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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives the visiting Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi yesterday. — KUNA

AMIR MEETS IRAQI PM

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received visiting Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi at Bayan Palace yesterday in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations, ways of promoting ties, issues of mutual interest

and the latest regional crisis. The meeting was attended by First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and other top officials. — KUNA

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's King Salman yesterday appointed his 31-year-old son Mohammed Bin Salman as Crown Prince, placing him first-in-line to the throne and removing the country's counterterrorism czar and a figure well-known to Washington from the line of succession. The monarch stripped Prince Mohammed Bin Nayef from his title as Crown Prince and from his powerful position as the country's Interior Minister overseeing security.

The announcements were made in a series of royal decrees carried on the state-run Saudi Press Agency. The all-but-certain takeover of the throne by Mohammed Bin Salman awards near absolute powers to a prince who has ruled out dialogue with rival Iran, has moved to isolate neighboring Qatar for its support of Islamist groups and who has led a war in Yemen that has killed thousands of civilians.

The prince already oversees a vast portfolio as Defense Minister and is spearheading economic reforms. He has become popular among some of Saudi Arabia's majority youth for pushing reforms that have opened the deeply conservative country to entertainment and greater foreign investments as part of an effort to overhaul the economy, including plans to list a percentage of the state-run oil giant Aramco.

The young prince was little known to Saudis and outsiders before Salman became king in January 2015. He had previously been in charge of his father's royal court when Salman was the Crown Prince. The Saudi monarch quickly awarded his son expansive powers and named him Deputy Crown Prince two years ago to the surprise of many within the royal family who are more senior

Continued on Page 13



TAIF: Saudi boys pose in front of a huge billboard showing (in the center) King Salman, with his 31-year-old son Mohammed Bin Salman to the right, and Prince Mohammed Bin Nayef to the left. Salman appointed his son, who was until now the Deputy Crown Prince and country's Defense Minister, as his successor and first in line to the throne. Salman stripped Mohammed Bin Nayef of the title of crown prince and ousted him from his powerful position of Interior Minister. — AP

COURT REOPENS ARGUMENTS IN ASSEMBLY STORMING CASE

FINANCE MINISTER DENIES LOSING \$70 BILLION

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The Court of Appeals yesterday reopened the door for fresh defense arguments in the case of storming the National Assembly in which 70 activists are defendants. The defendants, who include 11 present and former lawmakers, are charged with storming the National Assembly building during protests in 2011. The lower court had acquitted all of them. MPs involved in the case include Jamaan Al-Harbash and Waleed Al-Tabtabai and former law-

makers include Mussallam Al-Barrak and others.

Judge Ibrahim Al-Obaid set the next hearing for July 5. The Constitutional Court meanwhile set September 20 to issue its verdict on the controversy that surrounded the election of the deputy Speaker. Two candidates contested the election and Issa Al-Kundari emerged the winner after a re-vote. In the first vote, MP Harbash came ahead with one vote but did not secure the absolute majority needed for him to win.

Continued on Page 13

GULF COUNTRIES PREPARE FOR VAT IN TIME OF CRISIS

DUBAI: Oil-rich Gulf countries, which for decades have attracted millions of foreign workers thanks to their reputation as tax-free havens, aim to introduce value-added tax in 2018 to plug budget gaps. On top of administrative and technical hurdles, however, the project now faces an unprecedented diplomatic crisis after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain on June 5 severed all ties with Qatar, their partner in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar are due to introduce VAT in early 2018, with the other three GCC members-Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman-following at a later date. In case of a prolonged crisis, Qatar would have to replace imports from Saudi Arabia and UAE, valued at \$4.55 billion annually, with "costlier" non-GCC goods, said M R Raghu, head of research at the Kuwait Financial Centre (MARKAZ). "Implementing VAT in such a scenario would lead to inflationary pressures, especially in food-related items," he said.

"If the crisis is prolonged, then Qatar might want to delay the implementation of this envisaged tax reform to balance any spike in prices of commodities in the local markets." If it goes ahead as planned, VAT is unlikely to tarnish the GCC reputation as a low-tax region or reduce its appeal to expatriates, according to Monica Malik, chief economist at Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank. An introductory rate of five percent "looks to balance raising government revenue and still having a very attractive business environment, both for expatriates and corporations", she said. "We believe the UAE and the Gulf will still overall be seen as a low-tax environment on a global basis."

VAT, a tax paid by the consumer, is also unlikely to deter businesses from setting up operations in the Gulf region, according to Jeanine Daou, indirect tax leader at PwC Middle East. "From a business perspective, VAT should be neutral. What businesses are required to do is to collect tax on behalf of the government on their sales... It is not a corporate tax," she said. She said that five percent would be "one of the lowest VAT rates across the globe".

Continued on Page 13



OUR JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE

By Teresa Leshar

Our journey in life is never alone. Each of us has parents, and each is born into a family. In Islam, the journey through life is intrinsically woven into family life, in whose structure the journey takes shape. And it is in the Quran and prophetic traditions that the Muslim finds guidance for family life. The Quran presents a methodology for safeguarding the family group and, within it, each family member.

Each person in the family is cared for - children, mothers, fathers, near relatives, far relatives, servants and guests - even unborn children have rights that protect their wellbeing. Outside of family life is the community, another sphere of belonging. While many people see community life as competitive - trying to be more and possess more than others - Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) instructed us that the context of community is inclusive, not competitive.

Continued on Page 13



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Belgium's outgoing Ambassador to Kuwait Andy Detaille.

AMIR RECEIVES SENIOR OFFICIALS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the

Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness the Prime Minister, as well as

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also received Belgium's outgoing Ambassador to Kuwait Andy

Detaille. The meeting was attended by the head of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal Al-Saud Al-Sabah. — KUNA

KUWAIT MOST EFFECTIVE, PROBABLE MEDIATOR: UN CHIEF



UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres

NEW YORK: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has expressed his full support to Kuwait's mediation initiative in the complex Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) situation. In a press conference held at the UN headquarters, the UN chief expressed concern over the situation, believing that there should be a "regional solution." "I have followed particularly the efforts of mediation by Kuwait, and I express my support to the Kuwait mediation initiative," he said.

Guterres told the press that he thinks what Kuwait is doing "is the most useful way," and for the UN to cooperate in trying to address a situation that is complex, the leadership should be a "regional leadership." "My main concern has been to try to push for a regional solution and what I have considered as most effective and probable mediator has been Kuwait that has my full support," he added.

When asked about intervention of other countries to the conflict in order to solve it, he said if countries or entities who have leverage over the parties to the conflict can help, then obviously their efforts will always be welcomed. "I don't think the UN has a leverage over the parties to the conflict that makes our direct intervention more effective than the support of Kuwaiti mediation," Guterres stressed. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi. — KUNA

PREMIER MEETS IRAQI COUNTERPART

KUWAIT: His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met at Bayan Palace yesterday the visiting Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations and ways to develop them in all fields, in addition to regional and international issues that concern both nations.

The meeting was attended by First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, His Highness the Premier's Diwan Advisor and head of the accompanying mission of honor Faisal Mohammad Al-Haji, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Information Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Barrak Al-Sabeeh and Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah.

Moreover, senior officials from the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry, His Highness the Premier's Diwan, Kuwait Investment Authority and Public Authority of Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources also attended the meeting, in addition to the delegation accompanying the Iraqi Prime Minister. —KUNA



Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi

CONGRATULATIONS TO KUWAITI STUDENTS... AND WELCOME!

By Lawrence R Silverman, US Ambassador to the State of Kuwait

I heartily congratulate all students who have received Kuwaiti Ministry of Education scholarships and offers of admission from one or more of the over 4,500 accredited institutions of higher learning in the United States. Graduates of American universities have gone on to become leaders and innovators in many fields around the world, including Kuwait, and you should be proud of the invitation to join this special and select group of young people whose lives will be changed forever by the dynamism, openness, and quality of university campuses across the United States.

Offers of admission are the product of much careful thought and hard work, both by the students who apply and by American universities that conduct a rigorous review of their applications. You earned these acceptances; you should be proud. Universities recognize the energy and creativity you poured into essays about your dreams and ideas, the hard work it took to prepare for English language and other examinations, and the commitments you fulfilled to community service and extracurricular interests.

Over a million international students are now in US higher education institutions, and around 15,500 of them are from Kuwait. We are proud that this is the highest number in history. For five generations, Kuwaiti students have studied in the United States, giving American students and communities a unique opportunity for interaction that expands their world views. This helps prepare all of us for shared, successful futures in an interconnected world. Studying in the United States makes you part of an impressive Kuwaiti tradition of getting the best possible education, then returning to help build the Kuwait of the future.

International students help maintain the United States' long-standing position as the world's top host nation for international students. This is a testament to the unmatched quality of American higher education in the eyes of international students, their families and the business community.

International students from diverse backgrounds also strengthen ties between the United States and countries around the world, developing the relationships between people and communities that are necessary to solve global challenges. We value inclusion and actively support students from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and geographic backgrounds on campuses across the United States. Our universities value international students for the unique and

diverse perspectives you provide both in and out of classrooms. For generations, Kuwaitis have taken the opportunity of their schooling in the United States to explore all that America has to offer. These travel and cultural experiences are an important part of your education and preparation for your new careers.

US colleges and universities take pride in providing safe, welcoming environments for all their students, and I want to stress how welcome you are in the United States. Many universities have come together to send a specific and direct message to students around the world through the #YouAreWelcomeHere campaign. I join them in welcoming students from Kuwait to the United States, where our schools offer valuable educational opportunities to help you meet your life and career goals.

Consular officials at the American Embassy continue to work diligently to process student visa requests, and they are ready to welcome applications for students beginning their studies in the fall semester. Information about the visa process and maintaining your student status is available at travel.state.gov, ustraveldocs.com/kw, and studyinthestates.dhs.gov.

Be sure to follow us and check our Instagram account (@USEmbassyQ8) for information about our upcoming "Student Visa Days," which are specially designated days for students planning to study in the United States. Our Consular and Public Affairs staff are happy to be partnering with the Ministry of Higher Education and with the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) to help facilitate the process of applying for visas and the distribution of information about studying in the United States.

In addition, "EducationUSA" advisers worldwide stand ready to answer questions. You can contact our very own adviser for Kuwait, Carine Nassrallah, via email at: EducationUSAkuwait@state.gov. Ms. Nassrallah is ready to assist you with your search for the right academic program for you, undergraduate or graduate. American colleges and universities welcome you, as do the American people and communities throughout our country. As the US Ambassador to Kuwait, I personally encourage those of you who have received offers of admission to accept this life-changing opportunity and join your peers in experiencing the unique value of an American higher education.



US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman

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NO CASUALTIES IN FODDER FIRE NEAR SALMI: KFSD

KUWAIT: A huge fire that broke out at an open area used for storing fodder at 'kilometer one' of Al-Salmi highway resulted in no casualties, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said

Tuesday night. Fire engines from Al-Jahra, Al-Ardiya and Al-Salmi rushed to the site and managed to control the fire that spread across 3,500 square kilometers.— KUNA

NEW COMMITTEES FOR ISSUING MICRO-BUSINESS LICENSES: MINISTER

KUWAIT: Two committees have formed to set up executive mechanisms for issuing micro-business and mobile food trucks licenses, Minister of Trade and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan said on Tuesday. The statement followed a coordination meeting that featured Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, Director General of Kuwait Municipality Ahmad Al-Manfouhi and a number of officials of the Public Authority for Manpower, the Ministry of Trade and Industry added.

Roudhan, also Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs, said outcome of the meeting that was also attended by some MPs came in activation of the ministerial decree No. 33 regarding the issuance of free licenses after the end of Eid Al-Fitr holiday. He said the meeting aimed to overcome obstacles and difficulties for small entrepreneurs, and to come up with integrated projects. He extolled the constructive cooperation by all participants aiming to provide the best services to citizens and facilitate all procedures.



Khaled Al-Roudhan



Mohammad Al-Jabri

The minister stressed the government's keenness on materializing the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to develop Kuwait into a global commercial and financial hub through keeping pace with the world's economic developments and the creation of proper jobs for the Kuwaiti youth. The issuance of licenses would contribute to improving business environment, he noted, indicating that they also include commercial and intellectual businesses like

designing websites, translations and others. Meanwhile, Minister Jabri expressed his hope for enacting the law without disadvantages so as to attract the Kuwaiti youth and provide labor market with their creative ideas and projects. The decision to issue the licenses is based on eagerness of the government to provide jobs for youth and coping up with the technology revolution, he said. He referred to the improvement and development of Kuwait in international business environment.— KUNA

TELECOM TOWER REGULATIONS POSTPONED: COUNCIL MEMBER

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Municipal Council member and chairman of the legal and financial committee Ali Al-Mousa said the committee postponed the approval of telecommunications tower regulations, adding that the rulings have been stagnant since 2013 and are important to the communications sector. He said the postponement was due to the change of names and entities.

Farmers Union

Kuwait Farmers Union Chairman Barrak Al-Sabeeh said the court's ruling to annul the elections of the board is an initial one and does not have the power of execution. He said

the current board will continue as is, based on ruling by the sessions court, as the new ruling will be contested within the legal period. He said in case a final ruling is issued to remove the current board, it is only he who can call for new elections as the elected chairman.

Road opening

Assistant Undersecretary for Road Engineering at the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) Ahmad Al-Hussan announced the opening of the upper part of a 2.1-km-long bridge within the project of west Jamal Abdul Nasser St at dawn tomorrow, starting from Doha Spur to residential Sulaibikhat near the sports club.



Ali Al-Mousa

GRAVE CHARITY VIOLATIONS DROP: MINISTER

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Social Affairs and Labor Minister and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh said "there is a drop in grave violations, be it in mosques or donation ads on social media." Meanwhile, Sabeeh said the reason for the increase in the number of violations during the holy month compared with last year is due to the many NGOs participating in collecting donations (22), compared to 12 last year.



Hind Al-Sabeeh

Housing units

State Minister for Housing Affairs and State Minister for Utilities Affairs Yasser Abul said the government plans to distribute 149,827 housing units until 2020 through an ironclad

distribution plan that began in 2014. He said that the number of housing units in Jaber Al-Ahmad City total 2,185 units, including 1,475 houses and 710 flats. Meanwhile, there are 2,201 units in Sabah Al-Ahmad and

671 in West Sulaibikhat. The Wafra project includes 370 units, Sabahiya 133, Abu Halifa 141 and West Abdullah Al-Mubarak has 5,201 units.

Smart City

Korea Land and Housing Corporation opened its first branch in Kuwait in preparation for the construction of the smart city south of Saad Al-Abdullah. Deputy general manager for investment and private sector projects at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) Hadeel bin Naji said she was happy with the new branch, adding the Korean side will bring Korean engineers to execute the project. She said the contract is for two years and the size of project makes it necessary to have a branch in the country with its own engineers.

KUWAIT'S INFLATION UP 2.7 PERCENT IN MAY

KUWAIT: The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) has risen by 2.7 percent in May year-on-year, the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) said on Tuesday. The index figure for May 2017 recorded an increase of 0.07 percent, compared to April, the CSB added in its monthly report. The CPI increased in seven influential groups last month, and stability in five others. The index for the first main group (food and beverages) went up by 0.13 percent, compared to the same month in 2016.

The figure of the second main group (tobacco and narcotics) was up by 0.59 percent in May month-on-month, as the third group (clothing and footwear) rose by 0.31 on monthly basis. Inflation of the fourth group (housing services) shot up by 4.28 percent in May, and that of the fifth group (furnishing equipment and household maintenance) was up by 2.94 percent.

The sixth group (health) rose by 1.7 percent in May year-on-year, and the seventh (transport) went up by 12.33 percent on annual basis. Meanwhile, the index for the eighth group (communication) was down by 0.10 percent in May compared to the same month last year.

The ninth group (recreation and culture) also went down on an annual basis of 0.62 percent, as but the 10th group (education) was down by 1.15 on annual basis. As for the 11th group (restaurants and hotels), it edged up 4.47 percent on annual basis, and the last group (miscellaneous goods and service) witnessed an annual fall of 0.8 percent.— KUNA

KUWAIT URGES CITIZENS IN BELGIUM NOT TO USE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

BRUSSELS: The State of Kuwait's Embassy to Belgium urged citizens to refrain from using trains and metro services, following an explosion at Brussels-Central Station that occurred on Tuesday. Belgian police forces killed a person at Brussels Central Station, a police spokesman said, while an explosion took place in the station.

"There has been an explosion around a person. This person was neutralized by the soldiers present at the place," the spokesman was quoted by local media as saying. The embassy then advised citizens in Belgium not to use public transportation, including trains and metro services. It urged citizens wishing to contact the embassy in case of emergency to do so on following numbers: Emergency number: 47777-5801, Embassy: 2647-7950, Email: embassy-kwt+AEA-skynet.be.— KUNA

116,470 SQUARE METERS OF GARBAGE REMOVED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality's Director of Public Cleanliness and Road Occupancy Dr Saad Al-Jalawi said his department processed 182 transactions including the issuance of 30 licenses and renewing 44, 28 settlements for abandoned cars and 28 "to whom it may concern certificates." Jalawi said inspectors removed 116,470 square meters of garbage, besides issuing 242 warnings, 93 undertakings and 288 various violations.



MUSLIMS PERFORM QIYAM PRAYERS NATIONWIDE

KUWAIT: Muslims perform Qiyam night prayers at Kuwaiti mosques, especially in the evening of the 27th day of Ramadan, where they seek to observe Laylat Al-Qadr (night of power), which is a holy night for Muslims. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, in coordination with other government bodies, have already made proper preparations at mosques nationwide to create a suitable atmosphere to worshippers. Laylat Al-Qadr is one of the major blessings of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.— KUNA



KUWAIT: Sunil Jain, Ambassador of India to Kuwait hosted an iftar party at India House. Prominent Kuwaitis, foreign dignitaries and Indian community leaders attended the event.



GULF BANK CELEBRATES GIRGIAN WITH CHILDREN

IN COOPERATION WITH KACCH AND OTHER KUWAITI INSTITUTIONS

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is pleased to have continued its annual tradition of celebrating girgian with children across Kuwait. The major portion of the Bank's girgian activities were carried out in partnership with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospitals (KACCH) with the intention to bring laughter and smiles to hospitalized children.

Gulf Bank staff volunteered their time to visit children in seven hospitals over the course of one week. The volunteers distributed girgian bags and engaged the young patients in a series of fun activities such as games and coloring; face painting; henna, hair braiding; in addition to a variety of other activities. The visits to hospitals are considered an important part of supporting hospitalized children and their families.

This year, Gulf Bank was also happy to provide girgian bags filled with candies and a coloring/origami books to other Kuwaiti institutions such as: Nayef Palace, the Dasman Diabetes Institution, the Ideal Education School, and the Kuwait Center for Mental Health.

In addition to this initiative, the Bank also held a series of other activities during this Holy Month of Ramadan. The first event included the distribution of foodstuff boxes to families in need, which was carried out in cooperation with Saveco, the Kuwait Food Bank and LOYAC community service program. Next, was the sponsorship of the 'Women Football Tournament' which encouraged women to lead a fit and healthy lifestyle with sports activity being a key component. The Bank also launched a Ramadan TV commercial that highlights the importance of kinship and giving.

Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility program is committed to playing an active role in supporting Kuwait and its people. During the Holy Month of Ramadan, the bank's initiatives reflect the spirit of giving and sharing.





KFH DISTRIBUTES BREAKFAST MEALS TO MOTORISTS ON MAIN ROADS, INTERSECTIONS



KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continued its 'Feed a Fasting Person' campaign by distributing breakfast meals to motorists on the main roads and traffic intersections of the country. This initiative was part of the iftar meals project carried out by the bank as part of the Ramadan program 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 3' that reinforces the firm commitment towards social responsibility.

Distributing the meals took place in collaboration with the General Department of the Public Relations and Security Media and Kuwait Voluntary Work Center. The kind gesture is in line with the deeply-rooted values of giving in the Kuwaiti society. KFH's efforts in Ramadan underline the bank's role in the field of social responsibility, and contributes in strengthening the social ties. KFH voluntary team prepares and distributes over 600 meals daily until end of Ramadan.

KFH voluntary team distributes breakfast meals at places that are teeming with fasting people such as Nayef Palace, Souq Al-Mubarakaya in addition to Hawalli Governorate and other places in Kuwait. KFH's Ramadan program includes various social and humanitarian events and activities stemming from the bank's endeavors to solidify its commitment towards the society, while supporting all social and humanitarian initiatives.



AUB DISTRIBUTES SOHOOR MEALS DURING LAST TEN DAYS OF RAMADAN

KUWAIT: To add to Ahli United Bank's (AUB) extensive social program, which is filled with charitable activities during the Holy month of Ramadan, such as the distribution of iftar meals at the start of Ramadan, AUB recently began distributing light sohoor meals amongst individuals during Qiyam prayers across different mosques in Kuwait. The Bank's team members volunteered and distributed more than 2000 meals over five days at many mosques, aiming to support and share the feeling with the worshippers for the special last ten days of Ramadan.

The bank said in a press release that "The distribution of sohoor meals was inspired by the Bank's understanding of the importance of the last ten nights' prayers, and its desire to stand by the worshippers." He added, "The initiative reflects the bank's continued efforts to connect with the local community during the Holy Month of Ramadan and to promote the overall spirit of collaboration and social giving, a core element of AUB's strategic efforts in encouraging and promoting social cooperation."

CHARITIES

In my view



By Labeed Abdal

local@kuwaittimes.net

Nowadays, we hear charity owners screaming out on various radio and TV channels urging people to donate money to their charities. Well, where are citizens from all these funds? Some citizen had taken bank loans of KD 10,000 that were doubled by extra interests and rescheduling.

A relative of mine used to purchase large quantities of barely to feed birds and pigeons out of charity. I once told him that he should, instead, donate those sums to relatives in distress who are in real need of this money. Thanks be to Allah, he did so and is still feeding the birds.

I once witnessed the problem of someone I knew and used to help whenever I could. I advised him to go to one of the many charity organizations we have in Kuwait because he was indebted. I went with him to several charities, but at one of them, they told him that Kuwaitis are not entitled to charity money. Another charity asked him to provide some hard to procure documents including some that would take months to be issued.



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Crime

Report

RECKLESS DRIVER ARRESTED

KUWAIT: Ahmadi police arrested a reckless driver when he continued drifting in front of them. Police received calls about the incident and went to the area, where several drivers sped off except for the arrested man, who continued drifting. Police forced him to stop and arrested him.

Revenge

A Moroccan woman accused a man and his sister of storming her house and kidnapping her friend. They then took him to their house where they beat him and forced him to strip in revenge for tricking a girl into having sex, she said. Detectives were asked to arrest the two for questioning.

Suicide

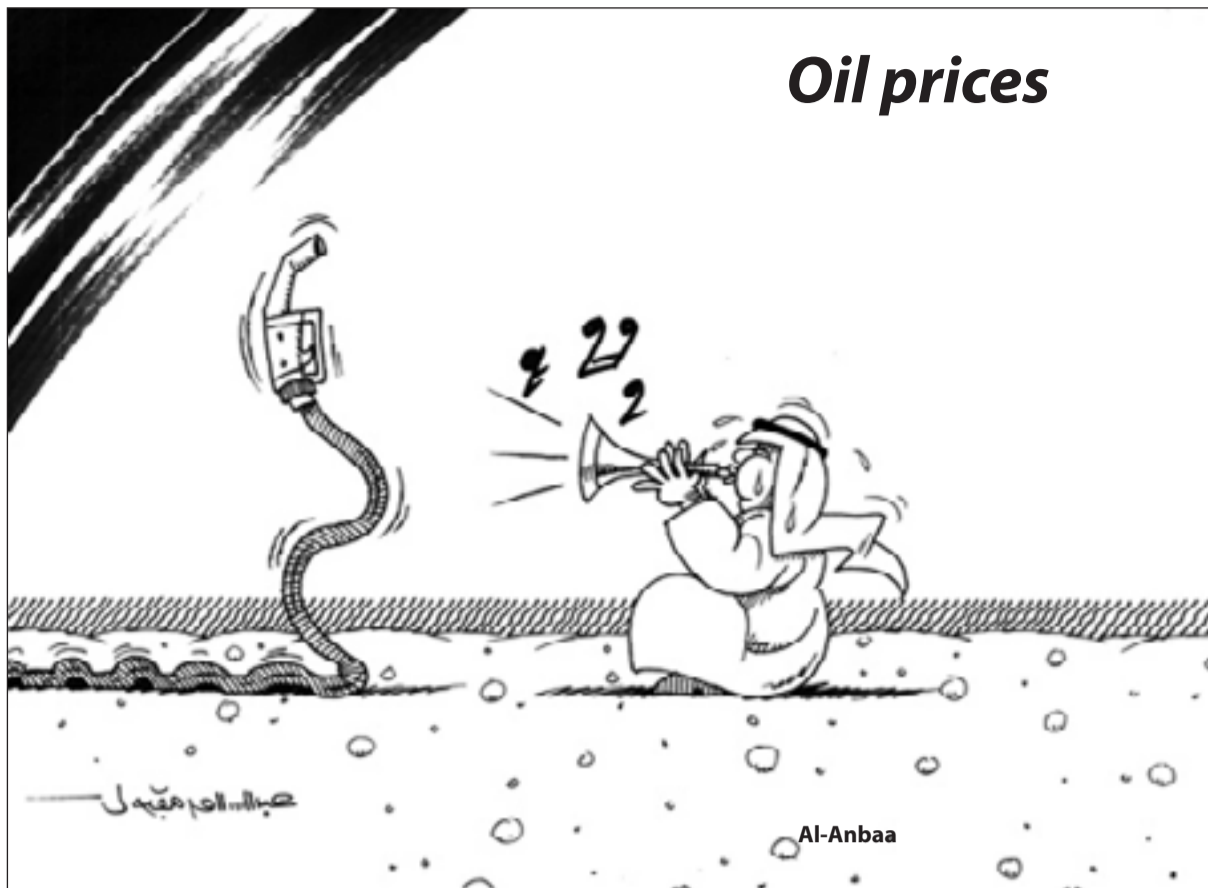
An Asian farm guard hanged himself to death in Kabd. The Asian worked of a former high-ranking officer at the interior ministry. The body was recovered by the coroner for further investigations.

Fire

A water tanker driver put out a fire that broke out in a car on Doha Spur. The fire department received a call about a two-vehicle collision, with one catching fire. The water truck that was passing by put out the fire.

— Translated from the Arabic press

Oil prices



Al-Anbaa

MERCHANTS AND BARBARIANS

By Salah Al-Sayer

In addition to their direct impact on markets and the economy, merchants have always had huge impact on deep social and cultural changes in various societies. Ancient Kuwaiti merchants not only turned Kuwait into a regional market, but they also contributed to developing the civil society, sponsored and nurtured literary activities, took care of charitable activities and built schools and mosques.

Islam prevailed in South

East Asia without

dispatching any troops

or declaring Jihad.

This simply happened because merchants are greatly effective. I would like to quote Scottish philosopher David Hume who said that the spread of trade was a vital element in refining societies and achieving the advancements in science and arts. Trade has played a major role in the spread of Islam in South Asia. Despite the bad consequences the Muslim World suffered in the aftermath of the invasion of the Mongols and the destruction of Baghdad, Muslims maintained control over trade in the Indian Ocean.

In his book titled 'Islamic History', the late Mahmoud Shakir said that Islam prevailed in South East Asia without dispatching any troops or declaring Jihad. No army conquered it. Islam spread through trade, or rather you could say through good treatment, good manners, respecting principles and behavior. The locals admired those values and adapted them, they were dazzled with these ideals and could not help but converting to Islam.

The history of Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia shows that trade is so powerful that it can change other peoples' religious beliefs. Trade enhances prudence and civilization, according to researcher Nigel Ashford in his book 'The Principles of Free Society'. Meanwhile, American intellectual Francis Fukuyama said that trade creates trust that enables a civil society to evolve.

The pioneer of French modern philosophy Montesquieu argues that thanks to trade, good manners prevailed amongst Northern European people (Scandinavians) who used to be described as 'barbarians' by the Romans. — Translated by Kuwait Times

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

COST OF OVERSEAS TREATMENT

By Dr Hassan Jouhar

Following a period of relative calmness about overseas treatment, the issue is back to light through the controversy made about its cost, which has raised so many exclamations, suspicions and accusations. Though the cost was KD 800 million over the past two years, the political cost remains as huge and dangerous. Overseas treatment is a public service the government is committed to provide to citizens, namely patients in critical conditions whose treatment is not available in Kuwait.

The budget set for this service is KD 120 million, which is way below the amounts actually spent, thus multiplying the total sum to several folds simply because the service has turned into a political bargaining process through which lawmakers and others' loyalty can be bought. This, of course, is done at the expense of real patients in need to be sent abroad for treatment at international hospitals.

A number of prestigious US and European hospitals stopped receiving patients sent by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health (MOH) and its health offices for treatment abroad because there are many overdue and unpaid bills. This has led to a state of confusion and seeking medical services in less costing and less competent medical facilities. Thus, overseas treatment has deteriorated at the expense of true patients, and

its reputation is becoming as bad as that of local health facilities. Despite the highly qualified medical staff, latest medical equipment and medications in both domestic and overseas facilities, corruption and mismanagement has been undermining the service and turning it into another example of squandering public funds.

The Kuwaiti government is currently indebted to US health insurance companies with amounts equal to the budget allocated for overseas treatment. Those companies have their own advocates and will surely get their demands whether we like it or not. If German, British and French companies do the same, the cost will be absolutely catastrophic. MOH also made another mistake when it opted to dispatching patients to less costing centers in Eastern Asia and the Middle East.

Overseas treatment might have exceeded KD 4 billion since the liberation; an amount which could have been used to build the world's largest medical facilities and manning them with the best international medical equipment and staffs. With such a sum, Kuwait would have been turned into an international health tourism destination. The real problem lies in the chronic diseased minds and souls that seem to have lost hope in overseas treatment.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

UP TO KD 1,700 ANNUAL FEE FOR PARENT'S VISA

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry is sticking to its decision to not grant new residence visas to expats' parents and siblings. Meanwhile, the directorate general of residency affairs issued executive rules regarding family residencies for those other than spouses and children - the 12,000 holders of article 22 residency permits.

The rules allow the issuance of residency permits to expats' parents only after producing a certificate of private health insurance and payment of KD 50 in health ministry insurance, apart from the payment of KD 200 per year per parent. The rules said the private health insurance value will be between KD 300 to KD 600 for parents according to their age, bringing the total annual fee to a minimum of KD 1,100 and up to KD 1,700. The rules stipulate siblings who reach the age of 24 have to transfer from family to work visas, and are not allowed to stay on family visas.

The rules exclude Kuwaitis' relatives from the need to get private health insurance, and will be treated as per the earlier rules, provided the sponsor pays KD 50 to the health ministry and KD 200 for the residency permit. The rules also exclude an expat's special needs relatives from private insurance - including parents or siblings. — Al-Rai



WARBA BANK CONCLUDES SOCIAL RAMADAN ACTIVITIES AT 360 MALL WITH GREAT SUCCESS

KUWAIT: Under the slogan 'The Beauty of Humanity', Warba Bank successfully concluded social activities during the Holy Month of Ramadan on 9-11 June at 360 Mall and every night during the three-days event, Warba Bank hosted Kuwaiti influencers who faced difficulties and overcame challenges to make achievements in the form of inventions or helping others in need. Sheikha Al-Majed, who invented the 'Electronic Peri' for the blind, Ma'ali Al-As'ousi, goodwill ambassador and winner of the Hope Makers award, as well as Dr Hesham Bu Rizq and Dr Abdul-Mohsen Al-Kandari of 'Al-Amal Medical Team' shared their experiences with the crowd in interactive atmospheres, in which they inspired people and showed them that human beauty is embodied in their commitment and struggle to reach their goals.

The Warba Bank activity specifically targeted young people to inspire them so that they can exploit their energy and capabilities to achieve their dreams. During the morning period, Warba Bank offered its pavilion at the mall to nonprofit charity organizations and young initiators. On the first day, it hosted the 'Dinarain' project; which is an educational youth project that encourages the youth to participate in charitable activities in innovative ways. On the second day, it hosted Yameenik_Q8 volunteer team. Established in 2012, Yameenik_Q8 is a voluntary group dedicated to helping needy families in Kuwait. It is affiliated to the International Islamic Charity Organization



(IICO). On the third day, it hosted the national campaign to raise awareness about cancer (CAN), which was launched under the sponsorship of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and seeks to fight cancer and spread awareness about early diagnoses.

Children had their share at Warba Bank's pavilion too. A special interactive corner was dedicated for them, where children were encouraged to develop their mental and creative skills through a series of interactive quizzes based on intelligence and linking different elements to solve on-screen puzzles. Warba Bank thanks its clients and the entire Kuwaiti society for meeting them at 360 mall, and to witness successful and inspiring experiences that made a positive change to the society.



ABK SUCCESSFULLY EQUIPS 7 BRANCHES TO BETTER SERVICE THE SPECIAL NEEDS SEGMENT

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently announced that it has successfully completed equipping seven of its branches to better service the special needs segment and facilitate their banking experience. The branches are located across Kuwait's six governorates to ensure maximum reach and customer support in all areas.

ABK's Head of Complaints and Customer Protection Unit, Ali BuHamad, stated that this initiative allows ABK to fulfill its main objective, which is to provide banking services to all clients, with no exceptions and commit to the Central Bank's instructions.

He added that the branches that have been fully equipped to service clients with special needs will allow them to manage and finalize their banking matters smoothly and safely, since ABK has put forth specialized teams that have been trained to practice sign language, in addition to braille printing services for visually impaired clients. ABK has also made available parking spaces near the banks entrances and ramps, to facilitate wheel chair movement when entering the bank or utilizing the ATM machines. BuHamad also clarified that ABK has provided 7 ATM machines that are equipped with Braille key boards and an audio jack to support the visually impaired and offer verbal guidance and instructions to simplify the execution of their banking transactions, with the utmost privacy and security.



Republican avoids upset in costly Georgia election

QUEEN OUTLINES UK GOVERNMENT AGENDA IN SCALED-DOWN SPEECH

QATAR ACCUSES 'NEIGHBORS' OF HACK US 'MYSTIFIED' BY FAILURE TO JUSTIFY EMBARGO

DOHA: Qatar on Tuesday accused "neighboring countries", which have cut ties with it, of being behind the alleged cyber attack on Doha's state media which set into motion the current diplomatic crisis. Attorney General Ali bin Fetais Al-Marri, one of the most senior legal figures in Qatar, said the case "is very clear" that the alleged hacking emanated from "countries responsible for the siege". It is the first time Qatar has accused any other countries of carrying out the attack. The alleged hack of the Qatar News Agency website

to show that iPhones originating from the countries laying siege to us have been used in this hacking," said Marri. "We have enough evidence to point the finger of blame at these countries."

Marri, speaking in Arabic, did not name any nations, but when pressed said the hack originated in "neighboring countries". He said the hack was carried out in more than one country. Less than a fortnight after the cyber attack, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt and other allies severed on June 5 all links with

ing in Doha were ordered home - a deadline which passed on Monday.

Marri, speaking at a Doha press conference, added that he would be able "very soon" to give specific phone numbers for those who he claimed were responsible for the alleged hack. Investigators in Qatar had also traced Internet service providers used to the Saudi-led allied countries, he said. "We have sent the information to the countries concerned and we are awaiting their response," said Marri. He added: "As far as we are concerned the case is very clear." The subsequent inquiry ordered by the Qatari government into the hack used investigators from the FBI and the United Kingdom. One subsequent media report claimed that Russian hackers were responsible, a charge denied in Moscow.

Meanwhile, the United States is "mystified" that Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies have failed to present details justifying their embargo on Qatar, the State Department said Tuesday. Signaling Washington's mounting frustration at Riyadh's role in the crisis, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert called on the parties to settle their differences. And she called into question whether Qatar's alleged support for terrorism is the true cause of the crisis, or whether there is an underlying political dispute.

"Now that it has been more than two weeks since the embargo started we are mystified that the Gulf states have not released to the Qataris nor to the public the details about the claims they are making toward Qatar," she said. "The more that time goes by the more doubt is raised about the actions taken by Saudi Arabia and the UAE," she added, in a significant swipe at two of Washington's closest allies. "At this point we are left with one simple question: Were the actions really about their concerns regarding Qatar's alleged support for terrorism? Or were they about the long-simmering grievances between and among the GCC countries?" she asked, referring to the Gulf Cooperation Council, which includes both Doha and Riyadh. — Agencies



Qatari men herd camels in a desert area on the Qatari side of the Abu Samrah border crossing between Saudi Arabia and Qatar yesterday. Around 12,000 camels and sheep have become the latest victims of the Gulf diplomatic crisis, being forced to trek back to Qatar from Saudi Arabia. — AFP

on May 24 attributed explosive remarks to Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, sparking a series of events that led to the region's diplomatic crisis.

The remarks covered sensitive political subjects such as Iran, Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, Israel and the United States. They were quickly seized on by news organizations outside Qatar, but Doha said they were false. "We have evidence

Qatar over accusations that Doha supports extremism - a claim it denies.

As well as diplomatic isolation, other measures taken included closing Qatar's only land border, banning its planes from using their airspace and barring Qatari nationals from transiting through their airports. Qatari nationals were told to leave those countries within 14 days, and some 11,000 citizens from the Saudi-led alliance countries liv-



GAZA: Egyptian trucks carrying fuel enter Gaza's power plant in Nusseirat in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. — AP

EGYPT DELIVERS FUEL TO GAZA, UNDERCUTS ABBAS

RAFAH: Egypt began yesterday to deliver a million litres of fuel to Gaza, temporarily easing a crisis that has left the Palestinian enclave's two million residents with only a few hours of electricity per day. The deliveries come two days after Israel began reducing the electricity it supplies to Gaza, following Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas' decision to stop paying for it amid a dispute with Hamas - the rival Palestinian faction that runs Gaza.

The United Nations and rights groups had warned the cuts would have disastrous effects, with the UN warning of a "total collapse" in basic services. The fuel will go to Gaza's sole power plant, which has been shut since April due to shortages, and will provide enough power for a few days, Samir Moutari, director general of the Gaza electricity company, told AFP. The gas-rich Gulf state of Qatar, a strong ally and backer of the Islamist Hamas, has previously intervened to cover fuel costs.

But the Saudi Arabian-led campaign to isolate Qatar, initially backed by US

President Donald Trump, has left the small Gulf state eager to distance itself from Hamas, considered a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union. Instead Egypt, led by President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, has intervened, despite traditionally frosty relations with Hamas, which has ruled Gaza since 2007. In total 22 trucks carrying a million litres (220,000 gallons) of fuel for the power plant were entering yesterday, Wael Abu Omar, the Rafah crossing spokesman, told AFP. The energy authority said it expected the power station to resume operations in the coming hours.

The Egyptian offer will be seen by some as a sign of shifting alliances, following meetings last week between senior Egyptian and Hamas figures, as well as Mohammed Dahlan - a great rival of Abbas from his Fatah party who is currently in exile. "This Egyptian support in Gaza is part of what was agreed at the Cairo meetings," General Tawfiq Abu Naim, head of security in Gaza, told a news conference in Rafah yesterday. — Agencies

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Pampers Pants 44,48,52,60 x 2's From 21 to 27.06.2017 Best Offer: 7.990	Apple iPad iPad 32 GB (2017) From 21 to 27.06.2017 Best Offer: 102.900	iPhone 7 iPhone 7 128GB from KWD 217.990 iPhone 7 Plus 128GB from KWD 254.990	TOY FEST 20% Discount Selected Items Only	ONE DAY OFFER 23rd FRIDAY EXCLUSIVE	39.900 SET OF 3

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MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) shakes hands with his Brazilian counterpart Michel Temer during a meeting at the Kremlin yesterday. —AFP

BRAZIL CRISIS GETS MESSIER

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil's federal police Tuesday said it had solid evidence embattled president Michel Temer received bribes, a legal development that could see him suspended from office. In a report the Federal Supreme Court said Temer - who was away in Russia - benefited from bribe funds, even if he did so using someone else to collect or deposit the bribes. Temer has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing. But Brazil's top court said it had accumulated enough evidence of bribes being paid to merit an investigation into Temer for "passive corruption." Prosecutor Rodrigo Janot will use the report as the foundation of the corruption case against the conservative president. "Faced with silence from the president and his former assistant, there is irrefutable evidence... showing strongly that passive corruption (on Temer's part) took place," the document said in part. The report referred to the president's relationship with suspended lawmaker Rodrigo Rocha Loures, who is in jail. Rocha Loures was filmed with a suitcase stuffed with a \$150,000 payoff from a JBS executive. The court's report alleges that Rocha Loures accepted bribes from JBS on Temer's behalf.

Long-haul corruption probe

Three years of investigations known as "Car Wash" have uncovered systemic corruption in the political and business elite, leaving Latin America's biggest country seething. "We are at war against a faceless enemy," Janot said late Monday. The main battle in that war features Janot's allegation that Temer took bribes - and attempted to buy the silence of a senior politician jailed for corruption. Temer is "the head of the most dangerous criminal organization in the country," according to meat-packing billionaire Joesley Batista, who secretly recorded the alleged hush money discussion as part of a plea deal to escape prosecution over his own corruption charges.

Now, it will be up to Janot to present formal charges before the Supreme Court. Once that

happens, the lower house of Congress would have to vote by a two-thirds majority for Temer to go on trial.

Friends in high places

Temer says his trips to fellow emerging economy giant Russia and to oil-rich Norway are about raising Brazil's trading footprint. He quickly retweeted a Russian presidency post showing him seated next to Vladimir Putin in a lavishly gilded stall at the Bolshoi theater. But Temer's coolness in taking a foreign trip in the midst of his domestic crisis isn't just bravado. The conservative president may have rock bottom popularity ratings and a major portion of his closest political allies also facing "Car Wash" investigations. Yet, he also has powerful friends.

These include many of the congressional deputies who will have to vote on whether to send Temer to trial. Given swaths of them also face corruption probes, they are currently expected to spare Temer and take out their anger on "Car Wash" instead. To illustrate this dynamic, the latest cover of politics magazine *Veja* depicts Temer in a canoe with scandal-ridden Aécio Neves - who is currently suspended from the Senate - and their political arch-enemy, former leftist president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

All three have wildly separate political agendas but also face "Car Wash" prosecutions and are in a "joint project of desperate survival and resistance against the most successful operation against corruption in Brazilian history," *Veja* commented. Temer has also been getting a boost from one of the country's most influential judges, Gilmar Mendes. Earlier this month, Mendes steered the Supreme Electoral Tribunal to throw out charges of campaign finance corruption that could have forced Temer out. Now, in his other role as a justice on the Supreme Court, Mendes is going after Janot and what he calls the out-of-control "Car Wash." —AFP

REPUBLICAN AVOIDS UPSET IN COSTLY GEORGIA ELECTION

HANDEL THANKS TRUMP IN VICTORY SPEECH

WASHINGTON: Republican Karen Handel won a closely watched special congressional election Tuesday, salvaging a seat in the traditionally conservative Georgia where Democrats had hoped to strike a blow against Donald Trump's presidency. Handel, an establishment Republican and former state secretary of state, defeated Democratic challenger and political novice Jon Ossoff by about five percentage points, US television networks projected, denying Democrats what would have been their first election victory of the year.

Her win marked an impressive rebound from polling that showed her narrowly trailing her rival as the vote approached, and signalled that Republican disillusionment about Trump was not as deep as Democrats were counting on. In her victory speech, Handel even gave "a special thanks to the president of United States of America" as the crowd went wild chanting Trump's name. The result comes as relief for Republicans who had grown concerned about whether their party, buffeted by the scandals that have plagued the Republican president, could hold the seat in Georgia's sixth district, which became the most expensive congressional race in US history.

"Congratulations to Karen Handel on her big win in Georgia 6th. Fantastic job, we are all very proud of you!" tweeted Trump, who had publicly implored Republicans to troop to the polls to back the candidate. While the White House had played down the national importance of the Georgia race, Trump had gone all in on Handel, and the Republican Party no doubt sees the victory as a shot in the arm as it prepares to fight to preserve its control of Congress in next year's mid-term elections.

"Tonight, the people of Georgia's sixth district overwhelmingly voted not only for Karen, but also for President Trump's agenda of replacing our broken health care system, reforming an outdated tax code, and prioritizing infrastructure investment," said Republican National Committee chairwoman Ronna McDaniel.

Trump gloats, Ossoff vows to fight

Democrats also lost a special election in neighboring South Carolina on Tuesday, where Republican Ralph Norman easily prevailed over Democrat Archie Parnell in a seat formerly held by Republican Mick Mulvaney, who is now serving as Trump's budget director. Democrats have now lost all four opportunities to win in special elections so far this year, following earlier losses in Republican-held districts in Kansas and Montana. The victories gave Trump a chance to gloat. "Well, the Special Elections are over and those that want to MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN are 5 and 0! All the Fake News, all the money spent = 0," he tweeted, apparently believing that there had been a fifth race.

The Democrats had portrayed each of the races as a referendum on Trump's scandal-plagued presidency. "We dodged a bullet tonight," Georgia-based Republican strategist Chip Lake told AFP. "We're still going to be on the defense in

November of 2018," with Trump a likely "liability," he added. But while Republicans were facing a sobering reminder of their president's poor approval ratings, Handel steadied the ship in a district that only narrowly backed Trump in last November's vote.

In conceding the race, Ossoff, a filmmaker and former political staffer, signalled that Democrats could learn from these races and prepare for the larger battle for control of the US Congress in 2018. "This is not the outcome many of us were hoping for," he told supporters. "But this is the beginning of something much bigger than us." Later on Twitter, Ossoff wrote that for months the district "has been a beacon of hope for people across the country. We showed the world that in places no one even thought it was possible to fight, we can fight. And we will fight."

'Wake-up call'

At least one Democratic lawmaker called Ossoff's loss a "wake-up

call for Democrats." "Business as usual isn't working," congressman Seth Moulton said on Twitter. "We need a genuinely new message, a serious jobs plan that reaches all Americans, and a bigger tent not a smaller one," he added. Ossoff tried to flip the Atlanta suburbs that Republican Tom Price left to become Trump's health secretary.

Republicans have held the seat since 1979. But as an increasingly well-educated and diverse suburban district, it is the kind of territory Democrats need to win if they want to gain the 24 seats necessary to reclaim the House in 2018. Price won the district last November by 23 points, and Ossoff's much closer margin serves as a "silver lining," Democratic congresswoman Cheri Bustos said. "We're moving in the right direction," she told CNN. But Handel's win is expected to energize Republican lawmakers in Washington as they seek to push forward with their repeal of Barack Obama's health care plan as well as tax law overhauls. —AFP



ATLANTA: Georgia's 6th Congressional district Republican candidate Karen Handel gives a victory speech to supporters gathered at the Hyatt Regency at Villa Christina on Tuesday. —AFP

SLAYING LEAVES DOUBT ABOUT MOTIVE IN MUSLIM COMMUNITY

FAIRFAX, Virginia: Islamic leaders are questioning Virginia detectives' insistence that the beating death of a teenage Muslim girl appears to have been a case of road rage, saying the attack looks all too much like a hate crime. Nabra Hassanen, 17, was bludgeoned with a baseball bat early Sunday by a motorist who drove up to about 15 Muslim teenagers as they walked or bicycled along a road, Fairfax County police said. A Hassanen family spokesman said all the girls in the group were wearing Muslim headscarves and robes.

Darwin Martinez Torres, a 22-year-old from El Salvador suspected of being in the US illegally, was jailed without bail on a murder charge after the girl's body was pulled from a pond near his apartment. In a sign of solidarity, Muslim groups held vigils across the country Tuesday to honor Hassanen. Her mosque, the All Dulles Area Muslim Society, announced plans to hold her funeral Wednesday afternoon and encouraged people to come together and "respond to bad with good."

Ibrahim Hooper, a spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said there is a strong possibility the crime wouldn't have happened if the teenagers weren't Muslim. "You can't just say, 'Oh, he didn't say anything against Islam, so no hate crime,'" he said. Fairfax police, in their account of the attack, said Martinez Torres and one of the boys in the group got into an argument, and the motorist chased the youngsters down and got out swinging the bat. They said Martinez Torres beat Hassanen as her friends scattered, then put her in his car, assaulted her again and dumped her body.

"No evidence has been uncovered that shows this murder was motivated by race or religion," police said in a statement Monday night. "It appears the suspect became so enraged over the traffic dispute it escalated into deadly violence." But after a string of attacks on Muslims around the world, most recently in London and in Portland, Oregon, some are deeply skeptical.

Rabia Chaudry, a lawyer and Muslim activist who lives in the Washington suburbs, ridiculed the notion it was road rage, saying on Twitter: "If you think for a minute that her appearance had nothing to do with this crime, you're lying to yourself." Chaudry said that when a Muslim commits a crime, officials are



WASHINGTON: People hold up signs during a vigil on Tuesday for Nabra Hassanen, a 17-year old Muslim girl who was killed in a road rage incident on June 18. —AFP

quick to treat it as an act of terror, but when the perpetrator is not Muslim, police seem to approach it differently. "I just feel like there is more hesitation and a lot of other factors are taken into account," such as whether the person was drunk or suffering mental problems, Chaudry said in an interview.

The public defender's office, which was appointed to represent Martinez Torres, declined to com-

munity is struggling because Hassanen was beloved by so many and known for her kind spirit. "If nobody gave you a compliment, she gave you a compliment. And it wasn't just Muslim youth" but the broader Reston community that she was connected to, he said.

CAIR called on Muslim communities to increase security during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in light of Hassanen's slaying and other recent crimes. The attack on Hassanen came as she was on her way to a mosque for Ramadan. On Monday, British authorities charged a man with terrorism after he allegedly plowed his van into Muslim worshippers outside a London mosque, injuring at least nine people.


And in Portland last month, a man was charged with the equivalent of a hate crime in the fatal stabbings of two white men who were trying to defend two teenage girls, one of them wearing a hijab, from his anti-Muslim tirade. In those cases, the suspects allegedly made repeated anti-Muslim slurs before and during the attacks. In Virginia, neither police nor witnesses interviewed by The Associated Press said they saw anything to make them think the teenagers were targeted over their religion.

Fairfax County police said if they find any evidence the killing was a hate crime, they will pursue appropriate charges. Virginia law, in part, defines a hate crime as any illegal act motivated by a person's race, religion or nationality. A hate crime in Virginia can bring up to five years behind bars if it results in injury. —AP

ment. He could get up to 40 years in prison if convicted on the murder charge. The mosque expressed optimism that law enforcement will determine what motivated the crime and added: "We request the community to not speculate on the motives and jump to conclusions."

Joshua Salaam, a chaplain at the ADAMS Center, said police "have given us complete confidence" but the






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LONDON: Britain's Prince Charles, Prince of Wales holds his mother Queen Elizabeth II's hand during the State Opening of Parliament in the Houses of Parliament in London yesterday. — AFP

QUEEN OUTLINES UK GOVERNMENT AGENDA IN SCALED-DOWN SPEECH

BRITAIN'S 'ZOMBIE GOVERNMENT' PRESENTS BREXIT LAWS

LONDON: Prime Minister Theresa May, leading a "zombie" government after a disastrous election, yesterday unveiled a diluted program of action that included the mammoth legislation needed to take Britain out of the EU. The state opening of parliament by Queen Elizabeth II came after a string of tragedies which have shaken the nation, and the election on June 8 in which May's Conservatives saw their parliamentary majority wiped out.

The queen, at an occasion shorn of its usual pageantry, read out the watered-down list of proposed legislation and lawmakers will then spend the next few days debating before bringing it to a vote. May could be forced to resign if she loses the vote, expected on June 29, just as the country embarks on highly sensitive negotiations for Britain's withdrawal from the European Union. After four terror attacks and a deadly tower block blaze that have darkened the national mood, anti-government protesters are also planning a "Day of Rage" in the streets that will converge outside parliament with temperatures forecast to hit 34 degrees Celsius - London's hottest June day since 1976.

May humbled

The enfeebled premier, who is still locked in difficult talks with a Northern Irish party to prop up her administration, says the program is about seizing opportunities offered by Brexit. The queen said: "My government's priority is to secure the best possible deal as the country leaves the

European Union." She said her government would seek "to build the widest possible consensus on the country's future outside the European Union", amid divisions within May's own cabinet over the best strategy.

The speech announced no fewer than eight bills to implement Brexit, and new legislation aimed at tackling extremist content online after the terror attacks. But the speech was notable also for what it did not contain. There was no mention of May's hugely controversial invitation to US President Donald Trump to come on a state visit. Also absent were key pledges the Conservatives had given in their manifesto for the recent election which analysts said had bombed with the electorate - such as reform of social care for the elderly and more shake-ups in schools.

There was also no mention of May's controversial promise to allow a parliamentary vote to repeal a ban on fox hunting, which angered left-wingers. The Times branded May's administration the "stumbling husk of a zombie government" and said she was now "so weak that she cannot arbitrate between squabbling cabinet ministers". "Downing Street is a vacuum," the newspaper said, two days after Britain and the EU formally started their Brexit negotiations.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said he was ready to step in and build a rival government - although he and other opposition parties lack the collective numbers to bring down May. "This is an unstable coalition, it's not even a coalition, they haven't even got an agreement with the DUP

(Democratic Unionist Party)," he said. "We're ready to form, obviously, a minority government if this government collapses and it may well," Corbyn said, while raising the possibility of a fresh election if parliamentary deadlock continues.

No deal yet

May called the snap general election in a bid to strengthen her mandate heading into the Brexit talks. But the plan spectacularly backfired, leaving her with a minority government that is now trying to form a majority with Northern Ireland's ultra-conservative DUP. May has resisted calls to resign and is hoping for the support of the DUP's 10 MPs to boost her tally of 317 seats in the 650-seat parliament, but a deal has proved elusive so far. A DUP source said a deal was "certainly not imminent" as the talks "haven't proceeded in a way that the DUP would have expected" and cautioned that the party "can't be taken for granted".

But even with DUP backing, the government would command only a tiny majority, and just a few rebel MPs could be enough to undermine it fatally. The Queen's Speech, normally a chance for a new government to show off an ambitious program, is usually a high point of British pomp, but this year there was no horse-drawn carriage procession, crown or ceremonial robes. The snap election plus the closeness to the monarch's official birthday parade last weekend meant it was deemed infeasible to prepare a second major event at short notice. — AFP

BRITAIN'S PRINCE PHILIP, 96, IN HOSPITAL WITH INFECTION

LONDON: Prince Philip, the 96-year-old husband of Queen Elizabeth II, has been admitted to hospital as a "precautionary measure" for treatment of an infection, Buckingham Palace said yesterday. The infection arose from "a pre-existing condition", the palace said. The Duke of Edinburgh, who is to retire from public duties later this year, was admitted to King Edward VII Hospital in London on Tuesday night. Prince Philip was due to accompany the monarch to the state opening of parliament on Wednesday as well as the Royal Ascot horse races.

Their eldest son Prince Charles, the heir to the throne, accompanied Queen Elizabeth to the Houses of Parliament in his place. "Prince Philip is in good spirits and is disappointed to be missing the state opening of parliament and Royal Ascot," a Buckingham Palace spokesman said. "Her Majesty is being kept informed and will attend Royal Ascot as planned." Prince Philip was by Queen Elizabeth's side on Saturday for Trooping the Colour, her official birthday military parade in London.

Prince Philip traditionally holds his wife's hand as the state opening of parliament as they process through the Palace of Westminster to the throne, where he sits at her side as she reads out her government's program of legislation. The prince has been the queen's loyal hus-

band for 70 years and announced his forthcoming retirement in May. He is the longest-serving consort in British history, and is still in good health for a man of 96.

But the royal family's patriarch, who conducted 219 royal engagements last year, has been gradually reducing his workload in his nineties. The former naval officer's irascible, non-sense approach, combined with his infamous and sometimes politically incorrect off-the-cuff remarks, has not made it easy for people to warm to his style. But his forthright manner and unwavering devotion to duty and the queen has endeared him to the nation. And observers say his quips put people at ease - while also providing a welcome contrast to the queen's seriousness.

'Trial and error'

Philip met the then Princess Elizabeth just before the outbreak of World War II, and they exchanged letters while he served with the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean and the Pacific. After their marriage in 1947, they spent time in Malta, where he was posted - only for their lives to be changed overnight by the premature death of her father, king George VI, in 1952. He once admitted the curtailment of his promising naval career was "disappointing", but



Prince Philip

said that "being married to the queen, it seemed to me that my first duty was to serve her in the best way I could".

Although he had a reputation for coldness towards his children, many observers consider Philip the glue that held the royal family together as their offspring went through a series of divorces in the 1990s. In a rare interview to mark his 90th birthday in 2011, the prince said he carved out his role by "trial and error".

'Done my bit'

Philip was born on a kitchen table on the Greek island of Corfu on June 10, 1921, the only son of prince Andrew of Greece - the younger brother of Greece's king Constantine I - and princess Alice of Battenberg. Aged just 18 months, his family was evacuated on a British navy ship from politically unstable Greece. They settled in Paris, and at seven Philip was sent away to school in England. He became a Royal Navy cadet following the outbreak of war in 1939. By 1945, he was a first lieutenant and was in Tokyo Bay for the Japanese surrender.

When he married he gave up his titles as a prince of Greece and Denmark - and became a naturalized British subject. In 2011, he said: "I reckon I've done my bit so I want to enjoy myself a bit now. "It's better to get out before you reach the sell-by date." — AFP

BRUSSELS ATTACKER IDENTIFIED AS MOROCCAN WITH NAIL BOMB

BRUSSELS: Belgium said yesterday a Moroccan man carried out a foiled terrorist attack with a nail bomb at a busy Brussels train station, the latest in a wave of attacks to hit Europe. The 36-year-old man, identified only as O.Z., shouted "Allahu Akbar" and tried to detonate a suitcase in a group of passengers at Brussels Central station before a soldier shot him dead on Tuesday. The suspect, from the largely immigrant Brussels neighborhood of Molenbeek which has been linked to a number of previous attacks, was not known to police for terrorism offences.

"It could have been much worse," Belgian federal prosecutor's spokesman Eric Van Der Sypt told a news conference. "It is clear that he wanted to cause more damage than he did." Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel said a "terrorist attack has been prevented" in the city that hosts the EU and NATO headquarters. But he said that while security would be stepped up, the country's terror alert level would be kept stable. "We are not allowing ourselves to be intimidated by terrorists," he added.

The blast came a day after a man mowed down Muslims near a mosque in London, and a suspected Islamist on a terror watchlist rammed a car laden with weapons into a police vehicle in Paris. Brussels has been on high alert since suicide bombers struck Zaventem Airport and the Maalbeek metro station near the EU quarter in March 2016, killing 32 people and injuring hundreds more. The Islamic State group claimed the attacks, which

were carried out by the same Brussels-based cell behind the November 2015 suicide bombings and shootings in Paris which left 130 people dead.

'Nails and gas bottles'

In Tuesday's incident, the man failed to cause any casualties. He entered the station and twice approached a group of around 10 passengers, the second time standing in the middle of them, prosecutors said. "He grabbed his suitcase while shouting and causing a partial explosion. Fortunately nobody was hurt," Van Der Sypt said. "The suitcase immediately caught fire. The man then left his luggage burning and went down to the platform in pursuit of a station master. Meanwhile the bag exploded a second time more violently. This bag contained nails and gas bottles," he added. "The man then returned to the hall where he rushed to a soldier shouting 'Allahu Akbar' (God is Greatest). The soldier immediately opened fire and hit the individual several times."

The man, who died instantly, was not wearing a suicide belt, contrary to some Belgian media reports, he said. "He was not known to the authorities for any terrorism connection," Van Der Sypt said, declining to give the man's full name while the investigation continues. Interior Minister Jan Jambon underlined what a close call passengers had when he said the "big explosion did not happen". Police later raided the man's home in Molenbeek, home to some of the jihadists involved in the Paris and Brussels attacks. — AFP



BRUSSELS: A Belgian army soldier patrols around the Central train station yesterday following a failed terrorist bomb attack a day earlier. — AFP

PORTUGAL FIRE SMOLDERS AS FIRST VICTIMS BURIED

PEDROGÃO GRANDE, Portugal: Hundreds of firefighters battled blazes in central Portugal yesterday as the funerals of some of the 64 people killed in the inferno renewed anger over the emergency response to the disaster. Questions swirled over how so many people could have died in the forest fire, most of whom perished on a single road that locals say should have been sealed off by first responders. From early yesterday, firefighting planes flew sorties over the smoldering forest canopy in the central Pedrogão Grande region, dropping water on the flames still licking pine and eucalyptus trees, according to an AFP journalist on the scene.

The head of the region's civil protection services Vitor Vaz Pinto told reporters that 95 percent of the fire had been extinguished. "This is great progress," he added, as around 1,200 crew and 400 vehicles worked on dousing the flames. Yesterday's forecast also suggested more favorable firefighting conditions, with temperatures set to hit 35 degrees Celsius, compared to 43 the day before.

The blaze appeared to have been brought under control on Tuesday, only for it to suddenly flare again, forcing authorities to evacuate 40 hamlets near the village of Gois. Officials have expressed concerns that some residents are refusing to leave homes threatened by the flames. "We have to protect our houses. I came to help my friends who live here," said Sonia Pereira, 29, who along with around a dozen people refused calls to leave. Authorities now believe more than 200 people were injured in the blaze at the weekend.

Questions, anger mount

Details were emerging of the victims,

many of whom were caught in their cars as they tried to flee. They included a four-year-old boy, Rodrigo. His parents had left with him with relatives while on honeymoon and posted frantic messages on social media. The bodies of Rodrigo and his uncle were found burnt beside a car. Most were killed on the N236 national highway, now dubbed the "road of death" by local media. "My nephew died, a fireman" said Joaquim Serra da Fonseca, 68.

As news of the fire spread on Saturday, the 40-year-old nephew and several colleagues rushed down the road to help. Faced with the fury of the fire, they turned back but in the thick smoke, they apparently crashed into a car full of people, Serra da Fonseca said. They stopped to try to get the passengers out, but in a matter of seconds the flames caught up. Serra da Fonseca wondered why they were allowed to take the road when police knew that a fire was raging in the area.

Prime Minister Antonio Costa has questioned why the N236 had not been closed to traffic, and has sought explanations into why the emergency services communications network had been interrupted. Press reports suggested Portugal's fire plan had not been revised for four years and that some communication antennae may have malfunctioned due to the intense heat. As anger mounted among the relatives of those killed, the daily Publico reported that civil protection personnel and backup fire crews only reached the fire site two hours after the first emergency calls. Costa has called for "immediate explanations" from authorities but insisted that there was "no evidence" of any rapid response failure. — AFP



Ambulances lead the way during the evacuation of Picha, as a wildfire approaches the village near Pedrogão Grande on Tuesday. — AFP

AROUND 100 KILLED IN CAR AFTER TRUCE DEAL

BANGUI, Central African Republic: The death toll from clashes in Central African Republic has surged to around 100, local officials said yesterday of violence that erupted hours after the government signed a truce with rebel groups. The bloodshed, which left dozens more injured, dashed hopes of an end to the simmering sectarian violence which has blighted the country since 2013, pitting Christian anti-Balaka militias against mainly Muslim ex-Seleka rebels.

Shooting erupted early on Tuesday in the central town of Bria and by midnight (2300 GMT) security sources and NGOs said some 40 people had been killed with another 43 wounded. But by Wednesday morning, the death toll had risen to around 100, according to the town's mayor Maurice Belikoussou and its parish priest Gbenai. The fighting began

just hours after Bangui reached a deal with rebel groups on an immediate ceasefire in an agreement brokered by a Catholic group in Rome.

Since mid-May, Bria and several other southeastern towns - Bangassou, Alindao and Mobaye - have been engulfed by violence. By the end of the month, the fighting had already killed 300 people, wounded 200 and displaced 100,000 others, the UN's humanitarian organization (OCHA) and the government said. In Bria alone, the violence has forced more than 40,000 people out of their homes, OCHA figures show, with more forced to flee in Tuesday's fighting. "The warring parties burned villages and neighborhoods of Bria, forcing more of the population out with many fleeing into the bush," local MP Arsene Kongbo told AFP yesterday. — AFP

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION EYES HARDENING LINE TOWARD PAK

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's administration is exploring hardening its approach toward Pakistan to crack down on Pakistan-based militants launching attacks in neighboring Afghanistan, two US officials tell Reuters. Potential Trump administration responses being discussed include expanding US drone strikes, redirecting or withholding some aid to Pakistan and perhaps eventually downgrading Pakistan's status as a major non-NATO ally, the two officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Other US officials are skeptical of the prospects for success, arguing that years of previous US efforts to curb Pakistan's support for militant groups have failed, and that already strengthening US ties to India, Pakistan's arch-enemy, undermine chances of a breakthrough with Islamabad. US officials say generally they seek greater cooperation with Pakistan, not a rupture in ties, once the administration finishes a regional review, due by mid-July, of the strategy guiding the 16-year-old war in Afghanistan.

The discussions include officials from across the Trump administration, including the White House and the Defense Department, both of which declined comment on the review before its completion. Precise actions have yet to be decided. But Pakistan's embassy in Washington warned against "scapegoating" Pakistan to explain the stalemate in Afghanistan, pointing instead to Afghanistan's own troubled internal dynamics. It also noted past Pakistani efforts to battle militants and expressed willingness to work with the United States and Afghanistan on border management. "Singling out Pakistan and pinning the entire blame on Pakistan for the situation in Afghanistan is neither fair nor accurate, nor is it borne out by the ground realities," said Abid Saeed, press minister at the embassy.

A Pakistan Strategy

Experts on America's longest war argue that militant safe havens in Pakistan have allowed Taliban-linked insurgents a place to plot deadly strikes in Afghanistan and regroup after ground offensives. Although long mindful of Pakistan, the Trump administration in recent weeks has put more emphasis on the relationship with Islamabad in discussions as it hammers out a regional strategy to be presented to Trump, who took office in late January, one official said.

"We've never really fully articulated what our strategy towards Pakistan is. The strategy will more clearly say what we want from Pakistan specifically," the US official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Other US officials question whether any mix of carrots and sticks can get Islamabad to change its behavior. At the end of the day, Washington needs a partner, even if an imperfect one, in nuclear-armed Pakistan, they say.

The United States is again poised to deploy thousands more troops in Afghanistan, an acknowledgment that US-backed forces are not winning and Taliban militants are resurgent. Without more pressure on militants within Pakistan who target Afghanistan, experts say additional US troop deployments will fail to meet their ultimate objective: to pressure the Taliban to eventually negotiate peace. "I believe there will be a much harder US line on Pakistan going forward than there has been in the past," Hamdullah Mohib, the Afghan ambassador to the United States, told Reuters, without citing specific measures under review.

Kabul has long been critical of Pakistan's role in Afghanistan. Pakistan fiercely denies allowing any militants safe haven on its territory. It bristles at US claims that Pakistan's spy agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) directorate, has ties to Haqqani network militants blamed for some of the deadliest attacks in Afghanistan. A senior Pakistani government source, speaking on condition of anonymity, doubted the Trump administration would press too hard, saying: "They don't want to push Pakistan to abandon their war against terrorism."

Pakistani officials point towards the toll militancy has taken on the country. Since 2003, almost 22,000 civilians and nearly 7,000 Pakistani security forces have been killed as a result of militancy, according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, which tracks violence. But the Pentagon, in a report to Congress released on Tuesday, explicitly accused elements of Pakistan's government of

supporting Afghanistan-focused militant groups, including the Taliban and Haqqani Network, who it said retained "freedom of action" within Pakistan. It called Pakistan "the most influential external actor affecting Afghan stability."

Is Pakistan an Ally?

Pakistan won the status as a major non-NATO ally in 2004 from the George Bush administration, in what was at the time seen in part as recognition of its importance in the US battle against al Qaeda and Taliban insurgents. The status is mainly symbolic, allowing limited benefits such as giving Pakistan faster access to surplus US military hardware. Yanking the title would be seen by Pakistan as a major blow. Some US officials and experts on the region scoff at the title. "Pakistan is not an ally. It's not North Korea or Iran. But it's not an ally," said Bruce Riedel, a Pakistan expert at the Brookings Institution think tank.

Lisa Curtis, prior to becoming senior director for South and Central Asia at the National Security Council, co-authored a report with Husain Haqqani, Pakistan's former ambassador to Washington, in which they recommended the Trump administration warn Pakistan the status could be revoked in six months. "Thinking of Pakistan as an ally will continue to create problems for the next administration as it did for the last one," said the February report, published by the conservative Hudson Institute think tank. It was unclear how seriously the Trump administration was considering the proposal.

The growing danger to Afghanistan from suspected Pakistan-based militants was underscored by a devastating May 31 truck bomb that killed more than 80 people and wounded 460 in Kabul. Afghanistan's main intelligence agency said the attack - one of the deadliest in memory in the Afghan capital - had been carried out by the Haqqani network with assistance from Pakistan, a charge Islamabad denies.

Washington believes the strikes appeared to be the work of the Haqqani network, US officials told Reuters. US frustration over the Haqqani's presence in Pakistan has been building for years. The United States designated the Haqqani network as a terrorist organization in 2012. US Navy Admiral Mike Mullen, then the top US military officer, told Congress in 2011 that the Haqqani network was a "veritable arm" of the ISI.

Any US pivot in its approach would be sharply different than the one taken at the start of the Obama administration, when US officials sought to court Pakistani leaders, including Army chief General Ashfaq Kayani. David Sedney, who served as Obama's deputy assistant secretary of defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia from 2009 to 2013, said the attempt to turn Islamabad into a strategic partner was a "disaster." "It didn't affect Pakistan's behavior one bit. In fact, I would argue it made Pakistan's behavior worse," Sedney said.

More Drones, Cash Cut-Off

Pakistan has received more than \$33 billion in US assistance since 2002, including more than \$14 billion in so-called Coalition Support Funds (CSF), a US Defense Department program to reimburse allies that have incurred costs in supporting counter-insurgency operations. Last year, the Pentagon decided not to pay Pakistan \$300 million in CSF funding after then-US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter declined to sign authorization that Pakistan was taking adequate action against the Haqqani network.

US officials said the Trump administration was discussing withholding at least some assistance to Pakistan. Curtis' report singled out the aid as a target. But US aid cuts could cede even more influence to China, which already has committed nearly \$60 billion in investments in Pakistan. Another option under review is broadening a drone campaign to penetrate deeper into Pakistan to target Haqqani fighters and other militants blamed for attacks in Afghanistan, US officials and a Pakistan expert said.

"Now the Americans (will be) saying, you aren't taking out our enemies, so therefore we are taking them out ourselves," said the Pakistan expert, who declined to be identified. Pakistan's army chief of staff last week criticized "unilateral actions" such as drone strikes as "counterproductive and against (the) spirit of ongoing cooperation and intelligence sharing being diligently undertaken by Pakistan." —Reuters

ROHINGYA SEEK NEW ESCAPE ROUTES FROM BANGLADESH

DHAKA: In squalid camps in Bangladesh, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya who have fled violence and persecution in neighboring Myanmar dream of a better life abroad - and rely on increasingly high-tech trafficking networks to get them there. Dhaka denies new arrivals refugee status and, after a major crackdown sealed off the ocean routes traditionally used to traffic migrants to Southeast Asia, many Rohingya are turning to complex smuggling operations to escape Bangladesh. "People are desperate to leave the camps," said community leader Mohammad Idris. "Those who have money or gold ornaments are paying smugglers to get them out by air, and those who don't are trying roads."

The Rohingya, who live mainly in Myanmar, are one of the most persecuted minorities in the world. Many now live in grinding poverty in Bangladesh's southeast coastal district of Cox's Bazar, packed into camps that were home to more than 300,000 Rohingya even

before some 70,000 new arrivals poured across the border after the Myanmar army launched a bloody crackdown last October. Bangladesh denies them the right to work, and is proposing to rehouse them on a mosquito-infested island that regularly floods at high tide.

New routes

For years, rickety boats were the main mode of escape for the refugees who would pay hefty amounts to smugglers to get them to Malaysia and Thailand. Those routes were cut off in 2015 when mass graves of would-be migrants, many of them killed at sea, were discovered in Thailand, triggering a global outcry and a major crackdown on traffickers. But the smuggling networks swiftly identified new routes out of Bangladesh by air and road, using mobile payments to operate internationally.

Mohammad, an undocumented 20-year-old Rohingya, said he spent 600,000 taka (\$7,700)

to reach Saudi Arabia, where he now lives. "I paid a local friend for a Bangladeshi passport and other papers. He also helped me pass through the immigration," Mohammad told AFP using the WhatsApp messaging service. He asked that his family name not be used. As it becomes more difficult for migrants to leave Bangladesh, many have been forced to head to destinations once considered less appealing.

Those who cannot afford flights are using buses and even travelling on foot to escape Bangladesh, going to India before moving on to Nepal or Pakistan. Some have even settled in the troubled Kashmir region. There is no reliable data on the value of the trafficking trade, but estimates suggest it is worth millions of dollars in Bangladesh alone. These networks arrange fake Bangladeshi passports and birth certificates for the Rohingya, a stateless ethnic minority denied citizenship rights in Myanmar even though they have lived in the Buddhist-majority nation for generations. —AFP

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MILITANTS TAKE HOSTAGES AT PHILIPPINE SCHOOL

MARAWI, Philippines: Islamic militants occupied a primary school and took hostages in a southern Philippine village yesterday, a few hours' drive from a city where other jihadists were fighting a month-long war, authorities said. Hundreds of gunmen initially attacked a lightly guarded military outpost at dawn, with many withdrawing but about 30 then taking over the school and using civilians as human shields, the military said.

"As of now they are in the school holding the civilians. They are using them as human shields," Captain Arvin Encinas, spokesman for the army division with responsibility for the area, told AFP by phone. He said the gunmen had planted improvised bombs around the school. Encinas said he did not know how many hostages had been taken, or if they included children.

The unrest occurred in Pigkawayan, a farming town about 160 km from Marawi city where fighters linked to the Islamic State (IS) group have been battling troops for a month in a conflict that has claimed hundreds of lives. Armed

forces spokesman Restituto Padilla earlier said the attackers yesterday belonged to the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), one of four groups in the southern Philippine region of Mindanao that have pledged allegiance to IS.

Local police said the BIFF attack may have been intended to help the militants in Marawi by distracting the military. Padilla said the gunmen attacked the outpost at daybreak, then exchanged fire with troops in the morning before retreating in a hit-and-run assault typical of BIFF fighters. "It's already resolved. The enemy has withdrawn... they failed," Padilla said late yesterday morning.

However about six hours later Encinas reported the hostage crisis at the school. Padilla then appeared on television and confirmed militants were occupying the school. Encinas and Padilla said there had also been skirmishes throughout the day outside of Pigkawayan, which is surrounded by marshlands, mountains and farmlands. —AFP

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OUR JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE

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Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "You will not enter Paradise until you have faith; and you will not complete your faith till you love one another." (Muslim) But love is a vague concept, and one person's definition of how to treat someone lovingly might be different from another's. But Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) clarified the issue. He said, "Do you know what the rights of a neighbor are? If a neighbor seeks your help, extend it to him. If a neighbor asks you for a loan, lend him.

If your neighbor becomes poor, then help him financially and attend to his poverty if you can. If your neighbor becomes ill, then visit him. If your neighbor is happy on certain gain, then congratulate him. If your neighbor is suffering a calamity, then offer him condolences. If your neighbor dies, then attend his funeral. Do not raise your building over his building, so that he would have no sun exposure or wind passage. Do not bother your neighbor with the smell of your cooking, unless you intend to offer him some." (Tabrani 101) These "rights" of a neighbor are expressions of love.

When a person reaches old age, he has a special status in the

community. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "He does not belong to us who does not show mercy to our children and respect to our elderly" (Tirmidi 1279). The Quran is particular about the care of parents: "We have enjoined everyone to look after his parents..." (31:14) "We have instructed man to be kind to his parents..." (46:15) "... when they attain old age...never say to them 'uff' nor scold either of them. Speak to them gently. Serve them with tenderness and humility..." (17:23-25)

Our journey through life is always in the company of others, and our treatment of each other is what will make our lives either happy and meaningful or lonely and miserable. Ramadan is the perfect time to reach out to others, whether relatives, colleagues, neighbors or strangers, and share the spirit of a loving community. It is the time to complete our faith by loving one another.

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GULF COUNTRIES PREPARE FOR VAT IN TIME...

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But in Dubai's old souk, a wholesale trader disagreed, expressing fear of having to bear the VAT cost due to low profit margins. "I think five percent will be too much," said Obaid Tahiri sitting in his household appliances shop. "For wholesale, we don't have five percent profit. Clients will not pay... I cannot increase the price for the customer."

Although the UAE has announced plans to introduce VAT in January next year, many wholesale traders in the souk seem unaware of it. "Until now, the government has not told us anything about tax," said Abdullah al-Marzouqi, another trader. The introduction of VAT is part of measures being taken by the energy-rich monarchies

to reduce dependency on oil revenue and to diversify their income. "The governments' objective is to diversify their revenue sources. It is about fiscal sustainability for the future. So, implementing VAT is an important tool allowing government to generate more revenue," said Daou.

Although the five-percent rate is unlikely to address the fiscal pressure faced by Gulf governments, "it is a tool for future fiscal sustainability". Malik said the introduction of VAT across the six nations is expected to provide revenues of up to 1.5 percent of total gross domestic product. "The aim is not to end the fiscal deficit. It is rather to deepen and widen non-oil revenue," she said, noting that hydrocarbons still account for between 50 and 90 percent of government revenues in GCC countries. — AFP

COURT REOPENS ARGUMENTS IN ASSEMBLY...

Continued from Page 1

So, a re-voting was called and Kundari was declared the winner. The loser candidate MP Harbath challenged the result and said that he should have been declared the winner in the first vote. The controversy was reviewed by the legal and legislative committee which recommended that it be sent to the Constitutional Court whose rulings are final.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh categorically denied reports that Kuwait assets abroad have lost around \$70 billion. The minister reiterated that neither Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), the country's sovereign fund, nor the Public Institution for Social Security made such losses. The minister called for taking legal action against those who initiate such false reports. Saleh

said that both KIA and the Social Security posted good profits in the past fiscal year. The minister told the closing session of the National Assembly two weeks ago that Kuwaiti fiscal reserves have reached their highest level ever at the end of March. He did not provide details.

MP Riyadh Al-Adasani meanwhile sent a number of questions to the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour Hind Al-Sabeeh about the activities of charity organizations and the fund raising activities. He said his questions come after Kuwaiti courts convicted several people of funding the Islamic State terror group. He asked the minister if there are any unlicensed bodies or individuals who can raise charity funds in Kuwait and demanded a list of their names if any. He also asked about the ministry mechanism of monitoring the collection of donations and also of spending them.

SAUDI KING OUSTS NEPHEW, NAMES SON...

Continued from Page 1

and more experienced than Mohammed Bin Salman, also known by his initials MBS.

The appointment of such a young royal as the immediate heir to the throne essentially sets Saudi policy for decades and removes the challenge of uncertainty. Saudi Arabia's stock market was up by more than 3.5 percent in mid-day trading. "He could be there for 50 years," said Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, a research fellow at the James A Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University. "If you look at it positively, it is basically setting Saudi Arabia's course into the 21st century."

Another young prince also ascended to power yesterday. Prince Abdulaziz Bin Saud, 33, was named the new Interior Minister tasked with counterterrorism efforts and domestic security. His father is the governor of Saudi Arabia's vast Eastern Province, home to much of the country's oil wealth and most of its minority Shiites. He previously served as an adviser to the interior and defense ministries.

The new Interior Minister is Mohammed Bin Nayef's nephew, while Mohammed Bin Salman is the former Crown Prince's cousin. All hail from the powerful Sudairi branch of the royal family. The royal decree issued yesterday stated that a majority of senior royal members - 31 out of 34 - from the so-called Allegiance Council support the recasting of the line of succession.

The Allegiance Council is a body made up of the sons and prominent grandsons of the late King Abdul-Aziz, the founder of the Saudi state. They gather in secret and vote to pick the king and crown prince from among themselves. It was not immediately clear if the council met before yesterday's sudden change. Even when there is disagreement, the royal family has long followed a tradition of speaking with one voice, particularly on issues of succession, in order to appear united in front of Saudi Arabia's many tribes and communities.

After the decrees were announced, Saudi TV aired footage of the new Crown Prince kissing Mohammed Bin Nayef's hand and kneeling before him. Mohammed Bin Nayef is heard telling him: "I will rest now, and God help you." In celebration of the news, King Salman ordered the reinstatement of all benefits and allowances for government employees that had been curbed by austerity measures, and granted additional days off for the upcoming Eid holiday that marks the end of Ramadan.

Over the weekend, the king had issued a decree restructuring Saudi Arabia's system for prosecutions that removed Mohammed Bin Nayef's oversight of criminal investigations, and instead ordered that a newly-named Office of Public Prosecution report directly to the monarch. Mohammed Bin Nayef was once a towering figure credited with crushing Al-Qaeda's cells in Saudi Arabia. He worked closely with Washington after the Sept 11 attacks, helping to share intelligence to thwart more attacks.

The prince had previously studied at the FBI and at Scotland Yard's anti-terrorism institute. Dubbed by Washington insiders as "the prince of counterterrorism", Mohammed Bin Nayef developed a ground-breaking program that rehabilitates and counsels individuals convicted

of terrorism-related crimes. The center bears his name. In 2009, he survived an assassination attempt when a man who'd completed the program approached the prince and blew himself up.

The 58-year-old prince had served in a senior security post before taking over as interior minister from his father, the late Prince Nayef, in 2011. Both cracked down hard on rights activists and crushed any signs of dissent. Though his image remained on billboards and atop buildings throughout Saudi Arabia, Mohammed Bin Nayef appeared to be slipping in profile and was not believed to have played a significant role in Saudi and Emirati-led efforts to isolate Qatar for its support of Islamist groups and its ties with Iran.

Instead, it was Mohammed Bin Salman, who embarked on major overseas visits, including a trip to the White House to meet President Donald Trump in March. That visit to Washington helped lay the foundation for Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia in May, which marked the president's first overseas visit and which was promoted heavily by the kingdom as proof of its weight in the region and wider Muslim world.

Saudi-US relations had cooled under the Obama administration after Washington pursued a nuclear accord with Shiite-majority Iran that the Sunni-ruled kingdom strongly opposed. The warm ties forged between Riyadh and Washington under the Trump administration may have helped accelerate Mohammed Bin Salman's ascension as crown prince. Despite his ambitions, the prince has faced criticism for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, which he oversees as defense minister.

The war, launched more than two years ago, has failed to dislodge Iranian-allied rebels known as Houthis from the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, and has had devastating effects on the impoverished country. Rights groups say Saudi forces have killed scores of civilians and have called on the United States, as well as Britain and France, to halt the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia that could be used in the war. The US already is helping the Saudis with intelligence and logistical support for the bombing campaign in Yemen, and the Trump administration has signaled it could assist with greater intelligence support to counter Iranian influence there.

The newly-minted crown prince also raised eyebrows when he ruled out any chance of dialogue with Iran. In remarks aired on Saudi TV in May, Mohammed Bin Salman framed the tensions with Iran in sectarian terms, saying it is Iran's goal "to control the Islamic world" and to spread its Shiite doctrine. He also vowed to take "the battle" to Iran. Iran and Saudi Arabia's rivalry has played out in proxy wars across the region. The conflicts have deepened Sunni-Shiite enmity between hard-liners on both sides. Batrawy reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Amir congratulated Saudi Arabia's King Salman for choosing Mohammed Bin Salman as his new Crown Prince yesterday. Kuwaiti Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah prayed for the Saudi king and said he was "looking forward to development and prosperity under the wise leadership" in the neighboring country. Mohammed Bin Salman was also congratulated by Kuwait's Amir, KUNA said. — Agencies

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Focus

DEMOCRATS LOSS UNDERScores THE PARTY CHALLENGES

By Erica Werner

Republicans just got a big argument for sticking with President Donald Trump and pushing forward with dismantling "Obamacare." And Democrats are looking almost incapable of translating the energy of their core supporters into actual election wins. Tuesday night's outcome in a Georgia special House race was a triumph for the GOP, and the most recent, and devastating, illustration of the Democrats' problems, from a weak bench and recruiting problems to divisions about what the party stands for. Instead of a win or even a razor-thin loss by Democrat Jon Ossoff that many had expected, Republican Karen Handel ended up winning by a relatively comfortable 4 percentage point margin in the wealthy suburban Atlanta district previously held by Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price.

That followed another recent Democratic disappointment in Montana, where the Republican candidate won even after last-minute assault charges, and an earlier loss for the Democrats in Kansas. Indeed the best news Democrats got Tuesday night was that a different special House race, in South Carolina, ended up closer than the Georgia contest even though it had drawn little national attention. Republican Ralph Norman beat Democrat Archie Parnell by around 3 percentage points in South Carolina, closer than expected and a warning sign to the GOP not to take any seat for granted.

But for Democrats, having failed to unseat a Republican in four special House elections in a row despite an extremely energized base, it's now a time for soul-searching - and finger-pointing. Ossoff ran a careful campaign and shied away from talking about Trump, and some groups on the left wasted no time in insisting that Democrats must draw brighter contrasts with the GOP. "Defeating Republicans in districts that they have traditionally held requires doing something drastically different than establishment Democrats have done before - specifically, running on a bold progressive vision and investing heavily in direct voter contact," said Jim Dean, chair of Democracy for America.

The Georgia race was the most expensive House race in history, with many millions spent on both sides. The fact that that level of investment failed to pay off with a win against a Republican candidate widely viewed as uninspiring left Democrats frustrated and dispirited heading into the 2018 midterm elections. Democrats will need to pick up 24 House seats to take back the majority. The outcome "better be a wake-up call for Democrats - business as usual isn't working," Rep Seth Moulton, D-Mass., said over Twitter. "Time to stop rehashing 2016 and talk about the future."

House Democratic leaders tried to downplay the loss ahead of time, pointing out that the Georgia race took place on GOP-friendly terrain, as did the other recent special elections. Rep Joe Crowley of New York, chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, said that there are 71 districts that will be more favorable for Democrats to contest than the one in Georgia. "This is a heavily Republican district," Crowley said. "It never should have been this close to begin with."

But for Republicans from the president on down, it was time to celebrate. Trump sent supporters a text message crowing, "Congrats to Karen Handel on a HUGE win in GA! Democrats lose again (0-4). Total disarray. The MAGA Mandate is stronger than ever. BIG LEAGUE." As the results rolled in Tuesday, AshLee Strong, spokeswoman to House Speaker Paul Ryan, mused over Twitter, "Remember when they told us we'd be punished in the special elx for following through on our promise to #RepealAndReplace #obamacare?"

Indeed the string of special election wins, especially in Georgia, sent a powerful message to Republicans that they must be doing something right, even though Trump's approval ratings are low by historical standards and the GOP has yet to notch a single major legislative accomplishment on Capitol Hill. Far from rethinking their support for Trump or their plans to undo former President Barack Obama's health care law, Republicans seem likely to stay the course. And as for the Democrats, they, clearly, are doing something wrong. What exactly it is, and whether they can fix it, will be debated in the weeks and months ahead.—AP

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3 THINGS TO WATCH AS SAUDI NAMES NEW HEIR TO THRONE

Mohammed bin Salman, named Saudi crown prince yesterday at the age of 31, inherits a historically conservative nation facing challenges at home and turmoil abroad. Here are three key areas to watch as the prince becomes first in line to the most powerful throne in the Middle East.

Yemen

Prince Mohammed retains his position as defense minister, a post he held when Riyadh joined the war in neighboring Yemen in 2015. Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia heads a regional military alliance fighting Shiite Houthi rebels, accused of ties to Iran, for control of the impoverished country. In May 2017, faced with international criticism over the Saudi-led alliance's role in Yemen's humanitarian crisis, the prince said his country had "no choice" but to intervene in the war to support the Saudi-allied, UN-recognized government of Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi. These militias posed a threat to international shipping in the Red Sea, Mohammed said in a televised interview.

"If we had waited, the threats would have grown more complicated, and there would have been a threat to Saudi Arabia", Mohammed defended Saudi Arabia's decision to fight a long war in Yemen as the sole means to protect civilians in the fight against the Houthis and their allies,

former troops loyal to ex-Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh. "We could eliminate the Houthis and Saleh in a few days ... but as a result thousands of our troops and Yemeni civilians would be the victims," he said.

International rights groups have criticized both sides in the war for human rights violations, accusing the Saudi-led alliance of attacking civilian targets including hospitals and schools. Human Rights Watch in January said some of those attacks may amount to war crimes. Amnesty International in March said Saudi arms purchases from the US and Britain were "used to commit gross violations and helped to precipitate a humanitarian catastrophe".

Saudi economy

Prince Mohammed is the chief architect of an ambitious plan to transform the Saudi economy by 2030 to reduce its dependence on oil and develop the private sector. Saudi Arabia, the world's largest exporter of oil, was dealt a serious blow when oil prices plummeted in 2014. Under the "Vision 2030" plan, unveiled in April 2016, Saudi Arabia will sell nearly five percent of state-owned Aramco—the world's largest oil company reportedly worth between \$2 trillion and \$2.5 trillion.

The sale would mark the first move towards Aramco's privatization. The plan aims to create a sovereign wealth fund worth \$2 trillion, which would make it the largest

state-owned investment fund in the world. It targets an increase in non-oil government revenue sixfold from \$43.5 billion to \$267 billion.

It aims to raise non-oil exports and boost the contribution of the private sector to gross domestic product (GDP) from 40 percent to 65 percent. The economic plans are also aimed at bringing about tentative societal change by expanding local industry and slashing unemployment. Women, who face some of the world's harshest restrictions in Saudi Arabia, are expected to constitute 30 percent of the workforce by 2030, up from 22 percent now.

Qatar crisis

Prince Mohammed is one of the prime movers behind Saudi Arabia's decision earlier this month to isolate Qatar, accusing the gas-rich emirate of ties to Shiite rival Iran and of facilitating the financing, and function, of extremist groups. As crown prince, and deputy prime minister, he will oversee the aftermath of what Qatar has called a "blockade" by Saudi Arabia and its allies the UAE and Bahrain. Saudi Arabia has sealed off Qatar's only land border to the outside world and the three Gulf states have banned all flights to and from Doha. Qatar has demanded the lifting of the "economic blockade" before agreeing to dialogue with its neighbors, but Saudi Arabia has remained unresponsive.—AFP

LOOKING BACK: THE HONG KONGERS WHO LEFT

In the years leading up to the return of Hong Kong to China by Britain in 1997, thousands of residents fearful of the future under Beijing jumped ship to start a new life abroad. As the semi-autonomous city prepares to mark 20 years since the handover and fears grow that China is tightening its grip, those who left are reflecting on their decision to abandon the home they loved.

Philip Fok moved to Australia in 1992 with his wife and two children because he felt unsure of what would happen after July 1, 1997. Fok says China's history under the Communist Party, including the Cultural Revolution which saw purges of political opponents in the 1960s and 1970s and the Tiananmen Square crackdown in 1989, played on people's minds.

Working as a mime artist at the time, he felt particularly vulnerable because of his need for freedom of expression. "To be free, to the artist, is very important," the 69-year-old explains. Before he emigrated, he performed a mime show at Hong Kong's City Hall theatre called: "The night before and after," dealing with pre-handover uncertainty. Fok went to Sydney where he already had relatives, but says life was hard he struggled to get a visa, had very little English and lived on benefits for two years. However, he eventually managed to set up a successful painting studio, which he ran until last year, and hosts a weekly Cantonese radio show in Sydney's north west, where he lives.

Fok says his worst fears for Hong Kong have not materialized and argues the city is freer now than in colonial times. But he has no regrets about leaving. "In Australia nobody cares about your dress, nobody cares about your money," he says, adding that artists there are held in higher regard. In contrast to the densely packed expensive high-rises of Hong Kong, Fok lives in a four-bedroom house and is proud of the vegetable patch in his backyard. "If I have space I can think. If I have no space I can't think. I love Australia like that," he muses.

'Better to leave'

There are no official emigration figures, but government estimates show hundreds of thousands leaving Hong Kong between 1990 and 1997, with the annual figure hitting 61,700 in 1990 and peaking at 66,200 in 1992. Australia, Canada and the United States were the top destinations and are still home to thriving Cantonese communities. Whilst emigration has dropped dramati-

cally, numbers have recently risen again, from 6,900 in 2014 - the year of major pro-democracy rallies to 7,600 in 2016.

Herman Fu, 58, believes the political divisions and lack of opportunities for young people, with increased competition for jobs and salaries outpaced by the cost of living, make the situation "worse than he thought" it would be when he left. He moved to Toronto in 1987 with his wife and two-year-old son, launching a window covering business, dealing in curtains, blinds and shutters. Fu originally planned to return once he had gained Canadian citizenship. But the Tiananmen crackdown changed his mind. "My idea of the Chinese government was too optimistic and I had to rethink my decision of going back," he says. As Hong Kong boomed in the 90s, Fu

felt pangs of regret as his friends rose through the ranks at their companies, but he believes overall the standard of living is better in Canada. "I'm now living in a 3,600 square feet (330 sq m) house plus the basement, with a lawn. You can't get a lawn unless you're Li Ka-shing in Hong Kong," he explains, referring to the city's richest tycoon. Fu insists he still loves Hong Kong as the place of his birth but argues it may be better for youngsters to move. He adds: "If they can't survive in their environment, or they find it hard to improve themselves, better to leave."

Next generation

Even for the children of Hong Kong's emigres, there is still a bond with the city. Justin Fung, 37, was born and raised in

Vancouver after his parents were among the first wave of Hong Kongers to move there. They went to study in the late 1960s and 70s and decided to stay. Fung says the prospect of a change in China's relations with Hong Kong was causing "rumblings" even back then.

The vast majority of his high school were ethnic Chinese students and there was always easy access to Cantonese food and culture. Fung refers to Hong Kong as "back home" and spent two years living and working in the city. But as the handover anniversary looms, he says he would hesitate to relocate permanently as concerns grow over Beijing interference. He says: "For myself as a father with a young child at home, I don't know if I'd want her growing up in that system."—AFP



SYDNEY: A busker plays the erhu, a traditional stringed Chinese instrument in Sydney. There are no official emigration figures, but government estimates show hundreds of thousands leaving Hong Kong between 1990 and 1997, with the annual figure hitting 61,700 in 1990 and peaking at 66,200 in 1992.—AFP

RUBEL HAS SURGERY AFTER DOOR COLLISION

DHAKA: Bangladeshi fast bowler Rubel Hossain has been ruled out of competition for at least a month after colliding with a door and breaking his jaw while on tour in England, his doctor said yesterday. The mishap occurred in the Bangladesh team hotel in Birmingham on June 15 after the semi-final loss to India in the Champions Trophy. Bangladesh Cricket Board physician Monirul Amin said Rubel underwent surgery yesterday and would need four to six weeks off to recover. "We hope he will be fine after that period, and make himself available for selection for the Australia series," Amin told AFP, referring to the first of two Tests starting late August. Rubel featured in all four of Bangladesh's Champions Trophy matches but claimed just two wickets at an average of 95.50. Bangladesh progressed to the semi-final of the 50-over tournament for the first time in their history, but were crushed by India in a nine-wicket thumping. — AFP



THREE RUSSIANS BANNED AFTER BEIJING RETESTING

MOSCOW: The Beijing Olympics relay silver medallist Anastasiya Kapachinskaya and two other Russian athletes were banned for four years yesterday for doping. Kapachinskaya, Inga Abitova and Denis Alekseyev, were caught out for using the prohibited substance turinabol when their samples from the 2008 Games were retested. The bans were announced by the All-Russian Athletics Federation (RusAF). Kapachinskaya, who also tested positive for stanozolol, was part of the women's 4x400m relay team that came second in Beijing. Her retested sample from the 2011 World Athletics Championships in Daegu also came back positive. Abitova took sixth in the women's 10,000m in China while Alekseyev picked up bronze in the men's 4x400m relay bronze that year. "These three runners have voluntary admitted doping code violations," RusAF anti-doping coordinator Yelena Ikonnikova told AFP. "Their avowals of guilt, which we received from the international athletics federation (IAAF) have been validated by the disciplinary committee of the country's anti-doping agency RUSADA," she added. — AFP

MARTIN LEADS KATUSHA AT TOUR DE FRANCE

PARIS: Katusha unveiled their nine man team for the Tour de France yesterday with Germany's freshly recruited Tony Martin tipped as a potential winner of the opening day July 1 time-trial in Dusseldorf. The four-time world champion time triallist with five Tour de France stages to his name will then have to wait until the penultimate day for a 23km time-trial around Marseille on July 22 in a Tour with an unusually low amount of time trialling. Another highlight of the Katusha line up will evoke glimmers of nostalgia for older fans with the first Tour de France appearance of 23-year-old sprinter Rick Zabel. Zabel's father Erik won the Tour's green sprint points jersey from 1996 through to 2001, also winning 12 stages. Rick, who bears a remarkable resemblance to his father, will support key Katusha sprinter Alexander Kristoff on the bunch sprints expected on around five of the flat stages. — AFP



FORD GT TAKES SECOND IN GTE PRO AT LE MANS 24 HOURS

KUWAIT: The #67 Ford Chip Ganassi Racing Ford GT of Andy Priaulx (GB), Harry Tincknell (GB), and Pipo Derani (BRA) grabbed the runner-up spot in the 2017 Le Mans 24 Hours at the end of the final lap. Last minute struggles for the second-placed Corvette gave Tincknell the opportunity to pounce and take the place just as the chequered flag fell.

In a door-to-door battle of manufacturers through the full 24-hours, the #67 crew that won the FIA World Endurance Championship season-opener at Silverstone proved their mettle once again with strong strategy and an incredible effort from the entire team.

"That was an amazing race," Priaulx said. "It was a faultless race with faultless pit stops. These guys (the Ford Chip Ganassi Racing team) deserve a medal as yet again they have risen to the challenge. It was a gruelling race; we had to fight through every lap, every pit stop, every moment of the 24 hours. Everything had to be perfect and it was. Watching Harry at the end was nail-biting so when we saw the Corvette appear in Harry's sights we knew he would get the job done and take second." All four Ford GTs finished the Le Mans 24 Hours, which was one of the most brutal 24-hour races at the Circuit de la Sarthe for many years. Last year's race-winning #68 Ford GT came home in sixth place, followed by the #69 car in seventh and the #66 in tenth place.

"Wow, what a race," said Dave Pericak, global director, Ford Performance. "It was

a tough one, but everyone stuck with it. This proves that you have to stick with it right until the very end. To take second place on our second time here is amazing. First is always best but we'll take this because it's a great result for this team. It was huge for us in the WEC championship so it's not just a great finish, but it's also great for the championship we want to win this year."

All four of the team's Ford GTs showed promise early, leading laps at the 14km/8.5-mile Circuit de la Sarthe. Then, as dusk fell, the challenges came quickly and with little warning.

The #66 Ford GT was leading the category four hours in with Billy Johnson (US) behind the wheel after Stefan Mücke (GER) started eighth, but 10 hours later a rear suspension problem sent their team-mate Olivier Pla (FRA) into the gravel and the #66 to the back of the pack.

The #68 struggled in qualifying and lined up 12th on the grid. Although it led briefly thanks to a charge by Dirk Müller (GER) and showed pace, a series of pit lane challenges kept the team from showing its real promise. "Congratulations to the #67 crew for a fantastic second-place finish," Müller said. "We know how it feels to make it on to the podium. It's a good feeling. We were hit with so many things during the race. Joey did a good job and definitely Tony Kanaan. (Adding him to the lineup) was such a rush. We arrived here on Tuesday morning and from that moment on it all went so fast. He gave



everything for us and we made a good team." Kanaan, who competed at this year's Rolex 24 At Daytona with Tincknell and Priaulx, made an easy transition into the car at Le Mans.

Of the two full-time IMSA SportsCar Championship cars (#68 and #69), it was

#69 that really showed promise going into race day. It qualified highest among the Ford Chip Ganassi Racing Ford GTs in fifth place and although starting driver Richard Westbrook reported understeer, still appeared to be a podium contender. It wasn't long, though, before the #69 had

to pit to fix a tail lamp issue - a problem that would resurface again the next day and hinder the progress of Westbrook, Ryan Briscoe and Scott Dixon.

The next race for the Ford Chip Ganassi Racing team is in two weeks' time at Watkins Glen in the US.

YACHTING

TEAM USA BACK ON WATER IN SEARCH OF ANSWER TO N ZEALAND

HAMILTON: Oracle Team USA were back on the water Tuesday as they scramble to find answers to Emirates Team New Zealand before America's Cup racing resumes on Saturday. A sweep of all four races on the opening weekend gave Team New Zealand a 3-0 lead in the first-to-seven points series as they erased their one-point opening deficit and then some. Team USA skipper Jimmy Spithill said "everything was on the table" as the two-time defenders contemplated "serious changes" aimed at narrowing the gap on Kiwis, who displayed markedly more speed in the light winds at the weekend on Bermuda's Great Sound.

After a day of work in the boat shed, Oracle had their foiling catamaran out on the water. While regatta rules limit the changes Team USA can make, they could tweak their hydrofoils, the appendages that allow the catamarans' twin hulls to rise above the water's surface to virtually fly at breathtaking speeds. Changes to the set-up of the massive fixed-wing sail and crew changes are also possible.

One of the most noticeable innovations by New Zealand this year was the use of bike-style cycle power, rather than traditional arm-grinders. Team USA have already added one cycle station-with tactician Tom Slingsby sometimes seen pedalling. But Spithill has insisted he doesn't believe the "cyclors" make much difference in providing sufficient power to the hydraulics system at key

moments, even though it's reckoned the legs can generate some 30 percent more power than the arms.

"I honestly don't think it's the bikes," Spithill said. "They've obviously got speed and they've had a little edge in a lot of the maneuvers." It's not the first time Spithill and Oracle have had their backs to the wall. In 2013, Team New Zealand were one win away from victory at 8-1, only for the US outfit backed by tech billionaire Larry Ellison to roar back to a 9-8 victory. Spithill said a similar resurgence wasn't out of the question. "We've got a lot of great boat building resources, we've got design engineering and we've got a very good group up here," Spithill said. And plenty of confidence. "Clearly we've got to make some steps forward in boat speed but we've shown we can do it," Spithill said.

"We're a group that isn't afraid of a challenge. I think mentally the guys seem to operate better under higher pressure and that's what we've got." But 26-year-old New Zealand helmsman Peter Burling believes the challengers can make strides before Saturday as well as they try to bring the Cup-the world's oldest international sporting trophy-to New Zealand for a third time after Black Magic's triumphs in 1995 and 2000. "We're all still on an incredibly steep part of the learning curve," he said. "We're just trying to keep learning and keep improving. Nothing changes for us." — AFP

RACING

BIRTLES A 'ROYAL' POET IN MOTION

ASCOT: Fashion may share the spotlight with racing at Royal Ascot but a nice literary touch is added by Henry Birtles who has written a poem dedicated to the showpiece event. The engaging 51-year-old-whose day to day job is his horse racing television rights business which includes the Melbourne Cup and Breeder's Cup — has penned 'A World Like Nowhere Else' for probably the most glamorous race meeting in the world.

The poem-the third he has been commissioned by Ascot to write-runs to 16 lines concluding with: "A blazing beacon to the most majestic sport of all where heroes rise and heroes fall, And Royal Ascot's world stands tallest of the tall."

Self-deprecatory to a fault-he says his mercenary instincts in writing commissioned poems would have dead poets spinning in their graves-he still puzzles over how he came to become a poet.

"My love of racing came first," he told AFP before racing got underway yesterday. "I don't know how the poetry part really happened as I was probably closer to the bottom than the top of my English class!"

"I suppose it started when I visited the Victoria Museum in Melbourne, Australia, and looked at Phar Lap their greatest horse who a taxidermist back in the 30's had done a great job on and there he is in all his glory. "This Australian lady came in with her child and remarked 'nice horsey' I thought to myself that is not a horse it is a piece of your history. "I was a bike courier at the time in Sydney and

the next day when I got on my bike I came up with a line for Phar Lap 'He ran for a country struck down by depression' and wrote a poem about him."

Others followed including one on the extraordinary grey steeplechaser Desert Orchid winning the 1987 Cheltenham Gold Cup. He has now penned 45 — "some of the lesser ones should be hidden at the back" — which he hopes to turn into a book and the proceeds given to charity with prostate cancer and the Injured Jockeys Fund favoured.

'HONEST FARE'

Birtles, who saw his tricky relationship with his English master at Stowe Public School brought to a premature end and was sent thousands of miles away to Canada to finish his schooling, says his poetry would not trouble the pantheon of greats like William Wordsworth or John Keats. "They do rhyme which is good and I think that they are just not complicated you can read them," he said.

"I would describe it as honest fare like a friend of my mother's who isn't a good cook would say 'come round to my house for dinner you can expect honest fare'."

"You don't have to dig deep to understand what my poems are about." Birtles is not just a racing poet. He had a poem read by 'Homeland' actor Damian Lewis at Westminster Abbey, and was asked by the BBC to write and film one for the 2014 football World Cup.

In the film he included "the vicar, the



Henry Birtles

butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker" from the local town as well as Lewis and Hugh Grant. "I said to my two youngest Alec and Scarlett do you want to be part of the BBC film and they said yes.

"Alec kicked a football into the back of the net and Scarlett let go a bunch of red, white and blue balloons up into the sky. "I asked (eldest son) Jack who was 16 at the time and he said 'no bloody well don't want to be part of your film' which was the answer I wanted. "Good on him!" — AFP



LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles Dodgers' Corey Seager watches his third home run of the night, during the fifth inning of the team's baseball game against the New York Mets, Tuesday, in Los Angeles. — AP

BASEBALL

SEAGER HITS 3 HRs, DODGERS GO DEEP IN BIG WIN

LOS ANGELES: Corey Seager hit three homers in a game for the second time in his young career and the Los Angeles Dodgers went deep five times in a 12-0 victory over the New York Mets on Tuesday night. Cody Bellinger also had a two-run homer to help the Dodgers win their fifth straight. Bellinger leads the National League with 22 homers in 52 games, including two long balls against the Mets on Monday. The Dodgers have hit nine home runs the past two nights and 27 home runs in their last 10 games. Seager has 12 home runs on the season. He hit a two-run homer in the first, a solo shot in the fourth and a three-run homer in the fifth. He flew out with the bases loaded in the sixth. Brandon McCarthy (6-3) pitched four-hit ball through six innings for Los Angeles, and Brock Stewart got his first career save with three hitless innings in his first outing of the season. Robert Gsellman (5-5) gave up four homers and eight runs over 4 1/3 innings.

CARDINALS 8, PHILLIES 1

Yadier Molina and Tommy Pham both homered in a seven-run 11th inning to help the St. Louis Cardinals beat the Philadelphia Phillies. Stephen Piscotty had a two-run double off Casey Fien after Edubray Ramos (0-5) started the inning with two walks. Molina and Pham followed with homers as the Cardinals had their biggest output of the season in an inning. Fien gave up both homers and then a single to Chad Huffman and double to Carpenter before the pitcher was removed. Philadelphia has now lost 12 of its last 13 games. Kevin Siegrist (1-1) pitched one inning in relief to earn the win. Mike Leake started the game for St. Louis and allowed one run and three hits in six innings. Jeremy Hellickson gave up six hits and a run in seven innings. His only blemish was a solo homer for Jedd Gyorko in the second inning. Philadelphia scored its lone run of the game on a Maikel Franco RBI single after Leake walked the first two batters in the fourth inning.

ROCKIES 4, DIAMONDBACKS 3

Nolan Arenado hit a two-run triple in the eighth inning, and the surging Rockies rallied past the Diamondbacks in the opening game of their NL West showdown. Carlos Gonzalez homered and saved a run with a diving catch of David Peralta's line drive in the fifth to help Colorado win its sixth straight. The NL West leaders extended their advantage over third-place Arizona to two games. Second-place Los Angeles, which began the night trailing the Rockies by a half-game, played late against the New York Mets. Peralta and Paul Goldschmidt homered for the Diamondbacks, who had won seven straight. Arizona and Colorado, perhaps baseball's two biggest surprises this season, both entered on a roll. The Diamondbacks are a major league-best 23-9 since May 15, while the Rockies' 23-11 mark since then ranks third.

ANGELS 8, YANKEES 3

Cameron Maybin hit a tiebreaking home run off struggling reliever Tyler Clippard to spark a three-run seventh inning, helping the Angels beat New York to extend the Yankees' losing streak to seven games - their longest in a single season since April 2007. Aaron Judge hit his major league-leading 24th home run and Gary Sanchez hit his 12th as New York climbed back from a 3-0 deficit. But then Cameron drove the second pitch from Clippard (1-4) into the left-field seats, Kole Calhoun doubled to the right-center gap, Albert Pujols flied out to the center-field warning track and Yunel Escobar hit an RBI triple just over the glove of a leaping Brett Gardner at the left-field wall. Clippard walked off to boos after allowing runs for the third time in four outings.

RED SOX 8, ROYALS 3

Chris Sale shut down the Royals while pitching into the ninth inning, and a ragtag bunch of Red Sox filling in for injured

starters pounded their way to a victory that moved them into first place in the AL East. Sale (9-3) gave up a homer to Mike Moustakas in the second and a two-run shot to Jorge Bonifacio in the ninth before departing two outs shy of his second consecutive complete game. He allowed four hits and fanned 10, pushing his major league-leading strikeout total to 146 this season. More importantly, he got a win after going the distance in a 1-0 loss to Philadelphia last week. Xander Bogaerts and Sandy Leon each drove in a pair of runs for Boston, which got plenty of production from a lineup missing Pablo Sandoval, Dustin Pedroia and Mitch Moreland to various injuries.

NATIONALS 12, MARLINS 3

Bryce Harper started the scoring with a two-run single that extended his hitting streak to 13 games, and Gio Gonzalez pitched seven innings to help the Nationals beat the Marlins 12-3 on Tuesday night. Daniel Murphy had two RBIs and hit his 12th homer for the Nationals. Teammate Stephen Drew had three hits and three RBIs, and Ryan Zimmerman drove in three runs with a double and a single. The NL East leaders went 7 for 14 with runners in scoring position. Gonzalez (7-1) allowed three runs, struck out eight and won his fourth straight decision. The left-hander, who grew up in nearby Hialeah, improved to 7-3 in 13 starts against his hometown team with an ERA of 2.19. Marcell Ozuna hit his 19th homer for the Marlins.

RAYS 6, REDS 5

Corey Dickerson went deep, Alex Cobb threw seven solid innings and the Rays beat the Reds. Dickerson had his 29th multi-hit game of the season with two hits. He drove in Tampa Bay's first run with a third-inning single, then capped their scoring with his 16th home run in the fourth. Cobb (6-5) gave up two runs and eight hits while striking out six. Alex Colome pitched the ninth for his 20th save. Joey Votto hit his 20th home and Eugenio Suarez drove in another run off Colome, but the Reds lost for the 10th time in 11 games. Amir Garrett (3-6) allowed six runs in 3 2/3 innings.

GIANTS 6, BRAVES 3

Austin Slater hit a three-run homer after the Braves botched a potential double-play grounder, sparking the Giants to a victory over Atlanta that snapped a seven-game losing streak. Matt Moore (3-7) pitched seven strong innings for his first win in over a month, and the shaky Giants bullpen protected the lead. Julio Teheran (6-5) was up 2-0 and cruising toward his first home win since opening night at SunTrust Park, only to be let down by his defense in the eighth inning. The Braves were charged with three errors in all, the biggest coming when shortstop Dansby Swanson dropped a throw trying to turn a double play. On the very next pitch, Slater lined one into the right-field seats for his

second homer of the season. The Giants went on to score five runs in the inning, also taking advantage of throwing errors by reliever Ian Krol and first baseman Matt Adams. Mark Melancon worked the ninth for his 11th save in 15 chances.

PIRATES 7, BREWERS 3

Chad Kuhl got his first victory since April, Andrew McCutchen homered for the fifth time in seven games and the Pirates beat the Brewers. Jose Osuna's three-run homer highlighted the Pirates' six-run first inning. McCutchen's two-run single and David Freese's RBI hit accounted for the other runs, all scored before Zach Davies (7-4) recorded a second out. Kuhl (2-6) went 12 starts without a win after beating Atlanta 6-4 on April 8. The young right-hander allowed two runs and seven hits over five innings, walked two and matched his career high of six strikeouts.

CUBS 4, PADRES 0

Anthony Rizzo hit another leadoff home run to help Mike Montgomery get his first win of the season in the Cubs' victory over the Padres. Rizzo homered on the second pitch from Jhoulyss Chacin (6-6) and was the third leading off in seven games since Rizzo was moved to the top of the order by manager Joe Maddon. In those seven games, he is 6 for 6 with a walk to open the first inning. It also extended his hitting streak to a career-high 14 games and came on the day Rizzo took a call from the league office about a collision at home plate with Padres catcher Austin Hedges the previous night. Rookie Ian Happ also homered for the Cubs. Montgomery (1-3) allowed three hits and two walks in six innings, striking out four.

ORIOLES 6, INDIANS 5

Manny Machado went 4 for 4, homered twice and drove in four runs to help the Orioles beat Cleveland and end the Indians' six-game winning streak. After the Orioles rallied from a 5-2 deficit to pull even, Machado doubled off Bryan Shaw (1-2) in the seventh inning and scored on a double by Adam Jones. Machado's first four-hit game since last August lifted his batting average 13 points to .227. He hit a solo homer in the first and tied it with a three-run drive in the fifth. Miguel Castro (1-0) worked out of a bases-loaded jam in the seventh to earn his first big league victory. Brad Brach pitched the ninth for his 13th save, retiring Yan Gomes on a deep fly ball with runners on the corners and two outs.

RANGERS 6, BLUE JAYS 1

Carlos Gomez homered in a four-run first inning, Nick Martinez allowed two hits while taking a shutout into the seventh and the Rangers beat the Blue Jays. Adrian Beltre had a solo homer in the eighth for his 2,960th career hit as the Rangers (35-35) got back to .500 while the Blue Jays (34-36) dropped to 0-8 this season when trying to reach the break-even mark for the first time. Toronto beat two-time

defending AL West champion Texas in a Division Series each of the past two seasons, as the AL East winner in 2015 and as a wild-card last year. Delino DeShields led off for the Rangers with a bunt single and scored on an RBI groundout by Beltre before Gomez's seventh homer and run-scoring hits from Jonathan Lucroy and Mike Napoli. Martinez (2-3) didn't allow more than one baserunner in any inning, giving up one run and striking out two in 6 1/3 innings for the right-hander's first win since May 19 at Detroit.

TWINS 9, WHITE SOX 7

Miguel Sano and Kennys Vargas each hit a long home run to help the Twins bounce back from a demoralizing sweep by beating the White Sox. Sano hit his 17th homer and Vargas added a three-run shot as the Twins overcame a rough outing from Ervin Santana (9-4), who gave up six runs on 10 hits and struck out six in five innings. Brandon Kintzler pitched the ninth for his 18th save in 21 tries. Jose Abreu went 4 for 5 with a home run and two doubles, and Avisail Garcia had a homer and two RBIs for the White Sox. Derek Holland (5-7) allowed seven runs and nine hits in 2 2/3 innings for Chicago.

ASTROS 8, ATHLETICS 4

George Springer hit a leadoff homer to spark a five-run first inning and the Astros once again made themselves at home in Oakland with a victory over the Athletics. Brian McCann and Yuli Gurriel each added an RBI double, and Alex Bregman hit a two-run single in the first against Sonny Gray (2-3) to give the Astros their eighth straight win at the Coliseum and 13th in the last 14 meetings with the A's overall. Francis Martes (2-0) was the beneficiary of the early outburst and won his second straight start to begin his career. Houston's heralded prospect allowed three runs and six hits in 5 2/3 innings. Chad Pinder hit a solo homer and Khris Davis and Jaycob Brugman added RBI hits for the A's, who cut the deficit to one but couldn't climb out of the early hole.

MARINERS 5, TIGERS 4, 10 INNINGS

Kyle Seager's double off the right-field wall drove home the winning run in the 10th inning to lift Seattle over Detroit. Seager's game-winning hit came on a night when his brother, Corey, hit three home runs for the Los Angeles Dodgers. Nelson Cruz walked on a 3-2 pitch from Justin Wilson (3-3) to open the 10th. Tyler Smith came on as a pinch runner and reached second with no outs on a wild pitch. Seager then turned on a fastball and lined it over the head of right fielder J.D. Martinez, allowing Smith to score easily. Steve Cishek (1-1) pitched the top of the 10th to get the win. Cruz had a two-run double, and Taylor Motter and Ben Gamel both homered for Seattle. Ian Kinsler, Justin Upton and J.D. Martinez all homered for the Tigers, who have lost four straight. — AP

MLB results/standings

Seattle 5, Detroit 4 (10 innings); LA Dodgers 12, NY Mets 0; Houston 8, Oakland 4; Colorado 4, Arizona 3; Boston 8, Kansas City 3; Minnesota 9, Chicago White Sox 7; Chicago Cubs 4, San Diego 0; Texas 6, Toronto 1; Pittsburgh 7, Milwaukee 3; San Francisco 6, Atlanta 3; Tampa Bay 6, Cincinnati 5; Washington 12, Miami 3; Baltimore 6, Cleveland 5; LA Angels 8, NY Yankees 3; St. Louis 8, Philadelphia 1 (11 innings).

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division			
	W	L	PCT	GB			
Boston	40	31	.563	-	Washington	43	28 .606
NY Yankees	38	30	.559	0.5	Atlanta	32	38 .457
Tampa Bay	38	36	.514	3.5	Miami	31	38 .449
Baltimore	35	35	.500	4.5	NY Mets	31	39 .443
Toronto	34	36	.486	5.5	Philadelphia	22	47 .319
Central Division				Central Division			
Cleveland	37	32	.536	-	Milwaukee	38	35 .521
Minnesota	35	33	.515	1.5	Chicago Cubs	36	34 .514
Kansas City	34	36	.486	3.5	Pittsburgh	33	38 .465
Detroit	32	38	.457	5.5	Louis	32	37 .464
Chicago White Sox	31	38	.449	6	Cincinnati	30	40 .429
Western Division				Western Division			
Houston	48	24	.667	-	Colorado	47	26 .644
LA Angels	37	37	.500	12	LA Dodgers	46	26 .639
Texas	35	35	.500	12	Arizona	44	27 .620
Seattle	36	37	.493	12.5	San Diego	28	44 .389
Oakland	31	40	.437	16.5	San Francisco	27	46 .370

Sports

Coach Gatland to curb chat ahead of All Blacks Test



Atlanta Hawks send center Dwight Howard to Hornets



THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2017

HEAVYWEIGHTS GERMANY AND CHILE CLASH AT CONFED CUP

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LONDON: Luxembourg's Gilles Muller serves to France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga on day three of the The Queen's Club tennis tournament in London, yesterday. — AP

TSONGA LATEST STAR TO SLUMP AT QUEEN'S

LONDON: Jo-Wilfried Tsonga became the latest star to crash out of Queen's Club as the world number 10 was beaten 6-4, 6-4 by Luxembourg's Gilles Muller yesterday. After world number one Andy Murray, three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka and former Wimbledon finalist Milos Raonic all endured shock first-round defeats on Tuesday, it was Tsonga's turn to suffer a surprise second-round exit.

Fifth-seeded Tsonga is traditionally a powerful force on grass and finished as Queen's runner-up in 2011, while twice

appearing in the Wimbledon semi-finals.

But the 32-year-old, who has won titles in Lyon, Marseille and Rotterdam in 2017, was out of sorts from start to finish against the big-serving Muller.

It took Muller just 69 minutes to hand Tsonga another frustrating loss on the heels of his embarrassing first-round exit against Renzo Olivo at the French Open.

"Sometimes you cannot do anything because the guy in front of you is doing the right things to make you play in a bad way," Tsonga said. "I played two matches here.

That's life. I'll try to play better in Wimbledon. "I have to put a little bit more energy in my game."

Muller's impressive display maintained his recent surge, which has seen the 34-year-old win the 's-Hertogenbosch grass-court tournament last week and reach a career-high ranking of 26.

Muller is in the quarter-finals at the Wimbledon warm-up event for a third successive year and will play former Queen's champion Sam Querrey or Australia's Jordan Thompson for a place in the last four.

Grigor Dimitrov fought back to avoid becoming yet another big name casualty as the Bulgarian world number 11 defeated France's Julien Benneteau 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Dimitrov won Queen's in 2014 and, given the way the tournament has unfolded, the sixth seed must fancy his chances of claiming the title again.

The 26-year-old was pushed hard by the world number 87 in almost two hours on court in searing heat, but he battled through to set up a quarter-final clash with Australian wild card Thanasi Kokkinakis or

Russia's Daniil Medvedev.

It is the first time Dimitrov has made the last eight of an ATP event since Rotterdam in February.

Donald Young reached the Queen's quarter-finals for the first time as the American world number 55 defeated Serbia's Viktor Troicki 6-3, 6-4.

Young, who arrived at Queen's on a five-match losing streak, faces former US Open champion Marin Cilic or American qualifier Stefan Kozlov with a semi-final berth at stake. — AFP

MUGURUZA SURVIVES SCARE IN TAKING FIRST STEP ON GRASS

BIRMINGHAM: Former Wimbledon finalist Garbine Muguruza suffered a scare before taking the first early steps that may help her forget her ordeal in losing her French Open title 10 days ago. The sixth seeded Spaniard was at times in serious difficulties during her survival by 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 against Elizaveta Kulichkova, a Russian qualifier, in the first round of the Aegon Classic, a Wimbledon warm-up tournament.

Kulichkova is slender of build but packs a tremendous wallop with her ground strokes on both sides, and had also had three qualifying matches to help her get used to the grass. She frequently forced Muguruza to scramble and plunge in different directions, unable to impose her elegant game on the rally. When Kulichkova broke back in the final set with a chance to serve for 5-5 the match could have gone in any direction.

"I often felt like a rookie out there," admitted Muguruza. "It was like a cat fight. She's very powerful, but I kept my concentration and spirit and I turned things around." It had taken Muguruza four or five days to start afresh after her loss in Paris to Kristina Mladenovic in an atmosphere that had caused her to make strong criticisms of the hostile crowd.

She claims she has put it behind her, but allowed herself one more comment on her trauma on her arrival here. "Tennis matches should not be like football," she said. "People should be respectful."

Muguruza does though believe she is a better player than when she reached the Wimbledon final two years ago. "I am much more experienced and less emotional," she reckoned. "Before I was super-hyped, but now I am more comfortable with situations. They don't take me by surprise now. I expect things more than before." She next plays Alison Riske, the world number 45 from the United States who is at her best on grass, and has previously reached the semi-final of this tournament.

Earlier Kvitova, the two-time Wimbledon champion,



BIRMINGHAM: Czech Republic's Petra Kvitova returns a shot to Great Britain's Naomi Broady during day three of the tennis Classic at Edgbaston Priory, Birmingham, England, yesterday. — AP

made a winning comeback to her beloved grass with a 6-2, 6-3 2 win over her fellow Czech Tereza Smitkova. Not that Kvitova will consider this a step towards an attempt on a third Wimbledon title just yet. More importantly it continued to raise hopes that after the much-publicised injuries inflicted upon her left hand by an intruder in her home she might yet regain many of the qualities her impressively forthright game.

At the age of 27, and after six months on the sidelines, this was only the third match in her comeback, but there were moments when Kvitova the ball almost as well as ever. There were also mistakes, but these became fewer and less bothersome the longer the match went on.

Kvitova had come away from her comeback tournament, the French Open where she won only one match, with an empty feeling. Now she was happy, she said, an

emotion apparently shared by others, particularly when the music signalling her capture of the first set was left on so long that it delayed the onset of the second by an entire minute.

"I love to be playing on grass, I have to be glad I am playing the game I love again, and yes, I am happy with the way I am playing," she said. "I hope my coaches are too. "Of course I still have to be careful about things. I don't want to get inflammation," she said of the damage which apparently included damage to all five fingers and two tendons. "I came here early to practise and try to do the right things."

If Kvitova has recovered enough of her former brilliance to reach the semi-finals, her path will have been smoothed by the exit of another top 10 player in her half. — AFP

BECKER DECLARED BANKRUPT

LONDON: Former German tennis star Boris Becker has been declared bankrupt by a court in London after failing to pay a "substantial" long-standing debt since 2015.

Laywers for the the three-time Wimbledon champion pleaded with a Bankruptcy Court registrar yesterday to allow Becker a "last chance" to pay off the debt.

But Registrar Christine Derrett, who recalled watching Becker play on Centre Court, ruled there was a lack of credible evidence the outstanding payment would be forthcoming and refused to adjourn the case. "One has the impression of a man with his head in the sand," she said of the six-time major winner after making the bankruptcy order following a brief hearing.

The bankruptcy application was made by private bankers Arbuthnot Latham & Co in connection with a judgment debt owed them by Becker dating back to 2015.

The German's lawyers had argued there was sufficient evidence to show that he would be able to pay the debt soon through a refinancing arrangement, involving remortgaging a property in Mallorca, which was expected to raise six million euros (\$6.7 million).

His advocate told the registrar his instructions from Becker were that it was expected the deal would be approved by a Spanish bank in approximately one month.

Becker's advocate said his client was not likely to benefit from bankruptcy and it could have an adverse effect on his "image". But the judge responded: "He should have thought about that a long time ago."

She added: "It is not often the case that a professional person has a judgment (debt) outstanding against them since October 2015. This is a historic debt." Becker split with former world number one Novak Djokovic last December following three successful years together, the Serb winning six of his 12 Grand Slam titles with Becker as coach. — AFP



Boris Becker



ASIA STOCKS HIT BY ENERGY FIRMS AS OIL DIVES



NEW DELHI: In this June 15, 2017 photo, employees wait for customers at a toy shop in Khan Market. —AP photos

INDIA SWITCHES TO SINGLE TAX

SHOPKEEPERS RUSHING TO COMPLY WITH CHANGES

NEW DELHI: The daily bustle of tourists and shoppers has died down in an upscale market in central New Delhi, but a toy shop owner is still busy poring over new Indian tax rules that take effect next month. The new tax regime - replacing a messy mix of state and federal taxes built up over seven decades of Indian commerce - will affect the final price of every board game and baseball bat in Sanjiv Mehra's cramped shop in Khan Market. The government promises that the transition to a single, nationwide tax on goods and services will streamline business and boost the economy. Mehra is trying to figure out how it will all work. "This is such a major tax reform, but there has been little effort to explain how it works to the traders," Mehra said while he and his son sorted through piles of invoices, receipts and price lists, trying to decide how each item should be taxed under the new system. The government published lists last month of how almost every item for sale in India, from shampoo to tea to automobiles, should be taxed within four broad categories - at rates of 5 percent, 12 percent, 18 percent or 28 percent. It had already ordered all businesses in January to adopt or upgrade cash registers and computer systems so they are able to file tax returns that comply with the new tax regime.

For millions of tiny neighborhood shops that often don't even use a calculator, this technology leap seems nearly impossible, and many hoped the July 1 rollout date would be delayed. "It's a tough time for small traders like us," the gray-haired Mehra said. "The government says we should all become computer savvy. Then give us the time to do so."

Most Indians have grown accustomed to the array of taxes slapped on every transaction. After a restaurant meal, for example, a customer is presented with a bill that includes a value-added tax, a service tax and a service charge. A bill for electricity also demands payment of an education tax and a fee for public sanitation. Big businesses are also worried they'll take a hit. Those producing goods in the highest 28 percent tax bracket - including sodas, shampoos and household appliances - say the new categories are unfair.

"This increase will have a negative ripple effect and hurt the entire ecosystem of farmers, retailers, distributors and bottlers in India," the Indian Beverage Association said last month. Unbranded food staples including vegetables, milk, eggs and flour will be exempt from sales tax, along with health and education services. Tea, edible oils, sugar, textiles and baby formula will attract a 5

percent tax. Luxury items including motorcycles, perfume and shampoo will be taxed at 18 percent or higher. They account for about 19 percent of all taxable items.

Long time coming

India's sales tax reform has been a long time coming. First proposed in 2003, the idea was bogged down for years in bipartisan debate, with various governments trying to push it forward while opposition politicians dragged it back. Before Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatya Janata Party came to power three years ago, they were staunchly against the move.

Now, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and others in Modi's government are promising it will boost the economy by a full 2 percent by making taxation more efficient and bringing small traders into the mainstream economy. Jaitley has acknowledged there may be "teething troubles" with small businesses as well as state governments still scrambling to get ready. But he said the effort would eventually help reduce rampant tax evasion.

Overall, financial analysts agree. Applying uniform sales taxes should draw more revenue without singling out any classes or sections of society,

they say. Only 12.5 million Indians - or 1 percent of the population - pay income taxes. Many evade taxes by hiding profits within antiquated accounting systems, while hundreds of millions are simply too poor and don't earn enough to qualify as income tax payers. With the new Goods and Services Tax, or GST, "we can expect indirect tax collection to increase by 30 to 40 percent," said tax adviser Suresh Rohira, a partner at Grant Thornton India, a consulting firm in Mumbai.

Some will suffer

Some will necessarily suffer. Manufacturing centers in the states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat are bracing for losses as taxes are charged at the point of consumption, though the federal government said it would reimburse those losses for five years.

Most of India's 29 states have passed local laws to implement the new tax regime, but some have pleaded for more time. The government last week dismissed that idea, but at least one industry grouping - the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India - urged a delay, saying the government's own computer networks are not yet ready for the change.

The Finance Ministry said preparations are on

track for implementation on July 1, but that authorities would show leniency toward businesses filing online until Sept 1. In some parts of India, business associations are holding workshops for small and medium-size businesses on how to get ready for the new regime. "Nobody can anticipate all the problems in implementing such a major overhaul," said economist Rajiv Kumar of the Palhe India Foundation, a New Delhi-based think tank.

Indian businesses are also still recovering from the government's snap decision to remove 86 percent of its currency from circulation overnight on Nov 8. In the months that followed, India replaced the old currency notes with newly designed bills. But the move caused chaos within the country's cash-dependent economy, hurting industries like construction and tourism, and hitting poor people the hardest.

Still, Kumar said India is right to push forward with the new tax regime, even if it is painful. "Traders will not willingly accept any regularization of their business activities," said Kumar, a former economic adviser to the Finance Ministry. "Given the magnitude of the reform, the way forward is to take the plunge - implement the GST - and deal with the problems as they come up." —AP

AFTER TOPPLING APPLE IN CHINA, OPPO NOW EYES WORLD MARKET

DONGGUAN: With its army of salespeople and vast network of outlets, a relatively new smartphone maker has exploded in popularity to overtake global giants Apple and Samsung in China's market and now it has its eye on the West.

Oppo began life selling DVD players in the southern manufacturing hub of Dongguan a little more than a decade ago and only broke into the handset market in 2011. But with an aggressive marketing strategy and concentration on bricks-and-mortar stores in small and medium-sized cities rather than relying on online customers-sales have soared. Last year it had a market share of 16.8 percent making it the China market leader and while a slip in the first three months of 2017 put it just behind local rival Huawei, according to market analyst IDC, it remains well ahead of Apple and Samsung. Globally it ranks fourth behind Samsung, Apple and Huawei.

While its rivals focus on the premium end of the

smartphone market in major cities and online, Oppo makes relatively cheap devices-its latest model is less than half the price of an iPhone 7. Oppo also sells them in actual shops. It has 200,000 outlets across China less than 10 percent of its purchases are made online-while retailers are offered generous commissions in exchange for promoting the brand.

"In small cities, consumers unfamiliar with smartphones need to see and touch the devices and to have salespeople there to help them," said Yi Jun, Oppo's international sales director. At the company's factory in Guangdong province, Oppo handsets are submitted to a series of durability tests including one-meter drops and temperature changes ranging from -40 degrees Celsius to 85 degrees Celsius. "Technology is essential for meeting consumers' expectations," Yi said, pointing to Oppo's fast-charging ability, high-definition camera lens and sleek design.

'Brand ambassadors'

Now Oppo's rivals are starting to follow suit. Chinese brand Xiaomi, which lost significant market share in 2016, has been relying on the web for sales of its top-of-the-range smartphones. But in February it announced plans to go back to old-fashioned selling techniques with plans to open 1,000 stores by 2020 in the hope of reversing its fortunes.

As competitors play catch up, analysts warn Oppo must maintain its momentum to stay on or near the top. It needs to continue expanding its sales network and offering competitive products, said Mo Jia, an analyst at technology research firm Canalys. Oppo has also been boosting its sales abroad, including emerging markets in Southeast Asia where its share more than doubled to 13.2 percent last year-by far the biggest increase among its rivals, IDC data shows. —AFP



SHENZHEN: In this picture taken on May 9, 2017, men holding smartphones stand in front of an Oppo shop. —AFP



ALGHANIM MOTORS LAUNCHES THE COMPLETELY REDESIGNED AND REENGINEERED ALL-**New 2017 Honda CR-V**

Honda Alghanim, the exclusive distributor of Honda cars, motorcycles and marine equipment in Kuwait, announced the launch of the All-New 5th Generation CR-V. The completely redesigned and reengineered 2017 CR-V boasts of bold new styling, a more premium interior and a host of new features and technologies aimed at enhancing CR-V's status as the outright benchmark in the highly popular compact SUV segment.

The New CR-V targets the highest levels of quality and driving refinement in its class with top class steering precision, ride comfort, body control and cabin quietness. The New CR-V comes in four grades namely, DX and LX in 2 Wheel Drive (2WD) and EX and Touring in All Wheel Drive (AWD).

New Powertrain and Chassis Technology:

At the heart of the 2017 CR-V is a 2.4-litre DOHC, direct injected i-VTEC engine that is mated to a smooth shifting and sporty continuously variable transmission (CVT) with Honda G-Shift control logic. The 2.4-litre engine generates 184-horsepower @ 6400rpm and a torque of 244NM @ 3900rpm. The fuel consumption statistics of the CR-V are 15.5km/L for the DX and LX grades and 14.7km/L for the EX and Touring grades.

The all-new body and chassis design in the 2017 CR-V provides more agile and confident handling, greater drive refinement and superior overall versatility. Its front

The All New CR-V comes in the below exterior and interior colors for all the grades:

Exterior Colors:
White Diamond Pearl
Lunar Silver Metallic
Modern Silver Metallic
Crystal Black Pearl
Basque Red Pearl

Color Availability

Dark Olive Metallic
Obsidian Blue Pearl
Sandstorm Metallic
Gun Metal Metallic

Interior Colors
Ivory
Black

MacPherson strut and rear multi-link suspension utilize specially tuned low-friction dampers, with both FWD and AWD models including tubular front and solid rear stabilizer bars that promote quick turn-in and flatter cornering. Dual-pinion, variable ratio Electric Power Steering (EPS) also contributes to the CR-V's direct and satisfying steering feel.

Bold and Sophisticated Exterior Styling:

The CR-V heads in a new fresh direction with crisper and sharper front-end design elements such as new aggressively styled headlights surrounded by wing shaped LED Day Time Running Light (DRL) array on all grades. The CR-V's new windswept front-end appearance also includes signature Honda LED headlights (touring only). Wide muscular fenders with athletic wheel arch-

es, longer wheelbase and short rear overhang give the 2017 CR-V a more sophisticated and athletic presence. Perfectly straddling the line between bold design and modern sophistication, this is the perfect SUV for any lifestyle.

The New CR-V also features distinct LED taillights and exciting wheel options in 17 inches (DX and LX grades) and 18 inches (EX and Touring Grades) that help it stand out whether sitting still or taking off. It also includes a Power Programmable Tailgate, which opens and closes at the push of a button with added tailgate height-adjustability feature (available on Touring grade only) which can be customized for drivers of all heights. Other notable standard features include power door mirrors, side mirror LED indicators, rear fog lights, headlight off timer, various chrome garnishes and auto rain sensing wipers (Touring only).

Premium, Spacious and Technologically Advanced Interior Styling:

The New CR-V raises the bar for interior refinement and utility through its completely redesigned cockpit and innovative premium features. The more spacious cabin, with top-in-class interior space and the best rear seat legroom in its class, features upgraded materials throughout, including a new soft-touch instrument panel and more intricately stitched seats. A color TFT driver information interface (DII) center meter display adds to the handsome new design aesthetic.

With the new Easy Fold Down and 60/40 split rear seat design, the CR-V interior is incredibly versatile with room for five people and a substantial amount of cargo of various sizes.

The CR-V offers the latest in vehicle connectivity and audio performance with a new generation of advanced technologies. The DX and LX grades have a 5-inch Colour Screen Audio and the EX and Touring grades have a 7-inch touch screen Display Audio interface with Android operating system™ that now features a physical volume knob as well as an available Navigation system. The 7-inch touch screen Display Audio is compatible with Apple CarPlay™ and AndroidAuto™ platforms, giving customers seamless integration of key smartphone features and functions, including smartphone powered GPS navigation and voice controlled search capabilities.

The clean and elegantly laid out dash-

board presents advanced driving technology placing essential information directly in the line of sight. The DII supplies a wide range of information such as average fuel consumption, AWD torque identification, turn-by-turn navigation and Driver Attention Monitor. The Driver Attention Monitor is designed to detect driver fatigue and alert the driver when exhibiting diminished attention to the road with a series of visual and audio alerts.

The Honda LANEWATCH™ feature in EX and Touring grades, uses a camera located in the passenger door mirror to display a clear image of the lanes and any vehicles that are on the lane on the 7-inch Display Audio screen. The Multi Angle Rearview Camera with dynamic guidelines shows steering input direction, to ensure you park safely and quickly.

Some of the key comfort and convenience features available on the New CR-V include a smart entry and remote engine start (LX, EX and Touring only), single zone air conditioning in DX and dual-zone climate controls in the remaining grades, rear A/C ducts in all grades, Auto Dimming Rear View Mirror (EX and Touring only), Electronic Parking Brake (EPB) with Brake Hold function, front USB ports, rear 2.5A USB charging ports and front passenger seat with 4-way power adjustment and driver's seat with 8-way power adjustment and 4-way power lumbar support.

Advanced Safety:

The all-new 2017 CR-V utilizes Honda's next-generation Advanced Compatibility Engineering™ (ACE™) body structure. 2017 CR-V targets the highest available collision safety ratings, including an NCAP 5-star Overall Vehicle Score from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and a TOP SAFETY PICK+ rating from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS).

The 2017 CR-V utilizes an Electronic Brake Booster (EBB), which replaces the conventional vacuum Brake Booster. The EBB motor is controlled by a microprocessor that monitors the vehicle speed as well as the pressure the driver applies to the brake pedal, building superior hydraulic pressure more quickly and with less pedal effort in all braking situations.

Other Honda active-safety features such as Vehicle Stability Assist (VSA) with Traction Control Systems (TCS), Anti-Lock Brake Systems (ABS), Electronic Brake Distributor (EBD), Agile Handling Assist, Tire Pressure Monitor System (TPMS), Brake Over Ride System and Hill Start Assist (HSA). Rear Parking Sensors are present in LX, EX and Touring grades.

Honda Alghanim invites all its customers and enthusiasts to visit one of the two Honda Alghanim showrooms located in Al-Rai and Shuwaikh to discover the all-new 2017 CR-V. The Ramadan timings for the showrooms are as follows: Honda Alghanim showroom in Al-Rai area operates from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM and from 8:00 PM until midnight, Saturday to Friday. Shuwaikh showroom operates from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM and from 8:00 PM until midnight from Saturday to Thursday. The cars service center waiting lounge offers entertainment and comfort for customers, digital satellite TV, free wireless internet and relaxing massage chairs. The service center operates from Saturday to Wednesday from 7:30 AM to 8:30 PM, from 7:30 AM to 6:30 PM on Thursdays, and from 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM on Fridays.





BEHBEHANI COMPANY ORGANIZES RAMADAN GHABQA FOR ISUZU CLIENTS

KUWAIT: Mohammad Saleh & Reza Yousuf Behbehani - Isuzu's dealer in Kuwait - has organized its seventh consecutive Ramadan Ghabqa for its customers at the Salwa Al-Sabah Hall. The attendance was remarkable, with an impressive turnout from major company owners and senior executives. The special guests enjoyed a pleasant evening which created a charming atmosphere that was commended by all.

It is worth noting that Isuzu is one of the world's top Japanese companies specialized in the development and manufacturing of commercial N-Series trucks and D-Max Pickup trucks, which are ideal partners for employers and individuals who are looking to maximize their business potential. Isuzu continuously strive to raise the industry's standard in trading mechanisms, designed in accordance with the global standards for safety, economy and environment. The event featured a special video presentation, which focused on the technological developments in the truck and vehicle industry and its enthusiasm to enhance its capabilities and efficiency, including safety and safety systems.

Representatives from Isuzu Regional Office in Dubai - Mr Piyapong Tennapei and Mr Kenji Hiseada - attended the Event and took the opportunity to praise Behbehani for its distinctive achievements and to celebrate a partnership of over 41 years. Mohammed Saleh & Reza Yousuf Behbehani, the exclusive agent for Isuzu trucks in Kuwait, have been recognized for their outstanding performance on two prestigious awards at the Isuzu Middle East agents confer-



ence held in Dubai this year, "SERVICE GOLD CATEGORY AWARD" & "SPARE PARTS SILVER CATEGORY AWARD" for the year 2016. The company has been awarded "Dealer Number one in the Middle East", this award is granted by Isuzu for the first time in its history in 2015.

Several factors paved the way to continue receiving such prestigious awards have been taken into account in the evaluation of the dealer, including sales growth, sales lounge, expectations system accuracy, excellence in the show brand, effective means of communication and marketing, the efficiency of experimental drive system, the level of maintenance and after-sales service. The company has achieved excellence in most of these factors, which paved the way to win awards year after year.



People stand outside a Whole Foods Market in Upper Saint Clair, Pa. Amazon's planned \$13.7 billion acquisition of Whole Foods signals a massive bet that people will opt more for the convenience of online orders and delivery or in-store pickup, putting even more pressure on the already highly competitive industry. —AP

SMALL FOOD MAKERS WONDER ABOUT THE AMAZON-WHOLE FOODS IMPACT

HOW MIGHT THIS DEAL AFFECT ME?

NEW YORK: Among the many questions being asked about Amazon's intended purchase of Whole Foods is one from small and medium-sized food manufacturers: How might this deal affect me? The unknowns include whether Amazon might change the grocery chain's food offerings, which at the moment include thousands of products made by small and mid-sized businesses. A key point for many companies is whether Whole Foods would place less of an emphasis on buying locally produced or innovative foods after the \$13.7 billion purchase, expected to become final later this year.

Whole Foods' buying strategy, which appeals to many consumers, has made it possible for small players to get products into regional stores. The company says between 10 percent and 20 percent of the products in each of its stores come from local producers. But activist investors who advocated a sale of Whole Foods also demanded that it cut the number of products it offers to lower its costs.

They contended that buying small amounts of so many food items eroded the company's profits. Gail Levy, who sells HFactor packaged water to stores including Giant's nearly 200 supermarkets in the East, has approached Whole Foods about her products and gotten some interest. With the Amazon deal pending, though, she says, "we just don't know how that's going to pan out and what it means for us, something good or bad."

HFactor is also sold on Amazon and doing well, says Levy, who's based in New York. "I can

only hope that having that status with Amazon will help us get into Whole Foods." Many experts believe Amazon would use its vast distribution system to help streamline Whole Foods' operations. That makes some food company owners who are courting the grocery chain more hopeful about their chances of success under Amazon. "They (Amazon) already have our gift boxes. It seems like it would be easier to loop that distribution system into Whole Foods," says Michael Volpatt, co-owner of Big Bottom Market in Guerneville, California, whose biscuit mixes are sold through Amazon.

Whole Foods has struggled in recent years with declining sales at established stores and increasing competition from big grocery chains across the country that have recognized the demand from consumers and are offering more natural and organic foods. Jeanne David, whose bread and pizza crust made primarily with cauliflower are sold in Whole Foods stores in the West, believes that Amazon's ownership will strengthen the chain and benefit suppliers.

"Amazon will give them the support they need, the financial stability, and Amazon will add to what they're currently doing," says David, owner of Goleta, California-based Outer Aisle Gourmet. Whatever changes Amazon makes, they're likely to be aimed at holding on to Whole Foods' current customers, says Mike Maher, CEO of Presenture, a company that helps food manufacturers sell their products to retailers. So he doesn't expect that a Whole Foods owned by Amazon would stop buying locally

produced food. However, being competitive on prices is part of Amazon's core culture, and buying larger quantities of a smaller number of products helps a retailer lower its overhead. So "instead of five choices of honey, there could be three," Maher says. He also expects that Amazon will demand lower prices from food manufacturers than Whole Foods has. "If I were a supplier, I would be concerned about profit margins," Maher says.

Meg Barnhart, who sells spices for slow cooking through both Amazon and Whole Foods, believes there's enough demand for natural or organic products that Whole Foods will continue to seek out ones that are unique. "It would be such a radical change if the company didn't go in that direction," said Barnhart, whose company, The Zen of Slow Cooking, is based in Lake Forest, Illinois. Her products are sold in 22 Whole Foods stores in the Chicago area. But because of the growing number of retailers courting the natural and organic food shopper, some food companies are bypassing Whole Foods.

Muuna, a company that makes single-serving containers of cottage cheese, is content selling in big chains in the Northeast. CEO Gerard Meyer says. He doesn't expect the Amazon-Whole Foods deal to have a big impact on his company for now. However, Meyer is interested in seeing whether Amazon, through its ownership of Whole Foods, can find a way to use its distribution system to deliver perishables like cottage cheese. "If they figure that out, it portends well even for brands like ours," he says. — AP



SKYTRAX WINS HAT-TRICK FOR ETIHAD AIRWAYS FIRST CLASS

ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways has once again been presented with three coveted awards for the World's Best First Class, Best First Class Onboard Catering, and Best First Class Airline Seat at the annual Skytrax World Airline Awards. The event was held at the Musee de l'Air et de l'Espace, as part of the bi-annual Paris Airshow.

The prestigious World Airline Awards are widely considered to be a global benchmark of airline excellence. Winners are chosen based on the votes and findings of a ten month survey of over 19 million air travelers from 105 countries. The survey covers over 325 airlines, from the largest international airlines to smaller domestic carriers, measuring quality standards for 41 KPIs across front-line product and service factors in the airport and onboard environments.

Linda Celestino, Etihad Airways Vice President Guest Experience Delivery, said: "This is a great honor for us - particularly as these awards mark the culmination of a global consumer satisfaction survey of millions of travelers around the world. Our First Class experience is unlike any other

and has been tailored around exact requirements of those who wish to enjoy a truly bespoke hospitality experience, with the finest in-flight dining and amenities, incomparable levels of privacy and the genuine warmth and care for which we are known.

"These awards not only recognize our drive for innovation and a superior guest experience, but also reinforce our commitment to First Class travel - an experience for which we have set the industry benchmark." In recent years, Etihad Airways has won numerous accolades for its First Class service and cabin designs. This also marks the third time the airline has won all three First Class award categories at the World Airline Awards.

Edward Plaisted, Chief Executive Officer of Skytrax, said: "Etihad Airways continues to be a market leader in first class air travel, illustrated by their excellent performance in this First Class section of the awards. It is a remarkable display of consistency to yet again secure this very prestigious set of awards and we congratulate them on this achievement."

GBK RED ACCOUNT HOLDERS ENJOY CINESCAPE SCREENS DURING EID

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank offers its red customers an exclusive opportunity to watch the latest movies at Kuwait National Cinema Company (KNCC) screens, during Eid Al Fitr break. Offer is valid between June 27th and July 1st 2017. New red customers, who open an account at the Avenues Mall, will be receiving a free ticket. During the period of the promotion, Gulf Bank will have a red booth by KNCC at the Avenues Mall to showcase its products and services to potential and existing customers.

Gulf Bank is also presenting its customers with a new feature "ePay" (Pay Bill) which allows customers to pay their mobile bills for Zain, Ooredoo, and Viva and buy iTunes and Google Play cards instantly using the new "ePay" service available on Gulf Bank's Online Banking and Mobile Banking App. red customers can now also transfer money from anyone, from any local bank into their Gulf Bank account.

Gulf Bank continuously looks for new and interesting initiatives to reward its loyal customer base over the year. Gulf Bank is committed to providing its red customers with

the right promotions that are tailored to meet their specific needs and to better enjoy their holidays. Gulf Bank is pleased to celebrate this occasion with the people of Kuwait.

Gulf Bank's red is an account for high school students, college and university students aged between 15 and 25. No minimum deposit or minimum balance charge is required to open a red account. Eligible customers will get the chance to enter the draw automatically and on a monthly basis, upon transferring their student allowances. Each month, a red iPhone 7, an iPad Pro, and an Apple Watch will be gifted to three lucky winners. The draws will run until January 2018.

In addition to the Apple prizes, students will have the opportunity to win a Fiat 500-Model 2017 at the annual car draw, upon transferring their allowance! Also, movie tickets at all Cinescape theatres will be available for only KD2 seven days a week, as well as red customers can shop from the USA or the UK with a dedicated company (edfa3ly) which provide mail box for internet shopping services from their website.

HEATWAVE SCORCHES EU, FROM LONDON TO SIBERIA

PARIS: Europe sizzled in a continent-wide heatwave yesterday, with London bracing for Britain's hottest June day since 1976 as Portugal battled to stamp out deadly forest fires. More than 1,000 firefighters were still fighting to control the flames that broke out in central Portugal at the weekend, killing 64 people.

Cooler weather was aiding their efforts, but thermometers were still hovering around 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit) — a level matched across oven-like swathes of Europe, including Italy, Austria, the Netherlands and even alpine Switzerland. Two forest fires have also broken out since Sunday on Croatia's southern Adriatic coast, prompting the authorities to evacuate 800 tourists, though the blazes have now been brought under control.

"We were scared, it's true," a Swedish tourist who gave her name only as Karolina told local media. "From the hotel room window it seemed like the fire was at our doors." As the northern hemisphere marked the summer solstice, firefighters were on alert in Austria, where revellers were due to celebrate the longest day of the year by lighting bonfires for the festival of Saint John. In Italy, forecasters say the current heatwave could turn out to be the most intense in 15 years, with temperatures around eight degrees above the seasonal average — 39 degrees Celsius in Milan and up to 30 in the Alps at an altitude of 1,000 metres (3,300 feet). A study released Monday warned that deadly heatwaves will become more and more common around the world even if the rise in temperatures is capped at 2.0 degrees Celsius as targeted by the Paris Agreement to combat climate change. "Even if we outperform the Paris targets, the population exposed to deadly heat will be about 50 percent by 2100," Camilo Mora, lead author of the study published in the journal Nature Climate Change, told AFP.

London sizzles

Britain was set to see its first five-day stretch of temperatures over 30 degrees in June since 1995. The thermometer was forecast to hit 34 Celsius in west London, a record for the month since 1976. In Guildford, southwest of the capital, a road surface melted on Tuesday, with motorists likening it to a bar of chocolate left out in the hot sun. At the prestigious Royal Ascot horse races, organisers said they were considering relaxing the strict dress code for the first time.

And a thunderstorm was looming over the Glastonbury Music Festival, threatening mud just as an expected 200,000 revellers begin pitching their tents. Music lovers in France were also braving the heat, as the annual Fete de la Musique—a nationwide celebration with thousands of free street performances — kicked off under an official heatwave declared across many areas of the country. The national postal service announced that its postmen would be calling on elderly and disabled residents living alone to check they were alright, with temperatures due to hit 37 Celsius in Paris.

A peak in pollution linked to the heat prompted police in the Paris region to reduce speed limits in some areas and divert heavy goods trucks, with the most polluting vehicles banned from the capital on Thursday. On Tuesday, the body of a 31-year-old man was pulled out of the Loire river in the central city of Tours after he got dragged down by the current while trying to cool down. In Russia, Siberia was also suffering a heatwave, with temperatures of up to 37 Celsius in the city of Krasnoyarsk, Channel One television reported. But at the other extreme, it was just one degree Celsius and snowing in Murmansk in northern Russia, the RIA Novosti news agency reported. Many residents are having to get by with no heating in their flats as centralised systems have been switched off for the summer. —AFP



Researchers from the Interuniversity Institute for Marine Sciences in the southern Israeli resort city Eilat monitor coral growth while scuba diving on June 12, 2017 in the Red Sea off Eilat. —AFP

IN THE RED SEA, CORAL REEFS CAN TAKE HEAT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

SCIENTISTS TRY TO UNLOCK THEIR SECRETS TO SURVIVAL

EILAT: In the azure waters of the Red Sea, Maoz Fine and his team dive to study what may be the planet's most unique coral: one that can survive global warming, at least for now. The corals, striking in their red, orange and green colors, grow on tables some eight meters underwater, put there by the Israeli scientists to unlock their secrets to survival.

They are of the same species that grows elsewhere in the northern Red Sea and are resistant to high temperatures. Fine's team dives in scuba gear to monitor the corals, taking notes on water-resistant pads. "We're looking here at a population of corals on a reef that is very resilient to high temperature changes, and is most likely going to be the last to survive in a world undergoing very significant warming and acidification of sea water," Fine said at his nearby office ahead of the dive.

Global warming has in recent years caused colourful coral reefs to bleach and die around the world—but not in the Gulf of Eilat, or Aqaba, part of the northern Red Sea. That is what has prompted Fine's work, both in the Red Sea and on its shores. At the Interuniversity Institute for Marine Sciences in the southern Israeli resort city of Eilat, dozens of aquariums have been lined up in rows just off the Red Sea shore containing samples of local corals.

A robot slowly dips its arms into each glass container, taking measurements and uploading them to a database. "We exposed corals to high temperatures over long periods of time, beyond the current peak summer temperatures and even beyond the model-based temperatures we predict for the end of the century," said Fine, a marine biology professor from Bar Ilan University in central Israel. He explained: "They didn't undergo bleaching."

Heat is on

According to Fine, the Gulf of Eilat corals fare well in heat thanks to their slow journey from the Indian Ocean through the Bab al-Mandab strait, between Djibouti and Yemen, where water temperatures are much higher. "Over the past 6,000 years they underwent a form of selection through a very, very hot body of water, and only those that could pass through that hot water body reached here, the northern Red Sea and

Gulf of Eilat," he said. The world just marked its three hottest years in modern times, with scientists pointing to increases in heat-trapping emissions such as carbon dioxide as a driving factor. Oceans also absorb about one-third of the carbon dioxide released by human activities, resulting in increasing acidification that is harmful to corals. Coral reefs, most famously Australia's Great Barrier Reef, are experiencing in recent years unabated mass bleaching and die-offs.

Often mistaken for a form of vegetation, corals "are in fact an animal that lives in symbiosis with an algae, a plant," said Jessica Bellworthy, a PhD student under Fine's supervision taking part in the Eilat research. Corals and algae "provide services for each other," with the algae providing "up to 90 percent of the coral animal's food" through photosynthesis, said Bellworthy, originally from Britain. "When ocean temperatures get too hot, this symbiosis, this relationship, breaks down," she said. "The algae is lost from the coral and causes the coral to look white," effectively "starving" it.

Losing coral reefs is not only bad news for

tourists diving to see their beauty and marine life swimming among them. Corals are important to "the whole balance of the eco-system," offering structure, food and protection to a variety of marine animals, Bellworthy said. Their rich chemical interactions have provided components for medications, including those for cancer and HIV patients, Fine said.

But while the coral reefs off Eilat and Aqaba may be able to survive global warming for now, they also face other risks. Fertilisers, pesticides and oil pollution "harm the corals and lower their resilience to high temperatures," Fine said, warning of plans to build fish pools that would stream nutrient waste into the Gulf of Eilat. The Israeli researcher stressed the need to join forces with countries that share the Red Sea. That would include not only Jordan and Egypt—the only two Arab states to have peace agreements with Israel—but also Saudi Arabia, with which Israel has no formal ties. "To safeguard this small body of water, we naturally need the cooperation of our neighbors since the reefs have no borders," Fine said. —AFP



LONDON: People relax in the hot weather in St James's Park. —AFP

ANTARCTIC RESEARCHERS TAKE ICY PLUNGE TO MARK SOLSTICE

SYDNEY: Antarctic researchers welcomed the winter solstice with an exhilarating plunge into icy waters yesterday as they look forward to brighter days after weeks of darkness. Expeditioners stationed at Australia's Davis station marked midwinter's day by taking a chainsaw to the ice, cutting a small pool and taking a dip in water with a temperature of -1.8 degrees Celsius (28.76 Fahrenheit). Davis station leader Kirsten le Mar said it was the halfway point for those wintering on the continent and a highlight of the Antarctic calendar.

"After three weeks of darkness, today marks the beginning of longer days in Antarctica, although it will still be 19 days before the sun starts to peek above the horizon here at Davis," she said. One of those who took the plunge was electrician Bryce Daniels, who described

his quick swim as "amazing". "There is the briefest of briefest moments where you slightly feel warm and then you work out that you are actually freezing instead," he said.

The winter solstice is the shortest day of the year and celebrations to mark the start of longer days date back over 100 years of exploration on the continent. Many of the 68 researchers working for Australia's Antarctic program joined in with the chilly festivities, which also included a sea-ice golf competition and theatrical performance. Several countries have territorial claims on Antarctica—viewed as a potential future source of huge mineral resources—although under a 1949 agreement the frozen continent is designated a scientific preserve. About 30 nations operate permanent research stations on the continent. —AFP

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PEACH GARDEN PROMOTES FRESH PEACHES IN KUWAIT

For the second year in a row and this year with the presence and support of the Greek embassy in Kuwait, the Peach Garden project lands in Kuwait to promote the European fresh peaches that produced in Greece and meet the industry decision makers to further boost the trade relations between both countries.

The 2017 version of the project has been launched in a press conference in presence of His Excellency Greek Ambassador in Kuwait, Andreas Papadakis, representatives from the Greek Association of Imathia's Agricultural Cooperatives Producers' Organization, Ghanima Al-Fahd, Macrobiotic expert and Kuwait media representatives and Novacert Ltd.

During the press conference, the speakers shed lights on the importance of this project in tying up business relations with Kuwait while providing an unparalleled opportunity to Kuwait importers to diversify their offerings to consumers. It also provided an insight for a nutrition angle on the importance of the goldstone fruit to maintain a healthy lifestyle system.

The Peach Garden is a European project promoting and increasing the marketing value of Greek fresh peaches in UAE, Saudi Arabian, Egyptian and Kuwait market. It was established by Greek Ministry of Rural Development & Food & the Greek Association of Imathia's Agricultural Cooperatives Producers Organizations as a result of the many Greek Agriculture Cooperatives that are active in the fresh produce sector.

The main purpose of this project has to do mainly with the wide recognition and presentation of Greek fresh fruits (peaches, nectarines, kiwis, apples, apricots etc) in these targeted countries. The participating companies come from a province of Greece which represent the vast majority of production from the peaches and general stone fruits.

More importantly the project for Kuwait enlists a series of promotional actions that has to do mainly with the product sampling in supermarkets in Kuwait, event presentation, as well public relations that include business missions from Greece to the targeted countries as well vice versa, visits to production units in Greece.

This year, 'Peach Garden' in Kuwait will be organizing a promotional event at 20 outlets for the prime aim to communicate the authenticity of Greek fresh peaches to Kuwait residents. One of the projects' main priorities is to better inform, introduce and increase daily consumption of fresh fruits from Greece while also develop and increase their qualitative value. To the same extent, the high priority of 'Peach Garden' is that Greek fresh fruits can obtain a high market share and can create a competitive advantage in the most populated area across Europe

due to their premium quality.

All the companies represented in 'Peach Garden' are specialized to some extent in the export of all kind of fresh fruits. The participating companies of this European project, under the legal form of Greek Association of Imathia's Agricultural Cooperatives Producers Organizations, are as follow: COOP MESI, VENUS GROWERS, AC MELIKI, AC NEOS ALIAKMON, ACN NAOUSA, ASOP EPIKOPI, AC EPIKOPI, ASEPOP NAOUSA.



TALABAT CELEBRATES THE SPIRIT OF RAMADAN WITH A NEW CAMPAIGN

On the occasion of the Holy Month, Talabat recently launched its newest Ramadan campaign, as part of its ongoing commitment towards the local community. Running throughout the entire month, the campaign sees a daily distribution of Iftar meal packages to individuals and families in need, with the aim of giving back to the community during this blessed month.

In partnership with the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society- Al-Qurain, this year's campaign provides wholesome, high-quality meals consisting of: rice, chicken or meat, Laban, dates and fruit. Accordingly, Talabat coordinated with one of its restaurant partners to prepare 200 Iftar meals every day. These meal packages are being distributed in Khaitan; where street workers, as well as anyone in need, can enjoy warm, nutritious meals for Iftar every day throughout Ramadan.

"Ramadan presents us with the per-

fect opportunity to interact with the community we operate in, the very same one that continues to support our ongoing successes. As the Holy Month of Ramadan is a time for generosity, through this initiative, we are delighted to team up with our local partners to give back to the community and truly make a difference, sharing the spirit of giving and caring with the local community," commented Abdulhamid Alomar, Chief Executive Officer of Talabat.

This campaign comes as part of Talabat's ongoing corporate social responsibility program, which stems from its belief in the importance of supporting charitable programs and its ongoing commitment towards the local community. Talabat has always been committed to organizing an array of different humanitarian initiatives and activities that aim at helping the less fortunate, particularly during the Holy Month of Ramadan, reflecting the true spirit of this Holy Month.

REGISTRATION FOR ALP EXTENDED

The Abdulaziz bin Humaid Foundation, which strives to shape a sustainable society driven by innovation leaders, announced that registration for the fifth edition of the Abdulaziz bin Humaid Leadership Program (ALP) will be extended to July 6th due to high demand. In just over a month, ALP has already received 320 applications.

The Abdulaziz bin Humaid Program provides young talents within the GCC with skills, knowledge and experience to be able to serve their nations and become successful leaders in the future. The program is designed in accordance with the best international practices in leadership and in collaboration with world's leading training and consultancy firms. The fourth edition of ALP concluded in May with a graduation ceremony that congratulated the success of all of its 20 exclusive participants.

Eng Marwan Bin Ghalita, Vice Chairman of the AAF Board Members, commented, "The Abdulaziz bin Humaid Foundation has taken the responsibility of nurturing and empowering young leaders by providing integrated programs where participants have a real opportunity to unleash their potential and have a positive impact on the community. Following the monumental success of ALP4, we are already receiving hundreds of applications from all over the GCC. As a result, we have decided to extend the period for registration."

He expressed his delight and gratitude for the support of His Highness Sheikh Humaid bin Rashid Al-Nuaimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ajman and HH Sheikh Ammar bin Humaid Al-Nuaimi, Crown Prince of Ajman and Chairman of the Executive Council. Registration is extended to July 6th for the fifth edition of ALP that will launch on the 8th of October. Following a review of the applications, the program will start interviewing potential candidates on the 10th of July. The next phase of the process is a psychometric test in August with the announcement of the final 20 candidates that have been accepted in September of 2017.

"We have continued to develop ALP to be one of



HH Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Humaid Al-Nuaimi

the most ambitious leadership programs in the GCC region, contributing to building capacity and nurturing the skills of young leaders. Key to the ongoing success and evolution of this program is its recruitment of applicants that are driven to be future leaders. We are looking forward to providing unique training opportunities for all the new participants and broaden the horizons of their true potential," added Eng Marwan Bin Ghalita.

Abdulaziz bin Humaid Leadership Program is an initiative under the umbrella of Abdulaziz bin Humaid Foundation, an organization that operates under the patronage and support of His Highness

Sheikh Humaid bin Rashid Al-Nuaimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Ajman, who stresses the importance of filling leadership positions with young candidates. The program is enthusiastically supported by His Highness Sheikh Ammar bin Humaid Al-Nuaimi, who monitors the progress of the program, which cultivates the skills of young GCC talents from both genders, aged between 25-35 with drive and determination. Registration for the fifth round of ALP is available and open for the next generation of innovators and leaders at www.abdulazizlp.com

SPECIAL EID OFFER AT MILLENNIUM HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTER

On the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr holiday, Millennium Hotel and Convention Centre Kuwait announced special offers on rooms in addition to the Eid brunch buffet at Lamar Restaurant. Furthermore, the hotel hosts several activities to spread the Eid joy among children, and allow guests to relish in the best hospitality this season.

Millennium Hotel and Convention Centre Kuwait presents on the first three days of Eid a three-day Eid Al-Adha Brunch at Lamar International Restaurant, featuring a wide selection of distinguished dishes, seafood and mixed grills, in addition to appetizers and desserts from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Meanwhile, several activities were prepared for children, including face painting, hair color, dancing with cartoon characters, magic show, hand activities, coloring and many others.

Dani Saleh, Area General Manager, Millennium & Copthorne Hotels - Kuwait, said: "We would like to greet all our guests on this vigorous occasion of Eid. We are looking forward to welcome them and hope that they will enjoy the variety of services that our hotel offers." Millennium Hotel and Convention Centre Kuwait is located in a strategic place in Salmiya, and a few meters away from the best shopping malls, recreational sites and restaurants in Kuwait.

It is considered one of the most luxurious 5-star hotels that serve businessmen and tourists, and the highest level in terms of hosting conferences and exhibitions. Millennium Hotel and Convention Centre Kuwait provides 295 rooms and suites equipped with the latest technology, including high-speed free Wi Fi, gym, pool, sauna and Spa. It also provides an integrated business center, secretarial services and office facilities. Furthermore, it contains three restaurants as well Lamar, Nara lounge and the library Cafe to ensure best moments.



AUK ART & GRAPHIC DESIGN DEPARTMENT HOLDS 10TH ANNUAL CAPSTONE EXHIBITION

The Art & Graphic Design Department at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) concluded its 10th annual Graphic Design Capstone Exhibition which took place recently at the Promenade Cultural Center at The Promenade Mall in Hawally. The Exhibition offered senior students an opportunity to display their creative work, which covered to a range of topics that included social and cultural awareness, corporate identity and entrepreneurship, to experts from the industry and the public.

Under the supervision of graphic design professors, Maryam Hosseinnia and Marcella Kulchitsky, participating students researched the topics of their choice and used graphic design as the medium to address their topics to target their audiences. The projects were then evaluated by the industry experts based on their creativity and presentation, their ability to conduct and use graphic design research strategy effectively, and their ability to plan and implement a compelling graphic design display.

Hosseinnia explained that the Graphic Design Capstone Exhibition showcases the accumulation of all the learning outcomes rooted in the course offerings in the Graphic Design curriculum. "When students enter in the Art & Graphic Design program, often, they are quiet or shy. By the time they reach to capstone, they gained a personal voice and able to visually communicate through text and image, and they have a strong sense of critical thinking about their environment and their role as designers."

As educators, our aim is to teach them about the importance of principles in design, to make them aware that through good design they can bring change within their small community and at large. They [the participating students] have a clear sense of purpose and direction as citizens of this community to advance further in their stud-



ies or professional practice," she said

Held on an annual basis, the Graphic Design Capstone Exhibition brings together visitors from the field of graphic design, including experts from graphic design studios, publishing houses, film and video production companies, advertising, and multimedia firms. Richard Halabi, Creative Director of Horizon FOB Kuwait, who has been serving as exhibition jury since 2014, found this year's exhibition exceptional in many ways.

"I have served as a jury since 2014 and with each year the students were getting better but this year they were exceptional in executing the concepts, ideas, presentations and designs. Also, I found that the idea of moving the exhibition out of campus to a gallery gave me the feeling as if I was in a design exhibition and not a capstone," he explained.

"With this year's Graphic Design Capstone Exhibition, we are celebrating a few extra things at AUK. First this is our largest gradu-

ating class, also, it's the tenth year graphic design is a degree program at AUK and finally, this is our first Graphic Design Capstone Exhibition being held off campus at our own alumnus' beautiful art gallery, the Promenade Cultural Center. We have a lot to celebrate along with the senior design students' final projects that demonstrate their wide ranging skills and creative abilities. At the opening event, students were already receiving job offers! Can't get much better than this!" Kulchitsky expressed.

AUK's Graphic Design Capstone Exhibition presents an opportunity for senior students to fully incorporate their design strengths and learning into a focused, extended, process of research and visual expression. Senior student Fajer Alfadallah, who created the "Voice of Women" campaign concept, explained that her project was an effort to advocate for gender equality in Kuwait. Alfadallah remarked that the process of working on her project helped her evolve on the personal level. "Throughout my project, I did a lot of research and I met with a lot of people inside and outside of Kuwait.

The experience has educated me a lot and made me stronger as a woman," she said. Senior student Nada Al-Kharashi, developed a project concept called "Ta3reeb", which was based on her observation that the GCC region lacks on Arabic type design. "In working on previous projects, it was very challenging for me to find Arabic fonts that were elegantly developed, so I decided to come up with a new Arabic font, inspired by the gulf region," she said.

The American University of Kuwait (AUK) is an independent, private, equal opportunity, and co-educational liberal arts institution of higher education. The educational, cultural and administrative structure, methods and standards of AUK are based on the American model of higher learning. The language of instruction is English.



GOSSIP

Steinfeld wants Sheeran collaboration

Hailee Steinfeld wants to collaborate with Ed Sheeran. The 'Starving' singer would love to work with the 'Castle On The Hill' hitmaker as he is "amazing and unbelievably talented". She said: "One day ... I love Ed so much. He is amazing and unbelievably talented." And the 20-year-old singer and actress also spoke out in criticism of sexism in the showbiz industry. She told the Metro's Guilty Pleasures: "I have seen it time and time again. Maybe it's been happening for a lot longer than I have been able to understand, but now that I do, it's important to band together." Meanwhile, Hailee previously revealed she is "obsessed" with music. Reflecting on her transition from movies into music, she said: "The idea of performing and entertaining [was already there]. I started with both [acting and singing] around the same time. The acting kind of happened first, and the music was more of a side project until I did that little movie called

'Pitch Perfect 2', which gave me the opportunity to go into music, which I've been doing the last few years and I'm obsessed." However, the brunette beauty admits it is "challenging" balancing her acting and singing careers. She explained: "It's definitely been a balancing act for the last couple of months. It's challenging. I'm finding the more I do both at the same time, I see how they conflict. Timing wise, it's hard. Luckily, it's been pretty seamless up until this point. I'm happiest when I'm doing both at the same time. I don't see myself doing one and not the other. Whether it's creating a soundtrack for a film or singing, whatever it is, I would love to integrate the two in the future!"



Stormzy raps emotional opening lines on Grenfell Tower charity single

Stormzy was given the honor of having the first verse on the Grenfell Tower charity single 'Bridge Over Troubled Water'. The 23-year-old grime superstar - who hails from Croydon, London, and was born Michael Owuo Jr. - spits lyrics about the horrific tragedy last week, which saw a 27-storey block of flats in west London engulfed in flames, leaving over 70 people dead. The 'Big for Your Boots' hitmaker pays a touching tribute to those who lost their lives saying he will "never forget them" and will be there for the victims when "troubled waters" arise. He emotionally raps: "Yeah. I don't know where to begin so I will start by saying I refuse to forget you. I refuse to be silenced. I refuse to neglect you. That's for every last soul up in Grenfell even though I've never even met you. That could have been my mum's house or that could have been my nephew. That could have been me up there

waiving my white plain tee up there with my friends on the ground trying to see up there. I just hope that you rest and are free up there. I can't feel your pain but I see what it is. I went to the block just to chill with the kids. When troubled waters coming running past I'm gonna be right there..." James Blunt then chimes in with the original lyrics to the Simon & Garfunkel classic followed by Emeli Sande and Bastille. Paloma Faith has a line, but Emeli has the biggest part in the song and reappears throughout. James Arthur and Ella Eyre then sing their dramatic parts, before the star-studded contributors, which includes Robbie Williams, Leona Lewis, Rita Ora, Craig David, The Who's Roger Daltrey, The Libertines' Carl Barat, Matt Terry, Stereophonics frontman Kelly Jones, Louisa Johnson, Gareth Malone, Geri Horner and Jessie J among many more, perform the climatic chorus. They collectively sing: "Like a bridge over troubled water, I will lay me down." And Emeli finished off the 3.54 track repeating the poignant words. Instrumentation is provided by 'Britain's Got Talent' winner Tokio Myers, The Who guitarist Pete Townshend, Nile Rodgers and Queen's Brian May. The recording of the track, which will raise money for the survivors of the blaze who have been left homeless and bereaved, was launched by 'X Factor' boss Simon Cowell who lives nearby Grenfell Tower and was left heartbroken by the disaster. The 57-year-old music mogul wrote on Twitter: "Thank you to everyone for their help and support in making this happen. (sic)" Artists for Grenfell's 'Bridge Over Troubled Waters' is available to download on iTunes and stream on Spotify, and donations can be made to help by visiting artistsforgrenfell.com.



Geri Horner proud to be part of Grenfell Tower single

Geri Horner is "proud" to be part of the Grenfell Tower charity single. The former Spice Girl is thrilled to hear how the track - a cover of Simon & Garfunkel's 'Bridge Over Troubled Water' - has come together and took to Twitter yesterday to urge her fans to download the track and donate to the victims of the devastating fire in west London, which killed over 70 people. Geri wrote: "Proud to be a part of this & support those affected by the Grenfell tragedy. You can also make a donation here: <http://artistsforgrenfell.com> (sic)". Paloma Faith shared a poignant message alongside the link to donate. She wrote on the social media site: "In light of the terrible tragedy at Grenfell a few of us came together to raise some money for the victims. Please download today and make donations here <https://artistsforgrenfell.com/> ... You cannot fight fire with fire. The most dignified and loudest protest is calm, peaceful and defiant. Remember Martin Luther King." Craig David

- who also took part in the track - took to social media to offer his thoughts and prayers to those who had been affected by the fire, writing: "My thoughts and prayers are with everyone whose lives were affected by the Grenfell Tower fire (sic)" Whilst Matt Terry, 2016's 'X Factor' winner, thanked fans as the song climbed to number 1 in the UK iTunes charts. He wrote: "Guys thank you ... Bridge Over Troubled Water is Number 1. This is such an incredible cause and I love it when we all stand together (sic)" The cover of 'Bridge Over Troubled Water' also features performances from the likes of Stormzy, Robbie Williams, Leona Lewis, Rita Ora and The Who's Roger Daltrey whilst musical accompaniment was provided by 'Britain's Got Talent' winner Tokio Myers, The Who guitarist Pete Townshend, Nile Rodgers and Queen's Brian May.



Gibson wants Damon to join Fast and Furious franchise

Tyrese Gibson wants Matt Damon and Denzel Washington to join the 'Fast and Furious' franchise. The 38-year-old singer and actor - who joined the series in the 2003 movie '2 Fast 2 Furious' as Roman Pearce - admits he wants to take the films to a new location and is also keen to see the franchise attract some new talent. Speaking to ExtraTV.com, Tyrese said: "I would love to take it to Africa, I would love some Cape Town and Johannesburg." And I would love Matt Damon and Denzel Washington to join the franchise. I really feel like they could contribute." Tyrese also revealed that the behind-scenes-clips of the latest movie, 'The Fate of the Furious', will give fans a real insight into life on the set. Tyrese said: "There's way more scenes, way more funny, a lot of stuff that was just chopped out. The director's cut is gonna be crazy. There is a whole lot more footage of Havana, Cuba and make the movie." Meanwhile, in May, Vin Diesel dedicated the 'Fast and Furious' Generation Award to his late co-star Paul Walker at the MTV Movie & TV Awards. The actor starred as Brian O'Conner in the action film franchise and tragically died at the age of 40 in 2013 after the Porsche Carrera GT he was driving in crashed. In a heartfelt speech, he said: "In 2002, I was standing on this stage, and MTV had given Paul Walker and I an award for Best Duo. And now, 15 years later, I'm with my whole family, and you're giving us the Generation Award. "Most importantly, I got to thank our generation. I got to thank, a generation that was willing to accept this multicultural franchise where it didn't matter what color your skin was or what country you are from, when you're family, you're family."

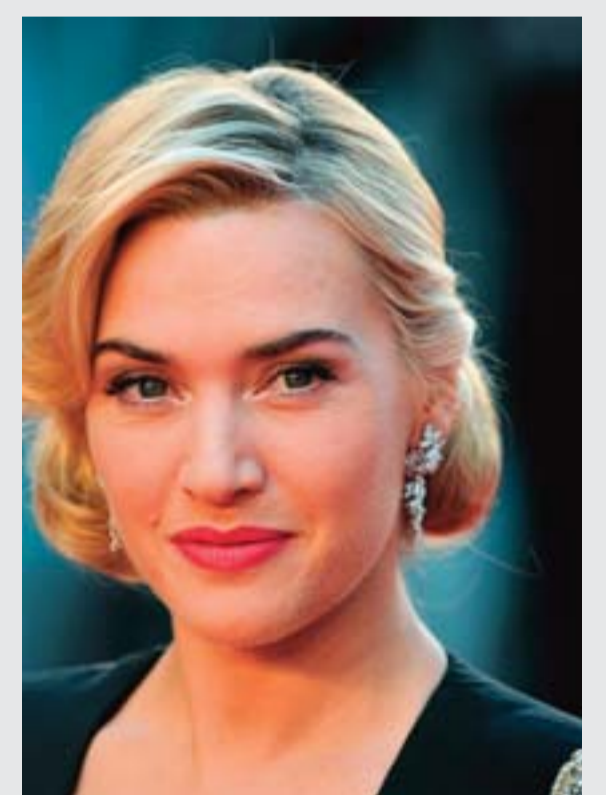


Dave Grohl teases pop collaboration

Dave Grohl has hinted Foo Fighters' new album features vocals from "the biggest pop star in the world". The 'Learn To Fly' rockers announced on Tuesday they are to release their new record 'Concrete and Gold' later this year, and now the band's frontman has teased a "surprising" collaboration with a mystery pop singer who lends their vocals to one of the album's "heaviest songs." Dave said: "We have a bunch of guests that we haven't told anybody about yet, some of them will really surprise you. But there is one, who is probably the biggest pop star in the world, and I'm not kidding, sings back-ups on one of the heaviest songs on the record, and we are not telling anybody who it is." The hint has led fans to speculate that it could be 'Shape of You' hitmaker Ed Sheeran, whose recent album 'Divide' has been dominating the charts since its release in April. And with both Ed and Foo Fighters preparing to take to the stage at Glastonbury festival in the UK over the weekend, fans have also begun speculating a live debut of their possible collaboration. It's not just the 26-year-old musician that fans are hoping joins the 'Walk' hitmakers on stage at the famous festival either, as Dave also hinted they could join forces with fellow rock band Queens of the Stone Age. Speaking about the band's new album with Annie Mac on UK radio station BBC Radio 1 on Tuesday, 48-year-old Dave said: "It was great because we were one block away from Queens of the Stone Age while they were making their record, so every day we would sneak over to each other's studios and steal donuts and coffee. And we were listening to each other's records thinking 'you know what, rock and roll is alive and well.' "These two records, honestly, Queens of the Stone Age and Foo Fighters should just join forces and take over the world right now." To which Annie said: "Well we are hoping that that happens in some way at Glastonbury, live on the Pyramid Stage, I'm just going to put it out there." Dave then replied: "We'll see what happens."

Winslet would love to work to DiCaprio again

Kate Winslet wants to work with Leonardo DiCaprio again - when she's 70. The Oscar-winning actors became firm friends when they worked on James Cameron's 1997 box office sensation 'Titanic' and they reunited a decade later on 'Revolutionary Road'. While they currently have no plans to team up on screen again in the future, Kate would jump at the chance to do so, even if she has to wait a long time. She told E! News: "There's nothing that Leo and I have planned. But as always I would love to work with him again one day but who knows? "It might not happen until we're 70." Kate can next be seen opposite Idris Elba in 'The Mountain Between Us' - in which they play two strangers who survive a plane crash on a snow-covered mountain and have to work together to survive - and she admitted her friend Leonardo warned her she was "crazy" for taking on the role because it involved shooting in temperatures of -38 degrees Celsius. But despite the tough conditions, the British actress insists it was nothing compared to what her pal went through when he shot 'The Revenant'. She said: "Leonardo and I did speak before filming and he did sort of say to me 'Oh my God, you are crazy. It's going to be freezing cold. Do you honestly know what you are sending yourself up for?' "I would send him little photos of me saying 'Thinking of you' as I am lying in the freezing snow covered ice and he would just send back slightly worried emojis. "How could I ever compare anything to what he did in 'The Revenant'? He did climb proper naked inside a horse carcass and I didn't do anything like that. "I have to hand it to him but I always have to hand it to him because he's my friend." While filming in the freezing cold, the actress says she has flashbacks to the watery shoot of 'Titanic' but claims 'The Mountain Between Us' was "much harder". She said: "This was much harder than 'Titanic' because we really were at



10,000 feet and it really was -38 degrees Celsius. "I definitely had 'Titanic' flashbacks. How could I not? Freezing cold. Me falling into that cold water. "It was definitely reminiscent of certain other rather challenging, strenuous experiences I had 20 years ago." — Bang Showbiz



Britney wants Beyonce collaboration

Britney Spears wants to collaborate on a song with Beyonce. The pair featured on a famous Pepsi TV commercial along with Pink in 2004 bringing girl power to Queen's hit song 'We Will Rock!', but the 'Slumber Party' singer wants to get on a track all by herself with the 35-year-old R&B superstar. The blonde beauty, also 35, told The Bangkok Post: "She's so fierce and her music is amazing." Britney also confessed that while she is always working on

new tunes she won't be dropping any new stuff this year. She said: "I'm constantly working on music, but no plans to release anything this year." The 'Make Me' hitmaker previously praised Beyonce for using her latest record 'Lemonade' as "therapy". The brunette beauty has a lot of "respect" for the "and can emphasize with the way she used her music on the visual LP to address marital issues with her rapper husband Jay-Z. Talking about the record, on which

Beyonce referenced "Becky with the good hair" and appeared to claim Jay had been cheating on her, Britney previously said: "I'm a little late on that, but it's good, really angry, a really hardcore album. Most of the time it almost feels like a therapy album. I respect that. She's an artist and that's what she needs to touch on at this moment in her life."





FASHION EVERY WHICH WAY AT ABBREVIATED MILAN FASHION WEEK



It was every man for himself at Milan Fashion Week. Runway shows for next spring and summer menswear collections were crammed into three days, ending Monday, with some fashion houses opting for presentations, others skipping menswear for combined men's and women's shows in September and yet others taking a break during creative transitions. The abbreviated calendar proved somewhat disorientating, leaving the feeling that something was missing.

Likewise, trends seemed to be going every which way. Many designers, for example, seemed not to have gotten the memo that these were warm-weather collections, with a plethora of winter fabrics like corduroy and velvet hitting the runway along with heavier gear like overcoats, beyond the seasonal bomber or duster.

One thing everyone agreed on: Millennial engagement. Some houses did that by inviting young personalities to either walk the runways or sit in the front row, while others sought to attract them with proportion plays, mixed media and other youthful touches. Armani invited Liam Payne of One Direction to see his preview show; Ferragamo seated Italian rapper Ghali in its front row; Fendi hosted actor Tommy Dorfman; and Dolce & Gabbana put no fewer than 106 style-setters from around the globe on their runway.

Made in Armani

Wind-swept and beach-ready describe Giorgio Armani's looks for next season, even if most are meant for an urban setting. The collection opened with a sweeping, double-breasted linen trench with a kaftan feel, setting a casual note. The materials - from crinkled linen to crumpled silk - also



contributed to the carefree mood.

The designer, who turns 83 next month, is securing his legacy of elegance. There was little that would challenge the norms of an Armani dresser, but plenty of fresh detail to maintain their interest. Tapered pants closed with a buckle. A shiny silken suit had a relaxed shawl collar and open pockets. A crinkly white trench was worn over a gray trouser, both with optical effects giving the impression of shimmering waves.

For fun, there were silky combinations of aqua green and magenta top and bottom combinations, broken up by gray hoodies, and he played with proportions on youthful hybrid tops featuring knit fronts and shirt cloth backs. For serious business, Armani sent five classic suits with ties down the runway. For the final flourish, the designer reprised the key looks in all white versions. —AP

Models present creations for fashion house Giorgio Armani during the Men's Spring/Summer 2018 fashion shows in Milan, on June 19, 2017. — AFP photos



Wella Professionals host annual stylist Ghabqa



On Tuesday Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Commercial Co (AAW) and Wella, one of the world's leading beauty and styling suppliers, hosted a Ramadan Ghabqa catered to stylists and beauty-enthusiasts in Kuwait. Highlighting key trends and styles for the summer, AAW introduced Wella's upcoming heat-protection collection, EIMI, and their plans to donate all salon sales of the product-line to the Kuwait Cancer Control Center.

Held at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, Wella presented emerging styles of this year's summer trends to combat heat and humidity and keep your hair shiny and soft with its new product line, EIMI, presented alongside a cat-walk styled Ghabqa dinner. Guests included fashion, beauty, and makeup Instagram sensation, Ahood Alenezi alongside stylists, beauty-enthusiasts and salons in Kuwait. EIMI by Wella Professionals is the first word in styling. With EIMI you can truly be yourself, interpreting the latest global trends, speaking the language of style and individuality. In addition to brand new products, EIMI also incorporates all your favorite products from Wella Professionals to complete a comprehensive lineup of styling products. Say Style, Speak EIMI!

The Ghabqa, hosted by Wella Professionals featured a cat-walk and showcase into old, present, and new Wella products up-to-date with the latest global hair trends for summer. Activities during the evening included an oriental band, cat-walk, traditional Ghabqa dinner, and stylist teachings through product presentations and a hands-on workshop.



TRAVEL



Photo shows a view of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Pillar (Basilica del Pilar) from Calle Alfonso in Zaragoza, Spain.



Photo shows a view of the Plaza del Pilar in Zaragoza, Spain.— AP photos

Zaragoza: Goya, tapas in El Tubo and 2,000 years of history

By Michelle Locke

Stepping out on a lazy Sunday, I stroll past remnants of a Roman wall and watch couples taking selfies with a statue of city namesake Caesar Augustus. Then I'm brought up short by the shimmering reflection of a 16th-century tower caught on the sleek glass walls of a very modern fountain celebrating the Hispanic world. That's 2,000-odd years of history in about a block, and just one of the reasons Zaragoza should be on your list of Spanish cities to explore. Sure, it may be best known as the halfway point between Madrid and Barcelona. But with its treasure trove of architecture, art (and tapas, too), Zaragoza is worth a closer look.

What's new

The Goya Museum, which reopened in 2015 after extensive reorganization, is a good way to get acquainted with the works of the famous Spanish painter, who was born near here. The museum is set in a Renaissance nobleman's home and includes works by Goya's rivals and mentors as well as an extensive collection of his etchings, 23 Calle Espoz y Mina. Open most days at 10 am, closing at 2 pm on Sundays and holidays. Admission about \$5.

Las Armas is an outdoor space that hosts everything from art and musical events to markets promoting local products, 66 Calle Las Armas. Some events ticketed.

Classic attractions

Plaza del Pilar, a huge public square, is the defining feature of Zaragoza. It is home to two cathedrals and a museum displaying remains of a Roman forum. Just beyond it is the River Ebro with its tree-lined pathways. Basilica del Pilar, topped with brightly colored cupolas, is a cathedral featuring ceiling paintings by Goya. You'll also find two unexploded bombs on display; they were dropped during the Spanish Civil War. Open most days, free admission.

About \$3 to visit the cathedral's museum, closed on Sundays, and about \$4 to access the tower, closed on Mondays. Next door is the Cathedral of the Savior, which has a tapestry museum (entrance about \$5) featuring wall-sized Flemish tapestries from the 16th to 18th centuries. La Aljaferia, originally built as a country retreat for the city's Islamic rulers and later the palace of Aragon's Catholic monarchs, is now home to the regional parliament. It features a beautiful and tranquil garden - and a room where trials of the Spanish Inquisition were held. Open daily, but closed during parliamentary sessions, held some Thursdays and Fridays, admission about \$6.



Photo shows sunlight illuminates the ornate archways of the Aljaferia palace in Zaragoza, Spain.



Photo shows diners strolling 'El Tubo,' the narrow grid of alleys lined with tapas restaurants and bars in Zaragoza, Spain.



Photo shows an octagonal tower, built by the Moors in the 16th century, now part of the 18th-century Church of San Juan de Panetes, reflected in the glass walls of the 20th-century Fuente de la Hispanidad in Zaragoza's Plaza del Pilar in Spain.

Tips

Fancy a tapas crawl? Head for "El Tubo," the series of tubes (narrow alleys in reality) that hums with chatter and the smell of crispy fried things as darkness falls. The district is not far from Plaza del Pilar; look for Calle Estebanes and Calle Libertad, the two main streets. Don't show up hungry between 5 pm and 8 pm, though, as most of the restaurants will be closed.

The Zaragoza Card offers convenience and a discount. Prices start at about \$22 for a 24-hour pass. Zaragoza is easily reachable by train from Madrid or Barcelona. — AP



Photo shows a view of Zaragoza's Basilica del Pilar from the banks of the River Ebro. Tree-lined paths make the riverside a pleasant place for a stroll.



Photo shows a statue in Plaza del Pilar in Zaragoza, Spain.



A couple takes a selfie in front of a statue of Caesar Augustus in Zaragoza, Spain.



Photo shows graffiti and other markings left behind by prisoners locked in the Aljaferia tower in Zaragoza, Spain, during the Spanish Inquisition.



This photo shows a painting in an unexpected place, a small, roll-up security gate on a doorway near the 'El Tubo' tapas crawl district in Zaragoza, Spain.



A couple takes a selfie in the arms of a sitting sculpture in Zaragoza, Spain's Plaza del Pilar.

Lifestyle

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Zaragoza: Goya, tapas in El Tubo and 2,000 years of history

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Indian students take part in a yoga session on International Yoga Day in Chennai yesterday. — AP/AFP photos



An Indian Sadhu or Hindu holy man performs Yoga to mark International Yoga Day at Kamakhya temple in Gauhati, India.



An Indian Sadhu or Hindu holy man performs Yoga.

YOGA PRACTITIONERS PAUSE TO STRETCH AND POSE FOR INT'L EVENT



Indian Border Security Force (BSF) personnel take part in a yoga session on International Yoga Day at BSF headquarters in Khasa on the outskirts of Amritsar.

Yoga practitioners took a relaxing break to bend, twist and pose yesterday morning for the annual event celebrating the practice, especially in the country where it began. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined 50,000 students and other residents for a mass yoga session in the pouring rain in the northern city of Lucknow to mark International Yoga Day. Similar yoga displays were organized in villages, towns and cities across India and in many other countries.

The United Nations designated International Yoga Day in 2014. In Myanmar, people performed exercises near the Shwedagon pagoda, the landmark Buddhist stupa in Yangon. The practice began in ancient India, and Modi has described yoga as free health insurance and exhorted people to make it a part of their daily lives. Even in the rain, "there is no let down in the enthusiasm of the volunteers," said Lucknow District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma.

Modi, dressed in white, instructed the children at the outdoor yoga session at Rama Bai Ambedkar Ground. Occasionally, he paused to correct a child's posture. "It was a very nice gesture of prime minister to come out of the dry comfort of his waterproof tent and do yoga with us in the open," said 18-year-old student Neha Prakash. "It was not easy. The yoga mat was wet and slippery and water puddles were all around." — AP



Revelers practice yoga as the sun rises during the pagan festival of Summer Solstice at Stonehenge in Wiltshire, southern England.



Indian yoga practitioners participate in a mass yoga session on International Yoga Day in Guwahati.



Indian sports students practice yoga during a session to mark International Yoga at the Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy in Hyderabad.



A group of people demonstrate yoga on International Yoga Day, in Yangon, Myanmar.



Indian yoga practitioners participate in a mass yoga session on International Yoga Day in New Delhi.



Yoga master Tao Porchon-Lynch, 98, takes part in a mass yoga session on International Yoga Day at the Shree Kanteerava Stadium in Bangalore.