

EID GREETINGS

Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan wishes HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Cabinet members, heads of states around the world, Kuwaitis, expatriates and our valued readers Eid Mubarak. Kuwait Times will not be published from June 26 to 28. Our next issue will be published on Thursday, June 29.



150 FILS
NO: 17265
40 PAGES

SUICIDE BOMBER BLOWS HIMSELF UP AS SAUDI FOILS MAKKAH PLOT

AMIR CONDEMNS TERRORIST PLOT; IRAN, QATAR VOICE SUPPORT FOR SAUDI

Min 32°
Max 45°
High Tide
01:10 & 11:40
Low Tide
06:25 & 19:27

AMIR CONGRATULATES CITIZENS, EXPATRIATES, CALLS FOR PEACE

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated all citizens and expatriates on Eid Al-Fitr, said the Amiri Diwan. The Amiri Diwan, on its part, congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah, 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 on the occasion. The Diwan also extended its congratulations to the whole Islamic World. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir expressed hope a rift among Arab and Gulf countries would be mended to pave way for security, stability and prosperity in the GCC countries. He expressed his hopes during phone calls with Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and Saudi Crown Prince, Deputy Premier and Defense Minister



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz. His Highness the Amir and the Gulf leaders discussed developments in the region, particularly the tension in relations between Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt on one side and Qatar on the other. — Agencies

RIYADH: A suicide bomber blew himself up near the Grand Mosque in Makkah as police disrupted a plot to target the holiest site just as the fasting month of Ramadan ends, Saudi security forces said yesterday. The Interior Ministry said it launched a raid around Jeddah, as well as two areas in Makkah itself, including the Ajyad Al-Masafi neighborhood, located near the Grand Mosque.

There, police said they engaged in a shootout at a three-story house with a suicide bomber, who blew himself up and caused the building to collapse. He was killed, while the blast wounded six foreigners and five members of security forces, according to the Interior Ministry's statement. Five others were arrested, including a woman, it said. Saudi state television aired footage after the raid Friday near the Grand Mosque, showing police and rescue personnel running through the neighborhood's narrow streets.

The blast demolished the building, its walls crushing a parked car. Nearby structures appeared to be peppered with shrapnel and bullet holes. The Interior Ministry said the thwarted "terrorist plan" would have violated "all sanctities by targeting the security of the Grand Mosque, the holiest place on Earth." "They obeyed their evil and corrupt self-serving schemes managed from abroad whose aim is to destabilize the security and stability of this blessed country," it said.

The ministry did not name the group involved in the attack. The ultraconservative Sunni kingdom battled an Al-Qaeda insurgency for years and more recently has faced attacks from a local branch of the Islamic State group.



MAKKAH: A handout picture shows Saudi security forces inspecting the site of a foiled attack in the Holy City of Makkah. — AFP

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MAOXIANG: Chinese military police and rescue workers are seen at the site of a landslide in Xinmo village, Sichuan province yesterday. — AFP

LANDSLIDE BURIES A VILLAGE

15 DIE, OVER 100 MISSING IN CHINA

BEIJING: Rescuers pulled 15 bodies from an avalanche of rocks that buried a mountain village in southwest China yesterday as an increasingly bleak search for some 100 people carried into the night. Only three survivors - a couple and their one-month-old baby - have been found so far after 62 homes in Xinmo village vanished under a mass of mud and rocks in Sichuan province.

Heavy rain caused the side of the mountain to collapse onto the riverside village in the early morning, according to authorities. Qiao Dashi, the baby's father, said he had woken up after 5:00 am to change his crying son's diaper when he "heard a big noise coming from the back." "The house shook," he told state broadcaster CCTV from his hospital bed. "Rocks were in the living room. My wife and I climbed over, took the baby, and got out."

"I have superficial injuries. Overall, I'm okay. But psychologically, it's hard. The entire village, with dozens of families, was flattened," he said, with a bandage around his head. The rescue operation's headquarters reported that 15 people had been found dead by the late evening, according to the official Xinhua news agency. The Maoxian, or Mao county, government said earlier that six people died and 112 people were missing. Xinhua had reported that more than 120 were buried.

The landslide blocked a two-kilometer stretch of river and 1.6 kilometer of road, according to state media. As night fell, authorities shined lamps onto the rubble while rescuers wore lights on their helmets as they sifted through the rocks, aided by sniffer dogs, according to photos from the official Xinhua news agency. During the day, rescuers and local residents used ropes to move a boulder while others lifted rocks with their bare hands, according to videos broadcast by the Maoxian government and CCTV.

Nearly 2,000 police, soldiers and civilians were taking part in the rescue. Bulldozers and excavators that were used earlier in the day stopped their work due to bad lighting as night fell, according to CCTV. No sign of the village could be seen in aerial footage, which showed a grim and grey rock-strewn landscape covering the area

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LEARNING ARABIC

By Tony Braun

The Quran was revealed in the Arabic language. Millions of Muslims around the world set their hearts on learning this language so that they will have a better understanding of their faith. Learning Arabic can be a struggle for English speakers. On the bright side, Kuwait has a lot to offer an expat who wishes to learn the language. In Kuwait, there are plenty of chances to practice and study. Language acquisition normally begins with repetition, which is why a learner must be exposed to the language as much as possible. There are different approaches to learning Arabic, which are described below.

Formal classes: The TIES Center, the IPC, and the Aware center offer part time classes for people who wish to learn Arabic. Formal classes are very useful when quick progress is made at the beginning of the course because it will keep the students motivated. In this regard, it is vitally important to have a good teacher that keeps the students engaged. This is not an easy task for teachers because the attention span of the average person is shrinking dramatically as more and more flashy electronics are introduced into our lives.

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WATANIYA AIRWAYS COMMISSIONS ITS FIRST AIRBUS

KUWAIT: Wataniya Airways, one of three national carriers of Kuwait, said Thursday its first Airbus (A-320) arrived at Kuwait International Airport to join its fleet. The move opens a new chapter of the airline's operations on the local market after a five-year hiatus, said Lana Al-Rashid, director of the information and public relations dept. of the company. "This is a historic moment on Wataniya's march; it is the fruit of a whole year of preparations," she said in a press release, appreciated the support offered by shareholders over the last years.

Rashid also thanked leaders of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), notably DGCA President Sheikh Salman Hamoud Al-Sabah, Director General Eng. Yousef Suleiman Al-Fouzan and Deputy Director General Emad Al-Jalawi for facilitating the resumption of the airline's operation. The new aircraft will fly to short and medium range destinations in the coming few days, she added. —KUNA



Kuwait International Airport

HUGE 65% RISE IN TRAVELLERS DURING LONG EID HOLIDAY: AIRPORT OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Airport expects a 65.46 percent rise in people flying abroad within the Eid Al-Fitr holidays in comparison to last year's figures. During the approximately 10-day holiday starting on Friday, which comprises the occasion, travellers are expected to hit the 410,400 mark, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation deputy chairman for aviation safety said. The number is a stark difference to the 141,700 travellers recorded in 2016, according to Emad Al-Jelowi,

during the festive occasion which marks the end of the holy Islamic lunar month of Ramadan. A significant factor in this year's rise in numbers is that the holiday falls within the summer, he suggested, when schools are out and most inhabitants seek to escape the blazing hot temperatures.

The three-day occasion given as a public holiday could also stretch to 10 days if a crescent is spotted tomorrow instead of today - during a working week, which starts on today in the

northern Gulf Arab country. The large volume of travellers has caused huge delays and malfunctions throughout the airport, which has a capacity of six million passengers but currently accepts double that amount, said the official. It is because of this, airport officials have devised several ways to ease the burden on travelers, including allowing them to check in their luggage at midnight on the same day of intended travel. —KUNA

Local spotlight

IS DESTROYING HISTORY



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Civilization, heritage and history have distinguished the Arab world for thousands of years and even before the advent of Islam, many civilizations appeared and left their print. So why does the so-called Islamic State (IS) destroy temples and museums? When Islam arrived, it did not destroy historical monuments in any area, but retained and preserved them as part of human history. Today, with the emergence of IS, a new crime has been added to their long criminal record against humanity, which is the destruction of archaeological sites in Syria and Iraq. It is a disaster that requires an urgent plan by the international community and to not allow perpetrators to escape.

Iraq and Syria are countries with an ancient history and civilization. Today, some of its cities have fallen to terrorism and criminality. The artifacts at Mosul museum and its historical monuments have been destroyed. In 2014, an 800 year-old synagogue was burned down in Mosul. Heritage is being ravaged.

Heritage is the full record of human activity in any society over a period of time and the preservation of all human activities. Documents, literature, paintings and sculptures are historical markers that constitute the identity of a society and its distinctiveness from other societies. Islam preserved these museums and collectibles because they are part of civilization and the history of mankind. But a terrorist group like IS has no regard for civilization and the real meaning of heritage.

The Nineveh museum was destroyed in the Iraqi city of Mosul. It is one of the most important museums in the world. It contains thousands of artifacts, but these criminals destroyed it. There are also reports that IS militants burned more than 8,000 rare books and manuscripts from different historical periods in the library.

Is this a war on Syrian and Iraqi heritage and history? I think the answer is yes, and the evidence is clear. Since the beginning of 2014, the Organization for the Defense of Monuments has recorded numerous cases in which religious sites in Syria have been demolished and the sale of artifacts has turned into a popular trade across the border. The figures indicate that the value of looted artifacts has reached \$2 billion. It is devastating to witness the cultural heritage of a country like Syria being stolen by thieves.

IS is trying to erase the cultural history of the Arab region by destroying its artifacts. I have to say that IS does not represent Islam or Muslims, but represents itself. Modern Islamic civil governments have never harmed any historical objects, but have preserved them, and this is something we should not ignore.

The Great Mosque of Nuri and its leaning Habda minaret were destroyed by IS militants last week, who accused coalition forces of the crime. But the international coalition denied any strikes in the area where the historic Nuri mosque is located. The general operations commander Joseph Martin denied the allegation and even stated that the destruction of the mosque is "a crime against the people of Mosul and the entire Iraqi people". The Mosque of the Great Nuri remained standing for about 844 years and even survived the invasion of the Mongols, but not IS!

Archaeologists have said the responsibility for the destruction of historical monuments falls on the international community, as these do not belong to Iraq alone and are inherited by all humanity. UNESCO seems to be serious about protecting heritage and history in Syria, Iraq and other places. The UNESCO director-general stressed her commitment to promoting measures to protect cultural heritage being attacked by IS in Syria, Iraq and Libya, and expressed solidarity and readiness to support and restore cultural heritage.

The question remains: How can the international community control illegal activities in the antiquities market? The United Nations must insist on the establishment of an international body to curb the financing of terrorism through the theft and sale of historical relics from Iraq and Syria and arrest antiquities thieves, especially those associated with terrorists or gangs. This is the duty and mission of the international community and every one of us.

KIB SPONSORS 'SNATCH FOR A CAUSE' CHARITY CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: As part of its commitment towards supporting humanitarian initiatives and promoting a healthier lifestyle, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently sponsored the 3rd charity campaign organized by Flare Fitness, entitled "Snatch For a Cause". Taking place throughout the Holy Month of Ramadan in partnership with Kuwait Food Bank and a number of other local partners, the campaign was aimed at supporting children in need within the local community.

As part of the larger campaign, a charity sports event was held at the club's main premises. Over 300 participants of all ages and from both genders came together to compete in various weight-lifting exercises, with a special focus on snatch lifts. Participants were able to channel sheer physical strength and determination for the benefit of their community, as with every 20kg of weight lifted, one dinar was donated to the Kuwait Food Bank. The charity campaign also featured a special iftar meal for those in need, which saw the participation of a large number of young

volunteers from across the community. Within this context, Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, said: "We are very proud to have taken part in this unique and exciting fitness charity event, which not only promotes a healthier lifestyle across the community in a fun, engaging social context, but also supports children in need of specialized medical treatment."

Najia added that KIB is always keen on promoting a greater sense of health consciousness across the local community, and for that reason, we continuously seek opportunities that allow us to better the lives of different segments across the community.

As part of its leading social responsibility program, KIB organized a wide range of humanitarian and community-based initiatives and activities during Ramadan. Additionally, the Bank is committed to raising awareness about health programs and various local sports activities, particularly those that support different segments across the local community.



KIB HONORS WINNERS OF ITS RAMADAN QURAN MEMORIZATION COMPETITION

KUWAIT: Under the umbrella of its leading social responsibility program during the Holy Month of Ramadan, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently concluded its annual Quran Memorization Competition. The competition was held for KIB staff and their children, as well as the children of KIB customers, and took place during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The awards ceremony was held under the patronage and in the presence of Chairman of KIB, Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah, and Acting Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Mohamed Said El-Saka.

On this occasion, Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, commented: "This year's competition was held at our head office, under the theme 'the best of you are those who learn the Quran and teach it', and witnessed an exceptional turnout compared to previous years. During the competition, participants showed remarkable skill while demonstrating their ability to memorize and recite the Holy Quran. At the end, only those who were able to properly recite the Quran made it to the finals for a chance to win a

number of valuable prizes, amounting to KD 6,000." Furthermore, Najia noted that KIB continues to play a leading role in fostering the traditions of the Holy Quran, as well as strong religious values and principles within the local community. Stemming from its belief in the importance of this role within the community, the Bank seeks to encourage the younger generations to uphold the traditions of proper Quran memorization and recitation, thereby supporting them to fulfill their duty towards their religion, community, and nation.

At the end of the ceremony, Najia congratulated the winners of the annual Ramadan competition. He further lauded the importance of the Holy Quran in strengthening ties and religious values within the community, noting that it remains one of the most important blessings bestowed on people. Accordingly, he expressed his delight at attending an event in which winners were recognized for their outstanding ability to memorize the Holy Quran. Najia concluded by stressing KIB's keenness on organizing this Quran competition annually during the holy month of Ramadan.



ZAIN DISTRIBUTES PRAYER ESSENTIALS TO KUWAIT'S MOSQUES

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, shared the spiritual blessings of the last 10 days of the Holy Month of Ramadan by providing prayer essentials at a number of Kuwait's biggest mosques during the 27th night of the Holy Month. The initiative came as part of the company's extensive Corporate Sustainability and Social

Responsibility program during the Holy Month.

This annual initiative is one of many social activities Zain conducts annually to foster an even more spiritual environment during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The company was keen to provide comfort to worshippers performing their Qiyam prayers during the 27th night at a number of

Kuwait's biggest mosques, most notably Jaber Al-Ali Mosque in Shuhada Area.

Zain's volunteers distributed the prayer essentials, mainly prayer chairs, as well as cold beverages and snacks to provide worshippers with more comfortable circumstances during the hot weather conditions.

Zain's Ramadan campaign for this year witnessed a wide range of social and charitable initiatives. The company participated in a number of charitable, social and voluntary activities, as well as the distribution of essential food supplies to underprivileged families, visit social care centers, visit hospitals, as well as organize other humanitarian initiatives.

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



NBK AND AL-RAWDAN FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT GRANT'S MOHAMMAD'S WISH TO MEET HIS IDOL

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues its 'I Dream to Be' initiative, a first-of-a-kind initiative that aims at granting wishes for children with severe illnesses around Kuwait, giving them the chance to live their dreams. Mohammad Wael, who is undergoing treatment at NBK Hospital, has always dreamt to meet his football idol Mohammad Abou Treikah, the famous footballer who played for Al-Ahly Club in Egypt. NBK and Al-Rawdan Football Tournament helped him make his dream come true. NBK's family arranged a meeting with Abou Treikah for Victor and his family, where he had the chance to see his idol and get his T-shirt.

"Mohammad's dream to meet Abou Treikah is yet another wish granted through NBK's initiative 'I dream to be'. We are proud to be a part of the children's wishes and expand our support to them as much as possible to fulfill their dreams," said Yaqoub Al-Baqer, NBK Public Relations Officer. "I Dream to Be" initiative is a lifetime experience for children," he added. "This initiative is a great way to spread joy and show



that there's always a positive side to a difficult situation."

NBK gives top priority to children through its commitment to its corporate social responsibility. NBK works closely with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospitals (KACCH), Bayt Abdullah for the Care of Children in Hospice (BACCH) and several other special needs organizations to maximize its reach to all the children in numerous hospitals and schools. NBK has been at the fore-

front of supporting Kuwait's community through a range of initiatives towards education, health, sports and social responsibilities. The establishment of NBK's Children Hospital for Oncology and Hematology at Al-Sabah Medical Area stands as one of many ongoing corporate social initiatives towards health and children. 'I Dream to Be' aims at focusing and supporting NBK's efforts towards children and addressing their needs as much as possible.



KUWAIT: Cabinet Affairs Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah (right) follows up with the operation with top Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) officials. — KFSD photos

FIREMEN TACKLE HUGE FIRE AT JAHRA METALS' FACTORY

KUWAIT: A large group of firefighters put out a fire at a large metals' factory dumpsite in Jahra's Amghara Industrial Area, west of Kuwait City. Some four fire departments, including Jahra, Sulaibikhat and Farwaniyah, handled the fire which spread out across a 3,000 sq/km radius, the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate said in a statement. — KUNA



AMIR THANKS PERSONNEL 'COURAGE, DEDICATION' IN SOUTH SURRA FIRE

NO INJURIES AT 19,000 SQUARE METER BUILDING FIRE

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah thanked firefighters, policemen, and paramedics for their "courage and dedication," which resulted in controlling a fire in a building under construction in South Surra on Friday.

His Highness the Amir sent cables of gratitude and appreciation to Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Information Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah, in his capacity as the person in charge of the fire department, and Minister of Health Dr Jamal Al-Harbi for their departments' "high national spirit," which was clear in their cooperation and coordination resulting in the control of the fire. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent cables for the three ministers, thanking them for the great efforts exerted by the policemen, paramedics and firefighters in controlling the fire in the building. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

Fire fighters contained a fire that erupted at a building under construction in South Surrah district on Friday, said Lieutenant General Khalid Al-Mekrad, the department director. The firefighters succeeded in stopping the blazes from spreading to nearby buildings, he said in a statement.

Fire squads have taken control of a large part of the fire scene, he said alluding to a 19,000 square meter building for Kuwait Credit Bank. The fire fighters contained the fire after battling the blazes for hours in South Surrah, one of the country's residential districts. A source at the fire department said that the blazes that broke out at a building for Kuwait Credit Bank inflicted material losses. — KUNA



FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSSES REGIONAL ISSUES WITH COUNTERPARTS

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday conducted telephone contacts with the US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson. He also contacted the foreign ministers of Albania and Turkey as well as Frederica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. His phone talks with the foreign officials deal with latest developments on the regional and international arenas. — KUNA



Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled

EID PRAYER INSIDE MOSQUES ONLY: MINISTER

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Eid prayer will be held inside mosques only in order to ensure the safety of worshippers in coordination with the Interior Ministry, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, State Minister for Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri said. He added that his ministry prepared for Ramadan months before its arrival by preparing mosques to host Qiyam Holy during the last 10 nights of the Holy Month. He said that they had 26 centers distributed in the governorates in addition to the Grand Mosque, adding that security measures were outstanding in all Kuwait's 1,500 mosques.



Mohammad Al-Jabri

PAHW staff
Recent numbers at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) showed that 143 employees including managers were employed there during the past two years. Statistics show that the number of PAHW employees dropped to 1844 from 1987 in 2015. The number of citizens is 1,254 at 68 percent while none Kuwaitis are 590 at 32 percent. Numbers further showed that 61 expat employees were terminated as their number dropped from 651 to 590.

Construction laws
Justice Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs Ali Al-Salman asked

Kuwait Municipality to exclude the new justice ministry building in industrial Shuwaikh from height limits in that area. He said the ministry intends to use the current location used as warehouses in industrial Shuwaikh with an area of 4,770 meters squared, which is ideal for constructing a new building that can meet all needs and requirements of the ministry. He said that based on the initial studies which include the areas needed and number of employees, the required area is up to 45,000 square meters which is 10 floors compared with the site area. This would violate the construction laws set by the municipality in industrial Shuwaikh.

THREE-CAR FIRE EXTINGUISHED



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firemen put out fires in three cars in Jaber Al-Ali. Qrain fire center responded to a call about the fire and contained the flames to keep them from spreading. No injuries were reported.

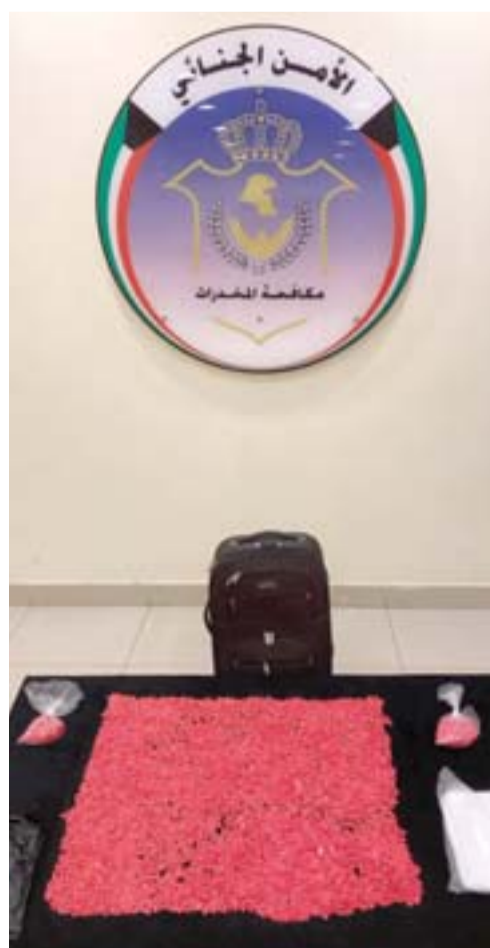
Smugglers arrested

Two Arabs were arrested for attempting to smuggle 12,000 Tramadol, while another Arab man was caught with one kilogram of 'chemical' ('Spice' with added chemicals) and 50 grams of shabu (methamphetamine). Drugs Control General Department received tips about the suspects bringing in drugs hidden in their vests, so the two were put under surveillance then arrested in Fahaheel. The third suspect was

arrested in his house where the drugs were found.

Inedible food

Kuwait Municipality's Public Relations Department said Jahra Services Department destroyed 10 tons of food stuff that were not fit for human consumption. In addition, 324 stores were inspected and 535 signs were removed from streets and yards, 251 citations were issued, 288 samples were sent to labs, and 1,887 cooled vegetables trucks were checked. Meanwhile, the department said its media campaign continues aiming at the safety of foodstuff. Head of the emergency team Riyadh Al-Rabee said the campaign resulted in the destruction of 18 tons of various food items.



MOI TAKES PRECAUTIONARY, PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR EID

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior (MoI) has taken all precautionary and preventive measures in preparation for the Eid of Al-Fitr, director of the ministry's Security Media and Public Relations Department Brigadier Adel Al-Hashash said yesterday. A security plan was set up for the Eid, with the aim of controlling traffic at roads and intersections across the country in order to avoid congestion, Hashash added in a press statement.

The plan is in line with instructions by Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah that call for harnessing all potentials and taking all measures to fulfill the joy of citizens and residents during the Eid holidays, he noted. There is coordination round the clock among all security directorates and concerned bodies to carry out the plan, he affirmed. The security forces will deal decisively with negative behaviors like disturbance or quarrel, he warned.

Hashash appealed to parents to care for their children, namely at malls, markets and commercial places, and to drivers not to use mobile phones while driving. He also urged people not to park at the places allocated to the disabled, warning that the ministry will confront immediately anybody who violates these rules. He pointed out that the sector of ports security affairs has a key role in facilitating matters for passengers at the Kuwait International Airport

and land ports across the country. The department's plan is working on fulfilling an awareness campaign fit for the Eid holidays, he said. The plan also aims to manifest the general rules so as to maintain safety of citizens and residents and make them happy during this occasion, he made clear. Finally, Hashash congratulated both Kuwaitis and expatriates on Eid Al-Fitr, wishing the State of Kuwait many returns of this occasion with further prosperity, joy and blessings, under the wisdom of the supreme leadership. — KUNA



Brigadier Adel Al-Hashash

KUWAIT

Heritage



Children playing merrily with simple traditional games that were found in many private squares, especially in Safat Square, and were most popular during Eid holidays and other celebrations. (Sources: A total of commemorative printed images by the Ministry of Information in the 1960s and 1970s. Prepared by Mahmoud Zakaria Abu Alella, heritage researcher in the Ministry of Information)

HOLIDAY INN SALMIYA HOSTED ITS ANNUAL GHABQA

KUWAIT: As a way of expressing gratitude for their continuous support in covering all the hotel's exclusive events and offers, Holiday Inn Salmiya hosted its annual Ramadan ghabqa to honor all the media and journalists representatives. In addition to the hotel top corporate accounts in recognition of their loyalty to the hotel over the past years as they have made the Holiday Inn Salmiyah their premier choice.

Guests upon arrival were welcomed by the hotel management team headed by Monjed Salha the General Manager, who addressed the invitees, warmly welcomed their presence and expressed his appreciation for their constant support for the hotel during the year around and wished them to spend a great evening.

During the event, the invitees were entertained by various activities such as fun competitions, entertainment show that reflects the traditional Ramadan cele-

brations and a live music performance and later on they were treated with a lavish buffet featuring variety of international cuisines prepared by the master chefs of Holiday Inn Salmiya, in addition to the distinctive live cooking stations with wide variety of fresh dishes beside the dessert and fresh fruit section that reflected the high standards of hospitality.

Also two raffle draws took place where all lucky attendees won many valuable prizes provided by pioneer group of companies in Kuwait including airline tickets presented by the Royal Jordanian Airlines, valuable vouchers offered from Sama Dental Clinic and Taiba Hospital, several electronics and discount vouchers from Starco Company which offers a range of high end retail brands such as Eden Park, United Colors Of Benetton, US Polo Assn, Gerry Weber, Seven, Oui and Woz, as well as to complimentary hotel stays offered by IHG hotels.



IRANIAN EMBASSY HOSTS RAMADAN GHABQA

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Ali Reza Enayati cautioned the region is facing the threat of terrorism from inside and outside. "Victims of terrorism are all over

the world, which obliges us to be united and fight sedition and sectarianism. Also, we should not forget our Zionist enemy that is occupying Palestine, which is our main issue. To keep this issue alive, the late Imam Khomeini set the International Day of

Jerusalem," he noted as he welcomed guests at the Iranian Embassy's annual ghabqa at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Wednesday.

He said the latest conflict in the region should be solved peacefully. "We all appre-

ciate the efforts of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to consolidate this crisis and bring our nations together. I would also like to praise the bilateral relations between Kuwait and Iran, which are very strong and friendly,"

added Enayati. "This is a special month during which people gather or visit each other and relations get stronger. The embassy holds this ghabqa and gathering annually to maintain connections between people," he concluded.



KUWAIT: A general view of guests in attendance. (Inset) Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Ali Reza Enayati speaks during the ghabqa. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS: CARING FOR OUR COMMON HOME

KUWAIT: The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) sent the following message for the month of Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr:

Dear Muslim Brothers and Sisters,

We wish to assure you of our prayerful solidarity during this time of fasting in the month of Ramadan and the celebration of Eid Al-Fitr that concludes it, and we extend to our heartfelt best wishes for serenity, joy and abundant spiritual gifts.

This year's message is especially timely and significant: fifty year ago, in 1967, only three years after the establishment of this Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) by Pope Paul VI on 19 May 1964, the first Message was sent for this occasion.

In the years that we followed, two Messages have been particularly important: the Message of 1991, during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, entitled "the path of believers is the way of peace". And the Message of 2013, in the first year of Pope Francis' pontificate, entitled "Promoting Mutual Respect through Education". Both Messages were signed by the pontiffs.

Among the many activities of PCID for promoting dialogue with Muslims, the most important and longstanding is this year message for Ramadan and for Eid Al-Fitr addressed to Muslims throughout the world. To share this message in the widest way possible, the PCID is assisted by local Catholic communities, as well as Papal Representatives present in almost country.

The experience of both our religious communities affirms the value of this message for promoting cordial relations between Christian and Muslim neighbors and friends, by offering insights on current pressing issues.

For this year, the PCID offers a theme related to Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter "Laudato Si" - on Care for Our Common Home", which was addressed not only to Catholics and Christians, but to the whole of humanity.

Pope Francis draws attention to the harm our lifestyles and decisions are causing to the environment, to ourselves and to our fellow human beings. There are, for example, certain philosophical, religious, and cultural perspectives that present obstacles which threaten humanity's relationship with nature. The take up this challenge involves all of us, regardless of whether or not we profess a religious belief. The encyclical's title itself is expressive: The world is a "common home," a dwelling for all the members of the human family. Therefore, no one person, nation or people can impose exclusively their understanding of our planet. This is why Pope Francis appeals "for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. ...since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affects us all" (n. 14).

Pope Francis states that "the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion" (no. 217). What is needed is education, spiritual openness and a "global ecological conversion" to adequately address this challenge. As believers, our relationship with God should be increasingly shown in the way we relate to the world around us. Our vocation to be guardians of God's handiwork is not optional, nor it is tangential to our religious commitment as Christians and Muslims: it is an essential part of it.

May the religious insights and blessings that flow from fasting, prayer and good works sustain you, with God's help, on the path of peace and goodness, to care for all the members of the human family and for whole of creation. With these sentiments, we wish you once again serenity, joy and prosperity.

CBK ANNOUNCES BRANCH TIMINGS

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced that it will continue its services during Eid-Al-Fitr holiday at CBK's branches in Kuwait International Airport on a 24-hours basis. If the holiday starts today, CBK branches (except for the airport branches) will be closed three days and will resume Wednesday. But in case the holiday starts tomorrow, the branches will be closed from Sunday until Wednesday, while the following branches will resume on Thursday: Mubarak Al-Kabeer, east Ahmadi, Sabah Al-Salem, Beirut Street - Hawally, and Jahra.



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Al-Shahed

WE ARE ALL CORRUPTED

By Awiad Al-Saleeli

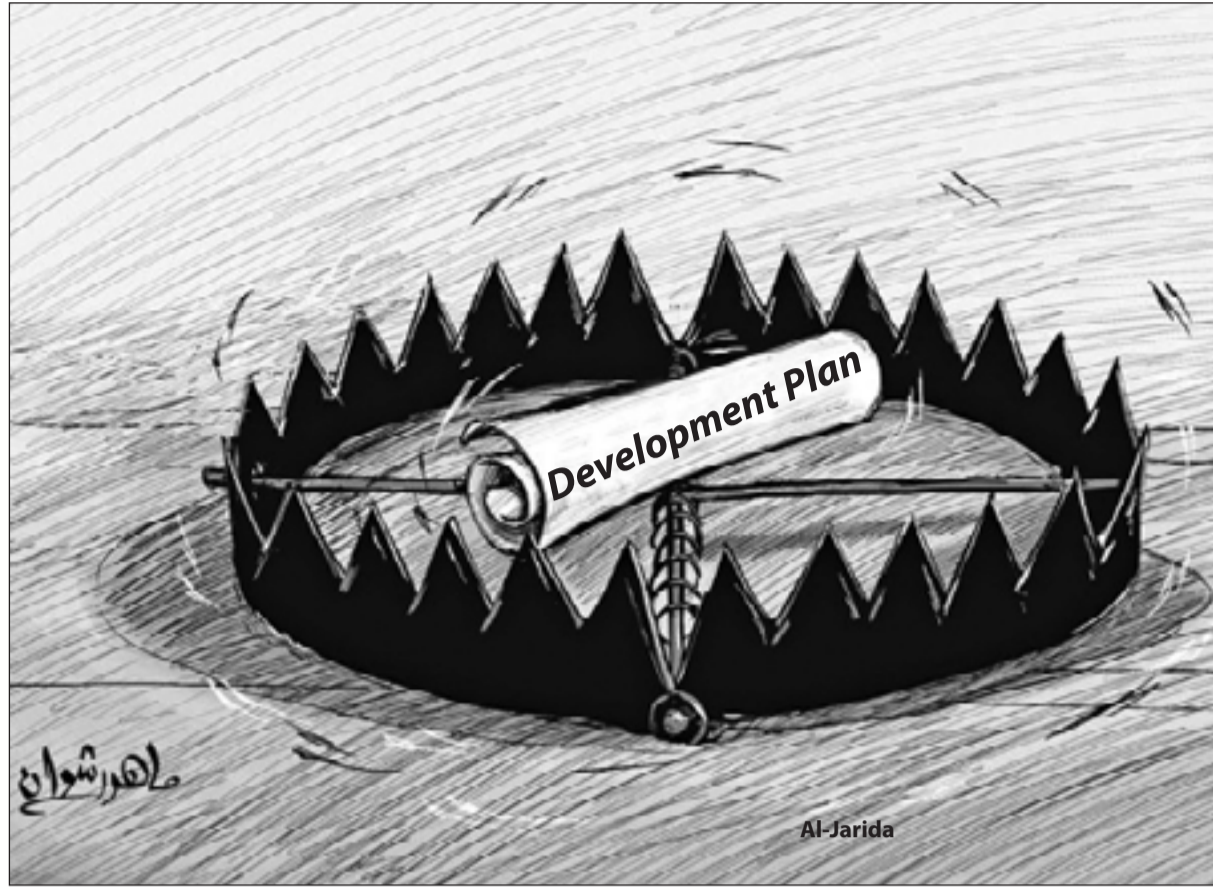
All former members of parliament, political parties, factions and their supporters, and the group of pretenders were screaming on top of their lungs demanding the fight against corruption. But many had their demands of reform not leave their mouths, all that during the swirling winds of the Arab illusion, as named by His Highness the Amir. In each gathering and diwaniya, the word corruption has always been on the top; everyone is frustrated, their view of the future is pessimistic, and they direct their anger at the government's ministers, and major businessmen who have the lion's share of the state's tender's corruption.

Yet, all without exception exclude themselves from the corruption accusations which they distribute as they like. There are those who criticize me and describe me as a 'government man' because I am a fierce defender of the regime, which is headed and represented by His Highness the Amir, judiciary and security men, and because I am among those who strongly refuse the chaos caused by demonstrations and marches.

The question that imposes itself on those, and which I am still asking and did not find an answer for: Is corruption caused exclusively by government and business people only? Or is it a wide open gate through which all can enter? Oxford dictionary defines corruption as "dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery." This is a precise definition through which we can identify the corrupt and what corruption includes.

Public jobs include all government employees, and the government here is not only the council of ministers and its ministries, but also includes more than 330 thousand employees who supervise and manage ministries, authorities and state facilities, while the small employee who has favoritism for his job for the sake of material or electoral interests, is practicing corruption according to the definition. The employee who halts transactions of people and lax in the service of citizens, along with the official, manager and the undersecretary who cause injustice towards employees through groupings, in promotions and his continued seeking to control committees and foreign missions to increase his monthly income is corrupt. The businessman who pays bribes to get tenders then sells them under the table to small companies that cause projects to stop is corrupt.

Ministers, when they appease MPs in undermining the law, and when they appoint undersecretaries, and inefficient authorities managers in the interest of the influential at the expense of the country's interest, are corrupt. MPs who violate the law and take the rights of others through wasta (connections) for their voters, are corrupt. Corruption covers all, and the path of true reform begins with the individual himself before throwing it at others, if the individual is good then the entire society will be good, and if the society is good the state will be good and flourish and the example is very clear in the west. Almighty Allah says: "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of the people until they change what is in themselves." In short, we are all corrupt unless we do not reform ourselves. —Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Jarida

KFH PARTICIPATES IN ORGANIZING QIYAM PRAYER AT GRAND MOSQUE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) took part in organizing Al-Qiyam prayer held at the state's Grand Mosque as part of its social responsibility and in continuation of its eventful Ramadan program and charitable activities.

KFH voluntary team provided wheelchairs and hospitality service to worshippers and the personnel at the mosque. This step contributes in further bolstering KFH relationship with the society, yet reinforces KFH pioneering role in assuming the social responsibility. It is worth noting that KFH's team worked in collaboration with the concerned parties to organize Al-Qiyam prayer at the grand Mosque. Such initiatives underline KFH's interest in having strong social and humanitarian relationships with the society, yet reflect its firm belief in its ongoing commitment to assume social and humanitarian responsibility. Meanwhile, The Administration of the Capital



Mosques applauded KFH's initiative and expressed their thanks and gratitude to the bank.

This initiative comes as part of the bank's Ramadan program "Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 3" that

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.

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

KUWAITIS' MAIDS IN EUROPE

By Abdulmohsen Jum'a

Soon enough, all European capitals and cities will be full of GCC citizens and families who annually flock there during the summer to enjoy the greenery and fine weather. The same old negative images will recur: GCC families wandering around or shopping while dragging an Asian or African maid behind carrying children and shopping bags while the GCC 'princess' leads the way without even looking behind at her own children.

To be honest, the phenomenon of travelling on touristic trips accompanied by maids does not exist amongst other GCC families, like Saudis, Emiratis, Qataris, etc. It is a distinctive trait of Kuwaiti tourists in Europe who will fight with European embassies to have visas issued for domestic laborers accompanying Kuwaiti families. Those embassies have been too soft on issuing such visas with the result that various problems may happen including deserting the family and breaking the visa to stay in Europe or causing legal disputes that may have bad consequences on the head of the family.

Kuwaiti women's addiction to housemaids is phenomenally becoming a bad social lesion. The sad thing is that you may find a young Kuwaiti woman taking her maid to Europe who won't serve her own husband and kids for a few weeks on the summer vacation while, at the same time, one sees Japanese, American and Australian tourists in their seventies or eighties accompanying their families on trips and gladly serving them.

There are other negative images of Kuwaiti families on flights. One will see a Kuwaiti mother in the front seat watching a movie while her kids are wrestling with the maid behind without even attracting her attention to look behind. A European lady once interfered on seeing a Kuwaiti family walking in an airport with a maid following them carrying a baby, some bags and dragging a trolley bag at the same time. The lady criticized the family noting that what the maid was doing was unbearable for human beings.

Scenes of Kuwaitis' maids in Europe have become terrible images portraying the Kuwaiti society because of a few lazy men and women who are the outcome of the age of oil and wealth that nobody made an effort to make. Therefore, the government must interfere and urge European embassies to limit the number of visas issued for domestic laborers accompanying Kuwaiti families to Europe, and make them restricted to those accompanying people with special needs. —Translated by Kuwait Times



KFH DISTRIBUTED IFTAR MEALS IN HAWALLY

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continued its "Feed a Fasting Person" campaign by distributing iftar meals in Hawally in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Hawally Governorate. This comes as part of the bank's Ramadan program 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 3' that reinforce the firm commitment towards social responsibility.

KFH voluntary team distributes iftar meals at places that are teeming with fasting people such as Nayef Palace, Souq Al-Mubarakaya in addition to oth-

er places in Kuwait. KFH's efforts in Ramadan underline the bank's role in the field of social responsibility, and contributes in strengthening the social ties. KFH voluntary team prepares and distributes over 600 meals daily until end of Ramadan.

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



BURGAN BANK CONCLUDES ITS ANNUAL RAMADAN PROGRAM

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently concluded its annual Ramadan program, which embodied the true spirit of giving during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The program, which involved various visits to organizations, charities and public associations, aimed to share with moments of joy and togetherness during Ramadan.

As part of this annual tradition, Burgan Bank conducted visits to distribute Girgian gift bags to children, elderly and people with disabilities

through fun-filled activities. The visits included Kuwait Centre for Mental Health, Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH), Kuwait Society for the Follow-up Issues of Disabled People and Abeer 2 Voluntary Team for Mentally Disabled and Kuwaiti Disabled Sport Club.

Through this honorable yearly tradition, Burgan Bank seeks to continue showcasing the essence of the rich Kuwaiti heritage during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Burgan Bank's initiative

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





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CIA knew Putin sought to boost Trump in elections

LONDON TOWER BLOCKS EVACUATED OVER FIRE FEARS

QATAR SAYS ULTIMATUM UNREASONABLE

DOHA GIVEN 10 DAYS TO COMPLY * TURKEY REJECTS CALL TO SHUT BASE

DOHA: Qatar yesterday denounced a sweeping list of demands from Saudi Arabia and its allies in an escalating Gulf diplomatic crisis as unreasonable and an impingement on the emirate's sovereignty. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt want Qatar to meet the 13-point ultimatum in return for an end to a nearly three-week-old diplomatic and trade "blockade" of the emirate. Qatar has been given 10 days to meet the demands, which apparently include a call to close down broadcaster Al-Jazeera, but Doha said the requests were unrealistic.

"This list of demands confirms what Qatar has said from the beginning - the illegal blockade has nothing to do with combating terrorism, it is about limiting Qatar's sovereignty, and outsourcing our foreign policy," said Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed Al-Thani, head of Qatar's government communications office, in a statement. "The US secretary of state recently called upon the blockading nations to produce a list of grievances that was 'reasonable and actionable'. The British foreign secretary asked that the demands be 'measured and realistic'. This list does not satisfy that criteria."

The four Arab governments delivered the demands to Qatar through mediator Kuwait on Thursday, more than two weeks after severing all ties with the emirate and imposing an embargo. The document has not been published but has been widely leaked and the demands are sweeping in their scope. They include the closure of Al-Jazeera television, a long-standing source of conflict between Doha and neighboring countries which accuse it of fomenting regional strife.

"The measures that have been taken are there to stay until there is a long-term solution to the issue," Emirati Ambassador to the US Yousef Al-Otaiba said in an interview. Suggesting the penalties would only be economic and diplomatic, he said "there is no military element to this whatsoever". Having urged Qatar's neighbors to come up with "reasonable and actionable" demands, the US sought to distance itself from the crisis the day after the Arab countries issued a list that included several provisions Qatar had already declared it could not or would not accept.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has tried to



A Qatari officer checks the vehicle of a Saudi citizen on the Qatari side of the Abu Samrah border crossing with Saudi Arabia on Friday. — AFP

mediate and earlier this week called on the Arab nations to limit themselves to "reasonable and actionable" demands. That call appeared to have been roundly ignored, and it was the Kuwaitis - who also offered to mediate - who delivered the list Thursday to Qatar. "This is an Arab issue that requires an Arab solution," Otaiba said. "That's why the Kuwaitis will take the lead in the negotiation." That's just fine, the US said. At the White House, spokesman Sean Spicer called it a "family issue" among Arab states and declined to say whether the newly articulated demands were legitimate. "This is something that they want to and should work out for themselves," Spicer said.

Qatar faces Gulf 'divorce'

The ultimatum also include calls for Doha to cut ties to groups including the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic State organization, Al-Qaeda and Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement. Qatar has also been asked to hand over opposition figures wanted by its three neighbors and Egypt and to down-

grade diplomatic ties with Iran. Notably, it has also been told to shut a Turkish military base in the emirate. Qatar's foreign affair ministry said it was "studying" the list, "in order to prepare an appropriate response". The sanctioning countries demanded Qatar pay them reparations for any damage or costs incurred due to Qatari policies. Compliance with the demands would be monitored, with monthly reports in the first year, then every three months the next year, then annually for 10 years.

The most powerful country in the region to back the Qatari side in the dispute has been Turkey, whose President Tayyip Erdogan has his roots in an Islamist political party similar to movements that Qatar has backed in the region. Days after the sanctions were imposed, Turkey rushed through legislation to send more troops to its base in Qatar as a sign of support. Defense Minister Fikri Isik rejected the demand to close the base, saying it would represent interference in Ankara's relations with Doha. Instead, Turkey might bolster its presence. "Strengthening the Turkish base

would be a positive step in terms of the Gulf's security," he said. "Re-evaluating the base agreement with Qatar is not on our agenda."

Meshal Hamad Al-Thani, Qatar's ambassador to the United States, tweeted that the list was meant to "punish Qatar for its independence". "I can assure you that our situation today is very comfortable," he told AP. "Qatar could continue forever like that with no problems." Asked whether Qatar felt pressure to resolve the crisis quickly, he said: "Not at all." "This reflects basically an attempt from these countries to suppress free media and also undermine our sovereignty," said the Qatari envoy. "They are trying to impose their views on how the issues need to be dealt with in the Middle East. They are bullies," he added.

Qatar was warned by one of its most hawkish critics in the region that unless it meets the list of demands, Doha faces "divorce" from its Gulf neighbors. Anwar Gargash, the UAE's state minister for foreign affairs, said Qatar should yield to the demands. "It would be wiser that (Qatar) deal seriously with the demands and concerns of the neighbors or a divorce will take place," he wrote on Twitter. The demands confirm that "the crisis is profound", Gargash added. He also said Qatar leaked the document containing the demands by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt, accusing Qatar of sponsoring terrorism. Qatar strongly denies such charges.

'Attempt to silence'

Al-Jazeera, one of the largest news organizations in the world, responded to the demands by saying it "deplores" calls for it to be taken off air. "We in the network believe that any call for closing down Al-Jazeera is nothing but an attempt to silence the freedom of expression in the region and to suppress people's right to information," the broadcaster said in a statement. In the other official response out of Qatar, its Human Rights Committee said the demands represented "gross violations" of basic rights.

Qatar is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council with Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. As well as cutting diplomatic ties, Qatar's neighbors closed their air space to Qatari carriers and blocked the emi-

rate's only land border, vital for its food imports. Qatar is home to the largest US base in the region, Al-Udeid, and Bahrain is home to the Fifth Fleet of the United States Navy.

Tillerson's spokeswoman Heather Nauert said Tuesday the United States was "mystified" that Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies had failed to present details justifying their embargo on Qatar. US President Donald Trump, however, has made statements siding with Saudi Arabia in the crisis. British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said Friday that any conditions placed on Qatar should be "measured and realistic".

The uncompromising demands leave little prospect for a quick end to the biggest diplomatic crisis for years between Sunni Arab Gulf states, regional analysts said. "The demands are so aggressive that it makes it close to impossible to currently see a resolution of that conflict," said Olivier Jakob, a strategist at Switzerland-based oil consultancy Petromatrix. Ibrahim Fraihat, Conflict Resolution Professor at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, forecast a prolonged stand-off. Qatar will reject the demands as a "non-starter," he said, and its neighbors had already escalated as far as they were likely to go. "Military action remains unlikely at the moment so the outcome after the deadline would be a political stalemate..."

Qataris who spoke to Reuters described the demands as unreasonable, particularly the closure of Jazeera, which millions of Arabs see as an important outlet for voices willing to challenge the region's authoritarian rulers, but which neighboring governments call a conduit for Islamist propaganda. "Imagine another country demanding that CNN be closed," 40-year-old Haseeb Mansour, who works for telecom operator Ooredoo, said.

Abdullah Al-Muhanadi, a retired public sector worker shopping for groceries in Doha on Friday morning, said the boycott must be lifted before negotiations to resolve the dispute could start. "There's a lot on the list that is simply not true or unreasonable, so how can we comply?" he said. "There are no IRGC (Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps) elements in Qatar and the agreement with Turkey is a long-standing diplomatic agreement so we cannot ask them to leave." — Agencies

TRUMP OKS \$2BN DRONE SALES TO INDIA

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration has authorized the sale of unarmed surveillance drones to India, the manufacturer said Friday, as the two nations' leaders prepare for their first face-to-face meeting. India initiated its request to buy 22 Guardian MQ-9B unmanned aircraft for maritime surveillance last year. The deal is estimated to be worth about \$2 billion. The offer is still subject to congressional approval.

The green light from the administration marks a further deepening in defense ties as India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets with US President Donald Trump at the White House on Monday. Modi's two-day visit to Washington, which starts today, takes place amid uncertainty over the relationship because of differences on trade and other issues. So far in his presidency, Trump has focused on outreach to China, India's strategic rival, as he looks to Beijing to rein in North Korea. But Washington and New Delhi share concerns about China's rise as a military power.

India reportedly wants the drones for surveillance of the Indian Ocean - waters that China's navy increasingly traverses after establishing its first overseas base in the Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti. India's archrival Pakistan would also likely be opposed to the drone sale. "We are pleased that the US government has cleared the way for the sale of the MQ-9B Guardian to the Indian government," Linden Blue, CEO of the manufacturer, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, said in a statement. Blue added that it would "significantly enhance India's sovereign maritime domain awareness in the Indo-Pacific."

A congressional staffer familiar with the matter confirmed the administration has approved the sale. The staffer was not authorized to discuss the potential deal and requested anonymity. David McKeeby, spokesman for the State Department bureau of political-military affairs, said it does not comment on proposed defense sales before Congress is formally notified. A senior White House official said Friday that the US is interested in providing India the kind of high technology it provides to its closest allies and defense partners. That is important to the strategic partnership and for cooperation in areas like the Indian Ocean, and also creates US jobs, said the official, who requested anonymity to brief reporters on the preparations for Modi's visit.

India does not have a formal alliance with the US, but defense ties have intensified in recent years with joint drills between the two militaries and defense sales. The South Asian nation, which has traditionally bought most of



LISBON: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (left) and Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa clasp hands at the Necessidades Palace, the Portuguese Foreign Ministry, yesterday. Modi is on a one-day visit to Portugal. — AP

its defense equipment from Russia, is looking to upgrade its capabilities. Since 2008, India has signed more than \$15 billion in US defense contracts, including for C-130J and C-17 transport aircraft, P-8 maritime patrol aircraft, Harpoon missiles and Apache and Chinook helicopters.

Ashley Tellis, an expert on South Asia at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said the US decision to offer the Guardian aircraft to India is significant as the US has a standing policy of declining export of such advanced drones other than to allies involved in combined operations with US forces. "Much bureaucratic china within the US government had to be broken to get to this decision," he said.

There could still be pushback from Congress. While there is bipartisan support for closer US-India security ties, some lawmakers remain wary of the export of US drone technology to non-allies. Modi, a Hindu nationalist, will be making his fourth visit to the US since he took office in 2014. He forged a strong relationship with President Barack Obama, and on his last visit in June 2016, he addressed Congress and described the US as an "indispensable partner".

The visit is likely to be lower key and aimed

at building a personal bond between the two leaders, who have spoken twice by phone since Trump took office. Modi will be the first foreign dignitary to be hosted for dinner at the White House during Trump's presidency. They share a populist streak and a knack for using social media, and are likely to find common ground on combating Islamic extremism. Modi will be urging a tougher stance on Pakistan over militants that India blames for attacks on its territory.

But there could be increased strains on trade issues. India is among nations singled out by the Trump administration for their trade surpluses with the US, which in India's case totaled \$30.8 billion in 2016. New Delhi is also closely watching the administration's review of the H1B visa program, under which thousands of skilled Indian workers come to the US.

New Delhi was irked by Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate accord. In making the announcement, the US president said New Delhi had made its participation "contingent on receiving billions and billions and billions of dollars in foreign aid." India denies that and says it will continue to be part of the accord, regardless of US participation. — AP

PANDA MANIA HITS GERMANY

CHINA'S CUDDLY ENVOYS ARRIVE

BERLIN: Germany was bracing for panda mania as furry ambassadors arrive from China yesterday, destined for a new life as stars of Berlin's premier zoo. The pair, named Meng Meng and Jiao Qing, will be jetting in on a special Lufthansa cargo plane, accompanied by two Chinese panda specialists, the Berlin Zoo's chief vet and a ton of bamboo.

Berlin's mayor, China's ambassador to Germany and a gaggle of journalists will greet the VIPs as LH8415 pulls to a stop on the tarmac of Schoenefeld airport. After just over a week's acclimatization, they will be unveiled to the public by no less than Chancellor Angela Merkel and Chinese President Xi Jinping, most likely two days before the G20 summit of world leaders hosted by Germany. Famed for its "panda diplomacy", China has dispatched its national treasure to only about a dozen countries as a symbol of close relations.

Export giants Germany and China have nurtured increasingly close economic ties, and over the last year the have also taken on the leading role in championing free trade as Donald Trump shifts the US away from market liberalization with his "America First" push. The Chinese see the pandas as Chinese brand ambassadors. China obviously has an image problem in Europe and giving pandas is a very smart and easy way to win hearts," said Bernhard Bartsch from the Bertelsmann Foundation think tank in Berlin. The "pandas will lend a very positive spin in German media to the visit by Xi Jinping in July," he added.

Bamboo snacks

The excitement over the two bears is evident in the run-up to their arrival, with the zoo publishing a daily updated blog about the pair. "We are obviously nervous now because everything must go well," Berlin Zoo director Andreas Knieriem told SWR

radio on Friday. "There's a plane flying them in exclusively, and the flight route-Chengdu to Berlin-is not a usual route. But I think we are well prepared," he said.

The 12 hour, 20 minute journey to Germany has been carefully prepared, with "bamboo snacks" to keep the pandas happy and absorbent mats to ensure the transport box stays dry and odourless. And their new home at Berlin's zoo will measure about 5,500 square meters (59,000 square feet) and comes fitted with a wooded climbing area and an artificial stream.

Meng Meng means "dream" in Chinese, while Jiao Qing translates as "darling", though the Chinese characters are a composite of "tender" and "festive" or "celebration". But the honour of hosting them does not come cheap.

The zoo will pay \$15 million (13.4 million euros) for a 15-year contract to host them, with most of the money going towards a conservation and breeding research program in China. And the pandas' main dish-bamboo-will cost tens of thousands of euros each year. The zoo will probably look to offset part of its outlays through panda-themed merchandising. Ultimately, it hopes that the pair will produce babies, even if experts have warned that panda reproduction is a fine art.

Panda expert Jerome Pouille said that "the female is only receptive to a male for about 24 to 48 hours a year", adding that there was little chance of a cub within the first three years. China has previously given three pandas to Germany, but the last one, 34-year-old Bao Bao, died in Berlin in 2012, having become the oldest male panda in the world. About 1,864 pandas remain in the wild in China, up from around 1,000 in the late 1970s, according to the environmental group WWF. Just over 400 pandas live in zoos around the world, in conservation projects set up with Beijing. — AFP

QATAR IDEAL FIRST DIPLOMATIC CRISIS FOR OILMAN TILLERSON

WASHINGTON: The Qatar crisis presents Rex Tillerson with his first challenge as Washington's top diplomat and an opportunity for the former oilman to use his vast network of contacts. But while his former life as chief of energy giant ExxonMobil prepared Tillerson well, he does have one potential handicap - his new boss, President Donald Trump. While Trump has claimed credit for Saudi Arabia's air and land blockade of its gas-rich neighbor, Tillerson has urged an end to the embargo and restored alliances.

That differing approach could make the secretary of state's task difficult at best, but his friends in Washington say his regional experience makes him just the man for the job. "If anyone can do it, it's him," says James Jeffrey of the Washington Institute of Near East Policy, a former senior diplomat who advised Tillerson at Exxon. On the face of it, the diplomatic standoff in the oil and gas-rich Gulf has all the makings of a US foreign policy disaster coming at the worst possible time.

Late last month, Trump made what appeared at the time a triumphal visit to Riyadh to unite US friends in the region

against Iranian meddling and Islamist extremism. But just weeks later, on June 5, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates broke ties with Qatar, accusing its royal government of backing terrorist groups. The resulting stand-off left the countries that host the bulk of US forces in the region - Turkey, Qatar, Kuwait and Iraq - at odds with Washington's other key allies.

Fighter jets

And it could only strengthen the hand of Iran, which is confronting US and Saudi interests through covert operations and proxies in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Lebanon. Trump initially appeared to revel in the situation, praising Riyadh for standing up to fight terror financing and accusing Qatar of supporting extremism at a "high level." But Tillerson - who has been asked by the White House to help defuse the situation - took a different tack, and this week appeared to be making some progress.

On Tuesday, after the secretary of state had cancelled a planned visit to Mexico and spent two frustrating days on the telephone, he issued a strong statement. His

target was not Qatar - although he has been clear that all countries should do more to eradicate terror funding - but Riyadh and its Emirati ally. Tillerson's spokeswoman, Heather Nauert, told reporters that Washington was "mystified" that the Saudis and Emiratis had not released details of their allegations against Qatar.

"The more that time goes by, the more doubt is raised about the actions taken by Saudi Arabia and the UAE," she said, before turning the knife. Were Riyadh's actions really about "Qatar's alleged support for terrorism, or were they about the long simmering grievances between and among the GCC countries?" she asked. The statement was a clear signal that, despite Trump's rhetoric, official Washington blames the Saudis for escalating an unnecessary dispute. It was not the first such signal from Trump's top national security team - whose actions often struggle to speak louder than the president's words.

Terror funds

A week earlier, Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis signed a \$12 billion deal to sell Qatar -



Rex Tillerson

supposedly a terror sponsor - US-made F-15 fighter jets. In case that wasn't a strong enough sign, Tillerson also made what for him was a rare appearance before reporters to urge the Saudis to "ease" their embargo. Will Saudi Arabia and the Emiratis listen to the State Department and the Pentagon, and seek a face-saving agreement with Qatar that reunites the allies? Or will they listen to

Trump, who during a Wednesday campaign speech praised the Saudi king "for fighting with other countries that have been funding terrorism"? The key to re-balancing the relationship will lie with Tillerson.

"I think he's doing a good job, and he knows everybody. He knows the Saudis and the Qataris very well," said Jeffrey, a White House advisor under former president George W. Bush. For Jeffrey, the mistake was to let Riyadh think Trump had given them a green light. "It isn't that you have two separate policies. Trump is supporting Mattis and Tillerson," Jeffrey argues. "It's just that Trump can't help himself - he communicates in a different sphere through tweets and with his supporters. It's not Trump the commander-in-chief or the president, it's Trump the leader of a movement with its own worldview," he said.

"It's going to take a while for the Saudis and the Emiratis to understand this and not to take it to the bank, which is what they did." On Wednesday, a day after the strong "mystified" statement, Tillerson announced that Riyadh had now indeed drawn up a list of demands. —AFP



CATATUMBO, Colombia: This handout picture shows the two Dutch journalists Derk Johannes Bolt and Eugenio Ernest Marie Follender after being released by National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrillas yesterday. —AFP

COLOMBIA'S ELN REBELS FREE 2 DUTCH REPORTERS

BOGOTA: Rebels with Colombia's National Liberation Army (ELN) group have freed two Dutch journalists snatched days ago in the country's northeast, officials said yesterday. Colombia's ombudsman office, which handles human rights issues, wrote on Twitter that the rebel group freed reporter Derk Johannes Bolt, 62, and his cameraman Eugenio Ernest Marie Follender, 58, in a rural area of Norte de Santander state.

The office posted an accompanying photo purporting to show the pair, pictured with some of the rebels, along with Colombian human rights officials. The news came after rebels issued what turned out to be an erroneous announcement earlier Friday stating that the two men, who were kidnapped on June 19, had been released. Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders early yesterday confirmed that the journalists had been freed.

"Derk Bolt and Eugenio Follender were released today in the very dangerous region of Catatumbo in northern Colombia," he said, adding that the families of both men have been informed and that the ambassador has been able to speak with them. "They are doing pretty well considering the circumstances," Koenders said. "We've been in constant contact with the Colombian authorities who have worked hard on freeing them. I have a lot of appreciation and am grateful for their contribution," Koenders added. "This is very good news. I am enormously pleased that this kidnapping has ended so quickly."

A short time later, the Dutch diplomat issued a follow-up statement, relating details from a brief conversation he was able to have with one of the journalists. "Bolt was able to talk and very relieved. They are now facing a journey back through the jungle. We are putting everything in

motion in order to bring them back to The Netherlands as quickly as possible," Koenders said. Officials feared the high-profile kidnapping could disrupt peace talks between the ELN and the Colombian government.

The journalists work for Spoorloos, a program on Kro-Ncrv TV that helps Dutch people trace their biological relatives around the world. "We are pleased and relieved that Derk Bolt and Eugenio Follender are free. We are grateful to everyone who has worked to release Derk and Eugenio. In particular, we thank the foreign ministry. They have really done everything in The Hague and in Colombia in order to bring this about," the news broadcaster said in a statement.

Like the families, we were very concerned about our close colleagues at KRO-NCRV. We are very happy that they can go home." The editor at Spoorloos assured Dutch broadcaster NPO Radio 4 that there had been no ransom demanded. "They were abducted by mistake. It does not appear to have been planned," Spoorloos editor Paul Vertegaal said. "They seem to have been in the wrong place last Saturday."

The government of Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos and ELN opened peace talks on Feb 7 in Quito, Ecuador, after nearly four years of secret negotiations. The ELN, with 1,500 fighters, is the last guerrilla group still active in Colombia. The government is seeking a "complete peace" with the ELN after reaching a peace accord last year with the much larger FARC - the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. The Colombian civil conflict erupted in 1964 when the FARC and ELN took up arms for rural land rights. The fighting, which over the years drew in various rebel and paramilitary groups and drug gangs as well as state forces, has left at least 260,000 people dead, according to authorities. —AFP

IRAQI FORCES FREE CIVILIANS IN MOSUL OLD CITY BATTLES

MOSUL: Iraqi forces opened exit routes for hundreds of civilians to flee the Old City of Mosul yesterday as they battled to retake the ancient quarter from Islamic State militants mounting a last stand in what was the de facto capital of their "caliphate". US-trained urban warfare units were channelling their onslaught along two perpendicular streets that converge in the heart of the Old City, aiming to isolate the jihadist insurgents in four pockets.

Iraqi authorities are hoping to declare victory in the northern Iraqi city in the Muslim Eid holiday, which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, during the next few days. Helicopter gunships were assisting the ground thrust, firing at insurgent emplacements in the Old City, a Reuters correspondent reported from a location near the front lines. The government advance was carving out escape corridors for civilians marooned behind Islamic State lines.

There was a steady trickle of fleeing families on Saturday, some with injured and malnourished children. "My baby only had bread and water for the past eight days," one mother said. At least 100 civilians reached the safety of a government-held area west of the Old City in one 20-minute period, tired, scared and hungry. Soldiers gave them food and water. More than 100,000 civilians, of whom half are believed to be children, remain trapped in the crumbling old houses of the Old City, with lit-

tle food, water or medical treatment.

The urban-warfare forces were leading the campaign to clear the Sunni Islamist militants from the maze of Old City alleyways, moving on foot house-to-house in locations too cramped for the use of armoured combat vehicles. Aid organizations and Iraqi authorities say Islamic State is trying to prevent civilians from leaving so as to use them as human shields. Hundreds of civilians fleeing the Old City have been killed in the past three weeks.

A US-led international coalition is providing ground and air support in the eight-month-old campaign to seize Mosul, the largest city the militants came to control in a shock offensive in Iraq and neighboring Syria three years ago. US-supported Iraqi government offensives have wrested back several important urban centers in the country's west and north from Islamic State over the past 18 months.

Historic Mosque Blown Up by Militants

Military analysts said Baghdad's campaign to recover Mosul gathered pace after Islamic State blew up the 850-year-old al-Nuri mosque with its famous leaning minaret on Wednesday. The mosque's destruction, while condemned by Iraqi and UN authorities as another cultural crime by the jihadists, gave troops more freedom to press their onslaught as they no longer had to worry about damaging the ancient site. —Reuters

CIA KNEW PUTIN SOUGHT TO BOOST TRUMP IN ELECTIONS

TRUMP DOES NOT INTEND TO FIRE INVESTIGATOR MUELLER

WASHINGTON: The CIA had top-level intelligence last August that Russian President Vladimir Putin personally ordered an operation to help Donald Trump win the US presidential race, the Washington Post reported Friday. The intelligence shocked the White House and put US security chiefs on a top-secret crisis footing to figure out how to react. But amid confidence that Democrat Hillary Clinton still had the election in the bag and worries over president Barack Obama himself being seen as manipulating the election, the administration delivered warnings to Moscow but left countermeasures until after the vote, the Post reported.

After Trump's shock victory, there were strong regrets among administration officials that they had shied from tough action. "From national security people there was a sense of immediate introspection, of, 'Wow, did we mishandle this,'" a former administration official told the newspaper. The Post said that as soon as the intelligence on Putin came in, the White House viewed it as a deep national security threat. A secret intelligence task force was created to firm up the information and come up with possible responses.

They couldn't do anything about embarrassing WikiLeaks revelations from hacked Clinton emails. The focus turned to whether Moscow could disrupt the November 8 vote itself by hacking voter registration

lists or voting machines, undermining confidence in the vote tally itself. Worried about making the situation worse, the administration put off retaliating, and instead delivered stiff warnings directly to the Russians not to go farther.

At least four direct warnings - Obama to Putin, spy chief to spy chief, and via top diplomatic channels - appeared to have an impact, officials told the Post. They believe



US President Donald Trump

that Moscow pulled back on any possible plans to sabotage US voting operations. "We made the judgment that we had ample time after the election, regardless of outcome, for punitive measures," a senior administration official told the Post.

Options to retaliate were on the table early: More crippling sanctions on the Russian economy, leaking information that would embar-

ass Putin diplomatically, and launching cyberattacks on Russian infrastructure were high on the list. But Trump's shock victory dampened the response. Obama took modest measures at the end of December, expelling 35 Russians and adding to existing sanctions. He also, according to the Post, authorized a plan to place cyberattack implants in the systems of critical Russian infrastructure.

But it remains unclear, the Post said, whether Trump has followed through with that. Trump on Friday questioned Obama's response to the Russian hacking crisis. "Just out: The Obama Administration knew far in advance of November 8th about election meddling by Russia. Did nothing about it. WHY?" he posted on Twitter. In an interview with Fox News program "Fox and Friends" that will air Sunday, Trump groused that Obama's response did not get more media coverage. "The CIA gave him information on Russia a long time before they even - before the election. And I hardly see it. It's an amazing thing," Trump said in an excerpt released by the program Friday evening. "If he had the information, why didn't he do something about it? He should have done something about it. But you don't read that. It's quite sad."

Meanwhile, Trump has no intention of firing the special counsel investigating charges of Russian meddling in the 2016 US election, even though he questioned the official's impartiality in an interview,

the White House said on Friday. White House spokesman Sean Spicer told reporters that while Trump "retains the authority" to dismiss special counsel Robert Mueller, "he has no intention of doing that".

Trump voiced concern in a TV interview on Fox News on Friday about what he said was the close relationship between former FBI Director James Comey and Mueller, who was named to take over the Russia investigation after Trump fired Comey. "He's very, very good friends with Comey, which is bothersome," Trump told Fox News. "Look, there has been no obstruction. There has been no collusion. There has been leaking by Comey."

Lawmakers investigating allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 US election have raised questions about whether Comey's May 9 firing was an attempt by Trump to stop the Russia probe. While White House officials have said the firing was due to concerns about Comey's actions at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Trump told an interviewer the Russia investigation was one of his concerns in taking the action.

But the president insists his campaign did not collude with Russia and that his firing of Comey did not obstruct justice. "There's been no collusion, no obstruction and virtually everybody agrees to that," Trump told Fox, adding that Mueller "is an honorable man and hopefully he'll come up with an honorable solution." —Agencies

QUEBEC EXTREMISTS COME OUT OF SHADOWS

QUEBEC CITY: Tattooed and wearing a black t-shirt emblazoned with a wolf paw, Patrick Beaudry admits being in the second year of a political movement "that is perhaps more radical" than others. La Meute, a far-right group in Quebec of which he is a founder, does not promote extremist or racist views, he insists, while confessing a liking for the French National Front of Marine Le Pen. His motivation, however, is unequivocal. "Our fight is with radical Islam," Beaudry told AFP.

La Meute is not a lone actor in Quebec. Other groups seeking independence or opposing immigration include Soldiers of Oden and the Federation of Native Quebecers (FQS). They are all close or affiliated to the far-right. Engaged by issues such as secularism or the veiling of Muslim women, they are no longer shy to speak out to try and influence political debate. "What I hear from the National Front charms me," says Beaudry, who also agrees with the position of the FQS, which welcomed Le Pen's recent visit to Quebec, which proved fertile ground.

About 20 percent of expatriates in the province voted for Le Pen in French presidential elections in April - twice the rate of support of French citizens residing throughout Canada. Membership of groups such as La Meute - some of which are interlaced and affiliated with international organizations - range from a few dozen to thousands. Most are held together by the charisma of their leader. "A group can disappear overnight because of an internal schism or a decision by its members to self-dissolve or go underground," said Aurelie Campana, a far-right specialist in Canada. But the movements are undoubtedly coming out of the woodwork.

Refugee tensions

"Until very recently, these extreme right-wing groups refused to be part of political debates and public discourse," said the professor at Laval University in Quebec City. "Many associate the extreme right with racism and, to say racist is to be stigmatized. These groups want to be seen as legitimate," Campana added. Tensions, however, have run high. Last fall, 50 far right sympathizers protested outside the Quebec legislature waving placards that read: "Death to Terrorists, Islam out."



STONEHAM-ET-TWESBURY, Canada: Former military member Patrick Beaudry, co-founder of the far right group "La Meute", poses on April 25, 2017. —AFP

And in March, nearly 200 demonstrated against a motion in Canada's parliament condemning Islamophobia. The motion was adopted after a shooting rampage at a mosque in Quebec City killed six worshippers. The far right quickly distanced itself from the action of the young attacker seemingly inspired by their rhetoric who is now in custody awaiting prosecution. A refugee group also noted that shooter Alexandre Bissonnette espoused in online posts positions taken by US President Donald Trump, Le Pen and a Quebec group that rejects multiculturalism.

But, like their brethren in Europe, the far-right groups in Canada have taken a firm stand against immigration, seizing on problems arising from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's welcoming of 40,000 Syrian

refugees. "Extreme right-wing groups in Quebec have a number of objectives," said Maxime Fiset, a former FQS member. They are "anti-immigrant, ultra-nationalist or neo-fascist," and see secularism as a means to combat radical Islam, he said.

La Meute and its contemporaries hope to make a breakthrough in next year's elections in the French-speaking province where liberals now rule. Horizon Quebec Actuel, another party affiliated with France's National Front, contested a by-election in late May in Montreal. Its campaign posters featured the split image of a young woman wearing a blue bonnet on one side and a black veil (niqab) on the other. "We ask immigrants to adopt the customs of the people of Quebec, it has nothing to do with racism," said its leader Alexandre Cormier-Denis. —AFP

MEAL PROGRAM BRIDGES DIVISIONS, ONE PLATE AT A TIME

PHILADELPHIA: On the menu, the flavor profiles seemed incongruous: Chinese dumplings, Italian-style roast pork and a Mexican chicken dish featuring an edible weed. But when dinner was served, the guests seated and plates bearing foods of three different cultures shared, it all made sense. The meal was part of "Breaking Bread, Breaking Barriers," a yearlong program that brings people of different backgrounds together for a meal featuring their cultural favorites, bridging differences one plate at a time.

"People cooking and eating together happens every day, but it doesn't often happen across our social boundaries," said Anuj Gupta, general manager of Reading Terminal Market, the historic and sprawling indoor market and home to the program. "It's an incredibly powerful tool to cut through whatever

social barriers you want to erect."

Jews and Muslims have shared Jewish apple cake and baklava as part of the program. Members of the African-American and Korean communities have come together to compare fried chicken recipes. During the most recent gathering, residents of the city's Chinese and Mexican communities enjoyed dinner with members of the Philadelphia Mummies Association, a 10,000-strong civic association behind the city's annual New Year's Day parade.

For much of their history, Mummies groups included only white men. Women weren't allowed in the parade until a few decades ago. The tradition is also a family legacy, with many clubs based in southern Philadelphia. While the 2017 parade was controversy-free, past parades were tainted by performances dubbed racist or culturally insen-

sitive. The Mummies have tried to diversify, creating a division in 2015 specifically for ethnic groups.

The dinner consisted of Chinese dumplings with pork or kale; verdolagas con pollo (verdolagas is an herb also known as purslane that's largely considered a weed by Americans); and roasted pork rolled with spinach, roasted peppers and provolone cheese, the Mummer contribution in a nod to a popular Italian-American dish served on New Year's Day.

Before the meal, Chef Alice Ye taught Mummer Jay Polakoff how to make Chinese dumplings as the other diners watched. Someone noted that Polakoff's seemed a little, well, misshapen. "It's actually a hamentashen," Polakoff said, referring to the tri-cornered confection associated with the Jewish holiday of Purim. — AP



PHILADELPHIA: Participants in a yearlong 'Breaking Bread, Breaking Barriers' program share a meal on June 5, 2017 at Reading Terminal Market. — AP



LONDON: Residents leave the Taplow Tower residential block on the Chalcots Estate in north London on Friday as it is evacuated because of fire safety concerns. — AFP

LONDON TOWERS URGENTLY EVACUATED OVER FIRE FEARS

DOZENS REFUSE TO LEAVE

LONDON: Residents of 650 London flats were evacuated yesterday due to fire safety fears in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, but 83 people refused to leave their homes, according to local officials. Four of the five Chalcots Estate towers in Camden, north London, were deemed unsafe after they were found to use cladding similar to that on Grenfell, widely blamed for the rapid spread of the massive blaze last week that is presumed to have killed 79 people.

"Following extensive joint visits and inspections the brigade advised that there were a number of fire safety issues in the buildings and recommended that residents should not remain," said a London Fire Brigade spokesman. The dramatic decision follows urgent testing of the towers' exteriors, which were installed by the same contractor as the Grenfell Tower. Residents from all five Chalcots towers were initially evacuated, but one of the five - Blashford - was deemed safe and residents allowed to return.

Other residents faced chaos, with temporary accommodation offered in a local leisure center and hotels, but some refused to move. Camden Council leader Georgia Gould told BBC News that 83 residents had refused to leave, adding the situation "will become a matter for the fire service". Resident Renee Williams, 90, said she and her neighbors had been given no warning. "No official came and told us what's going on, I saw it on the TV so I packed an overnight bag," she told the Press Association. "But now they're telling us we're going to be out of our homes for the next two to four weeks. There's no organization and it's chaos."

'Frightening'

Council leader Gould acknowledged it was "a scary time" but vowed "to make sure that they stay safe. "The cost we can deal with later," she added. The council has been booking hotels across London and the works are expected to take up to four weeks. Michelle Urquhart, who has been living in the Chalcots Estate's Bray tower, said the situation was "frightening". "I don't know where we are going to go. "One man in a suit said to me 'you can't stay here tonight'."

In an update early yesterday, Camden Council said they had secured "hundreds of hotel beds for Chalcots' residents". On Friday, police said that manslaughter charges could be brought over the Grenfell inferno, after finding that the fire started with a faulty fridge and the building's cladding had failed safety tests. Fiona McCormack from the London police said that tiles and insulation on the outside of the building "don't pass any safety tests". McCormack said police were investigating companies involved in the building and refurbishment of the tower, and possible "health and safety and fire safety offences".

The cladding was installed on the 24-storey council-owned Grenfell Tower, which was built in 1974, as part of a refurbishment completed last year. It has prompted a wider review of social housing which has identified at least 600 towers in England with similar cladding.

Charity hit

McCormack said all "complete bodies" had been removed from the burnt-out tower and

there was "a terrible reality that we may not find or identify everyone who died due to the intense heat". She said officers had been through all levels of the tower but that the full forensic search could take until the end of the year. Police fear the toll may be higher because some residents may have been living in the tower illegally.

Prime Minister Theresa May stressed on Thursday that all Grenfell victims, regardless of their immigration status, would be able to access whatever help they need. May said her thoughts were with the evacuated Chalcots residents. "We will work with and support the emergency services and relevant authorities to safeguard the public," she said.

Six men and three women killed in the Grenfell inferno have been formally identified. They are Mohammad Alhajali, 23; Khadija Saye, 24; Abufars Ibrahim, 39; Khadija Khalloufi, 52; and Anthony Disson, 65, while the identities of three men and one woman have not been made public at the request of their families. Nine patients remain in hospital, of which three are in a critical condition. Meanwhile the government ordered immediate checks on the Hotpoint FF175BP fridge freezer model blamed for the blaze.

A charity single released to raise money for survivors of the fire reached the top spot in the British charts on Friday after selling more than 170,000 copies. The track is a cover of Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water" by 50 artists including Stormzy, Emeli Sande, Robbie Williams and Paloma Faith. — AFP

MAFIA PRIMED FOR REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

PALERMO: Shortly before 8 am on a sunny spring morning, Mafia boss Giuseppe Dainotti was cycling down a quiet street when two men on a motorbike drew alongside and shot him three times, killing him on the spot. It was a classic mob hit in the heart of the Sicilian capital. People claimed to have seen nothing and only one person admitted to even hearing the gunfire. A month on, no one has been arrested.

Released from prison in 2014, Dainotti, 67, had served more than two decades in jail for murder. The motive for his own murder are not clear but police say the first high-profile Mafia hit in Palermo since 2010 may signal renewed internal strife. "The Mafia today is in search of a new leadership at a time when a lot of the old bosses are coming out of prison," said Palermo police chief, Renato Cortese. "The danger is that some bigwig will be released and try to put the Mafia back together again," he told Reuters.

Once all-powerful on Sicily, the world's most famous crime gang, known as Cosa Nostra, "Our Thing", has been squeezed over the past two decades, with many bosses put behind bars, many of its businesses sequestered and many locals ready to defy it. Despite these setbacks, no one believes it is dying. Indeed, after years of decline, with the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta overtaking it as Italy's most powerful mobsters, prosecutors believe it is trying to rebuild, start-

ing with its drug trade. "The mafia organization is once again looking to develop and maintain a total monopoly on the extremely profitable narcotics market," Matteo Frasca, the head of Palermo's Appeals Court, said in a speech in January. Italian prosecutors say the 'Ndrangheta has a stranglehold on cocaine trade, but Cosa Nostra is a major player in the Italian hashish market, often importing the drug from northern Africa and selling it throughout Europe.

In March, police found 400 kg of hashish, worth an estimated 3 million euros (\$3.4 million), floating just off the Sicilian coast after a drop-off went awry. In May, police seized around 300 kg of hashish in a single raid in Palermo. "For a while, the Mafia depended on public work scams and extortion rackets for much of their money, but with the economy in such a dire straits here, they are returning to their old drug habits," said a senior anti-Mafia magistrate, who declined to be named because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

Shopkeepers' Revolt

Sicily's economic output fell more than 13 percent between 2008 and 2015 and is only slowly recovering, while the jobless rate is 22 percent, twice the national average. The deep recession has made it much more difficult for hard-up businesses to pay protection money, or

"pizzo" in Italian, to the Mafia and more than 1,000 firms have revolted against paying that in Palermo alone in little more than a decade.

In May, the trial started of nine men accused of extorting cash from a dozen stores in the city's central Via Maqueda, which were all run by foreigners, mainly Bangladeshis. "It is an extraordinary affair. For the first time in Palermo, a group of foreign storekeepers rebelled. They rebelled together. It was a collective action," said Daniele Marannano, coordinator of Addiopizzo, "Goodbye pizzo".

Addiopizzo is a grassroots civic movement that encourages companies to fight back against Cosa Nostra. "Lots of businesses still pay the pizzo, but they now want something back from the Mafia for their money - help fixing prices in their neighborhood, help keeping difficult employees in check, help collecting unpaid bills," said Marannano.

A local businessman, who declined to be named because of the sensitivities involved, said one of the consequences of the Mafia's decline was a rise in petty crime. He complained that fruit groves operated by his family food company were regularly raided at night by small-time thieves. "That never used to happen in the past. A fly couldn't land on a fruit tree without permission first from the Mafia." — Reuters

NORTH NIGERIA CHRISTIANS WORRIED OVER QUIT NOTICE

KANO, Nigeria: Okechukwu Ugo has been left in a predicament after an ultimatum was issued for all southern Christians of Igbo heritage to leave Nigeria's Muslim-majority north. "I was born in Kano," the building materials salesman told AFP in Sabon Gari, a Christian enclave on the edge of the country's biggest northern city. "My father relocated to Kano from the east more than 60 years ago. I don't have any other place to call home apart from Kano."

Since the call was made by a Muslim group, the Arewa Youth Consultative Forum (AYCF), on June 8, the federal government in Abuja has repeatedly called for calm. But the notice to Igbos to leave the north by October 1 has brought to the fore barely-concealed ethnic and religious tensions across Africa's most-populous nation. In the Igbo-dominated southeast, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) movement, led by the charismatic Nnamdi Kanu, has been increasingly saying it wants to go its own way. Ugo, however, wants nothing to do with any of it. "The government should end all these calls for secession in the east and quit notice to Igbos in the north for national cohesion," he said.

Biafra blamed

Rising communalism and anti-Igbo sentiment has been blamed on IPOB, stoked by memories of 1967 when their predecessors declared an independent republic of Biafra in the southeast. The declaration led to a brutal 30-month civil war and more than one million deaths, most of them Igbos, from starvation and disease. Stanley Obiora, a 40-year-old Igbo trader in Kano, has like Ugo lived all his life in Sabon Gari and said Kanu and his ilk don't speak for him. "The northern youth said they issued the

ultimatum in reaction to the Biafra agitation which we, the Igbos in the north, are not party to," he added. "We call on our elders on the east to caution our youth from making reckless utterances that put their kinsmen in the north at the receiving end." The Igbos have so much investment in the north. You don't expect us to leave and abandon all that we worked to build overnight."

North-south divide

Nigeria is roughly evenly split between the Muslim-majority north and the largely Christian south, but the country is made up of more than 250 ethnic groups. The biggest is the Hausa-speaking Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the southwest and the Igbo in the southeast. Many have relocated for economic reasons over the years. The veteran Nigeria specialist Dmitri-Georges Lavroff has described the north as "quasi-feudal and under-developed".

Northerners feel "alien to the urbanized, commercial and industrial south, inhabited by a willingly expansionary people". They "have the impression they were economically 'colonized' by the Igbo traders from the south", he wrote in a research paper "On the path of national unity". Fifty years ago, there was a massacre of Igbos in the north in retaliation for a Jan 1966 military coup d'etat seen as orchestrated predominantly by Igbo army officers. That led to the Igbo declaration of secession.

Obiora pointed out there had been previous quit notices in the north, adding: "I hope it all comes to pass, as previous quit notices." With memories long and the history of what happened next not forgotten, the authorities are also keen to avoid a repetition at all costs. — AFP



PRETORIA: Imtiaz Cajee, the nephew of Ahmed Timol, an anti-apartheid activist brutally murdered in police custody in Oct 1971, holds a portrait of his uncle at his home on May 25, 2017. — AFP

SOUTH AFRICA CONFRONTING APARTHEID CUSTODY DEATHS

JOHANNESBURG: The brutal death of anti-apartheid campaigner Ahmed Timol was allowed to go quietly unsolved in the interests of South Africa's democratic reconciliation. But now more than 45 years after he fell from a 10th-floor window at a notorious regime security building and died, Timol's case is being re-examined following a campaign to expose the truth led by his family. Timol, a 30-year-old activist with the then-banned South African Communist Party (SACP), was arrested in Johannesburg on the night of October 22, 1971.

After being held in detention for five days, he was declared dead following his plunge from the blue-and-grey police headquarters onto the pavement below. Following an investigation by authorities at the time, the anti-apartheid activist was found by a judge to have taken his own life. Their verdict was not open to appeal. "Murder, in the view of the testimony given, is excluded and even considering it, is ludicrous... To accept anything other than that the deceased jumped out of the window and fell to the ground can only be seen as ludicrous," said the inquest judge, J J L de Villiers. Case closed.

But Timol's friends and family would not be deterred from their pursuit of the truth. His younger brother, who himself had been held in the apartheid regime's jails, was particularly instrumental in the campaign for justice. "Whether he was pushed out of the window or whether he was forced to jump, one can't tell. But over the years I have always said that Ahmed

was killed in police custody," said Mohammad Timol.

'He was gruesomely tortured'

Imtiaz Cajee, Ahmed Timol's nephew, is unequivocal about the events of Oct 1971. "He was gruesomely tortured and we believe he was murdered. If you look at the photographs of his body, nobody can believe he committed suicide," he said. "Remember he was already the 22nd person who died in police hands in 1971, so they already had a history of killing people in police detention."

Timol's nephew has also championed the campaign for truth, pursuing many different avenues, driven by his conviction that his uncle died unlawfully. Over the years, Imtiaz Cajee has launched media appeals, created a foundation, organized exhibitions, published a book and even recruited a private investigator with the help of an NGO. Then in October last year there was a breakthrough - prosecutors finally agreed to re-open Timol's case. "We are of the opinion that there is compelling evidence that necessitates the reopening of the inquest in the interest of justice," the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) wrote. A judge was tasked with examining the case and the first hearing was scheduled for June 26 at a Johannesburg court. For Cajee it was a cathartic victory following a long, emotional fight. "I have very faint memories of my uncle. When he was murdered in 1971, I was merely five-years-old," he said. "But... from a very young age, the death of my uncle had an impact on me." — AFP

AFGHAN 'HILL OF WIDOWS' LIVING IN A WORLD APART

KABUL: The first women settled on this stony slope outside Kabul in the 1990s hoping to escape the stigma those like them are forced to endure. Today it is known as Afghanistan's 'hill of widows', home to a cluster of women who have eked out independence in a society that shuns and condemns them as immoral. The rocky summit 15 km southeast of the capital has gradually been swallowed by the city, becoming a distant Kabul suburb. But for its residents, it remains "Zanabad", the city of women.

The matriarch of Zanabad, Bibi ul-Zuqia, known as "Bibikoh", died in 2016. Her eldest daughter, 38-year-old Anissa Azimi, has a husband - but in a rare step for married women in conservative Afghanistan, has taken up the matriarchal torch. Their house is one of the first when you arrive in Zanabad by a broken track, at the bottom of a passage barred with a tarp to protect privacy. "My mother arrived here 15 years ago" with her five children, Anissa says, sitting on carpets and assaulted by a swarm of children.

Bibikoh lost a first husband, killed by a rocket, before being remarried to a brother-in-law, who then died from an illness. She was scratching a living doing laundry for others, but found Kabul rents too expensive. In Zanabad, Anissa says, land was cheap. The first widows had already begun to lay down their belongings and their grief in the largely deserted suburb to form a tightly-knit community though no one any longer knows exactly who began it, and when.

'Safe and cheap'

"They encouraged the others (widows) to join them," says Anissa. "The main idea was to get a cheap and safe place ... a permanent address." Soon it became a haven for destitute and desperate women who had lost their husbands. Bibikoh organized literacy classes, sewing workshops and food distributions with the support of an NGO, says researcher Naheed Esar, who studied the community for several years for the Afghan Analysts Network.

Women are perceived as being owned by their father before becoming their husband's property. Widows are often rejected as immoral or regarded as burdens: they suffer violence, expulsion, ostracism and sometimes forced remarriage, often with a brother-in-law, as reported by the UN Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in a rare study published in 2014.

Alone, they are vulnerable. A small military post guards the hill. It's good for protection, Anissa says. The Taliban are not very far down the road. But these women have learned those in authority cannot always be relied upon. Anissa recalls policemen coming to tear down the hous-

es the women had painstakingly built together in Zanabad. The only way to put them off was with bribes. "They destroyed our house like eight or nine times," says Anissa, who is now herself a police officer. "The only option at the end was to give them little money."

It is estimated there are as many as 2.5 million widows in Afghanistan today. Often uneducated and cloistered at home, the women have few options if their husbands die. At best, they receive \$150 a year from the government if their husband was killed in fighting. They survive by doing household chores, a little sewing, or by sending their children to beg in the bazaar.

Misery and solidarity

"In Afghanistan, men usually provide financial support for women, so it is hard for women to lose this support," says women's ministry spokeswoman Kobra Rezaei. A policy providing aid for poor women was approved in 2008 but never ratified, she adds. A few non-governmental programs help the widows find a little autonomy. In front of the former royal palace in Kabul, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) created a small gardening cooperative where some 100 particularly poor women learned to work the land. Eighty percent of them are widows.

Their destinies have been invariably cruel: Marghooba Jafary, a widow at 35 with four children, had to marry her 13-year-old daughter to a forty-year-old man as she was unable to feed her. He has since abandoned his teen bride. As Marghooba tells her story to AFP, she bursts into tears. The other women sitting around her - many depressed and unused to having someone listen to their woes - join in. Sixteen years after the end of the Taliban regime, families are bereaved every day by an intensifying conflict. More than 11,500 civilians were killed in 2016, and at least 800 soldiers and police in three months this winter.

Nawzi Fakiri, who says she has been a widow "since Baba Karmal" - the former pro-Soviet president in power from 1979 to 1986 - has taken in one displaced mother, Nouria, with her five children. The family fled Kunduz city in the north after it was assaulted by the Taliban last summer and found a safe place staying with Nawzi in Zanabad. In exchange for their room, Nouria helps care for Nawzi, who is almost blind from her cataracts. Zanabad has been home to as many as 500 widows. Anissa is trying to keep the list up to date, but as insecurity spirals more and more displaced families are seeking refuge in the outskirts of Kabul. She says: "Everywhere there is war. People are joining us." —AFP



KABUL: In this photograph taken on March 20, 2017, Afghan widow Nawzi Fakiri (center) speaks during an interview at her home, alongside members of a displaced family from Kunduz, who now live with her, on the Zanabad 'Widows Hill'. —AFP

US TO DROP IRAQ, MYANMAR FROM CHILD SOLDIERS' LIST

SECRETARY OF STATE TILLERSON OVERRULES DIPLOMATS

WASHINGTON: In a highly unusual intervention, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson plans to remove Iraq and Myanmar from a US list of the world's worst offenders in the use of child soldiers, disregarding the recommendations of State Department experts and senior US diplomats, US officials said. The decision, confirmed by three US officials, would break with longstanding protocol at the State Department over how to identify offending countries and could prompt accusations the Trump administration is prioritizing security and diplomatic interests ahead of human rights.

Tillerson overruled his own staff's assessments on the use of child soldiers in both countries and rejected the recommendation of senior diplomats in Asia and the Middle East who wanted to keep Iraq and Myanmar on the list, said the officials, who have knowledge of the internal deliberations. Tillerson also rejected an internal State Department proposal to add Afghanistan to the list, the three US officials said.

One official said the decisions appeared to have been made following pressure from the Pentagon to avoid complicating assistance to

the Iraqi and Afghan militaries, close US allies in the fight against Islamist militants. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity. Foreign militaries on the list can face sanctions including a prohibition on receiving US military aid, training and US-made weapons unless the White House issues a waiver.

Human rights officials expressed surprise at the delisting, which was expected to be announced on Tuesday, the officials said, as part of the State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. A State Department official said the TIP report's contents were being kept under wraps until its release and the department "does not discuss details of internal deliberations." The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Under the Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008, the US government must be satisfied that "no children are recruited, conscripted or otherwise compelled to serve as child soldiers" in order for a country to be removed from the list and US military assistance to resume. In the lead-up to Tuesday's report, the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, which

researches the issue and helps shape US policy on it, along with its legal office and diplomatic bureaus in Asia and the Middle East concluded that the evidence merited keeping both countries on the list, the officials said. Officials said that although the report had been finalized there was always the possibility of last-minute changes.

Betraying Children

Human Rights Watch said removing Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, from the list would be a "completely premature and disastrous action that will effectively betray more children to continued servitude and rights abuses." The decision also would put the Trump administration at odds with the United Nations, which continues to list the Myanmar military, along with seven ethnic armed groups, on its list of entities using and recruiting child soldiers.

"What's particularly astonishing is this move ignores that the UN in Burma says that it is still receiving new cases of children being recruited" by the Myanmar military, said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch. Rights groups have long accused Myanmar

of using child soldiers. Bordering both China and India, Myanmar is also of growing strategic importance to the United States at a time of increasing encroachment in the region by China, which has sought closer relations with its neighbor.

Iraq, which has received more than \$2 billion in US arms and training over the last three years, was added to the State Department's "Child Soldier Prevention Act List" in 2016. However, the flow of US assistance has continued. Former President Barack Obama handed out full or partial waivers regularly, including last year to Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan and others out of 10 countries on the list.

Last year's State Department report said some militias of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), an umbrella group of mostly Shi'ite Muslim factions with ties to the Iraqi government and backed by Iran, "recruited and used child soldiers." The report said that despite the PMF being funded by the government, Baghdad struggled to control all of its factions. "The government did not hold anyone accountable for child recruitment and use by the PMF and PMF-affiliated militias." —Reuters

TRAFFICKERS BUYING UP LAND, HOUSES TO SMUGGLE WOMEN

CHENNAI: Along the India-Bangladesh border that runs through India's eastern state of West Bengal, human traffickers are buying land, building homes and enrolling on voter lists to create cover for their cross-border operations, campaigners said. "Traffickers operating in border areas are constantly looking for ways to legitimize their business," said Adrian Phillips of non-profit group Justice and Care, which works on the prosecution of traffickers and care for victims. "Purchase of land using fake documents is ... carried out to gain a foothold, establish support, a base and build a nexus."

Thousands of people - largely poor, rural women and children - are lured to India's towns and cities each year by traffickers who promise good jobs but sell them into prostitution or domestic servitude. West Bengal state - which shares a porous border with poorer neighbors Bangladesh and Nepal and is a known human trafficking hub for that reason - registered more than one-third of the total number of victims in 2016.

A report by Justice and Care and the Indian Border Security Force last month points to specific instances where traffickers on both sides "cement their operations" by buying land in villages close to the India-Bangladesh border and enrolling their names in voters lists in the village councils. The porous, roughly 2,000 km long border running through West Bengal is demarcated primarily by border pillars and meanders through villages, agricultural land and rivers.

Every day it is crossed by thousands of people, who share similar ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural characteristics. These features along with the topography make it easy for infiltrators, smugglers and human traffickers to cross over into India, security officials say. "When traffickers produce valid voter cards or land deeds, it makes surveillance and identification even tougher," a senior Border Security Force officer told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, declining to be named.

India - which has an estimated 40 percent of almost 46 million people enslaved worldwide according to the 2016 Global Slavery Index - is a destination and transit point for young girls and women being trafficked into brothels or domestic servitude. Traffickers are using fake documents to buy land or acquire Indian identity cards, the report said. It gave the example of "Trafficker 1", a Bangladeshi citizen who had all the necessary Indian identity documents, including a ration card.

He had purchased government-owned land and built a house on it, using it as a temporary shelter point for girls being trafficked from Bangladesh. The researchers discovered that more than 35 girls trafficked by the person were working in Mumbai. Describing their journey from their villages in Bangladesh to brothels in India, most trafficking victims said they were "harbored" for a night in a shelter along the border. These mustering points are grooming grounds for the girls who are to be sold to brothels later, the report said. —Reuters

INDIA MOB KILLS MUSLIM TEEN IN BEEF ROW, 1 HELD

NEW DELHI: Indian police yesterday said one person has been arrested after a mob stabbed a Muslim teenager to death on suspicion of carrying beef, the number of older people living alone has risen, yet talking about their mistreatment remains taboo. India has a tradition of honoring older people, and of multi-generational families living together. But with urbanization, nuclear families and rising longevity, more elderly people are living by themselves or in care homes.

Nearly half the elderly people surveyed by non-profit HelpAge India said they had experienced abuse, both at home and in public, with more women saying they had suffered some form of mistreatment. Growing awareness of elderly abuse has led to a host of new apps and technologies for the elderly or people who witness the abuse to call for help. "It is unfortunate that we need such a solution, but that is the reality today," said Prasad Bhide, founder of Aaji (meaning

PANIC BUTTONS, APPS COME TO RESCUE OF ELDERLY INDIANS

MUMBAI: Police, advocates and entrepreneurs have launched mobile apps and panic buttons to report abuse against the elderly in India, where the number of older people living alone has risen, yet talking about their mistreatment remains taboo. India has a tradition of honoring older people, and of multi-generational families living together. But with urbanization, nuclear families and rising longevity, more elderly people are living by themselves or in care homes.

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"grandmother") Care, a mobile and web-based service that has launched a remote surveillance system. Aaji Care offers a physical panic button, which calls five phone numbers, including the company itself in an emergency. Bhide said he is also working on a smart device the elderly can use easily and discreetly to summon help when needed. India has more than 104 million people aged 60 and older, according to official data. The elderly are forecast to make up a fifth of the country's total population by 2050.

An analysis of data from 28 countries, published this year by the Lancet Global Health, revealed nearly one in six people aged 60 and older had been psychologically abused, financially exploited, neglected, physically hurt or sexually abused. Abuse against older people is forecast to rise as their population more than doubles to 2 billion by 2050, according to the World Health Organization. —Reuters

MYANMAR'S MUSLIMS MARK RAMADAN OUT IN THE COLD

YANGON: Huddled under umbrellas to escape a thundering monsoon downpour, dozens of Muslims stood in line at a Yangon mosque for a small portion of rice and curry to break their Ramadan fast. Many would have normally prayed at Islamic schools that for six decades - most of them spent under Myanmar's former military government - doubled as a place for Muslims to come together for worship.

But last month the madrassas in eastern Yangon were closed down by a Buddhist nationalist mob, one of a growing number of raids by resurgent hardliners intent on silencing the maligned minority. "We have faced more discrimination over the last few years," said Hussein, who used to pray at the schools. Nearby old bearded men used wooden paddles to stir steaming vats of daal, which was portioned into metal tiffins with rice and handed to waiting families.

Muslims only make up some 3-4 percent of Myanmar's population, including the Rohingya minority from western Rakhine State, but the religion traces its roots in the country back centuries. Now many are feeling unwelcome in their own homeland. "When I



YANGON: In this photo taken on June 1, 2017, a Muslim family sits at the dinner table at home as they break their fast during the Holy Month of Ramadan. —AFP

was young there was no discrimination. We were very friendly (with Buddhists), so we would eat at their homes and they would eat at ours," added Hussein, who like many of

Myanmar's Muslims only goes by one name. "Now we live in this country and we are not free to practice our religion." Aung Htoo Myint, secretary of the mosque

in Yangon's poor Thaketa township, said they had struggled to accommodate the hundreds forced to join their congregation after Islamic schools were shuttered. Many from the mainly Muslim neighborhood braved the monsoon rains to pray together in the street when this year's holy month of Ramadan began, but local authorities swiftly banned those gatherings as well. They have since launched legal proceedings against three people who attended a prayer session, arguing the gathering threatened "stability and the rule of law."

Rising nationalism

Bo Gyi, a teacher at the madrassas, said they had been given no details of when the schools would reopen or what would happen to the 300 children who studied there. "We have written letters to the president and Yangon chief minister as well," he said, but there has been no reply. Myanmar has faced growing criticism for how it treats Muslims, who now encounter restrictions on who they can marry and even how many children they can have under the country's 2015 Race and Religion laws.

Tensions have simmered since 2012 when

sectarian violence erupted in Rakhine, killing around 200 people, mostly Rohingya Muslims, and driving tens of thousands into displacement camps. The young civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi has struggled to contain anti-Muslim sentiment since militants claiming to represent the Rohingya attacked police posts late last year. Since then the hardliners have become increasingly vocal, shutting down Islamic events, forming a political party to stand in the 2020 elections and clashing with Muslims on Yangon's streets.

Police have arrested ringleaders behind the violence, while the country's top Buddhist body has banned prominent ultra-nationalist group Ma Ba Tha - which responded by simply changing its name. But ordinary Muslims fear they are now becoming targets in their own country. Haroon, 57, who has spent his whole life in Yangon where he works selling chapatis, says he is increasingly worried about the nationalists. "There is only one group creating this situation," he tells AFP inside the house where he lives with his wife and three children, unwilling to say the name Ma Ba Tha out loud. "If that group disappeared completely, everything would be peaceful." —AFP

MONGOLIAN VOTERS WEIGH LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA

ULAN BATOR: The waving flags, triumphant song and rousing speeches of a Mongolian presidential campaign rally were interrupted by a fight that broke out in the crowd. A group of men had entered the event for Democratic Party candidate Khaltmaa Battulga on Friday carrying posters denouncing the businessman, prompting his supporters to

shove the interlopers and tear up their placards, all the while chanting: "You're mixed Chinese! You're mixed Chinese!"

The jeer - intended to be an insult to the men's Mongolian heritage - reflected the tone of an election marked by anti-Chinese sentiment and calls to protect the country's rich natural resources from foreign forces. As Mongolia prepares to

go to the polls tomorrow, voters are grappling with the nation's complex relationship with its powerful neighbor, characterized by centuries of historical enmity and current financial dependence.

Mongolia's financial fortunes are closely tied to China, whose slowing growth has troubled the landlocked nation's economy. China is by far the country's largest trade partner, with 80 percent of Mongolian exports going south of the border. Wary of this oversized influence, Mongolian presidential candidates have advocated a "third neighbor policy" for focusing Mongolia's partnerships beyond Russia and China.

'Biggest enemy'

A video circulating on Mongolian social media shows black and white footage of a lively Chinese community in Ulan Bator, followed by clips of Chinese migrants protesting and scuffling with Mongolian authorities. "Many Chinese people were expelled from Mongolia decades ago," the voiceover says, "but today the Mongolian People's Party (MPP) has lost its values and is running a half-Chinese person in the election."

The dramatic intonation refers to rumors that the candidate for the ruling MPP, Mieiymbombo Enkhbold, has Chinese ancestry. "China has been Mongolia's

biggest enemy since the time of Genghis Khan," Tuvshinbulag Svarikow, a 26-year-old Mongolian-Russian university student at the Battulga rally, told AFP. "Someone with a Chinese background has no right to represent Mongolia in the presidential office."

In response to such suspicions, Enkhbold has published a family tree detailing his lineage. Sainkhoo Ganbaatar, the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party's candidate, has done the same. This deliberate move to prove pure Mongolian origins points to a degree of nationalism absent from previous elections, University of British Columbia Mongolia scholar Julian Dierkes told AFP. "My sense is that sentiment among voters hasn't changed, but that politicians are more and more using nationalism to distract from the real issues," he said.

Dierkes observed that this election has also seen the three candidates more frequently wearing a "deel," a traditional Mongolian outfit, and using "Mongolia" in their slogans as opposed to simply "our nation" or "our country." Enkhbold has advocated for a "United Mongolia," while Battulga's slogan is "Mongolia will win." All three platforms emphasize the country's territorial integrity, though its borders are not disputed.

The idea that China remains Mongolia's "enemy" is shared by only a

portion of voters, while others have been frustrated by the negative campaigning. Nor does it align with current geopolitics. Bilateral ties have been stable for decades, receiving a boost last year through the announcement of a China-Mongolia-Russia economic corridor to be established as part of China's Belt and Road initiative, a global trade infrastructure program.

Rationality

While Mongolia's \$5.5 billion International Monetary Fund-fund bailout is expected to lessen its dependence on China, Beijing in February also announced additional financial assistance and favourable loan terms to the debt-wracked country. China's central bank will extend a currency swap line to Mongolia worth 15 billion yuan (\$2.2 billion). The aid was disclosed a couple months after Mongolia pledged not to extend any more invitations to the Dalai Lama after the Tibetan Buddhist leader's visit to Ulan Bator last November angered China. "I don't think (anti-China) sentiment can win," Gerel Orgil, a Mongolian public opinion analyst, told AFP. "People are increasingly rational. They are not thinking about what happened with China in the past; they're thinking about what will happen in their daily lives if the economy doesn't improve." —AFP



ULAN BATOR: Mongolian supporters wave during the speech of presidential election candidate Battulga Khaltmaa from the Mongolian Democracy Party during a rally on Friday. —AFP

WANTED TERROR LEADER MAY HAVE FLED MARAWI

HAPILON HAS NOT BEEN SEEN IN BATTLE ZONE

MARAWI, Philippines: One of America's most wanted terrorists may have escaped a five-week battle with Islamist militants in a southern Philippine city, which began with a raid to capture him, the military said yesterday. Isnilon Hapilon, a veteran Filipino militant said to be the leader of the Islamic State (IS) group in Southeast Asia, has not been seen in the battle zone in Marawi City, said Lieutenant General Carlito Galvez,

the entire southern region of Mindanao, unleashing an offensive to crush what he said was an attempt by the jihadist group to establish a province in the area.

"He (Hapilon) has not been seen in the area. We have some reports that he was already able to slip somewhere but as of now we are still confirming the reports," Galvez said in an interview with DZBB radio station. Asked if Hapilon was on the run, he said: "Yes,

ernment, which has his name on its "most wanted" terror list. He leads a faction of the Philippine militant group Abu Sayyaf that has pledged allegiance to IS. Security analysts say he has been recognized by IS as its "amir," or leader, in Southeast Asia, a region where the group wants to establish a caliphate.

The military says Hapilon's group had joined forces with another armed militancy, the Maute Group, to launch

expects the fighting to continue for a while. "These people are suicidal. Our assessment is that they will really fight to the end," Padilla said, also on DZBB. He said the militants are seeking shelter in bunkers and tunnels built by Marawi residents to protect themselves against possible clan wars and unrest related to a Muslim insurgency in Mindanao.

Nearly 300 militants and 67 government troops have been killed in the fighting, according to official figures. Galvez said there are "strong indications" that two or three of the Maute brothers - among the key players in the siege - had been killed, including Omarkhayam Maute, believed to be the group's top leader.

Foreign fighters

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said in Manila the military is "validating an intelligence report" that Malaysian Mahmud bin Ahmad, who helped lead and finance the Marawi siege, was killed. When asked about Mahmud's reported death, Malaysia's Inspector General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar told AFP in a text message in Kuala Lumpur: "Not true. He is still alive."

Abella said authorities were also verifying another intelligence report that 89 foreign fighters are in Mindanao, entering the region through the Philippines' porous maritime borders with Malaysia and Indonesia. Galvez said troops on Friday recovered two decomposing corpses that bore features of people from the Middle East. Eight other militants, including those from Chechnya, Indonesia and Malaysia, had been killed earlier in the fighting, officials have said. Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines on June 19 launched joint patrols on their maritime borders to block the movement of the militants. Australia said Friday it will send two high-tech spy planes to help Filipino troops fight the militants, joining the US which has also provided similar help. —AFP



MARAWI: Black smoke billows from burning houses after Philippine air force attack planes dropped bombs during an aerial bombing at militant position yesterday. —AFP

head of the military's Western Mindanao Command.

An attempt by government troops to arrest Hapilon in Marawi on May 23 triggered a rampage by Islamist militants flying black IS flags and backed by some foreign fighters who seized parts of the mainly Muslim city. Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte declared martial law in Marawi and

yes because reportedly he suffered a lot of casualties. Majority of his group, more than half, were casualties."

'Fight to the end'

Hapilon was indicted in Washington for his involvement in the 2001 kidnapping of three Americans in the Philippines, and has a \$5-million bounty on his head from the US gov-

the Marawi siege, now in its second month. Yesterday, security forces continued intense air raids and artillery fire on pockets of Marawi still occupied by the militants, while troops fought house-to-house gun battles. "We have gained substantial ground," said Galvez, the military commander.

But military spokesman Brigadier General Restituto Padilla said he

VOTING UNDERWAY IN SPRAWLING PNG POLLS

PORT MORESBY: Voting began in Papua New Guinea elections yesterday with the Pacific nation's leader urging peaceful polling to show it has "come of age", as he seeks another term to fix an economy under siege. Peter O'Neill's People's National Congress won the last election in 2012, and he has campaigned on delivering key infrastructure and providing free education and health to a country that remains mired in poverty.

He also points to more stability in a sprawling crime-ridden land where elections have been marred by violence in the past. "I appeal to all our citizens to peacefully cast their votes," said the prime minister, with more than 3,000 candidates from over 40 political parties jostling for support. "Let's show the international community that PNG has come of age and will express its democratic principles in a manner acceptable to the community."

Opponents accuse O'Neill of mismanaging an economy hurt by slumping global commodity prices, racking up debt by recklessly spending to meet his goals. He has also been tarred by corruption allegations, surviving a no-confidence vote last year following weeks of

protests and civil disobedience urging him to resign. "With all the variables at play this is an educated guess, but my money is on O'Neill," said Melanesia Program research fellow Jonathan Pryke at the Lowy Institute in Australia. "Say what you will about his policy track record, he is clearly a master at the game of politics. Whoever comes into power, however, will have urgent challenges to address - first and foremost, the dire state of the economy."

PNG's largest aid donor Australia has been working closely with Port Moresby to ensure the polling passes off smoothly, supplying election experts to train 30,000 local staff. It has also provided military helicopters and planes to help transport election materials to remote areas of a mountainous country that has some of the world's most difficult terrain. More than 10,000 security personnel have been deployed to maintain law and order.

Hundreds of observers are also in the country monitoring the polls, watching for any vote-buying as candidates jockey for a position in government. PNG villagers, who receive little from the political system, often see elections as simply a "time of food" - a reference to the cash, pigs and other items candidates provide to win votes. "We will consider whether the elections have been conducted according to the standards for democratic elections to which Papua New Guinea has committed itself," said Commonwealth Observer Group chair Anand Satyanand on the role his team was playing. He noted the huge logistical challenges of holding elections in a country like PNG, where many people have to walk for hours across rugged country to cast their vote. —AFP



Peter O'Neill

VIETNAM POLICE DETAIN DISSIDENT FOR DEPORTATION

HANOI: Vietnamese police detained a French dissident of Vietnamese descent for deportation on Friday after the Communist state revoked his Vietnamese citizenship last month, his wife said. Pham Minh Hoang, a 61-year-old activist and mathematics lecturer, had dual French and Vietnamese citizenship before Vietnam canceled his citizenship without giving a reason, a move that drew criticism from human rights groups.

Despite sweeping reforms to the economy and growing openness to social change, the Communist Party retains tight media censorship and tolerates no criticism. Dozens of bloggers and activists are serving sentences for crimes against the state. Hoang's wife, Le Thi Kieu Oanh, said police came to their house in Ho Chi Minh city on Friday asking to carry out a regular check on their household registration but later forced Hoang to leave with them and said they would deport him the next day. "My husband refused to go but three to four police officers used violence to drag him out and locked me inside the house... They also parked a signal-jammer car right in front of our house," Oanh said.

The French embassy in Vietnam said France regretted the Vietnamese authorities decision to revoke Hoang's Vietnamese nationality and to deport him. "Freedom of expression and of opinion, notably on the Internet, are both guaranteed by the international covenant on civil and political rights to which Vietnam is a party. France calls on Vietnamese authorities to ensure compliance with these commitments,"

the embassy said in a statement sent to Reuters. Ho Chi Minh police said they could not provide any information on the case.

Hoang was sentenced to three years in jail for attempted subversion in 2011 but was released after 17 months and served three years under house arrest. He frequently posts blogs criticizing the Vietnamese government. Oanh said the couple were informed on June 1 by the French consul-general that Hoang's Vietnamese citizenship was being annulled with a month for him to leave the country, but they refused to comply. "It's Hoang's ideal to stay in Vietnam to raise a voice and contribute to building freedom and democracy," Oanh said. "After the signal-jammer car left I called the consul general and he just said he acknowledged the situation. What they would do after that, I don't know," she added.

She said the French embassy and consulate in Vietnam were waiting for guidance from the French foreign ministry because Hoang's Vietnamese and French passports have expired. Vietnam's foreign ministry spokeswoman Le Thi Thu Hang last week defended the decision to revoke Hoang's citizenship, saying it was "conducted in accordance with the provisions of Vietnamese law". Hoang is a member of California-based Viet Tan, a group Vietnam considers a terrorist organization. "The French government should not take part in the Hanoi regime's brazen exile of a well-known human rights activist," Viet Tan said in a statement. —Reuters

NORTH KOREA SAYS US STUDENT'S DEATH A 'MYSTERY TO US AS WELL'

SEOUL: North Korea said on Friday the death of US university student Otto Warmbier soon after his return home was a mystery and dismissed accusations that Warmbier had died because of torture and beating during his captivity as "groundless". North Korea's foreign ministry spokesman said Warmbier was "a victim of the policy of strategic patience" of former US President Barack Obama whose government never requested his release, according to comments carried by the official KCNA agency.

"The fact that Warmbier died suddenly in less than a week just after his return to the US... is a mystery to us as well," KCNA quoted the spokesman as saying. Warmbier, 22, was arrested while visiting the exclusive country as a tourist. He was sentenced to 15 years of hard labour for trying to steal an item bearing a propaganda slogan from his hotel, North Korean state media said. He was sent home last week suffering from brain damage and in what US doctors called a state of unresponsive wakefulness. He died on Monday.

Katrina Adams, a spokeswoman for the US State Department's East Asia Bureau, said Washington had repeatedly requested the release of Warmbier under the Obama administration. A former senior State Department official said the United States had made repeated requests for Warmbier's release on humanitarian grounds under Obama, including via the North Korean mission at the United Nations, via the

Swedish mission in Pyongyang, at unofficial talks with North Korean officials involving former US officials, and via third parties.

Warmbier's death fanned a conflict between the North and the United States that was already aggravated by North Korea's defiant missile launches and two nuclear tests since early last year as part of its effort to build a nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of hitting the US mainland. A US official said on Thursday that North Korea had conducted another test of a rocket engine believed to be linked to Pyongyang's ICBM program.

'Clearly a Criminal'

US President Donald Trump blamed "the brutality of the North Korean regime" for Warmbier's death. South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who had advocated talks with the North, said Pyongyang had a "heavy responsibility" in the events leading up to the University of Virginia student's death. The North's unnamed ministry spokesman said that such accusations were part of a smear campaign to slander the country that had given "medical treatments and care with all sincerity" to a person who was "clearly a criminal".

US doctors who travelled to the North last week to bring Warmbier home recognized that the North had provided him with medical treatment, the spokesman said. "To make it clear, we are the

biggest victim of this incident." North Korea accepted repeated requests from the present US administration, the spokesman said, and repatriated the student on humanitarian grounds "in consideration of his bad health."

The exact cause of Warmbier's death remains unclear. Officials at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, where he was treated after his return, declined to provide details. His family asked the local coroner not to perform an autopsy. Thousands of friends and relatives gathered at Wyoming High School in suburban Cincinnati on Thursday for a memorial service for Warmbier, who graduated from the school as salutatorian in 2013.

After returning from a five-day trip to North Korea on June 17, former National Basketball Association star Dennis Rodman suggested on Friday that his visit may have had something to do with Pyongyang's decision to send the student home. Rodman, who has faced ridicule and criticism for visiting North Korea in the past, has said he was trying to bring sports to the increasingly isolated country. "I was just so happy to see the kid released," Rodman told ABC News in an interview. "Some good things came of this trip." The United States has demanded North Korea release three other US citizens it holds in detention: missionary Kim Dong Chul and academics Tony Kim and Kim Hak Song. —Reuters

LEARNING ARABIC

Continued from Page 1

There are a lot of Arabs who want to improve their English skills. That means that you should be able to find a language exchange partner. Searching the internet, or asking around, can help you locate such a person. I would strongly suggest that each partner teaches the other using a structured textbook, otherwise this method just doesn't seem to work.

Just talk

A lot of people will tell you that if you want to learn Arabic then you should just talk with people. It is so simple right? Just talk with people in Arabic. It is easy. But... wait a minute... if you don't speak Arabic then how are you supposed to speak Arabic with people? Perhaps this is good advice for intermediate and advanced students, but I don't think this will work for beginners, especially for people like me who are introverts. Also, there is another problem. Even if you start the conversation with Arabic, people will try to speak English with you because they want to practice their English. If you go this route, I would suggest buying a phrasebook.

Digital resources

I have found a lot of success using Rosetta Stone. It is very frustrating at the beginning because there is no English Translation in the program. I typically like to put the setting on "Listening and Speaking" only. Then I make sure to turn off Speech Recognition so that everything is just listening. Otherwise, the program is way too frustrating.

Another useful tool is Youtube. There are many teachers on Youtube that are making short, entertaining videos to teach Arabic. Just log on and search for the phrase "learn Arabic" or "Arabic lesson". Finally, search for apps on your smartphone. There are a lot of them and they can help you study Arabic when you are out having fun in Kuwait, or if you need to kill a few minutes while waiting in line.

Courtesy of the TIES Center: The TIES Center is a social and educational hub for expats in Kuwait whose motto is: Tolerance, Information, Empowerment, Solidarity. For more information, please call 252301015/6 or log onto: www.tiescenter.net

SUICIDE BOMBER BLOWS HIMSELF UP AS SAUDI...

Continued from Page 1

Neither group immediately claimed involvement, though IS sympathizers online have urged more attacks as an offensive in Iraq slowly squeezes the extremists out of Mosul and their de facto capital of Raqqa in Syria comes under daily bombing from a US-led coalition.

The disrupted attack comes at a sensitive time in Saudi Arabia. King Salman earlier this week short-circuited the kingdom's succession by making his son, Defense Minister Mohammed bin Salman, first in line to the throne. The newly appointed 31-year-old Crown Prince is the architect of Saudi Arabia's stalemated war in Yemen against Shiite rebels.

He has also offered aggressive comments about the kingdom confronting Shiite power Iran. Both Iran and Qatar yesterday voiced support for Saudi Arabia over a suicide bombing near Islam's holiest site in Makkah despite their severed ties. The Qatari Foreign Ministry expressed "solidarity with the brotherly kingdom of Saudi Arabia". Iran's Foreign Ministry yesterday condemned the Makkah plot and said it remains willing to work with other countries in confronting terrorism. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries have cut diplomatic ties to neighboring Qatar and are trying to isolate the energy-rich country over its alleged support of militants and ties to Iran. Qatar long has denied those allegations.

As the Interior Ministry announced the raid, over 1 million Muslim faithful prayed at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina to mark the end of Ramadan. In July 2016, a suicide bombing there killed four members of Saudi Arabia's security forces. Millions of Muslims from around the

world visit the mosque, the burial site of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), every year as part of their pilgrimage. The same day in July, separate suicide bomb attacks targeted a Shiite mosque in eastern Saudi Arabia and near the US Consulate in Jiddah.

The Grand Mosque has been the target of militants before, in part because it represents a symbol of the ruling Al Saud family's clout in the Islamic world. The Saudi monarch bears the title of "custodian of the two holy mosques." In 1979, some 250 militants seized the mosque and held it for two weeks as they demanded the royal family abdicate the throne. When Saudi troops stormed the mosque, the official death toll was 229, including extremists and soldiers. Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has sent a cable to Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz to express Kuwait's strong condemnation of the terrorist scheme against the Grand Mosque of Makkah. In his cable, His Highness the Amir said that this terrorist plot contradicts teachings of Islam and all religious and human values. His Highness the Amir also voiced Kuwait's support to all measures taken by the Saudi government to maintain the Kingdom's security and to counter terrorist plots. He also reiterated Kuwait's condemnation of all acts of terrorism and its support to the international efforts to uproot and dry up resources of terrorists. 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 sent similar cables to the Saudi King. — Agencies



JERUSALEM: Palestinians climb over the Israeli separation barrier in Al Ram, West Bank to attend prayers at Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem. — AP

LANDSLIDE BURIES A VILLAGE

Continued from Page 1

where it once existed by a river. "It's the biggest landslide in this area since the Wenchuan earthquake," said Wang Yongbo, one of the officials in charge of rescue efforts, referring to the disaster that killed 87,000 people in 2008 in a town in Sichuan.

More rain forecast

Local police captain Chen Tiebo said the heavy rains that hit the region in recent days had triggered the landslide. "There are several tons of rock" over the village, he told CCTV. "It's a seismic area here. There's not a lot of vegetation," Chen said. Trees can help absorb excess rain and prevent landslides. Tao Jian, director of the local weather service, told CCTV that the 2008 earthquake had "weakened the mountain" and that even a small amount of rain could provoke a geological catastrophe.

President Xi Jinping called for rescuers to "spare no effort" in their search for survivors and prevent more disasters, state media said. China's national weather observatory said more heavy rain was expected in parts of Sichuan and other southwestern provinces. More than 100 people living close to the landslide have been evacuated, Xinhua reported.

Past disasters

Landslides are a frequent danger in rural and mountainous parts of China, particularly at times of heavy rains. At least 12 people were killed in January when a landslide crushed a hotel in central Hubei province. More than 70 were killed by a landslide in the southern commercial hub of Shenzhen in December 2015, caused by the improper storage of waste. One of the deadliest landslides took place in 1991, when 216 were killed in southwestern Yunnan province. — AFP



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 ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
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Focus

CANTERBURY: A CITY OF FAITH, STUDENTS AND BREXIT ANGUISH

By Antoine Pollez

Twelve months after British voters rejected the EU, university cities such as Canterbury are on the frontlines of a political realignment shaped in part by students' revulsion at Brexit. Britain's general election two weeks ago featured a surge in turnout by younger voters, who plumped by and large for the opposition Labor party led by socialist firebrand Jeremy Corbyn.

That surge powered Labor's candidate in Canterbury to victory by just 187 votes, marking the first time the constituency has failed to return a Conservative MP since it was created in 1918. The Labor leader's pledge to scrap university tuition fees, coupled with his anti-establishment idealism, were credited with fuelling the surge. But half of under-35s surveyed in one poll said Brexit was the "main factor" in their decision to cast a ballot, contributing to the astonishing win in Canterbury by Labor candidate Rosie Duffield.

Duffield had hoped at most to dent her Conservative opponent's majority, and concedes she is "still very shocked" at her triumph. But speaking to AFP, she stressed: "Our economy is dependent on our relationship with Europe." Ironically, abysmal turnout by younger voters in the Brexit referendum held on June 23 last year was a major reason why the Leave camp won, by a margin of 52-48. Labor party critics of Corbyn, who for years characterized the EU as a pro-business cabal, say his own failure to campaign more forcefully for the Remain side contributed to the result.

'Sold out'

Most voters in Canterbury - 53 percent-voted to stay in the European Union, reflecting the results in Britain's other centers of learning, which benefit from EU research funding and are enriched by the free flow of European students. The city has 40,000 students, attending institutions such as the top-ranked University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), a former seminary adjacent to the city's historic cathedral, which is the cradle of the worldwide Anglican faith.

The county of Kent is Britain's gateway to Europe, with the ports of Dover and Folkestone lying on its southern coast about half an hour's drive from Canterbury. "Brexit has played an enormous role here," said the CCCU's Amelia Hadfield, who holds a chair in European studies named after Jean Monnet, one of the EU's founding fathers. Young people "were genuinely disappointed" by the Brexit result, "they felt that their future had been sold out", she said. "There was a real determination not to lose that opportunity (of voting) this time." In Canterbury, voter registration jumped by 10 percent during the referendum and the general election as the younger electorate mobilized.

While the city's Conservative vote held stable, the Labor vote nearly doubled, depriving the outgoing Tory MP of a seat he had held since 1987. Tobias Isaac, 19, did not see the point of voting in the referendum but changed his mind for the election. "I voted Labor this time, even if my whole family's voted for the Tories for years," he said. Because of results like Canterbury, Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservatives lost their national majority in parliament and are now holding out for an alliance with a pro-Brexit party from Northern Ireland.

Last chance?

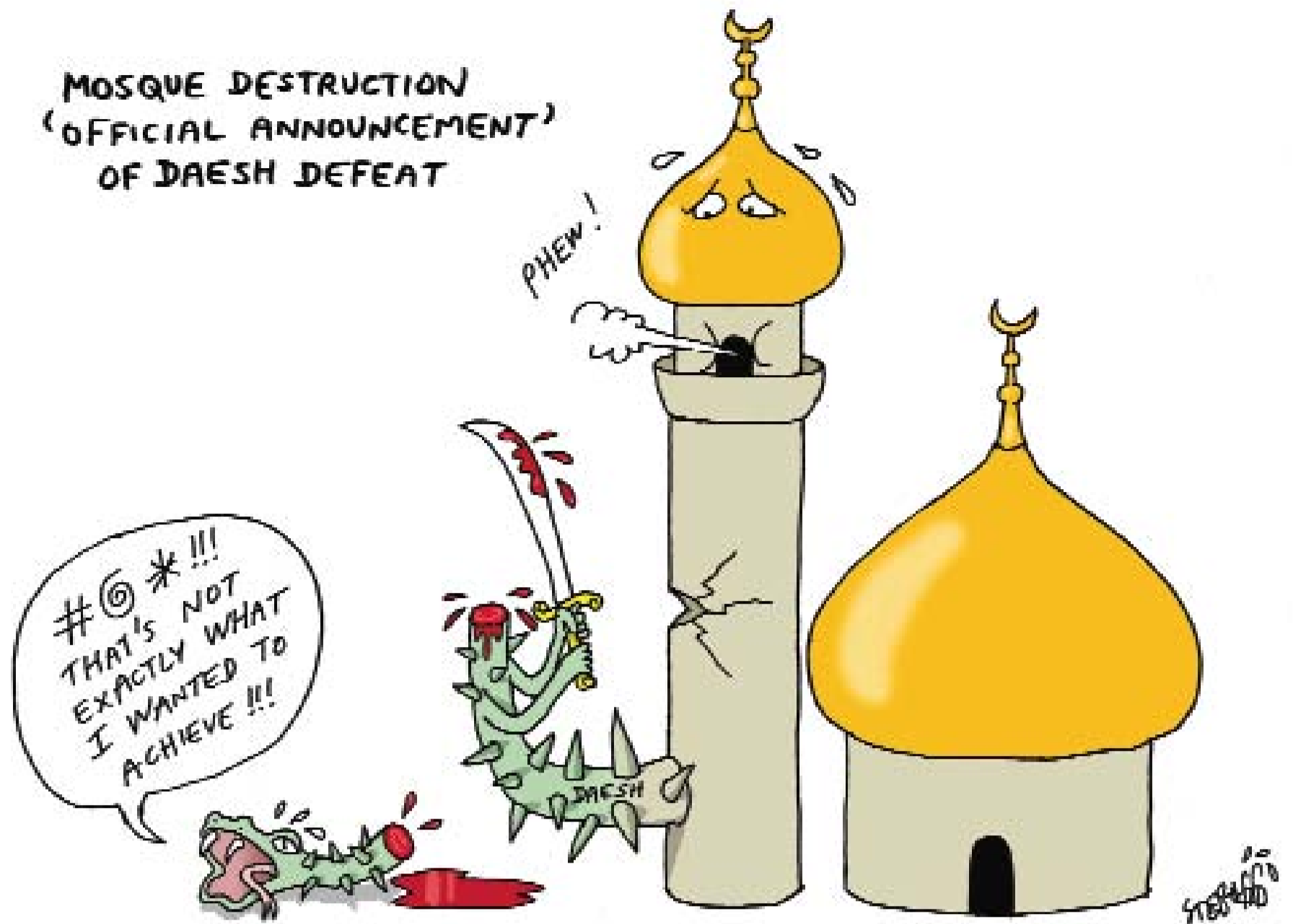
Nevertheless, opinion polls point to a strong majority of Britons in favor of honoring the referendum and turning Brexit into reality. Corbyn's Labor itself campaigned in the general election to pull Britain out of the EU, albeit with a stronger emphasis than May on protecting jobs and livelihoods. There is resentment among some Conservatives in Canterbury at the election shock. John Lemond, 62, accused Corbyn of extending a "bribe" to students with his manifesto pledge to cancel tuition fees, which reach thousands of pounds for every year of study.

The city's former lord mayor, George Metcalfe, took issue with the ability of students to register to vote in either their home town or their city of study. "Our students will eventually go home, but we who live here will be skewed for years by their choice of vote," the Tory councillor wrote to The Times newspaper.

The youth mobilization has stoked anxiety among right-wing commentators that politicians could row back on their commitment to Brexit, as the fiendishly complex process of negotiating Britain's departure begins. However, for CCCU literature student Rosie Jackson-Horn, Brexit is an inescapable reality. She hopes to pursue a master's degree in Germany next year. "Maybe it is our last chance" to study in Europe, she said. — AFP

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MOSQUE DESTRUCTION ('OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT') OF DAESH DEFEAT



PROTECTING EGYPT AND ITS COPTIC CHRISTIANS

Dr James J Zogby
 President Arab American Institute

In many ways, the future of Egypt will be shaped by how the government and the majority of Egyptians treat the country's minority Christian community. Will Egypt be an open, tolerant, and creative society? Or will it be closed and intolerant, looking backward? This is choice that Egyptians must make. A few months back I accepted an invitation to speak at a mid-June conference organized by Coptic Solidarity, a US organization.

I did so because I was eager to address the challenges facing Egypt, in general, and its Coptic community, in particular. A few days before the event, however, I received the final list of the conference speakers and the topics to be discussed. After reviewing the list, I felt obliged to cancel. What follows is what I had hoped to discuss at the event and why I found it necessary to inform the organizers I would not participate.

While I am not by profession an "Egypt scholar", I have visited the country dozens of times, conducted extensive polling of Egyptian public opinion, and, on several occasions, lectured at the Al-Ahram Center for Political & Strategic Studies. Like any person of Arab descent, I love Egypt and its people, and appreciate the enormous contributions Egyptians have made to Arab culture and world civilization. I will never forget the expression Jesse Jackson often used to describe Egypt. He called it "an essential hinge on which hangs the future stability of three continents-Europe, Asia, and Africa".

What concerns me today is that the hinge is rusted and in danger of fracturing. Six years of turmoil following the upheavals of the "Arab Spring" have taken a toll on Egyptian society. The ossification and corruption of the Mubarak government gave way to an elected Muslim

Brotherhood government, the policies of which created an existential crisis for many Egyptians. As they saw their vision of an open, pluralistic, creative Egypt giving way to a closed, less tolerant system, they rebelled. The result was a military takeover that gave way to an elected government that has become increasingly repressive, only serving to deepen societal divisions.

All of this has been clear from our polling. Six years ago, Egyptians told us that their top concerns were jobs, education, health care, and an end to corruption and nepotism. During the brief tenure of the Muslim Brotherhood's rule, a decisive majority told us that they disapproved of that party's efforts to transform Egypt. They wanted change, but decisively favored national dialogue and reconciliation as the way forward. Today, three-quarters of Egyptians say their country is moving in the wrong direction and have little confidence that the future will be better. More ominous, our polling also shows demonstrably less tolerance and acceptance for people of other faiths.

All of this unrest, uncertainty, and discontent has had repercussions for Egyptian society. Some supporters of the deposed Brotherhood have struck out at Christians-accusing them of complicity in the military action. One can hardly fault the Coptic leadership. They were and are in a bind. The intolerant policies of the Brotherhood most certainly put them at risk. And while the significant gestures of the new government have indicated respect for Christians and offered them signs of protection, mass repression and failure to improve the quality of life have only served to fuel greater discontent, exacerbating sectarian tensions.

Feeding off this discontent, violent extremist groups have committed repeated heinous acts of terror against Christians in an effort to further aggravate the already deplorable situation. And so, we find the country today

locked in a vicious cycle of repression and violence. Friends of Egypt are also caught in a bind. Those who understand Egypt's important role have attempted to buttress the state by providing substantial investment to develop its struggling economy. But they cannot, by themselves, force the government to make the right decisions and change direction.

This was the dilemma I had hoped to discuss at the Coptic Solidarity event and then, just a few days before the conference, I received the final program and list of speakers. I was troubled to find that the session at which I was to appear had changed. I was prepared to address issues facing the Coptic community in Egypt and how we might act to support policies that both protect them now, while helping to move Egypt toward becoming a more open and tolerant society that respects the rights of all its citizens.

Instead I discovered that the title for my session had been changed to-"The Indigenous Culture of Violence and Impunity"-implying that there was something endemic in Egyptian or Muslim culture that was at fault. While I knew and respected some of the event's invited speakers, I was deeply concerned with others, some of whom represent groups that are on the Southern Poverty Law Center list of hate groups in America. These are individuals and organizations that have made a career out of spreading hurtful anti-Arab and anti-Muslim propaganda.

They do not work to promote positive change in Egypt and to help build a more open society that will protect the rights of all. Instead, they are more focused on waging a war on Muslims and Islam, in general. Association with individuals and groups that fan the flames of hatred and division does not help protect vulnerable Christians in the Middle East. It may even put them at risk. I, therefore, felt compelled to withdraw from the event.

DUSTY TEDDY BEAR LIES IN WAR-RUINED PHILIPPINE CITY

By Ayee Macaraig

A dusty teddy bear strewn on the floor, family photos on a wall and dried underwear on a clothesline are among the few remnants of life in deserted homes of a Philippine city left in ruins by war. A dog eats the carcass of a cat on a street littered with rubbish where soldiers patrol, while military planes and helicopters continue the relentless bombing of Islamist militants hidden in other homes a kilometer (half a mile) away.

Nearly all of the 200,000 residents of Marawi have fled since hundreds of gunmen linked to the Islamic State (IS) group went on a rampage on May 23, triggering a conflict that has destroyed entire districts and left the others vulnerable to looting. Marawi has long been the Islamic cultural and commercial capital of the mainly Catholic Philippines, with a lake and cool mountain air making it a popular summer retreat, but parts now resemble the war-ravaged Syrian city of Aleppo.

Its residents are left in torment in nearby evacuation centres or friends' homes, waiting for the fighting to end and find out what has become of their homes. "Maybe there is nothing left. Our home may have been reduced to ashes. We heard our village was bombed and our house is just made of wood and bamboo," Rasmia Abdullah, 24, told AFP with watering eyes in a crowded gym close to Marawi. "It's very painful because we were already rebuilding our house after a fire when the war broke out. Now we really have nothing."

The war has also ended all types of business in Marawi-a city renowned for its traders-and locals fear looting has stripped well-off homes that were known to keep vaults of cash, jewellery and heirlooms. But the impact is hardest on poor residents such as Abdullah, a mother-of-three and a banana and rice cake vendor, who fled Marawi with only the clothes on her back and leaving her wares to rot. "If I could only save the machine I used to make rice cakes, I would do that to make a living. It pains me that the city I grew up in, all I worked for was gone and I don't know how to bring it back," she said.

Massive rehabilitation

President Rodrigo Duterte declared martial law across the southern Philippines immediately after the militants began their rampage in Marawi, which he said was part of an effort to establish a local IS caliphate. Duterte has deployed the full force of his military to end the uprising, most notably with a US-backed bombing campaign that has flattened entire neighborhoods.

However the militants still hold three of the city's nine districts, according to the government, using hostages as human shields while sheltering in bomb-proof basements and countering with brutal urban warfare. Sixty-seven soldiers and police have been killed, according to the military, which estimates nearly 300 militants have died. As the fighting continues with no signs of a quick resolution, the government and aid workers are starting to plan for the rehabilitation of the city on a scale as massive as for the most powerful typhoons that regularly smash the Philippines.

Duterte has promised to set aside 20 billion pesos (\$397 million) for the rehabilitation of Marawi, a process the provincial government expects to take 10 years. Locals

authorities are planning to build tent cities over the next six months. In the schools and gymnasiums being used as evacuation centres, residents' trauma is compounded by not knowing what has happened to their homes.

Vegetable farmer Amerodin Esmayatin, 35, said his cousins had told him that his house was first looted and later on bombed. "We were already fleeing for our lives and yet people still took the little we had," Esmayatin told AFP in a displacement camp where he and his family of five were staying. "I can't sleep at night thinking about what happened." Abdullah said she was haunted by thoughts of what she would see when she finally did return home. "I am steeling myself for the time I am able to come back but I imagine myself crying," she said. — AFP



MARAWI: Photo shows a teddy bear outside an abandoned house near the frontline in Marawi on the southern island of Mindanao, as fighting between government troops and Islamist militants enters its fourth week. —AFP

FORD STEPS DOWN AS SRI LANKA COACH

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's cricket coach Graham Ford has quit, officials said yesterday, midway through a 45-month contract and just two weeks after the team's early exit from the Champions Trophy. Sri Lanka's cricket board said the 56-year-old South African was ending his second stint with the team after a "decision arrived at mutually." No immediate replacement was announced. Sri Lanka will play a home ODI matches and one Test against India at the end of this month. Ford, who was with Sri Lanka from 2012 to 2014, had said he would rebuild the team when he returned to Sri Lanka last year, when the islanders were down the rankings. Sri Lanka failed to reach the semi-finals of this month's eight-team Champions Trophy in England, and there have been recriminations with the country's sports minister accusing the players of being too fat.—AFP

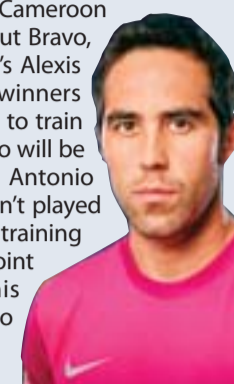


CHINA ORDERS PROBE AFTER PLAYERS QUIT TOURNAMENT

BEIJING: Chinese sports authorities have ordered a probe into the decision by two coaches and three top table tennis stars to quit an international tournament in apparent protest at their head coach's removal. Ma Long, Fan Zhendong and Xu Xin, who are the top three players in the world, did not show up for their second round singles matches at the China Open in the southwestern city of Chengdu on Friday. China's General Administration of Sports berated the two coaches and three players in a statement late Friday. By abandoning the matches, they "ignored professional ethics, they ignored national honour and interests, they disrespected the public, they disrespected the opponent." "This is extremely wrong," the statement said, adding that teams and athletes must put "patriotism and collectivism" first. The body said it had instructed China's table tennis association to find out the facts and deal with it seriously. The International Table Tennis Federation said Friday it was unclear why the players failed to appear for their matches, but it noted the crowd "consistently shouted the name of Liu Guoliang", who was China's head coach until Tuesday.—AFP

CHILE'S BRAVO POISED FOR CONFED CUP RETURN

MOSCOW: Manchester City goalkeeper Claudio Bravo could play for the first time since April in today's Confed Cup clash against Australia, says Chile's coach Juan Antonio Pizzi. Bravo, 34, has not played since injuring his calf in April during a derby against Manchester United. In his absence, Johnny Herrera was in goal for Chile's 2-0 win over Cameroon and Thursday's 1-1 draw with Germany in Russia. But Bravo, Chile's joint most capped player alongside Arsenal's Alexis Sanchez, could return to help the Copa America winners reach the last four. "Claudio is fit and has managed to train in the last few days and he is ready, we'll decide who will be our goalkeeper tomorrow," said Chile's coach Juan Antonio Pizzi yesterday. "We'll take into account that he hasn't played for a while, but he has shown he's fit in the last few training sessions." Chile, the Group B leaders, need only a point at Moscow's Spartak Stadium to reach the semis while the Socceroos must win by three clear goals to reach the last four.—AFP



MUJU: This picture taken on June 23, 2017 shows World Taekwondo President Chungwon Choue (C) and delegates posing for a photo during the General Assembly on the eve of the 23rd World Taekwondo Championships in southern county of Muju. World Taekwondo has officially replaced the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) due to its negative connotations of the acronym, the global governing body for the sport said.—AFP

TAEKWONDO

WTF? WORLD TAEKWONDO FEDERATION REBRANDS OVER ACRONYM

SEOUL: The World Taekwondo Federation has changed its name to World Taekwondo after becoming uncomfortable with the "negative connotations" of its acronym, WTF.

The body has been named World Taekwondo Federation since 1973, but it has been considering a change since the slang abbreviation 'WTF' gained currency on social media. "In the digital age, the acronym of our federation has developed negative connotations unrelated to our organisation and so it

was important that we rebranded to better engage with our fans," World Taekwondo president Chungwon Choue said on the body's website.

The rebranding and launch of a new logo reflect a "commitment to evolving and adapting to remain relevant with today's modern audiences", World Taekwondo said.

The new look for the Korean martial art was unveiled on the eve of the World Taekwondo Championships, which got underway in Muju,

South Korea yesterday.

Meanwhile, the 2017 Taekwondo World Championship opened in South Korea yesterday with local stars giving the home crowd plenty to cheer about.

In the city of Muju, about 240 kilometres (149 miles) south of Seoul, Kim Tae-hun, chasing a third consecutive title, made it to the last four in the men's under-54kg class as did Sim Jae-young in the women's under-46 kg category. The semi-final and the final of both cate-

gories will take place today. Kim, ranked sixth in the world and bronze medal winner at the 2016 Rio Olympics, opened by defeating Kito True Molaodi of Botswana 15-2, then Japan's Ryuta Matsui 29-3 before beating Hassan Haider of the United Kingdom.

His quarter-final victory came against Deniz Dagdelen of Turkey and was won 27-7 to earn a semi-final with Italian outsider Vito Dell'Aquila.

Iran's Armin Hadipour, ranked three, will

take on Thailand's Ramnarong Sawekwiharee, in the other last four showdown.

Sim Jae-young made it to the last four of the women's section where she will fight Andrea Ramirez of Colombia while Thailand's Napaporn Charanawat and Truong Thi Kim Tuyen of Vietnam meet in the other semi-final.

This event, which features all eight gold medal winners from the 2016 Rio Olympics, is the 23rd edition of the world championships and runs until June 30.—AFP

US OLYMPIC DOCTOR FACES TRIAL FOR SEXUAL ABUSE OF ATHLETES

MASON: A former doctor to gymnasts from successive US Olympic teams is to stand trial on charges that he sexually assaulted female athletes, one of whom was only 11, over almost two decades.

A Michigan court on Friday said Larry Nassar will face 17 counts of criminal sexual conduct, a ruling that followed three days of hearings during which six of his accusers testified.

The 53-year-old, a member of USA Gymnastics from 1996 to 2015, maintained a practice at Michigan State University before he was fired last year. He denies abusing his position to assault young girls. At Friday's final hearing, Judge Donald Allen Jr watched video of a police interview in which Nassar claimed the acts that one alleged victim considered assault were in fact medical treatment.

The recording helped corroborate some statements made by Nassar's accusers, and that the doctor's words helped establish enough cause to take the case to trial, the judge said.

One girl, identified only as Victim A, was 11 years old at the time of the alleged abuse and is now 16, the prosecutor said, adding that at least two victims claimed Nassar displayed signs of arousal during the abuse. One of those who testified was Rachael Denhollander, 32, who has publicly revealed her identity in accusing Nassar of sexually abusing her when she was 15 years old.

COMPLAINING COULD END DREAMS

"She described that the defendant had a visible.... during those appointments," Povilaitis said of Denhollander's testimony. "He convinced these girls that this was some type of legitimate treatment," the prosecutor said of the accused.

"Why would they question this gymnastics god?"

Nassar served as the US gymnastics team's doctor through four Olympic Games. Law enforcement officials have accused him of using his position with the governing body that sets rules and selects US Olympic gymnasts to sexually assault dozens of athletes and other patients over decades. Ex-athletes accusing Nassar of crimes say he was empowered by an environment in elite gymnastics where complaints or signs of injury could jeopardize Olympic dreams.

The president of USA Gymnastics, Steve Penny, resigned in March after repeatedly being urged to quit for allegedly being slow to notify authorities about sexual abuse allegations in the organization. Nassar has pleaded not guilty to the charges against him, including child pornography, and remains in jail pending trial.

A federal trial on the child pornography charges is scheduled for August, with state trials following later in the year.—AFP



Larry Nassar

GOLF

SPIETH MAINTAINS LEAD IN TRAVELERS CHAMPIONSHIP

CROMWELL: Jordan Spieth played well enough in the second round of the Travelers Championship to stay in the lead. Rory McIlroy played just well enough to stay in the tournament. Spieth shot a 1-under 69 on Friday morning, then watched as a windy afternoon kept anyone from overtaking him. The conditions also kept fourth-ranked Jason Day from making the cut for a second straight week. He bogeyed the 18th for a 70 to finish at 2 over. No. 3 McIlroy shot a 73, also closing with a bogey, but managed to just sneak into the weekend at even par.

Spieth, who began the day one shot ahead after a first-round 63, started on the back nine. The 23-year-old Texan had to recover from a double bogey on the par-5 13th hole after hitting his tee shot left and out-of-bounds. He also had four birdies and a bogey to reach 8 under.

"We've been kind of far behind in a lot of the events in making comeback runs," said Spieth, the two-time major champion who tied for 35th last week in the US Open. "But being able to be toward the front of the pack on a Saturday afternoon is a beautiful position to be in and one that we'll certainly embrace. I'm going to try to have a lot of fun this weekend."

Patrick Reed (66) and Troy Merritt (68) were tied for second. Both fought off wind gusts that exceeded 20 mph to hit 11 of 14 fairways and 14 of 18 greens. "A golf course like this, even when the wind is blowing, if you're hitting your tee shots straight, you're going to have some wedges into the greens," Reed said.

US Open champion Brooks Koepka isn't in Connecticut this week, but former Florida State teammate Chase Seiffert is in contention. The 25-year-old had to qualify tomorrow to get into the tournament. He made two eagles Friday and finished with a 66 to reach 6 under.

"I came into the week with no status on any tour, but I knew my game was really good," Seiffert said. "I just had to get it done. To come out and play the two first rounds the way I did, it gives me a lot of confidence."

Wesley Bryan (67), Daniel Summerhays (68) and Boo Weekley (68) also were 5 under. Graham DeLaet led briefly during the afternoon, but had a double bogey on 18 for a 70 to drop into the group at 5 under.

Eighty-five players made the cut and 68 finished within seven shots of the lead. The biggest



CROMWELL: Jordan Spieth watches his tee shot on the 12th hole during the first round of the Travelers Championship golf tournament, in Cromwell, Conn.—AP

drama of the afternoon was watching the world's third- and fourth-ranked players try to make it to the weekend.

Day was close, until he hit his second shot at 18 into a greenside bunker. He failed to get up and down, missing a 6-footer for par.

McIlroy seemed to be in good shape on 18. He was on the right edge of the fairway and looking at a second shot 105 yards from the hole. But he slipped during the swing and the ball went just 63 yards and farther right.

"My right foot completely came out from under me," he said. "Obviously, there was a tiny bit of drizzle. Maybe a little bit of surface water. Just, I don't know. It was weird. As soon as I started down, I just felt it and I couldn't stop."

McIlroy may have saved his tournament on the 13th. After hitting his first shot in the water and taking a drop, he hit his third shot to 17 feet and made par. He then putted in from off the green on 14. McIlroy, who didn't qualify for the weekend at Erin Hills, hasn't missed consecutive cuts since 2012.

"I won't be thinking about trying to win the tournament from there," he said. "I'll be thinking about trying to go and play a good, solid round of golf. But we have seen here in the past guys going out and shooting a low score and getting themselves back into the tournament."

Anirban Lahiri of India, playing his first tournament since tying for second at the Memorial, shot a bogey-free 63 to move to 4 under. He made a 32-foot eagle putt on No. 13.

"I was out (since the Memorial) meditating," he said. "So I've been a little bit rusty. The body is kind of easing its way back in. So I think I'm going to get better as the week progresses."

Two-time Travelers champion Bubba Watson, who missed the cut at Erin Hills, will have another weekend off. He followed up a 75 in the first round with a 67 and finished at 2 over.

Weather could also affect the scoring Saturday. A forecast of rain led tournament officials to move the start of the third round back to 11 a.m., with the players going out in threesomes off the first and 10th tees.—AP

INTERNATIONAL RUGBY MAKES A COMEBACK IN SOCCER-MAD SOWETO

SOWETO: A hardy mix of French fans, Springboks diehards and locals braved the cold in Soweto to see the return of international rugby to the sprawling Johannesburg township, where football usually rules.

The friendly fixture Friday night between South Africa A and the French Barbarians-ahead of this weekend's France-South Africa Test match-drew in a noticeably mixed crowd of both black and white South Africans including several school groups lured by 20 rand (1.40 euro) youth tickets.

William Thusi, a 58-year-old police officer from west Soweto, said he hoped to see more international rugby in the townships, pointing to the unifying legacy of the rugby World Cup.

South Africa hosted the tournament shortly after the end of apartheid in

1994 and it was credited with helping to ease tensions between the black majority and white minority.

"It's like the rugby World Cup (in 1995) which came after a long time and then the soccer World Cup-it's a really good thing. You don't see much rugby in Soweto so this is a good thing," he said. "I tend to watch more soccer but I follow rugby whenever I can."

Soweto, home to 1.3 million mostly black residents, is better known for football and last hosted international rugby in 2010 when the South African Bulls played their Super Rugby semi-final and final fixtures in the township.

Traditionally a sport played and watched largely by whites in South Africa, rugby has been growing in popularity among blacks, who comprised a third of the Springbok Test team last

season. While the Orlando stadium-home of the Orlando Pirates football club-was just over one-third full for Friday's encounter, players and spectators were nonetheless treated to an eclectic range of vibrant singing and traditional dance.

And as well as attracting Sowetans more accustomed to watching football, the fixture saw French followers of the three-match international Test series make the journey to Soweto.

France face South Africa today at Ellis Park in Johannesburg in the final match of that series.

Xavier Moreau, 47, originally from Pau in southwest France but now living in Johannesburg's upmarket Sandton suburb-some 20 kilometres (12 miles) north of the Orlando stadium-said township rugby was a first for him.

"This is not my first time in Soweto but it is my first time watching rugby here," he told AFP.

"I work for a very mixed company so I'm used to diversity but here it's a great mix of people and a great atmosphere."

Despite being among just a handful of French fans rooting for the Barbarians, his son and daughter fearlessly flew large Tricolor flags inviting cries of "Viva Les Bleus" from a nearby group of South African women. "There'll be thousands of French at Ellis Park. I'll be there with a trumpet-not a vuvuzela" horn, he joked.

There was a brief moment of trepidation when a shirtless South Africa fan covered in green bodypaint and sporting a stuffed springbok atop a hard-hat began to accost the small French contingent. But the mood was quickly lifted

when the crowd began taking photos of the surreal scene and cheering the group. "The welcome here is really lekker," said the green-painted Theunis Kleinhans, 52, using the Afrikaans word for "good". As the game entered the second half, a try and a conversion saw the home side's lead become unassailable-leading to a 48-28 victory for South Africa A. And though the handful of French fans became noticeably subdued, South Africa's support reached fever-pitch as the match wrapped up.

Neo Ponosha, 22, who was at the stadium selling biltong-the typically South African cured meat snack-said he was surprised to see so many white rugby fans travel to Soweto for the game.

"It's a shock but it's a good shock!" he said. "I don't really follow rugby but I might do now." — AFP

IRELAND THRASH JAPAN TO COMPLETE TOUR WHITEWASH

TOKYO: Ireland overpowered Japan 35-13 yesterday to finish with a perfect record in their three-game summer tour.

Joe Schmidt's second-string side looked on course to rack up 50 points for the third successive match as they ran in four first-half tries in Tokyo. The signs were ominous for Japan's "Brave Blossoms" when Garry Ringrose raced clear to score under the posts and flanker Josh van der Flier wriggled over in the corner in the first 10 minutes. Bulldozing tries from Kieran Marmion and stand-in skipper Rhys Ruddock further stretched the lead for Ireland, the bulk of whose regular players are on British and Irish Lions duty in New Zealand.

Japan's sole glimmer of hope had been Kotaro Matsushima's fine try on 24 minutes but after trailing 28-8 at half-time, the 2019 World Cup hosts offered significantly more resistance after the interval.

Akihito Yamada tiptoed down the wing to register Japan's second try, while Ireland narrowly avoided going scoreless in the second half thanks to Sean Reidy's late effort. Fly-half Paddy Jackson unerringly converted all five tries for Ireland, who crushed Japan 50-22 last weekend and also broke the 50-point mark against the United States in their opening tour game in New Jersey.

"We knew after last week Japan would bring a new level of intensity and test us," said Ruddock. "They certainly did that. It was a really tough game and credit Japan for the pace and tempo they played at."

Japan, who warmed up for the two tests against Ireland by beating Romania 33-21 earlier this month, were once again given a lesson in possession rugby by a team they will face in the pool stage of the 2019 World Cup.

"In terms of attitude we 100 percent left everything out there," said Japan captain Michael Leitch.

"Ireland are one of the top four teams in the world and the way they keep the ball and the intelligence they play with are things we need to learn from. Tactically we also need to sharpen up as we build to 2019." Japan had never beaten Ireland and the last time they met before last weekend was in 2005. The Asian champions have made real progress since then, shedding their tag as World Cup pushovers by winning three games at the 2015 tournament under Eddie Jones, including a stunning upset of South Africa.

But they never seriously threatened Ireland and Japan coach Jamie Joseph cut a frustrated figure as his players committed a string of elementary handling errors. —AFP



AUCKLAND: British and Irish Lions fullback Liam Williams is tackled by All Black defenders during the first test between the British and Irish Lions and the All Blacks at Eden Park in Auckland, New Zealand, yesterday. —AP

RUGBY

IOANE TRY DOUBLE AS ALL BLACKS MAUL LIONS

AUCKLAND: Rieko Ioane scored two second-half tries as the world champion All Blacks stamped their authority with a 30-15 victory in the first Test against the British and Irish Lions yesterday. Both tries were off the back of demolition work by a powerful New Zealand pack. The All Blacks outscored the Lions three tries to two to maintain their 24-year unbeaten record at Eden Park. After a fevered build-up to the game, the All Blacks made their mark early on with a penalty and Codie Taylor's converted try to lead 10-0, and they were ahead 13-8 at half-time. But they were struggling to build on that lead in the second half before Ioane, selected ahead of prolific try-scorer Julian Savea, exploded into action.

"It was a bloody tough Test match. Certainly that first half had everything both teams throwing the ball around, two bloody good sides," said All Blacks captain Kieran Read. "That's one (win)," he added. "We'll go back to the drawing board tomorrow. Nothing's been earned yet so we will work harder next week."

The Lions scored a running try for the ages through Sean O'Brien in the first half, but captain Peter O'Mahony was left to rue a number of missed chances. "We've plenty to play for, we've got to regroup now and move on to Wellington," O'Mahony said. "We were playing some good rugby and it paid off, and (O'Brien's) was a great try but I think we left a couple out there," he added. "I think we've got to be harder on ourselves to finish off opportunities we create."

TACTICAL TWIST

Twelve years since the Lions were 'black-washed' 3-0 on their last visit to New Zealand, the game turned on a brutal scrum by the All Blacks. It led to Ioane's first try and the second came when the All Blacks forwards secured turnover ball. TJ Perenara, taking a leaf from the playbook of his Lions opposite scrum-half Conor Murray, put in a box kick which Ioane gathered and raced away to score.

As expected, the Test was a collision of two distinct styles-enterprising running and audacious offloads, against box kicks and close-quarter charges-but with a twist.

The All Blacks countered the renowned Lions' defensive line speed by employing the visitors' tactics of direct crash-and-bash up the middle.

Murray's clever box kicks, which caused the All Blacks much discomfort in the opening 30 minutes, faded as the Lions pack started to wilt.

The convincing victory kept alive the All Blacks' phenomenal record, with 47 victories in a

row on home soil since 2009 and no defeats at Eden Park since 1994.

But it was a brutal, bloody encounter. The All Blacks lost both fullback Ben Smith (concussion) and outside centre Ryan Crotry (hamstring) in the first 30 minutes. After being on the back foot for the first 10 minutes, the All Blacks gave the Lions a taste of their own medicine with a series of charges through the middle which had the tourists scrambling before they eventually conceded a penalty, which Beauden Barrett converted. Five minutes later, from a repeat of the same direct approach, the All Blacks won another penalty close to the Lions line.

While the Lions switched off, expecting a shot

at goal, the All Blacks took a quick tap which resulted in a try to Taylor in the corner.

After an exchange of penalties by Owen Farrell and Barrett the Lions launched their running game with a counter-attack by Liam Williams inside his own 22 which caught the All Blacks off guard. He offloaded to Jonathan Davies who took play deep into All Blacks territory, where the ever-present Sean O'Brien finished off a brilliant move. In a torrid second half in the rain, the game broke open with Ioane's tries on 55 and 70 minutes. Rhys Webb scored the Lions' second try on full-time to at least give the visitors hope ahead of next week's second Test in Wellington. —AFP



TOKYO: Japan's Kotaro Matsushima, left, avoids a tackle on the way to scoring a try against Ireland during their rugby test in Tokyo yesterday. Ireland beat Japan 35-13 to sweep the two-match series between the 2019 Rugby World Cup group rivals. — AP

AUSTRALIA SCORES 2 LATE TRIES TO CLINCH RUGBY WIN OVER ITALY

BRISBANE: Australia rallied for two late tries in an unconvincing and error-filled 40-27 rugby test win yesterday over Italy.

It extended Australia's perfect record against Italy to 17 consecutive victories. Their last match in Brisbane in 1994 was a close win for the home side - 23-20 at Ballymore. Australia, leading 21-13 at half-time, looked to be coasting to victory when Sefa Naivalu scored his second try early in the second half for a 15-point lead.

But two Italy tries, both coming directly from Wallaby mistakes, reduced the margin to just one point, and a yellow card to replacement prop Toby Smith put the visitors in the hunt for their first win against Australia. First, Dane Haylett-Petty spilled a high cross-field kick in the 64th minute while standing just forward of the try line, coughing the ball up to Edoardo Padovani for an easy Italy try.

Minutes later, a Rory Arnold pass was intercepted by Tommaso Benvenuti, who went on to score and make it 28-27.

But the pressure on the Wallabies was relieved when Abraham Steyn was yellow-carded for a deliberate knockdown, erasing Italy's one-man advantage, and Bernard Foley and Reece Hodge then crossed for

late tries to clinch the win.

Man-of-the-match Israel Folau had his third consecutive two-try performance for Australia. "To Italy's credit they fought their way back into the game," Australia captain Stephen Moore said. "It probably shows where we are at, down on a little bit of confidence in some parts of our game."

"We want to be able to back ourselves, but you don't want to make those errors, particularly in our own half. We'll go away and look at that and work on it for the next couple of months." The Wallabies don't play again until the opening match of the Rugby Championship/Bledisloe Cup against New Zealand in Sydney on Aug. 19.

The Australians had a surprising 24-19 loss to Scotland last weekend in Sydney after opening their international season on June 10 with a 37-14 win over Fiji in Melbourne.

Scores: Australia 40 (Israel Folau 2, Sefanaia Naivalu 2, Bernard Foley, Reece Hodge tries; Foley 5 conversions), Italy 27 (Tommaso Benvenuti, Michele Campagnaro, Edoardo Padovani tries; Tommaso Allan 3 conversions, 2 penalties). HT: 21-13. —AP



BRISBANE: Italy's Carlo Canna is tackled by Australian players during their international rugby match in Brisbane, Australia, yesterday. — AP



NEW YORK: Texas Rangers' Elvis Andrus (1) steals third base as New York Yankees third baseman Ronald Torreyes leaps to snag the throw wide during the ninth inning of a baseball game, Friday, in New York. Andrus later scored on a passed ball. — AP

BASEBALL

YANKEES EDGE RANGERS AFTER DARVISH-TANAKA DUEL

NEW YORK: Ronald Torreyes hit a game-winning single with two outs in the 10th inning after midnight, lifting the New York Yankees over the Texas Rangers 2-1 in Major League baseball on a rainy Friday night for just their second win in 10 games. Brett Gardner lined a tying home run with one out in the New York ninth off closer Matt Bush. After Chasen Shreve (2-1) escaped a bases-loaded jam in the top of the 10th, Torreyes kept the Yankees atop the AL East. Yu Darvish and Masahiro Tanaka kept it scoreless into the late innings in the first major league meeting between the Japanese pitching stars. Gary Sanchez, whose passed ball gave Texas a 1-0 lead in the ninth, singled with one out in the 10th off Bush (2-3). A single by Didi Gregorius put runners at the corners and after Chris Carter struck out, Torreyes lined a single to center field.

MARLINS 2, CUBS 0

Giancarlo Stanton hit his 19th home run and Jose Urena scattered five hits over six innings as Miami topped defending champion Chicago. Christian Yelich added a sacrifice fly for the Marlins, who won for the second time this week with no more than three hits. Stanton had two hits and Dee Gordon the other for Miami, which got only two hits in a 2-1 win over Washington on Wednesday. Urena (6-2) won his fifth straight decision. A.J. Ramos pitched the ninth for his 11th save in 12 chances. Javier Baez and Ian Happ each had two hits for the Cubs. John Lackey (5-8) gave up just three hits and two runs - one earned - in six innings, yet still fell to 1-5 in his last seven starts.

RED SOX 9, ANGELS 4

Hanley Ramirez and Sandy Leon hit two-run homers and the Red Sox won on the night they retired David Ortiz's number. It was the 250th career home run for Ramirez, a good friend of Ortiz who was also born in the Dominican Republic. Leon finished with

three hits and four RBIs. The homers helped provide a nice cushion for Rick Porcello (4-9), who gave up four runs and struck out eight in 6 1/3 innings to earn the victory. It was the 13th straight start Porcello has gone at least six innings. Alex Meyer (3-4) allowed five runs and five hits in 3 1/3 innings. Los Angeles scored three runs in the seventh, but cooled off after Porcello exited.

RAYS 15, ORIOLES 5

Evan Longoria and Shane Peterson drove in four runs apiece to back the pitching of Chris Archer and lead surging Tampa Bay past Baltimore. Peterson and Derek Norris hit two-run homers off Ubaldo Jimenez (2-3) as Orioles pitchers allowed at least five runs for the 20th consecutive game, tying a major league record set by the 1924 Philadelphia Phillies. Longoria had a two-run single during Tampa Bay's four-run first inning, and Peterson and Norris both went deep in the third to chase Jimenez, who yielded nine runs, seven hits and four walks in 2 1/3 innings. Logan Morrison also had a big night for the Rays, hitting his 22nd homer and finishing with three RBIs. Archer (6-4) wasn't especially sharp. But the right-hander didn't have to be, with the Rays posting a season-high for runs.

PADRES 1, TIGERS 0

Luis Perdomo pitched two-hit ball over six innings and Austin Hedges had an RBI double as San Diego handed Detroit its seventh straight loss. Perdomo (2-4) outworked Detroit's Michael Fulmer and did not allow a hit until the fifth. Perdomo struck out six and walked five in his first scoreless outing of the season. Hedges doubled to the right-center gap in the second to drive home Cory Spangenberg, who reached base three times against Fulmer (6-6). It was Hedges' first at-bat since a collision at home plate with the Cubs' Anthony Rizzo that sidelined the catcher for two

games. Brad Hand pitched a scoreless eighth and Brandon Maurer retired the side in the ninth for his 14th save.

TWINS 5, INDIANS 0

Adalberto Mejia combined with three relievers on a four-hitter, leading Minnesota in a matchup of the top two teams in the AL Central. Mejia (2-3) held Cleveland to two hits in five innings, but had to work around five walks and two errors. The left-hander got out of bases-loaded jams in the second and fourth and stranded nine Indians runners on base. Cleveland was coming off a 7-1 road trip, including a four-game sweep at Target Field last weekend that gave the Indians first place in the division. The Twins are now 1 1/2 back. Tyler Duffey, Taylor Rogers and Trevor Hildenberger combined to pitch the final four innings. Jorge Polanco's two-run homer highlighted Minnesota's four-run second off Trevor Bauer (6-6) and gave the Twins only their third win in 11 games against the Indians this season. Brian Dozier was 3 for 4 with two RBIs.

NATIONALS 6, REDS 5, 10 INNINGS

Bryce Harper singled in the winning run in the 10th inning, Brian Goodwin homered twice and Washington got a solid performance from its bullpen. Anthony Rendon and Daniel Murphy also homered for the Nationals, who trailed 5-2 in the sixth before coming back to deal the Reds their 12th loss in 13 games. Trea Turner singled off Raisel Iglesias (2-2) with one out in the 10th and took third on a single by Goodwin before Harper hit a liner that struck the right-field wall on one bounce. Matt Albers (3-1) pitched the 10th to cap an impressive night for the Nationals' bullpen, a maligned group that blanked the Reds on one hit over the final five innings.

ATHLETICS 3, WHITE SOX 0

Khris Davis and Matt Joyce homered and Jharel Cotton pitched three-hit ball into the sixth inning before leaving with a blister on his right thumb as Oakland beat Chicago. Davis hit a two-run homer in the first. Joyce connected leading off the fifth against Mike Pelfrey (3-6) and the Athletics picked up the win coming off four-game sweep by Houston. Cotton (5-7) and four relievers combined on Oakland's second shutout of the season. Cotton gave up a leadoff single to Kevan Smith and left after he came up shaking his hand following the first pitch to Adam Engel. Liam Hendriks, Ryan Madson and Sean Doolittle each worked a scoreless inning before Santiago Casilla ran into trouble in the ninth. He allowed singles to Melky Cabrera and Jose Abreu before getting out of the jam, picking up his 12th save.

BRAVES 5, BREWERS 4

Mike Foltynewicz won his fourth straight decision at home, shortstop Dansby Swanson made a pair of outstanding defensive plays in the ninth inning and Atlanta won for the sixth time in seven games.

Foltynewicz (5-5) gave up one run, four hits and three walks in five innings with nine strikeouts, improving to 4-0 with a 2.17 ERA in his last five starts at SunTrust Park. Brandon Phillips homered and drove in two runs, and Arodys Vizcaino earned his first save since last June 26. Eric Thames doubled leading off the ninth, and Domingo Santana hit a two-hopper to the second-base side of Swanson, who spun and threw out Thames at third. Travis Shaw flied out to the left-field warning track as Santana advanced, and Manny Pina lined out to Swanson, who made a diving backhand catch in the shortstop hole, for the final out.

PIRATES 4, CARDINALS 3

Josh Bell and John Jaso homered as Pittsburgh snapped a seven-game skid in Busch Stadium. Jaso, who entered as part of a double switch in the eighth inning, drove a 3-2 pitch from Seung Hwan Oh (1-4) over the wall in right-center to break a 3-3 tie in the ninth. Jameson Taillon threw 104 pitches in six innings, both highs since coming back from testicular cancer surgery on June 12. Only one of the four hits the Pirates rightly allowed left the infield. Felipe Rivero (3-1) pitched the Pirates out of a two-on, one-out jam in the eighth. Rivero worked around a ninth inning walk to secure the win.

ROYALS 5, BLUE JAYS 4

Whit Merrifield hit a two-run, two-out double that capped a four run rally in the ninth inning as Kansas City reached .500 for the first time since April. With their 10th win in 12 games, the Royals improved to 36-36. They were 6-6 before play on April 20, then went on a nine-game losing streak that night and dropped as low as 10-20, seven games out of first place. They trail AL Central-leading Cleveland by three games. Toronto took a 2-1 lead into the ninth and extended it when Josh Donaldson and Justin Smoak hit RBI singles off Joakim Soria (4-2). Salvador Perez doubled with one out in the bottom half against Ryan Tepera, took third on a wild pitch, and Brandon Moss walked with two outs. Alcides Escobar greeted Aaron Loup (2-1) with an RBI single, and Alex Gordon hit a run-scoring single on the first pitch from Jason Grilli. Ahead 3-1 in the count, Merrifield doubled on a hop to the left-field wall, and Gordon scored easily from first, crossing the plate with a headfirst slide.

PHILLIES 6, DIAMONDBACKS 1

Mark Leiter Jr. held the Arizona Diamondbacks to three hits over six scoreless innings, and Maikel Franco and Tommy Joseph both homered to lead Philadelphia. Leiter (1-0) struck out five with a walk for his first major league win in his first major league start after 12 relief appearances. He bested Diamondbacks starter Patrick Corbin (6-7), who held the Phillies to a run and eight hits for 6 2/3 innings. Philadelphia won its second straight after five straight losses, three from being swept in a series with Arizona at home last week.

The Diamondbacks had scored 26 runs in their previous two games, both wins, and had won nine of their previous 10 games before Friday. They didn't score until Daniel Descalso's one-out triple drove in Rey Fuentes from first base in the eighth inning.

MARINERS 13, ASTROS 3

Felix Hernandez pitched six solid innings in his first start in nearly two months and was backed by home runs from Mike Zunino, Ben Gamel and Kyle Seager as Seattle beat Houston. A day after climbing over .500 for the first time this season, the Mariners continued their June surge with their sixth straight win thanks to an offense that knocked out Houston starter Joe Musgrove (4-7) early. Jarrod Dyson's RBI double in the second got Seattle started, but it was a six-run third inning that blew the game open. Danny Valencia's two-run single dribbled past the diving attempt of Alex Bregman and two batters later Zunino hit a three-run shot for his 10th home run of the season. Hernandez (3-2), pitching for the first time since April 25, gave up a pair of solo home runs to Bregman and Jose Altuve, but walked just one batter and pitched out of the one major jam he faced.

METS 11, GIANTS 4

Yoenis Cespedes had three hits including a two-run homer and Lucas Duda had three hits including a solo blast to help the Mets snap a four-game losing streak. Along with Cespedes and Duda, Asdrubal Cabrera, Wilmer Flores and Michael Conforto all had three hits for New York, which had lost seven of eight. The Giants have lost 10 of their last 11 games, 12 of their last 14 and 19 of their last 24. After being held to five runs over their last three games, the Mets broke out their hitting slump, combining for 20 hits. All but one Mets starter (Jose Reyes) had at least one hit and all but two (Reyes and Cabrera) drove in at least one run. Seth Lugo (2-1) won for the third time in his last four starts. He gave up four runs in 5 2/3 innings and was 1 for 2 with one RBI. Ty Blach (4-5) gave up seven runs in three innings.

DODGERS 6, ROCKIES 1

Yasiel Puig homered and left-hander Alex Wood kept his record perfect as the streaking Dodgers defeated the NL West rival Rockies for their eighth consecutive victory. The Dodgers have won 14 of their last 15 games and have scored at least six runs in seven consecutive games. Wood (8-0) allowed one run in six innings. He gave up only three hits and walked two, retiring his last 10 batters. The Dodgers have homered in 15 consecutive games, tied for fourth-longest streak in club history. The last time they managed it was in 1977. Their record is 24 consecutive games with a home run. Rookie left-hander Kyle Freeman (8-4) allowed five runs and a career-high 10 hits and three walks in six innings.— AP

MLB results/standings

NY Mets 11, San Francisco 4; LA Dodgers 6, Colorado 1; San Diego 1, Detroit 0; Seattle 13, Houston 3; Philadelphia 6, Arizona 1; Pittsburgh 4, St. Louis 3; Kansas City 5, Toronto 4; Oakland 3, Chicago White Sox 0; Atlanta 5, Milwaukee 4; Tampa Bay 15, Baltimore 5; Miami 2, Chicago Cubs 0; Boston 9, LA Angels 4; Minnesota 5, Cleveland 0; Washington 6, Cincinnati 5 (10 Innings); NY Yankees 2, Texas 1 (10 Innings).

American League					National League				
Eastern Division					Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
NY Yankees	40	31	.563	-	Washington	44	29	.603	-
Boston	41	32	.562	-	Atlanta	35	38	.479	9
Tampa Bay	40	36	.526	2.5	Miami	33	39	.458	10.5
Toronto	35	38	.479	6	NY Mets	32	41	.438	12
Baltimore	35	38	.479	6	Philadelphia	24	48	.333	19.5
Central Division					Central Division				
Cleveland	3	33	.542	-	Milwaukee	40	36	.526	-
Minnesota	37	34	.521	1.5	Chicago Cubs	37	36	.507	1.5
Kansas City	36	36	.500	3	Pittsburgh	34	40	.459	5
Chicago White Sox	32	40	.444	7	St. Louis	33	39	.458	5
Detroit	32	41	.438	7.5	Cincinnati	30	42	.417	8
Western Division					Western Division				
Houston	50	25	.667	-	LA Dodgers	49	26	.653	-
Seattle	39	37	.513	11.5	Arizona	46	28	.622	2.5
LA Angels	38	39	.494	13	Colorado	47	29	.618	2.5
Texas	36	37	.493	13	San Diego	30	44	.405	18.5
Oakland	32	42	.432	17.5	San Francisco	27	49	.355	22.5

GRINER, TAURASI LIFT PHOENIX OVER SEATTLE STORM

SEATTLE: Brittney Griner had her ninth career dunk and matched Diana Taurasi with 25 points to help the Phoenix Mercury beat the Seattle Storm 85-82 in the WNBA on Friday night. Griner has three more dunks than all the other players in WNBA history combined. She was 9 of 14 from the field. Camille Little spun in the lane for a layup to extend Phoenix's lead to 83-78 with 2:56 left and, after a Seattle miss, Danielle Robinson split two defenders for a seven-point lead. Seattle's Jewell Loyd was fouled on a drive with 32.5 seconds left and hit two free throws to pull to 85-82. After an offensive foul on Taurasi, Seattle lost control of it and a jump ball was called with 5.6 seconds left. Seattle won the tip and called timeout with 3.6 seconds left, but Sami Whitcomb's long 3-pointer didn't hit the rim. Taurasi made four 3-pointers and scored 19 points in the first half to help Phoenix (7-5) take a 50-43 lead. She finished 6 of 17 from distance, Breanna Stewart led Seattle (6-6) with 21 points and eight rebounds.

SUN 94, LIBERTY 89

Jasmine Thomas scored 23 points as Connecticut beat New York after blowing a 21-point lead. Jonquel Jones added 21 points for the Sun (6-5). They have won five straight games, including two over New York. Connecticut was up 70-49 in the third quarter before New York rallied to tie it at 86 with 1:06 left on a layup by Shavonte Zellous. Courtney Williams then hit a jumper to give the Sun the lead and pulled down the rebound on the other end. Jasmine Thomas then hit a 3-pointer from the wing - the team's 12th of the game - with 24 seconds left to seal the victory. Tina Charles scored 18 of her 20 points in the second half to lead New York (7-5).

WINGS 81, STARS 69

Skylar Diggins-Smith hit a franchise record seven 3-pointers and scored a season-high 30 points to help the Wings beat the winless Stars. Alex Montgomery made an open 3-pointer to extend San Antonio's lead to 62-58 with 7:28 left but Diggins-Smith made two shots from behind

the arc for a 64-62 lead. Theresa Plaisance's basket gave Dallas the lead for good with 5:13 to go and San Antonio went scoreless for nearly three minutes down the stretch. Plaisance finished with 19 points and eight rebounds for Dallas (7-8), which also beat the Stars on Wednesday. Allisha Gray scored 12 and Kayla Thornton 10. Kayla McBride made four 3-pointers and scored 20 points for San Antonio (0-13).

SKY 82, DREAM 78

Allie Quigley scored 22 points and Stefanie Dolson added 19 to help the Sky beat the Dream. Cappie Pondexter added 17 points and nine assists for Chicago (3-9), which also won at Atlanta on May 21. She moved into sixth in WNBA history with 1,399 made free throws. Pondexter hit a long jumper to give Chicago a 76-63 lead with 3:12 left but Atlanta closed to 76-73 with 28.9 seconds left on Elizabeth Williams' layup. Chicago sealed it at the line as Pondexter, Dolson and Courtney Vandersloot combined for six straight free throws. Williams led Atlanta (5-6) with 20 points and 10

rebounds. Rookie Brittney Sykes scored a season-best 18 points and grabbed nine rebounds, and Tiffany Hayes had 15 points.

LYNX 93, MYSTICS 76

Maya Moore had 22 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists and Sylvia Fowles added 21 points and 15 boards as the Lynx beat the Mystics. Minnesota started with a 9-0 run and led 50-36 at the break behind Moore, who had 18 points and 10 rebounds by the half. Washington pulled within 75-68 with 6:48 left but the Mystics went scoreless for two minutes and trailed 83-68. Lindsay Whalen added 12 points and Rebekkah Brunson scored 11 for Minnesota (10-1), which bounced back after a 98-93 home loss to the Connecticut Sun on Saturday. The Lynx made 23 of 28 free throws and out-rebounded the Mystics 43-31. Tayler Hill led Washington (7-5) with 21 points and Elena Delle Donne had 17 points and eight rebounds. Coach Mike Thibault missed the game as he was at the funeral for his father. — AP



SACRAMENTO: Justin Gatlin celebrates as he win the Men's 100 Meter Final during Day 2 of the 2017 USA Track & Field Championships at Hornet Stadium on Friday in Sacramento, California. —AFP

ATHLETICS

GATLIN STUNS COLEMAN AT US WORLD TRIALS

SACRAMENTO: Justin Gatlin stormed to victory in the 100m at the US world championship trials on Friday, upstaging rising star Christian Coleman and setting up the prospect of one final duel with Usain Bolt. The 35-year-old Gatlin turned on the gas in the final 20 meters at Sacramento's Hornet Stadium to reel in Coleman for a convincing win in 9.95sec.

"It was just a fighting moment," Gatlin said of his victory. "It wasn't the spectacular time that you've seen me run in the past couple of years. But it was a time that I needed to fight. I had to make sure I was right there with him at the end and try and hold on with experience."

Coleman, 21, had been tipped as the likeliest US rival to Bolt at August's World Championships after clocking the fastest time in the world this year, a blistering 9.82sec. But Coleman—who hours earlier had inked a seven-figure sponsorship deal with Nike—was put firmly in his place by the veteran Gatlin, finishing in 9.98sec. Christopher Belcher was third in 10.06sec.

Asked if he felt Gatlin still 'had it', Coleman replied: "He never lost it!" "I was just honored to be in the race and I'm looking forward to many

more," Coleman said. Gatlin meanwhile was left delighted after clinching his ticket to London and another potential showdown with Bolt. "It feels great," said Gatlin, who has registered only one victory over Bolt in his career.

TAYLOR FOULS

In the women's 100m, Tori Bowie swept to a comfortable win in 10.94 ahead of Deajah Stevens and Ariana Washington. Allyson Felix, the reigning world 400m champion, finished in last place.

Meanwhile in the men's triple jump, reigning Olympic and world champion Christian Taylor—who only needed to turn up in Sacramento this week to cash in a wildcard place-intentionally fouled on his only leap of the competition.

Taylor, who is based in the Netherlands, defended his decision not to effectively compete. "It's unfortunate," Taylor said. "Every time I want to come out to the track I want to compete and put on a show. But this time I have to be smart. I have to focus on being healthy."

In the women's high jump, teenager Vashti Cunningham, the world indoor champion and

daughter of former NFL star Randall Cunningham, posted a jump of 1.99m to win and clinch her place in London.

In the opening heats of the women's 100m hurdles, world record holder Keni Harrison impressed with 12.54sec, the fastest time in the world this season. The 24-year-old is desperate to make up for the bitter disappointment of last year, when she missed out on the Olympics after finishing sixth at the trials in Oregon.

Friday was Harrison's first race since breaking her hand at a meeting in Doha last month. "I wanted to come out here and put a good number down," said Harrison, who ran with a metal pin in her left hand.

A few weeks after missing out on a place to Rio last year, Harrison smashed Yordanka Donkova's 28-year-old world record, clocking 12.20sec at a meeting in London.

American women have achieved remarkable dominance in the 100m hurdles in recent years and in 2016 completed a clean sweep of medals in Rio. Brianna Rollins, the gold medalist in Rio, is not competing in Sacramento following a one-year ban for missing three drug tests. — AFP

THOMPSON, BLAKE WIN 100M AT JAMAICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

KINGSTON: Elaine Thompson lowered her world-leading time in the 100 meters at the Jamaican Track and Field Championships Friday, while former world champ Yohan Blake roared to his fastest time in five years.

Thompson clocked a 10.71 seconds to win the women's 100m and Blake did likewise in the men's 100m with a blazing time of 9.90 seconds.

On a cool evening at Kingston's iconic National Stadium, the two provided the star power with the absence of Jamaican Olympic heroes Usain Bolt and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce.

Blake is making a comeback after several years on the sidelines with injuries. His time was his fastest since 2012 when he ran 9.69 seconds in Lausanne.

Julian Forte was second in 10.04 seconds after running a career best 9.99 seconds in the semi-finals, while Senoj-Jay Givans booked his first spot on a senior national team by placing third in 10.05 seconds.

Blake said he has been encouraged by his training partner Bolt.

"Every time I run, I am getting better and better and I just want to maintain this form going into the World Championships. Every day Usain encourages me at training," he said.

Asked if there was any athlete that he feared on the track Blake said, "there is no one to fear, I train with the fastest man

ever; what's there to fear? I feel really good, and I am confident again and riding this wave of euphoria."

He admitted however that it was difficult to get back to this level of fitness and confidence after a series of injuries. "I was mentally scarred but my management team worked hard with me and look here we are."

Thompson just missed equalling her personal best as she lowered her time from the 10.78 seconds. She streaked away from the field with the veteran Simone Facey taking second in 11.04 seconds and Jura Levy third in 11.06 seconds.

The Olympic Games double sprint champion will not run the 200m which starts today.

She said things went according to plan, and that she had hoped to get through the round as easily as possible "and just take it from there."

Rhonda Whyte created the biggest upset of the evening as she stormed over the last three hurdles to win the 400m hurdles in a career best time of 54.29 seconds.

There were no major surprises in the men's and women's 400m first round heats with all the top guns advancing to semi-finals.

Kellion Knibb broke the national record in the women's discus throw for the third time this year after she threw 62.73m on her second attempt of the contest. — AFP



KINGSTON: Yohan Blake (186), winner in a time of 9.90 seconds, celebrates the final of the Men's 100m at the Jamaica National Senior Championship in Kingston on Friday. — AFP

BADMINTON

'DREAM PERFORMANCE' AS SRIKANTH SETS UP CHEN FINAL

SYDNEY: India's Kidambi Srikanth blew away China's Shi Yuqi with a "dream" performance to set up an Australian Open final against Olympic champion Chen Long yesterday. The 11th-ranked Srikanth beat Shi, the world number four, 21-10, 21-14 in just 37 minutes to reach his third successive Superseries final. China's Chen gave himself a shot at his first Superseries title this year by fighting off South Korean veteran Lee Hyun-Il 26-24, 15-21, 21-17 in 68 minutes.

The women's final today will be an all-Japanese affair between Akane Yamaguchi and Nozomi Okuhara. Okuhara made her first Superseries final in over a year, wearing down China's Sun Yu 21-18, 18-21, 21-14, while Yamaguchi played a brilliant counter-attacking game to shock Taiwanese top seed Tai Tzu Ying 21-19, 21-12. Srikanth, who won last week's Indonesia Open and also reached the Singapore Open final in May, gave a masterclass in net play and deception to blitz Shi. "Yes, it's a dream performance," Srikanth said. "I played a World Superseries final (Singapore Open) after two years, and then to play the next two finals is a dream for sure."

"I was in control of the whole match, I didn't give him any easy points at the start. It's just that I had to stay there and not give him easy points. I was in control at the net."

In the other men's semi-final, Lee pinned Chen to the lines and kept things tight until he chose his moment to attack. Chen's usually airtight defence was frequently pierced as he struggled to read the lines of Lee's attack.

The Korean dominated the Olympic champion but failed to convert any of four game points in the opener. He took the second game and had his chances in the third until a late surge by Chen proved too much. "I'm quite satisfied with my performance this tournament. I feel less pressure now as an independent player, that's why my performances have improved in recent times," Lee said. In the women's semi-finals, Yamaguchi went for winners and never let off her pace against Tai, the world number one.

Tai stayed level through the first game but Yamaguchi got lucky on her first game point-the shuttle catching the tape and tumbling into Tai's court and the Japanese consolidated her lead with solid play in the second. Okuhara has lost four straight matches to her compatriot Yamaguchi, but she was hopeful of turning it around in Sunday's final. "After the Rio Olympics, I had an injury and it has taken time to recover," Okuhara said.

"My condition is better now. I face Akane again. Last week I lost to her but I want to challenge her tomorrow." — AFP

ZAIN CONCLUDES DIAMOND SPONSORSHIP OF AL-ROUDHAN FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its participation in the concluding ceremony of the 38th edition of the Al-Roudhan Ramadan Football Tournament and the final match held at Martyr Fahad Al-Ahmad Hall in Daiya Area. Zain was the Diamond sponsor of the tournament, which was held under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The tournament's title was claimed by Team Ahmad Al-Roumi during the final match against Team BMW.

The concluding ceremony saw the attendance of Kuwait National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim; HH the Amir's representative Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and

Acting Minister of Information, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah; Nasser Al-Roudhan; Hawalli Governor Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah; Zain Kuwait CEO, Eaman Al-Roudhan; Director of Al-Roudhan Tournament's Organizational Committee, Abdullah Al-Roudhan; together with several ministers, members of parliament, and Kuwaiti political and sporting figures.

Zain's support of the Al-Roudhan Tournament for the second consecutive year is linked to it being the most prominent sports and youth event in Kuwait and the region during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The fact that it has also been organized under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

Al-Sabah over the last five years is also of significant importance. Supporting Kuwaiti sports will remain a strategic priority for Zain, and as a leading private sector company in the country, the company commits to remain at the forefront of supporting and encouraging Kuwaiti youth and sports.

Every year, Kuwaiti audiences look forward to the Al Roudhan Tournament, with Zain representatives being present at the event throughout, where they interacted with the attending audiences through various competitions, activities, and entertainment programs. The company also distributed valuable prizes and held daily challenges and competitions on its official social media channels. In addition, Zain organized a Gergaiaan activity where it distributed gifts and candy while hosting a traditional performance. The company also participated in a special friendly match between ministers and members of the parliament, which was held under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Al-Roudhan Tournament features international football legends and this year it hosted Wales and Manchester United legend Ryan Giggs, Spain and Barcelona legend Andres Iniesta, Spain and former Real Madrid legend Iker Casillas, as well as Egypt and Al-Ahli legend Mohammed Abutrika.

Zain's support of this unique event is in line with the company's interest in uplifting youth and sports development in Kuwait. Zain also remains enthusiastic about organizing social and humanitarian initiatives during Ramadan, which extend to voluntary, cultural, religious, sports, and recreational activities.



HIDDINK URGES FIFA TO PICK BEST REFEREES FOR WORLD CUP

ST PETERSBURG: FIFA should pick the best referees for the World Cup and not limit its list to one per nation, according to coaching great Guus Hiddink.

Hiddink, a two-time World Cup semifinalist, told The Associated Press three or four referees should be chosen from the same country if they were best at a job getting more complex as video review is tested. "It's not a World Cup for referees, it's a World Cup for football teams," the Dutch coach said in St Petersburg where he is analyzing Confederations Cup games for American broadcaster Fox Sports. "We want to have the best teams so we want to have the best referees as well. Not necessarily European. Without looking to their nationality, which are the best referees?"

At the 2014 World Cup, FIFA had 25 referees from 25 different countries working in Brazil. "I don't think it's a law that you have to have from every country or from every continent a referee,"

said Hiddink, who led the Netherlands in 1998 and co-host South Korea in 2002 to within a game of the World Cup final.

While Hiddink's South Korea benefited from controversial referee decisions, his Australia team in 2006 lost to a stoppage-time penalty against eventual winner Italy in the Round of 16.

Hiddink likes the video review which FIFA hopes will get fast-track approval for the 2018 World Cup, though with one concern. Trials are scheduled next season in only some national competitions worldwide. "Referees who are coming from, with all respect, less developed countries regarding this system, let them learn as soon as possible," he said.

Still, Hiddink supported the only African referee here, Bakary Gassama of Gambia, for handling a running melee involving New Zealand and Mexico players. "This referee was a little bit criticized but I will defend this man," said Hiddink, describing a "far over the top" incident with "15 or 16 players hus-

ling." In other observations on the World Cup rehearsal tournament.

BEAUTIFUL GAME

Hiddink's favorite from the first two rounds of group games was Chile and Germany playing to a 1-1 draw in Kazan. It was a "beautiful example" of trying to outplay an opponent from the first whistle.

Hiddink, whose last coaching job was with Chelsea in 2016 after Jose Mourinho was fired, enjoys the fast pace of Champions League games.

"I don't think the nature of the game is changing," the 70-year-old coach said. "The attitude and the intensity is how it was. There are some small changes in the rules which are good and which have the intention to make it more fair."

ADVICE FROM THE TOP

As a former Russia national team coach, Hiddink

was not surprised that President Vladimir Putin urged players to impress the public at its home tournament.

"Everybody is a national team manager," said the coach who led Russia to a surprise semifinal place at the 2008 European Championship. "From the man in the street to the high-ranked bosses in the Kremlin. They all have ideas about football as we have ideas about politics. For me that is OK."

GOT TO GET AHEAD

Hiddink sees a similarity in his two former teams at the Confederations Cup: Russia and Australia both seem to play better when trailing 1-0.

"Then you can see the potential is there," he said of a Russia team that tends to be "too cautious, too careful sometimes." "I know a lot of the mentality of the Aussies - they always react when there is a setback," he said, hoping they could "think in a different way" by scoring first. — AP

PREVIEW

LOEW SET TO ADD TO GERMANY'S STRONG SEMI-FINALS RECORD

SOCHI: Joachim Loew can maintain his proud decade-long record of steering Germany to the semi-finals at major tournaments with a draw against Cameroon today enough to reach the last four of the Confederations Cup.

Since Loew took charge as head coach after Germany finished third at the 2006 World Cup on home soil, the team has always reached the semi-finals at either European championships or World Cup finals. The world champions take on Cameroon's Indomitable Lions at Sochi's Fisht Stadium on Sunday while Chile play Australia in Moscow in the final round of Group B games.

Germany are second to Chile in the table only by a single goal with both teams on four points while Cameroon and Australia have a point each. While Germany need a point in Sochi, Cameroon must win by two clear goals to progress.

"A draw would be enough for us to go through, but it would be good to win the group so we'd play our semi-final in Sochi," said Loew. "I'm planning a few changes in a position or two, some will get a break to allow fresh faces to come in."

Germany have won two of the three previous meetings and there was a 2-2 draw when the teams last met in a pre-World Cup friendly in 2014.

A year before the World Cup, Loew took the gamble of leaving all of his World Cup-winning stars at home to blood fringe players. The move has paid off with forward Lars Stindl scoring in both Monday's 3-2 win over Australia and Thursday's 1-1 draw with Chile leaving him as the Confed Cup's top-scorer.

Loew's young side has so far been convincing in Russia. They dominated Australia

for the first hour in Sochi, then weathered a Socceroos fight back, while in Kazan against Chile they showed guts in fighting back after conceding an early goal.

Loew opted to make no changes against Chile—the first time a German coach has done that in an international since 1995 — saying he wanted his team to "tough it out." With first-choice shot-stopper Manuel Neuer recovering from foot surgery, Loew is expected to again rotate his goalkeeper with Paris Saint-Germain's Kevin Trapp set to start.

Cameroon coach Hugo Broos fielded the same starting line-up for both their opening 2-0 defeat to Chile and Thursday's disappointing 1-1 draw with Australia.

The Belgian is expected to call up the same again against the world champions.

SOCCEROOS' BIG TEST

Australia face Chile at Moscow's Spartak Stadium with a draw good enough for the Copa America champions while the Socceroos need a win by three clear goals to reach the last four.

It would be the biggest result in the three-year tenure of Australia's coach Ange Postecoglou, regardless of the result. "Our game against Chile is another massive one for us," said Australia captain Mark Milligan. "We will not just be hoping, we will prepare to try to win. Chile are a very good side, but they have weaknesses too." Chile's captain, Inter Milan defender Gary Medel, is set to miss out after picking up a leg injury in the draw with Germany.

Having become Chile's all-time top-scorer by scoring early against Germany, Arsenal's striker Alexis Sanchez will be looking to add to his tally of 38 international goals. — AFP



TAUNTON: England's Liam Livingstone watches the ball as he runs during the second T20 Blast match against South Africa at the Cooper Associates County Ground, Taunton, England, Friday. — AP

CRICKET

ROY'S BIZARRE EXIT TURNS 2ND T20 SOUTH AFRICA'S WAY

TAUNTON: Jason Roy's bizarre dismissal turned the second Twenty20 international's South Africa's way as the Proteas won by just three runs at Taunton on Friday. The narrow victory at Somerset's headquarters saw South Africa level the three-match series at 1-1 as bounced back from a nine-wicket defeat by England at Southampton two days earlier to set-up a winner-takes-all clash in Cardiff today.

England were on course for an unbeatable 2-0 lead while Roy (67) and Jonny Bairstow (47) shared a second-wicket stand of 110. But when Roy was given out obstructing the field—the first time this had happened in a T20 international—the innings fell away.

England's cause was not helped by batting second under increasingly dark skies in a match that started at 1600 GMT despite a lack of floodlights on the ground, although home skipper Eoin Morgan did field first after winning the toss.

A target of 12 off the last over became four off the last ball after Liam Dawson hit Andile Phehlukwayo for a boundary. But he could not repeat the trick and South Africa had a morale-boosting victory to follow their first-round exit at the 50-over Champions Trophy, with this win achieved despite the absence of coach Russell Domingo, who had flown home after his mother was involved in a traffic accident.

Durban-born Roy, dropped from England's Champions Trophy semi-final loss to Pakistan after a run of low scores, was in superb form. He struck nine fours and went to his fifty with a six against spinner Tabraiz Shamsi. Bairstow fell first, chipping man-of-the-match Chris Morris (two for 18) to mid-on. And then came the turning point.

Roy veered dramatically off a straight course, with the result he placed himself between the

incoming throw from Phehlukwayo, which hit him on the heel, and the stumps. South Africa appealed and, after on-field umpires Rob Bailey and Michael Gough referred the decision, Roy was given out by TV umpire Tim Robinson, the former England opening batsman.

'NOT CONTROVERSIAL'

Roy was clearly aghast but Morgan insisted it had been a "50-50 call".

"Everyone in the changing room thought it could go either way, so it's not massively controversial," Morgan told reporters.

"You can see why the umpires gave him out." But England all-rounder Ben Stokes, who was given out obstructing the field in a one-day international against Australia at Lord's two years ago when he reacted to a shy at the stumps from bowler, Mitchell Starc by sticking out a glove, was unimpressed. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

TAUNTON, United Kingdom: Completed scoreboard in the second Twenty20 international between England and South Africa at Taunton on Friday.

South Africa		England	
J. Smuts c Plunkett b Dawson	45	J. Roy obstructing the field	67
R. Hendricks b Curran	7	S. Billings c Miller b Morris	3
M. Mosehle c Buttler b Plunkett	15	J. Bairstow c Behardien b Morris	47
AB de Villiers c Morgan b Willey	46	L. Livingstone run out (Morkel/ Phehlukwayo)	16
D. Miller c Buttler b Plunkett	8	J. Buttler b Phehlukwayo	10
F. Behardien lbw b Jordan	32	E. Morgan c de Villiers b Paterson	6
C. Morris c Roy b Curran	12	L. Dawson not out	7
A. Phehlukwayo b Curran	0	L. Plunkett not out	0
M. Morkel not out	0	Extras (b4, lb5, w5, nb1)	15
D. Paterson not out	4	Total (6 wks, 20 overs)	171
Extras (w5)	5	Did not bat: D Willey, C Jordan, L Plunkett, T Curran	
Total (8 wks, 20 overs)	174	Fall of wickets: 1-15 (Billings), 2-125 (Bairstow), 3-133 (Roy), 4-153 (Buttler), 5-162 (Morgan), 6-167 (Livingstone)	
Did not bat: T Shamsi		Bowling: Morkel 4-0-43-0 (1nb); Morris 4-0-18-2 (1w); Paterson 4-0-32-1 (4w); Phehlukwayo 4-0-34-1; Smuts 1-0-11-0; Shamsi 3-0-24-0.	
Fall of wickets: 1-25 (Hendricks), 2-57 (Mosehle), 3-96 (Smuts), 4-113 (Miller), 5-127 (De Villiers), 6-157 (Morris), 7-164 (Phehlukwayo), 8-170 (Behardien)		Result: South Africa won by three runs	
Bowling: Willey 4-0-29-1; Jordan 4-0-38-1 (4w); Curran 4-0-33-3; Plunkett 4-0-36-2 (1w); Dawson 4-0-38-1.		Man-of-the-match: Chris Morris (RSA)	
		Previous Result	
		June 21: England won by nine wickets	



Fakhar Zaman

PAKISTAN'S FAKHAR GOES FROM VILLAGE PARIAH TO 'LORD'

MARDAN: Fakhar Zaman was once banned from playing cricket in his village and beaten by his brothers because he was simply too good-but he has returned a hero after his starring role in Pakistan's Champions Trophy win.

His eyes bright, the tall 27-year-old posed for selfies and was garlanded with flowers as he was welcomed back to his home in Katlang in northwestern Pakistan.

Fakhar said he was still taking it all in after he top-scored with 114 off 106 balls to lead Pakistan to a shock victory over arch-rivals India in the final, after making his ODI debut earlier in the tournament.

"I did not feel much at that time," Fakhar told AFP, referring to Sunday's final in London. "Then I came here, and people started coming here... They all are giving me love, so now I feel that I have done some great heroics."

Bottom-ranked Pakistan produced a breathtaking display in the climax of a tournament featuring the world's top eight one-day international nations.

They piled up 338 for four, bolstered by left-handed opener Fakhar's maiden hundred, in what was just his fourth one-day international.

His efforts set social media alight during the match, with laudatory articles and memes quickly going viral.

But, Fakhar said, it was not always so: in fact his village once refused to allow him to take part in local cricket games.

"I played one or two hard-ball matches in school and scored some runs. I then became popular in the whole region and people used to say wherever I went that, 'He is a hard-ball player, don't play with him,'" he said.

His brothers even used to beat him up to stop him from playing, elder sibling Asif told AFP sheepishly. "But he never

quit cricket, and has become a hero today," Asif added, joking: "He has become a lord for us".

SEA CHANGE

Fakhar said he had devoted most of his time to cricket as a child, but had never dreamt of playing beyond club level. Instead, he wanted to be a navy commando.

"Joining the Pakistan Navy was the biggest turning point in my career," he said. Recruited as a sailor, he appeared in a forces tournament where navy coach Nazim Khan spotted his talent immediately and encouraged him to quit the armed forces to focus on cricket.

"(He) said, 'You can play cricket at a high level,'" Fakhar recalled.

For five years he played in domestic tournaments, but it was his performance with the Lahore Qalandars in the popular Pakistan Super League T20 tournament that prompted national selectors to take notice.

Fakhar got his first cap when he was included in the national T20 side for Pakistan's West Indies tour in March this year.

It was a slow start-only 26 runs in two innings-but it was enough to earn a place in the Champions Trophy squad. When regular opener Ahmed Shahzad failed to deliver in Pakistan's opening game, a one-sided defeat to India, Fakhar had his chance.

He grabbed it with both hands, scoring a valuable 31 in his debut game, two half-centuries in the following two matches and the century in the final to guide Pakistan to their historic victory.

Now Pakistan's newest star has no intention of resting on his laurels and, he said proudly, plans to play for his country "for a long time". — AFP

ICC CONFIRMS PLANS FOR WORLD XI SERIES IN PAKISTAN

LONDON: Plans for the full resumption of international cricket in Pakistan moved forward Friday when the sport's global governing body said it wanted to send a World XI to the country later this year.

With the exception of Zimbabwe's tour two years ago, Pakistan have had to play all of their 'home' matches outside of the country since a 2009 terror attack on Sri Lanka's team bus in Lahore.

But Friday saw the International Cricket Council, following the conclusion of its annual meeting in London, announce that plans for a World XI to play in Pakistan later this year were "continuing to be developed". The ICC board said it had agreed to support a three-game Twenty20 series between Pakistan and a World XI in a bid to help revive international cricket in the country.

All the matches would take place in Lahore and be accorded full Twenty20 international status, the ICC said, adding "further details will be announced in due course."

After Pakistan's stunning 180-run win over arch-rivals India in the final of the one-day international Champions Trophy tournament at The Oval last week, coach Mickey Arthur said he hoped the visit of the World XI would go ahead. "We're scheduled to have a World XI in Pakistan

in September for three Twenty20 games," he said.

"So hopefully that starts paving the way for future tours. We can only hope."

Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed added: "I hope this win will boost Pakistan cricket and all the (major) playing nations will come to Pakistan. Giles Clarke, the president of the

England and Wales Cricket Board and head of the ICC's Pakistan task force said, in comments reported by the Guardian in March: "The desire is to give the cricket-starved Pakistani supporters the chance to see some of the world's finest players in live action."

"Furthermore, the terrorists cannot win and cricket must not give up on Pakistan." — AFP



DERBY: India's Mithali Raj, (left) and England's Sarah Taylor during the ICC Women's World Cup fixture at the County Ground, Derby, yesterday. — AP

Sports

WTF? World Taekwondo Federation rebrands over acronym



Ioane try double as All Blacks maul Lions



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GATLIN STUNS COLEMAN AT US WORLD TRIALS

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BIRMINGHAM: Czech Republic's Petra Kvitova in action against Czech Republic's Lucie Safarova during their semi-final match at the Birmingham Classic tennis tournament at Edgbaston Priory, Birmingham, England yesterday. — AP

KVITOVA REACHES FIRST GRASS FINAL SINCE 2014

BIRMINGHAM: Petra Kvitova took a big step forwards to convincing herself that she can make a full recovery when she reached the final of the Aegon Classic by outplaying her exhausted friend and Czech compatriot Lucie Safarova.

The twice former Wimbledon champion showed few signs of the appalling knife injuries to her playing hand in a thoroughly one-sided victory by 6-1 1-0 retired, which happened when Safarova, who had had two huge matches in the previous three days, pulled out with a thigh strain.

It is only Kvitova's second tournament since the seven-month hole which was torn from her career, and this was only her sixth match, yet she has reached her first grass court final since her 2014 Wimbledon triumph.

So well has she been playing that it has become even more significant that this tournament is a Wimbledon warm-up event, for Kvitova is already beginning to suggest she can again do well at the grass court Grand Slam starting in nine days' time.

"It's tough to play against a friend like Lucie," Kvitova said. "It's hard to think about yourself and not your opponent. I am sorry for her and hope she soon gets a bit better. I'm pleased with how I am playing. I love playing finals,

I like big matches, and I've missed it over the last six months. So this is quite a dream."

Kvitova had never lost any of her nine WTA Tour encounters with Safarova, and this one had a sense of inevitability about it from the start. She won her opening service game to love, took 14 of the first 15 points, and kept the rallies ultra-short by striking winners freely, especially with her hard-to-read flat-hit forehand.

Safarova had had to battle like a trooper to reach this stage, saving match points against both Dominika Cibulkova, the third seed, and Daria Gavrilova, the ninth seed from Australia, and by the end of a first set lasting only 26 minutes it was clear her resources were seriously depleted. After dropping her serve in the opening game of the second set, she decided to call it off. She had won only 12 points. That left Kvitova due to play today's final against either Garbine Muguruza, the former French Open champion who is seeking a repeat of her 2015 achievement in reaching a Wimbledon final, or Ashleigh Barty, the 21-year-old unseeded Australian who beat the twice former finalist Barbora Strýcová, another Czech en route to the last four. — AFP

EX CHAMPS CILIC, DIMITROV INTO QUEEN'S SEMI-FINALS

LONDON: Marin Cilic faces a Queen's Club semi-final showdown with Gilles Muller, while Feliciano Lopez eyes revenge against Grigor Dimitrov in the other last four clash at the Wimbledon warm-up event.

Having lifted the Queen's trophy in 2012, Cilic fancies his chances of adding a second title as the highest ranked player left in the draw following the shock exits of Andy Murray, Stan Wawrinka and Milos Raonic.

The world number seven has yet to drop a set in three matches en route to his fourth Queen's semi-final appearance. Cilic, who also finished as Queen's runner-up in 2013, was pushed hard by Donald Young in Friday's quarter-finals, but the former US Open champion fired 11 aces to see off the American 6-4, 7-5. "I'm playing really well this week. I'm feeling great on the court," said Cilic, who is chasing his second ATP title this year.

"It is another match without losing serve, so that's extremely pleasing." Luxembourg's Muller is through to his first Queen's semi-final after defeating 2010 champion

Sam Querrey 6-4, 7-6 (7/5).

Muller has won the first two ATP Tour titles of his career this year, helping him climb to a career-high ranking of 26, and he now has a seven-match winning streak on grass.

The 34-year-old's huge serve was on full display when he won the 's-Hertogenbosch title on grass last week and once again he used it to devastating effect against 2010 Queen's winner Querrey.

"I was never top 30 before in my life, and now this year for the first time I have a '2' in front of my ranking. That means a lot," Muller said.

"Those are things you dream of as a kid, so when it happens it feels good." Dimitrov moved into the last four with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 win against Russia's Daniil Medvedev. With Medvedev suffering a shoulder injury during the pre-match warm-up and needing lengthy treatment before he could start playing, it was no surprise Dimitrov won the first set after sprinting into a 5-0 lead. — AFP

QUAKER
کوئکر
1877

Quaker Oat Cookies
كوكيز الشوفان

Raisins
زبيب

Quaker Oat Cookies
كوكيز الشوفان

Chocolate Chip
كوكيز الشوفان

Quaker Oat Cookies
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Apple & Cinnamon
كوكيز الشوفان

Eid

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Kuwait Times ⁵⁵ BUSINESS

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STOCKS ADVANCE AS DOLLAR WEAKNESS LIFTS OIL



NEW DELHI: Commuters take shelter under the roof of a metro station as it rains in New Delhi, India, Wednesday, June 21, 2017. The annual monsoon rains are crucial for India's agriculture sector that accounts for more than 13 percent of the economy and provides work for about half of the country's 1.25 billion people. —AP

AFGHAN WOMEN REFUGEES REBORN AS WASTE WARRIORS

'I AM DOING A JOB TO SHOW THAT REFUGEES CAN DO SOMETHING GOOD'

NEW DELHI: Farah Naz is used to attracting scathing remarks and disapproving looks from neighbors in her Afghan refugee community as she leaves for work each day. They tell her she is "not a good woman", what she is doing is "shameful" and that her rightful place is inside her south Delhi home - caring for her sick husband and five children. But after fleeing the Taleban five years ago - where she was drenched in kerosene and almost burnt alive, her husband was ordered killed, and her children were threatened with kidnap - the 32-year-old refugee woman is past caring what people think.

She is on her way to becoming a business woman. "I had no choice but to work, and now I am proud," said Naz. "I am feeding my family and changing the view of women in my community, but most importantly I am doing a job which is showing that refugees also can do something good." Naz is one of five Afghan refugee women who are not only battling traditional gender roles by going out to work, but who have also become unlikely warriors in the Indian capital's fight to curb plastic waste pollution.

The task is immense and 10 hands will not solve it. But this project is gaining international support for its twin roles of addressing India's chronic waste problem and empowering refugee women who

often flounder in their adopted homelands. Employed under "Project Patradya" - an initiative led by Delhi University students - the Afghan women produce and supply edible bowls, cups and cutlery to cafes and ice-cream parlors as an alternative to non-biodegradable plastic ones.

Made from millet and wheat flour, the biscuit-like tableware is gaining popularity in the West as a sustainable, environment-friendly option to disposable plastic utensils, and those behind the initiative believe India is an untapped market. "We wanted to create a social enterprise model which was not only looking at improving the environment but also had a business plan that could employ excluded communities such as refugees," said 20-year-old commerce student Nishchay Hans.

Plagued with plastic pollution

Hans is one of more than 40 students at Kirori Mal College (KMC) who are part of Enactus, a charity that supports young people across the world work with poor communities and build sustainable, eco-friendly businesses. Their projects range from creating mobile salons for unemployed hairdressers in Ghana to working with villagers in Malaysia to build home stays - all with the aim of eventually handing over the businesses to communities to run themselves.

With New Delhi generating around 650 metric tons of plastic waste daily, only 60 percent of which is recycled, KMC students honed in on plastic pollution as a serious and neglected social problem. They found disposable plastic plates, bowls, cups and utensils make up much of the plastic waste in Delhi's burgeoning landfills, where it can take up to up to 1,000 years to decompose and leak pollutants into the soil and water.

Most of the litter and pollution affecting oceans also derives from plastics. This has dire consequences for marine species, which in turn is harmful for those further up the food chain, including humans, who consume the contaminated fish. During their months of research, the students visited Delhi cafes and consulted restaurateurs, bakers and customers - eventually settling on the idea of edible tableware as an alternative to use-and-throw utensils.

The students then approached the city's refugees to join their venture in a move welcomed by the United Nations. "Not only are refugees learning valuable new skills, they are also part of a meaningful and innovative initiative," said Ipsitha Sengupta, policy associate at the UN Refugee Agency. "Such projects demonstrate that refugees are active members of our society making positive

contributions to the communities they live in."

Bomb blasts to business women

India - a safe haven in a volatile region - is home to more than 200,000 refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom were forced to flee conflict or persecution in neighboring countries such as Sri Lanka, China, Afghanistan and Myanmar. But the country has not signed the landmark 1951 Refugee Convention, which spells out the legal obligations of states to protect refugees, nor does it have any domestic legislation in place to ensure their basic rights.

As a result, many refugees are vulnerable to harassment and exploitation. They cannot easily access education and health services and endure job discrimination and low pay. The 11,000-plus Afghan refugees in India fare better than some other poor communities, but many still live hand to mouth. Opportunities to improve their lives and gain new skills are limited, so when Naz and the four other women were offered the chance to join Project Patradya, they did not hesitate.

Most are the wives of once wealthy businessmen who had good lives in Kabul, but the constant fear of suicide attacks at schools, bomb blasts at markets and death and extortion threats from the

Taliban left them with no choice but to flee. In India now for almost five years, the roles have reversed and these women are the breadwinners - some now widows, others have husbands who are too sick to work or unable to find a job.

They work five hours daily at a charity office, above a hardware store along the bustling narrow lanes of Bhogal market, where they sit around a large table, carefully kneading and rolling dough, cutting and placing it into baking moulds. As well as making the products, the women are also trained in sales and marketing, meet customers and take orders, with the understanding they will run the business within three years. Patradya has been in operation for six months and is currently supplying edible tableware to 10 cafes and ice-cream parlors in Delhi, as well as taking online orders.

The women are turning over a small profit, averaging 7,500 rupees (\$115) monthly, which is divided equally between them. "It's just the beginning, so the money is not much," said Hasiba Fata, a 41-year-old mother of four, as she sprinkled flour over the ball of dough in front of her. "But we are excited about the idea that we can become business women and run our own company, employ other people and also do something for the environment. Maybe it's possible." —Reuters

TALLEST BUILDING WEST OF MISSISSIPPI RIVER OPENS

LOS ANGELES: The tallest building west of the Mississippi River opened its doors on Friday in oncedodgy downtown Los Angeles, which is sprouting a crop of new skyscrapers. Here are some things to know about the Wilshire Grand Center:

How tall is tall?

The 73-story building has a huge spire that brings its height to 1,100 feet (335 meters), topping the nearby US Bank Tower by more than 80 feet. The Bank Tower had held the height record since 1989. Critics might argue that a spire rising nearly 200 feet above the top of the building should not count, but it meets the criteria of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, which lists the world's tallest buildings based on the "architectural top of the building." A 2-foot lightning rod at the very top, however, doesn't count. The skyscraper is still dwarfed by buildings on the East Coast and overseas. In the United States, One World Trade Center is 1,776 feet tall, making it the sixth-largest completed building in the world. The tallest building, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, rises 2,717 feet, or more than a half-mile high.

No flat top, please

The tower features a 100-foot-tall, sail-shaped crown built of glass and steel. It is the first modern high-rise in Los Angeles without a flat roof. Since 1974, high-rise buildings had to have helicopter pads in case of fires or other emergencies. The Wilshire Center obtained Fire Department

permission to use other safety features, including a special landing platform and a dedicated elevator for firefighters. The city ended the flat-roof requirement in 2015.

Lights, action, entertainment

The building's spine and sail have programmable LEDs that can provide colorful illumination and visuals. Ripples of rainbow illumination glowed and flowed all the way up the building's 73 stories on Friday night in its inaugural lighting. The tower also includes an 889-room InterContinental hotel where rooms will go for about \$400 a night; some 350,000 square feet (32,516 square meters) of office space; a shopping mall and an observation deck. Restaurants range from the open-air, rooftop Spire 73 offering "chic fire pits" and signature cocktails to La Boucherie, with stratospheric steak prices and a wine list with 1,200 selections.

Construction

The building, located in the Financial District, cost about \$1.2 billion to build. Construction began in 2014. It reached a milestone that year when 21,200 cubic yards (16,208 cubic meters) of concrete, weighing 82 million pounds (37 million kilograms), were poured over a span of 18 hours to create the foundation. That broke the Guinness World Record for a continuous pour set during the 1999 construction of The Venetian hotel and casino in Las Vegas.

The record was eclipsed again this April when a

foundation for a mall was poured in the United Arab Emirates. Construction work on the tower was shut down for two days last year when an electrician killed himself by jumping from the 53rd floor. The tower includes a massive, stabilizing central core and braces designed to act as shock absorbers to withstand gusty Santa Ana winds and earthquakes. Southern California has dozens of faults, and the building is designed to withstand about a magnitude-7.5 temblor.

Jobs, jobs, jobs

The building construction provided about 11,000 jobs. Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis says the tower and its many tenants will provide about 1,750 permanent jobs and the tourism and business it may bring could provide another 122,000 jobs indirectly. The Wilshire Grand Center is part of a construction boom in the resurgent downtown area that for decades emptied out at night as commuters headed for the suburbs. The opening of the Staples Center arena in 1999 helped anchor redevelopment projects in the surrounding area. The Walt Disney Concert Hall, an internationally known architectural landmark designed by Frank Gehry, opened in 2003. Vacant office buildings have become pricey lofts and apartments, a new art museum opened and with changes to density and zoning laws, plans are moving ahead to create gigantic complexes of residences, hotels and shopping districts. About 150 building projects are in the works, including some 20 skyscrapers of 35 stories or more. —AP



LOS ANGELES: A light show illuminates Wilshire Grand Center to celebrate its grand opening. —AP

HOW TO MOVE PAST A JOB REJECTION

Job hunting is very demanding, especially when competition is high for the same position. Nowadays, job hunting does not only mean having the right qualifications, a professional CV, and strong interview skills. It also means outperforming other candidates who might be more qualified than you are on paper.

Everybody is prone to a job rejection and it can be quite tough to deal with; particularly when you've been applying and interviewing for a while and you're very adamant about getting this particular job. However, there are a few things to remember that can help you stay positive and motivated after a rejection. Here is what the career experts at Bayt.com recommend:

Don't take things personally

Most hiring decisions may not be clear to you as job seekers. You might have performed excellently

during the interview, but there might have been other factors that influenced the hiring decision. For example, there might have been a more qualified candidate, or a candidate with similar experience but demands half the pay. You might be really good, but that doesn't make you a "good fit" for a certain position. A rejection is inevitable at some point. So don't take it personally and blame yourself, because if you've prepared yourself and tried your best, you certainly did your part.

Ask for feedback

When responding to a job rejection letter, it is recommended to ask the employer for more detailed feedback about your interview and performance in order to help you improve for the next time. If you weren't able to get feedback from the busy employer after an interview, try to seek other useful feedback from HR professionals so you can get constructive

criticism. Also, always try to practice interviews with friends; it can help you feel more confident before heading to a job interview. Remember that a job rejection is a great learning experience. Just think of it as a practice for your next round.

Never stop learning

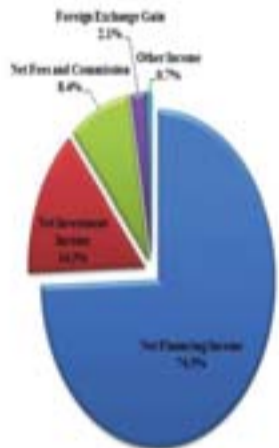
If you're currently unemployed and searching for a job, it's important to keep your experience and skills up to date. To do so, take a training course or volunteer at a relevant organization. This way, not only will you keep yourself professionally up to date, but you will also boost your confidence and keep yourself motivated. Being unemployed can have a big negative effect on you, as you might feel you're stuck in one place. By taking action, you'll feel that you're always developing as a person. Another advantage would be that this course you might be taking and this volunteer experience you might be

building could be something to talk about in your next job interview!

Keep a positive attitude

Always approach new job opportunities with a fresh perspective and a positive attitude. Don't keep dwelling on how you were rejected in past interviews. Before heading to a new job interview, try to tailor your CV to best suit the position you're applying for, and do a full research on the company. If you've made mistakes in your past interviews, learn from them but put the negativity behind you. Always keep a fresh approach and don't forget to stay true to your experience and personality. You might have lost one, two, or 10 opportunities but there are plenty more for you to pursue. Start your search again and find over 10,000 jobs available on Bayt.com on any given day. You just have to keep pushing yourself and you will find the job that suits you best!

Total Operating Incomes in The First Quarter 2017



The following tables summarize last week's performance of Boursa Kuwait

Description	Week 25	Week 24	Diff %
	22/06/2017	15/06/2017	
Working days	5	5	
AlShall index (35 Companies)	385.7	377.3	2.2%
Boursa Kuwait index (price)	6,772.1	6,810.7	-0.6%
Value Trade (KD)	60,849,007	29,841,740	
Daily average (KD)	12,169,801	5,968,348	103.9%
Volume Trade (Shares)	249,088,391	152,149,936	
Daily average (Shares)	49,817,678	30,429,987	63.7%
Transactions	10,847	7,188	
Daily average (Transactions)	2,169	1,438	50.9%

AL SHALL WEEKLY ECONOMIC REPORT

1. Interests Rates

Over one and a half year (since 16 December 2015 until June 14, 2017), the Federal Reserve Bank raised the base interest rate on the US dollar four times at an average of 0.25% point each time to become 1.25%. The base interest rate was fixed and close to zero (0.25%) since the global financial crisis in 2008 until December 2015 because the concern of the US Federal Reserve Bank was about stimulating the fragile growth and not fear of inflation. Even when it raised the interest for the first time on December 16, 2015 with a promise to raise it three times in 2016, it did only once at the end of 2016 due to continued weak inflation rates, weak labor market, and fragility of global economy.

The Central Bank of Kuwait has raised the discount rate on the Kuwaiti Dinar by 0.25% point on December 17, 2015, December 15, 2016 and March 16, 2017 simultaneous with the three US Federal increases. CBK decided not to raise the discount rate this June to act against its subordination to the US dollar interest rate movement since December 2015.

That is not a precedent in modern history as since the start of the current millennium, the US Federal Reserve Bank raised or lowered the base interest rates on the US dollar 47 times and the Central Bank of Kuwait disagreed 10 times on increase and disagreed 11 times in case of decrease, and the Central Bank of Kuwait moved unilaterally once in case of increase, 5 times in case of decrease. In our last report about interest rate movement in December 2016, we mentioned that the Central Bank of Kuwait's choice is between bad and worse; the bad is to raise the interest rate similar to the US dollar to sacrifice the concern with the weak growth of the Kuwaiti economy against repatriation of the Kuwaiti Dinar.

The worse is to allow reducing the attractiveness of the Kuwaiti Dinar by not raising its interest rates on the Kuwaiti Dinar against the US dollar which could endanger its repatriation, i.e. shifting to dollar deposits thus adversely affecting growth. This time it seems that the fragile domestic economic growth and the unexpected drop in oil prices, despite extending production cuts agreement, and difficult operation environment at banks because of weak economic growth and the negative geopolitical events the latest of which was the rift among GCC states drove the Central Bank of Kuwait to fix the discount rate on Kuwaiti dinars. To compensate depositors it raised the interest rate on Government securities-bonds-discount by a

0.25%, to compensate banks all allow them to raise the return on deposits by the same amount. This action represents the attempt of the Central Bank of Kuwait to keep the difference margin on deposits in favor of the Kuwaiti dinar against the American dollar as is while keeping interest rate on loans unchanged to encourage borrowing and it bears the increase cost of the (repo) rate or securities discount.

2. Some Energy Statistics 2016

Volume 2017 titled "BP Statistical Review of World Energy - June 2017" issued by British Petroleum (BP), and published on its website, indicates that the growth in global primary energy consumption remained low in 2016, at 1%. The increase in the growth rates of consumption of global energy vis-à-vis 2015 scored 2.8% for hydroelectricity, 1.6% for oil, 1.5% for natural gas, 1.3% for nuclear energy, and -1.7% for coal - most polluting.

Global proved oil reserves in the end of 2016 scored about 1706.7 billion barrels, a rise by about 15.2 billion barrels from 2015. The Middle East region contributes about 813.5 billion barrels, i.e., about 47.7% of global oil reserves, and about 99.3% (of the 47.7%) of which is in the Gulf region (GCC excluding Bahrain and including Iran and Iraq). South and Central America contribute about 19.2% (about 327.9 billion barrels), and North America contributes about 13.3% (about 227.5 billion barrels), while Europe and Central Asia contribute 9.5% (about 161.5 billion barrels), Africa by about 7.5% (about 128 billion barrels), and finally Asia Pacific by 2.8% (about 48.4 billion barrels).

The Middle East region produced 34.5% of global oil production in 2016, which amounted to about 92.150 million barrels/day (Saudi Arabia 13.4%, Iran 5%, Iraq 4.8%, UAE 4.4% and Kuwait 3.4%), and ME contributes (as mentioned earlier) about 47.7% of global oil reserves. North America produced 20.9% of global oil production (USA 13.4%), Europe and Central Asia 19.2% (Russian Federation 12.2%), Asia Pacific 8.7% (China 4.3%) Africa 8.6%, South and Central America 8.1%.

Asia Pacific consumed about 34.8% of global oil consumption (China 12.8%, India 4.6%, Japan 4.2%, and South Korea 2.9%), North America consumed about 24.7% (USA 20.3%), Europe and Central Asia consumed about 19.5% (Russian Federation 3.3%). This means oil is consumed beyond where its reserves are concentrated, which attaches high strategic importance to the Gulf region. The magnitude of consumption started to tilt eastwards and will increase with time, for China, India and Japan now consume collectively more than the USA.

tion started to tilt eastwards and will increase with time, for China, India and Japan now consume collectively more than the USA.

3. Aggregated Performance for Banks' Sector - First Quarter 2017

The banking sector contains 10 Kuwaiti banks achieved noticeable growth in its net profits in the first three months of the current year vis-à-vis the same period of 2016. First quarter 2017 profits scored KD 196 million, after deducting taxes and minority equities, rising by KD 12.6 million or by 6.9%, compared with KD 183.4 million in the same period of 2016. The 10 banks' operational profits prior to discounting provisions increased by KD 75.1 million, or by 23.9%, and scored about KD 388.7 million compared with KD 313.6 million.

Therefore, due to rise in operational incomes of the banks by 8.8%, versus a reduction in total expenditures by 1.1%. The impact was reflected directly on the rise in net banks' profits. Despite the rise in incomes, the Kuwaiti banks continued to implement blocking provisions against non-performing loans. Total provisions blocked scored KD 162.6 million in the first quarter compared with KD 132.9 million, rising by 22.3% while it decreased by 2% of the last quarter of 2016, when it scored KD 166 million. Therefore, the rise in total provisions might affect negatively the rise in banks' net profits unless improvement in operation environment continues, which is highly doubtful.

Profits of the five traditional banks scored about KD 121.8 million, which is 62.2% of total net profits of the 10 banks, rising by 3.7% compared with the same period of last year. While share of the Islamic banks scored KD 74.1 million, which is 37.8% of the 10 bank's net profits, rising by 12.6% from its level of the same period last year. This means the performance of Islamic banks continued to grow at higher rates. (P/E) for the banking sector on annual basis scored 14 times compared to 13.9 times for the same period last year.

The average return on total assets rose slightly to 1.1% compared with 1%. While the average return on equities (ROE) remained at 8.5% for both periods. When comparing the performance of the 10 banks, "NBK" continued to achieve the highest value in profits which scored KD 85.4 million (15 fils earnings per share), about 43.6% of the banking sector net profits, a rise by 8.1% vis-à-vis the same period of 2016, due to the rise in interests returns and net incomes from Islamic financing.



GULF BANK EXTENDS BEST WISHES FOR EID AL-FITR

KUWAIT: On this blessed occasion of Eid Al Fitr, Gulf Bank would like to convey its sincere congratulations and best wishes to the Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; 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 and to the people of Kuwait.

As per the approved guidelines set by the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), Gulf Bank would like to announce its Branches and Head Office closures depending on the date of Eid. If Ramadan is 29 days, the Bank will be closed from Sunday, 25 June to Tuesday, 27 June 2017, and will resume its regular working hours on Wednesday, 28 June 2017. In the case of Ramadan being 30 days, the Bank's branches and the Head Office will be closed from Sunday, 25 June 2017 to Thursday, 29 June 2017 and will resume its regular working hours on the Sunday, 2 July 2017.

However, several of the Bank's branches and banking business units will be working on a limited scale on Thursday, 29 June 2017. The branches are: Mubarak Al Kabeer, Fahaheel 1, Jahra 1, Salmiya Co-op, Farwaniya 1 and Hawally. The banking units that will operate are Trade Finance, Treasury Operations, Consumer Loans, CPU Unit, SWIFT Unit and the Consumer Banking Operations.

In addition, the Bank's clients will continue to be served round-the-clock through its dedicated Customer Contact Center. Moreover, Gulf Bank's Interactive Teller Machines (ITMs) will be available during Eid holidays from 10am till 3:30pm in Jabriya, Adan, Fahaheel, and South Surra. Clients can also access the Bank's online portal, (www.e-gulfbank.com) to find out more about the latest products and services; or to download the Mobile Banking App's (App store/Android) to monitor accounts and conduct self-service banking transactions, or view its social media channels.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

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

GCC COUNTRIES

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

ARAB COUNTRIES

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

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	304.100
Euro	343.630
Sterling Pound	391.960
Canadian dollar	231.960
Turkish lira	87.260

Swiss Franc	315.620
Australian Dollar	234.770
US Dollar Buying	302.900

GOLD

20 Gram	257.580
10 Gram	131.710
5 Gram	66.700

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr Selling Rate

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

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.135
Thai Bhat	9.910
Turkish Lira	86.480

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY BUY SELL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.381970	0.391970
Czech Korune	0.004997	0.016997
Danish Krone	0.041739	0.046739
Euro	0.335153	0.344153
Norwegian Krone	0.031958	0.037158
Romanian Leu	0.074243	0.074243
Slovakia	0.009095	0.019095
Swedish Krona	0.030923	0.035923
Swiss Franc	0.305977	0.316977
Turkish Lira	0.082073	0.092373
Australia		
Australian Dollar	0.223131	0.235131
New Zealand Dollar	0.214565	0.224065
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.224522	0.233522
Georgina Lari	0.137438	0.137438
US Dollars	0.300200	0.304600
US Dollars Mint	0.300700	0.304600
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003386	0.003970
Chinese Yuan	0.043246	0.046746
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036931	0.039681

Indian Rupee	0.004253	0.004941
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002654	0.002834
Kenyan Shilling	0.002931	0.002931
Korean Won	0.000258	0.000273
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067351	0.073351
Nepalese Rupee	0.002976	0.003146
Pakistan Rupee	0.002692	0.002982
Philippine Peso	0.006024	0.006324
Sierra Leone	0.000037	0.000043
Singapore Dollar	0.214515	0.224515
South African Rand	0.017752	0.026252
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001608	0.002188
Taiwan	0.009902	0.010082
Thai Baht	0.008640	0.009190
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.799738	0.808238
Egyptian Pound	0.014453	0.020361
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000190	0.000250
Jordanian Dinar	0.423835	0.432835
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.019791	0.043791
Nigerian Naira	0.000334	0.000969
Omani Riyal	0.783969	0.789649
Qatar Riyal	0.079294	0.084234
Saudi Riyal	0.080060	0.081360
Syrian Pound	0.001290	0.001510
Tunisian Dinar	0.120455	0.128455
Turkish Lira	0.082073	0.092373
UAE Dirhams	0.081425	0.083125
Yemeni Riyal	0.000989	0.001069

SUDAN HAS MADE 'POSITIVE' STEPS ON MEETING SANCTIONS TERMS: US ENVOY

EL DAIEN: Sudan has made "positive" steps towards meeting Washington's conditions for permanently lifting 20-year-old sanctions on the African country, the US envoy to Khartoum told AFP in an interview. Then-president Barack Obama eased the sanctions in January, but made their permanent lifting dependent on Khartoum's progress in five areas of concern during a six-month review period that ends on July 12.

These conditions-known as the "five tracks"-include improved access for aid groups, an end to support for rebels in neighboring South Sudan, an end to hostilities in the conflict zones of Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan, and counterterrorism cooperation with US intelligence agencies.

"I can say without much hesitation that, with the few exceptions, the advances on the five tracks have been positive," US charge d'affaires in Khartoum, Steven Koutsis, said. "The few exceptions being... the implementation of humanitarian access is uneven... and that we want to see that the government begins to act more on moving towards a more permanent agreement with the opposition" on ending hostilities.

Koutsis was speaking after touring Darfur, which has been gripped by conflict since 2003 when ethnic minority rose up against the Arab-dominated government in Khartoum. Koutsis travelled across vast

stretches of the western region, which is as large as France, to make a first-hand assessment of security ahead of President Donald Trump's decision on the trade embargo next month. While Khartoum has allowed more access to many parts of Darfur, there are some where restrictions remain, aid workers say. Washington first imposed the sanctions in 1997 over Khartoum's alleged support for Islamist militant groups. Now slain Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was based in the Sudanese capital from 1992 to 1996.

'Extreme restraint'

Washington has kept the sanctions in place largely in response to the scorched-earth tactics that President Omar al-Bashir's regime has used against the rebels in Darfur. At least 300,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million displaced in the region, the United Nations says. Koutsis said it was highly unlikely that a permanent agreement to end hostilities would be signed before July 12, but said Khartoum had shown "extreme restraint" in responding to rebel attacks over the past year.

"The fundamental issue that we asked for in return for sanctions relief was to stop any offensive," Koutsis said in El Daien, the East Darfur state capital. "We considered aerial bombardments as offensives, as an offensive act, not a defensive act in any way." Previously, government forces would

launch a "large offensive" against pro-rebel communities if the rebels looted a village or stole cattle, he said.

"We have not seen that this time, in the last one year," said Koutsis, whose assessment of Darfur is expected to guide Washington's decision on sanctions. "We have seen that when the army does attack, they act with restraint... they stop when they achieve their objective, they do not continue. "We have seen that the government has shown extreme restraint even in circumstances where they could have responded under the genus of self-defence."

Concerns over UN drawdown

However, an expected drawdown of the 17,000-strong United Nations and African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur threatens to unravel the fragile gains achieved so far, Koutsis said. "The biggest concern I have is the pace that UNAMID will draw down requires that the government of Sudan step up and fill those gaps in issues of security and development assistance," he said. "As we have seen it is not clear that the government is fully able at this point to do that."

Some think tanks have urged Washington to maintain the sanctions, accusing Khartoum of curbing freedom of speech, violating human rights and repressing Christians and other minority groups. Koutsis said Washington was not

blind to these issues and had "big differences" with Khartoum over them, although the two currently enjoyed a level of confidence that hadn't existed for 25 years. But the purpose of the sanctions was to end Sudanese support for extremist groups and bring peace to Darfur, he said.

"None of these other issues were the

point of sanctions, and none of these other issues, therefore, should be linked to the lifting of sanctions," Koutsis said that overall the sanctions had worked. "Yes, I can say with absolute certainty that Darfur today is more peaceful than it was a year ago," he said. "That is not to say that the causes of Darfur have been fully addressed, not by a long shot." —AFP



DARFUR: This file photo taken on June 19, 2017 shows Steven Koutsis (R), the United States' top envoy in Sudan, posing for a picture with Sudanese children and villagers in the war-torn town of Golo in the thickly forested mountainous area of Jebel Marra in central Darfur. —AFP



ATHENS: A woman holding her dog walks past a pile of garbage in central Athens on June 22, 2017, as contract garbage collectors refuse for the third day to pick up garbage cans and demand the renewal of their contracts. —AFP

MOODY'S RAISES SOVEREIGN BOND RATING AFTER BAILOUT

PARIS: Credit ratings agency Moody's on Friday raised Greece's long-term issuer rating to "Caa2" from "Caa3" after eurozone governments extended a credit lifeline to the country. Moody's also changed its outlook to "positive", up from "stable" previously, saying it saw signs that the heavily indebted country's economy was stabilizing.

It pointed to a mid-June agreement reached by Greece's creditors to re-launch an aid plan to the country, which had been blocked for months due to disagreements between eurozone countries-especially Germany-and the International Monetary Fund. The move reduces the spectre of a short-term crisis, after eurozone governments agreed to give Greece a new credit lifeline of some 8.5 billion euros (\$9.5 billion).

Moody's said it expected Greece's debt ratio to stabilize this year at 179 percent

of GDP, adding that growth should return to the economy this year and next. Greece returned to growth in the first quarter of 2017, with a 0.4 percent increase in GDP, according to figures revised upwards in early June. "It is too early to conclude that economic growth will be durable," Moody's said.

The IMF, which links financial aid to debt relief, has also signed an "agreement in principle" to allow immediate assistance that avoids a payment crisis in Athens this summer. It said Thursday that negotiations with creditors for debt reduction had "made progress". "If we did not think there was a good chance of reaching a debt deal, we would not have chosen that route," an IMF spokesman said. Moody's also raised the long-term country ceilings for foreign-currency and local-currency bonds to B3 from Caa2. —AFP

NEVADA'S ON-AGAIN, OFF-AGAIN MARIJUANA SALES ARE BACK ON

FATE OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAM IN LIMBO

RENO: Nevada regulators reaffirmed their intentions Friday to issue licenses necessary for retailers to begin selling pot for recreational use on July 1 while complying with a court order in a lawsuit filed by alcohol wholesalers who want a piece of the pot distribution business.

The retail licensees could include as many as 25 medical dispensaries in the Las Vegas area and four others in Reno that already have medical retail licenses, as long as they adhere to packaging requirements in an emergency regulation to be adopted tomorrow, state Department of Taxation spokeswoman Stephanie Klapstein said.

The fate of the recreational program has been in limbo since a Carson City judge ruled Tuesday that the ballot measure voters approved requires that alcohol wholesalers have exclusive rights to pot distribution licenses for 18 months. Distribution licenses allow pot to be moved between locations and are different than retail licenses.

The state had wanted the option of licensing existing medical marijuana businesses to serve as distributors when recreational sales begin. But District Judge James Wilson issued a temporary injunction barring distribution licenses for anyone except alcohol wholesalers. Klapstein said Friday that won't hold up licensing of marijuana establishments. "The injunction has no effect on the other license types," she said. Kevin Benson, a lawyer for the Independent Alcohol Distributors of Nevada, did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The group filed the lawsuit considered by Wilson aimed at blocking any pot distribution licenses outside the liquor industry.

Klapstein emphasized Friday that no decisions have been made on granting recreational pot licenses to the dispensaries in Reno and Las Vegas. "That said, those that applied, meet the qualifications and whose applications we get processed before July 1, will be licensed

by July 1," she said. However, retail sales could be short-lived unless the state issues distribution licenses necessary to move additional products from growers to retailers. "Once that inventory runs out, without distributors, they are not going to be able to restock," Klapstein said. The on-again, off-again plan to launch recreational sales has medical marijuana outlets scrambling to stockpile enough pot to meet what's expected to be extremely high demand. "It's been a little chaotic," said Clint Cates, director of compliance for the operators of the Mynt Cannabis Dispensary in Reno, which sells medical marijuana.

Different requirements

The operators also transport medical

pot products between about 25 pot facilities statewide. Unlike recreational pot movement, transporting medical marijuana does not require a distribution license. Cates said he's confident some alcohol wholesalers will get pot distribution licenses in the coming weeks while existing stockpiles at dispensaries are sold to recreational customers.

"Our phones have been blowing up with calls from all the dispensaries that we currently serve down in Las Vegas who are trying to stock up on inventory," Cates said. "We have been back-stocking for four to six months, so we have extra inventory on hand." Department of Taxation Director Deonne Contine issued an emergency statement Thursday explaining the need to implement before July 1 new marijuana

restrictions the Legislature approved last month. The new provisions - which the Nevada Tax Commission is expected to approve on Monday would mandate child-proof packaging with warning labels and prohibit the sale of products that appeal to children such as lollipops and gummies. They also make clear that edible products sold for recreational use can't carry as high a percentage of THC as allowed in items used for medicinal purposes. Mike Wildden, chief of staff for Gov. Brian Sandoval, said the governor doesn't intend to propose an emergency regulation allowing anyone other than alcohol wholesalers to serve as pot distributors. "It's more important to him to have tight packaging and labeling and tight security and tight controls than to just have an artificial July 1 date," Wildden said. —AP



RENO: In this March 24, 2017 file photo, Nevada state Sen Don Gustavson, R-Sparks, smells a sample of marijuana as Christopher Price, a "budtender" at the Blum medical marijuana dispensary, describes the operation during a brief tour at the store. —AP

NIGERIA HOPES TO RAISE \$1BN FROM TAX EVASION AMNESTY

ABUJA: Nigeria hopes to raise at least \$1 billion from a scheme that will give tax evaders a chance to make payments retrospectively, the finance ministry said on Friday. The OPEC member, which has Africa's largest economy, is in the second year of a recession brought on by low oil prices. Crude sales make up two-thirds of national revenue and the government is seeking to boost its income from non-oil sources.

The finance ministry said a scheme would be launched on June 29 to give evaders immunity from prosecution, penalty charges and interest if they "regularize their tax status" between July 1 and December 31, 2017. It said tax evaders who delayed participation until after December 31 would be liable for interest on overdue tax balances. International asset tracers and investigative specialists have been appointed to assist the government in tracing assets held by Nigerians, the ministry said in an emailed statement.

"Anticipated funds to be raised are at least US\$1 billion, which will reduce Nigeria's borrowing needs, allow investment in vital infrastructure and spur development," said the finance ministry statement. The country's record 7.44 trillion-naira (\$22.95 billion) 2017 budget, signed into law last week, seeks to increase capital expenditure to stimulate growth. Economists have long criticized the low levels of tax in Africa's most populous country and in March the government laid out plans to increase its overall tax to GDP ratio to 15 percent by 2020 from 6 percent now. The ministry said in May that it would increase the interest rate on unpaid taxes to discourage companies and individuals from paying late and racking up a larger debt. The government has previously announced plans to increase a luxury goods tax to 15 percent from 5 percent. —Reuters

REFUGEE WOMEN PREPARE FOR THE TOUGH UK WORLD OF WORK

LONDON: In a small London workshop on a hot summer's day, Reem goes back and forth between caring for her crying son and assembling purple campanulas, pink peonies and blue nigellas in a bouquet. Among the discarded stems that litter the floor, refugee women rush to ready the flowers for delivery to London homes before the heat wilts all their work.

"I find myself surrounded by refugees, and I feel we are being valued - I love the initiative," Marie, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in her native French. Marie and Reem, a 28-year-old from Syria, are among some 50 refugee women who have trained as florists in the British capital in a bid to overcome the many challenges they face on their way to meaningful employment.

While most are still waiting for their asylum applications to be processed, some of the women are now working as nursery teachers, elderly carers or volunteering in shops. The women interviewed in the workshop declined to reveal their real names to avoid repercussions back home. The training aims to give them a grounding in their adopted homeland, as well as teaching the artistry of flower arranging. "It's about learning the skills of floristry but also about speaking English more and interacting with different people," said Olivia Wilson, head florist at their new place of work, Bread and Roses.

Bread and roses

Bread and Roses is a social enterprise based in the east London borough of Hackney, which aims to help female refugees get ready for work, be it with flowers or not. Their mantra: helping refugee women to flourish through employment.

The company, founded in 2016, runs training programs where women learn how to make bouquets and care for a range of flowers, as well as how to write CVs. During workshops, they practice speaking English and make new friends in the capital. There were about 117,000 refugees and 35,000 asylum seekers in Britain in June 2016, according to the United Nations.

Even if migrants are granted refugee status in Britain and given access to regular benefits and the right to work, limited job opportunities and growing anti-immigration sentiment mean they are not always able to find work. For women, the path to employment is paved with further obstacles: many lack the skills or confidence of their male peers, while others struggle to find jobs that would cover the high cost of childcare. Reem used to teach in Syria but could not find education or work opportunities in London that would take into account her two children - until she started training with Bread and Roses.

She can now bring them along while she gains workplace experience and achieves a level of English that will allow her to train to become a nurse - her ultimate goal. "Because of childcare and health issues, it's very difficult for even part-time work - 15 to 20 hours a week is quite a big ask," said Sneha Jani, co-founder of Bread and Roses.

Breaking barriers

Many refugee women come from countries such as Syria, Eritrea and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where education and work opportunities are more limited for women than for men. "They are less skilled and haven't had the career or employment history that their male counterparts have," Matthew Powell, director of employment charity Breaking Barriers, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone. "They have transferable skills that they can apply but don't know how to articulate them," he added.

For example, women might have cared for elderly relatives back home, but do not recognise this experience as relevant to a next step in healthcare, Powell said. The Middle East and North Africa have the lowest rates of women in paid work and most jobs were confined to education, social work and agriculture, a United Nations report said last week. Some of the obstacles the women face lie deep within: the

emotional and physical scars left by the violence they fled at home, which can prevent them taking on full-time work. Many women attending the Hackney workshops were survivors of female genital mutilation, sexual abuse or trafficking.

"Refugees often have to overcome the mental scars of torture or persecution, of losing loved ones, or of arduous journeys," said Laura Padoan, a spokeswoman for the U.N. refugee agency UNHCR. "Refugee women in particular are more vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking and abuse at every stage of their journeys."

Baggage and skills

Without a job, migrants can't earn an income, improve their English or meet people - key factors for integration. And migrant women often face a disproportionate degree of isolation. "Women don't get access to the same social networks that men do, within or outside their ethnic community," Powell said. "They're not getting this moral support, not able to chat with friends," he added.

Back in the workshop, Marie sweeps up the last petals and stalks while Reem feeds her 9-month-old son, who falls silent. "Refugees are people we should not underestimate," Marie said. "They might have emotional baggage because they have been through bad things, but they have a lot of skills." — Reuters

STOCKS ADVANCE AS DOLLAR WEAKNESS LIFTS OIL

NEW YORK: World stocks advanced on Friday to end the week with a slight gain as a drop in the dollar helped boost slumping oil prices. The dollar fell against a basket of major currencies as preliminary data on U.S. factory and services activities in June fell short of analyst forecasts, stoking doubts about U.S. economic growth for the rest of 2017. That drop in the greenback helped crude oil pull away from 10-month lows, although prices were still set for their worst first-half performance since 1997. On the week, both Brent and WTI crude have lost nearly 4 percent.

"Overall, the market is saying it would be nice

to have a little more strength in the energy sector but the economy is doing OK without it," said David Joy, chief market strategist at Ameriprise Financial in Boston. "At the consumer level, cheap gasoline is not a bad thing and this is all translating into the lower inflation. Maybe that is part of the reason why the dollar is as soft as it is." US crude settled up 0.6 percent at \$43.01 per barrel and Brent settled up 0.7 percent at \$45.54 on the day.

The climb in crude helped lift energy stocks on Wall Street, with the group up 0.8 percent. The US dollar briefly managed to recoup some of its declines after economic data showed

new US single-family home sales rose in May and the median sales price surged to an all-time high. The PHLX housing index advanced 0.6 percent. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 2.53 points, or 0.01 percent, to 21,394.76, the S&P 500 gained 3.8 points, or 0.16 percent, to 2,438.3 and the Nasdaq Composite added 28.57 points, or 0.46 percent, to 6,265.25.

The slide in energy prices in recent weeks has worsened the outlook for inflation, creating a problem for the world's major central banks as they attempt to normalize interest rates after years of ultra-loose policy. The pan-European FTS Eurofirst 300 index lost 0.28 per-

cent and MSCI's gauge of stocks across the globe gained 0.19 percent to close out the week up 0.2 percent. The dollar index fell 0.34 percent, with the euro up 0.41 percent to \$1.1196.

The dollar had hit a one-month high on Tuesday following comments with a hawkish tone from Fed officials, including New York Fed President William Dudley and Boston Fed President Eric Rosengren. But it has been stuck in a tight range since and is up slightly on the week. Earlier on Friday, St Louis Fed President James Bullard said the central bank should wait on any further rate increases until inflation is reliably heading to the Fed's 2-percent target. Cleveland Fed President Loretta Mester said failure to hike US rates could mean missing inflation and employment goals that could cause a recession. The lower dollar also helped boost gold prices, but the prospect of further interest rate rises in the United States limited gains.

Britons voting in a referendum by a narrow margin to quit the EU, a shock outcome which then sent sterling, British and European stocks into a tailspin.

While stocks have recovered sharply from their slump in the immediate aftermath, in US dollar terms, British stocks continue to lag peers in Europe and elsewhere as a cloudy outlook for sterling dented appetite among foreign investors. "Brexit itself, I don't think, has had much of an effect on the market, but what has had an effect has been the fall in sterling," said Paul Mumford, senior investment manager at Cavendish Asset Management. Mumford said the inconclusive outcome of this month's national election in Britain was also now weighing on sterling. "Because of the uncertainty that might have arisen from the election result, it may be that sterling is going to stay down longer than we thought," Mumford said. The pan-European STOXX 600 index was down 0.2 percent as falls among financials, pharma firms and energy shares weighed.

Elsewhere, broker changes helped drive price action, with British broadcaster ITV rising more than 3 percent after Morgan Stanley upgraded it to "buy", citing its attractive valuation. "Timing is always tricky but typically the right moment to buy TV stocks is when advertising starts to improve, even if this is just on a second derivative basis (i.e. it starts to become less bad)," Morgan Stanley analysts said in a note. —Reuters

EU and UK shares diverge

Another wobble in commodity-related shares and dollar earners put pressure on British blue chips on Friday, underscoring their underperformance against continental European peers a year on from Britain's vote to leave the European Union. Britain's FTSE 100 was down 0.2 percent at its close, weighed down by weakness in health care and mining stocks - large-cap dollar earners. Friday marked the one-year anniversary of

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report						
Thursday 22 June 2017						
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing			
Price Index	▲ 7.08	6,772.09	6,765.01			
Weighted Index	▼ -0.53	402.97	403.50			
KSX 15	▲ 1.29	920.21	918.92			

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	84	84	35400	2,515	6	83	▲ 9.8
IPO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	345	— 0.0
NAFESCO	1,450	1,300	3,708	5,325	5	1,350	▼ -100.0
ENERGYH	36.7	35.0	56,950	2,011	9	36.7	▼ -3.3
GPI	30.2	38.3	248,579	9,632	16	39.2	▲ 0.2
ASAR	71	71	100	7	1	71	▼ -17.0
Oil & Gas			342,737	19,481	37	969.37	▼ -46.00
KFOUC	290	270	37,005	10,132	5	290	▲ 11.0
BPOC	585	580	814,547	357,077	38	581	▼ -2.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	590	— 0.0
ALQURAN	339	335	79,882	26,937	8	337	▲ 1.0
Basic Materials			731,434	394,546	51	1254.63	▲ 10.00
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	470	— 0.0
CABLE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	416	— 0.0
SHP	216	207	10,074	2,106	4	211	▼ -5.0
PCFM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	940	— 0.0
PAPER	300	290	1,400	407	2	300	▲ 30.0
MRC	89	88	8,001	533	5	89	— 0.0
ACICO	262	260	20,972	5,455	3	262	▲ 7.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208	— 0.0
KBMAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136	— 0.0
NICBM	198	190	116,000	22,048	4	190	▲ 25.0
EQUIPMENT	49.0	49.0	25,000	1,225	1	49.0	▼ -0.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	108	— 0.0
GYPSSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0
SALBOOKH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60	— 0.0
AGLTY	849	824	1,879,929	1,559,466	237	825	▼ -9.0
EDU	369	360	87,336	31,562	22	369	▲ 0.0
CLEANING	45.5	45.5	80	4	1	45.5	▲ 2.2
KGL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60	— 0.0
KCPK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	165	— 0.0
HUMANSOFT	4,290	4,130	80,008	334,564	12	4,200	▲ 100.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	150	— 0.0
GFC	84	84	100	8	1	84	▲ 8.1
MAFADEN	27.9	27.9	10	0	1	27.9	▲ 0.9
GGC	620	620	20,000	12,400	1	620	▲ 1.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0
LIPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	730	— 0.0
ALAFCO	308	305	226,000	69,261	15	307	▼ -3.0
MUBARRAD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	77	— 0.0
LOGISTICS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51	— 0.0
SCFM	83	83	10	1	1	83	▲ 6.6
GCMM	75	75	27,223	2,029	2	75	▼ -2.5
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	78	— 0.0
FCM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	— 0.0
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	— 0.0
SPEC	89	83	9,870	820	5	89	▲ 4.5
Industrials			2,510,613	2,041,889	317	1087.87	▲ 32.80
PAFPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	— 0.0
CATTL	220	220	17,380	8,824	1	220	▼ -8.0
DANAH	75	73	264,645	19,457	15	75	▲ 0.8
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,450	— 0.0
Consumer Goods			282,026	23,280	16	1082.06	▼ -12.40
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	453	— 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	— 0.0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	185	— 0.0
Health Care			0	0	0	0.00	— 0.00
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,390	— 0.0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	— 0.0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	— 0.0
CABLETV	31.0	26.0	134,440	3,811	49	31.0	▲ 1.0
EYAS	1,040	1,000	106,555	108,121	32	1,040	▲ 40.0
IFHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	219	— 0.0
OULAFUEL	122	120	31,528	3,823	8	121	— 0.0
MUNTAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	— 0.0
JAZEERA	470	468	239,300	112,358	22	470	▲ 3.0
SOOR	120	120	1,456	175	4	120	— 0.0
FUTUREXID	107	107	11,000	1,177	1	107	▲ 2.0
ALRAI	120	120	10,000	1,200	1	120	▲ 3.0
ZMAH	52	52	40	2	1	52	▲ 3.0
Massan			934	115,022	163	911	▼ -29
Consumer Services			799,921	393,855	136	1084.19	▲ 19.80
ZAIN	430	425	565,552	241,715	96	425	▼ -2.0
OOREDOO	1,090	1,030	14,551	15,478	6	1,090	▼ -10.0
VITSTELEC	41.5	39.6	1,817,890	72,326	24	39.6	▼ -1.0
VIVA	823	822	9,265	7,819	13	822	▼ -4.0
Telecommunications			2,407,358	327,135	99	590.14	▼ -7.50
NBK	703	696	1,779,877	1,244,953	105	696	— 0.0
GBK	246	245	154,796	37,968	7	246	▲ 2.0
CBK	319	315	42,810	13,500	13	315	▼ -5.0
ABK	327	319	3,100	990	2	327	▼ -4.0
ALMUTAHED	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	440	— 0.0
KIB	247	245	35,348	8,696	5	246	— 0.0
BURG	330	325	343,890	112,418	14	330	▲ 5.0
KFIN	493	484	1,609,879	788,247	253	486	▲ 2.0
BOUBYAN	409	409	78,880	32,262	9	409	— 0.0
AUB	207	205	598,845	123,163	38	207	▲ 1.0
ITHMR	48.8	46.0	840,500	43,631	31	46.1	▼ 0.0
WARISABANK	257	255	352,985	90,330	30	255	▼ -2.0
Banks			6,940,911	2,496,167	507	925.99	▼ -0.30
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	262	— 0.0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	530	— 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	480	— 0.0
WINS	99	82	1,118	95	4	99	▼ -1.3
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196	— 0.0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60	— 0.0
WETHAQ	56	56	500	28	1	56	▼ -1.0
BKQWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0
Insurance			1,618	123	5	1077.95	▼ -6.40

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOUK	47.5	47.5	190	9	1	47.5	— 0.0
KRE	55	55	51,016	2,814	6	55	▼ -8.2
URC	85	80	30,678	2,476	4	85	— 0.0
NRE	112	110	1,266,687	140,620	33	112	▲ 2.0
SRE	385	385	15,456	5,951	1	385	— 0.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	— 0.0
AREEC	145	138	43,954	6,115	6	138	▼ -8.0
MASSALEH	43.0	43.0	70	3	1	43.0	▲ 3.0
ARABREC	34.6	34.0	20,520	698	3	34.6	▲ 0.6
ERESCO	38.5	38.0	264,755	10,090	15	38.5	▼ -8.3
MBANEE	780	780	5,000	3,900	1	780	▲ 1.0
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	92	— 0.0
INVESTORS	23.3	22.9	456,385	10,493	13	23.3	▲ 0.4
IRC	32.8	32.8	10,000	328	1	32.8	— 0.0
ALTUJARIA	75	73	915,300	67,030	21	73	▼ -9.9
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50	— 0.0
AAYANRE	82	82	41,762	3,438	3	82	▼ -0.7
AGAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	66	— 0.0
ALAGARIA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	38.5	— 0.0
MAZAYA	112	106	298,919	32,790	12	110	▼ -2.0
ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0	— 0.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	— 0.0
TUARA	57	54	38,515	2,080	2	57	— 0.0
TAAMEER	33.9	32.9	193,200	6,381	10	33.8	▲ 0.9
ARKAN	0.0	0.0	0	0			

GLOBAL SHAREHOLDERS APPROVE KD 22.9 MILLION DISTRIBUTIONS

KUWAIT: Global Investment House ("Global" or the "Company"), a regional asset management and investment banking firm headquartered in Kuwait, with offices in major capital markets in the MENA region, held today its Annual General Meeting chaired by Abdul Wahab Al-Halabi, Director & Chief Executive Officer. The shareholders approved all the agenda items.

Shareholders approved the Board of Director's proposed case distribution of KWD22.9 million by capital reduction. The capital reduction will be implemented by cancelling 229,065,000 shares at the price of KWD0.100 and distributed cash to shareholders. The share cancellation will be applied pro-rata to the holdings of all shareholders excluding the Treasury Shares. On conclusion of the capital reduction, issued and paid-up capital of the company will stand around KWD 57 million with adequate liquidity to fund the company's



Sulaiman Al Rubaie (Deputy CEO) & Abdulwahab Al Halabi (CEO)

core fee business and will improve the return on equity and book value per share.

Shareholders also approved the transfer of 10% of the net profit to the voluntary reserve account amounting

to KWD 353,115 in addition to amendments to select articles of the Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association of the Company to reflect the Companies Law No. 1 of 2016. The Company reported revenues of



KWD14.7 million and net profits of KWD3.5 million in 2016 despite a challenging macro-economic environment and geo-political uncertainties. On this occasion, Al-Halabi thanked the compa-

ny's shareholders and clients for their trust and continuous support assuring all stakeholders of the company's commitment to continue creating value especially in these challenging times.



WASHINGTON: This file photo taken on February 3, 2017 shows a woman uses an ATM at a Bank of America branch. —AFP

MAJOR US BANKS WOULD WITHSTAND RECESSION

WASHINGTON: The largest US banks would withstand a severe recession and still be able to lend to American households and businesses, the Federal Reserve announced Thursday. The results of the central bank's so-called stress tests showed 34 major lenders were on solid capital footing, it said.

"This year's results show that, even during a severe recession, our large banks would remain well capitalized," Fed Governor Jerome Powell said in a statement. "This would allow them to lend throughout the economic cycle, and support households and businesses when times are tough." The results portrayed a picture of increasing resilience in the banking sector, with the 34 participating firms having added \$750 billion in common equity capital since 2009.

The most severe hypothetical scenario imposed by the Fed supposed a global economic downturn even worse than the recent Great Recession. US unemployment would rise to 10 percent, accompanied by a 35 percent drop in commercial real estate prices and pressures on corporate loan markets as well. In this scenario, loan losses would amount to \$383 billion over nine quarters. The ratio of capital, which allows lenders to absorb losses, to risk-weighted

assets would drop from 12.5 percent to 9.2 percent.

The tested banks included Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Morgan Chase and the Deutsche Bank Trust Corp, a US unit of the troubled German financial giant. The participating banks represent more than 75 percent of the assets of all domestic bank holding companies, according to the Fed. In the second step of the annual stress tests, next week the capital strengths of the individual banks will be weighed against their capital plans—whether they would remain adequately strong after planned dividend distributions and share buybacks.

In the past, some banks have been forced to reel back those plans in order to further build capital strength. Thursday's results also presented the outcome of a less severe "adverse" scenario in which participants' capital ratios only fell to 10.7 percent. The stress tests are conducted under the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial reform laws, which Congress enacted in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, which President Donald Trump's administration has vowed to scale back. Powell said this week the Fed would be open to reasonable changes to the law, including the threshold for including banks in the stress tests. —AFP

EMBATTLED UBER CEO KALANICK STEPS DOWN

SAN FRANCISCO: Uber said Wednesday that its embattled chief executive Travis Kalanick had agreed to step down from his job, as the company tries to clean up a corporate culture that has sparked charges of harassment and discrimination. Kalanick had already been on a leave of absence aimed at restoring confidence in the scandal-plagued ridesharing giant. The New York Times reported that five of the company's major investors had demanded his departure. "I can confirm Travis has resigned," a spokesman told AFP in an email. He also quoted from a board statement saying that "Travis has always put Uber first."

'Bold decision'

"This is a bold decision and a sign of his devotion and love for Uber," the board said. The pioneering company has been facing pressure to rein in a no-holds-barred management style led by Kalanick and to reform its workplace culture. Kalanick is to stay on as a board member, Uber said.

The investors, who made their demand in a letter, include one of Uber's biggest shareholders, the venture capital firm Benchmark, The New York Times said. In the letter, titled "Moving Uber Forward", the investors told Kalanick that he must immediately leave as part of a necessary change in leadership, the Times reported. Kalanick consulted with at least one Uber board member, and after long discussions with some of the investors he agreed to step down, the paper said.

'I love Uber'

"I love Uber more than anything in the world and at this difficult moment in my personal life I have accepted the investors' request to step aside so that Uber can go

back to building rather than be distracted with another fight," Kalanick said in a statement, quoted by The Times and confirmed by Uber. Last week, Kalanick said one of the reasons for taking a leave of absence was the recent death of his mother.

Uber, which is the world's richest venture-backed startup, valued at some \$68 billion, operates in dozens of countries despite problems with regulators in many jurisdictions and protests from established taxi operators. Kalanick had been seen as the driving force behind Uber despite a series of embarrassing missteps. His departure comes a day after the company emailed its US drivers to say it would allow passengers to tip them, starting in three cities and rolling out across the country by the end of July. Kalanick had reportedly been opposed to tipping.

Earlier this month the group, based in San Francisco, parted ways with its number two executive, Emil Michael, who had reportedly been linked to a number of questionable practices at Uber, including a visit to a South Korean escort-karaoke bar and an attempt to dig up embarrassing information on journalists.

A week earlier Uber said it had fired 20 people after examining 215 claims of discrimination, harassment, unprofessional behavior and bullying. Uber also this month released a 13-page document calling for major reforms at the company based on a probe led by former US attorney general Eric Holder, who investigated allegations of misconduct and ethical lapses. The report, recommendations of which were adopted by the board, said Uber "should reformulate its written cultural values" to "reflect more inclusive and positive behaviors". —AFP

THE CONSUMER ISSUES STEMMING FROM GOP HEALTH CARE INITIATIVE

INVOLVES LIMITING FUTURE FEDERAL FINANCING

WASHINGTON: Republicans in full control of government are on the brink of history-making changes to the nation's health care system. The impact for consumers would go well beyond "Obamacare." Former President Barack Obama's signature law is usually associated with subsidized insurance markets like HealthCare.gov. But the Affordable Care Act also expanded Medicaid.

Not only would the GOP legislation scale back coverage through the insurance markets and phase out the Medicaid expansion, it would also make fundamental changes to the broader Medicaid program. The federal-state program covers low-income people, from newborns to elderly nursing home residents, from special-needs kids to young adults caught in the opioid epidemic. House Republicans have passed their health care bill, and Senate GOP leaders are driving toward a vote next week. President Donald Trump is waiting, eager to deliver on a campaign promise to repeal the law. Against fast-moving developments, a look at some major issues for consumers.

Why Medicaid matters

As health care costs have kept climbing, employers cut back on coverage, and Medicaid passed Medicare as the nation's largest public insurance program. It now covers about 70 million people, including children and able-bodied adults mostly served by private managed care plans.

The GOP's biggest Medicaid change involves limiting future federal financing. Since its inception, Medicaid has been an open-ended entitlement, with Washington matching a share of what each state spends. Instead, Republicans propose a per-beneficiary cap. In addition, the GOP would phase out added financing that Obama's law provided as an incentive for states to expand the program and cover more low-income adults. About 11 million are covered by the expansion.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated the House bill would reduce federal Medicaid spending by \$834 billion over 10 years, and the program would cover about 14 million fewer people by 2026, a 17 percent reduction. Governors of both parties have warned Congress that would mean a cost shift to

states that undermines coverage for the vulnerable. Medicaid limits got very little attention in the 2016 presidential campaign. The idea was a relatively late addition to Trump's talking points. Indeed, candidate Trump had started out promising no cuts to Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid.

Economist Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a longtime GOP adviser, says the Republican approach is "180 degrees different in its economic and budgetary philosophy," from the course steered by Obama. The Medicaid limit would move the nation closer to putting public

dropped below 9 percent, a historic low. Progress has stalled, partly because "Obamacare" is politically divisive. Now, the uninsured rate may start climbing again, because both the House and Senate bills cut federal financing and repeal an unpopular requirement to carry health insurance. It "would have a profoundly negative impact on Americans," said John Meigs, president of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Some Republicans argue that a Medicaid card or an "Obamacare" policy means little because either the doctor doesn't accept notori-

sugars down, their blood pressure down," Blair said in a recent interview. "They're not going to have a disastrous complication like a stroke or a heart attack, at least not for the foreseeable future."

Private insurance changes

Republicans would make no significant changes to employer-provided coverage, which remains the mainstay of private insurance. They focus instead on the market for individual policies, which Obama's ACA sought to reform by providing subsidies, setting requirements for comprehensive coverage, and cre-



WASHINGTON: In this April 3, 2017, file photo, the Senate side of the Capitol. —AP

health care programs on a budget, fiscal discipline that conservatives say is long overdue. But the human consequences could be politically volatile. "No one wins on health care policy," observed Holtz-Eakin.

What doctors are saying

Groups representing doctors and hospitals are overwhelmingly opposed to the Republican approach, because it's likely to result in millions more uninsured people. Consumer organizations like AARP are also opposed. Under Obama, the nation's uninsured rate

ously low Medicaid fees, or high deductibles under the health law keep patients from coming in. But doctors see a health insurance card as a ticket into the system, so patients can be screened for chronic conditions that can ultimately lead to serious illnesses. Obama's law made many preventive services free of charge to the patient.

Dr Mott Blair of Wallace, NC, recalls a patient who got a colonoscopy that found a polyp, which undetected could have led to colon cancer. "Now we are able to bring them in and get their blood

ating online markets where consumers could compare plans. An estimated 17 million to 20 million people have individual policies. About 10 million are in the ACA's markets. "Obamacare's" results have been mixed, with lower enrollment than expected, big losses for many insurers, and sharp premium increases. The situation varies from state to state, with healthy markets in some and others struggling to hang on to insurers. Consumers who are not entitled to subsidies can face shockingly high premiums. —AP

ONLINE COW SHOPPING GATHERS PACE AMONG KENYAN FARMERS

NAIROBI: Sitting on a couch in his home in the Karen suburb of Nairobi, Samuel Odaga stares at his phone, his fingers occasionally flicking the screen. But he's not checking the weather or the news, or looking at his email. "I am looking for new cows posted online," he explains. Finding cattle to buy - or finding buyers for animals on sale - used to be a difficult business, said the livestock trader.

With large swathes of the country hit by recurring periods of drought, Kenyan herders and farmers are increasingly eager to sell animals when conditions turn worse rather than lose them to insufficient water and pasture. But finding buyers can be a problem, they say, and they often lack good information on what would be a fair price for the animals.

Victor Otieno, an animal science graduate of Kenya's Egerton University, said he "once met a farmer who thought she had made an excellent deal selling a cow for 70,000 Kenyan shillings (about \$675)." "Only we met a neighbor later that day who had just bought the very same cow from the middleman... for 130,000 shillings (\$1,250)," he added.

That information gap prompted Otieno in 2015 to set up Cowsoko, an online marketplace for dairy farmers that derives its name from the Swahili word "soko", or market. Sellers can upload a

picture of their animal, information on its weight, breed and cost, as well as the seller's details so prospective buyers can contact them directly. They pay an annual fee of 5,000 shillings (\$48) to the site, in addition to a fee of 2.5 percent of the cow's selling price.

More options

Philip Okech, a consultant at SNV, a Dutch development agency, said farmers often need to travel long distances - up to 100km - to buy or sell animals. Cowsoko encourages sellers to hire a van to deliver sold animals to their buyer within a day of purchase, Otieno said. Payment on the platform is enabled by M-Pesa, a popular mobile money service in Kenya.

Odaga, who so far has bought six cows using the service, said he frequently used to get "tricked by middlemen who would sell me cows at a much higher price than what they had originally bought them for." "And I had to spend even more money to feed the cows or buy drugs because they weren't in good health," he added.

In addition to problems locating cows for sale or buyers, Otieno said, farmers face another major challenge: finding reliable information on fodder and drugs for the animals. "I noticed that even once farmers had bought an animal, they knew very little

about diseases that might affect them, what feed they should give or what fodder might be available in the area," he said. With support from experts including SNV, Otieno now has made information on cattle fodder and drugs, as well as potential suppliers, available free on the cow trading platform. "I want farmers to be able to find all the information they need in one place," he said.

Tackling fraud

Not everyone shares Odaga's enthusiasm, however. David Mugambi, a lecturer at Chuka University in Kenya's central Tharaka-Nithi county, warned that fraud is rife on such online trading platforms. "Buyers on these platforms need to be careful as they rarely get to meet the person they're dealing with - the seller - nor do they see the animal physically before buying it, which weakens their negotiating position," he said. "They also have no control over the delivery time," said Mugambi. "If the seller delivers the animal later than agreed then there's not much you can do about it." To curb fraud, Otieno said the platform now only accepts sellers who are registered breeders, "so we can authenticate them". He also introduced the annual membership fee for sellers to dissuade fraudsters, and to be able to trace any transaction back to the seller in case of a dispute. —Reuters

QATAR AIRWAYS LAUNCHES NEW PORTAL FOR ONLINE REFUNDS



KUWAIT: Launched in time for the Eid break, Qatar Airways has a new online portal to assist passengers to apply for and manage their ticket refund process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. The announcement is part of the award-winning global airline's ongoing efforts to limit inconvenience to those of its passengers affected by the recent airspace and office closures, alongside the blocking of the airline's website, providing reassurance that customers remain the airline's utmost priority.

Following closure of airspace, its offices and the blocking of its websites, Qatar Airways has focused on finding innovative solutions and limiting its impact to passengers. This includes providing flexible commercial and refund policies for any passengers whose flight has been impacted by the recent travel bans.

In addition, since the airspace closures began, the airline has been providing regular communications through its increased global call centre capacity and new, flexible call-back function on its Facebook page. Qatar Airways has also taken all efforts to reassure its passengers that the vast

majority of its global flights remain undisrupted and that those affected will be assisted as quickly as possible. The airline is widely recognized as offering the world's best service and holds the title of 'World's Best Airline,' as awarded by the customer-voted the Skytrax awards 2017.

As one of the world's fastest growing airlines, Qatar Airways continues to fly the skies with a vast network of more than 150 destinations, including the recently launched summer route to Dublin, Ireland on June 12 and the upcoming Nice, France, on July 4. Qatar Airways' operations to and from its Doha hub continue to run smoothly, with 90 per cent of flights departing within 15 minutes of their scheduled departure time.

The airline recently released its annual report for the fiscal year 2017, revealing a net profit of \$541 million, a 21.7 percent year-on-year increase. The results also show an annual revenue increase of 10.4 percent. This week, the airline also revealed the revolutionary "First in Business Class" seat, Qsuite, debuting at the Paris Air Show followed by its maiden journey between Doha and London Heathrow on 24 June.

ETIHAD AIRWAYS INCREASES MENA FLIGHT CAPACITIES

ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways is increasing capacity between its Abu Dhabi hub and key markets of Amman, Beirut, Cairo, Casablanca and Rabat to cater to the peak June - September travel period, while additional services to Dammam will be year-round. Extra flights and the deployment of bigger aircraft in the Middle East and North Africa will provide local guests with more choice and greater convenience travelling during the holiday season.

Details are:

- Dammam: 4th new daily flight
- Amman: 2nd new daily flight

- Beirut: 4 new flights a week and introduction of Boeing 787
- Cairo: 5th new daily flight
- Casablanca: Aircraft upgrade to Airbus A340
- Rabat: One extra weekly flight

Dammam in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will initially be served with an additional three morning flights a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from June 26, rising to a daily service on July 9. The capacity increase to the largest city in the Kingdom's Eastern Province will raise frequency on the route to four daily services year-round. With the Amman route already upgraded to a Boeing 787 on each of the

current daily services, an additional daily early morning flight serving the Jordanian capital will operate between June 25 and September 30.

Four extra flights will be introduced on the Beirut route on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays between August 1 and September 10, taking frequency up from seven to 11 services a week. Effective August 1, seven of the flights to Lebanon's capital city will operate with the state-of-the-art Boeing 787 featuring 299 seats. Egypt's capital Cairo, one of Etihad Airways' most popular North African destinations, will have an additional seven midday flights a week, taking frequency up to five daily services between August 1 and September 10.

In Morocco, the daily Casablanca services will be upgraded from an Airbus A330-300 to A340-600 aircraft between August 1 and September 10. And frequency to Morocco's capital city of Rabat will increase from two to three flights a week with a new Sunday service operating between August 6 and September 3.

Peter Baumgartner, Etihad Airways Chief Executive Officer, said: "As we build up to the peak travel season and well into the holiday period, we are delighted to provide our local guests more choice with additional flights between Abu Dhabi and some of our key markets across the Middle East and North Africa. "By further aligning our capacity with demand during the busy upcoming months, the extra services will help facilitate our guests' travel to and from these cities and our popular connecting destinations in the GCC, Asia, Australia and the Indian Subcontinent."



KFH SET TO SERVE CLIENTS THROUGH AIRPORT BRANCH

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced that it is ready to fulfill its commitments towards its clients during the Eid holiday. The bank will continue to offer a plethora of services for its clients in Kuwait and overseas through its website that offers over 150 e-services, in addition to the alternative channels, XTM and the 24/7 airport branch.

XTM service allows customers to conduct their transactions and perform many banking services in minutes in a very modern way using advanced tools through visual and audio communication options; conference call with KFH staff who are always available and ready to answer all customers' questions. This service is available 24/7 at Avenues mall and Al Fayhaa Branch.

Moreover, the Call Center will be ready to receive calls from clients throughout

the day, and will work relentlessly to overcome any problems that might face clients in Kuwait and overseas. In addition, KFH continues to offer its IVR service that is available throughout the day. Clients can call to make account transactions, ask for financial transaction, pay bills, purchase cards to recharge cell phone, and other services.

Further, clients can take advantage of KFH's ATM machines (Shamel) that are available at most of the branches in vital locations. KFH offers Mobi Baitok vehicles that serve as mobile branches that allow people to deposit and withdraw cash in addition to other usual transactions. KFH has additional technical privileges, such as allowing clients to conduct basic banking operations through smart phones on KFH online application that offers a wide range of services.



BB NAMES WINNER OF THE KD 125K PRIZE IN YAWMI QUARTERLY DRAW

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced Mr MOHAMMAD NAFEL ALAZMI as the new KD 125,000 cash prize winner in the Yawmi Quarterly Draw. The winner expressed his excitement for being the winner of the tremendous cash prize with Yawmi Account from Burgan Bank. The Yawmi Account offers customers more chances to win higher rewards, entitling one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 cash prize every three months. To enter Burgan Bank's Yawmi Quarterly Draws, customers should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for 2 months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning.



ETIHAD INTRODUCES NEW CHANGES TO GROUND AND INFLIGHT SERVICES

ABUDHABI: Etihad Airways is introducing a series of changes designed to offer increased value and flexibility based on customer feedback. The airline is to amend its chauffeur policy following a review of usage by premium guests across all major markets. The complimentary chauffeur service will be retained at Etihad Airways' Abu Dhabi hub and replaced with a paid option at specially negotiated rates in all other cities. The changes will be implemented from 3 July 2017.

As part of the initiative to improve the value proposition for travelers, the airline will also extend the paid airport transfer option to all guests across all cabins and allow Etihad Guest members to accrue miles on their chauffeur bookings. Guests travelling in The Residence onboard the flagship Airbus A380 fleet will continue to receive complimentary chauffeur services at all A380 destinations - Abu Dhabi, London, Paris, Sydney and New York. First and Business Class tickets issued prior to 3 July 2017 will not be affected by these changes and will receive complimentary chauffeur service across destinations where the service is currently offered.

Mohammad Al-Bulooki, Executive Vice President Commercial for Etihad Airways, said: "Etihad Airways is constantly looking at ways to improve its value proposition for guests, focusing on the service elements that are most important to them. This change is being put in place as the airline looks to evolve its product proposition while continuing to match individual customer requirements. Following a review, the chauffeur services we offer will be amended globally, with the exception of Abu Dhabi, where there are a high number of users of the service. "Many customers prefer to make their own ground transportation arrangements. The decision by Etihad Airways to change its offering has been taken to provide increased choice and to ensure fares remain as low and as competitive as possible, while retaining best-in-class service for all guests, in all cabins." Etihad Airways will also offer Economy Class guests paid access to its growing portfolio of dedicated lounges around the world, including its Premium Lounges in Abu Dhabi, London, Manchester, Dublin, Paris, Washington DC, New York JFK, Sydney, Melbourne and Los Angeles.

ZAIN LAUNCHES BOLT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the launch of BOLT for the first time in the country, offering the latest superfast CAT11 network technology on its most advanced nationwide network. Zain's introduction of this revolutionary technology comes as part of the company's developmental strategy, through which it seeks to keep up with the latest innovations witnessed by the Telecommunications and Information Technology sector around the world. The company is committed to offer the most advanced technologies to its customer base, considered the largest in Kuwait.

Zain customers can now enjoy the advanced CAT11 network technology with the all-new BOLT router, which is offered for FREE with unlimited Internet through

the KD 16 plan, for KD 1.5 only with 2 TB through the KD 13 plan, or for KD 4 only with 1 TB through the KD 10 plan. Zain is keen on introducing the latest and most innovative services and solutions in the market to elevate its customers' experience and offer them convenience while meeting their unique lifestyles. The company is also committed to introducing them with the latest and most competitive offerings, and will always aim at providing a superior experience on its most advanced network. The introduction of this offer highlights Zain's eagerness in keeping pace with the ongoing changes of needs and wants of its customers. With this latest announcement, Zain strengthens its leading position in providing special services and offerings designed for heavy data users.

INCREASE YOUR AL-DANAH DEPOSITS THROUGH ITMS, ATM MACHINES, AND ePAY SERVICE

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank would like to remind Al-Danah customers that they can deposit money into their accounts through Gulf Bank's ITMs, ATM Deposit Machines as well as the new ePay service. Gulf Bank's Interactive Teller Machines (ITM) allow customers to conduct transactions by communicating with a branch teller in a live video/audio communication. Gulf Bank's ITM machines can be found in the banks' branches in Jabriya, Al-Adan, Fahaheel and South Surra. Customers can also make deposits through the ATM Deposit Machines and in any of Gulf Bank's 56 branches.

Furthermore, Gulf Bank's ePay service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking, allows customers

to transfer money immediately from any local bank. Simplify your life by increasing your chances of winning from any location, at any time! Customers are encouraged to open an account or deposit more before June 30th as to increase their chances of winning the 3rd Quarterly draw for the KD 500,000 prize. To participate in the Al-Danah draws, customers must have a minimum balance of KD 200 in their Al-Danah accounts and must meet the required hold period for each draw. Customers can open a new Al-Danah account at any one of the 56 Gulf Bank branches in Kuwait. Those who already have an account can enhance their chances of winning the upcoming draws by increasing and maintaining their deposits.

1 IN 4 BANKS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO VERIFY IDENTITY OF ONLINE BANKING CUSTOMERS

DUBAI: According to the Kaspersky Lab's Financial Institutions Security Risks survey, 24% of banks worldwide struggle with the identification of their customers when delivering digital and online banking services. As more than half of banks (59%) anticipate growing financial losses due to fraud in the next three years, the verification of a user's identity should be taking central stage in the cybersecurity strategies of financial institutions, Kaspersky Lab warns.

With the rise of online and mobile

banking, customers are not only becoming victims of financial fraud, but also a major entry point for attacks on banks' digital channels. According to the research, in 2016, 30% of banks have had security incidents affecting banking services delivered via the Internet - with phishing against customers, and using customer credentials for fraudulent activities, as the top contributing factor leading to the attacks.

Banks find themselves in need of security technologies that do not undermine the customer experience: 38% of the

organizations surveyed confirm that balancing prevention techniques and customer convenience is one of their specific concerns.

"While thinking of different approaches to secure digital and mobile channels, banks naturally avoid putting too much pressure on customers. Online banking should preserve its main benefits: as a convenient way of making financial transactions in seconds. That is why we are working on technologies that help to protect both banks and their customers without

adding an extra security routine to the user's experience," said Alexander Ermakovich, Head of Fraud Prevention at Kaspersky Lab.

In addition to two-factor authentication and other security procedures used by banks, Kaspersky Lab recommends implementing dedicated solutions that can help to identify whether a person is authorized, without requiring additional actions from the user. The Kaspersky Fraud Prevention platform accumulates and analyzes user behavior, device, environment and session

information as anonymized and depersonalized big data in the cloud. Risk Based Authentication (RBA) assesses possible risks before a user's login, while Continuous Session Anomaly Detection identifies account takeover, money laundering, automated tools or any suspicious processes during the session.

As a result, the platform provides protection not only at the stage of login, but also during the session itself, while customers do not have extra authorization stages to pass through.



DIGITAL SHADOWS UNVEILS CHANNEL REV PARTNER PROGRAM

DUBAI: Digital Shadows, the industry leader in digital risk management, announced the launch of its channel only partner program - Channel REV - and an associated online Partner Portal, designed to accelerate partner revenue and enhance their customers' loyalty by offering the award-winning Digital Shadows SearchLight service that combines scalable

gives partners access to marketing materials, training videos and a host of other content 24/7, as well as request quotes, submit incentive claims, run reports, track opportunities and registrations, request marketing development funds (MDF), and sales promotion incentive funds (SPIF).

"The digital footprint organizations present to the world, and specifically to cybercriminals and hackers needs protecting," said Chris Catanzaro, Director of Channel Sales at Digital Shadows. "Partners recognize that Digital Shadows' revolutionary SearchLight solution is ideally placed to give them the visibility and intelligence they need to tailor their own cybersecurity solutions to their customers around the world."

"Digital Shadows is a natural extension to our team and through that our Managed Security Services capability," said Tom Millar, CEO of ITC Secure Networking. "Digital Shadows supports us through every stage of an opportunity - from demand generation and qualification, right to deal closure."

"We have been impressed with the business model Digital Shadows has displayed to support our security practice," said Tom Gobeille, President & CEO at Network Computing Architects, Inc. "The strong support we get from the DS team through Channel REV program is invaluable to us as we expand our own security solutions."

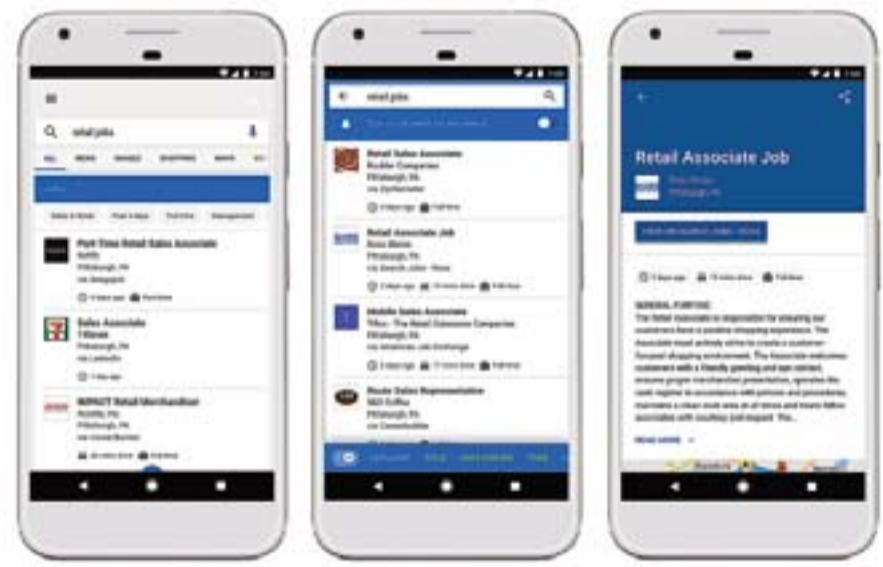
Digital Shadows is active around the world but is specifically targeting US, UK, Germany and Holland for new channel partners.



Chris Catanzaro

data analytics with human analysts to effectively manage and reduce the digital risks of cyber threats, data leakage, and reputation risks.

The Digital Shadows' Channel REV portal gives partners the tools they need to move fast to build their own professional services around the SearchLight solution from Digital Shadows. The new portal



This image provided by Google shows examples of help-wanted listings displayed on a smartphone. Google is trying to turn its search engine into an employment engine. From June 20, job hunters will be able to go to Google and see help-wanted listings that its search engine is collecting across the internet. Google will also show employer ratings from current and former workers, as well as typical commute times to where a job is located. It's a departure from the bare-bones links to various help-wanted sites that Google has traditionally shown. —AP

MAKE TRUMP'S BORDER WALL A SOLAR GENERATOR? IT'S NOT SO EASY

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump's new proposal to make his signature border wall with Mexico a solar generator seems a bright idea for a leader who has focused on reviving coal, but it would face huge regulatory hurdles.

The wall was a central feature of Trump's campaign and he has continued to promote it in the early months of his presidency, though it has found little support in Congress, which has declined to provide funding.

And despite the US leader's repeated statements, Mexico has consistently derided the idea that it would pay for the wall's construction, valued at between \$8 and \$40 billion. But Trump on Wednesday revived the plan, with a renewable energy twist.

"I will give you an idea that nobody has heard about yet," he said. "The southern border. Lots of sun, lots of heat. We are thinking about building a wall as a solar wall. So it creates energy. And pays for itself."

The Solar Energy Industries Association cautiously welcomed the announcement, at least

for its nod to an industry Trump has shown little support for.

"We are glad to hear that the president appreciates the many benefits of solar energy," Dan Whitten, SEIA's vice president of communications, said in a statement.

"We agree this could be a cost-cutting, environmentally friendly approach, but we're going to wait to comment further until we see a more detailed plan."

But others are skeptical the plan could work in practice, although large solar arrays in Texas and California already have proven economical, more so than natural gas or coal in some cases.

For solar to be economical, there needs to be a buyer in relatively close proximity, said Anya Schoolman, executive director of Community Power Network, a grassroots organization that promotes local and regional solar projects.

"These panels are out in the middle of nowhere, it's not clear who would buy the energy," —AFP

GOOGLE TO STOP READING YOUR GMAIL TO HELP SELL ADS

SAN FRANCISCO: Google is going to stop reading your Gmail in search of opportunities to sell ads.

The change announced Friday will end a practice that Google has embraced since the company introduced Gmail in 2004. The practice has raised concerns among privacy watchdogs and crept out some users. To help finance the free service, Google has been scanning through what Gmail users were discussing and then showing ads connected to some of the topics. Someone writing about running, for instance, might see ads for Nike or Asics shoes.

Google still plans to show ads within Gmail. But instead of scanning through email content, the company's software will rely on other signals to determine which ads are most likely to appeal to each of its 1.2 billion Gmail users.

The Mountain View, California, company said it would stop the ad-driven scanning of Gmail later this year. Google says it's changing course so its free Gmail service operates more like the subscription version that it has sold to more than 3 million companies. The paid Gmail doesn't include ads, so the company has never tried to scan the content of those users' emails for marketing purposes. Despite that, Google said

some of its business customers incorrectly assumed the company was scanning those accounts as well. By ending all scanning, Google hopes to end the confusion and sell

Gmail to even more businesses. Gmail now ranks as the world's largest email service, an indication that most people didn't care about Google's scanning methods. Both

Microsoft and Apple have publicly skewered Google for having the audacity to mine users' emails for ad sales, but those attacks didn't undercut Gmail's popularity. —AP



BRUSSELS: File photo shows the Google logo at the Google headquarters in Brussels. Google is going to stop reading your Gmail in search of opportunities to sell ads. The change announced Friday will end a practice that Google has embraced since the company introduced Gmail in 2004, even though it raised concerns among privacy watchdogs and crept out some users. —AP

KREMLIN WOOS BLOGGERS BUT YOUTUBE GENERATION IS NOT 'SELLING OUT'

MOSCOW: Russian authorities may have succeeded at quashing dissent on television and mass media but a new generation of voters has found a way to still get relevant news: on YouTube.

While the older generation is exposed to the state media's spin on current events and may know little of recent nationwide protests which were ignored by most broadcast channels, millennials are watching the news on social networks.

Invisible over the airwaves, opposition leader and fierce Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny has stepped up his presence on YouTube this year as he campaigns ahead of the 2018 presidential elections: a new Navalny Live channel now streams daily updates about the campaign and features a morning talk show.

Not only has Navalny's video alleging corruption by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev been viewed by more than 23 million people, his call for anti-graft protests to be held on March 26 and June 12 was heard by thousands of young Russians.

Out of the 866 people detained at the June 12 protest, 136 were aged under 18, according to Moscow police.

After the demonstration, "the Kremlin realised it's powerless over the internet," said video blogger Dmitry Ivanov, whose popular

YouTube channel kamikadze_d is highly critical of the government. "Politics is a new fashion among young people," said Ivanov, 30, a lawyer by education who has more than one million subscribers between the ages of 14 and 21.

"The authorities want to take the internet under their control as they did with the media," he said.

Political analyst Olga Kryshchanovskaya said pro-Kremlin trolls are "omnipresent" in social media and leave "perhaps half of the comments on influential blogs," but there is evidence that creating original content which appeals to youth does not come easy to them.

"The Kremlin is making an effort on the web, but a decade too late, and each year the lag grows more and more," political scientist Dmitry Oreshkin said.

'Selling out to the Kremlin'

In late May, the Russian parliament held a special session on youth policy and invited beauty blogger Sasha Spilberg, who is popular among 10 to 14-year-olds. She said MPs should "be as transparent" with voters as she is with her followers.

Lawmakers later organised a "council of bloggers", sending invitations to Russian YouTube stars in genres ranging from political

satire to stand-up comedy in an effort to reach out to young people. But most of the invited bloggers skipped the event, and the council had to contend with lesser-known names.

Lisa Peskova, the daughter of Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov who lives in France and mostly posts selfies to her 48,000 Instagram followers, turned out to be the most famous social media star in attendance.

Those who didn't come to the council "didn't want to become an instrument of political propaganda," said Yegor Yakovlev, who was invited but did not go.

Nikolai Sobolev, who has over three million YouTube subscribers, put the idea of attending to his viewers in one clip this month, but got an overwhelmingly negative response.

After some fans accused Sobolev of "selling out to the Kremlin," he decided to opt out.

"It's because of censorship in the press and on television that political discussions have moved to the internet," political columnist Maxim Artyemeyev said. But it is difficult to say how long this freedom will last.

The Kremlin has increasingly prosecuted online users for "extremism" and is looking to further restrict content. Some lawmakers have called for a ban on internet access for children and are seeking to end all anonymous online activity. —AFP

UNDER PRESSURE, WESTERN TECH FIRMS BOW TO RUSSIAN DEMANDS TO SHARE CYBER SECRETS

WASHINGTON/MOSCOW: Western technology companies, including Cisco, IBM and SAP, are acceding to demands by Moscow for access to closely guarded product security secrets, at a time when Russia has been accused of a growing number of cyber attacks on the West, a Reuters investigation has found.

Russian authorities are asking Western tech companies to allow them to review source code for security products such as firewalls, anti-virus applications and software containing encryption before permitting the products to be imported and sold in the country. The requests, which have increased since 2014, are ostensibly done to ensure foreign spy agencies have not hidden any "backdoors" that would allow them to burrow into Russian systems.

But those inspections also provide the Russians an opportunity to find vulnerabilities in the products' source code - instructions that control the basic operations of computer equipment - current and former US officials and security experts said.

While a number of US firms say they are playing ball to preserve their access to Russia's huge tech market, at least one US firm, Symantec, told Reuters it has stopped cooperating with the source code reviews over security concerns. That halt has not been

previously reported. Symantec said one of the labs inspecting its products was not independent enough from the Russian government.

U.S. officials say they have warned firms about the risks of allowing the Russians to review their products' source code, because of fears it could be used in cyber attacks. But they say they have no legal authority to stop the practice unless the technology has restricted military applications or violates US sanctions.

From their side, companies say they are under pressure to acquiesce to the demands from Russian regulators or risk being shut out of a lucrative market. The companies say they only allow Russia to review their source code in secure facilities that prevent code from being copied or altered.

The demands are being made by Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), which the US government says took part in the cyber attacks on Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign and the 2014 hack of 500 million Yahoo email accounts. The FSB, which has denied involvement in both the election and Yahoo hacks, doubles as a regulator charged with approving the sale of sophisticated technology products in Russia.

The reviews are also conducted

by the Federal Service for Technical and Export Control (FSTEC), a Russian defense agency tasked with countering cyber espionage and protecting state secrets. Records published by FSTEC and reviewed by Reuters show that from 1996 to 2013, it conducted source code reviews as part of approvals for 13 technology products from Western companies. In the past three years alone it carried out 28 reviews.

A Kremlin spokesman referred all questions to the FSB. The FSB did not respond to requests for comment. FSTEC said in a statement that its reviews were in line with international practice. The US State Department declined to comment.

Moscow's source code requests have mushroomed in scope since US-Russia relations went into a tailspin following the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, according to eight current and former US officials, four company executives, three US trade attorneys and Russian regulatory documents. In addition to IBM, Cisco and Germany's SAP, Hewlett Packard Enterprise Co and McAfee have also allowed Russia to conduct source code reviews of their products, according to people familiar with the companies' interactions with Moscow and Russian regulatory records.

Until now, little has been known about that regulatory review process outside of the industry. The FSTEC documents and interviews with those involved in the reviews provide a rare window into the tense push-and-pull between technology companies and governments in an era of mounting alarm about hacking.

Roszel Thomsen, an attorney who helps US tech companies navigate Russia import laws, said the firms must balance the dangers of revealing source code to Russian security services against possible lost sales.

"Some companies do refuse," he said. "Others look at the potential market and take the risk."

'We have a real concern'

If tech firms do decline the FSB's source code requests, then approval for their products can be indefinitely delayed or denied outright, US trade attorneys and US officials said. The Russian information technology market is expected to be worth \$18.4 billion this year, according to market researcher International Data Corporation (IDC).

Six current and former US officials who have dealt with companies on the issue said they are suspicious about Russia's motives for the expanded reviews. —Reuters

NEW DATA ON BREAST, OVARIAN CANCER HIGHLIGHT AGE RISKS

WASHINGTON: Researchers have unveiled new data that they would help better assess breast or ovarian cancer risks in women, identifying the advantages of early detection and lifelong monitoring. The study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, involved nearly 10,000 women with the most common mutations - 6,036 with BRCA1 and 3,820 with BRCA2. Of those surveyed, 5,046 had no cancer at the beginning of the study, while 4,810 had either a breast or ovarian tumor. During a median follow-up period of five years, 426 women were diagnosed with breast cancer, 109 with ovarian cancer and 245 with contralateral breast cancer.

The absolute risk of breast cancer between the onset of adulthood and age 80 was 72 percent for women with the BRCA1 mutation and 69 percent for

those with the BRCA2 mutant gene. But the incidence of breast cancer increased rapidly in early adulthood until the ages of 30 to 40 for BRCA1 mutation carriers and until the ages of 40 to 50 for those with the BRCA2 mutation. Beyond 40 years and 50 years respectively, the incidence of cancer in those surveyed remained unchanged until 80 years.

The absolute risk of ovarian cancer up to 80 years of age was 44 percent in the BRCA1 mutation group and 17 percent in the BRCA2 mutation group. For contralateral breast cancer, the risk accumulated for 20 years after the diagnosis of cancer in the other breast, was 40 percent for women with the BRCA1 mutation and 26 percent for those with BRCA2.

Women with BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations are likelier still to develop breast cancer if their relatives-of-first



WASHINGTON: This photo provided by Genentech, the Roche Group's biologic drug unit, shows vials of Rituxan Hycela. The Food and Drug Administration has approved Rituxan Hycela, a more convenient version of a blockbuster drug for treating three common blood cancers. —AFP

and second degree of kinship-have had cancer, said the study's authors, led by Antonis Antoniou at the University of Cambridge in Britain.

The risk of cancer also varies according to the site of the mutation on the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes. "The results indicate that family history is a strong risk factor for mutation carriers and that cancer risks vary by mutation location, suggesting that individualized counseling should incorporate both family history profiles and mutation location," the authors said. The results can be used to estimate more precisely the risk of breast and ovarian cancer, and to determine at what age to start regular screening. The number of breast cancer cases in the United States in 2017 is estimated at 252,710 including 40,610 deaths, according to the National Cancer Institute (NCI). — AFP

PAKISTANIS GASP FOR CLEAN AIR AMID 'DIRE WARNINGS'

PAKISTAN SUFFERS FROM WORST AIR POLLUTION

ISLAMABAD: Furhan Hussain moved to Islamabad seeking fresher air, only to find Pakistan's leafy capital in a semi-permanent haze. Frustrated, he joined a vanguard of citizens monitoring pollution themselves amid a void in government data. Fast-growing Pakistan is home to some 200 million people and suffers from some of the worst air pollution in the world, thanks to its giant population plying poorly maintained vehicles on the roads and unchecked industrial emissions.

Countries such as India and Sri Lanka publish statistics or warnings to help citizens cope when air pollution goes to dangerous levels. But Pakistan is "one of few countries who do not monitor air quality," says Hussain, of the informal PakAirQuality network, a group of concerned citizens monitoring pollution in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi then publishing their data on Twitter.

The lack of official information means citizens may be unaware of what they are breathing in. And without irrefutable data charting the scale of the problem it can be difficult to enforce change. The issue is acute in developing Pakistan, where emissions standards often go ignored partly because of a belief the country cannot afford to hamper its economic growth, says Imran Saqib Khalid of the Islamabad-based Sustainable Development Policy Institute.

Government policies do not outline a long-term strategy or move towards renewables. Instead, Pakistan is building some 13 coal-fired power plants with Chinese assistance under a \$50 billion investment plan. Officials insist these will not affect air quality. "Usage of ultra critical technology has been ensured to reduce emissions," an official from the Ministry of Climate Change said. Without data, it can be impossible to prove otherwise. The situation becomes particularly dire in the north during winter, when cities are blanketed in thick toxic smog reminiscent of Victorian England's "pea-soupers".

World Bank estimates show that residents of the northwestern city of Peshawar, for example, breathe an annual average of 110 cubic micrometres of fine particulate matter-tiny pollutants that reduce visibility and reach deep into the



KARACHI: Commuters drive on a busy street in the Pakistan's port city of Karachi. Pakistan's cities are gasping for clean air amid dire warnings from the World Bank, but officials say they are helpless to combat the looming calamity due to a lack of basic data. — AFP

respiratory tract. That is more than 11 times over the recommended upper limit, and is believed to be a factor in almost 60,000 deaths from related diseases each year, including lung and heart diseases, asthmas and cancers.

Official inaction

Pakistan does have a federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), whose chief Farzana Altaf Shah says data is collected via mobile monitoring stations but "not regularly." "If government is not doing so, citizens themselves have to do it and generate data to show how bad the situation is," says the activist Hussain. Ali Nadir, a Lahore-based businessman who is part of the PakAirQuality network, says they use "nodes" which can monitor air quality and share the data in real time through smart phones.

The idea originally came from a Pakistani national living in China, who showed his friends the cheap technology. "The basic pur-

pose is to raise awareness among people about the air quality, because you cannot rely on the government," Nadir told AFP. "Many people have told me that they follow my tweets about air quality and sometimes if the reading is too high and beyond safe level, they adjust their exercise schedule and plan going out accordingly."

Nadir said the network hopes to build on the groundswell of awareness. Meanwhile EPA chief Shah says there is some cause for hope, with a move toward higher fuel standards and the setting of pollution control units in Islamabad factories. "It is a slow process, but it is there." But exposure remains inevitable for millions of ordinary people. Walking into a clinic in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, Usman Rehman, 25, complains of a cough he can't shake. "I live in Rawalpindi and travel on a motorcycle and there is so much pollution that sometimes it is difficult to breathe," he says — AFP

HOW TO LIVE IN THE MOMENT WHILE ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

By Nadeen Rayan

A new trend has developed and it emphasizes the importance of being in the present moment and developing your inner Zen. However, many people struggle to understand and strike a balance between living in the moment and planning for the future. So, how do we really become present in whatever we are doing, but also plan for the future? The answer is much simpler than you would expect. It's one word, balance. How do we establish that balance? To answer the question, it would be wise to resort to a scientific explanation that explores the biological effects of living in the moment and planning for the future. Before any assumptions are made- yes, a balance can be established so that a person can attain long term happiness as well as be content with the present.

Science and facts

Dopamine is primarily released when a person seeks short term satisfaction or pleasure. This hormone has marvelous effects on our body and psyche among which are high attention, improved short-term memory, elation, boldness and a temporary desire to take risks and grab the world by its horns. Some scientists even claim that dopamine is equivalent to "one shot" of heroine. In short, it's an effective hormone that is released by the body. Now you may ask where is the catch? nothing seems to be wrong in this equation. However, the side effects come from pro-lactin. It is a hormone that is released once dopamine wears off causing depletion, irritability and depression.

When Dopamine is high, prolactin is low and vice versa. The long-term effects of such a cycle (i.e. constant highs and lows) affects the stability of the entire body and causes lower immunity and speeds up the ageing process of cells. All of this is to say that these cycles can get addictive and promote addictive behavior such as returning to a certain action to seek that short-term gratification. For example, a person gets a "high" when they buy a new car, house or whatever merchandise they acquire. It's all exciting in the beginning but once you get over the initial phase of excitement the toy becomes something of the past and you start seeking a new objective of gratification.

As for those who seek long term satisfaction, the hormonal effects that take place in the body are quite different. The hormone that is released is called Oxytocin. Some qualities for this hormone are: It gets released at a slower rate than Dopamine. Evermore, it is safer, deeper and long-enduring. It freely increases in the body without the addictive cycles of Dopamine (the highs and lows)

Keeps dopamine from wearing off

In short, Oxytocin lasts longer and is safer once produced. If you were to ask yourself am I really living in the moment or jumping from one new thing to the next? Living in the moment means that you are fully present in every action that you take. You are aware of the things that you are currently doing. You can be present in the moment while also writing down your goals and aspirations for the future with a plan that breaks down how you're going to achieve what it is that you want. To put it into simpler terms, here is an easy-guide that explains how you can start living in the moment and envisioning for the future: Living in the present moment

Meditate

Being in the Now takes a lot of concentration and practice. It is not something that you will do overnight. The best gift you can give yourself is to start meditating. Meditation has been proven to increase the level of concentration in the mind because it teaches you how to filter your thoughts by learning which ones to focus on and which ones to ignore.

Exercise

Exercising not only improves your health, but it also teaches you how to connect your mind with your body so that they can become harmonious together. It is a great way to establish complete presence in whatever you are doing. Take the time to really concentrate when you're exercising, focus on every rep and you'll see even better results as you create the muscle-mind connection.

Slowing Down

We all know how demanding society can be when it comes to the work that must get done. It is important however, that we stop, take a step back, slow down and go easy on ourselves. This step is crucial for growth. It

cultivates within us a sense of calmness and relaxation that allows us to become more grounded with our present. The way I like to picture it is stopping time to do the things I enjoy whether it be going out for a walk or hanging out with good friends.

Unplug & Go Wild

An essential part of this process is going after what makes you happy, as the quote states "Happiness is not a destination but a way of life." Follow your heart and do the things you want to do: travel, hike, camp, dance, sing. Do whatever it is that makes your inner child come out, leave it all on the ground. Your choices that make you happy will allow you to be more present in the things you do because not a care in the world is given when you're having fun. Being in the present moment comes down to establishing a connection with yourself, accepting your current circumstances, habits, social, personal and academic connections. Living in the now means enjoying what you have.

Planning for the Future

It is important that a balance is struck between living in the moment and making sure your future is secured. Security can mean so many different things for different people, but it all comes down to being able to live comfortably (whatever comfort is for you) without having to worry as much.

Set Goals

Setting S.M.A.R.T. goals and writing them down is an important part of planning for the future. You should know where your life is going and what direction you're going to take. Otherwise, whatever you do will not amount to anything that is going to build you up and ensure that you have the lifestyle that you desire.

Have a purpose for what you do (Your WHY)

Lots of people take action without knowing why they do so. Consequently, when they come across a hurdle or obstacle they quit, because they don't have a reason that pushes them outside of their comfort zone. Therefore, knowing the reason behind what you do and acknowledging WHY you work and push so hard to achieve your goals is essential. It is going to be your guide when the tough gets going and you feel like you no longer believe in yourself. Instead, you'll be believing in the purpose behind what you do, knowing that it will help elicit change.

Set a One, Three, Five and Ten Year Plan

When they said the great set big goals, they weren't kidding around. It's the envisioning of a better future that helps you stay focused on what you want. Set goals and a clear plan on how you will accomplish them. See it visually in your mind and start taking the necessary actions for their attainment. For each stage in your life, as you progress, your goals will change and that's completely normal. They may even change within the year according to your pace or the environment around you.

Accountability

Studies have shown that accountability increases the likelihood of a person achieving any goal set. Find someone whom you trust and ask them to hold you accountable for any goal you've set.

Take Action

Finally, take massive action. Acting towards your goals is the most important step in this plan. If you don't do anything about your success, no one is going to do it for you. It's a one-man job and it is only the man who wants to change himself that is going to have to act. If you must change certain habits within yourself, then do so wholeheartedly by setting the stage for a better you and a better future.

From a biological stand point you now understand how short and long term pleasures work. If you're living in the moment, then you're choosing to engage in activities that make you happier. In doing so, a change in your mindset takes place because you now realize that happiness is from within and not from external factors. You then go on to doing more of the things that make you happy.

Oxytocin is released, because your main drive is now from within, it's controllable. The more you enjoy the things that you do, the more likely you can focus your energy on that sole activity and thus increase your concentration capacity. Simply put, you start doing more of the things you want, which propel you to a better future.

STARVATION LOOMS; FOOD RUNS OUT IN DROUGHT-HIT ETHIOPIA

WARDER: The Somali people of Ethiopia's southeast have a name for the drought that has killed livestock, dried up wells and forced hundreds of thousands into camps: sima, which means "equalized". It's an appropriate name, they say, because this drought has left no person untouched, spared no corner of their arid region. And it has forced 7.8 million people across the whole of Ethiopia to rely on emergency food handouts to stay alive.

But by next month, that food will have run out, aid agencies say. Droughts are common in Ethiopia, and in past years the government and international community have mounted impressive efforts to curb starvation. This year though, Africa's second most-populous country is struggling to find the money for food aid, say aid agencies. "We're looking at the food pipeline actually breaking, so the food is running out in about a month's time," said John Graham, country director for Save the Children. "After that, we don't know what's going to happen."

Distracted donors

Once a global byword for starvation and poverty after a famine in 1984-85 killed hundreds of thousands, Ethiopia has seen its economy grow rapidly in the last decade. Health indicators such as infant mortality and malaria deaths have also improved. A stronger economy allowed Ethiopia to spend an impressive \$766 million (683 million euros) fighting one of its worst droughts in decades in 2015-16. This year however, things are different. Economic growth has slowed, due in part to protests spurred by long-simmering grievances



WARDER: A woman displaced by Ethiopia's drought walks with a branch at a displaced persons camp in Warder. —AFP

against Ethiopia's one-party state. Donors have also been distracted by other regional crises. To the southeast, Somalia is suffering from severe drought, with warnings it could tip into famine.

Ethiopia's western neighbor, South Sudan, has suffered four months of famine, and extreme hunger is at its highest levels ever after more than three years of civil war. Ethiopia by contrast has a strong central government and is relatively free from conflict. But with the situation so desperate in the region, donors aren't responding to the country's emergency as they have in the past, said Mitiku Kassa, head of Ethiopia's National Disaster Risk Management Commission, Mitiku Kassa. "They are stressed with the needs, especially from those countries which (have) declared famine," Mitiku said. "That is why it is underfunded."

'Skipping meals is common'

Even though Ethiopia has contributed \$117 million of its own

money this year and the international community \$302 million, a funding gap of \$481 million remains, according to the United Nations. In the drought ravaged town of Warder, the hundreds of displaced families crowding a ramshackle camp say handouts of rice and sugar are becoming less frequent. "Skipping meals is common," said Halimo Halim, a grandmother living with her children in a shelter made of sticks and pieces of plastic. "Skipping is the order of the day." Families of nomadic herders such as Halimo's are central to the economy of Ethiopia's southeastern Somali region. The drought has deprived goats, sheep and donkeys of water, killing them or making them so weak that by the time the rains come they perish in the cold.

Around 465,000 people who have lost their livestock have migrated to an estimated 250 camps in the region. The settlements are often located near water sources, but that presents

Paying the bill

Aid agencies have turned to so-called "non-traditional" donors like the Gulf countries for funding. At the same time they are keeping a nervous eye on budget negotiations in top funder the United States, where President Donald Trump has proposed slashing the aid budget. But some humanitarians privately complain that the Ethiopian government isn't doing enough to call attention to its plight. They argue that Addis Ababa does not want to distract from its development gains or resurrect the old image of Ethiopia as a place of mass starvation. "There is no shortage of funds to combat drought," communications minister Negeri Lencho insisted earlier this month.

If the international community doesn't send more money, Mitiku said the government would be "forced" to tap its development budget for drought relief in July. But with a lead time of about four months required to procure emergency food, the UN says that may be too late. In Warder, those uprooted by drought, like Sanara Ahmed, are wondering how long they can survive on unreliable food handouts. "Some support was there, but it cannot substitute for our dependability on our livelihood," Sanara said. — AFP

IN COLOMBIA, FARC 'NURSES' WANT TO TRADE ARMS FOR WHITE COATS

COLINAS: As a battlefield nurse for Colombia's FARC rebels, Johana Japon helped stitch up wounded fighters as bullets whizzed past her. And now that the rebel army is demobilizing under a historic accord signed last year to end more than 50 years of war, Japon wants to study medicine, don the white garb of a bona fide nurse and tend to everyday patients. Japon is among 500 rebel fighters assembled in Colinas, a town in southern Colombia, one of 26 designated spots for members of the rebel movement to gather, surrender their weapons to UN personnel and start the process of rejoining civilian life.

She is also among FARC members rushing to do the paperwork needed to apply for 500 scholarships Cuba is offering for ex-rebels to study medicine on the island. Another, Mery Quintero, who spent 20 of her 47 years in the ranks of the FARC, says people like them have a new purpose in life. "We worked as nurses, and that gives us the possibility to help rural people and people in general," said Quintero, who once studied bacteriology but had to leave school when her mother lost her job and could not afford to pay her tuition.

But like other applicants, Quintero says she may have a hard time getting one of the scholarships because she only got as far as grade school in her education. The Colombian conflict erupted in 1964 when the FARC and the ELN—a smaller rebel group that is now in peace negotiations with the government—took up arms for rural land rights. The violence drew in various rebel and paramilitary forces and drug gangs as well as state forces. The conflict left at least 260,000 people dead and displaced more than seven million, according to the authorities.

Mauricio Jaramillo, a FARC commander

who schooled Japon in field medicine when she joined the guerrilla army, said the scholarships are a golden opportunity for rebels who served as doctors or nurses during the war. But it is not just them, he added. "We have a lot of supporters who have children ... young people who want to study medicine," Jaramillo added. Jaramillo—a nom de guerre, as his real name is Jaime Parra—is known as "The Doctor" because he actually is one.

He is also one of the architects of the FARC medical care network, which at its war-time peak in 2000 even boasted a 300-bed hospital in southern Colombia. "Over the years we trained around 150 people to work as nurses," said Jaramillo. They specialized in lab work, surgery, treating trauma and other areas of medicine. Japon, 35, recalls treating fighters with horrific wounds, like one who was shot in the gut and hip, which she said was practically blown away. "Shards of bone kept piercing his small intestine. He was operated on three times. He ended up with his intestine sticking out of his body, and we had to douse it with water to keep it moist," Japon recalled.

Then the army came, the rebels had to flee and two days later that soldier died, she said. These nurses have other memories haunting them, too—performing abortions on female rebels so they could keep fighting. "Even though for everyone in Colombia we were the worst of the worst, with all that we did we are leaving a mark that is different from what people imagined we were," said Quintero. These days, as she waits to surrender her rifle as part of the peace process, Quintero is helping build a clinic in a village where some FARC fighters plan to settle and get on with their lives.—AFP



RIO DE JANEIRO: Photo shows meat products in a cold storage room at a supermarket in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during an inspection by the state's consumer protection agency, PROCON.—AFP

UNITED STATES HALTS FRESH BEEF IMPORTS FROM BRAZIL

LARGE SHIPMENTS FAIL FOOD SAFETY TESTS

NEW YORK: The United States has halt all imports of fresh beef from Brazil, the world's second-largest producer, citing "recurring" concerns after large shipments failed food safety tests. The ban will remain in place until satisfactory corrective actions are taken, the US Department of Agriculture said in a statement that will again put the reputation of Brazil's industry under the spotlight.

All meat imported to the US from Brazil has been inspected since March, when some of

the country's top meat producers became embroiled in a tainted-meat scandal. During that time, the US food safety and inspection service rejected 11 percent of Brazilian fresh beef, compared with only one percent of quantities from other nations, it added. "My first priority is to protect American consumers," US Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said.

"That's what we've done by halting the import of Brazilian fresh beef," Antonio Camardelli, president of Brazil's Meat

Exporters Association (Abiec), said the loss was potentially "incalculable". But he blamed the problems on a reaction to some components of a foot-and-mouth disease vaccine that Brazil uses, which had become visible in the US inspections. Camardelli said producers had asked the Brazilian government to resolve the problem in a meeting with their US counterparts.

But since the enhanced US inspection measures kicked in, 106 lots—approximately 1.9 million pounds (861,825 kilograms) — of Brazilian beef products were refused entry to the US "due to public health concerns, sanitary conditions, and animal health issues." "It is important to note that none of the rejected lots made it into the US market," the Department of Agriculture said, noting that the "Brazilian government had pledged to address those concerns, including by self-suspending five facilities from shipping beef to the US."

"Today's action to suspend all fresh beef shipments from Brazil supersedes the self-suspension," it added. Brazil's beef production is surpassed only by the United States, according to USDA data. But in March the South American country's industry was rocked by investigators' accusations that 21 meat processing companies used chemicals to hide the smell of rotting meat and bribed health inspectors to pass off their products as safe.

About 20 countries—including Hong Kong and China, the biggest importers of Brazilian beef—as well as the European Union, fully or partially closed their doors to the country's meat imports. After the bans, Brazil's average daily meat exports plunged 19 percent in a week, or \$11.7 million, according to the trade ministry, before client countries agreed to resume imports after fierce haggling. Meat exports brought in more than \$13 billion to the Brazilian economy in 2016. The industry employs six million people.—AFP



COLINAS: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) Dr Japon shows medical supplies after an interview with AFP at the Transitional Standardization Zone Jaime Pardo Leal in Colinas, Guaviare department, Colombia.—AFP

HEALING MEXICO'S 'CANCER,' WITH POTIONS AND POLITICS

TUXPAN: Maria de Jesus Patricio has a treatment for pretty much anything that ails you: "toad grass" for cholesterol, "dragon's blood" for infections, "sacred bark" for constipation or anger. Now the traditional healer is turning her attention to her biggest patient yet, as the first indigenous woman to run for president of Mexico—a country she says is sick with the "cancer" of unfettered capitalism, corruption and drug trafficking. Patricio's tiny practice in Tuxpan, a village tucked into the western mountains, seems a million miles away from Mexico City, with its graft-stained politics, back-room deals and failure to curb the violent crime racking the country.

Here, men, women and children come seeking antibiotic pomades, tinctures against indigestion and herbal remedies to ward off evil spirits. Besides running this tin-roof clinic, Patricio, a member of Mexico's native Nahuatl people, is also the spokeswoman for the National Indigenous

Congress, which represents 43 ethnicities. Last month the group nominated her to run for president. Thanks to a new law allowing independent candidates she plans to stand in the country's 2018 elections.

Her experience as a healer gives her a keen understanding of her nation's ills, says Patricio, 53, whose supporters affectionately know her as "Marichuy." "I'm seeing a lot more cases of stress, of colitis. Before, we didn't even have these diseases. Now they're chronic," she told AFP from behind the counter where she sells her remedies for 10 pesos (50 US cents) each, next to a wooden sign saying "welcome" in Nahuatl. Those problems are the product of poverty, marginalization and environmental pollution by large corporations, she explained. "We have to look deeper. What is making people sick? It's the fact that the economy is out of balance," she said, her jet-black hair trailing down her back in a long braid.

Herbal medicine and politics

The idea for Patricio's candidacy was launched by the Zapatistas, a former guerrilla army that took Mexico by surprise when they declared a rebellion against the state on January 1, 1994, the day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) took effect. Their "war" is now a symbolic one for land, housing, education and health care for Mexico's indigenous groups—some 7.3 million people, or 6.5 percent of the population. "We don't see traditional medicine as something separate from our struggle for autonomy, health, land, natural resources," said Patricio, speaking softly but firmly. "Everything is linked. It is a whole that we have to defend." Under the new law, she needs to gather some 800,000 signatures endorsing her candidacy. But it is not about signatures, nor about winning, she said. It is about launching a new movement that will "go far beyond 2018, and needs to go far beyond Mexico," she said.

Trump and narco

The symptoms of Mexico's ills are obvious to Patricio. She sees it in the inequality that divides Mexican society, where a dark-skinned person like her is far more likely to be a manual laborer than a manager. She sees it in the wave of bloodshed that has left more than 200,000 people dead or missing in the past decade as rival drug cartels wage war on each other and the Mexican security forces.

She sees it in the multi-billion-dollar corruption scandals that regularly embarrass the government, but have not stopped the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) from holding power for 76 of the past 88 years. "It's like a cancer," she said. "It's almost beyond hope." In her home state, Jalisco, she says that mining firms have grabbed people's land backed by hired guns from the Jalisco New Generation drug cartel and in collusion with corrupt authorities.—AFP

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Kuwait Times
248 33 199





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PAINTBALL OPEN FOR GAME LOVERS DURING EID AL-FITR

Paintball Company which is specializing in peaceful war games, has announced that; it has completed the development and modernization of its facilities, including provision of a new tools and equipments for the first time in Kuwait. Ahmed Sinjab, the marketing and sales manager of the company, said in a press statement that "the company's modernization and development included gun games and toys that are modern, exciting, environmentally friendly and harmless.

The company also aims to provide new and renewable services to meet the needs of amateurs of interesting and exciting peaceful games. He added that the games "Paintball" are games that combine the excitement in the

game and the art of shooting and hunting by special military games tools that launch colored balls.

He added that; the company has since the beginning of its activity to provide modern devices and tools to keep pace with everything that is modern and sophisticated, in addition to the renewal and development of its facilities such as stadiums, barriers, castles and fortresses, which consists of the "Field of paintball Games"; in addition to bringing modern games weapons and sophisticated military equipment and friendly.

He added also, that the stadiums were equipped with standards that match the style of the Global paintball stadiums. New castles

were installed around all sides of the stadiums to protect the player, also increasing the number of referees to referee the matches between the competitors. Also, we provided trainers to train customers on playing skills and competition.

As well as the addition of new air tools with higher features and better in terms of speed and accuracy so that the player can control them easily. In addition to the multiplicity of air weapons to suit all age groups from the age of 7 years and above, referring to the allocation of playgrounds for families to exercise family members in this kind of competitive games.

Also, he added that the city of games of the

company is ready to receive enthusiasts and lovers of adventures during the days of feast (Eid Al-Fitr) and battle and competitive rounds in the stadiums with modern equipments, which allows players to discover their talents and their own abilities and strive to win over competitors on the battlefield.

Ahmed Sinjab said that "what is impressive in such games is that they need intellectual skills through which players can plan and use their skills in dribbling and the trick to defeat the opposing team and win. This is where the challenge and participation in the team comes together in a team whose members agree on a plan to beat the opposing team. He invited adventure enthusiasts to the competition in

the company's stadiums alongside the Kuwait Towers. Ahmed Sinjab says that paintball, the leader company in competitive and unique games in Kuwait, has proved to be an ideal place for individuals and groups to discover their own skills and ability to plan compete and face many challenges to win the game in a lively and stimulating environment that makes competition interesting. Paintball Company has confirmed its readiness to receive an increasing numbers of pleasure seekers and self-discovery through games that young and old persons can share with each other, where the challenge is limitless to compete as long as the game will be a winning team and a defeat one.

CELEBRATE EID AL-FITR WITH THE SULTAN CENTER

Driven by its commitment to share with the community in joyous occasions, The Sultan Center (TSC) is celebrating Eid Al-Fitr with its customers in a cheerful and entertaining atmosphere across a number of its stores in Kuwait. Inspired by the traditional generosity of the occasion, the Eid festivities at TSC will include a special entertainment program tailor made for the children to enjoy while their parents enjoy an unparalleled shopping experience amongst a rich offering of products.

These activities will include: face painting, henna, arts and crafts, puppet show, balloons and so much more. Children will also find a unique collection of toys and games specially imported for the season. Activities will be held at Salmiya, Al-Kout, Sharq, Hawally and Boulevard stores from 5:00 pm until 8:00 pm on the 2nd & 3rd days of Eid. TSC wishes its customers and the whole Kuwait community a blissful and happy Eid, and invite them all to enjoy the Eid holiday with the fun-filled activities made to spread the joy and happiness of the occasion.



Congratulations



Family members and relatives wish Little Princess Aamina Imran the occasion of her first birthday. May God bless you and have a prosperous future ahead. Best wishes and love from papa, mama, grandparents, aunties, uncles and cousin brothers Abdullah, Osama, Ali, Umar, Hassan, Mohsin, Talha and Sisters Fatima, Ayesha and Meeqat.

EID OPEN HOUSE

Stop by the TIES Center to congratulate friends on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr. Enjoy a variety of refreshments, games and crafts. Children can enjoy special indoor activities.

LANDMARK GROUP TO BECOME REGION'S HAPPIEST WORKPLACE

Landmark Group, the pioneering retail and hospitality company behind some of the region's most loved brands and community initiatives, unveiled a first-of-its-kind 'Happiness Movement' impacting over 40,000 employees across all GCC countries, aiming to become the region's happiest workplace. Capturing the pride, positivity and sense of purpose that Landmark Group's enthused employees bring to work every day, the Landmark 'Happiness Movement' aims to reinforce the values such as passion, speed and simplicity, innovation, ownership and entrepreneurship that form the core foundation of the Group's philosophy of creating exceptional value.

The campaign has a memorable visual identity and an inspiring anthem, which have been welcomed by employees across the Group's warehouses, stores and offices. It reflects the Group's culture of openness, agility and adaptability, which has been integral to its success in the region. Nisha Jagtiani, Executive Director and Chief Happiness Officer said: "The retail business is changing very fast, whether it is from online to brick and mortar, or an evolution to the retail shopping experience or expectations of the customers.

In this dynamic, fast changing retail environment, we strongly believe that the value system that Landmark Group was built on - of innovation, entrepreneurship, ownership and passion, are the values that would help

us succeed. Through the Landmark Happiness Movement, we aim to bring a positive change by empowering our people, and instilling the values of ownership, pride and belongingness within them."

"Landmark Group has always been a great place to work in. We have grown because we have been able to nurture talent and recognize potential. Through the Landmark Happiness Movement, we aim to go one-step further. We are creating an environment where our people are the consistent drivers of happiness and positivity, across the Group, driving connectivity and togetherness across warehouse and retail." "We are thrilled at the response we have received from our people. Happiness is a journey and we are just getting started."

The Happiness Movement was rolled-out to landmarkers, through a three-day power-packed celebration across the Group's retail outlets, warehouses and offices, simultaneously engaging all 40,000 employees, irrespective of the country where they are based or the tasks that they perform. Leaders from Landmark Group, also visited and interact with landmarkers from across the Group's diverse network of retail and hospitality outlets. Thereby making it one of the largest simultaneously coordinated employee engagement initiative in the region.

Envisioned to significantly enhance work-life balance, the people-led movement witnessed the roll-out

of several initiatives to connect employees, increase overall engagement and drive focus towards employee health and wellness. Driven by a Happiness team at its core, the movement has identified ambassadors across its business to drive the initiatives being rolled-out.

The Group also introduced Workplace by Facebook to all Landmarkers across the organization, to provide their people, irrespective of designation or function, with one common platform to voice their opinions, engage with their leaders and colleagues, and belong to one large happy community. The internal employee community has since been abuzz with thousands of photos submitted by proud Landmarkers who joined their leaders in celebrations held across over 100 cities in the region.

This platform will leverage technology to connect every Landmarker across the company through the common thread of happiness. Landmark Group was the exclusive retail partner for the Global Happiness Dialogue at this year's World Government Summit (2017). The discussions at the summit's first Happiness Dialogue Day cemented the Group's intention to create a region-wide Happiness Movement.



CELEBRATE EID AL-FITR FESTIVITIES AT AL-KOUT

This Eid Al-Fitr, Souq Al-Kout will create great moments for everyone every day by welcoming grown-ups and children to join in a series of fun filled events and activities including the Kuwaiti board game "EnhashYalTheeb" and "Travel the World from Al-Kout" selfie corner. Visitors can look forward to the life sized popular Kuwaiti board game "EnhashYalTheeb", a local unique and exciting Kuwaiti board game where players compete by throwing dice and moving

around the board, expanded to a size of 12 m. Five games will be held every day giving the opportunity to a total of 30 winners spanning across the three-day event. Competing teams are welcome to register on a first come first served basis. The fun doesn't stop there, to enhance the visitors' experience, Souq Al-Kout invites people to "Travel the World from Al-Kout" by getting their selfie images clicked on a range of famous international landmarks. The backgrounds include the Leaning

Tower of Pisa and Eiffel Tower to name a few, and can be printed as a keepsake. The festivities and celebrations will be hosted by an MC and DJ as well as children's favorite characters shows, who will all entertain the crowd with fun games and competitions for the young and old alike. Participants can also win some of the many valuable spot prizes and giveaways as well as enjoy colorful face-painting and many more surprises.



Mijbil Al-Ayoub



OOREDOO CONCLUDES A MONTH OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network concluded its Ramadan program of activities, which included internal initiatives targeting staff members as well as external initiatives targeting different society segments. These initiatives come in line with the company's social responsibility strategy during the Holy Month. Commenting on this in a statement, Ooredoo Kuwait's Senior Director of Corporate Communications Mijbil Al-Ayoub said: "We're proud of all the participants and their willingness to give selflessly, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. We're also very our leading role in supporting volunteerism and charitable acts in this holy month."

Ooredoo Volunteer Program

Ooredoo is re-launching its Volunteer Program, following the great success it achieved upon the official launch of the program last two year. This program was launched in cooperation with Spread the Passion, a local non-profit organization which aims at encouraging youth to be more engaged in voluntarily programs. The accompanying training program is intended to continue for a whole month and includes workshops, training camp.

In addition, Ooredoo will continue to distribute iftar meals during the Holy Month of Ramadan through a distribution centre outside its head office and in its iftar tent, in addition to a special truck that will deliver meals to areas populated by underserved communities. The meal distribution drive is fully operated by Ooredoo's volunteer program members, after the great success of the program in the last



two years. The upper management at Ooredoo regularly participates in the activities, in addition to staff from the company's different departments and divisions.

Investing internally

Welcoming the Holy Month of Ramadan, Ooredoo organized a special 'Graish' meal for its staff at Ooredoo's headquarters in Al Soor Street. The 'Graish' meal was a way to welcome the Holy Month with its employees and to revive the old Kuwaiti customs and heritage. All employees gather on this occasion to have one last meal before Ramadan together, greet each other and exchange best wishes.

Connecting with its staff, Ooredoo held its Ramadan ghabqa, a fun-filled event with a tra-

ditional Kuwaiti theme under the title "Sanduq Embayyat," which was attended by the Chairman and CEO of Ooredoo Group Sheikh Saud bin Nasser Al-Thani, the CEO and General Manager of Ooredoo Kuwait Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani along with executive managers and department heads. Throughout the Holy Month, Ooredoo involved its staff in a number of key initiatives, such as meal distribution in the iftar tent in addition to the volunteer truck. Ooredoo staff also participated in a number of workshops and visits to hospital wards and other charitable initiatives throughout the month.

Sharing Festivities

The company also aims to hold a series of



giriyan celebrations to bring the joy to kids' hearts several locations, including the Guardians of the Disabled Association, Kuwait Centre for Down Syndrome, in addition to care centers. Ooredoo also held a special giriyan celebration with the Kuwaiti band Sons of Yusuf, where hundreds of children attended to celebrate the happy occasion. Ooredoo also held an iftar feast for the on-call medical staff and security personnel in Yarmouk area last week. The event took place in the Yarmouk Health Center and was attended by the mayor of Yamrouk, Abdulaziz Al-Meshari. The event was held in collaboration with the Yarmouk Co-Operative Society and Yarmouk Health Center, and Yarmouk Healthy City initiative. The event reflects Ooredoo's core values of

caring and connecting, and stems from the company's deep-rooted belief in enriching the community. A similar event was held for the parents, children and staff of the Kuwait Centre for Down Syndrome.

Supporting volunteer work among Ooredoo's top priorities through its CSR strategy. The company has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, to support youth projects and initiatives, making it the first telecom provider in Kuwait to sign such a high-level agreement. Ooredoo is continuously working with the Ministry to enrich youth experience in a variety of fields, with a focus on volunteerism.



OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 01:45 Gone In Sixty Seconds
- 04:00 Code Of Silence
- 05:45 The Lovers
- 07:45 Bermuda Tentacles
- 09:30 Code Of Silence
- 11:15 Gone In Sixty Seconds
- 13:15 The Tower
- 15:30 Harlock: Space Pirate
- 17:30 Rivers Nine
- 19:15 Metro
- 21:00 Beyond Redemption
- 22:45 I Am Number Four

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:45 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 01:40 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 02:35 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 03:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 04:15 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 05:02 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 05:49 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
- 06:36 Night
- 07:00 Night
- 07:25 Lone Star Law
- 08:15 The Lion Queen
- 09:10 After The Attack
- 10:05 Dog Rescuers
- 11:00 Wildest Africa
- 11:55 America's Cutest Pets
- 12:50 Shamwari: A Wild Life
- 13:15 Shamwari: A Wild Life
- 13:45 Shamwari: A Wild Life
- 14:10 Shamwari: A Wild Life
- 14:40 Shamwari: A Wild Life
- 15:05 Shamwari: A Wild Life
- 15:35 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 16:30 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 17:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 18:20 Queens Of The Savannah
- 19:15 Lone Star Law
- 20:10 Up Close And Dangerous
- 21:05 Lone Star Law
- 22:00 Queens Of The Savannah
- 22:55 Tanked
- 23:50 Tanked

Discovery Family

- 00:00 Nextworld
- 01:20 Nextworld
- 02:10 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 03:00 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 03:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 04:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 05:30 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 06:20 How It's Made
- 06:40 How It's Made
- 07:00 Kenny The Shark
- 07:25 Kenny The Shark
- 07:50 Kids vs Film
- 08:15 Kids vs Film
- 08:40 How It's Made
- 09:05 How It's Made
- 09:30 How It's Made
- 09:55 How It's Made
- 10:20 How It's Made
- 10:45 How It's Made
- 11:10 How It's Made
- 11:35 How It's Made

BBC FIRST

- 00:00 Doctors
- 00:30 EastEnders
- 01:00 Death In Paradise
- 01:55 Call The Midwife



I AM NUMBER FOUR ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 02:50 Doctor Who
- 03:40 EastEnders
- 04:10 Orphan Black
- 05:05 Call The Midwife
- 06:00 EastEnders
- 06:30 Holby City
- 07:25 New Tricks
- 08:20 Call The Midwife
- 09:15 Father Brown
- 10:15 Doctors
- 10:45 EastEnders
- 11:15 New Tricks
- 12:10 Call The Midwife
- 13:05 Father Brown
- 14:05 Doctors
- 14:35 EastEnders
- 15:05 New Tricks
- 16:00 Call The Midwife
- 17:00 Father Brown
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 EastEnders
- 19:05 New Tricks
- 20:00 Unforgotten
- 21:00 Whitechapel
- 21:50 Ripper Street
- 22:45 Ripper Street
- 23:40 Doctors

- 12:00 How It's Made
- 12:25 How It's Made
- 12:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 13:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 14:30 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 15:20 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 16:10 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 17:00 Nextworld
- 17:50 Nextworld
- 18:40 Troy
- 19:30 Prehistoric
- 20:20 Reign Of The Dinosaurs
- 21:10 Dinosaurs: Return To Life
- 22:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 22:25 What Happened Next?
- 22:50 What Happened Next?
- 23:15 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:40 Destroyed In Seconds

ID

- 00:30 The Real Story With Maria Elena Salinas
- 01:20 Casey Anthony: An American Murder Mystery
- 02:10 Murder Calls
- 03:00 Murder Chose Me
- 03:48 I Almost Got Away With It
- 04:36 I Almost Got Away With It
- 05:24 I Almost Got Away With It
- 06:12 I Almost Got Away With It
- 07:00 The Locator
- 07:25 The Locator
- 07:50 The Locator
- 08:15 The Locator
- 08:40 The Locator
- 09:05 The Locator
- 09:30 The Locator
- 09:55 The Locator
- 10:20 The Locator
- 10:45 The Locator
- 11:10 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 12:00 Blood Relatives
- 12:50 Blood Relatives
- 13:40 Blood Relatives
- 14:30 Blood Relatives
- 15:20 Blood Relatives
- 16:10 The Detectives Club: New Orleans
- 17:00 Murder Comes To Town
- 17:50 Murder Comes To Town
- 18:40 Murder Comes To Town
- 19:30 Murder Comes To Town
- 20:20 Murder Comes To Town
- 21:10 Blood Relatives
- 22:00 Six Degrees Of Murder
- 22:50 Evil Kin
- 23:40 Grave Secrets

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
- 01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 02:00 Babies Behind Bars
- 03:00 Escaping Polygamy
- 04:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
- 05:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 06:00 The First 48
- 07:00 The First 48
- 08:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
- 09:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
- 10:00 Holloway: Women Behind Bars
- 11:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 12:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 14:00 It Takes A Killer
- 16:00 Homicide Hunter
- 17:00 Homicide Hunter
- 18:00 Cold Case Files
- 19:00 Cold Case Files
- 20:00 The First 48
- 21:00 Homicide Hunter
- 22:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 23:00 Campus Nightmares

COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:05 Impractical Jokers
- 00:30 Impractical Jokers
- 00:55 The Jim Gaffigan Show
- 01:20 The Jim Gaffigan Show
- 01:45 Lip Sync Battle
- 02:10 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 03:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
- 03:25 Life Or Debt
- 04:15 Disaster Date
- 04:40 Disaster Date
- 05:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol

Disney HD

- 00:00 Hank Zipzer
- 00:25 Alex & Co.
- 00:45 The Hive
- 00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
- 01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:30 Binny And The Ghost

- 02:55 Hank Zipzer
- 03:15 The Hive
- 03:20 Hank Zipzer
- 03:45 Alex & Co.
- 04:10 Alex & Co.
- 04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:25 Binny And The Ghost
- 05:45 The Hive
- 05:50 The 7D
- 06:00 Jessie
- 06:25 Jessie
- 06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 06:55 Austin & Ally
- 07:20 The Zhuzhus
- 07:45 Gravity Falls
- 08:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 08:35 Elena Of Avalor
- 09:00 Stuck In The Middle
- 09:25 Best Friends Whenever
- 09:50 Bunk'd
- 10:15 Bizaardvark
- 10:40 Zapped
- 12:20 Evermoor Chronicles
- 14:00 Bunk'd
- 14:25 Jessie
- 14:50 Jessie
- 15:15 Austin & Ally
- 15:40 Austin & Ally
- 16:05 Descendants Wicked World
- 16:10 Girl Meets World
- 16:35 Girl Meets World
- 17:00 Good Luck Charlie
- 17:25 The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning
- 18:45 The 7D
- 19:00 Star Darlings
- 19:05 Best Friends Whenever
- 19:30 Liv And Maddie
- 19:55 Elena Of Avalor
- 20:20 Jessie
- 20:45 Bizaardvark
- 21:10 Austin & Ally
- 21:35 Stuck In The Middle
- 22:00 Bunk'd
- 22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 22:50 Lolirock
- 23:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 23:35 Binny And The Ghost

- 00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:15 Calimero
- 00:30 Art Attack
- 00:55 Zou
- 01:05 Loopidoo
- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 Calimero
- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Art Attack
- 02:30 The Hive
- 02:40 Loopidoo
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:10 Art Attack
- 03:35 Loopidoo
- 03:50 Calimero
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:45 Zou
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Loopidoo
- 06:00 Zou
- 06:15 Calimero
- 06:30 Loopidoo
- 06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:00 Sofia The First
- 07:25 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 07:50 The Lion Guard
- 08:15 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 08:40 Goldie & Bear
- 09:05 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
- 09:35 Sofia The First
- 10:00 The Lion Guard
- 10:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 11:00 PJ Masks
- 11:25 Goldie & Bear
- 11:55 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 12:25 The Lion Guard
- 12:50 Sofia The First
- 13:20 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 13:45 Doc McStuffins
- 14:10 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 14:40 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 15:05 PJ Masks
- 15:30 The Lion Guard
- 16:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 16:25 Sofia The First
- 16:50 PJ Masks
- 17:05 Goldie & Bear
- 17:35 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
- 18:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 18:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 19:05 Sofia The First
- 19:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 20:05 The Lion Guard
- 20:35 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 21:00 Goldie & Bear
- 21:25 Doc McStuffins
- 21:50 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 22:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 22:30 Sofia The First
- 22:55 PJ Masks
- 23:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 23:35 The Hive
- 23:45 Loopidoo

Disney Junior

- 00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:15 Calimero
- 00:30 Art Attack
- 00:55 Zou

- 06:00 Gold Divers
- 06:50 Wheeler Dealers
- 07:40 Misfit Garage
- 08:30 What On Earth?
- 09:20 Container Wars
- 09:45 How Do They Do It?
- 10:10 How Do They Do It?
- 10:35 What On Earth?
- 11:25 Salvage Hunters
- 12:15 Storage Hunters UK
- 12:40 Storage Hunters UK
- 13:05 How Do They Do It?
- 13:30 Container Wars
- 13:55 Container Wars
- 14:20 Gold Rush
- 15:10 What On Earth?
- 16:00 Gold Divers
- 16:50 Misfit Garage
- 17:40 Wheeler Dealers
- 18:30 How Do They Do It?
- 18:55 How Do They Do It?
- 19:20 What On Earth?
- 20:10 Container Wars
- 20:35 Baggage Battles
- 21:00 Heavy Rescue
- 21:50 Alcatraz: Escaping The Rock
- 22:40 What On Earth?
- 23:30 Misfit Garage

XD

- 06:00 Supa Strikas
- 06:25 Supa Strikas
- 06:50 Marvel's Guardians Of The Galaxy
- 07:15 Counterfeit Cat
- 07:40 Walk The Frank
- 08:10 K.C. Undercover
- 08:35 Milo Murphy's Law
- 09:00 Disney11
- 09:25 Disney11
- 09:50 Disney11
- 10:20 Disney11
- 10:45 Disney11
- 11:10 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 11:35 Mech-X4
- 12:00 Monsters, Inc
- 13:30 Access All Areas: Spider-Man: Homecoming
- 13:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:15 Milo Murphy's Law
- 14:40 K.C. Undercover
- 15:05 Walk The Frank
- 15:30 Atomic Puppet
- 15:55 Lab Rats
- 16:25 Mech-X4
- 16:50 K.C. Undercover
- 17:15 Supa Strikas
- 17:40 Mighty Med
- 18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 18:10 Right Now Kapow
- 18:35 Lab Rats
- 19:25 Kirby Buckets
- 19:55 K.C. Undercover
- 20:20 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 20:45 Counterfeit Cat
- 21:10 Mighty Med
- 21:35 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 21:45 Marvel's Guardians Of The Galaxy
- 22:10 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors
- 22:35 Booster
- 23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

itv CHOICE

- 00:05 Coronation Street
- 00:30 Coronation Street
- 01:00 Shoot The Messenger
- 02:00 Coronation Street
- 02:25 Coronation Street
- 02:50 Coronation Street
- 03:15 Coronation Street
- 03:35 Coronation Street
- 03:55 Surprise Surprise
- 04:50 Britain's Secrets With Anne Robinson
- 05:50 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army And Me
- 06:20 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army And Me
- 06:50 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
- 07:40 Grantchester
- 08:35 This Is England '86
- 09:30 Jekyll And Hyde
- 10:25 Shoot The Messenger
- 11:25 Chopping Block
- 12:20 Chopping Block
- 13:15 Grantchester
- 14:10 The Trials Of Jimmy Rose
- 15:00 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army And Me
- 15:30 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army And Me
- 16:00 This Is England '86
- 16:50 Britain's Secrets With Anne Robinson
- 17:50 The Secret Photos Of The Duke & Duchess Of Windsor
- 18:50 Grantchester
- 19:45 Jekyll And Hyde
- 20:35 Britain's Secrets With Anne Robinson
- 21:35 This Is England '86
- 22:30 Shoot The Messenger
- 23:20 Safe House

EHD

- 00:00 Bolched
- 00:55 Bolched
- 01:50 El News
- 02:50 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:20 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:50 So Cosmo
- 04:40 So Cosmo
- 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 06:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 06:50 El News
- 07:20 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 08:10 El News
- 09:05 Bolched
- 09:55 Bolched
- 10:45 Bolched
- 11:35 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 12:25 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 14:15 Second Wives Club
- 15:10 Second Wives Club
- 16:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 17:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 18:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 19:00 El News
- 20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 21:00 Bolched
- 22:00 Second Wives Club
- 23:00 Bolched

food

- 00:00 Man Fire Food
- 00:30 Man Fire Food
- 01:00 Restaurant Stakeout

- 02:00 Mystery Diners
- 02:30 Mystery Diners
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:30 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 06:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 07:00 Chopped
- 08:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 08:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 09:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 10:00 Siba's Table
- 10:30 Siba's Table
- 11:00 Bake With Anna Olson
- 11:30 Bake With Anna Olson
- 12:00 Man Fire Food
- 12:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 13:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 14:00 Chopped
- 15:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 15:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 16:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 16:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 17:00 Siba's Table
- 17:30 Siba's Table
- 18:00 Bake With Anna Olson
- 18:30 Bake With Anna Olson
- 19:00 Man Fire Food
- 19:30 Man Fire Food
- 20:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 20:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 21:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 21:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 22:00 Private Chef
- 22:30 Private Chef
- 23:00 Chopped

itv CHOICE

- 00:05 Coronation Street
- 00:30 Coronation Street
- 01:00 Shoot The Messenger
- 02:00 Coronation Street
- 02:25 Coronation Street
- 02:50 Coronation Street
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- 18:50 Grantchester
- 19:45 Jekyll And Hyde
- 20:35 Britain's Secrets With Anne Robinson
- 21:35 This Is England '86
- 22:30 Shoot The Messenger
- 23:20 Safe House

HISTORY HD

- 00:20 JFK Declassified: Hunting Oswald
- 01:10 Mountain Men
- 02:00 Leepu And Pitbull
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 Pawn Stars
- 03:40 Pawn Stars South Africa
- 04:05 Storage Wars Texas
- 04:30 Storage Wars Texas
- 05:00 Hoard Hunters
- 06:00 Leepu And Pitbull
- 06:50 Duck Dynasty
- 07:40 Counting Cars
- 08:05 Counting Cars
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 08:55 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 09:45 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 11:50 Duck Dynasty
- 12:40 Ice Road Truckers
- 13:30 Ax Men
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Leepu And Pitbull
- 16:00 Storage Wars
- 16:25 Storage Wars
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:15 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Billion Dollar Wreck
- 18:30 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The

HISTORY HD

- 00:00 Evacuate Earth
- 01:00 I Wouldn't Go In There
- 02:00 Monster Fish
- 03:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs South
- 04:00 Primal Survivor
- 05:00 China From Above
- 06:00 Outsiders: Living Off The Edge
- 07:00 Border Wars
- 08:00 Scam City
- 09:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 10:00 Breakthrough
- 11:00 Route Awakening
- 11:30 Route Awakening
- 12:00 Dog Whisperer
- 13:00 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
- 14:00 Genius
- 15:00 Monster Fish
- 16:00 The Putin Interviews
- 17:00 Genius
- 18:00 Brain Games
- 18:30 Brain Games
- 19:00 Monster Fish
- 20:00 The Putin Interviews
- 20:50 Genius
- 21:40 Brain Games
- 22:05 Brain Games
- 22:30 Monster Fish
- 23:20 Route Awakening
- 23:45 Route Awakening

NAT GEO WILD HD

- 00:20 1000 Days For The Planet
- 01:10 Savage Kingdom
- 02:00 Animal Fight Club 4.5
- 02:50 Australia's Deadly Monsters
- 03:45 Secret Life Of Predators (2016)
- 04:40 World's Deadliest
- 05:35 Blood Rivals: Lion vs. Buffalo
- 06:30 Monster Fish
- 07:25 Monster Fish
- 08:20 Predator Falls
- 09:15 Game Of Lions
- 10:10 Extreme Animals
- 11:05 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 12:00 World's Deadliest (2015)
- 12:55 Animal Fight Club 4.5
- 13:50 Australia's Deadly Monsters
- 14:45 Secrets Of The Wild
- 15:40 World's Deadliest
- 16:35 Hunter Hunted
- 17:30 Monster Fish
- 18:25 Wild Argentina
- 19:20 Secret Life Of Predators
- 20:10 World's Deadliest



THE WAVE ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL



INVICTUS ON OSN MOVIES HD

- Superstition...
- 19:20 Mountain Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 Pawn Stars
- 21:25 Pawn Stars South Africa
- 21:50 Storage Wars Texas
- 22:15 Storage Wars Texas
- 22:40 Detroit Steel
- 23:30 American Pickers

- 21:00 Hunter Hunted
- 21:50 Monster Fish
- 22:40 Wild Argentina
- 23:30 World's Deadliest (2015)

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:45 Eat Street
- 01:10 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
- 01:40 Bad Trip
- 02:35 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 03:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 03:30 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 03:55 Places We Go
- 04:25 Chocolate Covered
- 04:50 Chocolate Covered
- 05:20 Home Strange Home
- 06:15 Health Secrets Behind Korean Cuisine
- 07:10 Miguel's Feasts
- 07:35 Miguel's Feasts
- 08:05 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 08:30 Eat Street
- 09:00 Eat Street
- 09:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 09:55 Bad Trip
- 10:50 What's For Sale?
- 11:15 What's For Sale?
- 11:45 Chasing Time
- 12:10 Chasing Time
- 12:40 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
- 13:05 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
- 13:35 Bad Trip
- 14:30 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 14:55 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 15:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 15:50 Places We Go
- 16:20 Chocolate Covered
- 16:45 Chocolate Covered
- 17:15 Home Strange Home
- 18:10 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 18:35 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 19:05 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 19:30 Places We Go
- 20:00 Chocolate Covered
- 20:30 Chocolate Covered
- 21:00 Home Strange Home
- 22:00 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 22:25 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 22:55 Bad Trip
- 23:50 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita

CROSSWORD 1645



ACROSS

1. A substance that is used as a medicine or narcotic v 1.
5. Sometimes placed in family Hyacinthaceae.
12. Preserve of crushed fruit.
15. A German man.
16. Of or pertaining to adnexa.
17. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
18. The largest continent with 60% of the earth's population.
19. Chronic inflammatory disease of the skin characterized by blister capped papules and intense itching.
20. A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
21. Winnipeg is the capital and largest city of Manitoba.
23. 16 ounces.
25. Climbing salamanders.
26. (usually in the plural) Pants for casual wear.
28. Tasting sour like a lemon.
29. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
32. A populous province in northeastern China.
35. Electronic warfare undertaken to prevent or reduce an enemy's effective use of the electromagnetic spectrum.
37. Remote and separate physically or socially.
39. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
40. Not divisible by two.
42. Bubble shells.
45. (British) Diesel oil used in cars and lorries with diesel engines (from d(iesel) e(ngine) r(oad) v(ehicle)).
47. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
48. The sign language used in the United States.
49. State in northeastern India.
51. A Chadik language spoken south of Lake Chad.
53. Free from duties or responsibilities.
56. Genus of beetles whose grubs feed mainly on roots of plants.
58. Slices of bread that have been toasted.
60. An informal term for a father.
61. A dark gray mineral with a metallic luster that is a source of tin.
68. Remove with or as if with a ladle.
69. An anticholinergic drug (trade name Daricon) used in treating peptic ulcers.
72. An undergarment worn by women to support their breasts.
73. By bad luck.
74. A soft cotton or worsted fabric with an open mesh.
75. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
76. A large number or amount.
77. Show a response or a reaction to something.
78. A Turkish unit of weight equal to about 2.75 pounds.

DOWN

1. An Indian tree of the family Combretaceae that is a source of timber and gum.
2. Any of a class of solid or semisolid viscous substances obtained either as exudations from certain plants or prepared by polymerization of simple molecules.
3. Liquid excretory product.
4. Plutonic igneous rock having visibly crystalline texture.
5. A clerk who marks data on a chart.
6. With energy unrestored.
7. Offering safety.
8. An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
9. Small depression under the shoulder joint where the arm joins the shoulder.
10. A motley assortment of things.
11. The United Nations agency concerned with the interests of labor.
12. Plaything consisting of small 6-pointed metal pieces that are used (along with a ball) to play the game of jacks.
13. The sixth month of the civil year.
14. Designer drug designed to have the effects of amphetamines (it floods the brain with serotonin) but to avoid the drug laws.
22. A state in the Rocky Mountains.
24. Similar to the giraffe but smaller with much shorter neck and stripe on the legs.
27. Green algae common in freshwater lakes of limestone districts.
30. The largest Latin American country and the largest Portuguese speaking country in the world.
31. United States minimalist painter (born in 1936).
33. Excessively fat.
34. A member of a monotheistic sect of Zoroastrian origin.
36. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
38. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
41. A Mid-Atlantic state.
43. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
44. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
46. Unusual largeness in size or extent.
50. An elementary particle with a negative charge and a half-life of 2 microsecond.
52. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
54. Someone who takes spoils or plunder (as in war).
55. Everything you own.
57. Used of mouth or eyes.
59. (medicine) A grossly malformed and usually nonviable fetus.
62. The basic unit of money in Western Samoa.
63. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
64. A city in western Germany on the Rhine River.
65. A Spanish river.
66. Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
67. An informal term for a father.
70. (folklore) Fairies that are somewhat mischievous.
71. A federation of North American industrial unions that merged with the American Federation of Labor in 1955.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

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



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

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



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

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



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

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



Leo (July 23-August 22)

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



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

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



Libra (September 23-October 22)

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



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

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



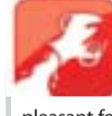
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

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



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

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



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

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



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

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

WORD SEARCH

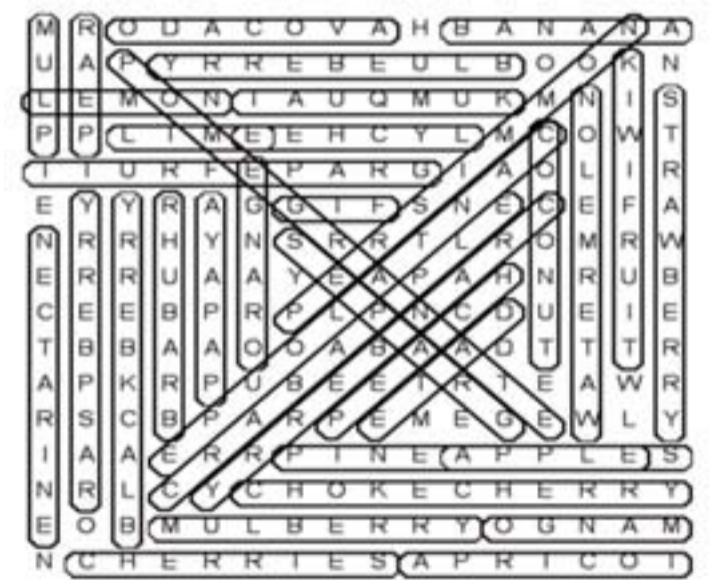
Gardening

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 27 letters spell a Lady Bird Johnson quote.



- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| ANNUALS | GARDEN | ORGANIC | SEEDS |
| BEANS | GERANIUMS | PEAS | SHOVEL |
| BEETS | GLOVES | PERENNIAL | SOIL |
| BIENNIAL | GNOME | PETUNIAS | SPADE |
| BROCCOLI | GREENHOUSE | PINWHEEL | SUNSHINE |
| CARROTS | GROW | PITCH FORK | TOMATOES |
| COMPOST | HOES | PLANTING | TROWEL |
| CULTIVATE | HORTICULTURE | RAIN | TULIPS |
| DAISIES | HYDRANGEA | RAKE | VEGETABLES |
| DIGGING | LILACS | RELAXING | WATER |
| FERTILIZER | LILIES | ROSES | WEEDS |
| FLOWERS | MARIGOLDS | ROWS | WHEELBARROW |

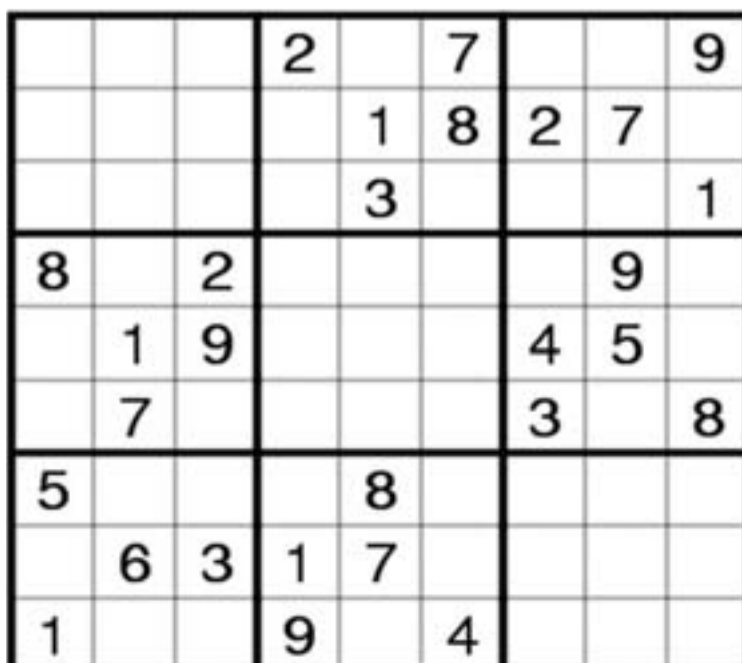
Fruit



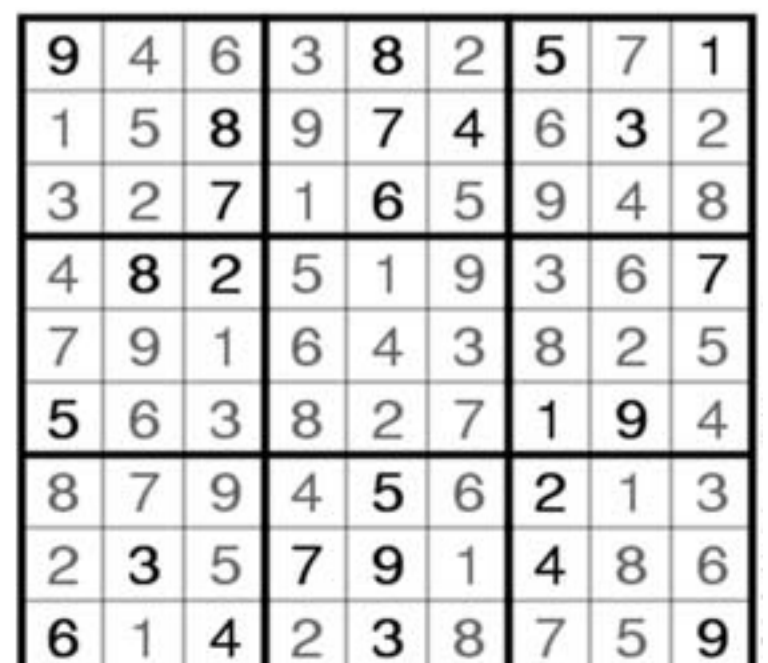
- | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------------|
| APPLES | DATE | ORANGE |
| APRICOT | FIG | PAPAYA |
| AVOCADO | GRAPEFRUIT | PEACH |
| BANANA | GRAPES | PEAR |
| BLACKBERRY | KIWI/FRUIT | PERSIMMON |
| BLUEBERRY | KUMQUAT | PINEAPPLE |
| CANTALOUPE | LEMON | PLUM |
| CHERRIES | LIME | POMEGRANATE |
| CHOKED-CHERRY | LYCHEE | RASPBERRY |
| COCONUT | MANGO | RHUBARB |
| CRABAPPLE | MULBERRY | STRAWBERRY |
| CRANBERRY | NECTARINE | WATERMELON |

The hidden message is: HONEYDEW MELON

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



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

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaee Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 24/06/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 45 °C

By Day : Hot with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 50 km/h causing rising dust.

By Night : Relatively hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h.



Four-Day Forecast

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Expected Weather	Hot + causing rising dust over open areas	Hot	Very hot	Very hot
Min Temp °C	32	32	33	34
Max Temp °C	45	45	48	49
Wind Direction	northerly westerly	northerly westerly	northerly westerly	northerly westerly
Wind Speed km/h	20 - 45	12 - 35	10 - 30	08 - 30

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

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C
KUWAIT CITY	31		44
KUWAIT AIRPORT	31		45
ABOALY	26		45
BUBYAN	26		44
JAHRA	30		44
FALAKA ISLAND	26		43
SALMIYAH	31		40
AHMADI	32		43
JAL ALIYAH	26		44
QAROH ISLAND	31		34
UMH AL-MARADEN	31		37
MUWAJISIB	28		43
WAFRA	29		45
SALMIY	24		42
MUTRIBA	26		45

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	43
Min Temp (°C)	31
Max Rel Hum (%)	27
Min Rel Hum (%)	09
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	64 N
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	04:50
Sunset	18:51

Prayer Times

Fajr	03:14
Sunrise	04:50
Zuhr	11:50
Aar	15:24
Sunset	18:51
Isha	20:23



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	Plastic Surgeons
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	Family Doctor
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	Psychiatrists
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	Internists, Chest & Heart
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Paediatricians	Endocrinologist
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarouf	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	Physiotherapists & VD
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dr. Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	Rheumatologists:
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	Internist, Chest & Heart
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foaid Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135
Dr. Mohammed Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Consultant Cardiologist	General Surgeons
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	
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Psychologists / Psychotherapists	Soor Center	Kaizen center	Noor Clinic	William Schuilenberg, RPC
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MOVIES

Bollywood star **Salman Khan's** latest Eid release hits screens

Indian Bollywood actor Salman Khan poses for a picture during the announcement of his association with PVR Cinema and Being Human Foundation to support their humanitarian initiatives, in Mumbai. — AFP

Bollywood bad boy Salman Khan's latest movie opened in Indian cinemas Friday but film analysts are skeptical it will have the same box office success as his previous Eid blockbusters. It is something of a tradition in the Hindi film industry for Khan to star in the big release of the Eid holiday to mark the end of Ramadan, which this year is expected to fall tomorrow. Last year's "Sultan" broke opening weekend records and currently sits fifth in the all-time list of highest-grossing Hindi language films worldwide, two places behind his 2015 Eid release "Bajrangi Bhaijaan".

However this year's "Tubelight", a drama set during the 1962 India-China war, is unlikely to do quite as well, according to movie critic and Bollywood trade analyst Taran Adarsh. "#Tubelight rests on a thin plot... Screenplay lacks the power to enthral and mesmerize... Emotions plenty, but few moments stand out..." he wrote on Twitter. Adarsh added that it would still have an "awesome" weekend at the box office due to Monday's holiday and Khan's star power, but doubted it would eventually make three billion rupees internationally, the benchmark for a major hit.

"Tubelight", an adaptation of 2015 American movie "Little

Boy", is Khan's fourth straight Eid release and his seventh since 2010. "For the audiences, Salman Khan is synonymous with Eid and for distributors Eid is synonymous with Salman Khan," trade analyst Akshay Rathi said. Khan-never far from controversy-enjoys a cult-like status in star-obsessed India, particularly among young men who regularly stand outside his house in Mumbai hoping to catch a glimpse of the superstar.

The 51-year-old body-building actor has successfully shaken off numerous scandals during his career to become one of Bollywood's most bankable stars. He sparked uproar shortly before Sultan hit screens by saying his heavy training schedule for the film, in which he played an ageing wrestler, left him feeling "like a raped woman". The movie made around 5.8 billion rupees globally. In 2015 Khan was cleared of killing a homeless man in a hit-and-run more than a decade earlier. That decision is now being challenged in the Supreme Court. Indian authorities are also challenging a court's decision to acquit him over the illegal use of firearms to kill endangered antelopes in 1998. — AFP

Freshman series 'Downward Dog' canceled by ABC

ABC's freshman sitcom "Downward Dog" has been canceled by ABC, the show's executive producer said. The last two of the show's eight episodes will air Tuesday, executive producer Jimmy Miller said Friday. ABC "loved it creatively and wanted to do more, but could not figure out a way to get it done financially," Miller said in a statement. The network didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. Miller thanked critics and viewers who have expressed their support for the comedy, and said he hoped it would land on its feet elsewhere.

"Clearly this show has hit a nerve, and we are hell bent on finding a new home for our 'Downward Dog,'" he said. The series stars Allison Tolman as the owner of Martin the dog, who talks directly to viewers about his feelings. The series centers on his sometimes conflicted feelings about his owner, loneliness and hatred of a neighborhood cat. Series co-creator Samm Hodges is the voice of Martin. Tolman was nominated for an Emmy Award in 2015 for her role on the FX series " Fargo." — AP

Johnny Depp apologizes for Trump assassination joke

Johnny Depp apologized Friday for joking about US President Donald Trump being assassinated, as his remarks to a music festival audience triggered an angry backlash. The "Pirates of the Caribbean" star made the off-color comments late Thursday at the Glastonbury Festival in southwest England, telling the crowd it had "been a while" since an actor had assassinated a president. The remarks drew a stern response from the White House, as Depp said he had intended no malice.



US actor Johnny Depp waves to Japanese fans during a promotional event for the film 'Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales' in Tokyo. — AFP

"President Trump has condemned violence in all forms and it's sad that others like Johnny Depp have not followed his lead," said Trump's spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders. "I hope that some of Mr. Depp's colleagues will speak out against this type of rhetoric as strongly as they would if his comments were directed to a Democrat elected official." In a statement to celebrity magazine People, the 54-year-old expressed regret that that his words "did not come out as intended," adding that he had intended no malice and "was only trying to amuse, not to harm anyone."

"I apologize for the bad joke I attempted last night in poor taste about President Trump," he said. The A-Lister had turned up at a drive-in cinema at Glastonbury, introducing his 2004 film "The Libertine" and answering questions from the 1,500-strong audience. "I think he needs help and there are a lot of wonderful dark, dark places he could go," Depp said when asked about Trump. "When was the last time an actor assassinated a president? I want to qualify, I am not an actor. I lie for a living."

"However, it has been a while and maybe it is time," Depp added. In 1865, Civil War president Abraham Lincoln was shot dead in a Washington theatre by actor John Wilkes Booth. "This is going to be in the press, and it will be horrible," the actor acknowledged to the Glastonbury crowd, telling them he was glad they were "all a part of it."

Lack of outrage

Depp is the latest of a string of entertainment industry figures to make controversial statements about Trump. Singer Madonna was reportedly the subject of a Secret Service investigation after saying she wanted to "blow up the White House". Comedian Kathy Griffin lost her New Year presenting job at CNN after posing for a picture while holding a mask styled to look like Trump's bloody severed head.

A production of Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" in New York's Central Park was recently interrupted by right-wing protesters outraged that it appeared to depict Trump, as Caesar, being knifed to death. Demonstrators shouted that the play had the "blood of Steve Scalise on its hands," referring to the recent shooting of the Republican congressman, although its defenders highlighted that a 2012 production featuring Barack Obama as Caesar attracted little controversy.

White House press secretary Sean Spicer, in a media briefing Friday, described both the play and Depp's comments as "troubling." "It is troubling the lack of outrage that we have seen in some of those instances where people have said what they said with respect to the president," he said. "The president had made it clear that we should denounce violence in all of its forms."

Depp, who has drawn headlines recently for all the wrong reasons, was revealed in January to have spent so lavishly that he reached the brink of financial ruin. Over the best part of two decades, the actor has been spending \$2 million a month, according to a lawsuit from the Beverly Hills-based The Management Group, which is suing the star in Los Angeles for an unpaid loan. Depp and actress Amber Heard, 31, reached an out-of-court settlement in August last year to end their 18-month marriage, agreeing that he would pay her \$7 million. — AFP



This file photo shows moderator/writer David Leslie Johnson, director David F. Sandberg, actors Miranda Otto, Anthony LaPaglia, Stephanie Sigman, Talitha Bateman and Lulu Wilson attending the premiere of Warner Bros. Pictures' Annabelle: Creation during the 2017 Los Angeles Film Festival at the Theatre at Ace Hotel in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

THE CREEPY TOYS MAKING A KILLING AT THE BOX OFFICE

Take away a vampire's teeth and he's just a Goth that can't handle garlic. Wait for some decent cloud cover and your average werewolf is about as scary as Lassie. But there is one enduring horror trope that can have grown men and women gnawing at their fingernails when things go bump in the night: The creepy, haunted child's toy. From malevolent teddy bears and possessed clowns to murderous porcelain dolls rocking menacingly in their chairs, these evil characters have become a multi-million dollar staple adored by fans and studio executives alike.

The killer toy resonates so profoundly because of the cognitive dissonance involved in the idea of a child's cuddly toy going rogue, according to film experts. "There's something very primal about absurd fears, which is something I posit that most of us never completely grow out of," Shawn Robbins, chief analyst at film industry number cruncher Boxoffice.com, said.

"In a twisted way, that just makes it more fun for adults when it comes to these types of movies," "Annabelle: Creation," which has blown away critics and earned a 100 percent rating on reviews website Rotten Tomatoes ahead of its summer release, is the latest example of a genre spanning more than 100 movies.

Origin story

But killer toys have been scaring the bejesus out

of theatergoers since Lionel Barrymore played a cross-dressing fugitive selling life-like doll that were actually shrunken humans in "The Devil-Doll" in 1936. "Child's Play" (1988) introduced perhaps the most famous evil doll of them all, Chucky—a crude, hard-drinking misogynist who went on to appear in four theatrical sequels and two straight-to-DVD movies.

After a fallow period, Australian filmmaker James Wan resurrected the creepy toy trope to huge success with Billy, the Jigsaw Killer's puppet in "Saw" (2004) and its sequels, as well as in "Dead Silence" (2007). His most significant contribution, however, has been Annabelle, a haunted porcelain doll first seen in "The Conjuring" (2013).

Based on a real, supposedly haunted "Raggedy Ann" doll that can be visited in a museum in Connecticut, Annabelle—an altogether darker prospect than Chucky—is regarded by many as the creepiest doll in cinema history. "Annabelle," a commercially successful but critically unadmired spin-off, came out in 2014. Wan is the producer on the much more impressive origin story "Annabelle: Creation," due out on August 11.

Boxoffice.com says the movie's impressive latest trailer has increased optimism for a healthy \$25-\$30 million domestic opening weekend. "It looks like a film that could help out what's initially been thought of as a very mixed August slate of releases," Robbins said.

Extra creepy

Filed over the summer of 2016 at the Warner Bros. lot in Burbank, the deliciously bloodcurdling prequel focuses on a dollmaker and his wife, whose daughter died 20 years earlier. Murder and mayhem ensue as they decide to open their home to several girls from a shuttered orphanage, only to reawaken the doll maker's possessed creation. "Annabelle just has such a rich history," 36-year-old Swedish director David Sandberg told reporters at a preview screening at the Los Angeles Film Festival this week.

"She's based on a real doll, and James did such a good job setting her up in 'The Conjuring' that people just associate her with evil." Emmy and Golden Globe-winning Australian actor Anthony LaPaglia, who plays the dollmaker, said he chose not to get to know the movie's talented young female cast led by Lulu Wilson, 11, and 15-year-old co-star Talitha Bateman—so that he "could be extra creepy" on set. "I always like implied violence as opposed to seeing a sword go through someone's head, and this has a lot of implied violence that is way scarier," he told reporters on the red carpet. "For me the best part was going to work and just scaring these kids every day." — AFP

For Okja, growing a GMO pig from page to screen

The giant genetically modified pig of Bong Joon Ho's "Okja" is 8-feet tall, 13-feet long and would, if real, weigh six tons. It looks most like a hippo, but it has big floppy dog ears and moves a little like an elephant. It's a hybrid creature for a hybrid movie. Like the South Korean director's previous films ("Snowpiercer," "The Host"), "Okja" is a mishmash of genres: magical fantasy and grotesque political satire. It's a cross between Spielberg and slaughterhouse.

Since its debut at the Cannes Film Festival, "Okja" has been thrust into debates over Netflix's impact on traditional movie going. Most large movie theater chains in North America and Bong's native South Korea have refused to screen a film that will simultaneously hit Netflix's streaming service. But on screens large or small, the animal named Okja is a wonder to behold. She snorts and slobbers, does running belly-flops into lakes and shoots poop like a low-caliber machine gun.

Up until now, Netflix original films have been largely lower budget affairs or documentaries. The giant pig of "Okja" is Netflix's first special-effect marvel. The largely English-language, international film, made for \$50 million, boasts a cast of Tilda Swinton, Jake Gyllenhaal and Paul Dano. But the heart of it is a young Korean girl named Mija (An Seo Hyun) and her loyal pig companion. After ten years raising Okja, the corporation that created these "super pigs" wants them back. Here's how she was created:

Initial inspiration

While in Seoul in 2011, Bong's eye caught an animal on the street with a melancholy look. The image stuck with him. "The very beginning was from the image of the animal," says Bong. "The face of the animal looked quite sad in my imagination. Sad and shy and a little bit in pain. So I was thinking of why? What's the reason she has such a sad face? What's the origin and destiny of that animal? Naturally, those industry things come in."

Bong began sketching the animal that would become Okja.



This image released by Netflix shows Seo-Hyun Ahn as Mija and the character Okja in a scene from 'Okja.' — AP

When he first mentioned the film to Swinton (they were driving to the airport after the Seoul premiere of "Snowpiercer") he merely showed her a pencil drawing of the animal.

New and old collaborators

To flesh out his own sketches, Bong turned to Jang Hee-chul, the conceptual artist who designed the monster of the director's 2007 thriller "The Host." Bong calls Jang, whose monster for "The Host" looked like a bottom-feeding fish but with legs, "a young genius." He's no less effusive about visual effects supervisor Erik-Jan De Boer, the Oscar-winning animator who crafted the tiger Richard Parker in Ang Lee's "Life of Pi."

"He's crazy about animals," says Bong. "He goes into the butcher shop and he studies the cuts and the crevices of animal

parts. Others usually just look at the outer exterior, but Erik conceived Okja with not just the skin but the arteries, the blood, the fat and the bone structure." They first met in late 2014. Bong showed him the concept work but didn't yet have a script ready. "That was a pretty interesting meeting, being shown that crazy design and having no idea where the story was going to go," says De Boer.

Beagle brainstorming

De Boer quickly began riffing through YouTube videos to study different animal behaviors, but some of his research was more hands on. Swinton's springer spaniel Rosie (one of her four) was an inspiration. A beagle also largely informed Okja's ears and hang-dog look. "For ears, we looked at canines and elephants.

For the skin, we looked at hippos and manatees and also elephants a little bit. For behavior and some of the intelligence and connection with the owner, we looked again at canines and Labradors and beagles, especially," said De Boer. "It's a hybrid of references we used to make this hybrid of an animal."

Bong was particularly fond of a YouTube video about a hippo named Jessica living in a house. They also photographed hippos to get a more sinewy skin. Pigs, ironically, were less of an influence because of Okja's size. "There's a lot of people nowadays who think they're buying one of those little minipiglets and they end up with a huge animal walking around their house," said De Boer. "There's a ton of online footage where you see a lot of interesting interactions and behavioral stuff. We definitely keyed off of that."

Shooting Okja

As much as computer generated effects have advanced in recent years, placing a CGI character amid live-action scenes is still arduous and expensive to do. It changes a film's entire production pipeline and affects every lighting decision. "We didn't have one of those shots, we had hundreds of those," said De Boer. "Almost in every shot, we had somebody putting their hands on Okja. In some cases we had six people touching Okja and we had to legitimize all of it." But the seamlessness and tactile feel of Okja is also what sets it above many others.

During filming, they used a foam puppet rig to stand in for Okja - sometimes the whole animal, sometimes just part of it. It was controlled by VFX animation director Stephen Cleo, who typically puppeteer the head, himself. Cleo stayed connected by radio with De Boer. It all made for a fairly outlandish looking shoot, from National Parks in Korea to Wall Street in New York. "We were running around with these foam pieces and everyone's looking at you wondering what the hell is going on," said De Boer. "It was spectacular filmmaking." — AP

MUSIC & MOVIES

The song that begat 'Baby Driver,' a quasi-musical on wheels

In the jagged grooves and quivering violins of the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion song "Bellbottoms," a young Edgar Wright heard a movie. When Wright first started fanatically listening to the lead track off the band's "Orange" album in 1995, the British writer-director had a vision that has culminated, more than two decades later, with his new film, "Baby Driver."

"The idea for this movie is as old as 'Orange,'" Wright said in an interview. "I was either 20 or 21 and I had just moved to London. I was working on my first movie I ever made. I was completely broke. I think I had a cassette of 'Orange' that I had copied off of someone else, maybe my brother. I listened to 'Bellbottoms' all the time. I just started to visualize this car chase. I'd think, 'This would be the perfect car chase song in a movie, but what's the movie?'"

"Baby Driver," it turned out, was the movie, but it took years for Wright ("Shaun of the Dead," "Hot Fuzz") to find the story that matched his initial inspiration. Eventually he hit on his protagonist: an uncommonly young, fresh-faced getaway driver (Ansel Elgort) who obsessively syncs his life and his car chases to the music of his iPod. The movie wouldn't just tie together song and cinema; it would be about the fusion of music and action.

While not exactly a musical, "Baby Driver" (which opens Wednesday) was built on top of its soundtrack, starting with "Bellbottoms." Martha and the Vandellas' "Nowhere to Run" plays during a tight squeeze. A hair-raising escape is set to the Damned's "Neat, Neat, Neat." Things happen on the beat. Wright had to secure his soundtrack's rights before shooting; many of the songs, like the Blues Explosion one, were cleared years ago. Actors received their scripts with a

thumb drive of music attached.

"It's something about trying to assign order to life by sound tracking your every move," said Wright. "It's that thing when everything breaks right and it's the right song and the right moment. It's something that a lot of people do on a sort of everyday level, but what if you put it together with an extremely high pressured job, like being a getaway driver for a very dangerous gang?" So it's fitting that the movie was essentially born from a single song. It's the start of the film, too: "Bellbottoms" kicks off the high-octane opera that is "Baby Driver."

"I definitely get a kick out of it," said Jon Spencer. "Edgar is sort of a very Blues Explosion kind of director - sort of post-modern, post-genre, everything is kind of amped up. Who better to use a Blues Explosion song and that particular Blues Explosion song?" It's an especially high-profile role in one of the summer's best-reviewed releases - not to mention one of the season's few refreshingly original tales - for a band that has for decades proudly lived in the underground. Spencer, who also wrote a song for "Hot Fuzz," even makes a cameo late in the film.

The New York blues- and irony-infused post-punk trio of Spencer, Judah Bauer and Russell Simins were a garage-rock forerunner to the White Stripes and others, whose most popular days were in the '90s. They've long drawn the interest of other artists; Beck, Moby and GZA have all remixed them. Mike Mills, the "20th Century Women" director, designed some of their cover art and directed a music video. David Michod's recent satire, "War Machine," used one of their songs. For "Baby Driver," Danger Mouse, Big Boi and Run the Jewels made their version of "Bellbottoms."

"We didn't have any hits, but if we were to have had a hit, this was our hit," said Spencer. "It's our most Blues Explosion song and it's from our most popular album. We were a working band. We weren't on a late-night show until like two or three years ago." Wright's idea underwent many iterations. He tested a version of it in a 2002 music video for the Mint Royale's "Blue Song." "I thought: What a waste. I just burned off a great idea on this music video," said Wright. "Ironically, years later, it became a way of post-dating the idea."

But Wright decided to keep at it. He estimates he wrote the script around 2010, when he started talking to ex-convicts for research, peppering them with questions about what, if anything, they listened to during heists. One mentioned that he was superstitious enough that if a truly awful song came on the radio, the gig was off. The offensive song to him was Guns 'N Roses' "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" cover, but the "hex song" in "Baby Driver" comes from a tune Jamie Foxx actually detests: the Eagles' "Hotel California."

At a 2010 event at the Los Angeles Film Festival, moderator J.J. Abrams showed the Mint Royale video. While it played, he leaned over to Wright and said, "This would make a great movie." Wright replied: "I'm way ahead of you." "The World's End," Wright's 2013 apocalyptic reunion movie, got pushed ahead of "Baby Driver." Then came years writing and developing Marvel's "Ant-Man." Shortly before production was to begin, he and the studio parted ways over creative differences, a painful end to a big-budget passion project of Wright's.

Wright acknowledges it was "a heartbreaking



This image released by Sony-TriStar Pictures shows Ansel Elgort as Baby in a scene from 'Baby Driver.' — AP

experience" but there was a quick U-turn. "Maybe the day after I left the other movie, literally one of the first emails I got from (production company) Working Title just said 'Baby Driver next?'" recalled Wright. "That's all it said." So "Baby Driver" was in that way a homecoming for Wright: a return to a movie he could control and to a song that's been in his head most of his adult life. "The lightbulb moment was listening to that song," said Wright. "The fact that 22 years later it exists in the film and 'Bellbottoms' is the first track, it's dream stuff for me." — AP



In this photo, singer-songwriter Lionel Richie poses for a portrait in Burbank, California, to promote his concert tour. — AP

Lionel Richie: Tour with Mariah will be camp city

Lionel Richie is welcoming full diva behavior from Mariah Carey when she joins his "All the Hits" tour next month. Richie jokes that he expects Carey to bring along a massive entourage and might need a "dressing room larger than the arena," but that's no problem. "I wanted her to feel in her element," Richie says. "And a diva has to do what a diva has to do." The Grammy- and Oscar-winning singer-songwriter says he invited Carey on tour because of her discography of hits and campy vibe.

"It's going to be camp city," Richie says. "And I told her, 'Bring all the camp with you.'" Richie and Carey's 22-show tour launches July 21 in Oakland. Richie postponed the tour's start in February so he could fully recover from a knee procedure and says he now feels great. The 68-year-old father of three - who says he's writing a book called "How to Survive Your Children" - is accustomed to dramatics.

"He says his daughter Nicole started her acting career as a teenager at home anytime she denied wrongdoing. Now she's earning praise for her comedic turn in the NBC sitcom "Great News." "She has the command of what she wants to portray," Richie says of his eldest child. "If it's dramatic, boy can she be dramatic. And just funny. That's a natural." NBC's "Great News" returns for its second season in September. — AP

Actress Mira Sorvino urges support for trafficking victims

Oscar-winning actress Mira Sorvino urged all nations and the business community on Friday to ramp up financial support for victims of human trafficking, saying the services such funds provide "mean the difference between life and death." Sorvino, who has been a UN goodwill ambassador for the global fight against human trafficking, told a UN meeting that "government and private sector funding is sorely lacking in providing the life-rebuilding shelter, services and legal help survivors desperately need."

The session was part of the preparatory process for a high-level UN meeting in September to review the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Sorvino said world leaders need "to craft a better, more victim-centered response" that puts survivors at the negotiating table where the global plan is readjusted. Survivors know "exactly what policies are needed ... as well as how to attack underlying causes," she said.

More than 15 years after the protocol to prevent and punish human trafficking was opened for signatures by a UN General Assembly resolution, Sorvino said, "I do believe we stand ready to ramp up our response to effectively combat and ultimately stamp out human trafficking." "But we must fully commit our political will and resources," she said. Sorvino's Oscar-winning role as a prostitute with a golden heart in Woody Allen's "Mighty Aphrodite" might have cast the world's oldest profession in comic light.

But she has become a crusader against the sex trade and modern-day slavery. "Often the treatment of survivors inadvertently re-victimizes them, keeping them in an atmosphere of incarceration and re-traumatizes them as they must re-live their experiences ... multiple times," she said. Adequate funding to groups that help trafficking victims means the difference between "slavery or the redemption of a free, productive life," Sorvino stressed. — AP

CELEBRITY CHEF DARREN SIMPSON DIES IN AUSTRALIA

Darren Simpson, who at 21 became Britain's youngest ever Young Chef of the Year and has been a television chef and food writer, has died in Australia, his family said Friday. Northern Ireland-born Simpson worked at multiple restaurants in London, Ireland and Australia and appeared in Australian television's "My Restaurant Rules," "Live This," and "Ready Steady Cook."

"My uncle Darren has passed away. He was truly one of a kind! He was a funny immature, caring guy, gonna miss you and your sick jokes! Love you Uncle Darren," the chef's nephew Matt Simpson posted on Facebook. Simpson died near his home in Byron Bay north of Sydney on Thursday afternoon, Seven Network television reported. He had recently attempted rehabilitation at a clinic for alcohol addiction before ending up in a hospital, News Corp. websites reported. The cause of death has not been confirmed.

Simpson grew up in Armoyn and Hillsborough outside Belfast, one of three children of publican parents. A family friend who was a chef in Bermuda inspired him to make cooking his career, Fairfax Media reported. Australia's LifeStyle Channel broadcast three series starring Simpson as "The Best in Australia," based on the BBC series "The Best," since 2007. The series producer Marian Bartsch, of Mago Films, described Simpson as "a bright spark full of all that life had to offer and a razor sharp wit to match."

"Darren's quick wit and quirky Irish sense of

humor allowed him to shine on and off camera and forged a lifelong friendship with all who came in contact with him on the show," Bartsch said in an email. "He was such a lovely man. Funny, thoughtful, larger-than-life and a damn good chef. We will miss him and are thinking of his family at this sad time," she added. The LifeStyle channel's profile of Simpson said he won the prestigious Young Chef of the Year award, open to all British chefs under the age of 25, within two years of landing his first job as a chef.

From 1992 to 1999, Simpson worked in restaurants including Michelin-starred Roscoff in Ireland and Le Gavroche in London. He also worked in top London restaurants Clarke's, Bibendum, River Cafe and Sartoria. In 1999, he was head-hunted to become the head chef of Aqua Luna Bar and Restaurant in Sydney. In 2005, he opened the award-winning La Sala a modern Italian restaurant. Simpson was awarded Chef of the Year by the Australian Hotels Association in 2011. He had recently worked at restaurants in Queensland state.

The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper's chief restaurant critic, Terry Durack, praised Simpson's influence on the local food scene, saying "he brought something new to Sydney." "He brought that cocky Irish charm to everything he did, but was actually a big old softie inside," Durack wrote. Simpson is survived by his wife Julie and sons Angus, 14, and Hamish, 12. — AP



In this undated photo released by Foxtel, Darren Simpson, right, poses with his co-hosts and fellow chefs Anna Gare and Ben O'Donoghue for their cooking show 'The Best in Australia.' — AP

Ron Howard to take over Star Wars Han Solo spin-off

Oscar-winning filmmaker Ron Howard has been brought in to complete the hotly-anticipated "Star Wars" Han Solo spin-off after directing duo Phil Lord and Chris Miller were sacked, Lucasfilm said Thursday. Lord and Miller, the pair behind the acclaimed "The LEGO Movie" and "21 Jump Street," were dropped after clashing with the studio's chief Kathleen Kennedy and writer Lawrence Kasdan, according to reports in the Hollywood trade press.

"At Lucasfilm, we believe the highest goal of each film is to delight, carrying forward the spirit of the saga that George Lucas began 40 years ago," Kennedy said in a statement. "With that in mind, we're thrilled to announce that Ron Howard will step in to direct the untitled Han Solo film. We have a wonderful script, an incredible cast and crew, and the absolute commitment to make a great movie. Filming will resume on July 10."

Lord and Miller, who were just weeks away from wrapping principal photography at London's Pinewood Studios, annoyed Kasdan - a "Star Wars" legend who co-wrote "The Empire Strikes Back," "Return of the Jedi" and "The Force Awakens" - by insisting on more humor and encouraging improvisation, according to Variety magazine.

"Nothing happens in the Lucasfilm universe without major consideration and bringing in Ron Howard to take over the reins of the 'Han Solo Project' must've come after intense deliberation," Paul Dergarabedian, a senior media analyst for comScore, said. "Considering the incredibly high-profile nature of the film and its importance to the 'Star Wars' brand and legacy, this move-while causing a huge stir now-will be

vindicated once the marketing machine sets in motion and if the first footage and resultant buzz for the film is strong."

Creative differences

Howard worked with Lucasfilm on "Willow" in 1988 but is better known for hits such as "Parenthood," "Apollo 13," and "A Beautiful Mind," a 2001 biopic about Nobel prize-winning paranoid schizophrenic mathematician John Nash, which won him a best director Oscar. But his reputation has suffered with a number of turkeys, including "Inferno," "In the Heart of the Sea," "Made in America" and "The Dilemma," and he will be looking to get back on track with his first big box office hit since "Angels and Demons" in 2009.

In a statement, Lord and Miller blamed "creative differences" for the split with Lucasfilm and said their "vision and process weren't aligned with our partners on this project." The untitled Han Solo film is slated for a May 25, 2018 release. Alden Ehrenreich stars as galactic smuggler Solo, a role that made Harrison Ford a superstar in the original 1977 movie and its sequels.

The spin-off also stars Woody Harrelson, Thandie Newton, Emilia Clarke and Donald Glover as Solo's pal Lando Calrissian. It is set in the period before the original 1977 movie, which was released as "Star Wars" but later retitled "Episode IV: A New Hope." This is the second in a series of standalone films that began with "Rogue One," released in December, which earned \$1 billion worldwide. — AFP



This file photo shows Director Ron Howard as he attends the world premiere of his movie 'Inferno' in Florence. — AFP

'El Chapo' to sue Netflix over series

Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman plans to sue Netflix and Univision for allegedly defaming him with a TV series about his life, one of his lawyers said Thursday. The series, "El Chapo" - which premiered in April - presents Guzman as a "heartless criminal," damaging his image just as he faces trial in US federal court next year, said lawyer Jose Refugio Rodriguez.

"Things are happening (in the series) that do not correspond to reality, despite the fact that there is no conviction confirming those events. That represents a grave violation of (Guzman's) right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty," he told Mexican radio network Formula. It is not the first time Guzman, who is accused of running one of the world's biggest drug empires, has threatened to sue over the series.

Last year, another of his lawyers threatened to sue Netflix and Univision because the American streaming giant and Spanish-language broadcaster had not paid for the rights to his story. The series, which stars Mexican actor Marco de la O, went ahead anyway. Refugio said he had not yet discussed the matter with Guzman because his client is being kept "incommunicado" in a New York jail.

The lawyer said he had not decided whether to file the lawsuit in the United States or Mexico. Guzman, 60, is being represented by two public defenders in the US court, which has not authorized his Mexican legal team to defend him. "El Chapo," the leader of the Sinaloa cartel, is being held in solitary confinement after twice escaping from prison in Mexico.

Ironically, it was Guzman's desire to see his life story on screen that led to his recapture, according to Mexican authorities. He was rearrested in January 2016 after a high-profile manhunt that ended with Hollywood star Sean Penn and US-Mexican actress Kate Del Castillo inadvertently leading the authorities to his hideout. Del Castillo said the drug boss agreed to the meeting because he wanted to discuss making a film about his life. — AFP

Teenage boy from Mumbai slum dances way to NY ballet school

The son of a welder from this city's slums had a dream few Indians dared to dream - to dance with the New York City Ballet. In a few months, that dream may be a little bit closer as 15-year-old Amiruddin Shah begins four years of training at the prestigious American Ballet Theatre's Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School. "I never thought I would become a ballet dancer," Shah said, though he knew from the age of 6 that he loved to move with music. "India is not on the ballet map, and I want to take India to an even higher level."

Shah began studying ballet less than three years ago when Israeli-American instructor Yehuda Maor was invited by the Danceworx Academy to teach in India - a country with no special ballet academies. Maor happened to catch Shah doing cartwheels and backflips as part of the Danceworx jazz and contemporary dance program for underprivileged students. "I had no idea about ballet," Shah recalled. He had been dancing freestyle whenever he got the chance - sometimes he was invited to weddings to perform, sometimes he just goofed around with friends.

Maor was impressed with how Shah moved and asked to see the bottom of Shah's feet. He discovered the boy had perfect arches for ballet and urged him to train. Within 2 1/2 years, Shah had nailed his pointe, pirouette and arabesque, "which is

unheard of," Maor said. "I knew I had found a diamond in a pile of rocks," said the teacher, acknowledging that his pupil now "needs to be challenged" by more teachers. Maor bought Shah ballet shoes and dance clothes and helped him and another young dancer, 21-year-old Manish Chauhan, win scholarships in June to New York's Joffrey Ballet School. But they could not secure US visas in time.

Shah and Chauhan were then offered scholarships at the Oregon Ballet Theater starting in December. Shah attended for three months, while Chauhan is still training in Portland. Now, Shah is trying to raise funds for four years of travel and tuition with the American Ballet Theatre in New York. They have enough for his first year, beginning in August, but have set up a website to accept donations for three more years in the US. Shah said he is eager to stay in a dormitory and "be in a proper ballet school."

"I am so excited, but slightly scared, too," said Shah, who speaks basic English but used Hindi in an interview with The Associated Press. "How would I interact with people? New York is very crowded." One day, he hopes to be a principal dancer in the New York Ballet. And eventually, he said, "I want to teach other children who cannot afford to pay for dance." — AP



In this photo, 15-year-old ballet dancer Amiruddin Shah, left, practices with Israeli-American instructor Yehuda Maor in Mumbai, India. — AP

In Argentina, music cures the soul

Picture a hospital: The bustle of harried doctors and nurses, time dragging for lonely patients, and the pervasive sadness of a place for the sick and dying. And suddenly, there's music-live, classical music, the sounds of masters like Johannes Brahms and Giuseppe Verdi-to make it all a bit more bearable. These unannounced flash concerts are staged by an organization called Music for the Soul, and on this particular day at Alvarez Hospital in Buenos Aires the artists are 70 musicians, a choir, two sopranos and a tenor.

They perform for free, and most of the time with fellow musicians they meet for the first time right then and there. The network was created in Argentina five years ago and now operates in 10 countries across three continents. It is made up of professionals from prestigious orchestras who donate their time and passion to share the soothing power of music. The organization boasts more than 2,000 performers and has given some 300 concerts in a format that has inspired similar programs in Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Ecuador, Italy, France and Israel.

Music in the soul

The force behind it all was a young orchestra flutist named Eugenia Rubio, who died of cancer at the age of 24. She asked colleagues to play for her as doctors tried to keep her comfortable in the final months of her life. "Eugenia was my partner, and although this idea was born of suffering, we realized that music is a magic channel that allows people to forget their pain, their loneliness, their incapacity," said Jorge Bergero, founder of the project and cellist for the orchestra of the

Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. After Rubio died, "we decided to carry on with 10 musicians and today there are more than 2,000 of us," he said.

The organization's web page allows musicians to volunteer and hospitals to request concerts. The only pre-requisite is that the musicians be professionals. "The musicians come because they want to. They do not get paid. No one is looking at their watch," said Bergero. Concerts are held on Mondays, the day that orchestras usually have off. The musical scores are sent via email, and the musicians meet each other right before the show. They rehearse right there on the spot. "I come to sing out of selfishness because it helps my spirit as well. It is my best therapy," said Soledad de la Rosa, a soprano.

Silence is not healthy

In the main lobby of the hospital in a lower middle class neighborhood, applause and shouts of "bravo!" ring out with the last notes of Verdi's La Traviata. The idea is not to disturb the routine of the hospital but that is a tough task when the walls are reverberating with the lively sounds of Brahms' Hungarian Dances. Some find it irritating but most people are fascinated. "I had never heard an orchestra," says a lady named Liliana, filming what she can for her sister, who is in a bed three floors up. The staircases are prime places to watch the concert in the lobby and they fill quickly, with many of the spectators wearing medical garb.

"Music has a healing effect because it is related to spirituality, and in patients who are approaching the end of their lives it allows them to reconnect with joy, happiness and

emotion. It is absolutely therapeutic," said Ana Maria Soriano, director of palliative care in the hospital's cancer ward. Out of nowhere, a patient asks permission to sing and surprises everybody. Claudia Llovet is a soprano who came to the hospital for treatment and knows all about how music helps fight sickness. "I used to sing to my mother when she had Alzheimer's. She did not recognize me anymore, and this was the only way for her to connect with me," said Llovet.

Concertino

When the concert ends, eight musicians and two singers head off through the hallways of the hospital to hold smaller performances in patients' rooms. Doctors get flustered when people with violins and double basses barge in. But the hospital management is OK with it all. "Play another, please," says a man named Daniel. He is 68 years old and has been an invalid for two. "It is a joy for the soul. Classical music is better than any kind of medicine."

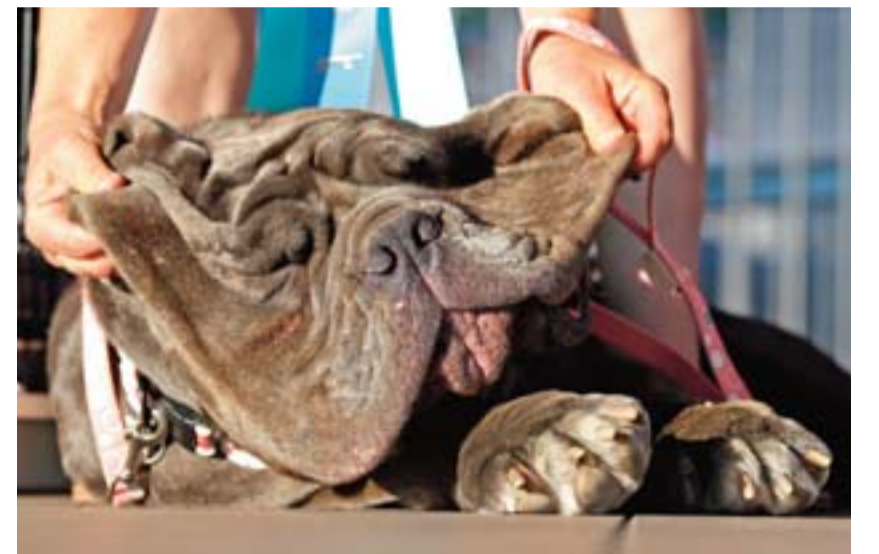
Further back in the room a young woman leans down toward her sick grandmother and together they make as if they were dancing to the music of Verdi. "It touches me to see how this affects the patients. For a short while, they stop thinking about their illness and focus on the music, which fills the heart with happiness," said Laura Cordero, the director of the hospital. Then, as if an invisible conductor waved an imaginary baton, the intimate concert ends and with a sigh a nurse says, "we are a hospital again." — AFP



A man watches volunteer members of Musica Para el Alma (Music for the Soul) giving a flash mob concert in the main hall of the Alvarez Hospital in Buenos Aires.



Volunteer members of Musica Para el Alma (Music for the Soul) perform for patients at the Alvarez Hospital in Buenos Aires. — AFP photos



Shirley Zindler, of Sebastopol, Calif, lifts up the jowls of Martha, a Neapolitan mastiff, during the World's Ugliest Dog Contest at the Sonoma-Marín Fair in Petaluma, California. — AP photos



Rascal, left, a Chinese Crest, held by Dane Andrew of Sunnyvale, California, meets Chase, right, a Chinese Crested Harke, held by Storm Shayler, right, of Britain.



In this file photo, Peanut, a 2-year-old mutt is held by owner Holly Chandler after winning the World's Ugliest Dog Contest at the Sonoma-Marín Fair in Petaluma, California.

WORLD'S UGLIEST DOG CONTEST AWARDS UNDERDOGS' INNER BEAUTY

Homely hounds and their humans walked down a one-of-a-kind runway Friday night at the annual World's Ugliest Dog Contest, where dog lovers celebrate the imperfections of man's best friend. Many of the contestants are adopted. Monkey, a 6-year-old Brussels Griffon, and Icky, an 8-year-old unknown breed, were both rescued from the homes of hoarders. These dogs - some with acne, others with tongues permanently sticking out - are used to their owners, it was love at first sight.

"He's my sexy boy," Vicky Adler, of Davis, California, said of her 8-year-old Chinese Crested named Zoomer. At 16 years old, Moe, a Brussels Griffon and pug, is this year's most senior contestant. He has lost his hearing and sight but his sense of smell is strong and he

was enjoying all the smells the fair-ground offered - including funnel cakes and other fried goodies. The pooches faced off in a red carpet walk and "Faux Paw Fashion Show." The contestants are judged on first impressions, unusual attributes, personality and audience reaction.

A blind Chihuahua-Chinese Crested mix named Sweepee Rambo bested 16 other ugly entries in last year's competition and waddled away with \$1,500, a trophy and a flight to New York with her owner for media appearances. Besides the main crown, the Spirit Award is presented to a dog and owner who have overcome obstacles or provide service to their community, organizers said. This is the 29th year the contest is being held at the Sonoma-Marín Fair. — AP

FASHION



Dubai based fashion designer Aisha Ramadan is seen in her studio in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. — AFP photos

Ramadan earns prime spot on Gulf fashion calendar

From Dolce & Gabbana to Michael Kors, major brands are catering to lucrative Gulf markets during the Muslim Holy Month of Ramadan, which is earning its own slot on the global fashion calendar. With Muslim spending on clothing on the rise, mainstream labels are courting the dirham, dinar and riyal in a region home to some of the world's biggest buyers of fashion.

High-end and fast-fashion brands in the United States, Europe and Asia have made an aggressive push to break into the Gulf, where demand for "modest wear" is skyrocketing, fuelled in part by the rise of social media influencers and Muslim lifestyle and beauty vloggers. Holidays have long been high seasons for retailers around the world and Ramadan, a month of fasting from dawn to sunset aimed at reflection and modesty, is no longer the exception.

The market for the abaya, a long, loose robe worn over clothes, in particular peaks during the holy month, according to Dubai-based designer Aisha Ramadan, as women strive to avoid outfit repeats at all costs. But while attention to clientele interested in modest wear has been a long time coming, some say the move has brought the good, the bad and the offensive to shelves across the Gulf.

Ramadan ready

Muslim spending worldwide on clothing and shoes is projected to reach \$500 billion by 2019, according to Tamara Hostal, the head of fashion marketing at design school ESMOD Dubai. Ramadan has turned into a de facto micro-sea-

son in the Middle East, with fashion brands releasing capsule collections exclusive to the region through May and June.

DKNY launched a Middle East-exclusive Ramadan line in 2014, and other labels have since jumped on the bandwagon: Dolce & Gabbana, CH Carolina Herrera, Michael Kors, Tommy Hilfiger, Zara, Mango, Uniqlo and Nike, among others.

Dolce & Gabbana filmed a widely publicized 2016 campaign for their abaya robe and hijab headscarf lines entirely in Dubai—where the need to be "Ramadan ready" is turning into a commercial, cultural and complex phenomenon. Instagram is flooded with #ootd (outfit of the day) posts and the pages of Vogue Arabia filled with how to curate a wardrobe of festive, and generally modest, attire.

Respect our culture

Most popular in Ramadan are evening dresses, particularly in bright colors, for the iftar meal to break the fast. Like the long abaya robe, the maxi dress also provides designers with a versatile canvas for a diverse clientele. Aisha Ramadan, who has dressed American singers Jennifer Lopez, Christina Aguilera and Zendaya, is both a creator and wearer of abayas and maxis.

"International brands are making a smart move by moving into the home of the Arab woman with kaftans and abayas," Ramadan said at her atelier in the UAE emirate of Sharjah. "There are so many options. You have the ready-to-wear, which draws in clients looking for a casual, everyday wardrobe. "Then you have the



haute couture abayas, which attract the client looking to stand out," said Ramadan, herself wearing a deep pink kaftan and a gold necklace with Arabic calligraphy. "As long as it respects our culture, it's a beautiful thing."

Eid collection

The three-day Eid al-Fitr holiday marking the end of Ramadan is an occasion to go all-out for style-savvy, and image-conscious, Arab customers, and some designers are releasing sepa-

rate lines for the occasion. US-Venezuelan designer Carolina Herrera in May unveiled a Ramadan line exclusively for the Gulf, featuring four styles of abayas with her trademark polka dot and bow motifs.

The house's ready-couture line is separately releasing a Fall/Winter collection exclusive to the region in preparation for Eid-likely to fall early next week—with "long dresses in black, red lace and mimosa yellow that can be buttoned up or down for every woman".

"This is a novel market. We are still collecting feedback on our first collection, but generally the client here won't pay for simple or what would be seen as plain designs," said Dania Fakhr, regional marketing manager for retailer CH Carolina Herrera. "They appreciate design, even if it's not for them. If they like it, they buy it."

Drop the hem and voila

But the trend has its critics among some industry insiders who stand at the crossroads of identity and international marketing. In gold and silver Dior sunglasses on a warm Dubai evening, one of the region's social media influencers—an observant Muslim and self-professed "fashion victim"—spoke out against "the commercialization without understanding" of her culture. "You can't just slap a pair of sleeves on a collection and drop the hem and voila, a collection for Ramadan," she said dismissively, requesting anonymity for professional reasons.

"Frankly, it's just offensive." But others hold that cultural and religious traditions inevitably spill beyond their origins. "The abaya started as a tradition, as a form of modesty," said Aisha Ramadan. "Culturally, it's moved beyond religion, and beyond plain black in terms of design," she added. "I think it's just a matter of time before we see women in the West incorporating abayas into their wardrobes." — AFP

KURDISH DESIGNERS BRING FIGHT WITH IS TO PARIS CATWALK



Dilan Lurr and his sister Lezan often ask themselves where would they be now if their parents had not left Iraq when they were children. Would they be fighting against Islamic State like their cousins back in Kirkuk? What is almost certain they would not be showing their first collection at Paris fashion week sandwiched in Friday's schedule between storied brands such as Berluti and Commes des Garçons. But the brother and sister who were brought up in Sweden have far from forgotten the historically Kurdish city they left behind at age nine and four.

They started their Namacheke menswear label in 2015 "as a way of expressing our thoughts about our background," said 28-year-old Dilan. "We grew up in a very free space in Sweden, where we could study and dream. Our parents are religious but they have always been very liberal with us." But imagine "how horrible is it if even in your dreams you cannot be free," he said.

"You always think where would I be right now if we had stayed in Kirkuk," he said of the city which was only saved from falling into IS hands by the swift intervention of Kurdish peshmerga fighters. More than mere fashion, the Lurrs' first collection is a subtle meditation on their lives between Sweden and Kirkuk, whose mixed population is about to vote on whether it will join Iraq's increasingly independent Kurdish autonomous region.

Cousin on frontline

"We talk a lot with our cousins there and they think it is

mind-blowing how we live," said Dilan, who like his sister studied engineering before coming to fashion through art. "We travelled between Sweden, Belgium and Paris to work on the collection and they cannot believe how we go from one country to another as if we were just taking a bus."

Their cousin Heresh, who modeled for them in a video Dilan shot in the flaming oilfields that surround Kirkuk, is now fighting IS on the frontline. "We feel our great freedom when we speak with our cousins," Dilan said. "When we went to the frontline we were amazed to see so many older men from their 50s onwards with their bellies and everything were fighting. But these guys do not run when ISIS comes. They know the drill. Some of them have been fighting since the 1970s."

"You imagine these super fit, highly-trained peshmergas but in reality there are a lot of fathers and grandfathers who are out there for three days and then home for a week." Cleverly disguised peshmerga jackets—white rather than regulation olive green—popped up in the Lurrs' Paris show—itsself a labor of love. "We begged and borrowed to put this show on. No one has been paid," said Dilan after the showing.

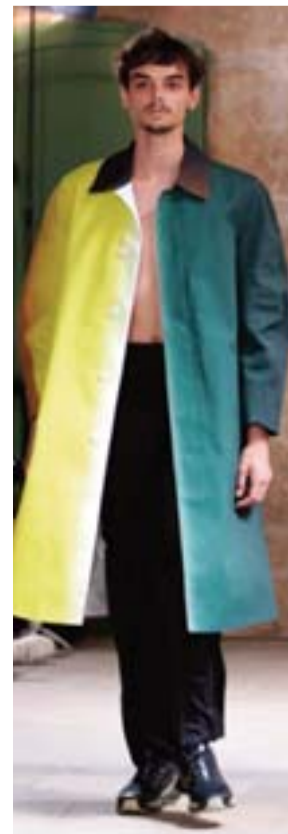
Exposing the suffering inside

The Lurrs are at pains to point out that Namacheke's cashmere and silk creations are more an expression of their own personal journey as they "adapted to Sweden and it adapted to us". Lezan told of how when she arrived in

Sweden she was sent to a church kindergarten rather than a state one by her pious parents where "my favourite story-book became the Bible." "I was the only Muslim there yet I loved its stories. My parents were very happy about it and even read it to me. They were very open and liberal with us, within limits."

Despite their preoccupations with exile and belonging, Dilan said there are few overtly Kurdish influences on their clothes, although there are touches for those with the eyes to see. "I don't want the collection to be Middle Eastern but we added small touches and references. Some people see it, others don't." But the Kurdish experience is clearly there in the Lucio Fontana slashes in the backs of some coats "exposing the suffering and melancholy inside", Dilan said.

Nevertheless, the siblings refuse to be called refugees, saying their parents chose to move to Sweden in 1997 for a better life. The Kurds were then being ruthlessly persecuted by the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. In fact, their father, a goldsmith, had to bribe officials to remain in Kirkuk as many other Kurds were forced out in the 1990s so Saddam could tighten his grip on its oilfields. "We were not running for our lives. But yes, it definitely wasn't a great time to be Kurdish," Dilan said. — AFP



Fashion designers Dilan, left, and Lezan Lurr pose during the Men's Fashion Week.

Models present creations by Kurdish designers Namacheke during the Men's Fashion Week for the Spring and Summer 2018 collection in Paris. — AFP photos



In this picture a Pakistani Muslim aesthetician applies henna on the hands of a customer, ahead of the Muslim festival of Eid Al-Fitr, at a beauty parlor in Karachi. — AFP

Gripping tales lure war-weary Syrians to Damascus cafe

With a slender sword in one hand and an antique storybook in the other, Ahmad al-Lahham captivates a packed Damascus coffeehouse with tales of ancient kingdoms and brave conquerors. Every evening, the 58-year-old heads to the cozy Nawfara cafe in the Old City of Syria's war-torn capital to perform as a traditional Arabic storyteller or "hakawati". He sheds his furniture maker's outfit and dons a bright red Ottoman-style cap, or tarboosh, reading out handwritten stories from the curling, yellowing pages of an old book.

"This occupation is steadily going extinct. I am the only hakawati left in the Old City," he says. "If I stop, there will be no storytellers left." Lahham, who also goes by the stage name "Abu Sami", settles into an ornately-carved wooden chair on a raised platform overlooking the cafe, where young men sip tea and smoke on bubbling water pipes. Clearing his throat, he opens with a well-known tale of 13th-century ruler Baibars before moving on to the heroic antics of Antarah Ibn Shaddad, a pre-Islamic knight.

He says such tales of courage and conquest have become much more popular, at the expense of traditional poems or romantic stories, since Syria's war erupted in 2011. "We went through a period where we wouldn't come out much, but the owner of this coffee shop insisted that hakawatis continue to tell

stories—even if he and I were the only ones left," Lahham says. "But today, as you can see, the situation is much better, and dozens of people wait for me every night."

'We come to forget'

The storytelling nights usually happen once a week but during the Muslim Holy Month of Ramadan, which ends this weekend, the show is daily. Listeners pack the cafe in the shadow of the famed Umayyad mosque late in the evening after breaking their fast. Many stay until the early hours of the morning to enjoy some sustenance before the fast resumes at dawn. Damascus residents have grown accustomed to regular rocket and mortar fire from rebel-held districts on the edges of the capital, with occasional rounds even reaching the Old City.

But those fronts have calmed since a May deal that saw opposition fighters withdraw from several neighborhoods, along with a separate agreement on "de-escalation" zones—including one in a rebel stronghold just outside the capital. Even so, the war is never far away, and listeners at Nawfara say the hakawati nights help them escape it, even if just for a few hours. "We're living every little part of the crisis everywhere we go. Every media outlet broadcasts tragedies. So we come to the coffee shops to forget—the hakawati's tales help us do that," 49-year-old Mohammad Duyub says.



A regular at Nawfara for over 20 years, he occupies a prime seat in the corner of the cafe, a ribbon of smoke curling up from his water pipe as he watches the storyteller. "His performance takes us back to the past to escape the reality we're living," he says. "The hakawati gives us space to breathe."

Preserving the tradition

Mohammad Jaafar, 57, closes his eyes and focuses on Abu

Sami's booming voice. "Since Ramadan started, I've made sure to follow the story of Sultan Baibars because it's exciting and beautiful. It reminds us of the powerful history that we're proud of—compared to our current situation," he says. Nawfara's wood-paneled walls and ceiling are decorated with Damascene mosaics which, its owner says, date back to the 17th century.

One wall features rows of framed photographs of historical figures who feature in Abu Sami's tales—as well as a simple portrait of an elderly man in a red tarboosh and white robe. The Arabic caption reads: "Abdelhamid al-Hawari, the first hakawati of Damascus, born 1885." But the art of public storytelling is on the decline, says Wassim Abdalhay. The 32-year-old was once a full-time hakawati but financial woes forced him to take a day job at a local power station.

During Ramadan, he performs each evening at a luxurious downtown restaurant under the stage name Abu Shadi, sporting loose black pants, a white cap and his own thick storybook. "Before the crisis, there was a huge group of us who would travel to Gulf countries and perform Damascene folklore. But because of the situation, we weren't able to travel—so we focused on preserving the tradition here," Abdalhay tells AFP. "We're currently suffering a hakawati shortage. I could count those that are left in the country on one hand." — AFP



Syrians gather in a Damascus coffeehouse.



Ahmad al-Lahham, a Syrian storyteller, reads from his storybook in a Damascus coffeehouse. — AFP photos