

Palestinian prisoners end hunger strike



Fierce clashes as factions battle in Libya; 52 dead



Michelin shares tyre tips during the hot summer



Imsak Fajr Shorook Duhr Asr Maghrib Isha
03:07 03:17 04:50 11:45 15:20 18:40 20:10

150 FILS
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40 PAGES

KUWAIT OUTLOOK CHANGES FROM 'NEGATIVE TO STABLE'

RATING AGENCY MOODY'S AFFIRMS AA2 RATING



Min 31°
Max 44°
High Tide 02:05 & 12:46
Low Tide 07:31 & 20:22

Ramadan Kareem
MONTH OF QURAN
By Teresa Leshar

One of the distinguishing features of Islam is its Holy Book, the first verses of which were revealed in the month of Ramadan, 1450 lunar years ago (610 AD). During the course of 23 years, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) received Quranic verses as spoken addresses from the Creator - the Quran is considered the speech of God in the Arabic language. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) then recited the verses so that they could be memorized verbatim, and they were also recorded in writing.

Before he died, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) specified the order of verses and the division of chapters, according to divine instruction. The original Quran is still preserved until today with precise pronunciation, with the Arabic language developing to represent it phonetically. It is the only revelation or divine book that contains the pure words of God without being rephrased by His messengers or any other human being.

The Quran is addressed to all mankind. Sometimes Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is specifically addressed with instructions such as "They ask you about... Say [to them]..." Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is also encouraged and sometimes gently reproached in the Quran. Believers are addressed with specific instructions on how to achieve both temporal and eternal success. And mankind in general is addressed with invitations to believe in God and mold life around that belief, and they are informed of the consequences of accepting or rejecting God's invitation.

The Quran's purpose is to inform people of a reality beyond their five senses and their perceptions of space and time, and to teach moral lessons and develop spirituality. With the additional perspective it offers, the Quran also invites people to adopt a lifestyle that ensures ultimate happiness and success. Finally, through stories and instruction, it describes the beliefs and practices that are essential to achieve that state.

The verses of the Quran were revealed to address particular situations, to relate historical information and to codify Islamic law. Common subjects are descriptions of God, stories of prophets, descriptions of believers and disbelievers, promises of God's rewards, especially Paradise, warnings about consequences for rebellion toward God, including Hellfire, instructions for personal conduct, guidelines for familial and social relations, and a framework for international relations.

Being an oral revelation first and foremost, devout Muslims learn how to recite the holy scripture as it was revealed. Verbatim memorization is common and care is taken to reproduce the exact pronunciation and vocal duration of each letter. Arabic is a rich language, and words of the Quran have great depth and breadth; therefore, they also study the meaning of the words, verses and chapters, and there are encyclopedic works of this nature. In addition, Muslims study the occasions of revelation, the relation of the holy text to

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: Kuwaitis shop for fruits at a market on the first day of the holy month of Ramadan in downtown Kuwait City yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: Moody's Investors' Service yesterday changed the rating outlook on Kuwait from 'negative to stable'. Concurrently, the long-term issuer rating has been affirmed at Aa2. According to its Global Credit Research issued late last night, Moody's decision to change the outlook to stable from negative reflects Moody's view that there are sufficient signs of Kuwait's government's institutional capacity to effectively implement its fiscal and economic reform program to preserve creditworthiness in the medium-term, which has the stated objective of diversifying and enhancing the economic base and its budgetary revenues.

The affirmation reflects Moody's view that, despite Kuwait's slower fiscal and economic reform progress relative to other highly-rated peers in the Gulf in response to lower oil prices, the sovereign's extraordinarily strong balance sheet, very high wealth levels and vast hydrocarbon reserves continue to support a credit profile that remains consistent with an Aa2 rating.

Moody's report says that Kuwait's long-term and short-term foreign-currency bond and deposit ceilings remain unchanged at Aa2 and Prime-1, respectively. Kuwait's long-term local-currency country risk ceiling also remains unchanged at Aa2. The decision also reflects Moody's view that Kuwait's institutional strength has improved to a degree that will help limit downside risks to the rating. In addition, fiscal performance in the past fiscal year proved slightly stronger than expected at the time of the last rating action.

Positive fiscal reform steps undertaken by the Kuwaiti government so far include the establishment

Continued on Page 13

RAMADAN BEGINS, VIOLENTLY FOR SOME

RIYADH: The world's 1.5 billion Muslims began observing the holy fasting month of Ramadan yesterday, blighted by conflict and bloodshed in countries ranging from Afghanistan to Libya. Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam during which Muslims are supposed to devote themselves to praying, giving to charity and fasting from dawn to dusk. It is sacred because tradition says the Quran was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) during that month.

Although for many Ramadan is a time for families to gather and break the fast with an iftar meal at sunset and socialize, this year it has been marked by violence. In Afghanistan's eastern city of Khost, a Taliban car bomber killed 13 people in the first major attack at the start of the holy month targeting a CIA-funded militia group. In the Philippines, security forces intensified a bombing campaign in one of the country's largest Muslim-majority cities where they have been battling Islamic militants.

The Islamic State group, which has been responsible for countless bloody attacks around the world, claimed responsibility for shooting dead 29 Christians on a bus in central Egypt. Friday's assault on the most populous Arab state's Coptic Christian minority community prompted retaliatory air strikes on jihadists in neighboring Libya and an outpouring of condemnation. "With a broken heart and tears in my eyes but after all I wish all my friends a great Happy Ramadan and may God accept all your prayers and fasting for the good of our beloved Egypt," Nabil Hakim, an Egyptian Copt who lives in the United States, posted on Facebook.

Continued on Page 13



JAKARTA: Muslim women perform an evening prayer during the holy fasting month of Ramadan, at Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta, Indonesia yesterday. During Ramadan, the holiest month in Islamic calendar, Muslims refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and sex from dawn to dusk. — AP



LONDON: British Airways planes are parked at Heathrow Airport in London. — AP

IT OUTAGE CAUSES CHAOS

LONDON: British Airways has cancelled all its flights from London's two biggest airports until yesterday evening after a global computer system outage caused confusion and chaos, with thousands of passengers queuing for hours and planes left stuck on runways. The airline, which said there was no evidence the problem had been caused by a cyber attack, said terminals at Heathrow and Gatwick had become extremely congested because of the IT failure and all BA flights scheduled before 1700 GMT had been cancelled.

"Please do not come to the airports. We have experienced a major IT system failure that is causing very severe disruption to our

flight operations worldwide," said BA, part of Europe's largest airline group IAG. "We are extremely sorry for the inconvenience this is causing our customers and we are working to resolve the situation as quickly as possible." The problems, which passengers said had affected flights across Britain, came on a particularly busy weekend with a public holiday on Monday and many children starting their school half-term breaks.

"It's a complete nightmare. There's just hundreds and thousands of people accumulating in the departures bit," Roshni Burt, who was flying from Heathrow to Bahrain with her young son, told Reuters.

Continued on Page 13

KUWAITI COMPANY TO PAY \$95 MILLION IN US FRAUD CASE

WASHINGTON: A Kuwaiti logistics company has agreed to pay \$95 million to resolve allegations that it inflated prices and defrauded the US government for contracts to feed American troops in Iraq, Kuwait and Jordan. The Justice Department announced the settlement involving Agility Public Warehousing on Friday. The company also agreed to plead guilty to misdemeanor theft of government funds.

Federal prosecutors said in an indictment that Agility manipulated a complex funding formula to defraud the government of at least \$68 million. The indictment said the company provided false invoices and statements to a logistics center, bought high-priced food items and then knowingly inflated prices. And it said the company received rebates and discounts from vendors that it did not pass to the government as required by contract.

The company also inflated fees by asking vendors to manipulate the way the products were packed, enabling it to bill the government twice as much as it should have, prosecutors said. Agility had been suspended from federal government contracting since its indictment in 2009. The Department of Defense's Defense Logistics Agency will lift that suspension as part of the agreement. Deputy Assistant Attorney General Joyce R Branda said the case is a reminder that the Justice Department will hold accountable contractors who unfairly profit at taxpayers' expense.

Continued on Page 13

STORMY CLIMATE AT G7

TAORMINA: G7 nations yesterday hit deadlock over climate change and strived to finesse divisions over trade, as US President Donald Trump rebuffed pressure to toe the collective line in the club of powerful democracies. Trump tweeted that he would reveal his hand only next week as to whether he will keep the United States in the Paris accord, a global pact on curbing carbon emissions that he vowed to jettison when campaigning for the White House.

The Group of Seven leading economies, in an extraordinary summit statement, acknowledged that six members were committed to upholding the 2015 accord while the United States stood apart. "The United States of America is in the process of reviewing its policies on climate change and on the Paris Agreement and thus is not in a position to join the consensus on these topics," the statement said in highly unusual language.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who also crossed swords with Trump on free trade at the G7, complained that the US president was keeping his colleagues in the dark. "The whole discussion on the topic of climate was very difficult, not to say very unsatisfactory," she told reporters, labeling the G7 deadlock as "six against one". On trade, the G7 vowed "to keep our markets open and to fight protectionism",

but also to combat "unfair trade practices" and help those left behind by globalization, after Trump came to power vowing "America First".

Noted that the global economy remains patchy with downside risks, pledging "to use all policy tools" to sustain growth threatened stronger sanctions against Russia over its annexation of Crimea if Moscow's actions warrant it. Condemned nuclear-armed North Korea's recent missile tests and said they were ready to take new measures as necessary after various rounds of UN sanctions. Demanded support from Russia and Iran for a peace process in Syria, and similarly called for an inclusive dialogue in Libya.

After starting his first presidential trip abroad wreathed in smiles, Trump ended it with rebukes, upbraiding America's European partners over military spending, trade and global warming. An enduring motif of the G7, which represents the lion's share of global economic output, has been to champion free trade. At last year's summit in Japan, leaders issued a lengthy communique in support of resisting protectionism, as well as helping refugees and fighting climate change. But that was then, when Barack Obama still occupied the White House.

Continued on Page 13

MEW COLLECTS KD 33 MILLION FROM THREE GOVERNORATES

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The committee entrusted with replacing, maintaining and installing the new electricity and water consumption meters in the Capital, Farwaniya and Jahra governorates announced that the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) managed to collect KD 33 million from the three governorates from January to April 2017. The committee's chairman Melweh Al-Ajmi said committee members were carrying out instructions from undersecretary Mohammad Boshehri and assistant undersecretary for consumers affairs Meshaan Al-Otaibi with regards to maintaining and replacing meters.

Electronic inspection

Municipal Council member and head of its technical committee Fahad Al-Sane said that the council approved a proposal he had made to use electronic inspection methods in various restaurants and food companies, and stressed that such methods will help prevent cheating and manipulation.

Construction waste

Kuwait Municipality's public relations department announced that the capital municipality's safety and cleanliness inspectors launched intensive cleaning operations along Sulaibikhat beach which resulted in removing 1,800 truckloads of construction material waste. Kuwait Municipality's environment affairs manager, Adnan Sayyed said that the site had been divided into four sections with two companies responsible for cleaning each sector and removing wastes to recycling factories. Sayyed added that the companies taking part in the project were Ahmadiyah, Boodai Constructions, the Combined Group Company, Arab International Industrial Projects Company, EPIC and the Arab Contractors Company. The landfill processing supervisor Abdullah Al-Afasi said that the companies will have to provide enough equipment to sort the waste on site.



DOHA: Kuwait's First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. — KUNA

KUWAIT FM MEETS QATARI AMIR

DOHA: Kuwait's First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. This came during Sheikh Tamim's meeting with Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled in Doha on Friday. Sheikh Sabah

Al-Khaled also conveyed His Highness the Amir's wishes that the Qatari people enjoyed further progress and prosperity. The meeting was attended by Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's Office Director Ambassador Dr. Ambassador Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah and Kuwait Ambassador to Qatar Hafeedh Al-Ajmi. — KUNA

Local spotlight

MARIJUANA AT HOME



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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It is important for expatriates to know that while some Western countries are legalizing the use and sale of marijuana for personal use by individuals, users in the East can be executed or imprisoned for life. Police in Kuwait recently arrested an expat cultivating and peddling marijuana. The Drug Control General Department said it received a tip about an expat growing marijuana in his private residence in Hawally. A team of detectives was assigned to follow up the case and arrested the suspect, who confessed to the crime.

This was not the first incident of its kind. In 2010, the criminal court sentenced a Kuwaiti to death after accusing him of planting cannabis in his home in Qusour in Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate. Another incident occurred in Dubai, where police arrested a 48-year-old Emirati last year for planting marijuana seedlings in a residential villa. He even set up the right atmosphere, using multiple equipment and techniques. So be careful!

The world today is confused over how to deal with the phenomenon of drug proliferation and demand. Some countries have decided to be more lenient about it, while others have hardened their positions. Everyone has their own reasons and motives. Those who decided to legalize marijuana believe that when the government authorities tightened and criminalized the issue, they turned it into a trade, and therefore a number of countries have passed legislation to approve it. The aim of this law is to take control away from criminal gangs and to ensure state supervision of the users.

An example of this is Uruguay, which licensed marijuana in 2013. Some US states have allowed the use of marijuana, particularly in Colorado, Michigan and Maine, while it is banned in other states. Some countries have adopted a policy not to consider marijuana use a crime, like Argentina, which allows personal use of marijuana in small quantities.

In one report, Amnesty International noted the difference between Western and Eastern countries towards drug control at a time when the value of drugs circulating worldwide is estimated at \$380 billion annually. It is a financial trade, so it is natural that every country is taking a different position towards it.

It is clear that the countries that urge fighting against the spread of drugs have logical reasons and an understanding of their culture and people, who may use the drugs excessively if legalized to become a threat to their societies, especially the youth. It also has a possible negative impact on social, health, mental and psychological activities, in addition to major developmental damage. All Gulf countries do not allow or tolerate any kind of drug use or trafficking, so be careful, if you want to save your neck and avoid spending many years in prison.

MINA ABDULLAH REFINERY UNDER MAINTENANCE: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: Mina Abdullah oil refinery is currently under full-scale maintenance due to proceed until June 6, said Mutlaq Rashed Nasser Al-Azmi, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer at the refinery. Azmi said in a statement yesterday that the maintenance work began on May 12, covering all the units. Projected budget for the work is estimated at KD 950,000, he added.

Coordination with Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) preceded as regular the process "to alter output and exportation plans and meet needs of the local and international markets," he said. He noted that the coordination with the other national oil companies ahead of the maintenance was conducted in a perfect and very professional manner. The operation was an opportunity to make more Kuwaiti personnel involved in various forms of maintenance and conduct fieldwork. — KUNA



Mutlaq Al-Azmi



EMPLOYERS URGED TO PAY FULL INDEMNITIES TO EMPLOYEES

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The manpower authority urged all employers to pay full indemnities to employees who worked for private companies for a minimum of 10 years and decided to resign, provided the total indemnity does not exceed the equivalent of 18 months' salary as per the labor act number 6/2010. The authority added that according to decision 842/2015, work permits will be transferred on conditions - the employee has worked for the same employer for a minimum of two years, and that the employer approves the transfer.

Meat consumption

Coinciding with International Vegetarian Week, The Telegraph daily published a report about the world's top and least meat-consuming nations, in which Kuwait was ranked first in the Arab world and second worldwide. According to the report, Bangladesh has the least meat consumption in Asia, where an average person consumes only four kilos a year. The report showed that average annual per capita meat consumption in UK is 84.2 kg, while people in the US consume 120.2 kg per person a year. In addition, the report showed that the world's top meat consuming countries include the US, Kuwait, Australia, Bahamas, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Austria, French Polynesia, Bermuda, Argentina and Spain. The report also showed that Kuwait came first amongst Arab countries, followed by UAE, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Algeria and Yemen.

Donations

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's (MSAL) charities department has issued special IDs for 870 accredited representatives from 22 charity organizations authorized to collect donations during Ramadan. Manager Munira Al-Kandari said the IDs were issued after all applicants were checked by security forces. She added that inspection teams will closely watch the process to monitor the process.

Projects delay

Well-informed sources said changes to some health projects and the paperwork needed to do them were behind delaying many Ministry of Health (MoH) projects, including that of expanding Amiri Hospital. The sources said the project's total cost was KD 98 million, and it was supposed to open this year, but in view of delays, the construction company demanded extra money as it believed that it was not responsible for the delay caused by MoH's problems with Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) or Kuwait Municipality.



KUWAIT: Ambassador of Jordan to Kuwait Mohammad Al-Kayed hosted a reception recently on the occasion of his country's national day. State officials led by Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



KUWAIT: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Kuwait El Khan Jahangir oglu Gahraman hosted a reception recently on the occasion of his country's national day. State officials led by Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Mohammad Al-Fares, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



EXPIRED FOOD CONFISCATED DURING MUNICIPALITY CAMPAIGNS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality's public relations department said that Mubarak Al-Kabeer municipality continued its inspection campaign on various foodstuff outlets and restaurants on the advent of Ramadan. Mubarak Al-Kabeer municipality's emergency team leader, Nasser Al-Hajri explained that the campaign resulted in closing down two stores, filing 20 citations for violations that include not having licenses, not advertising activity details, not having health certificates and selling expired foodstuff. Hajri added that 35 kilos of expired chocolate and meat were destroyed. Meanwhile, the municipality said that Jahra municipality carried out similar campaigns which resulted in confiscating and destroying half a ton of expired foodstuff. Jahra municipality emergency team leader Ali Al-Qowaisi said.



In Brief

RAMADAN WITH US AT KUWAIT TOWERS

KUWAIT: Within the Touristic Enterprises Company's (TEC) preparations to receive visitors in all its facilities during Ramadan, Kuwait Tower will receive visitors from 6:45 pm to 2:00 am throughout the holy month, Acting Manager Jarrah Jassem Al-Omani said. He added that Kuwait Towers Restaurant would also serve iftar and sohoor buffets in addition to outdoor catering services for special prices. "The iftar buffet costs KD 11 for adults and KD 8 for children, while sohoor costs KD 8 for adults and KD 6 for children," he explained. Omani added that the rotating sphere will receive visitors from 2:00 pm to 2:00 am.



CBK PRINTS HOLY QURAN IN BRAILLE

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced in a press release printing copies of the Holy Quran in Braille for the visually impaired, and that for the third consecutive year in cooperation with the Kuwait Blind Association. Throughout the holy month of Ramadan, CBK will deduct an amount for every transaction through its ATM machines, and the total amount will be donated to the association at the end of the month, said Commercial Credit Department Manager Sahar Al-Rumaih, adding that clients will not bear any additional costs as a result.



OIL PRICE DOWN TO \$48.41 PB

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil came down to \$48.41 per barrel (pb) on Thursday, shedding \$1.89 after being at \$50.30 pb on Thursday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. Prices in international markets on the other hand went up amidst limited trade after a major selling wave on Thursday on the backdrop of OPEC's meeting in Vienna. The meeting agreed on extending the production cut agreement; taken last January, for another nine months in a bid to balance market and decrease offer. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A vendor decorates his shop at a market in Kuwait City on the start of the holy month of Ramadan. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



ABK DISTRIBUTES RELIEF PACKAGES IN SPIRIT OF THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN

KUWAIT: In collaboration with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently donated relief packages to underprivileged families and individuals in Kuwait, in the spirit of the Holy Month of Ramadan. The relief packages which were distributed contained essential food items.

ABK is committed to playing an active role in support-

ing the members of Kuwait's community. It has been at the forefront with a series of initiatives it has taken throughout the year, especially in support of special needs individuals, which is the Bank's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) focus. The bank takes pride in its collaboration with the KRCS, which has allowed it to reach the most vulnerable people in need of support and contributions.

KUWAIT DOLES OUT RAMADAN FOOD BASKETS IN GHANA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Embassy in Accra has distributed hundreds of food packages to needy people in Ghana. In a press statement, the embassy said that 700 parcels, including rice, sugar, oil, tomato paste, macaroni and tuna, were doled out by Kuwait's Ambassador Mohammad Al-Failakawi and several other embassy staff members. The United Arab Emirates and Algerian ambassadors in Accra also helped distribute the Kuwaiti gifts. — KUNA

427 DEFAULTERS BENEFIT FROM CAMPAIGN: MINISTER

KUWAIT: Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri stated Friday that 427 defaulters have benefited from a campaign to pay the debts of those threatened by jail for inability to pay back their debts. In a press statement, the minister said that the campaign, themed 'Let them be with us in Ramadan', was launched upon directives from the wise political leadership with a view

to helping defaulting people. The campaign, started with a donation of KD 500,000, has managed to collect KD 1.35 million for far, he pointed out, adding that the campaign would continue until the end of the holy month of Ramadan. Jabri noted that the number of beneficiaries has increased drastically this year as only 170 people benefited from last year's edition. — KUNA

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Kuwait

Heritage



Kuwait's 10th ruler Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (1921 - 1950) meets with some Bedouin guests coming from the desert. The picture, taken circa 1946 shows the Amir's preferred falcon to his left. This picture was taken during beginning of the oil era in Kuwait. (source: the 'Picture Post' magazine, volume 32. Prepared by Mahmoud Zakaria Aby Alella, Researcher in Heritage, Ministry of Information)



KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) opened its annual Ramadan tent, where iftar meals are offered free of charge on a daily basis throughout the holy month. The tent is located in front of Souq Sharq on the Arabian Gulf Road.



KUWAIT: Public Relations Department employees at the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) carried out visits to patients at Mubarak Al-Kabeer hospital on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

Making Kuwait a better place



Sahar Beshayer

MERE ACTS OF KINDNESS CAN DO MAGIC

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

KUWAIT: Making the world a better place is a tall task for individuals, but everyone can do something to improve the quality of life in the environment around them and for people in their community. The advent of the holy month of Ramadan offers an opportunity for people to think of how they can contribute in a way that reflects positively on the society. This year, Kuwait Times is interviewing people from different age groups, genders, nationalities and occupations to tell us how they can participate in improving life in Kuwait, or correcting some wrong behaviors or manners.

The globe seems to be heading towards conflicts and tragedies that are creating a state of general frustration. Ordinary people find themselves unable to mend the world's wounds. Meanwhile, some have chosen to be the light amidst the darkness of earth. They believe that good deeds, regardless how small or big, gradually push the cycle of change towards peace.

Sahar Beshayer, an analyst, does not feel like she is doing enough to make the world around her a better place. "I should be doing more. I try to make up for it with little things like aiding an animal, holding the door open for someone, being a courteous driver and helping a friend in need. These are my own humble ways of making the world better. There are obvious ways an individual can make the world a better place like recycling, donating to charities, or spreading awareness for an important cause. All these are great ways to contribute to the well-being of the community," she said.

"But I really think people undervalue the importance of a smile, saying 'thank you' when someone does something for you (even if it is their job to do so), letting someone into your lane, and the simplest kind of gestures. These things do have an impact on people's everyday lives and make the world a more pleasant place to live. Mere acts of kindness can do magic," Sahar added.

رمضان كريم
RAMADAN
KAREEM

AMIR, CROWN PRINCE EXCHANGE RAMADAN GREETINGS WITH GULF, ARAB LEADERS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah exchanged Ramadan greetings with Saudi Arabia King Salman bin Abdulaziz, in a phone call Friday, wishing well-being for Arab and Muslim nations. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir exchanged greetings with Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, wishing the Kingdom further development and propensity. His Highness the Amir also exchanged Ramadan greetings with Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, and hoped the holy month return with Arab and Islamic nations in peace.

His Highness the Amir exchanged Ramadan greetings with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas during a phone call. His Highness the Amir hoped the State of Palestine achieve its aspirations. His Highness the Amir also exchanged Ramadan greetings with Bahraini Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Friday called Saudi Arabia King Salman bin Abdulaziz to congratulate him on advent of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. His Highness the Crown Prince wished this occasion would see Arab and Muslim nations enjoy further prosperity and progress. King Salman thanked His Highness the Crown Prince for his call, and hoped Kuwait enjoyed sustainable growth under wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince also called Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa to congratulate him on advent of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. His Highness the Crown Prince wished this occasion would see Arab and Muslim nations enjoy further prosperity and progress.


King Hamad thanked His Highness the Crown Prince for his gesture, and hoped Kuwait enjoyed sustainable growth under wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince received a phone call from Bahraini Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa to congratulate him on holy month of Ramadan. His Highness the Crown Prince thanked Prince Khalifa for his call and wished the Kingdom of Bahrain enjoyed lasting development and growth under leadership of King Hamad.

Furthermore, His Highness the Crown Prince received a phone call from Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani on the occasion of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Sheikh Tamim wished His Highness the Crown Prince good health and many returns of the blessed occasion, praying for more prosperity and progress for Kuwait under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir, as well as for the Arab and Muslim nations. His Highness the Crown Prince also called Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Crown prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces, to congratulate him on advent of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. His Highness the Crown Prince wished this occasion would see Arab and Muslim nations enjoy further prosperity and progress, and that UAE enjoy development under leadership of President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

Sheikh Mohammad thanked His Highness the Crown Prince for his call, and hoped Kuwait enjoyed sustainable growth under wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA


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Crime

Report

COP ARRESTED FOR RUNNING BROTHEL

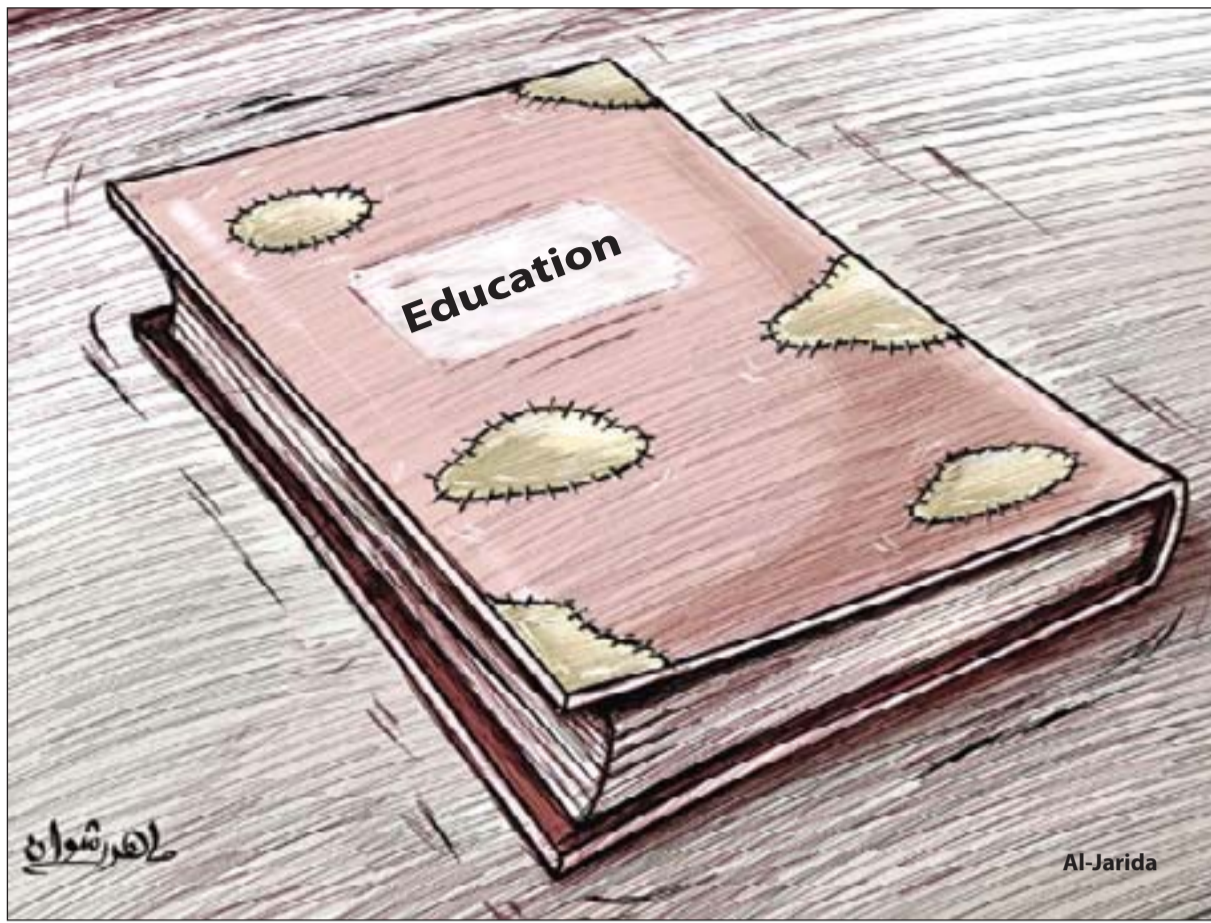
KUWAIT: A police officer was arrested for running a brothel using a number of Chinese women to attract customers through social media and websites, said security sources, noting that the suspect admitted to his crime. Another police officer was arrested for abuse of powers and blackmailing a woman who had sought his help on some legal matter, said security sources, noting that the woman filed a complaint to his superiors. The woman added that she initially responded to his demands but when he went too far and tried to force her to have an affair with him, she decided to report him to authorities.

Policemen honored

Twenty one police officers and security men were honored and promoted in appreciation for their role in foiling an attempt to kidnap a Kuwaiti coastguard patrol boat by some Iraqi fishermen, said security sources.

Only acting

Two male citizens, who had appeared in a social media video talking about an affair they allegedly have as 'lovers' were arrested, said security sources, noting that the men strongly denied homosexuality and said they were only acting on the video. However, they were both referred to relevant authorities for incitement of vice.



الجريدة Al-Jarida

LIFE WILL TEACH YOU

By Arwa Al-Waqian

Life will teach you that being successful, people will brag about their acquaintances because they always love hanging around successful ones. However, so many people will tend to avoid you in distress or when going through certain crises because nobody wants to know 'losers'. So, learn for sure that friends during success are only friends of that success, not yours.

Dear reader, the following is but the outcome of a personal experience that changes the more we grow older but I feel like letting you know what life might teach you if it resembles mine. Friends, life will teach you that the term 'forever' is beautiful but does not last long. It usually talks about string and sincere bonds at a certain time but you will eventually realize that 'forever' is a figure of speech expressing an instantaneous feeling. Life will teach you that plight in health, relations or work has a bright side because it immediately exposes the true essence of faithful ones and those who pretend to be.

You will be shocked to find nobody around you at times when you need someone close and will find out that the people you always neglected end up supporting you the most. Life will teach you that you will like people more than they like you while others will like you more than you like them. You will never find justice in opportunities and, sometimes, in love. Yet, this might be the absolute justice without knowing it. My friends, life will teach you to be careful when making promises because we cannot keep them at all times because change is inevitable in this life even if we do not wish for it.

Life will teach you, even in a while, that you were never the victim and that all the years you spent weeping were a waste because it was you who wanted to play the victim. It is stupid to keep on living like this. Take off the victim's attire because it does not fit you and makes you look unbearably ugly. Life will teach you that sometimes, you have the right to be logically selfish because giving too much might ruin you, especially when you realize that you wasted all your health and comfort for those who do not deserve it.

It is okay to love, give and be benevolent, but not at the expense of yourself. You will be stronger when you prioritize yourself, which will make you more capable of giving. Life will teach you that some friends will always stay in your life and nothing will change them. It will teach you that your closest friends in certain period are the closest only in that particular period and will then become part of a nice framed photo to remember with love. Do not let this fact annoy you, just pray for them. Life will teach you that everything will vanish. So, be prepared for a new life and new people stepping in by it chance. You will learn that most coincidences are the base of the most beautiful experiences. Never close doors before them and keep it half opened because you never know who will make a change. The most important thing you need to learn and have your subconscious convinced with is, never to expect too much from anyone, especially those you had willingly been good to and did not appreciate it. —Translated by Kuwait Times

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

YES, WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

By Dr Hassan Jouhar

Statements recently made by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh in the Arabian Business Magazine were disastrous in headlines, contradicting implications, unconvincing content and, moreover, the timing of publishing them in a foreign magazine. Unfortunately, the dangerous interview was cut down into inquiry about whether the minister actually expressed concerns for Kuwait, its reserves and sustainability, which all media raced to deny and blamed it all on translation mistakes.

I wish the minister has enough political courage and sense of responsibility to assert such concerns because they actually exist with each and every citizen regardless of age, sector or socio-economic sect. The minister himself admitted this metaphorically when he announced that the deficit was far worse than the declared figures, that previous governments had not been doing their jobs concerning the required reforms, that the parliament was for not solving the problems and that the democracy was the main reason of sluggish reforms, before he would finally announce exempting merchants from taxes. I wish the minister had held a press conference to brief the Kuwaiti people about the financial situation in general and respond to journalists and experts' inquiries, or at least had taken part in a televised debate with people

having different opinions to clear things up. I wish the minister had spoken about theft, looting and manipulating tenders and public funds; about iconic corrupt influential people and how they function; about the networks they have been running throughout our constitutional age and whether previous government were involved in that or, even, had been turning too many blind eyes to it.

I wish the minister had spoken about Kuwaiti human resources as the lifeblood of sustainable development, his government's plans and programs dealing with investing in youth potentials, launching productive projects or finding and diversifying sources of national income without compromising citizens' income or the wages of people with limited income.

When we blame the government and consider it the main and only reason behind all our problems, cabinet members and their propaganda writers will get mad, and this was the case with our minister here. The man is supposed to be the first in terms of having all detailed information digits, the volume of funds and incomes, revenues in and outside Kuwait in addition to future predictions. But, unfortunately, it seems that most of our officials are nothing more than 'deluxe' employees who have nothing to do but to talk back at the media. —Translated by Kuwait Times



Drug abuse

Two citizens were arrested in Jahra for smoking hashish and falling asleep in a vehicle, said security sources, noting that patrol officers noticed them in a vehicle and thought they were sick. However, the two suspected were awakened by the patrol's flashlights and siren. On searching them, detectives found more hashish and two joints. Separately, a citizen with a criminal record was arrested for hosting some drug abuse parties at his house in Taima, Jahra, said security sources.

Thief caught

A citizen who had specialized in robberies was arrested at a Jahra stable that he had been using as a hideout as well as a place to store his stolen goods, said security sources, noting that detectives found over 80 smartphones, three vehicles, six TVs and a many laptops inside the property. — Translated from the Arabic press

CAPITAL GOVERNOR HAILS KFH'S ROLE IN RAMADAN

KUWAIT: Governor of the Capital Governorate Retired Lieutenant-General Thabit Al-Muhanna received a delegation from Kuwait Finance House (KFH) headed by Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media at KFH, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh and the public relations team for the quest to enhance collaboration and coordination between the two sides.

During the visit, the Governor applauded FKH for its various contributions to support the society on all levels, which confirms the bank's keenness to take part in the issues that are of interest to the society and the development process. Muhanna said that KFH visit reflects the bank's priority to support and serve the soci-

ety in coordination and collaboration with the public and official authorities.

Meanwhile, Ruwaieh reiterated KFH's role in serving the society as part of the bank's social responsibility. He hailed the ceaseless efforts exerted by the Capital Governor Muhanna, expressing the bank's appreciation to these efforts and the bank's readiness to boost collaboration, indicating KFH will distribute iftar meals all days of Ramadan as part of its Ramadan program 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 delegation meets with the Governor

BURGAN BANK SPONSORS 'AFRICA DAY'

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, Kuwait's most progressive bank and a leading contributor to society, recently sponsored 'Africa Day', organized by the Embassy of The People Democratic Republic of Algeria to celebrate the continent's independence. The event, held on 18 May, brought together senior government officials, ambassadors, foreign dignitaries and other VIP guests.

Globally celebrated on May 25, 2017, the day reflects on the countries' sacrifices for freedom and their victory as independent countries able to shape their own future. To mark the occasion, 32 countries participated in the historical Expo organized by the Algerian Embassy in Kuwait to showcase the collective achievements of the African countries in education, music, arts while celebrating respective cultural ele-

ments such as their national dresses and famed dishes.

Since independence, African countries have worked to promote international cooperation and pledged to coordinate their economic, diplomatic, educational, health and defense policies for the benefit of all. Burgan Bank, which continues to record robust growth, expanded to North Africa and now owns two full-fledged subsidiaries in both Algeria and Tunisia. Having successfully transformed into a regional financial powerhouse, Burgan Bank currently owns 60 branches through its majority owned subsidiary - Gulf Bank Algeria and a total of three branches through Tunis International Bank.

The latest sponsorship reflects Burgan Bank's continued commitment to enriching the cultural land-

scape in Kuwait and building understanding between nations. Burgan Bank is also keen to support and encourage the development of friendly relations with the African people. The Bank also endeavors to advance economic development.

The sponsorship comes in line with the Bank's goals in supporting the exchange of cultures and openness between Kuwait and the world cultures. The Bank is also keen to provide support for the development of the African continent and its people through strengthening the economic, social, cultural, political and sports relations. Sharing in a deepened sense of social responsibility, the ever-growing Kuwaiti bank will continue to celebrate and contribute to the progress and advancement of societies in which it operates.



شركة البترول الوطنية الكويتية
KNPC
Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC)
A subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation
(Internal Purchasing Committee)
(Announcement For Pre-Qualification)

KNPC/PQ- R&T/ /001 "Al-Dibdibah Photovoltaic Power Plant For Oil Sector"

In line with the vision of the government of the State of Kuwait to source 15% of Kuwait's electricity requirements from renewable energy by 2030, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has pioneered the launching of a strategic initiative to secure 15% of the total electricity consumption of KPC and its Subsidiaries from Solar Energy.

Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), the Oil Sector representative for executing this initiative, will support this strategy by undertaking a project to build and operate a world-class Photovoltaic Power Plant(s) to achieve the targeted production by 2020. The plant(s) will generate 2,500 GWh/yr (energy requirement at 25 years from commissioning) and will cover an estimated area of 32 km2 within the Al Sheyaya Renewable Energy Park, located 100 km west of Kuwait City.

KNPC will select one or more potential firms, who have the financial capacity, technical capability and experience in implementing PV solar power generation projects, to Design, Build, Operate and Maintain [DBOM] the Photovoltaic Power Plant(s), as per the attached PQ Scope Highlight.

Interested Companies are advised to collect the pre qualification forms and questionnaire from the Internal Purchasing Committee (IPC) in the KNPC Head Office at Al-Ahmadi, starting from Sunday 28/05/2017 during normal working hours in RAMADAN from 10:00 am to 03:00 pm and after RAMADAN from 07:00 am to 03:00 pm, against the official fee of (KD 500/-).

Please note that the person who will collect the pre qualification document must bring an authorization letter, issued by the authorized person of the Company

- The last date to receive the Applications shall be not later than 1:00 pm, of Thursday 07 September 2017. The PQ documents to be filled in as required and shall be submitted to the IPC (Room no., 1A-046) in KNPC Head Office, Al-Ahmadi in a closed envelope, noting that the PQ number, title and the Closing date should be indicated on the envelope.
- For any enquiry, Applicants may contact dibdibahsolar@knpc.com
- IPC invites the Applicants to attend the PQ Applications opening meeting in Room 2A 050, 2nd Floor, KNPC Head Office at Al-Ahmadi at 08:00 am of the first Sunday following to the Application closing date

IPC Secretary

KNPC/PQ- R&T/ /001 "Al-Dibdibah Photovoltaic Power Plant For Oil Sector"

PQ Scope Highlight:-

- Design of the PV plant(s) including design specifications, layout, engineering drawings
- Simulation model of projected annual power generation from the PV plant(s) targeting 2,500 GWh at Year 25 of the project
- Procurement of all components of the PV plant(s) including wiring, PV modules, inverters, control system
- Construction of the plant(s) including structure supports, PV modules, inverters, substations and high voltage overhead lines up to the interconnection point
- Performance testing and commissioning of the PV plant(s)
- Operating and Maintaining (O&M) the plant(s) for a period to be defined by KNPC
- Training of staff for operating the PV plant(s) for handover upon completion of the O&M period



Clashes, curfew in Kashmir after rebel leader killed

GIRLS INCREASINGLY BEING MARRIED OFF IN WAR-TORN YEMEN



GAZA CITY: Palestinians take part in rally yesterday in support of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails who ended their hunger strike earlier in the day. —AFP

PALESTINIAN PRISONERS END MASS HUNGER STRIKE

RAMALLAH: Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails on hunger strike since April 17 have ended their mass protest after Israel agreed a deal following weeks of refusing to negotiate, sources on both sides said yesterday. Some 30 of the more than 800 hunger strikers had been hospitalized in recent days, raising fears of an escalation of clashes with Israeli security forces in the occupied West Bank.

Palestinians hailed the deal as a victory for the hunger strikers after Israeli authorities repeatedly vowed not to negotiate with convicted "terrorists". Palestinian Authority prisoners' affair chief Issa Qaraqa said it had come after some 20 hours of talks between Israeli officials and strike leader Marwan Barghouti, a figure revered among Palestinians but reviled by many Israelis. An Israel Prisons Service spokeswoman confirmed the hunger strike was over but said the deal had been reached not with prisoners' representatives but with the Palestinian Authority and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Israeli authorities conceded to one of the prisoners' main demands - that they should have two family visits a month instead of the one they were entitled to before the strike, the

spokeswoman said. Palestinian Prisoners' Club chief Qaddura Fares said there had been a last-minute U-turn by the Israeli authorities who had finally approached Barghouti for talks. "Right up to 8 am on Friday, the Israel Prisons Service insisted that no negotiations were possible," Fares told AFP. "Then two hours later everything changed," he said, adding that Israeli negotiators had begun talks with Barghouti. "In his cell in Ashkelon prison, they held more than 20 hours of negotiations, Fares said. "An agreement was finally reached with the prisons service."

'We won'

Qaraqa said full details of the deal would be announced later but news of it prompted celebrations in the West Bank city of Ramallah where supporters have staffed a solidarity tent throughout the hunger strike. Barghouti's wife Fadwa hailed a "victory for resistance and dignity" after the end of the 41-day hunger strike. Amal Abu Dalal, a 50-year-old mother whose 33-year-old son has been in jail for 14 years, said: "The prisoner has defeated the jailer. We're so happy. We won."

The ICRC had warned on Thursday that its doctors who have

been visiting the prisoners were concerned about "potential irreversible health consequences". ICRC spokesman Jesus Serrano welcomed yesterday's end of the strike and said it would do all it could to facilitate the additional visits. The resolution of the strike coincided with the start of the Muslim dawn-to-dusk fasting month of Ramadan.

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas had urged US counterpart Donald Trump to raise the issue with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his visit to the region earlier this week. He raised the issue again with Trump envoy Jason Greenblatt in a meeting at his headquarters in Ramallah on Thursday. Demonstrations in support of the prisoners had been held across the West Bank, leading to repeated bloody clashes with Israeli security forces. They come as the 50th anniversary nears of Israel's seizure of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including east Jerusalem, in the Six-Day War.

'Palestinian Mandela'

The hunger strike was led by Barghouti, a prominent figure in his Fatah movement and revered by many Palestinians, in

contrast to the increasingly unpopular president. Dubbed the "Palestinian Mandela" by supporters, Barghouti is serving five life sentences on charges of involvement in murders committed during the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising, that have made him a hate figure for many on the Israeli right.

Barghouti had been moved to solitary confinement and received a single reported visit by the ICRC to check on his condition on May 11. On May 7, the Israel's prison authority shared video of what it said was Barghouti eating biscuits in a break from the strike. But his wife Fadwa dismissed the footage as a "fake... intended to break the morale of prisoners" and called on Pope Francis to intervene.

Palestinian analysts hailed the deal as a victory for the hunger strikers. "It is very likely that the United States was directly involved in the discussions," said one analyst, Hani Al-Masri. Abdel Majid Sweeney welcomed the fact that the Israeli authorities had been forced to negotiate with prisoner representatives after trying to avoid doing so at all costs. "But we still have to see if Israel will respect its commitments," he warned. —AFP

TRUMP SON-IN-LAW SOUGHT SECRET LINE WITH MOSCOW

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, made a pre-inauguration proposal to the Russian ambassador to set up a secret, bug-proof communications line with the Kremlin, The Washington Post reported Friday evening. Kushner, a close adviser to Trump, went so far as to suggest using Russian diplomatic facilities in the United States to protect such a channel from being monitored, The Post said, quoting US officials briefed on intelligence reports. The revelation is yet another sensational element in the deluge of allegations raising questions about the Trump team's

relationship with the Russians, who US intelligence agencies say tried to sway the November election in Trump's favor and thus deny Hillary Clinton the presidency. And it ensures that Trump will be thrust back into the din of the Russia scandal upon his return to Washington this weekend following his first foreign trip, a tour of the Middle East and Europe.

The Washington Post said the secret communications proposal was made December 1 or 2 at Trump Tower in New York, according to intercepts of Russian communications that were reviewed by US officials. Michael Flynn, who would become Trump's national security adviser before being fired 24 days into the job for not telling the truth about meetings he held with the Russian ambassador, was also at the meeting, The Post reported. The Russian ambassador, Sergei Kislyak, was surprised by Kushner's idea of the secret channel and passed it on to the Kremlin, The Post said. It did not specify what came of Kushner's alleged pitch, if anything. The White House did not immediately comment on the report. Jim Himes, a Connecticut Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, told MSNBC, that not disclosing such contacts "raises a lot of questions". "If it's true that somebody did ask for some kind of private line, some kind of mode of communication that was secure, that was unusual, boy does that raise a whole bunch of questions."

Besides the Kushner developments, which strikes at Trump's core by drawing his family into the crisis, the White House also faces a cascade of other worries in the coming week. The Senate Intelligence Committee has "asked President Trump's political organization to gather and produce all Russia-related documents, emails and phone records going back to his campaign's launch in June 2015," The Post reported. There was no immediate White House reaction. Fired former

FBI director James Comey has promised to testify at an open session before the Senate Intelligence Committee, sometime after Monday's Memorial Day holiday. The White House staff itself could be facing upheaval. CBS News reported that Trump is expected to consider plans for a shakeup of his communications operation upon his return. And Oleg Deripaska, a Russian once close to Trump's former campaign manager, has offered to cooperate with congressional bodies probing alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 US election, The New York Times reported Friday.

Kushner at center stage

But Kushner, a 36-year-old real estate developer who is married to Trump's daughter Ivanka, is likely to take center stage in the coming days. Reserved in public, he was on prominent view during Trump's first presidential trip, as befitted a trusted behind-the-scenes adviser involved in everything from Middle East peace to an initiative to streamline the US bureaucracy. The Post reported earlier that investigators are focusing on meetings he held in December with Moscow's ambassador and the head of a Russian bank that has been under US sanctions since 2014.

Kushner has offered to talk to Congress about these meetings, according to his lawyer Jamie Gorelick. The Post and other media have been careful to note that their sources did not say Kushner was a "target" of the investigation, nor that he was accused of any wrongdoing. If he were a "target," it would suggest Kushner was a main suspect of the investigation. The Post reported last week that the Russia investigation had been extended to a top White House official as a "significant person of interest". Kushner is the only person currently in the White House known to be under investigation. —AFP



Mohammed Al-Naki Ramadan Mubarak

On the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, wish you all a happy and blessed Ramadan.

The family Diwaniya will be on Sunday, 28th May 2017
From 8:30PM to 10:30PM.

Mansouriya, Block 1, Opp. Al Othman Mosque

REQUIRED STAFF

Safety Manager

Safety Engineer

Safety Supervisor

QC Inspector Civil

Preferring transferable visa.

Please contact Mobile: 94126811

Send CV to:

hr.kwt007@gmail.com

EGYPT STRIKES LIBYA CAMPS AFTER CHRISTIANS KILLED

MINYA, Egypt: Egyptian fighter jets carried out strikes on Friday directed at camps in Libya which Cairo says have been training militants who killed dozens of Christians earlier in the day. President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi said he had ordered strikes against what he called terrorist camps, declaring in a televised address that states that sponsored terrorism would be punished.

Egyptian military sources said six strikes took place near Derna in eastern Libya at around sundown, hours after masked gunmen attacked a group of Coptic Christians travelling to a monastery in southern Egypt, killing 29 and wounding 24. The Egyptian military said the operation was ongoing and had been undertaken once it had been ascertained that the camps had produced the gunmen behind the attack on the Coptic Christians in Minya, southern Egypt, on Friday morning.

"The terrorist incident that took place today will not pass unnoticed," Sisi said. "We are currently targeting the camps where the terrorists are trained." He said Egypt would not hesitate to carry out further strikes against camps that trained people to carry out operations against Egypt, whether those camps were inside or outside the country. Egyptian military footage of pilots being briefed and war planes taking off was shown on state television. East Libyan forces said they participated in the air strikes, which had targeted forces linked to al-Qaeda at a number of sites, and would be followed by a ground operation. A resident in Derna heard four powerful explosions, and told Reuters that the strikes had targeted camps used by fight-

ers belonging to the Majlis al-Shura militant group. Majlis al-Shura spokesman Mohamed al-Mansouri said in a video posted online that the Egyptian air strikes did not hit any of the group's camps, but instead hit civilian areas.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack on the Christians, which followed a series of church bombings claimed by Islamic State in a campaign of violence against the Copts. Islamic State supporters reposted videos from earlier this year urging violence against the Copts in Egypt. At a nearby village, thousands later attended a funeral service that turned into an angry protest against the authorities' failure to protect Christians. "We will avenge them or die like them," mourners said, while marching with a giant wooden cross.

Gunfire and Blood

Eyewitnesses said masked men opened fire after stopping the Christians, who were in a bus and other vehicles on a desert road. Local TV channels showed a bus apparently raked by gunfire and smeared with blood. Clothes and shoes could be seen lying in and around the bus, while the bodies of some of the victims lay in the sand nearby, covered with black sheets. Eyewitnesses said three vehicles were attacked. First to be hit was a vehicle taking children to the monastery as part of a church-organized trip, and another vehicle taking families there. The gunmen boarded the vehicles and shot all the men and took all the women's gold jewelry. They then shot women and children in the legs. When one of the gunmen's vehicles got a flat tire they stopped a truck carrying



MAGHAGHA, Egypt: A man covers bloodstains of victims on the road leading to St Samuel the Confessor monastery about 220 km south of Cairo yesterday. — AP

Christian workers, shot them, and took the truck. One of the gunmen recorded the attack on the Copts with a video camera, eyewitnesses said.

The attack took place on a road leading to the monastery of Saint Samuel the Confessor in Minya province, which is home to a sizeable Christian minority. Security forces launched a hunt for the attackers, setting up dozens of checkpoints and patrols on the desert road. Police armed with assault rifles formed a security perimeter around the attack site while officials from the public prosecutor's office gathered evidence. Heavily armed special forces arrived later wearing face masks and body armour.

demned the perpetrators as traitors. The head of the Coptic Christian church, Pope Tawadros, who spoke with Sisi after the attack, said it was "not directed at the Copts, but at Egypt and the heart of the Egyptians". Pope Francis, who visited Cairo a month ago, described the attack as a "senseless act of hatred".

Ongoing Persecution

Coptic Christians, whose church dates back nearly 2,000 years, make up about 10 percent of Egypt's population of 92 million. They say they have long suffered from persecution, but in recent months the frequency of deadly attacks against them has increased. About 70 have been killed since December in bombings claimed by Islamic State at churches in the cities of Cairo, Alexandria and Tanta. An Islamic State campaign of murders in North Sinai prompted hundreds of Christians to flee in February and March.

Copts fear they will face the same fate as brethren in Iraq and Syria, where Christian communities have been decimated by wars and Islamic State persecution. Egypt's Copts are vocal supporters of Sisi, who has vowed to crush Islamist extremism and protect Christians. He declared a three-month state of emergency in the aftermath of the church bombings in April.

But many Christians feel the state either does not take their plight seriously enough or cannot protect them against determined fanatics. The government is fighting insurgents affiliated with Islamic State who have killed hundreds of police and soldiers in the Sinai Peninsula, while also carrying out attacks elsewhere in the country. —Reuters

GIRLS INCREASINGLY BEING MARRIED OFF IN YEMEN

CHILD MARRIAGES MOUNTING IN WAR-TORN COUNTRY

IBB, Yemen: Nasrine's husband was once a happy, optimistic man. He made good money from a restaurant and butcher shop he owned. "With his hands, he could turn dust into gold," Nasrine says. Then Yemen's civil war escalated, and as the country collapsed, so did he. He lost his businesses, the family became destitute, he began abusing Nasrine, and they divorced, she says. Soon after, she says, she learned to her horror that her ex-husband had agreed to marry off their 10-year-old daughter to a man in his 60s for 1 million riyals, or about \$4,000. Nasrine managed to block the wedding and went into hiding with her daughter.

Her case illustrates what human rights activists say is a dire situation for girls in Yemen: Child marriages are mounting dramatically in the Arab world's poorest country, fueled by a war that has thrown society into turmoil. As the fighting grinds on in its third year, millions of families are unable to make ends meet, and more than 3 million people have been driven from their homes, ending up in camps. For families desperate for cash, unable

to support their children or afraid they cannot protect their daughter's "virtue," marrying off a girl becomes the solution.

UNICEF said in March that early marriage in Yemen has become "alarmingly widespread." In a survey conducted in September in six provinces, 72 percent of female respondents said they got married before 18 - compared with around 50 percent in surveys before the war - and about 44 percent said they were wedded before they turned 15, the organization said. "Parents marry off their daughters to be relieved of the cost of their care or because they believe a husband's family can offer better protection," UNICEF said. "Families also seek dowry payments to cope with conflict-related hardship." Local organizations working to end child marriage point to what they consider numerous egregious cases. In one case, a father ran out of



IBB, Yemen: In this photo taken on Mar 6, 2017, a 10-year-old girl who fled with her mother after she was forced to get married to a man in his 60s, sits near her mother in a residential building. — AP

cash while buying qat - leaves habitually chewed as a stimulant in Yemen - so he gave his daughter to the dealer in marriage. Another man married off his daughter three times in two years for repeated dowries, all before she turned 18. In another case, a child bride who had been handed over by her father in exchange for a taxi bled to death after being forced to have sex days after her wedding.

Lawless

There is no minimum age for marriage in Yemen. In the 1990s, a law setting the age at 15 was repealed by parliament under pressure from Muslim conservatives, who argue that Islamic sharia law does not prohibit child marriage and that attempts to curb the practice are a Western plot. While the Ministry of Justice has issued a directive against marriages of girls under 18, it is often disregarded by judges. Sexual intercourse before the girl reaches puberty is banned, but the law is nearly impossible to enforce. Human rights groups have documented cases of prepubescent

girls being set to take place in a month. A top tribal leader, Mohammed Shabana, intervened, and the father agreed under pressure to return half the money and to sign, along with the husband-to-be, a pledge not to marry off the girl until she turns 18. Shabana said the father had entered into the contract for the money and to take revenge against his former wife. "We stopped it," he said. In trying to block the wedding, Nasrine said she sought help from the judge who presided over the marriage contract, but he refused. "Go learn the law and come talk to me later," she quoted the judge as saying. "Even if the girl is 2 months old, the father agreed. It's done."

In hiding

The judge, Abdu Al-Wahed Nagi Mohsen, denied the mother's accusations and said he has never been part of any underage marriages. He said he asks for identification and proof of age in keeping with the Ministry of Justice's instructions. Nasrine is now in hiding in a shelter run by the Yemen Women Union, a women's rights organization, and said she is afraid her ex-husband and the groom-to-be will retake the girl. She said the situation breaks her heart: "I want my daughter to go out and play with the rest of the kids. For a year now, she is trapped here."

Hayat Al-Kaynae, the representative of the UN Population Fund in Ibb, confirmed Nasrine's story. The father and the would-be husband could not be reached for comment. Because of the fighting between government forces backed by a Saudi-led coalition on one side and Houthi rebels supported by forces loyal to the country's former president on the other, more than 400,000 girls under 18 have lost their homes, and many of them are living in refugee camps. Hundreds of thousands of girls have lost access to schooling, and when girls are not in school, many families start to think about marrying them off.

Child marriage is growing dramatically in the camps, said Najlaa Mohammed, with the Yemen Women Union. Sometimes, she said, the father fears his daughter will be raped and seeks a husband in hopes of protecting her. Other times, it is purely for the money, she said. Once common in rural areas, child marriage is also sweeping into cities because of the conflict, said Nabil Fadel, head of the National Organization to Combat Human Trafficking. "Imagine for the past six months, there were no salaries, soaring unemployment and poverty," he said. For men who stand to benefit financially by marrying off their daughters early, "it's hard to resist."

International organizations warn that child brides are in danger of domestic violence. Hanadi, a divorced 17-year-old, told the AP that she was married off at 13 because of her family's need for money and the notion that marriage is a woman's destiny. She said she was abused by her in-laws, with whom she lived in rural Sanaa. She was prevented from going to school, banned from talking to her family, forced to do household chores and treated like a "slave," she said. She said she fled and sought a divorce after a beating by her in-laws caused her to suffer an abortion. "Even laughing, I was not allowed to laugh," she said. "They took control over the simplest things in my life." — AP



TAORMINA, Sicily: US President Donald Trump (center) poses with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta (left), Guinean President Alpha Conde (second left), Vice President of Nigeria Yemi Osinbajo (second right) and Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn after a family photo of the leaders of the G7 and the leaders of some African countries that have been invited for the two-day talks yesterday. — AFP

TRUMP TRIP LEAVES US AND ALLIES LOST IN TRANSLATION

TAORMINA, Italy: Donald Trump's first trip overseas was supposed to be about building bridges and clarifying his administration's intentions to friends and foes alike. But the US president heads for home today with some of Washington's allies as bewildered as ever by the billionaire tycoon's abrasive, unpredictable style and the substance of his policy plans. Trip stops in Saudi Arabia and Israel and the Palestinian territories secured broadly favorable coverage with Trump seen by some commentators as having finally hit a presidential note.

He then emerged from his Vatican meeting with Pope Francis in buoyant spirits, declaring himself inspired to work harder than ever in pursuit of peace around the world. But the mood started to sour when the 70-year-old hit Brussels on Thursday. There, he bluntly accused 23 out of 28 NATO countries of taking advantage of US taxpayers by failing to pay their way in the Atlantic alliance. In talks with EU leaders, Trump appeared to display a limited grasp of how the world's biggest market operates a common trade policy, railing against Germany's "bad, very bad" surplus with his country.

Strategic ambiguity

Rolled eyeballs were the order of the day among senior EU aides who couldn't decide whether Trump was badly briefed, incapable of mastering a complex brief or consciously engaging in megaphone diplomacy in order to show he is serious about his America First agenda. Brussels also provided one of the abiding images of the trip when the leader of the free world was filmed muscling Montenegro's Prime Minister, Dusko Markovic, out of his way to get to the front of a photo opportunity.

And European hopes that Trump could be pressured into a more conciliatory stance on trade, climate change and migration at the G7 summit in Sicily were dashed. It left his Italian hosts with virtually nothing to show after months of preparations. Compounding the diplomatic damage, Trump upstaged Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni's closing press conference by tweeting that he would next week make his long-anticipated decision on US observance, or not, of the Paris climate accords.

Julianne Smith, from the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), said the summit showed how team Trump appeared determined to maintain a

"strategic ambiguity" whatever the cost to long-established relationships. "We understand that this is a tool that the administration finds useful to deal with adversaries," she said. "But for European allies across the continent, it's creating a tremendous amount of uncertainty and insecurity."

Stonewalling on climate

Another US foreign policy expert, Derek Chollet, says it was no coincidence that the mood of the trip "changed dramatically when Trump left the controlled confines of the Middle East. "In Europe, where the leaders were less fawning and the press less forgiving, Trump got himself into trouble. "The contrast was remarkable: for this first time I can think of, we saw an American president who is more at home among Arab monarchs than democratic European allies," Chollet, a former Obama administration official, wrote in Foreign Policy.

With the exception of Japan's Shinzo Abe, with whom he shares a love of golf, Trump appears to have struck up little rapport with other G7 leaders. His stonewalling on climate change amounted to politically damaging rebuffs for new French president Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel. The German chancellor offered an insight into her view of Trump when she reacted good-naturedly to his outburst on Germany's exports, adopting the manner of a teacher patiently explaining the basics of supply and demand. And she described the debate on climate change as "very unsatisfactory".

Trump view 'evolving'

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had promised that the Sicily leg of the trip would showcase Trump's strengths as a communicator. However many summit participants disputed that had been the case, noting that the US team appears still to be a prisoner of the dynamics of last year's election campaign. That, they say, explains the confrontational rhetoric despite the administration having yet to define exactly what it plans to do on either of those issues.

"His views are evolving, he came here to learn," Trump's economic advisor Gary Cohn declared on Thursday - only to have his remarks immediately reframed by National Security chief H.R. McMaster. "The one thing that won't change, though, is that he will make his decision based on what he thinks is best for the American people," McMaster said. —AFP

'52 DEAD' IN MILITIA CLASHES IN TRIPOLI

TRIPOLI: Forces loyal to Libya's unity government said yesterday that 52 of its fighters were killed as they repelled rival militias in fierce clashes in the capital Tripoli. Apart from sporadic gunfire in southern Tripoli, calm returned to the city yesterday, the first day of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Among the 52 killed in Friday's clashes which centered on the southern district of Abu Slim, said Hashem Bichr, a security official of the Government

of National Accord, were 17 members of pro-GNA forces who had been "executed".

There was no immediate confirmation from medical or other independent sources of the death toll, updated from Friday's health ministry figures of 28 dead and more than 100 wounded that did not give a breakdown of the casualties. UN special envoy Martin Kobler condemned the fighting in which heavy artillery and tanks were

used, urging restraint from all sides. Forces of the UN-backed GNA announced on their Facebook page they had defeated rival militias and taken control of a prison holding key leaders of the ousted regime of Muammar Gaddafi including his last premier, Baghdadi Al-Mahmudi, and former intelligence chief Abdullah Senussi.

Al-Hadhba jail had been under the control of the Fajr Libya militia coalition, which had seized Tripoli

in 2014 and set up a government headed by Khalifa Ghwell. The Libyan capital has been gripped by a power struggle ever since a NATO-backed uprising toppled longtime dictator Kadhafi in 2011. The latest fighting started around a complex of luxury villas that until March served as headquarters of militias loyal to Ghwell, who was ousted when the GNA took office last year but refuses to recognize the new administration. — AFP

TRUMP SET TO RETURN TO TUMULT AT HOME

TAORMINA, Sicily: Down to the final day of his lengthy first international trip, US President Donald Trump will lift off for Washington having rattled some allies and reassured others, returning to a White House that sits under a cloud of scandal. Trump started yesterday at the second day of the G-7 summit in Sicily, bringing to an end a nine-day trip that started in Saudi Arabia and Israel before moving on to three European stops. The trip has largely gone off without a major misstep, with the administration touting the president's efforts to birth a new coalition to fight terrorism, while admonishing partners in an old alliance to pay their fair share.

"Big G7 meetings today. Lots of very important matters under discussion," Trump tweeted between events. "First on the list, of course, is terrorism. #G7Taormina." Trump also touted a renewed commitment by NATO's member to spend more on defense. "Many NATO countries have agreed to step up payments considerably, as they should. Money is beginning to pour in- NATO will be much stronger," he said. Trump was referring to a vow by NATO countries to move toward spending 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defense by 2024. Only five of NATO's 28 members meet the target: Britain, Estonia, debt-laden Greece, Poland and the United States, which spends more on defense than all the other allies combined.

There is no evidence that money has begun to "pour in" - and countries do not pay the U.S. or NATO directly. But Germany, for instance, has been increasing its defense spending with the goal of reaching the 2 percent target by 2024. After the pomp of presidential travel overseas, Trump will return to Washington to find the same problems that have dogged him.

As a newly appointed special counsel is beginning his investigation into links between the Trump campaign and Russian officials, Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and close adviser, has become a focus of the probe, according to The Washington Post. His lawyer said Kushner will cooperate with investigators. James Comey, the former FBI director leading the Russian probe until Trump abruptly fired him, is still expected to testify before Congress about the memos he kept on conversations with the president that involved the investigation. The search for a new FBI director continues.

And Trump's policy agenda has run into problems. The GOP health care bill that passed the House faces uncertain prospects in the Senate, after a

Congressional Budget Office analysis that it would leave 23 million more Americans uninsured by 2026. The president's budget was widely criticized for deep cuts to safety net programs. And some are starting to question the chances for tax reform.

But first Trump has one more day in Sicily, which will include discussions of global economy and climate, a meeting with small African nations - Trump was seated between the leaders of Niger and Tunisia - and migration issues. After the G-7 summit of economically advanced countries, the president will address American troops on an Italian base before departing for home.

Not yet on the agenda: A news conference. If that holds, Trump will break with presidential precedent by not holding at least one lengthy question-and-answer session with the press while abroad. Anxious about Trump's tendency to make things worse for himself with unscripted remarks, the White House staff has kept the president a safe distance from journalists for most of the trip.

Trump was warmly welcomed in the Middle East, but in Europe he's faced a far cooler reception. He's been willing to risk disapproval, engaging in an extraordinary scolding of close allies over their responsibility to pay for mutual defense. But true to form, on Friday Trump also showed that he might be willing to deal. While Trump is demanding that the world's wealthiest nations to do more to fight terror, he's also listening to their urgings about the need for the US to remain in the sweeping Paris climate agreement. As a candidate Trump denounced the deal, but has since said he's waiting to make a final decision.

"His views are evolving, he came here to learn and get smarter," said Gary Cohn, national economic council director, when asked about the president's views on the climate agreement. Cohn would not commit to a timetable for a decision. National Security Adviser H R McMaster, who appeared with Cohn at a briefing late Friday, quickly jumped in to reiterate that Trump would make a decision based "on what's best for the American people". Other G-7 nations leaned heavily on Trump to stay in the deal, with German Chancellor Angela Merkel saying "we put forward very many arguments".

Trump took part in the ceremonial spectacle of the summit, this time at a picturesque Sicilian town above the Mediterranean Sea. But he also held one-on-one meetings with the leaders of Japan, the United Kingdom and Germany. — AP

TRUMP'S BODY LANGUAGE SPEAKS VOLUMES ON TRIP

SOUNDS OF SILENCE?

TAORMINA, Italy: The alpha-male handshake. The deadpan reaction from NATO leaders. The presidential push to the front of the pack. Even if Donald Trump hasn't done a lot of public speaking during his big trip abroad, the body language of the president and those around him has spoken volumes. Day after day, with no presidential press conferences on the schedule, Trump watchers have instead parsed the president's movements, and taken away messages that are at times painfully obvious, at times puzzling.

Put it all together, though, and the sense emerges of a president aggressively, if somewhat awkwardly, trying to assert himself on the world stage - with mixed success depending on his audience. "Throughout the trip he looked uncomfortable and isolated, others looked surprised or distant," presidential historian Julian Zelizer of Princeton wrote in an email. "The looks capture how much of the international community is dealing with the unorthodox president who has done little to show he cares about the role of the US overseas."

There was certainly any number of routine and friendly interactions between Trump and world leaders. But there was no mistaking the cool reception of NATO leaders who stood by with stone faces on Thursday as Trump lectured US allies about the need to spend more on defense. No, heads were not bobbing as Trump intoned that he had been "very, very direct" with members of the NATO alliance in saying at they "must finally contribute their fair share."

That came on the heels of a straight-faced greeting from the pontiff. In a photo that quickly went viral, Pope Francis posed next to the president with a dour look while Trump grinned. Adding to the dissonant image, Trump's wife, Melania, and daughter, Ivanka, stood next to the president, silently staring off into the distance, their somber expressions heightened by their all black outfits.

Back in Brussels, after the outdoor NATO ceremony ended, as the leaders headed to their next event, most chatted and mingled, but Trump walked alone. It was a stark contrast to the way world leaders once maneuvered to get in the camera angle with Barack Obama when he was the new president on the block.

The scene repeated itself in Italy at the G-7 summit on Friday. After the "family photo" group shot, the other leaders convivially walked down the narrow Sicilian streets to their luncheon. Trump hung back and, minutes later, opted instead to ride in a golf cart. Later, a number of the leaders surrounded Trump, some laughing as they listened.

At the NATO group shot on Thursday Trump's move to get to the front of the pack



BRUSSELS: In this May 25, 2017 image taken from NATO TV, Montenegro Prime Minister Dusko Markovic (second right) appears to be pushed by US President Donald Trump as they were given a tour of NATO's new headquarters after taking part in a group photo. — AP

again caused double-takes. The president pushed himself past Montenegro's prime minister, Dusko Markovic, to get to the front of the group as the NATO leaders walked inside the alliance's new headquarters building. Markovic gave a tense smile, and later called it a "harmless situation".

But plenty of people in the Balkans were not amused. "It seems Donald Trump did not want that anyone overshadows his presence at the summit," said the Montenegro newspaper Vijesti. Asked about the incident, White House press secretary Sean Spicer said he hadn't seen the encounter but noted that places were assigned for the group photo.

Earlier, Trump and new French President Emmanuel Macron had engaged in a power hand shake that came across as a meeting of alpha males when they met for the first time over lunch at the US ambassador's residence in Brussels. After some friendly chatter, the two gripped each other's hands so tightly before the cameras that their jaws seemed to clench. It looked like Trump was ready to pull away first but Macron wasn't quite ready to disengage. "They're presenting themselves as equals," said body language expert Lillian Glass. "They're both alphas."

A different kind of hand-clasping - or lack thereof - also sparked chatter during the trip. Two days in a row, the president and first lady Melania Trump failed to connect when Trump

reached out to grab his wife's hand - interactions that were replayed in slow-motion and endlessly dissected online. At a red-carpet welcome in Israel, Trump reached out to grab his wife's hand but she appeared to slap his hand away. A day later, in Rome, Trump seemed to reach for the first lady's hand just as she reached up to brush her hair aside. On Thursday, the two did hold hands as they made their way down the stairs of Air Force One on another stop in their itinerary. Glass said the interactions left people wondering: "What is that going on in that relationship?"

There was no questioning Trump's friendly mojo with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu - the two embraced repeatedly while Trump was in Israel, in a telling contrast to the strained relationship the Israeli leader had with Obama. Netanyahu even tried to intervene when a politician in his Likud party with a reputation for inappropriate antics tried to take a selfie of the unamused-looking president by attempting to swat away Oren Hazan's arm.

For diplomats, body language can be especially important. Trump's ambassador to Israel, Ron Dermer, is probably wishing he'd had a better poker face during the president's Jerusalem stop. When Trump told an Israeli delegation that he had just gotten back from the Middle East - which Jerusalem is clearly part of - Dermer instinctively reacted to the flub by putting his palm to his forehead. — AP



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CARTER'S COLD WAR STRATEGIST BRZEZINSKI DIES

WASHINGTON: Former US national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, who established himself in the Carter administration as a hard-liner on foreign policy, died on Friday, his family said. He was 89. Brzezinski's daughter Mika said on social media that her father died peacefully, but did not give the cause of his death.

Brzezinski, the son of a Polish diplomat, was national security advisor for all four years of Jimmy Carter's presidency. He helped

Carter contend with several international issues including the Iranian revolution that overthrew the Shah, the taking of 52 Americans as hostages in Tehran and a failed rescue mission, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. As national security advisor, Brzezinski, who Carter plucked from the academic world, saw many of the Soviet Union's foreign policy moves as evidence it could not be trusted.

That placed him at odds with two of

Carter's most trusted advisors: Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who pushed for a Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT-2) with Moscow, and Defense Secretary Harold Brown, who urged a US-Soviet accord to curb conventional forces in Europe. When Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan, Brzezinski strongly backed the arming of Afghan rebels in response to the invasion.

His hardline stance on US-Soviet relations led Pravda, the Soviet Communist Party newspaper, to denounce him as a "foe of détente". And while he was skeptical of Soviet motives and objectives, Brzezinski nurtured a diplomatic friendship between the United States and China, which culminated in a trip to Beijing in June 1978. Six months later Carter announced a decision to re-establish diplomatic ties with China starting in 1979.

Brzezinski's view of the Soviet Union may have been colored by his childhood experiences. Born in Warsaw, Poland, on March 28, 1928, he was taken as a youngster to Canada where his father served as a diplomat. When the communists took over Poland at the end of World War II, the family remained in the West. Brzezinski received a doctorate from Harvard University in 1953 and became an American citizen in 1958. He voiced support for US policy in Vietnam in the mid-1960s, and served on the policy planning staff of President Lyndon Johnson's State Department in that era. Along with David Rockefeller, chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank, Brzezinski helped to found the Trilateral Commission, a private group that promoted closer ties among North America, West Europe and Japan.

Vast Influence

Carter had known Brzezinski before his election to the White House in 1976 and asked him to leave Columbia University, where the effects of Soviet communism had been the focus of much of Brzezinski's work. Having regular access to Carter gave him vast influence in Washington, which for a time led to recurring reports that he and Vance were rivals for the president's ear. The rivalry lasted until Vance resigned after the aborted mission to rescue American hostages in Iran in April 1980. Before the seizure of the US Embassy in Tehran in 1979, Vance had resisted Brzezinski's proposals that Washington back a military crackdown against Iran's radical Islamist forces. Once the embassy was taken by followers of Islamic leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Vance sought Carter's backing for an attempt to come to terms with Khomeini. Brzezinski characteristically favored military action to free the 52 American hostages and punish Iran. Carter vacillated but eventually accepted Brzezinski's proposal for the ill-fated rescue mission, in which eight servicemen died.

Brzezinski also took part in negotiations toward the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in 1979, which was seen by many as the major achievement of Carter's presidency. In the arms control field, Brzezinski, despite his lifelong antipathy to Soviet communism, joined defense secretary Brown in spearheading the unsuccessful drive to win Senate approval of the 1979 SALT-2 accord with Moscow. Although it never cleared the Senate as a result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, SALT-2 remained unofficially in effect even beyond its original five-year

life-span. After the Carter years, Brzezinski became a consultant on international affairs and a senior advisor for the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. He also taught American foreign policy at Johns Hopkins University. He frequently wrote opinion articles for newspapers and published several books, including "Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power" in 2012.

Vice President George H.W. Bush, trying to build up his own image as a tough foreign policy realist, considered it a coup to secure Brzezinski's support in his 1988 presidential campaign. Brzezinski was at times critical of the foreign policies of both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. He was sharply critical of Bush's "war on terror" and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In Aug 2007 Brzezinski endorsed Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, saying that Obama "recognizes that the challenge is a new face, a new sense of direction, a new definition of America's role in the world".

"He was an important part of our lives for more than four decades and was a superb public servant," Carter said in a statement. Brzezinski was an active professor and author well into his 80s. He did not support President Donald Trump's election and criticized his foreign policy as vague. "Does America have a foreign policy right now?" he tweeted in February. "The President should outline why America is important to the world, but also why the world needs America." Brzezinski and wife Emilie had three children, including Mika, a host on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" show. He passed away in Falls Church, Virginia, his family said. —Agencies



WASHINGTON: In this Jan 17, 1981 file photo, US President Jimmy Carter shakes hands with his national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski as he presents Brzezinski with the Medal of Freedom at a White House ceremony. —AP

MYANMAR, HAVING WARMED TO WEST, TURNING TO CHINA AGAIN

SUU KYI FINDING LESS LOVE AMONG WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

WASHINGTON: Myanmar was supposed to turn away from China and toward the West when the US helped it transition from five decades of military rule. The opposite is happening as the Southeast Asian country's new civilian government fails to attract Western investment and Beijing goes on a charm offensive. China is offering economic and political support and a relationship free of the human rights concerns straining Myanmar's ties elsewhere.

Also known as Burma, Myanmar represented a foreign policy success for President Barack Obama. He coaxed its powerful generals into ceding power by normalizing diplomatic relations and rolling back years of economic sanctions, paving the way for Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi to take power after winning elections.

Suu Kyi's historic struggle for democracy still evokes deep respect in Washington and European capitals, but 14 months running a civilian government has exposed her inability to bring peace to a country riven by ethnic conflict. She also has struggled to produce economic growth, hobbled by a lack of control over the nation's still powerful military and a rigid management style. Finding less love among the Western democracies, Suu Kyi is cautiously embracing closer ties to China. "Amid the unpredictable challenges of this democratic transition, Western influence on Burma is waning, while Beijing is becoming more assertive," Myanmar's Irrawaddy news website said in an editorial.

Recent weeks have seen a flurry of China-Myanmar engagement. Suu Kyi met Chinese leader Xi Jinping at a Beijing summit in mid-May, her second visit there in the past year. Earlier, Myanmar's titular president, Htin Kyaw, received a six-day state visit. Suu Kyi's trip ended with an agreement with China to create an economic cooperation zone as part of the Asian giant's "Belt and Road" initiative to connect with Asian and European markets.

Last weekend, Myanmar's Navy held drills with Chinese warships. China's state-run Global Times said the military cooperation demonstrated "political trust". That trust was expected to develop between Suu Kyi and the US-led West. Myanmar's enduring fear of being dominated by its much larger neighbor, China, was one reason it improved ties with the United States in the first place. The Obama administration seized the opportunity while trying to "pivot" American foreign policy focus to Asia, hop-

ing deeper relationships with its booming economies would provide the US long-term strategic and economic advantages.

Derek Mitchell, the former US ambassador who spearheaded Obama's Myanmar rapprochement, said China was "stunned" when the country reached out to the West between 2011 and 2015. China is now making up for lost time, and capitalizing on President Donald Trump's reduced attention for Myanmar, he said. "It gave an opportunity for China to say, 'See we're on your border and we're here to stay. You can't



Aung San Suu Kyi

count on the Americans," Mitchell said. The State Department and White House did not respond to requests for comment.

Trump has started to reach out to Southeast Asian leaders, praising Philippines' president Rodrigo Duterte for his deadly war on drugs and inviting him and Thailand's prime minister, who took power in a coup, to the White House. Next week, Trump is hosting communist Vietnam's prime minister. Trump has yet to speak with democratic icon Suu Kyi.

For two decades, while Myanmar languished under repressive military rule, US administrations and influential lawmakers adored Suu Kyi. Obama helped her transformation from political prisoner to national

leader, fostering democracy on China's doorstep. Republicans and Democrats touted the change as a victory for US interests and values.

China, which sees Myanmar as a land bridge to the Indian Ocean, saw a strategic setback. Yun Sun, a China expert at the Stimson Center in Washington, said Chinese policy experts even characterized it with a proverb: "The cooked duck flew out of the window." She said the proverb's meaning is clear: "Myanmar was already in our pockets but somehow the Americans stole it from us." But Trump may have little political incentive now to prioritize US ties with Myanmar. "What are left now are the problems," Sun added.

Problem one is sluggish economic growth. Washington has increased foreign aid and encouraged American investors by lifting sanctions. But the moves haven't spurred economic activity in one of Asia's last untapped markets. Myanmar ranks 170th out of 190 nations in the World Bank's ease-of-doing-business rankings, and third-worst globally for contract enforcement. Foreign investment dropped almost a third between April 2016 and April 2017, according to Myanmar government figures, with no new US projects.

Problem two is human rights. Western nations in March backed a UN fact-finding mission on reported atrocities against Myanmar's downtrodden Rohingya Muslims. Suu Kyi opposed the idea, tarnishing her international reputation. Problem three is ethnic conflict. Suu Kyi has prioritized resolving Myanmar's decades-long wars between the army and ethnic rebels, with little success. She tried again this week, bringing rebel groups together for talks with the government and military.

China has leverage with rebels near its border and says it supports peace. Resolution, however, hinges on Myanmar's willingness to cede power to minorities and facilitate greater federalism. On economic development, China faces wary Burmese citizens. Chinese projects have uprooted villagers and hurt the environment, factors that led Myanmar in 2011 to suspend a \$3.6 billion dam primarily funded by Chinese energy interests. The suspension remains a sore point. Mitchell, the former Obama envoy, warned of a larger strategic setback for the US failing to consolidate Myanmar's transition would tell the region's autocratic governments they were right, he said, that "democracy doesn't work in Asia." —AP



WELLESLEY, Massachusetts: Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gestures after she delivered the commencement address at Wellesley College on Friday. Clinton graduated from the school in 1969. —AP

CLINTON SLAMS TRUMP AT GRADUATION SPEECH

NEW YORK: Hillary Clinton launched a stinging attack on Donald Trump Friday, obliquely comparing him to former president Richard Nixon, who resigned in 1974 to escape impeachment, and savaging the Republican assault on fact-based politics. The defeated Democratic presidential nominee made her remarks in a commencement address at her alma mater Wellesley College, a women's liberal arts college in Massachusetts, 48 years after her own graduation.

Never once uttering Trump's name, she urged the class of 2017 to get politically and socially involved, saying that the future of America depends on "brave, thoughtful people like you insisting on truth and integrity". Coughing at one point before being passed a bottle of water and continuing briefly in a hoarse voice, the former secretary of state who made history as the first US woman to win a major party nomination for president was frequently interrupted by applause.

"Now, you may have heard that things didn't exactly go the way I planned, but you know what? I'm doing OK," she said of her electoral defeat. "I won't lie, Chardonnay helped a little too," she added to roars of delight. Clinton implicitly compared Trump to Nixon, the Republican president brought down by the Watergate scandal. He sacked his attorney general in a move some have compared to Trump's firing of FBI director James Comey, who was investigating Russian interference in last year's

election and possible collusion by Trump's campaign. The former first lady said her class of 1969 was "furious" about the then-recent election of Nixon, "a man whose presidency would eventually end in disgrace with his impeachment for obstruction of justice."

'Assault on truth'

"You are graduating at a time when there is a full-fledged assault on truth and reason. Just log on to social media for 10 seconds it will hit you right in the face," she said. "People denying science, concocting elaborate hurtful conspiracy theories... Drumming up rampant fear about undocumented immigrants, Muslims, minorities, the poor," she added. "Some are even denying things we see with our own eyes, like the size of crowds," she said, again alluding to but not naming Trump, who falsely accused the news media last January of misrepresenting the size of his inauguration crowds. "Then defending themselves by talking about quote unquote alternative facts."

Clinton called Trump's proposed federal budget "an attack of unimaginable cruelty on the most vulnerable" that "grossly underfunds" public education, mental health care, efforts to combat America's opioid epidemic and threats to worsen climate change. "It matters because if our leaders lie about the problems we face, we'll never solve them. It matters because it undermines confidence in government as a whole." —AFP

CLASHES AS VENEZUELA PROTESTERS TARGET BASE

CARACAS: Riot police in Venezuela fired tear gas and water cannon to stop anti-government protesters from marching on a key military installation Friday during the latest violence in nearly two months of unrest. The opposition is trying to sway the support of the armed forces, a key pillar of the government of socialist President Nicolas Maduro, who is resisting opposition calls for early elections. Retired military personnel joined demonstrators

who tried to march to the Los Proceres complex, which houses the defense ministry and lies close to a major military base in Caracas.

Friday's protest was aimed at "demanding that the armed forces lower their weapons and not be complicit in the dictatorship," said Freddy Guevara, an opposition leader who is vice president of parliament, the only branch of government the opposition controls. He called on the military to reject a "con-

stituent assembly" to be elected in July and tasked with drafting a new constitution, saying Maduro's plans "will liquidate Venezuelan democracy forever." Masked protesters threw Molotov cocktails at riot police in scenes familiar after nearly two months of unrest. A 33-year-old man who was injured Thursday night during a protest in the western city of Cabudare died on Friday, bringing the death toll from eight weeks of unrest to 58. Several people were also injured in the capital on Friday, including opposition lawmaker Carlos Paparoni, who was struck in the leg with a blunt object.

Protests planned

Attorney General Luisa Ortega blamed military police for hundreds of injuries and at least one death. Protesters brand the socialist president a dictator, blaming him for economic turmoil and food shortages. Maduro is resisting their calls for early elections, saying the opposition and the United States are plotting a coup against him. Despite the opposition's calls for the military to abandon Maduro, the high command has retained its public support for him so far.

A crowd of Maduro's supporters in red shirts started a counter-demonstration on Friday near the presidential palace in central Caracas. The president has launched steps to reform the constitution in response to the crisis. His opponents say that is a bid to dodge elections and cling to power. The National Electoral Council said those who wanted to stand for election to the constituent assembly to rewrite the constitution should sign up next Thursday and Friday. The opposition urged demonstrators to rally again yesterday, this time at the offices of the state media regulator. —AFP



CARACAS: Opposition demonstrators use a giant slingshot in clashes with riot police during a protest against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on Friday. —AFP

TEXAS 'ANGEL OF DEATH' NURSE CHARGED AGAIN

SAN ANTONIO: A former Texas nurse known as the "angel of death" for allegedly having killed up to 60 babies was served a new murder warrant linking her to the death of an infant boy more than 30 years ago, a district attorney said on Friday. Genevieve Jones, 66, was sentenced to 99 years in prison after being convicted of giving a fatal overdose to 15-month-old Chelsea McClellan in 1982. She was suspected by prosecutors of having given fatal injections to between 40 to 60 infants and toddlers. "She has been suspected in dozens of infant deaths, she has only been held accountable for one," Bexar County District Attorney Nicholas LaHood told reporters on Friday.



Genevieve Jones

LaHood said new evidence has been found to bring the new indictment charging her with the murder of then 11-month-old Joshua Sawyer in 1981. When Jones was sentenced, she had the benefit of a 1977 mandatory release parole law. The law was changed in 1987, but did not apply retroactively, thus setting a March 2018 release date, LaHood said. He gave no details of the new evidence but the new indictment could keep her behind

bars and thwart next year's mandatory release.

"The possibility of this individual suspected of killing several dozen infants being set free, was shocking to many, including the victims' families," LaHood said. In 1983, prosecutors in Bexar County, which contains San Antonio, said they were investigating 47 suspicious infant deaths at a county hospital where Jones had worked. Since then, law enforcement have said she may have been linked to as many as 60 deaths of babies and toddlers. Many of the deaths involved drugs that are difficult to trace. She has only been convicted of killing one baby.

LaHood said Jones was emotional when served with the new indictment on Thursday night. She is imprisoned at the Murray Unit in Gatesville, Texas, and is set for release on March 1, 2018, according to online prison records. Jones worked as a pediatric nurse in several Texas hospitals, clinics, and doctors' offices in the late 1970s and early 80s. The baby named in the latest indictment, Sawyer, died amid a surge of pediatric deaths that occurred when Jones was working as a pediatric intensive care unit of a San Antonio hospital. —Reuters

MOLDOVA'S 'FROZEN CONFLICT' HAS LESSONS FOR EAST UKRAINE

TIRASPOL, Moldova: The country Nikolai Klimkin serves does not officially exist and has remained trapped in a limbo of impoverished stagnation for decades. The 32-year-old is a soldier in the army of the self-proclaimed state of Transnistria - a tiny sliver of land that claimed independence from Moldova just after the Soviet Union fell apart some 25 years ago. About half of the nearly 500,000 people living in the region are ethnic Moldovans. A 2015 census showed Russians accounting for about 40 percent of the population and Ukrainians comprising much of the rest.

But Transnistria's independence is not even recognized by its main supporter Russia despite the presence of its troops in the region. Now Klimkin says he can see history repeating itself across the border to the east in Ukraine as the war between Moscow-backed separatists and Kiev sets into yet another "frozen conflict" across the former Soviet region. And he is worried that the separatist Ukrainian fiefdoms of Lugansk and Donetsk will end up following his homeland into a grey zone of uncertainty and hardship. "I just hope that what happened to us does not happen to them," Klimkin says from under the rim of his army cap.

Soviet time warp

Kiev has long suspected that Russia never intended to seize Ukraine's east

but to create a "frozen conflict": A festering wound that allows the Kremlin to meddle at will and hamper any moves closer to the West. The scenario has happened before when Moscow decided to support two breakaway regions in ex-Soviet Georgia. Transnistria turned into a frozen conflict for Moldova after it was wrested away from the rest of the country with the help of Russian forces in a 1992 war that killed 1,000 people.

The breakaway region's capital Tiraspol now appears trapped in a Soviet time warp more than a quarter of a century after Communism's collapse. A huge statue of Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin dominates the main square and portraits of dictator Joseph Stalin stare down from billboards over potholed streets where shabby government buildings are emblazoned with fading Soviet coats of arms.

Transnistria issues a local version of the Russian ruble and prints its own domestic identity papers. Both are worthless outside the region and only a lucky few are able to travel to Ukraine's neighboring Black Sea coastal retreat of Odessa when the border guards are in a particularly lenient mood. Ukraine's east is still experiencing low-level fighting but is also freer in some respects: Its documents are accepted for travel into Russia and it uses the official ruble for trade.

Delicate dance

An intense brain drain over the decades means that more than half of Transnistria's residents are pensioners who side with Ukraine's insurgents out of nostalgia for the days when the Kremlin ruled their land. But Transnistria's leaders tread a much more delicate line and have never recognised the separatists' independence. "Of course, the locals are

on the side of Lugansk and Donetsk," says a blogger identifying herself only as Olga out of fear of retribution from the authorities. "But those in charge in Transnistria would prefer not to get into a fight with either Ukraine, which is threatening us with a trade blockade, or Russia, on which we financially depend."

Everything from Russian food to medicine and fuel reaches Transnistria

through Ukraine. But Kiev on May 20 imposed a temporary blockade on Transnistria until it can establish rules for checking Russia's cargo for banned goods such as arms. The sudden halt in Russian support prompted a run on stores for essentials such as matches for lighting gas stoves and salt.

Kremlin towers

The region's deputy parliament speaker Galina Antyufeyeva said she could not rule out that Ukraine made the decision out of concern over Moscow's continued military presence in Transnistria. The number of its troops in the region remains a secret but is a constant worry for Kiev - afraid of being hemmed in by Russia from both the east and west. "Such blockades are inadmissible," Antyufeyeva told AFP. "We have to develop good-neighborly relations with Ukraine."

But people such as blogger Olga think the Kremlin could have easily staked its claim on either Transnistria or Ukraine's east if it wanted, regardless of what Kiev did. "Something is preventing it from doing this, and that something lies inside the Kremlin's walls," said Olga. "In Transnistria, we have a joke about how the Kremlin really has two towers instead of one. And one cannot agree with the other about what to do with either Transnistria or east Ukraine." —AFP



TIRASPOL: People take pictures of a Soviet armored personnel carrier placed as a monument in the capital of the self-proclaimed Moldovan Republic of Transnistria on April 3, 2017. —AFP

BRITAIN ARRESTS 2 MORE IN MANCHESTER PROBE

HUNT CONTINUES FOR SUICIDE BOMBER'S NETWORK

MANCHESTER: British police said they arrested two more people during raids yesterday in connection with the suicide bombing at a Manchester concert, with a "large part" of the network behind the attack now being held. The two men, aged 20 and 22, were arrested in north Manchester early yesterday after police gained entry to an address using a controlled explosion. The arrests bring to 11 the number of suspects held in Britain over Monday's blast at a concert by US pop idol Ariana Grande, in which 22 people died and 116 were injured, and for which the Islamic State group has claimed responsibility. Police in Libya have detained the father and brother of 22-year-old bomber Salman Abedi. Mark Rowley, head of Britain's counter-terrorism police, said on Friday that police had captured "a large part of the network" linked to the atrocity in which seven children aged under 18 were among the 22 dead. "We are very happy we've got our hands around some of the key players that we are concerned about but there's still a little bit more to do," he said.

Britain's terror threat assessment has been raised to "critical", the highest level, meaning an attack is considered imminent. Armed police will be on patrol over the holiday weekend, with security increased at football's showpiece FA Cup final at Wembley Stadium in London yesterday. "Anyone coming to the FA Cup Final or the other play-off matches over the weekend will see an increase in police numbers in and around the stadium," said Jon Williams from the Metropolitan Police.

Security to the fore

The bombing was the latest in a series of IS-claimed attacks in Europe

that have coincided with an offensive on the jihadist group in Syria and Iraq by US, British and other Western forces. Dozens of IS fighters were killed in US strikes in Syria on Friday, while masked gunmen killed at least 28 people in an attack on Coptic Christians in Egypt. But as campaigning resumed in Britain for a snap June 8 election following a halt called after Monday's attack, the issue of security, which had not been widely discussed before the attack, was poised to feature highly.

Opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said it was the "responsibility" of governments to minimise the risk of terror by giving police the funding they need, after cuts made while

Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May served as interior minister. The number of police officers fell by 14 percent, or almost 20,000, from 2009 to 2016, according to the independent Institute for Fiscal Studies think tank.

Focus on Internet

At the G7 summit meeting in Sicily on Friday, May faced questions from journalists over the police funding cuts during her six years as the interior minister. "We have protected counter-terrorism police funding, we've increased the funding for our security and intelligence agencies and we continue to provide them with the support they need," May said. She also urged the G7

leaders to demand action from internet providers and social media companies to keep extremist content from getting online. "The fight is moving from the battlefield to the Internet," she said. A YouGov poll in The Times newspaper put the Conservatives at 43 percent compared with Labour at 38 percent, far better for Labour than the double-digit margin that had previously separated it from the governing party. But the poll also suggested that 41 percent of respondents believe the Conservatives would handle defense and security best, while just 18 percent said the same of Labour. YouGov polled 2,052 people on Wednesday and Thursday. —AFP



MANCHESTER: Policemen are mobilized at a police cordon during a police operation at a property in Moss Side yesterday. —AFP



DENPASAR, Indonesia: Convicted Australian drug trafficker Schapelle Corby, seen with her face obscured with a shawl, is escorted by officials at the Correction Bureau on Bali island yesterday ahead of her departure to Brisbane. —AFP

AUSTRALIAN TRAFFICKER CORBY TO RETURN HOME AMID STORM

KUTA, Indonesia: Australian Schapelle Corby battled through a media scrum yesterday as she left a Bali villa to head home 12 years after being convicted of drug trafficking on the holiday island, a long-awaited return that has captivated public attention. The beauty school dropout covered her face with a scarf as she was hustled out of her home on the Indonesian resort island, amid heavy security as a huge pack of Australian and international journalists jostled to get a shot of her.

The 39-year-old, who was arrested in 2004 at Bali airport, was bundled into a car with tinted windows and sped off in a convoy that included armored vehicles through narrow streets as curious on-lookers gawped at the spectacle. After signing documents at a government office, her convoy raced towards the airport, from where she was to depart on a flight to Brisbane later yesterday. "Good bye to this parole paper work," she posted under a picture of the documents on an Instagram account, which had attracted over 35,000 followers within a few hours of being set up.

Corby was sentenced to 20 years in jail in 2005 after being caught with several kilos of marijuana stuffed in her surfing gear. She was released in 2014 but was required to remain on Bali another three years under the conditions of her parole, and now has to leave. Her story has fascinated the Australian public like few others in recent times. Her steadfast proclamations of innocence and well-documented fight with mental illness in prison generated much sympathy in Australia, where she was often depicted as the victim of a conspiracy.

National obsession

The view of her case is starkly different in Indonesia, where many see Corby as a common criminal who simply broke the country's tough anti-drugs laws. Australian media have flown into Bali en masse and camped out outside Corby's Bali villa for the past few days, and hundreds of police officers have been deployed for her departure. Bali corrections chief Surung Pasaribu said the Australian consulate on the island had requested help to ensure her departure was smooth, which he said was "normal". "We will protect her," he said. "We will pray for her that she will repent, God wants humans to return to the right path."

The Australian interest in Corby, which began with her arrest, intensified into an obsession during her trial. The dramatic courtroom scenes of her breaking down in tears as she was convicted and her sister Mercedes screaming from the sidelines were watched live by millions of Australians. The media have closely tracked her case, from the sordid conditions in Bali's Kerobokan jail - where prisoners live in cramped, filthy cells and drug abuse is widespread - to her struggles with mental illness. The end of her sentence was brought forward after she received several remissions for good behavior, and a five-year cut following an appeal to clemency to the Indonesian president.

Indonesia, which has some of the world's toughest anti-narcotics laws, has stepped up its campaign against drug use since Corby was jailed. Two Australians were put to death alongside six other foreigners and one Indonesian in April 2015 for drug smuggling, sparking a serious diplomatic row between Jakarta and Canberra. —AFP

POPE DENOUNCES SPECULATORS IN VISIT TO INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

GENOVA, Italy: Pope Francis highlighted the struggles workers face in a globalizing economy with a visit yesterday to a troubled steel factory in Genoa, where he stressed the importance of work in giving people a sense of human dignity and denounced those who exploit workers. The visit puts a focus on the plight of workers whose lives have been made precarious by years of economic crisis, including in Italy where a high jobless rate, especially among young adults, drives many to leave the country.

Speaking to some 3,500 industrial workers, many in factory uniforms or hard hats, Francis distinguished what he called the "real entrepreneur," a person who "shares the labors of workers and shares the joys of work" to create something together, and speculators who are not bothered when they fire workers in a search for profit. "One sickness of the economy is the gradual transformation of entrepreneurs into speculators," the pontiff said. "The speculator doesn't love his business, doesn't love the workers, but

only sees the business and workers as the means to make profit."

He decried a political system that "sometimes seems to encourage" speculators, "not those who invest and believe in work." He also denounced those who claim that workers do their jobs only for the money, saying that "denies the dignity of work." Francis, an Argentine whose parents left Italy in the early 20th century, also referred to his personal feelings aroused by visiting the port city, the departure point in the past for Italians seeking new lives in North and South America.

"It's the first time I come to Genoa, and being so close to the port reminds me of where my father departed from," he said. "This gives me a great emotion." After the visit at the factory, Francis held separate meetings with clergy at the Cathedral of San Lorenzo and later with young people in a different church. Later the pontiff also planned to meet with poor and homeless people as well as refugees and prisoners. He will also visit a pediatric hospital. —AP

MELANIA'S PRICEY JACKET DRAWS ATTENTION IN SICILY



CATANIA, Italy: US First Lady Melania Trump steps out of a car as she arrives at Chierici Palace on Friday, part of a visit of the G7 first ladies. —AP

TAORMINA, Sicily: Melania Trump's first outing in the Sicilian sunshine was in a colorful floral applique jacket by Dolce & Gabbana that sells for \$51,000, or several thousand dollars below the median US income in 2015. She also carried a matching clutch to lunch with spouses of the G-7 leaders, held at the historic Elephants Palace and hosted by Catania's mayor.

The burst of color in the US first lady's wardrobe came after a steady dose of mostly black and white during President Donald Trump's inaugural overseas tour, including a prim black lace dress with a matching mantilla head cover that she wore to meet Pope Francis, and a dark jacket with golden detailing on the cuff and collar that she wore for her arrival in Italy. Both outfits were also by Milan designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana.

The fashion choices of America's first ladies are a longstanding source of public fascination, and Mrs Trump is getting a taste of that on the trip, her first extended period in the public eye since her husband's inauguration. She has been living in the couple's penthouse at Trump Tower in New York instead of the White House, but plans to move to Washington once the couple's 11-year-old son finishes the school year.

Michelle Obama, for example, received rave reviews for most of the gowns she wore to White House state dinners that she and her husband hosted. But she was also mocked for some fashion choices, including wearing shorts on Air Force One and sporting designer sneakers that cost more than \$500 during a visit to a food bank. The first lady's attire can also be a big

boost for designers. Gabbana has celebrated each of Mrs Trump's appearance with Instagram posts. He shared three photos of the floral jacket, worn over a simple white shift dress, with Mrs Trump looking model-perfect as she stepped out of an SUV. Gabbana tagged the photo with hearts and a "Thank You" to @flotus #melaniatump. Dolce & Gabbana have made Sicily their fashion muse, so it wasn't surprising that Trump's wife would wear their designs in Sicily, the final stop on Trump's trip.

The White House did not respond to requests for comment on how much Mrs Trump, a former model and the wife of an independently wealthy president, paid for the jacket. The US government does not provide first ladies with a wardrobe allowance - though attire for official events of public or historic significance may be given as a gift by a designer and accepted on behalf of the US government. Several fashion designers have said publicly that they will not dress the first lady because they oppose her husband's policies - a fact that Gabbana appeared to chide in earlier Instagram posts he tagged #boy-cottolcedolce&gabbana please with laughing emojis. Mrs Trump, a former model, is known for her stylish appearance. Her fashion choices so far have been a contrast to her predecessor, who liked to mix designer items with more accessible brands like J.Crew.

The retail price for the Dolce & Gabbana jacket Mrs Trump wore comes in at about \$5,500 below the median US household income of \$56,516 in 2015, the most recent year for which figures are available from the US Census Bureau. —AP

PROTESTS HIT KASHMIR AFTER TOP REBEL KILLED

SIX REBELS KILLED ALONG DE FACTO BORDER

SRINAGAR: One civilian was killed and dozens of others injured yesterday after massive anti-India protests and clashes erupted in Indian-controlled Kashmir following the killing of a prominent rebel commander and his associate

the area, with police and paramilitary soldiers firing shotguns and tear gas to stop the protests. Witnesses said a young man was killed and several other people were injured after government forces fired on the protesters near the

sites, including Facebook and Twitter. The social media ban on April 26 came after videos depicting the alleged abuse of Kashmiris by Indian forces fueled widespread protests.

Anti-India sentiment runs deep among the region's mostly Muslim population and most people support the rebels' cause against Indian rule despite a decades-long military crackdown to fight the armed rebellion. Last year, similar massive protests followed by clashes roiled Kashmir following the killing of charismatic rebel leader Burhan Wani. His death led to months of protests and a security lockdown during which at least 90 people were killed and thousands injured. Hundreds were blinded or maimed by the firing of government forces.

Border clash

Earlier yesterday, Indian soldiers killed six suspected rebels along the highly militarized de facto border that divides Kashmir between India and Pakistan, the army said. The gun battle erupted after a group of heavily armed militants crossed from the Pakistani-controlled part of Kashmir into the Indian-held portion in western Rampur sector, said army spokesman Col Rajesh Kalia. On Friday, the army said soldiers killed two suspected militants in the same area after they crossed into the Indian-administered part of Kashmir from the Pakistani-held part. There was no independent confirmation of the latest incidents.

India and Pakistan claim Kashmir in its entirety and have fought two wars over their rival claims to the territory. Rebel groups have been fighting since 1989 for Kashmir's independence or merger with neighboring Pakistan. Nearly 70,000 people have been killed in the fighting and the ensuing Indian crackdown. India has accused Pakistan of arming and training the rebels, which Pakistan denies. Rebel groups have largely been suppressed by Indian forces in recent years. However, public opposition to Indian rule remains deep and is now principally expressed through street protests marked by youths hurling stones at government forces. — AP



An Indian army vehicle is parked next to a burning house where two Kashmiri rebels were killed during a gunfight in the Tral area south of Srinagar yesterday. — AFP

in a gun battle with government forces in the disputed region. Rebel leader Sabzar Ahmed Bhat and a fellow militant were killed after troops cordoned off the southern Tral area overnight following a tip that rebels were hiding there, police said. The gun battle ended later yesterday and soldiers recovered the bodies of two militants. However, they were searching the area for at least one more body, police said.

As the violence raged, hundreds of angry residents chanting anti-India slogans marched in an attempt to help the trapped rebels escape. Clashes between rock-throwing protesters and government forces erupted in different places in

site of the gun battle. Police chief S P Vaid said the man was killed by crossfire.

As the news of the rebel leader's killing spread in the region, thousands of people, including students, took to the streets shouting "Go India, go back" and "We want freedom." Traders shuttered shops and businesses across the Kashmir Valley, including in the region's main city of Srinagar. Officials said clashes were reported in more than four dozen places in the region. Dozens of civilians were reported injured in the clashes. Authorities suspended most internet services in the region a day after they lifted a month-long ban on 22 social networking



KHOST, Afghanistan: Afghan residents gather at the scene of a suicide car bomb that targeted a CIA-funded pro-government militia force at a public bus station in this province yesterday. — AFP

13 DEAD AS TALEBAN CAR BOMBER HITS CIA-FUNDED AFGHAN MILITIA

KHOST, Afghanistan: A Taliban car bomber killed 13 people in Afghanistan's Khost city yesterday, in the first major attack at the start of the holy month of Ramadan that targeted a CIA-funded militia group. It is the latest in a series of assaults on Western-backed forces as the Taliban step up their annual spring offensive and the insurgency expands more than 15 years after they were ousted from power in a US-led invasion. The powerful explosion in the eastern Afghan city, which also wounded six people including children, left the crowded area littered with charred debris and the twisted and mangled wreckage of vehicles.

"A suicide car bomb in Khost province has killed 13 people," said interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish. "The target was a public bus station which was hit by the bombing. The victims were in civilian clothes and it is difficult to verify their identities." But provincial police chief Faizullah Ghairat said the victims were civilians and members of the elite Khost Provincial Force (KPF) — known to be paid and equipped by the American CIA. "The bombing took place early morning when KPF members were heading to work," Ghairat told AFP.

The KPF, estimated to have around 4,000 fighters, are believed to operate a shadow war against the Taliban in a province that borders Pakistan and are accused of torture and extrajudicial killings. The brazen attack, claimed by the Taliban on their website, comes just a day after at least 15 Afghan soldiers were killed when insurgents attacked their base in Kandahar, in the third major assault this week on the military in the southern province. The attack in Shah Wali Kot district followed insurgent raids earlier this week on military bases in the same area and Maiwand district, bringing the death toll among Afghan troops in Kandahar to around 60.

'Unforgivable crime'

The battlefield losses mark a stinging blow for NATO-backed Afghan forces and have raised concerns about their capacity to beat back the resurgent Taliban. Afghan forces are beset by unprecedented casualties and blamed for corruption, desertion and "ghost soldiers" who exist on the payroll but whose salaries are usurped by fraudulent commanders. During another deadly Taliban attack on security outposts in southern Zabul province on Sunday, local officials made desperate calls to Afghan television stations to seek attention because they were unable to contact senior authorities for help.

The pleas for attention, a major embarrassment for the Western-backed government, highlighted the disarray in security ranks. The United Nations this week called on all parties of

the conflict for a halt in fighting during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. That has prompted no response from the Taliban, who launched their annual spring offensive in late April, heralding a surge in fighting as the US tries to craft a new Afghan strategy. "Terrorists, on the first day of Ramadan, conducted an attack in Khost that martyred a number of countrymen," the Afghan presidential office said in a statement. "The terrorists do not value any religious and holy days, committing a war crime and an unforgivable crime."

US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis last month warned of "another tough year" for security forces in Afghanistan. The United States and several NATO allies are considering sending thousands more troops to break the stalemate against the resurgent militants. — AFP

S KOREA-SKIPPERED VESSEL OUTRUNS SOMALI 'PIRATES'

SEOUL: A fishing vessel, initially believed to have been hijacked off the Somali coast early yesterday, was confirmed to be operating as normal, the South Korean foreign ministry said. The Mongolian-flagged ship - with a South Korean captain, and two South Korean and 18 Indonesian crew members - successfully outdistanced a suspicious boat that had pursued it for more than an hour in an apparent attempt to capture it, the ministry said in a statement.

The ship had raised the alarm that it was being chased before contact was lost, prompting a South Korean anti-piracy naval ship in the area to sail to its rescue. "Contact has been re-established with the (South Korean) skipper and it has been confirmed the crew are all

safe", the ministry's statement added. Somali pirates hijacked an Iranian fishing boat with a crew of up to 20 on Tuesday. There have been at least eight attacks by Somali pirates in recent months and three successful hijackings.

Last week the Indian navy thwarted an attempted hijacking, chasing away at least three boats that had swarmed a cargo vessel off Somalia's northeast. Lawlessness and a lack of job opportunities in Somalia, combined with the waning attention of international anti-piracy patrols has given piracy new life. Somali pirates began staging attacks in 2005, seriously disrupting a major international shipping route and costing the global economy billions of dollars a year. — AFP



MARAWI, Philippines: A fire rages in houses following air strikes by the Philippine Air Force yesterday. — AP

PHILIPPINES STEPS UP BOMBING OF MILITANTS

MARAWI, Philippines: Philippine security forces yesterday intensified a bombing campaign on homes and other buildings in a southern city where they have been battling Islamist militants for five days, and warned there may be collateral damage. President Rodrigo Duterte declared martial law across the southern third of the Philippines in response to the clashes, which have claimed at least 48 lives and he has said are part of a campaign by the Islamic State (IS) group to establish a local caliphate.

Most of the 200,000 residents of Marawi, one of the major Muslim cities in the mainly Catholic Philippines, fled the city because of the fighting as the military used air raids and engaged in street-to-street battles to flush out the militants. But, with security forces unable to end the crisis and the gunmen believed to be holding up to 15 hostages, the military warned on Saturday that it would step up the bombing assaults.

"In as much as we would like to avoid collateral damage, these rebels are forcing the hand of government by hiding and holding out inside private homes, government buildings and other facilities," military spokesman Brigadier-General Restituto Padilla said. "Their refusal to surrender is holding the city captive. Hence, it is now increasingly becoming necessary to use more surgical airstrikes to clear the city and to bring this rebellion to a quicker end."

The violence erupted on Tuesday when dozens of gunmen went on a rampage throughout Marawi in response to an attempt by security forces to arrest Isnilon Hapilon, a veteran Filipino militant regarded as the local leader of IS. The gunmen planted black IS flags, took a priest and up to 14 other people hostage from a church, and set fire to buildings. Thirteen soldiers, two policemen and 31 militants have died in the fighting, according to authorities.

Two civilians were also confirmed killed inside a hospital that the gunmen had occupied on Tuesday, and the military has

said nine other people may have been murdered at a militant checkpoint. Duterte has vowed to extinguish the threat of the militants, whom he has said belong to the local Maute terrorist group but are being backed by criminals in the area.

Prayers to end 'terrorism'

Nevertheless, Duterte also said on Friday that he was prepared to talk with the group's leaders. His spokesman, Ernesto Abella, said this was partly an offer made in the spirit of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which began in the Philippines yesterday. "Together we pray for an end to terrorism that falsely claims to advance Islam and seeks to subjugate our land to the brutal IS," Abella said in a statement. "In this spirit of Muslim peace, the president has offered the hand of peaceful dialogue to terrorist groups, to avoid bloodshed in this time of prayer, fasting and mercy."

However there appeared to be an extremely small chance of talks, unless they were to negotiate the release of the hostages. Local military spokesman military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Jo-ar Herrera told AFP the fighting could not stop because of Ramadan. "It is painful for the Maranao (the name for local Muslims) that it is Ramadan but our action now is to protect Marawi," Herrera said. "These are the impacts of the local terrorist group's actions."

The battle to clear the city of the gunmen was proving hard because they had scattered into small groups and were moving to different houses and setting up sniper positions, according to the military. "They also have sympathizers from private armed groups," Herrera said. Islamist militants working with criminals and corrupt politicians is common across Mindanao, where a Muslim separatist rebellion has claimed more than 120,000 lives since the 1970s. The Maute, Abu Sayyaf and other small headline groups are not interested in negotiating peace and have in recent years looked to IS to help them. — AFP

INDIA AIDS SRI LANKA AS MONSOON KILLS 100

COLOMBO: India joined Sri Lanka's relief operation yesterday as 230,000 people were driven from their homes after an intense monsoon deluge killed at least 103 people. Rainfall on Friday triggered the worst flooding and landslides in 14 years in the southern and western parts of the island, authorities said. The Disaster Management Centre (DMC) said 103 people were confirmed killed while another 113 were missing. The military conducted search operations in landslide-hit areas and the airforce deployed five aircraft for rescue operations and another five to transport emergency supplies to villagers who could not be reached by road.

Home Affairs minister Vajira Abeywardena said that while the worst of the rain was over, there was a danger of fresh flooding downstream. He urged people living in low-lying areas to move to higher ground. "There are several remote places which are still inaccessible," Abeywardena told reporters in Colombo. "We have reports of places where neither helicopters nor boats can reach." He said the government was air dropping 10,000 life jackets for marooned people until they could be moved to safer ground. The government has set up 104 temporary shelters in public buildings to accommodate those driven out of their homes by flooding and landslides, he added.

Indian supplies

An Indian naval ship equipped with medical supplies docked in Colombo yesterday. Indian High Commissioner Taranjit Singh Sandhu said a second larger vessel

was expected in Colombo on Monday with more aid. "When you feel the pain, we also feel the pain," the envoy said while formally handing over the Indian aid to Sri Lanka's Foreign minister Ravi Karunanayake at the Colombo port. The Indian aid included a medical team as well as inflatable boats and medicine.

India has offered more aid, including helicopters, to boost the relief operations, government spokesman Rajitha Senarathne said. President Maithripala Sirisena, who returned from a state visit to Australia, rushed to Kalutara, just south of the capital Colombo, to supervise relief operations. At the village of Bulathsinhala, relatives were seen loading coffins of 10 victims onto army armored personnel carriers to transport them across flooded streets to high ground for burial.

There were similar scenes in the adjoining Ratnapura district, the island's gem capital, which was also flooded. The meteorological department said they expected rains to subside, but the monsoon will remain active at a lower intensity. "The monsoon has firmly established and we could have evening showers at a lesser intensity," meteorological department chief S R Jayasekera said.

The flooding is the worst since May 2003 when 250 people were killed and 10,000 homes destroyed after a similarly powerful monsoon, officials said. Monsoon rains last year caused flooding and landslides, killing just over 100 people. The DMC said the latest monsoon ended a prolonged drought that had threatened agriculture as well as hydropower generation. — AFP



BULATHSINHALA, Sri Lanka: Villagers sit on an army armored personnel carrier being used in rescue operations during major flooding in Kalutara district yesterday. — AFP

RAMADAN BEGINS; VIOLENTLY FOR SOME

Continued from Page 1

Libya has been gripped by chaos since the overthrow and killing of longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, with rival governments and militias vying for power and jihadists taking advantage of the mayhem. On Friday, forces loyal to the UN-backed unity government battled rival militias in the capital Tripoli. The health ministry gave a provisional toll of 28 dead and more than 100 wounded, while loyalist forces said 52 of their fighters had been killed in the battles that rocked residential areas. "This is their gift to the people for the month of Ramadan," a Government of National Accord statement said. Residents of west Mosul in northern Iraq also did not expect a peaceful Ramadan, far from it as Iraqi forces pressed a broad assault on areas still held by IS jihadists. Earlier this week, the military said it had dropped "hundreds of thousands of leaflets" on IS-held areas of Mosul, urging "citizens to exit via safe corridors towards security forces".

Ramadan is a month generally marked by piety and sacrifice, and during which Muslims abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and having sex from dawn to dusk.

Civilians in impoverished Yemen, where Iran-backed Shiite Houthis rebels are battling government forces supported by a Saudi-led coalition, have certainly become accustomed to sacrifice. The United Nations says the conflict there has killed

more than 8,000 people, and has warned that 17 million Yemenis - 62 percent of the population are unable to access food. A third of the country's provinces are on the brink of famine, and it is also facing a cholera epidemic.

Several global leaders marked the start of Ramadan with messages urging a peaceful world. "Islam is the religion of mercy, moderation and peaceful coexistence," King Salman of Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's holiest sites, said in a statement. US President Donald Trump, winding up his first overseas trip in office that began in Saudi Arabia, wished Muslims a "joyful Ramadan", and urged them to use the holy month to reject extremist violence. "At its core, the spirit of Ramadan strengthens awareness of our shared obligation to reject violence, to pursue peace, and to give to those in need who are suffering from poverty or conflict," Trump said.

In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, police used a steamroller to crush thousands of bottles of alcohol, banned under Islam, and torched a huge stash of seized drugs in the run-up to Ramadan. Soaring temperatures and long days are expected to test the will of those who are fasting in many countries. Many Ramadan shoppers have complained that rising food prices meant they could not prepare lavish iftar meals as they once did, and would need to save some money to celebrate the Eid Al-Fitr festival that follows at the end of the month. — AFP

MONTH OF QURAN

Continued from Page 1

prophetic traditions, and the application of principles by renowned scholars and rulers.

The study of the Quran develops moral reasoning and spirituality first and foremost, as well as thought processes of logic, sequencing, deduction, intuition, assimilation and abstraction. Reciting and memorizing it develops memory, enunciation and self-expression. The printed Quran is revered as a holy book and is treated with respect. It is not considered casual reading or handled like an ordinary book. There is only one version of the Quran, and careful measures are taken that prints and reprints of the Quran in Arabic are authenticated by authoritative bodies for accuracy.

Since the Quran is an Arabic-language literary master-

piece both technically and aesthetically, it is impossible to portray its rhythm, rhyme, depth of denotation and subtlety of connotation in another language. There are many translations of the Quran, but we cannot call a translation "the Quran" but only an approximation of the meaning of the Quran. The best English translations have the accompanying original text in Arabic so that it can be consulted. Since Ramadan is the month of the Quran, everyone should have their copy handy and complete reading in this holy month.

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

STORMY CLIMATE AT G7

Continued from Page 1

Today, his successor is defiant about defying the G7 line after accusing China, Germany and others of cheating in international trade. Trump reportedly described the Germans as "bad, very bad" in their trade practices while visiting Brussels this past week. "We had very hard deliberations and discussions about trade but we found a reasonable solution," Merkel said, stressing the G7 statement's commitment to open markets.

The G7 leaders began the concluding day of their annual summit with discussions with leaders from Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria and Tunisia. The five African states are key players in the Mediterranean migration crisis, as countries of origin or transit for hundreds of thousands of migrants attempting to reach Europe via perilous sea crossings. The G7's Italian presidency held this year's summit on an ancient hilltop resort in Sicily to underline the proximity of the crisis.

But even that prompted discord among participants as Trump, according to Italian sources and activists, resisted the hosts' desire to issue a declaration underlining the benefits as well as pitfalls of migration. That sort of language is anathema to a White House that wants to impose a ban on travelers

from six Muslim-majority countries. The G7 statement recognized the human rights of migrants and refugees. But with Trump promising to build a "beautiful" wall on the US-Mexico border, it also said "we reaffirm the sovereign rights of states, individually and collectively, to control their own borders".

In a telling sign of the divisions now plaguing the G7, this year's statement came in at a meager six pages-down from 32 pages last year. The summit did find common ground on Friday in endorsing a British call urging internet service providers and social media companies to crack down on jihadist content online after 22 people were killed by a suicide bomber in the northwestern English city of Manchester this week.

But while Trump did battle on an array of summit fronts, he also found himself dogged in Europe by new allegations as investigations proceed in Washington into whether Russian meddling helped his election victory last year. The Washington Post reported that Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, made a pre-inauguration proposal to the Russian ambassador to set up a secret, bug-proof communications line with the Kremlin. There was no immediate comment from the White House, but Trump has angrily rejected allegations of such collusion. — AFP

KUWAIT OUTLOOK CHANGES FROM 'NEGATIVE...

Continued from Page 1

of a debt management unit at the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and improved coordination between key institutions such as Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), MoF and Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). Some fuel subsidy rationalization was implemented in 2016, and implementation of additional excise taxes on harmful items, as well as further utility tariff reforms are likely to happen in the second half of 2017.

Preparation to implement a medium-term budget framework supports this view. The proposed framework will cover a three-year rolling period and involves different entities in the budgeting process, such as Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, the Civil Service Commission, the Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, CBK, and the MoF.

Furthermore, the Kuwaiti authorities have signaled a renewed willingness to increase transparency with regard to government financial assets. The successful Eurobond issuance earlier in the year supports improved transparency and institutional development. Finally, implementation of projects under the current five-year National Development Plan is progressing better than under previous plans, which supports the economic growth outlook.

The decision to affirm Kuwait's Aa2 rating is driven by the government's very strong net asset position, which will persist despite ongoing debt issuance expected over the coming years. Given Kuwait's extraordinarily large hydrocarbon reserves, low oil production costs, its low fiscal and external breakeven oil prices, and Moody's expectation of oil prices remaining between \$40-\$60 per barrel over the coming 2-3 years, the rating agency thinks that Kuwait's credit profile will retain its key strengths, despite a more gradual reform pace than some of its peers in the region.

Moody's also notes that, despite the sharp economic contraction, Kuwait's GDP per capita-estimated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at \$71,887 in purchasing power parity terms in 2016-remains extremely high by international standards, and that this level of wealth continues to provide a significant economic buffer in terms of social stability.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance said yesterday that changing Kuwait rating outlook came out of the agency's conviction of the Kuwaiti government's commitment to economic reform. "The government will continue with its reform efforts on all levels, nonetheless in financial and economic spheres," Ministry spokesman Abdulmohsin Al-Tayyar said.— Agencies

IT OUTAGE CAUSES CHAOS

Continued from Page 1

She arrived at the airport at 0730 GMT, queued for hours at the check-in where the baggage drop-off system stopped working and then waited at the departure gate for two hours until passengers were told the flight was cancelled. All the affected passengers were corralled through a single gate so they could go back through border checks and then re-book flights. "We are now in a massive scrum trying to get to this gate."

BA staff didn't know what's going on," she said. "Border control aren't going to be able to deal with all these peo-

ple. I don't know what's going to happen." BA is the latest airline to be hit by computer problems. Last month Germany's Lufthansa and Air France suffered a global system outage which prevented them from boarding passengers. In September last year BA apologized to passengers for check-in delays caused by operational glitches that delayed flights at Gatwick and Heathrow, in a repeat of a similar incident that affected London-area flights for the airline last July.

In August a power surge near US airline Delta's Atlanta headquarters caused computers to crash and led to widespread delays across Delta's entire network. — Reuters

KUWAITI COMPANY TO PAY \$95 MILLION...

Continued from Page 1

"In simple terms, defense contractor-based fraud is theft directly from the American people," said David J LeValley, special agent in charge of the FBI's Atlanta office, adding

that investigators were pleased with the settlement. The scheme was first outlined in a civil whistleblower filing that was filed in 2005. It was filed by Kamal Mustafa Al-Sultan, general manager of a contracting firm that partnered with Public Warehousing Co in 2002. — AP



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Focus

TRUMP RETURNS

Dr James J Zogby President Arab American Institute

If I were a movie critic writing reviews of audience reactions to US President Donald Trump's performances abroad, they would look something like this: "...A big hit in Riyadh"; "...a smash sensation across the Holy Land"; "...subdued, but a success in Vatican City"; and "...a disaster, a flop in Brussels". Those were the reactions abroad. The White House must be feeling quite good about the trip, since the President played to script and appeared to accomplish multiple objectives.

He reset frayed relations and restored confidence with Gulf Arab allies-to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars in arms sales and investment in infrastructure. He kept the Israelis swooning and the Palestinian Authority smiling-despite dodging questions about Jerusalem, settlements, and Palestinian Statehood. And he appeared respectful in the presence of Pope Francis, promising to keep in mind Francis' words which most certainly dealt with the environment, immigration, and poverty.

After telling those audiences most of what they wanted to hear, the President appeared to take a U-turn in Europe blasting America's closest allies over their failure to "burden share" and omitting any US commitment to the defense of fellow NATO members. Looking at the dour reactions of the assembled European heads of state, one might have thought Trump had simply tired of telling audiences what they wanted to hear, except for the fact that the audiences for whom he was performing in Brussels were not in those in the room.

He was, instead, playing to his base back home and, maybe even to the Russians with whom Trump is also seeking to reset relations. There were, to be sure, a few minor flubs that provided grist for the media mill, but on the whole the trip went as planned. Now, back in Washington, the hard work begins and is compounded by the fact that the President returns home facing even more crises than those he left behind.

The Russia affair remains front and center with new questions being raised about the firing of FBI Director James Comey and the extent to which this firing was an effort by the President to obstruct the FBI's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election and Russian efforts to seek influence in the White House. Of special concern to the President, of course, will be the news that his son-in-law has now been ensnared in the net of this investigation.

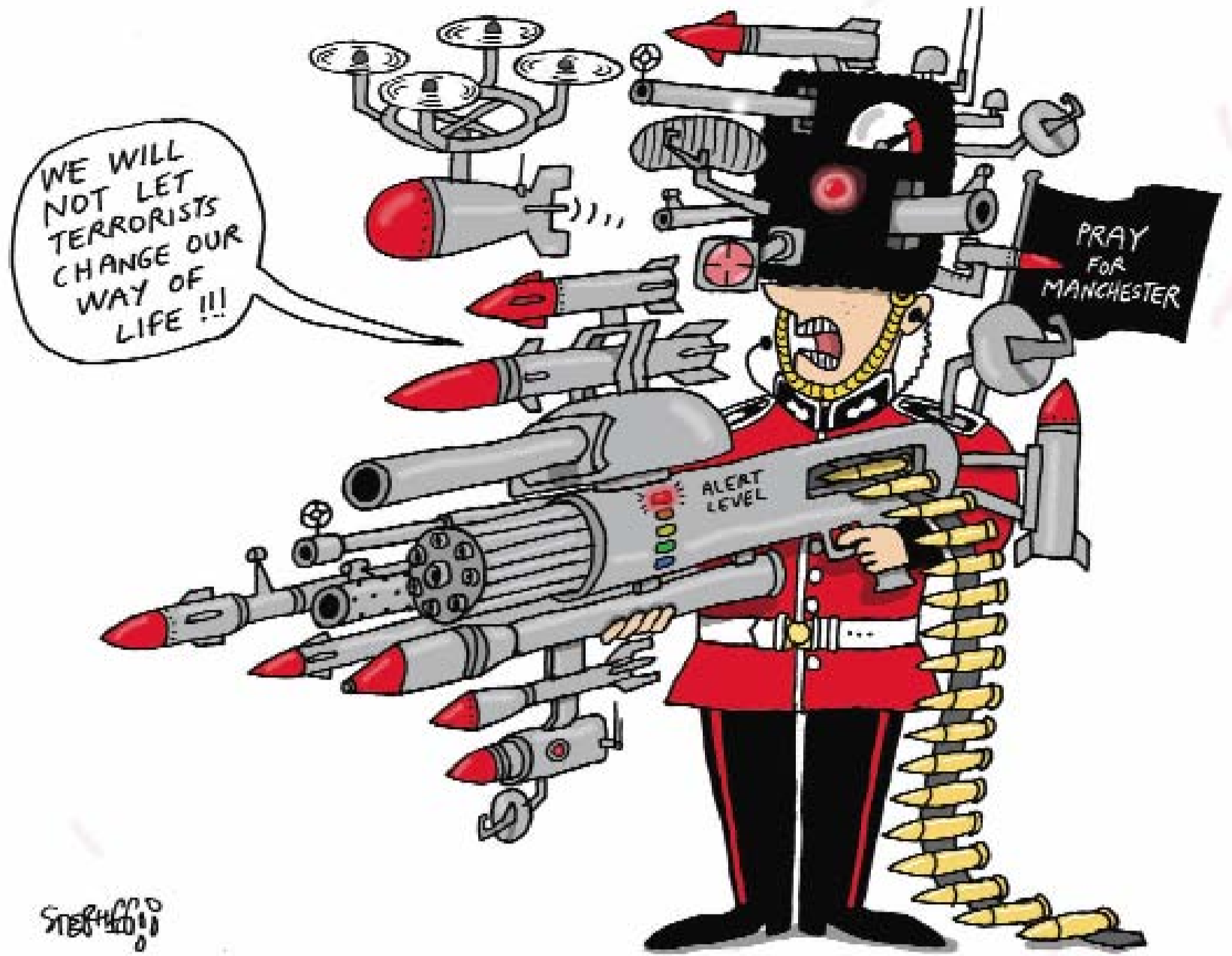
If that weren't problematic enough, Trump's domestic agenda is also in tatters. His budget hit Congress with a dull thud and was pronounced "dead on arrival" by leading Republicans. The GOP-led Congressional Budget Office released its evaluation of the recently House-passed and White House-celebrated health care reform bill determining that under its provisions 23 million Americans would lose health insurance coverage. And, more recently, another Appeals Court overturned the President's Executive Order banning travel to the US from six Muslim majority countries.

Reflecting this bad news, Trump's favorable ratings continue their downward slide-with most reputable polls showing only a little more than a third of voters now approve of his job performance. Increasingly, Republicans in Congress, who are looking to their own reelections in 2018, are beginning to see Trump, if not quite toxic, at least someone from whom they need some distance. And it is this that must be of the greatest concern to the White House since it will complicate efforts to advance not only their domestic agenda, but foreign policy initiatives, as well.

In just the past week, for example, there were signs of revolt. Senators watered down an Administration-supported tougher sanctions bill directed at Iran and proposed legislation placing some limits on arms sales to Saudi Arabia. In this environment, it will be problematic for Trump to advance Israeli-Palestinian peace by taking any steps that would challenge Israel's occupation policies-something Congress would be loathe to support.

So while the President had the stage to himself and was able to write his own script last week, he returns to a rather crowded stage in Washington and a high-stakes drama, the script for which is being written by others-Congress, the courts, the FBI and a special prosecutor, and the media. It remains to be seen how well he will perform in this setting.

All articles appearing on these pages are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein. Kuwait Times invites readers to voice their opinions. Please send submissions via email to: opinion@kuwait-times.net or via snail mail to PO Box 1301 Safat, Kuwait. The editor reserves the right to edit any submission as necessary.



SACRED MUSLIM MONTH OF RAMADAN STARTS

The world's nearly 1.5 billion Muslims yesterday began Ramadan, the holy month of dawn-to-dusk fasting and prayers. It is sacred to Muslims because tradition says the Quran was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) during that month. Here are four questions and answers about Ramadan:

What is Ramadan?
 Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. The others are the profession of faith, "there is no true God but Allah and Mohammed is his messenger"; the obligation to pray five times a day; charity; and the pilgrimage to Makkah. How does it take place? It lasts 29 or 30 days. During

that time, believers abstain from eating, drinking-even of water-smoking, and sexual relations between sunrise and sunset. The fast is conceived as a spiritual struggle against the seduction of earthly pleasures. But for the evening "break-fast", known as "iftar", festive meals traditionally bring families together and there is intense social

activity. The Eid Al-Fitr festival marks the end of Ramadan.

Who is involved?
 Fasting is required of all believers who have passed the age of puberty, but it is recommended that children be progressively exposed to the practice. Pregnant or nursing women, the sick, travelers, and fighters have the right not to fast, although they have a duty to carry it out as soon as they are able to. Ramadan risks being particularly hard during much of the Muslim world at this time of year when daytime temperatures are high, above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in parts of the Middle East.

How is date of Ramadan determined?
 Ramadan corresponds to the ninth month of the Hijri calendar to which Muslims refer for their religious festivals. It relies on the cycle of the moon. This calendar has 11 days less than the solar calendar, meaning that the start and end dates of Ramadan vary each year. The first day is determined by the sighting of the crescent moon, the first quarter of a new moon. It must be visible to the naked eye and recorded. Scholars meet to determine the exact timing, which varies about the globe. Religious authorities in Saudi Arabia, home of Islam's two holiest sites at Makkah and Madina, on Thursday determined that Ramadan would start on Saturday. — AFP



MEDAN: Students sit in circles as they read the holy book of Quran during the first day of the holy fasting month of Ramadan at Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah Islamic boarding school in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia yesterday. During Ramadan, the holiest month in Islamic calendar, Muslims refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and sex from dawn to dusk. — AP

TROUBLED PHILIPPINE SOUTH BURNS AGAIN: WHAT WE KNOW

By Cecil Morella

Militants fighting under the black flag of the Islamic State group have turned a southern city into a battleground, and triggered warnings by President Rodrigo Duterte of a potential IS caliphate. The violence is the latest in four decades of conflict across the southern third of the mostly Catholic Philippines, where a Muslim separatist rebellion has claimed more than 120,000 lives. Here is what we know about the latest violence, the factors behind it and what will happen next:

Who are the militants?

They mostly belong to the Maute group, which the government estimates has about 260 armed followers. It is one of a number of hardline groups that split from the nation's biggest Muslim rebel organization in anger at a planned peace accord. The Maute gunmen were protecting Isnilon Hapilon, a leader of a kidnapping-for-ransom gang called the Abu Sayyaf that is also believed to have only a few hundred gunmen but is blamed for the nation's worst terrorist attacks. The Maute and Hapilon's faction of the Abu Sayyaf have pledged allegiance to IS and want to establish a caliphate for it in the southern Philippines, according to Duterte and security analysts. IS has named Hapilon, 51, its leader in the Philippines, according to security analysts.

Why did the fighting erupt?

After receiving intelligence reports that Hapilon was hiding in Marawi city, security forces went to arrest him on Tuesday but were taken by surprise when they met massive resistance from Maute gunmen protecting him. The gunmen went on a rampage through Marawi, even though most of its 200,000 residents are Muslim, flying black IS flags partly to distract the troops but also to provide powerful propaganda images to highlight their cause.

What was the response?

President Rodrigo Duterte ordered a massive assault to kill the militants or drive them out of Marawi. The fighting has claimed the lives of at least 15 security forces and 31 militants, according to the military. At least two civilians have also been killed, while local media have reported the murders of nine other people apparently caught at a militant checkpoint. Duterte also imposed martial law across the entire southern region of Mindanao, which is home to 20 million people, to stop what he said was the rising threat of an IS caliphate being established.

What's the background?

The Philippines' Muslim minority regard Mindanao as their ancestral homeland. Muslims arrived in the Philippines well before the Spanish landed in the 16th Century and imported Catholicism, and Islam was most firmly established in the south. Heavy Catholic migration in recent decades has made Muslims a minority even in most Mindanao cities. Muslim rebels launched their separatist rebellion in the 1970s. The two main rebel groups have signed peace accords with the government in exchange for autonomy, although this has yet to be finalized. The Maute, Abu Sayyaf and other small hardline groups are not interested in negotiating peace and have in recent years looked to IS to help them. Nevertheless, security analysts regard these groups as lacking the fundamentalist ideology of their IS superiors, and say they are more interested in criminal activities than implementing ultra-strict versions of Sharia law.

What happens next?

Both sides could emerge with victories from the fighting and martial law, according to Julkipli Wadi, a professor of Islamic studies at the University of the Philippines. Wadi said he expected the militants to scatter after suffering casualties but then regroup, winning from the experience a "badge of honour" that could draw IS fighters fleeing the Middle East battlefields. Meanwhile, Duterte could claim an immediate victory in clearing Marawi, while using martial law and the security threat to muster support for some of his other political objectives that have lost some public support, according to Wadi. He said these included amending the constitution to change the form of government. There are few expectations that martial law could end the deep-rooted problems that have led to the Muslim conflict in the south. But Wadi also said he did not believe the vast majority of local Muslims supported an IS caliphate, nor the group's brutal tactics that include mass beheadings of opponents. —AFP



MINDANAO: A resident carries a relative as they evacuate from their homes in Marawi, in southern island of Mindanao yesterday, after government planes and helicopters bombed Islamic militants position. Philippine security forces dropped more bombs on a southern city where they have been battling Islamist militants for five days, vowing no let up despite the start of Ramadan. — AFP

CHINA'S FORMER TENNIS STAR LI NA JOINS BUSINESS SCHOOL

BEIJING: Chinese two-time Grand Slam champion Li Na enrolled yesterday in a prominent Beijing business school program for senior management executives. "As a retired athlete who has been in the tennis industry for many years, I hope to pursue a wide range of business interests in my second career," Li said in a statement. "I will be looking to develop on many levels, and making many new friends while undertaking the rigorous studies will also help to create more opportunities for the future," she added. Li will be studying alongside 300 students including famous pianist Zhao Yinyin in the two-year program at the Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business (CKGSB). Training since the age of 6, Li was the first Asian player to win a grand slam singles title. Her success prompted rapid growth in the sport in China before she retired in 2014. China's men have yet to make an impact on world tennis. Li's runaway success came after she made the tough and controversial decision to split from China's state sporting system and go it alone with her own coaching set-up. —AFP



KRUIJSWIJK PULLS OUT OF GIRO D'ITALIA

PORDENONE: Former pink jersey hopeful Steven Kruijswijk, of the Lotto NL team, pulled out of the Giro d'Italia prior to yesterday's penultimate stage to Asiago due to stomach problems. "I didn't feel good last night," said the 29-year-old Dutchman, who had dropped to 10th overall at over seven minutes behind race leader Nairo Quintana of Colombia. "It's not the way I wanted to end the race, but I can't go on." It is the second year in succession the race had ended in disappointment for Kruijswijk, who looked poised for overall victory last year before losing the pink jersey two days before the finish. The 20th stage, the final day in the mountains, his compatriot Tom Dumoulin, of the Sunweb team, will carry the torch for Dutch cycling fans hoping to see one of their own secure what would be an historic victory. He only lost the pink jersey on Friday, dropping to second overall at 38secs behind Movistar climbing specialist Quintana, the 2014 champion, after the fourth of five days in the mountains. Italy's two-time champion Vincenzo Nibali (Bahrain) is third at 43secs with Frenchman Thibaut Pinot (FDJ) third at 53. The 100th edition of the race ends Sunday with a 29.3km time trial from Monza to Milan. —AFP

RETURNING BUTTON HIT WITH PENALTY FOR ENGINE CHANGE

MONACO: Jenson Button's one-off return to Formula One at the Monaco Grand Prix is proving problematic. The veteran British driver is likely to start today's race from the back of the grid after his struggling McLaren team was forced to make an unscheduled change to the car's power unit and incurred a 15-place grid penalty. Given that McLaren has been way off the pace in qualifying, the 37-year-old Button is highly likely to be starting last among the 20 drivers after qualifying later yesterday. "It's awful for Jenson and awful for McLaren and not expected at all," McLaren racing director Eric Boullier said. "But it's Monaco, so we'll try anything we can." It is set to be another frustrating race for McLaren, which is struggling with Honda engines as it did throughout most of last year. Teammate Stoffel Vandoorne has already been penalized three places in Monaco, for causing a collision with Williams driver Felipe Massa two weeks ago at the Spanish GP. Fernando Alonso may have picked the perfect weekend to be away. —AP



PARK LEADS LPGA EVENT BY TWO AT HALFWAY MARK IN MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN: LPGA Tour rookie Sung Hyun Park of South Korea shot a 7-under-par 65 on Friday to take a two-stroke lead after two rounds of the Volvik Championship at Travis Pointe Country Club in Ann Arbor, Mich. Park has a two-day total of 12-under, leaving her ahead of Suzann Pettersen of Norway, who shot 67 on Friday, and Minjee Lee of Australia, who fired a 66, both at 10-under par.

Three Americans—Lizette Salas, Cydney Clanton and Jennifer Song-join Shanshan Feng of China and Sarah Jane Smith of Australia, who are all tied for fourth at 9-under. "I started birdie-birdie on the first two holes and after that I kind of lost it a little bit," Park said through an interpreter. "But going into the back nine, the first hole, on 10, I made a birdie, and from that point on I think my putting kind of came back alive." Park dominated last season on the Korean LPGA, topping the money list with seven victories in 2017. She competed in seven events on the LPGA Tour in 2016 and tied for second at the Evian Championship.

Park has three top-four finishes on the LPGA Tour this year and leads the Rookie of the Year standings.

"I've definitely felt the pressure and that's probably one of the biggest reasons why I haven't performed up to my standards this year," Park said. "This week I'm able to let things go a little bit more and play my game."

"I have a huge expectation being in the

final group, being that much closer to winning. But I have a lot of experience playing in the championship groups and I'll stick with my plan and play my game for the rest of the week."

Lee, who went out with the early wave of golfers, held the lead for much of the day. She was disqualified from last week's Kingsmill Championship after failing to sign her scorecard.

"I mean I don't know how I missed it, but obviously, I did and I got DQ'd. But it's OK, I can laugh about it now," Lee said on Thursday. "I played good last week and I know my game's there."

Pettersen played in the afternoon and recorded her second straight 67. She was a bit surprised by her scores.

"I usually play good the more tournaments I play, and last week was my first after a little bit of a break," Pettersen said. "My game is starting to shape up. Playing good golf, hitting a lot of good putts. Just enjoying this golf course."

"If you can be somewhere around the top or within reach, there's a lot of golf to be played. Obviously a great start the first two days. See if I can finish off a good round tomorrow and then finish off a good round Sunday. But take one day at a time here." The cut line was at 1-under par. So Yeon Ryu has the longest active streak of making cuts, dating back to 2014, and she just barely extended that streak, standing at 1-under after a 71 on Friday. — Reuters



Sung Hyun Park

LEE, KISNER LEAD LOGJAM AT TOP OF COLONIAL LEADERBOARD

LOS ANGELES: New Zealand's Danny Lee and red-hot Kevin Kisner were in a four-way tie for the lead halfway through the PGA Tour's Colonial as an already crowded leaderboard got more congested on Friday. Lee fired a six-under 64 and American Kisner shot his second straight 67 to move into a tie with Webb Simpson (66) and Scott Piercy (66) for a one-shot lead at six-under 134.

But there is no time to relax as a strong field that includes several major winners is nipping at their heels. Windy conditions helped create the logjam at the top with 21 players within five shots of the leaders after the first two rounds at the Colonial Country Club course in Fort Worth, Texas.

Reigning Masters champion Sergio Garcia (66) and two-time major winner and defending champ Jordan Spieth (68) are within striking distance heading into the weekend.

Garcia and fellow Spaniard Jon Rahm (69), England's Paul Casey (66) and American Sean O'Hair (68) are tied for fifth at five under 135.

Northern Ireland's Graeme McDowell is alone in ninth, two shots adrift. Tony Finau shot a 65 and climbed into contention and into 10th place. First-round co-leader Kelly Kraft stumbled to a 73 and is tied for 12th in a pack of nine golfers that includes Spieth, Stewart Cink (70) and Kevin Tway (70), all four strokes back. Lee's round featured seven birdies and a bogey and was the low round of the day.

"I was hitting the ball very nicely today," said Lee, a Kiwi from Rotorua on the North Island. "I had strong finish, and that's what I need to have carrying over the next couple days." Kisner continued his superb play this season as his round included four birdies and a bogey on No. 17. Kisner's only PGA Tour victory came by an impressive six shots in 2015, but he has been knocking on the door with six runner-up finishes in his career, including the 2017 Arnold Palmer Invitational.

Kisner said the key for him is to simply put his head down and not come up for air until today. —AFP



UNITED STATES STERLING Sterling, Virginia: Bernhard Langer follows his drive on the 15th hole during Round 2 of the Senior PGA Championship at Trump National Golf Club on May 26, 2017 in Sterling, Virginia.

GOLF

BERNHARD LANGER REGAINS SENIOR PGA LEAD WITH LATE BIRDIE RUN

STERLING: Bernhard Langer sat on a bench and ate a sandwich, chatted with his playing partners and signed autographs for fans as he waited out a 41-minute wind delay on the 14th tee at Trump National. When play resumed, he swung two clubs to loosen up and got back to business.

Langer grinded out three pars in the teeth of the wind and, when conditions began to improve, he took advantage, making five straight birdies to regain the lead Friday at the Senior PGA Championship.

Langer was 11 under through 13 holes when play was halted because of darkness, one shot ahead of Vijay Singh, who shot 68 amid wind measured at more than 30 mph. Singh was at 10-under 134 through two rounds. Billy Andrade also shot 68 and was one shot behind Singh. Their scores were eight shots better than the field average.

The wind was so strong that golf balls moved on exposed greens, sand blew out of bunkers and whitecaps formed on the muddy Potomac River.

Playing in his first Senior PGA, the 54-year-old Singh made par putts from outside 10 feet on 15 and 16 and two-putted for birdie on the par-5 18th. Through two rounds, the long-hitting Fijian is 7 under on the par 55, his only par coming when he three-putted the third hole. "I'm driving the ball really well, which makes a big difference," Singh said. "They're all reachable. So even for medium-length hitters, if you hit the fairways you can get in there with a 3-wood or 5-wood."

President Donald Trump's course about 25 miles outside Washington is exposed to the

wind in part because Trump decided to cut down more than 450 trees to create scenic riverfront holes. The conditions were reminiscent of another Trump course, Turnberry in Scotland, which has hosted multiple British Opens. There were 23 rounds in the 80s and one round of 90.

Playing with Singh, Corey Pavin made a quadruple-bogey 7 on the fourth hole and followed his first-round 69 with an 82 to miss the cut. Fran Quinn shot 80 but will play the weekend on the strength of his first-round 66.

"It was hard keeping your balance and hitting a solid shot," Singh said. "And putting was really difficult. Wind blowing sideways, if you have a downhill putt, it's really hard. ... If you start going south, it's really hard to keep it together."

NOTORIOUS

Notorious for tinkering with his putting method, Singh went to a new putter and a new grip this spring and teamed with Carlos Franco to win the Bass Pro Shops Legends of Golf, his first victory on the PGA Tour Champions. He then returned to the PGA Tour, where he continues to play a full schedule, and tied for 16th at The Players Championship. He parted ways with his caddie after The Players.

"New caddie this week as well that I'm working really well with," Singh said. Langer, 59, could break Jack Nicklaus' record this week with his ninth senior major. He won No. 8 last week at the Regions Tradition.

Andrade had a chance to match Singh after he hit his second shot to 8 feet on 18, but he

missed the eagle putt.

"I actually thought the putt was going to just kind of wiggle right and it was wiggling and then it quit wiggling," Andrade said.

Tom Lehman and Scott McCarron were 8 under with holes left to play. Lehman made amends on 18, the second-easiest hole on the course, after a bogey Thursday. His second shot bounced over the back of the green and nestled against a hospitality area. After a free drop, he fluffed his pitch and left it short. Then he chipped in for birdie.

Miguel Angel Jimenez provided plenty of excitement for the galleries following him, John Daly and Rocco Mediate in his round of 71. Playing aggressively despite the tough conditions, he hit 7-wood into the wind to 12 feet for birdie on the par-4 fifth. On the downwind, short par-4 ninth, he drove the green with a fairway wood and made a 40-footer for eagle to take the lead.

The ponytailed Spaniard gave back both shots on the downwind, par-3 10th after his tee shot trickled over the back of the green and down a steep slope. Following Jimenez, Daly made a weak swing and missed short and right. "I was afraid to hit it," said Daly, who shot 74 and was even par.

Jimenez dropped two more shots on the back nine, but he salvaged his round with a 25-footer from off the green for eagle on 18. Jimenez waved his visor in a swinging motion and sheathed his putter like a matador's sword. He was five shots back along with Larry Mize, who followed up his first-round 65 with a 73, and David Toms, who had three holes left to play. — AP

OOREDOO SUPPORTS KUWAIT FLAG BALL TEAM IN ASIA CUP

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, is proudly sponsoring the Kuwait National Flag Ball Team during the Asia Cup, which kicks off today in the Philippines. Kuwait will be playing against the teams of Vietnam, Korea, Japan, Thailand, and the Philippines. It is the first Arab team to participate in such an international competition in this sport.

In a statement about this event, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alayoub reiterated Ooredoo's commitment to supporting youth, as it is one of the most important segments in society. He added that the company is proud of endorsing athletes who play in international competitions, and wished all the participants the best of luck in the competition.

The team's manager Khaled Al-Sayyar on his part thanked Ooredoo for its support and endorsement, especially for believing in a relatively new sport that is starting to gain popularity in the country. Flag Football is a form of American football that started to get significant interest from youth in Kuwait recently. Empowering youth is among Ooredoo's top priorities through its CSR strategy. The company has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, to support youth projects and initiatives, making it the first telecom provider in Kuwait to sign such a high-level agreement. Ooredoo is continuously working with the Ministry to enrich youth experience in a variety of fields, with a focus on volunteerism.





TOKYO: Uzair Cassiem of the Cheetahs scores a try against the Sunwolves during the Super Rugby match between the Sunwolves of Japan and the Cheetahs of South Africa at Prince Chichibu Memorial Stadium in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

CHEETAHS MAUL SUNWOLVES IN TOKYO

TOKYO: Flanker Uzair Cassiem scored two tries as the Cheetahs thrashed Japan's Sunwolves 47-7 in Tokyo yesterday to post their third victory of the Super Rugby season.

Defeat by the South Africans left the Sunwolves with just a sole win from 12 matches this campaign—a 21-20 home win over the Bulls last month—and Sunwolves head coach Filo Tiatia blaming familiar short-comings. "If we'd taken our opportunities it

would have been a different story," he told reporters.

"But it wasn't. In the last two games there's been a trend of conceding points when we need to concentrate. That's certainly one area we will try to rectify."

Cassiem crashed over in the 16th minute before loose forward Niell Jordaan added a second try just before halftime for the visitors. When Niel Marais capped a fine move early

after the restart, the writing was on the wall for the Sunwolves, who have won just two games since joining Super Rugby last season.

Sunwolves lock Sam Wykes broke a tackle to reduce the deficit to 19-7 on 47 minutes but Cassiem bulldozed over for this second try of the day to dash Sunwolves hopes of a comeback in front of a boisterous Tokyo crowd. To add insult to injury for the home side, Cheetahs hooker Torsten Van Jaarsveld

scored a fifth try for the bonus point before replacement back Tian Meyer and winger Sergeal Petersen iced a comfortable win. Tiatia tried to put a positive spin on the result but it sounded like straw-clutching.

"It was 7-0 with about 32 minutes gone and if you watch that period of play, it could have swung either way," said the New Zealander. "Obviously we want to keep improving," he added. "When you play at this

level, when you play at this intensity, we just need to keep doing it and keep getting better." Cheetahs head coach Franco Smith credited the Sunwolves defence for preventing a rout. "Their defence was exceptional," he said. "We dominated territory and possession in the first half enormously but they managed to keep us out."

"The result was not a true reflection of the quality of the side we played today." —AFP

FORD WANTS ENGLAND TO MATCH PUMAS' PASSION

BRIGHTON: England fly-half George Ford has warned the Six Nations champions to prepare for a "hostile" atmosphere when they travel to Argentina for a two-Test series next month. Ford, along with several other players in the England squad, may have been overlooked for the British and Irish Lions tour of New Zealand but he insisted there was no time for regrets ahead of a testing trip to South America. With several first-choice players on Lions duty, England coach Eddie Jones has selected a mixture of experience hands and raw novices, with little in between, for the Argentina series.

Facing the Pumas will be a new experience for some members of a revamped England squad but not Ford. "The one thing, playing with Argentinian players as well, and against them, they're so passionate about the game that that's the type of game you're going to come up against," Ford told AFP at England's south coast training camp in Brighton. "The fans are just (as) passionate and emotional as the players are, it'll be hostile."

"On the pitch they'll be physical, they get into you and they pride themselves on being physical, so it's something we've got to be excited about and take that challenge front on. "If you want to win any Test match these days you've probably got to win the physicality battle and the Argentinians are probably up there with the world's best at that," he added.

'FLICK A SWITCH'

Ford, who is returning to Leicester from English Premiership rivals Bath in time for the start of the 2017/18 season, cited Pumas wing Horacio Agulla, now with French club Castres, as a case in point.

"I used to play with Horacio Agulla, at Leicester and Bath. "He never looked like a massive winger by any stretch of the imagination, but he punched way above his weight, he used to fly into tackles, he used to fly into carries and I thought that

summed Argentina up really, just go at everything 100 percent, be emotional and show that with their physicality. "They're obviously very nice guys off the pitch but they flick a switch on it."

Since the tour was scheduled, the series has been given added spice by the fact that England and Argentina have been drawn in the same pool, along with France, for the 2019 World Cup in Japan.

The last World Cup, in England two years ago, saw Argentina make it all the way to the semi-finals. England, by contrast suffered an embarrassing first-round exit that led to the sacking of Stuart Lancaster and his replacement by Australian coach Jones. "I think it will give us a greater understanding of how to play against Argentina," said the 24-year-old Ford.

"Obviously we had a meeting earlier and we spoke about the World Cup group and you've basically got to beat some really good teams whoever you play. France, Argentina, when you get to the quarters, it'll be a tough game. "It will be a really good test for us."

Before they leave for Argentina, England play the Barbarians in a non-cap international at Twickenham today.

As well as their Lions, England will be without players from Exeter and Wasps, who contest the Premiership final at Twickenham on Saturday. The fact that Northampton played on Friday, edging out Stade Francais in a tight final qualifier for next season's European Champions Cup, means regular captain Dylan Hartley will be missing as well. Ford and former England skipper Chris Robshaw have been named as co-captains for the Barbarians match.

Now a veteran of 35 Tests, Ford was keen to embrace leadership duties. "I'm looking to try develop that all the time really," he explained. "As a 10, you're more an on-field leader but I suppose especially last week and this week with Dylan not being here for example, there's some more off-field stuff that I've tried to develop." —AFP

REVENUE SHARE IS 'STARVING' GRASSROOTS: CRICKET AUSTRALIA

SYDNEY: Cricket Australia chief James Sutherland believes the revenue-share model which the body is trying to dump in its ongoing pay negotiations with players is "starving" the grassroots of the game of funding.

Australia faces the possibility of an embarrassing player strike or lockout if the protracted negotiation over a new five-year pay deal for country's international and state cricketers cannot be resolved by the end of June.

At the heart of the dispute is the arrangement whereby the players share a fixed percentage of up to 26 percent of Cricket Australia's revenue, which Sutherland's executive team want to end.

The players, through their union, have remained steadfastly opposed to such a change but Sutherland says it is essential if the grassroots of the game is to get the investment it needs.

"The model was created in 1997, when players were poorly paid, but now our top male players are easily the most highly paid team sportspeople in Australia," he wrote in a column in The Weekend Australian yesterday. "The main issue in 2017 is the chronic underfunding of grassroots. This will require an investment over time of many hundreds of millions of dollars and we must start now."

"We believe we can achieve both a healthy increase in player payments and our grassroots funding objectives over the next few years by sensibly adapting the current player payments model."

With more than 80 percent of the country's 5,584 cricket facilities currently having no provision for women and girls, meeting the needs of female players was the sort of project desperately required, he added.

Sutherland said that because the agreement was for revenue rather than profit share, any new investment Cricket Australia made would need to guarantee a 32 percent return just to break even, "an untenable situation for any business." "The current model of player payments has done its job, but now risks starving other vital parts of the game," he concluded. "That must change."

Cricket Australia has come under fire for not explaining its position clearly enough in what has been a tense standoff with the Australian Cricketers' Association (ACA).

The ACA yesterday blasted Cricket Australia for "lacking in common sense" by refusing mediation to end the dispute and said the governing body's "claims" on the grassroots needed to be closely examined. —Reuters



MARSEILLE: RC Toulon's players (L) celebrate after winning the French Top 14 rugby union match between RC Toulon and La Rochelle, on Friday at the Velodrome stadium in Marseille, southern France. — AFP

RUGBY

HIGHLANDERS WHIP WARATAHS TO CONTINUE LATE CHARGE

DUNEDIN: The Highlanders extended their Super Rugby winning streak to nine games with a 44-28 win over the New South Wales Waratahs yesterday, scoring two tries while the Australian side was down to 14 men during the second half. The Waratahs scored the second of two first-half tries on the tick of halftime to take a 14-13 lead to the break. But the sin-binning of lock Dean Mumm for a dangerous lifting tackle in the 45th minute proved costly and the Highlanders needed only a minute to take advantage, scoring a try to hooker Liam Coltman to reclaim the lead. Winger Tevita Li scored five minutes later and the Highlanders were 23-14 ahead. A further try to replacement winger Rob Thompson, which marked the first of several significant contributions from the Highlanders' bench, made the lead 30-14.

Replacement flyhalf Lima Sopoaga brought new energy to the Highlanders' attack, scoring a 73rd-minute try and contributing to Thompson's and another try by substitute prop Dan Lienert-Brown. Scrumhalf Jake Gordon came off the bench to score two second-half tries for the Waratahs and his second in the 77th minute made it six tries to four and deprived the Highlanders of a bonus point. The Highlanders were still able to leapfrog the Chiefs into second place in the New Zealand conference.

Coltman's try from a lineout and rolling maul which exploited Mumm's absence turned the game in the Highlanders' favor. "I think we got momentum and managed to score from the lineout and things changed from there," Highlanders captain Ben Smith said. "We knew they were going to come here and really try to test us and they did that early."

The Waratahs trailed 10-0 after a 14th-minute try to Richard Buckman but rallied with tries to Israel Folau and winger Taquele Naiyaravoro, the second from a superb long pass by scrumhalf Nick Phipps.

But there were already worrying signs for the Waratahs as the Highlanders, through Ben Smith and Li, seemed able to puncture the defense at will. Mumm's sin-binning was a turning point the

Highlanders' superiority grew from that point.

While the Waratahs have scored 44 tries this season, they have conceded 46. "Same story unfortunately," New South Wales captain Michael Hooper said. "Discipline killed us against a solid team like the Highlanders who really took their opportunities well."

Earlier yesterday, flanker Uzair Cassiem scored two tries and flyhalf Niel Marais had a try among

15 points as South Africa's Cheetahs outclassed Japan's Sunwolves 47-7 in Tokyo.

The Cheetahs, who have now beaten the Sunwolves in all four of their meetings, approached halftime with a tenuous 7-0 lead. But tries to Marais and Niell Jordaan on either side of the break blew out the lead to 19 points and allowed the Bloemfontein-based side to pull away. — AP

CRUSADERS RUMBLE ON TO STAY UNBEATEN

MELBOURNE: New Zealand's Canterbury Crusaders won a record-equalling 13th straight game to stay unbeaten in Super Rugby this season with a 41-19 bonus-point win over Australia's Melbourne Rebels in Melbourne yesterday.

The benchmark Kiwi outfit scored six tries to three but encountered stiffer resistance from the Rebels in the second half after leading 31-7 at half-time. The latest victory equalled the record held by the 2002 Crusaders—who featured current coach Scott Robertson. The Crusaders' free-wheeling win stretched New Zealand's dominance to 20-0 over Australian opposition this season and it has been a full year since the last Australian win over a Kiwi team.

It was the Christchurch-based Crusaders' 11th consecutive win over Australian teams and kept them firmly entrenched at the top of the New Zealand conference.

"The team has been great and we've used a number of the boys, everyone when they've had the opportunity has stepped up and played really well and tonight was no different," Crusaders skipper Sam Whitelock said. "It's good (to stay top), but we're pretty hard

on ourselves though so we're locked in and make sure we do." Replacement Jed Brown scored a double with other tries to Manasa Mataele, Seta Tamanivalu, David Kaetata Havili and Mitchell Drummond with fly-half Richie Mo'unga landing four conversions and a penalty. The seven-time champion Crusaders dominated territory and possession, made 15 linebreaks and ran a total of 795 metres with some scintillating passages of running rugby as the Rebels struggled to contain the Kiwi juggernauts. The Rebels, under threat of being dropped from next year's competition, outscored the Crusaders 12-10 in the second half with rugby league winger convert Marika Korobete scoring two tries.

But Melbourne had more bad luck in their fifth straight loss with an apparent serious arm injury to their Wallaby back-rower Sean McMahon. McMahon was forced off with a suspected broken left arm seven minutes from the end, putting him in doubt for the Wallabies' first international of the season against Fiji in Melbourne on June 10. The Crusaders still have to play Kiwi title rivals the Otago Highlanders and the Wellington Hurricanes in their remaining two games. — AFP

WARRIORS ALL-STAR, DURANT WAS ONCE THEIR SECOND CHOICE

OAKLAND: Truth be told, Golden State's former coach wasn't sure the Warriors needed Kevin Durant. The Warriors were already small-ball sensations, capable of piling up the points with their daring drives and sizzling shooting. So rather than add another scorer, Don Nelson figured Golden State might be better off getting a dominant man in the middle to shore up the defense in the 2007 NBA draft.

Nelson thought the Warriors needed Greg Oden. That was 10 years ago, leading up to the heavily hyped draft in which the Oden-Durant debate raged throughout basketball. And now, as Durant leads the league's most potent team into the NBA Finals while Oden is long gone from the NBA spotlight, it's easy to forget that a lot of people agreed with Nelson.

"I think everyone felt that there were two players there that were going to be prominent players, but one thing you can't count on is injuries," Warriors executive Jerry West said. "So Greg really never had a chance to have a career, where Kevin's obviously been more than advertised."

The Warriors were looking like a lottery team in March 2007 when Nelson was asked what he thought they should do if they got the No. 1 pick. He's one of the innovators of small ball, a coach who seemed more comfortable with a point forward than a power forward, so it wouldn't have been surprising if he leaned Durant.

But he favored Oden, a 7-footer who in his lone season at Ohio State was drawing comparisons to Hall of

Famer Bill Russell, Nelson's teammate in Boston. "I think it'd be pretty simple for us," Nelson said. "We would probably have to go with the bigger guy at this point." Nelson said he might reconsider if he thought Durant was going to be a superstar, and the forward looked like one as he tore through the Big 12 as a freshman at Texas. But with the Warriors already having Baron Davis, Monta Ellis and Stephen Jackson, Nelson saw other needs.

"With this team, the center position is one that we're looking for," he said. "But I'd say anybody up front. Our backcourt's pretty solid."

The Warriors were fined by the NBA for Nelson's comments about players who weren't yet draft eligible. Boston, San Antonio and New Orleans also would be penalized that spring when normally button-lipped coaches couldn't help themselves when thinking about the promise of the two freshmen.

"I don't think there could have been any more hype than there was," Memphis guard Mike Conley said. "It was an amazing time to see two great players who have Hall of Fame potential from the beginning. You just know that they could come in and win multiple championships and be All-Stars every year and you don't have that in every draft."

The No. 1 pick became a moot point when the Warriors finished the regular season with a 16-5 kick to secure the No. 8 seed in the Western Conference, then pulled off perhaps the biggest upset in NBA playoff his-

tory when they ousted the 67-win Dallas Mavericks in the first round.

Later that postseason, the Portland Trail Blazers won the draft lottery and the Seattle SuperSonics were second. The Grizzlies had the league's worst record and the best odds at the No. 1 pick but fell to fourth as West, then the Grizzlies' president of basketball operations, was left livid with the process.

Had he been given the chance, West said he would have taken the best player available, which is always his strategy. He said he considered Durant that player. Many mock drafts had it the other way, given Oden's potential - he likely would've been the top pick a year earlier out of high school, but the 2006 draft was the first with the NBA's age requirement.

"Everyone is always looking for someone big in the draft because everyone thinks it's a game-changer. Well, the game has changed," West said. "Now, they're not naming big guys unless you're really versatile. There are very few back-to-the-basket centers in the league that are not versatile enough to go out and play on the court. And so when you look at it, I think A, it would have been really interesting to see if another team, except Portland, who they would have taken if they needed a center."

Oden's knee injuries ended his NBA career after 105 games, long before he would've had to worry about playing away from the basket, the way traditional centers such as Marc Gasol now do. But Conley, Oden's high

school and college teammate who went to the Grizzlies with their No. 4 pick, believes his friend could have handled the transition.

"I think he's that kind of a talent. He would have reminded me of like a Joel Embiid, how he's able to stretch it out there and shoot the ball like he is," Conley said, referring to Philadelphia's rookie center. "So I think they have similar bodies and similar way they move, so I think he could have done it."

Instead, Oden himself acknowledged he goes down as a bust, which nobody could have predicted when coaches were tantalized by him. "Same thing was true with the Bowie-Olajuwon-Jordan draft, and that was years before that," said former NBA Commissioner David Stern, recalling more of Portland's painful past, when the Blazers took oft-injured center Sam Bowie at No. 2 in between Hall of Famers Hakeem Olajuwon and Michael Jordan in 1984.

"You never know. That's the beauty of it. That's why people watch," he said.

Next week they'll be watching Durant, who will play for his first title in his first season with the Warriors, a chance to finally be No. 1 on a team that once viewed him as their No. 2.

"I'm really proud where I am right now as a player and being as consistent every year as I've been," Durant said. "Since my first year I've grown so much and I'm proud of myself in that area as well, but I've got a long way to go. Hopefully there's another 10 more years." — AP



MONACO: Ferrari's German driver Sebastian Vettel acknowledges the audience after winning the third practice session at the Monaco street circuit, yesterday in Monaco, a day ahead of the Monaco Formula 1 Grand Prix. —AFP

VETTEL, FERRARI ON TOP AS MERCEDES TRAIL AGAIN

MONACO: Champions Mercedes' worst fears were confirmed yesterday morning when championship leader Sebastian Vettel topped the times for Ferrari in final practice for this weekend's Monaco Grand Prix. The four-time champion German clocked a best lap in one minute and 12.395 seconds, 0.345 seconds ahead of his team-mate Kimi Raikkonen, the 2007 champion, as the 'scuderia' established their supremacy ahead of qualifying later yesterday.

Vettel, winner of two of this year's five races so far, is aiming to enlarge his six-point lead ahead of Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes in the title race by claiming Ferrari's first victory in the classic Mediterranean principality showpiece since 2001.

Finn Valtteri Bottas was third-fastest for Mercedes, but three-time champion Hamilton was left behind in fifth, eight-tenths adrift of Vettel, in a session without major interruptions.

Hamilton was fastest in Thursday's opening practice but fell behind in the second and, amid concerns that the team's long-wheel base car has given them a distinct disadvantage, failed to recover significantly on Saturday. Frenchman Esteban Ocon crashed his Force India into the barri-

ers at the Swimming Pool exit in the closing minutes, without interrupting the flow of traffic such was the efficiency of the marshals, and Australian Daniel Ricciardo parked his Red Bull at Sainte-Devote corner after a brake-by-wire problem.

These minor incidents brought out brief use of the Virtual Safety Car (VSC), which interfered with the movement of a busy circuit of cars in the closing seconds.

Dutch teenager Max Verstappen was fourth for Red Bull ahead of Hamilton, Ricciardo and the Toro Rosso pairing of the ever-improving Spaniard Carlos Sainz and Russian Daniil Kvyat.

Dane Kevin Magnussen of Haas and Belgian Stoffel Vandoorne of McLaren Honda completed the top 10. Briton Jenson Button, the 2009 champion, making his return from retirement, was 12th for McLaren Honda. However, he is set for a 15-place grid penalty after his team discovered an engine problem, meaning he will start from the back of the grid.

After using two new engine components the limit of four per season per car was exceeded.

He is a replacement this weekend for two-time champion Spaniard Fernando Alonso, who is racing this weekend in the Indianapolis 500. —AFP

MOTOR RACING

RAIKKONEN ON POLE FOR FERRARI, VETTEL SECOND

MONACO: Kimi Raikkonen secured his first pole position for nine years yesterday when he outpaced his Ferrari team-mate Sebastian Vettel in a dramatic qualifying session for today's Monaco Grand Prix.

The 37-year-old Finn, who had not taken pole position for 128 races stretching back to the French Grand Prix of 2008, dominated the afternoon's action to clock a fastest lap of one minute and 12.178 seconds.

That left him 0.043 seconds ahead of the world championship leader and three-time champion Vettel who in turn was just two-thousandths of a second faster than third placed Valtteri Bottas of Mercedes.

The Finn's Mercedes team-mate Briton Lewis Hamilton failed to make progress from Q2 and missed the cut for the top ten shootout, qualifying 14th after a miserable afternoon.

"Obviously, it's great," said a mumbling and softly-spoken Raikkonen afterwards, showing little emotion. "We'll try to make the best of it tomorrow... Yes, of course it is good, but here it is all about the fine details."

Dutch teenager Max Verstappen took fourth place ahead of his Red Bull team-mate Australian Daniel Ricciardo, Spaniard Carlos Sainz of Toro Rosso, Mexican Sergio Perez of Force India and Frenchman Romain Grosjean of Haas.

Briton Jenson Button, back from retirement to replace two-time champion Spaniard Fernando Alonso who is racing in the Indianapolis 500, was ninth for McLaren Honda ahead of his team-mate Belgian Stoffel Vandoorne.

Button has a 15-place grid penalty for engine replacements and that is expected to lift Hamilton up to 13th. "I don't know what was wrong there," said Vettel of Mercedes' problems. "But this is one of the highlights of the season - to race at Monaco. It is a difficult one to get right, but if you do, it is great."

Bottas said: "It was a really good lap for me. This is one of the most mentally-demanding circuits and I have felt support from the fans and appreciate it."

On a perfect azure afternoon, with an air temperature of 27 degrees and a track reading of 53, Q1 delivered few surprises other than the early exit of Frenchman Esteban Ocon of Force India, who

'moment' at the top of the hill en route to Casino Square.

It proved costly for Hamilton whose first flying lap was more than a second adrift of Raikkonen's early fastest. "No grip, Bono," said Hamilton, talking to his engineer before he was stopped at the weighbridge on his way to Mercedes' pits.

By then, Raikkonen had clocked

"Something wrong with the car," he reported. With just seconds remaining, Hamilton's hopes were ruined when Belgian Stoffel Vandoorne went into the barriers at the Swimming Pool exit, yellow flags flying.

"That's me out, right?" said Hamilton, deprived of a clean lap and condemned to qualify 14th, one of five men eliminated along with Russian Daniil Kvyat of Toro



MONACO: Ferrari driver Kimi Raikkonen of Finland, center, celebrates his pole position with second placed Ferrari driver Sebastian Vettel of Germany, right and third Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas of Finland, following the qualification at the Formula One Grand Prix at the Monaco racetrack in Monaco, yesterday. The Formula 1 Grand Prix of Monaco race will take place today. —AP

had crashed at Casino Square in the closing minutes of the morning's final practice session.

The Q2 session began with the two Finns Bottas and Raikkonen on track swiftly followed by the title contenders Vettel and Hamilton, who survived a big

a 1:12.231 to leap half a second clear of Verstappen at the front until Vettel slotted into second on his second run.

In his haste, Hamilton weaved to heat his tyres and then had a major slide at the exit of Casino Square before he locked up at Mirabeau.

Rosso, German Nico Hulkenberg of Renault, Dane Kevin Magnussen of Haas and Brazilian Felipe Massa of Williams.

"Yes, toasted," came the reply for Hamilton as he pulled in to the pits, his chest heaving and hands waving with frustration. —AFP



MONACO: The car of McLaren driver Stoffel Vandoorne of Belgium is lifted after crashing into the fence during the qualification at the Formula One Grand Prix at the Monaco racetrack in Monaco, yesterday. —AP

ALONSO LOOKS TO RETURN TO WORK WITH INDY 500 WIN

INDIANAPOLIS: Fernando Alonso will be hoping to return to his McLaren Formula One day job next week with an Indianapolis 500 victory and another jewel in motor racing's Triple Crown.

For over a century the Indy 500 has been a magnet to motor racing giants and thrill seekers eager to test their skill and bravery on the sprawling 2.5 mile oval known as the Brickyard.

Dashing Spaniard Fernando Alonso, a twice Formula One world champion, is the latest driver to accept the challenge in a one-off bid to match the late Briton Graham Hill - the only man to claim the Triple Crown of motor sport with victories at the Monaco Grand Prix, Indy 500 and Le Mans 24 Hours race.

The 35-year-old Alonso has no experience of Le Mans either but has indicated that, while tackling the French race would be an easier leap because the cars are more similar, the challenge would have to wait until after Formula One.

When the Spaniard was granted leave by McLaren to skip the Monaco Grand Prix to chase Indy 500 glory on Sunday it seemed a far-fetched dream for a driver who had never sat in an IndyCar never mind trying out oval racing on one of the most notorious and dangerous tarmacs in all of motor sport.

But the Spaniard, twice a grand prix winner on the streets of Monaco, has proven to be a quick learner and has already showcased his immense skill by clinically coming to grips

with the nuances of oval racing to qualify in fifth place.

"I feel ready," declared Alonso. "Lacking experience for sure because (it is) my first time with everything that is going to happen from rolling starts and all these things, but at the same time I have worked very, very hard over the last month so I cannot be better prepared than I am."

"Maybe it is not enough but I could not do anything more than this."

HIGH-OCTANE ACTION

No amount of time in the cockpit of his McLaren Andretti Autosport Honda could prepare Alonso for what awaits him today.

Widely recognised as the world's biggest single day sporting event, drivers say there is nothing that compares to the sight of 300,000 plus spectators filling the sprawling grandstands for a day of high-octane action.

Held on the Memorial Day holiday weekend in the heart of the US Midwest, where the winner chugs a quart of milk rather than expensive French Champagne, the Indy 500 is a unique American event.

This year 33 drivers, including four rookies, from 10 countries and both sexes will take the green flag.

Scott Dixon, the 2008 winner, grabbed pole position last weekend on a Sunday full of drama that began with him taking P1 and ended with a gun pointed to his head during a rob-

bery while he was buying fast food at a drive thru restaurant.

Lining up alongside the popular New Zealander is Indianapolis native and twice pole sitter Ed Carpenter and last year's winner Alexander Rossi.

"This is the biggest event on the calendar each year and it's the one we set out to win first," said Dixon. "We finished second here a couple of times and it's almost the worst place to finish when you come so close."

"We come here to win, and that's the only goal. If we don't achieve that, we're disappointed." Row Two will see Japan's Takuma Sato and American JR Hildebrand flanking Alonso.

Brazil's Helio Castroneves, a four-time pole sitter and three-time champion, signalled his readiness to fight for an elusive fourth win after clocking the top speed in final practice on Friday.

In more than a century of racing at the famed speedway only three men - A J Foyt, Al Unser Sr and Rick Mears - have finished the 500 on Victory Lane four-times and Castroneves is aiming to become the first non-American to join that exclusive club. The Brazilian is part of the powerhouse Team Penske stable that includes an all-star lineup of Colombian twice winner Juan Pablo Montoya, reigning IndyCar Series champion Frenchman Simon Pagenaud, Australian Will Power and Josef Newgarden all trying to give 'The Captain' Roger Penske a 17th trip to Victory Lane. —Reuters

WATFORD APPOINT MARCO SILVA AS HEAD COACH

LONDON: Watford have appointed former Hull City manager Marco Silva as their new head coach on a two-year deal to replace Italian Walter Mazzarri who left at the end of the season, the Premier League club said yesterday. The 39-year-old, who has also managed in his native Portugal and Greece where he won the title with Olympiakos Piraeus, quit his job at Hull against the club's wishes on Thursday after they were relegated to the Championship (second-tier).

"His pedigree and promise speaks for itself with his achievements in top divisions elsewhere across Europe, as well as his work at Hull City last season," Watford chairman and CEO Scott Duxbury said in a statement.

"We are delighted to have secured his services and to be welcoming a Head Coach of his profile and potential." Silva was unable to secure top-flight survival at Hull but six home wins in 18 matches under him kept them alive in the relegation battle until the penultimate game of the season.

The former Estoril and Sporting manager led Olympiakos to their record 43rd league title last June after winning the Portuguese Cup with Sporting the previous season.

Watford finished 17th in the league standings, one place and six points above the drop, last season under Mazzarri, who stepped down following a run of 10 defeats in 14 games. —Reuters

TENNIS

MISSING STARS LET FRENCH OPEN PRETENDERS DREAM

PARIS: Serena Williams' bombshell pregnancy announcement last month triggered a sequence of events that has left this year's women's draw at Roland Garros wide open and primed for a new champion. The 23-time Grand Slam winner learned she was pregnant just two days before starting a successful assault on January's Australian Open and won't return before next year.

The French federation then refused to award Maria Sharapova a wild card for the tournament with the Russian on the comeback trail following a 15-month doping suspension.

With Li Na long since retired that means the winners of five of the past six French Opens—Williams (2013, 2015), Sharapova (2012, 2014) and Li (2011) are absent from the field, while several pretenders to the Coupe Suzanne Lenglen are battling injury and loss of form.

Simona Halep, the 2014 runner-up, established herself as arguably the leading challenger by winning the Madrid Open before reaching the Rome final, but an ankle injury has hampered her prepara-

tions. The Romanian, who faces Slovakia's Jana Cepelova in the first round, earlier this week rated her chances of playing in Paris as just "50-50". But after practice on Friday, Halep sounded far more confident. "I expect to play, I should be OK but I am waiting for another ultra-sound on Saturday," said Halep, who arrived early in Paris for treatment on torn ligaments.

World number one Angelique Kerber has endured a miserable clay-court season, losing early in Stuttgart and crashing out in her Rome opener, while retiring from her last-16 clash in Madrid with a lower back injury. The German opens with a tricky first-round tie against fellow left-hander and former top-10 player Ekaterina Makarova. Defending champion Garbine Muguruza's fortunes on the surface have proved almost as bleak. Her only three wins came in Rome where she reached the semi-finals before a neck injury forced her to quit against eventual champion Elina Svitolina, the fourth time the Spaniard has failed to complete a match in 2017. Muguruza begins her title defence against 2010

champion Francesca Schiavone, the wily veteran making her final French Open appearance before retiring at the end of the year.

'ALREADY WON MY BIGGEST FIGHT'

Petra Kvitova provides one of the tournament's feel-good storylines with the two-time Wimbledon champion making a shock comeback in the French capital. The former world number two has been sidelined since December after suffering career-threatening injuries to her left hand while fighting off a knife-wielding intruder at her home the eastern Czech town of Prostějov. "I actually already won my biggest fight. I stayed in life and I have all my fingers," Kvitova told reporters at Roland Garros. "I knew this day would come but sometimes when I was watching tennis on TV, I didn't really feel great. I felt like the tennis was taken away from me, and it wasn't my decision.

"Suddenly I couldn't do what I love. So I'm happy that I can be here." As 15th seed, Kvitova will face Julia Boserup of the United States in the first round.

The Czech star is one of few players with genuine Grand Slam pedigree in the draw, with Victoria Azarenka, the 2012 and 2013 Australian Open champion, not quite ready for Roland Garros after the birth of her son. The 27-year-old hasn't played since last year's French Open but is scheduled to return in Mallorca next month as a tune-up ahead of Wimbledon. Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki suffered a scare when she limped out of Strasbourg with a back problem, while third-ranked Karolina Pliskova's best results this season have come on hard courts.

Svitolina climbed to a career high of sixth after landing her fourth title of the season at the Italian Open, although the Ukrainian remained coy on her chances.

"There is no one I can name as a favourite," she said, with Svitolina's run to the 2015 quarter-finals the only time she has advanced to the second week at a major. Meanwhile Italy's Sara Errani, the 2012 finalist, has tumbled down the rankings and needed to come through three rounds of qualifying just to reach the main draw. — AFP



WASHINGTON: San Diego Padres pinch hitter Hunter Renfroe walks off the field after making the final out with the bases loaded during the ninth inning of a baseball game against the Washington Nationals at Nationals Park, Friday, in Washington. — AP

BASEBALL

SCHERZER PITCHES INTO 9TH, NATIONALS DEFEAT PADRES 5-1

WASHINGTON: Max Scherzer struck out 13 and gave up three hits over 8 2/3 innings, leading the Washington Nationals over the San Diego Padres 5-1 on Friday night. Bryce Harper, Trea Turner and Michael A. Taylor homered for the Nationals. Scherzer (5-3) got pulled by acting manager Chris Speier in the ninth, and Koda Glover got his fourth save. Speier is filling while manager Dusty Baker is away this weekend to attend his son Darren's high school graduation in California. Luis Perdomo (0-2) allowed three runs over six innings.

DODGERS 4, CUBS 0

Alex Wood allowed two hits over five scoreless innings, Chase Utley and Adrian Gonzalez homered, and Los Angeles defeated Chicago in the series opener. Wood extended his career-high scoreless innings streak to 25 1/3, longest in the majors this season. The left-hander began the season in the bullpen, got a chance to sub for some of the Dodgers' injured starters and has remained in the rotation since. Wood (6-0) struck out eight and walked two. The Dodgers have won nine of their last 11 at home, and their 19-8 home record is second-best in the majors. Jake Arrieta (5-4) continued to struggle for the World Series champions, whose three-game winning streak ended. The right-hander gave up four runs and five hits in six innings, struck out nine and walked one.

ROCKIES 10, CARDINALS 0

Rookie Antonio Senzatela threw eight sharp innings to grab a share of the major league lead in wins and Charlie Blackmon had a homer and

RBI single as part of an eight-run eighth for Colorado. Fresh off a 7-3 road swing, the Rockies kept right on rolling behind Senzatela, who joins Clayton Kershaw, Dallas Keuchel and Ervin Santana with seven victories. Senzatela (7-1) scattered five hits and showed plenty of poise as the 22-year-old escaped trouble courtesy of four double plays. Carlos Martinez (3-4) gave up three runs in 7 1/3 innings.

ASTROS 2, ORIOLES 0

Jake Marisnick and Carlos Beltran each homered for Houston to back a solid start by Joe Musgrove. Musgrove (4-4) allowed four hits in seven innings before the bullpen closed it out to send the Orioles to their season-high fifth straight loss. Ken Giles threw a perfect ninth for his 14th save. Kevin Gausman (2-4) yielded eight hits and two runs in 6 2/3 innings.

BLUE JAYS 7, RANGERS 6

Devon Travis hit his second career grand slam and Toronto posted its fourth straight win. Justin Smoak and Kendrys Morales also connected for the Blue Jays, who activated star infielders Josh Donaldson and Troy Tulowitzki off the disabled list. Aaron Loup (2-0) pitched 1 1/3 innings. Roberto Osuna struck out Mike Napoli for his eighth save. A.J. Griffin (4-2) was forced to leave in the second after suffering a strained left intercostal muscle. Texas has lost four straight.

METS 8, PIRATES 1

Neil Walker homered twice in his return to his hometown and Jacob deGrom gave New York's bullpen a needed rest. Walker, who grew up in

Pittsburgh and played seven seasons for the Pirates, had three hits and drove in four runs. DeGrom (4-1) became the first Mets starter to get an out in the eighth inning since last June, pitching 8 1/3 innings and striking out 10. He also got two hits. Chad Kuhl (1-5) took the loss.

RAYS 5, TWINS 2

Chris Archer struck out 11 while pitching into the eighth inning and Tampa Bay hit three home runs. Archer (4-3) gave up two runs and five hits in 7 2/3 innings and reached double digits in strikeouts for the fourth time in five May starts. Logan Morrison, Kevin Kiermaier and Steven Souza Jr. all went deep, and Alex Colome got four outs for his 13th save. Hector Santiago (4-3) gave up three runs and four hits in 5 1/3 innings.

MARLINS 8, ANGELS 5

Giancarlo Stanton homered off the retaining wall behind the center field fence, a shot estimated at 460 feet, to lead Miami. Stanton hit his 12th homer his first since May 8. Justin Bour and J.T. Realmuto also connected for the Marlins and Christian Yelich hit three doubles. Dan Straily (3-3) got the win and A.J. Ramos picked up his fifth save. Jesse Chavez (4-6) allowed five runs in 3 2/3 innings. The Angels became the final major league team to play at Marlins Park, which opened in 2012.

ATHLETICS 4, YANKEES 1

Masahiro Tanaka struck out a career-high 13 to rebound from the worst stretch of his major league career but wound up a hard-luck loser when reliever Tyler Clippard's wild pickoff throw sparked a go-ahead, two-run eighth inning for Oakland. Sean Manaea (3-3), starting because Kendall Graveman was scratched with a sore pitching shoulder, matched Tanaka and allowed four hits in seven innings. Tanaka (5-4) left with the game scoreless after allowing Adam Rosales' one-out single in the eighth.

WHITE SOX 8, TIGERS 2

Melky Cabrera homered and had four RBIs, Matt Davidson went deep and Avisail Garcia drove in three runs to lead Chicago over Detroit after the first game of their doubleheader was postponed because of rain. Detroit and Chicago will try again to play two on Saturday after Game 1 got washed out. The postponement was the 26th this year - one more than all of last season, according to Major League Baseball. Garcia's three-run double off Matthew Boyd (2-5) with two out in the third gave Chicago a 3-1 lead. Mike Pelfrey (2-4) worked five innings against his former team.

RED SOX 3, MARINERS 0

Eduardo Rodriguez pitched six scoreless innings and Boston won its season-high fifth in a row. Rodriguez (4-1) went six innings and Craig Kimbrel earned his 13th save. Yovani Gallardo (2-5) went 5 1/3 innings for Seattle, which has won just one of its last seven. — AP

NADAL TARGETS 10TH TITLE IN FRENCH OPEN GENERATION GAME

PARIS: With the world's top five occupied by players over 30 for the first time, Rafael Nadal is poised to tighten the old guard's Grand Slam grip by capturing an unprecedented 10th French Open. The Spaniard, written off as a contender in Paris after a quarter-final loss to Novak Djokovic in 2015 and an injury-enforced pull-out before the third round last year, arrives at Roland Garros as the overwhelming favourite. The 30-year-old has already reached the magical 10 titles this year at the clay-court events in Monte Carlo and Barcelona. For good measure, he also won Madrid for a fifth time, ending a two-year seven-match losing streak against Djokovic in the process. Nadal boasts a sensational career record at Roland Garros — 72 wins and just two defeats, to Djokovic in 2015 and an injury-affected shock loss to Robin Soderling in 2009.

That defeat to the Swede opened the door for Roger Federer to win his only French Open title. However, Federer, at 35, is skipping the French Open to save himself for an assault on an eighth Wimbledon.

Djokovic, the defending champion in Paris, and world number one Andy Murray are struggling for form ahead of the tournament which starts Sunday. However, Nadal is desperate to keep a lid on expectations. "You have to write what you have to do, but I don't care," said Nadal when asked about his status as favourite.

Nadal has also thrived on hard courts in 2017, reaching his first Slam final in three years when he lost in five sets to Federer in Australia despite being a break to the good in the deciding set.

He was a beaten finalist against Federer in Miami while his title triumph in Madrid gave him a record-equalling 30th Masters title to add to his 14 majors. Nadal's record on clay against the world's top two is also heavily-weighted in his favour — 8-2 against Murray (2-0 at Roland Garros) and 10-5 when facing Djokovic (5-1 in Paris).

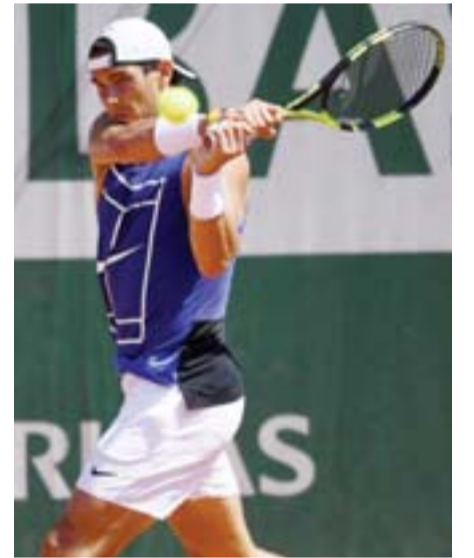
AGASSI SAID 'NO,' THEN 'YES'

The Spanish star will open his campaign against combustible Frenchman Benoit Paire, a man he described "as not the ideal opponent" first up. Friday's draw, meanwhile, placed him on a semi-final collision course with Djokovic.

Djokovic will have US legend Andre Agassi as coach for the first time. Djokovic completed the career Grand Slam at last year's French Open when he also held all four majors.

On clay this year, he has at least been on an upward curve-quarter-finals in Monte Carlo, semi-finals in Madrid and a runners-up spot in Rome where he was demolished

by Alexander Zverev. Djokovic's relationship with the 47-year-old Agassi, an eight-time major winner, is limited, for the moment, to just the French Open. "Andre has been in my shoes before playing Grand Slams, being the best in the world, and facing all the challenges that are present," explained Djokovic. Agassi said that he initially turned down Djokovic's approach, but was persuaded by his wife, Steffi Graf, to change his mind. Murray, defeated by Djokovic in the 2016 final, has endured a wretched season with an elbow injury and bouts of illness not helping. He lost in the third round in Monte Carlo, made the semis in Barcelona, was again a third-round loser in Madrid before an defeat in his first match at Rome to Fabio Fognini.



PARIS: Spain's Rafael Nadal returns the ball to France's Lucas Pouille during a practice session on the eve of the first round of the Roland Garros 2017 French Tennis Open yesterday in Paris. — AFP

"I need to accept that I'm struggling and then find a way to get through it. I will get through it," insisted Murray, who had his best year on clay in 2016 but who has now failed to reach a final in his last five events. The British star begins against Russia's Andrey Kuznetsov and could face dangerous Juan Martin del Potro, who is playing Paris for the first time in five years, in the third round. Should the likes of Nadal, Djokovic and Murray falter, then the much-hyped #NextGen, featuring the likes of Zverev and 2016 semi-finalist Dominic Thiem could take advantage. In Rome, Zverev, 20, became the first player born in the 1990s to win a Masters title. — AFP



NUREMBERG: Defeated Czech player Barbora Krejckikova, left, and winner Kiki Bertens of the Netherlands pose with their trophies after their final match at the WTA tennis tournament in Nuremberg, Germany, yesterday. — AP

BERTENS RETAINS NUREMBERG TITLE

NUREMBERG: Title holder Kiki Bertens swept aside Czech qualifier Barbora Krejckikova 6-2 6-1 yesterday to win her second consecutive Nuremberg Cup in a successful dress rehearsal for the French Open starting today.

The Dutch world number 19, who won the title last year after battling through the qualifiers, has enjoyed a memorable clay court season so far, reaching the quarter-finals in Madrid and the last four in Rome last week. "I did not expect to win but I am really happy," Bertens, a semi-finalist at

Roland Garros last year, said in a court-side interview. "Tomorrow I will take a plane to Paris. I will try my best. It was important to get confidence for the French Open. It could not be better this week."

She faced only brief resistance early in the first set from the 21-year-old Krejckikova, ranked 254th in the world, before breaking twice to race through it in half an hour.

Bertens, 25, fired seven aces, including one on her first match point, and constantly pinned her opponent to the baseline as she earned her first title of the year. — Reuters

MLB RESULTS/STANDINGS

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

American League Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB
NY Yankees	27	18	.600	-
Boston	26	21	.553	2
Baltimore	25	21	.543	2.5
Tampa Bay	26	25	.510	4
Toronto	22	26	.458	6.5
Central Division				
Minnesota	25	19	.568	-
Cleveland	24	22	.522	2
Detroit	22	25	.468	4.5
Chicago White Sox	21	25	.457	5
Kansas City	20	27	.426	6.5
Western Division				
Houston	33	16	.673	-
LA Angels	25	26	.490	9
Texas	24	25	.490	9
Oakland	22	25	.468	10
Seattle	21	28	.429	12

National League Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB
Washington	29	18	.617	-
Atlanta	21	25	.457	7.5
NY Mets	20	26	.435	8.5
Miami	17	29	.370	11.5
Philadelphia	16	30	.348	12.5
Central Division				
Chicago Cubs	25	22	.532	-
Milwaukee	25	23	.521	0.5
St. Louis	23	22	.511	1
Cincinnati	23	24	.489	2
Pittsburgh	22	27	.449	4
Western Division				
Colorado	32	18	.640	-
Arizona	31	19	.620	1
LA Dodgers	29	20	.592	2.5
San Francisco	20	30	.400	12
San Diego	18	32	.360	14

ATTACK SPARKS ROBUST SECURITY FOR FA CUP AND OTHER SPORTING EVENTS

LONDON: Armed police looked on as thousands watched the Great CityGames in the centre of Manchester just days after a suicide bomb at a pop concert claimed 22 lives and wounded dozens.

Similar robust security measures will be a feature of English football's showpiece event the FA Cup final at Wembley and several other high profile sporting events in the weeks to come.

The reinforced measures have been put in place with the terror alert raised to its highest level of 'critical' meaning another attack is believed to be imminent. With the heightened security threat, Chelsea have cancelled Sunday's parade in London to celebrate their Premier League title, saying they thought it was "inappropriate to go ahead" following the bombing. Arsenal, who face Chelsea in the FA Cup final, have also said they will not hold a victory parade if they win at Wembley.

Spectators attending the Scottish Cup final in Glasgow, the English Premiership rugby union final at Twickenham and the cricket one-day internation-

al between England and South Africa in Southampton all on Saturday will see a significantly increased armed police presence on the periphery of the stadia.

They have also been asked to turn up earlier than usual for security checks and to act as eyes and ears for the security services.

"We are working closely with both the Football Association (FA) and Wembley to ensure this weekend's iconic football matches pass off without incident," said Britain's top counter terrorism police officer Mark Rowley. "Together we have a long history of delivering safe and secure major sporting events. This will include extra armed officers on foot patrol around the environs of the Stadium, and the deployment of police armoured vehicles to support road closures.

"At Twickenham rugby fans will see more armed officers on foot around the stadium. Our operations will include a range of highly visible but also covert and discreet tactics and this will run far

beyond the final whistle and away from specific stadia. This will also apply right throughout the transport network. I would ask people to be our eyes and ears-if you see something suspicious tell a police officer or member of security staff."

'REASSURE, HELP AND KEEP YOU SAFE'

There will also be an armed police presence at Monday's one-day international between England and South Africa at Lord's in north west London.

"Advice has been sought from the Metropolitan Police and, in line with other major sporting and public events being held this week, there will be an armed police presence outside Lord's on Monday," said Derek Brewer, Secretary of the Marylebone Cricket Club the owners of Lord's.

English rugby club Northampton, who are hosting French side Stade Francais in a European Rugby Championship play-off match on Friday, implemented an 'Open Jacket Policy' demanding supporters wearing jackets to unzip them before being

allowed to enter their stadium.

Events further down the track will also see extra armed police deployed including two major horse racing events, Saturday week's Epsom Derby and Royal Ascot later in June-both of which are regularly attended by Queen Elizabeth II and other members of the royal family.

Fans going to Cardiff for European football's premier club competition the Champions League final on Saturday week have also been assured by UEFA on Friday that the fan zones will be open.

"Contrary to what has been said in some media outlets, the 'fan zones' and festival will take place as planned under strict security measures, measures which have been developed over months in cooperation with the Football Association of Wales and the local authorities."

Rowley also wished to strike a reassuring note. "If you are out in London this weekend or at an event talk to our officers, they are there to reassure, help and keep you safe." — AFP

BARCA SEEK WINNING END TO COACH LUIS ENRIQUE'S REIGN

MADRID: Gerard Pique wants Barcelona to reward outgoing coach Luis Enrique with a ninth trophy of his three-year spell in charge in Copa del Rey final against Alaves. Victory would see Barca lift the Cup for the third straight season under Enrique, but unlike in the past two years it would be Barca's only major silverware of the campaign.

The Catalans missed out on La Liga to Real Madrid last weekend and were dumped out of the Champions League at the quarter-final stage by Juventus. And Pique wants his boss to go out as a winner in the last ever competitive game at Atletico Madrid's Vicente Calderon stadium. "He is one of the best coaches in the history of the club," said the defender.

"He deserves a great final. The best way to leave would be on a high with a trophy and tomorrow is a good opportunity.

"I want him to leave as a winner."

However, Enrique himself warned against the threat posed by Alaves as the Basques played a huge role in costing Barca the league with a shock 2-1 win at the Camp Nou back in September.

"I have the chance to end my cycle with Barca with another title, but we are facing without doubt the revelation of La Liga this season." Indeed, on a night of good-byes at the Calderon, Mauricio Pellegrino could also be taking charge of Alaves for the final time with plenty of clubs eyeing the Argentine's services.

As well as taking Alaves to their first Copa del Rey final, Pellegrino's men finished ninth on their return to the Spanish

top flight after a decade in the lower leagues.

"I am very thankful to these boys for the work they have put in," said Pellegrino.

"There is not one of our players that doesn't deserve to play the final."

'HISTORIC EVENT'

Whilst Alaves have never reached Spanish football's showpiece occasion before, they did reach the UEFA Cup final back in 2001. Liverpool edged a thrilling final 5-4 back then and Alaves captain Manu Garcia urged the club's fans to revel in the atmosphere as they did 16 years ago in Dortmund.

"This is a historic event," he said. "It is a final and we only want to be champions.

"I want to tell the fans to enjoy the day as much as possible. As a youngster I experienced Dortmund, I have a lot of memories of that day and I want the fans to go there with their shirts, flags and scarves and be proud of Alaves."

Alaves' quest to make history will be helped by the absence of the suspended Luis Suarez.

Barca also have no natural right-back available with Sergi Roberto also suspended after both players were sent-off in the second leg of a tempestuous semi-final against Atletico Madrid.

However, Pique expects Barca to have the resources to cope. "We have to face up to that problem. There are players here with the ability to replace them," he added.

"We are Barca. Whoever plays has to perform." — AFP

SOCCER

WENGER INVOKES SPIRIT OF 2005 IN FA CUP HISTORY BID

LONDON: History-chasing Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger believes his team will upset the form book and overcome their defensive injury crisis by beating Double hopefuls Chelsea in FA Cup final. Despite Antonio Conte's claims to the contrary, Chelsea are the favourites, having already swept to glory in the Premier League and with a fully fit squad at their manager's disposal.

But Wenger says the example of the 2005 FA Cup final, when Arsenal weathered a battering by Manchester United to prevail on penalties in Cardiff, shows his team could upset the odds again. "Of course I expect us to win," said Wenger, who is still to commit himself to Arsenal beyond Saturday's match.

"It's true that in neutral opinions, Chelsea will be favourites. But we have gone into finals like that as well. I remember in 2005 we had no players available any more. I played with Dennis Bergkamp up front against Manchester United, who had (Cristiano) Ronaldo, (Wayne) Rooney, (Ryan) Giggs, (Paul) Scholes.

"We won, maybe without deserving it, but we won it." Wenger failed to secure Champions League qualification with Arsenal for the first time in 20 years, but he can still make history by becoming the first manager to win seven FA Cups. Arsenal are also hoping to steal a march on United by winning a 13th FA Cup, which would make them the outright most successful team in the tournament's 146-year history.

It is not the first time Wenger finds himself looking to the world's oldest cup competition for solace, with the FA Cup having enabled him to apply silver finishes to the season in both 2014 and 2015.

But he has never before gone into a final knowing it is his last hope of salvaging anything from the season, after Arsenal missed out on the top four and fell by the wayside in the League Cup and Champions League. While the Frenchman continues to be targeted by the vociferous 'Wenger Out' brigade, Arsenal's season-ending run of seven wins in eight games means they approach the game with something of a spring in their step.

MANCHESTER TRIBUTES

Their most recent Wembley outing will also stand them in good stead, with Arsenal having seen off Pep Guardiola's Manchester City 2-1 in



LONDON: Arsenal's Czech goalkeeper Petr Cech warms up ahead of the English FA Cup final football match between Arsenal and Chelsea at Wembley stadium in London yesterday. Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger restored cup goalkeeper David Ospina in place of Petr Cech, while Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain made his return from a hamstring injury as an auxiliary left-sided wing-back. — AFP

the semi-finals courtesy of an extra-time winner by Alexis Sanchez. Wenger's switch to a back three-mirroring Chelsea has helped Arsenal find a second wind, but the defence he aligns beneath the Wembley arch will be far from a first-choice triumvirate.

With Laurent Koscielny banned, Gabriel injured and Shkodran Mustafi a doubt due to concussion, club captain Per Mertesacker is set to make his first start of the entire season.

Chelsea manager Conte hopes to emulate his Italian compatriot Carlo Ancelotti's feat from the 2009-10 campaign by steering Chelsea to a league and FA Cup Double in his first season at Stamford Bridge. But he believes Arsenal's disappointment over their failure to secure a top-four finish makes them doubly dangerous opponents. "We could start as underdogs because we won

the league," said the Italian, whose side overcame Tottenham 4-2 in the last four. "We won the league and we celebrated the league. It was right to enjoy the moment, to celebrate the league.

"Instead, on the other side, we face a team who lost out on the possibility to play in the Champions League next season and they have only this possibility to save their season. We must pay great attention and focus." The game will be John Terry's last in Chelsea's colours and although he is not expected to start, he could bow out by lifting his 17th trophy as captain and 18th in total.

Monday's terror attack in Manchester, which left 22 people dead, means there will be a heavy police presence around Wembley. The players will wear black armbands and there will be a period of silence before kick-off. — AFP

EASTERN'S TRAILBLAZING FEMALE COACH RESIGNS

HONG KONG: Chan Yuen-ting, the first female coach to lead a men's professional soccer club to a top-flight title, has resigned from her position as head coach of Hong Kong's Eastern Sports Club.

Chan made headlines internationally after guiding the club to the Hong Kong Premier League title last season, but decided to stand down at the end of the just-completed campaign after Eastern relinquished their title to rivals Kitchee. "Chan Yuen-ting has resigned as head coach, but will remain on the club's coaching staff," a club spokesman told Reuters.

"She will be studying for the next level of coaching badges with the

Asian Football Confederation and will have to be out of Hong Kong a lot between June and December, so she decided she could not continue as head coach."

Chan won the league title with Eastern last season before taking the club into the Asian Champions League for the first time.

Eastern, however, struggled in the continental competition, picking up just one point in the group stages and suffering two heavy defeats at the hands of Chinese Super League champions Guangzhou Evergrande. Szeto Man-chung, who previously worked as team manager, will replace Chan as head coach. — Reuters



LONDON: Two Chelsea supporters wave a flag as they arrive at Wembley Stadium in London yesterday ahead of the English FA Cup final football match between Arsenal and Chelsea. — AFP



LONDON: Chelsea's Italian head coach Antonio Conte gestures from the touchline during the English Premier League football match. — AFP

CLEAN-LIVING CONTE KEEN FOR WEMBLEY CIGAR

LONDON: Health-conscious Chelsea manager Antonio Conte plans to indulge himself with some champagne and a cigar if his side succeed in overcoming Arsenal in FA Cup final. Conte, 47, does not smoke, generally steers clear of champagne and even eschews carbohydrates, but he will make exceptions if his team manage to complete a Premier League and FA Cup Double.

"We have to finish this great season and make it a fantastic season. There's only one way to do that," he told reporters at Stamford Bridge on Friday. "To try to win tomorrow and to celebrate. To drink a bit of champagne. I don't smoke, but tomorrow I'm hoping to smoke a cigar if we win. I'm ready to do this!"

The Wembley encounter is a repeat of the late-September fixture that proved to be the turning point in Chelsea's season, with Conte switching to a back three after his side crashed to a 3-0 defeat at the Emirates Stadium. Chelsea finished the league season seven points clear of Tottenham Hotspur and 18 points above

Arsenal-an outcome Conte admits was practically unthinkable at the time.

"It was very difficult to think about celebrating winning the league after the Arsenal defeat, to think we'd arrive at the end of the season and be celebrating winning the league," he said.

"Honestly, that felt very difficult. Not impossible, but in that period we had a lot of big problems to solve. To find the right solution quickly is not easy. You must be very good, very prepared, but also lucky in these circumstances.

"For that reason, I was lucky to have a group of players who put themselves in Chelsea and my ideas of football and we put ourselves in a position where we could secure a fantastic title and celebrate. At the start of the season, if you'd said we could qualify for the Champions League, I'd have signed for that. Then I found great players and we were able to change our season."

COSTA DEL SOL

Despite Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich

subsequently spending three days at the club's training ground, Conte says he never felt under threat. "He came for three days to watch our training sessions, to watch the video analysis, to stay with us. He supported me," said the Italian. "He never showed me he was angry. I think the club always saw my job, during pre-season and in that period, and trusted in my job. I never thought the club was thinking about sacking me."

The showpiece showdown with Arsenal could prove to be Diego Costa's last game with Chelsea, amid reports he is seeking a move away from Stamford Bridge. The Brazil-born Spain striker has admitted he has struggled to adapt to the British climate, but Conte hopes forecasts of scorching temperatures at Wembley will help inspire both Costa and his team-mates to great things. "Tomorrow we will have fantastic sun. For this reason, I hope to see a great game and all my players trying to win for us," Conte said. "When we finish the season, then it'll be the right moment to speak about the future of my players." — AFP

Sports

Langer regains Senior PGA lead with late birdie run



Kiki Bertens retains her Nuremberg title



SUNDAY, MAY 28, 2017

RAIKKONEN ON POLE FOR FERRARI, VETTEL SECOND

Page 17



LONDON: Arsenal's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the English FA Cup final soccer match between Arsenal and Chelsea at the Wembley stadium yesterday. — AP

RAMSEY FIRES WENGER TO RECORD 7TH FA CUP

ARSENAL DENY CHELSEA DOUBLE

LONDON: Aaron Ramsey scored a 79th-minute header to earn Arsenal a stunning 2-1 win over Double-chasing Chelsea yesterday and deliver embattled manager Arsene Wenger a record seventh FA Cup. Wenger has been barracked by his own fans and failed to secure Champions League qualification for the first time in 20 years, but he ends the season by surpassing Aston Villa's George Ramsey as the FA Cup's greatest manager. Alexis Sanchez's early opener for Arsenal, allowed to stand despite an apparent handball, was cancelled out by Diego Costa, only for Ramsey to reply immediately with the second FA Cup-winning goal of his career.

Arsenal, plagued by defensive selection issues, claimed a third FA Cup win in four seasons and 13th in total, making them the outright most successful team in the competition's history ahead of Manchester United. Antonio Conte's Chelsea, who had Victor Moses sent off after he received a second booking for diving, were thwarted in their attempt to complete a Premier League and FA Cup Double for the second time. It meant no glorious farewell for departing skipper John Terry, who will bow out on 717 appearances and 17 major honors after spending the match on the bench.

Victory was rich vindication for Wenger, whose Arsenal future is due to be decided by a board meet-

ing in the coming days, and allowed him to salvage something from the most difficult season of his 21-year tenure. He is reported to have been offered a two-year contract and while dissent against him has mounted this season, the stirring nature of his side's win will surely have won back some of his team's disgruntled fans. The Frenchman's team took a fourth-minute lead with a goal that will be debated long after the final whistle. After blocking N'Golo Kante's attempted clearance on the edge of Chelsea's box, Sanchez ran through to skewer a shot past Thibaut Courtois, only for an offside flag to be raised against Ramsey.

Mertesacker magnificent

Referee Anthony Taylor consulted his assistant referee before concluding, correctly, that Ramsey had not been interfering with play, but replays showed Sanchez had handled the ball when he charged down Kante's clearance. Arsenal's play brimmed with belief, Mesut Ozil forcing Gary Cahill to clear off his own line and Danny Welbeck and Ramsey hitting the same post in quick succession from a corner. The absences of the suspended Laurent Koscielny, the injured Gabriel and the concussed Shkodran Mustafi brought club captain Per Mertesacker into Arsenal back three for his first start of the season.

But there were few signs of ring-rust as the former Germany defender produced three crucial last-ditch blocks to thwart Costa. Chelsea stepped things up in the second half, with Arsenal goalkeeper David Ospina foiling Kante and Moses and Pedro curling narrowly wide, before Cesc Fabregas entered the fray in place of Nemanja Matic. But Arsenal continued to threaten on the break, Hector Bellerin working Courtois with a firm, low shot, and in the 68th minute the momentum tilted yet further in their direction. Already booked for holding back Welbeck on the touchline, Moses was shown a second yellow card for hurling himself to the ground in the Arsenal box in anticipation of an Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain challenge that never came.

Despite going a man down, Chelsea contrived to equalise in the 76th minute when Costa chested down substitute Willian's pass before beating Ospina with the aid of a slight deflection off Mertesacker. But Wenger reacted by sending on Olivier Giroud and within a minute of coming on for Welbeck, he crossed from the byline on the left and Ramsey charged in to net the winner with a stooping header. Bellerin shot just wide and Ozil hit the post after cutting inside Cesar Azpilicueta, but just as in the 2014 final against Hull City, Ramsey's goal was to prove the winner. — AFP



LONDON: Arsenal's French manager Arsene Wenger (2nd left) celebrates with his players on the pitch after the English FA Cup final football match between Arsenal and Chelsea yesterday. Arsenal won the game 2-1. — AFP

CHESPOL STOOPS TO CONQUER, DIBABA FAILS

EUGENE: Teenaged Kenyan star Celliphine Chespol recovered from a lost shoe to win the 3000m steeplechase with the second fastest time in history at the Prefontaine Classic Diamond League meeting on Friday. Chespol, still just 18, stormed to victory after a thrilling duel with Olympic champion and world record holder Ruth Jebet and fellow Kenyan Beatrice Chepkoech over the closing laps at Eugene's Hayward Field.

Chespol's hopes of a win looked to have evaporated when she stumbled on the water jump on the penultimate lap, appearing to lose her shoe as Jebet and Chepkoech pulled ahead.

Despite stooping to adjust her footwear, the teenager regained her composure and clawed back the lost ground before producing a devastating burst of speed up the home straight to finish in 8min 58.78sec. Only the Kenyan-born Jebet of Bahrain, the world record holder with 8:52.78, has run faster. "It was difficult but I try my best. I'm happy of course," Chespol said afterwards.

Chespol's outstanding performance was the highlight of the opening night of the two-day event, which resumes Saturday with a star-studded programme.

In the night's other main race, the women's 5000m, Ethiopia's Genzebe Dibaba failed in her bid to better the world record of 14:11.15 set by her sister Tirunesh in 2008.

Dibaba, the 1,500m world champion, was racing against the clock for the final five laps after leaving the pack behind but could only finish in 14:25.22, well outside the world record, and her own personal best of 14:15.41 set in 2015.

DIBABA UNHAPPY WITH TIME

Lilian Rengeruk was a distant second in 14:36.80 while Sifan Hassan of the Netherlands was third. "I'm happy that I won but I'm not happy about the time," Dibaba said through an interpreter. "The pace was real slow and I'm not happy with how we started.



EUGENE: Celliphine Cheptek Chespol of Ethiopia wins the 3000m Steeplechase during the 2017 Prefontaine Classic Diamond League at Hayward Field on Friday in Eugene, Oregon. — AFP

"We lost time in the first 3,000metres and it was hard to come back after that."

In the long jump, 2012 Olympic champion Brittney Reese of the United States posted a world-leading leap of 7.01 metres (23 feet) for victory. Reese's jump handed her victory over 2016 Olympic gold medalist and compatriot Tianna Bartoletta, who could only manage a best of 6.83m. Britain's Lorraine Ugen was third with a jump of 6.78m.

"The goal was to come out and jump seven metres, just to see where my training and everything was at," said Reese, who will be aiming to dethrone Bartoletta at the World Championships in London in August.

"I feel like I'm headed in the right direction to where I want to be. It was really important to come out here and tell myself I could perform." The women's javelin meanwhile saw a victory for Belarus's Tatsiana Khaladovich, who topped a strong field which included 2016 Olympic gold medalist Sara Kolak of Croatia and Czech world record holder Barbora Spotakova. Khaladovich claimed victory with her opening throw of the night, a 66.30m effort which was more than a metre further than her closest rival, China's Liu Shiying, who finished second with 65.21m. Kolak was third with a throw of 64.64m while Spotakova was fourth with a best of 63.30m. — AFP

EXETER CROWNED CHAMPIONS

LONDON: Exeter Chiefs were crowned English rugby's Premiership champions for the first time yesterday when veteran flyhalf Gareth Steenson landed a nerveless penalty three minutes from the end of extra time to beat Wasps 23-20 in an epic Twickenham final. Exeter, beaten in the final by Saracens last year, had led 14-3 only for Wasps to score 17 unanswered points and lead 20-14 midway through the second half.

A late Steenson penalty took the game to extra time and with both teams flagging on a hot afternoon, nearly 80,000 fans were bracing themselves for a drop-goal shootout before Exeter forced a scrum penalty.

It was fitting that Steenson, who has been at the south-west club for a decade as they climbed from second-tier also-rans to title challengers, was the man to settle it and the travelling fans exploded when he calmly split the posts. It was heartbreak for Wasps, who had topped the standings during the regular season and who had not lost in their last 10 final appearances.

But few neutrals would begrudge Exeter their moment in the sun, particularly Rob Baxter, who spent 14 years at the club as a player and another eight as head coach.

Exeter chairman Tony Rowe said: "Coming here last year and losing I know the pain, but I'm very pleased today. It is awesome. It was done on a seven year plan so we're actually on time - but with five minutes to go I didn't think we would do it." Exeter enjoyed the best of the first half and scored the first two tries.

Lions-bound wing Jack Nowell got the first, breaking into space after a lineout for a score that validated those who have questioned Wasps' defence while fullback Phil Dollman added the second - his first of the season - after great work by centre Ollie

Devoto. There had been precious little sign of Wasps' exciting attacking game but they eventually hit their stride with some great passing under pressure to send Jimmy Gopperth over and reduce the halftime deficit to 14-10. Within four minutes of the restart Wasps were three points ahead as impressive number eight Nathan Hughes forced a turnover then blasted through three tackles before Christian Wade's kick bounced beautifully into the arms of Elliot Daly who gleefully dived over the line.

A Gopperth penalty made it 20-14 to Wasps as Exeter had struggled to make any impact. However, they regrouped to trim the lead to 20-17 with a Steenson penalty and then, after a remarkable 34-phase attack, earned another penalty with 12 minutes to go. The Chiefs opted against a virtually guaranteed three points and instead went for the scrum, and did the same minutes later as the clock ticked down and it looked like poor decisions when Wasps forced a turnover.

However, with two minutes to go, they were given a lifeline when Hughes was penalised for handling in a ruck and Steenson took the game to extra time for the second time since the playoffs were introduced in the 2002/03 season.

The breathless finale was hardly unexpected after both teams had clinched their semi-finals with last-gasp scores but looked a hammer blow for Wasps, who had ended the regular season top of the standings and top try-scorers.

With the sun beating down and the players visibly wilting, the first 10 minute half was scoreless but Exeter upped the ante in the second and battered at the line relentlessly before finally earning a shot at goal which Steenson, fittingly, slotted home. — Reuters



IN ARAMCO IPO PITCH, CANADA PLAYS UP OIL & GAS EXPERTISE



ARBIL: A man prepares to pack traditional sweets during the holy month of Ramadan in Arbil, the capital of the Kurdish autonomous region in northern Iraq yesterday. —AFP

IN LIBYA, LITTLE CASH AND TOO MUCH VIOLENCE
DAWN QUEUES OUTSIDE BANKS BECOME ROUTINE FOR LIBYANS

TRIPOLI: The holy month of Ramadan began yesterday with a bitter taste for residents of Libya's capital, as a cash shortage bites, prices rise and deadly clashes returned to Tripoli. Dawn queues outside banks just to withdraw a few tens of dinars has become routine for most Libyans, whose chaos-plagued North African country faces a persistent liquidity shortfall.

But despite the difficulty of getting by on a daily basis, the small Tomzini grocery store was still crowded on the eve of Ramadan. However shoppers were cautious and extra-careful about their purchases this year, with cutbacks the order of the day.

During Ramadan, Muslims around the world abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and having sex from dawn to dusk. They break the fast with a meal known as iftar and before dawn they have a second opportunity to eat and drink during suhur. "Instead of buying three kilos of almonds, I'm buying three dinars' worth, just for decoration," said young mother Mariem, whose little girl gazed

imploringly at large baskets of multi-coloured sweet treats. Prices have multiplied by three or four times this year in Libya, including at Tomzini which is famed for its fresh spices. Most Libyans these days are trying to adapt and change their spending habits so they are still solvent by the end of the month.

'No cash'

People no longer buy in the large quantities of the past. "I have to be careful. I'm not sure I can replace every dinar that leaves my pocket," 59-year-old civil servant Mofthah Al-Barrani told AFP.

"We haven't been paid for months, and even if I still have money in the bank I can't get at it because there is no cash," he said. But he also added that people still wanted to do their shopping in case prices rose even further because of high demand during Ramadan.

Retired teacher and mother of three Halima, 54, counts her cash carefully to ensure she does not have to come

shopping again during the first week of Ramadan.

In a market in Tajoura, an eastern suburb of Tripoli, Sabri Al-Bouechi who lives on his salary as an official recognizes that "living conditions are below zero." "I'm just an ordinary guy like those who queue up outside the bank," he said, adding: "Officials should have pity on people."

Because of the cash shortage, the businesses that do best are those that accept cards and cheques.

"Do you take the Commerce and Development Bank card?" asked one customer in a supermarket.

In addition to economic mayhem, Libyans have also had to cope with a country in chaos after the 2011 revolution that ousted and killed strongman Muammar Gadhafi.

Subsidized imports

On Friday, fierce clashes in the capital between forces loyal to the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) and rival militias killed at least 28 people and wounded 130, according to the health ministry. The fight-

ing broke out in the south of the city after several months of relative calm in Tripoli, with even heavy weapons being used in residential areas.

In a statement on Friday, the GNA issued a scathing statement in the wake of the clashes. "This is their gift to the people for the month of Ramadan", the statement said of the month generally marked by sacrifice and piety. With such lofty ideals in mind, residents of Tripoli have been helping others to cope with a country in crisis.

For the past two months, throughout the city and on social networks, associations have mobilized to collect food supplies for needy families. "There's no point in praying and fasting when a neighbor goes hungry," said Samer Fayyadh, who runs a fast-food restaurant in Tripoli. In an attempt to counter the effects of the economic crisis, the central bank decided to spend more than \$550 million (500 million euros) on food imports for Ramadan. This is despite the constant risk of subsidized products being diverted by unscrupulous traders. — AFP



TAORMINA: Demonstrators stand by the beach during an anti-G7 rally near the venue of the G7 summit in the Sicilian town of Taormina yesterday. — AP

HUNDREDS OF DEMONSTRATORS STAGE PROTEST AMID MASSIVE G7 SECURITY

GIARDINI NAXOS, Italy: Hundreds of people marched yesterday amid massive security measures put in place for the Group of Seven summit nearby, protesting against world leaders who they said ignored the interests of regular people. Some 3,500 were expected to turn up, but actual turnout appeared to be about half of that.

Salvatore Giordano, a high school professor from the island of Sicily, blamed the low turnout of in part on heavy security. He was stopped by police multiple times and blocked for a half-hour at the highway exit before finally being let through. Police were also stopping buses and searching them, he said.

"They are criminalising our dissent," Giordano said. "We're pacifists. We're not here to break windows, but to protest against Sicily being turned into a giant aircraft carrier for the world's military powers." US President Donald Trump and the heads of Italy, France, Britain, Germany, Canada and Japan had been meeting in Taormina, which sits on a rocky hilltop just north of Giardini Naxos.

Busloads of police lined the route of the march in what is normally a sleepy town of beach-going tourists, while a police helicopter circled above.

Giordano came to air his opposition to the Mobile User Objective System (MUOS), part of an ultra-fast satellite communications network for the American military that he says poses a health risk to people living near the infrastructure.

Another group of protesters carried red flags bearing the communist hammer and sickle symbol. Alessandro D'Alessandro, the coordinator of Sicily's communist party, said there had been a media campaign of fear against the protesters, which kept numbers low.

"It was hard to get here," D'Alessandro said. "But we came to tell the world's most powerful people that we oppose their military and capitalistic worldview. We're here to defend the interests of the weakest." Fears of violent protests like the ones seen during a G7 summit in the northern Italian city of Genoa in 2001 prompted the mayor of Giardini Naxos to order all local businesses to close for the day. Sixteen years ago throngs of protesters in Genoa clashed with authorities in street battles spread out over two days, and police shot dead an anti-globalisation protester during some of Italy's worst-ever riots. In Giardini, shopkeepers boarded up windows and complained about lost business as the tourist season gets underway. — Reuters

TRUMP'S BUDGET RENEWS DEBATE ON ARCTIC REFUGE OIL DRILLING

ANCHORAGE, Alaska: President Donald Trump's plan to help balance the federal budget features a new attempt to open the coastal plain of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to petroleum drilling.

The effort is the latest chapter in a long-running political fight between two camps: environmentalists, who revere the plain as a maternity ward for polar bears, caribou and migratory birds; and politicians, including those in Alaska's congressional delegation, who have campaigned for four decades on the promise of jobs and prosperity through "opening ANWR." The refuge covers 2,300 square miles (5,957 square kilometers), an area the size of West Virginia and Connecticut combined in Alaska's northeast corner. Some things to know about the debate:

Alaska Natives have used it as subsistence hunting grounds for thousands of years. President Dwight Eisenhower in 1960 signed legislation creating the refuge. Congress in 1980 expanded it and declared much of it wilderness, but threw in a wild card: Recognizing the oil production potential, Congress declared that the coastal plain, tundra stretching from the Beaufort Sea to the foothills of the Brooks Range, should be studied. Another act of Congress and presidential approval can open it to drilling.

How much oil?

The US Geological Survey estimates the coastal plain holds 10.4 billion barrels of oil - compared with 25 billion at the older Prudhoe Bay oil field to the west. Republican US Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska calls the refuge's coast plain North America's greatest prospect for conventional oil production. The plain is 60 miles (97 kilometers) east of the trans-Alaska pipeline, which operates at one-quarter capacity as North Slope oil fields such as Prudhoe Bay have declined.

Alaska is draining billion-dollar savings accounts to pay for schools and roads and is anxious to find more revenue. Gov. Bill Walker says it's frustrating to be denied access to billions of barrels of oil in an area specifically set aside to be evaluated for resource development within miles of a pipeline that's three-

quarters empty. North Slope crude was selling for nearly \$54 a barrel Tuesday. Alaska could benefit from jobs, additional taxes and federal revenue sharing if the refuge opens.

What stands in the way of drilling?

The refuge is about as wild a place as there is. There are no roads, no campgrounds, not even established trails. And the environmental community and some Alaska Native groups want to keep it that way. Besides polar bears, the coastal plain is home to muskoxen, the nests of 200 species of migratory birds, and for part of the year, the vast Porcupine Caribou Herd - 197,000 animals that roam between the refuge and Canada's Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Environmentalists say America should pivot toward renewable energy, not add to climate warming by burning oil extracted from wilderness and generating greenhouse gases. "The fact it's happening to what's supposed to be a refuge for wildlife only adds insult to injury," said Kristen Monsell, an attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity.

Between the House and Senate, Congress has voted 49 times on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, according to the Alaska Wilderness League. Both chambers approved a bill to open the refuge in 1995, but President Bill Clinton vetoed it. Murkowski is optimistic that a Trump administration and a Republican-controlled Senate and House present a new opportunity to open the area for development.

Budget?

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke acknowledged Tuesday that the ANWR item in the president's proposed budget is a placeholder. Lease sales are not likely before 2022, Zinke said, and winning bids could generate \$3.5 billion over 10 years. If companies find oil, production would generate royalty payments and federal and state taxes.

Zinke said America needs refuge oil in the trans-Alaska pipeline to reach Trump's goal of "energy dominance" and to help balance the federal budget. — AP

IN ARAMCO IPO PITCH, CANADA PLAYS UP OIL & GAS EXPERTISE

TORONTO BOURSE OFFERS TO HELP KINGDOM REDUCE OIL RELIANCE

TORONTO: The Toronto Stock Exchange's efforts to win a slice of the massive Saudi Aramco public listing plays up the country's deep experience in natural resources as part of a broader offer to help the kingdom with its shift away from oil dependence.

In pitch documents obtained by Reuters, the TSX talks up "a customized regulatory environment for resource issuers"; its leading position in oil and gas equity capital raising, and strong trading interest from outside the country.

One source directly involved in the Canadian pitch told Reuters they are focused on convincing the Saudis that Canada excels in 10 of the 12 areas they have targeted for development under that plan, including in mining and infrastructure.

But its best chance of winning a part of the biggest IPO ever, expected to raise about \$100 billion as early as next year, may lie in its geography and geopolitics, securities lawyers say.

While the exchange, owned by the TMX Group Ltd, is widely considered an underdog in a race that has also excited larger exchanges in London, New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Singapore its case could be bolstered by a recent change in US

law that allows those affected by the September 11, 2001 attacks to sue the Saudi government, they said.

"We are inoffensive from a political perspective," said Sarah Gingrich, a Calgary-based partner at Fasken Martineau, who has previously worked in Dubai with Saudi clients for international law firm Freshfields.

That law, the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, came into effect in September, after the US Congress overrode a veto by former President Barack Obama.

In a March 17 interview with the Wall Street Journal, the Saudi energy minister, Khalid Al-Falih, said the so-called "terror law" is one consideration in the country's decision on whether to list in the United States.

It was not clear if the issue was discussed during US President Donald Trump's recent visit. A spokeswoman for the NYSE, which sources have said planned to visit Saudi soon after Trump's visit, declined to comment on their efforts to win Aramco's business.

Nasdaq, which is a technology partner to Saudi Arabia's exchange, is also pitching for the listing, while the London Stock Exchange is working on a completely new type of listing structure to woo Aramco, Reuters has reported.

SMALL MARKET, BIG ENERGY FOCUS

Canada-listed oil and gas companies raised 22 percent of global energy financing over the past five years, the TMX pitch documents show, second behind the NYSE's 44 percent.

The documents put Canada in third place behind Chinese and Hong Kong exchanges, and the United States for total capital raised in 2016, noting that TSX-listed companies raised 28 percent more than fourth-placed LSE.

Still, while Canada boasts significant expertise in oil and gas financing and strong interest from both institutional and retail investors, it is dwarfed by the much larger US market.

The oil and gas companies listed on its main TSX exchange and the junior TSXV have a total market capitalization of C\$325 billion (\$239 billion), TMX says.

By comparison, the New York Stock Exchange says its oil and gas companies - which include super majors ExxonMobil Corp., Chevron and secondary listings for Royal Dutch Shell and Total - are worth \$3.3 trillion.

But Canada would only find a way in to the action "if their (Aramco's) bankers think they will get sufficient enough market interest here that it will help promote the stock price and give them some liquidity and trading," said Darrell Peterson, a partner with Bennett Jones in Calgary.

AL-SAYER ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE SECOND RAFFLE

TOYOTA GENUINE PARTS EXCITING SPECIAL PROMOTION

KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Co (MNSS) Group Spare Parts Division, one of the Al-Sayer Group Holding Companies, held 2nd raffle on Wednesday 21 May 2017 at their Canada Dry outlet, to select the winners of the second draw of Toyota Genuine Parts special promotion in the presence of Abdulaziz Ashkanani from Ministry of Consumer Protection Affairs and Xavier Yesudas Manager Parts and Accessories Sales along with the members from Group Parts and Marketing.

18 June 2017. 4 lucky winners will be selected in each monthly draw who will be presented with cash prizes in total of KD 2500. In addition to cash prizes all customers will also have a chance to win 2017 Toyota Yaris through the grand prize draw.

All the winners can collect their prizes from Al-Sayer Group Head Quarters at Kuwait Free Trade Zone by presenting the official letter from Ministry. Last date to enter the draw will be the 18th of June and the final draw of this promotion will be held on 20 June 2017.

Names of the winners of the second raffle and the prizes won are as follows:

First prize Salem Ashban Al-Ali — KD 1000,

Second Prize Rami Najib —KD 750,

Third Prize Mohammed Faraj Faleh— KD 500,

Fourth Prize Kamlashanker Patidar KD 250.

Be a winner with Toyota Genuine Spare Parts Customers will be entitled to enter one draw every month for three months upon every KD 5 spent on Toyota Genuine Parts to win exciting prizes.



LACKLUSTER TRADING AT BOURSA KUWAIT

BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: Bursa Kuwait ended last week in the red zone. The Price Index closed at 6,687.53 points, down by 0.57 percent from the week before closing.

The Bursa ended the week's trading with a decrease to the three indices, affected by the selling trend on many stocks headed by the small-cap ones that witnessed fluctuated performance during the week, where the first few sessions witnessed active purchasing activity caused such stocks to increase rapidly and pushed the Price Index to maximize its gains.

On the other hand, Bursa Kuwait lost during the last week about KD 38 million in liquidity, as the market capitalization for the listed companies in the primary market reached KD 26.70 billion, down by 0.14 percent from its value in an earlier week, where it reached then KD 26.74 billion.

As per the daily trading activity, the Bursa Kuwait witnessed in the first session of the last week an increase to the three indices supported by the speculative and the active purchasing operations that included a wide range of listed stocks headed by the small-cap stocks, despite the large decrease in the trading rate reaching very low levels of both the value and volume.

Also, the mid-week session witnessed a continued fluctuation in the three indices closings, with changing positions, whereas the small-cap stocks were subject this time to the profit collection operations executed on a number of small-cap stocks of previous gains, which caused the Price Index to decline at the end of the session.

The last two sessions of the week witnessed a strong selling trend that included many stocks headed by the leading ones, which caused the three indices to lose all its gains realized since the beginning of the week.

Without official confirmation or data, it's hard to conclusively say what is happening. Prices also tend to fluctuate from station to station. Several possible scenarios could be in play. It was rumored last month that China had or was about to limit exports.

PYONGYANG GAS PRICE SURGE: BAD NEWS FOR KIM JONG UN?

TOKYO: While world attention has focused on Kim Jong Un's recent missile tests, a monthlong surge in gasoline prices in Pyongyang is showing no signs of letting up - a puzzling problem that if allowed to drag on could be very bad news for the North Korean economy.

Prices have shot up to about \$2.30 per kilogram, or about \$6.44 a gallon, since the surge began in mid-April, when prices were in the \$1.25-30 range.

The cause and extent of the surge remains a mystery. Officially, there has been no comment. There's no obvious sign of less traffic on the streets, at least in Pyongyang, which is more affluent and developed than other North Korean cities.

The North's by now pervasive market economy, which is tolerated by the ruling regime in exchange for its own cut of the profits, has made fuel and the ability to transport goods and people so essential that demand for gasoline is not so sensitive to price.

Without official confirmation or data, it's hard to conclusively say what is happening. Prices also tend to fluctuate from station to station. Several possible scenarios could be in play. It was rumored last month that China had or was about to limit exports.

The incentive to hoard remains because of rumors Beijing will implement sanctions if Pyongyang conducts a nuclear test.



PYONGYANG: In this April 1, 2016 file photo, cars line up at the pumps at a gas station in Pyongyang.—AP

It's unclear if prices are also rising for diesel and kerosene, used to heat and keep the lights on in city apartments and machinery working in the fields.

The resulting scarcity of dollars would hurt the value of North Korea's own currency, leading to inflation. In any case, Brown said, the volatility of gasoline prices underscores the North's dependence on markets that have expanded dramatically since Kim Jong Un took power more than five years ago.

Beijing doesn't require the North to pay and hasn't included those shipments in official trade figures since 2014.

If Pyongyang had to start paying for that 50,000-ton freebie, the profit from sales of what it refines domestically would drop and it would have less money to spend on other things.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

Table of Asian Countries exchange rates including Japanese Yen, Indian Rupees, Pakistani Rupees, Sri Lankan Rupees, Nepali Rupees, Singapore Dollar, Hongkong Dollar, Bangladesh Taka, Philippine Peso, Thai Baht.

Table of GCC Countries exchange rates including Saudi Riyal, Qatari Riyal, Omani Riyal, Bahraini Dinar, UAE Dirham.

Table of Arab Countries exchange rates including Egyptian Pound - Cash, Egyptian Pound - Transfer, Yemen Riyal/for 1000, Tunisian Dinar, Jordanian Dinar, Lebanese Lira/for 1000, Syrian Lira, Morocco Dirham.

Table of European & American Countries exchange rates including US Dollar Transfer, Euro, Sterling Pound, Canadian dollar, Turkish Lira.

Table of Gold prices in Swiss Franc, Australian Dollar, US Dollar, and Grams.

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Table of Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd rates for transfer and selling for various currencies like US Dollar, Canadian Dolla, Sterling Pound, Euro, Swiss Franc, etc.

Table of Chinese Yuan Renminbi, Thai Bhat, Turkish Lira exchange rates.

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

Table of Bahrain Exchange Company WLL rates for various currencies including British Pound, Czech Korune, Danish Krone, Euro, Norwegian Krone, Romanian Leu, Slovakia, Swedish Krona, Swiss Franc, Turkish Lira, Australian Dollar, New Zealand Dollar, Canadian Dollar, Georgia Lari, US Dollars, US Dollars Mint, Bangladesh Taka, Chinese Yuan, Hong Kong Dollar.

Table of Indian Rupee, Indonesian Rupiah, Japanese Yen, Kenyan Shilling, Korean Won, Malaysian Ringgit, Nepalese Rupee, Pakistan Rupee, Philippine Peso, Sierra Leone, Singapore Dollar, South African Rand, Sri Lankan Rupee, Taiwan, Thai Baht exchange rates.

Table of Bahraini Dinar, Egyptian Pound, Iranian Riyal, Iraqi Dinar, Jordanian Dinar, Kuwaiti Dinar, Lebanese Pound, Moroccan Dirhams, Nigerian Naira, Omani Riyal, Qatar Riyal, Saudi Riyal, Syrian Pound, Tunisian Dinar, Turkish Lira, UAE Dirhams, Yemeni Riyal exchange rates.



KFH LAUNCHES NOVEL APPROACH OF BANKING SERVICES; XTM KFH-GROUP RECEIVES PATENT FOR THIS INVENTION APPLIED AT KFH-TURKEY IN 2013

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched a novel approach of banking services; XTM, as part of the bank's innovation efforts and keenness to adopt the latest developments in technology as per highest standards of service quality.

Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer at KFH, Waleed Mandani said in a press statement on the occasion of launching this interactive service at Avenues mall in presence of Group CEO Mazin Al-Nahedh and the executive management, that this unique service allows customers to conduct their transactions and perform many banking services in minutes in a very modern way using advanced tools through visual and audio communication options; conference call with KFH staff who are always available and ready to answer all customers' questions.

Mandani added that this service is available 24/7. It allows customers to open bank saving account, which is a unique service offered from KFH to its customers. In addition, XTM offers several services including opening deposits, balance enquiry, cheque deposits, cash deposit, and account statement, instant transfer between

accounts, installment payment, and withdrawal up to KD 5000, not to mention other services offered by KFH Shamel ATM machines. In the future, KFH will offer the gold account and issuing banking cards service in addition to many different services.

Mandani boasted that this quintessential service had received a patent when applied at KFH-Turkey in 2013. After the great success in turkey, KFH brought this splendid experience to Kuwait after taking all regulatory approvals. KFH offers customers two XTM Mini-Branches with outstanding features at Avenues mall and at Fyaha branch.

Moreover, he said that this service is implemented in KFH thanks to the highly qualified staff who put their efforts to come up with this masterpiece. Mandani said that KFH strategy focuses on offering the banking services round the clock to its customers. KFH will continuously improve its services and keep abreast with latest banking technology in order to meet the aspiration of its customers while maintaining its pioneering position as a world leading Islamic financial institution.



MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS CSR INITIATIVES THIS RAMADAN

KUWAIT: The holy month of Ramadan is at our doorsteps and millions of people around the world are getting ready to welcome this holy month with the acts of service, charity and prayers. Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one among the BIG 5 global jewellery retailers strengthens its CSR activities in the GCC and Far East region this Ramadan, embracing the spirit of giving. Such month long activities are planned in association with like-minded organizations from the respective countries to benefit the needy. Over 60,000 special iftar meals / kits will be distributed during this period.

In Kuwait, the group will provide iftar meals to over 3,000 laborers in different parts of various governorates in Kuwait like Fahaheel, Mahboula, Fintas, Abu Halifa, Mina Abdullah, Mina Al-Soor, Jahra, Jaleeb, Al Shuwaikh. In Kuwait, the group associates with various like-minded organizations such as Kuwait Kerala Muslim Association, Kuwait KMCC, Kuwait Islamic Group etc. to conduct various CSR initiatives during the holy month of Ramadan.

In UAE, over 42,500 Iftar meals / kits will be provided to the residents in association with various like-minded organizations like Sharjah Charity International, Emirates Red Crescent, Al Rahma Charitable Trust, Dubai KMCC, various labour camps & masjids throughout this holy month of Ramadan. 18,000 Iftar meals will be provided at Sajaa Industrial area, Sharjah throughout the holy month of Ramadan in an air conditioned tent which is set up with the support of Sharjah Charity International. 2000 Iftar meals will be provided in association with Emirates Red Crescent. Malabar Gold & Diamonds associates with Al Rahma Charitable Trust to provide 500 meals at the respective tents. Company also associates with Dubai KMCC to provide 2,000 meals for the needy. Malabar Gold & Diamonds also provides 18,500 Iftar meals across the

various labor camps & nearby masjids where the group operates.

In Oman, the group provides over 4,500 Iftar meals at Ruwi Street, Muscat throughout the holy month of Ramadan. Company also provides special Ramadan Kit to the under privileged people which includes the grocery which will be enough for a person to break the fast for 30 days during Ramadan. 1,500 such kits will be distributed in Ruwi, 500 each in Sohar and Salalah.

In Qatar, the group will be providing Iftar meals to over 1,500 laborers during the time of Ramadan through their tents located in Al Khor & Industrial Areas. In Bahrain, the group is planning to provide over 4,500 Iftar meals to the workers at different labor camps located all over Bahrain like Askar, Akker, Jau, Arad, Hidd etc. Like in previous years, they will be associating with Discovery Islam, Al Hedaya Centre and Friendship Society for Blinds, UCO Parents Care to carry out such activities during Ramadan.

In Singapore, 500 Iftar meals will be distributed in an open ground near Angulia Mosque, Farrer Park. Company will also distribute around 25,000 water cups in the various masjids during the holy month.

In Malaysia, the group provides 1,000 special Ramadan Kit to the under privileged people which includes the grocery which will be enough for a person to break the fast for 15 days during Ramadan. The Company also provides 650 Iftar meals which will be distributed in masjids & orphanages.

Since its inception in 1993, Malabar Group has been actively involved in CSR activities with the aim of creating a difference to the community in and around their area of operations. The importance of CSR activities for Malabar Group has grown over the decades and the group sets aside a fixed percentage of its net profit for the benefit of the needy in the respective markets it operates in. They undertake social welfare activities all year long, focusing on five priority areas such medical, educational sector, environment as well as housing and women empowerment.

MORE RECORDS, BARELY AS STOCKS RISE FOR 7TH DAY

WALL STREET WEEKLY ROUNDUP

NEW YORK: US stocks made the tiniest of gains Friday as media companies and sellers of beauty products and food ticked higher. Major indexes added to their winning streak and record highs.

Stocks spent the day flipping back and forth between small gains and losses. Beauty products maker Ulta rose after a strong first-quarter report and competitor and Coty climbed as well. Media companies including Comcast and Disney also advanced while video game and drug companies slipped. The market has been steady in recent months, and with investors looking forward to the Memorial Day holiday Monday, trading was light.

It was the seventh gain in a row for the Standard & Poor's 500 index and Nasdaq composite following their biggest loss this year. "Investors have been conditioned over multiple years to buy the dip any time there's a market pullback," said Jason Draho, the head of American tactical asset allocation for UBS Wealth Management. He said that's one reason stocks have been so steady lately.

The S&P 500 index added 0.75 points to 2,415.82. The Dow Jones industrial average dipped 2.67 points to 21,080.28. The Nasdaq composite rose 4.94 points, or 0.1 percent, to 6,210.19. The Russell 2000 index of small-company stocks fell 1.14 points, or 0.1 percent, to 1,382.24.

Some of the market's biggest moves were based on company earnings, and many of those came from consumer-focused companies. Ulta Beauty gained \$9.36, or 3.1 percent, to \$302.40. Costco Wholesale rose \$3.13, or 1.8 percent, to \$177.86 after the warehouse club had a strong quarter as sales and member payments both increased.

Disappointing

Uggs maker Deckers Outdoor turned in earnings that were stronger than expected, and its stock gained \$10.64, or 18.8 percent, to \$67.21. GameStop's first-quarter results were stronger than analysts expected, but sales of new software and wireless devices were disappointing. The stock gave up \$1.40, or 5.9 percent, to \$22.22. Video game publishers also fell. Activision Blizzard lost 94 cents, or 1.6 percent, to \$58.28 and Electronic Arts slid \$1.70, or 1.5 percent, to \$112.13. Take-Two Interactive Software shed \$1.46, or 1.9 percent, to \$77.07.

The VIX, an index that is called Wall Street's "fear gauge" because it measures how much volatility investors expect, fell for the seventh day in a row. After a huge spike last Wednesday, the 27-year-old index is trading near all-time

lows. It sank to 9.81 Friday. The only time it was lower was late December 1993.

The Commerce Department said the US economy grew 1.2 percent in the first quarter, which was still weak but better than it originally estimated. Draho, of UBS Wealth Management, said that when the economy is steady, the market usually is, too.

The US economy and stock market have both been moving up for eight years. Draho said that as a bull market gets older, stocks don't move in the same direction as often. When one stock or one sector rises and another falls, that makes the overall market flatter and less volatile.

Crude oil prices bounced back from a sharp drop the day before. Benchmark US crude rose 90 cents, or 1.8 percent, to \$49.80 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, the international standard, added 69 cents, or 1.3 percent, to \$52.15 a barrel in London. On Thursday a group of 24 nations including the OPEC countries agreed to a nine-month extension of a cut in oil production. But energy companies, which have lagged

the market dramatically this year, hardly budged. The S&P 500's energy company index is down 12 percent in 2017 while the broader S&P 500 is up almost 8 percent.

In other energy trading, wholesale gasoline added 3 cents to \$1.64 a gallon. Heating oil gained 1 cent to \$1.56 a gallon. Natural gas rose 5 cents to \$3.24 per 1,000 cubic feet.

The dollar sank to 111.19 yen from 111.80 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1176 from \$1.1205.

As the dollar weakened, gold rose \$11.70 to \$1,268.10 an ounce and silver gained 13 cents to \$17.32 an ounce. Copper fell 3 cents to \$2.57 a pound. Bond prices were little changed. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note held steady at 2.25 percent.

Germany's DAX lost 0.2 percent and the FTSE 100 in Britain rose 0.4 percent. The French CAC 40 fell by a fraction of a percentage point. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index shed 0.6 percent but the South Korean Kospi climbed 0.5 percent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was nearly unchanged. —AP



NEW YORK: Trader William McInerney, right, works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Friday. — AP



NOVI: In this May 17, 2017 photo, used Infiniti Q50 luxury sedans await buyers at a dealership in the Detroit suburb of Novi, Michigan. Leases are ending on a large number of Q50s and other cars, flooding the market with quality used cars. —AP

OFF-LEASE USED CARS ARE FLOODING MARKET, PUSHING PRICES DOWN

FIRMS CUT BACK TO CONTROL USED CAR SUPPLY

DETROIT: In 2014, Infiniti leased more than 28,000 Q50 luxury sedans for as little as \$329 per month in a growing US market. The leases accounted for more than three-quarters of Q50 sales. Now they're coming back to haunt the automaker. Like many companies that juiced sales with sweet leases during the past few years, Nissan's luxury brand now faces a hefty supply of nice, low-mileage used cars at a time when most people want SUVs. For the US auto industry, about 3.5 million vehicles will come off

fied used passenger car payments relative to new passenger cars."

Three years ago, automakers leased about 3.3 million vehicles, just over 23 percent of US sales to individual buyers. The business was good. Cars were holding their values and automakers expected to sell them at a tidy profit when leases ended in two or three years. Cars were still popular, making up half of the nation's sales.

Leasing continued to grow, hitting a record of over 30 percent of sales earlier this year.

Eric Lyman, lead analyst for Automotive Lease Guide, advises consumers now is a good time to lease a car, before leasing cuts become more widespread. Although he expects the number of vehicles leased this year to stay flat, payments are likely to rise as automakers offer less generous terms.

Lease costs

But it will be difficult for automakers to stick to a strategy of raising lease costs unless they all go along. For example, if Honda leases a midsize Accord for \$229 per month, Toyota will have to match the price on the Camry, the Accord's prime competitor, Lyman says. Jake Winfield, a math teacher in Phoenix, considers himself a beneficiary of the car oversupply. Late last year he bought a 2015 Accord with under 15,000 miles that he believes started life as a lease. He paid just under \$20,000 for the certified pre-owned car with aluminum wheels and a moon roof that stickered around \$25,000 when new. It was inspected and comes with a warranty. "I was able to get a higher-end car by buying used than by buying new, with my budget," Winfield says.

Infiniti likely will take a big depreciation hit on 3-year-old Q50s coming back as used this year. An all-wheel-drive premium model with about 36,000 miles on it was listed on Autotrader.com this week for under \$24,000. It originally stickered around \$40,000. Nissan says it has plans to manage the influx of Q50s.

Lyman predicts used car prices as a percentage of original sticker price will fall for at least the next three years. The number of cars coming off leases each year will grow through at least 2020, when ALG expects more than 4.1 million lease cars to be returned.

The off-lease cars are attracting even customers with the high credit scores, according to Experian. A decade ago, roughly 49 percent of prime credit buyers bought used. That's now up to almost 55 percent. Lower used-car prices also can reduce new-car prices because buyers won't get as much money when they trade cars in, according to Lyman.

In two or three years, the price of popular used SUVs could fall too, because they're now being leased in large numbers, Lyman says. It may take four years or so, but prices eventually will stabilize as automakers cut new-car production and reduce leasing.

Still, some dealers who sell used cars are skeptical of the falling price forecasts. Paul Ritchie, who runs a Honda dealership in Hagerstown, Maryland, says he and other dealers he recently met with haven't seen a big decline. "We just don't think it's going to drop that much," he says. "Most of the dealers in our group are looking to buy used cars." —AP



TOKYO: A fuel cell hybrid vehicle is refueled from a mobile hydrogen station at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in Tokyo. Japan is backing a push for pollution-free vehicles that run on hydrogen and planning to build more hydrogen fueling stations so that fuel-cell vehicles on roads will grow to 40,000 by 2020, from the current handful. —AP

lease this year, after 3 million returned last year, according to Automotive Lease Guide. These are huge numbers when you consider that leasing all but came to a halt during the Great Recession about a decade ago.

The numbers signal three shifts in the market:

- Lease deals are starting to wane as many companies cut back to control the used car supply.
- You can get a great late-model used car for a bargain price.
- Competition from used cars likely will push down the price of new ones.

Since the lightly used cars are entering a market that favors trucks and SUVs, the prices will fall, says Jim Lentz, Toyota's CEO in North America. "It's more difficult to get rid of them," he says. "You're going to have very attractive certi-

Meanwhile, buyer tastes shifted to SUVs and demand for cars faded. Car sales are now about 38 percent of the market. As a result, used-vehicle prices tumbled 7 percent during March compared with a year ago, according to an NADA Guides index. The organization expects them to fall 6 percent for the full year.

Data collected by Kelley Blue Book shows leasing dropped to under 30 percent of sales in April after three years of increases.

Toyota started to reduce leasing in 2015. General Motors cut sales to rental car companies last year to control the used car supply, Chief Financial Officer Chuck Stevens says. Now GM is reallocating incentive spending away from leases toward conventional financing, as new-car sales are expected to back off slightly from last year's record 17.5 million.

JAPAN INFLATION TICKS UP IN APRIL AS OIL PRICES REBOUND

TOKYO: Japan's core consumer price index climbed to a two-year high in April of 0.3 percent, as costs for energy rose. Economists said the increase reported Friday was not likely to persist and that prices for imported consumer goods actually fell. Inflation has been positive in recent months but well below the government's 2 percent target.

Core inflation excluding volatile food prices rose 0.3 percent from a year earlier in April, just above the rate in March. Inflation excluding both fresh foods and energy was up 0.1 percent, while energy costs rose by 4.5 percent.

The government said the cost of gasoline surged 15 percent and the cost of kerosene jumped 28 percent, as US benchmark crude oil rose from about \$40 a barrel a year ago to about \$49 today. Crude oil prices fell overnight by 5 percent after oil producing nations opted to extend a six-month production increase freeze by another nine months, a shorter extension than had been expected.

"Headline inflation," which includes both fresh food and energy costs, rose 0.4 percent from a year earlier and 0.1 percent from March, the report said. Energy inflation will likely peak in the July-September quarter and then weaken, Marcel Thieliand of Capital Economics said in a commentary. —AP



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani police officers stand guard on a truck carrying copies of budget 2017-18 which arrived at the Parliament in Islamabad on Friday. Pakistan's Finance Minister introduced a \$50 billion development-heavy budget that also promises a 7 per cent increase in military spending. —AP

TRUMP CRITICIZES GERMAN TRADE SURPLUS AGAIN

TAORMINA, Sicily: President Donald Trump has criticized Germany's trade surplus with the United States, drawing attention to a contentious issue at a summit of world leaders where trade is already a sticking point.

As the leaders of seven wealthy democracies gathered for difficult talks on trade and climate change, Germany's Der Spiegel reported that Trump had told EU leaders the day before that the Germans were "bad, very bad" when it came to trade.

White House economic adviser Gary Cohn said the president's comments focused on the surplus and not the country. "He said they're very bad on trade, but he doesn't have a problem with Germany."

Cohn noted that "his dad is from Germany" and that he had said: "I don't have a problem with Germany. I have a problem with German trade." The president of the European Union's executive commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, said Trump was "not aggressive" in his comments about the surplus and called the report "exaggerated."

It's not the first time Trump has taken aim at Germany's trade success. In January, he said that German car manufacturers like BMW could face US tariffs of up to 35 percent if they set up plants in Mexico instead of in the US and try to export the cars to the US.

Balanced

Trump has said he wants trade to be balanced, fair and free so it benefits US workers and companies. He has focused on relationships in which the US buys more than it sells in partners' markets— as is the case with Germany and China.

Trump also has pushed back against earlier G7 agreements to "fight all forms of protectionism." G-7 finance ministers meeting in Bari, Italy, earlier this month agreed only to say they are "working to strengthen the contribution of trade to our economies."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said she spoke to Trump about the matter. Merkel said Friday at the summit that it's well known that Germany sells more to the US than it buys from America, "which on the one hand has to do with the quality of our goods," but noted that there is also a lot of German direct investment in the US.

"In my opinion, one has to see these things together," Merkel said. She also noted that Germany should not be singled out. German news agency dpa reported that she said: "We have a currency union. We are practically a common market. To pick out one country is, I think, not so appropriate."

Trump is not the only leader to criticize Germany's trade surplus. Then-Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy said last year that it wasn't good for the eurozone economy. Germany's trade surplus with the United States is part of its large overall surplus with the rest of the world. Last year, Germany ran a current account surplus - the broadest measure of trade and investment flows - of 8.7 percent of annual economic output.

The country benefits from producing competitive goods such as luxury autos and industrial machinery that are in demand in the rest of the world. A weaker euro has helped the export performance.

Germany, however, can't do much about the euro: its exchange rate has been driven down by troubles like the debt woes in Greece, and the policies of the European Central Bank. Further complicating the picture, some large German companies also invest, hire and produce in the United States. BMW, for instance, makes sport-utility vehicles in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and last year exported 70 percent of them - or 288,000 vehicles - to the rest of the world.

Daimler AG makes Mercedes-Benz cars in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, while Volkswagen has a plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee. —AP



TAORMINA: (From left), Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, President Donald Trump, Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, French President Emmanuel Macron, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, British Prime Minister Theresa May, European Council President Donald Tusk and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker sit around a table during the G7 Summit in Taormina, Sicily on Friday. —AP

WHITE HOUSE ADVISER DIFFERS WITH COAL-LOVING PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON: The president's chief economic adviser is casting doubt on the future of US coal, saying it "doesn't really make that much sense anymore as a feedstock," directly contradicting President Donald Trump's repeated promises to revive the struggling coal industry.

Briefing reporters Thursday night on Air Force One, Gary Cohn singled out natural gas as "such a cleaner fuel." By exporting more natural gas and investing in wind and solar energy, the US "can be a manufacturing powerhouse and still be environmentally friendly," Cohn said. Cohn's comments were at odds with his boss, who campaigned as coal's champion and decried what he and other Republicans called a "war on coal" by former President Barack Obama.

As president, Trump has unraveled a number of Obama-era energy restrictions, including a landmark plan to restrict climate-changing emissions from coal-fired power plants. Trump also has reversed an Obama plan to prevent coal mining debris from being dumped into nearby streams and lifted a moratorium on coal-mining leases on federal lands.

Sen. Joe Manchin, D-WVa., a long-time coal advocate, said he was taken aback by Cohn's remarks, which sounded more in line with the Obama administration than Trump.

"I completely disagree with his statement," Manchin said, adding that he plans to meet with Cohn "to explain the role that coal has and will continue to play in making this country great."

Melinda Pierce, legislative director for the Sierra Club, the nation's largest environmental group, said Cohn's comments were accurate. "Coal is increasingly not competitive as the market, the international community and public opinion reject this dirty fossil fuel that makes our families sick, pollutes our air and water and threatens our climate," Pierce said.

"The Trump administration's policies are completely at odds with these facts and need to catch up to reality instead of putting polluter profits ahead of the health of our communities," she said. That's unlikely to happen.

Throughout the presidential campaign, Trump railed against the Obama administration policies as he campaigned in economically depressed swaths of states like West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Trump won all three states and swept eight of the top nine coal-producing states.

The New York billionaire has frequently celebrated his popularity in coal country. At a ceremony in March, Trump was flanked on stage by more than a dozen coal miners as he signed an executive order that eliminated a host of Obama-era restrictions on fossil fuels, breaking with leaders across the globe who have embraced cleaner energy sources.

Wealthy America

"That is what this is all about: bringing back our jobs, bringing back our dreams and making America wealthy again," Trump said. The miners "told me about the efforts to shut down their mines, their communities and their very way of life."

I made them this promise: We will put our miners back to work," Trump said. "My administration is putting an end to the war on coal."

Trump's promise runs counter to market forces, including US utilities that have converted coal-fired power plants to cheaper, cleaner-burning natural gas. Democrats, environmental groups and scientists said Trump's executive order ignores the realities of climate change.

While Republicans have blamed Obama-era environmental regulations for the loss of coal jobs, federal data shows that US mines have been shedding jobs for decades amid increasing automation and steep competition from natural gas.

Another factor is the plummeting cost of solar panels and wind turbines, which now can produce emissions-free electricity cheaper than burning coal. According to an Energy Department analysis released in January, coal mining now accounts for fewer than 75,000 US jobs. By contrast, renewable energy - including wind, solar and bio-fuels - accounts for more than 650,000 US jobs. —AP



KUWAIT: Omar Sulaiman Al-Kazi, Executive Manager of Al-Mutawa and Al-Kazi Group, Wang Shungsheng, Deputy General Manager, LiuHaoyuan, Chief of International Business Division, Mark Chang, Director of Middle East, International Business Division and other officials of GAC Motor during the unveiling of GAC cars at Al-Tilal Complex. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

AL-MUTAWA & AL-KAZI AND GAC MOTOR AFFIRM STRONG, SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

GAC CARS BAG SEVERAL PRIZES, ACQUIRE CONFIDENCE OF CUSTOMERS ACROSS THE WORLD

KUWAIT: Omar Sulaiman Al-Kazi, Executive Manager of Al-Mutawa and Al-Kazi Group and its subsidiaries, affirmed the commitment of the group to provide the best of what was achieved in automobile technology in the world to its customers through the constructive partnership with Al-Mutawa and Al-Kazi and (GAC Motor), the giant of car industry in China and the owner of distinctive renovations.

Al-Kazi made these remarks during a press conference which was held in Al-Mutawa and Al-Kazi showroom in Al-Tilal Complex, on the occasion of the visit of Wang Shungsheng, Deputy General Manager, LiuHaoyuan, Chief of International Business Division, Mark Chang, Director of Middle East, International Business Division, and Leo Kong, Deputy Sales Director of Middle East, International Business Division, and Ye Suitao, Clerk of international Business Department, and Cheng Yongru, Economic & Commercial Consumer. On the occasion of the visit, two latest models were unveiled and added to the fleet of Al-Mutawa and Al-Kazi. The models unveiled were GA8 and GS8 and the unveiling took place in the presence of a large number of media persons and attendants including loyal customers of the company.

In the beginning, Al-Kazi welcomed Wang Shungsheng, and the accompanying delegation, and the attendants. He spoke about the importance of the mutual cooperation with (GAC) Company for manufacturing Chinese cars, whose products witness a peerless acceptance and an increased growth, not only in China but in Europe, Middle East and Kuwait because of the high confidence the company attained among the customers over the years. He also spoke about the quality of services provided to the customers at the time of sale including providing necessary advice for what is needed by the customers. The company also offers a competitive price



ing in addition to distinctive maintenance and repair facilities. Al-Kazi said: GAC Motor uses original components for its cars from two international providers with an international quality. The electronic stability programs and the engine driving systems are from German (Pouch) Co, frontal brakes are from German (Continental) Co, the frontal and rear bumpers are from American (Fisteon) Co, and the multi-speed transmission (6-speed) is from Japanese (Aisen) Co. GAC Motor cars provide five patterns of driving after testing accumulated endurance for more than 10 million km of high efficiency and low consumption of fuel, being the best worldwide.

It also has Japanese (Dinso) Co air conditioner, and safety belts, airbags, rear brakes, and hydraulic power systems that are from American (BMW) Co. This affirms the unique position being possessed by GAC among its peers in the car industry in the world. GAC is a fast-growing company in the world today as it

occupies the second position among the Chinese cars for the confidence and satisfaction of the customers and the eighth rank internationally with its high innovative technological specifications as they had been developed as per the European standards.

International success

Al-Kazi also referred to the international successes of GAC Motor through scooping several international awards as a result of its application of the highest international standards in car manufacturing and its serious efforts in ensuring safety and security standards on roads for drivers and passengers. Based upon the strategy of GAC Motor for car manufacturing, "providing excellent cars to its lovers" GAC puts its customers in a number one position. Al-Mutawa and Al-Kazi Trading Co, the exclusive agent of GAC Motor cars in Kuwait, is strictly adhering to security, comfort and good health of its customers.

Wang Shungsheng said the partnership between GAC Motor Car Manufacturing Co and Al-Mutawa & Al-Kazi Co in Kuwait is being considered a distinctive one and the GAC brand has achieved success in Kuwait and in the region through its various unique services it renders to its valued customers during and after sales. He thanked the Board of Directors of Al-Mutawa and Al-Kazi Trading Co for its cooperation and for the successes achieved over the last few years in growth in sales. "It is one of the companies with deep-rooted history in Kuwait. It enjoys huge experiences in the fields of marketing, selling of cars, motors and spare-parts and maintenances," he added.

GS8

Wang Shungsheng added that GAC car is distinguished by its technological and esthetical features, equipped with rear lamps, consisting of U-shape, dual LED lamp, as well as lanterns,



with the same shape, and dual, with a gradual design, creating a feeling of technology in the multi-dimension spaces, with its balanced details, explaining the spirit of freedom and liberty. The frontal lanterns enables the driver to have a view up to 600m, and a lighting width of 56 m, with a rectangular shape and form and adjustable sensitivity, for ensuring a safe driving in a great form, showing an elegance of the developed technology.

Wideness and comfort

Wang Shungsheng added that GS8 car is distinguished by very high specifications. The air-conditioner came independent with three places, a system of air cleaning with passive ion, providing comfort for passengers through their journey.

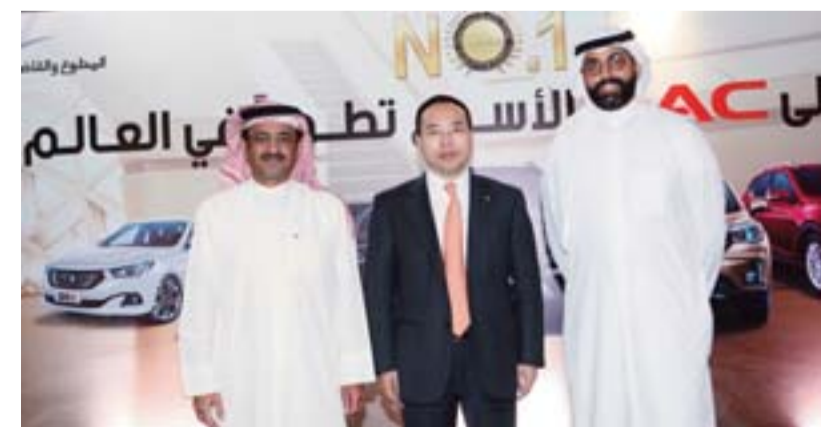
Wang Shungsheng clarified that GS8 vehicle is equipped with new technologies for smart identification with the second generation of BIB, introducing it without buttons. A

button for operation, by applying the technology of smart identification and smart welcoming lights. Identifying the driver automatically, and opening remote control for finding the car. It also has a 3D dual navigation and sound systems, indicating the status of traffic and crowdedness on roads and traffic jams. GS8 has a function of charging mobile phone wirelessly, by assistance of the technology of identifying strange objects and the function of electromagnetic charging for charging the phones without cables, for providing comfort in an ideal car.

Various driving patterns

GS8 car is consistent to work in a good form in all road conditions. It is equipped with 6 pioneering patterns of driving (sand, mud, smart, sportive, and economical position). The vehicle can immediately detect strange features and distribute the energy of driving fully among the frontal and rear wheels as per the case. GS8 also includes a solid chassis with a high performance, being accurately harmonious with the upper masses to enable them for driving easily, and solving the breakdowns of the car in a way that provides comfort during experience of driving and its splendor; it so have a safe, solid and high-power body with a percentage of 90 percent consistency with required standards in a great way in North America, being able to control absorbing shocks.

For more safety, there are 8 airbags with double pads for knee, being peerless of a kind, in the frontal rows to grant the passengers protection at all directions on occurrence of any risk, and provides a safe journey. The car is also equipped with high protection for children. It has a faAade of seats for children in the rear row, which provide easiness of installing seats for children with a professional design and firmness of 360 degrees, providing a safer space for children.





KAICO (AL-SHAYA & AL-SAGAR) HOSTS DEALERS MEETING

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automotive Imports Co WLL (Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar) KAICO, exclusive distributor of ExxonMobil Lubes in Kuwait since 1950, recently hosted its key dealers meeting with 50+ Mobil lubes dealers/ business partners of KAICO who graced the occasion and one of the Dealer won the prize of Mobil branded Peugeot Partner vehicle.

Kuwait Automotive Imports Co WLL (Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar) KAICO, exclusive distributor of ExxonMobil Lubes in Kuwait since 1950, recently hosted its key

dealers meeting with over 50 Mobil dealers and business partners of KAICO attending the event recently. Ashish Tandon, General Manager, Sadiq Ali, Divisional Manager and key Exxon Mobil delegates proudly rewarded the dealers with many prizes. They main prize of a Exxon Mobil branded PEUGEOT PARTNER was won by Bilal Mohammed from Golden Future Spare Parts followed by 3 prizes of iPhone 7 and 5 winners with Al-Shaya gift cards.

Sadiq Ali (Divisional Manager Tyre & Oil) wel-

comed the guests and thanked them for their continuous support during the years, the relationship with KAICO & ExxonMobil over 67 years which resulted in a continuous market growth for Mobil brand every year. He emphasized the win-win scenario in which KAICO and its business partners work hand in hand as one team to enhance the brand and sales also he presented Mobil overall business strategy for 2017 and the success of the dealer campaign which was recorded with 45 percent of

growth in Mobil 1 & Mobil Delvac products also encouraged the dealers to grow with Mobil by making more money as Mobil 1 being a premium product, also expect more rewards and similar gathering in future. Prior to this, Jayan welcomed the guests, explained the safety rules followed by a Grease presentation by Ahmed El-Asrar, Egypt & Middle East Distributors Field Engineer and Mobil Delvac 1 presentation by Gawad Nabil, AME FDS Market Chief Engineer of ExxonMobil.



KUWAIT: Aisha Al-Asfour receiving the award from Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah (second from right) and Dr Nasser bin Aqeel Al-Tayyar (left).

GIG GROUP AMONG 'TOP LISTED COMPANIES IN KUWAIT 2017'

FORBES MIDDLE EAST EVENT IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Gulf Insurance Group [gig], one of the leading insurance service provider in the Middle East and North Africa region, was recognized by Forbes Middle East as a 'Top 50 Listed Company in Kuwait 2017'. The award was announced during an event held at the JW Marriott in Kuwait.

The event recognizes the top 50 listed companies that, through dynamic and strong leadership, are making an impact on Kuwait's economy. Companies were ranked according to four

metrics: sales, net profit, assets and market value. The awards were presented by the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, and the President of Arab Publisher House and Publisher of Forbes Middle East, Dr Nasser bin Aqeel Al-Tayyar, Aisha Al-Asfour, Public Relation section head, received the award on behalf of the group.

Khaled Al-Sanousi, Group Senior Corporate

Communication & IR Manager said: "It's our absolute pleasure in receiving this recognition from Forbes Middle East for the second consecutive year. Being among the largest and most diversified insurance groups in the MENA region, GIG is successful in diversifying our insurance activities for continuous growth and profitability in the markets we operate in. This recognition certainly paves way to further enhance our business excellence in achieving our vision."

MICHELIN SHARES TYRE TIPS TO KEEP HEAD COOL DURING HOT SUMMER

The scorching summer heat often compels us to pay extra attention to our health. However we often tend to forget that our cars, especially our tyres, need to be taken care of too. Considering the challenging summer climate in the region, high temperatures can become a serious problem for tyres, especially if they are not properly maintained.

Pierre Granzotto, General Manager for Passenger Cars and Vice President for Michelin Africa, India & the Middle East (AIM) shares some key tips on how to maintain your tyres during the hot summer months:

1. Check all tyres regularly

All tyres - including the spare - should be checked regularly. One should look for any visible signs of wear or damage, such as deep cracks, exposed cables, cuts or uneven wear of the tyres.

The depth of the tyre tread indicates the remaining service life. To determine the tread depth, a tread depth gauge can be purchased and used. Whereas a new tyre usually has a depth of 8mm, the minimum legal requirement for a tread in motor cars is 1.6 mm, and motorists are recommended to change a tyre when its tread is 3 mm.

2. Check the tyre pressure - once a month

Tyre pressure is the life-blood of any tyre. Check the pressure of your tyres at least once a month. The air pressure in the tyre drops naturally at the rate of up to two pounds of air every month. However, high temperatures can increase the drop.

Apart from the fact that they wear more quickly, poorly inflated tyres generate more heat due to excessive sidewall flexing, affecting the overall performance of the vehicle, including braking distance, handling, safety and fuel consumption.

It is important to always check the pressure when the tyres are cold, meaning you have not driven the car for at least 2 hours or for not more than 3 km.

3. Check the tyre balance - when you feel a vibration

Ensure that your tyres are properly balanced. If you feel vibration through the steering wheel or through the vehicle body, your tyres could be balanced incorrectly. Balancing helps prevent premature wear of your tyres and eliminates vibration. It also protects the suspension, steering system and bearings of your vehicle.

4. Check the wheel alignment - when your vehicle tends to drift

Ensure that your wheels are properly aligned. If your tyre has come into contact with a solid object, such as a kerb or pothole, or you have noticed uneven wear on your tyres, your suspension can be disrupted making your wheels sit at improper angles. During summer, tyre discrepancies such as these must be monitored extra carefully. Uneven tyre alignment can affect the handling of the vehicle and will cause the tyres to wear unevenly and prematurely, which in turn may lead to a tyre burst.

There are several indicators of a mis-alignment; your car seems to be drifting to one side even when you think you're driving straight; your steering wheel vibrates; or you are driving straight but your steering wheel is not centred.

Tyre alignment should be checked and corrected by a professional.

5. Other tips to avoid tyre wear

With the tyre being the only contact point between the vehicle and the road, one cannot do enough to ensure the best quality of a tyre. These maintenance procedures must be done all year round, but during the summer motorists are recommended to be extra cautious. To end, never overload your vehicle. Overloading increases tyre wear and fuel consumption, adversely affects vehicle handling and stability, and increases the braking distance. And keep an eye on the suspension. Old or worn shock absorbers can cause faster tyre wear and impact vehicle handling.

ETIHAD AIRWAYS ANNOUNCED OFFICIAL AIRLINE PARTNER OF THE 2019 SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD SUMMER GAMES

ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways has been unveiled as the official airline partner of the 2019 Special Olympic World Summer Games, an event that will bring more than 7,000 athletes from 170 nations to Abu Dhabi in March of that year.

Special Olympic athletes from the UAE and Etihad Airways Emirati cadet pilots attended a special signing event today, Thursday 25 May, at

the headquarters of ADNOC (Abu Dhabi National Oil Company), another 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games sponsor.

The announcement was marked by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by His Excellency Mohamad Mubarak Al-Mazrouei, Chairman of the Etihad Aviation Group board, and His Excellency Mohamad Abdulla Al-Junaibi,

Chairman of the Higher Committee of the Special Olympics World Summer Games.

Peter Baumgartner, Chief Executive Officer, Etihad Airways, said: "The 2019 Special Olympic World Summer Games is a remarkable opportunity to showcase our Abu Dhabi home to these phenomenal athletes as they compete on the highest stage. Everyone at Etihad Airways is immensely proud to be supporting the Special Olympics World Summer Games which will be hosted in the Middle East region for the first time.

"The partnership with the Special Olympics is a key element of Etihad Aviation Group's extensive social activity program which, in turn, feeds into the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030. We look forward to working closely with all of our partners to make the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games a truly memorable occasion."

The national airline of the United Arab Emirates will carry athletes, equipment, coaches, dignitaries and world media to its Abu Dhabi home for the event in March 2019. The airline will be supported by Hala Abu Dhabi, Etihad's destination management company, and Etihad Cargo.

A wide program of support and engagement will be developed in the lead up to the event to ensure everyone coming to the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games has the best experience while in the UAE's capital city.

Peter Wheeler, Chief Executive Officer, Special Olympics Abu Dhabi 2019, said: "We are incredibly excited and grateful to be working alongside Etihad Airways for this prestigious sporting event.

"Etihad's support will help ensure we put on a world class event in 2019 and allow us to reach further with our message of inclusivity, tolerance and philanthropy. These three key pillars will empower not only our athletes, but people of all abilities across the UAE." Abu Dhabi will be the first city in the Middle East to host the global event that will bring together more than 7,000 athletes from 170 nations, making the Special Olympics World Summer Games the largest sporting and humanitarian event of 2019.

The athletes will be accompanied by 2,500 coaches and delegates, to compete in Abu Dhabi between 14 and 21 March 2019. Football, swimming, athletics, cycling, golf and powerlifting are amongst the 22 sports that feature over the competition and other events which include a Global Policy Summit and Global Youth Summit.



ABU DHABI: Representatives from Etihad Airways, Special Olympics Abu Dhabi 2019 and ADNOC pictured after Etihad Airways was unveiled as the official airline partner of the 2019 Special Olympic World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi. They are pictured at the headquarters of ADNOC, another 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games sponsor.



ABU DHABI: Mohamad Mubarak Al-Mazrouei, Chairman of the Etihad Aviation Group board (left) and Mohamad Abdulla Al-Junaibi, Chairman of the Higher Committee of the Special Olympics World Summer Games, sign a Memorandum of Understanding as Etihad Airways is announced as the official airline partner of the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games.



CISCO SURVEY REVEALS 'CLOSE TO THREE FOURTHS OF IOT PROJECTS ARE FAILING'

DUBAI: IDC predicts that the worldwide installed base of Internet of Things (IoT) endpoints will grow from 14.9 billion at the end of 2016 to more than 82 billion in 2025. At this rate, the Internet of Things may soon be as indispensable as the Internet itself. Despite the forward momentum, a new study conducted by Cisco shows that 60 percent of IoT initiatives stall at the Proof of Concept (PoC) stage and only 26 percent of companies have had an IoT initiative that they considered a complete success.

Even worse: a third of all completed projects were not considered a success. "It's not for lack of trying," said Rowan Trollope, Senior Vice President and General Manager, IoT and Applications, Cisco. "But there are plenty of things we can do to get more projects out of pilot and to complete success, and that's what we're here in London to do." Cisco released the findings at IoT World Forum (IoTWF), an event where Cisco convenes the industry's best, brightest and most passionate leaders with the goal of accelerating IoT.

We surveyed 1,845 IT and business decision-makers in the United States, UK, and India across a range of industries - manufacturing, local government, retail/hospitality/sports, energy (utilities/oil & gas/mining), transportation,



Rowan Trollope

and health care. All respondents worked for organizations that are implementing and/or have completed IoT initiatives. All were involved in the overall strategy or direction of at least one of their organization's IoT initiatives. The goal was to gain insight into both the successes as well as the challenges that are impacting progress.

Key Findings:
The human factor matters.
IoT may sound like it is all about technology, but human factors like culture, organization, and leadership are critical.



Inbar Lasser-Raab

In fact, three of the four top factors behind successful IoT projects had to do with people and relationships: Collaboration between IT and the business side was the #1 factor, cited by 54 percent. A technology-focused culture, stemming from top-down leadership and executive sponsorship, was called key by 49 percent. IoT expertise, whether internal or through external partnership, was selected by 48 percent.

In addition, organizations with the most successful IoT initiatives leveraged ecosystem partnerships most widely. They used partners at every phase, from strategic planning to data analytics after rollout. Despite the strong agreement on the importance of collaboration among IT and business decision-makers, some interesting differences emerged: IT decision-makers place more importance on technologies, organizational culture, expertise, and vendors. Business decision makers place greatest emphasis on strategy, business cases, processes, and milestones. IT decision-makers are more likely to think of IoT initiatives as successful. While 35 percent of IT decision-makers called their IoT initiatives a complete success, only 15 percent of business decision-makers did.

Don't Go It Alone
Sixty percent of respondents stressed that IoT initiatives often look good on paper but prove much more difficult than anyone expected. Top five challenges across all stages of implementation: time to completion, limited internal expertise, quality of data, integration across teams, and budget overruns. Our study found that the most successful organizations engage the IoT partner ecosystem at every stage, implying that strong partnerships throughout the process can smooth out the learning curve.

"We are seeing new IoT innovations almost every day," said Inbar Lasser-Raab, VP of Cisco Enterprise Solutions Marketing. "We are connecting things that we never thought would be connected, creating incredible new value to industries. But where we see most of the opportunity is where we partner with other vendors and create solutions that are not only connected but also share data. That shared data is the basis of a

network of industries - sharing of insights to make tremendous gains for business and society, because no one company can solve this alone."

improved profitability was the top unexpected benefit (39 percent).

Learn from the failures

Taking on these IoT projects has led to another unexpected benefit: 64 percent agreed that learning's from stalled or failed IoT initiatives have helped accelerate their organization's investment in IoT. Despite the challenges, many in our survey are optimistic for the future of IoT - a trend that, for all its forward momentum, is still in its nascent stages of evolution. Sixty-one percent believe that we have barely begun to scratch the surface of what IoT technologies can do for their businesses.

Reap the Benefits

When critical success factors come together, organizations are in position to reap a windfall in smart-data insights. Seventy-three percent of all participants are using data from IoT completed projects to improve their business. Globally the top 3 benefits of IoT include improved customer satisfaction (70 percent), operational efficiencies (67 percent) and improved product / service quality (66 percent). In addition,

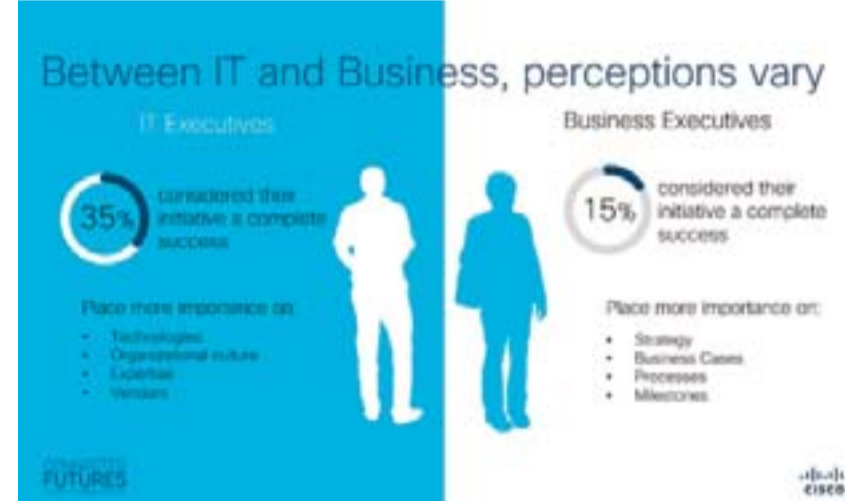
73% Of organizations are using data from IoT projects to improve their business:



of all surveyed companies are successful with their IoT Initiatives



Believe that IoT initiatives look good on paper, but prove more complex than expected



Agree that learning from stalled or failed initiatives help accelerate their IoT investments



Believe they have barely begun to scratch the surface of what IoT can do for their business

APPLE OPENS FIRST OFFICIAL STORE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



SINGAPORE: People look at products on display inside the Apple store in the Orchard shopping district on its opening day in Singapore.—AFP photos

SINGAPORE: Apple opened its first Southeast Asia store in Singapore yesterday, drawing hundreds of excited fans to the swanky two-storey site in the city's upmarket shopping district. Located on the affluent Orchard Road, the new shop-easily distinguished by its iconic glass facade-is expected to be one of the most popular Apple stores in the world according to the US tech giant.

Merchandise such as the iPhone and MacBook were strategically placed on display across the spacious first floor, while the upper level acted as a classroom for customers to participate in hands-on sessions. Hundreds of shoppers camped out in anticipation of the launch, while more than a thousand thronged the store soon after the doors opened, an AFP reporter observed.

First in the queue was Xiang Jiaxin, a twenty-five-year-old Chinese national working in Macau who had queued for more than 12 hours overnight and planned a holiday to Singapore specially to coincide with the opening. "I am very happy and excited to be part of this. I have participated in the official store openings in Macau, Guangzhou and Nanjing," he said.

Apple, which has a staggering \$256.8 billion cash stockpile, celebrated its 40th anniversary last year. The Silicon Valley legend sprang out of Steve Jobs' garage to reshape modern life with trend-setting gadgets. Most of its earnings come from the iPhone, which faces increasingly tough competition in a saturated market.

The tech behemoth has almost 500 stores globally with more than a million visitors daily. Aside from Singapore, its Asia shops are located in Hong Kong, China and Japan. A regional transport, business and financial hub, Singapore attracted 16.4 million visitors last year.—AFP



BUCHAREST: French designer Gael Langevin stands behind the InMoov robot after he unveiled it at a technology fair in Bucharest, Romania, while an entertainer holds a banner that reads 'the robots are among us.'—AP

FRENCH DESIGNER SHOWS OFF DIY ROBOT IN PUBLIC FOR FIRST TIME

BUCHAREST, Romania: A French designer has shown his humanoid DIY robot to the public for the first time. The life-size plastic model responded to English-language commands Friday, picking up and dropping a small ball and swiveling its head to follow people. Designer Gael Langevin unveiled the robot at a technology fair in Romania this week. The idea developed from a prosthetics hand he made in 2011, the first-ever made on a 3-D printer.

The robot is made with a 3-D printer and micro-cameras. It is hoped the robot will be used to

help children in schools and hospitals. If connected to the internet, it can answer a variety of questions taken from Wikipedia. Langevin admits his model, generically called InMoov, is not yet perfect. "This is a little bit like Geppetto building Pinocchio.

You make a robot and you send it in the world and you see what the others are going to do with it," he said. Children visiting the fair seemed thrilled. "He is awesome," said Adrian Margineanu, a student at Bucharest's elite St. Sava school. "I like it a lot. I'm tempted to make

one." For those who don't want to assemble it, InMoov offers a list of builders in different countries.

Langevin estimates that more than 1,000 DIY robots have been made by people who followed his design. His robot can be programmed to speak English, Spanish, French, Russian and Dutch. But Romanian graphic designer Paul Popescu, 35, has been assembling his own robot and has plans to program it to speak Romanian. A basic model costs about 1,500 euros (\$1,665).—AP

GERMAN KINDERGARTENS MUST REPORT PARENTS FOR REFUSING VACCINE ADVICE

BERLIN: Germany will pass a law next week obliging kindergartens to inform the authorities if parents fail to provide evidence that they have received advice from their doctor on vaccinating their children, the health ministry said yesterday. Parents refusing the advice risk fines of up to 2,500 euros (\$2,800) under the law expected to come into force on

June 1. Vaccination rules are being tightened across Europe, where a decline in immunization, has caused a spike in diseases such as measles, chicken pox and mumps, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). "Nobody can be indifferent to the fact that people are still dying of measles," German health

minister Hermann Groehe told Bild newspaper. "That's why we are tightening up regulations on vaccination." Italy made vaccination compulsory this month after health officials warned that a fall-off in vaccination rates had triggered a measles epidemic, with more than 2,000 cases there this year, almost ten times the number in 2015.

Lack of public trust in vaccines has become an important global health issue. Experts say negative attitudes may be due to fears over suspected side-effects and hesitancy among some doctors.

In 10 European countries, cases of measles, which can cause blindness and encephalitis, had doubled in number in

the first two months of 2017 compared to the previous year, the ECDC said last month. That is leading to greater activism among parents and public health officials. Last week, a German court ruled that a father could insist that his child be vaccinated over the objections of the child's mother because it was in the child's interest.—Reuters



LOS ANGELES: This file photo shows marijuana plants on display at a medical marijuana provider in downtown Los Angeles.—AP

SCIENCE SAYS: WHAT'S KNOWN, NOT KNOWN ABOUT MARIJUANA

NEW YORK: A new marijuana study joins a limited record of scientific knowledge about the harms and benefits of pot. The research published Wednesday is the first rigorous test of a marijuana compound in treating a certain form of severe epilepsy. It found that an ingredient of marijuana - one that doesn't give pot smokers a high - reduced the number of seizures in children. In the US, more than two dozen states allow medical use of marijuana.

Federal drug regulators have not approved marijuana itself, but they have allowed man-made, chemically related medicines to treat loss of appetite in people with AIDS, and nausea and vomiting caused by cancer therapy. A marijuana extract is sold in Britain for nerve pain and other problems from multiple sclerosis.

In January, a US advisory committee concluded that the lack of scientific information about marijuana and its chemical cousins, called cannabinoids, poses a risk to public health. The experts called for a national effort to learn more. In a report from the National Academies of

Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, they also rounded up what is known. Here are some of its conclusions. There's strong evidence that marijuana or cannabinoids:

- Can treat chronic pain in adults
- Can ease nausea and vomiting from chemotherapy
- Can treat muscle stiffness and spasms in multiple sclerosis as measured by what patients say, but less strong evidence if the changes are measured by doctor.
- On the other hand, it also found that pot smoking may be linked to:

- Risk of developing schizophrenia and other causes of psychosis, with the highest risk among the most frequent users
- Risk of a traffic accident

- More frequent chronic bronchitis episodes from long-term use
- Lower birth weight in offspring of female users
- Some evidence that pot or cannabinoids may:

- Improve short-term sleep in people with some medical conditions
- Boost appetite and ease weight loss in people with HIV or AIDS
- Ease symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and improve outcomes after traumatic brain injury

Similarly, some evidence suggests pot use may be linked to: Triggering a heart attack An increased risk of developing a lung condition called chronic obstructive pulmonary disease Pregnancy complications when used by the mother Impaired school achievement and outcomes Increased suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts, especially among heavier users Risk of developing bipolar disorder, especially among regular users There's not enough evidence to know if marijuana or cannabinoids can:

- Treat cancer
- Ease symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome
- Help with movement problems associated with Parkinson's disease
- Improve mental health outcomes in people with schizophrenia
- Similarly, there's not enough evidence to know if marijuana is linked to:

- Increased risk of heart attacks over time from chronic use
- Development of post-traumatic stress disorder
- Changes in the course or symptoms of depression disorders
- Development or worsening of asthma
- Accidents or injuries on the job.—AP

STORAGE OF NUCLEAR WASTE POSES THREAT TO US, SCIENTISTS WARN

WASHINGTON: The reluctance of US federal regulators to require operators of nuclear reactors to spend \$5 billion to enhance the security of spent fuel rods stored underground threatens the country with a potential catastrophe, scientists warned on Friday. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission greatly underestimated the risk and potential contamination of a nuclear waste fire triggered by a quake or a planned attack, experts writing in the journal "Science" said.

In 2014, the NRC found the chance of a disaster caused by leaving radioactive waste in storage pools was too remote to warrant the cost of moving it to safer dry casks. An earthquake that could trigger a radiation leak was likely less than once every 10 million years, hardly justifying the cost of about \$50 million per reactor to transfer spent fuel, the NRC said in that report. An accident at Japan's Fukushima nuclear plant in 2011 was triggered by a tsunami after an earthquake. "We think the NRC gamed their analysis essentially to get the answer they want," said Edwin Lyman, a senior scientist at the Union of Concerned Scientists and one of the authors of the article in "Science," a magazine published by the American Association for the

Advancement of Science. Michael Schoeppner and Frank von Hippel of Princeton University were co-authors.

On average, such a disaster could force 8 million people to evacuate and cause \$2 trillion in damage in the United States, the world's largest producer of nuclear energy, according to the report. The commission said in a statement on Friday it stood by a staff finding last year that "the security of US nuclear power plants remains extremely robust." Rod McCullum, senior director at the Nuclear Energy Institute, an industry group, said in an email that there was ample evidence that used fuel at 90 US storage sites was properly managed.

The collapse of a decommissioned tunnel at a plutonium-handling facility in Hanford, Washington, this month was a reminder of the potential risk of storing radioactive material. There was no spent fuel in the tunnel at the time and no indication anyone was exposed to radiation. When removed from reactors, spent fuel rods are cooled under 23 feet of water. To reduce costs, rods are packed into vaults instead of dry storage casks, scientists wrote. If the water was drained away due to an attack or accident, the rods would burn and spew radioactive fallout.—Reuters

TEXAS SET TO EMBRACE ABORTION RESTRICTIONS

AUSTIN, Texas: The Texas Legislature approved a sweeping package of new abortion limits Friday, despite the legal challenges they're likely to provoke and nearly a year after the US Supreme Court dismantled a 2013 law that prompted more than half the state's abortion clinics to close. The bill sent to Republican Gov Greg Abbott includes a measure that federal courts have already blocked in several states - a ban on a commonly used second-trimester abortion procedure known as dilation and evacuation.

Abbott is still expected to sign what amounts to Texas Republicans' counter-punch to last year's Supreme Court ruling, which struck down tough rules on abortion clinics and doctors and changed the landscape of abortion access in the nation's second-largest state. "That's why the courts are there," Republican state Sen. Charles Schwertner said moments before the state Senate gave its final approval. "We shouldn't be afraid to pass laws that we

think are necessary, proper and right."

The bill would also require the burial or creation of fetal remains - a requirement that a federal judge has already blocked in Texas after the state health rules were changed at Abbott's behest last year. The measure also would ban the sale or donation of fetal tissue, even though federal law already prohibits the sale of fetal tissue. The New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights, which helped challenge the 2013 Texas law, called the new package of anti-abortion limits "reminiscent" of the law struck down last year and signaled that another court challenge is ahead.

"It's just going to have the state embroiled in litigation," Democratic state Sen. Jose Rodriguez said before the 22-9 vote. Texas had 41 abortion clinics in 2012 and now has about 20. In April, Planned Parenthood reopened its first abortion clinic in Texas since the Supreme Court ruling, resuming operations in Waco. The legislative session ends Monday.—AP

WHAT HAPPENS TO EARTH IF US EXITS THE CLIMATE DEAL?

EARTH TO HIT MORE DANGEROUS LEVELS OF WARMING

WASHINGTON: Earth is likely to hit more dangerous levels of warming even sooner if the US pulls back from its pledge to cut carbon dioxide pollution, scientists said. That's because America contributes so much to rising temperatures. President Donald Trump, who once proclaimed global warming a Chinese hoax, will soon decide whether the United States stays in or leaves a 2015 Paris climate change accord in which nearly every nation agreed to curb its greenhouse gas emissions.

Other global leaders have been urging him to stay during high level security and economic meetings in Italy that began Friday. Pope Francis already made the case with a gift of his papal encyclical on the environment when Trump visited the Vatican earlier this week. In an attempt to understand what could happen to the planet if the US pulls out of Paris, The Associated Press consulted with more than two dozen climate scientists and analyzed a special computer model scenario designed to calculate potential effects.

Scientists said it would worsen an already bad problem, and make it far more difficult to prevent crossing a dangerous global temperature threshold. Calculations suggest it could result in emissions of up to 3 billion tons of additional carbon dioxide in the air a year. When it adds up year after year, scientists said that is

enough to melt ice sheets faster, raise seas higher and trigger more extreme weather. "If we lag, the noose tightens," said Princeton University climate scientist Michael Oppenheimer, co-editor of the peer-reviewed journal Climatic Change.

World without US efforts

One expert group ran a worst-case computer simulation of what would happen if the US does not curb emissions, but other nations do meet their targets. It found that America would add as much as half a degree of warming to the globe by the end of the century. Scientists are split on how reasonable and likely that scenario is. Many said because of cheap natural gas that displaces coal and growing adoption of renewable energy sources, it is unlikely that the US would stop reducing its carbon pollution even if it abandoned the accord, so the effect would likely be smaller.

But others say it could be worse because other countries might follow a US exit, leading to more emissions from both the US and the rest. Another computer simulation team put the effect of the US pulling out somewhere between 0.1 to 0.2 degrees Celsius. While scientists may disagree on the computer simulations they overwhelmingly agreed that the warming the planet is undergoing now would be faster and more

intense. The world without US efforts would have a far more difficult time avoiding a dangerous threshold: keeping the planet from warming more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The world has already warmed by just over half that amount - with about one-fifth of the past heat-trapping carbon dioxide emissions coming from the United States, usually from the burning of coal, oil and gas. So the efforts are really about preventing another 1.6 degrees Fahrenheit from now.

"Developed nations - particularly the US and Europe - are responsible for the lion's share of past emissions, with China now playing a major role," said Rutgers University climate scientist Jennifer Francis. "This means Americans have caused a large fraction of the warming." Even with the US doing what it promised under the Paris agreement, the world is likely to pass that 2 degree mark, many scientists said.

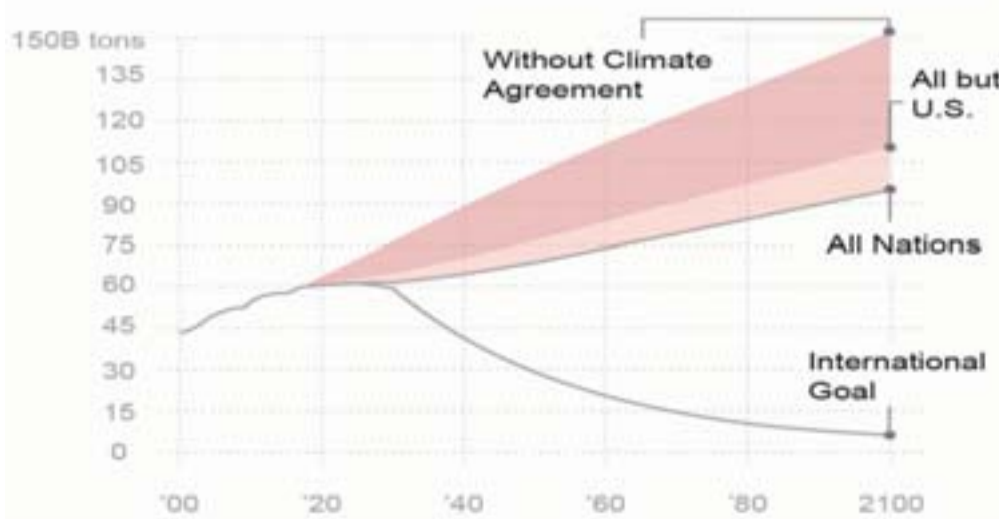
Move on

But the fractions of additional degrees that the US would contribute could mean passing the threshold faster, which could in turn mean "ecosystems being out of whack with the climate, trouble farming current crops and increasing shortages of food and water," said National Center for Atmospheric Research's Kevin Trenberth. Climate Interactive, a team of scientists and computer modelers who track global emissions and pledges, simulated global emissions if every country but the US reaches their individualized goals to curb carbon pollution. And then they calculated what that would mean in global temperature, sea level rise and ocean acidification using scientifically-accepted computer models. By the year 2030, it would mean an extra 3 billion tons of carbon dioxide in the air a year, according to the Climate Interactive models, and by the end of the century 0.3 degrees Celsius of warming.

"The US matters a great deal," said Climate Interactive co-director Andrew Jones. "That amount could make the difference between meeting the Paris limit of two degrees and missing it." Climate Action Tracker, a competing computer simulation team, put the effect of the US pulling out somewhere between 0.1 to 0.2 degrees Celsius by 2100. It uses a scenario where US emissions flatten through the century, while Climate Interactive has them rising.

One of the few scientists who downplay the harm of the US possibly leaving the agreement is John SchellInhuber, the director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and the scientist credited with coming up with the 2 degree goal.—AP

Simulation shows emissions may worsen if US leaves climate accord



SOURCE: Climate Interactive AP

Chart shows the projected Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions for no Paris Agreement plans, Paris Agreement plans with all nations and Paris Agreement plans without the US.

NEW EBOLA CASES MAY SHOW EFFECT OF IMPROVED ALERTS

CANCUN, Mexico: The rapid reaction by the Democratic Republic of Congo to recent cases of Ebola showed lessons were learned from earlier outbreaks, a top global health official said on Friday, stressing the need to factor health into disaster risk plans. Two cases of the virus have been confirmed by the World Health Organization in Congo's remote northeastern Bas-Uele province since early May. Four people have died so far among the 43 suspected and confirmed cases.

With the improved activation of early alert systems and emergency teams in Congo, "hopefully we will not get into a full-blown outbreak like it was a few years before," the secretary general of the International Red Cross and Red Cross Societies told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview. "This is very different from what we experienced in Liberia, Senegal and Guinea, where the outbreak was happening for the first time ever," said Elhadj As Sy.

"People couldn't recognize it in time," he said. Ebola in West Africa killed more than 11,300 between 2014 and 2016. Sy said the remote location in Congo - about 1,400 kilometers (870 miles) from the capital Kinshasa - meant the highly contagious hemorrhagic fever was "quasi-quarantining itself." "One is this time building on the past

experience in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the last outbreak as well as lessons learned in the last outbreak," he said.

This latest Ebola outbreak is Congo's eighth, the most of any country. The fever was first detected in its dense tropical forests in 1976 and named after its river Ebola. Speaking on the sidelines of a United Nations conference on disasters, Sy said vulnerable people in areas plagued by conflict and natural disasters such as Somalia and South Sudan need measures to reduce exposure to risk and increase their resilience.

The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction meeting in Cancun, which ended on Friday, was the first major meeting since a framework was hammered out in Sendai, Japan two years ago, setting ambitious targets for governments to cut deaths and economic losses from disasters by 2030. The targets include limiting damage to infrastructure and disruption to basic services and widening access to early warning systems and public disaster risk information. "There is a growing agreement that natural hazards do not equate to natural disasters," Sy said. "The shocks will happen. The fact that it becomes a disaster will pretty much depend on our level of preparedness and our level of response."—Reuters



HANOVER: A baby prairie dog is pictured at the zoo in Hanover, central Germany.—AFP

POLAND FACES DEADLINE TO STOP OVER-LOGGING IN ANCIENT FOREST

WARSAW, Poland: Poland has to explain to European Union authorities why it has increased logging in one of Europe's last primeval forests and to suspend the excessive removal of trees, environmental groups said Friday. The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, says the logging in Bialowieza Forest violates EU laws and threatens the UNESCO World Heritage site. It is threatening to take the Polish government before the EU's Court of Justice, if it does not comply by the deadline.

Bialowieza is a relic of an ancient forest that once stretched across Europe's lowlands. Its oldest section, dense, mossy woodland, is home to bison, lynx, storks and other animals. The ancient forest, which straddles Belarus and Poland, is recognized by the United Nations as a natural treasure of special significance. There are also newer sections planted by humans.

Logging has long been allowed in the forest, but at a level considered sustainable. Poland's government decided last year to add logging in new areas, resulting in a threefold increase in the number of removed trees. Environmental organizations reported the case to EU authorities, who have called on Poland to scale down the felling of trees. They say Warsaw is running out of time.

The head of Greenpeace in Poland, Robert Cyglicki, said Friday that the habitats of rare species like the Boros schneideri beetle are being destroyed by the logging and the use of heavy equipment. Poland's Environment Ministry argues the intensified logging is done outside the oldest woodland and is intended to preserve the forest by preventing the spread of harmful bark beetle. The ministry maintains the logging is in line with national and EU regulations.—AP



POLAND: In this file photo taken in the Bialowieza Forest, in Poland, a bison stands next to fir trees that have been logged.—AP

OH BABY! DC ZOO HOPING TO GET PANDA PREGNANT

WASHINGTON: Zoo officials in Washington are hoping to get panda mom Mei Xiang pregnant - again. Smithsonian National Zoo officials say they performed two artificial inseminations Thursday on 18-year-old Mei Xiang. Officials say they were closely monitoring her for when to do the procedure. That's because female giant pandas are only able to become pregnant for 24 to 72 hours

each year. Officials say Mei Xiang's estrogen levels peaked Wednesday, an indication she was able to become pregnant. Officials say Mei Xiang and the zoo's 19-year-old male Tian Tian failed to breed naturally. Mei Xiang has given birth to three surviving cubs: Tai Shan in 2005, Bao Bao in 2013 and Bei Bei in 2015. Bei Bei still lives at the zoo. Mei Xiang's other offspring live in China.—AP



WASHINGTON: In this photo Mei Xiang, the female giant panda at the Smithsonian's National Zoo in Washington, eats breakfast.—AP



MAHIA, New Zealand: This handout from Rocket Lab taken shows the Electron rocket lifting off from its launch site on the Mahia peninsula in Hawkes Bay.—AFP

SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH PUTS NEW ZEALAND IN SPACE RACE

WELLINGTON: A private New Zealand-based company joined the exclusive space-race club on Thursday with the successful launch of a Rocket Lab test craft named Electron. The rocket blasted off from the company's facility at Mahia, on the east coast of the North Island, to end three days of launch attempts aborted because of the weather. "Made it to space. Team delighted. More to follow!" aerospace company Rocket Lab tweeted as New Zealand became the 11th country to launch into space.

It was the world's first successful launch from a private site, and was seen as a further advancement in the move towards private enterprise carrying small satellites and other cargo towards the stars. "In the past, it's been countries that go to space, not companies," said Rocket Lab founder and chief executive Peter Beck. "We're one of a few companies to ever develop a rocket from scratch and we did it in under four years."

"We've worked tirelessly to get to this point. We've developed everything in house, built the world's first private orbital launch range, and we've done it with a small team." However, while the rocket reached space, it did not reach orbit. "We'll be investigating why, however reaching space in our first test puts us in an incredibly strong position to accelerate the commercial phase of our program, deliver our customers to orbit and

make space open for business," Beck added.

One of 11 countries

New Zealand Economic Development Minister Simon Bridges hailed the launch as the government set aside NZ\$15 million (US\$10.5 million) for the country's space program. "New Zealand is now one of 11 countries able to launch satellites into space from their own territory and the first to launch from a fully private orbital launch range," he said. Beck said Rocket Lab was committed to making space accessible and at full production, expected to launch more than 50 times a year.

Rocket Lab's commercial phase will see Electron fly already-signed customers including NASA, Spire, Planet, Moon Express and

Spaceflight. The launch is the first of three planned tests before Rocket Lab begins providing customers commercial satellite opportunities. The 17-metre rocket-which uses an engine with 3D-printed and battery-powered components-is said to have reached speeds of more than 27,000 kilometers per hour during the two-and-a-half-minute flight into space.

Beck has said that while there would be some celebrations following the successful launch, the main party would wait until they reached the commercial stage of taking satellite cargo into orbit. Although a New Zealand firm, Rocket Lab's main backers include US companies Kholsa Ventures, Beesemer Venture Partners, Data Collective, Promus Ventures and Lockheed Martin.—AFP

LEGO GIRAFFE TO BE NAMED IN HONOR OF GIRAFFE-LOVING BOY

BOSTON: A giant Lego giraffe is being renamed to honor a giraffe-loving Massachusetts boy who died last month. Legoland Discovery Center Boston says the giraffe outside its headquarters, built with 22,000 of the company's Duplo bricks, will be named in honor of Gio Maggiore. Gio, a 6-year-old from Medford, died April 10 of a congenital heart disease. His mother said he had

a giraffe pacifier, giraffe stuffed animals, even a giraffe costume.

In the days before he died, he spent much of his time watching the popular livestream of the pregnant giraffe, April, waiting for her to give birth at a New York zoo. The name Gio was among the finalists for April's calf, but it was ultimately named Tajiri. The Lego giraffe will be renamed in a May 31 ceremony.—AP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
فهد علي المخيزيم

Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



ACK SIGNS MOU WITH BRITISH COUNCIL KUWAIT

In a step aiming to cooperate with international educational institutions, the Center of the Continuous Education (CCE) at the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the British Council in Kuwait. According to the MOU, exams of the world renowned IELTS tests are to take place in ACK campus, which will have a substantial effect in facilitating the procedures of the exams. The cooperation is in line with the objective of the Community Service Center of its role towards the Kuwaiti society.

The MOU aims to enhance knowledge in English

Language and establish cooperation between the British Council, being the British organization concerned with emerging culture and educational opportunities, and CCE, in order to provide educational opportunities to the Kuwaiti youth. Engineer Sager Al-Sharhan, Deputy Managing Partner - Industry at ACK, stated: "The College provides such opportunities due to the higher demand for taking IELTS exams by the young people wishing to continue their education or those searching for better opportunities and to test their English skills, especially that the test is a major pre-req-

uisite in a large number of universities around the world." Representing the British Council in Kuwait, the MOU ceremony was attended by Mr. Grant Butler, General Manager, Mr. Murray Miller - General Manager - Examinations for MENA region, Mr. Anoj Janjula, Deputy GM - Examinations, Mr. Mahmoud Mansour, Director of Testing Department, and Mr. Azim Parker. Representing ACK, Engineer Sager Al-Sharhan, Deputy Managing Partner - Industry, Professor Sam Zabalawi, President, Dr. Gad Elbeheri, Dean of the College, Dr. Usama Al-Jamali, Advisor to the Chairman at ACK, Mr. Ali Mubarak, Director of

Corporate Training, and Dr. Zeina Nehme, Manager of Alumni and Career Placement Center.

IELTS is an international standardized test of English language leading to measure the English language skills. It is accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education in Kuwait. In addition, it is significant for studying and living abroad, and is recognized by 9,000 institutions and universities all over the world. Further, the test is recognized by a large number of universities in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and is used by over two million people in the world.



KFH VISITS PATIENTS AT MEKKI JUMAA, DISTRIBUTES GIFTS

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) visited patients at Mekki Jumaa Hospital as part of its corporate social responsibility and efforts to strengthen ties with the all segments of the society, especially in the month of Ramadan. KFH congratulated the patients on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan. The bank's PR team distributed gifts to the patients and wished them speedy recovery. This contributed in putting a smile on their faces, while easing their pain and suffering.

It is worth noting that such steps reinforce KFH's ties with the society, primarily because it prioritizes the support of humanitarian causes and contributions. Such initiatives come within the framework of KFH'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 different social and humanitarian programs.

GULF BANK HEADQUARTERS RECOGNIZED AS KUWAITI LANDMARK

Gulf Bank was founded in the heart of Kuwait in 1961, and its headquarters building is widely recognized as a Kuwaiti landmark. Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyya is currently hosting an exhibition entitled 'Modern Architecture Kuwait' which showcases the history and architecture of Kuwait during the period of 1949 and 1989, and features the Gulf Bank head office. Gulf Bank's iconic building stands out on the Kuwaiti architectural landscape due to its outer facade.

The design of the building was inspired by the sea, using 'acropode' type structures which are designed to resist the action of waves. This outer concrete facade was created to provide protection from the sun and elements, as well as to provide a uniform look. Jean-Robert Delb, is the French architect who was appointed to design Gulf Bank's headquarters after the completion of his well-known 'Tour Europe' in Paris. He was awarded the 'Deuxieme Prix de Rome' in 1957 for his work.

Ms Laila Al-Qatami, Assistant General Manager for Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, said, "Gulf Bank is honored to be highlighted for its place in the architectural landscape of Kuwait City. We would like to thank the organizers at Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyya for an enriching

exhibition that deepens knowledge of our country's architectural environment, and provides information on the city's urban development."

"Gulf Bank is proud of its unique heritage and to being an active contributor to our country's growth and development. Gulf Bank thanks our valued customers for their continued loyalty to Gulf Bank. The Bank also expresses its gratitude and appreciation to all those who, over the years, have been part of the Gulf Bank family."

Mr Osama Al-Balhan, Director of Media Programs and Public Relations at Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyya stated, "Our exhibition on Kuwait's modern architecture combines history with architectural design. We are displaying the most distinguished buildings such as the Diwan Al Amiri's building, the National Assembly building, the Kuwait Towers, unique school buildings, along with distinguished buildings in the private sector which we believe have contributed immensely to the development of the city's landscape. We are pleased to have Gulf Bank's headquarters featured amongst the most iconic ones; it has long been considered as a monumental building in Kuwait."

Commenting on the nautical theme of Gulf Bank's building and its identity, Ms Al-Qatami said, "The

Bank's head office, which dates back to 1969, is one of the most recognizable buildings in Kuwait, its outer facade provides a solution to the country's harsh climate conditions by providing shading from sun exposure and heat, in addition to being uniquely inspired by marine elements used for protection of break waters."

"Additionally, the Bank's logo and branch concept design is also strongly inspired by Kuwait's seafaring heritage. The decor in our 56 branches has been specially designed in the shape of a dhow and fitted with complementary accessories in the same theme. Customers entering the branch experience the warmth and spirit of true Kuwaiti heritage in a high-quality banking environment."

The construction of Gulf Bank head office started in 1969 and was finished in 1974. During this phase, the first banking institutions envisioned new purposed buildings that were built and conceived in different areas of the Central Business District. Over the years this area has expanded and changed, consequently not many of the early building constructed in that period remain and even fewer are still being used for their original purposes. Gulf Bank headquarters is one of the remaining few remaining still being used for its original purpose and with its outer facade intact.



CHICKEN AND VEGETABLES SAMBOUSEK

Ramadan recipes

Ingredients:

For the dough:
3 cups plain flour
1 tablespoon sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
4 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 tablespoon yeast, dissolved in 4 tablespoons warm water
3/4 cups water or 185 ml

For the stuffing:
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 small onion or 100 g, diced to small pieces
250 g chicken, minced
1 medium baby zucchini or 100 g, diced to small pieces
1 small green capsicum pepper or 100 g, diced to small pieces
1 baby eggplants or 70 g, diced to small pieces
1 medium tomatoes or 150 g, peeled and chopped
1 tablespoon tomato paste
2 Maggi chicken stock bouillon cubes, crumbled
2 tablespoons pine seeds, toasted
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon seven spices

Preparation:

Place flour in a deep bowl; add sugar, salt, oil and mix well with your fingertips until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add the dissolved yeast and mix. Gradually add little quantities of water and mix thoroughly until a dough forms. Cover with kitchen cloth and set aside for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile heat the oil in saucepan and saute onion for 2 minutes then add minced chicken and stir until chicken is cooked then add the baby zucchini, capsicum and eggplant and stir over a medium heat for 5

minutes or until vegetables are almost tender. Add the tomato, tomato paste and the crumbled Maggi Chicken Stock cubes. Stir and cook for 5 minutes or until all vegetables are well cooked and liquid is almost steamed.

Add pine seeds and spices. Stir and remove from heat. Roll the dough into round 3 millimeters thin pastry. Using a medium size cup or dough cutter, cut round pieces of the dough. Place 1 tablespoon of the stuffing in the center of each piece and seal the edges by twisting them or pressing with fork.

Place the stuffed sambousek in a greased oven tray keeping around 1 cm space between each piece from other and place them in a warm area for 30 minutes or until stuffed sambousek dough rise up. Bake sambousek in a 250 °C preheated oven for 13-15 minutes or until it becomes golden brown in color. Remove from oven and serve immediately.



WHAT'S ON - SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All photos submitted for What's On should be minimum 200dpi. Articles must be in plain text and should include name and phone numbers. Articles and photos that fail to meet these requirements will not be published.

Please send them to news@kuwaittimes.net

Greetings



Dear Dakshan, you truly fill our days with so much fun. I hope that your special day will be as gleeful, Happy 6th birthday. Best wishes from dad, mom, relatives and friends.



KFH LAUNCHES RAMADAN PROGRAM 'INCREASE GOOD DEEDS IN RAMADAN 3'

KFH has launched a comprehensive voluntary Ramadan program aiming at strengthening KFH's social role, while reinforcing ties with various segments of society. This program is the beginning of collaboration program and activities within the framework of the memorandum of understanding KFH inked with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs in tandem with 'Kuwait Capital of Arab Youth 2017' kick-off event. KFH's Ramadan program 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 3' 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. 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, especially in tandem with the holy month of Ramadan. He added that KFH has prepared a comprehensive program in Ramadan that encompasses different activities and social seg-

ments. He indicated that KFH will distribute breakfast meals at different places including Nayef Palace and Souq Al-Mubarakaya. KFH organizes breakfast feasts to workers on duties during Iftar time in recognition of their efforts and responsibilities. The number of iftar meals KFH distributes reaches roughly 20000 meals; all prepared by KFH voluntary team, where they distribute over 600 meals daily until end of Ramadan. KFH voluntary team will be present at different places to meet the public directly and distribute Ramadan presents and

confectionaries (Qerq'an). KFH will organize a number of visits to health centers and hospitals to visit patients and distribute presents. Al-Ruwaieh explained that KFH voluntary team will provide voluntary services to the public and will assist civil defense and security men and distribute food and beverages to worshippers. KFH is keen on reinforcing human values among society individuals. KFH organized over 40 activities and events in only 30 days during Ramadan 2016. He said that the collaboration with the

Ministry of State for Youth Affairs affirms the bank's commitment towards the youth and reflects its significant role in supporting this vital category of the society. KFH is the only bank in the region to sponsor a group of Kuwaiti youth who have international achievements. KFH held over 100 initiatives to support the Kuwaiti talents. Meanwhile, Public relations Department Manager at Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, Nasser AlArfaj hailed KFH's role in supporting the youth and optimally assuming the social responsibility.



AM MOVIES ACTION

- 00:00 Twixt
01:30 The Throwaways
03:15 DCU: Justice League vs Teen Titans

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:45 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
01:40 Cats 101
02:35 Cats 101

BBC FIRST

- 00:35 Doctors
01:05 Death In Paradise
02:00 Call The Midwife



SEVENTH SON ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 04:10 Rillington Place
05:05 Call The Midwife
06:00 Eastenders

- 12:00 How It's Made
12:25 How It's Made
12:50 Ultimate Survival

ID

- 00:30 The Real Story With Maria Elena Salinas
01:20 Killing Richard Glossip
02:10 Betrayed

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 The Last Goodbye
00:30 The Last Goodbye
01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos

COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:05 Impractical Jokers
00:30 Impractical Jokers
00:55 Tosh.0

Disney HD

- 00:00 Binny And The Ghost
00:25 Hank Zipzer
00:45 The Hive

Discovery Channel HD

- 00:20 Wheels That Fall
00:45 Yukon Men
01:35 Yukon Men

- 02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

Disney Junior

- 00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
00:15 Calimero
00:30 Art Attack

- 06:00 Gold Divers
06:50 Street Outlaws
07:40 Misfit Garage

XHD

- 06:00 Supa Strikas
06:25 Supa Strikas
06:50 Marvel's Guardians Of The Galaxy

EHD

- 00:00 Botched
00:55 Botched
01:50 El News

food

- 00:00 Man Fire Food
00:30 Man Fire Food
01:00 Restaurant: Impossible

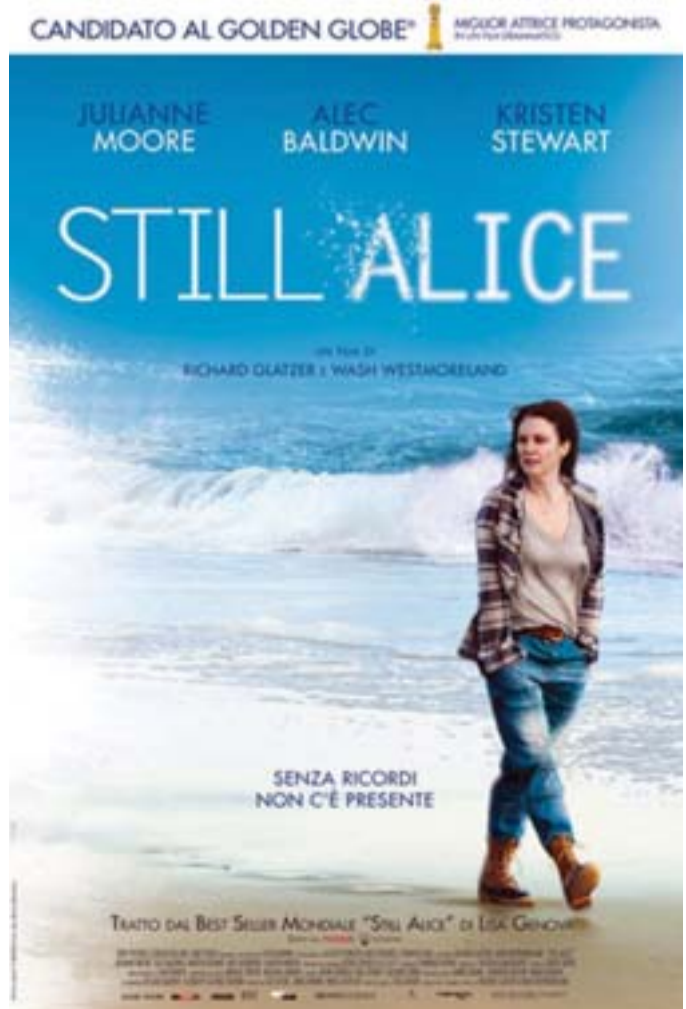
- 02:30 Mystery Diners
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food

itv CHOICE

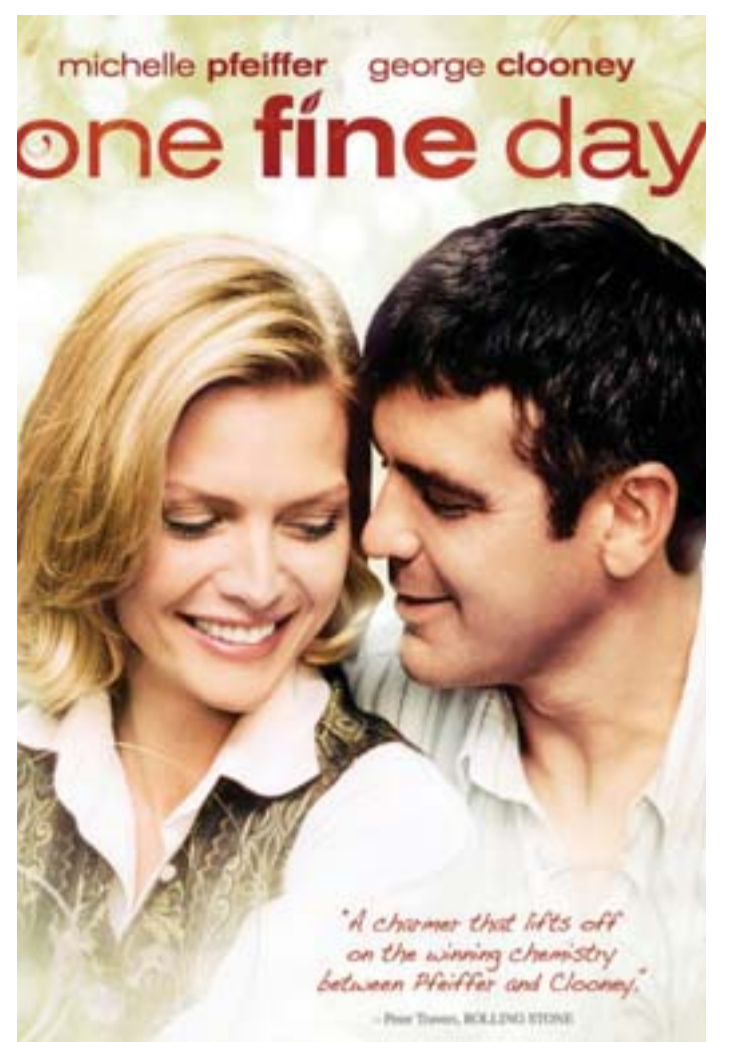
- 00:05 Coronation Street
00:30 Coronation Street
01:00 Tutankhamun

HISTORY

- 00:20 Fifth Gear
01:10 Mummies Alive
02:00 Big Easy Motors



STILL ALICE ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL



ONE FINE DAY ON OSN MOVIES HD

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:15 My Restaurant In India
00:40 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
01:10 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen

AM MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 00:30 Peter Pan
02:30 The Land Before Time: Journey Of The Brave

AM MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:30 Spy
02:45 Mr. Popper's Penguins
04:30 Father Of The Bride Part II

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

- 00:10 Mega Factories
01:00 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind
02:00 Monster Fish

AM MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 02:00 Trash
04:00 Neil Young: Heart Of Gold
05:45 Chariots Of Fire

AM MOVIES HD KIDS

- 01:15 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
03:00 Bontia
04:30 Lego: Scooby Doo Haunted Hollywood

NAT GEO WILD HD

- 00:20 Gorilla Murders
01:10 Savage Kingdom
02:00 Animal Fight Club 4.5

AM MOVIES HD

- 00:00 D-Tox
00:30 Dick Tracy
04:00 The Taking Of Pelham 123

DISCOVERY SCIENCE

- 00:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
01:20 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
02:10 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM 1ST DAY OF RAMADAN TO WEDNESDAY (31/05/2017)

Channel	Time	Programme	Channel	Time	Programme	Channel	Time	Programme
SHARQIA-1	9:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	11:30 PM	RAMANTE EDANTHOTTAM -Malayalam	9:45 PM	AL-KOUT.3	9:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
	12:15 AM	THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)		FAST & FURIOUS 8	12:15 AM		12:30 AM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
SHARQIA-2	10:00 PM	GIFTED	10:00 PM	AVENUES-8	9:30 PM	AL-KOUT.4	10:15 PM	THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)
	12:05 AM	GIFTED	12:05 AM	MAMNO'O MIN AL EKTIRAB AW ALTASWEER	11:45 PM		12:15 AM	THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)
SHARQIA-3	9:30 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	9:45 PM	AVENUES-9	9:45 PM	BAIRAQ-1	9:45 PM	MINIONS (Re Release)
	11:30 PM	ALIEN: COVENANT	12:15 AM	GIFTED	11:45 PM		11:45 PM	GIFTED
MUHALAB-1	9:30 PM	RARANDOI VEDUKA CHUDDAM-Telugu	9:30 PM	AVENUES-10	10:00 PM	BAIRAQ-2	9:30 PM	THE BOSS BABY
	12:30 AM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	11:30 PM	THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)	12:05 AM		11:30 PM	JURASSIC WORLD (Re Release)
MUHALAB-2	10:15 PM	GIFTED	9:30 PM	AVENUES-11	10:15 PM	BAIRAQ-3	10:00 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL
	12:15 AM	GIFTED	11:30 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL-CINESCAPE 11-2D	12:15 AM		12:05 AM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
MUHALAB-3	9:45 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	10:00 PM	AVENUES-2	9:30 PM	PLAZA	9:30 PM	GODHA -Malayalam
	11:45 PM	ALIEN: COVENANT	12:05 AM	MINIONS(Re Release)-3D-4DX	12:05 AM		12:05 AM	RAMANTE EDANTHOTTAM -Malayalam
FANAR-1	10:00 PM	SACHIN: A BILLION DREAMS -Hindi	10:30 PM	AVENUES-3	9:45 PM	LAILA	9:45 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL
	12:45 AM	THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)	12:30 AM	THE BOSS BABY	12:30 AM		11:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
FANAR-2	9:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:30 PM	Special Show "ALIEN: COVENANT"	10:00 PM	AJIAL.1	9:30 PM	RAMANTE EDANTHOTTAM -Malayalam
	12:15 AM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	10:45 PM	SUN	12:15 AM		12:05 AM	GODHA -Malayalam
FANAR-3	9:30 PM	RARANDOI VEDUKA CHUDDAM-Telugu	12:45 AM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	9:30 PM	AJIAL.2	9:30 PM	SACHIN: A BILLION DREAMS -Hindi
	12:30 AM	ALIEN: COVENANT		NO SUN	9:30 PM		12:15 AM	SACHIN: A BILLION DREAMS -Hindi
FANAR-4	10:00 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	9:45 PM	AVENUES-5	9:30 PM	AJIAL.3	9:45 PM	THONDAN- Tamil
	12:05 AM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	12:15 AM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:15 AM		12:30 AM	THONDAN- Tamil
FANAR-5	9:30 PM	THE BOSS BABY	10:00 PM	AVENUES-6	10:00 PM	AJIAL.4	9:30 PM	RARANDOI VEDUKA CHUDDAM-Telugu
			12:30 AM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:30 AM			
				AVENUES-7				

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DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 28/5/2017				Departure Flights on Sunday 28/5/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
TTHY	772	Istanbul	00:10	JZR	1540	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:15	JZR	1540	Cairo	00:20
JZR	553	Alexandria	00:15	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	MSC	406	Sohag	00:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	THY	773	Istanbul	01:40
KAC	102	London	00:55	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:35
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
JZR	539	Cairo	01:25	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KKK	6505	Istanbul	02:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	MEA	409	Beirut	03:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:50	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:30
MEA	408	Beirut	02:00	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	QTR	1087	Doha	04:10
QTR	1086	Doha	02:05	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	KAC	417	Manila	04:20
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:25
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	JZR	560	Sohag	04:45
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	103	London	05:00
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15	CEB	019	Manila	05:30
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:35
QTR	1076	Doha	03:40	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:50
KAC	1544	Cairo	03:50	FEG	934	Sohag	05:55
CEB	018	Manila	04:00	RJA	643	Amman	06:25
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	THY	771	Istanbul	06:25
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
FEG	931	Alexandria	05:00	QTR	8512	Doha	06:50
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	KAC	521	Al Najaf	07:35
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05	KAC	501	Beirut	07:50
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50
QTR	8511	Doha	05:20	BAW	156	London	08:20
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	741	Dammam	08:30
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	773	Riyadh	08:35
BAW	157	London	06:05	KAC	513	Tehran	08:45
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	09:00
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	KAC	117	SNN/New York	09:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
JZR	1541	Cairo	07:10	KAC	163	Rome	09:20
KAC	354	Bangalore	07:50	JZR	534	Cairo	09:30
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	691	Muscat	09:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:40
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	101	London	09:45
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
IRC	528	Ahwaz	10:25	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:25
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	153	Istanbul	10:30
SAW	703	Damascus	10:45	QTR	1071	Doha	10:35
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
PAL	668	Manila	11:00	JZR	1770	Jeddah	11:00
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	MSC	416	Sohag	11:15
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	IRC	529	Ahwaz	11:25
KAC	522	Al Najaf	11:20	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45	SAW	704	Damascus	11:45
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
KAC	774	Riyadh	12:45	VIZ	201	TQD	12:00
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
FEG	1933	Sohag	12:55	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KAC	413	Bangkok	12:20

CROSSWORD 1621



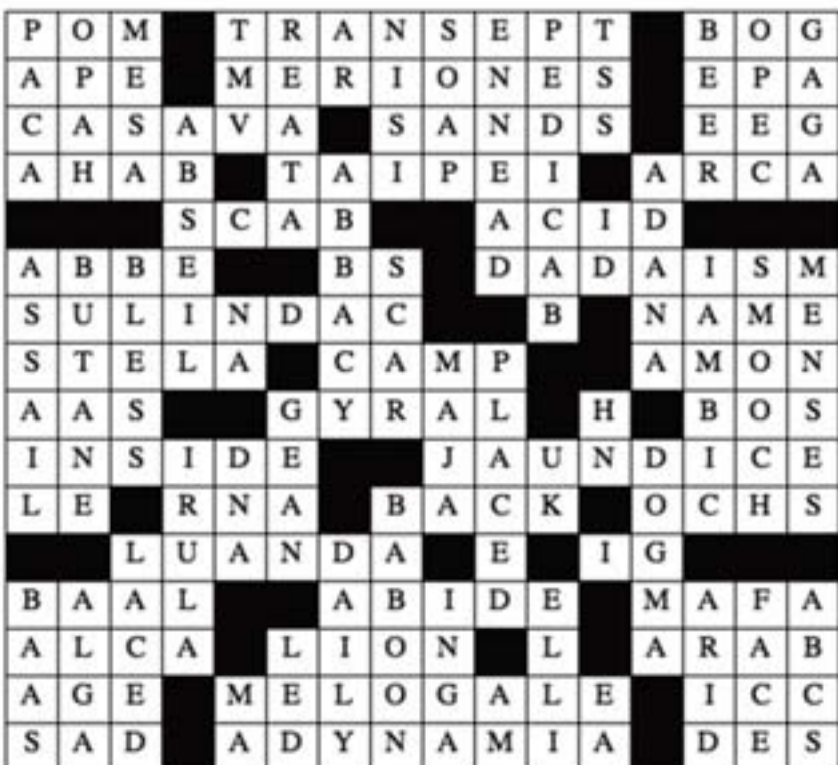
ACROSS

1. Interface consisting of a standard port between a computer and its peripherals that is used in some computers.
5. A steerable self-propelled airship.
12. The state of matter distinguished from the solid and liquid states by.
15. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
16. English writer (born in Scotland) of children's stories (1859-1932).
17. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
18. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
21. Type genus of the Tetraonidae.
23. Lap that forms a cloth border doubled back and stitched down v 1.
25. A public promotion of some product or service.
28. An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
31. A unit of length of thread or yarn.
32. A historical region on northwestern India and northern Pakistan.
36. A lapel on a woman's garment.
38. A digital display that uses liquid crystal cells that change reflectivity in an applied electric field.
40. Love intensely.
41. A nonstandard form of American English spoken by some American Black people.
43. The compass point that is one point north of due east.
45. An affirmative.
46. A police officer who investigates crimes.
47. The capital and chief port of Qatar.
49. A member of the Algonquian people formerly living the Hudson valley and eastward to the Housatonic.
52. Lifting device consisting of a platform or cage that is raised and lowered mechanically in a vertical shaft in order to move people from one floor to another in a building.
54. With a sneer.
55. A soft gray malleable metallic element that resembles tin but discolors on exposure to air.
56. 100 toea equal 1 kina.
58. How long something has existed.
59. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
61. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
62. The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
66. A loose cloak with a hood.
71. 16 ounces.
73. Lose blood from one's body.
74. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
75. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
78. A master's degree in business.
79. Being one more than two.
80. Of or relating to or near the groin.
81. An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
82. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
83. Lacking gonads.
84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. Petty quarrel.
2. An enclosure made of wire or metal bars in which birds or animals are kept.
3. Singing jazz.
4. A state in midwestern United States.
5. A fee charged for exchanging currencies.
6. A strong emotion.
7. Italian painter whose many paintings exemplify the ideals of the High Renaissance (1483-1520).
8. A lace used for fastening shoes.
9. A board game in which players try to move their pieces into their opponent's bases.
10. The United Nations agency concerned with international maritime activities.
11. The 17th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
12. Showing or causing joy and pleasure.
13. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
14. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
19. Freetail bats.
20. A choice or delicious dish.
22. Large black bird with a straight bill and long wedge-shaped tail.
24. Largest known toad species.
26. A metric unit of volume equal to one thousandth of a liter.
27. A radioactive transuranic metallic element.
29. Used by northerners of Confederate soldiers.
30. Long-legged web-footed black-and-white shorebird with slender upward-curving bill.
33. Influential Irish writer noted for his many innovations (such as stream of consciousness writing) (1882-1941).
34. Of or relating to or involving an area.
35. A small skullcap.
37. Award-winning United States film actor (1928-1999).
39. A software system that facilitates the creation and maintenance and use of an electronic database.
42. Drive away by crying "shoo!".
44. Indian religious leader who founded Sikhism (1469-1538).
48. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
50. Alcoholic liquor mixed with water or a carbonated beverage and served in a tall glass.
51. Conforming to an ultimate standard of perfection or excellence.
53. Large lipoproteins rich in triglycerides.
57. (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
60. Be in contradiction with.
63. A subsidiary proposition that is assumed to be true in order to prove another proposition.
64. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
67. Concerning those not members of the clergy.
68. The capital of Western Samoa.
69. A vigorous blow.
70. Formerly a large constellation in the southern hemisphere between Canis Major and the Southern Cross.
72. Something that hinders as if with bonds v 1.
76. A woman religious.
77. The cry made by sheep.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This day is rejuvenating, encouraging you to get much accomplished this morning. You may see gatherings of people in restaurants and parks, and being with or among these groupings of families may warm your heart. You may have created a get-together in your family today. Perhaps you will be cooking a large meal, enjoying someone else's cooking or just gathering the family together for some special time. This can be a photographic moment. You have the feeling that if you do not speak up now you could miss the opportunity to be expressive. A good conversation with those you love is possible. Physical activities such as sports among family and friends are best engaged in now. Expressing affection is easy and has the most positive results.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

All the products you see for sale today seem to be calling your name. This would be a good time to sit down and make out a list of what you really need so that you stay focused. You will be pleased with the results of your shopping trip-even if you have to walk away from a few good deals. Sex, power and money are compelling aphrodisiacs this afternoon. Be wise not to contribute to gossip or encourage gossip. Learning what makes people tick is fascinating-however, an untruth could be spread without your knowledge. This is especially true if you encourage others to carry on regarding subjects about which they really have no firsthand knowledge. You may find yourself helping a friend find that special apartment this evening.



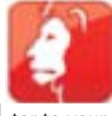
Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There is an urge to learn, discover and enjoy an adventure today. Enlarge your scope of thinking by discovering your public library. Reading current business and technical magazines or journals will clue you in on some educational classes you may want to take. Reading travel magazines may show the many possibilities that could lead to a great adventure. If you indulge in creative hobbies, consider going to that area in your library and picking something new you think you might like to learn. This is a good time for planning. There are opportunities now that will help you to grow and enhance your social wellbeing and lighten your spirit. If you are single and would like to meet someone new-this will happen soon.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This could be a difficult time to relax and remain calm. Negative feelings can only keep the positive away-including financial benefits. Your family, as well as friends, may be undergoing some hard times and could follow a different path, away from you. Your job is to stay positive and enjoy the support system that stays within your path. You will gain new friends during this time-count your blessings. Techniques for avoiding negative states are being offered to you. If you need it, loyal family members will help with financial aid. This could all mean some big changes ahead for you, but you have unusual powers to assert yourself in positive ways. Accent your home life after dark. Perhaps you can cook a special dinner tonight for your loved one.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may be able to enjoy and value your own life situation today. A visitor to your home may compliment you on your choice of decor. Companionships with others can be most rewarding at this time and you should take every opportunity to be with friends. You may have found a lot of time to devote to friends and family in the past but in becoming more career-driven, it seems difficult to find much quality time. You are smart to schedule in the times for quality visits on your calendar. You can be helping them as much as their presence is helping you. There is a heightened artistic inspiration that may manifest itself in creative work or just the urge to experience the beauty of nature. Your good cheer enhances your romance.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your energies are at a high and your best efforts-applied to any project-will be successful. Your communicative abilities are accentuated and it is an excellent time to sway others to your way of thinking. Be careful in taking a technical argument to the extremes, particularly as you may try to find a logical reason for every event that occurs. You may have political influence or handle other people's money at this time-perhaps there is an investment opportunity. You might belong to a group that pools their money to invest-the results are on the upswing. A nature walk is a great way to grow close to family members. This evening you enjoy family members for company. You have great insight and fluidity into positive future possibilities.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This morning you wake up with great ideas and will want to get to pen and paper as quickly as possible. Creating a focus and a plan may include the involvement of a family member or friend. You have an ability to exert influence and change your environment and relationships. On a mundane level, it is a good day to begin repairs or clean-or even look for a new apartment. You are ready to branch out into new directions-perhaps the beginning of a new business, a new home or to add an addition to your present home. A social setting this evening will give you an opportunity to communicate and be around the people you love. This could mean old friends and family in a picnic environment together, perhaps a homemade ice cream party.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are able to bring a group together with words or ideas that transport others. You may spend a great deal of time this morning playing with or teaching young people. This could mean you have your own children or you are leading a group of children in some fun activity. Making a good impression takes on greater importance, even with these young people, as you teach them a new creative skill or some other form of entertainment. The arts and others of life's pleasures seem to take center stage. You are persuasive with others and persuasive in speech and communication. You may find it interesting to see the response of others to your ideas. You and a loved one find time for romance this evening.



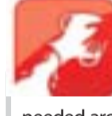
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

There may be a return of a mechanical problem today. Take your time and make sure all mechanical parts are serviced properly. A family member that lives some distance from you may enjoy talking to you by telephone today. Plan a visit within a month or so-telephone conversations are good but they will not tell you all you need to know. There is a strong emphasis on community participation-perhaps if you are not participating in a block party you could be planning one, etc. You and a friend or loved one or family members enjoy a group get-together with lots of laughter and communicating between neighbors. You feel most comfortable in these surroundings and may find yourself in a storytelling mood.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Story writing, whether it actually is a story to be published or one just developing, will get a big boost today. Ideas are easy and writing about your ideas will flow like a waterfall. Perhaps a new business plan is the object of the writing; whatever the case, much can be accomplished along these lines. You could be most persuasive with others and expressive in your communication. The situation is a natural for making yourself understood. Catching up on neighborhood gossip and visiting with friends can be enjoyed this afternoon. You are practical, realistic and stable in your feelings. Any frustrations with another can be easily solved-particularly through a compromise. Walk with a loved one after the evening meal.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Work and bad weather may have prevented the maintenance that was needed around your living quarters this winter. You may want to make those necessary changes this weekend to make you feel comfortable. Spread the jobs out over a period of time so there are not too many at one time. Completing any ongoing job will bring you a great deal of satisfaction. Any professional advice that you think you might need could be successfully taken into account. You always try to have a good understanding of the needs of others. Because of your attitude, you can communicate well with young people. A sociable, congenial, slightly frivolous orientation sets in this day. There is an opportunity to join others in the performance of a play or a show this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may be determined to change your body and your health. In order to do this you might decide to set new rules. Diet, exercise and work somehow mean more. You and a friend may be comparing different diets in order to decide the best one for now. Running, fast walking or just getting outside to walk on a routine basis will be helpful, especially with a friend. Keep firm to your own path this weekend as others may try to lead you astray. Expect interruptions, but complete your tasks. There is an air of positive attitude and much work or progress is accomplished and this could mean a hobby or a home project. Being involved in helping your loved ones this afternoon can bring you a great deal of satisfaction. Blend your activities.

WORD SEARCH

Mystery Christmas Carol

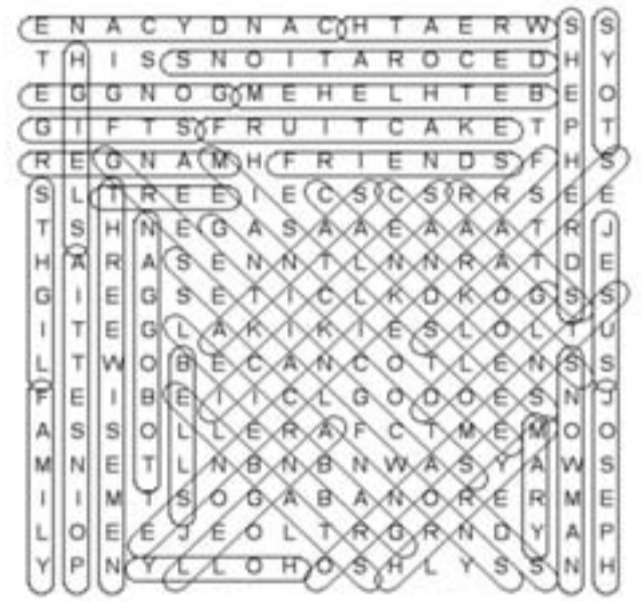
The words listed below are from a familiar Christmas Carol. What is it? Find and circle all of the words hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of the Christmas Carol.



- | | | | |
|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| ALL | FOLLOW | MEASURE | TIDE |
| ANCIENT | GAY | MERRY | TIS |
| APPAREL | HAIL | NEW | TOGETHER |
| AWAY | HARP | NOW | TREASURE |
| BEFORE | HEEDLESS | OLD | TROLL |
| BLAZING | HOLLY | OUR | WEATHER |
| BOUGHS | JOIN | PASSES | WHILE |
| CAROL | JOLLY | SEASON | WIND |
| CHORUS | JOYOUS | SING | WITH |
| DON | LADS | STRIKE | YEAR |
| FAST | LASSES | TELL | YULE |

Yesterday's Solution

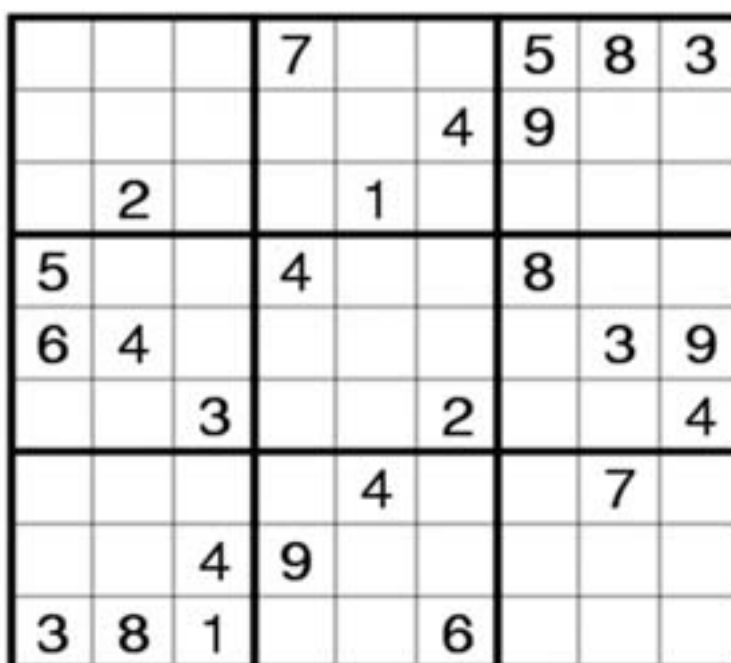
Christmas



- | | | | |
|--------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| ANGEL | FRUITCAKE | MANGER | SNOWFLAKES |
| BELLS | GABRIEL | MARY | SNOWMAN |
| BETHLEHEM | GIFTS | MISTLETOE | STABLE |
| CANDLES | GOLD | MYRRH | STAR |
| CANDY CANE | GREETING CARDS | ORNAMENTS | STOCKING |
| CAROLS | HOLLY | POINSETTIA | THREE WISE MEN |
| DECORATIONS | ICICLES | SANTA | TOBOGGAN |
| EGGNOG | JESUS | SHEPHERDS | TOYS |
| FAMILY | JOSEPH | SKATES | TREE |
| FRANKINCENSE | LIGHTS | SLEIGH | WREATH |
| FRIENDS | | | |

The hidden sentence is: TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





Ariana Grande's benefit concert is on June 4

The 23-year-old singer has vowed to return to the city where 22 of her fans were killed and over 50 injured following a terrorist attack at her concert last week and plans are reportedly in place to stage the concert early next month. A source told TMZ that Live Nation will produce the benefit gig and Ariana and her manager Scooter Braun have been reaching out to a number of high-profile stars, asking them to perform at the show. A venue has not yet been revealed but it will not be held at Manchester Arena, where the terrorist attack took place,

just after Ariana had finished performing to 21,000 fans. The star immediately flew home to the US following the atrocity but has revealed plans to return to the city to meet those affected and raise funds for the victims and their families. In a lengthy Twitter post, she said: "My heart, prayers and deepest condolences are with the victims of the Manchester Attack and their loved ones. There is nothing I or anyone can do to take away the pain you are feeling or to make this better. However, I extend my hand and heart and everything I possibly can give to you

and yours, should you want or need my help in any way. "The only thing we can do now is choose how we let this affect us and how we live our lives from here on out. "I'll be returning to the incredibly brave city of Manchester to spend time with my fans and to have a benefit concert in honor of and to raise money for the victims and their families. I want to thank my fellow musicians and friends for reaching out to be a part of our expression of love for Manchester. I will have details to share with you as soon as everything is confirmed."



Ben Stiller and Christine Taylor have split

The couple - who have daughter Ella, 15 and son Quinlin, 11, together - have announced that they have decided to separate. They told Entertainment Tonight in a statement: "With tremendous love and respect for each other, and the 18 years we spent together as a couple, we have made the decision to separate. Our priority will continue to be raising our children as devoted parents and the closest of friends. We kindly ask that the media respect our privacy at this time." Ben, 51, and Christine, 45, first met on the set of TV pilot 'Heat Vision and Jack' and tied the knot in Hawaii in 2000. And Ben admitted it was love at first sight. He said previously: "When I met her, I pretty much thought, 'That's the person.' It was like, 'Wow, this is a great person. I love her.'" Meanwhile, Ben revealed in October that he had been diagnosed with prostate cancer two years before but had kept it a secret from fans. He admitted he was taken

aback when doctors detected the life-threatening disease because it came "out of the blue", and Ben "stopped everything" and felt he couldn't agree to star in any movies because he didn't know what would happen in the future. He said: "It came out of the blue for me. I had no idea. "At first, I didn't know what was going to happen. I was scared. It just stopped everything in your life because you can't plan for a movie because you don't know what's going to happen." Ben also revealed he had an operation to have his prostate removed and whilst he was told about the side effects, he feels the decision he made was the best for him. He said: "When you're confronted with the question of, 'Hey, do you want to live, or do you want to make sure your sex life is the best it can be?', I opted for wanting to see what happens, and luckily everything's cool."



DRAKE LOVES SPRITZERS

The 'Hotline Bling' hitmaker's favourite tippie is wine mixed with soda water and DJ Nick Grimshaw once drank so many of the concoctions at a party at the rapper's house, he was sick in the toilet. Nick said: "Me and Florence [Welch] were DJing at the VMAs once and it was scary because suddenly on the dance floor were all these people I like - Kanye, Mary J. Blige, Drake, Lady Gaga - all these pop stars dancing in front of us. "Then everyone got invited to Drake's house for a party. "Drake loves white wine spritzers - 'prizzy with Drizzy'. I drank loads of white wine and was sick in his loo." Nick has a lot of famous pals he speaks to regularly, but he can only communicate with Ed Sheeran via email because the 'Shape of You' singer doesn't

have a phone. He told heat magazine: "We email - Ed doesn't have a phone. He's really genuine. "He's so good with everyone he meets - he talks to everyone and remembers their names." The 32-year-old presenter is very close to his former 'X Factor' co-judge Rita Ora and loves her caring nature - but wishes she didn't love video calling so much. He said of the 'How We Do' hitmaker: "Non-stop humour. I love her. "My only complaint is she loves to FaceTime and I hate FaceTime. "But if I was her, I would, because she always looks so good. "She is a very good friend as well. She'll go out of her way to look after you and check that you're alright."

Legend wants to perform at Cheryl Tweedy's wedding

The 38-year-old singer actually sang at Cheryl's first wedding to Ashley Cole in 2006 and although that ended in divorce, he would be happy to perform again if she ties the knot for a third time, with Liam Payne. Speaking about the possibility of performing again for Cheryl - who divorced her second husband Jean-Bernard Fernandez-Versini last year - he told The Sun: "Sure, why not? [But] I might be bad luck - I'm not sure she wants to go down that road again. "She'd be like, 'Last time you sang at my wedding you saw what happened!'" Cheryl, 33, and Ashley, 36, split in 2010 amid allegations he had cheated on her and although a number of John's songs feature infidelity, he is taking no responsibility for the split. He said: "My first album had several songs about cheating and the aftermath of cheating. "But I did not sing any cheating songs at Cheryl's wedding, I will say that for sure. I will not be blamed for anything that happened afterwards!" Meanwhile, although he has been referring to her as his wife in recent interviews, Liam, 23, insisted he has no plans to



marry Cheryl in the near future. The 'Strip That Down' singer - who has son Bear Payne with Cheryl - said: "I see marriage as more of a religious thing and I'm not really a religious person, so I know it's not really on the cards for me at the moment. So no, not yet, unfortunately."

Sir Cliff awarded damages of more than £1 million

The 76-year-old singer sued South Yorkshire Police and the BBC over the broadcast of a raid at his Berkshire home in August 2014 and although his case against the BBC is ongoing, he has settled with the police for an amount which is believed to be in excess of £1 million. His barrister Justin Rushbrooke told the Daily Mirror: "SYP has now recognised its conduct was unlawful and has agreed to pay the claimant a substantial sum by way of general and aggravated damages." The BBC said: "The police decision to settle the claim... doesn't change the fundamental principle that journalistic organisations should be able to report on the police and police investigations." Cliff saw his life turned upside down when his home was raided by police following the accusation made against him of historic sexual assault. The investigation continued for 22 months and in June 2016 he was cleared of all allegations made against him and informed by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) that the case would proceed no further as there was "insufficient evidence to prosecute". However, during his darkest moments, Cliff relied on his Christian faith to give him the strength to fight to clear his name. He previously said: "I felt closer to him (God) because I felt like, 'Who do I turn to?' There were certain friends, yes, of course, who I could turn to, but not at any time, I could turn to God in the middle of the night." Cliff's Christian beliefs meant he was able to forgive his first accuser, despite the things that had been said about



him. He added: "In fact, I forgave my first accuser on the second night. I woke up thinking, 'How do I survive this if I have hate and vengeance?' I just said to God, 'Please help me forgive him.' So I uttered the words 'I forgive you, whoever you are.' And you know what? It was a lot easier the next day because I didn't burn with hate and vengeance. So for me God became a reality much more so than he has done before, I don't know how people manage with someone like that to lean on through really bad times in your life."

Lindsay Lohan misses Hollywood

The 30-year-old actress - who had numerous run-ins with the law during her time in Hollywood - has lived in London for the last few years and been working with Syrian refugees and Lindsay insists her priorities have changed. She told E! News: "Yeah, I miss Hollywood. "[But] I think there's a lot of noise that we deal with, so I found a kind of peace in life working with children and helping other people that really interest me. "I think it's important for us to see that all of this stuff is fun, but you have to take time for you." Earlier this year, Lindsay visited Syrian refugees fleeing from the war-torn country to Turkey and revealed her hopes that her visit would help to raise awareness of those being displaced by the unrest in the country. She admitted: "I cried right away, right off the bat. These kids... they're scattered of bombs going off every second. "But you just see that they have this light inside of them and seeing a new face in somebody willing to teach them, sit with them, and bringing attention to other people coming to do that is really important. "I mean, the stories of some of these women, and this young girl Bana [Alabed, a refugee she met in Turkey], who's the first child who has a voice in what's going on, it's incredible." Lindsay also visited Turkey back in September, where she spent quality time with the refugees in their camp and she is "passionate" about making a difference.



Debra Messing has a huge number of allergies

The 'Will and Grace' actress attended an event for Haute Living magazine at New York restaurant Mamo earlier this week but before the bash, the publication was issued with a long list of her allergies to ensure she did not suffer a reaction. The New York Post's Page Six column obtained the list, allegedly sent by Debra's representatives, which read: "Food allergies: Debra is allergic to ALL WHITE FISH, chicken, mushrooms, gluten, dairy (except feta and goat cheese). Debra does not eat game, beans, yogurt, broccoli, cauliflower. She is lactose intolerant. She cannot have cheese or milk (only coconut milk). "Allergies: Debra is allergic to wool, cats, cashmere, down feathers, FLOWERS and gabardine [a type of woven cloth]. The only flower she is not allergic to is orchids." A special menu was provided and all flowers were replaced with orchids. Haute Media Group co-founder Seth Semilof said: "We were happy to provide a vegan and gluten-free menu at the release party of her Haute Living NYC cover." Debra, 48, has been open about her allergies in the past. She previously said: "I've had some very severe attacks... My allergies would take away from my feelings of self-confidence at work. I was always worrying that suddenly my eyes would start weeping or I'd be sneezy... There have been times when I couldn't even take my son to the park."

GOSSIP



Miranda Kerr and Evan Spiegel set to marry

The 34-year-old model and her billionaire 26-year-old fiancé, who founded social media app Snapchat will reportedly tie the knot at their Los Angeles home in front of close friends and family. A source told the New York Post's Page Six: "The wedding will be beautiful, super small and private, with only around 30 guests - just very close friends and family. Both Miranda and Evan wanted the ceremony to be very private." Miranda was previously married to Orlando Bloom, the father of her son Flynn, six, from 2010 to 2013 and she admitted Evan's proposal last year was a complete surprise. She said: "[Was I expecting it?] Absolutely not. He said to me, 'Miranda, I'm telling you now, this is the first and last time I'm going to kneel down in front of you.' I was terribly nervous and emotional,

trembling with happiness." And she often gushes over her love in interviews, previously saying: "Evan is real home-body like me. We have little dinner parties for our friends - he loves my cooking. Both of us are quite conservative even though we come from different worlds. "But we have common values, a sense of loyalty, family and honesty. I tend to trust other people more easily. Evan is more guarded and reserved. It's a good balance. "We spend hours talking about everything. He listens to me and he understands me. "He works very hard and he's proud that I've started my own business. He gives me tons of advice. He's my soulmate."

Bella Thorne 'not talking' to Scott Disick

Despite pictures emerging of the pair getting cosy by the pool earlier this week, the 'Famous In Love' star insists nothing is going on. When one fan tweeted, "Waiting for @bellathorne to tweet that she's not talking to Scott and that she's actually with someone else (sic)", the red-haired beauty replied: "Hahahah I'm not talking to scott or anyone else. #dontf**kwithit (sic)" And when another follower asked her what she was doing with Scott, she replied: "Legit nothing trolololo (sic)" It will come as a surprise to everyone after the 19-year-old actress was seen getting up close and personal with the 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' star. An eyewitness shared at the time: "Scott looked on laughing as the girls screamed, but then they decided it was Scott's turn and they wanted to get their revenge. At first Scott resisted but then he gave in and let Bella push him in. He had a big smile on his face and was dripping wet. "He pulled Bella close to him and she sat on his lap to dry off. They were both drenched in their clothes and kissing. They were laughing and having a good time. "They spent all day laying out and flirting with one another. They kissed several times and at one point Bella laid on top of Scott and ran her hands through his hair. When Scott got a FaceTime call on his phone, Bella got into the picture and was goofing around in the background. They stayed outside cuddling all day."



Saldana lets her sons run free around her house

The 'Guardians of the Galaxy' star is a mum to infant son Zen and two-year-old twins Cy and Bowie with her husband Marco Perego and whilst she lets her kids roam where they want in her house, she admits she tries to avoid playdates because she doesn't want other parents to get angry at them for being so loud. She said: "Our kids are free. We're rambunctious. We're a loud family, and we don't stop from 5am to 9pm. "And literally, we just don't have any play dates. You can always come to our house, our doors are open. "But we don't ever want them to be exposed to negligence or to someone getting angry with them for just being boys." Zoe lost her father when she was quite young and her sons have made her rethink how she views boys and men. She added to People magazine: "I lost my dad very

early on and even though I had a lot of male mentors in my life, either by family or being friends or just educators that inspired me, I still went through my aggressive stage in my 20s of forcefully being a feminist. "You know, I'm a feminist because I have to fight men and everything and it's not until the universe with its way of being ironic, blessed me with raising men that I realised I am so humbled. I couldn't be more in awe of who they are their natures as boys. We put so much pressure on them. "Through our nurture we tamper so much. So I've been leaning in on the books and talking to parents of boys, getting any advice from fathers and mothers that we can grab. My husband and I are sponges because we are determined to raise happy, stress-free men."



Nicole Kidman's committed to her family

The 'Secret in Their Eyes' star - who has Sunday, eight, and Faith, six, with her husband Keith Urban - has praised her family for keeping her going. She said: "It makes you able to go out and tackle everything." When she was growing up, the 49-year-old actress - who also has Isabella, 24, and Connor, 22, with her ex-husband Tom Cruise - spent time with her mother Janelle, a nursing executive, which she says informed her role in 'The Killing of a Sacred Deer'. She told the Daily Mail newspaper: "All through my childhood I'd go to the hospital with my mum. In 'Sacred Deer', they said, 'Oh, we need to teach you how to apply a tube to a patient,' and I said, 'I know how to do that!' I wasn't boasting. I had watched Mum do it for years ... It's only pretend in the movies. Mum did it all for real!" Meanwhile, Nicole previously revealed she approaches her acting career like she's 21-years-old again. She explained: "I'm at that place in my life where I try to act as though I'm 21 and starting my career. "At this stage in my life, I'm trying to stay bold and open and try things and support filmmakers that I believe in." And the blonde beauty confessed to turning down work for the sake of her family. She added: "My time is precious, I think once you reach a certain age the time becomes incredibly important - you're like [gasp]. I'm raising a six and an eight year old who are in school so there's only a certain amount of time I can work because of their school year."

Robert Pattinson faked his accent at auditions

The 'Remember Me' star has revealed how he would adopt an American accent when he went to audition for certain films rather than his British accent as he didn't want people to know he was born in the UK as he felt it stopped him getting particular roles. During a panel at Cannes Film Festival, director Josh Safdie - who is at the helm of Robert's new film 'Good Time' - said: "You were telling me that story about how you'd go to auditions with your Denver accent, because you just did not want anyone to know that you were British-born." To which Robert further explained: "I would do an impression. I would have another character to go to an audition to play a different character." It comes after Robert admitted he is a "manic" person. Speaking about his role in 'Good Time', he revealed: "I don't know how much of it was really me other than being really manic. No one really sees that. That's a private thing. I'm someone who just stops at a red light and I'm just revving ... "Because we were shooting guerrilla style, I was so nervous [about] people finding out about the shoot and paparazzi being there. It destroys the illusion of it. What I was doing as a person was feeding into the character, trying to disappear, trying to be a ghost in the crowd." Robert and the make-up team also experimented with a set of different looks beforehand and decided that adding some fake scars to his flesh would put fans off track. He added: "We experimented with a few different things. You've got these pock marks in the skin and no one recognizes you. We shot the movie on the streets of New York, and no one took a cell phone photo."

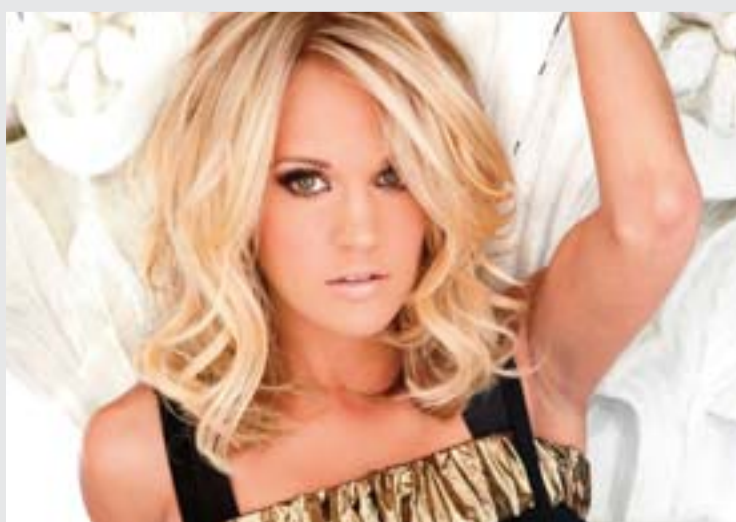


HAYEK THOUGHT HER HUSBAND WAS CHEATING ON HER

The 'From Dusk till Dawn' star has confessed to flying at her husband Francois-Henri Pinault - who hails from France - when she spotted a message from an Elisa on his phone asking to practice his English with him but was left red-faced when he revealed it was just a standard message generated from an app he had downloaded to improve his English. Speaking on The Graham Norton Show, she said: "One day there was a message on his phone that said, 'Hi, if you want to improve your English why don't we practice now.' It was a very sexy voice and I thought, 'What the hell? Who is this Elisa coming after my husband?' But then I thought, 'No, let it go.' "Anyway, about three hours later I just screamed and shouted at him, 'Who is Elisa and why is she calling you?' He was laughing when he explained it was an app that was helping him improve his English accent!" Meanwhile, the 50-year-old actress - who has nine-year-old daughter Valentina with her husband - previously revealed her family is her "biggest blessing". She said: "It's not success in this or in that, or money or things, or beauty. What if you're really beautiful and you're not loved? That's not gonna make you happy. But what makes you happy is, for me, my family. They are the biggest blessing I have."



Underwood 'competes' against other gym goers



The 34-year-old singer - who has two-year-old son Isaiah with her husband Mike Fisher - doesn't put pressure on herself to do intense workouts anymore but admits she can't resist getting competitive in a Barry's Bootcamp class. She said: "I love just putting headphones in and going for a run. I feel so good when I get home, especially when it's hot. I'm one of those weirdos that likes to run when it's super hot outside! Or classes. I find myself competing with other people in the room. I'm like, 'Oh she's good, I want to be like her!' I try to 'beat' someone in the class. They have no idea we're competing!" Carrie has just launched her own fashion line and admitted using her own workout gear is extra motivation to hit the gym. She explained: "I used to go to the gym in ratty old sweats, but if you already feel good going into your workout, it just kind of gives you that

little extra lift." And being a mother to Isaiah means Carrie doesn't always have time to fit in a proper work out and instead uses activities she does with her family to exercise. She told People magazine: "It just happens if and when it happens. I've gotten a lot better at doing what I can when I can, but also cutting myself a little slack. You have to! "Now it's like, 'Okay, I have 20 minutes. What can I do in 20 minutes?' I can go run for a little while, I can go do some tabata rounds, I can do something. Sometimes I'm like, my workout today is going to be running around after my kid. If we're going to go to the park, why not run there and push him in the stroller? Then I get a good cardio session to and from, and then he gets to play, so everybody wins."

70th Cannes Film Festival

FEATURES



(From L) British actress Jacqueline Bisset, Belgian actor Jeremie Renier, French director Francois Ozon, French actress Marine Vacth and French actress Myriam Boyer pose as they arrive on May 26, 2017 for the screening of the film 'L'Amant Double' (Amant Double).



(From Left) US actress Kirsten Dunst, US actress Elle Fanning, US director Sofia Coppola, Australian actress Nicole Kidman and US producer Youree Henley pose as they arrive on May 24, 2017 for the screening of the film 'The Beguiled' at the 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival. — AFP photos

Hollywood raids bookshelves in search of good stories

Hollywood has always adapted the classics but film and television's voracious appetite for new material now has film-makers raiding the bookshelves like never before.

Six of the movies in the running for the Cannes film festival's Palme d'Or top prize—which will be awarded today—are taken from books.

Sofia Coppola drew from Thomas Cullinan's classic Southern Gothic novel for "The Beguiled" starring Colin Farrell as a handsome Union officer who stokes sexual tension and jealousy inside a girl's school during the American Civil War. And Francois Ozon turned up the temperature of Joyce Carol Oates' sexual psycho drama "Double Delight" to almost unbearable levels for his steamy "Amant double".

The thirst for gripping new yarns has been fuelled by the boom in high-quality television series, meaning there are only so many good scripts going round, experts argue. Which is why "cinema, like TV, is on the lookout for really good stories", said Judith

Becqueriaux, of the French publishing house Denoel. "And a good book gives you a story which has already won over the public," she added. "There is more and more demand" for books to adapt, insisted Nathalie Piskowski of the main French publishers' body, with cinema adaptations rising by a fifth according to the latest available figures.

Rights snapped up

Such is the demand that film-makers are not even waiting for books to be published before snapping up the rights. More than 130 international producers took part in a special book rights market at Cannes this week, with publishers pitching them some of their new releases and soon-to-published novels. "A book adaptation gives a certain guarantee of success and helps the film get made," Piskowski argued.

Cannes is only one of a growing number of festivals where publishers are bringing books to be optioned for the screen. The

Berlin festival has its own showcase called "Books at the Berlinale" in a link up with the world's biggest book market, the Frankfurt Book Fair. Similar organized "pitching sessions" are now also taking place in Los Angeles and Shanghai. Some of the biggest deals in Cannes this year were for children's books, with the movie franchise of the Moomins, the Finnish storybook characters, sold to China. This comes as "Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets"—the most expensive European film ever made at \$190 million (170 millions euro) — is about to hit the screens in July.

Comics a sure bet

The massive project from Luc Besson, of "The Fifth Element" fame, is based on a French comic book. "For the last decade or so more and more film-makers are drawing from graphic novels because it's a super base and the stories are already well developed," said Alexis Ducord, whose comic animated film about a family of zombies, "Zombillennium", was shown at Cannes. "In a 12-

month period, eight films drawn from books in our back catalogue have either been released or are about to be released," said Helene de Saint Vincent, who handles the rights for three graphic novel houses.

But most directors are not interested in directing a book's narrative "straight", according to Nathalie Carpentier, whose company CAL deals with a number of international publishing houses. Instead they are looking for a "story which they can play with like a Playmobil toy and that will have enough action and emotion for the director to show that their film isn't simply bringing the book to the screen". But having a book optioned for a film is not quite the financial boon that many people believe. Average rights now sell for around 45,000 euros (\$50,000), with the biggest deals reaching 200,000 euros—with only a fraction of that going to the authors. — AFP

The Cannes effect: From unknown to star in a day

The Cannes film festival—the world's greatest movie showcase—celebrates its 70th anniversary this year. AFP asked actors and directors who made their names at the festival to recount their highs and lows at the star-studded event.

Danis Tanovic

Bosnian filmmaker Danis Tanovic, whose film "No Man's Land" won the Cannes prize for best screenplay in 2001 and best foreign film at the Oscars the following year, said there is "a magical effect of the Cannes film festival". Before the festival in 2001, Tanovic's team searched for internet mentions of the film and "there were some 30 or 50 sites announcing it," he told AFP in Sarajevo. "The next day, there were 350,000 sites that were mentioning the movie. The effect of Cannes is really incredible." But his most "important" memory was after the film's screening.

The applause "was not stopping. The whole theatre room was standing," he said. "Cedo (producer Cedimir Kolar) was counting, it was lasting more than 12 minutes. I was completely lost. At one point, I turned towards my parents who were there and I saw that they were crying. That was maybe the best moment of my life." "We had survived the war and all that it had brought to us, and then comes this sincere moment of joy and their gaze, you see pride in the eyes of your parents, the joy of seeing their child who succeeded to escape a bad dream." Tanovic said Cannes can be "an incredible springboard" for those with films that succeed, but "if you get there with a bad movie, you disap-

pear before even making the appearance".

Jaco Van Dormael

All of Belgian director Jaco Van Dormael's most significant images of Cannes happened the year his film "Totò Le Hero" premiered at the festival and won the Golden Camera and Youth awards, in 1991. When the huge crowd in front of the Palais des Festivals finally managed to make its way inside, "I found an abandoned shoe on the steps. It's a very 'Eisensteinian' image," he said, referring to a scene in the 1925 film "Battleship Potemkin" by pioneering Russian director Sergei Eisenstein.

Matteo Garrone

Italian filmmaker Matteo Garrone won the Grand Jury Prize in 2008 for his film "Gomorra", which is also the year of his first and best memory of the festival. "I was with my partner who was at the time pregnant with my first child and we mounted the steps before the screening of the film," he said. "When we entered the great hall, we hadn't been told the cameras would follow us live all the way to our seats. We unexpectedly saw our faces on the giant screen amid the applause of 2,000 people. We were shocked with emotion." Garrone said it's that arrival, first and foremost, that comes to mind when he thinks of Cannes, "more so than the phone call, a few days later that informed me the film had won an award". — AFP



French-Polish director Roman Polanski (C) talks yesterday during a press conference with French actress Emmanuelle Seigner (L) and French actress Eva Green for the film 'Based on a True Story' (D'Après une Histoire Vraie) at Cannes. — AFP



Director Patty Jenkins, left, and actress Gal Gadot arrive at the world premiere of "Wonder Woman" at the Pantages Theatre on Thursday, May 25, 2017, in Los Angeles. — AP

Female-only 'Wonder Woman' screenings set off complaints

Plans by a Texas theater to host women-only screenings of the action movie "Wonder Woman" unleashed an outpouring of complaints on social media of discrimination and sexism on Friday. The superhero movie opens in theaters nationwide next week, and the Alamo Drafthouse Ritz in Austin, Texas scheduled two female-only nights for a few days later.

"Apologies, gentlemen, but we're embracing our girl power and saying 'No Guys Allowed,'" the cinema wrote on its website. The movie, starring Israeli actress Gal Gadot, is based on a comic book character introduced in 1941, fighting villains, rescuing victims and unearthing evil plots. "How about a 'men's only' showing of a movie or is that not how equality works?" someone wrote on the cinema chain's Austin Facebook page, where more than 1,000 people left comments.

The popularity of the women-only shows, which quickly sold out, prompted the chain to add similar screenings in New York. "This has zip to do with equality. This is a celebration of a character that's meant a great deal to many women," the theater said on Facebook. The movie already triggered controversy last year when the character of Wonder Woman was chosen as an honorary U.N. ambassador to fight for gender equality. Tens of thousands of people signed an online petition, saying the fictional character was an inappropriate choice and that its evolution into a scantily clad and curvaceous heroine did not represent gender empowerment. The United Nations abruptly ended the character's role two months into her appointment. — Reuters

'OH? NO! HOMER AND 'THE SIMPSONS' TEAM EARN HALL TRIBUTE

Steve Sax won two World Series rings, was a five-time All-Star and got nearly 2,000 hits in the big leagues. Yet to many fans, it's those half-dozen lines he uttered to a bunch of yellow cartoon characters a long time ago that really made him famous. "I get asked as much about being on 'The Simpsons' as I do about baseball," Sax said this week. "They don't want to know how it was to hit against Nolan Ryan. They want to know about being on that show." All thanks to "Homer at the Bat".

Still hugely popular 25 years after it first aired, that Simpsons episode featuring the voices of Ken Griffey Jr., Darryl Strawberry, Jose Canseco and a lineup full of luminaries gets a fitting tribute Saturday from the national pastime. That's when the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, will present a plaque to Homer - well, really a piece of paper. Plus, a Simpsons-themed exhibit will open inside the shrine after a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Sweeping the nation

Actual Hall members Ozzie Smith and Wade Boggs will be in town to talk about taping their roles as Homer's teammates on the ringed-up Springfield Nuclear Plant company softball squad. Hired by the evil Mr Burns for the championship game, almost all of them are befallen by an odd fate and can't play. Miami Marlins manager Don Mattingly was playing for the New York Yankees when he lent his voice to the animated show about a funny-looking family that was sweeping the nation.

"I didn't know a whole lot about it, honestly. I knew it was hot and my kids watched it, but I didn't really know that much," Mattingly said. Doesn't to this day, either. He's never seen the half-hour program from start to finish. "No, not the whole thing," Mattingly said. Mattingly missed the big softball game, too. He gets kicked off the team for not cutting sideburns Burns imagines he has, yet mutters "I still like him better than Steinbrenner" as he trudges away. The season before, in real life, Mattingly was benched by the Yankees for not getting a haircut to adhere to the strict policies of owner George Steinbrenner.

Though Donnie Baseball didn't tune in, plenty of people saw "The Simpsons" the night it aired on

Feb. 20, 1992. In their third season, Bart & Co. out-drew "The Cosby Show" for the first time in a head-to-head matchup, and also topped the telecast of the Winter Olympics. The show took months to assemble, with players taping when their teams played at Dodger Stadium or the Angels in Anaheim during the 1991 season. Members of "The Simpsons" staff divvied up which guys they would direct.

Executive story editor Jeff Martin, a Red Sox fan from his days of rooting for Carl Yastrzemski, drew Boston pitcher Roger Clemens. Great, only one hitch: Martin had to inform the imposing Clemens

the script called for him to cluck like a chicken. Over and over.

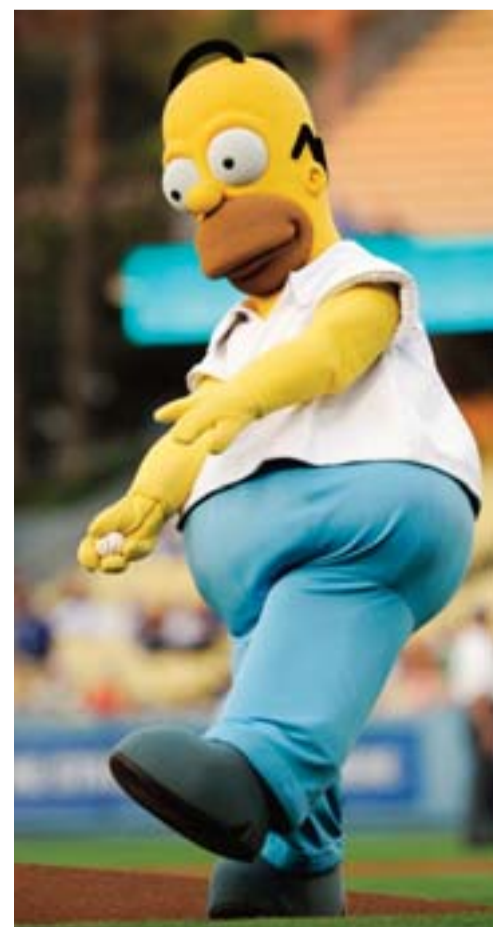
D'oh!

"I had visions of telling him and having him stomp out," Martin recalled this week from Fenway Park. "But without missing a beat, he started clucking away." Clemens was fine with his character being put under a spell by a hypnotist. In the cartoon, Sax was arrested for hundreds of unsolved murders in New York. "I liked mine in the show. Got to show off my rough side," Sax kidded.

The only player who wasn't happy with his part was Canseco - rather than a scandalous plot, he wanted to be more gallant. And the Simpsons crew got every star it wanted except one, with Ryne Sandberg passing and Sax taking his place at second base. In the show, Strawberry is the lone star able to play vs. the Shelbyville Nuclear Plant. He connects for nine home runs, but Homer pinch hits for him in the bottom of the ninth inning with two outs, the bases loaded and the score tied.

This time, Homer turns out to be a hero. He gets hit in the head with a pitch, giving Springfield a 44-43 win. A walk-off winner - actually, he's knocked out. There were a lot of unusual twists in this episode, in fact, even by Simpsons standards. "At the time, I think we thought maybe this show is too weird for some people," Martin said. As it came out over the years, a couple of actors who voiced prominent characters in the show notably didn't like the episode written by Simpsons great John Swartzwelder.

Los Angeles Angels manager Mike Scioscia liked it then, and now. He was catching for the Los Angeles Dodgers when he did his part, which had him miss the big softball game because of acute radiation poisoning. "I'm still signing Simpsons items," he said. The residuals are nice, too. "The checks come in, usually they're about 79 cents," he said, laughing. "A big one might be six bucks." — AP



In this July 11, 2008, file photo, a person in a Homer Simpson costume throws the first pitch before the start of the baseball game between the Florida Marlins and Los Angeles Dodgers at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. — AP

CHRIS CORNELL

REMEMBERED AS 'VOICE OF OUR GENERATION'



In this Sept 5, 2008, file photo, musician Chris Cornell performs on stage during Conde Nast's Fashion Rocks show in New York.



A fan wearing a Soundgarden T-shirt reacts following a funeral for Chris Cornell at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery on Friday, May 26, 2017, in Los Angeles. — AP/AFP photos

Music's elite and Hollywood stars remembered Chris Cornell at a somber memorial service Friday that focused on the Soundgarden frontman's love of family and friends as much as it did on his musical achievements as one of rock's leading voices.

"Chris was as melodic as The Beatles, as heavy as Sabbath and as haunting as Edgar Allan Poe," Tom Morello, Cornell's Audioslave bandmate, said during his eulogy. "The demons he wrestled with were real, but he harnessed those demons and rode them like a mother-flipping chariot of lightning strapped with Marshall stacks to make some of the greatest rock 'n' roll of all time." Linkin Park singer Chester Bennington and guitarist Brad Delson performed Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" for the crowd of mourners, including Brad Pitt, Pharrell Williams, James Franco, Christian Bale and numerous members of rock royalty, many of whom were moved to tears.



A plaque marking Chris Cornell's gravesite appears, covered in guitar picks, flowers, photos and notes.

Four large portraits of Cornell were on display on a dais where Morello, actor Josh Brolin, Pearl Jam bassist Jeff Ament, film producer Eric Esrailian and Cornell's Soundgarden bandmates Kim Thayil and Matt Cameron delivered eulogies under overcast skies at Hollywood Forever Cemetery. They all spoke of the rocker's compassion and his delight in his three children. Cameron said he and Cornell had "so many normal dad conversations" about the Cornell kids: Christopher, Toni and Lily.

"Losing my brother and artistic soulmate will always pale in comparison with you three kids losing your dad," Cameron said. "Let it be known that I am here for you and will forever be in your lives." Linda Ramone opened the service with words that Cornell was buried next to her late husband, punk rocker Johnny Ramone, whose headstone features a statue of him playing guitar.

Cornell's grave marker, decorated with bouquets of flowers and several red roses, reads, "Voice of our generation and an artist for all time." Cornell's music played before the hourlong service, and afterward as guests visited his grave site in the cemetery's Garden of Legends section. Among those paying respects were Dave Grohl of Foo Fighters; Krist Novoselic from Nirvana; Lars Ulrich and James Hetfield of Metallica; Dave Navarro and Perry Farrell of Jane's Addiction; singer-songwriter Joe Walsh; guitarist Nile Rodgers; rocker Courtney Love and Bush's Gavin Rossdale.

Death of a legend

Scores of fans gathered outside the cemetery during the service awaiting a public viewing of Cornell's grave site later Friday afternoon. "We had to be here. He was part of our generation," said 49-year-old Marcus Dubray, breaking into tears. He and his wife were visiting Los Angeles from Sacramento for her birthday when they heard about Cornell's service. "I was ready to go to Seattle" for the funeral, said fellow fan Alfredo Perez, 47.

Melody Andrade brought her 4-year-old son Jude to memorialize the Seattle rocker. The pair wore matching T-shirts that read, "Say Hello 2 Heaven," the title of a Temple of the Dog song Cornell wrote. "I feel like this is just as big as the death of Elvis or John Lennon. That's why I had to bring my son," Andrade said. "There will never be another. He's a modern day Freddie Mercury. I needed some closure on this."

Fans brought flowers and notes and sang Cornell's songs together. Some listened to his music aloud on their phones. One fan brought a guitar and strummed Soundgarden songs. Many left heartfelt notes, guitar picks and one woman left roses wrapped in a flannel shirt, an emblem of the grunge era. Hollywood Forever Cemetery is the final resting place for numerous stars, including Jayne Mansfield, Douglas Fairbanks, Rudolph Valentino and Cecil B. DeMille.

Cornell, 52, was pronounced dead May 18 after he was found unresponsive in a Detroit hotel room hours after performing a concert with Soundgarden. Coroner's officials said preliminary autopsy results show the singer hanged himself, but full toxicology results remain pending. The singer's family has disputed the findings and claim Cornell may have taken more of an anti-anxiety drug than he was prescribed. Cornell was a leading voice of the grunge movement in the 1990s. Besides Soundgarden, he scored hits as a solo artist and with bands Temple of the Dog and Audioslave. He is survived by his wife and three children. — AP

Fans visit the grave of Chris Cornell at Hollywood Forever Cemetery following a funeral service earlier in the day for the Soundgarden frontman.



Musician and singer Tom Morello attends the funeral.



Musician Dave Navarro at the memorial service.



Actor James Franco attends the funeral.



Tripp Holland, from left, Bamm-Bamm Slattery and Valerie Bourque, wearing Soundgarden t-shirts, watch cars enter the Hollywood Forever Cemetery.



Matt Cameron, of Soundgarden, right, hugs a guest.



Chester Bennington, of Linkin Park.

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, MAY 28, 2017

Chris Cornell
remembered as 'voice
of our generation'

39



Students perform a prayer on the first day of the holy fasting month of 'Ramadan' at Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah Islamic boarding school in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. — AP/AFP photos



A member of Tehran's moon-sighting headquarters searches the sky with a telescope for the new moon that signals the start of the Islamic holy month.

Ramadan

from around the world



A Palestinian man holds a copy of the Quran, Islam's holiest book, on the first day of fasting.



Malaysian Muslims
break their fast in
Kuala Lumpur.



Afghan Muslim men sleep as they wait to break their fast at a mosque in Jalalabad.



A man holds a tray of traditional sweets in Arbil, the capital of the Kurdish autonomous region in northern Iraq.



An Egyptian man makes "Katayef", a pancake-like Arabic sweet made at his stall in the Bani Mazar province, in the Minya governorate.