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documentation
of deep-rooted
ties with US



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EMBASSIES, AGENCIES WARY OF NEW MAID RECRUITING COMPANY

AL-DURRA PROMISES TO LOWER COST OF HIRING DOMESTIC HELPERS



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INDIA SCRAPS BANK GUARANTEE CLAUSE FOR HIRING MAIDS

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: The government of India has scrapped with immediate effect the \$2,500 bank guarantee measure that was enforced earlier for recruitment of Indian female domestic workers for Kuwait, a press release issued by the Indian Embassy in Kuwait said. The cancellation of the policy measure brings an end to a two-year-old dispute between Kuwait and India.

The Indian government had mandated in Nov 2014 that every employer who wanted to recruit an Indian female domestic worker had to provide a bank guarantee of \$2,500 (KD 730) to the Indian Embassy, drawing protests from Kuwaiti authorities. The issue was even raised in the National Assembly and several MPs called for stringent measures against India, such as halting of recruitment of manpower from India. The cancellation is applicable to all GCC countries.

"The measure was withdrawn primarily because it was not acceptable to Kuwait. Secondly, the measure was proven ineffective," said Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain. The ambassador said India's Minister of State for External Affairs M J Akbar is visiting Kuwait on Sept 18, heading a high-level delegation to attend the Joint

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KUWAIT: A housemaid waits at an office for domestic workers in a commercial complex in Kuwait City in this July 14, 2016 file photo. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Ben Garcia and Isobel Ransome

KUWAIT: A government-backed recruitment agency for domestic helpers in Kuwait is mooted to lower fees and clean up the industry. But embassies of countries with large populations of domestic helpers here as well as private recruiting agencies, both in Kuwait and in those countries, oppose the plan. This fall, the newly-established recruitment company tasked with hiring domestic helpers from labor-exporting countries such as the Philippines and Sri Lanka is set to launch operations.

Speaking exclusively with Kuwait Times, Saleh Al-Wehaib, General Manager of Al-Durra (KSCC), said the government-run agency will start recruiting domestic helpers once the labor-sending sources and fees are successfully negotiated and requirements of the relevant embassies are clear.

"We are in the process of introducing the company to the governments of labor-exporting countries. We submitted our profile to relevant higher authorities and spoke to their ambassadors. They told us to present our company's profile and submit all their requirements and documents. We are here to follow all the set rules and procedures specified by these countries. Once everything is completed, we will start recruiting. The privately-owned domestic labor supplying agencies currently operating will remain, but they have to compete with the new lower recruitment costs we will be introducing," Wehaib said.

It is the costs that are at the heart of the problem. Embassies and private recruitment agencies don't want lower costs - as this will mean lower revenue. Though no specific statistics are available, recruitment of domestic helpers is a lucrative business for both sides.

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SHARAPOVA OUSTED AT US OPEN, VENUS ADVANCES

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IN NICARAGUA, A FIGHT TO SAVE ENDANGERED TAPIRS

PAGE 23

TOTAL SELLS STAKE IN NORWEGIAN OIL FIELD TO KUWAIT

LOVED ONES WELCOME RETURNING HAJJIS



KUWAIT: Ululating and beaming with smiles, relatives and loved ones of hajj pilgrims welcome the returning faithful at Kuwait airport with roses and flowers yesterday. Having performed the rituals, pilgrims are returning to Kuwait to a warm welcome by their relatives and families, thanking the Saudi authorities for the extraordinary services during the hajj. Personnel of the interior ministry are facilitating the pilgrims' return via the airport, through which some 8,000 flew to the holy land. — KUNA

PARIS: French oil giant Total said yesterday it has agreed to sell its remaining stake in a Norwegian oil field to Kuwait so that it can focus on its recent acquisition of Denmark's Maersk Oil. "Total has signed an agreement to divest its remaining 15-percent interest in the Gina Krog field in Norway to Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC)," Total said in a statement. "In the framework of our portfolio management and optimization of the allocation of capital, we have decided to fully divest our interest in the Gina Krog project and focus on other opportunities in Norway," said Total's head of exploration and production, Arnaud Breuillac.

"With the recent acquisition of Maersk Oil & Gas, the group's position in the North Sea will be significantly strengthened, in particular in Norway." Total announced on Aug 21 that it would buy Maersk Oil for \$7.45 billion (6.35 billion euros), making it the second-largest operator in the North Sea, with substantial operations in Britain, Norway and Denmark. For its part, KUFPEC said the deal was valued at \$317 million. Total already sold a 15-percent stake Gina Krog to Kuwait in 2016. It put the combined value of both that deal and the latest one at more than \$600 million. The Gina Krog field is situated in the North Sea and is controlled by Norwegian giant Statoil. — AFP

SUU KYI, MYANMAR FACE CHORUS OF ANGER

YANGON: Nobel peace laureate Malala Yousafzai and mainly Muslim countries in Asia led a growing chorus of criticism yesterday aimed at Myanmar and its civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi over the plight of the Rohingya Muslim minority. Nearly 90,000

Rohingya have flooded into Bangladesh in the past 10 days following an uptick in fighting between militants and Myanmar's military in strife-torn western Rakhine state.

The impoverished region bordering Bangladesh has been a crucible of communal

tensions between Muslims and Buddhists for years, with the Rohingya forced to live under apartheid-like restrictions on movement and citizenship. The recent violence, which began last October when a small Rohingya militant group ambushed border posts, is the worst Rakhine has witnessed in years, with the UN saying Myanmar's army may have committed ethnic cleansing in its response.

Suu Kyi, a former political prisoner of Myanmar's junta, has come under increasing fire over her perceived unwillingness to speak out against the treatment of the Rohingya or chastise the military. She has made no public comment since the latest fighting broke out on Aug 25. "Every time I see the news, my heart breaks at the suffering of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar," Pakistani activist Yousafzai, who famously survived being shot in the head by the Taliban, said in a statement on Twitter. "Over the last several years I have repeatedly condemned this tragic and shameful treatment. I am still waiting for my fellow Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi to do the same," she added.

Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah Aman also questioned Suu Kyi's silence. "Very frankly, I am dissatisfied with Aung San Suu Kyi," Anifah told AFP. "(Previously) she stood up for the principles of human rights."

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KUTUPALONG, Bangladesh: An injured elderly woman and her relatives rush to a hospital in an autorickshaw near this border town yesterday. The Rohingya woman encountered a landmine that blew off her right leg while trying to cross into Bangladesh. — AP (See Page 6)



WARSAW: This photo taken on July 17, 2017 shows Britain's Prince William and his wife Kate with their children Prince George and Princess Charlotte. — AFP

PRINCE WILLIAM AND KATE EXPECTING THIRD CHILD

LONDON: Prince William and his wife Kate are expecting their third child, Kensington Palace announced yesterday, as she was forced to cancel a public event due to acute morning sickness. The 35-year-old is again suffering from hyperemesis gravidarum, a condition that plagued her two previous pregnan-

cies, and is being treated at home. She has not yet reached the 12-week stage when women normally make the news public but made the announcement after being unable to attend an event in London yesterday afternoon, a spokeswoman said.

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Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Photo captures sunrise at a beach in Fintas.— KUNA

CHINA CONTINUES TO BE KUWAIT'S TOP TRADE PARTNER

KUWAIT: Kuwait continues to enjoy a solid mutual relationship with China, notably in trade, economy, and investment fields, as Beijing is highly regarded as one of Kuwait's key partners in foreign trade. The Kuwaiti-Chinese economic relationship has significantly flourished since His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to China in 2009, which aimed at boosting

the two countries' ties in various fields.

Since then, China has become a vital partner in achieving His Highness the Amir's vision to transform Kuwait into a global commercial hub by 2035, also known as the "New Kuwait 2035" strategy. The two nations' booming trade ties reflect their grand strategic and economic vision, whether in China's New Silk Road vision and Belt and Road

Initiative, or in Kuwait's New 2035 strategy. Their visions and initiatives fall in line with the ongoing global economic changes that the world has been witnessing since the 2008 global financial crisis.

Kuwait and China seek to enhance their economic and trade relations through exchanging expertise to address obstacles and difficulties facing their commercial cooperation.

According to latest statistics issued by the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB), China's volume of exports to Kuwait was estimated at \$1.09 billion during Q1 2017, while Kuwait's non-oil exports to China stood at \$152.52 million in same period.

In 2016, the bilateral trade exchange hit \$9.5 billion, according to figures of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The min-

istry's data also estimated Kuwaiti petrochemical exports to China at \$298 million in 2016, while Chinese electric appliances and equipment exports to Kuwait at \$1.3 billion in same year. Moreover, Chinese companies are currently taking part in several vital projects in Kuwait, implementing around 84 projects worth some \$18.12 billion in oil, housing, and infrastructure sectors. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A team from the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently visited the coastguards headquarters at Sabah Al-Ahmed Marine Base in Fintas to celebrate Eid with the troops on duty. CBK's Deputy Director for PR and publicity Amani Al-Wer'a said that the visit was part of CBK's all year long communal activities and that CBK is keen on showing support and appreciation to security forces. Concluding the visit, Lt Colonel Sheikh Mubarak A-Sabah expressed appreciation for the visit and thanked CBK team.



KUWAIT: Young students prepare for lessons. The Ministry of Education is gearing up to welcome 337,131 students in its schools across the country with the start of the new academic year on Sunday, September 10th.—KUNA

EDUCATION MINISTRY GEARS UP TO WELCOME STUDENTS

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Education is gearing up to welcome 337,131 students in its schools across the country with the start of the new academic year on Sunday, September 10th. In press statements to KUNA, the ministry's Undersecretary Haitham Al-Athari stated that schools would open doors for students of grade 1 and grade 2 students as of September 10 and for students of grade 3 to grade 9 a day later.

Meanwhile, secondary schools, from grade 10 to grade 12, would welcome students as of September 17th, Al-Athari added. He pointed

out that schoolbooks have been delivered to over 90 percent of schools and the residue would be received soon. The official stated that the ministry has also completed maintenance and cleaning works at schools. Teachers and administrative staff would return to schools after the end of Eid Al-Adha holiday today, he said. Al-Athari thanked the ministry's staff and officials for their efforts during the summer to prepare schools for the new academic year. He also wished teachers and students a new scholastic year full of successes and achievements. —KUNA

SYRIAN VISAS SUBJECT TO SECURITY CHECKS

By A Saleh and Meshal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Responding to a parliamentary proposal suggesting allowing the issuance of family visit visas for Syrians residents, Deputy PM and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah said opening of family visit visas for Syrians was being done according to standard procedures and subject to security checks.

Excess expat workers

The Ministry of Social Affairs And Labor issued a ministerial decision mandating employers to pay a fee of KD 250 per work permit for excess expat workers, noting that employers will only be allowed a maximum of 50 percent of the workforce to be expats.

Replacing expat

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare announced full adherence to CSC regulations pertaining replacing expat employees with citizens, since Minister Yasser Abul took office in 2014. The authority also stressed that over 70 percent of its 1,850 employees are citizens and that expats are only limited to the positions of advisors, engineers and legal consultants. The authority added that it terminated 143 expat employees during the past two years and that the total number of expat employees has dropped to only 590.

Experts from Boston

Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi said a number of experts from Boston Pediatrics Hospital will visit Kuwait by the end of September to review health services provided

at pediatric departments at Kuwaiti hospitals and help develop them. Harbi added that the visiting team will also examine some rare cases. He also noted that another team from a Los Angeles hospital will visit Kuwait for the same purpose. In addition, Harbi said that a Kuwaiti medical team will visit UK soon to review its experiences in liver transplants. Finally, Harbi said that a Korean delegation visited Kuwait a few days earlier to help develop the e-filing system used in Kuwait.

Steps by KPC hailed

Kuwait Society of Engineers hailed steps by KPC and its subsidiary companies in appointing oil engineers in international oil companies cooperating with Kuwait's oil sector, which had been promised by the oil minister. In this regard, the society's chairman Faisal Dowaih Al-Ottol congratulated the engineers who had graduated many years ago and were finally appointed in these companies.

Terrorist funding index

Kuwait was ranked 90th worldwide and 3rd in GCC on the 2017 international money laundering and terrorist funding index. According to the report issued by The Basel Institute on Governance, Kuwait advanced from 83rd to 90th last year. Notably, the Basel AML Index measures the risk of money laundering and terrorist financing of countries based on publicly available sources. A total of 14 indicators that deal with AML/CFT regulations, corruption, financial standards, political disclosure and rule of law are aggregated into one overall risk score. By combining these various data sources, the overall risk score

represents a holistic assessment addressing structural as well as functional elements in the AML/CFT framework.

Overseas expenses

Responding to an inquiry by MP Rakan Al-Nisf about overseas spending and budgets for the fiscal year 2016-2017, Deputy PM and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh said total overseas expenses were KD 2,235,666,000 including a lion's share of KD 1.08 billion for overseas treatment alone, while cultural offices abroad only cost KD 654 million.

Fire in downtown tower

A fire broke out in a downtown tower's fourth floor, and wind made flames reach the sixth floor, said security sources, noting that firemen rushed to the site in record time and efficiently managed to control the fire without recording any casualties.

Municipality criticized

Kuwait Fishermen Union Chairman Thamer Al-Sowayan strongly criticized the municipality and the ministry of commerce's decision to transfer the imported fish auction from Mubarakiya to the Sharq fish market, noting that such a step was dangerous for local products and local fish catches. He also warned that such a step will facilitate fraud by mixing imported and local fish.

First Ring Road

MPW's Assistant Undersecretary for road engineering Ahmed Al-Hessan said 35 percent of the First Ring Road development project's first phase is complete.

KERALALITES CELEBRATE ONAM

Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: The Keralites in Kuwait yesterday celebrated Onam, Kerala's harvest festival, with traditional enthusiasm and gaiety. Fortunately, 'Thiruvonam', the most important day during the 10-day-long festival, fell on the fourth day of Eid Al-Adha festival this year, making it convenient for many to celebrate the festival alongside Eid festivities.

For many Malayali families, the festival provided an opportunity to get-together in their apartments where traditional 'Onasadya' (feast) was served. Being the highlight of the celebration, the Onam banquet, consists only of vegetarian dishes and is served on a banana leaf. It is an extravagant meal with 16 to 26 dishes and will be served as a single course. In many flats, women came together in their traditional Onam sari and blouse to lay 'pookalam' (floral designs).

"We are very happy this year because we could celebrate Eid first and then Onam during the 4-day of the holiday," said Mohammad Rafi, a Keralite expat who stays in Jleeb-Al-Shuyoukh.

Banking on the huge demand for fruits and vegetables during the festival season, many supermarkets and grocery shops announced big promotions and sales though customers claimed that the prices of many items went up during the season. Many Indian restaurants in Salmiya, Jleeb, Mangaf and Fahaheel announced 'ready-to-serve' Onam meals yesterday, charging KD2.5 to KD4 per packet. Eid and Onam celebra-

tions mark the beginning of a long festival season for the 350,000-strong Malayali community in Kuwait. Thiruvonam marks the end of a ten-day Onam festivities, though Indian associations in Kuwait have scheduled Onam celebrations in

the coming weekends which may very well continue through October. Onam is celebrated as the homecoming of mystical King 'Mahabali' and during his rule an egalitarian society prevailed where all citizens were treated as equal.



KUWAIT: A traditional Onam feast is served on banana leaves in an apartment in Salmiya as a group of Malayali families gathered there to celebrate the festival.



MUNICIPALITY SETS UP HOTLINE TO RECEIVE COMPLAINTS

By Nawara Fattahova

The Municipality is in charge of clearing waste and garbage in public places. But if it is construction debris or other waste in large quantities left over by companies, it is then their responsibility - whether it's the contractor or the owner - to remove it. Unfortunately, many negligent companies dump their waste material by the roadside. As this is an illegal action, it should be sanctioned by municipal inspectors, who are authorized to issue fines and even transfer the case to the prosecutor.

The municipality has set up a hotline (139) to receive complaints from people related to cleanliness in public places, restaurants, etc. This hotline is operated 24/7 and should deal with any complaint related to its work. Kuwait Times called the hotline on Sunday reporting huge amounts of waste materials dumped by a contractor near a building about a year ago. We provided the person manning the line with the exact address in Salwa (block 4, street 3), and the operator promised to send inspectors to the place on the same day.

After waiting for three days, the waste was still there. Calling the municipality emergency center again on 139, another operator answered the call and claimed that cleaning this type of waste is not their responsibility, although they are in charge

of clearing garbage. He noted that people should file their complaints personally with their civil ID at the cleaning center of the area.

As this call center is a department of the municipality, and is in charge of receiving complaints and delivering it to the department in charge, we were surprised by his answer and insisted that he assist us. The operator then advised us to take a photo of the debris and the surrounding area and send it to the Municipality's Instagram account, so it can post it and comment on it if it isn't removed. This official account of the Municipality - Kuwait Municipality - launched a campaign a few days ago encouraging people to cooperate and participate in keeping Kuwait clean by reporting waste or garbage dumped in public places.

The phone numbers provided by the operator were useless. One was out of service, and nobody answered the other number. Also, he didn't provide any contact number for Salmiya, where other hazardous waste dumped by the contractor is located, and refused accepting the complaint, saying this emergency line is not responsible for this. Incidentally, the Salmiya location is dangerous, as there is a gaping hole besides the building and the fence has collapsed. Children can get seriously injured if they fall in this hole, not mentioning the debris around it.



KUWAIT: Fence collapses at one of the locations in Salmiya amid leftover waste by a contractor. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



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His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with US President Donald Trump. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attending a banquet held by former US President Barack Obama in honor of GCC leaders.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with former US President George W Bush at the White House.

AMIR TO MEET TRUMP, DISCUSS REGIONAL ISSUES

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah began his official visit to the US capital, Washington DC yesterday, during which he will meet US President Donald Trump to discuss bilateral relations and issues of common concern. The visit of His Highness the Amir to the United States comes at a time when the two countries enjoy excellent relations, strong and close partnership in various fields.

President Trump invited His Highness the Amir to visit Washington during a telephone call last February following his victory in the US elections, stressing depth of bilateral ties and keenness to strengthen the frameworks of cooperation in various fields, especially economic, security and military domains and upgrade them to wider horizons to serve both countries' interest in the strategic partnership that brings together the two friendly countries.

Fourth visit

His Highness the Amir will also discuss with President Trump efforts to resolve the Gulf crisis and ways of cooperat-

ing closely on the war on terrorism, regional security and the Middle East peace process, as well as other bilateral files. This is the fourth official visit of His Highness the Amir to the United States since taking office in Kuwait. He last visited the US in May 2015 for a summit, which included leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and former US President Barack Obama.

In August 2009, His Highness the Amir also met with former President Obama, who expressed his country's gratitude to Kuwait as a host of the US armed forces during its operations in Iraq, stressing at the same time the strong bilateral relations between the two countries and the continued commitment of the United States to Kuwait's security. During His Highness' first visit to the United States in September 2006, he met with then US President George W Bush, who affirmed that Kuwait is a friend and an ally, praising His Highness the Amir's reforms, especially those related to economic and political openness, which are a good example for others in the region.

His Highness visited the United States in September 2003 after his appointment as Prime Minister. The US government and Congress expressed their infinite thanks to Kuwait's position in the war to liberate Iraq and the war against terrorism. The US-Kuwaiti relationship dates back many years when the US interest in the Gulf region began considering it of great importance. The United States recognized the State of Kuwait three months after the independence of the Gulf state on September 22, 1961, thus, kicking start the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

His Highness the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah paid a visit to the United States in December 1968, according to which relations between the two countries were re-fostered. He also discussed with then US President Lyndon Johnson the bilateral relations between the two countries and means of supporting them.

Regional stability

Preservation and stability of the Arab Gulf region as well as the Arab-Israeli conflict were also discussed. His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited the United States during the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and met with former US President George W. Bush, and discussed developments related to the war of liberation of Kuwait and steps taken in this regard.

In October 1991, late His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, visited the capital Washington D.C. in a tour that included most of the countries that contributed with their armed forces in the liberating of Kuwait within the international coalition that suppressed the aggression and raised the banner of truth and thanked them for their positions supporting the State of Kuwait.

On the fifth anniversary of the liberation of the State of Kuwait in February 1996, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, visited Washington DC, where he met with former US President Bill Clinton and discussed with him the bilateral relations between the two countries and means of boosting them in various fields, especially economic ones, in addition to Gulf security and the peace process in the Middle East.

His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad summed up the relations between the two countries during the historic visit by former US President Bill Clinton to Kuwait in October 1994, saying: "The friendship between our two countries and our peoples despite the long distance between them is the strongest evidence of the unity of good goals and pursuit to achieve common good among peoples on humanitarian grounds." The late Amir of Kuwait decorated late President of



His Highness late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is pictured with former US President George Bush in the White House in 1991.



His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah decorating former US President George Bush with Mubarak Al-Kabeer highest medal.

the United States, the highest Medal of Honor (Mubarak Al-Kabeer Medal), in appreciation for the pure friendship between the two peoples, united not only by common interests but by fighting side by side. His Highness also decorated former US President George Bush, the father, the same medal in 1993 when he visited the country after the end of his term of office, thanking him for the role of this man in the leadership of the war to liberate Kuwait. In January 2008, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received former US President George W Bush during his visit to Kuwait. The talks included the distinguished relations between the two friendly countries and means of enhancing them in all fields to build a common ground.

Foreign policy

The political relations between Kuwait and the United States were founded on the basis of principles set by Kuwait primarily for its foreign policy and relations with other countries including non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, adherence to good-neighborliness policy, and non-alignment as well as international cooperation in the economic and diplomatic fields. Kuwait's foreign policy relies primarily on the preservation of Kuwait's security, stability and territorial integrity, as well as stability of the Gulf, preservation of Islamic solidarity and finding an everlasting and just solution to the Palestinian issue.

And in light of these principles and objectives, both countries' ties have and are still progressing, making such relationships full of understanding, clarity, friendship and cooperation for the benefit of both peoples. Kuwaiti-American relations have gone through four stages until they reached their current level. In the 1960s and 1970s, relations with America were friendly, whereas in the mid-1980s they moved into a partnership when US flags were hoisted on Kuwaiti oil tankers during the Iran-Iraq war. Then came the stage of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the period of liberation, where such ties expanded to take a strategic framework between the two countries in the nineties of the last century. Kuwaiti-American relations deepened after the US administration in 2004 classified Kuwait as an ally outside NATO. During the past 56 years of relations between Washington and Kuwait, ties of friendship and cooperation have been established in various fields and reflected the depth and strength of strategic partnership between the two countries. — KUNA



His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah decorates former US President Bill Clinton with Mubarak Al-Kabeer highest medal.



His Highness late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met former US President Bill Clinton in Washington.

Local Spotlight

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Private schools admit many Kuwaiti and expat children every year, and while parents take the lead in choosing the best school for their kids, no one seems to think much about the key element in the educational process - the teacher. The foundation of a good education is a good teacher, and this has been an unresolved issue for years. Does anyone think about the foreign teachers here?

A new school year is round the corner, and of course, for all expat parents, this is an issue of concern. After all, they are the ones who pay the school fees, which are not getting cheaper. At the end of the day, no matter what school your kid goes to, school uniforms, books and stationery are things you need to buy, affecting your budget. In fact, sending kids to any school in Kuwait is becoming a financial burden on all families. The school management plays a role in facilitating this issue and should make best efforts to make it easier for all.

It is clear in Kuwait that sending kids to schools to get a good education is not easy, so some expatriates now prefer to send their children to their home countries, which means breaking up the family. The ministry of education has set a ceiling for salaries at private schools - though tuition fees continue to rise unabated.

Since life is not cheap here, there is talk about the departure of some good teachers from Kuwait to other Gulf countries. This should be taken seriously, because it relates to the quality of education. Some claim that foreign teachers leave for neighboring countries because of low wages, which is a baseless claim. The salaries of teachers in private schools in Kuwait are no less than those of foreign teachers in other Gulf countries. The school is bound by a contract with the foreign teacher. This contract determines the rights and duties of the teacher with the school, but when the school does not abide with labor laws or the contract, it is normal for teachers to leave, because they refuse to give up their rights.

Unfortunately, new teachers become aware of the role of wasta in Kuwait and how it helps to make their stay easier, for instance for getting their civil IDs and obtaining a car and driving license. Another important thing for new teachers is the possible ignorance of laws protecting their rights if they fall victim to a school that does not respect labor laws. They find it difficult to hire lawyers, especially since all laws here are in Arabic, a language many don't speak or understand.

There are some schools in Kuwait with poor academic international recognition by international bodies, and this for many teachers is an unpleasant surprise, especially when they come to Kuwait with their children.

Many schools have crowded classrooms, although there are rules against this, but then it's all about business and not preserving the quality of education. It is very tiring for any teacher and lack of support by the management makes the teacher feel alienated and vulnerable.

The ministry of education must periodically meet with foreign teachers and discuss their issues of concern in order to protect them from possible exploitation and ensure that they do not leave the country.

I think it would also be a great idea if the ministry met with parents - both locals and expats - to know their concerns, issues and frustrations regarding the skyrocketing fees.

I know that there are some excellent schools in Kuwait that work to maintain their reputation, but it is necessary to ensure all schools abide by the laws issued by the ministry of education. The goal of education is to look after children and prepare them for the future. We have a duty to protect foreign teachers to protect the country's reputation.

Legalese

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

I have written about this many times before but I will continue to say, we are blessed in Kuwait (and the GCC) to have such a diverse workforce. Some countries or some communities are homogenous; you will find that all the people in that community are from one race and one background, but fortunately in Kuwait we are a sea of humans, and it amazes me how much we can learn from each other. I am also personally blessed that I get to write for people, to share the knowledge I have, and to have people contact me.

But it also breaks my heart to see so many people affected in Kuwait with employment issues. And because we are a sea of humans, it is difficult for many of us to understand a law that is written in the state's official language: Arabic. Many people in Kuwait do not speak the official language. They cannot and will not need to understand to read and write in Arabic. It is difficult for them not just to understand the law, but also the process, and the way things are done here. So today, I will be answering common questions about employment law and more importantly, the necessary action that my readers can take by themselves or with a help of a lawyer.

Employment issue

Question: I want to go to Shoon for an employment issue, do I really need a lawyer? Should I get a lawyer? And what should I keep in mind?

Fajer: Before I answer the questions, I want to explain what Shoon is. 'Shoon' is a word dubbed for a department under the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. It is the first stop for any legal issue concerning employment. For a case to go to court, a complaint needs to be filed in Shoon first, where an investigator will try to mediate the situation first and attempt to resolve the matter amicably for both the employee and the employer, but if that does not work out, an investigation takes place. Then the issue is transferred to court, and another lengthy process happens, where the issue is transferred from court to an expert and then back to court. Then there is a verdict (that can be appealed) and assuming the verdict is final, it needs to be executed. That is also a lengthy process. There is one Shoon in every governorate in Kuwait.

Do you need a lawyer for all of this? Although many people figure things out at Shoon without a lawyer, I suggest that if you can afford to get one then do. Employment cases are lengthy as explained above and therefore costly. How much do they cost? It really depends on what documents you have, what you are asking for and so many other important factors. A lawyer that gives you a price without sitting with you to discuss the case would be lying to you. I have so many potential clients that call the firm asking "how much will it cost me?" I respond "I do not know, come in first for an initial consultation." This bothers them, but I would be dishonest if I gave them a price, because I might not need to go to court. I would not suggest something to my clients unless it was necessary and although many call saying they want to go to court, it just might not be the best process for them.

Common mistakes

Question: Since you are a lawyer with experience in commercial and employment law, what are the most common mistakes that people make with employment issues, or that your clients make, which can be avoided in the future?

Fajer: This is a very broad question. Instead of focusing on the mistakes one can make (there are too many to enumerate), let us think about what actions an employee can do to protect themselves in the future. Some of the most common being:

1. If you are going to resign, do it in writing.
2. If your boss agrees to your resignation, get it in writing.
3. If your boss makes any statement that can affect you in the future legally, get it in writing.
4. Read your contract carefully.
5. Ask for a copy of your contract.
6. Check your work permit.
7. Always try to figure things out amicably.
8. Research.

I have plenty of articles available on the Legalese section of the Kuwait Times website, www.KuwaitTimes.com, please read them. Email me with questions to ask@fajerthelawyer.com

Al-Jarida

KD 2 BILLION

By Ali Mahmoud Khajah

According to news reports published on Tuesday, the total sum spent on citizens' rent allowances over the past 25 years was KD 2 billion to compensate those awaiting government-provided housing though the rent allowance is only 30 percent of the actual rent value citizens pay, which means that the state has paid this huge sum to compensate people for one third of their monthly rent values.

As soon as I read the story, I surfed a website specialized in real estate trading and came across a newly built and uninhabited 10 floor building located over 1,000 square meters for sale for a negotiable price of KD 2.1 million. The building also includes a ground floor and a basement in addition to 43 three bedroom apartments. So, assuming that the actual cost of purchasing the land needed for the building and constructing it according to super deluxe standards as the ad mentions would be KD 1.7 or KD 2 million at most according to 2017 prices.

This means the sum spent on rent values could have provided us with at least one thousand similar buildings, that is, 43,000 three bedroom apartments.

This means the sum spent on rent values could have provided us with at least one thousand similar buildings, that is, 43,000 three bedroom apartments. Assuming that the average monthly rent is KD 230, which means that those buildings would make KD 10 million monthly, which is enough to purchase four extra similar buildings every month and thus save KD 2 million spent on maintenance, security and cleaning while the main assets are still owned by the state in hotel-like conditions.

In addition, this would greatly help reduce rent values and stop draining out people's earnings. What I assumed is one of the many solutions that does not require building special infrastructures. There are over thousand other solutions but I mentioned only this one because it is simple and reasonable in using money in a much better way instead of wasting it on rent allowances. All we need from officials is to be creative and search for alternatives instead of turning our spending methods into fixed habits and traditions.



NBK FAMILY SHARES EID MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN AT NBK HOSPITAL

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait's (NBK) family paid a visit to NBK Children's specialty Hospital at Sabah Medical district to share Eid Al Adha happy moments with children suffering from permanent and incurable ailments. NBK Public Relations Officer, Farah Al Bastaki said that "Sharing the happy moments of Eid Al Adha and other similar occasions with children is our pleasure. We are proud that NBK devotes such attention to supporting Kuwait society and providing compassion and support for those in need, including sick children."



Farah Bastaki



Sabah Medical District," Bastaki added. "Both hospitals emphasizes NBK's role in supporting the country's health care institutions and sick children in achieving their treatment."

The visit to the hospital was emotional and overwhelming for both the children and NBK staff.

Established in the year of 2000, NBK

Children's Specialty Hospital was the first of its kind in Kuwait to provide free treatment for children with cancer. In the beginning of this year, NBK finalized the establishment of the new Stem Cell Therapy Unit as part of the hospital development plan to offer free of charge treatment using advanced equipment and specialized doctors.

Al-Jarida

SEEKING SCAPEGOATS

By Hassan Al-Essa

As far as I know, no international court would hear cases filed by individuals against sovereign states except the European Human Rights Court, which jurisdiction is limited to the countries who had signed the particular court's treaty. If an expat, for example an Egyptian teacher, threatens to file a complaint with international human right organizations against Kuwait for violating expat teachers' rights, as he claims, that is his business. It is also the right of anyone who believes that his rights in equality and human dignity have been violated in a certain country.

If he has financial claims and the state has violated the contract signed with him, he should file his case with Kuwaiti courts that have brought justice to similar cases filed by expats. But, why make a fuss about the issue and why do we hear so snobbish anti-expat talks from lawmakers and some media figures who describe them as 'ungrateful' to Kuwait? These portrayed expats, who form two thirds of the population, as mere invading groups that came to 'devour' everything then leave.

I hope these verbal hotshots inquire once they retire to their air-conditioned comfortable houses about the Egyptian, Iranian or Bangladeshi builders and Indian technicians who worked in extreme heat

Many expats had taken advantage of the absence of financial and administrative bodies' effectiveness. Some expat advisors and others have unlawfully signed contracts with astronomical figures.

for their comfort. Let these 'Kuwaiti heroes' inquire about the nationalities of the people who built and maintained their villas and the nurses tending to them in hospitals and all those working silently without anybody listening to their grieves whenever their bread-winning is at stake, who are treated as if they are 'parasites', who fell from 'sick' skies onto the state of good and benevolence.

Al-Jarida's editorial titled 'Doing Wrong to Expats is Not Like Us' was fair and honorable. Doing so, Al-Jarida seems to have started swimming against violent racial currents that have been dominating the country after its revenues started decreasing. Some newspapers have started bringing the topic up with the excuse that 'it appeals to readers'.

They started joining the group of heroes to make gains through spreading a general situation of discontent instead of addressing the hearts and minds and humane citizens. Doing so, these newspapers are only paving the way to establish a GCC fascism that had been seeded long ago ever since we started hiring expats to build our modern state. Now that we are financially shaken, those seeds of hatred against expats have started to grow into thorns.

Many expats had taken advantage of the absence of financial and administrative bodies' effectiveness. Some expat advisors and others have unlawfully signed contracts with astronomical figures. Some of them were even hired to custom-tailor laws according to what their bosses, who are Kuwaitis, wish. Expats taking over small stores in government-owned markets and getting accused of using up the country's good things only did so because Kuwaitis have rented the place and settled for collecting the rent, just like most of us are getting oil revenues, while relaxing.

We are only looking for expat scapegoats to blame them for all the depression, mismanagement and incompetence we are suffering from. Such Trump-like manner of twisting truth is so dangerous because in America they, at least, have institutes to monitor and prevent the abuse of presidential powers.

Crime

Report

UNLICENSED TV CHANNEL

KUWAIT: High-ranking security sources said Kuwait has handed over Saudi national Sheikh Fayed bin Damkh, who was arrested over charges of launching an unlicensed TV channel from Kuwait under the name of Al-Jazeera Al-Arabiya. Bin Damkh was the channel's chairman, and its equipment was confiscated when the authorities raided a villa in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak.

Oil leak in Abdaly

KOC announced a limited leak took place from one of its pipes in Abdaly. Security sources said the leak was immediately dealt with and had no effect on production levels.

Violation of article 108

While patrolling the area where dead fish were found in Kuwait Bay during Eid, EPA deputy director for technical affairs Mohammed Al-Enezi spotted and arrested a number of expats fishing in the bay in violation of article 108 of the environment law.

2 arrested for fighting

A citizen and a Syrian were arrested outside a high-end downtown restaurant for fighting, when the Syrian tried to calm down the citizen who was shouting at his wife, said security sources. The sources explained that while dining, the citizen suddenly started yelling at his wife, calling her foul names, and her pleas failed to calm him down. The Syrian, also dining out with his family, intervened to calm the husband down, which shifted the husband's shouting and cursing towards him, forcing the wife to leave the place. Thinking that the husband would assault her when he followed her outside, the Syrian followed them and a fight ensued. A case was filed.

Body of a newborn

The body of a newborn baby was found near a garbage dumpster in Nugra.

Suspect nabbed

A non-Kuwaiti wanted for bribing a public servant and possessing an unlicensed gun was arrested at a checkpoint in Jahra.

Unidentified robber

A Jordanian working for an automobile insurance company reported that an unidentified robber broke into his apartment and stole KD 320 in cash, in addition to some documents and civil IDs. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Drug suspect arrested

An Egyptian in his twenties was arrested with a cigarette packet filled with marijuana joints, said security sources, noting that while walking in Rai, the suspect got nervous on seeing a police patrol, threw away the cigarette packet and ran off. The suspect was chased and apprehended, and returning to the discarded packet, detectives found the marijuana. A case was filed.

Hit and run

An Egyptian in his seventies was seriously injured when he was run over by a speeding vehicle while crossing the road in a rush to attend Fajr prayers in Hawally. Security sources said the man was rushed to Mubarak Hospital for treatment and the Syrian driver was arrested. — Al-Rai/Al-Anbaa

KFH LAUNCHES RECRUITMENT PROGRAM FOR HIGH ACHIEVERS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) launched the 4th edition of the recruitment program for high achievers iFrossahi. This program encompasses 11 distinguished new recruits. The 2-year program offers trainees over 50 training courses and workshops on all fields of Islamic banking industry, financial practices, management and planning.

Training courses are delivered by a selected group of experts and well-versed lecturers. The program includes field trips, tests and periodical assessments to measure the participants' performance. Amani AlMerri, an official at the National Labor Force Development Department at Manpower and Government Restructuring Program - MGRP praised KFH in recognition of its efforts in training the national labor through comprehensive training plans, hailing its commitment towards qualifying and honing the skills of its human resources.

She expressed, on the sidelines of inaugurating Forssah program, her pride of this program, indicating it has proved a great success since its launch in 2009. Meanwhile, Group Chief Human Resources Officer at KFH, Frederick Jacobus Carstens affirmed KFH's interest in improving the skills and capabilities of its human resources, especially the youth of national labor. Frederick urged the trainees to take advantage of the program to the extreme level. He added that a KFH staff has to have comprehensive vision on the Group banks and subsidiaries, while motivated to add value to the organization.

For his part, Executive Manager Talent Management at KFH,



KUWAIT: Frederick, Mirza and Al Merri pose for a photo with the trainees.

Imad Mirza said that KFH tailored this program to meet the qualification and the outstanding educational level of the trainees, which allows the bank to invest in them and create a reliable workforce of national youth. Mirza added that Forssah program tackles several topics in Islamic banking, technical and behavioral skills, field training at KFH branches and departments and at the Group levels. This allows trainees to expose to new products and services while getting introduced to new experiences.

Borgan Bank offers a special gift to the customers of Buba kids account, helping you get ready for school! All you have to do is visit the Borgan Bank branch at Discovery Mall and present your Buba ATM card to get the free school supplies. Offer starts from 5th September, 2017.

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BRICS urges UN reform, cooperation on terror

UN ACCUSES BURUNDI GOVT OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY



(Clockwise from top left) A local resident chats slogans during a mass protest in Chechnya's provincial capital Grozny; an activist of ultra-leftist organization enacts a scene of a tortured Rohingya in a street play to protest against the persecution of Rohingya Muslims near Myanmar Consulate in Kolkata; a Muslim woman shouts slogans as she holds up a poster bearing a defaced portrait of Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi during a rally against the persecution of Rohingya Muslim minority, outside the Myanmar's Embassy in Jakarta; Mohammad Osama, 16, center right, and Amanullah, 28, center left, show their bullets wound outside Sadar hospital, in Cox Bazar, Bangladesh.— AP photos

87K REFUGEES ARRIVE IN BANGLADESH FROM MYANMAR

AID AGENCIES STRUGGLING TO COPE WITH THE MASSIVE INFUX

COX'S BAZAR: A total of 87,000 mostly Rohingya refugees have arrived in Bangladesh since violence erupted in neighboring Myanmar on August 25, the United Nations said yesterday, amid growing international criticism of Aung San Suu Kyi. Thousands of the stateless Muslim minority have fled mainly Buddhist Myanmar and poured over the border since the latest round of fighting broke out. Their arrival has piled yet more pressure on already overcrowded camps in Bangladesh and raised fears of a humanitarian crisis as aid agencies struggle to cope with the influx of mainly women and children. Around 20,000 more were massed on the border waiting to enter, the UN said in a report. Dhaka stepped up border controls after the latest round of violence, but one Bangladeshi border guard told AFP the sheer number of people desperate to enter the country from Myanmar's western state of Rakhine had made it impossible to

keep them out. "It is bigger than the last time," said the guard, who asked not to be named, referring to the influx of refugees that followed an outbreak of violence last October. "If it continues then we will face serious problems. But it's impossible to stop the flow: these people are everywhere." Many of the new arrivals lacked shelter from the heavy monsoon rains, and an AFP reporter said hundreds of new makeshift shelters had sprung up on the outskirts of the existing camps in recent days. "It has been raining frequently since last week. We have to keep our children safe from being sick," said Amena Begum, a newly arrived mother of five. Rakhine has been a crucible of religious violence since 2012, when riots erupted. Scores of Rohingya were killed and tens of thousands of people-most of them from the Muslim minority-were forced into displacement camps. But the current round of

fighting, which broke out when Rohingya militants ambushed security installations, is the worst yet. Myanmar's army has said nearly 400 people have died in the fighting that ensued, including 370 Rohingya militants. **'Shameful treatment'** Yesterday the office of Myanmar's de facto leader Suu Kyi said the military had fought 90 separate clashes with Rohingya militants since the ambushes. In a statement it said more than 2,600 homes had been destroyed in Rohingya villages and 138 houses had been destroyed in non-Muslim villages-blaming the fires and other damage entirely on the militants. Suu Kyi is under increasing fire over her perceived unwillingness to speak out against the treatment of the Rohingya, who are viewed as interlopers in Myanmar. The Nobel peace laureate, a former political prisoner of Myanmar's junta, has made no pub-

lic comment since the latest fighting broke out. "Over the last several years I have repeatedly condemned this tragic and shameful treatment," Pakistani activist and fellow Nobel peace prize laureate Malala Yousafzai said in a statement about the Rohingya crisis on Twitter. "I am still waiting for my fellow Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi to do the same." The crisis threatens Myanmar's diplomatic relations, particularly with Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia where there is profound public anger at the treatment of the Rohingya. Indonesia's foreign minister Retno Marsudi met Suu Kyi as well as Myanmar's army chief General Min Aung Hlaing in Naypyidaw yesterday to press for greater efforts to alleviate the crisis. Bangladesh, already home to an estimated 400,000 Rohingya before the latest influx, has also come in for international criticism for pushing people back to Myanmar. Rights

groups say this is a contravention of its international obligations. Yesterday officials on the small island of St Martin's nine kilometers off Bangladesh's coast said authorities had forced 2,011 Rohingya seeking refuge there to leave. Elected official Farid Ahmed said children were among the refugees who were rounded up on Sunday evening before being taken back to Myanmar by boat. "Rohingya children were crying. But it is the government order. What can we do?" Ahmed told AFP. "They (Rohingya) said, where should we go? They (Myanmar forces) were killing us there. Our houses were burnt. They were firing at us." Scores of people have drowned while attempting to flee the violence, which also killed or displaced ethnic Rakhine Buddhists and other tribal groups allegedly targeted by Rohingya militants. The refugees say that many young Rohingya men have stayed behind to fight. — AFP

SYRIA ARMY NEARS REGIME ENCLAVE BESIEGED BY IS

BEIRUT: Syria's army battled the Islamic State group on the edges of Deir Ezzor yesterday, seeking to break the siege of a government enclave and oust the jihadists from a key stronghold. The jihadist group has already lost more than half of its nearby bastion of Raqqa to attacking US-backed forces, and the loss of Deir Ezzor city and the surrounding oil-rich province would leave it with only a handful of isolated outposts. Deir Ezzor province borders Iraq, where IS has also been expelled from former strongholds Mosul and Tal Afar. The jihadists hold large parts of Deir Ezzor province, and more than half the provincial capital Deir Ezzor city, the remainder of which is controlled by the government and under IS siege. Syrian troops backed by ally Russia have been advancing towards Deir Ezzor city on several fronts for weeks, and overnight they reached the Brigade 137 base on its western edge, a monitor said. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Syrian troops outside and inside the base were battling to break the IS siege of the base. "There have been multiple collapses of the Daesh (IS) line in western Deir

Ezzor province, allowing the army to move quickly and arrive 10 kilometers from the besieged forces," a military source told AFP. **Residents celebrate** "The siege on the government troops will be broken within hours," he added. Syrian state media also reported the army was advancing towards the besieged base, which is adjacent to parts of the city still under government control. Provincial governor Mohamed Ibrahim Samra, quoted by state news agency SANA, said besieged residents were already celebrating as the army neared. "Yesterday Deir Ezzor city saw celebrations and rejoicing among all segments of society ahead of the expected victory with the advance of the Syrian Arab Army to the outskirts of the besieged city," he said. IS seized large parts of Deir Ezzor province, including its many oilfields, in mid-2014 as it rampaged across Syria and Iraq. By early 2015 it had also seized parts of Deir Ezzor city and laid siege to the remaining parts of it under government control. The siege tightened further earlier this year, when IS advanced and cut the gov-

ernment-held parts of the city in two, with a southern section by the key military airport now divided from a northern sector. An estimated 100,000 people remain in government-held parts of the city, which had a pre-war population of some 300,000. The Observatory estimates more than 10,000 people may live in the parts of the city held by IS, although precise information is hard to come by. **Humanitarian crisis** The siege has created a humanitarian crisis in the city, with food and medical shortages and soaring prices. The government has brought supplies in by helicopter, and the United Nations has periodically airdropped humanitarian aid, but the situation remains difficult for those under siege. Conditions are also reportedly dire for civilians trapped in IS-held parts of the city, with activists also reporting food and medical shortages as well as water and electricity cuts. Syria's army has been advancing towards Deir Ezzor on several fronts in recent weeks, including from the west through neighboring Raqqa province, and from the south via central



DEIR EI-ZOUR: This photo released on Sunday, Sept 3, 2017 by the Syrian official news agency SANA, shows Syrian troops and pro-government gunmen standing near military vehicles. — AP Homs. Observatory director Rami Abdel Rahman said forces advancing from the southwest were now less than 20 kilometers from the key Deir Ezzor military airport and are also advancing from the north towards the city. Capturing Deir Ezzor would be a key gain for Syria's government, which has scored a series of military victories in recent months with Russian support. It has moved quickly towards the city, seeking to head off potential rival advances by US-backed fighters including the Kurdish-Arab Syrian Democratic Forces alliance which is conducting a separate battle to oust IS from the city of Raqqa. More than 330,000 people have been killed in Syria since the conflict began with anti-government protests in March 2011, before spiraling into a multi-front civil war. — AFP

OPPN FROM VENEZUELA SEEKS HELP IN EUROPE

CARACAS: One of Venezuela's leading opposition figures, national assembly leader Julio Borges, was in Europe Sunday ahead of meetings with European leaders for talks on Venezuela's deadly political crisis, he said. Borges was due to meet with the leaders of France, Germany, Spain and Britain. "The first meeting Borges has is with French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday; then on Tuesday he will go to Madrid for a meeting with Spain's Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy," according to a statement.

Yesterday, Borges, who leads the opposition-dominated assembly that President Nicolas Maduro has effectively shut down, meets in

Berlin with Chancellor Angela Merkel, ahead of a stop in London for a private meeting with Prime Minister Theresa May. On Saturday, Lilian Tintori, an activist and wife of opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez, said on Twitter that Venezuelan immigration officials confiscated her passport on orders from the chief prosecutor's office.

The Venezuelan government, which has denounced concerns raised by Britain and other countries over the action, says she was barred from leaving the country because she is under investigation for alleged corruption. Police last week found 205 million bolivars — \$61,000 at the official exchange rate and \$11,000 at the black market rate—in a vehicle she owns.

The assembly's number two official, Freddy Guevara said on Twitter that he was with Borges on the trip and brought along Tintori's concerns. Tintori, who has been summoned to appear in court today, has denounced the investigation as an attempt to prevent her from speaking out about the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela.

She has said the money was for family emergencies, including the hospitalization of an uninsured 100-year-old aunt. International powers accuse Maduro of dismantling democracy by taking over state institutions in order to resist opposition pressure for him to quit, amid an economic crisis that has caused shortages of food and medicine.

"I was ready to report that there are human rights violations in Venezuela; that it is a dictatorship, that there are 590 political prisoners; and that 53 percent of our children are malnourished," she stressed Saturday. Tintori's husband was sentenced in 2015 to nearly 14 years in prison on charges of inciting deadly violence in street protests. In July, Lopez was moved to his home and placed under house arrest after spending nearly 3.5 years in a military prison. Venezuela is suffering an economic crisis that has caused epic food and medicine shortages. Prosecutors say some 130 people were killed this year in four months of anti-government protests. Maduro says the crisis is a US-backed conspiracy. — AFP

MOSCOW COURT KEEPS THEATER DIRECTOR UNDER HOUSE ARREST

MOSCOW: A Moscow court ruled yesterday to keep arguably Russia's most revered contemporary theater and film director under house arrest, in a criminal case that has fueled fears of a revival of Soviet era-like crackdown on the arts. The Moscow City Court turned down Kirill Serebrennikov's appeal against a ruling last week to put him under house arrest, but agreed to allow him a two-hour walk outside the house each day.

Serebrennikov was arrested last month on charges of embezzlement in St Petersburg, where he was shooting a movie, and taken to Moscow under armed escort. For many in Russia, particularly in the arts scene, a photograph of the stunned-looking director, handcuffed and escorted to the court by three burly masked men, came as the ultimate proof that Soviet-style censorship has returned.

Investigators are accusing the 47-year-old director of scheming to embezzle about \$1.1 million in government funds allocated for one of his productions and the projects he championed between 2011 and 2014. Serebrennikov dismissed the accusations as "absurd and impossible." The director was briefly detained and questioned in May but investigators stopped short of saying they suspected he was involved. An accountant and one senior manager who worked with Serebrennikov are in custody and another manager is under house arrest.

Marina Davydova, a theater critic and a friend of Serebrennikov's who saw him shortly before the arrest, said he had somewhat anticipated his arrest but did not consider fleeing Russia because of his work commitments. In the few months between the questioning in May and his arrest in August, one of Russia's most sought-after directors staged one opera in Moscow, nearly finished another and began filming a movie in St Petersburg.

'Creative powerhouse'

"Kirill is a creative powerhouse," Davydova told The Associated Press. "They took his passport during the search. He cannot run away from work, he is constrained by it much more than (the absence of a) passport. He is an idealist, he kept saying till the end: So, everything I built here - it's all for nothing?"

Serebrennikov's cutting-edge produc-

tions, which range from drama to opera and movies, have been running against a more conservative streak in Russia society. He's focused on the little discussed subjects such as official lies, corruption and sex. Though bringing him critical acclaim, his work has been condemned by the more hard-line elements within Russian society, who protested against the use of state funds to finance his endeavors.

In what was largely perceived as the first warning shot from his high-placed enemies, the Bolshoi Theater in July canceled a much-anticipated ballet about dancer Rudolf Nureyev just three days before the opening night. Despite the numerous reports suggesting otherwise, the Bolshoi denied that the Nureyev ballet, directed by Serebrennikov, had been scrapped because of its frank description of his gay relationships, a taboo under a strict Russian law banning gay propaganda.

Conservative activists have felt empowered since Vladimir Putin returned as Russia's president in 2012. Art shows have been ransacked while theater shows have been cancelled under pressure from church officials. Tensions peaked earlier this year when conservative activists led by a lawmaker lashed out at a yet-to-be-released movie about the last czar's affair with a ballerina. The film's director has received threats, and unidentified attackers threw Molotov's cocktails at his studios last week. Davydova, the theater critic, is convinced that Serebrennikov's arrest is a personal vendetta by those who feel empowered enough to go after the likes of Serebrennikov, someone they consider to be an unpatriotic deviant.

"There was no pragmatic reason to arrest a director except for some personal hatred," she said. Davydova said the Russian government, in an echo of Soviet times, is expecting artists to toe the official line. "Kirill, of course, was doing the wrong kind of art in all respects," she said. Theater shows and movies were severely censored in the Soviet time. Following the Stalin-era purges that killed millions, many artists were forced to leave the country or were sidelined even though trials and arrests were unheard of. The Serebrennikov's case has stoked fears of a crackdown on Russia's liberal arts scene, which has until recently seen little if any interference from the state. — AP



HOUSTON: Mariko Shimmi, right, helps carry items out of the home of Ken Tani in a neighborhood still flooded from Harvey. — AP

HOUSTON FAITHFUL OFFER HELP FOR HARVEY AMID AID APPEAL

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE FLEEING TO EMERGENCY SHELTERS

HOUSTON: Houston's faithful embraced the comfort of church Sunday with their hearts heavy after mega-storm Harvey's destruction, as the Texas governor led appeals for billions of dollars in aid for his battered state. Some worshippers sought succor, and others offered compassion and aid, for their devastated communities in displays of solidarity and partnership that highlighted the best of the human spirit in trying times.

The nation's fourth-largest city of Houston was drying out after a week of flooding, but the immediate needs of many victims here remained acute. "We know that some are distressed, some are displaced. But I believe through it all we can say God is good," preached Minister Gary Smith at the Fifth Ward Church of Christ.

More than 1,000 worshippers, including some whose homes were badly damaged by floodwater, packed the historically black church's sanctuary for a service that repeatedly addressed the tragedy that swamped so many Texas and Louisiana communities. In Houston, which was devastated by record-setting rainfall, many residents whose homes had flooded returned over the weekend to begin removing soggy drywall, soaked carpets and ruined possessions.

The flooding damaged 40,000 to 50,000 homes in Houston and sent tens of thousands of people fleeing to emergency shelters. Texas Governor Greg Abbott said that a years-long recovery lay ahead, and appealed to Congress to step up and approve huge funding for recon-

struction. "The rebuilding process, this is where the long haul begins," Texas Governor Greg Abbott said on "Fox News Sunday." "This is where we come to the part where Congress plays a role."

The White House has asked Congress for \$7.85 billion for Harvey-related "response and initial recovery efforts," calling it a "down payment" on the long-term cost of recovering from the record flooding. In the end, Abbott said, recovery will cost "well over \$120 billion, probably \$150 billion to \$180 billion." White House budget director Mick Mulvaney has said the administration will later seek an additional \$6.7 billion for relief from the storm that has been blamed for at least 42 deaths.

Congress returns to Washington Tuesday after a summer recess. Democrats and Republicans who have feuded for months over President Donald Trump's agenda are under pressure to approve disaster relief. "It's not that it matters how much everything costs," said Diane Chapman, who was flooded out of her Houston home and was loading up on relief supplies. "What matters is that you help people who need help."

'Can-do city'

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner urged people who had been planning on traveling to Houston not to cancel their trips, conventions or concerts, saying the city was now 95 percent dry. "Yes, it was a very serious storm, historic, unprecedented, but the city of Houston is open for business."

Houston is a regional hub and also a center of the US petroleum industry, with the surrounding Gulf Coast area home to about a third of the nation's refining capacity. "That is a can-do city, we're not going to engage in a pity party," Turner said. He appeared Sunday on CBS and NBC.

Floodwaters in other hard-hit cities nearby such as Rockport, Beaumont and Port Arthur were slower to recede than Houston's. But while Houston was inching back to relative normalcy, some neighborhoods remained flooded, including those below the Addicks reservoir, where officials released water to ease structural pressure. Streets in Briarforest, which was eerily empty and quiet Sunday, remained under about three feet (one meter) or more of water.

Police set up roadblocks and were patrolling the area, in part to prevent looting. A Texas state trooper said there have been cases of thieves riding boats through streets of wealthy neighborhoods near the reservoir and breaking in to homes. Meanwhile, many Americans marked a "National Day of Prayer" for the storm's victims. In Washington, Trump and his wife Melania attended morning services at St John's Church near the White House.

In Houston, Barney Smith, 66, was among the more than 70 Fifth Ward church members impacted by Harvey. "I had to take everything out. Everything," he told AFP, saying the water ruined his home. As he spoke, people like Luella Rivera picked out supplies in the church's gymnasium, where a relief station was stocked with donations. — AFP

A SCORCHING FRESHMAN SUMMER LEAVES TRUMP POLITICALLY SCARRED

WASHINGTON: After a summer of staff shake-ups and self-made crises, President Donald Trump is emerging politically damaged, personally agitated and continuing to buck at the confines of his office, according to some close allies.

For weeks, the West Wing has been upended by a reorganization that Trump has endorsed and, later, second-guessed, including his choice of retired Marine Gen John Kelly as chief of staff. The president recently lashed out at Kelly after a boisterous rally in Phoenix, an incident relayed by a person with knowledge of the matter. In private conversations, Trump has leveled indiscriminate and harsh criticism on the rest of his remaining team.

Seven months into his tenure, Trump has yet to put his mark on any signature legislation and his approval ratings are sagging. Fellow Republicans have grown weary of his volatility, and Trump spent the summer tangling with some of the same lawmakers he'll need to work with in the coming weeks to pass a government funding bill, raise the country's borrowing limit and make a difficult bid for tax overhaul legislation.

"He's in a weak position," said Christopher Ruddy, the CEO of Newsmax and a longtime Trump friend. "A lot of the Republican establishment has not been supportive, his poll numbers are down and he has spent most of his early presidency appealing to his base while most presidents would be seeking more consensus." That sentiment was echoed in interviews with 10 White House officials, Republican operatives and others with close ties to the president. Most spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose private conversations with the president and his staff.

Recovery efforts

Some White House officials believe Trump

did find his footing during the response to Harvey, which they say has given him an opening to demonstrate presidential leadership. Trump has eagerly promoted the federal government's response and recovery efforts, and on Saturday was making his second visit to the region in a week.

The White House has asked Congress for an initial \$7.9 billion in emergency aid, a request expected to win quick approval. During an Oval Office event Friday, Trump struck a rare unifying tone: "As Americans, we know that no challenge is too great for us to overcome - no challenge." But the government's largely well-received handling of the storm has not soothed Trump's own frustrations, according to those who speak with him regularly. Trump told one associate he

missed his old life in New York. And he's become increasingly focused on the prospect of losing support among his core supporters - the voters he once said would stick with him even if he shot someone on New York's Fifth Avenue.

"I don't think it's a worry or a concern as much as it is a reality," Roger Stone, a longtime informal adviser to the president, said of Trump's preoccupation with his base. "It's a reality that he understands politically." Polls show Trump losing a bit of ground with some of his core constituencies. A Fox News survey released last week put Trump's overall approval rating at 41 percent, and notably cited a 7 percentage point drop among conservatives and a 9 point drop among whites without a college degree, one of Trump's strongest voting groups. — AP



TRIPOLI: French Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian, center, with the Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammed Siala during a press conference after meeting with the President of the Council Faiz Al-Sarraj at the Prime Minister Building. — AP

FRENCH FM IN TRIPOLI VOWS TO HELP RESOLVE LIBYA CRISIS

TRIPOLI: French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian held talks in Tripoli yesterday pledging his country's support for efforts to resolve Libya's political and security chaos. "This is a signal of the commitment of France, of President (Emmanuel) Macron's will, to contribute to resolving this crisis," Le Drian told reporters on a visit to the Libyan capital.

Le Drian said the visit was a follow-up to a July 25 accord sealed in Paris between the two main rivals in Libya, its UN-backed Government of National Accord head Fayez Al-Sarraj and military strongman Khalifa Haftar who backs a rival administration in the east of the country. "Our objective is the stabilization of Libya in the interest of Libyans themselves but also in the interest of neighboring countries, of which we form part in a way," he said at a joint news conference with Libyan counterpart Mohamed Al-Tajer Siala.

The French foreign minister said the aim was "a unified Libya with functioning institutions" that would stave off "the terrorist threat" and clear the way for reconciliation.

Libya has plunged into chaos since the overthrow of longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi in 2011 with dozens of armed factions filling the power vacuum as people smugglers exploit the chaos to ferry migrants on unseaworthy ships across the Mediterranean to Europe.

At the July talks hosted by France, Sarraj and Haftar accepted that only a political solution can end the crisis, starting with a ceasefire. In a 10-point statement, the leaders said: "We commit to a ceasefire and to refrain from any use of armed force for any purpose that does not strictly constitute counter-terrorism." The two sides also committed to "building the rule of law", and integrating fighters into "lawful military forces". Although the statement did not stipulate a date for elections, the French president said Sarraj and Haftar had "struck an agreement to hold elections next spring". Following his German and British counterparts who visited Libya this summer, Le Drian said he would travel on to Misrata and then to the eastern cities of Benghazi and Tobruk. — AFP



WASHINGTON: In this Sunday, Sept 3, 2017 photo, supporters of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA), demonstrate on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House. — AP

EU'S REFUGEE RELOCATION PLAN FACES MANY LEGAL CHALLENGES

BRUSSELS: The EU's top court rules tomorrow on the legality of a controversial quota scheme that Brussels launched two years ago to force member states to admit thousands of asylum seekers. The European Court of Justice will issue its verdict on a legal challenge that Hungary and Slovakia lodged against the scheme that requires bloc members to take in Syrians and others from overstretched Greece and Italy. The European Union approved the scheme as part of efforts to boost EU solidarity and end the chaos generated by Europe's worst migrant crisis since World War II. The Luxembourg-based court's senior lawyer Yves Bot recommended in July that the judges throw out the challenge, arguing the so-called relocation scheme was a proportionate means to help Greece and Italy.

The court often follows such opinions but not always. At stake is the EU's legal authority to take joint action to ease an unprecedented crisis and override opposition from a minority of member states. In this case, eastern member states rejected the plan on grounds they lack the capacity to integrate foreigners, most of them Muslim.

'Legally binding'

No matter the outcome of the court case, the scheme has been troubled from the start. EU figures show that just under 28,000 people have been relocated since a majority of member states agreed in September 2015 to relocate 160,000 Syrian, Iraqi and Eritrean asylum seekers from Italy and Greece by September this year.

Officials in Brussels have argued the scheme is legally binding on all member states, including those who voted against the quotas like Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Romania. Under the plan, Hungary must admit more than 2,300 asylum seekers, while Slovakia must in the long term take in 1,400. But in June, the European Commission, the 28-nation EU executive, launched legal action against Poland and Hungary for having failed to admit any asylum seekers.

It also took legal action against the Czech Republic for having stopped taking them but spared Slovakia which agreed to take a handful of them. Although it voted for it, Poland has come out strongly against the plan since a right-

wing government came to power. The EU action-which would be bolstered by a favorable ruling in Luxembourg-could see the three countries referred to the Court of Justice and given stiff financial penalties. Other EU member states have dragged their feet despite having voted for the plan.

'Disappointment'

In June, Filippo Grandi, the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees, called the relocation plan a "disappointment" where only a handful of countries on a wealthy continent were fulfilling their duty to asylum seekers. He singled out Greece, Italy, Germany, Sweden and Austria.

European sources have blamed the delays on governments trying to screen jihadists in the wake of terror attacks, a lack of housing and education for asylum seekers, and logistical problems. With the relocation scheme struggling to lift off, many Syrians and others in Greece and Italy have travelled with smugglers to wealthier northern countries like Germany and Sweden.

Brussels launched the relocation scheme in September 2015, the year more than one million migrants arrived in Europe by sea. It was introduced as an exception to so-called Dublin rules under which migrants must apply for asylum in the member state where they first land. Under international and European law, countries are required to grant asylum to people fleeing war or persecution but not those classed as economic migrants.

Political pressures have eased since March last year when the EU signed a deal with Turkey to send back migrants in return for billions of euros in aid and for admitting asylum seekers directly from refugee camps in Turkey. The controversial deal sharply cut the flow across the Aegean Sea to Greece, which had been the main point of entry to Europe. Other routes have since seen a resurgence in migrants, including via Libya to Italy as well as Morocco to Spain. The EU deems most people coming from sub-Saharan Africa as economic migrants. More than 14,000 people have died attempting to reach Europe since 2014. — AFP



BUJUMBURA: In this Saturday, Dec 12, 2015 file photo, men captured by the security forces, who were said by them to have been involved in attacks on military targets but which could not be independently verified, are paraded during a press conference at the country's intelligence service headquarters. — AP

UN ACCUSES BURUNDI GOVT OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

FINGERS POINT TOWARDS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE STATE

GENEVA: UN investigators yesterday accused Burundi's government of crimes against humanity, including executions and torture, and urged the International Criminal Court to open a case "as soon as possible". The United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Burundi said it had "reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed and continue to be committed in Burundi," pointing a finger at "the highest level of the state".

The three investigators, appointed by the Human Rights Council last September, described a "climate of fear" fuelled by violations including executions, torture and sexual violence. Commission chair Fatsah Ouguerouz told reporters in Geneva that the abuses were part of a "general or systematic attack against the civilian population" that could be considered "state policy". "We are struck by the scale and the brutality of the violations," Ouguerouz said in a statement. Given Burundi's record of impunity and the "strong likelihood that the perpetrators of these crimes will remain unpunished," the investigators asked "the International Criminal Court to open an investigation... as soon as possible". If it wants to follow that advice, the ICC will indeed need to move quickly: last year, Burundi formally announced it was withdrawing from the court,

with the move set to take effect on October 27. After that date, the ICC can only open a case if asked to do so by the Security Council.

President responsible?

Burundi plunged into a political crisis in April 2015 when President Pierre Nkurunziza decided to run for a third term that his opponents said was unconstitutional. He won elections in July that year which were boycotted by the opposition. Between 500 and 2,000 people have been killed in clashes in the country, according to UN and NGO sources. More than 400,000 people have fled and dozens of opposition activists have been forced into exile.

The commission stressed that the total number of violations is nearly impossible to estimate, but chairman Ouguerouz said the cases of torture and extrajudicial killings ran into the hundreds at least. About 40 women interviewed for the report recounted being victims of sexual violence, he added. The perpetrators included members of Burundi's National Intelligence Service, the police, military officials and members of the ruling party's youth league, the Imbonerakure, investigators said.

Nkurunziza himself, surrounded by a close-knit circle of "generals", was behind "big decisions,

including ones that led to serious human rights violations," it said. Armed opposition groups were also responsible for rights violations in Burundi, the report said, noting that these abuses had been more difficult to document.

List of perpetrators

The investigators were never permitted to enter Burundi, forcing them to conduct their probe from neighboring countries, where they interviewed more than 500 victims and witnesses. They said they were drafting a confidential list of suspected perpetrators of crimes against humanity, along with detailed information about the acts they are accused of committing or ordering. The UN is prepared to share the list with any credible judicial body, the report said.

Yesterday's report meanwhile said that despite a range of abuses against the Tutsi minority, there was currently no evidence of genocide in Burundi, as widely feared. But the commission said it remained deeply concerned by ethnically-loaded comments made by state and ruling party officials. "While this discourse does not constitute direct incitement to commit genocide, it nonetheless contributes to create a climate of dangerous hatred and to terrorize the population, and could revive ethnic tensions," it warned. — AFP

MERKEL AHEAD, SCHULZ FAILS TO LAND KNOCK-OUT PUNCH IN SOLE DEBATE

BERLIN: Angela Merkel appeared to be powering ahead yesterday to a fourth term as chancellor of Germany, after her rival Martin Schulz failed to halt her advance in a crucial televised debate three weeks before elections. Sunday's prime-time TV clash had been billed as Schulz's last chance to sway a decisive share of voters to his cause and halt a devastating popularity slide. But polls following the 90-minute showdown, which was watched by 16.1 million people, gave Merkel the clear edge over Schulz, a former European Parliament chief.

"Merkel came out as sure, Schulz was hardly able to land a punch. The candidate is an honorable man. But being honorable alone won't make one chancellor," wrote Sueddeutsche daily commentator Heribert Prantl. With millions of voters still undecided, Schulz had been looking to the debate to erode the commanding 17-percentage point lead of Merkel's CDU party and their Bavarian CSU allies ahead of the September 24 polls.

Schulz, who had previously complained that Merkel was lulling voters to sleep with her refusal to engage in combative debate, went on the offensive quickly on the hot-button issue of migration. He accused Merkel of failing to coordinate plans with EU neighbours when she decided to open Germany's borders in 2015 to allow in refugees, many from war-torn Syria and Iraq. But Merkel was not rattled, countering that: "In the life of a chancellor, there are moments when you have to make a quick decision."

And as Schulz voiced his wish to end EU membership talks with Turkey amid escalat-

ing tensions with Ankara, Merkel stole the issue from under his feet as she said she did not "see them ever joining" the bloc. Together with EU counterparts, she will examine if "we can end these membership talks", Merkel added. Merkel's tough line comes after Ankara arrested two more German nationals for "political reasons", according to Berlin. The plunge in relations began after Germany sharply criticised Ankara over the crackdown that followed last year's failed coup attempt there.

'Stiff and dowdy'

But for the minor skirmishes, commentators lamented it was more of a "duet than a duel" in the spirit of the right-left "grand coalition" Merkel has led since 2013. "That wasn't a TV debate, it was a torturous 90-minute grand coalition therapy discussion," said Dietmar Bartsch, a candidate from the far-left Die Linke. "Nothing on climate, nothing on education, nothing on digitalization," Greens party leader Cem Ozdemir tweeted during the event. "When will they start talking about the future?"

Opinion polls following the program showed a clear victory for Merkel, with public broadcaster ARD saying 55 percent found her more convincing while 35 percent plumped for Schulz. An ZDF survey was closer but still had Merkel ahead with 32 percent, against 29 percent who thought Schulz performed better. Merkel "appeared to be more competent than in any previous duel. She was not brilliant, but sure. Schulz, on the other hand, was so stiff and dowdy, like Merkel was in previous duels," wrote Prantl. — AFP



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel, right, talks to the Governor of the German state of Bavaria, Horst Seehofer, left, prior to a meeting of the German government with mayors of various German cities. — AP

GAMBIA WANTS TO STOP MIGRANTS RISKING IT ALL

BANJUL: After being stripped, beaten, robbed, enslaved and finally deported back to The Gambia, Karamo Keita is clear: no young Gambian should go through what he did in Libya. Keita and fellow migrants who suffered horrific abuses on their journey through the Sahara desert have formed a group to agitate for job creation from the new government and to dampen expectations among their peers that a life in Europe is within easy reach.

"We experienced the journey. We know the difficulties aspiring migrants face on the way and in Libya," Keita, 27, told AFP, sitting under a tree at a recent meeting of Youths Against Illegal Migration near the capital Banjul. So far this year, more than 5,400 Gambians have already made it to the shores of Italy from Libya, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), making Africa's smallest mainland nation the highest per capita source of migrants making the perilous crossing.

Gambians have also made headlines for a string of tragedies on the final stretch of what is known locally as "The Back Way", most notably 19-year-old goalkeeper Fatim Jawara of the women's national soccer side, who drowned in October 2016. President Adama Barrow, a onetime security guard in London, has said youth job creation is his top priority in a faltering economy. "Youths are risking this journey to Europe. You cannot blame them. They get frustrated to a level they cannot do anything," Barrow told AFP in an interview. Youths Against Illegal Migration say however that top-level government officials have so far failed to respond to their initiative.

Torture and slavery

Despite a small drop in numbers on 2016, migration to Europe is the talk of every Gambian community, where everyone has a son, cousin or niece who left on a bus bound for Niger and on to Libya. Keita and his fellow returnees believe many have an idealistic vision of what awaits them, often formed from social media images posted by Gambians who have made it across the Mediterranean.

Sketching the image of the harrowing journey he now shares as a warning to young Gambians, Keita recalls paying extortionate bribes in Burkina Faso and waiting for a smuggler in Agadez, Niger, bound for Libya, where his real nightmare began. "In Libya, black people have no right, and they have no say," Keita said, describing days spent labouring for free for racketeers with hopes of reaching the war-torn nation's northern coast, always in fear of kidnappers or police. "We were taken to various farms where the Libyan guy sold us as 'slaves'. We worked on the farms for free," Keita said. "We worked continuously. Some of us were gun-butted by the Libyans for working slowly," he added. "All we could do was to pray to escape alive."

The worst was to come in January when mass police raids against illegal migrants were carried out in the capital Tripoli, which Keita had finally reached, and he was passed through a string of detention facilities. "When I was arrested, they found money and a mobile phone on me. Everything was taken away from me. The soldiers stripped us naked and beat us until daybreak. It was raining and we were lying on the floor," he recalls. "It was cold, too." — AFP

GIRL 'JUST GOT INTO MY CAR', CLAIMS FRENCH WEDDING KIDNAP SUSPECT

LYON: The man charged with kidnapping a nine-year-old French girl during a wedding in the Alps has admitted during police questioning that she got into his car but denies abducting her, his lawyer told AFP yesterday. A week after Maelys de Araujo went missing in the eastern village of Pont-de-Beauvoisin, a 34-year-old man was remanded in custody Sunday on charges of "kidnapping, illegal confinement or arbitrary detention".

The man was a guest at the wedding that Maelys was attending with her parents when she went missing in the early hours of Sunday,

August 27. Her DNA was found in his car, which was parked next to the community hall where the celebrations were held and was cleaned the day after. The suspect's lawyer Bernard Meraud said his client told police that Maelys "got into his car with a little boy, onto the back seat, to see if his (the suspect's) dog was in the boot".

Meraud confirmed that a trace of her DNA had been found on the dashboard but that his client "completely denied" kidnapping her. Meraud said several DNA traces, including that of his client, had been found on the dashboard and that someone who was in contact with the

child could have "transferred" her DNA in to the vehicle. He also suggested that the children could have climbed into the car unbeknown to the driver, noting that all the windows were left down during the party.

The disappearance of the little girl, who was wearing a white dress and carrying a cuddly toy, has dominated French headlines over the past week. Sniffer dogs lost the scent from her toy in the car park outside the venue, raising fears she was kidnapped and whisked away by car. Scores of police, search and rescue teams, divers and cavers have been combing the woods and lakes in the area about 50 kilometers north of Grenoble for her but failed to turn up any sign.

Several hundred residents organised another search Saturday that also proved fruitless. Speaking to France's RTL radio the suspect's mother insisted her son was innocent. "He's a good boy who wouldn't hurt a soul," said the woman, who was not identified by name, accusing the authorities of "hounding him because they have to find a culprit".

Car was washed

The suspect was arrested last week along with a friend over inconsistencies in their account of the night's events, but the pair were later released. According to France Info radio, he is a former soldier who lives with his parents a few kilometers from Pont-de-Beauvoisin and does various odd jobs. Investigators became interested in him after it emerged he had been missing from the party around the time Maelys disappeared and washed his car the day after the wedding. His lawyer said that he cleaned the car with a view to selling it. — AFP



French gendarmes search for evidences in the forest on August 29, 2017 in the area around Pont-de-Beauvoisin, eastern France, after Maelys, a 9-year-old girl, disappeared during a wedding party two days ago. — AFP

PHILIPPINES PROBES SECOND POLICE KILLING OF TEENAGER

MANILA: Philippine authorities said yesterday they would investigate allegations police tortured and murdered a second teenager following an earlier killing that sparked the largest street protests so far against President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs. Police said they shot and killed Carl Angelo Arnaiz, 19, as he robbed a taxi driver with a handgun in northern Manila on August 17.

The young man's parents dispute the police account. On Monday the justice

ministry ordered an official investigation, said Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre. "The autopsy result appears contrary to the police allegation that he (Arnaiz) had allegedly fought back," Aguirre told reporters. A forensic examination by a government agency which provides legal services to the poor found that Arnaiz was tortured and shot dead while handcuffed.

"He was beaten up, his body was full of welts, he had a black eye, gashes as well as handcuff marks," Public

Attorney's Office chief pathologist Erwin Erfe told reporters, adding that bullet trajectories suggested Arnaiz was shot while kneeling. Arnaiz was killed the night after local police allegedly murdered 17-year-old Kian Delos Santos, in the same district during a major anti-drug raid on August 16. Justice ministry investigators last week recommended murder charges against four Manila police officers. The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) found they intention-

ally killed Delos Santos and fabricated evidence against him. Delos Santos' killing led to rare street protests against Duterte's war on drugs. Police have killed more than 3,800 drug suspects since he began his presidency in July last year.

Thousands of others have died in unexplained circumstances over the same period. Rights groups have expressed alarm at what they say are a wave of extrajudicial murders, a claim the Duterte government rejects. Persida Acosta, head of the Public

Attorney's Office, told reporters that Arnaiz and a 14-year-old neighbor who remains missing had disappeared from their homes in an eastern Manila suburb 10 days before Arnaiz's remains ended up in the morgue. Arnaiz had dropped out of the country's most prestigious university because he had become depressed over the absence of his mother, who worked in the Middle East, Acosta added. Justice Secretary Aguirre said he had ordered the NBI to locate the missing 14-year-old boy. —AFP

N KOREA MAY BE PREPARING NEW MISSILE LAUNCH: SEOUL

SEOUL: North Korea could be preparing another missile launch, Seoul said yesterday as it strengthened its defenses following Pyongyang's biggest-ever nuclear test and declaration it had a hydrogen bomb. The South and the United States will deploy more of the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile launchers that have infuriated Beijing, the defense ministry said.

The announcement came after Seoul fired an early-morning volley of ballistic missiles in an exercise simulating an attack on the North's nuclear test site. Pictures showed South Korean short-range Hyunmoo missiles roaring into the sky in the pale light of dawn from a launch site on the east coast. Pyongyang said the device it detonated Sunday was a hydrogen bomb far more powerful than the fission-based devices it is believed to have previously tested and small enough to fit into a missile.

The blast threw down a new gauntlet to President Donald Trump, after the North in July twice tested an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that appeared to bring much of the US mainland into range, and threatened to send a salvo of missiles towards the US territory of Guam.

South Korean defense ministry officials estimated its strength at 50 kilotons-five times the size of the North's previous nuclear test. They did not confirm whether it was a hydrogen bomb, saying only that "a variety of nuclear material" had been used. But Defense Minister Song Young-Moo said Seoul believed Pyongyang had succeeded in miniaturizing its nuclear weapons to fit into an ICBM.

The South had requested the US deploy strategic assets such as aircraft carriers and bombers to the peninsula, he said, but denied reports Seoul was seeking the return of US tactical nuclear weapons. Signs that North Korea was "preparing for another ballistic missile launch have consistently been detected since Sunday's test", the ministry said. It did not indicate when a launch might take place, but said it could involve an ICBM being fired into the Pacific Ocean to raise pressure on Washington further.

'Appeasement' accusation

After Sunday's test the United States warned it could launch a "massive military response" to threats from North Korea that would be "both effective and overwhelming". "We are not looking to the total annihilation of a country, namely North Korea," Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said, but warned: "We have many options to do so." Trump called an emergency meeting of his national security advisers and had his second telephone call of the weekend with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. But he did not talk to South Korea's Moon Jae-In for more than 24 hours—instead accusing Seoul of "appeasement", raising jitters in Seoul about the two

countries' decades-old alliance. Moon, who advocates engagement as well as penalties to bring Pyongyang to the negotiating table, called for new United Nations sanctions to "completely isolate North Korea." But Trump criticised the US treaty ally on Twitter, saying: "South Korea is finding, as I have told them, that their talk of appeasement with North Korea will not work, they only understand one thing!"

The nuclear test prompted an international chorus of condemnation. The Security Council will hold an emergency meeting today. At their summit in China, the North's key ally, the five-nation BRICS grouping-taking in the host nation as well as Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa—said Monday it "strongly deploras" the test.

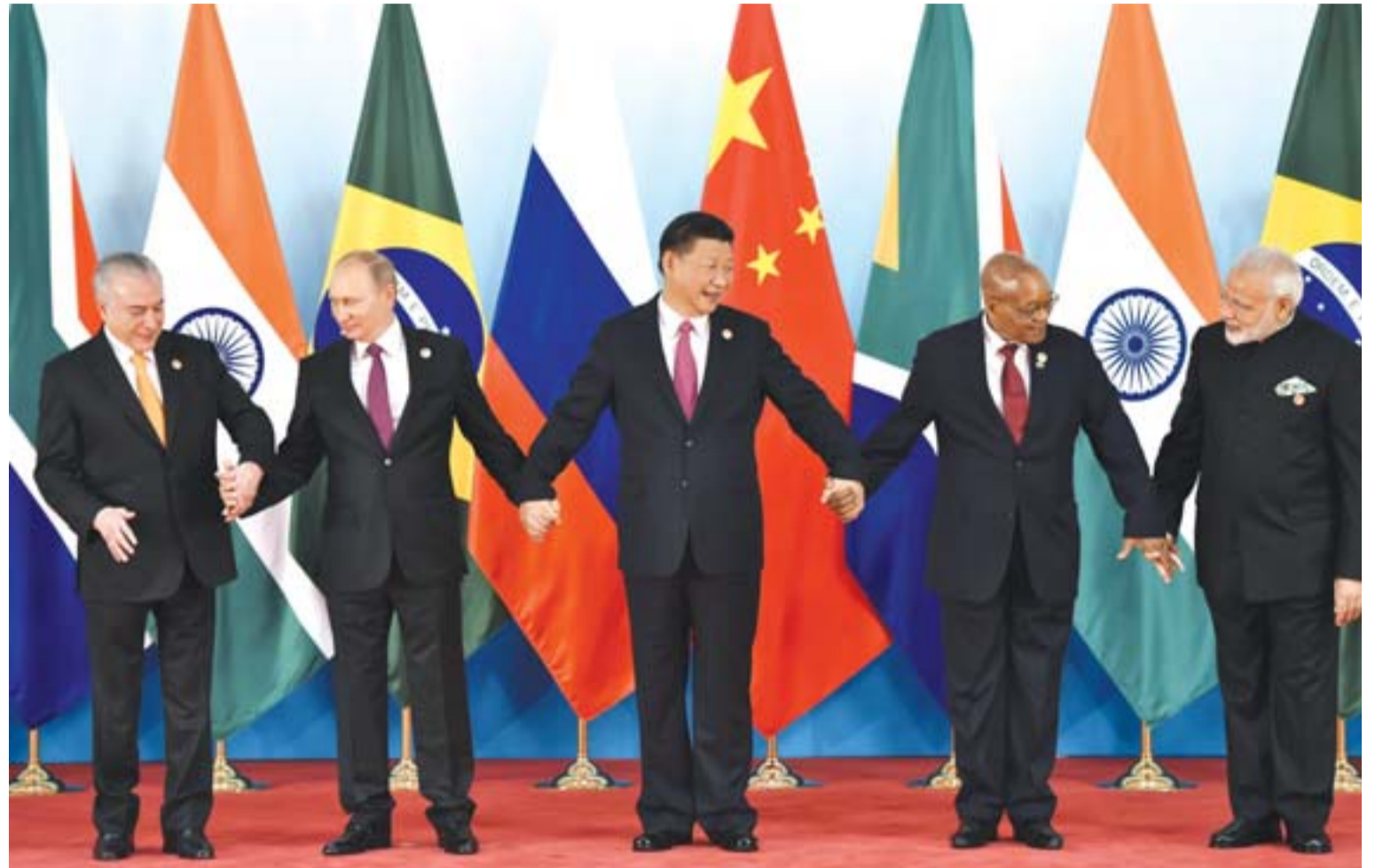
Moon and Abe agreed to work for stronger sanctions against the North, but seven sets of UN measures have so far done nothing to deter Pyongyang. US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Sunday his department was preparing measures to "cut off North Korea economically" and ensure anyone trading with it could not do business with the US. That would impact Beijing, which is responsible for about 90 percent of the North's commerce, but would also have dramatic consequences for the US as China is the world's second-largest economy.

'Perfect success'

On Sunday US monitors measured a powerful 6.3-magnitude earthquake near the North's main testing site, felt in parts of China and Russia, with an aftershock possibly caused by a rock cave-in. According to the South's Yonhap news agency, Seoul's National Intelligence Service said it was the fifth blast the North had conducted in the same No 2 tunnel at the Punggye-ri test site, and it was "likely to have collapsed".

But it said the North had already completed construction of a third tunnel, so that it could carry out another test at any time it chose, and work was underway on a fourth. The North hailed the test as "a perfect success". Despite fears of a possible radioactive leak after the apparent collapse, Japanese and Chinese scientists said they had detected no radiation in the atmosphere. Hours before the test, the North released images of leader Kim Jong-Un inspecting a device it called a "thermonuclear weapon with super explosive power" entirely made "by our own efforts and technology". The respected 38 North website urged caution, saying it was likely the item pictured was "only a model mock-up".

The North says it needs nuclear weapons to defend itself against the threat of invasion, and analysts say it is seeking to strengthen its hand for any future negotiations with Washington. An increasing number of experts say talks are now the only way to address the issue. —AFP



XIAMEN: (From left) Brazil's President Michel Temer, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, South Africa's President Jacob Zuma and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi pose for a group photo during the BRICS Summit at the Xiamen International Conference and Exhibition Center. — AP

BRICS URGES UN REFORM, COOPERATION ON TERROR

'ISLAMIST FUNDAMENTALISTS POSE A UNIVERSAL THREAT'

XIAMEN: The BRICS group of five major emerging economies called yesterday for reform of the United Nations and tougher measures against terrorist groups, while denouncing North Korea's latest nuclear test at a summit in China that seeks to enlarge the organization's presence on the world stage. The nations - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—agreed in a joint declaration to strengthen cooperation against a range of organizations it described as terrorist, including some based in Pakistan, in a diplomatic victory for New Delhi.

The five also pledged their opposition to protectionism, a theme increasingly taken up by host Chinese President Xi Jinping as anti-globalization sentiment in the West poses a threat to China's vast export markets. In the 43-page declaration, Xi, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Brazilian President Michel Temer and South African President Jacob Zuma said they would work together to improve global economic governance to foster "a more just and equitable international order."

They also strongly condemned North Korea's sixth - and most powerful - nuclear test that took place Sunday and has overshadowed the two-day BRICS summit in the southeastern Chinese city of Xiamen that China is using as a showcase for its growing international status. Preeti Saran, an official with India's Ministry of External Affairs, said each leader had referred to North Korea's nuclear test when they spoke during their meeting.

Direct dialogue

The declaration said the five emphasized that the issue should only be settled through "peaceful means and direct dialogue of all the parties concerned." They called for "comprehensive reform" of the UN and the UN Security Council "with a view to making it more representative,

effective and efficient, and to increase the representation of the developing countries so that it can adequately respond to global challenges." No proposals on specific reforms were offered.

China, the world's second largest economy, wants BRICS to play a more important role in international affairs. But some observers suggest the group's influence is waning given the ongoing political and economic rivalry between China and India and the economic woes faced by Brazil, Russia and South Africa. In addressing terrorism, the declaration named organizations including the Pakistan-based militant groups Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, the Islamic State group and Al-Qaeda.

Saran said it was the first time there had been a specific listing of alleged terrorist groups in a BRICS document, calling that "a very important development." China, a key ally of Pakistan, has repeatedly blocked India's attempts to have the leader of Jaish-e-Mohammad, Masood Azhar, put on a UN Security Council terror blacklist. India has accused archival Pakistan of harboring and training militants to launch attacks on its soil.

China is a veto-wielding permanent member of the Security Council and has been seen as using that clout to gain an edge in its political and economic rivalry with India. The nuclear-armed Asian giants recently ended a 10-week border standoff high in the Himalayas that re-awakened memories of their 1962 frontier war, paving the way for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the BRICS summit in China.

Saran denied any connection between China's agreement to list the Pakistan-based organizations and the withdrawal of Indian troops from the contested Himalayan area last week. "This is a multilateral forum with five sovereign countries. There is no linkage to any other development," she said. At earlier BRICS summits, China balked at India raising Pakistan-

sponsored terrorism allegations and defended its ally's role in countering terrorism, said Sreeram Chaulia, dean of the Jindal School of International Affairs near New Delhi.

Islamist fundamentalists

The inclusion of the two Pakistan-based groups in the declaration shows that "India has finally succeeded in persuading all BRICS members that Islamist fundamentalists pose a universal threat," Chaulia said. That came despite comments by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying on Thursday that China did not consider Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts to be an "appropriate topic" at the summit.

Saran said Modi and Putin discussed oil and gas cooperation and how to promote trade and investment between their two nations. Xi and Modi are expected to hold a meeting on the sidelines of the summit tomorrow. The declaration also expressed concern about the Haqqani network that is active in Afghanistan, and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, accused by Beijing of fomenting unrest in China's northeastern region of Xinjiang.

The declaration said nations should unite to fight terrorist groups in accordance with the principles of international law, but emphasized the importance of not interfering in the sovereign affairs of individual states. Xi announced in his opening address yesterday that China would set aside 500 million yuan (\$76 million) for economic and technological cooperation and exchanges among BRICS countries, and \$4 million to support the BRICS' New Development Bank. The figure was much smaller than the 780 billion yuan (\$120 billion) that Xi pledged at a summit in May for his own signature initiative, the "One Belt, One Road" project to boost connections between China, Europe and Africa. — AP



This undated file photo distributed on Sunday, Sept 3, 2017, by the North Korean government, shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, second from right, at an undisclosed location in North Korea. —AP

TAIWAN'S PREMIER RESIGNS

TAIPEI: Taiwan's Premier Lin Chuan resigned yesterday in a move aimed at reviving dwindling public support for the government of President Tsai Ing-wen. Tsai's office announced in a statement that Lin offered his resignation on Sunday, saying that he had "accomplished his periodic tasks", and it was approved by the president.

Speculation had been rife that Lin would be replaced. The government's popularity has been hit by a series of controversial policies, ranging from holiday cuts to pension reforms, as well as by worsening relations with China. Beijing has cut all official communication with Tsai's government since she took office in May last year. Her Democratic Progressive Party is traditionally independence-leaning and has refused officially to accept that Taiwan is part of "one China".

Tsai's popularity has dropped from a high of nearly 70 percent when she took

power to below 30 percent in several recent polls, with some in the DPP blaming the unpopular premier for dragging down her support. In a TVBS poll released last month, Lin's support fell to a record low of 18 percent, while 44 percent said he should be replaced against 26 percent who said he should stay.

"I am happy that somebody will take over the heavy burden and I'm grateful that somebody is willing to do that... I'll accept the criticisms that are reasonable," Lin told reporters when asked about his low public support. Lin, an economist and former finance minister, was rumored to become the next governor of Taiwan's central bank. But he said yesterday that he has no plans to take any government post in the future. His replacement will be announced on Tuesday. There has been widespread speculation that the popular mayor of the southern city of Tainan, William Lai, will take over. — AFP

PHNOM PENH:

When Cambodia's main opposition leader was arrested over the weekend in a surprise police raid, one of the country's last independent media outlets rushed reporters out in the middle of night to cover the story, just as it has done for nearly a quarter century. But the English-language Cambodia Daily's reportage about the arrest of Kem Sokha, who stands accused by the government of treason, was a tragic story in and of itself: it was to be the paper's last.

Yesterday the venerable broadsheet, which has helped pioneer press freedom and train generations of journalists since it was founded in 1993, appeared in newsstands for the last time - the latest victim of a determined push by the government of Prime Minister Hun Sen to silence critics in the run-up to 2018 elections.

The paper's owners said they were forced to close because of "extra-legal threats by the government," a reference to a \$6 million

tax bill they say authorities contrived with no audit and a single purpose - to shut them down. "It's terrible, it's frustrating," said Chhorn Chansy, who worked for a decade at the paper as a reporter and news editor. "We normally write about others. We can't believe that this happened to us."

During its 24-year-run, the Cambodia Daily served as a model for budding journalists, its stories offering a window into a growing nation that is still emerging from decades of conflict and genocide. About half the Daily's 30 editorial staff were Cambodian; the other half were foreigners drawn from around the world.

Outright dictatorship

The paper, which included a Khmer-language section, acquired a reputation for hard-hitting investigations in a nation where such things were rare. It was also a consistent thorn in Hun Sen's side. Its final front-page headline, "Descent into

Outright Dictatorship," ran above a story about Kem Sokha's arrest.

Below the piece was another announcing Monday's edition would be its last. Jodie DeJonge, the paper's American chief editor, called the closure a "blow against press freedom, a blow against allowing dissenting voices to be heard, a blow against democracy in

Cambodia." "It's hard to imagine that after working for so hard for so long, these journalists just have to walk away," she said.

The Daily's fate is part of a much broader government crackdown on critics that has intensified dramatically in recent weeks and left many wondering where the nation is headed. — AP



PHNOM PENH: The final issue of The Cambodia Daily is sold at a newsstand. —AP

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Focus

ALARMING WEST,
TURKEY CLOSER TO
RUSSIA ARMS DEAL

Turkey and Russia are inching towards an accord for the first major Turkish weapons purchase from Moscow, troubling Ankara's allies in NATO even though the deal may not ultimately materialize. According to Turkish and Russian officials, all preparations have been made for the purchase of a sophisticated S-400 missile defense system, Ankara's most significant accord with a non-NATO supplier. But despite confident proclamations, the deal has yet to be officially inked. Analysts remain skeptical over whether Turkey will ever take delivery of the surface-to-air missile defense batteries. Some argue the message sent to the West matters more than the actual acquisition.

The Pentagon has already sounded alarm, saying bluntly that "generally it's a good idea" for NATO allies to buy inter-operable equipment. But President Recep Tayyip Erdogan boasted that "God willing we will see the S-400s in our country". Erdogan has argued that Turkey's fellow NATO member and occasional regional foe Greece has Russian-made S-300 batteries on its southern island of Crete, originally bought by Cyprus in the late 1990s but passed on to Greece to prevent escalation on the divided island.

'Show dissatisfaction'

Dmitry Shugayev, the head of Russia's military-technical cooperation agency, told the Kommersant daily that the deal was "almost done" with just some "subtleties" to solve. The United States "may be indignant but Turkey is an independent state and can decide itself," he said. However Igor Delanoe, Deputy Director of the French-Russian Analytical Centre in Moscow, said he was "very sceptical" that the deal would come to fruition.

Russia was uncomfortable with the transfer of technology and production localization demanded by Turkey, he said. Moscow also had a demand backlog to its own forces but also to key client China. "Both Moscow and Ankara use this story on the political level to show their respective dissatisfaction to the West," Delanoe said. Russia's relations with NATO have been in crisis over its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine and for backing pro-Moscow separatists in eastern Ukraine.

But while still a key member of NATO, Turkey's ties with the United States in particular have been strained over Washington's support of the People's Protection Units (YPG) Syrian Kurd militia which Ankara considers a terror group. "Ankara is also tempted to use (the S-400 issue) since it has been deeply frustrated by America's ongoing military cooperation with the Syrian Kurds," said Delanoe.

Timur Akhmetov, Ankara-based Turkey expert at the Russian International Affairs Council, said the talks helped Russia promote its arms systems and corrode trust among NATO members, while Turkey wanted to show its Western allies it has a strategic choice in its relationships. "The longer the talks on the S-400 systems are on the agenda, the better for Russia and Turkey's respective interests," he said.

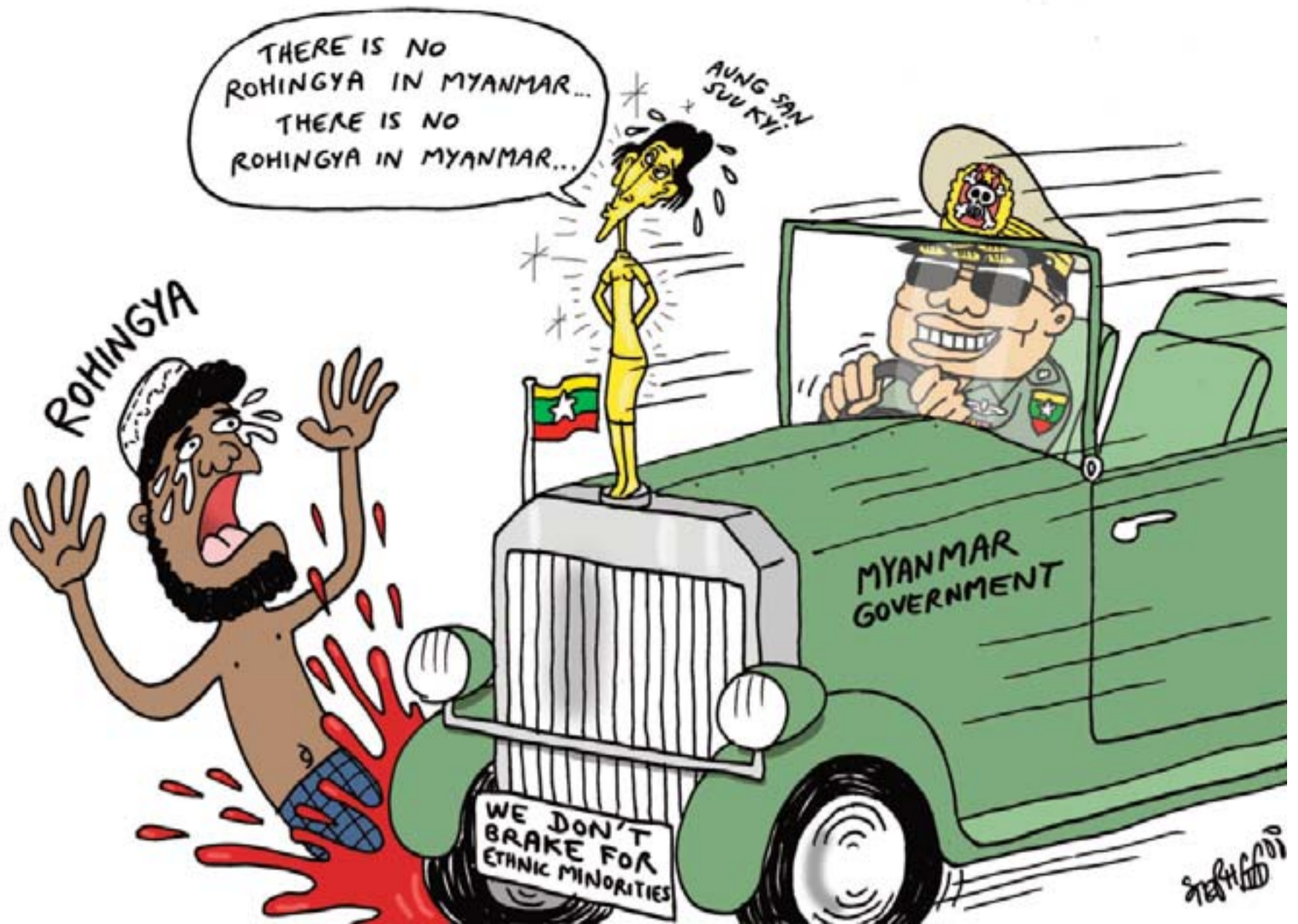
'No trust'

The fact the two countries are even discussing the purchase is a rich symbol of the transformation in relations since a reconciliation deal last summer following the shooting down by Turkey of a Russian plane over the Syrian border in Nov 2015. Moscow and Ankara remain on opposed sides in the Syrian conflict with Russia backing the Damascus regime and Turkey the rebels. In 2012, Turkish jets forced a Syrian plane flying from Moscow to Damascus to land at Ankara airport on the grounds it was carrying military equipment, reportedly radar parts for a Syrian air defense system.

The two post-imperial states both show an ability to compartmentalize relations by not letting a centuries old and persistent regional rivalry pollute potentially fruitful, but limited, areas of cooperation. Yet analysts say talk of the S-400 deal is far short of an indication of a major strategic alliance. "The only thing that makes both Turkey and Moscow drift to each other is their intention to pressure their own respective relations with the West," said Akhmetov.

Delanoe said "both partners do not trust each other" but "have built a geoeconomic partnership mainly based on energy" with work in progress on the TurkStream pipeline to pump Russian gas under the Black Sea. According to a study by Can Kasapoglu of the EDAM center for economic and foreign policy studies, Turkey's desire to obtain the weapons is also motivated by its dearth of qualified military pilots due to the purges that followed the July 15, 2016 failed coup which has necessitated an urgent shoring up of air defenses. Were Turkey to get its hands on the S-400 system, it would produce an outcome where NATO members Turkey and Greece were both operating Russian-made weapons, risking the same "vicious circle" that sees Moscow supplying bitter foes Armenia and Azerbaijan, he added. —AFP

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BIG COMPANIES TAKE REINS ON SOURCING SCHEMES

From cocoa to tea, food and drink giants are setting their own standards for ethical sourcing of raw materials, moving away from third-party labels such as Fairtrade. Mondelez International, owner of chocolate brands Cadbury and Toblerone, Unilever, behind tea brands such as Lipton and PG Tips, and Barry Callebaut, the world's biggest producer of chocolate and cocoa products, have all introduced their own schemes. They say their targets are more comprehensive and some claim their schemes are more effective in tracking whether a product is ethically sourced every step of the way. With companies under financial pressure, analysts say it has also been a way to save money.

But critics are worried that the standards that third-party groups such as UTZ Certified or Rainforest Alliance have fought to establish risk being muddled and what is deemed ethical and sustainable could become more ambiguous. "Standards measuring environmental and social issues need to be transparent because, once this process happens behind closed doors, it is difficult to see how companies and farms apply them," said Sloane Hamilton, labour rights policy advisor at Oxfam, a charity focused on alleviating poverty. "We don't want to see standards watered down, and neither do we want customers to be faced by a bewildering proliferation of different certification schemes."

Third-party certifiers are not opposed to all self-certification, even though the loss of fees could threaten their future. Rather, they are worried standards could become meaningless if too many companies set their own criteria. Mondelez started selling the first Green & Black's chocolate in the UK without a Fairtrade logo in August, more than 23 years after the brand's Maya Gold bar received Britain's first mark.

The bar instead carries the stamp of "Cocoa Life", a Mondelez scheme started in 2012 with broad goals including improved productivity, protection of fertile land and gender equality in farming communities. Mondelez says Fairtrade is still an "implementing partner" and the group's auditing arm is used to vet cocoa sourced through "Cocoa Life". Fairtrade, a non-profit, aims to push for a better deal for farmers and workers in developing nations. It sets standards, including a minimum price for raw materials, and requires companies to contribute towards businesses or community projects, in exchange for the Fairtrade stamp.

But as the concept of ethically-sourced ingredients has become better understood by consumers, brands have started adopting standards that work for their business and image. "It's opened the door for companies to say 'well let's develop a standard that suits our business and also has the impact that we want to have on the ground,'" said Alan

Rownan, ethical labels analyst at Euromonitor. Crafting in-house standards has also become a way to trim costs for big companies under financial pressure as economic growth slows and consumers opt for healthier snacks or smaller, more artisan brands.

"When the whole market is certified, the ability to have a higher price for it becomes less," said Jon Cox, analyst at Kepler Cheuvreux in Zurich, who follows companies such as Nestle and Barry Callebaut. "So why not bring it in-house anyway and save money? And if they can convince consumers that it's as good as some of the independents, if not better, then that maybe helps them as well."

Deeper Involvement

While third-party labels have had a leading role in the drive to stamp out practices such as deforestation and child labour on farms, they have also faced criticism. Think-tanks and industry groups say the way they enforce standards is not transparent enough and they have failed to align their programmes to reduce complexity. Rainforest Alliance and UTZ Certified are now expected to streamline their standards after recently announcing plans to merge.

With consumer awareness growing, companies are also seeking to track more closely the sourcing of their ingredients and show the impact of certification to their consumers. Fairtrade ensures that the sourcing of raw materials including coffee and bananas can be traced at every step of farming and processing but it does not provide the same guarantee for cocoa and tea. It says certified cocoa beans are difficult to track as they can get mixed with conventional beans at the processing stage in countries that do not have the capacity to keep them separate.

This means a Fairtrade chocolate bar may be made with certified and conventional cocoa, with the label only guaranteeing that the company buys a percentage of Fairtrade beans and that any premium paid goes to farmers certified by the organization. Some food and drinks companies say, as part of their move to new standards, they are taking a more active role in sourcing to show consumers a clearer link.

For example, Barry Callebaut built a dedicated ethically-sourced cocoa butter tank in a factory in Belgium and it has launched a mobile app aimed at improving traceability on farms in the Ivory Coast. Mondelez does not track cocoa through the entire supply chain, but it says Cocoa Life has allowed for a deeper involvement with farmers. The company uses digital mapping in Ghana, Ivory Coast and Indonesia to boost transparency and traceability from farm to processing facility. "When you're simply a buyer of raw materials,

then in a typical supply chain, you're not involved directly on the ground," said Jonathan Horrell, global director of sustainability for Mondelez.

Some companies have also set deadlines for eliminating unsustainable practices from their supply chain and, as they approach, the pressure to find solutions has intensified. Unilever has promised to source 100 percent of its materials sustainably by 2020 using both certification and its own "Unilever Sustainable Agriculture Code". Barry Callebaut is also aiming to source 100 percent of its ingredients sustainably by 2025, up from 23 percent in 2015. It buys cocoa through external schemes and its own "Cocoa Horizons" program. "They're under pressure to reach these (goals)," Rownan said. "And it's not always easy to reach 100 percent targets following these mainstream, rigid certifications."

Savvy Consumers

While critics of self-certification worry about muddling standards, consumers are growing savvier. The companies say they risk a fierce backlash if they try to loosen the rules. "If you connect your name to it...then you want to make sure what you're putting out there is absolutely credible," said Christiaan Prins, head of external affairs for Barry Callebaut. "The consumer nowadays can no longer be tricked in any sense." Sainsbury's angered consumers and watchdogs in June when it replaced the Fairtrade mark on its own-brand tea with its pilot "Fairly Traded" version, with an eye to possibly extending it to other products such as coffee and bananas. Under "Fairly Traded", farmers will get "above and beyond" what they were receiving from Fairtrade and it should help make them more resilient to climate change, said Sainsbury's head of media relations David Nieberg.

But critics say the scheme takes control away from farmer organizations, who will no longer directly receive a premium for their tea. The premium will be managed by the Sainsbury's Foundation and will be used to fund farmers' strategic projects. Sainsbury's will not pay licensing fees to Fairtrade but will continue to buy tea from farmers certified by the group. It will also purchase from farmers vetted by other groups if it decides they meet its in-house rules for ethical sourcing, Nieberg said.

Consumer scrutiny is likely to be even greater towards companies using self-made schemes to meet ambitious targets for "sustainable" sourcing - a label that is already ambiguous because it has many standards and meanings. "When companies move away from certifiers and all of a sudden are able to far more easily achieve their sustainability goals - well what's changed?" said Rownan. "I think consumers will want to know." — Reuters

MEATY CHALLENGE: WHAT'S ON THE MENU FOR CITIES?

Juicy lab-grown steaks and burgers made of plant-based meat could soon be tempting hardened carnivores scanning restaurant menus in the world's biggest cities, as food producers explore fresh ways to feed booming populations. With people pouring into cities across the developing world, rocketing demand for meat and dairy products will make it essential to find high-protein alternatives that have a lower environmental impact, some experts say.

"The food of the future, as we become more and more urban, will continue to be meat but it won't be meat from industrialised animal agriculture," said Bruce Friedrich, executive director of the Washington-based Good Food Institute. "It will be meat made from plants, and it will be meat grown in factories without farmers and slaughterhouses," said Friedrich, who calculates that traditional meat will be eliminated in high-income countries by 2050.

Others predict bugs or high-protein algae such as spirulina will be high on the list of future foods, along with fish produced in deep-sea farms or vast urban warehouses. But with a 50 percent jump in agricultural production needed to support nearly 10 billion people by 2050 as climate change bites, according to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), more obvious solutions may lie in cutting calories and animal protein in the diets of the rich, making agriculture more efficient, and reducing the one-third of food that is wasted.

About 80 percent of all agricultural land is dedicated to grazing or growing feed for animals, the FAO says. In addition, the livestock industry consumes 10 percent of the world's freshwater, while generating methane and other planet-warming emissions, and causing large-scale deforestation.

Kind to Animals

A handful of companies are racing to develop tech-

nology that could drastically reduce the price of so-called "cultured" or "clean" meat, grown from starter cells taken from live animals. They say it could eventually be produced in urban "breweries", would cost less than real meat, and use 99 percent less land. "Meat-eaters in a few years will be able to choose between traditional meat that includes animal suffering and non-animal suffering meat that is 100 percent meat and resembles meat's texture, taste and look," said Yaron Bogin, CEO of the Israel-based Modern Agriculture Foundation.

Elsewhere, start-ups are using "cellular agriculture" to develop animal-free eggs, milk and fish. San Francisco-based Hampton Creek wants to get the first clean meat product to consumers next year, but industry watchers and other companies say huge technological and regulatory hurdles mean it will take five years for the food to arrive in high-end restaurants and a decade to reach mass-market consumers.

"You'll be able to create food you can store and transport easily," said Ido Savir, chief executive of Israeli firm SuperMeat, whose cultured chicken will be kosher and halal. The technology will help feed people in developing countries who now consume almost no meat or have a poor-quality diet, he added. Big producers in the \$750-billion meat market are also looking at alternatives. Top US meat processor Tyson Foods has set up a \$150-million fund to develop cheap, alternative protein sources and invested in plant-based meat company Beyond Meat. Meanwhile, Bill Gates, Richard Branson and commodities giant Cargill have sunk money into California's Memphis Meats which is developing "clean" poultry, beef and pork.

Bet on Bugs

Other entrepreneurs are eyeing protein-rich bugs, already eaten by billions, which could easily be bred in cities on urban farms that don't take up large slabs of

pricey real estate. New York's Terreform ONE has developed a futuristic modular shelter and cricket farm, crowned with spiky quills, ideal for cultivating high-protein crickets that can be ground into flour. "You can see protein changing because it can be produced inside cities," said Mitchell Joachim, Terreform co-founder.

"It makes a lot of sense to do it in the case of insects - pound for pound it's a crushing difference. It's almost 1,000 times less water, 300 times less carbon. It's incredibly cheap to make bugs in cities," he added. Affordable pricing and astute marketing are key to convincing consumers to try radically new foods, particularly as they find it harder to ignore the ethical and environmental impact of their purchases. "It's always money; it's availability," said Morgaine Gaye, a food futurologist. "We'd like to think it's about how good it tastes, but that's actually pretty far down the line as you've got to get someone to pick it off the shelf." The "celebrity cool factor" can make a big difference to sales, if companies can get stars to endorse brands, she added.

Despite the buzz around future foods, countries could still manage to meet growing demand and environmental targets using what we eat today if they make key changes to the food system, said Lorenzo Giovanni Belli, a senior economist with the FAO. Methods like precision agriculture, tailored to the exact requirements of crops, could make production more efficient, while using more renewable energy would cut carbon emissions, said Belli.

Diets also need to become better balanced to cut over-eating, especially of meat, while increasing the amount of animal protein available to the poor, he added. Many simple solutions exist that can harness what the world already knows, he emphasised, including adapting existing technologies for poorer countries. "We have a lot of things to do before eating insects," he said. — Reuters



An aerial view shows Muslim pilgrims circumambulating the Kaaba, Islam's holiest shrine, at the Grand Mosque in Saudi Arabia's holy city of Makkah on Sunday during the annual hajj pilgrimage. — AFP

PRINCE WILLIAM AND KATE EXPECTING THIRD...

Continued from Page 1

William, also 35, is second in line to the throne and the new baby will be fifth in line, pushing William's younger brother Harry down the order of succession. "Their royal highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are very pleased to announce that the Duchess of Cambridge is expecting their third child," the palace said in a statement. Queen Elizabeth II, William's grandmother, and his father Prince Charles were said to be "delighted" at the news, while Harry said he was "very, very happy for them".

The news comes as William and Kate's eldest child, four-year-old Prince George, who is third in line to the throne, prepares to start school in London on Thursday. The couple also has a daughter, two-year-old Princess Charlotte. The palace declined to say when the new baby was due, but a spokeswoman confirmed to AFP that Kate "hasn't reached the 12-week stage yet". Many women wait until they are 12 weeks pregnant to announce the news, due to the risk of miscarriage. "As with her previous two pregnancies, the Duchess is suffering from hyperemesis gravidarum," the official palace statement said. "Her royal highness will no longer carry out her planned engagement at the Hornsey Road Children's Centre in London today. The Duchess is being cared for at Kensington Palace." Kate was only around a month pregnant with Charlotte when the news was announced, again because she had to cancel a public engagement.

Prime Minister Theresa May was quick to offer her congratulations, saying: "This is fantastic news." Speaking at an event in Manchester, Harry said it was "great" that he was going to be an uncle again, and said of Kate: "I think she's okay." Kate was hospitalized with hyperemesis gravidarum during her first pregnancy in 2012, while it also forced her to cancel a trip to Malta when she was pregnant with Charlotte in 2014.

William and Kate moved back to London from their rural home in eastern England this summer as they take over more engagements from the ageing senior royals. The 91-year-old queen has reduced her public events in recent years and Prince Philip, her 96-year-old husband, officially retired in August. William gave up his job as an air ambulance pilot in July and relocated his family from Anmer Hall in Norfolk to their apartment at Kensington Palace.

There has long been speculation that the couple would like a third child. On a royal tour of Poland in July, the duchess - who herself is one of three children - joked about having another after being given a cuddly toy designed to soothe tiny babies. Saying thank you for the present, she turned to William and joked: "We will just have to have more babies."

Hyperemesis gravidarum causes excessive nausea and vomiting and affects around one in every 100 pregnant women, according to the state-run National Health Service (NHS). Some women report being sick up to 50 times a day, and while most common in early pregnancy, symptoms can continue throughout the nine months. — AFP

EMBASSIES, AGENCIES WARY OF NEW MAID...

Continued from Page 1

There are around one million domestic workers in Kuwait. Most of them come from India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and a few from African nations. Recruiters typically charge sponsors anywhere from KD 600 to KD 1,600. In many cases, the workers also pay a fee to the recruiting agency in their home countries. Both sides earn revenue with every worker recruited - in fact, recently, a delegation of Philippine recruitment agency owners traveled to Kuwait to meet agency owners here.

In response to skyrocketing recruiting fees, the government of Kuwait established Al-Durra. According to Wehaib, Al-Durra's costs for recruiting housemaids will be much less; however he chose not to mention a specific figure, citing ongoing price negotiations. One source, discussing the potential new business model, suggested that recruiting fees may drop to around KD 700. However it is unclear if this is the figure being considered by Al-Durra. Asked whether a fee of KD 350, previously floated as a likely charge, was viable, Wehaib replied in the negative. "No. It will not be that low, but it won't cost KD 1,500 too - it will be a lesser amount. I cannot divulge the amount at present since we do not have the authority to release the figure yet. We visited the countries sending domestic helpers and we have become aware of the market reality and the amount involved in recruitment," he said.

Embassies and agencies not keen

Whatever the final fee, it's unlikely to meet with approval from local and home country recruiters. Already, embassies of labor-exporting countries are speaking out against the plan. Sri Lankan Ambassador to Kuwait Kandeepan Bala said that any lower fees than that currently charged will not be acceptable.

"The recruitment agencies are earning through commissions. We do not want to interfere, but it will be difficult for anyone to recruit with such sums. This is the system - the norm - in recruiting domestic helpers. In Sri Lanka, the cost of recruiting housemaids is KD 1,200 to KD 1,400, and from this the local recruiter will get about KD 200, and the recruitment agency in Sri Lanka gets KD 200. The remainder is given to the housemaid. The housemaid is responsible for her own welfare once in Kuwait, but they already have the money - approximately KD 650, in addition to their agreed monthly salary," he told Kuwait Times.

Commenting on how the embassy views Al-Durra, Bala said: "They went to the Philippines, India and Sri Lanka to introduce their agency, but it is still unclear at the moment how much will they really charge for the recruitment of workers. I don't see their operation as problematic - they already told us that all existing agencies will still be allowed to operate as they do currently."

The Philippines is also aware of Al-Durra's recent establishment, Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Renato Pedro Villa said. Philippine Labor Attache to Kuwait Alexander Padaen noted "negotiations with Al-Durra are currently underway". "Costs are more of a business concern. Our work, however, is to ensure the compliance of employers with embassy requirements and contractual obligations," he said. He confirmed that Al-Durra had been in contact with the embassy, but no agreement has been made yet regarding costs. Many recruiting offices in labor-exporting countries work in concert with local private recruitment agencies and may feel their revenue streams threatened by the new system being set up by the Kuwaiti government.

The Al-Durra Company was established through (law no. 69 of 2015) as a closed Kuwaiti shareholding company for the recruitment of domestic helpers. Al-Durra is owned by various government agencies such as the Union of Consumers Cooperative Society (60 percent), Public Institution for Social Security (10 percent), Kuwait Airways (10 percent), Public Authority for Minor Affairs (10 percent) and Kuwait Investment Authority (10 percent).

Since the majority of the shares are owned by co-ops, the Al-Durra Company will have branches in all six governorates, namely Nassim Cooperative Society (Jahra governorate), Zahra Cooperative Society (Hawally governorate), Adan and Qusoor Cooperative Society (Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate), Fahheel Cooperative Society (Ahmadi Governorate), Rawda and Hawally Cooperative Society (Capital governorate) and Ishbiya Cooperative Society (Farwaniya governorate). "With the shares coming from government institutions, we are purely and 100 percent a government-run recruitment agency," Wehaib said.

Al-Durra publicizes that its mission is to recruit and train domestic helpers to offer an alternative to the unreasonable fees and "monopolistic practices" of privately-owned recruitment companies. Another stated objective is to operate with transparency so as to improve Kuwait's image and reputation internationally with regards to human rights, and to build strong relations with labor-sending countries, opening new channels.

Final works on accommodation sites to be used for future incoming domestic helpers are underway. Upon arrival in Kuwait, domestic helpers are taken to the accommodation for a brief stay as a rest period before commencing work, as requested by some embassies. From there, they will be taken to their embassies for an orientation before being dropped off at their new places of work. Al-Durra will also handle cases of runaways, with transfer of sponsorship a unique privilege of the company. The interior ministry has given the right to relocate a worker only to Al-Durra, while those signed up with other agencies must leave Kuwait should they quit work.

SUU KYI, MYANMAR FACE CHORUS OF ANGER

Continued from Page 1

Now it seems she is doing nothing," Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan last week accused Myanmar of "genocide" against the Rohingya. Yesterday, he said: "Unfortunately large massacres have taken place in Myanmar. Humanity has remained silent..." He added that Turkish aid organizations were giving help and that he would take the issue to the UN General Assembly later this month. The growing crisis threatens Myanmar's diplomatic relations, particularly with Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia such as Malaysia and Indonesia where there is profound public anger over the treatment of the Rohingya. The Maldives announced yesterday that it was severing all trade ties with the country "until the government of Myanmar takes measures to prevent the atrocities being committed against Rohingya Muslims", the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi met Suu Kyi as well as Myanmar's army chief General Min Aung Hlaing in Naypyidaw yesterday in a bid to pressure the government to do more to alleviate the crisis. "Once again, violence, this humanitarian crisis has to stop immediately," Indonesian President Joko Widodo told reporters on Sunday as he announced Retno's mission. Hours before Widodo spoke, a petrol bomb was thrown at Myanmar's embassy in Jakarta while police there have previously thwarted two attempts by Islamist militants to bomb the compound. Dozens demonstrated in front of the embassy yesterday,

where armed police were deployed and the mission cordoned off behind barbed wire. Pakistan's foreign ministry said it was "deeply concerned over reports of growing number of deaths and forced displacement of Rohingya Muslims" and urged Myanmar to investigate reports of atrocities against the community.

Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif added in a recent tweet: "Global silence on continuing violence against #Rohingya Muslims. Int'l action crucial to prevent further ethnic cleansing - UN must rally." Analysts have long warned that Myanmar's treatment of the Rohingya would lead to homegrown militancy as well as support from international jihadists. Since the latest fighting broke out, Al-Qaeda's offshoot in Yemen has called for retaliatory attacks against Myanmar while the Afghan Taliban urged Muslims to "use their abilities to help Myanmar's oppressed Muslims". Thousands gathered in Russia's Chechnya region yesterday for an officially staged rally over the plight of the Rohingya.

Defenders of Suu Kyi say she has limited ability to control Myanmar's notoriously abusive military, which under the junta-era constitution is effectively independent of civilian oversight. The Rohingya are also widely dismissed in Myanmar as Bangladeshi interlopers despite many tracing their lineage back generations, making supporting them hugely unpopular. But detractors say Suu Kyi is one of the few people with the mass appeal and moral authority to swim against the tide on the issue. — AFP

INDIA SCRAPS BANK GUARANTEE CLAUSE...

Continued from Page 1

Working Group (JWG) meeting, in which many crucial bilateral issues will come up for discussion. "The government decision is also a goodwill gesture on the part of the Indian government ahead of the minister's visit to Kuwait," Jain added.

The embassy clarified in the release that the recruitment will, however, be regulated through six government recruitment agencies. They are: Non-Resident Keralites Affairs Department (NORKA-ROOTS), Overseas Development and Employment Promotion

Consultants Ltd (ODEPC), Overseas Manpower Corporation Limited (OMCL), Uttar Pradesh Financial Corporation, government of Uttar Pradesh, Telanga Overseas Manpower Company (TOM-COM) and the Overseas Manpower Company, Andhra Pradesh.

According to the Indian government, the measure was introduced for the protection and welfare of Indian female domestic workers coming to the GCC countries for employment after allegations were raised that they were mistreated by some of their employers. The bank guarantee policy measure had also been implemented in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar.

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COSTA OUT OF CHELSEA'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SQUAD

LONDON: Exiled striker Diego Costa was not included in Chelsea's 25-man squad for the Champions League group phase yesterday. Costa, 28, has been frozen out by Chelsea manager Antonio Conte and spent the transfer window angling for a return to former club Atletico Madrid that never materialised. Atletico, who were drawn in Champions League Group C alongside Chelsea, are banned from signing new players until January. By not including Costa in their squad, Chelsea have ensured he will not become cup-tied, meaning he could play in the competition for another team in the second part of the season. Despite being named in Chelsea's Premier League squad, Costa has not played in any of their league games to date, his place taken by £58 million (\$75.1 million, 63.1 million euros) record signing Alvaro Morata. Chelsea will also face Roma and Azerbaijani newcomers Qarabag in their group. —AFP

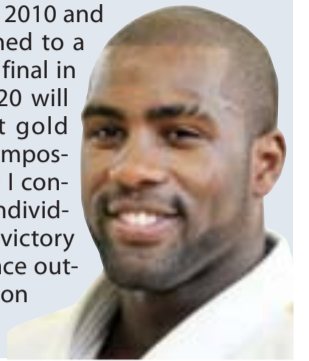


FEMALE REF TO MAKE GERMAN LEAGUE DEBUT

BERLIN: Germany's Bibiana Steinhaus is set to make Bundesliga history on Sunday by becoming the first woman to referee in one of Europe's top leagues, according to reports. Top German daily newspapers Bild and Die Welt claim the 38-year-old Steinhaus will officiate when Hertha Berlin host Werder Bremen in Germany's top flight in the capital on Sunday. The German Football Association (DFB) has refused to confirm the reports and, as is customary, will only announce the referee appointments for the following weekend in the Bundesliga on Thursday. Steinhaus, who is on the official list of Bundesliga referees for the 2017/18 season, has sat out the first two rounds of matches this season. Her debut on Sunday at Berlin's Olympic Stadium is set to make Steinhaus the first female referee in the German, English, Spanish, French or Italian leagues, having already been an assistant referee in the Bundesliga. —AFP

RINER TO CONTINUE UNTIL 2020 OLYMPICS

PARIS: French judoka Teddy Riner said yesterday that he will go for a third straight heavyweight Olympic gold medal at Tokyo 2020, after winning his record ninth world title in Budapest last week. The 28-year-old is unbeaten since September 2010 and has won 134 successive fights, but was pushed to a golden point in both the semi-finals and the final in Hungary. "I know that the road to Tokyo 2020 will be long, there's a long way to go for that gold medal," Riner said. "It will be difficult but not impossible. I want a challenge, challenges are what I continue for." The Guadeloupean now has eight individual world championship golds and one team victory since 2007, while he was also part of the France outfit that took bronze in the mixed team event on Sunday. —AFP



RICCIARDO GAINS REPUTATION FOR HIS OVERTAKING SKILLS

MONZA: Daniel Ricciardo is starting to make a habit of charging through the Formula One field with dazzling overtaking. The Red Bull driver claimed his fifth career win in the Azerbaijan Grand Prix in June after starting 10th and went all the way from the back to fifth in the British GP in July.

The Australian did it again at Sunday's Italian GP, slaloming through the field to finish just off the podium in fourth after another grid penalty imposed a 16th-place start. "Two of my favorite races this year have been starting from the back - Silverstone and this one," Ricciardo said. "I had some real pace in the end."

The moves in Monza added some much-needed excitement to a race that Lewis Hamilton dominated from start to finish. "I think he's one of the best overtakers out there. His judgment of being able to brake late enough for the apex is quite phenomenal," said Red Bull team principal Christian Horner, adding that Ricciardo's driving reminded him of 1992 Formula One champion Nigel Mansell.

A bit too much wheel spin at the start meant Ricciardo remained 16th but as soon as he got a bit of open road to work with, he started passing one car after another. After an expert pass of Force India driver Sergio Perez at the second chicane put Ricciardo firmly in the top 10, he became the last of the front-runners to visit the pits.

A perfectly executed stop prepared Ricciardo for an assault on Ferrari driver Kimi Raikkonen. On Lap 41 of the 53-lap

race, Ricciardo blasted past Raikkonen at the end of the main straightaway when the Finn broke earlier entering the first chicane. "I'll give him the credit and say he raced clean and fair, but I would have done it on anyone to be honest," Ricciardo said. "Especially when you are coming up through the field and you have that momentum, it doesn't matter who you come up against."

Sitting fourth, Ricciardo took aim at Sebastian Vettel in the other Ferrari. Ricciardo was gaining more than a second on Vettel each trip around the "Temple of Speed" - and set the race's quickest lap in the process - but ultimately ran out of time.

"I could see Seb and the thought of a podium was tempting me, so I was obviously trying to catch him right up to the end," Ricciardo said. "But I think then he was able to turn it up a bit and I was using every part of my tires."

Still, the result meant Ricciardo extended his lead over Raikkonen in their battle for fourth place in the drivers' standings. Ricciardo gained two more points than Raikkonen and is now six points ahead with seven races remaining.

"The boys did the quickest pit stop and I also got the fastest lap so that's very cool," added Ricciardo, who is among the fan favorites in Monza because of his Italian roots. "You can almost call it a perfect day. We couldn't have done much more from where we started. Of course I wanted to be up there on the podium as it looked unreal, but I believe it will come next year." —AP



MONZA: Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain celebrates after winning the Italian Formula One Grand Prix, at the Monza racetrack, Italy, Sunday. —AP

MOTOR RACING

HAMILTON SAYS HEART HAS LED HIS SURGE TO TOP

MONZA: Lewis Hamilton attributes his surge to the top of the Formula One drivers world championship to an increased level of "heart and passion" since winning the British Grand Prix in July. The 32-year-old Briton, whose victory in Sunday's Italian Grand Prix lifted him three points clear of Sebastian Vettel of Ferrari, has won three of the last four races to become leader for the first time this year. As Ferrari retreated from their home race to lick their wounds after being outclassed by a Mercedes master-class that saw Valtteri Bottas finish second, Hamilton admitted he felt he now has the momentum. "To come through these last races - they've been real solid races - I think I've felt more heart and passion within myself," said Hamilton, who claimed a record-breaking 69th career pole on Saturday and then his 59th win on Sunday.

"I've found more in the last three or four races. I think Silverstone was a real empowering weekend and from then it's sparked a forest fire within me - and that's hopefully reflected in my driving and the way I'm working with my guys."

"To be leading, whilst it's only a couple of points, I'm grateful for it. By no means do I feel comfortable and I will apply myself the same that I have these past three or four races."

"Earlier on in the year, it was obviously 20 points gap, or whatever, between myself and him, so now I'm going to see if we can have that feeling for a while." He added that his success had come after a "real constant search and battle for perfection, which is what's been needed to overhaul the Ferraris because they've been exceptional all year long."

He added that he had felt recharged and ready after the European summer break in August. "I timed it just perfectly where I came off and made sure I recharged the batteries and that's what they are, they're fully charged and ready to go!"

'DRIVE WITH MY HEART'

"It's like an ERS pack. Towards the end of the season, you're running on the low end of the battery pack, whereas I'm operating at the top end now and it's a good feeling. "Whilst I feel I always drive with my heart, my heart is the engine and the power and the force behind what I do... My mind is really like the rudder and I feel like it's really steering me in the right direction in terms of how I prepared."

As Hamilton celebrated his and Mercedes' supremacy by skateboarding in Monte Carlo, four-time champion Vettel attempted to put on a brave face after a disappointing result in front of a record 93,000 impassioned tifosi. His boss, Ferrari chief executive Sergio Marchionne, described the performance gap between Mercedes and his team as 'embarrassing', acknowledging the pain felt when Daniel Ricciardo, who started 16th on the grid, overtook Kimi Raikkonen to take fourth place.

"Emotions run high and when you have a bad day you can't hide it, so I can understand his feelings," said Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff. "For me it looks like Ferrari have taken a step back this weekend. I think we were very solid, but they have not performed in the way everybody expected." Mercedes know that their glorious end to the European season may not signal they have truly regained the momentum and

expect a Ferrari fight-back in Singapore, the first of three upcoming races in Asia. "To be leading the championship - whilst it is only a couple of points - I am grateful, but by no means do I feel

comfortable," added Hamilton, who is scheduled to take part in a tyres-testing day at Le Castellet in the south of France on Thursday. "But I want to stay here..." —AFP

ROSSI WINS INDYCAR RACE AT WATKINS GLEN

WATKINS GLEN: Alexander Rossi overcame a mechanical malfunction on pit road to notch a big victory. IndyCar points leader Josef Newgarden wasn't so lucky. Rossi used a stroke of good fortune to win the IndyCar Grand Prix at The Glen on Sunday from the pole, leading just over half of the 60-lap race and easily holding off four-time series champion Scott Dixon over the closing laps at Watkins Glen International for his second career victory. His first one came last year in the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500.

"Today I was finally able to prove what I've been talking about the past month, two months, in terms of the step forward Andretti Autosports has taken," said Rossi, who has five straight top-six finishes. "We have the package in the car and the people to be at the front. Just had things go wrong and we weren't able to execute fully."

The win was the 57th IndyCar triumph for Andretti Autosport and the team's first win at Watkins Glen. It was somewhat overshadowed, though, by the sudden fall by Newgarden after a costly error in the pits that relegated him to an 18th-place finish.

Dixon's second-place finish for Chip Ganassi Racing erased most of Newgarden's 31-point lead and left the four-time champion on just three points behind heading to the season finale at Sonoma next week, which is worth double points.

"I've been in situations like that," Dixon said. "I think you just got to treat next week as another race. I think you can't overcomplicate it. Obviously, we want to win it. There's a lot on the line. But, you know, I think if you overthink things too much, then it ends up being a very bad thing. "I've never raced Josef, really, in a championship like this," said Dixon, who stole the title from Juan Pablo Montoya two years ago by winning the finale to earn the double points. "You can have a pretty hefty swing." Newgarden, who has a series-high four wins, took the championship lead for the first time in his career after his win at Mid-Ohio in late July. His victory last week at Gateway Motorsports Park over Penske team-

mate Simon Pagenaud was his third in four races and seemed to stamp him as the man to beat.

Then his lead in the standings vanished in a flash at Watkins Glen. After taking his only lead of the day, Newgarden pitted with 15 laps to go around the 11-turn, 3.37-mile natural terrain road course. But he slammed the guard rail exiting the pits when his front tires locked up and he veered left into the blue steel barrier. He was hit from behind by Sebastien Bourdais, breaking part of the rear of the No. 2 Chevy. That brought out a caution and Newgarden had to pit again, his crew frantically working on the car as he fell two laps down. "It was going to come down to Sonoma," Newgarden said. "I made a mistake. It looks like a pretty stupid error, but it's easy to do. I just made a miscalculation ... came out of the pits too hot."

"It was one small thing, but those small things add up at the end of the day. It's all on me," he said. "It's not good for the team, but they're resilient. I'm sure they'll give me what I need at Sonoma." Other things to know about the IndyCar race at Watkins Glen International.

ROSSI'S SPECIAL WEEKEND

Rossi also inked a contract extension with Andretti Autosport that was announced on Friday, and he won his first career pole Saturday by zooming past Dixon on his final lap. That good fortune seemed to change on lap 24 when he had to pit off sequence because of problems with his refueling adapter. A 12-second stop left him back in 18th, but when the third caution flew one lap later, Rossi regained the lead.

"I thought we were pretty much done," Rossi said. "We were fortunate ... to have that yellow come out to where it negated those little things that had gone wrong." Rossi led Dixon on the final restart and it became a two-car race over the final laps between a four-time winner at Watkins Glen and a driver racing at the famed road course for only the second time, but Dixon never threatened. —AP



WATKINS GLEN: Winner Alexander Rossi, center, reacts after his wreath fell while posing with second-place finisher, Scott Dixon, left, and third-place finisher, Ryan Hunter-Reay after the IndyCar Series auto race, Sunday, in Watkins Glen, NY. — AP

HAMLIN SWEEPS DARLINGTON, RALLIES TO SOUTHERN 500 WIN

DARLINGTON: Denny Hamlin had strong motivation to chase down Martin Truex Jr. after badly missing pit road at Darlington Raceway - embarrassment. Hamlin turned a strong lead into a 20-second deficit when he missed the entrance - "Kind of a rookie move," he said - yet rallied over the final 50 laps to pass Truex and win the Southern 500. It was a dramatic turn of events that had Hamlin relieved he would not be remembered for blowing a certain win.

"I was hoping it would (turn out this way)," he said, "or else I would've looked pretty silly trying to explain why we lost." No explanations necessary, expect maybe, how the heck did Hamlin do it? "I think it's a great story," car owner Joe Gibbs said. "You can tell when he goes to certain race-tracks, too, that he's got some favorites that he's awful good at and this is one of them."

Hamlin won both Darlington races for the second time in his career, the other coming in 2010. He has won seven times in the two series at Darlington. Hamlin sure didn't think he'd celebrate anything after his error with 54 laps left as he fell behind Truex by some 20 seconds. But Hamlin slowly reeled in Truex and passed him with three laps left when his rival brushed the wall and got a flat tire.

Hamlin swept throwback weekend at Darlington after winning the Xfinity race Saturday. Truex won the first two stages, clinching NASCAR's regular-season championship and gaining the No. 1 seed heading into the playoffs in two weeks.

Kyle Busch was second, followed by brother Kurt Busch, Austin Dillon and Erik Jones. Hamlin led 124 laps and looked as if he was easily on the way to a second Southern 500 after winning in 2010. Then inexplicably, Hamlin missed the entrance and seemingly threw the race to the ever-steady Truex.

"We can still do this," crew chief Mike Wheeler told Hamlin after the miscue. Hamlin got up to Truex's bumper with three laps to go before moving low around lapped traffic to take the lead and hold on for victory.

"This is a good day all in all. So proud to be back in victory lane in the Southern 500," he said. Truex rubbed the wall, blew his right front tire and stumbled home in eighth. "Sometimes it's just not your night," Truex said. "Tonight wasn't our night." Dale Earnhardt Jr. finished 22nd - the same as how he started - in his final time racing at Darlington. On Friday, the track rechristened one of its suite buildings in turn three as "Earnhardt Towers" in honor of Dale Jr. and his late father Dale Earnhardt, who won nine times at Darlington.

Matt Kenseth was sixth, Ryan Newman seventh, then Truex, pole-sitter Kevin Harvick and Jamie McMurray rounding out the top 10. It's the

second time Hamlin has swept events at Darlington, winning both the Xfinity and Cup races together in 2010 and this year. Hamlin passed Joey Logano coming off the final turn to take Saturday's race.

A poor weekend on the track got worse after the race when Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s car was found to have two loose lugnuts in inspection.

EYE ON THE TRUCKS

Brad Keselowski finished 15th, but was asked about his truck series driver, Austin Cindric, who won the NASCAR Camping World Truck race in Bowmanville, Ontario. Cindric's win clinched a spot in that series' playoffs. "It's always good to get a win in that series," he said. "That's a good deal for the whole team."

Kyle Busch came to Darlington off a sweep of the truck, Xfinity and Monster Energy races at Bristol two weeks ago. Busch wound up second and led six laps on the way to his 10th top-five finish of the season.

Clint Bowyer had hoped the spirit of Mark Martin - Bowyer's car carried a paint scheme in tribute to Martin - but instead Bowyer was out of the race just 18 laps in with a broken valve. Bowyer, who came in 17th, in points, is on the outside looking in on NASCAR's 16-team playoff picture and would need a last-ditch win at Richmond next week to keep going. — AP



DARLINGTON: Denny Hamlin stands with his trophy in Victory Lane after winning the NASCAR Monster Cup auto race at Darlington Raceway, Sunday, in Darlington. — AP

ROSEN, UCLA OVERCOME 34-POINT DEFICIT TO TOP TEXAS A&M 45-44

LOS ANGELES: Josh Rosen faked a spike and threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to Jordan Lasley with 43 seconds remaining and UCLA overcame a 34-point deficit to stun Texas A&M 45-44 on Sunday night. Rosen was 35 of 59 for 491 yards and four touchdowns, and Jalen Starks and Soso Jamabo had touchdown runs for the Bruins in the opener for both teams. They overcame a deficit of more than 20 points for the first time since the 2005 Sun Bowl against Northwestern.

Texas A&M quarterback Kellen Mond was stopped short of the first-down marker on a scramble with 20 seconds left to close out the biggest FBS comeback since 2006. UCLA scored on five straight possessions after trailing 44-10

with 4:08 to play in the third quarter. Rosen threw touchdown passes of 9 and 42 yards to Darren Andrews before finding Theo Howard for a 16-yard score on a broken play with 3:08 remaining.

UCLA got the ball back with 2:39 to go and drove 51 yards in seven plays, including an 11-yard throw and catch to tight end Caleb Wilson. Rosen capped the remarkable comeback with a fade to the far corner of the end zone after faking the spike to freeze Texas A&M's defense. JJ Molson kicked the winning extra point.

Wilson had 15 receptions for 203 yards, and Andrews had 12 catches for 147 yards. Trayveon Williams rushed for 203 yards and two touchdowns, and Keith Ford added 114 yards rushing and

three touchdowns for Texas A&M. The Aggies lost for only the second time in six openers under coach Kevin Sumlin.

Rosen spent much of the game under constant pressure from Texas A&M for the second straight season until mounting the stunning comeback. After being sacked five times last season in a 31-24 overtime loss at College Station, Rosen was dropped three times and lost two fumbles in his return after missing the final six games last year with a shoulder injury. Texas A&M had largely dominated the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball before melting down, rushing for 382 yards and limiting UCLA to 70 yards on the ground. Williams had a 72-yard run where he bounced outside and raced

down the UCLA sideline, which set up a 2-yard rushing touchdown by Ford, and the sophomore added a 61-yard scoring run late in the first half.

THE TAKEAWAY

Redshirt freshman Nick Starkel got the start at quarterback for Texas A&M, and completed his first three throws during an 11-play, 75-yard drive that ended with a 5-yard touchdown run by Ford. The touted freshman Mond entered the game on the sixth possession for Texas A&M and played the entire second half after Starkel suffered an apparent left foot injury. Starkel returned to the sideline on crutches with his foot in a walking boot. Mond was 3 of 17 for 27 yards and rushed for

55 yards on 15 carries, and Starkel was 6 of 13 for 62 yards.

Sumlin's hot seat gets hotter. Plenty has been made of late-season implosions over the previous three years, but this game summed up those failures in 60 horrifying minutes. Rosen can roll. When they finally turned loose their star quarterback, the Bruins looked nothing like the inept offense that did practically nothing for most of the game. UCLA has plenty to work on, but Rosen is more than capable of taking them back to a winning record and more.

The Aggies return home to host Nicholls State on Saturday. The Bruins host Hawaii on Saturday, as the Rainbow Warriors seek their first 3-0 start since 2007. — AP



MINNEAPOLIS: Minnesota Twins catcher Chris Gimenez tags out Kansas City Royals' Lorenzo Cain, right, as he tried to score on his two-run triple off Minnesota Twins pitcher Alan Busenitz in the seventh inning of a baseball game, Sunday, in Minneapolis. The Royals won 5-4. — AP

BASEBALL

RAMIREZ HITS 2 HRs, 3 DOUBLES, INDIANS WIN 11TH IN ROW

DETROIT: Jose Ramirez tied a major league record with five extra-base hits, including a pair of home runs that deflected off Detroit outfielders, as the Cleveland Indians routed the Tigers 11-1 on Sunday for their 11th straight victory. Ramirez had three doubles in becoming the 13th player with five extra-base hits in a game. Kris Bryant of the Cubs did it last year, and the previous Cleveland player to accomplish the feat was Kelly Shoppach in 2008. The AL Central-leading Indians have their longest winning streak since a team-record 14-game run last year. They outscored the Tigers 29-5 while posting their first four-game sweep in Detroit. Cleveland right-hander Josh Tomlin (8-9) returned from the disabled list and allowed one run in 5 2/3 innings. Detroit left-hander Chad Bell (0-2) was charged with five runs in four-plus innings in his first major league start.

ROYALS 5, TWINS 4

Kansas City's Lorenzo Cain hit a go-ahead, two-run triple in the seventh inning after a checked-swing call went his way on a close two-strike pitch. The Royals trailed 4-3 and had two on with two outs when Cain fouled off his first four pitches from Alan Busenitz (1-1). Cain took a fastball up, and then checked his swing on an outside curveball in the dirt. First base umpire Mike Muchlinski ruled no swing and plate umpire Marty Foster ejected Minnesota manager Paul Molitor, who was still in the dugout. Molitor then came out to argue. Cain fouled off another pitch, and then drove a fastball over Byron Buxton and off the center-field wall. Scott Alexander (4-3) pitched a scoreless inning for the win.

ASTROS 8, METS 6

Cameron Maybin hit a three-run homer, George Springer connected for the second straight day and the Astros swept their weekend series with the Mets. Josh Reddick added two hits and three RBIs for the Astros, who won both games of a doubleheader on Saturday in their first home games since flooding from Hurricane Harvey devastated the city. Carlos Correa hit an RBI single in his return from the disabled list. Will Harris (3-2) pitched a scoreless sixth for the win and Chris Devenski allowed one hit in two scoreless innings for his fourth save. Mets starter Chris Flexen (3-4) allowed a career-high nine hits and matched a career high from his last start with seven runs in just four innings.

DIAMONDBACKS 5, ROCKIES 1

Ketel Marte and Brandon Drury homered in Arizona's three-run sixth, and the Diamondbacks extended their winning streak to 10 games. It's the Diamondbacks' longest winning streak since they captured a franchise-best 12 straight in 2003. Zack Godley (7-7) pitched six effective innings to help Arizona sweep a three-game series from Colorado. The Diamondbacks increased their lead over Colorado for the top NL wild card to 6 1/2 games. The slumping Rockies saw their lead over Milwaukee for the second wild card trimmed to just a half-game. Tied at 1 in the sixth, Marte lined a slider from German Marquez (10-6) over the fence in left for his first homer since July 29.

YANKEES 9, RED SOX 2

Matt Holliday and Todd Frazier hit back-to-

back home runs as New York wore out Chris Sale early and routed Boston, taking three of four games in their final series of the season to make up ground on the AL East leaders. Chase Headley also went deep against Sale, and slumping Aaron Judge capped a six-run sixth with a two-run homer that snapped his longest drought of the season. Starlin Castro laced a three-run double and Luis Severino (12-6) was overpowering for New York, striking out nine in six innings of two-hit ball to win a marquee matchup on the mound. The second-place Yankees won the season series 11-8 and sliced Boston's cushion in the division to 3 1/2 games. Sale (15-7) was chased in the fifth and dropped to 0-3 in five starts vs. New York this year - though he entered with a 2.12 ERA and 44 strikeouts in 29 2/3 innings against them.

BRAVES 5, CUBS 1

Max Fried combined with four relievers on a five-hitter in his first major league start, and the Braves ended the Cubs' six-game winning streak. Recalled from Triple-A on Friday, Fried (1-0) gave up a run and four hits in five innings. The NL Central-leading Cubs had matched their longest winning string of the season. Rookie Ian Happ hit his 21st homer, but Chicago couldn't get much going coming off a 14-12 victory. The Cubs also lost Javier Baez after he got shaken up diving into second base in the second inning. Chicago's electrifying star trotted out to shortstop in the third but exited the game with one out. Chicago left-hander Mike Montgomery (5-7) gave up three runs and five hits in five innings.

BREWERS 7, NATIONALS 2

Domingo Santana homered twice, and Milwaukee pulled within a half-game of Colorado for the NL's second wild card. Brent Suter, who had not pitched for Milwaukee since Aug. 12 because of left rotator cuff inflammation, allowed two hits in three scoreless innings and left after 43 pitches. Jeremy Jeffress (2-0), Jacob Barnes and Anthony Swarzak combined for five hitless innings. Junior Guerra completed the three-hitter but gave up a two-run homer to Ryan Zimmerman in the ninth. Edwin Jackson (5-4) gave up five runs - four earned - and five hits in 5 2/3 innings, dropping to 6-9 against the Brewers. The only team in the NL East above .500, Washington (82-54) maintained a 15-game lead over the second-place Marlins.

RANGERS 7, ANGELS 6

Elvis Andrus hit two of Texas' four homers and the Rangers took the rubber game of a series with wild-card implications for both teams. The Rangers (68-68) went ahead to stay when Robinson Chirinos and Delino DeShields hit back-to-back homers in the fourth inning. No. 9 hitter Chirinos' two-run homer tied it at 4 before DeShields went deep. With four weeks

left in the regular season, Texas is within three games of Minnesota for the AL's second wild card. The Angels (70-67) are 1 1/2 games back of that playoff spot. Martin Perez (11-10) threw a career-high 117 pitches over six innings to win his sixth straight start. Tony Barnette earned his second save. Andrew Heaney (1-1) was charged with five runs in 3 1/3 innings.

ORIOLES 5, BLUE JAYS 4, 12 INNINGS

Wellington Castillo homered twice for Baltimore, including a game-tying shot in the ninth inning, and Mark Trumbo won it in the 12th with an RBI single. The Orioles never led until Trumbo drove in Jonathan Schoop with a liner into the left-field corner off Danny Barnes (2-6). Prior to Trumbo's hit, Baltimore was 0 for 16 with runners in scoring position. Toronto led 4-3 in the ninth before Castillo connected off Roberto Osuna, who was vying for his 36th save. Osuna avoided further damage by retiring Adam Jones with two one and two out. Jimmy Yacabonis (2-0) pitched the 12th for the Orioles, who improved to 6-62 when trailing after eight innings. Josh Donaldson homered for the last-place Blue Jays, who had to settle for a split of the four game series.

PADRES 6, DODGERS 4

Erick Aybar hit a two-run homer and Jose Pirela also went deep to help the Padres hand the major league-leading Dodgers their eighth loss in nine games. San Diego won three straight against Los Angeles for the first time since June 2013. Cody Bellinger hit his 36th homer to break Mike Piazza's Dodgers rookie record, set in 1993. It came with one out in the ninth off All-Star closer Brad Hand, who got his 15th save. Dodgers left-hander Alex Wood (14-2) allowed four runs and seven hits in six innings in his first start since Aug 21. San Diego's Jhoulys Chacin (12-10) gave up three runs, two earned, and five hits in seven innings.

PHILLIES 3, MARLINS 1, 12 INNINGS

Nick Williams hit a two-run single with two out in the 12th inning, and five Phillies pitchers held the Marlins to four hits. Miami's Giancarlo Stanton went 0 for 3 with two walks to finish the week 2 for 25 (.080). Both hits were homers, giving him 52 for the season. Phillies rookie slugger Rhys Hoskins was held out of the starting lineup after being hit on the right wrist by a pitch Saturday. The Marlins fell to 1-6 on their homestand, pushing them to the fringe of the NL wild-card race. Junichi Tazawa (3-4) got the loss. Adam Morgan (3-1) allowed a walk and no hits in three scoreless innings. Hector Neris worked around a walk and a single to pitch a scoreless 12th for his 19th save.

WHITE SOX 6, RAYS 2

White sox rookie Lucas Giolito struck out 10

in seven sharp innings, and Jose Abreu homered in his return to the lineup. A key piece of Chicago's rebuilding project, the 23-year-old Giolito (2-1) allowed a run and three hits in his third start since being called up from the minor leagues last month. Tim Anderson added three hits, including his 15th homer, and drove in three runs as the lowly White Sox hurt the Rays' wild-card chances by taking two of three in the weekend series. Abreu, who missed the previous three games with a right elbow injury, hit a two-run shot in the third inning that made it 3-0 White Sox. Matt Andriese (5-2) took the loss in his first start since June 10, allowing five runs in five innings.

CARDINALS 7, GIANTS 3

Harrison Bader hit a tiebreaking homer in the decisive sixth inning after Madison Bumgarner homered in the bottom of the fifth, and the Cardinals gained ground in the wild-card race. Paul DeJong hit a solo homer in the fourth for the first St. Louis hit and Jose Martinez followed with a drive to nearly the same spot over the left-field fence. Luke Weaver (4-1) struck out nine over seven innings to just miss a third straight start with double-digit Ks, helping St. Louis move within three games of Colorado for the NL's second wild card. Bumgarner (3-7), who was scratched Thursday night with the flu, allowed five runs in six innings.

PIRATES 3, REDS 1

Trevor Williams pitched seven scoreless innings and Jordy Mercer hit his career-best 13th homer, leading Pittsburgh to the win. Williams (6-7) scattered eight hits, struck out five and walked one in his first win since Aug 7. The right-hander has allowed just two earned runs over 20 innings in his last three outings. Felipe Rivero worked a rocky ninth for his 17th save. Scooter Gennett scored on second baseman Max Moroff's error, but Jose Peraza bounced into a game-ending forceout at home. Cincinnati went 1 for 10 with runners in scoring position and left 10 runners on base. Reds right-hander Sal Romano (4-6) allowed two runs, one earned, and four hits in 5 2/3 innings.

MARINERS 10, ATHLETICS 2

Robinson Cano homered and drove in four runs, Andrew Albers took a no-hitter into the sixth inning, and the Mariners completed a three-game series sweep. Albers, acquired from Atlanta on Aug. 11, did not allow a hit until Matt Olson opened the sixth with his 12th homer. That was the only hit off Albers (3-1) who struck out five in six innings. Carlos Ruiz and Mitch Haniger homered for the Mariners, who moved within 2 1/2 games of Minnesota for the second wild card. Oakland's Daniel Gossett (3-8) gave up three runs and seven hits in 3 2/3 innings. — AP

MLB Results/Standings

NY Yankees 9, Boston 2; San Diego 6, LA Dodgers 4; Seattle 10, Oakland 2; St. Louis 7, San Francisco 3; Arizona 5, Colorado 1; Texas 7, LA Angels 6; Atlanta 5, Chicago Cubs 1; Kansas City 5, Minnesota 4; Houston 8, NY Mets 6; Chicago White Sox 6, Tampa Bay 2; Milwaukee 7, Washington 2; Pittsburgh 3, Cincinnati 1; Baltimore 5, Toronto 4 (12 innings); Cleveland 11, Detroit 1; Philadelphia 3, Miami 1 (12 innings).

American League					National League				
Eastern Division					Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	77	60	.562	-	Washington	82	54	.603	-
NY Yankees	73	63	.537	3.5	Miami	67	69	.493	15
Baltimore	70	67	.511	7	Atlanta	60	75	.444	21.5
Tampa Bay	68	70	.493	9.5	NY Mets	58	78	.426	24
Toronto	63	74	.460	14	Philadelphia	52	84	.382	30
Central Division					Central Division				
Cleveland	80	56	.588	-	Chicago Cubs	75	61	.551	-
Minnesota	71	65	.522	9	Milwaukee	72	65	.526	3.5
Kansas City	67	68	.496	12.5	St. Louis	69	67	.507	6
Detroit	58	78	.426	22	Pittsburgh	65	72	.474	10.5
Chicago White Sox	54	81	.400	25.5	Cincinnati	58	79	.423	17.5
Western Division					Western Division				
Houston	83	53	.610	-	LA Dodgers	92	44	.676	-
LA Angels	70	67	.511	13.5	Arizona	79	58	.577	13.5
Seattle	69	68	.504	14.5	Colorado	72	64	.529	20
Texas	68	68	.500	15	San Diego	62	75	.453	30.5
Oakland	58	78	.426	25	San Francisco	54	85	.388	39.5

ANDERSON LOOKING FORWARD TO 39 STEPS IN AUSTRALIA

LONDON: England bowling great James Anderson believes if he retains his form he could still be on the plane to Australia as he approaches his 40th birthday for the 2021/22 Ashes series. The 35-year-old who will be spearheading England's attack in the Ashes challenge Down Under later this year is three away from reaching the 500 wicket landmark.

It was expected Anderson would enter next week's third and final Test with the West Indies with that figure already

breached but even he was powerless to prevent a sublime West Indies batting performance levelling the series at 1-1 last week at Headingley. Anderson, England's all-time leading wicket taker, says being able to focus on the longer versions of the game, county cricket and Test matches has probably improved his chances of extending his international career. "I wouldn't rule it out, no," said the Lancashire quickie. "I'm very fortunate to have the body I have. For a fast bowler,

not much stress goes through my body. A lot less than a lot of other fast bowlers. "It's just a case of looking after myself. If I can keep fit, keep my speeds up, there's no reason why not."

"I don't know whether I've peaked but I think I'm bowling as well as I have. "I played here (at Lancashire) when Glen Chapple was 40 or 41 and he was as good as he ever was then. "I know it's slightly different in county cricket but for me, just playing Test cricket, not one-day

cricket, there's no reason why I can't extend my career a little bit."

Anderson, who has taken 30 wickets in six Tests this summer coming at an average of 15.9 and a strike-rate of one wicket every 40 balls, said even if the forthcoming Ashes tour went badly he would not quit prematurely.

Spinner Graeme Swann did just that announcing his retirement in the aftermath of Australia taking an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five Test series on the

2013/14 tour Down Under—they went on to suffer a 5-0 whitewash.

"If we are 3-0 down I am not going to do a Swanny and just do one!" said Anderson. "I am not going there and thinking 'right if we don't win this I am done'. We are going there because we want to try to win the Ashes.

"That's as much as I am thinking about it. I think about how I am going to play. How I am going to try to help the team win." — AFP

KOHLI STEERS INDIA TO 5-0 WHITEWASH OVER SRI LANKA

COLOMBO: Virat Kohli hit his second century in a row as India thrashed Sri Lanka by six wickets in the fifth one-day international Sunday to inflict a humiliating 5-0 series defeat on the beleaguered hosts. Kohli smashed nine fours in his unbeaten 110-run knock to help the visitors achieve the target of 239 with 21 balls to spare at the R. Premadasa stadium in Colombo.

The series win came after India swept the preceding three-Test rubber 3-0, capping their domination of the home side which has been beset by injury and selection woes. This was India's second 5-0 whitewash in an away ODI series with Kohli's men having blanked Zimbabwe in 2013.

Sri Lanka squandered the opportunity to salvage some pride, folding up for a below-par 238 in 49.4 overs after paceman Bhuvneshwar Kumar grabbed a career-best 5-42. "It's quite amazing to have won the

series 5-0. We always thought the shorter format is going to be much more challenging," said Kohli.

"The youngsters and the spunk on the field has worked for us. All round, it's been a complete series for us. We've been playing some good cricket." The Indians had a shaky start but Kohli anchored the innings with a 99-run partnership with Manish Pandey (36) for the third wicket.

KOHLI, DHONI MILESTONES

He also put on 109 runs with Kedar Jadhav who scored a fine 63 off 73 balls. Kohli, 28, looked in sublime form, hitting Milinda Siriwardana for three fours in an over to bring up his half-century.

The right-hander went on to complete his 30th ODI century, equalling former Australian captain Ricky Ponting's tally. Only Indian great Sachin Tendulkar has scored more centuries in the 50-over game with 49 tons. Earlier, Kumar made the most of the conditions, reducing Sri Lanka to 40-2 before Lahiru Thirimanne (67) and Angelo Mathews stitched together a 122-run stand for the fourth wicket to steady the innings.

The dismissal of the two set batsmen triggered a collapse that saw the hosts lose seven wickets for 53 runs. "It is a very difficult time for us. We were not up to the standard," said Sri Lankan skipper Upul Tharanga.

"We lost a few early wickets. Thirimanne and Mathews had a good partnership. At one stage we were looking at 260-270. Unfortunately we collapsed again.

"We have to improve all three departments, especially our batting. We couldn't get those big scores in all five games. We lost a few main players, but still as a captain I feel we didn't play to our standard."

Mathews gave an easy catch to wicket-keeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni off spinner Kuldeep Yadav (1-40) after making 55 off 98 deliveries. Thirimanne, who hit three fours and a six in his 102-ball knock, was bowled by Kumar, the man of the match.

Dhoni passed a career milestone when he stumped Akila Dananjaya (four) off the bowling of leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, his 100th in ODIs.

Dhoni became the first to achieve the feat, surpassing former Sri Lankan wicket-keeper Kumar Sangakkara who had 99 stumpings to his credit. — AFP



COLOMBO: India's captain Virat Kohli poses with the winner's trophy after their win over Sri Lanka in the fifth and last one-day international cricket match in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Sunday. Indian won the match by six wickets. — AP



CHITTAGONG: Bangladesh's captain Mushfiqur Rahim, right, plays a shot, as Australia's wicketkeeper Matthew Wade follows the ball during the first day of their second Test cricket match in Chittagong, Bangladesh, yesterday. — AP

CRICKET

RAHIM HITS UNBEATEN 62 FOR BANGLADESH AGAINST AUSTRALIA

CHITTAGONG: Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim hit an unbeaten 62 yesterday to steer his team to 253-6 at the end of the first day after winning the toss and batting in pursuit of a historic test series victory over Australia.

Rahim stalled the Australians progress after offspinner Nathan Lyon (5-77) put the visitors in commanding position with his second straight five-for. Bangladesh slumped to 117-5 before Rahim and Sabbir Rahman combined for a 105-run sixth wicket stand. Rahman made his career best 66, a fourth half-century, with six fours and one six off 113 balls. In his almost chanceless innings, Rahim negotiated 149 balls and sent the ball across the rope five times.

"I couldn't keep my balance. We would have been in a better position had I remained unbeaten. But I thought we did well today," Sabbir said of his dismissal. "The wicket isn't easy to bat on, but we did try to play till the end of the day. Mushfiqur and Nasir are still out there. "I am not really sure what is good score here. We just have to bat as long as possible."

Rahim came to the crease after Lyon removed the top four batsmen, all trapped lbw, to leave Bangladesh at 85-4. Lyon dismissed Tamin Iqbal (9), Imrul Kayes (4) and Soymya Sarkar (33) in the opening session of the second test to have Bangladesh reeling at 70-3, then added the wicket of Mominul Haque (31) in the second session. It was the first time in test cricket that one bowler had dismissed the top four batsmen leg before wicket. "At the moment, we need to go out there and take the four wickets and bowl really well in partnerships like we started off this morning," Lyon said. "There's not much spin there at the moment so it's a good challenge for us spinners to challenge the batters and challenge their defense on a wicket like this."

Bangladesh, on a high after its first-ever test victory over Australia last week, made only one change to its winning lineup and was upbeat after winning the toss for the second time in the series. But the Australians, making two changes to allow for a three-pronged spin attack, made early inroads when Lyon dismissed Tamim with a quicker ball in the 10th over. Tamim scored half-centuries in both innings in the first test and his loss was an early setback for the hosts.

Lyon tested the Bangladesh batsmen with his straight and quicker deliveries as he operated tirelessly after opening the bowling with paceman Pat Cummins. Lyon also trapped out-of-form Imrul Kayes for 4, with a straight delivery that skidded to baffle the batsman. Australia won a video review to dismiss him after umpire Nigel Long ruled it not out. Soumya Sarkar tried to dominate Lyon, hitting him a boundary and a six in an over, but he fell to quicker delivery on the stroke of lunch, ending his 81-ball innings and a 49-run stand for the third wicket.

Mominul Haque, who replaced paceman Shaiful Islam to bolster Bangladesh's batting, was out in the 34th over. Rahim then shared 32-run stand with Shakib Al Hasan, who scored 24 before left-arm spinner Ashton Agar (1-46) had Shakib well caught behind by Matthew Wade in the 47th over. Rahim's stubbornness complemented Rahman's aggressive batting as the duo rescued the hosts from the potential danger. Rahman failed to keep his balance to be stumped in the 82nd over as Lyon completed his 11th five-for. Rahim ended the day along with Nasir Hossain (19 not out) without any danger. The Australians dropped batsman Usman Khawaja, picked three spinners and brought in allrounder Hilton Cartwright as a seam bowling backup for Cummins in a revamped lineup that is trying to avoid a first-ever test series defeat to Bangladesh. — AP

SCOREBOARD

CHITTAGONG: Scoreboard at stumps on the first day of the second Test between Bangladesh and Australia at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday:

Bangladesh first innings		Australia	
Tamim Iqbal lbw b Lyon	9	Rahman	
Soumya Sarkar lbw b Lyon	33	Fall of wickets: 1-13 (Tamim), 2-21 (Imrul), 3-70 (Soumya), 4-85 (Mominul), 5- 117 (Shakib), 6-222 (Sabbir).	
Imrul Kayes lbw b Lyon	4	Bowling: Cummins 17-4-33-0, Lyon 28-6-77-5, O'Keefe 20-0-70-0, Agar 17-6-46-1, Maxwell 3-0-6-0, Cartwright 5-1-16-0.	
Mominul Haque lbw b Lyon	31	Australia: Steve Smith (captain), David Warner, Ashton Agar, Hilton Cartwright, Pat Cummins, Peter Handscomb, Matthew Wade, Steve O'Keefe, Nathan Lyon, Glenn Maxwell, Matt Renshaw.	
Shakib Al Hasan ct Wade b Agar	24		
Mushfiqur Rahim not out	62		
Sabbir Rahman st Wade b Lyon	66		
Nasir Hossain not out	19		
Extras (b5)	5		
Total (six wickets, 90 overs)	253		
Yet to bat: Mehedi Hasan, Tajjul Islam, Mustafizur			

WNBA

LYNX BEAT MYSTICS 86-72 FOR TOP SEED IN WNBA PLAYOFFS

ST PAUL: Maya Moore scored 26 points and Renee Montgomery added 18 to help the Minnesota Lynx secure the top seed in the WNBA playoffs with an 86-72 victory over the Washington Mystics on Sunday. Minnesota (27-7) finished the season a game ahead of Los Angeles (26-8). Both teams have byes until in the semifinals on Sept. 12. Washington (18-16) is the sixth seed and plays the Dallas Wings on Wednesday. Kristi Toliver hit a 3-pointer with 4:28 remaining to pull Washington within 80-71, but Moore answered at the other end and the Mystics didn't score again until the 2:09 mark. Toliver led Washington with 20 points. Elena Delle Donne added 12 points in just 18 minutes and Krystal Thomas grabbed 14 rebounds. It was Minnesota's final game at the Xcel Energy Center as the Lynx will play their home playoff games at the University of Minnesota's Williams Arena. The team is moving to accommodate the Minnesota Wild's preseason schedule.

SPARKS 81, SUN 70

Nneka Ogwumike scored 21 points and Candace Parker had a double-double as the defending champion Los Angeles Sparks closed the WNBA regular season with a win over Connecticut. Los Angeles (26-8) went 15-1 at home, but finished a game behind Minnesota for the top seed in the playoffs. The Sparks have a bye until the semifinals. The Sun (21-13) are the fourth seed and have a first-round bye. Parker had 12 points and 14 rebounds for the Sparks and Odyssey Sims had 16 points. Courtney Williams led the Suns with 19 points. Jonquel Jones had 10 rebounds to finish with 403, the first player in league history to surpass 400. Tina Charles held the old record at 398. With 10 points, Jones had 20 double-doubles this season.

LIBERTY 82, WINGS 81

Tina Charles had 18 points and 18 rebounds to help New York clinch the third seed in the playoffs with a win over the Wings and extend the Liberty's winning streak to 10 games. The Liberty (22-12) matched the franchise record for longest winning streak and have a first-round bye. The seventh-seeded Wings (16-18) play at No. 6 Washington in a one-game playoff on Wednesday. Trailing 82-79 after a Charles put-

back with 22.1 seconds to play, the Wings missed, but forced a turnover and Aerial Powers scored on a putback with 3.7 seconds left. When the Liberty inbounded the ball in the frontcourt after a timeout, they had a backcourt violation, giving Dallas one last shot. Skylar Diggins-Smith's attempt from the 3-point line bounced off the rim at the buzzer.

MERCURY 84, DREAM 70

Brittney Griner scored 30 points as the Phoenix Mercury closed the regular season with a victory over the Dream on Sunday to secure the fifth seed in the playoffs. Phoenix (18-16) will host Seattle on Wednesday night. Griner reached the 30-point mark for the sixth time in her career with a reverse layup with 1:23 remaining in the fourth quarter. She blocked Elizabeth Williams' shot at the other end. All six of her 30-point games have come this season. Leilani Mitchell added 18 points for Phoenix and Diana Taurasi was held to nine points on 3-of-12 shooting. Rookie Brittney Sykes scored a career-best 33 points for Atlanta (12-22). She was 12 of 19 from the floor and made seven free throws. Tiffany Hayes added 15 points, and Camille Little moved into a tie with Lauren Jackson for 12th place in WNBA history with 2,447 rebounds, passing Yolanda Griffith.

STORM 85, SKY 80

Breanna Stewart scored 29 points, making two free throws with 15.6 seconds left for a three-point lead, and Seattle beat Chicago. The Storm rallied to take a 79-78 lead with 3:11 left as Jewell Loyd's open 3-pointer from the corner capped a 9-0 run. After Stewart's makes, Allie Quigley curled around a high screen but her long 3 was off the mark. Seattle's Noelle Quinn sealed it by making two free throws with 11.2 seconds left. Loyd added 25 points for Seattle (15-19), which plays at Phoenix on Wednesday night in the first round of the playoffs. Stewart made 10 of 12 at the stripe as the Storm only missed three free throws in 27 attempts. Kahleah Copper paced Chicago (12-22) with 18 points. Courtney Vandersloot set a WNBA record in the third quarter for the highest single-season assists average. Her eight assists per game surpassed Ticha Penicheiro's 2002 mark of 7.9. — AP

SCOREBOARD

COLOMBO: Scoreboard of the fifth and final one-day international between India and Sri Lanka in Colombo on Sunday:

Sri Lanka		India	
N. Dickwella c & b Kumar	2	Bumrah 10-0-45-2, Yadav 10-0-40-1, Jadhav 4-0-20-0, Chahal 10-0-36-1.	
U. Tharanga c Dhoni b Bumrah	48		
D. Munaweera c Kohli b Kumar	4		
L. Thirimanne b Kumar	67	R. Sharma c Pushpakumara b Fernando 16	
A. Mathews c Dhoni b Yadav	55	A. Rahane c Munaweera b Malinga 5	
M. Siriwardana c Thakur b Kumar	18	V. Kohli not out	110
H. de Silva run out	9	M. Pandey c Tharanga b Pushpakumara 36	
A. Dananjaya st Dhoni b Chahal	4	K. Jadhav c Dickwella b de Silva 63	
M. Pushpakumara b Bumrah	8	M.S. Dhoni not out	1
V. Fernando not out	7	Extras (lb4, nb1, w3)	8
L. Malinga c sub b Kumar	2	Total (for four wkts; 46.3 overs)	239
Extras (b4, lb3, nb1, w6)	14	Fall of wickets: 1-17 (Rahane), 2-29 (Sharma), 3-128 (Pandey), 4-237 (Jadhav)	
Total: (all out; 49.4 overs)	238	Did not bat: Bumrah, Chahal, Yadav, Kumar, Thakur	
Fall of wickets: 1-14 (Dickwella), 2-40 (Munaweera), 3-63 (Tharanga), 4-185 (Thirimanne), 5-194 (Mathews), 6-205 (de Silva), 7-212 (Dananjaya), 8-228 (Pushpakumara), 9-228 (Siriwardana), 10-238 (Malinga)		Bowling: Malinga 8-1-35-1, Fernando 7-0-40-1, Dananjaya 10-0-49-0, Mathews 3-0-14-0, Pushpakumara 10-0-40-1, Siriwardana 4-0-28-0, de Silva 4.3-0-29-1.	
Bowling: Kumar 9.4-0-42-5, Thakur 6-0-48-0,		Result: India won by six wickets	

GOLF

SCOTT MCCARRON WINS 4TH PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS TITLE OF YEAR

CALGARY: Scott McCarron won the Shaw Charity Classic on Sunday for his fourth PGA Tour Champions title of the season. McCarron closed with a 3-under 67 to beat Miguel Angel Jimenez by a stroke at Canyon Meadows. After Jimenez missed a long eagle putt en route to a birdie on the par-5 18th, McCarron holed a 3-footer for par.

"It felt like 20 feet," McCarron said. "It was kind of a right-center putt. I didn't take much time over it, because I saw it go right by and I knew exactly what I was going to do. I just missed a couple short ones before, so I didn't want to even think about it too long. I set it up and made a good putt finally."

It really felt good to get that done." McCarron opened with rounds of 63 and 64 to take a two-stroke lead into the final round. The 52-year-old McCarron matched Bernhard Langer for the season victory lead and earned \$352,500 to pull closer to the idle German star in the Charles Schwab Cup season standings. McCarron has six victories in the last two seasons on the 50-and-over tour. The three-time PGA Tour winner won the Allianz Championship in February, the major Senior Players Championship in July

and the Dick's Sporting Goods Open two weeks ago.

"Winning does not get easier," McCarron said. "These guys are the best players in the world at their time and they're still playing some great golf. I truly believe we've got 25 guys that can still play on the PGA Tour and compete." McCarron finished at 16-under 194. He had an eagle for the third straight day, this time on the par-5 11th after accomplishing the feat the on the par-5 18th in the first two rounds. Jimenez closed with a 66.

"Scott is playing very well and holed very important putts for him and that's the key," Jimenez said. "He played very well. In this case, he holed more putts than us and won." Scott Dunlap (67), Todd Hamilton (67) and Kevin Sutherland (68) tied for third at 13 under.

Nick Faldo followed his second-round 64 with a 73 to tie for 21st at 6 under. "I didn't hit it, I had one shot inside my 15-foot circle," Faldo said. "I actually hit quite a few good shots, but I was either too long or too short and then everything else was medium. I got really miffed. I got messed up with that wind." — AP

SWEET DREAMS ARE MADE OF THIS — FERGIE'S SLEEPING LEGACY

MANCHESTER: Alex Ferguson was not one for wishing his players sweet dreams when he was Manchester United manager after a poor performance, but one of his lesser-known legacies is his forward-thinking on sleeping patterns. The legendary United coach can also be thanked by British Cycling, Team Sky and last year's record-breaking British Olympic team, because without his support, sleep guru Nick Littlehales would never have got the break that propelled him into becoming an essential part of many successful sporting teams.

"I didn't get my diploma from university, I got it from the media who said I tucked up the Bolton and Manchester United players, including (Cristiano) Ronaldo, and read them bedtime stories," joked Littlehales, after speaking at the Soccerex Global Convention yesterday.

"In reality though, if it wasn't for that particular manager, Alex Ferguson, I wouldn't have had a response about managing one's sleep. I worked locally at the time in Oldham and Alex liked that sort of thing, of helping local people, and I was also recommended to him by his good friend the then Bolton manager Sam Allardyce, who liked trying new things.

"If it was anywhere else in the United Kingdom my letter wouldn't have got read. Don't forget at that time there wasn't such a thing as a sports science person," Littlehales said that Ferguson encouraged him to come and sit in the players' lounge and see if they engaged with him. "Alex said, 'let's take it nice and slow', but he was very interested in it," said Littlehales. "However, only one player came up and engaged with me and

that was Ryan Giggs. "From there it evolved into dealing with some of the England squad at the 1998 World Cup and then a certain bespectacled Frenchman came along at Arsenal (Arsene Wenger) and all of a sudden I was speaking to the whole squad, including the likes of Thierry Henry, as a sleep coach."

'CURL UP ON THE FLOOR'

Littlehales, who says the myth of needing eight hours' straight sleep is bogus and that everyone's needs are different due to some being morning people and others night owls, says part of his goal is to suggest a more radical recommendation for players or athletes on the eve of a big game.

"To think you can sleep on the eve of an Olympic final or a big match is plainly

ridiculous," he said. "However, the answer is not sleeping tablets or snus (Scandinavian tobacco powder rubbed on the gums), it is far better not to sleep at all. "Someone like (British rowing great) Steve Redgrave would not sleep but he would still go out there and destroy the opposition in the final." Littlehales, whose book on the topic of managing sleeping patterns has been published in 13 different countries, also recommends that athletes sleep with just a 10-centimetre mattress.

"As a human being you are designed to curl up on the floor," he said. "Ethiopian marathon runners haven't grown up on mattresses. "If you are hanging off a mountain on a hook you can't tell them to take their mattress with them.

"Generally my advice is sleep in multi-

phases, go away and lie on the floor for 20 minutes every four hours, in the foetal not the dominant position, staring at the wall." However, for clients such as Team Sky, Littlehales recommends a 'bespoke service'. "Team Sky had the money and we especially focused on the Grand Tours," said Littlehales.

"As they are three weeks long and (at) a different hotel every night, we went down to (Bradley) Wiggins' home and looked at his bed and checked out the environment he slept in.

"So we took (a) single version of the mattress he slept on, plus the odours or the air fresheners he was used to, and advised the team to put fresh bed linen on every night. "That has now been taken to another level and become a prerequisite for the Winter Olympics next year and Tokyo in 2020." — AFP

WORLD CUP QUALIFYING SPOTS ON THE LINE IN LAST GAMES IN ASIA

SEOUL: For five countries still contending for two direct spots at the World Cup, the Asian qualifying campaign has come down to 90 minutes. Iran and Japan have already secured places at Russia 2018 as winners of Groups A and B, but both countries still could have a role to play in which of their rivals - including Asian champion Australia and South Korea - will be joining them in Russia.

Seven Asian teams can still qualify either by finishing second in their groups or by going through continental and intercontinental playoffs. Iran hosts the surprising Syria team, which has unable to play at home for security reasons during the ongoing conflict in their country, but which moved into third place in Group A last week with a 3-1 win over Qatar.

Despite the disrupted build up, Syria still has a chance to qualify for its first World Cup if results go its way today. To do so, the Syrians need to win in Tehran and rely on South Korea losing by a narrow margin in Uzbekistan.

Iran is yet to concede a goal in nine Group A games so far, but Syria has made a habit of upsetting the odds by holding Iran and South Korea to draws when playing in its temporary - and usually mostly empty - home ground in Malaysia. To win in Tehran would be the biggest result in the nation's history. "We know that we have a tough game ahead but we will do what we can," Syria coach Ayman Hakee, who earlier in qualification had to deal with a number of important players refusing to appear for the national team in a reflection of the divisions that have torn the country apart, was quoted as saying after the win over Qatar last Thursday.

With stars such as Omar Al Soma and Firas Al Khatib returning to the team and in good form, there's still potential for an upset win. "We have come this far," Ayman said. "We will keep going to the end."

Here's a breakdown of the status of each of group with two automatic places and two play-off places still up for grabs:

GROUP A

South Korea can qualify for a ninth successive World Cup if it takes all three points in Uzbekistan, though that is far from certain with the team winning just one of its last five qualifiers.

Poor form cost Uli Stielike to lose his job as head coach in June. Shin Tae-yong was appointed as the replacement but in his first game last week, could only record a 0-

0 draw at home to Iran, which had already qualified for the World Cup and was reduced to 10 men. "If we play our best and stay focused, then we will win," said Shin, who is awaiting news on the fitness of captain Ki Sung-yung.

Uzbekistan can qualify for a first-ever World Cup if it can beat South Korea in Tashkent and Syria fails to win in Iran. If Syria plays to a draw in Iran, it can hold third place and go into a play-off with the third-place team in Group B for a spot in an intercontinental qualifier. Even China still has a remote chance at one of the playoff spots, but needs to beat Qatar by a big margin and for Syria and Uzbekistan to both lose.

GROUP B

Saudi Arabia and Australia each has 16 points and are vying for second spot, with the group standings going down to the last game when the Saudis host Japan.

The Saudis have a superior goal difference of the two and hosts already qualified Japan. Australia hosts struggling Thailand to Melbourne. If the Saudis and Australians both win, the World Cup spot will depend on goal difference.

Australia, bidding for a fourth successive appearance at the World Cup, is taking nothing for granted against a Thai team that has collected just two points from nine games. One of those points was well earned in a 2-2 draw at home against Australia last November.

Star midfielder Aaron Mooy of English Premier League team Huddersfield Town missed Australia's loss to Japan because of illness but could recover to start in Melbourne. "We need to go out there and be fearless," Tim Cahill, a veteran of Australia's World Cup campaigns since 2006, said yesterday. "We all know what's on the line.

"This is a massive moment for our country to stake a claim in a World Cup. Goals will definitely come. I'm confident we'll score a lot of goals." Saudi Arabia has not appeared at the World Cup since 2006 and will be hoping that Japan is still in a celebratory mood after clinching qualification. The Samurai Blue are without injured midfielders Shinji Kagawa of Borussia Dortmund and captain Makoto Hasebe of Eintracht Frankfurt.

The United Arab Emirates needs a big win over Iraq in Amman combined with losses for the Saudis and Australians to have a chance of finishing third. — AP



BUDAPEST: Portugal's Andre Silva of Portugal, right, scores a goal, during the World Cup Group B first round soccer match between Hungary and Portugal, at the Groupama Arena, in Budapest, Hungary, Sunday. — AP

SOCCER

FRANCE HELD BY LUXEMBOURG, BELGIUM QUALIFIES FOR WCUP

TOULOUSE: France wasted its chance to move a step closer to World Cup qualification after a 0-0 home draw with Luxembourg that leaves automatic qualification from Group A wide open with two games to go. There were contrasting emotions afterward.

"We had the chances and didn't take them," France coach Didier Deschamps said. "We should have done more." But Luxembourg counterpart Luc Holtz could barely contain his delight. "It's a historic result," he said. "Yes, it's a glorious day for Luxembourg football." Belgium overcame stern resistance from Greece to qualify for Russia 2018, winning 2-1 away from home. Manchester United striker Romelu Lukaku's winning goal put the other Red Devils out of reach at the top of Group H.

Sweden moved one point behind France after easing to a 4-0 win away to Belarus, while a selection choice from Netherlands coach Dick Advocaat paid off as midfielder Davy Propper scored his first two international goals in a 3-1 home win against Bulgaria.

Advocaat's side is three points behind Sweden with two games remaining and still in with an outside chance of securing a playoff spot. Group B rivals Switzerland and Portugal both won, with the Swiss maintaining a perfect record and three-point lead. An Oct. 10 showdown in Lisbon will likely decide which team qualifies automatically. The two sides have already secured the top two spots.

Only the group winners automatically advance in European qualifying for the World Cup. Elsewhere, defender Domagoj Vida's header gave Group I leader Croatia a 1-0 win against Kosovo in a match which started Saturday before being called off due to a torrential downpour.

Here is a closer look at the qualifying groups in action Sunday:

GROUP A

While France fluffed countless chances, the Netherlands and Sweden had no problem finding the net. Propper's first international goals helped the Dutch keep their slim qualifying hopes alive - albeit four points behind Les Bleus.

Propper replaced veteran Wesley Sneijder and tapped in from close range in the seventh minute. Veteran winger Arjen Robben doubled the lead in the 67th minute with his 34th international goal. Georgi Kostadinov pulled back a goal just two minutes later before Propper sealed the win in the 80th.

On a night for firsts, Christoffer Nyman got his first Sweden goal to make it 2-0 midway through the first half. Emil Forsberg scored in the 18th and, after Nyman's goal, striker Marcus Berg popped up with his 14th for Sweden to put the result beyond doubt at halftime. Center half Andreas Granqvist completed the scoring near the end with a penalty.

GROUP B

Switzerland scored early and twice shortly after halftime to keep its impressive qualifying run going. Forward Haris Seferovic netted his fourth goal in the qualifying campaign with a neat flick from close range, and Blerim Dzemaili

and Ricardo Rodriguez added to the lead in the second half. Portugal remains three points behind the Swiss but kept pace with a seventh straight victory, 1-0 away to Hungary. Newly signed AC Milan striker Andre Silva headed in after a cross by Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo three minutes into the second half in Budapest. It was Silva's ninth international goal in only his 15th appearance.

"We were always in control," Portugal coach Fernando Santos said. "But it was a difficult and uncertain match." Portugal, which lost the opening group game to Switzerland, hosts the Swiss in a table-topper in Lisbon on Oct. 10. Meanwhile, the Faeroe Islands moved up to fourth place after a 1-0 win against fellow struggler Andorra.

GROUP H

A tense match in Greece was goalless until the 70th minute, when Tottenham defender Jan Vertonghen blasted Belgium ahead with a fierce shot. Greece responded three minutes later through Zeca, but Belgium retook the lead thanks to Lukaku's header one minute later.

Belgium has an unassailable eight-point lead over second-place Bosnia-Herzegovina,

making Belgium the first European team confirmed for the World Cup apart from host nation Russia. "We qualified, but it was not a great game," Belgium full back Thomas Meunier said. "We found it tough to find our groove." Two goals from Edin Dzeko helped Bosnia-Herzegovina win 4-0 away at Gibraltar to leapfrog Greece into second place, and taking the Roma striker's international tally to 52 goals. Mattias Kait may not be a household name but he is making a name for himself. The 19-year-old Fulham midfielder struck two minutes into injury time as next-to-last Estonia beat fourth-place Cyprus 1-0.

GROUP I

Defender Domagoj Vida headed in a free kick from Real Madrid's Luka Modric on his 50th international appearance to give Croatia a 1-0 win against Kosovo. The match started on Saturday but was abandoned after about 20 minutes due to a torrential downpour and postponed. It resumed Sunday on 21 minutes.

Croatia leads the group with 16 points, two ahead of Ukraine. Iceland is third on 13 points and Turkey has 11. Ukraine plays Iceland today, while Turkey hosts Croatia. — AP

SPANISH LEAGUE WANTS UEFA TO INVESTIGATE MAN CITY'S SPENDING

MANCHESTER: The Spanish soccer league wants UEFA to investigate Manchester City's spending and expand its newly-launched probe into whether Paris Saint-Germain has breached Financial Fair Play rules.

Spanish league president Javier Tebas said in a statement to The Associated Press yesterday that Abu Dhabi-funded City and Qatar-owned PSG are benefiting from state aid which distorts European competitions and "is irreparably harming the football industry."

Tebas wrote separate letters to European soccer's governing body on Aug. 22 requesting investigations into Man City and PSG. UEFA said Friday it would look into whether PSG was flouting rules designed to control excessive spending by top European clubs. Tebas wants UEFA to go further and look into "PSG's history of noncompliance."

Both City and PSG spent hundreds of millions of dollars in the transfer window that closed last week, and the Spanish league claims the teams "benefit from sponsorships that make no economic sense and lack any fair value" to help them comply with FFP.

Ultimately, clubs breaching rules can be banned from playing in the Champions League or Europa League. "PSG and Man City's funding by state-aid distorts European competitions and creates an inflationary spiral that is irreparably harming the football industry," Tebas said. "UEFA must enforce FFP regulations to avoid discrimination among clubs."

In 2014, PSG and City were the main targets of the first round of FFP sanctions. Both had 20 million euros (\$24 million) of their Champions League prize money deducted and had limits

imposed on their spending and squad size for matches.

Then, UEFA judges told PSG that a sponsorship deal with Qatar's tourism authority had been inflated above fair market value to help the club comply with the rules. It was only in April that UEFA declared that PSG had fulfilled its obligations of stricter ongoing scrutiny.

But Tebas said both City and PSG are still trying to evade spending rules intended to ensure clubs break even. "PSG is a habitual offender and has been violating UEFA's Financial Fair Play regulations for years," Tebas said. "It is important that UEFA doesn't just look at the most recent player transfers, but at PSG's history of noncompliance. The transfers are merely the result of years of financial doping at PSG."

UEFA's club finance monitoring panel intervened last week to open a fresh investigation into PSG after the French club broke the world record fee to sign Neymar from Barcelona for 222 million euros (\$262 million) and on Thursday signed Monaco forward Kylian Mbappe.

The deal for the 18-year-old Mbappe was unusual as a one-season loan with a commitment to pay a reported 180 million euros (\$216 million) next year, delaying PSG's financial commitment to the deal.

City was the biggest spending club in European soccer's recent transfer window, with an outlay exceeding 220 million pounds (\$285 million). The purchase of defenders Kyle Walker (Tottenham) and Benjamin Mendy (Monaco) accounted for about 100 million pounds (\$130 million) of the spending. — AP



TEHRAN: Iran's national football team Head Coach Carlos Queiroz, center, conducts a training session a day ahead of a Group A match against Syria during the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia Qualifier in Tehran, Iran, yesterday. — AP

'OUTRAGEOUS' TO SAY ENGLAND DON'T CARE: GARETH SOUTHGATE

ENFIELD: It is "outrageous" to suggest England's players do not care about representing their country, manager Gareth Southgate said ahead of pivotal World Cup qualifier against Slovakia. England were jeered by their own fans during Friday's laboured 4-0 win in Malta and critics on social media claimed the players were not motivated. Southgate lamented the booing directed at his players. "I don't see how it can help the team" - and said the age-old English obsession with passion and pride missed the point.

"I fully recognise that our job is to try and entertain and excite the supporters," Southgate told journalists at the Tottenham Hotspur training ground in Enfield, north London on Sunday.

"But we're all Englishmen, we want to progress to a World Cup and we're in this together. "The notion the players aren't proud to play is outrageous, really, because they're unbelievably proud to play. "At times we won't play as well as we'd like to, but there's nobody in that dressing room that's giving me less than 100 percent." He added:

"The easiest, basest reaction is to say: 'Oh, they don't care.' More often than not, players have cared too much and have been wrapped up in the whole experience too much and not been able to give their best for that reason.

"Having worn the shirt, that's where I think I can bring some context to it. Because it's not about 'caring.' Southgate, capped 57 times by England as a player, suggested there might be historical explanations for why debates about the national team are often framed in simplistic, emotional terms.

"I think it's a national characteristic," said Southgate, who played for the fondly remembered England team that reached the semi-finals of Euro 96 on home soil. "We are a country that's an island. My family have been involved in that.

"So there's always been a sort of aggressive side to that. But we've got to win football matches and we've got to be tactically and technically right to do that. Just working hard won't be enough. — AFP

Sports

Rossi wins
IndyCar race at
Watkins Glen



France held by
Luxembourg, Belgium
qualifies for WCup



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2017

ROSEN, UCLA OVERCOME 34-POINT DEFICIT TO TOP TEXAS A&M 45-44

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NEW YORK: Anastasija Sevastova, of Latvia, serves to Maria Sharapova, of Russia, during the fourth round of the US Open tennis tournament, Sunday, in New York. — AP

SHARAPOVA OUSTED AT US OPEN, VENUS, KVITOVA ADVANCE

NEW YORK: Maria Sharapova's Grand Slam return after a 15-month doping ban ended Sunday with a fourth-round defeat at the US Open but the former world number one considered it a major step in her comeback. Latvian 16th seed Anastasija Sevastova rallied to eliminate the five-time Grand Slam champion 5-7, 6-4, 6-2 at Arthur Ashe Stadium, booking a quarter-final against American Sloane Stephens, who ousted Germany's Julia Goerges 6-3, 3-6, 6-1.

Sharapova, the 2006 US Open winner, was able to find the positives after making 51 unforced errors to only 14 by Sevastova, whose 21 winners were half the 30-year-old Russian's total. "Reflecting back on the week, I can be happy," Sharapova said. "It has been a really great ride. Ultimately, I can take a lot from this week." Tuesday's other quarter-final will match Czech 13th seed Petra Kvitova, a two-time Wimbledon champion, against US ninth seed Venus Williams, seeking her eighth Slam title and third

US Open crown. Kvitova eliminated Spanish third seed and two-time Slam winner Garbine Muguruza 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 while Williams beat 35th-ranked Spaniard Carla Suarez Navarro 6-3, 3-6, 6-1. In Sharapova's first Slam since she tested positive for the banned blood booster melatonin at the 2016 Australian Open, she ousted second-ranked Simona Halep in the first round and served notice to any contender her game remains formidable.

"She played unbelievable throughout the first and second set and I just kept fighting, running for every ball," Sevastova said. "I was confident. I was feeling it. But still you have to beat her. She was playing one of the best matches here." Sharapova returned from her suspension in April, was snubbed for a French Open wildcard and missed Wimbledon with a thigh injury but received a US Open wildcard despite only one hardcourt tuneup match due to a left forearm injury. "It's great to get that major out of

the way," Sharapova said. "I'm thankful for the opportunity. I did my best and I can be proud of that." Sharapova is expected to jump from 146th to around 100th in the world rankings.

KVITOVA 4-1 AGAINST VENUS

Williams is the oldest woman entered at 37 but was this year's Wimbledon and Australian Open runner-up. She hasn't reached three Slam finals in a year since 2002.

"I'm focused on myself and trying to be as aggressive as possible," Williams said. "Nobody ever gives you a Slam. You've got to take it and I'm going to try and take it."

Kvitova, 4-1 all-time against Williams, missed five months after a knife-wielding home intruder injured her left hand last December. "I worked hard to come back and be here. It means a lot," Kvitova said. "I don't have words to describe. It was a tough time. All five months were very tough. It was just a journey I didn't

know how it would end. If it ends here on the big stage it's a happy end." Muguruza still leads the fight for world number one after the Open but will be overtaken if fourth seed Elina Svitolina makes the semi-finals or top seed Karolina Pliskova reaches the final.

Stephens missed 11 months with a foot injury and returned only at Wimbledon, but has won 12 of her past 14 matches for her deepest US Open run in six tries. "I honestly couldn't have asked for a better comeback," Stephens said. "Making it to the quarter-finals here is unbelievable."

TEEN SHAPOVALOV OUSTED

In a men's draw assured of producing a first-time Slam finalist, Spanish 12th seed Pablo Carreno Busta meets Argentine 29th seed Diego Schwartzman in the last-eight while South African 28th seed Kevin Anderson meets US 17th seed Sam Querrey, who beat German 23rd

seed Mischa Zverev 6-2, 6-2, 6-1. Anderson matched his best Slam run from the 2015 US Open by beating Italy's Paolo Lorenzi 6-4, 6-3, 6-7 (4/7), 6-4. "I got off to a great start the first two sets and imposed my game," Anderson said. "I had to dig deep and it feels absolutely fantastic to get through."

Carreno Busta, who has not dropped a set, ended Canadian 18-year-old qualifier Denis Shapovalov's dream run 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/3). Shapovalov would have been the youngest Slam quarter-finalist since Michael Chang at the 1990 French Open and youngest at the US Open since Andre Agassi in 1988.

"The biggest lesson is that I'm able to compete with these guys," Shapovalov said. "I still think I have a lot of work to do." Schwartzman eliminated French 16th seed Lucas Pouille 7-6 (7/3), 7-5, 2-6, 6-2. At 5ft 7ins (1.70m), he is the shortest Grand Slam quarter-finalist since Peruvian Jaime Yzaga at the 1994 US Open. — AFP

AMID WAR, SYRIA HOPES TO REACH WCUP FOR FIRST TIME

DAMASCUS: In the midst of a long-running and ruinous war, millions of Syrians may finally have something to be joyful about. Syria's national soccer team has a chance to qualify for next year's World Cup - what would be the Arab nation's first ever appearance in the sport's most prestigious event. The team, referred to by many Syrians as the "Qasioun Eagles" after a mountain overlooking the capital Damascus, has been on an impressive run despite being forced to play all its games in other countries.

The Syrians beat Qatar 3-1 on Thursday in Malaysia, moving into third place in Group A of Asian qualifying. The top two finishers in the six-team group will automatically qualify for next year's tournament in Russia, while the third-place team will enter a playoff.

If the Syrians beat Iran in Tehran in their final group match on Tuesday, they will be guaranteed to finish at least third. But Syria could finish second and qualify directly depending on the result of the match between South Korea and Uzbekistan.

"Our team is ready to achieve victory and qualify Syria for the first time to the World Cup," Muwaffaq Fathallah, the chief administrator of the Syrian team, said by telephone from the Iranian capital. "We want the Syrian people to be happy." The qualification would come as a welcome surprise for millions across the war-torn country, which has been devastated by the conflict. More than 400,000 people have been killed and half the country's prewar population displaced since the conflict erupted in March 2011. It will also be a boost for President Bashar Assad, who is eager to project strength and normalcy on the world stage while his forces continue to recapture territory on the ground.

The war has negatively impacted the country's soccer industry, the country's most popular sport. As the nation descended into conflict, sports stadiums were trashed and many of the national team's players moved to Arab or Asian countries to play.

The national team is made up of government-approved supporters, although at least one player was an opposition activist. Striker Firas al-Khatib, who was often seen attending fundraising events for the opposition during his years in exile, returned to Damascus last month for the first time in five years, receiving a VIP welcome at the airport.

"There is no better feeling than returning home," al-Khatib, who once said he would never again play for the government team until it stops its bombardment of opposition-held areas, said upon his arrival.

Another player who has been outside Syria for years but never expressed support for the opposition is Omar al-Soma, who joined the national team before the match against Qatar last week. The team's captain, Ahmad al-Saleh, plays for Chinese club Henan Jianye, while Omar Khribin, who scored a goal in each half against Qatar, plays for Saudi Arabian team Al-Hilal. Al-Soma, who recently joined the national team, plays for Saudi club Al-Ahli.

Al-Khatib, who played for Kuwaiti team Qadsia and later Al-Arabi, will be returning to his mother club of Al-Karamah in the central city of Homs. Opposition activists are divided over the team. Ahmad al-Masalmeh, an activist based in

the southern province of Daraa, said that he supports the team because "they are carrying the name of Syria."

He said will watch the game against Iran, as he did with previous ones. But an opposition fighter in northern Syria who goes by the name of Abu Dardaa al-Shami said he has no respect for the national soccer team.

"This is the team of the regime, not the team of our nation," al-Shami said. Syrian state news agency SANA said the national team began its training in Tehran on Saturday in preparation for today's match against Iran.

In the Syrian capital yesterday, workers were setting up giant screens in at least three squares for public viewing, while businessmen will be offering food and drinks for those planning to watch. State-run television, which is planning to broadcast the game live, has lined up special programs for the event. — AP



DOHA: In this Jan. 9, 2011 file photo, Syria's midfielder Abulrazaq al-Hussein, left, celebrates with teammates after scoring his team's second goal against Saudi Arabia during their 2011 Asian Cup group B football match at Al-Rayyan Stadium in the Qatari capital Doha. Millions of Syrians may finally have something to be joyful about in the midst of a long-running and ruinous war. Syria's national soccer team has a chance to qualify for next year's World Cup. — AP

NADAL HITS 50 AT US OPEN, PLISKOVA RACES THROUGH

NEW YORK: World number one Rafael Nadal notched up his 50th win at the US Open yesterday to reach the quarter-finals for the seventh time. The two-time champion, who could meet old rival Roger Federer in New York for the first time at the semi-final stage, crushed Ukraine's Alexander Dolgoplov 6-2, 6-4, 6-1.

The 31-year-old Spaniard goes on to face either 19-year-old Andrey Rublev of Russia or Belgian ninth seed David Goffin for a place in the last-four. "I played a solid match with not many mistakes," said Nadal, the reigning French Open champion.

"He's a player who can play amazing shots but sometimes he can be very unpredictable with errors so I just waited for my opportunity." Nadal, the 2010 and 2013 champion in New York, showed no signs of the struggles that bedeviled him in the two previous rounds, when he dropped the opening set before prevailing in four.

His 23 winners yesterday were just shaded by world number 64 Dolgoplov's 25 but the Ukrainian's 39 unforced errors were more than three times those committed by Nadal. Federer, bidding for a sixth US Open and 20th major, will tackle Philipp Kohlschreiber later.

After stretching his runs of dominance over Mikhail Youzhny to 17-0 and Feliciano Lopez to 13-0, the 36-year-old Federer takes an 11-0 advantage into his night-time duel with German 33rd seed Kohlschreiber. The remaining last-16 tie of the day sees 2009 champion Juan Martin del Potro, the 24th seeded Argentine, up against Austrian sixth seed Dominic Thiem. Thiem, who was forced to quit with injury against del Potro at the same stage in 2016, celebrated his 24th birthday on Sunday. Top seed Kristina Pliskova, the runner-up in 2016, needed just 46 minutes to sweep past Jennifer Brady of the United States 6-1, 6-0 and make her third Slam quarter-final of 2017.

The tall Czech had needed back-to-back three-setters to get to the last 16, including having to save a match point against Zhang Shuai of China in the third round. But the 25-year-old world number one fired 23 winners on Sunday while the outclassed Brady, the 91st-ranked player, managed just six in her quickfire demolition.

Pliskova will next face either 37th-ranked compatriot Lucie Safarova or US 20th seed CoCo Vandeweghe for a place in the semi-finals. "I think it was one of my best matches this year," said Pliskova. "But the opponent was not the best. Definitely she can play better than she was playing today." — AFP



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XIAMEN: A plenary session of the BRICS Summit is held in Xiamen, Fujian province, China yesterday. Five major emerging economies opened a summit yesterday to map out their future course, with host Chinese President Xi Jinping calling on them to play a bigger role in world governance, reject protectionism and inject new energy into tackling the gap between the world's wealthy and developing nations. — AP

BRICS PLEDGES TO OPPOSE PROTECTIONISM

XI TO GIVE \$80 MILLION FOR BRICS COOPERATION PLANS

XIAMEN, China: China will give \$80 million in funding for BRICS cooperation plans, Chinese President Xi Jinping said yesterday, while the bloc of five emerging countries pledged to oppose protectionism. Xi offered 500 million yuan (\$76.4 million) for a BRICS economic and technology cooperation plan, and another \$4 million for projects at the group's New Development Bank (NDB) during a three-day leaders summit in the southeastern city of Xiamen.

China's new contributions to BRICS pale in comparison to its \$124 billion pledge earlier in May for Xi's own Belt and Road initiative, which aims to expand links between Asia, Africa, Europe and beyond as a new way to boost global development.

The announcement came amid questions over the relevance of BRICS and China's commitment to the NDB in light of the Belt and Road initiative and the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, both key efforts by Beijing to bolster its global influence.

Xi said during a plenary session at the BRICS leaders' summit that the five emerging economies - Brazil, Russia, India, China and

South Africa - should increase cooperation in sectors such as trade and investment, monetary policy and finance, and sustainable development.

"We should redouble our efforts to comprehensively deepen BRICS partnerships and open BRICS cooperation," he said. Set up in 2015 as an alternative to the World Bank, the Shanghai-headquartered NDB was seen as the first major BRICS achievement after the group came together in 2009 to press for a bigger say in the post-World War Two financial order created by Western powers.

The BRICS leaders will gather in Xiamen through today, giving host China its latest chance to position itself as a bulwark of globalization in the face of US President Donald Trump's "America First" agenda.

A draft "Xiamen Declaration" seen by Reuters, a formal version of which is expected to be issued later, said BRICS countries will continue to firmly oppose protectionism as they are committed to an "open and inclusive" multilateral trading system. The communique emphasized the need to be vigilant in guarding against "inward-looking policies" that

could hurt global market confidence, and called upon all countries to fully implement the Paris climate agreement.

The summit has been overshadowed by North Korea's sixth and most powerful nuclear test, which came on Sunday just hours before Xi opened the meeting with a keynote speech, and prompted a vow of a "massive" military response from the United States if it or its allies were threatened.

Open world

The BRICS group of emerging economies must promote trade liberalization and an open world economy, Chinese President Xi Jinping said at a business meeting on Sunday at the start of a three-day summit being held in southeastern China.

BRICS leaders will be joined by observer countries Thailand, Mexico, Egypt, Guinea and Tajikistan, and officials will discuss a "BRICS Plus" plan to possibly expand the bloc to new members. Mexico's President Enrique Pena Nieto is set to be in China to discuss trade and investment, as Trump has renewed threats to scrap the 23-year-old North American Free

Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that he has labelled a killer of US jobs. "We should push for an open world economy, promote trade liberalization and facilitation, jointly create a new global value chain, and realize a global economic rebalancing," Xi told BRICS business leaders and senior officials. Xi said he still had "full confidence" in BRICS countries' development despite claims that the bloc's relevance had faded due to slower growth.

"The development of emerging market and developing countries won't touch anyone's cheese, but instead will diligently grow the world economic pie," he said.

Earlier, Chinese vice trade minister, Wang Shouwen, said the BRICS meeting was expected to "reach consensus for actions" to oppose trade protectionism. He added that China was interested in possibly establishing a free trade agreement with Mexico.

In July, Xi called on members of the Group of 20 (G20) nations to champion an open world economy, and at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January offered a vigorous defence of globalisation.

In Xiamen, Xi closed his 45-minute speech

by saying that Beijing encouraged Chinese companies to continue going abroad, and "warmly welcomed" other countries' firms to invest in the world's second-largest economy.

Some have questioned the relevance of BRICS and China's commitment to its New Development Bank (NDB) in light of Xi's own global Belt and Road development initiative and the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Set up in 2015 as an alternative to the World Bank, the Shanghai-headquartered NDB was seen as the first major BRICS achievement after the group came together in 2009 to press for a bigger say in the post-World War Two financial order created by Western powers.

The bank aims to address a massive infrastructure funding gap in the member countries, which account for almost half the world's population and about a fifth of global economic output.

The NDB's president on Friday said it aims to make about \$4 billion in loans next year. To date, it has invested in 11 projects, lending \$1.5 billion in 2016 and \$2.5 billion in loans set for this year. — Reuters

DISORDERLY BREXIT CHANCES 25%; UK ECONOMY TO SLOW FURTHER

LONDON: The chances of Britain eventually exiting the European Union in a disorderly manner have eased a bit, according to a Reuters poll of economic forecasters, who still say a free trade deal, even if there is a transition period, is the most likely outcome.

The median probability of no deal in the poll taken Aug 29-31 was 25 percent, down from 30 percent in a survey six weeks ago. In the meantime, UK economic growth is forecast to keep slowing despite an upturn in the broader world economy.

However, economists also say regardless of whether or not a transition deal is agreed, leaving with no agreement - meaning the UK would have to trade with the EU under basic World Trade Organization rules - is the second-most likely outcome. Third is European Economic Area membership, which would allow the UK continued full access to the EU Single Market that it was so instrumental in helping to shape. But it would exclude Britain from having any more say in shaping it.

Remaining in the EU, which would mean overriding the June 23, 2016 Brexit vote, was the fourth most likely outcome. "We apply a 50 percent weight to no deal being reached by the end of March 2019, but rather than a disorderly exit, we expect the process to be fudged in some way, for example a prolonged transition period," notes Joanna Davies, a senior economist at Fathom, underscoring the high level of uncertainty.

UK recession

Davies is the only economist in the panel who is forecasting a mild UK recession to take place this year. She gave a 20 percent probability of a disorderly Brexit in the poll, where other responses ranged from just 5 percent to 75 percent. Philip Shaw, chief economist at Investec, also gave just a one-in-five chance of a disorderly "no deal" Brexit. "While it is logistically impossible to agree an entire deal by March 2019, both sides generally seem to be in favour of a transition arrangement, or phased implementation. It would take a catastrophic breakdown in communications for one side to walk away from the table," Shaw noted.

The survey results provide some rough guidance on the prevailing thinking among economic forecasters on the UK just as negotiations between the British and EU delegations appear to have hit their roughest patch. Ahead of the EU membership referendum, economists were almost completely united - an extremely rare occurrence in a profession well-known for diverging views - saying that staying in the EU was the best choice for Britain's economic prospects.

Initial consensus forecasts for a mild recession following the vote, based on the assumption that Britain would formally declare its intention to leave straight away as then-Prime Minister David Cameron had promised to do, were off the mark. But before and since his successor Theresa May signed the Article 50 declaration to withdraw in late March, economists have called many of the

near-term consequences of the Brexit vote broadly correct, including soaring imported inflation from a tumbling pound, and the current consumer spending slowdown. While officials, including the Bank of England, have clung to a view exports and investment will rise and make up for this, economists have been more pessimistic, warning that uncertainty will force companies to delay spending decisions.

That call is also proving to be broadly correct, both in the official data and survey evidence. Forecasters in the Reuters poll are sticking to their view that economic growth will be just 1.6 percent this year and 1.3 percent next, in contrast to the Bank of England's view, which started the year at 2.0 percent and has since been chopped.

The Reuters consensus for 2018 growth has been in a steady range of 1.2-1.5 percent every month since July 2016, the month after the Brexit vote. Prior to that, it was 2.3 percent, showing just how consistent economists have been since. Most are also convinced that the BoE will not raise interest rates between now and when the Article 50 notification period expires. Only 14 of 59 economists expect one or more rate rises by end-2018.

Only two of the eight Monetary Policy Committee members voted for a rate rise in August, including ex-Citi economist Michael Saunders, who in a Thursday speech again argued the case for raising rates, saying the economy is likely to be "not too bad" in coming quarters. — Reuters

STRONG EURO COMPLICATES ECB'S STIMULUS PLANS

FRANKFURT: A strengthening euro is complicating the European Central Bank's efforts to scale back and then exit from its monetary stimulus efforts. For weeks, financial investors had been expecting the bank and its president, Mario Draghi, to give some signal after their policy meeting on Thursday about when they expect to start winding down the stimulus program.

But a recent surge in the euro, which can hurt exports and weigh on the economy, and the fact that inflation remains below the 2 percent target have dampened those expectations. Analysts are now wondering whether Draghi will reveal very much or anything at all in terms of concrete guidance for when to start phasing out the stimulus - for fear of driving the euro even higher. The stimulus program is credited with helping turn around the 19-country eurozone economy, which is now growing at a brisk pace. So investors are keen to know when the program will start being wound down, and how quickly. In the past, talk of tapering off stimulus has caused stocks to fall and the euro to rise. The euro has gained 13 percent in value this year against the dollar, to \$1.19, and briefly traded above \$1.20 last week. The exchange rate jumped after Draghi said in June that the ECB would ease off its stimulus in tandem with a recovering economy.

An end to the stimulus would mean higher long-term interest rates, and more returns for holding euro-denominated fixed-income investments; that tends to drive up demand for

the currency. A stimulus exit would also mean higher returns for savers and more borrowing costs for governments and businesses - including some zombie companies that have been kept afloat thanks to low rates. Yet Draghi can only postpone the stimulus exit for so long. That is because the program consists of 60 billion euros (\$72 billion) per month in purchases of government and corporate bonds. And analysts estimate that the bank will run out of eligible bonds to purchase next year.

Tapering hint

"While a clear tapering hint at this week's ECB meeting could send the euro even higher, potentially undermining the recovery, room to postpone tapering is limited due to bond scarcity," said Carsten Brzeski, chief economist for Germany and Austria at ING bank. "Therefore, we expect Draghi to strike a cautious balance between giving first clear hints about the upcoming tapering and dovish sounds in order to calm" foreign-exchange markets. "Dovish" is central bank jargon for being inclined toward more stimulus rather than less. The central bank has been purchasing government and high-quality corporate bonds since March 2015 in an effort to push up inflation from alarmingly low levels. The ECB buys the bonds from banks using newly created money, pushing that added money into the banking system and, it is hoped, into the economy through credit to businesses and consumers. — AP

THE FAMILIAR JOURNEY: FINDING A JOB AS A SENIOR CANDIDATE

Bain & Company Survey

Senior employees can sometimes find themselves looking for new positions either because they're looking for a change, they've been let go, or, for other reasons that could be out of their control. As senior employees might be doing the hiring and firing at their companies, they might very-well know what they want in an employee. But are they prepared for the tables to be turned? Are they ready to be job seekers again?

Bayt.com, the Middle East's #1 Job Site, will be guiding you through some of the challenges that most senior employees face when changing jobs as well as our experts' advice on how to overcome them.

1. Your ego and people's perception

The Challenges: You might feel like you've lost your self-esteem and confidence. You may also think that your situation is an embarrassment and that your image is now tarnished. It is hard to go from making big decisions and having major control and impact to a job seekers trying to impress and please.

How to overcome them? Keep your usual life going, engage in family activities, volunteer, fitness, hobbies, etc. It is

important to recognize your worth outside of the job. Now, it is also vital to be open to learning new things and taking small risks and, most importantly, learn the power of taking "baby steps" by doing things right over and over. Don't forget to ask for support when you need it.

2. Your age and experience

The Challenges: You may feel that employers will perceive you as being too old. You may fear that you won't get hired or won't last for a long time because the company "you're overqualified". You've been an employer before and you know that a cultural mis-match can be disastrous, so you worry that you're now the one not fitting in.

How to overcome them? Refocus the employer on your exceptional qualifications, proven results, industry contacts, and experience - not age. In addition, know the culture of the company (if no one there is over 35, don't try to get hired at 64!). Maintain and demonstrate your health, vitality, energy, and enthusiasm and avoid "the R word" (retirement) in conversations. Last but not least, be tech-savvy, up-to-date, and

important to recognize your worth outside of the job. Now, it is also vital to be open to learning new things and taking small risks and, most importantly, learn the power of taking "baby steps" by doing things right over and over. Don't forget to ask for support when you need it.

3. More competition at the top

The Challenge: High-level job openings often get a lot of exposure within your industry. The more desirable the position, the more people are fighting for it.

How to overcome it? Research a company's culture and weaknesses; understand both and sell yourself as the person who will turn weaknesses into strengths. When meeting with the decision makers, you must demonstrate your ability to produce tangible business results.

4. Senior positions are filled internally

The Challenges: Staff members have been working day and night for years at the company and have "paid their dues." They are already in line to get the top jobs, especially if a big company has clear succession planning. Some companies might not want to take the risk of bringing an outsider. How to overcome them? Explain how being from the outside can be a strength; you can diversify

the culture and bring a new perspective. But, you must focus your search on companies that have a good track record of bringing-in outside management successfully. Another way to target your search is by seeking out troubled companies that might need your fresh ideas.

5. Finding the right contacts

The Challenges: When it comes to hiring seniors, human resources is of little to no help in this regard, so the barrier of entry might be much higher. Therefore, it is only appropriate to speak and reach out to C-level executives (CEO, COO, CFO, CMO, CTO...etc.).

How to overcome them? When you manage getting in touch with senior managers, talk to them about ways you can help them reach their business goals; if there isn't a vacancy at this level, new ones can be created for top talent by people on that level. It is also prudent to join and engage with executive networking programs, boards of directors, and venture capital groups. These relationships can be your leverage with search firms and other professional contacts.

6. Maintaining a high salary

The Challenges: In an unstable economy, you may find it difficult to ask for a large salary. Sometimes, companies look at the big number and become distracted by it so much they might see no value in hiring you. In addition, hiring someone at a high level with a big salary often requires a lot of approvals so the process can take a while. How to overcome them? Be sure you talk to the right people, the ultimate decision makers are your go-to people. And when you do talk to them, focus on tangible results that can be measured in financial terms. That way you can demonstrate why your high salary is "worth it"

When a conversation develops into a salary negotiation, be familiar with the market average and obtain information on salaries paid for people in the position you're seeking to fill. Services like Bayt.com Salaries can do that trick. Moreover, try to negotiate other financial arrangements, such as an equity partnership, revenue-based bonus, or a contract with terms that can compensate for lower pay. You can always find a solution that satisfies both parties. If you fail to do so, then that job is not for you.



BEIJING: A woman carries an umbrella past a board displaying countries' national flags in Beijing yesterday. China said US President Donald Trump's threat to cut off trade with countries that deal with North Korea is unacceptable and unfair. —AP

TRUMP HINTS AT WITHDRAWAL FROM US-SOUTH KOREA FREE TRADE DEAL

US MAY NOTIFY S KOREA OF PULLOUT TODAY

HOUSTON: US President Donald Trump said on Saturday he will discuss the fate of a five-year-old US-South Korean free trade deal with his advisers next week in a move that could see him pull out of the accord with a key American ally at a time of heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula.

Trump made his remarks to reporters while visiting hurricane-hit Houston a day after he spoke with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and struck a deal allowing Seoul access to longer-range missiles as well as a potential arms sale. The US-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS), hammered out by Trump's Democratic predecessor Barack Obama, has been a frequent target for Trump, who in earlier interviews with Reuters threatened to withdraw from what he called an unequal deal in which Washington runs a goods trade deficit of almost \$28 billion with Seoul. "It is very much on my mind," Trump said in Houston when asked if he is talking to advisers and will do something about the pact this week.

The US Chamber of Commerce said in an email to members that it and other business groups "have received multiple reports" that the Trump administration is prepared to notify South Korea of its intent to withdraw from KORUS on Tuesday, and possibly sooner.

The largest US business lobby urged member

companies to have senior executives call the White House and other administration officials to tell them not to proceed, and to enlist Republican governors in the effort. "This is an all hands on deck effort," the group said in a memo seen by Reuters that recalled another emergency campaign in April to persuade Trump not to withdraw from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Second round of talks

Trump agreed to renegotiate NAFTA's terms but on Aug. 27 renewed his threat to scrap the 23-year-old trade pact, even as US, Canadian and Mexican trade negotiators were preparing for this weekend's second round of talks in Mexico City.

Trump is also likely to face resistance from within his own administration to any move to quit KORUS. National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn and other senior administration officials had opposed a unilateral NAFTA withdrawal. Trump's comments on Saturday came amid a standoff over North Korea's missile and nuclear tests. North Korea sharply raised regional tension this week with the launch of its Hwasong-12 intermediate-range ballistic missile, which flew over Japan and landed in the Pacific.

Washington wants to change the South

Korea deal to help cut its trade deficit with Asia's fourth-largest economy. South Korean and US officials began talks about possible revisions to the agreement on Aug. 22 but failed to agree on how to move forward. US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, South Korean Trade Minister Kim Hyun-chong and the trade pact's joint steering committee participated in a one-day video-conference that ended without a decision on the next steps for possible revisions. The pact was initially negotiated by the Republican administration of President George W. Bush in 2007, but that version was scrapped and renegotiated by Obama's administration three years later.

Trump has blamed the accord on his 2016 Democratic presidential election opponent, Hillary Clinton, who as Obama's secretary of state promoted the final version of the agreement before its approval by the US Congress in 2011. Pulling out of KORUS would mark the latest step taken by Trump to abandon the type of international trade agreement that had exemplified world economics for decades.

Days after taking office in January, Trump formally abandoned the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), an ambitious accord brokered by Obama that would have joined a dozen nations from Canada and Chile to Australia and Japan in a complicated array of trade rules. — Reuters

KFH ANNOUNCES CARDS SUMMER CAMPAIGN 13TH DRAW WINNERS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced 7 winners of the thirteenth draw of the new banking cards summer campaign themed "Get Back Double the Value of your Purchases". The campaign was launched in an attempt to encourage clients to use KFH credit, prepaid and debit cards while making purchases in Kuwait and overseas.

The winners are: Mansour Alsaed, Norah Aldowsari, Wasmiya Alajmi, Khazna Musailam, Badriya Alghareeb, Nasser Alkhezam and Mohamad alothaina.

The campaign that lasts for 120 days gives KFH customers chances to enter draw to win double cashback up to KD 2000 daily. KFH Credit and Prepaid cards used for domestic and international purchases and KFH Debit cards used for international purchases are eligible for the draw. For every KD 1 spent locally earns 1 chance and every KD 1 spent internationally earn 3 chances to enter the daily draw. This campaign is part of KFH efforts to reward its clients and grant them additional value; thus achieving customer satisfaction and boosting their confidence. The campaign also aims at enhancing the bank's presence especially that it dominates the largest mar-



ket share in the field of banking cards. KFH strives to continuously offer its clients new promotions and discounts in order to distinguish them among peers, not to mention to further bolster bank's leading position in the field of banking cards.

KFH marketing campaigns play a significant role in underlining KFH's principles that include boosting sales, and benefiting clients and merchants. It is worth noting that KFH has won several awards in the field of banking cards which reiterates its success and efficiency in banking cards market. KFH enjoys high confidence and leadership in the market in addition to high quality products which have enabled it to achieve growth in cards market and increase the number of customers.

INDONESIA'S PRESIDENT FACES ECONOMIC CLOUDS

JAKARTA: During the first months of this year, President Joko Widodo was an embattled leader grappling with Indonesia's most serious political and religious tensions in two decades. Now, he has come through the storm looking stronger than ever.

His popularity is near record highs and, thanks to deft manoeuvres against foes trying to exploit a blasphemy case against one of his allies, Widodo has stamped his authority on the ruling coalition, parliament and the security forces. The quietly spoken former furniture salesman may have proved his political mettle, but his next challenge is an economy that refuses to respond to conventional policies to fire up growth. That could dent his re-election chances in 2019, especially with a budget that won't stretch to lavish government spending. Senior government officials worry that Widodo has been distracted by the battles with political opponents and taken his eye off the economy. "We are suffering from bad policy right now ... if we don't fix it or we don't regain the initiative I could easily see GDP growth going down, and is that a risk you want to take?" said one senior government official, who asked not to be identified. According to a June survey,

nearly 60 percent of people polled were satisfied with Widodo's performance, almost an all-time high. But the poll also showed high expectations that he would deliver on promises to revive the lacklustre economy.

"If he doesn't perform on the economy, that would give ammunition to the opposition to challenge Jokowi in 2019," said Djayadi Hanan of the Saiful Mujani Research Center, a Jakarta-based pollster, using the president's nickname. Indonesia's GDP growth has shambled at around 5 percent for the past two years, too low to lift the country out of the middle-income trap, largely because domestic consumption - once the engine of the economy - and bank lending have been sluggish. An unexpected cut in interest rates last month highlighted the struggle to lift growth despite government initiatives, including a tax amnesty program, an infrastructure drive, and a series of regulatory tweaks designed to make business easier. The government has little fiscal room to breathe life into the economy: the budget deficit is already close to a legally mandated ceiling of 3 percent of GDP and parliament could impeach Widodo if he allowed the deficit to run past that limit. —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.759
Indian Rupees	4.746
Pakistani Rupees	2.870
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.971
Nepali Rupees	2.981
Singapore Dollar	223.020
Hongkong Dollar	38.695
Bangladesh Taka	3.737
Philippine Peso	5.988
Thai Baht	9.127

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.787
Qatari Riyal	83.207
Omani Riyal	786.772
Bahraini Dinar	804.440
UAE Dirham	82.482

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.200
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.972
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.216
Tunisian Dinar	127.210
Jordanian Dinar	427.490
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.018
Syrian Lira	2.159
Morocco Dirham	32.414

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	302.750
Euro	356.940
Sterling Pound	395.540
Canadian dollar	239.710
Turkish lira	85.890

Swiss Franc	316.020
Australian Dollar	240.230
US Dollar Buying	301.550

GOLD	
20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	301.850
Canadian Dollar	242.005
Sterling Pound	391.785
Euro	362.965
Swiss Frank	290.125
Bahrain Dinar	801.135
UAE Dirhams	82.575
Qatari Riyals	83.395
Saudi Riyals	81.350
Jordanian Dinar	427.020
Egyptian Pound	17.104
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.975
Indian Rupees	4.723
Pakistani Rupees	2.870
Bangladesh Taka	3.736
Philippines Peso	5.901
Cyprus pound	17.963
Japanese Yen	3.745
Syrian Pound	1.585
Nepalese Rupees	2.957
Malaysian Ringgit	71.600

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.315
Thai Bhat	10.075
Turkish Lira	87.880

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.383779	0.393779
Czech Korune	0.005823	0.0178265
Danish Krone	0.044509	0.049509
Euro	0.355896	0.364896
Norwegian Krone	0.034883	0.040083
Romanian Leu	0.078564	0.078564
Russian ruble	0.005127	0.005127
Slovakia	0.008997	0.018997
Swedish Krona	0.033971	0.038971
Swiss Franc	0.309624	0.320624
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.232838	0.244833
New Zealand Dollar	0.212844	0.222344
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.235959	0.244959
US Dollars	0.298100	0.302520
US Dollars Mint	0.298600	0.302420
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003239	0.003823
Chinese Yuan	0.044321	0.047821

Hong Kong Dollar	0.036529	0.039279
Indian Rupee	0.004220	0.004908
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002666	0.002846
Korean Won	0.000259	0.000274
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067277	0.073277
Nepalese Rupee	0.003015	0.003186
Pakistan Rupee	0.002717	0.003007
Philippine Peso	0.005807	0.006107
Singapore Dollar	0.217485	0.227485
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001608	0.002188
Taiwan	0.009808	0.010088
Thai Baht	0.008766	0.009316
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.794811	0.803311
Egyptian Pound	0.014867	0.020775
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000193	0.000253
Jordanian Dinar	0.421623	0.430623
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020772	0.044772
Omani Riyal	0.778515	0.784195
Qatar Riyal	0.078717	0.083657
Saudi Riyal	0.079500	0.080800
Syrian Pound	0.001280	0.001500
Tunisian Dinar	0.121947	0.129947
Turkish Lira	0.082876	0.093176
UAE Dirhams	0.080853	0.082553
Yemeni Riyal	0.000982	0.001062

THE LAUNCH OF THE BEST CAR IN THE WORLD

NEW MERCEDES-BENZ S-CLASS ARRIVES IN STYLE FOR MIDEAST LAUNCH IN ABU DHABI

ABU DHABI: The arrival of the best car in the world to the region - the new Mercedes-Benz S-Class - was celebrated in an evening of sheer elegance at Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi last week (28 August). The event showcased the exceptional intelligence, comfort and luxury defining the new flagship model.

The elegant event, attended by more than 200 VIP customers, influencers and media, comprised experiential zones that immersed guests in the superior elements and features of the model.

Audiences were treated to an extravagant grandstand visual display leading up to the reveal of the new S-Class. Presentation by Mark De Haes, President and CEO at Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East highlighted the flagship model's innovative capabilities and the brand's exciting new ventures that are reinventing the future of cars and creating new mobility solutions.

Commenting on the launch, Lennart Mueller-Teut, Head of Marketing and Communications, Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East, said: "Throughout its lifetime the Mercedes-Benz S-Class has been at the pinnacle of automotive engineering and an undisputed status symbol around the world. We are delighted to introduce this latest version of a truly

remarkable car, and to highlight the features that demonstrate why the new S-Class really is the best of the best."

Always ahead of its time, the 2018 model is the result of 114 years of pioneering evolution, making it unchallenged as the undisputed leader in automotive engineering. The new model takes autonomous driving to a new level with driver assistance systems and substantially expanded functionality that demonstrates the latest automotive technology. Intelligence in the new S-Class is matched equally with comfort and world-first wellness features that include in-seat massage options, temperature control, interior cabin climate control, and mood enhancing light and sound options. Luxury is evident in every detail of the latest model, from the finest quality interior craftsmanship to the exclusive exterior design that includes stylish chrome finishes and distinctive MULTIBEAM LED headlights with three unique torches of light.

Test drives are now available for customers to experience first-hand the intelligence and comfort features of the best car in the world. The new S-Class will be available in different model variants in the GCC and Levant markets.



THE NEW MERCEDES-BENZ S-CLASS

THE BEST CAR IN THE WORLD

ABU DHABI: The new Mercedes-Benz S-Class retains its title as the undisputed leader of intelligence, power, performance and luxury. The top-of-the-range model takes another big step towards autonomous driving and elevates Intelligent Drive to the next level. Its precise attention to detail is seen within every corner of the car, from the wood-leather steering wheel to the crystal-look tail lamps.

The new S-Class offers a new level of comfort for the driver and passengers. Thanks to the world-first ENERGIZING comfort control feature, the driver and passengers can now link various comfort systems such as climate control and massage functions. The new feature also allows customers to configure specific wellness set-ups to suit their mood and enhance physical comfort and performance on the road.

"The Mercedes-Benz S-Class remains ahead of its time. Like its predecessors, the new model sets new automotive standards by taking steps towards autonomous driving, achieving new levels of exceptional interior comfort and elevating the driver's experience to achieve new levels of satisfaction. The S-Class proved to be the best-selling luxury sedan in the world in 2016, and we are confident that the flagship model will maintain its pole position this year and well into the future," said Lennart Mueller-Teut, Head of Marketing & Communications, Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East.

Powertrain: New engines with landmark technology

The new Mercedes-Benz S 560 boasts a new V-8 engine that comes to the starting line with 345 kW (469 hp) and 700 Nm. The new biturbo engine is among the most economical V-8 petrol engines in the world, and consumes about ten percent less fuel than the predecessor. To lower the fuel consumption, four cylinders of the new V-8 are deactivated simultaneously under partial load with the help of the CAMTRONIC valve-lift adjustment system. This reduces gas-cycle losses and enhances the overall efficiency of the four firing cylinders by shifting the operating point towards higher loads. The turbochargers positioned in the V of the cylinder banks represent another special feature.

Intelligent Drive: The next step in driving assistance systems

Over ten years ago, innovations that began with PRE-SAFE and developed into DISTRONIC PLUS led to new dimensions in driving. With the previous S-Class, comfort and safety blended into one, which Mercedes-Benz referred to as "Intelligent Drive". Now, the new S-Class adds an additional layer of excellence by incorporating and enhancing a host of innovative driving assistance systems initially introduced in the previous model. These include:

- The Active Steer Assist, which has been noticeably improved across its entire performance range, results in markedly enhanced customer benefits.
- The Active Breaking Assist, which detects end-of-tail-back situations without space for evasive action, triggers a warning as well as automatic emergency stopping when required.
- [Q]The Evasive Steering Assist supports the driver in taking evasive action when pedestrians are detected in the danger zone in front of the vehicle.

With PRE-SAFE Sound, a short interference signal is triggered ahead of any collisions expected to produce a loud crash, in order to protect the eardrum and inner ear from high acoustic pressures.

The Mercedes-Benz S-Class made a technological statement of superiority in 2013 with ROAD SURFACE SCAN. The system detects bumps ahead of the vehicle and adjusts the ACTIVE BODY CONTROL suspension accordingly. In the new S-Class this suspension control is further improved. The stereo camera of the system now scans the road even more thoroughly, even in dusk and at speeds up to 180 km/h.

Another comfort enhancement is CURVE, the curve-tilting function available in the S-Class Sedan for the first time. The body tilts to the inside of the turn by up to 2.65

degrees and thereby reduces the centrifugal forces perceived by the passengers.

Exclusive exterior design

Modern luxury in the new S-Class is affirmed with the highest quality materials and uncompromising workmanship. All models are fitted with a new radiator grille: the versions with six and eight-cylinder engines sport three twin louvres as well as vertical strips with a high-gloss black finish. The V-12 model variants are fitted with additional chrome-finish vertical strips in the radiator grille. Seven



new light-alloy wheels with diameters between 17 and 20 inches have been introduced on the new model.

MULTIBEAM LED headlamps and ULTRA RANGE High Beam turn night into day. The ULTRA RANGE main beams produce the maximum light intensity permitted by law, which results in the brightness of the main beams remaining above the reference value of 1 lux over a distance of more than 650 metres. For the driver, this means a clear improvement of the already excellent lighting performance of current MULTIBEAM LED systems. The Adaptive High-Beam Assist Plus permanently activates the main beams without dazzling surrounding traffic.

In conjunction with the new MULTIBEAM LED headlamps, the S-Class features three distinctive torches of light as an exclusive design element. The front bumper with pronounced air intakes and sporty looks is also new.

The new LED lamps with crystal-look tail lamps stand out at the rear. They look like jewels and ensure a characteristic design day and night. A tail lamp light show that plays when the vehicle is unlocked and locked, as well as three horizontal pairs of fibre optics are also new.

The Adaptive High-Beam Assist Plus, which is part of the Intelligent Light System, allows drivers to drive with permanently activated main beams permanently without dazzling other road users.

Authentic materials and meticulous detail design

Another Mercedes-Benz hallmark is the high-quality look and feel created with the meticulous attention to detail and craftsmanship in the interior of the new S-Class. These include open-pore woods as well as leather-trimmed doors and dashboard.

The material and colour concept has also been carefully composed, and features a wide range of brown tones, including new colour combinations such as magma grey/espresso brown or mahogany brown/silk beige.

World-first: Wellness while driving

The ENERGIZING comfort control is a world-first entering series production and can be experienced in all seats. This optional feature links various comfort systems in the

vehicle together. It systematically uses the functions of the climate control system (including fragrancing) and the seats (heater, ventilation, massage), the panel heating as well as lighting and musical atmospheres, and enables a specific wellness set-up tailored to the mood and need of the customer. This enhances the physical comfort and performance while driving and during a break.

A choice of six programmes are available; Freshness, Warmth, Vitality, Joy, Comfort and Training (three options are available in Training mode - muscle relaxation, muscle activation and balance - each with several exercises). Each

start function. This also marks the introduction of the new attractive generation of keys, with a high-gloss black or high-gloss white design and different ornamental frames.

Control and display concept with widescreen cockpit and new generation of steering wheels

The interior of the new S-Class is characterised by two new high-resolution displays, each with a screen diagonal of 12.3 inches. Visually, the two displays under one shared glass cover blend into a widescreen cockpit and as a central element emphasise the horizontal orientation of the interior design. Like the instrument cluster, this widescreen cockpit contains a large display with virtual instruments in the direct field of vision of the driver as well as a central display above the centre console. Because the cockpit is fully digital, the driver can choose from three different display styles ("Classic", "Sporty" and "Progressive") and also configure the information and views relevant to them.

The new S-Class has touch-sensitive controls on the steering wheel that respond to swiping motions in the same manner as a smartphone. The driver can use the steering wheel controls to operate DISTRONIC and cruise operation and control the entire infotainment system without having to take their hands off the steering wheel. The infotainment system can be also operated via the touchpad controller in the centre console and by LINGUATRONIC voice control.

The new Mercedes-AMG S 63 4MATIC+ and S 65

The high-performance models of the new Mercedes-AMG S 63 4MATIC+ and S 65 add impressive power to the top-of-the-range collection. An updated front apron with jet wing underscore the more expressive appearance of both S-Class models. At the rear, the new apron and modified tailpipe trim add distinctive design focuses.

The new Mercedes-AMG S 63 4MATIC+ has been transformed with a new engine, new transmission, new all-wheel drive, new exterior and interior design, thereby dramatically honing the driving dynamics and looks further. It is equipped with the new AMG 4.0-litre V-8 Biturbo engine with cylinder deactivation, which replaces the previous 5.5-litre V-8 Biturbo engine. The new engine puts out 450 kW (612 hp) and thus exactly 20 kW (27 hp) more than the preceding model.

With a sprint time of 3.5 seconds from zero to 100 km/h, the performance luxury sedan is on par with full-blooded sports cars. The AMG SPEEDSHIFT MCT 9-speed sports transmission replaces the previous 7-speed gearbox, to enable even more agile response times. The fully variable AMG Performance 4MATIC+ all-wheel-drive system provides optimal traction.

The S 63 4MATIC+ is fitted as standard with the controllable AMG Performance exhaust system to achieve an even more emotionally appealing sound experience. The infinitely adjustable flaps modulate the exhaust note authentically and directly. The flaps open or close depending on the selected AMG DYNAMIC SELECT driving mode, but can also be controlled individually with a separate button in the AMG DRIVE UNIT on the centre console. In the "Comfort" and "Sport" modes, the low-frequency sound typical of a V-8 emphasises comfort. In "Sport+" it is of a much more emotionally appealing nature.

AMG TRACK PACE App

Motorsport enthusiasts can record numerous vehicle data and lap times on the race track with AMG Track Pace in the S 63 4MATIC+. Based on the data, drivers are able to analyse their driving style with precision and can use the insights gained to improve their lap times.

Numerous options from the AMG Performance Studio

Anyone looking to customise the S 63 4MATIC+ and S 65 even further, can order a host of options from the AMG Performance Studio. The exterior can be tailored to personal preferences with the Night package, attractive alternative wheels and a Carbon package. In the interior, the black nappa leather/DINAMICA microfibre Performance steering wheel boosts the sporty character. Carbon or carbon/piano lacquer trim elements round off the possibilities.

Mercedes-AMG S 65: AMG sports suspension based on MAGIC BODY CONTROL with curve-tilting function

The MAGIC BODY CONTROL suspension of the S 65 is focused on driving dynamics and prepares for bumps before the vehicle runs over them. To this end, MAGIC BODY CONTROL combines the active springs of the suspension with continuously adjustable dampers and ROAD SURFACE SCAN. The system precisely scans the condition of the road ahead with the help of a stereo camera to adjust the damping of each individual wheel optimally to the upcoming bumps already ahead of time.

Technical data at a glance

The new S-Class will be available in ten model variants in the Levant markets:

Mercedes-Benz S 320, S 450, S 450 4MATIC, S 560, S 560 4MATIC, Mercedes-AMG S 63 4MATIC+, S 65, Mercedes-Maybach S 560, S 560 4MATIC, S 650.

The Mercedes-Benz S 320, S 450, S 450 4MATIC, S 560 4MATIC, Mercedes-AMG S 63 4MATIC+ and Mercedes-Maybach S 560 4MATIC will be available from August 2017. All other model variants will launch in November 2017.



POLITICAL DRAMA AT THE HEART OF MARKETS

NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

KUWAIT: In the beginning of the week, the US dollar reached its lowest level since January of 2015 as a result of fresh tensions arising after the North Korean regime decided to launch a missile across Japan. The missile test unsurprisingly proved to be extremely provocative in an already tense situation between the defiant North Korea and almost everyone else. In addition, local turmoil pressured the dollar as tropical storm Harvey continued to hammer Texas. Officials expect more than 450,000 people to seek federal aid as the hurricane takes its toll on the US economy.

Later on, the US dollar recovered slightly against most of its counterparts as the geopolitical anxiety sparked by North Korea's missile over Japan subsided.

Finally, the US dollar resumes its drop as the US economy added fewer employees than estimated in August, the unemployment rate increased and wages rose less than forecast, in a break from otherwise solid progress in the labor market. Non-farm payrolls showed an addition of only 156K new jobs in August, worse than consensus estimates pointing to a reading of 180K. Moreover, the unemployment rate ticked higher to 4.4 percent above market expectations of 4.3 percent. Meanwhile, the major disappointment came from wage growth numbers, with average hourly earnings coming in to show a tepid 0.1 percent month on month increase in August and held the year on year rate at 2.5 percent.

On the equities front, major indexes in the US extended their gains as the inflation data dampened the expectations for another rate hike in 2017 and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin's remarks revived the hopes of a tax reform. Following US President Trump's tax-reform speech on Thursday, Treasury Secretary Mnuchin said that the House and the Senate were now circulating the tax reform among its members and they were hoping to get a tax plan by the end of 2017 with the aim of lowering the corporate tax rate down to 15 percent. On the currency front, the dollar index opened the week at 92.375 and managed to reach a low of 91.621 before increasing to a high of 93.347 on Thursday supported by good economic figures and managed to close the week at 92.814. The Euro opened the week at 1.1924 and managed to reach a new two-and-a-half year high against the US dollar, as the single currency hit a high of 1.2069 during trading on Tuesday. One economist, Martin van Vliet, commented on the Euro's surge saying that "I think the fact that Draghi refrained from talking about the Euro at Jackson Hole, opened the door for the market to test the level and the risk-off mood overnight gave it the final push". The currency closed the week at 1.1860.

The Sterling Pound opened the week at 1.2900. The cable rallied to a high of 1.2995 after positive UK manufacturing PMI and big

disappointment US jobs data. The pair closed the week at 1.2950

The Japanese Yen opened the week at 109.25 and reached a low of 108.25 against US dollar as Japanese consumer has recovered in recent months, and this is clearly helping to support the economy. Meanwhile, the Yen has traded on a mix of political dysfunction and risk appetite, the currency managed to close the week at 110.23. In the Commodities side, Hurricane Harvey wreaked havoc along the Gulf of Mexico coastline. Human casualties, economic losses, and outright chaos were left behind Harvey's trail. The hurricane dealt a major blow to oil production in Texas and the Gulf of Mexico, suspending a quarter of all US refineries and causing demand for crude to fall. As result, US crude oil prices are on track to post the steepest monthly losses in more than a year while gasoline prices have rocketed as a result of fuel shortages. The storm continues to pound the coast, causing widespread damage as it unloads a record amount of rain. On the other hand, gold prices rose last week to its highest level since November building on the renewed risk aversion. Gold gained as simmering tensions over the Korean peninsula fuelled safe haven demand. The Gold managed to reach a high of \$ 1328.82 and closed the week at \$1324.65.

US goods trade deficit widened

US goods trade deficit rose in July as exports dropped, suggesting that trade would make a modest contribution to economic growth in the third quarter. The goods trade gap increased 1.7 percent to \$65.1 billion in the previous month. Exports fell 1.3 percent, weighed down by an 8.0 percent tumble in shipments of motor vehicles. There were also drops in exports of consumer goods last month. Capital goods exports increased 1.5 percent. Imports declined 0.3 percent, reflecting a 2.8 percent drop in motor vehicle imports as well as a 1.7 percent decline in industrial supplies. Capital goods imports rose 2.0 percent last month and imports of consumer goods dipped 0.1 percent.

US consumer confidence

US consumer confidence climbed above market expectations, the index increased in August following a moderate improvement in July. The index came at 122.9 up from 120.0 in the previous month. Consumers' more buoyant assessment of present-day conditions was the primary driver of the boost in confidence. In August, consumers said jobs were even more "plentiful" than last month's report, up to 35.4 percent from 33.2 percent, while also saying jobs were not as "hard to get." Consumers found the current environment to be improving. The Conference Board reported those saying

Rates - 03 September, 2017

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1924	1.1821	1.2069	1.1860	1.1665	1.2080	1.1920
GBP	1.2900	1.2852	1.2995	1.2950	1.2715	1.3140	1.2990
JPY	109.25	108.27	110.67	110.23	108.30	111.95	109.70
CHF	0.9546	0.9429	0.9679	0.9640	0.9430	0.9840	0.9580

business conditions are "good" increased to 34.5 percent from 32.5 percent in the previous month, while the number who assessed business conditions to be "bad" was slightly lower to 13.1 percent from 13.5 percent.

US GDP expansion

According to the second estimate, US GDP increased at an annualized rate of 3.0 percent for the second quarter of 2017. This was an increase from the first estimate of 2.6 percent and above the market expectations of 2.7 percent while the economy expanded at the fastest pace since the first quarter of 2015. There was an upward revision to personal consumption expenditure growth to 3.3 percent from 2.8 percent previously. Investment made a positive contribution to the quarter with strong growth in non-residential capital spending. There was also a slightly larger net positive contribution from trade for the quarter. Although there was growth in federal government spending, primarily due to increase defense spending, there was a small negative impact from the government sector as a whole. There were no changes in the inflation estimates with the core PCE price index reported at 0.9 percent.

US unemployment claims

The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits increased slightly last week, pointing to sustained labor market strength that should continue to support the economy. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits rose by 1,000 to a seasonally adjusted 236,000 for the week ended August 26. The 4-week moving average was 236,750, a decrease of 1,250 from the previous week's revised average.

US pending home sales

Pending home sales fell in July for the fourth time in five months as only the West saw an increase in contract activity, according to the National Association of Realtors. The Pending Home Sales Index decreased 0.8 percent to 109.1 in July from a downwardly revised 110.0 in June. After last month's decline, the index is now 1.3 percent below a year ago and has fallen on an annual basis in three of the past four months.

Europe & UK

Euro area annual inflation came at 1.5 percent in August 2017, up from 1.3 percent in the previous month, according to a flash estimate from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. Eurostat anticipates that energy would be the main driver of inflation as energy prices are expected to increase by 4.0 percent in August, almost twice July's level of 2.2 percent. The remaining major components including services, food, and non-industrial goods are estimated to have held steady at 1.6 percent, 1.4 percent, and 0.5 percent respectively. Core CPI Flash Estimate, which excludes food and energy items, matched forecasts, standing flat at 1.3 percent year on year.

In another report, Eurostat posted readings on Eurozone unemployment rate for the month of August. The numbers indicated that unemployment rate was in line with expectations at July's reading of 9.1 percent, which is the lowest rate reported since June 2009 when it was at 9.3 percent.

UK house price growth

UK house prices dropped this month, dragging down the annual growth rate, in further evidence of a cooling market. The average price of a home fell 0.1 percent between July and August to £210,495, according to Nationwide, Britain's biggest building society. Prices increased in July and June but decreased between March and May, the first time this had happened since the financial crisis. The latest monthly price drop took the annual growth rate back down to 2.1 percent, a level last seen in May, which was the lowest rate in four years, from 2.9 percent in July. Household finances are under pressure, with the cost of living rising gradually as the weak pound bites, and wage growth stagnating.

UK manufacturing PMI

Manufacturing activity in the UK unexpectedly increased in August, hitting a four-month high and bolstering optimism over the British economy. UK manufacturing PMI came out at 56.9 in August, much stronger than expectations of 55.0. On the index, a reading above 50.0 indicates industry expansion, below indicates contraction. IHS Markit

highlighted that the improvement was due to a strengthening of new order inflows and that a broad-based expansion was seen across all product categories. The research group also added that input price inflation accelerated for the first time in seven months.

Japan household spending

Japan's household spending surprisingly dropped in July though the labor market continued to strengthen, offering some hope wage gains will soon accelerate and help the world's third-biggest economy overcome a decades-long battle with deflation. Household spending fell 0.2 percent in July from a year earlier after hitting a two-year high in June, government data showed on Tuesday, confounding market expectations for a 0.7 percent increase. The unemployment rate was flat at 2.8 percent in July and 1.52 jobs were available per applicant, the highest since 1974, separate data showed, a sign the economy continued to enjoy what many analysts consider as near full employment. Finally, Japan's economy expanded at the fastest pace in more than two years in the second quarter as consumer and company spending picked up. But price and wage growth remain stubbornly weak with firms still wary of passing on profits to employees, raising doubts over whether the second-quarter's bounce can be sustained.

Japan retail sales

Japan's retail sector strengthened in July for a ninth straight month, adding further evidence that consumer spending is gradually recovering. Retail sales rose at an annualized 1.9 percent in July, following a revised 2.2 percent gain the previous month. The increase was well above the market expectations, which called for an increase of 1.0 percent.

China manufacturing PMI

China's manufacturing sector continued its expansion territory in August, supported by the strongest increase in new business for just over three years. Firmer foreign demand was a key driver of new order growth, with export sales rising to the greatest extent in over seven years in August. As a result, companies expanded their production schedules and buying activity, while business confidence rose to its highest for five months. The Index came at 51.6 in August, up from 51.1 in July to signal an improvement in overall operating conditions. The health of China's manufacturing sector has now strengthened in each of the past three months, with the latest upturn the strongest since February.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30135
The USDKWD opened at 0.30135 on Wednesday.

KUWAIT MAY PROJECT KD 6-6.5BN BUDGET DEFICIT FOR 2017/18

AL-SHALL WEEKLY REPORT

By the end of August 2017, the 5th month of the current fiscal year 2017/2018 ended and the average Kuwaiti oil price for most of August scored \$48.5 per barrel, up by \$2.6 per barrel, 5.7 percent, from July's average price of \$45.9 per barrel. It is also higher by \$3.5 per barrel, 7.8 percent, than the new budget hypothetical price of \$45 per barrel. The last fiscal year 2016/2017 which ended on March 31, 2017 scored an average price for Kuwaiti oil by \$44.7 per barrel. The average price of oil for August 2017 is 8.5 percent higher than the barrel average price for the past fiscal year but it is lower by \$-22.5 per barrel than the parity price for the current budget at \$71 per barrel, according to the Ministry of Finance estimates after deducting the 10 percent for the Future Generations Fund.

According to the monthly follow up report of the State's Financial Administration Accounts - July 2017/2018 - issued by Ministry of Finance, Kuwait has received about KD 4.335 billion in actual oil revenues until the end of July. Therefore, Kuwait would achieve oil revenues in the amount of KD 12 billion for the entire current fiscal year, which is higher by KD 0.3 billion than the estimated amount of oil revenues for the budget at KD 11.7 billion. Adding KD 1.6 billion in non-oil revenues, projected budget revenues would score KD 13.6 billion for the current fiscal year. Comparing this figure with KD 19.9 billion for expenditures allocations, it is likely that the budget for 2017/2018 would face hypothetical deficit by KD 6-6.5 billion. If we assume saving by 6.3 percent in public expenditures, like last fiscal year, actual expenditures would drop to KD 18.6 billion, which is mere estimate, the public budget then would face a KD 5 billion deficit.

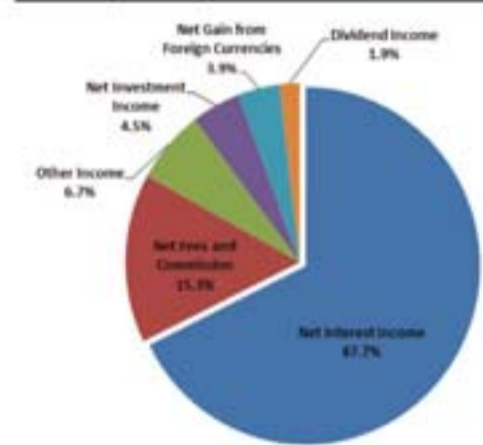
Population and labor force

According to the latest demographics and labor force statistics issued by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), Kuwait's total population has scored approximately 4.438 million in the end of June 2017. This means the population increased in half a year by 0.6 percent (1.2 percent annual growth). The total population increased positively by 4.1 percent in 2016 versus 3.6 percent, 3.2 percent, and 3.7 percent in the years of 2015, 2014, and 2013 respectively. The absolute increase of population in half a year scored about 26.5 thousand (172.1 thousand for 2016). Kuwaitis increased by 14.3 thousand during the first half of 2017, 1.1 percent growth rate (2.2 percent on annual basis), bringing their total to 1.352 million. As such, Kuwaitis percentage out of the total population increased from 30.3 percent in the end of 2016 to about 30.5 percent according to the latest figures.

Kuwaiti females whose number is 689 thousand outnumber the 662.9 thousand males. On the other hand, the number of non-Kuwaitis increased by about 12.2 thousand, a 0.4 percent growth rate, the lowest growth rate since 2010, bringing their total to 3.086 million with an annual compound growth rate of 2.9 percent during the years June/2007 - June/2017.

Total number of workers in Kuwait scored approximately 2.733 million workers, or about 61.6 percent of the total population. This percentage scored 33.2 percent for Kuwaitis of the total Kuwaiti population. But the non-Kuwaiti workers' percentage out of non-Kuwaiti population amounted to 74 percent. The Kuwaiti labor force percentage, out of total number of workers in Kuwait, dropped from 16.5 percent in December 2016 to 16.4 percent in June 2017. Proportion of female workers in the total Kuwaiti workforce rose to approxi-

Total Operating Income in the First Half 2017



mately 48.4 percent in the 1st half of 2017 (48.3 percent in the end of 2016). This percentage formed 25.7 percent out of the total labor force in Kuwait. Number of Kuwaiti workers increased by 2.1 thousand workers bringing their number to about 449.2 thousand workers in the 1st half of 2017 up from 447.1 thousand workers in the end of 2016. About 345.1 thousand of them are employed in the government (76.8 percent of total Kuwaiti workers). About 575 jobs were made for Kuwaitis outside the public sector, a growth rate by 0.6 percent (1.2 percent on annual basis). It is believed that Kuwaiti's unveiled unemployment rate dropped to about 14.3 thousand workers, 3.2 percent of total Kuwaiti workers on 30/6/2017 versus 3.3 percent in the end of 2016. Total workers (Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti) in the government sector scored about 489.7 thousand workers, about 11 percent, of the total population. Kuwaitis percentage-of the government labor force- formed 70.5 percent.

Performance of Bursa Kuwait

Bursa Kuwait performance during August was more active compared with July 2017, where all indexes showed an increase in liquidity and number of transactions. The value of general index (AlShall) rose and so did the three Bursa indexes. Market capitalization value of listed companies - investors' wealth in it- rose in eight months by KD 3.7 billion. Bursa's liquidity in August 2017 scored KD 320.4 million vis-à-vis KD 300.5 million in July 2017, it increased by 6.6 percent. Average daily trading value for August scored about KD 14.6 million, rose by 6.6 percent from July and it rose by 121 percent if compared with August 2016. Number of listed companies decreased from 161 companies to 160 (Kuwait Building Materials Manufacturing Co withdrew its listing).

Bursa liquidity in eight months (167 working days) scored KD 4.295 billion, average daily trading value scored KD 25.566 million, rose by 2.2 times compared with the average daily trading value for 2016 and about 2.3 times if compared with the average daily trading value for the first eight months of 2016. Liquidity trends since the beginning of the year still indicate that half of the listed companies got only 4.1 percent of that liquidity, including 50 companies there from which got about 0.5 percent only out of that liquidity and one company was not traded. As for liquid companies, 15 of them whose market capitalization value is equal to 1.8 percent only of the

	30/06/2017 (Thousand KD)	30/06/2016 (Thousand KD)	Change Value	%	
Total Assets	7,257,621	7,181,686	75,935	1.1%	↑
Total liabilities	6,390,014	6,374,472	15,542	0.2%	↑
Total Equity attributable to the equity holders of the bank	669,391	611,610	57,781	9.4%	↑
Total Operating Revenues	122,692	113,514	9,178	8.1%	↑
Total Operating Expenses	51,120	54,238	(3,118)	-5.7%	↓
Provision	24,236	25,160	(924)	-3.7%	↓
Taxation	5,776	3,798	1,978	52.1%	↑
Net income	41,560	30,318	11,242	37.1%	↑
Ratios					
**Return on Average Assets (ROA)	1.1%	0.9%			↑
**Return on Average Equity Relevant To The Bank Shareholder (ROE)	11.8%	10.1%			↑
**Return on Average Capital (ROC)	39.6%	29.6%			↑
Earnings per share (EPS) - (Fils)	15.7	12.2	3.5	28.7%	↑
Closing price - (Fils)	325	325	0	0.0%	↔
**Price to Earnings Per Share Multiples (P/E)	10.4	13.3			↓
Price to Book Value Multiples (P/B)	0.81	0.83			↓

* Indicators Ended June 30, 2017 on an annual basis
** Calculated based on the average rate of the financial data at the end of December 2016 and 30 June 2017

capitalization value of all listed companies got 21.5 percent of the Bursa liquidity. Liquidity distribution among the 4 categories of companies in the first eight months of the current year was as follows:

The Highest 10 percent in Liquidity: 18 listed companies contributed by 48.9 percent to Bursa market capitalization while they captured about 57.4 percent of the Bursa liquidity, including 11 large companies which contributed by about 48.1 percent of the market capitalization of all companies in the market, took about 80.1 percent of the liquidity of that category, 7 small companies, which took 19.9 percent of the liquidity of that category, while their market capitalization was about 0.8 percent only of all Bursa companies value. While some large companies obtained high deserved liquidity, deviation is still significant towards small companies.

The Highest 10 percent in Market Capitalization: That category contributed by about 72.1 percent of the Bursa capitalization and took 38.1 percent of the Bursa liquidity. However, there was obvious liquidity deviation in favor of 9 companies, which captured about 90.5 percent of the liquidity of that category leaving approximately 9.5 percent of that category, liquidity for 9 other large companies. The Lowest 10 percent in Market Capitalization: That category contributed by 0.3 percent to the Bursa capitalization, but it

took 4.8 percent of the Bursa liquidity. 13 companies within this category captured 97.3 percent liquidity of this category, while 5 other small companies got only 2.7 percent of that category's liquidity. That liquidity deviation in this category suggests a very high dose of speculation on some of its companies. This deviation may begin to recede with the weak liquidity but it revives appearance whenever liquidity revives.

Liquidity of Bursa Sectors: There are 5 active sectors in the Bursa that contribute 87.9 percent to its capitalization. It acquired 92.3 percent of liquidity suggesting consistence between liquidity and the weight of those sectors in the Bursa capitalization. But there was deviation within those sectors in the trend of liquidity. The banking sector got 26.5 percent of Bursa liquidity which accounts for 49.2 percent only of its contribution to its capitalization value. This means its share of liquidity is less than half of its contribution to its capitalization value. The financial services sector got 25.2 percent of Bursa liquidity, which equals 2.9 times its contribution to its capitalization value. While the real estate sector got 19.3 percent of Bursa liquidity which equals 2.6 times its contribution to its value, and both sectors are speculative ones. The remaining 7 sectors, liquid and non-liquid, acquired liquidity ratios close to their contribution to the Bursa capitalization.

Most Active Sectors & Companies		
Description	Value Traded	% of Total
Sectors		
KD Market		
MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY K.S.C (ZAIN)	9,752,486	16.9%
KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE	6,781,193	11.7%
ALIMTAZ INVESTMENT CO. K.S.C.C	6,096,535	10.6%
AHLI UNITED BANK B.U.C	5,018,466	8.7%
NATIONAL BANK OF KUWAIT	3,188,921	5.5%
Total	30,837,601	53.4%
Description Value Traded % of Total		
Sectors KD Market		
BANKS SECTOR	19,769,619	34.2%
FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR	12,143,243	21.0%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR	10,379,031	18.0%
REAL ESTATE SECTOR	6,762,161	11.7%
INDUSTRIALS SECTOR	3,974,420	6.9%

NBC LAUNCHES PHASE THREE OF MOTOR CITY GREEN COMMUNITY

DUBAI: National Bonds Corporation PJSC, through its real estate arm, National Properties LLC, continues to offer real estate investment opportunities to Motor City Green Community project by launching Phase 3 of Casa Flores villas, and apartments. The sales launch event will take place at Jumeirah Emirates Towers on September 9, 2017, from 10am to 10pm. Sales will also take place during the upcoming 2017 Cityscape Global event, which will be held from 10am to 7pm, from September 11 to 13 at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

MotorCity was voted as the best community to live in within Dubai according to a survey conducted by FlatReviews.com which include over 2000 residents. It's a destination development that has successfully combined the "city within a city" concept with wholesome suburban living and one of Dubai's finest iconic developments, offers residents and visitors a series of entertainment, recreational, educational and dining experiences as well as a diverse quality living and working environment, all within

one uniquely designed development.

Commenting on the announcement, Mohammed Qassim Al Ali, CEO of National Bonds, said: "We are committed to continue our real estate investments in the UAE, with great confidence in contributing to the social and economic development adopted by the wise leadership of the country. Motor City is a significant component of the rich MotorCity community, as it provides a way of life within a secure environment comprising landscaped gardens, water features, cobblestone streets and walkways with natural greenery that further enhances the peace and tranquillity provided." Al Ali added: "Green Community Phase 3 will consist of stylish spacious townhouse villas and apartments which were designed with high standards while maintaining the functionality, rich lifestyle and value that investors and end users expect."

Casa Flores townhouse villas consist of 137 villas only which is very unique and exclusive opportunity and protects the investment of any buyer. The villas are available with options of three bedrooms

and four bedrooms - the ground floor of each townhouse villa boasts an impressive grand entrance hall, spacious living and dining areas, kitchens that are fully fitted with "Grade A" appliances and electronics, the convenience of a separate breakfast room, the peace and quiet of a study in addition to a generous storage space. Furthermore, the ground floor has dedicated spaces for a maid's room and laundry room. On the first floor of the townhouse villa, the layout includes an expansive family room, three bedrooms, all of which come with their own bathrooms and wardrobes. Each townhouse villa has been built with a two-car garage and includes a private garden area at the back, designed for those who enjoy outdoor leisure.

The Eden Apartments building boasts 136 luxury yet surprisingly affordable apartments with options of studios, one bedroom and two bedroom apartments. It has spacious living and dining areas. The building is strategically located within walking distance to supermarkets, pharmacies, schools and several convenient stores.



Mohammed Qassim Al Ali

Furthermore, all apartments will have ample parking for residents and visitors. The apartment building will be managed by Harbor Real Estate, the award winning property management company originally from Australia and based in Dubai since 2007. Designed and constructed to international luxury and quality standards, the Casa Flores townhouse villas and Eden Apartments provide exceptional value in today's market, and have been made all the

more attainable and attractive for buyers with the introduction of a unique and award winning in-house rent-to-own finance scheme.

Buyers are given a best-in-class payment plan which has never been offered before in the UAE market that allows them to pay only 10 percent in advance during the construction phase of the townhouse villas and apartments. The remaining 90 percent of the payment will be due over a period of ten years' payment plan post hand over in Q4 2018. This in-house rent-to-own finance plan won the Best In-House Mortgage Offer in the GCC during the 2017 Gulf Property Awards that was held by Dubai Land Department in collaboration with Awards International. Furthermore, buyers will receive 5 years free annual service charges and 2% of the 4% DLD fees will be paid by the developer. This exclusive time offer on the limited number of villas and apartments will only be available to those attending the exclusive VIP launch event on Sep 9 at Jumeirah Emirates Towers and Cityscape Global exhibition.



BURGAN BANK LAUNCHES BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN FOR BUBA ACCOUNT CUSTOMERS

KUWAIT: Borgan Bank announces the launch of its Back to School campaign for its BuBa Kids Account customers. In a bid to accommodate to the little ones transition back into the new academic year with utmost convenience, Borgan Bank will offer BuBa account customers a gift that consists of school stationary supplies.

To collect the Free school supplies, BuBa customers or Parents can visit Discovery Mall branch and present their BuBa ATM card starting from 5th of September, 2017.

The "BuBa Kids Account" aims at providing creative solutions for parents who want to earn more from their savings for their children and at the same time enjoy a wide range of benefits. The BuBa Kids Account is a savings account, with the minimum opening balance of KD 10. Children, up to 14 years old, will also enjoy special offers and promotions throughout the year as well as attractive discounts at selected merchants across Kuwait.

Established in 1977, Borgan Bank is the youngest commercial Bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Borgan Bank has majority owned

subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Borgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. 'People come first' is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.

The bank was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2008, making it the first bank in the GCC, and the only bank in Kuwait to receive such accreditation for the third consecutive year. The Bank also has to its credit the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twelve consecutive years.

Borgan Bank, a subsidiary of KIPCO (Kuwait Projects Company), is a strongly positioned regional Bank in the MENA region.

KFH EXPANDS DISCOUNT FOR KFH CREDIT, PREPAID CARDHOLDERS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) is pleased to introduce a highly distinguished package of discounts to its KFH Credit, Prepaid Cardholders. Customers are entitled to avail special discounts at several stores and international brands upon using KFH credit and prepaid cards

ferent other stores and international brands. KFH series of discounts continue to thrill KFH customers as it aims to place its customers at the top of its priorities and ensure that they will always have the priority and the distinguished rank over other customers at the market level. KFH is always keen to ensure that these special and unique advantages and services fulfill all various expectations, needs and requirements of all customers.

KFH was established in Kuwait in 1977 and is enlisted in the Kuwait Stock Exchange. KFH Group is a global pioneer in the field of Islamic banking services, where it offers a wide array of Islamic products and services, not to mention a high standard of innovation and client service.

KFH manages its operations in the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 480 branches, including KFH-Turkey, in order to offer services for the bank's clients in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Germany, Jordan, and Dubai.

KFH's mission is to achieve highest levels of excellence and innovation in the field of client service, while developing common interest for all those concerned with the financial institution. KFH's vision is to spearhead the global development in Islamic financial services, and to upgrade the bank into the level of becoming the most sustainable profitable Islamic bank in the world.

KFH's values include cementing leadership through all its businesses, including leadership in the Islamic banking services worldwide, through innovation and in client service and the development of its employees. In addition, KFH is committed to all its procedures, and to setting up long-life partnerships with the concerned authorities.



at any of the marketing outlets on its website KFH.com and Instagram.

This step comes in continuation of KFH policy to offer unique and distinguished privileges to its customers. The discount program encompasses a plethora of restaurants, hotels, hospitals, clothes shops, accessories shops and dif-

ETIHAD AIRWAYS INTRODUCES BOEING 787 DREAMLINER ON DAILY AMSTERDAM SERVICE

KUWAIT: Etihad Airways has introduced the Boeing 787-9 aircraft on its daily service from Abu Dhabi to Amsterdam, delivering greater levels of comfort to its customers flying to and from Schiphol Airport.

Etihad Airways previously operated the 787 Dreamliner on the Amsterdam service in the summer of 2016. The introduction of the ultra-modern, fuel-efficient aircraft heralds the start of a year-round service to the Netherlands. The 787 Dreamliner features Etihad Airways' next generation Business and Economy Class cabins, configured with 299 seats - 28 Business Studios and 271 Economy Smart Seats.

Peter Baumgartner, Etihad Airways Chief Executive Officer, said: "The decision to upgrade our daily Amsterdam service to the 787 Dreamliner aircraft reflects the importance of the Netherlands market. "We received great customer feedback when we first flew the aircraft to the Dutch capital last summer, and I'm very pleased that more travellers will now be able to enjoy the superior levels of comfort and technology it offers, year-round."

The Business Studios offer an increase of 20 per cent in personal space and a fully-flat bed of up to 80.5 inches in length. Upholstered in Poltrona Frau leather, each Business Studio is equipped with an in-seat massage, a pneumatic cushion control system which enables passengers to adjust the firmness and comfort of their seat, and an 18-inch personal touch-screen TV.



The comfortable Economy Smart Seats provide enhanced comfort with a seat width of approximately 19 inches and an 11.1 inch personal TV monitor at each seat.

The airline's Boeing 787 fleet is equipped with the latest in-flight entertainment system offering more than 750 hours of movies and television programs, including live news and sports channels, as well as hundreds of music choices and a selection of games for both adults and children.

Etihad Airways currently operates a fleet of 16 Boeing 787-9s from its home base, Abu Dhabi, to

14 destinations: Amman, Beijing, Beirut, Brisbane, Dusseldorf, Johannesburg, Perth, Riyadh, Shanghai, Singapore, Tokyo, Washington, DC, and Zurich.

Etihad Aviation Group (EAG) is a diversified global aviation and travel group comprising five business divisions - Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, Etihad Airways Engineering, Etihad Airport Services, Hala Group and Airline Equity Partners. The group has minority investments in six airlines: airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Alitalia, Jet Airways and Virgin Australia.

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"NBK customers travel frequently, so we've partnered with Emirates to offer this exciting and valuable discount for our credit card and Al Shabab prepaid card holders," said Ghadeer Al-Awadhi, AGM Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. Discounts are applicable to full fare Emirates flights booked for travel. Offer valid until 10 December 2017. Terms and conditions apply. All flights must be booked through the dedicated Emirates page, <https://www.emirates.com/kw/nbk>

The offer is available for NBK credit card and



Ghadeer Al-Awadhi



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NAFTA NEGOTIATORS SEEK TO CHERISH MEXICO'S ENERGY REFORMS

MEXICO CITY: US, Canadian and Mexican negotiators are zeroing in on ways to enshrine Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto's sweeping energy reforms into a modernized North American Free Trade Agreement, Mexico's chief negotiator said on Saturday.

The 2014 reforms wrung control of the country's oil and gas sector from state hands, opening it up to private investment, and incorporating them into the 23-year-old NAFTA is seen as a way to help preserve them for the long term. "We're working in this sense, analyzing all of the elements that need to be included in the energy discussion to reflect the reform Mexico established," Mexico's chief trade negotiator, Kenneth Smith, said on Saturday after a bargaining session in the second round of NAFTA modernization talks.

Smith, speaking to reporters as he walked side-by-side with his counterparts John Melle of the United States and Steve Verheul of Canada, added that negotiators would "look for mechanisms that allow us to integrate ourselves in a positive way in the energy sector."

Trade negotiators from the three nations are working through the weekend in Mexico City to present more proposals to revamp NAFTA, an accord that underpins more than \$1.2 trillion in annual cross-border trade. When NAFTA was enacted in 1994, Mexico's energy sector was closed and Pena Nieto's reforms ended a

decades-long monopoly for national oil company Pemex and ensured competitive oil auctions. Incorporating them into NAFTA would help shield them from any future governments that may want to reverse them.

Trade experts both in the United States and Mexico have said that increasing energy trade and investments through NAFTA would help reduce the \$64 billion US trade deficit with Mexico that irritates US President Donald Trump, partly through increased US gas and oilfield equipment sales to Mexico.

Trump's swipes

Trump has repeatedly threatened to rip up NAFTA, warning he could do so again just this week. Pena Nieto, in his annual address to the nation on Saturday, defended free trade and young migrants in the United States, saying his government would not accept insults against "national dignity" from Trump's administration.

"The relationship with the new government of the United States, like any other nation, must be based on irrevocable principles: sovereignty, defense of the national interest and protection of our migrants," Pena Nieto said. "We will not accept anything that goes against our national dignity," he told a crowd of politicians and the country's elite, who rose at that point to deliver the most vigorous standing ovation of his address. Trump this week also insisted again that

Mexico would eventually pay for his proposed wall on the southern US border to block the flow of illegal immigrants and drugs.

Pena Nieto shied away from mentioning the wall but said Mexico would promote the recognition of migrants for their contributions and reject discrimination against them.

Pena Nieto also said Mexico would continue to defend NAFTA as a vehicle to further integrate the region. "The negotiating team has precise instructions to participate in this process with seriousness, good faith and a constructive spirit," he said, "always putting first the interest of Mexico while reaching for a result where all three countries win." Trump has repeatedly threatened to pull out of NAFTA if talks do not go his way and on Saturday said he would discuss next week with his advisers whether to withdraw from a trade deal with South Korea that he has also long criticized.

Top Mexican officials said Latin America's No. 2 economy would walk away from negotiations if Trump moves to withdraw from the deal. Negotiators were going to take until Monday to get to one of the thorniest issues, US demands for increased North American and US content for autos and other manufactured goods, according to a schedule seen by Reuters. Mexico's Smith said no specific proposals had been put on the table by US negotiators regarding rules of origin. — Reuters

SAUDI ARABIAN 'HONESTY' APP TAKES INTERNET BY STORM

RIYADH: Fizzing with boyish exuberance, Saudi programmer Zainalabdin Tawfiq could be mistaken for a college freshman, but the popularity of his "honesty" app has shone a spotlight on the conservative kingdom's nascent tech scene. Tawfiq catapulted to fame when he took time out of his day job as a business analyst last year to develop an anonymous messaging tool called Sarahah-honesty in Arabic that subsequently topped the charts for app downloads.

Initially conceived as a tool for soliciting bluntly frank workplace feedback, Sarahah has found its way into the smartphones of millennials worldwide, even as critics have raised alarm about trolling and privacy issues. "Sarahah is the digital equivalent of an old-school suggestion box," 29-year-old Tawfiq told AFP, adding that it is built on the premise that stripping users of their identity promotes ruthless honesty. "Feedback is the goal-anonymous feedback."

The app has a frugal design and a simple prompt that encourages users to "leave a constructive message :)", with the

recipient not allowed to reply but only share it on social media or block the sender. Its mass appeal stems from the appetite in the Arab world-notorious for online censorship-for unfiltered platforms for expression, though Tawfiq said it has also gained a strong popularity in Western countries. Such has been its power to knock down social barriers that obstruct free speech that one user described it as an app where you can "hit enter on comments you would have otherwise backspaced". Sarahah has so far drawn 85 million registered users, and rocketed to the top of the Apple app store in some countries, ahead of heavyweights such as Snapchat and Instagram.

'Oil's decline, entrepreneurship's rise'

That a Saudi app could gain such success spotlights hidden potential for tech innovation and entrepreneurship at a time of economic transformation in an ultra-conservative country. "The success story of Sarahah really proves that Saudi startups can achieve spectacular gains

when properly supported," said Nawaf Alshahaf, CEO of Badir, a government-backed technology incubator that helped Tawfiq. "There truly is undeniable potential behind Saudi startups we currently incubate," he said.

Saudi Arabia is promoting private enterprise as part of its ambitious reform program to move the kingdom away from its dependence on oil revenues. "It is clear oil's decline and entrepreneurship's rise are necessarily intertwined," the Beirut-based venture capital firm Leap Ventures wrote on its website last year, noting a new growth in disruptive tech innovations in the region. A new breed of Saudi startups from an on-demand roadside assistance app called Morni to Hunger Station, a food ordering portal-have recently drawn the attention of venture capitalists.

Minimizing abuse

Tawfiq said he is in negotiations with venture capitalists from the United States, China and the Arab world, without disclosing details, in response to critics who

question whether his app can be effectively monetized. In some gender-segregated Arab societies, men have used Sarahah for secret love confessions, but it has also been used by service delivery companies to harvest constructive feedback and psychiatrists in far-away Mumbai to engage openly on subjects such as sexual health.

Sarahah has come under fire for being a troll magnet-but Tawfiq said that problem was common to all major social media platforms. It has also recently been accused of secretly harvesting the address books of users. Tawfiq rejected that claim and said he plans to remove Sarahah's address upload feature with the next update. He currently runs a tight ship with another business partner and three customer support executives, but is considering leaving his day job to focus on Sarahah full time. "I believe that even one case (of abuse) is actually too many," Tawfiq said. "I won't tell you how, but my aim is to make the job of misusers as difficult as possible."—AFP



RIYADH: Picture shows Saudi programmer Zainalabdin Tawfiq, developer of the 'Sarahah' app, giving an interview with AFP at his office in the capital Riyadh.—AFP



SAN JOSE: In this photo, Sophie Li, of Cupertino, California, offers to dance with a K5 robot made by Knightscope, Inc., at Westfield Valley Fair shopping center in San Jose, California.—AP photos



SAN JOSE: In this photo, Steve Cousins, CEO of Savioke, talks while sitting next to a Relay robot.

ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE IN WORLD OF VOICE SHOPPING

SAN FRANCISCO: Ordering pizza from the sofa without lifting a finger has joined the list of modern-day conveniences thanks to a hot trend in voice-commanded smart speakers. Amazon, Apple and Google are duking it out with devices designed to sit out of sight in homes, awaiting spoken commands to tend to tasks such as ordering goods, finding information, playing music, mapping routes, or reading email.

According to Gartner, the market for voice-activated speakers equipped with artificial intelligence and synced to the internet will grow to \$3.52 billion in 2021 from \$360 million in 2015. While it is difficult to assess how many people use the devices to order online, industry analysts see it as a trend. "Shopping through speakers is still an early adopter activity," said Creative Strategies analyst Carolina Milanesi. "It's going to be slow. It's not going to be overnight."

Thanks to bargain prices for Amazon Echo devices in particular, smart speakers are becoming mainstream but consumers are not yet ready to fully trust the technology, Milanesi said. Voice-controlled shopping, for now, involves mainly straight-forward, repeated buys such as laundry soap or dog treats, with people tending to want to actually see big-ticket items, especially if they involve style or color choices, she contended.

Minimal effort

Lifestyles revolving around smartphones, with less time spent in front of desktop or laptop computers, were expected to enhance the lure of shopping by voice. A fan watching a sporting match on television can simply call out for their favorite pizza. Someone cooking can give an oral order to restock olive oil before they forget. "Convenience is something that drives a lot of behavior," Milanesi said, noting that voice-commands even spare the trouble of tapping a screen to open an app.

"It's human behavior, the least amount of effort for the greatest reward." Analyst Jack Gold of J. Gold Associated considered voice-shopping a major trend that has been embraced by distributors and technology firms, Amazon foremost among them. Amazon launched its first Echo device in 2014 and has already sold millions of the smart speakers, according to industry trackers.



SAN FRANCISCO: In this file photo, Google Home, right, sits on display near a Pixel phone following a product event, in San Francisco.—AP

GROWING DILEMMA: AUTOMATED JOBS MEET SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

SAN FRANCISCO: Security guard Eric Leon watches the Knightscope K5 security robot as it glides through the mall, charming shoppers with its blinking blue and white lights. The brawny automaton records video and sounds alerts. According to its maker, it deters mischief just by making the rounds. Leon, the all-too-human guard, feels pretty sure that the robot will someday take his job. "He doesn't complain," Leon says. "He's quiet. No lunch break. He's starting exactly at 10."

Even in the technology hotbed stretching from Silicon Valley to San Francisco, a security robot can captivate passers-by. But the K5 is only one of a growing menagerie of automated novelties in a region where you can eat a delivered pizza made via automation and drink beers at a bar served by an airborne robot. This summer, the San Francisco Chronicle published a tech tourism guide listing a dozen or so places where tourists can observe robots and automation in action.

Yet San Francisco is also where workers were the first to embrace mandatory sick leave and fully paid parental leave. Voters approved a \$15 hourly minimum wage in 2014, a requirement that Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law for the entire state in 2016. And now one official is pushing a statewide "tax" on robots that automate jobs and put people out of work. It's too soon to say if the effort will prevail, let alone whether less-progressive jurisdictions might follow suit.

The tussle points to the tensions that can flare when people embrace both technological innovation and a strong brand of social consciousness. Such frictions seem destined to escalate as automation makes further inroads into the workplace. One city supervisor, Norman Yee, has proposed barring food delivery robots from city streets, arguing that public sidewalks should be solely for people. "I'm a people person," Yee says, "so I tend to err on the side of things that should be beneficial and safe for people."

Robot tax

Jane Kim, the city supervisor who is pushing the robot tax, says it's important to think now about how people will earn a living as more US jobs are lost to automation. After speaking with experts on the subject, she decided to launch a statewide campaign with the hope of bringing revenue raising ideas to the state legislature or directly to voters. "I really do think automation is



SAN JOSE: In this photo, James Mak, left, and Marco Mak touch Pepper the robot.

going to be one of the biggest issues around income inequality," Kim says.

It makes sense, she adds, that the city at the center of tech disruption take up the charge to manage that disruption. "It's not inherently a bad thing, but it will concentrate wealth, and it's going to drive further inequity if you don't prepare for it now," she says. "Preposterous" is what William Santana Li, CEO of security robot maker Knightscope calls the supervisor's idea. His company created the K5 robot monitoring the Westfield Valley Fair mall in San Jose.

The private security industry, Li says, suffers from high turnover and low pay. As he sees it, having robots handle menial tasks allows human guards to assume greater responsibilities - like managing a platoon of K5 robots - and likely earn more pay in the process. Li acknowledges that such jobs would require further training and some technological know-how. But he says people ultimately stand to benefit. Besides, Li says, it's wrong to think that robots are intended to take people's jobs. "We're working on 160 contracts right now, and I can maybe name two that are literally talking about, 'How can I get rid of that particular human position?'" The question of

whether - or how quickly - workers will be displaced by automation ignites fierce debate. It's enough to worry Bill Gates, who suggested in an interview early this year a robot tax as a way to slow the speed of automation and give people time to prepare. The Microsoft co-founder hasn't spoken publicly about it since.

A report last year from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development concluded that 9 percent of jobs in the United States - or about 13 million - could be automated. Other economists argue that the impact will be much less drastic. The spread of automation should also generate its own jobs, analysts say, offsetting some of those being eliminated. Workers will be needed, for example, to build and maintain robots and develop the software to run them. Technological innovation has in the past created jobs in another way, too: Work involving new technologies is higher-skilled and typically higher-paying. Analysts say that much of the extra income those workers earn tends to be spent on additional goods and services, thereby creating more jobs. "There are going to be a wider array of jobs that will support the automation economy," said J P Gownder, an analyst at the research firm Forrester. "A lot of what we're going to be doing is working side by side with robots."

Jobs replaced by machines

What about people who lose jobs to automation but can't transition to more technologically demanding work? Lawmakers in Hawaii have voted to explore the idea of a universal basic income to guarantee wages to servers, cooks and cleaners whose jobs may be replaced by machines. Kim, the San Francisco supervisor, is weighing the idea of using revenue from a robot tax to supplement the low wages of people whose jobs can't be automated, like home health care aides.

Doug Bloch, political director of Teamsters Joint Council 7 in Northern California and northern Nevada, said there have been no mass layoffs among hotel, trucking or food service staff resulting from automation. But that day is coming, he warns. Part of his responsibility is to make sure that union drivers receive severance and retraining if they lose work to automation. "All the foundations are being built for this," he says. "The table is being set for this banquet, and we want to make sure our members have a seat at the table." Tech companies insist their products will largely assist, and not displace, workers. Savioke, based in San Jose, makes 3-foot-tall robots - called Relay - that deliver room service at hotels where only one person might be on duty at night. This allows the clerk to stay at the front desk, said Tessa Lau, the company's "chief robot whisperer." "We think of it as our robots taking over tasks but not taking over jobs," Lau says. "If you think of a task as walking down a hall and waiting for an elevator, Relay's really good at that."

Similarly, friends Steve Simoni, Luke Allen and Gregory Jaworski hatched the idea of a drink serving robot one night at a crowded bar in San Francisco. There was no table service. But there was a sea of thirsty people. "We all wanted another round, but you have to send someone to leave the conversation and wait in line at the bar for 10 minutes and carry all the drinks back," Allen says. They created the Bbot, a box that slides overhead on a fixed route at the Folsom Street Foundry in San Francisco, bringing drinks ordered by smartphone and poured by a bartender - who still receives a tip. —AP

DATING APP TINDER FINDS GOLD AT APPLE'S APP STORE

SAN FRANCISCO: Tinder for the first time became the top-grossing app in Apple's online shop, topping the likes of Netflix, Pandora and hit mobile games like "Clash Royale." Tinder wore the crown as the top money-making app at the App Store, according to rankings posted online by market data firm App Annie on Friday. Tinder, which made its debut five years ago, lets people swipe left or right on profiles to indicate those that they like as possible date partners.

The dating application's ascension to the top came quickly after it announced this week the worldwide roll-out of a new "Gold" service with features including the ability of subscribers to see who out there has "liked" them. Tinder Gold was described in a blog post as a "members-only service, offering our most

exclusive features: Passport, Rewind, Unlimited Likes, five Super Likes per day" and more. "Think of it as your personal Swipe Right concierge-available 24/7 - bringing all of your pending matches to you," Tinder said.

"Now you can sit back, enjoy a fine cocktail, and browse through profiles at your leisure." Tinder Gold made its debut at \$4.99 a month, and was to be available on Android-powered smartphones in a month or so. Tinder introduced a "Plus" subscription service in 2015 that freed users of a daily cap on the number of "swipes," and has pursued ad revenue. Tinder, owned by a Match Group subsidiary of IAC/InterActiveCorp, boasts some 50 million users and is reported to be valued at several billion dollars.—AFP

HUAWEI UNVEILS MOBILE AI ASSISTANT AT BERLIN'S IFA

BERLIN: Chinese electronics giant Huawei on Saturday unveiled its first mobile personal assistant with artificial intelligence in Berlin, in hopes it will rival the dominance of Samsung's Bixby and Apple's Siri. "Smartphones are smart but they are not intelligent enough," Richard Yu, chief executive of Huawei's Consumer Business Group, said at this year's IFA electronics fair. The mobile assistant, called Kirin 970, will systematically respond to three questions: "the most important combination," Yu said: "Where is the user? Who are they and what are they doing?"

"You ask your personal assistant what's the weather in Berlin," Yu said. "But intelligent AI already knows that you're in Berlin, on work assignment, on your way to a meeting, and if you're waiting outside or if you're already inside the car." Internet

giants have been investing heavily in creating software to help machines think more like people, ideally acting as virtual assistants who get to know users and perhaps even anticipate needs.

And as smartphones and other electronic devices make greater use of artificial intelligence (AI), the digital assistants already pervasive in our lives are set to become more intuitive and play a bigger role in our homes, observers say. But unlike its competitors' virtual assistants, which collect and gather information in the internet cloud, the prowess of Huawei's AI assistant lies in processing data on the smartphone, rather than in the cloud. Yu did not offer details into what type of smartphones the chip will be installed in nor what price range those smartphones will fall into.—AFP



MASAYA: A tapir calf and its mother walk in their enclosure at the National Zoo in Masaya, Nicaragua. — AFP

IN NICARAGUA, A FIGHT TO SAVE ENDANGERED TAPIRS

HUMAN ENCROACHMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE DECIMATE WOODLAND HABITAT

TICUANTEPE, Nicaragua: Thirteen tapirs lounge in the bushes of Ticuan-tepe Zoo, in eastern Nicaragua, their bellies plump with leaves and fruit-blissfully unaware of the peril faced by their kind. The largest land mammals in Central America, the brown, pig-like animals with sloping snouts came into the world in captivity, in an enclosure a short distance from the country's Masaya Volcano, under a scheme to save their endangered species. Each day they put away nine kilograms of leaves, fruit and horse feed, and are regularly weighed and monitored by cameras.

"Here, they're well fed," said Eduardo Sacasa, a wildlife expert who runs the reproductive program. In some cases, too much so: one of the males, a three-year-old called Pamka, was put on a diet because "he is too fat." Human encroachment and climate change have decimated the woodland habitat of the Baird's tapir, one of five

species left in the world, and, along with human and feline predators, have helped wipe out 16 other tapir species. Pamka and his fellow herbivores are among no more than 800 of the species left in Nicaragua.

Release into the wild

The Baird's tapir, considered at risk of extinction by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is the "most threatened" quadruped in Nicaragua, Sacasa said. It faces "flat-out deforestation, encroaching farmland, illegal sales and poaching, because people eat them," he said. In Ticuan-tepe Zoo, efforts are deployed to have them reproduce. But that's no easy task. Gestation is long — 14 months—and females produce only one offspring at a time. Three of the females are pregnant, including Rosita, a 12-year-old tapir, and Pueblana, nine years old.

Soon, others being held at the zoo will be released into the wild—but only if there are guarantees they won't be killed, Sacasa said. Three years ago, a couple of tapirs were about to be freed but their release was cancelled at the last moment when it was judged their safety wasn't secure. Tilba, a two-year-old male, is one of the animals designated to be taken by army helicopter to a hard-to-access reserve on Nicaragua's Caribbean coast. His young age makes him a good candidate to adapt to the wild.

Once in his new habitat, he will be joined by a female chosen by the conservation team as his potential mate. Sacasa, who began studying tapir behavior two decades ago with an American expert from Michigan University, Christopher Jordan, explained how they keep close tabs on the animals even after they are set free, tracking them through satellite-linked collars and some 150 cameras dotted through the jungle. His ambition is to eventually develop the conservation program and present "alternative ways to save the tapir" to the government.

Shrinking habitat

Across all of Central America, there are an estimated 3,000 Baird's tapirs left, according to environmental preservation organizations. That number could be cut by 80 percent in coming years if conservation measures aren't put in place, the IUCN warns in a report. Already, their population has more than halved over the past three generations. The animals, who use their snout to forage, weigh between 200 and 300 kilograms and have a life expectancy of between 15 and 40 years. Largely sedentary and mostly nocturnal, they usually stay within a nine-kilometer radius within their habitat.

Altering their immediate environment therefore directly puts their survival on the line—a big concern, given that 70 percent of Central America's woodland has disappeared in 40 years, according to the IUCN. In Nicaragua, the tapirs that lived on the western, Pacific coast have largely disappeared, a geographer who advises the government on environmental issues, Jaime Incer, said. That trend looked certain to worsen as each year the country loses between 50,000 and 60,000 hectares of forest, he said. —AFP

US CLEARS BREAKTHROUGH GENE THERAPY FOR CHILDHOOD LEUKEMIA

WASHINGTON: Opening a new era in cancer care, US health officials have approved a breakthrough treatment that genetically engineers patients' own blood cells into an army of assassins to seek and destroy childhood leukemia. The Food and Drug Administration said the approval on Wednesday was historic, the first gene therapy to hit the US market. Made from scratch for every patient, it's one of a wave of "living drugs" under development to fight additional blood cancers and other tumors, too.

Novartis Pharmaceuticals set the price for its one-time infusion of so-called "CAR-T cells" at \$475,000, but said there would be no charge for patients who didn't show a response within a month. "This is a brand new way of treating cancer," said Dr. Stephan Grupp of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, who treated the first child with CAR-T cell therapy — a girl who'd been near death but now is cancer-free for five years and counting. "That's enormously exciting."

CAR-T treatment uses gene therapy techniques not to fix disease-causing genes but to turbocharge T cells, immune system soldiers that cancer too often can evade. Researchers filter those cells from a patient's blood, reprogram them to harbor a "chimeric antigen receptor" or CAR that zeroes in on cancer, and grow hundreds of millions of copies. Returned to the patient, the reved-up cells can continue multiplying to fight disease for months or years.

It's a completely different way to harness the immune system than popular immunotherapy drugs called "checkpoint inhibitors" that treat a variety of cancers by helping the body's natural T cells better spot tumors. CAR-T cell therapy gives patients stronger T cells to do that job. "We're entering a new frontier in medical innovation with the ability to reprogram a patient's own cells to attack a deadly cancer," said FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb.

The first CAR-T version, developed by Novartis and the University of Pennsylvania, is approved for use by several hundred patients a year who are desperately ill with acute lymphoblastic leukemia, or ALL. It strikes more than 3,000 children and young adults in the US each year and while most survive, about 15 percent relapse despite today's best treatments. In a key study of 63

advanced patients, 83 percent went into remission soon after receiving the CAR-T cells. Importantly, it's not clear how long that benefit lasts: Some patients did relapse months later.

The others still are being tracked to see how they fare long-term. Still, "a far higher percentage of patients go into remission with this therapy than anything else we've seen to date with relapsed leukemia," said Dr. Ted Laetsch of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, one of the study sites. "I wouldn't say we know for sure how many will be cured yet by this therapy. There certainly is a hope" that some will be. Most patients suffered side effects that can be grueling, even life-threatening.

Cytokine release syndrome

An immune overreaction called "cytokine release syndrome" can trigger high fevers, plummeting blood pressure and in severe cases organ damage, side effects that require sophisticated care to help patients without blocking the cancer attack. The FDA designated a treatment for those side effects Wednesday. "This is remarkable technology," said Dr. Mikkael Sekeres of the American Society of Hematology. But, he cautioned that CAR-T "isn't a panacea."

Among concerns, sometimes leukemia can develop resistance, and sometimes patients worsen while waiting for their new cells, said Sekeres, who directs the Cleveland Clinic's leukemia program and wasn't involved with CAR-T testing. "Unfortunately leukemia grows so rapidly that it can evade even the smartest of our technologies," he added. To better ensure patient safety, the FDA is requiring Novartis to offer CAR-T therapy only through medical centers specially trained and certified to handle the complicated treatment.

Novartis expects to have 32 centers around the country, mostly in large cities, running by year's end, with the first 20 offering care within the next month. Patients' collected immune cells will be frozen and shipped to a Novartis factory in New Jersey that creates each dose, a process the company says should take about three weeks. The \$475,000 price tag doesn't include the cost of needed hospitalizations, travel to a certified hospital and other expenses. —AP



NEW JERSEY: In this photo, provided by Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp., human T cells belonging to cancer patients arrive at Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp.'s Morris Plains, New Jersey facility. — AP

MONSTER X-RAY LASER OFFERS GLIMPSE INTO NANO-WORLD

HAMBURG: The world's most powerful X-ray laser opened Friday in Germany, promising to shed new light onto very small things by letting scientists penetrate the inner workings of atoms, viruses and chemical reactions. The mega-project generates extremely intense laser flashes, at a mind-boggling rate of 27,000 per second, inside a 3.4-kilometre tunnel below the northern city of Hamburg.

Hailed as one of Europe's most cutting-edge research projects, the European XFEL, hidden 38 meters below corn fields and residential areas, was opened after eight years' construction at a ribbon-cutting ceremony with science and technology ministers from the 11 countries involved. At the heart of the 1.5-billion-euro facility is the ultrafast X-ray laser strobe light, which will allow researchers for the first time to look deep inside matter and take snapshots and "molecular movies".

"We can look deep into the micro-world, the nano-world, the world of atoms and mole-

cules, and study things we didn't previously know, for example what molecules do in a chemical reaction," said Johanna Wanka, Germany's education and research minister. Teams from around the world will be able to, for instance, map the atomic details of viruses, take 3-D images of the molecular make-up of cells or film chemical reactions as they happen.

The huge laser is "like a camera and a microscope that will make it possible to see more tiny details and processes in the nano-world than ever before," XFEL managing director Robert Feidenhans'l said. He said that so far, scientists know many chemical and biological processes only by their outcomes—like a football fan reading the score of a match he missed. "Now you can see the game and you can analyze it ... so next time you can win," Feidenhans'l said. "The game could be a chemical process, a biological process, it could be how you get energy from sunlight. The principle is the same: you want to see the game." —AFP

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— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

SAUDI AMBASSADOR CELEBRATES EID AL-ADHA

Saudi ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Abdulaziz bin Ibrahim Al-Fayez held a reception at the embassy on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha Al-Mubarak. It was attended by many dignitaries and guests.



SOCIAL REFORM SOCIETY CELEBRATES EID AL-ADHA

Social Reform Society held a reception on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha Al-Mubarak. It was attended by large number of people.



— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



- 00:45 Treetop Masters
01:40 Biggest And Baddest
02:35 Gator Boys
03:25 Catching Monsters
04:15 Alien Sharks: Close Encounters
05:02 Wild Iberia
05:49 Untamed & Uncut
06:36 Swamp Brothers
07:25 Gator Boys
08:15 Treetop Masters
09:10 Biggest And Baddest
09:15 Wild Iberia
10:00 Gator Boys
11:55 Catching Monsters
12:50 Alien Sharks: Close Encounters
13:45 Biggest And Baddest
14:40 Wild Iberia
15:35 Untamed & Uncut
16:30 Treetop Masters
17:25 Project Grizzly
18:15 After The Attack
19:15 Biggest And Baddest
20:10 Project Grizzly
21:05 I Survived An Animal Attack
22:55 Wild Iberia
23:50 Untamed & Uncut



- 00:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
01:00 It Takes A Killer
02:00 Homicide Hunter
03:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
04:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
05:00 It Takes A Killer
06:00 Cold Case Files
08:00 It Takes A Killer
09:00 Homicide Hunter
10:00 Evil Up Close
14:00 It Takes A Killer
14:30 It Takes A Killer
15:00 Cold Case Files
16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
17:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
18:00 Crime Stories
19:00 It Takes A Killer
19:30 It Takes A Killer
20:00 Homicide Hunter
21:00 Cold Case Files
22:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
23:00 Evil Up Close



- 00:05 Destroyed In Seconds
00:30 Risking It All
01:20 Life On A Wire
02:10 Dirty Jobs
03:00 Finding Bigfoot
03:50 Destroyed In Seconds
04:15 Destroyed In Seconds
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Risking It All
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Kenny The Shark
07:25 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
07:50 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Science Of The Movies
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 K9 Cops
12:00 Finding Bigfoot
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Risking It All
14:30 Kenny The Shark
14:55 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
15:20 Destroyed In Seconds
15:45 Destroyed In Seconds
16:10 Science Of The Movies
17:00 Driving Me Crazy
17:50 Now That's Funny
18:00 Mythbusters
18:40 How It's Made
19:30 How It's Made
20:20 Destroyed In Seconds
20:45 Destroyed In Seconds
21:10 Driving Me Crazy
22:00 World's Funniest
22:50 Finding Bigfoot
23:40 Destroyed In Seconds

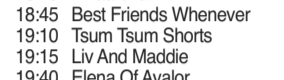


- 00:30 The Perfect Murder
01:20 Behind Closed Doors: Shocking Secrets
02:10 Jonben?: An American Murder Mystery
03:00 I Am Homicide
03:40 Disappeared
04:36 Grave Secrets
05:24 Swamp Murders
06:12 Deadly Affairs
07:00 Blood Relatives
10:20 The Locator
11:10 Betrayed
12:00 Disappeared
12:50 Grave Secrets
13:40 Swamp Murders
14:30 Deadly Affairs
15:20 Blood Relatives
16:10 Disappeared
17:50 Grave Secrets
18:40 Swamp Murders
19:30 Deadly Affairs
20:20 Blood Relatives
21:10 Unravelling



- 00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Evermore Chronicles
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 The Hive
05:50 Rolling With The Ronks S1
06:00 Jessie
06:25 Liv And Maddie
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:50 Liloalock
08:20 Elena Of Avalor
08:45 Bunk'd
08:10 Stuck In The Middle
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
09:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
09:25 Liloalock
09:50 Liloalock
10:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A

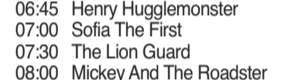
- Teenege Witch
10:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
11:05 Hank Zipzer
11:30 Alex & Co.
11:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
12:00 Rolling With The Ronks S1
12:05 Splits
12:15 Liloalock
13:05 Star Darlings
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
14:00 Jessie
14:25 Liloalock
14:50 The Zhuzhus S1
15:15 Elena Of Avalor
15:40 Stuck In The Middle
16:05 Liv And Maddie
16:30 Whisker Haven Tales...
16:35 Bunk'd
17:00 K.C. Undercover
17:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
17:50 Girl Meets World
18:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:20 Bizaardvark
18:45 Best Friends Whenever
19:10 Tsum Tsum Shorts
19:15 Liv And Maddie
19:40 Elena Of Avalor
20:05 Jessie
20:30 Cracke
20:35 K.C. Undercover
21:00 Austin & Ally
21:25 Stuck In The Middle
21:50 Sunny Bunnies
21:55 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
22:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...



- 00:10 Life Of Kylie
00:35 Life Of Kylie
01:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
01:55 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 So Cosmo
04:40 So Cosmo
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 La Clippers Dance Squad
06:55 El News
07:10 La Clippers Dance Squad
08:40 Life Of Kylie
09:10 Life Of Kylie
09:40 Life Of Kylie
10:10 Second Wives Club
11:05 Second Wives Club
12:00 El News
12:15 Botched By Nature
13:10 Botched By Nature
14:05 Botched By Nature
15:00 El News
15:15 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
16:15 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
19:00 Botched
20:00 Botched
22:00 Famously Single
04:45 Zou
05:00 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Loopdidoo
06:00 Zou
06:15 Calimero
06:30 Loopdidoo
06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
07:00 Sofia The First
07:30 The Lion Guard
08:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
08:30 Doc McStuffins
09:00 PJ Masks
09:30 Miles From Tomorrow
10:00 Little Mermaid
10:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
11:00 PJ Masks
11:30 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
12:00 Goldie & Bear
12:30 Sofia The First
13:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
13:30 PJ Masks
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15:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
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18:45 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
19:15 Sofia The First
19:45 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
20:15 The Lion Guard
20:45 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
21:15 Goldie & Bear
21:45 Doc McStuffins
22:15 Little Mermaid
22:45 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
23:15 PJ Masks
23:45 Loopdidoo



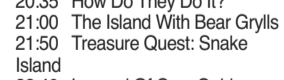
- 00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
00:15 Calimero
00:30 Art Attack
00:55 Zou
01:05 Loopdidoo
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 Calimero
01:50 Zou
02:05 Art Attack
02:25 Henry Hugglemonster
02:40 Loopdidoo
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:10 Art Attack
03:30 Loopdidoo
03:50 Calimero
04:05 Art Attack
04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
04:45 Zou
05:00 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Loopdidoo
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23:15 PJ Masks
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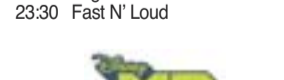
- 00:00 Restaurant Stakeout
01:00 Mystery Dinners
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Fire Food
04:00 Chopped
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:25 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:50 Anna Olson: Fresh
07:15 The Kitchen
08:05 The Pioneer Woman
08:55 Siba's Table
09:25 Siba's Table
09:55 Cooking For Real
10:25 Cooking For Real
10:55 The Kitchen
11:15 Bake With Anna Olson
12:10 The Pioneer Woman
12:35 The Pioneer Woman
13:30 Siba's Table
13:30 Siba's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 Cooking For Real
18:00 Chopped
18:00 Iron Chef America
19:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
20:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
21:00 Man Fire Food
21:30 Man Fire Food
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



- 00:10 Don't Tell The Bride
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
03:25 Victoria
04:15 Queen Victoria's Letters: A Monarch Unveiled
05:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
06:10 Don't Tell The Bride
07:05 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
08:00 Victoria
09:00 Queen Victoria's Letters: A Monarch Unveiled
10:00 Couples Come Dine With Me
10:55 Don't Tell The Bride
11:50 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
14:15 Don't Tell The Bride
15:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
16:00 Martin Clunes: Islands Of Australia
13:10 Gold Rush
13:55 Deadliest Catch
14:40 Deadliest Catch
15:25 Fast N' Loud
16:10 Wheeler Dealers
17:00 How Do They Do It?
17:25 How Do They Do It?
17:50 Storage Wars Canada
18:20 Storage Wars Canada
18:50 The Island With Bear Grylls
19:40 How Do They Do It?
20:10 How Do They Do It?
20:35 How Do They Do It?
21:00 The Island With Bear Grylls
21:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
22:40 Legend Of Croc Gold
23:30 Fast N' Loud



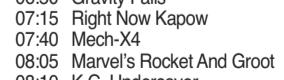
- 00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:05 Cooper's Treasure: The Hunt For A Secret Fortune
04:36 Grave Secrets
05:24 Swamp Murders
06:12 Deadly Affairs
07:00 Blood Relatives
10:20 The Locator
11:10 Betrayed
12:00 Disappeared
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18:40 Swamp Murders
19:30 Deadly Affairs
20:20 Blood Relatives
21:10 Unravelling



- 00:20 Ultimate Rivals: Cat V. Dog
01:10 Ultimate Animal Countdown
02:00 Pythonation
03:00 Monster Fish
03:45 World's Deadliest
04:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown
05:35 Pythonation
06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 World's Deadliest
08:20 Ultimate Animal Countdown
09:15 Man V. Cheetah
10:10 Wild 24
11:05 My Life Is A Zoo
12:00 Sharks Of Lost Island
12:55 Venom Island
13:50 Monster Fish
14:45 Ultimate Predators GPU
15:40 Snakes In The City
16:35 Secret Life Of Predators
17:30 Predator Patrol
18:25 Secrets Of The Wild
19:20 Ultimate Predators GPU
20:10 Snakes In The City
21:00 Secret Life Of Predators
21:50 Predator Patrol
22:40 Secrets Of The Wild
23:30 Sharks Of Lost Island



- 00:00 America: The Story Of The U.S.
01:00 Clash Of Warriors
02:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
03:40 Cities Of The Underworld
04:30 Engineering Disasters
05:20 America: The Story Of The U.S.
06:10 The Universe
07:00 Clash Of Warriors
08:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
09:00 Ancient Aliens
10:00 Cities Of The Underworld
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15:00 Ancient Aliens
16:00 Cities Of The Underworld
17:00 The Universe
18:00 America: The Story Of The U.S.
19:00 Clash Of Warriors
20:00 America's Book Of Secrets
21:00 Ancient Aliens



- 06:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
06:25 Disney11
06:50 Gravity Falls
07:15 Right Now Kapow
07:40 Mech-X4
08:05 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
08:10 K.C. Undercover
08:35 Milo Murphy's Law
09:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
09:25 Supa Strikas S5
09:50 Supa Strikas
10:20 Kickin' It
10:45 Kickin' It
11:00 Mighty Med
11:15 Mighty Med
12:00 Lab Rats
12:30 Lab Rats
12:55 K.C. Undercover
13:20 K.C. Undercover
13:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty...

- 14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Kirby Buckets Warped
14:40 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
15:05 Milo Murphy's Law
15:30 Walk The Prank
15:55 Right Now Kapow
16:25 Supa Strikas
16:50 Disney11
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Gravity Falls
18:05 Milo Murphy's Law
18:30 Marvel's Ant-Man
18:35 Lab Rats
19:00 Kirby Buckets
19:25 Walk The Prank
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Right Now Kapow
20:20 Mech-X4
20:45 Disney11
21:10 K.C. Undercover
21:35 Marvel's Ant-Man
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats
22:10 Lab Rats
22:35 Phineas And Ferb



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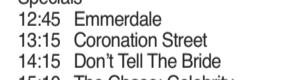
- 00:15 Delinquent Gourmet
04:55 Chasing The Sun
01:10 Places We Go
01:40 Bad Trip
02:35 World's Greatest Food Markets
03:30 Fish Of The Day
03:55 Street Food Around The World
04:25 David Rocco's Dolce India
04:50 Places We Go
05:20 Places We Go
05:45 Eat Street
06:40 Poh & Co.
07:10 Bad Trip
08:05 World's Greatest Food Markets
09:00 Fish Of The Day
09:25 Street Food Around The World
10:20 Places We Go
11:15 Eat Street
12:10 Poh & Co.
12:40 City Chase Marrakech
13:35 World's Greatest Food Markets
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14:55 Street Food Around The World
15:25 David Rocco's Dolce India
15:50 Places We Go
16:20 Warrior Road Trip
17:15 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
17:40 Poh & Co.
18:10 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
19:05 David Rocco's Dolce India
19:30 Places We Go
20:00 Warrior Road Trip
21:00 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
21:30 Poh & Co.
22:20 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
22:55 City Chase Marrakech
23:50 World's Greatest Food Markets



- 00:10 Airport Security: Colombia
01:00 Highway Thru Hell
02:00 Big Fix Alaska
03:00 Counterterror Nyc: Special Forces
04:00 Airport Security: Colombia
05:00 4 Babes A Second
06:00 Brain Games
06:30 Brain Games
07:00 Explorer
08:00 Surgery Ship
09:00 4 Babes A Second
10:00 Alaska Fish Wars
11:00 Wicked Tuna
12:00 Air Crash Investigation
13:00 Surgery Ship
14:00 Brain Games
14:30 Brain Games
15:00 Hooked
16:00 Alaska Fish Wars: Season On The Edge
17:00 Wicked Tuna
18:00 Air Crash Investigation
19:00 Hooked
20:00 Alaska Fish Wars: Season On The Edge
20:50 Wicked Tuna
21:40 Air Crash Investigation



- 00:20 Ultimate Rivals: Cat V. Dog
01:10 Ultimate Animal Countdown
02:00 Pythonation
03:00 Monster Fish
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06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 World's Deadliest
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09:15 Man V. Cheetah
10:10 Wild 24
11:05 My Life Is A Zoo
12:00 Sharks Of Lost Island
12:55 Venom Island
13:50 Monster Fish
14:45 Ultimate Predators GPU
15:40 Snakes In The City
16:35 Secret Life Of Predators
17:30 Predator Patrol
18:25 Secrets Of The Wild
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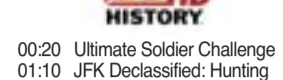


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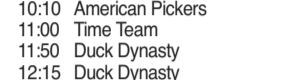


- 00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake

- 22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Engineering Disasters



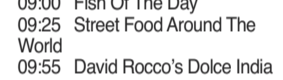
- 00:20 Ultimate Soldier Challenge
01:10 JFK Declassified: Hunting Oswald
02:00 Sean Bean On Waterloo
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 Ultimate Wheels
06:50 Duck Dynasty
07:15 Duck Dynasty
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Storage Wars
09:45 Storage Wars
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Time Team
11:50 Duck Dynasty
12:15 Duck Dynasty
12:40 Counting Cars
13:05 Counting Cars
13:30 Counting Cars
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Ultimate Wheels
16:00 Storage Wars
16:25 Storage Wars
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Pawn Stars
17:40 Ultimate Soldier Challenge
18:30 Sean Bean On Waterloo
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Mountain Men
21:50 Alone: Lost And Found
22:40 Swamp People
23:30 American Pickers



- 00:15 Delinquent Gourmet
04:55 Chasing The Sun
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03:55 Street Food Around The World
04:25 David Rocco's Dolce India
04:50 Places We Go
05:20 Places We Go
05:45 Eat Street
06:40 Poh & Co.
07:10 Bad Trip
08:05 World's Greatest Food Markets
09:00 Fish Of The Day
09:25 Street Food Around The World
10:20 Places We Go
11:15 Eat Street
12:10 Poh & Co.
12:40 City Chase Marrakech
13:35 World's Greatest Food Markets
14:30 Fish Of The Day
14:55 Street Food Around The World
15:25 David Rocco's Dolce India
15:50 Places We Go
16:20 Warrior Road Trip
17:15 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
17:40 Poh & Co.
18:10 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
19:05 David Rocco's Dolce India
19:30 Places We Go
20:00 Warrior Road Trip
21:00 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
21:30 Poh & Co.
22:20 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
22:55 City Chase Marrakech
23:50 World's Greatest Food Markets



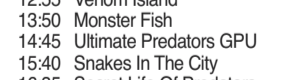
- 00:10 Airport Security: Colombia
01:00 Highway Thru Hell
02:00 Big Fix Alaska
03:00 Counterterror Nyc: Special Forces
04:00 Airport Security: Colombia
05:00 4 Babes A Second
06:00 Brain Games
06:30 Brain Games
07:00 Explorer
08:00 Surgery Ship
09:00 4 Babes A Second
10:00 Alaska Fish Wars
11:00 Wicked Tuna
12:00 Air Crash Investigation
13:00 Surgery Ship
14:00 Brain Games
14:30 Brain Games
15:00 Hooked
16:00 Alaska Fish Wars: Season On The Edge
17:00 Wicked Tuna
18:00 Air Crash Investigation
19:00 Hooked
20:00 Alaska Fish Wars: Season On The Edge
20:50 Wicked Tuna
21:40 Air Crash Investigation



- 00:20 Ultimate Rivals: Cat V. Dog
01:10 Ultimate Animal Countdown
02:00 Pythonation
03:00 Monster Fish
03:45 World's Deadliest
04:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown
05:35 Pythonation
06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 World's Deadliest
08:20 Ultimate Animal Countdown
09:15 Man V. Cheetah
10:10 Wild 24
11:05 My Life Is A Zoo
12:00 Sharks Of Lost Island
12:55 Venom Island
13:50 Monster Fish
14:45 Ultimate Predators GPU
15:40 Snakes In The City
16:35 Secret Life Of Predators
17:30 Predator Patrol
18:25 Secrets Of The Wild
19:20 Ultimate Predators GPU
20:10 Snakes In The City
21:00 Secret Life Of Predators
21:50 Predator Patrol
22:40 Secrets Of The Wild
23:30 Sharks Of Lost Island

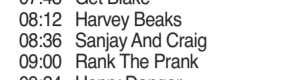


- 00:20 The Middle
00:45 The Middle
01:10 Modern Family
01:35 Modern Family
02:00 The Big C
02:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
03:15 Late Night With Seth Meyers
04:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
04:50 George Lopez
05:15 Suburgatory
05:40 Son Of Zorn
06:05 Son Of Zorn
06:30 Mom
06:55 Less Than Perfect
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
09:50 George Lopez
10:15 Suburgatory
10:40 Mom
11:05 Cougar Town
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 Seinfeld
12:45 Seinfeld
13:10 The Middle
13:35 The Middle
14:00 George Lopez
14:25 Happy Endings
14:50 Mom
15:15 Son Of Zorn
15:40 Son Of Zorn
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
17:00 Seinfeld
17:30 Seinfeld
18:00 The Middle
18:30 The Middle
19:00 Dr. Ken

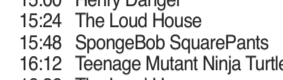


- 00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake

- 05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:00 The Loud House
07:24 Rabbids Invasion
07:48 Get Blake
08:12 Harvey Beaks
08:36 Sanjay And Craig
09:00 Rank The Prank
09:24 Harvey Danger
09:48 100 Things To Do Before High School
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 Regal Academy
11:00 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Rabbids Invasion
13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Sanjay And Craig
13:48 100 Things To Do Before High School
14:12 School Of Rock
14:36 The Thundermans
15:00 Henry Danger
15:24 The Loud House
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 The Loud House
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Regal Academy
17:24 Winx Club
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
21:00 The Loud House
21:24 Sanjay And Craig
21:48 Rabbids Invasion
22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



- 00:20 Ultimate Soldier Challenge
01:10 JFK Declassified: Hunting Oswald
02:00 Sean Bean On Waterloo
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 Ultimate Wheels
06:50 Duck Dynasty
07:15 Duck Dynasty
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Storage Wars
09:45 Storage Wars
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Time Team
11:50 Duck Dynasty
12:15 Duck Dynasty
12:40 Counting Cars
13:05 Counting Cars
13:30 Counting Cars
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Ultimate Wheels
16:00 Storage Wars
16:25 Storage Wars
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Pawn Stars
17:40 Ultimate Soldier Challenge
18:30 Sean Bean On Waterloo
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Mountain Men
21:50 Alone: Lost And Found
22:40 Swamp People
23:30 American Pickers



- 00:15 Delinquent Gourmet
04:55 Chasing The Sun
01:10 Places We Go
01:40 Bad Trip
02:35 World's Greatest Food Markets
03:30 Fish Of The Day
03:55 Street Food Around The World
04:25 David Rocco's Dolce India
04:50 Places We Go
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12:40 City Chase Marrakech
13:35 World's Greatest Food

CROSSWORD 1702



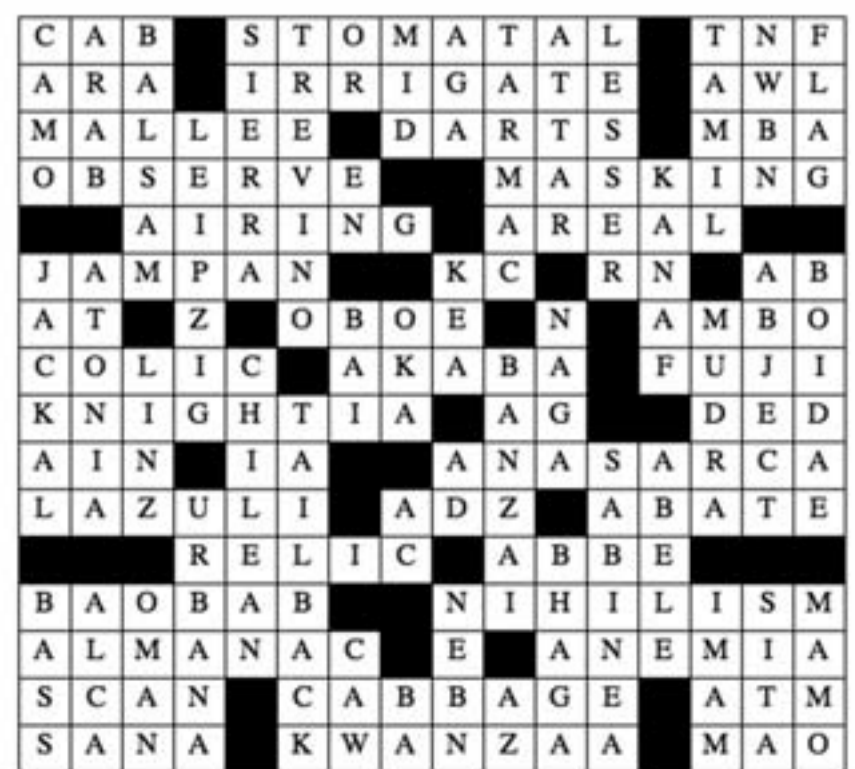
ACROSS

- The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
- A three-tone Chadic language.
- An undergarment worn by women to support their breasts.
- Someone who copies the words or behavior of another.
- Of or involving the ovaries.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
- A female deity.
- Sexually transmitted urethritis (usually caused by chlamydia).
- A peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.
- Shattered or torn up or torn apart violently as by e.g. wind or lightning or explosive.
- Make an etching of.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- A Loloish language.
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- (electronics) Of a circuit or device having an output that is proportional to the input.
- Used of independent armed resistance forces.
- Perennial having hollow cylindrical leaves used for seasoning.
- A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
- A member of a seafaring group of North American Indians who lived on the Pacific coast of British Columbia and southwestern Alaska.
- A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
- Late time of life.
- The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
- A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary.
- An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
- The sixth month of the civil year.
- Artists or writers whose ideas are ahead of their time.
- The Destroyer.
- Correction by erasing.
- Black tropical American cuckoo.
- A major god.
- Become steeper.
- A local computer network for communication between computers.

DOWN

- Thin fibrous bark of the paper mulberry and *Pipturus albidus*.
- South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- A Hindu theistic philosophy.
- 100 avos equal 1 pataca.
- A state in southeastern India on the Bay of Bengal (south of Andhra Pradesh).
- Type genus of the Ardeidae.
- The right to take another's property if an obligation is not discharged.
- The sensation that results when taste buds in the tongue and throat convey information about the chemical composition of a soluble stimulus.
- A transuranic element that has not been found in nature.
- (law) The seat for judges in a courtroom.
- East Indian cereal grass whose seed yield a somewhat bitter flour, a staple in the Orient.
- Wild sheep of northern Africa.
- Small tropical American tree bearing edible plumlike fruit.
- Being three more than ninety.
- Top part of an apron.
- (Norse mythology) God of war and strife and son of Odin.
- The act of refusing a request.
- Treated with oil.
- An narrative telling the adventures of a hero or a family.
- South African plant widely cultivated for its showy pure white spathe and yellow spadix.
- An assertion of a right (as to money or property).
- Patron saint of Wales (circa 520-600).
- United States screenwriter and filmmaker (born in 1944).
- Not only so, but.
- Wearing or provided with clothing.
- Small family of usually tropical butterflies.
- According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- United States political philosopher (born in Germany) concerned about the dehumanizing effects of capitalism and modern technology (1898-1979).
- Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- (Old Testament) The wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac.
- Any of the equal portions into which the capital stock of a corporation is divided and ownership of which is evidenced by a stock certificate.
- Being in competition.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- Russian founder of the Bolsheviks and leader of the Russian Revolution and first head of the USSR (1870-1924).
- A nearly horizontal passage from the surface into a mine.
- An island in Indonesia south of Borneo.
- Flesh of fish found in colder waters of northern Atlantic coast of the United States.
- The foot of a human being.
- The products of human creativity.
- Adult female chicken.

Firday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Frustration, especially in getting things accomplished, may set today's mood. You could set the energies back to an even keel if you stop and pay attention to the hot spots that need a bit of cooling. This could mean an unhappy customer or a missing file or just a frustrated co-worker that did not get that cup of coffee this morning—it happens. A drive to probe and penetrate may find you examining and working through some strong internal changes. You may find yourself spinning around and around and going nowhere if you stress too much. After lunch, the energies seem to have improved quite a lot. This afternoon you may find yourself interested in helping young people discover art. You teach color, music and a variety of the arts.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You have your energy back today. Professionally speaking, you are energized and ready for the day. Perhaps you have taken up a new exercise program before the workday begins. Being on the go and keeping a finger to the winds of change make you feel in touch. Learning and communicating scratch an instinctive itch and you may find yourself involved in a new project or volunteering to help others with their projects. You may learn about a new financial venture this afternoon. Pay attention to your intuition. A hunch could uncover a very wise investment. You may introduce some of your ideas about your city in a city council or community meeting this evening. Approval is only a step away. This evening is also a good time for electronic games.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You will be successful as you work in a group arrangement today. Several members of the group may seek your assistance for your best talent. You are expressive and the co-workers you are working with today are interested in the way you attract customers. This magnetic pull is something you can teach but you will want to keep a few secrets to yourself. You teach new ways to move the body to bring about a good self-confidence. There is fun in setting up a few scenarios that your co-workers can practice on each other. You will now be working with a more successful team. This area of your life is as amusing as it is rewarding. . . . Particularly at this time. You have an instinctive ability to lead others. You may decide to be a youth advocate.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

It is impressive how you can intuitively get your message across to others. Your timing should be perfect, and those around you should find you most flexible. Work issues move along fairly quickly. This afternoon you will find that your love life has become fast-paced; there is serious progress in your love relationship now. There is a strong need for nurturing such that you may feel the need to care for others or to have them care for you. A personal love relationship grows but the same is true of your public relationships. In fact . . . Everyone likes you and many people request your leadership talents. Politics or neighborhood affairs could be part of this energy. Everything comes together to reveal you at your most elegant, particularly in social situations.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This is a perfect time to be assertive and to move forward in your career. You have all the drive and energy you could want and it should be easy to channel this energy. The path is open and clear. You will find that this is a lucky day and things open up for you in a very natural way. Opportunities prevail—you may find yourself feeling like you could do almost anything. Now is an important time to think before you decide on a new path. Soon, there could be a period of great material gain; it is a time when material things have a great deal of attraction. If you are thinking about changing jobs, now would not be a good time to get into debt. This evening may be a good time to reevaluate your budget and perhaps combine, transfer and simplify.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This Monday is a lucky day for making plans or decisions and finding your way through just about any problem you may discover. You feel successful and able to handle difficult situations. Good advice from a guide or older person may be available today—a good day. You will prosper by pursuing your ideals and most deep-seated dreams of how life could be. Don't be afraid to project your image—make your dreams real. Ideas of group cooperation and communion could further your career. Work and career should be a primary focus during this time. There is an opportunity to make good decisions. You are at your most practical today and what happens now may have a lasting effect on your life direction. Love is a short travel across a room.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You could have difficulty getting your ideas across to others today. You may be working with the elderly or the handicapped at this time. Making a difference, doing things that you know will benefit others in positive ways, is a most important thing for you at this time. The people you are teaching or guiding at this time may have difficulty with communication skills. Think about how you would explain a particular idea to a much younger person and try again, at a later time. There must be the idea, the reason behind the idea and the projected end result. Enthusiasm picks up this afternoon; you are becoming more efficient and effective. A project, volunteer work or profession demands your attention. Jump in with both feet and enjoy the challenges!



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Once you make up your mind you will have no trouble initiating things and getting them moving. Circumstances can throw you into positions where you must use your mind and deal with communications, service or enclosed hidden interests. If needed, your friends will help you create a more diplomatic sense. Achievement, ambition and authority take on greater importance. You may deal with others through education, psychology, spiritual enlightenment or teaching principles and techniques. You have more than just the gift of gab. Your words and ideas can transport and enchant listeners, carrying them beyond the world as they know it into the world as they wish it could be. Love is in the air this evening—enjoy.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may feel inclined to create new ideas, think in new directions and spot new ways by which your company can grow and prosper. This will certainly help secure your job security and is one of the reasons your skills are constantly in demand. Increase your job skills so that you are not tied to one company. In the future, any change of job would only be of short duration. This afternoon you may be dealing with personal matters. Making peace with the past and coming to terms with karmic debts are some of the issues that confront you as a new phase begins in your life now. Failure to face these things can cause setbacks and put obstacles in your path. Learn to look beyond the narrowly personal. Include a new friend in your activities today.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Challenging authority will likely play a bigger role in your life now. Perhaps it is time for a change. The new broom sweeps clean; old patterns of organization and power are ripe for an innovative approach. In case you decide to quit your job—do not burn any bridges. Of course, making sure a new job is at the ready would not be a bad idea before making any rash moves. Radical and inventive ideas hold the key to realizing your ambitions and advancing your status—a shakeup is in the works. Whatever you do for a living, you have a wealth of creative talents to pull from now. In summary, from this time forward, expect a more confident, outgoing attitude, for you have brought to close a time of inward examination and learning. Change is encouraged.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Ambition and the desire for status can get a little out of touch with reality. Inflated expectations could be a problem unless you gain a new understanding. Still, you may find that you develop a knack for being in the right place at the right time—and that can win you the admiration of others. You could develop a reputation as a prophet of some kind . . . Or a hopeless idealist. Now is the time for becoming aware and attentive to where your goals are and how you are achieving them. This is a very fortunate day for making plans or decisions and finding your way through just about any problem you may discover. Family members may find you especially witty and eccentric this evening. You may have positive insights or breakthroughs in regard to your life.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your outward seriousness and no-nonsense approach to things is obvious. This deliberate sense of responsibility comes across and is central to the way you relate to other people. Everything is run through your checkpoint to see if it holds up and can pass the test. You can be a stickler with details. This is a good day to accomplish much. You could find that you are appreciated or valued for your feelings or your ability to act and get things done. This afternoon you may find yourself visiting with the young people in your family. Close personal relationships are likely to undergo some testing. This is a time to cement your ties to others and to make sure they are rock-solid—if they are not, future stresses are inevitable. Plan a future party this evening.

WORD SEARCH

Refrigerator

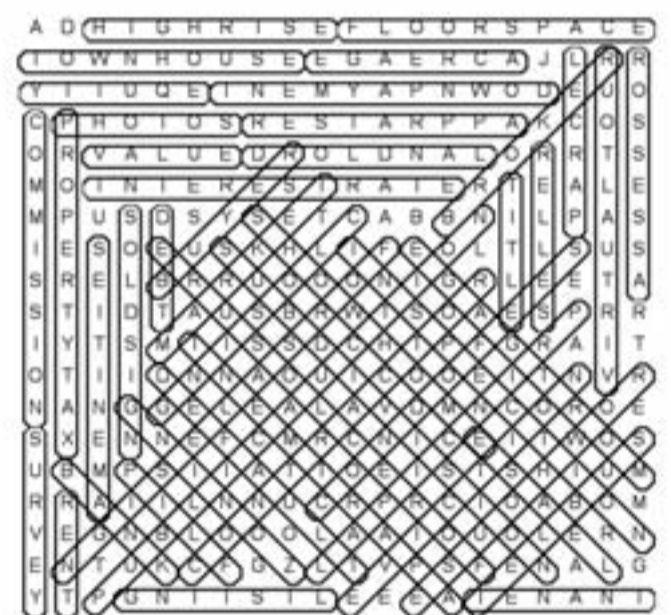
Find and circle all of the refrigerator items that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional item found in many refrigerators.



- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| APPLES | DRAWERS | LETTUCE | ORANGES |
| BACON | DRINKS | LIGHTBULB | PEAS |
| BANANAS | EGGS | MAGNETS | POULTRY |
| BREAD | GRAPES | MAPLE SYRUP | PRODUCE |
| BROCCOLI | ICE CUBES | MAYONNAISE | SHELVES |
| BUTTER | JAM | MEAT | SPINACH |
| CAKE | JUICES | MILK | STRAWBERRIES |
| CARROTS | KETCHUP | MUSTARD | WATER |
| CHEESE | LEFTOVERS | OLIVES | YOGURT |
| COLD | LEMONS | | |

Friday's Solution

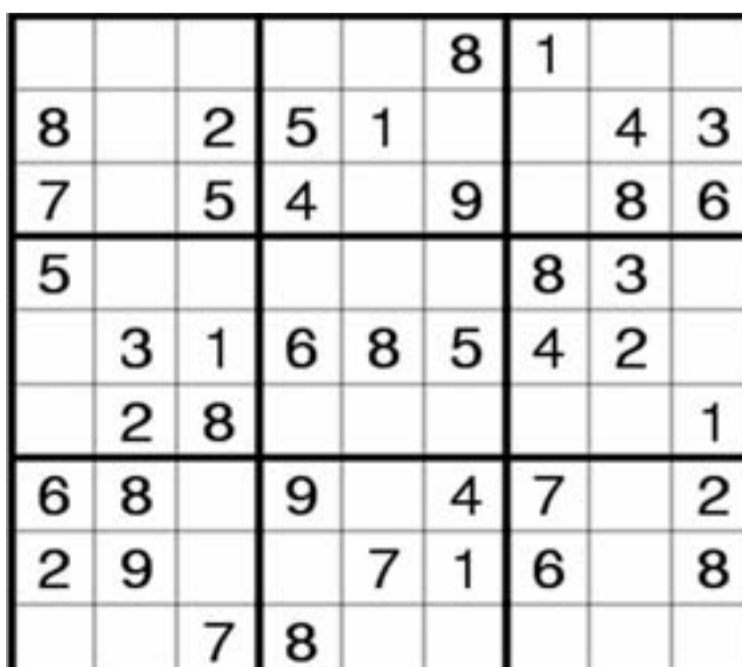
Real Estate 2



- | | | | |
|------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| ACREAGE | DEBT | LANDLORD | SELLER |
| APARTMENT | DEFAULT | LEASE | SHOW HOME |
| APPRaiser | DOWN PAYMENT | LISTING | SOLD SIGN |
| ASSESSOR | EQUITY | MARKET | SUBDIVISION |
| BANK | EVICTION | MORTGAGE | SUBLET |
| BROKER | FLIP | PARCEL | SURVEY |
| BUYER | FLOOR SPACE | PHOTOS | TENANT |
| CLOSING | FOR SALE SIGN | PRINCIPAL | TITLE |
| COMMISSION | FORECLOSURE | PROPERTY TAX | TOWHOUSE |
| CONDO FEES | HIGH RISE | PUBLIC AUCTION | VALUE |
| CONTRACTOR | INSPECTION | RENT | VIRTUAL TOUR |
| | INTEREST RATE | ROW HOUSE | ZONING |

The hidden message is: ADJUSTABLE-RATE MORTGAGE

Daily SuDoku



Friday's Solution



CLASSIFIEDS



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2017

Kuwait Times

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e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

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DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 35 km/h.

BY DAY: Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 32 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings			
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 04/09/2017 1200 UTC			
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	34 °C				
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	29 °C				
ABDALY	47 °C	29 °C				
BUBYAN	47 °C	27 °C				
JAHRA	48 °C	33 °C				
FAILAKA ISLAND	45 °C	29 °C				
SALMIYAH	41 °C	34 °C				
AHMADI	42 °C	34 °C				
NUWASIB	42 °C	28 °C				
WAFRA	46 °C	27 °C				
SALMY	46 °C	29 °C				

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	09/05	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	45 °C	29 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 32 km/h
Wednesday	09/06	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for fog forming at night	43 °C	26 °C	SE-VRB	06 - 28 km/h
Thursday	09/07	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	45 °C	27 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 30 km/h
Friday	09/08	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	46 °C	29 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	04:05
Sunrise	05:27
Zuhr	11:47
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:07
Isha	19:26

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	48 °C
MIN. Temp.	27 °C
MAX. RH	43 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	E 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

A Leading 4 stars Hotel in Kuwait is looking to hire

- Sales Executive
- Sales Manager

Qualifications:

1. Hospitality experience is a must
2. Valid Kuwait Driving license
3. Indian & Filipino Nationals ONLY

For interested applicants please send your CV to:
q8cv.recruitment@gmail.com
Only qualified candidates will be selected

AIRLINES

American Airlines	22087425
Kuwait Airways	22087426
Jazeera Airways	171
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Air Slovakia	22434940
Olympic Airways	2242002/9
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
Reservation	22433388
British Airways	22421578
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421044
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Alitalia	22414427
Balkan Airlines	22416474
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Czech Airlines	22417901/
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	2245820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Shabnam daughter of Imran Ali holder of Indian passport: H2426595 and Civil ID: 279102001734 has changed my name to Shabnam Imran Ali, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5342) 31-8-2017

FOR SALE

Expat leaving Kuwait, selling household furniture and kitchen appliances. Everything is less than 2 year old and in excellent condition. Please contact on 66491539. Salwa, block 12, street 6. (C 5341) 30-8-2017

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is
1889988

EMERGENCY
112

Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 5/9/2017				Departure Flights on Tuesday 5/9/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	574	Mumbai	00:05	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
JZR	565	Sohag	00:10	SAW	704	Damascus	11:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	MEA	405	Beirut	12:00
SVA	502	Jeddah	00:20	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
SVA	514	Riyadh	00:20	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
MSC	411	Asyut	00:30	RBG	554	Alexandria	12:10
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	MSC	404	Asyut	12:15
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	VIZ	203	TQD	12:30
KNE	541	Jeddah	00:35	KAC	2901	Jeddah	12:30
RJA	642	Amman	00:45	JZR	324	Al Najaf	12:50
KAC	102	London	00:55	SVA	4816	Jeddah	13:05
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	PAL	669	Manila	13:10
WAN	806	Sarajevo	01:10	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	KAC	402	Alexandria	13:30
JZR	539	Cairo	01:20	THY	767	Istanbul	13:45
THY	3942	Istanbul	01:30	FBG	938	Sohag	13:55
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:00
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	JZR	791	Jeddah	14:20
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	SVR	342	Damascus	14:30
QTR	1086	Doha	02:10	WAN	805	Sarajevo	14:35
JZR	553	Alexandria	02:10	KAC	673	Dubai	14:35
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	GFA	222	Jeddah	14:50
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	SVA	4822	Dubai	15:05
MEA	406	Beirut	02:20	FDB	060	Riyadh	15:10
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	KNE	2512	Doha	15:15
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
THY	752	Istanbul	03:05	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:30
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	15:40
RJA	644	Amman	03:10	UAE	501	Jeddah	15:45
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	619	Doha	16:00
MSR	053	Cairo	03:15	OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15	SVA	4814	Jeddah	16:20
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:45	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:30
KAC	544	Cairo	03:50	KAC	513	Tehran	16:30
QTR	1090	Doha	04:00	FDB	052	Damascus	16:50
LMJU	5510	Cairo	04:00	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:50
MSR	3010	Cairo/Luxor	04:05	SVA	4230	Madinah	16:55
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	FDK	802	Damascus	16:55
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	RJA	641	Amman	16:55
PGT	4680	Istanbul	04:20	UAE	052	FDB	17:05
MEA	400	Beirut	04:20	JZR	266	Beirut	17:15
THY	3946	Istanbul	04:30	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	JZR	240	Amman	17:30
FEG	937	Sohag	05:00	KAC	361	Colombo	17:40
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	KAC	858	Dubai	17:50
MSR	3000	Luxor	05:00	UAE	362	Alexandria	17:50
PGT	4692	Istanbul	05:00	KAC	381	Delhi	17:50
RBG	114	TZX	05:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
KAC	414	Bangkok	05:20	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	512	Sharm el-Sheikh	18:00
JZR	529	Asyut	05:35	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
SVA	332	Trivandrum	05:40	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
UAE	2555	Dubai	05:45	JZR	184	Dubai	18:25
BAW	157	London	06:05	JZR	658	Cairo	18:30
SVA	5832	Jeddah	06:20	KAC	785	Jeddah	18:45
KAC	678	Dubai	06:25	THY	1335	Al Najaf	18:45
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	QTR	1081	Jeddah	19:05
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	KAC	345	Doha	19:15
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	KAC	543	Ahmedabad	19:20
AAG	143	Sharjah	07:00	JZR	552	Alexandria	19:20
KNE	531	Jeddah	07:05	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
JZR	1541	Cairo	07:10	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
JZR	503	Luxor	07:25	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	NIA	124	Sharjah	20:00
KAC	354	Bangalore	07:50	FDB	058	Dubai	20:15
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	UAE	876	Dubai	20:30
SVA	5828	Jeddah	08:20	SVA	4826	Jeddah	20:35
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	DLH	634	Doha	21:00
JZR	1331	Al Najaf	08:30	KAC	543	Cairo	21:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	08:35	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
KNE	539	Jeddah	09:05	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:40
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
IJAW	157A	Al Najaf	10:05	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:00
SVA	5812	Jeddah	10:05	KNE	234	Riyadh	22:10
JZR	1771	Jeddah	10:15	KAC	155	Istanbul	22:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
SAW	703	Damascus	10:45	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:25
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	THY	1403	AYT	22:25
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
PAL	668	Manila	11:00	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	GFA	220	Jeddah	22:50
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	ICV	675	Hong Kong	22:55
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:15	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:30	JZR	528	Asyut	23:05
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45	QTR	1083	Jeddah	23:10
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:35
SVA	5816	Jeddah	12:05	PIA	240	Sialkot	23:35
				KAC	1801	Cairo	23:55

GOSSIP

Keating's fond memories working with Barry Gibb



Ronan Keating says getting to spend a week writing songs with Bee Gees legend Barry Gibb was an "amazing experience". The former Boyzone singer was involved in the recording of the disco legends' compilation LP 'Love Songs' and co-wrote and produced the song 'Lovers and Friends' in 1999 with Barry and his late brother Maurice, who sadly died four years later at the age of 53. Speaking during his first ever Breakfast Show for Magic Radio on Monday, Ronan recalled: "We spent five days away together writing and recording. It goes without saying how special The Bee Gees are and for me to work and spend time with Barry who's such a legendary writer is always such an amazing experience." The Bee Gees - which also included the late Robin Gibb, who died of cancer in May 2012 - released the album consisting of all of

their ballads in 2005 and it features some lesser known hits including 'Secret Love' and 'For Whom the Bell Tolls'. It followed after the success of 2004's 'Number Ones', containing their biggest hits. Boyzone famously covered Bee Gees' hit 1977 single 'Words' and the two groups even performed the song live together in the 90s. Speaking about how the band took the 'No Matter What' hitmakers "under their wing", Ronan said when Robin passed away: "We were lucky enough to work with him, to sing with him, perform a song called 'Words' together and they really took us under their wing and they were great to Boyzone." Listen to 'The Magic Radio Breakfast Show' with Ronan Keating and Harriet Scott weekdays from 6-10am.

MARIAH CAREY ANNOUNCES TWO UK SHOWS FOR CHRISTMAS

Mariah Carey is bringing her 'All I Want For Christmas Is You' tour to the UK this December. The 46-year-old R&B superstar's 1994 hit is one of the most popular songs played during the festive season and she has invited fans to join her to perform the magical song and the rest of her back catalogue at two special shows at Manchester Arena on December 10 and London's The O2 on December 11. She wrote on Twitter: "Excited to bring my 'All I Want For Christmas' tour to Manchester + London this December! (sic)" It comes after Mariah revealed that 'All I Want for Christmas Is You' is to be turned into an animated movie. Alongside a trailer for the movie, she wrote: "I am thrilled to be able to bring the story of my favorite Christmas song to new generations of families with my upcoming new animated movie, Mariah Carey's All I Want For Christmas Is You. You're the first to hear about this exciting news! Don't forget to follow @AllIWantedMovie for more updates. #AllIWantedMovie (sic)" In the promo clip, Mariah - who was dressed in festive red pyjamas and was sprawled out on

her sofa - sang the line: "I don't want a lot for Christmas there is just one thing I need..." Before the song blurs out, and the trailer reads: "Every holiday season, there are traditions we can't live without. The tree, the stockings, the presents and Mariah Carey." In 2015, the 'We Belong Together' hitmaker turned the same song into a children's book for her five-year-old twins Moroccan and Monroe, whom she has with her ex-husband Nick Cannon. At the time, she said: "When I wrote 'All I Want For Christmas Is You' it was my dream for it to become a classic Christmas song. I am so proud of the song's impact as it continues to create memories for fans each year. I am thrilled to be able to bring the story of the song to new generations of families with the picture book." Tickets for the two shows go on sale on Friday from Ticketmaster.co.uk Mariah Carey's UK 'All I Want For Christmas Is You' Tour dates are as follows: Sunday 10 December, Manchester, Manchester Arena, Monday 11 December, London, The O2.



Squeeze announce first album in two years

Squeeze have announced their first album in two years. The 'Up The Junction' hitmakers - including key members Glen Tilbrook, Chris Difford, Simon Hanson and Stephen Large - will release 'The Knowledge' on October 13, with lead single 'Innocence In Paradise' out now. The lead track is the new wave band's finest work and songwriter Chris says it is down to his great "musical bonding" with guitarist Glen. He said: "I'm so proud of this song, its flowing different and yet familiar. I don't think we have reached this kind of musical bonding in a very long time." The band's 15th studio LP follows 2015's critically-acclaimed 'Cradle To The Grave'. 'The Knowledge' was recorded at 45 RPM Studios in Charlton, South East London and finds Glenn and Chris once again in the company of drummer Simon Hanson and keyboard wizard Stephen Large. This time round there is the introduction of Yolanda Charles on bass and Steve Smith on percussion. Yolanda said: "I'm so excited to be invited to play with Squeeze. The guys were a pleasure to record the new album with and I know playing the live shows will be a fantastic experience." And Steve, who has previously supported Glenn on tour and has a deep personal connection with the band's music, added: "I don't know how many musicians get the chance of a lifetime to join the very first band that they ever went to see in concert." The band will head out on a tour in support of the record next month, kicking off at Rhyl Pavilion in North Wales on October 5 and concluding at London's Royal Albert Hall on November 6.



Aoki wants to pen song for Little Mix

Steve Aoki wants to write an EDM banger for Little Mix. The 'Cake Face' hitmaker has worked his magic on Louis Tomlinson, Linkin Park and Iggy Azalea in the past, but has now revealed he wants to task himself with the "challenge" of producing a track for the 'Power' hitmakers. Steve, 39, is currently working on his new LP 'Neon Future 3' and would love to work with the girls - Jesy Nelson, Jade Thirlwall, Perrie Edwards and Leigh-Anne Pincock - in time for its release. He said: "I prefer to work with artists that don't live in the EDM world because I want to do something new. I want to challenge myself, I want to push myself and find a new script. The new album 'Neon Future 3' is entirely collaborations, there's a lot of surprises and a lot of genres I've not tapped into

yet. "Little Mix are great, they are some-one I would love to work with. They are incredible singers and I love all their songs, I know all the words. They've shown diversity working with Stormzy, and that track is amazing, I 100 per cent want to see them on one of my songs." The long-haired hunk even hinted that he may already be in talks with the girl group. He spilled: "You never know, maybe I have been in contact..." Meanwhile, the 'Lit' star recently said he is planning on teaming up with One Direction hunk Louis again after the success of their single 'Just Hold On'. He said: "We've been talking about doing future music as well and we always try and figure out time between schedules. Plus he's crushing it with 'Back to You'. I love that track."



Garbage announce first UK live show in over two years



Garbage have announced their first UK show in over two years. The 'Why Do You Love Me' hitmakers surprised fans on Sunday evening when they took to Facebook to share the details of a one-off performance at London's O2 Academy Brixton on September 14, which is to mark two decades of their second album 'Version 2.0'. In a statement, they said: "Looking forward to playing our first UK show in over 2 years at London's O2 Academy Brixton on Friday, September 14th 2018! This show will be a 20-year celebration of our seminal second album, 'Version 2.0' This should be a very special night for us all. Tickets will be available on September 8th: (sic)" Shirley Manson and Co have also revealed that are working on their follow-up to 2016's 'Strange Little Birds' and even have a book coming out, thought it was a pain to write because so much has happened in their career spanning more than two decades. Shirley - who is joined by drummer Butch Vig and guitarist Steve Marker in the punk trio - recently told NME magazine: "We'll start on the record in the summer and we've had a book out, which was an absolute. We're happy that it's now finished and we at least have put things down on paper. After 22 years of constantly making new memories it's harder and harder to remember what happened in the beginning, and so we'll have that for our families and friends." The pink-haired frontwoman says they'll have a better idea of their direction with the new record once they are all in the room together. The 51-year-old beauty said: "I think each individual has their own ideas. We fluctuate. The record is the dictator. It's not us. I would love to be the dictator and I'm sure Butch would and Steven would but it's more about what happens when we get in the room and what occurs when we're together."

Grohl was inspired to play guitar by The Beatles



Dave Grohl learned to "play guitar" thanks to The Beatles. The Foo Fighters frontman was presented with the iconic group's greatest hits collections, along with a book of their music, by his mother when he was younger, and spent hours honing his skills by playing along to the records. Speaking to Mojo magazine, he said: "That's really where I learned to play guitar. I would put an album on, find the page with the song, try to play along according to this simple music sheet, almost like I was in a band in my bedroom, trying to follow along with these other players. "I'd have to remember an arrangement, and changes and tempo and melody. So those two albums were my music teacher when I was young." And the former Nirvana drummer was also driven to work on his sticks skills by another talented musician, after he realized his ability was not a patch on Led Zeppelin's John Bonham. He said: "The Song Remains the Same" blew my mind. That's when I really became a drummer, listening to that album and realizing how poor a drummer I actually was. "I'd been learning to play drums on pillows, listening to the Bad Brains and Minor Threat. "When I heard the power and clarity of John Bonham on that CD, I thought, I've got a lot of work to do." Dave, 48, even credits the 1980 AC/DC concert film, 'Let There Be Rock', for the high energy of Foo Fighters performances. He explained: "I saw that movie when I was 10 or 11 years old... I had never seen a performance like that. So the energy and the simplicity totally blew my mind. "It was the first time I'd ever listened to music that made me want to smash windows. Then I bought the record. "The energy that Foo Fighters try to give off is rooted in the night I saw that movie."

GOSSIP

Thomas to star in new comedy The Festival



Joe Thomas will be starring in a new comedy 'The Festival'. The 33-year-old actor shot to fame in the hit Channel 4 series 'The Inbetweeners' and the subsequent two movies, and now Thomas is attached to the new comedy written and produced by Iain Morris and Damon Beesley. 'The Festival' follows a group of students as they graduate and head to a music festival and has been described as a coming-of-age comedy. Morris told Variety: "I'm delighted to be making this film with my 'Inbetweeners' partners Film4 and Entertainment. Going to a music festival is a quintessential British rite of passage just like a lads' holiday or backpacking so it seemed like a natural fit for me to try and find then humour and fun in festivals." Thomas will star alongside Claudia O'Doherty, Hamed Animashaun, Jemaine Clement, Hannah Tointon and Kurt Yeager. Production company Fudge Park, which produced 'The Inbetweeners', is also reportedly attached to the film and is the first to be greenlit with Film4 and Entertainment. Fudge Park recently produced the BBC Three series 'White Gold' - which also starred Thomas - and the upcoming movie, which is slated for a summer 2018 release, is its first feature with a screenplay penned by Keith Akushie and Joe Parham. Daniel Battsek, director of Film4, said: "Film4 are delighted to be working with Fudge Park and Entertainment again for the first time since the phenomenally successful 'Inbetweeners' movies. "We're confident Iain and the rest of the team will produce another very funny and very commercial feature film." 'The Inbetweeners Movie' and the sequel were both box office successes with the second film having the biggest opening weekend of 2014.



Stallone hints Creed 2 to start production in 2018

Sylvester Stallone has hinted 'Creed 2' will start production next year. The 71-year-old actor has shared a post on his official Instagram account showing an image of co-star Michael B. Jordan - who played Apollo Creed's son Adonis Creed in the acclaimed 2015 film - in character in a boxing ring and then teased the 30-year-old actor is in training for his return in the role. Stallone captioned the image: "Getting stronger !!! 2018 #Creed 2 #mgm #fitness #Rocky (sic)" Deadline has also reported that Stallone has been working on the script for the sequel to the first film, which was brought to the big screen by director-and-writer Ryan Coogler and based around the Rocky Balboa cinematic universe which Stallone created in 1976. In July, Stallone teased 'Creed 2'

could be inspired by 'Rocky IV' and shared a photoshopped movie poster in which Adonis stands toe-to-toe with his Russian boxer Ivan Drago (Dolph Lundgren) who was responsible for killing his father Apollo (Carl Weathers) in the ring in the 1985 film. Stallone captioned the image: "Here's a chance to stretch your imagination ... HISTORY WILL ALWAYS REPEAT ITSELF IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, JUST GOT TO BE READY! ... Sins of the Father... #creed2 #agentnickyc (sic) Coogler's story revolved around Apollo's illegitimate son Adonis and his quest to follow in his father's footsteps to become a professional boxer, and he persuades Rocky - his dad's most famous opponent and dear friend - to train him.

JOLIE TO RETURN FOR MALEFICENT 2

Angelina Jolie has confirmed she will be returning for 'Maleficent 2'. The 42-year-old actress starred as the titular role in the 2014 live-action Disney remake and the studio revealed they are pressing ahead with plans for the sequel but due to potential contracting issues, Jolie was unsure whether she would be returning. However, at the Telluride Film Festival over the weekend, the actress said: "We have been working on the script and this is going to be a really strong sequel." Although not much else is known about the upcoming sequel, last week, Disney revealed they have hired 'Spectre' co-writer Jez Butterworth to rewrite the screenplay for the film. Linda Woolverton had penned the original draft, but her effort is set to be reworked by Butterworth, who will be under pressure to deliver a commercial hit following the success of the original movie. Jolie previously admitted she relished playing Maleficent, the antagonist in Walt Disney's classic 1959 animation 'Sleeping Beauty'. She explained: "It is really funny when people say you'd be obvious for a great villain. She was just my favorite as a little girl. I was terrified of her but I was really drawn to her. I loved her. There were some discussions about it before I got the part, and I got a phone call from my brother who said, 'You got to get your name on the list for this!'" Angelina also revealed that, in some ways, she could relate to her on-screen character. The Hollywood star - who has six children - previously said: "What's interesting about her that what I do relate to, and what I think everyone relates to, is she's not what you assume she is." The first movie starred Elle Fanning as Princess Aurora, the Sleeping Beauty, Brenton Thwaites as Prince Phillip and Sharlto Copley as King Stefan.



Matt Damon is the 'greatest actor' George Clooney has known

George Clooney has hailed Matt Damon as the "greatest actor" he has "ever" worked with. The 56-year-old actor has praised his 'Ocean's Eleven' co-star as being the most talented star he has worked with and even "seen" in his entire life, and although the silver fox has racked his brain to think of a star better than the 46-year-old he can't think of anyone "better". Speaking to 'Entertainment Tonight', the 'ER' heartthrob said: "Matt's the greatest actor I've ever worked with. In fact, I don't know a better actor I've seen in my life. I'm trying to think if there's a better actor. Nope, there's not a better actor. No, there is not." The 'The Martian' star has also credited George for his professionalism in the entertainment industry, and believes George is "over prepared" for the projects he takes on, although he has hinted he wouldn't want his pal to be any other way. Matt said: "It's not the first time I've worked with the wonderful and talented and brilliant George Clooney. He does things that other directors just can't do. He pays me in cash daily. You just don't see others doing that at this level. He's fantastic. I've done a bunch of movies

with him as a producer, as a writer, as an actor, as a director and it's why I keep coming back. He's over-prepared." Although George directs Matt in the crime film 'Suburbicon', it is the 'Jason Bourne' star who advises George on parenting. The Kentucky-born filmmaker - who has two-month-old twins Alexander and Ella with his wife Amal - explained: "Now that I've got kids, Matt gives me direction. 'I'm a mess. But [Amal] is like an Olympic athlete. You've got two kids, you're breastfeeding like crazy. I'm very good, but in my way, at diaper changing. "This is an all-new adventure for me ... [Fatherhood] has made me much older. It doesn't fundamentally change you, but I'm excited to see who these two people are going to be in life. I'm very proud to be [a dad]. I feel honored to be a part of it." Although George is "honored" to be a father, he never thought he'd be married with children. He said: "Honestly, I didn't think I'd be married with two kids. The world changes! I love being here [in Venice, where he married Amal]. It's a magic, improbable city."

Smith wants to join Marvel Cinematic Universe

Matt Smith wants to star in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The 34-year-old British actor would jump at the chance to take on a role in the superhero franchise, but only if he was asked by bosses and if it was the right part for him. The 'Lost River' actor is best known for portraying the Time Lord in British sci-fi series 'Doctor Who' from 2010 to 2014, and says it would be important for a future role in the MCU to be a challenge and therefore different from playing the Doctor. Asked if it is something he'd like to do, Matt said: "I'd love to. They've got to ask me though, the swines ... But it would have to be the right project ... It would have to be something that felt different enough to 'Doctor Who.'" Smith wouldn't be the first star of 'Doctor Who' to enter the MCU as Karen Gillan (a former companion) stars as Nebula in the 'Guardians of the Galaxy' movies, Christopher Eccleston (9th Doctor) did 'Thor: The Dark World's Malekith', while his predecessor David Tennant played villain Kilgrave in 'Jessica Jones'. He added: "I love so many of those movies and I love Nebula, because Karen's blue. With no hair. Anyway, I'd love to. If you're listening, Marvel?"



Bardem and Cruz reunite on screen

Javier Bardem and Penelope Cruz kept their personal and professional lives totally separate while filming 'Loving Pablo'. The couple - who are married in real life - play drug lord Pablo Escobar and journalist Virginia Vallejo in 'Loving Pablo' and Javier revealed they were careful not to bring the dark subject material home with them after a day on set. Speaking to E! News, Javier said: "One of the joys, and the fun of what we do, is to create. We were very careful [during shooting] to make sure we kept that joy and that we keep being able to create and use our imagination." Explaining that he and Penelope - who previously worked together on 'Vicky Cristina Barcelona' - kept their on and off-screen relationships totally separate, Javier added: "In this movie I think both of us learned more than ever to do that, because it was necessary for us to be able to get back to ourselves. To go back home and have a life. And actually it was easy. It was fun and I think we both made a little step towards growing up as performers because instead of stepping around things we really went there. We protected ourselves by being the

characters, not by bringing them to us." The new movie is based on a book Virginia wrote about falling for the criminal and Javier welcomed the chance to show a human side to Escobar. He said: "Thanks to all the documentaries and films, we know more about Pablo now than we ever have before. When I started to dig into this character almost 10 years ago, he wasn't as much in the public eye. I was attracted to this movie because it's about what's in his mind, how he could have that greed when he basically had it all. "I wanted to portray a real Pablo Escobar, because that's the scary part. He was a human being, he was not a machine, he was not an idea, he was a person. "It's very different than playing a psychopath. For example, Anton Chigurh in 'No Country for Old Men', he's a psychopath. He's not at all interested in any emotion, and that makes him very, very scary and dangerous. But I think the person who feels empathy, the person who feels love and at the same time does those bad things, is even scarier and even more dangerous."-Bang Showbiz



WILL SMITH: IT'S RARE FOR A 'BLACK DUDE' TO PLAY A 'RACIST'



Will Smith thinks it is rare for a "black dude" to play a "racist" on screen. The 48-year-old actor is set to star in the lead role of LAPD officer Scott Ward in the upcoming fantasy movie 'Bright', and has admitted he found it "really bizarre" that his character was given the prejudice trait, as it was new territory for him to be on the "other side" of racism. 'Bright' takes place in a world where human lives alongside fairytale creatures such as orcs and elves, and rather than showing racism between humans, the movie explores the tensions between people and creatures. Speaking to Empire magazine about the movie, he said: "As a black dude you just don't get a lot of movies where you're a racist. It's rugged and powerful and really bizarre for me to be on the other side of that." And the 'Hitch' actor wasn't the only star who struggled with

his role, as his co-star Noomi Rapace couldn't get to grips with wearing contact lenses and a false set of teeth when she first took on her role, although she soon adapted. She explained: "I was fighting against the contact lenses and teeth at the beginning. But it's amazing how quickly you adapt." Meanwhile, director David Ayer believes the production is a "daring movie" because it involves "fantasy creatures" who have to also juggle a normal life where they care for their families. The 49-year-old creator explained: "It's kind of a daring movie. It has all these fantasy creatures, but they still pay their bills on time, love their families and try to live their lives. It becomes this incredible template to study the social issues we're having right now." 'Bright' is being produced for Netflix, and is expected to land on the platform in December this year.

MUSIC & MOVIES



A Picture shows a view of the roofs of St Petersburg. — AFP photos



A tourist looks at the city during a visit to the first official tour of the roofs in St Petersburg.

Legal highs: Rooftop tours offer fresh look at Saint Petersburg

Standing on a roof in central Saint Petersburg, Marta Granadeiro gasped as she watched the statues on the Hermitage Museum's facade gleam in the sunset. "We wanted to see something extraordinary in Saint Petersburg and now we have," said Granadeiro, a 23-year-old Spanish tourist who climbed onto the roof of an apartment building on a tour organized by a local tourism agency. The rusty rooftops of Russia's tsarist-era capital, with its romantic skyline of elegant onion domes and pre-revolutionary buildings, have long been a coveted destination for illegal excursions.

To convince officials to let tourists admire the city from above, the agency PanoramicRoof spent four years navigating bureaucratic hoops to get the necessary permits. "I had this idea after getting my wedding photos taken on Saint Petersburg's roofs," said Anastasiya Kravitskaya, the agency's coordinator. "It was fantastic but dangerous and uncomfortable, the roof was slippery, and all in all it was stressful." Previously tourists could only surreptitiously access the building's roof. Those living in the flats below sometimes called the police when

they spotted visitors clambering up the stairwell. Eventually the agency decided to strike a deal with the residents, offering to repair the stairwell in exchange for access to the roof.

Only for foreigners?

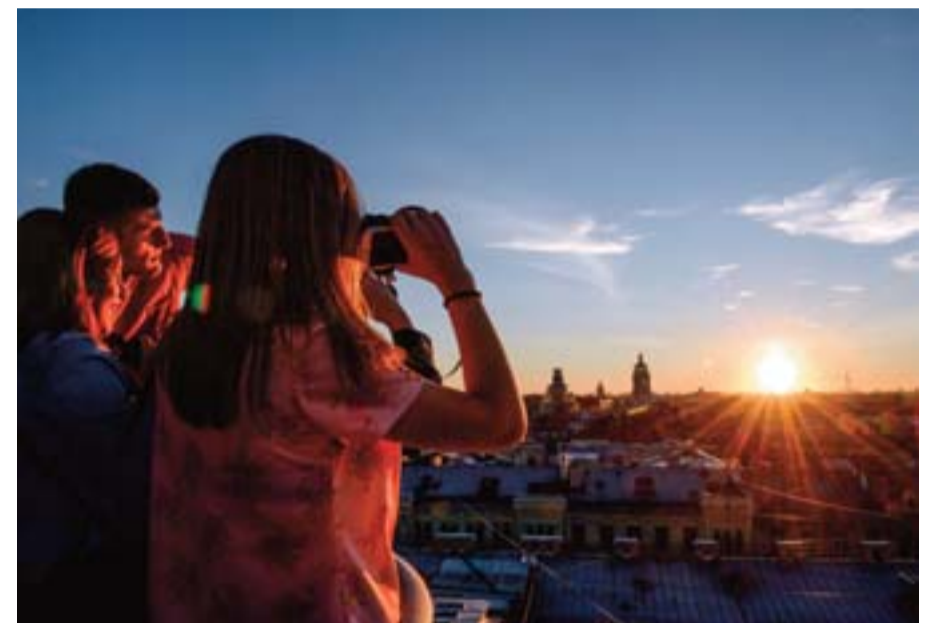
The city of 5.3 million annually draws in throngs of visitors -- 6.9 million in 2016 -- eager to see sights associated with the rule of the Russian monarchs and gape at its museum collections. But some tourists are also drawn to go off the beaten path for a more adventurous experience. Rooftops offer the best view of the city's skyline, which has remained lowrise in the historic center. The city's 18th-century founder Tsar Peter the Great ordered architects not to build anything higher than the Peter and Paul Fortress: 122.5 meters (402 feet).

Alexander Semyonov, the head of PanoramicRoof, took five tourists through the building's attic, heading toward the roof. Before going out to the open air, he repeated safety instructions: don't walk too fast and carefully follow the guide. He distributed hard hats and binoc-

ulars. "Safety is paramount," Semyonov told the tourists, who were busy snapping photos. They proceeded carefully along the crest of the roof, gripping a meter-high metal barrier to avoid slipping down the slope. For Andrei Stepanov, who takes groups on more clandestine outings, PanoramicRoof's trip is too tame and "mostly for the elderly and for foreigners".

For him going the official route is a waste of time: residents rarely make a fuss and even when they do, the fine is only 500 rubles (\$8, seven euros). He said the agency charges too much (500 to 700 rubles) and only skims the surface of the city's world of rooftops. "For that price, we can arrange a visit to several roofs, and even walk along from one to another, to take in more views," he said. "That's what's extraordinary, not any officially sanctioned visit." — AFP

Tourists look at the city during a visit to the first official tour of the roofs in St Petersburg.



This file photo shows rapper Lil Wayne performing during a free concert in Champ de Mars in Port-au-Prince. — AFP

Rapper Lil Wayne hospitalized with seizures

Rapper Lil Wayne has been hospitalized in Chicago after suffering multiple epileptic seizures, celebrity news site TMZ reported. The online outlet said Lil Wayne was found unconscious in his hotel room Sunday and was rushed to Northwestern Memorial hospital. The New Orleans-based rapper was scheduled to perform Sunday in Las Vegas, but his doctors advised him to rest for a few days, TMZ said. A representative for Lil Wayne told TMZ the Vegas gig was cancelled. — AFP

McDormand scorches in 'Three Billboards' at Venice

In a year of strong women on screen, Frances McDormand plays one of the strongest: a bereaved mother who resorts to drastic action to bring her daughter's killer to justice in "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri." It's a slight surprise to learn she drew inspiration from John Wayne. McDormand seems guaranteed an Oscar nomination for her role in Martin McDonagh's witty, visceral drama, which premiered Monday at the Venice Film Festival. She oozes righteous fury, tinged with irony and compassion, as Mildred Hayes, a woman so desperate to find her daughter's murderer that she uses three billboards on the edge of town to goad the police into action.

Mildred is a force of nature: single-minded, uncompromising and tough as nails. "When I was looking for iconic characters in cinema that I might model myself after as Mildred, the only ones I could find were male," McDormand told reporters in Venice yesterday. "I thought maybe Pam Grier in blaxploitation films in the 70s, but her characters always led much more with their sexuality, which Mildred doesn't. So really the one that I latched onto the most was John Wayne. "His politics aside, and his personal beliefs aside, I think that as an American iconic cinematic figure he has stood the test of time."

"That's whose footsteps I was trying to walk in. And he was a size 10 1/2." In the film, Mildred's quest brings all the rage in her small town boiling to the surface. It also puts her in conflict with Woody Harrelson's police chief - a decent man facing his own trauma - and Sam Rockwell's brutal police officer. Writer-director McDonagh made the similarly tragicomic "In Bruges" and "Seven Psychopaths." Like those films, "Three Billboards" is darkly funny. But it is also surprisingly

moving, as the plot and characters develop in unexpected directions.

"That's what Martin does best - melancholy and funny," McDormand said. "That's a really good combination, and that kind of is what humanity is about." One of 21 films competing for the Golden Lion prize at the Venice festival, "Three Billboards" takes a bracingly honest approach to grief, particularly the almost inexpressible pain of losing a child. McDormand noted that "if your spouse dies you're a widow or a widower.



(From left) Actors Sam Rockwell, Frances McDormand and Woody Harrelson pose for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri' during the 74th edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy yesterday. — AP

Lambert leads nominees for country music awards

Miranda Lambert led the pack with five nominations for Country Music Association awards yesterday, with Little Big Town and Keith Urban earning four nods each. Lambert was nominated for song and single of the year for "Tin Man," and also earned nods for album, female vocalist and best video of the year. Nominations for the 51st annual awards were announced on "Good Morning America." The ceremony is scheduled for Nov. 8 in Nashville. Old friend Taylor Swift, now a pop music queen, earned a song of the year nomination for penning "Better Man," performed by Little Big Town.

The inescapable song of the summer, Sam Hunt's "Body Like a Back Road," earned nominations for top single and song; it holds the record for most weeks topping Billboard's list of top country songs. Hunt was snubbed in the best male vocalist and entertainer of the year categories. Veteran Garth Brooks is shooting for his sixth entertainer of the year award, and his third straight since coming out of retirement. He's competing with four other men in the category: Luke Bryan, Eric Church, Chris Stapleton and Urban.

Urban, a 10-time CMA award winner, was also nominated for male vocalist and single and music video of the year for "Blue Ain't Your Color." He can even get an extra trophy because he's also listed as a producer for the song. Little Big Town earned nominations

for single and video of the year for "Better Man," album of the year for "The Breaker" and vocal group of the year. Besides Lambert, female vocalist nominees were Kelsea Ballerini, Reba McEntire, Maren Morris and Carrie Underwood. Along with Urban, male vocalist nominees were Dierks Bentley, Eric Church, Thomas Rhett and Chris Stapleton. Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit earned an album of the year nomination for "The Nashville Sound," unusual for an artist generally pegged in the Americana category. Brad Paisley and Underwood will host the awards show. — AP



File photo shows Miranda Lambert performs iTin Mani at the 52nd annual Academy of Country Music Awards at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas. — AP

Love, wrinkles and all, conquers Venice

Love conquers all, even when wrinkles become part of the equation. That's the message from Helen Mirren and from Venice, appropriately the world's oldest film festival. An art form that for decades was constructed around the dynamics of youthful sexuality has belatedly discovered that, when it comes to love and sex, there are other stories to tell, and audiences waiting to hear them. After Robert Redford and Jane Fonda, 81 and 79 respectively, hooked up for the fourth time in their illustrious careers in Netflix drama "Our Souls at Night," now it is the turn of Mirren, 72, and Donald Sutherland, 82, to fly the flag for love in later life.

In "The Leisure Seeker," Italian director Paolo Virzi's first English language film, the duo play a retired couple who decide to flee their stifling existence and its cast of doctors and bossy grown-up children, for a final road trip in their vintage 1970s camper van. Mirren said she had been drawn to the "funny, natural story" after some initial hesitation. "Of course I love watching movies with young beautiful people in them," she told AFP in an interview in Venice. "But the wonderful thing about film as an art form is that it has this ability to show us culture and life and humanity in all its different ways of being. "And it had Donald Sutherland in it!"

Shared memories

Sutherland, whose career has ranged from 1967 World War II epic "The Dirty Dozen" to the recent Hunger Games franchise, plays a retired teacher who can still recite pages of Hemingway but is losing his short-term memory and is no longer entirely reliable at the wheel of a vehicle. Mirren's character is battling cancer but remains the couple's driving force and the actress says the charm of the story lies in its universal quality. "Every single family on this planet today will go through a version of this," she said. The couple's journey takes them from Boston to Key West in Florida, allowing them time to nurture each other, discuss what comes after this life and go over a shared stock of memories, not all of which have been previously shared.

"Obviously we are dealing with people-as we are-who are towards the ends of our lives not the beginning of their lives," Mirren said. "And with that comes all of our history of



Actor Donald Sutherland and actress Helen Mirren attend the premiere of the movie 'The Leisure Seeker' (Ella and John) presented in competition at the 74th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. — AFP

FEATURE



A woman walks past mooncakes (front) for sale at a bakery inside a train station in Hong Kong. — AFP photos



Mooncakes are displayed for sale at a bakery inside a train station in Hong Kong.



People walk past an advertisement for mooncakes in a train station in Hong Kong.

Mooncakes from heaven: Hong Kong's sweet obsession



Chef Yip Wing-wah prepares to oven-bake his signature "spring moon mini egg custard mooncakes" at Hong Kong's famous colonial era Peninsula Hotel.

It is one of Hong Kong's most treasured food traditions: the buying, giving and eating of "mooncakes" to mark mid-autumn festival, celebrated in Chinese communities around the world next month. Bakeries and supermarkets are already packed with boxes of the dense pastries, traditionally filled with a heavy sweet concoction of lotus seed and egg yolks. But not all mooncakes are made equal. Picky customers will queue outside the most popular stores to ensure they bag their favorite brand.

Mooncakes by chef Yip Wing-wah of Hong Kong's famous colonial era Peninsula Hotel are among the most in demand and the priciest. Boxes of eight of his Spring Moon mini egg custard mooncakes cost HK\$520 (\$66) and are only available in a three-day pre-order sale online, to avoid previous unseemly queues at the hotel. This year's sale took place in August and sold out, weeks ahead of the festival. Now 65, Yip invented what has become his signature mooncake 30 years ago when he worked as a dim sum chef at the hotel's Spring Moon restaurant.



Ingredients are shown in metal bowls before a chef makes his signature "spring moon mini egg custard mooncakes".



Chef Yip Wing-wah brushes fresh egg yolk on his pre-baked signature "spring moon mini egg custard mooncakes".

It was inspired by gooey egg custard buns, a classic dim sum dish, and is smaller and lighter than traditional mooncakes, although it still packs a sugary buttery punch. "I have an emotional attachment to it, really I do because I would never have guessed that it would grow more popular every year," says Yip, who started to work in Hong Kong restaurant kitchens aged 13. Deep in the Peninsula's basement, Yip kneads elastic golden dough to show how he and his team will make this year's new lychee-flavored spin on his original classic.

Rolling it out into lengths he plucks small pieces off and flattens them between his hands before using them to encase sweet filling. Each dough ball is then pressed individually into a mooncake-shaped hole in a heavy wooden holder, which Yip bangs three times on a worktop to pop out a perfect pastry. Those who get hold of a box will share them with friends, family and business associates as part of the festival, which is the second largest in Hong Kong after lunar new year.

The legend behind it revolves around a beautiful woman called Chang E, who drank an elixir of immortal life to keep it out of the hands of a rival of her husband. It caused her to ascend to the moon, leaving her distraught husband on earth. He took her favorite foods to an altar and offered them as a sacrifice to her, a ritual then adopted by local people. "Mid-autumn festival is about coming together as a family to eat mooncakes and fruit and to admire the moon," says Lam Mei Yu, 40, biting into one on Hong Kong's harbourfront during a visit from her home in the southern mainland Chinese province of Guangdong. For his part, Yip vows to continue to bake them as long as he is able. "As I make more I become happier," he said. — AFP



Chef Yip Wing-wah displays his freshly oven-baked signature "spring moon mini egg custard mooncakes".



Chef Yip Wing-wah uses a heavy wooden holder containing a dough ball, which he bangs three times on a worktop to pop out a perfect pastry, as he makes his signature "spring moon mini egg custard mooncakes".



Chef Yip Wing-wah kneads dough as he makes his signature "spring moon mini egg custard mooncakes".



Chef Yip Wing-wah pushes a trolley with his freshly oven-baked signature "spring moon mini egg custard mooncakes".

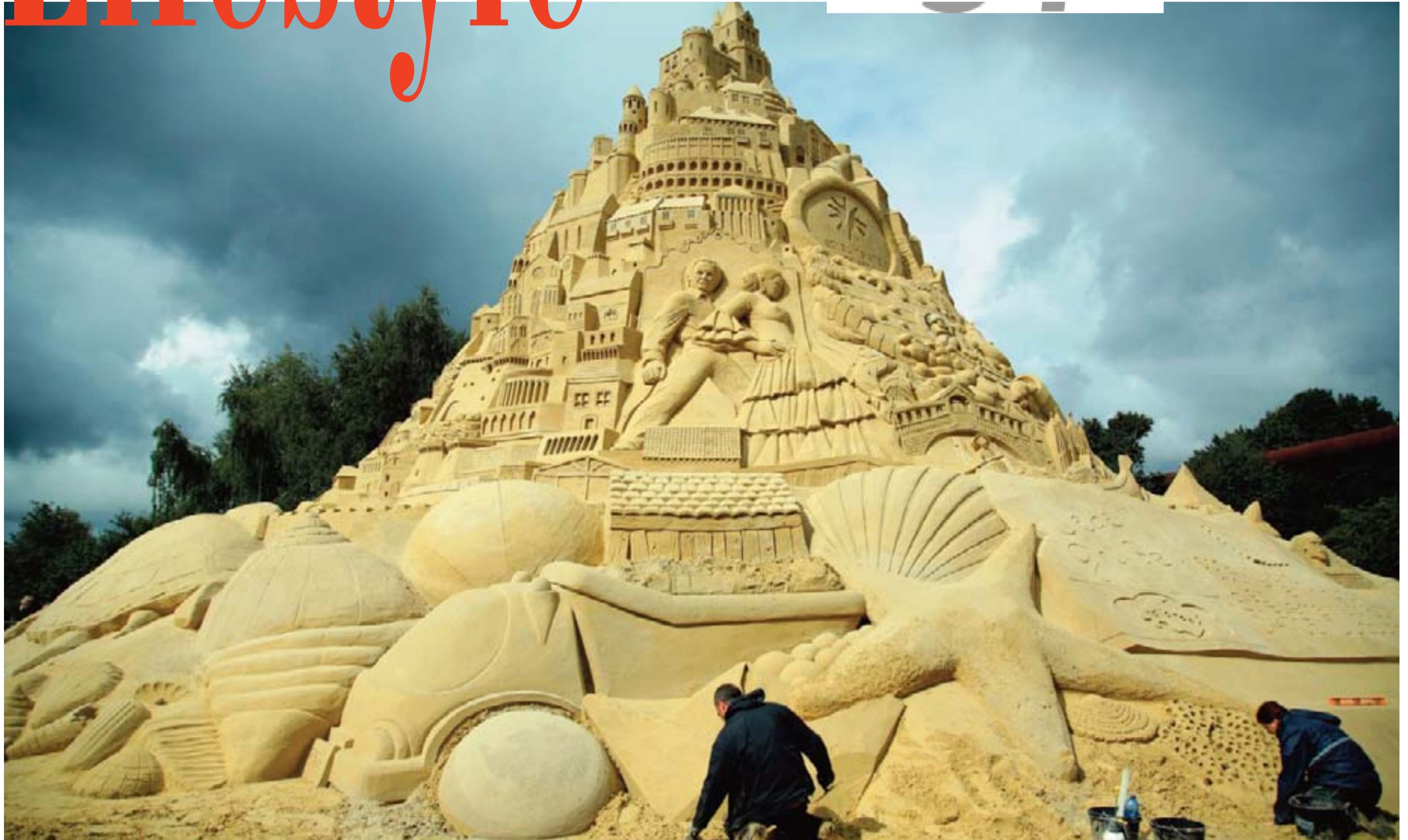
Lifestyle

Mooncakes from heaven:
Hong Kong's sweet obsession



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Artists work on a sandcastle at the Landschaftspark (lit. 'Landscape Park') in Duisburg, Germany, Thursday. Artists from Duisburg want to break the Guinness World Record for the tallest sandcastle in the world. The Guinness jury will examine the sandcastle. — AFP

Japan's cutesy 'kei cars' hit rocky road

Yoko Kojima loves zipping around Tokyo in her Daihatsu Tanto with its tiny wheels and pint-sized engine, but Japan's beloved 'kei cars' may have a rocky road ahead despite a legion of loyal fans. Sales of the cutesy box-shaped cars, a staple of the world's number three vehicle market, drove off a cliff after peaking at 2.27 million units in 2014. The drop to 1.72 million vehicles sold last year was a response by cost-conscious drivers as the government-looking to pay down a massive national debt-jacked up taxes on the popular made-in-Japan vehicles.

It was a nasty shock for many kei drivers, the majority of whom are women and those in rural areas where the little vehicles are indispensable for getting around on the cheap. "I don't see a bright future for kei cars," said Yoshiaki Kawano, analyst at IHS Markit consultancy, who added that a consumption tax rise planned for 2019 could also dent kei sales. "It's an ageing society and rural areas are losing residents-where kei cars are most popular," he added. There's no doubt that kei-short for kei jidosha, or light cars in Japanese-still have plenty of fans who love their great fuel economy and modest price tag.

They make up more than one-third of the domestic market, with Honda releasing the newest version of its top-selling N-Box kei car this week. "You can manoeuvre the car even if the streets are really nar-

row," said 75-year-old Kojima, whose Tanto doubles as a van for her part-time flower delivery business. "It's really easy to drive-I adore it."

'Nerdy image'

Keis were born out of the ashes of World War II when the government of the fast-modernizing country was keen to get Japanese out of scooters or non-motorized transit and into economy-priced cars. These days, the plucky little vehicles are still restricted to a motor less than 660 cc, about the same as your average motorbike. And they can't be wider than 1.48 metres (4.8 feet), giving keis a comically narrow shape that makes them look like they could tip over on a tight corner. Keis cost less to produce than conventional cars and they sell for about \$6,000 less than a conventional car. They also have cheaper insurance and, until recently, much lower taxes.

While they're everywhere in Japan-as a second family car, a farmer's pickup truck or even a police vehicle for neighborhood patrols-kei cars are a tough sell overseas. Apart from their odd shape and sometimes peculiar names, such as the Suzuki Hustler and the Cappuccino, most would not comply with US or European crash standards. And their tiny engines would make any muscle car enthusiast howl with laughter.

With Japan's changing demographics and little chance of success overseas, except in emerging markets, keis may never reclaim their peak. But some think the industry can put the brakes on falling sales. "They won't disappear from the landscape," said Asako Hoshino, a vice president at Nissan who oversees the company's domestic vehicle market. Hoshino cites Nissan's acquisition of kei car specialist Mitsubishi last year as proof they still have value, while Toyota took back all of its stake in Daihatsu, which leads the mini-vehicle market alongside Suzuki.

"Twenty years ago, cars were a symbol of success, but that is not necessarily the case today," Hoshino said. "The trend now is to reduce the size." Producers are trying to boost keis' appeal by putting more style and cutting-edge features into what have long been bare-bones vehicles. "A decade ago, kei cars' functions were very limited-they had a nerdy image," said Abe Shuhei, who works in Daihatsu's sales planning division. "But, bit by bit, people are starting to buy them now by choice because they're energy efficient, safe and stylish." — AFP



This picture shows a kei (center), or light car in Japanese, in the Ginza shopping district in Tokyo. — AFP photos



This picture shows a kei, or light car in Japanese, in the Ginza shopping district in Tokyo.



This images show a 75-year-old flower shop owner Yoko Kojima (left) talking with a salesman at the Daihatsu car dealer in Tokyo.

Getting well-oiled: Booze in the age of the robo-barman

As Tippy methodically unfolds an arm to select a glass, retrieve ice and mix a drink, it's all a far cry from the flashy swagger of Tom Cruise in "Cocktail." But then he doesn't have the twinkle in his eye of a fictional Hollywood bartender-or any eyes at all, for that matter-because Tippy is a robot. He won't be able to swap sporting banter or offer relationship advice to lovelorn paramours but he mixes a mean Bloody Mary for his customers at his shopping mall bar in Las Vegas.

Tippy is the logical conclusion of an increasingly space-age service industry that has already given us the mechanical cupcake dispenser and automated pizza restaurants. "Monsieur" and "Tended Bar" are two brands among a new wave of machines that can whip up cocktails at sports arenas, hotels and other venues for a fraction of the cost of a human server. The concept-essentially a vending machine with a boozy kick-couldn't be more straightforward: select your tipple from a digital menu and wait moments for that little slice of liquid gold to drop into a plastic beaker.

The idea is not uniquely American-Parisian start-ups Realtime Robotics and Kuantom have also produced bartending automatons, while vending machines for canned alcohol are common on the streets of Tokyo. In the US, "self-service" venues such as L.I. Pour House Bar and Grill in Long Island have embraced automation by allowing customers to pull their own pints and pay via a computer terminal. The boss there, Anthony Pallino, points to the need to economize at a time when the minimum wage is set to rise to \$15.

'This is the future'

"If you needed five or six servers on a normal night, now you need four," he says, estimating savings of thousands of dollars a year with each electronic server. Automation always brings with it concerns over unemployment among increasingly obsolete humans, yet back in Las Vegas, customers seem to have taken to Tippy. "Robots and automation are definitely a quicker and an easier way. The drinks are always the same. You can add a little extra if you want to for the machines, so it makes it really cool," says John Woodall, a tourist from Tennessee. "This is the future," adds Las Vegas resident Mauricio Letona-but not everyone is sold on the technological advance.

French tourist Antoine Ferrari thinks it is "cooler to have a drink when there is someone behind the bar," although he acknowledges Tippy's unique selling point, the novelty of a "slightly futuristic" drink-

ing experience. Italian Rino Armeni, president of Robotic Innovations and owner of the bar in which Tippy works, is conscious of the imperative to retain the human element of going for a drink. "The first thing that I said to my staff when we opened, I said 'Look, remember one thing: these robots are entertainers, but people will come back because of you,'" he tells AFP.

"I don't want to go away from human nature, the human rapport. That will never change." Experts expect jobs to disappear as this latest front opens in the race for automation, but say there is little chance that the trendy, tattooed mixologist will ever be a relic of the past. "Consider the job of bartender," says Michael Dyer, emeritus professor of computer science at UCLA. "The bartender has numerous tasks: chat with the clients, decide when to not serve them more drinks, make sure they don't reach over the bar and steal bottles or drinks, collect payment and give back change."

'Huge challenge'

Androids can perform few of these tasks to a human level of competence, he adds, so choosing whether or not to automate will always be a simple question of balancing the costs and benefits. A machine may cost a one-off \$100,000 to perform just one limited task while a human barman might cost \$30,000 a year but offer a much wider range of skills, he argues. While the bionic barman is already a reality, the robotic cordon bleu chef remains a distant dream, says Richard Korf, another professor at UCLA. "You can automate what a barman does-there's a limited number of ingredients-but it might not work for a chef who uses a lot of ingredients, different skills, different tools, cutting slicing, whipping, mixing," he argues. "That would be a huge challenge."

"The other question is: would you want that? A lot of the experience of going to bar is talking to the bartender. They are often attractive and talk to customers, you can tell them your problems et cetera." The ideal places for automated bartenders, he maintains, would be venues where the goal is not social interaction, such as concert halls. "There will be situations where using these robots will increase the quality of service, in a busy, noisy environment, for example," agrees Pamela Rutledge, an expert in media psychology. But she adds that being recognized and acknowledged by the staff, especially at the local neighborhood bar, "creates a kind of social connection, it makes you feel like you belong." — AFP