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AMIR OPENS ASSEMBLY TERM, URGES SPENDING CUTS, UNITY

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KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah greets members of the National Assembly during the opening ceremony of the new legislative term yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

EXPATS CANNOT GET CAMPING LICENSES

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: According to the municipal law, expats cannot apply for camping licenses this year, which will only be granted to Kuwaitis aged 21 and above. The local camping season begins on Nov 1. Municipality Director General Engineer Ahmad Al-Subaih said there are 20 camping sites over a total area of 1,135 sq km in Jahra and Ahmadi governorates - 15 sites in Jahra and five in Ahmadi. He said those applying for a camping license can do so in only one site from the 20 sites allocated by the municipality. Subaih said KD 50 will be charged as fees for each license for each camp, while a KD 300 deposit for every 1,000 m will be charged, and will be refunded after the camp is removed and the site cleaned.

IOC BANS KUWAIT, PAYS SLAMS 'PLOT'

KUWAIT: The International Olympic Committee has suspended Kuwait for the second time in five years over government interference in the country's Games committee, but the decision was rejected by Kuwait's Public Authority for Youth and Sport. The IOC said yesterday it met the government and the Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC) on Oct 12 to resolve the issue

over a piece of sports legislation that was seen as threatening the autonomy of the Olympic body but the talks proved fruitless.

"The Olympic Movement in Kuwait has faced a number of issues to preserve its autonomy, in particular due to recently amended sports legislation in Kuwait," the IOC added.

Continued on Page 13

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah yesterday called on the government and the National Assembly to take urgent austerity measures to cut spending and boost non-oil revenues after a slump in oil prices resulted in Kuwait losing 60 percent of its revenues. The Amir also urged the nation to unite to confront the threat of terrorism which struck the country when a suicide bomber blew himself up in the Imam Al-Sadeq Mosque in June, killing 26 people and wounding 227 others.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the new parliamentary term, the Amir said that although revenues dropped sharply,

public spending, especially on items without returns, has continued without any reduction. The Amir also called on the Kuwaiti people to understand the aims of economic reforms, but insisted that any reforms should not hurt low-income people.

Over the past 16 fiscal years, oil revenues contributed close to 94-95 percent of public revenues and this contribution is forecast to slide by around 60 percent because of the drop in oil prices since June 2014. Kuwait is projecting a deficit of KD 7 billion before calculating the 10 percent deduction in favor of the future generations fund.

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SEE PAGES 2 & 3

23 EXPATS TO BE DEPORTED FOR PUBLIC BRAWL

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti authorities will deport without trial 17 Egyptians and six Syrians after they were involved in a mass brawl over a commercial dispute, an information ministry official said yesterday. The official denied media reports that the men were being deported after allegedly beating up a Kuwaiti citizen. The reports had also put the number of Egyptians at 18. "The men participated in a brawl and damaged vehicles in Shuwaikh industrial area," the information ministry official told AFP. "There was no (Kuwaiti) citizen involved in the case," he said, requesting anonymity.

Continued on Page 13

KUWAIT AIRWAYS SEEKS PARTNERS AS EXPANSION BEGINS

DUBAI: Kuwait Airways is heading into an expansion phase which will include partnerships, following a restructuring plan that helped it cut losses, an executive at the state-owned airline said yesterday. "We have a whole plan until 2022 of different fleet leases, purchases ... we're restructuring our routes as we speak and reducing operational costs," Kuwait Airways Chief Operating Officer Kamil Al-Awadhi told reporters. "We're looking at partners ... that would give more access and passengers," he said, saying agreements could go beyond code shares, whereby airlines extend networks by selling tickets for flights operated by partners, and vice versa.

In November last year, Kuwait Airways agreed to purchase 10 Boeing 777-300s which it will start receiving in Nov 2016. Some of these will be used to replace retiring aircraft, while others will be used for expansion on long-haul routes. The airline may also exercise options to purchase five more planes. Kuwait Airways has made firm orders for Boeing 777s, Airbus A320neos and A350s and has options to buy more.

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KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim seen during his speech at the Fourth session of the 14th legislative term. — KUNA

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti woman takes a selfie during the opening ceremony of the new legislative year at the National Assembly in Kuwait City yesterday. Amir called on the government and parliament to carry out urgent economic reforms after state income dropped 60 percent due to a sharp slide in oil prices. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAITIS DEFEATED TERRORISM THROUGH UNITY: SPEAKER RESPONSIBLE DEMOCRACY 'KEY TO DEVELOPMENT'

KUWAIT: Through unity and cooperation with the leadership, Kuwaitis have managed to defeat terrorism, said Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanim yesterday. In his speech to the Fourth Session of the 14th legislative term attended by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Al-Ghanim called on the people of Kuwait to band together to eliminate any chances for terrorism to undermine Kuwait's national security. Al-Ghanim touched on issues connected to the Imam Al-Saqed Mosque terrorist attack on June 26 and the discovery of a terrorist cell in Kuwait, saying that the way the leadership handled the situations had defused tension in the country.

Al-Ghanim lauded His Highness the Amir's immediate and spontaneous response to the attack on Imam Al-Sadeq Mosque, noting that his visit to the scene of the attack was a "historical" move on his part.

The Speaker also commended the Kuwait people's reaction in denouncing all acts and attempts to spread fear in the country, affirming that the Kuwaiti people will come out triumphant against terrorism. Regarding the National Assembly's recent activities, Al-Ghanim said that the parliament had approved 49 public

legislations, namely within the housing and audit domains.

The parliament's achievements could not have happened without the guidance of the country's leadership, said Al-Ghanim who also commended MPs for their cooperation with the cabinet on various issues. Despite the fact, said Al-Ghanim, there are still some issues that need to be addressed; therefore, the parliament will continue to monitor the cabinet's efforts to ensure that things would be accomplished. Change will come with patience and planning, affirmed Al-Ghanim who called on the executive and legislative authorities to work together for the sake of the people. He also called on citizens to respect the rule of law, adding that the concept of unity will enable Kuwait to overcome social, economic, political, and other sorts of challenges ahead.

Enlightened democracy

Meanwhile, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said Monday that responsible and enlightened democracy is an effective means of development of nations. "It's important to promote public awareness about the correct democratic practices and the need to main-

tain security and stability as a way to attain multi-faceted development including the political, economic and social aspects," he said.

Sheikh Salman made the comments during his meeting with foreign press people who arrived here to cover the opening of the fourth legislative term of the National Assembly. "The Arab world is undergoing challenging conditions and mixed experiences; some of these experiences were constructive and others went in the wrong direction," the minister said.

"The people of some Arab countries were seduced into believing in too idealistic slogans and far-fetched ideas that can hardly reflect reality; they are now unable to deal with reality as they are faced with fear for freedom versus fear for life and safety," Sheikh Salman argued.

"To the contrary, the Kuwaiti democratic experiment was the result and expression of reality, not imported from abroad; it has a unique feature derived from the intimate ruler-ruled relationship," he pointed out. He added that the Kuwaiti democratic experiment was able to overcome the numerous challenges through successful cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities, thus laying the groundwork for development and national action. — Agencies

IIMFE IS THE GREATEST INCUBATOR FOR KUWAITI INVENTOR: MINISTER

KUWAIT: The International Invention Fair of the Middle East (IIFME) is considered the greatest 'incubator' for the Kuwaiti inventor, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa said yesterday.

The Minister praised the efforts exerted by the Kuwait Science Club's (KSC) officials for preparing the launching of the 8th session of IIFME that will be held on November 16, under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir's care offered to IIFME since it kicked off in 2007 reflected His Highness' great attention towards science, scientists and scientific researches. His Highness' interest in the field was also reflected in his instructions to establish Sabah Al-Ahmad Creativity and Talent Center. Al-Essa praised the fruitful cooperation between KSC and Ministry

of Education which contributes in serving the scientific research field, indicating that "our political leadership is fully aware of the importance towards coping with the latest modern technologies and scientific notions worldwide."

The Minister expressed his trust in the skills and capabilities of the IIMFE organizers as its 8th session will be more successful as the Ministry is offering the full support it needs through the field trips of high school students. IIMFE and KSC both form the largest incubator for the Kuwaiti inventor. IIMFE was first launched in 2007, and was established by KSC. It aims at founding basic pillar for the scientific research which is capable to empower Kuwaiti youth in activating their inventions in the regional and international arenas, which reflects Kuwait's prominent role in taking care of science and scientists. — KUNA

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GOVERNMENT 'WON'T TOLERATE BIDS TO UNDERMINE SECURITY'

PM CALLS FOR A TIGHT-BELT POLICY TO TRIM OVER-SPENDING

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday reaffirmed that government would not tolerate any attempt aimed at undermining security of Kuwait and called for implementing a tight-belt policy to trim over-spending. "Our national unity is a shield against anyone attempting to undermine the security of this society, while the vigilance of security forces will deal with all possibilities in order to keep Kuwait and people safe," His Highness the Prime Minister said in a speech at the inauguration of the parliament's 4th term of the 14th legislative term.

He said the government, in its quest to fight and eliminate terrorism, started activating a number of "important laws," like the DNA, the installation of surveillance cameras and the collection of unlicensed weapons. These laws, he added, would strengthen security and stability of Kuwait. The Prime Minister noted His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's calls to safeguarding security of Kuwait. He said the government would spare no effort to develop its security services and vigilance, as well as work on promoting national unity vis-a-vis security challenges facing the country.

Cooperation

He added that the government is determined to achieve development and prosperity despite numerous challenges, foremost low oil prices. "Cooperation between the government and National Assembly in line with the article 50 of the constitution has contributed to many achievements that benefited the country and citizens. The government realized the gravity of the low oil prices and the "negative impacts on our national economy as well as our ability to address financial burdens..." PM said.

The Prime Minister said that maintaining social prosperity required doubling of efforts coupled with cutting of spending and proper investment of resources. He cited His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's call to cut spending without affecting standard of living of citizens, in addition to diversifying income and minimizing dependence on oil. "The government would continue its tight-belt policy, protecting public fund and

fighting corruption, citing efforts of the Public Anti-Corruption Authority (PACA)," he added, calling on all officials to submit their own financial statement to PACA, just like he did earlier.

On reforms, Prime Minister said the process of reform needed collaboration of all citizens with the objective of achieving development of Kuwait. "The government is targeting the development of human resources as the backbone of prosperity. Caring and empowering of youth is a major element in the development plan," he added and cited the launch of the national fund for small and medium-size enterprises.

UN resolutions

His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak said the competitiveness of Kuwait has improved, and the country has made large strides in the fight against money laundering and terrorism financing, all in line with relevant UN resolutions. He said the Working Group on Tackling Financing of Terrorism's lifting of Kuwait name from its terrorism financing list was "a great civilized achievement." On the development projects, His Highness the Prime Minister said over 80 percent of ventures have been implemented in 2014-15.

The government has recently opened Al-Razi hospital with eight hospitals to be operated in the next five years, he said. New transportation and housing projects are also being implemented, he added, in addition to the development of the education system which was implemented in cooperation with the World Bank. His Highness the Prime Minister said "constructive" cooperation between the government and parliament contributed to approval of many projects like Al-Zour North power station, Al-Abdaliya solar station, sewage water treatment station and waste recycling.

Kuwait's foreign policy will remain committed to non-interference in other countries' affairs, solving conflicts peacefully with an emphasis GCC countries' security was integrated, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh added. Kuwait is committed to good neighborliness, supporting freedom, justice, peace and human rights, His Highness the Prime Minister said in a speech at the inauguration of the 4th term

of the 14th legislative term of the National Assembly.

He said Kuwait believed that security of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries was integrated, and the GCC member states shared responsibility of preserving security and stability in the region. His Highness the Prime Minister commended Saudi Arabia's positive role in supporting just causes and its attempt to maintain peace and stability in the area. Saudi Arabia is leading an Arab coalition that aimed at protecting legitimacy in Yemen in the wake of the coup d'etat carried out by the Houthis and former president Ali Abdullah Saleh's forces against President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi. The objective of the coalition is to restore the legitimate leadership in Yemen and help the Yemeni people. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah attends the opening ceremony of the new legislative year at the National Assembly in Kuwait City yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Social Affairs and Labor Minister Hind Al-Subaih looks on during a parliament session at the National Assembly in Kuwait City yesterday. Kuwaiti MP Mohammad Tana filed a request to grill Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Subaih over alleged financial and administrative violations. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT REITERATES SOLIDARITY WITH SAUDI ARABIA IN COUNTERING TERROR

KUWAIT: Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah has reiterated Kuwait's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia in countering terrorist threats and actions endangering the Kingdom's security and stability. The Interior Minister made his remarks yesterday in a cable of condolences he sent to his Saudi counterpart Prince Muhammad Bin Nayif bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. In the cable, Sheikh Mohammad condemned the recent heinous terrorist explosion that targeted a mosque in Najran, which killed two worshippers and wounded several others.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow his mercy upon the deceased, grant the injured with speedy recovery, and preserve the King, government, and people of Saudi Arabia from all types of harm.

Two people were killed and several others were injured when a suicide bomber blew himself up inside a mosque in the Saudi southern city of Najran on Monday.

According to the Saudi Interior Ministry, the suicide bomber, who was wearing an explosive belt, entered Al-Mashhad Mosque in the Dahhda neighborhood while worshippers were

leaving after performing Maghreb (sunset) prayers.

Egypt on track

In another development, Kuwaiti Information Minister said Egypt is well on its way to follow a course of security, stability, and prosperity having completed the first stage of its parliamentary elections. In a statement to the Middle East News Agency (MENA), Kuwait's Minister of Information and State Minister for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said Egypt is the heart of the Arab world and is vital to its stability, especially as the region is undergoing painful changes, ranging from conflagrations of internal strife to waves of terrorism. Egypt, he stressed, is a major element of support to the security and stability of the GCC region and is an active partner in the growth and development of Kuwait, going back many decades. He reviewed the history of bilateral relations in numerous fields, particularly in those of health, education, and media. He called for more cooperation between the two countries as both work for peace, growth, development, and stability. — Agencies

PAAAFR BANS ANIMAL IMPORTS FROM SAUDI, OTHER COUNTRIES

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) has banned the importation of ruminants from Saudi Arabia due to foot and mouth disease. These include cattle, sheep, goats, deer, giraffes, antelopes, and camels. The decision also includes a temporary banning importation of all live birds from Portugal due to West Nile fever as well as all species of ruminants from France and Canada banned due to the emergence of bluetongue disease, Deputy Director of PAAAFR Hanadi Bastaki said in a statement.

The decision also temporarily banned

the importation of Equidae family from the Republic of Panama due to inflammation of the brain and spinal cord disease as the import of all ruminants from Slovenia banned due to the spread of mad cow disease, Bastaki added. Bastaki stressed the need that all animals shall be subject to conditions and regulations issued by the Animal Health Department of PAAAFR and according to the procedures of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Veterinary Quarantine in the GCC as well as procedures prescribed by regulation quarantine system in Kuwait. — KUNA

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DIRECT FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN KUWAIT SOARS

PIA: INVESTMENTS COMPATIBLE WITH NATIONAL LEGISLATIONS, ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

KUWAIT: The recently implemented foreign direct investment law has amply succeeded in attracting a number of foreign projects from well-heeled international companies, said Sheikh Meshal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Chief of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority yesterday. Kuwait has been fortunate in promoting itself as a to-go-for investment center for direct foreign investment (DFI) ever since the adoption of the law no.116 for the year 2013 regarding easing regulations for DFI in the country, he said a forum discussing investments in Kuwait.

Right after the official implementation of the law last December, bids from foreign companies, wishing to set up business in Kuwait, tumbled in an unprecedented manner, he said as he emphasized that the welcoming mat was rolled out by both the private and public sectors for this much-awaited law. Chief among objectives for the adoption of this law, said Sheikh Meshal, is seeking out alternative sources of income, besides the income from oil, noting that the success

of the new law is due in a great part to its overcoming negative aspects that speckled the old law prior to the 116 for 2013 one. In enticing DFI in Kuwait, a number of criteria has been set by Kuwait Direct



Sheikh Meshal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Chief of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority.

Investment Promotion Authority, mainly that the project to be undertaken by the foreign investor in the country should be of high tech nature, able to generate jobs

for young Kuwaitis, adds high value to the national economy, and requires quality in implementation and application, he said."

It is immaterial the number of foreign companies we attract to the Kuwaiti market, as what we seek is reputable and well-anchored companies," he stressed. Among companies of that caliber that are planning to set up business in Kuwait are IBM and Huawei, he said. The forum was attended by representatives from the domestic private sector and those from international foreign companies eager to hear about the benefits of the new FDI law.

Public Investment Authority

Meanwhile, the Public Investment Authority (PIA) has affirmed that its investments are compatible with national legislations and internationally recognized accounting standards. Concerning recent claims about its investment office in London, the authority said in a press statement yesterday it has a professional team of experts and staff, like that at glob-

al institutions, either in its offices in Kuwait or overseas. The authority expressed its pride in real estate through restructuring its portfolio which had a positive effect on the public funds, noting that all measures have been taken in accordance with administrative and legal frameworks.

It accepts willingly any constructive criticism serving the public interest, it said, adding that it doesn't reject any investigations by the Public Prosecution regarding this file. The PIA said it is supervised by the State Audit Bureau which has a tightly and regulatory series, and two other professional offices in the world. The PIA, thence, urged the Public Prosecution to take action against anybody who could press baseless accusations and claims against it. It voiced its full confidence in fair judiciary, stressing that all Kuwaiti people are proud of it. The authority noted that ungrounded claims about its activities will have harmful effects on its international reputation. —Agencies

News

In brief



Acting Managing Director for Finance Mohammed Al-Farhoud seen with Export-Import Bank of Korea representative during signing ceremony.—KUNA

KPC and Korea's Eximbank ink MoU worth \$5 billion

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and the Export-Import Bank of Korea, also known as Korea Eximbank, have signed in Seoul, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) worth \$5 billion. According to the MoU, Eximbank will contribute \$5 billion as a total to finance capital projects for KPC and subsidiaries in oil production, refining and transport as well as petrochemical industries, including the Clean Fuel project, the KPC said in a statement yesterday. It added that a high-profile delegation represented the KPC in the MoU, led by Managing Director for Planning and Acting Managing Director for Finance Mohammed Al-Farhoud.

Environment Protection Society organizes photo shooting event

KUWAIT: Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS) yesterday announced the launching of a marine organisms photo shooting and documenting field program at Kuwait's shores for professional and mature photographers to be presented at the KEPS 11th wildlife photography contest. The head of wildlife protection committee in KEPS Dr Manaf Bahbahani said in remarks to KUNA that the committee is willing to organize an open-day for the photographers who are willing to take part in the competition to be held next Saturday, including a trip to Kuwait towers. The trip will include scientific and anatomical explanation about the marine organisms in the country including fish, prawns, birds and sponge besides others, he said. Experts, researchers and academics from Kuwait University (KU), Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), and Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) will offer a scientific and educating presentation to the participants, he added.



Head of wildlife protection committee in KEPS Dr Manaf Bahbahani



KRCS distributes food aid to Yemeni refugees in Somalia

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) distributed yesterday food aid to Yemeni refugee families in Puntland State in Somalia. The Kuwaiti team distributed 2,300 food packages to Yemeni families in Basaso refugee camp, KRSC Head of the aid delegation to Somalia Abdulrahman Al-Oun said in a statement. Al-Oun said the food aid campaign covered as well Ain Taher refugee camp, Klipir camp, Laiyaho camp, Lalah Karen camp, adding that those refugees in these camps need more exerted efforts from all humanitarian international organizations. Al-Oun thanked Puntland officials and people for their hospitality and setting up those temporary camps for desperate Yemeni refugees fleeing the war in Yemen. The Kuwaiti official added around 10,000 food packages will be distributed in the future to Yemeni refugees in various Somali regions.

KUWAIT BLASTS ISRAEL AS A ROGUE COUNTRY

KUWAIT RALLIES WORLD SUPPORT FOR UNSC BID

NEW YORK: The Permanent Mission of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations on Monday condemned Israel as rogue country for trifling with all international laws and the UN resolutions. The policies of the Israeli occupation authorities negatively impact on the social and economic rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, according to a statement read by Abrar Abdullatif Jarraq on behalf of the mission during a meeting by the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly.

The meeting discusses the item on "Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources." Jarraq expressed Kuwait's appreciation of the efforts of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the report of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) on the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

Systematic violations

The report traces Israel's systematic violations of the international laws including the destruction of the infrastructure and principals of development in the occupied Palestinian territories as well as demolition of Palestinian homes, she pointed out. Last year the Israeli occupation authorities destroyed Palestinian educational facilities and have confiscated more than one billion sq. meters of Palestinian farmland since the start of the occupation, she said, citing the report.

The illegal Jewish settlement expansions continued hectically to the extent that 40 percent of the West Bank area became under the control of Israeli municipal councils, Jarraq went on. Israel continued hampering the socio-economic development and usurping the natural resources in the occupied territories through its racist and discriminatory policies that hindered the Palestinians' access to fresh water. The constraints placed by the Israeli occupation authorities on Palestinian economic activities left the Palestinian territories virtually isolated from the rest of the world.

The racist policies of the Israeli authorities deprived the Palestinians of their religious rights enshrined in the Fourth Geneva Convention and other international legal instruments, she added. On behalf of Kuwait, Jarraq renewed the call for lifting the siege on Gaza Strip, providing international protection for the Palestinian people and preparing the ground for Palestinian statehood and an ultimate end to the Israeli occupation. Kuwait has pledged \$200 million to the post-war rehabilitation of Gaza Strip, she said, urging the international community to follow suit and shoulder its responsibility towards the Palestinians besieged in the Strip.

Coalition meeting

In another development, the 7th meeting of chiefs of staff of members of the US-led coalition against ISIL kicked off on Monday, with Kuwait's Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khedher participating. Some 100

representative from 30 member countries of the coalition are to review and coordinate efforts, as well as discuss latest developments in terms of fighting ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant), said a statement by the Spanish ministry of defense. The two-day meeting would also focus on security strategies and terrorist threats, as well as exchanging views on how to address the situation in Iraq and Syria, the statement added. The last meeting was held in Doha, Qatar, while the previous ones were hosted by Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the US, Germany and France.

Security Council bid

Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah stated late Monday that Kuwait is intensifying efforts to rally world's support for its nomination to a non-permanent member seat in the UN Security Council elections of 2018. Kuwait's preparations for the UNSC elections are on full swing at different levels and in all the world continents, Al-Jarallah told reporters following his participation in a celebration of the 70th anniversary of launching UN charter. He went on to say that if elected, Kuwait would do its utmost to serve international causes during its two-year tenure. On the various calls for reforming the UN charter, Al-Jarallah expressed Kuwait's support to the initiatives and proposals to upgrade the charter to help boost the UN role in resolving international disputes. He also announced that the British capital of London would play host for the fourth international aid pledging conference for Syria. — Agencies



KUWAITI ARRESTED WITH UNLICENSED FIREARMS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Weapons detectives arrested a citizen with unlicensed firearms and ammunition. Officials found two firearms in a cupboard and material suspected to be hashish, along with 75 bottles of liquor.

Jordanian dies

Foul odor led to the discovery of the body of 61-year-old Jordanian in a Hawally flat. Firemen were called to break the door.



4-vehicle collision

A car flipped over and a woman was trapped on King Fahd highway near Sabah Al-Salem after a four-vehicle collision. The woman was freed and taken by paramedics to hospital.

Residency violators

Residency Affairs Detectives carried out a campaign resulting in the arrest of 32 Asian and African workers of a cleaning company in Jahra governorate in violation of residency law. Detectives called those who harbored them and charged them.

Inspection campaign

Assisted by security forces, Farwaniya municipality launched a wide scale inspection campaign on various garages, restaurants, grocery stores, photo studios and readymade garment stores in Jleeb. The campaign resulted in closing down 13 stores for various violations as well as arresting violators and referring them to relevant authorities.



ZAIN ORGANIZES BREAST CANCER AWARENESS EVENT

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, recently organized an awareness event at Mall 360 as part of its annual breast cancer awareness campaign, which aimed at raising awareness about breast cancer through promoting the importance of early detection. Zain took the opportunity to gather its partners from various leading medical institutions in its pink corner at Mall 360, which saw the attendance of Kuwait Cancer Control Center's Director Dr Ahmad Al Awadhi and Head of the Breast Imaging Unit at Al Sabah Hospital Dr Noor Al Huda Karmani, who answered visitors' questions and informed the crowd on the importance of early detection.

Waleed Al Khashti, Zain Kuwait's Corporate Communications and Relations Director said: "Zain's solid Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability strategies primarily focus on the wellbeing of the entire nation. For that reason, we maintained our support to all kinds of initiatives

that spread awareness and help make a difference." Al Khashti added: "This year's breast cancer awareness campaign consisted of several strategic phases, including the distribution of awareness messages through the media and the highly acclaimed TVC that received overwhelming feedback on social media channels, in addition to the recently held interactive event at Mall 360."

"During this year's campaign, Zain further strengthened its partnership with Breast Care Kuwait for the eighth consecutive year. In addition, we undertook many new strategic partnerships with leading healthcare providers including Fatima Clinic, Al Sidra Association for Psychological Care of Cancer Patients, and the Ministry of Health's Kuwait Cancer Control Center. These partnerships enriched our efforts to inform the public through the existing expertise of such leading medical organizations" Al Khashti concluded.



THE 6TH MUSLIM WORLD BIZ KICKS OFF IN KUALA LUMPUR

KUALA LUMPUR: The 6th Muslim World Biz 2015, the leading trade exhibition and conference in the Muslim World, kicked off in Kuala Lumpur yesterday under the theme "reaching a golden age of industry". The international Islamic exhibition has previously achieved positive

results in developing commerce in member-states of the Organizations of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), said Malaysian Minister in the Prime Minister's Department of Islamic Affairs Jamil Baharom.

Over 320 commercial companies and organizations from 49 countries

are participating in the event in the sectors of tourism, travelling, infrastructure, real estate, banking, finance, food, education cosmetics, Islamic fashion and investment, he added. On his part, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Malaysia Saad Al-Asousi noted that Kuwait is participating in the event for the second time, with ten companies from both the private and the public sector. The event provides Kuwaiti businessmen with an opportunity for marketing their country's products, while also sharing experience with their Malaysian counterparts, said the ambassador.

Al-Asousi also mentioned the honoring of Kuwaiti businessman Fawzi Mohammad Abdulmohsen Al-Kharafi, who was awarded the "Jewels of Muslim World Award" at the opening of the conference, in recognition of his efforts in the field. Meanwhile, CEO of Mohammed Abdulmohsin Al-Kharafi and Sons Company (MAK Group) Hussam Fawzi Al-Kharafi, who received the award on behalf of his father, said he was eager to create partnerships with Malaysian businessmen, noting that most of MAK's commercial relations in Asia are focused in India at the moment.

The Muslim World Biz, held from October 27 to 30, has generated over \$300 million in investments over the years. With quality trade buyers and exhibitors from both Muslim and Non-Muslim countries, it is the ideal opportunity to expand to over 40 countries worldwide and target the affluent Muslim trade and industry sector. The exhibition provides an ideal platform for exhibitors from all over the world to connect with over 500 private and government sector from more than 30 Muslim countries and tap into the Muslim market. — KUNA

KUWAIT RECORDS REMARKABLE SUCCESS AT EXPO MILAN 2015

MILAN: Kuwait's Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday applauded remarkable success of Kuwait's participation in Expo Milan 2015 and the role it played in reflecting the country's civil image to the world. The diplomat added in remarks to KUNA that the Kuwaiti pavilion gained the admiration of the Expo's visitors, beside those interested in architecture art, as being the most beautiful pavilion which witnessed a high turnout of visitors - receiving great media and official care. This international merit to Kuwait is achieved upon the instructions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, which also contributed to the prominent position of Kuwait in a world of globalization and open communication.

Kuwait's bright image represented in one of the largest Expo's exhibitions, among other 145 countries, forming 97 percent of the world population in 54 pavilions, supported with strong investments for a period of six months is "inimitable investment" in the field of media and public relations, he affirmed. The participation of world leaders, interna-

tional senior officials, and the unprecedented attendance of United Nations (UN) and its main organizations, besides major international institutions in the Expo which witnessed holding international conferences on a number of global challenges resulted recommendations adopted by the international community in the field of sustainable development and cultural heritage, he said.

Through his position as a diplomat he monitored the effect of the fruitful Kuwaiti participation in the Expo, through the appreciation of political, economic and media figures. The Kuwaiti participation also contributed in enhancing and boosting the Kuwait-Italian bilateral ties, as the Italian government thanked Kuwait for its contribution in the success of Expo Milan, he said. The Ambassador congratulated His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Kuwait's government, official and private institutions and people on the success of the Kuwaiti participation in the Expo. — KUNA



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EQUATE RECOGNIZES FORMER VP MOHAMMAD AL BENALI

KUWAIT: EQUATE Petrochemical Company, Kuwait's first international joint-venture in this industry, hosted a celebration to recognize its former Vice President for Technical Services Mohammad Al Benali. Al Benali's contribution to Kuwait's petrochemical industry commenced during 1984 at Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) before he was selected as the Information Technology (IT) Project Manager for the establishment of EQUATE.

Being one of the key individuals since EQUATE's founding in 1995 and serving as VP Technical services during 2009-2015, Al Benali played a critical role in several achievements relevant to strategic planning, technology improvement, IT, procurement, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), sustainability, Research & Development (R&D), Code of Business Conduct (COBC), industrial operations, plant expansions, as well as other fields.

EQUATE President & CEO Mohammad Husain said, "Al Benali's positive impact at EQUATE, especially our human resources, deserves endless gratitude and cannot be described with words. His ethical conduct, outstanding professionalism, world-class achievements, vast expertise and exemplary leadership have truly made him one of our main 'Partners in Success.'"

Al Benali has been instrumental in achieving EQUATE's Mission, Vision & Values at every level and with all stakeholders, such as shareholders, customers, public bodies, private organizations, civic entities, and most important of all our employees and contractors who have interacted with him. EQUATE's overall achievements in sustainability relevant to CSR are a result of Al Benali's efforts, passion and vision. Al Benali is an exceptional colleague and a true friend, not to mention being viewed as a brother or a father figure to many who have worked with him. The celebration was attended by board members of EQUATE and other Greater EQUATE companies, as well as several of the company's current and previous leaders and employees.

Established in 1995 as Kuwait's first international joint-venture in this industry, EQUATE Petrochemical Company (EQUATE) embodies its "Partners in Success" slogan through the partnership between Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), The Dow Chemical Company (Dow), Boubyan Petrochemical Company (BPC)



and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC).

Commencing production in 1997, EQUATE is currently the owner and single-operator of several fully integrated world-class petrochemical units, within the Greater EQUATE joint-venture, that annually produce over 5 million tons of the highest quality grades of Ethylene, Polyethylene (PE), Ethylene Glycol (EG), Polypropylene (PP), Styrene Monomer (SM), Paraxylene (PX), Heavy Aromatics (HA) and Benzene (BZ). The products are marketed throughout the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Europe.

Alongside with being a leading industrial organization, EQUATE dedicates its utmost commitment and care to overall sustainability wherever it operates in cooperation with public and private bodies, including employees, the society and customers, in all relevant fields, such as human development, environment, education, health and public awareness.



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Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Photo shows Kuwaiti traditional coffee pot 'Al-Dallah' which is always present at the 'diwanahs'. It is a symbol of Kuwait generosity and hospitality. —KUNA

Al-Anbaa

RAY OF HOPE

By Nermin Al-Houti

Political pressure, deteriorating economy and accumulation of social problems, be they domestic or foreign, on our societies, makes one look for a glimpse of hope; to look at things with optimism and be able to see the future with hope and optimism. Abrar Faisal Al-Masoud is the first Kuwaiti, rather Gulf national, who signed a memorandum of understanding with the US State Department within the framework of a world program that supports future works. This program will allow many Kuwaiti and Gulf youth to train and develop ideas in the region. This agreement is a fort for youth ideas, and a camp that supports the development of their small projects and works on developing and executing them in reality. This is a ray of light in a place full of darkness. Abrar bears an honorable load at the scientific and practical levels, which distinguishes her by her penetration of the First World through gathering the ideas of youth and carrying out a full study. Its results were honorable, through which she was able to convince the US to sign up to her initiative and support her project. Abrar was able to link the First and the Third Worlds, and became the first of her kind when she made the First World say: This is Kuwait and these are Kuwait youth. In conclusion: "Kuwait's youth and its status, and defending and protecting it, is the responsibility of its people and their efforts," said the Amir of hearts Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, may Allah bestow his mercy on him. — Translated by Kuwait Times

Al-Anbaa

Al-Anbaa

FLYING COWS

By Saad Al-Motesh

I used to disbelieve the story about the teacher who asked his students about 'animals' that can fly and was shocked when one of them said that an elephant could fly. When he tried to explain that it could not, the student insisted! "Who is the idiot who told so?" the teacher asked the student, to get a very shocking answer - that it was the president. "Well, an elephant can fly but not too high above the ground," the teacher said with a smile clouded with terror. (End of story.)

Well, I used to think this story was just a joke, but many Twitter users have been insisting that so many other animals, including ruminants, can also fly and even do some acrobatics in the sky while flying. Fanciers, especially those raising pigeons, usually whistle and clap their hands to make their birds fly, and this is what happens on Twitter, where you can have the majority of your followers fly by simply posting a tweet of a rumor. You will immediately find many flying around with this rumor the way elephants fly!

Therefore, I do urge the bricks company to manufacture an edgeless type that does not tear pockets if we keep them as weights preventing us from flying or floating around with each and every rumor and false piece of information as a folkloric saying has always and wisely advised us to 'load our pockets with rocks'!

— Translated by Kuwait Times

Crime

Report

EGYPTIANS SCUFFLE WITH POLICE

KUWAIT: Egyptians who had gathered at Green Island to be transported to their embassy to cast their votes got involved in a fight. A policeman attempted to break up the fight and organize traffic, but one of the transport supervisors refused to obey instructions and insulted the policeman, so he asked for backup. When an officer approached the supervisor, who is an embassy employee, he was pushed back to the patrol car. The people that were fighting each other then turned on the police cars and threw water bottles and soda cans at them. Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for General Security Abdelfattah Al-Ali went to the scene and found the supervisor did not have authorization from the embassy. Meanwhile, those who started the fight fled the scene.

Thief asked for password

A thief who stole a phone of a citizen in London was able to find her local number in Kuwait and sent her a message asking her to give him the password to be able to use the stolen phone. The woman, who got a replacement SIM card, ignored him, so he started sending her messages from two Egyptian numbers. The woman went to Adailiya police station and filed a complaint, and electronic crimes detectives are working on the case.

KD 4,250 cheque destroyed

An owner of a cleaning company accused an official at a security company of tearing a KD 4,250 cheque at the company premises. The cleaning company owner went to Nugra police station and lodged a complaint. He said a dispute took place while signing a contract, and the cheque was torn.

Online theft

A thief withdrew KD 620 from the account of a Syrian through the Internet, so filed a complaint at Salmiya police station. The Syrian said he received an SMS telling him about the withdrawal of KD 620 in two transactions, so he called the bank and suspended the account. Criminal detectives are investigating.

ASAR - AL RUWAYEH & PARTNERS ORGANIZES A SEMINAR ON PROMOTION OF DIRECT INVESTMENT

KUWAIT: ASAR-Al Ruwayeh & Partners (ASAR) - Kuwait's leading corporate, commercial and finance law firm, hosted a leading seminar on the Promotion of Direct Investment in the State of Kuwait. The seminar was held yesterday at the JW Marriott Hotel in Kuwait City with the presence of KDIPA's Director General, Sheikh Dr Meshaal Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, ASAR partners and lawyers, who shared significant insights on the technical aspects of Law No 116 of 2013 (Regarding the Promotion of Direct Investment in the State of Kuwait) and its executive regulations (the "Direct Investment Law").

The seminar was specifically designed and organized by ASAR to shed light on the considerable incentives under the Direct Investment Law and practical issues currently facing investors in the course of the KDIPA application process and thereafter. Moreover, the seminar also addressed the various exemptions available to investors under the Direct Investment Law with regards to foreign ownership restrictions (which allow foreign investors to own up to 100% of the shares in a Kuwait incorporated company), partial and full custom duties exemptions, and Kuwait income tax exemptions for a period of up to 10 years.

Additionally, the seminar featured key note speeches by KDIPA's Sheikh Dr Meshaal Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah along with other senior KDIPA officials including, Sheikh Abdullah Sabah Al Sabah - Head of Licensing and Registration at KDIPA, highlighting the authority's role, in being the applicable Kuwaiti regulator under whose purview the Foreign Direct Investment Law falls. Sam Habbas, Senior Partner at ASAR - Al Ruwayeh & Partners said: "It gives ASAR great pleasure to have organized and hosted such a prominent event; we are also honored to have had the presence of KDIPA's Director General Sheikh Dr Meshaal Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

We have been working closely with KDIPA to attract foreign investment in Kuwait, and to assist investors in establishing Kuwaiti owned entities under the Direct Investment Law, and today's seminar has played a major role in outlining significant milestones and key regulatory frameworks. It is of prime importance to have these types of platforms organized among the regulatory authorities, industry experts and other key market players to exchange ideas on how to enhance the efficiency, reliability and transparency of the investment market landscape in Kuwait."

With dedicated offices in Kuwait and Bahrain coupled with its associated offices and relationships, ASAR provides clients across an extensive range of industry sectors with comprehensive legal advice and strategic support for their business activities in Kuwait, across member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and beyond.

The firm has been consistently rated as the leading corporate, commercial and finance law firm in Kuwait by reputable legal guides such as the Chambers Global Guide, International Financial Law Review (IFLR) and the Legal 500. In October 2014 ASAR won the "IFLR National Law Firm of the Year Award" for the 6th consecutive year and the "Project Finance Deal of the Year Award". In addition, ASAR also won the prestigious "2014 Commercial Litigation Law Firm of the Year" and the "2014 Best Banking and Finance Legal Team -Kuwait" awards from Acquisition International Magazine in 2014. ASAR lawyers also received multiple awards under different categories in the Fourth Edition of "Best Lawyers" in Kuwait.

Al-Anbaa

DON'T BE TOO OPTIMISTIC

By Saleh Al-Shayegi

We often see some photos going back decades, forty, fifty or even more years, circulating on social media networks. We then immediately start comparing our present to the times those photos were taken to come up with a conclusion that is, unfortunately, always in favor of the past. By this, I am not speaking about Kuwait alone. Unfortunately, this applies to most Arab countries seen in the photos that clearly declare their past superiority to their present. It even goes beyond Arab countries including some afflicted Muslim countries such as Afghanistan, where photos of the 1950s show a great deal of elegance and beauty Afghans used to enjoy then compared to the daily killings, terrorism and devastation that never knocks any doors. The same applies for Iran and Pakistan as well.

The reason for such regression in favor of the past is very well known to us all, and our governments know it even better than we do. However, no one dares to declare or mention it so that we can start solving problems and try to catch up with the 'past'. My readers might probably be wondering why I am saying this now. Well, with all self-confidence, I can say that I, as well, do not dare mention the reason, and if I had the guts and actually brought such reasons to public, I might be subjecting both myself and my newspaper to jeopardy!

I believe that such regression will continue and expand further and further to reach societies that are probably experiencing welfare, progress and development at the time being. Optimism in this regard is more like false pregnancy. It is a mere illusion and mirage spread around by people who do not realize the danger in feeling optimistic about bringing a corpse back to life.

We grew richer. Our pockets are overfilled with money, but our minds are almost entirely hollow and empty. We are less aware and appreciative of the values of virtue and beauty. We are clinging more to evil and ugliness. Beauty is no longer appreciated. We actually detest and disrespect it. There is no beauty in souls or minds as those minds are more concerned with destruction rather than with construction. We have substituted love with hatred and repulsion. We have been enviously fighting each other and boasting about all the blood we have been shedding, as if we came to this life to kill and be killed. Don't be too optimistic. — Translated by Kuwait Times



US warship sails near Chinese man-made islands in Spratlys

EGYPTIANS RETURN TO VOTE AS ELECTION RUN-OFF BEGINS

AFGHAN-PAKISTAN QUAKE TOLL TOPS 350

HUNT FOR SURVIVORS CONTINUES, COMMUNICATION SYSTEM DISRUPTED

ISLAMABAD: Rescuers were yesterday picking their way through rugged terrain and pockets of Taliban insurgency in the search for survivors after a massive quake hit Pakistan and Afghanistan, killing more than 350 people.

The toll was expected to rise as search teams reach remote areas that were cut off by Monday's powerful 7.5 magnitude quake, which triggered landslides and stampedes as it toppled buildings and severed communication lines. A police official in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar told AFP they had not been able to get in touch with authorities in the district of Kohistan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to see how its population of nearly half a million people had fared.

"There is no way to communicate with the officials in Kohistan, the communication system has been disrupted and roads blocked so we cannot say anything about the damage there," the official told AFP.

Authorities were also still struggling to ascertain the damage in the northern district of Chitral, where a local official said the quake had damaged the water supply system. "Around 80,000 people don't have access to clean drinking water and it's our top priority to restore the water supply," he said. In other remote areas residents-including children and the elderly-were helping with relief work, many of them digging through rubble for survivors.

The bulk of the casualties recorded so far were in Pakistan, where 241 people were killed, including 196 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, and more than 1,600 injured, disaster management authorities said. Pakistan army helicopters were evacuating victims yesterday to the provincial capital Peshawar and Rawalpindi, which borders Islamabad. The military has also sent medical teams, tents and rations to affected areas.

'Doomsday repeated'

For many, Monday's quake brought back traumatic memories of a 7.6 magnitude quake that struck in October 2005, killing more than 75,000 people and displacing some 3.5 million. Muzaffarabad resident Shehnaz Rasheed, 34, whose



SHANGLA: A Pakistani boy holds his young brother on his back next to collapsed houses in the quake-hit village of Gandao around 20 kilometers from Shangla in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province yesterday. Rescuers were picking their way through rugged terrain and pockets of Taliban insurgency in the search for survivors after a massive quake hit Pakistan and Afghanistan, killing more than 350 people. — AFP

daughter was killed in the 2005 disaster, said that as the quake struck she feared "doomsday was being repeated".

"I ran towards my children's school leaving everything behind-I did not even close the doors of my house and did not care for anything on the road," she told AFP, explaining she was frantic to reach her two sons so she could "die together with them if we have to die".

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif returned to Pakistan Tuesday after a visit to the US and said the government would announce a disaster relief package.

State media later reported he had flown to Shangla in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-believed to be one of the worst-hit districts with 49 reported dead so far-where he promised survivors "ample compensation so that they can rebuild better homes". Two hundred rescuers have been deployed to the district. Afghan officials said at least 115 people were confirmed dead and hundreds more injured, with casualties reported from around half a dozen of the country's 34 provinces, and some 7,000 homes reported damaged. The government has implored aid agencies for assistance. But large swathes of Badakhshan, the remote province where the epicentre is located, and other quake-hit areas are effectively controlled by the Taliban, posing a huge challenge to any official aid efforts.

The militants yesterday urged charity organisations not to hold back in delivering aid, and vowed their fighters would provide "complete help" in the affected areas.

'They could not even talk'

In one of the most horrifying incidents to emerge so far, a dozen Afghan schoolgirls were trampled to death as they rushed to escape their classrooms in remote northern Takhar province when the quake struck.

Bystanders rushed the dazed and terrified survivors to hospital, many lying limp in the arms of their rescuers, as doctors tried reviving some of them by pumping their chests.

"When the relatives of the dead students came to collect their bodies, they were so distressed that they could not even talk to authorities to record their names," said Hafizullah Safai, head of the Takhar health department.

Several historic buildings were damaged in Peshawar, including the Bala Hissar fort which houses the Frontier Corps and overlooks the city, and the 17th-century Mohabbat Khan mosque. "A whole side of the Bala Hissar fort and a minaret of the Mohabbat Khan mosque collapsed during the tremor. The mosque has also developed some cracks," Khyber Pakhtunkhwa information minister Mushtaq Ahmad Ghani told AFP. The quake was centred near Jurm in northeast Afghanistan, 250 kilometres (160 miles) from the capital Kabul and at a depth of 213.5 kilometres, the US Geological Survey said. Afghanistan is frequently hit by earthquakes, especially

in the Hindu Kush mountain range, which lies near the junction of the Eurasian and Indian tectonic plates. In Nepal a quake in April and a strong aftershock in May

killed more than 8,900 people. Also yesterday the Pakistan military said seven of its soldiers had been killed in heavy cross-border fire from Afghanistan, drawing attention to the

continuing unrest along the porous border between the two countries, much of which had been affected by Monday's quake. — AFP

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FAMILY CONFIRMS FIRST RUSSIAN MILITARY FATALITY IN SYRIA

PARENTS SAY THEIR SON FLEW TO SYRIA ON SEPT 14

GRECHANAYA BALKA: The parents of the first Russian serviceman confirmed dead in four weeks of air strikes in Syria said yesterday they did not believe the military's account that their 19-year-old son had hanged himself.

In an interview with Reuters at their home in southern Russia, Alexander and Svetlana Kostenko said their son, Vadim, had sounded cheerful over the phone as recently as Saturday, the day he died while working at an air base on the Syrian coast.

"I will never believe this version (suicide)," said Svetlana, who was wearing a black head scarf. "We spoke every day by phone for half an hour. (On Saturday) he was cheerful, happy, and he laughed," she said. Alexander, Vadim's father, speaking in a low voice, agreed: "We were told he had hanged himself because of a girl. He would never have done it. I know my son really well." Kostenko was one of the Russian air force's support staff. He signed a contract on June 20 and was dispatched to Syria by plane on Sept. 14, two weeks before the Kremlin's air campaign began, his father said. He said they had only discovered Vadim in Syria when he was already there.



DAMASCUS: Piture shows a Syrian man in Damascus holding an edition of Syrian al-Thawra (The Revolution) newspaper displaying a picture of President Bashar al-Assad with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin during the former's visit to Moscow. Russia's decision to begin air strikes has been criticised by Syria's opposition and its international backers, but for many in the Syrian capital and other government-held parts of Syria, the intervention is a welcome relief. — AFP

Interfax news agency quoted a source in the defence ministry's press service confirming the death. "A contract serviceman stationed at the Hmeimim airbase (in Latakia) as a technician committed suicide while he was resting after duty," the source told Interfax.

"According to preliminary information, in particular the analysis of text messages in his phone, the reason for the death of the contract serviceman is problems in his personal relationship with a girl," the source said.

The ministry did not respond to written questions from Reuters. Opinion polls show strong public support at home for the Kremlin's air campaign in support of the government of President Bashar al-Assad; one survey put support above 70 percent. If the air force suffers serious fatalities, sentiment could change toward the mission, Moscow's first major combat outside the frontiers of the former Soviet Union since the disastrous Soviet campaign in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

Kostenko's death was first flagged by Conflict Intelligence Team (CIT), a group of bloggers led by Ruslan Leviev who have previously worked to uncover

information about Russian military deaths in Ukraine, where Russia denies its troops are fighting despite what Western countries say is overwhelming evidence.

WOULD-BE PILOT

A Reuters reporter was told she could not enter the base of the air force unit, in Primorsko-Akhtarsk, where Kostenko served, and where CIT says Sukhoi-25 jets operational in Syria are usually based. When asked if it was true that a serviceman from the base

had died in Syria, an officer leaving the base yesterday morning, who declined to give his name, said: "Yes, I heard about that." He refused to provide any more details.

Standing in front of their house in the village of Grechanaya Balka in southern Russia as hens clucked around them, the Kostenkos said their son's battalion commander had broken the bad news personally, telling them Vadim had hanged himself on Saturday, Oct. 24. — Reuters



MARACAIBO: Lilian Tintori (R), wife of jailed Venezuelan opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez, speaks during rally in Maracaibo, Zulia state, Venezuela. A Venezuelan prosecutor who called the conviction and imprisonment of Lopez a "farce" has been fired, the country's attorney general said Monday. — AFP

PROSECUTOR IN TRIAL OF VENEZUELA LEADER GIVES NEW DETAILS

CARACAS: A Venezuelan prosecutor who helped convict opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez is saying that the government had long plotted Lopez's arrest.

Prosecutor Franklin Nieves, who reportedly is now seeking asylum in the United States, said in a video posted Monday on the Venezuelan news website La Patilla that superiors in the prosecutor's office had given him orders to have Lopez arrested days before the Caracas protest - and the alleged crime - took place.

Nieves said orders went out to arrest Lopez at an earlier scheduled protest, but Lopez did not appear so the plan was dropped. Nieves fled Venezuela and apologized last week for his role in what he called a sham trial. Lopez was convicted in September of inciting violence during a 2014 anti-government protest in Caracas and received the maximum sentence, about 14 years. Lopez insisted that he never called for violence, but prosecutors argued that violence was implicit in his calls for the resignation of President Nicolas Maduro.

Lopez was mayor of an upscale neighborhood in Caracas, and has for years been

one of the primary leaders of the hardline opposition to the country's socialist administration.

Nieves has promised to reveal more evidence that Lopez was railroaded. In an interview published Monday, he told the Wall Street Journal that he is in Miami and is seeking asylum with his wife and two daughters.

Venezuela's chief prosecutor, Luisa Ortega Diaz, on Monday denied that Nieves was pressured to go after Lopez, and rejected calls to annul Lopez's sentence. She said Nieves had caved in to foreign interests.

"We at the prosecutors' office we don't put pressure on anyone," she said in a televised interview.

Twenty members of Congress have called for sanctions against Nieves and four other Venezuelan officials involved in Lopez's trial. The request came in a bipartisan letter sent to Secretary of State John Kerry and Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew.

This week, some of those same Congress members are using Nieves testimony to renew their calls for sanctions on Venezuelan officials. — AP

BRITAIN TO KEEP TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN INTO 2016

LONDON: Britain will keep its current level of 450 troops on non-combat missions in Afghanistan through 2016, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said in a written statement to parliament yesterday.

The announcement comes after the United States earlier this month announced that thousands of its troops would stay in Afghanistan longer than promised following intense recent fighting.

"Both the US and our own decisions underline NATO's continued commitment to training and assisting Afghan forces as they grow stronger," Fallon said. "We have now concluded that we should maintain the scale of the UK's current military mission in the country in 2016, to help build a secure and stable Afghanistan," he added.

Fallon explained that British troops were involved in training Afghan army officers, building capacity in Afghan security ministries and supporting NATO operations in Kabul. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani welcomed Britain's announcement.

International help for the Afghan army "augments the commitment and effectiveness of these forces to fulfil their grand mission, and further boosts their morale," he said in a statement.

"The government of Afghanistan thanks its international partners like Britain for their assistance," he said. The last British combat troops in Afghanistan were airlifted out of Camp Bastion, a sprawling base located in the southern Helmand province, last October.

The pull-out formally ended a mission that lasted longer than World War II and cost 453 lives. Britain had previously said it would keep non-combat troops in Kabul through 2015 at least. President Barack Obama has said the US will maintain its current force of 9,800 in the country through 2016, going back on a campaign promise to end the war in Afghanistan after acknowledging that Afghan forces were not ready to stand alone.

After that, rather than go down to a normal embassy presence as had been planned, the United States will leave a force of 5,500 troops in place to train Afghan forces and conduct counter-terrorism missions.

US-backed forces ousted the Taliban government from Kabul in 2001. At the height of its deployment, US had around 100,000 troops in Afghanistan.

Emboldened by their recent three-day occupation of Kunduz, the first Afghan city to fall to the Taliban since their 2001 ouster from power, insurgents have made brazen attempts to overrun several other provincial centres in recent weeks.

Obama and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif last week issued a joint call for the Taliban to return to negotiations with the Afghan government. — AFP

PORTUGAL PRESIDENT ACCEPTS NEW MINORITY GOVERNMENT

LISBON: Portuguese President Anibal Cavaco Silva accepted yesterday the line-up of a new minority government formed by premier Pedro Passos Coelho, setting the countdown for it to win approval of the opposition-dominated parliament or fall next month. The presidency said in a statement that the new ministers of the centre-right government, most of whom have served in the previous administration, will be sworn in on Friday. Under Portuguese law, the new government has to present its programme to parliament 10 days after taking over. If it is rejected, the government will fall.

Portugal's main opposition Socialists last week pledged to topple the centre-right minority government with a no-confidence motion. Passos Coelho was named prime minister on Thursday after his coalition won the most votes in the national election on Oct. 4 but lost its majority in parliament, which swung to leftist parties. The Socialists have been negotiating a coalition agreement with the Left Bloc and the Communists and all three parties have criticised the president for naming Passos Coelho as prime minister, calling it a waste of time. Passos Coelho's Social Democrats have in the past few days called for renewed dialogue with the Socialists. Paulo Portas, leader of the junior ruling coalition partner CDS-PP, will stay on as deputy prime minister in the new government.

Maria Luis Albuquerque who has served as finance minister since mid-2013, will keep the portfolio in the new cabinet, along with most other ministers.

The political stand-off has prompted concerns that the economy's recovery, after a debt crisis and an international bailout, could stumble. But, so far, bond market investors have focused instead on the likelihood of more quantitative easing from the European Central Bank that have kept bond yields low. Benchmark 10-year bond yields were little changed at 2.45 percent on Tuesday. — Reuters

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SAN ANTONIO: This Dec. 12, 2014, file photo shows Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant (24) celebrating after he scored against the San Antonio Spurs during the second half of an NBA basketball game. —AP



SAN ANTONIO: this Dec. 19, 2014, file photo shows San Antonio Spurs forward Tim Duncan shooting against Portland Trail Blazers center Joel Freeland (left) during a NBA basketball game. —AP

KOBE BRYANT HEADS GROUP OF AGING, 37-PLUS EX-ALL-STARS

NEW YORK: Kobe Bryant is still a Los Angeles Laker. NBA fans are anxiously waiting to see what he has left and wondering if this is his last year. It's probably not wise to count him out just yet - or any of the seven former All-Stars who are at least 37 years old and expected to contribute on the court this year as the NBA tips off the 2015-16 season late yesterday.

Bryant, the 13th pick in the 1996 draft, is back after missing much of last season with a shoulder injury. He joins Tim Duncan, Dirk Nowitzki, Kevin Garnett, Manu Ginobili, Paul Pierce and Vince Carter - all drafted between 1995 and 1999. That matches the most former All-Stars at least 37-years old to secure roster spots to start the season since the 2004-2005 campaign, according to STATS.

Between them, they have 80 All-Star appearances, 17 NBA titles, five MVP awards and seven finals MVP awards. They enter this season with varying roles:

Kobe Bryant, Los Angeles Lakers

This could be Bryant's final season, depending on how it unfolds. Part of his role will be to mentor D'Angelo Russell, Julius Randle and Jordan Clarkson. Passing the torch and passing up shots are two different things, though. Bryant is the No. 3 scorer in NBA history for a reason. In the 35 games he played last season, his shot attempts per 48 minutes were the third-highest of his career. Lakers coach Byron Scott likely will limit his minutes at times and rest him in some back-to-backs, but when he's on the floor, odds are Bryant will be looking to score.

Tim Duncan, San Antonio Spurs

Duncan will turn 40 in April. Old Man River Walk is still a starter, but his minutes will likely be limited again. The Spurs added All-Star LaMarcus Aldridge and 35-year-old former All-Star David West, which should help preserve

Duncan for another championship run. He still has great moments, but at this stage, he's OK with giving up some floor time to be a significant factor in the playoffs.

Kevin Garnett, Minnesota Timberwolves

Garnett's focus is to set the tone and help No. 1 overall draft pick Karl-Anthony Towns develop. The 39-year-old Garnett can still play - his rebounds per 48 minutes last season were similar to those he posted in his prime. He started all 47 games he played last season and averaged 20 minutes a contest. He started every game this preseason, but never played more than 17 minutes.

Dirk Nowitzki, Dallas Mavericks

Nowitzki was the Mavs' No. 2 scorer last year. Since the top scorer from that team, Monta Ellis, now plays for the Indiana Pacers, Dirk will still carry quite a bit of the load. The

Mavericks added Deron Williams and Wesley Matthews in the offseason to help with the scoring, and Chandler Parsons' role will expand in his second year with the team. Nowitzki, 37, averaged just under 30 minutes per game last season. Coach Rick Carlisle wants to trim that to about 26 per contest.

Paul Pierce, Los Angeles Clippers

Pierce, who just turned 38, brings his usual air of confidence to a team that hasn't quite gotten over the hump. The clutch shooter who won a title with Boston in 2008 has plenty of talent around him, so he won't be counted on to make all the big shots. He started 73 games for Washington last season, but he came off the bench in all but one preseason game this season with the Clippers. But if he's on the floor, and gets the opportunity at the end of the game, look for Pierce to take the shot.

Vince Carter, Memphis Grizzlies

The days of Vinsanity and the routine high-flying dunks have passed, and the 38-year-old Carter has settled into a role as a perimeter-shooting reserve. Last year, an ankle injury kept him out of training camp and he had a foot injury during the season. He started just once last year and played 16.5 minutes per game. He comes into this season healthy, but newly acquired Matt Barnes, a slightly younger perimeter shooter, could cut into his minutes.

Manu Ginobili, San Antonio Spurs

Ginobili benefits from having been a sixth man for so many years. He has only started 10 regular-season games the past four seasons and hasn't played more than 24 minutes a contest since the 2010-11 campaign. It's perfect fit for the Spurs, so expect a similar role this year for the 38-year-old wing from Argentina. —AP

US MEN SOLID IN WORLD GYMNASTICS QUALIFYING

GLASGOW: Alex Naddour watched his buddies labor through one skittish pommel horse routine after another, none with any particular degree of precision or artistry. The good vibes surrounding the somewhat patchwork U.S. men's gymnastics team were gone. The seemingly comfy spot in the team finals and the automatic spot in next summer's Olympics suddenly didn't quite feel so comfy.

Naddour, the rare American who seems to actually enjoy the 45 seconds of lactic acid torture that is the pommel horse, smiled. This is kind of his thing.

"Some guys when they feel the pressure, they get tight," Naddour said. "For me, I look at each guy in the eyes and I tell myself I'm not going to mess up, I'm going to do it for all these guys right here." Sliding from one side of the horse to the other with a controlled flair rare for an American, Naddour calmly put together a routine that cemented a trip to Rio next August and allowed the U.S. men's program to exhale.

The six-man group missing Olympic veterans Sam Mikulak, Jake Dalton and John Orozco finished qualifying in fifth place with a total of 350.322. The Americans will be joined in the finals and by Japan, China, Britain, Russia, Switzerland, Brazil and South Korea. The U.S. officially moved on after Naddour posted a passport-punching 15.266 on pommels, the final routine on the final rotation that capped an uneven but gritty performance.

"I love a good fight," Chris Brooks said. Good thing, because the U.S. was in one for much of the afternoon. Rising star Donnell Whittenburg battled a cold and a series of wobbles, including a memorable brawl with the parallel bars where his massive arms nearly turned one of the poles into splinters as he tried to hold on. The resilient Brooks, added to the team when Mikulak sprained an ankle a few weeks ago, tried to ignore the searing pain in his left shoulder when not serving as the de facto cheerleader. Danell Leyva, a bronze medalist in the all-around at the 2012 Olympics, showed extended flashes of the brilliance that has appeared only occasionally since his triumph in London three years ago while earning a spot in the all-around final.

It wasn't perfect and it wasn't always pretty. That can wait until Rio. This was about survival for a team minus some vital parts from the group that captured bronze at worlds a year ago. Yet the U.S. survived to remain firmly in the pack behind front-

runners China and Japan.

The top of the podium is likely out of reach. That third step, however, remains in sight. Three days after a sloppy training session, one that included Paul Ruggeri laughing in frustration during his floor exercise, the US regrouped.

"They've been doing this long enough to know the difference between a tough day and a bad one. It's why national team coordinator Kevin Mazeika didn't feel the need for a pep talk.

"They do their best gymnastics when they're not too tight," Mazeika said. "I don't micromanage that. I let them be themselves." The Americans looked loose, breezing through still rings and vault before things started to get shaky. Brooks' bum shoulder kept him from making the lift he needed on parallel bars, and his 12.933 put the U.S. in the need of a big score to offset it.

Enter Leyva was the world champion in the event back in 2011, when he was a teenager. Not anymore. The 23-year-old remains a work in progress, but his athletically aggressive set produced a 15.633. Twenty minutes later Leyva was at it again, soaring over the high bar in what is the gymnastics version of the half-pipe, a series of turns and daring flips that seems to connect with Leyva's inner showman. He drilled his landing and received a massive hug from stepfather and coach Yin Alvarez.

Leyva's 15.566 was the highest of the meet and the highlight of an all-around total that put him fourth overall and placed him in the premier group with Japan's incomparable Kohei Uchimura for the all-around finals on Friday.

"It wasn't the best and that's what I needed," Leyva said. "I need to have something to look forward to. I need to know I didn't do my best."

A sentiment echoed by the rest of a team that will have to find a way past Russia and the rapidly improving Brits if it wants to find its way onto the medal stand Wednesday. It's telling that the group which has spoken incessantly about its depth since London needed it more than ever. The highest U.S. score on each event was spread among five different gymnasts, and Leyva, Naddour, Whittenburg, Brooks and Brandon Wynn all advanced to at least one event final. The chase for individual glory can wait. For now they'll settle for a mix of relief and guarded optimism. "We did our job today, we're going to Rio," Whittenburg said. "But we still have more jobs ahead of us." —AP



KANSAS CITY: Ground crew prepare Citi Field ahead of the Major League Baseball World Series between the New York Mets and the Kansas City Royals. —AP

TITLE-STARVED TEAMS OFFER GRIPPING WORLD SERIES CLASH

KANSAS CITY: The Kansas City Royals and New York Mets get set to battle in the 111th World Series starting on Tuesday in a best-of-seven clash with intriguing match-ups between teams aching to end long title droughts.

Showdowns abound with the Mets' young, fireballing starting pitchers going against a battling Royals team that have been the hardest to strike out in Major League Baseball.

Kansas City will pit their relentless hit and run, pressure offense against a Mets attack that features the hottest hitter on the planet in Daniel Murphy, who along with other slugging New Yorkers will test their power in spacious Kauffman Stadium.

What the two teams have in common is a fierce desire to end decades of frustration by hoisting the championship trophy, with odds-makers making Kansas City a narrow favorite.

The Royals are in the World Series for a second consecutive season after last year ending a 29-year postseason drought only to fall painfully shy of beating the San Francisco Giants.

The last Mets' appearance in the Fall Classic came in 2000 when they lost in five games to the crosstown rival Yankees. Kansas City last reached the MLB winner's circle in 1985, while the Mets have not won since 1986. Those Royals, led on

the field by Hall of Fame third baseman George Brett, were a perennial contender. Those 1980s Mets were a powerhouse built around young stars Doc Gooden and Darryl Strawberry.

Kansas City came agonizingly close last year, pushing the Giants to a Game Seven at home before going down to defeat against valiant emergency reliever Madison Bumgarner with the tying run on third in the bottom of the ninth.

"I think it was a driving force for all of these guys back in spring training, knowing that we wanted to get back to that situation and get that one more run," Royals leftfielder Alex Gordon said at a workout in advance of the Series.

CONTRASTING STYLES

The Mets' success starts with their young pitchers - Noah Syndergaard, who hits 100 miles per hour with his fastball, Matt Harvey, who throws in the high 90s, the moving 96 from Jacob deGrom and all the strikeouts they log.

They combine that sizzle with curves and change-ups that can buckle the knees of batters braced for high heat. "We're going to strike people out," said Mets manager Terry Collins.

Power pitching has been combined with power at the plate by the Mets, who have soared this postseason with the home run surge by the

astonishing Daniel Murphy. Murphy, who hit a modest, career-high 14 homers this season, carries an MLB record of six home runs in six straight games into the World Series and is backed by power-hitting Yoenis Cespedes and Lucas Duda in the Mets' batting order.

The Royals' pitching edge comes from a deep bullpen anchored by closer Wade Davis and flamethrowing set-up man Kelvin Herrera, who routinely reaches 100 mph himself, that preserves late-inning leads like clockwork.

Then again, the Mets never trailed once during their four-game sweep of the Cubs in the NL Championship Series. Kansas City relies on a different type of attack, standing second from last in the American League with 139 home runs, but second best in stolen bases with 107.

The Royals, including Lorenzo Cain and Alcides Escobar, AL Championship Series MVPs the last two years, make the most consistent contact in the majors. The pennant-clinching run against Toronto demonstrated their resourcefulness as Cain raced from first base all the way home on a single by Eric Hosmer down the right-field line. "It was an unconventional way to score a run, but that was Royals baseball," said Kansas City manager Ned Yost. "We did it on speed and athleticism." —Reuters



SAUDI ARABIA: A picture taken September 12, 2015 shows Asian expats working in Saudi Arabia playing cricket during a competition on a sandy and stony ground beside a shopping mall's parking lot. —AFP



SAUDI ARABIA: A picture taken September 12, 2015 shows Asian expats playing cricket during a competition on a sandy and stony ground in Saudi Arabia. —AFP

ON STONY GROUND: ASIAN CRICKETERS FIND SAUDI SOLACE

RIYADH: Even the best groundskeeper's skills would be lost on this grassless pitch in the Saudi capital Riyadh where Asian expats make the most of an improvised version of cricket.

"This ground is full of stones and everything," said Kiran Ravi, 26, from India, blaming the sandy lot beside a shopping mall's parking lot for his team's slow run buildup on the first day of a tournament.

There are no carefully manicured grass pitches for cricketers in this city carved out of the desert. In Riyadh, there is hardly any grass at all.

The players make do with what they have: lots of asphalt or, in this case, the dangerous rock-strewn sand beside Granada Mall and the multi-lane roads that surround it.

Millions of expatriate workers from cricket-mad South Asia work in Saudi Arabia. For the talented players among them, Ravi's Warriors and other teams offer a chance to relax, even without a normal pitch. "You don't find anything like entertainment" in the ultra-conservative Islamic kingdom, said team-mate Vasant Warrior, 36.

He was seated on the back of a pickup truck, marking off the runs for his team on a scoresheet. "We play cards. We play cricket. Sometimes we play football."

For Fazeel Mihar, 27, who belongs to a team of Sri Lankans, the Rising Stars, cricket is a chance to "release the tension". Mihar, who played under-19 cricket in his homeland, works as a household driver and would be back on the job after Friday's match, toiling until the wee hours of Saturday. Other players work in everything from juice production to sales and logistics. Friday, the Muslim weekend, is their day off-and their match day.

The 10-over contest between the Warriors and Rising Stars was well under way by 7:00 am before the worst of Riyadh's 40 Centigrade (104 Fahrenheit) heat bore down them.

A second tournament match was being held at the same time on a neighbouring rough ground outside the mall's Debenhams department store.

A total of 16 teams, with mostly Indians and Pakistanis, were in competition for prize money of 1,200 riyals (\$320),

which each team contributed to and will go towards their equipment.

While the ground may not impress, the Warriors' uniforms do. A stylised lion adorns the blue caps which they paid for themselves. Matching jerseys bear each man's name.

CRICKET'S 'REAL SPIRIT'

Players ask visiting family and friends to bring bats from India because those available locally are not of the best quality. The ball, normally used for tennis, looks authentic enough after it is bound in red tape. "It will give speed and swing," Ravi said, explaining that a conventional stitched cricket ball can't be used on the hard Riyadh surfaces.

The wicket itself is an uneven-edged strip of concrete, with mats laid down on the rough ground around the stumps.

There can be no dramatic diving catches on this surface where the fielders, their faces beaded in sweat, throw up puffs of dust as they run.

"Here in Saudi Arabia we lack grounds," said Ravi, a player since his high school days in the Saudi capital. In neighbouring Qatar, where South Asian labourers make up a much higher proportion of the population, cricketers have it better.

Their Asian Town stadium is a green oasis that seats 14,000. Warrior, a 14-year veteran of Riyadh cricket, said the city's burgeoning construction projects have eaten away at space for the game. In any case, Saudis prefer football.

India and Pakistan, major contributors to the Saudi workforce, are fierce opponents both in politics and international cricket. Such rivalries are put aside on the predominantly-Indian Warriors side, which includes some Pakistanis in what Ravi calls "the real spirit of cricket." On match day, the Warriors were all out for 79, sending the raucous Rising Stars in to bat. Mohammed Halfees, 27, who had taken four wickets, rested his scoresheet on a bat to record the fours and sixes that quickly pushed the Stars to a six-wicket victory on the stony ground. —AFP



SAUDI ARABIA: A picture taken September 12, 2015 shows an Asian expat working in Saudi Arabia bowling as he plays cricket during a competition. —AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH LEAGUE CUP

Man City v Crystal 22:45 **Frosinone v Carpi** 22:45

beIN SPORTS 1 HD **Sassuolo v Juventus** 22:45

Liverpool v Bournemouth 22:45 **beIN SPORTS 3 HD**

beIN SPORTS 11 HD

Southampton v Aston Villa 22:45

beIN SPORTS

Man United v Middlesbrough 23:00

beIN SPORTS 12 HD

ITALIAN LEAGUE

Milan v Chievo 22:45

beIN SPORTS 5 HD

Atalanta v Lazio 22:45

beIN SPORTS

Roma v Udinese 22:45

beIN SPORTS 8 HD

Torino v Genoa 22:45

beIN SPORTS

Napoli v Palermo 22:45

beIN SPORTS

Hellas v Fiorentina 22:45

beIN SPORTS 6 HD

FRENCH LEAGUE CUP

Ajaccio v Guingamp 20:30

beIN SPORTS 5 HD

Dijon v Reims 22:00

beIN SPORTS

Peronnas v Nantes 23:00

beIN SPORTS

Caen v Nice 23:00

beIN SPORTS

Lille v Troyes 23:00

beIN SPORTS

Lorient v Montpellier 23:00

beIN SPORTS

Toulouse v Auxerre 23:00

beIN SPORTS

SPANISH LEAGUE

Villanovense v Barcelona 22:30

beIN SPORTS 2 HD

MISHRA GETS BAIL AFTER ARREST IN ASSAULT CASE

MUMBAI: India leg-spinner Amit Mishra was arrested by police and then released on bail in Bengaluru yesterday in connection with a complaint of assault filed by a woman.

The 32-year-old featured in four of the five one-day internationals against South Africa that concluded on Sunday and is also part of the squad for the first two tests of a four-match series against the same opponents starting next month.

The complaint was registered during the last

week of September when Mishra was with the Indian team in Bengaluru for a training camp ahead of the series against South Africa.

The woman, who is reportedly a friend of the cricketer, alleged Mishra assaulted her in his hotel room. "We questioned him for two to two-and-a-half hours today and then he was arrested," Sandeep Patil, Bengaluru's deputy commissioner of police, central division, told Reuters.

"He was later granted bail as it's a bailable offence. "We will have to gather more evidence

now before we file the charge sheet against him." Patil said there was no restriction on Mishra playing for India and it was up to the Indian cricket board (BCCI) to decide if they want to include him in the team. Calls and messages to Mishra, who has played 16 tests and 31 ODIs for India, went unanswered while the BCCI was yet to make any comment on the incident. The first test between India and South Africa will be played in the Northern Indian city of Mohali from Nov. 5.—Reuters



BANGALORE: Indian cricketer Amit Mishra (center) is mobbed by the media as he comes out of a police station. Mishra was arrested on October 27 and later released on bail for allegedly assaulting a filmmaker in his hotel room, a police official said.—AFP

TENDULKAR, WARNE BAT FOR CRICKET OLYMPIC COMEBACK

DUBAI: Former Australia spinner Shane Warne and India batting great Sachin Tendulkar have joined the chorus clamoring for cricket to become an Olympic sport, the BBC reported.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is scheduled to meet the International Olympic Committee (IOC) next month to discuss a possible bid, with the Twenty20 format of the game most likely to be discussed. Cricket has not featured in the Olympics since 1900, when Great Britain took on France in Paris, and the ICC has

resisted attempts to include it in the Games in the past over fears that this might dilute existing competitions such as the 50-over World Cup and World Twenty20.

"I'd love to see it as an Olympic sport and, who knows, down the track it might be," the BBC quoted Warne as saying. "I think it's a great idea and I reckon T20 is the best format for it," former India batsman and test cricket's all-time leading run-scorer Tendulkar said. "It's the most acceptable format for people who don't have any

knowledge about cricket or the ones who need an introduction to cricket. "The game is over in three hours and it's like any sport- you go to a stadium and after three hours you get back to your work," the former India captain added.

The duo are captaining rival teams in a series of three Twenty20 All Star matches in the United States in November as part of an attempt to raise cricket's profile around the globe.

Their backing for an Olympic bid will increase the pressure on the ICC to reverse its resistance

to the idea. The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) in July urged the sport's ruling body to try to get the game's Twenty20 international format into the Olympics. The MCC, founded in 1787 and the owner of the Lord's ground where it is based, was formerly the governing body of world cricket and is the guardian of the laws of the game.

Warne said he was in favor of the Twenty20 format for the Olympics, but is open to the idea of indoor cricket being chosen as well. "If it advertises the game of cricket and the skill and

athleticism that are involved in a game of cricket then great," he said. "I haven't seen a game of indoor cricket for a long time so I don't know how good indoor cricket is at the moment. But the last time I saw it, it was fantastic-so hopefully they have grown a different skill for it. "Ideally, I'd stick to Twenty20 because it's over in three hours, it's easy to organise and you play two or three games a day. I'd include the associate nations because it's helping spread the word of cricket." —Reuters

SUAREZ SUCCEEDS IN SUPPRESSING HIS IMPULSES AT BARCA

BARCELONA: Wearing the burgundy-and-blue of Barcelona, Luis Suarez has succeeded in suppressing his violent impulses while maintaining his magnificence in front of goal.

The Spanish club can only hope that the rehabilitated Uruguayan is here to stay because he has become irreplaceable for Barcelona coach Luis Enrique, especially in the absence of the injured Lionel Messi. Suarez was the most maligned player on the planet when he arrived in disgrace at Barcelona after being slapped with a four-month ban and expulsion from the World Cup for biting Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini.

Despite his otherwise soft-spoken and even friendly demeanor off the field, Suarez's third multi-match ban for sinking his teeth into an opponent - to go with another suspension for racial abuse

- had created the widespread perception that he was incorrigible and that it was only a matter of time before he added another incident to his growing record of misdemeanors.

But Suarez, who has received therapy, has since done what he can to restart his career in Spain. He has helped Barcelona win four trophies while avoiding any outbreaks of rage or knee-jerk overreactions after brushes with opposing defenders that can trigger his worst responses.

Suarez celebrated his anniversary on Sunday by scoring a hat trick to rally Barcelona past Eibar for a 3-1 win that kept the defending champions level on points with league leader Real Madrid.

Those were Suarez's 33rd, 34th and 35th goals in 57 appearances since Barcelona jeopardized its motto of being

"more than a club" by signing the volatile striker. With Messi out with a left-knee ligament tear, Suarez and Neymar have kept the team in contention. Suarez also scored to complete a 2-1 comeback over Bayer Leverkusen in the Champions League. He leads the team with 10 goals overall this campaign.

"He is unstoppable," Barcelona coach Luis Enrique said. "He is a fundamental player for us and does not have a substitute."

Barcelona's decision to overlook a reputation left in tatters by the World Cup biting ban was considered cynical by many, but the 28-year-old Suarez said what he needed to after leaving Liverpool and arriving at Camp Nou last year. After apologizing, he publicly pledged that he would not bite again, and said that he was receiving "profes-

sional" help to control his emotions.

Suarez seems right at home in Barcelona. He was already well acquainted with Mediterranean city, regularly visiting his wife's family in the area, and communication with his teammates, coaches and staff was easier in his native Spanish.

Perhaps more importantly, he knew his place on the team. No longer would he be the No. 1 option in attack like at Liverpool, when he led the Premier League in scoring with 31 goals. At Barcelona, Suarez immediately took a supporting role behind Messi.

He certainly rose to the occasion in the biggest matches last season, scoring in the 2-1 win over Madrid that helped Barcelona reclaim the league title, and then adding Barcelona's second goal in its 3-1 win over Juventus in the

Champions League final.

He also appears to have developed a technique for avoiding trouble: Just walk away. Against Eibar, Suarez fell to the ground entangled with a defender. Once on their feet they japed at each other, but at the point where it could have gotten ugly, Suarez turned away.

Ironically, given Messi's tax fraud case and the lawsuit over Neymar's contract, Suarez is the only one of the three stars not to taint Barcelona's reputation.

He still has a long way to go to prove he has exorcised all his demons, and he will need to finish out the remaining years of his career on his absolute best behavior to leave behind an evenly mild positive legacy. Until then, there is always the lingering worry that one stiff knock or naughty word from an adversary and it could all unravel. —AP



BELGRADE: Athletic Bilbao's Iker Muniain celebrates his goal in this file photo. —AFP

BILBAO BLANK SPORTING 3-0

BILBAO: Aritz Aduriz continued his superb start to the season by scoring two goals in his 400th topflight appearance to lead Athletic Bilbao to a 3-0 win over Sporting Gijon on Monday. The 34-year-old striker, who recently signed a contract extension through 2017, is enjoying a fruitful spell in front of goal.

His tally of 14 goals in all competitions this season sees him top the overall scoring charts in Spain, and his brace moved him to within one of the league's top scorer Neymar's eight goals.

"We played a serious match and had our scoring touch at the right moments," said Aduriz. "We knew how important it was to get the three points playing at home." The win moved the Basque club into 12th place in the Spanish league, further clear of the relegation zone while

Sporting fell to 17th. Speedy forward Iker Muniain crossed for Markel Susaeta to finish off a great buildup instigated by Raul Garcia's key pass that sent Williams clear in the 29th minute.

Williams was involved in the second, earning his side a penalty after he was tripped by Omar Mascarell. Aduriz scored at the second attempt after goalkeeper Alberto Garcia's parried his spot kick three minutes before halftime.

Williams then played Aduriz through only for him to fire off the woodwork, but Aduriz didn't miss on the break in the 67th when he drilled in a deflected shot.

Real Madrid leads the league on goal difference, ahead of second-placed Barcelona, also on 21 points. Atletico Madrid in third place, trails the pair by two points. —AP

BARCELONA LOOK TO YOUTH FOR COPA DEL REY CLASH

MADRID: Copa del Rey holders Barcelona begin their defence of the trophy when they go to third-tier Villanovense for the first leg of their last-32 tie today.

The match has been brought forward from the first midweek in December because of Barcelona's involvement in the Club World Cup in Japan at the end of the year, and so the Catalans make the trip to the small town of Villanueva de la Serena while the rest of La Liga enjoys a midweek off. Still without the injured Lionel Messi, Barca coach Luis Enrique has also opted to rest the likes of Neymar, Luis Suarez, Gerard Pique, Sergio Busquets and Claudio Bravo for the game against opponents from the region of Extremadura in western Spain.

As a result, four players from Barca's B team, who like Villanovense compete in the Second Division B, have been promoted to the first team. Midfielders Sergi Samper and Gerard Gumbau, both 20 and who have already featured for the first team, are included along with attacking duo Aitor Cantalapiedra and Wilfrid Kaptoum, both aged 19. A slip-up would not be disastrous for Barca with the second leg to be played on December 2 at the Camp Nou, but Luis Enrique is prevented by competition rules from fielding too many reserve players. "We are limited because we must always have seven first-team players on the field," he acknowledged. "I would have liked to rely on more young players and give more of a rest to others." —AFP

CANDIDATES WAIT FOR FIFA TO VALIDATE PRESIDENTIAL BIDS

LAUSANNE: The eight candidates to succeed Sepp Blatter as FIFA president were still waiting to have their bids validated by the electoral committee of world football's governing body yesterday after the deadline for hopefuls to come forward passed.

FIFA's electoral committee was set to meet yesterday to study each bid and the integrity of the those running, but the official list of candidates for the February 26 election may not be made public until today, a source close to FIFA told AFP.

Meanwhile, one of the contenders, Shaikh Salman bin Ibrahim al Khalifa of Bahrain moved to deny claims he had been involved in the torture of footballers.

And another hopeful, the 62-year-old South African anti-apartheid campaigner Tokyo Sexwale, launched his campaign as he promised to bring "transparency and accountability" to the scandal-tainted governing body of world football.

Sexwale and the Bahraini royal Sheikh Salman, the head of the Asian Football Confederation, confirmed their bids on Monday as UEFA General Secretary Gianni Infantino also entered the running to blow the race wide open.

The 49-year-old Sheikh Salman can expect widespread support from the vast Asian Confederation, but he has already had to defend himself against criticism by human rights campaigners who have accused him of involvement in the arrest and torture of footballers when he was head of the Bahrain Football Association. "These are false, nasty lies that have been repeated again and again in the past and the present," he told the BBC in an interview.

"I cannot deny something that I haven't done. Such accusations are not just damaging,

it's really hurting. Some people have agenda on their table."

Sheikh Salman was head of the Bahrain FA in 2011 when scores of people were killed as security forces in the country put down mass Shia-led protests calling for reforms. Rights groups say he helped identify players involved in the protests and did nothing to protect them from abuses.

Sexwale, who was once jailed alongside



BAHRAIN: In this Thursday, April 30, 2015 file photo, Asian Football Confederation President Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa leaves the AFC Congress in Manama. —AP

Nelson Mandela, serving 13 years of an 18-year sentence on Robben Island on terrorism charges, vowed to "follow the money" to rid football's ruling body of corruption after recent scandals.

"What has been broken in FIFA is the ability to follow money," he told a press conference. "It is about good financial management, control systems, making sure things are done and there is a lot of transparency and accountability."

"That is what I would like to bring to FIFA," added Sexwale, now a politician and millionaire businessman who serves on FIFA's anti-racism and anti-discrimination committee.

Infantino's decision to stand, and the backing he has received from UEFA, has cast doubt over Michel Platini's campaign to replace his former ally Blatter, who announced in June that he would step down just days after being re-elected for a fifth term.

The UEFA president is currently serving a 90-day ban as investigations continue into a 1.8 million euro (\$2 million) payment received from FIFA in 2011 without a written contract.

Erstwhile favorite Platini officially remains a contender pending an examination of his candidacy when his ban ends on January 5.

But Swiss lawyer Infantino's announcement casts doubt over Platini's support within UEFA and poses the question as to whether Infantino is being presented as a Plan B in case the former France star is prevented from standing.

FIFA's electoral committee must judge the integrity of all candidates, meaning Platini's bid could be compromised by his ban. Other confirmed candidates include the Jordanian Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein, the 39-year-old brother of Jordan's King Abdullah who was the only adversary to Blatter at the previous election in May this year and can boast that he took the veteran Swiss to a second round of voting before withdrawing.

Then there is 57-year-old French former diplomat Jerome Champagne, who spent 11 years working for FIFA between 1999 and 2010. Unlike his previous bid in May, he has managed to get the necessary five signatures from national associations. David Nakhid, the former Trinidad and Tobago captain, and Liberian FA chief Musa Bility have also entered the race. —AFP

ROMA OUT TO TAKE CHARGE ATOP PACKED SERIE A PACK

MILAN: Roma will seek to succeed where both Fiorentina and Inter Milan have failed by entrenching themselves at the top of Serie A when they go in search of a fifth consecutive win at home to Udinese yesterday. Goals from Mohamed Salah and Gervinho in a 2-1 win over Fiorentina at the weekend fired Rudi Garcia's men to the top of Serie A for the first time this season to underline their title credentials.

After a middling start, Roma have hit their stride but Frenchman Garcia played down any premature talk of the Giallorossi landing their first scudetto since 2001 when Fabio Capello was in charge.

"We can't be favourites now just because we're in first place. Not so long ago we were all rubbish, from the players to the coach and even the sporting director," Garcia told media after his side's victory saw them replace Fiorentina at the summit.

"We just keep doing our job and right now

we're first after a quarter of the season. I don't need to tell my players they need to keep their feet on the ground.

"We believe in ourselves if we stick together and show humility, but there's a long way to go," he added. However, Garcia will be without suspended midfielder general Daniele de Rossi as well as leading scorer Salah, who was sent off towards the end of Sunday's victory in Florence.

Napoli are up to second having also reeled off four straight wins, the latest a Gonzalo Higuain-inspired 1-0 victory at Chievo, but the Argentine said he and his team-mates weren't looking too far ahead. "We are sending a message to ourselves. We're focusing only on what we do and not looking at what the other teams are doing," Higuain told Sky Sport Italia.

"It's a very balanced league and there are several teams bunched together with a very long way to go," added the Argentina striker, the league's joint-top scorer this term with seven

goals. Back-to-back defeats have dropped Fiorentina from first to third but a trip to winless Verona will give La Viola a chance to rediscover the form that enabled Paulo Sousa's men to begin the season with six wins in seven matches.

Inter Milan's title challenge has also lost steam with Roberto Mancini's men winless in their last four outings, but the Nerazzurri will strive to get back on track yesterday when they travel to 18th-placed Bologna. Fifth-placed Lazio, one of four teams just two points behind leaders Roma, head to Atalanta vying for a fifth win in six, while AC Milan, who recorded a first win in four after beating Sassuolo 2-1 on Sunday, are at home to Chievo. Struggling champions Juventus appear to be finally finding some form with seven points from their last three matches. Massimiliano Allegri's 12th-placed side will aim to continue their resurgence when they travel to Sassuolo. —AFP



RIO DE JANEIRO: A Brazilian Parisi Indian plays traditional head football during the World Indigenous Games, in Palmas, Brazil. The event, which comes one year after Brazil played host to soccer's World Cup and ahead of next year's Olympics. —AP

Sports

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2015

**On stony ground:
Asian cricketers find
Saudi solace**



**Candidates wait
for FIFA to
validate
presidential bids**



KOBE BRYANT HEADS GROUP OF AGING, 37-PLUS EX-ALL-STARS Page 17

SHARAPOVA FLOORS HALEP

SINGAPORE: Maria Sharapova emphatically declared her return to form after months of injury problems yesterday as she beat top seed Simona Halep 6-4, 6-4 at the WTA finals in Singapore.

Sharapova showed few signs of rust or fitness problems but she had to overcome a determined fightback from the world number two before finally closing out the victory.

The Russian, who had not completed a match since July when she arrived at the eight-player season finale, now tops Red Group after also beating Agnieszka Radwanska.

Earlier Flavia Pennetta upset Radwanska 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 with Red Group now set to go down to the wire in Thursday's final round-robin matches.

"It definitely got really tough and I guess those are the moments that you just have to get through when you haven't played for a long time," Sharapova said of her match against Halep.

"Especially against the number two player in the world these matches don't come easy. It definitely showed until the end."

The five-time Grand Slam-winner broke at the crucial moment for a one-set lead when Halep, serving to stay in the first set, made her first two double faults.

She grabbed a double break to go 5-1 up in the second set before Romania's Halep belatedly rediscovered her mojo, dragging it back to 5-4 in an inspired spell.

But Sharapova, after a stern talking-to by her coach, then brought up two match points on Halep's serve and she finished it with a firm backhand into the corner.

Sharapova's sixth straight win over Halep comes after leg and forearm problems had largely kept her sidelined since her Wimbledon semi-finals loss to Serena Williams.

In the other Red Group match yesterday, US Open champion Pennetta kept her hopes of one last title alive with her win over Radwanska.

The 33-year-old, who announced her retirement moments after winning her first Grand Slam title last month, swept past the Pole with a display of controlled aggression.

The Italian, who could have been eliminated yesterday, said she was enjoying every moment on the court after declaring her retirement plans. "It's the last tournament of the year. It's

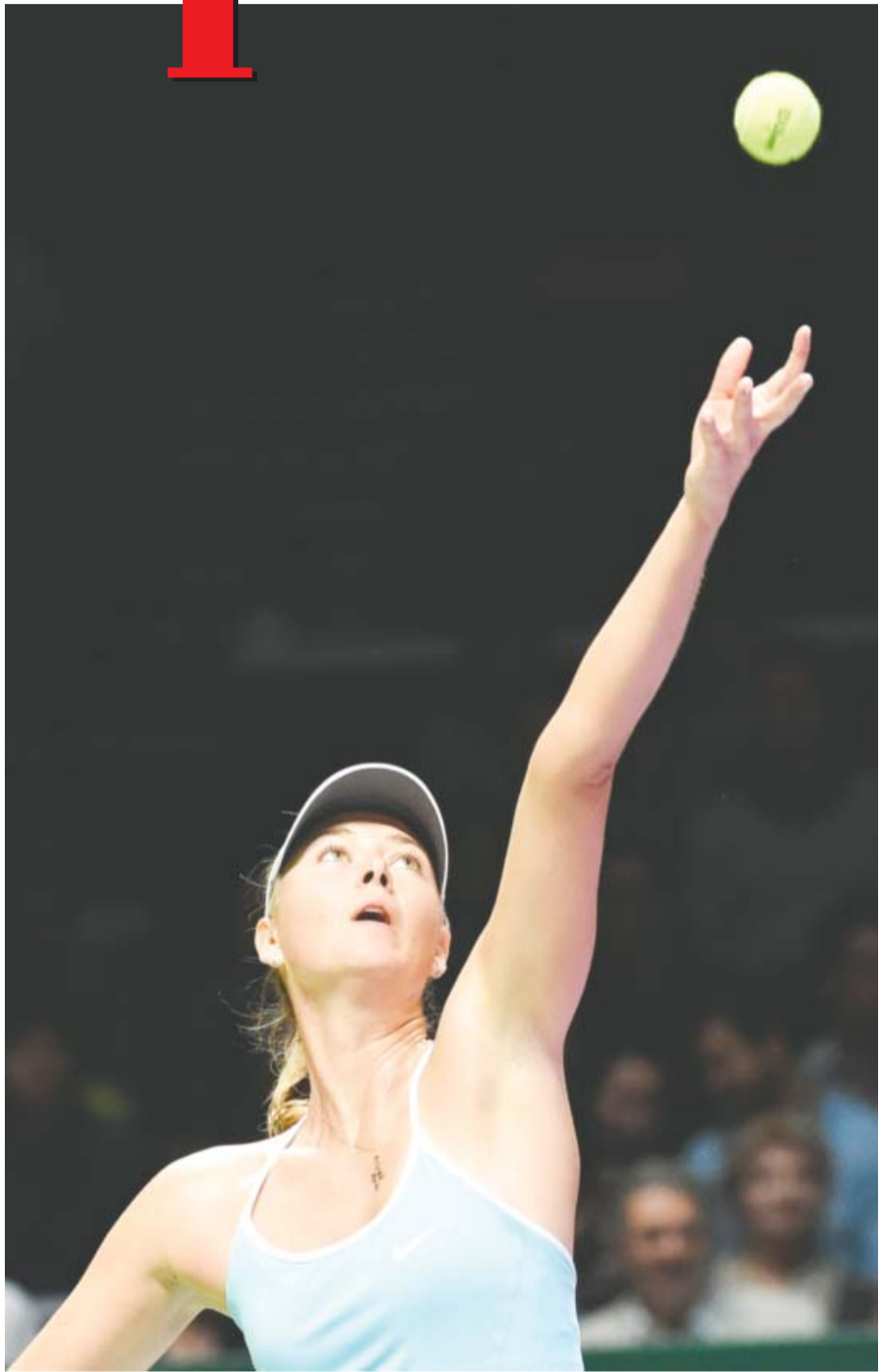
the last moment, it's special to me," she said. "Here it's like you're playing the final of a Grand Slam every match, so you try your best."

Victory at the glitzy season climax would be a fairytale farewell for Pennetta, who has held open the door to returning for next year's Olympics.

But she will first have to find a way past Sharapova, who looks in determined mood as

she bids to regain a title she last won aged 17 on debut in 2004. On that occasion, the Russian won the final against Williams, this year's defending champion and world number one who has opted not to play in Singapore.

In White Group, Spain's freshly anointed world number three Garbine Muguruza also looked a major threat when she crushed Lucie Safarova in her first match on Monday. — AFP



SINGAPORE: Russia's Maria Sharapova serves a shot against Romania's Simona Halep during their women's singles round robin tennis match at the WTA Finals. — AFP

NADAL AVOIDS ANOTHER UPSET

BASEL: Rafael Nadal rallied from the depths to narrowly prevent a repeat of one of his worst career losses as he beat Lukas Rosol 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) at the Swiss Indoors on Monday.

Three years ago, the then number 69 journeyman famously upset world number two Nadal in the 2012 Wimbledon second round.

This time, Nadal had to make numerous recoveries, the last from 4-2 down in the final-set tiebreaker, before finally prevailing.

"I thought I was out of here," said Nadal after his narrow first-round escape. "It was the first match on indoor hardcourt for me in almost a year. He's tough to play, he came to the court with big confidence. He was trying to hit the ball hard on every shot. I had a tough time adjusting. I just tried to survive the second set and wait for my opportunities. I'm very happy to have survived and still be playing."

World number seven Nadal escaped a repeat disappointment after losing in the first round here 12 years ago to countryman Feliciano Lopez. He made a dismal start as he lost the opening set in just 23 minutes. The third seed, whose game looked a shambles through much of the first two sets, finally came to life in the nick of time, breaking Rosol with the Czech leading 5-4 and serving for the match.

Nadal, whose first forehand winner only came in the first game of the second set, found a backhand winner down the line to break for 5-5.

The former world number one and 14-time Grand Slam winner then seized the momentum with a break in the final game on a third match point as his nervous opponent double-faulted. Nadal found his form, breaking Rosol for 2-0 and saving a pair of break points for a 3-0 lead.

But he lost the momentum and the set went into a tiebreaker, which the Czech led 4-2. Nadal slowly reeled in the potential spoiler, claiming a match point at 5-4 and finishing it off seconds later. "I was only thinking about trying to find a way to win the next point," Nadal said, adding that he has come back a lot of times in tough situations, but this year has been different.

"I've lost matches that I was winning. But the last few weeks have helped for building the confidence. And the crowd support was very important for me."

Nadal has already qualified for the eight-man World Tour Finals next month, but was carrying solid momentum from a Beijing final and Shanghai semi-final into the European indoors swing which ends next week at Paris Bercy.

Since his Wimbledon loss, Nadal had beaten Rosol twice in 2014 — including a revenge win in July at Wimbledon in the second round.

Defending champion Roger Federer, who is chasing a seventh title in his homeland, has reached 11 finals in Basel and has a record of 56-9. He opens his bid for more home success on Tuesday when he faces Kazakh outsider Mikhail Kukushkin while compatriot and second seed Stan Wawrinka is also in the field and plays Croatian big-server Ivo Karlovic.

In the first round on a quiet opening day, Adrian Mannarino beat Serb Viktor Troicki 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/3) while Dominic Thiem of Austria put out Dutch qualifier Robin Haase 0-6, 7-6 (7/5), 7-5.

Swiss wild card Henri Laaksonen lost in the Basel first round for the third time without a win, going down to American Donald Young 2-6, 6-3, 6-4. — AFP



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KUWAIT: The Ooredoo Kuwait headquarters building.

OOREDOO KUWAIT POSTS KD 547.9M REVENUE IN 9 MONTHS

CUSTOMER NUMBERS INCREASED BY 7.5% • GROWTH DELIVERED IN Q3 REVENUE, EBITDA AND NET PROFIT

KUWAIT: National Mobile Telecommunications Company (NMTCC) (Ooredoo) yesterday announced its financial results for the nine months of 2015:

Financial Highlights:

- Total customer base increased to 23.9 million at the close of nine months of 2015, versus 22.3 million for the same period in 2014, amounting to growth of 7.5 percent.
- Positive trend delivering growth in Revenue, EBITDA and net profit in the third quarter of 2015.
- Revenues for nine months of 2015 stood at KD547.9 million (\$1,812.8 million), compared with KD565.5 million (\$1,961.7 million) for the same period in 2014, a decrease of 3.1 percent. However, in local currency terms, Ooredoo Kuwait, Ooredoo Algeria and Ooredoo Maldives have posted revenue growth.
- EBITDA for nine months of 2015 was KD192.1 million (\$635.7 million), compared to EBITDA of KD203.4 million (\$705.7 million) for the same period in 2014.
- The consolidated net profit for the period was impacted by adverse currency movements in Tunisia (-10 percent YoY) and Algeria (-14 percent YoY) and foreign exchange losses of KD12.6 million (\$ 41.7 million) mainly from Algeria. The consolidated net profit for nine months of 2015 was KD33.9 million (\$112.1 million), compared to net profit for the same period in 2014 of KD58.7 million (\$203.6 million).
- Net profit attributable to NMTCC in nine months of 2015 was KD 28.1 million (\$93.0 million) compared with a Net attributable profit of KD 45.7 million (\$158.7 million) for the same period of 2014. Excluding the adverse impact of Foreign currency losses, Net Profit to NMTCC would have been KD 36.6 million (\$121.1 million) compared to KD 49.0 million (\$169.9 million) in nine months of 2014. Additionally, nine months of 2014 included one-off gains from discontinued business amounting to KD 3.6 million.
- The consolidated earnings per share was 56.1 fils (\$18.6 cents), compared to 91.3 fils (\$31.7 cents) per share earned for the same period last year.

Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani, Chairman of the Board, commented:

"Ooredoo Kuwait and its operations (Algeria, Palestine, Maldives, Tunisia and Oman) has delivered strong performance in Q3 2015 recording growth in revenue, EBITDA and Net Income compared to Q3 2014 amid adverse currency movements in some of our markets in 2015.

We continued to grow our customer base through the successful execution of our strategy. Our number of customers reached 23.9 million

as of Q3 2015, an increase of 7.5 percent compared to the same period last year.

We continued our network investments across our footprint to ensure our customers have the best customer experience. Our data leadership in Algeria continues to attract new customers, and we have maintained our leadership in Tunisia. Our LTE-A network in Kuwait differentiates Ooredoo's offer through the quality and speed of our services.

The shift to an increasingly digital world offers significant opportunity for Ooredoo to develop and capture new sources of revenue by delivering innovative and ubiquitous services. Our data centric strategy will deliver long term value for both our customers and shareholders."

Review of operations:

The Group's operational performance can be summarized as follows:

Ooredoo - Kuwait: Ooredoo's customer base in Kuwait was 2.4 million at the end of nine months of 2015, a decrease of 1.5 percent on the same period in 2014. Revenues for nine months of 2015 were KD 139.1 million (\$460.1 million), an increase of 11.1 percent compared to 2014 of KD 125.1 million (\$434.1 million). EBITDA was KD 34.5 million (\$114.2 million) versus EBITDA for nine months of 2014 of KD 26.4 million (USD 91.6 million), an increase by 30.9 percent. Net Profit was at KWD 8.6 million (\$28.6 million), compared to KD 5.4 million (\$18.6 million) for the same period in 2014.

Ooredoo - Tunisia: Ooredoo's Tunisia customer base at the end of nine months of 2015 was 7.5



Chairman Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani

million customers. During nine months of 2015, the Tunisian Dinar depreciated by 10 percent compared to 2014, which has significantly impacted the results shown in Kuwaiti dinar. Revenues for nine months of 2015 were KD116.6 million (\$385.8 million), compared to revenues for the same period in 2014 of KD138.2 million (\$ 479.3 million). EBITDA was KD51.6 million (\$170.8 million) compared to KD66.3 million (\$230.0 million) for the same period last year representing a decrease of 22.1 percent. The net

profit decreased to KD12.5 million (\$41.2 million) a decrease of 36.6 percent when compared with KD19.6 million (\$68.1 million) for the same period in 2014. The Net Attributable Profit to Ooredoo for nine months of 2015 was KD9.3 million (\$ 30.9 million), compared to KD14.7 million (\$51.1 million) for the same period in 2014.

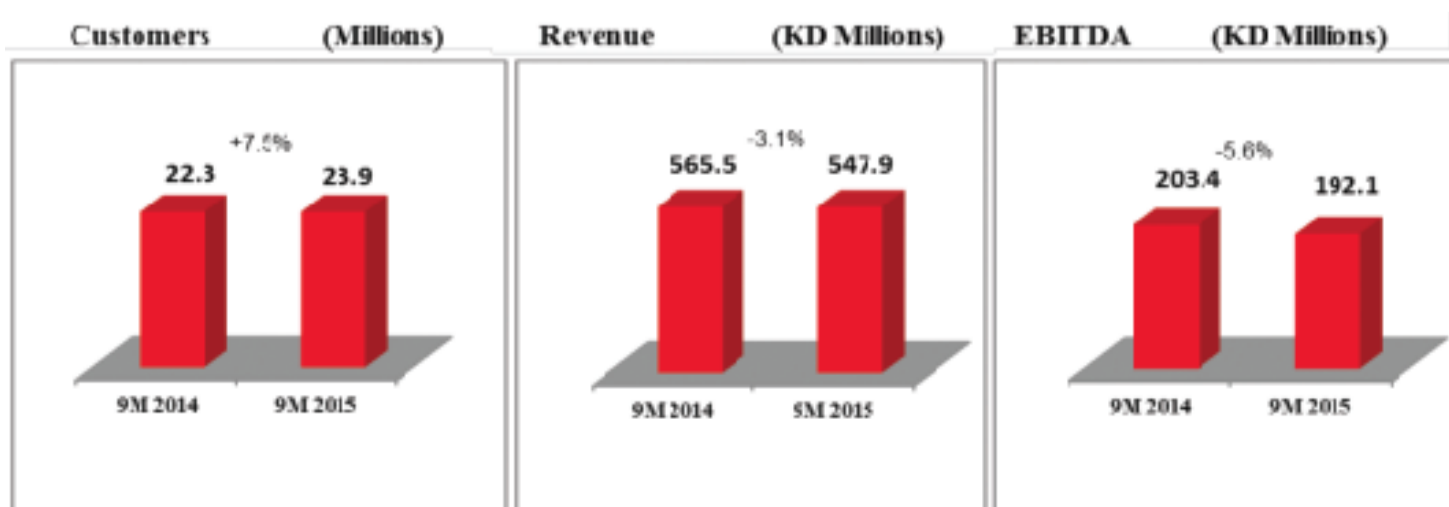
Ooredoo - Algeria: Ooredoo's customer base in Algeria at the end of nine months of 2015 was 13.1 million customers, an increase of 14.1 per-

cent. During nine months of 2015, the Algerian Dinar depreciated by 14 percent over nine months of 2014 which has significantly impacted the results shown in Kuwaiti dinar. Revenues for nine months of 2015 were KD255.8 million (\$846.4 million), a decrease of 6.0 percent compared with revenues of KD272.2 million (\$944.2 million) for the same period in 2014. EBITDA for nine months of 2015 was KD96.2 million (\$318.3 million), a decrease of 9.3 percent on KD106.0 million (\$367.9 million) for the same period in 2014. The total Net Profit for nine months 2015 was KD15.7 million (\$51.9 million) compared to a total Net Profit of KD34.5 million (\$119.6 million) for the same period in 2014. The Net Attributable profit to Ooredoo for nine months 2015 was KD11.1 million (\$36.9 million) compared to a Net Attributable Profit of KWD24.5 million (USD 84.9 million) for the same period in 2014. Excluding the losses caused by depreciation of DZD, the Attributable Net Profit to Ooredoo would be KD 19.1 million (\$63.2 million).

Wataniya - Palestine: The total customer base for Wataniya Mobile Palestine at the end of nine months of 2015 was 0.7 million, an increase of 7.7 percent from the same period of 2014. Revenues for nine months of 2015 were KD19.1 million (\$63.2 million), an increase of 4.0 percent compared to the revenues of KD18.4 million (\$63.7 million) for the same period in 2014. EBITDA for nine months of 2015 was KD3.4 million (\$11.1 million) an increase of 18.7 percent, compared to an EBITDA of KD2.8 million (\$9.8 million). The total net loss for nine months of 2015 was KD2.5 million (\$8.2 million) compared to a total net loss of KD3.0 million (\$10.5 million). The net attributable Loss for the nine months of 2015 stood at KD1.2 million (\$4.0 million) compared to a net attributable loss of KD1.5 million (\$5.1 million) for the same period in 2014.

Ooredoo - Maldives: Maldives total customer base at the end of nine months of 2015 was 0.3 million, an increase of 18.3 percent from the same period of 2014. Revenues for nine months of 2015 were KD17.3 million (\$57.2 million), an increase of 52.2 percent, compared to KD11.4 million (\$39.4 million) for the same period 2014. EBITDA for the nine months of 2015 was KD8.0 million (\$26.4 million) an increase of 127.0 percent, compared to an EBITDA of KD3.5 million (\$12.2 million). The net attributable profit for nine months of 2015 was KD3.7 million (\$12.2 million) compared to the net attributable profit of KD0.2 million (\$0.9 million) for the same period in 2014.

• The KD to USD conversion rate used for nine months of 2015 is 0.30224 and for nine months of 2014 is 0.28826.





'INDIAN PROPERTY MELA 2015' ON OCTOBER 30-31

KUWAIT: Kuwait Times, in association with Aashiaana, a leading property portal in Kuwait, will be organizing the much-awaited 'India Property Mela 2015' on October 30 and 31 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Kuwait.

The two-day 'Property Mela' will be the ideal opportunity for NRIs looking to invest in Indian real estate, as they would have access to meet and interact with top Indian property developers and gain first-hand information on current and upcoming real estate projects across India.

Hundreds of projects, including from 15 top Indian developers, ranging from affordable apartments to luxury villas will be on offer at the Property Mela. Developers will be highlighting real estate in cities across India and will be presenting special offers on limited properties during the two-day show.

Leading developers at the Property Mela 2015 include the likes of Lodha, Kanakia, Mahindra Lifespaces, Hubtown, Vaishnavi, Propshell, KoltePatil, Nahar's and Supertech. The builders and developers will be showcasing their properties in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Pune, Thane, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Gurgaon, Noida, Goa, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai, among other places.

A house is usually a person's biggest investment. In case the person is not in a position to buy, renting is the next best option. But, in India, renting can be a nightmare as weak implementation of regulations means the renter is often at the mercy of the owner. In case the own-



er does anything wrong, it is next to impossible for the renter to seek redress. Under these circumstances, most people prefer to save money and buy their own homes. Increasingly, people are also looking at realty as a lucrative investment.

The real estate industry in India has once again turned into a rewarding market, surpassing many other industries in terms of growth, in the first half of 2015. Revival of the real-estate industry into one of the most vibrant and dynamic sectors of the Indian economy can be attributed to several factors.

Some of the reasons for the recent boom in this industry include, the new

real-estate policies introduced by the government, the liberalized lending regulations of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the huge demand for affordable housing in cities and entry of many new real-estate developers to the sector. But, underlining all this demand for real-estate is the realization that the Indian economy is on a growth trajectory and investment in realty is one of the best ways to share in this progress and development.

Industry analysts see the recent rise in residential demand in cities as something not very surprising. In the last decade there has been a huge migration of rural people to urban areas, both in

search of better employment opportunities and living conditions. A recent survey on the Indian property market revealed that in many states there is a huge pent up demand for affordable housing units, especially from lower- and middle-income groups.

Increasing connectivity between suburbs and large metropolitan cities has also made living in new satellite cities attractive to many people. This has led to a huge expansion and investment by realty builders developing properties, including affordable housing, on the outskirts of major cities.

In response to this demand for affordable residences, the Reserve Bank of

India (RBI) is now encouraging commercial banks to provide loans up to 90 percent for properties that cost up to Rs30 lakhs. Earlier, this facility was available only when the cost of the property was up to Rs20 lakhs. The RBI is also initiating policies that allow major banks to reduce interest rates on home loans. The central bank has noted that in the case of 'individual housing loans' that fall under the category of Rs30 lakh, the loan value ratio is now up to 90 percent; for properties above 30 lakhs the ratio is now up to 80 percent and for those above Rs75 lakh, the ratio comes to 75 percent.

Experts believe that in the future, more and more satellite cities will be developed and they will continue to hold potential for investors, as well as provide affordable housing to those in need. Given the growth potential of these new satellite cities, and the fact that real estate investments generally have higher returns compared to other asset classes, investors will be well-advised to invest a portion of their savings in these properties, as the yield will likely be significantly higher over a period of time.

With developers providing a wide range of offerings, from luxury villas to mid-range and affordable apartments, and given other favorable increments taking place in the real estate market, this is the right time to make property investments in India and there is no better venue to explore this rewarding market than the Indian Property Mela 2015.



ERFURT: Uwe Schneider, counterfeit money expert of the German Federal Bank, presents the new twenty euro banknotes during a press conference at a branch office of the German Federal Bank in Erfurt, central Germany, yesterday. — AP

SAUDI TUMBLES AS ENERGY PRICE RISES CONSIDERED

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's stock market fell sharply yesterday after the oil minister said the government was considering whether to raise domestic energy prices, a reform that could initially at least hurt consumer spending and corporate profits.

Asked on the sidelines of a mining conference if he expected domestic energy prices to increase in the near term, Ali Al-Naimi said: "What you are asking is: is it under study? And the answer is yes."

Naimi did not give any details of the possible changes, which could form part of a major tightening of fiscal policy next year as the government reduces a budget deficit estimated at well over \$100 billion in 2015. In the past, officials have spoken privately of the possibility of cutting price subsidies for gasoline, other fuels, electricity and the gas feedstock used by Saudi petrochemical producers. But Naimi's remarks were the first public confirmation from such a senior official that such measures were being studied.

The Saudi stock index sank 3.0 percent to 7,098 points, close to technical support at its August low of 6,921 points. Turnover rose as the market dropped, a negative technical signal. The petrochemical sector index slid 3.4 percent as the top producer, Saudi Basic Industries, fell 2.1 percent. But stocks dropped across the board, with miner Ma'aden slipping 5.3 percent, Al-Rajhi Bank losing 2.8 percent, and Knowledge

Economic City, a developer of industrial zones, plunging 10 percent.

Most other Gulf markets were also soft because of weak oil prices and global equities. Dubai's index fell 1.0 percent to 3,518 points, testing technical support around 3,500 points, from which it bounced three times in September.

Second-tier property developer Deyaar fell 3.2 percent after reporting a 38 percent slump in profit. Peer Union Properties dropped 4.0 percent. Abu Dhabi dropped 0.5 percent although some blue chips were strong, with Aldar Properties up 1.8 percent. Qatar, seen as a defensive market because of high dividend yields and the government's comfortable fiscal position, once again outperformed most of the region, with its index edging down just 0.1 percent. Qatari German Co for Medical Devices soared 9.9 percent in its heaviest trade since June. Earlier this week it reported a nine-month net loss of 9.4 million riyals (\$2.6 million) against a year-ago loss of 9.9 million riyals.

In Egypt, the index dropped 0.6 percent with activity still focusing on real estate developer Amer Group, down 5.4 percent, and its spin-off Porto Group, which surged in early trade but closed flat.

GB Auto climbed 2.1 percent after it said it had signed an agreement with China's Chery International to distribute Chery cars in Egypt. — Reuters

RATE HIKE NOT EXPECTED AS FED OPENS POLICY MEETING

WASHINGTON: With the US economy showing signs of slower growth, the Federal Reserve was expected to again put off raising interest rates as it opened a two-day policy meeting yesterday.

But Fed Chair Janet Yellen was tasked with bringing the members of the Federal Open Market Committee in line around a clear message, after a divide opened over the past month that has sowed confusion in markets. Few analysts believed that the FOMC will raise the benchmark federal funds rate when the meeting ends on Wednesday, even though it has remained at an extraordinarily low near zero percent since the end of 2008.

After the September meeting, Yellen said she expected to begin what would be a slow series of increases by year-end, if the US economy continued to show strength.

But since then the key points of data, on output, hiring, wages and inflation, have all appeared weaker, in part because of the downturn in global economic activity.

And with central banks in China and Europe headed in the direction of more easing and deflationary pressures all around, many economists and the debt markets are now betting that the first rate increase in more than nine years will not happen until next year, with March the consensus view.

That will buy some more time for emerging-market countries and their businesses to prepare better for a long-expected and challenging tightening of US monetary policy.

"The chances of a rate hike announcement at October's FOMC meeting are slim to none," said Kim Fraser of Spanish bank BBVA. "Throughout the past few months, the US economy has been hit hard by weakness abroad, with many export-oriented industries reporting a significant drop in production," she said.

The meeting takes place as third-quarter growth appears likely to be only around 1.6 percent, much lower than the hot 3.9 percent pace of the second quarter.

Strong dollar a problem

US exports and inflation have looked weaker; more doubts have arisen over China's ability to beat back a sharp downturn; and the powerful US job creation machine of the past two years has ratcheted back into second gear. Analysts said they expect the FOMC to "mark down" its assessment of the economy in its policy statement, after displaying consistent confidence since the beginning of the year.

But, with markets on edge over any signal from the Fed, the onus is on the FOMC to clear up perceptions that its policy is drifting.

Weeks after Yellen said in September that she expected a rate rise this year, two members of the Fed board of governors publicly declared themselves in favor of waiting.

Both said the jobs market still showed too much slack, and inflation was too weak, to begin tightening monetary policy now. Fed Governor Lael Brainard said in a speech that the downside risks to the economy "make a strong case for continuing to carefully nurture the US



The US Federal Reserve building in Washington, DC. The Federal Reserve is expected to again delay raising interest rates when it began a two-day policy meeting yesterday. — AFP

recovery and argue against prematurely taking away the support that has been so critical to its vitality." While it appeared as a public split, their views also came after several data releases showed hiring and US output lower than expected, and China's growth outlook weakened. The other problem is that the dollar has been stronger than US economists would like, and that has taken a toll on US exports, a key

reason why economic growth slowed in the third quarter.

If the Fed does increase rates now, the dollar would likely strengthen. "The FOMC cited the strong dollar as a drag on net exports in the minutes to their September meeting, and also pointed out that the strong dollar holds down US inflation," said economist William Adams at PNC Bank. — AFP

UK ECONOMY SLOWS IN Q3 ON MANUFACTURING SLUMP

LONDON: Britain's economic growth slowed in the third quarter, official data showed yesterday, hit by shrinking construction and manufacturing activity as well as global economic strains. Gross domestic product (GDP) — the value of all goods and services produced in the economy — expanded by 0.5 percent between July and September, the Office for National Statistics said in an initial estimate. That was a slightly lower rate than market expectations for 0.6-percent quarter-on-quarter expansion, and followed growth of 0.7 percent in April through June.

The nation's powerhouse services sector grew by a solid 0.7 percent, but this was partially offset by a 2.2-percent drop in construction output. Manufacturing meanwhile slid by 0.3 percent but mining and quarrying activity rose 2.4 percent. "The signs have been there for some time: the UK economy has been losing momentum," said Hargreaves Lansdown economist Ben Brettell. "Weaker construction and manufacturing output are the primary reasons for the slowdown, which could prompt concerns that the UK economy's reliance on the services sector is increasing further." "The manufacturing sector,

which represents 10 percent of the economy, is battling twin headwinds of a stronger pound and weaker demand from abroad as the global economy falters." Sanjiv Shah, chief investment officer at Sun Global Investments, added: "These figures add to the view that the global slowdown will increasingly affect the UK economy in the next few months". In response to the Q3 slowdown, Britain's Conservative finance minister George Osborne warned there were more "tough decisions" required to keep the economy on track. "There are clear global risks and there is still much more to do to fix our economy," said the chancellor of the exchequer, who will deliver an autumn budget update next month.

"In the Autumn Statement we will take more steps to ensure we feel the recovery right across our country, make the long-term investments for the future and, crucially, continue to make the tough decisions required so that Britain lives within its means," Osborne said. Meanwhile, analysts said Tuesday's data would ease pressure on the Bank of England to raise interest rates from their current 0.50-percent record-low level any time soon. — AFP



Honda's car showroom in Al Rai next to Safat Alghanim

HONDA Opens Two New Showrooms in Al Rai

Alghanim Industries, one of the largest, privately owned companies in the Gulf region, has furthered its expansion plans by opening a brand new Honda showroom as well as another new showroom that is exclusively for Honda motorcycles and power products. The inauguration of the new showroom took place from 6 - 8 PM on October 19, 2015, marking the fruitful partnership between Alghanim Industries and Honda.



Chairman of Alghanim Industries
Kutayba Yusuf Alghanim

The highly-anticipated evening was attended by Honda Motors Company's management including Mr. Yusuke Hori, the Operating Officer / Head of Regional Unit - Africa & Middle East of Honda Motor Company and Shunichi Uchida, Director of Honda Motor Company - Africa & Middle East, VIP clients as well as Omar Kutayba Alghanim, CEO of Alghanim Industries who commented on the unveiling of the new Honda showroom, saying, "Since its founding in 1946, Honda has become an iconic brand that continues to push the envelope on engineering and creativity; it also sets the performance bar high for automakers worldwide. Honda is also the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles - a title it has held since 1959. Alghanim Industries is incredibly proud to align with such an admired and beloved brand: our partnership began in 2013, and we are deeply honored to serve as Honda's exclusive dealer in Kuwait.

Alghanim continued, "We have been investing in the global auto business for decades; it's one of the oldest and most successful parts of our business portfolio, in fact. And we intend on continuing to actively grow our auto presence across the GCC by partnering with world-class organizations like Honda. We are excited at what the future holds and will continue to deliver on our promise of placing our customers at the center of our businesses."

Located at Alghanim Industries' Safat Facility which occupies an area of nearly 9,000 square meters, the new Honda showroom embodies Alghanim Industries' steadfast commitment and true portrayal of the Honda brand, starting from the showroom's design and layout to the customer-centric services that are at the core of the brand's success. The showroom is proudly considered the largest in the MENA region, boasting three distinctive floors and a service center.

The Operating Officer / Head of Regional Unit - Africa & Middle East of Honda Motor Company, Yusuke Hori, commented on Alghanim Industries during the grand opening saying: "It is a leading company of automobile industries in Kuwait, and I am very pleased to be with the best partner for this auspicious occasion today. We ranked Kuwait as priority market as high as Saudi Arabia and UAE in the Middle East region. Since 1968, we have been trying to enhance our presence in this market."

Hori continued by saying, "In 2013, Honda started partnership with one of the best companies in Customer Satisfaction, and we appreciate their efforts which help us enhance our presence in Kuwait, and now, many customers enjoy our products. To further enhance customers' experience, our partner built new showroom at the best location. This showroom has the cutting-edge Sales, After Sales, and parts function. In addition, Alghanim built the best ever Motorcycle facility. Now, we can give you the best experience of all product-line, Motorcycle, Automobile, and Power Products. Honda's fundamental belief is 'The Three Joys' - The Joy of Buying, The Joy of Selling, and the Joy of Creating. I am very sure that our best partner, Alghanim can realize these Three Joys through providing the best service with the latest facility."

Before the attendees were taken on a tour of the new showroom, they were entertained by professional London-based acrobats and stunt performers who wowed them with breathtaking routines. Following the performances, the attendees walked through the spacious two-floor showroom, admiringly observing the modern, Louvre-esque facade, luxurious high ceilings,



Omar Kutayba Alghanim and Yusuke Hori cutting the ribbon in the new showroom

large waiting areas as well as a children play area that is naturally lit by three skylights, bringing the warmth of the sun all the way down to the showroom's ground garage at the lower level.

The showroom is the first in the region to incorporate a new wall fabric technology that features moving images, an element that reflects Alghanim Industries' keenness to highlight Honda's commitment to newness and innovation. Alluding to the corporation's transparency, the new Honda showroom features glass flooring at the showroom level that displays the service garage at the lower level, as well as a spacious, clean

and brightly lit area that is equipped with a service lounge that provides customers a chance to observe their vehicles' maintenance process. Customers can also take in the panoramic view overlooking the showroom and service garage from the glass, state-of-the-art elevator.

Honda offers varied products that are catered to different audiences. To better serve individuals who are more interested in Honda's motorcycles and power products, Alghanim Industries built a brand new showroom that is solely designated for Honda motorcycles and power products. The new showroom displays the



Omar Kutayba Alghanim and Yusuke Hori at the new showroom



A tour of the service center



The acrobats' live performance during the ceremony



Motorcycles showroom from the outside



Motorcycles showroom from the inside

same modern, contemporary exterior design as well as an uplifting interior that mirrors the youthful spirit of the showroom's main customers. Adding to the futuristic edge is a spaceship-like area designed for selling motorcycle gears and accessories in addition to a modern lounge area where customers can relax and enjoy complimentary services and renowned hospitality.

Winner of the Top Safety Pick Plus Rating in 2015, the all-new 2016 Honda Pilot has been redesigned for the modern family who values convenience and safety done in style. Equipped with remote start and with a capacity to seat eight passengers in addition to its new aerodynamic styling that augments the SUV's sharp appeal, the new Honda Pilot provides the perfect level of comfort with its heated and ventilated front and rear seats.

For three years running, Honda has been awarded the Kelly Blue Book Award for Best Overall Brand, securing the highest average scores among all 12 Brand watch factors, including affordability, "cool" factor, driving comfort, driving performance, durability and reliability, exterior styling, fuel efficiency, interior layout, prestige and sophistication, reputation, ruggedness and safety. Strong consumer perception of the Accord, Civic, CR-V and Odyssey helped drive Honda's success in once again earning the top honor among all automakers. In addition to its Best Overall Brand win, this year Honda also recaptures Best Value Brand for 2015, which it won three previous times from 2011 - 2013.

While it has accomplished numerous milestones since its partnership, Alghanim Industries will continue to uphold Honda's vision: to make dreams come true. Whether that entails an extraordinarily designed showroom, a superior and highly motivating working envi-



Omar Kutayba Alghanim speaking during the opening ceremony

ronment or surpassing customers' satisfaction, Alghanim Industries is committed to achieving it all with and for Honda. Experience the new Honda showroom during the weekdays from 8:30 AM until 10 PM and 9:30 AM until 10 PM on Fridays.



Omar Kutayba Alghanim and Yusuke Hori at Kuwait Riders motorcycles showroom



Checking out the power products in the motorcycle showroom



The new Honda car showroom in Al Rai

CAR DESIGNER WARNS ON GOOGLE GAME CHANGER

TOKYO: The days of cheap and cheerful cars like the Honda Civic and Toyota Corolla may be numbered as technology firms Google and Apple muscle into the auto industry, and change the way people own and drive cars. That's the warning from Ken Okuyama, high-end Japanese designer of the Ferrari F60 Enzo and Porsche Boxster, who says game-changing self-drive technology could threaten Japan's position as a major car producer. "If they don't watch out, they risk becoming just suppliers to those (tech) companies," Okuyama told Reuters in an interview at his industrial design studio in the Japanese capital ahead of this week's Tokyo Motor Show.

Okuyama, who made his mark at Italy's famed Pininfarina studio and also redesigned the Chevrolet Camaro and Corvette, says taking on Google and Apple will be the ultimate test for Toyota and other mainstream automakers. As writing code becomes as vital to car making as engineering, Japanese automakers are under pressure to show they can compete with the tech giants.

Google's fleet of self-driving cars includes a modified version of Toyota's Lexus sport utility vehicles, in addition to the pod-like, driverless Google Car prototype, both of

which are being road-tested in the United States. Apple could roll out a self-driving vehicle in 2019, Honda, which yesterday said it was developing a new automatic setting to be used in congested traffic, and technology to pre-programme cars to drive automatically, acknowledged the potential threat from tech firms in the future.

"At this point, whether Google or Apple can come up with a car is unclear," said Koichi Fukuo, president of research and development at Honda. "But they are spending aggressively to recruit people to achieve that and in that sense ... we can't rule out the possibility they may eventually become a competitor."

Market to Split

As cars become more automated, Okuyama predicts the auto market over time may split into two camps: vehicles that simply fulfil public transportation needs such as self-driving taxis serviced by ride-hailing applications; and super-luxury cars that will be trophy items for the wealthy. As a result, he says, car ownership will decline, decreasing demand for affordable, traditional cars like Honda's hugely popular Civic models.

"Automakers have used existing technology and road infrastructure to create cars which have an emotional connection with drivers. This is how they have been adding value to their products," Okuyama said. "But cars have become commodity products, and, as such, they have to become more functional and even more affordable," he said, foreseeing a future where stripped down, minimalist 'commodity' cars would share the roads with luxury vehicles.

While this market polarisation could be years away, Okuyama says Japanese automakers must focus even more on finding ways for cars to benefit from advanced technologies - an area where he says they have lagged for years. "Self-driving cars will eventually become commonplace ... as a result, carmakers will have to sell not only the hardware, but also the overall system to run the cars," he said. "Companies like Mercedes and Toyota are looking at this, but Google is ahead in this game."

To be sure, Japanese automakers are starting to show off their own automated driving capability, with Toyota this month unveiling automatic lane changing and merging functions on a Tokyo highway. The world's

largest car maker plans to market its first self-driving car in 2020. Honda and Nissan have also set 2020, the year of the Tokyo Olympics, as a target date to bring advanced self-driving cars to the market. Most automakers have focused on developing automated driving functions, such as automatic braking systems, parking and lane-changing capabilities which drivers can switch on or off.

Google and ZMP, a Tokyo-based robotics start-up which plans to introduce a robot taxi service in time for the Olympics, are taking automated driving a step further, developing cars with no steering wheel or pedals - taking humans out of the driving equation altogether. Since returning to Japan in 2007 and starting his own design firm, Okuyama, 56, has focused on urban planning and public transportation projects, giving a facelift to some of Japan's 'bullet' trains and designing a concept line of farm equipment. But slick, fast luxury cars remain close to his heart, and the high-tech sports cars Okuyama now designs for his own brand sit firmly in trophy car territory. A bespoke model he plans to unveil at the Tokyo show clocks in at a cool \$1.3 million. — Reuters

IT DEPTS FACE OBSTACLES TO USER MOBILITY FEARING DATA BREACHES

DUBAI: Organizations are challenged to meet demands for greater mobility as 98 percent of IT departments in the Middle East still restrict users from accessing sensitive corporate data and resources from mobile devices. This is according to a recent global survey of 900 IT decision makers by Gemalto, the world leader in digital security. Despite almost all organizations (98 percent) having users who require mobile or remote access, 100 percent of IT departments in the region are facing obstacles to increased user mobility in their organization, the primary being security concerns.

The 2015 Global Authentication and Identity Access Management Index reveals that all respondents from the Middle East (100 percent) are concerned that their organization will be breached or hacked as a result of credential theft or compromise. This is exacerbated by the rise in mobile end points within organizations, as most organizations reported to have, on average, three mobile end points per user and managing three sets of credentials per user. Additionally, on average, almost one out of every five (18.66 percent) IT support tickets are resulting from lost or forgotten usernames and passwords.

In an effort to overcome the security challenges around mobility, all IT departments in the Middle East region plan to implement two-factor authentication

for access to cloud applications. Currently, 18 percent of users use two-factor authentication, this is expected to rise to 31 percent of users in two years. Almost three quarters (74 percent) already use two-factor authentication to secure external users' access to resources, indicating the varied use of the technology. All respondents currently have at least one application protected by two-factor authentication, with cloud applications, web portals and VPNs among the top three apps protected.

As IT continues to look to two-factor authentication to deal with the credentials crunch, the vast majority (98 percent) of respondents are seeking to do this by using cloud-based authentication-as-a-service and managing their organization's two-factor authentication centrally. By having the ability to implement uniform policies that address security threats in a consistent way, two-factor authentication can at the same time streamline access to numerous applications. In addition, cloud efficiencies are a critical factor in being able to deploy two-factor authentication across multiple use cases and implement solutions quickly and efficiently. Indeed, 98 percent of respondents view cloud delivery as a key consideration in the purchasing process of a strong authentication solution.



VROUWENPOLDER, NETHERLANDS: A file photo taken on Dec 6, 2013 shows the Eastern Scheldt storm surge barrier (Oosterscheldekering). — AFP

GOING DUTCH TO HELP CONQUER RISING SEAS

ZEELAND, NETHERLANDS: Had nature been left to take its course much of the Netherlands would be a muddy swamp and the tiny coastal nation would never have risen to be the eurozone's fifth largest economy. More than half of the country's 17 million people live in low-lying at risk areas, but thanks to hard work, perseverance and a lot of technical savvy they snuggle safely behind an ingenious network of 17,500 km of dykes, dunes and barrages.

After struggling against the seas for hundreds of years, the Netherlands prides itself on being the "safest delta" on the planet and now exports its expertise around the world. As water levels rise thanks to climate change and turbulent weather patterns unleash fierce storms, Dutch know-how in protecting low-lying areas has turned the country into the leader in its field. "It's thanks to our history," Infrastructure Minister Melanie Schultz van Haegen told AFP. "We have been battling for centuries to hold back the seas." Just like the legend of the boy who stuck his finger in crumbling dyke, necessity has been the mother of invention. Dutch companies now account for some 40 percent of the global dredging business open to international competition. "Water is not so much a threat, but an asset. It can bridge economy and ecology," said Henk Ovink, the country's special representative on water issues. Amsterdam's sprawling Schiphol airport - the fifth busiest in Europe - should by rights be a playground for fish.

to a series of massive sluice gates it can completely close off the mouth of the estuary, preventing the unpredictable North Sea from surging through.

But simpler solutions also work. A huge man-made sand bank, bigger than 200 football fields, was inaugurated in Dec 2011 just south of The Hague. Like a pregnant belly it juts out into the sea from the beach, and swept by the winds and tides protects the beautiful dunes behind from erosion. According to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the oceans rose some 19 cm from 1901 to 2010. They predict sea levels will now rise from 26 to 82 cm by 2100 compared with the end of the 20th century.

Deltsa at Risk

And the world's burgeoning and resource-rich delta zones where some 10 percent of the world's

population lives are at the greatest risk, according to the Delta Alliance organisation. It's here that Dutch technology has proved so valuable. Some 2,500 Dutch firms work in the water industry, doing some 17 billion euros of business every year, said Lennart Silvis, director of the Netherlands Water Partnership. After Hurricane Katrina ripped through New Orleans in August 2005, the Netherlands played a huge role in reconstructing the city's sea defences. That led to an increased cooperation with the United States, and when Hurricane Sandy hit New York and Jersey in 2012, Dutch help was again called upon. "There is often huge interest after a disaster. But we would like to see greater preventative work which will help protect people in the long term," said Schultz van Haegen. — AFP

THE NETHERLANDS: THE SAFEST DELTA IN THE WORLD

THE HAGUE: Anti-storm barriers, 17,500 kilometres (10,800 miles) of dykes and dunes and a spirit of constant innovation to hold back the seas. These are some of the key ingredients which allow the Netherlands to boast that it is the "world's safest delta".

GEOGRAPHY

The Netherlands is essentially a large delta traversed by three major rivers - the Rhine, the Schelde and the Maas - which all flow out into the North Sea. Some 26 percent of country lies below sea-level, including Schiphol airport Europe's fifth busiest air hub. And about 60 percent of the territory is classified as at risk from flooding. More than half of the nation's 17 million people live in these at-risk low-lying areas, where 70 percent of the country's gross domestic product is produced.

and are the among the first traces of man's attempt to conquer the seas. About 18 percent of the country's territory also stretches across polders swaths of reclaimed land encased and protected from the waves by a series of dykes.

STORM BARRIERS AND THE DELTA PLAN

After a catastrophic flood in 1953 left almost 2,000 people dead, the Netherlands put in place the so-called "Delta Plan" to secure those areas most at risk. Back then, sea defences were overwhelmed and dykes crumbled in the face of heavy storms, deluging large swathes of the southern province of Zeeland.

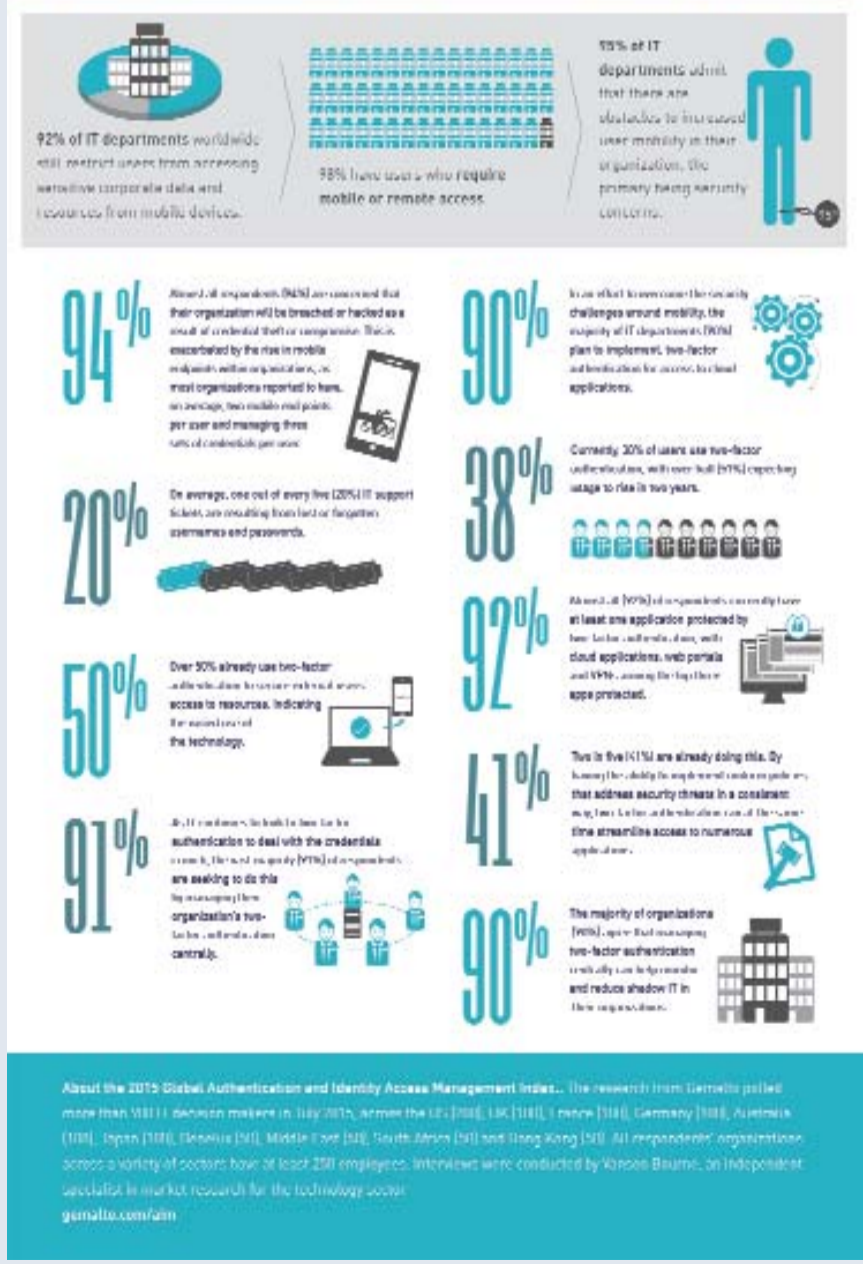
Several storm surge barriers were built and are used to seal off estuary mouths during heavy weather.

The most impressive of these is the famous Eastern Scheldt storm surge barrier, opened in 1986 and which this year served as the finish line for the Tour de France's first stage. Almost nine kilometres (five miles) in length, this barrier has 64 metal "doors" - each around 42 metres wide - which can be closed when the land is threatened by rising tides or storm surges. — AFP

POLDERS AND TERPS

In the battle to keep the tides at bay, Holland is dotted with hundreds of artificial earth mounds, called terps, on which the Dutch have built homes, farms and even whole villages.

Some of these terps date back as far as 500 BC,



Floods Trauma

The turning point for the Netherlands came in 1953 when devastating floods swept in from the North Sea killing 1,835 people and leaving 72,000 homeless in the southwest. Traumatized and shocked, the Dutch decided the only way forward was to improve their sea defences. "Now Holland's level of protection is 100 to a 1,000 times better than most other countries," said Bart Schultz, a researcher at the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education based in Delft.

The Eastern Scheldt storm surge barrier is a gargantuan construction stretching an impressive nine kilometres between the southern islands of Schouwen-Duiveland and Noord-Beveland. Thanks

HUAWEI BRINGS FLAGSHIP HONOR 7 TO MIDDLE EAST

DUBAI: Huawei Honor, the number one smartphone e-brand brought Honor 7 to the Middle East on Oct 12 as part of its hugely successful global rollout. Having already made waves around the world after reaching more than 9 million pre-orders and selling out in just one day in Europe, Honor 7 will help catapult the Honor brand to achieve \$5 billion by the end of this year. Honor is already on track to achieve its target of 10 percent market share in online phone sales in the Middle East this year and will be looking to secure this further with the launch of Honor 7, as well as solidify its game-changing status in the market.

Chris Sun Baigong, Vice President of Huawei Honor in the Middle East, commented: "After all the global hype regarding the Honor 7, we are delighted to announce that it is now in the Middle East. Based on the huge wave of anti-

and subsequent sell-out success, we have high expectations of the Honor 7 in this region."

As part of its brave global roll out, Honor brought world-record breaking, champion slackliner Andy 'Sketchy' Lewis to Dubai to take part in the launch event. Andy also revealed plans of his next world record slacklining attempt, where he will walk across a slack rope

between two nail-bitingly high points in Dubai, in partnership with Honor. Kept well under wraps but months in the planning, Andy will work with Honor to scope out some of the most iconic buildings in the city during his visit next month.

Lewis commented, "I am absolutely thrilled to come to Dubai to mark the Honor 7 launch! It was an awe-inspiring event in itself, and I am anxious to start scoping out how I may be able to realize my own goal of becoming a world-record holder in the Middle East. I feel privileged to be working with Honor as I have dreamed to create history in this spectacular region. I feel grateful to have such an innovative partner to help make it happen and this will be a truly monumental and unforgettable achievement." The launch event took place at Art Sava in Al Quoz on Oct 12.



OBAMA ADMINISTRATION UNVEILS HEALTH CARE PREMIUMS FOR 2016

WASHINGTON: When consumers turn on their laptops and tablets Monday morning, they should be able to check premiums for 2016 under President Barack Obama's health care law.

Rates are going up in many parts of the country as a new sign-up season starts Nov. 1. But people have options if they shop around, and an upgraded government website will help them compare costs and benefits. HealthCare.gov and state-run insurance markets are entering their third year, offering taxpayer-subsidized private coverage. That's helped cut the share of Americans who are uninsured to about 9 percent, a historical low. Still, the many moving parts of the Affordable Care Act don't always click smoothly, and people are divided about the law.

A look at what's new for 2016:

AVERAGE PREMIUM? NO SUCH THING

Independent experts are forecasting bigger premium increases in 2016 than last year, averaging from the high single digits to the teens. Next week the government will release a master file that researchers use to piece together national trends. Averages won't tell the story, because health care is local. Premiums can vary widely from state to state, and within a state. Most states won't be like Minnesota, where all five carriers selling individual policies on the insurance exchange have posted double-digit increases, from 14 percent to 49 percent.

They're not likely to be like southern California either, where officials forecast an average rise of 1.8 percent for consumers who stay with their current plan.

For more than 8 in 10 customers, premium increases will be cushioned by taxpayer subsidies. That will absorb most of the cost, but it still may pay to shop around.

NEW HELP FIGURING OUT COSTS

Too many consumers look only at the monthly premium when picking a plan. They shouldn't. Other costs can be just as important. These include the deductible - the amount individuals must pay each year before their plan kicks in - and cost-sharing or copays for medical services. Trying to demystify the process, HealthCare.gov will feature a new calculator that estimates total costs based on a consumer's expected medical needs. Tip: Even if people use the calculator, the website will still rank options starting with the lowest premium plan. Look below that figure for total costs. Patients who need medical follow-up for ongoing health issues may come out ahead by paying a higher monthly premium for a plan that has lower out-of-pocket costs. Instead of picking a plan at the "bronze" coverage level, they might look at "silver," which also offers subsidies for cost sharing, based on the consumer's income.

SMOOTHER RENEWALS?

As before, returning customers who don't want to make any changes will get automatically reenrolled. That process will be smoother this year, insurers say, because the government has better information to update subsidies for customers who just want to keep the same plan.

Tip: Returning customers must make sure to file a tax return. Those who got subsidies in 2014 could lose their financial assistance next year if they have not filed.

SOME NEW FEATURES STILL IN TESTING

Consumer advocates have been clamoring for an upgrade that allows patients to easily search for insurance plans that their doctor participates in. That's coming, but it may not be ready by Nov. 1, the date when consumers can start signing up.

Administration officials say the doctor look-up - as well as a prescription drug finder - are in final testing. They want to be sure the information is accurate before flipping the switch.

Tip: Trust but verify. Call doctors and insurers to check doctor and hospital listings.

PENALTY PERIL

The tax penalty for people remaining uninsured in 2016 is no slap on the wrist. It's high enough to cover several weeks of groceries.

The fine will rise to the greater of either \$695 or 2.5 percent of taxable income. That's for someone without coverage for a full 12 months. This year the comparable numbers are \$325 or 2 percent of income, whichever is greater. Several organizations, from TurboTax to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center, will be offering online tax penalty calculators. That can put a dollar figure on the trade-offs for those who are on the fence about signing up.

WEBSITE UPGRADES

Changes include new privacy protections. A "privacy manager" will let consumers opt out of embedded connections to third-party websites. If customers have enabled the "Do Not Track" setting on their browsers, the government will automatically honor their preferences. In another improvement, consumers will get real-time reminders to enter Social Security numbers and key details from immigration documents. That can head off major problems later on by helping the government quickly verify a person's identity.

Officials say a maddening glitch that resulted in some customers getting locked out of their accounts has been fixed. Call center operators can now help reset passwords for consumers who no longer have access to the email address they used to set up their HealthCare.gov accounts.

The federal website will serve 38 states. — AP



MANILA: Cyclist Jack Yabut stops on his bike at a street in Manila in this picture taken on October 7, 2015. Yabut is on a perilous and likely futile crusade to help the Philippine capital beat "Carmageddon", but if he fails he will at least have saved himself a lot of time. — AFP

CYCLISTS BATTLE PHILIPPINE CAPITAL'S 'CARMAGEDDON'

MANILA: Cyclist Jack Yabut is on a perilous and likely futile crusade to help the Philippine capital beat "Carmageddon", but even if his campaign fails-he will have saved time on his own commute.

Traffic in the megacity of 12 million people has reached crisis levels this year, as record car sales have added to long-term problems of decrepit railways, a stunted road network and a law-of-the-jungle driving culture. In response to the worsening traffic, President Benigno Aquino recently deployed extra police to some of Manila's worst choke points with orders for them to force recalcitrant drivers to obey laws.

But, with relatively little infrastructure spending underway, Aquino has been widely seen as otherwise helpless in trying to ease what enraged commuters and the national press have branded "Carmageddon". Cycling has barely featured in the discussion of remedies but Yabut, part of a growing community of daredevil bike riding advocates, believes that is a mistake.

"Cycling offers an immediate solution to the traffic and pollution problems," Yabut, 55, told AFP after dodging trucks and buses while riding along EDSA, one of the city's most important and gridlocked roads. While commuters in cars or on over-crowded buses regularly spend more than two hours travelling just 15 kilometres (nine miles) along EDSA and its arteries, Yabut does that in under 30 minutes. "It seems crazy to me to be stuck in traffic when you can cycle so much more quickly." But, for most drivers, cyclists such as Yabut are the crazy ones.

Killer roads

Cycling fatalities are common, and tens of thousands of people have signed online petitions calling for authorities to improve road safety conditions for bike riders. "It is very dangerous," acknowledged Yabut, a father-of-two and president of cycling advocacy group The Firefly Brigade.

Advocates are lobbying for bike lanes, which are nearly non-existent, as well as to educate drivers that cyclists have the right to share the roads.

"Opening bike lanes is one part of it. But the bigger effort is changing people's perceptions and attitudes," Yabut said. Among the dangers, cyclists have to negotiate mini-bus "jeepneys" and buses that randomly stop in the middle of roads for passengers, or sweep out suddenly into lanes meant for oncoming traffic.

Most drivers also routinely ignore pedestrian crossings and block intersections at traffic lights, while indi-

cators are rarely used and poorly enforced emission standards mean badly polluting vehicles roam free.

One of the chief strategists for the capital's transport network, Emerson Carlos, said cyclists should be an important part of the traffic solution.

But, in a candid interview, he said there were few options for them and the ideal of bikes sharing the road with vehicles was unwise. "It is not safe for cyclists to share the roads with motor vehicles," said Carlos, the Metro Manila Development Authority's assistant general manager for operations. He said city authorities were trying to establish bike lanes but only on footpaths where there were already many other obstacles, such as electric poles, illegally parked cars and pedestrians.

"The problem is cyclists were an afterthought. We can't move the electric poles," he said.

Urban dreams

Meanwhile, Carlos and other city planners appear focused on much bigger problems. With a fast-growing middle class, the Philippines is in the midst of an unprecedented car-buying frenzy.

An extra 600,000 new vehicles are expected to hit the capital's roads this year, taking the total to three million, according to Carlos. "Where are all those cars going to go? We already don't have enough roads," Carlos said. Global road navigation app Waze recently reported that Manila had the world's worst traffic, based on a survey of its users and its own data. Carlos lamented the lack of other

options for commuters, citing figures showing the city's rail network was much smaller than in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and other Southeast Asian capitals. "It's pathetic," he said of the rail network. "We need an efficient, safe and comfortable mass transport system."

A "Dream Plan" recently adopted by the government to fix the urban chaos envisages 65 billion dollars of infrastructure spending over the next 15 years, which would include building a subway system.

But, in a nation bedevilled by government corruption and a chaotic democracy that has seen similar strategies collapse, most people expect the plan will remain a dream. With few other solutions, cycling offers the opportunity for quick and cheap "big wins" in the traffic war, according to Julia Nebrija, another bike riding advocate and a prominent urban planner.

"It's not rocket science. And it will have a big impact," she said, citing measures such as creating cycling lanes on major roads that have the space, building bike racks at transport hubs and installing showers at offices. Nebrija and Yabut said one district in the capital had successfully started to introduce a bike network, proving it was possible.

In the meantime, Yabut intends to continue riding with an almost missionary zeal, hoping that his high-stakes, traffic-beating exploits will inspire others. "We need people to be role models... to be crazy enough to bicycle, so that motorists and pedestrians will be encouraged to bicycle too," he said. — AFP



Flamingos are led from an island to their wintering grounds on a sunny autumnal yesterday at the zoo in Gelsenkirchen, Germany. — AP

DOMINICAN WORKERS BATTLE DENGUE FEVER

SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: Dominican health officials say that public workers will fan out across the Caribbean country to spray insecticides and instruct citizens how best to avoid contracting dengue fever. On Monday, Health Minister Altagracia Guzman said the effort comes amid an uptick of the mosquito-borne illness. Besides spraying, workers will teach people how to destroy mosquito breeding areas around their communities.

So far this year, there have been 98 deaths and over 8,500 reported cases. That's nearly double the 52 dengue deaths reported during the same period in 2014.

Among the victims is local TV presenter Juan Luis Reynoso. He died over the weekend following health complications caused by dengue. Dengue's symptoms include severe muscle and joint pain, high fever and rash. Its most acute forms can cause internal bleeding and death. — AP

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AWL says Fight Like a Girl



KUWAIT: The American Women's League organized a Pretty in Pink awareness celebration, Fight Like a Girl, at the Regency hotel in Bida'a. The well attended event aimed to raise breast cancer awareness and honor those who have battled the disease or lost loved ones to it. US Ambassador Douglas A Silliman and his wife, Catherine, who serves as an honorary president and patron attended. The AWL board members include Lynda Van Greenstone, President; Heather Kaczmarek, Vice President; Nadiyah Mayyahi, Secretary; Tara Rogers, Treasurer; Deborah B. Al-Qanai, Honorary Board Member and Maxine Al-Refai, Honorary Board Member.

AUK PROF DISCUSSES EFFECTIVENESS OF IS APPLICATIONS IN A NEW BOOK

Professor Ahmad A Rabaa'i, Chair of Computer Science and Information Systems at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) and Assistant Professor of Information Systems, has released a book titled 'Evaluating the Success of Large-Scale Information Systems Applications', in which he discusses the effectiveness and success of Information System (IS) applications.



Published by Scholars' Press, the book stems from a central interest in the importance of systematically evaluating operational large-scale integrated IS applications in organizations and addresses often debated concepts in the field of Information Systems. Research and studies for this book were conducted at the IS-Impact Research Track at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Australia, where the IS-Impact model served as the core theory. Introduced by Gable et al in 2008, the IS-Impact model attempts to measure and evaluate the effectiveness (or impact) of IS applications and their ability to offer solutions within organizations from a user's perspective. In addition to publishing his first book, Rabaa'i has published over 25 peer-reviewed articles in conferences and journals including the Asia Pacific Journal of Information Systems and the International Journal of Business Information Systems. The American University of Kuwait is an independent, private, equal opportunity, and co-educational liberal arts institution of higher education. The educational, cultural and administrative structure, methods and standards of AUK are based on the American model of higher learning. The language of instruction is English.

Scholars' Press

www.scholars-press.com



MCDONALD'S FLYING START TRIATHLON

More than 300 participants took part in this year's edition of the McDonald's Flying Start Triathlon which took place this past Friday, October 23rd at Marina Mall. The race was open to all participants, and offered two race distances: Sprint (with 750m swimming, 20km cycling and 5km running) and Olympic (with 1500m swimming, 40km cycling and 10km running). Participants were able to enter as individuals or in teams of three to cover the three separate legs of the race; first leg being the swimming lap at Marina Mall, second being the cycling from Marina Mall to Green Island and back, and finally the running from Marina Mall to the Scientific Center and back.

In the Olympic Individual category Mohammed Al Qais came in first place completing the race in 1:59:43.69, followed by Mikel Calahorra in second place with a time of 2:02:45.14 and Hamad Almansoori in third place with a time of 2:02:53.68. Whilst in the Sprint Individual race, Abdulla Attiya bagged first place clocking in at 1:04:36.5, with Mohammed Al Mubarak nabbing second place with 1:09:58.6 and Talal Almayahi coming in third with 1:10:05.7.

Whilst in the individual female races, Renata Hoppova once again came in first place in the Olympic category, completing the race with a time of 2:13:49.74. In the same category, Abigail Bartholomew ranked second with her time of 2:24:45.92 and Molly McDaniel rounded up the top three with her time of 2:42:20.51. In the Sprint category, first place went to Sameera Al Bitar who had a time of 1:11:48.6, followed by Noura AlHajeri in second place with 1:24:35.5 and Tania Davies in third with her time of 1:26:04.9.

As for the team races, Abdo came in first



in the Olympic category completing the race in 01:53:16.8, with TEAM ALPHA coming in second with their time of 01:57:04.4 and Dreams rounding up the top three spots with a time of 02:14:42.5. In the Sprint Team race, the top spot went to no limit and their time of 1:05:33.8, followed by Al Mansoori with a time of 1:07:42.7 and then The Blue Birds with a time of 1:16:01.9. "I would like to commend every single person who took part in the Triathlon, and I especially would like to congratulate all the winners on their impressive achievements, because this race was truly a challenge not to be reckoned with," said Sherif Coutry, Marketing Director at McDonald's Kuwait. "We are thrilled by the incredible turnout

for this year's race, and I would like to thank everyone involved in organizing this race for their hard work and dedication which helped make it such a success. I only hope that this race raises awareness about the importance of sports, helping to motivate people across Kuwait to be more active and encouraging them to incorporate sports and physical activity into their everyday lives." The Triathlon was organized based on the highest international standards for races, and it used a state-of-the-art system which allowed for participants to be tracked using a magnetic chip, which measured distance and speed in order to ensure fair and accurate results. First launched in 2010, the Flying Start

Triathlon was expanded into an annual event with the help of the sponsorship from McDonald's Kuwait, quickly becoming an eagerly awaited yearly event for sports and exercise enthusiasts. Coutry further added "As a brand, McDonald's has always been committed to raising awareness of the importance of sports in people's daily lives, and we are staunch advocates of adopting an active and balanced lifestyle. This is why we keep on supporting local sports programs and initiatives, including the McDonald's Flying Start Triathlon which continues to be a success year on year."



AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF KUWAIT HOLDS GRADUATION CEREMONY



Prof. Mohammad Terro - ACK President



Mr/ Abdullah Al Sharhan - ACK Chairman



ACK Chairman - Abdullah Al Sharhan with Minister Dr/ Bader Al Essa

By Faten Omar

Under the patronage of Minister of Education Dr Bader Hamad Al-Essa, the Australian College of Kuwait celebrated the graduation of more than 276 students from various bachelor and diploma programs on Monday at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel.

ACK was established in 2004 to provide internationally recognized and accredited vocational education and practical training to the business, engineering and aviation sectors. Since then, ACK has grown to become one of the leading educational institutions in Kuwait, strongly contributing to the employment sector and continuing to produce knowledgeable, skilled and professional candidates for Kuwait's growing economy through its diploma and degree programs.

ACK President Prof Mohammad Terro presented the gradu-

ates his warmest wishes for a future full of achievements and success. He added that the Australian College of Kuwait strives to provide an encouraging academic and non-academic educational atmosphere in order to implant values and skills in students so as to develop their personalities and enable them to contribute positively in the development of Kuwait. Moreover, Terro promised to do the best for the continuous development of the college and maintain quality of education in all scientific and practical fields. He also reveal that ACK is coordinating with various industry partners that recruit the graduates to observe and measure their progress at the workplace and establish systems for continuous improvement of educational, scientific and applied outcomes.

In addition, the college started a scholarship program for eligible outstanding students to pursue their postgraduate education abroad. Terro concluded his speech by quoting

American politician Newton Baker: "The man who graduates today and stops learning tomorrow is uneducated the day after." Abdullah Abdulmohsen Al-Sharhan, ACK Chairman of Board of Trustees, said, "ACK celebrated its 10th anniversary and a lot has been learnt, but there is much more to learn. Every day brings us new challenges. We aspire continually to raise our standards and ability to provide relevant teaching and training modes that will imbue our graduates with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will allow them to hit the ground running."

Sharhan advised the graduates that learning is a lifelong process. "The technology of today is worlds away from the technology when I began my career 60 years ago. Progress does not stop nor does it wait! Keeping your skills in line with advancement is the only way to ensure success in your professional life," he said.



Noura Fareed Abdulrazz
Bachelor of Engineering Technol
Petroleum



Abdullah Naser Shukhair A
Bachelor of Business
Marketing



Masnaai Mutiaq Kumare
Diploma of Engineering
Technical Mecha
3.93



(From left) US actor Leonardo DiCaprio, co-chairman of Melco Crown Entertainment James Packer, US film director Martin Scorsese, chief executive officer of Melco Crown Entertainment Lawrence Ho, US actor Robert De Niro and US film director and film producer Brett Ratner pose with performers wearing lion dance costumes during a press conference ahead of the opening of the Studio City casino resort in Macau yesterday. — AFP photos



(From left) US actor Leonardo DiCaprio, US actor Robert De Niro and US film director Martin Scorsese pose during a press conference.

DiCaprio finds joy in Macau project with De Niro, Scorsese

Leonardo DiCaprio says being able to work with his two cinematic father figures on a short film commissioned for the opening of a Macau casino resort was "a slice of heaven." He spoke in the Asian gambling hub ahead of yesterday's debut of "The Audition," which also stars Robert De Niro and was directed by Martin Scorsese, who also attended the press briefing. DiCaprio said that "for me the great joy was

finally getting to be on set with both of these guys." "To be able to have scenes with Bob and being directed by Marty is a small slice of heaven for me as an actor," DiCaprio said. He described the two as like his "fathers in the world of cinema." The 15-minute film's premiere is part of the star-studded lineup to launch Melco Crown Entertainment Ltd's Hollywood-themed Studio City resort in Macau. The casino's

ability to draw such star power attests to the rising influence of the special Chinese region, which has grown into the world's top gambling market.

Scorsese described the film as "reality-based with some humor." The plot has DiCaprio and De Niro invited to Macau by Scorsese to compete for the same part in a movie. Brad Pitt also appears in the film but did not attend the opening.

Scorsese has directed multiple films with DiCaprio or De Niro, but "The Audition" marks the first time the three, along with Pitt, have collaborated. Producer Brett Ratner said he hoped that the short could be turned into a feature film. "It's just a teaser. We come to Macau, Marty comes here, lives at the hotel for three months, six months and we make a big event movie," he said. — AP



French actress Lea Seydoux, British actor Daniel Craig and Italian actress Monica Bellucci pose on arrival for the world premiere of the new James Bond film 'Spectre' at the Royal Albert Hall in London. — AP



(From left) Britain's William, Duke of Cambridge, Britain's Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge and Britain's Prince Harry arrive for the world premiere of the new James Bond film 'Spectre' at the Royal Albert Hall in London.

Royals and 007 cast give sparkle to 'Spectre' world premiere

The new James Bond flick "Spectre" got a royal seal of approval at its world premiere Monday night. Fans who lined the red carpet not only got to see Daniel Craig - resplendent in a dark tuxedo and earthy smile - and glamorous co-stars Lea Seydoux and Monica Bellucci, but could also catch a glimpse of Prince William, his wife Kate, and Prince Harry, still sporting a beard. All eyes were on Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, who was among the last to arrive at the Royal Albert Hall before the film rolled. She chose a light blue Jenny Packham dress for the event.

The two princes wore tuxedos, which have been something of a Bond trademark since the days when Sean Connery played 007 for the first time in "Dr No" in 1962. The royals, who arrived in a Bentley, were greeted by director Sam Mendes and co-producers Barbara Broccoli and Michael G Wilson. Craig, accompanied by his film star wife Rachel Weisz, patiently posed for dozens of selfies with adoring fans. He told reporters he had "loved every minute" he's spent as Bond and declined to answer questions about whether he would return for a fifth turn as the sexy, world-saving British agent.

Seydoux wore a shimmering gold backless gown for the night that marked her emergence as the latest in a long line of romantic interests for the suave British agent. Bellucci, also a love interest in the film, wore a dark gown with a plunging neckline. Naomi Harris, reprising her role as loyal Miss Moneybags, wore a low-cut full length orange dress to the premiere. They were joined by Christoph Waltz, the Academy Award winner recruited to play villain Franz Oberhauser, who challenges Bond in a series of exotic locales, and Ben Whishaw, who has an expanded role as the gadget master Q. British critics have praised the film and Craig's performance. — AP

'Spotlight' film illuminates Boston clergy abuse scandal

It was a scandal that shook the Roman Catholic Church to its core: Hundreds of priests molested children for decades and got away with it because church leaders covered it up. More than a decade later, the story of how The Boston Globe exposed the church's secret is being told in "Spotlight," a movie starring Michael Keaton, Rachel McAdams and Mark Ruffalo, set for release in the US Nov 6. In Boston, where the scandal led to the resignation of Cardinal Bernard Law and settlements with hundreds of victims, key figures featured in the film say it captures the shock of the scandal as it unfolded, the pain suffered by the victims and the work done by journalists to bring it to light.

"We obviously stumbled upon something far more extensive and horrifying than we had any right to expect to find," recalled Walter Robinson - played by Michael Keaton - who led the Boston Globe's Spotlight Team, the investigative unit that broke open the scandal with a series of stories in 2002. The stories detailed how church higher-ups - including Law - knew priests were abusing children but moved them from parish to parish instead of removing them. The series won the Pulitzer Prize for public service in 2003.

Other victims

The film shows the anguish of victims as they tell their stories to Globe reporters. Actor Neal Huff plays Phil Saviano, a Boston man who was abused by a priest when he was 11. In one scene, Huff holds a childhood photo. "When you're a poor kid from a poor family and when a priest pays attention to you, it's a big deal. How do you say no to God?" he says. Alexa MacPherson, who was molested and sexually assaulted by a Boston priest for six years, starting at age 3, said she and several other victims plan to go see the movie together so they can support each other.

"I feel like in some ways it will be cathartic and healing, even though it brings stuff to the surface and the forefront," she said. "I feel like you can't ever really heal if you don't bring things to the forefront." For the reporters, the film is a realistic depiction of both the failings and triumphs of journalism. Before the 2002 series, the Globe had written numerous stories about abusive priests but had not delved deeper to report on who within the archdiocese knew what was going on. Shortly before Marty Baron took the helm as editor in 2001, he saw a reference in a Globe column about sealed court files in

the case of John Geoghan, a priest accused of abusing more than 100 children.

His first day on the job, Baron asked Globe staffers if they had tried to get the files unsealed. "There was a sort of silence in the room," he recalled. The Spotlight Team went to work while the Globe's lawyers went to court. A judge eventually unsealed church documents, including priest personnel files containing extensive details on when the archdiocese received sexual abuse allegations against priests and who in the church hierarchy knew. The Globe's explosive series sparked an upheaval in the Boston archdiocese that snowballed as similar revelations came to light about abusive priests around the world.

Aggressive steps

The scandal hit close to home for Globe reporter Matt Carroll when he learned Geoghan lived right around the corner from him. "I had four young kids of my own at that point. ... I put a picture of Geoghan on the refrigerator and I said, 'Look, kids, if you see this guy, run the other way,'" Carroll said. The movie, directed by Tom McCarthy, has already sparked some Oscar buzz. In its review, Variety compared it to one of the most famous movies about journalists - "All the President's Men." Baron, played by Liev Schreiber, said he hopes the film will send a message about the importance of investigative journalism.

"We need to have local news organizations investigating institutions, individuals with power, holding people accountable," said Baron, now the executive editor of The Washington Post. Spokesman Terrence Donilon said the Archdiocese of Boston has taken aggressive steps to ensure proper screening of priests and continues to focus on helping victims. "We acknowledge the terrible crimes committed by clergy against children and the failure of many leaders within the church to deal appropriately with these crimes," he said. Saviano said more needs to be done. "I'm hoping that the film will serve as an incentive for the Vatican to get more serious about putting measures in place to hold bishops accountable and to protect children," he said. — AP



In this Sept 14, 2015 file photo, from left: Brian d'Arcy James, Liev Schreiber, Rachel McAdams, Mark Ruffalo, and John Slattery pose for photos on the red carpet for the film 'Spotlight,' during the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival. — AP

Winslet to receive Variety Award at British Independent Film Awards

Kate Winslet will receive The Variety Award at the Moet British Independent Film Awards ceremony, which takes place on Dec 6. The award recognizes a director, actor, writer or producer who has made a global impact and helped to focus the international spotlight on the UK. Previous recipients include Benedict Cumberbatch, Daniel Craig and Helen Mirren. Winslet said: "I am thrilled to be receiving this award, and to be in the company of a whole host of brilliant filmmakers and actors, many of whom I'm lucky enough to call friends and colleagues. It's an honor to be flying the flag for British filmmaking."

Variety executive editor, Steven Gaydos, commented: "From

the beginning of her illustrious film career over 20 years ago, Kate Winslet has never ceased her eagerness to tackle new creative challenges, and to turn those challenges into amazing, lasting performances. Her current film, 'Steve Jobs,' is no exception and once again, the awards season conversation is immeasurably enlivened by her presence."

Winslet won both the Academy Award and BAFTA for her portrayal as Hanna Schmitz in "The Reader" in 2008. She also won two Golden Globes that same year for her performance in "The Reader" and in "Revolutionary Road," alongside Leonardo DiCaprio.

Winslet's credits consist of critically and commercially acclaimed work. Some of her most memorable roles have been in "Titanic," "Sense and Sensibility," "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" and "Little Children." She also won an Emmy for her role in HBO's "Mildred Pierce" in 2010. Nominations for the BIFAs will be announced on Nov 3 and the ceremony will take place on Dec. 6 at Old Billingsgate, London. — Reuters



Honoree Kate Winslet speaks onstage during the 22nd Annual ELLE Women in Hollywood Awards at Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills. — AFP



In this June 28, 2015 file photo, Ne-Yo performs during a tribute to Smokey Robinson at the BET Awards in Los Angeles. — AP photos

In this Feb 11, 2014 file photo, singer Mary J Blige performs on stage during the entertainment portion of the State Dinner for French President Francois Hollande, center, seated with first lady Michelle Obama, left, and President Barack Obama, on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington.

In this Dec 6, 2013 file photo, entertainer Aretha Franklin sings at the National Christmas Tree lighting ceremony across from the White House in Washington.

Obama puts White House light on diversity in American music

Whether belting out lyrics to Al Green's "Let's Stay Together," leading a mournful congregation through "Amazing Grace," or tweeting his Spotify music playlist that includes Stevie Wonder and Nina Simone, President Barack Obama has shown that he's a pretty soulful guy. The president and his wife, Michelle, also have prominently showcased such R&B and soul talent as Patti LaBelle and BB King during state dinners, music history events and the annual Easter Egg Roll.

The latest installment of the PBS series "In Performance at the White House" celebrated the history of American music with performances by Queen Latifah, Smokey Robinson, Usher, Trombone Shorty, and Esperanza Spalding, among others. It is set to air on PBS stations Jan 8. Spalding landed on the first lady's Spotify music playlist. The Grammy Award-winning jazz singer and bassist said the variety of musicians who have performed at the White House conveys a message of inclusion at what the Obamas have long touted as the "People's House."

Selects artists

"It seems like there is a theme of wanting to really support artists who are working hard- not just in their craft- but communicating about the issues of our time," said Spalding, an advocate of human rights issues at the US detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Spalding, who has trained student musicians at a White House workshop, said the Obamas believe that "just because you're not famous, doesn't mean you're not important. Everybody that is committed to their art" is an important part of American music.

Dalton Delan, an executive producer for "In Performance at the White House," said WETA, the PBS station that serves the Washington, DC, area and produces the series, largely selects artists based on the show's theme, but with administration approval. "Sure, I can suggest a show, but the administration has to feel like coming and attending the show," Delan said. He also consulted with White House social secretary Deesha Dyer on the best hip-hop artists and she suggested female rap

pioneer MC Lyte. The Obamas' musical tastes are reflected in White House entertainment over the years. "Queen of hip hop and soul" Mary J. Blige, R&B crooner John Legend and jazz great Herbie Hancock have entertained dignitaries at Obama state dinners.

National anthem

Pop superstar Beyonce, a favorite of both the president and first lady, is a mainstay at presidential events. She sang at an inaugural ball in 2009 and a state dinner for the Mexican president in 2010, and performed a highly scrutinized rendition of the national anthem at Obama's second inauguration ceremony in 2013. "Queen of Soul" Aretha Franklin has also appeared at several presidential shindigs, including performing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" at Obama's first inauguration ceremony in 2009. Earlier this year, Franklin performed at a White House concert celebrating gospel music and put in a surprise appearance at the Justice Department to help bid farewell to Obama's good friend, then-Attorney General Eric Holder.

President's favorites

Desiree Rogers, the Obamas' first social secretary, said a combination of factors go into choosing entertainment for White House functions, including the first lady's input, the president's favorites and suggestions from White House staff members. "It starts with whatever the event is," Rogers said. For state dinners, Rogers said the White House considers the interests of the country being honored. She said a main goal is to always keep in mind the tastes of the president and first lady "to ensure that it is someone they might enjoy. The Obamas enjoy showcasing diverse American talent."

Lea Berman, who was a social secretary for President George W. Bush, said the entertainer selection process varies with each administration. "Sometimes the Bushes would have suggestions of people they wanted to invite to perform, and sometimes I would come up with a few names for Mrs Bush to consider for an event and she would choose one," Berman said. Berman said many times it's also a matter of availability. "Scheduling conflicts weeded out a number of prospects because big entertainers are so heavily booked months in advance," she said. — AP



In this photo taken Oct 14, 2015, jazz musician Esperanza Spalding, from left, Grammy award-winning blues musician Keb' Mo', and trombone and trumpet player from New Orleans, La, Trombone Shorty, perform during an interactive student workshop with middle school students from the Washington area, in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington.



In this Oct 14, 2015 file photo, singer-songwriter Smokey Robinson, right, mentors a group of middle school students from the Washington area during an interactive student workshop in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington.



In this April 27, 2013 file photo, singer John Legend and his wife, model Chrissy Teigen attend the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner in Washington.

After 'Happy,' Pharrell dedicates 'Freedom' to migrants

Pharrell Williams on Monday dedicated his song "Freedom" to refugees fleeing to Europe, hailing immigrants' contributions around the world. The US pop star, best known for his viral global hit "Happy," on Sunday performed his jazzy new track at the MTV Europe Music Awards in Milan, interjecting the phrase, "Let them in!" Elaborating a day later at a forum in New York, Williams said he did not consider himself an activist but added: "We should use our platforms where we can."

"We have to be open. And it's a tough conversation, but America is built on immigrants. We wouldn't have a country" without them, he said. Asked if the same held true for Europe, which is facing an unprecedented influx of migrants from Syria and other troubled countries, Williams said, "Absolutely." The 42-year-old musician spoke at length on his prolific career at an event of National Public Radio and New York University, whose Tisch School of the Arts has named him artist-in-residence. The video for "Freedom," released in July, is subtle in its political imagery, featuring footage from around the world of places that range from an Asian sweatshop to a slum to India's holy Ganges River.

"Happy" turned into a global ode to joy as fans around the world recorded and shared their own homemade dance videos. Williams-for two decades a songwriter and producer for other artists including Madonna, Britney Spears and Snoop Dogg-said he remained surprised by the massive success of "Happy." Williams had only begun to sing himself on a large scale with French electronic duo Daft Punk's Grammy-winning 2013 album "Random Access Memories." "In 2012, did you guys see me as an artist?" Williams asked the audience. "I never have, this whole time." —AFP



File photo shows US singer Pharrell Williams performing on the Pyramid Stage at the Glastonbury Festival of Music and Performing Arts. — AFP



In this Feb 24, 2013 file photo, singer Adele performs during the Oscars at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. — AP

Adele producer: Keeping mum about 'Hello' was hard

Getting into the studio and writing a potential hit song for Adele sounds hard enough. Now add in keeping mum about the track for a year. That's the challenge Greg Kurstin faced after producing and co-writing "Hello" last year. "I'm not going to lie - it's not easy to hold that information in for that long," the Grammy- and Golden Globe-nominated songwriter-producer said in an interview with The Associated Press. "You kind of want to shout it out, run around in the streets yelling to random strangers what you've just done," he added.

"Hello" was released Friday, and it topped the iTunes singles chart in 85 countries. The music video broke the Vevo record for most views in a day with 27.7 million. "Hello" is Adele's first album single since releasing 2011's "21," her sophomore album that sold more than 11 million units in the United States and won the Grammy Award for album of the year, among other accolades. "I'm still in shock, honestly. ... I was just pretty blown away," Kurstin said of the insta-success of "Hello."

Kurstin, who has worked with Pink, Lily Allen, Katy Perry and Taylor Swift, said he and Adele were supposed to work together on music for "21," but it didn't pan out. On "25," which Adele will release Nov 20, he also contributed to the tracks "Water Under the Bridge" and "Million Years Ago." Kurstin said he felt pressure before meeting with Adele since this was her follow-up to "21." —AP

Prince invites fans to party with him at Paisley Park

Prince seems to be shedding his reclusive reputation and becoming a party animal. In recent weeks the superstar has hosted late-night jam sessions where he serenaded Madonna, celebrated the Minnesota Lynx's WNBA championship and showcased his latest protege, singer Judith Hill. Hundreds of fans descended on suburban Paisley Park Studios on Saturday night, paying \$10 each to hear Prince and his backing band raise the roof until 3 am. "Y'all want to party with me?" Prince asks the crowd at one point. So why the new openness? Prince, of course, isn't talking. "Why is he so friendly? Why is he open now? He's inviting strangers into his house. Why? Why? What's the reason? Let's ask everyone else besides him," Prince - wearing a purple tunic and large gold chain - teased from the darkened stage as he blasted through a funky mix that included oldies by Bill Withers and Sly and the Family Stone and his own songs ("Alphabet St," "Hot Thing").

Since Prince wasn't giving interviews that night (he rarely does), here's what fans had to say: "I think he's been open for a while," said Gina Meier, 48, of Richfield, seeing her seventh Prince performance at Paisley Park. "He's done Paisley Park stuff for years. It's like he's brought us into his home." Meier described Paisley Park as "a safe place" for fans, with no drugs or alcohol allowed (Red Bull, juice, water, ginger ale and Coke were for sale).

Feeling fantastic

Fans browsed through Prince T-shirts at the merchandise booth in the lobby, adorned by a large heart-shaped mirror and another mirror with the word "Love." An ATM machine was nearby. For \$40, fans could take a "mini-tour" of Paisley Park, where Prince's gold records are on the walls and the purple motorcycle he rode in his 1984 breakout movie, "Purple Rain," is on display. In between music sets, a DJ spun Prince music as well as R&B hits.

"If you don't leave here feeling fantastic, there's something wrong with you," Meier said. Andy Kiernan, 45, of Minnetonka, who has been at Paisley Park several times, brought a friend to see her first show at the white-walled studio complex bathed in purple lights outside of Minneapolis. "My impression is it's every Prince fan's dream to have the access he allows now," Kiernan said. "I feel this is him opening up a little bit." Longtime Prince fan Mark Anderson, 42, of Eagan brought his 17-year-old son Noah, who was making his second trip to Paisley Park. Anderson said Prince's music "just got with a groove and it just sucks you in. It's mesmerizing."

New album

"Some people think that 'Purple Rain' is his best music," Anderson said. "I just love what he's doing now." Announced on

Twitter, the event was to promote Hill and her new album, "Back in Time," co produced by Prince and released just the day before. Wearing a white fringed top, blue jeans and boots, Hill, a former contestant on NBC's "The Voice" and a backup singer to Michael Jackson and Stevie Wonder, played keyboards and soulfully sang her songs such as "Cry, Cry, Cry" and "My People" to warm applause. Hill, a 31-year-old California native, had told an interviewer that working with Prince would be her "dream collaboration." Shortly afterward, she got the call from Prince.

Free-spirited environment

"It's been incredible," Hill told The Associated Press in the Paisley Park studio where her album was recorded - old-school analog - on 2-inch tape. Jam sessions at Paisley Park led to the album, Hill said, citing the studio's "very free-spirited environment." She said Prince "wants to share with the world what goes on here." "He feels he wants to share with everyone," Hill said of Prince's recent open houses.

Back onstage, Prince trades hot licks with 3RDEYEGIRL guitarist Donna Grantis. In a playful mood, Prince invites a fan, dressed in a shiny silver hooded parka, to dance onstage, announcing that he's "Judith's nephew" and "Kenny from 'South Park.'" Prince keeps the groove going with a James Brown-style funk, a new song he's working on. He leads the party-goers in a call-and-response. Prince thanks the crowd several times for coming. Eventually, nearly five hours after it started, the party ends and fans drift away into the cool autumn air. — AP



In this Feb 4, 2007 file photo, Prince performs during the halftime show at Super Bowl XLII in Miami. — AP

Khloe Kardashian debuts shorter hair

Khloe Kardashian has cut her hair. The 31-year-old reality TV star has swapped her flowing blonde locks for a trendy lob (long bob) and debuted the look on her hairstylist Jen Atkin's Instagram page. Posting the picture, Jen wrote: "Guess who just joined the # ShortHair DontCare club! Do we like? #LOBS4 LIFE make-up@joycebonelli thx@ traceycunningham!@ oncolourground for ur help!! (sic)" Khloe is

believed to have cut around six inches off her hair and added some subtle blonde highlights. Khloe has transformed from her natural brunette locks to a honey blonde but she admitted it took time. She explained: "People seem to forget that my progression from dark to blonde took time. First I was chocolate brown, and then I added some highlights, then it was my ombre phase and now I am a blonde. Point is listen to the professionals."

And her colorist Tracey Cunningham added: "Khloe is the lightest of the Kardashian sisters, and as a child, she had very light hair. Over the years, she went darker and darker. From the beginning of the transition - from her dark-brown hair to her current blonde - it took three to four months of gradual lightening." — Bang Showbiz

TARIK EDIZ SHINES AT MOSCOW FASHION WEEK



Models display creations by Turkish designer Tarik Ediz during Fashion Week in Moscow, Russia. — AP photos



In this photo taken with long exposure, spectators wait for the start of a collection by Turkish designer Tarik Ediz during Fashion Week in Moscow, Russia.

A spectator smiles while watching a model display a creation by Turkish designer Tarik Ediz.



Turkish designer Tarik Ediz greets spectators during Fashion Week in Moscow, Russia.

Monica Bellucci finds ageing sexy

Monica Bellucci thinks ageing is sexy. The 51-year-old brunette beauty is the oldest ever Bond girl, thanks to her role in upcoming movie 'SPECTRE' and says that there is a certain type of beauty that comes with getting older. She told United Airlines' Rhapsody Magazine: "In Europe, I think we're lucky. Look at Isabelle Huppert, Catherine Deneuve, Charlotte Rampling, Juliette Binoche.

"There are a lot of women getting beautiful roles as they get older, and I think it's right. There's a certain beauty with youth, and that's another one that comes with age. Your soul grows, and that's sexy." This isn't the first time that Monica has spoken about her lack of concern over getting older. She recently told the Daily Mail newspaper: "I've had old people in my life that I really loved - especially women - so I'm not

scared about getting old. It's what's inside that makes us beautiful on the outside." However, she doesn't have an issue with those who have plastic surgery to stave off the ageing process. She said: "Everybody does what she needs. And if you want plastic surgery and then you feel better, why not? There is no law.

"I've nothing against using something to help your beau-

ty - but do it in a good way, with intelligence. I do acupuncture. Because it really helps. It is the opposite of Botox. Botox blocks and acupuncture moves. Botox for some people is really good. For others they have different reactions. I am for freedom." — Bang Showbiz

China Fashion Week



Models parade creations of the ECHO CHEN Collection designed by Chen Weiyi at China Fashion Week in Beijing yesterday.



Models parade creations of the Giada Curti Haute Couture Collection designed by Giada Belfiore during the China Fashion Week in Beijing yesterday. The nine-day event kicked off October 25. — AP/AFP photos

Perez creates Mindy-inspired coat collection

Salvador Perez is releasing a capsule collection of coats inspired by Mindy Lahiri. The costume designer on Mindy Kaling's 'The Mindy Project' has created six statement coats, versions of which will all be worn by the chief character on the Hulu show and sold on Gilt.com. He told Us Weekly: "One of the first things I started making for Mindy on The Mindy

Project were the fun coats I couldn't find on the market. The fans have been requesting them for years, so I wanted to make them available to purchase."

"Gilt really let me design and manufacture the coats the way I make them for the show, with the same lavish fabrics and trim details. I would love to continue making the looks available to

fans." While Mindy's style can be quite over the top, Salvador recommends fans pair the bright coats with more subdued outfits. He explained: "I paired the aqua and gold coat on Mindy with an aqua and gold sari. For Mindy, it was so chic, but I would also pair the aqua and gold coat with a black sweater and jeans." Since Mindy's a new mom, I think everyone expect-

ed her to be more casual. But Mindy [Kaling] said she wants us to bring the character's fashion game up even more! We love discovering new brands and creating fashion moments on the show. The costumes have become [just as much of] a main character that everyone loves." — Bang Showbiz

DiCaprio finds joy in Macau project with De Niro, Scorsese

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Japanese toy company Tomy president Harold Meij (center) and employees clad in fancy costumes pose as they gather for the company's Halloween Day event at the Tomy headquarters in Tokyo yesterday. Employees for the Japanese toymaker were allowed to wear their favorite costumes in observance of the holiday. — AFP

Halloween turnips? Britons urged to return to tradition



A man posing as he carves a turnip into the shape of a face.

Britons should go back to the indigenous tradition of carving turnips instead of pumpkins for Halloween, even though they are harder to cut, the conservation charity English Heritage said on Monday. "English Heritage is calling on people to rediscover the original carved decoration, the humble turnip," the group said in a statement that delved into the British and Irish roots of Halloween revelry. "Long before the pumpkin became the Halloween decoration of choice, people across the British Isles carved scary faces into turnips and placed them near doorways to frighten away evil spirits," it said.

English Heritage said the original "Jack-o'-lantern" came from a folk tale about a man named Jack who was cursed to roam the earth using only a burning coal inside a hollowed-out turnip to light his way. Carved beets and potatoes were also sometimes used. The tradition migrated in the 19th century to the United States, where immigrants found that pumpkins—a native American fruit—were easier to carve.

Britons now mostly carve pumpkins for Halloween even though it is seen as an imported American tradition. Swedes and turnips are still widely used in northern Britain, however, and in Scotland the tradition of "guising"—a form of trick or treating—has also survived. "I don't think turnips are going to replace pumpkins, they are more difficult to carve, but hopefully people will remember the turnip and all our other rich traditions this Halloween," said Michal Carter, an English Heritage historian. Halloween originates from an ancient Celtic festival held around November 1 — a time marking the transition from autumn to winter when the souls of the dead were believed to revisit their homes. — AFP

A combination of handout pictures released by English Heritage on October 26, 2015 shows carved turnip faces at Dover Castle, southern England ahead of Halloween. — AFP photos



Pumpkins available for Halloween but maybe not Thanksgiving



Children play with pumpkins harvested in Hitachiomiya, northeast of Tokyo, on display for the upcoming Halloween at Yumenoshima Tropical Greenhouse Dome in Tokyo, yesterday. — AP

There should be enough pumpkins for Halloween this year, but that might not be the case for the canned pumpkin used in pies come Thanksgiving, according to crop experts in Illinois, the country's top pumpkin-producing state. "I would not wait until Nov. 20," University of Illinois professor Mohammad Babadoost said, referencing the Nov 26 holiday. "I'd buy it whenever it comes to the store."

Large canned-pumpkin manufacturer Libby says yields could be off by as much as a third this year in Illinois, where about 90 percent of the pumpkins grown in the US come from within a 90-mile radius of Peoria. Libby's corporate and brand affairs director Roz O'Hearn said the company, which has had a central Illinois pumpkin-

processing plant since 1929, is confident it will have enough pumpkin for autumn holidays.

But, she said, "once we ship the remainder of the 2015 harvest, we'll have no more Libby's pumpkin to sell until harvest 2016." Farmers are blaming record rainfall in June for washing out the crop. Jane Moran, who owns Moran's Orchard in Neoga, said they replanted washed out pumpkin crops and then it rained more so they're buying pumpkins at auction twice a week. "When you deal with Mother Nature, you just have to take it and go on," Moran said. Earlier this year, Illinois Gov Bruce Rauner signed legislation making pumpkin pie the official state pie of Illinois. — AP



An artist in a ghost costume performs on a street of the French Quarter in New Orleans, Louisiana. — AFP