



Spectators watch as a car lands on its nose during a car jumping display at Stunt Fest at the Santa Pod Raceway near Wellingborough, central England, yesterday. The annual Stunt Fest event of automotive displays features monster trucks, car jumping, stunt driving and car football. — AFP

GOVT SUBMITS SUBSIDY STUDY TO MPs

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MP Abdulhameed Dashti said that during the meeting, the government told MPs that the decision to cut the cost of medical treatment for Kuwaitis abroad has been frozen until it is discussed with the Assembly as part of the reforms and spending cut measures. MP Askar Al-Enezi said that during the meeting, MPs asked the government to suspend the implementation of the medical treatment decision and the government agreed. He said he is confident that the prime minister will take every care not to undermine the rights of citizens for medical care and that the decision to cut allocations will be carefully assessed. Head of the economic consultative committee at the planning council Nasser Al-Roudhan, who attended the meeting, said the committee stressed that

tackling the economic situation should come through privatizing public services with strong government monitoring through the so-called golden share rule. National Assembly speaker Marzouk Al-Ghanem said the Assembly and the government will not shy away from tackling the economic issue and the treatment is aimed at achieving a bright future for the country. He stressed for the need to design a national project for tackling economic imbalances and if there is a need to issue legislation, the Assembly has no objection.

Ghanem also urged the government to review its decision on the reduction of allocations for medical treatment abroad in a way that should not affect patients. Ghanem told reporters that he agrees on reducing spending in different sectors, including overseas medical treatment, through sound rules that should not affect those who deserve it.

IRAN SEEKS \$45BN IN FOREIGN INVESTMENT

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resources for next year, with about \$15 billion in direct foreign investment," he told a press conference. Tayebnia said Iran signed an agreement with Japan earlier this month for \$10 billion in investments and is seeking similar deals with other nations. Iran is now seeking to reduce reliance on oil revenues and move towards an economy

that depends on taxation, tourism, agriculture and other sources of revenue. Attracting foreign investment is seen as a necessary must-do step towards that goal. Tayebnia, however, said Iran welcomes foreign investment only if it leads to strengthening Iran's economy. "We won't welcome any proposal that doesn't lead to transfer of technology and capital (to Iran) or doesn't boost production and exports," he said. — AP

REFUGEE DOCU 'FIRE AT SEA' WINS...

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"I give this gift to the Tunisian people, all the martyrs of the revolution, all of those who contributed to the revolution," he said. "I hope we will continue on being free, being happy, producing good art." The Silver Bear for best actress went to Denmark's Trine Dyrholm for her role as a wronged wife in Thomas Vinterberg's "The Commune", a semi-autobiographical movie about his 1970s childhood. Oscar-winning Bosnian director Danis Tanovic accept-

ed the runner-up Grand Jury Prize for "Death in Sarajevo" about the corrosive legacy of the Balkans wars. A more than eight-hour-long historical epic by Filipino director Lav Diaz, "A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery", claimed the Alfred Bauer Prize for a feature film that opens new perspectives in cinema. Best screenplay went to Polish filmmaker Tomasz Wasilewski for his portrait of the pivotal 1989-90 period in his country as told through four women, played by some of Poland's best-known theatre actresses, at crossroads in their lives. — AFP

UK SETS JUNE DATE FOR EU REFERENDUM

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"The starting gun has been fired," the UK Independence Party (UKIP) said in a statement. "The 23rd is our golden opportunity, let battle be joined," Nigel Farage, the party's leader, said, branding the EU deal "pathetic." "We must look forward to work with everybody who cares about our future, a future where the people of Britain controls her own borders, where we can make our own trade deals and make our own laws. "We want our country back," he said.

Cameron's Conservative party in particular is split over Europe, and no sooner had yesterday's cabinet meeting ended than five of its 22 ministers announced they would be campaigning to leave. Among them are justice minister Michael Gove, who said "this chance may never come again in our lifetimes". The biggest prize for the eurosceptic camp, which has so far been plagued by infighting and has no clear leader, would be Boris Johnson, the popular Conservative mayor of London. Johnson, who has ambitions to succeed Cameron as leader of the Conservative party, has yet to declare his position. Media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, an influential figure in Britain through his ownership of a clutch of UK newspapers, congratulated Gove. "Congratulations Michael Gove," Murdoch said on Twitter. "Friends always knew his principles would overcome his personal friendships." The message from the 84-year-old executive chairman of News Corp and 21st Century Fox Inc raises the prospect of some of the media tycoon's British newspapers possibly campaigning for an EU exit.

Cameron announced his intention to hold a referendum three years ago, under pressure from Conservative eurosceptics and the rise of UKIP. He said he would only campaign to stay in if he could secure reforms to address key concerns about EU migration, loss of sovereignty, economic competitiveness and the protection of non-eurozone Britain's financial sector. Declaring success in his negotiations on Friday, with what German Chancellor Angela Merkel was a "fair compromise", Cameron said he would campaign "with all my heart and soul" to stay.

But critics say the deal, which contained restrictions on welfare payments for EU migrants and an opt-out for Britain from the EU's goal towards ever closer union, falls far short of what

was originally promised. "Call that a Deal, Dave?" headlined the mass-market Daily Mail, while The Daily Telegraph said Cameron had made "puny gains" and The Times called it "Thin Gruel".

Analysts say the nitty-gritty of the EU deal will likely be only a small part of the referendum campaign, which is already focused on the big issues of immigration, security, prosperity and Britain's place in the world. "Voters are not going to decide by this deal," said John Springford, senior research fellow at the Centre for European Reform. Opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn dismissed Cameron's deal as a "sideshow" but said he would be campaign to stay because the EU "brings investment, jobs and protection for British workers and consumers".

Anand Menon, professor of European politics at King's College London, said he expected both sides to emphasise the risks of either leaving or sticking with the status quo. "This is going to be a depressingly negative campaign," he told AFP. The date for the referendum, which clashes with the Glastonbury music festival, an EU summit in Brussels and comes in the middle of the Euro 2016 football tournament, has to be approved in parliament and Cameron will address the House of Commons tomorrow.

It will be Britain's second referendum on European membership in just over 40 years. In June 1975, voters backed membership of the then European Economic Community (EEC) by just over 67 percent. The question on June 23 will be: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?"

Pro-Europeans, including former prime ministers Tony Blair and John Major, have warned that an exit could also trigger the break-up of the United Kingdom by prompting another Scottish independence vote if England pulled Scotland out of the EU. Companies such as BP and GlaxoSmithKline have cautioned that Britain's \$2.9 trillion economy would face years of uncertain negotiations if voters chose to divorce, while Goldman Sachs said sterling could fall by as much as a fifth.

Members of Britain's split 'Out' campaign say such warnings are overblown and that Britain would prosper if it broke free from what they say is a doomed German-dominated bloc that punches way below its weight beside rivals such as Russian President Vladimir Putin. — Agencies

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