

KNPC launches key liquefied gas project



Irma strengthens into 'extremely' dangerous Cat 5



Syrian army breaks Islamic State siege



SKorea reach WCup as Syria book play-offs



KUWAIT AND US TO HOLD FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND FORUM

AMIR MAKES A HISTORIC TRIP TO US AMID REGIONAL CRISIS



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News

in brief

Kuwait denies reports

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Jarallah denied reports on Kuwait opening an embassy in Libya. The visit by Ambassador Mubarak Al-Adwani to Libya is only to check up on the conditions of the diplomatic mission, Al-Jarallah said in a statement to Al-Jareeda newspaper published yesterday. He noted that Al-Adwani had met with Libyan Prime Minister Fayez Al-Sarraj in Tripoli a few days ago to discuss the situation in the country, adding that no date had yet been set to open the embassy. Libya is suffering tense political and security conditions since the outbreak of the revolution in 2014, as the country is torn between the struggle of two authorities over power.

Contaminated eggs

TALLINN: A scandal involving eggs tainted by the insecticide fipronil has spread to 45 countries worldwide, including 19 beyond the European Union where the scare began, a top EU official said yesterday. "The impact of the illegal use of this product has reached an EU-wide dimension with hundreds of farms blocked for production, 26 (EU) member states and 19 third countries involved," European health commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis said. The figure has increased from the 35 countries reported last week, with millions of eggs pulled from supermarket shelves to limit the risk from a product that can harm human health in high doses.



File photo shows His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during a meeting with US President Donald Trump. — KUNA

WASHINGTON: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's current visit to Washington is historic both in the timing and the level of the accompanying delegation, said a Kuwaiti diplomat yesterday. This visit also comes at a very delicate time due to the challenges and crises in the Arab region, Ambassador of Kuwait to Washington Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said.

He pointed out that the visit comes upon an invitation from US President Donald Trump last February shortly after his inauguration. The ambassador added that His Highness the Amir is accompanied by a high-caliber official and business delegation. Moreover, the US Chamber of Commerce and the Kuwait's Chamber of Commerce and Industry would hold a first-of-its-kind Kuwaiti-US economic forum in Washington on Friday, Sheikh Salem said.

He disclosed that Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh would head the Kuwaiti side at the forum, which would bring together a plethora of Kuwaiti and American officials and business-people to discuss efforts to remove obstacles to joint investments as well as make use of the available investment opportunities. He added that His Highness the Amir and US President Donald Trump's talks tomorrow would build on the outcome of their talks on the sidelines of the Gulf-American Summit in Riyadh last May.

The talks would also be a continuation of the fruitful consultation between the two leaders and a reflection of the strength of friendship bonds linking the two nations, the ambassador said. He clarified that the talks would tackle bilateral relations and regional and international developments of mutual concern.

Continued on Page 11



Photo shows a general view of the Qatari side of the Abu Samrah border crossing with Saudi Arabia. — AFP

NEW QATAR PORT AIMS TO BREAK THE BOYCOTT

DOHA: Qatar said yesterday that a new \$7.4 billion port would help to break a three-month-old boycott of the gas-rich emirate. The Hamad Port, which began operating in December, is a major hub for imports to Qatar, hit by a land and air embargo by some of its neighbors. "This is a gateway to break the shackles imposed on Qatar," Transport Minister Jassim bin Saif Al-Sulaiti said in a speech during an inauguration ceremony for the port held yesterday. "Nothing can stop us and our ambition," he added.

In a relatively rare public appearance since the onset of the crisis, Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani attended the

inauguration but did not speak. On June 5, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain cut ties with Qatar, accusing it of bankrolling Islamist extremist groups and having close ties to Shiite Iran. Qatar denies the charges.

Yesterday's hour-long ceremony, broadcast live on Qatari television stations, included a band, acrobats and fireworks. Hamad will be Qatar's largest container port and will provide commercial access to some 150 countries, according to official reports. These include links to regional ports in Oman and Kuwait, and more distant ports of call from Turkey to India and Pakistan.

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PUTIN WARNS OF 'GLOBAL CATASTROPHE'

GCC-BORN WOMEN STRIVE TO FIND WORK

FOREIGN AND 'FUTURELESS'

MAKKAH: Hafsa had hoped to land a much-needed job distributing meals for the Muslim Eid Al-Fitr holiday. One question stood in her way: "Are you, your husband, or any of your relatives Saudi?" Born in one of the GCC countries to Somali parents, Hafsa had applied for temporary work during the holiday, which marked the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in June.

The job did not have any educational requirements, and the 30-year-old who has neither a university degree nor Saudi citizenship was hopeful. She knocked at the door of an office overseeing logistics for Eid Al-Fitr. An eye appeared through a peephole. A voice asked her if she or anyone in her immediate family was a citizen of Saudi Arabia. The door, she said, did not open.

"Over the past three years, it has become harder and harder to find a job," said Hafsa, who along with other women interviewed for this story asked AFP not to use her real name. When her immigrant parents first arrived to Saudi Arabia, "they accepted that the system was the system and we had to follow it," she said. "They had no ambitions. They did not question if they had rights. We are different."

The ultra-conservative kingdom is home to more than nine million foreigners who constitute a third of the country's population of 31 million, a relatively low percentage compared to other Gulf countries.

Continued on Page 11

XIAMEN: Russian President Vladimir Putin warned yesterday of a global catastrophe unless a diplomatic solution is reached over North Korea, but rejected US calls for more sanctions as "useless", widening a split among major powers over how to rein in Pyongyang. Putin's comments appeared to draw the lines for a clash at the United Nations pitting Moscow and Beijing against Washington and its allies.

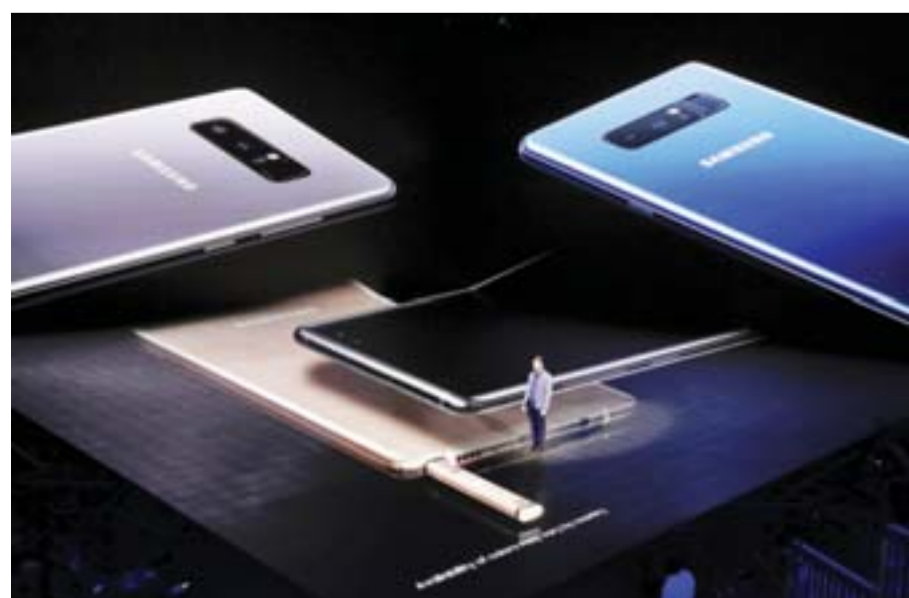
The US on Monday demanded the "strongest possible measures" against North Korea for detonating what

Pyongyang said was a hydrogen bomb that could be mounted on a missile. The announcement dramatically upped the stakes in its standoff with the international community over its banned weapons programs, which have seen it subjected to seven sets of UN Security Council sanctions so far. As well as the US, South Korea and Japan, plus permanent Security Council members France and Britain, have called for stronger measures against it, with several arguing for a potentially crippling oil embargo.

Continued on Page 11



Photo distributed by the North Korean government shows what was said to be the test launch of a Hwasong-12 intermediate range missile in Pyongyang, North Korea. — AP



NEW YORK: Justin Denison, vice president of strategy for Samsung Telecommunications America, stands among projections of the company's Galaxy Note 8, during the phone's introduction, in New York. — AP

SAMSUNG NOTE 8 GIVES ITS STYLUS - FOR A PRICE

NEW YORK: A stylus might seem, well, out of style in the tap-and-type world of smartphones. Yet it's what sets Samsung's Note phones apart from the competition. That's significant as Apple prepares to launch what's expected to be a super-premium phone next week, one that will match many of the features in the new Note 8 phone.

Though not its pen. I was skeptical at first, but the stylus grew on me. Still, the Note 8 isn't going to be for everyone. Most people will be fine with Samsung's S8 phones for a few hundred dollars less. The Note 8 is more for "power users" - those who use their phones a lot more than the average consumer. The Note 8 starts selling in the US next week for \$930 to \$960, depending on the carrier.

Battery issues

What's top on people's minds probably isn't the pen, but the phone's battery, given last year's Note 7 recall following a string of sponta-

neous fires. Samsung has stepped up its safety tests this year. Time will tell how well they work. Samsung reduced battery capacity by 6 percent to make room for various safety measures. But there's still plenty of juice. The phone still had two-thirds of its charge left after four hours of Netflix. Tasks such as email, Facebook and note-taking won't be as draining.

Great for note-taking

A screen-off memo feature lets you use the stylus to take notes without having to unlock the phone. You can jot down a quick reminder while walking, or cross items off your shopping list at the store. It feels like real writing, without any noticeable lag. And writing a quick thought doesn't feel as rude as opening an app and typing while with friends. Unlike past Note models, this one lets you scroll down to write more than a single screen worth of notes. But I had to retype my notes anyway, including impressions I jotted down for this review.

Samsung's character-recognition software couldn't make out my chicken-scratch handwriting. For instance, "end up typing" got transcribed as "inn up yping."

Traveling abroad

Past Note phones translated words you hovered over with the stylus. The Note 8 extends that to full sentences, though it's on you to figure out that you have to tap the "T" icon to switch modes. And you need to specify the language you're translating from, even though the Google Translate service the feature's based on usually has auto-detection. The translation feature also converts currency and units of measurements. That's useful in figuring out that a 23-kilogram baggage limit means 50.71 pounds. But it repeatedly failed to pick up measurements in centimeters. And it didn't pick up on a common European convention of using a comma where the decimal point

Continued on Page 11



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives the National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim.



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



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

DEPUTY AMIR RECEIVES SEVERAL SENIOR OFFICIALS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received the National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim at Seif Palace yesterday. HH the Deputy Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

KUWAIT APPLAUDS SAUDI ARABIA AFTER PROSPEROUS HAJJ SEASON

By Mesh'al Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the ministry of Awqaf and Islamic affairs, Fareed Assad Emadi said that under the leadership of the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz, KSA has succeeded in organizing the Hajj season this year and sufficiently facilitating the ritual for all pilgrims. Emadi added

that the expansions of construction sites made it much easier for pilgrims to perform Hajj this year thanks to the decades of experience KSA governments and rulers have in serving and aiding pilgrims. Emadi also said that Kuwait's Hajj mission has also developed and successfully administered the season. In addition to Kuwaiti pilgrims, the mission also served 1,000 bedoon pilgrims.



Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Fareed Emadi.



Hind Al-Sabeeh receives Eid well wishers.

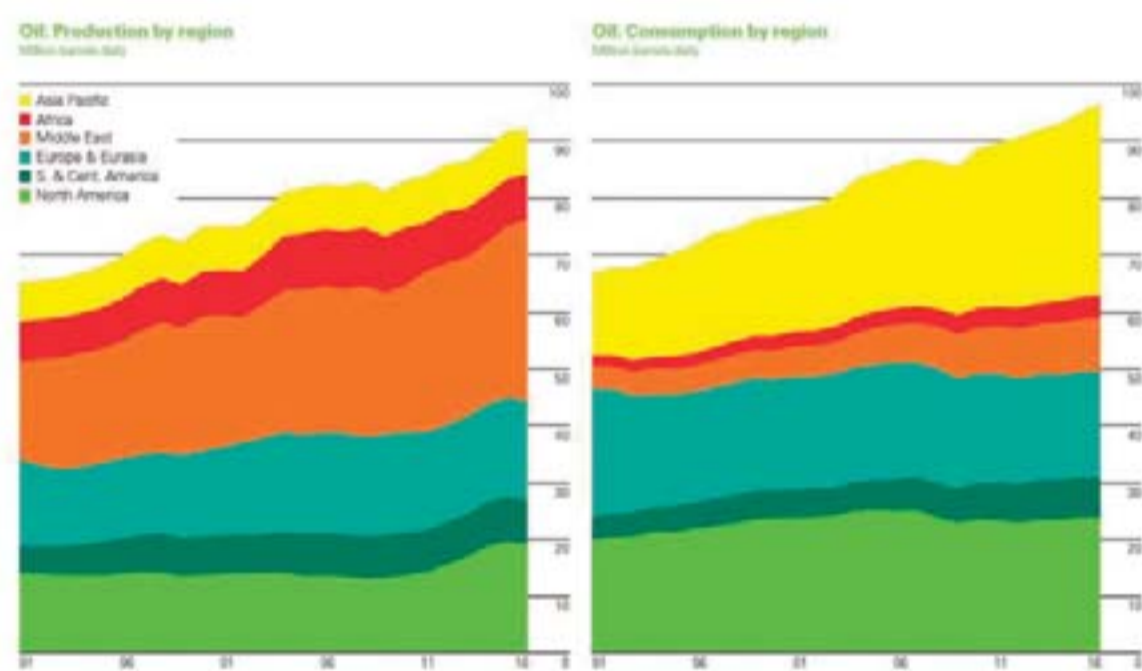
MPs HAVE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO GRILL, SAYS MIN AL-SABEEH

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh proclaimed yesterday that it is a parliamentary prerogative to inter-pole any government official and that right is supported by the constitution. Al-Sabeeh's remarks come in response to the growing speculation that she could be subject to a grilling procedure in parliament, a prospect that she welcomed and

described as "a constitutional right of all MPs." Al-Sabeeh, who is also Minister of State for Economic Affairs, added that all "development plans will be shared with the parliament during its forthcoming term." When asked about the country's demographic structure, she replied that an ad hoc committee dealing with the issue would meet soon to discuss the matter. — KUNA



Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh speaks to the press.

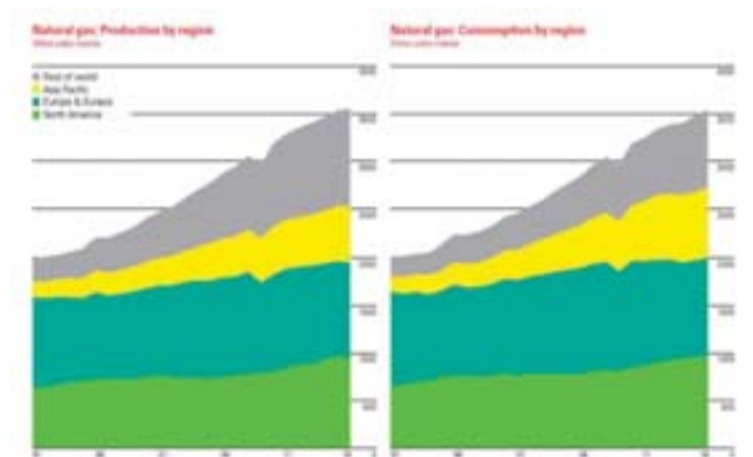


KUWAIT CONSUMPTION OF OIL DECREASES BY 1.3 PER CENT

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: BP's sixth annual report recently indicated that Kuwait consumption of oil decreased by 1.3 per cent to 499,000 barrels per day while KSA remains the highest in GCC and ME in consumption rates. International oil consumption has grown by 1.6 billion barrels/day (1.6 per cent), which more than the 1.2 per cent average that had been dominant for ten years. The report said that China had the lion's cut of the consumption increase with 400,000 barrels a day followed by India with 330,000 barrels per day.

The report also said that international daily oil consumption was 96.55 million barrels per day of which 34.8 per cent is consumed in Asia and the Pacific, 24.7 per cent in North America, 9.8 per cent in the Middle East, a little over 4 per cent in Africa, 19.5 per cent in Europe and Eurasia and 7.2 per cent in Latin and Central America. Notably, the report showed that Qatar consumption rates grew 7.5 per cent; that is 339,000 barrels per day, in 2016 followed by UAE by 6.7 per cent (987,000 barrels/day).



Legislation achievements

MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subai'e said that the coming parliamentary term would witness an abundance of legislation achievements, namely laws related to citizens and economic reform. Al-Subai'e added that it was highly important to pass the bills of supporting the judiciary, retention, social insurance, honesty and contradiction of interests during the coming term. He also denied that the parliamentary legislation committee delayed laws and bills though it has

too many proposals on its agenda.

Water solutions

MPW's assistant undersecretary for health engineering affairs and the ministry's official spokesperson, Abdul Mohsen Al-Enezi expected the electric current would be connected to Al-Khairan sewage water processing plant soon in order to meet Khairan residents' demands to operate the plant and use the processed sewage water in irrigating area plants and parks.

KUWAIT BOURSE ENDS TRADING IN GREEN ZONE

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait, the national stock exchange, ended yesterday's trading session in the green zone as the price index went up by 28.46 points to reach 6,920.56 points. The weighted index went up 1.64 points reaching 432.21 points as well as the KSX 15, gaining 7.18 points to stand at 992.08 points. The number of trades reached 3,047 points with a value of KD 18 million while the volume was at 87,228.433 million shares. — KUNA



KNPC LAUNCHES KEY LIQUEFIED GAS PROJECT

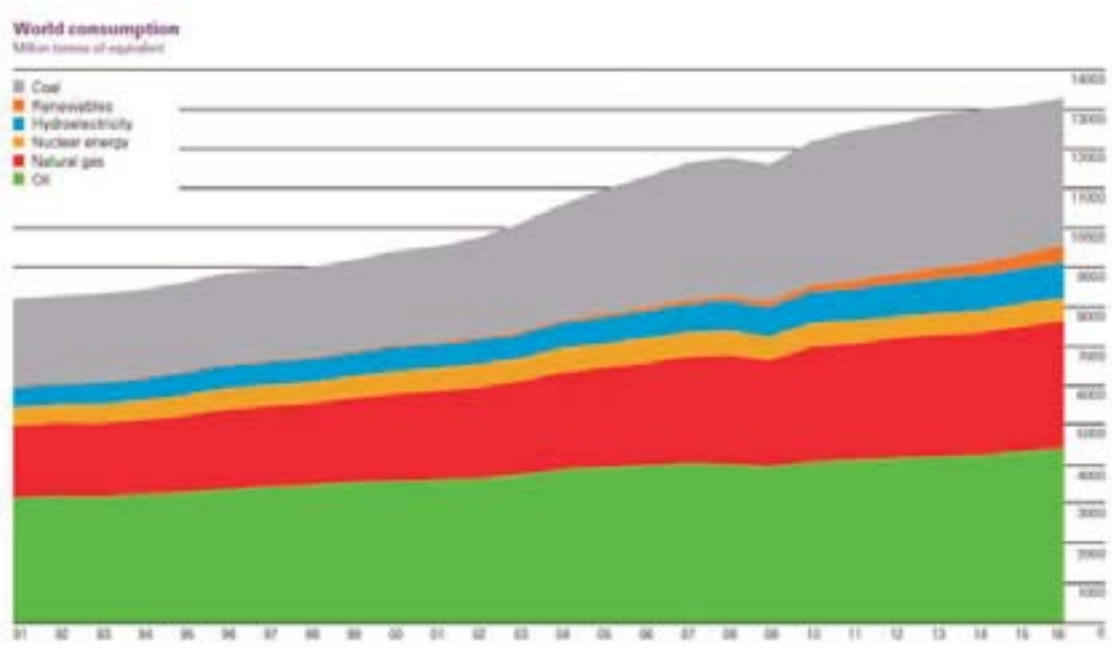
KUWAIT: Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) kicked off yesterday the first phase of a liquefied gas tank project in Mina Al-Ahmadi refinery. The project was initiated after the export of the first shipment of propane

and butane gases, KNPC's official spokesman Abdullah Al-Ajmi told KUNA. He spoke of the significance of the enterprise as a major project that will prove beneficial for the company by boosting liquefied gas storage capacity,

which, in turn, leads to increased production and profits. Al-Ajmi pointed out that the first phase of the project entails configuring four out of 10 tanks, while the remaining ones will be up and running by December. — KUNA



First phase of a liquefied gas tank project in Mina Al-Ahmadi refinery



Photo

of the day



Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center during sunset — KUNA



DUTCH MOSQUES RECEIVE MILLIONS FROM KUWAIT

KUWAIT: According to the NRC yesterday, charitable organizations from Kuwait donated over 10 million euros towards eighteen Islamic organizations in the Netherlands. The NRC reports were based on a confidential overview of Kuwaiti gifts that the Gulf State provided to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Kuwait is the first Gulf State to give Netherlands an overview of its gifts and donations to institutions in the country. The overview shows the amounts Kuwait donated between 2007 and 2015.

The report was well-received expect for a noted gift towards the controversial Al Fitrah mosque in the city of Utrecht. The donation

was sent from the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, which is included on the US list of organizations funding terrorism. The document shows that Al Fitrah received money from the organization in 2012 to build a new mosque, despite denying this claim last year, the NRC said. The mosque has denied all terror claims and told the authorities that it has no financial ties with any terrorist organizations in Kuwait. The document only covers donations from charities, not private individuals. Some extremely moderate organisations also benefited from extra money for a wide range of uses, including paying for Qurans to distribute and new mosque buildings, the paper said.



JAKARTA: Muslim women hold a banner during a rally against persecution of Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim minority, outside Myanmar Embassy. — AP

KUWAIT EXPRESSES CONCERNS OVER WORRYING DEVELOPMENTS IN ASIA

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah expressed concerns yesterday over the growing and worrying developments in the Asian region. In a press statement to Al-Jareeda newspaper, Al-Jarallah expressed deep concerns over the human rights violations against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, stressing that Kuwait's position on the issue came within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which condemned the outbreak of violence against the Rohingya.

He called on Myanmar to protect the rights of its Rohingya Muslim minority. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), about 90,000 Rohingyas have fled into neighboring Bangladesh from Myanmar since violence erupted on

August 25. On developments in the Korean Peninsula, Al-Jarallah reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to the UN Security Council resolutions relating to economic embargo on North Korea.

He said that Kuwait will continue working with the competent UN bodies and international partners to keep them apprised of the measures it takes in this regard, adding that Kuwait's commitment was consistent with its international responsibilities to the resolutions of the international legitimacy. Last month, the UN Security Council unanimously passed a resolution imposing new sanctions against North Korea in response to its intercontinental missile tests, which recently resulted in projectile flying over northern Japan. —KUNA

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report

YOUNG FEMALE CITIZEN ATTEMPTS SUICIDE

KUWAIT: A young female citizen was rushed to hospital for treatment after she ingested some of her mother's PB medications in an attempt to commit suicide. The girl's mother and sister claimed her daughter was experiencing bouts of shock and depression after her divorce and that her suicide attempt was due to these stressful conditions.

Drunken citizen arrested

A citizen was recently arrested when he began drunkenly shouting at salesmen in a desserts store in Hawally. He was screaming at the employees to give him money. One of the salesmen smelled the liquor on his breath and then proceeded to call the police.

Heroin users caught

Two citizens were recently arrested in Farwaniya with the possession of heroin said security sources. Sources noted that a police patrol had spotted a suspicious looking vehicle and on stopping it and searching the two passengers, they turned out to be citizens in their fifties and had the drugs on them. A case was filed and the suspects were referred to the relevant authorities.

Liquor factory shut

Ahmadi detectives recently raided a local liquor 'factory' run by two expatriates in Sabah Al-Ahmed. The police arrested the suspects and confiscated around 140 barrels of liquor, 105 sugar sacks and 6 evaporation and distillation devices.

Social media virus

A search is currently on for a reckless driver who had been filming his own stunts and posting the videos on social media networks. The videos included acts of defiance and insults to the police daring them to catch him. The suspect was also seen in one of the videos promising the police that he would be soon released if they arrest him and that he would manage to have his vehicle released the exact following day if they detained it.

Open robbery

A citizen reported that while waiting for a meal he ordered at a Fahaheel restaurant, a young Syrian approached while him crying. When he inquired about the reason, he told him that he was so hungry as he had not eaten for two days and only wanted one dinar to buy something to eat. The man told security sources that he immediately reached for his wallet to give him some money but the suspect immediately snatched the wallet and disappeared, leaving the citizen in shock. The man explained that his wallet included his IDs, driving license, credit and ATM cards in addition to KD 100 in cash.

Paradise lost

Well-informed sources recently warned that Firdous Area was becoming too dangerous for people passersby and drivers as many kids and young men have been bullying people and stoning passing vehicles and buses without any legal or ethical deterrent. The sources added that the area was no more a 'Paradise' as reckless and violent assailants have also been damaging public facilities in the area and have been seen running away from the police on several occasions. — Al-Rai/ Al-Qabas



CAPITAL DRIVING TEST DEPARTMENT READY TO MOVE TO NEW LOCATION

By: Hanan Al-Sa'doun

KUWAIT: MOI relations and security media department said that the capital driving test department would be moved to its nearby new location within the capital driving school and that the new department would start receiving the public starting from the official working hours on Sunday, September 10, 2017.

Elsewhere, the acting MOI undersecretary, lit general Sheikh Mohammed Al-Yousif Al-Sabah yesterday visited the services directorate, the retirees Diwaniya, the citizenship and passports department and the residency affairs and detectives departments where he was received by top officials and briefed on the work procedures and progress in each department, especially during the vacations.



BIKER GANG APPREHENDED

By Hanan Al-Sa'doun

KUWAIT: A gang of six was arrested recently for multiple robberies said security sources noting that the suspects were arrested with the possession of seven bikes they used to rob their victims. The sources explained that two suspects usually rode a bike and approached their victims from behind to snatch their mobile phones, back bags or whatever other valuables they carried. The sources added that the suspects had also stolen the contents of vehicles they managed to break open. The suspects are so far facing charges in 23 robbery cases.

Car bust

MOI relations and the security media department said that the capital security department launched an inspection campaign in Shuwaikh industrial area where 15 vehicles were confiscated from garages where they had been under repair without insurance.

Dead man's cell

A 58-year-old central prison inmate was found dead in his cell, said security sources noting that on examining the body, coroners discovered the man had died of natural causes.

Drug dealer caught

An expatriate was recently arrested in Farwaniya for possessing over half a kilo of heroin. Security sources noted that the suspect later admitted he was a drug dealer.



AHMADI MUNICIPALITY LAUNCHES E-CONSTRUCTION LICENSE SYSTEM

KUWAIT: Ahmadi municipality officially launched its e-construction license issue system in a special ceremony held at Ahmadi municipality headquarters attended by Municipality deputy director for Ahmadi and Hawally, Fahad Al-Otaibi and Ahmadi municipality manager, Soud Al-Dabbous. The launch followed the implementation of the system in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Hawally and the capital.

Speaking on this occasion, Al-Otaibi said that Ahmadi issued its first e-license and explained that the new system allows returning any transaction back to the related architecture and engineering office to make sure all needed documents are provided so that the license could be issued in record time. He added that the new system would be used in all municipality branches by the end of the year.

Furthermore, Al-Otaibi said that the e-construction licenses system was part of a strategy set by director, Ahmed Al-Manfouhi under the supervision of Minister of Awqaf and Islamic affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Mohammed Al-Jebri.



RESTAURANT INSPECTION CAMPAIGNS

KUWAIT: Head of the capital municipality A and B inspection teams, Abdullah Jabber said his teams had conducted inspection campaigns throughout the Eid vacation on various restaurants and stores. He added that the campaigns resulted in filing 32 citations including violating cleanliness conditions, selling expired food items, not having health certificates, using unlicensed ads, operating without a license, removing 26 ads and destroying 23 kilos of expired food items.



Teachers head back to school

Al-Anbaa

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

ABDUL HUSSEIN'S SECRET

By Professor Ghanem Al-Najjar

Reactions to the sad demise of Abdul Hussein Abdul Redha have surely exceeded all norms, which is well deserved and truly reflects the legacy of that 'beautiful' human being. The atmosphere was filled with love, containment and solidarity. What is Abdul Hussein Abdul Redha's secret? He was not a political leader, ruler, millionaire or the head of some clan. How did he manage to unite everyone in loving him at such time when hatred prevails everywhere and hating others has become an acceptable habit? Abdul Hussein Abdul Redha's value appears even in his death as people realized they share a common value. I posted this on Twitter to emphasize his value and not to get answers.

The reactions were beyond my expectations but I failed to follow up all reactions that reflected a wonderful spirit. Contemplating about the secret of Abdul Hussein Abdul Redha, the feedback I received suggested patriotism, his genuine smile, pure heart, avoiding

grudges and conflicts, honesty, reaping the love he had sown. Feedback also included, "others are as honest and hardworking but he is different", "Allah loved him and made people love him", "He spread love and joy", "He was a great unrivalled artist", "He devotedly loved Kuwait" and so many more.

My tweet wasn't a question but rather to emphasize the man's value. People had a wild surge to answer a question that needed no answer. Most people feel like they are a part of Abdul Hussein, and that they knew him so well that they feel identical with him. One of the comments I received stressed the way everybody united in dealing with losing Abdul Hussein Abdul Redha indicating that we need him and the national patriotic values he represented instead of the current state of fragmentation, designation and sectarianism. May almighty have mercy on your soul Abo Adnan. We will surely miss you.—Translated by Kuwait Times

القمر

Al-Qabas

THE PHENOMENAL ECLIPSE

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

When we were young we were scared of the dark and the solar eclipse or the drop in temperature accompanied with strong winds. At such times everyone used rushed to the mosques to pray for the end of this crises thinking it was something evil but all this ended with development in science that cleared the mist from our eyes, and soon this phenomenon became something that we now spend money to watch and wait for its occurrence.

On August 21, 2017, a total eclipse took place and pleased many people. The last time this occurred was about 100 years ago, and we won't see another one until 2024 so until then, Muslims will continue to fight, insult with each other and consider an unbeliever over the authenticity of seeing the crescent or Ramadan.

During the May 29, 1919 eclipse which lasted six minutes, it was seen from Northern Brazil to Principe Island in African Guinea. It represented a scientific phenomenon, as the English physicist Arthur Eddington convinced his government to finance his attempt to prove the gravity theory written by a German Jewish scientist Albert Einstein in 1915, who said that gravity causes the curvature of space, and that the lights leaving the stars bend following the curvature. So if there was a star that is close to the sun, then its light will bend due to the gravity of the sun.

The total eclipse gave Eddington the opportunity to test Einstein's theory but the English government gave credit to the German national, its arch enemy, besides that proof of the theory represents an adjustment made by the smart English scientist Isaac Newton. Yet, Eddington went ahead with his project, as he will not get another opportunity. When darkness prevailed with the sun disappearing behind the moon, and stars appeared during mid-day, Eddington located a certain star that is normally hidden behind the sun, exactly like Einstein expected and in turn was sure he was accurate.

In addition to that, the total eclipse phenomenon enabled scientists to see the sun's crown and considered it as a scientific discovery, as the sun's disc is brighter than its outer edges or crown, and only with the eclipse the outer limits can be seen. After that German Einstein with his relativity theory, knocked down or adjusted the theories of Isaac Newton, and became the greatest scientist humanity has known, and that was the start of Einstein's fame.—Translated by Kuwait Times

AHLI UNITED BANK VISITS CHILDREN AT AMIRI HOSPITAL BEARING EID GIFTS

KUWAIT: In the spirit of Eid Al-Adha, and as part of Ahli United Bank's corporate social responsibility framework that includes a wide range of initiatives and humanitarian acts as well as social events, the Bank's volunteer team visited children at the Amiri Hospital to celebrate the forthcoming Eid. During the visit, the Bank's team members distributed gifts and games to the children appropriate to their

health condition and age group. Ahli United Bank's latest initiative has left children and their families with smiles and a lasting positive impact. Mr Richard Groves, CEO Ahli United Bank said, "The Bank's visit reflects our keen interest in consistently communicating with all members of society, and sharing with them the joyful moments of Eid, especially children who may be poorly and in hospital at this time. We hope they will get well soon.

The Bank's volunteers who visited Amiri Hospital were able to connect and communicate with children with the objective of sharing happy moments with them, reflecting our values. The visit was successful and children have reacted positively with the Bank's team." The Amiri Hospital's Public Relations team have commended Ahli United Bank's visit and thanked the Bank's management for their staff's efforts.



NBK PARTICIPATES IN LOYAC'S SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM KON

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) participated in Loyac's social entrepreneurship program 'KON'. 'KON' is a social entrepreneurship program that is co-created with Babson College. It aims to introduce young adults between the ages of 12 to 16 to the world business and to help turn their ideas into action. Throughout the 5 weeks program, NBK-Kuwait Deputy CEO, General Manager of Treasury Group, Sulaiman Al Marzouq along with a group of professional

leaders, mentors and trainers, encouraged the participants to create a profitable business that solves a social problem.

NBK's participation in the program comes as a part of its continuous support to Loyac. NBK is dedicated towards supporting talented young people and empowering them towards achieving their goals. 'KON' is one of these initiatives that help invest and support young youths. NBK is elated with the outcome of the program and

looks forward to seeing the participants moving into key leadership roles in their near future.

NBK is committed to supporting talented and qualified youngsters and empowering them to realize their potentials. The KON program goes along with NBK's initiatives to invest in youth and support their aspirations. NBK believes that investing in human resources is investing in our future. NBK looks forward with high expectations for the outcomes of 'KON'.



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(Announcement)

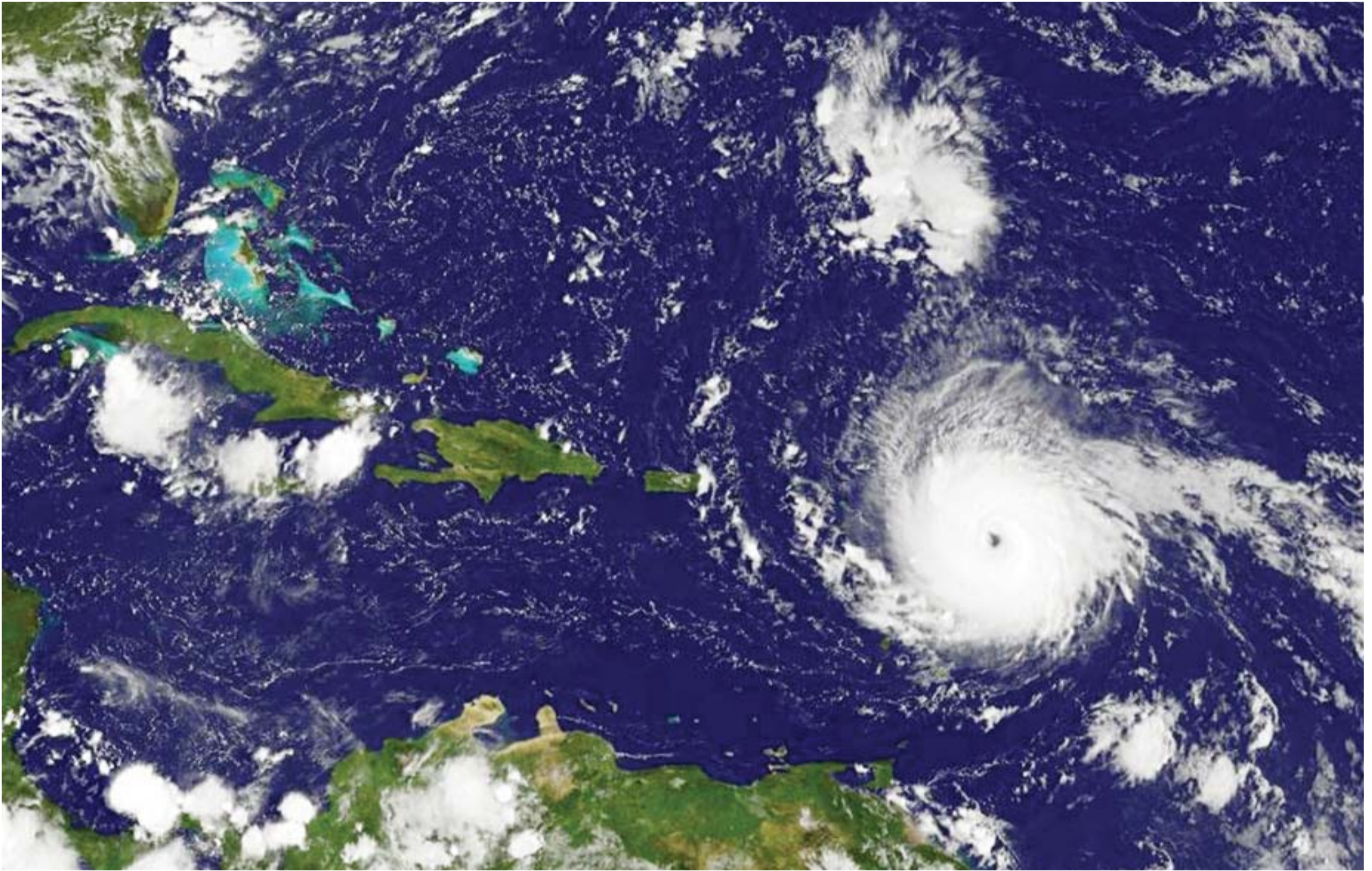
KNPC/PQ-R&T/ /001 "Al-Dibdibah Photovoltaic Power Plant" For Oil Sector

Internal Purchasing Committee (IPC) would like to announce that the closing date of the above (PQ) has been extended from Thursday 07/09/2017 to Thursday 28/09/2017



Crisis looms as nearly 125,000 refugees flood into Bangladesh

AFTER STRING OF DEFEATS, IS FACES RETREAT TO THE DESERT



IN SPACE: This image obtained from NASA's GOES Project shows Hurricane Irma. —AFP

HURRICANE IRMA BARRELS TOWARDS CARIBBEAN

SCHOOLS, OFFICES SHUT DOWN, HOSPITALS STOCK UP ON MEDICINES

MARIGOT, France: Irma, a dangerous Category Four hurricane that is gaining in force, closed in on the Caribbean yesterday, sparking alarm and alerts from the French West Indies to Florida. The monster hurricane coming on the heels of Hurricane Harvey that struck Texas and Louisiana late last month is expected to make landfall along the string of French islands including Guadeloupe late yesterday before heading to Haiti and Florida.

The US National Hurricane Center said at 0900 GMT that the storm was packing top sustained winds of 150 mph. Irma's centre was grinding westward at 14 miles per hour and located about 320 miles east of the West Indies' Leeward Islands, the NHC said, urging that "preparations to protect life and property should be rushed to completion" in the region. Schools and government offices in Guadeloupe have been ordered shut, while hospitals are stocking up on medicines, food and drinking water.

People living on shorelines will be moved to safety,

authorities said in the Guadeloupe capital Marigot. Saint Barthelemy and St Martin islands, both popular holiday destinations, are expected to be especially hard hit. The top French official of the islands, Anne Laubies, said the hurricane posed the greatest threat in 20 years, with more people endangered in flood-prone areas because of a rise in population.

Threat to Florida

The governor of the US state of Florida, Rick Scott, declared a state of emergency, saying Irma posed "a severe threat to the entire state of Florida", barely a week after Harvey claimed at least 42 lives. Long queues of people rushed to get batteries and bottled water, while many cut trees around their dwellings and sought to tie down objects and seal up their windows. A Category Four storm on the Saffir Simpson scale is capable of doing widespread major structural and infrastructure damage. It can easily

tear off roofing, shatter windows, uproot palm trees and turn them into projectiles that can kill people.

Irma is projected to make landfall late yesterday or early today, bringing water levels up to nine feet above normal levels, rainfall of up to 10 inches in areas, and "large and destructive waves," the US National Hurricane Center warned. Category-four strength was the maximum attained by Harvey, which dumped as many as 50 inches of rain in some parts of Houston, turning neighborhoods into lakes and causing material damage estimated at around \$100 billion.

In Puerto Rico, a US territory of 3.5 million, Governor Ricardo Rossello activated the National Guard and announced the opening of storm shelters able to house up to 62,000 people. The major of the Puerto Rican capital San Juan, Carmen Yulin Cruz Soto, ordered 900 municipal employees-police, emergency personnel, and aid and social workers-to report for rotating 12-hour shifts. Even if

Puerto Rico is spared a direct hit, the mayor said, three days of pounding rain will do heavy damage.

US carrier in position

A US aircraft carrier with a field hospital and dozens of aircraft able to conduct rescue or supply missions has been positioned protectively in the area, according to Alejandro de la Campa of the Caribbean division of the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Local press identified the carrier as the USS Kearsarge. Irma's precise path remains unclear. But several projections have it passing over the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba before turning north toward

Florida and then possibly swinging up the US East Coast. Irma is expected to produce total rainfall accumulations of 3 to 6 inches across the islands of the northeastern Caribbean, with isolated maximum amounts of 10 inches across the northern section.—AFP

SYRIA ARMY BREAKS YEARS LONG IS SIEGE ON DEIR EZZOR

DEIR EZZOR, Syria: Syria's army broke a years-long Islamic State group siege on the government enclave of Deir Ezzor city yesterday as it battles to expel the jihadists from a key stronghold. The jihadist group has already lost more than half of its nearby bastion of Raqqa to 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.

Syria's army and allied fighters, backed by Russian air support, have been advancing towards Deir Ezzor on several fronts in recent weeks, and yesterday arrived inside the Brigade 137 base on its western edge. "The Syrian Arab Army this afternoon broke the siege on Deir Ezzor city after its advancing forces arrived from the western province to Brigade 137," state news agency SANA said.

State media reported celebrations inside the government-held parts of the city as the troops arrived. Government forces and tens of thousands of civilians in the city have been trapped under IS siege for over two years, facing food and medical shortages. Early this year, the government-held parts of the city were cut in two by an IS offensive. The army's advance to the Brigade 137 base yesterday breaks the siege on the northern part of the city, to which it is connected by a road.

'Good morning of victory'

But a southern government-held section, including the key military airport, remains surrounded. Government forces are heading towards the southern sector, however, and are currently around 15 kilometers away, according to the Syrian

Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor. Around 100,000 people are believed to be inside government-held areas of Deir Ezzor, with perhaps 10,000 more in parts of the city held by IS.

Earlier yesterday, a local journalist contributing to AFP inside the government-held northern part of Deir Ezzor reported the sound of fierce clashes and heavy artillery as the army approached. He said the national flag had been raised throughout the area in anticipation of celebrations upon the arrival of government soldiers. Some residents, who have faced shortages of food and medicine throughout the siege, had begun greeting each other with "Good morning of victory," he added.

The army still faces a potentially difficult battle to break the siege on the south of the city and free its remaining neighborhoods, and the surrounding province, from IS. But for the government, its success would be "one of the most symbolic victories in its six-year war," wrote Syria analyst Aron Lund in an analysis recently.

"The reopening of the Deir Ezzor road is a strategic disaster for IS, which is now at its weakest since 2014 and seems unable to break out of an accelerating spiral of defeats," he added. IS has lost over half its other Syrian stronghold, the city of Raqqa, to an offensive by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, an alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters. And in neighboring Iraq, it has lost 90 percent of the territory it once held, including the city of Mosul. — AFP



DEIR EZZOR: Syrian pro-government forces gather in Bir Qabaqib, more than 40 kilometers west of Deir Ezzor, after taking control of the area on their way to Kobajjep in the ongoing battle against Islamic State (IS) group jihadists. — AFP

YEMEN'S HUTHI REBELS FEAR COUP

SANAA: Yemen's ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh said the country's Huthi rebels feared a "coup" but that there were no longer any tensions with them, despite strains in the past fortnight. "There is no crisis and conflict at the moment," the 75-year-old strongman said late Monday in an interview on Al-Yemen Al-Yom television, which his party controls. On August 24, hundreds of thousands put on a show of force for Saleh at a rally marking the 35th anniversary of

his Arab nationalist General People's Congress (GPC) party.

"There were fears and suspicions that the rally would be a coup" against the Iran-backed Huthis, and "this is what their leaders told us," said the former president. Saleh said Huthi leaders told him there had been "an operation" against them and a GPC plot to "take control of state institutions". In response, Saleh said he had sent two letters to Abdel Malek al-Huthi, head of

the rebel group, to reassure him. "I asked him not to believe the suspicions, and he reacted positively," he added. Cracks emerged in the alliance between Saleh and Huthi after the two publicly accused each other of treason and back-stabbing.

In an unprecedented outbreak of violence between the allies on August 26, a colonel loyal to Saleh and two rebels were killed. Saleh ruled Yemen with an iron fist for more than three

decades before stepping down in 2012 after a bloody, year-long uprising. But the strongman retained the loyalty of some of the best-equipped units in the military and later joined forces with the Huthis, after they overran the capital in 2014. The ensuing civil war between the Saudi-backed government and the Huthi-Saleh alliance has killed thousands and brought the Arabian Peninsula country to the brink of famine. —AFP

AID WORKERS FEAR FALLOUT FROM ISRAEL VISA SUSPENSION

JERUSALEM: Israel has suspended granting work visas for new foreign charity workers arriving in the country, humanitarians say, in a move that could impede aid to Palestinians. Dozens of aid workers from major international NGOs have been unable to get work visas or faced delays in recent months, the humanitarians say. Israel says the matter is procedural, but has not found a permanent solution to the issue in more than a year. "This situation could escalate into crippled humanitarian operations," a senior aid worker said.

Israeli officials strongly denied that the delay was intentional, with the social affairs ministry calling any such suggestion a "false accusation". Palestinians are heavily dependent on aid, with more than two-thirds in the beleaguered Gaza Strip reliant upon it, according to the United Nations. Much of it is delivered by international charities, which usually operate through Israel.

Since June, however, no new aid workers have been able to get a B1 work visa, the most common type for foreign NGO workers in the country. This followed similar suspensions from August to December 2016 and from March to April this year. Dozens of aid workers have been affected so far, the humanitarians said, with a number stuck outside the country waiting for their visas to come through.

'They can't replace me'

Others are working illegally on tourist visas, but fear they could be expelled. "A country director who is waiting outside the country for months means timely delivery of aid will be affected," the senior aid worker said. Another aid worker who arrived in Israel in June said she waited two months to hear from the ministry of social affairs to no avail. In August, the aid worker travelled outside Israel and on her return she said authorities told her she had a month to sort out her situation or leave. She expects to leave Israel in the coming days.

"They can't replace me, as any foreigner they bring in will have the same problem," she told AFP on condition of anonymity. The head of the charity's operations in the occupied West Bank is due to arrive in the coming weeks but is expected to face the same predicament. Around 300 international NGO staff, including country heads,

need B1 visas approved on a yearly basis, but to do so they need a letter of recommendation from the ministry of social affairs. Without such letters the interior ministry will not issue the visa, but the ministry of social affairs has said it is no longer its responsibility. And the interior ministry has said it could not issue new visas without the letters.

'Important work'

The ministry of social affairs said the delays were due to "ongoing inter-ministerial considerations regarding the applications approval procedure". "We believe the temporal delay will soon end, hopefully with minimal effect on the important work done by aid organizations and NGOs," it said in a statement to AFP. Aid workers said, however, the problem began over a year ago and some expressed concerns the Israeli government is seeking to make their work harder. The ministry of social affairs said they "absolutely and completely deny this false accusation".

Previous delays were resolved when the ministry temporarily returned to the practice of delivering the letters. Early this year, Israel passed a law allowing the interior ministry to ban entry to supporters of a movement boycotting Israel over its occupation of Palestinian territories. The senior aid worker suggested the ministry of social affairs could be wary of giving recommendation letters as it does not have the ability to properly vet individuals.

Israeli officials have accused a number of aid workers of being biased towards the Palestinians and of being manipulated by the Islamist movement Hamas. The Gaza head of the international Christian charity World Vision is on trial in Israel for allegedly providing support to Hamas, which is considered a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States and the European Union. Rights groups also fear their work is being curtailed by the Israeli government, considered the most right-wing in the country's history.

In February, Israel refused a visa for the American country head of Human Rights Watch, accusing the group of being "fundamentally biased" towards the Palestinians. After international condemnation, however, the Israeli government reversed position and granted the visa. — AFP



TAL AFAR: Fighters of the Hashed al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization units) ride in a motorcycle as one carries a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launcher and an Iraqi flag, during their advance in the eastern part of the town of Tal Afar, west of Mosul. —AFP

AFTER STRING OF DEFEATS, IS FACES RETREAT TO THE DESERT

SYRIAN GOVT RAPIDLY RECOVERS GROUND LOST TO JIHADISTS

BAGHDAD: Facing a string of defeats in Syria and Iraq, the Islamic State group is being forced to retreat to the desert from which it emerged three years ago. By the end of 2014, the group born in Iraq held one third of the oil-rich country and large swathes of territory in neighboring Syria. But today it has lost 90 percent of its territory in Iraq, including the city of Mosul, while in Syria a US-backed alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters has captured over 60 percent of its one-time bastion of Raqqa.

Syrian government troops meanwhile are eating away at the last province under jihadist control, Deir Ezzor. At one time, the group held around half of Syria, much of it uninhabited desert, but today it controls just 15 percent, according to Syria specialist Fabrice Balanche. Syria's government meanwhile has rapidly recovered ground lost to rebel groups and jihadists and now claims 50 percent of the ravaged country. Kurdish forces hold around 23 percent, according to Balanche.

In Iraq and Syria, "the Islamic State's governance project (is) compromised, but I don't see the Islamic State completely defeated," said Ludovico Carlino, a senior analyst at IHS Markit Country Risk. "From a narrative/propaganda perspective, losing Raqqa will have surely big implications," particularly after the fall of Mosul, he said. But he said the Euphrates River Valley, an area of desert stretching from Deir Ezzor province in eastern Syria to Al-Qaim in western Iraq "from a strategic perspective... is much more important."

New tactics

"This is the area where IS will go underground and use as a launchpad for their insurgency." Commanders in the US-led coalition against IS estimate between 5,000 and 10,000 jihadist fighters and commanders have already fled Raqqa to the area. "The group has basically transferred all its administrative institutions and assets" there, said Carlino. The region includes key oil fields, an increasingly precious resource for IS, which has seen its finances decline enormously from their peak, with both oil revenue and tax collection down.

IS faces attack from several fronts and forces in the area, including the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Syria's army backed by Russia, and Iraq's army. The jihadists have begun to dig tunnels, plant explosive devices and prepare vehicle bombs, according to the US-led coalition. "The loss of Raqqa is already happening. It is the complete recapture of Deir Ezzor by the Syrian army that will be the real turning point," said Balanche.

Inside IS-held parts of the province, that possibility has created new restrictions and tension, according to activists. "They've built military barriers in each neighborhood and alleyway. They've mined the administrative borders to the cities," said Omar Abu Leila, an activist from Deir Ezzor 24, which publishes news on the city.

Lacking food and water

The group has also stepped up patrols,

inspecting ID cards of local residents and arresting young men, he said. "IS has planted more spies recently, fearing being compromised just before this expected battle," he added. As the prospect of IS being driven completely from Syria and Iraq nears, attention is turning to what might follow, and in particular the question of relations between minority and majority groups in the two countries.

The SDF has brought together Kurdish and Arab fighters, but it remains to be seen whether the alliance will withstand Kurdish dreams of federalism. And it is unclear whether Syria's government will allow other forces to control parts of the country it has spent six years trying to clear of rebels and jihadists. In Deir Ezzor, civilians in IS-held territory face shortages of food, water and electricity, and are increasingly afraid as the battle approaches, said Abu Leila.

"They are afraid that the SDF will collude with regime forces and hand over the territory from which Daesh was ousted to Assad's forces," he said, using the Arabic acronym for IS. They also fear revenge attacks by government forces or allies, he said. IS mined ethnic and sectarian divisions in both Syria and Iraq to recruit members to its cause, and experts warned the group would profit in the absence of real efforts at reconciliation. And the group will not disappear entirely, said Balanche. "IS will return to the underground. It will carry out terrorist attacks," he said. "Some will leave to pursue jihad elsewhere." —AFP



NAIROBI: Supporters of Kenya's opposition National Super Alliance (NASA) leader, Raila Odinga celebrate in the streets of Mathare slum in Nairobi. —AFP

KENYAN OPPOSITION LEADER ODINGA SETS CONDITIONS TO TAKE PART IN POLL RE-RUN

NAIROBI: Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga yesterday sought the sacking of several poll commission officials and set other conditions for taking part in a presidential vote re-run in October after the landmark scrapping of last month's poll won by President Uhuru Kenyatta. On Friday, Supreme Court Chief Justice David Maraga created history in Africa by declaring Kenyatta's victory in the August 8 election "invalid, null and void", citing widespread irregularities in the electronic transmission of vote results.

It was the first time a presidential election result was overturned in the continent and followed three failed bids by the 72-year-old Odinga for the presidency-in 1997, 2007 and 2013. "There will be no election on the 17th of October until terms and conditions which we have spelt out in this statement are met," a combative Odinga told reporters. He said the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) had set the new date after only consulting Kenyatta's Jubilee grouping and not his National Super Alliance.

"We find this a contemptuous action," he said. "It is Jubilee that decided on the date and not the IEBC. A number of the election officials should be sent home and some of them should be investigated and prosecuted for the kind of heinous crimes they committed in the last elections. Their names are known," he said. "These officials should not conduct elections." Odinga said

all eight presidential candidates who took part in the earlier poll should be allowed to contest this time as well.

New election no run-off

"This is a not repeat of a presidential election where number 1 and number 2 goes for a run-off," he said. "Therefore any Kenyan eligible to run can run." Odinga said the IEBC had not given the opposition access to its servers despite a Supreme Court injunction and called for a revamp of the system. "Basically by law the technology system that is being used by IEBC should be accessible by law to everyone, all the stakeholders..." he said. "We are not ready to participate in elections on October 17 without legal and constitutional guarantees. Because you cannot do a mistake twice and expect to get different results," Odinga warned.

After the shock ruling, an enraged Kenyatta said he would respect the decision but lashed out at the judges, saying: "Every time we do something a judge comes out and places an injunction. It can't go on like this... there is a problem and we must fix it." The 55-year-old president also branded the judges "hyenas" and "crooks", sparking a strong reaction about his "veiled threats" which they called an "assault on the judiciary". The electoral commission has vowed to make "internal changes" ahead of the new vote, though its chairman, Wafuqa Chebukati, ruled out resigning himself. —AFP

PALESTINIAN FAMILY EVICTED FROM JERUSALEM HOME OF 50 YEARS

JERUSALEM: Israeli police yesterday evicted a Palestinian family from the east Jerusalem home in which they lived for over half a century, making way for Israelis deemed the legal occupants. Plans for the eviction had been criticized by the European Union, United Nations and various Western governments, though not the United States. Fahamiya Shamasneh, 75, said police arrived unannounced before dawn and forced her out of the house along with her husband Ayoub, 84, their son and his family.

The couple had lived in the house in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of east Jerusalem near the historic Old City for 53 years. An AFP journalist saw young Jewish men moving into the building after the family were escorted out. "It is the hardest day," Fahamiya Shamasneh said tearfully on the street after being evicted. She said she was heating milk for her grandchildren when "they knocked on the door and said 'open its the police'."

"They took us out and threw us outside. What greater injustice is there than this? Maybe we will sleep in the street." The United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said it would seek to support the family financially to find another home. The Shamasnehs had for years been fighting a court battle against Jewish claimants who said the building was their family property, which they fled when east Jerusalem was occupied by Jordanian troops in the 1948 war that led to the creation of the Jewish state.

Under Israeli law, if Jews can prove their families lived in east Jerusalem homes before the

1948 war they can demand that Israel's general custodian office release the property and return their "ownership rights". During that war, thousands of Jews fled Jerusalem as Jordanian-led Arab forces seized the city, while hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled from land that was later to become Israel. No such law exists for Palestinians who lost their land.

Dangerous trend

The Shamasnehs say they had paid 250

shekels a month to the general custodian since 1967, an arrangement used by the settlers' side as proof that the family acknowledged its status as tenants. In 2013 the Israeli Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Jewish claimants. Yesterday's eviction was the first in the neighborhood since 2009, according to Israeli anti-occupation group Peace Now. Israel sees Jerusalem as its undivided capital, while the Palestinians want the eastern sector as their future capital. —AFP



JERUSALEM: Israeli policemen evict the Palestinian Shamasneh family from their home, in which they lived for over half a century, in the Arab neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah in east Jerusalem. —AFP

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MODI, XI MEETING ON RELATIONS CONSTRUCTIVE

XIAMEN, China: Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi agreed yesterday their countries need to make more efforts to improve mutual trust and that peace in their border areas was paramount for a positive future relationship, India's foreign secretary said. S Jaishankar told reporters that a more-than-hour-long meeting between the leaders was "constructive about where the relationship should be going and will be going." It was "a very strong affirmation at the leadership level that it is really in the interests of both countries to keep this relationship forward and on an upward trajectory," Jaishankar said.

India last week agreed to pull back troops from the disputed Doklam Plateau high in the Himalayas, where Chinese troops had started constructing a road. The 10-week standoff was the two nations' most protracted in decades, and added to their longstanding strategic rivalry. The plateau is claimed by

both China and the tiny kingdom of Bhutan, whose external security is handled by India. It is "natural that between neighbors and large powers that there would be areas of difference, but where there is an area of difference it should be handled with mutual respect and efforts should be made to find common ground in addressing those areas," Jaishankar said.

The two sides agreed that Chinese and Indian defense and security personnel "must maintain strong contacts and cooperation and ensure that the sort of situations which happened recently do not re-occur," he said. "One of the important points which was made during the meeting was that peace and tranquility in the border areas was a prerequisite for the further development of our relationship and that there should be more effort made to really enhance and strengthen the level of mutual trust between the two sides," Jaishankar said.

Healthy, stable relations

China's official Xinhua News Agency reported that Xi had said "healthy and stable" relations between China and India were in line with "the fundamental interests of their people." China is willing to work with India to improve political mutual trust, promote mutually beneficial cooperation, and "push Sino-Indian ties along a right track," Xinhua quoted him as saying. Xi and Modi met on the sidelines of the summit of the BRICS emerging economies in the southeastern Chinese port city of Xiamen. The BRICS nations are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The Indian foreign secretary said Beijing and Delhi could help build on their relationship through multilateral institutions like BRICS and the Chinese-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Progress was made during the BRICS summit on an issue relating to a major point of discord between the two—China's ally and India's archrival, Pakistan. —AP



XIAMEN: In this photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, left, and China's President Xi Jinping shake hands as they pose for a photo during a meeting on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Xiamen in southeastern China's Fujian Province. — AP



COX'S BAZAR: A Rohingya family reaches the Bangladesh border after crossing a creek of the Naf river on the border with Myanmar, in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf area. — AP

CRISIS LOOMS AS NEARLY 125,000 REFUGEES FLOOD INTO BANGLADESH

REFUGEE ARRIVAL RAISES FEARS OF HUMANITARIAN DISASTER

COX'S BAZAR: Nearly 125,000 mostly Rohingya refugees have entered Bangladesh since a fresh upsurge of violence in Myanmar on August 25, the United Nations said yesterday, as fears grow of a humanitarian crisis in the overstretched camps. The UN said 123,600 had crossed the border in the past 11 days from Myanmar's violence-racked Rakhine state. Their arrival has raised fears of a fresh humanitarian disaster as already crowded camps in Bangladesh-home to around 400,000 Rohingya refugees before the latest crisis-struggle to cope with the influx.

Many are sleeping in the open air and are in dire need of food and water after walking for days to reach safety, the UN's main coordinator in Bangladesh said in a report. "There is an urgent need for emergency shelters and for land to build these shelters on," said Vivian Tan, spokeswoman for the UN refugee agency. "These people have walked for days. Some of them haven't eaten for days since they left. They survived on rain water and ground water."

Bangladesh initially tried to block the refugees, stepping up border patrols and pushing some back into Myanmar. But in recent days they appear to have largely given up trying to prevent an influx that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday was a "big burden" for Bangladesh. Bangladeshi rights campaigner Nur Khan Liton said a "massive humanitarian crisis" was unfolding.

"People are staying in refugee camps, on the roads, school yards and under open sky. They are clearing forest to create new settlements. There is an acute crisis of water and food," he said.

Decades of persecution

The latest unrest broke out when a Rohingya militant group launched a series of coordinated ambushes on Myanmar security posts in response to what it said was a fresh crackdown. The Muslim Rohingya are seen as illegal immigrants in mainly Buddhist Myanmar and have suffered decades of persecution, according to rights groups.

Unverifiable testimony from those who have fled has alleged tit-for-tat mass killings and villages being torched by the army, Buddhist mobs and Rohingya militants. At least 11,000 Rakhine Buddhists and Hindus have also fled arson and attacks by militants to camps inside Myanmar, according to the last government update. Last week the World Food Program said it was suspending aid in Rakhine state as the humanitarian situation deteriorated.

Landmines

Bangladesh border officials say those fleeing are also facing the risk of landmines on the frontier between the two countries. Yesterday, two Rohingya children were injured by an apparent

landmine blast as they tried to flee unrest in Myanmar, border guard commander Manzurul Hasan Khan said. "They stepped onto some sort of explosives this morning and one of them lost his leg," Khan said. The incident came after a Rohingya woman had a leg blown off in the same area on Monday, raising fears that the border area had been deliberately mined.

It is not known what caused the blast, which he said was well inside Myanmar territory, but Khan said he believed it was a landmine. All three have been taken to hospitals in Cox's Bazar, the nearest city to the border, where hundreds of thousands of Rohingya—a stateless Muslim minority—have taken shelter in camps. Khan said many Rohingya were also entering Bangladesh with bullet wounds, although it was impossible to say how these were sustained as media access to the worst-hit parts of Myanmar's neighboring Rakhine is limited.

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. —AFP

SLOW JUSTICE AS DRUG WAR RAGES IN PHILIPPINES

MANILA: Accused murderer Manuel Cerna has languished in a Philippine jail for 15 years without a verdict, one of countless inmates enduring interminable trials that are expected to get longer as an unrelenting drug war overwhelms the courts. A notoriously slow and under-resourced judicial system has seen a "tidal wave" of new cases as police have conducted a nationwide crime crackdown in response to President Rodrigo Duterte's order to eradicate all illegal drugs from Philippine society.

The case of Cerna, 60, who almost died of tuberculosis in one of the nation's most overcrowded jails as his hearings dragged on, is not unusual in that his time in jail while on trial is close to reaching the minimum sentence. "I get depressed. Some others here committed suicide because their wives left them. They lost all hope of freedom," Cerna said in the Manila jail surrounded by rusting barbed wire and the stench of rotting food.

So-called "decader" inmates—because they have spent 10 years or more behind bars while on trial—are a symptom of a deeply flawed justice system that helped fuel Duterte's rise to the presidency last year. Duterte won the elections on a brutal law-and-order platform, promising swift justice chiefly by killing tens of thousands of criminals and a no-mercy stance on convicted criminals who he said could not be rehabilitated.

Duterte's police have indeed shot dead thousands of people as they have scoured slums hunting drug traffickers and addicts, leading rights groups to express alarm at what they say are a wave of extrajudicial killings. This has undoubtedly avoided many trials. But another 96,700 people have also been arrested as part of the drug war since Duterte came to power, according to the presidential spokesman, adding

to pressure on jails that were already nearly six times more crowded than they were built for.

Defendants often have to wait months between hearings, only for the session to be delayed because a judge is sick, a prosecutor fails to show up or a lawyer has another engagement. Sometimes the case gets reassigned to a new judge and the whole process starts from scratch. In other cases, public attorneys assigned to defend poor suspects change jobs without handing over crucial documents to their replacement, or worse, files get lost, and again the defendant is back at square one.

Vicious cycle

"There is a tidal wave flooding the judiciary. (But) there is no attendant increase in the number of courts, judges, prosecutors and public attorneys," Raymund Narag, assistant professor at Southern Illinois University in the United States, said. "Extrajudicial killings are justified for Filipinos because of the failure of the criminal justice system. It becomes a vicious cycle." Trials nationwide last an average of six to 10 years, according to prominent human rights lawyer Jose Manuel Diokno. A Supreme Court task force on prison decongestion last year also said "an innocent man is jailed for at least five years before he is eventually acquitted."

One of the key problems is simply a lack of courts, prosecutors and judges. There are just 2,600 criminal, civilian and other types of courts for a population of 100 million, Supreme Court administrator Midas Marquez said. Thirty percent of those courts have no judges, according to Marquez's office. This leaves the others with impossible tasks, with judges having to handle up to 5,000 cases at any one time, Marquez said. —AFP



MANILA: Eva Arnaiz, left, the mother of a teenager who was killed in an alleged shootout with police, grieves during his burial ceremony in Manila, Philippines. —AP

AUSTRALIA SAME-SEX MARRIAGE VOTE FACES LEGAL CHALLENGE

SYDNEY: Same-sex marriage advocates launched legal action in Australia's highest court yesterday against a controversial government plan for a postal vote on the issue, calling it divisive and harmful. Polls indicate popular support in Australia for marriage equality, but a standoff has dragged on for more than a decade amid political wrangling over the best way to decide the matter. After parliament's upper house, the Senate, last year rebuffed plans for a national plebiscite involving 15 million people, the government opted for a voluntary postal ballot, with papers due to be sent out next week.

Both options are strongly opposed by gay marriage advocates, who argue that a national vote is expensive and will subject gay people and their families to hate speech. If the ballot goes ahead and a majority of Australians vote "yes", the government would hold a free vote in parliament on the issue, with MPs not bound by party policy or the postal ballot's result. If there is a "no" outcome, there would be no parliamentary vote. Anna Brown, from the Human Rights Centre which is representing advocacy group Australian Marriage Equality and Greens senator Janet Rice in the legal action, said she was confident the Melbourne court would rule the vote invalid.

"The postal plebiscite is unnecessary

and is already proving divisive and harmful. LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex) groups strongly oppose the plebiscite and so do we," she said. "Telling one group of people that their rights have to be decided by a public vote sends a terrible message." It is one of two legal challenges being heard by the court, both essentially seeking the same thing. The other, launched last month and being heard alongside yesterday's challenge, is led by Independent MP Andrew Wilkie, PFLAG (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), and Melbourne mother Felicity Marlowe.

Opponents claim the survey falls outside the powers of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which has been hired to conduct the poll. They also say Canberra exceeded its executive authority by earmarking Aus\$122 million (US\$96 million) to carry it out without parliamentary approval. The government argues it can authorize using the cash under laws that allow it to green-light "urgent" and "unforeseen" spending.

"Our case is very tight," Wilkie told reporters. "It's very much about the power of the executive and whether or not a government has the right to conduct this sort of activity without the approval of the parliament." The government is expected to make its case on Wednesday, with legal experts saying a result is possible later this week. —AFP

AFGHANISTAN TO DOUBLE SPECIAL FORCES IN FIGHT AGAINST TALEBAN

CAMP MOREHEAD: Commandos armed with RPG-7 rocket launchers aim at a tank hundreds of meters away, fresh recruits to Afghanistan's most skilled fighting force—an elite group whose growing strength, US generals say, worries the Taliban. These new members of Afghanistan's Special Operations Command (SOC) will soon be on the frontline of the war that US President Donald Trump has vowed "to

win" by putting more American boots on the ground indefinitely.

Camp Morehead, a former Soviet base near Kabul, is one of two training bases where the commandos are drilled by Afghan instructors in a program overseen by US-led international forces. "We are hunters, you know. What I'm saying to you is we are killers, we are looking for the bad people to kick them in their arse,"

one of the commandos, who cannot be identified, told reporters recently at the secondary training base.

While the SOC—which also includes top special forces—account for about seven percent of the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces, they have been deployed in nearly 80 percent of offensives and emerged victorious each time, they say—a claim supported by US and foreign forces. But as the Taliban gain ground across the country and Islamic State group expands its footprint, there are concerns the fighters are becoming physically exhausted.

"It's true they are tired. They are currently fighting on behalf of the world" against multiple militant groups, said General Dawlat Waziri, spokesman for the defense ministry. Earlier this year Afghan President Ashraf Ghani ordered a near doubling of their ranks from 17,000 as part of a four-year roadmap that also aims to strengthen Afghanistan's air force. At Camp Morehead, also previously used by the Taliban as a training ground, commandos are put through several months of training before being sent into battle.

From Kunduz province in the north to Helmand province in the southwest they defend villages threatened by the Taliban and their specialty-launch night raids on insurgent hideouts. "You better be in good condition. During the week of selection they had to run around with a 25-kilogramme bag and return," said an Afghan sergeant. —AFP



KABUL: In this photograph, Afghan National Army (ANA) female soldiers use rifles on a range during a live firing exercise at the Kabul Military Training Centre (KMTCC) on the outskirts of Kabul. — AFP

PUTIN WARNS OF 'GLOBAL CATASTROPHE'

Continued from Page 1

But Putin made clear that Russia was opposed to further interdictions, and while China-North Korea's patron and closest political and economic partner has yet to be drawn on the issue, it tends to resist placing pressure on Pyongyang.

'Planetary catastrophe'

Putin, speaking after an international gathering in China, said Russia condemned North Korea's "provocative" actions. But he called for dialogue and warned against other actions that could escalate the crisis. "Resorting to just any sanctions in this situation is useless and inefficient," he told reporters in the Chinese city of Xiamen following a summit of the five-nation BRICS club of emerging economies. "All of this can lead to a global planetary catastrophe and a great number of victims."

World powers are scrambling to react to the latest ominous advance in the North's rogue weapons program, which has sent global tensions soaring. US President Donald Trump has approved in principle the sale of "many billions of dollars' worth of military weapons and equipment" for South Korea, the White House said Monday. South Korea said it fired a volley of ballistic missiles on Monday to simulate an attack on the North's nuclear test site, followed yesterday by major live-fire drills at sea.

At an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council, US Ambassador Nikki Haley said Washington would present a new sanctions resolution for debate in the coming days. Declaring that "enough is enough," Haley said existing measures not worked and accused North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un of "begging for war" with the country's sixth and most powerful nuclear test. Seoul estimated the blast's yield at 50 kilotons, more than three times the size of the bomb detonated over Hiroshima in 1945.

Haley did not spell out what measures Washington was seeking, but diplomats said it could target oil sup-

plies to North Korea-potentially dealing a major blow to its economy. In a phone call with Putin on Monday, South Korean president Moon Jae-In-who travels to Russia today-told him it was time for the Security Council to "seriously review" the suspension of crude oil supplies to the North, and the export of its workers, many of whom are sent to Russia to earn funds for Pyongyang.

New sanctions could also seek to curb tourism to the country. The most recent measures, imposed last month following Pyongyang's July firing of two intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that apparently brought much of the US mainland into range, zeroed in on the economy. They targeted key exports such as coal that are a source of foreign currency for the regime. Seoul has said the North could be planning another missile test. At the Security Council meeting, China's ambassador Liu Jieyi warned that the crisis was worsening and emphasized the need for dialogue and a diplomatic solution. "China will never allow chaos and war on the (Korean) peninsula," he asserted.

Liu urged the parties to agree to a Chinese-Russian plan calling for the North to freeze its missile and nuclear tests and the United States and South Korea to suspend joint military exercises. Haley rejected the proposal as "insulting." "When a rogue regime has a nuclear weapon and an ICBM pointed at you, you do not take steps to lower your guard. No one would do that. We certainly won't," she declared. Haley reiterated US threats to impose sanctions on countries that trade with North Korea.

That could have major reverberations: China is the largest trading partner of both the North and the United States. South Korea's defense ministry said it was already strengthening its defenses, in part by deploying more US-made Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile launchers. The North says it needs nuclear weapons to defend itself, and analysts say it is seeking to strengthen its hand for any future negotiations with Washington. — AFP

KUWAIT AND US TO HOLD FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND...

Continued from Page 1

The cooperation in the fight against terror would be top on the summit's agenda, he said, adding that Kuwait is a main partner to the US in the war on terror.

The Ambassador stated that second round of strategic Kuwaiti-US dialogue would be held in Washington on Friday. First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah would head Kuwait's side in the event which is meant to push political, military, security, trade and culture cooperation to new high. This historic visit signals the start of new chapter in bilateral relations as the leaders of the two countries are seeking to lay foundations for a more developed relations in the coming 25 years, he concluded.

HH the Amir's visit to US and his meeting with President Trump highlight the shared desire to deepen cooperation to secure the Gulf region and beyond. The visit that falls in the framework of the multi-faceted strategic partnership aims to follow up the existing programs of cooperation and discuss regional and international issues of common concern.

It gains additional importance given the new challenges in the Gulf region and the two sides' profound understanding of the crises in the Arab region. Kuwait and US share the desire to stabilize the region through political means and realize the right priorities of restoring security and stability

and combating terrorism. The strategic partnership came to the fore following the US spearheading of the international coalition to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion (between August 2, 1990 and February 28, 1991).

The coalition, put into motion by former US president George HW Bush on August 7, 1990, and the US-led military campaign to liberate Kuwait on February 24-28, 1991, constituted a turning point in the Kuwaiti-US relationship. Since then the relations have been growing and both sides have showed keenness on promoting regional security and economic prosperity and combating terrorism and extremism.

Kuwait is held in high esteem in the eyes of the US due to Kuwait's growing role in addressing humanitarian disasters and economic problems worldwide as well as promotion of tolerance and coexistence among people with different cultures. President Trump invited His Highness the Amir to visit the US in recognition of Kuwait's status as a model democracy in the region, and the exemplary humanitarian role of His Highness the Amir.

Recognizing the humanitarian leadership of His Highness the Amir, the former UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon hosted a ceremony in New York, on September 9, 2014, to pay his "deepest tribute" to His Highness the Amir and thank him and the people of Kuwait for their "outstanding generosity towards" the victims of man-made and natural disasters around the globe. — Agencies

NEW QATAR PORT AIMS TO BREAK THE BOYCOTT

Continued from Page 1

Qatar previously relied on neighboring Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for food imports. But as part of the sanctions, Saudi Arabia sealed its land border with Qatar. Turkey and Saudi Arabia's arch-rival Iran have

since stepped in to help meet Qatar's food needs. The Hamad Port is located on Qatar's south eastern coast, around an hour's drive from Doha. It has a capacity of 1.7 million tons of general freight and one million tons of grain, according to Mwani Qatar, the country's port management company. — AFP

SAMSUNG NOTE 8 GIVES ITS STYLUS - FOR A PRICE

Continued from Page 1

usually goes, so 4.20 euros became 420 euros, or about \$500. The dollar is getting weaker, but it's not that bad.

Digital doodling

You can now handwrite text messages, instead of just typing them. Messages are sent as animated GIF files, so your friends can see your exact strokes, even if they don't have a Note 8. Those who already pepper messages with emojis and other embellishments might like it.

Camera and more

Beyond the stylus, the Note 8 mostly matches features introduced in Samsung's S8 phones this past spring. This includes an "infinity display," in which the 6.3-inch screen runs up to the edge, giving the phone more display without feeling much bigger. The fingerprint sensor is on the

back, as with the S8, though it's now farther from the camera lenses to reduce smudge. And yes, that's lenses. The Note 8 has a second lens on the back, with twice the magnification, matching Apple's iPhone 7 Plus. This permits software tricks that blur out the background, though conditions have to be just right. I find the second lens more useful for zoom.

Waiting for apple

Apple is expected to announce new iPhones next week, including an anniversary edition that, according to published reports, will include a similar edge-less display, as well as a color-boosting screen technology called OLED, something Samsung has long used. Apple users will probably want to stick with that and avoid having to buy new apps for Android. Current Note users, though, may want the Note 8, as Apple isn't likely to include a stylus. And because of the Note 7 recall, the current Note models are getting old. — AP

OMAN SEEKS TO MOVE ECONOMY BEYOND OIL

DUQM: In the remote desert along Oman's southern coast, construction machines hired by a Chinese consortium are levelling an expanse of pale orange sand - a first step towards billions of dollars of investment. Over the past year the Chinese have become key to Oman's effort to transform Duqm, a fishing village 550 km south of Muscat, into an industrial centre that will help the country diversify its economy beyond oil and gas exports.

In a pattern seen across much of the Middle East, the economic interests of the Omani and Chinese governments are coinciding in ways that promise a surge of Chinese capital into the region over the next few years. Oman's state finances have been hit hard by low oil prices, so it is scrambling to attract foreign money for new industrial zones that will create jobs for Omanis whom the government can no longer afford to employ.

Duqm is its biggest such project. For China, the project is a potential success in its Belt and Road Initiative, a government-backed drive to win trade and investment deals along routes linking China to Europe. Duqm, which lies on the Arabian Sea, is a potential operating base for Chinese businesses near export markets which they want to develop in the Gulf, the Indian subcontinent and East Africa. Duqm is also close to some of the raw materials which Chinese companies will need for that purpose: the oil and gas resources of the Gulf.

The result could be a bonanza for Duqm. Eventually, Chinese firms aim to invest up to \$10.7 billion there, said Ali Shah, chief executive of Oman Wanfang, the Chinese consortium. If that figure materializes - which is by no means certain, given the multi-year time frame and the many pressures on Chinese companies - it will be equivalent to over half of Oman's current stock of foreign direct investment.

"Duqm isn't like Jeddah or like Dubai. It's still new, it needs time to develop. But we at Wanfang are thinking the future for Duqm will be better than those cities inside the Gulf," Ali Shah said. Duqm is marketing its location as a major attraction - not only its proximity to

maritime trade routes but the fact that it lies outside the Strait of Hormuz, which could insulate it from conflict if regional tensions rise.

As recently as 2009, China accounted for less than 1 percent of the stock of foreign direct investment in the Middle East, according to ChinaMed, a research operation at Italy's Torino World Affairs Institute. Partly because of Belt and Road, that is changing fast; the ratio rose above 5 percent in 2015. China was the top foreign investor in the Arab world in 2016, pledging \$29.5 billion of new money, according to Kuwait's Arab Investment and Export Credit Guarantee Corp. The United States, the second biggest investor, accounted for \$7 billion. The zone around Duqm already features a port and a dry dock, and is to include an oil refinery, built partly with Kuwaiti money, and petrochemical plants.

Oman Wanfang plans to develop over 11 square kilometers, making the Chinese Duqm's largest prospective foreign tenants by far. Their first facility, a \$138 million complex to store building materials and distribute them around the region, is to be completed within 18 months. Plans for a further nine Chinese facilities, including a \$2.8 billion methanol plant, pipe factories, an \$84 million vehicle assembly plant and a \$203 million hotel, have been agreed in principle and are to be completed within five years.

Oman has been trying to attract capital for Duqm from many nations. It had been hoping in particular for investment from Iran, with which it has close diplomatic ties, but Iran's economy is struggling. In January 2016 its top auto maker, Iran Khodro Industrial Group, agreed to study a proposal for a \$200 million auto plant in Duqm, but no progress has been disclosed since then. For now at least, that leaves the Chinese as Duqm's best bet. Oman Wanfang is a consortium of six Chinese firms, many from the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region in north-central China, an area with a large Muslim population that is active in promoting business ties with Arab nations. — Reuters

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Focus

AFTER STRING OF DEFEATS,
THE ISLAMIC STATE FACES
RETREAT TO THE DESERT

By Sarah Benhaida
with Maya Gebeily

Facing a string of defeats in Syria and Iraq, the Islamic State group is being forced to retreat to the desert from which it emerged three years ago. By the end of 2014, the group born in Iraq held one third of the oil-rich country and large swathes of territory in neighboring Syria. But today it has lost 90 percent of its territory in Iraq, including the city of Mosul, while in Syria a US-backed alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters has captured over 60 percent of its one-time bastion of Raqqa. Syrian government troops meanwhile are eating away at the last province under jihadist control, Deir Ezzor.

At one time, the group held around half of Syria, much of it uninhabited desert, but today it controls just 15 percent, according to Syria specialist Fabrice Balanche. Syria's government meanwhile has rapidly recovered ground lost to rebel groups and jihadists and now claims 50 percent of the ravaged country. Kurdish forces hold around 23 percent, according to Balanche.

In Iraq and Syria, "the Islamic State's governance project (is) compromised, but I don't see the Islamic State completely defeated," said Ludovico Carlino, a senior analyst at IHS Markit Country Risk. "From a narrative/propaganda perspective, losing Raqqa will have surely big implications," particularly after the fall of Mosul, he said. But he said the Euphrates River Valley, an area of desert stretching from Deir Ezzor province in eastern Syria to Al-Qaim in western Iraq "from a strategic perspective... is much more important."

New tactics

"This is the area where IS will go underground and use as a launchpad for their insurgency." Commanders in the US-led coalition against IS estimate between 5,000 and 10,000 jihadist fighters and commanders have already fled Raqqa to the area. "The group has basically transferred all its administrative institutions and assets" there, said Carlino. The region includes key oil fields, an increasingly precious resource for IS, which has seen its finances decline enormously from their peak, with both oil revenue and tax collection down. IS faces attack from several fronts and forces in the area, including the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Syria's army backed by Russia, and Iraq's army.

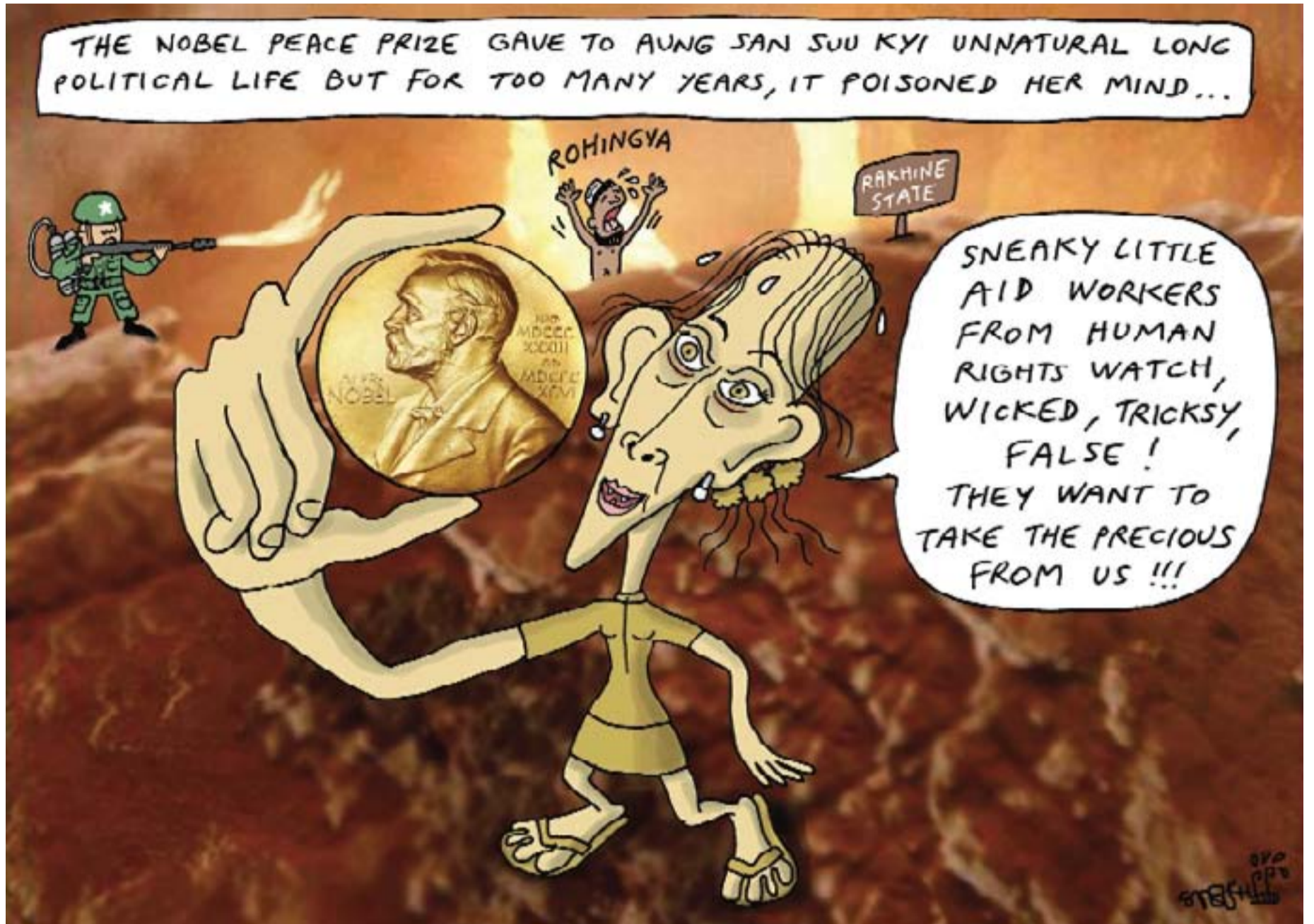
The jihadists have begun to dig tunnels, plant explosive devices and prepare vehicle bombs, according to the US-led coalition. "The loss of Raqqa is already happening. It is the complete recapture of Deir Ezzor by the Syrian army that will be the real turning point," said Balanche. Inside IS-held parts of the province, that possibility has created new restrictions and tension, according to activists. "They've built military barriers in each neighborhood and alleyway. They've mined the administrative borders to the cities," said Omar Abu Leila, an activist from Deir Ezzor 24, which publishes news on the city.

Lacking food and water

The group has also stepped up patrols, inspecting ID cards of local residents and arresting young men, he told AFP. "IS has planted more spies recently, fearing being compromised just before this expected battle," he added. As the prospect of IS being driven completely from Syria and Iraq nears, attention is turning to what might follow, and in particular the question of relations between minority and majority groups in the two countries. The SDF has brought together Kurdish and Arab fighters, but it remains to be seen whether the alliance will withstand Kurdish dreams of federalism. And it is unclear whether Syria's government will allow other forces to control parts of the country it has spent six years trying to clear of rebels and jihadists.

In Deir Ezzor, civilians in IS-held territory face shortages of food, water and electricity, and are increasingly afraid as the battle approaches, said Abu Leila. "They are afraid that the SDF will collude with regime forces and hand over the territory from which Daesh was ousted to Assad's forces," he said, using the Arabic acronym for IS. They also fear revenge attacks by government forces or allies, he said. IS mined ethnic and sectarian divisions in both Syria and Iraq to recruit members to its cause, and experts warned the group would profit in the absence of real efforts at reconciliation. And the group will not disappear entirely, said Balanche. "IS will return to the underground. It will carry out terrorist attacks," he said. "Some will leave to pursue jihad elsewhere." — AFP

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BUDDHISTS AND HINDUS FLEE MYANMAR'S SECTARIAN CLASHES

Village chief San Tun's remote Mro tribe used to get by foraging in the Myanmar jungle, living among the patchwork of ethnic groups who co-existed imperfectly in Rakhine state. But last month murder visited his community. An attack on his people, allegedly by Muslim Rohingya militants, was the catalyst for the worst round of fighting the region has ever seen, forcing them to flee death, arson and suspicion. San Tun says Rohingya militants killed eight villagers as they were out foraging, including his brother and oldest son, on August 3.

Following the deaths a build-up of security forces in northern Rakhine sent tensions soaring. Heavy fighting broke out three weeks later between Islamist militants and security forces, causing some 73,000 Rohingya Muslims to flee west into Bangladesh, bringing with them harrowing tales of rape and murder at the hands of the military and Buddhist mobs. But a smaller and similarly terrified stream of civilians from Rakhine's Buddhist and Hindu communities—some 11,000 — have headed in the opposite direction, their lives also upended by neighbour turning on neighbour.

The Mro, a forest-dwelling and mainly Buddhist tribe who live on Myanmar's border with Bangladesh, are among them, fleeing the latest round of violence in which they had played an inadvertent central role. "We Mro used to live on the forests and mountains, our only business was farming since the time of our ancestors," San Tun, 46, told AFP earlier this week in a government-controlled village outside Maungdaw, the main town in northern Rakhine to which many Buddhists and Hindus have escaped. "Now we have no security," he lamented.

Tit for tat

Rakhine, Myanmar's poorest state, has become a crucible of religious hatred focused on the Rohingya, who are reviled and perceived as illegal immigrants in the Buddhist-majority country. The Rohingya militant group fighting Myanmar's military since last October the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) — said the coordinated ambushes they launched on August 25 were in response to the fresh security crackdown on their kin. San Tun said many of his Mro people—who number between 20,000 and 40,000 had to leave everything behind as they sought sanctuary in government-held areas, fearful Rohingya militants would target them again. Now in relative safety his thoughts turned to the village livestock and ripe paddy fields they were forced to abandon.

"There is no one left to feed them, I think our pigs will have died," he said. Han Thein, an ethnic Rakhine Buddhist, said her village of Khan Thaya was one of the places ambushed by Rohingya militants on August 25. They spent the night hiding out in nearby forest. After the fighting died down, her 62-year-old husband returned to see if he could salvage anything. But Ha Thein decided to press on

to Sittwe, Rakhine's state capital. She has not heard from him since. "I was just worried for my grandchildren," she said in the grounds of a Buddhist monastery where many refugees had gathered to wash what little clothing they had with them and rest.

"We just ran, we didn't think about anything other than our safety. But now I am very worried for my husband. He is old." Some of those gathered in Sittwe said it was not the first time they had been forced to flee because of sectarian fighting. "This is the third time I have left my village," said San Mae, a 52-year-old Rakhine Buddhist. She first fled Baw Di Kone village in 2012 when sectarian riots coursed through Rakhine, killing more than 100 people and forcing some 120,000 people, mostly Rohingya, into internal camps. Violence broke out again in 2015.

'We were once brothers'

But the current round of fighting is the worst Rakhine has ever experienced. For the first time, the state's small Hindu population has found itself targeted. Last week an AFP reporter visited a hospital in Maungdaw where the

bullet-riddled bodies of six Hindu construction workers had been brought. Survivors said the group had been ambushed by Rohingya militants. "We came here for a while because Muslims were causing disturbances," Chaw, a 50-year-old Hindu woman in Maungdaw said. "But we do not know where we will go if the situation gets any worse." Rohingya refugees crossing into Bangladesh have confirmed that some of their men have stayed behind to join ARSA and fight Myanmar's military, often wielding little more than sticks and swords.

Analysts long warned that decades of state-sanctioned restrictions and persecution of the Rohingya risked fostering militancy among a Muslim minority that had largely eschewed violence. But support for the militants is far from universal, with some Rohingya left in Rakhine saying they were furious the attacks have poured fuel on the flames of Myanmar's already vitriolic anti-Muslim tensions. "We do not want terrorists," a Muslim Rohingya from the village of Maungni said. "We will cooperate with the ethnic Rakhine (Buddhists)," he added. "We used to be like family and brothers before this." — AFP



A Rohingya child is carried on a sling while his family walks through rice fields after crossing the border into Bangladesh near Cox's Bazar's Teknaf area yesterday. — AP

GHOST CITIES HAUNT STABILITY DREAM IN FAR WEST CHINA

By Ben Dooley

The future of economic development in China's far western Xinjiang region lies behind the shattered glass door of a welcome centre on the outskirts of the ancient Silk Road city of Kashgar. Inside, a dusty model depicts a modern urban development with wide, tree-lined boulevards and a pair of twin skyscrapers—but outside the project remains a ghost town reflecting Beijing's struggle to bring prosperity to the restles region.

Dubbed "Shenzhen City" after the bustling southern port city that financed it, the more than 200,000 square metre development is part of a government project to stabilize Xinjiang with massive economic stimulus. Beijing has paired promises of wealth with strict controls on personal and religious freedoms in an effort to quell ethnic strife between the country's Han Chinese majority and the region's mostly Muslim Uighur minority. But outside the welcome centre, where a broken LED sign flashed out an investment hotline number like an SOS, the plan for a vibrant oasis on the western edge of the Taklamakan desert stood like a mirage.

The landmark buildings' half-finished silhouettes jut out of a rubble-strewn construction site, surrounded by withered trees and grass. Several such ambi-

tious projects around Kashgar have stagnated despite government plans to bring the poverty-stricken region's economy on par with the rest of the nation. To do so, Shenzhen and 18 of the country's other wealthiest cities and provinces have been required to pump a fraction of their GDP into Xinjiang under a "pairing assistance" program.

The rationale is "if you can improve people's economic conditions, they will become less politically restive," said Enze Han, a lecturer on politics at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies. But "if you look at the ground, the story in Xinjiang is a failure," he said.

'Pairing assistance'

In 2010, a year after deadly riots in Xinjiang's capital Urumqi killed around 200 people, authorities rolled out the "pairing assistance" programme to raise the region's per capita GDP to the national average within five years. By the end of 2015, cities such as Beijing and Shanghai had invested some \$8.5 billion in the region, according to the official Xinhua news agency. But President Xi Jinping shifted the focus back to security in 2014 after Uighurs perpetrated a series of violent attacks across the country, killing dozens.

Two years later, the gap between Xinjiang and the rest of the country had

only grown, with its per capita GDP expanding about 18 percent more slowly than the nation as a whole during the five-year period after the assistance programme began, according to calculations by AFP using government statistics.

'Stability maintenance problems'

Another project lies largely abandoned across town: Guangzhou New City, a 1.5 million square meter "urban centre" in suburban Kashgar funded by the wealthy southern province of the same name. In late June, Michael Jackson music blared from speakers around the complex, where rubbish piled up in front of empty store fronts covered in fading "for rent" signs. Toilets in the men's bathroom were still wrapped in their original cellophane.

When the development opened in 2012, promotional materials promised 20,000 jobs and housing for up to 80,000 people, roughly 15 percent of Kashgar's population. But local officials had to beg businessmen to come, said Lal Muhammad, a Pakistani trader, who signed a three-year lease for \$1,000, which he soon abandoned. "Few people came. Very few," he said, adding that the ubiquitous police checkpoints encircling the city had made it difficult for customers to come and go. "The project is a flop."

There is no easy answer as to why the Kashgar projects have stumbled. Ji Yeon

Hong, a Xinjiang expert at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, said that while fears of violence deter economic investment and development, the projects "seem unrelated to what the local population needs." Shenzhen City was stopped because its "prospects were not good," a project manager surnamed Yang told AFP without elaborating.

But a 2014 prospectus by the Shum Yip Group, a company involved in the development, said "frequent terrorist violence" made it difficult to attract labor or businesses. "Some shops have closed because of Kashgar's stability maintenance problems," said Zou Zebin, the owner of a high-end furniture store, one of the few remaining shops in Guangzhou New City.

Xinjiang's ever stricter security may also be negatively affecting businesses, according to Adrian Zenz, an expert on Chinese security at Germany's European School of Culture and Theology. "Regular businesses and manufacturing there are no longer competitive due to the added expenses caused by security measures," he said. But Zou believes the "cities" can still replicate their namesakes' success, as Kashgar is a key part of China's One Belt, One Road initiative, a massive global infrastructure project to revive the ancient Silk Road. "The country's investment in Xinjiang is really big," Zou said. "I think in three years, we'll see the benefits." — AFP

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GERMANY THRASH NORWAY, WHILE ENGLAND SURVIVE SLOVAKIA SCARE

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TEHRAN: Syria's Omar Alsoma, left, vies for the ball with Iran's Morteza Pouraliganji during their Round 3 - Group A World Cup qualifier at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran, Iran, yesterday. — AP

S KOREA QUALIFIES FOR WORLD CUP, SYRIA GOES TO PLAYOFF

TASHKENT: South Korea overcame a troubled campaign to qualify for next year's World Cup yesterday, while war-torn Syria kept its dream alive. A goalless draw away to Uzbekistan was enough for South Korea on the final day of Asian group games. Syria goes to a playoff following its 2-2 draw with Iran, which had already qualified. The South Koreans hit the woodwork twice in the first half, but endured some nery moments in the second against Uzbekistan, which was in contention to make its first World Cup appearance. When the final whistle blew, several South Korean players sank to the ground in relief before starting some low-key celebrations. South Korea had risked missing the World Cup for the first time since 1982 after a campaign which

included surprise losses to Qatar and China. Despite the war raging at home, Syria had come close to qualifying for its first World Cup, and would have done so had it held on to a 1-0 lead away to Iran. Syria must now get through two playoff rounds to reach the tournament in Russia. Tamer Mohamed's 13th-minute header put the Syrians ahead, but Iran fought back to show why it was unbeaten in competitive games for over three years. Sardar Azmoun pulled Iran level in first-half stoppage time, using his chest to knock in a rebound, and he struck again from close range in the 64th when Syria failed to clear a long throw-in. Syria made it 2-2 in stoppage time when Omar Al Soma put the ball between Iranian goal-

keeper Alireza Salimi's legs. Conflict at home put huge obstacles in Syria's path. The team played all its home games in Malaysia, 4,500 miles (7,240 kilometers) away to the south-east. But it still managed strong performances against some of Asia's best teams, earning draws with South Korea and Iran in previous qualifiers.

AUTOMATIC ENTRY

Earlier, a nervous Australia lineup wasted dozens of opportunities and needed a late winner to edge Thailand 2-1 yesterday and maintain hope of gaining automatic entry to the World Cup. Australia moved into second place, meaning Saudi Arabia has to win at home against already-qualified Japan to overhaul the

Socceroos for the second direct spot from Group B. The Saudis entered the last matchday in Asian qualifying tied with Australia with 16 points but with a superior goal difference. The top two teams in each group go directly to the World Cup, and the third-place teams go into a playoff for a shot at an intercontinental qualifier. The Australians went in with an attacking mindset but were unable to capitalize on almost three-quarters of the possession in the first half, when they twice hit the post and forced two good saves from Thai goalkeeper Sinthaweechai Hathairattanakool. Tommy Rogic hit the post again in the 67th minute, Australia's 24th shot, two minutes before Tomi Juric finally broke the deadlock when he

nodded in a cross from Aaron Mooy. Pokklaw Anan got a surprise equalizer for Thailand against the run of play in the 82nd, but Mathew Leckie ensured Australia's win in the 86th with a left-foot drive from close range after Sinthaweechai failed to punch the ball clear of the goalmouth. "A little bit frustrating," Juric said. "Leaves us in a position of waiting for another result to go our way. "Obviously the win is what we need, but we needed more goals for the goal difference. That was the frustrating thing tonight - it could have been five, easily." Australia was unbeaten in qualifying until it lost at Japan last week, a result that ensured Japan secured first place in Group B and a spot in Russia next year. Thailand finished last in the group with two points. — AP

KEYS ADVANCES TO US OPEN QUARTER-FINALS

NEW YORK: Yes, Madison Keys was excited to give the United States four women in the US Open quarterfinals for the first time in 15 years. And, of course, it was significant that she got this far at Flushing Meadows, something she'd never done. Truly, though, the reason Keys was near tears at the end of her 7-6 (2), 1-6, 6-4 victory over No. 4-seeded Elina Svitolina on Monday night, and went over to slap palms with coach Lindsay Davenport and others afterward, was how far away this sort of performance seemed earlier this year. Keys missed the first two months of 2017 after offseason surgery on her left wrist, then had a follow-up procedure in June because of lingering pain in that arm. The way she powered her way to take the last four games against Svitolina was proof that Keys is back to being at the top of her game. "I mean, it means the world to me to make the quarterfinals. It was a really rough start to my year. This is just amazing," said the 22-year-old Keys, a semifinalist at the 2015 Australian Open. "I'm really proud of myself for digging deep and figuring that out tonight." The 15th-seeded Keys joined No. 9 Venus Williams, No. 20 CoCo Vandeweghe and unseeded Sloane Stephens in the final eight at Flushing Meadows. "I think it shows how hard we've been working," Keys said. "We're all cheering for each other." Well, at least until they might have to play one another. Each is in a separate quarter of the draw, so none will meet in the quarterfinals - meaning that there could be four American semifinalists, too. Way back in 2002, the host country put five representatives in the women's quarterfinals: Davenport, Williams and her sister Serena, Jennifer Capriati and Monica Seles. Serena Williams wound up with the title. Yesterday, Venus Williams plays No. 13 Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic, and Stephens faces No. 16 Anastasija Sevastova of Latvia. Today, Vandeweghe takes on No. 1 Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic, while Keys goes up against

418th-ranked qualifier Kaia Kanepi of Estonia. Svitolina's loss means she is no longer in the running to move up to No. 1 in the rankings after the US Open. A race that once involved eight women with a shot at the top spot is now down to two: Pliskova, who needs to get to the final to hold onto No. 1, and Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza, who can rise despite losing to Kvitova in the fourth round. Against Svitolina, Keys

compiled a 19-4 edge in winners in the opening set, then had problems at the start of each of the remaining two sets. She fell behind 5-0 in the second and 4-2 in the third before running away with the victory. "It's definitely more than just a win," Keys said. "So often a match like that could have gone really quick for me, and I could have lost that third set fairly easy, come off and been really disappointed." — AP



NEW YORK: Madison Keys, of the United States, serves in a fourth-round match against Elina Svitolina, of Ukraine, at the US Open tennis tournament in New York, Monday.— AP

DEL POTRO SETS UP US OPEN SHOWDOWN WITH FEDERER

NEW YORK: Juan Martin del Potro shrugged off sickness to save two match points and defeat Dominic Thiem in a five-set US Open epic on Monday to book a quarter-final showdown with five-time champion Roger Federer. Argentina 24th seed Del Potro claimed a heroic 1-6, 2-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7/1), 6-4 victory over the sixth-seeded Austrian on a rocking Grandstand court, describing it as night he would remember forever. Del Potro famously defeated Federer in the 2009 final for his only career Grand Slam title before his career was almost torpedoed by a succession of wrist surgeries. Federer, the third seed, eased into the last-eight with a 6-4, 6-2, 7-5 win over Philipp Kohlschreiber, taking his record over the German veteran to 12-0. Elsewhere, top seed Rafael Nadal claimed his 50th win at the US Open and will meet Russian teenager Andrey Rublev. In the women's event, world number one Karolina Pliskova set-up a quarter-final date against America's CoCo Vandeweghe. Estonia's world number 418 Kaia Kanepi also reached the quarter-finals, just the second qualifier to make the last eight. But the day belonged to Del Potro, who celebrated his win, which came off a Thiem double fault, by stretching out his arms, head facing the night sky, as his legion of fans, many dressed in the light blue colors of Argentina's famed football and Pumas rugby teams, celebrated wildly. "Oh my God," said Del Potro, who had been 2-5 down in the fourth set. "I was sick the last two days. I came here trying to play the best I can and then when I see this crowd cheering for me, I was trying to play better

every game. I will always remember this." **FEDERER'S 'BUM' NOTE** Federer has a 16-5 advantage over Del Potro but they have split their last six meetings. The 36-year-old Swiss maestro didn't face a break point against Kohlschreiber with his biggest challenge having to take a medical time-out off court at the end of the second set. "I needed a rub on my back... or bottom and I didn't want to do it in front of you guys," he explained before he turned his attentions to Del Potro. "It's great to see him back on tour. He's had a rough ride with wrist problems. He's a good guy." World number one and 2010 and 2013 champion Nadal, who could meet Federer for the first time in New York in the semi-finals, crushed Ukraine's Alexander Dolgoplov 6-2, 6-4, 6-1. The 31-year-old Spaniard goes on to face Russian 19-year-old Rublev, who stunned Belgian ninth seed David Goffin 7-5, 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 to become the youngest quarter-finalist since Andy Roddick in 2001. "I played a solid match with not many mistakes," said Nadal, the reigning French Open champion. Rublev, ranked 53, has won 13 of his last 17 matches after breaking the top 100 for the first time in June. "Rafa is a real champion. I will try to do my best-I have nothing to lose," said Rublev. Meanwhile, the 32-year-old Kanepi, a former world number 15 whose career was almost ended by illness and a crippling injury, downed Russia's Daria Kasatkina 6-4, 6-4. She will next face Madison Keys of the United States, who put out fourth seed Elina Svitolina 7-6 (7/2), 1-6, 6-4, ending the Ukrainian's hopes of taking the world number one spot.—AFP

Kuwait Times ⁵⁵ BUSINESS

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BRUSSELS: Anti-Brexit activists stage a demonstration in front of the European institutions in Brussels yesterday. — AP

UK ECONOMY LOSES STEAM AS BREXIT FEARS MOUNT

EUROZONE HEADS FOR DECADE-HIGH GDP GROWTH

LONDON: Britain's economy is falling further behind a fast-recovering eurozone as firms worry about Brexit and consumers feel the pinch of rising inflation and the weak pound, surveys showed yesterday.

Manufacturers are benefiting from increasing demand in Europe and beyond, but the much bigger UK services sector grew at its weakest pace in nearly a year in August, according to the IHS Markit/CIPS services Purchasing Managers' Index. The world's fifth-biggest economy initially withstood the shock of the June 2016 vote to leave the European Union, which will remodel its ties with its biggest trade partners. While Britain and the rest of the EU are struggling to agree on divorce terms, it's increasingly clear that on the economic front they are diverging sharply. In closely watched surveys of economic activity, financial information company IHS Markit said yesterday that the economy of the 19 EU countries that use the euro is heading for decade-high growth rates while Britain's is increasingly sluggish - largely due to uncertainty surrounding Brexit.

The purchasing managers' index, a broad gauge of economic activity, for the eurozone was unchanged at 55.7 points in August. The index is on a 100-point scale, with anything above 50 indicating expansion.

But growth began to slow sharply this year as inflation rose on the falling value of the pound and hit households. The economy now

looks on track to grow by 0.3 percent quarter on quarter in the July-September period, IHS Markit said. That is the same slow rate as in the previous three months, and momentum is gradually being lost, IHS Markit said.

Based on similar surveys also published yesterday, growth in the euro zone is likely to be at 0.6 percent, the same as in the second quarter. The weak outlook for growth in Britain means the Bank of England, whose policymakers meet next week, is likely to keep interest rates at a record low despite rising inflation.

Separate figures published yesterday showed car sales fell for a fifth month in a row. Shoppers spent more on the high street and in supermarkets, but retailers said that was caused in part by the increased cost of food. Some economists saw yesterday's data as a precursor of more gloom.

"Where would growth come from at this stage in Britain? There is erosion of real income because of the inflation numbers and the uncertainty means investment will not play a role until you get some clarity on what is going on (about Brexit)," said Erik Nielsen, group chief economist at UniCredit.

But others predicted a slight pick-up because official data have looked a bit stronger than PMI surveys. "We continue to think that growth will come in a bit stronger in the second half of this year," Paul Hollingsworth, at Capital Economics, said. "Nonetheless, we still think that the

Monetary Policy Committee will hold off until around the middle of next year, before raising interest rates."

Job growth strong

The IHS Markit/CIPS services Purchasing Managers' Index fell to 53.2 in August from 53.8 in July, a bigger drop than the median forecast of 53.5 in a Reuters poll of economists. It was the lowest reading since September last year, shortly after the referendum vote. Optimism among company managers edged up, but with Brexit a major concern, morale remained close to low levels that have previously indicated the economy was stalling or even contracting, IHS Markit said. Less than two years before Britain leaves the EU, Prime Minister Theresa May's government has yet to start substantive talks with Brussels on issues such as trade.

EU forges ahead

In one bright spot, yesterday's survey showed job creation was its strongest in 19 months as firms sought to work off backlogs. But new orders grew at the second slowest pace since September of last year.

In another concern for the BoE, prices paid by services firms grew at the fastest pace in six months, potentially adding to Britain's inflation rate which is already heading for about 3 percent, above the central bank's 2 percent target.

Though output growth in the third quarter is slightly down on the second quarter, the firm said the single currency bloc is on course for economic growth of 2.1 percent this year, its highest since 2007, when the global financial crisis started to bite. The firm's chief business economist, Chris Williamson, said the moderate growth slowdown from the second quarter is no cause for alarm given that business orders remain strong. "There's good reason to be optimistic that the current spurt growth has further to run," he said. The scale of the eurozone recovery this year has caught many economists by surprise. At the year's start, many feared that the region, already disturbed by Britain's vote last year to leave the European Union, ongoing concerns over the

euro and a slew of key elections, would face a difficult time. Though uncertainty over Brexit remains, the Greek crisis seems contained and populist politicians failed to make the breakthrough many economists feared during those elections, notably in France.

One of the main arguments made during last year's Brexit referendum in Britain was about how the UK economy would be better off unshackled from a region that had battled one crisis after another for years. While that will be determined in the longer-term, for now it's clear that Britain's economy is starting to suffer from the Brexit vote. In the first few months after the vote, it held up better than anticipated, partly because of the pound's export-boosting 15 percent fall. — Agencies

US FACTORY ORDERS FELL 3.3% IN JULY

WASHINGTON: Orders at US factories tumbled in July, dragged down by a sharp fall in orders for civilian aircraft. The Commerce Department said yesterday that factory orders declined 3.3 percent in July, after a 3.2 percent gain last month. July's decline was mostly because of a 19.2 percent drop in orders in the volatile transportation equipment category. Orders for civilian aircraft - which can vary wildly from month to month - tumbled 70.8 percent in July after a 129.3 percent gain last month.

Excluding the transportation sector that includes aircraft, factory orders rose 0.5 percent in July after a tiny 0.1 percent uptick last month. A category that serves as a proxy for business investment posted a solid 1 percent gain after a small 0.1 percent decline in June. In recent months, US manufacturing

has been benefiting from a stronger dollar and an improving global economy. Growth has been picking up in Europe, Japan and parts of the developing world.

Despite the sharp fall in overall orders, the increase in the business investment category suggests companies are more optimistic about future demand from customers. A private survey last week showed that US factories expanded at a brisk pace in August, another bright sign for the overall economy. Orders for computers and electronic products rose 2.1 percent, and orders for electrical equipment, appliances and components rose 2.6 percent. Orders for autos and auto parts fell 0.9 percent. Orders for durable goods - items meant to last at least three years - fell 6.8 percent after a 6.4 surge in June. — AP

WTO REVERSES BOEING 777X RULING IN BLOW TO EU

PARIS/GENEVA: The World Trade Organization has reversed a ruling that Boeing received prohibited support for its newest aircraft, dealing a blow to the European Union in its long-running row with the United States over subsidies. Monday's decision by WTO appeal judges overturns a ruling which had banned some Washington-state support for plants including a \$1 billion factory designed to build the world's largest carbon-composite wings for Boeing's 777X jet.

A WTO panel ruled last year that a reduction in the state's business and occupation tax in return for a decision to place 777X production in the state had deliberately shut out imports. But its appeals body found the tax breaks had not explicitly targeted trade flows, removing them from the WTO's most severe category of banned aid known as "prohibited" subsidies.

The decision neutralizes a potential trump card, which the EU played in 2014 to shake up the world's biggest trade dispute. Prohibited subsidies are a form of aid that the WTO's 164 members consider exceptionally market-distorting and are automatically banned wherever they are proved to exist.

The WTO appeals body did not consider whether the 777X tax credits fell under the more common banner of "actionable" subsidies, since the EU had not resorted to fallback arguments as it gambled on securing a quick, game-changing victory. But the EU may use evidence from the case to try to widen a previous successful claim against earlier versions of the same tax credits, meaning that although the EU's latest gambit failed, the 13-year-old war between Washington and Brussels over support for their dominant planemakers will continue. "Today's ruling will strengthen the (original EU) case on the long term and allow us to expand our compliance demands," Airbus spokeswoman Maggie Bergsma said, while Boeing called the ruling a "sweeping and clear win." US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said the EU had lost most of its claims and "cannot justify their own illegal subsidies by hiding behind groundless claims against the US."

Compliance

Neither side has been able to make the key charge of prohibited subsidies stick at the appeals stage but both have won billions of

dollars of claims about "actionable" subsidies, while disagreeing over who comes off worst and racking up an estimated \$100 million in costs. The WTO is considering appeals on whether each side complied with previous demands to remove billions of dollars of unfair support. A decision on whether the EU has fallen into line is expected at the end of the year, with a ruling on US compliance due in 2018.

US sources say the timetable could give the administration of President Donald Trump, who has pledged tough enforcement of trade laws, the first crack at introducing sanctions that could theoretically be targeted at any industry, not just aerospace. If either side is found not to have complied by removing the harmful support for its planes, the other will be able to impose counter-measures. However, new disputes could arise if sanctions are imposed, despite claims to have complied subsequently. A European source predicted legal procedures could continue indefinitely until both sides decide to settle. Airbus renewed a call for a broad global agreement on support for planemakers. — Reuters



In this May 25, 2017 file photo, an employee works on a factory floor at a Stihl Inc. production plant in Virginia Beach, Va. The Commerce Department reported on US factory orders for July yesterday. — AP

'WE'VE COME A LONG WAY AND HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO'

FORD REPORTS ITS ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS ACROSS BUSINESS

KUWAIT: Ford Motor Company yesterday released its 18th annual Sustainability Report, including a short film, detailing its environmental progress across the world and commitment to continued sustainability actions in the future.

"We know climate change is real and a critical threat, and we will continue to work with leaders around the world in support of ambitious global greenhouse gas reduction targets," said Executive Chairman Bill Ford. "At the same time, we have the opportunity to make real environmental progress as we move into a world of smart vehicles and smart environments, including car sharing, multi-modal transportation and dynamic shuttles."

"Every day, we work to do the right things for our customers, communities and the planet," said Kim Pittel, group vice president, sustainability, environment and safety engineering. "Through our integrated sustainability approach, we're embedding sustainability best practices throughout our company and our supply chain to help make people's lives better."

Sustainability report highlights

The 2016-17 Ford Sustainability Report highlights key environmental benchmarks and the



automaker's ongoing work to address issues related to climate change, including:

Water stewardship

Believing that access to clean water is a human right, Ford made the decision to join the Business Alliance for Water and Climate "Improve Water Security" initiative. This coalition created a program of actions for companies to demonstrate their commitment to being responsible water stewards.

Sustainable materials

Ford continued to expand its sustainable materials research efforts through a collaboration with Jose Cuervo to explore the use of agave plants to develop a sustainable bioplastic material to incorporate in vehicles.

Sustainable manufacturing

Ford has an ongoing commitment to reducing waste in its manufacturing facilities, and as part of that commitment, the automaker expanded its aluminum closed-loop recycling system to three factories.

month, enough to build more than 37,000 F-Series truck bodies a month.

Supply chain sustainability

In addition to reducing the company's own environmental footprint, Ford is reducing the footprint of its supply chain with an enhanced Partnership for a Cleaner Environment program that has grown to more than 40 suppliers in 40 countries - up from just 25 suppliers in 2015.

Waste reduction

Ford expanded its true zero-waste-to-landfill program to 82 Ford facilities around the world - 49 manufacturing facilities and 33 non-manufacturing facilities - where absolutely no waste goes to landfill.

The report also details year-over-year progress and goals around the company's work in the areas of improving safety and fuel economy, reducing manufacturing carbon dioxide, the company global electrification strategy and more.

Responsible business

For the eighth year in a row, Ford was named to Ethisphere Institute's "World's Most Ethical Company" list - the only automaker to achieve this recognition.

NMC HEALTH, FIRST MIDDLE EAST FIRM TO BE LISTED ON FTSE 100

COMPANY TO LIST WITH A MARKET CAP OF AED 26BN

KUWAIT: NMC Health, the largest private healthcare provider in the United Arab Emirates, has just been promoted to the UK's leading FTSE 100 index.



Saeed M Bin Butti Al-Qubaisi

London Stock Exchange with the highest market capitalization, indicating strong results and a solid performance as backed by the confidence of investors.

NMC Health was promoted to the FTSE 100 yesterday while during the last quarter its shares have risen 22 percent from 2,187p to yesterday's close of 2,670p, giving it a market cap of £5.5bn (26 billion UAE Dirham).

Commenting on the development, Saeed M Bin Butti Al-Qubaisi, the largest shareholder in NMC Health, said: "Being among the FTSE 100

index solidifies NMC's standards, demonstrating the overall performance and strengthening the firm's reputation as an esteemed blue-chip company in the region.

"We take great pride in this positioning as it signifies NMC Health is rightfully recognized as a leader in the healthcare industry, and of added value to customers, businesses, communities, and most importantly, investors," he added.

VIGOR EVENTS TO BEGIN SEASON 2, A WORKSHOP ON HUMAN ENERGY

KUWAIT: Vigor Events will bring to Kuwait a highly engaging two-day design-based workshop, that is developed to create individual and organizational strategies for the future using the unique 7 Dimensions of the Future of Work model (based on 4 years of action research and consulting practice with progressive organizations, academic theories and applied methodologies).

The immersive program led by Perry Timms Founder of People & Transformational HR (PTRH), will be centered on design thinking and built around the use of case studies, emerging theories and disruptive models. Using each dimension of the future of work, 7 parts will follow the prime; pose and participate model to enable leaders to discover new thinking and examples and apply to their own context.

Participants will have access to a learning platform with The Future of Work content and a socialized community space to share with other participants before the event, they will participate in a complimentary psychometric assessment - The Game Changer Index with a report and the end and continued access to learning platform along with content such as films and workshop content post the event.

Attendees will understand the 7 dimensions of the future of work, build a massive transformative purpose, values, culture of success for the future and Receive key insight into the emerging future of work from case studies, theories and research.

Perry Timms the acclaimed author of the e-book "HR 2025", one of the top 10 HR Bloggers in the 2013 update and the world's only WorldBlu(r) Certified Freedom at Work Consultant + Coach - helping organizations be more democratic and inclusive.

The Future of Work workshop is a tailor made for Top Management, Executives and HR Professionals with an active interest and part to play in designing and leading workplace change and transformational activities. It will take place on the 24th and 25th of September 2017 at Hilton Resort, Mangaf - Borgan Meeting Room from 9am to 3:00pm and is organized by Vigor Events & vo-organized by ALGAS Events. Members of the Knowledge Club this year includes Hadi Clinic as Gold Member, Warba Bank & Kout Food Group as Silver Member, Kuwait Oil Company, Aramex & Platinum Gym as Corporate members and media support from the International Advertising Association (Kuwait Chapter).



OOREDOO CONTINUES TO DELIVER THE BEST BENEFITS WITH SHAMEL PREMIUM

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, is proud to continue delivering the best in-class services to its customers through its Shamel Premium prepaid plans, part of its Al-Nokhba offerings. Customers of Shamel Premium can choose from a line-up of the latest smartphone devices such as the iPhone 7, Samsung Galaxy 8 and Huawei Porsche Design.

Additionally, Premium plans include a number of first-rate benefits with Nojoom, including business class tickets and Nojoom rewards worth up to KD 500, which can be redeemed from Ooredoo's selection of exclusive partners who offer the best in class services in a variety of industries, ranging from retail to hospitality and travel.

Commenting on this, Ooredoo Kuwait's director of VIP direct sales Jassem Abdul Rahim noted that the company is continuously working on enriching its portfolio of partners to ensure delivering customers with an unrivalled experience. Shamel Premium offers customers with unlimited benefits that includes credit of up to KD240 in roaming benefits.

Abdul Rahim noted that the plans were especially tailored to better suit the needs of VIP customers, and that the company is keeping in mind the needs of its business leading clients with their global interests,



especially in the fast-paced field of telecommunication.

In addition to the unrivalled services, Shamel Premium customers can enjoy the exclusive VIP treatment in Ooredoo's Nokhba lounge, from 8 AM to 4 PM in the fifth floor of Ooredoo's Head Office in Kuwait City, Soor Street.

Ooredoo's operations in Kuwait date back to December 1999 when it launched wireless services as the second operator. The company today provides mobile, broadband internet and corporate managed services tailored to the needs of customers and businesses. Ooredoo Kuwait - which is an enlisted company in the Kuwait Stock Exchange Market - operates a number of telecom service providers in the region, such as Ooredoo Algeria, Ooredoo Tunisia, Ooredoo Maldives, and Wataniya Palestine. Ooredoo Kuwait is a member of the international Ooredoo Group based in Doha, Qatar.

Our vision: Enabling the Kuwaiti community through digitalization and enriching people's daily experiences. Our mission: To be a leading one-stop shop, offering comprehensive telecom services to meet all the demands of our customers.

Amazing news from Al-Tijari...
Al-Najma account gives you the biggest daily prize in Kuwait!
KD 7000

CBK ANNOUNCES WINNERS IN AL-NAJMA ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the daily draw on "Al-Najma Account" yesterday at the Bank's Head Office to select 5 winners to win a cash prize of KD 7000 for each. The draw was held in the presence of Abdulaziz Ashkanani, representative of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry. The following names were announced as winners of the prizes:

1. Ahmad Ali Al Haddad
2. Kaled Parvaiz Nather Ahmed
3. Mohammad Arshad Taj Din
4. Amin Khalil Ismail Eslah

Al-Najma Account allows its customers to win a daily prize of KD 7000 which is the highest daily prize in Kuwait. In addition, the Account offers quarterly draws that provide customers with opportunity to get

their dreams turned to reality by winning great prizes starting from KD 100,000 for the first quarter escalating thereafter by KD 50 thousand for each quarter to reach KD 250,000 in the last quarter. Customers can enjoy additional benefits including obtaining ATM card and a credit card against the customer's account along with enjoying all other banking services.

The Bank congratulates all the lucky winners and draws their attention that the cash prizes will be credited into their accounts with the Bank. Further, the Bank appreciates the Ministry of Commerce & Industry's significant role and its continuous cooperation and effective supervision on the draw that was smoothly and transparently organized.

now... "Yawmi" account offers
KD 125,000 quarterly
and KD 5,000 daily
"Yawmi"... changed my day

BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF YAWMI DRAW

KUWAIT: Borgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

- The lucky winners are:
1. Mehrdad Yousef Mehdi
 2. Gigy George Parakkadan
 3. Shamlan Abdulaziz Mahmoud
 4. Jassem Rashim Al-Abboudi

In addition to the daily draw, Borgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers Daily and Quarterly Draws, wherein the Quarterly Draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws. Borgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize

their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

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 MENA 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.

ABK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 'DOUBLE YOUR SALARY' DRAWS

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its 'Double Your Salary' weekly draw on 15th - 22th August, 2017 at the Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce, announcing the names of the winners. The promotion includes weekly draws for existing and new ABK customers. The campaign will run until 30th September, 2017.

The winners are:

- Aesha Mohammad Abd Al-Rasoul Mohammad, Head office branch

- Shaheer Kamal George Shokralla, Salmiya branch
 - Marzouq Theeb Saleh AlHarshani, Sabah Hospital branch
 - Masoud Mewafrosh, Head office branch
- New customers who transfer their salary to ABK receive KD 300 and will automatically be entered into the weekly draws to double their salaries. Existing customers who are already transferring their salary to ABK are entered into a separate draw.





DANAN, Ethiopia: A child attends to his malnourished calf in the Danan district of the Somali region of Ethiopia, which hasn't seen significant amounts of rain in the past three years. —AP photos

ETHIOPIA FACES WORST DROUGHT IN YEARS AS MILLIONS AT RISK

'THE AID WE ARE RECEIVING IS NOT ENOUGH TO FEED OURSELVES AND OUR ANIMALS'

DANAN, Ethiopia: Men, women and children in this remote region of Ethiopia scramble to receive food aid and feed their rail-thin cattle as a huge cloud of dust rises into a sky that hasn't delivered enough rain for the past three years. The mass feeding program, managed by aid groups in this sun-scorched district, is the last attempt to save the lives of humans and animals until the rains hopefully materialize in mid-September. More than eight million people in drought-hit southeastern and southern Ethiopia are in need of emergency food assistance, officials said as the heads of the World Food Program, Food and Agriculture Organization and International Fund for Agricultural Development made a rare joint visit over the weekend.

Despite economic growth in the past decade that has made Ethiopia one of Africa's fastest-developing countries, rural areas are suffering as the nation faces its worst drought in years. This barren district called Danan, populated mostly by ethnic Somalis, has been historically neglected

and is home to a rebel movement that seeks secession. "This particular year is more intense due to the fact that it's the third for fourth year that the drought repeats itself in this region," Jose Graziano da Silva, director-general of the Food and Agriculture Organization, told The Associated Press. "In Africa, Ethiopia was best-prepared to face the impacts of climate change. But after having three successive years of El Nino, the country is unable to deal with it alone."

The situation has been overshadowed by drought in neighboring Somalia and the famine that was briefly declared earlier this year in parts of neighboring South Sudan, aid workers say. Over 27 million people in East Africa are in need of food assistance, largely because of drought, according to FAO. "The aid we are receiving is not enough to feed ourselves and our animals," a local chief, Sheikh Hussein Mohammed, told the delegation. "Besides, the food that is being delivered to us is not the one that we are used to eating. And worst of all, the animals aren't providing us



DANAN, Ethiopia: Ethiopian women wait in line to receive food aid due to drought conditions in the Danan district of the Somali region of Ethiopia, which hasn't seen significant amounts of rain in the past three years.

any milk and meat. We are really hungry. And we are suffering."

Food, transport and income

Another local chief, Sheikh Ibrahim Mohamed, said he has lost half of his cattle in the past two years. "The youth are leaving the area to other towns and villages nearby, but I've nowhere to go," the 62-year-old said. "I can't abandon my family and my remaining cattle and flee this area. I will die here."

While no official death tolls are available, regional officials say half of Danan district's estimated 280,000 cattle have died, a serious blow to the seminomadic population that relies on the animals for food, transport and income. Aid groups say an additional 2.2 million households require livestock-related assistance until the end of the year.

Ethiopia's government says it has invested more than \$400 million in the humanitarian relief effort, and aid groups say the government is now beyond its capacity to deal with the drought alone. The United States last week announced \$91 million in additional aid as the new

head of the U.S. Agency for International Development, Mark Green, visited the country as part of his first overseas trip. "During my visit to the Somali region, which is experiencing near famine-like conditions, I saw the dire need for food assistance," Green told reporters.

The weekend visit by the heads of WFP, FAO and IFAD also was aimed at addressing the root causes of the drought and improving communities' ability to prepare for future shocks. "We've got to scale up and stop working on a project-based approach," said Gilbert Houngbo, the director of International Fund for Agricultural Development as the delegation visited Ethiopia's Tigray region, which has been praised for its land and water conservation. "We cannot do business as usual."

The northern Tigray region once was one of Ethiopia's most environmentally degraded areas after some 3,000 years of human settlement. It still faces droughts but has built resilience over the years through conservation efforts, and humanitarian aid now focuses less on the kind of emergency response seen in Danan district and elsewhere. — AP

CHINESE WOMAN CHARGED OVER FATAL AUSTRALIA BREAST IMPLANT

SYDNEY: A Chinese national was charged with manslaughter yesterday over an alleged botched attempt at breast augmentation surgery at a Sydney beauty clinic led to the death of the salon's manager. Jean Huang, 35, was rushed to hospital last week after she went into cardiac arrest during a breast implant procedure. Attempts to revive her failed and she died a few days later. Prosecutors allege Jie Shao, 33, administered an incorrect dose of anaesthetic while performing the surgery. She reportedly had no medical qualifications in Australia. Court documents listed the drugs involved as tramadol and lidocaine, both pain relievers, and restricted substance hyaluronic acid, which is often used in cosmetic surgery, including lip and breast procedures. Shao, who was visiting Australia on a tourist visa, was reportedly known to Huang through mutual friends. She also faces charges relating to recklessly causing grievous bodily harm and using poison to endanger life. Shao was refused bail with the matter due back in court next month. —AFP

DEATH TOLL FROM NIGERIA CHOLERA RISES TO 21

KANO, Nigeria: The death toll from a cholera outbreak in restive northeast Nigeria has risen to 21, with most of the victims living in a camp for people displaced by Boko Haram violence, the health ministry said yesterday. On Saturday, the ministry had said the cholera toll was 14 in the town of Maiduguri, with most of the victims living in a camp for people displaced by Boko Haram violence.

"As of 4 September, 21 deaths have been reported," the Borno state health ministry said yesterday, as the toll mounts. "The total number of suspected cholera cases is now 375 in Maiduguri," it said, up from 186 at the weekend. Most of the suspected cases and deaths are in Muna Garage, a camp for displaced people on the outskirts of Maiduguri, while other victims come from neighboring districts, it said. The government and NGOs are working to contain the outbreak which has spread to the town of Dikwa, 60 kilometers (40 miles) away, where five cases had been reported, it added. Maiduguri, the birthplace of Boko Haram has been repeatedly attacked by the jihadists. — AFP

ITALIAN DOCTORS BAFFLED AFTER MALARIA KILLS FOUR-YEAR-OLD

ROME: A four-year-old girl has died of malaria after apparently contracting the disease in northern Italy in a case that has perplexed the medical world, doctors said yesterday. "I've never seen a case like it, it's a mystery. It shouldn't have been possible for her to get malaria," Claudio Paternoster, head of the infectious diseases department at the Santa Chiara hospital in Trento, told AFP. The girl, named as Sofia Zago by the media, had not travelled to any at-risk countries but had spent her summer holiday with her family at the seaside in Italy's Veneto region.

She had then been admitted for other health reasons to the paediatric department of the Santa Chiara, where she had come into contact with two children who had picked up malaria during a trip to Burkina Faso in Africa. "But only some types of mosquito are able to transmit the disease from person to person, and they don't exist in Italy," said Paternoster, who was called to consult on Zago's case over the weekend.

While there are a few cases of malaria in Italy a year, "they are so-called 'suitcase' cases, where someone has brought an infected mosquito back with them from Africa," he said. Zago was diagnosed with malaria on Saturday and transferred to intensive care, but rapidly deteriorated on Sunday. "It was a very hot summer and with climate change we cannot rule out the adaptation of some species (of mosquito) or the re-introduction of others" which could transmit the disease, Paternoster said. — AFP



DANAN, Ethiopia: Pastoralists feed their cattle at an animal feeding scheme run by UN agencies, in the Danan district of the Somali region of Ethiopia, which hasn't seen significant amounts of rain in the past three years.

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DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN KUWAIT BIDS FAREWELL TO AMBASSADORS

Dean of the diplomatic corps in Kuwait Abdelahad Embaki hosted a farewell dinner at Crowne Plaza for the Polish ambassador to Kuwait, Grzegorz Olszak and Czech ambassador to Kuwait, Martin Dvorak on the completion of their diplomatic missions in Kuwait. Many diplomats and dignitaries attended the event. On this occasion, Embaki presented the ambassadors with a memorial shield.



LULU HYPERMARKET CELEBRATES ONAM AND EID AL-ADHA

LuLu Hypermarket, the largest and most popular hypermarket chain in the region, celebrated the dual festivals of Onam and Eid with a commemorative campaign that included colorful competitions and vibrant cultural programs. Onam is a mega-cultural event for people from the Indian state of Kerala, while Eid Al-Adha is celebrated by Muslims throughout the world as a religious festival. The occurrence of these two celebrations together has multiplied the joy and festivities of the occasions.

Eid celebrations at LuLu Hypermarket, which started off on 29 August and the Onam festivities that began on 31 August, featured special offers on a wide variety of food items and festival-related products. LuLu Hypermarket organized a special two-hour colorful program on 3 September to showcase the traditional elements of Onam and Eid, and to share with patrons the joyful spirit and camaraderie of the two festivals.

Dancers in colorful costumes performed a range of traditional dances and musical pieces that helped highlight the dual festivals. A large crowd of visitors and shoppers gathered to witness and join in on the celebrations. A special attraction during the campaign period was the vibrant two-day cultural program that was held on 2nd and 3rd September. Traditional Eid and Onam songs and dances were the highlight of the cultural evening, with the Onam folk dance called 'Puli Kali' and the energetic, rhythmic renditions on drums called 'chenda melam', drawing the loudest cheers from audiences.

A floral-carpet competition, a traditional feature of Onam celebrations called the 'Pookalam', was organized by LuLu Hypermarket on 3 September. During the competition, 10 pre-selected teams presented their vivid decorations made with flowers placed in imaginative designs on the floor. The winning team received KD 100 worth gift vouchers, while gift vouchers of KD 75



and KD 50 were distributed to the second and third placed teams respectively.

All participating teams were appreciated for their efforts with KD 20 gift vouchers each. The celebratory campaign marking Eid and Onam

festivals marks LuLu Hypermarket's unique customer-centric approach to retailing, and its commitment to strengthen customer relations by creating a distinctive shopping experience at every touch-point.



AL MUHALLAB MALL CELEBRATES EID AL-ADHA



Manarat for educational services hosted their annual staff back-to-school orientation for staff from their eight Hamel al-Mesk Bilingual nursery schools at the Holiday Inn, Salmiya.

GREETINGS

THE Ambassador of Mexico, Miguel Angel Isidro extends his sincere felicitation and best wishes to His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness the Crown Prince, the Government and the people of the State of Kuwait, on the occasion of the advent of Eid-Al-Adhai, wishing the friendly people of Kuwait prosperity and stability and for the kind and distinguished relations between the two friendly nations to be further enhanced.

GOSSIP

Hetfield recovers quickly from tumble at Amsterdam gig



Metallica's James Hetfield took a tumble on stage at the band's show in Amsterdam on Monday night. The 'Seek & Destroy' rocker narrowly avoided a serious injury after stepping backwards into a hole in the stage near to the drum kit at Ziggo Dome. Video footage showed the 54-year-old singer fall down and pause for a moment in pain as the band performed 'Now That We're Dead'. In the clip shared on YouTube by a fan, James asks the crowd: "Is everyone OK?" He appeared to take the fall in good spirit and joked about how much his "ego" was hurting. He replied to himself saying: "Yes, I am OK. My ego

not so much. But, we are fine. It hurt my feelings a maybe, a little bit. But I can tell you about it now it's done." The guitar god and vocalist then bravely carried on with the rest of their 18-song set including an encore of 'Blackened', 'Nothing Else Matters' and 'Enter Sandman'. Metallica are currently on the European leg of their 'WorldWired' tour, which comes to London's The O2 on October 22 and 24 and concludes at Birmingham's Genting Arena on October 30. Meanwhile, the band recently announced they are set to re-release their third studio album 'Master Of Puppets' on November 10. The reissue of the classic 1986 metal

record will feature unreleased material including demos, rough mixes, videos and live tracks, including a new version of 'Disposable Heroes' and a live recording of 'The Thing That Should Not Be'. The LP was the band's first record to go platinum and ended up going 6 x platinum in the US. 'Master Of Puppets' was the last studio release the band recorded with late bass player Cliff Burton, who was in the band from 1982 until his death in September 1986.

Boyzone ditch love ballads for new urban sound

Boyzone have ditched the love ballads and gone urban for their big comeback album. The Irish quartet - Ronan Keating, Keith Duffy, Mikey Graham and Shane Lynch - will mark their 25th anniversary in 2018 by hitting the road to celebrate with their fans and releasing new music. Ronan says Shane has taken the lead with writing the new tunes and that they will be a little different from their usual love ballads. Speaking to the Daily Star newspaper, he said: "Shane has been working so hard, there has been a lot of Shane influence rather than Boyzone. "He's from an urban background with his style and taste in music, and that's been a huge influence on this record and our music." Fans of the 'No Matter What' group could see the new record - their first since 2013's 'BZZO' - could be released later this year, but definitely in time for the tour. Ronan, 40, said: "The album will be out either this year or next, we're trying to get it finished, it's

been really enjoyable." Boyzone announced their return in May and have done a number of shows this summer, their last one is at Derby County Cricket Ground on September 16. They wrote on Instagram: "2018 will see Boyzone celebrate their 25th anniversary! That's something that Ronan, Keith, Mikey & Shane are incredibly proud of. Plans are being hatched for new music and lots of touring throughout the year. But next year still seems a long way off so in case you can't wait, the Boyz are hitting the road for some exclusive UK shows later this summer. Dates and ticketing details will be announced here soon... #boyzone2017 (sic)." In addition to releasing new music and going on tour, it has been claimed that the band have also discussed writing a tell-all book and even creating their own West End show.



Placebo axed Perth gig at last minute due to Brian Molko's ill health

Placebo cancelled their concert at Perth Arena on Monday night moments before they were due to go on stage after frontman Brian Molko was struck down with illness. Placebo were forced to pull out of their show at Perth Arena in Australia last night at the last minute, due to illness. The 'Every You Every Me' hitmakers left fans disappointed as they called off the first date of their Australian tour just before they were due to appear on stage shortly after 8.30pm. Frontman Brian Molko, 44, was struck down with a mystery illness but is on the mend, and the band are expected to resume their tour of the country today at Adelaide's Entertainment Centre Theatre. A statement released by promoters TEG LIVE read: "Placebo regretfully advise that they are unable to perform tonight's concert at Perth Arena due to illness." Promoter TEG Live has requested that fans retain their tickets until more information is available." The band hope to make it up to their Perth fans as soon as possible." Perth Arena also released a statement giving fans an update on Brian's health, adding: "We wish Brian a speedy recovery." TEG Live are believed to be working on scheduling a new show at the venue after the band's final concert in Canberra on September 14. All ticket holders are advised to retain their tickets and await further information.



Amy Lee's album nerves

Amy Lee is "nervous" and excited about releasing the band's new album 'Synthesis'. The 35-year-old singer has been working on the remix record with David Campbell, who was responsible for the arrangement, along with producer William B. Hunt. And while she is proud of the finished product, which will be released on November 10, it was a whole new experience for the 'Everybody's Fool' hitmaker. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz about the project, she said: "I'm nervous and thrilled at the same time. It's absolutely beautiful, it isn't just beautiful it's next level awesome. Usually the strings, they're not an after thought, but the songs are written and already have everything done and they get thrown on top. But with this, we started there. So we did orchestration and programming, collaborating back and forth with David for months. It is exciting. It's a very different process." Amy explained that the record - their first since their self-titled LP in 2011 - was about combining the old with the new and "orchestra with electronica". She explained: "It's about the dichotomy, the synthesis, the synergy, between several things. One being, orchestra and electronica, these two very opposite things. Organic and synthetic, they seem like they'd be polar opposites, but they totally work together. "Also past and present. Because it's our history, it's our catalogue, so pulling it together in this new place, the musician that I am now. It's the synthesis of that as well and probably more things I can't think of right now." The American rock band recently released a new version of their biggest hit 'Bring Me To Life' reimagined with orchestration, which gives an indication of what to expect from the rest of the record. 'Synthesis' so far features 'Bring Me To Life' and a new version of 'Imperfection' from 2003's 'Fallen'.



Starr reveals his spiritual routine

Ringo Starr reads spiritual books to get himself "through the day". The 77-year-old former Beatles member has revealed the secrets to his good health, admitting his vegetarian diet and spiritual routine have been keys to his longevity. He explained: "I have a meditation practice. I pray to the god of my understanding, and I read spiritual books - day-at-a-time books, things like that that help you get through the day." Ringo's new album, 'Give More Love', is released later this month, and the music icon says he's still living his life-long ambition. And Ringo insisted his passion for making new tracks remains undiminished. He told the Los Angeles Times newspaper: "I only ever wanted to play - that was my aim from 13. "I worked in factories and on the railway, but I played at night and made decisions that got me where I was. I didn't know I was going to get there [into the Beatles]. But I knew I wanted to play. So I got into a Liverpool band, then I got into Rory [Storm & the Hurricanes], then I got into the biggest band in the land. "I just always wanted to play, and to play with good people. I'm sitting here, at 77, still talking about it. And I'm still playing." Ringo has been working with former Eurythmics guitarist Dave Stewart on his new music. But he recently revealed that regardless of who he's collaborating with, he always tries to direct the tunes towards a feeling of "peace and love". Reflecting on the collaboration process, Ringo explained: "What usually happens is - it doesn't matter what people are doing. I direct it to the place I want it to be. Which is usually peace and love."



Danny O'Donoghue lost his voice for two months



The Script frontman Danny O'Donoghue has revealed he almost completely lost his voice after having an operation to remove nodules from his vocal cords. The 37-year-old singer was unable to talk for two months after having surgery to correct the problem which was affecting his ability to perform live. Danny admits the medical problem occurred because the band had taken on too much work and were "burning the candle from both ends". Appearing on UK TV show 'Loose Women' on Monday, he said: "It was from partying and burning the candle from both ends. We'd done like 300 shows in one year and all those other days we were travelling. Fame came to us at a later stage so were grateful for everything we have, and we just weren't able to say no to anything - because we didn't know if it was going to come again or going to stop. So God has a way of making you kind of stop. I'm really lucky to have come out the other end." Following the surgery Danny had to learn how to sing again, and his bandmates Mark Sheehan and Glen Power have had to be patient with him as he had to build up his vocal stamina again. He said: "It's taken us six months to build the stamina back up. I've had to learn how to relax more when I'm singing. No tension around the neck area. I couldn't cough and I couldn't burp! I had to stay deadly silent. I went through the surgery once, then the doctor had another look and said we didn't get everything out. So I had to go back in again." Discussing how his family and friends reacted to his enforced vow of silence, he added: "They were like, 'When was the last time you've been silent for this amount of time?'"

Lewis recruits Scott for new music

Leona Lewis has been discussing a duet with Calum Scott. The 32-year-old singer was last heard on the Grenfell Tower charity single, a cover of Simon and Garfunkel's 'Bridge Over Troubled Water', alongside the likes of Stormzy, Rita Ora, Robbie Williams, Louis Tomlinson and Liam Payne, which was released in June to benefit the victims of the blaze at the block of flats in west London, which killed over 70 people. However, the 'Britain's Got Talent' alumni has revealed he's been messaging the former 'X Factor' winner about getting together for a new song, though he didn't say if it would be for his debut album or Leona's next offering. He told The Sun newspaper: "Me and Leona have been texting recently. She was like, 'Maybe you'd like to do this song with me?' So we're going back and forth. "It's times like that where I'm like, 'I'm messaging Leona Lewis about a possible duet. What is going on with my life?' " In 2016, Leona was dropped from her label, Island Records, and experienced a bumpy ride in the charts, despite their best efforts to propel her career. The 'Bleeding Love' hitmaker signed to the label in 2015, following her split from Simon Cowell's Syco. A source said at the time: "It simply didn't work out with Island. She made a great record and the label really championed her but something just didn't click." Leona's first single 'Fire Under My Feet' from her fifth studio album 'I Am', released under Island Records, flopped in the charts and the LP sold just 8,500 copies in its first week in September 2015. As for Calum, his cover of Robyn's 'Dancing on My Own' released last year sold over 600,000 copies, making it platinum in the UK.



This combination of photos shows from left top to bottom; The interiors of 1951 Spartan Royal Mansion, 1947 Airpointer Bus, 1957 Airfloat, 1959 El Rey, 1947 Chris Craft Yacht, 1951 Spartan Royal Mansion, 1951 Spartan Royal Mansion, 1950 Spartannette, and 1959 El Rey at the Shady Dell Trailer Court in Bisbee, Ariz. Vintage aluminum travel trailers, a yacht and a Hawaiian-themed bus are used as guest rooms at the trailer lodge located off Highway 80 in the historic Southern Arizona copper mining town. — AP photos



The interior of a 1947 Airpointer bus is decorated in a 1950's Hawaiian theme at the Shady Dell Trailer Court in Bisbee, Ariz.



The 1953 movie "Cat Women of the Moon" is shown on the big screen at the Shady Dell Trailer Court.



The galley of a 38-foot 1947 Chris Craft Yacht dry docked at the Shady Dell Trailer Court.



A retro motel room key to a 1947 Airpointer bus sits on a tiki pole at the Shady Dell Trailer Court.



A guest takes a photo with her smartphone while leaning on a Spartan Manor travel trailer.

Vintage trailer court takes tourists back in time

Visitors arriving at the neon-illuminated office of the Shady Dell trailer court enter a kind of time warp, transported back to the 1950s when big Studebakers and Chevys rolled up carrying road-weary travelers, their trailers in tow. Decades later, that mid-century feeling endures at this southern Arizona tourist stop. Lined inside with warm woods, vintage aluminum travel trailers manufactured under names such as Airstream, Spartan Royal Mansion, Airfloat, Boles Aero and El Rey populate the tidy trailer court with gravel paths and small lawns. But the trailers, rather than the spaces, are for rent, like hotel rooms. The trailer windows glow a soft amber hue after dusk, and tiki torches and neatly hung strings of multicolored lights circle a small bandstand outside. Once-popular songs from 1950s vinyl records crackle over a loudspeaker throughout the park just 10 miles (16 kilometers) from the US-Mexico border.



Windows glow a soft amber hue after dark at the Shady Dell trailer court.

Founded in 1927 as the Thompson Motor Court and renamed Shady Dell in the 1950s, the rest haven nestled in the copper mining town of Bisbee was a frequent stop for motorists along Highway 80 during the golden age of American automobile travel. Similar to its big brother, Route 66, the lesser-known Highway 80 once linked America's Atlantic and Pacific coasts - in its case between Savannah, Georgia, and San Diego. Back then, trailer courts lined Highway 80, offering respite to motorists tra-

versing the Southwest's harsh landscape in the final push to Southern California.

The Shady Dell later sat dormant, reopening in 1996 with the idea of reviving its vintage atmosphere. Now, the former layover for people traveling long distances has become a destination of

its own for vintage enthusiasts and those just looking to get off the beaten path. The trailer park shuts down several months each year for the brutally hot desert summer but reopens as fall nears, coming this year on Friday. Along with various mid-century trailers, a 1947 Chris Craft yacht with V-shaped berth sleeping quarters and a 1947 Airpointer bus decked out in 1950s Hawaiian style have added to the court's yesteryear charm.

All guest rooms come complete with period-correct furnishings. Several have old-fashioned phonographs and black-and-white television sets, but there are no telephones, digital clocks or remote controls. Staying true to the 1950s style, classic films are shown every night at a kind of drive-in theater outside, the viewers sitting in carts as they watch the big screen spread against Arizona's star-filled sky. The outdoor movie, adjacent to a little snack bar, is the perfect nightcap to a relaxing day in Bisbee's slow lane. — AP

COURTYARDS - THE ORIGINAL 'OUTDOOR ROOMS' - GET A NEW LOOK



This undated photo provided by Ed Castro Landscape, Inc. shows the courtyard outside a home in Atlanta, Ga.

The trend toward outdoor living, which uses comfy seating, bright rugs and weatherproof art to extend the alfresco season at home, is bringing new attention to a centuries-old architectural feature: the courtyard. "It's the original outdoor room," said Philip Weddle, principal architect of Weddle Gilmore Black Rock Studio in Scottsdale, Arizona. "Courtyards are as much about enriching the indoor spaces as creating amazing outdoor spaces. That blurring of the boundary between indoors and out makes the experience of each space richer."

Courtyards - a staple in Roman, Middle Eastern and ancient Chinese architecture - are becoming popular in homes throughout the United States, builders and architects say. As they have for thousands of years, courtyards offer a safe and private area for families and guests to gather. In urban areas, especially, such secluded outdoor space is rare. Courtyards increase the amount of living space in a home. And when designed right, they can create a cooling retreat in warm climates. Improvements in retractable glass walls and sliding doors have helped make them more feasible. "That technology has really improved over the last decade," Weddle said. "It really does allow you to open interior space to a courtyard more easily."

People are accessing that outdoor space to cook, dine, entertain or just relax, Weddle said. He's designed small court-

yards that connect to a master bath and include an outdoor shower. "Courtyards come in all shapes and sizes," he said. Builder Nilay Bhatt, president of Dani Homes in Columbus, Ohio, also sees more Midwestern customers choosing courtyards: "It's an element of outdoor living," he said. And in older suburban neighborhoods in Atlanta, Ed Castro Landscape has helped clients add courtyards to existing homes, said Hannah Seaton, a senior landscape design consultant with the firm. "They're trying to turn an area of their property into a private place," she said.

Luckily, the footprints of many older homes include nooks and hidden spots that lend themselves to courtyards, Seaton said. In other places, homeowners are creating courtyards in front of houses by adding plantings and paving stones. That can increase curb appeal, reduce the amount of water-guzzling lawn, and showcase a water feature or piece of sculpture, said Tanya Wilson of Bonick Landscaping in Irving, Texas. Front-yard courtyards can be casual (benches and gravel walkways) or formal (statues, fancy lighting and fountains). The key, Wilson said, is selecting a look that matches the house's architecture. "It's a nice transition from the street to the front door," she said. "It can feel more welcoming."

Build community

But the appeal of a courtyard doesn't stop at the door, said

Missy Henriksen, vice president of public affairs for the National Association of Landscape Professionals in Herndon, Virginia. The courtyard's purpose is to connect the home's interior with the outdoors, she said. "Most landscape features bring the indoors out. With the popularity of outdoor living, we think of landscapes as extensions of our homes," she said. "Courtyards are unique in that they flip this idea by instead bringing the outdoors inside the home, allowing the beauty of the courtyard to be seen from several areas of the home." Courtyards are all about the sight lines from inside the home, agreed Tracy Schiefferle, interim director of the Building Industry Association of Central Ohio.

Several builders in recent years have included front courtyards in homes for the association's annual Parade of Homes, which showcases trends. "We're definitely seeing more attention to the front of the house," she said. Front courtyards make sense in neighborhoods trying to build community, she said. They mix well with walking trails, bike paths and other amenities designed to help homeowners stay active, Schiefferle said. "It reflects how people want to be connected to their neighborhood." — AP



This photo shows the entry courtyard of a residence located in Paradise Valley, Ariz.



This photo provided by Bonick Landscaping shows a front gravel courtyard with a boulder water feature by Bonick Landscaping in Dallas, Texas.



This photo provided by Bonick Landscaping shows a contemporary courtyard landscape by Bonick Landscaping in Dallas, Texas. — AP photos

FEATURE



Fellow nuns of Maria Valentina de los Angeles, of the 'Comunicadoras Eucaristicas del Padre Celestial' (Eucharistic Communicators of the Celestial Father) congregation, perform during the recording of a music video at a convent on the outskirts of Cali, Colombia. — AFP photos



Nun Maria Valentina de los Angeles (center) plays the guitar as she prays alongside fellow nuns at a convent.



Fellow nuns of Maria Valentina de los Angeles perform during the recording of a music video at a convent.

Straight outta Colombia: Nun raps for pope

A Colombian nun-turned-rapper in sports sneakers will perform for Pope Francis when he visits her country this week. Maria Valentina de los Angeles is one of a group who will sing the official song for the Argentine pontiff's visit as he greets the crowds. It is "an opportunity to show him our love the way that we know, which is through music," Maria Valentina, 28, told AFP. "The cool thing about rap is that it sticks in your head easily. And when it has the depth of truth, which is Christ, then it is even more striking."



Rafaela (left) and Fatimam, fellow nuns of Maria Valentina de los Angeles make an internet radio program at a convent.



Fellow nuns of Maria Valentina de los Angeles walk at a convent.

The group was formed in response to a call from the late Pope Jean Paul II for artists to use their work as a means of spreading the gospel. Its members include a television producer and a musical group including Maria Valentina, which has made two records. "God wants to be known through the media," she says. "He has to make himself known by way of current trends."



A fellow nun of Maria Valentina de los Angeles prepares to play football at a convent.



Fellows nun of Maria Valentina de los Angeles play football at a convent.

'Blessed be God'

The petite nun, 28, performs a rap interlude among the cheerful Latin beats of the song "Let's Take The First Step" by the United Catholic Musicians. The ensemble headhunted her after she won a reality-show competition on television called "Another Level." The United Catholic Musicians hailed the naturalness of her rapping and invited her to compose and perform the rap interlude. Francis visits Colombia, a Catholic country of 47 million, from September 6 to 10. He is credited with aiding a peace deal signed last year between the Colombian government and the leftist FARC rebel force after half a century of war. "Colombia welcomes you with open arms," goes Maria Valentina's rap. "With one voice happily we say to you: blessed be God, who in his wisdom has brought you to our land to be its guide."

Raising hell

The nun says she likes the rebellious spirit of rap. For her, it chimes with Francis's own call to the young to "make trouble"-his way of telling them to fearlessly share their faith. "Trouble in the way the holy father means it is being different, being bold and bringing a message of joy, hope and charity," she told AFP in the western city of Cali, where she is based. "Our intention beyond just thanking the holy father is to act as a church so that all people can sing with us."

Divine mouthpiece

Maria Valentina is a member of the Community of Eucharistic Communicators of the Heavenly Father in Cali.

Songs of devotion

Maria Valentina also strums the ukelele and played rock guitar in her youth. She says God saved her from a serious liver disease when she was a youngster. "My dream is to be a good nun. Making music is a second dream," she says. "I want to make more recordings, but more than making people fall in love with my voice, I want to make them fall in with Jesus." — AFP



Nun Maria Valentina de los Angeles (right) plays the guitar and sings at a convent.



Nun Maria Valentina de los Angeles sings during a concert together with the group MCU Musicos Catolicos Unidos in Cali, Colombia.



Sarah, fellow nun of Maria Valentina de los Angeles records a music video at a convent.



Fellow nuns of Maria Valentina de los Angeles make their morning prayer at a convent.



Nun Maria Valentina de los Angeles sits on a swing at a convent in the outskirts of Cali.

Lifestyle

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Hot air balloons glide during a flight over Nevsehir in Turkey's historical Cappadocia region, Central Anatolia, eastern Turkey, yesterday. The rides by hot air balloon start in the morning as the balloons cannot fly at temperatures over 28 degrees Celsius and during extreme windy conditions. Cappadocia is one of the most famous tourist sites in Turkey and has been listed as a World Heritage Site in 1985. — AFP

Stylish and savvy wastebaskets



This undated photo shows designer Annie Selke's wire basket sets at Pine Cone Hill, which bring several trends into a room, including brass accents, minimalism and geo patterning. — AP photos

This photo provided by Brendan Ravenhill Studios shows a wastebasket by Los Angeles-based designer Brendan Ravenhill.

When decorating a room, we don't tend to give much thought to the waste receptacle. But the decorative details can be important. "They can make or break your best efforts," says Diane Henkler, a decorator in Lake Murray, South Carolina. "The details are the fine tuning; you should give them the same thought and planning that you give to the major elements in the room."

You could plunk any utilitarian plastic bucket in the corner, but why not add something with a little dash to stash the trash? Some options that would make a space look pulled together and cohesive:

Los Angeles designer Brendan Ravenhill calls his clever, clean-lined bin "the lovechild of a trash can and dust pan." It's made from a durable, powder-coated steel that resists chips and scratches; a handy dust pan made of birch, with coconut-skin bristles, attaches to the side of the dustbin with magnets.

Lidded bins are a smart choice for the bathroom. Simple Human's 10-liter, rectangular model has a slim profile that slides nicely between vanity and toilet. Easy-to-clean, odor-resistant metal, a sturdy foot pedal and a well-fitting lid make it a durable option. Or if you're a tech lover, you might appreciate Simple Human's 58-liter can

that comes in several finishes, including trendy burnished bronze and rose gold. No need to tap the pedal or lift the lid; the can has a hand and voice-activated sensor.

If you don't need a lid but would still like to use a liner, consider Rubbermaid's Executive Series 3.5-gallon can. You fit your plastic waste bag over an inner liner, then a black-and-chrome outer bin slides over the top like a collar so the plastic bag won't show.

Lexmod takes a whimsical approach with their Lava bin made of plastic molded to look like crumpled paper. It comes in white, black and an emphatic red.

More whimsical bins are to be found at www.overstock.com, including one made of resin molded into a tree stump, with a mother bear and cub climbing up the side. A trio of Kokopelli dancers cavorts around another resin bin in traditional Southwestern hues. Or art lovers might appreciate Van Gogh's "Autumn Blossom" rendered on canvas and wood with a leather trim.

Umbra Studio's designer Henry Huang has created an elegant yet minimalist wood bin with an integrated handle. Choose from matte-finish stains in on-trend colors like teal, espresso and misty blue.

Metallic accents add flair to a room. Urban Outfitters has a simple yet chic copper cylinder that would work in bed, bath or office. Also here, there's one with a silvery, iridescent finish.

Designer Annie Selke's trio of copper wire bins could be used to hold crafts or accessories.

Another option: The creative folks at Martha Stewart Living suggest combing antiques fairs and flea markets for old cracker barrels, sap buckets, woven baskets or ceramic canisters that can be used as wastebaskets.

Or make your own. Henkler bought an inexpensive woven bin, spray-painted it and then worked strips of coordinating fabric through the basketweave.

Repurpose an existing trashcan by giving it a new outfit. Choose felt, fabric or a decorative paper - gift wrap, scrapbook, newsprint, glossy magazine or handmade - and roll the can along the paper to trace the outline. Attach with glue or tape, and add top and bottom ribbon trim if desired. Leftover wallpaper or contact paper also works well. Add embellishments like stencils, pompoms or trinkets. Instructions can be found at www.hgtv.com and www.shelterness.com. — AP

Bizarre News

Cheaters are likely to cheat again, research finds

People who cheat are more likely to cheat again according to new research. A study carried out by the Archives of Sexual Behavior found that people who had been unfaithful on their parents in the past were three times more likely to do so again. The researchers asked the 484 participants in mixed-gender relationships if any of them had sexual relations outside of their relationships, and if they suspected their other half to have done the same. The report also found that people can forget their own cheating, but are able to remember others very clearly.

Young boy discovers python in toilet

A young boy was left terrified after a three foot snake was found in his toilet. The five-year-old child from Essex was horrified when he lifted the lid of his loo only to find the reptile coiled up looking at him while its head lay on the rim of the lavatory with its tail stretched into the pipe, the BBC has reported. The youngster's mother, Laura Cowell, said the toilet had been blocked for a few days but they didn't know what had caused the problem - until now. The parent was worried the animal would creep out of the toilet into their home so she decided to put weights on top for several days, even after the snake was removed, to stop a repeat happening. Laura said: "I had to use a broom handle to life the lid, then out popped its head and its tongue came out as well." A specialist from Scales and Fangs pet shop rescued the baby royal python and explained it must have came up through the U-bend of the toilet.



Man's unexpected \$1M lotto win

A man who went back to a shop after he forgot to buy ice won \$1 million on the lottery. Neil Briggs from New York thought he'd try his luck and pick up a ticket for \$5 when he returned to his local store and was left gobsmacked when he won the jackpot. He told UPI: "I ran my errands earlier that day, but I forgot to buy two bags of ice." "I ran down to the store to grab the ice and decided not but a lottery ticket while I was there. "I had two 20s, a five and three singles on me. "I can't justify paying \$20 for a lottery ticket and the dollar tick-

ets really don't pay a lot so I went in with the five dollar ticket."

Toilet-themed restaurants take Taiwan by storm

A toilet-themed restaurant chain in Taiwan is serving up meals in mini bogs. Local people are rushing to book a table at one of the many Modern Toilet eateries which serve up Chinese food and other popular dishes including Spaghetti Bolognese and even pork chop. Each customer gets a complimentary toilet with chocolate ice cream in the shape of poop and a green tea. The first restaurant opened in 2004 and just served ice cream, but has gone on to expand its menu.



Eight million Britons only shower once a week

A study has found over eight million Britons shower just once a week. The research conducted by BetterBathrooms.com found that 14 percent of British people wash once in seven days, while 51 percent of people have admitted to showering daily. The survey has also revealed only four per cent shower twice a day, whilst 21 percent of those who took part in the survey shower every other day. And eight percent of people have revealed they never shower, and prefer to have a bath instead. The report also discovered men are most likely to shower daily and women wash less frequently and prefer having a relaxing bath. The study has found men take a shorter time washing and enjoy a seven minute shower, compared to women who spend an average of 13 minutes hosing down. And within that time almost 40 percent of people have admitted to singing in the shower. — Bang Showbiz

Kitten walking on highway rescued after traffic is shut down

A kitten found walking in a busy Massachusetts highway tunnel has been rescued with the help of state police troopers who shut down traffic for it. Police said Sunday on Facebook the kitten decided to "play a little hide and seek" in the Ted Williams Tunnel in Boston.

Sgt Bob Dateo shut traffic down. The Animal Rescue League of Boston quickly rescued the kitten. A trooper posted a photo of the wayward kitten on social media. A video taken by police shows the kitten walking

along the side of the road as cars drive by. Police say they need ideas on what to name the kitten. The kitten will be put up for adoption when it's medically cleared. — AP

This image shows a kitten was spotted walking along the side of the road as cars drive by in the Ted Williams Tunnel in Boston, and was rescued by state police troopers who shut down traffic for it. — AP

