

Vice police raid brothel, arrest 12 prostitutes



3

Saudi to allow women into stadium



8

Qatar Emir calls for dialogue as Gulf row rages



11

Boxer LaMotta, immortalized in 'Raging Bull' dies



16

EARTHQUAKE, VOLCANO, TREMOR HIT MEXICO, KILLING AT LEAST 225

STUDENTS SEND TEXT MESSAGES FROM THE RUBBLE; AMIR SENDS CONDOLENCE



Min 25°
Max 43°
High Tide 10:53
Low Tide 05:03 & 17:59

MP AL-TABTABAE BLASTS KPC

KUWAIT: In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful. "The plan, and Allah plans, and Allah is the Best of Planners" (Holy Quran 8:30). Praise be to Allah who supported us with his grace, as we did not need more than the statement of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) that was published in yesterday's newspapers to answer the parliamentary question we put forward in regards to the packages (worth millions) - given to senior officials in the oil sectors to prove that KPC is still practicing its chaotic policies of fraud and misinforming the public.

In the sixth item of our aforementioned question, we submitted a request with a precondition - which is the numbers, names and posts of the senior officials who benefit from a certain decision that was mentioned in the same item (the retirement system). It seems there are some people who are trying by all means to cover up the alleged 'packages of millions' at the expense of the public.

The only option they had was to behave recklessly and to manipulate the facts in order to cover up their deeds. They turned things upside down and mixed things up -

and increased the number of beneficiaries to 33 (not seven). Yet, it seemed that they miscalculated the end of service rewards and packages for the 33 senior staff which exceeded KD 33 million after raising their numbers.

KPC had a taste of its own medicine, and was forced - while facing the anger of the public opinion to retrieve its misleading answers that were given to us, and confess openly that only seven senior staff benefited from these packages at the expense of public.

As for the true value of the packages, we will give a comprehensive presentation to the Kuwaiti people about the true value of the following financial rewards for all the senior staff: (1) The packages; (2) Indemnity (better advantage); (3) Additional incentive; (4) Retirement award for those whose service is over 30 years according to the social securities law), and how those packages got inflated. They [think to] deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive not except themselves and perceive [it] not. (Holy Quran: 2:9)



MP Omar Al-Tabtabae



MEXICO CITY: People hurry to free possible victims out of the rubble of a collapsed building after a quake rattled Mexico City yesterday. — AFP

MEXICO CITY: Rescue workers scabbled through piles of rubble yesterday in a harrowing search for dozens of children feared buried under a Mexico City school, among hundreds of buildings destroyed by the country's most lethal earthquake in a generation. The magnitude 7.1 quake on Tuesday killed at least 225 people, nearly half of them in the capital, 32 years to the day after a devastating 1985 quake.

Mexico is also still reeling from a powerful tremor that killed nearly 100 people in the south of the country less than two weeks ago. Among the twisted concrete and steel ruin of the Enrique Rebsamen school, soldiers and firefighters found the bodies of at least 22 children and two adults, while another 30 children and 12 adults were missing, President Enrique Pena Nieto said. The public school is for children aged 3 to 14.

Hundreds of neighbors and emergency workers spent the night pulling rubble from the ruins of the school with their bare hands under the glare of floodlights. Three survivors were found at around midnight as volunteer rescue teams known as "moles" crawled deep under the rubble. Yesterday morning, the workers said a teacher and two students had sent text messages from within the rubble. Parents clung to hope that their children were alive.

"They keep pulling kids out, but we know nothing of my daughter," said 32-year-old Adriana D'Fargo, her eyes red, who had been waiting for hours for news of her seven-year-old.

Continued on Page 11

In celebration of Hijri New Year, Kuwait Times will not be published on Friday.

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US EXTREMELY APPRECIATIVE OF AMIR'S EFFORTS IN GULF CRISIS: AMBASSADOR

KUWAIT: The United States and Kuwait believe that it is imperative to bring about a settlement to the Gulf dispute as quickly as possible in order to maintain security and stability of the Middle East and regions beyond, the US envoy to Kuwait said.

Ambassador Lawrence R Silverman made those statements in an interview yesterday, in which he reiterated that the United States is "extremely appreciative" of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's efforts in mediating in the Gulf dispute.

He noted that the US will continue to support efforts of His Highness the Amir as His Highness "wants us to be involved in this," adding that the US' endeavors must be synchronized with Kuwait's efforts because the "GCC security is essential to the safety of the region."

Silverman pointed out that US President Donald Trump said he was willing to mediate and "we have to see what is necessary" and Kuwait will have ideas as well as the parties concerned. He said that Trump met Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani yesterday, adding that Sheikh Tamim and US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson have been on the phone on multiple occasions, in addition to Saudi, UAE officials and Kuwaitis as well. He said that the US wanted all parties concerned to work together to reach an agreement to the Gulf crisis, pointing to a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the US and Qatar on what should be done and additional steps that need to be taken to fight terrorism and stop financing terrorism.

Excellent relations

Furthermore, Silverman has described his country's relations with the State of Kuwait as "excellent" and both countries enjoy a close and strategic partnership. Silverman said that both the United States and Kuwait work together for the best interest of their peoples, adding that both countries also enjoy good cooperation ties in the security, defense, securing each other's territories, fighting terrorism and terrorists financing for the sake of prosperity of the region. He called for building up mutual trade and profitable investments, stressing the importance of expanding "educational connections" between both countries because this is a "foundation block" for bilateral relations.

"We both realized we could do more and

enhance the relationship and broaden it to other subjects," pointing to the five generations of Kuwaiti students pursuing their education in his country. He said that the strategic dialogue was created in order to find concrete ways to strengthen bilateral ties, describing both countries' bilateral ties as "strong and getting stronger."

He described His Highness the Amir's recent meeting with President Trump as "very successful," adding that it was important that His Highness the Amir saw the new administration and they heard from His Highness directly. "We have respect for His Highness," said Silverman, praising what His Highness the Amir has done for so many years when he was a foreign minister and now as an Amir. "We were able to talk about the region's issues, GCC issues with great focus on bilateral relations," noted the ambassador.

He said "although we discussed the GCC, His Highness the Amir's visit was conceived before the dispute started. We were well prepared for His Highness the Amir's visit." The US Ambassador pointed out that both sides were trying to get concrete benefits for both peoples and that is why "we signed the MoU and the arrangements we did." Commenting on the 2nd strategic dialogue and Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements (CMAAs), Silverman said "we were working throughout the years to try to come to agreements during His Highness' visit and we were able to accomplish all these arrangements. He said that these agreements took bilateral relations to a newer level, saying "if you look at the 1st strategic dialogue last year, we didn't reach any agreement, we kind of laid the foundation and this time we did it. As a result of this agreement, people of Kuwait are safer and more secure and will see more trade and investment opportunities."

"We will help each other secure our borders, share information about customs and help exporters in both ways," he said. He pointed to the formation of five different working groups aimed at overcoming any particular problem or impediment, adding "we can develop ideas that will ease visa process, ease processing of students," pointing out that some 15,000 Kuwaiti students are now pursuing their education in various US universities. Silverman said that both countries signed an educational MoU that will lead to more cooperation between both countries' educational and research institutions. The US diplomat also unveiled that his



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman speaks in an interview yesterday. — KUNA

country initiated an English teaching program as part of the educational MoU to better prepare Kuwaiti students wishing to pursue their education in the US and to have greater success.

Commercial conference

On the other hand, the diplomat said that it was wise of the Kuwaiti government to organize with cooperation of US-Kuwaiti chambers of commerce the first of its kind commercial conference bringing together both business peoples, anticipating such conference to be held annually, saying that he "fully supports it." He also pointed to the practical agreement initiated between Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority with SelectUSA authority, pointing to training programs offered by the US authority for Kuwaiti customs, commerce and education staffers in various spheres.

The ambassador touched on the importance of protecting Intellectual Property rights and that Kuwait has made efforts in this regard but "needs to do more," saying that such matter is a component of the strategic dialogue.

On cyber security, Silverman said that it is a benefit for Kuwaitis to cooperate on this issue, saying that "we are increasing cooperation on cyber security." The ambassador congratulated Kuwait for winning a non-permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council starting as of January 1, 2018, adding that Kuwait will represent the Arab world, describing that as a great prestige and the US has respect for Kuwait. — KUNA



NEW YORK: The Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani speaks during the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly at UN headquarters on Tuesday. — AP

QATAR APPRECIATES KUWAIT MEDIATION IN GULF CRISIS

NEW YORK: Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Al-Thani said Tuesday he highly appreciated the "honest" mediation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to solve the Gulf crisis. "I highly appreciate the honest mediation of my brother His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," the Qatari Emir said in a speech before the UN General Assembly in New York.

Kuwait has been mediating between Qatar on one side, and Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt on the other, a mediation that has won regional and international backing. Sheikh Tamim thanked all countries who supported the Kuwaiti mediation. He meanwhile called for "unconditional" dialogue with the four countries to solve the crisis. "I

call again for an unconditional dialogue based on the respect of sovereignty," Sheikh Tamim.

Sheikh Tamim said that Qatar fighting terrorism and its ideologies. He called on countries around the world to join hands in fight against all forms of terrorism. Last June, three GCC countries plus Egypt decided to sever ties with Qatar, resulting in diplomatic tension in the region.

Since then, Kuwait and other major global players were focusing on efforts to end the dispute. Sheikh Tamim, meanwhile, called for achieving a two-state solution for the Palestinians, solving the Syrian conflict peacefully on basis of communique of the Geneva I conference, and ending the crisis in Yemen based on UN Security Council resolution 2216. — KUNA



NEW YORK: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the UN Secretary General Special Representative to Iraq Jan Kubic. — KUNA



First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini.



First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson.

KUWAIT URGES UN TO PRESS IRAQ OVER PRISONERS, NATIONAL ARCHIVE

EU COMMENDS KUWAIT'S PROMOTION OF PEACE, SECURITY GLOBALLY

NEW YORK: Kuwait urged UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) to press the Iraqi government to double efforts in the search of the Kuwaiti prisoners and missing persons, as well as property and national archive.

First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah highlighted the importance of this "humanitarian file" during a meeting with Jan Kubic, the UN Secretary General Special Representative to Iraq. He said Kuwait attached great importance to this file and that it was necessary for UNAMI to press the government of Iraq to address this issue. Kubic briefed Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled about the latest developments regarding the file of Kuwaiti prisoners and missing, properties and national archive. He also informed the Kuwaiti top diplomat about meetings with the Iraqi officials to urge them double the efforts in this humanitarian cause.

The meeting, held on sidelines of the UN General Assembly session, was attended by the Assistant Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah and Kuwait's permanent representative to the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi.

Promotion of peace

Meanwhile, European Union (EU) foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini commended Kuwait for its efforts at regional and international levels to promote security and peace, as well as addressing crises in the area. Mogherini, during a meeting with Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, said the EU was pleased with the level of cooperation with Kuwait. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also praised the EU's endeavors to achieving security and stability regionally and globally.

Separately, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad talks with British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson on regional and international issues of mutual interest. The meeting also touched upon bilateral relations and cooperation. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also held similar meets with Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, Omani Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yusuf bin Alawi Abdullah, Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano and Thai Foreign Secretary Don Pramudwinai. — KUNA



Kuwait's First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano.



First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Thai Foreign Secretary Don Pramudwinai.

PALESTINE EYES ARAB INVESTMENTS INSIDE ITS TERRITORIES, SAYS OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: Palestine seeks to switch the current financial backup it receives from Arab states into an investment inside its territories, a Palestinian official said yesterday. Such a step would have a beneficial impact on everyone, said Mohammad Mustafa, Chairman of Palestine Investment Fund (PIF). It will also contribute in eliminating unemployment and attaining economic growth, added Mustafa, also former National Economy Minister.

On his current visit to Kuwait, Mustafa said that he would represent his country as a member of the board of governors in the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (the Arab Fund) meeting to discuss the programs offered to the Palestinian authority. The visit will include several meetings with Kuwaiti economic officials to review investment opportunities awaiting the Kuwaiti private sector inside Palestine, he said. It also aims to encourage Kuwaiti businesspersons to take advantage of the many and various investment opportunities available inside his country, particularly real estate and housing fields.

Several Gulf companies are still active in the Palestinian market, including Ooredoo, previously owned by Kuwait Projects Company Holding (KIPCO), in the West Bank, he noted, adding that the company will soon be operating in the Gaza Strip. Qatar has a notable presence inside Palestinian territories through its investments, backed by Qatar Investment Authority, in telecommunications and housing fields, Mustafa said, adding that Kuwait and UAE also have



Chairman of Palestine Investment Fund (PIF) Mohammad Mustafa

investments in the banking sector via Bank of Palestine.

The long and historic expertise of Kuwaiti investors has always inspired PIF officials, especially in the state and private sectors, he noted, pointing out Kuwait's major role in backing his country financially in past and present years. Kuwait has an influential diplomatic role in resolving several issues in the region, particularly financial support, in addition to reducing the negative impacts of other issues such as oil prices fall and human migrations, said the Palestinian official. He also praised Kuwait's recent step in bringing back Palestinian educators to its schools, which will reflect positively on both sides, adding that Palestinian cadres enjoy wide expertise in education and health fields. — KUNA

News

in brief

DONATIONS OPEN FOR EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

KUWAIT: The Embassy of Mexico announced yesterday the opening of donations through the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) to help the victims of the devastating earthquake that struck Mexico on September 19th 2017. The Society will receive donations in cash and in-kind through its website: <https://donation.krscs.org.kw>. The embassy would further like to extend its thanks and gratitude to all those who contributed to the alleviation of the suffering of the families of the victims and those affected, and in particular to the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and the State of Kuwait (Leadership, Government and People) for their sympathy towards our country.

Treated abroad

KUWAIT: The Health Ministry revealed yesterday that the number of Kuwaitis seeking medical treatment abroad fell by 80 percent in first quarter of 2017. The ministry revealed that the number of case was at 2,927 compared to the same period in 2016, which was at 13,352 cases. Meanwhile, this retreat was attributed to health ministry's strict measures to inspect each medical case and determine whether treatment abroad was necessary.

Driver's licenses

The Central Tenders Committee (CTC) recently approved a request made by the Interior Ministry's General Traffic Department to purchase one million driver's licenses of various types with a total cost of KD 99,000, and that in order to end a shortage that had been delaying the issuance of new or renewed licenses in some governorates.

Flags

Kuwait Municipality recently announced a reverse auction to supply state flags to be used for decorating various streets in preparation for the National and Liberation Days' holiday next February, said informed sources, noting that a meeting would be held soon with participants to review the conditions.

Smoking

Environment police recently fined a hotel in Farwaniya for allowing guests to smoke indoors, which is a violation of article 173 of the environment law number 42/2014. The guests who were caught smoking were fined as well, said sources.



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh and India's Minister of State for External Affairs M J Akbar shake hands during the third meeting of Kuwait-India joint ministerial commission.



India's Minister of State for External Affairs M J Akbar meets with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Jarallah.

KUWAIT, INDIA TO STRENGTHEN COOPERATION IN MANY SECTORS
KUWAIT KEEN ON PROTECTING EXPATS RIGHTS: SABEEH

KUWAIT: Kuwait and India yesterday agreed to strengthen cooperation and partnerships in various fields following the ministerial level meetings of the Kuwait-India Joint Commission. The agreements, seeking to strengthen bilateral cooperation, covered various sectors such as investment, science and technology, education, labor, culture, and oil and gas.

Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh chaired the third meeting of Kuwait-India joint ministerial commission for trade, commerce, economy and science and technology. In his address, the minister underlined the importance of bolstering cooperation and partnerships between Kuwait and India, reflecting the visions of the leaders of both countries. The minister exchanged documents with India's Minister of State for External Affairs M J Akbar at the end of the meeting.

Akbar paid a two-day visit to Kuwait heading a high-level delegation to attend the commission meeting. The minister also visited Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Jarallah and Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh yesterday

and held discussions. In his talks with Jarallah, Akbar discussed means of boosting bilateral cooperation in addition to other international topics of mutual interest.

Assistant Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs Amal Al-Hamad, Kuwait Ambassador to India Fahad Ahmad Al-Awadhi and the Ministry of Finance's Assistant Undersecretary for Economic Affairs Nabeel Al-Abduljalil were also present during the meeting. On the sidelines of the meeting, India's engineering conglomerate Larsen and Toubro (L&T) bagged a major pipeline contract yesterday from Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) worth Indian rupees 1,700 crore contract.

"L&T's hydrocarbon division has bagged a major pipeline contract with a value close to Rs 1,700 crore from KOC for Engineering, Procurement and Construction of a new 48" Crude Transit Line (TL-5) from North Kuwait to Ahmadi," the company said in a statement yesterday. The project is scheduled to be completed in the third quarter of 2020.

Expats' rights

Meanwhile, Sabeeh reiterated Kuwait's keenness in protecting the rights of expats



India's Minister of State for External Affairs M J Akbar meets with Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh.

in general and overcoming all obstacles facing them. Sabeeh, also Minister of State for Economic Affairs, made her remarks in press statement after meeting Akbar.

Kuwait eyes closer cooperation with India in various vital fields, particularly labor, she said, adding the two countries are currently studying ways to recruit Indian labor

in the country via electronic connectivity.

Using such a modern method would contribute in bringing more of qualified and productive labor to the Kuwaiti market, said Sabeeh. Currently, there are some 900,000 Indian workers in Kuwait, she mentioned, adding that all these workers are protected under Kuwaiti laws.

DEPUTY SPEAKER HAILS CONSTITUTIONAL COURT VERDICT

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Essa Al-Kandari yesterday hailed a Constitutional Court order which upheld the validity of the procedures followed when he was elected to his post. "[The court's decision] fully adheres with the constitution," he said, describing the verdict.

Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem made the right decision when he invited MPs for a second vote to elect the Deputy Speaker after the first vote was done in the absence of the majority of MPs, Kandari said. During the first session of the current parliament, MP Jamaan Al-Harbash, the other nominee for the Deputy Speaker's post, had objected conducting a revote, and stressed that he was the winner.

Working hours

Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri is expected to issue a special directive within a few days to mandate all municipality employees to be committed to official working hours, including morning, afternoon and night shifts. Informed sources explained that the directive would urge employees to respect Civil



Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Essa Al-Kandari

Service Commission (CSC) regulations with regards to work timings, and said that morning working hours start at 7:30 am and end at 2:30 pm, while afternoon working hours start at 2:30 pm and end at 9:30 pm. The sources added that all concerned employees would also have to use the fingerprint check in and out systems except those exempted for severe disabilities or mild mental impairments officially certified by the Public Authority for the Disabled.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality workers remove debris during a recent campaign in Hawally.

12 ARRESTED ON PROSTITUTION CHARGES

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Police recently arrested 12 Asian men and women on charges of practicing prostitution, said security sources. The arrest happened during a police raid on a brothel based on findings of an investigation that was opened after detectives were tipped off about the suspects' activities. In addition, police also discovered that the suspects were reported absconding and in violation of residency laws. They were taken to the

proper authorities to face charges.

Crackdown

Hawally municipality inspection teams carried out several campaigns recently, during which nine citations were issued for violation of hygiene regulations. Meanwhile, 386 cubic meters of debris were removed, 160 streets were cleaned, 191 garbage containers were replaced, 110 warning notice stickers were placed on abandoned vehicles, while 65 cars and one boat were impounded.

Kuwait Times

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In Brief

LAWMAKERS HEAD TO SPAIN, SWITZERLAND

KUWAIT: A group of Kuwaiti lawmakers, headed by MP Askar Al-Enezi, embarked on visits to Spain and Switzerland yesterday. The two visits are carried out by the Sixth Kuwaiti Parliamentary Friendship Group, which also includes MP Mohammed Al-Huwailah. They come as part of a protocol to strengthen relations between the National Assembly and the parliaments of the two countries, the Kuwaiti parliament's press office 'Al-Dustour' said in a press statement. —KUNA



OIL PRICE DOWN TO \$52.59 PB

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti crude oil dropped 7 cents to \$52.59 per barrel in Tuesday's trading down from \$52.66 per barrel on Monday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). The drop in global oil prices comes following expectations of a rise in US crude reserves. It also comes ahead of a meeting OPEC and other major oil exporters to discuss lowering production quotas. The price of the Brent crude shed 34 cents to \$55.14 per barrel while the West Texas Intermediate dropped 43 cents to \$49.48 pb. —KUNA



DOLLAR UNCHANGED AT KD 0.301

KUWAIT: The US dollar's exchange rate was unchanged at KD 0.301 while the euro rose to KD 0.361, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said yesterday. Meanwhile, the rate of the pound Sterling was stable at KD 0.407 as was the Swiss franc at KD 0.313 and the Japanese yen, which stood still at KD 0.002. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Heavy traffic is seen at Fahaheel Road, one of the busiest motorways in Kuwait. Traffic congestions returned to main roads around the country after the end of the summer holiday and students' return back to school. —KUNA photo

KUWAIT'S SECURITY APPARATUS WRAPS UP 3-DAY NATO WEEK

KUWAIT: The NATO-Kuwait Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Regional Centre of the Kuwait National Security Apparatus on Tuesday wrapped up the 'NATO Week', which featured a plethora of activities dedicated to the international military alliance. The event reaffirmed the crucial security and maritime security as well as planning for emergencies in cities.

The third and the final day of the 'NATO Week' tackled a host of topics,

including protection of the infrastructure, and boosting cooperation on the relevant issues, Director of the NATO-Kuwait ICI center Fawaz Al-Othman said in a press statement. The 'NATO Week', the first of its kind in the Gulf region, aimed at building strategic ties and an effective partnership among the Gulf states that are members of the ICI, Othman added.

In addition, the event sought to benefit from the NATO expertise in the sci-

entific, training and technical fields, as well as streamlining the application of the cooperation program for Kuwait, he said. Chief of the Kuwait National Security Apparatus Chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah had said earlier that such key events reiterated Kuwait's backing of the regional and international security. The 'NATO Week' included workshops on topics that run the gamut from cyber security and crisis management to maritime security. —KUNA

TEMPERATURES TO DROP SLIGHTLY IN NEXT FEW DAYS

KUWAIT: Temperatures in Kuwait are expected to drop slightly over the coming days, Kuwait's Meteorological Center said yesterday. The Indian Monsoon Current continues to affect the region accompanied by a wet air mass with a slight decrease in the temperature, the center's head meteorologist Dhirar Al-Ali said.

This constitutes an opportunity for light fog over some areas, he added. Meanwhile, he said that the weather today is expected to be hot and moderately humid, particularly over coastal areas, with temperatures ranging 43-45 degrees Celsius. As for the state of winds, he said they will be northwesterly over most areas and

southeasterly, with light to moderate speeds ranging 8-30 km/h, over coastal areas.

In the evening, humidity is expected to be concentrated in coastal areas, with moderately hot weather due to southeasterly winds of moderate speeds. As for the state of the sea, he said 1-4 foot waves would be light to moderate. On Saturday he said temperatures during the day would remain hot with southwesterly to northerly light and moderate winds ranging 12-35 km/h speeds. The maximum temperature is expected to be in the 42-22 degrees Celsius range. As for the evening, slightly hot and humid weather will be witnessed over coastal areas. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry concluded its second martial arts tournament, featuring officers who participated in jujitsu, kick boxing and mixed martial arts matches. The winners were awarded in a ceremony attended by senior ministry officials including Undersecretary Lieutenant General Mahmoud Al-Dousary. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Crime

Report

PLASTIC SURGEON CHARGED OVER MEDICAL ERROR

KUWAIT: Detectives arrested an Egyptian plastic surgeon after a patient accused him of removing a part of her body during an operation performed at his private clinic. Investigations later revealed that the same doctor had previously been arrested over similar charges. A female citizen went to a Hawally police station with a medical report stating that she suffered from dangerous complications due to a medical error. She explained that she went to a private clinic for a plastic surgery, but the doctor removed part of her abdomen, causing her complications that required her to be admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU). The doctor confirmed that he performed the operation. Investigations are ongoing.

Massage parlor

Three people were arrested for running an unlicensed massage parlor. The suspects' activity was discovered when patrolmen pulled over a bus with illegally tinted windows. Police grew even more suspicious when they noticed that the bus contained a bed and cosmetics, and they discovered two women inside. Police questioned the women who admitted that they offered massages to customers based on agreements made over social media. The Filipina women as well as the bus' Bangladesh driver were arrested after they failed to produce a license for their activity, and police later discovered that they are in violation of residency regulations as well.

Food poisoning

Three police officers from Failaka police station were taken to Mubarak Hospital for food poisoning. The three became ill after eating food they personally brought with them to the station. The three were taken by medevac and were treated promptly. Medical reports were obtained for further action.

Jailbreak

A citizen sentenced to 10 years in jail over a blackmail case was able to escape while the appeals court was discussing his case. When the judge adjourned the case, the suspect reportedly slipped away from security and walked out of the courtroom by merging with the crowds without being noticed. The suspect is 34 years of age, worked as a car dealer and was convicted in several cases including blackmail and swindling. An investigation was opened to determine the circumstances behind the man's escape, and to bring him under arrest.

Fugitives caught

Jahra detectives arrested a citizen sentenced to seven years in jail over two felonies, and discovered that he is also wanted on a civil case worth KD 300,000. The man was also charged with resisting arrest. The suspect was arrested at his home where police went with an arrest warrant, as they foiled his escape attempt. He was taken to the police station for further legal action. Separately, a Hawally detective was injured when a fugitive ran him over in Salmiya. The suspect was caught and taken to the detectives' office and charged accordingly, while the policeman was taken to Mubarak Hospital.

Forgery

Residency detectives discovered a forged order to cancel the residency of an Arab man who was out of the country. Information indicated that an Arab man left Kuwait, but his residency permit was cancelled by the Ministry of Social Affairs report before six months had passed since his departure. Investigations were carried out, and the residency affairs department employee was summoned. She said that she processed the transaction based on the social affairs ministry's cancellation request. The case was sent to the public prosecution for further action.

— Translated from the Arabic press

Al-Jarida



VIVA SPONSORS NUKS - UK BRANCH'S GRADUATION CEREMONY

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, sponsored the graduation ceremony held by National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) - UK Branch, in the State of Kuwait at Symphony Style Hotel under the patronage and the presence of Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah, VIVA's Corporate Communications Director Abdulrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Country Manager at the British Council Grant Butler and NUKS - UK Branch's Fahed Khalifa Al-Hayfi. The event featured different speeches which hailed the role

of NUKS and appreciated the support of the sponsors for the Kuwaiti students. At the end, graduates and outstanding students received trophies. Abdulrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Director of Corporate Communications at VIVA: "VIVA is keen to continue its ongoing socially responsible role in the community in education, health, sport, environment and entrepreneurship, by spreading the spirit of goodness amongst Kuwaiti society. We believe at VIVA in taking a holistic approach to our CSR activities, one that engages our employees, and creates goodwill in

our communities with a focus on helping to grow and develop the State of Kuwait." The National Union of Kuwaiti Students is considered to be the lone representative for the Kuwaiti students studying in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, as it is well known to be the oldest branch of the Union, established in London 1950. The students union aims to serve its members by demanding of protecting their rights, ensuring the successful encouragement of students in getting their scientific procurement.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated as a sponsor in an awareness campaign organized recently by the Interior Ministry to spread awareness about road safety at the start of the school year.

Al-Anbaa

DIFFERENT TIME, DIFFERENT PLACES

By Saleh Al-Shayji

Violence against Muslims in Myanmar is nothing new. It has been recurring for centuries because of the amount of hatred some Buddhists have for Muslims as a result of historical residues that go back to the day of the Mongol Empire. In fact, I came across so many painful details while reading about the situation of Muslims in Myanmar and why they often fall victims to massacres.

I do not know much about Myanmar or about the reasons behind those people's sufferings, but I did my best to collect some information on the matter. I would not only like to talk about the sufferings of Muslims in Myanmar, but also the sufferings of Muslims in various countries all around the world.

More horrible and brutal massacres have been committed against various races and people belonging to other religions. Yet, it seems that Muslims have not been aware of them as if they had never happened, and as if those killed in the most brutal and painful ways were not human beings. Why? The answer, I believe, is simply because those other victims are not Muslims, as if mankind should only be Muslim and others should not be considered human.

The Islamic State (IS), Hezbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Qaeda, Al-Nosra, Hamas and so many other Islamic organizations have killed more Muslims than those killed by extremists in Myanmar. Nonetheless, the Muslim world did not revolt, condemn or even launch demonstrations then, as if Muslims killed by those terrorist groups are mere sacrifices they use to 'worship' Allah. Their feelings are only moved for Muslims in Myanmar because the 'enemy' is Buddhist, not Muslim!

With all the humanity in me, I do condemn and reject what is happening to the Muslims in Myanmar and to others oppressed elsewhere because of their religion or race. My sympathy is not restricted to Muslims alone, but since I am a Muslim, I would not want this nation to be used, abused and messed up with by people fooling around with Muslims' feeling, instigating them, making up stories that never happened, fabricating photos and images and claiming that the victims seen in them are Muslims while the true incidents took place with other peoples in different times and different places! So, Oh the nation of Islam...when and how will you ever wake up?

— Translated by Kuwait Times

Al-Jarida

POLICEMEN INDIFFERENCE

By Abdu Mohsen Jumaa

Everybody is complaining and grumbling about traffic situations in Kuwait, the way people drive and vehicles that are not fit for ordinary roads but instead should rather be driven on racing tracks. Complainers also often criticize security forces, namely traffic police who they accuse of being too passive and all they do is to present on various streets without interfering to stop reckless motorists.

Meanwhile, we have noticed how a driver would be chased and stopped to be ticketed by traffic police even if a vehicle's or a bike's tire touch the dotted white lane line in foreign countries. So what about what we have here in terms of drivers who maneuver around from lane to lane at top speed, not to mention motorists who equip their vehicles with accessories that create very loud noises?

One would so often drive past a police patrol

Policemen need legislations to protect them from such penalties so that they can do their part in fighting this 'street war'

and see a reckless driver speeding past without being chased or stopped by the police, and we would immediately criticize the policeman's reaction and start comparing it to what we see abroad.

The Interior Ministry has started chasing traffic law violators on various roads, which has recently resulted in a tragic accident when two young people were killed while trying to escape arrest as a police patrol was chasing to stop them. May Almighty Allah have mercy on their souls. They were killed because of young people's lack of awareness of traffic laws and because they have not been warned about the dangerous consequences of violating those laws and defying security men.

The strange thing about this accident is that those two policemen who were only doing their duty in law enforcement were detained, facing charges of second degree murder! This will, of course, lead to more police passivity and reluctance from chasing outlaws, whereas escaping arrest is a punishable crime worldwide and violators will have to adhere to the consequences while policemen have full immunity and protection so that they can do their jobs. So, what if a policeman is jailed simply because he did his job?

Policemen need legislations to protect them from such penalties so that they can do their part in fighting this 'street war' that has been reaping lives on a daily basis. Otherwise, policemen will become more passive and indifferent to avoid endless disciplinary or penal measures as rewards for doing their jobs.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) organized a campaign recently to offer free dental care to families in need. KRCS workers also distributed school bags to children during the activity. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2017



Heavy rains causes Mumbai airport chaos

US-BACKED FORCE SEIZES 90% OF RAQA FROM IS

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SAN JUAN: Trees are toppled in a parking lot at Roberto Clemente Coliseum in San Juan, Puerto Rico yesterday during the passage of the Hurricane Maria. Maria made landfall on Puerto Rico yesterday, pummeling the US territory after killing at least two people on its passage through the Caribbean. — AFP

HURRICANE MARIA SLAMS INTO PUERTO RICO

NATURE'S FURY CONTINUES TO DEMOLISH REGION

SAN JUAN: One of the strongest hurricanes to ever hit Puerto Rico pummeled the island yesterday, tearing off roofs and sending doors flying from hinges as officials warned Hurricane Maria would decimate the power company's crumbling infrastructure and force the government to rebuild dozens of communities.

Maria, which has killed at least nine in the Caribbean, made landfall early yesterday in the southeast coastal town of Yabucoa as a Category 4 storm with winds of 155 mph winds, and it was expected to punish the island with life-threatening winds for 12 to 24 hours, forecasters said. People calling local radio stations reported that doors were flying off hinges and a water tank flew away in the island's southern region. Meanwhile, widespread flooding was reported in the capital of San Juan, with water running down one apartment's interior staircase.

Gov Ricardo Rossello warned of heavy rains and flooding but urged people to have faith: "We are stronger than any hurricane. Together, we will rebuild." Metal roofs were already flying and windows were breaking as the storm approached before dawn, with people seeking shelter inside stairwells, bathrooms and walk-in closets. As Maria slowly crossed the island, it

toppled cell phone towers, snapped trees and unleashed heavy flooding, dumping 20 inches of rain so far across Puerto Rico.

El Nuevo Dia newspaper reported that an emergency medical station in the north coastal town of Arecibo lost its roof, and communication was severed with several emergency management stations. One hospital and one police station reported broken windows. About 90 percent of customers were without power and one tree fell on an ambulance. Those who sought shelter at a coliseum in San Juan were moved to the building's second and third floors, radio station WKAQ 580 AM reported.

Spared no longer

The storm was approaching Puerto Rico's northern coast Wednesday at 12 mph, with top sustained winds of 140 mph according to the US National Hurricane Center in Miami. The eye was about 25 miles west of San Juan. Previously a Category 5 storm with 175 mph winds, Maria hit Puerto Rico as the third strongest storm to make landfall in the United States based on a key measurement that meteorologists use: air pressure. The lower the central pressure a storm the stronger it is and Maria's pressure was 917 millibars, lower than Irma's US landfall of 929

millibars in the Florida Keys earlier this month.

Puerto Rico had long been spared from a direct hit by hurricanes that tend to veer north or south of the island. The last Category 4 hurricane landfall in Puerto Rico occurred in 1932, and the strongest storm to ever hit the island was San Felipe in 1928 with winds of 160 mph. As Maria approached, US President Donald Trump offered his support via Twitter: "Puerto Rico being hit hard by new monster Hurricane. Be careful, our hearts are with you - will be there to help!"

More than 4,400 people were in shelters by late Tuesday, along with 105 pets, Rossello said. The storm's center passed near or over St Croix overnight Tuesday, prompting US Virgin Islands Gov Kenneth Mapp to insist that people remain alert. St Croix was largely spared the widespread damage caused by Hurricane Irma on the chain's St Thomas and St John islands just two weeks ago. But this time, the island would experience five hours of hurricane force winds, Mapp said.

"For folks in their homes, I really recommend that you not be in any kind of sleepwear," he said. "Make sure you have your shoes on. Make sure you have a jacket around. Something for your head in case your roof

should breach. ... I don't really recommend you be sleeping from 11 o'clock to 4 (a.m.) ... Be aware of what's going on around you." Maria killed two people in the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe and two people aboard a boat were reported missing off La Desirade Island, just east of Guadeloupe, officials said. About 40 percent of the island - 80,000 homes - were without power and flooding was reported in several communities.

'The winds are merciless!'

The storm also blew over the tiny eastern Caribbean island of Dominica late Monday, where Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerit sent out a series of dramatic posts on his Facebook page, including that his own roof had blown away. "The winds are merciless! We shall survive by the grace of God," Skerit wrote before communications went down.

Hartley Henry, an adviser to Skerit, said there have been seven confirmed deaths in the Caribbean country from Hurricane Maria. He didn't say how the deaths occurred. The storm knocked out communications for the entire island, leaving anyone outside Dominica struggling to determine the extent of damage, though it was clearly widespread. "The situation

is really grave," Consul General Barbara Dailey said in New York. She said she lost contact with the island about 4 am. At that point, officials had learned that 70 percent of homes had lost their roofs, including her own. Flooding was a big concern, given the island's steep mountains, cut through with rivers that rage even after a heavy rain. Dominica was still recovering from Tropical Storm Erika, which killed 30 people and destroyed more than 370 homes in August 2015.

Forecasters said the storm surge from Maria could raise water levels by 6 to 9 feet near the storm's center. The storm was predicted to bring 10 to 15 inches of rain across the islands, with more in isolated areas. To the north, Hurricane Jose weakened to a tropical storm Tuesday night. Forecasters said dangerous surf and rip currents were likely to continue along the US East Coast but said the storm was unlikely to make landfall. Big waves from Jose swept five people off a coastal jetty in Rhode Island and they were hospitalized after being rescued. A tropical storm warning was posted for coastal areas in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and tropical storm watches were up for parts of New York's Long Island and Connecticut. — AP

TRUMP'S JABS SET UP BIG US-IRAN TALKS

NEW YORK: The United States and Iran yesterday will have their highest-level interaction of Donald Trump's presidency, a day after the American leader delivered a blistering attack on the Islamic Republic and the landmark 2015 nuclear deal.

Amid strong signals Trump could walk away from the nuclear accord as early as next month, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will attend a European Union-hosted meeting about the agreement at the United Nations. The closed-door gathering is expected to be contentious, and the lead-up has seen Washington and Tehran trade increasingly harsh barbs.

A year ago, such a get-together would have been considered routine as nations strove to implement an agreement that curtailed Iran's nuclear activity in exchange for an end to various oil, trade and financial restrictions on the country. In the current environment of animus, however, it is anything but. Trump used his UN General Assembly speech on Tuesday to launch a withering critique of Iran, saying its government "masks a corrupt dictatorship behind the false guise of a democracy" and ruthlessly represses its own people.

Animosity is mutual

"It has turned a wealthy country with a rich history and culture into an economically depleted rogue state whose chief exports are violence, bloodshed and chaos," he said, repeating a litany of oft-spoken US complaints about Iran.

These include its antipathy to Israel, support for terrorism and Syrian President Bashar Assad, ballistic missile testing and its nuclear program.

"We cannot let a murderous regime continue these destabilizing activities while building dangerous missiles," Trump said. "And we cannot abide by an agreement if it provides cover for the eventual construction of a nuclear program. The Iran deal was one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered into. Frankly, that deal is an embarrassment to the United States." The animosity is mutual.

Zarif, who had a friendly, collegial relationship with former Secretary of State John Kerry while they negotiated the nuclear deal, was quick to denounce Trump's speech. He took to Twitter to offer a glimpse of what may be in store for future exchanges with US officials, including perhaps with Tillerson yesterday. "Trump's ignorant hate speech belongs in medieval times - not the 21st Century UN - unworthy of a reply," Zarif said on Twitter. "Fake empathy for Iranians fools no one."

In comments broadcast shortly before Trump's speech, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani warned Trump that exiting the nuclear deal would "carry a high cost." "No one would trust America again and there is no higher price to pay than this," Rouhani told NBC. "Which country would be willing to sit across the table from the United States of America and talk about international issues?" Rouhani is set to deliver his own UN address yesterday, shortly before the nuclear meeting. — AP

SAUDI UNIVERSITY SET TO DISMISS BROTHERHOOD-LINKED ACADEMICS

RIYADH: A large Saudi public university announced it would dismiss employees suspected of ties to the banned Muslim Brotherhood, adding to concerns that the government is clamping down on its critics in academia and beyond. Activists and rights groups say security forces have rounded up some 30 clerics, intellectuals and others in the past 10 days, in what Human Rights Watch has described as "a coordinated crackdown on dissent."

Authorities have not explicitly acknowledged the detentions, which come amid widespread speculation - denied by officials - that King Salman will abdicate in favor of his son as well as deepening tensions with neighboring Qatar, which is accused by Riyadh of supporting Islamists, including the Brotherhood. The governing council of Al-Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh advised against renewing contracts for employees it said were "influenced by the ideology

of the terrorist Muslim Brotherhood organization."

The statement, posted online on Tuesday, did not name the employees or specify their number, but said they included Saudis and foreigners. The employees' removal "aims to protect the minds of students and university employees from those deviant, partisan ideas and dangerous, destructive trends", it added. Saudi Arabia designated the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization in 2014. Hardline groups such as Al Qaeda and Islamic State are also blacklisted.

Internal threat

The ruling Al Saud family has always regarded Islamist groups as a major internal threat to its rule over a country in which appeals to religious sentiment resonate deeply and an al Qaeda campaign a decade ago killed hundreds. Since the kingdom's founding, the Al Saud have enjoyed a close alliance with clerics of the ultra-

conservative Wahhabi school of Islam who have espoused a political philosophy that demands obedience to the ruler.

By contrast the Brotherhood advances an active political doctrine urging revolutionary action, which flies in the face of Wahhabi teaching. A political Islamist organization founded in Egypt nearly a century ago, it says it is committed to peaceful activism and reform through elections, and its adherents span the region, holding elected office in Arab countries from Tunisia to Jordan.

Brotherhood members fleeing repression in Egypt, Syria and Iraq half a century ago took shelter in Saudi Arabia, some taking up roles in the kingdom's education system and helping to establish the Sahwa or "Awakening" movement which agitated in the 1990s for democracy. The Sahwa mostly fizzled, with some activists arrested and others coaxed into conformity, though admirers and its appeal lingered. — Reuters

BACK TO SCHOOL Offers



YORK AUTHORIZED DISTRIBUTOR YHFC12 12000 BTU/hr 1 طن 109 149 40	YORK AUTHORIZED DISTRIBUTOR YHFC18 18000 BTU/hr 1.5 طن 139 179 40	YORK AUTHORIZED DISTRIBUTOR YHFC24 24000 BTU/hr 2 طن 179 199 20	YORK AUTHORIZED DISTRIBUTOR YHFC36 36000 BTU/hr 3 طن 339 369 30
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Panasonic
 CS-YC24TKF
 24000 BTU/hr
 2 طن
 229
249
20
 55°C
 الجهاز الوحيد المعتمد
 يعمل حتى درجة حرارة
 55°C
 NEW ARRIVAL

White-Westinghouse
 WANC18FNWHI
 18000 BTU/hr
 1.5 طن
 129
175
46
 Superior Quality • Active Carbon
 Quick Cool

SHARP
 AH-A18REM
 18000 BTU/hr
 1.5 طن
 145
189
44
 4 way auto air swing
 Superjet, gentle cool air system

Midea
 MST1MB1-24CR
 24000 BTU/hr
 2 طن
 149
189
40

White-Westinghouse
 WS36N37BSCI
 36000 BTU/hr
 3 طن
 369
399
30
 4 Ways Air Flow • Cools Even at 54°C

Symphony
 siesta 70
 Air Cooler
 70 لتر
 39
69
30
 Water Tank 70 Liter
 Fan 16 inch
 3 Speeds
 1300 RPM

Midea
 MWT2F-24CM
 24000 BTU/hr
 2 طن
 99
139
40
 Auto Swing
 Self- evaporative system
 Quiet design
 Fresh Air

MRA21V70W
 Refrigerator
 581 لتر
 264
289
25
 WWH Up Right Ref.
 21 Cubic Feet
 White Color

MUFF21VLW
 Freezer
 278 لتر
 274
299
25
 278 Liters
 9.6 Cu.Ft
 No Frost
 Silver

Panasonic
 MX-GX1061WTZ
 Blender
 400
22
31
8
 1 Speed
 Glass jar
 Wet & Dry Mill

Midea
 MJ-60JM01B
 Juicer
 600
120
14
16
1
 74mm Feeding tube
 1.5L Pulp container
 2 Speed

DeLonghi
 ECAM22
 Coffee machine
 149
249
100
 Automatic Cappuccino system
 150g beans container capacity
 automatic cleaning indicator
 Milk frothing system
 Easy to clean

Panasonic
 SCR-CH200H2
 100 لتر
 69
82
13

SHARP
 SCF-K440H-WH3
 440 لتر
 89
129
40
 Horizontal Freezer
 440 Ltr
 Cubic Feet 15.5

CEFFICE
 XLT5700
 Chest Freezer
 540 لتر
 124
144
20
 Automatic fast freezing
 Voltage fluctuation proof
 Eco green technology

Panasonic
 NN-SM332WK1Q
 Microwave
 25
800
24
31
7
 800 Watts
 25 Liters
 Timer upto 30 mins
 Round Turntable

Midea
 MM720CJ9
 Microwave
 20
700
12
19
7
 700W
 Power Level
 Defrost Settings

ORCA
 OR-HK-10002
 Oven
 100
2000
39
 Top & Bottom Heat
 Rotisserie Core
 Inner lamp

White-Westinghouse
 WLCE07GGFWT1
 7 طن
 68
149
81
 1000 RPM
 15 Programs
 Safety Lock

Midea
 MAS80-507TCLPS
 8 طن
 55
79
24
 8 KG
 8 Programs
 LED Display
 Child Lock

Panasonic
 NA-127VB6WAS
 7 طن
 109
139
30
 1200 Rpm
 33cm Wide Door
 Allergy Care Program
 Double Layer Door
 White Color

BURCO
 C10STHF
 Boiler
 10 لتر
 44
50
6
 Water Boiler
 10 ltr
 Thermostatic

Panasonic
 MX-SS40BTZ
 Hand Blender
 4 in 1
 600
19
29
10
 600W
 1.2 L
 Multi Speed
 4 Attachments

Midea
 BL1192
 Professional Blender
 2 طن
 32
 3 Speed
 4 Leaf SJS Blade

SAUDI TO ALLOW WOMEN INTO STADIUM FOR NATIONAL DAY

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has invited women to a sports stadium for the first time to attend annual national day celebrations with their families, state media said yesterday, opening up a previously male-only venue. Families will be allowed into the King Fahd stadium in Riyadh, used mostly for football matches, and seated separately from single men to mark the kingdom's 87th National Day this weekend.

"The stadium is ready to receive about 40,000 people divided between individuals and families to be seated separately," the official Saudi Press

Agency said in a statement, citing the general authority of entertainment. This marks a shift from previous celebrations in the kingdom where women are effectively barred from sports arenas by strict rules on segregation of the sexes in public.

Saudi Arabia has some of the world's tightest restrictions on women and is the only country where they are not allowed to drive. Under the country's guardianship system, a male family member — normally the father, husband or brother — must grant permission for a woman's study, travel and other

activities. But the kingdom appears to be relaxing some norms as part of its "Vision 2030" plan for economic and social reforms. In July, rights campaigners welcomed an "overdue" reform by the education ministry to allow girls to take part in sports at state schools.

Scrap referendum

Meanwhile Saudi Arabia yesterday urged Iraqi Kurdish leader Massud Barzani to call off to planned referendum on independence for his autonomous region to avoid further "crises" in Iraq and the region. A Saudi government official

said Barzani should drop plans to hold a referendum "in light of the situation in the region and the dangers it is facing, and in order to avoid new crises". He called on the Kurdish leader to make use of his "wisdom and experience", the state-run Saudi Press Agency said.

Holding the referendum as planned on September 25 could have "negative consequences on the political, security and humanitarian fronts". It could also "affect efforts to establish security and stability in the region, as well as efforts to fight against terrorist organizations and their activities," the official added.

Regional kingpin Saudi Arabia is the latest country to voice its opposition to the referendum in oil-rich Iraqi Kurdistan. But Barzani has so far resisted pressure from Baghdad and Iraq's neighbors Turkey and Iran, as well as from the United States and its Western allies, to call off the vote. Iraq's supreme court has ordered the suspension of the referendum to examine claims made by the federal government that it was unconstitutional. The Saudi official called on "all concerned parties to engage in a dialogue that would serve the interests of the entire Iraqi people". —AFP

US-BACKED FORCE SEIZES 90% OF RAQA FROM IS

IN FINAL STAGES OF CAPTURING STRONGHOLD



RAQA: A military convoy composed of 140 trailers used to carrying US-made armoured vehicles, bulldozers, and arms, through Simalka border crossing between Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan, and headed for SDF forces fighting. —AFP

BEIRUT: US-backed fighters have seized 90 percent of Raqa from the Islamic State group, a monitor said yesterday, as they announced they were in the "final stages" of capturing the jihadists' Syrian stronghold. Under siege in the northern city for three months, IS is struggling to defend its one-time bastion under a barrage of air strikes by the US-led coalition battling the jihadists in Syria and Iraq.

"Because of the heavy coalition air strikes, IS withdrew from at least five key neighborhoods over the past 48 hours," said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. "This allowed the Syrian Democratic Forces to control 90 percent of the city." The SDF is an alliance of Kurdish and Arab forces the coalition is backing in Syria with air strikes, equipment and advisers.

IS pulled out of the north of the city and abandoned its grain silos and mills, Abdel Rahman said. It was now confined to the city centre, in government administrative buildings, the stadium and tunnels. The SDF said its forces had mounted a "surprise attack" on IS in the north of the city. "We consider this the final stages of the Wrath of the Euphrates campaign, which is nearing its end," a statement said.

IS seized Raqa in early 2014, transforming the city into the de facto Syrian capital of the "caliphate" it declared after taking control of large parts of Syria and Iraq. It quickly became synonymous with the group's most gruesome atrocities, including public beheadings, and IS is thought to have used the city to plan attacks abroad.

'Not resist much longer'

The SDF spent months encircling the city before entering it in June and sealing off all access routes. Abdel Rahman said the siege had worn down IS's defensive capabilities. "After hundreds of their fighters were killed in recent weeks, the remaining IS fighters will not be able to resist much longer in Raqa as their military equipment and basic necessities are dwindling," he said.

Without food or medical equipment, IS was unable to treat its own wounded and had retreated to the city centre, which it considered "the most secure," he said. But the battle for the 10 percent of the city still held by IS is likely to be tough, as the jihadists have heavily mined the area, Abdel Rahman said. IS has used mines, snipers, car bombs, and weaponized drones against the SDF offensive. Tens of thousands of civilians have fled the fighting in recent months. Estimates of the number still inside the city range from fewer than 10,000 to as many as 25,000. In its statement yesterday, the SDF said it had helped hundreds of civilians escape the city in recent days. "We will continue the campaign until we achieve our aim," Jihan Sheikh Ahmed, the SDF's spokeswoman for the Raqa offensive said.

'Impact for years to come'

More than 330,000 people have been killed and millions more displaced since civil war broke out in Syria following protests against President Bashar Al-Assad in March 2011. It has since evolved into a complex, multi-front conflict involving government forces, rebels, Kurdish fighters and jihadist groups including IS. After seizing swathes of Syria and neighboring Iraq in 2014, IS has seen the territory under its control fast diminish in recent months.

In July, it was defeated in Iraq's second city Mosul after a nine-month offensive. On Monday, Iraqi forces launched an attack up the Euphrates Valley against one of IS's two remaining enclaves in Iraq. And in Syria's eastern province of Deir Ezzor, IS faces twin assaults—one by Russian-backed government troops and the other by the US-backed SDF. The jihadist group also holds pockets of territory in central and southern Syria and around the capital Damascus, but some of those too are under attack.

"I don't think it is a simple question of taking away the Islamic State's territory and then the Islamic State idea evaporates," said Charlie Winter, a senior research fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence in London. IS had made its mark by establishing a so-called "caliphate" and calling on hundreds of thousands of people around the world to join it, Winter said. "The ideological impact of that is going to be immense for years and years to come." —AFP



In this July 21, 2006 file photo, Israeli soldiers cover their ears as an artillery unit fires shells towards southern Lebanon from a position near Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel, near the border with Lebanon. —AP

AS SYRIAN WAR WINDS DOWN, ISRAEL TARGETS HEZBOLLAH

PILON MILITARY BASE: With President Bashar Assad seemingly poised to survive the Syrian civil war, Israeli leaders are growing nervous about the intentions of his Iranian patrons and their emerging corridor of influence across the region.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is agitating against Iran in global forums like this week's UN General Assembly. The Israeli military is holding war games targeting the Iran-backed Lebanese Hezbollah, and generals are issuing tough threats in hopes of avoiding what could be another ruinous Israeli entanglement in Lebanon, this time with Iranian advisers and troops on Israel's doorstep. Israel has long identified Iran as its biggest threat, citing its suspect nuclear program, development of long-range missiles and hostile rhetoric. But gains by Syrian troops and their Iranian-backed allies have given those concerns new urgency. Israel fears the establishment of a Shiite "corridor," with land links from Iran to Lebanon, allowing the movement of fighters and weapons across the region. At the heart of those fears is Hezbollah, the Lebanese militia that battled Israel to a stalemate in a monthlong war in 2006.

'Tyranny and terror'

The group has greatly beefed up its arsenal of rockets and missiles since then, and after years of fighting in Syria, is more battle-tested than ever. In his UN address Tuesday, Netanyahu warned that Iran was spreading a "curtain of tyranny and terror" across the region, and said Israel would defend itself. "We will act to prevent Iran from establishing permanent military bases in Syria for its air, sea and ground forces. We will act to prevent Iran from producing deadly weapons in Syria or in Lebanon for use against us. And we will act to prevent Iran from opening new terror fronts against Israel along our northern border," he said.

Israel last week wrapped up its largest military exercise in two decades - mobilizing some 30,000 troops to train for the next war against Hezbollah. In an exclusive interview with The Associated Press, the commander of the exercise, Maj Gen Tamir Hayman, said that despite Hezbollah's gains, the balance of power has greatly shifted in favor of Israel since 2006. "If Hezbollah's capabilities have grown linearly, ours have grown exponentially, in intelligence, in targets and in the ability to attack," he said. If fighting resumes, "the damage to Hezbollah will be severe, mortal and comprehensive."

He said he was pleased with the performance of his troops, and said the two-week drill should send a powerful message of deterrence. "We have no intentions at this time to go out and defeat

Hezbollah. Our goal is to maintain the quiet and stability in the north," said Hayman, the commander of the army's Northern Corps. Israeli forces on Tuesday shot down what Israel said was a Hezbollah surveillance drone that veered too close to the Syrian border with Israel. The military said the unmanned aircraft was Iranian-made and launched from a Damascus airport before it was shot down near the Israeli-controlled side of the Golan Heights.

Upper hand

After six years of fighting that claimed at least 400,000 lives, Assad's forces appear to have finally gained the upper hand as they recapture territory from the Islamic State group and opposition fighters. Russia, which is waging an air campaign on behalf of Assad, and Iran and Hezbollah, which have fighters on the ground, have provided crucial support and are expected to play a major role in postwar Syria.

"The vector is quite clear right now, with the Syrian army, Hezbollah and the Shiite militias gradually regaining control of large swathes of the country," said Chagai Tzuril, the director general of the Israeli Intelligence Ministry. Israel has said any permanent presence of Iranian or Hezbollah troops along the Syrian border with Israel would be crossing a "red line," hinting that it would be willing to take military action if needed. Tzuril warned of a "regional conflagration."

He said Russia could end up playing a positive role, because it wants to stabilize Syria. He said the Russians realize that Iran could create friction not only with Israel, but also with the Sunni majority in the region. "I think there is a good chance that it will limit and restrain Iran, Hezbollah and the Shiite militias," he said. But that is far from clear. Netanyahu last month flew to Russia to discuss Syria with President Vladimir Putin, but apparently returned home empty-handed. Israeli media last week said Russia had rejected an Israeli request to keep the Shiite forces at least 60 kilometers from the border. Neither side has commented on the reports.

Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz recently claimed at a security conference that Iran and Syria are working on an agreement that could bring an Iranian naval base, airport or army bases to Israel's doorstep, a major boost for Hezbollah. "The Iranians may bring different kinds of missiles to Syria, and a large and well-equipped force of Shiite militias may settle there, including tens of thousands of Afghans, Pakistanis, Iraqis and Syrians whose goal is to threaten and battle Israel," Katz said. "Hezbollah will train and command the Shiite militias." —AP

YEMEN'S CAPITAL SANAA: THREE YEARS UNDER REBEL CONTROL

SANAA: Houthi rebels captured the Yemeni capital Sanaa three years ago today with the help of forces loyal to ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh. The conflict that followed Saleh's departure has left thousands dead and fractured the impoverished country. Here is a timeline of key events.

A president forced out

Inspired by regional uprisings in what becomes known as the Arab Spring, Yemenis take to the streets in early 2011 to demand the departure of Saleh, a military man who has ruled with an iron fist since 1978. For the next 11 months the protests grow, drawing in the opposition, diplomats and military officers, and resulting in deadly clashes. Under pressure from the Gulf monarchies, Saleh agrees in November 2011 to hand over power in exchange for immunity from prosecution for him and his family. A presidential election is held in February 2012, with only one candidate: Saleh's low-profile deputy Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, seen as a man of consensus. He is sworn in days later.

Rebellion erupts, Sanaa is seized

Amid difficulties facing a national dialogue charged with drawing up a new constitution, tensions intensify between Yemen's majority Sunnis and minority Shiites, who feel marginalized after Saleh's departure. Rebels from the Shiite Houthi group in 2014 launch an offensive from their strongholds in the north and push towards Sanaa, intent on expanding a hoped-for autonomous unit in a future federation. On September 21, 2014, they storm the capital and seize the government headquarters and state radio and military sites after days of conflict in which more than 270 people are killed. The rebels, backed by Shiite Iran, are now allied with forces loyal to Saleh, a former foe after he had cracked down on Houthi s while president. By January the

rebels and their allies have also taken control of the presidential palace. Hadi flees to Yemen's second city, Aden, which he later declares is the "provisional capital."

'Decisive Storm' and failed truces

On March 26, 2015, nine regional countries in a Sunni Saudi-led coalition launch operation "Decisive Storm" with air strikes on the rebels to defend embattled Hadi and his internationally recognised government. They claw back some territory but also have to deal with increasing attacks by Sunni jihadists allied to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group. The UN and US organize three rounds of fruitless peace talks over 2015 and 2016. Seven truces are agreed, but all broken.

Cracks on both sides

In April 2017 Hadi fires the former Aden governor Aidarous Al-Zoubeidi, who then goes on to form a council that aims to "pursue the mission of liberating" South Yemen. The following month, thousands of Yemenis in the south — which was an independent state until 1990 when it was unified with North Yemen — march in support of Zoubeidi.

There are splits in the rebel camp, too, with the Houthi s on August 23 calling Saleh a "traitor" after he dismissed the Iran-backed group as a "militia" in a speech. The next day hundreds of thousands of Yemenis attend a rally marking 35 years since the founding of Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) in a major show of support. The tensions erupt into clashes between the allies in which a colonel loyal to Saleh and two rebels are killed. Saleh's party warns it could push the capital into all-out war but on September 5 the ex-president says that, even though the Houthi rebels had feared a "coup" by his party, there was "no crisis and conflict at the moment". —AFP



SANAA: A Yemeni man walks in Sanaa carrying a flag bearing the logo of the third anniversary of the Houthi capture of the Yemeni capital. —AFP

REPORT POINTS TO EGYPTIAN ANTI-DEMOCRACY ACTS

UNITED NATIONS: Egypt is failing to protect free speech and its minorities, investigate abuses by its forces or grant US monitors access to the conflict-ridden Sinai Peninsula, according to a damning Trump administration report obtained by The Associated Press. The US grievances, detailed in a State Department memorandum to Congress, are likely to draw consternation from Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, who meets Wednesday with President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly gathering. The memo was legally required for the Trump administration to continue giving certain US aid to Cairo despite its failure to meet several conditions on good governance.

"The overall human rights climate in Egypt continues to deteriorate," the memo says. "There is a continuing problem with

arbitrary arrests, detentions, disappearances. There are reports of extrajudicial killings. There are numerous allegations of torture and deaths in detention." Last month, the Trump administration cut nearly \$100 million in military and economic aid to Egypt, a key counterterrorism partner that has repeatedly run afoul of the US over its human rights record. But the administration said Egypt would still receive almost \$200 million more in military financing, on a delayed basis, if it makes improvements, including easing tight restrictions on civic groups.

Falling short

Although the US determined it couldn't certify that Egypt was meeting its conditions to receive the aid, the law allows Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to waive those conditions if

he determines it's in US national security interests to provide the funds anyway. But the law requires a detailed "memorandum of justification" outlining how Egypt is falling short.

Tillerson sent the memo to Congress on Aug 22, the same day the funding decision was announced. But the State Department has declined to make the memo public, despite requests from the media and human rights groups. The memo is considered embarrassing to el-Sissi, who has denounced previous human rights critiques as baseless. El-Sissi did not directly address global critiques of his country's rights record in his speech to the UN on Tuesday. But the Egyptian leader said his country was working to empower its people economically despite being "encircled by the most dangerous crises in the world." —AP

AMBITIOUS BORIS JOHNSON SHAKES UP BREXIT DEBATE

LONDON: Prime Minister Theresa May must be asking herself: How do you solve a problem like Boris Johnson? Britain's undiplomatic chief diplomat has thrown British politics into turmoil by thrusting himself to the front of the Brexit debate at the worst possible time for the country's leader. The insurrection has left friends and foes scrambling to determine his motives. Is he about to resign, get fired, mount a coup? Is he trying to push May into adopting his free-market vision of life outside the European Union?

The one certainty is that Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson is exactly where he likes to be: at the center of attention. Johnson's rumpled exterior - affable, flaxen-haired upper-class eccentric - covers a core of steely ambition. "He doesn't like it

that much when the spotlight isn't on him," journalist Michael Cockerell, who has made a documentary about Johnson, told Sky News.

Johnson's latest spotlight-stealing move came in a 4,000-word Sunday Telegraph article outlining his vision of a "glorious Brexit." It was published days before the prime minister travels to Florence, Italy on Friday to make a speech intended to unblock log-jammed divorce talks with the EU. Johnson's article called for the UK to adopt a low-tax, low-regulation economy outside the EU's single market and customs union. Seemingly written without consulting May, it was widely seen as an act of insubordination that would get most ministers fired.

'Boris is Boris'

But pro-EU Conservative lawmaker Ken Clarke said that May, leading a fragile government and weakened after losing her parliamentary majority in June's snap election, "is not in the position easily to sack him." The response from May and her allies was noticeably muted. "Boris is Boris," May said, insisting that "the UK government is driven from the front, and we all have the same destination in our sights."

Johnson, meanwhile, denied planning to quit or maneuvering to oust May. Cornered - in his jogging clothes - by British reporters in a New York hotel lobby on Tuesday, he insisted that the government was a harmonious "nest of singing birds." That's unlikely. The Cabinet is split between Brexit true believers

including Environment Secretary Michael Gove and Trade Secretary Liam Fox, who want a sharp break with the EU, and those such as Treasury chief Philip Hammond, who want to soften the economic impact through a long status-quo transition period.

May is trying to keep the warring sides from tearing her government apart. Johnson's article helps position him as figurehead of the "hard Brexit" faction. "He is trying to create an alternative base for himself in the Conservative Party and portray Theresa May as a lame duck - which in essence she is," said Victoria Honeyman, a lecturer in politics at the University of Leeds.

Honeyman said becoming prime minister was the "ultimate game plan, though

I think Boris Johnson generally is someone who travels in zigzags, rather than in a straight line." His career bears out that description. The 53-year-old has been a journalist (and was once fired for fabricating a quote), a magazine editor, a member of Parliament, the mayor of London between 2008 and 2016 and a leading campaigner to quit the EU during last year's referendum campaign.

When David Cameron resigned as prime minister after the referendum, Johnson planned to run to replace him. But he was abandoned by a key Conservative ally and outmaneuvered by May, who had backed the losing "remain" side of the EU debate. May made him foreign secretary, one of the most important posts in government. —AP



BERLIN: A revolving billboard features a poster showing the Christian Democratic Union's main candidate German Chancellor Angela Merkel (top) and a poster from the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) (bottom) featuring the sentence "Stop Islamisation" with the word "stop" cut off. —AFP

ELECTION MAY REFLECT GERMANY'S MANAGEMENT OF MIGRANT INFLUX

COLOGNE: German Chancellor Angela Merkel adopted a mantra when citizens questioned her decision to open the country to refugees fleeing wars: "We'll manage." She kept repeating it as the lines at immigration offices circled city blocks, school gyms turned into temporary housing and the questions devolved into angry criticism.

But as Merkel campaigns for a fourth term, the German obsession with "Ordnung" - order - looks to have been assuaged. Most of the 890,000 asylum-seekers who entered Germany two years ago are in language and job training courses. Students are again playing sports in the gyms. Rejected asylum applicants are being deported. A national election on Sunday could show how well voters think Merkel's government managed the refugee influx.

For the chancellor and her Christian Democrats, the signs are promising. The far-right Alternative for Germany party has struggled to make immigration a major election issue. While the party is expected to win seats in parliament for the first time, the support it drew when thousands of newcomers were arriving daily has fallen along with the number of migrants trying to enter the country.

'Big problem'

At the same time, Merkel has changed her rhetoric. Along with working to streamline and improve services for new arrivals, she now emphasizes that migrants not deserving of asylum will be sent home and that other European nations need to share the work of assisting eligible refugees. "Merkel's government started a highly risky maneuver with its policy of the absolute opening of the borders," University of Heidelberg political scientist Manfred Schmidt said. "It led to a loss of control which was interpreted as a big, big problem by the people. However, the politicians realized themselves that they had a huge

problem and started facing the issues." German opinion has been divided since large numbers of job-seeking migrants from economically depressed countries and refugees from Middle East nations wracked by civil wars and extremist groups poured into Europe in 2015. Tens of thousands of Germans pitched in to help the refugees, bringing food and water to train stations, waving welcome signs and volunteering at shelters. Tens of thousands more took to the streets in the nationalist Pegida demonstrations, a German acronym for "Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West."

The friction between the two sides came to a head in October 2015 in Cologne, Germany's fourth-largest city. Henriette Reker, a mayoral candidate who oversaw municipal services for the refugees who sometimes arrived at a rate of 500 per week, was stabbed and nearly killed by a far-right extremist at a campaign event.

Flash point

Reker, an independent who went on to win the election while still in a coma, concedes Germany was not prepared to take in so many desperate foreigners, yet defends Merkel's decision to welcome refugees. "The chancellor did the only right thing: she didn't close the borders for purely humanitarian reasons," Reker, 60, a career civil servant, said in an interview. "If she had closed it, and this is really not being mentioned enough, than hundreds of thousands of people would have languished."

Two months after Reker's stabbing, Cologne again became a flash point in the immigration debate. Hundreds of women reported being groped and sexually assaulted by migrants during the city's New Year's Eve celebration, causing attitudes toward young men from the Middle East and Africa in particular to harden into hostility. —AP

ANGRY PROTESTS IN BARCELONA AS SPAIN ARREST CATALAN OFFICIALS

BAN ON REFERENDUM BY MADRID BEING IGNORED

BARCELONA: Thousands took to the streets of Barcelona yesterday as Spanish police detained 13 Catalan government officials in a crackdown ahead of an independence referendum which Madrid says is illegal. With tensions mounting, separatist organizations called for more people to protest as leaders in the northeastern region pressed ahead with preparations for the October 1 vote despite Madrid's ban and a court ruling deeming it unconstitutional.

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy called for calm, urging "a return to normality and a return to common sense because the referendum cannot take place." But Catalan President Carles Puigdemont accused Madrid of imposing a "de facto" state of emergency to try and stop the referendum. Among those arrested by the Guardia Civil police was Josep Maria Jove, secretary general of economic affairs and Catalonia's deputy vice president, a regional government spokesman said.

The others work in various Catalan government departments, including its economic and budget affairs departments, a local Guardia Civil spokesman said. The reason for the arrests was not immediately clear, but Spain's central government has warned that officials who help stage the referendum could face criminal charges. Police said they staged 22 search operations.

'They declared war'

In central Barcelona, thousands of protesters gathered near Jove's office, many draped in red and yellow Catalan flags, chanting "Independence!" and "We will vote!" Anna Sola, an unemployed 45-year-old, said she rushed out to protest after hearing about Jove's arrest on the news and through text messages from friends. "They are attacking our institutions, those that we voted for, just for simply doing what the people want," she said. "It is shameful what is happening in Catalonia, there are no words for it."

An influential pro-independence citizens' organization, the Catalan National Assembly (ANC), urged Catalans to hit the streets in protest. "Let's go out to defend our institutions in a non-violent way. They made a big mistake, we wanted to vote and they declared war," its president Jordi Sanchez said in a statement.

Threats and seizures

The police operation comes a day after officers seized a trove of documents related to the independence referendum from the offices of Unipost, a private delivery company, in Terrassa near Barcelona. Police said they confiscated over 45,000 notifications which were about to be sent to Catalans selected to staff polling stations for the vote, representing 80 percent of the numbers necessary to ensure the stations were adequately staffed. Police scuffled with dozens of pro-secession protesters who gathered outside Unipost's office to keep officers from entering the building. Madrid has also threatened to arrest mayors who facilitate the vote, has seized posters and fliers that promote the plebiscite and has tightened its

control over the region's finances. It says the constitution stipulates that a Spanish region does not have the right to call a referendum.

Catalans divided

Tensions have also reached the parliament in Madrid, where Gabriel Rufian, a lawmaker for the pro-separatist Catalan Republican Left (ERC), yesterday told Rajoy to take his "dirty hands off Catalan institutions." "The will of the Catalan people cannot be stopped. And now we will leave to support our friends," he added before storming out of the assembly with fellow ERC lawmakers.

But Rajoy defended his government's position, saying it was "fulfilling its obligation."

Pro-separatist parties captured 47.6 percent of the vote in a September 2015 Catalan election which was billed as a proxy vote on independence, giving them a narrow majority of 72 seats in the 135-seat Catalan parliament. But opinion polls show Catalonia's roughly 7.5 million residents are deeply divided on independence. A survey commissioned by the regional government in July showed that 49.4 percent of Catalans were against independence while 41.1 percent were in favor. —AFP



BARCELONA: People holding 'Esteladas' (Catalan pro-independence flags) and a symbolic ballot box at a protest. —AFP

LONDON'S PARLIAMENT SQUARE TO GET ITS FIRST STATUE OF A WOMAN

LONDON: A century after she successfully campaigned to win women the right to vote, British suffragette Millicent Fawcett will become the first woman honored with a statue in London's Parliament Square. Plans to erect the bronze monument next to those of Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela and nine other historic male figures received the final go ahead on Tuesday, London City Hall said.

Authorities hoped to unveil the "long overdue" statue in time for the centenary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, which gave some women the right to vote for the first time, said London's mayor, Sadiq Khan. "We want this statue to depict the strength and determination of the women who dedicated their lives to the fight for women's suffrage and to inspire many generations to come," Khan said in a statement. Fawcett, who formed the National Union of

Women's Suffrage Societies in 1897, spent decades advocating for equal rights for women, including voting rights and access to higher education. The idea for the statue gained momentum following an online petition which garnered more than 80,000 signatures and was backed by Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling and actress Emma Watson.

The contemporary monument will depict Fawcett at the age of 50 holding a placard reading "courage calls to courage everywhere" - a quote from a speech she gave following the death of fellow suffragette, Emily Davison, who died after running out in front of the king's horse at the 1913 Epsom Derby. Designed by Turner Prize-winning artist Gillian Wearing it will be the first created by a woman to adorn the iconic square in front of Britain's houses of parliament. —Reuters

KENYA'S TOP COURT NIXED POLL BECAUSE IT COULDN'T SEE DATA

NAIROBI: Kenya's Supreme Court said yesterday it nullified President Uhuru Kenyatta's re-election largely because the electoral commission refused scrutiny of its computerized voting system. The court judges said because the electoral commission refused to allow scrutiny of its computer servers it had no option but to agree with the claim by Kenya's opposition leader Raila Odinga that the computerized data of the August presidential elections had been interfered with.

The court annulled President Uhuru Kenyatta's re-election earlier this month saying there were irregularities and illegalities. It made the decision in response to Odinga's petition challenging the official results that Kenyatta won with 54 percent of the vote.

The electoral commission has set Oct. 17 as the date for a fresh election. Explaining why it annulled Kenyatta's win, the Supreme Court said its order to view the computerized data was "a golden opportunity" for the electoral commission to present evidence to debunk Odinga's claim of interference.

"IEBC's contumacious disobedience of this order ... in critical areas leaves us with no option but to accept the petitioner's (Odinga's) claims that the IEBC IT

system was infiltrated and the data therein interfered with or IEBC officials interfered with the data or simply refused to accept that it had bungled the whole transmission system and was unable to verify the data," said Justice Philomena Mwili, who read part of the judgment.

'Dubious authenticity'

The electoral commission also failed to implement verification measures required by law and the constitution to ensure the election was credible, said the judgment. The electoral commission announced the winner of the presidential election even though it was missing thousands of scanned copies of forms used to compile the presidential results at the constituency, said the judgment. Those measures were ordered by the court of appeal last year to enhance accountability and reduce incidences of electoral fraud.

The presidential results announced on August 11 were based on forms which were not the primary document that the law says should be used to compile presidential elections results and some of those forms were of "dubious authenticity," said the judgment. "For the above reasons we find the 2017 presidential election was not conducted in



NAIROBI: Opposition leader Raila Odinga, center, arrives at the Supreme Court. —AP

accordance with the principles laid down in the constitution and the written law of election in that it was ... neither transparent nor verifiable. On that ground alone ... we have no choice but nullify it," said the judgment.

Outside the court room, Kenya's police tear gassed opposition and ruling party supporters who had gathered outside the Supreme Court and started jeering and pushing each other, threatening violence, said a witness. Cyrus Okemwa, who was among the opposition supporters, said a swarm of bees first

attacked the demonstrators followed by police tear gas.

"There was push between or among the supporters outside the court and all over a sudden bees attacked and tear gas came from police," Okemwa said. Kenya's Chief Justice David Maraga said Tuesday that since the September 1 judgment nullifying the election results, there have been attempts to intimidate judges. Kenyatta has called the Supreme Court judges "crooks" and warned of unspecified action against the judiciary if he is re-elected next month. —AP



condolences

The Management and Staff of
EQUATE Petrochemical Company
wish to offer their heartfelt
condolences to

Mr. Padmaraj Nambiar

Environment Health & Safety Department
on the sad demise of his

Father

May his soul rest in peace and may
God grant comfort and strength to the
bereaved family members during this time

MIDWIVES DEPLOYED TO ASSIST PREGNANT ROHINGYA WOMEN

MUMBAI: Dozens of midwives have been deployed to camps in Bangladesh to deliver babies and help young mothers among the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees who have fled across the border from Myanmar and are now living in squalid settlements. About 35 midwives trained by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to work in crisis situations have been attending to women and girls in the two government-run refugee camps in Cox's Bazar over the past few weeks, according to UNFPA.

The midwives are providing emer-

gency services including for sexually transmitted disease and sexual violence, as well as caring for pregnant women and young mothers. "The sheer number of people pouring in, the magnitude of the situation is quite overwhelming," said Sathya Doraiswamy, chief of health at UNFPA. "Our midwives are used to working in more stable situations, with other Bangladeshi women; there is a language issue and other challenges, but they are facing up to them," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone.

The midwives have delivered about

200 babies since the recent influx of refugees began Aug. 25, Doraiswamy said. More than 400,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled a Myanmar military offensive that began after a series of guerrilla attacks on Aug. 25 on security posts and an army camp in which about a dozen people were killed. UNICEF estimates that an "unprecedented" 60 percent of new refugees in Bangladesh are children.

Besides sexual violence, early marriage is a risk for Rohingya refugee girls. Earlier this year, a UN survey found that over half of Rohingya girls

who fled to Malaysia, India and Indonesia became child brides. In Bangladesh, which has been hosting hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees since the 1990s, about two-thirds of the refugees in the camps are women and girls, including many pregnant women and young mothers, Doraiswamy said.

"The people coming in are hungry, thirsty, sick, they have been walking for days and they are emotionally traumatized," said Rondi Anderson, UNFPA's midwifery specialist. "Still, pregnant women and young mothers in the

camp know they have a safe space and good care with the midwives." The midwives are part of a national program backed by the Bangladesh government and supported by UNFPA and the World Health Organization to improve maternal health and reduce infant mortality, particularly in the country's rural areas. The midwives at the camps have been trained for crisis situations including floods. "There are many challenges. But even in these difficult circumstances, there is some happiness for everyone at the safe birth of a child," said Anderson. —Reuters

TRUMP'S UN THREAT LEAVES ASIA STRUGGLING TO EXPLAIN S KOREA PRAISES RESOLVE, N KOREA REMAINS SILENT

SEOUL: Was it a bluff? A warning that Washington would shoot down North Korea's next missile test? A restatement of past policy? Or simply just what it seemed: a straightforward threat of annihilation from the president of the United States? Officials and pundits across Asia struggled yesterday to parse Donald Trump's vow Tuesday at the UN General Assembly to "totally destroy North Korea" if provoked. In a region well used to Pyongyang's pursuit of nuclear weapons generating a seemingly never-ending cycle of threats and counter-threats, Trump's comments stood out.

with "fire and fury." Pyongyang responded to those past remarks with a string of weapons tests, including its sixth and most powerful nuclear detonation and two missiles that flew over US ally Japan. Park Soo-hyun, a Moon spokesman, said that Trump's comments "reaffirmed the need to put maximum sanctions and pressure against North Korea's nuclear and missile provocations" so that Pyongyang realizes that abandoning its nuclear weapons is the only way forward.

Marcus Noland, a North Korea specialist with the Peterson Institute for International

UN speech came days after US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis created unease in South Korea by saying without elaboration that the United States has military options against North Korea that wouldn't involve the destruction of Seoul. The South Korean capital is within easy artillery range of the huge array of North Korean weapons dug in along a border only an hour's drive from greater Seoul's 25 million people.

Kim Su-min, a lawmaker in the People's Party, expressed worry that South Korean officials heard nothing from Washington before both Mattis' and Trump's remarks. "The government should comprehensively review its diplomatic and national security system and do its absolute best so that our stance on critical issues related to the existence of our country and the lives of our people doesn't go ignored," Kim said.

China push

Diplomacy meant to rid the North of its nukes has been moribund for years, and Pyongyang has made huge strides over the last several years in its quest for nuclear tipped missiles that can reach anywhere in the world. Trump has pushed Beijing, which is the North's only major ally, to do more to influence Pyongyang's behavior, so far to no avail. A Chinese expert on North Korea was surprised by the vehemence of Trump's speech, saying "his rhetoric is full of military force." Cheng Xiaohu of Renmin University said in an interview that he initially thought that "the US had nearly declared war on North Korea." The speech signals that "if North Korea conducts another missile test, the US is very likely to intercept."

Officials in Tokyo, meanwhile, welcomed a reference by Trump to North Korea's abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and '80s. "I think it means an understanding has gotten through" to the United States and other countries, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasutoshi Nishimura said, according to Kyodo News service. Trump said, "We know it kidnapped a sweet 13-year-old Japanese girl from a beach in her own country to enslave her as a language tutor for North Korea's spies."

The girl, Megumi Yokota, was one of at least 17 people that Japan says North Korea kidnapped. Andrei Lankov, a North Korea expert at Kookmin University in South Korea, described Trump's threats as similar to the type of bluffing that North Korea has used for decades. "It's a bit funny to see how the US president behaves in exactly the same way, using exactly the same words his North Korean counterparts have been using for decades," Lankov said.

Rhetoric that isn't followed by action will eventually undermine the US image internationally. "It makes American threats far less efficient," he said. Lankov said he expects North Korea to respond to Trump's threats with "equally powerful ... equally comical" and "probably more ridiculous rhetoric." —AP



PYONGYANG: Participants rehearse ahead of a celebratory event on Kium Il-Sung square. —AFP

South Korea officially played them down, while some politicians worried that Trump's words signaled a loss of influence for Seoul. Tokyo focused on his mention of Japanese citizens abducted by the North. Analysts across Asia expressed surprise, worry, even wry amusement, in one case, that Trump's words seemed to mirror threats normally emanating from North Korean state media. Amid the speculation, the focus of Trump's belligerence, North Korea, remained silent in the hours after the speech. Officials from the office of South Korean President Moon Jae-in, a liberal who has advocated dialogue with the North while being forced into a hawkish position by the North's weapons tests, called Trump's words a signal of Washington's strong resolve to deal with the North, but also essentially a repetition of the basic stance that all options will be considered when confronting Pyongyang.

Economics in Washington, said in an online post that Trump's threat will feed a long-standing North Korean narrative that claims that the United States poses an existential threat. "With those words, President Trump handed the Kim regime the soundtrack of the century. It will play on a continuous loop on North Korean national television," Noland wrote.

North Korea's regular weapons tests are an attempt to create an arsenal of nuclear missiles that can threaten US troops throughout Asia and the US mainland. Pyongyang tested its first two intercontinental ballistic missiles in July and claims that it can now accurately reach the U.S. homeland, though outside experts say the North may still need more tests before its weapons are fully viable. Each new test pushes the nation that much closer to that goal.

Some South Korean opposition politicians saw the comments as another sign that South Korea is losing its voice in international efforts to deal with the North's nuclear program. Trump's

'Fire and fury'

Trump has previously threatened the North



CANBERRA: Two anti-nuclear weapons campaigners Gem Romuld, left, and Papatya Danis unfurl a banner at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade building. —AP

ANTI-NUCLEAR PROTESTERS SCALE AUSTRALIAN BUILDING

CANBERRA: Two anti-nuclear weapons campaigners scaled the entrance awning of Australia's foreign ministry and unfurled a banner yesterday to protest the government's failure to endorse a UN nuclear disarmament treaty. Gem Romuld and Papatya Danis spent three hours on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade building near Parliament House in the national capital Canberra holding the banner: "Sign nuclear weapons ban treaty."

Scores of police were soon on the scene and the two climbed down and were released without charge. "I think we've made our statement and hopefully brought some attention to Julie Bishop's failure to sign Australia on to the treaty," Romuld said. Australia has joined nuclear-armed countries including the United States, a staunch ally, in boycotting the first treaty to ban nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons opened for signatures yesterday at the UN General Assembly's annual ministerial meeting attended by Foreign Minister Julie Bishop in New York. Sue Wareham, board member of the International

Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, told reporters outside the Canberra building that her lobby group had done all it could through "legitimate channels" to get the government to change its stance.

"We need to get the message out to the Australian people that we expect better from our government, we want them to engage in this nuclear disarmament initiative," Wareham said. "Our government is not representing us on this issue." Australia argues that it is protected by an umbrella of deterrence created by US nuclear weapons.

Australian diplomats are also skeptical about the treaty's ability to reduce the number of nuclear weapons. Bishop said in a statement that she would "continue Australia's tireless efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons." She said she would promote the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in New York and would work with ministerial counterparts from the 12-member Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative on practical initiatives to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. —AP

AFGHANISTAN CIVILIANS TO PROTECT MOSQUES IN SHIITE HOLY MONTH

KABUL: Afghanistan is arming hundreds of civilians nationwide to help protect mosques during one of the holiest months on the Islamic calendar after several deadly attacks on Shiite religious sites. The government's move comes as it considers a similar proposal to arm 20,000 villagers to fight Islamist militants, highlighting the impotence of Afghanistan's army and police in beating back insurgents and stemming the bloody violence.

The extra protection for mosques was announced on the website of Second Vice President Sarwar Danish. It also involves the deployment during the mourning month of Muharram of more troops and police around places of worship, particularly those of the Shiite Muslim minority. Shiites, who number around three million in overwhelmingly Sunni Afghanistan, have regularly been targeted by Islamic State jihadists and accuse police and troops of failing to protect them.

"After the recent unfortunate incidents the people should not rely on security forces alone to provide them protection. The people, especially the youth, in their respective areas, need to focus on securing the mosques during the Muharram days," Danish said after a meeting with top security officials and Shiite leaders on Monday.

Muharram, beginning this week, marks the start of the Islamic New Year and the mourning period for the seventh century killing of the prophet's grandson. The holy day of Ashura, which falls on the 10th day of Muharram, is a key date. Acting Interior Minister Wais Barmak said the training of "hundreds of people" recruited by the ministry to protect mosques had almost finished. They will support the additional forces to be deployed around "sacred places." "Measures have been taken to distribute weapons, salaries and other necessary means to the newly recruited people," Barmak said, according to the statement.

IS in the past 14 months has claimed a series of attacks which killed scores of Shiites. There were two major assaults on Shiite mosques in August alone. In Kabul a suicide bomber and gunmen stormed a building during Friday prayers, killing 28 people and wounding scores more. Earlier in the month an IS attack on a Shiite mosque in the western city of Herat left 33 worshippers dead and 66 wounded. —AFP



MUMBAI: An aircraft of India's Jet Airways lands during rain showers yesterday. —AFP

PLANE STUCK IN THE MUD AS RAIN CAUSES MUMBAI AIRPORT CHAOS

MUMBAI: Dozens of flights were diverted from Mumbai after a SpiceJet plane overshoot the runway and became stuck in the mud as heavy rain lashed India's financial capital and caused travel chaos yesterday. Schools and colleges also closed for the day as a precaution after severe monsoon rain late Tuesday and overnight led to fears of widespread flooding. The storms came three weeks after ten people were killed when torrential rain deluged Mumbai, flooding homes and railway lines and shutting down the city for two days.

Yesterday airport officials were trying to move the SpiceJet plane which skidded on landing at around 10:00 pm on Tuesday and forced the closure of the main runway. All 183 passengers were safely evacuated from the Varanasi to Mumbai flight after it missed the runway and "skidded off into the unpaved surface" due to wet conditions, the airline said in a statement. "The main runway is out of use due to heavy rains. Only the secondary runway is operational and it can only handle a limited number of flights," Veena

Chiplunkar, a spokeswoman for the international airport, told AFP.

Some 56 flights were diverted due to Tuesday night's thunder and lightning storms, she added. Several other flights had been cancelled while travelers were told to expect delays to departures while the main runway remained closed. The plane was still stuck yesterday morning.

Officials had warned of flooding if heavy rain coincided with a high tide, expected around midday, but India's Meteorological Department said the worst had passed. Railway officials said trains were running normally but many residents decided not to take the risk, opting to work from home.

The city's famed dabbawallahs, who take hundreds of thousands of hot lunches from commuters' homes to offices every day, cancelled their delivery service Wednesday. Mumbai is regularly deluged by rain between June and September. In 2005 around 950 millimeters fell on the city in just 24 hours, killing around 500 people. —AFP

LEADER OF INDONESIA ATTACK PLOT GETS 11 YEAR SENTENCE

JAKARTA: An Indonesian militant linked to the Islamic State group smiled and raised one finger toward heaven after a court yesterday sentenced him to 11 years in prison for leading a plot to attack a presidential guard-changing ceremony in Jakarta. At the same sentencing hearing, a co-conspirator, who received six years in prison, shook his fist in the air and shouted "God is Great."

Muhammad Nur Solihin, the ring leader, and Agus Supriyadi were arrested along with two other militants including Solihin's wife in December, just one day before their planned attack on the popular family attraction at the presidential palace. In its verdict at the East Jakarta District Court, a three-judge panel said there was no justification for either man's actions and both were guilty of violating Indonesia's anti-terror law.

The would-be suicide bomber, Solihin's wife Dian Yulia Novi, was sentenced last month to 7 1/2 years in prison. Another woman, Tutin, received 3 1/2 years for encouraging Novi to become a suicide bomber. The apparently unrepentant militants are indicative of the challenge facing Indonesian authorities who have imprisoned hundreds of Islamic radicals in the past decade for plots and attacks.

After serving their sentences, many emerge from the country's overcrowded

prisons with an even greater commitment to violent radicalism and new links to other militants.

Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, has waged a sustained crackdown on violent jihadis since the 2002 Bali bombings that killed more than 200 people, but efforts to de-radicalize convicted militants have had uneven success. Meanwhile, a new threat of attacks has emerged from Islamic State group sympathizers. In a television interview after December arrests, Solihin said that he married Novi as his second wife to facilitate her desire to become a suicide bomber.

Presiding Judge Syafrudin Ainor Rafiek said the 37-year-old Supriyadi helped transport Solihin and the bomb for the attack from Central Java to Novi's residence in Bekasi, a Jakarta satellite city. The 27-year-old Solihin was the alleged leader of a small extremist cell in Central Java's Solo city, police have said. His 28-year-old wife planned to run close to the presidential guards during the ceremony and blow herself up with a pressure cooker bomb.

Police have described the group as part of Jemaah Anshorut Daulah, a network of almost two dozen Indonesian extremist groups that formed in 2015 and pledges allegiance to Islamic State group leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. —AP



JAKARTA: Suspected Indonesian militant Agus Supriyadi, center, raises his fist as he shouts "God is great!" during his sentencing hearing at East Jakarta District Court. — AP

OVER 40 MILLION STILL TRAPPED IN SLAVERY

NEW YORK: More than 40 million people were trapped as slaves last year in forced labor and forced marriages, according to the first joint effort by key anti-slavery groups to estimate the number of victims worldwide of the international crime. The International Labour Organization (ILO), human rights group Walk Free Foundation, and International Organization for Migration said 40.3 million people were victims of modern slavery in 2016 - but added this was a conservative estimate.

They estimated 24.9 million people were trapped working in factories, on construction sites, farms and fishing boats, and as domestic or sex workers, while 15.4 million people were in marriages to which they had not consented. Almost three out of every four slaves were women and girls and one in four was a child, with modern slavery most prevalent in Africa followed by Asia and Pacific, said the report.

"Forced laborers produced some of the food we eat and the clothes we wear, and they have cleaned the buildings in which many of us live or work," the groups said in a report released on Tuesday, stressing the crime was prevalent in all nations. The findings mark the first time the groups collaborated on an international estimate and prompted calls for stronger labor rights, improved governance of migrants, action to address root causes of debt bondage, and better victim identification.

"Given that a large share of modern slavery can be traced to migration, improved migration governance is vitally important to preventing forced labor and protecting victims," they said. Previously the groups had used different data, definitions and methodologies, said Houtan Homayounpour, a specialist on forced labor at the ILO, the United Nations' labor agency. "There's been many different numbers out there for many years. Now finally everyone has come together and has worked on developing one global estimate that becomes a reference point," Homayounpour told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Child, sex exploitation

The estimate compared with a 2016 Walk Free finding

that 45.8 million people were slaves and an ILO figure of 21 million in forced labor, but Homayounpour cautioned the numbers cannot be used to show progress or failure in anti-slavery efforts. Fiona David, executive director of global research at Australia-based Walk Free, said the estimated number of victims contrasted sharply with a mere "tens of thousands" of slavery cases that have gone before authorities.

"That's an enormous gap that we have to close," she said. She said unlike previous estimates, the findings included people forced into marriages, many of whom were taken from their homes, raped, and treated like property that could sometimes be bought, sold or passed on as inheritance. The report found more than a third of the 15 million victims of forced marriage were aged under 18 when wed, and nearly half of those were younger than 15. Nearly all were female.

"Really the label marriage is actually a little bit misleading. When you look at what's behind it, it could also be called sexual slavery," she said. The ILO also released a separate report showing 152 million children were victims of child labor, which amounted to nearly one in every 10 child worldwide, with almost half of those engaged in hazardous work. More than two-thirds of these children were working on a family farm or in a family business, with 71 percent overall working in agriculture. The calculation of forced labor included the private economy, forced sexual exploitation and state-imposed labor.

Half of forced laborers were victims of debt bondage, who were made to work to repay a debt or other obligation, and nearly four million adults and one million children were victims of forced sexual exploitation. "The vast majority of forced labor today exists in the private economy. This underscores the importance of partnering with the business community ... to eradicate forced labour in supply chains," the report said. The ILO and Walk Free conducted surveys in 48 countries and interviewed more than 71,000 people with findings supplemented by data from the International Organization for Migration. — Reuters

SAUDI ARABIA LIFTS THE BAN ON INTERNET CALLS

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia will remove its ban on internet phone calls today, a government spokesman said, in a bid to stimulate online business as the kingdom looks to boost non-oil revenue. All online voice and video call services such as Microsoft's Skype and Facebook's WhatsApp that satisfy regulatory requirements will become accessible at midnight, Adel Abu Hameed, spokesman for the telecoms regulator CITC said on Twitter yesterday.

The lifting of the ban could pinch Saudi Arabia's three main telecoms operators - Saudi Telecom Co (STC), Etihad Etisalat (Mobily) and Zain Saudi - which earn substantial revenue from international phone and text calls made by the millions of expatriates living in the kingdom. The policy reversal comes as part of the government's broad reform program to diversify revenue sources as oil prices have hit the finances of the world's top exporter.

"Digital transformation is one of the key kick-starters for the Saudi economy, as it will incentivize the growth of internet-based businesses, especially in the media

and entertainment industries," a separate statement from the information ministry said. "Access to VoIP (voice over internet protocol) will reduce operational costs and spur digital entrepreneurship - that's why it is such an important step in the Kingdom's internet regulation," it said. The kingdom and its Gulf Arab neighbors have been concerned by the use of secure internet communication - which experts say is harder to monitor - especially by activists and militants.

Gulf Arab states, except the island kingdom of Bahrain, were mostly spared the "Arab Spring" mass protests often organized over the Internet which roiled much of the region in 2011. They avoided the civil wars which largely followed but face deadly bombing attacks by Islamic State and militancy by fringes of their Shiite Muslim populations they say is fuelled by Iran. The authorities will continue to regulate the Internet in order to restrict content that violates the kingdom's laws such as extremist material, pornography and gambling sites, the information ministry added. — Reuters



NEW YORK: Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani (left) and US President Donald Trump wait for a meeting at the Palace Hotel in New York City, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. — AFP

QATAR EMIR CALLS FOR DIALOGUE; ROW RAGES

UNITED NATIONS: Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani has renewed a call for "unconditional dialogue" to end a crisis pitting Qatar against four Arab states while US President Donald Trump said he expected the dispute to be resolved quickly. Speaking from the podium of the 193-member United Nations General Assembly, Sheikh Tamim renewed the call "for an unconditional dialogue based on mutual respect for sovereignty".

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain cut diplomatic and trade links with Qatar on June 5, suspending air and shipping routes with the world's biggest exporter of liquefied natural gas, which is home to the region's biggest US military base. The nations say Doha supports regional foe Iran and Islamists, charges Qatar's leaders deny. Kuwait has been trying to mediate and the United States has taken an increasingly robust role in trying to end the crisis, but as yet to no avail.

Trump and Sheikh Tamim later held a meeting in which the Emir was careful to emphasize the strong Qatar-US relationship after Trump appeared to be more sympathetic to the Saudi position at the start of the crisis. Qatar hosts Al Udeid air base, the largest US military facility in the Middle East. "As you said, Mr President, we have a problem with our neighbors," Tamim said, adding that with Trump's intervention, "hopefully we can find a solution for this problem."

Trump, who has said he would be willing to mediate the worst dispute in decades among the US-allied Arab

states and Qatar, said he had a "very strong feeling" the dispute would be solved "pretty quickly". In a speech severely criticizing the four Arab states' conduct during the dispute, the Emir said the countries were inflicting damage on the "war on terror".

"The countries who imposed the blockade on Qatar interfere in the internal affairs of many countries, and accuse all those who oppose them domestically and abroad with terrorism. By doing that they are inflicting damage on the war on terror," Sheikh Tamim said in his speech to the annual gathering of world leaders. "We have refused to yield to dictations by pressure and siege."

A Gulf official from one of the opposing countries said it was "unfortunate that Emir Tamim continues to talk about a blockade when even he in the same speech acknowledged that his ship lanes are open." "It's disappointing that he talks about interference in the internal affairs of others while refusing to admit that is a core part of the four nations' complaints against Qatar," the official added.

Earlier this month, Saudi Arabia suspended any dialogue with Qatar, accusing it of "distorting facts," just after a report of a phone call between the leaders of the two countries suggested a breakthrough in the Gulf dispute. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman spoke by the telephone with Qatar's emir in the first publicly reported contact between the two leaders since the start of the crisis. — Reuters

EARTHQUAKE, VOLCANO, TREMOR HIT MEXICO...

Continued from Page 1

Overnight, volunteers with bullhorns shouted the names of rescued kids so that tense family members could be reunited with them. The earthquake toppled dozens of buildings, tore gas mains and sparked fires across the city and other towns in central Mexico. Falling rubble and billboards crushed cars.

Even wealthier parts of the capital, including the Condesa and Roma neighborhoods, were badly damaged as older buildings buckled. Because bedrock is uneven in a city built on a drained lake bed, some districts weather quakes better than others. Parts of colonial-era churches crumbled in the adjacent state of Puebla, where the US Geological Survey (USGS) put the quake's epicenter some 100 miles southwest of the capital.

Volcano erupts too

Around the same time that the earth shook, Mexico's Popocatepetl volcano, visible from the capital on a clear day, had a small eruption. On its slopes, a church in Atzitzihuacan collapsed during Mass, killing 15 people, Puebla Governor Jose Antonio Gali said. In Rome, Pope Francis said he was praying for Mexico, a majority Catholic country. "In this moment of pain, I want to express my closeness and prayers to all the beloved Mexican people," he said.

US President Donald Trump said in a tweet: "God bless the people of Mexico City. We are with you and will be there for you." Residents of Mexico City, home to some 20 million people, slept in the streets while authorities and volunteers distributed food and water at tented collection centers. Other volunteers, soldiers and firefighters formed human chains and dug with hammers and picks to find dust-covered survivors and bodies in the remains of apartment buildings, schools and a factory.

With each layer of rubble that was removed, workers pled onlookers and volunteers for silence, desperate to hear the sound of any survivors below. Some volunteers in Mexico City expressed frustration at the disorganization among military and civilian emergency services, which competed over who would lead the rescue efforts. "There is so much bureaucracy and so many obstacles in the way of getting these kids out alive," said Alfredo Perez, 52, a freelance civil engineer, who arrived at the Enrique Rebsamen school in the early

hours of the morning to help.

The middle-class neighborhood of Del Valle was hit hard, with several buildings toppling over on one street. Reserve rescue workers arrived late at night and were still pulling survivors out yesterday. With power out in much of the city overnight, the work was carried out with flashlights and generators. Moises Amador Mejia, a 44-year-old employee of the civil protection agency, worked late into the night looking for people trapped in a collapsed building in the bohemian Condesa neighborhood. "The idea is to stay here until we find who is inside. Day and night."

In Obrera, central Mexico City, people applauded when rescuers managed to retrieve four people alive, with cheers of "Si se puede." - "Yes we can." - ringing out. Volunteers arrived throughout the night, following calls from the civil protection agency, the Red Cross and firefighters. The quake killed 94 people in the capital by yesterday morning, according to Mayor Miguel Angel Mancera. In Morelos State, just to the south, 71 people died, with hundreds of homes destroyed. In Puebla at least 43 died.

Another 17 people were reported killed in the states of Mexico, Guerrero and Oaxaca. The governor of Morelos state declared 5 days of mourning. Nearly 5 million homes, businesses and other facilities lost electricity, according to national power company Comision Federal de Electricidad, including 40 percent of homes in Mexico City. Power was later re-established to 90 percent of the areas affected. Still, much business and industry in affected areas remained closed. Carmaker Volkswagen AG temporarily shut its sprawling Puebla factory, its biggest outside of Germany, due to structural damages from the quake.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable to President of Mexico Enrique Pena Nieto, expressing his condolences over the earthquake which hit his country. His Highness the Amir said that Kuwait stands in solidarity with Mexico during this time of despair, hoping that the friendly nation would overcome the aftermath of the quake that left hundreds of people dead or injured and also caused some considerable damage. His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah sent similar cables. — Agencies

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Focus

BREXIT LIBDEMS
STRUGGLE FOR A
NEW MESSAGE

By James Pheby

Meeting for their annual conference in a seaside town that voted to leave the European Union, Britain's Liberal Democrats are torn over their role as the country's sole anti-Brexit political force. The party had expected to Hoover up extra support from some of the 48 percent who voted to remain in the European Union in the June general election but ended up with only 12 MPs.

"It's a double edged-sword," member Clive Dellard, 61, said of the party's Brexit stance outside the main conference hall in Bournemouth, south England. "You don't want to become a one-issue party," he said. Dellard joined the party last year to fight Britain's departure from the EU, and the presence of many new similar members exposes the bind in which the party finds itself in maintaining relevance.

"I wasn't a Lib Dem before, I joined because it was the only party that was going to push for Remain," Jane Riekman, 62, who was wearing an EU beret said on the sunny Bournemouth seafloor. "I think it has become the purpose of the party now," she added. The retired teacher said the message failed to resonate in the election due to the "British psyche of 'right, this is done, let's move on'" but argued that attitudes would shift "when we see the implications." Conference voted to push for a referendum on the terms of Britain's departure, which is expected to take place in March 2019.

"There was a lot of soul-searching about whether a second referendum is the right thing to do," said Dellard, pointing out the risk of alienating voters in northern Leave constituencies that voted Leave. "The guy from Sunderland (northeast England) who spoke the other day said 'I'm flogging a dead horse with this message', I understand it must be difficult, we've got to somehow get that balance." Chris Bailey, treasurer of the local party in Southend, southeast England, said that while the party was "languishing" in the national polls, membership in his town had gone up from 97 to 247, explaining "it's Europe that has driven it."

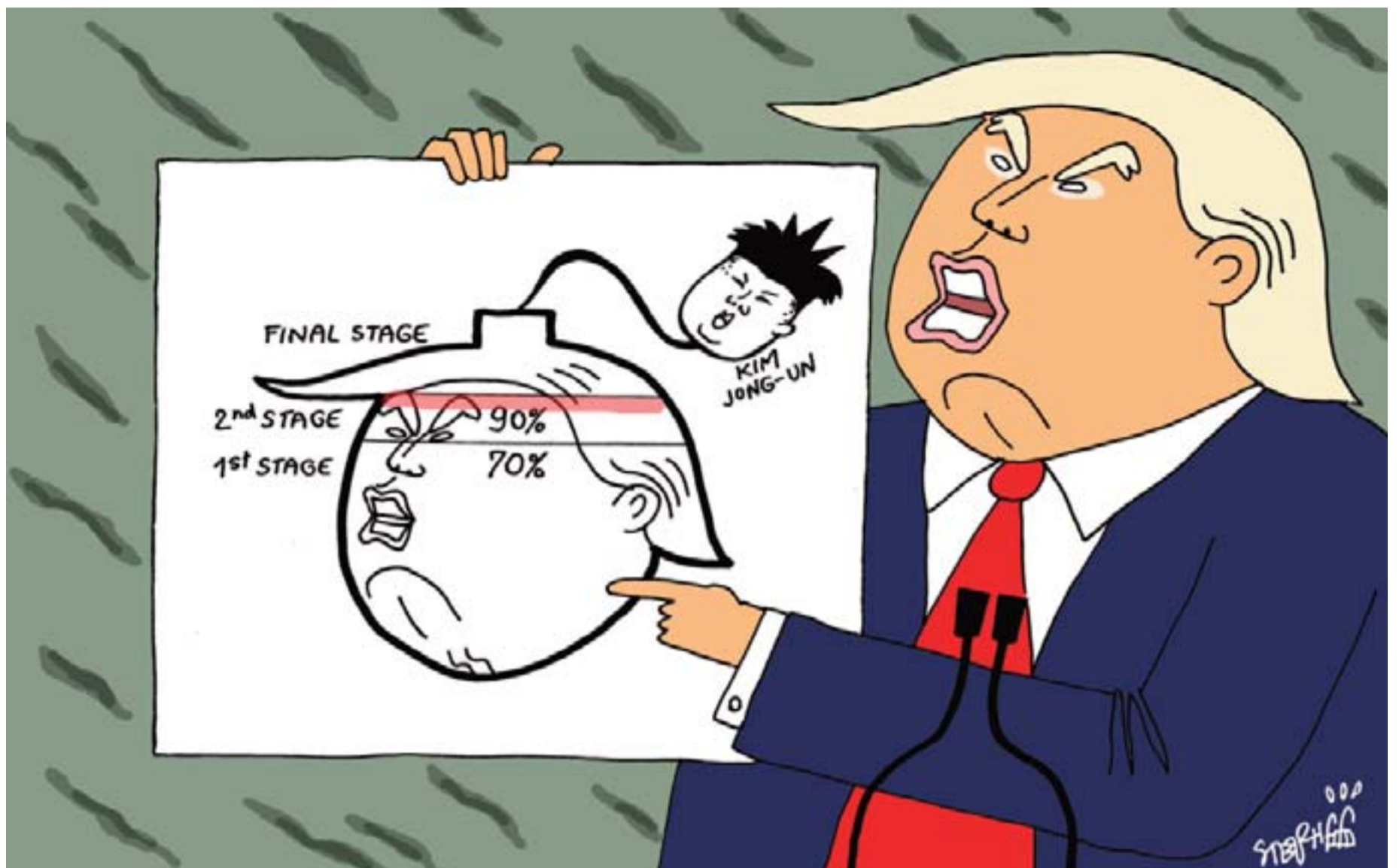
'Just being awkward'

New party leader Vince Cable delivered his conference speech Tuesday, promising to "lead the fight against Brexit", but warning that "we should not be consumed by Brexit to the exclusion of everything else". But among the members roaming around the stalls-many of them wearing "Stop Brexit" badges-said they wanted the focus to be on EU membership. Political commentator Anand Menon, who was part of a conference panel on Brexit said that the party needed to decide whether to focus on winning new voters or satisfying the core of anti-Brexit supporters. "The line they are taking is not one that is easy to persuade waverers, the 'oh my God it's so stupid', is more likely to alienate people."

He also believes that the focus on stopping Brexit was doomed to failure and could harm the party's long-term future. "If your *raison d'être* is to stop Brexit and then Brexit happens, what the hell is the point of you?" He advised focusing on core issues, a view echoed by 25-year-old Dipa Vaya, a member since 2013. "We need to focus a lot of inequality, and things like housing, young people, helping people prosper in their jobs, where we have a lot to say," the young member told AFP over breakfast.

Outside the conference bubble in the town centre, friends of 50 years Wyn Jones, 80, and Terry Price, 77, highlighted the challenge faced in changing the minds of Brexit supporters. Bournemouth voted 54 percent in favor of leaving the EU, higher than the national average. "They are just being awkward, they can sit there and spout off about everything, but they are never going to get in government, so they can say what they want," said Brexiteer Price. "They are going against what the population voted for." — AFP

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TRUMP'S UN SPEECH SHOWS NATIONALIST INSTINCTS FIRMLY INTACT

By Jeff Mason and Steve Holland

Chalk one up for the nationalists. Among the many signals that Donald Trump sent in his speech to the United Nations on Tuesday, one was especially clear: former chief strategist Steve Bannon's White House departure has not muted the president's "America First" foreign policy instincts. Trump's eight months in office have been characterized by a sometimes dramatic tug-of-war between "globalists" and "nationalist" advisers who have sought to move the president in myriad ways on issues both domestic and international.

Bannon's exit last month caused some of the former New York businessman's core supporters to fret that the more multilateral-leaning group inside the administration had gained ground. Not on foreign policy, at least not on Tuesday. Trump's strident defense of national sovereignty during his debut at the annual UN General Assembly

showed his campaign-honed policy inclinations very much intact and presented a Trump Doctrine to the world that focused unabashedly on the US homeland.

"The chief nationalist in this administration is Donald J Trump. And he knows what he's trying to say," said Newt Gingrich, the former speaker of the US House of Representatives and a Trump supporter. He said the speech showed that Trump had a doctrine that was defined by more than tweets, with roots in the conservative philosophies of former US President Ronald Reagan, France's Charles de Gaulle, and Britain's Margaret Thatcher. "It's not a one-sided American nationalism, it's a re-centering on sovereignty that's really, really important," Gingrich said.

The speech, in which Trump threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea if attacked, divided Trump's supporters and opponents. Ben Rhodes, an adviser to former Democratic President Barack Obama, said Trump was upending international order

with threats of war and attacks on diplomacy. It did not divide Trump's often warring advisers, however, an administration official said. "It was the most collaborative speech among the senior people in the national security cabinet that the president has given to date," the official said.

He said Secretary of State Rex Tillerson stood up after Trump's speech and shook chief speechwriter Stephen Miller's hand and said "you did a great job." Miller is considered a nationalist and an ally of Bannon, while Tillerson is more globally minded. "This was more ... Trump just being Trump," said Sam Nunberg, a former Trump campaign adviser, adding he thought the nationalist versus globalist tension in the administration played itself out more on domestic policy issues such as immigration policy. The administration has given mixed signals on foreign policy, too. Gary Cohn, the president's top economic adviser and a member of the so-called globalist wing, had to clarify with US allies this week that

Trump still intended to pull the United States out of the Paris climate change agreement unless there were a renegotiation to make it more favorable for US interests. But Trump seemed to stun some people in the United Nations hall, despite his well-known penchant for blunt talk. His speech included a condemnation of the Iran nuclear agreement reached with US allies under Obama, and an observation that some portions of the world were "going to hell".

Aaron David Miller, a former Middle East negotiator for Democratic and Republican administrations, said allies would interpret the speech as a sign that Trump was wary of undertaking major commitments around the world. "Neither of the biggest problems, North Korea and Iran, can be solved by an America First, Lone Ranger policy," he said, adding the speech showed that globalists within his administrations were "throwaways" and that Trump was still driven by nationalism.—Reuters

CUBA MYSTERY: THEORIES US INVESTIGATORS PURSUE

By Josh Lederman
and Lauran Neergaard

There must be an answer. Whatever is harming US diplomats in Havana, it has eluded the doctors, scientists and intelligence analysts scouring for answers. Investigators have chased many theories, including a sonic attack, electromagnetic weapon or flawed spying device. Each explanation seems to fit parts of what's happened, conflicting with others. The United States doesn't even know what to call it. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson used the phrase "health attacks." The State Department prefers "incidents." Either way, suspicion has fallen on Cuba. But investigators also are examining whether a rogue faction of its security services, another country such as Russia, or some combination is to blame, more than a dozen US officials familiar with the investigation said. Those officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to publicly discuss the investigation. The AP also talked to scientists, physicians, acoustics and weapons experts, and others about the theories being pursued.

Perhaps the biggest mystery is why the symptoms, sounds and sensations vary so dramatically from person to person. Of the 21 medically confirmed US victims, some have permanent hearing loss or concussions, while others suffered nausea, headaches and ear-ringing. Some are struggling with concentration or common word recall, the AP has reported. Some felt vibrations or heard loud sounds mysteriously audible in only parts of rooms, and others heard nothing.

"These are very nonspecific symptoms. That's why it's difficult to tell what's going on," said Dr H Jeffrey Kim, a specialist on ear disorders at MedStar Georgetown University

Hospital, who isn't involved with the investigation. To solve the puzzle, investigators are sorting symptoms into categories, such as auditory and neurological, according to individuals briefed on the probe. There can be a lag before victims discover or report symptoms, some of which are hard to diagnose.

So investigators are charting the timeline of reported incidents to identify "clusters" to help solve the when, where and how of the Havana whodunit. While Cuba has been surprisingly cooperative, even inviting the FBI to fly down to Havana, it's not the same as an investigation with the US government in full control. "You're on foreign soil," said David Rubincam, a former FBI agent who served in Moscow. "The quality of the information and evidence you collect is limited to what the host government will allow you to see and hear and touch and do." Especially when you don't even know what you're looking for.

Sonic device

The first signs pointed to a sonic attack. But what kind? Some victims heard things - signs that the sounds were in the audible spectrum. Loud noise can harm hearing, especially high-decibel sounds that can trigger ear-ringing tinnitus, ruptured ear drums, even permanent hearing loss. But others heard nothing, and still became ill. So investigators considered inaudible sound: infrasound, too low for humans to hear, and ultrasound, too high. Infrasound often is experienced as vibration, like standing near a subwoofer. Some victims reported feeling vibrations. And it's not impossible that infrasound could explain some of what diplomats thought they heard.

Though infrasound is usually inaudible, some people can detect it if the waves are powerful enough. For example, individuals

living near infrasound-generating wind turbines have described pulsating hums that have left them dizzy, nauseous or with interrupted sleep. Such effects have prompted fierce scientific debate. The balance problems reported in Havana? Possibly explained by infrasound, which may stimulate cells in the ear's vestibular system that controls balance, scientists say. But there's little evidence infrasound can cause lasting damage once the sound stops.

And the pinpointed focus of the sound, reported by some? Infrasound waves travel everywhere, making them difficult to aim with precision. "There's no efficient way to focus infrasound to make it into a usable weapon," said Mario Svirsky, an expert on ear disorders and neuroscience at New York University School of Medicine. If not infrasound, maybe ultrasound? At high-intensity, ultrasound can damage human tissue. That's why doctors use it to destroy uterine fibroids and some tumors.

But ultrasound damage requires close contact between the device and the body. "You cannot sense ultrasound from long distances," Svirsky said. No victim said they saw a weird contraption nearby. None of these sound waves seems to explain the concussions. Usually, those follow a blow to the head or proximity to something like a bomb blast. "I know of no acoustic effect or device that could produce traumatic brain injury or concussion-like symptoms," said Juergen Altmann, an acoustic weapons expert and physicist at Germany's Technische Universitaet Dortmund.

Electromagnetic weapon

It may sound like Star Wars fantasy, but electromagnetic weapons have been around for years. They generally harm electronics, not humans. The electromagnetic spectrum includes waves like the ones used by your cellphone, microwave and light bulbs. And they can be easily pinpointed. Think lasers. Such waves can also travel through walls, so an electromagnetic attack could be plausibly concealed from afar. There's precedent.

For more than a decade ending in the 1970s, the former Soviet Union bombarded the US Embassy in Moscow with microwaves. The exact purpose was never clear. What about the sounds people heard? Microwave pulses - short, intense blasts - can cause people to "hear" clicking sounds. According to a two-decade-old US Air Force patent, the American military has researched whether those blasts could be manipulated to "beam" voices or other sounds to someone's head. But when electromagnetic waves cause physical damage, it usually results from body tissue being heated. The diplomats in Cuba haven't been reporting burning sensations.

Something else

The stress and anxiety about the disturbing incidents could be complicating the situa-

tion. Diplomats may be taking a closer look at mild symptoms they'd otherwise ignored. After all, once symptoms emerged, the US Embassy encouraged employees to report anything suspicious. Many of these symptoms can be caused by a lot of different things. At least one other country, France, tested embassy staffers after an employee reported symptoms. The French then ruled out sonic-induced damage, the AP reported. Not knowing what's causing the crisis in Cuba has made it harder to find the culprit. If there is one at all.

The Cuba theory

It was only natural that American suspicion started with Cuba. The attacks happened on Cuban soil. The two countries routinely harassed each other's diplomats over a half-century of enmity. Despite eased tensions over the past couple of years, distrust lingers. Diplomats reported incidents in their homes and in hotels. Cuban authorities would know who is staying in each.

But what's the motive?

When symptoms emerged last November, Cuba was working feverishly with the US to make progress on everything from internet access to immigration rules before President Barack Obama's term ended. Officials still don't understand why Havana would at the same time perpetrate attacks that could destroy its new relationship with Washington entirely. Cuban President Raul Castro's reaction deepened investigators' skepticism, according to officials briefed on a rare, face-to-face discussion he had on the matter with America's top envoy in Havana. Predictably, Castro denied responsibility. But US officials were surprised that Castro seemed genuinely rattled, and that Cuba offered to let the FBI come investigate. Then, Canadians got ill. Why them? The warm, long-standing ties between Cuba and Canada made it seem even less logical that Castro's government was the culprit.

The rogues

If not Castro, could elements of Cuba's vast intelligence apparatus be to blame? Investigators haven't ruled out that possibility, several US officials said. It's no secret that some within Cuba's government are uneasy about Raul Castro's opening with Washington. "It's entirely possible that hard-line elements acted," said Michael Parmlin, who headed the US mission in Havana until 2008. But mounting unauthorized attacks, tantamount to aggression against a foreign power, would be a risky act of defiance in a country noted for its strong central control. Cuba's surveillance of US diplomats in Havana is intense. The government tracks US diplomats' movements and conversations. So at a minimum, if Americans were being attacked, it's difficult to imagine Cuba's spies being left in the dark.—AP



HAVANA: Josefina Vidal speaks to reporters in Havana, Cuba. The Trump administration will press its concerns about unexplained incidents harming American diplomats in Cuba during a meeting in Washington, as the United States considers shuttering its recently re-opened Embassy in Havana. US diplomats will host Cuban official Josefina Vidal, who has been the public face of Cuba's diplomatic opening with the US, and other Cuban officials. — AP

BILIC DEMANDS MORE FROM ARNAUTOVIC

LONDON: West Ham United's record signing Marko Arnautovic has plenty of ability but needs to venture outside of his comfort zone more often, manager Slaven Bilic has said. The Austrian playmaker set up goals for Angelo Ogbonna and Diafra Sakho before Arthur Masuaku sealed West Ham's 3-0 League Cup win over Bolton Wanderers at the London Stadium on Tuesday. Despite his contribution, Bilic demanded more from Arnautovic, who West Ham prised from Stoke City for a reported fee of 25 million pounds (\$33.80 million) in the off season. "I could have asked for more. I want him to do more. He's got that quality and that something extra," Bilic told British media after the game. "I like him as a player but sometimes he gets happy with the few things that he does when I want him to push the borders," the manager added. — Reuters

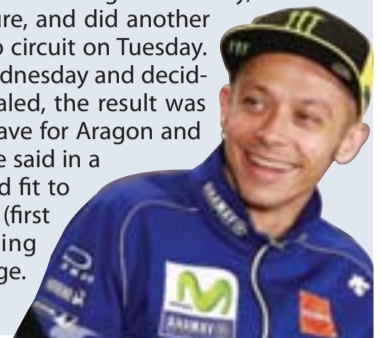


RUSSIA REGAINS FIFA COUNCIL SEAT

GENEVA: Russia has regained its place on the FIFA Council, six months after Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko was blocked from re-election. UEFA member federations yesterday elected Alexei Sorokin, CEO of the 2018 World Cup organizing committee, by acclamation as one of their delegates to FIFA's strategy-setting committee. The seat, which runs through 2021, was vacant since May when Mutko was formally forced to step down. Mutko's candidacy was blocked by FIFA's then governance committee chairman, Miguel Maduro, because of a conflict of interest with his government work. Maduro, who was ousted by FIFA weeks later, said last week that the world soccer body's leaders put pressure on him to protect Mutko's position. Meeting with British lawmakers, Maduro said he was told that his ruling on Mutko's eligibility could threaten FIFA President Gianni Infantino's hold on power and "would be a disaster" for the World Cup. — AP

ROSSI WILL TRY TO RACE IN SPAIN WITH A BROKEN LEG

LONDON: Yamaha's Valentino Rossi will try to make a race return in Spain this weekend, three weeks after breaking his leg in an off-road training accident, if MotoGP doctors give him the green light. The 38-year-old Italian great was back on track in testing on Monday, 18 days after suffering a double fracture, and did another 20 laps on a road bike at Italy's Misano circuit on Tuesday. He underwent a medical in Italy on Wednesday and decided that while his leg had not fully healed, the result was 'positive'. "At the end I decided I will leave for Aragon and will try to ride my M1 this weekend," he said in a Yamaha statement. "If I will be declared fit to ride, I'll have the real answer after FP1 (first free practice on Friday), because riding the M1 will be a much bigger challenge. We'll see." — Reuters



Zain's team with champions during the press conference.

ZAIN STRATEGIC PARTNER OF KUWAIT'S NATIONAL JET SKI TEAM

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its strategic partnership of the Kuwait National Jet Ski team for the seventh consecutive year. The company's sponsorship will extend during the team's participation in the upcoming World Jet Ski Championship 2017 that will be held in October at the Orlando, United States. During its participation in the press conference held at the Kuwait Sea Sport Club headquarters, Zain explained that this partnership falls under its solid Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the youth and sports sectors as well as supporting Kuwaiti athletes. Zain expressed its utmost confidence in the talents of the Kuwaiti youth, expressing its wishes of the best of luck to the team on their upcoming participation in the

World Jet Ski Championship. The company further expressed its keenness on encouraging Kuwaiti athletes to represent Kuwait in the various internationally renowned championships. The National Jet Ski team is authorized by the Kuwait Sea Sport Club to officially represent Kuwait in regional and international Jet Ski championships. The team champions won a number of prominent titles during past participations, most notably many first place titles of last year's World Jet Ski Championship, held in the United States. The company expressed its pride in all National teams that raise the Kuwaiti flag high by achieving top international titles, and it further confirms its commitment towards Kuwaiti champions, which resembles the company's endless confidence of the competencies of these young athletes and their capabilities in excelling in different fields.

As a leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, Zain is constantly looking to identify and support excellence across the sports sector. The company will continue to put Kuwaiti National teams and individual athletes at the forefront of its priorities and pledges to continue motivating them to achieve all the recognition they deserve.



PHOENIX: NBA players Markieff, left, and Marcus Morris arrive with Gerald Bowman, right, at Superior Court for the second day of their aggravated assault trial, Tuesday in Phoenix. The twins and Bowman are charged with assaulting Erik Hood outside a recreation center in 2015 in Phoenix. — AP

MAN TESTIFIES IN TRIAL OVER NBA PLAYERS ASSAULT

PHOENIX: The man accusing NBA players Marcus and Markieff Morris of aggravated assault was pressed Tuesday by defense lawyers about his financial motives in the case. An Arizona grand jury indicted the Morris brothers on felony aggravated assault charges. They are accused of helping three other people beat Erik Hood outside a Phoenix recreation center on Jan. 24, 2015. Two of the other co-defendants pleaded guilty Sept. 13 to the same charges. The Morris brothers and the final defendant, Gerald Bowman, have pleaded not guilty. Hood told Phoenix police he was leaving a high school basketball game when he was approached by a friend of the Morris brothers. Hood said the man was speaking to him when he was punched in the back of the head. Hood tried to run but fell down before five men, including the Morris twins, punched and kicked him repeatedly, authorities said. All five left in a Rolls Royce Phantom, according to police. Hood, 36, testified he wanted justice for the incident that left him with a broken nose and other injuries. The Morris brothers have known Hood since they were promising teenage AAU players, but Hood testified they had a falling out in 2011. Hood testified that his relationship with the brothers became strained because of a misinterpreted text message he sent their mother. He said there was nothing "improper" happening with him and their mother. Defense attorney Timothy Eckstein

suggested Hood knew he had no chance of having a professional relationship with the players after the 2011 incident, but Hood insisted their relationship was not based on the twins making it to the NBA. The Morris brothers were drafted back-to-back in the first round of the 2011 NBA draft. The 6-foot-9 twins became teammates in 2013 when Marcus was traded to the Suns. Hood stressed in court that he wasn't looking at any of the defendants differently from each other. Hood initially identified both Marcus and Markieff Morris as assailants, but testified that he couldn't be sure whether Markieff had physically assaulted him or was just in the vicinity. Defense attorneys pressed Hood on his knowing about the NBA players' substantial assets and asked if he was intent on having a claim on at least one of the Morris twins for his financial gain. Hood denied that claim. Eckstein reviewed text messages Hood sent to multiple people indicating the Morris twins would have to pay him millions in financial damages for the case. The Morris brothers face the possibility of prison time and discipline from the NBA, including a minimum 10-game suspension, if they are found guilty. Marcus was traded to the Boston Celtics in July, and Markieff is now with the Washington Wizards. The two-week trial also threatens to disrupt the start of their 2017 NBA season, with training camp set to begin for both players on Sept 26. — AP

NHL

NHL HOPING TO MAKE INROADS IN CHINA WITH PRESEASON GAMES

SHANGHAI: As the Vancouver Canucks held their first practice in Shanghai before their exhibition game with the Los Angeles Kings, a dense fog settled over the ice. The humidity in the arena was high and the players could barely see the puck. Large dehumidifiers were rolled in and the mist eventually cleared, but the NHL has perhaps a bigger visibility problem in China - a country with little tradition of winter sports, hockey included. The league is hoping to turn that around with a major push in the country, beginning with its first two preseason games between the Canucks and Kings in Shanghai and Beijing this week. The timing couldn't be better for the NHL. With Beijing set to host the 2022 Winter Olympics, the government is putting a massive emphasis on developing winter sports. Hockey training programs and youth leagues are expanding across China, and the nation's first professional team, the Kunlan Red Star, plays in Russia's Kontinental Hockey League. With interest on the rise, the NHL believes it now has an opportunity to crack a market that has traditionally been more fixated on basketball and soccer.



SHANGHAI: In this Sept 19, 2017 photo, the Vancouver Canucks' players practice at the foggy Mercedes-Benz Arena in Shanghai, China. The National Hockey League is looking to build its visibility in China. It will hold its first two preseason games in the nation of 1.2 billion people this week, with the Vancouver Canucks and Los Angeles Kings facing each other in Shanghai and Beijing. — AP

"You don't quite know what to expect the first time the game is coming here, but I've always believed that hockey is a game you need to see live," Los Angeles Kings coach John Stevens said after Wednesday's practice. "And once you see it live, you become hooked as a fan." A glance at the numbers shows just how far the NHL has to go. According to the International Ice Hockey Federation, China has just 1,101 registered players, compared with nearly 556,000 in the US and more than 631,000 in Canada. And the fan base in a nation of more than 1.2 billion people is still in its infancy. On Weibo, the Chinese equivalent of Twitter, the NHL has just 47,000 followers, some of whom are obviously new to the sport. (One posted a question about the temperature of the arena and what was suitable to wear to the game.) The NBA, which hosted its first preseason exhibition games in China in 2004, boasts more than 33 million followers on Weibo. "We're learning a lot about how to market here and we're learning a lot about how tickets are sold," says David Proper, the NHL's executive vice president of media and international strategy. "We're just viewing this as Year 1 of a multi-year project and in Year 1 we may not knock it out of the park. but we can still build over time."

INFLUENTIAL PARTNER

Media exposure certainly helps. State broadcaster CCTV now televises five games per week to Chinese audiences and the Internet giant Tencent streams 14 games per week on its digital platforms, including the Stanley Cup

playoffs. The NHL also has an influential partner on the ground in Zhou Yunjie, the billionaire founder of a Chinese drinks packaging company who has devoted significant time and resources to building the game he fell in love with as a youth in Beijing. Zhou's company, ORG Packaging, is the presenting partner for this week's exhibition games. "Hockey was actually quite common in northern China back in the '60s and '70s, so there is a foundation among the kids in those areas," Zhou told The Associated Press at his company's newly opened hockey training base in a Beijing suburb, which includes a fully stocked gym, physical therapy room and a hotel for players attending training camps. Zhou said China's hockey revival should focus on both universities and a professional league, using the North American, northern European and Russian systems as models. "It will take time before ice hockey really becomes like a religion with young people as it is in the West," he said. "But ice hockey will definitely catch on with lots of kids." One thing that will certainly help is developing a home-grown star similar to Yao Ming in basketball and Li Na in tennis. There are promising signs on this front, too. Song Andong became the first China-born player to be drafted in the NHL two years ago, selected by the New York Islanders. The 20-

year-old Song has committed to play at Cornell this season. On Monday, the Vancouver Canucks signed 21-year-old Sun Zehao to an amateur tryout contract to serve as the team's third goaltender for the China preseason games. "He's working with our goalie coach," Vancouver coach Travis Green said. "He liked how quick (Sun) was, how competitive he was. I just think it's a great experience for him." The NHL should also get a boost in China as excitement builds for the 2022 Olympics. The league angered its players by deciding not to interrupt its season to allow them to take part in the 2018 Games in South Korea in February. That stance may change for 2022 in the much larger Chinese market. To some, skipping the Pyeongchang Olympics is a missed opportunity to gain a bigger foothold in China. "With 2022 coming up, winter sports are taking the leading focus of all sports in China right now - more so than football," said Mark Dreyer, founder of the China Sports Insider website. "They'll be promoting the Korea Olympics more than ever before." For now, the league is focused on taking its first baby steps in China, giving spectators in Shanghai and Beijing a good show. "It's going to be pretty cool, especially for people who have never really experienced it before," Kings forward Tanner Pearson said. "It's going to hopefully start something good here." — AP

DEMAURICE SMITH RE-ELECTED AS HEAD OF NFL PLAYERS' UNION

NEW YORK: DeMaurice Smith has been re-elected as executive director of the players' union in a special committee vote. Under guidelines passed since his last election as NFL Players Association head in 2015, a 14-player selection committee could bypass a full membership election.

That committee, made up of the 11 members of the NFLPA executive committee plus the three longest-serving player representatives, reviews the sitting executive director. That group can then call for an election to keep the incumbent in office, and the vote must be unanimous.

The 14-0 vote took place Tuesday night. "After a comprehensive and professional process in line with our constitu-

tion," NFLPA President Eric Winston said in a statement, "the NFLPA selection committee has unanimously selected DeMaurice Smith to continue in the role of executive director. Congratulations to De and we know there is more work to be done."

Added Smith: "The union centered on player leadership. I am proud of their commitment, humbled by their trust in me and honored to serve." But attorney Cyrus Mehri, who had launched a campaign to oppose Smith in a general election in March, called the re-election "a non-democratic process" and vowed to continue working toward having a full election of the membership in March.

"This was a very closed process," Mehri

said. "This is less about me than the 2,100 players and 32 player reps who have been disenfranchised; 26 clubs didn't even have a representative on the executive committee. I talked to a number of player reps who were not on the executive committee and the feedback was they want a competition. Overwhelmingly, they said that I am a serious candidate."

"No one I talked to remembers having a big constitutional discussion about this (change), so it's kind of a mystery behind what happened with the amending of the constitution. I also feel the union has lost a lot because they don't have a leader with legitimacy because this was a non-democratic process."

A union spokesman declined to

respond to Mehri's comments. Smith was elected to the post in 2009 and led the players through the league's lockout of them in 2011. That summer, the sides reached agreement on a new 10-year CBA that included, among other things, reductions in practice and meeting times and in how much contact was allowed in those practices.

The deal also allowed NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell to keep his powers in overseeing fines and suspensions in a variety of areas, including personal conduct. Smith and the union have claimed nearly ever since that Goodell has abused those powers, and they currently are fighting the league in court over Cowboys running back Ezekiel Elliott's six-

game suspension under the personal conduct policy.

But league spokesman Joe Lockhart yesterday congratulated Smith on his re-election while avoiding getting into the politics of it. "As far as we are concerned, we congratulate him on his re-election," Lockhart said. "We

think we had productive negotiations with him in 2011 with the last collective bargaining agreement and believe that agreement has worked strongly for both sides, ownership and players. "Most important has been the joint effort to grow the game of football with things like what you saw Sunday night in Atlanta with a new stadium ... that grows the game and works for both parties.—AP



SEATTLE: Seattle Mariners pitcher Nick Vincent (50) loses his footing tossing the ball to Seattle Mariners shortstop Jean Segura (2), who reaches to tag out Texas Rangers shortstop Elvis Andrus (1), trying to steal third, as third baseman Kyle Seager, right, runs to assist in the eighth inning of a baseball game Tuesday, in Seattle. — AP

BASEBALL

HOSKINS' 4 RBIS LEAD PHILLIES OVER DODGERS 6-2

LOS ANGELES: Rhys Hoskins delivered a bases-clearing, two-out double in the seventh inning to lift Philadelphia past Los Angeles. It was another stellar night at the plate for Hoskins, a 24-year-old first baseman. He went 2-for-3 with a walk and four RBIs, raising his average to .299 with 43 RBIs (and 18 home runs) in his first 39 career games. Batting with one out in the seventh inning after Odubel Herrera drew a bases-loaded walk to tie the game at 2-2, Hoskins worked a 10-pitch at-bat against Dodgers reliever Pedro Baez (3-6) before shooting a 97 mph fastball through the gap in left-center.

CUBS 2, RAYS 1

Mike Montgomery took a no-hitter into the sixth inning, and Chicago manager Joe Maddon won in his return to Tropicana Field as the Cubs claimed their seventh straight victory, holding the Tampa Bay Rays to one hit in a 2-1 win Tuesday. Chicago got a solo home run from Kyle Schwarber and an RBI double from Javier Baez while limiting Tampa Bay to Brad Miller's solo home run in the sixth inning. Maddon managed the Rays for nine seasons (2006-14), guiding them to their only American League pennant in 2008.

RED SOX 1, ORIOLES 0 (11 INNINGS)

Jackie Bradley Jr. scored on a Brad Brach wild pitch with two outs in the top of the 11th inning as Boston improved to 15-3 in extra-inning games this season. Bradley reached when grounding into a force for the first out of the 11th against Brach (4-5), and Xander Bogaerts' groundout moved him to second. Andrew Benintendi and Mookie Betts both followed

with walks, loading the bases with two outs.

YANKEES 5, TWINS 2

CC Sabathia pitched six solid innings as New York widened its lead in the AL wild-card race over Minnesota. After the first pitch was delayed 65 minutes by heavy rain, Sabathia (12-5) helped the Yankees take a six-game lead over the Twins and remain three games behind the Boston Red Sox in the AL East.

GIANTS 4, ROCKIES 3

Hunter Pence's sacrifice fly to center field scored pinch runner Orlando Calixte with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning as San Francisco defeated Colorado. Pence earlier had a two-run homer and Pablo Sandoval collected three hits for the Giants. Sam Dyson (3-2), the fourth San Francisco pitcher, got the win after pitching into and out of a ninth-inning jam.

BREWERS 1, PIRATES 0

Domingo Santana's solo home run held up as Milwaukee edged Pittsburgh. Santana's homer, his 26th of the season, just cleared the short wall near the left field foul pole in the fourth inning. It traveled only 338 feet and was the only damage the Brewers could muster against Pirates starter Trevor Williams (6-9).

INDIANS 6, ANGELS 3

Austin Jackson had four hits, and Roberto Perez had two hits including a home run as Cleveland defeated Los Angeles for its 25th victory in its last 26 games. The Indians' Mike Clevinger (11-5) gave up one run and three hits in six innings while Jay Bruce led a 14-hit attack by coming a home run short of hitting

for the cycle. Cleveland leads Houston by 1 1/2 games for the best record in the AL.

ASTROS 3, WHITE SOX 1

Jose Altuve matched his career high for home runs, and a four-man bullpen turned in an exceptional performance in Houston's victory over Chicago. Altuve smacked an opposite-field homer off White Sox starter Lucas Giolito (2-3) with one out in the fourth inning, pulling the Astros even at 1-1 with his 24th dinger.

NATIONALS 4, BRAVES 2

Ryan Zimmerman's three hits were the centerpiece of an 11-hit attack and supported seven strong innings from starter Max Scherzer as Washington beat Atlanta. Zimmerman was 3-for-5 with a double and two RBIs. The double was his 30th of the season, the sixth time he reached that milestone. He has driven in 101 runs, the third time he surpassed 100 and nine shy of his career best.

PADRES 6, DIAMONDBACKS 2

Travis Wood gave up only a pair of A.J. Pollock solo homers over six innings and added a two-run, two-out single to lead San

Diego past Arizona. Wood (3-3) allowed three hits and two walks with three strikeouts his 10th start as a Padre. San Diego relievers Phil Maton, Buddy Baumann and Jose Torres each pitched a scoreless inning to close out the win.

RANGERS 3, MARINERS 1

Shin-Soo Choo broke open a tie game with a sacrifice fly in the eighth inning, and Elvis Andrus added an RBI single as Texas defeated Seattle. Carlos Gomez led off in the decisive eighth with a double to right. Delino DeShields then beat out a bunt, with pinch runner Will Middlebrooks going to third.

CARDINALS 8, REDS 7 (10 INNINGS)

Dexter Fowler tied the score with a solo home run in the eighth inning and drove home the go-ahead run with a double in the 10th to lift St. Louis over Cincinnati. Juan Nicasio (4-5) earned the victory after pitching 1 1/3 innings, allowing a run on two hits. Scooter Gennett homered off Nicasio to make it a one-run game leading off bottom of the 10th. Tyler Lyons retired both batters he faced to earn his third save. Marlins 5, Mets 4 (10 innings) J.T. Realmuto hit a walk-off homer in

the 10th inning as Miami rallied to defeat New York. Realmuto's homer, off reliever Paul Sewald (0-6), was his 17th of the season. It was Realmuto's second career walk-off hit and his first career walk-off homer. Kyle Barraclough (6-2) earned the win after tossing a scoreless top of the 10th.

ATHLETICS 9, TIGERS 8

Jed Lowrie hit a go-ahead grand slam and drove in five runs, and Matt Olson homered for the fifth straight game to power Oakland past Detroit. Lowrie also tied the franchise single-season record with his 47th double. Jason Giambi established the mark in 2001. Olson's solo shot in the second was his 15th long ball over the past 21 games and his 23rd of the year.

BLUE JAYS 5, ROYALS 2

Marcus Stroman pitched seven strong innings, and Darwin Barney homered and drove in three runs as Toronto defeated Kansas City. Russell Martin also hit a two-run double for the Blue Jays. Roberto Osuna pitched a perfect ninth with two strikeouts to earn his 37th save of the season. —Reuters

BAIRSTOW 100, ENGLAND EASES TO VICTORY OVER WI IN 1ST ODI

MANCHESTER: England gave Jonny Bairstow another opportunity at the top of the order and he responded with a maiden one-day international century in a comfortable seven-wicket win over West Indies in the series-opener on Tuesday. Bairstow was 100 not out, reaching three figures on the penultimate ball of the match. Next delivery, Ben Stokes launched a six over long-on to seal the win. England finished on 210-3 off 30.5 overs, easily chasing down West Indies' 204-9 off 42 overs in the shortened match. A two-hour delay for a wet outfield meant the game was reduced to 42 overs per side, but any notion that that would play into the hands of the West Indies, the world 20-over champions, was convincingly dispelled. Apart from a burst of boundary-hitting from Chris Gayle at the start of the West Indian innings and a fighting 41 not out from Jason Holder at the end, the tourists were outclassed.

Stokes took 3-43 to restrict the West Indians to the below-par total despite the rapid start from Gayle. Chris Woakes and Adil Rashid had two each. Bairstow and Joe Root (54) put together a 125-run stand for the second wicket and England won with ease to take the lead in the five-match series.

Bairstow was promoted to opener in England's last ODI, the loss to Pakistan in the Champions Trophy semifinals in June. He was again preferred there ahead of Jason Roy for the start of this series and seized his opportunity. Bairstow needed just 97 balls for his near

faultless century, striking 11 fours and batting through England's innings.

His century came from a drive through extra cover. He and Stokes ran three and he celebrated with a leap and a punch in the air. Stokes ended it straight after with his second six and was 23 not out as England barely broke a sweat to win. Kesrick Williams was West Indies' best bowler with 2-50, removing Root and England captain Eoin Morgan for 10. It began brightly for West Indies in Gayle's first one-day international since the 2015 World Cup. He was dropped by Root on 0, then hit three sixes and two fours in his 37 from 27 balls.

Gayle fell as he was starting to get going, though, this time when Root held onto a second chance with a brilliant running catch at extra cover. West Indies lost all its momentum in the middle overs, with Stokes leading England's bowlers on his return after being rested for the one-off Twenty20 game on Saturday. The International Cricket Council said following the match that the West Indies' loss meant that Sri Lanka had qualified for the 2019 Cricket World Cup in England and Wales. The ICC said that with Sept. 30 as the cutoff for automatic qualification, West Indies could not move past Sri Lanka regardless of the outcome of its remaining matches in England. West Indies could still qualify for the 2019 event via a qualifying tournament next year. Sri Lanka became the eighth team to qualify directly, joining defending champion Australia,

Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan and South Africa. —AP



MANCHESTER: England's Joe Root bowled by West Indies Kesrick Williams during the first One Day International cricket match between England and West Indies at Old Trafford in Manchester, England, Tuesday. —AP

MLB Results/Standings

San Francisco 4, Colorado 3; San Diego 6, Arizona 2; Texas 3, Seattle 1; Cleveland 6, LA Angels 3; Houston 3, Chicago White Sox 1; Washington 4, Atlanta 2; Chicago Cubs 2, Tampa Bay 1; Miami 5, NY Mets 4 (10 innings); Oakland 9, Detroit 8; St. Louis 8, Cincinnati 7 (10 innings); Toronto 5, Kansas City 2; Boston 1, Baltimore 0 (11 innings); Philadelphia 6, LA Dodgers 2; Milwaukee 1, Pittsburgh 0; NY Yankees 5, Minnesota 2.

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division			
W	L	PCT	GB	Washington	91	59	.607
Boston	87	64	.576	Miami	71	80	.470
NY Yankees	84	67	.556	Atlanta	67	82	.450
Tampa Bay	73	78	.483	NY Mets	65	86	.430
Baltimore	73	79	.480	Philadelphia	60	91	.397
Toronto	71	80	.470	Chicago Cubs	84	66	.560
Central Division				Milwaukee	81	70	.536
Cleveland	94	57	.623	St. Louis	78	72	.520
Minnesota	78	73	.517	Pittsburgh	68	84	.447
Kansas City	73	77	.487	Cincinnati	66	85	.437
Detroit	62	89	.411	San Francisco	59	93	.388
Chicago White Sox	60	90	.400	Western Division			
Western Division				LA Dodgers	96	55	.636
Houston	92	58	.613	Arizona	87	65	.572
LA Angels	76	74	.507	Colorado	82	69	.543
Texas	74	76	.493	San Diego	68	83	.450
Seattle	74	77	.490	San Francisco	59	93	.388
Oakland	68	83	.450				

FIFA PRESIDENT INFANTINO SAYS TIME TO REFORM TRANSFER RAT RACE

GENEVA: FIFA president Gianni Infantino appealed to European football bosses yesterday to help reform the sport's transfer system and described the current set-up as a "rat race" which had cast football in a negative light.

"It is the responsibility of all of us to tackle the transfer system," Infantino said in a speech at the extraordinary congress of European soccer body UEFA. "We have to come up with some positive solutions for agents, transfer regulations, for loans and transfer windows, (salary) caps and all these items

which are somewhere in the air but which have never been addressed... in a significant way."

Later, Infantino told reporters from international news agencies of his ideas for new regulations governing the roles of agents, limits on the sizes of club squads and the co-ordination of transfer windows so they closed before major championships start.

"We have to make sure that transfers don't affect the integrity of the competitions, they should indeed stop before the start," he said. Referring to the way

teams could strengthen their squads after a poor start to the season, he added: "When you run a marathon, you don't run for 10 kilometres and then take a bike."

Infantino, who was elected FIFA president in February of last year, said that spending on international transfers had totalled around 4.6 billion euros (\$5.5 billion) during the northern hemisphere summer compared to 3.6 billion euros for the same period the year before. These included Brazilian forward Neymar's record-shattering 222 million

euro move from Barcelona to Paris St Germain, plus 18-year-old French forward Kylian Mbappe's move to the same Ligue 1 club.

He also said that the transfer market "doesn't necessarily reflect very well" on the sport, although he still believed it played an important role in redistributing resources.

"What is worrying is the inflation that these transfers trigger and the rat race that this entails with all the other clubs," he said. "All these negative headlines bring the whole football

movement into a negative light. From a perception point of view, it doesn't feel right."

The Swiss, who previously told Reuters in an interview last November that he wanted to reform the transfer system, said that leagues and clubs felt the same way. "I see it from the discussions I had with players, clubs, leagues, associations," he said.

"I have never felt it is as strongly as I do now. It's not limited only to Europe and we need to have a framework at worldwide level." — Reuters

KLOPP ANGRY AS LIVERPOOL ELIMINATED FROM LEAGUE CUP

LONDON: Liverpool failed to finish off a slew of chances and conceded a sloppy goal in a 2-0 loss at Leicester in the English League Cup, arousing the ire of its frustrated manager Jurgen Klopp on Tuesday. It is becoming a familiar narrative for the Reds in a disappointing month when they haven't won any of their four matches. Questions are now being asked the team's efficiency at both ends of the field.

Liverpool over-ran Leicester in a dominant first-half display, with Philippe Coutinho orchestrating the attacks from midfield. But the visitors struggled after the Brazil playmaker was substituted at half-time of the third-round match in a pre-planned move from Klopp.

In another game-changing substitution, Shinji Okazaki came on in the 53rd minute for Leicester, scored 12 minutes later with a deflected shot after Liverpool's defense was beaten to two headers, and then laid the ball on for Islam Slimani to drive home a stunning second goal at King Power stadium. "Second ball from a corner and a goal from a throw-in - I'm sick of goals like this, to be honest. Unbelievable," Klopp said. Referring to the first goal, Klopp added: "We didn't push up together - I say it one time, I say it a thousand times. It's not nice to concede these goals."

Since beating Arsenal 4-0 in the Premier League before the international break, Liverpool has been thrashed 5-0 by Manchester City and drawn 1-1 at home to Burnley in the league, conceded late to draw 2-2 with Sevilla in the Champions League, and has now been eliminated from the League Cup.

Klopp is easing Coutinho back to full match sharpness after the midfielder missed Liverpool's first six games of the season - officially because of injury and illness - while he was the subject of three transfer bids from Barcelona.

Leicester couldn't handle Coutinho's passing and movement in the first half, and only came into the game when he was off the field. "They've got a world-class player in Coutinho," Leicester manager Craig Shakespeare said.

"I was very relieved when he went off." Liverpool finished the game having had 21 shots, but only three on target. Against Burnley on Saturday, the Reds only scored once from 35 shots. Tottenham was among the other Premier League teams to win on a night when top-flight sides mostly fielded

fringe players for what is regarded as the inferior cup competition on the English calendar, compared to the FA Cup.

SPURS EDGE THROUGH

In another unconvincing domestic display at its temporary home of Wembley Stadium, Tottenham beat second-tier Barnsley 1-0 thanks to Dele Alli's close-range goal in the 65th minute.

Tottenham hasn't won any of its three Premier League games at Wembley this season, but has beaten Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League.

HODGSON'S FIRST WIN

Crystal Palace scored its first goal since Aug. 22 to earn a 1-0 win over Huddersfield and a first victory under new manager Roy Hodgson. Bakary Sako was the scorer from a corner.

Palace has started the Premier League season with five straight losses and no goals, the first time that has happened in the history of England's top flight. Hodgson replaced the fired Frank de Boer last week. Defender Pape Souare came on as a substitute for Palace for his first appearance since breaking his jaw and thigh, and picking up other injuries, in a car crash a year ago.

STOKE, BURNLEY ELIMINATED

Stoke lost 2-0 at Bristol City and Burnley was eliminated on penalties by Leeds after a 2-2 draw, as two second-tier League Championship teams got the better of Premier League sides. Bristol City also knocked out a Premier League team in Watford in the second round. Bournemouth, West Ham and Swansea were Premier League teams to advance to Round 4. — AP

Live Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE	
Villarreal v Espanyol	21:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Celta de Vigo v Getafe	22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Levante v Real Sociedad	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3	

REAL DOMINATE FIFPRO AWARD NOMINATIONS

MADRID: Real Madrid is the best represented club with a record 13 names on the international players' association FIFPro's shortlist of 55 contenders for its World XI Player Awards. The Spanish giants, who won both the La Liga and Champions League titles last season, also held the previous club record of having 12 players on the list in both 2014 and 2015.

Nine Spaniards have made the shortlist, making Spain the most well-represented country, with France and Brazil close behind on seven nominations each. England, who dominated the inaugural shortlist back in 2005 with 10 nominations, have just one representative this year in Tottenham Hotspur striker Harry Kane, who has made the list for the first time.

Portugal forward Cristiano Ronaldo and Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon are also included, making them the only two players to make every shortlist since the first World XI in 2005. About 25,000 professional footballers took part in the poll, which this year covers performances by players from August to June, aligned with the majority of club competitions. Previous editions covered player performances in a calendar year.

The final World XI will be announced at an awards ceremony in London on Oct. 23. Full shortlist (home country/club in 2016-17):

Goalkeepers: Gianluigi Buffon (Italy/Juventus), David de Gea (Spain/Manchester United), Keylor Navas (Costa Rica/Real Madrid), Manuel Neuer (Germany/Bayern Munich), Jan Oblak (Slovenia/Atletico Madrid)

Defenders: David Alaba (Austria/Bayern Munich), Jordi Alba (Spain/Barcelona), Dani Alves (Brazil/Paris St-Germain), Jerome Boateng (Germany/Bayern Munich), Leonardo Bonucci (Italy/Juventus/AC Milan), Dani Carvajal (Spain/Real Madrid),

Giorgio Chiellini (Italy/Juventus), Diego Godin (Uruguay/Atletico Madrid), Mats Hummels (Germany/Bayern Munich), Philipp Lahm (Germany/Bayern Munich retired), David Luiz (Brazil/Chelsea), Marcelo (Brazil/Real Madrid), Javier Mascherano (Argentina/Barcelona), Pepe (Portugal/Real Madrid/Besiktas), Gerard Pique (Spain/Barcelona), Sergio Ramos (Spain/Real Madrid), Thiago Silva (Brazil/Paris St-Germain), Samuel Umtiti (France/Barcelona), Antonio Valencia (Ecuador/Manchester United), Raphael Varane (France/Real Madrid)

Midfielders: Thiago Alcantara (Spain/Bayern Munich), Sergio Busquets (Spain/Barcelona), Casemiro (Brazil/Real Madrid), Philippe Coutinho (Brazil/Liverpool), Eden Hazard (Belgium/Chelsea), Andres Iniesta (Spain/Barcelona), Isco (Spain/Real Madrid), N'Golo Kante (France/Chelsea), Toni Kroos (Germany/Real Madrid), Nemanja Matic (Serbia/Chelsea/Manchester United), Luka Modric (Croatia/Real Madrid), Mesut Ozil (Germany/Arsenal), Paul Pogba (France/Manchester United), Marco Verratti (Italy/Paris St-Germain), Arturo Vidal (Chile/Bayern Munich)

Forwards: Gareth Bale (Wales/Real Madrid), Karim Benzema (France/Real Madrid), Edinson Cavani (Uruguay/Paris St-Germain), Paulo Dybala (Argentina/Juventus), Antoine Griezmann (France/Atletico Madrid), Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Sweden/Manchester United), Harry Kane (England/Tottenham Hotspur), Robert Lewandowski (Poland/Bayern Munich), Romelu Lukaku (Belgium/Everton/Manchester United), Kylian Mbappe (France/Monaco/Paris St-Germain), Lionel Messi (Argentina/Barcelona), Neymar (Brazil/Barcelona/Paris St-Germain), Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal/Real Madrid), Alexis Sanchez (Chile/Arsenal), Luis Suarez (Uruguay/Barcelona). — Reuters



BARCELONA: FC Barcelona's Denis Suarez, right, duels for the ball during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between FC Barcelona and Eibar at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona, Spain, Tuesday. — AP

SOCCER

MESSI NETS FOUR GOALS TO KEEP BARCELONA WITH PERFECT RECORD

MADRID: Lionel Messi added to his impressive start to the season by scoring four goals and helping Barcelona rout Eibar 6-1 to extend its perfect record in the Spanish league on Tuesday. Messi converted a penalty in the first half and scored three more goals in the second to give Barcelona its fifth straight victory in the league.

The Argentina playmaker took his tally to 12 goals in eight matches this season, including nine in the five league games. Messi had already scored a hat trick in Barcelona's 5-0 rout of Espanyol in the Catalan derby two rounds ago.

The result gave Barcelona a five-point lead over Sevilla, which hosts Las Palmas today. Real Sociedad, six points back, is at Levante today. Defending champion Real Madrid, seven points behind Barcelona, hosts Real Betis. It has been a rather unexpectedly good start to the season for Barcelona, which began the league amid turmoil after seeing Neymar leave for Paris Saint-Germain and losing the Spanish Super Cup match to Real Madrid.

It is the best start to the league for Messi, who in 2011-12 had scored eight goals after five matches. He is the league's leading scorer, with four goals more than Simone Zaza of Valencia, who had a hat trick in a 5-0 rout of Malaga earlier Tuesday.

"He is one of the smartest players I've ever seen on a field," Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde said of Messi. "You don't really know how, but he is always in good position. He is extraordinary." It was the fourth time Messi has scored four goals or more with Barcelona. Brazil midfielder Paulinho and Denis Suarez also scored for the Catalan club, while Sergi Enrich netted Eibar's goal.

Barcelona was without Ousmane Dembele, who injured his left thigh at the weekend and is expected to be sidelined for up to four months. The young France forward, Barcelona's top signing during the transfer window, traveled to Finland to undergo surgery on a ruptured tendon. He made only three appearances after arriving to replace Neymar.

Valverde left Luis Suarez on the bench and started with Gerard Deulofeu, Denis Suarez and Messi as a false "9" in the attack. Paulinho, the Brazil midfielder who came off the bench to score the winner against Getafe on Saturday, also made it to the starting lineup.

"Today we have been able to rest certain players and give playing time to others who needed to play and it turned out well," Valverde said.

LOSING AGAIN

Valencia won 5-0 with a hat trick by Simone Zaza to hand Malaga its fifth straight loss to start the season. Zaza scored his three goals eight minutes apart early in the second half to give Valencia its first victory after three straight draws and move the club into third place. Forward Santi Mina and Rodrigo also scored for the hosts at Mestalla Stadium. — AP

JAMES STARS FOR BAYERN MUNICH IN BUNDESLIGA WIN AT SCHALKE

BERLIN: James Rodriguez starred on his first Bundesliga start for Bayern Munich, scoring one goal and playing a role in the others for a 3-0 win at Schalke on Tuesday. James, who switched from Real Madrid in the offseason, earned a penalty and then scored in the first half, before brilliantly setting up Arturo Vidal to wrap up the win in the second.

"James played very well, very much for the team with good combination-play, but physically he is not yet at 100 percent," Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti said. While the Colombian midfielder made his first league start for Bayern, American teenager Weston McKennie did likewise for the home team. Despite the efforts of the 19-year-old Texan midfielder - who covered more ground than any other player in the first half - Schalke had no answer to James' individual brilliance.

"We created the goals very well, so we deserved to win," said Bayern's reserve goalkeeper Sven Ulreich, playing in place of Germany No. 1 Manuel Neuer. Neuer has been ruled out until January with another hairline fracture of the metatarsal in his left foot.

The home side was first to have the ball in the net, but Amine Harit's goal was ruled out as Bastian Oczipka was offside. Ulreich had done well with two saves beforehand. Bayern got the penalty after referee Marco Fritz consulted his video assistant to see if Naldo had handled the ball when James cut it back. The Brazilian defender was going to ground but had his arms raised when the ball struck.

Protests by Schalke players had no effect

and Robert Lewandowski duly converted from the spot. It got worse for the home side four minutes later, when Bayern scored after a Schalke throw-in. Thomas Mueller, Lewandowski and Corentin Tolisso worked the ball to the unmarked James, who wrong-footed Ralf Faehrmann to score his first Bundesliga goal. Mueller hit the post with a header from a cross by James after the break, before substitute Yevhen Konoplyanka went close at the other end. Schalke coach Domenico Tedesco brought on Swiss forward Brel Embolo for McKennie with just over half an hour remaining. Any hopes of an equalizer ended when James eluded two defenders and delivered a perfect ball for Vidal to strike with a volley to the top corner. "Altogether there's no denying that Bayern had a very good day. Then it's hard for any team," Schalke general manager Christian Heidel said.

WOLFSBURG FRUSTRATION, AUGSBURG ELATION

Fin Bartels' second-half header earned Werder Bremen a 1-1 draw at Wolfsburg and denied Martin Schmidt a winning start as coach. Schmidt was appointed Monday when Wolfsburg fired Andries Jonker after the team had claimed just four points in its opening four games. Michael Gregoritsch's fourth-minute strike was enough for Augsburg to beat visiting Leipzig 10 for its third win from five games. Two goals from Brazilian midfielder Raffael gave Borussia Moenchengladbach a 2-0 win at home over promoted Stuttgart. — AP



GELSENKIRCHEN: Schalke goalkeeper Ralf Faehrmann, right, catches a ball alone in front of Bayern's Thiago during the German Bundesliga soccer match between FC Schalke 04 and Bayern Munich at the Arena in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, Tuesday. — AP

Sports

NHL hoping to make inroads in China with preseason games

13



Messi nets four goals to keep Barcelona with perfect record

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2017

HOSKINS' 4 RBIS LEAD PHILLIES OVER DODGERS 6-2

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PRAGUE: (L to R) Swiss tennis player Roger Federer, Spanish tennis player Rafael Nadal, Swedish former tennis player Bjorn Borg, former tennis player of Australia Rod Laver, former tennis player of US John McEnroe pose on the stage ahead of the tennis Laver Cup yesterday in Prague, Czech Republic. European players compete against players from the rest of the World during the Laver Cup tournament that runs from from September 22-24. — AFP

NADAL, FEDERER LEAD EUROPE IN INAUGURAL LAVER CUP

PRAGUE: Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer will set aside their long-time rivalry when they play for Europe against the rest of the world in the inaugural Laver Cup tournament which starts tomorrow. Team Europe, featuring the world's top two players, are overwhelming favourites to win the three-day tournament, which is named after Australian great Rod Laver, with a squad boasting a combined 36 grand slam titles against one for Team World.

The teams are captained by Bjorn Borg and John McEnroe, whose own rivalry starting in the 1970s featured a contrast in temperament and style that made their matches the kind of must-

watch events that Laver Cup organisers hope to showcase. "I've been watching these guys play for so many years, it's going to be a fun weekend," Borg, now 61, told reporters yesterday. "But make no mistake, we are here to win." Conceived by Federer and his sports management company Team8, the tournament is the latest to join a crowded calendar and comes on the heels of the Davis Cup semi-finals last week.

World number two Federer played down the impact of another event, saying matches over a short period were manageable and gave players on the two teams the chance to build camaraderie. "I don't think it's too much otherwise all

the players wouldn't be here," the Swiss great told a news conference. "The best (players) in the world are very picky in what (tournaments) they play, which (is why it) is great they made this a priority." "(We're) looking forward to making friendships because we play together and not against each other for a change."

EUROPE FAVOURED

Team Europe also includes German Alexander Zverev, Croatia's Marin Cilic, Austrian Dominic Thiem and Czech Tomas Berdych. Team World features Americans Sam Querrey, Jack Sock, John Isner and Frances Tiafoe plus Australia's Nick

Krygios and Canadian Denis Shapovalov.

With five players inside the world's top 10, the Borg-led European squad is heavily favoured against a world team hit by Argentine Juan Martin del Potro's late withdrawal due to injury.

"I'm expecting a lot of fun but at the same time I know it's going to be very competitive," the 22-year-old Krygios told reporters. "We are the underdogs."

The tournament, which will rotate between Europe and the rest of the world each year, features three singles and one doubles match each day. A win is worth one point on Friday, two on Saturday and three on Sunday.

In a bid to keep the pace humming, the indoor hard court matches at Prague's O2 Arena will be best-of-three sets with a 10-point tiebreak deciding the final set. With no player featuring in singles more than twice during the first two days, Nadal and Federer could see themselves on the same side of the net in a mouthwatering doubles pairing. "We don't even know if captain Borg is going to pick us but, of course, I would love to play with Rafa and see that forehand do damage on the other side (of the net)," Federer said.

"I'm sure that the crowd would go absolutely crazy and just because of that it would just be great to play us potentially." — Reuters

JAKE LAMOTTA, BOXING'S 'RAGING BULL,' DEAD AT 90S

MIAMI: Jake LaMotta, the brutish former boxing champion whose life of violence in and out of the ring was portrayed in the movie "Raging Bull," died on Tuesday, according to one of his daughters. LaMotta, who admitted intentionally losing a fight at the behest of mobsters, was in his 90s, listing his birthday as July 10, 1922, while other sources had the year as 1921. His daughter Christi LaMotta announced the death on her personal Facebook page but did not disclose the cause of death.

LaMotta's seventh wife, Denise Baker, told ABC News that the boxer, who had been living in a nursing home in Miami, died of complications of pneumonia. Actor Robert DeNiro, who won an Academy Award in 1981 for his movie portrayal of LaMotta, issued a statement saying, "Rest in Peace, Champ."

LaMotta, who grew up in a rough neighborhood in New York City's Bronx borough, had a fearless ring style in which he closed in on an opponent, leaning low and forward, and began battering away with little concern about the shots he might take in return. He had a reputation for having the strongest chin in the sport. "Punches never bothered me that much," he once told the Times of London. LaMotta's career was highlighted by a rivalry with the legendary Sugar Ray Robinson, who beat LaMotta in five of their six matches, including an especially ferocious title bout in 1951.

"The three toughest fighters I've ever been up against were Sugar Ray Robinson, Sugar Ray Robinson and Sugar Ray Robinson," LaMotta said. "I fought Sugar so many times, I'm surprised I'm not diabetic," he said in a line that he would use often.

Fighting mostly as a middleweight and known as the "Raging Bull" and "Bronx Bull," LaMotta finished his 13-year career with 83 victories (30 by knockout), 19 losses and four draws. He was never knocked out and in 2002, the authoritative Ring Magazine ranked him 52nd on its list of the 80 best fighters of the previous 80 years. While LaMotta's strength and volatility made him one of the top fighters of the 1940s and '50s, by his own admission, his paranoid, jealous and self-destructive nature led to a life of turmoil.

EARLY CRIMES

LaMotta was a raging bull of a hoodlum as a child. After being beaten up at school once, LaMotta told Reuters his abusive father gave him an ice pick to use on his attackers. "And when I went after them with an ice pick, they ran away," he said. "Then I realized I didn't have to use an ice pick any more. I was good enough with my fists." He fought other neighborhood boys in matches that adults bet on and ended up at a juvenile facility for attempting to rob a jewelry store. Due to an erroneous newspaper report, LaMotta

went several years thinking he had beaten a bookie to death in a robbery. As an adult, he was abusive to women and once severely beat his wife Vicki and his best friend after hearing they were having an affair. Mobsters had a great deal of control over boxing during LaMotta's career but he refused to take on a Mafia-connected manager. He did, however, agree to throw his 1947 match against Billy Fox in return for a long-sought chance to fight for a championship. In his autobiography LaMotta said he had trouble making the Fox fight look convincing. The referee stopped the fight in the fourth round as Fox pounded LaMotta, who was not defending himself. By that point, LaMotta wrote, "If there was anybody in the Garden who didn't know what was happening, he must have been dead drunk." LaMotta was suspended for several months after the bout and admitted throwing the fight when he testified to a Senate subcommittee investigating boxing corruption in 1960. The mob did give LaMotta his shot at the title, though, and he made good on it, defeating French-Algerian Marcel Cerdan in 1949 to win the middleweight crown.

LaMotta held the title almost two years before losing it to Robinson in their sixth fight on Feb. 14, 1951, a bout so fierce it became known as the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. LaMotta took a brutal pounding from Robinson but was never knocked down in a fight stopped by the referee in the 13th round.

LaMotta retired three years after that loss to Robinson. Martin Scorsese's 1980 "Raging Bull" movie was based on LaMotta's 1970 autobiography and the boxer helped DeNiro prepare for the starring role by training and sparring with the actor. "When I saw the film I was upset," LaMotta told an interviewer. "I kind of look bad in it. Then I realized it was true. That's the way it was. I was a no-good bastard ... It's not the way I am now but the way I was then." After retiring from the ring, LaMotta tried standup comedy and had a few small acting roles, most notably in the Paul Newman-Jackie Gleason movie "The Hustler" and the 1960s sitcom "Car 54, Where Are You?" He opened a nightclub in Florida and in 1967 was sentenced to prison for six months on a charge of promoting prostitution. LaMotta was in his 90s when he took the stage for a poorly reviewed cabaret-style show based on his life and co-starring seventh wife Baker, recalling highlights from his career and reciting Marlon Brando's "I coulda been a contender" monologue from the movie "On the Waterfront." LaMotta had six children from his seven marriages. Robinson was the best man at the sixth wedding. —Reuters



NEW YORK: This file photo taken on January 27, 2005 shows boxer Jake LaMotta and actor Robert De Niro attending a special screening of "Raging Bull" to celebrate its 25th anniversary and DVD release in New York. LaMotta, the former world middleweight boxing champion who was portrayed by De Niro in the Scorsese film "Raging Bull," has died at age 95, his family announced yesterday. — AFP



TOKYO: Garbine Muguruza of Spain returns a shot to Monica Puig of Puerto Rico during their second round match of the Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament in Tokyo, yesterday. — AP

MUGURUZA BEATS PUIG TO REACH PAN PACIFIC QUARTER-FINALS

TOKYO: Garbine Muguruza began her reign as No. 1 with a 6-4, 6-0 win over Monica Puig yesterday, earning a spot in the quarterfinals of the Pan Pacific Open.

Playing in her first tournament since earning the WTA's top ranking, the Wimbledon champion broke Puig to go up 5-0 in the second set and then won with her third ace of the match.

"I'm happy to win my first match as No. 1," Muguruza said. "I have to be ready and every match is going to be tougher now."

Puig beat Muguruza 6-1, 6-1 at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics and maintained that momentum early on but Muguruza found her pace by breaking in the opening game of the second set. A stretch of 12 points won in succession formed part of another break as the Spaniard raced out to a 4-0 lead.

"The last time I played her it didn't go my way at all," Muguruza said. "This time, I found a better way to play and got the victory. In the second set, I kind of learned what I did well in the first set."

Muguruza will next face either Kurumi Nara or Caroline Garcia as she takes part in

the quarterfinals for the fourth straight year.

Muguruza took over at No. 1 from Karolina Pliskova, who also advanced with a 6-2, 6-1 win over Magda Linette. After coasting through the first set, the Czech player broke her opponent with a backhand to the corner in the sixth game before serving out to win. The second-seeded Pliskova, who had eight aces against Linette, will next face seventh-seeded Angelique Kerber. Kerber beat Daria Kasatkina 7-6 (5), 6-3.

Also, Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of Russia advanced with a 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 win over Wang Qiang. Second-seeded Karolina Pliskova used a strong serve to help overpower Magda Linette of Poland 6-2, 6-1 yesterday to advance to the Pan Pacific Open quarterfinals. After coasting through the first set, the Czech player broke her opponent with a backhand to the corner in the sixth game before serving out to win in just over an hour at Ariake Coliseum.

Pliskova, who had eight aces against Linette, will face either seventh-seeded Angelique Kerber or Daria Kasatkina in the quarterfinals. — AP



Reforms could boost Kuwait-Qatar ties



HONG KONG: A woman poses while facing Victoria Harbor and the Kowloon skyline as her friend takes photos of her in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

KUWAIT CREDIT RATING AT AA2 STABLE: MOODY'S

STATE'S CREDIT PROFILE SUPPORTED BY STRONG BALANCE-SHEET

KUWAIT: Kuwait's credit profile is supported by the government's exceptionally strong balance sheet, with assets in the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) estimated to exceed 550 percent of GDP, roughly 29 times outstanding government debt in 2016.

Vast hydrocarbon reserves are estimated to exceed 88 years at current rates of production, the credit rating agency Moody's Investors Service reported on Tuesday. However, the government remains highly dependent on these oil revenues, rendering it vulnerable to oil price volatility. The outlook for Kuwait's Aa2 rating is stable. Fiscal challenges arising from a period of lower for longer oil prices are balanced by vast sovereign asset buffers, a low fiscal breakeven oil price, and a gradual fiscal and economic reform program which should ultimately lower exposure to the oil sector.

Steady diversification of government revenues and economic activity away from the oil sector could apply upwards pressure on the rating. Additionally, sustained improvements to the institutional framework, in particular in government transparency and reporting standards, would be credit positive. "We would consider a negative rating action if Kuwait's reform momentum were to slow beyond the already anticipated, slower-than peer pace, for example, in the

event that parliamentary resistance blocks or forces the reversal of planned reforms to government finances and the management of government debt," Moody's said in its report.

Fiscal balance

In addition, a further sustained fall in the price of oil, a further marked worsening in the fiscal balance for which there was no clear plan for reversal, and/or signs of falling government financial assets would also exert downward pressure on the rating. A deterioration in the domestic or regional political environment resulting in disruptions to oil production and/or a deterioration in the business climate would also be credit negative.

"We have adjusted Kuwait's score for economic strength upwards from the indicative "Moderate (-)" to "High (+)" to reflect the country's exceptionally high wealth levels, as well as its substantial hydrocarbons endowment."

According to the 2017 BP Statistical Review of World Energy, in 2016 the country had the seventh largest proved oil reserves in the world and the second largest within the group of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, after Saudi Arabia (A1 stable). At the current rate of production, these reserves would last for almost 90 years. This translates into high levels of national wealth, and the IMF estimates Kuwait's GDP per

capita in purchasing power terms at approximately USD 71,887 in 2016, the sixth-highest amongst rated sovereigns and slightly higher than Norway's (Aaa stable). However, the very high dependence on the oil sector has led to wide fluctuations in economic performance. Oil-sector GDP accounted for an average of 62 percent of total nominal GDP between 2011-15, and the oil price shock has significantly reduced nominal GDP.

Vast oil wealth

In addition, partly because of its vast oil wealth, Kuwait has been slower than other highly rated GCC governments to develop its nonoil sector through encouraging private sector activity or attracting foreign investment. This has resulted in an oversized public sector relative to the private sector.

Kuwait's institutional strength score of "High (-)" is adjusted up from the indicative score of "Moderate (+)". Positive fiscal reform steps undertaken by the Kuwaiti government so far include the establishment of a debt management unit at the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and improved coordination between key institutions such as Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), MoF, and Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). Preparation to implement a medium-term budget framework

with plans to cap spending at 2017/18 levels supports this view. Furthermore, the Kuwaiti authorities have signalled renewed willingness to increase transparency with regard to government financial assets.

The successful Eurobond issuance earlier in the year supports improved transparency and institutional development. Kuwait scores only moderately in terms of its institutional framework and government effectiveness in the Worldwide Governance Indicators. Kuwait's fiscal strength score is "Very High (+)". Given the extraordinarily large government financial assets managed by KIA, we have adjusted the score upwards from an indicative score of "Very High."

Moderate risk

As a result of the fall in oil prices Kuwait posted a sharp drop in its fiscal balance to a small surplus of about 1.2 percent of GDP in fiscal year 2015, which ended in March 2016, and we estimate that the fiscal balance deteriorated further to a deficit of 2.6 percent of GDP in fiscal year 2016. This compares to average fiscal surpluses of almost 31 percent of GDP between 2010 and 2014. Risks to Kuwait's fiscal position are further mitigated by a relatively low fiscal break-even oil price, which the IMF projects at around \$50 per barrel for 2017 and 2018 (this estimate includes

investment income).

Kuwait's susceptibility to event risk is "Moderate". Similar to most other GCC countries, Kuwait's geographical location renders it vulnerable to regional geopolitical event risk, which dominates our event risk assessment for Kuwait. However, Kuwait enjoys close relations with the US (which has demonstrated strong commitment to protecting Kuwait's sovereignty), other G8 countries, and fellow GCC members. The government also attempts to maintain stable relations with neighboring Iran and Iraq and has taken a mediating role in the ongoing regional diplomatic dispute. We forecast a contraction of 2.7 percent in oil GDP in 2017 as a result of lower oil production volumes, according to the report. However, in the event that OPEC votes to extend or even reduce production allocations in 2018 we would likely look to revise down our 2018 real GDP growth forecasts - which currently anticipates a 1.9 percent expansion in oil GDP - given Kuwait's strong track record of compliance with production cuts.

Nonetheless, reaching consensus for further cuts will be challenging given that Russia is likely to oppose further extensions, while Nigeria is pushing for further exemptions due to the delay in bringing its own production back towards 2.1 million bpd, the report concluded. — KUNA

SHOPPING SURGE BOOSTS BRITISH RATE HIKE BETS

LONDON: British retail sales unexpectedly surged in August, boosting chances the Bank of England will raise interest rates for the first time in a decade at its next meeting.

More downbeat news, however, came from a BoE survey which showed no sign that wages were likely to grow much more quickly, tempering a jump in sterling. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, meanwhile, said uncertainty about Brexit meant Britain next year will suffer its slowest growth since the financial crisis. The contrasting signals

underscored the challenge for the BoE which last week surprised investors by saying it was likely to raise rates in the coming months if the economy and inflation pressures strengthen as expected.

That change of gear by the BoE came despite the uncertainty about Britain's withdrawal from the European Union and mixed messages about the strength of the economy. Yesterday's official data showed a sharp pick-up in monthly sales growth in August, despite inflation pressures that have previously squeezed spending. Retail sales volumes rose 1.0 percent month-on-month,

their fastest since April, to give an annual growth of 2.4 percent, both well above the highest forecasts in a Reuters poll. More Britons holidaying at home and more foreign visitors, reflecting the weaker pound since the Brexit vote, could be behind some of the rise, economists said. Shoppers spent heavily on non-essentials, despite rising prices, with strong demand for watches and jewelry. "These latest figures will give further encouragement to the Bank of England to follow up their recent statements on the need to raise interest rates," Andrew Sentance, a former BoE policymaker who now advises accountants PwC, said. HSBC said market pricing for a quarter-point rate rise on Nov. 2, after the BoE's next meeting, rose to 65 percent. Sterling gained almost a cent against the U.S. dollar after the data, before later giving back most of its gains.

British retail data is frequently volatile on a monthly basis and a separate survey released by the BoE on Wednesday offered a more downbeat picture. Construction and consumer-facing industries were suffering and there were mixed signals on investment, although factory exports and business-to-business services were strong. Pay rises mostly remained at 2-3 percent, below inflation but there were some signs that the worst of the impact on prices of last year's fall in the pound should start to ease.

The loss of disposable income this year caused the weakest first quarter for retail sales since 2010. But companies have reported little slowdown in spending so far.

Kingfisher, Britain's biggest home improvements retailer, said sales of expensive power tools and new kitchens had not changed, though it was cautious about the outlook. — Reuters



LONDON: Shoppers sit with their purchases in bags outside a Primark store in central London yesterday. — AFP

ARAMCO COULD DISCLOSE ACCOUNTS EARLY 2018

LONDON/DUBAI: Saudi Aramco will be able to release its audited financial accounts in early 2018 if the government decides on a venue for listing the oil giant's IPO and finalizes several reforms this year, three sources said.

It will be the first public earnings disclosure for Aramco and one of the most important internal milestones in preparing for the initial public offering (IPO), which is expected to raise as much as \$100 billion. The Saudi government has said it wants the sale of five percent of Aramco to take place before the end of 2018. A Saudi government source said the share sale was on track.

Releasing the 2015-2017 accounts in the first quarter would be a major step towards sticking to the 2018 goal although the IPO's timing depends on several external factors, the sources said. "Aramco will have its 2017 results by the first quarter, the audited accounts will be available then, so the IPO could happen after that," one of the sources said.

The sources said internal accountants would send the 2017 accounts to external auditors when they have finished work on them at the beginning of next year. The auditors - named by Aramco as PwC, EY and BCG - have already audited the 2015 and 2016 accounts. They have never been released. The auditors and Aramco would first prepare a report on the accounts for all three years that it could share with a group of prospective large investors. They would then prepare a full prospectus which would be available to all investors. The accounts for 2017 would be done to reflect Saudi's new taxation system

while the two previous years would be done on a pro-forma accounting basis. However, it would make sense to release the accounts only after the government has decided where the listing will take place as different venues use different accounting standards, the sources said.

For example, a listing in New York would require the accounts to be prepared according to US GAAP standards whereas IFRS standards would be acceptable for a listing in London, Hong Kong or Singapore. Aramco has so far prepared the accounts according to IFRS standards, but can quickly convert those to US GAAP if the government decides to list in New York, a second source said.

Decision-maker

The IPO is a centerpiece of Vision 2030, an ambitious reform plan to diversify the Saudi economy beyond oil which is championed by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. He has sweeping powers over defense, energy and the economy and is expected to take the final decision about Aramco's listing venue and the other reforms. The accounts also cannot be finalized until the government has finished the reform of domestic fuel price subsidies. These are currently funded by Aramco. Under the planned reform, the government will pay for the subsidies, the sources said. This would boost Aramco's valuation and make it more attractive to investors ahead of the IPO as it could mean a higher dividend. The government has also yet to decide on Aramco's dividend policy. — Reuters

BRITISH TRADE MISSION FROM N IRELAND TO VISIT KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Seven companies from Northern Ireland will visit Kuwait from 23 to 25 September 2017 as part of a trade mission. This visit is part of a regional tour to UAE and Kuwait. The visit is organized by Invest Northern Ireland, which is a regional economic development agency with its global headquarters in Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom. The Regional HQ for India, Middle East and Africa is located at the British Embassy in Dubai.

The companies participating in the delegation covers the following sectors: Waste management; software in the power and energy sector; specialist education and training on Fitness, Health, Sport and Leisure as well as medical supplies. The companies are as follows:

EMS Environmental Marketing Solutions Ltd
www.emswasterecycle.com
EMS has been involved in the manufacture of bespoke plants for the waste and material handling sectors for over ten years. Its specialty is the develop-

ment of individual, bespoke systems to suit customer requirements by truly understanding the input material and separation processes possible.

McCloskey Washing Systems
www.mccloskeywashing.com
McCloskey Washing Systems has become a world-leader delivering a full range of mobile, modular and static material and mineral washing equipment across multiple applications. For over 30 years, McCloskey has gained a reputation for quality, reliability and agility in providing superior equipment to a large customer network worldwide.

NiSoft
www.NiSoft.com
NiSoft is a world leader in safety, operations and compliance management software across energy, power and water installations globally. With project management and support staff based in Europe, Asia and USA, it is well positioned to manage implemen-

tations configured to the client's requirements and working environment.

CareerSport International
www.careersport.net
CareerSport International provides specialist education and training courses for those wanting to pursue a professional career in Education, Fitness and Health and Sport and Leisure. It has fitness academies based in the UK, UAE and India. Its qualifications are internationally accredited by Skills Active (UK) and Active IQ for fitness instructors, personal trainers, activity leaders, sports coaches, teachers, and health and leisure professionals. The company is committed to educate, motivate and inspire students to perform to their full potential.

Clonallon Laboratories Ltd
www.clonallon.com
Clonallon Laboratories Ltd, a UK medical supplies company based in Northern Ireland, manufac-

tures and supplies custom sterile procedure packs, surgical instruments and other products to the healthcare industry.

Cunningham Covers
www.cunninghamcovers.co.uk
Founded in 1969, Cunningham Covers specializes in the design, specification and manufacture of custom industrial textile tarpaulin covers for the protection of high value assets and provides the transportation industry with kits and accessories for the construction of curtain sides.

The company exports to over 40 counties and is recognized by ISO 9001 quality award and has recently won the Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade.

Sandvik Mobile Crushers & Screens
www.construction.sandvik.com
Construction and demolition debris waste and asphalt recycling.



ISTANBUL: A woman pets a cat as shopkeepers sit outside bookstores in Istanbul. An increasing number of highly-skilled Turks are leaving Turkey, pushed by the flagging economy and what critics say are attacks on individual liberties. — AFP

ESCAPING DISILLUSION: SKILLED YOUTH ARE QUITTING TURKEY

ISTANBUL: When Dilara left Turkey for Dubai five years ago, her friends said she'd made a mistake. The economy was flourishing, the cultural scene was vibrant and relations with the West warm. But now, "most of my friends are sending me their CVs because they don't want to stay in Turkey anymore, especially after the referendum," said Dilara, a pseudonym as she did not want to be identified by her real name. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan won a landmark referendum in April on expanding his powers, which critics fear will lead to one-man rule in an increasingly polarized nation.

Dilara, a specialist in digital marketing, is one of an increasing number of highly-skilled Turks to leave the country, a trend that has grown in recent years, according to Ulas Sunata, sociologist at the University of Bahcesehir in Istanbul.

Lamenting a lack of data, she said the issue represented a potentially damaging brain drain. "It's a genuine problem for the country," she told AFP. "But it's not just the sociocultural aspect, there's the economic aspect, too... their departure is a real disadvantage for the country."

A dozen Turkish citizens interviewed by AFP, who have left or are planning to leave, cited dwindling job prospects for graduates and complained of a rising conservatism under the government and an erosion of civil liberties. The Turkish government insists it is building a strong economy, based on innovation and investment, with the aim of becoming one of the world's top 10 economies by the 100th anniversary of the modern Republic in 2023.

The economy has remained robust after the July 2016 failed coup, even expanding by 5.1 percent in the second quarter this year. Yet critics point to high unemployment—especially the 20.6-percent rate among 15 to 24 year-olds—and an uncertain future outlook as reforms stall.

Erdogan claimed in July that a "brain drain" was taking place throughout the Muslim world. "We are losing our most intelligent students to the benefit of the West," he said.

'Why should I suffer?'
Dilara initially left Turkey temporarily to enrich her CV with experience abroad. "I planned to go back many times in the past few years, but there were things happening in Turkey so I changed my mind," she said. The suppression of anti-government protests and terror attacks, which hit the country in 2016, made some think twice about staying in Turkey.

"Why should I suffer when there are better options elsewhere? What am I doing in a country with no justice?" said a 33-year-old English-language teacher, who, like several people, agreed to speak to AFP on condition their names were not published.

He said he had taken the first steps to leave the country, with his wife and children, explaining that he felt they "deserve better standards of living." "There is no longer a place for independent films in Turkey," added one 26-year-old filmmaker, who plans to move to Paris.

'Quite bold decision'
"It would be a quite bold decision now to take up an academic position in Turkey," Merve, a communications PhD student, will soon join her partner, who is also an academic, in Budapest. Both believe it is "too difficult" in today's climate to lead an academic career in Turkey. "Everyone is making choices, thinking of their future, so I chose to leave," she added.

'Graduates taking risks'
Those most likely to leave are graduates, who "have a better chance of being accepted in the countries they want to go to," said Sunata. "Leaving involves risks, and it is the graduates who can afford to face them." But she warned: "Their departure means that there are fewer people left to uphold important, universal values such as human rights and (their departure) entails a weakening of those values." The procedure for leaving is long and arduous: for one historian, who recently moved to France after having long taught in one of Turkey's most respected universities, it took four years to prepare the paperwork and find a job abroad. — AFP

PENSION FUNDS SECOND LARGEST INVESTOR IN GCC AFTER SWFs

GCC DEMOGRAPHICS POSITIVE FOR MOPPING UP FURTHER ASSETS

KUWAIT: Marmore MENA Intelligence, a subsidiary of Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz", recently released a report on GCC Institutional Investors III - Pension funds. It is the third report in the series of GCC's Institutional Investors; which had earlier covered State Owned Entities (SOE) and Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWF). GCC Pension Funds are the second largest set of institutional investors in the region after the SWFs. However, this investor class has seldom been researched in detail despite its widespread influence in the economy. This report covers the size, development, roles and future of this investor class in the region.

The report stated that pension funds in the GCC are a recent development barring Kuwait, which founded a pension fund in 1955 and Saudi Arabia, which founded a similar fund in 1958. Until recently, concepts such as retirement benefits and payouts to its citizens were not given much importance, due to the generous government salaries and associated benefits coupled with the higher proportion of expatriate workers. Non-transparent actuarial information and limited public disclosure of data by the respective authorities make it very difficult to assess the solvency and sustainability of current pension schemes.

As a fallout of the rapid economic development of the GCC countries, the aggregate population increased by more than tenfold in little over half a century which is widely considered the most rapid population growth rate anywhere in the world during that period. It is estimated that the population



will further grow by another third to 53 million people by 2020. Swelling population and the challenges it poses are well reflected in the growing unemployment rates. Advancing healthcare facilities available in the GCC countries is extending the life expectancy of retirees. Early retirement schemes and higher payouts have created an asset liability mismatch and needs immediate attention. The report elaborates on these factors and its impact on the funding shortfall that could likely take place in these retirement funds going forward.

Demographics

On the positive side, current demographics of GCC countries, dominated by youth population, allow for the pension subscription base to expand and mop up further assets. The Pension fund asset is bound to grow in the future as these countries transform themselves through their economic visions. According to our estimates, the total pension fund asset in GCC by 2020 is estimated to be \$602.4 Billion and by 2025 is estimated to be \$938.6 billion. Millennials who are currently entering the workforce have close to thirty-four years before they retire. However, GCC pension systems are at a nascent stage and are only partially funded

with most retirement benefits being paid out with the help of excess contributions from the employees rather than income derived from pension assets. This position may not be sustainable unless structural reforms in the pension system are introduced. Pension funds have the mandate to invest in the local stock markets and they currently contribute about 5 percent of the market cap. Saudi Arabia has the highest exposure to the stock market followed by Kuwait and Qatar. They serve as anchor investors with a long-term investment horizon, thereby providing support in times of crisis and reducing the volatility. Pension funds, being one of the largest investor class, are important force for the stability and growth of GCC markets. Considering the growth in pension assets from a youthful population, these funds have the room to take higher risk. This opportunity should be used proactively in order to widen the scope of investments and delve into products such as ETFs, REITs and other structured investments.

Currently there is no One-Size-Fits-All rule to define the proper level of basic pension or replacement rate. GCC region needs to take into account a multitude of factors to find the right mix. Cultural factors, such as family structures or the willingness of individuals to save for old age play a big role. Economic factors, such as the general standard of living of the population, estimates about minimum consumption needs, the existence of other formal and informal social assistance programs, and, of course, the costs have to be considered.

MOODY'S: EGYPT ECONOMY STILL RECOVERING FROM 2011 UPRISING

CAIRO: Egypt's economy has started to improve but has yet to recover from the country's 2011 uprising and the years of unrest that followed, an international credit rating agency said.

Moody's hailed recent economic and fiscal reforms in its annual report released on Tuesday, saying they point to "improved government effectiveness and policy predictability." Weak finances, however, remain a "key challenge" for the government, it added.

Egypt embarked on an ambitious economic reform plan shortly after President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi took office in 2014. The government has slashed subsidies, imposed a value-added tax and allowed currency devaluation in order to qualify for a \$12 billion bailout loan from the International Monetary Fund.

The austerity measures have hit the public hard, however, with inflation hovering around 30 percent for months, many import products unavailable, and soaring electricity and fuel costs. Moody's said reforms and financial support provided by international lenders have helped in restoring Egypt's foreign reserves, which are currently above \$36 billion, their highest level since December 2010. "We also expect that Egypt's high fiscal deficits and government debt levels will gradually reduce," said Steffen Dyck, a Moody's vice president. Egypt's Finance Minister Amr Al-Garhy announced earlier this week that the country will face a \$10-\$12 billion budget deficit for the current

fiscal year 2017-18, which started in July. He also said the government plans to plug the gap by increasing foreign debt issuance, and will announce future bond offerings in the coming

weeks. Egypt's sovereign rating by Moody's remains unchanged at B3, far below investment grade and subject to high credit risk, but the outlook remains stable. — AP



TIANJIN: Employees wait in front of the first Airbus A330 plane to be delivered before the inauguration ceremony of the Airbus A330 Completion and Delivery Centre in Tianjin, China yesterday. Aerospace giant Airbus inaugurated a completion center for A330 wide-body aircraft, which will provide cabin equipment, furnishing and exterior paint for the planes bought by Chinese airlines - a new selling point for the European group in the crucial and fast expanding Chinese market. — AP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.710
Indian Rupees	4.690
Pakistani Rupees	2.867
Srilankan Rupees	1.971
Nepali Rupees	2.956
Singapore Dollar	225.490
Hongkong Dollar	38.717
Bangladesh Taka	3.702
Philippine Peso	5.941
Thai Baht	9.164

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.627
Qatari Riyal	83.042
Omani Riyal	785.213
Bahraini Dinar	802.840
UAE Dirham	82.318

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.750
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.044
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.214
Tunisian Dinar	125.900
Jordanian Dinar	426.400
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.014
Syrian Lira	2.000
Morocco Dirham	32.986

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.150
Euro	364.540
Sterling Pound	410.320

Canadian dollar	247.160
Turkish lira	87.330
Swiss Franc	316.060
Australian Dollar	243.680
US Dollar Buying	300.950

GOLD

20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	301.800
Canadian Dollar	248.685
Sterling Pound	403.050
Euro	363.090
Swiss Franc	291.255
Bahraini Dinar	801.000
UAE Dirhams	82.560
Qatari Riyals	83.380
Saudi Riyals	81.340
Jordanian Dinar	426.950
Egyptian Pound	17.121
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.975
Indian Rupees	4.719
Pakistani Rupees	2.863
Bangladesh Taka	3.733
Philippines Peso	5.929
Cyprus pound	17.960
Japanese Yen	3.740
Syrian Pound	1.585
Nepalese Rupees	2.954

Malaysian Ringgit	72.765
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.660
Thai Bhat	10.115
Turkish Lira	88.375

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY

BUY	SELL
Europe	
British Pound	0.401410
Czech Korune	0.005867
Danish Krone	0.044650
Euro	0.357072
Georgian Lari	0.121210
Norwegian Krone	0.034661
Romanian Leu	0.078686
Russian ruble	0.005183
Slovakia	0.008995
Swedish Krona	0.039399
Swiss Franc	0.307553
Australian Dollar	0.233853
New Zealand Dollar	0.214360

America

Canadian Dollar	0.240430	0.249430
US Dollars	0.298050	0.302470
US Dollars Mint	0.298550	0.302470

Asia

Bangladesh Taka	0.003238	0.003822
Chinese Yuan	0.044488	0.047988

Hong Kong Dollar	0.036620	0.039370
Indian Rupee	0.004242	0.004930
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002624	0.002804
Korean Won	0.000257	0.000272
Malaysian Ringgit	0.068031	0.074031
Nepalese Rupee	0.003015	0.003185
Pakistan Rupee	0.002754	0.003044
Philippine Peso	0.005814	0.006114
Singapore Dollar	0.218910	0.228910
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001623	0.002203
Taiwan	0.009890	0.010070
Thai Baht	0.008794	0.009344

Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.794255	0.802755
Egyptian Pound	0.014472	0.020380
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000193	0.000253
Jordanian Dinar	0.421552	0.430552
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021126	0.045126
Omani Riyal	0.778385	0.784065
Qatar Riyal	0.078703	0.083643
Saudi Riyal	0.079487	0.080787
Syrian Pound	0.001280	0.001500
Tunisian Dinar	0.120434	0.128343
Turkish Lira	0.081704	0.092004
UAE Dirhams	0.080839	0.082539
Yemeni Riyal	0.000982	0.001062

DOES BOE'S HAWKISH LURCH NOD TO STERLING CRISIS?



LONDON: Pedestrians carry shopping bags as they walk past shops in central London yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: As the Bank of England sends its strongest signal to date that the first interest rate hike in a decade is approaching, could Britain be heading towards its first sterling crisis in a quarter of a century?

At first glance, there appear to be few parallels between now and 1992, when George Soros famously "broke the Bank of England" and the pound chalked up what was then its biggest one-day loss of the floating exchange rate era.

That dubious record was smashed on June 24, 2016, after Britain voted to leave the European Union, but there has been little talk since of a "sterling crisis", and the weaker pound has been broadly viewed as a welcome safety valve, keeping asset markets attractive to foreign investors while buoying export and cor-

porate earnings without forcing up interest rates.

So what then constitutes a sterling crisis? And does the Bank's sudden hawkish turn to offset the inflationary effects of a weak pound bring Britain closer to one?

There's no agreed definition of a sterling "crisis", but one common element is that persistent sterling selling or weakness forces up interest rates, hits asset markets and potentially hastens recession. In effect, rates are forced higher to defend the pound or to bring imported inflation under control, regardless of the economy's ability to withstand that monetary tightening.

Some might argue that's now happening with a 15-month lag, although no one at the Bank will ever admit that the exchange rate determines policy,

despite it being the main reason the Bank is failing in its sole mandate: controlling inflation.

There have been at least four sterling crises in the last 50 years - 1967, 1976, the mid 1980s and 1992 - where interest rates were jacked up aggressively in ultimately unsuccessful attempts to defend the currency. A doubling of interest rates from a record low 0.25 percent currently to 0.5 percent would only reverse the emergency cut shortly after the Brexit referendum last year. Even another quarter point hike would be laughably minuscule when set against the steep rate increases of crises past.

But it would represent a doubling or trebling of official borrowing costs, greater magnitudes of increase than those four crises past. — Reuters

OECD THINKS EUROZONE WILL GROW AS MUCH AS US THIS YEAR

PARIS: The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development has upgraded its economic growth forecasts for the 19-country eurozone following a run of upbeat news from the single currency bloc. In a forecast update yesterday, the OECD is now predicting eurozone growth this year of 2.1 percent. That's 0.3 percentage point more than its previous prediction in June and means the region will match the expected growth rate of the U.S., which was left unchanged.

And for next year it is forecasting growth of 1.9 percent for the eurozone, 0.1 percentage point more than previously estimated but below the 2.4 percent projection for the US. The big three eurozone economies - Germany, France and Italy - all saw upward revisions. Britain's growth rates were left

unchanged at 1.6 percent this year and 1 percent in 2018. Uncertainty over the country's exit from the European Union will continue to hobble its economy, the OECD said.

Japan's expected growth was also revised higher by 0.2 percentage point for this year and next, to 1.6 percent and 1.2 percent, respectively. Overall, the OECD is sticking with its view of a broad-based global recovery from last year's 3.1 percent rate, with industrial production and trade picking up and a further acceleration in technology spending. Its global growth forecast for this year was left at 3.5 percent for this year, but next year's was revised up by 0.1 percentage point to 3.7 percent.

"The upturn is promising, but there is no room for complacency," said OECD Chief Economist Catherine L. Mann. — AP



NEW YORK: Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (right) answers questions after his keynote speech on Japan's economy and investment-friendly reforms, at the New York Stock Exchange, yesterday. — AP

SAUDI TO CREATE \$2.7BN ENTERTAINMENT FIRM

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund is set to create a \$2.7 billion entertainment investment company, state media said yesterday, as the ultra-conservative kingdom opens up avenues for leisure.

The country seeks to increase domestic spending on entertainment and launch hundreds of recreation centres across the kingdom as part of its Vision 2030 plan to reduce its dependence on oil. "The Public Investment Fund is in the process of developing a new company to act as its investment arm in Saudi Arabia's growing entertainment sector," the Saudi Press Agency said.

"The company, which will have an initial capitalisation of SAR 10 billion, will play an active investment role in various areas of the entertainment sector."

The unnamed company will invest in a variety of projects, including an entertainment complex that will be launched by 2019, SPA said, adding that it aims to create more than 22,000 jobs by 2030.

SPA did not give further details about the projects. Alcohol, cinemas and theatres are currently banned in the kingdom, an absolute monarchy and one of the world's most conservative countries. Vision 2030, an ambitious economic diversification plan unveiled in April 2016, aims to broaden its investment base to make citizens reliant on private sector jobs rather than on government largesse.

The largest Arab economy is suffering from a sharp slide in oil revenues since crude prices plummeted in mid-2014, forcing Riyadh to cut subsidies and delay projects. — AFP

BRITAIN TO PROMISE 20BN EUROS IN BREXIT BILL

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May will promise to pay a Brexit divorce bill of at least 20 billion euros (£18 billion, \$24 billion), the Financial Times newspaper reported yesterday. May's EU adviser Oly Robbins has informed his counterparts in various European capitals of the offer, the newspaper said, citing unnamed officials briefed on the discussions.

The announcement will be formally made by May on Friday, during her highly-anticipated Brexit speech in the Italian city of Florence, the FT said. However, the German government's spokesman Georg Streiter denied that Chancellor Angela Merkel had received any such notification.

"We have not been informed in advance by the British government of any negotiation offer," he told a regular press briefing in Berlin. May's Downing Street office called the report "pure speculation".

Britain is yet to put forward a figure to meet its financial obligations to the European Union when it leaves the bloc, currently set for March 29, 2019.

The lack of agreement on a divorce settlement has proven a major stumbling block in the Brexit talks.

While Brussels has not made public its own figure, EU senior officials have told AFP the preliminary evaluation is between 60 to 100 billion euros.

Britain's net contribution in 2015, the last year for which figures were available, was 10.75 billion euros, according to European Commission and European Parliament documents.

The 20-billion-euro figure points to payments to meet the UK commitment to the EU's seven-year budget, which runs to 2020, and could be paid during a transitioned departure from the bloc. — AFP

ASIA FIRMS' SENTIMENT SLIPS ON GEO-POLITICAL TENSIONS

SURVEY FINDS RETAIL AND LEISURE SECTOR MOST POSITIVE; AUTOS LEAST

MUMBAI: Business confidence among Asian companies fell for the first time in three quarters in July-September as escalating geo-political tensions outweighed an improved performance by most economies in the region, a Thomson Reuters/INSEAD survey showed.

The Thomson Reuters/INSEAD Asian Business Sentiment Index, representing the six-month outlook of 86 firms, slipped to 69 for the September quarter from 74 three months before. The decline was the first drop from a previous quarter since the final quarter of 2016. A reading above 50 indicates a positive outlook. While China, India and South Korea led the fall in sentiment in the third quarter, reflecting regional tensions and sluggish growth, most Southeast Asian economies and Australia put in a stable performance, limiting the downside in the overall index.

"Companies expressed concerns this quarter about trade and diplomatic tensions not only in the region but also in the world," said Antonio Fatas, a Singapore-based economics professor at global business school INSEAD.

"This brought the index down, in a reflection of cautiousness because of the potential risks that could derail the current state of the economy," he said.

South Korea's sub-index fell the steepest among its peers in the survey, dropping to 50 from 75 in the previous quarter. The country has been rattled by North Korea's series of nuclear tests and missile launches, although a war on the Korean peninsula is seen as unlikely.

Trade friction with China has also risen over Seoul's deployment of a US anti-missile system to counter the North Korean threat, as Beijing fears the system's radar can penetrate its territory.

China, upon which much of Asia depends for trade, saw its subindex fall to 63, its lowest since the last quarter of 2015. Its gross domestic product rose 6.9 percent in the second quarter but growth is expected to slow on tighter debt regulations. India fell to 63 from 82 in April-June, a level last seen in the second quarter of 2013. Growth at Asia's third-largest economy slowed to its lowest in three years to 5.7 percent in April-June and is expected to stay muted on a lack of private investment.

Australia's sub-index inched up to 69 from 67 in the June quarter, and Singapore's rose to 64 from 62. Sentiment climbed the most in Indonesia in the September quarter, with a 17 point jump in its sub-index to 100, its highest since the second quarter of 2013, though the survey pool was small with only three firms participating. The sub-index for three other economies - Malaysia, Philippines and Taiwan - remained unchanged over the previous quarter.

Status quo ahead?

The pace at which global central banks tighten their accommodative monetary policies is set to be one of the biggest factors for Asia business sentiment in the quarters ahead.

"More than geo-political tensions, policy normalization by global central banks and firming

up of oil prices are a bigger issue for Asian economies," said Radhika Rao, chief economist at DBS in Singapore.

While Canada has already hiked rates twice in recent months and the Bank of England warned of rate hike possibilities, all eyes are now on the US Federal Reserve's decision on Wednesday where it is likely to take another step towards policy normalization. But a major shift in business sentiment either way is unlikely. "The technology-oriented and commodity exporting countries will do well in Asia but overall I expect a status quo in sentiments going ahead, barring a reversal in oil prices," DBS's Rao said.

The survey showed that while the proportion of respondents with a positive bias fell to 47, the lowest level since the December quarter of 2016, companies which were neutral rose to 45, the highest level since the March quarter of 2016.

Sectors including retail, metals, real estate and technology showed bullish trends while others like autos, construction, healthcare and transport were more subdued. Corporates such as survey respondent Kossan Rubber Industries of Malaysia cited exchange rates and interest rates as the key risks going ahead. While maintaining that it was cautiously positive, given increasing global demand for gloves, Kossan was worried about "escalating production cost due to higher raw material cost, energy, labor and volatile exchange rate". Note: Companies surveyed can change from quarter to quarter. — Reuters

US EXISTING HOME SALES FALL TO 12-MONTH LOW



This Thursday, April 27, 2017, file photo shows a "For Sale" sign posted in front of a home in Charlotte, NC. Yesterday, the National Association of Realtors reported on sales of existing homes in August. — AP

WASHINGTON: US home resales fell to their lowest in a year in August as Hurricane Harvey depressed activity in Houston and a perennial shortage of properties on the market sidelined buyers.

The National Association of Realtors said yesterday existing home sales decreased 1.7 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.35 million units last month. That was the lowest level since August 2016.

July's sales pace was unrevised at 5.44 million units. Economists had forecast sales rising 0.3 percent to a 5.46 million-unit rate.

The NAR said Harvey, which struck Texas in the last week of August, had resulted in sales in Houston declining 25 percent on a year-on-year basis. Stripping out Houston, existing home sales would have been unchanged in August.

Home resales in the South tumbled 5.7 percent last month. Harvey, and a second hurricane, Irma, which slammed Florida early this month could hurt September home resales. Texas and Florida account for more than 18 percent of existing home sales. Sales lost because of delays in closing contracts will be recouped in 2018, the Realtors group said.

US financial markets were little moved by the data as traders awaited the conclusion of the Federal Reserve's two-day policy meeting later yesterday. The US central bank is expect-

ed to announce a plan to start shrinking its \$4.2 trillion portfolio of Treasury bonds and mortgage-backed securities, accumulated as the Fed sought to stimulate the economy following the 2008 financial crisis.

Housing stalling

Even before the hurricanes struck, the housing market had been slowing as supply failed to keep up with strong demand. Sales were up 0.2 percent from August 2016. Home sales have virtually stalled this year amid tight inventories that have resulted in home price increases outpacing wage gains.

Builders have blamed shortages of labor and land for their inability to ramp up construction. They have also complained about higher costs of building materials.

Economists and builders say Harvey and Irma could worsen the housing shortage as scarce labor is pulled toward the rebuilding effort and building materials are bid higher. A report on Tuesday showed housing completions tumbling to a 10-month low in August. At the same time single-family home permits fell to a three-month low. These developments suggest housing inventory will remain troublesome for a while.

The NAR said the number of homes on the market fell 2.1 percent to 1.88 million units in August. Supply was down 6.5 percent from a year ago. Housing inventory has dropped for

27 straight months on a year-on-year basis. As a result, the median house price increased 5.6 percent from a year ago to \$253,500 in August. That was the 66th consecutive month of year-on-year price gains. Annual wage growth has not exceed 2.5 percent.

Pointing to strong demand for houses, existing homes sold in August typically stayed on the market for 30 days. That compared to 36 days a year ago. Demand for housing is being driven by a tight labor market, marked by a 4.4 percent unemployment rate, which is boosting employment opportunities for young Americans. The housing market also remains supported by historically low mortgage rates, with the 30-year fixed mortgage rate averaging 3.78 percent.

High house prices as a result of tight inventories are sidelining first-time homebuyers. In August, first-time buyers accounted for 31 percent of transactions, well below the 40 percent share that economists and Realtors say is needed for a robust housing market.

August's share of first-time homebuyers was the smallest in a year and was down from 33 percent in July. Sales rose 10.8 percent in the volatile Northeast and climbed 2.4 percent in the Midwest. They dropped 4.8 percent in the West, where the price increases and property shortages have been concentrated. — Reuters

EQUITIES FLAT AHEAD OF FED UNVEILING MONETARY HORIZON

LONDON: Europe's stock markets wavered yesterday as investor caution prevailed before the Federal Reserve's latest interest rate call. Frankfurt equities sagged despite a rally for shares in German heavy industry giant ThyssenKrupp, which announced a deal with Indian group Tata to merge their steel operations in Europe.

ThyssenKrupp jumped 3.4 percent to stand at 26.15 euros in Frankfurt afternoon deals following news of the combination to create Europe's second-largest steelmaker after ArcelorMittal, whose stock was up 1.0 percent at euros in Amsterdam.

The main index in London was flat despite data revealing a surprise surge in British retail sales last month, while Paris stocks edged higher. Wall Street equities also temporized at the open of trading, with the Dow flat.

US stocks added modestly to records early yesterday as oil-linked equities gained ahead of a Federal Reserve policy announcement expected to offer clues on the likelihood of a third 2017 rate hike.

Shares of petroleum-linked companies such as ConocoPhillips and Halliburton rose more than one percent on a bump in oil prices as a two-day Fed meeting resumed. While the Fed is not expected to announce a rate hike, analysts will assess the policy statement and Fed Chair Janet Yellen's comments during her news conference for signs the odds of a December rate hike have risen.

The Fed is also expected to announce the start of a gradual process to unwind its bond-buying stimulus program. About 15 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up a hair at 22,373.75.

The broad-based S&P 500 won 0.1 percent to 2,508.57, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index advanced 0.1 percent to 4,644.89. All three major indices finished at records Tuesday.

Retailer Bed Bath & Beyond plummeted 14.8 percent after reporting that second-quarter earnings tumbled 43.7 percent from the year-ago period to \$94.2 million. Comparable store sales fell 2.6 percent. General Mills dived 6.3 percent after reporting first-quarter earnings per share of 71 cents, five cents below analyst expectations.

Adobe Systems lost 4.7 percent after reporting that third-quarter earnings rose 55 percent



In this Feb 9, 2017, file photo, traders work the floor at the New York Stock Exchange. —AP

to \$419.6 million. Ford fell 0.3 percent after announcing it was trimming production at five plants in Mexico and the United States due to low demand for some cars.

Focus was on 1800 GMT when the US Federal Reserve announces the outcome of its latest monetary policy meeting. "The Fed trumps all else, and with hours to go until the next decision, caution reigns supreme," said IG analyst Chris Beauchamp.

"Today's Fed meeting provides us with enough to pore over for weeks to come." Details on balance sheet reduction will be of interest, but crucially the committee will extend its rate outlook in 2020, and this could give us a good sense of the end-point for the interest rate in this current tightening cycle," he added. A third successive record performance on Wall Street, fanned by speculation about Trump's economic agenda, was not enough to induce much buying elsewhere.

Foreign exchange markets saw little movement, although the Mexican peso was down after an earthquake killed more than 200 people. While Fed policymakers are not expected to raise

interest rates, the post-meeting statement and comments from chair Janet Yellen are the main focus as traders hope for a timetable on winding down its crisis-era bond-buying stimulus.

Yesterday's announcement comes amid broader moves by global central banks to tighten monetary policy in the face of rebounding world economic growth, dealers said.

'Money is still cheap'

"We expect steady Fed policy through to the end of the year," Rabobank analyst Jane Foley told AFP. "All central banks would like to regain more ammunition in preparation of the next downturn, so in this context there is a universal desire of central banks to have higher interest rates-but not at any cost clearly." She added: "When the low levels of bond yields is taken into account, money is still very cheap. This factor, combined with good levels of global growth, is a good environment for stocks."

Asian equities earlier moved tentatively after US President Donald Trump threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea if it threatened the US or its allies. — AFP

THYSSENKRUPP-TATA STEEL MERGER MAY SPARK JOBS WAR

BERLIN: German heavy industry giant ThyssenKrupp and Indian group Tata agreed yesterday to merge their steel operations in Europe, sending governments and unions scrambling to ward off job cuts.

Once the deal is finalized in 2018, the two groups aim for efficiency savings of between 400 and 600 million euros (\$480-720 million) per year—and are likely to shed 4,000 jobs in production and administration. The combination would create Europe's second-largest steelmaker after ArcelorMittal, expected to produce around 21 million tons of steel per year for sales of 15 billion euros.

The two sides plan a 50-50 joint venture, named "ThyssenKrupp Tata Steel", as a holding company in the Netherlands with joint management that will employ some 48,000 people across 34 sites.

"We have found a European solution for a European industry," ThyssenKrupp chief executive Heinrich Hiesinger told reporters. He said the planned job cuts would be shared evenly with Tata, with ThyssenKrupp shedding a thousand jobs in production and another thousand in administration.

"This is not a pretty number, and it would not have been any better if we had stayed on our own," Hiesinger said. The merger comes as Europe and the United States have long complained of massive gluts in the world steel market caused by overproduction in China, with Washington launching investigations into the national security implications of Chinese competition.

"The steel industry has faced massive challenges in Europe for many years," ThyssenKrupp, an industrial conglomerate whose products range from lifts to car parts and submarines, said in a statement.

"Steel demand is characterized by a lack of dynamic. There is structural overcapacity in supply and constantly high import pressure," it said, which has led to various stages in the value chain operating well below capacity.

Tata Steel chairman N Chandrasekaran said the partnership agreement was a "momentous occasion" for two firms who "share similar culture and values". The "declaration of intent" signed by both sides must still be approved by competition authorities. Investors welcomed the news,

with ThyssenKrupp shares the top performer on the DAX index of blue-chip German stocks as they added 3.7 percent to trade at 26.19 euros at 1310 GMT.

'Betting everything'

Worker representatives in Germany, where ThyssenKrupp employs some 27,000 people in its steel division, were quick to voice fears over the planned tie-up.

"The board has bet everything on a single card in the face of all the warnings," works council chief Guenter Back told news agency DPA, adding that "significantly more" job cuts would likely follow those announced yesterday. Trade unions at ThyssenKrupp have for months been fearing news of job losses, using the pressure of Germany's general election campaign to enlist support from Berlin.

"There should not be a merger at any cost" between Tata and ThyssenKrupp, Labor Minister Andrea Nahles said of the deal. The jobs tussle is set to intensify at the weekend, as ThyssenKrupp must submit the plan to its supervisory board—where worker representatives hold half the seats—for approval.

"There has to be consensus with worker representatives on important strategic decisions of this kind," said Economy Minister Brigitte Zypries. "That is not yet the case." IG Metall plans a demonstration by "thousands" of workers in the western German city of Bochum on Friday, a spokesman told AFP. Protestors will call for "transparency" in the merger process and "security for jobs, for workplaces, the preservation of the German model of employee participation," union spokesman Mike Schuerg told AFP.

More upbeat than Germany's Gabriel, British Economy Minister Greg Clark hailed an "important step" for the island nation's steel industry. London hopes the deal will secure the future of Tata's 4,000-strong site at Port Talbot in Wales, which sits at the heart of the local economy. "As always, the devil will be in the detail and we are seeking further assurances on jobs, investment and future production" in the UK, said trade union representative Roy Rickhuss, while adding that workers "recognize the industrial logic of such a partnership". — AFP



This file photo taken on May 15, 2017 shows the logo of troubled conglomerate Toshiba at the headquarters in Tokyo. —AFP

TOSHIBA SELLS CHIP UNIT TO BAIN CAPITAL FOR AROUND \$18BN

TOKYO: Toshiba said yesterday it would sell its memory chip business to a group led by US investor Bain Capital, in a deal worth around \$18 billion and seen as crucial to keeping the Japanese conglomerate afloat. The sale to the consortium—which includes US tech giants Apple and Dell as well as South Korean chipmaker SK Hynix—caps a months-long saga that saw heated courtroom battles, rival bids and the near-delisting of one of Japan's best-known firms.

"At the board meeting held today, our company has decided to conclude a contract to transfer stocks of Toshiba Memory to Pangea, a special purpose acquisition company formed by a consortium led by Bain Capital Private Equity," Toshiba said in a Japanese-language statement.

The deal is worth two trillion yen (\$18 billion), Toshiba said, adding that it also planned a reinvestment worth 350.5 billion yen (\$3.1 billion) in Pangea.

Toshiba said it aimed to complete the sale by March. The announcement was a milestone in a protracted effort to sell the lucrative chip unit to revive the group's overall financial health. Last week Toshiba said it had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Bain group as the leading candidate.

But at the time, the Japanese giant had held open the possibility it could still ink a deal with rival bidders Western Digital, Toshiba's US-based chip factory partner, or Taiwan's Hon Hai Precision, better known as Foxconn. Toshiba and Western Digital were embroiled in a heated legal dispute over the sale, with the Japanese firm suing its US partner for trying to block a deal.

Delisting fear

Toshiba is the world's number two chipmaker behind Samsung and the division's products are found in many smartphones and electronic gadgets.

The chip unit accounts for around a quarter of Toshiba's total annual revenue and is the crown jewel in a vast range of businesses ranging from home appliances to nuclear reactors. Toshiba narrowly averted a delisting this year, but it still faces the humiliating prospect of being yanked from Japan's premier stock exchange if the sale does not raise enough money.

Selling the chip division is seen as key to Toshiba's survival, as it battles to recover from multi-billion-dollar losses at its US nuclear operation Westinghouse Electric. The Japanese industrial giant is still recovering from a disastrous earlier acquisition of Westinghouse, which racked up billions of dollars in losses before being placed in bankruptcy protection. Those huge losses came to light as the group was still reeling from revelations that top Toshiba executives had pressured underlings to cover up weak results for years after the 2008 global financial meltdown.

Its most recent results published in August revealed a loss of \$8.8 billion in the last fiscal year, although it predicted it would swing back into the black this year.

The losses are a major embarrassment for a cornerstone of Japan Inc, which traces its history back as far as 1875 when the company started life as a telegraph factory in what is now Tokyo's ritzy Ginza shopping district. —AFP

EU, CANADA LAUNCH FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WHILE BRITAIN EYES OWN DEAL

BRUSSELS: The European Union and Canada will begin cutting import duties from today on thousands of products and services in a reminder to Britain of the work it will take to replace the trade alliances it will give up when it leaves the EU.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will provisionally enter force on Thursday, eight years after negotiations begun. It will be the EU's first major trade deal since it began implementing its South Korea agreement in 2011. The Canada agreement is the EU's first trade pact with a G7 country, marking a success after its credibility took a beating from Britain's 2016 vote to leave the block.

It has since struck a deal with Japan and hopes for further agreements with Mexico and the Mercosur countries of South America by the end of this year. British Conservatives in the European Parliament said yesterday that the EU-Canada deal would bring 1.3 billion pounds (\$1.76 billion) in benefits to Britain and said they hoped CETA's benefits for Britain would continue after Brexit.

"I believe CETA will become the gold standard of agreements and one we

can tailor to suit the priorities of the British and Canadian economies post-Brexit," lawmaker Emma McClarkin said in a statement. British Prime Minister Theresa May said in Ottawa on Monday that she and Canada's Justin Trudeau had agreed that CETA should be "swiftly transitioned" into a new UK-Canada deal after Brexit.

How fast that transition occurs will depend on how much post-Brexit Britain wants to tailor the deal, perhaps by including closer convergence on financial services, rather than largely copying what is in place. CETA will abolish some 98 percent of customs duties, open up public tenders to companies and allow the EU to export more cheese and wine and Canada more pork and beef in quotas that expand over the next six years.

The 1,598-page CETA text is full of negotiated details, including the right of European companies to ship up to 537,000 knitted jerseys to Canada and Canadian companies' ability to send up to 196,000 square metres of carpet to Europe.

Britain and Canada will still have to create their own free trade agreement, which took the Brussels and Ottawa five years to negotiate. —Reuters

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report								
At 02:00 PM Previous Day								
Global Stock Indices								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance	Yearly Performance			
Dow Jones	22,331.35	22,370.80	39.45	▲	0.18	13.20		
NASDAQ	6,454.64	6,461.32	6.68	▲	0.10	20.03		
S&P 500	2,503.87	2,506.65	2.78	▲	0.11	11.96		
Financial Times	7,275.25	7,279.60	4.35	▲	0.06	1.91		
DAX	12,561.79	12,552.82	-8.97	▼	-0.07	9.34		
CAC 40	5,237.44	5,243.79	6.35	▲	0.12	7.85		
Swiss	9,093.20	9,106.50	13.30	▲	0.15	10.79		
Nikkei 225	20,299.38	20,310.46	11.08	▲	0.05	6.26		
Tse	1,667.88	1,667.92	0.04	▲	0.00	9.83		
Hong Seng	28,051.41	28,127.80	76.39	▲	0.27	27.85		
Straits Times	3,225.95	3,218.07	-7.88	▼	-0.24	11.71		
MENA Stock Indices								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance	Yearly Performance			
Kuwait	6,892.80	6,849.11	-43.69	▼	-0.63	16.61		
Saudi Arabia	7,351.55	7,305.94	-45.61	▼	-0.62	1.95		
Dubai	3,655.07	3,632.54	-22.53	▼	-0.62	3.52		
Abu Dhabi	4,464.11	4,455.09	-9.02	▼	-0.20	-1.81		
Bahrain	1,302.60	1,307.95	5.35	▲	0.41	6.73		
Qatar	8,289.23	8,348.05	58.82	▲	0.71	-20.58		
Oman	4,997.53	5,042.28	44.75	▲	0.90	-13.58		
Lebanon	1,149.20	1,149.07	-0.13	▼	-0.01	-5.24		
Jordan	2,139.19	2,131.49	-7.70	▼	-0.36	-1.43		
Egypt	13,730.00	13,721.49	-8.51	▼	-0.06	11.22		
Morocco	12,568.93	12,532.69	-36.24	▼	-0.29	7.63		
Tunisia	6,257.51	6,244.87	-12.64	▼	-0.20	14.01		
Global Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	Kuwait Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwait Dinar		12.3305	3.3020	2.7498	2.4369	3.1712	367.44	4.0993
Saudi Riyal	0.08110		0.2678	0.2230	0.1976	0.2572	29.80	0.3324
US Dollar	0.30285	3.7343		0.8328	0.7380	0.9604	111.28	1.2415
Euro	0.36366	4.4841	1.2008		0.8863	1.1536	133.63	1.4910
Sterling Pound	0.41036	5.0600	1.3550	1.1283		1.3017	150.79	1.6826
Swiss Franc	0.31534	3.8883	1.0412	0.8669	0.7682		115.89	1.2927
Japanese Yen	0.00272	0.0336	0.0090	0.0075	0.0066	0.0086		0.0112
Australian Dollar	0.24395	3.0080	0.8055	0.6707	0.5943	0.7736	89.64	
MENA Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwait Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30285	3.7343	0.3743	3.6270	0.3834	3.6570	17.5800
Kuwait Dinar	3.3020		12.3305	1.2359	11.9762	1.2661	12.0753	58.0485
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08110		0.1002	0.9713	0.1027	0.9793	4.7077
Bahraini Dinar	2.6717	0.80911	9.9768		9.6901	1.0244	9.7702	46.9677
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08350	1.0296	0.1032		0.1057	1.0083	4.8470
Omani Riyal	2.6800	0.78984	9.7392	0.9762	9.4594		9.5376	45.8493
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08281	1.0211	0.1024	0.9918	0.1048		4.8072
Egyptian Pound	0.0569	0.01723	0.2124	0.0213	0.2063	0.0218	0.2080	
Global Interest Rates								
Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year			
Kuwait Dinar	1.25	1.56	1.75	2.00	2.31			
US Dollar	1.19	1.23	1.48	1.48	1.74			
Euro	0.41	0.40	0.37	0.30	0.21			
Sterling Pound	0.23	0.25	0.32	0.47	0.71			
Swiss Franc	0.78	0.78	0.72	0.64	0.50			
Australian Dollar	1.57	1.65	1.61	1.64	1.74			
Japanese Yen	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.00	0.11			
Global Bond Yields								
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year				
United States	1.39	1.82	2.23	2.80				
Europe	-0.70	-0.28	0.43	1.22				
United Kingdom	0.40	0.73	1.32	1.91				
Commodities								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance	Yearly Performance			
Kuwait Oil	53.17	53.19	0.02	▲	0.04	-0.08		
Brent	57.64	58.01	0.37	▲	0.64	5.17		
West Texas	49.59	49.49	-0.10	▼	-0.20	-8.39		
Gold	1311.18	1314.40	3.22	▲	0.25	12.15		
Silver	17.32	17.32	0.00	-	0.00	7.98		



The plant entrance of ThyssenKrupp is pictured yesterday in Duisburg, western Germany. —AFP

GULF AIR GOES DAILY TO ISTANBUL

MANAMA: Gulf Air, the Kingdom of Bahrain's national carrier, will introduce a permanent increase to its Istanbul service with daily flights on the route effective early November 2017. The increase is in direct response to passenger demand, increasing the number of convenient flight options offered by the airline and giving passengers greater flexibility and choice when travelling to and from Istanbul.

Last year Gulf Air celebrated the 30th anniversary of its direct, nonstop service to and from the city of Istanbul in the Republic of Turkey. Launched in 1986, Istanbul is one of the airline's main tourist destinations with growing numbers of passengers from Bahrain and the GCC throughout the year. Gulf Air's Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Captain Waleed Abdul Hameed Al-Alawi, commented on this growth saying: "Gulf Air's Istanbul route performance to date has been promising with consistently strong passenger demand throughout the year. Offering our valued passengers a daily service to and from Istanbul meets their travel needs, further reinforcing the strong historical ties between Bahrain and Turkey and our airline's key role in encouraging two-way travel, trade, tourism and investment opportunities."

Operating double daily flights or more to 10 regional cities, Gulf Air provides excellent connectivity for passengers travelling to/from Istanbul with connections to various cities in the Middle East, Indian Subcontinent and Asia. The airline's network currently serves 42 cities in 25 countries spanning three continents. Gulf Air flights can be booked online at gulfair.com, the airline's one-stop-shop website, where customers can find a suite of addi-

tional online services offering hotel bookings, car rental and travel insurance.

Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, commenced operations in 1950, becoming one of the first commercial airlines established in the Middle East. Today, Gulf Air is a major international carrier serving 42 cities in 25 countries spanning three continents.

The airline operates double daily flights or more to 10 regional cities, in addition to select destinations in the Indian Subcontinent and Europe, from its hub at Bahrain International Airport. Gulf Air currently serves all its destinations with a combination wide and narrow body fleet totalling 28 modern aircraft with orders for 39 new Boeing and Airbus aircraft due for delivery commencing in early 2018. The modern fleet will herald a new era for Gulf Air as it continues to enhance its product and service offering. Renowned for its traditional Arabian hospitality, evidenced by the airline's signature family and business friendly products, Gulf Air is committed to being an industry leader and developing products and services that reflect the evolving needs and aspirations of its passengers.

Gulf Air connects Bahrain to the world and, as such, is a key national infrastructure asset, serving as a powerful driver for the economy and supporting the Kingdom's ongoing economic growth.

Gulf Air has been the Title Sponsor of the FORMULA 1 GULF AIR SAUDI GRAND PRIX ever since it made history as the first Formula 1 Grand Prix to be held in the Middle East in 2004. In addition, the airline has been Official Carrier of the biennial Bahrain International Airshow since it was first held in 2010.



REFORMS COULD LEAD TO A SURGE IN KUWAIT-QATAR BILATERAL TIES

DOHA BANK HOSTS KNOWLEDGE-SHARING EVENT

KUWAIT: Doha Bank hosted a knowledge sharing event on 19th September 2017 at JW Marriot Hotel, Kuwait. The theme of the event was "Qatar - Kuwait bilateral opportunities". The event was well attended by leading Corporates and Bankers in Kuwait who were keen to hear more about Kuwait Qatar bilateral relationships and to explore further business opportunities with Doha Bank.

Dr R Seetharaman, CEO, Doha Bank was the keynote speaker and gave the concept note. He said "According to IMF July 2017 Outlook, economic activity in both advanced economies and emerging and developing economies is forecast to accelerate in 2017, to 2 percent and 4.6 percent respectively, with global growth projected to be 3.5 percent. Current global growth prospects are encouraging, though the pace of growth is still weaker than desirable."

Dr R Seetharaman gave an insight on Kuwait economy. He said "Kuwait's non-oil growth is expected to improve to in 2017 and 2018. Kuwait Banking sector lending growth in was more than 7 percent on YOY basis in 1st Half of 2017 and deposit growth was flat. Government-funded projects will drive economic growth. Domestic interest rates moved up in June 2017 even as the Central Bank of Kuwait opted to keep its key policy rate on hold following the US Fed hike. Though the central bank refrained from hiking the discount rate in June, it did increase the overnight repo rate by 25 basis points, which helped lift interest rates. Qatar - Kuwait bilateral trade was above 2.7bn QR in 2016."

Dr R Seetharaman highlighted on the opportunities in Kuwait. He said "This year Kuwait has

unveiled a new plan to transform the country into a regional financial and cultural hub by 2035. It has organized seven pillars which are areas of focus for investment and improvement. The Kuwait budget deficit 2017-18 is projected to be \$21.6 billion, with revenues estimated at \$43.6 billion and expenditure at \$65.2 billion. Kuwait stocks could get an extra boost from the Kuwait Investment Authority. Initiatives targeted at improving market liquidity and reducing trading costs should help support local and foreign interest in the Kuwaiti capital market. The Kuwait government had issued domestic bonds worth \$7.2 billion and international bonds worth \$8 billion. Kuwait is coming up with infrastructure projects such as Kuwait Metro, Kuwait International Airport expansion & Regional Highway. Kuwait's 2035 vision stresses the importance of developing tourism and its role in supporting Kuwait's economy by creating employment opportunities in the private sector."

Dr R Seetharaman gave insight on the recent reforms brought by Qatar and the potential opportunities therein. He said "Qatar ranked 18th in the Global Competitiveness Report 2016-17" and stands second in the region. A new law for Public Private Partnership (PPP) businesses in Qatar should provide an additional level of comfort to the private sector and foreign investors. In Feb 2017, Qatar issued a new law on arbitration (the "Arbitration Law"), inspired by the UNCITRAL Model Law (the "Model Law"), an international template for law on arbitration. In terms of food security, Qatar now have many local companies that are supporting the country and it can develop

these businesses further and boost its food production to provide both locally and internationally. Qatar Budget 2017 has allocated for key sectors such as health, education and infrastructure QR87.1 billion (\$23.9 billion) which is made up of nearly 44 percent of the total expenditure in the 2017. Transportation and infrastructure projects, which represented a main pillar of enhancing sustainable development, have been allocated QR42 billion. (\$11.51 billion). The accomplishment of the New Orbit Highway will facilitate the world cup infrastructure works as per schedule. Qatar's landmark residency plan is a welcoming social and economic reform. It will attract skilled expats to have a career in Qatar. It will also encourage investors as they would be able to launch business ventures. It will help migrants to further integrate with Qatar's society. On the whole the landmark residency plan will enhance expatriates participation in Qatar's economy and society in various forms and thereby contribute to sustainable growth of Qatar. Qatar has also waived entry visa requirements for citizens of 80 countries."

Doha Bank Management gave a farewell to Ahmed Yousuf Ahmed Al-Mehza, Chief Country Manager, Kuwait Branch and On behalf of Doha Bank Management Dr R Seetharaman thanked him for all the efforts taken for the organization and wished him good luck in all his future endeavors. He also welcomed Loai Fadel Mukamis who will be the new Chief Country Manager of Doha Bank Kuwait Branch.

The vote of thanks was given by Loai Fadel Mukamis, Chief Country Manager of Kuwait.



EXPLORE POPULAR DESTINATION IN INDIA BY AVAILING EXCITING FARES FROM JET AIRWAYS

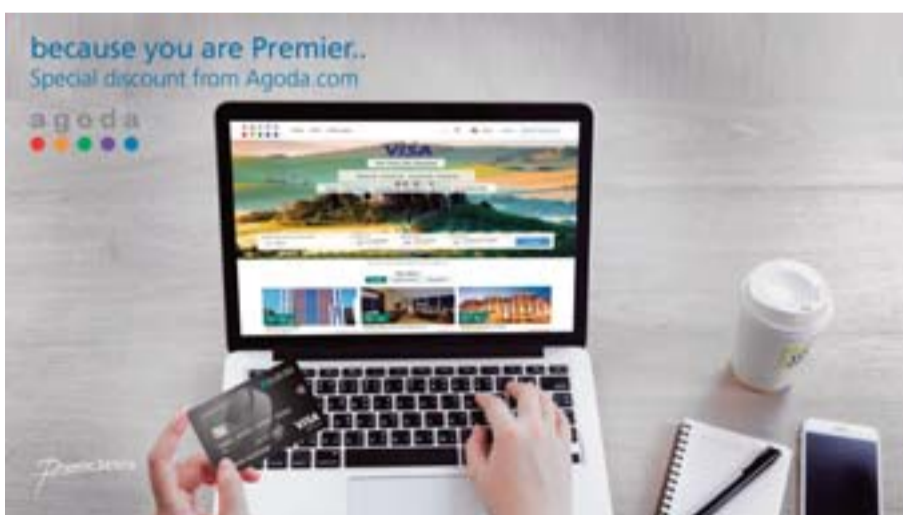
KUWAIT: Jet Airways, India's full-service, premiere international airline, is offering discounted Economy fares on select direct flights from Gulf region to destinations in India such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, Lucknow and Calicut. Guests can use this opportunity to explore exotic destinations in India or plan to visit their family and friends.

Jet Airways will offer guests travelling from Kuwait to Kochi and Hyderabad in India a discount of 20% percent on base fares, applicable on tickets booked on website, mobile app and through travel agents. The airline will offer these special fares for tickets booked by September 28, 2017. Tickets booked as part of the pro-

motion will be valid for travel by September 30, 2017.

The special fares will be applicable on Economy class travel, on direct flights operated by Jet Airways and for both one-way and return journeys. The special fares will be applicable only on direct flights operated by Jet Airways. Guests can book their tickets on www.jetairways.com or use the airline's mobile app.

Shakir Kantawala, Vice President - Gulf, Middle East & Africa, Jet Airways, said, "Jet Airways constantly finding means of providing our guests moments of joy through our 'Guest First' policy. This fare sale will provide our guests an opportunity to explore destinations in India or visit their families."



BURGAN BANK ENCOURAGES ITS PREMIER CUSTOMERS TO BENEFIT FROM AGODA.COM OFFER

KUWAIT: Ensuring a consistent approach to satisfying its customers' needs, Burgan Bank is pleased to announce that its premier customers are now entitled to up to 12 percent discount when booking on Agoda.com. Recognizing its customers' enhanced interest in overseas travel, Kuwait's most dynamic bank brings additional privileges under its premier banking services.

Further integrating luxury provisions for its discerning clientele, Burgan Bank's premier customers can enjoy discounted deals on hotels, as Agoda.com owns a wide network of more than 985,000 hotels worldwide and is home to a popular selection of resorts and unique homes, making it the ideal platform for avid travelers.

Established in 1977, Burgan 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. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan 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 WISHES EVERYONE IN KUWAIT A HAPPY ISLAMIC NEW YEAR

KUWAIT: ABK announced that during the Islamic New Year holiday, its Branches and the Head Office will be closed today (September 21, 2017). The Bank will resume its regular working hours on Sunday 24th September 2017.

ABK's online services and Call Center will be available 24 hours a day during the holiday and can be reached by contacting a customer

service agent via 'Ahlani Ahl'. On the occasion of the Islamic New Year, ABK's Board Members, Management & Staff, would like to extend its warmest wishes to the Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to the Kuwaiti government and its people.

FOR ECB TAPER CLUES, EUROZONE BOND MARKETS LOOK TO THE FED

LONDON: Eurozone government bond yields nudged down yesterday as investors awaited the conclusion of a US Federal Reserve meeting for clues on whether another interest rate rise is likely this year.

Caught between a lull in US inflation and a stronger global economy, the Fed is expected to signal whether it will raise rates for a third time this year or back off until prices rise more briskly.

What it says is important for the outlook for monetary policy in the euro zone, since any statement that points to another rate hike this year could lift the dollar against the euro.

And any weakening in the single currency, up around 14 percent against the dollar this year, could encourage the European Central Bank to press ahead with plans to unwind its hefty stimulus scheme.

A strong euro, with its dampening effect on inflation, has clouded the outlook for ECB tapering.

ECB policymakers are divided on whether to set a definitive end-date for their stimulus scheme when they meet in October, raising the chance that they will keep open at least the option of prolonging it again, Reuters reported on Tuesday. "The euro is still strong so that doesn't make life easier for the ECB," said Commerzbank rates strategist Rainer Guntermann. "If we move closer to a US rate hike, that should come along with a bit more dollar strength

and euro weakness which would harden the ECB's exit case and be a headwind for government bonds."

Most euro zone bond yields fell around 1-2 basis points on the day.

Portugal's 10-year bond yield hit its lowest level since December 2015 at 2.387 percent, extending sharp falls seen after the country's return to investment grade with a major ratings agency.

German bond yields dipped after a 30-year bond auction. Germany's 10-year Bund yield was down 1.5 bps to 0.44 percent, while 30-year yields fell 2 bps to 1.23 percent.

Still, the main focus remained the Fed. Expectations for a December Fed rate hike have gained ground over the past week, boosted by stronger-than-expected inflation numbers. The Fed's policy statement is due out at 1800 GMT. Fed Chair Janet Yellen will hold a press conference half an hour later.

"We think that another rate hike by the end of this year still has a 40 percent chance, however the upcoming economic data is going to keep traders on their toes due to the massive footprints of hurricanes," said Naeem Aslam, chief market analyst at ThinkMarkets UK. The Fed is also likely to announce a scheduled reduction of its approximately \$4.2 trillion in holdings of bonds and mortgage-backed securities. — Reuters

SAMSUNG Galaxy Note8

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OOREDOO LAUNCHES THE NEW NOTE8 WITH SHAMEL

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, announced yesterday that the all-new Galaxy Note 8 is available in 3 colours (midnight black, orchid grey and maple gold) in all its stores across Kuwait. The device is available with the all-inclusive post-paid Shamel plans, which include a variety of benefits like unlimited minutes, internet sharing, and internet carryover. Customers can enjoy surfing the web using Ooredoo's blazing-fast 4G+ internet.

keeps your personal and professional data separate.

Powerful Performance

With 6 GB RAM, a 10nm processor, and expandable memory (up to 256 GB), you have the power you need to browse, stream, play games, and multitask.

Innovative Mobile Experiences

Samsung DeX enables a desktop experience powered by your phone. You can keep your files on your device, conduct work on the go, and use Samsung DeX when you need an even bigger screen. The Note 8 is Samsung's first smartphone to come with a dual camera lens and includes Bixby (cutting edge artificial intelligence to respond to voice commands), a smarter way to use your phone; it learns from you, improves over time, and helps you get more done.

Water and Dust Resistance

You can take your Note8 almost anywhere you want and write even when the display is wet due to its water and dust resistance feature on both the device and the S Pen.

Fast Wireless Charging

The Galaxy Note8 supports the most advanced wireless charging capabilities yet, so you can get a quick charge without having to deal with the mess of ports or wires.

Security

The Galaxy Note8 offers a choice of biometric authentication options-including iris and fingerprint scanning. Samsung Knox7 provides defense-grade security at the hardware and software layers and with Secure Folder that

Available with Shamel

The device is available exclusively with the Shamel 30 plan, which includes unlimited local minutes, 500 GB LTE internet and taking unused internet to the next month.

AS APPLE SLOWS, FAST-MOVING CHINESE RIVALS GAIN

HONG KONG/SINGAPORE: Slowing innovation at iPhone maker Apple gives Asian rivals their best chance yet to conquer developed markets, retailers and consumers say - thanks to better designs and lower prices. Apple last week unveiled new iPhones with wireless charging, an edge-to-edge screen and dual cameras - all features already widely available in phones from China's Huawei and Oppo, and Samsung Electronics.

While Apple must convince buyers to fork out nearly \$1,000 for its high-end model, challengers are tilting at the luxury market, offering similar features for less money.

Chinese vendors, formerly seen as churning out cheap phones with copycat innovation, have upped their quality game and now control nearly half the global mobile market. By cramming high-end features into affordable devices, and using a canny mix of promotion, advertising and retail reach, they have also won over some loyal Apple users.

"Huawei is seen as a relevant competitor to Apple and Samsung (by) covering all major price points and placing big investments in marketing and sales," said a spokeswoman for MediaMarktSaturn, Europe's biggest electronics retailer. She said Huawei, ZTE,

Lenovo and TCL all Chinese firms - were among the top-10 best-selling smartphones in its stores.

Chinese manufacturers' rapid growth has been fuelled by strong domestic sales, but they now export 40 percent of their smartphones, almost double the number just three years ago, according to CLSA. Huawei, whose smartphone shipments to Europe jumped more than 50 percent in the first half of this year, is poised to overtake Apple as the world's second-largest vendor.

The Chinese firm's confidence was on show in a short Facebook video ad ahead of its "RealAlphone" launch next month, using a clown to poke fun at Apple's facial recognition feature that unlocks the new iPhone.

Huawei plans to unveil its top-of-the-line Mate 10 phone on Oct. 16, with artificial intelligence-powered features such as instant translation and image recognition. And media reports speculate the phone will have an edge-to-edge screen, and undercut the iPhone on price. Huawei declined to comment. With their growing scale and the flattening of hardware improvements, other Chinese firms are also looking to crack the high-end smartphone market.

Xiaomi, for example, unveiled a full-screen phone

this month that features a sleek, all-ceramic 'unibody' design and 12-megapixel front camera. The special edition Mi MIX 2 retails for \$720. Also, Xiaomi, Oppo and Vivo are working with Qualcomm to embed ultrasound sensors under smartphone screens to improve the touch function.

"Chinese brands with growing scale, access to the same supply chain, rising components buying power, aggressive marketing and value-for-money offerings have stalled Apple's growth rate and nullified the differentiation points," said Neil Shah, research director at Counterpoint. Apple declined to comment beyond what their executives have said publicly about why they hold off on certain technologies.

Still a big gap

To be sure, Apple maintains a healthy market share lead over Chinese rivals in the premium segment, and few experts see Apple fans switching from the iPhone X to Huawei's Mate 10. "The biggest challenge they (Chinese firms) face would be proving to consumers their products and brand are worth paying that much for," said Xiaohan Tay, an analyst at research firm IDC.

"Apple has taken years to build that premium

brand image, and Samsung too. If they can pay a little more to purchase an Apple or Samsung phone, most consumers may still continue to do that."

In the \$600-plus segment, Apple has 63 percent market share, against just 3 percent for Huawei, and the US firm's retention rate of around 82 percent, versus Huawei's 52 percent, suggests it will be tough for Chinese firms to raise their prices, according to UBS. The average selling price of smartphones from the top-3 Chinese makers - Huawei, Oppo and Vivo - is just \$248, or two-thirds less than the cheapest iPhone 8. Yet experts say the threat of competition is real, especially as buyers pay more attention to smartphone apps than hardware features. "How much impact would a \$1,000 iPhone really have on UX (user experience) of WhatsApp, or YouTube, or Snapchat?" said Sameer Singh, founder of research firm Tech-Thoughts.

"The most popular apps being available on both platforms (Apple's iOS and Google's Android) really makes the experience a bit of a wash, making it harder to justify the price point based just on features. This isn't all that different from the PC industry 10-20 years ago. At one point, a PC was a PC irrespective of the manufacturer." — Reuters



DALLAS: A customer walks into a Toys R Us store in Dallas on Tuesday. Toys R Us has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection while continuing with normal business operations. — AP

TOYS R US JOINS BANKRUPTCY LIST AS AMAZON EXERTS CLOUT

NEW YORK: In filing for bankruptcy, Toys R Us joins a list of dozens of store chains that have done so already this year as online leader Amazon increasingly exerts its influence over a huge part of the retailing world. The toy chain, hobbled by \$5 billion in debt and more intense competition, filed for protection from its creditors ahead of the key holiday season. Like so many retailers that find it harder to co-exist with Amazon, analysts say Toys R Us needs to improve its online services and offering special experiences in the stores.

For Toys R Us, that might be game demonstrations or hosting birthday parties. It says it'll keep its 1,600 Toys R Us and Babies R Us stores open, and keep serving customers while in bankruptcy. Still, the chain faces hurdles - price is a big issue for shoppers, and Toys R Us acknowledges that it can't compete there.

"We will go to Toys R Us to check out the current toys, and while we are at the store, we will be looking up prices on the phone on Walmart.com and Amazon," said Randy Watson of Fort Worth, Texas.

He used to pick up items at Toys R Us for his kids. But for his grandchildren, he uses the store to see what's available and then shops elsewhere to get lower prices.

The bankruptcies of nearly three dozen retailers since the beginning of the year - many of them very small companies, but also well-known names like Payless Shoe Source, Gymboree Corp. and True Religion jeans - has resulted in job losses and store closings. Toys R Us didn't say if it would trim its workforce of nearly 65,000 employees worldwide.

Credit Suisse believes that there could be 8,640 store closings this year, which would surpass the 2008 peak of 6,200. In 2008, the number of bankruptcies was at a historic high of 569, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence. Amazon, meanwhile, has been using its \$99-a-year-Prime Membership as a way to gain fierce shopper loyalty as it adds more perks like same-day delivery Amazon Now for a growing number of markets. It's also making partnerships with brands like Sears and Kohl's, and now has hundreds of Whole Foods stores that it could use as distribution points. "Amazon has the level of convenience that so far surpasses the ability of traditional retailers can offer," said Karl Havard, a retail industry expert for PA Consulting Group, a global retail consultancy. "There's a lot of inertia in the retail boardroom. They're not prepared to take the risk."

Toys R Us was a major force in toy retailing in the 1980s and early 1990s, and was one of the first of the "category killers" - retailers that focused on one merchandising category and offered low prices. That combination hurt mom-and-pop shops that couldn't compete on breadth of inventory or price.

But like its peers, the now-defunct Sports Authority, Borders and Circuit City, Toys R Us started losing shoppers to discounters like

Walmart and Target, and then to Amazon.

GlobalData Retail estimates that about 13.7 percent of toy sales were made online in 2016, up from 6.5 percent five years ago. And Toys R Us has also been hurt by children shifting to mobile devices as playthings. But the toy industry still needs Toys R Us, says Jim Silver, editor-in-chief of the toy review website TTPM. He cites the fact that it sells toys all year, rather than just at the holidays, and has helped launch toy crazes such as ZhuZhu Pets during the downturn.

"If toy companies lost Toys R Us, it would be a hardship for a lot of companies," said Silver. Toys R Us has also struggled with debt since private-equity firms Bain Capital, KKR & Co. and Vornado Realty Trust took it private in a \$6.6 billion leveraged buyout in 2005. The plan had been to take the company public, but that never happened because of its weak financial performance. With such debt levels, Toys R Us has not had the financial flexibility to invest in its business. Marc Rosenberg, a toy marketing executive, said it hasn't been aggressive about building its online business, and let those sales migrate to rivals.

Toys R Us said the bankruptcy proceedings are a way for it to work with its creditors on restructuring its debt and will give it greater financial flexibility. The company said it's "well-stocked as we prepare for the holiday season and are excited about all of our upcoming in-store events."

What shoppers find on the shelves might be a question. Lawyers for Toys R Us said in court Tuesday that within a week of a news story about the possibility of bankruptcy, nearly 40 percent of the company's suppliers refused to ship products without cash on delivery. That accelerated the bankruptcy filing. Jefferies analyst Stephanie Wissink said she expects that Toys R Us suppliers will continue to shift some orders to other retailers. For most multinational toy suppliers, the Toys R Us business roughly accounted for 10 percent of total sales, she said.

The issue isn't that people aren't buying toys. US toy sales rose 6 percent last year on top of a 7 percent increase in the prior year, says NPDI Group Inc, a market research firm. That was the biggest increase since 1999 and was fueled by several blockbuster movies.

But for the first half of 2017, sales rose 3 percent. That puts more pressure on the latter part of the year, when most toy sales occur, for the industry to meet NPDI's estimate for a 4.5 percent annual increase. Lego is laying off 1,400 workers after saying profits and sales dropped in the first half. And the nation's two largest toy makers, Mattel and Hasbro, reported disappointing second-quarter results.

Toys R Us, based in Wayne, New Jersey, made its filing in the US Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, and said its Canadian subsidiary would seek similar protection through a court in Ontario. — AP

APPLE WATCH GOES SOLO, BUT DON'T DUMP YOUR PHONE YET

YOU'RE STILL MISSING CALLS, MESSAGES WITHOUT PHONE NEARBY

SANTA CLARA, California: A chief gripe with Apple Watch is that it requires you to keep an iPhone with you for most tasks. The inclusion of GPS last year helped on runs and bike rides, but you're still missing calls and messages without the phone nearby.

A new model with its own cellular-network connection is Apple's next step toward an untethered world. Now you can make and receive calls and messages on the watch while leaving your phone at home. But the watch still needs regular contact with an iPhone, and for most tasks, the phone needs to be on and connected, even if it's nowhere nearby. So you can't get away with ditching the iPhone altogether. (Android users have their own wristwear options, including Samsung Gear and Android Wear watches, some of which can already manage their own network connections.)

The new Apple Watch Series 3, distinguished by a red crown, comes out Friday starting at about \$400. You can forgo cellular, and the red crown, for \$70 less. Or get a first-generation model, without GPS, for about \$250.

Where it helps

You might not want to bring your phone on a short jog; the watch can still keep you in touch. Or you can leave the phone home while walking the dog or performing a quick errand. You need a data add-on from the same wireless provider as your phone. It typically costs \$5 or \$10 a month and uses the phone's data allotment.

While the watch technically has its own phone number, the major carriers have worked out number syncing. Calls to your phone will go to the watch, and calls from the watch will appear on caller ID with your regular number. Same goes for texts and iMessage chats. Calls use the watch's speaker and microphone, or wireless earphones.

Colleagues say call quality was fine. It came in handy for sneaking in runs during conference calls (though if you're my boss, just kidding! Now, about that raise...)

Phone calls and iMessage chats work on the watch even if your phone is off, as do turn-by-turn maps and queries to the Siri voice assistant. For texts, the phone needs to be on - somewhere. With the phone on, you can perform a variety of other tasks, including checking weather



In this Sept 15, 2017, photo, the non-cellular version of the Apple Watch Series 3 is displayed in New York. The new watch comes out tomorrow. — AP

er apps, Yelp recommendations and notifications that go to the phone. Coming soon: the ability to stream Apple Music, even with the phone off. Unfortunately, this doesn't apply to rival music services or Apple's podcast app.

Limitations

Because the watch screen is small, many apps offer only a sliver of information and refer you back to the phone to view more. That was little more than an annoyance when the phone was in the same room. If you've left the phone behind, though, you'll be left hanging.

You can also run into trouble while roaming, particularly internationally. For one thing, engineers weren't able to squeeze in support for cellular frequencies around the world. And outside the US, only a handful of carriers are supporting the cellular watch. In any case, don't forget to switch to airplane mode on flights. Cellular data also drains the battery quicker. Apple's promised 18 hours of battery life includes about four hours of such use. An hour of phone calls over LTE will drain the battery completely.

I got dropped from two conference calls because the battery was low to begin with. Plan

ahead. A spare watch charger at your desk helps for those days you're dumb enough to leave your phone on the kitchen counter. It can be handy to untether the watch at times, but it's not always necessary. Even when tied to the phone, Series 3 offers improvement such as tracking elevation, so you get credit for climbing stairs or jogging up a hill. And you can now hear Siri responses on the watch speaker, something enabled by the new version's faster processor.

For owners of past models, a software update out this week, watchOS 4, will bring easier access to music playback controls when exercising - just swipe left. There are more prompts when reaching or nearing daily goals, and options for multiple sports in a single workout. A new heart rate app now shows heart rate at rest and averages when walking or recovering from exercise. These can help you gauge your overall fitness. And if your heart rate is high without any signs of exercise, you'll get an alert. You enable this when you first open the heart rate app. It can signal health problems, though Apple is stopping short of telling you to see a doctor or visit the emergency room, as the watch isn't marketed - or certified - as a medical device. — AP

CHINA RISES AT FRANKFURT CAR SHOW

FRANKFURT: Traditional heavyweights Fiat, Peugeot and Volvo may have shunned this year's Frankfurt auto show (IAA), but for Chinese and Taiwanese carmakers looking to make inroads in Europe the chance to step into the limelight was not to be missed. Two years after becoming a surprise hit at the last IAA with an electric sedan concept car to rival Tesla's Model S, Taiwanese upstart Thunder Power was back at Europe's top industry showcase, which runs until September 24.

But this time there was no mistaking its ambitions. Positioning itself a stone's throw away from luxury brands Maserati and Ferrari, Thunder Power unveiled a second prototype, a high-end electric SUV with which it hopes to capture a slice of the booming 4x4 market. "I'm not interested in gasoline cars. I want to build an electric car that is the best in the world," said chief executive Wellen Sham. The sedan is set for mass production in 2019, followed by the SUV a year later, he told AFP, adding that the firm already had a factory in China and planned to set up one in Spain.

Starting with Germany and Britain, Thunder Power eventually aims to sell 40,000 units a year in Europe, he said.

European litmus test

On the other side of the mammoth Frankfurt convention centre, fairgoers marvelled at the renaissance of storied German brand Borgward, which went under 50 years ago but was brought back to life in 2015 with the help of Chinese truck maker Beiqi Foton. "We are coming to Europe this year," said chief executive Ulrich Walker, adding that its limited-edition BX7 SUV, priced at around 45,000 euros (\$53,000), will go on sale in Germany first before other models are launched across the continent.

Tapping into nostalgia for the brand's heyday, Borgward also unveiled a sporty Isabella concept car inspired by a legendary 1950s coupe of the same name. The reborn German-Chinese manufacturer, which is already producing cars in China, plans to increase its European footprint by building an assembly plant in Borgward's original hometown of Bremen in northern Germany next year. The plant will manufacture electric vehicles for European consumers, with production slated for 2019.

"Like the Japanese and South Koreans in the

past, Chinese manufacturers want to show they can be successful in Europe, it's a mark of quality, a test before expanding to other markets outside Europe," said Walker. Two other Chinese manufacturers, high-end WEY and the mass-market Chery, made their IAA debuts this year. WEY, the newly created luxury label of Chinese carmaker Great Wall, showcased a range of compact 4x4s offering both petrol and hybrid drivetrains.

It also wowed with its XEV concept, a sleek crossover with futuristic-looking gullwing doors, but did not make any announcements about when it might land in Europe. Chery showed off the Exeed Tx, an urban crossover designed for European tastes that it says will be made available with hybrid, plug-in hybrid and fully electric drivetrains. "We have the firm intention to come to Europe, but it's too early to disclose the details," Chery CEO Anning Chen said, hinting only that "this product isn't going to be the cheapest car on the market."

Chinese carmakers' more visible presence at this year's IAA is not just for European consumption, said industry expert Laurent Petizon at consultancy AlixPartners. Showing that they appeal to an international audience is also a way for the brands to increase their cachet back home in the world's largest car market, he told AFP, pointing out that those jostling for attention at the IAA were not China's biggest players. "The goal is not to invade the European market, at least not for now," he said.

But analyst Ferdinand Dudenhoeffer of Germany's CAR research center noted that Chinese manufacturers had worked hard in recent years to improve their chances of gaining a foothold in Europe's competitive and mature car market.

"The design and quality are now at the level of those seen in general European manufacturers like Renault, Opel, Volkswagen," he told AFP, calling the Chinese focus on offering electrified SUVs "a good strategy". Chery boss Chen for his part said he was "confident" of a European breakthrough. — AFP



DETROIT: This file photo taken on January 08, 2017 shows John Krafcik, CEO of Waymo at a press conference at the 2017 North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Michigan. Intel announced its computing tech is being loaded into Waymo self-driving minivans. — AFP

SELF-DRIVING UBER FLEET RETURNS TO SERVICE

PITTSBURGH: Uber has resumed self-driving vehicle service in Pittsburgh following a crash.

The company briefly suspended their self-driving fleet yesterday morning. Police say a car collided with a self-driving Uber SUV.

Two Uber employees who were in the SUV at the time of the crash and the driver of the car were not injured. According to police spokeswoman

Sonya Toler, the Uber driver was in control of the vehicle at the time of the crash. Uber says their self-driving vehicles returned to service late Tuesday morning following an investigation.

The San Francisco-based company had previously suspended its nationwide self-driving fleet for two days in March after a crash in Arizona. Police determined the Uber vehicle was not at fault in the crash. — AP

TEENS RISK SUICIDE, DRUGS, AIDS DUE TO GENDER 'STRAITJACKET'

NEW YORK: Gender stereotypes put girls as young as 10 at risk of HIV/AIDS and depression, and lead boys to abuse drugs and commit suicide, a major study across 15 countries said yesterday. Children around the world - in liberal and conservative cultures - internalize damaging beliefs that boys are aggressive troublemakers, while vulnerable girls need protection, at a much younger age than previously thought, the research found.

"Before this study, there was a general belief that at 10 or 11 years of age, (adolescents) were not clued into any issues around gender norms and values," Robert Blum, director of the Johns Hopkins

Urban Health Institute, said. "Young adolescents do not live in the world of childhood... they live in a transitional era where they're acutely aware of what's going on," he said.

The US-based university and the World Health Organization interviewed about 450 adolescents over four years in countries ranging from the United States and Belgium to Malawi and India. "There are tremendous commonalities in young people in as diverse places as Beijing and Kinshasa," said Blum. Pre-teens know where to get a backstreet abortion in countries where it is illegal and understand that certain friendships are no longer acceptable after

puberty, he said. The gender "straitjacket" is especially harmful for girls. Constant emphasis on their physical appearance and perceptions of vulnerability make girls subservient and can sanction abuse as punishment for violating gender norms, the landmark study found. This leaves girls at a greater risk of physical and sexual violence, child marriage, early pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, it said. For boys, an emphasis on physical strength and independence at an early age makes them more likely to abuse drugs and get involved in violence.

Damaging expectations become entrenched between the ages of 10 and 14, rather than in mid-

teens, which means adolescent mental and sexual health programs need to start younger, Blum said. "If we start intervention at the age of 15, we may be too late," he said. "These gender norms become solidified in early adolescence, they're exposed to them since they were born." In countries such as the United States, India, Belgium and China, it is increasingly acceptable for girls to defy gender stereotypes but not for boys, who get bullied and beaten up for appearing feminine, it said. Recent shifts in gender roles in the United States and northern Europe show that cultures can change, Blum said. — Reuters



WASHINGTON: US Sen Dean Heller (R-NV) (2nd left) and Sen Lindsey Graham (R-SC) (left) listen during a news conference on health care at Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. Senators Graham, Cassidy, Heller and Johnson unveiled a proposed legislation to repeal and replace the Obamacare. — AFP

WINNERS AND LOSERS IN GOP'S LAST-DITCH HEALTH OVERHAUL

LATEST BILL LIKELY TO LEAVE MORE PEOPLE UNINSURED

WASHINGTON: The GOP's last-ditch effort to repeal "Obamacare" would redistribute hundreds of billions of dollars in federal financing for insurance coverage, creating winners and losers among individual Americans and states in ways not yet fully clear. Independent analysts say the latest Senate Republican bill is likely to leave more people uninsured than the Affordable Care Act, and allow states to make changes that raise costs for people with health problems or pre-existing medical conditions.

After closed-door meetings Tuesday, supporters seemed confident but acknowledged they're not sure if the bill can pass. There's only a narrow window for the Senate to act under special budget rules that expire at the end of the month. The Congressional Budget Office has said it doesn't have time to complete a full analysis of the impact on coverage before the deadline.

The biggest changes would start in 2020 - the next presidential election year. That's a political risk for Republicans, since health care changes often involve unforeseen problems. A key feature of the legislation from Sens Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana would put the ACA's financing for subsidized private health insurance and Medicaid expansion into a giant pot and redistribute it among states according to new formulas.

States could obtain federal waivers allowing them to modify insurance market safeguards for consumers. For example, states could let insurers charge higher premiums for older adults. The 31 states that expanded Medicaid are likely to see a

funding reduction over time, as well as states, like Florida, where many residents received subsidies for private health insurance, said Larry Levitt of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation.

"Every state has to start from scratch creating its own health insurance program, in some cases with reduced federal funding and in some cases with increased federal funding," Levitt said. "I don't think at this point anybody knows what states are going to do." Following the framework of previous Republican bills, the new legislation would also limit overall federal financing for Medicaid, which serves more than 70 million low-income people. That feature affects the entire program, not just former President Barack Obama's expansion to cover more low-income adults. It would change the current open-ended nature of Medicaid financing, a move that prompts deep concern from hospitals, doctors, nursing homes, consumer groups, and some state officials. "The bottom line is most states will experience a reduction in federal funding under the bill," said Caroline Pearson of the consulting firm Avalere Health. "States that expanded Medicaid are likely to see some of the biggest cuts."

Graham says his bill will allow states to take the initiative on health care, designing programs that work best under local conditions. "I believe that most Republicans like the idea of state control of health care rather than Washington, DC, control," he said. "We've come upon an idea that is uniquely Republican." But Sen Susan Collins, R-Maine, sees problems. "It seems that it has many of the same flaws as the bill that we rejected pre-

viously," said Collins, one of three GOP senators whose opposition derailed the last Republican legislation. Here's a look at some winners and losers under the bill:

Winners - People who don't believe the government should require individuals to purchase a costly private service like health insurance. The bill would repeal "Obamacare's" unpopular requirements for individuals to have coverage and for larger employers to offer coverage. The trade-off is that without such a legal requirement, more people are likely to be uninsured. And an accident or unexpected illness can make that a costly decision. **Losers** - People with health problems or with pre-existing medical conditions could be charged more if the state they live in obtains a waiver from current requirements that forbid insurers from charging higher premiums based on health status. States could also seek waivers from the current requirement that insurers cover 10 basic kinds of services, such as maternity and childbirth, or mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Winners - Medical device manufacturers. The bill would repeal an ACA tax on the industry. But it would leave in place Obama's tax increases on upper-income individuals, a feature that may cause problems among some conservatives.

Losers - States that expanded Medicaid, including 17 with Republican governors. The more generous federal match for the expansion would be phased out, and some of the money would be redistributed to states that did not expand their programs. — AP

'VERBAL AUTOPSIES' SHOW INDIA AVERTED A MILLION CHILD DEATHS

LONDON: India has avoided the deaths of about one million children under the age of five since 2005, largely due to a decrease in cases of preventable diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhoea, tetanus and measles, a study published on Tuesday found. The study took a novel approach carrying out "verbal autopsies" as census staff knocked on more than 1.3 million doors to speak to households about infant mortality, in a country where many deaths occur at home and without medical attention. "It's huge progress," said Prabhat Jha, lead investigator of the survey. "The most important thing that India has done is actually count the deaths."

Jha told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that the approach, which included using local languages and listening to parents tell unvarnished stories of their children's deaths, was simple and cheap and could be replicated elsewhere. "India has got a simple way of counting the dead and describing causes that many countries could adopt at low cost, this isn't hard stuff, it just needs a bit of money and some political commitment," he said. The research published in The Lancet, a medical journal, is part of a wider Million Death Study taking place across India and is one

of the largest studies of premature deaths in the world.

The study found that mortality rates from vaccine-preventable diseases such as tetanus and measles fell by about 90 percent since 2005 while neonatal infection and birth trauma fell by more than 66 percent. For children aged one to 59 months, mortality rates from pneumonia and diarrhoea also fell by more than 60 percent, according to the research.

Improved female literacy rates, schemes paying women to deliver babies in hospitals and an increase in spending on public health by the Indian government have all contributed to the falling death rates.

"It is clear that there is good progress in some states in India - but this is not shared across all communities," said Vishal Chowla of Save the Children in India. "Access to healthcare remains unequal, and very low public spending means that the poor are often left to fend for themselves." Worldwide, more than six million children die before their fifth birthday each year, according to the United Nations, with children born into poverty almost twice as likely to die before the age of five as those from wealthier families. — Reuters

HEPATITIS A OUTBREAK SEEN IN LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES: Public health authorities have declared an outbreak of the highly contagious liver disease hepatitis A in Los Angeles County, the third California region to see significant infections this year. Health officials reported the outbreak to the county Board of Supervisors, which requested a briefing due to the proximity of LA to San Diego, which has had more than 420 cases and 16 deaths since early this year.

The Los Angeles County outbreak was declared because two of 10 confirmed cases could not be traced back to either San Diego or to Santa Cruz County, some 300 miles to the north, where there have been 69 hepatitis A cases since April, the Department of Public Health said. The two apparently locally acquired infections were the most recent. "We've met the definition for an outbreak," department Director Barbara Ferrer told the board. "As of this morning we've confirmed that we have two community acquired cases." Of the other cases, four had been in San Diego and one had been in Santa Cruz during their exposure period.

Three secondary cases occurred in a health care facility in Los Angeles County. Most of those infected in the outbreaks have been homeless or using illicit drugs.

Several people who provide services to the homeless have also been infected. Los Angeles County Interim Health Officer Dr Jeffrey Gunzenhauser said vaccination is the best protection against hepatitis A and outreach teams and clinics are offering free vaccine to the homeless, active drug users and people who work with those groups. The homeless are considered at high risk for infection because of poor sanitation. The latest annual tally found nearly 59,000 homeless people in the nation's most populous county. Hepatitis A spreads when someone comes in contact with an infected person's feces, sometimes when hands are not properly washed after going to the bathroom or changing diapers and the virus is then spread through food or objects.

It can also be spread through sex or by sharing drug paraphernalia. Health officials say the incubation period ranges from 15 to 50 days, and symptoms include fever, malaise, dark urine, anorexia, nausea and abdominal discomfort, followed by jaundice. In addition to vaccination and thorough hand washing, medical experts say people should avoid sex with anyone who has hepatitis A, and not share food, drinks, cigarettes, towels, toothbrushes or eating utensils. — AP

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PEPPER STEAKHOUSE OFFERS FAMED SMOKED HOUSE SPECIALS AT JUMEIRAH MESSILAH BEACH HOTEL AND SPA

AWARD-WINNING RESTAURANT DELIGHTS GUESTS WITH ITS SPECIALTY THIS MONTH

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, Kuwait's idyllic resort, is introducing a variety of new culinary surprises in September, one of them is the Smoked House Specials served at the resort's award-winning Steakhouse, Pepper.

The luxurious restaurant with its signature vibrant atmosphere continues to offer its diners their favorite premium meat cuts, this time with a special menu devoted to wood-smoked treats. Guests will discover a choice of Mesquite Smoked Angus Brisket with candied sweet potato and BBQ bean, Oak Smoked Angus Rib-eye Steak accompanied with crispy onion rings, aromatic Baby Chicken with Apple Compote, Duck Leg garnished with garlic mushrooms and tender Lamb Shank. All dishes are expertly infused with a variety of Hickory, Oak, and Cherry woods to create the unique and authentic smoky flavors combined with fresh local ingredients.

For those looking to host an intimate special occasion, guests can savor their dishes in the warmth of the restaurant's private dining area coupled with creative romantic arrangements of their choice. Recently awarded as the best Luxury Steakhouse and Luxury Hotel Restaurant for 2017 by the World Luxury Restaurant Awards, the hotel's premium Steakhouse offers a memorable dining experience in classy and extravagant surroundings ideal for business and leisure occasions.



SULTANCHEF SOON IN OMAN

Mohammed Fawzi Al-Qassar, the General Manager of the Kuwait Turkish Catering and Restaurants Company announced the first branch of Sultanchef franchise will be opening soon in the Opera Galleria in Muscat, Oman. "We are expecting the Oman branch opening in the summer with a huge attendance," Qassar said in a press statement. He also clarified that the Sultanchef expansion plan started in the GCC countries in 2017 through opening more branches around the area to satisfy the global expectations for elite fans of the Turkish steakhouse in the Arabian Gulf. Sultanchef has three branches in Kuwait;

in Salmiya (Symphony Style Mall); Sharq (Altijaria Tower); and Mahboula (Light Complex). Sultanchef chooses the best cuts of meat from cattle and livestock fed in the rich pastures of Turkey, the United States, South Africa, and other countries. The quality of the pasture, the color and aroma of the meat and the way of slaughtering and preservation in special dry-age fridges are the key factors carrying Sultanchef to success. The high standard of kitchen equipment and industrial kitchenware mainly imported from well-known Turkish producers is another important fact about Sultanchef.



A delegation from the Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Media Department visited the Amal School for female students with special needs as part of its ongoing awareness campaign for the start of the school year.



- 00:45 Treehouse Masters
01:40 My Tiny Terror
02:35 Swamp Brothers
03:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
04:15 Treehouse Masters
05:02 Wildest Indochina
05:49 Untamed & Uncut
06:36 Going Ape
07:00 Going Ape
07:25 Swamp Brothers
08:15 Treehouse Masters
09:10 My Tiny Terror
09:15 Wildest Indochina
11:00 Swamp Brothers
11:28 Swamp Brothers
11:55 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
12:50 Treehouse Masters
13:45 My Tiny Terror
14:40 Wildest Indochina
15:35 Untamed & Uncut
16:30 Treehouse Masters
17:25 Whale Wars
18:20 Whale Wars
19:15 My Tiny Terror
20:10 Swamp Brothers
20:38 Swamp Brothers
21:05 Whale Wars
22:00 Whale Wars
22:55 Wildest Indochina
23:50 Untamed & Uncut

- 11:30 Alex & Co.
11:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
12:00 Rolling With The Honks
12:15 Lolorock
12:40 Lolorock
13:05 Star Darlings
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
13:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
14:00 Jessie
14:25 Lolorock
14:50 The Zhuzhus
15:15 Elena Of Avalor
15:40 Stuck In The Middle
16:05 Liv And Maddie
16:30 Whisker Haven Tales With The Palace Pets
16:35 Bunk'd
17:00 K.C. Undercover
17:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
17:50 Girl Meets World
18:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:20 Bizaardvark
18:45 Best Friends Whenever
19:10 Tsum Tsum Shorts
19:15 Liv And Maddie
19:40 Elena Of Avalor
20:05 Jessie
20:30 Crackle
20:35 K.C. Undercover
21:00 The Zhuzhus
21:25 Stuck In The Middle
21:50 Sunny Bunnies

- 16:50 Disney11
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Storage Wars
09:45 Storage Wars
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Alone
11:50 Duck Dynasty
12:15 Duck Dynasty
12:40 Counting Cars
13:05 Counting Cars
13:30 Ozy And Jack's World Detour
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Leepu And Pitbull
16:00 Storage Wars
16:25 Storage Wars
16:50 Cars That Made America
18:30 Forged In Fire
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Road To 9/11
22:40 Road To 9/11

- 07:15 Duck Dynasty
07:40 Counting Cars
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18:30 Forged In Fire
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Road To 9/11
22:40 Road To 9/11



- 00:15 Carnival Eats
00:45 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
01:10 Fish Of The Day
01:40 Korean Soul Food
02:35 Access 360 World Heritage
03:30 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
04:25 Poh & Co.
05:45 Fish Of The Day
05:20 Route Awakening
05:45 Route Awakening
06:15 Billionaire's Paradise: Inside Necker Island
07:10 Korean Soul Food
08:05 Access 360 World Heritage
09:00 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
09:55 Poh & Co.
10:20 Fish Of The Day
10:50 Route Awakening
11:15 Route Awakening
11:45 Billionaire's Paradise: Inside Necker Island
12:40 Rustic Adventures Italy
13:05 Rustic Adventures Italy
13:35 Access 360 World Heritage
14:30 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
15:25 Fish Of The Day
15:50 Fish Of The Day
16:20 Route Awakening
16:45 Route Awakening
17:15 Cesar Millan: Viva Las Vegas!
18:10 Restoration Man
18:50 Fish Of The Day
19:30 Fish Of The Day
20:00 Route Awakening
20:30 Route Awakening
21:00 Cesar Millan: Viva Las Vegas!
21:50 Restoration Man
22:55 Rustic Adventures Italy
23:20 Rustic Adventures Italy
23:50 Access 360 World Heritage

- 13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Sanjay And Craig
13:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
14:12 Henry Danger
14:36 The Thundermans
15:00 School Of Rock
15:24 Breadwinners
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Regal Academy
17:24 Winx Club
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
21:00 The Loud House
21:24 Sanjay And Craig
21:48 Rabbids Invasion
22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



- 00:01 Max & Ruby
00:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:47 The Day Henry Met
00:52 The Day Henry Met
00:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:41 Zack & Quack
02:03 Shimmer And Shine
02:25 Olive The Ostrich
02:30 Olive The Ostrich
02:35 Paw Patrol
02:58 Little Charmers
03:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
03:22 Dora The Explorer
03:44 Max & Ruby
04:06 The Day Henry Met
04:11 Nella The Princess Knight
04:35 Shimmer And Shine
04:59 Wallykazam!
05:21 Zack & Quack
05:32 The Day Henry Met
05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
06:00 Rusty Rivets
06:13 Paw Patrol
06:37 Dora The Explorer
07:00 Zack & Quack
07:21 Bubble Guppies
07:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
08:07 Paw Patrol
08:30 Shimmer And Shine
08:53 Nella The Princess Knight
09:15 The Day Henry Met
09:22 Paw Patrol
09:45 Rusty Rivets
09:57 Wallykazam!
10:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
10:42 Zack & Quack
10:52 Team Umizoomi
11:15 Shimmer And Shine
11:39 Shimmer And Shine
12:01 Max & Ruby
12:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
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22:42 Zack & Quack
22:52 Team Umizoomi
23:15 Shimmer And Shine



- 00:40 Star
01:30 The Americans
02:30 Chicago Justice
04:10 Code Black
05:00 Good Morning America
07:00 The View
07:45 The Chew
08:30 Star
09:20 Chicago Justice
10:10 Code Black
11:00 The Unit
11:45 The Flash
12:30 The View
13:15 The Chew
14:00 Live Good Morning America
16:00 Code Black
17:00 Chicago Justice
18:00 The Unit
19:00 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit
20:00 The Night Shift
21:00 Star
22:00 Claws
23:00 Claws
23:50 Falling Water



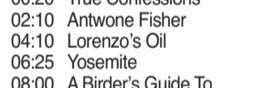
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01:45 White Fang 2: Myth Of The White Wolf
03:40 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
05:20 Home On The Range
06:45 The Secret Of The Magic Gourd
08:20 White Fang 2: Myth Of The White Wolf
10:15 Tinker Bell And The Lost Treasure
11:45 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
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15:00 Treasure Planet
16:40 Ice Princess
18:20 Tuck Everlasting
19:55 A Simple Wish
21:30 Frankenweenie
23:05 Treasure Planet



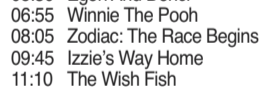
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02:45 Black Rose
04:30 Virtual Revolution
06:15 Spooks: The Greater Good
08:05 Survivor
09:45 The Call Up
11:20 The Lovers
13:15 Spooks: The Greater Good
15:00 Beyond Redemption
16:35 Swordfish
18:15 Tekken: Kazuya's Revenge
19:50 Operation Chromite
21:45 Terminator Genisys
23:50 The Canal



- 01:35 The Golden Child
03:10 The Grand Seduction
05:05 Down With Love
06:50 Big Momma's House 2
08:30 The Grand Seduction
10:25 Down With Love
12:10 Big Momma's House 2
13:50 Babe: Pig In The City
15:30 Outside Bet
17:15 Taxi
18:55 Undercover Brother
20:25 Spanglish
22:35 Don Peyote



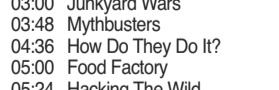
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02:10 Antwone Fisher
04:10 Lorenzo's Oil
06:25 Yosemite
08:00 A Birder's Guide To Everything
09:35 Reds
12:50 Lorenzo's Oil
15:05 The Shamer's Daughter
16:45 I'll See You In My Dreams
18:30 My Old Lady
20:20 The End Of The Tour
22:10 Steve Jobs: The Man In The Machine



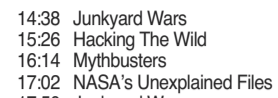
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02:35 Get Squirrelly
04:00 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder
05:30 Egon And Donal
06:55 Winnie The Pooh
08:05 Zodiac: The Race Begins
09:45 Izzie's Way Home
11:10 The Wish Fish
12:35 The Tigger Movie
14:00 Get Squirrelly
15:30 Funny Little Cars
16:35 Izzie's Way Home
18:00 Space Dogs 2: Adventure To The Moon
19:25 A Town Called Panic
20:45 Funny Little Cars
21:50 Zodiac: The Race Begins
23:30 The Wish Fish



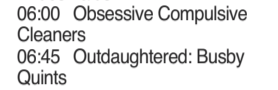
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03:45 A.I. Artificial Intelligence
06:10 Dick Tracy
07:55 Raising Helen
10:00 Rocky Balboa
11:45 Before We Go
13:20 Dick Tracy
15:05 Kicking And Screaming
16:40 Dracula Untold
18:15 Seven Years In Tibet
20:30 National Security
22:00 This Boy's Life
23:55 Bram Stoker's Dracula



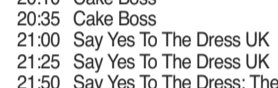
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00:55 Food Factory
01:20 Hacking The Wild
02:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
03:00 Junkyard Wars
03:48 Mythbusters
04:36 How Do They Do It?
05:00 Food Factory
05:24 Hacking The Wild
06:12 NASA's Unexplained Files
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:26 Junkyard Wars
08:14 Mythbusters
09:02 NASA's Unexplained Files
09:50 How Do They Do It?
10:14 Food Factory
10:38 Hacking The Wild
11:26 Junkyard Wars
12:14 Mythbusters
13:02 How Do They Do It?
13:26 Food Factory
13:50 NASA's Unexplained Files



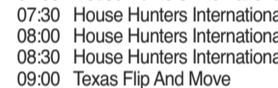
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19:55 Food Factory USA
20:20 How Do They Do It?
20:45 Food Factory
21:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
22:00 Food Factory USA
22:25 Food Factory USA
22:50 Junkyard Wars



- 00:20 My 600lb Life: Where Are They Now?
01:05 The Day I Almost Died
01:50 My Extreme Excess Skin Oprah: Where Are They Now?
03:20 Sister Wives
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras
04:50 Your Style In His Hands
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
06:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
06:45 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
07:30 Say Yes To The Dress UK
07:52 Say Yes To The Dress UK
08:15 Sister Wives
09:00 Cake Boss
09:25 Toddlers & Tiaras
10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
10:55 Too Ugly For Love?
11:40 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
12:25 Say Yes To The Dress UK
13:55 Cake Boss
14:40 Sister Wives
15:25 Too Ugly For Love?
16:10 Love, Lust Or Run
16:35 Cake Boss
17:00 Oprah's Master Class
17:50 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
18:50 Your Style In His Hands
19:40 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
20:10 Cake Boss
20:35 Cake Boss
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21:50 Say Yes To The Dress: The Big Day
22:40 Say Yes To The Dress UK
23:05 Say Yes To The Dress UK



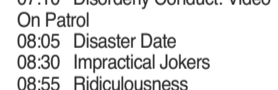
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01:00 Mysteries At The Museum
02:00 Expedition Unknown
03:00 Expedition Unknown Special
04:00 The Road Less Travelled
05:00 Bizarre Foods America
06:00 Mysteries At The Museum
07:30 House Hunters International
08:30 House Hunters International
08:30 House Hunters International
09:00 Texas Flip And Move
10:00 Hotel Impossible
11:00 Mysteries At The Museum
12:00 Expedition Unknown
13:00 House Hunters International
13:30 House Hunters International
14:00 House Hunters International
14:30 House Hunters International
15:00 Big Time RV
15:30 Big Time RV
16:00 Texas Flip And Move
17:00 Hotel Impossible
18:00 Bizarre Foods America
19:00 House Hunters International
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21:00 Mysteries At The Castle
22:00 Mysteries At The Museum
23:00 Expedition Unknown Special



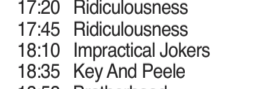
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00:55 Broad City
01:20 Broad City
01:45 Another Period
02:10 Lip Sync Battle
02:35 Lip Sync Battle
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
04:15 Lip Sync Battle
04:40 Ridiculousness
05:05 Disaster Date
05:30 Catch A Contractor
06:20 Sweat Inc.
07:10 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
08:05 Disaster Date
08:30 Impractical Jokers
08:55 Ridiculousness
09:20 Key And Peele
09:45 Lip Sync Battle
10:10 Ridiculousness
10:35 Disaster Date
11:30 Sweet Inc.
11:50 Disaster Date
12:15 Catch A Contractor
13:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
13:55 Gym Rescue
14:30 Lip Sync Battle
15:10 The Jim Gaffigan Show
15:35 Ridiculousness Arabia
16:00 Impractical Jokers
16:30 Disaster Date
16:55 Disaster Date
17:20 Ridiculousness
17:45 Ridiculousness
18:10 Impractical Jokers
18:35 Key And Peele
18:58 Brotherhood
19:22 Ridiculousness Arabia
19:46 Ridiculousness Arabia
20:09 Lip Sync Battle
20:32 Lip Sync Battle
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
22:00 Sean Lock - Purple Van Man
22:50 The Half Hour
23:15 South Park
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23:15 South Park
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



- 00:40 Doctors
01:10 EastEnders
01:40 Poldark
02:40 Last Tango In Halifax
03:35 Prime Suspect: Tension Series
04:25 New Blood
05:25 Doctors
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Doctors
07:00 EastEnders
07:30 Father Brown
08:20 New Tricks
09:15 Stella
10:05 Doctors
10:35 EastEnders



- 00:00 Escaping Polygamy
01:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
02:00 My Haunted House
03:00 Stalked By A Ghost
04:00 Escaping Polygamy
05:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
06:00 Cold Case Files
08:00 It Takes A Killer
09:00 Homicide Hunter
10:00 Evil Up Close
14:00 It Takes A Killer
15:00 Cold Case Files
16:00 Gangs Of Britain With Gary & Martin Kemp
17:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
19:00 It Takes A Killer
19:30 It Takes A Killer
20:00 Homicide Hunter
21:00 Cold Case Files
22:00 Fred Dineage: Murder Casebook
23:00 It Takes A Killer



- 00:05 Destroyed In Seconds
01:30 Pawn Queens
01:20 Don't Drive Here
02:10 Animal Nation With Anthony Anderson
03:00 Finding Bigfoot
03:50 Destroyed In Seconds
04:40 How It's Made
05:30 Pawn Queens
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Awesome Adventures
07:25 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
07:50 K9 Cops
08:30 How It's Made
08:40 Nextworld
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 K9 Cops
12:50 Finding Bigfoot
13:40 How It's Made
14:30 Pick A Puppy
14:50 Awesome Adventures
15:50 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
16:20 Destroyed In Seconds
18:00 Nextworld
17:00 Space Dealers
17:50 Engineering The Impossible
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 How It's Made
20:20 Destroyed In Seconds
21:10 Space Dealers
22:00 Engineering The Impossible



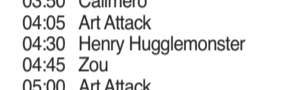
- 00:30 The Coroner: I Speak For The Dead
01:20 Evil Online
02:10 I Am Homicide
03:00 Sin City Justice
03:10 Disappeared
04:38 Murder Chose Me
05:24 A Crime To Remember
06:12 I'd Kill For You
07:00 Disappeared
07:50 Murder Chose Me
08:40 A Crime To Remember
09:30 I'd Kill For You
10:20 Blood Relatives
11:10 Unravalled
12:00 Disappeared
12:50 Murder Chose Me
13:40 A Crime To Remember
14:30 I'd Kill For You
15:20 Blood Relatives
16:10 Evil Online
17:00 Disappeared
17:50 Murder Chose Me
18:40 A Crime To Remember
19:30 Obsession: Dark Desires
20:20 Blood Relatives
21:10 Murder Chose Me
22:00 I Am Homicide
22:50 The Perfect Murder
23:40 Evil Online



- 00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 The Hive
05:50 Rolling With The Honks
06:00 Jessie
06:25 Liv And Maddie
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:25 The Zhuzhus
07:45 Bunk'd
08:10 Stuck In The Middle
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
09:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
09:25 Lolorock
09:50 Lolorock
10:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
10:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
11:05 Hank Zipzer



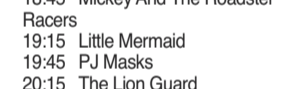
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00:15 Calimero
00:30 Art Attack
00:55 Zou
01:05 Loopdideoo
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 Calimero
01:50 Zou
02:05 Art Attack
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05:45 Loopdideoo
06:00 Zou
06:15 Calimero
06:30 Loopdideoo
06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
07:00 Sofia The First
07:30 The Lion Guard
08:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
08:30 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
09:00 PJ Masks
09:30 Miles From Tomorrow
10:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
10:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
11:00 PJ Masks
11:30 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
12:00 Goldie & Bear
12:30 Sofia The First
13:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
13:30 PJ Masks
14:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
14:30 The Lion Guard
15:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
15:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
16:00 Sofia The First
16:25 Miles From Tomorrow
16:50 Doc McStuffins
17:00 Doc McStuffins
17:15 The Lion Guard
17:45 Sofia The First
18:15 Goldie & Bear
18:45 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
19:15 Little Mermaid
19:45 PJ Masks
20:15 The Lion Guard
20:45 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse Goldie & Bear
21:45 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
22:15 Little Mermaid
22:45 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
23:15 PJ Masks
23:45 Loopdideoo



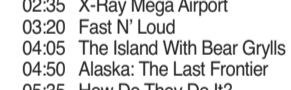
- 00:00 Chopped
01:00 Food Network Star Kids
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Fire Food
04:00 Chopped
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:25 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:50 Anna Olson: Fresh
07:15 The Kitchen
08:05 The Pioneer Woman
08:55 Sita's Table
09:25 Sita's Table
09:55 Cooking For Real
10:25 Cooking For Real
10:55 The Kitchen
11:45 Bake With Anna Olson
12:10 The Pioneer Woman
12:35 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Sita's Table
13:30 Sita's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 Cooking For Real
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Guy's Grocery Games
20:00 Sita's Table
20:30 Sita's Table
21:00 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy
21:30 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



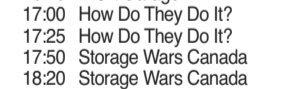
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20:00 Sita's Table
20:30 Sita's Table
21:00 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy
21:30 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



- 00:10 Chopping Block
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 Midsomer Murders
05:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
06:10 Chopping Block
07:05 The Chase
08:00 Midsomer Murders
09:30 Catchphrase
10:00 Couples Come Dine With Me
10:55 Chopping Block
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Chopping Block
15:10 The Chase
16:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
17:15 Catchphrase
17:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
20:10 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
22:15 Catchphrase
22:15 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



- 00:20 Misfit Garage
01:05 Harley And The Davidson's
02:35 X-Ray Mega Airport
03:20 Fast N' Loud
04:05 The Island With Bear Grylls
04:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Deadliest Catch
06:45 Misfit Garage
07:30 Fast N' Loud
08:15 The Island With Bear Grylls
09:00 Storage Wars Canada
09:25 How Do They Do It?
09:47 How Do They Do It?
10:10 Harley And The Davidson's
11:40 X-Ray Mega Airport
12:25 How Do They Do It?
12:47 Storage Wars Canada
13:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
13:55 The Island With Bear Grylls
14:40 Deadliest Catch
15:25 Fast N' Loud
16:10 Misfit Garage
17:00 How Do They Do It?
17:25 How Do They Do It?
17:50 Storage Wars Canada
18:20 Storage Wars Canada
18:50 The Island With Bear Grylls: USA
19:40 How Do They Do It?
20:10 How Do They Do It?
20:35 How Do They Do It?
21:00 What On Earth?
21:50 So You Think You'd Survive?
22:40 Impossible Engineering
23:30 Fast N' Loud



- 00:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
01:00 Clash Of Warriors
02:00 America's Book Of Secrets
02:50 Ancient Aliens
03:40 United Staff Of America
04:30 Serial Killer Earth
05:20 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
06:10 The Universe
07:00 Clash Of Warriors
08:00 America's Book Of Secrets
09:00 Ancient Aliens
10:00 United Staff Of America
11:00 Serial Killer Earth

CROSSWORD 1716



ACROSS

1. The muscular back part of the shank.
5. A mural done with watercolors on wet plaster.
11. A bachelor's degree in library science.
15. A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
16. Of or involving the rectum.
17. A barrier consisting of a horizontal bar and supports.
18. A notice of someone's death.
19. Convert ordinary language into code.
20. Avatar of Vishnu.
21. Not reflecting light.
23. Antihypertensive drug (trade name Minipress).
25. Jordan's port.
27. Mentally or physically infirm with age.
29. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
30. (astronomy) A measure of time defined by Earth's orbital motion.
31. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
32. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
35. An extinct ancient language of unknown affinities.
39. French cabaret singer (1915-1963).
41. An awkward stupid person.
44. Antibacterial drug (trade name Nydradiz) used to treat tuberculosis.
45. Informal or slang terms for mentally irregular.
49. Petty quarrel.
51. A package of several things tied together for carrying or storing.
53. The sixth month of the civil year.
54. A thick sweet sticky liquid.
56. A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
57. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
59. A state in midwestern United States.
60. An agency of the United Nations responsible for programs to aid education and the health of children and mothers in developing countries.
62. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
64. A public promotion of some product or service.
65. A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived.
66. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
67. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
69. United States writer of thrillers (born in 1925).
73. Counting the number of white and red blood cells and the number of platelets in 1 cubic millimeter of blood.
75. A short labored intake of breath with the mouth open.
78. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
79. (Old Testament) The guardian archangel of the Jews.
82. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
83. A hormone secreted by the anterior pituitary gland that controls the degree of pigmentation in melanocytes.
84. A white trivalent metallic element.
85. A light touch or stroke.
86. The foot of a human being.
87. Made clean.
88. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A minute epidermal pore in a leaf or stem.
2. A member of a Turkic people of Uzbekistan and neighboring areas.
3. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
4. The products of human creativity.
5. Able to act at will.
6. The mistake of not following suit when able to do so.
7. (computer science) A coding system that incorporates extra parity bits in order to detect errors.
8. Something contrived to meet an urgent need or emergency.
9. A genus of Pyralidae.
10. Evergreen trees and shrubs having oily one-seeded fruits.
11. A unit of weight used in some Spanish speaking countries.
12. South African term for 'boss'.
13. The greatest possible degree of something.
14. A biased way of looking at or presenting something.
22. Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
24. (Middle East) An ornamental metal cup-shaped holder for a hot coffee cup.
26. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
28. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
33. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
34. A pointed instrument used to prod into motion.
36. Remove the pins from.
37. An African river that flows northwest into Lake Chad.
38. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
40. Small tropical American tree bearing edible plumlike fruit.
42. A genus of Platalea.
43. The capacitance of a capacitor that has an equal and opposite charge of 1 coulomb on each plate and a voltage difference of 1 volt between the plates.
46. A federally chartered savings bank.
47. 100 thebe equal 1 pula.
48. A motley assortment of things.
50. A large faint constellation in the southern hemisphere containing most of the Small Magellanic Cloud.
52. A large family of trees, shrubs, vines, and herbs bearing bean pods.
55. Having nine hinged bands of bony plates.
58. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
61. A 10% solution of formaldehyde in water.
63. A city in western Germany near the Dutch and Belgian borders.
68. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
70. Other than what is under consideration or implied.
71. United States newspaper publisher (1858-1935).
72. Small cubes with 1 to 6 spots on the faces.
74. Informal or slang terms for mentally irregular.
76. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
77. A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
80. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
81. An honorary law degree.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may have to repeat or clarify instructions several times this day, particularly to one individual. Write to-do lists for yourself and check all paperwork that passes through your hands, including contracts. You may feel left out or passed over just now. Your own requirements may appear to separate you from where the rest of the gang is headed. The reason for all of this delay is quite acceptable as you like your work and you know the demands of work at this time are temporary. This afternoon you draw emotional sustenance and a sense of security from friends and social involvement. There are plenty of things to grab your attention and your spirits are lifted when a young person opens up to you. Budgeting is favorable.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

There are extra charm and charisma in the way you come across to others this day. When faced with difficult situations or difficult people, you can be exceptionally creative. Speaking in front of a group, you may speak convincingly. You communicate with great enthusiasm. Your words just flow out and carry an emotional impact that brings your point or your ideas home to your listeners. Things are happening in your career and your future may strengthen now depending upon your drive to achieve, which is strong and works in your favor. This is a good time to get ahead in your work or personal life. This evening your desires are strong and you will want to enjoy yourself. Romance is possible. There is a basic drive to appreciate and taste life.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may find yourself coordinating events and communicating with new people. Your company may have decided to open another store in another area of town or some such scenario. You could be chosen to make sure everything runs smoothly. It looks as though there are requests for your services that are not included in your job identification. You might put your request in for additional pay before the action begins. Using your mind to negotiate obstacles and dilemmas is a great talent. You tend to radiate success. This afternoon is a time of concentration and working through any professional matters. You can demonstrate great understanding and sensitivity to your friends at this time. You may enjoy dinner away from the home this evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your instinctive orientation at this time is in taking care of business. You may take some risks today, even if you appear a bit unconventional. You will prosper through new insights, inventions and an independent point of view. Breakthroughs in your career could open up during this time, making it possible for you to solve problems and reach new levels of accomplishment. Improved solutions, insights and approaches make this a time not to be ignored. A dental checkup can be very positive this week. There is an instinctive urge to learn about better nutrition and better health at many levels. You may want to join a health spa so that there is some regular exercise in your life. Diet, exercise and work somehow mean more to you now.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may be tempted to only focus on what you dislike today. However, you can be more fully empowered by using this time to embrace your strengths. If at work, keep a journal of date, time, event, problem and how you helped to create a good or successful outcome. If you are put in difficult situations that seem to have no ending, it may be time for a good compromise or a future change. You should be experiencing rewards for your hard work soon. There is the possibility of new visions or sudden insights into your plans—perhaps a reassessment. Breakthroughs and insights into future plans will become clearer as time moves along. Parents and friends as well as a career advisor may be quite helpful. Move to music this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Ambitious schemes and the pursuit of success and status take on a high priority. This brings a focus on the practical, the successful, the realistic—whatever it takes to get you ahead in the long run. The meek may inherit the earth, but the clever will collect the rent. Ambition and achievement are qualities you hold in special regard. You look for ways to get ahead and perhaps combine business and pleasure. Seeing both sides of an issue and figuring out resolutions to opposing views take on more importance in your life. Intense focus on your career can find you mercilessly cutting back and getting down to the bare essentials regarding the path or direction you are taking with your life. You enjoy the climb as well as the rewards.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are disciplined regarding your career. Lock those practical skills of yours into a routine and make them good habits. Your mind and decision-making abilities should be at a peak. You may be called on for your organizational and management skills. You are an aggressive prime mover, a starter—able to get things moving. Although you are not always hot on the follow-up, you will be able to tackle tasks that require real discipline. This evening is a good time for surrounding yourself with friends and young people and for having a good time. You appreciate your particular situation and enjoy support from those around you. You and a loved one can relax this evening—perhaps after a long and enjoyable bicycle ride.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You could be in the limelight, particularly with superiors or in relation to your work. You may discover that you are more comfortable in your job than usual. There is much mental busyness now. A good time, when your efforts really pay off and things seem to run smoothly. Now you have the opportunity for sustained work that allows you to coordinate and organize like never before. There is time to clean off your desk and complete any uncompleted tasks before the end of this workday. Cultivate and collect positive images of successful situations as well as relaxed settings—use these to ease tensions. A heightened interest in health and diet, as well as an urge to get things organized into a rational system, agrees with this. Music will lift your spirits tonight.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Some days are just difficult to maneuver around. It could be hard to figure out the right move. You may feel frustrated as to where you are headed in life just now. Someone older or in an authoritative position may disapprove of your decisions just now—it may be a bit hard to think. Thinking long-term, however, you will be able to come up with just the right technique, step, method or frame of words to create some positive reaction when it comes to pleasing the customer and the supervisor. An upswing in sales or in stock can be the result of some internal change that requires many people to cooperate. You will be pleased with the results of your efforts this day. The pleasures of music can calm the beast in all of us. Enjoy music this evening.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You like to work with words and ideas and have a natural appreciation for anything that is literary or artistic. Your sense of discernment when it comes to matters of literary and intellectual taste is refined. You could write poetry or prose, and you put a high value on the written word. You enjoy good conversations and may be skilled at speaking and communicating. The lunch hour today could bring some fun conversations your way. This afternoon you may have to be careful not to disturb others with your urge to talk—you will do well in matters that concern proofing and editing. Expect a more confident, outgoing attitude, for you have brought to close a time of inward examination and learning. There is a growing sense of direction and self-worth.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

There could be change in the air with regard to your working situation. You may want to be open to the new ideas of others. This may mean moving in a different direction within the same company for which you work or taking a class to brush up on some technical skills. You are driven when it comes to fulfilling your ambitions and carving out a career. There is no lack of energy or drive here; nothing can stand in your way. Lots of energy goes into making the right moves. Most of your co-workers will find you outgoing, enthusiastic and diplomatic. Friends, group projects and community concerns could play key roles that effect your career direction. Relaxation can be found in your own backyard.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Everything points to your taking the initiative today. Interest and success in a career requires activity, whether it is physical, mental or emotional—you need to be moving! Work and career should be a primary focus during this time. There is an opportunity to make good decisions—clear choice is yours. You are at your most practical and what happens with the remainder of this week may have a lasting effect on your life direction. Patterns, habits and new ideas will be forming. You love to tinker around and might enjoy a hobby that involves some sort of design or mechanics. After work, this hobby may be the only thing on your mind. Setting a timer that will give you time for this hobby will also remind you to stop and enjoy some time with your family.

Wordsearch Puzzle

St. Patrick's Day

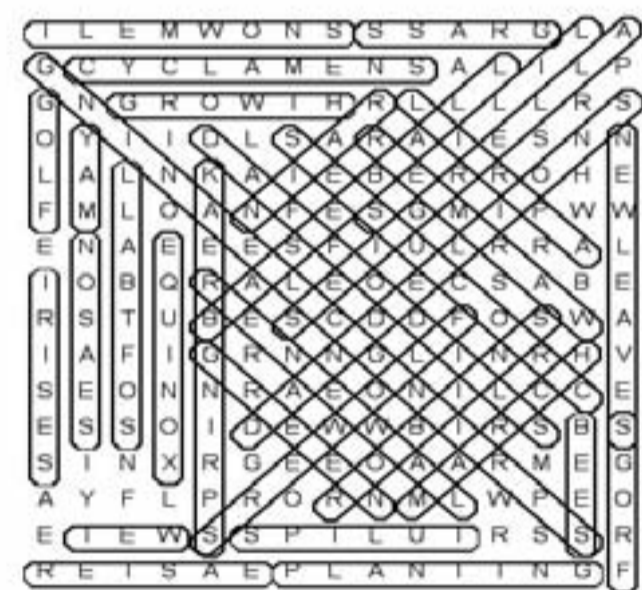
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 34 letters spell a secret message.



- BEER
- BELFAST
- BISHOP
- CABBAGE
- CELEBRATION
- CELTIC CROSS
- CHRISTIAN
- CLOVER
- CORK
- CORNED BEEF
- DANCING
- DUBLIN
- EVENTS
- FEAST DAY
- FESTIVAL
- GREEN
- GUINNESS
- HERITAGE
- HISTORY
- HOLIDAY
- HOLY DAY
- IRELAND
- IRISH
- LEPRECHAUN
- LIMERICK
- MARCH
- MISSIONARY
- MUSIC
- PARADE
- PATRON SAINT
- POTATOES
- SEVENTEENTH
- SHAMROCK
- SNAKES
- SODA BREAD
- TRADITION
- YEARLY

Yesterday's Solution

Spring



- ALLERGIES
- APRIL
- BASEBALL
- BEES
- CROCUSES
- CYCLAMENS
- DAFFODILS
- DANDELIONS
- EASTER
- EQUINOX
- FLOWERS
- FROGS
- GOLF
- GRASS
- GREEN
- GROWTH
- IRISES
- LILIES
- MARCH
- MAY
- NEW LEAVES
- PLANTING
- RAIN
- RENEWAL
- ROBINS
- SEASON
- SNOWMELT
- SOFTBALL
- SPRING BREAK
- SPRING CLEANING
- TULIPS
- WARMER
- WET

The hidden sentence is: APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



CLASSIFIEDS

Kuwait Times
 Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



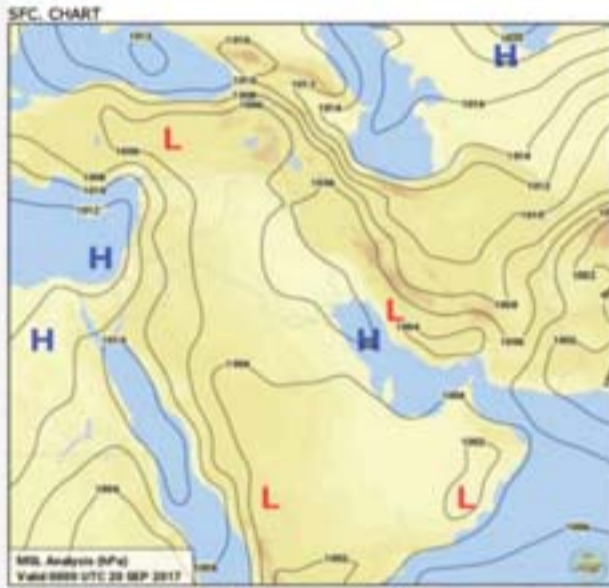
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
 Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours
 Issued 20/09/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 45 °C

By Day: Hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h and some high clouds will appear.
By Night: Relatively hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate variable wind to light south westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h.



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	Hot	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for fog forming at night	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	Hot
Min Temp °C	25	24	25	24
Max Temp °C	43	42	43	43
Wind Direction	variable to south easterly	variable to south easterly	variable to northerly westerly	northerly westerly
Wind Speed km/h	08 - 32	06 - 28	10 - 30	12 - 32

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	34	45
KUWAIT AIRPORT	26	45
ABDALY	28	45
BUBYAN	25	40
JAHRA	30	46
FAJLAKA ISLAND	29	40
SALMIYAH	34	37
AHMADI	34	40
JAL ALIYAH	28	45
QAROH ISLAND	33	37
UMM AL-MARADEM	33	38
NUWAISIB	28	45
WAFRA	28	46
SALMY	30	45
MUTRIBA	27	47

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	45
Min Temp (°C)	26
Max Rel Hum (%)	75
Min Rel Hum (%)	10
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	32 S
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	05:35
Sunset	17:48

Prayer Times

Fajr	04:15
Sunrise	05:35
Zuhr	11:42
Aar	15:10
Sunset	17:48
Isha	19:05



AIRLINES

American Airlines	22087425
Kuwait Airways	22087426
Jazeera Airways	177
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Air Slovakia	22434940
Olympic Airways	22420002/9
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5
Reservation	22433388
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Alitalia	22414427
Balkan Airlines	22416474
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Czech Airlines	22417901/
Indian Airlines	22456700
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Flight Schedule

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DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 21/9/2017				Departure Flights on Thursday 21/9/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	574	Mumbai	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	RBG	556	Alexandria	00:05
JZR	553	Alexandria	00:15	BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10
KAC	102	London	00:15	MSR	2615	Cairo	00:30
SVA	502	Jeddah	00:20	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
SVA	514	Riyadh	00:25	PIA	240	Doha	00:40
MSC	411	Asyut	00:30	JZR	502	Luxor	01:15
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	SVA	503	Jeddah	01:20
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	JAI	573	Mumbai	01:25
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	SVA	515	Riyadh	01:25
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	MSC	412	Asyut	01:30
JZR	539	Cairo	01:20	THY	773	Istanbul	01:40
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	KAC	677	Dubai	01:45
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	JZR	1442	Doha	02:10
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	OMR	6505	Istanbul	02:55
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
PGT	830	Istanbul	02:10	KAC	351	Kochi	03:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:10	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	PGT	831	Istanbul	03:10
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:30
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	MSR	607	Luxor	04:05
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	QTR	1087	Doha	04:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15	KAC	417	Manila	04:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:45	JZR	560	Sohag	04:45
KAC	1544	Cairo	03:50	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:50
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	FEG	934	Sohag	05:55
FEG	931	Alexandria	05:00	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	UAE	874	Dubai	06:15
THY	1414	TZK	05:05	RJA	643	Amman	06:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	THY	773	Istanbul	06:25
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	KAC	771	Riyadh	06:35
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
JZR	529	Asyut	05:35	JZR	238	Amman	06:55
JZR	1433	Doha	05:45	KAC	173	Munich	06:55
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50	FDB	070	Dubai	07:05
BAW	157	London	06:05	JZR	164	Dubai	07:15
KAC	204	Lahore	06:20	KAC	167	Paris	07:15
KAC	678	Dubai	06:25	KAC	501	Beirut	07:50
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	KAC	613	Bahrain	07:55
QTR	8511	Doha	06:35	QTR	8512	Sialkot	08:05
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	BAW	156	London	08:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	KAC	177	Vienna	08:25
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
JZR	503	Luxor	07:25	KAC	791	Madinah	08:35
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	513	Tehran	08:45
KAC	354	Bangalore	07:50	KAC	117	New York	09:15
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KNE	381	Dubai	09:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	DLH	634	Cairo	09:30
IRA	673	Ahwaz	08:35	MEA	402	Beirut	09:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	561	Amman	09:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	IRA	672	Ahwaz	09:35
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:05	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:40
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	101	London	09:45
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
FDK	803	Damascus	10:00	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	10:45	IRA	668	Mashhad	10:05
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	153	Istanbul	10:30
PAL	668	Manila	11:00	QTR	1071	Doha	10:35
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	AAG	148	IOA	11:00
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:15	FDK	804	Damascus	11:00
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:30	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
JZR	239	Amman	12:20	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
SAW	709	Latakia	12:30	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	WAN	435	Al Najaf	12:05
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50	FDB	071	Doha	12:10

FASHION



US designer Tommy Hilfiger (left) and US model Gigi Hadid greet the crowd after the catwalk show for the Spring/Summer 2018 collection on the fifth and final day of The London Fashion Week Women's in London. — AP/AFP photos



Tommy Hilfiger and Gigi Hadid stage London Fashion Week show



London Fashion Week has reached its giddy conclusion, the extravaganza more than meeting expectations with a string of shows, parties and presentations. The theme seemed to be a frenzied search for fun and whimsy, a shade less serious and complicated than usual as designers looked forward to next spring and summer. There were big shows by Giorgio Armani, Burberry, Versace, and more, and more intimate affairs by the up-and-coming designers. London depends on its fashion cred. The first day was marred when a subway train was attacked on the outskirts of London, raising fears of more attacks, but the fashionistas stayed calm and partied on.

Tommy Hilfiger, Gigi Hadid pay homage to rock music

Designer Tommy Hilfiger and model Gigi Hadid staged a grungy rock affair for their show on the final night of London Fashion Week. It was the pair's third collaboration and featured early appearances by Hadid's siblings, Bella and Anwar. The Tuesday show was presented at London's legendary Roundhouse, where stars such as James Brown and Bob Dylan have performed over the years. Concert-style merchandise stalls had pieces from the TOMMYNOW collection available to purchase around the venue.

The outfits included leather jackets with leopard print collars, worn with cropped denim shorts and beanie hats emblazoned with "Gigi Hadid" - a homage to band merchandise and an appeal to the model's vast fan base. Models also wore lanyards mimicking backstage passes printed with "Gigi" and cropped T-shirts also bearing the model's name. Patterns were checks or stripes, and oversize puffer jackets were worn open. Hadid said she was happy the show was such a family affair. "It is obviously a huge event, and I put a lot of pressure on myself as I'm a perfectionist, so to be able to look around and see my family is very grounding and keeps me calm," she said.

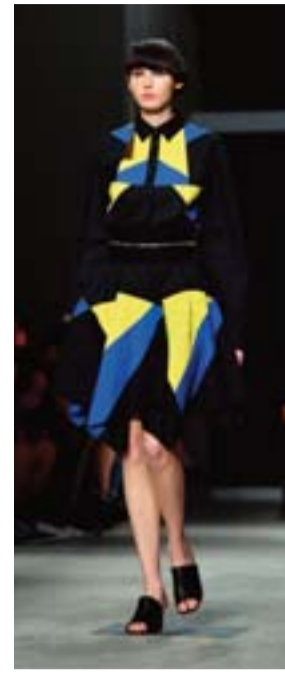
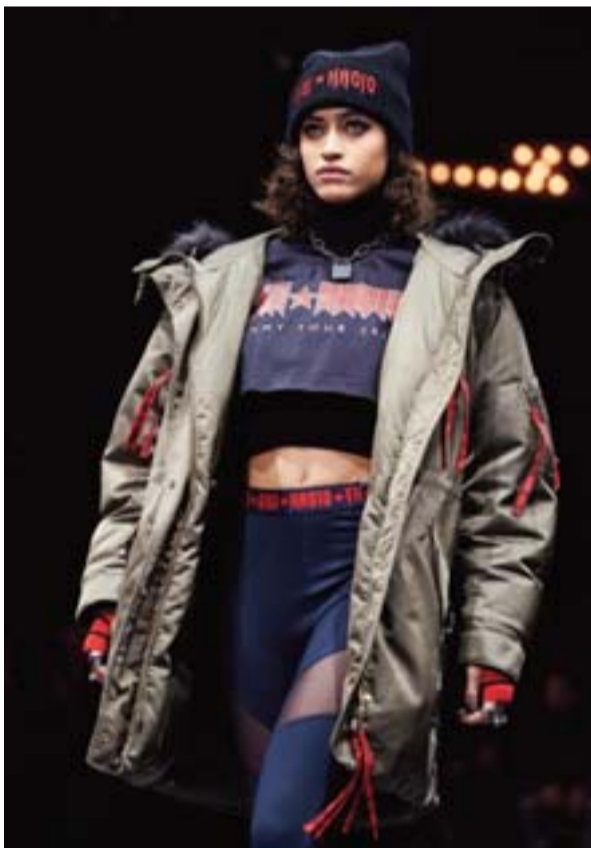
Victoria Beckham gives glimpse of Victoria, Victoria Beckham

Victoria Beckham didn't have a runway show at London Fashion Week, but she showed the spring and summer 2018 collection for her popular Victoria, Victoria Beckham line to journalists and guests at a private club in Mayfair. The former Spice Girl, whose New York show won accolades last week, is offering a youthful look. Some of the clothes celebrated Miami and its neon colors, including a jacket with pink flamingo designs. The saturated pop colors included "milkshake pink," "bubblegum" and "peppermint."

One tan suede outfit of short-short pants and a patch pocket jacket caught the eye, as did some pajama-style slouchy outfits. The look was relaxed and meant for fun, a far cry from the black that was once Beckham's signature color. She's emphasizing pastels now - at least for summer - and suits made of pinstriped cotton twill. It's been quite a year for Beckham, who in April was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in a ceremony at Buckingham Palace. — AP



FASHION



Models present creations for fashion house Atsushi Nakashima during the Women's Spring/Summer 2018 fashion shows in Milan yesterday. — AP/AFP photos

Hot new talent lights up Milan Fashion Week

Fashion week roared into Milan yesterday with a line-up of hotly anticipated shows from fresh talent as well as luxury titans ranging from Moschino to Armani, who are battling for their share of a rebounding market. Gucci is the first big name in line during the six days of catwalk strutting, coming in with mighty momentum under mastermind Alessandro Michele and the geek chic aesthetic he has established since taking the reins in 2015.

The Spring/Summer 2018 collection starring in its show yesterday is also Gucci's first since French parent company Kering announced a pledge earlier this month to ban ultra-thin models from its brands' advertising and runways. Luxury group LVMH, which counts heavyweight Fendi among its labels, has signed on as well to the ban that comes after repeated scandals in the fashion industry about anorexia and the mistreatment of models.

"This is the reason for the collection... putting together, understanding each other to have more communication," he told reporters through a translator. "We can connect with each other." Expectations are building for British talent Paul Surridge, who will on Friday show off his maiden collection since being named creative director in May of Roberto Cavalli, known for its sexy rock'n'roll attitude. Husband-and-wife team Luke and Lucie Meier are presenting their first designs on Saturday since being tapped in April as creative leads of minimalist stalwart Jil Sander. The Meiers, a rare married duo of co-directors, come from Dior for her and Paris-based menswear brand OAMC via iconic streetwear label Supreme for him.

Very good times, for some

"Lucie and I work together very naturally," Canadian Luke Meier told Vogue in June of his Swiss-born wife. "We have had an open dialogue about the approach to design for over 15 years and have often spoken of working together one day." Newcomers to the Milan calendar also include the-sirius, a young Seoul-based label known for futuristic designs, which will indulge its ultramodern urge with a show Thursday on the campus of Milan's Leonardo da Vinci Museum of Science and Technology.

But it would not be fashion week in Italy's capital of clothes and accessories without the kings and queens of the multi-billion euro luxury goods industry like Fendi, Ferragamo, Versace, Moschino and Prada. These European behemoths-or some of them, anyway-are seeing sales jump after years troubled by the triple whammy of a slowdown in Asia, currency volatility and customers staying at home after a string of terror attacks in Europe.

"While in the past good meant good for everyone... now the situation is very good for some and very bad for others," said Stefania Saviolo, a fashion and luxury expert at Milan's Bocconi University. "It depends on the category, the brand, it depends on many things," she told AFP. The rebound has been led by houses like Gucci which saw its sales in the first quarter of 2017 grow at their fastest pace in 20 years.

But the flip side is labels like Prada that just cannot seem to remember where they put the secret sauce. Prada has put some of the blame for soft sales on tourists being driven away by a strong euro. However, the winners and losers in the war for luxury buyers' hearts-and cash-must remember that nothing is forever. Saviolo said: "You don't know how long it will last. Cycles are getting shorter and shorter. The market gets tired of styles very fast." — AFP

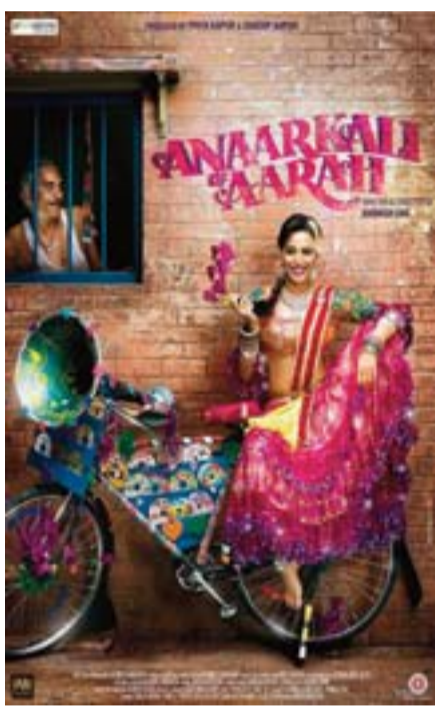


Milan kicked off with shows from smaller up-and-comers, including Japanese designer Atsushi Nakashima, who unveiled bright colors, space-agey silver ponchos and clothing bisected with lots of shiny zips. For Nakashima the zips are a reminder of humanity's better impulses in an uncertain time that has seen North Korea fire missiles directly over his homeland.



MUSIC & MOVIES

In glossy Bollywood, stories of ordinary Indian women shine



An elderly woman seeks a Mills & Boon romance with her swimming coach in Hindi film, 'Lipstick Under My Burkha', that battled the Indian censors ahead of its release in theatres last month and is now going strong on streaming service Amazon Prime. In another Bollywood film this year, 'Anaarkali of Aarah', inspired by a real-life incident, a nautch girl who sings innuendo-laden songs at functions in a small town called Aarah takes on a powerful official who molests her in public.

A fresh crop of Hindi films - or Bollywood as the industry is popularly known - are telling stories of ordinary women seeking sexual and financial freedom, or tackling tags of being "available" because they are in the company of men or are out until late. "Bollywood is a male-dominated industry but there is a sudden influx of women-oriented films that are also doing well," Avinash Das, writer-director of 'Anaarkali of Aarah' told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Triggering the change in Bollywood's narrative was the brutal gang rape of a 23-year-old woman on a bus in New Delhi in 2012, that led to massive protests across the country and put a spotlight on women's safety in India. "After the Delhi gang rape case, people are taking note of these films. Such films were made in the past too, but after the protests following the 2012 case, people are alert, and no longer casual about these stories."

Bollywood films, often characterized by their song and dance sequences and male-dominated story lines are influential in India and beyond, and objectification of women and their use in titillating songs is often blamed for stoking sexual crime in the country. India has only 10 cinema screens per million people as against 124 in the United States and 90 in China for the nearly 1,000 films Bollywood churns out every year, but it has the largest number of people going to the cinema.

The films that tell women's stories, though still perceived as commercially unviable, have done well at the box office. Alankrita Shrivastava, director of 'Lipstick Under My Burkha' said viewers were drawn to her film as "an honest story about them" and that the film remains the most watched since Amazon Prime's launch in India last December. The makers of 'Anaarkali' too could prove naysayers wrong when the film did commercially well and even a movie exploring lack of sanitation as a women's rights violation - 'Toilet: A Love Story' - has been a major hit this year.

"When issues matter to people ... they are bound to

come into popular entertainment media," said veteran filmmaker Shyam Benegal, whose award-winning films explored India's caste divide and told stories of ordinary women. "Films like 'Toilet: A Love Story' ring a bell with a large section of the audience who identify with the problem and that explains why they are doing well."

Off screen voices

In April, popular actor Abhay Deol took on fellow actors for endorsing skin whitening creams and slammed the popular Indian belief of "fairer is better" as racist. This off-screen voice of leading actors is creating awareness on subjects that were never discussed, be it fairness creams or even sex trafficking, campaigners said. "Celebrities have a huge following and the message goes out to people that campaigners would never be able to reach out to," said Samarth Pathak, spokesman at United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Pathak interviewed Bollywood heartthrob John Abraham on World Day Against Trafficking in July where he described trafficking as a "serious threat to humanity".

"This was our first interview with a filmstar and it created quite a buzz. A lot of young people are reaching out on (to understand) trafficking, which is unprecedented," Pathak said. A couple of days before the interview, Bollywood's most sought-after actor Akshay Kumar, who plays the male lead in 'Toilet...' and is now working in a film on menstrual hygiene, spoke about the need to protect children from abuse at an international sex trafficking conference in Mumbai.

These star voices matter as Bollywood's handling of prostitution had been restricted to portraying women as "call girls" without delving into the problems of sex trafficking and modern day slavery, said Sanjay Macwan, regional director of anti-trafficking charity International Justice Mission. "When Bollywood celebrities speak against sex trafficking, exploitation and bonded labour, it brings the issue before every Indian."

'Fashionable again'

Last year's release 'Dangal', which shows an ageing father train his two daughters to become wrestlers, defying social norms in conservative Haryana state in northern India, is among Bollywood's biggest ever hits, beating fluffy romances and epic revenge dramas in box office collections.

While arthouse films in the 1980s and a crop of independent filmmakers have tackled social issues, gender and small town India in their films, the backing of such projects by major studios seems a recent phenomenon - but in some ways is simply following an old Bollywood tradition.

"Hindi cinema has been dealing with social issues since the 1920s, even in the silent era," Meenakshi Shedde, South Asia consultant to the Berlin and Dubai Film Festivals and festival curator told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. A 1937 film - 'Duniya Na Mane (The World Does Not Agree)' - that showed a young schoolteacher from a poor family



refusing to consummate her marriage with an old man.

Some of India's most successful filmmakers from the 1930s to 60s such as V Shantaram and Bimal Roy had social themes at the centre of their stories. "Bollywood is often perceived as monolithic, masala films with stars, six songs and a happy ending. But it is many different things," Shedde said. It is wonderful that social issues are becoming fashionable in Bollywood again. — Reuters



Venezuelan musician Wully Artega thanks the audience after playing the violin at the Alice Tully Hall in New York's Lincoln Center. — AP

Protesting Venezuelan violinist may seek asylum in US

A violinist who became the young face of anti-government protests in Venezuela may soon seek political asylum in the United States. Wully Artega became well-known after playing somber renditions of Venezuela's national anthem while standing amid clouds of tear gas. During one clash with security forces earlier this year, he and his violin were dragged to the ground and he was later thrown in jail, where he said he was beaten.

Now free, he performed Tuesday at Lincoln Center in New York at an event to draw attention to human rights abuses in Venezuela. The 23-year-old said his priority is to find work in the US rather than request asylum. But he said he doesn't feel safe returning home because of death threats he's received on social media and by phone following his outspoken criticism of President Nicolas Maduro. "I'll probably seek asylum but it's not a decision I've made yet," Artega told The Associated Press at the concert. "I'm nervous and worried. I don't know what's going to happen with my life."

Dressed in a T-shirt and hat in the red, yellow and blue colors of the Venezuelan flag, Artega performed somber rendi-

tions of the classic folk standards that became anthems of the four-month protest movement. Projected on a screen behind him were scenes from the protests in which more than 120 people died and hundreds more were injured or jailed. Some of the images showed Artega, his face bloodied.

"I play the violin for peace, for freedom," Artega told the Lincoln Center crowd. Artega first picked up the violin growing up in the city of Valencia and was a member of Venezuela's world-famous El Sistema network of youth orchestras and music schools. He dropped out after two years but continued studying on his own. About four years ago he moved to Caracas, busking for his meals by playing on the streets and outside stores. He arrived in New York on Sunday with little means to support himself. He's living now at a hotel paid for by the sponsors of Tuesday's event but says he'll soon have to start looking for work. — AP



The members of Little Big Town, from left, Phillip Sweet, Kimberly Schlapman, Karen Fairchild and Jimi Westbrook receive their start in the Music City Walk of Fame in Nashville, Tenn. — AP

MUSIC TEACHER SUSPENDED AFTER RAP ASSIGNMENT ANGERS PARENT

A Georgia middle school music teacher who assigned homework featuring explicit rap lyrics has been suspended. Crishana Wright, the parent of a student at Bethune Middle School in DeKalb County, told WSB-TV on Tuesday that her daughter brought home a worksheet that contained expletives, violence and sexually suggestive lyrics. The exercise was for sixth-grade stu-

dents to take the rap lyrics and come up with their own positive words.

DeKalb County School District Superintendent R. Stephen Green said in a statement that the teacher was removed from the classroom and will be held accountable for "poor judgment." He said the district encourages teacher creativity, but instruction must be age-appropriate. — AP

Little Big Town heads back on tour after Ryman residency

Every time country vocal group Little Big Town walked into the 125-year-old Ryman Auditorium to play one of their residency shows this year, the four singers breathed a little sigh of relief. "When we go into the dressing room, you just take a breath and go, 'OK, I feel like I am at home,'" said Jimi Westbrook. The Mother Church of country music in downtown Nashville, Tennessee, was one of the few places fans could have seen the quartet perform this year, but the five-time Country Music Association vocal group of the year will return to a major headlining tour starting in February. After the release of their eighth album "The Breaker" in February, the Grammy-winning band took a break from heavy touring but their nine Ryman concerts between February and September gave fans a much more intimate and unique concert experience. They took advantage of the theater's natural acoustics to show off their beautiful four-part harmonies and had surprise special guests including Miranda Lambert, Luke Bryan, Tori Kelly and Chris Stapleton. The last show in the residency will be on Nov 27.

"It's magical and it's surreal every time," Phillip Sweet said of the Ryman shows. "And it's been such an enriching experience for us. We come away really emotional in a good way." "The Breakers" tour will kick off in Oklahoma City on Feb. 8 and hit the Radio City Music Hall in New York, as well as Green Bay, Wisconsin, Minneapolis and Atlanta. Opening acts include Kacey Musgraves and Midland and tickets go on sale Friday. The group is up for four nominations at this year's CMA Awards on Nov. 8, including single and video of the year for "Better Man," written by pop superstar Taylor Swift. Swift, who got her start in country, is also nominated for the first time in several years as the songwriter for "Better Man."

"When you can't get it out of your head, and when it becomes sing-able instantly, then there's always something special about it," Fairchild said. "And then when you get that extra tug of the heart and connection... then you really have just gone to a deeper level with the fans... Taylor wrote a beautiful song and we're just really grateful that the fans connected with it." The group said they sent Swift messages of congratulations after learning of the nomination and Sweet said, "She was very thrilled, very excited." But there's no word if Swift, whose new album "reputation" comes out two days after the CMA Awards, will show up to the awards show. "She is one busy lady," Fairchild said, but added if she did come, "that would be awesome." — AP

'Stronger' spawns a friendship for Gyllenhaal and Bauman

As the cast and makers of "Stronger" collectively rose to take a bow after the film's Toronto International Film Festival premiere, Jake Gyllenhaal realized that Jeff Bauman, whom he plays in the film and who wears prosthetic legs, was still sitting, overwhelmed with emotion. "Jake was like, 'Get up!'" Bauman said. "And I stood up." "As soon as he got up, everyone else stood up," Gyllenhaal said. "I realized: This movie just showed them everything he went through just for that moment. I've never had an experience like that making a movie." "Stronger," directed by David Gordon Green, is the kind of movie that holds as much drama off the screen as on it. The movie chronicles Bauman's struggles after a bomb explosion tore through his legs while he was waiting by the finish line of the 2013 Boston Marathon. He was there to greet his on-again, off-again girlfriend, Erin Hurley, who had previously chided him for never "showing up."

"Stronger," based on Bauman's 2014 memoir, is an undoubtedly inspiring story, but maybe not in the way you'd expect. Honest, painful and funny, it avoids the familiar Hollywood beats for a more truthful tale of personal growth. "The big moments of our lives don't happen in a close-up," says Gyllenhaal. "Stronger" captures Bauman, now 31, recalibrating his life after the tragedy, still struggling with relationship and drinking problems that predated the bombing and chafing at the role cast upon him as a heroic symbol of "Boston Strong." Bauman instead saw himself merely, he says, as: "Just a dude with no legs."

Totally different person

Bauman's modesty remains, but he's also come to terms with being someone who gives hope to others, who can now connect with a wide world of amputees, war veterans and other sufferers trying to get by. One memorable scene, taken from a real experience, shows Bauman mobbed at Fenway and listening to story after story. "There's so much love coming at Jeff," says Gyllenhaal. "People line up - they really do - to talk to him. They're like: 'This thing happened to me; That thing happened to me.' We are not alone in all that, and that's what his story says."

Meeting for an interview at a Toronto hotel shortly after the film's festival premiere, the close bond between Gyllenhaal and Bauman was plainly evident. In the two and a half years since they began working on the movie together, they've gotten to know each other well through Gyllenhaal's regular trips up to Boston to spend time with Bauman and study how he moves physically. Bauman came to New York to see Gyllenhaal on Broadway. They threw out the first pitch at Fenway Park together. "Since we first met, I think he's a totally different person now," Gyllenhaal says. "Particularly in the past year, since getting sober. I think he's been much more open. When we first met, trying to learn about him and figure out what was going on was a little harder. And now I feel like I know him better than even when I played the role."

"Bromance" is a term that has often been applied to their relationship, but Gyllenhaal, 36, is more like an encouraging older

brother. He's helped Bauman through hard times (he and Hurley, previously married and with a three-year-old daughter, Nora, have separated) and gamely accepts Bauman's playful chiding - like his questioning the depth of the New York-based Gyllenhaal's Red Sox fandom.

'I had my life on pause'

Jake: I am a Sox fan. I just wear a Yankees hat, but I am a Sox fan. Jeff: He doesn't wear a Yankees hat around me. Jake: That's true. Jeff (derisively): He's a Warriors fan. Jake: Easy. They've been inseparable while strolling down red carpets and promoting "Stronger." "I'm like his shadow," said Gyllenhaal. Last week, they showed the film to patients and staff at the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, where Bauman worked on his recovery and where they filmed scenes for the movie. In Toronto, Bauman was pleased to see a photo caption misidentifying him as his fiction-film doppelganger. He plans to frame it and give it to Jake.

But in the time they've been making "Stronger" (Gyllenhaal is also a producer), both say Bauman has dramatically grown. He's now 15 months sober and studying engineering in college. Working at Costco at the time of the bombing, Bauman now hopes to work for a prosthetics company. He also moved out of his mother's apartment and into his own place. Gyllenhaal considers it the film's biggest accomplishment. "I took my hand off the pause button," says Bauman. "I had my life on pause. You get stuck, especially when you're drinking and isolating. I started homing in on what I wanted to do as a person. Just try to grow up."

When Gyllenhaal first met Bauman, he was struggling to adjust to the prosthetic legs. Now, he confidently goes up and down stairs, unaided. Bauman, still reluctant to take any credit, praises the technology. But Gyllenhaal prods him, still trying to get Bauman to take some credit. "I wish you could stand where I stand when you walk through," Gyllenhaal says, "and people just go, 'F---ing awesome.'" — AP

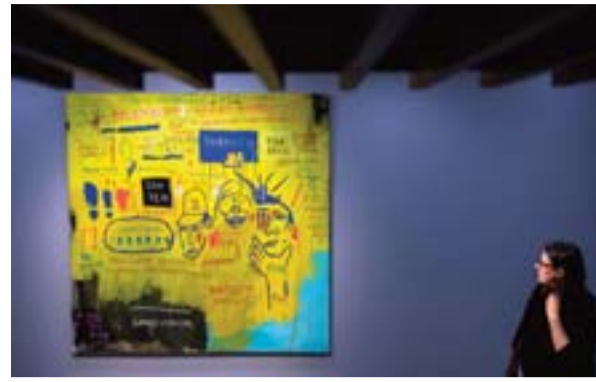


Actor Jake Gyllenhaal, left, director David Gordon Green, center left, Boston Marathon bombing survivor Jeff Bauman, center right, and actress Tatiana Maslany, right, arrive on the red carpet at the US premiere of the movie 'Stronger' at the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Boston. — AP

FEATURES



A man videos himself in front of a painting titled 'King Zulu' by US artist Jean Michel Basquiat during a press call for a new exhibition 'Basquiat: Boom for real' at the Barbican in London yesterday. — AP/AFP photos



A woman looks at a painting titled 'Hollywood Africans' by US artist Jean Michel Basquiat.



A woman looks at a painting titled 'Untitled', 1982 by US artist Jean Michel Basquiat.



A man looks a painting titled 'Dos Cabezas' by US artist Jean Michel Basquiat, depicting himself and Andy Warhol.



A woman looks at a painting titled 'Glenn' by US artist Jean Michel Basquiat.

'Seismic' street-art icon Basquiat gets major UK show

The explosive works of Jean-Michel Basquiat, a trailblazer of the New York art scene of the 1970s and 80s, are to be shown in London starting this week in his first major British exhibition. The former graffiti artist, who died in 1988 at just 27 years old, mined a huge range of influences including jazz, pop culture, abstract and primitive art and old masters in producing his dynamic and distinctive paintings, earning him a devout legion of supporters. "These works are able to induce almost maniacal passion in people, once you get hooked there's no going back," said Eleanor Nairne, curator at Barbican Art Gallery, where the exhibition will open today.

"His work is really expressive, loose, free," she said. "Very rough and ready, but with that raw texture to it, teeming with thoughts, influences." His "Untitled" work sold for a record

\$110.5 million (92 million euros) in New York this year, a sign the increasingly high esteem in which his work is held. The vibrant, busy pieces reveal a stream of consciousness, absorbing influences from high and pop culture, including jazz master Charlie Parker, Leonardo da Vinci, Henri Matisse and the Looney Tunes's Road Runner and reproducing them in abstract forms. Common motifs include the use of symbols and text, often repeated in blocks, exploring themes such as colonialism and class politics.

'Beginning of information age'

Nairne said Basquiat had a "seismic impact not just on contemporary art, but much more broadly, in fashion and in media, whether it be Jay Z or Banksy." Basquiat, born in 1960,

learned his trade in the late 1970s in the post-punk underground art scene in downtown New York, being a protege of pop-art icon Andy Warhol and becoming a pioneer of multimedia work. He also played in a band as part of the scene that spawned artists such as Blondie and the Ramones, and his use of chopped-up samples in his paintings echoed similar techniques being used at the same time by hip-hop pioneers like Grandmaster Flash. "This is an artist who has this insatiable appetite for information," said Nairne. "We might think of this as the beginning of the information age."

"He always had the television on in the studio, always had books spread open and music playing. He was able to sample from a lot of material." Since his death of a heroin overdose, Basquiat has had little exposure in Britain. The Barbican Centre

worked with international museums and private collections for three years to secure more than a 100 works, from vast paintings like "King of Zulu" to handwritten poems influenced by beat poet William S Burroughs.

British graffiti artist Banksy counts himself one of Basquiat's biggest fans, and caused a stir by producing two new works close to the Barbican, one pointing out the irony of holding the show in a neighborhood largely devoid of street art. Among those coming to survey Banksy's latest works were Sharon De Boos and her young daughter Elise. "I wanted to show my daughter, she's never heard of Banksy so I thought I'd show her, it's something different," De Boos said. — AP

Contemplating a ski trip this winter? Book now for best deal

Are you contemplating a ski trip this winter? It might be hard to wrap your head around the concept of snow if you're still mourning summer's passing or trying to make vacation plans for fall amid foliage forecasts and hurricane news. But the best deals for ski vacations are offered well before cold weather hits. "Now is the best time to time to book a ski trip," said Dan Sherman, spokesman for Ski.com. "You may not want to think about snow right now but it's coming. People wait and then they may have to pay more."

Sherman said travelers often don't focus on skiing until much later in the year, but airfare, hotels, car rentals and other ski trip essentials typically cost more as winter and the holidays approach. Some options will sell out altogether, especially nonstop flights and stays at ski-in and ski-out properties. Multiresort passes like the Epic Pass and Mountain Collective become more expensive the longer you wait to buy. "We will see accommodation sellouts as early as this fall at

popular resorts like Vail, Breckenridge, Aspen and Park City," Sherman said. "If you're planning to visit these resorts and others, especially during the holiday season, booking now ensures you'll have first choice in your travel days, connections and accommodation preferences."

Sherman predicts that Canadian resorts like Whistler Blackcomb will also see sellouts this year, due to new ownership and inclusion on the Epic Pass, which covers unlimited skiing at a dozen resorts including Vail in Colorado and Park City in Utah. Seven-day Epic passes are \$659 until Oct 8, when the price goes up to \$753.77. Ski.com also has a variety of early bird deals, like a discounted Christmas through New Year's stay at Breckenridge in Colorado if you book by Oct 10. The one-bedroom suite deal at Beaver Run Resort, eight nights from Dec 25 through Jan 2, is \$5,068 (before taxes and fees), 30 percent off the regular price of \$7,240. — AP



A picture shows an Egyptian rowing a boat in the Nile, in the southern Egyptian city of Luxor.



A picture shows river boats moored in the Nile at a marina during sunrise in the southern Egyptian city of Luxor. — AFP photos

Merchants say Egypt tourism revival steady but slow

Pummelled by political unrest and jihadist attacks, Egypt's tourism industry is slowly growing again, but too slowly for thousands of bazaar workers who fondly recall when tourists thronged their stores. Abu Aya owns a souvenir shop in the southern city of Luxor which is home to ancient pharaonic monuments, and he fondly remembers the days when the front pocket of his traditional Arabic robe sagged with cash. "Before 2011 it was filled with dollars and euros. Today the sellers just sit in front of their stores reading the papers because there are so few customers," the 47-year-old said. In the promenade bazaar lined with shops selling souvenirs and incense, every business seemed to be suffering from the downturn.

For years the North African nation had worked to attract more tourists to its famed ancient sites and pristine Red Sea beaches, a policy that resulted in a record 14.7 million visitors in 2010. Tourism in the Arab world's most populous country has long provided much-needed revenues. But an uprising that unseated autocrat Hosni Mubarak in February 2011, followed by years of political unrest, rolled back the gains in a disaster to the four million people whose jobs at the time relied on the tourism industry. A jihadist insurgency that erupted in 2013 also took its toll. Two years later, security forces mistakenly killed eight Mexican tourists they thought were "terrorists".

Public relations blitz

In October 2015, the Islamic State group said it downed a Russian airliner in the Sinai after it took off from a Red Sea resort, killing all 224 people on board. Visitor numbers plunged from 9.3 million in 2015 to 5.3 million the following year. A public relations blitz by the tourism industry including international events and slick advertisements has had some effect, tourism officials say. Hotel occupancy rates in Luxor are expected to reach 30 percent by the end of the year, compared with 23 percent in 2016 and 17 percent in 2015, said Maher Abdel Hakim, an expert on the hospitality industry who runs a tourism promotion group.

But there is still a long way to go, as suggested by the desperate shop owners and drivers of horse-drawn carriages who resort to pleading for business. "I'll accept whatever you pay-I just want to buy fodder for the horse," one yelled at potential clients outside the colossus-flanked entrance of the ancient Luxor Temple. Sites such as Luxor-once a pharaonic capital that still boasts stunning ancient temples-have been hardest hit, compared with the beach resorts that continue to attract a diminished but steady flow of holidaymakers. "Before the 2011 revolution, 1,500 French tourists would come to Luxor in just a week," said Ahmed Mahmoud, a 35-year-old former tourism industry worker who has since switched to teaching.

'The people are great'

Abdel Hakim said the city's population and its tourism workers were suffering. "Tourists in the past would walk around the historic sites, and ride carriages and buy souvenirs... everyone would profit," he said. Abu Aya accepts that tourists have indeed begun to return. But "this hasn't yet been felt by the owners of bazaars and residents of the city". He says that despite a bungled attack in a Luxor temple in 2015, the city is safe, a view Chinese tourist Ann Zhu agreed with. "I feel Luxor is safer than Cairo, and the people here are great," said the 28-year-old who had just visited the Karnak temple where the attack was foiled.

Tourists from China have been among the most drawn to the ancient Egyptian sites over the past two years. China's top public travel agency, China International Travel Service, reported a 58 percent increase in the number of tourists flying to Egypt compared with 2015. "I've started speaking Chinese," said Ahmed Hassan, who operates a hot-air balloon that gives tourists the chance to experience a different perspective of the area's famous sites. — AFP



In this, file photo, a skier kicks up some fresh powder during opening day at Arapahoe Basin in Dillon, Colo. — AP

Safat Home launches new Autumn collection and a chance to win a 2017 Chevrolet Malibu

Safat Home, Kuwait's leading home furnishing retailer, launched its new Autumn collection bringing over 3,000 brand new products into its showrooms across Kuwait and giving customers a chance to win a 2017 Chevrolet Malibu when shopping the new collection.

Running its new collection campaign from September 14 to October 25, Safat Home enables customers to enter the draw to win the coveted 2017 Chevrolet Malibu for every KD 100 spent on the new collection. The campaign also rewards a second draw winner who will leave with 500 KD in cash, and a third draw winner of 250 KD in vouchers to be used at Safat Home. The draw will be held on October 26 at the Safat Alghanim Shuwaikh showroom.

The Autumn collection also reveals a new selection of sanitary and tiles from Italy & Spain, on which customers will receive 50 KD in voucher for every 500 KD spent on these products.

Constantly rewarding customers and ensuring their satisfaction, Safat Home offers customers 0% interest on credit facilities taken over 12 months. The service enables customers to renew their homes from the largest variety of home furnishing styles and products in Kuwait, catering to all tastes, demographics and lifestyles. The available collections run the gamut from the classical, luxurious, contemporary and minimalist, giving customers that furniture set they really need, or a stylish mixture of accessories that are guaranteed to add beauty and pizzazz to any corner in their house.

Customers can take advantage of the diversified Autumn collection, quality products, the latest trends and competitive prices under one roof by visiting the Safat Home showrooms located in Al-Rai, Shuwaikh and Fahaheel. The Shuwaikh showroom is located near Yusuf A Alghanim Service and Maintenance Center, while the Al-Rai showroom is located in Safat Alghanim, and the Fahaheel showroom on Dabbous Street, above X-cite.

The Shuwaikh showroom is open from 9am to 11pm every day, while the Al-Rai showroom operates from 9:30am until midnight every day, and the Fahaheel showroom is open daily from 9am to 10pm.



Lifestyle

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2017

Tommy Hilfiger and Gigi Hadid stage London Fashion Week show

28



Kuwaiti men looking at a painting of Kuwaiti artist Ahmed Muqeem, during an art exhibition in Kuwait City. — Yasser Al-Zayyat

Marie Kondo is back with a manga about decluttering

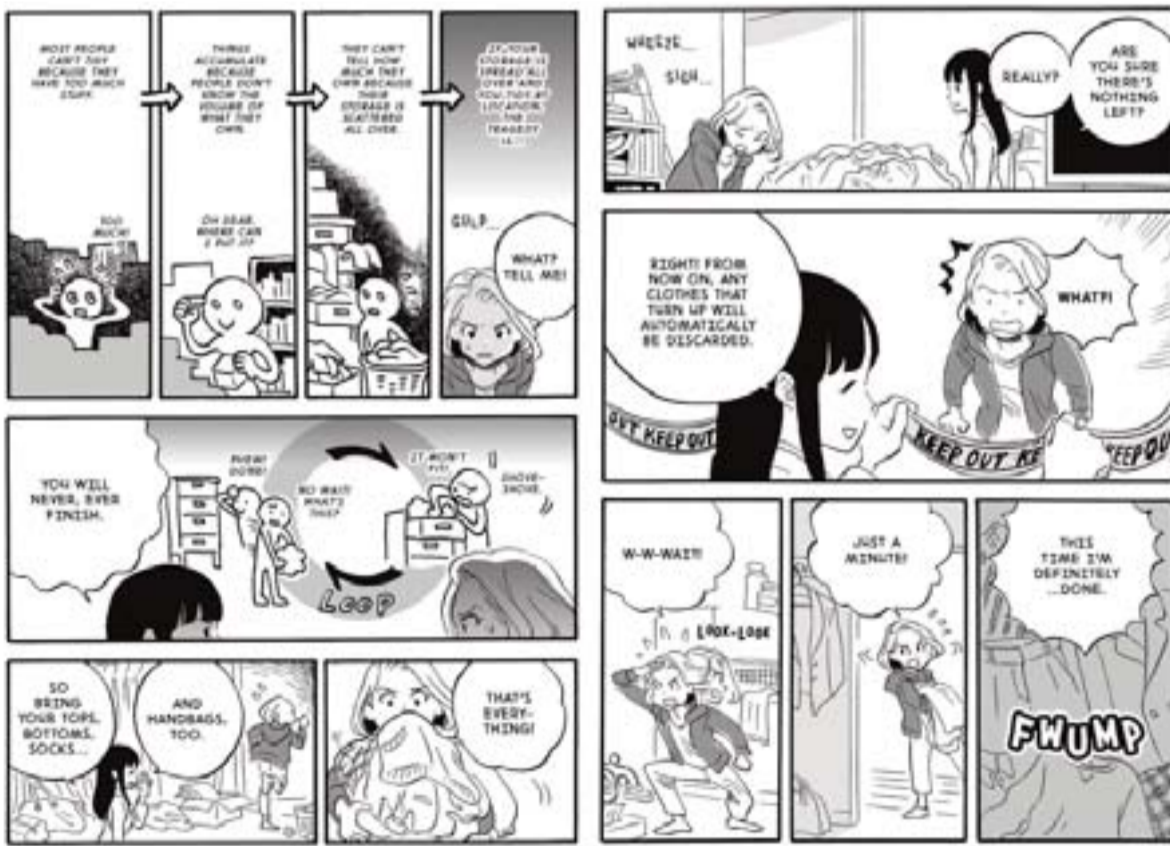


Photo provided by Ten Speed Press shows illustrations inside the book "the life-changing manga of tidying up: a magical story," by Marie Kondo and illustrated by Yuko Uramoto. — AP photos



Photo shows the cover of the book "the life-changing manga of tidying up: a magical story."

Just when it seemed Marie Kondo had spread her gospel on the "life-changing magic" of decluttering as far as it could go, the author - whose two previous books remain international best-sellers - is back with a different audience in mind. Kondo's message that you should keep only things that "spark joy" is now in manga form, with a love story as a backdrop. Her new book, "The Life-Changing Manga of Tidying Up" (Ten Speed Press), features the work of artist Yuko Uramoto and seems designed to attract a younger set - including teenage boys - many of whom probably missed out on her earlier volumes. And she may be on target.

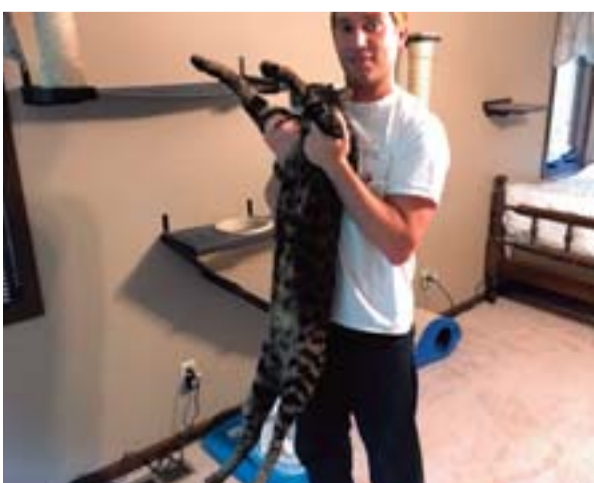
While my two sons, ages 12 and 14, had zero interest in her earlier books, they battled over who could rip through Kondo's manga as soon as they spotted it on the dining room table. And while they rolled their eyes when I asked if it had made a difference in their lives, my younger son was soon putting his desk in order and going through his drawers, and my older son packed for a family trip by carefully rolling his clothes into neat little packets in his suitcase. He also commented on a recently acquired cabinet in our living room, noting Kondo's advice that additional storage furniture should be unnecessary in a properly decluttered home.

Then my boys passed the book on to a friend, who also rolled his eyes and shrugged when asked if he'd learned anything from it. But within days, he'd packed up no less than seven bags of unwanted toys and clothes from his room. A coincidence? Perhaps. Manga is a form of graphic novel in Kondo's native Japan. "In Japan, manga is a form of artistic expression and entertainment that connects people across generations," Kondo wrote in an email when asked about the book. "Creating the manga has been such a fun and gratifying experience for me, and I hope that it sparks joy for new readers and fans alike!" The fictional story tells of Chiaki Suzuki, 29, single, and living in a tiny hoarders' den of a Tokyo apartment. She develops a crush on the handsome - and minimalist - young man next door, a professional cook whom she can't bring herself to invite over because of her messy apartment. The two meet when he

complains about the mountains of trash on her balcony. Chiaki is a workaholic and never has time to cook, but she dreams of preparing delicious meals at home. Will she ever be able to tidy up enough to invite her Prince Charming to dinner?

Thanks to Kondo, who appears as a character in the book - a sort of magical decluttering fairy - the answer is yes. Kondo, teaching her method of sifting through belongings one category at a time, helps Chiaki transform her apartment and, in the process, her life. Chiaki learns to appreciate the things around her, recognize her forgotten dreams and value herself.

In short, she discovers the life-changing magic of tidying up. And yes, she does end up with the cute guy next door, a role model for any reader, of any age, who ever doubted that cooking and tidying up was a certain way to a girl's heart. — AP



Will Powers holds his cat Arcturus Aldebaran Powers in Farmington Hills, Mich. — AP photos

TALL TAIL: RECORD-SETTING CATS SHARE HOME NEAR DETROIT

Here's a very tall tail: Two record-setting cats are living together near Detroit. Arcturus Aldebaran Powers holds the Guinness World Records mark for tallest domestic cat, measuring at about 19 inches (48 centimeters). Housemate Cygnus Regulus Powers holds the record for the domestic cat with the longest tail, measuring more than 17 inches (43 centimeters). The cats live in Farmington Hills with Will and Lauren Powers.

Guinness says they sought the records to raise awareness about a cat shelter.

Will Powers told The Detroit News that people often want to have photos taken with the cats, so they ask them for donations for the shelter. He says both cats are about 2 years old. MLive.com reports that Arcturus could keep growing until age four or five. — AP