued in the neighboring office buildings, with police helping staff to escape from windows and snipers taking position from rooftops.

Speaker Ali Larijani dismissed the attacks, saying they were a "trivial matter" and that security forces were dealing with them. The intelligence ministry said there had been a third "terrorist" team that was neutralized before the attacks started. Tehran was on lockdown, with streets

blocked and parts of the metro closed. Journalists and onlookers were kept away from the sites by police. Interior Minister Abdolrahman Fazli told ISNA he had convened a special meeting of the country's Security Council.

Messages of support were sent by Russian President Vladimir Putin and from the Syrian foreign ministry. The three countries are close allies in the fight against rebels and jihadist groups in Syria. Iran has also been helping to battle IS in Iraq, which also sent its condolences. This has made Iran, the predominant Shiite power, a priority target for IS, which published a rare video in Persian in March warning that it "will conquer Iran and restore it to the Sunni Muslim nation as it was before."

Jihadist groups have clashed frequently with Iranian security forces along the borders with Iraq and Afghanistan, but the country has largely escaped attacks within its urban centers. The

intelligence ministry said in June 2016 that it had foiled an IS plot to carry out multiple bomb attacks in Tehran and around the country. IS is under increasing pressure, having lost significant territory in the face of offensives now targeting its last two major urban bastions, Raqa in Syria and Mosul in Iraq.

Militant groups are also known to operate in Iran's southeastern Sistan-Baluchistan province, which borders Pakistan and has a large Sunni community. Jaish-ul Adl (Army of Justice), which Tehran accuses of links with Al-Qaeda, has carried out several armed attacks on Iranian soil in recent years. Khamenei said on Sunday that attacks by IS in Europe and elsewhere showed that Western policies in the Middle East have backfired. "This is a fire that (Western powers) themselves ignited and now has backfired on them," he told a gathering of senior officials in Tehran. — AFP

KIDS AND RAMADAN

Continued from Page 1

You will be surprised at the novelty your children's ideas. Here are some ideas for you: Create a charity jar, make posters, help to create awareness among friends and family, collect money for a cause, hold a bake-sale, be grateful for food and finish the food on their plate, write a letter to a friend, pray for them in daily prayers and before breaking the fast,

share food with the poor and needy. During the month pick one idea from your wall and follow through. Give from your time, money and effort for the sake of your Lord.

If you are a non-Muslim, try to fast with your kids for a day or part of a day, and discuss how you feel. The TIES Center has regular events to help you integrate into the culture, such as the Ramadan Challenge where participants fast for a full day in order to have fun,

gain knowledge, or have a new spiritual experience.

Courtesy of the TIES Center, whose mission is to empower Kuwait's expats through social and educational services that promote a positive and productive role in society, and to facilitate opportunities for intra- and interfaith interactions that promote social solidarity. For more information, please call 25231015/6 or e-mail: info@tiescenter.net.

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Focus

ARAB RIFT DEEPENS
WOES FOR AIRLINES

By Tim Hepher and Victoria Bryan

A bust-up between Arab powers has dealt a blow to supercarriers already hurt by low oil prices and laptop bans, exposing the sensitivity of Gulf hubs to regional uncertainty and creating openings for rival airlines - at least in the short term. The unexpected closure of most surrounding airspace to Qatar's airline and restrictions on travel for its nationals left passengers stranded and forced its high-profile chief executive to bail out of a meeting of airline bosses in Mexico. "It completely surprised all of us," Alexandre de Juniac, head of the International Air Transport Association, said after overseeing the meeting of around 200 airlines. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE and Bahrain severed diplomatic ties with Qatar on Monday over its alleged support for militants. Transport links closed. Plunged into a diplomatic row for the second time in three years, Qatar Airways was forced to reroute dozens of flights through Iranian airspace as the world's second-richest nation per capita found itself almost boxed in by no-fly restrictions.

It was a dramatic reversal for the once unstoppable carrier, which has splashed tens of billions of dollars on jetliners and clashed with US rivals over its breakneck expansion. "The whole business model is based on being a hub. They have invested in the airport, invested in state-of-the-art aircraft. They are losing a key source of (traffic) feed from major local markets," British aviation consultant John Strickland said. "With the overflight ban, it is not only a headache to reroute some of the operation, but it will make flights longer due to more circuitous routes. It adds time and cost and disrupts the schedule in terms of making connections."

Shift to other carriers

Some demand may shift to other carriers, he said. IATA delegates said European carriers and Turkish Airlines could benefit, as well as UAE heavyweights Emirates and Etihad. Disarray between Gulf allies left the region's wider aviation growth looking vulnerable in the eyes of some industry watchers and laid bare political complexities underpinning the diversification from oil into an East-West transit point. "It has been a reality that they have adapted to and lived with. That said, there has always been a significant concern that this (Gulf aviation) is, if not on a knife-edge, then on a fairly narrow plane," said Peter Harbison, a former Australian aviation trade negotiator and chairman of consultancy CAPA. "It certainly does destabilize things that little bit further. Do you get to a tipping point? I don't think so." IATA, whose members include national carriers of all the affected states, was reluctant to wade publicly into the row. "Nations all over the world can close their borders and close or open their (airspace). But we would like the normal connectivity to be re-established, the sooner the better," de Juniac said. While air travel between nations is governed by bilateral pacts, the right to overfly another country for civil transport is enshrined in international law through a 1944 transit accord. However, Saudi Arabia is not a member of the treaty, which calls for disputes to be settled through negotiation before exercising the right to close airspace for limited reasons.

Fragmented airspace

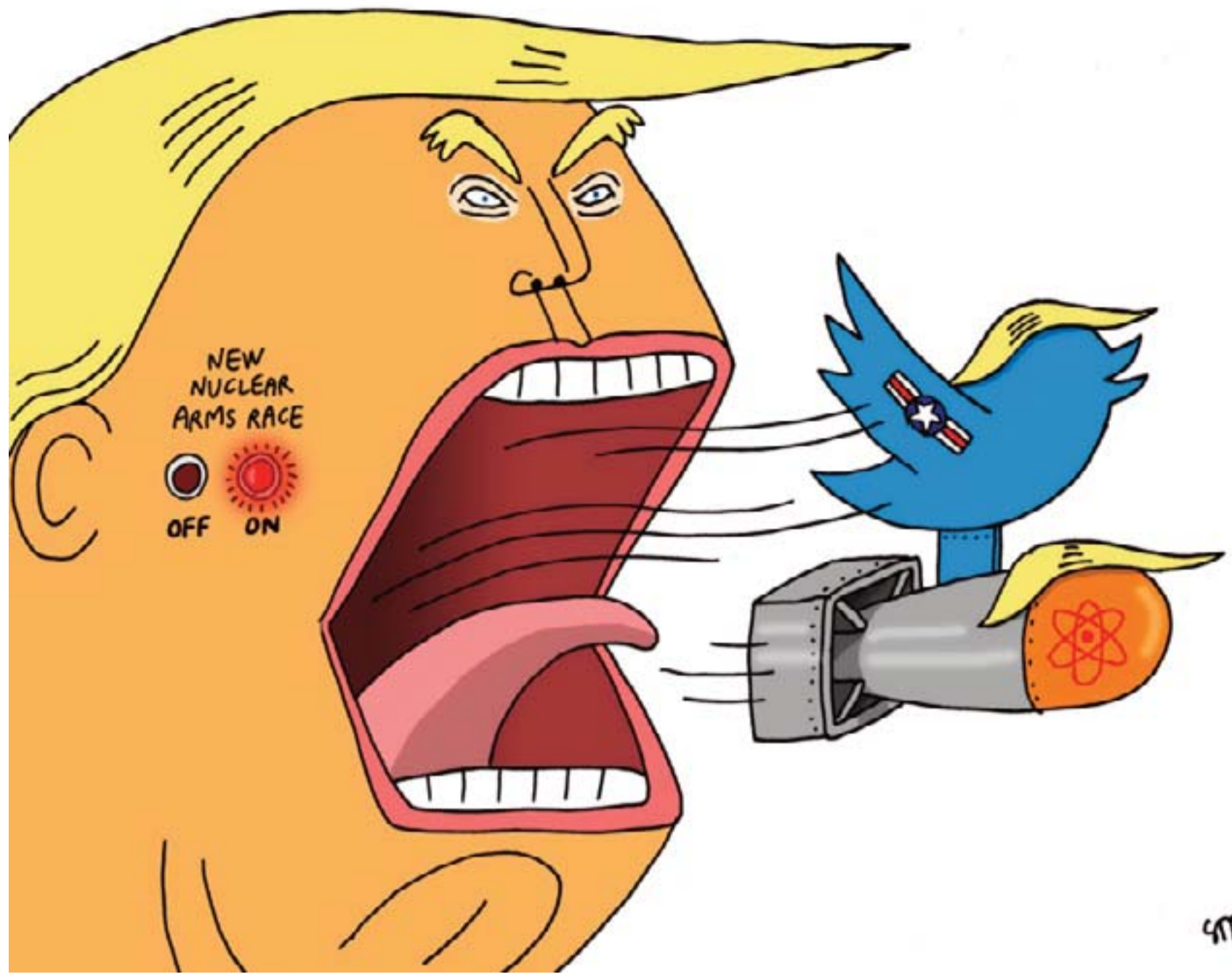
The decision to isolate Doha came as Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker mingled with IATA members late on Sunday in Cancun. He left overnight by business jet, delegates said. The move sent aviation officials from Montreal to Geneva and the Gulf scrambling to understand the ban and find routings through fragmented airspace, a step akin to threading a needle. IATA said last week Gulf airlines had already seen traffic curtailed in April by US and UK bans on electronics in cabins of flights from some Middle East and North African nations.

"I think one can read too much into a short-term event," said Aengus Kelly, chief executive of AerCap, one of the world's largest leasing companies and aircraft owners. "Global travel is resilient. We have been through so much in the last decade: Russia, Brazil, Euro-zone crisis, Turkey." "Having said that, a lot of capacity has been going into the Gulf region. Some carriers in the Gulf recognized about a year and a half ago that there wasn't an endless growth model of 15 percent a year. That could have consequences for the timing of deliveries of dozens of wide-body jets on order from Airbus and Boeing. They will be deferred and the market will come back into balance," Kelly predicted.

Iran joins IATA board

The row placed Qatar and its outspoken airline boss in the unusual position of responding to events outside his control. The region's shifting dynamics were also reflected by the election of the head of IranAir to IATA's board for the first time since at least before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Qatar has friendlier ties with Tehran than most neighbors including Saudi Arabia, where President Donald Trump last month called on Muslim states to stand united against Iran. The undercurrent of tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which has ordered 200 Western jets under a deal with major powers, is seen as key to the stability of the region and could spill over to air travel demand, aviation experts said. "For the first time, it's very clear Iran does have a chance to come back into the fold and that is part of the things that are creating new tension in the Middle East," said Robert Martin, head of Singapore lessor BOC Aviation. —Reuters

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QATAR CRISIS EXPOSES A LONG GULF FAMILY FIGHT

By Jon Gambrell

Gulf Arab nations often get considered one giant family, as many ruling tribes intermarried and have long ties stretching back to the days before oil turned dusty fishing villages into skyscraper-studded metropolises. But if the last day has proven anything, it's that every family fights. The diplomatic standoff between Qatar and its neighbors has exposed longstanding faults running just under the surface of the Gulf Cooperation Council, a regional body meant to serve as a counterbalance to Iran.

None of the key countries - Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - appears to be backing down, calling into question the unity of the council just as it seeks to portray itself as standing up to Iran. "The new hawkish policy reflects an end to decades-long tradition in the Gulf Cooperation Countries that seeks to maintain dialogue irrespective of policy differences," wrote Ayham Kamel, Middle East director at the Eurasia Group, calling the damage to Gulf relations "irreparable." "Saudi Arabia's relationship with President Trump is the linchpin of Riyadh's new approach. The implicit message to all the Gulf leaders is that Saudi Arabia remains the center of gravity in Gulf affairs."

The Gulf Cooperation Council, known by the acronym GCC, formed in 1981 in the wake of Iran's Islamic Revolution overthrowing the shah and installing its clerically overseen government. By the time ink dried on the agreement, Iraq had already invaded Iran, sparking a long, bloody war between the two countries that spilled into the waters of the Persian Gulf and worrying the Sunni Arab members of the council.

Typically, heavyweight Saudi Arabia has dictated major foreign policy deci-

sions across the council, which is headquartered in the kingdom. Saudi Arabia, home to the holiest sites in Islam, views itself as the protector of the Sunni faith as well. Both it and the United Arab Emirates also view themselves as providing the military power necessary to counter Iran, especially after the 2015 nuclear deal Tehran struck with world powers. But there always have been cracks. The sultanate of Oman long has maintained its distance, serving as a crucial go-between Iran and the West. Kuwait, home to Shiites and Sunnis living together in peace, has served as a mediator as well.

But while those countries quietly stand apart, Qatar has gone loud. While practicing Wahhabism, an ultra-conservative version of Islam standard in Saudi Arabia, Qatar allows women to drive and foreigners to drink alcohol. Qatar openly embraces officials from the Muslim Brotherhood, a Sunni Islamist group that other Gulf nations

view as a threat to their hereditary rule. It maintains relations with Iran as it shares a massive offshore natural gas field with the Islamic Republic. And its Doha-based Al-Jazeera news network didn't hesitate to go hard after autocratic rulers amid the protests of the 2011 Arab Spring.

That, coupled with long-standing allegations from the West of Qatar allowing or even encouraging funding of Sunni extremists, appear to be what finally tipped Saudi Arabia and others into taking action. Even US President Donald Trump appeared to line up with them in a tweet Tuesday, writing: "Perhaps this will be the beginning of the end of the horror of terrorism." Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani warned that the crisis raised "a big question mark" about the Gulf council.

"This brings about real questions about the future of the GCC nations, which are basically one people who

share the same language and have extensive family ties among its people," he told Al-Jazeera. "That said, however, we reject that some in the GCC are trying to impose their will on Qatar or intervene in its internal affairs." Despite Sheikh Mohammed's strong words, Qatar is vulnerable. It imports the majority of its food, much of it over its now-shut land border with Saudi Arabia. Emirati and Saudi government officials have offered no specifics about what they hope to achieve with isolating Qatar. However, there have been some suggestions.

Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi, an outspoken member of the ruling family of the sheikhdom of Sharjah in the UAE, wrote Monday that "it is likely that this time the Gulf states will demand the complete shuttering of the Al-Jazeera TV network before any mediation can take place." He also identified other Qatari media outlets that could be closed, as well as said Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas members would need to be expelled. "It must de-escalate the media coverage and must sever ties with extremist groups including, but not only, the Muslim Brotherhood and groups in Yemen," Al Qassemi wrote in a column for Newsweek's website. "Judging by the Qatari reaction so far, it seems the Gulf states' patience will be tested."

That's toned down compared to other columns, which include one in the Saudi government-aligned daily newspaper Arab News calling Qatari officials "pathological liars." Others warned that Qatar stood on a diplomatic precipice. "Qatar cannot continue to face two ways, supporting groups and regimes that are actively harming the region," Abu Dhabi's state-owned The National newspaper opined in an editorial Tuesday. "The GCC is a club, with common goals. If Qatar cannot agree with those goals, it should not hope to remain part of the club." —AP



RIYADH: Photo shows a general view of the King Fahad street in the Saudi capital Riyadh. Arab nations including Saudi Arabia and Egypt cut ties with Qatar accusing it of supporting extremism, in the biggest diplomatic crisis to hit the region in years. —AFP

GULF CRISIS PRESENTS OPPORTUNITIES, UNCERTAINTIES FOR IRAN

By Eric Randolph

Viewed from Tehran, the extraordinary spat between Qatar and its Gulf neighbors has many advantages, experts say, but it is also worried about yet more volatility in the troubled neighborhood. "This is a new low for the Saudis. They don't know how to do foreign policy. They are fighting with most of their neighbors," said Foad Izadi, international affairs professor at the University of Tehran. "At least this incident gives the Iranian government an opportunity to show it is the mature and responsible actor in the region," he added.

"It also gives us an opportunity to increase relations with Qatar since now it needs Iran for aviation and food supplies." After Saudi Arabia and several of their allies severed ties with Qatar on Monday-cutting off its sea, land and air access-Iran was quick to jump in with offers of food imports and access to its airspace. The Saudis accused Qatar of supporting extremist groups seeking to "destabilize the region," which it denied. But analysts say the real target was Iran.

"The Saudis seek to create a united front against Iran, and they need to eliminate any opposition within the (Gulf) coalition," said Farhad Rezaei, research fellow with the Center for Iranian Studies in Turkey. He said the Qataris are being punished for not sharing Saudi Arabia's "obsession with Iran." "There are others in the Gulf coalition that do not share this obsession, but

none have Qatar's ability to resist Saudi pressure," said Rezaei, highlighting Doha's immense gas reserves and close military ties with Washington.

'No satisfaction in Tehran'

The spat comes less than a month after US President Donald Trump visited Saudi Arabia and called for a united front to isolate Iran, so the sudden collapse in the Gulf alliance should be welcome in Tehran. Not just Qatar, but also other Muslim nations including Oman, Kuwait and Malaysia have expressed their doubts or even outright opposition to the Saudis' relentless campaign against Iran. But that doesn't mean Iran welcomes the latest tumult among its rivals, said Adnan Tabatabai, head of German think-tank CARPO.

"I don't think there's a sense of satisfaction in Tehran over this spat," he said. "Of course Iran is happy to show that the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) is fragile, but ultimately it just makes the neighboring region even more volatile and that doesn't serve anyone's interests." He said the dispute was a particular tragedy because Qatar and Iran have shown it's possible to have a constructive economic partnership despite sharp differences in other areas.

They back opposing sides in the Syrian conflict, where Iran has provided vital ground forces to Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad while Qatar has funded the rebel groups trying to bring him down. But Qatar and Iran also share an offshore gas field, called North Dome

and South Pars, working closely together on its management and naval security. "That should not have been seen as a problem but as a blueprint for other countries on how economic cooperation can build into a common security relationship," said Tabatabai.

Regional competition

Spurred on by a fiercely anti-Iran administration in Washington, the Saudis are determined to push back against Tehran's powerful position across the region. As well as its successful campaigns in Syria, Iranian-backed militias are crucial to the fight against the Islamic State group in Iraq. Tehran's close ally Hezbollah is dominant in Lebanon, while the loosely affiliated Houthis rebels in Yemen have dragged the Saudis and their allies into a devastating and draining conflict in that country.

"Unfortunately for the Saudis, Qatar has viewed Iran as part of the solution to regional conflicts... and know that military conflict could threaten its economic ties with Iran," said Rezaei. It remains to be seen whether the aggressive move against Qatar will force it to change its mind, or do the opposite and push it more firmly into the arms of Iran. But for now, Iranian analysts are basking in the opportunity to depict the Saudis as the bad guys. "The Saudi government is not content with having a dictatorship internally, they want a regional dictatorship," said Izadi. "They don't accept any dissent, even from their fellow Sunni governments." —AFP

SPALLETTI AGREES TO TAKE OVER AS INTER COACH

MILAN: Former Roma coach Luciano Spalletti said Tuesday he has agreed to take over at Inter Milan as he flew to China to meet the Serie A club's owners ahead of his imminent appointment. Spalletti, who led Roma to runners-up spot behind Juventus in Serie A last week, is expected to be officially named as the successor to sacked Stefano Pioli in the coming days. The 58-year-old Italian told media at Milan's Malpensa airport he had "shaken hands" on a deal with Inter and would soon put pen to paper on what is expected to be a three-year contract. "I'm happy to be the coach of Inter," Spalletti said. "The signature? Everything's in order. We've done things the old fashioned way and shaken hands on it." In his second spell in charge of Roma, Spalletti failed to break the Serie A stranglehold of northern rivals Juventus, who finished four points ahead for a record sixth consecutive scudetto. But the former Zenit St Petersburg coach did secure a place in the group stages of the Champions League, a goal Inter will be hoping he can match with them next season. —AFP



OLYMPIC HURDLER HARRIS CHARGED WITH APPROACHING TEEN FOR SEX

LOS ANGELES: Danny Harris who won Olympic 400m hurdles silver in 1984, was charged Tuesday with allegedly sending inappropriate sexual messages to an underage girl. Harris, 51, pleaded not guilty to contact with a minor for a sexual offense, child abuse and to two misdemeanor counts of child annoyance. The messages were sent to a student at Gabriellino High School in the Los Angeles suburb of San Gabriel, where Harris had been an assistant athletics coach. He was relieved of his coaching duties in May. The Los Angeles County District Attorney's office said the alleged messages were sent between April and May, and were discovered by a relative of the girl. Harris, who was arrested on Friday, is due back in court on June 16 for a hearing to determine if there is enough evidence to require him to stand trial. Harris finished second in the 400m hurdles at the 1984 Olympics behind hurdling great Edwin Moses. In June of 1987, he ended Moses' 122-race winning streak in the event, but again finished runner-up to Moses at the World Championships later that year. —AFP

FORMER RANGERS OWNER WHYTE CLEARED OF FRAUD

GLASGOW: Former Rangers owner Craig Whyte walked free from court on Tuesday after a jury delivered a not guilty majority verdict on two charges of fraud in the takeover of the Scottish club. It took the jury just two hours to clear the 46-year-old Scottish businessman—who was charged following an investigation into his purchase of the club in May 2011, after which the Glasgow giants entered administration. "You have been acquitted and are free to leave the dock," the trial Judge told Whyte at the court in Glasgow. He thanked the judge and jury before leaving the courtroom, bringing the curtain down on a six-week trial and a saga that had dragged on for six years. A small group of people booed as Whyte left the court. Questioned by reporters as he walked to a car, he said: "I'm just delighted with the outcome." The prosecution alleged Whyte pretended to then-owner Sir David Murray funds were "immediately available" on an "unconditional basis" to make all required payments for a controlling and majority stake in the club. —AFP



BACK TO BASICS WORKS WONDERS FOR WAKEFIELD

LEEDS: Wakefield Trinity have dramatically turned their season around over the past month and Bill Tupou credits a focus on the basics.

Wakefield will be seeking to make it seven successive wins on Saturday against Leeds Rhinos—just one place above them in the standings. Auckland-born centre Tupou admits the game means more than most.

"We're definitely looking forward to it," said the former New Zealand Warriors and Canberra Raiders star. "They beat us at their home the first time round (38-14 back in March), so we've been working hard all this week to get the result."

"It's a Yorkshire derby, so it's a bit different to the other games because of the fans."

"They make it more interesting—they're louder and get behind you even more." After not a good start, the boys have learned from those games, come together and worked hard and now we're seeing results. "We're going over the basics again and again, so it's locked in our head and we know automatically what to do on the field." While Wakefield have turned things round, Warrington Wolves are still languishing in the lower reaches of the standings—currently tenth with just five wins from 17 games. They were thrashed 44-4 by Huddersfield Giants last week, following heavy defeats to Salford and Leeds, and as

they prepare to travel to league leaders Castleford Tigers on Sunday, coach Tony Smith has urged his team to be tougher.

"We need to recover and we need to do it quickly; confidence is down but we need to work hard," said Smith.

"We need to go there and not be bullied about. "We were down on confidence early in the season and we worked our way back into a position where we were grafting out some wins."

"We need to go through that process again. "We've got to toughen up and do some hard work over the next couple of weeks." Meanwhile, Salford Red Devils vice-captain Mark Flanagan has signed a new deal with the club until the end of 2019.

Flanagan is set to play his 17th game of the campaign when Salford welcome Hull FC to the AJ Bell Stadium on Friday.

Head coach Ian Watson admits the 29-year-old, signed from St Helens in 2015, has been crucial to his side's rise to second in the table this term.

"His form would have attracted interest from elsewhere but he's a really important part of what we do," said Watson.

"He is one of our main leaders, he's uncompromising in defence and he's a really good ball-playing loose forward. He's part of the glue that holds this team together." —AFP



AUCKLAND: Auckland Blues player Sonny Bill Williams watches as British & Irish Lions players clear the ball during their game at Eden Park in Auckland, New Zealand, yesterday. The Blues defeated the Lions 22-16. — AP

RUGBY

SONNY BILL MAGIC, LATE TRY GIVE LIONS THE BLUES

AUCKLAND: Ihaia West's spectacular late try, created by double World Cup-winning All Black Sonny Bill Williams, condemned the British and Irish Lions to first tour defeat as the Auckland Blues triumphed 22-16 yesterday. The tourists, especially in the forwards, were much improved on their lacklustre 13-7 win against the Provincial Barbarians but the backs struggled with the speed and cutting edge of the New Zealanders' attacking game. The Blues, who have the worst record this season of New Zealand's five Super Rugby teams, scored three tries to one with the Lions needing three penalties and a conversion from the flawless boot of full-back Leigh Halfpenny to keep them in the match.

The tour will only get more difficult for coach Warren Gatland's men, who face the table-topping, undefeated Canterbury Crusaders in Christchurch on Saturday. Gatland said he was unfazed by the loss with his main focus on the three-Test series against the world champion All Blacks which begins on June 24. "Having a really tough game is going to be great preparation for the Test matches," he said.

LIONS MUST 'BE MORE CLINICAL'

"I honestly don't believe there's going to be a massive amount of difference between some of the Super Rugby sides and the All Blacks because there's so much depth in this country."

The Lions conceded 13 penalties and Gatland said the lack of discipline halted his team's

momentum on attack and the Lions allowed the New Zealanders to offload too easily from the tackle. All Blacks coach Steve Hansen watched from the stands and saw two-time World Cup winner Williams score a try and emphatically lay claim for a return to the All Blacks squad.

Blues winger Rieko Ioane also continued to press his case for selection with his seventh try in six matches.

Prior to kick-off, there was a minute's silence to honour victims of the London terror attacks, then the Blues performed a haka specially commissioned for the occasion.

The Lions came out of the blocks hard, dominating possession creating early attacking opportunities. Jared Payne came close twice in the first half. First he failed by a fingertip to catch up with the ball after a kick through, and later was just dragged into touch by Stephen Perofeta as he grounded in the corner.

Skipper Ken Owens said he was "hugely disappointed" that the Lions had failed to take more of their chances: "I think we're going to have to tidy up on our discipline and be a little bit more clinical," the Welsh hooker admitted.

Blues fly-half Perofeta set up the opening try, turning the Lions defence with a cross-field kick then sending out a long-range pass to put Ioane through on the wing.

The tourists were patient in response and, after twice turning down a kickable penalties in favour of lineouts in the corner, were rewarded

when Munster's CJ Stander drove over.

Halfpenny converted and added a penalty to put the Lions 10-5 up before Williams sensationally stole the lead back on the stroke of half-time. Perofeta's penalty goal attempt struck the post and Williams was quickest to react as Lions winger Jack Nowell knocked the ball back behind his tryline under pressure.

LIGHTNING PACE

The former rugby league international darted between two defenders to get a hand on the ball first under the posts. Perofeta converted and suddenly the Blues were 12-10 ahead.

The Blues began to stretch the Lions' defence after the break and the tourists' task was made more difficult when replacement centre Liam Williams was sinbinned for dangerous play.

But the Lions worked their way tirelessly back into the game, drawing two penalties which Halfpenny kicked to edge the Lions into a slender 16-15 lead. But Williams produced his moment of magic to seize the advantage back with six minutes remaining, breaking the line and offloading behind his back to West. The replacement fly-half's lightning pace took him through a gap, past four defenders and under the posts as he raised his finger in joyous celebration. West kicked the conversion himself to make it 22-16 and despite the Lions throwing everything into attack during the final minutes they could not find a breakthrough. — AFP

OKLAHOMA DEFENDS SOFTBALL TITLE WITH WIN OVER FLORIDA

OKLAHOMA CITY: Even as defending champions, it seemed for most of the season that Oklahoma was unlikely to repeat. The Sooners earned just a No. 10 seed in the NCAA Tournament. They lost their NCAA opener to North Dakota State before rallying, then had to go to Auburn and win a super regional.

Even when they recovered at the Women's College World Series and reached the championship round, they faced No. 1 seed Florida and its two All-American pitchers. In the end, Oklahoma found a way. Shay Knighten hit a three-run double in the second inning, and the Sooners defeated Florida 5-4 on Tuesday night to win it all again. The Sooners (61-9) took both games from Florida in the best-of-three series to earn their third NCAA title in five years.

"I still cannot believe that this happened, with where we started and where we finished," Oklahoma coach Patty Gasso said. "There's so many stories. The journey was unbelievable. I think if you looked at us in February and March, even parts of April, you would never imagine us sitting here right now with trophies in front of us."

Knighten, who hit a three-run homer in the 17th inning to help win Game 1 on Monday, was selected the World Series' Most Outstanding Player.

Oklahoma freshman Mariah Lopez (18-1) got the win in relief of Paige Parker. Though Parker has an 8-0 career World Series record, she struggled on Tuesday and lasted just 1 2-3 innings. She threw 108 pitches in the 51/2-hour game on Monday night. "I think Paige probably could tell you she didn't have her best stuff, but she is the reason why we're sitting here right now, and she knows that. I know she knows that," Gasso said. "To be able to give Mariah (Lopez) the ball, a freshman who's been waiting patiently, and for her to step up and do what we asked her to do in that setting was another reason why we're sitting here with a trophy. It's another reason why we're here, period."

CONFIDENT

Paige Lowary stepped in and threw two innings of perfect relief for her nation-leading 11th save. With a one-run lead, she retired Florida's Nos. 2-4 hitters in order in

the seventh. "Paige Lowary came in, and she was hot," Gasso said. "She was ready. I don't know how hard she was throwing, but it looked like 100 miles an hour. The adrenaline was there and she was hitting her spots just so confident."

Florida (58-10) did not allow an earned run in three games to reach the championship series, but the Sooners were able to break through against what statistically was the nation's best pitching staff.

Florida pitcher Kelly Barnhill, USA Softball's National Collegiate Player of the Year, did not play Tuesday. Florida coach Tim Walton went with No. 3 pitcher Alesia Ocasio (8-2), and she got the loss. Delaney Gourley allowed the double to Knighten in relief. "It just wasn't our tournament," Walton said. "You look at the statistics, it's eerie how close the games were statistically. So I think that you've got two evenly matched teams. One just found a way to hit the ball over the fence more than we did, and give them a lot of credit."

Oklahoma's Nicole Mendes homered on Ocasio's third pitch of the game to give the Sooners a 1-0 lead. Sophia Reynoso responded with a solo shot for Florida in the second.

With the bases loaded and two outs in the top of the second, Ocasio singled to knock in Justine McLean, then Kayli Kvistad walked with the bases loaded to score Amanda Lorenz and make it 3-1.

Knighten's big hit in the bottom of the second put Oklahoma up 5-3. "Being in those moments, I've just got to keep myself calm, just stay relaxed and just kind of not think about what if, just kind of go for it," she said. "And it paid off."

Florida's Chelsea Herndon came back with a solo blast in the third to cut Oklahoma's lead to 5-4. The pitchers took over from there.

"Just a hard-fought two games," Walton said. "Wish we could have pushed it to a third, and give us a chance. But I thought overall our players - really proud of our team." Oklahoma had just one senior in its lineup and has no senior pitchers. Gasso said her team will be focused again next season. "We learned a lesson," she said. "We are good at learning lessons. We're not going to let this get in our way." —AP



OKLAHOMA: The Oklahoma team celebrates after defeating Florida in the second game of the best-of-three championship series in the NCAA Women's College World Series in Oklahoma City, Tuesday. Oklahoma won the game 5-4, and the championship. —AP

RACING

HORSEY MCHORSEFACE WINS FIRST RACE

SYDNEY: Young gelding Horsey McHorseface, named in tribute to Britain's Boaty McBoatface, has broken through for his first win. The New Zealand-bred horse, a cult favourite with its own Twitter account, galloped to victory at Cessnock in Australia, Sky Racing reported. "He's done it! The people's horse Horsey McHorseface breaks through for his maiden win at #Cessnock," it tweeted.

Trained by Bjorn Baker at Sydney's Warwick Farm racetrack, the three-year-old's name is a play on Boaty McBoatface, the joke moniker that the public backed when British authorities sought a suggested name for a new polar research ship.

Not surprisingly, authorities opted instead to name the ship the Sir David Attenborough after the legendary wildlife presenter. Racing authorities usually weed out obscene or risqué suggestions but there is a long history of mischievous names designed to give fast-talking racing commentators a hard time.

Former Liverpool football players Robbie Fowler and Steve McManaman owned a thoroughbred called Some Horse, then bought a second and named it Another Horse, according to the BBC. The website greatbritishracing.com lists a variety of names, including Star Wars-themed Maythehorsebewithu, Passing Wind, Hoof Hearted and the piratical AARRRRRR. —AFP



CESSNOCK: This handout photograph taken on June 5, 2017 and provided to AFP on June 6, 2017 by Jack Bruce shows race horse Horsey McHorseface after winning its first race in Cessnock. — AFP

PITTSBURGH, GRADUATE TRANSFER AT ODDS OVER MOVE TO UNC

RALEIGH: Former Pittsburgh guard Cameron Johnson wants to play immediately at North Carolina as a graduate transfer. The Panthers aren't going along with that plan.

Pitt believes the 6-foot-8 Johnson should sit out a year if he goes to another Atlantic Coast Conference school instead of playing immediately as a graduate transfer with two seasons of eligibility. Johnson said Tuesday he has committed to play for the reigning national champion Tar Heels in Chapel Hill and issued an open letter saying Pitt is wrong to stand in his way.

In an interview with The Associated Press, his father said Tuesday night he doesn't know how the situation will turn out. "I am optimistic, but I don't know what to expect," said Gil Johnson, himself a former Pitt basketball player from 1988-90. UNC coach Roy Williams "and

his staff seem very confident and comfortable with the procedures, so I am optimistic. And hopefully these adults will do the right thing by Cam."

NCAA rules allow transfers who have earned their degrees to play immediately. However, schools and conferences can have their own policies for granting a release from a year-to-year scholarship agreement. In this case, Pitt has cited an internal policy regarding immediate eligibility for transfers within the conference or to a team on the next year's schedule.

"The University of Pittsburgh followed the NCAA processes and our institutional policies as they are written," the school's athletics department said in a statement Tuesday night. "The NCAA is currently evaluating the graduate transfer rule and its application to this situation. We are awaiting their response."

UNC cannot comment on players yet to formally sign with the school. If Johnson doesn't gain his release and remains committed to play at UNC, he would lose one of his remaining seasons of eligibility. Gil Johnson said his son picked UNC over programs such as Kentucky, Arizona, UCLA and Oregon.

"I started this process believing that having graduated from Pitt, I should have instantly been granted an unconditional release," Cameron Johnson writes in his open letter. "I feel that should be available to any student-athlete who earns their degree. Unfortunately, Pitt has continued to try and block my wish to attend North Carolina."

There is no ACC rule barring a graduate transfer from being immediately eligible after moving within the league. In fact, there are recent examples, such as UNC receiver T.J. Thorpe playing foot-

ball for Virginia in 2015 and former Virginia Tech guard Adam Smith playing his final basketball season at Georgia Tech in 2015-16 - though both were one-year cases.

Johnson graduated in three years, including a medical redshirt season in 2014-15, and would provide the Tar Heels with perimeter scoring to help replace departed AP All-American Justin Jackson. Johnson averaged 11.9 points and 4.5 rebounds while shooting nearly 42 percent on 3-pointers last season.

It's unclear if the disagreement could lead to legal action, though Johnson references "my family's legal counsel" at one point in his letter.

Pitt's policy isn't the only confusion in the case. Johnson writes that he appealed the school's position during a May 2 hearing and was soon granted permission to "immediately receive" a

scholarship at another ACC school, though he was also told he must sit out and "serve a year of residence" due to NCAA rules.

But Johnson said the NCAA notified him last week that the residence requirement doesn't apply to graduate transfers. Rather, he writes, the NCAA said the bylaw requires athletes to be either immediately eligible or "totally denied" from attending a school.

Johnson said Pitt "did not interpret the NCAA rule correctly." "Now that I have learned that their attempt to make me sit a year before competing at an ACC school is against NCAA rules, I see no reason why the faculty committee, or anybody associated with Pitt, should be able to reverse a ruling they already made," Johnson writes. "Quite simply, I should be immediately eligible at North Carolina." — AP

LYNCH DECIDED ON COMEBACK AFTER RAIDERS ANNOUNCED MOVE

ALAMEDA: For Marshawn Lynch, the decision to come out of retirement and resume his NFL career was made as soon as the league announced his hometown Raiders were leaving for Las Vegas.

Lynch wanted to give Oakland fans one last chance to cheer an Oakland native playing for an Oakland team. "Maybe them staying probably wouldn't have been so big for me to want to come and play," he said Tuesday in his first news conference since joining the Raiders in April. "But knowing that they were leaving and a lot of the kids here probably won't have an opportunity to see most of their idols growing up being a hometown no more. With me being from here, continuing to be here, it gives them an opportunity to get to see somebody that's actually from where they're from and for the team that they probably idolize."

The NFL approved the Raiders' proposed move to Las Vegas starting in the 2020 season on March 27. The following week, Lynch visited the Raiders to talk about the possibility of coming out of retirement.

That happened three weeks later when Seattle agreed to trade Lynch's rights to Oakland in a deal that included a swap of late-round draft picks in 2018. Lynch agreed to a restructured \$9 million, two-year deal that includes incentives that could increase the value even more.

There were billboards welcoming Lynch back home and palpable excitement for Oakland fans. "It was heartfelt," Lynch said. "At the end of the day, I still walk outside. Besides the billboards and all of that, I really just get out with the people. The billboards are for the commercial people. When you get outside and you walk in the cracks you get to find out what's real." Lynch was born and raised in Oakland, star-

ring at Oakland Technical High School and then going on to play college ball at nearby California. Even during an NFL career that took him to Buffalo and Seattle, Lynch always kept close ties to the community that raised him.

Since joining the Raiders, Lynch has been a regular participant in the offseason program, unlike during his time in Seattle, and he generated buzz when coach Jack Del Rio posted a video Monday of Lynch running for a TD during practice.

"I think it's a testament to Marshawn as a whole," offensive coordinator Todd Downing said earlier this spring. "Yeah, he hadn't really been an offseason attendee, but he showed it's important to him to integrate himself, not only in the offense, but just in the locker room and with the coaching staff."

The Raiders will be hoping to see plenty more of that from the 31-year-old Lynch once the regular season starts. Lynch was perhaps the best power back in the league before he retired. He had double digits in touchdown runs every season from 2011 to 2014, and his 51 TDs on the ground are the most in the NFL since 2011 even though he played just seven games in 2015 and was retired last season.

Lynch's 245 broken tackles since the start of the 2013 season are 66 more than any other player in that span, according to Pro Football Focus.

He averaged 3.8 yards per carry in his limited action in 2015 before retiring. Before that, he was one of the game's top running backs, with more than 1,200 yards rushing in each of the previous four seasons. He has already become popular with his new teammates because of his fierce loyalty and willingness to joke around. — AP



OAKLAND: Draymond Green #23 and Kevin Durant #35 of the Golden State Warriors speak at a postgame press conference following their 132-113 win over the Cleveland Cavaliers in Game 2 of the 2017 NBA Finals at ORACLE Arena on June 4, 2017 in Oakland, California. — AFP

BASKETBALL

WARRIORS FOCUS ON CROWN, NOT HISTORIC UNBEATEN RUN

CLEVELAND: A year after making history but falling one game short of an NBA title, the Golden State Warriors are focused on capturing the crown, not a possible unbeaten playoff run. The Warriors remained perfect in the 2017 post-season by sweeping the first two games of the NBA Finals at home and enter game three Wednesday at Cleveland on a record 14-0 playoff win streak-two wins shy of the first undefeated run to a championship.

"We want 15-0. That's what we want," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said Tuesday, his version of taking one win at a time. "We literally have never once mentioned 16-0. To me it's a miracle that it's even a possibility. It's so hard to do." The difference between making history and taking the title was put in clear perspective last year when the Warriors won an NBA record 73 regular-season games but lost the finals to Cleveland, squandering a 3-1 edge in the best-of-seven series and falling to the greatest comeback in finals history.

"We're more focused on what happened last year in terms of we were up 2-0 and we came here and the series shifted," Kerr said. "That's the important lesson, not any historical benchmarks or anything like that. It's definitely not something we're focused on."

The Warriors, who won 113-91 and 132-113 at home over the Cavaliers, swept Portland, Utah and San Antonio to reach the finals.

They surpassed the 13-win streaks of the 1980s Los Angeles Lakers and the 2016-17 Cleveland Cavaliers to set the record, although "Showtime" Lakers star Magic Johnson claimed Monday his squad would have swept the Warriors in a series.

Hearing that, Warriors forward Draymond Green began a long period of laughter before saying, "That's my thoughts." The best record for any champion in NBA playoff history belongs to the 2001 Los Angeles Lakers, who went 15-1 to claim the crown, their only loss in the opening game of the finals.

'A HUGE HURDLE'

The Warriors know history can be bitter-sweet. There are four championship banners in the team's practice facility and a much smaller one to commemorate 73 wins.

"We have a huge hurdle to get over tomorrow," Warriors guard Stephen Curry said. "To give ourselves a chance at even coming close to thinking about (16-0), we need to really just lock in on how hard this 48 minutes is going to be to really seize control of this series."

"We talked about it before — 16-0 doesn't matter in any stretch of the imagination unless that's a closeout game. And that's the opportunity in front of us, because all it is just winning a championship and doing what you need to do to get that done."

"Tomorrow is another step in that direction that we need to be ready for."

Complacency will not be setting in for the Warriors, Green vowed. "There's no feeling of we're almost there. You've got to play every game like you're down. If you can keep that mindset you'll eventually reach the goal," Green said. "But to say we're up 2-0, we're good, we still got two more games to win and those two will be way harder than the first two." Green had said that the effort to win 73

games might have taken focus on the title quest last year, but Curry said he had no regrets about how Golden State handled the situation.

"That was a decision that we had talked about and we had discussed as a group," Curry said. "I don't know if there may have been a little bit of a mental fatigue when it comes to just how much it took to get that 73 done and

then having to restart and go to the playoffs.

"But honestly I wouldn't regret those decisions at all. We were one game away from winning a championship, so I don't think you can second guess that that much."

"This situation, it's nice to be able to just turn the page and focus on winning the championship and in its purest form and that's what we're about right now." — AFP

JETS CONTINUE PURGE, PART WAYS WITH VETS HARRIS, DECKER

FLORHAM PARK: David Harris was just the latest veteran player shown the door in what has been an offseason purge by the New York Jets. Eric Decker will be the next to leave. And, there could be more to come. On a dreary Tuesday that will be remembered by Jets fans for fond farewells to two of their favorites, Harris was released and Decker was told he will be traded or cut. The two moves will save the Jets \$13.75 million in salary cap space.

"These are tough decisions to make on all of our players," general manager Mike Maccagnan said. "Going forward, we have a situation where we have some flexibility now. We'll see how that unfolds going forward."

Harris and Decker join what has become a lengthy list of veterans who have been sent packing during the past few months. That includes cornerback Darrelle Revis, center Nick Mangold, wide receiver Brandon Marshall, kicker Nick Folk, offensive tackle Breno Giacomini and safety Marcus Gilchrist, who were cut; Calvin Pryor, who was traded last week to Cleveland; and quarterbacks Ryan Fitzpatrick and Geno Smith, who were allowed to become free agents.

Both Harris and Decker participated in practice during organized team activities on Tuesday. A few hours later, coach Todd Bowles confirmed that Harris had been cut. The playmaking linebacker's release was a stunning move in which the team parted ways with one of its most-productive and well-respected players. The team and the second-round draft pick out of Michigan in 2007, second on the franchise's career list in tackles, had been dis-

cussing a salary reduction.

"They didn't come to an agreement and we didn't come to an agreement, and it led to this," Bowles said. "It wasn't an easy time. David has been a Jet all his life. He ... bled green." The move was particularly surprising because of Harris' status as the Jets' longest-tenured player - and it being so late in the offseason.

In a statement released to The Associated Press, Harris' agents Brian Mackler and Jim Ivler called the timing of the decision "very disappointing." "The Jets could have done this prior to free agency instead of waiting three months," the statement said, "especially for a player who has exhibited nothing but loyalty and class for 10 years."

Maccagnan declined to disclose details of the negotiations between the sides. "You go through this process and there's always different times to do things," Maccagnan said. "I don't know if there's a good or a bad time to do this, but this is obviously something we discussed as an organization."

Nicknamed "The Hitman" for his knack for making big tackles, the 33-year-old Harris had at least 113 in every season but his second, when he had 87 after missing six games with an injury. He ranks second to only Kyle Clifton (1,471) on the team's career list with 1,260 tackles, according to stats compiled by the team. Harris has never been a flashy guy off the field, preferring to keep out of the New York spotlight despite his status as one of the Jets' best players in recent years. His humble approach made him a favorite of teammates and fans alike. — AP



New York Jets team



Thomas RoeHLer

ATHLETICS

ROME LOOK TO JAVELIN STAR ROEHLER TO ROCK OLIMPICO

MILAN: The absence of Jamaican sprint legend Usain Bolt has Rome Diamond League organizers turning their eyes skywards today in the hope German javelin star Thomas RoeHLer raises the roof with another stellar performance.

Bolt, who is set to retire from athletics this year, will only make his European debut-ahead of the London world championships in August-at the Czech Golden Spikes event in Ostrava on June 28.

The second of 14 Diamond League meetings spread over 13 different countries, Rome-in spite of Bolt's absence-offers up an all-star cast featuring 36 medallists from the 2016 Rio Olympics, and a world record attempt in the women's 5000m for Ethiopia's Genzebe Dibaba.

And RoeHLer would be forgiven for wanting to snatch the spotlight-in Doha last month, the German threw the spear a massive 93.90 metres.

Although well short of Jan Zelezny's world mark of 98.48m, set in 1996, RoeHLer's throw was the second best of all time, the furthest in 20 years and gave an indication of what's to come from the 25-year-old Olympic champion.

"I did not see that coming. I did not expect that in the first start of the season," RoeHLer said in Doha on May 5.

"I'm second best ever. It will take some days to realise that."

With ideal conditions set to grace the Italian capital on the 37th edition of the Golden Gala Pietro Mennea, RoeHLer will be looking for more heroics competing from a field including 2012 Olympic cham-

pion Keshorn Walcott of Trinidad and Tobago, and a trio of world champions in Julius Yego, Vitezslav Vesely and Tero Pitkamaki.

On the track, highly-fancied American Ronnie Baker lines up hoping to hold off the threat of Frenchman Jimmy Vicaut, who has run 9.97secs this year, in the 100m following a wind-aided 9.86secs (2.4m/s) victory in Eugene.

The women's 100m features a head-to-head between Dutchwoman Dafne Schippers, the 2015 world 200m champion, and American Tianna Bartoletta, the 2016 Olympic long jump champion-although Schippers has been fastest this year, setting a 10.95 in April.

With a season's best of 20.41, Canada's Olympic silver medallist Andre De Grasse leads the men's 200m field ahead of Frenchman Christophe Lemaire (21.22) and Panamanian Alonso Edward, who has won the last three editions of the Diamond Race. In the absence of Jamaican hurdles king Omar McLeod, American world record holder Aries Merritt, the fastest in the field this year in 13.13sec, can step into the spotlight-although Spain's Olympic silver medallist Orlando Ortega (13.15) and Britain's Andrew Pozzi (13.19) could also be in contention.

The entire women's pole vault podium from Rio-Katerini Stefanidi of Greece, American Sandi Morris and New Zealand's Eliza McCartney-will reunite, with Cuba's world champion Yarisleys Silva and Britain's Holly Bradshaw looking to play the upsets. — AFP



CINCINNATI: Cincinnati Reds' Scooter Gennett hits a two-run home run and his fourth overall in the eighth inning of a baseball game against the St. Louis Cardinals, Tuesday, in Cincinnati. The Reds won 13-1. —AP

BASEBALL

SCOOTER GENNETT HITS 4 HOME RUNS FOR REDS TO TIE MLB RECORD

CINCINNATI: Scooter Gennett hit four home runs, matching the major league record, and finished with 10 RBIs as the Cincinnati Reds routed the slumping St. Louis Cardinals 13-1 on Tuesday night. Gennett became the 17th player to homer four times in one game - and perhaps the least likely. A scrappy second baseman who was claimed off waivers from Milwaukee in late March, he began the night with 38 career home runs in five seasons, including three this year. Josh Hamilton was the previous player to hit four home runs in one game, for Texas against Baltimore in May 2012. The 27-year-old Gennett singled his first time up and then homered in four straight at-bats, including a grand slam. His 10 RBIs tied Cincinnati's club record. Gennett ended an 0-for-19 slump during the Reds' 4-2 win over the Cardinals on Monday. He went 5 for 5 on Tuesday and raised his batting average 32 points to .302. Since being picked up by the Reds late in spring training, Gennett has played a utility role for Cincinnati. He started in left field Tuesday night. Gennett hit an RBI single and his second career slam off St. Louis starter Adam Wainwright (6-4) Tim Adleman (4-2) gave up one run - on Stephen Piscotty's homer - in seven innings.

ROYALS 9, ASTROS 7

Mike Moustakas hit a two-run homer with two outs in the ninth inning after Kansas City rallied from a six-run deficit to end Houston's 11-game winning streak. Moustakas drove an 0-1 pitch from Ken Giles (1-2) out to right field with Salvador Perez aboard. Moustakas had four hits and three RBIs. Alex Gordon also homered for the Royals, his first since Sept. 25 - a span of 192 at-bats. Kansas City trailed 7-1 in the fourth but fought back with a four-run eighth. Whit Merrifield hit a three-run double with two outs to tie it at 7. Merrifield has hit safely in 20 of his last 21 games. Giles blew his second save in 18 opportunities. The Astros' winning streak was the longest in the majors this season. They dropped to a major league-best 42-17. Mike Minor (3-1) pitched a scoreless inning for the win. Carlos Beltran hit his 429th home run for the Astros.

NATIONALS 2, DODGERS 1

Max Scherzer struck out a season-high 14, outpitching Brandon McCarthy and leading Washington over Los Angeles in a game that ended with a testy exchange. With a runner on second base, Koda Glover fanned Yasiel Puig for his eighth save and shouted in the direction of home plate. Puig walked toward the

mound and twice appeared to ask Glover what he said. Glover took off his cap and tossed aside his glove as players from both teams quickly intervened to keep the two separated. Nothing escalated before the squads headed off the field. Both starting pitchers went seven innings and allowed only three hits. The first 11 outs for Scherzer (7-3) came on strikeouts. Bryce Harper and Daniel Murphy each had a sacrifice fly for the Nationals, who have won the first two games of this series between NL pennant contenders. McCarthy (5-3), who lasted only four innings in his previous start because of a blister, walked two and struck out four.

ROCKIES 11, INDIANS 3

Rookie pitcher Antonio Senzatela hit a three-run double and Mark Reynolds homered twice to drive in five runs for Colorado. Carlos Gonzalez also hit a home run for the Rockies, who can sweep the two-game interleague set today. Bouncing back from a loss in his previous outing, Senzatela (8-2) allowed three runs in 6 1/3 innings. He struck out four and walked one in continuing to lead major league rookie pitchers in wins this season while also opening the scoring for Colorado. Mike Clevinger (2-3) allowed five runs in four innings for Cleveland.

ORIOLES 6, PIRATES 5, 10 INNINGS

Jonathan Schoop tied it in the ninth inning with his second home run of the game and Mark Trumbo singled home a run in the 10th to rally Baltimore past Pittsburgh. Baltimore trailed 4-1 after six innings and 5-3 in the ninth. Schoop's two-run drive off closer Tony Watson knotted it at 5, setting the stage for Trumbo's big hit. Adam Jones singled with one out in the 10th against Wade LeBlanc (3-1) and took second when Manny Machado hit a fly ball to the warning track in left. Trumbo then lined a single to center, and Jones easily beat Andrew McCutchen's throw to the plate. Brad Brach (1-1) worked the 10th for the Orioles, who improved to 8-1 in extra innings.

RED SOX 5, YANKEES 4

Mitch Moreland and Hanley Ramirez hit back-to-back home runs and Andrew Benintendi later connected off struggling Masahiro Tanaka, powering Boston over New York. The Red Sox made their first visit of the season to Yankee Stadium, and the matchup between the longtime rivals and top teams in the AL East had the feel of October, mostly because of the raw weather - low 50s, windy and damp. Overpowering closer Craig Kimbrel

struck out five in 1 1/3 innings for his 17th save in 18 chances. He fanned one batter on a wild pitch, and struck out big-hitting rookie Aaron Judge on a 99 mph fastball to finish it. Playing at the new Yankee Stadium for the first time without now-retired slugger David Ortiz on the roster, the Red Sox launched a trio of long balls and moved within a game of first-place New York. Tanaka (5-6) lost his career-worst fifth straight start. He's been tagged for 27 runs and 11 homers in 22 2/3 innings during that span. Drew Pomeranz (6-3) labored through a career-high 123 pitches in five innings to win his third start in a row.

CUBS 10, MARLINS 2

Jake Arrieta pitched two-hit ball into the seventh inning, Anthony Rizzo drove in four runs and surging Chicago beat Miami for its season-high fifth straight win. Arrieta (6-4) allowed two runs, struck out five and walked three in just his second win in the past month. The 2015 NL Cy Young Award winner retired 16 in a row over one stretch, showing signs of rounding into form after a bumpy start to the season. Jason Heyward had three hits and two RBIs as the Cubs remained perfect since returning home after a winless six-game road trip. Kris Bryant reached four times, scored two runs and robbed Giancarlo Stanton of a hit with a diving stop on a grounder to third in the third. Jeff Locke (0-1) cruised into fifth inning with a 1-0 lead and retired the first two batters before everything fell apart for the Marlins in a hurry.

WHITE SOX 4, RAYS 2

Avisail Garcia, Volmer Sanchez and Todd Frazier homered to help Chicago stop a five-game losing streak with a victory over Tampa Bay. Chris Beck (1-0) escaped a bases-loaded jam in the sixth inning to win in relief of Jose Quintana, who avoided becoming the first pitcher in the major leagues to lose eight games this season. Garcia led off the seventh with a homer, snapping a 1-all tie against Chris Archer (4-4), who also gave up a leadoff homer to Sanchez on the fourth pitch of the game. Jose Abreu added an RBI single in the eighth before Frazier led off the ninth with a homer off Ryan Garton. David Robertson earned his ninth save in 10 opportunities.

ANGELS 5, TIGERS 3

Kole Calhoun and C.J. Cron homered as Los Angeles beat Detroit. Jesse Chavez (5-6) got the win, allowing two runs and seven hits in 5 2/3 innings. The Tigers loaded the bases with two outs in the ninth, but Bud Norris struck out Alex Avila for his 11th save. Daniel Norris (3-3) gave up four runs - three earned - and five hits in six innings. He struck out seven, but allowed two homers. The loss ended Detroit's four-game winning streak. Avila homered for the Tigers.

RANGERS 10, METS 7

Joey Gallo hit a towering two-run homer that put Texas ahead to stay, and the Rangers ended a four-game losing streak with a victory over New York. Nomar Mazara had four hits and also homered for the Rangers. Gallo's 17th homer put Texas up 5-4. Mets starter Jacob deGrom (4-3) pitched only four innings for his second straight start. Austin Bibens-Dirkx (1-0) got his first major league victory. Asdrubal Cabrera and Neil Walker went deep in the third for the Mets. In between those shots, Jay Bruce was robbed of a homer when Jared Hooying made a leaping catch just above the 8-foot wall in straightaway center.

BREWERS 5, GIANTS 2

Chase Anderson pitched 7 2/3 shutout innings, drove in a run and won his third straight game for Milwaukee. Anderson (5-1) extended his scoreless streak to 21 2/3 innings with the win. He walked one, struck out four and helped the Brewers beat the Giants for just the third time in the last 17 games against them. Anderson collected his first RBI of the season and the fifth of his career in the third with a double off the wall in left. Hernon Perez added a homer for Milwaukee. The Brewers roughed up Matt Cain (3-5) with four runs in the second.

PHILLIES 3, BRAVES 1

Aaron Nola allowed a run over eight innings, Odubel Herrera doubled in the go-ahead run in the sixth and Philadelphia survived a ninth-inning scare to beat Atlanta. Nola (3-3) earned his first win since April 20 and became the Phillies' first starter to pitch past the seventh inning this season. Pat Neshek struck out Adonis Garcia and ended the game on Kurt Suzuki's pop to catcher Cameron Rupp for his first save. Jaime Garcia (2-4) allowed three runs in 7 2/3 innings.

ATHLETICS 4, BLUE JAYS 1

Jesse Hahn allowed an unearned run over six innings in his return from the disabled list, pitching Oakland past Toronto. Khris Davis drove in two runs and Adam Rosales hit a tiebreaking single with two outs in the fifth as the A's overcame their major league-leading 59th error. Activated before the game, Hahn (2-4) pitched out of a bases-loaded jam in the fourth. The right-hander also got plenty of help from Oakland's shaky defense. Santiago

Casilla closed for his 10th save. Marco Estrada (4-4) took the loss.

DIAMONDBACKS 10, PADRES 2

Robbie Ray struck out 11 in 6 2/3 innings and Chris Owings hit a three-run homer to help Arizona cruise past San Diego. Jake Lamb drove in four runs, Gregor Blanco doubled twice and scored three runs, and the Diamondbacks won their seventh straight home game to equal a season high. Owings' career-high seventh of the season gave the Diamondbacks a homer in 10 straight home games for the first time since 2011. Ray (6-3) had his scoreless streak stopped at 27 2/3 innings. The first of Hunter Renfroe's two homers was the only run he allowed. Dinelson Lamet (2-1) lasted just three innings. He gave up seven earned runs and nine hits with five walks. The Padres lost their third straight and managed only three hits off Ray.

MARINERS 12, TWINS 3

Robinson Cano and Kyle Seager each hit a three-run homer, and James Paxton was effective enough for five innings to help Seattle defeat Minnesota. Cano staked the Mariners to a 3-0 lead in the first and Seager's shot capped a seven-run fourth that extended the lead to 12-2 as the Mariners won for the eighth time in nine games. Paxton (5-0) missed most of May with a left forearm strain. He allowed three runs and five hits with three walks in his second start since coming off the disabled list. Hector Santiago (4-6) lasted just 2 2/3 innings, yielding five runs and three hits with four walks, all of which came around to score. Twins catcher Chris Gimenez pitched the eighth, retiring all three batters he faced. —AFP

MLB results/standings

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

| American League Eastern Division | | | | | National League Eastern Division | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|-----|------|------|----------------------------------|----|-----|------|------|
| W | L | PCT | GB | | W | L | PCT | GB | |
| NY Yankees | 32 | 23 | .582 | - | Washington | 37 | 20 | .649 | - |
| Boston | 32 | 25 | .561 | 1 | NY Mets | 24 | 32 | .429 | 12.5 |
| Baltimore | 30 | 26 | .536 | 2.5 | Atlanta | 24 | 32 | .429 | 12.5 |
| Tampa Bay | 29 | 31 | .483 | 5.5 | Miami | 24 | 33 | .421 | 13 |
| Toronto | 28 | 31 | .475 | 6 | Philadelphia | 21 | 35 | .375 | 15.5 |
| Central Division | | | | | Central Division | | | | |
| Minnesota | 29 | 25 | .537 | - | Chicago Cubs | 30 | 27 | .526 | - |
| Cleveland | 29 | 27 | .518 | 1 | Milwaukee | 31 | 28 | .525 | - |
| Detroit | 28 | 29 | .491 | 2.5 | Cincinnati | 27 | 30 | .474 | 3 |
| Chicago White Sox | 25 | 31 | .446 | 5 | St. Louis | 26 | 30 | .464 | 3.5 |
| Kansas City | 25 | 32 | .439 | 5.5 | Pittsburgh | 26 | 32 | .448 | 4.5 |
| Western Division | | | | | Western Division | | | | |
| Houston | 42 | 17 | .712 | - | Colorado | 37 | 23 | .617 | - |
| LA Angels | 30 | 31 | .492 | 13 | LA Dodgers | 35 | 25 | .583 | 2 |
| Seattle | 29 | 30 | .492 | 13 | Arizona | 35 | 25 | .583 | 2 |
| Texas | 27 | 31 | .466 | 14.5 | San Francisco | 24 | 36 | .400 | 13 |
| Oakland | 26 | 32 | .448 | 15.5 | San Diego | 23 | 36 | .390 | 13.5 |



LOS ANGELES: Washington Nationals starting pitcher Max Scherzer follows through on a pitch to the Los Angeles Dodgers during the seventh inning of a baseball game, Tuesday in Los Angeles. — AP

CREW SAFE AFTER KIWIS CAPSIZE IN AMERICA'S CUP CHALLENGER RACE

HAMILTON: Emirates Team New Zealand capsized spectacularly to cap a chaotic day of America's Cup racing on the wind-whipped waters of Bermuda's Great Sound on Tuesday. All crew members were reported safe as the race against Ben Ainslie's Land Rover BAR was black-flagged and support crews rushed to the aid of the crippled Kiwi catamaran.

The New Zealand boat rose on its hydrofoils rapidly just before the start and lost control, its bows plunging into the water before the boat flipped sideways, its massive fixed wing sail in the water.

Three of the crew remained in their cockpits in one hull suspended high above the water, while the other three went overboard. "I was very thankful when I was sitting up top to be able to look out back and see all their heads above water," said New

Zealand helmsman Peter Burling, one of those left on board.

"We've all got a few bruises and cuts and bits and pieces, but nothing major," Burling said the team were still assessing the damage and the precise cause of the mishap. Ainslie, who had crossed the start line in front, immediately slowed and instructed the support boat following him to return to render assistance.

"I didn't actually see the capsize itself," Ainslie said. "Thank God it sounds like everyone's OK, that's the most important thing." High winds and intermittent lashing rain made for what four-time Olympic gold medalist Ainslie called "an incredible day of racing."

"I don't think in 30 years of sailing I've ever experienced anything quite like that," Ainslie said of racing the temperamental

AC catamarans in winds averaging upwards of 21 knots (38.89 Km/h) with gusts even higher.

The New Zealand capsize handed the British outfit their first point of the first-to-five semi-final series, which New Zealand led 3-1 at the end of the day.

SoftBank Team Japan beat Artemis Racing of Sweden twice to take a 3-1 lead in their series.

But all four teams were challenged by the conditions, with gusting winds causing at least some degree of damage to every boat.

'ALL SAILORS SAFE'

New Zealand, trying to book a return to the America's Cup Match after a heart-breaking loss to Oracle Team USA in San Francisco four years ago, had looked solid

in building a 2-0 lead over the Brits with two wins on Monday.

But disaster struck even before racing began on Tuesday when they found themselves in a frantic bid to replace their damaged fixed wing sail in time to make the start of their first race.

Burling said the damage was to the bottom flap, but declined to go into specifics lest he give away design secrets.

They sailed with composure, overtaking BAR mid-race and hanging on to take their series lead to 3-0.

Japan took a 2-1 lead over Sweden when the struggling Artemis retired from their first race of the day.

"She's still upright, so that's a good start," SoftBank helmsman Dean Barker said after both boats took a beating.

Controversy erupted in the second race

between the two, with Artemis tactician Iain Percy infuriated by penalties meted out after they sailed full-tilt beyond the course boundary. However, that drama paled in comparison to the frightening capsize in the final race.

"All sailors accounted for and safe after Emirates TeamNZ capsize," the team tweeted. "Boat is making its way back to dock to assess damage."

High winds are again forecast for Wednesday, and if they top the 24 knot (44.45 Km/h) limit allowed for racing New Zealand could get an extra day to make repairs.

"As a group of New Zealanders, we are really resilient," Burling said. Although it remained to be seen just how extensive the damage was, he said, "we feel like we'll be able to repair it and get back into action." —AFP

CRICKET

MORGAN LAUDS 'OUTSTANDING' ATTACK, ENGLAND IN SEMIS

CARDIFF: England captain Eoin Morgan praised his "outstanding" bowling attack after the tournament hosts booked their place in the semi-finals of the Champions Trophy with an 87-run win over New Zealand in Cardiff.

Tuesday's success means England will return to the Welsh capital as Group A winners for a last four clash against the as yet unknown Group B runners-up on June 14, in an event featuring the world's leading eight one-day international teams.

England looked to have fallen short of a par score despite making 310 all out after Joe Root (64), Alex Hales (56) and Ben Stokes (48) were all dismissed when well set before Jos Buttler's unbeaten 61 boosted the total.

But fast bowler Mark Wood took the key wicket of New Zealand captain Kane Williamson (87) in the 31st over. Williamson's exit sparked a collapse that saw New Zealand lose their last eight wickets for 65 runs on the way to a total of 223 all out.

Liam Plunkett took four for 55, with his fellow paceman Jake Ball named man-of-the-match after striking early to dismiss Luke Ronchi for a duck on his way to fine figures of two for 31 in eight overs.

Meanwhile, leg-spinner Adil Rashid justified his recall in place of injured all-rounder Chris Woakes with a 10-over return of two for 47.

'AVERAGE BATTING'

Morgan feared England didn't have enough runs to play with after

being sent into bat by Williamson.

"I thought we were probably 10 or 15 below par-given that 320 is probably a par score regardless of the game we're playing in these days," said Morgan after England had still passed 300 in half of their 46 ODIs since a humiliating first-round exit at the 2015 World Cup.

Wood produced a superb delivery that Williamson, seemingly on course for a second successive century after his hundred in the Blackcaps' rain-ruined no result opener against Australia, could only glove to diving wicket-keeper Buttler.

"Guys like him (Wood) are so valuable to the team-and you can't leave any of our bowlers out," Morgan insisted.

"I thought they did an outstanding job. They were truly the highlight of the day. "Our batting performance was probably par or below par-so pretty average."

'UNIQUE' WOOD

Williamson, reflecting on the delivery from Wood that ended the innings said the Durham quick, fit following a persistent ankle injury, was a tough man to face.

"He's a very good bowler, unique in the fact that he bowls at such good pace off maybe a five to 10-metre run-up-which you don't see too much around the world," said Williamson.

"He's performed very, very well for England over a period of time-especially coming back after injury... so certainly he is a strength of their bowling attack."

Defeat was made worse for Williamson when the International Cricket Council fined him 40 percent and his players 20 percent of their match fees for a slow over-rate during England's innings.

Morgan, meanwhile, knows his side will top the group regardless of the result of their final pool fixture against Australia, on Saturday, where a win over their Ashes rivals for the second time in successive Champions Trophy editions at Edgbaston would likely eliminate their oldest foes.

For all that they were already into the last four, Morgan promised no let-up against World Cup champions Australia as England, in marked contrast, seek their first major 50-over title.

"I think if we're truly going to be contenders for this tournament, we need to beat the best teams-and Australia are one of the best teams," he said.

"They always are going into a white-ball tournament. They seem to produce limited-overs cricketers at will," the former Ireland international added.

"So to go into a game like that with no other attitude than winning is very important to us." —AFP



OVAL: India's captain Virat Kohli, left, and batsman Shikhar Dhawan attend a training session at the Oval cricket ground in London, yesterday. India are due to play Sri Lanka in an ICC Trophy cricket match at the Oval today. —AP

KOHLI URGES INDIA TO BUILD ON PAKISTAN ROUT

LONDON: Virat Kohli has urged India to produce a repeat of their Pakistan demolition when they face Sri Lanka in the Champions Trophy today.

Kohli's side made a memorable start to the tournament as the defending champions crushed arch rivals Pakistan by 124 runs in Birmingham on Sunday. After India piled up 319 for three in 48 overs, they turned the screw on Pakistan, dismissing them for 164 as they failed to chase down a rain-reduced target of 289.

It was the perfect response to reports of a rift between India captain Kohli and the team's coach Anil Kumble. Kohli knows momentum can change quickly in one-day competitions, especially against a desperate Sri Lanka team looking to bounce back from defeat to South Africa in their opener. But Kohli hopes the confidence boost from beating Pakistan will help India secure another victory in their second Group B match. "Every game in this tournament is big, but we have a side with a few youngsters coming in and gradually getting towards strengthening their careers for India," he said.

"So I think from that, from the team's point of view, it's a massive win for us.

"Just the way we played and the confidence we showed throughout the game was something that was very pleasing to see as a captain. "Even though we lost the toss, guys were raring and ready to go, willing to take up the pressure.

"That gave all of us the confidence to start striking the ball well, but initially the openers gave us a good start as well. "As I said, it's a clinical performance from us, from the team's point of view, yes, it is indeed a very big win."

DEFLATED

Kohli, with 81 not out off 68 balls, and Yuvraj Singh, named man-of-the-match for a rapid 53, both battered the Pakistan attack after Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan laid the platform for a big total with an opening stand of 136.

A repeat of that batting blitz against Sri Lanka at The Oval would put India on course for the semi-finals and Kohli expect Yuvraj to lead the charge again.

"After I got to 50, I wasn't able to freely play. And Yuvraj came in and just took all the pressure off me," he said. "The way he batted was the way only he can strike the ball. "I think that really deflated the opposition. His innings was a difference in the game."

Beaten by 96 runs by South Africa, there is no margin for error for Sri Lanka as they try to avoid elimination. Adding insult to injury, Sri Lanka were later found guilty of a slow over-rate offence by the ICC, with their stand-in captain Upul Tharanga banned for their next two matches, and players fined.

Angelo Mathews is set to resume captaincy duties after returning to fitness from the calf muscle injury that ruled him out of the South Africa match. "The whole team is responsible. Whoever the captain is, we have to back him and try to support him in the field," Mathews said. "The captain has to do so many other things and stuff to work on. We have addressed in the past as well, but it cropped up again. "It's so unfortunate to see Upul going out as he is a crucial player in our set up. "He batted well against South Africa and it's so disappointing. This cannot happen again." —AFP



CARDIFF: New Zealand's Ross Taylor (R) plays a shot as England's Joe Root (L) and England's Jos Buttler look on during the ICC Champions Trophy match between England and New Zealand at Cardiff on Tuesday. England, sent in to bat in overcast conditions, made a total of 310 all out. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

CARDIFF, United Kingdom: Completed scoreboard in the Group A Champions Trophy match between England and New Zealand at Cardiff on Tuesday:

| England | | New Zealand | |
|--|-----|--|-----|
| J. Roy b Milne | 13 | M. Guptill c Root b Stokes | 27 |
| A. Hales b Milne | 56 | L. Ronchi b Ball | 0 |
| J. Root b Anderson | 64 | K. Williamson c Buttler b Wood | 87 |
| E. Morgan c Ronchi b Anderson | 13 | R. Taylor c Root b Ball | 39 |
| B. Stokes c Milne b Boult | 48 | N. Broom lbw b Rashid | 11 |
| J. Buttler not out | 61 | J. Neesham c Hales b Plunkett | 18 |
| M. Ali c Boult b Anderson | 12 | C. Anderson c Hales b Plunkett | 10 |
| A. Rashid lbw b Santner | 12 | M. Santner st Buttler b Rashid | 3 |
| L. Plunkett c Southee b Milne | 15 | A. Milne c Rashid b Plunkett | 10 |
| M. Wood c Taylor b Southee | 0 | T. Southee c Roy b Plunkett | 2 |
| J. Ball c Boult b Southee | 0 | T. Boult not out | 0 |
| Extras (lb5, w11) | 16 | Extras (b4, lb8, w4) | 16 |
| Total (all out, 49.3 overs) | 310 | Total (all out, 44.3 overs) | 223 |
| Fall of wickets: 1-37 (Roy), 2-118 (Hales), 3-134 (Morgan), 4-188 (Root), 5-210 (Stokes), 6-230 (Ali), 7-260 (Rashid), 8-309 (Plunkett), 9-310 (Wood), 10-310 (Ball) | | Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Ronchi), 2-63 (Guptill), 3-158 (Williamson), 4-168 (Taylor), 5-191 (Neesham), 6-194 (Broom), 7-205 (Rashid), 8-211 (Anderson), 9-223 (Milne), 10-223 | |
| Bowling: Southee 9.3-0-44-2 (2w); Boult 10.0-56-1; Milne 10.0-79-3 (4w); Anderson 9.0-55-3 (3w); Santner 8.0-54-1 (1w); Neesham 3.0-17-0 | | Stokes 8.0-46-1 (3w) Rashid 10.0-47-2 (1w) Result: England won by 87 runs. | |

NO PRESSURE ON UNDERDOGS SRI LANKA, SAYS MATHEWS

LONDON: Angelo Mathews insists there is no pressure on Sri Lanka in their crucial Champions Trophy clash against India today because the defending champions are expected to thrash his underdogs.

Mathews' side must beat India at The Oval to keep alive their hopes of reaching the semi-finals, but the odds are against a Sri Lanka team hit by injury and suspension.

Sri Lanka looked like tournament also rans when they lost to South Africa by 96 runs in their Group B opener last weekend.

Already in the midst of a rebuilding project following the retirement of several stars, Sri Lanka will be without Upul Tharanga, banned for his team's slow over rate, against India, while batsman Chamara Kapugedera may miss out due to injury.

Mathews knows India, who thrashed Pakistan in their first group match, are firm favourites to maintain their 100 percent record.

But the Sri Lanka captain hopes being written off will allow his team to play with enough freedom to spring a surprise.

"People will want India to come in and thrash us, and it's just all the pressure is off us," Mathews told a press conference at The Oval yesterday.

"We are happy to walk in as the underdogs. I mean, no one really expects us to win the championship. Which takes a lot of pressure out of the guys.

"We just have to go out there, just express ourselves and be aggressive. "That is our brand of cricket, being aggressive and positive." Tharanga's absence is a blow for Sri Lanka and Mathews, who missed the South Africa match due to a calf injury, pulled no punches as he slammed the stand-in skipper and his team-mates for failing to keep up with the required over rate.

PATHTIC

"The over rate was an issue. It was pathetic. I call it pathetic because of the whole team, and the captain was warned several times, and there's no excuse at all but to take responsibility for that because nobody else can take responsibility on it," Mathews said.

"The whole team is responsible, including the cap-

tain. It's a very hard job on the field, and he has to look into so many things. "The rest of the players has to support them. Most of the teams play with four seamers and they have not had an issue.

"We played only three and we've had an issue. That has been addressed and it will not happen again."

While Mathews is aware he is in charge of a largely inexperienced group still finding their way on the international stage, he expects them to rise to the challenge sooner rather than later.

"The guys are learning every single day. If you look at most of the guys, they haven't played a lot of international cricket," he said.

"The more you play, the more you learn. Everyone has to step up with their roles because we can't just expect things to fall in line.

"We've got to make it happen, and we've got to make it happen soon."

It might be hard to see too many signs of progress against the might of India and Mathews, who will return to the line-up as a batsman but may not bowl, conceded Virat Kohli's group are formidable. —AFP



OVAL: Sri Lanka's captain Angelo Mathews speaks during a press conference at the Oval cricket ground in London, yesterday. India are due to play Sri Lanka in an ICC Trophy cricket match at the Oval today. —AP

QATAR'S UNIFYING WORLD CUP VISION ERODES AS NATIONS CUT TIES

Qatar's bid for the 2022 World Cup was based on a powerful vision that soccer could unite the Middle East. "Just think together of what we can achieve together," Sheikhha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned, the wife of the Qatar's then-ruler, told FIFA voters in 2010. She ambitiously forecast a "culture of peace across our region through football." With five years until kickoff, that optimism is rapidly disintegrating after Arab neighbors severed ties on Monday with the tiny nation that turned to sports to buttress its global status.

Soccer's world governing body, FIFA, is hoping the regional rifts are healed long before there's any need to contemplate any change of host, a move that would deal a heavy blow to Qatar's reputation and economy as it is investing more than \$150 billion on infrastructure to handle the World Cup.

For now, FIFA is predictably side-stepping detailed questions about the impact of the decision by Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to cast Qatar adrift diplomatically. Qatar's Gulf neighbors have accused Qatar of supporting terror groups, interfering in the sov-

ern affairs of Arab countries and backing groups that undermine political stability.

FIFA has reiterated that it maintains regular contact with Qatar. "One thing is certain, the world's football community should agree that large tournaments cannot be played in countries that actively support terror," said Reinhard Grindel, president of the German football federation and a member of FIFA's ruling council.

Qatar denies funding extremists, but that hasn't stopped its neighbors from implementing punitive measures that impact people and businesses across the region, including soccer fans. FIFA was dragged into the backlash against the 2022 World Cup host nation on Tuesday when Qatar's state-funded broadcaster beIN Sports appeared to be blocked in the UAE. With beIN holding the broadcasting rights to FIFA events across the Middle East and North Africa, the ongoing Under-20 World Cup in South Korea will now be unavailable for viewers in the UAE.

FIFA said it was in contact with the broadcaster and was monitoring the situation. FIFA is also in partnership

with Qatar's flagship carrier, Qatar Airways, which signed up as a World Cup sponsor last month, has been forced to reroute journeys over Iranian and Turkish airspace after Saudi Arabia and Egypt blocked Qatari flights from using their airspace. A soccer sponsorship has already been affected, with Saudi club Al-Ahli terminating its deal with the airline.

The escalation of the crisis in the Persian Gulf will have underscored to FIFA just how precarious the region is, and the geographical weakness of oil-and-gas rich Qatar. The desert nation is heavily reliant on food imports, predominantly through its border with Saudi Arabia, where hundreds of trucks transporting food and construction materials have now been stopped from entering. A sustained blockade could hit the construction boom required to transform the sparse nation. An entire city is being built to stage the final. Not a single stadium was ready at the time of bidding, and only one venue has so far been completed as Qatar prepares to welcome the 32 teams.

Qatar has long been heavily reliant on a massive workforce of migrant

laborers from Asia to expand its infrastructure. The Philippines has temporarily suspended the deployment of Filipino workers to Doha, but said there is no plan yet to repatriate the more than 200,000 existing members of the labor force.

Being handed the World Cup made working, living conditions and employment rights in Qatar a global concern. Practices such as the "kafala" sponsorship system that binds workers to their employer are in place across the region, but activists have largely only shone the spotlight on Qatar and the human cost of hosting the World Cup.

Qatar has responded to the pressure by compelling companies to adopt labor reforms. It's one of the consequences of hosting a major sporting event that Qatar did not seem to anticipate amid the joy of beating the United States, Australia, Japan and South Korea in the 2010 vote.

Qatar has the global attention, but it's largely been unwelcome. From the moment then-FIFA President Sepp Blatter pulled Qatar's name out of the envelope in Zurich, the whiff of corruption has hung over Qatar's bid, coupled

with concerns about heat that forced the tournament to be shifted into the heart of the European season in November-December 2022.

Despite being exonerated by FIFA's ethics investigators, speculation about Qatar being stripped of the hosting rights or being boycotted by some countries has persisted, without the call coming from any authoritative soccer body or government.

Significantly, the federation of World Cup holder Germany is not endorsing such an extreme move. "There are still five years before the World Cup kicks off," Grindel said. "Political solutions must take precedence over threats of boycott in this time."

Not all the countries currently embroiled in the dispute with Qatar are World Cup regulars, so there is slim chance of the entire bloc qualifying for the 2022 tournament. But Qatar will be hosting athletes from across the region when it stages the world track and field championships in 2019.

"We are talking to our teams in the region to properly understand the implications for both the short term and long term," the IAAF said. —AP



TOKYO: Japan's Yuya Osako controls the ball against Syria's players during their Kirin Challenge Cup international friendly soccer match in Tokyo, yesterday. —AP

JAPAN SUFFER KAGAWA BLOW IN DRAW WITH SYRIA

TOKYO: Japan's World Cup qualifying preparations were dealt a blow yesterday when playmaker Shinji Kagawa suffered a shoulder injury in a 1-1 home draw with Syria. The Borussia Dortmund midfielder was stretchered off just nine minutes into the Tokyo friendly clutching his left shoulder after an awkward fall, and could be in doubt for next week's Asian qualifier against Iraq.

Syria took a shock lead early in the second half when forward Mardik Mardikian powered home a header after clever work on the right by Amro Jenyat. Japan equalised after 59 minutes, Inter Milan left-back Yuto Nagatomo squaring for Yasuyuki

Konno to apply a simple finish from point-blank range. Keisuke Honda and Takashi Inui went close as Japan pushed for a winner. But the Blue Samurai produced little that will strike fear into Iraq when the teams square off in neutral Tehran on Tuesday.

Japan currently top Group B in the final round of Asian 2018 World Cup qualifiers with 16 points from seven games, ahead of Saudi Arabia on goal difference. Australia, the reigning Asian champions, are three points behind the leaders with three matches left to play.

The top two teams from each of the two groups qualify automatically for next year's World Cup in Russia. —AFP

SOCCER

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO HAS ATTENTION OF US IN WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

COMMERCE CITY: US goalkeeper Tim Howard has far too much riding on this game to even consider overlooking Trinidad and Tobago. First and foremost, an all-important three points in the standings. Next, his friendly wager with Trinidad and Tobago defender Mekeil Williams, who is Howard's teammate with Major League Soccer's Colorado Rapids. The bet goes something like this: Should Howard's side win the World Cup qualifier Thursday night in Commerce City, Williams has to sit at a locker next to the bathroom. If Williams' side wins, Howard must sit with the rookie keepers for the rest of the season.

"Hopefully, he'll have to repay," Howard said Tuesday after a training session on the field at Dick's Sporting Goods Park. "This is as key as it gets. We need the three points at home." And no, Howard adamantly stressed, the Americans won't get caught looking toward their matchup three days later in Mexico City against Mexico.

"Mexico is the furthest thing from our mind, to be honest," Howard said. "We have to focus."

There's no room for anymore hiccups - for either team. The Americans are in fourth place in the six-team standings with four points, while Trinidad and Tobago is last with three points. Mexico leads the standings with 10 points. The top three teams qualify, with the fourth-place squad going to a playoff against Asia's No. 5 nation.

"Crunch time," Williams said in a recent interview on the Soca Warriors' Facebook page as he also outlined his wager with Howard. "Everyone is positive and confident." Traditionally, the red, white and

blue has fared well against Trinidad and Tobago, a country with a population around 1.4 million. The US - population roughly 326 million - is 12-1-3 in World Cup qualifying against the Soca Warriors, including 7-0-1 at home.

"Come Thursday night, that's the most important thing," forward Jozy Altidore said. "When the whistle blows and the game is over, you think about Mexico." Maybe when he was younger, Altidore might have let his mind wander toward playing at Azteca Stadium and facing the hostile crowd. Not at this stage of qualifying.

"In a lot of ways, the Trinidad

game is also very important and attractive in its own way," Altidore said. "So, that's the focus."

Altidore arrived late to training camp after attending his brother's wedding. He's trying to quickly get acclimated to the elevation.

"It's tough, man. It's tough," he said. "But it's the same for everybody - the same for Trinidad. No excuses." The 27-year-old Altidore could be paired up top Thursday with fellow forward Clint Dempsey, who has 56 international goals and would tie Landon Donovan's U.S. record with his next one. Altidore has certainly seen his share of Dempsey's goals. "To score on a

consistent level over a number of years is never easy. He's a guy that pops up in good spots," Altidore said. "He's able to score those grimy goals. That's why he's so important to us and that's why he's done it for such a long time."

Looking forward to owning that record?

"The most important thing is qualify for the World Cup," the 34-year-old Dempsey said. "That's the most important thing. ... The team looks good. It's really competitive. Looking forward to these games and I think we have a lot of depth. I think you'll see our best." —AP



MELBOURNE: Brazil's players attend a football training session in Melbourne yesterday, ahead of their match against Argentina tomorrow. —AFP

TREBLE WINNER RENARD EYES EURO GLORY FOR FRANCE

PARIS: Fresh from leading Lyon to a French league and cup and Champions League treble, inspirational France captain Wendie Renard is fixing her gaze on delivering the women's national team its first ever silverware.

France are seen as one of the favorites to win the women's European Championship which kicks off on July 16 in the Netherlands and Renard is hoping Lyon's run of success can carry through to the national team. "It's great to have won the Champions League and then defended it, we want to go and make history now with a third (consecutive) win," the 26-year-old defender told AFP in an exclusive interview.

The powerfully built 6ft 2in (1.87m) central defender or right back has in fact won four Champions Leagues and first captained France at the 2015 World Cup in Canada, where Germany beat them on penalties in the quarter-finals. "With France we'll have to be more humble about our approach. We have always declared we want to win tournaments when going into them," she pointed out.

France have consistently underachieved, never having reached the final of a major competition. They were knocked out in the last eight of the last Euro in 2013.

"Sadly we've been stopped in our tracks so far so this time we'll say nothing and work hard. We're ambitious though, that's for sure," said Renard, who identified holders Germany as the chief pretender to the title. "Germany is still the team to beat but tactically and physically many teams look capable of winning. Norway, Sweden and Denmark are all in that group too." Renard feels the depth needed to win a tournament is now within France's reach due to domestic success and a new generation coming through. "We have won nothing yet,"

she warned. "We have zero titles and we need to stay unified, and hard work always pays off. "And in the new generation coming through we have some very talented players, but you cannot buy experience."

"The Euro is a long competition with many

matches and we need to maintain a winning attitude over a long period," said Renard, who has done that with her club side and who, with 89 caps so far, looks set to apply her experience on the international stage in the Netherlands. —AFP



GUANGDONG: China's Jiang Zhipeng (R) is brought down by Amani Aguinaldo of the Philippines during their football friendly match in Guangzhou, in China's southern Guangdong province yesterday. —AFP

ENGLAND FANS BANNED OVER NAZI GESTURES

BURTON-ON-TRENT: Two England supporters received lifetime bans for making Nazi gestures during a friendly against Germany in March, the Football Association revealed on Tuesday.

One fan made a Nazi salute, while the other mimicked an Adolf Hitler moustache with his finger and made a cut-throat gesture towards Germany fans.

The pair received the first lifetime bans every issued by the FA, officials told reporters at the St George's Park national football centre in Burton-on-Trent, central England.

The game in Dortmund, which Germany won 1-0, also led to 27 members of England's official travel club being temporarily banned from attending matches and six receiving written warnings.

FA chairman Greg Clarke was deeply critical of a minority of England fans who jeered the German national anthem prior to the game and sang songs about the two World Wars.

"The behaviour of a section of the England support in Dortmund was inappropriate, disrespectful and disap-

pointing," Clarke said at the time.

"The FA has consistently urged supporters to show respect and not to chant songs that could be regarded as insulting to others.

"Individuals who engage in such behaviour do not represent the overwhelming majority of England fans, nor the values and identity we should aspire to as a football nation."

The FA is concerned by a rise in boorish, anti-social behaviour that it says is fuelled by alcohol and predominantly carried out by male fans aged between 18 and 25.

England were threatened with expulsion from last year's European Championship in France after running battles between English and Russian fans in Marseille.

Since 2014, 142 England fans have been issued with bans ranging from six months to five years, with 239 issued warnings. The FA said 4,761 members of England's official supporters club would travel to Glasgow for Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Scotland, which is seen as having "potential for risk". —AFP

BECKHAM MIAMI TEAM EDGES CLOSER AFTER LAND DEAL

MIAMI: David Beckham's hopes of launching a Major League Soccer franchise in Miami took a giant step towards becoming reality Tuesday after city officials approved the sale of land crucial to a proposed stadium project. Miami-Dade County commissioners voted by 9-4 to approve the transfer of a three-acre parcel of land worth \$9 million to Beckham's consortium, which reportedly hopes to launch its MLS team by 2021.

Beckham's group had already purchased six acres of land next to the site for some \$19 million in Miami's Overtown district.

"We look forward to working with the Miami

community to bring our vision for the neighborhood to life," Miami Beckham United said in a statement, describing the deal as a "major milestone" towards its MLS team. "Our loyal fans in Miami and around the world have been waiting for this moment for years, and we're thrilled that we're getting closer to our kick-off."

The group hopes to build a 25,000-seat stadium on the site. Beckham's group has said the cost of the stadium, which still needs to be approved by city planners, will be met by private investors with no public funds being used in its construction. —AFP

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hits 4 home
runs for Reds to
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PARIS: Austria's Dominic Thiem returns the ball to Serbia's Novak Djokovic during their tennis match at the Roland Garros 2017 French Open yesterday in Paris. — AFP

THIEM KNOCKS DJOKOVIC OUT OF FRENCH OPEN

PARIS: Novak Djokovic's French Open title defense ended with a surprisingly lopsided 7-6 (5), 6-3, 6-0 quarterfinal loss to sixth-seeded Dominic Thiem of Austria yesterday. A year ago, Djokovic became the first man in nearly a half-century to claim a fourth consecutive major championship and completed a career Grand Slam at Roland Garros. But his form has dipped considerably since then, and now he has gone four majors in a row without earning a trophy.

"It's a fact that I'm not playing close to my best," Djokovic said. "This is a whole new situation that I'm feeling." Yesterday at a windy Court Suzanne Lenglen, Djokovic was out of sorts in so many ways, even before that 20-minute third set in which he won only 8 of 34 points. That was only the second time that Djokovic lost a final set by the score of 6-0 in his 937 career tour-level matches. "It was not there for me today," Djokovic said with a sigh. He wasted two set points in the opener. By

the end of the match, he wound up with nearly twice as many unforced errors, 35, as winners, 18. His backhand was particularly problematic.

Known for tremendous footwork and court coverage, the No. 2-seeded Serb even stumbled and tumbled to the court, his racket flying out of his hands, early in the second set. Djokovic was left on his knees, and soon he would be out of the tournament entirely.

"All in all," Djokovic said, "it was decided, I think, in the first set." How unlikely was this result? Djokovic entered the day having won all five previous matches - and 11 of 12 sets - against Thiem, including in the French Open semifinals a year ago.

"It's amazing for me," Thiem said. "To beat him for the first time in the quarters of the French Open is a dream." Plus, Djokovic had appeared in a record six consecutive semifinals in Paris. But this continued what has become something of a 12-month downward slide for him since

he finally grabbed ahold of the French Open championship he had so long sought.

Since then, though, the highlight for Djokovic was a runner-up finish at the U.S. Open. Otherwise, he lost his No. 1 ranking to Andy Murray and lost in the third round of Wimbledon, the first round of the Rio de Janeiro Olympics, and the second round of the Australian Open.

Along the way, he split with one of his coaches, Boris Becker, and then his other, Marian Vajda, along with other members of his entourage. Djokovic enlisted Andre Agassi for coaching help during Week 1 of the French Open, but Agassi had some prior commitments and so was gone by the time Djokovic faced Thiem.

The 23-year-old Thiem will face nine-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal next.

"You have to play the best guys round after round," Thiem said. "It's not getting easier on Friday." The other men's quarterfinals scheduled for later Wednesday:

2016 runner-up Murray vs. No. 8 Kei Nishikori, and 2015 champion Stan Wawrinka vs. No. 7 Marin Cilic.

Thiem is a talented, up-and-coming player, to be sure, and he is the only man to beat Nadal in the Spaniard's 23 matches on clay in 2017. That came in the quarterfinals of the Italian Open last month.

Earlier yesterday, Nadal reached his record 10th French Open semifinal when No. 20 Pablo Carreno Busta of Spain retired from their match early in the second set because of an injured abdominal muscle he said began bothering him on a serve at 5-2 in the first.

Nadal led 6-2, 2-0 when Carreno Busta stopped. Nadal has dropped only 22 games so far in the tournament, the fewest he has lost on the way to any of his 26 Grand Slam semifinal berths.

"I don't know how many games I lost this year, but I really don't care about this, no?" Nadal said. "I only care that I am in the semifinals." — AP



BEIJING: This picture taken on May 31, 2017 shows Vivo Senior Vice President Ni Xudong (front R) and FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samouraon holding a framed football jersey during an event to announce Vivo's sponsorship of the FIFA Football World Cup in Beijing. —AFP

FIFA SPONSORS 'ACCELERATE' CHINA'S WORLD CUP CHANCES

BEIJING: China's footballers may be struggling on the pitch but its companies are proving to be a big player, signing sponsorship deals with FIFA as the giant Asian nation looks to boost its chances of hosting the World Cup.

In the space of a year, football governing body FIFA has gained three major Chinese sponsors in conglomerate Wanda, Hisense-the world's number three television manufacturer-and smartphone maker Vivo, who concluded a deal just a week ago.

The new partnerships came as a welcome relief to football's governing body after FIFA's image and reputation was battered in recent years by a slew of corruption allegations involving former president Sepp Blatter.

Sony, Emirates, Castrol, Continental and Johnson & Johnson all declined to renew their sponsorship deals, leaving FIFA struggling to find new backers. "Vivo was very well received by FIFA, which was why (the deal) was concluded very quickly," said Mark Gao, CEO of the agency Momentum Sports, which brokered the sponsorship agreement. "Negotiations were tough on the amount, but lasted less than 100 days." The Vivo deal comes 18 months after e-commerce world leader Alibaba signed a partnership with the FIFA Club World Cup, lending further ammunition to those who believe China will bid for the 2030 World Cup.

When Wanda became a sponsor of FIFA at the beginning of 2016, its chief Wang Jianlin, known to have Beijing's ear, said the partnership "would

increase the chances" of a Chinese World Cup.

Gao says he too is now "convinced that the arrival of Chinese sponsors will promote and accelerate a Chinese bid for a World Cup".

'RULES CANNOT CHANGE'

The Chinese national team currently ranks 82nd in the FIFA world ranking, just behind the tiny Faroe Islands and Benin.

But that has not stopped the Asian giant's president Xi Jinping, a devoted football fan, from dreaming of glory and pushing for his country to host a World Cup in the future.

Next year's World Cup is in Russia, who are part of UEFA, and 2022 will be in Qatar, part of the Asian Football Confederation, making China ineligible to be a host until at least 2030 under FIFA rules that stipulate tournaments must alternate between continents.

Chinese Football Association Vice President Zhang Jian, a member of the FIFA Council which devises the institution's global strategy, said last year he would back a Chinese World Cup in 2030. However, not everyone shares China's enthusiasm to play host at the first opportunity.

Last week UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin told the BBC that "the World Cup should go to the country that has the best bid", adding that he favoured a European host for 2030.

"We cannot just sell the World Cup to the ones who want to pay the most..."

Rules cannot change just because we have some big sponsors," he added. Sebastian

Chiappero, Geneva-based director of sponsor consulting firm Sponsorize, does not believe there is a link between sponsorship and World Cup hosts. "Sponsors are primarily interested in promoting their products and they do not in theory have any influence over who hosts the World Cup. Otherwise the United States would have hosted it many times thanks to McDonald's and Coca-Cola," he told AFP. "FIFA rules prevent any conflict of interest. In practice, we don't know what is going on behind the scenes."

PERFECT HOSTS

However, it is difficult to dismiss the possibility of a Chinese World Cup, says Marcus Luer, CEO of TSA, a Singapore-based sports marketing agency. "The voting process and internal workings of FIFA are very complex and not always that transparent. It (Chinese sponsorship) will help to show that China is eager to host the World Cup and has companies to support that effort," he explains.

It is already in with a shot of bagging the 2021 FIFA Confederations Cup after Qatar was forced to withdraw over difficult playing conditions in its boiling summer heat.

According to Luer, China would be "a perfect country to host a future World Cup", noting its passion for the game, its decent facilities, the support the tournament would receive from the government and its experience in hosting world-class events, such as the 2008 Beijing Olympics. "China will host a FIFA World Cup," said Luer. "It's a matter of when not if." — AFP

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DUBAI: A picture taken on June 6, 2017 shows a general view of the exterior of the Dubai Opera with the Burj Khalifa nearby, in downtown Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. — AFP

NEW TRUMP HOTELS HEAVILY SCRUTINIZED

IS THE NEW CHAIN EXPLOITING PRESIDENCY OR JUST BUSINESS?

NEW YORK: The name of the new hotel chain is American Idea. It was inspired by stories heard in small towns on the campaign trail. The owner is now president of the United States. That said, the Trump Organization wants to make something perfectly clear: It is not exploiting the presidency for profit.

The suggestion is "pure, unadulterated nonsense," said Eric Danziger, CEO of the company's hotel division, Trump Hotels. "I'm sure you've heard of American Express. I'm sure you've heard of American Airlines. ... We didn't invent the word 'American.'" President Donald Trump has been criticized for raising membership fees at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida, boasting of his new Washington hotel that has become a favorite spot for foreign diplomats, and benefiting from trademark approvals from China for possible future business there.

Now comes his company's latest venture: a hotel chain. The American Idea chain was unveiled Monday night in New York at a Trump Tower party hosted by the president's two adult sons, Eric and Don Jr., and featuring a video showing the Washington Mall. The first family plans to franchise the mid-market hotels, taking a cut of revenue, and leaving the management and ownership of the buildings to other developers. The first three are planned for Mississippi.

"They're cashing in on the red states," said Kathleen Clark, a government ethics expert and law professor at Washington University in St. Louis. "I'm not surprised that the Trump family would look to opportunities to commercially exploit his political success." Ethics expert Edwin

Williamson, a former State Department legal adviser, isn't so bothered by the new chain. He noted that the president is not bound by the federal ethics laws that limit other public officials from pursuing business interests while in office, and said he thinks Trump critics and the media are too fast to see conflicts of interest where there are none. "There may be people who want to do business with them because they are the president's sons. But I don't know what you do about that," Williamson said. Anyway, he added, the deals struck will probably be "normal business transactions that meet the standard of the marketplace."

Promise and profit

The first outside partners for American Idea were introduced Monday and quickly established their appeal as embodiments of the American dream. Sons of a refugee from India, Suresh and Dinesh Chawla spoke of an America full of promise and profit, if you work hard enough - and maybe get advice from a real estate mogul along the way.

Suresh told the story of how his late father, founder of Chawla Hotels of Cleveland, Mississippi, was brazen enough to call Donald Trump looking for money for his new hotel chain more than quarter of a century ago. Trump turned the immigrant down, calling his venture "small fry." But he did spend time on the phone, said Suresh, giving advice on ways to secure a loan elsewhere. Chawla Hotels now owns 17 hotels. As a franchising fee, Trump Hotels CEO Danziger said he expects to earn less than the typical 9 to 12 percent cut of re-

venue charged by others, at least initially while the chain is rolled out. The Chawla brothers plan to convert three Mississippi hotels now under other franchisee names to the American Idea brand, one each in Cleveland, Clarksdale and Greenville. Danziger wouldn't say how many American Idea hotels he hopes to build, but he talked big in an interview.

"It can go anywhere in the United States, anywhere there is an extended stay or mid-scale (hotel), that can be an American Idea," he said. The Trump Organization is also opening a fourth property with Chawla Hotels under its

Scion brand, a more upscale, boutique chain launched last year. That one will open in Cleveland, Mississippi. Danziger said in March that he hoped to open as many as 100 Scion hotels in three years.

Washington University's Clark said the new chains raise many conflicts of issues questions: Do the developers have other motives in striking a deal with the president's company, perhaps to influence public policy? Will local governments help the developers in securing zoning changes or permits to curry favor with the president?

'Problematic'

The new chains are "problematic for the same reason all his other businesses are problematic: It provides opportunity for people to influence him by sending business his way," Clark said. The rollout of the Scion chain hit a snag earlier this year because of just such conflicts issues. A Dallas developer who had signed a letter of intent with the Trump Organization revealed that he planned to raise money for a Scion hotel in the city from unnamed investors from Turkey, Qatar and Kazakhstan.

The Trump Organization canceled talks with the developer after several news articles raised questions about whether the foreign investors might try to use their investments to influence the new administration. Danziger said the Dallas developer would never have gotten past his company's vetting, which had only begun as the media got hold of the story.

Before Trump took the oath of office, he announced a series of steps to help address concerns that his sprawling business holdings could lead to conflicts. He handed management control of his company to his two adult sons, vowed to make "no new foreign deals" while president and hired an outside council to vet any new deals his sons would strike in the US. Danziger has expressed confidence that these steps can help avoid any ethical trouble. As far as the Chawlas are concerned, Danziger said, they've been vetted fully. Their company, he said, is 100 percent owned by the two brothers. And he suggested they were perfect partners for a company under scrutiny. — AFP



NEW YORK: Eric Danziger, CEO of Trump Hotels, left, joins Eric Trump, center, and Donald Trump Jr., both of whom are executive Vice Presidents of The Trump Organization, as the trio poses for a photograph during an event for Scion Hotels. — AP

FIRMS STRUGGLE TO KEEP QATAR BUSINESS TIES

DUBAI/DOHA: Banks and firms across Gulf Arab nations sought to keep business links to Qatar open and avoid a costly fire-sale of assets yesterday as a political freeze descended on the region. Many banks in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain suspended new business with Qatar soon after their governments cut diplomatic and transport ties with Doha on Monday, accusing it of supporting terrorism.

But it was still unclear on Wednesday whether tens of billions of dollars of existing deals - from loans to bank deposits and cross-border shareholdings, as well as merchandise trade contracts - would have to be unwound, and if so how fast. That left bankers and businessmen in limbo as they continued to insist to clients that commercial links had not been severed, even though their ability to service these links was in doubt.

"Customers keep asking the bank whether it is still operating in UAE and the bank's response is, it's business as usual," said an executive at a Qatari bank in the UAE. He added that the UAE business did not do interbank deals locally and obtained funding from its head office in Doha, so it was able

for now to continue corporate and retail banking. Like most other businessmen, he declined to be named when talking about Qatar because of political sensitivities. The UAE has threatened anyone publishing expressions of sympathy towards Qatar with up to 15 years in prison.

The UAE central bank issued a statement saying payments and remittances in the UAE financial system were occurring normally after the diplomatic split, but it did not specify whether UAE banks would be required to close out their exposure to Qatar. UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash told Reuters that the UAE could not rule out more curbs on bilateral business. He did not give details of banking policy.

Bank guidance

Bankers in Riyadh said they had received informal guidance from the central bank which essentially banned new transactions with any Qatari institution. The guidance was ambiguous about whether existing deals, such as syndicated loans involving Saudi and Qatari banks, could remain in place. The bankers said they hoped to clarify the new policy in coming days.

The Saudi, UAE, Bahraini and Qatari central banks did not respond to requests for comment. Some bankers believe the lack of official guidance is deliberate - if the diplomatic crisis can be resolved within days or weeks, all sides could save money by avoiding a forced sale of assets in each other's countries. "There is still a feeling that this will be resolved," said a banker at a major international institution which does a lot of business with Qatar.

But the head of Middle Eastern debt capital markets at a European bank in Dubai said his institution had put all new Qatari business on hold while it awaited guidance from the UAE central bank, which was expected to imitate Riyadh's policy.

The chief executive of an Abu Dhabi bank said he was bracing for the possibility that he would have to close out his Qatar exposure by boosting his access to ready funds. "Stopping new business was relatively easy - the difficulty would be unwinding existing business," he said. Trade and investment between Qatar and other Gulf countries is small compared to the size of their economies. — Reuters

INDIA'S CENTRAL BANK RATES AT 6.25 PERCENT

MUMBAI: India's central bank held interest rates in line with analysts' expectations yesterday, rebuffing the finance ministry's desire for a cut after India's growth slowed. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said the benchmark repo rate the level at which it lends to commercial banks would remain at 6.25 percent. It was the fourth consecutive monetary policy committee (MPC) meeting where rates have been left unchanged.

Forty-eight out of 50 economists surveyed by Bloomberg News had predicted that the rate would be held despite India's growth slowing to 6.1 percent in the recently ended fourth quarter. The fall in GDP, reported last month, came after the government's shock move in November to ban most of the country's currency in circulation. A rate cut encourages consumers to spend, usually causing a spur in growth, and Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley called for a

reduction in the rate this week owing to a sharp fall in inflation.

Consumer prices rose at just 2.99 percent in April from a year earlier, a record low, but the RBI headed by governor Urjit Patel said it needed to wait and see whether those levels would remain or spike before moving on rates. "Premature action at this stage risks disruptive policy reversals later and the loss of credibility. Accordingly, the MPC decided to keep the policy rate unchanged with a neutral stance and remain watchful of incoming data," it said in a statement.

The central bank last cut the interest rate in October when it was reduced by 25 basis points to 6.25 percent, the lowest level since November 2010. That cut came shortly before Prime Minister Narendra Modi stunned the country by removing all 500 (around \$7.50) and 1,000 rupee notes from circulation. — AFP



HONG KONG: This picture taken on May 25, 2017 shows a resident (C) walking across the road in the Wonderland Villas hilltop residential complex in the Kwai Fong district of Hong Kong. —AFP

WONDERLAND VILLAS: A TALE OF HK'S PROPERTY ROLLERCOASTER

LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING BECOMES MAJOR POLITICAL ISSUE

HONG KONG: Red-whiskered bulbuls start chirping around 5:00 am at Wonderland Villas, a hilltop complex in leafy northern Hong Kong whose own history charts the city's political, economic and social fortunes. Built in 1984, the year colonial power Britain signed an agreement to hand Hong Kong back to China, the complex was one of the pioneering designs of its time, a cluster of 22 curvaceous white apartment blocks complete with clubhouse, tennis courts and swimming pool.

Prices at Wonderland have risen, waned and risen again, as Hong Kong property has swung through boom and bust to become one of the world's most expensive markets. The lack of affordable housing has become a major political issue for Hong Kong as it approaches the 20th anniversary of the British handover of the city. But Wonderland was once an attainable aspiration.

Former tailor Winnie Wong, now 70, bought a three-bedroom apartment there with her husband in 1997, when Hong Kong was transferred to China and became a semi-autonomous city. Some emigrated ahead of the handover, worried about Beijing calling the shots. Wong said she was concerned, but decided to hold on.

"My dad once said, the more you flee, the harder it gets," she told AFP. From the late 1970s, China began to open up its economy, helping transform Hong Kong from a manufacturing hub to a service oriented gateway to the mainland. The Wongs are typical of a savvy post-war generation who traded up as Hong Kong grew. They bought their first apartment in 1970 for HK\$45,000 (US\$5,775), moving seven times before they splashed out HK\$7.85 million on their Wonderland Villas home-it is now worth

double that. The comfortable 1,600-square-foot (149-square-metre) apartment, decorated with artworks and family photos, boasts lush green views and a large terrace. "For my generation, it was easier to buy a home if you worked hard," Wong says.

China influence

After rising steadily through the 1980s and 90s, property prices crashed in the last quarter of 1997 as the Asian financial crisis sent markets tumbling. Hong Kong's economy was dealt another blow in 2003 when an outbreak of the respiratory virus SARS killed 299 people in the city. Those crises were reflected at Wonderland while the Wongs kept their heads above water, almost 30 indebted homeowners were forced to forfeit their flats between 1997 and 2003 and prices plunged by more than two thirds.

However, thanks to China's economic growth and Hong Kong's encouragement of mainland tourists, which boosted retail industries, the market rallied as the 2000s wore on. Industrialists and wealthy businessmen snapped up homes at Wonderland as they had in its heyday. A handful of mainland buyers also bought there, but most preferred higher-profile central condos expected to rise more in value, albeit with less space. "From the perspective of expats or mainland Chinese, when they invested in an unfamiliar place they would choose well-known properties or those built atop subway stations. So that started to turn around the direction of investment," local estate sales manager Ken Lee said.

Inflated market

Despite falling out of fashion, a Wonderland Villas home like the Wongs' still fetches SHK16

million. But while they have watched their investment grow, younger generations find it increasingly hard to buy. A 2017 survey by research organisation Demographia named Hong Kong the world's least affordable city for housing—the median property price exceeds the median annual household income 18.1 times, well ahead of Sydney and Vancouver in second and third place.

Mainland buyers parking their capital in Hong Kong property is one factor driving up prices. The local government also stands accused of colluding with developers instead of pushing for affordable accommodation. Residents are increasingly forced to live in cramped conditions at spiraling costs. Some analysts say a recent government pledge to create more homes should eventually bring values down.

"With more projects going to be launched in the market, (developers) have to price them more competitively," property analyst Joyce Kwok of Nomura told AFP. Residents at Wonderland Villas are now mostly retirees, their families, and those who enjoy proximity to nature. Its airy layout and verdant, suburban surroundings contrast with the newer urban towers that favour glass, marble and chandeliers.

The next generation of Wongs have set up home there—one of the couple's daughters lives in a neighboring block with her own family. As many middle-class parents now do, the Wongs helped her with the down-payment. "It's hard for younger people to make it independently now," Wong told AFP. She and her husband have no plan to move as they enjoy a happy retirement. "It would be hard for us to find another place this green," she says. "We like the quiet here." —AFP

INDIA'S MEAT EXPORTERS HURT AMID COW PROTECTION DRIVE

NEW DELHI: Indian buffalo meat exports plunged more than 10 percent in April, new trade figures show, with traders blaming a campaign to protect cows for undermining its position as one of the world's top beef suppliers. Buffalo meat shipments dropped 11.4 percent in April, data released this week showed, denting profits for a \$4.8 billion export industry that has been hit by a sustained crackdown on abattoirs and traders.

India does not export beef from cows, which are considered sacred by Hindus and whose slaughter is banned in many states. But it is the world's largest exporter of buffalo meat, which is also classified as beef. Buffalo meat businesses have however been caught up in a renewed drive to prevent cow slaughter. Hindu hardliners have long alleged that abattoirs—largely run by Muslims—cover up the slaughter of cows and pass the meat off as buffalo.

Businesses in Uttar Pradesh, the top meat-producing state, have been hit with inspections and closures. The crackdown spearheaded by the state's Hindu-rightwing government-swept up not just unlicensed butchers but major exporters, who were forced to stop taking orders and cancel shipments as their businesses were shut. "India has been the largest exporter of meat but after this drop it's quite possible that it has lost that place," Fauzan Alavi, spokesman for the All India Meat and Livestock Exporters Association, told AFP.

"Crackdowns have added to the cost and that makes it less attractive to buyers." Traders are bracing for further pain. The national government led by the Hindu-rightwing Bharatiya Janata Party imposed a nationwide ban on the sale of cattle—including both cows and buffalo—last month. The blanket prohibition caused outcry and has already been challenged, with a court in southern India temporarily staying the ban.

But it is expected to further curb exports. The All India Meat Exporters Association is calling for the ban to be lifted or at least amended to exclude buffalo. "We're all hit. International buyers aren't placing orders and we aren't placing orders because we don't know if we will have the meat supply to deliver," said DB Sabharwal, the association head, whose own company has seen a nearly 40 percent drop in sales in recent weeks. The slaughter of cows is illegal in many Indian states, with some imposing life sentences for transgressions.

Rumours of cow slaughter can also spur communal violence between headline Hindus and India's sizeable Muslim population, who dominate the abattoir industry. Violence against Muslims and Dalits—lower-caste Hindus who also eat meat accused of killing the holy beasts has risen in recent months. Two Muslims were beaten to death last month on suspicion of stealing cows while another was killed by vigilantes for transporting dairy cattle by road in April. —AFP



CHONGQING: This picture taken on June 3, 2017 shows motorists driving on an interchange in Chongqing, southwest China. The interchange is made up of five layers, 20 ramps and goes in eight different directions. —AFP

CHINESE DRIVERS BEWILDERED BY TWISTING, COMPLEX INTERCHANGE

CHONGQING: Five suspended levels and cars going in all directions: A new highway interchange is driving motorists to tears, as they find themselves lost in a concrete maze resembling a plate of spaghetti. After eight years of construction, the Huangjuewan interchange was completed last week on the outskirts of Chongqing, a sprawling metropolis in southwest China.

The structure balances five layers of traffic with the highest 37 meters above ground. No less than 15 ramps have been built to allow vehicles to move from one level to another, in eight directions, according to the municipality's website. An official on Chongqing's urban and rural construc-

tion committee told Xinhua news agency that the complex design was necessary to link the city's core, airport, and expressway, with each ramp leading to a different zone. This navigational nightmare has set the internet ablaze.

"If you miss a ramp, you will reach Chongqing one day later," warned one user on the social network Weibo. "My GPS told me: Go where you want and leave me alone!", a commenter joked, while another christened the city "Chongqing, the city that you'll never leave." One driver was more reassuring: "Huangjuewan, a legendary bridge in eight directions and five stories: I took it without a GPS and without getting lost!" —AFP

TURKMEN LEADER CALLS FOR END TO FREE WATER, GAS AND POWER

ASHGABAT: Turkmenistan's authoritarian President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov called for an end to free gas, electricity and water for citizens as the energy-rich republic's economic woes deepen, state media reported yesterday. Berdimukhamedov branded the popular subsidies introduced by his eccentric predecessor Saparmurat Niyazov over two decades ago "completely ineffective," the state newspaper Neutrality Turkmenistan said.

Niyazov, who used the moniker 'Father of the Turkmen,' had made water, electricity and gas free in 1993 shortly after the country gained independence from the Soviet Union. However financial penalties applied after specific consumption limits. In 2014

Berdimukhamedov increased the size of these penalties, ostensibly to curb waste. Currently each Turkmen citizen has the right to free monthly allowances of 35 kilowatt hours of electricity and 50 cubic meters of gas as well as 250 liters of water every day.

The government mouthpiece reported that Berdimukhamedov "gave instructions" to the deputy prime minister in charge of economic affairs "to prepare proposals for the cancellation of all benefits." The 59-year-old strongman, who is head of both state and cabinet in the country of five million inhabitants, said the allowances would remain for "those who genuinely require social assistance". —AFP

STRUGGLING AIR BERLIN EYING PARTNERSHIP WITH LUFTHANSA

BERLIN: Ailing German airline Air Berlin said Wednesday that it was open to working with Lufthansa, as it struggled to stem heavy losses. The Berlin-based airline booked losses amounting to 1.2 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) for the last two years, and depends on cash infusions from key shareholder Etihad for survival.

"We need to find a partner in 2017, and Lufthansa is a possible one," said Air Berlin chief executive Thomas Winkelmann. "I will look at everything that makes sense for Air Berlin and secures jobs in the long term," he told Die Zeit weekly in an interview. Executives from Germany's second-largest airline presented a massive restructuring plan in late September that

included renting 38 aircraft with crew to Lufthansa and slashing 1,200 jobs—or one in seven of its workforce. Amid its restructuring, it has also been hit by a string of flight cancellations and severe delays, including over the recent Whitsun long weekend. Winkelmann apologized to his clients for the problems, saying: "I am sorry for the delays. I myself am furious when there is a delay of more than ten minutes." But beyond the bad publicity caused by the delays, the airline would also have to pay a price. According to Germany's biggest daily Bild, compensation payments over the Whitsun weekend alone are expected to reach more than half a million euros. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Japanese Yen | 2.773 |
| Indian Rupees | 4.726 |
| Pakistani Rupees | 2.899 |
| Sri Lankan Rupees | 1.984 |
| Nepali Rupees | 2.956 |
| Singapore Dollar | 220.860 |
| Hongkong Dollar | 39.992 |
| Bangladesh Taka | 3.751 |
| Philippine Peso | 6.151 |
| Thai Baht | 8.945 |

GCC COUNTRIES

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Saudi Riyal | 81.094 |
| Qatari Riyal | 83.523 |
| Omani Riyal | 789.761 |
| Bahraini Dinar | 807.490 |
| UAE Dirham | 82.795 |

ARAB COUNTRIES

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Egyptian Pound - Cash | 19.300 |
| Egyptian Pound - Transfer | 16.726 |
| Yemen Riyal/for 1000 | 1.221 |
| Tunisian Dinar | 126.360 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 428.630 |
| Lebanese Lira/for 1000 | 2.026 |
| Syrian Lira | 2.167 |
| Morocco Dirham | 31.656 |

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| US Dollar Transfer | 303.900 |
| Euro | 344.320 |
| Sterling Pound | 393.700 |

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Canadian dollar | 226.690 |
| Turkish Lira | 87.130 |
| Swiss Franc | 317.220 |
| Australian Dollar | 230.660 |
| US Dollar Buying | 302.700 |

GOLD

| | |
|---------|---------|
| 20 Gram | 261.980 |
| 10 Gram | 133.910 |
| 5 Gram | 67.800 |

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

| Rate for Transfer | Selling Rate |
|-------------------|--------------|
| US Dollar | 303.900 |
| Canadian Dolla | 225.785 |
| Sterling Pound | 392.035 |
| Euro | 343.070 |
| Swiss Frank | 296.080 |
| Bahrain Dinar | 806.040 |
| UAE Dirhams | 83.135 |
| Qatari Riyals | 84.355 |
| Saudi Riyals | 81.935 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 428.454 |
| Egyptian Pound | 16.923 |
| Sri Lankan Rupees | 1.987 |
| Indian Rupees | 4.718 |
| Pakistani Rupees | 2.898 |
| Bangladesh Taka | 3.772 |
| Philippines Peso | 6.109 |
| Cyprus pound | 167.712 |
| Japanese Yen | 3.735 |
| Syrian Pound | 2.420 |

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Nepalese Rupees | 3.945 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 71.750 |
| Chinese Yuan Renminbi | 45.135 |
| Thai Bhat | 9.880 |
| Turkish Lira | 86.480 |

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

| CURRENCY | BUY | SELL |
|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Europe | | |
| British Pound | 0.385431 | 0.395431 |
| Czech Korune | 0.004981 | 0.016981 |
| Danish Krone | 0.041939 | 0.046939 |
| Euro | 0.336737 | 0.345737 |
| Norwegian Krone | 0.031868 | 0.037068 |
| Romanian Leu | 0.074836 | 0.074836 |
| Slovakia | 0.009076 | 0.019076 |
| Swedish Krona | 0.030943 | 0.035943 |
| Swiss Franc | 0.308817 | 0.319817 |
| Turkish Lira | 0.081077 | 0.091377 |
| Australasia | | |
| Australian Dollar | 0.221037 | 0.233037 |
| New Zealand Dollar | 0.212319 | 0.221819 |
| America | | |
| Canadian Dollar | 0.220679 | 0.229679 |
| Georgina Lari | 0.137257 | 0.137257 |
| US Dollars | 0.299800 | 0.304200 |
| US Dollars Mint | 0.300300 | 0.304200 |
| Asia | | |
| Bangladesh Taka | 0.003381 | 0.003965 |
| Chinese Yuan | 0.043253 | 0.046753 |

| | | |
|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Hong Kong Dollar | 0.036900 | 0.039650 |
| Indian Rupee | 0.004224 | 0.004912 |
| Indonesian Rupiah | 0.000018 | 0.000024 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.002695 | 0.002875 |
| Kenyan Shilling | 0.002934 | 0.002934 |
| Korean Won | 0.000260 | 0.000275 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 0.067257 | 0.073257 |
| Nepalese Rupee | 0.002972 | 0.003142 |
| Pakistan Rupee | 0.002711 | 0.003001 |
| Philippine Peso | 0.006023 | 0.006323 |
| Sierra Leone | 0.000038 | 0.000044 |
| Singapore Dollar | 0.214607 | 0.224607 |
| South African Rand | 0.017588 | 0.026088 |
| Sri Lankan Rupee | 0.001606 | 0.002186 |
| Taiwan | 0.009967 | 0.010147 |
| Thai Baht | 0.008590 | 0.009140 |

| Arab | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| Bahraini Dinar | 0.798679 | 0.807179 |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.013974 | 0.019882 |
| Iranian Riyal | 0.000084 | 0.000085 |
| Iraqi Dinar | 0.000190 | 0.000250 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 0.423270 | 0.432700 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 1.000000 | 1.000000 |
| Lebanese Pound | 0.000151 | 0.00251 |
| Moroccan Dirhams | 0.019749 | 0.043749 |
| Nigerian Naira | 0.000364 | 0.000999 |
| Omani Riyal | 0.782930 | 0.788610 |
| Qatar Riyal | 0.079172 | 0.084112 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.079953 | 0.081253 |
| Syrian Pound | 0.001288 | 0.001508 |
| Tunisian Dinar | 0.121729 | 0.129729 |
| Turkish Lira | 0.081077 | 0.091377 |
| UAE Dirhams | 0.081316 | 0.083016 |
| Yemeni Riyal | 0.000988 | 0.001068 |

TRADERS ON EDGE AHEAD OF KEY GLOBAL EVENTS

HONG KONG: Traders trod water in Asia as they nervously await a string of major events that could either hammer global markets or fuel a rally. Britain votes today in a general election, the European Central Bank's policy meeting and potentially the biggest market-mover sacked FBI boss James Comey testifying to Congress on President Donald Trump's possible campaign links to Russia. Adding to the sense of unease is a brewing crisis in the Middle East, where Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt cut off ties and transport links to Qatar citing its alleged support for extremism.

There are fears the dispute could turn into a wider conflict involving Qatar ally Iran, with Trump wading into the row in a series of tweets signaling support for Riyadh on the issue. After a recent rally trading floors have quietened as dealers take a wait-and-see attitude, lifting safe-haven assets such as the yen and gold. "There seems to be a little bit of nervousness in the market over Comey's testimony," Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at AxiTrader, said in a note. "Whether it is geopolitics and the Middle East, worries about James Comey's testimony, the ECB or UK election, traders backed off a little overnight." The yen rose to 109.37 against the dollar, more than 1.5 percent stronger than last week, while gold was hovering around seven-month highs. The

two are considered safe bets in times of uncertainty.

Shanghai jumps

On equity markets Tokyo's Nikkei ended flat, while Seoul and Wellington each slipped 0.4 percent. Hong Kong fell 0.2 percent in the afternoon. Sydney barely moved following data showing Australia's economic growth slowed sharply in the first quarter. But Shanghai jumped 1.2 percent as traders welcomed a further strengthening of the yuan, which has jumped more than three percent since the start of the year, when it had been wallowing around eight-year lows. Singapore, Manila and Jakarta were slightly higher. On currency markets the pound edged up against the dollar ahead of the British vote. Sterling has come under pressure in the past few weeks as Prime Minister Theresa May's ruling Conservatives have seen their once-commanding lead almost wiped out by Jeremy Corbyn's opposition Labour Party, raising worries about uncertainty just weeks ahead of Brexit negotiations. The euro also remains in good health following a string of positive indicators out of the euro zone, led by Germany, and expectations the ECB will start to tighten monetary policy soon, possibly today. In early European trade London and Paris each dipped 0.1 percent while Frankfurt slipped 0.2 percent. — AFP



PHILIPPINES: A logo of Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI). — AFP

PHILIPPINE BANK CHAOS AS MONEY GOES MISSING FROM ACCOUNTS

OFFICIALS SAY COMPUTER ERROR, CUSTOMERS SAY HACK

MANILA: A major Philippine bank shut down online transactions and cash machines yesterday after money went missing from accounts, triggering fears it had been hacked even as company officials said it was an internal computer error. Customers of Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) were shocked yesterday morning to see unauthorized withdrawals and deposits from their accounts.

BPI said in a statement the problem was caused by an "internal data processing error" that had been identified. But it had to close its automatic teller machines (ATMs) and told its eight million customers they could not do online transactions yesterday as the bank scrambled to fix the problem. "Please do not panic, we will make sure that your money is there," BPI senior vice president Cathy Santamaria said at a news conference as social media lit up with complaints from customers about missing money and inconvenience. Efforts to fix the problem were "progressing well" and the glitch was expected to be resolved within the day, the bank added in a statement, although it did not explain why the glitch occurred.

There has been global concern about hacking following the world's biggest ransomware attack last month that struck hundreds of thousands of computers worldwide. Nestor Espenilla,

the incoming governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the country's central bank, said they had accepted "for now" BPI's explanation that no hacking was involved, but would still conduct its own probe. "We have no reason to believe otherwise at this point of time, but as I said this is standard operating procedure, we always verify every incident that we are aware of," Espenilla said in a radio interview. "For now I think it's important that BPI resolves it as quickly as possible. We take their assurance that this is not a hack and no money will be lost."

Lost confidence

The bank said the error had led to some transactions between April 27 and May 2 to be "double posted" from Tuesday. Santamaria said she did not know how many of the 166-year-old bank's customers were affected by the glitch. She assured customers they had not lost money and their account balances would be fixed once the glitch was fixed. But customers were unhappy and confused. Yumi Sanpei-Angeles, 29, who had 15,500 pesos (\$313) withdrawn from her account, told she was considering switching banks, with her frustration at missing money compounded by not being able to check her account online.

"I've lost confidence in BPI's system," said

Sanpei-Angeles, a corporate brand specialist, adding other people had been inconvenienced more than her. "We have friends who needed the money today to pay for tuition. Another friend is travelling and cannot withdraw money via ATM. Such a huge hassle for customers because of the company's negligence." Marjorie del Rosario, 27, said her two accounts with BPI were affected — one had a negative balance because of an unauthorized withdrawal and the other had 40 pesos (80 cents) added. "Almost all of us in our office were affected, from hundreds to six-digit figures lost from our accounts," she told. Other customers vented their frustrations through social media.

"I had 3 unauthorized atm withdrawals! What the heck! I don't have any money left on my Personal acct!!" a customer named Belle tweeted. A user called wild flower wrote: "I lost my money. I only have 15 pesos (30 US cents) left on my pocket. How can I go home? Fix it please." BPI's Santamaria was also forced to warn clients against posting personal bank account information online, noting that some had posted their private data on Facebook apparently to show what had happened. "Please be vigilant. You also have a role to play in your personal safety," she said. She also appealed for honesty from clients whose accounts had funds deposited. —AFP



NEW YORK: This file photo taken on February 16, 2017 shows the hand from a statue of George Washington, overlooking the New York Stock Exchange. — AFP

CONDOLENCES

BURGAN BANK

Board of Directors, Executive Management and Staff

wish to offer their heartfelt
condolences to

Mr. Majed Essa Al-Ajeel

Chairman of the Board
on the sad demise of his

Father

May his soul rest in peace and may
God grant comfort and strength to the
bereaved family members during this time

EU EQUITIES FIRM ON EVE OF UK ELECTION

LONDON: European stocks ticked higher yesterday on the eve of a hectic news day that includes a general election in Britain, an interest rate call in the eurozone and vital testimony from sacked FBI chief James Comey in the United States.

Donald Trump's campaign links to Russia. Meanwhile, Britain headed yesterday into the final day of campaigning for a general election darkened by jihadist attacks in both London and Manchester.

Conservative victory?

Opinion polls predict a win for Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May, but main opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has gained ground in recent weeks. Financial markets expect May to triumph against Corbyn, even though the Conservatives' polling lead has narrowed since the start of the campaign.

"I think the markets are definitely pricing in a

Conservative win," Hamlyn told AFP. "If you looked at the polls, you would basically say that markets are being incredibly complacent about the outcome." They are certainly not pricing in the odds of a Labour election victory. The polls are split between those that think there is going to be a big Conservative majority, and those that think it is too close to call.

Nerves over Comey "There seems to be a little bit of nervousness in the market over Comey's testimony," added Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at AxiTrader. "Whether it is geopolitics and the Middle East, worries about James Comey's testimony, the ECB or UK election, traders backed off a little."

There are fears the dispute could turn into a wider conflict involving Qatar ally Iran, with Trump wading into the row in a series of tweets signaling support for Riyadh on the issue. After a recent rally trading floors have quietened as dealers take a wait-and-see attitude, lifting safe-haven assets such as the yen and gold.

China's reserves rise

Elsewhere, China's foreign currency reserves rose in May for a fourth month ahead of a possible US interest rate hike that might put new pressure on Beijing's exchange rate controls. The reserves, the world's biggest, increased \$24 billion to \$3.05 trillion, according to government data released yesterday.

A sharp decline last year prompted Beijing to tighten controls on the outflow of money from the world's second-largest economy. The Chinese controls could face a new test if the U.S. Federal Reserve decides at a meeting next week to raise interest rates. That would draw money out of China in search of higher returns, which could require Beijing to raise its own inter-

est rates or further tighten controls. The Fed has signaled it expects to raise rates a total of three times this year to ensure tighter labor markets do not trigger inflation pressures. The central bank spent reserves to shore up the yuan's exchange rate after expectations that the Chinese currency would decline prompted investors to move money out of the country starting in 2015. The reserves declined from a peak of \$3.99 trillion in June 2014 to just under \$3 trillion late last year. Late last year, the net outflow was tens of billions of dollars a month, which prompted Beijing to step up scrutiny of proposed foreign investments and ban some activities by individual investors.

"Though the large capital outflow appears to have eased notably, the authorities have no intention to loosen capital control yet," said Citigroup economists Li-Gang Liu and Xiaowen Jin in a report. In its latest tactic, the foreign currency regulator announced Friday that Chinese banks must report all overseas automatic teller or credit card transactions above 1,000 yuan (\$150) by their customers beginning Sept 1. The tighter controls have temporarily set back Beijing's gradual moves to encourage more use of the yuan abroad for trade.

The People's Bank of China bases the yuan's state-set exchange rate on a basket of currencies that is believed to be dominated by the dollar. That required Beijing to intervene to keep the yuan in line with the dollar as the greenback rose over the past two years. The latest controls appear to have locked the yuan to the dollar, possibly to send a clear signal it won't fall further. —Agencies

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Wednesday 07 June 2017. Includes tables for Index, Price Index, Weighted Index, KSX 15, Trades, and various stock categories like Basic Materials, Chemicals, and Consumer Goods.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. At 02:00 PM Previous Day. Includes tables for Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, Global Bond Yields, and Commodities.

UBER MOVES TO REPAIR TAINTED IMAGE WITH 20 FIRINGS, 1 HIRING

DETROIT: Uber, the world's leading ride-hailing company, has taken two big steps toward repairing its corporate image: It fired 20 employees for a host of harassment problems and hired an Apple marketing executive to rescue its tainted brand. Those fired for sexual harassment as well as bullying, discrimination and other behavior that violated company policies included both managers and lower-level workers. Some had retaliated against other employees after they complained about bad conduct, said Bobbie Wilson, a partner at the Perkins Coie law firm, which did the investigation.

Separately, Uber announced Tuesday that it had hired Apple marketing executive Bozoma Saint John, who will be Uber's chief brand officer. She ran global consumer marketing of Apple Music and iTunes. Her task at Uber will be to improve its brand image so people like it as well as they like the company's ride

services, an Uber spokeswoman said. "Boz has a long track record of successfully creating emotional connections between people and the products they love," Uber CEO Travis Kalanick said in a statement.

More action could come next week when a report on Uber's culture by former Attorney General Eric Holder is likely to be made public. He is supposed to make broader recommendations on how to change Uber's culture. During Uber's ascent to becoming the world's most valuable startup, the San Francisco-based company took Silicon Valley's penchant for sexism, for cutthroat, unapologetic competition and distaste for government regulation and kicked it up several notches.

'Change and grow up'

For a while, this worked well, pushing Uber's valuation to nearly \$70 billion. But this year, Uber's

aggressive corporate culture and 40-year-old Kalanick's self-admitted need to "fundamentally change and grow up" has caught up with it. In addition to the sexual harassment allegations, Uber is the target of lawsuits, boycott threats and a federal investigation into claims that it has used a fake version of its app to thwart authorities. It's also been accused of corporate espionage by Waymo, formerly Google's autonomous vehicle arm. Uber's former chief autonomous car researcher took confidential documents from Waymo before his startup firm was purchased by Uber, according to a Waymo lawsuit.

Uber also is searching for a chief operating officer and chief financial officer as it prepares for a possible public stock offering. Uber Technologies Inc. retained Perkins Coie after former engineer Susan Fowler posted a blog in February about sex harassment at the company. Fowler wrote that on her first

day at work her boss propositioned her in a series of messages and superiors ignored her complaints. After the posting, Uber set up a 24-hour hotline to take complaints from employees, and hired Perkins Coie to investigate them. The firm checked into 215 complaints, and 57 remain under investigation. The hotline will remain in operation.

The probe into Fowler's complaints is still underway, and Wilson wouldn't say if any of those fired, or 31 other employees placed in counseling, were involved in that. Wilson said Uber gave her law firm "unfettered access" to people and documents that were needed for the Fowler investigation. Problems at Uber are not unusual in the technology industry, given the company's size of more than 14,000 employees, said Wilson, whose firm has done similar work for the biggest tech companies in the nation. — AP

A LOOK AT HOW TRUMP'S CLIMATE MOVES AFFECT THE COAL INDUSTRY

CHEYENNE: President Donald Trump says withdrawing from a global climate change agreement will boost the US economy, but existing market forces have had far more of an effect on the fossil fuel industries than climate regulations. For at least three years now, the coal industry has been reeling from growing competition from natural gas, wind and solar power. Environmental regulations enacted under President Barack Obama haven't helped any but they've played a much smaller role.

Most of those regulations haven't even taken effect. In March, Trump ordered a review of the Clean Power Plan, which seeks to reduce emissions from coal power plants, and the lifting of a moratorium on the sale of coal mining leases on federal lands. So far, those moves have spurred a couple of relatively minor coal leases but no coal rush. Here's a look at the state of the US coal industry:

An industry in decline

Experts say coal's biggest problem isn't climate change regulations but cheap and abundant natural gas. Gas prices dropped as advances in drilling such as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, greatly increased the amount of gas on the market. For many utilities, that's made gas more attractive than coal.

Meanwhile, companies have gotten more efficient at extracting coal, meaning fewer workers are needed. Mountaintop removal mining, in which hilltops in Appalachia are blasted off with explosives to expose coal seams, is less expensive and more automated than underground mining. So are the massive strip mines developed since the 1970s in Wyoming and Montana. US coal production fell to 739 million tons last year, the lowest in almost four decades. From 2011 through 2016, the coal mining industry lost about 60,000 jobs, according to preliminary Labor Department data that excludes mine office workers.

Last weekend, Environmental

Protection Agency Director Scott Pruitt said Trump's policies had created 50,000 coal jobs, including 7,000 in May alone. In fact, the coal industry nationwide accounted for a total of 51,000 jobs through May, up only about 400 jobs from the month before. Pruitt's staff pointed to job gains across the overall mining sector - which includes oil and natural gas drilling, metal ore mining and stone quarrying.

Over the last decade, coal's share of the US power market has dwindled from more than 50 percent to about 32 percent last year. Gas and renewables have both made gains, and hundreds of coal-burning power plants have been retired or are scheduled to shut down soon. Utilities "are not going to flip on a dime and say now it's time to start building a whole bunch of coal plants because there's a Trump administration," said Brian Murray, director of environmental economics at Duke University's Nicholas Institute. None of that appears to have shaken the administration's backing of coal. During a Wednesday meeting with international energy ministers in Beijing, Energy Secretary Rick Perry said devising ways to burn coal more cleanly could stimulate economic growth.

Should the federal government subsidize coal?

The Obama administration blocked new coal lease sales on federal lands in January 2016 to determine if the government's coal program was shortchanging taxpayers and exacerbating climate change by effectively subsidizing coal. In some cases, coal companies bought leases for as little as 1 cent per ton. The program is supposed to be competitive but often involves just a single bidder. The royalties these companies pay to the government on each ton of coal mined have remained unchanged since 1976. Under the moratorium, the Obama administration was considering raising royalty rates as much as 50 percent. Trump has put that idea on hold. Environmentalists last week asked a federal judge to revive the coal program review. — AP



SAN JUAN: In this file photo taken on May 16, 2017 shows a Puerto Rican woman walking past protest murals. — AFP

PUERTO RICO'S BANKRUPTCY LEAVES US ISLAND FACING TROUBLING TIMES 'GREECE OF THE CARIBBEAN'

SAN JUAN: In San Juan, chants of "the debt is illegal" and "colonial dictatorship" fill the morning air, as students from the University of Puerto Rico block a palm-lined avenue. Across the street, a board of overseers imposed by Washington is meeting with student representatives to hear their demands as they mull ever deeper cuts to pull this "Greece of the Caribbean" out of bankruptcy.

To some, it's a necessary corrective to get a stumbling Puerto Rico back on its feet. But to others like Mariana de Alba, a 27-year-old law student at the protest, it all smacks of colonial subjugation. "What they've come to do is to cut back the public budget and the island's public services to give it to the big bond holders, to pay off a debt that we don't even know whether it is legitimate," she says.

The Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico-made up of seven members appointed by the US president and one by the island's governor-is tasked with getting a handle on the territory's crushing \$74 billion debt. But in an island proud of a cultural identity expressed in its language, food and music, the board is widely seen as having an intolerable stranglehold on Puerto Rican life.

As in Greece, where the arrival of the European "troika" repulsed much of the population, Puerto Rico had long shrugged off the dangers of unrestrained borrowing-until the crash. But unlike its Mediterranean counterpart, Puerto Rico is not independent. A former Spanish colony that became an American territory at the end of the 19th century, the island of 3.5 million has had its own government since 1952 when it became a

"free associated state," or commonwealth, of the United States. On Sunday, its inhabitants will vote on its relationship with the United States, in a non-binding referendum. They can choose from three options-statehood, independence or another form of so-called "free association" or the status quo.

'Blind cuts'

Even though Puerto Ricans are American citizens, they cannot vote in the US presidential elections. And the Spanish-speaking island, with its white beaches and turquoise seas, can seem far away from Washington. But its economic ties to the US are still very tight-too much so, some say. Long a popular tourist destination, Puerto Rico also enjoyed an exemption from US federal taxes that led many US companies to set up manufacturing operations on the island, an arrangement that lasted for decades until the tax breaks were ended in 2006. To offset the loss in revenues, Puerto Rico turned to the US municipal bond markets for relief, offering investors attractive tax-exempt bonds that provided ready cash but sank the island deeper into debt. As unemployment rose and recession set in, Puerto Ricans left the island in droves. One in 10 Puerto Ricans emigrated over a 10-year period.

The exodus-a massive population shift that has left more Puerto Ricans in the United States than in Puerto Rico-aggravated the debt crisis by siphoning off the island's tax base. Unable to repay its creditors, Puerto Rico declared bankruptcy in early May. The bankruptcy-the largest ever by a local US government-caused barely a ripple

in the United States, but in Puerto Rico, it has fueled joblessness and protests. At the University of Puerto Rico, closed since the end of March by student protests, chairs and desks have been chained to its gated entrance. "They have to stop making blind cuts," said Alba.

'In shock'

Governor Ricardo Rossello-who took office in January, and now lives in La Fortaleza, an imposing walled palace overlooking San Juan's harbor-has presented an austere 10-year plan to rescue the economy. But the 38-year-old governor was unable to persuade creditors to lower debt payments to a "sustainable level." So he declared bankruptcy. It's now up to the US courts to resolve the matter. In the face of this financial morass, the two parties that have alternated in power since the 1950s-Rossello's New Progressive Party and the opposition Popular Democratic Party-are blaming each other for the mess. Rossello "has had to do the work that the previous administration did not do," said Christian Sobrino, the governor's chief economic adviser and the head of the Government Development Bank for Puerto Rico. Sobrino is optimistic that Rossello can stabilize the island's economy within four years, relying on private investment, particularly in the tourism industry, which he feels has room to grow. But re-launching the island's economy is likely to be more difficult under US President Donald Trump, who is pushing for deep cuts in food assistance and medical insurance programs for the poor. And Trump has spoken out on several occasions against bailouts for Puerto Rico. — AFP



DECKER, Montana: In this April 4, 2013, file photo, a dragline excavator moves rocks above a coal seam at the Spring Creek Mine. — AP

GERMAN FACTORY ORDERS TUMBLLED IN APRIL: DATA

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Factory orders in Germany tumbled unexpectedly in April, data showed yesterday, but the indicator is notoriously volatile and the drop will not be enough to dissipate the generally optimistic outlook for Europe's biggest economy, the economy ministry said. The ministry calculated in a statement that factory orders dropped by 2.1 percent in April, dragged down by a decline in big-ticket orders.

Analysts surveyed by financial service Factset had been penciling in a much smaller decline of 0.3 percent in April, following strong growth in orders in the preceding two months. Excluding big-ticket items, the total volume of orders stable in April from March, the ministry calculated. In terms of region, domestic orders edged down by 0.2 percent, while orders from abroad tumbled by 3.4 percent.

Nevertheless, the ministry was optimistic that current data pointed to "growth in industrial orders" for the remainder of the year. Another key indicator, industrial output data, is due to be released on Thursday, and analysts have forecast a small rebound after a dip of 0.4 percent in March. German business confidence soared in May to levels not seen in more than a quarter of a century, according to a monthly survey from the Munich-based Ifo institute. —AFP

TESLA FACE CHALLENGES AS SHAREHOLDERS MEET

DETROIT: Tesla Inc. was riding high as it hosted its annual shareholders' meeting Tuesday. The automaker's shares are trading at record levels, and it has surpassed General Motors and Ford in market value. It's about to introduce its first mass-market electric car, the Model 3 sedan, as well as a line of solar panels that look like roof tiles. CEO Elon Musk is also enticing fans with new vehicles, including a semi-truck it plans to show this fall and the Model Y SUV, which he said will go on sale in 2019. But the company is not without its challenges. Or, as Musk put it at the hour-long meeting, "Tesla's like a drama magnet." Here are three issues Musk addressed at the meeting.

Corporate structure

Shareholders voted Tuesday to continue electing Tesla's board members to three-year terms, rejecting a proposal to elect them annually. A group of Connecticut pension funds had called for annual elections, saying it would improve accountability. They also say conflicts of interest "plague" Tesla's board. Musk's brother, Kimbal, is a board member. Tesla's lead independent director, Antonio Gracias, also serves on the board of Musk's rocket company, SpaceX, and is the CEO of a private equity fund backed by Musk. But shareholders sided with Tesla, which says its mission requires long-term strategic planning and three-year terms ensure that board members aren't distracted by short-term returns. Official results of the vote will be released within a few days, the company said.

Model 3

The Model 3 is Tesla's first non-luxury sedan, with a start-

ing price around \$35,000. Production is on track to start next month, Musk said. Tesla is aiming to make 5,000 Model 3 sedans per week by the end of this year and 10,000 per week in 2018. Tesla hasn't said how many people have put down \$1,000 refundable deposits for the Model 3, but Musk said Tuesday people who put down a deposit now won't get a car until the end of 2018, indicating it could be close to 500,000. Whether Tesla can meet its production goals is an open question. The company's vehicles have often faced

delays getting to market. Its last new vehicle, the Model X SUV, was delayed nearly 18 months. Musk says the Model 3 is much simpler to make, but 14-year-old Tesla has no experience producing and selling vehicles in high volumes. Tesla made just 84,000 cars last year. Bigger rivals like GM, Volkswagen and Toyota routinely sell more than 10 million per year. "It's crazy hard to make cars," Musk said Tuesday. "There's 10,000 unique items, and it only moves as fast as the slowest item." —AP



FREMONT: In this Sept 29, 2015, file photo, Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla Motors Inc, introduces the Model X car at the company's headquarters. — AP

RAMADAN OFFER CONTINUES WITH NISSAN AL BABBAIN

KUWAIT: Abdulmohehsen Abdulaziz Al-Babbain Co, the exclusive authorized dealer of Nissan in the State of Kuwait, continues one of the largest campaigns of the year during the Holy month of Ramadan, where customers receive special instant gifts, including smart devices, special prices on all models, till the end of June.

Upon purchasing any Nissan vehicle during the month of Ramadan customers will get a chance to choose their gift from a wide variety, which includes the latest smart devices along with receiving free registration and 3rd party insurance. Not only that, but customers get Ramadan special prices on all models during the Holy Month and an instant gift upon delivery, "Ramadan Generous Offers are Back" with Nissan Al-Babbain.

Abdulmohehsen Abdulaziz Al-Babbain Co would also like to wish all its customers a Ramadan Kareem, wishing to contribute that their strong promotion and the high level of services that they offer will increase and strengthen confidence in its brand and maintain its position as a leader in the local and regional automotive markets.

Nissan Al-Babbain invites customers to celebrate the Ramadan atmosphere within its widespread showrooms around Kuwait and learn about the details of the offers. Nissan Al-Babbain is known on being keen to constantly provide the best deals to its customers throughout the year, as well as after-sales service to meet the growing demand for Nissan and achieve the company's goals to always remain at the forefront of leading automotive brands.



JAZEERA AIRWAYS HONORS PASSENGERS WITH TRADITIONAL RAMADAN DELIGHTS

KUWAIT: Observing the Holy Month of Ramadan with its passengers, Jazeera Airways, a leading Kuwaiti carrier operating regionally and internationally, is offering traditional Ramadan refreshments onboard staying true to its

starters as part of their on board meals consisting of sandwiches, chocolates and drinks. For Business passengers travelling to all sectors, the airline has additionally replaced the international dessert on the meal tray with a rich collection of popular Arabic and Kuwaiti sweets namely Mamoul Walnut, Goraiba Kuwaiti and Aish Al-Bulbul.

During this Holy Month, the additional Iftar refreshments will be distributed to travelers flying to and from: Alexandria, Dubai, Jeddah, Beirut, Amman, Istanbul, Cairo, Sharm El Sheikh and Taif. On the special occasion of the month of Ramadan, Jazeera Airways extends its best wishes to all passengers and their families for a blessed journey to peace and prosperity. The latest offer symbolizes Jazeera Airway's pledge to ensure a seamless travel experience across different destinations whilst also promoting a sense of community and solidarity in society as it honors regional culture and traditions.



regional heritage and Ramadan's spirit of giving and kindness. All Jazeera Airways passengers flying up to 90 minutes before and after Iftar will be served special Iftar starters such as dates, yoghurt and apricot juice along with the regular meal when they break their fast, either in flight or shortly after.

Economy passengers can look forward to being offered the healthy Iftar

AL-MAZAYA REAL ESTATE CONSOLIDATES MEDIUM HOUSING CONCEPT IN DUBAI

DUBAI: Al Mazaya Holding has handed over 2,300 housing units to their owners in Q-Point project, a landmark development for the medium housing group at Dubailand, after the successful completion of construction work. The first phase of another development project, Q-Line, has been sold out 100 percent. The construction of the second phase, comprising 253 units, will be completed on its scheduled date early next year, the company announced today.

Q-Point is one of the key projects developed by Al Mazaya Holding for medium housing segments in Dubai over the recent years. The project witnessed great interest among end-users looking for affordable housing as well as buyers searching for attractive investment opportunities. The remarkable success of Q-Point development encouraged Al-Mazaya Holding to develop an integrated series of projects that now includes Q-Line and Q-Zone, increasing the project's total number of units to 5,000.

The first phase of Q-Line project comprising 229 units has been sold out and handed over to their new owners. The work is under way to deliver the second phase units by early next year. The project features four residential buildings with modern infrastructure and a variety of residential options including, studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments. The construction work of the project is progressing as per schedule.

Commenting on the company's growing focus on the middle-income and affordable projects, Group Chief Executive Officer, Eng Ibrahim Al Soqab said: "We are proud of this achievement. Today, Al-Mazaya is one of the leading real estate developers in the UAE and as well as the Gulf region, particularly in areas addressing the requirements of middle-income segment of the society. This translates into the wise vision adopted by the company's Board of Directors and Executive Management to develop real estate products at competitive prices without compromising on quality and finishing in Dubai where most of the real estate projects are upscale developments addressing high-income elite class.

'Remarkable success'

"We launched Q-Line project in Dubailand following the remarkable success of the previous phases of Q-Point project, which attracted a large number of UAE nationals, residents and foreign investors. Q-Line is a new development project dedicated to the middle-income group with high-quality specifications and finishing. "The company is eagerly look-



ing for new investment opportunities in Dubai, especially in Dubailand area. We have solid belief in the strong potential of the Dubai real estate market and high prospects of success awaiting the projects to be implemented in this part of the city.



Eng Ibrahim Al Soqab



Khaled Abdullahif

"The company has managed to establish an integrated residential compound in Dubailand that fulfils the requirements of different segments of the society and also meet the growing needs of medium housing real estate developments in a high-income society that enjoys opulent standards of living, said Mr. Abdul Latif. The project will help to improve the balance between demand and supply in a way that meets the ambitions of all seg-

ments of the society, he added.

Mazaya Real Estate FZ, Chief Executive Officer in Dubai, Khaled Abdullahif said that Mazaya recently announced a major marketing campaign for Q-Point and Q-Line projects for the Holy Month of Ramadan, offering residential units with a starting price tag of AED670,000 at a 10 percent advance payment. More interesting, the company is waiving both registration fees, which account for 4 per cent of the property's total value, as well as service charges for the first two years. These offerings will help save a lot of money.

"The QPOINT and QLINE projects are a truly promising business opportunity, which stand out in the current real estate market. Moreover, these projects will be boosted by EXPO 2020 in Dubai," he added. As well, Al-Mazaya announced the opening of Qline phase two for sale offering residential units with a starting price AED 470,000.

Q-Point and Q-Line are distinctively located at the intersection of Emirates Road and Al Ain Road in Al-Liwan area in Dubailand, which is a 20-minute drive from the Dubai International Airport, Dubai International Financial Centre, Downtown Dubai, and BurjKhalifa. Offering annual rental yields of not less than 9 percent, the projects boast enviable prospects for success once all construction works and infrastructural services will be completed, including gardens and waterfalls.



SKYLINE TEAM IN KUWAIT WITH AWARD WINNING VILLA PROJECT

KUWAIT: As part of their annual Middle East Tour, the Skyline Team is visiting Kuwait this month. The team will be in Kuwait till the 16th of June 2017 at the Kuwait Continental Hotel at Farwaniya. Skyline will be offering expert assistance to those looking to buy a home in Kerala, bringing 19 ongoing projects across Kerala, which includes 'Skyline Oasis Garden Villas', awarded the Best Group Housing Villa Project 2016, by Indian Institute of Architects (IIA), Kerala Chapter. Skyline Oasis is fully completed and ready to move in.

Nestled in the quaint locale of Sankranthi, 1 km from MC Road, Skyline Oasis has set a new benchmark in luxury living in Kottayam. Recognized by the IIA for excellence in architecture; with innovative and optimum use of space, Oasis is a haven for city dwellers who crave for peace and quiet. Its central location, serene surroundings and proximity to the common conveniences, lets its residents experience the best of both worlds - access to the city as well as tranquility and comfort. Set in 2.88 acres, offering 3 & 4 BHK garden villas ranging from 1812 to 2417 sq ft, Oasis also houses a wide array of world-class amenities including a swimming pool, Club house with air conditioned recreation hall and Fitness centre.

Skyline Oasis is but one example of a Skyline masterpiece. International designs, world class luxury amenities, prime locations and on time delivery are but a few things that make a Skyline home stand out from the rest. The customer always tops Skyline's list of priorities. Little wonder that the



builder offers a spectrum of professional post sales services that simplify the lives of over 6650 customers from 53 countries.

Starting from the Homecare Division that takes care of utilities, support services, rental and resale, to the After Sales Division that repairs and maintains your home keeping it in prime condition, to the Interiors division that helps you design a home that suits your lifestyle with the best architects and designers, there is no end to the luxuries that a

Skyliner has access to. Skylineage is yet another unique feature that Skyline offers, which lets Skyline customers and family stay free of cost at any of their 6 furnished, air-conditioned Guest Houses across Kerala and one Guest House in Ooty. This facility can be availed year after year. Skyline has luxury projects in 9 cities across Kerala that includes ready-to-move-in villas and apartments. They have projects in Trivandrum, Kollam, Thiruvalla, Pala, Kottayam, Cochin, Thrissur, Calicut and Kannur.



ETIHAD CARGO AND ROYAL AIR MAROC CARGO TO INCREASE COOPERATION



ABU DHABI: Etihad Cargo and Royal Air Maroc Cargo have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which will see the two airlines cooperate in a number of areas including network development, freighter deployment and increasing traffic on several trade lanes over the next nine months. The MOU was signed at Royal Air Maroc's headquarters in Casablanca by David Kerr, Senior Vice President, Etihad Cargo, and Amine El Farissi, Vice President Cargo, Royal Air Maroc. Abdelhamid Addou, Chief Executive Officer of the Moroccan national airline, also attended the signing ceremony.

Mr Kerr said: "This new MOU reinforces Etihad Cargo's commitment to our customers by providing more capacity and greater frequency to destinations around the world. Together with Royal Air Maroc, we have been working for the past year to deliver improved services for shippers to the US, Canada, Brazil and West Africa. "This MOU is a testament to the success of our partnership - both commercially for our respective airlines, and for

our customers who have benefitted from enhanced connections." Mr El Farissi said: "We are very pleased to strengthen our existing partnership with Etihad Cargo through this agreement. The signature of this MOU is a milestone for our long-term cooperation.

"Thanks to the geographic and commercial synergies which will result from this game-changing partnership, we will take our performance to the next level, mainly in the African and the American markets. Royal Air Maroc Cargo will also benefit from Etihad Cargo's operational and technological know-how." The airlines will spend the next nine months growing traffic through joint network development, including freighter deployment, and identifying further areas of cooperation. Royal Air Maroc Cargo operates one Boeing 737 freighter, which will be complemented by Etihad Cargo's freighter fleet of 10 aircraft - five Boeing 777Fs and five Airbus A330Fs - as well as belly hold capacity on a combined fleet of more than 150 passenger aircraft from both airlines.

LUXURY OFFER IN COOPERATION WITH AL-MULLA ACURA DURING RAMADAN

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced its cooperation with Al-Mulla Acura for launching offer on Acura cars, the luxury Japanese car targeting special customers who are looking for a car with an amazing performance, incomparable comfort and advanced safety precautions.

This offer comprises discount up to 50% of the total interest in case the auto finance is made by Commercial Bank of Kuwait. In addition, the customers who meet the terms and conditions shall enjoy several benefits covering one year comprehensive insurance, five years free service or up to 50,000 km, five years warranty or 200,000 km, five years car replacement and five

years road assistance. The offer is valid until 30 June 2017.

The offer is an excellent opportunity for purchasing an Acura car available in luxury sedans and SUV models. The customers interested to avail this exclusive offer or to get more information on this car can visit Al-Mulla Auto showroom in Al-Rai along the Fourth Ring Road. Commercial Bank of Kuwait always endeavors to provide its customers with the best offers in cooperation with the prestigious and well known agents and resellers with the best international brands as a token of appreciation of customers' continuous loyalty and trust in the Bank's products and services.

Benefit from a luxurious offer with Al-Tijari during Ramadan

Enjoy up to 50% discount on the interest and many other features from Acura

2017 RDX Tech Monthly Instalment 199 AED

2017 MDX Tech Monthly Instalment 249 AED

MIMECAST AND PHISHME TO IMPROVE CYBER RESILIENCE

DUBAI: Mimecast Limited (NASDAQ: MIME), a leading email and data security company, has collaborated with PhishMe to integrate their expansive security educational content to help organizations improve employee awareness of common email-borne attacks. The power of Mimecast and PhishMe together provides customers with enhanced cyber resilience against the latest spear-phishing, ransomware, and impersonation attacks that are plaguing organizations today. Through this partnership, organizations can now harness powerful security controls with impactful education from the cloud.

Organizations struggle with being consistent with the security training offered to employees, if it is done at all. Recent research conducted with Vanson Bourne highlights the gap organizations need to fill relative to proper security training and email. This research also found that 39 percent of IT

decision makers in global organizations had complete confidence they had sufficient email security training. In fact a mere 15 percent of respondents reported they conduct near regular security trainings - 25 percent reported to offer trainings every month, 32 percent every quarter and 13 percent every year. Only 36 percent of organizations increased employee security trainings following the high-profile cyberattacks of 2016.

PhishMe, a global provider of human phishing defense solutions, will supply their award-winning, contextual educational material within the Mimecast Targeted Threat Protection cloud security service. This service includes the inspection of inbound, outbound and internal emails to help detect and fight phishing, ransomware, impersonation attempts, as well as malicious URLs and attachments. When used together, Mimecast and PhishMe will arm organizations with anti-phishing

cloud security services and immersive behavioral conditioning and phishing reporting for employees. This collaboration follows the formation of the Cyber Resilience Coalition by the companies in 2016.

"Most organizations lack both sufficient technical security controls and end-user education when it comes to identifying and stopping the latest email-borne threats," said Ed Jennings, chief operating officer at Mimecast. The consequence is financial loss, data compromise, business interruption and reputational damage. Email security training is patchy and



Ed Jennings

inconsistent and customers have requested help to serve up regular and timely security awareness training to employees for email-borne security threats. This employee awareness training is part of a cyber resilience strategy for email that spans security, business continuity, archiving and end-user empowerment."

"Conditioning employees to recognize phishing email is critical to reaching the end goal of identifying and reporting attacks to security teams to minimize business impact," said Allan Carey, VP of Business Development, PhishMe. "Recent events have highlighted the need to keep employees continuously engaged and vigilant against suspicious emails as attacker techniques change rapidly. The collaboration between Mimecast and PhishMe provides another opportunity for organizations to augment their employee resiliency strategy on email-borne threats."

KASPERSKY LAB, AVL SIGN COOPERATION ON AUTOMOTIVE CYBERSECURITY DEVELOPMENT

DUBAI: A steadily increasing number of vehicle features - such as remote diagnostics, telematics and infotainment - are using communication channels between vehicles and the cloud or other infrastructure. While the data exchange from, and to the car, provides a lot of new technological opportunities, these channels are also increasingly turning into cyberattack targets. The growing risk of a vehicle being intruded, violating its safety, privacy and financial values, requires methodical, organizational and technical measures to ensure the protection of all vehicle features.

To meet the cybersecurity challenges of next generation automotive system development, Kaspersky Lab and AVL Software and Functions GmbH will work together to develop advanced, embedded security technologies through a collaborative and comprehensive partnership approach. Dr Georg Schwab, MD of AVL Software and Functions GmbH and Mr Alex Moiseev, CSO of Kaspersky Lab signed the cooperation agreement in Regensburg on June 1, 2017. The agreement involves the following:

Joint-development of a software solution, which will guarantee interference-proof secure communication between car components, the car, and its external connected infrastructure. Building a bridge between embedded automotive development and best cybersecurity practices and technologies. Bundling security products with engineered car components, and the promotion of comprehensive security solutions for the

car manufacturing industry

Building a training and coaching portfolio for automotive security. Consequent extension of business, via a seamless and comprehensive portfolio, to provide security and safety for the connected and autonomous cars of the future. One of the key objectives is to create a reliable and flexible software platform that will allow car manufacturers to develop and implement a Secure Communication Unit (SCU or Car Gateway) into their cars, using hardware and additional software components that are aligned with their manufacturing plans. Once developed, the proof-of-concept SCU solution will be tested via security-related verification and validation methods.

This comprehensive development package will not only produce the technical deliverables needed in the industry, but will also develop new concepts for making car software secure by design. Kaspersky Lab and its technology partner AVL Software and Functions GmbH will present their exemplary secure communication platform at New Mobility World / IAA 2017 in Frankfurt from Sept. 12th to 17th. Alex Moiseev, CSO of Kaspersky Lab, comments: "Kaspersky Lab's automotive security experts have been monitoring connected car vulnerabilities and their rapidly increasing cybersecurity attack-surface for many years and believe that the only way to secure the entire connected car ecosystem is through close collaboration between cybersecurity experts and our counterparts in the automotive industry."



SAN JOSE: The HomePod speaker is photographed in a showroom during an announcement of new products at the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference. — AP

APPLE'S NEW SPEAKER WANTS TO ROCK THE MARKET

HIGH-END HOMEPOD FACES CHALLENGES

SAN FRANCISCO: Apple's new HomePod speaker may be music to the ears of its loyal fans, but how much it can crank up volume in the smart speaker market remains to be heard. Apple unveiled its long-awaited HomePod at its annual developers conference taking place this week in the heart of Silicon Valley, enticing lovers of its products with a high-end offering in a market dominated by lower-priced devices from Amazon and Google.

Analysts are yet to be convinced that HomePod will rock the smart speaker market the way iPhones came to rule the smartphone world and iPods dominated MP3 players. "If we are comparing this to Apple's past successes, it doesn't fit that model," said analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group. "This product is much more of a me-too offering." There was no overwhelming differentiation in HomePod, according to the analyst. But he saw a big negative-it is more expensive. HomePod, infused with machine smarts by Siri digital assistant, will be priced at \$349 when it begins shipping in December in the United States, Australia and Britain. HomePod will take on Amazon Echo and Google Home, which have momentum in the arena of voice-controlled speakers capable of controlling smart appliances, fetching content from the internet and more. Amazon sells Echo devices for \$179, and smaller "Dot" versions for \$50. Google sells Home for \$180, promoting the smart speakers with discounts.

HomePod's tune

Apple played up the rich speaker quality of HomePod, and synched it with the company's music service that boasts 27 million subscribers. Apple vice president Phil Schiller said the company's Siri team tuned the virtual assistant as a "musicologist" that learns the tastes of listeners and gets songs from the internet cloud. The speaker has the "power to rock the house," according to Schiller, and the aim is to make HomePod a voice-commanded assistant for news, messages, weather, traffic, home controls and more.

"Apple's base should like it, because they are committed to the ecosystem," Enderle said of HomePod. "If you are paying the extra money because Apple is requiring you to do so to access your stuff that is the Apple tax and it is the kind of thing that people don't like." HomePod combined elements of Echo and Sonos smart speakers, known for rich sound quality, according to Reticle Research principal analyst Ross Rubin. Apple lovers already tend to be "premium product buyers," and may not flinch at paying more for what they believe is a superior quality product, said Gartner analyst Brian Blau.

Just a glimpse

Blau suspected Apple only gave a glimpse at its vision for HomePod, noting its potential to be a command center for smart houses and to

mesh with iPhones, iPads, online services and more. "We have to imagine there is going to be more there," Blau said. Is it going to be an Echo killer? A Google Home killer? We are going to have to wait and see. Apple is saving some insights into HomePod for later this year when it is expected to unveil a tenth-anniversary edition of the iPhone.

Since HomePod will not hit the market until December, it is unlikely to catch much of the year-end holiday shopping wave and post big sales this year, according to Blau. "I think, over time, they are going to do just fine in this category but it is going to take a while," the analyst said. "I don't think it will be the next iPhone," Blau said of HomePod, "but, Apple could gain share and be a leader."

In a blog post Technalysis Research founder Bob O'Donnell depicted Apple's latest product news as an affirmation that the company has not fallen behind competitors and is working to take advantage of potentially exciting new technologies. But O'Donnell also expressed skepticism on Apple's ability to dominate this new segment. "Yes, some songs may sound pleasing, but for true audiophiles who actually want to hear what the artist and producer intended, Apple's positioning of the HomePod as super high-quality speaker is going to be a very tough sell," O'Donnell said in a blog post. —AFP

EXPLOITING DATA BREACHES

By Michael Marriott

High profile data breaches are regularly in the news and, seemingly, businesses and are losing the battle to protect their intellectual property (IP), corporate, and customer data from the threats posed by professional cybercriminals. It is no surprise that financial gain is the single biggest motivator for cyberattacks. The 2016 Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report highlighted that financial gain and espionage accounted for more than 89 percent of all data breaches they studies.

Financial gain was by far the biggest single reason for attacks, beating espionage and all other objectives into a distant second place. This is big business for cybercriminals. To deal with the threats posed by these breaches, organizations, have to get on the front foot when protecting their intellectual property. Firstly, by identifying the location and protections around critical IP, secondly keeping a watchful eye on the types of attackers and the methods they might use to obtain it.

But despite the excitement, which is

often rightly directed at new viruses or malware or attack techniques, it is exploit kits that remain one of cybercriminals' most reliable and trusted delivery mechanisms to embed malware and conduct malicious activity. And, even as an exploit kit gets shut down, others pick up the slack and continue to deliver their payloads. Our report, "In the Business of Exploitation", found that the vulnerabilities exploited by the top 22 exploit kits showed that Adobe Flash Player was likely to be the most targeted software, with 27 of the 76 identified vulnerabilities exploited taking advantage of this software. Understanding the most commonly exploited software, and the most frequently targeted vulnerabilities, can aid in mitigating the threat posed by exploit kits and prioritizing their patching.

To protect their IP it is critical that a company evaluates their security using the perspective of an attacker, which helps prioritize the work to address potential vulnerabilities. This could involve looking at where their organization is exposed on social media sites, points of compromise, and looking for evidence of previous attacks across the visible, dark, and deep web. The military use the term situational awareness, and we believe that it is useful for companies to use this approach when considering their cybersecurity controls. Companies can therefore remain quick to respond to incidents and limit the consequences of any potential breach.



Michael Marriott

CZECH 'GYRODRIVE' BEATS FLYING CARS

BOCHOR, Czech Republic: As global automakers compete to bring the first flying car to market, Czech pilot Pavel Brezina is trying a different tack: instead of creating a car that flies, he has made a "GyroDrive"—a mini helicopter you can drive. The engineer and owner of Nirvana Systems, a company producing motors for small flying machines, insists his vehicle is the first in the world authorized to operate both on roads and in the air.

"This is the only road certified flying vehicle I

know about," Brezina said in a hangar at the Prerov-Bochor airport in the eastern Czech Republic. "Everyone is trying to make a high-speed car that can fly, but this is a different thing," said the tall, bespectacled 51-year-old, who has 30 years' experience as a pilot under his belt. His GyroDrive vehicle is based on a gyroplane—a mini-helicopter—that uses a copter-style rotor to move up and down, and an aero plane-type "pusher propeller" to go forward.

Brezina's company buys gyroplane kits from

a German firm, and then assembles and equips them with a system allowing the pilot-driver to switch between a petrol engine propelling the rotors and an electric engine that drives the wheels. The two-seat GyroDrive has a maximum driving speed of just 40 kph and can take its crew of two on short drives to a petrol station or a hotel. It needs less than 100 meters to take off and reaches a top speed of 180 kph in the air. Its flying range is 600 kilometers.

After landing, the pilot only has to fix the main rotor blades along the axis of the GyroDrive and pull out a built-in license plate to transform it into a road vehicle. Prices start at 1.5 million koruna, but they can reach four million koruna, depending on specifications.

Robust testing

While Brezina is already planning to take his wife—also a pilot—and two children to London aboard GyroDrives, inventors worldwide are frantically working on prototypes of cars that fly. In neighboring Slovakia, the AeroMobil company says it has received dozens of orders from customers for a flying car expected to hit the market in 2020. "We want to build a vehicle that will not only be able to fly and drive but also fulfill each technical and legal requirement," says AeroMobil CEO Juraj Vaculik, touting "a robust testing program."

He said that AeroMobil initially plans to produce 500 units of its winged car, which uses a turbo propeller to get off the ground. The AeroMobil is expected to reach a top ground



PRIBRAM: Pavel Brezina, owner of Nirvana Autogyro company, flies with his autogyro at the airport near Pribram city in the Czech Republic.

speed of 160 kph and up to 360 kph in the air, with a flying and driving range of some 700 kilometers. In mid-May, Japan's Toyota also unveiled plans to launch a three-wheel flying car dubbed SkyDrive using retractable wings and drone technology. The vehicle is expected to have a top flight speed of around 100 kph, hovering around 10 meters off the ground. It will have a top land speed around 150 kph.

Silicon Valley flying car startup, Kitty Hawk, reportedly backed by Google co-founder Larry Page, released a video in April of its airborne prototype and announced plans for deliveries of a "personal flying machine" this year. Other firms, including ride-sharing serv-

ice Uber, also have soaring ambitions for their flying car prototypes.

Not for everyone

Brezina got the license plates for his GyroDrive in March, three years after starting the project. For his first trip, he flew some 230 kilometers west to an airport on the outskirts of Prague, then drove downtown to have a cup of coffee in the Czech capital's central Wenceslas Square—and got stopped by the police on the way. "Well, if you saw this driving through Prague, wouldn't you stop it? I would," chuckles Brezina, adding the police merely checked his papers and did a breathalyzer test. —AFP



BRATISLAVA: Flying cars AeroMobil are on display during a media presentation in the headquarters of AeroMobil company in Bratislava. —AFP photos

UN WARNS OF SERIOUS CLEAN WATER SHORTAGES BY 2050

UNITED NATIONS: Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that by 2050 global demand for fresh water is projected to grow by more than 40 percent and at least a quarter of the world's population will live in countries with a "chronic or recurrent" lack of clean water. He told the Security Council that "strains on water access are already rising in all regions," noting that three-quarters of the 193 UN member states share rivers or lake basins with their neighbors. "Water, peace and security are inextricably linked," Guterres said.

"Without effective management of our water resources, we risk intensified disputes between communities and sectors and increased tensions among nations." The secretary-general said the

United Nations is ready to engage in preventive diplomacy to keep the competition for water from sparking conflicts. Bolivian President Evo Morales, whose country currently holds the council presidency, noted that since 1947, some 37 conflicts have taken place between countries related to water.

"Our planet, the human family and life in all its myriad forms on Earth are in the throes of a water crisis that will only get worse over the coming decades," he said. "If current patterns of consumption continue unabated, two-thirds of the world's population will be facing water shortages as a daily reality by 2025," Morales added.

Right now, he said, more than 800 million people lack access to safe drink-

ing water and more than 2.5 billion don't have basic sanitation. Morales, who presided over the meeting, said the limited availability of fresh water underscores the importance of tackling the issue and ensuring that access to clean water is shared and doesn't become "a pretext for domestic or international conflict."

British Ambassador Matthew Rycroft said the world has already seen what can happen "when the waters run dry," pointing to drought in Somalia that is driving acute food shortages and threatening famine and a lack of clean water that is exacerbating the crisis sparked by Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria and sickening thousands. He said the world currently is not on track to meet UN

goals for 2030 calling for improved water security, access to drinking water and sanitation, as well as stronger management of water resources shared by countries.

In South Asia, Rycroft said, 1 billion people across Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal and Pakistan rely heavily on just three rivers, but "despite facing similar problems posed by water demand and climate change, regional collaboration between these countries is limited." Rycroft said Britain has provided \$30 million over the past five years to support a regional approach to "identify and resolve challenges affecting these trans boundary waters." But to tackle the problem globally, he urged the world's developed

nations to also invest in delivering improved water security within and between states.

In one example of regional cooperation, Ethiopian Ambassador Tekeda Alemu said that while there are differences between the six countries that are upstream and downstream on the Nile River, those nations negotiated for 13 years to produce an agreement on using its waters. It was signed by all six nations and is awaiting ratification by three of them. "The cooperation between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan and the signing of the Declaration of Principles by the leaders of the three countries is also another manifestation of regional cooperation that needs to be enhanced further," he said.—AP

BABY LOBSTER COUNT DROPS OFF US COAST

PORTLAND, Maine: The number of young lobsters is declining in the Gulf of Maine despite years of record-breaking harvests, a University of Maine marine scientist has warned. Rick Wahle quantifies the population of baby lobsters in the gulf, a key lobster fishing area about the size of Wisconsin, at monitoring sites in New England and Canada every year. His American Lobster Settlement Index, released this month, shows monitoring sites from New Brunswick to Cape Cod had some of the lowest levels since the late 1990s or early 2000s.

The decline in baby lobsters represent an "early warning" of what might happen to the future of the lobster harvest, which is the source of a major fishery and a focus of the tourism industry in New England, Wahle said. Lobsters take several years to grow to legal harvesting size, so the drop in young lobsters would start to affect lobstermen in future years, he said. "If we were to see a collapse in the lobster catch, it would mean that we're already seven to eight years into a decline in the population," Wahle said.

For over 10 years now, lobster egg production has been rising but the number of baby lobsters has been falling, Wahle said. Scientists and fishermen are working to better understand the changes in the lobster population and their potential ramifications for the environment and the economy. Wahle said one factor could be a declining amount of a type of copepod that baby lobsters like to feed on. Another

possibility is an increase in predators of young lobsters, he said.

Wahle said scientists need to better understand those issues to help prepare for the future of the lobster fishery. Maine accounts for the largest percentage of the US lobster catch yearly, and the industry has been booming in recent years. The catch climbed to more than 130 million pounds last year, which was a record total according to state statistics that go back to the 19th century.

The total US lobster catch was worth a record of more than \$620 million in 2015, which is the most recent year for which statistics are available. It's a lifeblood industry in Maine, and Wahle cautioned that "a downward trend in lobster production could significantly impact the state's coastal economy in the future." David Cousens, the president of the Maine Lobstermen's Association, agreed. He said he's concerned about the Maine lobster fishery going the way of the southern New England fishery, which scientists have said has faded in the face of warming ocean waters.

"It isn't encouraging. You've got to find out what's causing it if we're losing baby lobsters," Cousens said. "And we need to do as much as we can to slow down global warming. That is critical to our existence." Wahle is co-chairing an international conference on lobster management this week in Portland. Environmental factors such as the impact of warming ocean waters on the lobster population are among the focuses of the event.—AP

BUFFALO TRAIL TOUR TRACES STORY OF AMERICAN BISON

PIERRE: From historical details of Native Americans' final great wild buffalo hunts to tales of the animal's rescue from near extinction, a new self-guided tour across 10 sites in the western Dakotas tells the story of the last stand of the American bison, the national mammal. The trail, which is accompanied by the tour book "Buffalo Trails in the Dakota Buttes" oriented toward history and nature enthusiasts, officially opens June 11.

Starting in Hettinger, North Dakota, the route runs at times across gravel or pasture roads into South Dakota before returning north with an opportunity to see the Standing Rock Sioux's tribal bison herds. "They're authentic places, and not only that, but most of them are unspoiled," said Francie Berg, the tour book's author. "There's one place where it's good to be able to roll under a fence." Tens of millions of bison, also known as buffalo, once thundered across a range stretching from central Canada through the Great Plains and northern Mexico.

After a century-long slaughter driven by commercial hunting for buffalo pelts, the population dwindled to a thousand or fewer near the end of the 1800s. At the tour's second stop in North Dakota, visitors see the valley near Hiddenwood Cliff where the "Great Buffalo Hunt" began in June 1882 on the Great Sioux Reservation. According to the book, for the previous 15 years those grasslands were empty of buffalo as white hide hunters had pushed them west and most herds had been killed.

Key to tribal stories

But Indian agent James McLaughlin describes in his memoirs a herd that sum-

mer estimated at 50,000, with roughly 600 Native American hunters on horseback and others taking 5,000 buffalo. "The story of the buffalo - that powerful, resilient, magnificent creature - is an American story," Berg writes. "In large part it is an Indian story. For thousands of years they flourished together, and as is fitting, Native Americans were in charge of the final hunts."

The tour's fifth site, with a view of the south fork of the Grand River in South Dakota, tells the story of Pete Dupree and other families honored as critical to saving the buffalo from extinction. By Dupree's death in 1898, his herd had grown to over 80 buffalo, according to the tour book. Now, there are nearly 400,000 bison in North America, many on private ranches and farms, according to the National Bison Association.

Member tribes of the InterTribal Buffalo Council have between 15,000 and 20,000 bison, said Jim Stone, executive director of the South Dakota-based group. He said buffalo, or "tatanka" in Lakota, are key to some tribal creation stories. "As long as there's been people on North America there's been buffalo, and we've co-existed with this relationship of them being a huge part of our daily lives," Stone said.

North Dakota Tourism Director Sara Otte Coleman said in a statement that the new experience tells of the history and preservation of the buffalo in the Dakotas. The 10 stops are marked with signs for visitors, and Berg recommended taking two days to traverse the entire route. Detailed directions are included in the book. "I think people get a taste of what it really was like, and of course you can see buffalo herds here, too," she said.—AP



SEOUL: This picture shows South Korean health officials preparing to bury chickens at a chicken farm in the southeastern city Ulsan after the bird flu virus hit a nearby aviary.—AFP

CULLS, POULTRY TRANSPORT BAN AS S KOREA FIGHTS BIRD FLU OUTBREAK

H5N6 VIRUS LEADS TO SLAUGHTER OF 190,000 BIRDS

SEOUL: South Korea has imposed a temporary nationwide ban on poultry transportation as it struggles to contain a fresh outbreak of the highly pathogenic H5N6 virus, which has led to the slaughter of some 190,000 birds. The first case in this outbreak of the virus was confirmed in the southern island of Jeju on June 2, and four more cases have been confirmed in different locations across the country.

On Tuesday, Seoul raised the national bird flu alert to its highest level, as it ordered for

more than 180,000 chickens, ducks and other birds are culled, the agriculture ministry said. "We hope that the outbreak will be contained soon with the bird flu alert raised to the top 'grave' level," a ministry official said. "Grave" is the final step on the four-level alert system, and means officials can ban any movements of vehicles carrying birds, shut poultry stores or animal slaughterhouses, vaccinate poultry, and disinfect any vehicles on the road.

Under the 24-hour poultry transport ban that took effect Wednesday, all birds and bird

farmers were banned from travelling, with farms subjected to disinfection. The worst outbreak of the highly contagious strain of avian flu ever to hit the South was recorded late last year when a record 30 million birds were slaughtered, which sent egg prices soaring. There have been no cases of human infections from H5N6 in the South, although the virus killed six people in China between 2014 and 2016. The World Health Organization warned earlier this year that the strain has caused "severe infection" in humans.—AFP

CLIMATE CHANGE RAISES NEW RISK, ARE INLAND BRIDGES TOO LOW?

DES MOINES, Iowa: A century-old train trestle stands as one of the trophies of Des Moines' push to spruce up its downtown. Bicyclists and pedestrians pose for pictures beside the brightly painted beams of the Red Bridge and gather on viewing platforms overlooking the Des Moines River. But little more than a decade after it was restored, crews went back to the site with a crane to hoist the span 4 1/2 feet higher, at a cost of \$3 million, after experts concluded that the river's flooding risk was nearly double earlier estimates. Climate change was likely to blame.

"It was like a bomb was dropped off in our lap," City Engineer Pam Cooksey said of the revised flood forecasts from the Army Corps of Engineers. The findings suggested that the bridge could act as a dam during bad storms, sending waves of backed-up floodwater into the refurbished business district. Climate change is often seen as posing the greatest risk to coastal areas. But the nation's inland cities face perils of their own, including more intense storms and more frequent flooding.

Even as President Donald Trump has announced his intention for the US to withdraw from a global climate agreement, many of the nation's river communities are responding to climate change by raising or replacing bridges that suddenly seem too low to stay safely above water. The reconstructed bridges range from multi-lane structures that handle heavy traffic loads to small rural spans traversed by country school buses and farmers shuttling between their fields.

The bridges are being raised even in states such as Texas, where political leaders have long questioned whether climate change is real. In Milwaukee, bridges have been raised as part of \$400 million in flood-management projects across a metro area with 28 communities. In Reno, Nevada, officials spent about \$18 million to replace a bridge over the Truckee River last year and plan to replace three more after flood-damage projections were increased by up to 15 percent.

Flood-mitigation

Because the cities are inland, "A lot of these are not the kind of places that people are used to thinking of being in the forefront of climate

change," said Jim Schwab, manager of the Hazards Planning Center at the American Planning Association, which is working with nearly a dozen cities on flood-mitigation options. Many communities are "still feeling their way through this particular problem," he said. No one tracks how many communities are raising bridges or replacing them with higher ones, but the Federal Emergency Management Agency says it's now routinely providing money for this purpose, although no dollar total is available.

Typically, more than 1,500 bridges are reconstructed each year for an assortment of reasons. Schwab said he's sure hundreds and possibly thousands of bridge-raising projects have been completed recently or are planned. A cursory check by the AP in a handful of states found at least 20 locations where bridges have been raised or construction will begin soon. FEMA is now finalizing a rule that states that floods "are expected to be more frequent and more severe over the next century due in part to the projected effects of climate change."

That could mean higher costs for a country that sustained more than \$260 billion in flood damage between 1980 and 2013. Given the

Trump administration's skepticism of climate change, however, a FEMA spokeswoman says the agency "has not determined what its next action will be" on the rule. The Corps of Engineers did not respond to requests for information on cities where flood risks have been reassessed.

Increasing humidity from the more than 1.5 degree increase in global temperatures since 1880 has resulted in more intense downpours, according to David R. Easterling, director of the national climate assessment unit at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "It causes day after day of rainfall, and that leads to flooding," Easterling said.

In some cases, a city's 100-year flood could be seen as twice what it was 40 years ago, with double the risk, as it was for Des Moines. A 100-year flood is the worst flood that can be expected to happen over a century. It has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year. River level forecasts have increased in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, since tropic-like rainstorms in 2008 caused the normally placid Cedar River to climb higher than anyone thought possible, eventually topping the previous record flood by 11 feet.—AP



NORTH DAKOTA: In this file photo, a bison munches grass in Theodore Roosevelt National Park in western North Dakota.—AP



IOWA: In this photo, the Red Bridge pedestrian bridge is seen over the Des Moines River in Des Moines, Iowa.—AP



MICHIGAN: This photo shows Ruger, the adventure cat, and Jeremy Vick in Marquette, Michigan.—AP photos



WISCONSIN: This photo shows Bug the cat and Ken Lambrecht at the Point to La Pointe Swim from Bayfield, Wisconsin, to Madeline Island in Lake Superior.

WHY SHOULD DOGS HAVE ALL THE FUN? TRY ADVENTURE CATTING

NEW YORK: At the beach, in the snow or on a hiking trail, heading outdoors for adventures with a "house cat" runs counter to the stereotype that all cats really want to do is eat and sleep. Any human who thinks that hasn't met Ruger, Bug or NouNou. They haven't encountered Helena the bike basket-riding tuxedo cat, or Sushi the salmon-and-white rescue who's been in a harness and walking on a leash since she was 10 weeks old. These are not indoor-outdoor cats in the traditional sense. They don't have cat doors at home that allow them to come and go as they please.

Rather, their humans say, their lives are enriched - safely - by heading outdoors, whether it's a simple stroll around the neighborhood or a scurry along a craggy slot canyon in

Armstrong's first cat. They bonded when she was the one kitten at the animal shelter to climb all over him at 8 weeks old. They started adventuring close to home after he introduced her to a harness in the house. He would sometimes attach a leash and let her drag it around. He also took Millie on frequent car rides to get her used to road trips. Determining whether your cat is prone to motion sickness is important, said Moss, who advocates using a leash at all times.

Millie never took to her leash, so Armstrong keeps her harness on but lets her meander, following her and keeping her moving along the way. He knows her well enough to know she may do her own thing but won't run off. When rappelling, Millie perches on his shoulders, her harness

have a cat who's extremely courageous and always up to try something new but who may not feel comfortable outside. You can also have a cat who's very timid and hides when somebody comes over but loves to walk around the backyard."

Michele Lanza in Oakland, California, has two leash-trained walkers, but found it impossible to walk both cats at the same time. They complain loudly, however, if left behind when the other is out for a neighborhood walk. Lanza's female, NouNou, is now 7; her younger brother Jaspur didn't take to adventuring right away as she did. "The thought of just forcing them to be inside their whole lives felt mean to me," Lanza said.

"But I have to get one of the kids to walk one of them, and it's a little embarrassing for them. They're both teenagers, and we'll be walking down the street and cars will stop and be like, what?" Kenneth Lambrecht is a veterinarian near Madison, Wisconsin. He's also a cross-country skier, cyclist, water sports lover and proud dad to four cats: Lance, Bug, Annie and Georgie. Bug, a rescue who's now 6, has been adventuring since kittenhood, and Annie is an up-and-comer.

The two cats ride with him on his paddleboard, and Bug hikes and travels extensively. But Lambrecht warns that a cat like her is one in a million. "She's fascinated with water. When she was younger, the lake was breaking up in the spring one time and she jumped up onto an iceberg and started pawing the water. That's when I knew I had a different cat on my hands," Lambrecht said.

Choose your adventures wisely

Sushi, who lives in New Hampshire with her human, Georgina Saravia, is a beach-loving cat who goes everywhere with Saravia. But Saravia keeps her out of the woods, fearing ticks. "She doesn't like getting wet, but she likes looking to see what might be in the water," Saravia said. Moss suggests keeping cats out of scrub or brush to avoid toxic plants and foliage. Kim Randolph, in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and her fiancé started taking her cat Ruger snow hiking about two years ago, along with their German shepherd.

"He's kind of a funny cat. We got him as a kitten and started harness training almost immediately because I love dogs and my first pet out of college away from home was a cat because I couldn't have a dog," Randolph said. "I treated that first cat like a dog. He went everywhere with me, so when I got Ruger we put him on that same path." They, too, started slowly, going out on the porch or in the backyard to see how Ruger would react to snow.

The first time, he was befuddled, but then he gained confidence, and now tramps around in the snow or snuggles into a fleece-lined cat backpack. "Sometimes the sound of our snowshoes can make him a little bit nervous, so we take them off and go around to smaller areas, like a viewing point or lookout on the hiking trail. He likes to come out of the backpack and climbs on the picnic tables. He comes up to me and puts his paws on my legs when he wants to come up," Randolph said.

J P Chan in New York City's Harlem neighborhood has been trying to leash-train his Helena for a while now, but she doesn't love it. She DOES love hotel rooms, however, and joins him and his girlfriend on airplane trips and in pet-friendly hotels. He bought a special cat basket that has a mesh dome and clips securely onto the front of his bicycle. "She likes people. She's very friendly," he said. "Why should dogs have all the fun?"—AP

T REX WAS NOT FEATHERY: STUDY

PARIS: Tyrannosaurus Rex had scales, not feathers, said a study Wednesday which rescues the giant lizard's reputation as a fearsome killer with a rough-and-tough hide. Recent research has claimed to provide evidence for feathers in ancestors of T Rex, and suggested the iconic carnivore may itself have sported bird-like plumage rather than reptilian scales. Those findings challenged a long-held contention that large-bodied dinos had no feathers, requiring them for neither warmth nor flight.

For the new study, an international team of scientists tracked down museum samples of skin from T Rex and several of its cousins in the tyrannosaurid family, and compiled a database of fossilized hide impressions. These included skin patches of the neck, pelvis and tail of a T Rex from the Houston Museum of Natural Science, as well as samples from four other members of the extended tyrannosaurid family.

That group roamed the planet during the Late Cretaceous, which extended from 99 million to 65.5 million years ago, when an asteroid slammed into Earth and wiped out all land-dwelling dinos. The team concluded that "extensive feather coverings" in tyrannosaurids which lived much earlier were already lost in the common forefather of T Rex and its cousins about the time the Late Cretaceous began. The data provides "compelling evidence" of an entirely scaly covering for T Rex, the team wrote in the Royal Society journal Biology Letters.

"Our discovery of fossilized scaly skin similar to that of modern reptiles on the bodies of a wide variety of tyrannosaur species, including T Rex, paints a more traditional scaly-skinned picture of these huge predators," they wrote in a press summary. This suggested, in turn, "that most (if not all) large-bodied tyrannosaurids were scaly and, if partly feathered, these were limited to the dorsum (back)," they wrote.

The study begged the question of why after T Rex's ancestors evolved feathers from an even more ancient scaly forebear the giant tyrannosaurs reverted back to scales. Paleontologists believe the first birds appeared 150 million years ago and were descendants of small feathered dinosaurs. The first dino feathers were simple hollow shafts, which evolved over time into something resembling their modern shape, engineered for flight.—AFP



NEW HAMPSHIRE: This photo shows her cat Sushi on a leash navigating around a structure in Greenland, New Hampshire.

the Utah desert. Laura J Moss, the author of a new book, "Adventure Cats," said such excursions may not be for every cat, but owners won't really know unless they try. The stimulation and connection with nature are invaluable, she said. Nearly two years ago, Moss started a website, AdventureCats.org, connecting enthusiasts of "adventure catting" around the globe.

"If you're a cat lover who also is active outdoors, it's a great way to get your cat involved in your active lifestyle," she said in a recent interview. "But the No. 1 reason to do it is because it's good for your cat." Most people venturing out with their cats are not rock climbing, rappelling or snowshoeing, but some are. Craig Armstrong in Salt Lake City takes his black rescue, Millie, rock climbing in the desert nearly every weekend with a buddy who owns a fellow feline adventurer, named Kenneth.

Safety gear

Armstrong is an experienced hiker and climber, but he and his friend scaled back their challenges to let the two cats hike and climb at their own pace. Millie was

secured to safety lines. "That's kind of her safe place, on my shoulders. From the time she was a baby kitty I would call her to climb up to my shoulders and gave her a treat when she got there. She still does that every single morning," Armstrong said. As with humans, sometimes adventure catting is about the gear.

A good place to start is figuring out what kind of harness your cat will feel most comfortable in. Traditional harnesses usually have a few straps, often in a figure-eight fitting around a cat's neck and shoulders and fastening between the legs or around the waist, Moss said. Walking jackets or vests fit snugly like tiny coats. They provide more coverage and better distribution of pressure points if a cat pulls at the leash. They're also more difficult to wiggle out of, Moss said.

Treat training is also key, she said, as is bringing along water from a source familiar to your cat. So how do you know whether adventure catting is right for your pet? "Is your cat interested in watching the world outside the window? Is your cat a door dasher? Does your cat have a lot of pent-up energy?" asks Moss. "At the same time, you can

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CANADIANS IN KUWAIT HOLD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Canadians in Kuwait (CIK) is a social, membership-based organization supported by Canadian volunteers. CIK shares Canadian culture with Kuwaitis' and Canadian and Non-Canadian expats living in Kuwait, utilizing the talents and efforts of members. CIK and its members actively participate in various activities like - social, community based, national events of Canada and Kuwait by organizing or participating in various events.

Large number of members attended the Annual General Meeting - 2017. Paul Jensen from Embassy of Canada presided over the meeting with a welcome note. Ishtiaq Malik - CIK President presented the annual report. Reza Mehrabi presented the financial report. The new Board Members of CIK involves Ishtiaq Malik, Reza Mehrabi, Christophe Holdrinet, Mohammad Al-Shemry, Graham Dillabough, Moly Hinh, Angelina Lantaca and Jolanta Dziadkowiec. The volunteers are Abby Bell, Yasir, Anita, Maggie, Ana, Yakira, Didi, Allisan Levin, Gay Rawding and Tara Kostecki.



ASSE KUWAIT CHAPTER CONDUCTS SEMINAR ON WASTE MANAGEMENT

Adding on to its illustrious pathways of educating and empowering its members, American Society of Safety Engineers, (ASSE) Kuwait Chapter conducted a training seminar on "Waste Management - Journey from Waste to Resources" on May 19, 2017 at Best Western Hotel, Mahboula. The trainer for the session was Jignesh Shah. 26 members attended the event and got benefited from this program.

ASSE- Kuwait Chapter lead by Chairman Fadhel-Al Ali, is a non-profit organization which always strives to excel in providing quality trainings and consultation in the field of Health Safety and Environment all across different public and private sectors in Kuwait. Sanjay Jaiswal in his opening remarks congratulated the participants for their keen interest on learning Waste Management skills.

Sony Thomas, Head of Training Committee welcomed all participants and congratulated them for their interest to learn and updating their knowledge. He briefed about the significance of the training seminar and the importance of conducting such seminars for the benefit of ASSE members and introduced the trainer Jignesh Shah.

Jignesh Shah, an environmental engineering graduate, has over 24 years of industrial experience in the field of HSE, Environment in particular. He has served several types of industries right from chem-



icals to pharmaceutical, downstream and upstream of Oil and Gas industries. He is an ISO 14001 Lead Auditor, Certified Internal auditor for IMS and holds many other certifications in the field of HSE.

He has been associated with ASSE Kuwait Chapter for long and has served in various key positions. The program turned out to be very advantageous to all the members particularly Safety Professionals from Oil and Petrochemical industries. The session concluded with the distribution of participation certificates to the participants. ASSE Kuwait Chapter will continue to do their best for the progress of the society and its members in particular, by organizing such important and remarkable events in future too.



TIES TO CONDUCT LECTURE ON 'ANIMAL WELFARE IN ISLAM'

The TIES Center cordially invites all those interested to the lecture entitled "Animal Welfare in Islam," today at 9.30 pm. The lecture will emphasize the fact that Islam strongly enjoins Muslims and people of other faiths to treat all kinds of animals with respect, consideration and compassion.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the embodiment of mercy that transcended human beings to include animals, birds, insects, etc., and he treated the environment, as well, with respect. The speaker will also shed light on the status of animals in Islam, their rights, and how to ensure their rights are observed. Come along with your friends to learn about this important act of worship.

LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH CONDUCTS SUMMER CAMP FOR KIDS

SonForce Kids Special Agents is a summer camp conducted by the Lighthouse Church. The SonForce Kids headquarters is located on a satellite orbiting high above the earth. In this hi-tech command center, SonForce agents gather to prepare for their five daily missions: Trust, unite, train, follow and lead. Throughout the summer camp, the students will have the opportunity to grow and develop many skills as they advance from Level 1 to Level 5 agents.



INDIAN COMMUNITY IN KUWAIT OBSERVE 26TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF RAJIV GANDHI

Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister touched the soul of India," declared well known author, community leader and social activist Sam Pynummoodu inaugurated the 26th Martyrdom Day event of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on May 21, 2017 at the residence of Rajiv Gandhi Awards Committee Chairman Markos Williams. Members of the Indian community in Kuwait observed May 21 as Communal Harmony Day with representatives from the Hindu, Christian, Muslim and Sikh community speaking on the occasion.

Quoting Rajiv Gandhi's grandfather Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who said "Who lives if India dies", Sam Pynummoodu traced the rich cultural, political and secular heritage of Rajiv Gandhi and explained that the secular votes gathered together to usher him into office between 1984 and 1989 with an astounding majority. "The last

three years has seen a subversion of the democratic spirit of the Indian Constitution with brazen attempts being made to impose on the people of India the type of attire they should wear, the kind of food to eat and what they should talk" he said.

"Rajiv Gandhi supported the Bill for Muslim Personal Law in Parliament and ushered in a golden era and he was a symbol of communal harmony," said Kanneth Sharafuddeen, a prominent community leader who has rendered yeoman service as the President of the Kuwait Kerala Muslim Cultural Center and Director of NORKA Welfare Board, a Government of Kerala NRI Affairs Organization. He added that Rajiv Gandhi was responsible for the advent of social media when he opened the floodgates of knowledge by making computers and television easily available. "We need a secular government in India,

otherwise the Federal Government will collapse," Sharafuddeen Kanneth emphasized.

Speaking on the occasion, K E Subramanian, Vice President at NBK Capital said from an economic viewpoint, the Technology Missions of Rajiv Gandhi helped transform India from a socialistic society to a society that embraced capitalism. "By introducing computers in India despite the fears that it would take away jobs, Rajiv Gandhi ensured that India would thrive in the services sector and he laid the technology foundation for the changes that we have witnessed in India in the last two decades," Subramanian stated.

Gurmeet Singh Mallah who is the President of the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Welfare and Vichar Manch in Kuwait spoke of the difficulties students face in the Indian state of Punjab with educational fees skyrocketing many

times and added that the educational sector was not beset with such problems during the premiership of Rajiv Gandhi. "There was communal harmony with people of all religions at peace with each other during Rajiv Gandhi's regime and this is now absent," Gurmeet Singh Malla said.

Miss Aparna Sashidaran administered the Anti Terrorism Pledge which calls for working "for the emotional oneness and harmony of all the people of India regardless of caste, creed, religion or language and resolving differences through dialogue and constitutional means without resorting to violence". At the conclusion of the event all present paid floral tributes to Rajiv Gandhi and RGAC Chairman Markos Williams quoting Rajiv Gandhi said, "The prism of geography may color our peoples differently, but in the white light we are one in humanity."



AL MULLA EXCHANGE OPENS 72ND BRANCH IN KUWAIT

Al Mulla Exchange, the leading money exchange company in Kuwait, takes its expansion drive a step further with the opening of the 72nd branch in Kuwait at the Mishref Co-operative Society. This is the company's first branch in the area seeking to reach its unique services and products even to the far-flung parts of the country to serve its customers.

The branch was inaugurated by Mr Abdul Mehsen Al-Saraf, member of board, head of investment committee and head of Mubarak Al Abdullah Aljaber area committee in the presence of senior management, staff and well-wishers of Al Mulla Exchange. The new branch, located in block 6 at west Mishref area near Australian college of Kuwait, provides all of Al Mulla Exchange services to fulfill the various needs of its customers.

Speaking at the opening event, Mr Rakesh Joshi, General Manager Al Mulla Exchange said Al Mulla Exchange has been growing from strength to strength driven by its commitment to bring the best services and products to its customers. "We are on the track of continuous improvement while aiming to expand at a steady pace so that the greatest number of our customers can benefit from our services."

Rakesh Joshi thanked all the employees of Al Mulla Exchange for their dedication and commitment which has reflected in the company's overall success. "However, our deepest gratitude goes out to our valuable customers without whose patronage and support we wouldn't make it this far."



AL MUTHANA NURSERY HOLDS GRADUATION CEREMONY 2017

Al Muthana nursery has successfully held its Graduation Ceremony 2017 titled "Moving up Ceremony and Recognition Day" for its pre-school level on May 20, 2017. Certificates of completion were awarded to young graduates as they were escorted by their parents. Also, the certificates of appreciation were awarded to the distinguished students with their achievements. Guest speaker Dr. Dave McHardy, President, Algonquin College Kuwait, in his speech emphasized the importance of making the learning experience of the children fun and entertaining.

Students from the Toddlers classes presented songs and dance special numbers were added to the festive mode of the ceremony. Parents were happy and excited to see their children confidently performed on the stage. Director of Al Muthana nursery, in his speech, assured the parents of the

safety and security of their children while in the nursery. "We will take care of your children", he was quoted as saying.

He went on to thank the teaching staff and administration for their year-round hard work making the nursery consistently a friendly and conducive environment for the children. He assured the parents that besides playing and learning, serious attention is given to the children the basic foundation of good manners. In the same vein, Ms Angie Lantaca, nursery administrator thanked all the parents who entrusted Al Muthana nursery to be a part of their children's growing up years, and assured them that the nursery will continuously work on improving and enhancing the brand of Al Muthana education.



OM MOVIES ACTION

- 00:00 Twixt
- 01:45 Age Of Tomorrow
- 03:30 Run All Night
- 05:30 Star Wars: The Force Awakens
- 08:00 Hard Target 2
- 09:45 Run All Night
- 11:45 DCU: Justice League vs Teen Titans
- 13:15 Star Wars: The Force Awakens
- 15:45 Larceny
- 17:30 The 5th Wave
- 19:30 Forbidden Empire
- 21:30 Pompeii
- 23:15 Attila

- 05:55 Catch A Contractor
- 06:50 Framework
- 07:40 Hungry Investors
- 08:30 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 09:20 Lip Sync Battle
- 10:10 Bondi Ink
- 11:00 Framework
- 11:50 Catch A Contractor
- 12:40 Disaster Date
- 13:30 Lip Sync Battle
- 14:20 Bondi Ink
- 15:10 Framework
- 16:00 Comedy Central Presents Comedy
- 16:30 Comedy Central Presents Comedy
- 16:55 Brotherhood
- 17:25 Brotherhood
- 17:50 MLE Championship
- 18:39 Impractical Jokers
- 19:03 Disaster Date
- 19:27 Hungry Investors
- 20:13 Lip Sync Battle
- 20:37 Lip Sync Battle
- 21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 21:30 Comedy Central Presents Comedy
- 22:00 Comedy Central Presents Comedy
- 22:25 Ridiculousness Arabia
- 22:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
- 23:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

- 03:35 Loopedidoo
- 03:50 Calimero
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:45 Zou
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Loopedidoo
- 06:00 Zou
- 06:15 Calimero
- 06:30 Loopedidoo
- 06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 07:25 Sofia The First
- 07:50 The Lion Guard
- 08:15 PJ Masks
- 08:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 09:05 Goldie & Bear
- 09:35 The Lion Guard
- 10:00 Sofia The First
- 10:30 Doc McStuffins
- 11:00 Little Mermaid
- 11:25 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 11:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 12:15 Gummi Bears
- 12:40 Miles From Tomorrow
- 13:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 13:35 PJ Masks
- 14:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 14:30 The Lion Guard
- 14:55 Unbungalavable
- 15:00 Goldie & Bear
- 15:30 PJ Masks
- 15:55 Sofia The First
- 16:20 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 16:50 Doc McStuffins
- 17:15 The Lion Guard
- 17:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 18:05 PJ Masks
- 18:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 19:05 Sofia The First
- 19:35 Sofia The First
- 20:05 Goldie & Bear
- 20:35 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 21:00 Gummi Bears
- 21:25 Sofia The First
- 21:50 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 22:00 Little Mermaid
- 22:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 22:55 PJ Masks
- 23:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 23:35 The Hive
- 23:45 Loopedidoo

- 20:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 21:00 Britain's Secrets With Anne Robinson
- 21:55 5 Star Family Reunion
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:15 Coronation Street
- 23:40 Coronation Street

- 00:20 Detroit Steel
- 01:10 Big Easy Motors
- 01:35 Big Easy Motors
- 02:00 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 04:30 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 Leepu And Pitbull
- 06:50 Duck Dynasty
- 07:15 Duck Dynasty
- 07:40 Counting Cars
- 08:05 Counting Cars
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 08:55 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 09:45 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 Alone
- 11:50 Duck Dynasty
- 12:15 Duck Dynasty
- 12:40 Swamp People
- 13:30 Ax Men
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Leepu And Pitbull
- 16:00 Storage Wars
- 16:25 Storage Wars
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:15 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Detroit Steel
- 18:30 Big Easy Motors
- 18:55 Big Easy Motors
- 19:20 Mountain Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 Billion Dollar Wreck
- 21:50 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...
- 22:40 Time Team
- 23:30 American Pickers

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:45 Animal Cops Miami
- 01:40 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 02:35 Tanked
- 03:25 The Lion Queen
- 04:15 Preposterous Pets
- 05:02 River Monsters
- 05:49 From WAGs To Riches
- 06:36 Gorilla School
- 07:00 Gorilla School
- 07:25 Preposterous Pets
- 08:15 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 09:10 The Lion Queen
- 10:05 Tanked
- 11:00 Preposterous Pets
- 11:55 Animal Cops Miami
- 12:50 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 13:45 River Monsters
- 14:40 The Lion Queen
- 15:35 Tanked
- 16:30 River Monsters
- 17:25 The Lion Queen
- 18:20 Wild Ones
- 18:45 Wild Ones
- 19:15 Tanked
- 20:10 Preposterous Pets
- 21:05 The Lion Queen
- 22:00 Wild Ones
- 22:55 The Lion Queen
- 23:50 River Monsters

Discovery Family

- 00:30 Nextworld
- 01:20 Bondi Vet
- 02:10 Everest: Beyond The Limit
- 03:00 What Happened Next?
- 03:25 What Happened Next?
- 03:50 Ultimate Survival
- 04:40 How It's Made
- 05:05 How It's Made
- 05:30 Storm Chasers
- 06:20 Mythbusters
- 07:00 Kenny The Shark
- 07:25 Bear Grylls Survival School
- 07:50 K9 Cops
- 08:40 How It's Made
- 09:05 How It's Made
- 09:30 Nextworld
- 10:20 Mythbusters
- 11:10 K9 Cops
- 12:00 Ultimate Survival
- 12:50 How It's Made
- 13:15 How It's Made
- 13:40 Storm Chasers
- 14:30 Kenny The Shark

Discovery CHANNEL HD

- 00:00 Street Outlaws
- 01:10 Abandoned Engineering
- 02:00 Man vs Weird
- 02:50 Incredible Engineering Blunders:

EHD

- 00:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 00:55 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 01:50 E! News
- 02:50 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:20 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:50 WAGs
- 04:40 WAGs
- 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 06:00 La Clippers Dance Squad
- 06:55 E! News
- 07:10 La Clippers Dance Squad
- 08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
- 09:10 Botched
- 10:05 Botched
- 11:00 Botched
- 12:00 E! News
- 12:15 Botched
- 13:10 Botched
- 14:05 Botched
- 15:00 E! News
- 15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
- 16:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 17:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 18:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 19:00 E! News
- 20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 22:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 23:00 E! News
- 23:15 Second Wives Club

food network

- 00:00 Chopped
- 01:00 Kids BBQ Championship
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:30 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 Chopped
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 06:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 07:00 The Kitchen
- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 Siba's Table
- 09:30 Siba's Table
- 10:00 Bake With Anna Olson
- 10:30 Bake With Anna Olson
- 11:00 The Kitchen
- 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 13:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 13:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Chopped
- 16:00 The Kitchen
- 17:00 Bake With Anna Olson
- 17:30 Bake With Anna Olson
- 18:00 Chopped
- 19:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 20:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 20:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 21:00 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 21:30 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 22:00 The Big Eat - Middle East
- 22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 23:00 Chopped

HISTORY HD

- 00:20 Detroit Steel
- 01:10 Big Easy Motors
- 01:35 Big Easy Motors
- 02:00 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 04:30 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 Leepu And Pitbull
- 06:50 Duck Dynasty
- 07:15 Duck Dynasty
- 07:40 Counting Cars
- 08:05 Counting Cars
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 08:55 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 09:45 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 Alone
- 11:50 Duck Dynasty
- 12:15 Duck Dynasty
- 12:40 Swamp People
- 13:30 Ax Men
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Leepu And Pitbull
- 16:00 Storage Wars
- 16:25 Storage Wars
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:15 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Detroit Steel
- 18:30 Big Easy Motors
- 18:55 Big Easy Motors
- 19:20 Mountain Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 Billion Dollar Wreck
- 21:50 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...
- 22:40 Time Team
- 23:30 American Pickers

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:45 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
- 01:10 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 01:40 Top Chef Top Table: Seoul
- 02:05 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
- 02:35 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
- 03:00 Route Awakening
- 03:30 Chasing The Sun
- 03:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 04:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 04:50 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 05:20 The Food Files
- 05:45 The Food Files
- 06:15 Mega Food
- 07:10 Top Chef Top Table: Seoul
- 07:35 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
- 08:05 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
- 08:30 Route Awakening
- 09:00 Chasing The Sun
- 09:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 09:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 10:20 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 10:50 The Food Files
- 11:15 The Food Files
- 11:45 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
- 12:10 A Is For Apple
- 12:40 A Is For Apple
- 13:05 What's For Sale?
- 13:35 What's For Sale?
- 14:00 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
- 14:30 Route Awakening
- 14:55 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
- 15:25 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
- 15:50 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 16:20 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 16:45 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 17:15 The Food Files
- 17:40 Tripping Out With Allie & Georgia
- 18:10 This Is Brazil
- 19:05 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
- 19:30 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 20:00 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 20:30 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 21:00 The Food Files
- 21:30 Tripping Out With Allie & Georgia
- 22:00 This Is Brazil
- 22:55 What's For Sale?
- 23:20 What's For Sale?
- 23:50 Andy And Ben Eat Australia

BBC FIRST

- 00:00 EastEnders
- 00:40 Kat & Alfie: Redwater
- 01:35 Mairgit



POMPEII ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 03:10 The Kettering Incident
- 04:05 Doctors
- 04:35 EastEnders
- 05:05 The Musketeers
- 06:00 Father Brown
- 06:55 Doctors
- 07:25 EastEnders
- 07:55 New Tricks
- 08:45 The Musketeers
- 09:40 Father Brown
- 10:35 Doctors
- 11:05 EastEnders
- 11:35 New Tricks
- 12:30 The Musketeers
- 13:25 Father Brown
- 14:20 Doctors
- 14:50 EastEnders
- 15:20 New Tricks
- 16:15 The Musketeers
- 17:10 Father Brown
- 18:05 Doctors
- 18:35 EastEnders
- 19:05 New Tricks
- 20:00 Holby City
- 21:00 Agatha Raisin
- 22:30 Him & Her
- 23:05 New Tricks

- 14:55 Bear Grylls Survival School
- 15:20 K9 Cops
- 16:10 Nextworld
- 17:00 Secret Space Escapes
- 17:50 How The Universe Works
- 18:40 What Happened Next?
- 19:05 What Happened Next?
- 19:30 How It's Made
- 19:55 How It's Made
- 20:20 Mythbusters
- 21:10 Secret Space Escapes
- 22:00 How The Universe Works
- 22:50 What Happened Next?
- 23:15 What Happened Next?
- 23:40 Ultimate Survival

- Fixed
- 03:40 Misfit Garage
- 04:30 Garage Gold
- 05:00 How Do They Do It?
- 05:30 How Do They Do It?
- 06:00 Gold Divers
- 06:50 Street Outlaws
- 07:40 Misfit Garage
- 08:30 What On Earth?
- 09:20 Garage Gold
- 09:45 How Do They Do It?
- 10:10 How Do They Do It?
- 10:35 Abandoned Engineering
- 11:25 You Have Been Warned
- 12:15 Incredible Engineering Blunders:

ITV CHOICE

- 00:10 Alphabetical
- 01:00 Emmerdale
- 01:30 Coronation Street
- 02:00 Coronation Street
- 02:30 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 03:25 This Is England '86
- 04:20 Safe House
- 05:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
- 06:10 Alphabetical
- 07:05 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 08:00 This Is England '86
- 09:00 Safe House
- 10:00 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
- 10:55 Alphabetical
- 11:50 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 12:45 Emmerdale
- 13:15 Coronation Street
- 14:15 Alphabetical
- 15:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 16:00 Britain's Secrets With Anne Robinson
- 16:55 5 Star Family Reunion
- 17:50 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
- 18:45 Emmerdale
- 19:15 Coronation Street

crime investigation network

- 00:00 Escaping Polygamy
- 01:00 Who Was I? My Past Lives
- 02:00 My Haunted House
- 03:00 Paranormal State
- 04:00 Paranormal State
- 05:00 Escaping Polygamy
- 06:00 Who Was I? My Past Lives
- 07:00 I Love You...But I Lied
- 08:00 I Love You...But I Lied
- 09:00 Evil Up Close
- 10:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 11:00 Homicide Hunter
- 12:00 It Takes A Killer
- 13:00 It Takes A Killer
- 14:00 It Takes A Killer
- 15:00 I Love You...But I Lied
- 16:00 Evil Up Close
- 17:00 Homicide Hunter
- 18:00 Crime Stories
- 19:00 It Takes A Killer
- 20:00 It Takes A Killer
- 21:00 Evil Up Close
- 22:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 23:00 Homicide Hunter
- 24:00 Homicide Hunter
- 25:00 Cold Case Files

ID

- 00:30 Pandora's Box: Unleashing Evil
- 01:20 Betrayed
- 02:10 Murder Chose Me
- 03:00 Grave Secrets
- 03:48 I Almost Got Away With It
- 04:36 California Investigator
- 05:01 California Investigator
- 05:24 Deadly Affairs
- 06:12 Southern Fried Homicide
- 07:00 The Locator
- 07:25 The Locator
- 07:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 08:40 California Investigator
- 09:05 California Investigator
- 09:30 Deadly Affairs
- 10:20 Southern Fried Homicide
- 11:10 The Detectives Club: New Orleans
- 12:00 The Locator
- 12:25 The Locator
- 12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 13:40 California Investigator
- 14:05 California Investigator
- 14:30 Deadly Affairs
- 15:20 Southern Fried Homicide
- 16:10 Vanity Fair Confidential
- 17:00 The Locator
- 17:25 The Locator
- 17:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 18:40 California Investigator
- 19:05 California Investigator
- 19:30 Deadly Affairs
- 20:20 Southern Fried Homicide
- 21:10 I Am Homicide
- 22:00 Murder Chose Me
- 22:50 Murder Book
- 23:40 Betrayed

XHD

- 06:00 Right Now Kapow
- 06:25 Disney11
- 06:50 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 07:15 Milo Murphy's Law
- 07:25 Danger Mouse
- 07:40 Supa Strikas
- 08:10 K.C. Undercover
- 08:35 Counterfeit Cat
- 09:00 Lab Rats
- 09:25 Lab Rats
- 09:50 Future-Worm!
- 10:20 Pair Of Kings
- 10:45 Pair Of Kings
- 11:10 Danger Mouse
- 11:35 Supa Strikas
- 12:00 Supa Strikas
- 12:30 Gravity Falls
- 12:55 Annedroids
- 13:20 Atomic Puppet
- 13:45 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:15 Mighty Med
- 14:40 Kirby Buckets
- 15:05 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 15:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 15:55 Right Now Kapow
- 16:25 K.C. Undercover
- 16:50 Disney11
- 17:15 Mech-X4
- 17:40 Milo Murphy's Law
- 18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 18:10 Gravity Falls
- 18:35 Mighty Med
- 19:00 Atomic Puppet
- 19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much

Disney Junior

- 00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:15 Calimero
- 00:30 Art Attack
- 00:55 Zou
- 01:05 Loopedidoo
- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 Calimero
- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Art Attack
- 02:30 The Hive
- 02:40 Loopedidoo
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:10 Art Attack

COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:05 Disaster Date
- 00:30 Disaster Date
- 00:55 Impractical Jokers
- 01:20 Impractical Jokers
- 01:45 Lip Sync Battle
- 02:10 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 03:25 Framework
- 04:15 Sweet Inc.
- 05:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On



EVEREST ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 09:00 Doomsday Preppers
- 10:00 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind
- 11:00 Street Heat: High Speed Justice
- 12:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 13:00 Science Of Stupid
- 13:30 Science Of Stupid
- 14:00 Ancient Megastructures
- 15:00 Genius
- 16:00 Hacking The System
- 16:30 Hacking The System
- 17:00 Inside
- 18:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 19:00 Genius
- 20:00 Hacking The System
- 20:25 Hacking The System
- 20:50 Inside
- 21:40 Locked Up Abroad
- 22:30 Genius
- 23:20 Science Of Stupid
- 23:45 Science Of Stupid

OM MOVIES HD

- 02:00 Beaches
- 04:15 Everest
- 06:30 Amelia
- 08:30 X-Men: First Class
- 10:45 Seventh Son
- 12:30 Rocky IV
- 14:15 Everest
- 16:30 Big
- 18:15 Dick Tracy
- 20:00 Unstoppable
- 21:45 Rocky v
- 23:30 The Babadook

NAT GEO WILD HD

- 00:20 Kings Of The Kill
- 01:10 Monster Fish
- 02:00 Brutal Killers
- 02:50 Strangest Bird Alive
- 03:45 World's Weirdest
- 04:40 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 05:35 Brutal Killers
- 06:30 Strangest Bird Alive
- 07:25 World's Weirdest
- 08:20 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 09:15 Safari Brothers
- 10:10 Secret Life Of Predators
- 11:05 World's Deadliest
- 12:00 Salmon Wars
- 12:55 Lion Battle Zone
- 13:50 World's Weirdest
- 14:45 World Oceans Day
- 15:40 Dolphin Dynasty
- 16:35 Extreme Animals
- 17:30 Secret Life Of Predators (2016)
- 18:25 Snake Underworld
- 19:20 World Oceans Day
- 20:10 Dolphin Dynasty
- 21:00 Extreme Animals
- 21:50 Secret Life Of Predators (2016)
- 22:40 Snake Underworld
- 23:30 Salmon Wars

OM MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 02:05 Toy Story 2
- 03:40 The Unbeatables
- 05:20 K-9 Adventures: Legend Of The Lost Gold
- 06:55 Toy Story 2
- 08:30 The Unbeatables
- 10:10 Hercules (1997)
- 11:45 K-9 Adventures: Legend Of The Lost Gold
- 13:15 Toy Story 3
- 15:00 Frozen
- 16:45 The Parent Trap
- 18:55 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
- 20:25 Tuck Everlasting
- 22:00 Frozen
- 23:45 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen

OM MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 01:00 Death At A Funeral
- 02:45 Outside Bet
- 04:30 After The Ball
- 06:15 Confessions Of A Shopaholic
- 08:00 Outside Bet
- 09:45 After The Ball
- 11:30 Confessions Of A Shopaholic
- 13:15 Life
- 15:15 Oscar
- 17:15 Big Ass Spider!
- 19:20 National Security
- 20:15 When In Rome
- 21:45 Hector And The Search For Happiness
- 23:45 Awful Nice

OM MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 01:00 Memories
- 02:45 Manny
- 04:15 The Help
- 06:45 Chariots Of Fire
- 08:45 Every Thing Will Be Fine
- 10:45 Manny
- 12:15 The Help
- 14:45 I Am Bolt
- 16:30 Days Of Heaven
- 18:15 The Joy Luck Club
- 20:30 Still Alice
- 22:15 The Kings Of Summer

OM MOVIES HD KIDS

- 00:45 Outback
- 02:30 Egon And Donci
- 04:15 Paws

DISCOVERY SCIENCE

- 00:30 How Do They Do It?</

CLASSIFIEDS



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 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO THURSDAY (08/06/2017 TO 15/06/2017)

| | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--|----------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| SHARQIA-1 Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) | 10:00 PM 12:15 AM | MARINA-2 Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) | 9:45 PM 12:30 AM | 360°-2 Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) ALIEN: COVENANT | 10:15 PM 12:45 AM |
| SHARQIA-2 Seats-428 Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) | 9:30 PM 12:30 AM | MARINA-3 DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) | 10:00 PM 12:05 AM | 360°-3 AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) | 9:45 PM 11:15 PM 12:45 AM |
| SHARQIA-3 MINIONS (Re Release) KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD | 9:45 PM 11:45 PM | AVENUES-1 YO-KAI WATCH: The Movie ALIEN: COVENANT | 9:30 PM 11:30 PM | AL-KOUT.1 Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) | 9:30 PM 11:45 PM |
| MUHALAB-1 Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD | 9:30 PM 11:45 PM | AVENUES-2 MINIONS (Re-Release)-3D-4DX KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD (3D-4DX) | 10:00 PM 12:05 AM | AL-KOUT.2 AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) | 9:45 PM 11:15 PM 12:45 AM |
| MUHALAB-2 RAABTA (Hindi) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) | 9:45 PM 12:45 AM | AVENUES-3 THE BOSS BABY HERE ALONE | 10:30 PM 12:30 AM | AL-KOUT.3 Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD | 10:15 PM 12:30 AM |
| MUHALAB-3 Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) | 10:00 PM 12:15 AM | AVENUES-4 ALIEN: COVENANT Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) | 10:15 PM 12:45 AM | AL-KOUT.4 Safra 5 Njoom (Kuwaiti Film) (Re-Release) Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) | 10:00 PM 12:05 AM |
| FANAR-1 RAABTA (Hindi) RAABTA (Hindi) | 9:30 PM 12:30 AM | AVENUES-5 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL | 9:45 PM 12:15 AM | BAIRAQ-1 MINIONS (Re Release) THE BOSS BABY | 9:45 PM 11:45 PM |
| FANAR-2 DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) | 10:30 PM 12:30 AM | AVENUES-6 AL FERAN (KUWAITI) Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) | 10:00 PM 11:30 PM | BAIRAQ-2 DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL | 10:00 PM 12:05 AM |
| FANAR-3 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) | 9:45 PM 12:15 AM | AVENUES-7 Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) | 9:30 PM 11:45 PM | BAIRAQ-3 RAABTA (Hindi) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) | 9:30 PM 12:30 AM |
| FANAR-4 Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) ALIEN: COVENANT | 9:30 PM 12:30 AM | AVENUES-8 DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) | 10:15 PM 12:30 AM | PLAZA CIA: Comrade in America (Malayalam) RAABTA (Hindi) | 9:30 PM 12:15 AM |
| FANAR-5 AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) | 10:00 PM 11:30 PM 1:00 AM | AVENUES-9 RAABTA (Hindi) THE EXCEPTION | 9:45 PM 12:45 AM | LAILA Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD | 9:30 PM 11:45 PM |
| MARINA-1 Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD | 9:30 PM 12:15 AM | 360°-1 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD | 9:45 PM 12:30 AM | AJIAL.1 CIA: Comrade in America (Malayalam) | 9:30 PM |

JOB VACANCY

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- For Position 1 to 2- Candidate should have minimum 3 years of experience in oil & gas field.
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ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation available with separate room and other facility near Al-Rashid hospital Salmiya for a small Indian family or a working lady immediately. Contact: 99315825. (C 5318) 7-6-2017

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Subhash Vishnu Andraz S/o Vishnu Andraz, holder of Indian Passport No. J2750368 & Civil ID No. 284010806937 has changed my name to Subhash Vishnu Murgaonkar, before father name Vishnu Mulgaonkar the new name Vishnu Murgaonkar, hereinafter in all my dealings and document, I will be known by name of Subhash Vishnu Murgaonkar. (C 5317)

Sharing accommodation available in Farwaniya block



Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

| Arrival Flights on Thursday 8/6/2017 | | | | Departure Flights on Thursday 8/6/2017 | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|-------------|-------|--|------|-------------------|-------|
| Airlines | Flt | Route | Time | Airlines | Flt | Route | Time |
| THY | 772 | Istanbul | 00:10 | KAC | 788 | Jeddah | 14:20 |
| KAC | 102 | London | 00:15 | KAC | 304 | Jeddah | 14:25 |
| JZR | 553 | Alexandria | 00:15 | KNE | 529 | Mumbai | 14:55 |
| SVA | 502 | Jeddah | 00:20 | KAC | 692 | Jeddah | 14:55 |
| SVA | 514 | Riyadh | 00:25 | ETD | 303 | Muscat | 14:55 |
| KAC | 786 | Jeddah | 00:30 | OMA | 645 | Abu Dhabi | 15:05 |
| MSC | 411 | Asyut | 00:30 | KAC | 562 | Muscat | 15:10 |
| JZR | 267 | Beirut | 00:35 | CLX | 856 | Amman | 15:10 |
| KAC | 504 | Beirut | 00:45 | KAC | 502 | Luxembourg | 15:20 |
| DLH | 635 | Doha | 01:00 | ABY | 127 | Beirut | 15:25 |
| JZR | 539 | Cairo | 01:25 | UAE | 857 | Sharjah | 15:35 |
| SAI | 441 | Lahore | 01:30 | SAW | 705 | Dubai | 15:45 |
| UAE | 853 | Dubai | 01:40 | RJA | 640 | Damascus | 15:50 |
| RJA | 642 | Amman | 01:45 | FDB | 051 | Amman | 16:00 |
| ETH | 620 | Addis Ababa | 01:50 | QTR | 1072 | Dubai | 16:15 |
| KAC | 358 | Kochi | 04:50 | JZR | 535 | Cairo | 16:15 |
| KAC | 784 | Jeddah | 05:00 | JZR | 125 | Doha | 16:25 |
| FEG | 931 | Alexandria | 05:00 | KNE | 531 | Jeddah | 16:35 |
| THY | 770 | Istanbul | 05:05 | JZR | 787 | Riyadh | 16:35 |
| DHX | 170 | Bahrain | 05:10 | NIA | 361 | Alexandria | 16:50 |
| KAC | 344 | Chennai | 05:30 | KAC | 118 | New York | 16:55 |
| JZR | 529 | Asyut | 05:35 | KAC | 542 | Cairo | 17:05 |
| KAC | 362 | Colombo | 05:50 | SVA | 510 | Riyadh | 17:15 |
| BAW | 157 | London | 06:05 | GFA | 215 | Bahrain | 17:30 |
| KAC | 204 | Lahore | 06:20 | JZR | 777 | Jeddah | 17:35 |
| KAC | 284 | Dhaka | 06:35 | JZR | 177 | Dubai | 17:45 |
| QTR | 8511 | Doha | 06:35 | QTR | 1080 | Doha | 18:05 |
| KAC | 206 | Islamabad | 06:40 | MSR | 620 | Cairo | 18:30 |
| KAC | 302 | Mumbai | 06:55 | JZR | 483 | Istanbul | 18:30 |
| KAC | 156 | Istanbul | 07:05 | UAE | 875 | Dubai | 19:05 |
| JZR | 1541 | Cairo | 07:10 | GFA | 217 | Bahrain | 19:05 |
| JZR | 503 | Luxor | 07:25 | KAC | 744 | Dammam | 19:05 |
| KAC | 524 | Al Najaf | 07:30 | FDB | 063 | Dubai | 19:10 |
| KAC | 354 | Bangalore | 07:50 | ABY | 123 | Sharjah | 19:20 |
| FDB | 053 | Dubai | 07:50 | KAC | 154 | Istanbul | 19:30 |
| KAC | 384 | Delhi | 08:00 | KAC | 674 | Dubai | 19:40 |
| KAC | 332 | Trivandrum | 08:05 | KAC | 616 | Bahrain | 19:40 |
| UAE | 855 | Dubai | 08:25 | KAC | 776 | Riyadh | 19:45 |
| IRA | 673 | Ahwaz | 08:35 | FDB | 057 | Dubai | 19:50 |
| ETD | 301 | Abu Dhabi | 08:55 | KAC | 620 | Doha | 19:50 |
| ABY | 125 | Sharjah | 09:00 | OMA | 647 | Muscat | 20:05 |
| IRA | 667 | Esfahan | 09:05 | KNE | 381 | Taif | 20:10 |
| QTR | 1070 | Doha | 09:20 | DLH | 634 | Frankfurt | 20:15 |
| FDB | 055 | Dubai | 09:40 | MEA | 402 | Beirut | 20:15 |
| SVA | 512 | Riyadh | 10:00 | KAC | 662 | Abu Dhabi | 20:20 |
| FDK | 803 | Damascus | 10:00 | JZR | 189 | Dubai | 20:25 |
| GFA | 213 | Bahrain | 10:40 | QTR | 1088 | Doha | 20:35 |
| KAC | 774 | Riyadh | 10:45 | KAC | 564 | Amman | 21:00 |
| MEA | 404 | Beirut | 10:55 | KAC | 168 | Paris | 21:05 |
| PAL | 668 | Manila | 11:00 | ETD | 307 | Abu Dhabi | 21:10 |
| SYR | 341 | Damascus | 11:00 | KLM | 445 | Amsterdam | 21:15 |
| JZR | 561 | Sohag | 11:10 | ALK | 229 | Colombo | 21:15 |
| KAC | 614 | Bahrain | 11:15 | UAE | 859 | Dubai | 21:15 |
| MSC | 403 | Asyut | 11:15 | FDB | 8053 | Dubai | 21:25 |
| RBG | 553 | Alexandria | 11:30 | KAC | 676 | Dubai | 21:35 |
| JZR | 165 | Dubai | 11:50 | GFA | 219 | Bahrain | 21:50 |
| SAW | 701 | Damascus | 12:30 | QTR | 1082 | Doha | 22:00 |
| JZR | 239 | Amman | 12:40 | NIA | 161 | Cairo | 22:10 |
| UAE | 871 | Dubai | 12:45 | ETD | 309 | Abu Dhabi | 22:10 |
| THY | 766 | Istanbul | 12:50 | AIC | 981 | Chennai/Ahmedabad | 22:25 |
| FEG | 933 | Sohag | 12:55 | JZR | 185 | Dubai | 22:55 |
| MEA | 406 | Beirut | 13:00 | JZR | 241 | Amman | 22:55 |
| MSR | 610 | Cairo | 13:00 | JAI | 574 | Mumbai | 23:00 |
| KAC | 514 | Tehran | 13:10 | MSC | 405 | Sohag | 23:30 |
| AXB | 393 | Kozhikode | 13:10 | FDB | 071 | Dubai | 23:35 |
| KAC | 522 | Al Najaf | 13:40 | THY | 764 | Istanbul | 23:45 |
| KAC | 672 | Dubai | 13:55 | | | | |
| KAC | 792 | Madinah | 13:55 | | | | |
| QTR | 1078 | Doha | 14:05 | | | | |
| KNE | 231 | Riyadh | 14:10 | | | | |
| GFA | 221 | Bahrain | 14:15 | | | | |
| SVA | 500 | Jeddah | 14:15 | | | | |
| KAC | 352 | Kochi | 14:20 | | | | |
| KAC | 618 | Doha | 14:20 | | | | |

CROSSWORD 1631



ACROSS

1. Waterproofed canvas.
5. A green transparent form of beryl.
12. Thickening of tissue in the motor tracts of the lateral columns and anterior horns of the spinal cord.
15. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
16. Genus of herbs and subshrubs having showy flowers.
17. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
18. (Greek mythology) The Muse of history.
19. Demanding attention.
20. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
21. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
23. A unit of magnetomotive force equal to 0.7958 ampere-turns.
24. Norwegian explorer of the Arctic and director of the League of Nations relief program for refugees of World War I (1861-1930).
26. Agreement with a statement or proposal to do something.
27. Type genus of the Majidae.
29. (Irish) The sea personified.
30. American novelist (1909-1955).
31. (British) An informer or spy working for the police.
35. The United Nations agency concerned with the international collection of meteorological data.
38. The sciences concerned with gathering and manipulating and storing and retrieving and classifying recorded information.
40. Gull family.
42. Harass with persistent criticism or carping.
44. Of or like a cecum.
47. Make less active or intense.
48. Having the leading position or higher score in a contest.
50. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
52. A monarchy on a Polynesian archipelago in the South Pacific.
53. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
56. Perceive sound.
58. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
59. A ductile silvery-white ductile ferromagnetic trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
60. A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.
63. Perversely irritable.
71. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
72. Sightlessness (especially because of a structural defect in or the absence of an eye).
75. Small tropical American tree bearing edible plumlike fruit.
76. Greenwich Mean Time updated with leap seconds.
77. Spanish singer noted for his ballads and love songs (born in 1943).
79. The money risked on a gamble.
80. A unit of length of thread or yarn.

DOWN

81. (Italian cookery) Squid prepared as food.
82. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
1. Genus of tropical plants with creeping rootstocks and small umbellate flowers.
2. (Greek mythology) A Titan who was forced by Zeus to bear the sky on his shoulders.
3. A bar or bars of rolled steel making a track along which vehicles can roll.
4. Cause to move forward with force.
5. Using or providing or producing or transmitting or operated by electricity.
6. A commercially prepared mixture of dry ingredients.
7. Something that baffles understanding and cannot be explained.
8. A motley assortment of things.
9. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
10. 1 species.
11. A collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn.
12. By bad luck.
13. A narrow way or road.
14. The act of scanning.
22. Used of a single unit or thing.
25. (Sumerian and Babylonian) A solar deity.
28. A loose cloak with a hood.
32. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
33. An appraisal of the value of something.
34. Having a ridge or shaped like a ridge or the keel of a ship.
36. Shrubby tree widely distributed along tropical shores.
37. A chronic disease of the nose characterized by a foul-smelling nasal discharge and atrophy of nasal structures.
39. Large dark brown North American arboreal carnivorous mammal.
41. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
43. The capital of Croatia.
45. One of the often brightly colored and branching hornlike structures on the back of the nudibranch (and other related mollusks) that serve as gills.
46. Lower in esteem.
49. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
54. The capital and largest city of Georgia on the Kura river.
55. Violent and needless disturbance.
57. A genus of tropical Asian and Malaysian palm trees.
61. An uproarious party.
62. Jordan's port.
64. Amount of a charge or payment relative to some basis.
65. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
66. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
67. A small replica of a person.
68. Type genus of the Majidae.
69. Type genus of the Aceraceae.
70. A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.
73. Seed of a pea plant.
74. A belief (or system of beliefs) accepted as authoritative by some group or school.
78. A colorless and odorless inert gas.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are able to understand how to work with the enthusiastic energy of others today-making all the right connections. The word for the day is accomplishment. If there is a job, you can do it. A prodigious worker, you pour yourself into any task with absolute determination. You have a great desire and drive to be thorough and responsible. You seem to know what is essential and what is not. You love the routine that your work brings into your life but you can become too strict with yourself-ease up a bit this afternoon. Take a little trip or get outside for a while. You may be sought after for your counsel regarding some very emotional issues later today. You can and will handle this situation very well. A love relationship could be changing; easy does it.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are a heavy-duty thinker and serious student, always ready to work an idea through, reducing it to what is essential. You do a lot to fulfill the popular stereotype of a genius. There may be a sustained interest today in communication, computers and all that is technical. You could be an excellent teacher in areas requiring organization. You value order and place a high premium on hard work and effort. You like to get down to the most important. Whatever is practical is best and you appreciate things that are durable and long-lasting. You love truth, philosophy and law, etc. Your emotions could send you off in a direction that is anything but where you really want to go for now-careful. You are smart to guide yourself in positive directions.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your commuting time could be prolonged this morning due to traffic snarls and unexpected detours. Someone important or in authority may put a damper on your desires just now. Let this pass-in the future, there will be opportunities to express yourself in a better light. Advice that will help coordinate your job and your emotional life comes from a trusted friend. You would make a great investigator, either in scientific research or undercover work-it makes no difference. Your ability to get to the point is all but phenomenal. Close relationships take on more emotional depth, power and importance this evening. You often keep in touch with old friends and tonight you are able to have a long conversation with a loving relative.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This may not be the best time for a job change. You may lack the skill to organize and have feelings of inadequacy-fortunately this is temporary. There are options open for you, but it would be wise for you not to move too fast. Advice from a trusted friend or someone in career transitioning is in order to help coordinate your search and ease the emotions. It is easy for you to work with those in authority-those older and more experienced than you. You enjoy working with others and would eventually make a good manager. You have an easy way with those in authority. You may be flattered by an admirer this evening. All that glitters is not necessarily gold, however! You might be blinded by too much of a good thing. Adjust your priorities.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There is an emphasis on communication, expression of ideas and the connections between things, places and people. What goes on in your mind is your all-important motivation. You tend toward mental pursuits and admire intelligence. Creative visualization and meditation will give you some insight into the answers you may need. Your sense of concern for everything makes you valuable when anything needs doing and, if left unoccupied, you may worry too much! Given only a few facts, you are able to take in a situation and come up with a real picture of what is happening today-national or local. You will find plenty of opportunities to involve yourself in what interests you this evening: creative art, computers, music, etc.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

The morning may be a bit confusing due to the input of higher-ups. Your energy is high and can be put to constructive use-look around. Buckling down to the usual routine is the best way to handle this high energy for now. You will have opportunities to accomplish much as the day progresses. You are powerfully motivated and driven to positive end results. You have a very analytical bent and your mind excels at making practical decisions. Your ideas run deeper than superficial issues. You have an interest in market trends and business psychology at present. Your emotions and feelings of those around you may be very clear this afternoon. You are likely to meet and enjoy the antics of an individual that is strong in the areas of law enforcement.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You can accomplish quite a lot today. Your outgoing nature and your extremely skillful ways of handling other people make you a natural for working with or for the public. You would make an excellent teacher or coach and helping others to make career decisions is a skill you possess. These are things you should consider when making career decisions. Your career is never a problem-you have the kind of drive about which others can only dream. Everything works out well for you. You may want something less boring out of your life now and you may even invent ways in which to make your life more interesting. Repair work and perhaps some maintenance chores at home may catch your attention and satisfy your restless nature.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is a great time to be with others and to work together. You may be sought after as just the person for a particular job. However, be aware that there is a lot of energy available for disciplined work-you could push too hard and may even break something or become irritable. This is the best time to make a steady progress-push forward and rise to prominence-don't give up now! You will receive recognition for your hard work. Your psychic abilities are very good; you are tuned in, turned on and ready to help, advise, guide or lend your expertise to whatever comes to your attention now. You just naturally seem to know what is needed as well as how to provide the best results. This is a good time to become involved in new social gatherings.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This may be a very superficial day. It may not be possible for you to penetrate to anything remotely meaningful or moving. Work as usual may be the best road to take for now. Perhaps there is a sense of the artificial, the repetitive and the senseless. Do not worry about getting beneath the surface of a matter... All will work successfully. You are gifted and even lucky when it comes to professional decisions. It might take a little more work for you to be less timid in expressing your opinions. However, things almost always manage to work out for you. This evening, children or animals will be important to your life. Let go and enjoy the company of friends or family. Study nature-natural law. Play this evening. Let your imagination flow.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Clear decisions affecting others could be made today. This morning is full of opportunities to communicate with groups of people, perhaps in a meeting. Passing your ideas on to others helps you to organize your own thoughts and provides an opportunity for your ideas to develop. You are very gifted, having great magnetism and warmth and also a keen and powerful mind. Later today you succeed in completing your tasks in order to leave work early. For everything there is a place and a time, however, and this afternoon you shop for clothes. Tonight you may be entertaining people from out-of-town. They have not seen your city and you may enjoy showing them some high points. Your social agility is fine-tuned; you are ready for whatever may come.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may find that a particular project is just not your cup of tea this morning. Arguments of an emotional kind could be easy to find. Take a more giving attitude and picture the end result of this questionable project as a feather in your hat. A professional review of your efforts will receive positive praise. A good-sport attitude may be most important now. Outwardly you are intense and passionate and this quality is so essential to your character that all else revolves around it. Your ability to cut through the superficial and get to the real heart of things comes through loud and clear. There are no secrets with you. You always get right down to the nitty-gritty and lay things bare. Your lifestyle may find you burning through a lot of changes just now.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You could be most persuasive with others and well-spoken in all sorts of communication. Your drive and reasons are sometimes very independent and clever. You may find yourself breaking out of the ordinary with bursts of energy, fits of temper or new ideas. You could come up with new inventions. If you are in sales, now is the time that your sales will increase. You will be able to get a lot accomplished. Productive results are important to you now, more than narrowly personal concerns. Later this evening you may find yourself interacting with young people. This may be a good time to reflect upon your own situation and just how you feel about yourself. Your personal plans are back on track and headed in a positive direction.

WORD SEARCH

Dogs

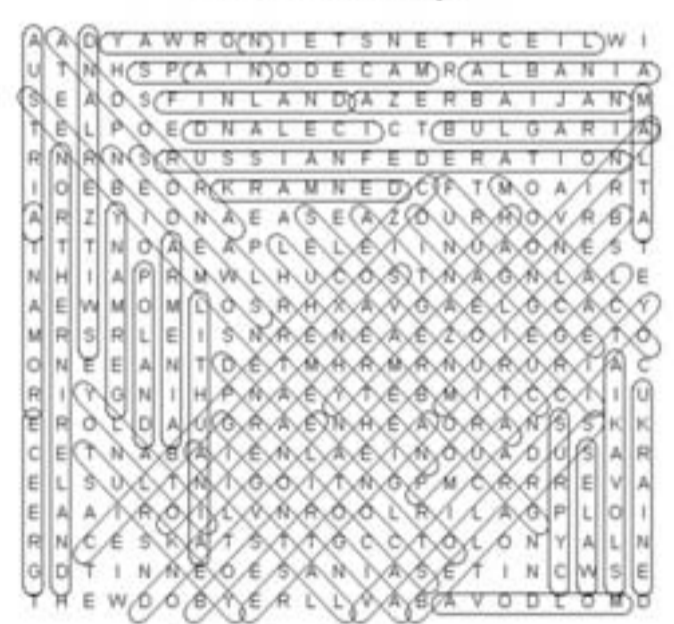
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 44 letters spell an Ogden Nash quotation.



- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| BASSET HOUND | DACHSHUND | MASTIFF | SAMOYED |
| BEAGLE | DALMATIAN | PEKINGESE | SCHNAUZER |
| BLOODHOUND | DEERHOUND | PINSCHER | SETTER |
| BOXER | DINGO | POINTER | SHAR PEI |
| BULLDOG | GERMAN SHEPHERD | POMERANIAN | SHEEPDOG |
| CHIHUAHUA | GREAT DANE | POODLE | SPITZ |
| CHOW CHOW | GREYHOUND | PUG | TERRIER |
| COCKER SPANIEL | HUSKY | RETRIEVER | WHIPPET |
| COLLIE | LHASA APSO | ROTTWEILER | |
| CORGI | MALAMUTE | SAINT BERNARD | |

Yesterday's Solution

Countries of Europe



- | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| ALBANIA | ENGLAND | LITHUANIA | SAN MARINO |
| ANDORRA | ESTONIA | LUXEMBOURG | SCOTLAND |
| ARMENIA | FINLAND | MACEDONIA | SLOVAKIA |
| AUSTRIA | FRANCE | MALTA | SLOVENIA |
| AZERBAIJAN | GEORGIA | MOLDOVA | SPAIN |
| BELARUS | GERMANY | MONACO | SWEDEN |
| BELGIUM | GREECE | NETHERLANDS | SWITZERLAND |
| BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA | HUNGARY | NORTHERN IRELAND | TURKEY |
| BULGARIA | ICELAND | NORWAY | UKRAINE |
| CHADIA | IRELAND | POLAND | SERBIA-MONTENEGRO |
| CYPRUS | ITALY | PORTUGAL | VATICAN CITY |
| CZECH REPUBLIC | LATVIA | ROMANIA | WALES |
| DENMARK | LIECHTENSTEIN | RUSSIAN FEDERATION | |

Hidden sentence: IN RESPECT TO AREA EUROPE IS THE SECOND SMALLEST CONTINENT IN THE WORLD

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



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

Hospitals

Table listing hospitals such as Sabah Hospital, Amiri Hospital, and Maternity Hospital with their respective contact numbers.

Clinics

Table listing various clinics including Kaizen center, Rawda, Adaliya, and many others, with their phone numbers.



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

Table listing pharmacies across Governorates: Ahmadi, Jahra, Capital, Farwaniya, and Hawally, including their addresses and phone numbers.

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Large table listing international call numbers for various countries from Afghanistan to Lesotho.

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Contact information for the Meteorological Department: Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630, Fax: (+965) 24348714, www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Weather forecast section including SFC. CHART, Four-Day Forecast table, and other meteorological data.

Warnings & Weather Watches

Warnings and weather watches section including Kuwait Forecast table and Prayer Times table.



PRIVATE CLINICS

Large table listing various private clinics and specialists such as Ophthalmologists, Plastic Surgeons, Paediatricians, Endocrinologist, etc., with their names and contact numbers.

GOSSIP

Shania Twain to perform in UK after 13-year gap

Shania Twain is set to perform in the UK for the first time in 13 years. The 'Man! I Feel Like A Woman' hit-maker will take to the stage as part of the line-up for BBC Radio 2's Festival in a Day at London's Hyde Park on September 10, in what will be her first live performance in the country since 2004. Speaking on 'The Chris Evans Breakfast Show' on the radio station yesterday Shania said: "I can't wait. It's been a long time. I'm so excited about it. I'll play a couple of new songs but I will definitely stick primarily to the hits." The appearance of the 'That Don't Impress Me Much' singer, 51, will also mark her only performance in the country for 2017, and comes as a celebration of the 20th anniversary of her breakthrough album 'Come on

Over'. Shania spent several years out of the spotlight after suffering with dysphonia, a condition which causes a loss of voice. At the time, it was believed the condition - which is often brought on by psychological trauma - was a result of her divorce from record producer Robert John 'Mutt' Lange, however, Shania later attributed the condition to contracting Lyme disease. The star is set to release a brand new album later this year, which will be her first since 2002's 'Up!'. Meanwhile, Take That are set to headline the BBC Radio 2 festival, and will be joined on the bill by the likes of Blondie, Rick Astley, James Blunt, Stereophonics, Emeli Sandé, Seth Lakeman, and newcomers Wildwood Kin. Take That's appearance will mark the second time

they've headlined the event, after having to step in to replace Lionel Richie in 2011, when he fell ill days before his scheduled performance. Frontman Gary Barlow told Chris Evans: "Do you remember in 2011, when you called me? I think I was at New York Airport and you said, 'Our headliner's let us down, can you come and do it?' "So I know what this festival's like, brilliant crowds, brilliant atmosphere. So when we were asked by Radio 2, what do you think we were going to say? Yes is the answer, and we cannot wait to be there." Tickets for Festival in a Day go on sale on Thursday at 8am.



Sam Smith is in the studio plotting comeback

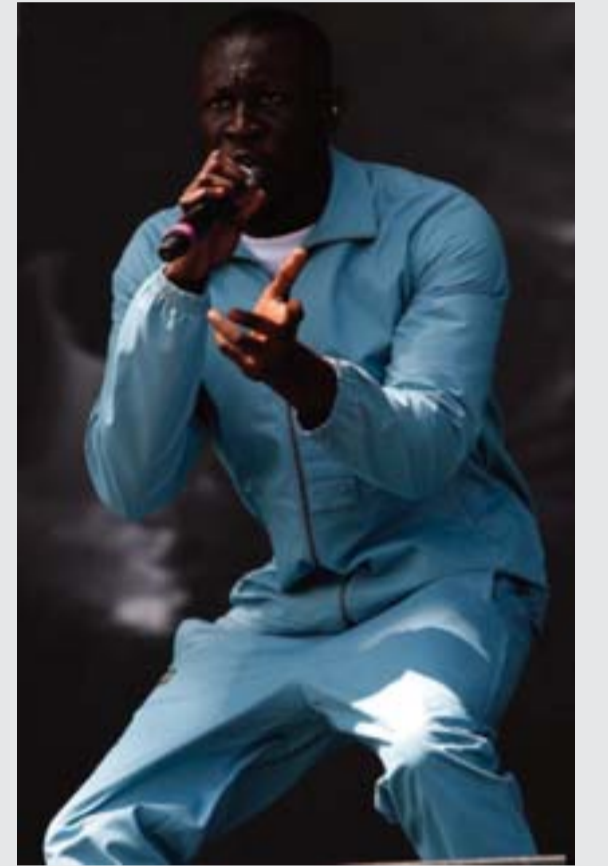
Sam Smith has confirmed he is in the studio recording new music. The 'Stay With Me' singer has shared a series of professional photographs from his creative hub on his Instagram account and has captioned them all simply, "recording". The 24-year-old pop star has been a break from the limelight since 2015, after a phenomenally successful two years touring his debut album 'In The Lonely Hour'. Little is known about the new music he is working on, except that he has collaborated with rising singer/songwriter Frances for his second LP. Speaking about the song, Frances, 23, previously said: "It was amazing. We wrote a song a few weeks ago for his second album so it was really fun." And the dark-haired hunk has also been in the studio with producer Timbaland. Sharing a selfie with Sam on Instagram, he previously wrote: "It was a pleasure working with this man @sam-

smithworld #puretalent #goodvibes #makingmemories and #timeless #music (sic)" The Grammy winner has been hard at work making new tunes from the very offset of his hiatus, according to Frances. The 'Don't Worry About Me' musician previously revealed that while the 'Writing's On The Wall' hitmaker might have been out of the spotlight and getting some much needed me time, he hasn't stopped writing. She told BANG Showbiz "Sam is so lovely and so supportive so great. I think he is doing a bit of writing, but he is having the most deserved break. I just think he worked so hard and he is so amazing and he did so well. I think he has been seeing his family and having a bit of Sam time, which he really deserves."

STORMZY WON'T MARK SUCCESS UNTIL FRIENDS ARE MILLIONAIRES

Stormzy won't celebrate his accomplishments until he makes all of his pals wealthy. The 23-year-old grime star - whose real name is Michael Omari - might have sold more than 69,000 copies of his number one debut LP 'Gangs Signs & Prayers', but that doesn't mean he's splashed the cash on expensive items to toast in his success. The 'Big Up Your Boots' hitmaker would rather wait until his friends become millionaires and just get a takeaway to acknowledge his triumphs as an artist. He told the latest issue of GQ magazine: "You know when you see a day-in-the-life of a rapper? And they got to Harrods? And buy a watch? Bro, I'd rather order a Deliveroo in my bed. "I can't sit down and say 'Mandem, we've done it it's done.' "Not until all of my friends are millionaires." Despite not wanting to shower himself in gifts, the 'Shut Up' rapper recently donated some of his hard earned money to help pay a fans £9,000 university tuition fees. He gave

lucky Fiona Asiedu from south London, the hefty sum in order to fund her dream of studying for her master's degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Fiona had set up a crowdfunding initiative entitled '#SW2Harvard' in order to try and raise a total of £12,000 in order to study Human Development and Psychology at the prestigious school and Stormzy gifted the amount online after the cause was brought to his attention on Twitter. Friends of Fiona tweeted the star and asked him to share the link to the crowdfunding page and he happily obliged, when a donation of £9,000 was made under the name of Michael Ebenazer Kwadjo Omari Owuo Junior - Stormzy's real name. A representative for the musician said: "I can confirm it was Stormzy who made the £9,000 donation."



Michael Fassbender wanted for Dark Universe

Bosses at Universal want Michael Fassbender to join the 'Dark Universe' franchise. The new cinematic universe - which launches with the upcoming reboot of 'The Mummy' - is set to bring together the movie giants' most classic monsters, and company bosses are already looking at which big names they can bring into their roster. Alex Kurtzman, who directed 'The Mummy' - which stars Tom Cruise - has said the studio would be interested in securing the 'X-Men' actor, alongside the likes of Jennifer Lawrence, Angelina Jolie, and Charlize Theron, for roles in productions including 'Frankenstein' and 'Dracula'. He said: "I'd love to bring Michael Fassbender in, I'd love to bring Jennifer Lawrence in, I'd love to see Charlize Theron in there, Angelina Jolie. "We know we're going to do 'Frankenstein', 'Bride of Frankenstein', 'Dracula', 'Creature from the Black Lagoon', 'Phantom of the Opera', 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' and 'Invisible Man'. There are characters within those films that can grow and expand and maybe even spin off." So far, Javier Bardem has already been cast as Dr Victor Frankenstein, and Johnny Depp has signed up to star as the titular Invisible Man, but no other casting announcements for further movies in the monsterverse have yet been announced. And Alex, is keen to "connect the monsters" between each story, in a similar way that Marvel have connected their heroes through ensemble movie



series 'Avengers', and DC have with 'Justice League'. He told Fandom.com: "I think that digging into deep mythologies about monsters around the world is fair game for us, as well and connecting the monsters that we know to some surprising monsters could also be really interesting." 'The Mummy' also stars Sofia Boutella, Russell Crowe, and Annabelle Wallis, and is set for release in the UK and US on Friday.



Justin Bieber's new single 2U to lead to LP?

Justin Bieber's forthcoming single with David Guetta '2U' could lead to an album, according to Def Jam's Steve Bartels. The record label's CEO - who also works with the likes of Kanye West and Iggy Azalea - has praised the 23-year-old pop superstar for releasing banger after banger with his latest hits 'Despacito' with Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee and 'I'm the One' with DJ Khaled, and says "all bets are off" as to whether a follow-up to 2015's 'Purpose' could be coming soon after the Guetta track. On his success lately, Steve said: "The remarkable thing about him right now is that he could be having the song of the summer without it being his own record - both the DJ Khaled ['I'm the One'] and Luis Fonsi ['Despacito'] records are massive right now, and we've got another one coming: We're doing a new release on Friday with Bieber and David Guetta called '2U'. We'll be working on in conjunction with Warner France - we'll be taking care of it here. It's a massive record, and it's another song that's gonna compete for song of the summer even though it's starting later than the other two." Asked if fans can expect a new record from the 'Sorry' singer, he replied: "These in their own right are driving to this tour, and when artists are hot, all bets are off. Scooter Braun, [Bieber's manager] and I constantly talk about strategy and what his step-outs are gonna be and what he's doing them on and maybe something happens and maybe it doesn't, but when you're making so much noise and such big hits, you never know." '2U' is to be released on Friday.

Sofia Boutella joins Fahrenheit 451

Sofia Boutella has been cast in 'Fahrenheit 451'. The 35-year-old actress is set to star alongside the previously announced Michael B. Jordan and Michael Shannon in the HBO movie adaptation of the dystopian novel of the same name written by Ray Bradbury in 1953. 'Fahrenheit 451' is set in a future where history and books are outlawed, and those that are discovered are burned by "firemen". Jordan will play the role of Montag, a young fireman who goes against the rules of the land and battles with his mentor Beatty - played by Shannon - in an attempt to regain his humanity. Sofia, meanwhile, has been cast as Clarisse, an informant caught between the competing interests of both Montag and Beatty. The movie is to be directed by Ramin Bahrani, and will also see Jordan serve as an executive producer through his Outlier Productions banner. Also working as executive producers on the project are

Sarah Green of Brace Cove Productions, Alan Gasmer, and Peter Jaysen, with David Coatsworth on board as a producer. Ramin is also set to both executive produce and co-write the movie, alongside Amir Naderi. For Sofia, the role comes as her latest movie 'The Mummy' - in which she stars as Princess Ahmanet and the titular Mummy, alongside Tom Cruise, Russell Crowe, and Annabelle Wallis - is set to hit screens later this week. Recently, Sofia spoke high praise of her role in the upcoming monster movie, dubbing her character as the "definition of a feminist". She said: "There was a lot of fear, I didn't need much acting to look frightened. It was weird, I felt really disempowered. I don't know if that word exists, did I just make that up? "I love that they gave this to a woman. Ahmanet is the definition of a feminist: strong, powerful and opinionated."



Annabelle Wallis' Mummy character represents real women

Annabelle Wallis says her 'The Mummy' character is "reflective" of women in the real world. The 32-year-old actress stars as Jenny Halsey in the upcoming reboot of the action-adventure franchise of the same name, and has said the role shows "the truth about women" and isn't the stereotypical "damsel in distress" character. Speaking to People magazine at the New York City premiere for the feature, Annabelle said: "I loved that she's feisty and she's reflective of the women that I know in my life and that women that we have in Hollywood and in all walks of life. She's real and she's the truth about women. I wanted to make someone that was an homage to the

classic heroine, but also a modern one that could be brought forward into the future. And she's rough and tumble and just is who she is." The news comes after the blonde beauty recently revealed she was relieved that she didn't throw up on her co-star Tom Cruise after it took them 64 takes to complete a stunt filmed in zero gravity. She said: "If you get any job you are excited but doing a stunt with him that he has never done before is just incredible. And, not vomiting on him!" Meanwhile, 54-year-old Tom has revealed his character Nick Morton plays the role of the anti-hero in the movie, as some of his motives are "questionable". He said: "He's kind of naughty, Nick, a little

bit. He's somebody who's a thief, an interesting character. We follow him as he takes us through this new world of gods and monsters in the new Dark Universe world and with this Dark Universe, you have these grey area characters. [Nick] is questionable, but he's very charming and funny." 'The Mummy' also stars Sofia Boutella as Princess Ahmanet and the titular Mummy, as well as Russell Crowe as Dr Henry Jekyll, and will hit cinema screens in the UK and the US on Friday.



MUSIC & MOVIE

George and Amal Clooney welcome twins Ella and Alexander

George and Amal Clooney's twins have arrived - one of the most anticipated births since Knox and Vivienne Jolie-Pitt were born in 2008. Beyonce and Jay Z, you're next. The Clooneys welcomed a son and a daughter on Tuesday morning, announcing in a joint statement that daughter Ella, son Alexander and mother Amal were all "happy,

healthy and doing fine." "George is sedated and should recover in a few days," the statement said. Clooney, 56, and international human rights lawyer Amal Alamuddin, 39, married in Italy in 2014. These are the first children for both. Other celebrity parents of twins include Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon, Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony

and Rebecca Romijn and Jerry O'Connell. Beyonce and Jay Z are also expecting twins imminently. She announced the pregnancy in February. — AP

In this file photo, Amal Clooney, left, and George Clooney arrive at the world premiere of "Hail, Caesar!" in Los Angeles. — AP



This file photo shows music artist Eddie Vedder performing before outgoing US President Barack Obama's farewell address in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

Three weeks on, Eddie Vedder mourns grunge icon Cornell

Pearl Jam frontman Eddie Vedder on Tuesday mourned grunge icon Chris Cornell as someone like a brother to him, breaking a nearly three-week silence that had irked the late singer's family. The death of Cornell, who had been an early mentor to Vedder, left Pearl Jam as the last surviving titans of the grunge rock scene that burst out of Seattle in the early 1990s. Vedder, in an on-stage speech during a show in London, said he had been reflecting on Cornell's death and "these things take time."

"You know, he wasn't just a friend. He was someone I looked up to like my older brother," Vedder said in remarks quoted by several spectators on a Pearl Jam fan forum. Vedder said he had lain awake two days after Cornell's death in a waterfront cabin, "a place he would have loved," and memories came back. "I'm still thinking about those memories, and I will live with those memories in my heart and I will love him forever," Vedder said. Cornell, 52, was found hanging in his hotel room in Detroit early on May 18 after a show with his main band Soundgarden. The medical examiner called the death a suicide.

Cornell's wife disputed the finding, saying the singer—who had recovered a decade earlier from longtime drug and alcohol problems—had shown no suicidal inclinations and that his judgment may have been impaired by an anti-anxiety prescription drug. Two days afterward, Pearl Jam posted a picture of Cornell on Facebook but did not issue a statement. Cornell's mother-in-law, Toni Karayiannis, later upbraided Vedder on Twitter, saying the late singer's family was distraught.

"Who's not man enough not to pay a tribute to the man who gave him a chance to be who he is? To not send a message to his wife and 3 kids," she tweeted, not using Vedder's name but pointedly saying the person sang "Daughter." Vedder met Cornell when the future Pearl Jam singer arrived in Seattle to join the growing scene of grunge, the musical subgenre that merged the rawness of punk rock with dark introspection. Vedder's first-ever recording was in 1991 when Cornell included him on "Hunger Strike" by Temple of the Dog, which featured musicians who would form Pearl Jam. Of other emblematic singers of grunge, Kurt Cobain of Nirvana killed himself in 1994 and Stone Temple Pilots frontman Scott Weiland died of a drug overdose in 2015. — AP

Sony backs 'Ghostbusters' director after Aykroyd criticism

Sony Pictures Entertainment is backing the director of last year's "Ghostbusters" remake, Paul Feig, after Dan Aykroyd criticized him for spending too much money on the film to make it worthwhile for Sony to make a sequel. Without mentioning Feig's name, Aykroyd said on the British chat show "Sunday Brunch" this week that Feig didn't want to shoot scenes Aykroyd and others told him were necessary. He said the scenes were eventually added as reshoots and cost the production an additional \$30 million to \$40 million, making a sequel "economically not feasible."

While he said he was pleased with the reboot of the franchise that starred Kristen Wiig and Melissa McCarthy, Aykroyd suggested Sony wouldn't be eager again to work with Feig, who directed comedy hits "Bridesmaids" and "The Heat." "He will not be back on the Sony lot any time soon," Aykroyd said. Sony Pictures took issue with Aykroyd's comments in a statement to The Associated Press on Tuesday, putting the cost of the reshoots at \$3 million to \$4 million. "Sony has a strong relationship with Paul Feig, and we have incredible respect for his work," spokeswoman Jean Guerin said. Sony Pictures hasn't said whether there will be a sequel to "Ghostbusters." The company does say that "Ghostbusters" television and family projects are in the works. Aykroyd co-wrote and starred in the original "Ghostbusters" film and its 1989 sequel. He served as an executive producer for the remake. — AP

ARIANA GRANDE TO RESUME TOUR IN PARIS AMID TIGHT SECURITY

US singer Ariana Grande is to resume her world tour in Paris on Wednesday, more than two weeks after it was interrupted by the Manchester suicide bomb attack. Security will be extra tight in the French capital, a day after police shot and injured a man who attacked an officer outside the world-famous Notre Dame cathedral. Roads will be blocked off around the concert venue in the east of Paris while police will help security guards to check fans as they arrive for the show.

Even before Tuesday's Notre Dame attack, police had announced a significant deployment planned for the US singer's concert, noting its "powerful symbolic context". On May 22 a suicide bomber blew himself up, killing 22 people including 7 children at a concert by Grande in Manchester. She cancelled shows she was due to give in London, Belgium, Germany, Poland and Switzerland, and returned to Florida, before returning to Manchester on Sunday to headline an all-star benefit show for victims of the attack. Before the Paris show, her young fans said they would not give in to fear.

"I feel really anxious but I don't want that to stop me from going. I will probably feel on edge, I hope security is tight-if there is something planned, there is not much we can do," said Caoimhe McDonnell, a 19-year-old student from Northern Ireland living in Paris. Clodagh Ennis, also 19, added: "I feel that not going to the concert would be letting terrorists win, that's what they want, they want people to be scared, so still attending despite the attacks is like a protest against them. "Personally, I am not naturally a worried person. Of course there will be the thought of 'What if something happens?' but I know there are probably people a lot more worried than I am. "I do wonder what the concert will be like, will it go as normal, will it be sad, but I think the best thing to do is go and show our support for her, and try to enjoy it as much as we can." — AFP

In this handout photo provided by Dave Hogan for One Love Manchester, singer Ariana Grande performs at the One Love Manchester tribute concert in Manchester, north western England, Sunday. — AP



People gather near a new musical fountain which is decorated with lights in Belgrade, Serbia. — AP



Not everyone dancing to tunes of Belgrade musical fountain

A giant new fountain in Belgrade, complete with light show and loud music, is drawing mixed reviews and online ridicule. The huge 1.8-million-euro (\$2 million) installation on the Serbian capital's busiest roundabout features 350 water jets, a colorful light show and sometimes loud music. Many think the money could have been better spent on something more urgent, like patching up the numerous potholes on Belgrade's streets, renovating drab-looking facades all around the city or providing air conditioning to poorly equipped hospitals.

Dubbed "the biggest fountain in southeast Europe" by city authorities, it formally opened earlier this week to the tunes of Italian opera and hits by Michael Jackson, attracting thou-

sands of curious onlookers. Goran Babovic wasn't impressed, saying it reminded him of fountains he had seen in China. "I would prefer if this was more original," he said. "It looks a bit cheap." Dragan Kovacic, another onlooker, considered it "too glamorous" for its rundown neighborhood, and called the fountain "a bit kitsch."

But the fountain did have some fans. "When I came here and saw this I was speechless. Fantastic colors," said Jelena Nikolic. "I think that the music should be a few decibels down, but all in all it is pretty," said Desimir Stojkovic. Social media was awash with jokes about the fountain and some anti-government groups announced protests at the site. Another group announced a rave party at the square on July 1.

The satirical njuz.net site said that the drivers who crash at the busy roundabout after being distracted by the lights and loud music will have the right to request the next song to be played. City Manager Goran Vesic defended the project, saying it will become a major tourist attraction. He said that the fountain has heating that will enable it to work in the winter when temperatures drop to minus 20 degrees Celsius (-4 F). "This is the only such fountain in this part of Europe," he said. — AP

Bon Jovi, Whoopi Goldberg to appear at Songwriters Hall

Jon Bon Jovi, Whoopi Goldberg and Usher are set to attend the 2017 Songwriters Hall of Fame event inducting Jay Z, Berry Gordy and others. The Songwriters Hall announced Thursday that Irving Azoff, Benny Blanco, Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff also will appear June 15 at the New York Marriott Marquis hotel.

The organization previously announced that Max Martin, Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis and

Chicago's Robert Lamm and James Pankow will be inducted this year. Jay Z will be the first rapper inducted into the Songwriters Hall. Ed Sheeran will receive the Hal David Starlight Award, and Pitbull will earn the Global Ambassador Award at the gala and awards ceremony. Others set to appear include Johnny Gill, Pat Monahan, Kelli O'Hara and Cassandra Wilson. — AP



This file photo, shows Jerry Seinfeld performing at Stand Up For Heroes in New York. — AP



In this file photo Kesha arrives at the Billboard Music Awards at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas.

Jerry Seinfeld says 'no thanks' to hug from Kesha

Jerry Seinfeld is not a hugger and he let Kesha know it before a star-studded charity event in Washington earlier this week. Video shows Kesha interrupting an interview Seinfeld was doing with a local news reporter ahead of the "Night of Laughter & Song" event at the Kennedy Center on Monday. The singer wanted a hug from the comedian, but Seinfeld repeatedly declined, backing off and telling her, "no thanks."

Kesha quickly walked away while Seinfeld laughed and told the reporter he "didn't know who that was." He said that he wished her the best after being told it was Kesha. The singer didn't seem too upset about the encounter, posting on Twitter on Tuesday that she has "lots to smile about." — AP

Hip Hop Hall of Fame secures Harlem building

Planners of a Hip Hop Hall of Fame said Tuesday they had secured a Harlem location in their ambitious bid to build a museum, hotel and concert venue devoted to the New York-born genre. The organizers said they were launching a campaign to raise \$150 million to meet a goal of opening a first phase of the Hip Hop Hall of Fame in February which will include an initial museum, a cafe and a gift shop.

In a key step, Hip Hop Hall of Fame planners said they had won a bid to acquire a building on Harlem's 125th Street, the bustling heart of the uptown Manhattan neighborhood that for a century has been one of the foremost centers of African American culture. The space is modeled on the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, which each year inducts artists for their historic contributions. Founded in 1983, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995 opened a complex in Cleveland that has become a major draw to the Midwestern city.

"Cleveland is home to the Rock Hall of Fame and Harlem will be the location for the Hip Hop Hall of Fame Headquarters," planners said in a statement. The Hip Hop Hall of Fame planners eventually envision a 20-story complex that will include a five-star hotel, television studio, concert lounge, restaurant and sports bar with an aim of drawing one million visitors a year. The project is being led by J.T. Thompson, a concert promoter and television producer who earlier arranged a Hip Hop Hall of Fame award show for Black Entertainment Television.

A separate project, known as the Universal Hip Hop Museum, has been in the planning stages in The Bronx, the city's northernmost borough where the musical genre was first born in the 1970s. Rocky Bucano, who leads the project in The Bronx, hopes to combine the museum with businesses, green space and affordable housing as a way to stimulate the economy in the borough, which remains the poorest in New York despite gains in recent years. Harlem, which has been rapidly gentrifying, regularly draws tourists to attractions that include the Apollo Theater, the legendary jazz venue which has started its own Hollywood-style Walk of Fame of jazz greats. The moves come as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame increasingly embraces hip-hop stars, with slain rap legend Tupac Shakur inducted in April. — AP



This summer be kind to your skin

By Real Fouz

Summer is officially here which means it is time to open our summer wardrobes and bring out those sundresses and sandals to show off our most important summer accessory, 'a beautiful golden tan.' It's very important to know how to build a gorgeous, bronze tan instead of burning your skin, which can be very painful and unflattering. But first, you need to understand the type of skin that you have. Is it sensitive and easily burned or can it stand high heats? Answering this question will help guide you to what kind of products are best for you.

The first and most important product you will need is a sunscreen that protects your skin from both UVA and UVB lights. UVA light turns your skin into bronze but also leads to wrinkles in the future if you don't protect your skin in the right way. UVB is the reddening ray that tends to burn your skin. Once you apply your SPF, you can then apply the tanning oil of your choice. Applying tanning oil with no protection will attract the sunrays to your skin, which will give

you a nice color, but will also do so much damage to your skin in the long run.

If you have sensitive skin that is prone to sun burns, spray tanning is also a great option that can give you amazing results. There are so many places that offer spray tans, so find a place that you trust and make sure that they use high quality products that won't irritate your skin in anyway. Before going to your spray tan, it's really important to prep your skin. Exfoliate exfoliate exfoliate! Using exfoliating gloves is a good way to get rid of any excess dry skin that you may have, which will make the spray tan go on much more evenly and smoothly and you won't get those annoying patches that we all hate.

Also, make sure you have an idea of how dark you want to be and discuss the shade you want with your beautician so that you don't end up with a shade that you're unhappy with. My recommendation is to get the spray tan done at night because you can't touch or wash your skin for 6-8 hours, so it's easier to sleep right after and then shower it off the next morning. Another option is to self-tan at home. This is great if you're on a

budget or you want something quick and don't have the time to go out and get tanned in the sun or get a professional spray tan.

There are a lot of different products in the market that you can use at home. It's important to make sure you find the right one for your skin type. The same applies with self-tanning and spray tanning, always make sure to exfoliate beforehand. An important tip is to make sure that your exfoliator doesn't contain any oil because using any oily products before applying a fake tan will completely ruin it and leave your skin with patchy results.

If you do happen to end up with a streaky, patchy tan or turn yourself orange, don't worry, there is a solution. Immediately get into a hot shower or steam room and use a wet cloth and a coin sized amount of baking soda mixed with water to scrub away your tan. It's all about choosing what's best for you, so be kind to your skin this summer and get your tan on without damaging your skin.

How to make plane trips easier on pets, and owners too

Gabby Slome rarely vacations without her dog Pancho in tow. He is a full-fledged family member. And just as "you wouldn't leave your child at home," Slome says, she doesn't leave Pancho either - even if that means an airplane flight or two. Traveling with pets has become easier thanks to pet-friendly hotels. But air travel is a bigger challenge than a road trip, and many owners worry about risks to the pets' health and life. Air travel is usually quite safe for dogs and cats, says veterinarian Julia Langfitt, who has treated pets in the US and Asia, and is now based in the UK.

"Pets kind of live in the moment," she says. "Once they're on the plane, they just kind of settle down and accept what's happening." Owners, on the other hand, are often "very, very worried about how the animal's going to feel and how stressed the animal is going to be in the carrier." As the summer travel season begins, how can owners make flying safer for their pets and less stressful for themselves?

Cargo versus cabin

Pets who fly as checked baggage are expected to be kept in a safely pressurized and temperature-controlled cargo hold. But summer heat can pose risks. So choose flight times that won't have your plane waiting on the tarmac during the hottest part of the day. Many airlines won't transport pets as cargo if the temperature is expected to be 85 degrees Fahrenheit or above.

Therapy animals can ride in the cabin with their owners, and some airlines allow other small pets in the cabin. But there are fees and restrictions on the size, weight and type of pet, as well as the type of carrier. Contact the airline directly when planning a trip, and confirm by phone the arrangements and cost to have your pet travel with you. If your pet will ride with you, leave extra time to pass through security and avoid crowds at the gate. And if the pet isn't comfortable with strangers, arrive early, request priority boarding and keep children from reaching into the carrier.

Visit your vet

Most airlines request proof of a pet's good health and recent vaccinations, so learn the rules for your airline and schedule a visit to a vet. Discuss any concerns about your pet's age, health and breed. The Humane Society advises owners of short-nosed or "brachycephalic" pets,

such as pugs and bulldogs, to consider the risk of respiratory problems due to heat or limited oxygen. Also discuss hydration: Langfitt says to hydrate pets well before a trip, and be sure they have access to clean water while flying. One solution: Teach your cat or dog to use a "sipper bottle" like hamsters and rabbits use. Attach one to the inside of the carrier door several weeks before flying. Place a bit of appealing food on the end of the water spout, and the pet will quickly learn how to get water from the bottle. Upon arrival, especially after long flights or multiple plane changes, Langfitt suggests having a vet check the pet for dehydration and perhaps give fluids intravenously.

Container concerns

Make sure the pet's carrier is approved by your airline. For pets traveling in the cabin with you, a soft-sided



This photo provided by veterinarian Julia Langfitt shows a cat in a travel carrier in Shanghai, China.

carrier may be approved, but as cargo they must be in a hard-sided crate. Slome and Langfitt both recommend introducing pets to their carrier as early as possible. Slome kept some of Pancho's toys in his carrier, and kept it open as a place to nap and play. She even fed him meals there to make it more familiar.

Dogs who are not crate-trained may have a harder time during a flight, Langfitt says. But she doesn't advise loading up the carrier with toys or blankets. "Less is more," she says. "Just bring the pee pad." It's also important to clearly label the pet's carrier with your name, the pet's name and your contact information, especially if they'll travel as cargo.

Know your airports

Airports serving more than 10,000 passengers per year are required to offer "pet relief stations" in each terminal. But facilities vary: Some have just a tiny patch of fake grass, while others offer real grass and play rooms. TSA facilities at airports also vary. Some have animal inspection rooms, which might be less frightening to a pet than being removed from a carrier at crowded security checkpoints.

Time and planning

For international flights, investigate local laws, airport rules and airline rules. Pets likely need vaccinations and health clearances within a specific timeframe, which can range from 30 days to just 48 hours before departure. Pet owners who are relocating can hire a service to handle their pets' flights, immunizations and even immigration into a new country. But the costs can be high. Door-to-door service for an international move can cost as much as \$2,500 per cat, Langfitt says, and \$3,000 to \$4,000 per dog. And these services may need several months to handle all the paperwork and examinations. Slome, a canine nutritionist who runs the New York-based pet food delivery service Ollie (myollie.com), suggests thinking ahead to your pet's arrival: Familiar items such as a blanket can make a hotel room seem like home, and it helps to feed the pet the same food they eat at home. — AP



In this file photo, rescue dogs wait in a hanger to board planes at the Van Nuys Airport in the Van Nuys section of Los Angeles. — AP photos



In this file photo, crated Labrador-mix puppies await a flight from Montgomery, Ala, to Tampa, Fla.



This photo provided by veterinarian Julia Langfitt shows an employee with WorldCare Pet loading a pet carrier into a van to transport a cat to the airport in Shanghai, China.

PUG LOVE: OWNERS OF FLAT-FACED DOGS DON'T MIND THE SNORTING

The first time Lisha Gonzalez and her husband, Victor, met their bulldog, Buddy, as a puppy, they immediately fell in love with his slobbering, smush-nosed face and stubborn charm. They didn't realize that Buddy, now 6, would be allergic to grass, cats and dust, take medication daily and need medicated shampoo. He can't get too hot or his skin will break out in a rash. He also snores at night and snorts like a pig. But that's all fine. "Buddy has been a very delicate creature. But he's very loving and social," said Lisha, 56, one recent day as Buddy rolled around in the grass at their home in Pasadena, California.

With their short muzzles and smaller upper jaws, flat-faced dogs - known as brachycephalic breeds, and including bulldogs, Boston terriers, pugs and French bulldogs - tend to have particular health issues, from breathing noisily to overheating and allergies. But they remain favorites among dog owners. According to the American Kennel Club's rankings of popular dog breeds for 2016, bulldogs rank No. 4, French bulldogs No. 6, Boston terriers No. 21 and pugs No. 32 out of the AKC's 189 recognized breeds. (Labrador retrievers top the list.) The four breeds "are all known for their good temperament, and they tend to be affectionate, loveable and

friendly," said AKC Vice President and Executive Secretary Gina DiNardo.

'cute, funny, trendy and sociable'

Lisa Hsuan, a veterinarian at the Animal Health Care Center in Los Angeles, said brachycephalic breeds are seen as "cute, funny, trendy and sociable," as well as entertaining (think of those videos of skateboarding bulldogs on social media). Prospective owners should do their research first about the dogs and their issues, however, Hsuan said. "They have breathing issues because of the anatomy of their faces, airways and noses, are prone to yeast infections in their skin folds, which are always moist, and have allergies and sensitive skin," she said. "They have a lot of ear infections, because their ear canals are narrow and twisty. They're also prone to heat exhaustion, since they don't move air very efficiently because of their faces. They pant a lot."

These dogs shouldn't be allowed to overheat or exercise in warm weather, Hsuan said. Keep them indoors with air conditioning on very hot days, DiNardo added. Pay attention to cleaning and hygiene, Hsuan said. "Minimize contact with dust, grass and pollen, which can cause skin inflammation,"

she said. "Bathing frequently helps to avoid contact with environmental allergens. A lot of medicated shampoos have anti-yeast and anti-bacterial ingredients." Energy levels vary among individual dogs and breeds, Hsuan said.

"Boston terriers can be wild sometimes, and are pretty high energy," said Hsuan. "Bulldogs tend to be nice, and low energy. They're heavy and don't breathe very well, so they don't have a lot of stamina. A lot of brachycephalic dog owners don't understand how important it is for their dogs to be lean. Being overweight can increase stress on their dogs' breathing. Some vets and breeders put the dogs on low-fat diets early in life." Cynthia and Gerardo Rodriguez of Altadena, California, occasionally look after their adult daughter's 6-year-old pug, Lola. With her scrunched face and bulging eyes, Lola resembles a sad, cute clown.

Incredibly disobedient

"There's a lot of personality in a little package with pugs," said Cynthia Rodriguez. "You have to make sure with their protruding eyes that they don't run into a cactus! Lola is prissy. She's a sitting dog. She likes comfort. If the ground is too rough, she doesn't like it because it hurts her little paws."

Sharon Freeark of Pasadena had reservations about getting a bat-eared, squish-faced French bulldog five years ago, but since then has fallen in love with sporty, pool-loving Booboo. "She's darling with kids, and is so smart, but incredibly disobedient," said Freeark, as Booboo panted loudly next to her on a recent walk. "Sit, stay, come" mean nothing to her. She's also hilarious, and she'll sit with her feet sticking straight out."

Los Angeles artist Lili Chin's 12-year-old Boston terrier, Boogie, is the muse and model for her business, Doggie Drawings, which specializes in pet portraits, dog art, and infographics on dog behavior and training. "Boston terriers' faces are so expressive and full of character," said Chin. "Perhaps smush-faced dogs look more like people, with their big eyes and pouty mouths." Boogie used to develop staph infections on his skin every summer. He takes allergy medicine daily. Yet he plays like a puppy, and enjoys long walks. "I love that Boogie likes to sleep in in the mornings. He's a wonderful snuggle buddy," said Chin. "I feel very lucky that aside from the allergies, Boogie is a relatively healthy dog, and I would love him even if he wasn't." — AP



Photo shows 8-year-old French bulldog Booboo with her owner Sharon Freeark in Pasadena, Calif. — AP photos



Photo provided by Solvej Schou shows 6-year-old bulldog Buddy in Pasadena, Calif. Buddy is owned by Lisha Gonzalez and her husband Victor Gonzalez.



Photo shows 6-year-old bulldog Buddy and his owner Lisha Gonzalez, 56, in Pasadena, Calif.



This photo provided by Solvej Schou shows 6-year-old pug Lola with Altadena, Calif, couple Cynthia Rodriguez, 64, and Gerardo Rodriguez, 66, in Pasadena, Calif.

FEATURES



View of the "Parthenon of Books" by Argentinian artist Marta Minujin, at the Documenta 14 art exhibition in Kassel. — AFP photos

The "Parthenon of Books" by Argentinian artist Marta Minujin, can be seen between two billboards advertising the Documenta 14 art exhibition, in Kassel.

A volunteer uses a mobile lift to hang books on the "Parthenon of Books" by Argentinian artist Marta Minujin.

'Parthenon of Books': monumental artwork protests censorship

It looks like the monumental temple standing imposingly at the Acropolis in Athens. But this replica in central Germany is not built with marble, but books that have been or remain banned. "The Parthenon of Books" is the main showpiece at this year's Documenta—the cult contemporary art show held once every five years in the university town of Kassel. The work by Argentine artist Marta Minujin is a plea against all forms of censorship. Minujin, 74, a pop art icon in South America, has described it as "the most political" of her works. In fact, the "Parthenon of Books" stands at the same site where, in 1933, Nazis set in flames books by Jewish or Marxist writers.



View of the "Parthenon of Books" by Argentinian artist Marta Minujin.

Books sit in a crate before being fixed onto the "Parthenon of Books".

Fast forward eight decades and there is a team of volunteers wearing hard hats gathering at the foot of a crane, preparing to lift more books onto the installation. In a few minutes, a copy of "The First Circle" by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn would find its place on one of the 46 columns formed by metal grills which are in turn covered with books. The Russian writer's novel joins bestsellers including "The Bible", "The Satanic Verses", "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" and "The Little Prince". In all, 100,000 copies of 170 titles will cover the columns, each individually wrapped in a plastic bag to shield it from the capricious German weather.

"The work has exactly the same dimensions as the Parthenon -- 70 metres (230 feet) in length, 31 meters in breadth and 10 meters in height," one of Documenta's curators, Pierre Bal-Blanc, told AFP. The Frenchman said the art installation at Friedrichsplatz also has a "slightly slanted orientation which gives a more impressive presence, because you get a side view of it rather than a frontal view."

170 titles, 100,000 books

The showpiece's reference to ancient Greece is not pure chance. This year's edition of Documenta, which attracted 905,000 people in 2012, is taking place simultaneously in

another city—Athens. Since April 8, the Greek capital with its underground emerging art scene has been busy with the exhibitions, concerts, films and performances linked to Documenta. And from June 10, the show, known for rejecting commercialism in favour of the quirky and groundbreaking, returns to its birth place, Kassel, where it will feature works from 160 artists until September 17.

Preparations for the "Parthenon of Books" began last year, when Minujin launched an appeal to collect up to 100,000 books. Nineteen students at Kassel University had also helped to draw up an inventory of banned books, listing some 70,000 that span "the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago to apartheid South Africa," said art historian Florian Gassner. The

process of picking which titles would be featured was at times complicated. "In communist East Germany, there wasn't a list of banned books drawn up by the authorities," said Gassner. "What happened was that at the moment when a writer wanted to get his work published, suddenly there was no more paper for the job," he said. Finally, Minujin and the Documenta team shortlisted 170 titles.

Handed out

But what is perhaps Germany's most controversial work, banned in several countries, will not figure on the Parthenon—Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf". The book outlines Hitler's ideology that formed the basis for Nazism, but, like pornographic works,

has been deliberately left out of the exhibition. Meanwhile, some art experts have also decried the key showpiece of this year's Documenta as a copy of a work that already exists. In fact, some 34 years ago, after the fall of the Argentine junta, Minujin had already set up a similar installation of books to condemn censorship imposed by the military dictatorship.

In Kassel, Minujin will keep collecting copies of the banned titles until Documenta closes its doors. After that, the books will be redistributed to the public. The "Parthenon of Books" is "a monumental project but an immaterial one," said Bal-Blanc. "It will disappear just as quickly as it has appeared." — AFP



A female ordinance plant worker's uniform is part of the permanent exhibit "Salute to the Home Front" at the National World War II Museum which will open to the public this Saturday, in New Orleans. — AP photos



Luggage, an image of a boy of Japanese descent, and a video interview of a man who was kept in an internment camp, are part of the permanent exhibit "Salute to the Home Front".



Employees walk through a mock-up of a 1940s-style living room, with military uniforms hanging in the closet, as part of the permanent exhibit "Salute to the Home Front".



A mockup of a 1940s era living room, with framed photos of family members who are off to war, is part of the permanent exhibit "Salute to the Home Front".

New National WWII Museum exhibit looks at fight on homefront

A rusted fragment of the battleship USS Arizona sunk at Pearl Harbor, a woman's munitions plant uniform and ration books all tell the complex story of life on the homefront in a new exhibit at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans. "Salute to the Home Front," which opens Saturday, explores the bitter fight about entering the war, racial and gender prejudice, and the development of the atomic bomb.

Museum President and CEO Nick Mueller said most of the museum's 6-acre campus shows how the war was won on the battlefield but the new permanent exhibit explains "why it was fought and how it was won on the homefront." The 10,000-square-foot exhibit begins with the years after World War I. The peace treaty that ended the war in 1918 was "punitive and did not really solve the social and cultural ills" that led to the war, according Owen Glendenning, the museum's associate vice president for education and access.

"With democracy and capitalism under question, the rise of authoritarian regimes really shook the world," he said. Among the artifacts are British gas masks for children - one that might fit a 5-year-old and a much bigger one designed to hold an infant from head to waist. Gas had been a major weapon of World War I, and people feared that gas bombs might be dropped in civilian areas. "Fortunately, it never happened, but the population was scared stiff," Glendenning said. Headlines and newsreels show the strident debate between US isolationists and internationalists, which ended when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor.

Survivors' accounts of that attack are among more than 50 videotaped oral histories interspersed throughout the exhibit. "The signature of this museum is to engage people in personal stories. ... We hear from survivors of Pearl Harbor, people on Main Street USA. ... We hear first-hand

stories about people who went into factories or into the service to fight," Mueller said. The exhibit's Main Street USA has a newsstand, a theater marquee and a store window filled with propagandistic wares such as Victory bobby pins and a charm bracelet of military service insignia.

Favorite pieces

Within the picket fence outside two rooms representing a 1940s-style home, one wall is covered with a photo of a victory garden. Nearby are a real hubcap and other metal items for a scrap drive. Inside the kitchen, the shelves display pamphlets with titles such as "Victory Begins at Home! Recipes to Match Your Sugar Ration" and "Health for Victory Club Meal-Planning Guide." Pull open kitchen drawers and you see items including ration books, matchbooks and an icebag. A living-room wall displays a framed map: "Esso War Map II: Invasion Edition." It's designed, an introductory statement says, so people can "follow the strategy of the Allies as it develops from day to day." An open closet in the same room displays children's military dolls, toy guns and dress-up uniforms.

Glendenning said the gallery on the rush to turn from a peacetime economy to a wartime one holds two of his favorite artifacts: A cutaway ship model from the Higgins boat-building plant in New Orleans, built as a reference to show workers how everything fit together, and the overalls and cap worn by a female munitions factory worker. "It has such a '40s sense of style," he said. "I love the big red buttons at the hip." Toni Kiser, assistant director for collections management, said one of her favorite pieces is at the bottom right corner of the living room's display cabinet: A statuette of Hitler bending over, with a pincushion as his rear end. — AP



A posting restricting the movement of, and instructing people of Japanese origin to prepare to be moved to internment camps, is part of the permanent exhibit "Salute to the Home Front".



Kristin Guillot works on installing images of newspapers as part of the permanent exhibit "Salute to the Home Front".



A child's gas mask, is part of the permanent exhibit "Salute to the Home Front".

Lifestyle

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A Kashmiri man prays inside the shrine of Sufi saint Shiekh Abdul Qadir Jeelani during the Holy Month of Ramadan in Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir. Muslims across the world are observing the holy fasting month of Ramadan, where they refrain from eating, drinking and smoking from dawn to dusk. — AP



This file photo shows Paris Hilton showing the Paris Hilton Limited Edition Watch in New York City.

In US, diamonds are a millennial's best friend

Diamonds are making a comeback in America as more millennials fall for crystals long associated with "eternal" love. US diamond demand hit \$40 billion in 2016, up 4.4 percent from the prior year and comprising half of global diamond revenues for the first time since the 1990s, according to global diamond mining and retail giant De Beers. The surge has come despite sluggish economic growth and overproduction of the jewels that has depressed prices, said Stephen Lussier, vice president of marketing at De Beers. The industry has gotten more bullish in America with the success of a marketing pivot targeted at millennials, those born between 1981 and 2000 who have shown concern for social issues, including the ethics of harvesting diamonds from war-torn countries.

Increased demand from this key demographic has lifted sales of diamonds that cost between \$1,000 and \$5,000. The US, along with China and India, are considered the most crucial components of the \$80 billion global diamond market. Gone is the motto "diamonds are forever" that was intro-

duced after World War II and popularized by Marilyn Monroe, who sang "Diamonds are a girl's best friend" in the 1953 movie, "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes." Today's slogan, "Real is rare, real is a diamond," positions the crystals as a "symbol of authentic connection and commitment" and an antidote to all things mass-produced, according to industry lobby the Diamonds Producers Association.

'Designer' diamonds

"We want to change their perception, what they think about diamonds," said Lussier of De Beers, which is 85 percent held by Anglo American and 15 percent by the government of Botswana. De Beers, through its Forevermark brand, provides information on diamond origins and supports the nonprofit group Women for Women International, which provides aide to women in war-torn countries. "Millennial consumers have distinctive preferences, which in many ways diverge from previous generations," Ashley Wallace, an analyst from Bank of America Merrill Lynch said in a research note.

"They tend to be more value conscious, more concerned with sustainability and ethical production, and often value unique and individual products versus items that are standardized and mass-produced." Another shift has been greater use of diamonds as an accessory and not simply for rings. Jewelers are making creative uses of the four "C's"-cut, clarity, carat weight and color. Popular choices include diamonds in red, coffee or champagne colors. Sales of so-called "designer" diamonds as accessories now comprise 60 percent of the US total, with solitary diamonds at 40 percent.

While diamond sellers are more confident they have cracked the millennial code, there are some challenges on the horizon. Most worrisome is the trend of more consumers preferring cheaper synthetic diamonds, such as those made by California startup Diamond Foundry, which is backed by actor Leonardo DiCaprio, the star of the 2007 movie "Blood Diamonds." Growth of synthetic diamonds has taken market share from giants such as Tiffany, Blue Nile and Signet Jewelers. — AFP



This file photo shows a million-dollar-diamond Victoria's Secret bra in Miami Beach, Florida, in preparation for the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show.



This file photo shows a 5.16-carat pear-shaped internally flawless vivid blue diamond at Sotheby's in New York. — AFP photos



This file photo shows newly extracted diamonds at the Cullinan Diamond Mine, 100 kms north-east of Johannesburg.



This file photo shows Rio Tinto Diamond Production Manager Gavin Pearce looking at a rare pink diamond in New York.

Bizarre News

Best man steals limelight from newlyweds

A couple are outraged with their best man after he proposed to his girlfriend at their wedding ceremony. The newlyweds decided to splash out on an extravagant marital ceremony after having a child together because they could finally afford a "huge blowout" bash, only for the attention to be stolen by the best man who got down on one knee when the pair were reciting their own wedding vows. Speaking about their special day, which was ruined by their close pal, on an advisory website Dear Prudence, the bride wrote: "My husband and I started dating, got pregnant, had a child, moved in together, bought a house, and got a dog in that order. [We] reached a point where we could afford a huge blowout wedding to celebrate our lives with everyone we know and love. "My husband's best friend, 'John,' was the best man/officiant. "The setting was beautiful, everyone seemed happy, our families were overjoyed. "My mom may have used the phrase 'hallelujah' a few dozen times. "The entire atmosphere felt moving. "So moving, in fact, that John stopped mid-ceremony to propose to his longtime girlfriend, 'Jane.'" But the bride's special moment was not only ruined by the proposal, as the fellow couple went on to announce they were expecting a baby. The bride continued: "[They also] reveal her pregnancy. "I couldn't even hear the vows my husband wrote or the rest of the ceremony over the noise of Jane's happy sobs, her very surprised family who were also guests, and people seated nearby congratulating her. "Even the videographer cut to her frequently during the ceremony, and you can't hear anything over the chatter."

Man sets up business after living in a forest for three years

A man who spent three years sleeping in the woods now sells unique, hand-carved spoons from his workshop in Stepney. Barnaby Carder was dumped by his former partner after he travelled around the world at the age of 27, and when he returned to his home in Berkshire he was adamant he wasn't going to move back in to live with his parents and decided to reside in the woods. In his new residency Barnaby spent his time chopping down trees to make cutlery for himself for a number of years as it was his passion when he was 16 years old. The male has since moved out and has set up his business in London, Time Out magazine has reported.

Alligator walks across golf course

An alligator stunned onlookers after he sauntered across a golf course in the middle of the day. The 12ft-long reptile - who residents are convinced is the elusive predator they've called Sherman the Tank - had no care in the world last week when he plodded out from nearby water and made his way across the grass of Ocean Creek Golf Course on Fripp Island, South Carolina, while families were busy playing the sport. Animal worker Jessica Miller is quoted by the Daily Mirror newspaper as saying: "This was an absolutely enormous alligator. There are tales of one from around the neighborhood of a huge tarot called 'Sherman the Tank' so this could be him. This one was at least 30 years old but could be in his 50s or even 60s. Once they get to a certain size they stop growing so it's hard to know the exact age. Alligators mostly come out in the middle of the night so it was pretty rare to see one this size in the daytime. He was just going from pond to pond chilling out, oblivious to everyone else and he wasn't looking to cause any trouble." After feeling satisfied with his stroll, the alligator disappeared into some long reeds. Mother breaks neck