

Kuwait's power outage rate one of the world's lowest: Minister



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NEW COMPUTER VIRUS DISRUPTS WORLD BUSINESS

FRANKFURT/MOSCOW/KIEV: A cyber attack wreaked havoc around the globe yesterday, crippling thousands of computers, disrupting operations at ports from Mumbai to Los Angeles and halting production at a chocolate factory in Australia. The virus is believed to have first taken hold on Tuesday in Ukraine where it silently infected computers after users downloaded a popular tax accounting package or visited a local news site, national police and international cyber experts said.

The malicious code locked machines and demanded victims post a ransom worth \$300 in bitcoins or lose their data entirely, similar to the extortion tactic used in the global WannaCry ransomware attack in May. More than 30 victims paid up but security experts are questioning whether extortion was the goal, given the relatively small sum demanded, or whether the hackers were driven by destructive motives rather than financial gain.

Hackers asked victims to notify them by email when ransoms had been paid but German email provider Posteo quickly shut down the address, a German government cyber security official said. Ukraine, the epicentre of the cyber strike, has repeatedly accused Russia of orchestrating attacks on its computer systems and critical power infrastructure since its powerful neighbor annexed the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea in 2014.

The Kremlin, which has consistently rejected the accusations, said yesterday it had no information about the origin of the global cyber attack, which also struck Russian companies such as oil giant Rosneft and a steelmaker. "No one can effectively combat cyber threats on their own, and, unfortunately, unfounded blanket accusations will not solve this problem," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

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WASHINGTON: Kuwaiti Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah meets US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Tuesday. — KUNA

WASHINGTON: The US and the United Nations expressed late Tuesday their support to Kuwait's mediation efforts to resolve the current GCC crisis, said a statement by the Kuwaiti Embassy in Washington. The US support was reflected during Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's meeting with Kuwaiti Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah, said the statement. During their meeting, both sides stressed "the need for all parties to exercise restraint to allow for productive diplomatic discussions". Tillerson also supported the initiative carried out by HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to end the crisis.

Tillerson "reaffirmed his strong support for Kuwait's efforts to mediate the dispute between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt," and "urged the parties to remain open to negotiation as the best way to resolve the dispute," the US State Department said in a readout of their meeting. Both officials also agreed "that stopping terrorism and confronting extremism should be our shared and primary focus". Following the talks, the top US diplomat said: "We hope all the parties will continue to talk to one another in good faith."

Earlier, the US State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert stated the US is "pleased and happy" that Kuwait has taken on mediation efforts in the current GCC crisis, to ultimately "come to some sort of an agreement." Nauert told reporters that "Kuwait has really done a lot of hard work in terms of trying to bring the nations together so that they can come to some sort of agreement".

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REVIVED US TRAVEL BAN SOWS CONFUSION, ANGER IN MIDEAST

US PLANS ENHANCED AIRLINE SECURITY

KHARTOUM: A US Supreme Court decision allowing partial implementation of President Donald Trump's travel ban has stirred anger and confusion in parts of the Middle East, with would-be visitors worried about their travel plans and their futures. The blanket 90-day ban on visitors from six Muslim-majority countries - Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen - and a 120-day ban on all refugees was completely blocked by lower courts after Trump issued it on March 6, saying it was needed to prevent terrorism attacks.

On Monday, the Supreme Court ruled the bans could proceed, though only for foreigners with no "bona fide relationship" with an American entity or person, and it did not specify what that meant. The ruling left some in the Middle East wondering if they would be able to enter the United States. "It's a big disappointment for me," said a 52-year-old Sudanese man in the capital Khartoum, who believed he would now be rejected for a visa to visit relatives in the United States.

The man, who declined to be identified, said he

wouldn't know the outcome until at least Sunday, when the US Embassy opens again after a string of national holidays. "I've travelled to America before and I don't know why I'm prevented from travelling (now). I didn't violate American law during my previous visits," he told Reuters. At the US Consulate in Dubai, where there is normally a queue out the door of people waiting to process visa applications, a Reuters reporter saw few people.

Middle East airlines have yet to receive a directive from the United States following the ruling, industry sources told Reuters yesterday. The sources said US flights would continue to operate as normal until guidance is received. Major airlines based in the region include Dubai-based Emirates Airlines, Turkish Airlines and Qatar Airways. Iranian nationals attempting to get visas at the US Embassy in the Turkish capital Ankara - Washington does not have an embassy in Iran - also expressed concern.

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LE BOURGET, France: This file photograph taken on June 21, 2017 shows Slovakian company AeroMobil's flying car on display during the International Paris Air Show. — AFP

RACE ON TO BUILD FLYING CAR

LE BOURGET, France: Aeronautics giants are treating the idea of a flying car with caution, as such a project raises more questions than it answers, experts say - it's a child's dream, a millionaire's toy. But is it really the next big thing in transport? At this year's Paris Air Show, you had to search hard to find an aircraft that looked anything like an automobile: But one such model, the AeroMobil, was tucked away under the old Concorde at the Air and Space Museum, just outside the capital.

This strange-looking hybrid, with its bulbous nose and retractable wings, designed by a Slovakian company, is scheduled to go into series production by 2020. "After you've landed at an airport, you transform the plane into a car and take the road to wherever you want," Simon Bendrey, AeroMobil's deputy head of engineering, told

AFP. And they have already received a number of orders, he added, despite an asking price of €1.2-1.5 million (\$1.3-\$1.8 million). While flying cars have starred in films including Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and the Fifth Element, the race to turn such dreams into a reality is being run by dozens of small creative start-ups like AeroMobil.

Among those nearest to take-off is the Dutch outfit PAL-V, which is offering a two-seater gyrocopter and is scheduled to be available by next year - a steal at €300,000. Czech company Nirvana Systems says it has had dozens of orders for its mini-helicopter, which can also travel on roads, albeit at rather sluggish ground speeds. Silicon Valley-based company Kitty Hawk says its Flyer will be on sale by the end of the year.

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KUWAIT: (From left) His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receive Eid Al-Fitr well-wishers. —Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah performs the Eid Al-Fitr prayer at the Grand Mosque.

AMIR ATTENDS, PERFORMS EID AL-FITR PRAYERS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah celebrated Sunday the first day of Eid Al-Fitr by attending and performing Eid prayers at the Grand Mosque of Kuwait. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah was accompanied by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh

Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Faisal Al-Saud Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-

Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Also present were First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of

Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, in addition to senior state officials. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah bids farewell to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. —Amiri Diwan photos

CROWN PRINCE THANKS EID WELL-WISHERS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has addressed a message of gratitude to citizens in and outside Kuwait and residents in the country who expressed their sincere congratulations and impassioned sentiments on Eid Al-Fitr.

His Highness the Deputy Amir prayed to Allah Almighty so the occasion may recur in the dear homeland, with abundant bounties, blessings and welfare for all so Kuwait may continue to enjoy prosperity under the sagacious leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the leader of humanitarian action.

In other news, His Highness the Deputy Amir received at Seif Palace yesterday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also received First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. —KUNA

DEFENSE MINISTER RECEIVES EID AL-FITR WELL-WISHERS

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday received Eid Al-Fitr well-wishers at retired General Ahmad Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah Hall.

Sheikh Mohammad has welcomed the visitors and prayed to Almighty Allah to maintain the current security and stability in Kuwait, under the leadership of His Highness the Amir

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

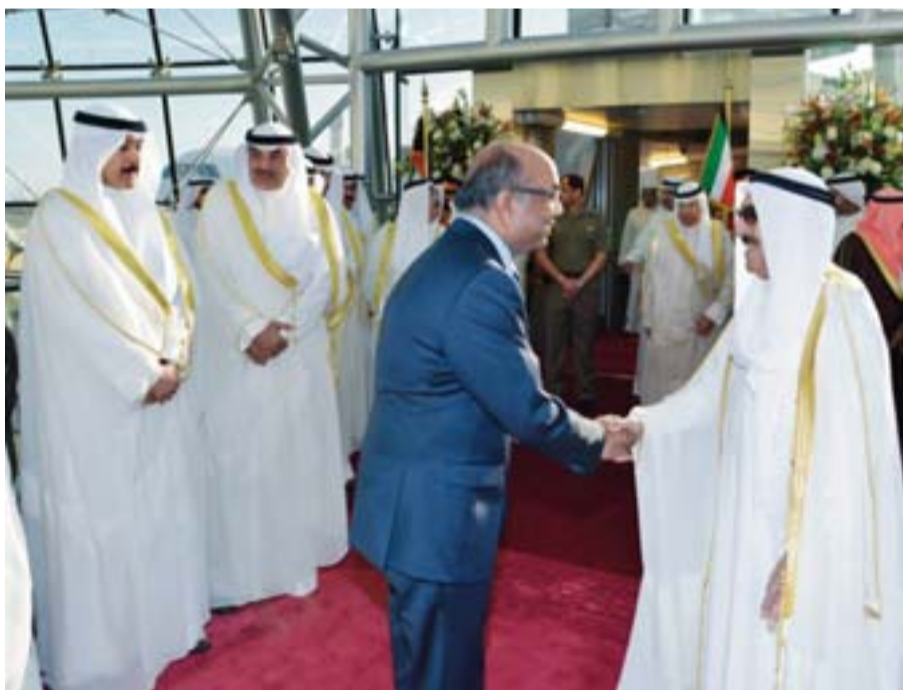
Military personnel and a number of Ministry of Defense (MoD) officers and civil personnel have expressed their greeting to the Deputy Premier, in addition to public civilians that

attended the greeting reception.

The reception was attended by Kuwait's Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Khaled Al-Khedr, MoD Undersecretary Jassar Abdul-Razzak Al-Jassar and Deputy Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Abdullah Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah, in addition to senior MoD officials and high ranking officers in the army. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah (second from right) and other officials receive Eid Al-Fitr well-wishers. —KUNA



Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sunil Jain bids farewell to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

AMIR HEADS TO INDIA ON PRIVATE VISIT

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, accompanied by Deputy Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, left the country Sunday, heading to India on a private visit. His Highness the Amir was seen off at the international airport by His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-

Hamad Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Affairs Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, as well as Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. —KUNA



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah greets military personnel.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah shares a conversation with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman.



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah hosts Eid well-wishers. —KUNA

FOREIGN MINISTER SHEIKH SABAH KHALED HOSTS EID WELL-WISHERS

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday Eid Al-Fitr well-wishers. Among the figures, who expressed the good wishes at a session held at the foreign ministry headquarters and attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Suleiman Al-Jarallah, were the foreign minister assistants, diplomats, officials at Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic

Development (KFAED) and foreign ministry staff. Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled reciprocated with good wishes for the eminent guests as well as for dear Kuwait so it may witness sustainable progress and prosperity under the sagacious leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Justice, Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr Faleh Azeb receives Eid Al-Fitr well-wishers. —KUNA



GENEROUS KUWAITIS RELIEVE MANY DEFAULTERS

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti donors have put an end to plight of indebted citizens and relieved hundreds of others of legal action and penalties, the Minister of Justice indicated yesterday. The national campaign, entitled 'let them fast with us', has resulted in paying KD 960,000 (\$3 million) worth of debts for those facing civil suits, lifted arrest warrants against 618 persons, closed 800 legal files and freed 25

prisoners, said Dr Faleh Azeb, also the Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs. The minister made the revelation as he received Eid Al-Fitr well-wishers. The government, he said, has succeeded in coordination with welfare societies in paying debts of nationals and expatriates, persons wanted in civil cases, as a contribution to boost social stability. —KUNA

KUWAIT'S POWER OUTAGE RATE ONE OF THE WORLD'S LOWEST: MINISTER

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait has one of the lowest power outages' rates in the world, but cannot completely eliminate the problem due to high consumption in parallel with the rising temperatures, a senior government official said yesterday.

The Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) carries out periodic maintenance operations and expansion works at power plants to increase their production capacity, Minister Essam Al-Marzouq said. These works help limit blackouts



Essam Al-Marzouq

to the minimum, but cannot prevent cuts which might happen when consumption rates increase during hot summer months.

Marzouq, who doubles as Minister of Oil, made those remarks during a reception held at the MEW head office building to receive Eid Al-Fitr well-wishers. Asked about a project to connect water networks between Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, the minister said that coordination continues on that regard between GCC energy ministries, but a set date is yet to be determined.

Staff attendance

More than 65 percent of employees at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) reported to work yesterday, which is a positive indicator in terms of job commitment and making sure that the process of work goes on unaffected, minister Hind Al-Sabeeh said.

Speaking during a reception to receive Eid Al-

Fitr well-wishers, Sabeeh expressed gratitude to top ministry officials who made sure to report to work in order to help patrons finalize their transactions before the weekend in order to be able to travel.

Meanwhile, Sabeeh confirmed reports about a near merger between the Manpower Public Authority and the

Management and Government Restructuring Program, saying that it will help provide more effective mechanisms to collect fines from private companies that fail to abide by the minimum quota for hiring national manpower.



Hind Al-Sabeeh

KUWAITI FIRM DEVELOPS CANADIAN SHALE

By Sara Ahmed

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti oil company has partnered with Chevron to develop a shale gas play in western Canada. The Duvernay shale field is reported to hold a total of 443 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, 11.3 billion barrels of NGLs and 61.7 billion barrels of oil, according to a 2012 NaturalGasIntel.com report. Chevron holds a 70 percent stake and is developing the shale play in partnership with the Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC), a subsidiary of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation.

The Alberta Energy Regulator reports that the Duvernay field is home to 354 million barrels of oil equivalent in proved reserves (34 MMBo, 145 MMB of condensate, 1,052 Bcf of natural gas) on top of 41 MMBOE in probable reserves (half condensate). About 96 percent of those remaining proved and probable reserves are located in the Kaybob assessment area, which is where Chevron and KUFPEC are working together. So far 28 development wells have been drilled, 36 wells completed and 30 wells were tied in to production. The net production for 2016 averaged 3,848 bopd, according to the KUFPEC website.

KUWAIT'S OIL REFINING INDUSTRY FACES CHALLENGES

KUWAIT: Refining industry in Kuwait is facing some challenges that warrant greater efforts to tackle and attain the country's strategic goals in the sector, according to a report. The report, released by Kuwait Diplomatic Center for Strategic Studies, indicated that these challenges are related to the industry's nature itself and investments. Heavy crudes are naturally different from light oils, with diverse transportation and refining difficulties, largely due to divergent crudes' densities and disposable substances.

Heavy crudes require more complex refining processes, and there are difficulties in producing derivatives, and this lead

to higher contamination to the environment, where Kuwait is doing its best to minimize such harmful outcome. On the investment dimension, the report notes unstable supply and demand in the markets, thus creating uncertainties with respect of requirements, production and proceeds. This situation has prompted producers to revise expansion schemes, with intention to cut cost of production and minimize losses. Moreover, there is strong competition on part of new comers in the field, namely China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam, in addition to other Gulf countries. —KUNA

CREDIT BANK FIRE-CAUSED LOSSES MORE THAN \$6 MILLION: DIRECTOR

KUWAIT: Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB) General Director Salah Al-Mudaf said yesterday that losses inflicted at the news headquarters building due to the recent fire did not exceed KD 2 million (\$6.5 million), noting that they would be covered by the insurance company, not public funds. Mudaf, speaking at the project site in South Surrah, indicated that the fire

caused delay of the venture handover for six months, maximum. The fire, losses of which were estimated at five percent of the project value, caused no injuries, he said, lauding the extraordinary efforts by the Kuwaiti firemen who doused the flames. A new plan is in the offing to complete this vital project, one of the State of Kuwait key ventures. —KUNA

SLOVENIAN TOP LEGISLATOR LAUDS KUWAIT'S REGIONAL, INT'L ROLES

LJUBLJANA: The State of Kuwait plays major roles within the regional and international scenes and this fact led to the Gulf country's election as a non-permanent member in the UNSC, said a top Slovenian legislator Tuesday. After meeting with a visiting Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation, Milan Brglez, Speaker of the Slovenian National Assembly, said that Slovenia trusts that Kuwait will actively contribute to the promotion of peace and security globally, and will uphold the UN Charter.

Slovenia and Kuwait are both active members of the United Nations, supportive of preventive diplomacy, UN reform and the implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. He revealed that Slovenia was eager to bolster relations with Kuwait on all possible domains, revealing that his country took several steps to facilitate cooperation with Kuwait and other GCC countries especially within the economic and commercial sectors.

He indicated that the current visit by the Kuwaiti delegation, headed by MP Dr Jamaam Al-Harbash, would help push forward parliamentary ties. "The delegation of the Kuwaiti Parliamentary Friendship Group to the Slovenian parliament in the last two years is very telling of the good relationship between our institutions. Nevertheless, while the intensity of our relations has recently evidently been growing, plenty of room remains for further strengthening of cooperation," said Brglez.

Asked about Slovenia willingness to participate in the 'Kuwait 2035' plan, the Speaker said that Slovenian companies and business were eager to invest in Kuwait and partake in the ambitious development plan of the GCC country. "We see Kuwait as one of the most important partners in this respect. Particular attention will be paid to the field of development aid, where we have identified potential for cooperation of individual Kuwaiti and Slovenian funds and to the economic coopera-

tion, including investments."

"Slovenian companies (especially those active in the Gulf region) are aware of business opportunities knowing the exceptional development plans of Kuwait. Slovenian companies can contribute their share in high-tech solutions in different fields such as technological equipment for various construction and industrial facilities, renewable and sustainable energy and top IT solutions. Slovenian companies could offer their experience in the field of environmental technologies and projects, in the field of civil engineering constructions, closer cooperation between the two countries in tourism, including health and spa tourism. The international reputation, abundant knowledge and extensive experience make Slovenian companies reliable and trustworthy business partners." He also welcomed Kuwaiti investments in Slovenia, noting that his country has many opportunities to offer for those eager to do business. —KUNA

REPORT: KUWAITI-IRAQI RELATIONS STEADILY IMPROVING

BAGHDAD: Last Tuesday marked the 13th anniversary of restoring normal diplomatic relations with neighboring Iraq, a neighbor with which Kuwait had experienced peak and ebbs in ties, disputes, war and peace. Cross-border routes through which Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait in 1990, are now used by Kuwaiti convoys in carrying humanitarian supplies to relocated Iraqis, mainly those settling in the north of the neighboring nation. Moreover, these are the same roads via which Iraq had sent in igniters to set alight Kuwait's oil wells in the final days of the Iraqi occupation and witnessed dispatch of Kuwaiti firefighters who took part in dousing fires at oil fields in northern Mosul.

Despite recurring strains in relations, sometimes turning icy and in others thawing, geo-social realities have always brought the two nations close, re-establishing the brotherly relationship, which are in words of the Iraqi Prime Minister, Haider Al-Abadi, are exemplary.

"Although the former regime had tried to make our relationship with Kuwait stained with blood, we have succeeded as two States to make this relationship as exemplary in the region," Abadi said in remarks commenting on the occasion.

Premier Abadi expressed hope to tackle the remaining files, noting that Iraq paid 47 billion US dollars' worth of war compensations to Kuwait in 2014 and only \$4.6 billion have not been paid, affirming Baghdad's commitment to pay the rest "in line with a UN resolution and because this is a matter of duty." He pledged to follow up and finalize the other files, namely the issues of the "disappeared Kuwaitis," noting that his government had supplied Kuwait with a lot of information in this respect.

The Iraqi prime minister called for further cooperation between the two neighboring countries to thrash out the remaining hanging issues, affirming his government's readiness to push forward the bilateral relations

for serving the two peoples' interests. The Iraqi Government encourages Kuwaiti investments in the country, said the premier who visited Kuwait on June 21, discussing means of promoting the bilateral relations with the Kuwaiti leaders.

Meanwhile, echoing identical thoughts on prospects of enhancing the Iraqi-Kuwaiti bonds, First Deputy of the Iraqi Parliament Speaker Hammoudi said that these relations have noticeably improved recently, praising efforts in this regard by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He also lauded His Highness the Amir's efforts in narrowing the gulf between the two countries, also praising Kuwaiti humanitarian assistance for the needy in the country.

In the meantime, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Iraq Salem Ghesab Al-Zamanan noted that Kuwait maintains an unwavering stance in support of Iraq's territorial sanctity, sovereignty and independence, expressing hope that efforts aimed at attaining national conciliation in Iraq would be successful.

Citing other events that depicted the improving ties, the ambassador noted His Highness the Amir's participation in the Baghdad-hosted Arab Summit as well as Kuwait's construction of 23 schools in several Iraqi provinces, in addition to a grant to build a hospital in Basra. Furthermore, Kuwait pledged \$200 million in aid for Iraq in 2015. Elaborating, ambassador Zamanan indicated the April meeting in Kuwait between Iraqi and Kuwaiti philanthropists aimed at discussing prospects of holding an international conference for rebuilding Iraq.

At the political level, the governments of the two brotherly countries have made headway in coordination, inking 53 treaties and memoranda of understanding. The Kuwaiti-Iraqi Ministerial Commission held six meetings over the past six years in Baghdad and Kuwait. Kuwait restored the diplomatic relations with Iraq on June 28, 2004. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The scene inside a Farwaniya apartment after firefighters put out a fire there.



Firemen help rescue four people who became trapped inside an elevator that malfunctioned in Salmiya.

NO INJURIES IN FARWANIYA FIRE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firefighters responded to an emergency call made yesterday at 1:00 pm reporting a fire at an apartment in Farwaniya. Firemen first evacuated the building then tackled the blaze, which helped prevent human injuries from happening. An investigation was opened to determine the cause of the fire.

Four rescued

Firefighters rescued four people who became trapped inside an elevator that malfunctioned in Salmiya. South Salmiya Fire Station men arrived at the building within three minutes after the incident was reported. They managed to handle the situation and free the four persons unharmed despite the fact that the elevator was in very bad shape, which had posed danger to the lives of the people inside it and rescuers.

KUWAIT REMAINS IN TIER 2 IN US TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

STATE DOESN'T MEET MINIMUM STANDARDS, BUT MAKING EFFORTS TO DO SO

KUWAIT: The United States Department of State recently released its annual Trafficking in Persons Report, which also lists Kuwait in Tier 2 for "countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards." The following is a transcript for Kuwait's section in the 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report:

The Government of Kuwait does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated significant efforts during the reporting period by passing by-laws to implement the 2015 domestic labor law, and co-sponsoring the future establishment of a centralized recruitment company, that, once operational, will reduce recruitment costs and serve to combat illegal recruiting fees. Officials also referred 39 cases of illegal recruitment for criminal investigation under the 2015 domestic labor law, and prosecuted 15 individuals under the 2013 anti-trafficking law, which resulted in nine convictions. The government also amended the 2010 labor law that increases penalties for employers who engage in unscrupulous recruiting practices. To curb the prevalence of North Korean workers subjected to trafficking, the government halted Air Koryo flights and ceased issuing new work visas to North Koreans. However, the government did not demonstrate increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period. Many officials continued to use arbitration and administrative penalties as the main avenues of resolving grievances filed by domestic workers, instead of investigating such cases as human trafficking crimes, and protracted litigation and subsequent appeals processes led most workers to decline to file court cases. Corruption at all levels dissuaded workers from reporting trafficking cases to law enforcement. The government did not regularly use formal established procedures for identifying victims, and foreign workers who quit their jobs without permission were often subjected to criminal penalties, detention, and deportation. Therefore, Kuwait remained on Tier 2 Watch List for the second consecutive year.

Recommendations for Kuwait

Increase law enforcement efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, including Kuwaiti citizens, under

Kuwait passed by-laws to implement the 2015 domestic labor law

the 2013 anti-trafficking law, and prosecute and convict sponsors who subject foreign domestic workers to involuntary servitude; stringently enforce the domestic labor law (law68/15) to ensure domestic workers receive appropriate rights and protections; operationalize the centralized recruitment company; uphold laws against sponsors and employers who illegally hold migrant workers' passports; establish standard operating procedures for investigations and prosecutions of trafficking crimes; routinely employ formal established procedures to proactively identify and refer to protection services all victims of human trafficking; continue to train law enforcement officials and social workers to identify trafficking victims among vulnerable populations, and screen for human trafficking victims during migrant roundups; establish linkages between emerging victim care efforts and law enforcement activities; continue to train shelter staff in providing services to potential trafficking victims; ensure the availability of shelter and services to male victims, sex trafficking victims, and forced labor victims outside of the domestic worker context; finalize and implement a multi-year national anti-trafficking strategy and action plan; and expand efforts to raise awareness and prevent trafficking.

Prosecution

The government sustained law enforcement efforts and took steps to strengthen its legal infrastructure. Anti-trafficking legislation enacted in 2013 prohibits all forms of trafficking and prescribes penalties ranging from 15 years to life imprisonment, which are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. The domestic labor law (law68/15) guarantees domestic workers one day off per week, a maximum 12-hour workday, minimum wage paid per month, paid annual leave, and access to file formal grievances at the Ministry of Interior (MOI), among other protections. In 2016, MOI issued by-laws to commence implementation of the domestic labor law. In June 2016, parliament

passed numerous amendments to the 2010 labor law, to increase penalties for non-payment of wages, make mandatory documentation of all paid wages, and require prison time and fines for employers and government officials who fail to adhere to provisions of this law.

In 2016, the government investigated six potential trafficking cases and prosecuted 15 suspects, compared to six cases investigated and 20 suspects prosecuted

trafficking; however, the government did not report efforts to prosecute and convict officials complicit in trafficking or trafficking-related offenses. The MOI's anti-trafficking unit conducted five anti-trafficking training programs during the reporting year, which covered signs of trafficking and a victim-centered approach to law enforcement efforts, and targeted approximately 35 trainees from all MOI departments. In addition, in conjunction with an interna-

did not offer foreign trafficking victims legal alternatives to removal to countries where they may face hardship or retribution.

Systemic challenges, including threat of criminalization and limited access to legal support, remained an impediment to the government's protection efforts. The 2013 anti-trafficking law does not stipulate that victims who flee abusive employers should be immune from pros-

secution under the anti-trafficking law. In January 2017, authorities investigated a Kuwaiti company on suspicion of labor law violations against its foreign workers; at the close of the reporting year, the government was still negotiating with the company and employees to determine punitive charges or fines to levy on the former and adequate compensation for the latter. To curb exploitation of North Korean laborers, the government halted all Air Koryo flights in August 2016. In September 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ceased issuance of work visas for North Koreans. To reduce the demand for commercial sex acts, the government prosecuted and deported individuals guilty of exploiting potential sex trafficking victims in prostitution. The government provided anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel.

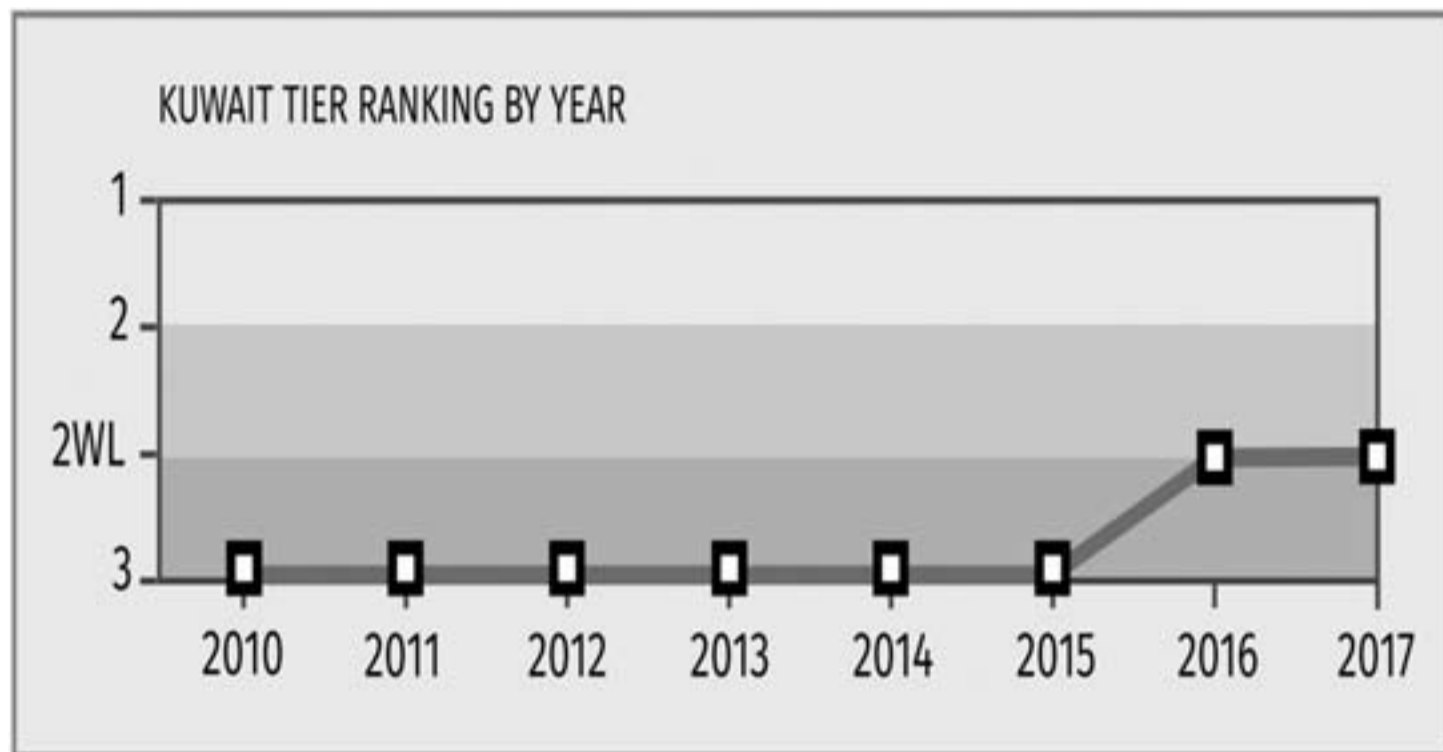
Trafficking profile

As reported over the past five years, Kuwait is a destination country for men and women subjected to forced labor and, to a lesser degree, forced prostitution. Men and women migrate from South and Southeast Asia, Egypt, the Middle East, and increasingly throughout Africa to work in Kuwait, predominantly in the domestic service, construction, hospitality, and sanitation sectors. Several labor-sending countries, including India, Nepal, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, and Bangladesh, restrict their female nationals from domestic employment in Kuwait. Kuwait also banned the issuance of domestic worker visas from Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Togo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Tanzania, The Gambia, Ghana, and Zimbabwe, which resulted in additional recruitment of domestic employees from other African labor-sending countries, including Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Niger, Djibouti, and Liberia, among others. The vast majority of migrant workers arrive voluntarily; however, upon arrival some sponsors subject migrants to forced labor, including through non-payment of wages, protracted working hours without rest, deprivation of food, threats, physical or sexual abuse, and restrictions on movement, such as confinement to the workplace and the withholding of passports. Many of the migrant workers arriving in Kuwait have paid exorbitant fees to labor recruiters in their home countries or are coerced into paying labor broker fees in Kuwait which, according to Kuwaiti law, should be paid by the employer—a practice making workers highly vulnerable to forced labor, including debt bondage. Some labor recruiting companies have facilitated trafficking through the use of deceptive techniques to bring in migrant workers on the basis of unenforceable contracts and nonexistent positions. Reports allege officials take bribes or overtly sell work permits to illegal labor recruiting companies or directly to migrant workers. Since 2008, reports indicate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) has sent over 4,000 North Korean laborers to Kuwait for forced labor on construction projects, sourced by a North Korean company operated by the Workers' Party of Korea and the North Korean military. According to these reports, employees work 14 to 16 hours a day while the company retains 80 to 90 percent of the workers' wages, and monitors and confines the workers, who live in impoverished conditions and are in very poor health due to lack of adequate nutrition and health care.

Kuwait's sponsorship law—which ties a migrant worker's legal residence and valid immigration status to an employer—restricts workers' movements and penalizes them for leaving abusive workplaces; as a result, domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to forced labor inside private homes. Many workers report experiencing work conditions substantially different from those described in the con-

Corruption dissuaded workers from reporting trafficking cases to law enforcement

tract; some workers never see the contract at all and others receive Arabic or English-language contracts they are unable to read. In addition, sources report runaway domestic workers are sometimes exploited in forced prostitution by agents or criminals, who manipulate their illegal status. Albeit illegal, passport confiscation by employers continues to be a common practice in Kuwait.



The diagram taken from the Trafficking in Persons Report shows Kuwait's tier ranking by the year, with 'Tier 1' being the best and 'Tier 3' being the worst.

during the previous reporting period. Seven prosecutions from 2015 remained pending at the close of the reporting year. The government achieved nine convictions— including one Kuwaiti citizen— under the anti-trafficking law, on par with eight convictions the previous year; five accused traffickers were acquitted. All cases put forth for criminal prosecution under the anti-trafficking law involved sex trafficking. The MOI's anti-trafficking and public morals department continued to investigate suspected trafficking cases and referred an unknown number to the public prosecutor's office in 2016; it referred one forced labor case for prosecution during the previous reporting year. Domestic worker labor authorities from the MOI began investigating domestic worker labor recruitment agencies and residences to ensure compliance with the 2015 domestic labor law. During the reporting period, officials conducted 1,806 such inspections, referred 39 recruiters for criminal investigation under the domestic labor law for illegal practices, and permanently shut down 90 recruitment agencies for domestic labor law contraventions. The MOI's Domestic Labor Department (DLD) investigates employers and recruiting agencies, in addition to grievances filed by employees, NGOs, embassies of labor-sending countries, and private citizens, and subsequently arbitrates such grievances. If a settlement cannot be agreed upon, DLD officials refer the case to the courts, and if the complaint involves a gross violation, such as assault or domestic abuse, authorities transfer the case directly to the public prosecutor's office. Many Kuwaiti law enforcement officials did not categorize or investigate the exploitation or forced labor of domestic workers as human trafficking and continued to treat such cases as administrative infractions, using official arbitration resulting in monetary compensation and repayment of back-wages to victims, application of administrative fines, and closure of recruitment firms to resolve such cases; such approaches do not provide adequate deterrence to the commission of forced labor crimes. In some cases, characterized by local media as showing indicators of trafficking, the government sought prosecution for abuse or simple assault rather than under anti-trafficking laws. Although the withholding of workers' passports is prohibited under Kuwaiti law, this practice remained

Arbitration and administrative penalties still used to resolve grievances filed by domestic workers

common among sponsors and employers of foreign workers; the government demonstrated no efforts to enforce this prohibition. Reports claimed some government officials sold work permits to illegal recruiters or even directly to migrant workers, potentially facilitating

tional organization, it facilitated two training programs for MOI front-line personnel. The DLD developed and launched 12 training programs for MOI investigators and labor inspectors.

Protection

The government maintained efforts to protect trafficking victims. It provided shelter over the course of the reporting

Recruitment company to reduce recruitment costs and help combat illegal recruiting fees

period to a total of 5,000 domestic workers, including some potential forced labor victims, in its 500-bed shelter dedicated to runaway domestic workers. The shelter served as a one-stop facility, providing medical and psychological care, repatriation assistance, and access to officials from various ministries to facilitate legal assistance, including filing cases against employers. The government allocated an annual budget of 1.9 million Kuwaiti dinar (\$6.23 million) for shelter operations, an increase from 260,000 Kuwaiti dinar (\$852,460) the prior year. During the reporting period, the government identified 76 female trafficking victims. While victims were permitted to leave the facility unescorted, there continued to be no shelter or other protective services for male trafficking victims. The shelter received referrals from embassies, NGOs, international organizations, churches, private citizens, and migrant workers. An international organization provided assistance to 120 domestic workers, primarily from African countries without diplomatic representation in Kuwait, who needed to procure travel documentation. Embassies of the Philippines, India, and Sri Lanka maintained their own domestic worker shelters and sought compensation and legal redress for their nationals subjected to exploitative working conditions in Kuwait. During the reporting year, IOM helped the government develop and implement a screening process to identify potential trafficking victims among vulnerable populations, such as foreign migrant workers, domestic workers, and women in prostitution. During the government's migrant round-ups, the extent to which the government employed this proactive screening mechanism was unknown. The MOI provided repatriation and transition assistance to approximately 200 foreign domestic workers during the reporting period; however, it was unclear whether authorities sought a refund of travel costs from the employers who sponsored the workers. To assist embassies in repatriating trafficking victims, the government, in partnership with IOM and in coordination with recruitment agencies, funded airline tickets and repatriation services for 20 victims of trafficking. The government

Therefore, workers who fled their employers without permission risked criminal penalties and arrest, detention at police stations, and deportation, even if they were fleeing an abusive sponsor; following round-ups, the government reported deporting 1,118 domestic workers who allegedly violated residency and local laws. The risk of penalization, coupled with protracted litigation processes and expensive legal fees, discouraged workers from appealing to police or other authorities for protection and adequate legal redress for their exploitation. As such, trafficking victims rarely filed cases against their employers. In addition, it was not uncommon for sponsors to file counter-grievances against trafficking victims who reported their own, which often resulted in administrative deportation or detention of the employees. In February 2016, the DLD announced that employers would only be allowed to file desertion charges against workers at the DLD, as opposed to any MOI facility, which is intended to deter employers from filing such initial charges; however, it was unclear how readily the nascent policy was employed during the reporting period. The government reported public prosecutors sometimes tried cases on victims' behalf using their oral and written statements; however, it lacked privacy laws to protect victims against potential retribution, and often was unable to provide adequate care for victims throughout the duration of legal proceedings.

Prevention

The government continued efforts to prevent human trafficking. The government began drafting a national action plan to address trafficking. Several ministries, in collaboration with IOM, printed and disseminated anti-trafficking pamphlets and actively participated in public awareness campaigns that warned against using illegal domestic worker recruitment companies. In June 2016, IOM partnered with the MOI to conduct a five-day anti-trafficking awareness campaign, with an emphasis on domestic workers, at three of Kuwait's major retail shopping malls. Various officials also took part in awareness messages on local television outlets and continued to disseminate pamphlets to educate migrant workers on their rights, which were published in multiple languages, in airports, embassies, and labor-recruitment agencies.

As directed by the new domestic worker law, the government sponsored development of a centralized recruitment company that, once operational, will reduce recruitment costs and serve to combat illegal recruiting fees. During the reporting period, the government received approximately 24,200 official grievances from foreign workers, the most common included pay discrepancies, requests for sponsor and employment transfers, and overtime pay disputes; of these, 3,800 of the employment transfer grievances were resolved via arbitration, roughly 2,000 in favor of the employee, and more than 10,800 were sent to the labor courts. The government did not report outcomes of the cases referred for criminal investigation or which, if any, would be considered for

In Brief

RESOUNDING SUCCESS

KUWAIT: A security plan put in place during the Holy Month of Ramadan was a resounding success, the Interior Ministry's (Mol) Undersecretary General Mahmoud Al-Doseri said. The meticulous plan was implemented to perfection, a statement issued by the Mol quoted Doseri as saying. He also heaped praise on security forces for their efforts to protect the nation from all ills, congratulating the entire Mol staff on the Eid Al-Fitr holidays. — KUNA



GOLD PRICE

KUWAIT: Gold price has settled at \$1,250 per ounce increasing by 15 dollars as compared to the week start rates, according to Sabaek Al-Kuwait company. The company said in its weekly report released yesterday that the gold price decline, over the past weeks, was due to corrections. As to silver, its rate exceeded \$16.75 per ounce. Meanwhile, the local market witnessed noticeably hefty purchases, targeting in particular manufactured gold items and jewelry. — KUNA



OIL BARREL UP

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil barrel rose \$1.10 to reach \$42.87 per barrel on Tuesday, compared with \$41.77 pb on Friday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. Oil prices in international markets went up yesterday affected by the drop in the US Dollar's exchange rate and an expected decrease in American crude reserves for the third consecutive week. Brent crude oil rose 82 cents reaching \$46.65 per barrel upon settlement and West Texas Crude went up 86 cents to reach \$44.24 pb. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: People ride a roller coaster at an amusement park in Kuwait during the Eid Al-Fitr holiday.— Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

NBK SHARES EID HAPPY MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN AT NBK HOSPITAL

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait's (NBK) family paid a visit to NBK Children's Specialty Hospital at Sabah Medical district to share Eid happy moments with children suffering from permanent ailments. NBK Public Relations Officer, Yaqoub Al-Baqer said that NBK staff have always devoted a considerable part of their time to comfort the children and present them with felicitations and gifts as part of NBK's corporate social responsibility program.

"Sharing the happy moments of Eid Al-Fitr and other similar occasions with children is our pleasure. We are proud that NBK devotes such attention to supporting Kuwait society and providing compassion and support for those in need, including sick children. NBK's commitment to shoulder its corporate social responsibility was the basic motive that led NBK to build its

children hospital at Sabah Medical district before 17 years," Baqer added.

It is worth mentioning that NBK opened recently the first stem cell therapy unit in Kuwait, the new state-of-the-art cancer wing for NBK Children's Hospital. This unit will serve as the only children's bone marrow transplant center in Kuwait and will expand the hospital's ability to treat children with cancer and blood diseases.

The visit to the hospital was emotional and overwhelming for both the children and NBK staff. NBK's visits to hospitals and care centers reflect the Bank's high sense of duty and responsibility towards all those in need from different sectors of society. It is a well rooted tradition that has been carried out by NBK each year in its efforts to continuously have an active role in the Kuwait society.



KUWAIT: NBK Family celebrate with children.

SEASIDE RESTAURANT COMPLEXES BECOMING POPULAR IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Seaside restaurant complexes in Kuwait have increased in popularity in recent years with several ones erected especially on the coastal

roads. With their unique designs, these buildings group up a number of famous restaurants and cafes under one roof. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Zain volunteers and Kuwait Food Bank officials distributing the meals.

ZAIN DISTRIBUTES EID BREAKFAST MEALS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KUWAIT FOOD BANK

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, shared the joys of Eid with needy laborers and underprivileged individuals by distributing Eid breakfast meals in a number of Kuwait's largest mosques. The initiative came as part of the company's strategic partnership with the Kuwait Food Bank. In the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr, Zain distributed 2,000 breakfast meals after Eid prayers to needy laborers and underprivileged individuals in a number of Kuwait's largest mosques. The initiative was supervised by the Kuwait Food Bank who assured the quality of the meals and distributed enough quantities to those who are less fortunate during Eid.

Zain's initiative is part of its growing support for charitable and social oriented programs, and is a reflection of its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy. One such program Zain organized before the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan featured the distribution of "Machla Boxes" to underprivileged families.

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, iftar halls, visit social care centers, visit hospitals, as well as organize other

humanitarian initiatives. The company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility campaign during the Holy Month of Ramadan included an extensive array of programs that covered different areas. The initiatives and programs included humanitarian, voluntary, cultural, religious, sports, and recreational activities to cater to

the different segments of society. Ramadan presented a special occasion for Zain to communicate and interact with the Kuwaiti community it operates in through its extensive CSSR campaign. The company was keen on helping less fortunate people to enjoy Ramadan happily, as well as celebrate the true spirit the Holy month brought.



Crime

Report

WIVES FIGHT DURING MOTHER-IN-LAW VISIT

KUWAIT: A mother's visit to her son turned into a fight between his two wives who exchanged blows and insults and both ended in the police station. The two wives had met during the visit of their mother-in-law, and apparently engaged in an argument that escalated into exchanging insults and blows. Their husband and his mother eventually stepped in to break the fight.

Waiter beaten up

Four citizens beat up an Egyptian waiter in a Salmiya restaurant because of a reserved table, and did not stop beating him until customers interfered to save him. The four entered the restaurant and headed towards a table, so the waiter asked them to select another one as it was already taken. The four did not like what they heard and beat the waiter before they went and sat on another table. Police arrived to the scene before they finished their meal and took them to the police station for further action.

Illicit tablets

An ex-convict citizen got rid of illicit tablets by swallowing them while attempting to escape from police in industrial Ardhiya, but was detained. A police patrol officer asked the driver to pull over. When the patrol man approached him, he swallowed several pills at once. He is being sent to concerned authorities.

KD 2 million debt

Police arrested a citizen wanted on a KD 2 million debt case. The man was apprehended in Sabah health zone during a surprise campaign. The citizen claimed he did not have an ID on him, then when policemen insisted on taking him to make sure about his identity, he gave the ID. He was found to be wanted by the civil implementation department for several debts totaling KD 2 million.

Drugs and alcohol

An Egyptian woman who is reported missing was found with two citizens, all under the influence of alcohol and drugs. A police patrol noticed the car being driven unsteadily so they stopped it. Upon checking their IDs, the girl was discovered to be wanted, and all three were under the influence of drugs. Police also found drugs and a half empty liquor bottle. All were sent to concerned authorities.

Harasser caught

A man attempted to have a female citizen commit vice crimes, then he insulted police in his attempt to escape from them. The female citizen was surprised by the man, also a citizen, flirting with her in a mall. When she ignored him, he started touching her which caught the attention of police who responded, so he insulted them and attempted to escape but failed. He was arrested and the woman lodged a complaint against him. —Translated from the Arabic press



Al-Anbaa

ON THE SAME PATH

By Saleh Al-Shayji

We are still way too far from changing our cultural behavior, and even our ethical realities. Categorizing societies and considering people equal in terms of means of change, conduct, way of thinking, moral practices, general cultural structure and even goals leads to peoples' destruction. Therefore, we find that peoples who had been ruled by totalitarians and subjected to a sort of brainwashing seem to have been molded to come out identical in both shape, ways of thinking, IQ levels, understanding, deduction and so on.

We used to be an open society filled with all forms of giving, creativity and talents

Such people are not creative because of closure, hearing mono-voices and having mono-teachers and paths. Individuals are identical. This is what we need to warn Arab nations about, namely in Kuwait where we follow set patterns, circulate the same information, speak in the same manner, and even get the same results. One-minded single-patterned societies become futile soon and their wombs get dry. They never give birth or reproduce and soon die. Therefore, I wish we would realize this soon and I do urge all NGOs to work on solving this problem and helping people out with these killing patterns. We need to diversify cultural resources and sources of information that should be accessible to all people to activate social life and cut loose with lethal fixed patterns. During our age of social and cultural liberty, all cultural resources were freely accessible to everyone without any restrictions or intimidation.

We used to be an open society filled with all forms of giving, creativity and talents. We used to have good poets, outstanding actors, elite athletes, creative musicians, enchanting signers, distinctive writers, smart journalists, well-aware patriotic politicians and enlightened thinkers. Our societies were productive and renewable. They were happier and more stable then. We only started going backwards when one single 'voice' started dominating everything and the result is the current disasters and social diseases we are suffering from.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

Al-Anbaa

Al-Anbaa

A DRIVERLESS WORLD

By Saleh Al-Shayji

As kids we used to call a driver 'Draiwel', which derived from the English word. Kids used to greet a bus driver whenever they got on a bus by singing an old song like 'Long live our driver' while clapping their hands. Well, that song has now vanished and so has the driver's job, especially with the invention of automated and driverless means of transport such as the Dubai Metro, which was included in the Guinness Book of World Records as the longest automated metro grid in the world that is remotely operated by an electronic system to ensure more punctuality.

I would also like to refer to the Google self-driving car that company officials describe as safer than vehicles driven by man as they are equipped with sensors that respond to changes quicker than man can. Most automobile manufacturers are currently using industrial intelligence to manufacture self-operated means of transport and drones such as those used for weather forecasting, video shooting, firefighting and air bombardment in military operations.

In politics, we have also experienced some 'remote-controlling' or 'puling strings'

The same will apply for ship captains who will control and cruise their ships remotely from the convenience of their offices at the shipping companies they work for. According to BBC, some Japanese freight companies have already started developing such captain-less ships. Rolls Royce also announced plans to manufacture remotely operated ships to join service by 2020.

In politics, we have also experienced some 'remote-controlling' or 'puling strings' where many politicians are more like a modern driverless taxi controlled by a central operations center determining their routes.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

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KFH voluntary team at Abdulaziz Almeshari Mosque.

KFH'S CSR EFFORTS WIN PRAISE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) took part in organizing Al-Qiyam prayer held at the Abdulaziz Almeshari Mosque as part of its social responsibly 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 Abdulaziz Almeshari 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. KFH won praise from the public and the concerned parties in recognition for its efforts in the social responsibility.

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.



KFH PR team with personnel at Department of Emergency Medicine.

KFH HOSTS IFTAR FEAST FOR PERSONNEL AT DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) hosted iftar feast for personnel at Department of Emergency Medicine in recognition of their efforts and pivotal role in serving the country and the people. The visit also emanates from KFH's corporate social responsibility and part of its Ramadan program "Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 3"

Taking these initiatives, KFH confirms its keenness to solidify ties with society, not to mention enhance cooperation with government's institutions. Such initiatives had a positive effect in encouraging Emergency

Medicine personnel and lifting their morale to perform their duties optimally. Meanwhile, personnel at Department of Emergency Medicine extended their thanks and gratitude to KFH for this initiative and lauded its distinguished role in assuming social responsibility.



Helicopter launches grenade attacks on Venezuelan court

THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 2017

GIRLS AS DESSERT?; THAI SEX SCANDAL EXPOSES GRIM TRADITION

Page 12

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TEL AVIV: Muslims bathe in the Mediterranean Sea during the Eid Al-Fitr holiday as the sun sets in Tel Aviv, Israel. — AP

A NEW ISLAND IN THE MEDITERRANEAN - JUST OFF GAZA

ISRAEL INTELLIGENCE CHIEF WANTS TO BUILD ARTIFICIAL ISLAND

JERUSALEM: At first glance the video looks like a promotion for a luxury offshore development, a Dubai Palm-style project on the Mediterranean. Then it becomes clear it's about Gaza and the future of the impoverished and fenced-in Palestinian enclave. Israel's intelligence and transport minister has long pushed the idea of an artificial island off the coast of the Gaza Strip, with plans for a port, cargo terminal and even an airport to boost the territory's economy and connect it to the world.

But now the minister, Israel Katz, has released a slick, high-production video setting out his proposal in more detail, complete with a dramatic, English-speaking narration, colorful graphics and stirring music. "The artificial island initiative is aimed at providing an

answer to a reality that is bad for the Palestinians and not good for Israel," says the narrator, acknowledging that the aim is in part to change the view that Israel is to blame for the deteriorating circumstances of Gaza's two million people.

The Islamist militant group Hamas has controlled Gaza for the past decade, during which time Israel and neighboring Egypt have maintained a tight blockade, restricting the flow of goods and people in and out, in part to pressure Hamas. While Israel withdrew its soldiers and settlers in 2005, it still limits Gaza's access to the sea and controls its airspace. "Today, Israel continues to be perceived as being responsible for the Gaza Strip and is to a large extent the only lifeline to it, even though it withdrew from the strip over a decade ago,"

says the narrator. To challenge that perception, and tackle the broader humanitarian and economic problems that beset Gaza - it is currently receiving less than three hours of electricity a day and has unemployment exceeding 40 percent - Katz's plan calls for a \$5 billion investment over five years. It envisages an international consortium building the 1,300-acre island some three miles offshore, connecting it to the mainland via a causeway, which would have a bridge in the middle that could be raised, cutting off access.

Hamas, which has fought three wars with Israel since it seized control of Gaza from the rival Palestinian movement Fatah, has long called for a sea port and wants the airport in Gaza, destroyed by Israel in 2001, rebuilt. It has not commented directly on Katz's island plan,

but Sami Abu Zuhri, a spokesman for the group, said: "Building a sea port for Gaza is a right of its people to alleviate their suffering and end the blockade."

Gas, water works

The projected island would hold vast infrastructure, including cargo and passenger ports, a marina, gas and electricity terminals, a desalination plant and space for an airport in the future. While Israel would retain control of security in the sea around the island, and would carry out inspections at the port, an international policing force would be responsible for security on the island and at checkpoints on the bridge. "In addition to its humanitarian and economic importance, and distinct security advantages, the artificial

island initiative will strengthen the cooperation and relations between Israel and the countries in the region," says the video.

While at one level the idea sounds pie-in-the-sky, Katz has presented it internationally and raised it consistently for discussion. He showed his video to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet this month, where it met with widespread approval, according to Katz's spokesman. But Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman, who has responsibility for Gaza policy, remains unconvinced and has not endorsed the proposal. He has said Gaza does not deserve any development project as long as Hamas runs the territory. Katz's hope is that if the Israeli government does get fully behind it, it can then be presented to international partners as a potential, if ambitious, project to finance. — AP

PENTAGON REBUKES PUTIN FOR 'MISCHIEF'

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN: Pentagon chief Jim Mattis accused Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday of making international "mischief" and said America's commitment to NATO remains unwavering. Speaking to students in Germany to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Marshall Plan to rebuild World War II-ravaged Europe, Mattis said Russia had chosen to challenge the "secure and peaceful" post-war order.

The Russian people's "leader making mischief beyond Russian borders will not restore their fortunes or rekindle their hope," he said, in an apparent reference to the Ukraine conflict and Moscow's alleged meddling in the US electoral process. Mattis' visit to Germany is his fourth to Europe since becoming US defense secretary in January. Jittery European partners have looked to him for reassurance about America's international intentions after President Donald Trump on the campaign trail repeatedly questioned long-established alliances.

Matters haven't improved much since Trump entered the White House, with his administration embroiled in a simmering scandal about alleged ties to Russia. The US president further stoked concerns when he visited NATO and the G7 summit in Europe last month, where he upbraided allies over their levels of military spending. Any message of reassurance his presence was intended to provide was overshadowed by images of the billionaire tycoon shoving his way to the front of a NATO summit "family photo" shoot in Brussels.

But Mattis stressed that America and Trump should be judged by their actions.

He pointed to continued US support through 2020 for NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in the alliance's east to counter Russia. And he said Trump had requested a huge increase for the European Reassurance Initiative, up from \$3.4 billion last year to \$4.8 billion this year. "Beyond any words in the newspapers, you can judge America by such actions," Mattis said.

Speaking at the same event, German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen credited the transatlantic bond for bringing peace and stability to Europe, but also said it was time for the continent to do more to ensure its own security. "As Europeans, we do want to take on more responsibility, but without ever forgetting where we have come from," she said, noting Europe needed to "pool its resources" as it works towards building a greater defense union.

She also spoke in favor of Germany spending two percent of GDP to meet NATO pledges. "Being partners, we need to have a fair burden sharing within NATO. That means we Germans need to do more for our security," she said. Mattis also pointed to Article 5, NATO's mutual defense guarantee, calling US commitment to the measure "iron-clad." Mattis is a former four-star Marine Corps general who fought with NATO and Western allies in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Marshall Plan was named after General George Marshall, who was chief of staff of the US Army during World War II. He was secretary of state from 1947 to 1949 and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953 for his post-war rebuilding efforts. — AFP

NEW LIMBS FOR GROWING BODIES: MUTILATED ALBINOS GET REFITTED

NEW YORK: Baraka Cosmas, 7, is missing half his right arm. Mwigulu Matonange, 14, lost his left arm. Emmanuel Festo, 15, lost his right, plus the fingers of his left hand. Pendo Sengerema, 16, had an arm severed at the elbow. These youngsters from Tanzania are not limbless by accident or through some genetic glitch. Their amputations were the work of human hunters with machetes who believed children with albinism - born without pigment instead of the brown skin of their families - are ghosts who bring good luck if their body parts are ritually sacrificed.

The ghastly tradition, which still persists in isolated, rural areas of Tanzania, is to hack off the children's limbs and to turn the pieces into "good luck" potions for witchcraft rituals. Attackers who stole

into Emmanuel's village at night even tried to pull out his tongue and teeth. The four youths are part of a group of victims who have been getting treatment and free prosthetic limbs in the US since 2015. This spring, they returned for about two months to get replacement prostheses from Shriners Hospitals for Children in Philadelphia to accommodate their growing bodies.

During their trips to the US, they stay in New York City under the care of Elissa Montanti and sponsored by her Global Medical Relief Fund. The nonprofit helps children from crisis zones get cost-free prostheses. In this latest phase of their journey, the children seemed more self-assured and gregarious after living in Tanzanian safe houses funded by the Canadian charity Under the Same Sun. Two

years ago in New York, knowing no English, they kept to themselves and had to be coaxed to speak to visitors through a translator.

Mwigulu said his replacement limb helped him gain confidence. "I was feeling a bit bad that I have only one hand and others have both hands," he said. He's estranged from his parents, partly because authorities suspect his father may have been complicit in the attack. Pendo said fitting in with other Tanzanians has become less painful. When she wears her prosthesis, "it's not easy for another person to discover that I have one arm. It looks like I have both arms until someone comes close."

As they prepared to leave the US this month to head back to Tanzania with their new limbs, the kids gathered around a Staten Island table for a meal cooked by an American friend. Emmanuel used a metal hook attached to his arm to handle the cutlery and food. A broad smile filled his face as he chatted with dinner companions. Though he'll never forget that attackers "cut off my arm and cut my face and teeth ... God turned it around and put people in my life that have brought joy and put a new mark in my life."

During their 10 weeks in New York, Baraka, the 7-year-old, began to learn to play tunes on the piano with one hand, taught by Ahmed Shareef, 20, who lost his right hand as a child during fighting in Iraq and also got his prosthesis through the Global Medical Relief Fund. The boy returned to Tanzania with a gift from Shareef: An electronic keyboard. Since Tanzania's government outlawed witch doctors three years ago, hundreds have been arrested in killings of people with albinism. Baraka, Emmanuel, Pendo and Mwigulu have learned to push away their own unimaginable traumas and to live, even thrive. At 16, Pendo hopes to become a teacher of Swahili, English and math. Mwigulu's pipe dream is to be Tanzania's president. — AP



NEW YORK: (From left) Baraka Cosmas, Mwigulu Matonange, and Emmanuel Festo pull on their new prosthetic limbs as they prepare to visit a friend's home for dinner in Staten Island, NY. — AP

SOMALI REFUGEES REGRET RETURNING HOME FROM KENYA

BAIDOA: As a teenager, Aden Hussein chose to become a refugee to get an education. With Somalia in collapse, he left his family for neighboring Kenya where Dadaab, one of the largest and oldest refugee camps in the world, offered a de-facto city served by the UN and dozens of aid agencies. "There I had free education," he said. Last August, six years after arriving, Hussein, now 21, took advantage of a repatriation package offered to Somali refugees when the Kenyan government said it would close the camp.

Hussein said he was given \$400 (355 euros) and promised healthcare, shelter and schooling—the same benefits he enjoyed in Dadaab. Human rights organizations have protested that refugees are being coerced into returning to a war zone where none of these services are available and, in the end, Hussein only received the cash. He is bitterly disappointed that he has not been able to finish high school since his return to Baidoa in southwestern Somalia.

Casualties of chaos

In the past 18 months more than 50,000 refugees have left Dadaab for Somalia, a country that has been a byword for "failed state" since civil war felled the government in 1991. One of the countless casualties of the chaos is the national education system which successive fragile governments have failed to rebuild. The only schools outside the major cities are Islamic madrasas and the ones that are functioning lack properly trained teachers or a standardized curriculum. Patrick Mbugua, the Somalia Researcher for Amnesty International, who recently returned from a fact-



MOGADISHU: Somali soldiers stand on the scene of a suicide car bomb attack on a police station in Mogadishu, Somalia. — AFP

finding mission in Baidoa said that the majority of refugees he spoke to said their children were not in schools. Those who were, found a school system in shambles. Of the 29 schools in Baidoa, some are privately-run and follow the Ethiopian, Kenyan, Ugandan or even Qatari curriculums while public schools adhere to a Somali curriculum dating back to the pre-war era and unchanged in more than 20 years. By contrast, all schools in Dadaab follow the

"very modern" Kenyan curriculum. "[The] education system in Somalia is not fully functional and continues to face challenges," Julien Navier, a UNHCR Senior External Relations Officer said. Navier said that returnee parents can opt to keep their children in the academies that follow the Kenyan program.

No education, no future
Madina Abdinoor Osman has seven children, five of whom attended school when they lived in Kenya

but since returning to Somalia in January none has been in class. "We need our children to be getting an education," she said. "A person who learns and a person who does not learn, they are not in the same category." A recently "enhanced" repatriation package provides funding to some—but not all—children in each returnee family to go to school. The deal covers education for nine months.

After that, parents are on their own. "I am very much worried," said Hadija Issak Ali. Two of her five school-aged children are in class now but Ali's husband is elderly, and she's not sure how she will continue to pay school fees. "Our future only depends on our children's education," said Ali. Lack of coordination between Somalia's central government and federal states is also causing problems. Sadad Mohamed Nur, a senior education official in South West State's capital Baidoa, said his department is "ready to support" education but blamed Mogadishu for not releasing funds.

Vulnerable youth

"This is a very serious matter," said Abdullahi Abdurahman Ali the Director of the Rural Education and Agriculture Development Organization (READO), a local charity. For Ali, the real concern is that uneducated children are easy targets for the Shabaab, an Al Qaeda-linked group that is fighting to overthrow the Mogadishu government and holds sway in much of the countryside. "Kids at the age of 20 or 18 who have not received any education, then those guys say, 'Will you join us?' and they say, 'Yes! It's easy.' He also worries that without education, young people might seek their future elsewhere, choosing the dangerous path of migrating to Europe. — AFP

TEHRAN ACCUSES US OF A 'BRAZEN' PLAN TO CHANGE ITS GOVERNMENT

US TRAVEL BAN 'RACIST AND UNFAIR'

UNITED NATIONS: Iran is accusing US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson of "a brazen interventionist plan" to change the current government that violates international law and the UN Charter. Iran's UN Ambassador Gholamali Khoshroo said in a letter to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres circulated Tuesday that Tillerson's comments are also "a flagrant violation" of the 1981 Algiers Accords in which the United States pledged "not to intervene, directly or indirectly, politically or militarily, in Iran's internal affairs."

Tillerson said in a June 14 hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the 2018 State Department budget that US policy is to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons "and work toward support of those elements inside of Iran that would lead to a peaceful transition of that government." "Those elements are there, certainly as we know," he said. Kohshroo said Iran expects all countries to condemn "such grotesque policy statements and advise the government of the United States to act responsibly and to adhere to the principles of the (UN) Charter and international law."

He noted that Tillerson's comments came weeks after President Hassan Rouhani's re-election to another four-year term and local elections in which 71 percent of the Iranian people participated. Rouhani is a political moderate who defeated a hardline opponent. "The people of Iran have repeatedly proven that they are the ones to decide their own destiny and thus attempts by the United States to interfere in Iranian domestic affairs will be doomed to failure," Kohshroo said. "They have learned how to stand strong and independent, as demonstrated in the Islamic Revolution of 1979."

He said Tillerson's statement also coincided with the release of newly declassified documents that "further clarified how United States agencies were behind the overthrow of Mohammad Mossadegh, the popular and democratically elected prime



TEHRAN: A cartoon by Lezio Junior from Brazil, a participant in the Islamic Republic's 2017 International Trumpism cartoon and caricature contest, is seen erected in the Iranian capital Tehran yesterday. — AFP

minister of Iran on Aug 19, 1953." At the June 14 hearing, Tillerson said the Trump administration's Iranian policy is under development. "But I would tell you that we certainly recognize Iran's continued destabi-

lizing (role) in the region," Tillerson said, citing its payment of foreign fighters, support for Hezbollah extremists, and "their export of militia forces in Syria, in Iraq, in Yemen."

US lawmakers have long sought to hit Iran with more sanctions in order to check its ballistic missile program and rebuke Tehran's continued support for terrorist groups, and on June 15 the Senate approved a sweeping sanctions bill. The bill imposes mandatory sanctions on people involved in Iran's ballistic missile program and anyone who does business with them. The measure also would apply terrorism sanctions to the country's Revolutionary Guards and enforce an arms embargo. It now goes to the House. Senators insisted the new Iran sanctions won't undermine or impede enforcement of the landmark nuclear deal that former president Barack Obama and five other key nations reached with Tehran two years ago.

US travel ban

Iran says the US Supreme Court's decision to reinstate parts of a travel ban applied to six Muslim-majority countries is "racist" and "unfair." Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi was quoted by state TV Wednesday as saying it is "regrettable" that Washington "closes its eyes to the main perpetrators of terrorist acts in the US," without elaborating. The Supreme Court on Monday allowed US President Donald Trump to forge ahead with a limited version of his ban on travelers from Iran, Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Libya and Somalia. The justices will hear full arguments in October in the case. Critics say the ban is intended to meet Trump's campaign promise of keeping Muslims out of the country. The administration says the restrictions are needed to keep out terrorists while it tightens vetting procedures. — Agencies



HAMA: Syrian President Bashar Assad (second left) prays on the first day of Eid al-Fitr, that marks the end of the Muslim Holy Month of Ramadan, at the Nouri Mosque in Hama, Syria. — AP

AIR STRIKES KILL 30

BEIRUT: At least 30 civilians were killed in air strikes on an area of eastern Syria held by the Islamic State group yesterday, a monitoring group said. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said it was not immediately able to say whether the strikes in Deir Ezzor province were carried out by the US-led coalition, or by the Syrian army or its Russian ally. They came just two days after a suspected coalition strike on an IS jail in the province killed 42 prisoners and 15 jihadists, according to an Observatory toll.

Yesterday's strikes hit an area 20 kilometers east of Mayadeen, the town where the prison bombing took place. Most of Deir Ezzor province is controlled by the jihadists and it has been the target of air strikes by the US-led coalition as well as the Syrian army and Russia. The coalition has been hitting IS in both Syria and Iraq since mid-2014 and the jihadists are under growing pressure in both countries. Syria's war has killed more than 320,000 people and forced millions from their homes since it began in March 2011 with anti-government protests.

Turkey, Kurdish militia clash

Meanwhile, the Turkish army and Syrian Kurdish militia have exchanged fire in northern Syria, the Turkish military said yesterday, amid growing tensions in the border region. The army said in a statement that forces of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) had fired on pro-Ankara rebels close to the rebel-held town of Azaz in northern Syria late Tuesday. The Turkish military launched artillery fire on the YPG in retaliation, destroying several targets belonging to the group.

No further details were given. Turkey considers the YPG a terrorist group and the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which has waged an insurgency inside Turkey since 1984. Ankara worries that the YPG wants to carve out a Kurdish region in northern Syria, a step Turkey vehemently opposes. But the United States is openly arming the YPG, as it considers the Kurdish militia group the most effective fighting force against jihadists in Syria. Last August, Turkey launched its Euphrates Shield cross-border operation aimed at clearing the border zone in northern Syria of both YPG fighters and jihadists. — Agencies

SUSPECTED JIHADISTS ARRESTED IN EUROPE

MADRID: Six suspected members of the Islamic State group were arrested in Spain, Britain and Germany yesterday in an operation led by Spanish authorities investigating a jihadist recruiting network, the Spanish interior ministry said. Raids were continuing yesterday targeting the group, based on the island of Majorca and led by an Islamist imam, who was arrested in Britain, the ministry said in a statement.

The imam, 44, was the target of a European arrest warrant and seized by the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit on behalf of the Spanish authorities. "The investigation focuses on terrorism material created for use online," the West Midlands police said, adding that prosecutors would seek his extradition to Spain later. The investigation began in 2015 after authorities discovered videos posted to the internet describing a young Muslim living in Spain and his radicalization, and his eventual departure for Syria.

The imam, "whose public discourse was well known to European police and intelligence services, focused in private on the recruitment of fighters and collecting funds for Syria," the Spanish interior ministry said. The group organized "weekly underground meetings... of youths with similar ideologies... to convince them to travel to conflict zones," the ministry said. "The group's engagement and total allegiance to Daesh (IS) directives, the defense of terrorist actions carried out by lone operatives in Europe, and its readiness to carry out violent jihad, justified this operation."

Four arrests were also made in Palma, the capital of Majorca, and one in Germany, and searches were still under-

way in Germany and Britain. The intelligence and police services of Spain, Britain and Germany, along with European agencies, took part in the raids coordinated by the Spanish state prosecutor, which oversees terrorism cases.

Swiss terror arrest

Meanwhile, Swiss police have arrested four people this month with suspected links to jihadist organizations like the Islamic State group, fearing some posed "an immediate danger," prosecutors said yesterday. The office of Switzerland's attorney general (OAG) confirmed that three people were arrested in the western canton of Vaud last Friday and Saturday, suspected of violating "the prohibition of groups like Al-Qaeda, Islamic State and similar organizations."

They were also suspected of participating in a "criminal organization", it said. A fourth man—reportedly a taxi driver suspected of being an Islamic State recruiter—was arrested in Geneva on June 14. There was no apparent link with the other three, according to the OAG. Swiss authorities have not revealed the identities or the nationalities of those arrested. In the most dramatic case, police swooped on a car outside a busy mall in Aubonne, Vaud on Saturday, in what one onlooker said looked like a scene straight out of an "American movie." "It was surreal," the witness told the 20 Minutes daily, describing how heavily-armed police had blindfolded and taken the driver away.

Other witnesses told the paper that police had also taken away his passenger, a woman wearing a headscarf and with a child on her lap. — Agencies

News

in brief

Pope defrocks priest

ROME: Pope Francis has defrocked an Italian priest found guilty of the sexual abuse of minors, reversing an earlier decision to reduce his punishment, the diocese at the heart of the scandal said yesterday. Mauro Inzoli, 67, was defrocked in 2012 after he was first accused of paedophilia, but that decision was reversed in 2014, when Pope Francis ordered him to stay away from minors and retire to "a life of prayer and humble discretion". Yesterday the diocese of Crema in northern Italy said Francis had "ruled definitively" on May 20 that Inzoli-sentenced to nearly five years in prison last year for sex abuse—would be stripped of his clerical status. The priest, dubbed "Don Mercedes" by the press for his penchant for luxury cars, was found guilty by a Cremona court of eight counts of sexual abuse of children aged 12 to 16 years old between 2004 and 2008. Francis, who was elected in 2013 and vowed to take a "zero tolerance" approach to clerical sex abuse, had faced heavy criticism for overturning the decision by his predecessor, Pope Benedict, to defrock Inzoli.

Superstitious woman

SHANGHAI: An elderly passenger who threw coins at the engine of a plane at a Shanghai airport for good luck will not face police action, Chinese state media said yesterday. The superstitious 80-year-old woman delayed the China Southern Airlines flight on Tuesday for nearly six hours after she tossed nine coins at the engine from the tarmac while boarding, with one nestling inside. Police at Shanghai Pudong International Airport said the woman surnamed Qiu was a devoted Buddhist and believed the coin offering would ensure her safety on the flight to the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou. She was taken away by police after a fellow passenger reported the bizarre incident. However the People's Daily newspaper, citing police, said that while she had broken the law and would normally serve five days behind bars, she is exempted because she is aged over 70.



HARARE: Zimbabwean Pastor Evan Mawarire (centre) arrives at court handcuffed with an unidentified person in Harare yesterday. — AP

'Protest pastor' freed

HARARE: Zimbabwean pastor and political activist Evan Mawarire was freed on \$200 bail yesterday after his arrest for speaking to striking medical students. Mawarire had been addressing students protesting a doubling of tuition fees Monday when he and a student at the University of Zimbabwe were taken into custody. Magistrate Rumbidzai Mugwaga released the pair on bail, ordering them to report to the police every Friday and surrender their passports. Scores of placard-carrying students had gathered Monday at the University of Zimbabwe's main campus, chanting and singing in protest against a hike in tuition fees from \$450 (396 euros) to \$900 (791 euros) a year. The university said the students had thrown stones and ordered all medical students out of campus and residence halls. Mawarire last year led mass anti-government protests dubbed #ThisFlag after posting videos on social media lamenting the worsening economic situation in Zimbabwe under long-ruling President Robert Mugabe.

Gabon opposition figure

LIBREVILLE: A Gabonese opposition figure who earlier this month threatened violence if President Ali Bongo failed to resign has been placed in preventive custody, the state prosecutor said yesterday. Roland Desire Aba'a Minko "was placed in preventive detention ... Tuesday night after being charged with threatening state security, inciting rebellion and circulating fake news to undermine public order," prosecutor Steeve Ndong Essame Ndong said. Aba'a Minko had earlier this month issued an ultimatum to Bongo to step down before the arrival of an International Criminal Court team, which wound up its work on June 22. During a public speech in Libreville on June 16, Aba'a Minko told Bongo to quit within 72 hours, threatening to set off explosives that had been laid in "all administrative and ministerial buildings."

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GLOVES OFF OVER CHANCELLOR 'ATTACK'; VOTE FIGHT HEATS UP

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE PUSH DIVIDES GERMAN RULING COALITION

BERLIN: Germany's election campaign battle heated up, with accusations of mud-slinging flying after Chancellor Angela Merkel's rival accused her of an "attack on democracy". Social Democrats chief Martin Schulz lashed out Sunday at the German leader, saying the famously cautious Merkel caused voters to disengage by refusing to air her views or engage in forceful debate. That's what's called, in Berlin circles, "asymmetric demobilization," said Schulz, referring to Merkel's supposed tactic of making politics so dull that opposition voters don't bother showing up on polling day.

"I call it an attack on democracy," charged

broadcaster ARD. Government spokesman Steffen Seibert declined to comment on issues of party politics but stressed that it was "clear" for the coalition that "we are all working for democracy".

'Sounds like panic'

Schulz revitalised SPD support and enjoyed soaring popularity ratings when he took his party's reins in January, but the trend has since reversed. Three months before Germany heads to the polls on September 24, the SPD is trailing Merkel's centre-right CDU by 15 percentage points, according to a survey published Sunday by Bild am Sonntag. After four years in a coal-

ition after a heated coalition spat sealed an election-year divorce between Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives and her centre-left governing partners. The reform would grant full marital rights, including child adoption, to gay and lesbian couples, who in Germany are now only able to enter so-called civil unions. Granting all couples marriage equality would put Germany in line with a host of other democracies, including the United States, Canada and many EU member nations.

"The path to equality is open," tweeted lawmaker Renate Kuenast of the Greens opposition party, which has campaigned for gay rights for decades, after a committee paved the way for a Friday vote. But even as the LGBT community celebrated many conservative politicians were fuming. The speedy parliamentary vote before the summer break was forced by Merkel's rivals who pounced on her U-turn on same-sex marriage she voiced in an on-stage interview Monday evening. The usually cautious chancellor said her thinking had shifted since she met a lesbian couple who lovingly cared for eight foster children in her Baltic Coast electoral district. Merkel had previously opposed gay marriage with adoption rights because of concern about "the well-being of the children". The chancellor added that she favored a vote on the issue, at an undefined future stage, in which all lawmakers could follow their conscience rather than the party line.

'Breach of trust'

Merkel's comments were widely read as a tactical move to deprive opposition parties of a campaign issue before September 24 elections. Her coalition partners the Social Democrats (SPD), as well as the Greens, far-left Linke and pro-business Free Democrats, have declared same-sex marriage as a red-line demand and condition for entering into any future coalition. By signaling that she was open on the issue, Merkel kept the door open to various alliance options for her Christian Democrats (CDU) and its Bavarian sister party the CSU.

But as Merkel's comments sparked hot debate under the trending Twitter hashtag #EheFuerAlle (MarriageForAll), momentum quickly built to force an early vote. SPD chancellor-candidate Martin Schulz, eager to close a yawning poll gap with front-runner Merkel, said "we will take her at her word" and broke coalition ranks to call for an immediate vote, backed by the Greens and Linke parties. The CDU slammed the SPD for its "breach of trust" after four years of joint rule. The spat erupted days after Schulz had infuriated conservatives by accusing Merkel of an "attack on democracy" for her supposed tactic of making politics so dull that opposition voters don't bother showing up on polling day. — Agencies



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel delivers a speech as part of the 'Congress: Germany 4.0' of the Christian Democratic Union faction at the German federal parliament, Bundestag yesterday. — AP

Schulz, whose Social Democratic Party (SPD) are now the junior partner in Merkel's right-left coalition. But Schulz, who also accused Merkel of "arrogance", was swiftly met with a torrent of protest and accused of having crossed a line. "Even if Mr Schulz is frustrated by the polls, he should remain measured," tweeted Peter Tauber, the general secretary of Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU). "The desperation must never be so deep that Democrats accuse Democrats of attacks against democracy," he said.

Tauber pledged that the CDU would pursue a "fair campaign", adding that "that's what we're expecting from the SPD, too". But, defending his SPD party boss, its parliamentary group head Thomas Oppermann said Schulz has struck the right tone. "An election campaign is not a pillow fight, one needs to be concrete. I find that he succeeded in this case," Oppermann told public

tion led by Merkel, the SPD has seen falling support as its left-leaning supporters accuse it of shifting too far right to accommodate the German leader's economically liberal policies. For Horst Seehofer, who heads Merkel's conservative Bavarian allies the CSU, Schulz's harsh words for Merkel bode ill for the SPD candidate himself.

"It seems a little early in the campaign to have lost one's nerves," he said, adding that it's "not a good sign for a chancellor candidate but, actually, rather unworthy". The head of the pro-business liberal FDP party, Christian Lindner, also waded in. "When one uses vocabulary as serious as that which Mr Schulz did, then undoubtedly there is a danger of trivializing the real enemies of democracy," he told the Heilbronner Stimme newspaper.

Same-sex marriage

Germany is set to legalize same-sex marriage



PATRAS: Pakistani migrants sit in a park near the port of Patras, southwestern Greece. — AFP

IN GREEK PORT, MIGRANTS PLAY CAT AND MOUSE WITH POLICE

PATRAS: Khalid, a 13-year-old from Afghanistan, spends his days in squalor repeatedly trying to scale a metal fence separating him from the better life he dreams about at night. He is one of around 200 migrants camped next to the Greek port of Patras, dodging police patrols and irate truck drivers, attempting to board a boat to Italy after other countries shut down the overland route to northern Europe. "One day I will make it, I know," says the boy, who hopes to become an engineer in Germany or Switzerland.

After the migrant crisis of 2015-16, which saw more than a million people reach Europe from Turkey, the EU struck a deal with Ankara that dramatically reduced the number of new arrivals. The agreement coupled with some European countries essentially closing their borders to migrants has left around 60,000 people—mainly Syrian, Afghan and Pakistani—stuck in Greece with little prospect of employment. "There is no future (in Greece)," Khalid says. After leaving Kabul a year ago Khalid and his family reached the Aegean island of Chios by boat from Turkey.

Under the terms of the migrant deal, he should have waited in Chios to be returned to Turkey. But the camp there was so full he was instead transferred to mainland Greece. Fearing he would be forced to leave Europe, and lacking the 4,000 euros (\$4,500) needed to pay a smuggler, Khalid made his way to Patras, a port city on the northwestern Peloponnese. He's now part of a 200-strong group of young men and children who roam the derelict factories opposite the port fence, constantly on the lookout for trucks bound for Italy in which to hide.

'Everybody is sick'

Khalid sleeps in an abandoned building

with other young boys, mainly Afghans or Pakistanis—a hodgepodge of makeshift tents and sleeping bags strewn with rotting garbage. "Everybody is sick in here because it's not a good place," he says. According to NGO worker Georgia Tzanakou, there are 30 unaccompanied minors currently living in a single migrant centre in Patras. This includes "an eight-year-old boy who was left behind when his father caught a boat to Italy," she says.

"We found the child staying in precarious conditions inside a warehouse." The closure of the land-based route to northern Europe has led more and more migrants to return to the sea passage between Greece and Italy, either as stowaways in cargo ships or crammed into smuggling vessels. "This passage was never completely closed, but it was logical that when the road to the Balkans was open, very few would resort to it, because it is much more risky," according to a police source in Patras. Europe's border agency Frontex earlier this year deployed a patrol boat in the Ionian Sea and in April Greek coastguards escorted a migrant vessel in distress to the island of Kefalonia.

Hundreds arrested

For Khalid and his cohorts, trying to sneak aboard vehicles waiting to embark for Bari, Brindisi or Ancona is a full-time job. The migrants mix discreet nighttime solo attempts with mass group raids, braving stones thrown by angry truck drivers and regular police stings. Even if they make it over the three-meter (10-foot) fence unscathed, many are discovered hiding in trucks during cargo checks. Most return home willingly, pocketing the occasional piece of fruit as loot. — AFP



CRANS-MONTANA: (Left to right) UN envoy Espen Barth Eide, Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias and head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) Elizabeth Spehar pose for a picture at the opening of Cyprus peace talks yesterday in the Swiss resort of Crans-Montana. — AFP

CYPRIT LEADERS GRAPPLE WITH DECADES-OLD FEUDS

CRANS-MONTANA: Rival Cypriot leaders resumed efforts yesterday to solve one of the world's longest-running conflicts in what the United Nations billed as the "best chance" to bring lasting peace to the Mediterranean island. Security was at the top of the agenda at the make-or-break talks in the Swiss Alpine resort of Crans-Montana geared towards ending the decades-old division between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

"It's a unique opportunity, because after all of these decades of division it is possible to solve," UN envoy Espen Barth Eide told reporters ahead of the talks. Cyprus has been divided since 1974, when Turkish troops invaded the island in response to an Athens-inspired coup attempt seeking union with Greece. Turkey, which later occupied the island's northern third, maintains more than 35,000 troops in Cyprus, and Nicosia remains Europe's last divided capital. Eide has presided over peace efforts since 2014, and the last round of talks in January ended with a number of issues—namely security, property and power sharing—unresolved.

President Nicos Anastasiades, the Greek Cypriot leader who heads the island's internationally recognised government, and his Turkish Cypriot counterpart Mustafa Akinci are representing their respective communities during talks. They were joined yesterday by the foreign ministers of Cyprus's so-called guarantor powers, Greece and Turkey, along with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini. British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson, whose country also acts as a guarantor and retains two military base areas on the island, left Crans-Montana after discussions with counterparts over dinner Tuesday night. Britain's embassy in Cyprus said on Twitter that the talks were a "moment of opportunity".

'Might be last chance'

Front and centre at the Swiss Alps summit is a new security arrangement for a post-settlement federal Cyprus, particularly

the presence of Turkish troops historically a major sticking point in peace efforts. Turkey has indicated it may be willing to sharply reduce its troop numbers on the island, but analysts say Ankara is unlikely to agree to a total military pullout. Eide said the two sides were "basically done" on four other issues being discussed, focused on governance and power sharing, property, economy and EU matters.

Any deal would need to be put to dual votes among Greek and Turkish Cypriots. An agreement reached in 2004 was supported by Turkish Cypriots but overwhelmingly rejected by the island's Greek speakers. A small group of demonstrators unfurled banners yesterday urging leaders to reach a lasting peace accord as official delegations arrived. "We believe in Cyprus that both communities really want a solution. It is not easy but we believe necessary concessions should be made," Kemal Baykalli of the Unite Cyprus Now group said. "We fear that this might be the last chance but I think the leaders are close to (a deal)."

Huge compensation costs

More than 2,000 people went missing during sectarian infighting and massacres carried out by Greek and Turkish Cypriot militias that culminated in the 1974 invasion. Eide said that while there was currently no "burning drama" in Cyprus, "many Cypriots are aware that the status quo is not guaranteed." "My preference is to talk about this as the best chance... It will be extremely sad if it is wasted," he said on the eve of the talks. A source close to the negotiations said that UN chief Antonio Guterres was set to attend the Crans-Montana conference. But it remains to be seen how leaders aim to overcome a host of issues, including potentially rehousing thousands of families who fled their homes more than four decades ago. The cost for arranging the return of displaced persons and compensating those who lost property is estimated to run to billions of euros. — AFP

COPTER STRAFES COURT IN 'TERRORIST ATTACK'

CARACAS: A police helicopter fired on Venezuela's Supreme Court and Interior Ministry in what President Nicolas Maduro said was a thwarted terrorist attack aimed at ousting him from power. The confusing incident, which may ratchet up tensions in a country already paralyzed by months of deadly anti-government protests, took place as Maduro was speaking live on state television Tuesday. He later said the helicopter had fired on the pro-government court with grenades, one of which didn't go off, helping avoid any loss of life.

Pictures of a blue police helicopter carrying an anti-government banner appeared on social media around the same time as a video in which an apparent police pilot and budding action movie actor, identified as Oscar Perez, called for a rebellion against Maduro's "tyranny." He said he was part of a coalition of members of the country's security forces. Authorities said they were still searching for the man. "We have two choices: be judged tomorrow by our conscience and the people or begin today to free ourselves from this corrupt government," the man said while reading from a statement with four figures dressed in military fatigues, ski masks and carrying what looked like assault rifles standing behind him.

There was no sign of any other police or troops taking part an uprising. Many of Maduro's opponents took to social media to

accuse the president of orchestrating an elaborate ruse to justify a crackdown against Venezuelans seeking to block his plans to rewrite the constitution. Venezuela has been roiled by anti-government protests the past three months that have left at least 75 people dead and hundreds injured.

After the incident, Maduro sounded alternately calm and angry as he told the audience about what had happened in the airspace just beyond the presidential palace. "It couldn't have caused a tragedy with several dozen dead and injured," he said, calling it a "terrorist attack." Information Minister Ernesto Villegas later read a statement accusing those in the helicopter of firing 15 shots against the Interior Ministry as a reception was taking place for 80 people celebrating national journalists' day. It then flew a short distance to the court, which was in session, and launched what he said were four Israeli-made grenades of "Colombian origin," two of them against national guardsmen protecting the building.

The pro-government president of the high court said there were no injuries from the attack and there were no visible signs of damage outside either of the government buildings yesterday morning. Villegas said security forces were being deployed to apprehend Perez as well as recover the stolen German-built Bolkow helicopter. — AFP



CARACAS: Venezuelan Bolivarian National Guard soldiers dressed in riot gear enter the National Assembly building in Caracas. Opposition lawmakers got into fistfights with national guardsmen as they tried to enter the National Assembly. — AP

AFTER STRING OF DEFEATS, DEMOCRATS RUDDERLESS IN TRUMP ERA

WASHINGTON: Frozen out of power in Washington and having lost a string of congressional races this year, Democrats are struggling to craft winning strategies to convert disillusionment with President Donald Trump into victory in 2018's midterm elections. The party fielded a hodgepodge of candidates in four special elections in recent months, including a banjo-strumming cowboy poet in Montana. Most recently Democrats nominated a young novice in Georgia, where the party, judging it had its best pick-up opportunity, threw millions of dollars into the race.

Yet each time, Republicans beat back the advances. And Democratic lawmakers, strategists and party officials have been left scratching their heads about how to turn it around and launch a viable bid to reclaim Congress next year. "They're definitely licking their wounds," Kerwin Swint, professor and chair of the political science department at Georgia's Kennesaw State University said. Debate has swirled among Democrats about what strategy to deploy: going all in with a nationwide anti-Trump agenda, or tailoring individual races to local economic issues in a bid to repair fraying connections between the Democratic Party and the common voter.

The Georgia race showed "the effectiveness of Trump's staying power" despite the scandals rocking the White House, Swint said. "Democrats should not focus

their campaigns about him, they should be about jobs," he added. "They need a much more focused economic pitch." At the same time, Zac Petkanas, who directed Hillary Clinton's rapid-response operation during her 2016 presidential campaign, said Republicans should not see their four congressional victories as a sign all is well in Trumpworld.

In a normal political environment, the races in Georgia, Kansas, Montana and South Carolina to fill seats vacated by congressmen who joined Trump's cabinet would be blowouts for Republicans, given the overwhelming, ruby-red nature of the districts, Petkanas said in a telephone interview. Instead, they were all within seven percentage points. Trump and Republican lawmakers have gloated over the wins, "but I think in private they're actually very scared," he said. "They are in for the races of their lives, and they know it."

'Unique opportunity'

As Democrats seek to regroup, they are hobbled by a glaring omission: no clear party protagonist has emerged as a potential challenger to Trump in 2020. Absent such a standard-bearer, some Democrats have begun urging House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, the icon atop the party's hierarchy, to step aside and allow new blood into leadership. "I don't think people in the Beltway are real-

izing just how toxic the Democratic Party brand is in so much of the country," congressman Tim Ryan, who unsuccessfully challenged Pelosi for the leadership position last year, told CNN in a blunt post-mortem after the June 20 loss in Georgia.

The California congresswoman pushed back tensely against her party's rebels, insisting she has brought unity to the Democrats. "My decision about how long I stay is not up to them," Pelosi, who is 77, told reporters. Asked about the Democrats' doldrums and Pelosi's future role, Trump quipped that it would be "very sad for Republicans" if the congresswoman—a favorite target of Republicans—stepped down. "I'd like to keep her right where she is, because our record is extraordinary against her," he told Fox on Friday.

The party in presidential power traditionally fares poorly during US midterm elections. In 2010, two years into Barack Obama's first term as president, Democrats got hammered, losing 63 seats and control of the 435-member House of Representatives. Democrats now need to gain 24 seats to reclaim the House, and analysts say there are several dozen Republican-held seats in play. In a memo this past week, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee chairman Ben Ray Lujan described at least 71 districts that are more competitive than the four contested so far this year.

"We have a unique opportunity to flip control of the House of Representatives in

2018," he wrote. One reason Lujan is banking on victory: the Republican health care bill. Senate Republicans on Thursday unveiled their plan, which would repeal much of Obama's signature health care reforms. It has had a frosty reception. Democrats are counting on voters revolt-

ing against any lawmaker who supports legislation that could leave millions of Americans without health insurance. "A lot will depend on where Trump's approval rating is next year, and health care will obviously mold that climate," Professor Swint said. —AFP



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump, accompanied by Iowa Gov Kim Reynolds, speaks in the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington yesterday during an energy roundtable with tribal, state, and local leaders. —AP

3 CHICAGO POLICE OFFICERS INDICTED

ANOTHER BLOW TO POLICE

CHICAGO: Three Chicago police officers were indicted on charges that they conspired to cover up and lie about what happened when a white police officer shot a black teenager 16 times, prompting outrage when a video of the shooting was finally released. The indictment handed down Tuesday alleges that one current and two former officers lied about the events of Oct 20, 2014, when Officer Jason Van Dyke killed Laquan McDonald.

The officers' version of events contradicts what can be seen on police dashcam video, in which the teenager spins after he was shot and falls to the ground - seemingly incapacitated - as the officer continues to fire shot after shot into his body. The indictment further alleges that officers lied when they said McDonald ignored Van Dyke's verbal commands and that one of the officers signed off on a report that claimed the other two officers were, in fact, victims of an attack by McDonald.

"The co-conspirators created police reports in the critical early hours and days following the killing of Laquan McDonald that contained important false information," says the indictment in which the three are charged with felony counts of obstruction of justice, official misconduct and conspiracy. The indictments mark the latest chapter in what has been one of the most troubling events in the history of a police force dogged by allegations of racism, brutality and the protection of officers who brutalize African-Americans.

The video sparked massive protests, cost the police superintendent his job and left the city scrambling to implement reforms to regain shattered public trust. In

January, the Department of Justice issued a scathing report that found that the department had violated the constitutional rights of residents for years, including by too often using excessive force and killing suspects who posed no threat. Around the country, there are renewed questions whether the

gation of the shooting - said in a news release that the three - David March, Joseph Walsh and Thomas Gaffney - "coordinated their activities to protect each other and other members of the Chicago Police Department," including by filing false police reports, ignoring contrary evidence and not even attempting to

deal the true facts of the events surrounding the killing of Laquan McDonald" and "to shield their fellow officer from criminal investigation and prosecution."

The indictment alleges that the officers understood that, if video and other evidence became public, "it would inexorably lead to a thorough criminal investigation by an independent body and likely criminal charges." Jeffrey Neslund, an attorney who helped negotiate a \$5 million settlement with the city on behalf of the McDonald family, welcomed the indictments.

"This is the same thing that our investigation showed back when we were negotiating with the city in 2015, that there was a cover-up," he said. Van Dyke was charged more than a year after the shooting with first-degree murder on the same day that the city - under orders from a judge - made public the dashboard camera video. He has pleaded not guilty. His attorney Dan Herbert released a fiery statement late Tuesday, alleging the indictment will silence potential witnesses and is "further proof that the government is determined to prevent" Van Dyke from having a fair trial.

If convicted, the three officers could face years in prison. The official misconduct charge alone carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$25,000 fine. The officers weren't arrested and will be allowed to show up on their own accord at their arraignment on July 10, Holmes said. Asked why, she told a news conference later Tuesday "it's very typical for a situation like this to give a courtesy call to the defendants" and, if they're not deemed dangerous or a flight risk, to let them appear at their future arraignment. —AP



CHICAGO: Jared Steverson confronting a police officer guarding a store as demonstrators demand justice for Laquan McDonald, a black teen killed by police. Chicago special prosecutor Patricia Brown Holmes yesterday, charged police officers David March, Joseph Walsh and Thomas Gaffney with conspiracy, official misconduct and obstruction of justice for allegedly concealing "the true facts of the events surrounding the killing of Laquan McDonald." —AFP

legal system is willing to punish officers, particularly after two police officers - one in Milwaukee and the other in Minnesota - were acquitted and a mistrial was declared in Cincinnati in the shootings of blacks that were captured by video.

Patricia Brown Holmes - appointed special prosecutor last July to investigate officers at the scene and involved in the investi-

interview keys witnesses.

"The indictment makes clear that these defendants did more than merely obey an unofficial 'code of silence,' Holmes said in the statement. "It alleges that they lied about what occurred to prevent independent criminal investigators from learning the truth." The officers allegedly began to conspire almost immediately on the day of the shooting, "to con-



HUNTSVILLE: Authorities block an entrance to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Ala. The military post said in a tweet it was on lockdown Tuesday amid reports of possible active shooter, telling workers to "run hide fight." —AP

NO SHOTS FIRED; CALLS PROMPT LOCKDOWN AT US MILITARY POST

HUNTSVILLE: Two 911 calls and a tweet about the possibility of an active shooter at a military installation set off a day of panic and confusion in Alabama. The emergency calls Tuesday came from within the Redstone Arsenal base near Huntsville and led the installation to tweet a warning to its 30,000 government employees, civilians and contractors: "run hide fight."

Police cars with flashing lights rushed to the scene and blocked entrances to the post, home to Army missile defense programs, NASA's rocket propulsion operations and federal law enforcement agencies. Even before any gunfire was confirmed, the governor offered her prayers and social media lit up with worried friends and families talking about the lockdown.

At one point, Redstone spokesman Christopher Colster acknowledged he didn't know whether the lockdown was part of a drill or an actual threat. In the end, an investigation found there was no active shooter and no shots were fired, garrison commander Col. Tom Holliday said. He said authorities would continue to investigate what happened, including whether the 911 calls were part of a hoax. "We did have initial reports of someone hearing shots fired and someone seeing a weapon."

That in itself drove us to our response," he said. "I would say that the situation that we live in the United States today leads to caution. Honestly, if we have to overreact, I would rather overreact than underreact."

He said the phrase used in the tweet - "run hide fight" - is a standard response during an active shooter situation. An active shooter drill planned for Wednesday was canceled. "We believe we have learned everything we needed to as part of the event today," he said, adding that the response worked as designed.

Images on social media showed an ambulance and what appeared to be civilians standing outside the Sparkman Center, which includes offices, an auditorium, cafeteria and an interior courtyard. Holliday said the 911 calls came from the Sparkman complex and that some people who evacuated the building needed medical attention unrelated to the 911 calls. It took two hours to give the all-clear for the installation and another two hours to make sure the sprawling Sparkman complex was secure.

Amy Jay said her husband, who was working at the Sparkman Center, was told the situation was over through an announcement over the building's public address system. "Feeling like I can breathe again!" Jay wrote in a message to The Associated Press. "My husband is a contractor and a veteran so when we hear things like this we're reminded of what happened at Fort Hood," she said, referring to the 2009 shooting at a military base in Texas. Alabama Gov Kay Ivey's office said after the lockdown was lifted that she didn't know what led to the alert. "The important thing is everybody's safe," Ivey said. —AP

UTAH OFFICIALS BLAME LACK OF LOGGING FOR MAJOR WILDFIRE

SALT LAKE CITY: Insisting that logging could have cleaned up dead, bug-infested trees that are fueling a Utah wildfire, a Republican state lawmaker blamed federal mismanagement and lawsuits by "tree hugger" environmentalists for the blaze that has burned 13 homes and forced the evacuation of 1,500 people. A conservation group called that contention "shameful" and misleading, saying it fails to take into account climate change and drought.

In addition, a US Forest Service researcher said logging probably would not have made a big difference in the high-altitude fire that is sending embers from tree-to-tree over long distances - normal for the ecosystem. Utah state Rep Mike Noel said Tuesday he wants to use the fire near the ski town of Brian Head and a popular fishing lake to highlight the imbalance of power afforded environmental groups under previous presidents and to ease bureaucratic and legal blockades for logging companies. He believes the Trump administration will provide a more receptive audience for his plea.

The blaze is one of several in the West. Crews in California were making gains against two new fires that spread quickly, and firefighters in Idaho battled five lightning-sparked wildfires burning in grass and brush. Crews dealt with windy conditions as they battled a northern Arizona wildfire that has burned nearly 7 square miles. Authorities say the Utah fire was started on June

17 by someone using a torch tool to burn weeds on private land.

Noel contends it wouldn't have spread as fast if federal forest lands had been cleared of dead trees. A video of his Monday rant against environmentalists generated social media buzz and sparked new debate about whether logging could help prevent Western wildfires. He joined several other state and county officials in speaking out. "When we turn the Forest Service over to the bird and bunny lovers and the tree huggers and the rock lickers, we've turned our history over," Noel said. "We are going to lose our wildlife and we are going to lose our scenery, the very thing you people wanted to try to protect. It's just plain stupidity."

Mark Finney, a researcher at the US Forest Service Fire Science Laboratory in Missoula, Montana, said getting rid of the dead trees in the Brian Head area probably would not have made much difference. The trees died years ago, making irrelevant a 2011 US Forest Service study that found the needles of beetle-killed trees ignite three times faster and burn more intensely than healthy trees. "If we're looking for someone to blame, there isn't anyone," Finney said. "Forests burn." Steve Bloch, legal director of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, said Noel's assertion is an over-simplification of wildfires that are the result of fire suppression, climate change, drought and unpredictable winds. —AP

TOILET CHARITY PLAN FOR INDIAN VILLAGE BLOCKED

NEW DELHI: Local officials are blocking a toilet-building charity's effort to rename a north Indian village after US President Donald Trump, the group said yesterday. District officials did not immediately return calls for comment, but were quoted by the Press Trust of India news agency as saying the renaming effort was just a fundraising stunt for the charity.

Residents of the dusty village of Maroda worried they wouldn't receive free toilets if they abandoned the new name "Trump Sulabh Village," the charity said. But it assured them that it would continue its campaign to build commodes for each home. "As long as they let us, we're going to keep this work going," said Sulabh International founder Bindeshwar Pathak. None of the funding is coming from Trump or the US, but Pathak said he hoped the renaming attempt would bring attention to their efforts to improve sanitation across India.

Some 60 percent of India's 1.25 billion people still defecate in the open. Pathak said authorities in the surrounding district of Mewat objected to the charity's plan to rename the village as part of a plan to make it the first in the state of Haryana to be free of open defecation. "The real issue is that the area had already been declared open-defecation free," though a survey by the charity found that only 40 of the village's 160 homes had toilets, Pathak said. "When we brought attention to the lack of toilets," he said, "they asked us to remove the signs" declaring its new name as Trump Sulabh Village.



MARORA, India: A poster with the image of US President Donald Trump is set up at Marora village, which has been unofficially renamed 'Trump Village,' about 100km from New Delhi. —AFP

Most of the villagers who attended a renaming ceremony last Friday said they did not know who Trump was, but were happy to take on his name if it came with a free toilet. "Every morning we would go out toward the jungle, or just find any place to sit and do our business," said villager

Hasina, a 45-year-old housewife who like many in India uses only one name. A new toilet, she said, "is going to be more convenient for us. It is definitely good." The Hindi-language word "sulabh" means "accessible" and describes the simple pit toilets the charity builds for free. —AP

STOLEN BOYS: LIFE AFTER SEXUAL SLAVERY IN AFGHANISTAN

KABUL: Adorned in makeup, fake breasts and bells, Jawed whirls around middle-aged men at Kabul's underground bacha bazi, or "boy play" parties, where the former child sex slave finds freedom of sorts as a dancing boy. Jawed was kidnapped by a former jihadi commander in Shomali, north of Kabul, when he was barely 14, a victim of a hidden epidemic in Afghanistan of culturally-sanctioned male rape.

He is one of three former "bachas" traced by AFP who managed to escape their abusers. Their testimonies shed searing light on the stolen lives of boy sex slaves, often seen as caricatures of shame and cast out of their families, with many like Jawed falling prey to a new cycle of abuse. Four years after he was kidnapped, Jawed's commander replaced him with a new boy slave, and "gifted" him to another strongman. The

19-year-old says he escaped one night amid the chaos of a gunfight at a wedding where his new captor took him to entertain guests. But dancing is the only skill he has that can earn a livelihood, having had no education and with virtually no protection offered in Afghanistan for bacha bazi survivors. Now he performs for powerful male patrons at dance parties, where the evening often ends in sex-underlining how, even when they are free, victims struggle to break out of the role that has been forced on them. "Fights usually break out over who will take me home" after the parties, 19-year-old Jawed said, requesting that his real name not be revealed.

'Transform into a woman'

Bacha bazi is not seen as homosexuality in Afghanistan's gender segregated society—instead the possession of young boys decked out as pretty women symbolizes power and primacy. It is carried out with impunity often within Western-backed Afghan forces. After two failed attempts that resulted in a beating, 15-year-old Gul escaped barefoot at the end of three months of captivity in a police outpost in Helmand's Nad Ali district.

But there was no going home again. Gul lives constantly on the move, chased by the paralyzing fear he will be kidnapped once more. His parents and brothers, meanwhile, have been forced to flee their home over fears the powerful com-

mander will come looking for him. "Transform yourself into a woman," the checkpoint commander would tell me with makeup and ankle bells, Gul told AFP by telephone from his hiding place.

Gul was one of three bachas at the checkpoint. Troublingly, he said, the policemen prowled for more victims—especially effeminate boys from poor families unable to fight back. "They tried to outdo each other: 'My boy is more handsome than yours, my boy is a better dancer,'" he said. For some the only escape is to forge a secret deal with the Taliban, who have successfully recruited boy sex slaves hungry for revenge to kill their abusers within police ranks, AFP revealed last year.

'Save my boy'

Unlike many other victims, Gul is relatively fortunate in that his family was ready to take him back. "Family honor is like a glass of water. One speck of dirt ruins it," said Aimal, a former bacha in his 30s who was abandoned by his parents. "If I were a woman my family wouldn't leave me alive." The shame also stalks parents who try to help their children, say medical professionals in southern Afghanistan who treat the brutally violated survivors. "Increasingly parents will bring boys saying they have bowel problems," said a surgeon in Helmand province, where bacha bazi is widespread, corroborating what two other health officials said. "But a closer examina-

tion shows the boys were raped and need to be stitched up.

The parents break down in tears: 'We want no publicity, just save my boy.' Aimal, who requested his real name be withheld, was discarded after years of enslavement to a jihadi commander in northern Balkh province as he began sprouting a beard. Now a youth activist in Kabul, he said he did not want to end up the way that many other victims do—becoming predators themselves. President Ashraf Ghani this year laid out stringent penalties against bacha bazi for the first time in a revised penal code, but the government has given no time frame over when they will be enforced.

Instead, authorities in February launched a massive raid on a bacha bazi party in Kabul, jailing not the organizers but a handful of dancing boys, multiple witnesses said. "For me dancing is not a crime," said Aimal. "This culture of victimizing the victim must end." In a country with little legal protection or psychosocial support, victims might be lucky to escape their abusers but not their past. Almost by default, prostitution has become a common fallback for many abused boys. "Dancing has become too risky" since the raid, Jawed said before he sidled back into his underground life. "Now I might only do sex work." —AFP



Photo shows an Afghan youth dancing at a private party in an unidentified location in Afghanistan. Bacha bazi is not seen as homosexuality in Afghanistan's gender segregated society—instead the possession of young boys decked out as pretty women symbolizes power and primacy. —AFP

GIRLS AS DESSERT?

THAI SEX SCANDAL EXPOSES GRIM TRADITION

BANGKOK: When senior bureaucrats visited the remote Thai province where local official Boonyarit worked, the routine was often the same: welcome them with the finest food and drink and then bring out the teen girls, often referred to as "dessert". The tradition—known by the euphemistic Thai phrase "treat to food, lay down the mat"—refers to the expectation that underlings lavish superiors and VIPs with local delicacies, top-notch

to foreigners, the bulk of its sprawling sex industry is geared mostly towards locals.

"This tradition became common a long time ago," explained Boonyarit Nipavanit, a district official in Mae Hong Son, a poor and rugged province in the mountainous north. "When groups of senior officials come for seminars or work trips, there is a custom of 'treating them', which means welcoming them with food, and then 'laying

down the mat', which means providing girls," he said. "Sometimes we received information about what type of girls they liked... sometimes officials had to prepare five to ten women for a senior to choose from."

Some of the victims, she said, were branded with owl tattoos by the gangmasters as a kind of ownership stamp. Under pressure from the press, national police arrested a Mae Hong Son police sergeant accused

spread in a hierarchical country where subordinates—both in government and the private sector—are expected to pamper bosses to hold onto jobs or move up the career ladder. "We don't have a merit system in the bureaucracy, we have to bribe our bosses," explained Lakkana Punwichai, a Thai columnist covering social issues. The practise of arranging sex for superiors comes from "a culture that sees girls not as human beings but as property", she added. "She is a present. She is the same as food, as beautiful clothes—something that has a price."

Protecting the boss

Many sex trafficking victims are too fearful to come forward when it is powerful figures who control or patronize the business—especially in rural areas like Mae Hong Son, where social networks are small. Local authorities are also under pressure to protect their own. That was the case in Mae Hong Son, where police initially tried to bury the accusations made by the whistleblowing mother, who has requested anonymity and is now under government protection in Bangkok. "She was asked to compromise the case by some (local) police," her lawyer said. In the wake of the Mae Hong Son scandal, Thailand's Social Development Ministry said it would "lead by example" as an agency "opposed to the 'treat to food, lay down the mat' practice".

Anti-trafficking police also vowed to accelerate a crackdown on the flesh trade. Last week a task force arrested three local officials from northeastern Nakhon Ratchasima province accused of having sex with teen girls—some as young as 14 — who were trafficked into an underage prostitution ring. But experts say it is almost always only low-level pimps or officials who are punished. "After police rescue the girls and handlers, they never expand the case," said Ronnasit Proeksayajiva from anti-trafficking NGO Nvader. "They never investigate more about who the customers are." —AFP



BANGKOK: A Thai street food vendor waits for customers at China town in Bangkok. —AP

accommodation and sex services. Until recently the most sinister part of that tradition, the procurement of underage girls, was well-known but rarely discussed. Yet a trafficking scandal involving teens, police and officials in Boonyarit's province has flung the practice onto the nation's front pages, prompting calls to root out a culture that helps fuel the kingdom's infamous flesh trade. While Thailand is known globally for flashy red-light districts that cater

down the mat', which means providing girls," he said. "Sometimes we received information about what type of girls they liked... sometimes officials had to prepare five to ten women for a senior to choose from."

'She is a present'

Boonyarit is comfortable speaking freely about the practice now that detectives have opened 41 cases into an alleged police-run prostitution network in his

of trafficking girls into the sex ring and charged eight other officers with sleeping with the minors. Five administrators from central Nonthaburi province have also been charged for allegedly hiring the teens with government funds during an official visit to Mae Hong Son. "Since this story broke, many officials feel relieved that we don't have to do it anymore," said Boonyarit.

But the so-called tradition is far from unique to Mae Hong Son. Trafficking experts say it is wide-



HONG KONG: A bird flies past as pro-democracy demonstrators standing on top of the Golden Bauhinia statue, given to Hong Kong by China to mark the 1997 handover, after storming the sculpture in front of the Convention and Exhibition Centre in Hong Kong yesterday. —AFP

HONG KONG PROTESTERS STAGE SIT-IN AHEAD OF JINPING'S VISIT

HONG KONG: Pro-democracy protesters climbed a statue in Hong Kong yesterday and staged a sit-in ahead of a visit by President Xi Jinping to mark 20 years since the city was handed back to China by Britain. Xi's visit this week comes at a time when fears are growing that Beijing is tightening its grip on semi-autonomous Hong Kong. High-profile student activist Joshua Wong was among more than 20 demonstrators who encircled the sculpture of a golden bauhinia flower which became the emblem of Hong Kong in 1997.

The statue was given to the city by China as a present to mark the handover. Some activists chained themselves to the sculpture while others climbed into its petals. Pro-democracy lawmakers Nathan Law and Leung Kwok-hung, also known as Long Hair, were among the protesters sitting at its base as police cordoned off the square, which is a popular tourist attraction.

Xi is due to land in Hong Kong on Thursday for a three-day visit to attend anniversary celebrations and swear in the city's new leader Carrie Lam. The city is ruled under a "one country, two systems" deal, enshrined in the handover agreement, which allows it rights unseen on the mainland, including freedom of speech and an independent judiciary. But there are concerns that China is increasingly interfering in a range of areas, from politics to education and the media. Protesters at the bauhinia statue chanted "Long live the Umbrella Movement!" and "I'm a Hong Konger!"

The Umbrella Movement was the name given to mass rallies in 2014 calling for democratic reforms. Wong and Law were among the student leaders of those protests, which ultimately failed to win concessions. Activists yesterday also called for the release of Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo who was granted medical parole this week due to late-stage liver cancer but remains in the mainland. The writer and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, now 61, was sentenced to 11 years in prison in 2009 for "subversion" after spearheading a bold petition for democratic reforms. "Free Liu Xiaobo! Free all political prisoners! Universal suffrage now!" the protesters

chanted.

Latest-generation destroyer

In another development, China's increasingly powerful navy launched its most advanced domestically produced destroyer yesterday, at a time of rising competition with other naval powers such as the United States, Japan and India. The first 10,000-ton Type 055 entered the water at Shanghai's Jiangnan Shipyard yesterday morning, the navy said in a statement. It said the ship is equipped with the latest air, missile, ship and submarine defense systems. China is believed to be planning to produce four of the ships. "The launch of this ship signifies that our nation's development of destroyers has reached a new stage," the navy said.

A photo on the navy's website showed multicolored streamers being shot out of tubes while sailors and shipyard workers stood dockside next to a massive Chinese flag. It said the chief of the People's Liberation Army's General Armaments Department, Zhang Youxia, presided over the ceremony, in which a bottle of champagne was broken over the ship's bow. The Type 055 is significantly larger than China's other modern destroyer, the Type 052, representing the rising sophistication of China's defense industries. Once heavily dependent on foreign technology, China in April launched its first aircraft carrier built entirely on its own, based on an earlier Ukrainian model.

In terms of displacement, it is roughly equivalent to the Arleigh Burke class of destroyer. China's navy is undergoing an ambitious expansion and is projected to have a total of 265-273 warships, submarines and logistics vessels by 2020, according to the Washington, DC-based Center for Naval Analysis. That compares with 275 deployable battle force ships presently in the US Navy, China's primary rival in the Asia Pacific, with the once-yawning gap between the two narrowing rapidly. China says it needs a powerful navy to defend its 14,500 kilometers of coastline, as well as its crucial maritime shipping routes. —Agencies

'VEILED WOMEN OUR PRIDE' SPARKS ANGER IN HARYANA

NEW DELHI: Authorities in a deeply conservative Indian state were accused yesterday of reinforcing entrenched gender discrimination after describing veiled women as the "pride" of the region. The advertisement sponsored by the government of northern Haryana state featured the image of a woman, her face shrouded by a traditional scarf, with a tagline saying "the veil is Haryana's pride".

Women are often kept behind closed doors and treated as second-class citizens in largely-rural Haryana, where male-dominated councils issue diktats aimed at upholding conservative traditions—in some cases, banning girls from wearing jeans or using mobile phones. The state, which borders the capital New Delhi, has the lowest ratio of female to male births in the country, with the selective abortion of girls resulting in 877 women for every 1000 men, according to the last official census in 2011.

But women in Haryana have increasingly been challenging gender stereotypes, pursuing successful careers in traditionally male sports like boxing and wrestling. Geeta Phogat, India's first female wrestler to win gold at the Commonwealth Games, lashed

out at the government's portrayal of women in her home state. "My sisters and I have climbed out of exactly this kind of backward thinking—where women are expected to be covered in veils, where they can't step out of the house, where they can't go to school... this mindset is wrong," Phogat said news network. "If anything, Haryana's women are its pride. There is nothing they can't do and that is a matter of pride."

Haryana is governed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Since storming to power in 2014, Modi has sought to position himself as a champion of women's rights, emphasizing education for girls and an end to female foeticide. India's main opposition Congress party said this latest scandal exposed the BJP's "parochial approach and objectification of women". "This is symbolical of the regressive mindset of the BJP government and they need to shed this now," said Randeep Surjewala, a Congress party spokesman. Anil Vij, a Haryana cabinet minister, told reporters he would look into why the caption was printed in the first place, given the veil is not mandatory in the state. —AFP

YES HE CAN: OBAMA RETURNS TO INDONESIA FOR VACATION

JAKARTA: From white water rafting in Bali to visiting temples on Java, former US President Barack Obama's private family holiday is being closely tracked in Indonesia where he spent four years as a child. Obama was six when he moved to Jakarta after his American mother, Ann Dunham, married an Indonesian man following the end of her marriage to Obama's Kenyan father. "I feel proud that my friend became a president," said Sonni Gondokusumo, 56, a former classmate of Obama at the Menteng 01 state elementary school in Jakarta. Gondokusumo showed a class photograph of himself standing behind a young Obama, who was wearing a school beret. "He was a clever boy. Whenever a teacher asked him to solve a problem in front of the class, he could do it," Gondokusumo told Reuters, adding he hoped to meet the former president again.

Obama remains popular in the world's most populous Muslim nation and his trip has been splashed across the media during an extended public holiday to mark the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. The Rakyat Merdeka newspaper carried a headline "Obama loves Indonesia". Obama returned for an official visit as president in 2010 with his wife, Michelle, but this time has brought daughters Malia and Sasha as well. Indonesians are avid social media users and snaps of the former US president walking with his family in rice fields and rafting on Bali's Ayung River have gone viral. —Reuters

US, UN SUPPORT KUWAIT'S GULF...

Continued from Page 1

"We stand by in order to help facilitate some of these conversations," she added. Ultimately, she noted, the GCC countries are "going to have to work out their disagreement".

Sheikh Mohammad also met UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who also lauded the international organization's support of Kuwaiti mediation efforts. Guterres fully supported the initiative carried out by HH the Amir, hoping that it will end the crisis. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah also met Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, discussing with him recent regional and international developments. Both officials also stressed the importance of ending the GCC crisis. The meetings were attended by Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, Qatar yesterday condemned Saudi Arabia's refusal to negotiate the demands of the kingdom and its allies for ending a crippling embargo on the emirate. Speaking from Washington, where he held talks with Tillerson on Tuesday, Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said the Saudi position was unacceptable. "This is contrary to the principles that govern international relations because you can't just present lists of demands and refuse to negotiate," he said in comments published in Doha.

His Saudi counterpart Adel Al-Jubeir, who is also in Washington, was unbudging on Tuesday over the three-week-old dispute, which has left Qatar, a US ally, isolated under a trade and diplomatic embargo set by its Gulf Arab neighbors. "Our demands on Qatar are non-negotiable. It's now up to Qatar to end its support for extremism and terrorism," Jubeir said on Twitter.

With the support of the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain, the Saudis announced on June 5 they were suspending all ties with Qatar, accusing it of support for extremist groups - a claim Doha denies. They closed their airspace to Qatari carriers and blocked the emirate's only land border, a vital route for its food imports. They also ordered all Qataris to leave and their own nationals to return home.

Last week, Riyadh laid down a list of 13 demands for Qatar, including ending Doha's support for the Muslim

Brotherhood, the closure of Al-Jazeera television, a downgrade of diplomatic ties with Iran and the shutdown of a Turkish military base in the emirate. The United Arab Emirates warned that Qatar should take the demands seriously or face "divorce" from its Gulf neighbors.

"The hour of truth is near," tweeted UAE state minister for foreign affairs Anwar Gargash. "It's time for our brother (Qatar) to choose... honesty and transparency and to realise that media furore and ideological heroism are illusions. "We have long suffered (Qatar's) conspiracy against our stability and witnessed its support for ideologies that aim to sow chaos in the Arab world. Enough. Return to reason," Gargash wrote. The rift between its allies has been a blow to Washington just as its campaign against the Islamic State group comes to a climax in Iraq and Syria. Tillerson has held repeated meetings with both sides as well as with mediators Kuwait and the United Nations.

Meanwhile, a top Qatari human rights group said yesterday it will employ Swiss lawyers to seek compensation for those impacted by the decision of Gulf countries to cut ties with the emirate. Ali bin Smaikh Al-Marri, chairman of Qatar's National Human Rights Commission, said his group would take action against Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, which cut ties with Qatar this month. "We'll be coordinating to start legal action with those affected by these sanctions," Marri told a news conference.

"The three countries are responsible to compensate those affected," he said, adding many Qataris qualified for compensation. "Some cases will be filed in courts in those three countries and in some courts that have international jurisdictions, like in Europe, related to compensation." Marri refused to say which Swiss firm would be employed, but said a statement would be released in the near future.

Many Qataris own properties and businesses in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Bahrain. One senior official said recently that most Qataris own "two or three properties and a villa" in Saudi alone. Thousands of families are also affected as parents are drawn from Qatar and one of the countries opposed to Doha, and will have property in both.— Agencies

REVIVED US TRAVEL BAN SOWS CONFUSION, ANGER...

Continued from Page 1

"What is the reason behind this law? It's all very unclear," said Masoud, a 28-year-old engineer who was applying for a student visa after being accepted into a doctoral program at a university in Dallas, Texas. "This is not fair." Nearby, another Iranian national, 27-year-old Nima, also said he was hoping to get a visa to pursue an advanced degree in the United States. "I just hope that I can get my visa soon and on time," he told Reuters. "We don't know anything about where this may lead, but I wish they would extract Iran from this country list."

Meanwhile, the US Homeland Security Department was set to announce new security measures yesterday for international flights

bound to the United States, which could lead to a lifting of a ban on laptops and other electronics from passenger cabins from certain airports. Industry and US officials briefed on the announcement said airlines flying directly to the United States will be required to implement the enhanced measures. If they don't, their passengers may be barred from carrying laptops and other large electronics in passenger cabins.

Such a laptop ban has been in place at 10 airports in the Middle East and Africa since March amid concerns about an undisclosed threat described only as sophisticated and ongoing. The ban applies to nonstop flights to the United States from Amman, Jordan; Kuwait City, Kuwait; Cairo; Istanbul; Jeddah

and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Casablanca, Morocco; Doha, Qatar; and Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. The roughly 50 affected flights are on foreign airlines.

The new policy will provide a roadmap for airlines and airports that could lead to those bans being lifted. Neither official provided a timeline for compliance. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the changes publicly before the government announcement yesterday afternoon. The government had been considering expanding the laptop ban to include some European airports. The new measure sidetracks those plans, though they could resurface if airlines don't comply with the new guidelines. — Agencies

NEW COMPUTER VIRUS DISRUPTS WORLD BUSINESS

Continued from Page 1

ESET, a Slovakian company that sells products to shield computers from viruses, said 80 percent of the infections detected among its global customer base were in Ukraine, with Italy second hardest hit with about 10 percent. The aim of the latest attack appeared to be disruption rather than ransom, said Brian Lord, former deputy director of intelligence and cyber operations at Britain's GCHQ and now managing director at private security firm PGI Cyber. "My sense is this starts to look like a state operating through a proxy... as a kind of experiment to see what happens," Lord told Reuters yesterday.

While the malware seemed to be a variant of past campaigns, derived from code known as Eternal Blue believed to have been developed by the US National Security Agency (NSA), experts said it was not as virulent as May's WannaCry attack. Security researchers said Tuesday's virus could leap from computer to computer once unleashed within an organisation but, unlike WannaCry, it could not

randomly trawl the internet for its next victims, limiting its scope to infect.

Business that installed Microsoft's latest security patches from earlier this year and turned off Windows file-sharing features appeared to be largely unaffected. There was speculation, however, among some experts that once the new virus had infected one computer it could spread to other machines on the same network, even if those devices had received a security update. After WannaCry, governments, security firms and industrial groups advised businesses and consumers to make sure all their computers were updated with Microsoft security patches.

Austria's government-backed Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) said "a small number" of international firms appeared to be affected, with tens of thousands of computers taken down. Security firms including Microsoft, Cisco's Talos and Symantec said they had confirmed some of the initial infections occurred when malware was transmitted to users of a Ukrainian tax software program called MEDoc.

The supplier of the software, M.E.Doc denied in a post on Facebook that its software was to blame, though Microsoft reiterated its suspicions afterwards. "Microsoft now has evidence that a few active infections of the ransomware initially started from the legitimate MEDoc updater process," it said in a technical blog post. Russian security firm Kaspersky said a Ukrainian news site for the city of Bakhmut was also hacked and used to distribute the ransomware to visitors, encrypting data on their machines.

A number of the international firms hit have operations in Ukraine, and the virus is believed to have spread within global corporate networks after gaining traction within the country. Shipping giant A P Moller-Maersk, which handles one in seven containers shipped worldwide, has a logistics unit in Ukraine. Other large firms affected, such as French construction materials company Saint Gobain and Mondelez International Inc, which owns chocolate brand Cadbury, also have operations in the country. — Reuters

RACE ON TO BUILD FLYING CAR

Continued from Page 1

And just last week France's Pegase, a cross between an ultra-light plane and a mini-car, crossed the Channel, the narrow stretch of water between England and France.

Until recently, flying cars "were a cross between a bad car and a bad plane", said Bruno Sainjon, head of the French aerospace lab ONERA, on the sidelines of the Paris Air Show. But there has been a quantum leap in design thanks to vast improvements in the power of electric propulsion, linked largely to the rapid advances in drone technology recently. Today, such engines lift 80-100 kilos, Xavier Dutertre, director of the Techoplane project based in Normandy, northern France, told AFP. "And we're not far from having the capacity to transport one or two men for about 20 minutes," he added. "In five to 10 years, that will have become commonplace."

While driving-flying hybrids may initially be the latest must-have gadgets for the ultra-rich, experts believe that such vehicles could actually be rapidly

overtaken, as the industry sets its sights on fly-only solutions further down the line. The real future, said ONERA's Sainjon is "a system of on-demand air transport, which would clearly be the start of a new era for aviation" - a flying taxi service, in other words.

Flying cars will not be something that just anyone can drive, "because it's too risky", Pascal Pincemin, an aerospace specialist with Deloitte, told AFP. He envisaged digital platforms to manage the new form of traffic, and that appears to be what Uber, the App-based ride-hailing service, has in mind with its "Elevate" project. The idea appears to be to develop a network of electric, vertical-takeoff aircraft and they are aiming to make their first demonstrations in 2020.

Dubai could be the first off the starting blocks with a new kind of small autonomous electric helicopter scheduled to come into operation later this year. There is "a real appetite, a real interest" in this kind of transport in some of the more traffic-congested cities, said Jean Brice Dumont, head of engineering at Airbus Helicopters. — AFP

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Focus

WOMAN UNCOVERS SORDID PAST IN HUNT FOR MOTHER

As an Indian child adopted and raised in Sweden, Nilakshi Elizabeth Purve Jorendal, was always curious about her birth mother. Her adoptive parents were open about her background, which was "hard to miss when you are a brown girl growing up in a white country" with three white siblings, said Jorendal, now 44. So in the late 1990s she started to search for her birth mother, an on-and-off process that took years but finally succeeded.

But rather than the happy reunion she expected, Jorendal opened up a heartbreak suppressed for decades - finding she had been taken against her mother's will from an orphanage near Pune in western Maharashtra state to Helsingborg, Sweden, in 1976. "My mother was pregnant when my father died. She had delivered me in an orphanage. She never wanted to leave me," Jorendal told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "She told me she was coerced, tricked and pressurized to give me up by her own family members who wanted her to remarry," she said after visiting her ailing mother in Yavatmal, 670 km east of Mumbai in Maharashtra state this month.

Jorendal is one of thousands of Indian children who were given away during rising numbers of inter-country adoptions in the 1970s when there was no law in India to regulate this. Studies show that India was in the top five countries sending children to the United States between 1978 to 1995 but stories of corruption started to cause considerable controversy. But it was not until a Supreme Court judgment in 1984 that private adoptions were banned and the Indian government started to monitor and regulate adoptions.

However campaigners said as more of these children become adults and set out to find their birth parents, more are uncovering the fact that they were forcibly taken. The charity Against Child Trafficking (ACT), that helped Jorendal in her search, has reunited around 40 inter-country adoptees with their birth mothers in the past six years, with a rising numbers seeking help and uncovering the truth.

Child Trafficking

"These children were treated as abandoned by the officials who put them up for adoption and within six months they were abroad," said Arun Dohle of ACT, who was adopted from India to a German family in Aachen. "This should be treated as trafficking of babies." Jorendal said she would have never guessed anything was wrong at her first meeting with her mother in 2015 which was stilted and arranged discreetly so that her mother's children from her second marriage wouldn't know.

But she found out what really happened at a second meeting this month which was warm and effortless as the two women had bonded over conference calls Jorendal made from Sweden aided by a Marathi translator. She said she was "still processing the information" that her mother shared from her hospital bed - of how she was forced to leave her in the orphanage and was remarried, cutting all contact with her first child. "(My mother) was more worried about my health and wants to see me married," added Jorendal who studied law but couldn't work due to problems with epilepsy and a blood disorder. But Jorendal wants to find out exactly what happened and has mailed her queries to the orphanage superintendent, who is 90 and settled in Australia, and is awaiting a response.

Legal Searches

Dohle said he realized the challenges for children adopted from India - and the exploitation that was involved in many cases from the 1970s - when he set out to find his birth mother as he wanted to find out why she gave him up. After a 17-year struggle, in 2010 he successfully sought access for his original adoption papers from India's Supreme Court. He finally met his mother in Pune and, as news spread, other adopted children like Jorendal started contacting him.

"I had so much difficulty establishing my identity," said Dohle who co-founded ACT in 2008 with Dutch whistleblower from the European Commission, Roelie Post, a leader campaigner against inter-country adoption. A year later, India tweaked rules allowing adopted children access to original adoption papers. Dohle said some of the cases were tragic for the families as the pattern of exploitation emerged.

"We had a case of a mother whose child was taken by a money lender she owed money to. In another case, a hospital kept the child as the unwed mother couldn't pay the fee after her delivery," Dohle said. In his own case, Dohle's was taken from his mother without her consent. "This is trade of children. There is no real consent. If there is a consent, the mothers are under pressure to give up their children," he said. —Reuters

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FACEBOOK REACHES 2 BILLION USERS...



WIND POWER'S BIG BET: MEGATURBINES

Wind farm operators are betting on a new generation of colossal turbines, which will dwarf many skyscrapers, as they seek to remain profitable after European countries phase out subsidies that have defined the green industry since the 1990s. The world's three leading offshore wind operators - DONG Energy, EnBW and Vattenfall - all told Reuters they were looking to these megaturbines to help adapt to the upcoming reality with dwindling government handouts.

According to interviews with turbine makers and engineers, at least one manufacturer - Siemens Gamesa - will have built a prototype megaturbine by next year and the first farms could be up and running in the first half of the next decade. These massive machines will each stand 300 metres tall - almost as high as London's Shard, western Europe's tallest building - with 200-metre rotor spans that will stretch the length of two football fields.

The wind power sector is at a critical juncture as the subsidies that have cradled it since its inception in the early 1990s, and underpinned its business model, disappear as politicians enact a long-planned push to make the industry more commercially viable and able to compete with other energy sources.

The countries that form the hub of the European offshore wind industry - Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Britain - are looking to gradually phase out the handouts over the next decade. This will end a crucial source of revenue for operators; in tenders concluded as recently as 2014, subsidies still accounted for around half of European wind projects' income.

With the writing on the wall, DONG and EnBW submitted bids with no subsidies factored in at a tender in April for a German project planned for 2024. The auction represented an industry milestone, the first with zero-subsidy bids, but raised the burning question of how operators will be able to make money and survive while offering a commercially attractive alternative to coal and nuclear.

The answer, according to the companies, are the megaturbines, which would sweep a far bigger area and harness more wind, cutting costs per megawatt. They will each generate between 10 and 15 megawatts (MW) of power - a considerable leap from the largest turbines currently in operation, made by MHI Vestas, which are 195 metres tall and generate 8 MW. The megaturbines are no sure bet for the companies' bottom lines, however. There are challenges on the technical front to create monumentally tall towers and light, slender blades that can withstand the strain of gale-force winds.

Economically, there are also doubts among some industry experts about whether zero-subsidy wind projects can make money, even with the increased efficiency delivered by megaturbines. They say deeper savings must be made by operators across their businesses and electricity prices must also rise significantly to bring profitability. Michael Guldbrandtsen, offshore wind consultant at MAKE, said there were financial and technical risks associated with megaturbines, but that operators had little choice but to invest in a technology needed to make zero-subsidy projects viable. "Without a significant increase in the size of turbines it would not be possible to ensure a reasonable return," he added.

Prototype Megaturbine

Operators are nonetheless banking on the new technology. Michael Simmelsgaard, head of offshore business at Swedish utility Vattenfall, said the industry would cross the 10 MW turbine threshold "faster than many expect now", without being more specific. A 10 W turbine could power about 9,000 homes. "We will definitely see these big turbines," he added.

DONG Energy's wind business, Samuel Leupold, laid out more ambitious plans: "We believe we can utilise (turbines) in the range of 13 to 15 megawatts," he said on the sidelines of an offshore wind conference in London this

month - the first time an industry executive has given such a high figure. Previously, companies have only spoken about turbines in the region of 10W. EnBW also said it was turning to megaturbines.

"Size is an important driver of efficiency," said Dirk Guesewell, its head of generation portfolio development. "Bigger rotors mean fewer turbines and foundations are needed to achieve the same capacity." German turbine maker Senvion said it was developing megaturbines of over 10 MW. While the machines are still in the design stage, it said it was already offering them for future use to wind farm operators.

"We envisage that the installations of those wind farms will take place in the first half of the next decade," head of Senvion's Global Offshore business, Cornelius Druecker, told Reuters without saying how close the firm was to a prototype. An independent engineer working with Siemens Gamesa, who asked not to be named as they are authorised to speak publicly, said the German company will have built a prototype megaturbine by next year. Another engineer, who works with several big turbine makers, said designs had almost been completed across the sector and the process of producing prototypes was about to start. Siemens Gamesa declined to comment.

Technical Hurdles

The biggest technical hurdle involves increasing the length of the turbine blades without putting too much strain on the structure which is built on a platform fastened to the seabed. With spans of around 200 m, the blades will be about 50 m longer than those of the most powerful turbines now in operation. As they are constantly exposed to different levels of wind, their construction, which requires adhesives that join different layers of carbon or glass-fibre to dry at exactly the right temperatures, is extremely complex. —Reuters

MACRON AND MERKEL CONVERGE ON EUROPE

Back in January, when his chances of winning the French presidency were considered slim, Emmanuel Macron came to Berlin and spelled out what he felt was needed to fix Europe. "As Jacques Delors said, for Europe we need a vision and a screwdriver," Macron told an audience at the Humboldt University, citing the former president of the European Commission. "Unfortunately, we currently have a lot of screwdrivers but we are still lacking a vision."

Now, less than two months after surging to victory in the French election, Macron is filling the void, articulating a path forward for the continent, and crucially, bringing Germany along with him. That was the main take-away from a meeting of European Union leaders last week in which Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel stood side by side at an end-of-summit news conference and sent a message of total unity. After more than a decade of sputtering and stalling, it may be premature to declare that the Franco-German engine is revving on all cylinders again.

Macron still faces the daunting challenge of delivering on his plans to reform the French economy. Only if he is successful will he end the mutual distrust between Paris and Berlin that has prevented close cooperation in past years. Merkel, for her part, must win a fourth term in September. If she does, she could still struggle to convince sceptical conservative allies to work with the centrist Macron.

But the past weeks, culminating in the joint appearance in Brussels on Friday, have helped lay to rest two of the big question marks that loomed over Macron's election victory last month: whether he could maintain the momentum that propelled him into the Elysee Palace, and whether Merkel would be prepared to embrace his ideas on Europe.

For the past decade, as the continent lurched from one crisis to the next, Merkel seemed more comfortable making gradual adjustments to European structures, like tightening screws with a screwdriver, than coming up with inspiring new visions. Now, with Europe out of acute crisis mode and feeling more confident against a backdrop of economic growth and political disarray in Britain and the United States, the 39-year-old Macron, emboldened by his party's strong performance in parliamentary elections this month, is stepping into the breach.

Full Weight

In Brussels, he made clear that he would not shy away from confronting countries like Poland and Hungary if their right-wing governments failed to respect European democratic values. He promised to respond in kind if countries

like China and the United States do not play fair on trade. And he pressed his fellow leaders to embrace a more ambitious approach to European defense cooperation. On all three of these issues, Merkel's instinct in the past would have been to soft-pedal out of concern for sensitivities in Warsaw, Budapest, Washington, Beijing and - on the issue of defense - in Germany.

But in Brussels she threw her full weight behind Macron. This did not go unnoticed in other EU delegations, particularly among eastern Europeans unsettled by the looming departure of Britain and the erratic US presidency of Donald Trump. "If the (Franco-German) engine works too well it is not always the best for the EU," said a senior EU

diplomat from an eastern country. "We hope that they will be wise enough to control their speed."

Officials in Britain and the United States are also uneasy. A more confident, assertive Europe is likely to be a tougher counterpart in Brexit negotiations. At the summit, British Prime Minister Theresa May looked diminished and defensive next to the rejuvenated duo of Merkel and Macron. While applauding the political momentum in Europe generated by Macron's victory over far-right leader Marine Le Pen, Charles Kupchan, a former European adviser to US President Barack Obama, expressed concern that a bolder, brasher Europe might end up defining itself in opposition to Washington. —Reuters



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron prepare to address the media at an EU summit in Brussels on June 23, 2017. — AP

GIDLEY TO RETIRE AT END OF SEASON

LONDON: Former Australian international Kurt Gidley is to retire at the end of the present Super League season bringing the curtain down on a stellar 16 year career he announced yesterday. The 35-year-old utility back-who was capped 12 times and also represented New South Wales in 12 State of Origin clashes with Queensland-will see out the second year of his contract with Warrington Wolves before hanging up his boots. Gidley, who prior to coming to England had played for Newcastle Knights in Australia captaining them over 120 times, played a pivotal role in the Wolves reaching both the Grand Final and the Challenge Cup final last season, although they eventually lost both. "I'm really grateful that I got the opportunity to play here at the back end of my career and experience playing in Super League for a great club," said Gidley. "I always had two years in my own head, signing a one-year deal and then extending for another year. I knew deep down that two years was probably the right amount of time although I was open to playing more. —AFP



GENEVA TO HOST COMBINED DAVIS CUP, FED CUP FINALS

PARIS: Next year's Davis Cup and Fed Cup finals will be staged together in Geneva as part of sweeping changes to the team tournaments, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) announced yesterday. A new combined season-ending event, the World Cup of Tennis finals, will be the highlight of a series of historic reforms aimed at transforming the annual national team competitions. The Swiss city was selected by the ITF board from a shortlist of six candidates across three continents that included Copenhagen, Istanbul, Miami, Turin and Wuhan. The new format is due to start in November 2018 and run for a three-year period as the ITF looks to get the sport's top players to commit to the tournaments on a regular basis in an already crammed tennis schedule. "The creation of the World Cup of Tennis finals is at the heart of a series of reforms that represent the most significant changes in the history of Davis Cup and Fed Cup by BNP Paribas," ITF president David Haggerty said in a statement. "Change is needed to ensure that we maximise the full potential of these iconic and historic competitions. —AFP

LOEW WANTS DOPERS NAMED AND SHAMED

SOCHI: Germany manager Joachim Loew wants the names of any players caught doping to be made public, after Russian football was yesterday accused of tampering with urine samples. A year before they host the World Cup, Russian football has come under the spotlight amidst fresh allegations of drug abuse. Canadian lawyer Richard McLaren, the author of an explosive report into Russian doping, has told German broadcaster ARD he has new evidence suggesting that positive tests taken from Russian players were swapped with clean samples. Loew says any footballer caught doping must be named and shamed. "It's an ongoing investigation and I don't want to heat the speculation," said Loew in yesterday's press conference ahead of Germany's Confederations Cup semi-final against Mexico in Sochi. "But if it's confirmed, I would like to hear the names being made public. "The anti-doping agencies and FIFA (world football's governing body) should call a spade a spade, then we will see what happens. —AFP



BASKETBALL

CONNECTICUT SUN TO CELEBRATE THEIR 15TH SEASON TOMORROW

UNCASVILLE: It's been 15 years since the Connecticut Sun joined the WNBA, and right from the start, Mitchell Etesse knew the team could be prosperous on and off the court. With the backing of the Mohegan Sun Casino, the team has flourished and been a model for independently owned franchises.

"We were the first non-NBA-owned team and we were the first to make money," said Etesse, who is the team's president and CEO, in a phone interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday. "We knew it would be successful. We didn't go into it with any questions in our mind."

While there might have been some concern with a casino owning a franchise, the WNBA didn't have too many reservations since there was no sports book where you could bet on the league.

"We were able to manage the gambling concern because of the unavailability to bet on site for our sport," former WNBA President Val Ackerman said. "The other factors were so overwhelming to let them be the first independent team."

The Sun have turned a profit each of the past six seasons, impressive since the team has struggled a bit on the court lately, failing to make the playoffs since 2012.

"I think the business metrics from the beginning were solid," Ackerman said. "The ability to draw the UConn fan helped. Even when they didn't have former Huskies on the team, the same fan would enjoy coming to see players roll through when they played for other teams."

It helps having a self-contained venue that has parking, dining and an arena all in one place, as well as good marketing.

"They didn't have to start from scratch building a support structure. To me it was the perfect combination," Ackerman said. "To this day, it's still unique in the sport marketplace." Etesse said there was some initial pushback, but that NBA Commissioner David Stern handled it.

"The commissioner took the bullet," he said. There haven't been any other casinos that have owned a sports team in any of the four major sports. That may change in the future as pro teams have started to move to Las Vegas with the city getting an NFL and NHL franchise this past year. A few

other WNBA teams have had sponsorship deals with casinos, including Phoenix and New York, but none are owned by them. "It's got to be the right model clearly for other sports and a few things would have to change for that to happen," Etesse said.

Connecticut has a natural fan base because of the success of the Huskies. The Sun have hosted the All-Star Game numerous times, as well as the WNBA draft. Both of those events were extremely meaningful to Etesse.

Tomorrow, the Sun will honor their 15th season with former players Katie Douglas and Nykesha Sales coming to the game and answering questions at halftime. The team will give away commemorative t-shirts with the names of the 2003 roster.

Rebecca Lobo, who was on that inaugural team that moved up from Orlando, will call tomorrow's game on national TV. She had fond memories of her one year with the Sun. "When I found out they were getting a franchise, my first thought was, 'Could my life turn out so perfectly that I'd get to play there?'" Lobo said. "A lot of us were thrilled to play for a franchise that wanted to do things the right way. They just didn't have the time or the know-how right away."

That first season was put together in amazing fashion as the team, which was previously in Orlando, was approved in January and the season started in April. Etesse and his group had to find a coach, players and a practice facility very quickly. In stepped Mike Thibault as the coach - his first time in the WNBA. "I remember Day One sitting in the arena after my press conference and saying what had I just done," Thibault recalled laughing. "I hadn't met any of the players, they had no basketballs, no uniforms and no confirmed practice site. I had a long list of what needed to be done, and we just start knocking them off."

The team surprisingly made the playoffs. Connecticut made the finals the next two years, losing both times. They made the playoffs the first six years they were in Connecticut and then twice more, but still are looking for their first title.

"That's the one thing that is missing, but hopefully we can compete for one soon," Etesse said. — AP

KNICKS, PHIL JACKSON PART WAYS AFTER DISMAL THREE YEARS RUN

NEW YORK: Phil Jackson is out as New York Knicks president after he oversaw one of the worst eras in team history and feuded with star Carmelo Anthony.

Days after Jackson reiterated his desire to trade Anthony and said he would listen to deals for Kristaps Porzingis, Madison Square Garden chairman James Dolan reversed course and cut ties with Jackson yesterday.

"After careful thought and consideration, we mutually agreed that the Knicks will be going in a different direction," Dolan said in a statement. "Phil Jackson is one of the most celebrated and successful individuals in the history of the NBA. His legacy in the game of basketball is unmatched."

But his work as a first-time executive was awful. The winner of an NBA-record 11 championships as coach, Jackson couldn't engineer one playoff berth while running the Knicks. The team was 80-166 in his three full seasons, including a franchise-worst 17-65 in 2014-15.

The move comes less than a week after Jackson led the Knicks through the NBA

draft and on the eve of free agency that opens Saturday. Dolan said general manager Steve Mills would run the day-to-day business of the team in the short term.

Jackson was a Hall of Fame coach with the Chicago Bulls and Los Angeles Lakers, delivering titles with some of the game's biggest stars like Michael Jordan, Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant. He also was part of the Knicks when they won NBA titles in 1970 and 1973.

He was welcomed back to the organization to huge fanfare in March 2014, but it soon became clear the transition would be a poor one. His first coaching hire, Derek Fisher, lasted just 11/2 seasons, and Jackson's trades and free agency moves also failed to improve the club.

"I had hoped, of course, to bring another NBA championship to the Garden. As someone who treasures winning, I am deeply disappointed that we weren't able to do that," Jackson said. "New York fans deserve nothing less. I wish them and the Knicks organization all the best - today and always." — AP



GREENBURGH: In this July 8, 2016, file photo, New York Knicks president Phil Jackson, left, and general manager Steve Mills answer questions during a news conference at the team's training facility in Greenburgh, NY. — AP



WELLINGTON: Wellington Hurricanes' Wes Goosen scores a try during the rugby union match against the British and Irish Lions at Westpac Stadium in Wellington on Tuesday. — AFP

RUGBY

COACH GATLAND EYES FORWARD RESHUFFLE FOR SECOND TEST

WELLINGTON: British and Irish Lions coach Warren Gatland has given the strongest indication yet he will overhaul the forward pack found wanting in last week's first Test loss to the All Blacks. As he mulls options for the second Test in Wellington on Saturday, Gatland was full of praise for the performance of locks Courtney Lawes and Iain Henderson in a 31-31 draw with the Hurricanes on Tuesday night. Gatland was impressed with Henderson's commitment, even though the Irishman cost the Lions dearly when his yellow card let the Hurricanes back into the match. He also liked the look of Lawes, bringing him off in the 53rd minute, probably to keep him fresh for the Test. "I thought (Lawes) played really well and Iain Henderson played exceptionally well also, in terms of carrying and getting behind," Gatland said. "Courtney Lawes was strong in the lineup and carried and defended particularly well."

Lawes could offer a potent combination with fellow Englishman Maro Itoje, who is regarded as a certain starter after making an immediate impact when he came off the bench in the first Test.

Lawes said he was ready to match the physicality of the All Blacks, whose locks Brodie Retallick and Sam Whitelock were outstanding in the 30-15 Test series opener. "I don't think you get to this level without having a certain level of physicality. That is an area of my game that is up there I suppose," he said. "It's a final this weekend. There's no second chance for us and we need to front up."

HAPPY CLOWN

Meanwhile, Gatland shrugged off what he said was a personal campaign against him by local media, including a caricature depicting him as a clown in the New Zealand Herald.

Gatland said he did not care about those who attempted to target him. "I hope it was a happy clown, that's all," he joked. "I'd like to think as a Kiwi that some things about me would be more positive from some media, but that hasn't happened. "One or two people have had a personal campaign against me but it's water off a duck's back. I couldn't give a toss."

The Wales coach revealed an unusual reason for not using his bench against the Hurricanes as his starting XV faded late in a furiously paced match. Gatland said he had faced so much criticism for calling up six players as late replacements-four from Wales and two from Scotland-that he decided to use them only as a last resort.

"So much was made of devaluing the jersey that we decided we would try and get through the game with as many of our starting XV staying on as could," he said. "You understand people's views, so we made the collective decision that they would be just head injury assessment (concussion) or injury replacements." — AFP

LEEDS LOOK TO TIGHTEN UP AGAINST ST HELENS

LONDON: They say attack is the best form of defence, and Leeds Rhinos centre Joel Moon is under no illusions that his side need to improve with the ball in hand this weekend against St Helens. Brian McDermott's side were beaten 23-12 by league leaders Castleford Tigers last time out, with the head coach's pre-match taunts backfiring spectacularly as the league leaders beat them for a seventh straight meeting.

Leeds restricted Castleford's free-flowing attack to just three tries, but could only manage two themselves as the error count racked up, and with Saints in town this week Moon knows exactly where the Rhinos must tighten up. "Obviously we were all a bit disappointed after our loss against Castleford, but it's a long season and the boys are ready to go again this weekend," said the former Brisbane Broncos and New Zealand Warriors man. "Our competition wasn't good enough last week. I don't think you're going to beat any team if you're dropping that much ball-but our defence was very good indeed."

"So we've just been working on a few things in training this week in terms of our own possession of the ball and then we'll be alright. "You always want to bounce straight back after a tough loss, but it will be hard again this weekend against Saints as they will come here ready to go. "All round the field they are strong. They have some big forwards in Alex Walmsley and Kyle Amor up front, and then they've got some great backs with Theo Fages and Matty Smith in the halves with

some good outside backs around them. "So it's an all-round game and we've just got to worry about what we do. We're in good shape with a few good wins and performances-but it's a long year and it's good we have things to work on."

The League Leaders' Shield looks destined for Castleford, as they sit seven points clear of Hull FC-but their chasers have the chance to close the gap on Friday. And boss Lee Radford is expecting the Tigers to show off their best rugby in search of revenge, after Hull dumped them out of the Challenge Cup earlier this month. "It's another instance of learning lessons from last year," he said. "After the Challenge Cup final we played Warrington for the League Leaders' Shield at home."

"We got out-enthusied that night and there was just a little bit of revenge in that performance from Warrington. "I've got no doubt that will be exactly the same from Castleford this week. If we are not bang at it then we can expect a real response from these blokes." Elsewhere, Warrington's hopes of reaching the Super 8s still hang in the balance and they face Wakefield Trinity away from home this weekend. But Wire boss Tony Smith remains confident after ending a run of six games without a victory by beating Catalan Dragons 24-16 last weekend. He said: "By the end of the rounds, we'll be where we deserve to be. There will be more twists and turns yet. There will be shocks and upsets here and there."

"All we can do is focus on who we're playing, this week we did that pretty well." —AFP



WELLINGTON: Hurricanes loose forward Vaea Fifita dives over the ruck to score a try against the British and Irish Lions in Wellington, New Zealand, Tuesday. The game ended in a 31 all draw. — AP

COUNTER-TERRORISM POLICE DEPLOYED FOR TOUR DE FRANCE

PARIS: A crack unit of elite counter-terrorism officers will be among a deployment of 23,000 police ensuring safety at the Tour de France, which begins in Düsseldorf on Saturday, the French interior ministry said.

But while the jihadist terror threat is high and France remains in a state of emergency, Tour director Christian Prudhomme insists that road accidents are biggest danger to the smooth running of the Tour. "When 12 million people line the roadside, vehicles pass, there are cyclists in front and behind, you have

to be careful that enthusiasm doesn't eliminate attentiveness," Prudhomme told AFP. Even so, for the second year running, an elite GIGN unit—which specialises in counter-terrorism and hostage rescue—will be mobilised to tackle any potential terror threat to the three-week Tour which covers 3,500km across the country during July.

The unit will be divided into two teams, one following the Tour on the road, the other by helicopter, once the world's most prestigious cycle race enters France after two stages taking in

Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg. Tour organisers ASO have "similar agreements with authorities" in those countries to ensure security, said Prudhomme, while acknowledging that "the French special forces have their own contacts with special forces in foreign countries".

Dog teams trained in sniffing out explosives will also patrol the departure and arrival villages during each stage, the ministry added. And a special measure will likely be put in place for the Tour's final stage finish on the world-famous Champs Elysees in Paris on July

23, where the city prefect will be able to create a "protection or security zone" that would allow authorities to restrict access to the area to individuals or groups. Last year, France was on high alert for possible terror attacks as it hosted football's European Championships and the Tour.

But while those both passed off smoothly, 86 people were killed and hundreds of others injured when a lone militant drove a lorry into crowds celebrating the French national Bastille Day holiday on the night of July 14 in Nice. —AFP



SEOUL: North Korean taekwondo demonstration team members perform at the World Taekwondo Headquarters in Seoul yesterday. North Korea's International Taekwondo Federation (ITF) delegation is in South Korea for performances at the World Taekwondo Championships. This is the ITF's first visit to South Korea in 10 years. — AFP

BRITAIN TAKES FIRST GOLD

SEOUL: Great Britain picked up a first gold medal at the 2017 World Taekwondo Championships yesterday in South Korea as Bianca Walkden defeated Jackie Galloway of the United States.

The two bronze medallists from the 2016 Rio Olympics met in the Over-73 kg category in the southern South Korean city of Muju. Walkden overcame Galloway 14-4 in the final of the event that ends Friday.

There was less positive news for the United Kingdom in the men's Under-87kg class as Lutalo Muhammad, who missed out on gold at the 2016 Rio Olympics in the last seconds of the final, crashed out at the second round after a 21-6 defeat at the hands of Smayil Dusebay of Kazakhstan.

Turkey picked up a second gold to move second in the medal table as Zeliha Agris defeated Tatiana Kudashova of Russia in the final of the women's Under-53kg category with a score of 11-8.

South Korea is still dominant however as

the host nation collected a fourth gold medal of the tournament. Russia had to settle for silver once again as Jeong Yun-jo squeezed past 19-year-old Mikhail Artamonov 24-23 in an epic showdown in the final of the men's Under-58kg category.

Russia and South Korea meet again on Thursday when Vladislav Larin and In Kyodon face off in the semi-final of the men's Under-87 kg category for the right to face either Alexander Bachmann of Germany or Slovenia's Ivan Trajkovic in the final.

In the men's Over-87 kg, there is an All-Africa semi-final as Gabon's Anthony Obama meets Abdoul Razak Issoufou of Niger while Britain's Mahama Cho meets Roman Kuznetsov.

South Korea has another medal hope in the semi-final of the women's Under-73 kg category. Oh Hye-ri meets Mexico's Maria Espinoza. The winner will take on either Reshmie Oogink of the Netherlands or Serbia's Milica Mandic. —AFP

SWIMMING

LEDECKY, ADRIAN STEALS OPENING NIGHT SHOW AT US NATIONALS

INDIANAPOLIS: Katie Ledecky keeps making winning look easy. Nathan Adrian continues to prove experience matters when things get close. Either way, the result was the same Tuesday night in Indianapolis: The two Olympic gold medalists qualified for another American world championship team.

Ledecky, as usual, dominated the women's 800-meter freestyle, winning by nearly 9 seconds. Adrian, meanwhile, rallied in the closing meters of the men's 100 free and out-touched Caleb Dressel by 0.01 seconds to win the men's 100 free at the US National Championships. "That's kind of what we've built into my nervous system," Adrian said. "I've always tried to go out and bring it back in the back half. Now maybe we can figure out what to do in the front half." Adrian doesn't have much time for fine-tuning before heading to Budapest, Hungary. The meet is scheduled for July 23-30.

But after taking Olympic gold in the 100 free in 2012 and picking up a bronze in the same event last summer in Rio de Janeiro, Adrian returned to Indianapolis this year under completely different circumstances.

At age 28, he was easily the oldest competitor in the final, almost 6 1-2 years older than the oldest competitor, Ryan Held. And with the retired Michael Phelps and suspended Ryan Lochte not around, Adrian has accepted his role as Team USA's elder spokesman.

The good news is that he appears to be as strong as ever. After qualifying fourth in the morning prelims, Adrian charged back from the No. 6 spot at the turn and sprinted past five younger competitors to reclaim a title he first won in 2009, also in Indy. He won in 47.96 seconds. Dressel was next at 47.97. "I didn't know where they were and if I had looked, I probably would have lost it," Adrian said after pumping his fist and taking a deep breath following the race. The winners of each event qualify for the world championships. Runner-ups are also likely to join the team through a selection process.



INDIANAPOLIS: Katie Ledecky celebrates after winning the Women's 800 LC Meter Freestyle Final during the 2017 Phillips 66 National Championships & World Championship Trials at Indiana University Natatorium on Tuesday in Indianapolis, Indiana. — AFP

Ledecky, as usual, provided no drama in an event she has owned for years. The 20-year-old Stanford star took the lead in the first 50 meters and extended it by between 0.31 and 0.83 seconds on each ensuing lap through the first 600 meters. At one point, the Washington native was even swimming under her own world record pace. She eventually finished in 8:11.50, beating Leah Smith to the wall by 8.96 seconds. Ledecky did all that despite having only about 25 minutes between her sixth-place finish in the 100 free and the start of the 800 and without the benefit of changing her workouts before nationals. "I didn't rest too much for this. I'd say maybe

compared to other trials/selection meets, this is probably the least tapered I've been," she said. "I felt in control but by the time I got to about 400 or 50, I couldn't pick it up any more."

By winning, Ledecky has already given herself the option to compete in the 1,500 free at Budapest without having to swim the event Saturday. She will still plan to swim the 200 free today and the 400 free on Friday, setting her up for the possibility of four more international golds to match the four individual golds she won at the 2015 world championships and four more golds more she brought home from the 2016 Olympics. — AP

BOXING

PACQUIAO TEAM SAYS HORN FIGHT WILL BE 'SHORT AND SWEET'

BRISBANE: Manny Pacquiao's world title fight with Jeff Horn will be "short and sweet" with a knockout likely, his trainer predicted yesterday, as his Australian challenger said he was "ready for war".

The legendary Filipino, one of the greatest fighters of his generation, is widely tipped to triumph over the unbeaten Horn in front of an expected 50,000 people at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium on Sunday.

"He (Manny) doesn't like to predict knockouts and so forth but I think it is going to be short and sweet," trainer Freddie Roach told reporters at a press conference ahead of the World Boxing Organization (WBO) welterweight bout.

"I think it won't last too long and someone will get knocked out." Roach on Tuesday suggested the fight was a stepping stone for the eight-weight world champion to secure a rematch with American rival Floyd Mayweather, who outpointed Pacquiao in the "Fight of the Century" two years ago.

Horn's camp hit back, with the former school teacher's promoters taking a dig at Pacquiao for spending most of the press conference looking at his mobile phone.

"Not only is Manny Pacquiao an eleven-time world champion... he is also a world champion boxer, because he never gets off his bloody phone," Dean Lonergan said.

Horn's trainer Glenn Rushton accused Pacquiao's camp of underestimating his 29-year-old challenger and said the so-called "Battle of Brisbane" would become the "fight of the year". "My vision for this fight is it will be a late stoppage. I think it is going to occur late in the fight after... all of these rounds. I personally believe this will be the fight of the year," Rushton said. "I do think Freddie and Manny are probably underestimating Jeff even though I know they say they are not because he is too experienced not to prepare properly. "But I do think when they get out there, it's going to be so different. I think this will become Manny's toughest fight... we've trained as hard as we've ever trained for this fight, so we're ready for war."

Pacquiao (59-6-2, 38 knockouts) briefly retired last year before making a comeback to win the WBO welterweight title against Jesse Vargas in November, as he juggles boxing with his duties as a senator in the Philippines. — AFP



Manny Pacquiao



TOKYO: International Olympic Committee (IOC) Vice President John Coates, front row third right, and other members visit the planned construction site of Aomi Urban Sports Venue for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 in Tokyo yesterday. The venue is planned for Skateboarding and Sport Climbing events of Tokyo 2020 Olympics. — AP

SOARING COSTS THREATEN GAMES FUTURE, IOC WARNS

TOKYO: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) yesterday praised Japanese organisers for slashing costs for the 2020 Tokyo Games, but warned that soaring Olympic budgets could see future bids dry up.

Tokyo 2020 coordination commission chairman John Coates noted that significant progress had been made since the IOC ordered local organisers to keep costs below \$20 billion but added that more needed to be done. "Apart from the fact you've got the budget down now to around \$13 billion, the emphasis that you are continuing to work together to further reduce costs and optimise resources is not only important to you and taxpayers, but also very important to the IOC," he said at the start of a three-day visit to Tokyo.

"We know you can pay for the Games in a city as strong financially as yours and with the support you get from the government, private sector and sponsorship," added Coates.

"But it is important to us that when the

costs of the Games in the final analysis become public that they're going to attract (future) candidate cities, rather than scare them off." The IOC pledged earlier this year to make changes to the Olympic bidding process following the withdrawal of Budapest from the race to host the 2024 Games, leaving just Paris and Los Angeles in the running.

"If we appear to be pushing very hard on saving money, it's for our own future that we are doing it—just as much as you want to do it for your taxpayers," Coates said.

Rome, Hamburg and Boston all previously pulled the plug on their bids for the 2024 Summer Games, citing costs.

Tokyo governor Yuriko Koike last year ordered a review of the budget that recommended revised plans for three venues to reduce costs projected to balloon to more than \$25 billion—four times the initial estimates when Tokyo won the 2020 hosting rights. As Tokyo organisers battle to rein in

costs, Coates added that a progress report on the troubled 2020 Olympic stadium would be high on the agenda during the coordination commission's visit.

Japanese officials bungled the rollout of the showpiece venue in 2015 when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe tore up the blueprints for Tokyo's new national stadium over its eye-watering \$2 billion price tag.

Coates also said the commission hopes to decide on the 2020 Olympic role of Fukushima, which was hit by a nuclear meltdown following the deadly 2011 tsunami that devastated north-east Japan. "We want to finalise how many games in baseball and softball will be held in Fukushima," he said.

"We really want to honour the commitment that president (Thomas) Bach made to Prime Minister Abe to take events to Fukushima as part of the (region's) recovery and rehabilitation. I think it's critical we do that." —AFP



WASHINGTON: Trea Turner #7 of the Washington Nationals forces out Willson Contreras #40 of the Chicago Cubs to start a double play in the seventh inning at Nationals Park on Tuesday in Washington, DC. —AFP

BASEBALL

SCHERZER SHARP AS WASHINGTON BEAT CUBS

WASHINGTON: Max Scherzer pitched six sharp innings, Trea Turner had four of Washington's seven steals and the Nationals beat Jake Arrieta and the Chicago Cubs 6-1 on Tuesday in a showdown of the past two NL Cy Young Award winners. Scherzer (9-5) struck out six, walked none and retired 16 of his final 17 batters. The right-hander allowed an earned run in the first inning for the first time since April and his streak of 10-plus strikeout games ended at six, but he was in control almost all night. Arrieta (7-6) issued a season-high six walks and allowed five earned runs, getting the hook two batters into the fifth inning. Arrieta and catcher Miguel Montero allowed seven steals, matching the Montreal Expos/Nationals franchise record. Michael Taylor had two hits and two RBIs for Washington, and Scherzer washed out the RBI triple he allowed to Kris Bryant in the first by driving in a run with an infield single in the fourth.

DIAMONDBACKS 6, CARDINALS 5

Chris Herrmann hit a game-ending RBI single in the 10th inning as Arizona Diamondbacks rallied to beat St. Louis Cardinals. The surging Diamondbacks scored two in the eighth and one in the ninth to force extra innings. They have won four in a row and 13 of 15. Rey Fuentes opened the Arizona 10th with a single and advanced on a sacrifice by pinch-hitting pitcher Zack Godley. Herrmann singled off Matt Bowman (1-3). Diamondbacks closer Fernando Rodney (2-2) pitched a 1-2-3 10th inning for the win.

DODGERS 4, ANGELS 0

Dodgers right-hander Kenta Maeda pitched four-hit ball over seven innings in a spot start, and Joc Pederson hit a three-run homer. Maeda (6-3) was moved to the bullpen earlier this month, but filled in Tuesday to give the rotation an extra day of rest. He struck out six and walked none. Angels starter Jesse Chavez (5-8) was pulled in the sixth after getting into a jam, and Cody Bellinger greeted Jose Alvarez with an RBI single. Pederson hit his seventh home

run two batters later. The Dodgers have won 17 of 19 and lead the National League with a 52-27 record.

RANGERS 2, INDIANS 1

Adrian Beltre hit his 450th home run, a solo drive in the ninth inning off Cody Allen that lifted the Rangers to the road win. Beltre drove the first pitch from Allen (0-4) into the left-field bleachers. The third baseman moved into sole possession of 39th place on the career homer list. Keone Kela (4-1) stranded a runner in the eighth. Matt Bush allowed Michael Brantley's one-out single in the ninth while getting his 10th save. Indians manager Terry Francona missed the game after his second trip to the hospital this month. Bench coach Brad Mills filled in for Francona, who is expected to return Wednesday.

RED SOX 9, TWINS 2

Chris Young hit a three-run homer, Christian Vazquez went deep for the first time in more than a year and the Red Sox beat the Twins in a game delayed twice by stormy weather. Drew Pomeranz (7-4) pitched five effective innings for Boston, which won consecutive games for the first time in nearly two weeks. Dustin Pedroia had three hits and scored twice. The Red Sox capitalized on three errors by the Twins and took over first place in the AL East, moving a half-game ahead of the slumping Yankees. Hector Santiago (4-7) returned for the Twins after a stint on the 10-day disabled list with a strained left shoulder. He allowed two runs and one hit in two innings.

WHITE SOX 4, YANKEES 3

Jose Abreu hit a game-ending, two-run single off Dellin Betances, and the White Sox stopped a four-game losing streak. Kevan Smith sparked the winning rally with a one-out walk. Betances (3-2) then walked Alen Hanson and hit Yolmer Sanchez, loading the bases. After Melky Cabrera fouled out, Abreu hit a grounder into left field. Brett Gardner's throw to the plate was high, and

Hanson scored easily. Abreu also had an RBI double in the third. Dan Jennings (3-1) pitched 1 1/3 scoreless innings for the win. New York wasted an outstanding start by Luis Severino, who struck out a career-high 12 while pitching seven innings of one-run ball. It has dropped three of four and 11 of 14 overall.

MARLINS 6, METS 3

Ichiro Suzuki had a pinch-hit RBI single in the seventh inning to put Miami ahead, and Christian Yelich collected three hits for the Marlins. Suzuki poked a pitch to the opposite field against Jerry Blevins for a 4-3 lead. The 43-year-old Suzuki leads the majors with 12 pinch hits. Yelich added a two-run single in the seventh. Kyle Barraclough (4-1) got the win and A.J. Ramos pitched around a leadoff single in the ninth for his 13th save. New York's Robert Gsellman left with a strained left hamstring after he pulled up trying to beat out a grounder in the third inning. The injury-plagued Mets have already had five starting pitchers on the disabled list this year. Curtis Granderson and Travis d'Arnaud homered for New York. Neil Ramirez (0-1) got the loss.

ORIOLES 3, BLUE JAYS 1

Kevin Gausman won for the first time in four starts, Mark Trumbo hit an RBI double and Baltimore earned its third straight win. The Orioles improved to 8-2 against the Blue Jays this season. Toronto lost for the fifth time in seven games. Gausman (4-7) allowed four hits in 5 1/3 scoreless innings. The right-hander was 0-3 with a 9.20 ERA over his previous three starts. Brad Brach gave up a two-out homer to Troy Tulowitzki in the ninth but held on for his 14th save. Toronto right-hander Joe Biagini (2-7) allowed three runs in 5 1/3 innings, losing for the fifth time in six starts.

ATHLETICS 6, ASTROS 4

Ryon Healy's first career grand slam broke a tie in the sixth inning, and Oakland held on for its fourth straight win. The score was 1-1 when Matt Joyce singled to start the sixth. Yonder Alonso drew a walk with two outs to load the bases and chase Mike Fiers (5-3). He was replaced by James Hoyt, who was greeted with Healy's 18th homer - a full-count shot which landed in the second row of the seats in right field. A's left-hander Sean Manaea (7-4) allowed a season-high nine hits, but just one run in 5 2/3 innings.

PHILLIES 8, MARINERS 2

Maikel Franco and Arron Altherr homered for Philadelphia, and Aaron Nola pitched seven strong innings. Franco opened the seventh with his 10th home run, sending a 1-0 pitch from James Paxton over the wall in left-center. The Phillies made it 4-2 in the eighth on an RBI single by Freddy Galvis and then added four unearned runs in the ninth, capped by Altherr's two-run homer. Nola (5-5) gave up five hits, including Jean Segura's two-run homer in the third. He struck out a season-

high nine. Paxton (5-3) gave up four hits in seven innings. He struck out nine and walked three in losing his third consecutive decision.

RAYS 4, PIRATES 2, 10 INNINGS

David Freese misplayed a grounder at third base, allowing Steven Souza Jr. to score in the 10th inning and sending Tampa Bay to the victory. With Souza at first base and no outs, Wilson Ramos hit a hard grounder off Felipe Rivero (3-2) that Freese missed while trying to backhand. Adeiny Hechavarria added a sacrifice fly, giving him two RBIs in his first game since being traded from the Miami Marlins on Monday. Tommy Hunter pitched the 10th for his first save of the season. The Pirates were no-hit through six innings by Alex Cobb, but Andrew McCutchen forced extra innings with a two-run double in the ninth.

TIGERS 5, ROYALS 3

J.D. Martinez and Miguel Cabrera homered for Detroit, and Justin Verlander pitched seven strong innings. Verlander (5-4) was down 3-0 before getting an out, but didn't allow another run as the Tigers won their second straight after an eight-game losing streak. He gave up nine hits, struck out six and walked one. Justin Wilson pitched the ninth for his seventh save. Matt Strahm (2-5) gave up five runs and six hits in 3 2/3 innings for the Royals.

REDS 8, BREWERS 6

Joey Votto hit a tiebreaking two-run homer in the fifth inning, helping the last-place Reds get the win. Billy Hamilton, Adam Duvall and Eugenio Suarez also connected for Cincinnati, which scored its most runs in 19 games since Scooter Gennett hit four homers in its 13-1 win over St. Louis on June 6. Tim Lincecum (5-4) pitched five

innings and Raisel Iglesias got three outs for his 13th save. Milwaukee slugger Ryan Braun returned after missing 31 games with a strained left calf, but the NL Central-leading Brewers lost for the third time in four games. Braun went 1 for 5 with a double. Travis Shaw, Manny Pina and Orlando Arcia homered for Milwaukee. Junior Guerra (1-2) set a career high by allowing eight runs in four-plus innings.

BRAVES 3, PADRES 0

Braves left-hander Sean Newcomb struck out eight over six-plus innings for his first major league victory. Atlanta has won eight of 10. Johan Camargo had a two-run double off the left field wall in the fourth to begin the scoring, and Atlanta added an unearned run in the eighth. Newcomb (1-2) allowed six hits and walked one. He made his major league debut June 10 and has a 1.48 ERA through four starts. Padres starter Jhoulys Chacin (6-7) pitched seven innings of two-run ball. Jim Johnson struck out three in the ninth for his 16th save.

GIANTS 4, ROCKIES 3

Denard Span singled home Gorkys Hernandez with two outs in the 14th inning, lifting the Giants over Colorado. The Giants went cold after Kelby Tomlinson's tying single in the eighth inning before rallying to win off Chad Qualls (1-1). Hernandez lined a one-out double over the head of left fielder Ian Desmond. After Qualls struck out Gearrin, Span hit a 1-0 pitch into right field, and Hernandez scored easily. The Giants raced out of the dugout and chased Span into the outfield, celebrating their second straight win over Colorado after nine consecutive losses to their NL West rival. Gearrin (2-2) pitched three scoreless innings to win after the Giants rallied from a 3-1 deficit. — AP

MLB results/standings

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

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB				
Boston	43	34	.558	-	Washington	46	31 .597	-
NY Yankees	41	34	.547	1	Atlanta	37	39 .487	8.5
Tampa Bay	41	38	.519	3	Miami	35	40 .467	10
Baltimore	38	38	.500	4.5	NY Mets	34	42 .447	11.5
Toronto	36	40	.474	6.5	Philadelphia	25	51 .329	20.5
Central Division				Central Division				
Cleveland	40	36	.526	-	Milwaukee	41	38 .519	-
Minnesota	39	36	.520	0.5	Chicago Cubs	39	38 .506	1
Kansas City	37	38	.493	2.5	St. Louis	35	41 .461	4.5
Detroit	34	42	.447	6	Pittsburgh	35	42 .455	5
Chicago White Sox	33	43	.434	7	Cincinnati	32	44 .421	7.5
Western Division				Western Division				
Houston	52	26	.667	-	LA Dodgers	52	27 .658	-
Texas	39	38	.506	12.5	Arizona	50	28 .641	1.5
LA Angels	41	40	.506	12.5	Colorado	47	33 .588	5.5
Seattle	39	40	.494	13.5	San Diego	31	46 .403	20
Oakland	35	42	.455	16.5	San Francisco	29	51 .363	23.5



PHOENIX: David Peralta #6 of the Arizona Diamondbacks hits a solo home run against the St. Louis Cardinals during the ninth inning of the MLB game at Chase Field on Tuesday in Phoenix, Arizona. — AFP

GHOST OF FOOTBALL PAST STALKS ABANDONED UKRAINE ARENA

DONETSK: In its halcyon days, the Donbass Arena in eastern Ukraine was a gleaming temple to football, welcoming some of the sport's biggest names through its portals. But while star players are now lining up in the Confederations Cup tournament across the border in Russia, the Arena is wasting away. Seized by insurgents waging a bloody three-year conflict against Kiev, the venue is in a state of pitiful decline.

The stands which once echoed to the chants and cheers of miners and their families are long deserted. The once-hallowed turf has turned a sickly yellow in parts. The floodlights died long ago, and the shop that showcased the merchandise of host club Shakhtar Donetsk is empty. "It is very sad that we are no longer able to get to the stadium," local supporter Yury Zhavoronkov

told AFP in an empty sports bar nearby. "It was our football mecca where we all met together," the 50-year-old grey-haired fan lamented.

The 52,000-seat venue was state-of-the-art when it opened in 2009, back when the city of Donetsk was another place. The former Soviet mining hub was undergoing a mini-boom as local-boy-made-good Rinat Akhmetov ploughed huge sums into the city. Akhmetov, a metals tycoon who rose to become the richest person in Ukraine, had turned local club Shakhtar into champions and decided to splash some \$400 million (350 million euros) on building the team a fitting new home. He hired the top designers behind Bayern Munich's Allianz Arena and the "Bird's Nest" stadium in Beijing and got megastar Beyonce to sing at a glitzy unveiling.

In June 2012 the stadium basked in the international spotlight as it hosted the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo, Andres Iniesta and Xavi Hernandez as Spain beat Portugal on penalties in the semi-final of the Euros championship.

REBEL SEIZURE

But that high point would soon turn out to be a bittersweet memory for Ukrainian football fans. Under two years later Donetsk and the surrounding region plunged dramatically into bloodshed that almost no one saw coming. After the February 2014 ouster of Ukraine's Kremlin-backed leader by protesters in Kiev, Moscow seized the Crimea region and was then accused of masterminding a rebellion that engulfed the east of the country. As the conflict—which has now claimed some 10,000 lives—worsened, so

inevitably Shakhtar Donetsk and its stadium were impacted as well. In May 2014 the club halted matches at its stadium as international organisations demanded game stop in a war zone and the club upped sticks definitively and shifted its home base away from the city. While the footballers moved out, Akhmetov—who has been accused of playing off both sides in east Ukraine's murky conflict—trod a fine line as he tried to maintain control over his stadium.

A charity he runs began using the venue as a distribution point for aid to the hard hit residents of the rebel-controlled city. But eventually even that tenuous link was severed and in March this year the rebels officially took over the arena as they seized a string of Akhmetov's properties in a dispute over a trade blockade of their territory. The

rebel move saw the remaining financing from Akhmetov dry up and the staff who were still there to maintain the stadium dwindle. Now the venue is yet another monument to the ruinous impact of Ukraine's conflict.

Luckily the stadium's glass front has largely survived the shelling that pockmarked much of Donetsk. But while the Moscow-backed rebel leadership claims they want to start using the arena again they have not said how they would fund it or set any timeframe.

For now the venue-like much of the rest of the insurgent-held lands—remains trapped in a limbo of depression and uncertainty.

And with the conflict in east Ukraine showing little sign of coming to a conclusion it looks like there is no chance that crowds of fans or international stars will be back any time soon. — AFP

PREVIEW

S LANKA EYE REDEMPTION AGAINST ZIMBABWE

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka are looking to pick themselves up as the series against Zimbabwe begins this week in Galle after a string of poor performances prompted their coach to quit. Angelo Mathews leads the Sri Lankans who take on Zimbabwe in the first of five one-day internationals on Friday as they look to get over their first-round exit in the Champions Trophy.

South African Graham Ford quit as coach last week with assistant Nic Pothas taking over in an interim capacity for the clashes against Zimbabwe, whose tour will end with a single Test match next month in Colombo. Ford's exit just 15 months into



GALLE: Zimbabwe cricketer Wellington Masakadza delivers a ball during a practice session at Galle International Cricket Stadium in Galle yesterday. — AFP

his four-year contract adds to Sri Lanka's problems on and off the field, which are hampering preparations for the 2019 World Cup. "It is beyond our control. What happens outside the cricket field, we don't think a lot about it," Mathews said on Tuesday.

"Fordy has been fantastic, one of the very best in the business. Sorry to see him go. But, we have to move on and look ahead to this series." Veteran pacesman Lasith Malinga was this week handed a one-year suspended ban after being found guilty of insulting a minister but has been retained in the 13-man ODI squad.

The speedster has been docked 50 percent of his match fee from Friday's opening game in Galle and is under six-month probation after comparing the country's sports minister to a "monkey".

STRUGGLING ZIMBABWE

The minister-Dayasiri Jayasekera had accused Sri Lankan players of being too fat after the team failed to reach the Champions Trophy semi-finals in England.

Malinga, who returned from injury to the 50-over side in England, struggled and took only three wickets in three matches.

The islanders have just won five of their 20 one-day games since August 2016 with two coming against hosts Zimbabwe during a tri-nation series triumph in November.

Zimbabwe, on their first tour of Sri Lanka since 2001-2002, are led by Graeme Cremer and are trying to build momentum as they look ahead to the World Cup qualifying tournament in April next year.

The African nation has slipped to 11th, a place above bottom-ranked Ireland, in the International Cricket Conference ODI rankings. They lost a five-match series at home to Afghanistan 3-2 in February. Star player Hamilton Masakadza, who has played only one of Zimbabwe's five one-day games this year, is expected to bolster the batting lineup on tricky Sri Lankan pitches.

Cremer's leg-spin, off-spinner Sikandar Raza and left-arm bowler Sean Williams will lead the spin attack on surfaces that should turn. Coach Heath Streak blamed Zimbabwe's dismal form on a "lack of cricket" as financial and administrative hurdles hinder progress. "The problem is the volume or the lack of cricket that we have had," said the former captain. "We have got to play good competitive cricket for countries to want to play against us."

The first two ODIs will be at Galle, the first limited-overs matches there in 17 years. The remaining three games will be at the refurbished stadium in Hambantota. The only Test will be at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo starting July 14.

Squads

Sri Lanka (for first two ODIs): Angelo Mathews (captain), Upul Tharanga (vice captain), Niroshan Dikwella, Danushka Gunathilaka, Kusal Mendis, Asela Gunaratne, Wanidu Hasaranga, L. Sandakan, Akila Dananjaya, Nuwan Pradeep Fernando, Lasith Malinga, Dushmantha Chameera, Lahiru Madushanka.

Zimbabwe: Graeme Cremer (captain), Solomon Mire, Hamilton Masakadza, Craig Ervine, Sean Williams, Ryan Burl, Peter Moor, Sikandar Raza Butt, Tendai Chatara, Christ Mpofo, Donald Tiripano, Richard Ngarava, Wellington Masakadza, Malcolm Waller, Chamu Chibhabha, Tarisai Musakanda. — AFP

SHASTRI TO APPLY FOR INDIA COACH JOB

NEW DELHI: Former captain Ravi Shastri will apply to become India's head coach after the national cricket board extended the application deadline following Anil Kumble's shock exit, reports said yesterday. "Yes, I have decided to apply for the job," the cricketer-turned-television commentator was quoted as saying by the New Indian Express.

Top names such as former batsman Virender Sehwag and Australia's Tom Moody are already in the running for one of the toughest jobs in cricket.

Shastri applied for the job last year after being team director between 2014-16. Kumble was appointed instead and coached India to five Test series victories but resigned last week, stating his partnership with India captain Virat Kohli had become "untenable".

Former all-rounder Shastri, 55, has been touted as a strong candidate who has a good relationship with Kohli.

The new coach for the world's number one Test team will be decided by a three-man committee made up of former India stars Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman.

Ganguly was reportedly key in Kumble being chosen over Shastri in June last year. The two former captains have publicly rowed over the coach's post. However Ganguly said of Shastri's renewed candidacy: "Everybody has the right to apply. We will find out."

The Board of Control for Cricket in India has said applications will be accepted until July 9. The BCCI is aiming to

announce the new coach before India head to Sri Lanka in July. — AFP



Ravi Shastri



LEICESTER: England's Natalie Sciver plays a shot against Pakistan during the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup match at Grace Road, Leicester, England Tuesday. — AP

CRICKET

ENGLAND BEAT PAKISTAN AT WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

LONDON: Natalie Sciver and Heather Knight both scored maiden centuries as England posted their highest-ever Women's World Cup total en route to beating Pakistan by 107 runs on the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) Method in Leicester on Tuesday.

Sciver hit 137 off 92 balls and captain Knight scored 106 off 109 balls as England recovered from 42 for two to finish at 377 for seven in 50 overs, the second-highest total in competition history behind Australia's 412 for three in 1997.

While the 213-run partnership equalled England's third-wicket record stand set back in 1993, Pakistan left-arm spinner Nashra Sandhu finished with figures of one for 82 — the most

expensive in Women's World Cup history.

Pakistan opener Ayesha Zafar was 56 not out and Nain Abidi, batting at five, 23 not out when rain brought an early end to the proceedings with the scoreboard reading 107 for three in 29.2 overs. "It was really nice to get that partnership together and have a convincing win," said Knight after England were put into bat following a short rain delay. "We don't really set targets too much, it's about getting as many runs as we can. Pakistan actually started well, we had to ride that out a bit, play our shots and enjoy ourselves." Knight struck 12 fours and two sixes in a 109-ball 106, while Sciver slapped 14 fours and four sixes in a whirlwind 92-ball 137.

There was also an entertaining 50-run partnership between Danielle Wyatt (42 not out) and Fran Wilson (33). The form of Ayesha was a rare positive for Pakistan as the opener brought up her half-century off 67 balls.

It was a second defeat in as many outings for Pakistan and captain Sana Mir said: "We disappointed a lot of fans today. In the first game, we were not able to play the standard we set ourselves and we did not reach those standards again." The only match today sees New Zealand take on South Africa in Derby. All the eight teams involved will play each other once, with the top four contesting the semi-finals. The final takes place at Lord's on July 23. — AFP

SRI LANKA PLAYERS TOLD TO GET FIT OR GET OUT

COLOMBO: The Sri Lankan government yesterday warned the national cricket team to get fit in three months or get booted out. The ultimatum came after the squad was found to be unfit for the series against Zimbabwe which starts tomorrow. "No one has a satisfactory level of fitness, but I have made an exception this time," sports minister Dayasiri Jayasekera said.

Players are selected by an independent panel for the national team, but the sports minister must give final approval before they can represent the country.

Jayasekera said no member of the 13-man squad met required international fitness standards and noted that high levels of injuries were due to poor endurance.

Only two players—Dushmantha Chameera and Lahiru Madushanka — scored high marks in the "yo-yo" endurance test which is mainly running against the clock, a source familiar with the process told AFP. Three other fitness tests were also carried out.

Controversial fast bowler Lasith Malinga who weighs 80 kilos (176 pounds) failed one test, the source said, and barely scraped through the rest. He is officially under observation.

"Malinga has suffered recurring injuries partly because of the poor fitness," the source said on condition of anonymity.

Malinga was slapped with a fine of 50 percent of his match fee for Friday's game and given a six-month suspended match-ban for comparing Jayasekera to a "monkey" and saying the minister knew nothing about cricket.

The Sri Lankan board held an inquiry after Malinga publicly lambasted Jayasekera who had said many players were too fat following their

failure to reach the Champions Trophy semi-finals earlier this month.

The typical body fat amount for a cricketer was 16 percent, but most Sri Lankan players had over 26 percent, Jayasekera said.

He has warned any player with a body fat

percentage over 16 will not be allowed to represent the country. Sri Lanka Cricket announced Tuesday that Malinga had apologised and also pleaded guilty to violating his contract with the board which precludes players from making public statements. — AFP



GALLE: Sri Lankan cricketer Danushka Gunathilaka (2L) warms up with teammates during a practice session at Galle International Cricket Stadium in Galle yesterday. Sri Lanka are looking to pick themselves up as the series against Zimbabwe begins this week in Galle after a string of poor performances prompted their coach to quit. — AFP

HOMOPHOBIA PERMEATES FOOTBALL WORLD IN SPAIN

MADRID: Death threats and insults: Homophobia remains omnipresent in Spain's sacred football world, where players don't dare "come out" in an otherwise gay friendly country whose capital hosts the WorldPride until July 2.

"First, they refused to take their showers with me," says Jose Manuel Garoz, who was sidelined from his amateur local team in his teens when his co-players found out he was gay via social networks. "They provoked me all the time and we argued. We came to blows and the president decided to kick me out," the young man, now 22, remembers as he stands next to a football pitch where he now plays in a "gay-friendly" Madrid club, GMadrid Sports.

A world leader in LGBT rights, Spain became the third country to authorise gay marriage in 2005 and Madrid is now hosting the WorldPride, one of the biggest celebrations of lesbian, gay,

bisexual and transgender rights.

But homosexuality remains a taboo in the professional football world. "With around eight percent of the population gay and lesbian, it's not normal at all that there are no overtly gay players," says Paco Ramirez, president of Spain's Observatory against Homophobia.

He believes this is because they fear it will "affect their career".

"For a player to dare come out under these circumstances, there is no assurance that sponsors won't drop him," adds Julien Pontes of the French Rouge Direct collective, which fights homophobia in football.

'HOMOPHOBIA IS EVERYWHERE'

Spanish sporting authorities say they are fighting discrimination.

Every weekend, for instance, Spain's national football league LaLiga details all insults shouted in stadiums. Just sev-

eral months ago, LaLiga boss Javier Tebas said that the league "would not allow any bad-mouthing from a co-player, the public, the media" if a footballer revealed he was gay.

The clubs also promise they would support any player wanting to come out. "If someone wants to freely express his homosexuality, there is no constraint in our club," a management source at FC Barcelona told AFP. And Atletico Madrid's French star Antoine Griezmann told men's magazine Icon: "If I were homosexual, I would say so. Even if it's easier to say this when you're not."

But despite this, no player has taken that step. "In the football world, homophobia is everywhere," says Jesus Tomillero, a referee who has been the victim of death threats for denouncing homophobic insults aimed at him.

"People think that football is for machos, that a gay man can dirty this

image," the 22-year-old says.

SPAIN BEHIND

Homophobic insults are common in Spain's stadiums, used to discredit opponents regardless of their alleged or real sexual orientation. Several generations of players have been at the receiving end, from Spain's former midfielder Guti to Real Madrid's star striker Cristiano Ronaldo, as well as coach Pep Guardiola.

The rival is a "maricon" ("faggot"), whoever he may be. "Why don't we condemn this? The referee doesn't write it up in his match report. There is inaction from all those involved in the sport," says Ruben Lopez, in charge of sporting issues at the Spanish LGBT Federation.

In 2016, Spain's interior ministry reported 92 "hate crimes"—including homophobic acts—committed in sporting facilities. Acts targeting LGBT are not counted separately and a parliamentary

initiative seeking to specifically include gays and lesbians in a law against intolerance in sports has yet to be adopted. "The sporting world will gradually progress, but it will still take many years," says Tomillero.

Some recent initiatives have had an echo. In 2015, some players started lacing their football boots with rainbow laces—the colour of the LGBT cause.

One of the shirts worn by players of Madrid's Rayo Vallecano, now in Spain's second division, sports a rainbow-coloured strip to fight discrimination. And since 2016, LaLiga publishes a guide recommending "zero tolerance" of discrimination. But Spain is nevertheless still behind compared to countries in western and northern Europe, activists say. "Did the laces have a real impact in the football world?", asks Lopez. "We don't know. In any case people in stadiums continue to shout 'maricon.'" — AFP



MADRID: This is a Sunday, May 22, 2016 file photo of Barcelona's Lionel Messi, carrying his son, poses for a photo with his girlfriend Antonella Rocuzzo as they celebrate after winning the final of the Copa del Rey soccer match between FC Barcelona and Sevilla FC at the Vicente Calderon stadium in Madrid. —AP

LIONEL MESSI TYING THE KNOT WITH CHILDHOOD SWEETHEART

BUENOS AIRES: There is a different side to Lionel Messi, one that not everyone gets to see. The player who shines with the ball by his feet appears to be extremely shy off the field. But the timid-looking Argentine star, who for years has been attracting the world's attention because of his mind-boggling soccer skills, is an outgoing, cheerful and humorous character when he is among those he knows and trusts.

It's the lighthearted and extroverted version of Messi that will be the center of attention on Friday in his hometown of Rosario when he marries 29-year-old Antonella Rocuzzo, his childhood sweetheart and mother of his two children.

The wedding is a highly anticipated event in the central Argentine city, located about 300 kilometers (186 miles) northwest of the capital of Buenos Aires, although the public is not expected to have any access to the festivities.

About 250 guests, including some current and former teammates, are expected to attend the ceremony in a five-star hotel that overlooks the city's largest shantytown. Special security measures are expected to be in place as guests begin arriving for the event.

Among those expected to attend are Barcelona teammates Neymar, Luis Suarez and Gerard Pique. Colombian singer Shakira, Pique's wife, is also expected at the ceremony. Organizers said personal hairdressers will be available for the guests, along with entertainment services for their children. About 150 journalists will be allowed to cover the wedding under very strict rules, without any direct access to the ceremony or the party. Messi and Rocuzzo have requested that wedding gifts come in the form of donations to the Leo Messi Foundation. Messi is already in Rosario on vacation, but hasn't made any public appearances. He was in the city to celebrate his 30th birthday this week.

CLOSE RELATIONSHIP

Messi grew up in a lower-middle-class neighborhood in Rosario along with two brothers and a sister. Rocuzzo was the cousin of a close friend of Messi, and the two were always around each other and shared a close relationship from a young age. They stayed in touch after Messi left to play in Spain as a teenager, and eventually started their relationship in the late 2000s, reportedly after he returned to Argentina following the death of one of Rocuzzo's close friends in a traffic accident.

Rocuzzo eventually moved to Barcelona, where the couple have two boys, 4-year-old Thiago and 1-year-old Mateo. "I'm a normal person. I have the same life as any human being," Messi said in an interview with ESPN before the 2014 World Cup. "When I finish playing, I have my family, my friends. I live like any other person." Even before Messi turned into one of the best players in the world, he was already the type of person who kept to himself and avoided the spotlight but opened up in the company of friends and relatives.

People close to Messi and some of his former teammates say he is just a normal guy, talkative and often joking. The serious-looking player who rarely shows any expressions on the field or in front of the cameras is nothing like "the real Messi," they say. "No, no, no ...," former Barcelona teammate Jonathan Dos Santos said when asked if Messi was as shy as he appears.

Dos Santos, in Russia with Mexico's national soccer team at the Confederations Cup, said that Messi always opened up while with his teammates. "He is a great guy, just a great guy," said Dos Santos, who was a teammate of Messi's at Barcelona from 2009-14.

Messi and his family recently were photographed with friends on vacation on a boat in Ibiza. Messi was seen playing with his children and laughing with his friends. It was the same when an Uruguayan television channel showed footage of Messi and Suarez playing cards with friends, with Messi joking and smiling all the time.

Messi, who has tattoos of both of his children, showed a more rebellious side of himself recently, dying his hair blond. He also has tattoos honoring his mother and Jesus. He became much more active in social media recently, opening an Instagram account and posting many pictures of his children and some private moments with his family.

"I think that on the field I'm completely different than I am off," Messi told Television Publica Argentina a few years ago. The soft-spoken Messi rarely speaks publicly and almost never talks to the media after or before games. Only a few times he has shown up at news conferences during tournaments with his club or national team.

Messi moved to Barcelona when he was 13 after being diagnosed with a hormone disorder that affected his growth. Barcelona offered to help him with the treatment. —AP

SOCCER

QATAR SAYS GARCIA REPORT 'VINDICATES' 2022 BID

DOHA: Qatar World Cup organisers said yesterday that the surprise publication of FIFA's Garcia Report "vindicated the integrity" of its successful bid to host the 2022 tournament.

In a statement, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy also questioned the timing of the publication, which comes as Qatar faces political isolation from many neighbouring countries. "We believe that the extent of our cooperation with this investigation and the conclusions drawn represent a vindication of the integrity of our bid," read the statement.

"We will continue to dedicate ourselves toward delivering on the promises we made during our bid and hosting an historic first FIFA World Cup in the Middle East."

Although the long-awaited report from US independent investigator Michael Garcia highlighted an array of potentially suspect financial dealings, there appeared to be no "smoking gun" which could end up denying Qatar the World Cup in five years' time.

His report referred to a payment of £2 million (\$2.6 million) allegedly sent by a consultant for Qatar, Sandro Rosell, to the 10-year-old daughter of a FIFA official. The payment was described by

an associate as the proceeds from a real estate deal. But Garcia concluded that no proof existed to link Qatar to the payment.

Rosell, an ex-Barcelona president, is currently in prison under investigation for money laundering related to the sale of the Brazilian national football team's television rights.

Garcia's investigation also revealed that one former FIFA executive committee member thanked Qatar by mail for a transfer of several hundred thousand euros just after Qatar was awarded the 2022 tournament.

And it also documents that three executive members of FIFA were flown to Rio de Janeiro for a private party ahead of the vote to decide who would host the 2022 World Cup.

Garcia's report was commissioned in 2012 and presented to FIFA in 2014. Following his investigation, the adjudicatory chamber of FIFA's ethics committee said there was not enough evidence to call into question Qatar's hosting of the 2022 World Cup. FIFA—which had previously only published a 40-page summary of the report

finally made the document public after it was obtained by German newspaper Bild. Qatar's statement added that "we question the timing of



Chairman of the two chambers of the new FIFA Ethics Committee Michael Garcia

the leak", which comes at a time of high political tension in the Gulf.

Countries led by Saudi Arabia announced earlier this month the suspension of ties with Qatar, accusing it of support for extremist groups—a claim Doha denies. —AFP

PREVIEW

PENALTY KINGS GERMANY CONFIDENT AGAINST MEXICO

SOCHI: Germany are the kings of the penalty shoot-out-but the world champions hope to see off Mexico in today's Confederations Cup semi-final without needing dreaded spot kicks. The Germans have won all five penalty shoot-outs they have faced since 1976 at either World Cup finals or European championships. Joachim Loew's team face the Mexicans in Sochi for a place in Sunday's Confed Cup final in St Petersburg against either Portugal or Chile, who meet later in Kazan's other semi-final.

Having won their Confed Cup group, Germany are on a 13-match unbeaten run, dating back just under a year to their Euro 2016 semi-final defeat to hosts France.

Left-back Jonas Hector said Germany's young guns have not yet practised spot-kicks and hope to beat Mexico over the 90 minutes. "We would like to avoid this situation (penalties)," admitted Hector.

"We haven't specifically trained for it and we'll take it as it comes." Nevertheless, the Germans seem to have penalty-taking in their blood. Their Under-21 team beat England 4-3 on penalties on Tuesday to book their place in Friday's final at the European Under-21 championships in Poland. Loew said he does not have a list of his top five penalty takers. "Sometimes the players practise after training, but you can't train for what will happen on the night," the German coach said. "If it happens, I will look at the faces of my players after the final whistle, take into account who is ready and who has missed them in

the past, then make a decision," added Loew. The Germans expect a battle royal against Mexico's come-back kings. The Mexicans came from behind in all three of their group matches, beating both New Zealand and Russia 2-1 after drawing 2-2 with Portugal, when they twice equalised.

"It will be aggressive in a positive sense, it is how they have been playing for years," said Loew. "They hunt the ball with all their players and when they have it, they play it deep quickly." Mexico coach Juan Carlos Osorio, who has chopped and changed his side so far, will be without suspended captain Andres Guardado. Loew has promised changes with forward Lars Stindl, who has scored twice so far in Russia, expected to return along with left-back Hector. With Manuel Neuer missing the Confed Cup after foot surgery, Loew says Barcelona's Marc-Andre ter Stegen will be Germany's goalkeeper for the rest of the tournament.

Mexico's all-time top-scorer Javier Hernandez knows all about German football after two seasons with Bayer Leverkusen. "We know them, we know about the things that could make them suffer, but we are going to focus on our team and our tactics," said the ex-Manchester United striker.

The Germans beat Mexico 4-3 when the teams last met in the third-place play-off at the 2005 Confed Cup in Germany. They make no secret of their confidence and expect to reach Sunday's final. "I think in terms of gut feeling, we're heading to St Petersburg," said Loew. — AFP



SOCHI: Germany's Joshua Kimmich exercises with the ball in Sochi, Russia, yesterday. Germany will play Mexico in a Confederations Cup semifinal soccer match scheduled for today in Sochi. — AP

RUSSIANS HIT BY FRESH DOPING ALLEGATIONS

BERLIN: Russian football was the target of fresh doping allegations yesterday with claims of widespread urine sample tampering levelled by Richard McLaren, author of an explosive report into Russian doping.

The Canadian lawyer told German TV channel ARD he had fresh evidence indicating that positive tests taken from Russian players were swapped with clean samples.

McLaren said the World Anti-Doping Agency had seized 155 samples from 2018 World Cup hosts Russia for re-testing, with FIFA kept informed.

According to WADA's special anti-doping investigator an exchange of emails between high-ranking Russian officials dating back to 2015 detailed the urine sample swap scam.

He told ARD: "We have some information where there's reference to trying to find a sample which would be suitable possibly for swapping that gives rise to a suspicion that there is a bank of clean samples somewhere, not in the lab, maintained by somebody, and that it's being used, with respect to footballers."

"We would conclude from what information we do have that there must be a different system operating in football than the ones that we reported on (in other sports)."

McLaren fears this is "the tip of the iceberg." "We'd like to know what's underneath the waterline," he told ARD. He says the batch of samples taken by WADA and awaiting analysis will reveal one of two things: "Either there's been tampering with the caps or the contents could have been changed."

"Or the contents haven't been changed but there may be prohibited substances in there."

Neither FIFA nor the Russian authorities accepted ARD's invitation to respond to the allegations which follow last weekend's report in a British newspaper that Russia's entire 2014 World Cup squad was under FIFA investigation for doping. The Mail on Sunday wrote that the Russian players are being probed by FIFA as part of a broader scandal over allegations of state-backed doping in the country.

Russian deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko blasted the report as "nonsense" and insisted that there has never been any problem with doping in the Russian game.

And FIFA insisted all players including all of the Russian squad underwent pre-competition and post-match tests in Brazil. "All of which resulted negative," a spokesman for football's governing body said on Sunday.

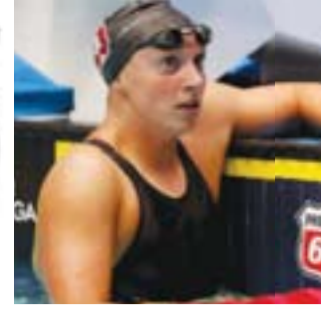
McLaren's bombshell report in 2015 uncovered state-sponsored doping in Russia, with the country's track and field team banned from the 2016 Rio Olympics.

A second report released by McLaren in December highlighted 31 tampered doping samples from footballers. — AFP

Sports

55th Anniversary
Kuwait Times

Ledecky, Adrian steals opening night show at US nationals



Lionel Messi tying the knot with childhood sweetheart



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EASTBOURNE: Serbia's Novak Djokovic plays a return during his round of 16 match against Canada's Vasek Pospisil, during day five of the AEGON International tennis tournament at Devonshire Park, Eastbourne, England yesterday. — AP

DJOKOVIC PASSES GRASS TEST AT EASTBOURNE

EASTBOURNE: Top seed Novak Djokovic passed his first grass court test of the season yesterday, defeating Canadian qualifier Vasek Pospisil 6-4, 6-3 to reach the quarter-finals at Eastbourne.

The Serb is playing a pre-Wimbledon event for the first time since 2010 and will next face the winner from a pair of Americans, either Donald Young or Jared Donaldson. The three-time Wimbledon champion got onto court after rain washed out Tuesday's play-save one game in the Djokovic match-leaving organisers with a backlog to get through.

The former world number one claimed his fifth victory in as many attempts against Pospisil, who is now 4-22 lifetime against top 10 opponents.

"That was the first official grass court match for me this year," Djokovic said. "I'm glad that I came here to Eastbourne. I have had a great couple of days of training with good players, different styles of game."

"Yesterday it obviously wasn't really enjoyable to see the rain falling all day."

"But today we almost played a full match, so I'm glad for that. I felt good on the court, considering it's the first match. "I played against an opponent that has a really good game for grass. Serves well, comes to the net, has a good variety."

"It was a really, really solid win. I'm happy with it." Djokovic, who will be advised by Andre Agassi at

Wimbledon, is the second-highest-ranked men's player to ever compete at the Aegon International behind then-number two Marcelo Rios in 1998.

In the men's first round, Russian Daniil Medvedev knocked out fifth seed Sam Querrey, beating the American 6-3, 7-5. German Mischa Zverev, seeded sixth, beat Ryan Harrison of the US 6-4, 7-6 (11/9).

On the women's side, top-ranked Angelique Kerber recovered to beat Czech Kristyna Pliskova 4-6, 6-1, 7-5, as the German returned to action for the first time since her opening round defeat at the French Open.

Kerber is fighting to hold onto her number one ranking and withdrew from last week's Birmingham event with a

hamstring strain.

She trained in Mallorca after recovering from her injury but has yet to capture a title this year or beaten an opponent inside the top 20.

Roland Garros finalist Simona Halep, who trails Kerber by just 115 ranking points, rallied to defeat China's Duan Ying-Ying 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, while Bulgarian Tsvetana Pironkova a 2010 Wimbledon semi-finalist-thumped Monica Niculescu of Romania 6-0, 6-4.

Two-time Grand Slam winner and seventh seed Svetlana Kuznetsova overcame German Mona Barthel 4-6, 7-5, 6-2 while France's Kristina Mladenovic, seeded ninth, dusted aside China's Zhang Shuai 6-0, 6-4. — AFP

GERMANY, SPAIN SET UNDER-21 EURO FINAL DATE

KRAKOW: Southampton's Nathan Redmond missed the crucial penalty as England agonisingly lost on penalties to Germany in the semi-finals of the under-21 European Championship in Poland on Tuesday.

Germany goalkeeper Julian Pollersbeck saved Redmond's spot-kick to consign England to a 4-3 defeat in the shoot-out after the match had ended 2-2 at the end of 90 minutes and extra time.

They will face Spain in tomorrow's final in Krakow after a brilliant second-half hat-trick from the Atletico Madrid midfielder Saul Niguez handed them a 3-1 win over 10-man Italy in the night's other last-four tie.

Spain, coached by the former Barcelona and Real Madrid midfielder Albert Celades, are bidding to win the continental title in the age group for the fifth time and equal Italy's record in the process.

Germany's only previous triumph came in 2009 when they outclassed England in the final.

England have been accustomed to losing penalty shoot-outs to Germany in the past but they were hopeful of winning this encounter in 90 minutes as Aidy Boothroyd's side sought to provide more success for the English after their recent triumph at the under-20 World Cup.

RB Leipzig striker Davie Selke gave Germany the lead in southern town Tychy but England turned the game around, Demarai Gray and Tammy Abraham scoring to leave them 2-1 up early in the second half.

However, a terrific header from substitute Felix Platte allowed Germany to force extra time, in which they were the better side.

Yannick Gerhardt missed from the spot for Germany, but Pollersbeck was to be the hero as he saved from Abraham and then from Redmond.

In Krakow, Saul opened the scoring in the 53rd minute and Italy were reduced to 10 men before the hour mark when Inter midfielder Roberto Gagliardini was sent off for a second yellow card. — AFP



TYCHY: Spectators celebrate when Germany's Felix Platte scores his side's second goal during the Euro Under 21 semifinal soccer match between England and Germany in Tychy, Poland, Tuesday. — AP

MURRAY WIMBLEDON TOP SEED FOR FIRST TIME

LONDON: Defending champion Andy Murray's indifferent form of late did not prevent him being named top seed for Wimbledon for the first time yesterday.

The 30-year-old Scot and world number one who suffered a shock first round defeat at the hands of journeyman Australian Jordan Thompson at last week's Queen's tournament-will not face any of his fellow members of the 'Big Four' till the semi-finals.

Novak Djokovic, whose form has also taken a turn for the worse, Roger Federer, fresh from winning at Halle, and Rafael Nadal, re-invigorated after triumphing at the French Open, are seeded in the top four meaning it is the first time since Wimbledon in 2014 the quartet have been the top four seeds at a Grand Slam event.

Djokovic-a two time Wimbledon champion-and seven-time Wimbledon Federer both benefit from Wimbledon organisers habit of not sticking blindly to the world rankings.

Djokovic is raised to second seed despite being world ranked four and the Swiss master is promoted to third seed from a global ranking of five with second-ranked Nadal dropping down to fourth seed.

World number three Stan Wawrinka-overwhelmed by Nadal in the French Open final-has never reached the last four at Wimbledon and drops to fifth seeding.

The player in the men's draw who gains most benefit from Wimbledon's liberal seedings policy is Luxembourg's Gilles Muller who is lifted 10 places from 26th in the world to 16th on account of his love of grass.

The women's draw sees world number one and last year's beaten finalist Angelique Kerber of Germany top the seedings with Romania's French Open finalist Simona Halep, Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic and Ukrainian Elina Svitolina rounding up the top four.

Defending champion Serena Williams is absent as she awaits giving birth to her first child.

Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova is seeded 11 and provided she recovers from an abdominal injury, which ruled her out of Eastbourne this week, could provide a fairytale winner after suffering severe wounds to her left hand while fighting off a knife-wielding burglar at her home last December. — AFP

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NEW YORK: People look at the New York skyline with the Empire State Building lit in burgundy and white in honor of Qatar Airways and its 10th Anniversary of flying to the United States, as seen from Weehawken, New Jersey on June 27, 2017. Qatar's sovereign wealth fund in August purchased a 9.9-percent stake in the company that owns the Empire State Building for \$622 million. — AFP

DOHA'S HOTELS SUFFER IN EID HOLIDAY

ARAB SANCTIONS LEAD TO STEEP FALL IN OCCUPANCY RATES

DOHA: A boycott imposed by four Arab nations that accuse Qatar of supporting terrorism is squeezing the tourism sector and Doha's hotels which would normally be full in the Eid Al-Fitr holiday have seen steep falls in their occupancy rates. A Reuters survey of five major hotels found average occupancy was around 57 percent at the start of the Eid festival on Sunday which marks the end of the Ramadan fasting month when friends and families eat and pray together and take holidays.

"We're usually packed with Saudis and Bahrainis but not this year," a staff member at a five-star hotel said. But Qatar's official news agency QNA cited officials and managers in the hotel sector reporting hotel occupancy over the holiday period stood at more than 95 percent and denied reports of lower rates. "They pointed to high tourist flows from the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Kuwait and a significant increase in demand from domestic tourism," QNA said.

QNA said an offer by some hotels to offer guests staying two nights at hotels a third night free had helped win high occupancy and that the sector has shown its ability to "diversify away from traditional markets". Aviation analyst Will Horton estimated Hamad International Airport, one of the Middle East's busiest, would handle 76 percent as many flights in early July compared with the same period last year, a loss of about 27,000 passengers a day.

The airport said in a statement on Tuesday it had experienced a "very busy" Eid period with 580,000 passengers passing through between June 19 and June 25. It did not give comparative figures for last year's Eid. Visitors from the rest of the Gulf Cooperation Council usually account for almost half of all visitors to Qatar. So a decision by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt to cut diplomatic and transport ties on June 5 hit traffic hard.

"Doha in early July, assuming the restrictions remain, will have less capacity than a year ago - a confronting figure for a region where every month sets year-on-year records," said Horton, senior analyst at Australia's CAPA Centre for Aviation. There is no breakthrough in sight for the crisis in which the four Arab nations issued an ultimatum to Doha to close Al Jazeera television, curb ties with Iran, shut a Turkish base and pay reparations. A defiant Doha has denied accusations of supporting terrorism and says the demands are unrealistic.

Air travel hit

Hundreds of weekly flights to and from Qatar have already been cancelled because of the dispute. Hamad airport stands to lose fees paid by airlines and passengers, as well as terminal revenue from duty free shops and restaurants. Air links suspended by the four Arab states represented around 25 percent of flights by state-owned Qatar Airways, one of the region's big three carriers. Qatar Airways, whose hub is Hamad airport, said on Tuesday that 510,949 of its passengers had travelled through the airport in the past seven days. It did not give comparative figures. Qatar Airways Chief Executive Akbar al-Baker had said on June 14 the majority of its operations had not been affected by restrictions imposed by the four Arab states.

Elsewhere in the tourist sector, hotels, restaurants and other facilities have had to find new sources of services and goods, in some cases, at higher cost, due to the boycott, said Rashid Aboobacker, senior director at TRI Consulting in Dubai. "A substantial drop in visitor arrivals is likely to force hotel and real estate developers to re-evaluate their strate-

gies and priorities, potentially causing delays to some of the ongoing (tourism) projects," he said.

Qatar's World Cup organising committee has said sanctions had not affected preparations for the tournament and alternative sources for construction materials had been secured. Qatar has said 46,000 rooms will be available to host fans by the time of the World Cup. In March, it had 119 hotels with 23,347 rooms, according to the tourism authority. Developing business and leisure tourism is part of Qatar's drive to develop its economy away from reliance on oil and gas revenue. Doha aims to raise the tourism sector's contribution to GDP to 5.2 percent by 2030 from around 4.1 percent now, while raising the number of people employed by nearly 70 percent to 127,900. — Reuters

INDIA TO SELL AIR INDIA STAKE

NEW DELHI: India's cabinet approved yesterday plans to sell a stake in state-run Air India as the debt-saddled carrier struggles to compete with low-cost rivals in one of the world's fastest-growing airline markets. "A civil aviation ministry proposal was received by the cabinet which was given an in principle approval for the disinvestment of Air India," finance minister Arun Jaitley said after the meeting. The cabinet also set up a separate group, headed by Jaitley, to decide how to move forward with the sale, including the amount of divestment

and other matters related to its assets and debt. Once the country's monopoly airline, Air India lost market share to new private players, especially low-cost carriers. Hit by delayed and cancelled flights and a generally poor service record the flagship carrier began accumulating debts as passengers flocked to an ever-growing market of competitors. The carrier received a \$5.8 billion bailout package from the government in 2012. Proposals to privatise the airline have been floated in the past but stalled. — AFP

INDIAN BUSINESSES BRACE FOR BIGGEST TAX REFORM

MEERUT: Businessman Pankaj Jain is so worried about the impending launch of a new sales tax in India that he is thinking of shutting down his tiny textile factory for a month to give himself time to adjust. Jain is one of millions of small business owners who face wrenching change from India's biggest tax reform since independence that will unify the country's \$2 trillion economy and 1.3 billion people into a common market.

But he is simply not ready for a regime that from July 1 will for the first time tax the bed linen his 10 workers make, and require him to file his taxes every month online. On the desk in his tiny office in Meerut, two hours drive northeast of New Delhi, lay two calculators. Turning to open a metal cabinet, he pulled out a hand-written ledger to show how he keeps his books. "We will have to hire an accountant - and get a computer," the thick-set 52-year-old told Reuters, as a dozen ancient power looms clattered away in the ramshackle workshop next door. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government says that by replacing several federal and state taxes, the new Goods and Services Tax (GST) will make life simpler for business. To drive home the point, Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan has appeared in a promotional video in which he weaves a cat's cradle between the fingers of his hands - symbolizing India's thicket of old taxes. With a flourish, the tangle is gone and Bachchan proclaims: "One nation, one tax, one market!"

Not so simple

By tearing down barriers between India's 29 states, the GST should deliver efficiency gains to larger businesses. HSBC estimates the reform could add 0.4 percent to economic growth. Yet at the local chapter of the Indian Industries Association, which groups 6,500 smaller enterprises nationwide, the talk is about how to cope in the aftermath of the GST rollout. "In the initial months, there may be utter confusion," said chairman Ashok Malhotra, who runs one firm that manufactures voltage stabilisers and a second that makes timing equipment for boxing contests. A big concern is the Indian GST's sheer complexity - with rates of 5, 12, 18 and 28 percent, and myriad exceptions, it contrasts with simpler, flatter and broader sales taxes in other countries. The official schedule of GST rates runs to 213 pages and has undergone repeated last-minute changes. "Rubber goods are taxed at 12 percent; sporting goods at 18 percent. I make rubber sporting goods - so what tax am I supposed to pay?" asks Anurag Agarwal, the local IIA secretary.

Grace period ?

The top government official responsible for coordinating the GST rollout rebuts complaints from bosses that the tax is

too complex, adding that the IT back-end that will drive it - crunching up to 5 billion invoices a month - is robust. "It is a technological marvel, as well as a fiscal marvel," Revenue Secretary Hasmukh Adhia told Reuters in an interview. The government will, however, allow firms to file simplified returns for July and August. From September they must file a total of 37 online returns annually - three each month and one at the year's end - for each state they operate in.

One particular concern is how a new feature of the GST, the input tax credit, will work. This allows a company to claim refunds on its inputs and means it should only pay tax on the value it adds. The structure will encourage companies to buy from suppliers that are GST-compliant, so that tax credits can flow down a supply chain.

That spells bad news for small firms hesitating to shift into the formal economy. The government estimates smaller companies account for 45 percent of manufacturing and employ more than 117 million people. Adhia played down the risk of

job losses, however, saying this would be offset by new service sector jobs.

Demonetisation 2.0

The prospect of disruption is drawing comparisons with Modi's decision last November to scrap high-value bank notes that made up 86 percent of the cash in circulation, in a bid to purge illicit "black money" from the system. The note ban caused severe disruption to India's cash-driven economy and slammed the brakes on growth, which slowed to a two-year low in the quarter to March. "It could throw the business out of gear - it can affect your volumes by at least 30 percent," said the head of one large cement company in the Delhi region. Back in Meerut, Pankaj Jain worries that hiring an accountant and charging 5 percent GST on his bedsheets could eat up to two-thirds of his annual profits of 400,000-500,000 rupees (\$6,210-\$7,760). "I know my costs will go up, but I don't know about my income," he said. "I might even have to shut up shop completely and go into trading." — Reuters



NEW DELHI: Indian traders shout slogans as they burn an effigy representing a tax worker during a protest against the forthcoming Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates. — AFP

OIL ERASES 2017 GAINS

NBK MONEY MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: In a generally calm week after the Fed hawkishly hiked interest rates, the future pace of monetary tightening is unknown. Oil prices tumbled to 15 month lows pushing down treasury yields. Lower crude prices weaken inflationary pressures and in turn slow the rise in yields. With US inflation already slowing in the second quarter, another fall in oil prices could hinder the Fed's plan for another rate hike in 2017.

Even FOMC members seem conflicted on the pace of tightening. New York Fed President William Dudley reinforced expectations of another interest rate hike this year stating that inflation should rebound alongside wages as the labor market continues to improve. Dallas Fed President Robert Kaplan on the other hand, said that low US treasury yields suggest markets expect sluggish growth ahead and there needs to be more evidence that recent weak inflation is indeed transitory. A Reuters poll sees the FOMC passing on all Fed meetings this year with the December meeting being the most disputed at 60% for no hike. The USD dollar traded in a relatively tight range only jumping up to a high of

manufacturing data. With Purchasing Manager's Index data being very strong in Europe this year and consumer confidence at a 16 year high, the EUR/USD reached a one week high of 1.1209.

In commodities, oil prices dropped to around multi-month lows this week despite strong compliance by OPEC and non-OPEC's deal to curb production. OPEC compliance with the output curbs in May was 108%, while non-OPEC compliance was 100%. However, the drop in prices suggests that markets are unconvinced that the production curb will affect total supply as other producers like US shale have been ramping up production. Brent Crude was last \$45.65 while West Texas was \$43.15.

US housing in demand

New and existing home sales rebounded in May despite rising prices due to low supply. Low mortgage rates, a solid labor market and rising wages continue to drive steady demand for housing. However, a tightening inventory could lead to inflated prices that could potentially price out new home buyers. Last month's

since lowest level since 2008. The public finances have been bolstered by greater government income. The central government received £110.2bn in income including £79.1bn in taxes. This was around 5% more than in the same period in the previous financial year. The Office for National Statistics said public sector net borrowing, excluding state-owned banks, fell by £300 million to a lower-than-expected £6.7 billion in May.

Eurozone PMIs indicate expansion

According to Markit's flash PMI survey, continued rises in Eurozone business activity in June led to the strongest quarter of economic expansion for over six years. Although the rate of growth decreased to a five-month low, high order book inflows and elevated levels of business confidence meant job creation remained one of the strongest recorded in 10 years as firms continued to expand capacity to meet rising demand. Price pressures eased however, reflecting lower global commodity prices. While overall new order growth eased in the service sector, manufacturing output rose at the steepest rate since April 2011 with factories reporting the high influx of new orders. Eurozone Manufacturing PMI came in at a 6 year high of 57.3 while Services PMI Activity came in at a 5 month low of 54.7.

ASIA

Royal Bank of Australia minutes

In the minutes of the Royal Bank of Australia's June meeting, the bank reiterated the appropriateness of keeping their accommodative policies and interest rate unchanged. The bank also mentioned its focus on employment and maintained its cautious outlook on the nation's housing market. While employment gains had strengthened in recent months, growth in housing debt had outpaced growth in household incomes. In regards to consumption, the RBA said wage growth had remained low and this was likely to remain the case for some time. "Low growth in incomes, along with high levels of household debt, appeared to have been restraining growth in household consumption." The minutes revealed that the RBA still expects GDP growth to accelerate to 3% over time, despite soft first quarter.

Japan manufacturing slows

The preliminary Nikkei flash manufacturing PMI for June came in at seven-month low of 52.0, down from 53.1 in May. Slower growth was signaled in June, with both orders and output rising at the weakest rates since late last year amid reports of a slight softening in market conditions. However, external demand is consistent and the sector continues to operate within a solid growth range. This is helping support employment gains while also enabling firms to pass costs on to clients fueling inflation.

Bank of Japan minutes

In their last meeting, the Bank of Japan kept monetary policy on hold and made its most optimistic assessment of the economy in nine years. Policymakers also expressed more optimism about exports and industrial production, according to the minutes. However, the BOJ also trimmed its consumer price forecast as inflation expectations have struggled. In regards to their asset-purchases, policymakers agreed that the amount of government debt purchases will fluctuate under its quantitative easing program but will not affect the BOJ's guidance on its market operations, the minutes showed.



ABU SAMRAH: Qatari boy plays with camels in a desert area on the Qatari side of the Abu Samrah border crossing between Saudi Arabia and Qatar on June 21, 2017. Around 12,000 camels and sheep have become the latest victims of the Gulf diplomatic crisis, being forced to trek back to Qatar from Saudi Arabia, a newspaper reported Tuesday. — AFP

QATAR RIYAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE IN CHAOS

DUBAI/ABU DHABI: Economic sanctions and poor liquidity have created chaos in the foreign exchange market for Qatari riyals, with the currency trading far below its peg to the US dollar this week, but bankers in the region believe the peg remains solid. The riyal has been increasingly volatile in the spot market since Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut diplomatic and transport ties with Qatar on June 5, accusing it of backing terrorism.

Some banks are quoting huge bid-ask spreads, there are big jumps in quoted rates within the space of a few minutes, some customers find it difficult to fill orders because of poor liquidity, and there's continual uncertainty about which banks are still willing to trade riyal and in what volumes. At times, the riyal has been quoted by Qatari banks very near its peg of 3.64 to the dollar; at other times, foreign banks have quoted it much lower. This week it traded between banks as low as 3.81, more than 4 percent below its peg - the lowest level this decade.

Onshore, offshore

Normally, such a gap would suggest the central bank was abandoning the peg and allowing its currency to depreciate but this time the riyal's drop is due to the way the diplomatic crisis has fragmented the foreign exchange market. Many Gulf banks have suspended or reduced ties with Qatar, causing funds in the market to flow more slowly and inefficiently between onshore and offshore banks.

This has opened a chasm between onshore trade, where the Qatari central bank has continued to provide ample supplies of dollars at a rate of up to 3.6415 under its peg mechanism, and offshore trade, where jittery foreign banks are demanding a premium for buying riyals, pushing the currency lower. "There's definitely an arbitrage between offshore and onshore rates because of the uncertainty, and traders are taking advantage of the volatility," said a senior treasury official at a bank in Abu Dhabi.

But the official, who like others in the region declined to be named because of political sensitivities, said there was no reason to think Qatar would need to take the risky and destabilising step of abandoning its peg. "Qatar Central Bank will definitely defend the peg... It makes no sense for Qatar to de-peg. It won't happen from an economic point of view. If it de-pegs at all, that would be due to political reasons."

The riyal's lowest levels were hit early this week when all Gulf Arab financial markets were closed for the Eid Al-Fitr holidays,

leaving offshore banks in Europe and New York to trade without reference to business in the Gulf. Yesterday morning, when the UAE and Bahrain reopened after the holidays, an Abu Dhabi bank quoted the riyal only slightly below the peg at 3.6550. Qatar itself will remain on holiday throughout this week and reopen next Sunday.

Central bank

Qatar's central bank had net foreign reserves of \$34.8 billion in May and Doha is estimated to have over \$200 billion of liquid assets in its sovereign wealth fund - enough to defend the peg for years, even if there is a mass withdrawal of foreign bank deposits from Qatar, analysts calculate. That raises the question of why the central bank has not intervened aggressively by flooding the market with dollars to keep riyal spot rates consistently in line with the peg and deter offshore speculation.

Ehsan Khoman, regional strategist at Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, said such action was possible if the gap between onshore and offshore rates continued to widen. "It would not be unprecedented if the Qatar Central Bank intervenes in some form in the offshore market to inject USD liquidity, which would narrow the divergence somewhat precipitously."

Several commercial bankers in the region, however, said they thought the central bank simply saw no need to spend part of its reserves getting drawn into a battle with offshore banks. Forwards market prices show that expectations for long-term riyal depreciation are minor and not enough to trigger major capital flight from Qatar.

The country gets most of its dollar supplies from oil and gas exports, which are controlled by the government, so it does not need to fear offshore trade will suck dollars away from onshore companies which need them. In this situation, the central bank may see no harm in an offshore weakening of the riyal, especially if it means foreign banks considering whether to sell their riyal assets would face an exchange loss in doing so, the bankers said.

In his only public statement since the diplomatic crisis erupted, central bank governor Sheikh Abdullah bin Saud Al-Thani said Doha had enough foreign currency reserves to meet all its requirements, but did not explicitly mention the peg.

The central bank has privately told Qatari banks, however, that it is committed to the peg, a Qatari commercial banker told Reuters. "The message was that those hedge funds and other international investors who bet against the peg will lose their money." — Reuters



97.87 after Fed Dudley's comments. The index then inched lower throughout the week as more promising data was released in Europe. Markets will be waiting for fresh new indicators to provide more insight on the Fed's plans.

In the UK, the Pound Sterling dropped to new lows as Bank of England governor Mark Carney dispelled expectations of an upcoming rate hike. Carney said "now is not the time to hike rates" citing weak wage growth and a likely hit to incomes as Britain prepares to leave the European Union. Last week 3 policy members voted in favor of tightening increasing expectations that a rate hike may not be too far off. Carney's comments sent the GBP to a two-month low of 1.2587. However, cable moved higher erasing most of its losses as Bank of England's chief economist Andy Haldane countered Carney's comments and voicing his support for a rate hike this year.

In Europe, the Euro followed suit trading in a tight range throughout the week only jumping higher on Friday after the release of optimistic

median sale price came in at \$252,800 up 5.8% from a year ago and marked a record high for the survey.

Current account deficit widens

The US trade deficit in the broadest measure of trade rose to the highest level in a year during the first quarter of 2017. The US current-account deficit increased to \$116.8 billion in the January-March period from \$114.0 billion in the fourth quarter of 2016. The \$2.8 billion increase was largely due to the widening of trade imbalance of goods by \$5.3 billion. Overall, exports of goods and services plus income receipts increased \$22.5 billion in the first quarter as imports of goods and services plus income payments increased \$25.2 billion. The deficit now accounts for 2.5% of the US GDP.

EUROPE & UK

Public sector borrowing falls

UK public sector borrowing fell more-than-expected in the last quarter to the lowest level

CHEMCHINA COMPLETES TAKEOVER OF SYNGENTA

SHANGHAI: ChemChina has completed its \$43 billion takeover of Swiss pesticide and seed giant Syngenta, the companies said, in the biggest overseas acquisition so far by a Chinese firm. The deal combines Syngenta, a global leader in seeds and crop protection, with ChemChina which controls Adama, the largest supplier of generic crop protection products in Europe.

It is part of a broader wave of consolidation in the agro-chemicals sector that has worried environmental activists and farmers. ChemChina-also known as China National Chemical Corp-made its offer for Syngenta in February 2016, but the takeover had to await the green light from regulators.

US and European Union authorities approved the deal in April despite growing resistance on both sides of the Atlantic to blockbuster takeovers by Chinese companies. China itself has sought to

rein in the foreign buying spree by its firms over concerns about capital flight and bad loans, reversing course after previously encouraging such ventures abroad. ChemChina pledged to sell part of Adama's pesticide business and take other steps, to gain regulatory approval.

"All our stakeholders are benefiting from this change of ownership. Jobs have been safeguarded and farmers will continue to have a choice and enjoy the benefits of our investments in technology," Syngenta vice chairman Michel Demare said in a statement Tuesday. Syngenta will remain a standalone company and the existing management team will continue to run it. ChemChina chairman Ren Jianxin, who has been elected to head Syngenta's board of directors, said the Chinese company would support Syngenta's "growth, product offering and services". — AFP

KIA INVESTS IN A SMALL FINANCE BANK IN INDIA

KUWAIT: Kuwait's sovereign wealth fund is among a small group of anchor investors backing a finance bank in India head of its initial public offering. The AU Small Finance Bank raised \$87 million from investors including Kuwait Investment Authority, GIC Pte, the sovereign wealth fund of Singapore and US-based private equity firm East Bridge Capital, reported VCIRCLE website. Other foreign investors who took part in the anchor allotment include the

Master Trust Bank of Japan, Singapore hedge fund Amansa Holdings and investment funds of Nomura, Wells Fargo and HSBC. As many as 13 domestic mutual funds also bought shares. Anchor investors are institutional investors who accept a one-month lock-in period for a sizeable allocation of shares and support a public offering. The Jaipur-based AU Small Finance Bank is hoping to raise \$1.6 billion through the IPO.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.727
Indian Rupees	4.729
Pakistani Rupees	2.900
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.985
Nepali Rupees	2.955
Singapore Dollar	220.650
Hongkong Dollar	39.043
Bangladesh Taka	3.765
Philippine Peso	6.084
Thai Baht	8.990

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.254
Qatari Riyal	83.688
Omani Riyal	791.320
Bahraini Dinar	809.090
UAE Dirham	82.959

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.350
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.760
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	125.050
Jordanian Dinar	429.540
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.030
Syrian Lira	2.171
Morocco Dirham	31.719

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.500
Euro	341.340
Sterling Pound	389.760
Canadian dollar	231.210
Turkish lira	87.250

Swiss Franc	313.920
Australian Dollar	233.090
US Dollar Buying	303.300

GOLD	
20 Gram	254.110
10 Gram	129.970
5 Gram	65.830

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.150
Canadian Dolla	230.815
Sterling Pound	389.365
Euro	340.715
Swiss Frank	298.260
Bahrain Dinar	806.705
UAE Dirhams	83.205
Qatari Riyals	84.425
Saudi Riyals	82.000
Jordanian Dinar	428.895
Egyptian Pound	16.937
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.986
Indian Rupees	4.720
Pakistani Rupees	2.900
Bangladesh Taka	3.771
Philippines Peso	6.077
Cyprus pound	167.850
Japanese Yen	3.720
Syrian Pound	2.420
Nepalese Rupees	3.953
Malaysian Ringgit	71.970

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.975
Thai Bhat	9.945
Turkish Lira	86.795

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.382834	0.392834
Czech Korune	0.005102	0.017102
Danish Krone	0.042336	0.047336
Euro	0.339272	0.348272
Norwegian Krone	0.032121	0.037321
Romanian Leu	0.084264	0.084264
Slovakia	0.009083	0.019083
Swedish Krona	0.031293	0.036293
Swiss Franc	0.309858	0.320858
Turkish Lira	0.081621	0.091921
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.226698	0.234698
New Zealand Dollar	0.214899	0.224399
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.225606	0.234606
Georgina Lari	0.137325	0.137325
US Dollars	0.299950	0.304370
US Dollars Mint	0.300450	0.304370
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003428	0.004012
Chinese Yuan	0.043342	0.046742
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037091	0.039841
Indian Rupee	0.004241	0.004929

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002628	0.002808
Kenyan Shilling	0.002990	0.002990
Korean Won	0.000256	0.000271
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067042	0.073442
Nepalese Rupee	0.002974	0.003144
Pakistan Rupee	0.002713	0.003003
Philippine Peso	0.006019	0.006319
Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073
Singapore Dollar	0.214152	0.224152
South African Rand	0.017389	0.025889
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001607	0.002187
Taiwan	0.009733	0.009913
Thai Baht	0.008655	0.009205
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.799076	0.807576
Egyptian Pound	0.015196	0.021104
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000190	0.000250
Jordanian Dinar	0.424240	0.433240
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.019764	0.043764
Nigerian Naira	0.001256	0.001891
Omani Riyal	0.783320	0.789000
Qatar Riyal	0.079225	0.084165
Saudi Riyal	0.079993	0.081293
Syrian Pound	0.001289	0.001509
Tunisian Dinar	0.122458	0.130458
Turkish Lira	0.081621	0.091921
UAE Dirhams	0.081357	0.083057
Yemeni Riyal	0.000988	0.001068

TAP WATER DWINDLES AS CITIES PARCHED BY S INDIA DROUGHT

CHENNAI: One of southern India's worst droughts in decades has dried up reservoirs in the region, severely impacting the availability of drinking water in Chennai and other cities, with the government urging citizens to save water. Water supplies across the port city of Chennai have dropped by half, with the government saying tap water may dwindle to a trickle in the days to come.

"We are supplying between 450 to 470 million liters of water every day," compared to the normal requirement of 830 million liters, said Arun Roy, of the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewage Board that supplies water across the city. "Many residents have

switched to their private borewells to meet their requirements, and we are also using water tankers to regulate supply."

Water from lakes and reservoirs around the city largely meet the needs of the city and its suburbs, home to more than 8 million people. Veeranam lake in neighboring Cuddalore district - one of Chennai's main water sources - is almost dry after the failure of the 2016 monsoons. Depleted groundwater sources and other dried up lakes within 60 km of Chennai - including Pulicat, Puzhal, Sholavaram, Kaliveli and Maduranthakam - have left the city parched.

Constant fights

Domestic worker Maheshwari Karunakaran is allowed to fill only 20 pots of water every two days to meet the needs of her four-member household. Karunakaran uses this water to drink, cook, bathe, wash utensils and clothes. "There is a fight every time the water supply is released to the hand pump below my block of apartments," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, adding that she often had to leave work early to queue up for water.

"Everybody needs more water. We are forced to buy additional water for anywhere between two to five Indian rupees (less than \$1) per pot." In many

areas, piped water is being supplied only once every three to four days. The water costs for most Chennai residents have gone up by 50 percent, while more people are depending on private water tankers and personal borewells for their everyday needs.

Officials say the number of calls to their helpline have increased with many people asking for water tankers. The government has 7,000 tankers in operation in the city. Chennai also gets water from government-run desalination plants, which are now working around the clock, raising concerns about technical glitches. "This crisis was expected considering that the last monsoons had failed," said Sekhar

Raghavan of Rain Centre, a nonprofit that promotes rainwater harvesting in the city. "But the shocker is that there has been no planning to deal with it. De-silting of lakes and reservoirs, efforts to ensure recharge of groundwater have all been missing."

According to Roy, the government started putting measures into place as early as January. "Industries and bulk users were forewarned, and our engineers have been engaging with resident welfare associations to create awareness on the situation," he said. "We are hoping we will get some rains in July that will help recharge some of the groundwater, failing which, the next few months will be tough." —Reuters



ATHENS: A motorcyclist looks on as he drives next to a pile of garbage in Piraeus, near Athens, on Monday, June 26, 2017. Municipality workers have been on strike for almost a week, hindering trash collection across the country. —AP

GREECE TAKE FORECLOSURES ONLINE TO AVOID PROTESTS

ATHENS: The scene has become familiar in Greece in recent months—a middle-aged woman in a courthouse, trying to dodge an angry crowd shouting inches from her face. "Get out, crowd!" is the usual cry at notaries-in most cases women-seeking to carry out court-mandated property auctions. "Not a single home in bankers' hands!" A tacit ban on thousands of property foreclosures in Greece, stalling sales for years, is now under threat as cash-strapped banks and social insurance funds start to turn the screws on borrowers. And to escape obstruction by anti-eviction groups, the auctions will be taken online with the blessing of Greece's EU-IMF creditors.

"It will be like eBay," warns Victor Tsiafoutis, a lawyer helping debtors on behalf of Greek consumer group Ekpizo. "Everything is being done to facilitate foreclosures... it's all done for the banks," he lamented. From September, a custom-made platform will enable some 15,000 properties including homes to go under the hammer electronically, says Georgios Rouskas, head of Greece's notary associations. "There are court rulings covering these foreclosures... instead of doing it in court, it will be done on an electronic platform."

In recent months, notaries have played a cat-and-mouse game with anti-eviction activists, who arrive in force to prevent property auctions from taking place. On a regular basis, members of leftist groups—including hardline former ministers of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras—interrupt the proceedings and escort notaries out of court offices, in full view of the police.

'Punching bag'

After several run-ins, the notaries in October decided to abstain from all but the most pressing auction cases. They ended their protest on Friday. "We had become a punching bag," says Rouskas. "Foreclosures were never easy to accept... (but) in the past year the problem has become acute." The notaries insist that the repossessions are not targeting the poor—in most cases, properties to go under the hammer are worth over 300,000 euros.

Formerly loose with questionable loans to not only the public, but also political parties and prominent media groups, Greek banks are now loaded with bad debt. From 2011 onwards, if property auctions had been allowed to proceed unhindered, the number of foreclosures stemming from mortgages would have doubled, the notaries say. Those related to business loans would have tripled, while those linked to consumer loans would have quadrupled.

Protection waning

In 2010, at the outset of Greece's seven-year economic crisis, a law was passed to protect family homes from debt seizure. For years to come, private and state creditors refrained from aggressively pursuing foreclosures, even after court rulings, as the country sank deeper into recession.

Bank staff privately admit that mass foreclosures would also have been impractical in a country with a near-dead property market, as they would have found it hard to sell on the houses they seized. But this has led to wealthy debtors playing the system to their advantage, Rouskas argues, by using the auction moratorium to avoid having their assets taken and sold.

"Greeks are prone to extremes," says Rouskas. "We are asked to stop all auctions, be it a warehouse, a factory, a villa, a hotel or a ship... anything that can be called 'people's' property." In the online auction platform, which was prepared with advice from EU-IMF technical experts, participation is open to all bidders, Greek or foreign.

Tsiafoutis says the move "may benefit foreign funds and investors (as) there is no liquidity (in Greece)." Auctions will be held three times a week from 11 in the morning to five in the afternoon. Bidders will need to register ahead of time and pay a fee depending on the value of the property. The software is being developed by Newsphone Hellas, a company best known in Greece for late-night TV telemarketing ads.

"This is who we found... they were the best prepared," shrugs Rouskas, pointing to a low contract cost of 20,000 euros for each of Greece's nine regional notary associations "compared to initial estimates of 900,000 euros." "The law says everybody should be free to participate in the process. There will be opposition. But I think things will work out," he says when asked about a possible backlash.

On June 15, masked anarchists smashed the front entrance of Newsphone Hellas and threw paint in the lobby. Rouskas says notaries are not intimidated. "Notaries have always held auctions in public. We are not scared. Most people recognize our contribution (in delaying unfair auctions)." But others in the profession are not as sanguine. "Why should I get beaten up because someone didn't settle their debt on time?" says another notary, speaking on condition of anonymity. The justice ministry did not respond to calls for comment. Two top banks with homes to auction declined to answer questions for this story. —AFP

EU FINES GOOGLE \$2.7 BILLION FOR ABUSING WEAKER RIVALS

ATTEMPTING TO CURB COMPANY'S CLOUT ON THE CONTINENT

BRUSSELS: European regulators fined Google a record 2.42 billion euros (\$2.72 billion) for abusing its dominance of the online search market in a case that could be just the opening salvo in Europe's attempt to curb the company's clout on that continent. The decision announced Tuesday by the European Commission punished Google for unfairly favoring its own online shopping recommendations in its search results. The commission is also conducting at least two other probes into the company's business practices that could force Google to make even more changes in the way it bundles services on mobile devices and sells digital advertising.

Even so, Europe's crackdown is unlikely to affect Google's products in the U.S. or elsewhere. But it could provide an opportunity to contrast how consumers fare when the company operates under constraints compared with an unfettered Google. The fine immediately triggered debate about whether European regulators were taking prudent steps to preserve competition or overstepping their bounds to save companies being shunned by consumers who have overwhelmingly embraced an alternative.

Margrethe Vestager, Europe's top antitrust regulator, said her agency's nearly seven-year investigation left no doubt something had to be done to rein in Google. "What Google has done is illegal under EU antitrust rules. It denied other companies the chance to compete on the merits and to innovate. And most importantly, it denied European consumers a genuine choice of services and the full benefits of innovation," Vestager told reporters Tuesday.

Highest ever fine

The fine was the highest ever imposed in Europe for anti-competitive behavior, exceeding a 1.06 billion euros penalty on Silicon Valley chip maker Intel in 2009. The penalty itself is unlikely to leave a dent in Google's finances. Parent company Alphabet Inc. has more than \$92 billion (82 billion euros) in cash, including nearly \$56 billion (50 billion euros) in accounts outside of the U.S.

The findings in Europe contrasted sharply with those reached by the US Federal Trade Commission in a similar investigation of Google

completed in 2013. The FTC absolved Google of any serious wrongdoing after concluding that its search recommendations did not undermine competition or hurt consumers. Leading up to that unanimous decision, though, some of the FTC's staff sent a memo to the agency's commissioners recommending legal action because Google's "conduct has resulted - and will result - in real harm to consumers and to innovation in the online search and advertising markets," according to a memo inadvertently released to The Wall Street Journal two years ago.

Google's misbehavior in Europe boiled down to its practice of highlighting its own online shopping service above those of its rivals. Merchants pay Google for the right to show summaries of their products in small boxes displayed near the top of search results when someone seems to be interested in a purchase. Meanwhile, Google lists search results of its biggest rivals in online shopping on page 4 - and smaller rivals even lower, based on the calculations of European regulators. That's a huge advantage for Google when 90 percent of user clicks are on the first page. —AP



BRUSSELS: European Union Commissioner for Competition Margrethe Vestager speaks during a media conference at EU headquarters. —AP

BREXIT TO BLOW BIG HOLE IN EU BUDGET: COMMISSIONER

BRUSSELS: The European Union faces a 20-billion-euro hole in its annual budget due to Britain's withdrawal and rising costs in issues such as defense, a commissioner said yesterday.

EU Budget Commissioner Guenther Oettinger, of Germany, called on the bloc to improve the efficiency of its spending in the wake of Brexit in March 2019. "We won't have the UK with us any-

more, but they were net payers despite the Thatcher rebate, so we will have a gap of 10 to 11 billion euros a year," Oettinger told a press conference as he unveiled the commission's proposals for the budget.

Under late British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Britain secured an annual rebate on its budget contribution worth more than three billion euros. Oettinger wrote separately in a blog on the proposals that "at the same time we need to finance new tasks such as defense, internal security... The total gap could therefore be up to twice as much." Twenty billion euros would amount to \$22.5-billion. The EU's budget in 2017 was 157.9 billion euros.

The German commissioner said that the EU could, after Britain leaves, save money by eliminating all rebates enjoyed by a number of other countries. But it would have to take further measures, he said. "I am ambitious and realistic," he said. "The Brexit gap will be financed by a mix of cuts, shifting expenditure, saving, and some new sources of money."

The commission's proposals suggest in particular that EU countries could save a lot of money by cooperating in key areas, as they aim to do on defense post-Brexit. But it does not set out detailed plans, saying that it wants to hear from member state next. As part of Brexit negotiations that began this month, the EU 27 are demanding that Britain pay an exit bill of up to 100 billion euros to honor commitments made while it was a member. —AFP



LONDON: This file photo taken on March 25, 2017 shows an EU flag and a Union flag held by a demonstrator is seen with Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben) and the Houses of Parliament as marchers taking part in an anti-Brexit, pro-European Union (EU) march enter Parliament Square in central London. —AFP

PRIZE-WINNING TECH HELPING GHANA'S FARMERS TO GROW

ACCRA: Agyei Douglas is a farmer who grows vegetables near Kumasi in Ghana's central Ashanti region. He used to struggle to access markets and capital. The information he needed was broadcast on the radio but often it wasn't specific enough to improve his yield of lettuce, spring onions, cabbage and chili pepper. Two years ago, the 43-year-old began using Farmerline, which delivers weather updates, the latest market prices and other details to his second generation mobile phone.

"It has helped us improve on our productions through the information we get from them, it has made things easier for us as compared to our previous system," he told AFP. The Ghanaian tech company behind Farmerline is one of a number of start-ups in the West African country working to bolster food security through better access to information. The initiative was established in 2012 and has so far helped connect some 200,000 farmers in 10 countries using the mobile technology.

Farming industry

According to 2014 Ghana government figures, almost half of the working population are involved in agriculture, and just over half of Ghana's land is used for farming. World Bank figures indicate some 80 per cent of agricultural output came from smallholders on family-operated farms with average landholdings of less than two hectares (4.9 acres). A lack of more in-depth and accurate data have been seen as a stumbling block for Ghana's farmers, preventing them from better production or accessing financial loans. Farmerline offers a range of services for both farmers and those who want to connect to them, including non-government organizations, global food companies and local businesses. Businesses can access data and farm auditing services as well as farmer profiling, and farm mapping. For farmers, there are also weather forecasts, market prices and agricultural tips all offered as voice messages in local languages such as the Akan dialect Twi.

Award winner

A point of pride for Farmerline's chief executive and co-founder Alloysius Attah is its business model. It puts people in direct touch with farmers, breaking the cycle of poverty and dependency on aid. "The business of agriculture has always been about aid, a feel-good project," said Attah. "But we are working really hard to show you can create a business around it that provides value to farmers and... you can get paid for those values you create."

Farmerline this week won the King Baudouin African Development Prize, which rewards "exceptional contributions to development work in Africa." The two other winners are an online legal services firm from Uganda, BarefootLaw, and Kytabu, which provides school reading content for students across Kenya. All three received 75,000 euros (\$83,750) each. The prize, announced on

June 20 in Brussels, aims to highlight work in driving social change across the continent and with funds attached, to help them advance. Organisers say the prize is based on the idea that "entrepreneurship and local leadership, rather than traditional aid, is the key to sustainable change."

Tech boom

Attah isn't alone in his quest to use technology to make agriculture more sustainable and productive in Ghana. The country's government says it wants to modernize agriculture, including mapping cocoa farms and collecting data on them. In the private sector, agri-tech firm Ghalani, set up in late 2016, also has data-collection as a key focus, digitizing any manual records farmers may have. —AFP

ASIA HIT BY FEARS OVER TRUMP AGENDA

HONG KONG: Asian markets turned negative yesterday as Republicans' struggle to push through controversial health care legislation fuels concerns about the chances of Donald Trump passing his much-vaunted economic agenda. Global markets soared in the months after the tycoon's November election victory as traders bet his plans to slash taxes and red tape while ramping up infrastructure spending would fire the world's top economy.

But his failure to pass an overhaul of Obamacare—a key campaign promise despite his party controlling Congress—has led many to question his ability to deliver his major prom-

ises. The president's lack of detail on his economic plans led the International Monetary Fund to cut its 2017 and 2018 US growth projections. "US lawmakers have withdrawn the Senate Health Care Bill till after the summer recess. This is a blow to the Trump agenda because it makes tax cuts all the more difficult," said Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at AxiTrader.

All three main indexes on Wall Street ended sharply lower and the losses filtered through to Asia, with the technology sector taking a hit. Big-name giants including Seoul-listed Samsung, Japan's Sony and Tencent in

Hong Kong were all lower. Tokyo's Nikkei ended 0.5 percent lower, while Hong Kong lost 0.6 percent, Singapore gave up 0.1 percent and Seoul dropped 0.4 percent. Wellington, Taipei and Manila also retreated but Sydney rose 0.7 percent. Adding to the selling were concerns about another wave of global cyberattacks reminiscent of May's WannaCry virus that crippled organisations and companies in 150 countries.

Euro rallies
On currency markets the euro extended gains against the dollar after European Central

Bank boss Mario Draghi said the EU was enjoying a newfound confidence that could unlock demand and investment. And while he cautioned against winding down the bank's easy money policy, analysts said the Italian was more hawkish than expected.

Stephen Innes, senior trader at OANDA, said in a note: "An emphatically hawkish Mario Draghi suggests the ECB policy is on track while all but declaring victory over the eurozone inflation conundrum. Apparently, the ECB has taken a giant leap towards ending (its) ultra-loose monetary policy."

The euro surged more than one percent above \$1.13 and yesterday it pushed to highs not seen since May last year. The single currency was also up about 1.4 percent against the yen at levels not seen since early 2016.

The greenback was also down against the pound on concerns about Trump's agenda. It held gains above 112 yen after top Federal Reserve officials indicated interest rates would rise further this year. Oil prices eased slightly after jumping around two percent Tuesday as the commodity bounces back from sharp losses that saw it hit a 10-month low. In early European trade London fell

0.3 percent, Paris lost 0.5 percent and Frankfurt shed 0.7 percent.

"Wednesday's trading continued to be driven by Tuesday's news, with little to challenge either Draghi's... comments or the latest US healthcare reform stumble for market dominance," said Connor Campbell, analyst at Spreadex trading group. "The euro had already managed a strong Tuesday performance after Draghi subtly hinted at a slight shift in the ECB's approach to stimulus. Yet the currency soon received a second wind, hitting a 12-month high against the dollar following news that the Republicans had pushed back the Senate healthcare vote due to intra-party opposition," he added.

European stock markets were lower in Wednesday trading, mirroring falls across Asia and on Wall Street overnight. Draghi on Tuesday said the EU was enjoying a newfound confidence that could unlock demand and investment. While he cautioned against winding down the bank's easy money policy, analysts said the Italian was more hawkish than expected. The European single currency was also up against the yen at levels not seen since April 2016, while the dollar was lower also on concerns about Trump's agenda. —AFP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report				Global			
Wednesday 28 June 2017							
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing				
Price Index	▼ -3.03	6,789.06	6,772.08	Volume	37,344,643		
Weighted Index	▼ -0.82	402.15	402.97	Value (KWD)	7,289,321		
KSX 15	▲ 0.05	920.26	920.21	Number of Trades	1,793		

Trades						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KDI)	Trades	Last Change
MARIN	90	87	450	33	5	70 ▼ -13.0
IPO	349	349	7,802	2,723	1	349 ▲ 4.0
NAFESCO	1,359	1,351	834	1,130	9	1,359 ▲ 3.0
ENERGIYH	40.0	35.0	2,842	102	3	39.9 ▲ 9.2
GPI	38.9	38.5	517,521	20,076	23	38.5 ▼ -0.7
ABAR	85	85	850	72	2	85 ▲ 14.0
Oil & Gas			530,299	24,138	43	964.97 ▼ -4.8
KFOUC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	290 — 0.0
BPCO	585	575	424,331	244,786	40	575 ▼ -6.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	590 — 0.0
ALQURAN	340	338	34,881	11,541	7	340 ▲ 3.0
Basic Materials			459,212	256,827	47	1256.22 ▲ 1.20
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	470 — 0.0
CABLE	416	415	13,150	5,483	3	415 ▼ -1.0
SHP	216	207	10,020	2,074	2	216 ▲ 5.0
PCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	940 — 0.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	300 — 0.0
MRC	89	72	1,002	88	8	89 — 0.0
ACICO	262	255	8,200	1,818	4	260 ▼ -2.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208 — 0.0
KBMMAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136 — 0.0
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190 — 0.0
EQUIPMENT	47.1	47.1	28,200	1,328	1	47.1 ▼ -5.9
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	108 — 0.0
GYPISUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95 — 0.0
SALBOOKH	59	55	53,048	2,918	3	59 ▼ -1.2
AQLYT	833	820	624,013	517,536	105	824 ▼ -1.0
EDU	400	363	539,100	202,499	93	377 ▲ 8.0
CLEANING	45.5	45.5	200	9	1	45.5 — 0.0
KGL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80 — 0.0
KCPK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	165 — 0.0
HUMANSOFT	4,200	4,199	29,460	123,732	8	4,199 ▼ -1.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	150 — 0.0
GFC	81	72	10,000	724	7	80 ▼ -4.0
MAYADEEN	27.8	26.1	100,020	2,652	9	27.8 ▼ -0.1
CGC	619	597	1,010	625	2	619 ▼ -1.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56 — 0.0
UPAC	851	851	3	3	1	851 ▲ 121.0
ALAFCO	315	315	1,000	315	1	315 ▲ 8.0
MUBARRAD	77	77	10,000	770	1	77 — 0.0
LOGISTICS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51 — 0.0
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83 — 0.0
GCEM	75	74	1,094,777	81,042	25	74 ▼ -0.1
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	78 — 0.0
FCEM	83	83	6,000	498	2	83 — 0.0
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90 — 0.0
SPEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	89 — 0.0
Industrials			2,527,263	843,884	274	1906.19 ▲ 19.10
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190 — 0.0
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	220 — 0.0
DANAH	73	72	254,100	18,597	8	72 ▼ -2.7
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,450 — 0.0
Consumer Goods			254,100	18,597	8	1075.50 ▼ -6.90
MHC	453	453	20,000	9,080	1	453 — 0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100 — 0
YACCO	185	151	11,966	1,833	7	185 — 0
Health Care			31,966	10,893	8	1635.51 — 0.00
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,390 — 0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250 — 0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	87 — 0
CABLETV	28.0	28.0	12,000	336	4	28.0 ▼ -3
IFAYS	1,000	941	4,490	4,431	6	1,000 ▼ -40
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210 — 0
OULAFUEL	123	121	111,423	13,580	14	121 — 0
MUNTAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82 — 0
JAZEERA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	470 — 0
SOOR	120	120	110,967	13,316	13	120 — 0
FUTUREXID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	107 — 0
ALRAI	122	121	30,000	3,650	3	122 ▲ 2
ZMAH	52	48.1	150,050	7,447	9	50 ▼ -2
Mazzan	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	911 — 0
Consumer Services			418,930	42,780	49	1070.19 ▼ -14.00
ZAIN	427	421	791,134	335,402	82	424 ▼ -1
OOREDOO	1,060	1,060	1,571	1,665	2	1,060 ▼ -30
HITSTELEC	41.0	39.6	695,300	28,032	25	40.8 ▲ 1
VIVA	825	820	52,560	43,181	33	820 ▼ -2
Telecommunications			1,540,565	408,281	142	589.29 ▼ -0.90
NBK	699	691	2,116,463	1,472,556	128	698 ▲ 2
GBK	249	247	684,148	164,854	10	248 ▲ 2
CBK	320	311	10,066	3,131	5	311 ▼ -4
ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	327 — 0
ALMUTAHED	420	420	115,000	48,300	6	420 ▼ -20
KIB	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	246 — 0
BURJ	330	325	145,034	47,798	5	330 — 0
KFIN	490	482	2,310,478	1,118,007	174	485 ▼ -1
BOUBYAN	410	408	508,140	207,772	37	410 ▲ 1
AUB	208	206	90,870	18,725	22	207 — 0
ITHMR	48.4	46.0	213,000	9,853	18	46.2 ▲ 3
WARISBANK	260	255	2,375,864	616,687	79	258 ▲ 3
Banks			8,548,863	3,707,683	484	934.74 ▼ -1.30
KINS	250	250	1,286	322	1	250 ▼ -12
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	530 — 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	480 — 0.0
WINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99 — 0.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196 — 0.0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60 — 0.0
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56 — 0.0
BKINWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355 — 0.0
Insurance			1,286	322	1	1071.21 ▼ -6.70

Trades						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KDI)	Trades	Last Change
SOKOLK	47.5	47.0	20500	964	2	47.5 — 0.0
KRE	55	55	654,800	36,087	13	55 ▲ 0.1
URC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	85 — 0.0
NRE	111	109	664,175	73,173	20	110 ▼ -2.0
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385 — 0.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400 — 0.0
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	138 — 0.0
MASSALEH	45.0	38.0	165	7	2	45.0 ▲ 2.0
ARABREC	34.6	32.9	583,900	19,870	20	32.9 ▼ -1.7
ERESCO	38.8	37.7	217,000	8,384	10	38.5 — 0.0
MBANEE	780	771	57,327	44,206	7	771 ▼ -9.0
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	92 — 0.0
INVESTORS	24.0	23.0	2,254,840	53,233	38	23.5 ▲ 0.2
IRC	32.7	30.0	27,600	829	7	32.7 ▼ -8.1
ALTUJARIA	73	73	685,000	50,087	8	73 — 0.0
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50 — 0.0
AAYANRE	85	84	130,004	11,045	6	85 ▲ 3.1
AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	66 — 0.0
ALAGARIA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	38.5 — 0.0
MAZAYA	111	111	108,200	12,121	6	111 ▲ 1.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70 — 0.0
TUARA	57	57	150,000	8,550	3	57 — 0.0
TAMEER	33.5	32.6	220,586	7,225	8	33.4 ▼ -0.4
ARKAN	83	83	200,000	16,000	5	83 — 0.0
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	186 — 0.0
ABYAR	23.9	23.5	2,237,150	53,182	41	23.6 — 0.0
MUNSHAAT	54	53	379,250	20,245	9	54 ▲ 0.1
FIRSTDUBAI	48.5	47.0	209,500	9,961	11	47.5 — 0.0
KBT	48.0	47.5	350,000	16,665	11	47.8 ▼ -0.6
REAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	290 — 0.0
MENA	23.3	23.0	178,129	4,106	11	23.0 ▲ 0.1
ALMUDJON	35.0	34.0	101,891	3,468	6	34.9 ▲ 0.1
MARAKEZ	49.0	45.5	38,944	1,802	6	49.0 ▲ 3.5
REMAL	60	57	386,674	23,265	19	60 — 0.0
AWJ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	77 — 0.0
Real Estate			9,876,215	474,855	267	943.94 ▲ 1.40
KINV	97	97	200,000	19,300	1	97 — 0.0
FACIL	170	169	488,814	79,736	18	169 — 0.0
IFA	35.9	34.6				

LAWYERS JOIN BATTLE OVER LAND IN MINERAL-RICH INDIAN STATE

BILASPUR: For Shalini Gera, a rights lawyer in India's Chhattisgarh state, it was the searing testimony of tribal activist Soni Sori that drew her attention to atrocities in the mineral-rich state. Sori, who was arrested in 2011 on charges of aiding Maoist rebels in the state, accused the police of torturing and sexually assaulting her while in prison. The crime? Defending the right of indigenous people to live in an area rich in minerals in what is one of India's poorest states.

Police officials, who have since been moved to other locations, deny any mistreatment. Stirred by Sori's call for justice, Gera and a couple of other lawyers left Delhi to set up office in the state's restive Bastar region in 2013. It wasn't long before they were targets. The lawyers said they were followed, had objects thrown into their home, and accused of helping Maoist rebels. They say they were harassed for defending villagers and indigenous people. They were finally evicted by a fearful landlord last year, and relocated to Bilaspur about 400 km (250 miles)

away, where they continued to pursue their cases.

Mineral-rich, rights-poor

The lawyers have angered plenty of people in high places. A top police official recently said they should be crushed on the highway for going against the state to protect villagers. "Parts of Chhattisgarh are like a war zone," said Sudha Bharadwaj, a lawyer in Bilaspur who backed Gera and set up a legal aid group, Janhit, for farmers and indigenous people. "There is violence against people who insist on their rights and we are perceived as anti-development for helping them," said Bharadwaj, 55, who took up law aged 40 to help local people.

One of India's least developed states, Chhattisgarh sits atop some of India's biggest reserves of coal, iron ore, bauxite, dolomite, limestone, tin and gold, and accounts for nearly a fifth of the total value of minerals produced in India. At least 25 conflicts are raging in the state - over coal and iron ore, power projects and steel plants - and they affect 70,000 peo-

ple, according to research firm Land Conflict Watch. The race for resources to spur India's economic growth has pitted some of its most vulnerable people against the state, stalling industrial projects worth billions of dollars. There are at least 332 land conflicts nationwide, affecting more than 3.5 million people, according to Land Conflict Watch. Nowhere are these conflicts more violent and bloody than in Chhattisgarh, part of the "Red Corridor" stretching across eastern and central India that has witnessed a Maoist rebellion for more than three decades.

The rebels, who say they are fighting for the land rights and empowerment of indigenous people, accuse the government of plundering mineral resources while ignoring the villagers. Adivasis, or "original dwellers," and lower-caste Dalits make up more than 40 percent of the state's 28 million population and traditionally lived in its forests and hills.

After the opening of the economy in the early 1990s, tracts of forest land were handed to companies including

Adani Group, Jindal Power, Essar and Tata Steel for mines and power plants. Backed by the state, an anti-insurgency militia called Salwa Judum - meaning 'Peace March' or 'Purification March' - began cracking down on the Maoist rebels from 2005 to free up land.

A pitched battle ensued, in which hundreds were killed and tens of thousands displaced amid accusations of mass rape, illegal detentions, torture and extra-judicial killings. Activists are caught "between two sets of guns" in the conflict between Maoist combatants and government security forces, Human Rights Watch said in a 2012 report. "The original inhabitants are seen as road blocks that they have to get out of the way to do more mining, build more plants, more industry," said Bharadwaj.

Murder, treason

The fight for land and the environment is "a new battleground for human rights," according to British-based watchdog Global Witness, with India chalking up at least six deaths in

2015 related to land conflicts. In Chhattisgarh, villagers spoke of giving up land at gunpoint while activists faced charges from murder to treason.

Lingaram Kodopi, a tribal activist, fled to Delhi after being shot in the leg in 2011. Binayak Sen, a physician, was convicted of treason and sedition in 2010 and sentenced to life imprisonment. Ramesh Agrawal, who received the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in 2014 for leading a protest that shut down a proposed coal mine, was wounded by masked gunmen in 2012. Sori was attacked again last year with chemicals. Delhi University professor Nandini Sundar was among those charged last year in the killing of an indigenous man in Bastar shortly after she published a book on the conflict. "People opposing the state are not treated as citizens. The state sees it fit to tackle them only through the military," said Gera, a co-founder of Jagdalpur Legal Aid Group. "Would there be less violence if there were no resources? Perhaps." —Reuters



HONG KONG: This file picture taken on October 29, 2016 shows mainland Chinese tourists (C) taking selfies on a viewing deck overlooking Victoria harbor. —AFP

HK'S ALLURE FADING IN MAINLAND CHINA

BEIJING: When Naomi Wu was a teenager, she and her friends would ride the train from mainland China to Hong Kong several times a year to shop for clothes and designer handbags. But the 23-year-old computer programmer, who lives across the border in Shenzhen, now shuns a city that two decades after the handover from Britain has lost its allure for many mainlanders.

"Chinese gadgets are as good or better than foreign," said Wu, who prefers to shop online from her home in Shenzhen, which has transformed from a shabby backwater into an industrial powerhouse. "There's lots of new malls that are well-designed, and new buildings everywhere else. There are new subway lines and lots of parks. Shenzhen built more skyscrapers last year than US and Australia combined," she said.

As Hong Kong readies to mark the July 1 anniversary of the handover, it is increasingly eclipsed by China, which has become a global superpower with a vibrant consumer and cultural scene of its own. Beijing and Shanghai boast a sophisticated array of bars and restaurants as well as sprawling shopping centers and arts districts that put space-starved Hong Kong to shame. China has leapfrogged from seventh to second place among top economies since 1997 and become a vital engine of global growth, while Hong Kong has fallen from 24th to 33rd.

Import taxes on foreign goods are still much higher in China, but shoppers who once flocked to luxury flagship stores along Hong Kong's glittering Canton Road are now also heading to cities such as Paris and New York. The changing fortunes have seen the number of tourist visits from the mainland to Hong Kong steadily decrease, dropping nearly seven percent in 2016 compared to the previous year.

'Full of hostility'

Disneyland even opened in Shanghai last year, attracting millions as visitor numbers sag at its older sister theme park in Hong Kong. And Hong Kong's waning cultural clout has

also seen it disappear from mainland screens which it dominated during the "golden age" of Hong Kong cinema in the 1990s.

"Hong Kong films and Hong Kong music have faded from our lives, and there is a variety of mainland-produced music and shows," said Li, a trading manager at a state-owned enterprise who declined to give his full name. "China's rapid economic development has greatly reduced the gap between the mainland and Hong Kong."

As the scales tip, there is growing resentment in Hong Kong over the perceived "mainlandisation" of the city as China extends its influence in a range of areas, from business to politics, education and media. Some see this as a way for Beijing to tighten its grip on Hong Kong and erode the city's identity and cherished freedoms-fears reflected in mass student-led rallies calling for democratic reform in 2014.

One of the results is that the mainland tourists who continue to visit Hong Kong don't always feel welcome. Wu was shocked to hear open criticism aired on the subway during a recent visit. "Mainlanders go to Hong Kong and spend lots of money, but then get sneered at for our trouble. I speak Cantonese, and they are still rude to me," she said, referring to the variant of Chinese spoken in the city.

Manners have long been a source of tension, with Hong Kongers complaining about what they see as the unrefined social habits of their "nouveau riche" mainland counterparts. The growing tension is a hot topic on China's internet forums. On Zhihua, a question-and-answer site, nearly 1,400 people posted responses to the question: "Fewer and fewer people go to Hong Kong to shop. Why?"

"I loved the shops and restaurants, the public transport was so convenient... and people were very friendly," wrote Jennifer Liu. "But the last time I went there was a very different atmosphere... on the streets, young people would glare at me," she added. "Since then, the news I see from Hong Kong is very strange to me, full of hostility." —AFP

MAKING IVANKA TRUMP SHOES: LONG HOURS, LOW PAY, ABUSE

'HE WAS BLEEDING RIGHT FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE HEAD'

GANZHOU: A worker with blood dripping from his head marked a low point in the tense, grinding life at a southeastern China factory used by Ivanka Trump and other fashion brands. An angry manager had hit him with the sharp end of a high-heeled shoe. Workers from the factory, including one current and two former employees who spoke to The Associated Press, reported overtime that stretched past midnight, steep production quotas and crude verbal abuse at Ganzhou Huajian International Shoe City Co. They said beatings were not unheard of, but the shoe attack, which all three say they witnessed last year, was violent enough to stand out.

"He was bleeding right from the middle of the head," the current worker said. "There was a lot of blood. He went to the factory's nurse station, passing by me," said a second man, who said he quit his job at Huajian because of the long hours and low pay. The three workers are the first people with direct knowledge of conditions at the Ganzhou factory to speak with the media. All three spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity, for fear of retribution or arrest.

Last month, three men investigating conditions at the Huajian Group factory in Ganzhou were detained, accused of illegally using secret recording devices to steal commercial secrets. They, like one of the three men AP spoke with, worked with China Labor Watch, a New York group that has been investigating Ivanka Trump's Chinese suppliers for more than a year. The group said the men were released on bail yesterday, the final day of their legally mandated 30-day detention period limit.

Fake pay stubs

Li Qiang, founder of China Labor Watch, describes Huajian's Ganzhou factory as among the worst he has seen in nearly two decades investigating labor abuses. His group says pay can be as low as a dollar an hour, in violation of China's labor laws. According to China Labor Watch investigators, until recently, workers might get only two days off - or less - per month.

China Labor Watch said the company forced workers to sign fake pay stubs with inflated salary numbers and threatened to fire workers if they didn't fill in questionnaires about working conditions with pre-approved answers. Workers also said the company pressured people not to speak with outsiders about

conditions at the factory. In comments to the AP, the Huajian Group declined to respond to specific questions, but broadly denied all allegations, calling them "completely not true to the facts, taken out of context, exaggerated." The company said it operates lawfully and that China Labor Watch "invented so-called 'facts' by illegal means of buying undercover work, which has already affected the enterprise's normal business seriously and affected the survival and employment of tens of thousands of staff." The company noted its significant contribution to the economy and to society, particularly through its

Abigail Klem, president of the Ivanka Trump brand, said "the integrity of our supply chain is a top priority and we take all allegations very seriously." The company says its products have not been made in the factory since March, but China Labor Watch said it had an April production schedule indicating that nearly 1,000 pairs of Ivanka Trump shoes were due in May.

In the past, some brands have used China Labor Watch's reports as a tool to help keep their supply chains clean. Walt Disney Co, for example, investigated and ultimately decided to sever its relationship with at least one supplier following

but it was shown to AP at China Labor Watch's office in New York.

Marc Fisher, which has made shoes for Ivanka Trump and Easy Spirit at the Ganzhou factory, has said it would look into the allegations. G-III Apparel Group, which produces shoes for Karl Lagerfeld, said it had not received a letter but "fully supports the independent monitoring of global supply chains." "When workplace safety and fairness issues are brought to our attention, we take them very seriously and work with our partners to resolve them," G-III spokesman Chris Giglio said in an email.

Ann Taylor spokesman Shawn



ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian factory workers sort shoes at the Chinese company Huajian's plant. —AP

employment of disabled people.

Before taking on an official role as adviser to her father, Ivanka Trump stepped back from day-to-day management of her brand, but she has retained her ownership interest. In Washington on Tuesday, she spoke at a ceremony unveiling the annual US Trafficking in Persons Report, in which China was demoted to the lowest ranking over its human trafficking record. She said the report is "clarion call into action in defense of the vulnerable and the exploited." She has not commented, however, on the detentions or the reports of poor working conditions at one of her brand's suppliers. Her spokeswoman declined to comment for this story.

reports of poor conditions, and sought to improve labor practices at others. China Labor Watch outlined its findings in letters sent in June to Ivanka Trump at the White House and to other brands. So far, the group says it has gotten no response.

'I'll beat you right here'

The group said it also sent Ivanka Trump a video taken inside the factory in May. That video included a clip in which a manager threatened to rough up a worker who had apparently arranged shoes in the wrong order. "If I see them f---ing messed up again," the manager yells, "I'll beat you right here." The video has not been released to the public,

Buchanan also said the company takes the allegations "very seriously" and is "actively conducting an investigation to assess this facility's compliance with our code of conduct and applicable laws and regulations." The Kendall & Kyle brand said its "footwear manufacturer works with many footwear production factories and all factories are required to operate within strict social compliance regulations." Other brands identified by China Labor Watch as customers of the Ganzhou factory include Nine West, Naturalizer and the Camuto Group, which makes shoes for BCBG Max Azria, Jessica Simpson and Tory Burch. None responded to requests for comment. —AP



HIKONE: In this photo taken on June 24, 2017 shows a view of a Takata factory. —AFP

TAKATA BANKRUPTCY: A QUESTION MARK FOR CONSUMER LAWSUITS

WASHINGTON: The bankruptcy of Japanese auto parts giant Takata may frustrate the legal challenges by victims harmed by the company's exploding airbags, which were part of the largest auto safety recall ever. The United States has been by far the hardest hit by the scandal over the defective airbags, which in some cases exploded with deadly force and are tied to 11 deaths on US soil out of the 16 recorded worldwide.

Of the 100 million airbags involved in the recall, some 70 million were sold in the United States. So it is not surprising to see such a large amount of litigation against Takata in US courts. The Japanese company, which announced the bankruptcy on Sunday, plead guilty to fraud in January. It is also in the United States that the bankruptcy by the world's number two airbag maker whose assets will be bought up by US-based Key Safety Systems-creates the most uncertainty.

"Takata chose a cowardly way to escape its responsibilities. They'll eventually get held accountable but it's going to be a significant delay," said Kevin Dean, a lawyer

representing 25 plaintiffs in the United States. For those injured and the families of those killed, the major question is what happens to their legal cases while a bankruptcy court sorts through competing claims from Takata creditors.

For now, Takata has set aside \$125 million to compensate the victims and pledged again on Monday to honor that commitment, which it made in January as part of its guilty plea. But this could fall far short of the total liabilities, estimated at more than \$1 billion. "We will continue fighting for our clients and prosecuting claims against ... Takata, to make sure all affected consumers receive the recourse they deserve," Peter Prieto, a lead attorney for the plaintiffs, told AFP in an email.

Suing a dead company

But Michael Duffy, an attorney who specializes in catastrophic personal injuries, said this was unlikely. "There won't be enough money to cover the costs," he said. The price of shares in the company, which has debts of nearly

\$9 billion, will not suffer. KSS has snapped them up for \$1.5 billion. But finances are not the only issue. The bankruptcy process will leave Takata completely reorganized, complicating the work of the attorneys.

"It will impact my ability to represent the claimants," said Dean. In addition, he said he will not be able to contact witnesses while the cases were on hold, so "There's a risk related to the preservation of evidence." With Takata shielded by bankruptcy law, the burden could fall on automakers themselves, who stand accused of knowingly installing defective airbags.

Car makers already are facing the massive task of replacing all the potentially defective airbags still on the road, at their own cost, which Takata must supply. This process, overseen by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, appears not to be threatened by the bankruptcy. "We've worked hard to act quickly, proactively and responsibly in addressing the Takata airbag recall for all impacted customers, and we will continue to do so," Toyota USA told AFP. —AFP

LUCKY WINNERS CELEBRATE WITH MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS

KUWAIT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one among the BIG 5 global jewelry retailer announced the first 12 lucky winners of their ongoing Campaign 'Win up to 75 Gold Bars & BE A GOLD BULLIONNAIRE'. 12 lucky winners have won 100 gram gold bars each. As in previous years, Malabar Gold & Diamonds summer offers got very good response from their customers. This time the company gives their customers an exclusive chance to win up to 75 gold bars with the purchase of gold and diamond jewelry.

With every purchase of gold jewelry worth KWD 40, customers get a chance to enter raffle draws to win up to 75 gold bars in total weighing 100 gram gold each. Those who buy diamond jewelry worth KWD 40 will get 2 raffle coupons, doubling their chances to win. Adding to the above, customers also get free 1 gram gold coin on diamond jewelry purchase of KWD 250 and above.

"We are glad that our customers have wholeheartedly welcomed the summer promotion as we could see the increased footfalls at our showrooms. The school vacation have started and the people are planning their vacation to their home country and our customers are making use of this amazing opportunity to buy gold and diamond jewelry to gift themselves as well as their loved ones" said Mr Shamal Ahamed, Managing Director - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

To add more glitter to this season, they have also unveiled the latest collection of jewelry in gold, diamonds and precious gems to suit the tastes of their multicultural and multinational customers. This holiday season, Malabar Gold & Diamonds provides customers with the most attractive offers, definitely not worth a miss. Their mesmerizing collection and exclusive offers can be availed in all outlets of Malabar Gold & Diamonds in GCC.



MALINDO AIR APPOINTS CAESARS INT'L TRAVEL CO AS GENERAL SALES AGENT

KUWAIT: Malindo Air, recent winner of CAPA's 2016 Asia Pacific Regional Airline of the Year, has appointed Caesars Int'l Travel Co, a leading travel service provider in Kuwait, as the General Sales Agent (GSA) in Kuwait, with immediate effect. This is the second appointment of GSA in the Middle East for Malindo Air, in line with the airline's commitment to expand its presence to the international network, by allowing easy access to Malindo Air product & services to the Kuwait market through Caesars Int'l Travel Co.

Chandran Rama Muthy, Malindo Air's CEO said, "We have strived to build stronger market presence and enhance the accessibility of travelers through our network. We are happy to partner with Caesars Int'l Travel Co. to promote Malindo Air in Kuwait and we welcome more passengers from Kuwait to enjoy our airline's premium services and connectivity through our net-

work." "Our partnership with the various leading Middle Eastern carriers will serve the market for leisure, business, travel & more. We aim to boost the travel related industries in the region, with Caesars Int'l Travel Co. onboard," he added.

"By partnering with Malindo Air as a GSA in Kuwait, we are opening a new window for traveling to our valued clients with the Malindo's exciting network. We are going to introduce this growing airline for our passengers in Kuwait for the inflow of leisure, business to their network," said P.N.J. Kumar, CEO - Caesars Travel Group. The GSA office of Malindo Air is located in Crystal Tower (25th Floor) with contact numbers: 22970241, E-mail: malindoair@caesarstravel.com

Caesars Travel Group, the parent organization of Caesars Int'l Travel Company is one of the leading travel groups in Kuwait - part of Caesars Group of Companies, was established in 1992,

aims to provide quality travel services to both leisure and business travelers. Despite having built up a reliable reputation among the travel arena in Kuwait, Caesars Travel Group thought of a change in the fast moving world of travel by stretching their wings to all travel ancillaries under a travel umbrella and today, apart from the travel agency services, Caesars Travel Group has introduced various airline representations in Kuwait, Holiday division, Cargo, Cruises and other many ancillary products.

The four-year old premium airline, Malindo Air is offering baggage allowance of 30kg for Economy Class and 40 kg for Business Class. Passengers on board will enjoy in-flight entertainment, in-flight meal, spacious legroom and optional Wi-Fi (for selected flights). Currently, Malindo Air has 800 flights travelling weekly to 45 destinations.

ETIHAD ORGANIZES 'A WISH COMES TRUE' EVENT

ABU DHABI: Etihad Aviation Group (EAG) recently hosted 'A Wish Comes True' day as part of the 'Road to Happiness' initiative in support of autism awareness, in collaboration with the Emirates Autism Society. Ali Abdullah Mohammed Al-Dosari (pictured), a 13-year old autistic child who always dreamed of becoming a pilot, finally realized his dream when he was invited to experience a simulator flight, and to meet with Etihad Airways pilots, who presented him with a customized pilot uniform.

The event was attended by members of EAG's senior management including: Khaled Almehairbi, Senior Vice President and General Manager Etihad Airport

Ground Services- Abu Dhabi Hub; Captain Salah Awadh Alfarajalla, Senior Vice President Security & National Pilot Development, Captain Majed Al-Marzouqi, Vice President Flight Operations; Adil Al Mulla, Vice President Procurement and Supply Management; Ali Al Shamsi, Vice President Global Airports; Linda Celestino, Vice President Guest Experience Delivery; Dr. Nadia Qassem Mohd Yousuf Bastaki, Vice President Medical Services and CSR Strategy; Wissam Hachem, Vice President Learning and Development; along with Dr Khawla Salem Rashed Al Saeedi, President of Emirates Autism Society.

REGISTRATION FOR NBK SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM 2017 ENDS

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) ends up the registration for the 2017 Summer Internship Program today through nbk.com. The program will start on Sunday 2nd of July, 2017. The two-week courses in this program are specially designed for high school and college students, between 15 and 20 years old. The Summer Internship Program is made up of four different sessions, five-hour daily over two weeks each. The first session starts on the 2nd of July, while the following sessions start on 16th of July, 30th of July and 13th of August respectively.

The Summer Internship Program features a mixture of theoretical and practical training. It is dedicated to providing the interns with invaluable knowledge on a variety of subjects such as: the teamwork, creative thinking, means of self expression and modern banking, in addition to helping them to have greater exposure to daily banking work procedures.

This annual program demonstrates NBK's longstanding social involvement as well as its national commitment towards providing young generations with the appropriate opportunities to experience how the actual professional banking issues and transactions are handled and processed. NBK views the Summer Internship Program as an extension to its educative initiatives and as part of its corporate social responsibility. In addition to the Summer Training program for high school students, NBK regularly organizes the Summer Internship Program for university students. NBK offers as well a range of educational and professional developing programs targeted at developing Kuwaiti youth entering the work force.



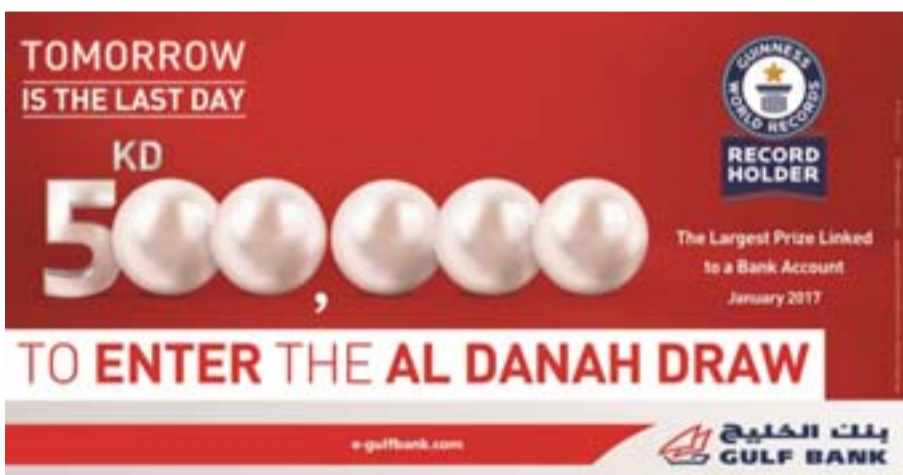
BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF YAWMI ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Borgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000. The lucky winners are:

1. Bader Abel Hasan
2. Khaled Abdulaziz Al Tkheaim
3. Moamen Madani Hussain
4. Faisal Faleh Al Subaiei
5. Mohammad Saeed Al Salameen

In addition to the daily draw, Borgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi

Account offers Daily and Quarterly Draws, wherein the Quarterly Draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws. Borgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.



30TH JUNE IS LAST DAY TO ENTER AL DANAH'S KD 500,000 DRAW

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced that tomorrow, June 30th is the last date for customers to open an Al Danah account or deposit more, as to increase their chances of winning the 3rd Quarterly draw for the KD 500,000 prize.

Furthermore, Al Danah's 2nd Quarterly draw winner for the KD 250,000 prize will be announced on July 13th, while the 3rd Quarterly Draw for the prize of KD 500,000 will be held on 28 September. The final Al Danah draw for 1 Million Kuwaiti Dinars will be held on 11 January, 2018 whereby the Al Danah Millionaire will be announced. Eligible customers will also enter the daily draw offering two KD 1,000 prizes, which are drawn each working day.

To participate in the Al Danah draws,

customers must have an Al Danah account containing at least KD 200. 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.

Gulf Bank encourages you to increase your chances by depositing more into your Al Danah account, immediately from any local bank, using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's Online and Mobile Banking. Customers can also make deposits through Gulf Bank's ITMs machines which are located in the Jabriya, Al Adan, Fahaaheel and South Surra branches.

AL TIJARI NAMES THE WINNERS OF AL NAJMA ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the Al Najma Account daily draw yesterday. The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry represented by Abdulaziz Ashkanani. The winners of the Al Najma Daily Draw are :-
Huda Omar Ostah KD 7000/-
Mohammed Ahmed Hasan Mohammed KD 7000/-
Gilani Gul Alam KD 7000/-

Aayah Jaber Zaid Al Alroudhan KD 7000/-
Taibah Hamad Khashan KD 7000/-

Al Najma awards are now brighter and bigger than ever. With the revamped Al Najma account, all your dreams will be turned to reality. On top of offering the highest daily prize in Kuwait for KD 7,000, now our Mega prize draws got bigger to reach KD 250,000.

TOSHIBA SUES WESTERN DIGITAL IN FEUD OVER MEMORY UNIT SALE

TOKYO: Toshiba Corp. said yesterday it is suing its joint venture partner Western Digital over the US company's opposition to a plan to sell the Japanese electronics and energy giant's memory chip unit. Toshiba said in a statement that it was seeking a permanent injunction and 120 billion yen (\$1.1 billion) in damages for what it called interference in the effort to sell Toshiba Memory Corp.

Financially strapped Toshiba needs the cash from selling its flash memory unit to survive, but Western Digital contends its Japanese partner has no right to sell the memory chip unit without its consent. Such sales can be sensitive because they involve the transfer of valuable technology. Western Digital owns some SanDisk chip operations including the joint venture in Japan with Toshiba. It has submitted its own bid for the memory chip business, but last week Toshiba announced it had chosen a consortium led by a Japanese government-backed fund and Bain Capital Private Equity LP as the preferred bidder. There was no immediate comment from Western Digital as 140-year-old Toshiba convened a shareholders meeting yesterday outside Tokyo.

Toshiba had said it hoped to reach agreement with the consortium on the proposed 2 trillion yen (\$18 billion) sale before that meeting. But earlier in the day it said negotiations were taking longer than expected. The lawsuit Toshiba filed in Tokyo District Court contends that Western Digital

has exaggerated its right to say in the planned sale. "WD's claims are false, designed only to interfere with the sale process, and have damaged Toshiba and TMC (Toshiba Memory Corp.)," Toshiba said in a statement.

It also accused Western Digital of "improperly obtaining" trade secrets by transferring SanDisk employees holding confidential information into the US company. Toshiba's sprawling business includes everything from TV sets to high-speed trains. But the company's losses have mounted in recent years, and its U.S. nuclear unit Westinghouse Electric Co filed for bankruptcy protection in March.

In 2015, Toshiba acknowledged it had been systematically falsifying its books since 2008, trying to meet overly ambitious targets. An outside investigation found profits had been inflated and expenses hidden across the board. Toshiba risks having its shares delisted and is facing an Aug. 10 deadline for getting auditors to sign off on its long-delayed earnings.

The company's nuclear business is in deep trouble: Reactors that Westinghouse is building in the U.S. are still unfinished, partly because of beefed-up safety regulations following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster. Toshiba, is also responsible for decommissioning of Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant, where three reactors suffered meltdowns after a massive earthquake and tsunami. — AP



ABK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 59TH 'DOUBLE YOUR SALARY' WEEKLY DRAWS

KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its 59th 'Double Your Salary' weekly draw on 13th June, 2017 at the Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce, announcing the names of the winners. The promotion includes weekly draws, with two winners per draw.

The winners were:
Mohammad Shereen A Allaqani, Galleria Branch
Hasan Abdullah Hasan AlMulla, Khaitan Branch
New customers who transfer their salary to ABK receive KD 100 and will automatically be entered into the weekly draws to double their salaries. Existing customers who are already transferring their salary to ABK are entered into a separate draw. All winners will be contacted personally and a weekly announcement will be made through the media with the winners' names.

CISCO JASPER REMOVES OBSTACLES TO IMPLEMENT IOT

DUBAI: While the number of businesses investing in IoT across all markets continues to grow, recent research shows that 60 percent of IoT initiatives stall at the proof-of-concept (POC) stage. This highlights that companies today are still struggling with the key challenges of IoT, including the need for more flexibility, greater security, and the ability to address new use cases. Cisco Jasper has been partnering with service providers to help its customer base, which has grown from 3,500 to 11,000 enterprises in the past year alone, to overcome these challenges and accelerate their IoT success.



Rowan Trollope

To continue to meet the exponential demand for IoT solutions and in keeping with Cisco's dedication to helping customers get from paper to successful IoT deployment more quickly, today Cisco Jasper introduced a new expanded model to bring the benefits of its IoT connectivity platform - Control Center - to a broader audience. Control Center 7.0 addresses business' needs for greater flexibility with a new multi-tiered IoT platform that gives companies various options to meet their specific needs, regardless of which stage of IoT implementation they are in.

This new platform is also paired with a new set of Premium Services that address previously unmet needs in the industry related to IoT monetization and security. "We first introduced our Control Center IoT connectivity management platform to the market over 10 years ago, and since then it has become the largest IoT platform with over 43M devices being managed today, and more than 1.5M new devices being added per month," said Jahangir Mohammed, GM of IoT at Cisco.

"What we've learned from enabling IoT success for our 11K customers is that companies have different needs at different stages

Umbrella. The first applications of TPSS will be in the Connected Car industry. The second service, Traffic Segmentation, provides a new solution to support different types of revenue generation models. Cisco Jasper service providers can customize Premium Services to meet their customers' specific needs.

LPWAN Support: Control Center 7.0 extends the platform's capabilities - including the platform's global reach and scale via support for cellular networks - to low power devices via support for multiple LPWAN technologies, including NB-IoT and LTE-M.

AT&T, a Cisco Jasper service provider partner, is integrating these additional capabilities to meet IoT needs for a broad range of industries. The platform will be called AT&T Control Center Advanced, and will be paired with AT&T Premium Services. "We work with companies of every size and across every industry. No two companies are in the same stage when it comes to their IoT initiatives," said Chris Penrose, President, IoT Solutions, AT&T.

"Control Center Advanced will enable us to meet our customers' needs no matter where they are in their IoT implementation - from initial deployment to scaling to millions of devices. Our collaboration with Cisco Jasper helps us put our customers in charge of their IoT solutions worldwide with additional security features, analytics and automation rules to increase their ROI!"

Control Center 7.0 is the first version of the IoT platform to integrate multiple Cisco technologies, delivering on the promise made at the time of Jasper's acquisition to combine the power of Cisco's portfolio with the world's leading IoT connectivity management platform. As a result, Control Center 7.0 solves the biggest challenges companies currently face in IoT with:

Only...



Multi-layer Security: Expanding upon Control Center's existing security capabilities, users now get multi-layered security controls including closed user groups, two-factor authentication, white listing capabilities and more to identify and solve known issues.

Collaboration: Integration with Cisco Spark gives users the ability to easily collaborate on issues with connected devices, enabling them to lower resolution time and manage costs. Enhanced Analytics: New reports on historical trends of device behavior and usage enable users to take action on issues that impact performance, costs and security.

Support for Low Power Devices: Control Center 7.0 is the first commercially available IoT platform that supports the management of IoT devices across cellular, NB-IoT and LTE-M networks to accommodate a wide range of use cases.

"When we acquired Jasper, we made a promise to the industry that Cisco and Jasper would be more than the sum of our separate parts - that we would create something better together," said Rowan Trollope, SVP and

GM of IoT and Applications at Cisco. "This is the realization of that promise. And what we've built in the past year has surpassed even our lofty expectations." With Control Center 7.0, Cisco Jasper has created a single, integrated solution to address the needs of both Information Technology (IT) and Operational Technology (OT) professionals.

Previously, Control Center - which automates and manages connectivity of devices on cellular networks globally - was a stand-alone offering. Today, Control Center 7.0 is yet another proof point of Cisco's leading innovation in IoT solutions, and is now compatible with Cisco's broader IoT Operations Platform, which integrates Connection Management, Data Delivery and Fog Computing for a complete end-to-end solution. And this complements the Cisco DNA offerings, which are delivering the next generation of networks to provide new levels of security, analytics and automation to enable exciting new IoT, cloud and mobile experiences. As a result, customers in any industry can now manage IoT from the edge to the cloud.



LONDON: This file photo shows the logo of social networking website 'Facebook' displayed on a computer screen in London. —AFP

FACEBOOK HITS TWO BILLION USER MARK

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook said Tuesday it now counts two billion active monthly users, as the social giant's founder Mark Zuckerberg highlighted his new mission-not just connecting people, but helping them find common ground. "As of this morning, the Facebook community is now officially 2 billion people!" Zuckerberg wrote in a post marking the milestone. "We're making progress connecting the world, and now let's bring the world closer together," he wrote. "It's an honor to be on this journey with you."

Facebook's announcement came as it works to redefine its purpose, led by Zuckerberg who traveled the US this year to better understand what people want out of the social network. "We realize that we need to do more too," the 33-year-old said in a recent interview with CNN Tech. "It's important to give people a voice, to get a diversity of opinions out there, but on top of that, you also need to do this work of building common ground so that way we can all move forward together." The firm's new mission statement says it seeks "to give people the power to build community."

Zuckerberg's message was echoed by

Naomi Gleit, a vice president at the internet giant, who credited the millions of small communities emerging within Facebook for helping drive growth. More than a billion people take part each month in Facebook "groups"-built around everything from sporting interests to humanitarian projects, she said in an online post on Tuesday. For Gartner analyst Brian Blau, Facebook appears to be striving to become "more of a community company than a technology company." He noted that Facebook's role in last year's contentious US election-during which social networks were awash in misinformation-may have been a motivating factor.

TV shows

Founded in 2004, the social media behemoth hit the billion-user mark five years ago. "These billion levels are significant milestones; and certainly it is a lot of people around the planet," said Blau. "It goes to show the power of community, and how people are naturally drawn to each other." As it has grown, Facebook has updated features to fend off challengers such as Snapchat and adapt to trends such as the migration of news and streaming video online. —AFP

MIMECAST TALKS ABOUT RANSOMWARE OUTBREAK

LONDON: Steven Malone, director of security product management at Mimecast, commented, "The rapid pace of this new Petya ransomware attack points at another worm that can spread from computer to computer by itself. Many commentators think WannaCry came from hackers in Russia, perhaps as an experiment that escaped early. Therefore it's not too surprising that Ukraine's critical national infrastructure has been crippled today while other firms in Europe may have been hit in the crossfire."



Steven Malone

As with the early stages of the Wannacry outbreak, the bitcoin wallet associated with this ransomware is not seeing high volumes of payments. Six people globally have currently paid the ransom, suggesting this won't be a financially-successful attack. A cyber resilience strategy that acknowledges that attacks are likely to continue and will sometimes be successful is required. Defence-in-depth security and continuity plans are needed to keep critical services running every time they are attacked."

Ransomware protection advice

"This new outbreak once again highlights the disruptive power of ransomware like never before. Simply by encrypting and blocking access to files, critical national services and valuable business data can be damaged. Mimecast advises organizations never to succumb to the pressure to pay the ran-

som to regain access to their applications and data. There is no guarantee this will unlock files and further motivates and finances attackers to expand their ransomware campaigns."

Email has traditionally been the primary attack route for ransomware. Attackers often send Microsoft Office documents with malicious macros that download and install malware. This includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint and also PDFs. Clever social engineering will trick employees into enabling the macros and delivering the ransomware payload.

Data backups

Preventive measures alone can't keep up with the fast-evolving nature of ransomware attacks and as this attack highlights, there are many ways for an infection to enter an organization. It's vital you regularly backup critical data and ensure that ransomware cannot spread to backup files. Ransomware can take time to encrypt large volumes of files, particularly across a network share. It is imperative to ensure your back-up window is long enough to go back before any infection begins. Backup and recovery measures only work after an attack, and cost organizations in downtime and IT resources dealing with the attack and aftermath. You must be able to continue to operate during the infection period and recover quickly once the infection has been removed."

CHINA DRONE KING TURNS TO FARMING

SHENZHEN: China drone-maker DJI is betting on flying machines that shoot pesticide instead of photos to fend off growing competition in the global remote-controlled aircraft market. The world leader in the civilian drones sector is switching its focus from leisure photography to more professional uses for its unmanned aerial vehicles, and it sees agriculture as the future for the burgeoning industry.

DJI's campus lies within the High Tech Park of the southern city of Shenzhen, China's Silicon Valley, where visitors are treated to a showroom featuring an array of drones. Half the space of the showroom is dedicated to the recreational machines like the Phantom series, while the other half shows off the "enterprise" drones for agriculture, public safety, professional photography or film-making. Propelled by rotors, the tiny crop dusting aircraft can carry a liquid payload of 15 kilograms to spray fields.

Piloted from a distance, one drone can cover the same surface as around 30 people and it does the job more efficiently, said Jiang Sanchun, manager of a small company that operates pesticide drones for farmers in northern China. "Within five years, we went from drones that only took photos to machines specialized in first aid or agriculture," DJI vice president Paul Xu said at the company's headquarters in Shenzhen.

Fighting fires

DJI was founded in 2006 in an apartment in Shenzhen by Frank Wang, a young graduate with a passion for model planes. The company now makes almost two-thirds of the world's civilian drones, according to an estimate by Frost & Sullivan, a market research company. Its overall revenues reached \$1.5 billion last year. Xu boasted that DJI "created a new market" in 2013 when it launched its Phantom drone with

high-definition cameras.

Some 75 percent of its drones are sold abroad, mostly in the United States and Europe, and they are popular among people flying the crafts for fun or to take aerial photos. A drone that landed on the White House lawn in 2015 was a DJI Phantom. US authorities issued new rules last year that clear the way for small, commercial drones

firefighters use them to get a complete, bird's eye view of a blaze. Zoom lenses can help authorities locate people in rescue missions in remote areas.

"DJI is entering these enterprise markets because that is where their customer base takes them," said Susan Eustis, president of US-based firm WinterGreen Research. Worldwide drone sales soared by

Not a winner

But the Chinese firm is far from dominating the enterprise drone market. While DJI commands half the general market in small drone sales in North America, its share falls dramatically for the higher priced machines. In the battle for drones costing more than \$7,500, DJI has a 33 percent market share in North America, said Colin Snow, chief



SHENZHEN: In this picture a drone flies in the showroom of the DJI headquarters in Shenzhen. —AFP

to operate across American airspace, while European Union regulators are trying to catch up. With competition on the rise, DJI is looking for new markets.

In late 2015, it launched Agrab MG-1, an octocopter, or eight-rotor drone, which can carry pesticide or fertilizer. "A drone can monitor energy networks in hard to reach areas or support public security missions," Xu said. Chinese police use thermal cameras to track down fugitives. In Brazil and California,

60 percent last year, according to the Gartner consulting company. Sales are expected to reach \$6 billion this year and nearly double to 11.2 billion by 2020. Drones for commercial uses represent six percent of the market, but a whopping 60 percent of revenue.

"We do see the DJI market domination as likely to continue for the next five years with no serious challengers," Eustis said, noting that the company has the ability to roll out new products within months.

executive of Skylogic Research, a consultancy in the drone market.

Snow, writing in a research note, said DJI's strategy of transforming existing products to fit the enterprise market "is not a winner", noting that brands like Lockheed Martin are better known among companies. But with a quarter of DJI's 8,000-staff dedicated to research, Xu said the company was capable of producing "the necessary cocktail of complex technologies". —AFP

NEW MIMECAST ARCHIVE CLOUD CAPABILITY STREAMLINES GDPR

DUBAI: Mimecast Limited (NASDAQ: MIME), a leading email and data security company, yesterday introduced the Mimecast Case Review App to its Mimecast Email Archiving service. The Mimecast Case Review App offers fast, accurate first-pass review for email in response to audits, compliance reviews, legal claims, and other investigations. The Mimecast Case Review App provides Early Case Assessment (ECA) search tools that allow e-discovery administrators and compliance professionals to collect, identify, review, cull and preserve relevant emails and attachments quickly and effectively.

A key driver for this new feature is the upcoming European Union (EU) directive General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR). Starting in May 2018, GDPR poses new burdens and risks for global organizations that maintain or process personal data of EU residents. Searching and qualifying semi-structured data poses unique challenges and often a single case may involve vast numbers of messages. The Mimecast Case Review App provides a set of tools for selecting relevant subsets of archive data for conducting e-discovery, compliance, and



Neil Murray

and reduces time and cost through effective in-house email review. Mimecast Case Review App is part of the Mimecast Enterprise Information Archiving (EIA) platform, which was named a leader in the 2016 Gartner Magic Quadrant for EIA. After implementing Mimecast Email Archiving, Texas-based law firm, Harris, Finley and Bogle, P.C. (HFB), saw a 66 percent reduction in IT administration time, through intuitive management of archiving, security, and mailbox continuity services.

other investigative searches, and for sharing them quickly and securely with reviewers.

The Case Review App also offers reviewers an intuitive workspace for marking messages for relevance, privilege, and other criteria. This simplifies the first-pass review process, reduces the volume of email files to be exported, and reduces time and cost through effective in-house email review. Mimecast Case Review App is part of the Mimecast Enterprise Information Archiving (EIA) platform, which was named a leader in the 2016 Gartner Magic Quadrant for EIA. After implementing Mimecast Email Archiving, Texas-based law firm, Harris, Finley and Bogle, P.C. (HFB), saw a 66 percent reduction in IT administration time, through intuitive management of archiving, security, and mailbox continuity services.

Streamlining GDPR

GDPR requires organizations put in place necessary measures to mitigate risks to the personal data that they handle. Among other provisions, the GDPR will require organizations - quickly and without compensation - to respond to EU residents' queries about how their personal data is used, and to purge their data upon request. The robust filtering, tagging, and annotation features of the Case Review App, coupled with the fast search and e-discovery performance of Mimecast Archiving, help legal and compliance professionals simplify and streamline management of these queries and requests.

"With the impending GDPR deadline quickly approaching, admin will require a process that can quickly and accurately scan through archive data. Email first-pass review is a vital component of eDiscovery, but often admin are competing against tight deadlines and other priorities. Casting too wide a net for searches leads to massive amounts of data that is often redundant or obsolete," said Neil Murray, chief technology officer at Mimecast. "The Mimecast Case Review App can streamline this process, improving e-discovery effectiveness while also reducing legal costs."

CHINA FACING LARGEST DIABETES EPIDEMIC IN THE WORLD: STUDY

WASHINGTON: China is facing the largest diabetes epidemic in the world with around 11 percent of its population suffering from the metabolic illness, while nearly 36 percent are prediabetic, according to a US study published Tuesday. The survey, which included 170,287 participants and was conducted in 2013, was analyzed with the assistance of Linhong Wang from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention and was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

Researchers measured levels of fasting plasma glucose of each participant. Those with levels of 126 milligrams per deciliter or higher were defined as diabetic while those with levels between 105 and 126 mg/dl were defined as prediabetic. Hyperglycemia is a result of two anomalies—a malfunction of the pancreas which creates insulin, or the resistance of the body to this hormone. Among the diabetic population in China, 36.5 percent were aware of their diagnosis and

32.2 percent were receiving treatment. Among those being treated, 49.2 percent had adequate glycemic control.

Tibetan and Muslim Chinese had significantly lower prevalence of diabetes compared to the majority Han population (14.7 percent for Han, 4.3 percent for Tibetan, and 10.6 percent for Muslim). The adult diabetic rate in China of 10.9 percent is close to that of the United States of 9.3 percent according to 2014 figures recorded by the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention. The Chinese prediabetic rate of 35.7 percent was also close to the US rate of 37 percent recorded in 2014.

With approximately 1.09 billion adults in China, some 388.1 million were projected to be prediabetic (200.4 million men and 187.7 million women). Diabetes is a growing public health problem throughout the world. Some 422 million adults around the world had diabetes in 2014, compared to 108 million in 1980,

according to a report published by the World Health Organization in 2016.

Diabetes rates have increased more rapidly in low and middle-income countries. Diabetes is a major cause of blindness, kidney failure, heart attacks and lower limb amputations, according to the WHO. In 2012, an estimated 1.5 million deaths were directly caused by diabetes and another 2.2 million deaths were attributable to high blood glucose, according to the report.—AFP

ARE ASTEROIDS HUMANITY'S 'GREATEST CHALLENGE'?

HIGH RISK OF EARTH GETTING HIT BY AN ASTEROID

PARIS: Throughout its 4.5-billion-year history, Earth has been repeatedly pummeled by space rocks that have caused anything from an innocuous splash in the ocean to species annihilation. When the next big impact will be, nobody knows. But the pressure is on to predict-and intercept-its arrival. "Sooner or later we will get... a minor or major impact," Rolf Densing, who heads the European Space Operations Centre (ESOC) in Darmstadt, Germany, said ahead of International Asteroid Day on Friday.

It may not happen in our lifetime, he said, but "the risk that Earth will get hit in a devastating event one day is very high." For now, there is little we can do. And yet, the first-ever mission to

from a few millimeters to behemoths 10 kilometers across-the size of rock that wiped out non-avian dinosaurs some 65 million years ago. The smallest type enter Earth's atmosphere daily, burning up prettily as shooting stars.

End of days

The largest occur once every 100 million years, and the next impact could well ring in the end of human civilization. But when would it happen? So far, experts have managed to list more than 90 percent of asteroids in the do-kill range, and determined that none poses an immediate threat. A much bigger concern is the whereabouts of millions of asteroids in the

Space Agency's Space Situational Awareness project, which surveys asteroids. At least the ones it knows of.

The Chelyabinsk impact in 2013, for example, caught everyone unawares. A once-a-decade category rock of about 20m exploded in the atmosphere over central Russia with the kinetic energy of some 27 Hiroshima bombs. The resulting shockwave blew out the windows of nearly 5,000 buildings and injured more than 1,200 people. "Now that we have discovered most of the (asteroids) that are about a kilometer in size and larger, the goal is to discover most of the ones which are (up to) about 140 m," said Patrick Michel, an astrophysicist with France's CNRS research institute.

"This is the threshold-if an object of this size impacts the Earth-for regional damage at the scale of a country or a continent." Another unknown is long-period comets: wanderers of the Solar System which can take centuries or millennia to orbit the Sun, and whose passage has never been recorded.

Eye on the sky

Europe is setting up a network of telescopes to provide us with a heads-up. Scheduled for completion in about two years, it "will scan systematically the sky every night and any asteroid which is coming... would be detected with a warning time of approximately two to three weeks," said Bobrinsky. This is admittedly "not much, but it's better than what we have now," he added. At the very least, it would allow for cities to be evacuated, or a shockwave warning to be issued.

"Contrary to all other natural risks that we face on Earth, like tsunamis, earthquakes and things like that, this is the only one that we can predict," Michel said. What is needed is cooperation between politicians and space agencies-and especially money. An asteroid deflection system would require "something in the order of 300-400 million euros," according to Bobrinsky-a minuscule amount compared to the cost of disaster.

The United Nations declared June 30 International Asteroid Day to raise public awareness about what event organizers describe as "humanity's greatest challenge". It was initiated by astrophysicist and Queen guitarist Brian May, and moviemaker Grigoriy Richters who directed the sci-fi film 51 Degrees North about an asteroid headed for London. The initiative has the backing of dozens of scientists, astronauts, and celebrities, many of whom will take part in a special 24-hour live broadcast tomorrow, with round-the-clock asteroid programming by the European, Japanese and American space agencies.—AFP



WASHINGTON: This file photo shows a piece of the Chelyabinsk meteorite on display before a hearing of the House Administration Committee in the Longworth House Office Building on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.—AFP

crash a probe into a small space rock to alter its trajectory suffered a major setback when European ministers declined in December to fund part of the project. "We are not ready to defend ourselves" against an Earth-bound object, said Densing. "We have no active planetary defense measures."

Hitherto relegated to the realms of science fiction, tactics could include nuking an incoming asteroid, using lasers to vaporize it, sending a space "tractor" to drag it off course, or bumping it into a new direction. But first, we need to be able to spot the threat. Astrophysicists monitoring the risk classify objects into sizes ranging

15- to 140-metre range. One such object, a 40-metre space rock, caused the largest impact in recent history when it exploded over Tunguska, Siberia, on June 30, 1908 — the date on which Asteroid Day is marked.

The blast flattened some 80 million trees over 2,000 sparsely-populated square kilometers — an area bigger than greater London. Tunguska-sized events happen, on average, every 300 years or so. "Imagine that this type of asteroid would fall in a very populated area like... Paris or Germany, I mean this is something that would be really, really a catastrophe," said Nicolas Bobrinsky, program manager of the European



KENTUCKY: This photo shows part of Hopkinsville, Kentucky.—AP

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE 1ST IN 99 YEARS TO SWEEP WIDTH OF US

CAPE CANAVERAL: This August, the US will experience its first coast-to-coast total solar eclipse in 99 years. Total solar eclipses occur every year or two or three, often in the middle of nowhere like the South Pacific or Antarctic. What makes this one so special - at least for Americans - is that it will cut diagonally across the entire United States. The path of totality on Aug 21 - where day briefly becomes night - will pass over Oregon, continuing through the heartland all the way to Charleston, South Carolina.

Those on the outskirts - all the way into Canada, Central America and even the upper part of South America - will be treated to a partial eclipse. The last time a total solar eclipse swept the whole width of the US was in 1918. No tickets are required for this Monday matinee, just special eclipse glasses so you don't ruin your eyes. Here are some eclipse tidbits as you get ready to feast your protected eyes on perhaps the greatest of all cosmic spectacles.

What's a total solar eclipse?

When the moon passes between Earth and the sun, and scores a bull's eye by completely blotting out the sunlight, that's a total solar eclipse. The moon casts a shadow on our planet. Dead center is where sky gazers get the full treatment. In this case, the total eclipse will last

up to 2 minutes and 40 seconds in places. A partial eclipse will be visible along the periphery. Clouds could always spoil the view, though, so be ready to split for somewhere with clear skies, if necessary.

What's the path?

The path of totality - meaning total darkness - will begin near Lincoln City, Oregon, as the lunar shadow makes its way into the US This path will be 60 miles to 70 miles wide; the closer to the center, the longer the totality. Totality will cross from Oregon into Idaho, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina and, finally, South Carolina.

(It will also pass over tiny slivers of Montana and Iowa.) The eclipse will last longest near Carbondale, Illinois: approximately two minutes and 40 seconds. The biggest cities in the path include Nashville; Columbia and Charleston, South Carolina; Salem, Oregon; Casper, Wyoming; and just barely within, Kansas City, Missouri.

Last total solar eclipses in US?

Hawaii experienced a total solar eclipse in 1991. But the US mainland hasn't seen a total

solar eclipse since 1979, when it swooped across Oregon, Washington state, Idaho, Montana and North Dakota, then into Canada. Before that, in 1970, a total solar eclipse skirted the Atlantic coastline from Florida to Virginia. Totality - or total darkness - exceeded three minutes in 1970, longer than the one coming up. The country's last total solar eclipse stretching from coast to coast, on June 8, 1918, came in over Oregon and Washington, and made a beeline for Florida.

When's the next one?

If you miss the Aug 21 eclipse - or get bitten by the eclipse bug - you'll have to wait seven years to see another one in the continental US. The very next total solar eclipse will be in 2019, but you'll have to be below the equator for a glimpse. We're talking the South Pacific, and Chile and Argentina. It's pretty much the same in 2020. For the US, the next total solar eclipse will occur on April 8, 2024. The line of totality will cross from Texas, up through the Midwest, almost directly over Indianapolis, Cleveland and Buffalo, New York, up over New England and over Maine and New Brunswick, Canada. Carbondale, Illinois, will be in the crosshairs once again.—AP



ZIMBABWE: This file photo shows a herd of African elephants in a national park in Zimbabwe.—AFP

ZIMBABWE BEGINS TRANSFER OF ANIMALS TO MOZAMBIQUE

HARARE: The animals won't travel two-by-two, but thousands of safari stalwarts will soon begin their journeys from Zimbabwe to Mozambique in one of Africa's largest ever wildlife transfers. Fifty elephants, 100 giraffes, 200 zebras and 200 buffaloes will be among the several thousand animals that will be transferred between the two neighbors, Zimbabwe's Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA) said on Thursday.

They will travel 600 kilometers on dusty roads from the Save Valley Conservancy to Zimbabwe's eastern neighbor in an effort to replenish animal numbers that were devastated during Mozambique's bloody 15-year civil war. "Zimbabwe approved the translocation of wildlife from the Sango Ranch in the Save Valley Conservancy to Zinave National Park in Mozambique," said

PWMA spokesman Simukai Nyasha. Wily Pabst, owner of Zimbabwe's Sango Wildlife Conservancy, said in a statement that he was "proud to support the initiative... with over 6,000 of our animals".

"For us this relocation is the perfect example how conservation in Africa works," he added. A further 500 animals will be selected from Mozambique's Gorongosa National Park to help repopulate Zinave, the Peace Parks foundation which is coordinating the transfers said in a statement. "This week saw the start of one of the largest wildlife translocation projects that Africa has ever seen," it said. Some 7,500 animals from Zimbabwe, South Africa and elsewhere in Mozambique will be moved to help repopulate Zinave over the course of the three-year project.—AFP

PAINT-STRIPPING CHEMICAL POSES NEW OZONE RISK

PARIS: Earth's protective ozone layer, on a slow path to recovery since the 1987 Montreal Protocol banned chemicals that erode it, may be in danger anew, scientists warned Tuesday. Levels in the stratosphere of dichloromethane, a chemical not covered by the ozone rescue pact, are increasing rapidly and could delay the layer's recovery, they said.

Although "currently modest, the impact of dichloromethane on ozone has increased markedly in recent years," a team reported in the journal Nature Communications. "Sustained growth in dichloromethane would... offset some of the gains achieved by the Montreal

Protocol, further delaying recovery of Earth's ozone layer." The layer sits in the stratosphere at 10 to 50 kilometers above the Earth's surface, where it filters out harmful ultraviolet light that can cause cancer and damage crops. The Montreal accord phased out production of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in refrigerators, aerosols, air-conditioners and foam insulation when it was discovered they were responsible for the so-called ozone "hole".

CFCs were replaced in the 1990s by hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which were safe for the now-healing ozone but also highly effective at trapping heat in the atmosphere, contributing to global warming.—AFP

WEED KILLER INGREDIENT GOES ON LIST AS CANCEROUS

FRESNO, California: Regulators in California took a pivotal step on Monday toward becoming the first state to require the popular weed killer Roundup to come with a label warning that it's known to cause cancer. Officials announced that starting July 7 the weed killer's main ingredient, glyphosate, will appear on a list California keeps of potentially cancerous chemicals. A year later, the listing could come with warning labels on the product, officials said.

However, it's not certain whether Roundup will ultimately get a warning label. Monsanto, the chemical's maker, has filed an appeal after losing in court to block the labeling, arguing that Roundup doesn't cause cancer and that the labels will harm the company's business. State health regulators must also decide if there's a high enough amount of the chemical in Roundup to pose a risk to human health. State officials received more than 1,300 public comments.

"We can't say for sure," said Sam Delson,

a spokesman for California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. "We're reviewing those comments." Glyphosate has no color or smell. Monsanto introduced it in 1974 as an effective way of killing weeds while leaving crops and plants intact. It's sold in more than 160 countries, and farmers use it on 250 types of crops in California, the nation's leading farming state. Attorney Michael Baum, who represents more than 300 people who claim a loved one became sick or died from exposure to Roundup, says the fight to protect Californians is not over.

He said that the state's failure to set the proper risk level would undermine protections California put in place by listing harmful chemicals. Scott Partridge, Monsanto's vice president of global strategy, said in a statement that glyphosate does not cause cancer and there's no need to list it as harmful in California. "This is not the final step in the process," Partridge said. "We will continue to aggressively challenge this improper decision."—AP



LOS ANGELES: In this photo, containers of Roundup, left, a weed killer is seen on a shelf with other products for sale at a hardware store in Los Angeles.—AP

DEADLY DIET: THAI DOCTORS BATTLE CANCER-CAUSING FISH

KALASIN, Thailand: It wasn't until he got to medical school that Narong Khuntikeo finally discovered what caused the liver cancer that took both of his parents' lives: their lunch. Like millions of Thais across the rural northeast, his family regularly ate koi pla—a local dish made of raw fish ground with spices and lime. The pungent meal is quick, cheap and tasty, but the fish is also a favorite feast for parasites that can cause a lethal liver cancer killing up to 20,000 Thais annually.

Most hail from northeast, a large, poor region known as Isaan that has dined on koi pla for generations and now has the highest reported instance of the Cholangiocarcinoma (CCA) — bile duct cancer—in the world. One of the major causes of CCA is a parasitic flatworm—or fluke—which is native to the Mekong region and found in many freshwater fish. Once eaten, the worms can embed undetected in the bile ducts for years causing inflammation that can, over time, trigger the aggressive cancer, according to the World Health Organization.

"It's a very big health burden around here... it affects families, education and socioeconomic development," said Narong, who went on to become a liver surgeon to battle the scourge. "But nobody knows about this because they

die quietly, like leaves falling from a tree." After seeing hundreds of hopeless late-stage cases on the operating table, Narong is now marshalling scientists, doctors and anthropologists to attack the "silent killer" at source.

They are fanning out across Isaan provinces to screen villagers for the liver fluke and warn them of the perils of koi pla and other risky fermented fish dishes. But changing eating habits is no easy task in a region where love for Isaan's famously chili-laden cuisine runs deep.

Karma and convenience

Many villagers are shocked to hear that a beloved dish passed down for generations is a danger rather than a comfort. Others are wedded to the convenience of a thrifty lunch they can whip up using fish caught in the ponds that border their rice paddies. "I used to come here and just catch the fish in the pond... it's so easy to eat raw," said Boonliang Konghakot, a farmer from Khon Kaen province, licking his lips as he sprinkled seasonings into a bowl of the finely-chopped fish's pink flesh.

Since learning of the cancer link he has started frying the mixture to kill off the parasite—a method doctors recommend. Yet not everyone is as easily swayed, according to Narong and his



THAILAND: This photograph shows a farmer chopping fresh fish for lunch in the northeastern Thai province of Khon Kaen. —AFP

team. Many villagers complain that cooking the dish gives it a sour taste. Others simply shrug off the dangers and say their fate has already been fixed—a common belief in the Buddhist nation where karma can dictate decisions. "They'll say: 'Oh well, there are many ways to die,'" lamented Narong. "But I cannot accept this answer."

Catch it early

When it comes to changing eating habits, health officials are pinning their hopes on the next generation, targeting children with a new school curriculum that use cartoons to teach the risks of eating raw. For the elderly, the target is to catch infections before it's too late. Narong and his team have developed

urine tests to detect the presence of the parasite, which has infected up to 80 percent of some Isaan communities.

They have also spent the past four years trucking ultrasound machines around the region to examine the livers of villagers who live far from public hospitals. The initiative, called CASCAP (Cholangiocarcinoma Screening and Care Program), started as research at Khon Kaen university but received full government backing last year—putting it on Thailand's national agenda.

"I've never been checked before, so I think I will probably have it because I've been eating (koi pla) since I was little," said 48-year-old Thanin Wongseeda, one of 500 villagers lining up for a recent screening in Kalasin province.

The group ticked off a series of high-risk factors: they were over the age of 40, had a history of eating raw fish and had family members with the cancer. A third of them showed abnormal liver symptoms and four were suspected to have cancer. Thanin was one of the lucky ones, emerging from his ultrasound with a look of relief. "I don't think I will eat (koi pla) raw anymore," he said with resolve. As for his neighbors? "They will not quit it easily." —AFP

GREENLAND ICE SHEET MELT OFF QUICKENS SEA LEVELS RISE: STUDY

PARIS: Ocean levels rose 50 percent faster in 2014 than in 1993, with melt water from the Greenland ice sheet now supplying 25 percent of total sea level increase compared with just five percent 20 years earlier, researchers reported Monday. The findings add to growing concern among scientists that the global watermark is climbing more rapidly than forecast only a few years ago, with potentially devastating consequences.

Hundreds of millions of people around the world live in low-lying deltas that are vulnerable, especially when rising seas are combined with land sinking due to depleted water tables, or a lack of ground-forming silt held back by dams. Major coastal cities are also threatened, while some small island states are already laying plans for the day their drowning nations will no longer be livable.

"This result is important because the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—the UN science advisory body—"makes a very conservative projection of total sea level rise by the end of the century," at 60 to 90 centimeters, said Peter

Wadhams, a professor of ocean physics at the University of Oxford who did not take part in the research. That estimate, he added, assumes that the rate at which ocean levels rise will remain constant.

"Yet there is convincing evidence—including accelerating losses of mass from Greenland and Antarctica—that the rate is actually increasing and increasing exponentially." Greenland alone contains enough frozen water to lift oceans by about seven meters, though experts disagree on the global warming threshold for irreversible melting, and how long that would take once set in motion.

"Most scientists now expect total rise to be well over a meter by the end of the century," Wadhams said. The new study, published in Nature Climate Change, reconciles for the first time two distinct measurements of sea level rise. The first looked one-by-one at three contributions: ocean expansion due to warming, changes in the amount of water stored on land, and loss of land-based ice from glaciers and ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica.



IN SPACE: This file photo provided by NASA Earth Observatory shows some glaciers observed from the HU-25A Guardian aircraft, showing the Bruckner and Heim glaciers where they flow into Johan Petersen Fjord in southeastern Greenland. —AFP

A major warning

The second was from satellite altimetry, which gauges heights on the Earth's surface from space. The technique measures the time taken by a radar pulse to travel from a satellite antenna to the surface, and then back to a satellite receiver. Up to now, altimetry data showed little acceleration in sea level rise over the last two decades, even if other measurements left little doubt that oceans were deepening more quickly.

"We corrected for a small but significant bias in the first decade of the satellite record," co-author Xuebin Zhang, a researcher at the Centre for Southern Hemisphere Oceans Research in Hobart, Tasmania, said. Overall, the pace of global average sea level rise went up from about 2.2 millimeters a year in 1993, to 3.3 millimeters a year two decades later. In the early 1990s, they found, thermal expansion accounted for fully half of the added millimeters.

Two decades later, that figure was only 30 percent. Andrew Shepherd, director of the Centre for Polar Observation and Modeling at the University of Leeds in England, urged caution in interpreting the results. "Even with decades of measurements, it is hard to be sure whether there has been a steady acceleration in the rate of global sea level rise during the satellite era because the change is so small," he said.

Disentangling single sources—such as the massive chunk of ice atop Greenland—is even harder. But other researchers said the study should sound an alarm. "This is a major warning about the dangers of a sea level rise that will continue for many centuries, even after global warming is stopped," said Brian Hoskins, chair of the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London. —AFP



FRANCE: This file photo shows a one-month-old wallaby peek out of its mother's pouch (Foreground) at the Anneville zoo, eastern France. —AFP

STRAY WALLABY HAS SMALL DUTCH TOWN HOPPING

THE HAGUE: Dutch police are looking for the owner of a stray wallaby which made an unexpected appearance in a small town over the weekend, disrupting rail traffic before finally being lassoed by a local. Trains near Staphorst in the northern Netherlands were delayed for at least half-an-hour Saturday afternoon after a driver spotted the small macropod hopping along the tracks before disappearing into the small town, Dutch media reports said Monday.

The animal, by then christened "Skippy" by Dutch Rail's Twitter feed, was again spotted by locals who were having an afternoon beer at a nearby cafe and who phoned local resident Patrick Dunnik to come help trap the wandering wallaby. "I live just around the corner, so I ran out to help," said Dunnik. "We failed several times to trap it, including once when it jumped right over the outstretched arms of a friend of mine," he said.

Dunnik devised a lasso from rope and managed to snag

the animal round a leg before finally bringing it down. "It took both me and my two friends to hold down the wallaby because it was incredibly strong," he said. Police and the Dutch "animal ambulance" arrived a short while later to take "Skippy" to an animal shelter. "We're keeping it a few days at the shelter so it can de-stress," regional animal ambulance coordinator Edwin Budel said.

"At the moment, we have no idea who the owner is and how the animal got there," added Budel, who urged the owner to contact local police. More than 500 wallabies are known to be kept in The Netherlands mainly by animal parks, according to the Dutch NOS newscaster. Some have escaped from time-to-time. In a recent unfortunate incident involving a wallaby escape, one of the animals inadvertently hopped into a lion enclosure in an eastern animal park in March where it was promptly hunted and eaten. —AFP

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SHERATON KUWAIT CELEBRATES 51 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE AND SUCCESS

The Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel celebrates this year over fifty years of excellence and success at a steady pace and real leadership, since its inception in June 1966 to be the first five stars hotel in Kuwait and in the region, the first hotel of Marriott International in the Middle East and North Africa and the Second Sheraton to open outside of the United States.

Sheraton Kuwait icon has remarkably made a major leap in the hotel industry with a proven track record of achievements and successes which strengthened its presence over 50 years in addition to the loyalty of its guests as well as major companies and all those who give Sheraton Kuwait the real fence in this excellence and true symbol of its success to be the favorite milestone in Kuwait.

Sheraton Kuwait maintained over the last 50 years its pioneering pres-



Fahed Abushaar

tigious status, and it is considered the best choice for the regional and international summits and launched by international organizations and many successful events due to the extensive experience in the hospitality industry. The Sheraton Kuwait has won many prestigious awards and International certificates of

appreciation and has been appraised from the world and celebrities and hosted over more than five decades millions of guests and some of them experienced the stages of its development and the expansion that added value to its high-end services.

On this occasion, Mr Fahed Abushaar- the General Manager of the Sheraton Kuwait, stated that it is indescribable feeling to talk about more than half a century of success, our desire and strong determination will continue to nourish and strive towards achieving more success and excellence. Mr Abushaar thanks all sectors, businessmen, companies and guests for their trust and believe in Sheraton Kuwait, also he appreciated the great attitude of the executive management and all associates for their great efforts and support to move forward with a series of success.



CBK CONCLUDES ITS RAMADAN PROGRAM

CBK concluded its Ramadan social program that was launched at the beginning of the Holy month of Ramadan. Assistant general manager of public relations and advertising department, Amani Al-Warda'a said, "CBK will continue to carry out its responsibilities and duties that aim to serve and benefit the society."





Honoring Sheikh Meshari Al-Afasi



Dr Adel Al-Mutairat



Khalid Al-Jhaim

KFH HONORS IMAMS AT STATE'S GRAND MOSQUE

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) honored the Imams and Quran reciters of the State's Grand Mosque in recognition of their role in leading worshippers throughout the Holy Month of Ramadan in Al-Qiyam and Taraweeh prayers, and as part of KFH's Ramadan program and commitment to serving the society. Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh handed out commemorative gifts to the

Grand Mosque's Imams and reciters, affirming KFH's keenness to recognize the exerted efforts in providing a spiritual atmosphere in the mosque. Al-Ruwaieh extended thanks and appreciation to the Grand Mosque's administration, the concerned parties and to organizers in recognition of their efforts in organizing prayers and offering the best services to worshippers. It is worth noting that KFH voluntary team took part in organizing Al-Qiyam prayer

held at the state's Grand Mosque as part of its social responsibly and in continuation of its eventful Ramadan program and charitable activities. This initiative comes as part of the bank's Ramadan program "Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 3" that included 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 voluntary initiatives.



Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nafis

KFH WRAPS UP ITS RAMADAN PROGRAM 'INCREASE GOOD DEEDS IN RAMADAN 3'

KFH has successfully concluded its comprehensive voluntary Ramadan program "Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 3" aiming at strengthening KFH's social role, while reinforcing ties with various segments of society. KFH's Ramadan program "Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 3" included a plethora of social events and activities stemming from the bank's endeavors to solidify its commitment towards the society, while supporting all social and humanitarian initiatives. Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media at KFH, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh said that KFH will continue its efforts to support all activities of interest to the society in line with the bank's strategy and social responsibility message. He added in a press release, that KFH eventful Ramadan program confirmed the bank's leadership position in achieving the corpo-

rate social responsibility, yet reiterated the firm belief in encouraging voluntary work, raising the awareness of philanthropy and charity, while boosting the community-oriented initiatives within society. He said that KFH organized and participated in a wide range of activities and events tailored to reach out across the community. The activities encompassed the annual Ramadan Ghabqa that was held in the presence of the executive management and a huge number of KFH employees. The Ghabqa witnessed huge participation. Moreover, the bank held Media Ghabqa for local and international media outlets in addition to Public Relations officials in recognition of their vital role and efforts in the media, not to mention the confirmation of the bank's keenness to continually communicate with all local media outlets. This Ghabqa witnessed remarkable



attendance from different local and international media types; print media, broadcast media, and the Internet. He indicated that KFH distributed breakfast meals at different places including Nayef Palace, mosques, Hawally, Farwaniya and Souq Al-Mubarakaya on a daily basis. The number of iftar meals KFH distributed and prepared by KFH voluntary team surpassed 600 meals daily in Ramadan. KFH organizes breakfast feasts to workers on duties during Iftar time in recognition of their efforts and responsibilities. KFH voluntary team hosted several Confectionary girgian events for many parties including the Kuwaiti Association for Down syndrome, Nayef palace, the Discovery mall and Hospital. Al-Ruwaieh explained that KFH voluntary team provided voluntary services to the public and assisted civil defense and security men and distributed food and beverages to wor-

shippers. KFH is keen on reinforcing the human values among society individuals. KFH organized during its Ramadan campaign 2017 over 70 social and voluntary activities. With regards to social media, KFH presented many health and awareness materials on its social media channels in collaboration with different parties including the Chairman of Fatwa and Sharia Supervisory Board of KFH Group Dr Sayyed Mohammad Al-Sayyed Abdul Razzaq Al-Tabtaba'e, Dasman Institute, Public Relations and Security Media, Shaikh, Talal Fakher, Reciter Meshari Albaghli and others. KFH as a long track record of achievements in the field of social responsibility. It won several awards in this regard such as "Best Corporate and Public Affairs" from Kuwait Public Relations Association in an event held Under the auspice of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh



OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 00:00 King Arthur
- 02:15 Judge Dredd
- 04:00 Hitting The Apex
- 06:30 Compadres
- 08:15 The Throwaways
- 10:00 King Arthur
- 12:15 Judge Dredd
- 14:00 Forbidden Empire
- 16:00 Hudson Hawk
- 17:45 DCU: Justice League vs Teen Titans
- 19:15 Die Hard
- 21:30 The Man From U.N.C.L.E.
- 23:30 Hitman: Agent 47

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:45 Cats 101
- 01:40 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 02:35 Tanked
- 03:25 Into The Pride
- 04:15 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 05:02 River Monsters
- 05:49 Insane Pools: Off The Deep End
- 06:36 Night
- 07:00 Night
- 07:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 08:15 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 09:10 Into The Pride
- 10:05 Tanked
- 11:00 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 11:55 Cats 101
- 12:50 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 13:45 River Monsters
- 14:40 Into The Pride
- 15:35 Tanked
- 16:30 River Monsters
- 17:25 The Lion Queen
- 18:20 After The Attack
- 19:15 Tanked
- 20:10 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 21:05 The Lion Queen
- 22:00 After The Attack
- 22:55 Into The Pride
- 23:50 River Monsters

BBC FIRST

- 00:00 EastEnders
- 00:40 Kat & Alfie: Redwater
- 01:35 Sherlock
- 03:10 The Kettering Incident

- 05:55 Bondi Ink
- 06:50 Catch A Contractor
- 07:40 Lip Sync Battle
- 08:05 Lip Sync Battle
- 08:30 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 09:20 Sweat Inc.
- 10:10 Hungry Investors
- 11:00 Life Or Debt
- 11:50 Bondi Ink
- 12:40 Disaster Date
- 13:30 Lip Sync Battle
- 14:20 Hungry Investors
- 15:10 Catch A Contractor
- 16:00 Comedy Central Presents Comedy Salwagef
- 16:30 Comedy Central Presents Comedy Salwagef
- 16:55 Brotherhood
- 17:25 Brotherhood
- 17:50 Tattoo Disasters
- 18:15 Tattoo Disasters
- 18:39 Impractical Jokers
- 19:03 Disaster Date
- 19:27 Hungry Investors
- 20:13 The Jim Gaffigan Show
- 20:37 The Jim Gaffigan Show
- 21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 21:30 Comedy Central Presents Comedy Salwagef
- 22:00 Comedy Central Presents Comedy Salwagef
- 22:25 Ridiculousness Arabia
- 22:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
- 23:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

Discovery Family

- 00:30 Nextworld
- 01:20 Bondi Vet
- 02:10 Kings Of The Wild
- 03:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 03:25 Destroyed In Seconds
- 03:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 04:40 How It's Made
- 05:05 How It's Made
- 05:30 Dirty Jobs
- 06:20 Mythbusters
- 07:00 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
- 07:25 Kids vs Film
- 07:50 Giant Pandas Go Wild
- 08:40 How It's Made
- 09:05 How It's Made
- 09:30 Nextworld
- 10:20 Mythbusters
- 11:10 Giant Pandas Go Wild
- 12:00 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 12:50 How It's Made
- 13:15 How It's Made

- 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 JD
- 06:00 Jessie
- 06:25 Jessie
- 06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 06:55 Rolling With The Ronks
- 07:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 07:45 Bunk'd
- 08:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 08:35 Bizaardvark
- 09:00 Austin & Ally
- 09:25 Austin & Ally
- 09:50 Good Luck Charlie
- 10:15 Good Luck Charlie
- 10:40 Alex & Co.
- 11:05 Loloiroc
- 11:30 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 11:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 12:00 Welcome To The Ronks
- 12:15 Hank Zipzer
- 12:40 Dog With A Blog
- 13:05 Star Darlings
- 13:10 Good Luck Charlie
- 13:35 Austin & Ally
- 14:00 Jessie
- 14:25 Rolling With The Ronks
- 14:50 Sunny Bunnies
- 14:55 The ZhuZhus
- 15:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 15:45 Elena Of Avalor
- 16:10 Liv And Maddie
- 16:35 Descendants Wicked World
- 16:40 Girl Meets World
- 17:05 Stuck In The Middle
- 17:30 Bunk'd
- 17:55 Evermoor Chronicles
- 18:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 18:25 Alex & Co.
- 18:50 Best Friends Whenever
- 19:15 Star Darlings
- 19:20 Liv And Maddie
- 19:45 Mako Mermaids
- 20:10 Jessie
- 20:35 Crackle
- 20:40 Bizaardvark
- 21:05 Evermoor Chronicles
- 21:30 Stuck In The Middle
- 21:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 22:00 Bunk'd
- 22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir

- 23:45 Loopdidoo
- Discovery Channel HD**
- 00:20 Wheeler Dealers
 - 01:10 Dive Wars Australia
 - 02:00 Strip The City
 - 02:50 Incredible Engineering Blunders: Fixed
 - 03:40 Misfit Garage
 - 04:30 Baggage Battles
 - 05:00 How Do They Do It?
 - 05:30 How Do They Do It?
 - 06:00 Gold Divers
 - 06:50 Wheeler Dealers
 - 07:40 Misfit Garage
 - 08:30 What On Earth?
 - 09:20 Baggage Battles
 - 09:45 How Do They Do It?
 - 10:10 How Do They Do It?
 - 10:35 Dive Wars Australia
 - 11:25 Strip The City
 - 12:15 Incredible Engineering Blunders: Fixed
 - 13:05 How Do They Do It?
 - 13:30 Baggage Battles
 - 13:55 Baggage Battles
 - 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 Baggage Battles
 - 20:35 Baggage Battles
 - 21:00 What On Earth?
 - 21:50 Salvage Hunters
 - 22:40 Storage Hunters UK
 - 23:05 Storage Hunters UK
 - 23:30 Misfit Garage

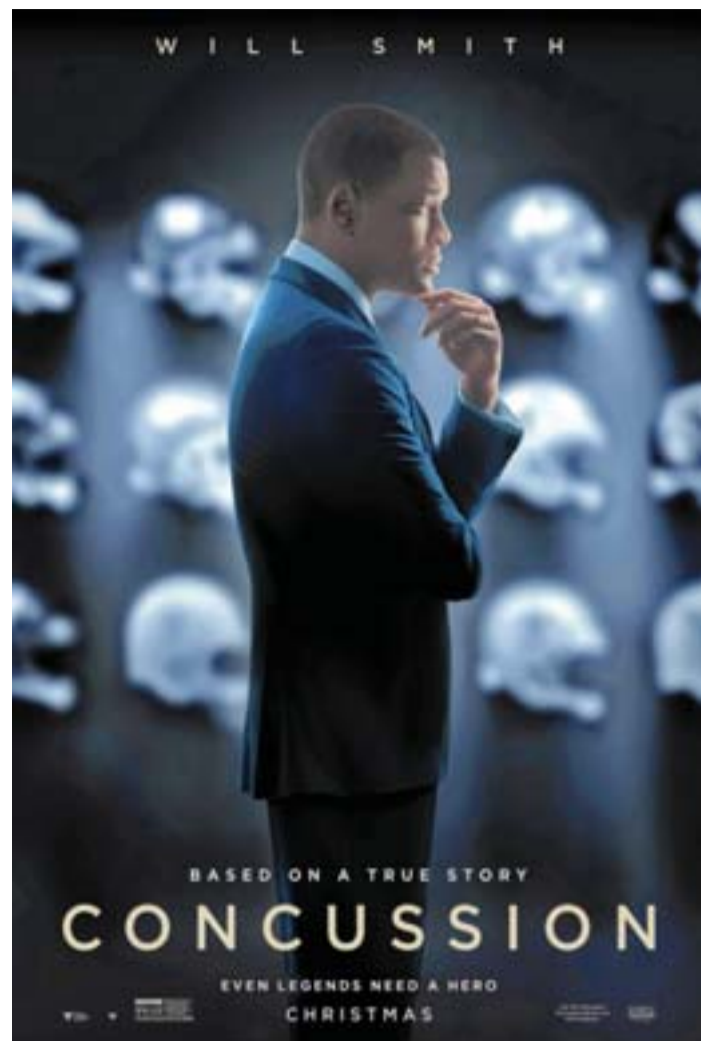
- Discovery XD**
- 06:00 Right Now Kapow
 - 06:25 Disney11
 - 06:50 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
 - 07:15 Milo Murphy's Law
 - 07:25 Danger Mouse
 - 07:40 Supa Strikas
 - 08:10 K.C. Undercover
 - 08:35 Counterfeit Cat
 - 09:00 Lab Rats
 - 09:25 Lab Rats
 - 09:50 Future-Worm!
 - 10:20 Pair Of Kings
 - 10:45 Pair Of Kings
 - 11:10 Danger Mouse
 - 11:35 Supa Strikas
 - 12:00 Supa Strikas
 - 12:30 Gravity Falls
 - 12:55 Annedroids
 - 13:20 Atomic Puppet
 - 13:45 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
 - 14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
 - 14:15 Mighty Med
 - 14:40 Kirby Buckets
 - 15:05 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
 - 15:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
 - 15:55 Right Now Kapow
 - 16:25 K.C. Undercover
 - 16:50 Disney11
 - 17:15 Mech-X4
 - 17:40 Milo Murphy's Law
 - 18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
 - 18:10 Gravity Falls
 - 18:35 Mighty Med
 - 19:00 Atomic Puppet
 - 19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
 - 19:55 K.C. Undercover
 - 20:20 Mech-X4
 - 20:45 Disney11
 - 21:10 Walk The Prank
 - 21:35 Disney Mickey Mouse
 - 21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
 - 21:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
 - 22:10 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors
 - 22:35 Boyster
 - 23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

- 11:00 Botched
- 12:00 El News
- 12:15 Botched
- 13:10 Botched
- 14:05 Botched
- 15:00 El News
- 15:15 El News: Daily Pop
- 16:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 17:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 18:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 19:00 El News
- 20:00 WAGs Miami
- 21:00 WAGs Miami
- 22:00 WAGs Miami
- 23:00 El News
- 23:15 Second Wives Club

- food network**
- 00:00 Chopped
 - 01:00 The Great Food Truck Race
 - 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 - 02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 - 03:00 Man Fire Food
 - 03:30 Man Fire Food
 - 04:00 Chopped
 - 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
 - 06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
 - 06:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
 - 07:00 The Kitchen
 - 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
 - 08:30 The Pioneer Woman
 - 09:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
 - 09:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
 - 10:00 Bake With Anna Olson
 - 10:30 Bake With Anna Olson
 - 11:00 The Kitchen
 - 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
 - 12:30 The Pioneer Woman
 - 13:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
 - 13:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
 - 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 - 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 - 15:00 Chopped
 - 16:00 The Kitchen
 - 17:00 Bake With Anna Olson
 - 18:00 Chopped
 - 19:00 Guy's Grocery Games
 - 20:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
 - 20:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
 - 21:00 Private Chef
 - 22:00 Private Chef
 - 22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 - 23:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 - 23:30 Chopped

- itv HD CHOICE**
- 00:10 Pick Me!
 - 01:00 Emmerdale
 - 01:30 Coronation Street
 - 02:00 Coronation Street
 - 02:30 Chopping Block
 - 03:25 This Is England '86
 - 04:20 Safe House
 - 05:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
 - 06:10 Pick Me!
 - 07:05 Chopping Block
 - 08:00 This Is England '86
 - 09:00 Safe House
 - 10:00 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
 - 10:55 Pick Me!
 - 11:50 Chopping Block
 - 12:45 Emmerdale
 - 13:15 Coronation Street
 - 13:45 Coronation Street
 - 14:15 Pick Me!
 - 15:10 Chopping Block
 - 16:00 The Queen's 90th Birthday Celebration
 - 18:15 Catchphrase
 - 18:45 Emmerdale
 - 19:15 Coronation Street
 - 19:45 Coronation Street
 - 20:10 Chopping Block
 - 21:00 The Queen's 90th Birthday Celebration
 - 23:15 Emmerdale
 - 23:40 Coronation Street

- HISTORY HD**
- 00:20 Detroit Steel
 - 01:10 Forged In Fire
 - 02:00 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
 - 02:50 Storage Wars
 - 03:15 American Pickers
 - 04:05 Pawn Stars
 - 04:30 Pawn Stars
 - 05:00 Mountain Men
 - 06:00 Leepu And Pitbull
 - 06:50 Duck Dynasty
 - 07:15 Duck Dynasty
 - 07:40 Counting Cars
 - 08:05 Counting Cars
 - 08:30 Pawn Stars
 - 08:55 Pawn Stars
 - 09:20 Storage Wars
 - 09:45 Storage Wars
 - 10:10 American Pickers



CONCUSSION ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 11:00 Alone
- 11:50 Duck Dynasty
- 12:15 Duck Dynasty
- 12:40 Ice Road Truckers
- 13:30 X Men
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Leepu And Pitbull
- 16:00 Storage Wars
- 16:25 Storage Wars
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:15 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Detroit Steel
- 18:30 Forged In Fire
- 19:20 Mountain Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 21:50 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...
- 22:40 Time Team
- 23:30 American Pickers

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- NAT GEO people HD**
- 00:45 Husic Adventure Argentina
 - 01:10 What's For Sale?
 - 01:40 What's For Sale?
 - 02:05 Sara's Australia Unveiled
 - 02:35 Route Awakening
 - 03:00 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
 - 03:30 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
 - 03:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
 - 04:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
 - 04:50 Poh & Co
 - 05:20 Eat Street
 - 05:45 Eat Street
 - 06:15 This Is Brazil
 - 07:10 What's For Sale?
 - 07:35 Sara's Australia Unveiled
 - 08:05 Route Awakening
 - 08:30 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
 - 09:00 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
 - 09:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
 - 09:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
 - 10:20 Poh & Co
 - 10:50 Eat Street
 - 11:15 Eat Street
 - 11:45 What's For Sale?
 - 12:10 A Is For Apple
 - 12:40 A Is For Apple
 - 13:05 What's For Sale?
 - 13:35 What's For Sale?
 - 14:00 Sara's Australia Unveiled
 - 14:30 Route Awakening
 - 14:55 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
 - 15:25 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
 - 15:50 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
 - 16:20 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
 - 16:45 Poh & Co
 - 17:15 Eat Street
 - 17:40 Eat Street
 - 18:10 This Is Brazil
 - 19:05 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita
 - 19:30 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
 - 20:00 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
 - 20:30 Poh & Co
 - 21:00 Eat Street
 - 21:30 Eat Street
 - 22:00 This Is Brazil
 - 22:55 What's For Sale?
 - 23:20 What's For Sale?
 - 23:50 Sara's Australia Unveiled

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:00 Mr. Accident
- 02:00 Spanglish
- 04:15 Ride
- 05:45 Accidental Love
- 07:30 Hanging Up
- 09:15 Ride
- 10:45 Accidental Love
- 12:30 Hanging Up
- 14:15 Overboard
- 16:15 The Golden Child
- 18:00 Valentine's Day
- 20:15 5 To 7
- 22:00 Trainwreck

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 00:30 My Old Lady
- 02:30 WarGames
- 04:30 A Country Called Home
- 06:15 Experimenter
- 08:00 WarGames
- 10:00 The End Of The Tour
- 11:45 A Perfect Day
- 13:30 Experimenter
- 15:15 Of Mice And Men
- 17:15 Ed Wood
- 19:30 The Assassination Of Jesse James Unbroken

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

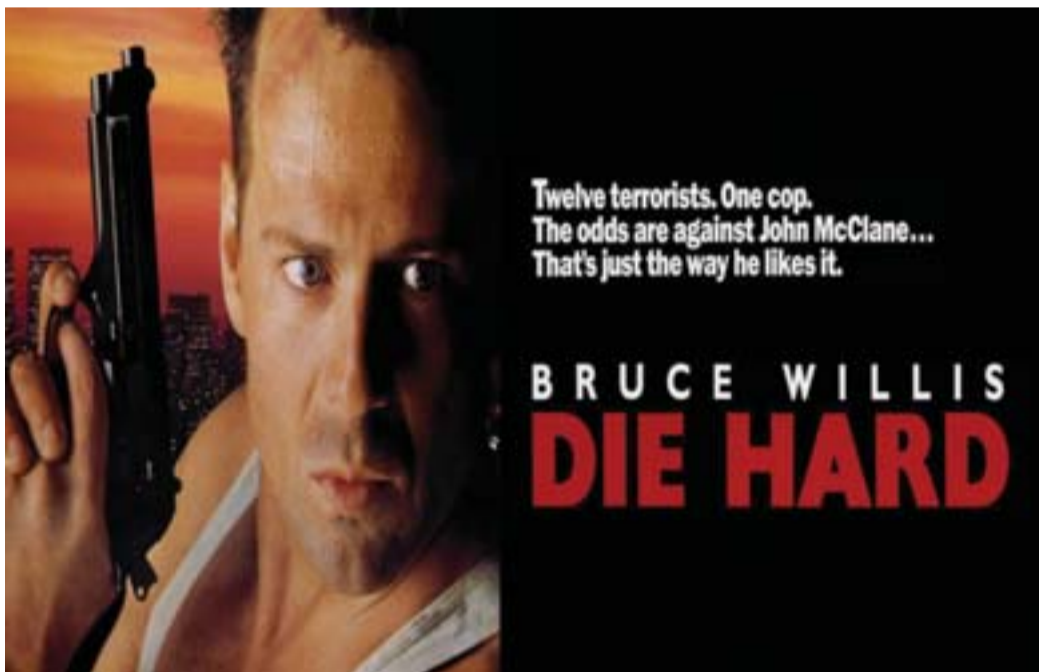
- 00:10 Invasion Earth
- 02:00 I Wouldn't Go In There
- 03:00 Evacuate Earth
- 04:00 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
- 05:00 Doomsday Preppers
- 06:00 Science Of Stupid
- 06:30 Science Of Stupid
- 07:00 Genius
- 08:00 Route Awakening
- 08:30 Route Awakening
- 09:00 Doomsday Preppers
- 10:00 Breakthrough
- 11:00 La Street Racers
- 12:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 13:00 Science Of Stupid
- 13:30 Science Of Stupid
- 14:00 Route Awakening
- 14:30 Route Awakening
- 15:00 Genius
- 16:00 Breakthrough
- 17:00 From The Ashes
- 18:30 Locked Up Abroad
- 19:00 Genius
- 20:00 Breakthrough
- 20:50 From The Ashes
- 22:30 Genius
- 23:20 Science Of Stupid
- 23:45 Science Of Stupid

OSN MOVIES HD

- 00:45 A Night At The Hoxbury
- 02:30 Ghostbusters
- 04:30 Concession
- 07:00 The Legend Of Zorro
- 09:15 Gulliver's Travels
- 11:00 S.W.A.T.
- 13:00 Ghostbusters II
- 15:00 Seventh Son
- 16:45 Steve Jobs
- 18:45 X-Men: First Class
- 21:00 Swoffish
- 22:45 The Woman In Black 2: Angel Of Death

DISCOVERY SCIENCE

- 00:30 How Do They Do It?
- 00:55 Food Factory
- 01:20 Invent It Rich



DIE HARD ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 04:05 Doctors
- 04:35 EastEnders
- 05:05 Call The Midwife
- 06:00 Father Brown
- 06:55 Doctors
- 07:25 EastEnders
- 07:55 New Tricks
- 08:45 Call The Midwife
- 09:40 Father Brown
- 10:35 Doctors
- 11:05 EastEnders
- 11:35 New Tricks
- 12:30 Call The Midwife
- 13:25 Father Brown
- 14:20 Doctors
- 14:50 EastEnders
- 15:20 New Tricks
- 16:15 Call The Midwife
- 17:10 Father Brown
- 18:05 Doctors
- 18:35 EastEnders
- 19:05 New Tricks
- 20:00 Holby City
- 21:00 Agatha Raisin
- 21:50 Uncle
- 22:20 Uncle
- 22:50 Him & Her
- 23:25 New Tricks

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 Escaping Polygamy
- 01:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
- 02:00 My Haunted House
- 03:00 Paranormal State
- 03:30 Paranormal State
- 04:00 Escaping Polygamy
- 05:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
- 06:00 My Crazy Ex
- 07:00 My Crazy Ex
- 08:00 Evil Up Close
- 09:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 10:00 Homicide Hunter
- 11:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 13:00 My Crazy Ex
- 14:00 Evil Up Close
- 15:00 Homicide Hunter
- 16:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
- 17:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 18:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 19:00 Evil Up Close
- 20:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 21:00 Homicide Hunter
- 22:00 Homicide Hunter
- 23:00 The

COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:05 Disaster Date
- 00:30 Disaster Date
- 00:55 Impractical Jokers
- 01:20 Impractical Jokers
- 01:45 Lip Sync Battle
- 02:10 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 03:25 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

EHD

- 00:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 00:55 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 01:50 El News
- 02:50 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:20 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:50 WAGs
- 04:40 WAGs
- 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 06:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 06:55 El News
- 07:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 08:10 El News: Daily Pop
- 09:10 Botched
- 10:05 Botched



A PERFECT DAY ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

- 00:20 Valley Of The Wolves
- 01:10 Monster Fish
- 02:00 The Phantom Cat
- 02:50 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 03:45 World's Weirdest (2015)
- 04:40 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 05:35 The Phantom Cat

CLASSIFIEDS



Kuwait Times
 Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM

Category	Movie/Program	Time	Category	Movie/Program	Time	
SHARQIA-1	THE MUMMY	10:15 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	12:30 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	6:00 PM
	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	11:30 AM	KHAMMIS & JUMMA (Horoob Ejbary)	2:30 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	8:00 PM
	TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	1:30 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	5:15 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	10:00 PM
	THE MUMMY	4:30 PM	TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	7:15 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	12:05 AM
SHARQIA-2	TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	6:45 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	10:15 PM		
	TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	9:30 PM	TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	12:15 AM		
	TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	12:30 AM				
SHARQIA-3	TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	12:15 AM				
MUHALAB-1	TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	12:15 AM				
MUHALAB-2	TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	12:15 AM				
MUHALAB-3	TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	12:15 AM				

SITUATION WANTED

I am Looking for job as Architecture & MEP Draftsman with 12 years' Experience in UAE & Kuwait. Proficient in AutoCAD-2000 to 2016, Knowledge in REVIT-2014, 3D-MAX, Photoshop, Micro station, Architectural Desktop, Google Sketch up, MEP-Electrical, Low voltage, Telephone, Fire Alarm, Fire Fighting, HVAC. Transferable visa-18, can join immediately. Call: 99076506
 25-6-2017

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation For Filipino ONLY Farwaniya block 1, near gulfmart. Available on June 25, Contact 94418396 or 94033908
 25-6-2017

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is

1889988

EMERGENCY 112

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	03:16
Shorook:	04:51
Duhr:	11:51
Asr:	15:25
Maghrib:	18:51
Isha:	20:24



Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 29/6/2017				Departure Flights on Thursday 29/6/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	KAC	618	Doha	14:20
KAC	102	London	00:15	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
JZR	553	Alexandria	00:15	JZR	779	Jeddah	14:25
SVA	502	Jeddah	00:20	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55
SVA	514	Riyadh	00:25	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:55
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
MSC	411	Asyut	00:30	KAC	692	Muscat	14:55
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	OMA	645	Muscat	15:10
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	KAC	562	Amman	15:10
JZR	539	Cairo	01:25	CLX	856	Luxembourg	15:20
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	KAC	502	Beirut	15:25
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:50	SAW	705	Damascus	15:50
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	RJA	640	Amman	16:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	FDB	051	Dubai	16:15
FEG	931	Alexandria	05:00	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05	JZR	535	Cairo	16:20
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	JZR	125	Bahrain	16:25
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KNE	531	Jeddah	16:35
JZR	529	Asyut	05:35	JZR	787	Riyadh	16:35
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50	NIA	361	Alexandria	16:50
BAW	157	London	06:05	KAC	118	New York	16:55
KAC	204	Lahore	06:20	KAC	542	Cairo	17:05
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
QTR	8511	Doha	06:35	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	JZR	177	Dubai	17:45
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	QTR	1080	Doha	18:05
JZR	1541	Cairo	07:10	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
JZR	503	Luxor	07:25	JZR	483	Istanbul	18:30
KAC	524	Al Najaf	07:30	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
KAC	354	Bangalore	07:50	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	744	Dammam	19:05
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	154	Istanbul	19:30
IRA	673	Ahwaz	08:35	KAC	674	Dubai	19:40
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:45
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:05	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KAC	620	Doha	19:50
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KNE	381	Taif	20:10
FDK	803	Damascus	10:00	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
KAC	774	Riyadh	10:45	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	20:20
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	JZR	189	Dubai	20:25
PAL	668	Manila	11:00	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
SVR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	564	Amman	21:00
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	KAC	168	Paris	21:05
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:15	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:10
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:15
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:30	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	FDB	8053	Dubai	21:25
JZR	239	Amman	12:40	KAC	676	Dubai	21:35
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50	QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
FEG	933	Sohag	12:55	NIA	161	Cairo	22:10
MEA	406	Beirut	13:00	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25
KAC	514	Tehran	13:10	JZR	185	Dubai	22:55
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	JZR	241	Amman	22:55
KAC	522	Al Najaf	13:40	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
KAC	672	Dubai	13:55	MSC	405	Sohag	23:30
KAC	792	Madinah	13:55	FDB	071	Dubai	23:35
QTR	1078	Doha	14:05	THY	764	Istanbul	23:45
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10				
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15				
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15				
KAC	352	Kochi	14:20				

CROSSWORD 1646



ACROSS

1. The portion of the vertebrate nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord.
4. The wife or widow of a czar.
11. A disorderly outburst or tumult.
15. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
16. A place where ships can take on or discharge cargo.
17. (Greek mythology) Daughter of Zeus and Demeter.
18. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
19. Growing old.
21. Some point in the air.
23. Lacking general education or knowledge.
26. English essayist (1775-1834).
27. A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
30. Easily irritated or annoyed.
32. Sour or bitter in taste.
38. A change from one state to the opposite state.
43. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
44. The atomic weight of an element that has the same combining capacity as a given weight of another element.
45. Made agreeably cold (especially by ice).
47. Type genus of the Anatidae.
48. Soviet physicist who worked on low temperature physics (1908-1968).
50. The muscular back part of the shank.
51. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
52. Be earlier in time.
54. Strike with disgust or revulsion.
56. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
57. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
60. A rechargeable battery with a nickel cathode and a cadmium anode.
65. Green algae common in freshwater lakes of limestone districts.
68. A heavy gray-white metallic element.
71. A unit of heat equal to the amount of heat required to raise one pound of water one degree Fahrenheit at one atmosphere pressure.
72. Feeling or caused to feel uneasy and self-conscious.
75. Port city that is the capital and largest city of Latvia.
76. Tag the base runner to get him out.
77. Large and brightly colored handkerchief.
78. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.

DOWN

1. Burrowing marine mollusk living on sand or mud.
2. Medium-sized tree having glossy lanceolate leaves.
3. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
4. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand and its people.
5. The capital of Croatia.
6. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
7. A run that is the result of the batter's performance.
8. Convert into ions.
9. A solid lump of a precious metal (especially gold) as found in the earth.
10. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
11. So scary as to cause chills and shudders.
12. Constituting the full quantity or extent.
13. A native or inhabitant of Iran.
14. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
20. A polyvalent metallic element that resembles chromium and tungsten in its properties.
22. Large west African tree having large palmately lobed leaves and axillary cymose panicles of small white flowers and one-winged seeds.
24. Government agency created in 1974 to license and regulate nuclear power plants.
25. Put to use.
28. Someone who cuts and delivers ice.
29. A heavy morocco often used in bookbinding.
31. A gray tetravalent metallic element that resembles zirconium chemically and is found in zirconium minerals.
33. Food made from dough of flour or meal and usually raised with yeast or baking powder and then baked.
34. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
35. Obvious and dull.
36. Partially carbonized vegetable matter saturated with water.
37. An independent group of closely related Chadic languages spoken in the area between the Biu-Mandara and East Chadic languages.
39. Short and fat.
40. Cause to run off the tracks.
41. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
42. An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
46. A ductile malleable reddish-brown corrosion-resistant diamagnetic metallic element.
49. Coffee with the caffeine removed.
53. Dutch navigator who was the first European to discover Tasmania and New Zealand (1603-1659).
55. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
58. An ancient city in northern Portugal.
59. Food mixtures either arranged on a plate or tossed and served with a moist dressing.
61. A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.
62. A team of professional baseball players who play and travel together.
63. Lacking in liveliness or charm or surprise.
64. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
66. Queen of the Olympian gods in ancient Greek mythology.
67. Harsh or corrosive in tone.

Sunday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You have great internal strength and tend to be independent, preferring to lean on yourself more than on others. You may find opportunities to be self-motivating-certainly no dependency here. This afternoon you may decide to sign up to work in a trade-day activity or a festival of sorts for this next weekend. You look forward to earning a little extra money. Any activity that pulls in a little extra cash will also create an opportunity for you to show off your talents so also consider displaying your own talents. Family matters are enjoyed most of the late afternoon. Being more involved with family now may involve some picture taking, social get-togethers, etc. Communicating ideas, experiences and current affairs with loved ones is most important today.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are very communicative-not just a little curious. You enjoy talking and writing skills. If you are in a job that calls for a creative expression, you can excel in your presentation. Working with another person speeds the work along to a completion this afternoon. At home you may become involved in much letter-writing or phone conversations with family members you do not get to see very often. You could be most persuasive with others and moving in speech and communication. Study, research and investigations of all kinds appeal to you as well. If you are not traveling now, you will be thinking about it soon. The best places to visit, names of bed and breakfast places and the popular restaurants are topics of conversation this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You can be peaceful, calm and undisturbed regardless of what is going on around you. You are a genius at bringing out the best in others and this is something you take great pride in for today. Teaching, translating and conducting a tour or an orchestra are just a few of the things you could excel in today. An elderly couple or other people show their gratefulness to you for some help or advice you shared recently. Ideas-philosophy and religion-are what make your life stimulating. Travel opportunities may come to your attention this afternoon and you can make future plans with your mate or loved ones. Before you relax this evening, you spend some time caring for animals or children. Tonight is for relaxing with bubbles, music and your heart's desire.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

A talent of yours is required in the business place. There might be a convention in which your company is preparing to be represented or perhaps there is a new opening of a branch company. Whatever the case, it could be that you will play the piano or greet people or help in some other way. You might set aside some time to visit with a past friend that appears on the scene. The prospects for a spectacular day are promising. You help make the day a positive one for others. You manage to spend a lot of time in the spotlight. With family or friends this evening, there is talk of a vacation. There is a love of the sea and a great desire to take some time off for a while. Travel may be possible before the middle of next month. There is talk about the types of travel.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You could find yourself feeling rebellious and independent regarding your current situation. Some difficult employee may bring opposition to a group, or just strain relationships. There is the possibility of new visions or sudden insights into your ability to solve problems and others take your lead. Progress in the workplace is a miraculous thing this day as there are unusual circumstances. You naturally gravitate toward positions of power. Others see in you a great practical ability and will easily accept you as a leader. This could be a very political time for you. It certainly is a time in which you can accomplish much for the workplace or your community. A short story has a beginning this evening and you will be pleased with the ending.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

It's important to keep your perspective with a close relationship. Something you thought was resolved may, once again, come to your attention. Cool logic will help you communicate. Learn from past experiences and agree to disagree. This way, there is forward movement. You have the mental drive that is necessary for political assignments and may find yourself enjoying the tasks. Put your artistic talents to work improving your home this afternoon. Colorful accents will brighten the scene and the psyche. Consider an herb garden in a bright and sunny corner of a room. Consult those that share your space so that everyone is able to give some input. New ways of appreciating and loving may be possible now. A loved one shows off a new talent tonight.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Fate sends opportunity your way if you listen to your instincts and give your natural sense of curiosity a free rein. Travel and education can help uncover some of the answers that will give you the power or advantage you seek. Allow yourself these experiences. Mass communications can be financially rewarding in some way-think about advertising, broadcasting, publishing, etc. Something as simple as owning a computer and belonging to a network would be what puts you into a new and rewarding business. The way in which you respond to change and maintain your independence is a major focus now. A young person in your family wants more independence-give this person responsibilities and independence will come.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Mysterious or mystical information fires your imagination and you may find there could be more imagination than knowledge for now. Keep an open mind and learn all you can, but do not take everything you hear for gospel. You may take action today, when an issue dear to your heart comes to your attention. Your theories are good but facts will get you support for what you want to accomplish. Work on research and creating a plan that will develop some positive outcomes. Patience is a key word when it comes to dealing with people-timing is essential. You may be pleasantly surprised with a call or letter you receive this afternoon. Contacts with an old neighbor or friend bring about good memories from the past.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Situations and people you thought you could rely on might not be so solid today. These are the ways we learn about people. It is very important that you do not hold grudges and you learn from your experience with others. Look for the truth in all of your affairs. There is a feeling that things will work out in positive ways. You should be able to improve your security now. This is a time of independence when you may try new and different things. This is also a time during which you may be able to speed up your pace to reach your goals and acknowledge your life's purpose. You could receive unexpected help from someone older or from authority figures. Accept the good advice that somebody older gives you today-you won't go wrong.



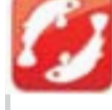
Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your physical vitality, psychological or spiritual goals are highly emphasized now. If there is something in your life that works against your progress-now is the time to weed through and eliminate or in some way divert or control the problem. This means an abundance of old clothes or too many animals or not enough time for a good night's rest, etc. This is not a favorable time for establishing new life directions, but is a good time for creating a healthy balance. Stay away from arguments and possible hard feelings at this time. After the workday is over consider inviting a friend or loved one to enjoy a movie with you. You are a master of applied psychology and will be able to apply a subtle influence on a young person in your family tonight.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

The idea of how you want your day to go and the plans of those around you may be in conflict with others today. With communication, compromise and the willingness to share, today can turn out to be one of your best family or friendship days. The people or person you live with may agree to share or trade some book, equipment or chore with you today. Your eagerness to work or play with others and to be helpful will create some bonds that will last forever. This is an important time to be patient and tread lightly when it comes to indulgence and overextending yourself. Whether your relationships at this time are partnerships, work and social or personal, they are very important and can have a very strong influence on your career and private life.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Although work is accomplished with little or no problems, there is a feeling of low energy. This will pass but you can use the afternoon as an opportunity to clear away some unfinished business. Those old books you would like to read again may better serve you as a gift to the library. Keep your favorites, but make room for the new books that will be coming into your life. You may want to dedicate one room of your living quarters as a library or hobby room. Now is the time to be creative-perhaps after you remove the old newspapers or magazines and as your energy returns you could create an indoor herb garden that will be relaxing as you read. Education in law and philosophy impacts your lifestyle now. You may find a way to work for the school.

WORD SEARCH

Geometry

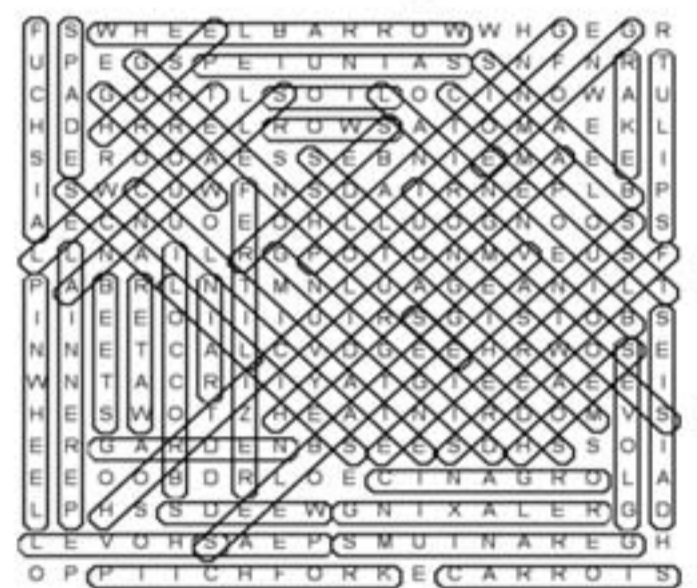
Find and circle all of the Geometry words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| ACUTE | EQUATION | PERIMETER | SIDE |
| APOTHEM | EQUILANGULAR | PERPENDICULAR | SLANT |
| AREA | EQUILATERAL | POLYGON | SLOPE |
| BASE | FACE | POLYHEDRON | SOLIDS |
| BISECT | FORMULA | PYRAMID | SPHERE |
| CHORD | HEIGHT | PYTHAGORAS | SQUARE |
| CIRCLE | HYPOTENUSE | QUADRILATERAL | THEOREM |
| CIRCUMFERENCE | INTERSECT | RADIUS | TRANSVERSAL |
| CONE | ISOSCELES | RHOMBUS | TRAPEZOID |
| CONGRUENT | LEGS | SCALENE | TRIANGLE |
| COORDINATES | MIDPOINT | SECANT | VERTEX |
| CYLINDER | OBTUSE | SEGMENT | VOLUME |
| DIAMETER | PARALLELOGRAM | | |

Sunday's Solution

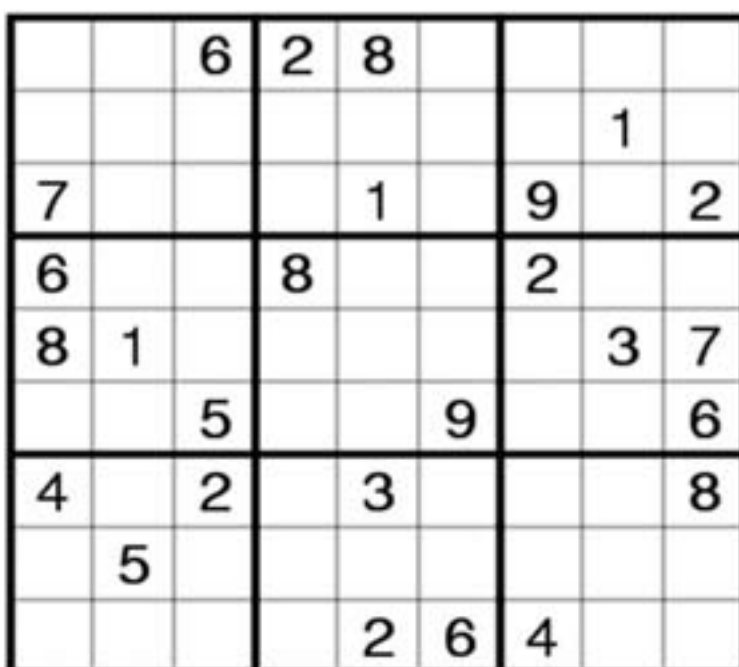
Gardening



- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| ANNUALS | GARDEN | ORGANIC | SEEDS |
| BEANS | GERANIUMS | PEAS | SHOVEL |
| BIENNIAL | GLOVES | PERENNIAL | SOIL |
| BROCCOLI | GNOPE | PETUNIAS | SPADE |
| CARROTS | GREENHOUSE | PINWHEEL | SUNSHINE |
| COMPOST | GROW | PITCH FORK | TOMATOES |
| CULTIVATE | HOES | PLANTING | TROWEL |
| DAISIES | HORTICULTURE | RAIN | TULIPS |
| DIGGING | HOSE | RAKE | VEGETABLES |
| FERTILIZER | HYDRANGEA | RELAXING | WATER |
| FLOWERS | LILACS | ROSES | WEEDS |
| FUCHSIA | LILIES | ROWS | WHEELBARROW |
| | MARIGOLDS | | |

The hidden message is: WHERE FLOWERS BLOOM SO DOES HOPE

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



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

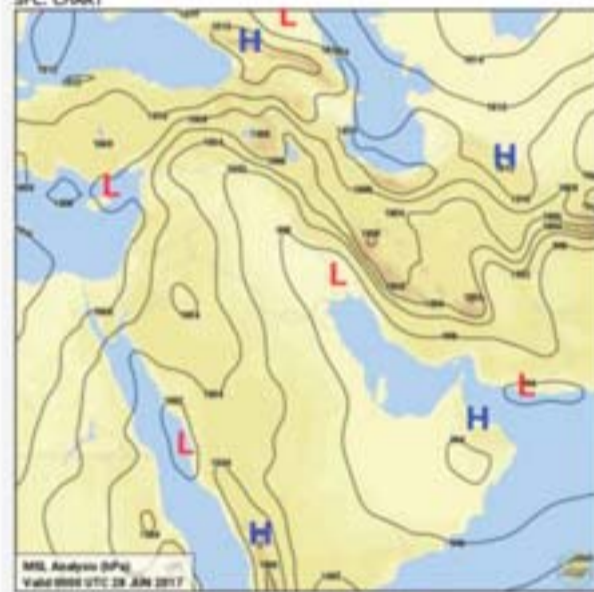
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 28/06/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 49 °C

By Day: Very hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 30 km/h.
By Night: Relatively hot with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 40 km/h with a chance for blowing dust over open areas later on.

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	Dust	Very hot + causing rising dust	Very hot	Very hot
Min Temp °C	33	32	31	31
Max Temp °C	51	49	48	49
Wind Direction	northerly westerly	northerly westerly	northerly westerly to variable	variable
Wind Speed km/h	25 - 55	15 - 50	08 - 30	08 - 20

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	35	48	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	30	49	
ABDULY	29	49	
BUBIYAN	29	48	
JAHRA	33	49	
FAILAKA ISLAND	27	48	
SALMIYAH	34	45	
AHMADI	35	43	
JAL ALIYAH	29	48	
QARDH ISLAND	31	41	
UMM AL-MARADEM	32	41	
MUWASIB	33	47	
WAFRA	34	48	
SALMIYAH	30	47	
MUTRIBA	29	50	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	48
Min Temp (°C)	28
Max Rel Hum (%)	18
Min Rel Hum (%)	05
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	46 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Prayer Times

Fajr	03:16
Sunrise	04:51
Zuhr	11:51
Aer	15:25
Sunset	18:51
Isha	20:24



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)	
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	
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-Rfae	25333501
Urologists	
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 Gupare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
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	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foaid Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Family Doctor	Psychiatrists	Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	Internists, Chest & Heart
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581	Dr Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
		Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
		Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
		Dr. Verginia s. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
		Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
		Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
		Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
		Dr. Salem soso	22618787
		Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
		Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
		Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
		Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
		Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
		Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
		Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
		Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Physiotherapists & VD	Rheumatologists:	Internist, Chest & Heart	Consultant Cardiologist
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330	Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888	Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924	DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291	Dr. Mohammad Zubaid	MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288	Assistant Professor Of Medicine	Head, Division of Cardiology
		Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
		Dr. Farida Al-Habib	2611555-2622555
		MD, PH.D, FACC	
		Inaya German Medical Center	
		Te: 2575077	
		Fax: 25723123	

MUSIC & MOVIES



This image released by Netflix shows Millie Bobby Brown in a scene from, 'Stranger Things.' — AP photos



This image released by Oscilloscope shows Royalty Hightower in a scene from 'The Fits,' a film about an 11-year-old girl who learns about gender and identity through dance.



This image released by Twentieth Century Fox shows Dafne Keen, right, and Hugh Jackman in a scene from 'Logan.'



This image released by Netflix shows Seo-Hyun Ahn in a scene from 'Okja.'

TV, films turning to young girls for their new action stars

From the murderous Laura in "Logan" to the mysterious Eleven in "Stranger Things" to the audacious determination of Mija in "Okja," opening Wednesday, powerful young girls are starring in mainstream action fare like never before. Though Nancy Drew was solving mysteries in the 1930s and Buffy slayed vampires all through high school in the late 1990s, young girls are rarely shown as heroes in programs aimed at general audiences, said Mary Celeste Kearney, director of gender studies and a professor of film, television and theater at University of Notre Dame.

"Girls have seen these figures... but when they've looked to mainstream stuff and what their brothers and their dads and boys are watching, those girls are never there," Kearney said. "And now they are, and that's huge." It means girls don't have to look to grown up heroes like Katniss Everdeen in "The Hunger Games" or Rey in "Star Wars: The Force Awakens." Like 10-year-old Elliot on the flying bicycle in "E.T. the Extraterrestrial," now girls are having awesome genre adventures as powerful young kids onscreen. The Duffer Brothers said gender was never a question when it came to creating the super-powered star character in their Netflix series "Stranger Things." Eleven, played by 13-year-old Millie Bobby Brown, can move things with her mind and is the fascinating secret friend of a group of pre-teen boys in the fictional town of Hawkins, Indiana.

An international adventure film

"Eleven was always a girl. I don't even remember when or why we made that decision except that was always the case,"

Matt Duffer said in a recent interview. "Eleven was the centerpiece of the show for us always and was always going to be this girl who escaped the lab... I think we liked the idea because it wasn't something we had seen before." A second little girl is joining the cast for the show's second season, which premieres Oct 31. Writer-director Bong Joon Ho intentionally made his central human character a girl in "Okja," an international adventure film named for the genetically engineered six-ton "super pig" at its heart. "In cartoons or movies, young girls are often portrayed as characters that need to be protected or rescued. I wanted to do the opposite," the filmmaker said in an email. "I liked that a young female character was the unstoppable guardian of a creature, and that she had to charge and break through all obstacles that stood in her way. I liked this feeling."

Played by 13-year-old An Seo Hyun, Mija has grown up with Okja, and risks everything to protect the massive creature when the corporation that sponsored the super-pig program comes to claim its product. One thing that's missing from "Okja" and the other projects is a stereotypical little girl who needs saving. "Logan" writer-director James Mangold can't take credit for creating the young female mutant Laura - he mined the character from "X-Men" history. But Mangold cast an exceptional actress, 11-year-old Dafne Keen, and successfully brought a killer female character to the ultra-male world of big-screen superheroes.

He chose to make Laura a child rather than the teenager she is in the comics because of the bond it would allow with Hugh Jackman's character and the shock it might elicit when

Laura draws her claws. Like Hit-Girl in 2010's "Kick-Ass," Laura is a character created in her father's image. She's Wolverine's daughter and has just as much flesh-shredding power as her dad. "I did think the shocking nature of Laura's ability to kill savagely would be all the more shocking, in a really wonderful way, that it was a girl and not a boy, that that lethality would be exhibited by this little girl," Mangold said. "I wondered whether we could pull it off, whether the audience would truly believe this level of violence and intensity trapped inside an 11-year-old body. To me that made it even more exciting to put it on the screen."

Empowered characters

Mangold said he took care with Laura's character, who's mute for the first half of the film and speaks only Spanish in the second, to "undermine the kind of cute factor of what this young woman would be and allow her to exist as her own unique character." It's notable, too, that these young heroines are not all embodied by white actresses. Kearney says it's more than just the "Wonder Woman" effect inspiring these empowered characters: "History has everything to do with this and the gender politics of different historical moments." The powerful women and girls onscreen reflect more progressive gender attitudes, she said, adding that some writers and producers may have been inspired to create such heroes out of a desire to see more real-life female leaders.

She noted the recent crop of characters all exist in "fantasy narratives," where people can have super powers. "It's not in our reality; it's in some other reality, and that's really disheart-

ening if you think about it in that way," she said. "Like girls are great as action heroes, but not as president of the United States, not in real life." Consider that "Billy Elliott," the charming, realistic 2000 independent film about an 11-year-old boy who learns about gender and identity through dance, became a sleeper hit that was adapted for the stage. "The Fits," a similarly realistic, 2016 indie film about an 11-year-old girl who does the same, didn't get the same reception.

Girl action heroes are a start, though, especially ones with mass-market appeal. "They have a powerful, powerful cultural impact," Kearney said, "which is girls seeing these things and boys seeing girls do these things.... A boy can't go and see 'Logan' and not see a girl as powerful as Logan." The Duffer Brothers note that Eleven is the show's most popular character and best-selling action figure. Mangold said that when his pre-teen sons visited the set during the making of "Logan," they were more interested in Laura than Wolverine himself. "They were completely mesmerized by her," he said. "It's really refreshing for everyone to see a kid, especially a young girl, who's not a kewpie doll first or a dimpled smile first, you know? That what's really going on there is someone in conflict, someone who's searching for something, someone who's capable - someone also, by the way, in my film who ends up offering pretty intense advice and wisdom and stability." — AP

Cult series 'Twin Peaks' makes long-awaited return

"Twin Peaks," the quirky TV show turned cult classic that gave way to a new age of television, makes its hotly anticipated return Sunday, nearly three decades after its debut. Little has emerged about the third season's 18 episodes, the first of which will air Sunday evening on the cable network Showtime, which took the series over from ABC, home of the first two seasons.

Even most of the show's actors are in the dark about all the details of the small-town drama's revival-only Kyle MacLachlan, who returns in his role as FBI special agent Dale Cooper, was able to have a single read of the entire script. Although viewers have known since the beginning of the second season who killed Laura Palmer—a high school student whose shocking murder launched the plot—an air of mystery lingers. Most of the show's original cast members have returned to reprise their characters' roles nearly a quarter-century after the second season wrapped. Director David Lynch, who co-created the early '90s series, also returned to direct the reboot of the cult series, his first major project since he directed the film "Inland Empire" 11 years ago.

But no matter how the third season of "Twin Peaks" plays out, the show has already cemented its status as a TV masterpiece. "David Lynch proved that there wasn't just one way of making television," said Damon Lindelof, creator of the hit TV show "Lost," at a Showtime preview segment. Contemporary to "The Cosby Show" and "Roseanne," "Twin Peaks" emerged as unclassifiable—a series whose narrative style, rhythm and music took a striking departure from standard TV fare toward a more cinematic feel. "You felt like watching a movie, but a movie that went on for hours and hours," Lindelof said.

Neither soap opera nor crime series—but simultaneously a bit of both—the show defied all labels, adding to its recipe for success a pinch of the supernatural. Madchen Amick, who plays the waitress Shelly Johnson, told the magazine

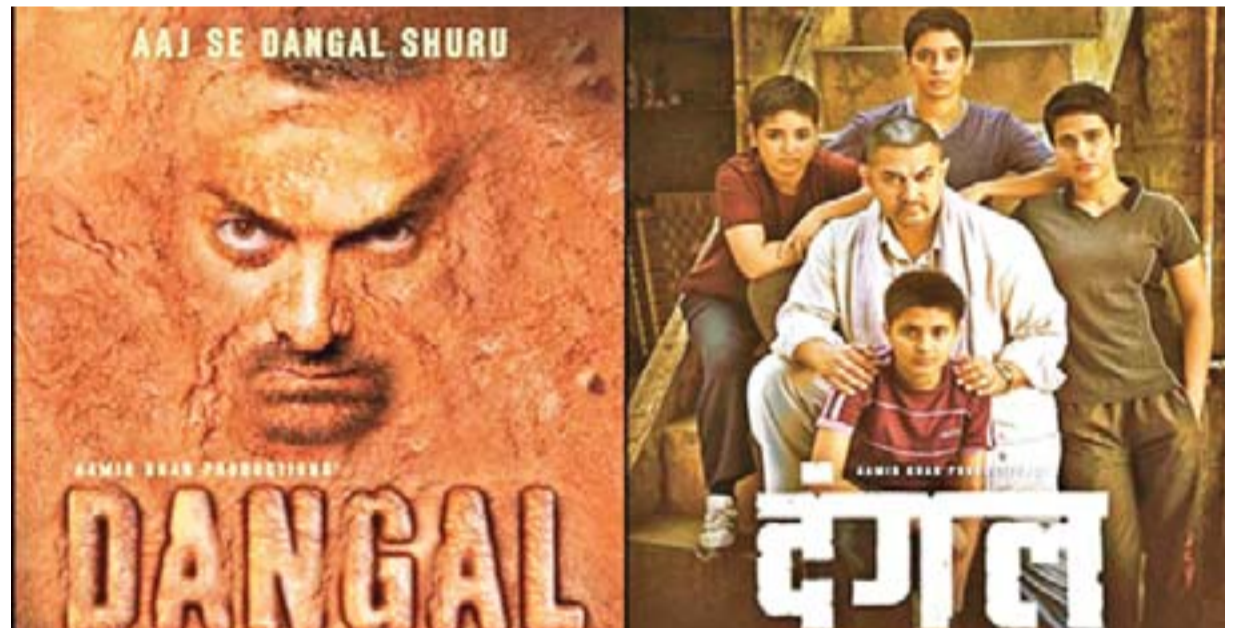
Entertainment Weekly that the show "gave the audience what they were craving, which was intelligence and mystery and something different."

Cinematic television

The enigmatic series deliberately left gray areas when traditional television took pains to avoid them. Each episode lasted about an hour, "but it actually necessitated discussion following it," Lindelof said. The show quickly gained a loyal fan base, which has grown decades later thanks to a new generation of devotees who took to binge-watching episodes. For MacLachlan, "the fans kept the memory alive and they're about to be rewarded."

"I hope that they're going to be happy with what we've done." When the actor went to work on other shows—including the hits "Desperate Housewives" and "Sex and the City"—he said writers would often come to him to sing the praises of "Twin Peaks." "The writers would say to me: 'I didn't really think it was possible to do this, but because of 'Twin Peaks,' suddenly I felt empowered, this is my vision.'"

But Gary Edgerton, a television expert at Butler University, said that while the show was in some ways "unlike anything that had been on television before," the influence of shows like "The Sopranos" was "even more significant." "The idea of cinematic television really found its footing and became much more realized when the emphasis went away from broadcast networks and went into the cable and satellite sector," Edgerton said. There, he said, "audiences were relatively smaller, although still substantial, and the show runners had great ambitions in realizing television as art." "But the question is, would we necessarily have had a Sopranos on television if we didn't have Twin Peaks?" — AFP



Bollywood's 'Dangal' sets new benchmarks for success abroad

Bollywood star Aamir Khan's hit wrestling movie "Dangal" has become the first Indian film to make 20 billion rupees, analysts said yesterday, as it takes China's cinemas by storm. The Hindi movie's record-breaking run has set a new and previously unthought of box office benchmark for Bollywood films abroad while also highlighting the value of the Chinese audience to Indian filmmakers. "Dangal has crossed the 2,000 crore mark (20 billion rupees or \$310 million) which has never been done before," Indian film trade analyst Ramesh Bala told AFP, pointing out that previous top Bollywood grosser "PK" made just \$120 million.

"Even 1,000 crore was a distant dream just a few months back. The bar has now been set very high," he added. "Dangal," directed by Nitesh Tiwari, is based on the true story of wrestling coach Mahavir Singh Phogat, who defies the odds

by raising his daughters Geeta and Babita Phogat to become champion wrestlers. Geeta won a gold medal for India at the 2010 Commonwealth Games while her sister topped the podium at the same event in 2014. "Dangal" is a Hindi word used to describe a wrestling competition. The movie was released in India on December 23 last year and quickly became the highest-grossing Bollywood film of all time, beating the 2014 science fiction film "PK," which also stars Khan.

Gender discrimination and strict parenting are among the film's themes. The issues appear to have struck an emotional response with Chinese viewers, who have alone contributed around \$190 million to "Dangal's" takings, said Bala. "Dangal" has become the highest-grossing non-Hollywood foreign film released in China," the analyst added. — AFP



Cast member Adele Renee attends the world premiere of the Showtime limited-event series 'Twin Peaks' at the Ace Hotel in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

'DRAGON TATTOO' STAR MICHAEL NYQVIST DEAD AT 56

Michael Nyqvist, the Swedish star of the original "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" films, died at the age of 56 on Tuesday after battling lung cancer, his manager said. "On behalf of Michael Nyqvist's representatives and family, it is with deep sadness that I can confirm that our beloved Michael, one of Sweden's most respected and accomplished actors, has passed away quietly surrounded by family after a year long battle with lung cancer," Alissa Goodman said in a statement to AFP.

"Michael's joy and passion were infectious to those who knew and loved him. His charm and charisma were undeniable, and his love for the arts was felt by all who had the pleasure of working with him." Nyqvist, who had been acting in his native Sweden since the early 1980s, won global fame and critical acclaim for his

role opposite Noomi Rapace in three movies based on Stieg Larsson's "Millennium" novels. "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" and its two sequels, all released in 2009, made more than \$215 million at box offices worldwide.

Nyqvist played Mikael Blomkvist, an investigative reporter who teamed up with feisty rebel hacker-turned-detective Lisbeth Salander (Rapace) in the first movie as they searched for the disappeared niece of a business tycoon. Nyqvist—who had more than 50 film credits—went on to forge a successful career in Hollywood, starring in "Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol" (2011), "John Wick" (2014) and "Frank and Lola" (2016). In 2010, Nyqvist published "N%or barnet lagt sig" ("Just After Dreaming"), an acclaimed memoir detailing his earliest childhood memories after his adoption, experiences at theatre



This file picture taken on January 4, 2017 shows Swedish actor Michael Nyqvist in Stockholm. — AFP

FASHION

Arab girls in another perspective

Most people who follow me from the very beginning know that I started my page on social media because of my love for makeup, and sharing different looks and products with my followers. I was obsessed with MAC cosmetics and I used to post different looks using their products all the time. Ever since I started experimenting with make up and using it, I started with MAC, specifically their lipsticks. MAC lipsticks were the first products that made me fall in love with make up.

MAC is genuinely one of my all time favorite brands that I've tried and worked with. I'm so grateful that social media has given me the opportunity to work with them on many different collaborations, as well as my most recent and biggest collaboration, which was creating my own lipstick. At the beginning, working with MAC was a huge deal for me, even before the collaboration of the Real Fouz lipstick. When they first suggested me that something like this might happen, it was an achieve-

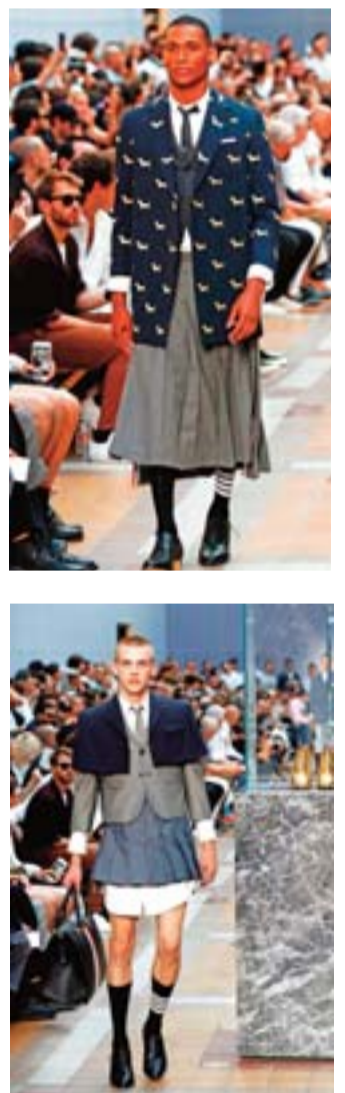
ment. I was so honored by the fact that they even considered me as someone they would want to work with and being the first and only Arab influencer to get this opportunity was also a huge deal.

Creating "The Real Fouz" lipstick and seeing how people reacted to it was like a dream come true. The whole process was so different and exciting for me, especially choosing the lipstick shade, which I'm so happy with and it's honestly become my most worn lipstick these past few months. I didn't want to pick a color that people weren't used to seeing me wearing; I wanted something that matched my personality and I made sure to include my followers and supporters from the beginning stages of creating the lipstick.

From choosing the shade of the lipstick to visiting the MAC labs in Canada and creating the lipstick for the first time to finally launching was an amazing journey. Feeling the support of the entire gulf and the amount of people that showed up at the launch and bought the

lipstick, as well as the fact that it sold out online within 30 minutes all over gulf, was an indescribable feeling. I'm so glad that a global brand like MAC shed some light on Arab girls and gave us the opportunity to show the world that we are successful, sophisticated and independent and not the stereotype that many people around the world have in mind.

To me, it isn't just that I created a lipstick with MAC, its much more than that. It was the whole concept of a global brand working with an Arab influencer and how foreigners got a chance to see Arab girls in another perspective. I'm so proud that I was able to represent the Arab world and Arab women and a huge thank you to everyone who made this possible; I couldn't have done it without your love and support.



Models present creations by US designer Thom Browne, during the Men's Fashion Week for the Spring and Summer 2018 collection in Paris, on June 25, 2017. — AFP photos

Von Furstenberg, in her 'third act,' focuses on philanthropy

Designer Diane von Furstenberg's current favorite model is, not surprisingly, tall - more than 100 feet, actually. And though this model's 225 tons don't exactly fit into a DVF wrap dress, she does have some rather iconic accessories: a tablet and, most importantly, a torch. Von Furstenberg's latest project - part of a redirection of her energies in the year since she handed over the creative reins of her company - is the Statue of Liberty. More specifically, it's a new museum that aims to better serve the four million-plus visitors who come to Liberty Island each year, since the vast majority can't get into the statue itself due to increased post-9/11 security. The goal is to raise \$100 million for the project, which is slated to open in 2019; Von Furstenberg has already raised \$74 million in a year and a half, according to the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation.

But the veteran designer, who recently turned 70, says she had one key request when signing on as chair of the fundraising campaign: "Don't call me chairwoman. Give me the title of temporary godmother." It's an apt title in a number of ways. For one thing, "Diane really is a godmother of fashion," says Steven Kolb, president and CEO of the Council of Fashion Designers of America, where von Furstenberg serves as board chair. In her role - she was president of the organization for about a decade - she is a key influence and source of support for up-and-coming designers, Kolb says.

Women's leadership organization

And as she shifts into the latest stage of her career -

a year ago, she ceded her company's creative director position to Scottish designer Jonathan Saunders - she has focused increasingly on projects that promote women, including her annual DVF awards, now in their eighth year. She also often speaks to groups of women and girls, and is on the board of Vital Voices, the women's leadership organization. In her CFDA role, she notes, she writes to designers before Fashion Week, reminding them to avoid using models who are "too thin and clearly starving themselves to death." And the flashy CFDA Awards ceremony that she presides over each year had a more political bent earlier this month, honoring three women for their roles in the Women's March on Washington in January: feminist author and leader Gloria Steinem, Planned Parenthood head Cecile Richards, and singer/actress Janelle Monae.

"Fashion is a reflection of our time," she explains. "The women's march was a very major thing ... there's really a sense of activism that has happened. So it was natural to give them this award." The designer calls this time in her life and career her "third act." "I always used to say that life has three moments," she says, sitting in her downtown office on a recent afternoon. "One is development, until about (age) 30. One is enjoyment, and then the third, the last season of your life, is somehow about fulfillment." She says she'd been preparing for the milestone of turning 70 - which she reached on New Year's Eve - for about a year, asking herself, "What kind of senior citizen do I want to be? How do I stay relevant?" What she decided, she says, was to use her voice to focus on women

from the inside, rather than the outside. "All my life was about creating a product, fashion, something (women) could use to be the woman they want to be, and now in my third act I want to use my voice to help women be the woman they want to be, but from the inside," she says. "Because it doesn't matter how successful and powerful women are ... sometimes you wake up in the morning and you feel like a total loser. I know I do."

An actual prince

When the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation came calling, von Furstenberg says, she thought, "Oh my God, my husband is going to divorce me if I join one more board." She also professes to not enjoy asking people for money. But then, as she recounted to guests last week at a sunset event on Liberty Island, she read about the statue's story, and found herself riveted. As for the foundation, they were looking for "a woman who spoke French," quips president Stephen Briganti. He says the Belgian-born von Furstenberg was also perfect because she herself arrived as an aspiring designer in America - those jersey dresses in her trunks - by boat, catching sight of Lady Liberty as she arrived. (Unlike most immigrants, though, she had just married an actual prince.)

Von Furstenberg says her new project was also inspired by her late mother. As she recounts in her 2014 memoir, "The Woman I Wanted to Be," the designer's mother served in the Resistance in Belgium during World War II, was arrested in May 1944 and sent to Auschwitz. She was one of the very few who



Designer Diane von Furstenberg appears during an interview in her office in the Meat Packing District in New York. — AP

survived - the camp was liberated by the Soviets in January 1945 - and when she made it back to Belgium she wrote on a form that she was "in excellent health" even though, her daughter says, she weighed about 50 pounds. "My mother always said God saved her so she could give me life," she says. "And she used to add, 'You are my torch of freedom! So it's kind of the end of a cycle.'" — AP

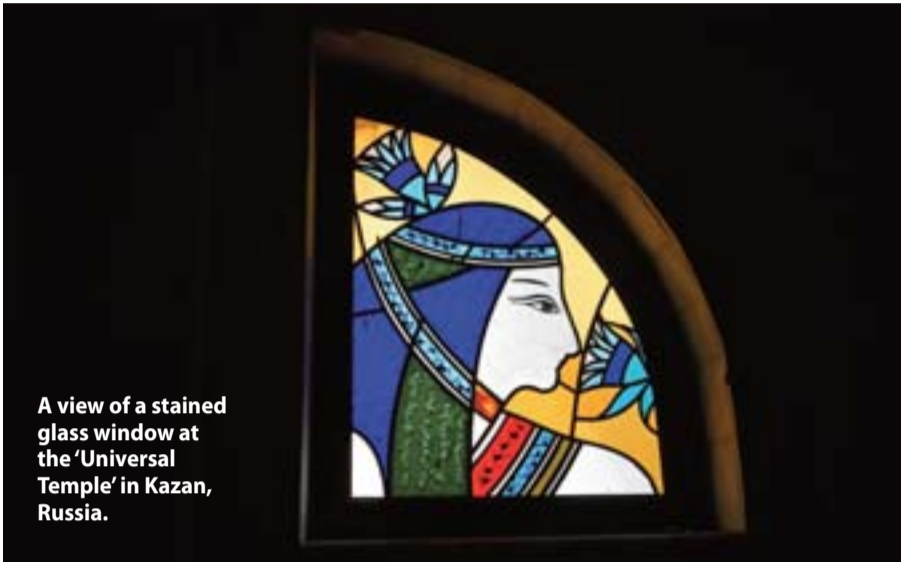
FEATURE



A view of the 'Universal Temple' in Kazan, Russia.



A view of the 'Universal Temple' in Kazan, Russia. — AFP photos



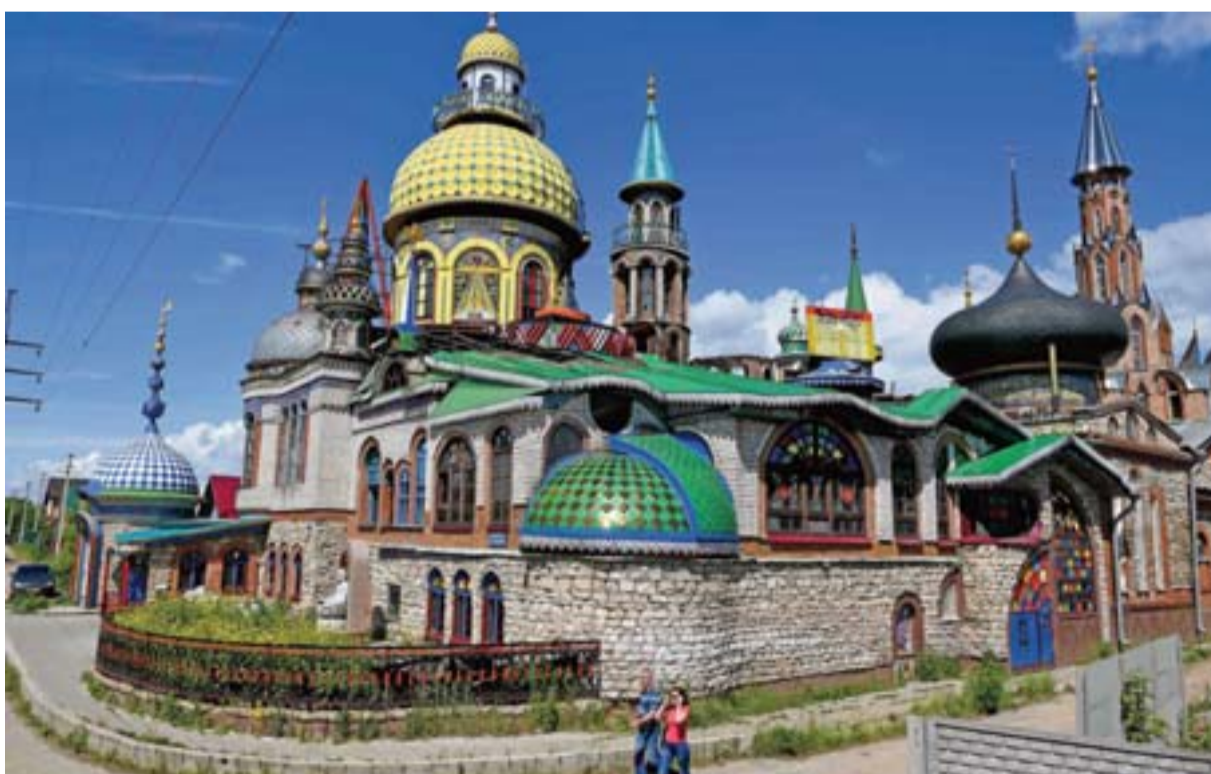
A view of a stained glass window at the 'Universal Temple' in Kazan, Russia.



A detail of the 'Universal Temple' in Kazan, Russia.



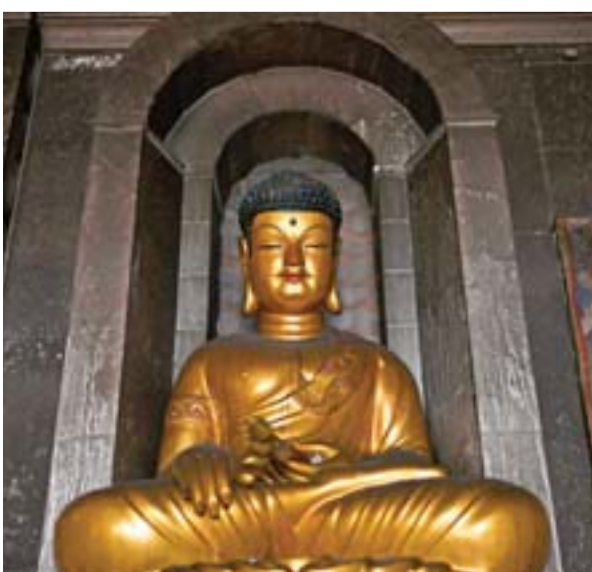
An interior view of the 'Universal Temple' in Kazan, Russia.



A view of the 'Universal Temple' in Kazan, Russia.



Icons in the 'Universal Temple' in Kazan, Russia.



A Buddha statue at the 'Universal Temple' in Kazan, Russia.



A Buddha statue outside the 'Universal Temple' in Kazan, Russia.



A small sculpture of an Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun at the 'Universal Temple' in Kazan, Russia.

Artist's dream of unity alive in Russian 'Universal Temple'

This place was not intended to hold religious ceremonies, it is a symbolic location'

Christian crosses and Islamic crescent moons jut into the sky from the multicolored roof of the "Universal Temple" in the provincial Russian city of Kazan. The mosaic-covered jumble of minarets, spires and onion domes is the eccentric creation of local artist Ildar Khanov, who dreamt up until his death in 2013 of uniting all of the world's major faiths in his childhood home. Khanov's vision was to foster understanding between religions in Russia's multi-ethnic Tatarstan region—a majority Tatar Muslim area nearly 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) east of Moscow that is a melting pot of different cultures.

Now the job of looking after and trying to finish his ambitious project near the banks of the Volga river has fallen to his niece Elvira Galeeva. "This place was not intended to hold religious ceremonies, it is a symbolic location," Galeeva told AFP during a tour. "He wanted to plant the seeds in people's minds to make ideas of harmony and tolerance grow."

Rococo and Socialist Realism

Khanov's fantasy is a dazzling mixture of kitsch and rococo excess that continually throws up surprises for visitors. Next to the entrance, there is a turret dedicated to the memory of Mother Teresa, the Catholic room is decked out like a church and the Orthodox Christian section is decorated with wooden walls and icons. Elsewhere, an Egyptian sphinx stands in an empty building inscribed with Islamic scriptures that is still being built. The hot patch is understandable for an artist who was born a Muslim but grew up under the state atheism of Soviet rule. Some of the friezes and decorations are clearly influenced by the Communist-era genre of Socialist realism and reference 20th century horrors such as the bombing of Hiroshima.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the idea to transform his former family home reportedly came to Khanov in a vision. "One night Christ came to me and said 'You will wake at dawn, get a shovel from the shed and start work on a universal temple,'" he told France's Le Figaro newspaper in 2012 before his death at the age of 72. Originally the artist had even more grandiose plans and wanted to build an entire town with the world's biggest Holocaust memorial. For now his creation has only rooms to seven of the 16 major faiths he intended to honor. Volunteer workers who helped build the temple are still busy at the site.

'Another sort of union'

The striking building is a tourist draw for those coming to Kazan and should attract more attention as the city hosts the

Confederations Cup football tournament this month and the World Cup in 2018. At a time of religious tensions around the globe and when Moscow is locked in its worst standoff with the West since the Cold War over the Ukraine crisis and Syria, some say the temple's message is more important than ever. "When the political situation is tense then it is important to think about something more elevated where people of differ-



A detail of the 'Universal Temple' in Kazan, Russia.

ent religions can unite," said visitor Roman Butyn from Siberia. "Today we are all linked by the internet but here there is another sort of union thanks to religion," chimed in his companion Nadezhda Miloserdova. Sadly, however, even this symbol of harmony has not escaped disputes. Some two months ago a fire tore through the building, damaging the buddhist section, a tower dedicated to Judaism, a theatre room and a library. Galeeva said a police investigation is under way and that the blaze could have been due to an arson attack linked to a family disagreement. But despite the setback, she is hopeful that the temple will eventually be completed along the lines envisioned by her uncle. "We would like to make a cultural and education center and to realize the dream of Ildar Khanov," she said. "This will take years, maybe all of our lives." — AFP

FEATURES



In this file photo taken on Nov 4, 1942 Spanish surrealist painter, Salvador Dali is pictured in New York.



In this May 21, 1973 file photo, Spanish surrealist painter Salvador Dali, presents his first Chrono-Hologram in Paris, France. — AFP photos



This file photo taken on December 13, 1972 shows Spanish artist Salvador Dali in Paris.



Spanish national Pilar Abel Martinez, 61, who claimed to be Salvador Dali's daughter, speaks during an interview in Barcelona.

Dali's 'daughter' says she wants her identity

Pilar Abel, the woman claiming to be Salvador Dali's daughter, said Tuesday she wanted to recover her identity more than anything else, a day after the artist's exhumation was ordered. For a decade, the 62-year-old who long worked as a psychic in the northeastern region of Catalonia where Dali was born, has tried to prove she is the painter's child.

Her paternity claim, however, has raised skepticism, with Dali biographer Ian Gibson writing in *El Pais* that he had doubts, saying the artist preferred watching rather than having sex. But Abel is adamant her mother had a

relationship with Dali, one of the most celebrated and prolific painters of the 20th century, when she worked for his friends in Port Lligat, a tiny fishing hamlet.

The painter lived and worked there for years. Abel told AFP a judge's decision on Monday to exhume Dali's remains was "a big victory" though she acknowledged there was still a long way to go. The Dali Foundation which manages the artist's estate has said it will appeal. "At last I would know who I really am and would be recognized," she said. "I don't want his heritage, if it comes so be it, but it's the last thing I want. First of all I want my identity."

Exchanging glances

She said her grandmother first told her she was Dali's daughter when she was seven or eight years old, and her mother admitted it much later. Abel is from the city of Figueras like Dali, and she said she would see him in the streets often. "We wouldn't say anything, we would just look at each other. But a glance is worth a thousand words," she said. Notoriously eccentric, Dali's life was marked as much by the genius of his work than by his own extravagances. A question mark has always hung over his sexuality.

Writing in *El Pais*, Gibson said he had once spoken to a gay Colombian gallery owner called Carlos Lozano who knew Dali well and told him the painter was homosexual but incapable of acting on it. He also said Dali could not stand anyone touching him, bar his muse and long-time partner Gala. Lozano recalled orgies at Dali's house during which the artist would merely watch, Gibson says, adding it was "possible" that he had sex with a woman, though he doubted it "very much." But according to Abel's lawyer Enrique Blaquez, the affair was "known in the village, there are people who have testified before a notary." — AFP



Glass sculptures by artist Dale Chihuly adorn an opening to the sky in a sanctuary room at the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center in Omaha, Neb. — AP photos

At 75, Dale Chihuly discusses struggles with mental health

The private studio of glass artist Dale Chihuly reflects his long obsession with collecting. Sheets of stamps cover one table; pocket knives are marshaled on another. Carnival-prize figurines from the first half of the 20th century line shelves that reach the ceiling. Amid the ordered clutter, some items hint at more than Chihuly's eclectic tastes: A long row of Ernest Hemingway titles in one bookcase, and in another an entire wall devoted to Vincent van Gogh - homages to creative geniuses racked by depression.

Chihuly, too, has struggled with his mental health, by turns fragile and luminous like the art he makes. Now 75 and still in the thrall of a decades-long career, he discussed his bipolar disorder in detail for the first time publicly in an interview with *The Associated Press*. He and his wife, Leslie Chihuly, said they don't want to omit from his legacy a large part of who he is. "It's a pretty remarkable moment to be able to have this conversation," she said. "We really want to open our lives a little bit and share something more personal. ... Dale's a great example of somebody who can have a successful marriage and a successful family life and successful career - and suffer from a really debilitating, chronic disease. That might be helpful for other people."

Botanical gardens and museums

Chihuly, who began working with glass in the 1960s, is a pioneer of the glass art movement. Known for styles that include vibrant seashell-like shapes, baskets, chandeliers and ambitious installations in botanical gardens and museums, he has said that pushing the material to new forms, creating objects never before seen, fascinates him.

Even in the past year he has found a new way of working with glass - painting with glass enamel on glass panes, stacking the panes together and back-lighting them to give them a visual depth. He calls it "Glass on Glass" and it's featured for the first time in the new Chihuly Sanctuary at the Buffett Cancer Center in Omaha, Nebraska, and at an indoor-outdoor exhibit opening June 3 at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas.

But the flip side of that creativity has sometimes been dark. He began suffering from depression in his 20s, he said, and those spells began to alternate with manic periods beginning in his late 40s. "I'm usually either up or down," Chihuly said. "I don't have neutral very much. When I'm up I'm usually working on several projects. A lot of times it's about a six-month period. When I'm down, I kind of go in hibernation." He still works but doesn't feel as good about it. His wife noted that if he only went into the studio when he was up, he "wouldn't have had a career."

Asked what his down periods are like, Chihuly took a long pause. "Just pretty tough," he said. "I'm lucky that I like movies. If I don't feel good, I'll put on a movie." Leslie Chihuly, who runs his studio, is more loquacious about the difficulties his condition has posed in their 25-year relationship. They've tried to manage it as a family with various types of counseling, medication and a 1-to-10 scale system that allows him to communicate how he's feeling when he doesn't want to talk about it, she said.

Chihuly gave up drinking 15 years ago, and it's been more than a decade since he was "life-threateningly depressed," she said, though he's never been suicidal. "Dale has an impeccable memory about certain things, but there have been certain periods of time when he's been hypomanic, as we call it, or

depressed, and I'll be the keeper for our family and our business around those difficult times," she said.

She met him in 1992 after a mutual friend set them up. He was in a near-manic period, talking about an idea for bringing glassblowers from around the world to Venice, Italy, to display their art in the city's canals. He had no plan and no funding, but she was eager to help him realize his vision - one that would eventually be depicted in the public television documentary "Chihuly Over Venice." Six months later, they traveled to an exhibit opening at the Brooklyn Museum in New York. "It was like the lights went out," she said, choking back a sob. "All of a sudden the guy who was interested in everything ... that guy wasn't there."

'See a good shrink'

Dale Chihuly remained quiet as his wife described that moment. A tear fell from beneath the recognizable eyepatch he has worn since he lost sight in his left eye in a 1976 car crash. Though the mood swings were new to Leslie Chihuly at the time, they were familiar to the other artists Chihuly worked with. Joey Kirkpatrick met him in 1979, when she attended Pilchuck Glass School, which Chihuly founded in the woods north of Seattle in 1971. It was a small summer workshop; the students constructed their own shelter. She and her partner, Flora Mace, spent many hours watching movies with him during his down periods.

"What amazed me about it is his persistence at picking the thing, his creative life, that would pull him along or keep him going through those times," she said. "When he was up, he could call you up at Pilchuck on a Sunday night and say, 'Meet me at the airport at 10 tomorrow, we've got a flight to Pittsburgh to go to some demonstration.' It was always exciting. When he was down, there wasn't that. It was quieter." Chihuly said the message he'd have for others struggling with the condition would be to "see a good shrink" and to "try to live with it, to know that when they're really depressed, it's going to change, before too long. And to take advantage when they do feel up to get as much done as they can." — AP

Kay Solberg takes photos of the "Persian Ceiling" during a preview of the Chihuly Garden and Glass exhibit at the Seattle Center in Seattle.



Books about artist Vincent van Gogh are displayed on shelves behind glass artist Dale Chihuly during an interview in his private studio in Seattle.



Glass artist Dale Chihuly, right, holds the arm of his wife Leslie as they talk in his private studio in Seattle.



Glass artist Dale Chihuly uses a broom to paint on the deck of his Boathouse facility in Seattle.



A man stands beneath an installation by artist Dale Chihuly titled, "Fiori di Como," (Flowers of Como), suspended from the ceiling of the lobby at the Bellagio hotel and casino in Las Vegas.



Kay Solberg takes photos of the "Persian Ceiling" during a preview of the Chihuly Garden and Glass exhibit at the Seattle Center in Seattle.



Glass artist Dale Chihuly poses for a picture in front of his "Glass on Glass" pieces in a reflection room at the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center in Omaha, Neb.



A picture shows a sculpture by Italian duet Vedovamazzei a.k.a Simeone Crispino and Stella Scala titled 'After love' on June 27, 2017 at the Palatine Hill in Rome during a press preview of the exhibition 'From Duchamp to Cattelan, Contemporary art on Palatine Hill'. — AFP



Photo shows musicians performance in a small clearing in a forest on the outskirts of Oslo on June 2, 2017 to bring this year's manuscript by author Sjon to the 'Future Library'. — AFP photos



(From left) Photo shows Mayor of Oslo Marianne Borgen, artist Katie Paterson and author Sjon with his manuscript in a small clearing in a forest on the outskirts of Oslo.



Photo shows people making their way to a small clearing in a forest on the outskirts of Oslo.



Photo shows people including author Sjon (right) making their way to a small clearing in a forest on the outskirts of Oslo.

In a Norwegian Wood, a 22nd century library grows

Some will never know if their books were appreciated by readers, many of whom aren't born yet. Every year for 100 years, a different author will contribute to the "Future Library", a collection of works to be published only in the next century. So far, 1,000 Norwegian spruces planted three years ago are the only visible sign of this internationally and stylistically diverse project, each little shrub decorated with a red ribbon in a modest clearing in a forest on the outskirts of Oslo.

Once they reach 100-years-old, in 2114, the trees will be chopped down and used to make paper for anthologies compiling the works of the invited writers. Canadian author Margaret Atwood was the first one asked to join the initiative in 2015, followed by English novelist David Mitchell in 2016. This year Icelandic poet Sjon submitted his manuscript-one, his contemporaries will, in all likelihood, never read. "One of the things an author will always deal with is the fact that there will be readers the author never knows."

"They might be on another continent and they might be far away in time. But it's very rare to know that no one will read the text while you are alive," says Sjon, who also writes lyrics for Icelandic singer Bjork. Knowing that he would never see any reactions to his piece "made my relationship with the text very deep," he explained. "I realized that many of the mechanisms I take for granted as I write my texts are really something that I need to think about all the time: the precision of words, using old words... "Writing in my language, which is the Icelandic language, was also one of the questions I was faced with because I don't know where my language will be in 100 years."

From tree to book

While normally it is the blank page that awaits the author's divine inspiration, this time it is the authors' words that have to wait for the tree to turn into the pages of a book. The long wait for the "Future Library" is just the latest in a string of initiatives in Norway celebrating "slow life" and posterity. The Scandinavian country is the champion of "Slow TV"-a 134-hour boat journey through the fjords was broadcast live. A 24-hour mostly live broadcast of salmon fishing and 12 hours on the topic of firewood are among other marathon "slow TV" coverage.

It is also home to a "doomsday" seed storage vault designed to protect the world's crops from disaster forever after. And thanks to its abundance of oil, it has also amassed the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, officially destined to fund the welfare state for future generations. The idea for the library took root in the imagination of Scottish artist Katie Paterson and was able to grow following a meeting with Norwegian real estate developers hunting for cultural projects. "The authors of today or in a decade's time or several decades will hopefully say something of this moment," Paterson says. "I think that will be very interesting for those who get to read the manuscripts in 100 years. Because they can reflect all the way back in time because, 100 years later, who knows what that civilisation is going to be?"

'Vote of confidence in the future'

But, will we still be reading books in 2114? Will there still be machines to print books? The "Future Library" is "a vote of

confidence in the future of culture," said David Mitchell last year. "I think it was Umberto Eco, who said the form of the book can never be improved upon. It's like the wheel, there's no improvement," says Paterson. "But, of course, technology advances so fast that, I think what feels extremely unknown is that now we talk about digital books-but we have no idea what the form of the book might be. "It might be something completely unimaginable to us. So maybe the paper book might be an antique by then," she says.

"That's for the future to know." A total of 1,000 limited-edition copies of the anthologies will be published. Certificates entitling holders to a copy will be sold gradually over the years for \$1,000 (around 900 euros) in art galleries. Pending the release of the secret works in the next century, the manuscripts will be locked up in a specially designed room at the new Oslo Public Library, due to be opened in 2020.

Drawing a light-hearted comparison with real estate development in which she works, Anne Beate Hovind, who heads the overall project and the selection committee that chooses the writers, acknowledges its unconventional but stressed the "Future Library" carried prestige for those writers involved. "If we had to do a risk assessment of this artwork, it would have never happened," she said smiling. "But we're competing with the Nobels now." — AFP



Photo shows one of the trees planted in a small clearing in a forest on the outskirts of Oslo.



Photo shows artist Katie Paterson marking a tree planted in a forest.



Photo shows people gathering in a small clearing in a forest on the outskirts of Oslo.