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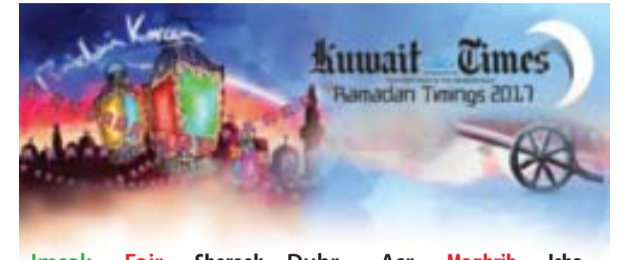
Multiple fires reported as temperature soars in Kuwait



Israel cancels 250,000 family visit permits



It is not just cricket: India, Pakistan rivalry transcends sport



Imsak 03:03 Fajr 03:13 Shorook 04:48 Duhr 11:48 Asr 15:22 Maghrib 18:49 Isha 20:21

150 FILS
NO: 17259
40 PAGES

TRUMP ROLLS BACK 'TERRIBLE, MISGUIDED' OBAMA POLICIES

OBAMA-ERA CUBA DEAL REVAMPED



Min 31°
Max 47°
High Tide 06:16 & 17:27
Low Tide 12:01 & 20:55



HONORING PARENTS

By Hassan Twaha Bwambale

Around the world, many days are designated to honor and appreciate special people. Among those days are Father's Day, Mother's Day, Memorial Day and Labor Day. In Islam, however, respecting, honoring and appreciating parents are not just for a single day of the year, but rather for each and every day of the year.

Dutifulness to parents, respecting them, and recognizing their care, love and concern are mentioned in the Quran eleven times. The following verse is one of the instances in which Allah enjoins us to honor, respect, and be dutiful to our parents in the best possible manner. Allah says, "And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment."

Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "uff," and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word. (Al-Isra, 17:23) Dutifulness to parents is among the most meritorious acts of worship: Abdullah Bin Masoud (Prophet's companion) narrated, "I asked Allah's Messenger (PBUH), 'What is the most beloved deed to Allah Almighty? He replied, 'Prayers performed on time.' I then asked, 'What next?' He replied, 'Dutifulness to parents.'..." (Collected by Imam Al-Bukhari in Al-Fat'h 10/5970 and Muslim # 85)

Abdullah bin Abbaas (Prophet Muhammad's Companion) said, "I do not know of any act of worship that would draw a believer closer to Allah (to Whom belongs all might and majesty) more than any other good deed, than dutifulness to one's parents." (See Al-Adab Al-Mufrad by Al-Bukhari, volume 3.) Your parents will always love you in whatever situation you are. Others may claim to love you; you may think that your friends do, but they may fake the love for their own vested interests.

The love of your parents is the best thing in the world. They always pray for you and wish you well in what you do. Therefore, I would strongly advise you to respect their love because you are lucky to have them. Think about those who do not have parents, and consider yourself as the luckiest person to have them in your life. Moreover, treating them well is a means to accrue Allah's rewards and a cause to enter one of the gates of Paradise.

Courtesy of the TIES Center: The TIES Center is a social and educational hub for expats in Kuwait whose motto is: Tolerance, Information, Empowerment, Solidarity. For more information, please call 25231015/6 or log onto: www.tiescenter.net



KUWAIT: Photo captured the sunset near Doha beach. Islam's holiest month is a period of intense prayer, dawn-to-dusk fasting and nightly feasts. — KUNA

MIAMI: President Donald Trump has ordered tighter restrictions on Americans traveling to Cuba and a clampdown on US business dealings with the Caribbean island's military, saying he was canceling former President Barack Obama's "terrible and misguided deal" with Havana. Laying out his new Cuba policy in a speech in Miami, Trump signed a presidential directive rolling back parts of Obama's historic opening to the Communist-ruled country after a 2014 diplomatic breakthrough between the two former Cold War foes.

But Trump left in place many of Obama's changes, including the reopened US embassy in Havana, even as he sought to show he was making good on a campaign promise to take a tougher line against Cuba, especially over its human rights record. "We will not be silent in the face of communist oppression any longer," Trump told a cheering crowd in Miami's Cuban-American enclave of Little Havana, including Republican Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, who helped forge the new restrictions on Cuba.

"Effective immediately, I am canceling the last administration's completely one-sided deal with Cuba," Trump declared as he made a full-throated assault on the government of Cuban President Raul Castro. Cuba later denounced the move as a setback in US-Cuban relations, saying Trump had been badly advised and was resorting to "coercive methods of the past" that were doomed to fail. The government remained willing to engage in "respectful dialogue," it said in a statement.

Trump's revised approach calls for stricter enforcement of a longtime ban on Americans going to Cuba as tourists, and seeks to prevent US dollars from being used to fund what the Trump administration sees as a repressive military-dominated government. But, facing pressure from US businesses and even some fellow Republicans to avoid turning back the clock completely in relations with Cuba, the president chose to leave intact some of his Democratic predecessor's steps toward normalization.

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FATHER OF GERMAN REUNIFICATION DIES

PAGE 10

INDONESIAN TRIBE TURNS TO ISLAM

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TRUMP 'UNDER INVESTIGATION'

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump acknowledged for the first time Friday that he is under federal investigation as part of the expanding probe into Russia's election meddling. He lashed out at a top Justice Department official overseeing the inquiry, reflecting his mounting frustration with the unrelenting controversy that has consumed his early presidency. "I am being investigated for firing the FBI Director by the man who told me to fire the FBI Director! Witch Hunt," the president wrote on Twitter.

His morning missive apparently referred to Rod Rosenstein, the deputy attorney general whose role leading the federal investigation has become increasingly complicated. The White House has used a memo

he wrote to justify Trump's decision to fire FBI Director James Comey, but that Trump action may now be part of the probe. Thursday night, Rosenstein issued an unusual statement complaining about leaks in the case.

Trump advisers and confidants describe the president as increasingly angry over the investigation, yelling at television sets in the White House carrying coverage and insisting he is the target of a conspiracy to discredit - and potentially end - his presidency. Some of his ire is aimed at Rosenstein and investigative special counsel Robert Mueller, both of whom the president believes are biased against him, associates say.

Dianne Feinstein, top Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said she was "increasingly con-

cerned" that Trump will fire both Mueller and Rosenstein. "The message the president is sending through his tweets is that he believes the rule of law doesn't apply to him and that anyone who thinks otherwise will be fired," Feinstein said. "That's undemocratic on its face and a blatant violation of the president's oath of office."

Aides have counseled the president to stay off Twitter and focus on other aspects of his job. They have tried to highlight the positive reviews he received Wednesday when he made a statesman-like appearance in the White House to address the nation after Rep Steve Scalise was shot during a congressional baseball practice.

Continued on Page 13

PHILIPPINE TROOPS POUND ISLAMISTS; OVER 300 KILLED

MARAWI: Philippine troops pounded Islamist militants holding parts of southern Marawi city with air strikes and artillery yesterday as more soldiers were deployed and the death toll rose to more than 300 after nearly a month of fighting. Fires erupted and dark plumes of smoke rose from enclaves still occupied by the militants as the air force staged bombing runs to support ground troops struggling to dislodge the fighters from entrenched positions, AFP journalists at the scene said.

MG520 attack helicopters and FA50 fighter jets were used in the raids, while sustained bursts of automatic gunfire could be heard in the distance, indicating the intensity of the fighting. Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, appearing in public for the first time in nearly a week, said the presence of foreign fighters from the Islamic State (IS) group among the militants in Marawi has made the fighting more difficult.

"You have a conglomeration there of ISIS fighters from Syria, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Arabs," he told soldiers during a visit to a military camp

in Butuan city, northeast of Marawi, in the southern region of Mindanao. "We have to use the air assets because we are up against fighters from the Middle East and they have learned the art of brutal killing—they will burn you, behead you," he said. Duterte's absence had fuelled speculation about the state of the 72-year-old leader's health.

Also yesterday, 400 fresh troops were airlifted to Marawi from the central Philippines, ANC television said quoting military officials. Television footage showed the soldiers bidding goodbye to their families before being flown to the conflict zone. Hundreds of militants-supported by foreign fighters-rampaged through Marawi, the largely Christian Philippines' most important Muslim city, on May 23 waving black flags of the Islamic State (IS) group.

Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao to counter the attack, which he said was part of a plan by IS to establish a base in the country. Such a base could be crucial for IS' ambitions to establish a caliphate in Southeast Asia, analysts say. — AFP

7 US DESTROYER CREW MISSING

COMMANDER HURT IN CRASH OFF JAPAN

YOKOSUKA: Seven US sailors were missing and a skipper injured after their Navy destroyer collided with a container ship off the coast of Japan yesterday, with the badly damaged US vessel partially flooded. Aerial television footage showed one sailor lying on a stretcher and a rescuer being pulled up to a helicopter that was hovering above the USS Fitzgerald, its right side partially crushed.

Three sailors were injured in the pre-dawn collision, including the guided missile destroyer's commanding officer Bryce Benson. "Two sailors, in addition to the commanding officer, have been medically evacuated from USS Fitzgerald to US Naval Hospital Yokosuka for lacerations and bruises," the navy said. "There are seven sailors unaccounted for; the ship and the Japanese Coast Guard continues to search for them."

The accident between the Fitzgerald and Philippine-flagged ACX Crystal happened around 2:30 am off the coast off the Izu peninsula southwest of Tokyo, the US Navy and Japan's coastguard said. The area is a busy shipping channel near major container ports in Yokohama and Tokyo. "The volume of ships is heavy in this area and there have been accidents before," coastguard official Yutaka Saito told Japan's public broadcaster NHK.

It was not immediately clear what caused the collision, but NHK said the massive 222-metre container ship made a sharp turn around the time of the accident.

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YOKOSUKA: A Japan Coast Guard ship (foreground) navigates the damaged USS Fitzgerald near the US Naval base in Yokosuka, southwest of Tokyo, after the US destroyer collided with the Philippine-registered container ship ACX Crystal yesterday. — AP



WEEKLY ROUNDUP OF KUWAIT RELIEF EFFORTS

KUWAIT: Living up to its status as a 'humanitarian center,' Kuwait continued offering assistance to needy people in the Middle East and beyond throughout the just-ended week. On Wednesday, the United Iraqi Medical Society for Relief and Development (UIMS) doled out a new batch of food aid provided by Kuwait to displaced Iraqis in Anbar province, west of Iraq. Head of UIMS Dr Ahmad Al-Haity said that the aid was distributed as part of the "Kuwait is by your side" campaign.

The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) funded the aid and the distribution process was supervised by the Kuwaiti Embassy in Iraq and a body affiliated to the Iraqi Prime Minister, he added. The assistance included 1,000 food packages which were handed out to the displaced in Anbar province, he noted.

The campaign previously distributed a lot of food aid and adopted the construction of schools and healthcare centers for displaced Iraqis in various provinces. On the same day, a Kuwaiti charity said that it would fund the International Committee of the Red Cross' (ICRC) efforts to fight cholera in Yemen, through equipping the impoverished nation's water stations with 10 tons of chlorine granules. Speaking to the press, Director General of the International Islamic Charity Organization (IIICO) Bader Al-Sumait said that IIICO and ICRC have joined forces to assist the victims of armed conflicts, citing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between both sides.

He also underscored the charity's eagerness to partner with international organizations, given the dismal humanitarian conditions in large swathes of the globe. Meanwhile, head of ICRC's Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) delegation Yahya Alibi noted that both sides have worked together for quite some time and that the MoU aims to strengthen ties.

Alibi pointed out that there have been 101 cases of cholera reported in Yemen and that the endemic has

claimed the lives of more than 800 people. The MoU also comprises numerous workshops and training courses designed to boost awareness on the guidelines of humanitarian assistance.

Donation drive

On Tuesday, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) launched a donation drive to grant needy children in Kuwait and Africa access to education. Speaking to the press as the fundraising campaign kicked off at the Avenues Mall, KRCS Chairman Hilal Al-Sayer said that the endeavor encapsulates the Kuwaiti charity's penchant for altruism, while promoting the merits of volunteerism. He pointed out that it was apropos that the Avenues Mall hosts this campaign, given KRCS' close rapport with the private sector, which gives philanthropists nationwide the chance to contribute to benevolent deeds.

Meanwhile, Vice President of M H Al-Shaya's Corporate Communications Hilary Baker said that the company throws its weight behind all efforts to assist children all across the globe, making sure that no child is deprived of inalienable rights, including education.

Baker heaped praise on Kuwait for being a bastion of philanthropy, saying that the company was eager to join forces with KRCS for a noble cause. General Manager of Boubyan Bank, which is sponsoring the donation drive, Waleed Al-Yaqout, said that it was a social obligation for the bank to take part in events organized by a venerable institution such as KRCS.

He added that Boubyan Bank was a proponent of charitable projects that prove beneficial for swathes of people, as he thanked KRCS for its devotion to serve humanity. In Iraq, KRCS delivered on Tuesday its third batch of food aid to needy families in the southern Basra province.

Around 5,000 food baskets will be distributed to improv-

erished families in the Iraqi province all week long, said Kuwait's Consul General in Basra Yousef Al-Sabagh in a statement. Meanwhile, Shamlan Abdulrahim, the head of the KRCS delegation in Basra, said that the distribution process is being carried out in collaboration with Iraq's Red Crescent Society, where 252 families were given access to wholesome food on just the first day alone.

Medical supplies

On Monday, The International Organization for Migration (IOM) announced providing necessary medical supplies to a major dialysis unit in Irbil thanks to Kuwaiti financing. The IOM office in the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan said in a statement that in order to fulfill the dire needs of the dialysis unit in Irbil's Al-Jumhouria Hospital, the organization has provided life-saving supplies, financed by the State of Kuwait. The statement quoted head of the unit Dr Farid Mohammad as saying that thanks to the newly-arrived supplies, they would be able to offer life-saving services to patients for three months to come.

Al-Jumhouria Hospital dialysis unit offers services free of charge to about 100 patients weekly, locals, displaced Iraqis as well as Syrian refugees. Kuwait has presented about \$400 million to support the IOM efforts to assist the displaced Iraqis from Mosul which is the scene of a military campaign to liberate the city from the control of the so-called Islamic State (IS). The country has also provided \$30 million for the UN organizations and agencies for the same noble purposes.

Also on Monday, KRCS provided humanitarian aid to thousands of people affected by Tajikistan's recent floods and landslides, chairman Hilal Al-Sayer said. The assistance program includes the distribution of food, blankets, bedding and seeds for crops to 5,000 victims across three provinces along the border with Afghanistan, Sayer

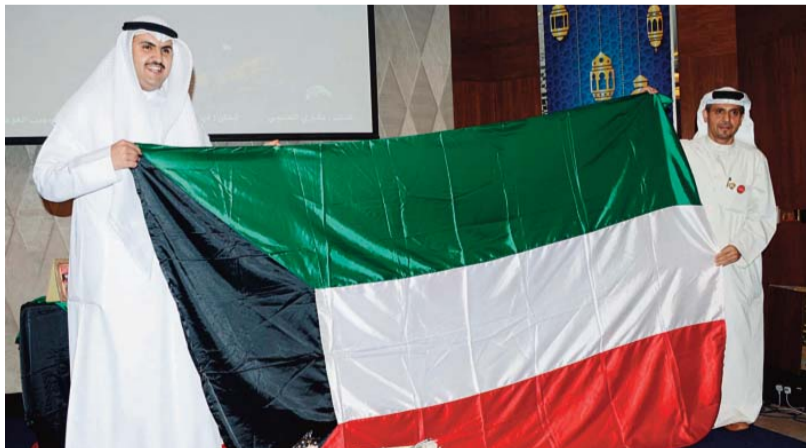
said. "KRCS is committed to providing this aid according to the highest standards of quality," he said, describing this role as a "duty."

Sayer went on to express his appreciation and gratitude to people in Kuwait who provided funds to the humanitarian organization's various fund raisers. On Sunday, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) hailed the efforts of KRCS in aiding people in need around the world. KRCS is continuously providing humanitarian aid for those affected by war or natural disasters in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Indonesia, Libya, the Philippines and many others, head of IFRC's office in Dubai Fatma Jeelani said. During her meeting with Al-Sayer, Jeelani lauded the society's support for IFRC in distributing aid for those in need.

Sayer noted that KRCS is cooperating with different international humanitarian organizations to provide better living conditions for these people. On Saturday, the Kuwait-based Al-Najat Charitable Society continues to hand out food parcels to Syrian families living in several areas across Turkey, said Thamer Al-Seheeb, a senior official at the society.

Speaking in a statement, he added that the move aims to alleviate suffering of Syrians particularly during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. A lot of iftar meals were delivered to Syrian families in the areas of Reyhanli, Kirkikhan, Sanliurfa and others to make those needy people happy, he noted.

The meals cover all family members during Ramadan and the society held other meals for orphans in Kirkikhan, he said, adding that the society supports up to 2,000 Syrian orphans. The society also is keen on educating those orphans to be a scientific and cultural wealth to both the Arab and Islamic world, he said, indicating that there are some schools for Syrian children. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Author and columnist Abdullah Abbas Buwair hosted his annual ceremony to commemorate families of martyrs this past Friday at Crowne Plaza Hotel. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Local spotlight

OIL AND GAS



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Oil prices went down markedly last week - Brent crude fell below \$50 a barrel. What is happening? Is it due to the crisis in the GCC, US oil shale, or what? Traders had been expecting crude prices to remain stable, and the market had gained recently due to rising tensions in the Middle East and some indicators of a gradual decline in huge US oil shale reserves.

It seems to me that it is becoming increasingly difficult to determine a stable forecast for future oil prices in light of the tense situation in the region. OPEC and other oil producers promised to lower oil production by 1.8 million barrels, but some reports have raised doubt on OPEC's ability to implement production cuts.

I don't see the current crisis in the GCC behind the fall in oil prices. Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Faleh recently said that he doesn't expect political and diplomatic issues with Qatar to affect the agreement signed between OPEC and non-OPEC countries on reducing oil production. Also, a Bloomberg report predicted continued high oil prices, and disruption of gas supplies from Qatar is not expected. I agree, and believe it is in everyone's best interest to abide by the terms of the agreement.

Talking about the future of oil, many economists have pointed out that in the next 10 years, oil-producing countries will face more economic problems if they do not expand their investments and diversify their sources of income. The new discoveries in the West of oil and shale gas will lead to a decline in demand for energy from traditional gas and oil producers.

On the other hand, Russian oil company Lukoil previously mentioned in its forecasts for the next 10 years the price of oil at the level of \$50 per barrel. Lukoil is the second largest Russian oil company, and operates in many countries of the world with large investment projects. Iraq is the main Arab country with projects of this company.

It makes sense to give credibility to this statement because it is based on logic. It is crazy to expect an imaginary rise, such as a price of \$120 a barrel or more in view of the tense international conditions. It is normal for Gulf markets to fear a drop in the price of a barrel to below \$75, which affects government spending, performance of the economy and companies, decline in government deposits and quality of sovereign credit.

Government policies, especially in Kuwait, should not rely too much on hopes, but on reality. Therefore, the financial estimates of government spending, whether for salaries or privileges for senior officials, official flights and government projects should be reviewed very seriously since oil is the basic and only source of income.

What worries me most is that the salaries item for employees in the government sector consumes the bulk of the state budget without a real review to keep wages balanced with the requirements of the job. It is sad that some consider any change in salaries as a violation of their rights. The state's fiscal policy must be designed to achieve sustainability and stability at all times.

In light of all the variables surrounding international oil markets, the expectation of fixed prices of oil is not right, because it is affected by major international conflicts, and the issue of oil shale is adding some pressure too. Future oil prices will remain hostage to changes, and therefore sound policies are key.

In my view

THE CRISIS OF REFUGEES



By Labeed Abdal

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) declaration that 1,530 refugees died while crossing the sea to Europe is a statement from the entire world that justice and humanity exist in that old continent, not anywhere else. UNHCR also reports that 60,521 refugees have already reached Europe by sea this year and that over 80 percent of them arrived to Italy while others arrived to Greece and Cyprus; which confirms that this is their only haven.

However, the total number of fatalities amongst refugees this year reached 1,530 people who died on the same route. This number is almost the same as that recorded during the same period in 2016, which shows that the risks remain the same and that the crisis of the Kurdish child may happen again, while it will no longer be accepted that human consciences will not act until more sad and miserable scenes are seen.

Children and their parents in a worn out rubber boat setting sail without knowing the possible consequences. This has become the dream of so many of those miserable people in their home countries that is if they survive violent waves and shark attacks. We do not need videos to realize the sufferings of those innocent people, especially when major powers opted to competing away from their own soils to save the lives of their own subjects and use others' funds to do it as if the affluent should always be blackmailed.



KUWAIT: Flames coming out from a seventh floor apartment in Khaitan.



A firefighter hands his colleague a bottle of water after battling the Khaitan blaze.



The scene inside one of the rooms in an Ardhiya house after firefighters extinguished a fire there.



Smoke coming out from under the hood of a bus that caught fire in Farwaniya.

MULTIPLE FIRES REPORTED; NO INJURIES

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A fire broke out on the seventh floor of an eight storey building in Khaitan. Firemen rushed to the scene where they evacuated the building, controlled the fire and managed to rescue five people who were trapped by the flames, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement. No casualties were reported. Another fire broke out in the second floor of an Ardhiya house, said security sources, noting that firemen rushed to the scene and managed to control the fire and prevented it from spreading to other parts of the house. No casualties were reported. Meanwhile, a bus caught fire minutes before iftar time in Farwaniya, said security sources, noting that firemen rushed to the scene and managed to control the fire before it spread to adjacent vehicles.

Fight

The Interior Ministry's relations and security media department said that criminal detectives managed to identify a person who appeared in a video circulated on social media fighting with a policeman. The department added that investigations revealed that the two men were arguing over some unsettled personal disputes.

Inedible food

Ahmadi municipality teams launched an inspection campaign on various foodstuff stores, co-ops and restaurants which resulted in filing 48 citations and destroying 10 tons of inedible foodstuff items. The citations included violations such as operating a facility without a license and hiring laborers who did not have health certificates, the municipality's auditing and follow up manager Saad Al-Shaiba explained. He added that 10 tons of inedible vegetables, fruits, meat, poultry and fish were confiscated and destroyed and that two stores were shut down.



A municipality inspector examines food during a crackdown in Ahmadi.



WARBA BANK HIGHLIGHTS THE ROLE OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN OIL INVESTMENTS

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, the best investment bank in Kuwait and the best corporate advisory institution, organized a lecture under the title 'Oil Industry in Kuwait: Reality and Challenges', in the headquarters of the bank in Sanabil Tower. The lecture dealt with many vital issues related to the oil industry in terms of investments and developments witnessed by such sector.

The lecture was given by Abdul-Aziz Al-Jaber, a member of the Board of Directors of the Bank. Jaber holds a bachelor's degree in electronic engineering from the University of Washington and has a long record in the oil sector. He held several positions in both KOC and KPC from 1979 to 2005. He also served as a Chairman and a Board Member in a number of companies such as the Petrochemical Industries Company, the Gulf Oil Company, and the Human Investment Corporation.

During the lecture, he addressed many topics related to the oil sector. He started



by giving an overview of the oil industry in Kuwait. Then he addressed the global trend of production and the outlook for oil prices, and the role of the financial institutions in this industry. Jaber also addressed the investment in oil industry and the role played by Warba Bank in developing this sector by injecting investments into it.

These lectures are given as the Bank intends to expand its investments and

financing solutions it offers to the oil sector. Last year, the Bank announced that it would contribute to the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) with an amount of KD 25 million to implement KNPC's Environment-Friendly Fuel Project. That confirms the Bank's continuous support for the national economy and local companies, and its passion to strengthen its position in the Islamic banking sector in Kuwait.

KUWAIT WINS ADVANCED POSITIONS IN GII DUE TO AMIR'S SUPPORT

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir's support for the Kuwait Science Club (KSC) has helped the country get advanced positions in the Global Innovation Index (GII), affiliated to World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), KSC Chairman Talal Al-Kharafi stressed on Friday.

In a press statement, Kharafi said Kuwait came first in the Middle East region and second in the world in backing scientific innovations, jumping 11 positions from 2016 to 2017 to reach the 56th rank in the GII amongst 127 other countries. He revealed that the club established an office to care for inventors, as a signal of its keen-

ness on buttressing youth, extolling the pioneering role of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science in backing the club's activities. He added that the office encouraged youth to fulfill and develop their creative ideas in order to obtain several patents from Kuwait, GCC countries or any other patent offices across the globe.

The office also backed Kuwait inventors to take part in the biggest world inventions exhibitions in which the country chalked up several achievements, he noted. He noted that Kuwaiti inventor Abdullah Al-Yateem ranked first in the Mexico exhibition in 1999 and his compatriot Ahmad Al-Hashash won

the Oscar of Inventions Award 2005 from Exhibition of International Inventions - Geneva in April. Kharafi said that the State of Kuwait obtained several patents in many fields, noting that it hosted some international events in this field. Meanwhile, Kuwait has seen prominent development in the quality of local scientific innovations that put the country in the 18th place worldwide on the Global Innovation Index, said a report by WIPO, a UN related organization, on Thursday. The report added that Kuwait sits in the sixth place in spreading knowledge and the 12th in the outcome of the information technology field. —KUNA

PANEL MULLS BUILDING MORE TELECOM TOWERS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Municipal Council's legal and financial committee will discuss the conditions of building telecommunication towers and mobile phone signal boosting stations in various areas during its meeting on Wednesday, head of the committee Ali Al-Mousa said. He added that telecommunication towers are important because they add more revenues to the state's treasury and because they provide mobile phone users with better services.



Ali Al-Mousa

Roaming vendors

Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan contacted the Municipal Council concerning roaming vendors using truck and trail outlets. Roudhan stressed that the council was keen on supporting national economy through small projects that will help get rid of unemployment and create more job opportunities for youth away from office work and government jobs. Roudhan's letter included some amendments he suggested to the project's chart.

Charity violations

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's (MSAL) charity collection inspection teams reported filing 80 citation of charity collection violations through more than 300 field inspection rounds since the beginning of Ramadan, said informed sources, noting that all concerned charities had been contacted to immediately remove the violations and take proper measures against violators. The sources added that violations included calling for donations through social media without getting MSAL approval or permission. The violations also included having unauthorized individuals collect charities and building special booths to collect used clothes in various areas.

North Korea ban

The acting undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MCI) Samira Al-Ghareeb issued a directive on banning the import of charcoal and some metals such as steel and gold from North Korea, as stipulated by the UN Security Council's resolution number 2270/2016 pertaining with sanctions imposed on the Asian nation. The directive also bans licensing any Kuwaiti company to open branches in North Korea.

Flooding

Minister of Public Works (MPW) Abdul Rahman Al-Mutawa referred the contractor who built Mangaf and Sabahiya tunnel to public prosecution for investigations over last winter's flooding incident.

Canadian University

Kuwait Municipality agreed to allocate a 100,000 square meters land plot in Abu Hlaifa to build the Canadian University.

AL-SAWAN HOSTS ANNUAL RAMADAN IFTAR BANQUET



KUWAIT: Al-Sawan Company for Trade, Transport and Tourism; the agent of the Ethiopian, Philippine and Royal Jordanian Airlines, recently held its annual Ramadan iftar banquet which was attended by dignitaries, journalists and editors in chief of some electronic magazines and websites. The banquet also witnessed honoring Al-Sawan agents by the company's General Manager Habib Menawer, who expressed appreciation of their constant cooperation. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



BURGAN BANK'S AVENUES, DISCOVERY MALL BRANCHES CELEBRATE GIRGIAN WITH ALL KIDS

SPREADING JOY AND KINDNESS DURING RAMADAN

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, a dynamic local bank and a great contributor to society, celebrated girgian with the children in its branches at the Avenues Mall and Discovery Mall on the 12th and 14th of June 2017. With the help of popular "BuBa" Kids Account mascot, Burgan Bank provided entertainment for all kids and their families.

An important celebration that reflects the Kuwaiti culture in general and Ramadan's spirit in specific, the bank's yearly girgian events serve to reflect the giving and sharing spirit of Ramadan, the Holiest Month of the year. During the festivities, Burgan Bank staff distributed girgian gift boxes to all the children and to BuBa Account customers, who enjoyed the fun and games.

Burgan Bank's support of this initiative falls under its full-fledged community program titled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies are aligned with the needs and interests of society.



KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) distributed iftar meals near Nayef Palace and mosques in the Capital Governorate, as well as the Information Ministry's intersection last week.

KUWAIT

Heritage



An aerial view of the Dasman Palace taken circa 1930, as Kuwait's Wall can be seen in the upper left side. Currently considered a historic building in Kuwait, the structure was built by Sheikh Salem Al-Mubarak, and still maintains its old structure. The palace is located on the Arabian Gulf Street near Kuwait Towers. (Source: 'Kuwait... in Black and White,' by Basem Al-Loughani, Kuwait, 2008. Prepared by Mahmoud Zakaria Abu Alella, heritage researcher, Ministry of Information)



Ahmed Adeeb Ahmed

NEW GENERATION CAPABLE OF INNOVATION

By Faten Omar

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.

Kuwait Times interviewed Ahmed Adeeb Ahmed, a 31-year-old Palestinian expat who works at a law firm and legal consultation in Kuwait.

He believes that Kuwait needs three main changes to be better and improved. "E-Kuwait; Kuwait needs to be more developed in technology for electronics and manufacturing. It should be technologically advanced everywhere in the hospitals, police stations, and governmental institutions," he said.

Ahmed noted that he would meet with officials and experts to suggest these ideas that will develop the country and encourage people to invent and benefit from the technology of the West and Japan, which will create a new generation that is capable of innovation, development and production.

The second change Kuwait needs is to go green. "Every inch of desert should be planted with suitable trees and plants that can survive in this kind of weather. I would like to start an awareness campaign to remind Kuwaitis about their past and how their parents used to depend on nature," he noted.

"Kuwait must put some efforts to show its culture through art. Modern Kuwaiti style mixed with the old traditions could depict the beauty of this country. Also, we must care and renew museums dedicated to these concerns so that the new generation can recognize the origin of Kuwait," he added.



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Crime

Report

GOOD SAMARITAN ROBBED

KUWAIT: An Indian man stopped to help a young man whose car appeared to have broken down, but was robbed of KD 440 by the youngster. The money was the income of a car rental company that the victim works for, and which he was on his way to deposit in the company's bank account. The suspect reportedly pulled him out of the car and drove away with it for a short distance, then stopped and ran away on foot. When he came back to his vehicle, the victim discovered that the bag containing the cash was missing. Detectives are working on identifying the suspect to bring him to justice.

Fugitives arrested

A bedoon man who was driving under the influence of drugs nearly caused another vehicle to flip over when he hit it while being chased by police. Hawally detectives were chasing the suspect and his accomplice who are wanted on theft charges in Jahra. A security source said the suspect hit another vehicle with a family inside, so backup was called in and the two were eventually arrested.

Harboring a fugitive

Police who responded to a call about a car accident in Sabah Al-Salem found out that the persons involved include a Jordanian and a Kuwaiti who were under the influence of drugs, accompanied by a girl in her 20s, who was reported missing by her family. The two was arrested and detained on charges of drug use and harboring a missing girl.



القلم

Al-Qabas

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

Lived years believing that man existed to be happy and I wrote several columns about that out of my personal experience or from the experience of others. But a book was published lately showing that if we make our goal in life to be happy, and work towards it, we may end up feeling lonely and become miserable, and so it is much better to work towards making our life have a meaning. The search for happiness only through concentrating on satisfying our desires will only lead to feeling empty, while if we live a life that has a meaning through serving others and helping them with giving and not taking, then this will make a difference.

One of the differences between seeking happiness or to live a life that has a meaning lies in the difficulty of the second type, because it includes sacrifice and giving, whether it was money, time or emotion. So life is not for us to be happy, rather we make it meaningful and this will make us happier at the end. If we studied reasons that pushed many to commit suicide, we would find that the majority of them did not complain of misery, rather they suffered from emptiness, and their lives did not have a meaning.

That was mentioned in the book of American researcher Emily Esfahani Smith, in which she said that one finds the goal or meaning of his life, even during the most difficult circumstances, and this gives us the motive to continue living, while seeking happiness that satisfies our desires and wishes will at the end lead to emptiness. Happiness is usually linked with feeling healthy and active, and as we are on the receiving side and this normally does not result in having a meaning for our life because we do not give anything to others.

She said that the millennials became more interested in having a meaning in their lives, so they started looking, in addition to financial return, for what the job means for them when they search for one. This meaning may differ from one person to another, as some are in need of relations that gives them the feeling of belonging, and that there is a need for them, and that their performance has a meaning, so if we wanted those who wish not to continue their life or the misery, then we should make a target for their living and not work to make them happy.

I can say here out of my experience with tens of those who I made interested to find jobs, especially those who were sent by the Management and Government Restructuring Program who have been unemployed for years, most of them are living without a goal or purpose, and they are mostly miserable. This made them less motivated to seek jobs and more disgusted with life, because of the lack of meaning or goal to work towards.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

POLITICIANS AND QATAMI

By Mudaffar Abdullah

With all its details and traits, the concept of a 'statesman' is far from the kind of individuals running public errands in parliament or in the government. Parts of the image can be seen in the personality of the late Jassem Al-Qatami. So many of us have noticed how politicians change sides and lie all the time. We have read articles that they have written about the principles of a state management only after they left sensitive leading offices that they have failed in running. Some of them even dared to speak on TV about bribes they gave to some lawmakers to get a law passed in parliament.

Reviewing such an unhealthy atmosphere, I could not help but remember a unique patriotic man; that is the late Jassem Abdul Aziz Al-Qatami (1929-2012). I wondered how this man managed to remain faithful to his principles and values despite assuming many various positions and how he managed to use all those positions to serve the people and protect their dignity without yielding or giving in.

Jassem Al-Qatami, who assumed various positions as a policeman then a police chief in 1954 submitted his famous resignation justifying it by rejection of a direct order to use force on protestors during the tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1956. He then served as an executive politician with the foreign ministry, later as a lawmaker and finally an advocate of human rights. There was a very thin line between all these positions; that is the summary of the concept of a 'statesman'.

Things developed and that man, who had just taken off his uniform, remained faithful to principles. He demanded a constitutional democratic regime in a speech he delivered at Shuwaikh High school on the anniversary of the Egyptian-Syrian unity. He was then punished by withdrawing his passport and remained unemployed from 1959 to 1961 when he was appointed as an advisor in the Amiri Diwan. He was then appointed as undersecretary of the foreign ministry when it was founded in 1962.

He faced the problems caused by Abdul Kareem Qassim before he resigned to run for the first parliamentary elections in 1963 where he fiercely defended the constitution and people's rights. Along with Rashid Al-Farhan, he was the first to demand women rights in 1975. He practiced politics and parliamentary life until 1985 when the parliament was dissolved.

Later in the 1990s, Qatami became a human rights activist, as human rights regionally prevailed after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. He founded Kuwait's branch of the Arab Human Rights Organization. He then founded Kuwait Society for Human Rights where I had the honor of working with him for six years until his health deteriorated.

This is but a summary of Jassem Al-Qatami's biography; the man who never changed or yielded to make any gains. He remained an icon for values and good virtues that rarely exist amongst politicians these days till the very last day of his life. — Translated by Kuwait Times



Fraud

Three Egyptians were arrested for using duplicate civil ID's of citizens and expats to buy electronics and mobile phones, which original ID holders were asked to pay for. Several Kuwaiti citizens and expats told police that mobile phones and electronic companies as well as car rentals were demanding payments for items they did not buy or rent, according to a security source. He said detectives collected information that led to an Egyptian man who works for a security company and obtains get replacement cards for KD 200 each. So an undercover source agreed to buy a card and arrested him red handed. The suspect told authorities about two others, one working for a security company and the other for a company dealing with the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), so both were arrested. The suspects were detained and will be referred to concerned authorities. — Translated from the Arabic press



ABK'S 50 YEAR JOURNEY SHOWCASED AT AVENUES

AS PART OF THE BANK'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

KUWAIT: In celebration of its 50 year anniversary, ABK showcased the bank's exciting and rich journey over the past half-century, through a booth display that was set up at the Avenues Mall on the 9th and 10th of June, 2017 at the 'Dome' area in phase 1.

banking services and products to its customers and build on its rich and successful journey towards simplicity.

The ABK booth featured a four dimensional two sided stand that displayed a historical timeline of ABK's key highlights, along with the overall evolution of the bank's logo on one side and children's activities on the other.



ABK branch staff and a full direct sales team were available at the stand to engage visitors and speak to them about the bank's products and services. ABK's specially designed anniversary TVC and documentary that depicted the bank's 50 year journey was also played throughout the day.

ABK's years of service in the Kuwait market is a source of pride to its people. The bank will continue to bring the best of



KFH PARTICIPATES IN 'INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING' GRADUATION CEREMONY

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) took part in the graduation ceremony of the Industrial Engineering at Kuwait University's College of Petroleum and Engineering, as part of its social responsibility and efforts to support the youth and the students. The ceremony was held amidst huge attendance of a number of officials, VIPs, and faculty members.

KFH participation in sponsoring the graduation ceremony stems from its keenness to assume the social responsibility towards all segments of society, yet reflects its commitment and endeavors to support the students as they are key pillar in achieving the comprehensive development in the country.

KFH has a long track record of initiatives to support the students and sponsor their graduation projects and their various activities. This comes in line with the bank's strategy. KFH representatives at the ceremony expressed their sincere congratulations to the graduates and their parents for the great achievement.

Meanwhile, Industrial Engineering officials praised KFH in recognition of the significant role it plays in shouldering social responsibility towards students and the educational process which reflects its prestigious status as a global leading Islamic financial institution.



KIB DONATES WHEELCHAIRS FOR PATIENTS AT AL-SABAH HOSPITAL

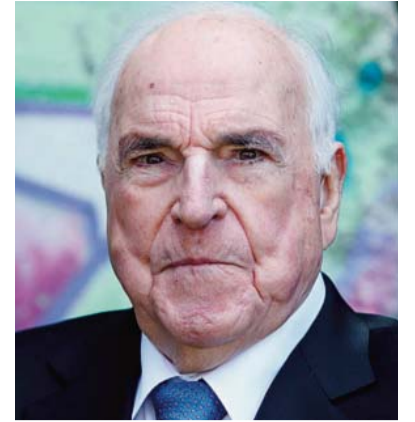
KUWAIT: As part of its efforts to support health initiatives in the country, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently donated wheelchairs to Al-Sabah Hospital, in order to support the advancement of medical care in the hospital.

Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at the bank, stated: "KIB actively seeks to develop the quality of national healthcare services, through our sponsorship of and participation in a wide range of health-focused initiatives. These healthcare initiatives and programs are an absolutely integral part of KIB's leading social responsibility program."

Najia further added: "KIB believes in the important role the private sector plays in supporting the community and working to improve the quality of life for its various segments. KIB is particularly keen on supporting community initiatives which are aimed at the development of key sectors, such as the healthcare sector."

KIB believes that its role goes beyond the provision of banking services and products, but it extends further to the adoption of social initiatives, which aim to serve the community and meet the needs of its various segments. The bank seeks to develop strategic partnerships with healthcare institutions and programs throughout the year, as it focuses on increasing the level of health awareness towards the key health issues affecting the Kuwaiti community.





Kohl, father of German reunification, dies at 87

US OFFICER ACQUITTED OVER SHOOTING OF BLACK MOTORIST

UK LEFT 'SOMBER' BY TOWER BLAZE: QUEEN

LONDON: Queen Elizabeth II said Britain was left somber by the London tower block inferno, as Prime Minister Theresa May, accused of misreading the mood, met survivors on Saturday at Downing Street. As public anger swelled at the unknown death toll - there are 58 confirmed fatalities so far, with dozens more unaccounted for - Downing Street said May was meeting a 15-strong group of victims, residents and volunteer workers at her office.



Queen Elizabeth II

dents, victims, volunteers and community leaders at her office. The group, most dressed in casual clothes, did not speak to reporters on their way in. May was criticized for avoiding locals when she visited the burnt-out shell of the 24-storey tower on Thursday and faced cries of "Shame on you" and "coward" when she returned the following day.

Furious residents heckled May and stormed the local authority headquarters on Friday, demanding justice for the victims of the Grenfell Tower disaster, claiming the fatal blaze was due to negligence. "It was a death trap and they knew it," one person shouted as demonstrators stormed inside the offices of the Kensington and Chelsea council, which was responsible for managing the 1970s social housing block in a working-class enclave of one of Britain's richest areas.

Some 19 patients are still being treated in hospital, of whom 10 are in a critical condition, the National Health Service said Saturday. The emergency services expect to find no more survivors from Wednesday's tragedy. Many people remain unaccounted for and the area surrounding the tower has been plastered by distraught relatives with pictures of the missing, from grandparents to young children.

Resolve in adversity

May chaired a government task force on the disaster at 10 Downing Street early yesterday before meeting a delegation of resi-

Dozens of police officers held back booing crowds and broke up scuffles as her car drove off from a local church, where she had met survivors, residents and volunteers. In a television interview, she sidestepped questions over whether she had misread the public mood. Queen Elizabeth and her grandson Prince William visited a community center on Friday where some of the survivors are being housed, and where volunteers have been inundated with donations of clothes and food.

The head of state said a saddened country was showing resolve in the face of adversity and a determination to rebuild lives wrecked by "terrible" tragedy. She stood for a minute's silence at the start of her birthday parade yesterday. "It is difficult to escape a very somber national mood," she said in a message marking the event. "I have been profoundly struck by the immediate inclination of people throughout the country to offer comfort and support to those in desperate need. 'United in our sadness, we are equally determined, without fear or favor, to support all those rebuilding lives so horribly affected by injury and loss.'" —AFP

RIYADH REJECTS TURKISH BASE

TURKEY FM IN SAUDI TALKS • REPORTERS HELD

JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia said yesterday a Turkish military base similar to that built in neighboring Qatar would not be welcome in the kingdom, insisting it is "not needed". The statement came after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reportedly said he had offered to build a military base in the Muslim kingdom shortly after work began on Turkey's facility in Qatar. Ankara is at the forefront of efforts to defuse a diplomatic crisis that led Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain, as well as Egypt and other countries, to sever ties with Qatar, which is a strong ally of Ankara.

"The kingdom cannot allow Turkey to set up a military base on its territory," said a statement carried by SPA state news agency. The statement, quoting an unnamed official, said Saudi Arabia "does not need such thing", adding that its armed forces and military capabilities were "at the best standards". The official said Saudi armed forces were participating abroad, including from Turkey's Incirlik base, "in the fight against terrorism and protecting security and stability in the region".

Erdogan told Portuguese television this week that he had approached the Gulf state's King Salman "with the same idea for Saudi" after work began on the base in Qatar in 2014. "I made the same offer to King Salman... and said that if it's appropriate we could also establish a base in Saudi Arabia. They said they would look into it but since that day nothing more came," he said. The Turkish parliament approved the deployment of troops to the base in Qatar only two days after the Gulf crisis broke out earlier this month.

On Friday, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu held talks with King Salman as part of Ankara's efforts to resolve the Gulf crisis. Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Egypt and others severed ties with Qatar, accusing it of supporting extremist groups, including some backed by Iran. Asked by Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency if the talks had found a solution, Cavusoglu replied: "No. There are other countries involved... It's very complicated at the moment."

Cavusoglu said he told the Saudi king that "it would be useful now to soften the conditions" against Qatar. He had passed on a message for Salman from Erdogan



MAKKAH: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud meets Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on Friday. —AFP

that "we expect (the king) to find a solution in a worthy way. We are also prepared to contribute." Cavusoglu travelled to the holy city of Makkah, where King Salman is based for the last days of Ramadan, after meeting his Kuwaiti counterpart on Thursday. HH the Amir of Kuwait, which did not cut ties with Qatar, has also been trying to mediate. Turkey's chief diplomat was in Doha on Wednesday where he called for dialogue after meeting Qatar's emir and foreign minister ahead of his Saudi stop.

"Although the kingdom is a party in this crisis, we know that King Salman is a party in resolving it," Cavusoglu said earlier. "We want to hear the views of Saudi Arabia regarding possible solutions and will share with them our views in a transparent way... We pay a great attention to our relations with them," he said. The crisis has put Turkey in a delicate position as Ankara regards Qatar as its chief ally in the Gulf but is also keen to maintain its improving ties with regional power Saudi Arabia. At the same time, Turkey is eager to maintain workable relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia's foe.

Meanwhile, reports said yesterday Saudi Arabia detained two Pakistani reporters for Turkey's state-run English language channel TRT World for some 10 hours during a visit by the Turkish foreign minister, before releasing them. Correspondent Hasan Abdullah and cameraman Nihat Yayman, who were covering the talks, were detained by Saudi authorities at their hotel but then released after Cavusoglu personally intervened with the Saudi king, the Hurriyet daily said.

Abdullah said in a statement the pair "were detained from our hotel by Saudi police in Makkah after a live analysis" on the crisis with Qatar. "The ordeal lasted nearly 10 hours during which we faced multiple interrogations and lock-up," he said, expressing gratitude to the Turkish authorities for solving the issue. There was no immediate indication over why they had been detained or if it directly concerned their reporting from the kingdom. Hurriyet said they were freed on the instructions of the Saudi king after Cavusoglu brought up the issue. The pair are now heading back to Turkey. —Agencies

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SAUDI-QATAR CRISIS PUTS SYRIA REBELS IN TRICKY POSITION

BEIRUT: A diplomatic crisis pitting Saudi Arabia against Qatar has put Syrian rebels in a difficult position, analysts say, after rivalries between Gulf backers had already weakened the opposition. Both Sunni-ruled monarchies sided with the protesters in March 2011, when the war started with the brutal repression of anti-government demonstrations. They continued supporting the mostly Sunni rebels when unrest spiralled into conflict between the armed opposition and troops loyal to President Bashar al-Assad, who hails from the country's Alawite Shiite minority and is backed by Saudi Arabia's arch-rival Iran.

But six years later, the rebellion has been plagued by rivalries between Riyadh and Doha, as well as weakened by Russia's military intervention in support of Assad's forces. Moscow's support for regime forces led to a series of setbacks for the rebels, including their landmark loss in December of second city Aleppo.

Last week, Saudi Arabia and allies, including the United Arab Emirates, severed or reduced diplomatic ties with Qatar over accusations the emirate supports extremism, claims Doha has denied.

"The current rupture puts the Syrian opposition in a very awkward position politically, as nobody wants to have to take sides publicly nor can afford to alienate either side," said Yezid Sayigh, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Centre. A rebel official in the opposition stronghold of Eastern Ghouta outside Damascus said he hoped the crisis between Doha and Riyadh was just "a temporary storm".

'Sensitive' issue

"Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates have supported the revolution of the Syrian people and shown solidarity throughout years of tragedy," the rebel official said. In a sign of the embarrassment the crisis is

causing, several rebel groups approached by AFP refused to comment, saying it was a "sensitive" issue. But Sayigh said the latest flare-up in relations between Qatar and Saudi Arabia will have a limited impact on the Syrian conflict.

"It probably won't have a major financial impact, nor a military one since the US and Turkey have stepped up their support for factions that previously were close to Qatar or to Saudi Arabia," Sayigh said. Riyadh "reduced its funding sharply starting" from the summer of 2015 "after it launched its intervention in Yemen" earlier in the year, he said. Six years into the war, Syria's fractured rebellion controls just around 10 percent of the war-torn country, with backing from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Jordan and the United States.

Pro-Doha rebels including the powerful Ahrar al-Sham group are present in the north of the country. In Eastern Ghouta, pro-Doha opposition groups exist along-

side the pro-Riyadh Jaish al-Islam rebel alliance. Rebels in the south, meanwhile, are trained by Amman and Washington. Another influential player is Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate, which now leads the Tahrir al-Sham group and which some analysts and Syrian factions say has links with Qatar, although Doha has denied this.

Tensions in Eastern Ghouta?

Qatar led most mediation efforts to obtain the release of hostages held by the group formerly known as Al-Nusra Front. In Eastern Ghouta, even before the Gulf crisis, factions supported by Qatar on one side and Saudi Arabia on the other had already clashed, killing hundreds of fighters. Raphael Lefevre, a researcher at the University of Oxford, said the latest Saudi-Qatari crisis could well spark further tensions between rival groups in the rebel enclave.

In 2013 and 2014, "Qatar and Saudi Arabia competed for influence within

exiled opposition bodies, each by supporting different factions and leaders, something which largely contributed to paralyzing and fragmenting the Syrian opposition," he said. But the consequences of the latest spat "could be much bloodier, especially as the two countries support rival rebel factions in areas already marked by a great degree of opposition infighting and regime violence such as the Eastern Ghouta", Lefevre said.

Syria expert Thomas Pierret however said "local dynamics rather than external patrons determine alliances" in Eastern Ghouta. He said Ahrar al-Sham risked "suffering financially from a reorientation of Qatari politics", even if it continues to enjoy support from Turkey, which has intervened as a mediator in the Gulf dispute. Syria's exiled political opposition is also fractured. The High Negotiations Committee is based in Riyadh, while the National Coalition works out of Istanbul. — AFP

PALESTINIANS DISMISS IS CLAIM OF ISRAEL POLICEWOMAN KILLING

ISRAEL CANCELS 250,000 FAMILY VISIT PERMITS

JERUSALEM: Palestinian militant factions yesterday dismissed a claim by the Islamic State group that it was behind the fatal stabbing of an Israeli policewoman in Jerusalem, saying the assailants came from their ranks. The Israeli security services also raised doubts about the veracity of the IS claim - its first for an attack in Jerusalem or inside Israel - which came with the jihadists facing defeat in their Iraq and Syria bastions.

Three Palestinians attacked officers just outside the walled Old City in annexed east Jerusalem late on Friday before being shot dead by security forces, Israeli police said. In an online statement, IS said jihadist fighters had targeted a "gathering of Jews", warning that "this attack will

assailants opened fire on a group of officers who returned fire, and a third stabbed the border policewoman a short distance away before being shot. Policewoman Hadas Malka, a 23-year-old staff sergeant major, was taken to hospital in critical condition and later died of her wounds.

'Muddy the waters'

In its statement, IS said the attack was "revenge for the religion of Allah and the sanctities of the violated Muslims". Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said the IS claim was an attempt to "muddy the waters", adding that the attack was carried out by "two Palestinians from the

tion found no evidence of them belonging to any group, rather they appear to have been a typical popular terror squad," an army spokeswoman said. Hamas and the PFLP identified the three assailants as Bara Ata, 18, Osama Ata, 19, and Adel Ankush, 18, all from the village of Deir Abu Mashal near the West Bank city of Ramallah.

The Shin Bet said they had been implicated in previous "popular terror activity". The PFLP said Bara and Osama Ata had recently been released from several months in Israeli prison. A family member of one of the three flatly rejected any connection to IS, angrily telling AFP the jihadist group's claim was a "lie" that didn't deserve mention. The army sealed off the assailants' home village while troops went house to house, arresting two youths before leaving after a number of hours.

UN envoy 'appalled'

Israel had eased restrictions on the entry of Palestinians to Jerusalem and Israel from the West Bank for Ramadan. Following the attack, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided to cancel permission for Palestinians to visit family members in Jerusalem and Israel, police said. Major General Yoav Mordechai - head of COGAT, the Israeli defense ministry agency responsible for civilian affairs in the Palestinian territories - said the 250,000 family visit permits were cancelled in response to "encouragement to terrorism" by Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah movement.

In a Facebook post in Arabic, Mordechai charged that Fatah had congratulated the attackers. A statement by Fatah carried on the official Palestinian news agency Wafa condemned the "killing" of the three Palestinians, without mentioning the circumstances leading up to their deaths. UN Middle East peace process coordinator Nickolay Mladenov said that "terrorist acts" like Friday's "must be clearly condemned by all". He also spoke out against the way both Hamas and PFLP had described the incident. "I am appalled that once again some find it appropriate to justify such attacks as 'heroic,'" Mladenov said in a statement.

The unrest that broke out in Oct 2015 has claimed the lives of 272 Palestinians, 42 Israelis, two Americans, two Jordanians, an Eritrean, a Sudanese and a Briton, according to an AFP tally. Israeli authorities say most of the Palestinians killed were carrying out knife, gun or car-rammings attacks. The jihadist group has a major presence across Israel's southern border in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, from where it has claimed several rocket attacks into Israel. — AFP



DEIR ABU MASH'AL: Israeli border police arrest a Palestinian during clashes in this West Bank village near Ramallah yesterday. — AP

not be the last". But Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist group that runs the Gaza Strip, dismissed the claim, saying the attackers had come from among its own ranks and those of the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

The assault took place as tens of thousands of Palestinians held night prayers at the nearby Al-Aqsa mosque compound, Islam's third-holiest site, on the third Friday of the holy fasting month of Ramadan. According to police, two

PFLP and a third from Hamas". The killing was "a natural response to the crimes of the occupier," he said. A spokesman for Israel's Shin Bet internal security agency told AFP it was "impossible to corroborate (the IS claim) at this point".

The Israeli army said the assailants appeared to have acted independently, like many of the attackers in a wave of unrest that has rocked Israel and the occupied territories since Oct 2015. "A preliminary army intelligence evalua-

SANCTIONS 'HARSHER THAN BERLIN WALL'

GENEVA: A Qatari official accused Saudi Arabia and its allies Friday of imposing a "siege" on his country with sanctions he said were having a more devastating effect than the Berlin Wall. Ali bin Smaikh Al-Marri, chairman of Qatar's national human rights committee, said the measures amounted to collective punishment and cited one case of a mother being separated from her baby. The recent decision by several countries to cut ties with Qatar was trampling on the rights of citizens from the entire region, he said. "This siege and these measures have led to what is called collective punishment," Marri told reporters in Geneva in Arabic through a translator, calling on the international community to intervene.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt announced earlier this month the suspension of all ties to Qatar. They accused it of state support for extremist groups and denounced its political proximity to Shiite Iran. Qatar denies the allegations. Among other measures, the four states gave all Qatari citizens 14 days to leave their countries and ordered home their own citizens living in Qatar. This had led to "gross violations of human rights", Marri said, pointing out that every Qatari family had at least one member living in other countries in the region. These measures "are harsher than the Berlin Wall that separated families", he added.

His committee had so far received 1,064 complaints for a vast range of rights violations, from both Qataris and citizens of the

other countries involved, he said. He pointed to new laws issued by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE threatening between five and 15 years in prison for any of their citizens "who shows sympathy to the state of Qatar". In one case, he said, a Qatari woman was ordered to leave the UAE where she lived with her husband and infant. When she arrived at the airport however, she was told she could not take her baby,

who had Emirati citizenship, with her. Thousands of students studying abroad had also been affected, he said. He cited the case of one woman from Qatar who was in her last year studying at a university in UAE who had been forced to leave. "She has lost four years of study," he said. Marri said his committee was urging Saudi Arabia and its allies to lift their sanctions, and was calling on the

international community to pressure them to do so. He called on UN human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, who has already expressed alarm at the measures, to send a delegation to Qatar to see the impact of the sanctions firsthand. Marri also urged Qatar to "immediately move internationally to ensure the end of this siege, by going to the Security Council or other UN mechanisms." — AFP



DOHA: Mohammed Dasmal Al-Kuwari (center), Qatari navy Chief Coordinator and Jon Anderson (right) and Benjamin Davni of the US navy are seen on a vessel during a joint military exercise between Qatar and the US navy on Friday. — AFP



DOHA: This file photo taken on Nov 24, 2005 shows a general view of the newsroom at the headquarters of the Qatari satellite channel Al-Jazeera. — AP

JAZEERA TWITTER ACCOUNT TEMPORARILY 'SUSPENDED'

DOHA: Qatar-based broadcaster Al-Jazeera said the Twitter account for its main Arabic-language channel was temporarily "suspended" on Saturday, in the latest incident at the station. A spokesman for the channel said the cut may have been due to a technical problem and that all Twitter accounts affected were back online. "Most of our Arabic accounts were blocked, but they are now up-and-running," the spokesman told AFP, adding that it may take several hours for them to be fully restored.

An investigation was taking place to determine the cause, and technical teams from the broadcaster were trying to coordinate with Twitter. Al-Jazeera's main Arabic language account has almost 12 million followers. The station's English-language account was unaffected. The announcement that the online accounts were back came around an hour after first reports that some of Al-Jazeera's Twitter accounts had been blocked.

"The main Al-Jazeera Twitter account

has been suspended, and work is ongoing to solve the problem," Yasser Abuhilalah, managing director of Al-Jazeera Arabic, tweeted. "Disruption (by others) will not stop because the truth terrifies them. We'll be back." In another tweet, he said no other "channel in the world... faces the same amount of conspiracy".

The incident came at a time of diplomatic crisis between Qatar and neighboring Gulf countries. All diplomatic ties with Doha were cut on June 5 by several countries including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, which accuse Qatar of supporting and funding terrorist groups. Qatar strongly denies the charge and claims those countries which have cut links are trying to change Doha's foreign policy. The television channel has long been a target for criticism by other Middle East countries, with Al-Jazeera banned on several occasions. Earlier this month, Al-Jazeera said it was combating a large-scale cyber attack. — AFP



CAIRO: In this June 29, 2015 photo, Egyptian policemen stand guard after a bomb attack that targeted Egypt's prosecutor general in the Heliopolis district. — AP

EGYPT COURT RECOMMENDS DEATH PENALTY OVER PROSECUTOR KILLING

CAIRO: A Cairo criminal court on Saturday recommended the death penalty for 30 people convicted of involvement in the 2015 assassination of Egypt's top prosecutor, the most senior state official killed by militants in recent years. The court set a verdict session for July 22, after referring its recommendation to the country's top religious authority, the Grand Mufti, for a non-binding legally-required opinion. The July 22 verdict can be appealed against.

Public prosecutor Hisham Barakat was killed in a car bomb attack on his convoy in Cairo, an operation for which Egypt blamed the Muslim Brotherhood and Gaza-based Hamas militants, though both groups have denied it. "The brutal conspiracy by hired hands to target the public prosecutor Hisham Barakat and assassinate him, where the corrupt and weak-willed forces of evil and tyranny conspired, could only be carried out by an unjust group that has shed innocent blood," said Judge Hassan Farid.

Farid initially read out 31 names but two of them referred to the same person and the judge then corrected himself.

Only half of the defendants are in custody, with 15 on the run. The Interior Ministry released a video last year showing clips of several young men confessing and admitting going to Gaza for training from Hamas, though some of them later denied the accusations in court.

The defendants said they were forced to confess under torture and their lawyers asked that they be medically examined. Farid said he granted the request to a majority, but not all, and that doctors in a prison hospital had found no signs of torture. Egypt faces an Islamist insurgency led by Islamic State in North Sinai, where hundreds of soldiers and police have been killed.

The group has also increasingly carried out attacks in Egypt targeting Christians in a spate of church bombings and shootings that have killed some 100 since December. Barakat was the highest-ranking state official to die in a militant attack since President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, a former military chief, ousted President Mohamed Morsi, a Brotherhood leader, in 2013 after mass protests against his rule. — Reuters



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AS HOMELANDS DEVASTATED, INDONESIA TRIBE TURNS TO ISLAM

BATANG HARI, Indonesia: Indonesian tribesman Muhammad Yusuf believes his conversion from animism to Islam in a government-supported program will eventually make his life easier. "Thank God, the government now pays attention to us; before our conversion they didn't care," says Yusuf, the Islamic name he has adopted. Yusuf is a member of the "Orang Rimba" tribe. His small community now gathers around a stilt-mounted wooden hut, while children inside wearing Islamic skullcaps and hijabs enthusiastically recite the Holy Quran.

Not far away, other members of the tribe who remain faithful to the old ways stalk through palm oil trees in a desperate hunt for prey in an area that was once lush Sumatran rainforest. Stick-thin and wearing only loincloths over their weather-beaten skin, they brandish homemade rifles as they search for their next meal. Yusuf's group converted to Islam, the predominant faith in Indonesia, and gave up their nomadic ways in January in a bid to improve livelihoods that have been devastated by the expansion of palm oil plantations and coal mines into their forest homelands. Authorities insist the move is positive but critics say it amounts to a last throw of the dice for indigenous groups driven to desperation by the government's failure to prop-

erly defend their rights against rapid commercial expansion. Indonesia is home to an estimated 70 million tribespeople, more than a quarter of the total 255-million population, from the heavily tattooed Dayaks of Borneo island to the Mentawai who are famed for sharpening their teeth as they believe it makes them more beautiful. But as a nomadic group, the Orang Rimba - whose name translates as "jungle people" - are a rarity.

Big changes

The 200 who recently converted in the Batang Hari district of Jambi province - a handful of the approximately 3,500 Orang Rimba - decided to turn to the Muslim faith after being approached by an Islamic NGO, and the social welfare ministry has helped with the process. Community leader Yusuf conceded the reason they were converting was because food was increasingly hard to find and they were constantly locked in disputes with companies on whose lands they hunt, rather than due to any deeply-held beliefs.

The tribesman also said that he and his family - he has 10 children - wanted to get national identity cards, which would allow them access to public services including education and healthcare.



BATANG HARI, Indonesia: This photo taken on May 19, 2017 shows children from the "Orang Rimba" tribe, who have converted to Islam and given up their nomadic ways, wearing Islamic skullcaps and hijabs as they gather to recite the Holy Quran in Jambi province. — AFP

Converting to Islam and settling in one location means they can get the cards. The decision has meant big changes. The converts now live in basic wooden huts on stilts and no longer move to a new

location every few weeks. They are fully-clothed in items donated by the government and NGOs, having abandoned the simple loincloths and sarongs they wore in the past. — AFP



MARAWI, Philippines: People watch as smoke billows from houses after aerial bombings by Philippine air force planes on militant positions yesterday. — AFP

PHILIPPINE WAR BABIES TO LIVE WITH 'MARTIAL' LAW LEGACY

EVACUEES CLING TO HOPES FOR THEIR CHILDREN

MARAWI, Philippines: Raisah Labay gently cradles her newborn: A boy who was named Martial to mark her flight from a war-torn Philippine city and his birth under newly imposed military rule. President Rodrigo Duterte declared martial law across the southern third of the Philippines last month in response to Islamist militants going on a rampage in her home city of Marawi, which triggered deadly clashes that show no signs of ending. Nearly all of the Islamic city's 200,000 residents have fled the fighting and are now living in overcrowded evacuation centers, where babies sleep on gymnasium floors and makeshift cribs suspended from basketball rings, or relatives' homes.

"I named him Martial as a sign that he was born in the time of war," Labay, 21, told AFP while seated on the bleachers of an evacuation camp in a nearby city. "During martial law, our lives collapsed. Someday I want to tell him about the painful ordeal I went through: Going into labor while evacuating our family and telling myself: 'No, don't push him out yet.'" The urban battle began on May 23 when hundreds of militants waving black flags of the Islamic State group occupied parts of Marawi in what authorities said was a bid to declare a caliphate in the region.

Despite a US-backed bombing campaign that

has destroyed large parts of Marawi, many militants remain holed up in pockets of the city protected by hundreds of human shields and they are continuing to surprise with their enduring firepower. Twenty-six civilians, 59 security forces and 225 militants have been confirmed killed in the fighting, according to the government. Outside the combat zone, refugees are dying from disease and dehydration, with women and children bearing the brunt of the humanitarian crisis, according to local officials and aid groups. "Almost every day, some people in evacuation centers die: Children, the elderly. They get sick but our hospitals are full because of the bulk of the evacuees," provincial vice governor Mamintal Adiong told AFP.

Nothing but breast milk

In the gymnasium where Labay was staying, 220 people shared a lone toilet and lacked potable water while women were in need of underwear and hygiene kits, social workers told AFP. Only boxes of relief goods separated families who were huddled on mats, where they crammed in for a humid afternoon doze. Labay, whose family ran an eatery in Marawi, carried nothing but her two-year-old firstborn in the exodus. She was lucky to reach a government hospi-

tal in time to give birth to Martial, and there were no complications. But now Labay feels desperate. "We have no money for diapers, milk or clothes for my baby. The only thing I can give him is breast milk," she said.

Rosalyn Arat, 30, another pregnant woman, said she wanted to get an ultrasound but could not. She said the extent of her medical care at the evacuation center was some vitamins. She is set to give birth this month and also plans to name her baby Martial if it's a boy, or Martiala if it's a girl. "It started as a joke for my husband and I but then we thought it was a fitting name," Arat told AFP. "What happened in Marawi was a nightmare we never imagined. But we try to be strong because even if we lost our belongings, we are still together as one family."

With their homes and livelihood ravaged by airstrikes and street-to-street fighting, evacuees face an uncertain future but cling to hopes for their children. Raisah Labay is determined to ensure a peaceful life for Martial - nicknamed Marmar to also include a reference to Marawi - even if she does not know how right now. "This is my first time to be an evacuee and I do not want my baby to experience this," she said. "If you've gone through such difficulty, would you want your child to suffer to it too?" — AFP

N KOREA'S HOSTAGE 'PLAYBOOK' BACKFIRES WITH WARMBIER COMA

SEOUL: North Korea has a well-thumbed playbook for detained American citizens who are valuable diplomatic bargaining chips for the regime, but the case of Otto Warmbier, flown home in a coma this week, is a glaring exception. The script is simple and familiar: Arrest an American, hold a show trial ending with a lengthy jail term, release them in exchange for a high-profile visit - Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton have both helped free detainees in the past - which is used for domestic propaganda.

"With Otto Warmbier they wanted to play the same game again," Andrei Lankov, Kookmin University, told AFP. When it works, "it's a brilliant propaganda coup," for the regime, he said. Warmbier, a 22-year-old University of Virginia student from Cincinnati who was in North Korea as a tourist, looked set to follow the usual pattern. He tried to steal a propaganda poster, was arrested and sentenced to 15 years of hard labor at a show trial.

But then something went wrong. "If you are always playing games, one day things are going to backfire. This is pretty much what happened in this case," Lankov said. Doctors treating Warmbier in the US, where he arrived this week after being released by Pyongyang on "humanitarian grounds", said that the student is in "a state of unresponsive wakefulness", having suffered a severe brain injury, most likely due to a cardiopulmonary arrest. The US doctors could not prove what triggered this but said they had found no signs of a botulism infection - the official explanation given by the North Korean regime for how the young man fell into a coma.

'A dangerous place'

North Korea, a one-party state that maintains prison camps and has a dire record on human rights, has for decades pursued a nuclear weapons program, despite global condemnation and successive rounds of UN sanctions. US President Donald Trump has made "solving" the peninsula's problem a top priority for his administration. Experts said it was unlikely North Korea would have intentionally put a detained American into a coma. "It must have been an accident and that's probably why they were hiding it for a year," Go Myong-Hyun, researcher at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, told AFP.

North Korean escapees have reported that it is common practice to send home the prisoners who are very ill, Greg Scarlatou, executive director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) told AFP. "This way, political prison camp and other detention facility officials avoid having to deal with that situation," he said. Once Pyongyang realized the seriousness of Warmbier's medical situation, they would likely have panicked, said Stephan Haggard, Director of the Korea-Pacific Program at UC San Diego.

It could be that "Warmbier went into a coma very soon after the sentencing, but the intelligence services covered it up or didn't report it up the chain," he told AFP, adding that apparently even the North's ministry of foreign affairs had been out of the loop. Eventually "someone realizes that the worst of all possible worlds is for the guy to die in custody," he said, at which point the North embarked on a flurry of secret diplomatic activity which led to Warmbier's release. — AFP



PYONGYANG: This file photo taken on March 16, 2016 shows the trial of US student Otto Frederick Warmbier, who was arrested for committing hostile acts against North Korea, at the Supreme Court. — AFP

PAKISTAN ARRESTS JAIL OFFICIALS OVER ESCAPE OF 2 MILITANTS

KARACHI: A jail superintendent and 11 other officials were arrested in the wake of a jail break in which two militants who were on trial escaped from a high-security prison, Pakistani police said yesterday. The arrested officials were being questioned to determine how two members of the outlawed Lashkar-e-Jhangvi group escaped Wednesday from the jail in the port city of Karachi, senior police official Khawaja Naveed said. He alleged the two men escaped due to negligence of the jail staff. Naveed said efforts were underway to trace and capture the escapees

who were arrested in 2013 over alleged links to terrorism. His comments came two days after counter-terrorism officials claimed the two militants shaved their beards in a court bathroom located on the jail premises and fled without being checked. Also yesterday, Mohammad Saeed, provincial head of the paramilitary Rangers, said security forces in an overnight raid arrested four members of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi group and seized weapons and explosives from their hide-out in Karachi. He said the detained men wanted to target a rally of Shiites. — AP

DUTERTE RESURFACES AFTER REST, SAYS BATTLE WINDING DOWN

MANILA: President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines, who had avoided public appearances for nearly a week to recover from what spokesmen described as fatigue, said yesterday that a battle with Islamist militants in Marawi City was winding down, but the insurgency had deep roots. More than 300 people have been killed in the southern town, where troops have been fighting for over three weeks to oust militants who have sworn allegiance to Islamic State. "The fighting is going on, but it's

winding down," Duterte said while addressing soldiers in the town of Butuan, an event covered live on television. But he added: "It's difficult to fight those who are willing to die. They have corrupted the name of God in the form of religion to kill many innocent people, for nothing." The presence of fighters from the Middle East had made it a brutal conflict, Duterte said. Duterte had not attended any public event since last Sunday, with his spokesmen saying the president was tired and resting. — Reuters

RODMAN RETURNS FROM N KOREA TRIP

BEIJING: Former National Basketball Association star Dennis Rodman arrived in Beijing yesterday after what he said was a "really good" 5-day trip to North Korea. Rodman, 56, said last week before departing for Pyongyang that he was trying to bring sports to the increasingly isolated nuclear-armed country, where he has previously met leader Kim Jong Un. "Everybody's going to be happy. It was a good day. It was a good trip. A

really good trip," Rodman said. Wearing black clothing with the PotCoin logo - a crypto-currency used by the legal marijuana industry - Rodman fended off questions from dozens of journalists at the arrival gate. Asked repeatedly if he had met Kim, Rodman said: "You'll find out."

He also declined to answer questions about whether he had played a role in the release of Otto Warmbier, an American student who was

returned home on the day of Rodman's arrival suffering from brain damage and in a state of unresponsive wakefulness, after more than a year in detention in North Korea. Tensions have escalated on the Korean peninsula over North Korea's nuclear and missile tests and its vow to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the US mainland, presenting US President Donald Trump with perhaps his most pressing security worry.

Rodman's North Korea visits over the years have fuelled speculation that he could somehow facilitate a diplomatic breakthrough between Pyongyang and Washington. The US State Department has said Rodman was travelling as a private citizen. Rodman has faced ridicule and criticism for his trips to North Korea, which some US politicians and activists view as serving only as fodder for North Korean propaganda.

His earlier visits to North Korea in 2013 and 2014 included a basketball game that he organized, an event chronicled in the documentary film "Big Bang in Pyongyang", which featured Rodman singing "Happy Birthday" to Kim. The US government has issued travel warnings to Americans against going to North Korea. Rodman, nicknamed "The Worm" during his playing career and known for his tattoos, body piercings and multicolored hair, is considered one of the best defensive players and rebounders in NBA history. He won five league championships with the Detroit Pistons and Chicago Bulls. — Reuters



BEIJING: Former NBA basketball player Dennis Rodman of the US is mobbed by the media as he walks out from the arrival gate, returning from his trip to North Korea at Beijing's international airport yesterday. — AFP

TRUMP ROLLS BACK 'TERRIBLE, MISGUIDED'...

Continued from Page 1

The new policy bans most US business transactions with the Armed Forces Business Enterprises Group, a Cuban conglomerate involved in all sectors of the economy. But it makes some exceptions, including for air and sea travel, according to US officials. This will essentially shield US airlines and cruise lines serving the island. "We do not want US dollars to prop up a military monopoly that exploits and abuses the citizens of Cuba," Trump said, pledging that US sanctions would not be lifted until Cuba frees political prisoners and holds free elections.

While the changes are far-reaching, they appear to be less sweeping than many US pro-engagement advocates had feared. Trump based his partial reversal of Obama's Cuba measures largely on human rights grounds. His critics, however, have questioned why his administration is now singling out Cuba for human rights abuses but downplaying the issue in other parts of the world, including Saudi Arabia, a close US ally Trump visited last month where political parties and protests are banned.

Some policies left in place

Trump, however, stopped short of breaking diplomatic relations restored in 2015 after more than five decades of hostilities. He also will not cut off recently resumed direct U.S.-Cuba commercial flights or cruise-ship travel, though his more restrictive policy seems certain to dampen new economic ties overall.

The administration, according to one White House official, has no intention of "disrupting" existing business ventures such as one struck under Obama by Starwood Hotels Inc, which is owned by Marriott International Inc, to manage a historic Havana hotel. Nor does Trump plan to reinstate limits that Obama lifted on the amount of the island's coveted rum and cigars that Americans can bring home for personal use.

Still, it will be the latest attempt by Trump to overturn parts of Obama's presidential legacy. He has already pulled the United States out of a major international climate treaty and is trying to scrap his predecessor's landmark healthcare program. When Obama announced the detente in 2014, he said that decades of US efforts to achieve change in Cuba by isolating the island had failed and it was time to try a new approach.

Critics of the rapprochement said Obama was giving too much away without extracting concessions from the Cuban government. Castro's government has clearly stated it does not intend to change its one-party political system. Trump aides say Obama's efforts amounted to "appeasement" and have done nothing to advance political freedoms in Cuba, while benefiting the Cuban government financially.

"It's hard to think of a policy that makes less sense than the prior administration's terrible and misguided deal with the Castro regime," Trump said in Miami. International human rights groups say, however, that renewed US efforts to isolate the island could worsen the

situation by empowering Cuban hard-liners. The Cuban government, which has made clear it will not be pressured into reforms, had no immediate comment.

But ordinary Cubans said they were crestfallen to be returning to an era of frostier relations with the United States with potential economic fallout for them. "It's like we are returning to the Cold War," said Cuban designer Idania del Rio, who joined a group of friends in a hotel in Old Havana to watch the speech in English on CNN. Trump announced his new approach at the Manuel Artime Theater in the heart of the United States' largest Cuban-American and Cuban exile community, whose support aides believe helped him win Florida in the election.

The venue is named after a leader of the failed US-backed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 against Fidel Castro's revolutionary government. "I have trust in Trump to do the right thing when it comes to Cuba," said Jorge Saurez, 66, a retired physician in Little Havana. Trump's vow to keep the broader decades-old US economic embargo on Cuba firmly in place drew criticism from some US farmers, especially growers of corn, soybeans and rice. Obama's detente has already lifted exports and raised hopes for more gains, which they said were now in doubt.

Mexico's foreign ministry urged the United States and Cuba to resolve their differences "via dialogue." But Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, whose leftist government is Cuba's main regional ally, slammed Trump's tightening of restrictions as an "offence" against Latin America. "His speech was aggressive and threatening, ... revealing his contempt and ignorance," President Nicolas Maduro said in a speech. "We reject Donald Trump's declarations against our brother Cuba. It is an offence against Latin America."

The biggest change in travel policy will be that Americans making educational people-to-people trips, one of the most popular authorized categories, can no longer go to the island on their own but only on group tours. Trump's aides said the aim was to close off a path for Americans seeking beach vacations in a country where US tourism is still officially banned.

US Senator Jeff Flake, one of the Republican Party's most vocal advocates for easing rules on US dealings with Cuba, called for a vote on legislation lifting restrictions on American travel there. But the Republican leadership in Congress has long blocked such a move, and it appears unlikely to budge.

Under Trump's order, the Treasury and Commerce departments will be given 30 days to begin writing new regulations, which will not take effect until they are complete. In contentious deliberations leading up to the new policy, some aides argued that Trump, a former real estate magnate who won the presidency vowing to unleash US business, would have a hard time defending any moves that close off the Cuban market. But other advisers have contended that it is important to make good on a campaign promise to Cuban-Americans. — AP

7 US DESTROYER CREW MISSING

Continued from Page 1

Japan's coastguard, which is probing the incident, has sent five vessels, two planes and a team of specially trained rescue personnel to help in the search for the missing crew, a spokesman said. The USS Dewey and two Navy tugboats were helping out in the search and rescue, the US military said, while Japan's Self-Defence Forces also joined the operation, sending three ships and several aircraft.

The 154-metre Fitzgerald—which was commissioned in 1995 and was deployed in the Iraq war in 2003 - is based in Yokosuka and operates in the Pacific and the Sea of Japan (East Sea). The accident happened 56 nautical miles southwest of Yokosuka, the navy said. "My daughter is on the Fitzgerald," a parent wrote on the 7th Fleet's Facebook page. "So worried. Just need to hear she is ok. Thinking of all of our sailors and their families!!"

US chief of naval operations Admiral John Richardson said in a statement: "As more information is learned we will be sure to share it with the Fitzgerald families and when appropriate the public. All of our thoughts and concerns are with the Fitzgerald crew and their families."

Video by Japan's public broadcaster NHK showed heavy damage to the right side of the Fitzgerald just ahead of the control tower, and that the ship had taken on water.

An orange hose was visible on the ship's deck, with many crew members seen checking the damage. The destroyer, piloted by two tugboats, was sailing to Yokosuka. "The USS Fitzgerald suffered damage on her starboard side above and below the waterline. The collision resulted in some flooding," the Navy said. The Fitzgerald was still under its own power "although her propulsion was limited," the navy said. It is not in danger of sinking and is headed back to port on its own power.

The footage meanwhile showed relatively light damage to the ACX Crystal. Twenty crew members were aboard the container and none was injured, another Japanese coast-guard spokesman said, adding that the vessel was separately sailing back to a Tokyo port. "We are now investigating the case as further details, including the weather conditions at the time, are not available," the spokesman said. The ACX Crystal is a commercial container ship that, according to marine tracking websites, was on its way to Tokyo. The ship carries a Philippine flag but is listed as owned by Japanese shipping giant NYK Line. — AFP

TRUMP 'UNDER INVESTIGATION'

Continued from Page 1

Yet Trump's angry tweets on Friday underscored the near-impossible challenge his advisers and legal team have in trying to get him to avoid weighing in on an active probe.

The president has denied that he has any nefarious ties to Russia and has also disputed that he's attempted to block the investigation into his campaign's possible role in Russia's election-related hacking. It was unclear whether his tweet about being under investigation was based on direct knowledge or new media reports that suggest Mueller is examining whether the president obstructed justice by firing Comey. The tweets came shortly after Rosenstein issued his unusual statement that appeared to be warning about the accuracy of such reports.

"Americans should be skeptical about anonymous allegations," Rosenstein said. "The Department of Justice has a long-established policy to neither confirm nor deny such allegations." The department would not comment on the record on whether Trump, who has repeatedly complained about leaks on the case, requested the statement. But a department official said no one asked for the statement and Rosenstein acted on his own. The official demanded anonymity because the official was not authorized to be named discussing the deliberations.

Trump has told associates he has the legal authority to fire Mueller. What is clear is that he could order the Justice Department to ax Mueller, which may result in Rosenstein's departure and would certainly intensify the uproar over the investigation. Though some in the White House have preached caution, fearing a repeat of the freestorm over Comey's firing, many in Trump's orbit - including his son Donald Trump Jr. and adviser Newt Gingrich - have deemed

Mueller biased and worthy of dismissal. Several White House officials and Trump associates insisted on anonymity in order to discuss the president's views of the unfolding investigation. Rosenstein has been overseeing the Russia probe since shortly after Attorney General Jeff Sessions recused himself. But Rosenstein, too, may ultimately have to hand over oversight given his role in Trump's decision to fire Comey.

Earlier this month, Rosenstein said that "if anything that I did winds up being relevant to his investigation then, as Director Mueller and I discussed, if there's a need from me to recuse, I will." Trump's tweets came after the top lawyer for his transition team warned the organization's officials to preserve all records and other materials related to the Russia probe. An official of Trump's transition confirmed the lawyer's internal order, which was sent Thursday.

The order from the general counsel for the transition team casts a wide net on documents that could shed light on ties between Trump's presidential campaign and representatives of Russia's government. The order also covers separate inquiries into several key Trump associates including former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn, campaign adviser Paul Manafort, foreign policy aide Carter Page and outside adviser Roger Stone.

The White House has directed questions for details to outside legal counsel, which has not responded. Vice President Mike Pence has also hired a private lawyer to represent his interests in the expanding probe. Pence headed the Trump transition until Inauguration Day. Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, also has retained an attorney to represent him. Cohen has worked for Trump since the mid-2000s and was active in the campaign. He has already been subpoenaed by the House intelligence committee — AP

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Focus

WHAT'S NEXT IN LEGAL FIGHT OVER US TRAVEL BAN

By Sudhin Thanawala
and Gene Johnson

Another appeals court, another defeat for the Trump administration. The San Francisco-based 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals on Monday refused to reinstate President Donald Trump's executive order banning travelers from six mostly Muslim countries. A three judge panel said the administration failed to show that blocking citizens from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen was needed to protect the US. The court also found that the president's order ran afoul of an immigration law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of nationality. Another federal appeals court, the Virginia-based 4th Circuit, last month also refused to reinstate the travel ban, a decision Trump has already appealed to the Supreme Court. Here's a look at how the rulings compare and what might come next.

How do rulings differ?

Critics of the ban have asserted that the president's order was motivated by anti-Muslim sentiment, in violation of the Constitution's separation of church and state. The 4th Circuit's ruling took that question head-on, agreeing that the ban officially disfavored Islam - as evidenced by Trump's campaign statements calling for a "total and complete shutdown" on Muslims entering the US - and was thus unconstitutional.

But the 9th Circuit sidestepped that question, saying they didn't need to answer it because the legality of the travel ban could be decided on narrower grounds: It violated immigration law. While the president has broad authority over immigration, the judges said, to invoke that authority in this case, Trump would have to show the entry of citizens from the six countries would harm the US. He made no such showing, they said. "National security is not a 'talismanic incantation' that, once invoked, can support any and all exercise of executive power," the judges wrote.

By avoiding the question of Trump's motive for banning the travelers, the 9th Circuit avoided a thorny issue about whether courts should consider the president's campaign-trail statements. The 9th Circuit, however, did not completely ignore the president's statements. The judges pointed to a June 5 tweet by Trump saying the executive order was aimed at "dangerous countries." That helped demonstrate that he was not assessing whether the roughly 180 million citizens of the six countries had ties to terrorism, they said.

What about refugees?

In addition to banning travelers from six mostly Muslim nations for 90 days, Trump's executive order called for a suspension of the nation's refugee program. In his March ruling striking down the travel ban, a federal judge in Hawaii also held that the suspension of the refugee program was unconstitutional. The 9th Circuit rebuffed the administration's efforts to reinstate that part of the order as well. The court said the president was required to consult with Congress in setting the number of refugees that would be allowed into the country in a given year and could not decrease that number mid-year. That issue wasn't before the 4th Circuit, because in the Maryland case it considered, the lower court judge had not struck down the refugee program's suspension.

What comes next?

Attorney General Jeff Sessions said after Monday's ruling that the ban was necessary to protect national security, and the president was within his lawful authority to enact it. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said the administration was confident that the travel ban would be upheld by the US Supreme Court. The administration has asked the Supreme Court to immediately reinstate the ban on travelers.

At the Supreme Court, anything is possible if you have five votes - a majority of the court. The justices have a range of options in front of them. They could order an unusual June argument and try to resolve the travel ban lawsuits before they leave town for the summer. They also could essentially do nothing, leaving the two appeals court rulings in place. One reason the court might feel some responsibility to act - and sooner rather than later - is because the administration has asked for expedited review. The court typically also has the last word when a federal court strikes down a law or presidential order. The 9th Circuit's more narrow focus on immigration law may appeal to conservative justices on the Supreme Court who might be loath to extend their review beyond the text of the executive order to include the president's campaign statements about a Muslim ban, said David Levine, a professor at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law. "They don't need to psychoanalyze the president," he said. "They don't need to go beyond the four corners of the order." — AP

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1967 WAR: WHAT WE DIDN'T KNOW

Dr James J Zogby

President Arab
American Institute

In June of 1967, I was in the midst of my final weeks in college when the war broke out. At the time, I knew little about the Middle East, since I was more engaged in the anti-war and civil rights movements. And so as I watched the UN Security Council debates that preceded and followed the war, I saw what was unfolding through the prism of those struggles with which I was more familiar - the one in opposition to the war in Vietnam and the other for civil rights and justice in America. As a result, I was skeptical both about the US and Israel's justifications for the war and the reporting and political commentary that followed. The story, as it was being told, was too simple and, therefore, it just didn't ring true. I knew there had to be more.

The war started and ended quickly and in the US, the media and political establishment were quick to celebrate the Israeli victory. It was, we were told, "clean and quick" and "miraculous". There were two haunting photos from that period that were intended

to capture the essence of the war. One featured handsome and hopeful young Israeli soldiers standing next to Jerusalem's Western Wall. It was meant to convey their joyous victory and their conquest of Jerusalem. The other was a more ominous picture of shoes in the Sinai's desert sand. We were told that they had been left by fleeing Egyptian soldiers, clearly intending to portray Israel's enemies as vanquished cowards. I knew enough about the "fog of war" to know that we didn't know the whole story, but it wasn't until years later that the bloody horrors that accompanied these pictures became known establishing that this war had neither been "clean" or had it been "miraculous".

In September of 1995, the New York Times ran a story under the headline "Egypt Says Israelis Killed POW's in the '67 War". The story reported on the discovery of mass graves in the Sinai desert containing the bodies of Egyptian soldiers, together with eye witness accounts of the killings. One former Egyptian soldier reported "I saw a line of prisoners, civilian and military, and they [the Israelis] opened fire at them all at once. When they were dead, they told us to bury them." While this crime was news to readers of the

Times, it had been known in Israel for years, since Israeli officers had, previously admitted to killing unarmed prisoners. Nevertheless, the story died because neither the US nor the Egyptian government wanted to pursue it out of fear that it would disrupt the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian "peace process". For their part, the Israelis being masters at brushing off bad news, as if it didn't happen, knew that it would go away. And it did. The story of the Western Wall was no less troubling. Here, too, what happened to the Palestinian inhabitants of the Moughrabi neighborhood that was adjacent to the Wall has long been known and long been ignored.

Just last week, an Israeli newspaper, Haaretz, published an account of the way Israel quickly moved to consolidate its hold over Jerusalem by demolishing the entire neighborhood of 135 Palestinian homes that bordered the Wall, forcibly evicting its residents. The story's intent was to romanticize how 15 Israeli contractors came together quickly to plan the demolition of the Arab homes in order to create a plaza where Jewish worshippers could come to pray at the Wall. Their goal, as they described it, was to "purify" the area. They

called it a "great and glorious mission". In reality it was neither great nor glorious.

One of these contractors related, with chilling calm, how they went into the neighborhood with a megaphone and "asked the people [the Palestinian inhabitants] to gather" and then ushered them out as the bulldozers began their work. Some "residents refused to leave and left only when the bulldozers rammed" into their homes. One old woman was buried alive in the rubble of her home. The article describes a picture, from that time, showing a demolished home "with furniture, curtains, and a vase with flowers inside". It was "ethnic cleansing" of innocent Palestinians to "purify" an area in order to provide Israelis a place to pray.

Even with these accounts, there is still so much we don't know and so many more stories that need to be told. Looking at the official records of the deaths of the 1967 War, we are told that 10,000 Egyptians died while another 5,000 were listed "missing". Why was there no accounting for this large number? What other secrets still reside beneath the Sinai's sands? And it wasn't only the families from the Moughrabi neighborhood who were "gloriously" removed to "purify the area".

STAY PUT? DEADLY FIRE PUTS SCRUTINY ON UK HIGH-RISE RULE

By Colleen Long

A catastrophic blaze at a London apartment tower has brought new scrutiny to a long-accepted, counterintuitive rule for people in tall buildings: If the blaze breaks out elsewhere in the structure, don't automatically run for the stairs. Stay put and wait for instructions. That's what residents of London's 24-story Grenfell Tower had been told to do, but the strategy failed early Wednesday when flames that began on a lower floor spread shockingly fast and quickly engulfed the entire building.

Many residents were trapped, forcing some on higher floors to jump to their deaths rather than face the flames or throw their children to bystanders below. So far, at least 30 people have been reported dead and about 70 people were missing. Despite that outcome, fire experts say "stay put" is still the best advice - as long as the building has proper fire-suppression protections, such as multiple stairwells, sprinkler systems, fireproof doors and flame-resistant construction materials, some of which were lacking in the London blaze.

"It is human nature for most of us - if we know there's a fire, start moving and get out," said Robert Solomon of the National Fire Protection Association, a US-based organization that studies fire safety globally. "But we try to make sure people know there are features and redundancies in buildings that you can count on, and you can stay put."

Most major cities with many high-rise buildings have detailed building codes and fire safety rules requiring several layers of protections in tall buildings. The rules vary from place to place, as does advice about when to evacuate, but fire experts say the "shelter-in-place" directive is usually applied to buildings of 15 stories or more. Floors directly above and below the reported fire are usually evacuated, but others are to stay and use damp towels to block cracks beneath the door unless told otherwise, and call 911 if they have questions.

That's partly to avoid repeated, unnecessary evacuations that cause people eventually to ignore such orders when they really matter. And it also avoids panicked and unsafe evacuations down a long stairwell choked with smoke, which can be just as deadly as the licking flames. Several such high-rise evacuations over the years have resulted in needless deaths. In 2014, a man who fled his apartment on the 38th floor of a New York City apartment building died when he encountered a plume of suffocating smoke in a stairwell as he tried to descend to the street. His apartment remained entirely untouched by the flames.

What makes the London fire maddening for fire experts who believe in the "stay put" rule is that the Grenfell may have lacked many of the safety redundancies necessary to make it work. For example, the Grenfell building had only one stairwell. A lawmaker says it didn't have working sprinklers. And Britain's Guardian newspaper reported that cladding used on the high-rise structure was made of the

cheaper, more flammable material of two types offered by the manufacturer. "The bottom line: Sprinklers, fire doors and multiple stairwells work" said Chicago Fire Department Battalion Chief Michael Conroy. "It becomes difficult to shelter-in-place when you have no engineered fire protection systems within a building." New York City Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro, whose department is among the most practiced in the world at fighting fires in tall buildings, says he believes in the stay-put policy but "what happened in London, in which a fire went from the fourth floor to the 21st floor in what we understand was in 17 minutes, is unprecedented."

The sister of a man still missing in the London blaze told reporters that when she phoned him on the 21st floor as the fire spread, he said he hadn't evacuated with his wife and three children because fire officials told him to "stay inside, stay in one room together and put towels under the door." Hana Wahabi said she begged her brother, Abdulaziz Wahabi, to leave but he told her "there was too much smoke." One question now is whether people will heed that

guidance with the Grenfell disaster fresh in their minds. "There is no way I am waiting to die in a building. I am getting out to safety," said Jennifer Lopez, who works in a high-rise building a short walk from the World Trade Center in New York City. Any move away from the shelter in place tactic would put lives at risk, said Simon Lay, a fire safety expert and fellow at the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat. "Statistics tell us that defend in place remains the best policy and is based on sound principles as it enables firefighters to work unhindered and protects against the apathy that can develop from exposure to false alarms," he said.

Jonathan Lum, an advertising executive who lives on the 57th floor of a glittering Manhattan tower designed by noted architect Frank Gehry, said if a fire breaks out there, he will heed the wisdom of the fire department and stay in his apartment, but partly because he lives in a building constructed in the past decade. "If I were in a different, less modern building with less obvious fire safety, I'm not sure how I would feel, honestly," he said. —AP



LONDON: Railway tracks run in front of the charred remains of the Grenfell Tower block in Kensington, west London yesterday, following the June 14 fire at the residential building. Angry London residents heckled Prime Minister Theresa May and stormed local authority headquarters on Friday as they demanded justice for the victims of the June 14 Kensington tower block fire that left 30 people dead, with dozens more unaccounted for. — AFP

CLAY PERFECT PREPARATION FOR GRASS, SAYS RAONIC

LONDON: Canada's Milos Raonic says he is in great shape mentally thanks to the clay court season as he prepares to try and go one better than last year at the grass court tournaments of Queen's and Wimbledon. The 26-year-old big serving Canadian, runner-up to British star Andy Murray at both Queen's and then Wimbledon in 2016, told The Times he feels even better having recovered from a hamstring injury which he said had been "exhausting mentally." "Since I have started playing well on grass, the one thing I've accepted is that I won't play my best tennis (on the surface)," said Raonic ahead Queen's which gets underway on Monday. "I'm excited to get out on the grass. It's where I can succeed and have great results, hopefully this year and in many years to come. "One thing that does wonders for me leading up to the grass is how much more I have to put myself through mentally on the clay. —AFP

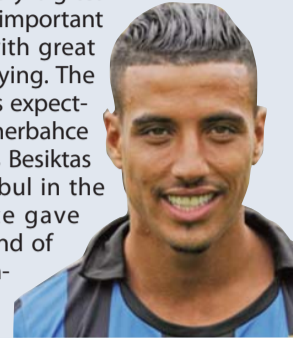


TOYOTA LEAD PORSCHE AS F1 CHIEF STARTS LE MANS

LE MANS: New Formula One chief Chase Carey waved a gold tassel French tricolor to start the Le Mans 24 Hour Race yesterday with Toyota enjoying a perfect getaway from pole. Briton Mike Conway quickly established a healthy lead from the Porsche driven by last year's winning driver Jani Neel. The second of three Toyotas, with former F1 driver Sebastian Buemi at the wheel, was placed third at the sun-drenched Sarthe circuit. Conway is sharing the driving with Stephane Sarrazin and Kamui Kobayashi, the Japanese driver who had electrified Le Mans fans with a record breaking lap to grab pole in qualifying. Toyota are seeking a first ever win at the iconic four-wheeled endurance test after 18 attempts since 1985. They came agonisingly close last year only for Kazuki Nakajima's car to break down when in the lead in the final lap. Nakajima is sharing the driving with Buemi, and another ex F1 driver, Anthony Davidson. While Toyota are three-handed this year, Porsche are relying on only two cars as the German manufacturer goes in search of a third successive success. Carey was joined at the start by race organiser Pierre Fillon and Jean Todt, the head of motorsport's ruling body the FIA. —AFP

MOROCCO'S DIRAR JOINS FENERBAHCE FROM MONACO

ISTANBUL: Moroccan international midfielder Nabil Dirar is to join Istanbul giants Fenerbahce from French Ligue 1 champions Monaco, the Turkish side announced yesterday. Dirar, 31, arrived in Istanbul earlier in the week and passed a medical. The formal signing is expected in the next days with press reports saying a three-year deal with the option of a further year will be inked. "Fenerbahce is a very big team based on very good players. There are many important names here. We will achieve great things with great players," Fenerbahce quoted the player as saying. The versatile Dirar, who can also play in defence, is expected to bring much needed reinforcement to Fenerbahce after the side finished well behind champions Besiktas and surprise runners-up Basaksehir of Istanbul in the Turkish Super Lig last season. Third place gave Fenerbahce entry to the third qualifying round of the Europa League but only a Super Lig championship would satisfy their fans. —AFP



FUNG SQUEAKS INTO POLE AT QUEEN'S CUP

BANGKOK: Malaysia's Nicholas Fung squeaked into pole on the third round of the Queen's Cup in Thailand yesterday but a crowded leaderboard leaves everything to play for on the final day.

The 27-year-old struck two birdies on his final three holes to hit a three-under-par 68 and nip one shot ahead of former Asian Tour number ones Thaworn Wiratchant and Juvic Pagunsan of the Philippines.

Fung has been among the more consistent at the often blustery Santiburi Samui Country Club on the southern Thai beach island of Koh Samui, with 66-68-68 in the first three rounds of the \$500,000 tournament. But he will have to fight hard to keep veteran local Thaworn, the Asian Tour player with the most career wins, and Pagunsan, a former number one in 2011, off his back.

Thaworn, 50, struck a magnificent 63 on the second day at the par-71 course on Friday but couldn't bring the same magic on Saturday.

Fung said he was aiming to keep consistent on the final day and not focus too much on the cup.

"I just want to shoot another 68 tomorrow. If I think of winning, there will be a lot of pressure," he said according to a match report put out by the organisers.

"Maybe someone will shoot six or seven under tomorrow and if he does, he deserves to win it. If I shoot three under it is good enough for me on this course."

One stroke behind Thaworn and Pagunsan are four more players in with a good shot of taking the trophy on the final day Sunday: Thailand's rising star Jazz Janewattananond, Malaysia's Danny Chia, Taiwan's Hung Chien-yao and Filipino Angelo Que.

Order of Merit number two S.S.P Chawrasia is a distant five shots off the lead while number one and Queen's Cup title defender Scott Hend is languishing a full 10 shots behind.

Leading scores after the third round of the \$500,000 Asian Tour Queen's Cup at the par-71 Santiburi Samui Country Club in Thailand:

202 - Nicholas Fung (MAS) 66-68-68
203 - Juvic Pagunsan (PHI) 68-67-68, Thaworn Wiratchant (THA) 70-63-70.
204 - Jazz Janewattananond (THA) 67-72-65, Danny Chia (MAS) 69-68-67, Hung Chien-yao (TPE) 66-71-67, Angelo Que (PHI) 65-70-69.
205 - Rashid Khan (IND) 65-70-70.
206 - Panuphol Pittayarat (THA) 69-66-71, Prayad Marksaeng (THA) 65-70-71. —AFP

MATSUYAMA MAGIC LEADS ASIAN CHALLENGE AT US OPEN

ERIN: Hideki Matsuyama exploded with a magnificent seven-under-par 65 to spearhead Asia's US Open challenge on Friday as Li Haotong carved a piece of history for China. Matsuyama, who struggled with a two-over-par 74 on Thursday, roared up the leaderboard with a front nine birdie blitz to finish the day at five under.

With just two strokes separating Matsuyama from the leading group, and no major winners in the top 18 players on the leaderboard, the Japanese star now looks as good a bet as any to challenge for the title this weekend.

Matsuyama's chances are also boosted by the early exit of the three players above him in the world rankings-Dustin Johnson, Rory McIlroy and Jason Day. "I'm very excited and very happy with the score," Matsuyama said. "There were a couple of loose swings out there, but when you shoot 65, you can take those."

Matsuyama's sizzling run of birdies began on the par-five first, when he reached the edge of the green in two before getting up and down for birdie.

A chip to six feet set up a further birdie on the second before a superb iron to left him with an easy birdie on the fourth. A solid tee-shot on the par-three sixth gave him another chance which he rolled in nervlessly from 13ft.

PUTTING THE KEY

It was the start of three consecutive birdies. Another sublime wedge from the fairway to three feet presented him with a tap-in on the seventh while on the eighth,

he stroked home 22ft effort to move to six under for the round.

A relative lull followed with four straight pars but another long-range putt-this time from 28ft-presented him with a seventh birdie on the 13th.

"The biggest difference was I putted very well today," said Matsuyama, who could become only the second Asian-born man after South Korea's Yang Yong-Eun to win a major this weekend. Yang defeated Tiger Woods to win the PGA Championship in 2009.

Elsewhere Friday, Chinese golfing prodigy Li celebrated becoming the first player from mainland China to make the cut of a major. The 21-year-old shot a two-under-par 70 to finish with a level par 36-hole aggregate of 144, seven off the lead.

The other big Asian mover on Friday was South Korea's Kim Si-Woo. Kim carded four birdies and two bogeys for a two-under-par 70 which left him at five under.

It is the first time in three attempts Kim has progressed beyond the half-way stage of a major championship after missing the cut at last year's PGA Championship and this year's Masters.

The 21-year-old from Seoul, who is still riding high after a victory at The Players Championship last month, said that win at TPC Sawgrass had infused him with belief coming into the US Open.

"Players gave a lot of confidence for me," said Kim, who plans to adopt the same approach into the weekend. "I'm just going to try to the same that I've done the last two days," he said. —AFP



ERIN: Dustin Johnson drives on the 18th hole during the second round of the US Open golf tournament Friday, at Erin Hills in Erin, Wis.—AP

GOLF

JOHNSON READY FOR BREAK AFTER US OPEN FLOP

ERIN: World number one Dustin Johnson said he plans to take some time off with his family as he struggles to digest his US Open flop.

The 32-year-old American star had arrived at Erin Hills brimming with confidence, buoyed by the birth of his second son, and ready to tear into a course suited to his big-hitting game.

But after two wayward rounds and a missed cut, defending champion Johnson was heading home on Friday resigned to watching the climax of the tournament on TV.

"This is the United States Open. It's a major, it means a lot to me," Johnson said.

"I'm definitely disappointed I'm not playing the weekend, but there is a lot I can take out of it. I feel like I'm striking it very well. So I just need to go home, relax a little bit, hang out with the family and I'll see you at the Open Championship in a month."

Johnson, who had struggled to a three-over-par 75 in the first round, carded three birdies and four bogeys in a one-over-par 73.

With the cut on another low-scoring day coming at one over, Johnson seemed poised to scrape into the weekend after three birdies and a bogey left him at two under, one over outright, midway through his second round.

But three costly bogeys on the back nine left Johnson needing to pick up strokes down the stretch which proved beyond him.

Johnson had started his round with a flourish, notching back-to-back birdies to immediately move up the leaderboard.

A superb chip to three feet set up the birdie on the 597-yard first hole before he then demolished the short par-four second.

A 338-yard drive off the tee took him to the edge of the green and he got up and down in two for a birdie.

Yet Johnson was forced to bide his time for the next six holes, unable to convert the few birdie chances that came his way.

However a bogey on the ninth checked his progress, pushing him out to two over.

He clawed that back with a birdie on the 12th, draining a six-foot putt but was soon in

trouble on the 13th, three-putting for bogey.

Johnson blamed a failure to generate anything with his putter for his woes.

"As we all know, this game's all about putting," he said. "So it's pretty simple, I just didn't get it in the hole fast enough.

"It's just golf. It's frustrating but I don't let it bother me. I feel like I'm playing good. I've got four weeks off now.

"I'm looking forward to it very much. I'll work on the game a little bit, and I'll be ready to play at the British." —AFP

MCILROY HEADING HOME AFTER ERRATIC ROUND

ERIN: Rory McIlroy was left reflecting on a missed cut at the US Open for the second consecutive year on Friday after once again struggling to get to grips with the Erin Hills layout. The world number two, who earlier in the week suggested players unable to find the fairways should "pack their bags", is now contemplating an early exit following a second-round 71.

The one-under-par total was a substantial improvement on Thursday's six-over-par 78, but with the cut projected at one-over-par, it was too little, too late for the popular Northern Irishman.

McIlroy, however, who had come into the tournament from an injury layoff after a nagging rib problem, said he was encouraged by his performance. "I'm optimistic with where my game is," he said. "Hopefully I've got a lot of the bad stuff out of my system yesterday and some parts today. It's just a matter of getting competitive rounds under my belt. "I've got a busy summer, so I'm excited to play a lot of golf. I feel like that's going to help me to get back into contention and hopefully try to win some of these things."

McIlroy, who had stumbled through a lacklustre opening round on Thursday, again found the going tough after teeing off on the 10th hole. He missed a five-

footer for birdie on his first and then squandered another chance on 11, where he missed a 12-footer.

His problems deepened at the par-four 12th, when his second shot rolled off the back of the green. A chip went sailing past the pin, leaving a long putt to save par which was duly missed.

He recovered to drain a 13-foot birdie putt on the par-three 13th, but thereafter was unable to build any momentum over the remainder of the opening nine holes.

His inward nine began with a further bogey on the long par-five first, which was followed by another bogey on the second which left him at eight over. A further bogey on the third left him nine over. With little to play for McIlroy then strung together his best sequence of holes in the tournament, carding four birdies and two pars. But the late birdie spree was not enough to lift McIlroy to safety as the exit door loomed.

McIlroy meanwhile said a new putter being used for the tournament was not the problem. "I didn't think it was the putter, it was the guy on the end of it," he said. "It's all good holing the putts on the practice green, but it's a different kettle of fish when you get out on the course and have to read slope, read downhill, uphill into the green, side green." — AFP



HARTFORD: A detail view of the Cobra golf bag used by Rickie Fowler of the United States during the second round of the 2017 U.S. Open at Erin Hills on Friday in Hartford, Wisconsin. — AFP



MINNEAPOLIS: Cleveland Indians first baseman Carlos Santana, front right, waits for the throw as Minnesota Twins' Brian Dozier, left, dives safely back to first base after Robbie Grossman lined out in the sixth inning of a baseball game Friday, in Minneapolis. — AP

BASEBALL

SCHERZER STRIKES OUT 10, LEADS NATIONALS OVER METS

NEW YORK: Max Scherzer struck out 10 over eight masterful innings to reach double digits for the fifth straight start and limited the Mets to four hits, leading the Washington Nationals over New York 7-2 on Friday night. Matt Wieters and Michael A. Taylor hit consecutive homers starting the third inning against Steven Matz (1-1). Anthony Rendon added a two-run homer in the sixth and had three RBIs, Bryce Harper finished with three hits, including a run-scoring single in the eighth, as the Nationals improved to 5-0 at Citi Field this year. Scherzer (8-4) won for the fourth time in five starts, starting 26 of 29 batters with strikes. He never threw more than 16 pitches in an inning until the eighth, ending that one by fanning Yoanis Cespedes in an 11-pitch at-bat. Scherzer walked two and threw 118 pitches, his most since May 11 last year.

his major league-leading 23rd homer and Chris Carter added a solo shot for the Yankees. Daniel Coulombe (1-1) got four outs for the win and Santiago Casilla pitched the ninth for his 11th save.

DODGERS 3, REDS 1

Left-hander Alex Wood remained unbeaten by pitching four-hit ball over eight innings as the Los Angeles Dodgers extended their domination of Cincinnati. Wood (7-0) lost his shutout when Devin Mesoraco homered in the eighth. He's the first Dodgers pitcher to get so deep into a season without a loss since 1985, when Orel Hershiser made his first 11 starts without a loss, according to STATS. Kenley Jansen gave up a double in the ninth while picking up his 14th save, and Tim Lincecum (4-3) took the loss.

ROYALS 3, ANGELS 1

Lorenzo Cain hit two homers and drove in three runs, and Ian Kennedy retired the first 17 Angels to end his 16-start winless skid in the Kansas City Royals' sixth consecutive victory. Cain posted the fifth multi-homer game of his career and his second in a week, connecting for solo shots in the third and eighth innings. He also drove in Alex Gordon with a two-out single in the fifth against Jesse Chavez (5-7). Kennedy (1-6) pitched six innings of two-hit ball and stayed perfect until Cliff Pennington hit his first homer since last August with two outs in the sixth. Kelvin Herrera pitched the ninth for his 14th save.

CARDINALS 11, ORIOLES 2

Carlos Martinez struck out eight over six sharp innings, and the St. Louis Cardinals hit a season-high five home runs in a rout of struggling Baltimore. Rookie Paul DeJong homered, singled twice, scored three runs and had three RBIs to help St. Louis snap a three-game skid. Coming off a four-hit shutout against Philadelphia, Martinez (6-5) gave up one run and four hits. The right-hander has 45 strikeouts over his last five starts. Kevin Gausman (3-6) allowed five runs in 5 2/3 innings.

WHITE SOX 11, BLUE JAYS 4

Melky Cabrera homered, doubled and drove in five runs against his former team, leading Jose Quintana and the Chicago White Sox over Toronto. Cabrera connected for his seventh homer, a three-run drive in the fifth inning that made it 11-2. Cabrera scored three times as the White Sox went to win for the fifth time in seven games. Jose Quintana (3-8) snapped a four-game losing streak with his first win since May 2. Joe Biagini (1-6) lasted just 33 pitches, getting yanked with no outs in the second.

TIGERS 13, RAYS 4

Nicholas Castellanos doubled, tripled

and drove in four runs as the Detroit Tigers routed Tampa Bay. Justin Upton drove in three runs for the Tigers, while Ian Kinsler and Alex Avila homered. Daniel Norris (4-4) gave up three runs in six-plus innings. He matched a season high with eight strikeouts. Erasmo Ramirez (3-2) matched a career worst by allowing 10 runs on nine hits and two walks in 4 2/3 innings.

MARLINS 5, BRAVES 0

Dan Straily pitched into the seventh inning, Christian Yelich drove in three runs and the Miami Marlins beat Atlanta. Dee Gordon went 3 for 5 and Justin Bour homered in his first game back from the disabled list as the Marlins moved into second place in the NL East, 10 games behind Washington. Miami has won 13 of 18. Straily (5-4) was coming off his second-shortest outing of the season, but he kept the Braves guessing most of the night, allowing just four hits and striking out eight in 6 1/3 innings. Sean Newcomb (0-2) gave up three runs, five hits and three walks in six innings.

DIAMONDBACKS 5, PHILLIES 4

Gregor Blanco hit a tying two-run homer and Jake Lamb drove in the go-ahead run with a sacrifice fly in the seventh inning to rally the Arizona Diamondbacks over Philadelphia. David Peralta tripled among his three hits, including a single that followed Blanco's second homer of the season off Aaron Nola (3-5) in the seventh. Peralta advanced to third on Paul Goldschmidt's single off Pat Neshek and scored on Lamb's fly. Patrick Corbin (6-6) gave up four runs - two earned - and five hits while striking out five in six innings to get the win. Fernando Rodney got his 19th save.

CUBS 9, PIRATES 5

Anthony Rizzo almost led off his third straight game with a homer, losing his bid

INDIANS 8, TWINS 1

Carlos Carrasco pitched one-hit ball into the sixth inning, Jose Ramirez had three hits and Edwin Encarnacion homered as the Cleveland Indians beat pitching-thin Minnesota. Carrasco (7-2) gave up four hits in 6 1/3 innings, with three walks and seven strikeouts. The Indians pulled a game behind the Twins at the top of the AL Central standings. Minnesota has had at least a share of first place since May 11. Nik Turley (0-1), a 27-year-old journeyman making his second major league appearance, took the loss.

RANGERS 10, MARINERS 4

Tyson Ross allowed just a pair of runs in his first start in 14 months and Carlos Gomez homered to help the Texas Rangers beat Seattle. Ross (1-0) made his Rangers debut and started for the first time since opening day last year when he pitched for the Padres. He had been sidelined with Thoracic Outlet Syndrome and picked up his first win since Aug. 31, 2015. He struck out five in 5 2/3 innings. Seattle starter James Paxton (5-2) allowed seven hits and seven runs in 3 2/3 innings.

RED SOX 2, ASTROS 1

Mookie Betts hit a tiebreaking home run in the eighth inning, sending the Boston

Red Sox over Houston. Betts hit his team-leading 12th homer, and third in three games. He led off with a drive into the Crawford Boxes in left field, connecting against Will Harris (2-2) into the Crawford Boxes in left field. Joe Kelly (3-0) got two outs for the win, while Craig Kimbrel threw a perfect ninth for his 19th save.

BREWERS 6, PADRES 5, 10 INNINGS

Eric Thames hit the Brewers' first walk-off home run of the season in the bottom of the 10th inning, lifting Milwaukee to a victory over the San Diego Padres. Thames hit his 19th home run of the season when he drove a 1-1 pitch from Ryan Butcher (3-3) off the top of the left-field fence. The ball bounced off the yellow padding and into the Brewers' bullpen, setting off a raucous celebration at home plate.

Jared Hughes (3-1) retired the side in order in the top of the 10th, helping the Brewers match their season-best four-game winning streak for the third time.

ROCKIES 10, GIANTS 8

Colorado rookie Antonio Senzatela battled through six innings to tie for the major league lead in wins, and help the Rockies beat the Giants for the seventh straight time. Ian Desmond hit a three-run homer and drove in four runs and DJ LeMahieu had four hits for the second straight game for the Rockies. Senzatela (9-2) tied Clayton Kershaw, Dallas Keuchel and Jason Vargas for the most wins despite giving up three home runs. Joe Panik, who also doubled twice, and Denard Span had solo shots and starter Jeff Samardzija (2-9) hit a two-run homer that gave the Giants a 4-1 lead in the fifth. Greg Holland gave up a run in the ninth but finished up for his major league-best 24th save. Giants manager Bruce Bochy was ejected by home plate umpire Gary Cederstrom in the top of the seventh. — AP

MLB results/standings

Colorado 10, San Francisco 8; Boston 2, Houston 1; Cleveland 8, Minnesota 1; Milwaukee 6, San Diego 5 (10 innings); Texas 10, Seattle 4; Miami 5, Atlanta 0; LA Dodgers 3, Cincinnati 1; Detroit 13, Tampa Bay 4; Washington 7, NY Mets 2; Chicago White Sox 11, Toronto 4; Arizona 5, Philadelphia 4; Chicago Cubs 9, Pittsburgh 5; St. Louis 11, Baltimore 2.

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division					
W	L	PCT	GB	W	L	PCT	GB		
NY Yankees	38	27	.585	-	Washington	41	26	.612	-
Boston	38	29	.567	1	Miami	30	35	.462	10
Tampa Bay	35	35	.500	5.5	NY Mets	30	36	.455	10.5
Toronto	32	34	.485	6.5	Atlanta	29	37	.439	11.5
Baltimore	32	34	.485	6.5	Philadelphia	22	44	.333	18.5
Central Division				Central Division					
Minnesota	34	30	.531	-	Milwaukee	37	32	.536	-
Cleveland	33	31	.516	1	Chicago Cubs	33	33	.500	2.5
Kansas City	32	34	.485	3	St. Louis	31	35	.470	4.5
Detroit	32	34	.485	3	Pittsburgh	30	37	.448	6
Chicago White Sox	30	36	.455	5	Cincinnati	29	37	.439	6.5
Western Division				Western Division					
Houston	45	23	.662	-	Colorado	44	26	.629	-
Texas	33	33	.500	11	Arizona	42	26	.618	1
LA Angels	35	36	.493	11.5	LA Dodgers	42	26	.618	1
Seattle	33	36	.478	12.5	San Diego	27	41	.397	16
Oakland	29	38	.433	15.5	San Francisco	26	43	.377	17.5



ANAHEIM: Kansas City Royals' Lorenzo Cain hits a solo home run as Los Angeles Angels catcher Martin Maldonado watches during the eighth inning of a baseball game, Friday, in Anaheim, Calif. — AP

TENNIS

MURRAY TALKS UP BONDING EXPERIENCE IN TRAUMATIC TIMES

LONDON: Iconic British secret agent James Bond's ability to unite the British people is required now more than ever, tennis star Andy Murray said in a candid interview with The Times yesterday.

The 30-year-old defending Wimbledon champion was speaking about unity after a year in which the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union and suffered three deadly terror attacks as well as this week's devastating fire in London.

There were angry scenes on the streets of the capital after the blaze that engulfed a tower block, killing at least 30 people and leaving dozens more unaccounted for. Murray, talking ahead of the key Wimbledon warm-up event at Queen's which gets

underway on Monday in London, told The Times: "Every time a new James Bond movie comes out everyone's so pumped for it and we start comparing the Bonds. "People know James Bond as being a British icon. "With everything that's happened over the last year, the country has a decision to make.

"Does it divide us or does it bring us together. The closer together we become, the better it is for the country," said Murray, who came out in support of a pro Scottish independence vote on the day of the referendum in 2014.

Murray, whose mother Judy joined him and doubles specialist brother Jamie in being honoured by Queen Elizabeth II on Friday, said unlike Bond he

craves to go unrecognised. "I don't like being the centre of attention and obviously when you lose a match and there are lots of people around, you just want to go unnoticed," he said. Murray has been promoting this weekend's 'The Great Get Together' to honour the politician Jo Cox who was murdered a year ago. He agreed with her sister who said his support is just that of any normal person. "It's absolutely true and that's why I mentioned being invisible because I'm uncomfortable if people are staring at me," said Murray.

"I go out for a dinner and people ask for a photo and I feel uncomfortable with that, it doesn't feel natural. "I'm very grateful people enjoy watching me

play tennis but everyone's the same and should be treated as such." The two-time Olympic champion who displayed super hero powers to come through an epic Olympic final with Argentinian Juan Martin del Potro in Rio de Janeiro last year-nominated Batman as his boyhood hero but would prefer to be 'The Invisible Man'. He told the paper he likes Batman as "he is mysterious and I like the cars he drives". He recalled how he and Jamie would dash round to their grandparents' house and watch cartoons as young boys favouring especially 'Wacky Races'.

He said he liked Dick Dastardly, one of the main characters in the children's cartoon series, because "he cheated and he lost." — AFP

SOCCER

RUSSIA SET FOR WORLD CUP STRESS TEST IN CONFED CUP

SAINT PETERSBURG: Russia faces a stress test of its readiness to host the 2018 World Cup as the Confederations Cup kicks off later amid concerns over hooliganism and security.

World Cup holders Germany and the FIFA confederations champions compete in the eight-team tournament which will put Russia's ability to handle thousands of visiting and home fans under the spotlight. Security will be a concern over the two weeks in stadiums which have been dogged by construction delays and structural problems. Next year's World Cup will take place in 12 stadiums spread across 11 cities, including Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan and Sochi, the host cities for the Confederations Cup.

President Vladimir Putin will attend Saturday's Group A opener in Saint Petersburg's Krestovsky Stadium between Russia and Oceania champions New Zealand. The Krestovsky Stadium has been mired in scandal, taking over a decade to build at an estimated cost of \$800 million, amid allegations of corruption. A new pitch had to be laid hastily after the old one broke up during test games this year, but organisers insist the 68,000-seater arena is ship shape for the June 17 opener and July 2 final. "We're completely ready for the tournament," Russia's deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko told Friday's press conference.

"The infrastructure, hotels, transportation systems—everything's

ready. And we've taken the full-scale measures to assure the event's security. Welcome to Russia. "The Confederations Cup is the champions' tournament. And it's a great football occasion," added Mutko, who is also president of the Russian Football Union.

'MILESTONE'

FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura said Russia's readiness had "surpassed expectations". "We have visited Moscow and the St Petersburg stadium and I can say that every technical detail there has been fine-tuned and we can expect one of the best competitions ever here in Russia," said the Senegalese FIFA official.

"The Confederations Cup is the

main operational milestone on the way to the next year's World Cup. "It is the experience and knowledge that will be of enormous value for 2018." The other two Group A teams include European champions Portugal spearheaded by the global superstar Cristiano Ronaldo and the most decorated CONCACAF team Mexico.

Heavyweights Germany will clash with Asian Cup champions Australia, Africa Cup of Nations winners Cameroon and Copa America holders Chile in Group B. And Samoura said that 480,000 tickets had already been sold — 60 percent of the overall total.

"As much as 44,000 tickets have been sold for the opening match in St Petersburg with 24 hours remaining before the kick-off," Samoura added. "And the match between Russia and Portugal has been sold out several weeks ago." The issue of racism against fans and hooliganism is also a concern after ugly clashes between Russian and English fans at Euro 2016 in Marseille last summer.

Russian authorities insist there is almost no chance of a repeat as police have cracked down on suspected troublemakers with a barrage of searches, detentions and criminal probes. Some 191 fans have been put on a blacklist barring them from games and legislation introduced to toughen up punishments and deport foreign hooligans.

"The clashes between the fans in Marseille last year were ugly," Alexei Sorokin, the CEO of Russia's organising committee, told AFP in a recent interview. "But Russia's authorities have worked out a comprehensive security concept that will act during the major football tournaments here to avoid any chance of the repetition of such kind of events. "We're confident that the Confederations and World Cup in Russia will be completely safe." —AFP



ST PETERSBURG: Performers take part in the opening ceremony of the 2017 Confederations Cup football tournament at the Krestovsky Stadium in Saint-Petersburg yesterday. — AFP

ARTURO VIDAL, THE HUMBLE ROAD TO CHILE STARDOM

SANTIAGO: In one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Santiago, Yvo and his friends lace up their boots and throw on their Rodelindo Roman club jerseys in the hope of emulating the path to stardom of Chile's Arturo Vidal.

Twenty years ago, it was Vidal emerging from a pitchside hut at this modest club in the San Joaquin district of the Chilean capital, allowing him to briefly forget the cold and hunger. For Vidal, who started out with nothing, those days came well before his glittering career took off and propelled him into a star with both Chile and Bayern Munich. Now aged 30, Arturo is "a model and a source of inspiration, I would like to be like him," Yvo Aliaga told AFP, following his team's victory over another local side.

That same admiration prompts numerous youngsters to join the club and follow in their idol's footsteps, with Vidal's combative playing style and mohawk haircut symbols of the golden generation of Chile's La Roja. Vidal is fresh off a second Bundesliga title with Bayern and has helped Chile to a pair of Copa America triumphs—the first in their history—over the past two years.

"To Rodelindo, the club I love and which saw me grow up," is the phrase affixed to a picture of a young Vidal in a Colo Colo shirt that welcomes visitors to the club's headquarters. Arturo "is our king", claims long-time local resident Maria Teresa Lizama. He still keeps close tabs on events back home, working with the club and always ready to come to the aid of a stricken neighbour, say those in Rodelindo, who brave the elements and swirling clouds of dust to support their team each weekend.

Vidal is held in great esteem and showered with affection by those close to him despite his well-documented struggles with indiscipline. No-one wants to flag up incidents such as the time he drunkenly crashed his Ferrari

during the 2015 Copa America in his homeland.

'EARTH EATER'

His family, not unused to run-ins with the law and troubled by their father's battles with alcohol, found themselves back in the headlines in April following the tragic death of Arturo's brother-in-law, shot dead just outside their neighbourhood.

The circumstances of his demise remain blurry but the intense media scrutiny that followed irritated those who support their local hero through thick and thin.

Everyone speaks of Arturo's mother, Jacqueline Pardo, as a "great pillar" that carried the family forward through poverty in a house "where the wind blew in from everywhere," recounts Arturo Olea, a former coach at Rodelindo. Olea, wearing a Bayern top, proudly displays his photo collection of Vidal and emotionally recalls the young Arturo, whom they called the "earth eater". "He fell and he played, we beat him up and he stopped... (but) being hurt or injured, he didn't care," said Olea.

Vidal still displays those warrior-like qualities, issuing a rallying cry to his Bayern teammates ahead of this year's Champions League quarter-final against Real Madrid.

"If you need to barricade it with your head, with whatever it takes to win, then it must be done," he said, although Bayern were eventually defeated after extra time in the second leg. "The confidence he has as a player has led him to play a big role on the pitch, he's already a leader," said Ivan Valenzuela, a former academy teammate of Vidal at Colo Colo. Outside of football, Vidal has a strong passion for horses. He owns around 30 and is a regular guest at the riding club in Santiago. "It excites him to come here, no doubt less than when he plays football because that's his life, but here he's excited in a relaxed way," said journalist Juan Antonio Torres, who interviewed him while he was just a prospect at Colo Colo. —AFP



ST PETERSBURG: New Zealand goalkeeper Stefan Marinovic, right, watches the ball after a shot from Russia's Dmitry Poloz, 2nd left, during the Confederations Cup Group A soccer match between Russia and New Zealand, at the St Petersburg stadium in St Petersburg, Russia, yesterday. — AP

YOUNGSTER SILVA BECOMING RONALDO'S PERFECT WINGMAN

KAZAN: Cristiano Ronaldo is finally getting an attacking partner he can count on. Andre Silva, the 21-year-old forward who is about to make his debut in a major tournament with Portugal, has been successfully teaming up with Ronaldo to give the European champions an impressive attacking force entering the Confederations Cup.

Together, the young Silva and the veteran Ronaldo have scored 18 goals since they started playing alongside each other following Euros 2016. Silva, who has just moved from FC Porto to AC Milan in a transfer worth nearly 40 million euros, has scored seven goals in eight games since his debut with the national team in a friendly against Gibraltar in September. "It's a dream to be playing with Ronaldo," Silva said ahead of Portugal's Confederation Cup debut against Mexico today in Kazan. "I've always imagined myself playing with him. I'm very happy to be playing alongside our captain."

Few players have succeeded alongside Ronaldo in Portugal's attack recently. Eder was the striker when Portugal won the European championship, scoring the winner in the final against host France, but he didn't even make it to Fernando Santos' squad for the Confederations Cup, the World Cup warm-up event. In addition to being an idol, Ronaldo also serves as a mentor for the talented young forward. "Cristiano talks to me and gives me advice," Silva said. "He's been playing this game for several years, I'm just starting. I try to listen to him and he tries to help me as best he can. I think that we communicate well and we have a good understanding, and that leads to these good results."

Ronaldo scored twice and set up Silva's goal in the team's 3-0 win at Latvia in European World Cup qualifying last week, the team's last match before Sunday's Group A opener against Mexico at Kazan Arena. The duo scored goals in the same match three other times - World Cup qualifiers against Hungary, Andorra and the Faroe Islands.

Silva's first goal with Portugal's main squad was an 86th-minute close-range strike against Andorra, capping a 6-0 rout in which Ronaldo scored four times. It was only Silva's third match.

In his next game, Silva scored a hat-trick against the Faroe Islands, when Ronaldo added one goal in another 6-0 victory.

"Since I joined the national team I've felt very welcomed," Silva said. "I arrived at a good point in time, when the team had just won the (European) title. The most experienced players received me with open arms and made me feel welcomed. It's a very united group and I'm very

happy to have gotten along with everyone from the start." A regular of Portugal's youth teams, Silva began attracting headlines when he joined Porto's senior squad and played well from the start, finishing the season with 21 goals. His rapid rise led to speculation about moves to some of the top European clubs, and he eventually signed with Milan for next season. —AP



MOSCOW: Cameroon's players attend a training session during the Russia 2017 Confederations Cup football tournament at the Otkrytie Arena stadium in Moscow yesterday. —AFP

ONLY TWO KENYAN CHAN VENUES READY

NAIROBI: Only two of five Kenyan stadiums earmarked to host the African Nations Championships (CHAN) in January 2018 are ready, a visiting CAF delegation said yesterday.

But the delegation led by CAF vice-president Constant Selemani brushed aside concerns that the 16-team championship, reserved for players who are playing in their domestic leagues, might be moved to another country saying Kenya should be able to deliver on its promises.

Selemani, who is also president of the Congolese Association of Football Federation (FECOFA) said CAF would make a third inspection of the facilities at the end of August to assess progress before making a final decision.

"We have agreed that from now work would be stepped up on the infrastructure. CAF believed in the Kenyan government's commitment to host this competition when we awarded it in 2014, and we cannot start to doubt that now."

"We have been given a guarantee that Kenya will correct the situation, and at the end of August we will be able to know exactly where we stand and how much per cent of the work has been done before we decide the way forward."

Officials of the Football Kenya Federation (FKF) said only the Nairobi's Kasarani stadium and the Meru Kinoru stadium, on the slopes of Mount Kenya have been declared almost complete.

Kenyan sports minister Hassan Wario accepted a lot of work needed to be done to upgrade the other three concerned stadiums in Nairobi, Machakos and the north-western town of Eldoret.

"We are not moving at the pace expected of us but there have a lot of things have been happening behind the scenes. We were looking for the money, setting up the contracts and visiting the sites," Wario said.

"All that have come together and now we are moving to the next phase, which is awarding the contracts and ensuring that people work day and night. Let me not lie to you, we have a lot of work to do. But we are up to it and are promising CAF that we reached the target."

"We are not only fully committed to hosting Chan but other African football competitions in the future."

Rwanda hosted the last tournament in February 2016 which was won for the second successive year by the Democratic Republic of Congo. — AFP

Johnson ready
for break after
US Open flopWorld game's
biggest match
to decide Champions
Trophy title

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SCHERZER STRIKES OUT 10, LEADS NATIONALS OVER METS

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KAZAN: Portugal's forward Cristiano Ronaldo (R) controls the ball during a training session at the Kazan Arena stadium in Kazan, Russia, yesterday on the eve of the Russia 2017 Confederations Cup football match Portugal vs Mexico. — AFP

RONALDO EYES MORE SILVER AT CONFEDERATIONS CUP

KAZAN: Cristiano Ronaldo will put speculation over his club future firmly on one side as he leads European champions Portugal into their Confederations Cup opener against Mexico in Kazan today.

The 32-year-old Real Madrid superstar's build-up to the tournament in Russia has been overshadowed after he was this week accused by prosecutors in Spain of defrauding the authorities of 14.7 million euros (\$16.5m) in tax through offshore companies.

Now the Madrid sports media is awash with headlines suggesting Ronaldo wants out of the Spanish champions, despite only signing a new contract through to 2021 in November.

But for the next two weeks the main thing on the mind of the reigning Ballon d'Or holder is winning more silverware in the eight-nation World Cup warm-up event. "He takes this tournament very seriously and is focused," said Ronaldo's team-mate Andre Silva, the

striker who has just joined AC Milan from Porto.

"It would be a beautiful thing to have on the CV. Of course it would be a dream to win it," Ronaldo said in January, since when he has powered Madrid to glory both in La Liga and in the Champions League.

It has been a dream last 12 months on the field for the former Manchester United man, who was a European champion at club and international level in 2016. More glory here in Russia will end any doubt about him winning a fifth Ballon d'Or.

"We don't have words to describe what he represents for our country. He is an idol, even for us players," admitted veteran defender Bruno Alves, the 35-year-old who has just signed for Scottish club Rangers.

Portugal's triumph at Euro 2016 secured them a place in Russia, where they will be making their Confederations Cup debut against CONCACAF Gold Cup winners Mexico in Group A before facing the hosts

and New Zealand. Ronaldo has scored 12 goals in six international outings since coming off injured in the Euro final, but Mexico-winners of the Confederations Cup in 1999 — are confident they can stop him.

MARQUEZ STILL GOING STRONG

"It goes without saying that he's a great player. But we're a great side too, and I'm sure we can stop him," striker Raul Jimenez, a Portuguese league and cup double winner with Benfica, told FIFA.com.

It is not just Ronaldo they will need to stop though-winger Bernardo Silva, who missed Euro 2016 through injury, is fresh from winning the French title with Monaco and sealing a big-money move to Manchester City. "A year ago, I said Portugal were going to Euro 2016 to win it. I said we were not the favourites, but that we were candidates to win it. I have the same confidence today," Portugal coach Fernando Santos said ear-

lier this week. Mexico, who drew 1-1 at home to the United States in World Cup qualifying last weekend, will look to Real Sociedad's Carlos Vela and Bayer Leverkusen striker Javier Hernandez for inspiration.

They will be led by former Barcelona defender Rafael Marquez, still going strong at 38 — while Ronaldo will win his 140th cap in the game, Marquez will be making his 139th international appearance.

The match in Kazan will start at 1500 GMT and will be followed at 1800 GMT by the Group B opener between African champions Cameroon and Chile in Moscow.

The Indomitable Lions, who reached the final in 2003, surprised everyone by winning the Africa Cup of Nations in Gabon at the turn of the year, while Chile won back-to-back Copa America crowns in the last two years and are spearheaded by Alexis Sanchez and Arturo Vidal. — AFP



Conor McGregor (left) and Floyd Mayweather.

BACKLASH FROM MAYWEATHER, MCGREGOR WILL LAST YEARS

LOS ANGELES: Promoter Kathy Duva says the fight is "bad for boxing" and the backlash from the exhibition spectacle will likely dog the sport for years to come.

"Of course it's bad for boxing," said Duva. "It's going to suck up all the air in the room."

Boxing legend Mayweather and mixed martial arts superstar McGregor announced plans on Wednesday for a boxing showdown that could become one of the richest bouts in history. The fight will take place August 26 in the American boxing capital of Las Vegas.

"You're all going to write about it. People will get all excited," Duva said of the competition. "And the casual fans we always want to bring into the tent are going to be disappointed again."

"It's going to be years before they want to see another boxing event," she told the Los Angeles Times.

Mayweather, who is considered one of the greatest boxers of all time, is a heavy favourite against McGregor who hasn't boxed competitively in the ring since he was a teenager.

"It's not a boxing event, it's a spectacle," said Duva, who is the promoter for Russian boxer Sergey Kovalev, who will fight Andre Ward in a world title light heavy-weight rematch later.

"On the other hand, when this is over and this fight ends up the way I expect it will, the next time somebody asks me, 'MMA or boxing, what's the better sport?'

I'll say, 'We know who the bad asses are because Ronda Rousey and Conor McGregor just got their asses kicked by two boxers.'

"We'll have that to cling to," she told the paper.

There are some who think that if McGregor starts losing he might resort to throwing elbows and kicks at Mayweather, but the promoters of the fight say that won't happen.

"It is in the contract," said Dana White. "The fight is under the rules of boxing. There would be a lawsuit. If that ever happened, Conor would depart with a lot of money, and Conor likes money."

White said plans are in the works to have the fighters go on a promotional tour of major US cities.

Since the fight was announced Mayweather has mentioned it just once via social media as he appears to be more concerned about showing off his extravagant lifestyle. He has launched something he calls the "Mayweather Challenge" because he is "tired of people on social media bragging they live a certain lifestyle when they don't." Over the last few days, Mayweather has made a point of using his Twitter and Instagram to show off his private jet. That was followed by another video taken inside his "Rolls-Royce Phantom Limousine" as he boasts about his Patek Philippe gold watch while the camera pans down to show off his "Chinchilla" floor mats. — AFP

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CHANGPING: Workers ride on a motor tricycle to go to a construction site in Changping, on the outskirts of Beijing. — AFP

GATES KEEP RICH AWAY FROM CAIRO'S CHAOS

AS WEALTH GAP WIDENS, RICH BATHE IN LUXURY OF EXCLUSION

CAIRO: Guards check drivers' papers to keep out uninvited guests from gated compounds where Egypt's rich can escape the chaos of Cairo's streets in a country with a widening wealth gap. Built in the deserts around Cairo, some compounds offer amenities such as indoor and outdoor swimming pools, health clubs, golf courses and man-made lakes, as well as palm trees and manicured gardens with lawns.

Iman Khalifa, 32, and her husband traded their Nile view apartment to migrate to a new home in a compound in eastern Cairo. "You pay higher maintenance fees and they provide you with better security," said Khalifa. "You see a decent landscape and a nice view, while back there (in the city) you see garbage everywhere." The compounds, surrounded by malls, international schools and modern office spaces, are connected with the city by a complex web of highways, overpasses and tunnels.

Economists say this is in contrast with a rising percentage of Egyptians living under the poverty line. Not too far from a cluster of compounds in western Cairo, workmen wait each day on the side of the road for manual jobs. Many of them sleep on the floor of a shared apartment, and they do not always have enough food to eat. "We eat beans in the morning, at noon, and in the evening," said Mohamed, an 18-year-old who moved to Cairo two years ago from the southern province of Sohag.

Income distribution

The percentage of Egyptians unable to provide for themselves or their family's basic needs rose to 27.8 percent in 2015, from 16.7 percent in 2000, according to Egypt's statistics bureau. Those in the top 10-percent income bracket account for around a third of Egypt's total income, econo-

mists Facundo Alvaredo and Thomas Piketty at the World Wealth and Income Database found in a 2015 paper.

In a pilot project using house prices to estimate income distribution, "we noticed that inequality is considerably higher than suggested by conventional survey-only estimates", World Bank economist Roy van der Weide, who leads poverty and inequality mapping research, told AFP. "Before we made the adjustment, Egypt was ranking as one of the most equal countries in the world. It went from somewhere at the bottom of inequality rankings, to somewhere near the top," said van der Weide.

However, "inequality estimates for other countries may also be downward biased." Military general-turned-President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi regularly inaugurates community housing projects and the government subsidizes food for the most underprivileged. "But all these are analgesics," said Heba el-Laithy, a statistics professor at Cairo University.

Inequality in opportunity

Under a \$12-billion International Monetary Fund loan approved last year, Egypt floated the pound, letting its value drop by more than 50 percent, cut fuel subsidies and issued a value added tax, leading to soaring prices. "People are reducing their food intake and are taking their children out of school to work," said Laithy.

Among these children is Mohamed, who quit school to start work. "This inequality in opportunity is where the government must act" by providing quality education and health services, which can be financed through progressive taxes, said Laithy. But Egypt has been rolling back progressive taxes, to the benefit of the rich, said Salma Hussein, a researcher on inequality with the Egyptian Initiative for

Personal Rights. "There is a sort of collusion: the wealthy tell the government just let us make profits without high taxes, and we don't want democracy and we'll build our

own communities," said Hussein. Laithy warned of rising frustration and civil unrest if the government does not introduce change. — AFP



CAIRO: A picture taken on June 16, 2017 shows modern buildings at a compound located in the east of the Egyptian capital. — AFP

MACRON WOOING THE TECH WORLD, PLEDGES FRENCH 'STARTUP NATION'

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron is inviting the world's innovators, engineers and business-builders to come to France as he tries

to transform this country from a land resting on the laurels of its past into a "startup nation." In a first step, the French government on Thursday

launched a "French Tech Visa," a fast-track four-year residence permit for entrepreneurs and their families if they meet certain criteria.

Echoing his call for US climate scientists to come to France after President Donald Trump pulled out of the Paris climate agreement, Macron said Thursday - in English: "At a time when some people think that walls are a solution, we do think that openness is the right path, because the challenges we face are global. "We want the pioneers, the innovators, the entrepreneurs of the whole world to come to France and work with us on green technologies, food technologies, artificial intelligence, on all the possible innovation."

It may be a hard sell. Tech entrepreneurs say France notably needs easier financing for startups and more flexibility in labor laws. Macron agrees - and is making those changes a pillar of his vision for reinvigorating the world's sixth-largest economy. "I want France to be a nation that works with and for startups, and a nation that thinks and moves like a startup," he said at a Paris gadget show called Vivatech, where he chatted with a robot in English and studied French startups that measure pollution neighborhood-by-neighborhood or use artificial intelligence to predict which buses or subway trains have available seats. — AP



PARIS: People walk at the Vivatech, a gadgets show. — AP

IMF SAYS PAKISTAN OUTLOOK 'FAVORABLE', WARNS OF RISKS

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said the outlook for Pakistan's economy was "favorable", citing Chinese infrastructure investments among reasons for growth, but warned of risks to recent progress. Confidence in insurgency-hit Pakistan is growing, with the IMF saying last year that the country had emerged from crisis and stabilized its economy after completing a bailout program. However the IMF warned in a report on Friday that macroeconomic stability gains have started to erode and could pose risks to the economic outlook.

"Pakistan's outlook for economic growth is favorable, with real GDP estimated at 5.3 percent in ... 2016/17 and strengthening to 6 percent over the medium term on the back of stepped-up China Pakistan Economic Corridor investments, improved availability of energy, and growth-supporting structural reforms," the report said. "However, macroeconomic stability gains ... have begun to erode and could pose risks to the economic outlook," it added.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif vowed to boost the long-depressed economy after winning a third term in 2013. Encouraged-and undeterred by domestic

debt of \$182 billion-Islamabad set an ambitious yearly growth target of 5.7 percent for 2016/2017. The World Bank predicted 5.4 percent growth by 2018. Hopes are pinned on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a \$46 billion initiative by Beijing that aims to link the Asian superpower's Xinjiang region with the Arabian Sea through Pakistan.

The plan encompasses a series of infrastructure, power and transport upgrades that Islamabad hopes will kick start the economy. But experts say the deal is opaque, and much more transparency is needed before they can assess any impact for Pakistan-including, for example, whether the \$46 billion is an investment or a loan. According to Friday's IMF report, Pakistan's current account deficit has widened and is expected at 3 percent of GDP in 2016-17 or more than \$9 billion, driven by fast rising imports of capital goods and energy. It said Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves have declined in the context of a stable rupee-dollar exchange rate, urging Islamabad to allow greater exchange rate flexibility. Over the last two weeks, official foreign currency reserves decreased by more than \$1.5 billion. — AFP



IHG(R) AND BUKHAMSEEN GROUP SIGN AN EXCLUSIVE AGREEMENT IN KUWAIT



—Photos by Joseph Shagra

KUWAIT: InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG(r)), one of the world's leading hotel companies, yesterday announced an agreement with Bukhamseen Group Holding Company, a Kuwaiti business conglomerate, to build and operate IHG hotels exclusively in the State of Kuwait. Under the terms of the agreement, IHG will expand its brand portfolio and hotel footprint in the market in an exclusive collaboration with the Group.

Founded in 1957, Bukhamseen Group Holding Company is a multinational organisation with business interests in tourism and hospitality, food and beverage, banking, education, engineering, finance, insurance, real estate as well as retail. Based in Safat, Kuwait, the group has operations in several markets in the Middle East including Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Syria and Lebanon.

On this same day, forty years ago, Jawad Bukhamseen signed the first agreement with Mr. Charles Wilson, the founder of Holiday Inn chain of hotels. IHG currently operates three hotels in Kuwait in partnership with Bukhamseen Group - Crowne Plaza Al Thuraya City, Holiday Inn Al Thuraya City and Holiday Inn Salmiya. Additionally, the newest venture

located adjacent to the Crowne Plaza Al Thuraya City and Holiday Inn Al Thuraya City, is the InterContinental Al Thuraya that is currently under construction and is due to open in 2019. The agreement grants country wide-exclusivity (Kuwait) to the Bukhamseen Group for a 10-year term and covers six IHG brands, including InterContinental Hotels and Resorts, Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Resort, Holiday Inn Express and Staybridge Suites.

Alan Watts, Chief Operating Officer, Asia, Middle East and Africa, IHG said "we are pleased to be signing an exclusive agreement with our long-term business partner - Bukhamseen Group, for further hotel development in Kuwait. With this signing, we look forward to increasing the momentum of our growth in the country and continue our endeavour to deliver great guest experiences to guests visiting Kuwait for business and/or leisure."

Pascal Gauvin, Chief Operating Officer, India, Middle East and Africa, IHG said "our relationship with the Bukhamseen group goes back over three decades, and together we have established a strong presence for IHG in Kuwait, with three operational hotels and one under construction.



Each one of these hotels has a successful legacy in the country and we are confident that our future ventures together will follow suit." Jawad Ahmed Bukhamseen Founder & Chairman, Bukhamseen Group Holding Company said "we have had a rewarding relationship

with IHG over the last 30 years. It is our pleasure to strengthen this association further through an exclusive agreement which will allow us to continue to deliver hotels of international standard in Kuwait and cater to the guests looking for a truly local, Kuwaiti experience."

ALGHANIM INDUSTRIES HOLDS A DIVERSITY AWARENESS SESSION

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries, one of the largest private companies in the region, organized a Diversity Awareness Session for its Finance Management Team on Monday, 22 May 2017 held at the Radisson Blu Hotel. The session, entitled "Passport to the World" was designed to raise awareness and promote the significance of diversity and inclusion within the Finance Management Department at Alghanim Industries. The session was facilitated by Dr. Alanoud Al Sharekh, one of the most accomplished advocates for women's rights in Kuwait and the region, who is currently a Consulting Partner for Ibtakar, a boutique Strategic and Public Relations Consultancy firm.

Dr Alanoud facilitated the workshop by introducing multiple topics, including the different types of biases, the importance of communication, and how to leverage differences when building a successful team. The event also included interactive team building activities which were well-received by the audience.

George Lambros, Chief Human Resources Officer commented saying, "At Alghanim Industries, 'Diversity and Respect' is one of our core values. We believe in creating an empowering work environment for our employees -

one that gives them the confidence to share their thoughts and ideas. Alghanim Industries employees come from many nationalities and backgrounds, and our diversity provides an important source of creativity and innovation in the workplace. We look forward to organizing similar events in the near future". The session concluded with a panel discussion facilitated by Dr. Al Sharekh that included Henning Schlutt, Corporate Controller at Alghanim Industries, and Robert Etman, Chief Financial Officer, where they shared their perspective on diversity and addressed questions from the audience.

Henning Schlutt, highlighted the key benefits of having a more diverse culture and its positive effect on financial return and performance within the organization. He said: "We see 'Diversity' as a leadership challenge to create an environment of respect, transparency and open feedback in the workplace. Diversity helps create high performance teams and will improve engagement and empowerment of our employees."

On a different note, the company also participated in a recent panel forum, titled "Women in the Economy" organized by Kuwait University's Women's Research and Studies



Center (WRSC). Where Alghanim Industries was invited to speak at the 'Private Sector and its Role in Supporting Women's Economic Participation' session, discussing the company's initiatives towards gender diversity.

Alghanim Industries has actively prioritized

gender diversity at the company, and worked on multiple fronts to address issues related to recruiting and retaining female talent. The company introduced improved maternity leave policies, including extending the paid maternity leave up to 90 days. Alghanim

Industries also co-organized a gender diversity conference that hosted local and international guest speakers, along with CEO Omar Alghanim who highlighted the company's commitment to female talent during his keynote speech.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.744
Indian Rupees	4.723
Pakistani Rupees	2.898
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.985
Nepali Rupees	2.945
Singapore Dollar	221.570
Hongkong Dollar	38.988
Bangladesh Taka	3.763
Philippine Peso	6.100
Thai Baht	8.968

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.147
Qatari Riyal	83.578
Omani Riyal	790.281
Bahraini Dinar	808.020
UAE Dirham	82.850

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.050
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.737
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.221
Tunisian Dinar	124.890
Jordanian Dinar	428.970
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.027
Syrian Lira	2.168
Morocco Dirham	31.513

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.100
Euro	343.630
Sterling Pound	391.960
Canadian dollar	231.960
Turkish lira	87.260

Swiss Franc	315.620
Australian Dollar	234.770
US Dollar Buying	302.900

GOLD	
20 Gram	257.580
10 Gram	131.710
5 Gram	66.700

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD	
Rate for Transfr	
US Dollar	303.900
Canadian Dolla	226.475
Sterling Pound	388.545
Euro	342.155
Swiss Frank	295.810
Bahrain Dinar	806.040
UAE Dirhams	83.135
Qatari Riyals	84.355
Saudi Riyals	81.935
Jordanian Dinar	428.545
Egyptian Pound	16.923
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.988
Indian Rupees	4.725
Pakistani Rupees	2.898
Bangladesh Taka	3.772
Philippines Peso	6.140
Cyprus pound	167.715
Japanese Yen	3.755
Syrian Pound	2.420
Nepalese Rupees	3.962
Malaysian Ringgit	72.080

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.135
Thai Bhat	9.910
Turkish Lira	86.480

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.382807	0.392807
Czech Korune	0.004999	0.016999
Danish Krone	0.041708	0.046708
Euro	0.335870	0.344870
Norwegian Krone	0.031969	0.037169
Romanian Leu	0.084278	0.084278
Slovakia	0.009085	0.019085
Swedish Krona	0.030929	0.035929
Swiss Franc	0.305531	0.316531
Turkish Lira	0.081635	0.091935

Australasia		
Currency	Buy	Sell
Australian Dollar	0.223343	0.235343
New Zealand Dollar	0.214724	0.224224

America		
Currency	Buy	Sell
Canadian Dollar	0.225110	0.234140
Georgina Lari	0.137347	0.137347
US Dollars	0.300000	0.304400
US Dollars Mint	0.300500	0.304400

Asia		
Currency	Buy	Sell
Bangladesh Taka	0.003384	0.003968
Chinese Yuan	0.043216	0.046718
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037098	0.039648

Indian Rupee	0.004250	0.004938
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002663	0.002843
Kenyan Shilling	0.002994	0.002994
Korean Won	0.000258	0.000273
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067304	0.073304
Nepalese Rupee	0.002974	0.003144
Pakistan Rupee	0.002705	0.002995
Philippine Peso	0.006020	0.006320
Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073
Singapore Dollar	0.214855	0.224855
South African Rand	0.017726	0.026226
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001607	0.002187
Taiwan	0.009735	0.009915
Thai Baht	0.008626	0.009176

Arab		
Currency	Buy	Sell
Bahraini Dinar	0.799209	0.807709
Egyptian Pound	0.014441	0.020349
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000190	0.000250
Jordanian Dinar	0.423553	0.432553
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.019770	0.043770
Nigerian Naira	0.001257	0.001892
Omani Riyal	0.783450	0.789130
Qatar Riyal	0.079239	0.084179
Saudi Riyal	0.080007	0.081307
Syrian Pound	0.001289	0.001509
Tunisian Dinar	0.120372	0.128372
Turkish Lira	0.081635	0.091935
UAE Dirhams	0.081370	0.083070
Yemeni Riyal	0.000988	0.001068

SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY					SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %	Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	6,790,448	4.47%	272,095	0.91%	OIL & GAS	1,041.85	1,032.81	0.88%	33.46%
BASIC MATERIALS	1,559,432	1.03%	730,709	2.45%	BASIC MATERIALS	1,243.35	1,309.60	-5.06%	23.74%
INDUSTRIALS	14,154,719	9.31%	7,091,304	23.76%	INDUSTRIALS	1,820.76	1,813.13	0.42%	35.47%
CONSUMER GOODS	318,065	0.21%	353,557	1.18%	CONSUMER GOODS	1,100.25	1,126.73	-2.35%	-2.21%
HEALTH CARE	253,902	0.17%	44,926	0.1505%	HEALTH CARE	1,451.70	1,528.57	-5.03%	16.65%
CONSUMER SERVICES	2,266,582	1.49%	731,068	2.45%	CONSUMER SERVICES	1,201.17	1,122.71	6.99%	29.92%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	10,308,641	6.78%	2,547,941	8.54%	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	606.02	601.70	0.72%	-4.74%
BANKS	32,400,992	21.31%	10,751,390	36.03%	BANKS	918.81	910.88	0.87%	9.75%
INSURANCE	118,640	0.08%	12,179	0.04%	INSURANCE	1,082.16	1,052.28	2.84%	8.84%
REAL ESTATE	29,403,289	19.34%	2,334,734	7.82%	REAL ESTATE	947.38	949.00	-0.17%	8.87%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	54,359,223	35.75%	4,946,211	16.57%	FINANCIAL SERVICES	689.85	691.34	-0.22%	15.54%
TECHNOLOGY	125,016	0.08%	25,627	0.09%	TECHNOLOGY	664.45	704.01	-5.62%	9.44%

BOURSA KUWAIT ENDS WEEK WITH MIXED ZONE

BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: The Price Index closed at 6,810.68 points, up by 0.40% from the week before closing, the Weighted Index decreased by 0.11% after closing at 399.79 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 901.27 points declining by 0.61%. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover decreased by 13.58%, compared to the preceding week, reaching K.D 5.97 million, whereas trading volume average was 30.43 million shares, recording a drop of 18.19%.

Boursa Kuwait ended last week's trading with mixed closing for the three indices, whereas the Price Index was able to increase, supported by the active purchasing operations and the quick speculations concentrated on the small-cap and idle stocks, especially the ones valued less than its book and par values, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices ended the week's trading in the red zone, affected by the continued selling and profit collection operations that targeted the leading and heavy stocks. Also, the Boursa witnessed such performance in parallel with the noticeable decline in the trading activity, as the total cash liquidity dropped during the five sessions to reach K.D. 29.84 million only, while the volume decreased during the week to reach 152.15 million share.

Moreover, Boursa Kuwait lost around K.D. 27 million during the last five sessions, whereas the market capitalization reached by the end of the last week K.D. 26.57 billion, down by 0.10% compared to its level in a week earlier, where it was K.D. 26.60 billion. On an annual level, the market cap for the listed companies in the market recorded growth of 4.59% from its value at end of 2016, where it reached then KD 25.41 billion.

As per the daily trading activity, the Boursa initiated the first session of the week with a decline to the three indices, affected by the strong selling pressures that included many stocks headed by the leading ones, in addition to the speculative operations that concentrated on the small-cap stocks, plus the refrain from trading state that the market has been witnessing during this period and had a negative impact on its performance. Also, despite the losses that the three indices recorded, its value witnessed an increase by the end of the session, whereas it reached K.D. 5.79 million, against K.D. 5.27 million in the previous session.

On Monday's session, the market was able to realize gain for the three indices, compensating part of its losses recorded in the first session of the week, as the Boursa returned to the green zone supported by the quick speculations and the collection operations that targeted some small-cap stock of previous strong declines, in addition to the random purchasing operations that included some leading and heavy stocks. The Boursa increased despite the decline in the cash liquidity during the session, whereas it dropped to reach K.D. 4.36 million, down by around 25%.

On the mid-week session, the Boursa Kuwait witnessed a mixed closing for the three indices, whereas the Price Index continued its upward direction for the second consecutive session, amid a continued control of the quick

speculations over the trading behavior in the market, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices declined by the end of the session, affected by the profit collection operations that were executed on some leading and operational stocks. Also, the market witnessed such variance in light of the continued decline in the value for the second consecutive session, as the cash liquidity dropped by the end of the session to reach K.D. 3.88 million only, its lowest level since the beginning of the current year.

The Boursa was able in the last two sessions of the week to return to the green zone and realize some gains to the three indices, as it received support from the random purchasing operations that included a wide range of leading and small-cap stocks, which positively reflected on the three market indices, especially the Price Index, which was able to compensate its previous losses and end the week's trading in the green zone, however, the Weighted and KSX-15 indices were able to compensate a part of its losses, to end the week's trading with limited losses. For the annual performance, the Price Index ended last week recording 19.49% annual gain compared to its closing in 2016, while the Weighted Index increased by 5.18%, and the KSX-15 recorded 1.84% growth.

Sectors' Indices

Six of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the red zone, while the other six recorded increases. The Technology sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 5.62% to end the week's activity at 664.45 points. The Basic Materials sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 5.06%, closing at 1,243.35 points, followed by the Health Care sector, as its index closed at 1,451.70 points at a loss of 5.03%. The Real Estate sector was the least declining as its index closed at 947.38 points with a 0.17% decrease. On the other hand, last week's highest gainer was the Consumer Services sector, achieving 6.99% growth rate as its index closed at 1,201.17 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Insurance sector's index closed at 1,082.16 points recording 2.84% increase. The Oil & Gas sector came in third as its index achieved 0.88% growth, ending the week at 1,041.85 points.

Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 54.36 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 35.75% of the total market trading volume. The Banks sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 21.31% of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 32.4 million shares. On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around K.D 10.75 million or 36.03% of last week's total market trading value. The Industrial sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. K.D 7.09 million representing 23.76% of the total market trading value.

BOURSA KUWAIT INDICES				
	Price Index	Weighted index	KSX 15	
Weekly	Last week	6,810.68	399.79	901.27
	Previous week	6,783.42	400.23	906.77
	Change (Point)	27.26	-0.44	-5.50
	Change (%)	0.40%	-0.11%	-0.61%
Annual	Last year	5,748.09	380.09	885.02
	Change (Point)	1,062.59	19.70	16.25
	Change (%)	18.49%	5.18%	1.84%

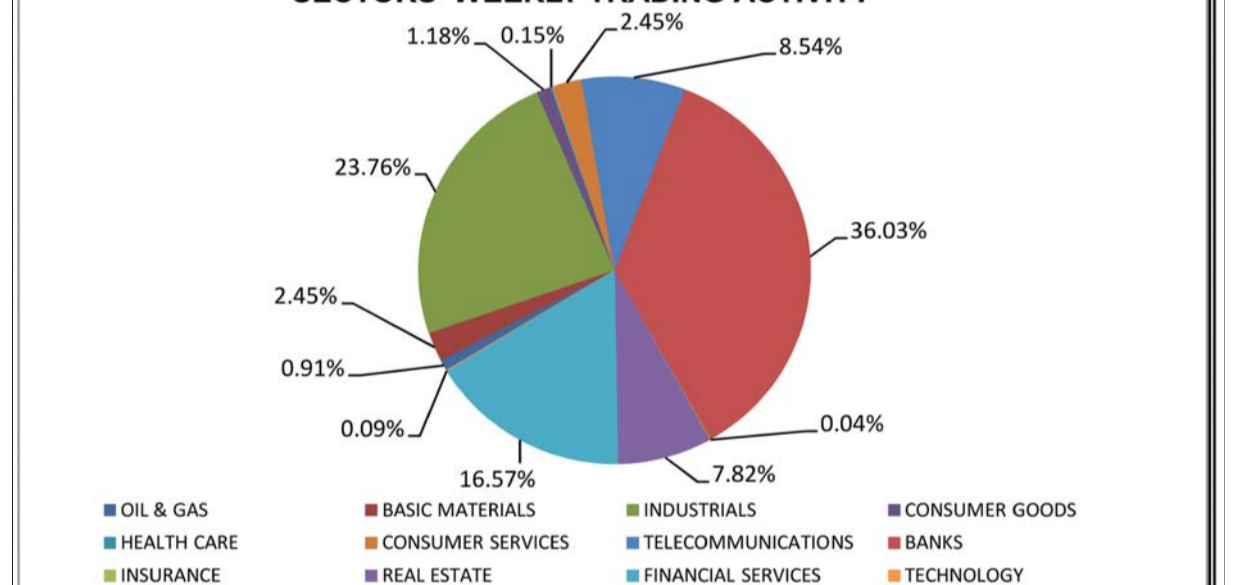
BOURSA KUWAIT INDICES



Last Four Days Activity



SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY



MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.)

Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
26,572,925,001	26,599,750,362	-0.10%	4.59%

TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK

Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
MASSALEH	45.00	37.00	8.0	21.62%
ALMADINA	50.50	42.00	8.5	20.24%
MARIN	90.00	75.00	15.0	20.00%
WINS	102.00	86.00	16.0	18.60%
EYAS	1,400.00	1,187.00	213.0	17.94%

TOP LOSERS OF THE WEEK

Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
YIACO	164.00	240.00	-76.0	-31.67%
AMWAL	59.70	71.80	-12.1	-16.85%
ALKOUT	590.00	690.00	-100.0	-14.49%
AMAR	50.00	57.00	-7.0	-12.28%
EFFECT	31.00	35.00	-4.0	-11.43%

THIS IS PEAK INVESTING: STOCKS, BONDS AND CONCERNS ARE UP

NEW YORK: Nearly everything has come up a winner for investors this year. Stocks are bumping up against peak levels. Bonds are making money despite a raft of predictions to the contrary at the start of the year. Stock markets overseas, notoriously poor investments for much of the last decade, are perking higher. Even gold, which typically glitters brightest when other markets are struggling, is up this year.

If it feels precarious to have so many investments doing so well, particularly when the economy itself is still growing only modestly, markets are giving few indications of worry. The volatility index that traders use to measure fear in the U.S. stock market hit its lowest, as in calmest, level last week since 1993. And stocks have been so strong for so long that investors have been rewarded for using any dip in prices that does happen as an opportunity to buy low.

The latest example is the pullback for big technology stocks that began just over a week ago. Apple, Facebook and other technology giants that had been among the market's biggest stars slumped, seemingly on the simple worry that their runaway success had made them too expensive. But the rest of the market has held steady through the mini-bout of tumult, and the Standard & Poor's 500 index is just 0.3 percent below its record.

Analysts pin much of the credit for the upsurge in markets on all the stimulus that

central banks have thrown at them. By keeping interest rates low and buying trillions of dollars of bonds, the Federal Reserve, European Central Bank and others have helped lift prices for bonds. And when bonds get more expensive, it makes stocks and other types of investments more attractive in relative terms, even if their price tags no longer look cheap at face value.

That has some contrarians worried about what will happen when central banks move away from stimulus. The Federal Reserve raised rates again at its meeting on Wednesday, and it's talking about paring back its bond investments this year. Mom-and-pop investors seem relatively unfazed for now. They have been plowing cash into stock and bond funds this year, but concerns are bubbling up elsewhere. Bill Gross, the famed bond fund manager, recently cautioned investors to not "be mesmerized by the blue skies created by central bank" actions. "All markets are increasingly at risk," he wrote in his most recent investment outlook.

Big institutional investors have begun cashing in some of their winnings and have sold some stocks or moved into less-risky areas of the market, said Kirk Hartman, global chief investment officer for Wells Fargo Asset Management. Even he himself has dialed back a bit on stocks. "In my own portfolio, do I have more cash than earlier in the year?" he said. "Absolutely." If stocks



NEW YORK: In this Monday, Jan 11, 2016, file photo, specialist Anthony Rinaldi is silhouetted on a screen at his post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. —AP

do end up having a sharp pullback, he wants to have cash on hand to pounce quickly and buy some more. Here's a look at what's been driving markets, and what risks lie beneath:

The US stock market

Why it's so high: Corporate profits are climbing again, and analysts expect earnings for S&P 500 companies to rise 10 percent to a record this year

after stalling or falling the last two years. Revenue growth is also stronger for companies, which offers a more sustainable and healthier route to gains. For years, businesses depended instead on cutting costs and buying back their own stock to squeeze out more earnings per share.

If Washington is able to cut tax rates, as Republicans have promised to do, profits could be set for an even bigger bounce. And stock prices, at their heart, reflect how much profit companies are producing or will. What could trip it up: Price tags are high. This most recent quarter notwithstanding, companies' stock prices have been rising faster than their profits. When measuring the S&P 500 against its expected earnings over the next 12 months, stocks have been this expensive just 1 percent of the time over the last 10 years, according to Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at BMO Private Bank.

Another way to measure stock prices popularized by Robert Shiller, a Nobel prize winner in economics, looks at how much companies have earned over the prior 10 years, in hopes of smoothing out the effects of boom-and-bust periods. That measure says the S&P 500 is at its most expensive level since the dot-com bubble was deflating in 2002. Why it's so high: Since the 2008 financial crisis, the Federal Reserve and other central banks around the world have reached deep into their toolbox to support markets. —AP



IVECO SUPPORTS LEGENDARY TEAM ABARTH SCORPION

Starting from June 2017 and for the next three years, IVECO will be the official supplier of heavy-duty logistics vehicles for the Abarth racing division, and will supply the team with two trucks, a Stralis XP and a Eurocargo. The first will be destined for the Abarth Selenia

Trophy, which is run on the race track, and the second for the Abarth 124 Rally Selenia, where it will be part of the Abarth support fleet.

With this prestigious partnership, IVECO celebrates the legendary car brand - one that succeeds better than any

other in communicating the competitive spirit of the racing circuits and rally roads, as well as sharing the values of sportsmanship and performance which are in the Scorpion's very DNA. This collaborative relationship has its roots in the past: since the early eighties, IVECO has supported the Scorpion Team in numerous world-class competitions, contributing to the historic success of the brand.

To honor this partnership between the two brands, IVECO is set to produce a special limited edition version of the New Stralis XP TCO2 Champion with just 124 models in white livery with red and grey finishes, the traditional colors of the team. These 124 models celebrate the famous Abarth 124 Spider, a car with legendary status on the roads and on the twisting rally tracks. Number "zero" of this limited edition - that is, the very first vehicle of the series to come off the production line - will be used by Abarth for logistical support during the races.

This limited edition series also draws inspiration from the New Stralis XP Abarth "Emotional Truck", a unique vehicle and the only model ever produced, as a special tribute to the partnership between IVECO and the Scorpion team. The vehicle livery was designed and created by the Abarth Design centre, with special attention dedicated to customizing the vehicle with the colors and the graphics of the brand. The vehicle interiors, in true Abarth style, echo those of the Abarth 124, with leather upholstery on the seats, steering wheel and door panels. The vehicle will be the star of the show at all of the FIA European Truck Race 2017 championship circuits, and will be on display in the IVECO paddock.

The "Emotional Truck" model celebrates the superb levels of performance achieved by the New Stralis XP, the most reliable and fuel-efficient vehicle on the market



today, designed to maximize reliability, reduce CO2 emissions and slash the TCO (Total Cost of Ownership). The new and improved drive train, the new top-of-the-range gearbox, the fully redesigned engine, and the widely popular and proven HI-SCR technology will be coupled with the latest generation GPS predictive functions and a host of new features to achieve fuel savings of up to 11.2%, as verified in recent tests conducted by the European technical certification centre TÜV. The extraordinary performance in terms of TCO and CO2 emissions reduction make the New Stralis XP a true TCO2 champion.



WARBA BANK LAUNCHES CREDIT CARD CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: In line with its commitment to introduce new banking solutions, and in order to reward its customers at the beginning of the travel and holidays season, Warba Bank, the best Kuwaiti Bank in corporate banking and investment banking services, launched a marketing campaign for its Al Safwa Credit Card customers.

The new campaign is intended to ensure that customers get the most when they pay for their purchases by their credit cards in Kuwait and abroad. The campaign offers Al Safwa customers a package of features that culminates in entering a draw where they can win a Toyota Land Cruiser. The results of that draw are to be announced with the end of the campaign under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Commenting on this campaign, Simon Clements, Chief Retail Banking Officer, said, "This campaign highlights our elite Al-Safwa customers who enjoy the best personal banking services and special privileges that suit their lifestyle and exceed their expectations in an

atmosphere of privacy. The campaign starts on June 1, and ends on August 31. It offers them the opportunity to enter the Grand Prize draw at a rate of one chance per each KD 100 they pay with their credit cards, including the recently launched Visa Signature card, as well as pre-paid cards, provided that they are issued before June 1, 2017. The Bank's also offers its credit card customers to receive back 1% of the value of their purchases."

Consequently, earlier this year, the Bank launched its Visa Signature credit card that opens new horizons, including free family travel insurance, discounts and offers at the finest restaurants, and more than 900 luxury hotels all over the world, in addition to the membership of the LoungeKey program which gives free access to the VIP waiting rooms in more than 750 airports around the world, to name a few. The launch of the new campaign adds value to the Bank's credit solutions and enhances the Bank's relentless efforts to enrich the Islamic banking experience and deliver world-class services.



AUB MAKES CUSTOMERS' DREAM COME TRUE WITH KD 250,000 GRAND PRIZE

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading Shari'ah compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 14 June. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each.

AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car. On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al Hassad Islamic account whereby,

the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300. The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 was Ibrahim Abdulaziz Ibrahim.

Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year." Al Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions. Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw. For every KD 50 deposited in the account, customers are given one chance to enter the quarterly draw. They must have held the minimum deposit requirement for at least two weeks prior to the draw date. The more deposits made, the higher the chances of winning on a weekly basis.



FLORIDA: In this Oct 26, 2005 file photo, shoppers line up outside a Whole Foods Market before it opens for the day in Palm Beach Gardens. —AP

SHOPPERS MAY SEE BIG CHANGES AFTER AMAZON BUYS WHOLE FOODS

NEW YORK: Amazon's \$13.7 billion acquisition of Whole Foods could mean big changes for the way people buy groceries - and just about everything else. Amazon could try to use automation and data analysis to draw more customers to stores while helping Whole Foods cut costs and perhaps prices. Meanwhile, the more than 460 Whole Foods stores in the US, Canada and the UK could be turned into distribution hubs - not just for delivering groceries, but also as pickup centers for online orders.

Walmart, which has the largest share of the U.S. food market, has already been pushing harder into e-commerce to build on strength in its stores and groceries. It announced Friday that it's buying online men's clothing retailer Bonobos for \$310 million, following a string of online acquisitions such as ModCloth and Moosejaw. But if Amazon can be the one-stop shop for everything - groceries had been one of the key missing elements - customers would have even less of a need to go to Walmart or elsewhere.

Tough times for grocers
Amazon already offers grocery-delivery services in five markets, but analysts say expansion is tough because its current distribution centers are set up for dry goods, not perishables. Just two years ago, Whole Foods CEO John Mackey told Bloomberg BusinessWeek that Amazon's foray into grocery delivery would be "Amazon's Waterloo."

But it was Whole Foods that fell behind as shoppers found alternatives to the organic and natural foods it helped popularize since its

founding in 1978. Whole Foods has seen its sales slump and recently announced a board shake-up and cost-cutting plan amid pressure from activist investor Jana Partners. Groceries are already a fiercely competitive business, with low-cost rivals like Aldi putting pressure on traditional supermarket chains and another discounter, Lidl, opening its first US stores just this week. Whole Foods itself had launched an offshoot chain named after its "365" private label brand in a nod to the popularity of no-frills chains.

The Amazon-Whole Foods combination, expected to close by the end of the year, could put even more pressure on those chains and other big grocery sellers. "Dominant players like Walmart, Kroger, Costco and Target now have to look over their shoulders at the Amazon train coming down the tracks," said Moody's lead retail analyst Charlie O'Shea.

Technology to the rescue

Amazon could try to cut operational costs at Whole Foods by using the same types of robots that already move inventory around at its e-commerce fulfillment centers. The company also has been testing sensors at a convenience store in Seattle to track items as shoppers put them into baskets or return them to the shelf. Shoppers skip the checkout line, and their Amazon accounts get automatically charged. Gartner retail analyst Robert Hetu said Amazon could bring pieces of that to Whole Foods to further cut costs.

Both companies said there will be no layoffs, but they did not respond to other questions about Amazon's plans for Whole Foods. Whole Foods will keep operating stores under its name. In an email to customers, the company said it planned to maintain the same standards under Amazon, including

bans on artificial flavors and colors. Whole Foods, often derided as "Whole Paycheck" for its high prices, could see its reputation change if Amazon, a master at undercutting its brick-and-mortar rivals, passes any savings from automation to customers. "This might be an opportunity for consumers who have felt that Whole Foods is inaccessible," said Lauren Beitelspacher, a marketing professor at Babson College in Massachusetts.

Beyond food

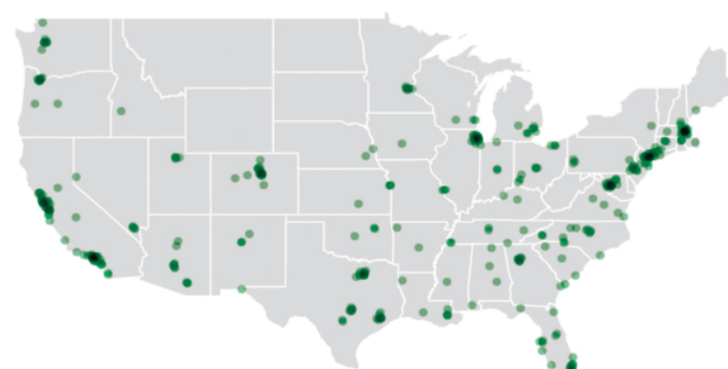
Amazon could also get a better picture of customers by marrying data from Amazon and Whole Foods' loyalty programs. Hetu said Amazon could make pertinent offers to attract shoppers of one but not the other, or get shoppers of both to buy more.

Ryne Misso of the research firm Market Track said a customer who buys fresh fruit regularly at Whole Foods might be offered a deal on blenders and serving bowls. Or someone who buys granola bars monthly from Whole Foods and paper towels every other week from Amazon might be offered the items in a single shipment, delivered to the door.

The Whole Foods deal could also get more people to try grocery delivery, something many shoppers have been hesitant about because of concerns about meat and produce quality. Wedbush Securities analyst Michael Pachter said Amazon might get customers over those fears if they know the delivered items are the same as those they would find at the local store. —AP

Amazon to buy Whole Foods

Whole Foods Market U.S. store locations





ALGHANIM AUTO SIGNS NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH AAYAN

PROVIDING THE FORD EDGE FOR LEASE-TO-OWN CUSTOMERS

KUWAIT: Alghanim Auto, the only Ford-authorized importer in Kuwait, announced a new milestone partnership with Aayan Auto, one of the leading car leasing companies in Kuwait, in which it will offer the Ford Edge to customers on a lease-to-own basis. Under the new partnership, Aayan Auto will offer the Ford Edge to customers who wish to lease a sporty family crossover vehicle without a down payment and up to 2 years.

Nihad Al Kilani, Sales Director - Alghanim Auto said: "We are committed alongside Ford Middle East to cater to the needs of Aayan customers and are honored to collaborate with one of the leading car leasing companies in Kuwait with this unique agreement that brings the entire Ford vehicle lineup closer to customers and enables us to provide them with competitive and unprecedented offers. The successful partnership is

individual customers. It allows companies and individuals to change their cars every year or two without bothering to sell or value them, saving them time, effort and money. The leasing service is economical and provides customers with money and time through a full range of additional services such as comprehensive maintenance during the contract period, comprehensive golden insurance and courtesy car if the car is under maintenance for over 24 hours, in addition to 24-hour roadside assistance.

"As we continue to innovate and develop new products that meet the needs and desires of our customers, we have created "Value Plus", a unique offering by Aayan to its elite customers, featuring a range of superior services and preferential benefits associated with leasing. Value Plus benefits include extra mileage allowance, comprehensive

insurance, ability to travel by car within GCC countries, car pick-up and delivery from a customer-defined location and 24-hour roadside assistance. The Ford Edge was revealed in its all-new generation in 2016 and demonstrates what happens when a proven leader gets even better. In its 3rd generation, the new model features an impressive lineup of power trains, class-leading technologies, higher levels of craftsmanship and greatly improved vehicle dynamics, guaranteed to impress drivers at first sight and test drive. The Edge comes with a standard 3.5-liter Ti-VCT Engine with 283 PS and 340 Nm of torque, and a SelectShift(r) six-speed automatic transmission with paddle shifters.

The All-New Edge is a technology leader for Ford, with a suite of standard and available technologies designed to improve the driving experi-

ence and the level of occupant comfort. Technologies being offered for the first time include Ford's first ever application of adaptive steering, adaptive cruise control and collision warning with brake support, enhanced active park assist, front, rear, and side parking sensors and a 180-degree split front camera. Other available key technology features include a hand-free lift gate, lane-keeping system, Blind Spot Information System BLIS(r), and SYNC(r) with MyFord Touch(r). The Edge is also loaded with standard safety technologies, including active glove box knee airbag, Advance Trac(r) with Roll Stability Control(tm) and Curve Control, and available inflatable rear safety belts.

Significant move forward

Overall, the Edge represents a significant move forward in both material and visual quality. Throughout the vehicle, seams are tighter and more consistent, and the design has been executed in a way that reduces visual cutlines. The dashboard and center console have also been carefully designed and shaped to look like one thin, streamlined piece. A central 8-inch LCD touch screen supporting SYNC with MyFord Touch is now available on even more models.

Thanks in part to smart design work and next-generation seats that are thinner and more supportive, the interior of the new Edge is larger and more spacious. Adding further to the feeling of openness, Edge will continue to offer one of the largest sunroofs in the business - Ford's Panoramic Vista Roof, measuring 121 cm front to back.

Legroom in the first and second row of the new Edge has increased by 4.8cm and 2.54cm, respectively. Headroom increases by 2.54cm throughout. Cargo capacity increases, with 39.2 cubic feet of space behind the second row of seats - 7.0 cubic feet more than the previous model. With the second row folded, space has increased by 4.5 cubic feet, to 73.4 cubic feet. The new Edge is slightly longer and taller than its predecessor, and the wheelbase increases by 2.54cm, to 285cm.



indeed the first of many foreseen collaborations with Aayan, through which we aim to enhance our service offering."

Mishary Al Hossayan, General Manager Car Leasing - Aayan, said: "We are pleased to collaborate with Ford Middle East and Alghanim Auto, the only Ford-authorized importer in Kuwait, to provide our customers with the best offers and the best value through our trusted partners. This partnership will allow us to enhance the offerings to our customers by providing them with reliable Ford vehicles that are both internationally renowned and locally loved."

Excellent services

Al Hossayan explained that Aayan Auto, the leading leasing company in Kuwait, offers excellent services in the operational leasing service and offers many advantages to corporate and

insured customers. It allows companies and individuals to change their cars every year or two without bothering to sell or value them, saving them time, effort and money. The leasing service is economical and provides customers with money and time through a full range of additional services such as comprehensive maintenance during the contract period, comprehensive golden insurance and courtesy car if the car is under maintenance for over 24 hours, in addition to 24-hour roadside assistance.

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PASSENGER DEMAND DRIVES INCREASE IN FLYDUBAI'S FREQUENCY TO TANZANIA

KUWAIT: Dubai-based flydubai today announced the start of flights to Kilimanjaro from 29 October. The re-launched service to the carrier's third point in Tanzania, along with Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, will see flydubai's network in Africa expand to 12 destinations. flydubai began operations to Tanzania in 2014 and has seen a steady

growth in passenger numbers. Kilimanjaro will be served with six flights a week three of which are via a stop in the capital, Dar es Salaam. In addition, the carrier will increase direct flights to Zanzibar from three to eight flights a week.

Commenting on the launch of flights, Ghaith Al Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer of flydubai, said: "With the addition of the service to Kilimanjaro and more direct flights to Zanzibar, flydubai will operate 14 flights a week, marking a 133% increase in capacity to the market compared to the previous year. This is a healthy indication of the rising popularity of Tanzania as a preferred tourist destination and we are happy to be connecting the market to Dubai."

Kilimanjaro International Airport is located between the regions of Kilimanjaro and Arusha in Northern Tanzania. The airport is the major gateway to the Kilimanjaro region,

a main international tourism destination that includes Mount Kilimanjaro, Arusha National Park, Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti National Park. Only a few international carriers operate to Kilimanjaro and flydubai will be the first airline to provide direct air links from the UAE.

"We are committed to opening up underserved markets and flydubai's service to Kilimanjaro will introduce more options for travel with a Business and Economy Class service, together with added cargo capacity available through our Cargo Division. We expect to see healthy flows of trade and tourism on this route from the GCC and Eastern Europe via our hub in Dubai," said Sudhir Sreedharan, Senior Vice President Commercial (GCC, Subcontinent and Africa). flydubai has seen a 3.5% increase in passengers' numbers travelling between the UAE and Africa in 2016 compared to 2015, a positive record for this emerging market. flydubai has built up a comprehensive network in Africa with flights to Addis Ababa, Alexandria, Asmara, Djibouti, Entebbe, Hargeisa, Juba, Khartoum and Port Sudan, as well as Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro and Zanzibar. The 12 points will be served with more than 80 weekly flights for the summer period.



CEO of flydubai Ghaith-Al-Ghaith

JAZEERA AIRWAYS OFFERS COMPLIMENTARY PARK & FLY ACCESS DURING EID AL FITR

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways, a leading Kuwaiti carrier operating regionally and internationally, is pleased to announce an exclusive offer of added convenience for its passengers travelling during the special Eid Al Fitr holidays. A pioneering service in the region, the new Park & Fly facility will guarantee vacationers a stress-free routine wherein they can valet park their cars and enjoy a faster and complimentary check-in and frequent transfer to and from the Kuwait International Airport. In an effort to thank its valuable customers with a rewarding experience and ensure a relaxed Eid break, the offer will be valid for travelers flying between 21 - 27 June 2017 who will receive 2 days of free parking at Park & Fly.

Ensuring additional customer satisfaction, the Jazeera Park & Fly facility is effortlessly located minutes away from Kuwait International Airport, opposite the Amiri Terminal. The new service will allow passengers to bypass the usual traffic congestion, avoid typically long airport queues and find secure long-term parking with 24/7 security surveillance while benefiting from professional valet agents at Park & Fly. The check-in and luggage drop-off will be handled in an exclusive check-in counter, after which travelers will be escorted to the waiting area and then driven to the airport departure gate, minutes away from Park & Fly facility.

After finishing their travel, passengers can call on 6571737, after picking up their



luggage and clearing customs. Passengers can then proceed to board the Jazeera Airways shuttle through door No. 6. Demonstrating improved quality of care and to ensure minimum waiting time for passengers, a shuttle is ready every 15 minutes to drive them from the Kuwait International Airport back to Park & Fly where their cars will be ready for pick up at the Park & Fly main entrance.

On the occasion of the special Eid Al Fitr holiday, Jazeera Airways extends its best wishes and greetings to the public as it continues to pioneer a broad spectrum of products and services, being the only airline in Kuwait and the region to offer the unique advantages of Park & Fly. The new facility reflects its commitment to smart travel by connecting better with its loyal customers, and is also the latest in a long series of progressive solutions the airline has launched over the past years.

The Park & Fly Service is part of the airline's "Next Big Thing" volume of value boosting projects and initiatives tasked with creating a better travel experience on ground and in the air. These include the sophisticated Jazeera Lounge, a Jazeera Airways dedicated Mobile App and WhatsApp number that is launched to receive and attend to customers' queries from all over the world and the forthcoming launch of the much-awaited brand new dedicated terminal at the Kuwait International Airport.

KFH UNVEILS NEW RANGE OF INNOVATIVE BANKING SERVICES

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) unveiled the launch of a range of innovative e-services in the fields of bank accounts and call center in efforts to give customers a stellar banking experience as per highest standards of banking technology, quality, accuracy, security and usability. "These solutions allow customers to conduct their transactions and perform many banking services in a very modern way using advanced tools. This emanates from KFH endeavors to improve its banking services through alternative channels, while maintaining its pioneering position in keeping abreast of latest banking technology in order

to meet the aspiration of its customers," said Executive Manager Direct Channels at KFH, Meshal Adnan Al-Obaid.

He added, in a press release, that KFH uniquely launched a first-of-its-kind service named "Call Back Assist", indicating that at call center peak times, IVR will offer a call back service to customers and system will call them back automatically when their queue is reached. This contributes in reaching every calling customer and maintains KFH service level at peak times. When customers wish to receive a call back, the system will ask them to insert their phone number; whether it is local or interna-

tional number and then the system will call them back and transfer the call to the customer service agent whom serves the customer as per highest standards of quality. This enhances the efficiency of the Call Center and increases the customers' satisfaction level. Also, KFH launched "ANI" Service. This service provides a choice for a customer to register a trusted mobile number which allows him/her to call Allo Baitak 1803333 service and authorize customer account with 4 digits pin entry only. Moreover, KFH offered "Favorite Menu" service whereby customers can choose up to 6 services from Allo Baitak 1803333 as his/her favorite menu to be prompted directly when customer calls the service as an authenticated caller.

Al-Obaid added, that KFH offered "Link Accounts" service whereby customers can link several accounts of their own to one

ATM card which allows them to use Allo Baitak 1803333 services from single account entry. In addition, KFH customers will be able to withdraw from KFH ATMs from their linked accounts directly. He reiterated that KFH spares no efforts in continually improving its banking services and adopting the latest technology to enhance its infrastructure in an attempt to strengthen the bank's pioneering position and meet customers' aspirations.

He said that this range of diversified services and solutions affirms KFH commitment towards optimally serving customers, emphasizing that customer service is always a top priority at KFH. KFH exerts unremitting efforts for the sake of improving innovation in its banking services, thus benefiting customers and solidifying its leadership position.

OOREDOO AND OULA REINFORCE PARTNERSHIP

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, underscored its partnership with Oula Fuel Marketing Company in a meeting between Ooredoo Kuwait's General Manager and CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani and CEO of Oula Fuel Marketing Engineer Adel Al-Awadhi. The two managers discussed in a meeting held last week ways to fortify bilateral interests, through Ooredoo's Nojoom program which gives customers the opportunity to redeem points for service vouchers from Oula fuel stations. Services include fueling and full car service in addition to washing and detailing.

Ooredoo Kuwait's CEO and General Manager Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani reiterated in a statement Ooredoo's pride in fostering a strong relationship with Oula, its long-term partner which is one of the leading

companies in Kuwait with more than 40 fuel stations located across different areas of Kuwait. Meanwhile, Oula Fuel Marketing Company CEO Eng. Adel Al-Awadhi expressed his pride in partnering with Ooredoo in its unique Nojoom Rewards Program, noting that this is in tandem with the company's strategy to increase added value to customers and create an unparalleled experience.

Ooredoo announced earlier the launch of its newly revamped Nojoom rewards program which offers its customers the best exclusive discounts. Accessible to all Ooredoo customers, the program offers members free upgrades, vouchers and discounts from a large variety of partners, ranging from service providers, retailers and hotels, and airline companies. In addition, customers use their Nojoom points to buy products from the Nojoom Online Rewards Store.



VIVA LAUNCHES NEW ROAMING VOICE AND INTERNET PLANS

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched new innovative roaming voice and internet plans covering the GCC and Arab countries including Lebanon, in addition to many tourist destinations in the world. The new roaming plans include two voice plans, KD 5 Gulf plan for 7 days, 30 minutes of call time and 30 SMS, in addition to the KD 15 international plan for 7 days. There are also 3 internet plans that give customers unlimited internet in the GCC, Egypt, Turkey, Iraq and Jordan for KD 5, KD 7 and KD 18. For the rest of the world, 500 MB, 1 GB and 2 GB internet plans for the same prices. Customers can benefit from add-on service for discounted rates once they consume their quota. These new plans



offer postpaid, prepaid and data customers, ease and flexibility during their travels outside Kuwait to meet their roaming needs. Customers can subscribe to any of these plans by sending an SMS "R" to 102.

EU UNVEILS PLANS TO REGULATE DRONES BY 2019

BRUSSELS: The EU unveiled a blueprint to safely regulate drone traffic in Europe by 2019 in order to tap the growing commercial potential for unmanned aircraft technology. The blueprint from the European Commission, the EU executive, covers allowing drones to operate in high density under the supervision of fleet operators. "Drones mean innovation, new services for citizens, new business models and a huge potential for economic growth," EU Transport Minister Violeta Bulc said.

"We need the EU to be in the driving seat and have a safe drone services market up and running by 2019," she said in a statement. "The EU needs to

take a leading role worldwide in developing the right framework for this market to flourish, by unleashing the benefits for key economic sectors." The idea is to build a system similar to that of Air Traffic Management for manned aviation that would supply information to allow drones to fly safely and avoid obstacles or collisions.

The aim is to have the regulatory framework functioning by 2019, with basic services like registration and e-identification. The European Commission said it hopes negotiations involving the European Parliament and 28 member states will be completed by the end of the year as a key part of

the process. Drones can be used to deliver services in urban areas, collect data for a wide range of industries, inspect infrastructure, and aid farming.

The Commission cited estimates that the drone services market could grow up to 127 billion euros in the next few years. Current common European rules only cover drones weighing above 150 kilograms. The demand for regulation is increasing with the rising use of drones and the risk of collisions. The International Air Transport Association (IATA), which sets global standards for the aviation industry, counted 856 cases worldwide between January 2013 and August 2015 of a drone getting

too close to a plane for comfort. There have been no collisions to date, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) reported in February.

According to IATA, 65 countries currently have rules for the use of small drones. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is trying to establish a global framework for the future use of drones. Among EU countries, France is a pioneer. Government decrees already regulate drone use and parliament has voted in a law coming into force next year that will punish users of drones flying over airports and other sensitive areas with fines or prison. —AFP

FAREYE WINS PRESTIGIOUS WORLD POST & PARCEL AWARD IN TECHNOLOGY CATEGORY

DUBAI: FarEye, a leading Global Logistics Management solution has claimed top honors at the World Post and Parcel Awards 2017, which was held in Paris recently. The company was recognized for revolutionizing the Logistics and Supply Chain Industry with its flexible, scalable and future-oriented mobile solutions. Regarded as the 'Oscars' of the Logistics industry, the World Post and Parcel Awards 2017 celebrated the successes of emerging talents in Mail and Express industry across the globe.

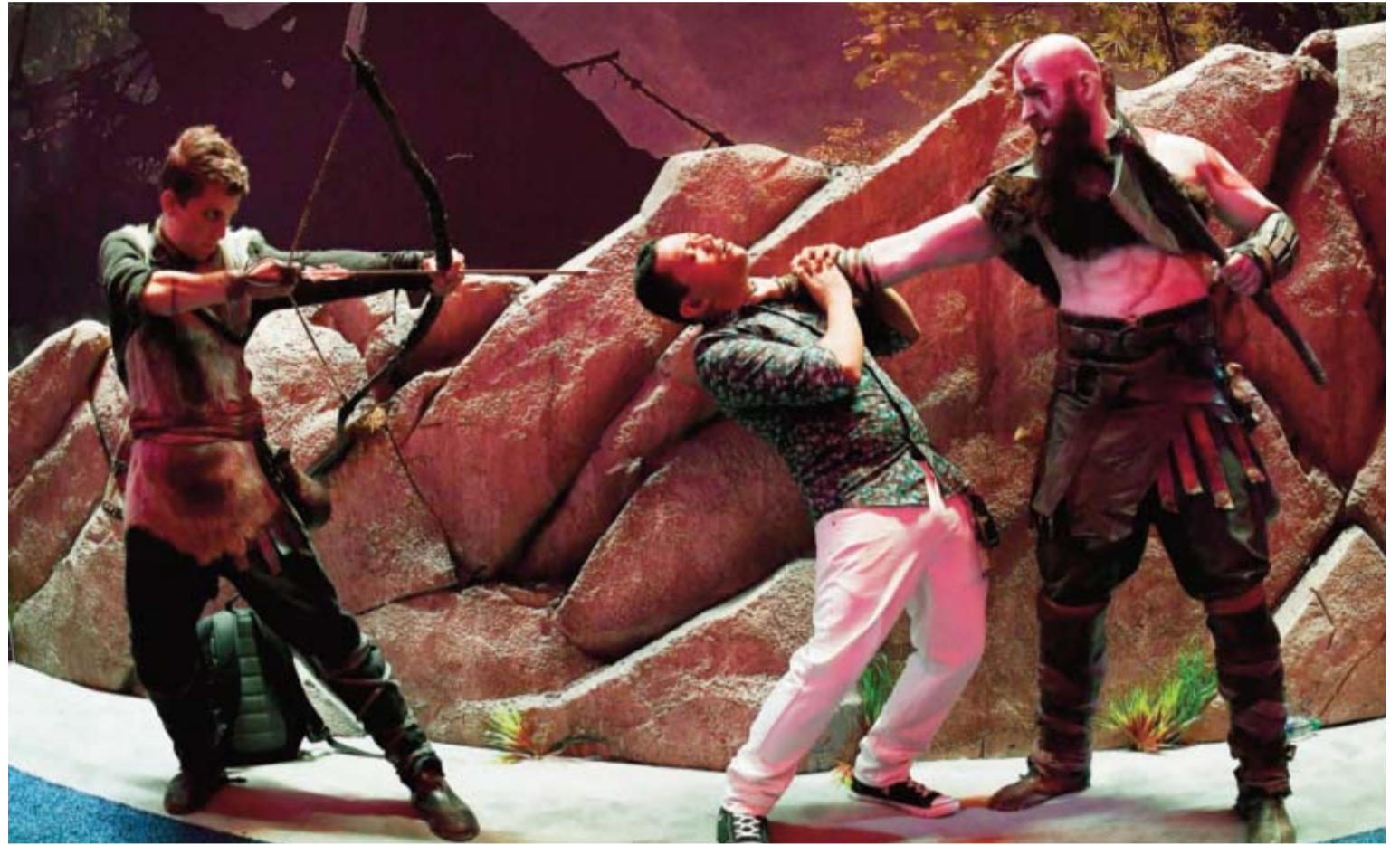
Kushal Nahata, Co-founder and CEO of FarEye and Gaurav Srivastava Co-founder and CTO of FarEye accepted the prestigious award in the 'Technology' category on behalf of their entire global team. Speaking on their achievement, Kushal Nahata, Co-founder and CEO of FarEye said, "We founded FarEye in 2013 with a vision to solve the huge challenge of visibility and inefficiencies in the supply chain industry. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our incredible team and clients for their continued support and faith in us. Having achieved this milestone, we shall continue to march forward with a focus on serving our clients better, every day!"

"FarEye has been revolutionizing the supply chain operations for enterprises by empowering deskless workforce and reiterating success stories across the industry verticals. As a multi-lingual mobile product with a process engine to adapt to geographic specific logistic processes, FarEye's platform is catering seamlessly to the international demand. We are extremely delighted to be listed as the global leaders in history and this award is a testament of our innovative offerings," added Gaurav Srivastava Co-founder and CTO of FarEye.

FarEye's intuitive dashboard delivers complete visibility to CxOsthus helping them enhance their customers' experience and deliver their brand promise 'real-time'. FarEye's solution is transforming operations through its intelligent dispatch and machine-learning algorithms and empowering enterprises by providing them a competitive edge. Through artificial intelligence capabilities and smart analytics, the organizations can enhance their customers' experience with updates on the go.

FarEye created the world's first Business Process Management platform for Logistics companies to optimize their supply chains, bring in visibility and provide deeper analytics into their processes. The company has been helping organizations execute approximately 1 Million transactions per day thus increasing the first-time attempts by 25 percent, reducing the fuel expenses by 28 percent and increasing the customer visits by 66 percent.

FarEye brings the expertise of working with larger enterprises across industry verticals including Express, Supply Chain, Retail, Financial Services and Pathology. The logistics management solution has been empowering over 75 large organizations across 15 countries including the likes of DHL-BlueDart, Zalora, Mara Xpress, Namshi, Hero FinCorp, Hitachi and Indian wings of Amway and Walmart. FarEye had raised Series A funding last year to cater to overseas demand with offices in Dubai and Singapore. Forecasting the demand from developed markets, FarEye has already expanded in the US and Europe having already secured some large enterprise projects and running multiple pilots for other companies in parallel.



LOS ANGELES: A gamer poses with characters from the 'Uncharted: The Lost Legacy' game at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

GAME PLAYERS FACE THEIR DEMONS IN VIRTUAL REALITY

LOS ANGELES: Zombies from the television series "The Walking Dead" and other demons are coming to life for video game players in virtual worlds. With new virtual reality systems, gamers will be climbing into colossal war machines to battle high-tech armies, wandering mutant-infested post-apocalyptic wastelands and going toe-to-toe with demons in new offerings unveiled at the Electronic Entertainment Expo this week.

While play on consoles or Windows-powered personal computers continued to dominate the annual industry gathering, virtual reality flourished as game makers invested in the future. The number of E3 exhibitors involved with virtual or augmented realities more than doubled to 126 from 53 last year, according to the Entertainment Software Association behind the event. "This by far, is the most exciting E3 as it comes to virtual reality," said YouTube director of gaming Ryan Wyatt.

Virtual reality versions of blockbuster video games "Fallout," "Doom," and "Skyrim" were part of a lineup unveiled by Bethesda Softworks. "Virtual reality is something we have been at the forefront of for a while now," said Bethesda vice president of marketing Pete Hines. Later this year, shooter game "Doom" will "bathe you in virtual carnage" as a cybernetic survivor fighting off a demon invasion.

A VR version of "Fallout" will put players into a world destroyed by nuclear war, while they will face dragons in a full-length, open-world version of "Skyrim," according to Bethesda. Sony built on its library of games for its PlayStation VR gear, which works with top-selling PlayStation 4 consoles. More than a million PS VR units have been sold, along with some 5.25 million VR games.

decided to jump headfirst into the business of VR with 'Archangel' because we saw an emerging market and want Skydance to help write this story," Skydance Interactive president Peter Akemann said. "We know we're only at the tip of the iceberg with what VR can ultimately deliver as a gaming medium but we believe wholeheartedly in its long term potential and are investing in it as such."

Pushing the envelope

Sony, HTC and Facebook-owned Oculus are the top players in virtual reality head gear, each striving to stake out territory in the budding market. And even though the VR audience is lean compared to the hundreds of millions of people with consoles or personal computers, game makers are prone to embracing new technologies and understand that compelling content can inspire consumers to follow suit.

"If you don't start pushing the envelope, people won't think about upgrading hardware," YouTube's Wyatt said of the drive toward richer graphics and immersive worlds in gaming. "Publishers know the long-term payout that VR will have and are investing." Ultra-high definition graphics and virtual reality in games has been a bright spot in the personal computer, which is seeing that segment grow while the market overall declines. —AFP



Kushal Nahata

DVMAP: ANDROID MALWARE THAT CONTROLS DEVICES ON GOOGLE PLAY

DUBAI: Kaspersky Lab experts have discovered an unusual new Trojan being distributed through the Google Play Store. The Dvmap Trojan is capable not only of obtaining root access rights on an Android smartphone, it can also take control of the device by injecting malicious code into the system library. If successful, it can then delete root access, which helps to avoid detection. The Trojan, which has been reported to Google, has been downloaded from Google Play more than 50,000 times since March, 2017. Kaspersky Lab reported the Trojan to Google, and it has now been removed from the store.

The introduction of code injection capability is a dangerous new development in mobile malware. Since the approach can be used to execute malicious modules even with root access deleted, any security solutions and banking apps with root-detection features that are installed after infection won't spot the presence of the malware. However, modification of the system libraries is a risky process that can misfire. The researchers observed that the Dvmap malware tracks and reports its every move to its command and control server - although the command server didn't respond with instructions. This suggests that the malware is not yet fully ready or implemented.

Dvmap is distributed as a game through the Google Play Store. To bypass the store's security checks, the malware creators uploaded a clean app to the store at the end of March 2017. They then updated this with a malicious version for a short period of time, before uploading another clean version. In the space of four weeks they did this at least five times. The Dvmap Trojan installs itself onto a victim device in two stages. During the initial phase, the malware tries to gain root rights on the device.

If successful, it will install a number of tools, some of which carry comments in the Chinese language. One of these modules is an application, "com.qual-

comm.timeservices", which connects the Trojan to its command and control server. However, during the period of investigation the malware did not receive any commands in return. In the main phase of infection, the Trojan launches a "start" file, checks the version of Android installed and decides which library to inject its code into.

The next step: overwriting the existing code with malicious code, can cause the infected device to crash. The newly-patched system libraries execute a malicious module which can turn off the 'VerifyApps' feature. It then switches on the setting 'Unknown sources' which allows it to install apps from anywhere, not just the Google Play Store. These could be malicious or unsolicited advertising apps.

"The Dvmap Trojan marks a dangerous new development in Android malware, with the malicious code injecting itself into system libraries where it is harder to detect and remove. Users who don't have the security in place to identify and block the threat before it breaks in have a difficult time ahead. We believe that we have uncovered the malware at a very early stage. Our analysis shows that the malicious modules report their every move to the attackers and some techniques can break the infected devices. Time is of the essence if we are going to prevent a massive and dangerous attack," said Roman Unuchek, Senior Malware Analyst, Kaspersky Lab.

Users concerned they may have been infected by Dvmap are advised to back up all their data and perform a factory data reset. In addition, Kaspersky Lab advises all users to install a reliable security solution, such as Kaspersky Internet Security for Android, on their device, always check that apps have been created by a reputable developer, to keep their OS and application software up-to-date, and not to download anything that looks at all suspicious or whose source cannot be verified.



Roman Unuchek

Bathing in carnage

Virtual reality versions of blockbuster video games "Fallout," "Doom," and "Skyrim" were part of a lineup unveiled by Bethesda Softworks. "Virtual reality is something we have been at the forefront of for a while now," said Bethesda vice president of marketing Pete Hines. Later this year, shooter game "Doom" will "bathe you in virtual carnage" as a cybernetic survivor fighting off a demon invasion.

IF IT FLIES, HOVERS, IT WILL BE AT THE PARIS AIR SHOW

LE BOURGET, France: While Airbus and Boeing will again hog the spotlight at the Paris Air Show with their battle for ever-larger slices of the lucrative pie in the sky, a lot of the really interesting stuff will be going on elsewhere at the upcoming biennial aviation and defense industry gathering. Lockheed Martin's F-35 jet will crane necks with high-speed aerial displays, drones will again be a hot topic and a would-be flying car will aim to show that it is closer to getting off the ground as a consumer ride.

Defense contractors will be seeking customers for their latest high-tech weapons, including drones designed to act as wingmen to piloted aircraft in battle. More peacefully, there'll be the launch of a distress beacon with an integrated GPS transmitter to help locate planes that go down - an issue of vital importance after the failure to locate Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 that disappeared with 239 passengers and crew on March 8, 2014. And several companies are showcasing technologies to allow passengers to stay connected in the air.

With airlines suffering a string of public relations' embarrassments recently - from the United Airlines' passenger getting dragged off a flight to British Airways' massive outage - the aerospace industry is eager to show off its goods. Here, in greater detail, is a taste of what to watch for at the show, which runs from June 19-25:

Airbus vs. Boeing - again

The US and European manufacturers invariably seek to out-do each other by announcing big deals at the show. The last event in 2015 brought orders for 421 planes worth \$57 billion for Airbus and orders for 331 planes worth \$50 billion for Boeing. Airbus and Boeing orders have seen a downturn in recent years after a buying spree by

Mideast and Asian carriers. This year, each company is expected to announce around 200 orders, though some may be airlines or leasing companies firming up earlier tentative orders.

Neither Boeing nor Airbus is unveiling a major new plane at the show. Likely to get attention are Boeing's latest 787 model, the 787-10, and Airbus' answer to it, the A350-1000, the latest version of the long-delayed Airbus wide-body. Boeing will also show its 737 Max 9 and Airbus will show the single-aisle A321, popular for its fuel efficiency.

Make way for the F-35

Among the 130 aircraft on display, the star will likely be the cutting-edge F-35 stealth jet fighter, which costs about \$100 million each. Designed to creep up undetected on ground targets and for air-to-air combat, the jet will wow with daily flights - hoping to impress potential foreign customers for manufacturer Lockheed Martin. Briefings, by the plane's chief test pilot and others, on the jet's aerial capabilities and the F-35 program could produce news about recent problems that grounded US Air Force F-35s at a base in Arizona, after pilots reported symptoms of oxygen deprivation. The US Air Force will use the F-35 to replace the A-10 and F-16, and has already taken delivery of more than 100 of the planes. —AP



LE BOURGET: This file photo shows an aerial view of the 50th Paris Air Show at Le Bourget airport, north of Paris, France. — AP

SNACKS WITH ADDED FIBER A PART OF NUTRITION FACTS DELAY

NEW YORK: A new labeling rule could change how much fiber is listed for some snack bars and cereals. A little-discussed aspect of the revamped Nutrition Facts panel, which was postponed this week, is that it could change what ingredients products like Fiber One bars can count as dietary fiber. The Food and Drug Administration says added ingredients need to have a health benefit to be counted as fiber on the new panel. And many ingredients that are currently used to boost fiber counts haven't yet gotten the green light to keep doing so.

General Mills Inc., for instance, says its Fiber One brownie has 90 calories and 5 grams of fiber. The brownie lists ingredients like sugarcane fiber and xanthan gum, which are among those being reviewed by the FDA. Bridget Christenson, a General Mills representative, said the FDA has received "more

than ample scientific support" for the ingredients the company uses to boost fiber. She said General Mills does not expect it will need to make any recipe changes.

So far, the FDA has cleared seven fiber ingredients to be counted as fiber. Clearance is pending for another 26 ingredients. Bonnie Liebman, director of nutrition at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, said she thinks food makers "will convince the FDA to approve most of the 26 fibers," since it's not that difficult to demonstrate some health effect on traits like bowel function. But she said the problem is that such added fibers may lead people to think foods like snack bars are healthier treats.

"Our position is that none of these fibers should count," Liebman said of the 26 fibers under review and five of the seven that have been approved.

Products with labels touting fiber on their packaging accounted for \$12.34 billion in US sales for the year that ended April 1, according to Nielsen. Sales had climbed in 2013 and 2014, but slipped back more recently. The ingredients in question include only synthetic fibers or fibers that have been isolated from foods - not those that occur naturally and are kept intact. So the fiber from oatmeal or chopped apples could continue to be counted as fiber.

Nutrition facts panel

But isolated "apple fiber" is among the ingredients the FDA is reviewing, as well as gum acacia, pea fiber and rice bran fiber. Until this week, companies had a July 2018 deadline to start using the new Nutrition Facts panel, which makes it easier to see how many calories and how much added sugar are in

products. The Food and Drug Administration said it was pushing back that date this week, though it has not yet announced a new deadline. Industry groups have asked to postpone implementation until 2021.

The FDA said it can't comment on when it expects to determine whether the 26 ingredients can be counted as fiber. Companies could use the fibers the FDA has already cleared, including psyllium husk and cellulose. But there are many more fibers with different properties that might work well in particular products, said Robert Burns, vice president of health and nutrition policy at the Grocery Manufacturers Association, which represents major packaged food makers.

Burns said there's no reason to think that fiber ingredients would be any less beneficial when they're isolated and

added to a product, versus when they're consumed as a naturally occurring part of a food. And if companies were to no longer use ingredients because they can't be counted as fiber, he said, people may end up eating less fiber. In the meantime, many are calling on the FDA to hurry up and implement the new Nutrition Facts panel, which makes it easier to see how many calories and how much added sugar are in products.

Some companies have already started using the new panel, and those calling for a speedy implementation say that extending the time during which there are different versions in the marketplace could cause confusion. Oreo cookie maker Mondelez, for instance, said it had been working toward the July 2018 deadline, and that its Wheat Thins crackers are already using the new panel.—AP

CALL FOR MORE ELECTRIC FENCES TO STOP ELEPHANTS DESTROYING GABON CROPS

LOPE NATIONAL PARK, Gabon: For several months, electric fences have been put up in Gabon as part of a new program to stop the country's 40,000 forest elephants from destroying crops. So far three electric barriers have been built but dozens more are required, Professor Lee White, the British-born director of Gabon's national parks agency (ANPN), said.

"I want 500 barriers," said White to emphasize that others methods had failed to stop the huge animals from trampling over villagers' fields in the west African country. "We have already tried putting up chili and even bee hives (to protect farming areas) but all these methods did not work," said White, who has been compared to Tarzan by the magazine National Geographic due to his work in the jungle.

Huge efforts have been made to conserve Gabon's forest elephants and the remaining rainforests of equatorial Africa that they inhabit, but people living side-by-side with the animals are upset about the destruction of their crops and economic losses.

The elephant menace

"The rural population are angry with the elephants, it is a problem that has long been neglected," said White. Gabon is home to over half of Africa's forest elephants, who are highly valued by poachers because their ivory is tinged with pink and is very hard. It is the poaching that has encouraged elephants to move closer to villages, according to White, and that has led to farmers being killed by elephants, with little compensation for the families.

In one village close to the Ogooue river and Mount Braza in Lope national park, a new electric fence powered by solar panels is up and running, protecting a lush green plantation. The technology has been

imported from Kenya and does not come cheap: The enclosure cost about 53,000 euros, according to a fence guard. Gabon may be a major oil producer on Africa's west coast but the authorities have struggled to provide funds to pay for more fences, as requested by Professor White.

The ANPN will try to reduce the cost of the next barriers to around 15,000 euros, White said, and villagers have backed the idea in the hope of protecting their livelihoods. "The food is safe, the elephants do not destroy it anymore," said one farmer, describing how she can now safely grow her potatoes, bananas and tropical root vegetables, secure inside the fence.

Elephants under threat

The dense tropical rainforests of the Minkebe national park in northern Gabon are on the front line of a war with poachers. Bordered by Cameroon and Congo, the Belgium-sized area has been a target for central African gangs looking to make some quick cash from Africa's white gold. More than 25,000 elephants in Minkebe were killed by poachers between 2004 and 2014 — around 80 percent of the park's total forest elephant population—according to a study in February by Duke University in North Carolina.

The stark reduction in forest elephant numbers in Minkebe reflects the shocking slaughter of elephants elsewhere. According to the first ever pan-African survey of savanna elephants last year, the Great Elephant Census, numbers of savannah elephants are estimated to be about 352,000, down from 1.3 million in 1979. In Gabon, it is hoped that if the electrified fences initiative expands then that will help ensure villagers and their elephant neighbors can live happily beside each other.—AFP



PENNSYLVANIA: In this photo, Melissa Jones, right, a nurse educator with Alosa Health speaks with Dr Dorothy Wilhelm in an exam room at a medical office in Monroeville, Pennsylvania.—AP

OVERCOMING OPIOIDS: EASING AN EPIDEMIC ONE DOCTOR AT A TIME

MONROEVILLE: Even doctors can be addicted to opioids, in a way: It's hard to stop prescribing them. Melissa Jones is on a mission to break doctors of their habit, and in the process try to turn the tide of the painkiller epidemic that has engulfed 2 million Americans. It was in doctors' offices where the epidemic began, and it's in doctors' offices where it must be fought. So Jones is using some of the same tactics pharmaceutical sales forces used to push their potent pills into communities - this time, to get them out.

She drives 100 miles a day to visit doctors across western Pennsylvania's Allegheny and Westmoreland counties, where prescription painkillers and their illicit cousin, heroin, killed more than 600 people last year. Bearing a smile, educational pamphlets and sometimes sandwiches, she is working to help doctors stick to new national prescribing guidelines, give them tips on how to handle patients demanding pills and remind them that opioids aren't very good for chronic pain anyway.

"Most people trust their doctors," said Jones' boss, Cheryl Bartlett. "But we haven't trained doctors about addiction, how to recognize it early and treat it in their practices. Why not help doctors better understand how to care for their patients?" The rate of opioid prescribing has started to edge down in recent years, but it remains 56 percent higher than it was 20 years ago, enough to provide nearly every adult in America with a bottle of pills.

Misprescribed

The number of overdose deaths is still climbing, from pills that have been prescribed and from the surge of even more powerful opioids like fentanyl on the black market, where many turn for cheaper drugs after becoming addicted. While narcotics can bring short-term pain relief and help patients with cancer and in end-of-life care, they're often misprescribed.

Increasingly, the fight to save lives has put doctors in the crosshairs: They often feel they have no good choices to treat pain, and not enough time with patients who are already dependent on opioids. Pennsylvania is among about a dozen states where people like Jones try to flip the script on drug marketing and push doctors toward change. Despite mounting evidence about the dangers of opioids - and their limited benefits for chronic pain - far less is known about what works to change doctors' behavior. "What's taking so long to reverse this thing?" asked an exasperated Dr. Gary Franklin, a University of Washington researcher who, more than a decade ago, published a paper sounding the alarm about fatal overdoses in patients prescribed opioids.

Across the US, lawmakers are restricting how doctors handle millions of quick encounters with patients in pain. In Pennsylvania, where the opioid death rate is above the national average and rising, doctors now face sanctions if they fail to check a state-run database to flag those getting narcotics from multiple doctors. Massachusetts

bars doctors from prescribing more than a seven-day supply to first-time opioid patients. Washington State won't let doctors prescribe high doses without consulting a pain specialist. And an Illinois congressman wants all US opioid prescribers to take classes every three years.

Jones uses a gentler approach. Her visits, funded by state lottery dollars, are voluntary and part of a program for low-income seniors run by the Boston-based nonprofit organization Alosa Health. Jones and her colleagues visit 2,600 Pennsylvania doctors a year to talk about opioids and other issues. It used to be difficult for Dr Dorothy Wilhelm, a geriatrics doctor in Monroeville outside of Pittsburgh, to get patients to agree to a urine screen to test for prescription medications and illicit drugs.

Now, with new guidelines and pocket cards from Jones that help her explain the screens, patients don't fight her anymore. Evidence from New York City's public health department and the Veterans Health Administration suggests Jones and others like her can reduce opioid prescribing, adapting a tried-and-true tactic from the pharmaceutical industry called detailing. Drug companies send charismatic sales reps to visit doctors with free pens, lunches and pill samples, along with sometimes-skewed information.

Safer alternatives

In 2007, Purdue Pharma agreed to pay more than \$600 million in fines for falsely informing its sales force that its opioid pill OxyContin had less potential for addiction and abuse than other painkillers. The marketing helped feed a 20-year trend of skyrocketing prescribing. Jones, who has a nursing background, is fighting back with a charm offensive of science-backed facts. "When I see her coming, I know I'm going to learn something and it's fair," said Dr. Rudy Antonic, an internist in McKeesport.

Antonic said he doesn't have time to monitor patients for addiction, discuss overdose reversal drugs or follow other steps in new opioid-prescribing guidelines - so he refers patients to pain specialists instead. "I'm forced to say, 'Go to the pain clinic. Let those guys figure it out,'" he said. Pain medicine emerged in the 1970s as a specialty. Many pain specialists prescribe responsibly, but others are notorious over-prescribers, handing out medicine to known addicts. Jones would rather see her doctors keep their patients and follow the guidelines.

Over sandwiches at a large medical practice in Monroeville recently, Jones quizzed two doctors about what's slowing down change. Their answers boiled down to choices, time and money. "The problem with treating pain is there are not a lot of options," said Dr. Richard Rosenthal. "Tylenol can affect the liver. Anti-inflammatory can affect the heart, the liver, the kidneys. You're not supposed to use muscle relaxants" with elderly patients. Dr. Chaitali Sarkar said patients want pills for "instant gratification" and resist safer alternatives. "We need more than 20 min-

utes to talk to patients," Sarkar told Jones. "Everybody's stretched thin." Jones reminds doctors that opioids' side effects - besides addiction and death - include constipation and, in men, low testosterone. Minimizing harm by getting off opioids can seem a dismal prospect to patients, unless a doctor offers other ways to cope with pain. What about tai chi, massage or acupuncture? Jones asked, pointing to research in the educational materials she gave the doctors. Those usually aren't covered by insurance so can be expensive for patients, Rosenthal said.

Ultimate goal

Physical therapy might be covered, but co-pays add up. Many chronic pain patients with valid opioid prescriptions become addicted - the best guess is about 1 in 10, according to an analysis of 38 studies. For patients dependent on opioids, Jones makes sure doctors know how to taper them gradually to a lower dose. A pocket card she gives them suggests starting off by cutting the dose by a quarter or a half each week, which prompts scoffs from most doctors. Cutting a dose in half "would not be well-received" by patients, Rosenthal said.

Start off slower, Jones nudged, reminding that using antihistamines or antidiarrheal drugs can help manage withdrawal symptoms. Another big worry for doctors trying to limit opioids for patients: Some patients may seek pills from dealers on the street. It's been more than a year since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published the first national prescribing guidelines for opioids. The action was followed quickly by most state governors signing an unprecedented Compact to Fight Opioid Addiction. The ultimate goal is fewer deaths, but it may take years.

Research suggests "it takes somewhere between 13 to 17 years for a new guideline to get fully implemented," said University of Colorado researcher Robert Valuck, who coordinates his state's response to the opioid crisis. Among laws aimed at doctors, one of the more promising requires them to check a prescription drug-monitoring database to weed out patients with multiple doctors, pharmacies and prescriptions. Most states now have these databases. Pennsylvania is among the few requiring doctors to check it every time they prescribe an opioid.

One study found states requiring such checks, combined with restrictions on pain clinics, reduced opioid prescribing by 8 percent and prescription opioid overdose death rates by 12 percent, without increasing heroin overdose deaths. Doctors tell Jones they love the new requirement because it keeps them from being fooled into feeding addiction. Some patients even say they don't want to be tracked, so will stop taking opioids. If doctors can change their behavior and patients can change their expectations, there may be hope. "We can't wait 17 years," Valuck said. "The cost to society is too great. We have to address this problem as aggressively as we can."—AP

NO LONGER THE HOT NEW THING? TEEN VAPING FALLS

NEW YORK: Teen vaping, which has been skyrocketing, fell dramatically last year in the United States. A government survey released Thursday suggests the number of high school and middle school students using electronic cigarettes fell to 2.2 million last year, from 3 million the year before. Health officials have worried about the booming popularity of vaping products among kids and the potential impact on adult smoking rates in the future.

"It certainly is a public health win," said Brian King, an expert on smoking and health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It's the first decline CDC has reported in teen vaping since the agency began tracking it in 2011. The findings echo a recent University of Michigan survey, which also detected a decline in 2016. It's unclear why teen vaping fell last year, and it's too soon to know if the numbers will continue to drop.

One possibility may be a growing push to ban sale of e-cigarettes to minors, including a federal regulation that took effect in August. Another may be the influence of ad campaigns by the government and other organizations to discourage kids from smoking, the CDC said. E-cigarettes may also be losing their novelty among teens, said Matthew Farrelly, a tobacco control researcher at RTI International. Studies suggest many kids who vape use the products less often than kids who smoke cigarettes - a sign that vaping seems to be more social and experimental, some experts said.

Current users

"These products were new and novel



CHICAGO: In this file photo, a man smokes an electronic cigarette in Chicago.—AP

ASPIRIN INCREASES BLEEDING RISK IN OLDER STROKE PATIENTS: STUDY

PARIS: Long-term, daily use of aspirin to prevent blood clots in very elderly patients leads to an increased risk of serious or fatal internal bleeding, researchers said yesterday. Heartburn medication would allow people 75 years and older to keep the preventative benefits of aspirin while avoiding its dangerous side-effects, they reported in the medical journal *The Lancet*. Even among people with no history of heart problems or stroke, the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding goes up with age for aspirin users, other research has shown.

Roughly half of all adults 75 and over in the US and Europe take small daily doses of aspirin ranging from 75 to 150 milligrams or other clot-inhibiting drugs. A normal dose for a headache is 325 to 600 mg. Lifelong treatment with such medications is especially recommended for patients who have suffered a heart attack or stroke. But the clinical tests underlying these recommendations involved mostly patients younger than 75 who had taken aspirin for only a couple years. As a result, how much the risk of bleeding might rise with age was largely unknown.

Reassurance

To find out more, Peter Rothwell from the University of Oxford led a team of researchers in examining medical records for more than 3,000 patients who had had a stroke or heart attack, and taken daily aspirin or its equivalent for many years. Half the patients were 75 or older at the start of the period covered by the study. Over the following decade, 314 patients were admitted to hospital for bleeding. The risk of that happening increased sharply with age: for patients under 65, the annual rate of hospital admissions due to bleeding was 1.5 percent; for patients 75 to 84, the rate rose to 3.5 percent; and for those over 85 it was five percent.

The chances that bleeding was disabling or fatal, while lower, increased in roughly the same proportions across the different age groups. "We have known for some time that aspirin increases the risk of bleeding in elderly patients," Rothwell said in a statement. "But our study gives us a much clearer understanding of the size of the increased risk and the severity of the consequences." The researchers suggest that taking proton pump inhibitors (PPI) a kind of heartburn medication could reduce bleeding in the upper gastrointestinal tract by up to 90 percent.

"There is some evidence that long-term PPI use might have some small risks," Rothwell noted. But "the new data should provide reassurance that the benefits of PPI use at older age outweigh the risks." Treatment programs should be reviewed every three to five years in very elderly patients who take aspirin and PPIs together, the authors said. Several experts not involved in the study praised its methodology and endorsed its conclusions. "It is clear from the data presented that in the over-75s taking PPI along with aspirin was associated with a reduced likelihood of bleeding," said Tony Fox, a professor in the Pharmaceutical Medicine Group at King's College London.—AFP

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RUPKITE, Bulgaria: A paleontologist uncovers fossils near the site where a fossilized tooth with three roots was found in 2002, near the village of Rupkite, central Bulgaria.—AFP

LOOKING FOR MAN'S ORIGINS IN A BULGARIAN SAVANNAH

RUPKITE, Bulgaria: Seven million years ago the sunflower and corn fields in parts of southern Bulgaria were like an African savannah, roamed by gazelles and giraffes. And perhaps also, amazingly, by the oldest known human ancestor—which most scientists have hitherto believed came from Africa. A small team of researchers hopes to find proof of human origins in Bulgaria as they gingerly recover fossils from the clay of a dried-up river bed near the sleepy village of Rupkite in the June sunshine.

It all began in 2002 when the five-year-old grandson of local amateur paleontologist Petar Popdimitrov found what looked like a fossilized tooth with three roots. "The whole of it was of a blue-grayish color. It looked much worn out, especially the chewing surface. We thought that it was an animal one," Popdimitrov, 76, said. "But my son-in-law, who is a dentist, said in the evening that it might be human."

He might be right, in a way, and the discovery could be nothing short of momentous, potentially proving that humans diverged from apes not in Africa but in the eastern Mediterranean. In 2007 Popdimitrov showed the tooth to Professor Nikolai Spassov from Bulgaria's National Museum of Natural History and to Denis Geraads from the Musee National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris. Now, 10 years on, a team led by Spassov and Madelaine Boehme from Tuebingen University in Germany have put forward the theory that the tooth matches a jawbone found near Athens in 1944.

Conducting new studies on the jawbone, discovered by German soldiers digging a bunker in World War II, and on the tooth and the fauna in the area of Bulgaria where they were found, the researchers have come up with a bold and controversial theory. They posit that both items are from a creature called *Graecopithecus*, and that it was a hominin—the collective term for humans and our direct line of non-ape ancestors. *Graecopithecus*, the researchers hypothesize, migrated to Africa only later.

Previously it was assumed that the oldest potential hominin was the *Sahelanthropus* found in Chad in west Africa in 2001, Spassov said, and thought to be around seven million years old. "Now we think that it was the *Graecopithecus* found in Greece and Bulgaria because our two finds are several hundred thou-

sand years older," he said. The male *Graecopithecus* weighed around 40 kilos (90 pounds), as much as a female chimpanzee today, with massive and powerful jaws capable of chewing tree bark and chestnuts, Spassov said.

"We can also assume that it walked upright," he added. Spassov's theory however has been widely criticized in scientific circles for lack of proof, prompting him to search for more evidence. "This opposition stimulates our desire to find something more than a tooth and a broken jaw," he said. "That's why we are here to look for whatever part of a skeleton, preferably pelvis, hip, jaw or skull that will enable us to cement our theory and tell much more about our potential first ancestors."

Chronic lack of funding for scientific research and field trips in Bulgaria, the European Union's poorest country, has limited his team's excavations to just eight days this summer. But they have unearthed hundreds of fossils that will be carefully cleaned and examined and hopefully turn out to be parts of *Graecopithecus*. Excavations are also expected to start in neighboring Greece and Macedonia in September. The tooth meanwhile will take pride of place in Popdimitrov's new private museum in the town of Chirpan, near Rupkite. "I have the feeling that I was in contact with something that had lived millions of years ago," he said.—AFP

WARMER CLIMATE THREATENS MALARIA SPREAD IN ETHIOPIA

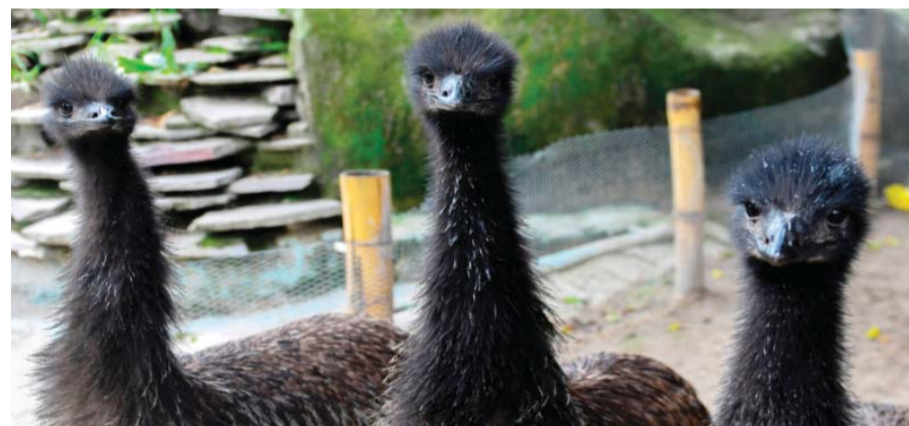
PARIS: Cool, high-lying areas of Ethiopia hitherto shielded from heat-loving malaria mosquitoes are increasingly exposed to the disease as the climate warms, researchers said Thursday. Most Ethiopians live in the country's highlands, and have long enjoyed natural protection against mosquitoes carrying the malaria-causing parasites *Plasmodium falciparum* and *P. vivax*. But the buffered area has been shrinking since 1981, scientists reported in the journal *Environmental Research Letters*.

About six million people live in the newly-vulnerable regions. Air temperatures below 18 degrees Celsius prevent development of *P. falciparum*. The survival threshold for *P. vivax* is 15 C, according to the research team. Low temperatures also impede the spread of mosquitoes that host the parasites. Since temperatures decrease with altitude, much of the Ethiopian highlands — 1,500 to 2,500 meters above sea level—were beyond the reach of malaria transmission.

To date, it was not known whether the

mercury had risen in the East African highlands, or whether global warming contributed to a recent upsurge in malaria in the region. To find out, a team from the University of Maine and Columbia University in New York compiled a national temperature dataset for Ethiopia covering the period 1981-2014. They discovered that temperatures rose at least 0.22 C per decade. The team then used the new climate data to pinpoint the highest elevation where the average minimum temperature never exceeds the 18 C or 15 C malaria threshold.

"The elevation at which the temperature thresholds are met has risen by more than 100 meters since 1981," the study's lead author Bradfield Lyon of the University of Maine, said in a statement. Taking into account natural variability in the regional climate and impacts of the seasonal El Nino weather phenomenon, the observed rise was "consistent" with global warming caused by mankind's burning of fossil fuels, the authors found.—AFP



SAN SALVADOR: Picture of three emus at the National Zoo of El Salvador in San Salvador.—AFP

MOTHER'S OBESITY BOOSTS RISK FOR MAJOR BIRTH DEFECTS: STUDY

PARIS: Children of obese women are more likely to be afflicted by major birth defects, including malformations of the heart and genitals, according to a study published yesterday. The fatter the mother, the higher the risk, it found. "We found that risks of major congenital malformations in offspring progressively increase with maternal overweight and severity of obesity," researchers wrote in *The BMJ* medical journal. "Thus, efforts should be made to encourage women of reproductive age to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to obtain a normal body weight before conception."

According to research published last year, the number of women aged 18 and older classified as severely obese, doubled from about 50 million to 100 million in just 10 years from 2000. It warned that if current trends continue, one in five women will be obese, and one in 10 severely obese, by 2025. People are divided into weight categories based on their Body Mass Index (BMI) — a ratio of weight-to-height squared. Under the World Health Organization (WHO) standard, a BMI of 18.5-24.9 is normal, 25-29.9 overweight, 30-34.9 moderately obese, 35-39.9 severely obese, and anything over 40 morbidly obese. For the new study, researchers used data on more than 1.2 million births registered in Sweden from 2001 to 2014. They gathered information on major congenital malformations, also known as birth defects, and compared this to the BMI of the mother at the time she gave birth. Just over 43,500 of the children studied had a major malformation, the researchers found.

The most common was a heart defect, followed by malformation of the genital organs, the limbs, the urinary system, the eye, digestive system, facial clefts and nervous system defects of the spine or brain. Among the offspring of mothers of normal weight, as well as underweight ones, the rate of congenital malformation was about 3.4 percent, the researchers found. This rose to 3.5 percent for children of overweight women, 3.8 percent for obese ones, 4.2 percent in the severely obese category and 4.7 percent for the morbidly obese.

The risk was higher for boys than for girls. The study took into account other potential risk factors such as maternal smoking or drinking, socio-economic status, diabetes, the use anti-epileptic drugs, and vitamin deficiency. The findings "underline the importance of having a maternal BMI in the normal range before pregnancy," the study authors said. Losing weight after conception would likely be too late, they said, as embryonic organ formation occurs within the first eight weeks.—AFP

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AL-NAHAR PLUS HOLDS ANNUAL IFTAR

Al-Nahar Plus, an authorized agent for Samsung (mobile and accessories), held the annual Iftar for the employees of the company and their families on the occasion of the Holy Month of Ramadan at the Jumeirah Hotel and Resort. Amer Hindi, general manager of the company, welcomed the attendees and praised the efforts and accomplishments achieved by the company recently which included the opening of three service centers in Sharq, Salmiya and Fahaheel. The ceremony included a number of competitions and awards. Kamel Shalabi, technical support manager and Ahmed Al-Shuwaikh, sales manager honored the best employees in all departments.



LAMAR PLAGE RAMADAN EXHIBITION OPENS AT PLAGE HOTEL, SALMIYA

Under auspices of Sheikh Nawal Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, the second phase of the Lamar Plage Ramadan exhibition was recently opened at the Plage Hotel in Salmiya. The first week of the exhibition was held from June 8-14 and the second week started on June 15 and will be on till June 22. Notably, the exhibition is held to support small projects and provide various consumer goods needed for various age categories.

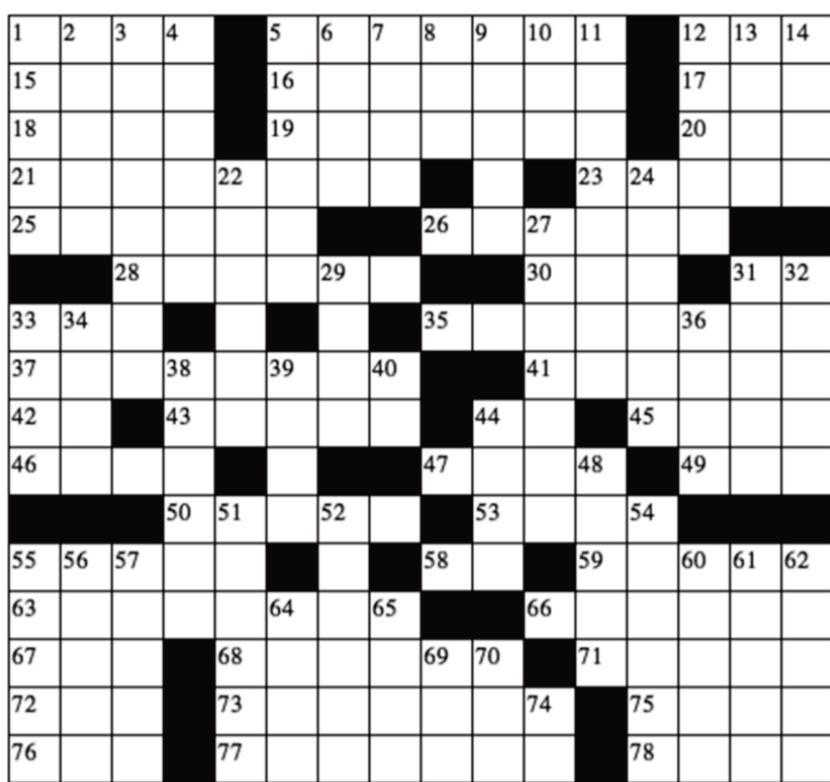




International Women Group (IWG) had carried out various activities during the last few months. Many diplomats, guests and media personnels attended the events which were celebrated with great enthusiasm and success.



CROSSWORD 1639



ACROSS

1. Stairway in India leading down to a landing on the water.
5. Any heavy material used to stabilize a ship or airship.
12. Liveliness and energy.
15. (Roman Catholic Church) The supreme ecclesiastical tribunal for cases appealed to the Holy See from diocesan courts.
16. Large genus of Australian evergreen shrubs or small trees with large daisylike flowers.
17. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
18. The eighth month of the civil year.
19. Light in a transparent protective case.
20. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
21. Hypothetical universal solvent once sought by alchemists.
23. Any of various usually white herons having long plumes during breeding season.
25. A lane at sea that is a regularly used route for vessels.
26. Old World nocturnal canine mammal closely related to the dog.
28. A heathen (especially a Muslim).
30. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
33. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
35. Less than human or not worthy of a human being.
37. A person who eats human flesh.
41. A member of an agricultural people of southern India.
42. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
43. Softly bright or radiant.
45. Affected manners intended to impress others.
46. A program under which employees regularly accumulate shares and may ultimately assume control of the company.
47. (British) An open river valley (in a hilly area).
49. A unit of length of thread or yarn.
50. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
53. An informal term for a father.
55. A gum used especially as a thickener or emulsifier.
58. The syllable naming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in solmization.
59. Wheelwork consisting of a connected set of rotating gears by which force is transmitted or motion or torque is changed.
63. A genus of ducks.
66. A district of Manhattan.
67. The bill in a restaurant.
68. Render capable or able for some task.
71. The relative magnitudes of two quantities (usually expressed as a quotient).
72. The executive agency that advises the President on the federal budget.
73. Reduce to lay status.
75. An enclosed armored military vehicle.
76. A column of light (as from a beacon).
77. The act of persuading (or attempting to persuade).
78. Any of several related languages of the Celts in Ireland and Scotland.

DOWN

1. Anchovy pear tree.
2. English writer on games (1672-1769).
3. A language spoken by the Atakapa people of the Gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas.
4. National capital of Kiribati.
5. The second wife of Henry VIII of England and mother of Elizabeth I.
6. By bad luck.
7. A period of 40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday.
8. A broad flat muscle on either side of the back.
9. A particular environment or walk of life.
10. Term of address for a man.
11. Medium tall celery pine of New Zealand.
12. Relating to or resembling or made of or adorned with pearls or mother-of-pearl.
13. A fencing sword similar to a foil but with a heavier blade.
14. A written agreement between two states or sovereigns.
22. A frame attached to a wagon to increase the amount of hay it can carry.
24. Supernatural half-man and half-bird vehicle or bearer of Vishnu.
27. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
29. The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
31. A high wave (often dangerous) caused by tidal flow (as by colliding tidal currents or in a narrow estuary).
32. Squash bugs.
34. South African term for 'boss'.
36. The bags of letters and packages that are transported by the postal service.
38. To protect clothing.
39. (pathology) An elevation of the skin filled with serous fluid.
40. A radioactive transuranic element synthesized from californium.
44. A quantity of no importance.
48. The younger brother of Edwy who became king of Northumbria when it renounced Edwy.
51. Socialist who wrote The Communist Manifesto with Karl Marx in 1848 (1820-1895).
52. (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
54. Expose to fresh air, as of old clothing.
56. Wild or domesticated South American cud-chewing animal related to camels but smaller and lacking a hump.
57. Full of trivial conversation.
60. The table in Christian churches where communion is given.
61. Power to control.
62. A cloud of fine particles suspended in a gas.
64. Relatively small fast-moving sloth.
65. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
69. Being two more than fifty.
70. The second larges of the four main islands of Japan.
74. Half the width of an em.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may find yourself awake at an early hour this morning. You could be helping someone move or driving someone to the airport. Whatever the case, you are available to help. Sympathy and understanding are emotional qualities that take on a greater importance now. Even though it is the top of the morning when you help this person, you are reflective and may be a mirror for this person's focus. You are equality-minded and easy to talk with—a good mediator as well. As a sociable and slightly frivolous orientation sets in this afternoon, you may find yourself planning a neighborhood get-together. There is time to relax—perhaps a massage or some leisure time in a pool. You are driven to excel in any form of physical or creative expression today.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are good at relations regarding politics, diplomacy and sales—not to mention considerate and helpful. This is a good day for you to deal in sales or presentations. You have an inner urge to be all things to all people and would rather bend than argue. You will be helping a friend today because you are willing to listen and not criticize. You are a natural diplomat, always concerned with the comfort and welfare of others. You stay in the background, but are able to manipulate and bring out cooperation in others every time. A real estate profession is something you might seriously consider. This is a day you should enjoy—relax. With your strong drive to do and accomplish, every bit of relaxation you get will be beneficial.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Progressive people and idealistic groups or concepts play a more important role in your life now—a new cycle begins. There is a concern for something bigger than any one person—perhaps an interest in civic affairs or even some new recycling technique. You are very communicative, flexible, mental and other-oriented today. You will find many, particularly young people, listen to your ideas and advice. Your laser-like mind makes conversations fast-paced and illuminating. A ready wit and a great sense of humor create a rewarding day. You may join a self-help group or find yourself talking about a self-help book to a close friend this evening. Whatever the case, you have insight into your own emotions and drive. You can be a good mentor.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Easy does it—this is one of those busy days. If you need to concentrate on a particular chore, it would be a good idea to suggest that others either help you or leave you alone to do your work. This way, you will not get as many interruptions—and who knows—someone might help you with your special chore or project. A family gathering may be planned for later this day, perhaps a picnic. Tonight could complete your little gathering with a nearby outdoor concert. A music festival or some other type of fun activity with lots of children and unique exhibits just gives everyone the perfect opportunity to get to know each other better. There are opportunities to teach young people a sense of sharing and support of each other.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Having and appreciating things of beauty and value plays a big role in your life at this time. Making the most of what you have, striving for security and stability; that's the impulse that stirs in you now. You find yourself talking about investing and may even have a personal plan. Provided you do not spend the entire budget on the fancy things that catch your eye, a shopping expedition can be a financially favorable one for you now. Circumstances may expand your appreciation and enjoyment of your life situation. Your system of values may deepen, providing you with a better sense of discrimination and good taste. There is a desire to purchase items and you might forget when to stop adding to your basket. You are inspired to write poetry.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You are not bound by relationships and are thus not much of a domestic. You find it easy to work with other people and tend to pour a lot of energy into those around you. Foreign affairs may catch your attention at this time. Perhaps an investment you are thinking about is beginning to show quite an upswing in potential. You will find support from others when you turn your attention to health, food, nutrition and areas where service or attention to detail is in high focus. You may enjoy working with a group of people that have similar thinking or politics. With your powerful spirit, you enjoy your strong emotions and have an active social life. There are opportunities to show off your charming side this evening at an upscale social affair.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are very much the creature of habit. The encircling network of friends and relationships are crucial to your success or lack thereof from time to time. You are nourished in great measure by the atmosphere and conditions you are able to set up. You may, however, tend to fluctuate between uninspired routine and crazy binges. For the next few days you may want to spend some time in organizing your thoughts and goals-making lists. Do not forget to walk around your home and make any necessary notes about updates. This is a good time to change the air filters, set out a soaker hose, clean vents, etc. Enjoy a bit of time away from work and responsibilities, perhaps by short trips to fun places this weekend. Consider creating a butterfly garden.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

It is easy for you to express yourself to others—you always manage to make a good appearance. You have an easy manner and find it easy to communicate with just about anyone. You like beautiful surroundings, everything that is calm, tasteful and harmonious. You may be planning a water garden for those hot summer days—maybe a few goldfish. This afternoon you will find yourself involved in several fun conversations with those you love. You are very giving, conciliatory and even flattering in relationships, able to adjust to any situation. Budget restraints are definitely needed so that some item you want in the future will become more attainable. Suggestions by young members in the family will give you new ideas.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You would like your conversations and thinking to stay somewhere near the surface today. This is a day of rest, and deep problem-solving conversations are certainly not on your to-do list. You can create new subjects easily with all the interests you have. You will enjoy your friends today—you love to interact with them. There may be an occasion to teach someone how to write music or to put one of your poems to music. You appreciate change, variety and making local connections—there may be an open house or opening day for some new business. You have many avenues to explore this weekend and many positive things to accomplish. You are more attractive than usual. Intimacy with a person you love will go beyond the usual.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Circumstances may press you and tend to bring out the rebel in you. A little bicycle ride or just a change of scenery for a short while will help to bring your emotions back in balance. Self-control is the accepted and admired behavior, and you are able to respond in positive ways. Circumstances work together to bring out your ideals—making it easier to make your dreams real. You are very original when it comes to home and surroundings—the environment you build around you. This could also manifest in new ideas for unusual ways of supporting yourself in the future. Get outside and be with friends this afternoon—enjoy a breath of fresh air! This evening, literature is on your mind. That book you want to write or read may hold your attention.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

There are changes around your household that may not be the most pleasant for you. Change would be easier if you could have more control. However, if you are paying for these changes, you have the power! This doesn't mean you could be bossy, but it does mean you could become more influential with the price, color, style, etc. If you do not care about any of these, the changes will probably stay. Progressive people and idealistic groups or concepts play an important role in your life. This may be a special day when you have been looking forward to a trip to a museum, art show or the opening night of a play where a family member is performing. You enjoy a bit of culture from time to time and this experience is special.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Everything points to your taking the lead in today's activities. You could feel great support from those around you. You feel healthy and natural. You will find that today is packed full of communication with friends, especially those you may not have seen in some time. Perhaps it is time for a reunion. Practical and effective ideas are the ones that make the most sense—putting them to good use is a focus for you. Material things are foremost on your mind in many respects; an emphasis on the real rather than the ideal. This is the time you may decide to install a porch instead of a deck. Now when company comes, there will be a place to put them. If it is a porch with wide windows, you will enjoy sitting out there for meditations.

WORD SEARCH

Fish 1

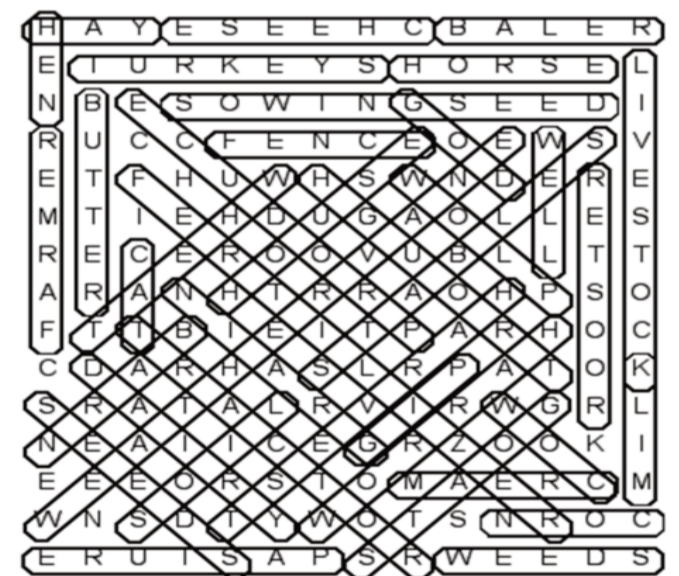
Find and circle all of the fish that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Benjamin Franklin quotation.



- | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| BARRACUDA | DORADO | PARROTFISH | SMELT |
| BLUEFISH | DRUM | PERMIT | SNOOK |
| BONEFISH | GAR | POMPANO | STURGEON |
| BULLHEAD | GRAYLING | REDFISH | SUNFISH |
| CATFISH | GRUNT | ROOSTERFISH | SWORDFISH |
| CHUB | HALIBUT | SALMON | TILAPIA |
| COD | JEWFISH | SAND DAB | TRIPLETAIL |
| CRAPPIE | MACKEREL | SAUGER | TUNA |
| CREVALLE | MUSKELLUNGE | SHARK | WAHOO |
| DOLLY VARDEN | PADDFISH | SHEEPSHEAD | WARMOUTH |

Yesterday's Solution

Farm



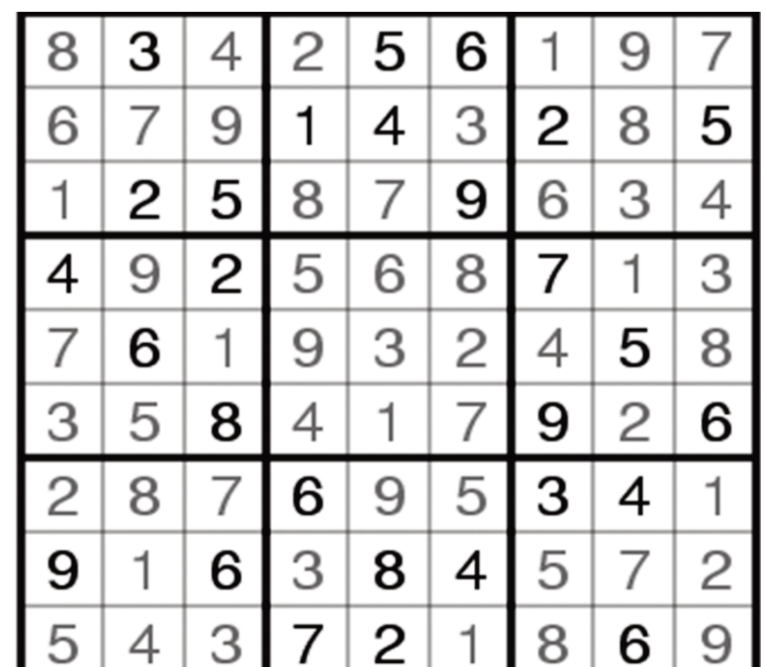
- | | | | |
|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| BALER | FARMER | HOUSE | SOWING SEED |
| BARN | FENCE | LIVESTOCK | STABLES |
| BUTTER | FERTILIZER | MILK | TRACTOR |
| CAT | GOATS | PASTURE | TROUGH |
| CHEESE | GRAIN | PIG | TURKEYS |
| CORN | HARROW | PLOW | WEATHERVANE |
| COW | HARVEST | PRODUCE | WEEDS |
| CREAM | HAY | ROOSTER | WELL |
| DAIRY | HEN | SEEDS | WHEAT |
| DOG | HORSE | SOIL | |

The hidden message is: CHICKENS

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Table listing various hospitals including Sabah Hospital, Amiri Hospital, and others with their respective phone numbers.

Clinics

Table listing various clinics including Kaizen center, Rawda, Adaliya, and others with their respective phone numbers.



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

Table listing pharmacies across different Governorates (Ahmadi, Jahra, Capital, Farwaniya, Hawally) with their addresses and phone numbers.

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Contact information for the Meteorological Department including telephone and fax numbers and website.

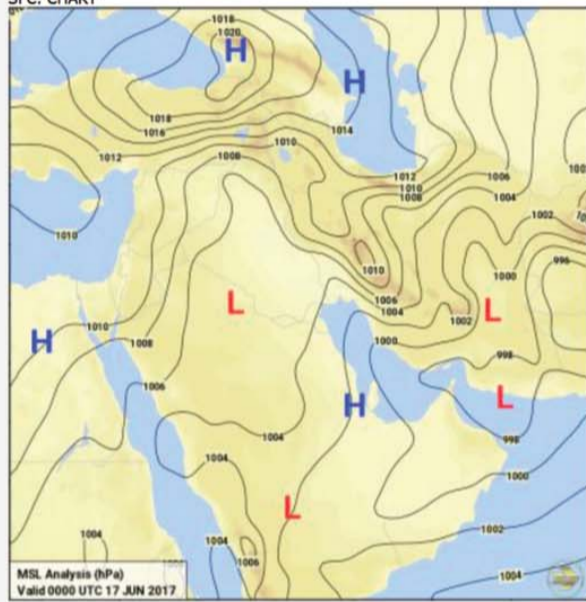
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 17/06/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 47 °C

Day and Night weather descriptions including temperature ranges and wind conditions.

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

Table showing the four-day forecast with icons for weather conditions and temperature ranges.

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Table of forecast data for various stations including Kuwait City, Airport, and other locations.

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Table of recorded weather data for the previous day at the airport.

Prayer Times

Table of prayer times for Fajr, Sunrise, Zuhr, Asr, Sunset, and Isha.

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Large table listing international call numbers for various countries from Afghanistan to Lesotho.



PRIVATE CLINICS

Table listing various medical specialties and practitioners including Ophthalmologists, General Practitioners, and Urologists.

Table listing various medical specialties and practitioners including Plastic Surgeons, Family Doctor, Psychiatrists, and Gynaecologists.

Table listing various medical specialties and practitioners including Paediatricians, Dermatologists, Dentists, and Neurologists.

Table listing various medical specialties and practitioners including Endocrinologist, Physiotherapists, Rheumatologists, and Internist.

Contact information for Psychologists and Psychotherapists.

Contact information for Soor Center, Kaizen center, and Noor Clinic.

Contact information for William Schuilenberg, RPC.

GOSSIP

QUALLEY'S 'FAVORITE' FILM IS THE PARENT TRAP

Margaret Qualley's "favorite" film of all time was 'The Parent Trap'. The 22-year-old actress and model - who is the daughter of Andie MacDowell and her ex-husband Paul Qualley - has admitted when she was growing up she "particularly loved" the romantic drama film, but the 1998 version starring Lindsay Lohan, because it gave her hope her parents, who split in 1999, would rekindle their marriage. The brunette beauty said: "Like every child of divorce I had 'Parent Trap' fantasies. In fact, 'The Parent Trap' was my favorite movie. I was a Nineties baby so I particularly loved the Lindsay Lohan version." And the 'The Leftovers' star has revealed she would drop hints about the movie to her family in the hope it would encourage the 'Groundhog Day' star to give her romance another go, although her plan failed. She explained: "I made a point of telling my mom how much I loved the movie - I talked about it a lot. And then she started dating Dennis Quaid [who stars in the film]. And I was like 'Nooooo!

You got it all wrong! This is not what I meant at all!" Although Qualley attended the North Carolina School of the Arts where she trained in ballet, she soon realized she wanted to explore a different career path, which saw her sign up to a modeling agency in New York, as well as the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) where she took up acting classes. Speaking about her journey and her life as an actor, she said: "The mistakes are beautiful. It's a very different way of storytelling and it's liberating." However, Qualley has admitted her path into the entertainment industry was not forced upon her by her parent, as she never used to watch her mother act in any of her movies. She told ES magazine: "We didn't grow up watching her movies. She made an effort just to be a mom, which I'm grateful for."



Johnson was

'surprised' by fun Cruise

Jake Johnson was "pleasantly surprised" by how fun Tom Cruise was to work with on 'The Mummy'. The 39-year-old actor - who is best known for playing Nick Miller in the popular comedy 'New Girl' - stars alongside the Hollywood legend in the new fantasy film as Sgt. Vail and has admitted he was initially fearful of how they would get on because he'd done his research on Tom's style of work. Speaking to Collider.com, he said: "I had read a lot about Tom Cruise and his methods - in terms of doing his own stunts and his intensity. I was really pleasantly surprised about how fun Tom was to work with and what an electric charge you get from him, and how much he loves movies and how much that actually rubs off. He makes you feel like you're a kid again." Meanwhile, Tom, 54, is known for playing the hero that "saves the day" in movies such as the 'Mission: Impossible' franchise and 'Jack Reacher', but director Alex Kurtzman has said the idea of taking control away from his character Nick Morton in the reboot of the monster franchise was "interesting" to him. He said recently: "We have over 30 years of knowing Tom Cruise is going to save the day, in order to make the movie unpredictable I loved the idea that suddenly his control over the situation would be taken away from him ... That got me excited, it felt like it served two purposes in that it honored a key Mummy power but it also made a Tom Cruise movie feel different and interesting." And whilst Nick is still billed as the protagonist of the movie, Tom recently said there are a lot of "grey areas" in his character which present him as an anti-hero. 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."

Kruger to star in filmmaker Zemeckis' upcoming movie

Diane Kruger is set to star in filmmaker Robert Zemeckis' upcoming movie. The 40-year-old actress has been cast in the drama film, which has yet to receive a title, but is based on the award-winning documentary titled 'Marwencol' created by Jeff Malmberg in 2010, which was recognized by the Boston Society of Film Critics and South by Southwest (SXSW), Variety has reported. And the blonde-haired beauty will feature in the production alongside Janelle Monae, 'The Other Woman' star Leslie Mann, and 54-year-old actor Steve Carell, who is known for featuring in '40 Year Old Virgin', 'Crazy, Stupid Love' and 'Despicable Me'. The movie's storyline will explore the life of a man who is recovering from an assault and takes to his garden to build a miniature World War II village to help him overcome the horrific ordeal. And it has been reported the 'Troy' star will take on the role of the Belgian Witch of Marwencol named Deja

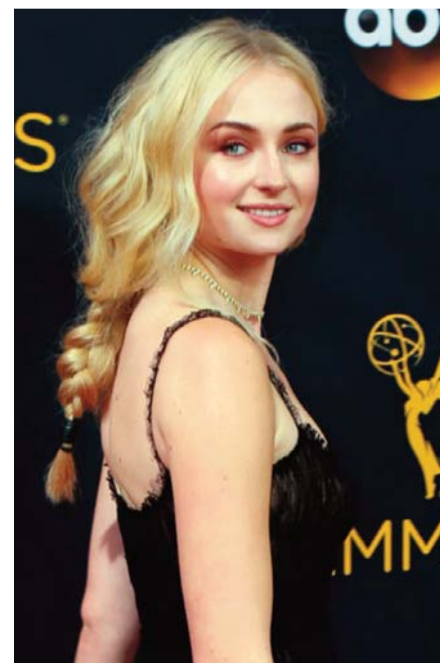
Thoris, who resides in the world of the fictional village. Although Carell, Monae and Mann were asked to join the project earlier this year, the character's Monae and Mann are set to portray has yet to be unveiled. The 65-year-old creator and screenwriter will direct and produce the production based on a screenplay he previously worked on with Caroline Thompson. Zemeckis will also receive assistance from Steve Starkey and Jack Rapke from his ImageMovers company to co-produce the film, alongside Cherylanne Martin. And Malmberg will also be involved in the creative process and will executive produce the drama alongside Jackie Levine. Maradith Frenkel and Chloe Yellin are also on board the production and have been called in to oversee the project and report back to Universal.



Sophie Turner will star in Louis Vuitton's new campaign

Sophie Turner has joined forces with Louis Vuitton. The 21-year-old actress has been announced as the new brand ambassador for the luxury company, and under her new partnership with the company the golden-haired beauty will star in the label's Series Seven Autumn/Winter 2017 fashion campaign, alongside Jaden Smith, 18, and 28-year-old actress Riley Keough. And the upcoming commercial has been shot by popular photographer Bruce Weber. Louis Vuitton's creative director, Nicolas Ghesquiere, has shared a string of images of the trio from the upcoming advertorial to broadcast the exciting news. Alongside an image of Sophie, which was posted on his Instagram account, he wrote: "@sophiet with @santirobleddopages shot by @bruce_weber for @louisvuitton new campaign #LVFW17 (sic)." Whilst another image of Riley clinging on to the 'The Karate Kid' star's neck has been uploaded to the 46-year-old creative mastermind's photo-sharing site. He wrote: "The first look at my new #lseries7 campaign @louisvuitton starring @rileykeough and @csyresmith shot by @bruce_weber #LVFW17 (sic)." Although Sophie has yet to share the news on her social media platforms, Riley has decided to spread the exciting news of her latest project on her page with a photograph from the shoot, which is the same image Nicolas posted. She captioned her upload: "#lvfw17 @louisvuitton by the incredible @nicolasghesquiere photo by @bruce_weber (sic)."

And Sophie is set for a busy year ahead, as alongside her work with the French fashion house she is set to join the cast of 'Time Freak', and is rumored to reprise her role as Jean Grey in the upcoming 'X-Men: Dark Phoenix'. Sophie - who is currently dating singer Joe Jonas - first starred as the psychic superhero in 'X-Men: Apocalypse' last year and she is now set to have her own stand-alone movie based on the Marvel Comics character's alter-ego Dark Phoenix.



Priyanka Chopra praises Baywatch timing



Priyanka Chopra thinks 'Baywatch' is the kind of film the world needs right now. The 34-year-old actress had a great time making the "fun and silly" movie and she thinks something to lighten the mood is exactly what people ought to be watching during turbulent times. She said: "I play a complete villain. It's so much fun to play a baddie in a comedy, because you can do the most ridiculous things and they work. It's such a fun, silly movie. I hope people will get a couple of laughs and enjoy themselves. The world needs a little bit of laughter right now." While she had a lot of fun making the movie, Priyanka - who stars alongside Zac Efron and Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson in the film - admits filming could be quite hard as it

was so hot in Florida. She told HELLO! magazine: "It was actually a really hard movie to shoot because it was four months of 15-hour days in the Miami heat. I was amazed that Dwayne would be up and working out from five in the morning." And Priyanka loved seeing the bond between her co-stars. She said: "Zac and Dwayne have an incredible mutual love for each other and were always laughing." After finding fame in Bollywood before landing a role in 'Quantico', the former Miss World has a huge following behind her, but 'Baywatch' is likely to bring her to an international audience for the first time. She said: "This is my 51st movie but my first English language film."



Eliza Doolittle makes a comeback

Eliza Doolittle is set to make a comeback to the music industry. The 29-year-old singer has been off the radar for the past few years following the release of her 2013 'In Your Hands' album, but the star has taken to social media to unveil her new single 'Wide Eyed Fool'. The brunette beauty has acknowledged she has been away for "a little while", but she is "so happy" to have made a return to the entertainment business and to be able to share her new record with her fans. Alongside a teaser clip of the music video to her latest track, which was published on her Instagram account, she wrote: "It's been a little while. So happy to share this with you. Here's my new song - Wide Eyed Fool. (Link to video in bio) (sic)." The star has also shared a link to the full track on her page. The lyrics include: "Forever a wide eyed fool. "What am I to do... There's a method to my madness, cry a little more, a little harder, a little stronger... "Under the starry skies I know this life ain't right, I know I'm all alone. "Nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing is going to change my tune... Earlier this week the 'Pack Up' hitmaker has been teasing the release of her single with a string of images, which are believed to be still shots from her music video, on her photo-sharing site. The images include black and white photographs of the musician sprawled out in various positions, whilst other posts are of artistic illustrations. And various phrases from the track are sprawled across the picture, which read "And the city lights all flash blue", as well as "We might not be going down in history, but the way you're kissing me it feels just as important."



Deutch is 'very particular' about her outfits

Zoey Deutch is "very particular" about her outfits. The 22-year-old actress has admitted she is very specific with the garments she adorns, and she will surprise her friends with some of her ensembles when they go out to a club in Los Angeles together and she adorns a "full black lawyer suit". Speaking about her style and unusual wardrobe choices to InStyle.com, the golden-haired beauty said: "I'm very particular about what I wear. "I'll go out with my friends to a club in LA in a full black lawyer suit, totally buttoned up, with pointy heels, and I'm barely even showing the tips of my fingers. They'll be like, 'Zoey?'" Although the American star has been spotted wearing designer garments, she has admitted she loves nothing more than going to garage sales with her mother, Lea, and her 26-year-old sibling

Madelyn, in the hunt for vintage items. She explained: "One of my favorite things to do with my mom and sister is to go to garage sales. We take road trips to visit thrift stores in Albuquerque or Montana." Meanwhile, the 'Dirty Grandpa' star has admitted when she has a good night's sleep she is bouncing off the walls because she has so much energy, but she has also hinted being with herself constantly is draining - even for her. She said: "You should be really grateful you're not catching me when I've had a full night of sleep. Because you would be so exhausted. "When people tell me I have a lot of energy, I usually feel bad for them, but then they only have to spend a certain amount of time with me. I have to be with me all the time."

Ed Sheeran is set to receive an MBE

The 26-year-old singer songwriter has been recognized in the Queen's Birthday Honor's List and has been selected to gain the prestigious accolade for his contribution to the music industry for the last six years, ever since he launched his career in 2011, BBC news has reported. The flame-haired hunk shot to fame with the release of his debut album 'Plus', and he has continued to make waves in the entertainment business with his records, which has seen him bag two Grammy awards for Song of the Year and Best Solo Performance for his single 'Thinking Out Loud' in 2016, as well as a Brit Award for the track from his album 'X', and Songwriter of the Year at the 2015 Ivor Novello Awards. Although the musician recently took a one-year hiatus from the music industry, he made an unforgettable comeback earlier this year with the

release of his two hit singles 'Castle on the Hill' and 'Shape of You' from his third LP 'Divide'. However, Sheeran - who is currently dating girlfriend Cherry Seaborn - is not the only vocalist set to be recognized for the Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, as Emeli Sande is also set to receive the title for her vocal talent, as well as her charity work. The 30-year-old powerhouse won two Ivor Novello Awards for her 2012 hit 'Next To Me', but she has also worked closely with charities to help those suffering from cancer, HIV and AIDS, and in 2014 she took part in the 'Do They Know It's Christmas' single to raise funds for the Ebola crisis that hit West Africa. And Sir Paul McCartney, who was knighted 20 years ago, is set to become a Companion of Honor, which can only be awarded to 65 members. — Bang Showbiz



Cosby jury begins Day 6 of deliberations in sex assault case

The jury in Bill Cosby's sexual assault trial got back to work yesterday as deliberations on the fate of the man once known as America's Dad pushed into Father's Day weekend. Bill Cosby's lawyer has repeatedly demanded a mistrial as the talks wore on without a verdict, but the judge said there was no precedent to send the jury home. "I have no authority to do this," Judge Steven O'Neill said in the 52nd hour of deliberations Friday night. "I'm sorry it's causing everyone frustration." Cosby lawyer Brian McMonagle fired back that jurors might be under the assumption they have to deliberate until "the cows come home."

Cosby, 79, is accused of drugging and molesting a Temple University employee in 2004 at his home near Philadelphia. Cosby's lawyers have said he and Andrea Constand were lovers sharing a consensual sexual encounter. With no decision in sight, the TV star thanked his fans and supporters - first in a tweet, then in brief comments as he left the courthouse late Friday.

"I just want to wish all of the fathers a happy Father's Day," Cosby said. "And I want to thank the jury for their long days.

Their honest work, individually. I also want to thank the reporters who have been here. And, please, to the supporters, stay calm. Do not argue with people. Just keep up the great support. Thank you." A conviction could send Cosby to prison for the rest of his life. The case has already helped replace the public's image of him as kindly, paternal Dr. Cliff Huxtable on "The Cosby Show," the top-rated 1980s and '90s sitcom, with that of an accused serial predator. Dozens of women have come forward to say he drugged and assaulted them, though Costand's encounter with Cosby was the only one to result in criminal charges.

The epic deliberation has produced some testy exchanges in court. The judge challenged McMonagle's requests to end the trial without a verdict, saying that for all he knows, the jury might be working toward an acquittal. "You don't know why they were deadlocked. Everyone is assuming one way or another," said O'Neill. As jurors left for the night, O'Neill praised their "hard work, dedication and fidelity to your oath." The jury, from the Pittsburgh area, has been sequestered for two weeks about 300 miles from home.

McMonagle objected in court to the panel's repeated requests to review testimony, saying it suggested some jurors were trying to coerce other jurors in an attempt to bring an end to the deadlock. The judge said he saw no evidence of coercion or trouble in the deliberating room after the jurors reported their impasse on Thursday and he instructed them to keep trying for a verdict. "There's a misperception that there's a time limit," he said. Jurors got the case on Monday. They must come to a unanimous decision to convict or acquit. If they can't break the deadlock, O'Neill could declare a hung jury and a mistrial. Then, prosecutors would get four months to decide whether they want to retry Cosby or drop the charges.



Bill Cosby waves as he arrives at the Montgomery County Courthouse during his sexual assault trial, yesterday in Norristown, Pa. — AP



This April 7, 2011 file photo shows Carrie Fisher at the 2011 NewNowNext Awards in Los Angeles. — AP

Coroner: Sleep apnea among causes of Carrie Fisher's death

Carrie Fisher died from sleep apnea and a combination of other factors, but investigators were not able to pinpoint an exact cause, coroner's officials said Friday. Among the factors that contributed to Fisher's death was buildup of fatty tissue in the walls of her arteries, the Los Angeles County coroner's office said in a news release late Friday. The release states that the "Star Wars" actress showed signs of having taken multiple drugs, but investigators could not determine whether they contributed to her death in December.

Her manner of death would be listed as undetermined, the agency said. The agency did not immediately respond to a request for additional details about whether a full autopsy report and toxicology results were available. Sleep apnea is a condition in which a person's breathing pauses during sleep. The pauses may be brief or last several minutes, according to information from the National Institutes of Health. Fisher, 60, suffered a medical emergency on an international flight on Dec 23. Her mother, longtime movie star Debbie Reynolds, died the following day.

The actresses were laid to rest together at Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills, a cemetery where numerous celebrities are buried. Fisher's brother, Todd Fisher, said he was not surprised by the results. He added that his family did not want a coroner's investigation of his sister's death. "We're not enlightened. There's nothing about this that is enlightening," he said. "I would tell you, from my perspective that there's certainly no news that Carrie did drugs," Todd Fisher said. He noted that his sister wrote extensively about her drug use, and that many of the drugs she took were prescribed by doctors to try to treat her mental health conditions.

Fisher long battled drug addiction and mental illness. She said she smoked pot at 13, used LSD by 21 and was diagnosed as bipolar at 24. She was treated with electroshock therapy and medication. "I am not shocked that part of her health was affected by drugs," Todd Fisher said. He said his sister's heart condition was probably worsened by her smoking habit, as well as the medications she took. "If you want to know what killed her, it's all of it," he said. Todd Fisher said it was difficult to blame doctors who treated his sister because they were trying to help her. "They were doing their best to cure a mental disorder. Can you really blame them?" Todd Fisher said. "Without her drugs, maybe she would have left long ago."

Carrie Fisher made her feature film debut opposite Warren Beatty in the 1975 hit "Shampoo." She also appeared in "Austin Powers," "The Blues Brothers," "Charlie's Angels," "Hannah and Her Sisters," "Scream 3" and "When Harry Met Sally..." She will reprise her role as Leia Organa in the eighth installment of the core "Star Wars" franchise, "The Last Jedi," which will be released in December. — AP

John Avildsen, director of 'Rocky', dies at 81

John Avildsen, the Oscar-winning director whose blockbuster films like "Rocky" and "The Karate Kid" championed the ascent of underdogs, has died. He was 81 years old. The filmmaker died of pancreatic cancer at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, according to the Los Angeles Times, citing Avildsen's eldest son. The 1976 hit "Rocky"-an adrenaline-pumping story that captures the rise of a down-and-out boxer from working-class Philadelphia-earned Avildsen an Oscar for best director.

The tight-budget drama was a sleeper hit, propelling actor Sylvester Stallone to Hollywood fame and growing into a beloved franchise. Avildsen returned to direct just one of his original film's six sequels, Rocky V. The filmmaker also

directed the box-office winner "The Karate Kid." Released in 1984, the film centers on a bullied teenager who gains confidence after learning karate from a Japanese handyman. Avildsen went on to direct both "The Karate Kid, Part II" in 1986 and "The Karate Kid, Part III" in 1989.

"Throughout the decades, his rousing portrayals of victory, courage and emotion captured the hearts of generations of Americans," said Paris Barclay, president of the Directors Guild of America, in a statement. Stallone took to Instagram to pay tribute to Avildsen, who helped usher the actor to stardom: "R. I. P. I'm sure you will soon be directing Hits in Heaven-Thank you, Sly." — AFP



This file photo taken on February 03, 2017 shows director John G. Avildsen speaking onstage at a screening of 'John G. Avildsen: King of the Underdogs'. — AFP



Jada Pinkett Smith

JADA PINKETT SMITH CALLS TUPAC BIOPIC 'DEEPLY HURTFUL'

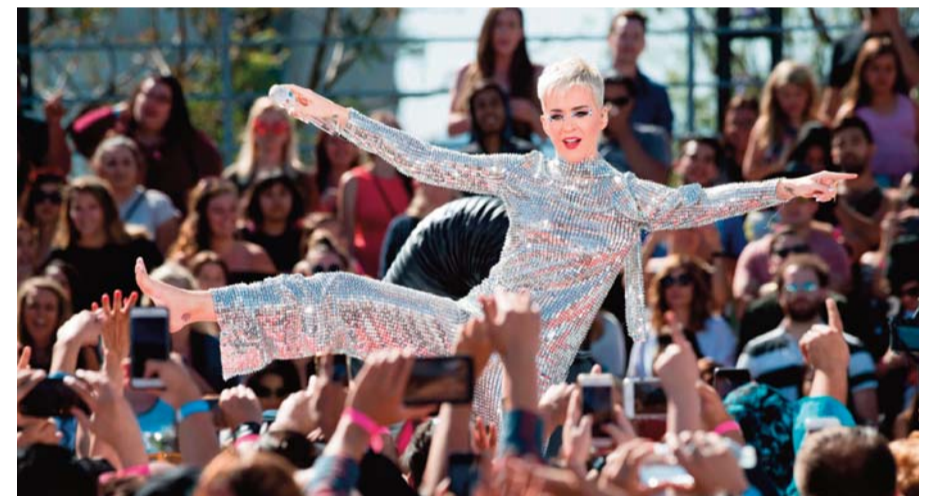
Jada Pinkett Smith is calling the Tupac Shakur biopic "All Eyez on Me" "deeply hurtful" for its portrayal of her relationship with the rap legend. In a series of tweets Friday, just as the film is opening in theaters, Pinkett Smith contradicted several scenes. She said she never had an argument with Shakur backstage, that their parting was fictionalized and that he never read her a poem, as seen in the film. Pinkett Smith said her relationship to Shakur was "too precious" for her not take issue.

Pinkett Smith was close friends from childhood with Shakur. She's portrayed in the film by Kat Graham, whose performance Pinkett Smith complimented, along with Demetrius Shipp Jr, who plays Shakur. The filmmakers of "All Eyez on Me" didn't immediately comment Friday. — AP

4 years later, Lorde still a royal singer

Grammy-winning New Zealander Lorde created "Royals" and the rest of her debut album in her teen years. Now, at 20, she's back with a sophomore release just as exceptional, and with a growing sound. "Melodrama" finds Lorde partnering with Jack Antonoff, the fun, guitarist and songwriter-producer who worked on Taylor Swift's "1989."

He helps Lorde expand her sound on the new album, keeping what was best about 2013's moody "Pure Heroine," with a few extra layers. Tracks like "Liability" and "Writer In The Dark" are beautiful tunes, highlighted by the piano, that showcase Lorde's overall growth - sonically, vocally and lyrically. "Sober" and "Supercut" are beat-laden winners; "Hard Feelings/Loveless" is revealing; and "Sober II (Melodrama)" is eerie and epic. This 11-track set is as grand as Lorde's name. — AP



Singer Katy Perry performs to conclude the 'Katy Perry - Witness World Wide', an exclusive 4-day, 96-hour, livestream in partnership with YouTube in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Celebrities share the best advice they ever got from dad

Dads sometimes know best. In time for Father's Day on Sunday, a range of artists from film, television and music shared the most valuable lessons from their own dads with The Associated Press:

Patty Jenkins, "Wonder Woman" director, daughter of a Vietnam War veteran: "Perseverance and focus, first of all, because I think that that kind of job of being a fighter pilot is strangely difficult. You're on your own and you just have to put one foot in front of the other, figuratively speaking, to get things done and to deal with whatever comes up. And that actually comes up. That is very present in my life as a director every day."

James Taylor, music legend: "Just to be there for your family. I've tried to be as much as possible. If there is a struggle, that's it, trying to balance family life and life on the road."

Hugh Jackman, "Logan" star: "Education. He preached education. And passion, like find whatever you're good at then do everything you can to learn every bit of it, and don't go out into the world until you've studied."

Ashley Campbell, daughter of Glen Campbell, who is battling Alzheimer's: "This one piece of advice really stuck with me. We were on tour and it was toward the end of the tour, so he was definitely not as there, not as with it. So moments of clarity were very noticeable. He looked at me and said, 'How's your music going?' I, joking, said, 'It's going well. I am going to be a

superstar!' Very self-deprecatingly. And he got really serious and he said, 'Be a super person and the superstar will follow! That's Glen wisdom.'

Connie Nielsen, Hippolyta actress in "Wonder Woman": "My father always said, 'You belong in that room. No matter what, you can do whatever you want.'"

Bonnie Raitt, daughter of the late Broadway musical star John Raitt: "I think his positivity and seeing the good in people. He just never said bad words about anyone. I really believe it was that outlook, really honoring people and trying to find out who they really are underneath what they present themselves to be."

Kate Mara, star of the film "Megan Leavey": "The one that I sort of use every day, I guess, is just a good handshake because in this business, specifically, but I'm sure everybody meets new people on a daily basis, a firm handshake, I think, goes a long way. To this day there's nothing worse than kind of a half-ass handshake from someone. I think it says a lot about your character."

Bryan Cranston, star of "Wakefield": "You reflect on being a son, you reflect on being a father, and it's a good time. For past issues that I've had with my father, now he's passed and you kind of think of things differently. But the joy for me is being so proud of my daughter, who's now 24 and an actor in her own right, and independent and a freethinking, funny, talented young woman."

Mayim Bialik, co-star of "The Big Bang

Theory": "He taught me a lot of lessons. My dad had a really big personality, and he was a really gracious person. I don't know if it's a lesson in particular but it was a way that he was. He wasn't afraid to let his big personality show, and sometimes that was a good thing and sometimes it was a bad thing. But when he walked into a room you knew it. That's a powerful lesson, to see the presence of a person."

Matt Smith, star of "The Crown" on Netflix: "My dad said to me very early on, 'It's not the disappointments, son. It's how you get over them.' And that, that - I'll pass that onto my son, you know? Yeah. He was 70 (recently) so we kind of celebrated his birthday. He's a very important man in my life, my dad. Probably the most important."

Lucy Davis, Etta actress in "Wonder Woman": "One of the things he said to me was, 'If you give, you get. But not if you give to get.' And I love that. And it made you realize that you just have to be the person you want to be just because that's what you want to be, not because you think there's going to be a reward at the end."

Tom Bergeron, host of "Dancing with the Stars": "Well we'd go out in the back 40 and, you know, clear some of the brush, slaughter a few hogs and then have a big meal. That's in the old days, though."

Barry Watson, star of "Date my Dad": "My father always said luck is when opportunity meets preparation, so always be prepared, which I try to be!" — AP



File photo shows Lorde performs on day one of the Governors Ball Music Festival in New York. — AP

Perry makes Twitter history with 100 million followers

Pop superstar Katy Perry has made history by becoming the first user to garner 100 million followers on Twitter, the social media platform announced. "Today we #WITNESS history," Twitter said Friday in a tweet, referencing the title of Perry's recently released fifth album. "Congratulations @katyperry, the first to reach 100 million followers! #LoveKaty." The 32-year-old singer recently livestreamed her life for 96 hours, inviting fans to watch as she slept, cooked, did yoga, cuddled with her dog Nugget and chatted with a stream of celebrities who showed up at her door.

Despite putting her life temporarily under observation with 41 cameras, Perry-born Katheryn Hudson to conservative Christian parents in California said she struggled to handle the attention to her life more broadly. "I built up this Katy Perry thing that everybody knows and that's the reason why they're tuning in and it's fantastic, but it's more of a facade," she told the therapist Siri Singh. "I'm human and I'm living under this crazy microscope," she said, tears smudging her mascara. Singer Justin Bieber trails on Twitter with just under 97 million followers, while Perry's pop rival Taylor Swift has 85 million. — AFP



Actor Hugh Jackman



Kate Mara



Mayim Bialik



Japan's latest super-deluxe cruise train "Twilight Express Mizukaze" during its press preview in Osaka.



The vista-dome car of Japan's latest super-deluxe cruise train "Twilight Express Mizukaze" during its press preview in Osaka.

Luxury on the rails in train-mad Japan

Japan's latest super-deluxe train left the station yesterday with a select group of passengers who paid thousands of dollars for a leisurely trip harking back to an era of Art Deco opulence and a slower pace of life. The Twilight Express Mizukaze departed Osaka on its maiden trip with around 30 well-heeled passengers on a journey to the far reaches of Japan's main island. A couple staying in the 10-car train's top room, The Suite, paid out a combined 2.4 million yen (\$22,000) for a two-night, three-day return trip that rolls past emerald green rice paddies, craggy coastlines and ancient shrines.

That eye-popping price tag gets you five-star hotel luxury including a marble-floored bathroom with claw-legged tub in the priciest suite, food prepared by gourmet chefs, and sumptuous lounges where you can sip cocktails as you take in the dramatic scenery through huge viewing windows. "I'm so delighted to get a spot on this historic train," Ayaka Kobayashi, a newlywed who was travelling on the Mizukaze with her husband, told Jiji Press news agency. "I want to enjoy this special time and space."

The Mizukaze, which means "fresh wind" in Japanese, is just the latest luxury offering in train-mad Japan, which has an extensive railway network covering most of the country. These top-end rolling hotels pay homage to once numerous sleeper cars that were overtaken by Shinkansen bullet trains that cut hours off travel times. "Things have been reset, giving birth to



A suite of Japan's latest super-deluxe cruise train "Twilight Express Mizukaze" during its press preview.

a new breed" of trains, said photojournalist and train expert Kageri Kurihara after touring The Mizukaze. "Train companies are trying to show what they can do without constraints. You may have this idea that sleeper trains are cramped and inconvenient but these railways are saying 'look what we can offer!' "Japanese people are very fond of trains and you'd be excited with all these superb choices," he added.



A dining car of Japan's latest super-deluxe cruise train "Twilight Express Mizukaze" during its press preview in Osaka. — AFP photos

Gourmet grub, cypress tubs

Last month, the Shiki-Shima left Tokyo's Ueno Station with passengers treated to meals whipped up by gourmet chefs. A four-day journey in several rooms that boast a cypress wood tub cost a cool 950,000 yen per person. Well-heeled passengers even got piano playing and a fireplace—actually a trick created by steam and coloured light—on the trip that took

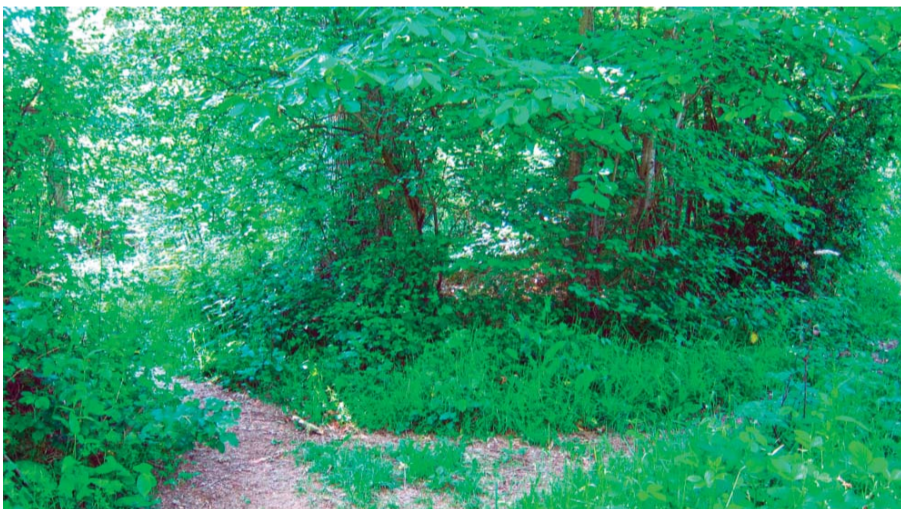
them from Japan's capital to the northernmost island of Hokkaido and back again.

It cost the Shiki-Shima's operator 10 billion yen to refurbish it and build special lounges at regular stops, among other expenses. The train is booked out through to March next year. In 2013, Kyushu Railway unveiled its "Seven Stars" service with a piano and a bar, top-end dining and luxury suites. Japan's train operators have some offerings a notch down too, including a carriage with a foot-soaker bath. As Tokyo gets set to host the 2020 Olympics, the record numbers of tourists visiting Japan could be another lucrative market for luxury train operators.

"This trend comes when more and more travellers from abroad are visiting Japan so the timing is good," Kurihara said. And while the economy may not be as booming as it once was, there are still many Japanese willing to pay for a local version of the Orient Express. Passengers on the Mizukaze and Shiki-Shima had to put their names into a lottery and hope they got picked. "(Luxury train travel) is not feeling the impact of deflation or a weak economy—and there are rich people out there," Kurihara said. "Money aside, I'd love to travel on it just once in my life." — AFP



A buttercup meadow beside a wooded area in Dymock, England. — AP photos



A path forks in a wooded area in Dymock, England.



Photo shows Little Iddens, the cottage where the American poet Robert Frost lived in the summer of 1914 as part of a writers' colony centered on the English village of Dymock.



Photo shows Little Iddens, the house near Dymock, England, where the American poet Robert Frost and his family stayed for several months in 1914.

Those 2 roads diverging in a yellow wood might be in England

The woods were cool, a welcome balm on a hot day. Shafts of sunlight poured through the canopy. Slowly, I walked down a track thick with long-fallen leaves. And then I found it. It wasn't much to look at, just a spot where the path split. But that was the point. Could this be the fork that inspired one of America's favorite poems, the one beginning, "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood"? Mention poet Robert Frost and everyone thinks of New England. But the wood I stood in was an ocean away, a three-hour drive west of London.

The writers' colony

Frost had moved to England to make his mark on the literary world. He spent a year or so in a writers' colony, centered in the village of Dymock. That experience shaped some of his best-known works, including the iconic "The Road Not Taken." Few poems are more esteemed in the American literary canon. Some believe the poem expresses core American values of choice and self-reliance.

But I'd set out to discover Frost in this English landscape. Guiding me was Richard Simkin, chairman of the Friends of the Dymock Poets, a group dedicated to preserving the area's literary heritage. Starting beside Preston church we took a footpath through an apple orchard, then a newly planted maize field. Up a hill, then down through a head-high crop of oilseed rape. To our right stood Oldfields, a handsome, thatched farmhouse.

In the summer of 1914, Oldfields was home to Frost's close friend, writer Edward Thomas. The two men often talked as they walked through the countryside. But when the path they were on split, Thomas always dithered. And that is the genesis of

Frost's poem: written not as a manifesto of American values, but as an affectionate tease.

Thomas and Frost lived so close by that they could shout to each other, so it took no time for us to reach Little Iddens, the half-timbered cottage where Frost lived. In 1914, it was a small house in a potato patch. Today it's a fine home, renovated and enlarged, rising up behind a high, green hedge.

Oldfields' genial owner had invited us in for tea. No such luck at Little Iddens, where there was no sign of movement. Perhaps the occupants had seen us coming. Literary pilgrims should remember that these are private homes and behave accordingly. It was easy to see how Frost had been inspired here. The area is beautiful, set between the Malvern Hills and May Hill, with its distinctive clump of Scots pines. The land dips and folds into orchards, fields and tiny hamlets interspersed with woods. Little Iddens is the most complete reminder of Frost's presence, but also intriguing are locations where no trace remains.

Frost drafted "The Road Not Taken" at nearby Ryton at The Gallows, a site once comprised of two cottages. Only one dwelling survives. Was the poem written there, or in the house long gone? Then there is the forest cottage where a gamekeeper pulled a shotgun on Frost and Thomas in a trespassing dispute. Today not a brick survives. It's a lonely spot, overgrown with nettles and overshadowed by oak, ash and elder trees. Did this copse, and this incident, feed into Frost's famous "Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening," in which the author savored an illicit, unchallenged stop on private land? The poem begins, "Whose woods these are I think I know."

The elusive fork

That brings me back to the cool wood, and the fork in the path. Was I in the right spot? Or was it the next fork? Or the next wood? The text doesn't tell us and Frost never said. Frost biographer Jay Parini, a professor at Vermont's Middlebury College, confirmed that the location of the poem's divergent roads is unknown, "so it's very possible that Dymock was the place." The wood wasn't yellow on my visit, but it is yellow in early spring, thanks to a profusion of daffodils, and it may be yellow in autumn too. Simkin also wryly pointed out a buttercup meadow nearby.

His guidance was invaluable but visitors can find their own way well enough. There are two signposted Poets' Paths plus other related walks, and a series of beautifully illustrated maps - including one called "Walks in Dymock Woods" - by local artist Barbara Davis. Lodging options are limited, which hints at one of the area's delights: No one's there. Unlike Wordsworth's Lake District or Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon, there are no coach parties, themed attractions or souvenir shops. There's just The Garland Hut, a shack in Davis' garden near The Gallows, with her maps for sale and a homemade display about the poets. What a day I'd had chasing Frost's ghost in utter tranquility. The only sounds had been birdsong, an occasional car on a distant lane and the swish of our feet through long grass. And that had made all the difference. — AP

Photo shows the countryside around Dymock, England.



FEATURES

US SHOW OF SAUDI ART AIMS TO SHARE IDEAS, TEST PERCEPTIONS

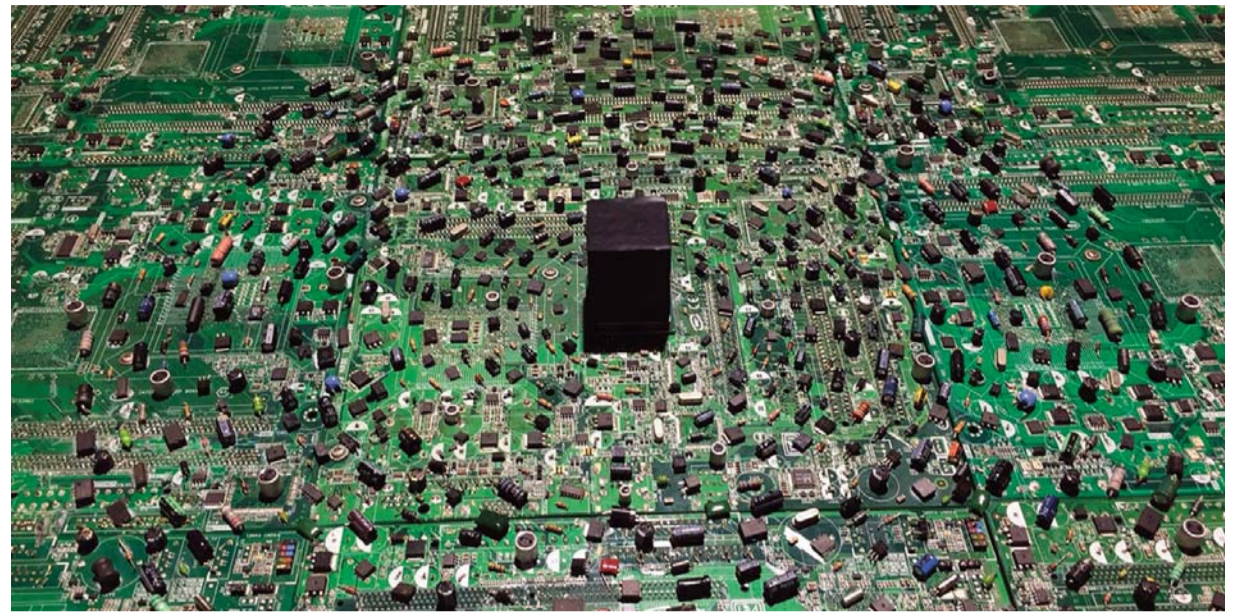
A US exhibition featuring the works of roughly 40 Saudi Arabian artists aims to share their expressions, foster conversations and challenge conceptions of life in the conservative Islamic nation. "Epicenter X: Saudi Contemporary Art" opens July 8 and runs for about three months at the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. It will feature photographic and video installations as well as murals exploring themes of urbanization, globalization, religion and the impact of US culture on a restrictive Saudi society that's loosened somewhat when it comes to arts and entertainment.

It's among the first and largest US shows featuring a group of contemporary Saudi Arabian artists, some of whom have had their work exhibited at the Smithsonian Institution, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and elsewhere. It's also a big score for the Smithsonian-affiliated Arab museum in a Detroit suburb that can lay claim to being the capital of Arab America. "I think there's a lot changing in Saudi Arabia right now," museum Director Devon Akmon said. "What I find really interesting is obviously the role of the artist in society, regardless of where they are. They are chroniclers of our time - they bear witness, they reflect, they speak about contemporary issues. That's exactly what many of the artists in this show are doing."

Themes explored in the exhibit include the role of urbanization and changing landscapes in cities and the impact of religion on society. Akmon said many Americans are neither "attuned to" those issues in Saudi Arabia nor aware that artists are "giving voice to these discussions." Akmon said he and his colleagues worked closely on the exhibit with the Saudi Arabia-based King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, known as Ithra. He said museum officials were clear in conversations that they would be curating the exhibit and had "a message to share that could not be interfered with." The museum also expressed its desire to display a wide array of artwork representing a diversity of artists, including women.

Artist in residence

"It was a very collaborative process - they were very open to how we wanted to portray this," he said. Among the pieces that



In this undated photo provided by Arab American National Museum, 'Digital Spirituality' by Saudi Arabian artist Amr Alngmah is seen.

will be on display is "Digital Spirituality" by Amr Alngmah, which places the cube-shaped Kaaba in the Saudi Arabian city of Mecca - Islam's most sacred site - in the middle of a circuit board. Akmon calls it a commentary on "how technology is becoming a religion in our lives." Another artist involved in the exhibition is Ayman Yossri Daydban, who also is the museum's current artist in residence. He will have three photographic works in the exhibit and will be staging two solo shows. Daydban, whose last name means "watchman" in Arabic, has been encouraged to use the museum's exhibits and archives and surrounding communities as his "studio," as he creates or collaborates on numerous multimedia projects.

"I have had many residencies, including in Dubai, Berlin and

Paris," Daydban said with the help of an interpreter. "This is the first time when I feel like I becoming younger, and I find it very refreshing. This residency makes me feel brave to ask questions." Although Saudi Arabia's restrictions on freedom and ban on women driving often grab headlines, Akmon said his visit to the kingdom earlier this opened his eyes to the burgeoning, expressive art scene in Jeddah featuring men and women. He hopes that visitors to the exhibit experience that as well. "It was essentially discovery - getting an introduction to some of the ideas of the Saudi people that was unfiltered, so to speak," he said. "That's exactly what people will see when they come to the gallery - a range of ideas and philosophies emerging." — AP



In this photo provided by Arab American National Museum, Ayman Yossri Daydban, who is the museum's current artist in residence, poses for a photo in front of the museum. — AP photos



Alain Sinandja, 27, from Togo rehearses with other students at the Ecole des Sables founded by legendary Senegalese dancer and choreographer Germaine Acogny in Toubab Diallaw, Senegal. — AP photos



A dance student takes note during a break at the Ecole des Sables.

Senegal artist a legend fusing West African, modern dance

The glow of a tobacco pipe illuminates the stage before dancer Germaine Acogny begins to move. She uses a simple black cloth to portray her many identities: African, creator, mother, mystic and object of desire. At 73, Acogny commands attention with a movement as simple as a turn of the wrist. A new film about her dance career, along with this solo piece choreographed just for her, are deepening her mark on the next generation of African dancers.

"She's like the lighthouse at the sea," said Mohamed Y Shika, a 28-year-old Egyptian dancer and one of her students. "You know when you're at sea and you can't see anything and you see this light coming from so far, and this is the track you should keep on going for, I think this is Mama Germaine."

Acogny is best known for fusing West African and modern dance. She has been sharing her decades-old technique with young artists from across the continent at L'Ecole des Sables, French for the School of Sands, in a remote fishing village in Senegal. Dance is the mother of all arts, she says. The new film about her career, "Iya Tunde: The Mother Came Back," was released in May as Dakar's French Institute dedicated a festival to her.

"The greatest influence on me has been the traditional dances of my country. It's that which gave me ideas, it's my influence, it's that which is my roots and it's that which is at my base," Acogny told The Associated Press. "If you don't know well where you come from, you will not go far." She grew up embracing tradition while challenging traditional roles in West African society. "I'm Christian, I'm Muslim and I'm animist," she said. Born in Benin, she was raised in Senegal. She divorced her husband at 23 after refusing his request for a second wife. To feed her two children, she opened a dance studio for young girls.



Carmelita Siwa, 24, from Benin, stretches with other students before rehearsal at the Ecole des Sables.

International artists

From there, Senegal's then-President Leopold Sedar Senghor and French-born choreographer Maurice Bejart appointed her to direct the Mudra Afrique, a school opened in 1977 to train contemporary dancers. When it closed she moved to Europe, where she met her husband, Helmut Vogt. They returned to Senegal and eventually founded Ecole des Sables, whose rural isolation complemented Acogny's work: rooted in nature, using the baobab, sun and moon as guides. She also founded a dance company, Jant-Bi, and won a New York Dance and Performance Bessie Award.

Students from across Africa come for months at a time to explore their lives as artists, a rarity on a

continent where dance is more tradition than profession. They learn the Acogny technique, share their own traditional dances and are taught contemporary dance by visiting international artists. The hope is they return home to develop their art while fostering local support. Kadidja Tiemanta, a 25-year-old from Mali, soon will go back and teach others. It's not easy to be a professional dancer in Africa, Tiemanta said. "It's an important space here to have the opportunity here to express ourselves."

The school, however, is threatened by a funding loss. And now Acogny is leaving it in the hands of her son Patrick as she prepares for a tour of the United States and Europe. She will perform "Mon Elue Noire," or "My Elected Black Maiden," choreographed by France's Ballet du Nord director Olivier Dubois as part of a series of works he plans to make for various artists set to Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring."

The dark, powerful dance touches on colonialism and embraces Acogny's life. She laughs, talks to the audience, spreads her legs, shakes her hips, raises her fist and eventually lowers herself into a black box, slapping it with white paint that later appears to cascade from her body as if she's giving birth. Smoke envelops her, and she disappears. "She's carrying this status of woman, the status of a black woman, the status of a black legend, the status of the weight of history, the bright and the dark one," Dubois said.

Dubois praised Acogny's diverse contributions to dance. "She never gave up. And she is 73 and she started very young, and she gave the chance to the African dance community to exist anywhere," he said. "She's carrying history, but she's giving perspective for the future already. And that's quite unique." — AP



Legendary Senegalese dancer and choreographer Germaine Acogny, 73, rehearses 'Mon Elue Noire' on the stage at the Ecole des Sables in Toubab Diallaw, Senegal.



US billionaire brings Dutch painters to China's masses

Standing in a dimly-lit gallery space in China's National Museum, the owner of the world's only privately-held Vermeer gazed at the small oil painting for a long moment, before showing it to the assembled press. Since American billionaire Tom Kaplan purchased the piece in 2008, it has spent most of its time on loan to various museums around the world. When the investor-who made his fortune betting on precious metals and natural gas-and his wife began buying up works by 17th century Dutch painters in 2003, their goal was to take "paintings from the private domain and return them to the public," he said.

Now the collection is set to find its biggest audience yet when a selection of around 70 of its more than 250 works goes on show from yesterday through September 3 just steps from the mausoleum of Communist China's founder Mao Zedong on Tiananmen Square. China is the first stop on a world tour of the works, known as the Leiden Collection after the Dutch town where many of its contributors plied their trade during the European nation's golden age. After three months in Beijing, the exhibition will move to a private museum in Shanghai before heading to Russia and then the United Arab Emirates.

The National Museum, according to officials, has passed the Louvre to become the world's most visited, and if all goes according to plan, the exhibition will see hundreds of thousands of visitors flood through its doors. While the Vermeer is a showstopper, the exhibit is built around the Kaplans' collection of 11 Rembrandts and focuses on the artist's evolution and influence on his contemporaries. It is a major step towards achieving the couple's goal of promoting the Dutch master's legacy to an international audience, an effort which Kaplan believes will be greatly boosted by a positive reception in China. "The cultural influence of China is going to multiply in the next decade," he said, adding that the painter's future will "be very different depending on the way China reacts to his art." "The country will hopefully embrace Rembrandt for the genius he is."

'Beauty is truth'

Kaplan expresses a fervent belief in the transformative power of art, promoting his favorite painter with an almost missionary zeal. The investor discovered the artist during a visit to the New York Museum of Metropolitan Art when he was six years old, sparking a life-long obsession with the Dutch master. He and his wife began collecting Rembrandts after a chance encounter in 2003 with a renowned art expert, who informed him that many of the paintings remained in private hands and were available for purchase. The couple soon began snatching up works from the era, buying "on average a painting a week for five years," Kaplan said.

He believes Rembrandt's power lies in his universality and the revolutionary message hidden in his work: "Beauty is truth. It's humanity. That's our salvation." Rembrandt lived in an era when the Netherlands was a global trading powerhouse in the 17th century, something that should resonate with many Chinese visitors to the exhibition, who are grappling with their own country's sudden access to wealth. "We believe very strongly that perhaps uniquely Rembrandt can serve as (a) bridge," he said. (Rembrandt) is truly a universal artist from whose DNA we've seen art all over the world be able to find its freedom and liberation."

Beware of riches

As attendees leave the exhibition, they will be confronted by a wall of paintings captioned with an admonition to "Beware of Riches." It is a timely, if perhaps unintentional, warning for a country that is grappling with rampant corruption, as well as a spiritual malaise linked to what many see as increasingly pervasive materialism. While the exhibition is expected to receive a warm welcome in China, the underlying message might find a less eager audience.

The concept of "universal values" is not a popular one in modern China, where the government of President Xi Jinping has demonstrated an almost reflexive distaste for the kinds of "Western" ideals Kaplan embraces. But the billionaire has no interest in lecturing. Rembrandt, he said, speaks for himself. — AFP



US art collector Tom Kaplan (second right) showing Johannes Vermeer's 'Young Woman Seated at a Virginal', which will be displayed as part of the Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection exhibition, at China's National Museum in Beijing. — AFP photos



Johannes Vermeer's 'Young Woman Seated at a Virginal' being displayed as part of the Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection exhibition at China's National Museum in Beijing.



This photo taken on June 16, 2017 shows visitors watching fireworks exploding over the castle at an event to mark the first anniversary of the opening of Shanghai Disneyland, in Shanghai. — AFP



Members of the "Cirque Plume" performing during the last show called "La derniere saison".

French innovative Cirque Plume begins 'Last Season'

To enter the world of Cirque Plume is to fall into a magical wonderland of fairies and otherworldly creatures—a musical universe where artists flit around the stage, sometimes in slow motion. Poetry, the idea of a "poem in action", is the signature of this French circus company based in the eastern city of Besançon, near the Swiss border. And after more than 2,500 shows in France, Europe and across the world, including in New York and Sao Paulo, the dream is ending. Cirque Plume has just embarked on its farewell tour with "The Last Season", a "show that moves through seasons the way we move through ages" and confronts the reality of climate change along the way.

It was created in 1984 by the two brothers, Bernard and Pierre Kudlak, and seven of their friends. "A Cirque Plume show is made by the living for the living," Bernard Kudlak says on the company website. "It's joyful, colorful, profound, poetic, messy, rough and ready, and precise. It's like life." In the "Last Season", under decorated skies that depict autumn, winter, spring or summer, performers act out everyday life or get down on all fours to transform into animals.

They dance, sing, scream, play instruments and twist their bodies into acrobatic feats on a stage resembling an enchanted, mythical forest. "I wanted this show to be

a poem with lights, with shadows of tree branches and snows of feathers," Bernard Kudlak, who serves as the company's director, said. "A poem to share, one last time". Once "The Last Season" winds through the traditional seasons, the show hints of a fifth, "threatened to be the last", on a planet crippled by pollution and its reliance on plastic, Kudlak said.

'Our circus, our image'

Bernard and Pierre Kudlak will be in their mid-60s by the time the curtain finally falls on their show for the last time. They'll pack up their materials and manuscripts, dismantle the bright yellow Cirque Plume tents and send company notes and archives to France's National Library. But for a successful tour company that started as just a gangly group of poor street performers more than 30 years ago, the ride has been more than worth it. "We were all pebes from outside the traditional circus world which gave us total freedom," Pierre Kudlak, a clown and musician, said. "We weren't held to any standard. We could create our circus in our image".

The group's "image" turned out to revolutionize what circus was at the time and what it could potentially be—expanding the medium into more than just a series of beautiful and daring high-wire acts. Where traditional

circus dictated that the entertainment be placed in the centre of a venue, on a circular stage with the audience around it, the group opted for the half-moon shape of a theatre with a facing audience.

'Extraordinary adventure'

Every single production of Cirque Plume also employed an entirely new cast unlike other established companies with a permanent cast of performers. And they've played to audiences worldwide totaling more than two million people. The last three shows, "Plic Ploc" in 2004, "The Artist's Studio" in 2009 and "Tempus Fugit" in 2013 were seen by more than 300,000 people—nearly 400,000 for "Plic Ploc". But the Kudlak brothers insist the "Last Season" will be their final production. The show started in France and will tour worldwide, ending its run in 2020 when the circus act folds. The brothers described the three-decade run of Cirque Plume as the "adventure of a huge vessel set to dock" after "having lived an extraordinary human and artistic adventure". — AFP



This file photo in Besançon shows members of the "Cirque Plume" performing during the last show called "La derniere saison".



Members of the "Cirque Plume" performing during the last show called "La derniere saison".



Artist from "Le cirque Plume" company performing during the rehearsal of "Tempus Fugit?".