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Clashes rage after Yemen ex-president Saleh killed

Strongman dies in Houthi RPG, shooting attack

SANAA: Yemen's ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh was killed yesterday as fighting raged between his forces and Iran-backed rebels, the insurgents and his party said, following the dramatic collapse of their anti-government alliance. Sources in the Houthi militia said its fighters stopped Saleh's armored vehicle with an RPG rocket outside the embattled capital Sanaa and then shot him dead. President Abdrabbo Mansour Hadi, the head of Yemen's internationally recognized government, moved to take advantage of the chaos by ordering an offensive to retake the capital.

Saleh, who ruled Yemen with an iron fist for three decades until 2012, had joined forces with the Shiite Houthi rebels three years ago when they took control of large parts of the Arabian Peninsula country including the capital Sanaa. But that alliance unraveled over the last week, with heavy fighting across the capital. His death could mark a major turning point in a conflict that has left thousands dead, led to one of the world's worst humanitarian crises and deepened tensions between Middle East rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Saudi-led military coalition backing Hadi's government carried out a wave of air strikes on the capital and warned residents to evacuate areas under rebel control.

The Houthi-controlled interior ministry in Sanaa announced Saleh's death on the rebels' Al-Masirah television station. A statement read on the channel announced the "end of the crisis of militias", referring to Saleh's armed supporters, and "the killing of their leader and a number of his criminal supporters". A video provided to AFP by the rebels showed what appeared to be a dead Saleh with a severe head injury, his body wrapped in a floral-print blanket. Armed men could be seen loading the body into the back of a pick-up truck in an empty, sandy lot.

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SANAA: Houthi rebel fighters are seen in front of the burning residence of Yemen's former president Ali Abdullah Saleh yesterday. — AFP



The body of Saleh is being transported to an undisclosed location in Yemen. — AFP

Schools in some areas to close during summit

KUWAIT: Schools in some areas will close during the 38th Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) Summit on Dec 5-6, said a statement by the education ministry yesterday. In a press release, the ministry said schools in Farwaniya, Hawally and the Capital educational districts will be closed today due to the holding of the summit. The closure might be extended to tomorrow to prevent traffic congestions, said the ministry. Meanwhile, the health and interior ministries released statements expressing their readiness during the course of the summit. — KUNA

Kuwaiti FM, Zayani stress on GCC unity, strategic ties

By Nawara Fattahova and Agencies

KUWAIT: The Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) unity and solidarity is still intact, standing against various kinds of challenges and trials over the years, affirmed First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday. Delivering his opening speech to the 144th foreign ministers' meeting held ahead of the 38th GCC Summit on Dec 5-6, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled welcomed the meeting's participants, saying that their presence

will contribute to the success of the summit. The foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and Qatar attended the round-table talks, in their first such encounter since Riyadh cut all ties with Doha.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled thanked Bahrain for hosting the 37th GCC Summit, affirming that the fellow GCC country is an integral member of the council. He also thanked the GCC Secretariat and participants for attending the preparatory meeting. The Kuwaiti foreign minister stressed the importance of the current summit, noting that it will contribute to the continuation of the council's success.

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his fellow GCC leaders are hopeful that the summit will continue to be the venue that serves the people of the region and carries on the rapid development of GCC nations, said Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled. He noted that the GCC's supportive stance during the Iraqi invasion in 1990 and the subsequent

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KUWAIT: Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) foreign ministers meet at Bayan Palace yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Indian screen icon Shashi Kapoor dies

MUMBAI: Bollywood icon Shashi Kapoor - a star of 1970s Indian cinema and a member of the Hindi film industry's famous Kapoor family - died yesterday aged 79 after a long illness, his family said. The multiple award-winning actor died at a hospital in Mumbai yesterday evening, his nephew Randhir Kapoor told the Press Trust of India news agency. Another family member confirmed the death to AFP. "Yes, he has passed away. He had kidney problem for several years," Kapoor told PTI, adding that the funeral would be held today.



Shashi Kapoor

Shashi - the youngest son of Prithviraj Kapoor, a pioneer of Hindi film and theatre - appeared in more than 150 films, winning over fans with his charm and suave good looks. His most memorable roles were in such films as "Jab Jab Phool Khile" (Whenever The Flowers Bloom, 1965), "Kabhi Kabhie" (Sometimes, 1976), and "Kalyug"

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US firms invited to bid for Saudi nuclear plants

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has invited US firms to take part in developing its civilian nuclear power program, Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih said yesterday, adding the kingdom was not interested in diverting nuclear technology to military use. Reuters has reported that Westinghouse is in talks with other US-based companies to form a consortium for a multi-billion-dollar project to build two reactors and that those firms are pushing Washington to restart talks with Riyadh on a civil nuclear cooperation pact.

Falih said Saudi Arabia was committed to restricting nuclear technology to civilian use. "Not only are we not interested in any way to diverting nuclear technology to military use, we are very active in non-proliferation by others," he said at a joint news conference with US Energy Secretary Rick Perry. KACARE, the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy, is the Saudi government agency tasked with the nuclear plans. It said last month on its website that it was in talks with Toshiba-owned Westinghouse and France's EDF.

"We hope that the two paths will converge - the commercial, technical discussions between KACARE and the American companies, while we work with our counterparts on the American side to address the regulatory and policy issues," Falih said. Perry, who is on his first official visit to Saudi Arabia and will go on to the United Arab Emirates and Qatar this week, said it was "a bit premature" to comment on the negotiations. "We are in the early stages of it but I think we both are working from the position of getting to yes," he said.

Washington usually requires a country to sign a peaceful nuclear cooperation pact - known as a 123 agreement - that blocks steps in fuel production with potential bomb-making uses. In previous talks, Saudi Arabia has refused to sign up to any agreement that would deprive it of the possibility of one day enriching uranium. The world's top oil exporter says it wants nuclear power to diversify its energy mix allowing it to export more crude rather than burning it to generate electricity. It has not yet acquired nuclear power or enrichment technology.

Reactors need uranium enriched to around 5 percent purity but the same technology in this process can also be used to enrich the heavy metal to a higher, weapons-grade level. This has been at the heart of Western and regional concerns over the nuclear work of Iran, Saudi Arabia's archival which enriches uranium domestically.

Riyadh has said it wants to tap its own uranium resources for "self-sufficiency in producing nuclear fuel". The kingdom sent a request for information to nuclear reactor suppliers in October, and plans to award the first construction contract in 2018. Its nuclear plans have gained momentum as part of a reform plan led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin



RIYADH: US Energy Secretary Rick Perry (left) and Saudi Energy Minister Khaled Al-Falih shake hands after a signing ceremony of a memorandum of understanding on carbon management between Saudi Arabia and the US yesterday. — AFP

Salman to reduce the economy's dependence on oil. Riyadh wants eventually to install up to 17.6 gigawatts of atomic capacity by 2032 - or up to 17 reactors. This is a promising prospect for the struggling global nuclear industry and the United States is expected to face competition from South Korea, Russia, France and China for the initial tender. — Reuters

Local

Amir receives letter from Sheikh Tamim

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a letter yesterday from Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani focusing on means to bolster bilateral relations. Qatari Ambassador to Kuwait Hamad Bin Ali handed the letter to His Highness the Amir. The reception was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Tamim will attend the 38th Gulf Cooperation Council Summit hosted by Kuwait today, Qatar's Foreign Minister had stated on Sunday. Meanwhile, Omani Deputy Prime Minister for Cabinet Affairs Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Saeed will represent Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed of Oman in the 38th Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit.

Omani News Agency said yesterday that Al Saeed

will be accompanied by a delegation consisting of Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs Yousef bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Transport and Communications Minister Dr Ahmad bin Mohammad Al-Futaisi, Minister of Legal Affairs Dr Abdullah bin Mohammad Al-Saadi and a number of senior officials.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received at Bayan Palace National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanem, as well as His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Ghanem, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Qatari Ambassador to Kuwait Hamad Bin Ali. —KUNA

A history written by contributions of departed icons

KUWAIT: Since the inception of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981, one cannot overlook the historic and deep impact of great leaders who were able to transform a dream into a reality in spite of great challenges in their path. Their efforts led to the formation of a leading regional bloc with an authentic identity, carrying the ambitions and aspirations of this region's people. History will remember, with much pride, the leaders of the six brotherly nations who worked tirelessly to form the bloc until it reached its esteemed position on the regional and global map.

Their labours and contributions have survived the test of time long after their passing. These figures include the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his companion the late Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdallah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the late UAE President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, Saudi Arabia's late King Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and after him the late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the late Amir of Bahrain (an emirate at the time) Issa bin Salman Al-Khalifa and the late Emir of Qatar Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani. The seeds for the formation of the GCC were planted by Sheikh Jaber and UAE President Zayed in 1976 which was followed by tour carried out by Kuwait's Sheikh Saad to several GCC countries in 1980.

The late Saudi King Khaled bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and his successor King Fahad also played a part in supporting the idea of the GCC's formation. King Khaled and then Crown Prince King Fahad stood side by side during the first two GCC Summits. King Fahad himself represented the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the third Summit in Manama 1982, continuing the Saudi strong leadership and support. The strength of the GCC as an entity was clearly seen during Doha's GCC Summit in 1990. The strong stance by King Fahad against the Iraqi aggression and invasion of Kuwait that year reflected the crucial role played by the council in strengthening the relations and security amongst all member states. —KUNA

GCC achievements in all domains since inception

KUWAIT: The thirty-year history of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has witnessed great achievements in various fields, which have reflected on the Gulf citizens and achieved their aspirations on all economic, political, military and security levels, and on the regional and international arenas. Through these achievements, the Council has been able to form as a strong framework for collective security and a means to protect the achievements of its states and to address the threats it faces and to play an effective role in addressing of crises in the region.

On May 25, 1981, the will of the GCC leaders agreed in their meeting in the UAE capital Abu Dhabi to a consensus formula for cooperation between them which was one of the most important objectives of achieving coordination, integration and interdependence among the peoples of the GCC countries in all fields. In the area of foreign policy, the GCC countries have agreed to adopt unified positions on political issues based on the principles of good neighborliness, non-interference in internal affairs, respect for the sovereignty of each country over its territory and resources, and the adoption of the principle of peaceful dialogue as a means of resolving disputes, a matter that has given the GCC more credibility as a vital international organization in this important region.

Foreign policy

One of the most prominent achievements of the Gulf Cooperation Council in the field of foreign policy is participation in ending the Iran-Iraq War, liberating the State of Kuwait, supporting the unity, stability and sovereignty of Iraq, supporting the issue of the three occupied UAE islands, supporting the Palestinian cause, supporting the unity and stability of Yemen, as well as the situation in Lebanon and the Syrian crisis. Libyan aspirations and condemnation of the persecution of Muslim minorities in Myanmar were also a priority.

This was reflected in the strong positions taken by the GCC in defending the interests of its members and

GCC Summit: An event of important resolutions

KUWAIT: The Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) Summit is seen by many as an event which comes out with important resolutions and vital decisions. Between 1981-2016, the GCC Summit came out with various decisions which contributed to the development of cooperation and security of the Gulf countries. In Abu Dhabi, the UAE, June 1981, the leaders of the six Gulf countries announced the official formation of the GCC. The leaders came out with a resolution which called for a just solution to the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupiers. In November of 1981, the GCC Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, agreed on an accord to facilitate economic transactions and business amongst the council's members. In Manama, Bahrain, the GCC Summit held in 1982 agreed on the establishment of the Gulf Investment Corporation (GIC) at the capital of USD 2.2 billion. The Doha, Qatar, Summit held in 1983, the GCC leaders focused on developing relations and coordinating efforts during the Iran-Iraq War.

In Kuwait's summit of 1984, the summit agreed on a draft resolution enabling Gulf citizens to acquire real-estate in any given GCC countries. In 1985, the Muscat summit in Oman, the GCC leaders agreed on policies to bolster cooperation in the agricultural, education, industrial, environmental, and security domains.

During the Abu Dhabi Summit of 1986, leaders approved of a resolution that allowed GCC citizens to gain loans from banks and funds in each of the Gulf states. The leaders also agreed on an accord to coordinate military cooperation. In the Riyadh Summit of 1987, GCC leaders agreed on a system for petroleum loans for the Gulf countries. In 1988, the GCC Summit in Manama allowed GCC citizens to acquire stocks in joint shareholding companies.

Muscat's 1989 GCC Summit focused on the recent developments in the occupied Arab lands in Palestine with the advent of the Intifada. The situation in Lebanon after the Ta'if accord and the international developments that year were also discussed during the event.

Iraqi invasion

In 1990, the Doha Summit condemned the heinous Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and expressed solidarity with the Kuwaiti people against their aggressors. The summit called for the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops

from Kuwait. It also demanded from Iraq to respect international accords and laws.

Kuwait's 1991 summit saw Gulf leaders discussing the regional status quo after the liberation of Kuwait. The leaders called on Iraq to implement UNSC resolutions regarding the release of Kuwaiti POWs and other nationals from Iraq's prisons. It also called on Baghdad to implement UNSC resolutions pertinent to compensations for Kuwait. In Emirati capital Abu Dhabi in 1992, GCC leaders lauded UNSC resolution 773 regarding the Iraqi-Kuwaiti borders. They called on Iraq to abide by the decision. In 1993, the Riyadh Summit discussed Iraqi regime's selective implementation of international resolutions concerning Kuwait. The participants stressed that Baghdad should abide by all decisions in this regard. The GCC leaders lauded the declaration of principles accord between Palestine and Israel which called for a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East.

Manama's 1994 GCC summit came out with a resolution to reject all forms of terrorism and extremism. The issue of the spread of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and their threat was highlighted in the Muscat Summit of 1995.

The GCC Summit in Doha in 1996 discussed cooperation within the military, security, legal, and media domains. In 1997, the GCC Summit in Kuwait issued resolutions aimed at protecting the environment nuclear pollutants and trash. In Abu Dhabi's 1998 GCC Summit, the developments of Pan Am Flight 103 Lockerbie bombing was discussed during the event.

The Riyadh Summit in 1999 focused on international economic developments. The GCC leaders called for a unified Gulf front in the global scene. In 2000, the GCC leaders called for speeding the process for the establishment of a joint Gulf customs union and a unified currency.

Muscat's 2001 Gulf Summit approved a new economic accord for the GCC which replaced the one in the first summit of 1981. The meeting's participants also approved resolutions to speed up the formation of the customs union and lower customs fees. In 2002, the GCC Summit in Doha focused on program to form a unified monetary union. The meeting expressed its satisfaction over pegging GCC currencies with the US Dollar.

The summit also touched on Iraqi regime's threats towards Kuwait. Kuwait's 2003 GCC Summit touched on the war on Iraq, expressing solidarity with the Iraqi people against its regime which ruled for decades. The summit called for measures to link transportation amongst the GCC countries.

Manama's GCC Summit in 2004, participants called on the UN to coordinate with the interim Iraqi govern-

ment on the issue of returning Kuwaiti properties stolen since the invasion in 1991. During Abu Dhabi's 2005 GCC Summit, participants agreed on a unified trade policy for the GCC at the global scene.

Late Amir

In Riyadh's summit of 2006, GCC leaders mourned the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, saying that his death left a huge gap in the hearts of Gulf citizens. The summit approved a GCC system for the protection of trademarks. In 2007, the Doha GCC Summit expressed satisfaction for the efforts to shape the joint Gulf market. The summit touched on measures to regulate retail trading and business.

The GCC Summit held in Muscat Oman in 2008 lauded the efforts to bolster relations between the Saudis and Qataris. The world economic crunch was also on the radar of the summit. In the extraordinary GCC Summit, held in Riyadh in January of 2009, the GCC leaders expressed solidarity with the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip who were suffering from a barbaric Israeli military assault.

In December of 2009, the GCC Summit in Kuwait focused on bolstering educational and military cooperation. In 2010, the GCC Summit in Abu Dhabi approved a resolution which allowed GCC companies to open branches in each respective Gulf State. The 2011 GCC Summit in Riyadh approved a resolution to allow GCC citizens to use their civil identification cards as an official document to allow them to work in the public and private sectors.

The Manama Summit in 2012 approved a draft resolution to establish a unified military command for GCC land troops, marines' corps, and air forces. The 2013 GCC Summit in Kuwait, the meeting approved the formation of a united GCC military command. The summit condemned the Assad regimes atrocities against the Syrian people.

Doha's 2014 GCC Summit called for the establishment of a unified security command for the Gulf police forces. It also called for efforts to denounce extremism and terror acts. The Riyadh GCC Summit in 2015 called for a peaceful solution to the Syrian and Yemeni crises. The meeting's participants focused on bolstering military cooperation among Gulf troops.

The GCC Summit in Manama Bahrain in 2016 agreed on a unified payment system in the Gulf countries. The summit tasked banks and financial institutes with the nitty-gritty of the whole process. The meeting also called for intensifying measures to combat commercial fraud. The GCC members also touched on efforts to establish the Gulf railway project as a measure step to link transportation in the region and beyond. —KUNA

GCC's Secretary General: Position of great importance

KUWAIT: Five Secretaries General have led the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) since its inception in 1981. The GCC Secretary General is an important position that helps to coordinate efforts amongst leaders of the Gulf countries.

The first GCC Secretary General was Kuwait's Abdullah Yaquob Bshara who was born in 1936. The Kuwaiti official received education in Egypt and the UK between 1959 and 1962. Bshara obtained his MA in diplomacy and foreign relations while studying in the US in 1973. Bshara was the non-permanent Kuwaiti delegate to the UN from 1971 until 1981. He was chosen as GCC Secretary General in 1981 and continued to hold the position until 1993.

UAE's Fahem bin Sultan Al-Qasbi, born in 1948, held the position from 1993 until 1995. He was the UAE's Permanent delegate to the UN headquarters in Geneva between 1977 and 1980 and also held the same position at the UN headquarters in New York from 1980 until 1984.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's Jamil Ibrahim Hejailan, born in 1926, was the first Saudi Ambassador to the State of Kuwait. Held several ministerial and diplomatic positions in Saudi Arabia. He led the GCC as Secretary General from 1995 until 2002.

Hejailan was followed by Qatar's Abdul Rahman bin Hamad Al-Atiyyah, born in 1950, who held several key positions in the Qatari Foreign Ministry before leading the GCC Secretary General position between 2002 until 2011. Since 2011, Bahrain's Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani held the Secretary General position. Zayani, born in 1954, attained several positions in the Bahraini military and retired as a lieutenant general. —KUNA



GCC Secretary General Dr Abdullatif Al-Zayani

March 2011 in order to maintain integrated collective security.

Due to the unfortunate events witnessed by the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom, as a member state of the GCC, requested the activation of the joint defense agreement and the GCC countries responded by sending the forces of Peninsula Shield in March 2011, which played a major role in confronting the attempts of chaos and sabotage and the return of security and stability.

In March 2015, the Operation Decisive Storm came to represent a shift in the Gulf's dealings with external threats based on decisive intervention. The failure of the GCC states in putting and to violations carried out by the Houthis and their failure to implement the Gulf initiative and the outcome of the national dialogue would cause serious repercussions on security of the GCC region. The Operation Restoring Hope then came to ease the suffering of the Yemeni people and to begin reconstruction.

Security domain

On the security domain, the meeting of GCC interior ministers in Riyadh in 1982 was considered a kick start for launching coordination and cooperation in the security sphere and formed as an integrated security strategy on the path of confronting terrorism. In 2003, the GCC strategy on combating terrorism was endorsed. In 2008, member states signed an agreement on ways of combating terrorism. They also signed an agreement on enhancing and modernizing the integrated GCC strategy. In the media domain, the GCC has been able to reach numerous achievements in the foreign media, tv and radio programs and in the news agencies.

In the economic sphere, the bylaw of the establishment of the GCC formed as the first reference towards achieving an economic integration among the GCC states starting with the unified economic agreement in 2001, monetary union, unified currency, efforts of achieving the unified customs union and the establishment of a unified GCC market. The GCC states have also coordinated efforts in the fields of Zakat (Alms giving), audit bureaus and other joint action in the fields of judiciaries and legal work. The GCC member states also have strong belief in the cooperation in the fields of energy, electricity and water, industry, planning, transport, communications, statistics and developments. —KUNA

Local

Amir meets development projects' monitoring body

Amir's vision of grandeur resonates with private sector



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and the technical team tasked with monitoring progress on the 'Silk City' and 'Boubyan Island' development projects. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Monday at Bayan Palace Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. The Kuwaiti minister was accompanied by the head of a technical team tasked with monitoring progress on the 'Silk City' and 'Boubyan Island' development projects and the assistant undersecretary of the general secretariat for parliament's financial and administrative affairs Osama Al-Duaij.

Duaij, along with members of the team, offered His Highness the Amir an explanation over the intricacies of the projects, which fit into His Highness the Amir's vision of transforming Kuwait into a regional commercial hub and could help usher in unprecedented development. Meanwhile, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah said the team were honored to have met His Highness the Amir and that the projects were progressing as planned.

His Highness the Amir's vision coupled with the private sector's earnest desire could prove decisive in

helping Kuwait reclaim its erstwhile position as a regional commercial hub. With that in mind, Kuwait's 'Silk Road' and 'Boubyan Island' development projects, two highly promising enterprises, could very well help make that vision see the light of day.

Meanwhile, the projects have been touted as a historic opportunity for Kuwait to secure alternative sources of revenue in a nation whose economy has long been crude-dependent. In efforts to ensure a foolproof plan for these development projects, Kuwait has partnered with a global consultative firm

to examine the pros and cons that come along with such mega projects.

According to the firm, the 'Silk Road' and 'Boubyan Island' projects are likely to be vibrant cities with equally enticing investment climates, given their strategic locations in the country's northeast. On the site of the projects, the firm pointed out that it was highly conducive for touristic and recreational enterprises, where 'Silk Road' alone could help provide around 220,000 jobs and a Gross National Product (GNP) of up to KD 7 billion. — KUNA

Cabinet OKs sports legislation



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti cabinet yesterday approved a newly passed sports law aiming at revamping Kuwaiti sports and helping in lifting the international on the country's sports activities. This came during the cabinet's customary weekly meeting held at Bayan Palace and chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The cabinet appreciated the National Assembly's understanding of the significance of the fresh sports law, and its effective contribution to taking this major step, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Information Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said in a press statement following the meeting. The ministers hoped that the sports law would lead to developing Kuwaiti sports and lifting the international suspension of Kuwaiti sports activities, he added. Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti ministers reviewed the final preparations and arrangements for the 38th GCC summit in Kuwait today, showing warm welcome of the participating GCC leaders.

They wished that the summit would come up with the aspired outcomes that could fulfill the expectations and ambitions of the Gulf people, and reflect cooperation in various areas. Finally, the cabinet mourned the death of Yacoub Yousef Al-Humaidi, remembering his national contributions and sincere efforts to serving the nation. — KUNA

Amir receives letter from Palestinian president

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a letter from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on bilateral relations and ways of developing aspects of cooperation. The letter was delivered by Ambassador of Palestine to Kuwait Rami Tahboub with the presence of Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with Ambassador of Palestine to Kuwait Rami Tahboub. — KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, along with Ambassadors of GCC states cut the cake during the UAE embassy's national day celebration. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah performs the 'Artha' dance with other officials.

Ambassadors hail Amir's efforts to mediate Gulf feud

KUWAIT: The ambassadors of Russia and Spain to Kuwait have praised Kuwait's efforts, led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to mediate the Gulf and maintain the Gulf Cooperation Council bloc's system. The ambassadors of Russia Alexey Solomatn and Spain Carlos Saenz de Tejada, speaking on the fringes of the UAE embassy in Kuwait National Day celebrations, said they hoped the Gulf Summit, due to be held in Kuwait today, would lead to results that aid resolving the Gulf dispute.

"We hope that Gulf Cooperation Council member nations resolve all outstanding issues between them... and we in Russia encourage Kuwaiti efforts aimed at

uniting the Gulf, and maintaining this bloc," Ambassador Solomatn said. Solomatn said that Russia is closely watching over developments in the region, particularly in the Gulf, and that Moscow is keen on developing and boosting its relations with all Arab countries, particularly those in the Gulf. "We hope that the 38th GCC Summit would be the last stop for the Gulf dispute," as he expressed his confidence in Kuwait-led efforts to end the dispute. Meanwhile, Spain's Ambassador de Tejada praised His Highness the Amir's efforts to bridge the gap between Gulf countries, saying he hoped GCC countries would be able to overcome their difference at this "distinguished session." — KUNA



Ambassadors pose for a group photo during the event.

Mattis meets Kuwaiti Foreign, Defense Ministers

KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah held talks Sunday with the visiting US Secretary of Defense James Mattis on regional and international issues of mutual interest. The meeting, which took place at Bayan

Palace, was attended by Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Information Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah, a foreign ministry statement said.

The meeting was also attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Office Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Ceremonials Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran, Assistant Foreign Minister for Deputy Foreign Minister Office Affairs Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar and Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for First Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Office Affairs Ambassador Saleh Al-Loghani and several Foreign Minister officials.

Mattis arrived in Kuwait as part of a regional tour, which already taken him to Egypt and Jordan.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said that Mattis' visit contribute to cementing military cooperation between Kuwait and Washington. Sheikh Mohammad and Mattis discussed military cooperation issues as well as a host of issues of mutual interest, according to a statement by the defense ministry. The meeting was attended by Chief of Staff of Kuwait Army Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khodhr, Defense Undersecretary Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of Staff Lt Gen Abdullah Nawwah Al-Sabah and US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Sliverman. — KUNA



Kuwait's First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with US Secretary of Defense James Mattis.



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with US Secretary of Defense James Mattis. — KUNA

Local

Film powerful tool to break any manmade barriers

ASEAN Committee hosts five-day movie screenings

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Committee in Kuwait under the chairmanship of the Philippines inaugurated a five-day screening of movies produced by member-states on Sunday. The ASEAN group comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. All of the mentioned countries have diplomatic missions in Kuwait except for Singapore.

In his inaugural speech, Philippines Ambassador to Kuwait Renato Villa welcomed the guests to the five-day event and hoped that people will come to realize how powerful a film can be, and would learn more about each one's culture. "Film is just one of the many powerful tools used to accomplish our goals, it breaks down unforeseen manmade barriers and unites people from diverse cultures," Villa said.

"After five decades of regional grouping, the ASEAN has accomplished several milestones and one of them was the establishment of the ASEAN community in 2015, as one community. This includes continued peace and harmony in the region, that will give our people more access and greater opportunities to pursue their dreams," he added.

Organized under the auspices of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, the film week is being screened at the Kuwait National Library from December 3

to 8, 2017, from 6:30 pm onwards. Faisal Al-Mutairi, the Councilor of Asian Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Saleh Al-Asousi, Assistant Secretary General for the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters and Sulaiman Abdul Jalil-Director General of the National Library of Kuwait were present during the inaugural ceremony.

'Polis Evo,' a Malaysian action drama and comedy directed by Ghaz Abu Bakar was screened, on Sunday. The film is about two policemen, with different personalities, forced to work together to bring down a drug trafficking gang. The film earned 17.3 million Malaysian Ringgit. 'Kayan Beauties,' a film directed by Aung Ko Latt who co-wrote the story with Hector Carosso, followed by an Indonesian film entitled 'Habibie and Ainun' were featured yesterday. No movies will be featured today on account of Thailand's National Day.

A film produced by Brunei, 'Ada Apa Dengan Rina (What's So Special About Rina?)' will be screened tomorrow, followed by 'The Overture' movie from Thailand. On Thursday, 'Terbaik Dari Langit,' an adventure movie from Malaysia will be showcased. The movie, released in 2014, is directed by Nik Amir Mustapha. It will be followed by Laotian movie 'Only Love,' a production by Lao Art Media released in 2010 and directed by Anousone Srisackda. The finale will see a film from the Philippines 'Bayan Ko' (My Country), a story of a dynasty, greediness and corruption. All films screenings are available to the public free of charge.



At Kuwait National Library



KUWAIT: Philippines Ambassador to Kuwait Renato Villa (second from left) poses with officials honored during the event. —Photo by Joseph Shagra

Campaign shines spotlight on DPN nerve disease

KUWAIT: Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy (DPN) is a nerve damaging condition of the lower limbs that affects more than half of diabetics worldwide and causes an average of 54,000 lower-limb amputations globally every year. With approximately 399,000 diabetics in Kuwait, the prevalence and risk of DPN in the country is 39 per cent.

The Kuwait Diabetes Society (KDS) and the leading biopharmaceutical company Pfizer recently launched 'Qadam Bella Alam' (Foot Without Pain): a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of diabetes and DPN, and demonstrate to sufferers that there is support for them.

DPN which affects the feet, legs, hands and arms, is extremely serious as it can strike at any time, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity, and leads to numbness, loss of sensation and sometimes pain in the feet, legs and hands. The longer a person lives with diabetes the more prone he is to DPN. If left untreated the condition can have serious consequences that could result in amputation.

Under the campaign tagline, Qadam Bella Alam (Foot Without Pain), the widespread initiative will highlight the condition and dispel the commonly-held myth that foot and leg problems associated with diabetes are caused by poor blood circulation to the lower limbs. 'Foot Without Pain' was derived from the urgent need to tackle diabetes and address the serious nature of DPN particularly because it affects the limbs that are critical to a person's way of living.

60 to 70 percent

"Studies show that about 60 to 70 percent of people with diabetes will eventually develop Peripheral Neuropathy, though not all will experience pain," said Dr Walid El-Dahi, head of the KDS. "However, through the Qadam Bella Alam campaign, we aim to highlight that this potentially nerve damage is not inevitable and that with a proactive approach from all concerned we can reduce the risk and prevalence of peripheral neuropathy in Kuwait."

"Our feet have driven us to where we are now, and they are an integral part of our life that we should protect. There are many diabetics around us whose feet are at risk," added Dr Dahi. "This is why we are here today, and this is why we are launching our campaign, 'Foot Without Pain' so we can take a step forward, to mobilize diabetics to get their feet checked. Our goal is to foster a default thought process within communities so diabetics will naturally go and get their feet checked regularly, and we want to make foot examinations a priority for healthcare professionals, especially endocrinologists. We aim to engage a wide segment of society, highlighting what can be done to mitigate the risks and provide expert care for those living with it and how they can best manage it."

"The partnership between the public and private sectors plays an important role in spreading awareness in Kuwait society. The successful joint alliance between the



Dr Ahmad Al-Shatti

Ministry of Health, the Kuwait Diabetes Society, and Pfizer led to this great awareness campaign Qadam Bella Alam (Foot Without Pain)," he added.

Necessary healthcare

Dr Ahmad Al-Shatti, the official spokesperson of the Ministry of Health stated: "The State of Kuwait provides the necessary healthcare to the Kuwait society, and offers more than 120 health centers in various areas; which are only ten minutes away from any patient in case of any emergency or periodic examinations."

"Kuwait has one in five people suffering from diabetes, so this interactive campaign was launched in order to raise awareness about this disease, share valuable knowledge, as well as providing the society with important information allowing them to know more about the relation between peripheral neuropathy and diabetes in addition to ways of how to avoid it," he added.

"There is no doubt that this campaign will have a significant positive impact over the long term in terms of spending on health care services, the health of the population as a whole as well as it comes within the framework of our joint alliance to achieve a healthier and happier future for the Kuwait society," concluded Dr Shatti.

Nerve damage symptoms

Dr Jassim Hashem, Head of Neurology at Ibn Sina Hospital and Head of the Kuwait Neurology Society, added: "Nerve damage shows itself differently in each person with Peripheral Neuropathy. Some people feel tingling, then later feel pain, others lose feeling in their toes. These changes happen over a period of years, so people might not even notice it. People tend to ignore the signs and just think it is a sign of ageing."

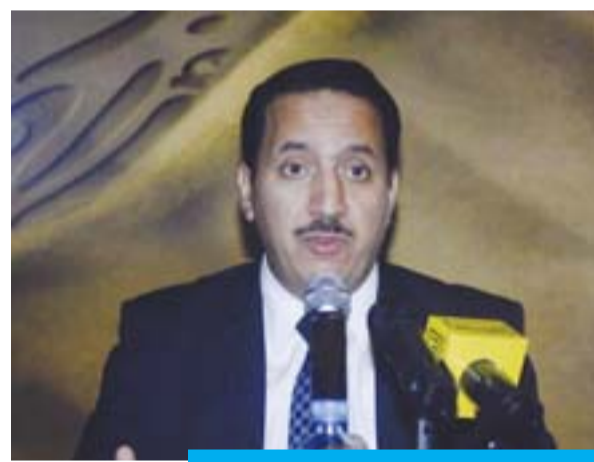
Through the awareness drive and extensive outreach activities, KDS and Pfizer will emphasize that foot problems are often caused by nerve damage and that even if feet look healthy it is important to visit a physician for routine checks. Additionally, the message will reinforce that while keeping glucose levels within the target area is important, it does not fully negate the risk of DPN.

The initiative will include educational and awareness posts on social media to engage as many people as possible: flyers outlining DPN as well as a questionnaire will

be presented to patients and visitors at health centers. Informative posters and various branding elements stressing on the campaign message will be placed around health centers to draw more attention to the issue.

Physicians and healthcare professionals who specialize in diabetes will be aligned with the initiative to share their knowledge and expertise and encourage those living with diabetes to undergo regular foot examinations to assess the risk of DPN. The awareness drive will also stress on the importance of implementing lifestyle changes that can significantly reduce the risk of DPN, such as quitting smoking, dramatically reducing sugar intake and taking regular exercise.

"Through this engaging initiative we aim to educate and enhance awareness, and advise on the best treatment while encouraging those who might be showing signs of Peripheral Neuropathy to take a proactive approach and visit their physician. Working together we can change perceptions and attitudes," said Dr Mohamed Fawzy, the PIH Gulf cluster lead.



Dr Jassim Hashem



Dr Mohamed Fawzy

Kuwait launches Ideal Mother Award '18

KUWAIT: Chairperson of Kuwait Association of the Ideal Family Sheikha Fareeha Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said Sunday the State of Kuwait would develop through genuine minds and hearts, who live in ideal families. Sheikha Fareeha, also Goodwill Ambassador and Chairperson of Al-Fatah Sport Club, said a united generation would be capable of building the country. She was speaking at a press conference to announce the launch of the Ideal Mother Award 2018. She said the award would be given for the ideal mothers who showed true dedication to raise a good generation.

Sheikha Fareeha said the Association has been keen on organizing activities and programs that would benefit the family, minimize crime rate, address negative behavior, educating the sons about the rights of parents and promoting role of women. Association deputy chairperson Saleh Al-Nahham said the award would be given to the family that showed it was committed to religious, social and moral values. He said the association sent invitations to Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Afghanistan to participate in the award. Suad Al-Uraifan, Chairperson of the award Cultural Committee, said the award criteria specified abilities of the parents in confronting challenges, being a role model and contributing to social and voluntary actions. —KUNA

Minister draws link between ethics, development

KUWAIT: Following a strict code of professional ethics is crucial to achieve rapid development in myriad fields, Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan said yesterday. Addressing a forum hosted by Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) on professional ethics, Roudhan, who is also Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs, said that being ethical was both a moral and religious obligation.

He pointed out that a lack of a code of conduct could lead to diminished trust and cooperation in the workplace, saying that the one-day forum represents a genuine effort to generate public awareness on sound moral principles. The Kuwaiti minister urged public and private corporations alike to put in place strict codes of conduct and rules of decorum, citing transparency and behavioral integrity as other much needed virtues.

Meanwhile, KBA's Chairman Majed Al-Ajeel touted the forum as the first of its kind and a testament to the Kuwaiti leadership's eagerness to motivate the national workforce. He added that KBA aspires to be a major contributor to the development and growth of the national economy. —KUNA

Burgan Bank supports 'Int'l Day of People with Disabilities'

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, one of the highest contributors to progress in society, recently sponsored 'The International Day of People with Disabilities' for the third time in a row. Hosted by the 'Ideal Education School' for students with special needs, the annual event promotes an inclusive environment that acknowledges the efforts of people with disabilities and encourages their invaluable role in the society.

As a strong supporter that seeks to enrich Kuwait's communities through added value initiatives and social aid, Burgan Bank showcased its solidarity by applauding the students' hard work and participation in various entertainment programs. The event that took place on 29 November 2017, displayed the special needs students' handmade arts and crafts prepared during the year.

The annual platform is designed to present an open avenue to social engagement and advancement for peo-

ple with disabilities and ensure their concerns and contributions are appreciated. Strengthening their identity in society, the event helps reiterate each individual's equal right to participate fully in every aspect of social and cultural life.

Ideal Education School, a private school, was started as a result of a parent initiative. It teaches students aged 5-21 with developmental disabilities such as autism, Down syndrome, mental retardation, speech and language impairments, hard of hearing, cerebral palsy, and those with multiple disabilities. The School aims to provide education and support services to students with special needs to help them develop their maximum independence through educational programs that include vocational training, community awareness and advocacy.

Burgan Bank has a long proud history of supporting similar initiatives starting with its largest special needs program, 'Al-Mass Awards' that ran for over 13 years of honoring and recognizing outstanding special needs across various activities. When it comes to promoting national talent, the bank has always been a prominent patron of Kuwait's world champion in wheelchair fencing - Tareq Al-Qallaf and his exemplary achievements at regional and international competitions. Additionally,



Burgan Bank dedicated six fully-equipped branches to cater to the special needs requirements to ensure a banking experience with improved accessibility and the latest world-class technological applications.

Burgan Bank's support of this initiative falls under its dynamic full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program

sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural and health driven initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a leading Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the community.

Local

Lawmakers visit jailed colleagues today

MPs to plead with Amir for amnesty

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari announced that a number of his colleagues met at MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei's office and decided to visit today MPs Tabtabaei and Jamaan Al-Harbash, as well as a number of citizens detained at the central prison. "We hope to turn a new leaf and focus more on the best interests of Kuwait during such critical circumstances," he added, expressing hope that next Sunday's parliamentary session will be held with a new Cabinet in office to help maintain domestic solidarity.

MPs Mohammed Al-Dallal, Khaled Al-Otaibi, Osama Al-Shaheen, Kandari, Mubarak Al-Hajraf, Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei, Nayef Al-Merdas, Omar Al-Tabtabaei, Mohammed Hayef, Majed Al-Mutairi,

Thamer Al-Suwait, Mohammed Al-Huwailah, Abdullah Fahhad, Abdulwahab Al-Babtain and Ali Al-Deqbasi attended the meeting at Tabtabaei's office, and they agreed to request a meeting with HH the Amir and plead for an amnesty.

Business cities

A number of lawmakers plan to make a proposal to the government requesting building six 'business cities' including integrated commercial complexes to be distributed to entrepreneurs in various governorates. Informed sources said each city should at least comprise 2,000 units to be distributed to entrepreneurs and new graduates for nominal fees in order to help the youth start their own businesses. The sources added that the Kuwait national fund for small and medium enterprises development is currently preparing a special accounting

3,107 expats working in oil sector

tributed to entrepreneurs and new graduates for nominal fees in order to help the youth start their own businesses. The sources added that the Kuwait national fund for small and medium enterprises development is currently preparing a special accounting



MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei



MP Jamaan Al-Harbash

Kuwait Petroleum International Company (Q8) and 8,375 in Kuwait Oil Company (KOC). Marzouq added that the total number of non-Kuwaitis working in the oil sector is 3,107. Responding to a question about cases filed by KPC and its subsidiaries against public fund violators over the past 10 years, Marzouq said nine cases had been filed by KOC and 13 by Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC).

Advisors' salaries

Minister of Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Faleh Al-Azb said a parliamentary inquiry is one of lawmakers' constitutional rights, but remarked that such a right is not an absolute one. Responding to an inquiry about advisors working in his office, Azab stressed that he cannot reveal information about employees and advisors' financial affairs, as according to the constitutional court's explanation number 3/2004, a parliamentary inquiry is not absolute and is limited by individuals' constitutional and personal freedoms and rights. Azb added that he has four Egyptian advisors working in his office, and they had been appointed by the Central Service Commission (CSC) after reviewing their CVs.

system to be used by entrepreneurs with the aim of enhancing control and reducing risks.

Oil sector

Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq said the total number of citizens working in Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries is 18,436, including 150 at

1,353 arrested in security campaigns

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: As part of their law enforcement efforts, security directorates conducted several inspection campaigns that resulted in arresting 300 people wanted for criminal and civil claims, in addition to 950 people in violation of residency laws and not carrying IDs. Another 103 were arrested over drugs and liquor-related cases. The campaigns were carried out under the supervision of the Interior Ministry's acting assistant undersecretary for general security Maj Gen Ibrahim Al-Tarrah.

Tourism in Kuwait vital, promising sector

KUWAIT: Kuwait seeks to develop its tourism sector as an important economic resource based on its promising development plan 'New Kuwait 2035,' supported by its geographical location, and driven by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's vision to transform the country into a commercial and financial center.

Kuwait is working to develop sustainable tourism and promoting investment in this vital sector, which is based on a number of strong foundations. When talking about tourism in Kuwait, entertainment and shopping pops out, with lots of places near the coastal area such Souq Al-Mubarakiya, Marina Mall and Scientific Center, as well as the Grand Mosque; the largest in Kuwait, and an array of restaurants and hotels along the coast.

The tourism sector in Kuwait started one year after the declaration of independence, where The Kuwait Hotels Company was established in 1962 and joined the World Tourism Organization the following year. Kuwait then accelerated the establishment of infrastructure for tourism projects, including Kuwait International Airport, advanced road networks, sports clubs, theaters, cinemas, parks and chalets. In the 1970s, a clear interest in local tourism emerged, especially after the establishment of the Department of Tourism within the Ministry of Information, where it formed an annual committee for tourism that held events and entertaining programs for families, in addition to meetings, seminars, tournaments and various exhibitions in that period.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the country focused on enhancing the security and economic conditions, which led to a decrease in interest in tourism, until such interest reemerged in 2002 with the establishment of the tourism sector in the Ministry of Information.

Since the establishment of Touristic Enterprises



KUWAIT: The Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center is pictured during a cloudy day. —KUNA

Company in 1976, the company has been a strong supporter of this sector and responsible for tourist sites in the country. The hotels sector in Kuwait has grown significantly with the establishment of a series of new projects that added value to existing hotels.

In recent years, Kuwait has been keen to provide more support to the tourism sector as one of the economic sectors that provide jobs for national employment and its importance in promoting Kuwaiti identity.

Kuwait relies on tourism as an investment in order to reduce unemployment rates, diversify sources of national income and reduce dependency on oil. Kuwait's long-term tourism growth strategy has been buoyed by the number of passengers flying through the airport to more than 10 million passengers a year, in line with the country's plans to develop and expand its transport infrastructure. These plans include the expansion of Kuwait International Airport (Terminal 2) to increase the capacity of the airport to accommodate 25 million passengers, as

well as other projects, such as the Kuwait Expressway and the railway network, all of which are included in the Kuwait 2035 plan.

Based on these data, the World Tourism Organization confirmed in 2015 that Kuwait is fully ready to be an important tourist destination in the region because of the fundamentals that are suitable for the establishment of sustainable tourism. The organization expected that Kuwait would achieve an advanced position in the region in the coming years due to the list of activities and tourism services that it owns, including hotels, restaurants, transportation, leisure facilities, economic, medical and scientific centers.

According to government estimates, the tourism sector is expected to provide more than 90,000 jobs for young people until 2035. The total contribution to tourism in the short-term GDP will be about two percent, with the possibility of raising it to four percent through developing the sector that will attract foreign investment. —KUNA

France chooses Kuwaiti Commander as 'Defense Figure'

PARIS: France announced choosing Kuwaiti Commander Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Sabah as the 'Defense Figure' of 2017 in recognition of his contribution to the development of security and defense services. French defense ministry organized a special event on this occasion earlier yesterday that will continue for five days, in which Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah will hold talks on a number of security and strategic issues with French military officials. He will discuss bilateral issues related to security, war against terror, and radicalism among other topics. —KUNA



Kuwaiti Commander Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Sabah

KRCS eager to share experience with int'l bodies: Official



KUWAIT: KRCS Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi meets with the World Bank's Director Firas Raad. —KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) is eager to share experience with international organizations, mainly the World Bank. KRCS aims to benefit from the bank's experience in preparing statistics and surveys, learn of the humanitarian conditions around the world and develop database for donors' information. KRCS Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi said yesterday after his meeting with the World Bank's Director Firas Raad. He noted that the society is following a plan to develop its performance and efforts around the world. Hasawi also stressed the importance of boosting the work of international organizations in the field of rescue operations, crisis management and health. —KUNA



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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF KUWAIT

International

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2017



Cathay flight crew 'saw' North Korea missile from plane

Bombs crush illusion of 'de-escalation' near Damascus

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JERUSALEM: A general view of the city of Jerusalem shows the Dome of the Rock mosque (center) in the early afternoon hours yesterday. Palestinian leaders were seeking to rally diplomatic support to persuade US President Donald Trump not to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. —AFP

Trump set for crucial decision on Jerusalem

A flood of warnings from the Arab world

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump faces a key decision this week on whether to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, prompting a flood of warnings from the Arab world that it could ignite tensions and sink hopes for peace. "The president's going to make his decision," his Middle East peace envoy and son-in-law Jared Kushner said, without denying reports Trump could declare Jerusalem Israel's capital tomorrow.

The status of Jerusalem is one of the most contentious issues of the long-running Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the suggestion Trump could reverse years of US policy has prompted a furious bout of lobbying from the Palestinian leadership. Most of the international community, including the United States, does not formally recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, insisting the issue can only be resolved through final status negotiations.

Central to the issue of recognition is the question of the US embassy. All foreign embassies are located in Tel Aviv with consular representation in Jerusalem, but Trump will have to decide whether to sign a legal waiver that would delay by six months plans to move the US embassy from the Holy City. The Arab League said it was closely following the matter, with leader Abul Gheit warning any such move would pose a threat "to the stability of the Middle East and the whole world."

"It will not serve peace or stability, instead it will nourish fanaticism and violence," he said on Sunday, noting that the League was closely following the issue and would coordinate a joint position with Palestinian and Arab leaders if Trump took the step. Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi also warned that any change to the status of Jerusalem would have "grave consequences", in a phone conversation with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Sunday. It was crucial, he said, "to preserve the historical and legal status of Jerusalem and refrain from any decision that aims to change that status," the official Petra news agency reported.

A move in waiting

In 1995, the US Congress passed the so-called Jerusalem Embassy Act recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and stating that the US embassy should be moved there. But an inbuilt waiver, which allows the president to temporarily

postpone the move on grounds of "national security", has been repeatedly invoked by successive US presidents, from Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, meaning the law has never taken effect. Trump is expected to begrudgingly sign the waiver for a second time this week.

A threat 'to the stability of Mideast'

But according to diplomats and observers, he is expected to make a speech tomorrow announcing his support for Israel's claim on Jerusalem as its capital. Israel seized the largely-Arab eastern sector of Jerusalem during the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it, claims both halves of the city to be its "eternal and undivided capital." But the Palestinians want the eastern sector as capital of their promised state and fiercely oppose any Israeli attempt to extend sovereignty there. Several peace plans have come unstuck over debates on whether, and how, to divide sovereignty or oversee the sites holy to Christians, Jews and Muslims.

'Looking at the facts'

In an address to the Saban Forum of Israeli and US policymakers on Sunday, Kushner, who heads a small and tight-knit White House negotiating team, suggested a decision was close. "He's still looking at a lot of different facts and when he makes his decision he'll be the one who wants to tell you. So he'll make sure he does that at the right time," he said. Palestinians have been lobbying regional leaders to oppose the decision and the armed Islamist movement Hamas has threatened to launch a new "intifada." Late on Sunday, Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas spoke to Hamas leader Ismail Haniya, with the two agreeing to oppose any shift in US policy.

Saeb Erakat, secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organization, also warned that a change in the US stance on Jerusalem would spell disaster, warning that it would amount to an own goal for US peace efforts in the region. He said in a statement that Washington would "be disqualifying itself to play any role in any initiative towards achieving a just and lasting peace." Trump has said he wants to relaunch frozen peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians in search of the "ultimate deal". But analysts warn that any major shift in US policy would make that goal more difficult to achieve.—AFP

UN voices alarm about the spread of HIV in Egypt

CAIRO: The UN is voicing alarm over the spread of HIV in Egypt, where the number of new cases is growing by up to 40 percent a year, and where efforts to combat the epidemic are hampered by social stigma and a lack of funding to address the crisis. The virus that causes AIDS, UN officials say, is infecting more young and adolescent people than any other age group.

Egypt, home to some 95 million people, ranks behind only Iran, Sudan and Somalia in the Middle East for the rate at which the epidemic is spreading, according to UN figures. In Egypt, patients are often jailed on trumped up charges and ostracized by society. The disease is associated with homosexuality, which is not explicitly illegal but is widely seen as a transgression against religion and nature in the conservative, Muslim-majority country. "There is a 25-30 percent increase in incidents every year... It's alarming to us because the growth of the epidemic and the discontinuation of interest from donors in funding," Ahmed Khamis, of the UN AIDS agency, told The Associated Press.

Estimates of the number of people living with HIV in Egypt vary. UNAIDS says there are over 11,000 cases, while the country's Health Ministry estimates the figure to be around 7,000. The rise in the number of new infections, however, is not in dispute. "Most recently,

we've been seeing people of a much younger age group infected with the virus. There is a higher risk now for adolescents and youths than in the past," said Khamis. "We don't have exact numbers, but this is what the evidence we are seeing on the ground is suggesting," he added, explaining that the lack of funds is hampering Egypt's capacity to produce precise figures.

Patients who require surgical intervention are often unable to access basic health care at hospitals because of the associated stigma, UNAIDS officials said. The virus can be spread through sexual contact, as well as contaminated needles or syringes, or blood transfusions. It can also be passed from infected women to their babies at birth or through breast-feeding. But in Egypt, the virus is widely associated with homosexuality, which is seen by many Egyptians as a lifestyle choice. In a recent conference on AIDS, Islamic scholar and cleric Ali al-Jifri spoke about the stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV and AIDS patients. "A person diagnosed with HIV is a human."

We should never question their diagnosis," he told the conference. A Christian priest, Bolous Soror, told the conference that Egyptians should accept others, regardless of their HIV status. Shunned by society, it is not uncommon for patients to contemplate suicide. Ahmed, 40, is one of them. He has been trying to gain asylum status in the US because, he says, he has lost hope in a future in Egypt. "I do not want to be living a life always feeling strapped down and imprisoned," he told his therapist during a session attended by an AP reporter.—AP

Afghan war widows pay heavy price for husband's sacrifice

SHEMOL: Widowed Afghan grandmother Janat Bibi has no adult males left in her family after the Taliban killed her son and two grandsons during an attack on their police base a few months ago. Such bereavements are often a double tragedy for an increasing number of poverty-stricken families like hers in Afghanistan—they have lost not only a loved one, but also their main income earner.

Bibi and the men's widows now battle to support 12 children in a remote village in the eastern province of Nangarhar where there are few jobs for men, let alone for women. "We have not received any help from the government since I lost my son and grandsons. They were the only breadwinners of this big family," the 65-year-old told AFP as she sat crying in her stone and mud house in Shemol. Bibi, who was widowed during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, said she had supported the men's decision to join the police in the restive southeastern province of Zabul despite the risks.

Afghan security forces are facing soaring casualties as they struggle to beat back the Taliban—but the combined monthly salary of 36,000 afghanis (\$530) was more than her relatives could hope to earn in Shemol. The loss of their fathers' incomes means the children have to work alongside their mothers in nearby fields to help eke out a meagre living for the family, instead of attending the local outdoor school. Their plight is shared by others in the 4,500-strong village where around 900 men, or 20 percent of the population, have joined the security forces. "Casualties are on the rise," provincial council member Amir Mohammad told AFP noting dozens



SHEMOL: Afghan widow Janat Bibi, 65 walks inside her mud house in the remote village of Shemol in the eastern province of Nangarhar. —AFP

of bodies had been brought back to the village in recent months.

Soaring casualties

Many of Afghanistan's more than 330,000-strong security forces come from villages much like Shemol, which is some 70 kilometers from the provincial capital Jalalabad. With economic prospects bleak in the war-torn country, men like Bibi's relatives often join in a gamble they will survive to support their families. But casualty rates have leapt since NATO pulled its combat forces out of Afghanistan since 2014. More than 2,500 Afghan security forces were killed in the first four months of this year alone, according to US watchdog SIGAR.

The soaring deaths leave more and more widows particularly vulnerable in the male-dominated country, where they are often regarded as a burden and subjected to violence. Mostly illiterate and with little or no experience of working

outside the home, they have few options to earn money if their husbands die. While widows of security forces killed in action are entitled to receive their husbands' salary until they remarry or their children turn 18, many women do not know how to access the financial benefits, a UN report has said.

The widows are required to submit documents to the authorities proving their connection to the dead soldier or policeman, according to the labour and social affairs ministry. "The survivors have to come to us," ministry spokesman Abdul Fatah Ahmadzai told AFP, adding: "Nobody is left out." But Help for Afghan Heroes, an Afghan non-profit organization supporting 5,000 families of wounded or dead security forces, said corruption was a key reason many women did not receive assistance. "They are asked to pay a bribe to get the application (for benefits) processed and they often don't have the money," Nasreen Sharar, special projects officer for the group said.—AFP

International

Deadly bombs crush illusion of 'de-escalation' near Damascus

Blistering air campaign reduces Ghouta deal to tatters

BEIRUT: Three weeks of ferocious bombardment of Syria's Eastern Ghouta have crushed illusions of a lasting truce in the rebel enclave which Damascus appears determined to recapture at all costs. A blistering air campaign has reduced a "de-escalation" deal in Eastern Ghouta to tatters, just as regime and opposition representatives struggle to progress at sputtering peace talks in Geneva. At least 193 civilians, including 44 children, have been killed in three weeks of Syrian government raids and artillery fire on the area, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Rebels based in the area have also ramped up rocket fire onto Damascus, killing 29 civilians and wounding more than 200 in the capital. Eastern Ghouta, the last opposition stronghold near Syria's capital, was one of four "de-escalation zones" agreed in May by powerbrokers Russia, Iran and Turkey. The deal aimed to pave the way for a nationwide ceasefire and political settlement that would finally put an end to the conflict that has killed 340,000 since 2011. A reduction in violence has more or less held in the other three zones in Syria's northwest, centre and south.

In mid-November, a relative calm that had prevailed over the Eastern Ghouta area ended with an explosive bombing campaign by regime forces. "Eastern Ghouta is suffering the fiercest bombing and worst situation since the war began," said Thomas Pierret, a Syria specialist at the University of Edinburgh. "We're really very far away from a reduction in violence," said Pierret, adding that the de-escalation zone had been reduced to "a big joke".

Half my house standing

Eastern Ghouta is home to an estimated 400,000 people struggling to survive under a devastating four-year government siege that has made food and medicine

unavailable or too expensive. The United Nations has warned that 500 of them, mainly women and children, are at risk of dying without immediate medical care. On November 28, Damascus nominally accepted a new Russian-proposed truce in Eastern Ghouta, to coincide with the resumption of UN-led peace talks in Geneva. But it has since ratcheted up its bombing.

Maysoun, a nurse living in the large Eastern Ghouta town of Douma, says she can vividly remember the day air strikes picked up again. "I came back from the market to find half my house was left standing," said the 30-year-old, who has since been staying with a friend. "I hadn't expected that much destruction. Usually, it's just the doors and windows that are affected," she said. Rajaa, a mother of four now pregnant with her fifth child, lives in Hammuriyeh—one of the most heavily-bombed towns in recent weeks. "When they hear the planes, the children cry and don't want to stay at home anymore. They're traumatized," she said.

At least 193 including 44 children die

On the capital's doorstep, President Bashar Al-Assad has repeatedly pledged his forces would retake all of Syria, and observers point to several reasons he appears to have doubled down on Eastern Ghouta now. French cartographer and analyst Fabrice Balanche said the de-escalation deal had served as a "temporary" arrangement to allow the regime to redeploy troops elsewhere. With key battlefronts against rebels frozen, Russian-backed government forces could focus on ousting the Islamic State group from Syria's centre and east, Balanche said.

Now, with IS territory reduced to a tiny sliver, Assad could comfortably resume the push for Eastern Ghouta. "The regime needs to get rid of this pocket," used by opposition factions to lob rockets on Damascus and launch offensives on nearby troops, Balanche said. "There's no question for the regime about allowing rebels to constitute little republics in these territories," he said. For Sam Heller,

an expert at The Century Foundation, Eastern Ghouta's location "on the doorstep of the capital" has kept it a priority for Assad. The Syrian government has worked at "digesting it over time, through a combination of siege (and) periodic military pressure", said Heller.

Other zones next?

The other three de-escalation areas—the south, Homs in central Syria, and northwest Idlib—are lower on Assad's list and have so far remained relatively quiet. "The zones' success rate ranges from 20 percent in Eastern Ghouta to 80

percent in the other regions," said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman. The southern zone borders Israel, making a government push sensitive. The "status quo" would likely prevail there, according to Balanche. Rebel enclaves in Homs province are smaller and less threatening—but Idlib presents a major challenge, with most of the province held by jihadists once loyal to Al-Qaeda. Tens of thousands of rebels who were bussed out of opposition zones under local truce deals were dumped in Idlib, along with thousands of civilians. An assault to take it would take much preparation, said Balanche. —AFP



HAMOURIA, Syria: A Syrian man carries the body of a child who was killed in a reported air strike in the rebel-controlled town of Hamouria, in the eastern Ghouta region on the outskirts of Damascus on December 3, 2017. —AFP



Malta arrests 10 over journalist's killing that shocked world

VALLETTA: Maltese authorities announced yesterday they have arrested 10 people in connection with the murder of a prominent journalist that sent shockwaves around the world. Daphne Caruana Galizia, who was killed in a car bomb attack on October 16, was one of the Mediterranean island's most prominent public figures thanks to a widely-read blog she used to campaign against corruption. Her most explosive reports included allegations that members of Prime Minister Joseph Muscat's inner circle benefited from kickbacks. But the 53-year-old also focused attention on alleged murky behavior by prominent opposition and business figures.

Speaking to reporters, the prime minister said a joint team of police, military and security services made the arrests following a near seven-week investigation carried out with help from the FBI, Europol and Finnish intelligence. Caruana Galizia's murder triggered an outpouring of grief on Malta and an international outcry over press freedom. It also turned an unflattering spotlight on the EU country's problems with corruption and organised crime, both seen as having flourished against the backdrop of a booming economy.

PM's biggest adversary

Muscat announced the arrest of eight of the suspects in a statement and then added in a tweet, that a further two had been detained. The statement said the suspects had been arrested on the basis of "reasonable suspicion in connection with involvement in the murder" of Caruana Galizia. All the suspects were Maltese nationals, it said, noting that some were "known to police".

Under Maltese law, they can be interrogated for 48 hours before a decision on whether to prosecute them has to be made. Muscat would not divulge if the suspects included the alleged perpetrators of the assassination, or those suspected of commissioning it. Nor would he comment on the suspected motive, saying he did not want to go into any detail for fear of prejudicing a potential trial. The premier, who had described the slain journalist as his biggest adversary, reiterated his commitment to bringing



BIDNIJA: Police and forensic experts inspect the wreckage of a car bomb believed to have killed journalist and blogger Daphne Caruana Galizia close to her home in Bidnija, Malta, on October 16, 2017. — AFP

her killers to justice. "As I stated as soon as I learnt about this barbaric act, we will leave no stone unturned to get this case solved," he said. "I am committed to doing so more than ever."

'One-woman Wikileaks'

Muscat's Labour Party government had offered a one million euro (\$1.2 million) reward for information leading to a conviction of Caruana Galizia's killers. Her sons had denounced the reward as a publicity stunt and called on Muscat to resign over the failings in the police and judiciary that contributed to their mother's death and his attempts to silence her through legal suits when she was still alive.

The family have repeatedly expressed concern that her death will be explained away as a criminal murder and that any connection with her revelations about the island's political elite will be swept under the carpet. In her final

post on Running Commentary, the widely-read blog she had written since 2008, Caruana Galizia voiced despair over the cronyism and sleaze she saw engulfing her island nation. "There are crooks everywhere you look now. The situation is desperate," she wrote minutes before she died in a blast so powerful her car was blown to pieces and her body was catapulted into a nearby field.

Friends subsequently revealed that she had feared she would be assassinated but had been reluctant to accept police protection that would have restricted her reporting activity. A significant part of that had involved exposing what the massive Panama Papers data leak revealed about corruption at the highest levels of Maltese government. Earlier this year, online news site Politico included the journalist on a list of 28 public figures "shaping, shaking and stirring Europe," describing her as "a one-woman WikiLeaks". She is survived by her lawyer husband, Peter, and three sons.—AFP

Risks grow for Rohingyas in squalid camps

DHAKA: Bangladesh plans to allocate more land for camps housing Rohingya refugees as concerns grow over a possible outbreak of disease in crowded, makeshift settlements clustered at the country's southern tip. About 625,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled to sanctuary in Bangladesh from violence, looting and destruction in neighboring Myanmar after government forces launched a counter insurgency following attacks by Rohingya militants on Aug 25. The swift exodus has taken the Rohingya refugee population to 837,000, making Bangladesh one of the world's largest, most crowded settlement of asylum-seekers.

More than 60 percent of the water supply in the camps is contaminated with bacteria as temporary latrines overflow into hastily-built, shallow wells, a World Health Organization survey showed. Faecal sludge

in the settlements goes largely untreated. "There is a high risk of a public health event, not just cholera and acute watery diarrhoea," said Naim Talukder of the group Action Against Hunger, who is coordinating the efforts of 31 groups and agencies to manage water, sanitation and hygiene. A Reuters graphic uses satellite imagery to document the mushrooming spread of the refugee areas. Data show the challenge of meeting international standards for water, sanitation and hygiene in the camps and spillover sites.

More land needed

Most refugees live in flimsy bamboo and canvas shelters in an area crowded well beyond emergency standards, said Graham Eastmond, an official of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). "You are talking a third of the international standard," he said. "We need to decongest urgently and obviously, to do that, we need more land." The IOM is among the bodies that have urged Bangladesh to free up more land and allow a wider spread of settlements. "The government already allocated 3,000 acres of land for the Rohingyas," Shah Kamal, a disaster management official, told Reuters.

That figure is equivalent to 1,214 hectares. "Considering the current situation, the government is planning to allocate 500 acres more land for them," he added. Last week, Bangladesh approved a \$280-million project to develop an isolated and flood-prone island in the Bay of Bengal to temporarily house 100,000 Rohingyas, despite criticism from rights groups. The overcrowding spells health and safety risks, Eastmond added, from rapidly spreading water-borne and communicable diseases to landslides and flooding, besides swelling the threat to vulnerable children and women.

Single women or children head about a fifth of households, preliminary findings of a population survey by the UN refugee agency and Bangladesh show. By Nov 11, there were 36,096 cases of acute watery diarrhoea since Aug. 25, as infection rates climbed, the UN children's agency said last month. Bangladesh, in partnership with UN agencies and charities, has spent hundreds of millions of dollars in responding to the crisis. New roads built by the army will open this month, boosting access for camp-dwellers, said Eastmond. Yet just 23 percent of funding needs for water, sanitation and hygiene services are being met, Talukder said.—Reuters



KUTUPALONG: A Rohingya Muslim refugee child stands in the Jamtoli refugee camp in Cox's Bazar. — AFP

News in brief

Post-Mugabe cabinet

HARARE: Zimbabwe's new president Emmerson Mnangagwa swore in his cabinet yesterday, with allies defending him against criticism for giving top posts to the generals who helped his rise to power. Sworn in as president on Nov 24 after 93-year-old Robert Mugabe quit following a de facto military coup, Mnangagwa has also come under fire for bringing back several faces from the Mugabe era, including Patrick Chinamasa as finance minister. Air Marshall Perrance Shiri, who was handed the sensitive land portfolio, defended his appointment in remarks to reporters after a simple ceremony to take oaths of office. "Who says military people should never be politicians? I'm a Zimbabwean so I have every right to participate in government," he said.

German coalition woes

MUNICH: German Chancellor Angela Merkel's struggling bid to form a government was hit by a new setback yesterday as her key ally was weakened in a leadership tussle. Horst Seehofer, head of Merkel's Bavarian allies the CSU, will step down as premier of the wealthy southern state in early 2018, leaving the post to regional finance minister Markus Soeder. Seehofer, 68, intends to stay on as chairman of the Christian Social Union, a less influential post than that of premier of the Alpine state. The party veteran has held both roles since 2008, but has come under fire after leading his party to a record low score in September's general elections. "A new chapter is beginning," said Soeder, 50, as he called for unity within the party. "Politics is always teamwork, going alone would achieve nothing." The leadership change is expected to be approved at the CSU's party congress in mid-December.

Disabled abandoned

STILLWATER: An Oklahoma woman is accused of abandoning her diabetic and nearly blind husband, leaving him to die and his body to lay undiscovered for months. The woman was arrested in Sayre last week. Court records don't show that formal charges have been filed. Payne County Sheriff's Investigator Rockford Brown told the Stillwater NewsPress that the man's body showed no obvious sign of foul play and that an autopsy will determine if he died due to neglect. Two dogs were also found dead in the home. Brown says the man was diabetic, blind and unable to get food or water that was not inside the home. He has sent the prosecutor complaints of caretaker neglect, financial exploitation and animal cruelty. Sayre is about 130 miles west of Oklahoma City.

South Sudan's drones

JUBA: Cash-strapped South Sudan has spent millions of dollars on Israeli surveillance drones and security cameras aimed at fighting rampant crime in the capital Juba, officials said yesterday. The first two drones and 11 cameras will be deployed by Israeli company Global Group, President Salva Kiir said at a launch event. Criminals "can now be traced and they cannot get away with crime," he said. "All the planes at the airport will be safe. Everybody can be screened wherever he or she is going," Kiir said, speaking at the drone control centre at a police training centre. Edward Dimitiri, technology director at the interior ministry, would not put an exact price tag on the project, which he said was costing "millions of dollars". Since the outbreak of a fresh civil war four years ago, South Sudan's oil-based economy has all but collapsed, further impoverishing an already poor population, while the ongoing conflict has uprooted a third of the population and pushed millions more to the brink of starvation.

International

Ireland becomes target of Brexiteers' acrimony

Pro-Brexit British politicians blast Ireland

DUBLIN: Pro-Brexit British politicians have heavily criticized Ireland due to fears it may block the start of the next phase of EU negotiations over the country's sensitive border. Dublin and other EU member states are set to decide this month if Britain has made sufficient progress in three key areas of the talks—the border issue, the country's exit bill and the rights of expatriate citizens. In the run-up to the crucial decision, the rhetoric from people anxious for an agreement has become increasingly incendiary against their former colony. "The South needs to wind its neck in," wrote Northern Ireland's former first minister Peter Robinson, in a post on Facebook last week.

Irish politicians "have taken to lecturing the UK" and should adopt a "more positive and accommodating approach," he added. The Sun tabloid adopted an even angrier tone: "Ireland's naive young prime minister should shut its gob on Brexit and grow up." Prime Minister "Leo Varadkar may not like Brexit but he needs to accept it's happening," the newspaper said. Gerard Batten, a member of the European Parliament from the UK Independence Party, tweeted: "UK threatened by Ireland. A tiny country that relies on UK for its existence." Batten's message, posted on November 26, elicited hundreds of indignant responses from other Twitter users.

Irish 'a bit petty'

Ireland's insistence in Brexit negotiations that there can be no return to a hard border on the island has generated

other reactions on social media, including ugly historical references. "Oh bring back Cromwell, he understood how to deal with the Irish," one Twitter user wrote in response to a news article on the topic. Oliver Cromwell led British forces sent to conduct a brutal conquest of Ireland in the 17th century.

Britain's right-wing newspapers have also joined in. "Ireland and the EU need to stop using the border as a stick to beat us with," the headline of an editorial in the Daily Telegraph newspaper said last month. In the war of words, pro-Brexit UK lawmaker Kate Hoey warned Dublin that there would be consequences if the talks stall this month. "If this ends up with a no deal, we won't be putting up the border, they'll have to pay for it," she told a BBC interviewer, echoing US President Donald Trump's controversial campaign comments that Mexico pay for building a wall on America's southern border.

The escalating rhetoric is "worrying", wrote

Jennifer O'Connell of the Irish Times in a recent column. She said that "the work done by the hard Brexiteers... trying to position the border question as an Irish problem seems to be paying off". O'Connell highlighted a video from Britain's Channel 4 News that went viral in which Britons were asked to draw the actual borderline between the Irish republic and Northern Ireland—with little success. The interviewees were then asked their feelings about the Brexit negotiations, which elicited responses like "the Irish are just making trouble" and accusations of being "a bit petty". — AFP



Exit bill, rights' border issues still lingering

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DUNDALK, Ireland: A lorry passes a Brexit Border poster on the Dublin road Co Armagh border, between Newry in Northern Ireland and Dundalk in the Irish Republic. — AFP

Finland anchored firmly to the West

HELSINKI: A century after gaining independence from its powerful neighbor Russia, Finland continues to consolidate its ties to the West, as tensions flare between Moscow and the West. Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and an uptick in military activity in the Baltic region have tested Finnish-Russian relations, painstakingly maintained over the years with scrupulous diplomatic efforts.

Like its neighbors Sweden, Denmark, Poland and the Baltic states, Finland has modernized its military in recent years and has stepped up initiatives tying itself closer to NATO—but has stopped short of joining the alliance. And Finland's political rhetoric remains cautious when it comes to Russia, its fifth biggest trading partner. "We are ready to defend ourselves, but we don't speculate about the direction or the countries" the threat could come from, Finnish Foreign Minister Timo Soini said in an interview. "We are two independent nations, we don't ask permission from each other" before making strategic decisions, he said.

Wary of their neighbor

Finland belonged to Sweden for six centuries—until 1809 – and was then a Russian Grand Duchy until 1917, only gaining its independence at the end of World War I after the fall of the Tsarist Russian empire. The Soviet Union recognized Finland's independence in 1918, but the Nordic country had to fight off its great eastern neighbor during the winter of 1939-1940, and again from June 1941 to September 1944 to avoid being occupied by the Communists.

The 1947 Treaty of Paris recognized Finland's defeat at the end of World War II, and it had to pay substantial war reparations to the USSR and permanently cede 10 percent of its territory, the eastern part of Karelia. The human and territorial losses from these conflicts remain very present in the minds of today's 5.5 million Finns. An old saying goes: "Nothing good comes from the East, only the Sun." "From the Finnish point of view, (Russia) is not a real threat but rather a big neighbour they're still a bit wary of, and with whom they have a joint history that has not always been easy," Barbara Kunz, a Nordic specialist at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) said.

EU's longest border

Careful not to wake the Russian bear, Finnish leaders publicly stayed on good terms with Russia and refrained from expressing any open criticism during the Cold War, a process that coined the term "Finlandization". But the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 changed everything. Remaining militarily non-aligned, Finland rapidly joined the European Union in 1995, swapping its currency, the markka, for the euro in 2002. The Finnish border is now the longest EU border with Russia, stretching 1,340 kilometers. Anchoring itself firmly to the West, Finland is keen to make sure it has a diplomatic and security "shield". "We are a part of the West, and we need the Western power to stabilize the situation in terms of Russia," said Markku Kivinen, head of Helsinki's Aleksanteri Institute, a centre for Russian and Eastern European studies.

Pragmatic neutrality

Unlike Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, the Baltic states which won their independence in the early 1990s and joined NATO a decade later, Finland has no intention of joining the military alliance for fear of angering Moscow. Last month, a public opinion poll found that only 22 percent of Finns have a good opinion of NATO, a fall of three percentage points from a year earlier. The policy of military non-alignment is broadly supported in the country. "We need to stay independent. We never know what could happen with Russia," Heini Vahtera, a Helsinki resident in her 30s said. Joining the Atlantic alliance would "elicit a pretty harsh reaction from the Russians", noted Jean de Glinasty, a Russia expert at the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs (IRIS) and a former French envoy to Moscow. — AFP

Families condemn police brutality in Californian town

BAKERSFIELD: James de la Rosa was unarmed when four police officers in the rural Californian town of Bakersfield ended his life in a hail of bullets by the roadside. At the age of 22, he had never picked up a single conviction, but initial police reports justified the killing by saying he had reached into his waistband after being chased by police and crashing. "I'm broken," sobs his mother Leticia as she visits his grave in a local cemetery three years after the killing, cradling a picture of her beaming son in happier times.

"No money, nothing in this world, will bring me back my son. I think of James everyday. I live in the house he was living in. He was a good kid, he had a bright future." A family lawsuit alleged that De la Rosa had his hands in the air when an officer first tried to taser him and then other officers opened fire, shooting him five times in the head, groin and other areas. The family settled on a \$400,000 compensation deal after it emerged that an officer had "tickled" De la Rosa's dead body—but many other victims' families feel they have never seen justice.

Far from the media spotlight on flashpoints like Ferguson, Missouri and Baltimore, at least 29 people have been shot by police in Kern County, where the oil production hub of Bakersfield is located, since 2013. "In recent years, Kern County Sheriff's deputies shot and killed considerably more people than law enforcement agencies in areas of equivalent population sizes," the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said in a recent report. "And the Bakersfield Police Department had the highest rate of police homicides per capita of the country's 60 largest police departments."

Shootings, beatings

The report described "a disturbing pattern of shootings, beatings and canine attacks" by police and sheriff's

Spain Judge refuses to free 4 Catalan leaders

MADRID: Catalonia's sacked vice president Oriol Junqueras and three other separatist leaders will remain in prison pending a probe over their role in the region's independence drive, a Spanish judge decided yesterday, as critical Catalan elections approach. Six other former ministers who were also remanded in custody last month will be released on bail of 100,000 euros (\$120,000) each as an investigation into charges of rebellion, sedition and misuse of public funds continues, the Madrid court said in a statement.

The decision comes as axed Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont faces an extradition hearing in Belgium, where he escaped to after his region's parliament declared independence on October 27, claiming he would not get a fair trial back home. Spain is seeking to have Puigdemont and four of his former ministers who also fled with him sent back to face charges over their role in the independence drive.

News that Junqueras, former regional interior minister Joaquim Forn, and two civil society leaders will stay in prison comes as the official campaign for Catalan elections on December 21 kicks off at mid-

night. Madrid called the polls after the independence declaration, sacked Catalonia's government and suspended the region's autonomy. Supreme Court Judge Pablo Llarena decided there was a risk that Junqueras and the three others would repeat their alleged offences if he released them.

'Turn sadness into energy'

The news sparked outrage among independence supporters. "We want you back home," tweeted Catalan parliament speaker Carme Forcadell, who is also under investigation over her role in Catalonia's secession drive. "We will turn sadness into energy and we won't stop until you are free." Madrid wants the elections to "restore normality" to the wealthy north-eastern region, which declared independence unilaterally following a referendum that went ahead on October 1 despite a court ban. Puigdemont, Junqueras and other former ministers are candidates for the elections. This means the campaign will take an unprecedented turn, with candidates both "in exile" and in prison.

Separatist parties have repeatedly accused Madrid of taking "political prisoners" and "repression" after their independence declaration fell flat, and the decision to keep some Catalan leaders in jail is likely to magnify those claims. But generally, Catalans remain deeply split on independence, and several polls suggest pro-secession parties might struggle to win enough seats to form a new regional government. "From now until December 21, the dispute in the pro-independence camp is going to get worse and they will exchange blows," said Oriol Bartomeus, a political science professor at



BAKERSFIELD: Leticia De la Rosa places a rose on the grave of her son James in Bakersfield. James was reportedly killed in 2014 by Bakersfield police. — AFP

deputies, especially targeting unarmed suspects. Families of the dead say the real toll over the period covered by the report is 38 — and more than one a month in 2015 — although Mark Nations, a lawyer for the the sheriff's office, told AFP that year was an anomaly.

"We have not had an in-custody death since then. I can tell you there was a spike in incidents in the sense that there was not much going on before that and not much after that," he told AFP. The Bakersfield Police Department, involved in at least four deaths since 2016, refused to comment, citing an ongoing investigation by California's public prosecutor. The ACLU says the level of lethal violence directed at Hispanics and African Americans in Bakersfield by the predominantly white police force is out of proportion with the level of local crime.

Peter Bibring, the group's director of police practices for California, has noted that a small number of officers in Bakersfield have been involved in two deaths or more. One officer was present during the deaths of De La Rosa and two other victims—Jorge Ramirez and Jason Alderman.

Alderman, a 29-year-old father of two, met his end after being caught leaving a fast food joint he had just burglarized, in August 2015. He was about to escape, having found nothing worth stealing, when he was gunned down by police who later said he had raised his car jack, which they thought was a rifle.

'Wild West'

A surveillance video showed he had been crouching to get through a window when he was propelled back by the gunfire. Ramirez, a 34-year-old father of five, was on probation when he agreed four years ago to lead officers to a suspect. But the operation ended in a bloodbath on a parking lot and he was riddled with police bullets. "He was expecting the police to take care of him instead of killing him," his father, Jorge Ramirez Sr, told AFP, adding that he was haunted by the image of his son's death. Academics and campaigners describe Kern County as poverty-stricken and blighted by drug abuse, more the cultural twin of rural Texas than liberal Hollywood or high-tech Silicon Valley. — AFP



ESTREMERA: A group of people hold Catalan 'Estelada' flags and banners demanding a republic as they wait for the release of some Catalan former ministers, outside the Estremera prison yesterday. — AFP

the Autonomous University of Barcelona. "They could open up a rift that prevents them returning an overall majority."

Separate lists

In 2015 pro-independence parties won 47.8 percent of the vote, which allowed them to form the largest bloc in the region's parliament. But the latest polls show support for secessionists hovering around 45 percent—potentially putting another majority out of reach. And unlike 2015, pro-independence parties are running on separate lists. Junqueras hopes to lead his ERC party, which is ahead in the polls, to victory on December 21.

Puigdemont launched his campaign last month from Brussels with a flurry of high-profile media appearances and a demand that he be returned as the "legitimate" president of Catalonia. After Monday's hearing the court is expected to make its ruling in eight to 10 days, according to the Brussels prosecutor's office. But Puigdemont's lawyer said at the weekend he will remain in Belgium until after the Catalan elections, which indicates he will campaign from there. "No matter what, they will be (in Brussels) till at least December 21 and according to my calculations this could go on till mid-January," lawyer Jaume Alonso Cuevillas told Catalan radio Racl. — AFP

International

Cathay flight crew 'saw' N Korea missile re-enter the atmosphere

More 'ghost boats,' bodies wash up on Japan's shores

SEOUL: An airplane crew flying over Japan saw North Korea's missile as it plunged back through the atmosphere last week, their airline said yesterday, as South Korea and the US kicked off their largest ever joint air exercise. Hong Kong carrier Cathay Pacific released a statement saying the crew of flight CX893 spotted "what is suspected to be the re-entry" of the missile as they flew from San Francisco to the southern Chinese city.

In a separate message to staff, Cathay general manager Mark Hoey said the crew described seeing the missile "blow up and fall apart", the South China Morning Post reported. Pyongyang sent tensions soaring on the Korean Peninsula five days ago when it announced it had successfully test fired a new ICBM, which it says brings the whole of the continental United States within range. Analysts say it is unclear whether the missile survived re-entry into the earth's atmosphere or could successfully deliver a warhead to its target-key technological hurdles for Pyongyang.

The isolated and impoverished North has staged six increasingly powerful atomic tests since 2006 — most recently in September—which have rattled Washington and its key regional allies South Korea and Japan. On Monday the US and South Korea started their largest ever joint air exercise, an operation Pyongyang has labeled an "all-out provocation". The five-day Vigilant Ace drill involves 230 aircraft, including F-22 Raptor stealth jet fighters, and tens of thousands of troops, Seoul's air force said.

Pyongyang over the weekend blasted the drill, accusing US President Donald Trump's administration of "begging for nuclear war". As tensions surged, US Senator Lindsey Graham, an influential Republican and foreign policy hawk, warned that the US was moving closer to "preemptive war" with the North. "If there's an underground nuclear test (by the North), then you need to get ready for a very serious response by the United States," Graham told the CBS show "Face the Nation".

In recent years Pyongyang has accelerated its drive to develop nuclear and missile technology capable of threatening the US, which it accuses of hostility. "The preemption is becoming more likely as their technology matures," Graham said. His remarks echoed those of Trump's National Security Adviser HR McMaster, who told a secu-

rity forum on Saturday that the potential for war with the North "is increasing every day". As well as featuring the latest generation of stealth fighters, this year's wargames involve simulated precision attacks on the North's military installations, including its missile launch sites and artillery units, Yonhap news agency said, citing unnamed Seoul sources.

Risks of war

The North has boasted that the Hwasong 15 ICBM tested on Wednesday is capable of delivering a "super-large" nuclear warhead anywhere in the US mainland. Analysts agree the latest test showed a big improvement in potential range, but say it was likely achieved using a dummy warhead that would have been quite light. They say a missile carrying a much heavier nuclear warhead would struggle to travel as far. They are also skeptical that Pyongyang has mastered the sophisticated technology required to protect such a warhead from the extreme temperatures and stresses encountered as the missile hurtles back to Earth.

The latest launch, which saw the missile drop into Japan's economic waters, was condemned by Tokyo's parliament Monday, which slammed the North's rogue weapons program as an "imminent threat". Washington has called on China, the North's major ally, to do more to rein in Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions. Yesterday China's foreign ministry yesterday warned that the Korean peninsula remained "highly sensitive" and called on all sides to "do more things to ease the tension and avoid provoking each other".

The North's leader Kim Jong-Un has presided over significant progress in the country's widely-condemned nuclear and missile programs since taking power in 2011. A nuclear standoff between Kim and Trump in recent months has seen the pair trade personal insults. The tensions have fueled concerns of another conflict, more than six decades after the 1950-53 Korean War that left much of the peninsula in ruins.

'Ghost boats'

In another development, three bodies and a dilapidated wooden boat believed to have come from North Korea washed ashore in northern Japan yesterday, coast guard



GUNSAN: Photo shows US Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon (right) and F-35A Lightning II fighter jets taxiing at Kunsan Air Base in the southwestern port city of Gunsan. The US and South Korea kicked off their largest ever joint air exercise yesterday.—AFP

officials said. The coast guard said a Japanese fishing boat picked up a male body floating off the coast of Sakata in Yamagata prefecture and two more bodies washed up on a nearby beach an hour and half later. The bodies were decomposed, but one of them had a lapel pin thought to be North Korean.

Officials are investigating if the bodies were from a boat that washed ashore Saturday. Winds and water currents push dozens of boats onto Japan's northern coasts annually. Ricketty North Korean fishing boats are particularly vulnerable because they lack the sturdiness and equipment to return home. But the alarming pace over the past few weeks has prompted Japanese authorities to step up patrols. Twenty-eight of the vessels - dubbed "ghost boats" - were detected in November, up from just four in November last year. Usually, only the boats or fragments wash ashore. It is very rare for survivors to be rescued and brought ashore by the Japanese.

The increase may be related to a campaign led by Kim

Jong Un to boost fish harvests as a means of increasing sources of protein for the nation, which continues to fall short of food self-sufficiency and remains vulnerable to health problems caused by the lack of a varied, balanced diet. In order to reach their quotas, the North Korean fishermen may be taking more risks and venturing farther from their usual waters. Japanese authorities are also holding 18 people from two other boats. They claim to be North Korean.

The first batch of 10 landed on a small uninhabited island off southern Hokkaido on a damaged fishing boat and allegedly stole electronics appliances and other items from an unmanned shelter while temporarily taking refuge from rough seas. Japan's coast guard rescued them last week. Eight other survivors who lost their boat but managed to swim ashore in Akita have been transferred to immigration. Japanese officials said the 10 are being investigated for possible theft, while the other eight are expected to be sent home via China.—Agencies

MP proposes to gay partner in the parliament

SYDNEY: A gay Australian lawmaker popped the question to his partner in parliament yesterday, with the first ever proposal in the chamber coming shortly after a bill paving the way for same-sex marriage was introduced. Tim Wilson, who has reportedly been engaged to Ryan Bolger for nine years, fought back tears as he thanked his fiancée for enduring a marriage debate that "has been the soundtrack to our relationship".

"In my first speech I defined our bond by the ring that sits on both of our left hands—that they are the answer to the questions we cannot ask," the 37-year-old lawmaker from the ruling conservative party said. "So there is only one thing left to do: Ryan Patrick Bolger will you marry me?" Bolger, who was sitting in the public gallery, quickly responded "yes" as the floor erupted in applause. "That was a 'yes', a resounding 'yes'," house speaker Rob Mitchell noted for the record. "Congratulations, well done mate." The Australian House of Representatives official twitter account confirmed later that after reviewing past records, Wilson's proposal was likely the first ever in that chamber of Parliament.

"Update: We've dug through Hansard and @timwilson-comau appears to be the first ever Member to propose on the floor of the House," it tweeted. Wilson earlier emotionally recalled the uneasiness he experienced with some friends when he and Bolger were first engaged. "Many simply didn't know how to react. Many SMS went unresponded. In conversations some people politely changed the topic, or fell silent entirely," he said. His partner had pushed him to have an engagement party. "On informing one person of our news, they responded: Why bother? 'At the time



CANBERRA: Australian lawmaker Tim Wilson (center) proposes to his partner Ryan Bolger (not pictured) in parliament in Canberra yesterday.—AFP

I fell silent and I have never had an answer to that question. But the Australian people have now answered that for me."

'Historic moment of inclusion'

The same-sex marriage bill being debated is expected to comfortably pass through the House of Representatives before Christmas after the upper house Senate last week overwhelmingly voted in its favor. After more than a decade of debate, Australians emphatically endorsed gay marriage in a recent nationwide postal vote, with some 62 percent of the 12.7 million who took part voting "yes" last month. "This is a historic moment of inclusion, of recognition, of respect," Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said shortly after the bill was introduced for debate in the lower house yesterday. "This is a day to be especially proud that

all of our friends, our colleagues, our neighbors, our brothers, our sisters, can marry the people they love."

Former conservative prime minister Tony Abbott, a leading voice in the "no" campaign, said he would now back the bill. "I certainly don't pretend to be an overnight convert to support same-sex marriage but I am pledged to respect and to facilitate the verdict of the Australian people," he said. "Same-sex marriage should now be recognized. It will now be recognized." Abbott moved an amendment he said protected discrimination against anyone over their "conscientious view about the nature of marriage", before saying he planned to attend his gay sister's wedding next year. "I am looking forward to attending the marriage of my sister, Christine, to her partner Virginia some time early in the new year."—AFP

Five questions on Jerusalem

JERUSALEM: US President Donald Trump faces a deadline to decide whether to move the US embassy in Israel to the disputed city of Jerusalem. Israelis and Palestinians are eagerly watching to see whether he again renews a waiver delaying the move, as his predecessors have done. There are suggestions he will sign the waiver and decline to move the embassy for now, but later this week declare Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Here are five questions and answers explaining the issue:

What is the dispute?

Israel seized control of Palestinian east Jerusalem from Jordan during a 1967 war and later annexed it. The move was never recognized by the international community but Israel declared the city its undivided capital. The Palestinians see east Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. No countries have accepted Israeli sovereignty and have their embassies in the commercial capital Tel Aviv instead. Moving the embassy would be seen

as the United States endorsing Israel's claim to the city and rejecting the Palestinian one.

What is the waiver?

In 1995, the US Congress passed the Jerusalem Embassy Act calling on the country to move its embassy to the Holy City. "Since 1950, the city of Jerusalem has been the capital of the state of Israel," it said, demanding the government move the embassy. The act is binding but there was a clause that presidents could delay it for six months at a time to protect "national security interests". Presidents Bill Clinton, George W Bush and Barack Obama signed these waivers routinely every six months. Trump reluctantly signed the first waiver that came due during his presidency on June 1. He now faces a second deadline.

Will Trump sign?

During the election campaign, Trump promised multiple times to move the embassy, and his ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, is a strong advocate of the shift. However, Trump appeared to back away from the idea during his first months in office under pressure from the Palestinians and other Arab leaders. As he seeks ways to inject new life into moribund peace talks, there have been warnings that such a move would

enrage the Arab world. But Trump is also faced with trying to keep his campaign promise and pleasing his right-wing base, which wants to see the embassy moved. There have been suggestions he will not move the embassy now, but instead recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital later this week.

Dan Shapiro, US ambassador to Israel under Obama said that such a move in practice would not "have a significant effect, but it will be a signal of future intent to follow through on the president's commitment to actually move the embassy". "It would be new language for the United States to formally describe Jerusalem as Israel's capital. That has not been the traditional US language."

What happens if he doesn't?

If Trump chooses not to sign the waiver, the embassy wouldn't move immediately, but there are rapid repercussions. Under the 1995 act, the US State Department would see a 50-percent cut in all its future budgets for "acquisition and maintenance of buildings abroad" until the new embassy opens. In 2016, \$968 million was spent on embassy security, construction and maintenance, according to State Department figures.

What would be the impact of the name? Alan Baker, a former Israeli ambassador to Canada, said recognition of Jerusalem as



JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu talks yesterday in Jerusalem during a signing ceremony of an agreement between the US and Israel for energy aid given by both countries to Africa.—AFP

Israel's capital without moving the embassy would amount to a "sort of legal acrobatics—trying to please both sides and not annoy either". But Baker said "anything is better than now, where Jerusalem is not recognized by Israel's best friend and supporter". Palestinians see the issue starkly differently. Saeb Erekat, secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organization, said Sunday that such recognition would "promote international anarchy and disrespect for global institutions and law".—AFP

News in brief

Children raped, burnt

CHENNAI: The brutal "breaking in" of trafficked girls in Indian brothels, from rape to beatings to starvation, leaves girls unable to say "no to anyone" or escape, a new study has found. The testimonies of child sex trafficking survivors in the eastern Indian city of Kolkata offer a glimpse into the violence young girls endure before they are pushed into the sex trade. "Traffickers are using the tactic of a 'conditioning period' to break the resilience of children," said Saji Philip of the charity International Justice Mission, which co-authored the study with the government of West Bengal state. "Fifty-five percent of the survivors were beaten with objects and some were forced to witness murder of other minors. These are extremely violent and cruel methods."

'Female morality lessons'

BEIJING: Chinese authorities have shut down a "female morality class" that provoked anger by lecturing women to shut up, accept a second-rate role in society and focus on housework, state media reported yesterday. In viral video that surfaced on China's internet, an instructor in the class in the northeastern province of Liaoning tells students that "women should talk less, do more housework and shut their mouths". The teacher also said that "women should not strive to move upwards in society, but should always remain at the bottom level". "If you order food delivery instead of cooking by yourself, you are disobeying rules for women," another instructor said. The class was launched in the city of Fushun by the Fushun Traditional Cultural Research Association, which was established in 2011 with the approval of city authorities.

'Kwaussie' - word of the year

SYDNEY: Inspired by a dual citizenship crisis plaguing politics in Australia, the term "Kwaussie"—a mix of Kiwi and Aussie was yesterday picked as word of the year. It had been used sparingly in the past to describe a dual citizen of Australia and New Zealand, but took on a new lease of life when Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce found out he also had Kiwi citizenship in August. He was the highest profile scalp of a constitutional provision barring dual citizens from serving in federal parliament, with eight lawmakers forced to resign so far. "In a time of covfefe, fake news, and tweetstorms, the Australian National Dictionary Centre has looked for a word of the year that is both lexically interesting and Australian," the centre's director Amanda Laugesen said in a statement.

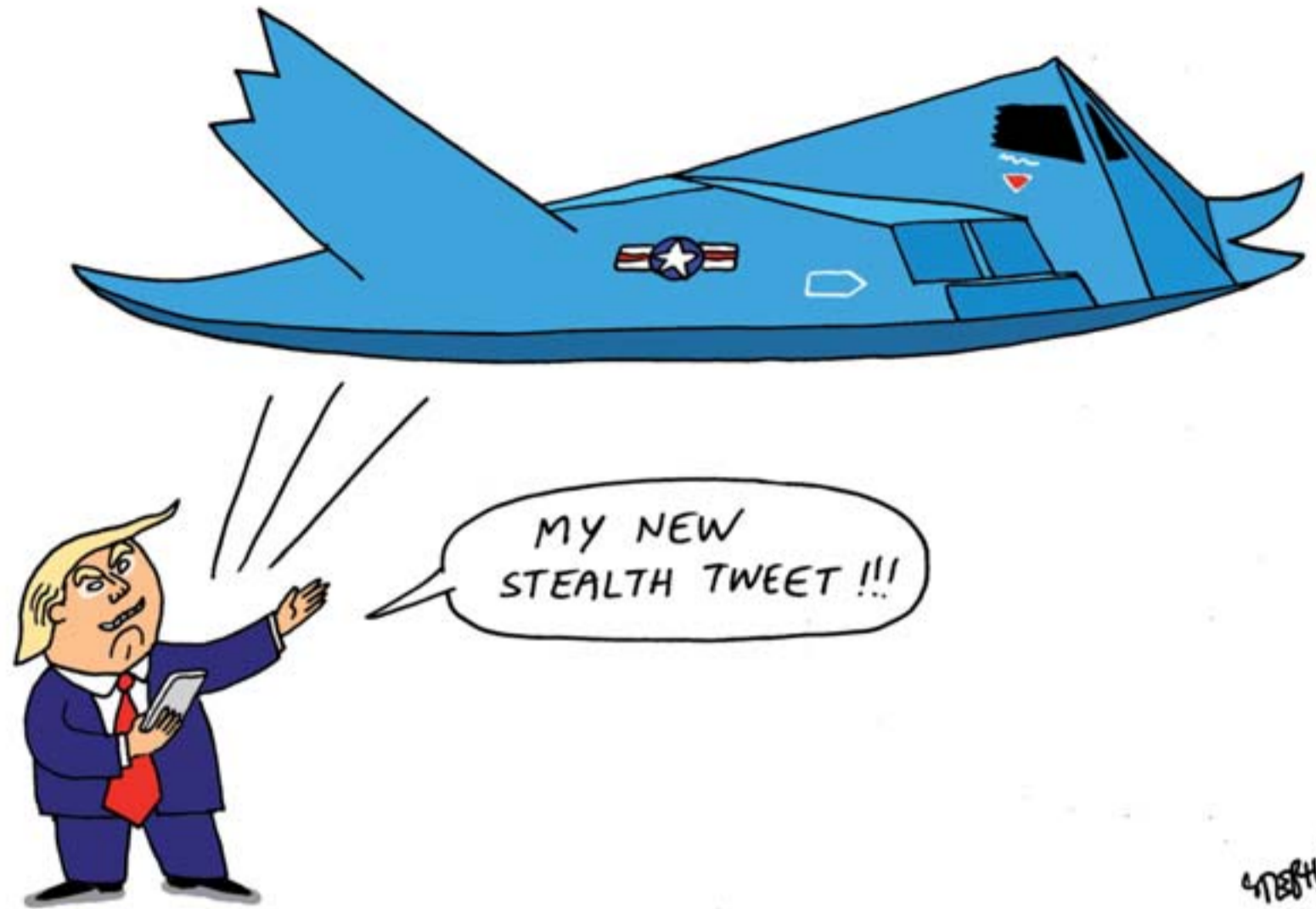
4 Syrians convicted

AMMAN: Jordan's state security court convicted four Syrians yesterday of helping Islamic State militants carry out a 2016 car bomb attack that led to the closure of the Syrian-Jordanian border. The court sentenced one defendant to death and three to life in prison with hard labor. The cross-border suicide attack, launched in June 2016 from near the Rukban camp for displaced Syrians on the Syrian-Jordanian frontier, killed seven Jordanian border guards. In response, Jordan sealed the border, barring the entry of virtually all Syrians who were fleeing from fighting and were amassing on the border. The bearded defendants, ranging in age from 20 to 26, were led into the courtroom cage yesterday, dressed in jump suits and wearing rubber sandals.

Analysis

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US MASSES STEALTH JETS FOR WAR GAMES



Tunisia softening economic reforms to avoid unrest

Tunisia plans to launch long-awaited reforms to reduce its chronic budget deficit, but the measures could harm investment if the government imposes new taxes and resists cutting the bloated public sector in order to avoid social unrest. The International Monetary Fund is in Tunisia this week to review the government's efforts to fix an economy in turmoil since President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali was ousted in the first of the Arab Spring rebellions in 2011. Tunisia has been praised as the only democratic success among the Arab Spring nations. But economic performance has lagged, with phosphate exports hit by strikes and tourism suffering from Islamist attacks. Hoping to secure further IMF finance to fund the 2018 budget, Economic Reforms Minister Taoufik Rajhi said the government would launch "unprecedented reforms" to cut the deficit to 4.9 percent in 2018 from 6 percent this year.

Tunisia wants to reduce the public workforce by 20,000 from 800,000, overhaul loss-making state firms, and increase taxes and social security contributions, Rajhi told Reuters. Rajhi said the government is serious about reforms this time, but analysts say Prime Minister Youssef Chahed is likely to amend the proposals in order to calm social tensions. That would put Tunisia at odds with its lenders. Since 2011, nine governments have failed to cut the deficit and the country needs \$3 billion in foreign loans next year alone.

"The government is heavily reliant on financial assistance from multilateral lenders - such as the IMF - which are putting pressure and conditioning their support on the implementation of structural reforms, notably on the fiscal front, (and) job cuts in the public sector in particular," said Raphaelae Auberty, Tunisia analyst at BMI Research. On the other hand, "risks of social instability in the country are limiting the scope for fiscal consolidation without triggering large-scale protests", she said.

Under pressure from unions, officials have agreed to increase public sector salaries in 2018 and avoid compulsory lay-offs which could provoke protests. The government wants to cut the public sector wage bill to 12.5 percent of GDP in 2020 from 15 percent by offering voluntary redundancies, although that would be expensive. A spokesman for the IMF said the fund and Tunisia agreed urgent reforms were needed, "including tax reforms and measures to limit the further growth of the public wage bill that risks becoming unaffordable and is among the highest in the world."

Jobs

Tunisian officials also want to raise taxes on bank profits to 40 percent from 35 percent. Tax on real estate deals will rise to 19 percent from 6 percent, which businesses say will undermine their competitiveness. "Taxes kill investors' desire to come here," said Nafaa Naifer of the business association UTICA, which says companies will close if the tax plan goes ahead. "We cannot tolerate more sacrifices if our sacrifices only go to boost the public sector salaries," he said. Last year, the government imposed a temporary 7-percent tax on companies to help finance the budget, 45 percent of which is spent on public sector salaries. Western countries are keen that Tunisia should attract investment because high unemployment has forced many young Tunisians to go abroad in search of better fortune or even war. The number of boats smuggling migrants to Italy has risen sharply, while Tunisia has produced the largest number of jihadists heading for battlefields in Iraq, Syria and Libya.

In April, the IMF agreed to pay out a delayed \$320 million second tranche of a \$2.8 billion loan to Tunisia after complaining about lack of progress in cutting the public sector. Chahed is walking a tightrope, presiding over a coalition of secularists and Islamists who have repeatedly clashed over the country's transition since 2011. He especially needs to listen to the powerful labour union UGTT, which mediated in 2013 when tensions between Islamists and secular forces were threatening Tunisia's stability. The UGTT opposes deep cuts, saying people are worse off than before the revolution due to inflation of around 5.8 percent.

The dinar has fallen by 35 percent since 2011 as tourists have stayed away. Two big militant attacks almost killed off the sector in 2015. Tunisia lost nearly \$2 billion due to a drop in phosphate exports when jobless youths blocked rail tracks near the mines. The IMF wants to cut subsidies on bread, petrol and other goods but the government plans to keep the bill stable at the equivalent of \$1.4 billion next year. The sensitivity of the issue was apparent when a minister told Reuters recently that bread prices would rise by a few cents because the government could not absorb the cost of an increase in global wheat prices. Local media jumped on the story and the UGTT leader met Chahed to press him to keep prices stable.

Protests?

Opposition parties expect the reforms to cause protests. "These measures are painful and 2018 will be the most difficult year for Tunisians. I don't think it will go without a popular reaction," said Jilani Hammami, an official in the left-leaning Popular Front movement. The government plan calls for an overhaul of overstaffed state firms but avoids any mention of layoffs. "We will determine what should be kept entirely under the state and what should be a partnership between the public and private sectors, and what should be privatized," said Rajhi, the reform minister, without elaborating. —Reuters

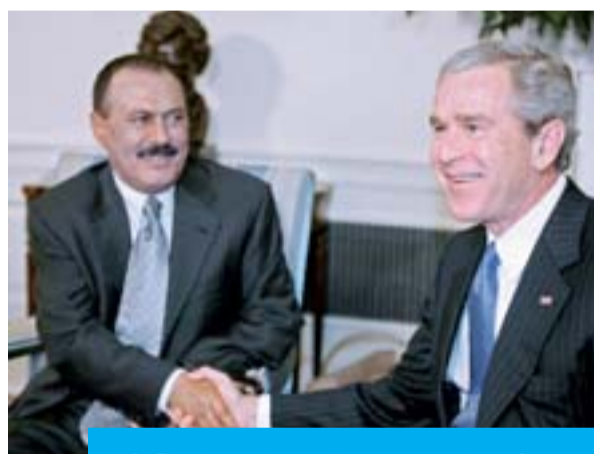
Saleh played his last hand and lost



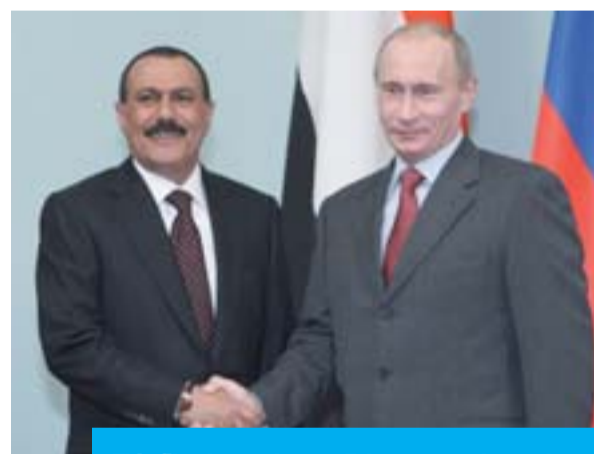
This file photo taken on Oct 10, 2010 during an Afro-Arab joint summit in the Libyan coastal city of Sirte shows Libya's late deposed leader Muammar Gaddafi (center) leaning on former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak (right) and Yemen's ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh (left) as they pose for a group picture with other leaders, including Tunisia's deposed president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. —AFP



This file photo taken on Feb 8, 1999 shows (from left) then US president Bill Clinton, his Egyptian and Yemeni counterparts Mubarak and Saleh, and late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat attending the funeral of Jordanian King Hussein in Amman. —AFP



This file photo taken on Nov 10, 2005 shows former US President George W Bush shaking hands with Saleh as the two meet privately inside the Oval Office of the White House in Washington. —AFP



This file photo taken on Feb 24, 2009 shows then Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin and Saleh posing during their meeting in Moscow. —AFP



In this Sept 12, 2000 file photo, then Cuban President Fidel Castro hugs Saleh during an official welcome ceremony in Havana. —AP

Yemen's steely former president of 33 years, Ali Abdullah Saleh, made his last political gamble and lost on Monday, meeting his death at the hands of the Houthis movement, his erstwhile allies in the country's multi-sided civil war. Officials in his General People's Congress party (GPC) confirmed to Reuters that the 75-year-old Saleh had been killed outside the capital Sanaa in what Houthi sources said was an RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) and gun attack.

A master of weaving alliances and advancing his personal and family interests in Yemen's heavily armed and deeply fractious tribal society, Saleh unified his country by force, but he also helped guide it toward collapse in its latest war. The Middle East's arch-survivor once compared running Yemen to "dancing on the heads of snakes", ruling with expertly balanced doses of largesse and force. He outlived other Arab leaders who were left dead or deposed by uprisings and civil wars since 2011.

Cornered by pro-democracy "Arab Spring" protests, Saleh wore a cryptic smile when signing his resignation in a televised ceremony in 2012. Saleh waged six wars against the Houthis from 2002 to 2009 before he made an impromptu alliance with the group that seized the capital Sanaa in 2014 and eventually turned on him. The two sides feuded for years for supremacy over territory they ran together. The Houthis probably never forgave his forces for killing their founder and father of the current leader.

Fearing the Houthis are a proxy for their arch-foe Iran, the mostly Gulf Arab alliance sought to help the internationally recognized Yemeni government win the conflict. Saleh's army loyalists and Houthi fighters together weathered thousands of air strikes by a Saudi-led military coalition in almost three years of war. As the conflict wrought a humanitarian crisis, mutual sniping about responsibility for economic woes in northern Yemeni lands that they together rule peaked on Wednesday when the capital erupted in gunbattles between their partisans.

Arch-Survivor

Saleh had seemed unshakable in one of the world's poorest and unstable countries. He managed to play his enemies off against each other as tribal warfare, separatist movements and Islamist militants destabilized Yemen. He survived a bomb attack in his palace mosque in 2011 which killed senior aides and disfigured him. As other leaders were toppled by the Arab Spring uprisings, he found a way to retire peacefully to his villa in the capital and plot a comeback.

Despite being forced to step down in 2012 under a Gulf-



Arch-survivor ruled for 33 yrs, undone by 2011 uprising

brokered transition plan following protests against his rule, Saleh won immunity in the deal and remained a powerful political player. The ever-nimble Saleh was a pivotal figure in the war, which has killed at least 10,000 people, displaced 2 million from their homes, led to widespread hunger and a cholera epidemic.

Saleh became the ruler of North Yemen in 1978 at a time when the south was a separate, communist state, and led the unified country after the two states merged in 1990. Opponents often complained that Yemen under Saleh failed to meet the basic needs of the country's people, where two of

every three live on less than \$2 per day. Saleh managed to keep Western and Arab powers on his side, styling himself as a key ally of the United States in its war on terrorism. He received tens of millions of dollars in US military aid for units commanded by his relatives.

After the Sept 11, 2001 attacks against US cities, Yemen came onto Washington's radar as a source of foot soldiers for Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda network. Bin Laden was born in Saudi Arabia though his family came from Yemen's Hadramaut region. Saleh cooperated with US authorities as the CIA stepped up a campaign of drone strikes against key al-Qaeda figures, which also led to scores of civilian deaths.

Born in 1942 near Sanaa, he received only limited education before joining the military as a non-commissioned officer. His first break came when President Ahmed Al-Ghashmi, who came from the same Hashed tribe as Saleh, appointed him military governor of Taiz, North Yemen's second city. When Ghashmi was killed by a bomb in 1978, Saleh replaced him. In 1990, the collapse of the Soviet Union helped propel North Yemen under Saleh and the socialist South Yemen state into a unification. Saleh angered Gulf Arab allies by staying close to Saddam Hussein during the 1990-91 Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, leading to the expulsion of up to 1 million Yemenis from Saudi Arabia. But he then won plaudits from Western powers for carrying out economic reforms drawn up by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and made efforts to attract foreign investors. He swept to victory when southerners tried to secede from united Yemen in 1994 and drew closer to Saudi Arabia.

Saleh's son, Ahmed Ali, lives under house arrest in the United Arab Emirates, where he once served as ambassador before it joined ally Saudi Arabia to make war on the Houthi-Saleh alliance. Ahmed Ali, a powerful former military commander whom his father appeared to be grooming to succeed him, may the family's last chance to win back influence. —Reuters

News

Indian screen icon Shashi...

Continued from Page 1

(Age of Downfall, 1981). He was also adored for his role opposite Bollywood veteran Amitabh Bachchan in the hit movie "Deewaar" (The Wall, 1975) in which he delivered one of Hindi cinema's most famous lines - 'Mere paas maa hai' (I have mother).

Tributes poured in from the world of Indian cinema and politics following news of Kapoor's death. "Shashi uncle was not only a great star and a passionate filmmaker, but also a wonderful human being. His work has always given Indian audiences great joy," Bollywood superstar Amir Khan said in a statement posted on Twitter. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that he was "saddened" by Kapoor's death. "His brilliant acting will be remembered by generations to come," wrote Modi.

Kapoor was born in the eastern Indian city of Kolkata in 1938, the youngest of Prithviraj's three children. He

began his career early, assisting in his father's travelling theatre company and appearing on stage in a production of "Shakuntala", a classic Hindu love story, at the age of six. His Bollywood career also began in childhood and he grew into a matinee idol after debuting as a leading man in "Dharmputra" in 1961. He enjoyed a thriving onscreen relationship with Bachchan. As well as "Deewaar", they appeared together in "Trishul" (Trident, 1978) and "Suhaag" (Husband, 1979).

Thanks to his youthful looks Kapoor often played Bachchan's younger brother, despite being five years older than him. Kapoor was among the first Indian actors to work abroad, with roles in Merchant Ivory films such as "The Householder" (1963), "Heat and Dust" (1983) and "Shakespeare Wallah" (1965). In 1958, Kapoor married English actress Jennifer Kendal. They had three children together. Kendal died of cancer aged just 51 in 1984.

The couple were keen patrons of the arts and in 1978 established the Prithvi Theatre in Mumbai which is today one of the city's most popular theatres. Kapoor won numerous acting prizes and in 2011 was honored with the Padma Bhushan, one of India's highest civilian awards. Shashi's eldest brother Raj Kapoor, who died in 1988, was also a famous Hindi cinema actor and father to Randhir. — AFP

Bahrain's top Shiite cleric hospitalized

DUBAI: Bahrain's leading Shiite cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim, a central opposition figure, has been admitted to hospital in critical condition, his family and a rights group said yesterday. Sheikh Qassim, in his late 70s, is a spearhead of Bahrain's opposition movement demanding an elected government in the kingdom, which has been ruled for more than two centuries by the Al-Khalifa dynasty. Qassim was stripped of his citizenship in 2016 on charges that include "serving

foreign interests", an allusion to Shiite-ruled Iran. He has been under de facto house arrest ever since.

Nedal Al-Salman, acting president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, and a relative of Qassim who requested anonymity both confirmed Qassim was in critical condition. Authorities allowed his family to transport him to a hospital of their choosing after they declined state-sanctioned medical care. The cleric's ailing health has for weeks been a point of contention between authorities and the Qassim family, who had refused the government's offer to transfer him to hospital over fears he may be detained and deported should he leave his residence. While his family has not made public the details of his condition, rights groups say he



Isa Qassim

has high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease. —AFP

Clashes rage after Yemen ex-president...

Continued from Page 1

"Praise God!" and "Hey Ali Affash!" (another name for Saleh) they were shouting.

Saleh's political party, the General People's Congress, confirmed the death of the 75-year-old, blaming the rebels. "He was martyred in the defense of the republic," said Faiqa Al-Sayyid, a party leader. Sayyid said Saleh and other top party officials had come under Houthi gunfire as they fled Sanaa. His death was confirmed by Saleh's nephew and former chief of Yemen's security forces, Yahya Mohammed Abdullah Saleh, who hailed him as a martyr on his official Facebook page. A military source said the Houthis stopped their four-car convoy about 40 km south of Sanaa and shot dead Saleh and two other senior GPC officials.

The collapse of the alliance between Saleh and the rebels saw at least 100 people reported dead in fighting, accusations of betrayal and the former leader reaching out to the Saudi-led coalition. The fighting continued yesterday, with reports of heavy clashes and coalition strikes against Houthi-controlled government buildings and around Sanaa International Airport. The government, which has operated out of southern city Aden since being ousted from the capital, ordered an offensive to advance on Sanaa. "The president has ordered Vice President Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar, who is in Marib (east of Sanaa), to activate military units and advance towards the capital," a presidency official told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity. Military and government sources said the army would advance on Sanaa from the east and northeast,

with at least seven battalions ordered to move forward.

The government also reached out to Saleh's supporters with an offer of amnesty. "The president will soon announce a general amnesty for all those who collaborated with the Houthis in recent months and who have retracted that allegiance," said Prime Minister Ahmad Obaid bin Daghr.

The Saleh-Houthi alliance had been fraught since its inception in 2014, when the two ended decades of enmity and joined ranks to capture Sanaa from Hadi's government. Saudi Arabia, accusing Iran of backing the rebels, intervened in the Yemen war on behalf of the government the following year. Saleh on Saturday announced he was open to talks with Saudi Arabia and its allies on condition they ended their crippling blockade of Yemen's ports and airports.

That dealt a serious blow to his already fragile alliance with rebel chief Abdul Malik Al-Houthi. In a televised speech yesterday, Houthi made no mention of Saleh's death but expressed his satisfaction at the day's events.

"Today marked the failure of the conspiracy and treason, a black day for the forces of aggression," he said on Al-Masirah. Houthi media and political sources also reported that the Houthis also advanced toward Saleh's birthplace in a village outside Sanaa where he maintained a fortified palace.

The fresh violence has increased fears for civilian victims of Yemen's war, which has claimed more than 8,750 lives since the Saudi-led coalition intervened. The conflict has pushed Yemen to the brink of mass starvation and triggered what the United Nations has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis. International aid groups warned yesterday they were losing the ability to reach civilians in Sanaa. "Ambulances and medical teams can't access injured, people can't buy food and other supplies," UNICEF's Rajat Madhok said on Twitter. "Aid workers can't travel and implement critical life-saving programs. This latest violence couldn't come at a worse time." — Agencies



SANAA: Houthi fighters guard a street leading to the residence of former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh yesterday. — AP

Kuwaiti FM, Zayani stress....

Continued from Page 1

liberation of Kuwait in 1991 was one of the many instances that proved the strength of the regional body against aggressors. The Kuwaiti foreign minister hoped that the current summit will meet the aspirations and dreams of the people in the region and would continue the GCC's strong stride towards a bright future.

GCC Secretary General Abdullah Al-Zayani said strategic ties linking the members of the GCC must continue to address current and future challenges. Zayani thanked the Kuwaiti leadership for hosting the grand event, which he hoped will continue the success story of the council. His strong support to the GCC's stability, security and cooperation is a clear example of Kuwaiti generosity and supportive stance, said Zayani.

Zayani congratulated Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled for hosting the ministerial meeting, indicating that it will be one of the main reasons for the success of the summit. Zayani also thanked Bahrain for hosting the previous summit in Manama. The secretary general thanked the council's top consultative authorities and the secretariat for contributing to the ministerial meeting, saying that the GCC leaders will look into decisions which will come in favor of the development of Gulf countries. The GCC Summit is very crucial under the current circumstances, said Zayani, who affirmed that Gulf leaders were up to the task at hand.

Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yusef bin Alawi sat between Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani and his Saudi counterpart Adel Al-Jubeir. The meeting was also attended by UAE state minister for foreign affairs Anwar Gargash and Bahrain's assistant foreign minister Abdullah Al-Dossari. The Qatari foreign minister left immediately after the meeting, as the rest of the ministers headed for a lunch banquet. None of the ministers agreed to give any statement to the press.

Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani will be at the summit today, but less than 24 hours before it

was due to begin it was still unclear whether the rulers of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain would also attend. Those three Gulf states, together with Egypt, cut all ties with Qatar on June 5, accusing the gas-rich emirate of supporting extremists and of being too close to Iran, Riyadh's arch-rival. Qatar denies the allegations.

Mediation efforts led by Kuwait have failed to resolve what is the worst crisis to hit the GCC in its 36-year history, casting serious doubts over the future of the six-state alliance. As Kuwait readied to host the two-day GCC summit, analysts said its efforts to bring about a peaceful end to the crisis may be at a complete standstill. "The crisis is too deep and very complicated... I don't think it will be resolved during the summit," said independent Kuwaiti political analyst Saleh Al-Saeedi. "But I think Kuwait hopes to at least freeze the dispute, stop its deterioration and move on to the next step."

Founded in 1981, the GCC is a political and economic union grouping Qatar with Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as well as Oman and Kuwait. Qatar has accused the Saudi-led Arab bloc of aiming to

incite a change of regime in Doha. Besides the Qatari emir, it is still unclear who will attend. Oman has said it will be sending a senior official to represent its ruler Sultan Qaboos, who traditionally stays away from summits. The other GCC states have yet to announce who they would be sending, although some Kuwaiti media have reported Saudi King Salman may attend.

After cutting off all ties with Qatar, Saudi Arabia and its allies imposed a land, sea and air blockade of the emirate and issued a list of 13 demands to have it lifted. Bahrain in October openly called for Qatar's membership of the GCC to be suspended until it accepted the demands. Experts warn that the crisis could lead to the demise of the once-powerful GCC. "The justifications for the existence of the GCC bloc amidst the continued crisis are no longer present like before," said Sami Al-Faraj, head of the Kuwait Center for Strategic Studies. "As long as our enemy has changed from Iran to Qatar, the GCC will not continue."

The failure of the GCC members to solidify long-delayed plans for economic unity may also threaten its future. The Gulf states have approved a customs union, a common market, a single currency and a single central bank but most of these have yet to be properly implemented.



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10
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Sports

England finally fire but Australia in charge of second Ashes Test

Australia lead five-match series 1-0

ADELAIDE: England finally got the pink ball to swing on the third night of the second Ashes Test yesterday but it still looked too little, too late and Australia will go into day four on 53 for four with a lead of 268 runs. Australia skipper Steve Smith elected not to enforce the follow-on after the tourists were dismissed for 227, a first-innings deficit of 215, and probably rued his decision as England attacked under the Adelaide Oval lights. James Anderson led the way with the wickets of Cameron Bancroft (four) and Usman Khawaja (20) while Chris Woakes removed David Warner with a delivery that moved off the seam and got an edge to fly to Joe Root in the slips.

That the usually free-scoring Warner took 60 balls to eke out 14 runs was an indication of how tough the conditions were and captain could have followed vice-captain in the following over when Smith was given out lbw for a three-ball duck. For the third time in two days, however, Anderson was denied an lbw decision by the DRS system with tracking suggesting the ball had pitched fractionally outside leg.

NO REPRIEVE

Smith only survived to make six runs, though, before he was given out lbw to Woakes and this time there was to be no reprieve from the technology. "We've pushed Australia back tonight," Woakes said. "Australia are obviously still ahead in the game but it was important that we bowled well, showed some character and pushed them back." Nightwatchman Nathan Lyon survived to the end of the day and will resume with Peter Handscomb. Both were three not out. "We know the night session is toughest to bat, as we saw tonight," Starc said.

"With a lead of 260 going into the day session, we're in the drivers' seat. There's no



ADELAIDE: England batsman Craig Overton (L) slams a ball past Australian fieldsman Cameron Bancroft (R) on the third day of the second Ashes cricket Test match in Adelaide yesterday. — AFP

reason why we can't build a really big lead and then have England on the ropes in the night session." Lyon had earlier taken 4-60 as he and the pace trio of Pat Cummins, Starc and Josh Hazlewood combined to humble England's top order and build on the 442-8 declared the hosts accumulated in their first innings. England, 1-0 down in the five-match series after a 10-wicket defeat in Brisbane, had resumed on 29-1 only to lose James Vince for two in the second over. Desperate for a decent partnership to bolster the top order, expectations were high when Root came out to join Alastair Cook in the middle.

Root made just nine before he got a thick edge to a Cummins delivery, however, and

Cook departed for 37 prodding at a Lyon tweeker with Smith gobbling up the catch at first slip. Dawid Malan got a life when he successfully referred an lbw decision but made his exit for 19 when he got a bit of glove on another snorter from Cummins soon after England had reached the hundred mark.

Woakes and debutant seamer Craig Overton (41 not out) put on 66 for the eighth wicket but once the former departed for 36, the writing was on the wall. Off-spinner Lyon had removed Moeen Ali for 25 with a brilliant leaping catch off his own bowling and Starc followed suit to remove Jonny Bairstow (21) and Woakes, making it three caught and bowleds in a row. — Reuters



SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day in the second Test between Australia and England yesterday in Adelaide, Australia.

Australia 1st innings 442 for 8 decl (S. Marsh 126no, T. Paine 57, U. Khawaja 53)	England 1st innings (Overnight: 29-1)
A. Cook c Smith b Lyon 37	M. Stoneman lbw b Starc 18
J. Vince c Paine b Hazlewood 2	J. Root c Bancroft b Cummins 9
D. Malan c Paine b Cummins 19	M. Ali c&camp;b Lyon 25
M. Ali c&camp;b Lyon 25	J. Bairstow c&camp;b Starc 21
C. Woakes c&camp;b Starc 36	C. Overton not out 41
S. Broad c Paine b Lyon 3	J. Anderson lbw b Lyon 0
J. Anderson lbw b Lyon 0	Extras (lb-15 w-1) 16
Extras (lb-15 w-1) 16	Total (all out, 76.1 overs) 227
Total (all out, 76.1 overs) 227	Fall of wickets: 1-29 M. Stoneman, 2-31 J. Vince, 3-50 J. Root, 4-80 A. Cook, 5-102 D. Malan, 6-132 M. Ali, 7-142 J. Bairstow, 8-208 C. Woakes, 9-227 S. Broad, 10-227 J. Anderson
Australia 2nd innings	Bowling:
C. Bancroft c Bairstow b Anderson 4	M. Starc 20-4-49-3; J. Hazlewood 16-3-56-1; P. Cummins 16-3-47-2(w-1); N. Lyon 24.1-5-60-4.
D. Warner c Root b Woakes 14	
U. Khawaja lbw b Anderson 20	
S. Smith lbw b Woakes 6	
P. Handscomb not out 3	
N. Lyon not out 3	
Extras (lb-2 w-1) 3	
Total (for 4 wickets, 26 overs) 53	
Fall of wickets: 1-5 C. Bancroft, 2-39 U. Khawaja, 3-41 D. Warner, 4-50 S. Smith	
Australia: S. Marsh, T. Paine, M. Starc, P. Cummins, J. Hazlewood	
Bowling: J. Anderson 11-7-16-2; S. Broad 7-2-14-0(w-1); C. Overton 1-0-8-0; C. Woakes 7-0-13-2.	

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play on the fourth day in the first Test between New Zealand and West Indies yesterday in Wellington, New Zealand.

West Indies 1st innings 134 (N. Wagner 7-39)	M. Cummins b Boult 14
New Zealand 1st innings 520 for 9 decl (T. Blundell 107no, C. de Grandhomme 105, R. Taylor 93, H. Nicholls 67)	S. Gabriel not out 4
	Extras (b-4 lb-4 w-6) 14
	Total (all out, 106 overs) 319
	Fall of wickets: 1-72 K. Powell, 2-166 S. Hetmyer, 3-231 K. Brathwaite, 4-257 S. Hope, 5-273 R. Chase, 6-286 S. Ambris, 7-288 S. Dowrich, 8-301 K. Roach, 9-301 J. Holder, 10-319 M. Cummins
West Indies 2nd innings (Overnight: 214-2)	Bowling: T. Boult 23-5-87-2; M. Henry 24-6-57-3(w-1); C. de Grandhomme 19-3-40-2; N. Wagner 22-3-102-2(w-1); M. Santner 17-7-25-1; K. Williamson 1-1-0-0.
K. Brathwaite lbw b Santner 91	Result: New Zealand won by an innings and 67 runs
K. Powell c&camp;b Henry 40	
S. Hetmyer c Raval b Henry 66	
S. Hope c Williamson b Boult 37	
R. Chase b Henry 18	
S. Ambris c Taylor b de Grandhomme 18	
S. Dowrich c Santner b Wagner 3	
J. Holder c Boult b Wagner 7	
K. Roach lbw b de Grandhomme 7	

New Zealand beat W Indies by an innings and 67 runs

WELLINGTON: After a staunch effort by the top order, the West Indies batting crumbled for a second time in the first test to hand New Zealand a win by an innings and 67 runs yesterday and a confidence-boosting lead in the two-match series.

Trailing by 386 runs on the first innings, the West Indies started positively on day three and appeared to be ready to carry that into the fourth, rallying behind Kraigg Brathwaite's 91 to reach 231-2. But its second innings disintegrated around the lunch interval, with the arrival of the second new ball, and it lost its last eight wickets for 88 runs.

Brathwaite had anchored the top order, putting on 72 for the first wicket with Kieran Powell (40) and 94 for the second with Shimron Hetmyer (66) and as long as he remained at the crease there seemed a chance the West Indies would at least make New Zealand bat again.

But when he was out nine runs short of his seventh test century, the West Indies effort unraveled and after fleeting resistance from Shai Hope (37), Roston Chase (18) and Sunil Ambris (18) the second collapse of the match continued with increasing speed.

From 286-5 at lunch, 100 runs behind New Zealand, the West Indies lost 5-33 to be all out for 319. South Africa-born fast bowler Neil Wagner, who took 7-39 in the West Indies' first innings and was voted player of the match, struggled in

the second innings and had 0-85 at stumps on Sunday after a tough third day. But he came to light with two important wickets after lunch on day four - those of wicketkeeper Shane Dowrich and captain Jason Holder who were both century-makers in the West Indies previous test against Zimbabwe.

Wagner finished with 9-141 for the match, just failing to claim his first 10-wicket haul in Tests but producing the sixth-best match analysis by a New Zealander. His performance on a flat pitch which didn't live up to New Zealand's expectations when it won the toss and bowled outweighed those of Colin de Grandhomme and Tom Blundell, who scored centuries in New Zealand's only innings.

De Grandhomme scored his maiden test century from 71 balls - the second fastest by a New Zealander and the ninth fastest of all time - and Blundell, standing in for the injured B.J. Watling, became the 11th Kiwi to score a test century on debut. The bowlers backed up that batting effort yesterday, thriving with the new ball. Matt Henry took 3-57, removing both Hetmyer and Powell to expose the West Indies' vulnerable middle order then dismissing Chase. Trent Boult took 2-87 and the de Grandhomme, with his relatively gentle medium pace, removed Ambris with the first ball after lunch to set the final slide in motion. "It was a superb effort all round really," New Zealand captain Kane Williamson said. The New Zealand batting effort was crucial after having dismissed the West Indies cheaply, he said. Beyond de Grandhomme and Blundell, Henry Nicholls made 67 and Ross Taylor 93.

"We've seen the West Indies in the last few series they've played and they've got better and better through those series so we'll be expecting them to be better in the next test," Williamson said. — AP

Chandimal and Mathews tons fuel S Lanka fightback

NEW DELHI: Dinesh Chandimal made 147 not out and Angelo Mathews ended his century drought to help Sri Lanka rediscover their competitive edge against India on day three of the third and final Test yesterday.

Sri Lanka's current and former Test skipper combined in a 181-run fourth-wicket partnership to help them reach 356 for nine when bad light stopped play, the first time they had passed 300 in the series.

Chandimal played a captain's knock and his 10th Test century included 18 fours and one six. Lakshan Sandakan was yet to open his account at the other end with Sri Lanka still 180 runs behind. Beginning the day 405 adrift of India's total of 536 for seven declared, the onus was on overnight batsmen Mathews and Chandimal to lead Sri Lanka's battle for survival at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium. The right-handed duo did not let their team down, denying India in the morning session as Mathews rode his luck to move on to 111 after being dropped twice. After the second day was blighted by complaints of air pollution by the visitors, Sri Lanka resumed on a slightly hazy morning on 131 for three.

Their occasional discomforts notwithstanding, Chandimal and Mathews displayed the kind of application that has been lacking among the tourists who trail 1-0 after their heaviest defeat in the second test in Nagpur. Mathews was on six when Virat Kohli dropped him at second slip on Sunday and paceman Ishant Sharma endured more anguish when Rohit Sharma grassed a catch in the same position with the batsman on 98.

Mathews went on to complete his eighth test century, more than two years after his last against the same opponents, and the relief was evident as he pumped air in celebration. "It was very pleasing and bit of a relief as well," Mathews said.

"I had the confidence within myself. I was hitting the ball in the nets. Once I got the start today, I thought let's try and capitalise, with the luck as well." Mathews was lucky again on 104 when he lofted Ravindra Jadeja to



NEW DELHI: Sri Lanka's captain Dinesh Chandimal, right, celebrates scoring a century during the third day of their third Test cricket match against India in New Delhi. — AP

mid-off and the ball burst through substitute fielder Vijay Shankar's hands. He finally ran out of fortune when Ashwin ended his defiant knock which included 14 fours and two sixes. Sadeera Samarawickrama, who suffered concussion on Saturday and missed play on Sunday, scored 33 but Sri Lanka lost four wickets for 39 runs in a late collapse.

Ashwin (3-90) spoiled Roshen Silva's test debut by dismissing him for a duck, while

Niroshan Dickwella also fell to the off-spinner for nought. Stumper Wriddhiman Saha took four catches in the innings but it was otherwise a slipshod performance by the Indian fielders. "Players are not machines. You feel angry as a bowler but it's part and parcel of the game," paceman Mohammad Shami said. "After a long time, we dropped so many catches. We have enough time to work hard on it and improve our catching." — Reuters

SCOREBOARD

NEW DELHI: Scoreboard at stumps on day three of the third and final cricket Test between India and Sri Lanka in New Delhi yesterday:

India 1st innings 536-7 dec (V. Kohli 243, M. Vijay 155; L. Sandakan 4-167)	S. Lakmal c Saha b Shami 5
Sri Lanka 1st innings (overnight 131-3):	L. Gamage lbw b Jadeja 1
D. Karunaratne c Saha b Shami 0	L. Sandakan not out 0
D. Perera lbw b Jadeja 42	Extras (b4, lb5, nb2, penalty 5) 16
D. de Silva lbw b I. Sharma 1	Total (9 wickets, 130 overs) 356
A. Mathews c Saha b Ashwin 111	Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Karunaratne), 2-14 (De Silva), 3-75 (Perera), 4-256 (Mathews), 5-317 (Samarawickrama), 6-318 (Silva), 7-322 (Dickwella), 8-331 (Lakmal), 9-343 (Gamage).
D. Chandimal not out 147	Bowling: Shami 24-6-74-2 (nbl), Sharma 27-6-93-2, Jadeja 44-13-85-2 (nbl), Ashwin 30-8-90-3.
S. Samarawickrama c Saha b I. Sharma 33	
R. Silva c Dhawan b Ashwin 0	
N. Dickwella b Ashwin 0	

Sports

Masterful Russell Wilson leads Seahawks past Eagles 24-10

Saints again ride dynamic Kamara to victory

SEATTLE: Russell Wilson threw three touchdown passes, the last a 15-yard strike to J.D. McKissic with 7:29 left, and the Seattle Seahawks stayed in the NFC playoff hunt with a 24-10 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday night. Seattle (8-4) snapped Philadelphia's nine-game winning streak thanks largely to another masterful performance by its quarterback. Wilson was 20 of 31 for 227 and threw touchdowns of 11 yards to Jimmy Graham, 1-yard to Tyler Lockett and the TD to McKissic after the Eagles had trimmed the lead to seven. Philadelphia (10-2) was the highest-scoring team in the NFL averaging 31.9 points per game. But the Eagles got just 10 points out of seven drives that at some point reached Seattle territory.

VIKINGS 14, FALCONS 9

Case Keenum threw a pair of touchdown passes, and Minnesota extended its winning streak to eight straight games, keeping Atlanta out of the end zone. Keenum, who was 25 of 30 for 227 yards, hooked up with Jerick McKinnon on a 2-yard scoring play in the second quarter, and went to Kyle Rudolph for a 6-yard TD on the first play of the fourth quarter, capping an 89-yard drive that consumed more than eight minutes. Minnesota (10-2) turned in a stellar defensive effort against a Falcons team that led the league in scoring a year ago and seemed to be finding its stride during a three-game winning streak, averaging nearly 32 points. While Minnesota remained far ahead in the NFC North, the Falcons' fell further behind in the NFC South and could be damaged in the wild-card race.

PATRIOTS 23, BILLS 3

Rex Burkhead scored twice and the Patriots won their eighth straight in an AFC East showdown overshadowed by injuries and cheap shots. Bills starting quarterback Tyrod Taylor had a towel draped over his head while being carted off the sideline with a left knee injury early in the fourth quarter. Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski, meanwhile, was accused of making a dirty hit after pile-driving shoulder-first into the back of the head of Bills cornerback Tre'Davious White, who was laying on the field after making an interception with 4:50 remaining. White was dazed as he got up and was immediately escorted to the locker room to be evaluated for a concussion.



Raiders move into a three-way tie for first place

SAINTS 31, PANTHERS 21

Rookie sensation Alvin Kamara scored two tackle-shedding touchdowns, and New Orleans took advantage of a pair of Carolina special teams gaffes as the Saints reclaimed sole possession of first place in the NFC South. Mark Ingram rushed for 85 yards and a touchdown for the Saints (9-3), who own the head-to-head tiebreaker over Carolina (8-4) with four games to go. Drew Brees passed for 269 yards, including a 10-yard TD to Michael Thomas a few plays after a botched Panthers punt gave New Orleans the ball on the Carolina 31. In the fourth quarter, a fumble by Panthers punt returner Kaelin Clay near midfield set up Wil Lutz's 31-yard field goal to give New Orleans a 31-14 lead.

CHARGERS 19, BROWNS 10

Philip Rivers passed for 344 yards and hit Keenan Allen for a touchdown, and the surging Chargers moved

into a tie for first place in the AFC West with a victory over the winless Browns. Allen had 10 catches for 105 yards in his third straight big game for the Chargers (6-6), who have won six of eight to pull even with Oakland and slumping Kansas City atop the division with four games to go. New kicker Travis Coons hit four field goals as the Chargers grinded out a win over the Browns (0-12), whose only victory in their previous 30 games was a 20-17 win over the then-San Diego Chargers on Christmas Eve last season. Cleveland trailed 19-7 entering the fourth quarter, and Zane Gonzalez hit an early field goal before the Browns mounted a long drive.

RAIDERS 24, GIANTS 17

Oakland's Marshawn Lynch had a 51-yard touchdown run and got his first 100-yard rushing game since coming out of retirement, in New York's first game without Eli Manning starting in 13 years. Oakland (6-6) overcame the absences of starting receivers Michael Crabtree (suspension) and Amari Cooper (injury) to win consecutive games for the first time since the opening two games of the season. The Raiders moved into a three-way tie for first place in the AFC West with Kansas City and the Chargers. Geno Smith lost two fumbles before throwing a touchdown pass in the fourth quarter to Evan Engram for the Giants (2-10), while Manning spent the day on the sideline watching.

RAMS 32, CARDINALS 16

Jared Goff passed for two touchdowns, Los Angeles took advantage of two early interceptions thrown by Blaine Gabbert, and the Rams solidified their grip on first place in the NFC West. The Rams (9-3) won for the sixth time in seven games to clinch their first winning season since 2003 when they were in St. Louis. They took the season series with the Cardinals for only the second time in the last 14 years and first since 2012. The

Rams had routed the Cardinals in London 33-0 on Oct. 22 and were in the lead almost from the start of this one. Gabbert's interceptions helped Los Angeles score 16 early points, including Alec Ogletree's 41-yard interception return for a touchdown, and the Rams led the rest of the way.

JETS 38, CHIEFS 31

Josh McCown scored on a 1-yard quarterback sneak with 2:15 left, and the Jets bounced back from a brutal start for a wild and wacky win over the spiraling Chiefs. Chandler Catanzaro kicked a 21-yard field goal to put the Jets (5-7) ahead with 3:55 left. But Kansas City's Bennie Logan was called for a personal foul for hitting long snapper Thomas Hennessy on the play. That gave the Jets the ball at the 1 with a new set of downs. After two running plays, McCown threw incomplete - but Steven Nelson was penalized for defensive holding, making it first-and-goal from the 2. Three plays later, McCown kept the ball and shoved his way into the end zone.

PACKERS 26, BUCCANEERS 20, OT

Aaron Jones' 20-yard touchdown run on his only carry, with 5:59 left in overtime, won it. With the passing game struggling, Green Bay (6-6) wore down the Buccaneers on the ground. Brett Hundley had runs of 18 and 7 yards on the drive to start overtime. The Packers grinded out a win to stay in the playoff race, though



SEATTLE: Seattle Seahawks' Paul Richardson, left, has his helmet pulled back as Philadelphia Eagles' Ronald Darby makes contact on a pass attempt to Richardson during the second half of an NFL football game, in Seattle. — AP

they trail NFC North leader Minnesota by four games. They hope to get starting quarterback Aaron Rodgers back from a collarbone injury in a couple weeks. Jameis Winston threw two touchdown passes to Cameron Brate in the quarterback's shaky return from a shoulder injury. But the defense couldn't hold up in overtime for the last-place Buccaneers (4-8).

TITANS 24, TEXANS 13

LeShaun Sims intercepted a pass intended for DeAndre Hopkins in the end zone with 1:02 left, and then stayed atop the AFC South. Marcus Mariota also ran for a touchdown and threw for another, but the Titans needed the interception to preserve the win with Tom Savage throwing for a career-high 365 yards despite the Texans losing four offensive players to injuries during the game. The Titans (8-4) won their second straight and sixth of their past seven. They improved to 4-1 in the AFC South to stay ahead of Jacksonville, a winner over Indianapolis. Tennessee didn't look ready to take advantage of a chance for a little payback against Houston for the 57-14 beat-down the Texans put on them Oct. 1 when Deshaun Watson and J.J. Watt were healthy. The Titans even fell behind 10-0 before rallying to tie at halftime.

RAVENS 44, LIONS 20

Joe Flacco threw for 269 yards and two touchdowns, and the Ravens survived a strong comeback bid by Matthew Stafford and the Lions. After relying heavily on their opportunistic defense for much of the season, the Ravens (7-5) finally received an ample contribution from the league's 31st-ranked offense. Flacco helped Baltimore take a 20-0 halftime lead and directed three scoring drives in the fourth quarter to keep the Ravens in front. Flacco completed 23 of 36 passes while guiding an offense that did not commit a turnover. Stafford completed a team-record 20 straight passes in the second half, twice getting the Lions within a touchdown. But Detroit (6-6) lost a second straight following a three-game winning streak.

JAGUARS 30, COLTS 10

Blake Bortles threw two touchdown passes, Leonard Fournette scored for the first time in six weeks and the Jaguars swept the series for the second time since they joined the AFC South in 2002. The Jaguars (8-4) bounced back from a last-second loss at Arizona, reached eight wins for the first time since 2010, and remained in the thick of the playoff picture. Bortles, Fournette and some more trickery had a lot to do with the latest victory. Bortles completed 26 of 35 passes for 309 yards, with TD passes to Marqise Lee and Keelan Cole. Fournette found little room for the third time in the past four games. He finished with 57 yards on 20 carries and limped off the field with an ankle injury late in the third quarter, but re-entered the game.

DOLPHINS 35, BRONCOS 9

Xavien Howard's 30-yard interception return for a touchdown highlighted a dominating defensive effort by the Dolphins, and they snapped a five-game losing streak. The Broncos (3-9) lost their eighth in a row. Miami (5-7) scored two safeties in a game for the first time in franchise history and held Denver to 1 for 13 on third-down conversions. Trevor Siemian, the Broncos' third starting quarterback in as many weeks, went 20 for 42 for 219 yards with three interceptions. Kenyan Drake rushed for 120 yards for Miami on 23 carries, both career highs. He scored on a 42-yard touchdown run - only the Dolphins' second rush for a TD this year.

49ERS 15, BEARS 14

Robbie Gould kicked a 24-yard field goal in the closing seconds and Jimmy Garoppolo threw for 293 yards in his first San Francisco start. Gould made five field goals in his first appearance at Soldier Field since Chicago cut him prior to the 2016 opener. The Bears' all-time leader in points and field goals made, he shouted at their sideline after he nailed the winner. Garoppolo was solid in his first start since the 49ers (2-10) acquired him from New England before the trade deadline in October. The suburban Chicago product completed 26 of 37 passes with an interception.—AP

Squash a perfect match for Syria girl refugees in Jordan

AMMAN: Eleven-year-old Syrian refugee Raghda Hasriyeh whacks a ball against the wall of a squash court as she practices in front of her parents in the Jordanian capital of Amman.

Along with a group of other young girls displaced by the war in their homeland she has been playing the sport for almost a year thanks to a US charity—and now she dreams of taking on all-comers.

"I love this sport. I train almost every day," Raghda said. "I hope that I can travel around the whole world and take part in Arab championships and international ones." Since the conflict in Syria broke out in 2011 the UN estimates more than 330,000 children have been among the waves of people who fled across the border into Jordan. Five years ago Raghda and her family escaped the bombs and bullets in their battered hometown of Homs before gradually making their way to safety in the kingdom.

"God alone knows what would have happened to my five children and I if I had not decided to flee my country," said Raghda's father Nizar Hasriyeh. Life for the family in Jordan has been difficult and they had to move out of a crowded camp to the outskirts of Amman. And in those conditions, squash has proved a godsend for the children.

"I don't understand anything about this sport but I am so happy to see my three daughters playing squash. I hope to see them become world champions one day," Nizar said.

With its costly racquets and purpose-built courts, squash might not seem an obvious choice for children displaced from Syria. But while the game has never been mainstream in the country, it is hugely popular in some parts of



AMMAN: US charity Reclaim Childhood's Clayton Keir (C) poses with Syrian refugee girls and their parents during a squash training session in the Jordanian capital Amman, on November 18, 2017. — AFP

the Middle East, most prominently Egypt, and major tournaments are hosted in places like Qatar.

Reclaim Childhood, the charity behind the programme, insists that getting the refugee girls involved in the sport can be invaluable in helping them deal with the hardships they face. "Today the team is made up of four girls and we are looking to expand it to 15," said member Clayton Keir. "We train five times a week and training includes English lessons aimed at helping them compete in tournaments in Jordan and abroad." Coach Reem Niaz-herself a refugee from Damascus-said the girls on the team were chosen from dozens of aspirants.

The aim is to help the players "release the potential inside themselves and let off steam doing something positive," she said. "Nothing is impossible! Just look at where we have all come

from and where we are now."

For the girls, there is more to their squash playing dream than just winning tournaments—they hope one day to represent Syria at the sport. "I want to take part in championships across the globe and help raise my country's spirits," said 12-year-old Eman al-Hassan.

Her mother Mona Mohamed can still remember vividly the day she fled Homs in 2012 with her two children in her arms. "There was nothing left there, even their school was bombed. That is why I decided to leave to start a new life," she said.

Now despite the difficulties the family has faced creating a new home in a foreign country—for her daughter, squash is at least providing a chink of light. "She is doing something that we never had the chance to accomplish in our lives," she said.—AFP

Rockets roll to 7th straight with win over Lakers

LOS ANGELES: James Harden scored 36 points and handed out nine assists, and the Houston Rockets won their sixth consecutive road game with a 118-95 victory against the Los Angeles Lakers on Sunday. Houston has won all six road games in the streak by at least 15 points, setting an NBA record. Eric Gordon scored 22 points off the bench and Chris Paul finished with 21 points and six assists for the Rockets. Kyle Kuzma had 22 points and 12 rebounds off the bench to lead the Lakers, while Brandon Ingram had 18 points and nine rebounds.

Warriors 123, Heat 95

Stephen Curry scored 30 points to lead Golden State to a win over Miami. The Warriors, who are 3-0 on their current road trip, also got 24 points from Kevin Durant and 19 from Klay Thompson. Curry, who scored 16 points in the first quarter, made 11 of 16 shots from the floor, including 5 of 9 on 3-pointers. The Heat were led by point guard Goran Dragic, who broke a slump with 20 points on 7-for-10 shooting. In his three previous games, Dragic failed to score in double figures, averaging 6.7 points on 30 percent shooting.

Thunder 90, Spurs 87

Russell Westbrook had his seventh triple-double of the season, leading Oklahoma past a San Antonio team

depleted by injuries and other absences. Russell finished with 22 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists but committed seven turnovers. Steven Adams added 19 points and 10 boards for the Thunder. Dejounte Murray led the Spurs with 17 points and 11 rebounds. Davis Bertans added 16 points and five blocks. Already without All-Star forward Kawhi Leonard, the Spurs sat forwards LaMarcus Aldridge and Rudy Gay, and guards Tony Parker and Manu Ginobili.

Timberwolves 112, Clippers 106

Jimmy Butler scored a season-high 33 points, including 20 in the fourth quarter, as Minnesota recovered and held on to beat Los Angeles. Karl-Anthony Towns had his league-leading 19th double-double with 15 points and 12 rebounds and Taj Gibson added 20 points and 11 rebounds for Minnesota, which surrendered the lead in the fourth before Butler came to the rescue. Austin Rivers scored 30 points, tying a career best with seven 3-pointers, for the shorthanded Clippers. DeAndre Jordan had 17 points and 12 rebounds for Los Angeles, which is without four injured starters in Blake Griffin, Patrick Beverley, Danilo Gallinari and Milos Teodosic.

Magic 105, Knicks 101

Nikola Vucevic scored 34 points and Orlando grabbed an early 17-point lead en route to just its second win in the last 12 games. Evan Fournier had 20 and Jonathan Simmons added 16 as all five Magic starters scored in double figures. Orlando's starting lineup accounted for 95 of the team's 105 points. Minus Kristaps Porzingis and Tim Hardaway Jr., their top two scorers, the Knicks turned to Michael Beasley, who had 21 points. Courtney Lee had 19 points and Enes Kanter totaled 18 points and 16 rebounds to lead New York. — Reuters

Sports

Five things to watch out for in Champions League knockout stage

Barca have wrapped up first place, may rest players

PARIS: Manchester United and Liverpool are among the teams bidding to book their places in the Champions League knockout stage this week, while Atletico Madrid appear set to bow out of the competition. Here, AFP Sport looks at five scenarios to keep an eye on during the final round of group-stage games today and tomorrow:

UNITED ON THE CUSP

Manchester United were made to wait for a place in the knockout phase after conceding late in a 1-0 defeat at Basel, but Jose Mourinho's team are still all but guaranteed to reach the last 16. United, who were indebted to a starring display from goalkeeper David de Gea in Saturday's 3-1 win at Arsenal, must simply avoid losing by more than six goals at home to CSKA Moscow. For the Russians to pip Basel to the other qualifying spot they need to better the Swiss club's result away to pointless Benfica. United are unbeaten in 20 European home games, but CSKA have won all four matches on their travels this season having come through two rounds of qualifiers.



Liverpool must avoid defeat to reach the last 16

won't be helped by the fact that Antonio Conte's Blues still have plenty to play for too, as they need a win to guarantee top spot ahead of Roma. It's not over yet, but Atletico's two draws with Qarabag look set to condemn them to the Europa League.

JUVE STILL IN DANGER

Last season's runners-up Juventus would have expected to have qualified before the final match day when they were drawn in Group D alongside Barcelona, Sporting Lisbon and Olympiakos, but they head to Athens today still needing a win to definitely progress. Sporting have been rejuvenated in the last two seasons under Jorge Jesus, but face the daunting task of having to win at Barcelona to have any chance of ending a nine-year absence from the knockout stage. But Barca have already wrapped up first place so may rest players, and have dropped four points from their last two La Liga matches. If Sporting fail to win, Juve go through regardless.

LIVERPOOL CLOSING IN ON LAST-16 RETURN

Liverpool welcome Spartak Moscow to Anfield tomorrow knowing that they only need to avoid defeat to reach the last 16 for the first time in nine years. Victory for the five-time champions would also wrap up top spot in Group E. Jurgen Klopp's men should have secured qualification a fortnight ago, but blew a three-goal lead to draw 3-3 at Sevilla. The Reds are bidding to banish the memories of three years ago when a 1-1 home draw with Basel sent them packing. Russian champions Spartak have to win to have any chance of progressing. Sevilla only need to draw with



SANT JOAN DESPI: FC Barcelona's Lionel Messi, center, takes part in a training session with his teammates at the Sports Center FC Barcelona Joan Gamper in Sant Joan Despi, Spain, yesterday. — AP

Maribor in Slovenia to qualify for the knockout stage, and would go through as group winners if they win and Liverpool slip up.

NAPOLI BID TO OVERHAUL SHAKHTAR

With Manchester City already assured of top spot, Shakhtar Donetsk and Serie A high-flyers Napoli are fighting it out for second in Group F. Shakhtar take on City in Ukraine and will qualify for the knockout

rounds if they can end Pep Guardiola's side's 20-match winning streak. Napoli head to pointless Feyenoord knowing that victory would see them snatch a ticket for the last 16 if Shakhtar lose to City, after their 3-0 victory over the Ukrainians last time out gave them the better head-to-head record. Napoli, who lost their unbeaten start to the Italian season with a 1-0 defeat by Juventus on Friday, are looking to reach the last 16 for only the third time. — AFP

Mourinho not risking Zlatan ahead of City clash

MANCHESTER: Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho says he will not risk Zlatan Ibrahimovic in their Champions League match against CSKA Moscow as he keeps one eye on the derby with Manchester City on Sunday. Ibrahimovic recently returned from a long-term knee injury but Mourinho confirmed that the experienced Swedish striker will miss the game against the Russian side at Old Trafford. United require only a point from the match to be sure of qualifying for the knockout stage of the European Cup as winners of Group A. However, they are eight points behind table-topping City in the Premier League table so Mourinho will not take any chances with Ibrahimovic. "Zlatan is not injured," Mourinho said in his pre-match press conference on Monday. "Zlatan needs some time of very hard work on the muscular area

that supports the knee that had the problem. "When the time for that hard work comes the fatigue comes. To work really hard for a certain period of time, he cannot play these days. "We decided to do that after Watford. He is on his cycle of work divided between the gym and the pitch. He will be out again for tomorrow, but I believe he will be back to normal work after CSKA." Mourinho also revealed he will give left-back Luke Shaw the chance to reignite his career in today's match. The left-back has been a peripheral figure at Old Trafford this season having managed a total of 48 minutes as a substitute over two appearances in the League Cup against Burton and Swansea.

Shaw has been linked with a January move away from the Red Devils with Newcastle United and former club Southampton both reported to be interested. But Jose Mourinho said the 22-year-old has impressed with his attitude in training and deserves a chance. "When we speak about Luke Shaw you are right," Mourinho said. "He's working to have an opportunity and sooner or later that opportunity will arrive because he deserves that opportunity. "Selected for today, yes for sure. To start or be on the bench. I cannot answer. "I am going to make a few, but



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Zlatan Ibrahimovic gestures during the training session at United's training complex in Manchester, England yesterday. United will play CSKA Moscow in a Champions League soccer match today. — AP

not too many, changes. We didn't qualify yet, we didn't finish first in the group yet, there are other clubs also involved in qualification and I need to keep a certain balance in the team." United are still without defender Eric Bailly and midfielder Marouane Fellaini, who both have knocks, while centre-back Phil Jones (calf) is also out. French midfielder Paul Pogba is suspended for the derby with

City after he was sent off in United's 3-1 win over Arsenal last weekend and will play against CSKA.

"He's happy to play tomorrow," said Mourinho said. "It's the next match, the match that matters. He plays tomorrow." "He's very happy to play tomorrow and try to keep his momentum," he added. "Since he was back from injury he's been phenomenal." — AFP

Heynckes takes Bayern back to basics for PSG

BERLIN: Jupp Heynckes, the 72-year-old disciplinarian who has steered the ship at Bayern Munich, has urged his side to keep it simple for today's crunch Champions League match at home to Paris Saint-Germain. Bayern need to win by a four-goal margin in order to win their group, a situation they find themselves in because of the 3-0 thrashing by a Neymar-inspired PSG in the French capital that precipitated the sacking of Carlo Ancelotti. At the time, defending champions Bayern were also five points adrift in the Bundesliga. But Heynckes has stamped his authority on his fourth stint at the club after Karl-Heinz Rummenigge and president Uli Hoenes turned to their 2013 treble-winning coach in their hour of need. Bayern won nine of their ten following matches and now hold a six-point lead in the Bundesliga. However in the Champions League, PSG arrive in Munich with a three-point lead over Bayern at the top of Group B.

Both teams are already through to the last 16, but the French have a vastly superior goal difference after five straight wins. It means Bayern need to win by four clear goals to wrestle top spot in the clubs' head-to-head record—a result no one in the German camp deems realistic. "It would be an unlikely dream," said defender Mats Hummels while chairman Rummenigge said beating PSG by such a margin is "wishful thinking". Heynckes sees the game as "pure psychology". "We want to beat them and show off what we are capable of. Everything else is far from realistic," he added. "I am someone who demands a lot," Heynckes said on his return. "The players will have to get used to that. Discipline is a part of life and work." Former AC Milan and Chelsea boss Ancelotti had lost his dressing room long before the PSG hammering. Arjen Robben quipped that training sessions at his son's junior team in Munich were tougher than what had become the norm at Bayern, but Heynckes tightened discipline immediately. He insists on politeness and punctuality at



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's German head coach Jupp Heynckes (R) watches Bayern Munich's Colombian midfielder James Rodriguez (C) shooting during a training session prior to the UEFA Champions League Group B match

all times. Mobile phones are expected to be neither seen nor heard and training sessions start an hour earlier than under Ancelotti. The players tidy the dressing room and eat together after training. Heynckes is a Champions League expert, winning it twice in the three seasons he has been involved in the competition. In 1997-98, he lifted the trophy with Real Madrid in his only season at the Santiago Bernabeu.

With Bayern, he suffered the heartbreak of a penalty shoot-out defeat against Chelsea in the 2012 final in Munich. A year later, Heynckes lifted the trophy when Bayern became the first German club to win the treble of Champions League,

Bundesliga and German Cup titles before he was replaced by Pep Guardiola. Of his 2013 treble-winning side, Robben, Franck Ribery, Thomas Muller, Rafinha, Jerome Boateng, Manuel Neuer and Javi Martinez are still at Bayern. Heynckes' return has been a big plus for Mueller and Boateng who both struggled for game time under Ancelotti. Heynckes also identified that James Rodriguez, on loan from Real, was struggling to settle in Munich, so started addressing the Colombian in Spanish. He has also worked wonders with Arturo Vidal, having already worked with the Chilean at Bayer Leverkusen between 2009 and 2011. — AFP

Italian pride clinging to Champions League hopes

MILAN: The battered pride of football mad Italians is now hanging on precarious Champions League ambitions less than a month after the country's humiliating World Cup exit. The chances of last season's runners-up Juventus and Serie A rivals Napoli and Roma reaching the knockout stages go down to the wire in this week's final round of action.

Four-time winners Italy exited the World Cup prematurely for the first time in 60 years leading to a period akin to national mourning. Now the progress of Italian clubs to the knockout rounds of the elite European trophy, which they have held aloft 12 times—Inter Milan winning their last title in 2010 — is still uncertain.

Juventus—runners-up twice in the last three seasons — would have expected to qualify when they were drawn in Group D alongside Barcelona, Sporting Lisbon and Olympiakos, but they head to Athens on Tuesday still needing a win to progress.

A draw or even defeat would be sufficient for the six-time defending Serie A champions unless Sporting Lisbon beat Barcelona at the Camp Nou. Napoli no longer control their own fate as they sit third in Group F before Wednesday's trip to play last-place Feyenoord.

Maurizio Sarri's side need to win in the Netherlands and hope Manchester City beat Shakhtar to finish second on a superior head-to-head record. Roma—second in Group C—also need to win against Azerbaijan minnows Qarabag to progress along with Chelsea, with Atletico Madrid still in with a chance if they win at Stamford Bridge.

Italian clubs' problems in the elite European competition in which they will have a fourth spot next season mirrors their national struggles. — AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE	
Benfica v Basel 1893	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 7	
Manchester United v CSKA Moscow	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 6	
Bayern Munich v Paris Saint-Germain	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
Celtic v RSC Anderlecht	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 8	
Chelsea FC v Atletico de Madrid	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
AS Roma v Qarabag Agdam FK	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 5	
Barcelona v Sporting CP	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Olympiacos CFP v Juventus FC	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 4	

13 England finally fire but Australia in charge of second Ashes Test



14 Masterful Russell Wilson leads Seahawks past Eagles 24-10



15 Heynckes takes Bayern back to basics for PSG



SOCHI: File photo taken on February 24, 2014 shows Russia's President Vladimir Putin (C) posing for a photo with Russian athletes, winners of the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics, in Sochi. Vladimir Putin has staked Russia's prestige — and his own reputation — on sporting achievements but a possible ban from the Winter Olympics after claims of state-run doping threatens to wipe out any successes. — AFP

IOC weighs Russian Olympic ban

Putin's thirst for victory backfires

MOSCOW: Vladimir Putin has staked Russia's prestige and his own reputation on sporting achievements but a possible ban from the Winter Olympics after claims of state-run doping threatens to wipe out any successes.

Observers say it was the Kremlin's desire for victory that fuelled the cheating that spectacularly backfired, with the country losing its top ranking in the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics after being stripped of 11 medals for doping.

More penalties are expected in the coming days as the International Olympic Committee meets today to rule on whether to ban Russia from competing in the Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, in February as punishment for cheating at the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

"Sport is a huge media and political resource and Sochi was very important for the country's image," said political commentator Sergei Medvedev, adding Russia had resorted to mass-scale doping to guarantee victory in the Sochi games. "It turns out they overplayed their hand and the largest scandal in the history of the Olympic movement ensued," the professor at the Moscow-based Higher School of Economics told AFP. "It is a huge blow to Russian sport." Russia may not be barred from the world's most prestigious sporting event altogether but IOC officials are likely to ban Russian

emblems including its flag and anthem from the games.

An explosive 2016 report by the World Anti-Doping Agency detailing the "state-dictated" system to hide drug test failures said it was put in place after a dismal showing at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

Moscow has consistently denied running a state-orchestrated doping programme, seeking to pin all the blame on sporting officials. In September, a Russian court issued an arrest warrant for whistleblower Grigory Rodchenkov, who has fled to the United States and spoken out about Moscow's doping cover-up.

'BIAS AGAINST RUSSIA'

Medvedev of the Higher School of Economics said the possible ban against Russia would only reinforce the Kremlin's rhetoric which maintains the West is out to get Russia, in Ukraine, Syria and now in sport.

"What is happening now is just one more piece of evi-

dence for the Kremlin that Russia is at war with the outside world," he said. Putin said this month that doping allegations against Russian athletes had been invented by the United States to influence a March presidential election he is widely expected to contest and win.

Tatyana Stanovaya, a Paris-based analyst for the Centre of Political Technologies in Moscow, said the Kremlin is sure that performance-based substances are used by athletes everywhere but the West singles out Russia to punish it for its increasingly assertive political stance.

"The question is, why some sportsmen get exposed and others don't," she told AFP. "Putin believes that it is not about doping but about bias against Russia."

Ironically, the punishment of Russian athletes may play into the Kremlin's hands ahead of the March vote and prompt ordinary Russians to rally behind Putin, just like many did after Western sanctions following Moscow's

takeover of Crimea in 2014. The Kremlin has pumped more than \$50 billion into hosting the Sochi games

some say to the detriment of health care, science and education—and is pulling out all the stops to hold the football World Cup in 2018. Russia's state television and radio holding company VGTRK has already said it would not broadcast the Winter Olympics in South Korea if Russian athletes are not allowed to compete in it.

'DO WE NEED OLYMPICS?'

But even anti-Kremlin observers admit Olympic officials may be going too far in their desire to punish Russia. "A poisonous political atmosphere affects the decisions," said Anton Orekh, an observer with the liberal Echo of Moscow radio. Yevgeny Slyusarenko, deputy editor of Russian sports website Championat.com, was more blunt. "There are doubts that Russian sport and Russian athletes have the right to a fair trial today," he told AFP.

Some are even wondering whether Russia should pull out of the Olympics altogether.

Dmitry Ponomarenko, a columnist for Sovetsky Sport newspaper, said he personally knew many athletes and how hard they worked, adding he was tired of seeing them painted as villains.—AFP

“ It is a huge blow to Russian sport ”

Written-off Real remain Champions League threat

MADRID: Real Madrid's slump in form has alarms ringing in the Spanish capital, but pretenders to the champions' European crown should beware: Real are often a different animal in the spring. A familiar foe in recent seasons, Borussia Dortmund, visit the Santiago Bernabeu for the fifth time in five years tomorrow. However, for once there is precious little on the line with the Germans already eliminated from the Champions League and Real certain to finish second in Group H behind Tottenham Hotspur.

Two years ago, Madrid were in such mid-season crisis that Rafael Benitez was sacked in January. Zinedine Zidane took over and five months later won the Champions League. Last season, Zidane's men finished second in their

group, but still qualified behind Dortmund and went on to retain their European title. This winter has brought another crisis. A 0-0 draw at Athletic Bilbao on Saturday left Real eight points adrift of Barcelona at the top of La Liga, having failed to win six of 14 league games so far this season. An unusual lack of firepower has hobbled the Spanish giants with Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema scoring a meagre four La Liga goals combined and Gareth Bale sidelined for most of the season by a series of injuries. The Champions League has been a different story, though, as Ronaldo once again leads all scorers with eight in five games.

Throughout his nine seasons with Real, Benzema has also tended to save his best for the European stage and he became the fifth-top scorer in the competition's history with a double in a 6-0 rout of APOEL Nicosia two weeks ago.

Poor domestic form has historically only made Madrid stronger come the business end of the Champions League. Last season's La Liga and Champions League double was a first for 59 years with Los Blancos having won the European Cup, or Champions League, eight times in that span.

There is a feeling that this Madrid squad is not as strong as last season. Ronaldo even admitted, following a first group stage defeat for five years, at Spurs last month that the departures of Alvaro Morata, James Rodriguez and Pepe over the summer had left the current squad lacking "experience." The squad has also lost depth, with Zidane yet to fully trust summer recruits Theo Hernandez, Dani Ceballos and Jesus Vallejo. "I also think the Real Madrid squad is inferior, they have lost potential compared to last season," Valencia coach Marcelino Garcia Toral, whose side lead Madrid by three points in La Liga, said on Sunday. However, Zidane insists the level of performance is the same and all that is missing is a killer touch in front of goal. "Last season we would score goals in the last minute and at the moment that isn't happening," said Zidane on Saturday. "We need to keep going and think that there will be better moments to come." Ronaldo was also questioned this time last year after an unusually slow start to the season before coming alive to score 10 goals from the Champions League quarter-finals on that will see him win the Ballon d'Or for a fifth time this week.—AFP



GETAFE: File photo, Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo falls during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Getafe and Real Madrid at the Coliseum Alfonso Perez in Getafe, Spain. — AP

Business

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18 Ethics integral to the success of a profession, says Al-Roudhan**21** The Banker names NBK Bank of the Year in Kuwait for 2017**22** Apple, Google at Chinese fest shows lure of market

BRUSSELS: Eurogroup outgoing President Jeroen Dijsselbloem (second left) speaks with Italian Finance Minister Pier Carlo Padoan (left) and German acting-Finance Minister Peter Altmaier (third left) as candidates for the Eurogroup presidency, Portugal's Mario Centeno (second right), Slovakia's Peter Kazimir (fourth left), Luxembourg's Pierre Gramegna (third right) and Latvia's Dana Reizniece-Ozola look on during an Eurogroup meeting yesterday.—AFP

Battle to lead Eurogroup reaches climax

Portuguese Finance Minister Centeno expected to take the prize

BRUSSELS: Eurozone finance ministers were to pick the replacement for Eurogroup chief Jeroen Dijsselbloem yesterday, with four countries led by Portugal battling for the challenge of guiding the eurozone currency bloc through much needed reforms.

Finance ministers from Latvia, Luxembourg, Slovakia and Portugal have thrown their hats into the ring with a decision expected later when the 19 Eurogroup ministers cast their vote at a closed session in Brussels.

The job is one of the most strategic in the European Union, tasked with guiding economic policy in the face of clashing opinions and resistance, most notably by Germany. "I fully expect that the process will take one or two rounds," a senior eurozone official said ahead of the vote, on condition of anonymity. "The procedure is set up so that a candidate emerges after only one or two rounds."

The winning candidate must secure 10 votes to win. Portuguese Finance Minister Mario Centeno is widely expected to take the prize, having won the support of Spain and positive signs from France and Italy, the eurozone's second and third biggest economies. European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker has also backed him. "I have decided to put forward my candidacy for the

presidency of the Eurogroup... with the intention of working towards a necessary consensus to complete Europe's economic and monetary union," Centeno said in a statement. His candidacy marks a big turnaround for Portugal since the worst of the debt crisis in which Lisbon was bailed out and forced to push through painful reforms to save its economy. Also running is Slovakia's Peter Kazimir, a strong backer of Germany's austerity-heavy approach, but he is seen as a long shot after controversial comments about Greece during bailout talks in 2015. In a surprise, Latvian Finance Minister Dana Reizniece-Ozola, 36 and a chess grandmaster, is also running, though she is relatively unknown to her colleagues. Their bids come soon after the EU's eastern member states were painfully overlooked in favor of France and

the Netherlands to be the new hosts for EU agencies forced to leave London after Brexit.

Luxembourg's Pierre Gramegna, a veteran diplomat, has also confirmed his candidacy, which is seen as a safety choice in case the others cancel each other out.

"Europe needs to be stronger" Elected for two and a half years, the head of the Eurogroup chairs the monthly meetings of finance ministers of the 19 countries that use the euro, with the main responsibility of coordinating the often clashing economic policies and priorities of its members.

Former Dutch finance minister Dijsselbloem must step down as Eurogroup head after losing his ministerial job when his party suffered a poor election result earlier this year. The job is one of Europe's top posts, with the holder considered one of the

EU's "five presidents" along with European Commission head Juncker and European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi.

The role was especially crucial during the tumultuous years of the eurozone debt crisis and Greek bailout negotiations, when the bloc's ministers faced the daunting task of saving the euro currency from near collapse. With his dry humor and clashes with Greece's maverick former finance minister Yanis Varoufakis, Dijsselbloem became the face of a sensible, austerity-pushing eurozone during the crisis. Ministers have myriad considerations in selecting a candidate, including nationality and political leaning, with Centeno's socialist party widely considered to be due a top post.

The first order of business for the incoming chief will be shepherding through reforms of the eurozone, which the ministers will discuss. The reform push is part of wider efforts, spurred by French President Emmanuel Macron, to pursue deeper integration after Britain's vote last year to leave the bloc. Greece's third bailout will also quickly come on to the agenda, with Athens expecting debt relief from its eurozone partners next year, a move powerful Germany believes is not necessary.—AFP



Luxembourg, Slovakia, Latvia and Portugal in race

Lamborghini joins the boom in supercar SUVs

MILAN: Supercar makers have long known that parked next to that snarling Lamborghini, racing-red Ferrari, or stately Bentley at some of the globe's toniest addresses is a practical SUV. With the sport utility vehicle market growing by leaps and bounds, they increasingly want in on those profits.

Lamborghini unveils the once-improbable Urus SUV yesterday at its headquarters in Sant'Agata, Italy, where the supercar maker owned by the Volkswagen group is expanding the factory to meet utility vehicle demand. The Urus enters a luxury field crowded with the Mercedes G-Class, the Bentley Bentayga and

the trailblazing Porsche Cayenne - and soon to be joined by Aston Martin, Rolls Royce and, in all probability, Ferrari.

Analysts say that the move into SUVs has become a natural fit for most brands, even supercar makers like Lamborghini, despite the risk of alienating aficionados.

"I think if you look at those brands' image, I think you would look at an SUV - especially a Lamborghini - as almost a sell-out move. I don't think that is the case anymore," Jeff Schuster, senior vice president at LMC Automotive in Detroit. "There is some risk to the purist, who can only see one view of the brand. But as long as they don't move too far out of who they are, a lineup can include an SUV in these brands. I wouldn't have said that five years ago."

From bring nonexistent in 2006, high-end SUVs have more than quadrupled in sales since 2010, from 4,700 units to almost 21,000 units in 2016, driven by the Mercedes G-Class and Bentley Bentayga, according to IHS Automotive. The entry of the Urus along with the planned Aston Martin DBX and Rolls Royce "High Side Vehicle" is expected to push those numbers up

to 29,300 by 2020. Even Ferrari is considering entering the category, with a decision expected early next year, which could leave McLaren as the only hold-out among supercars.

Luxury SUVs are merely following the mass-market trend. SUVs are the fastest-growing overall segment of the car market, tripling in sales in a decade from just under 8 million units in 2006 to nearly 26.5 million units last year. SUV sales are forecast by IHS Automotive to grow by another 28 percent to over 34 million units by 2020.

Before having a true luxury option, IHS automotive analyst Ian Fletcher said, many SUV owners went to private modifiers and tuners to increase performance and add luxury swag to their off-the-line mass-market vehicle. "A lot of that," Fletcher said. "Oh, we can have a piece of that."

Porsche proved the market with the Cayenne, and was followed by the Mercedes G-Class, "which went from being utilitarian to being something synonymous with the Kardashians," he said. The decision to enter the SUV market was a no-brainer for Lamborghini, which as part

of the VW group shares luxury SUV platforms with the Bentley Bentayga and the Audi Q7, bringing down development costs and increasing profit margins.

"The Urus looks like it will be far more rakish than the SUV range that the VW group has, and far more dynamic," Fletcher said. Trailers of the Urus show the vehicle spinning around the desert, an obvious job to Middle Eastern brand enthusiasts, but could also appeal to buyers in Africa and Russia, where road conditions in some areas may have discouraged buyers from indulging in the lower-slung sports cars. "They are aiming to have a vehicle which epitomizes what the brand's core characteristics are: sport, high performance and accessible to customers who had to give up a sports car because they are having children, or just couldn't get into a sports car any more or it wasn't practical," Fletcher said. "It broadens the brand to a wider group." IHS forecasts Urus sales of 2,900 a year to a peak in 2019-2020, putting it on par with the Lamborghini Huracan. And as with cars in the super luxury segment, the profit margins can be astronomical.—AP



Business

Ethics integral to the success of a profession, says Al-Roudhan

Kuwait First Forum for Professional Ethics held

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan, the Kuwait First Forum for Professional Ethics was held yesterday at Salwa Al-Sabah Hall. The organization of this forum comes in line with the strategic partnership between Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics (APPE).

During his opening speech, the Minister Al-Roudhan said that for a better country, life and career, the professional ethics is a requirement. "All religions agree that ethics is the main reason for the development of human beings. Regardless of profession or the field of work one belongs to, ethics is an important part of work. The success or the expected results depend on how the workers deal with the situations."

Al-Roudhan added if people behaved ethically, the chances are positive for growth and development where good ethics is a fundamental requirement of any profession. It is integral to the success of the business as well. He said it is sad that there no such forums are held in Kuwait. "But I will always support and encourage the organizers. Ethics is a system of moral principles governing the appropriate conduct of a person or a group. Maintaining good ethics is being consistent with the principles of correct moral conduct constantly," he added.

Chairman of Kuwait Banks Association Majid Issa Al-Ajeel said that the Kuwait Forum for Professional Ethics is the first of its kind being held in Kuwait, noting that the efforts of the Federation in organizing the forum came within the framework of its commitment to follow the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to develop national cadres and ensure their rehabilitation in accordance with the criteria of high efficiency and based on a civilized culture based on sound foundations to ensure a promising future for youth.

He added, "Driven from its important national role and responsibility towards efficient and positive contribution to the economic development, KBA endeavors to interact with the decision makers and highly influential parties in governmental institutions."

Meanwhile, the Director General of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences Dr Adnan Shehabuddin pointed out that ethics is the main element in KFAS. "We can't be creative and develop science in private or public sector if we didn't have professional ethics," he said.

He added that good ethics is good business and it leads to the success of the business, but it also provides many ways for growth and development by leaving a good impression about an organization in the market. "KFAS strives continually to be in pursuit of its goals while benefiting the employees in building up their high competencies. In this direction, the adherence to high ethical standards of the employees can be very much contributory to the impressive achievements of business goals being turned out as planned and intended."

Shehabuddin noted that ethics refers to human conduct so as to make judgements between what is right and what is wrong. There are several factors that may compel one to resort unethical behavior. But it is one's responsibility to make a differentiation between what is morally good and bad and follow the rules and code of professional conduct," he said.

The forum focused on four key aspects: The role of the state in practical and professional ethics and their impact on the development process, successful management and the role of business owners in enhancing the commitment to practical and professional ethics, drivers to commitment of professional ethics and their impact on professional



KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan during his inaugural speech. —fotos by Joseph Shagra



The Chairman of Kuwait Banks association, Majid Issa Al-Ajeel.



Director General of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences Dr Adnan Shehabuddin.



performance, and methods and mechanisms to enhance compliance with practical and professional ethics and future challenges. Emad Al-Ablani, NBK Group General Manager - Human Resources, will participate in the forum's second session which will be chaired by the Economic Advisor at Al-Diwan Al-Amiri, Dr Yousef Al-Ibrahim, entitled "Successful Management and the Role of Business Owners in Enhancing Compliance of Practical and Professional Ethics."

This theme includes 4 key topics, where Al-Ablani will address the second topic about the commitment to practical and professional ethics in the banking environment and its impact on the success of the Kuwaiti banking sector. The session will also

include the following topics: The impact of the commitment to professional ethics on organizations' competitive conditions, the charters of professional ethics in the Arab banking sectors, and the impact of practical and professional ethics in attracting and developing family businesses investments, as well as the commitment to practical and professional ethics.

Al-Ablani will address in his speech NBK's pioneering experience in applying the highest international standards of the banking profession and its commitment to raising awareness and professional culture among its employees, especially the newly hired personnel, through its continuous delivery of training and

awareness programs. Al-Ablani will also discuss the importance of having confidence, credibility and professional ethics among banking professionals, since the lack of investors' confidence in the banking system may cause the market to lose its credibility and attractiveness. Al-Ablani will also highlight the importance of instilling a culture of positive banking behavior within the sector's participants, urging them to protect customers' rights and spreading awareness and banking culture among them, so that clients would fully understand the consequences of every step taken and clearly know their rights and obligations.

NBK continues to maintain its leading position among Kuwaiti private sector organizations in applying the highest professional and ethical standards among its employees by spreading a banking culture based on positive conduct and equipping them with tools to gain customers' confidence, while adhering to the professional rules and standards set by regulators both locally in Kuwait and internationally in all the other countries where it operates.



The forum focuses on 4 key aspects

Turkey inflation hits highest level since 2003

ANKARA: Turkey's inflation in November hit its highest annual rate in 14 years at nearly 13 percent, according to official data released yesterday. Consumer prices rose

12.98 percent last month from the same period in 2016, the state statistics agency said, the highest annual rate recorded since December 2003. Inflation had been 11.9 percent in October.

Monthly inflation meanwhile was 1.49 percent in November from October, with transport, clothing and food showing strong rises. The rise was sharper than analysts had predicted, and comes after the

Turkish lira's value against the US dollar declined by 13.5 percent since September. Economists said that annual inflation would

probably come down from December onwards but said it was still likely to remain in double digits. Gokce Celik, chief economist at QNB Finansbank, said year-on-year inflation "is likely to spend the first half of the year (2018) above 10.5 percent". The Turkish central bank will hold its regular monetary policy committee meeting on December 14 to decide on interest rates.

Liam Carson, Emerging Europe economist at London-based Capital Economics, said in a note the rise in inflation was "likely to prompt a rate hike next week". Economists

agreed the bank needed to make a meaningful hike to interest rates but Inan Demir of Nomura International said this was "unlikely". "A large hike of several hundred basis points looks unlikely unless renewed (Turkish lira) depreciation pressures force the bank's hand," Demir said in a note.

The lira hit a record low of 3.97 against the greenback last month. The Turkish currency was at 3.92 at 1100 GMT yesterday. Since the New York trial of a Turkish banker accused of violating US sanctions against Iran started last week, the lira has traded at

more than 3.90 to the US dollar. Turkish-Iranian gold trader Reza Zarrab, the prosecution's star witness, admitted to being involved in a multi-billion-dollar gold-for-oil scheme.

He also implicated President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the scheme allegedly designed to subvert sanctions, and admitted to bribing a former Turkish economy minister. A guilty verdict in the trial that Ankara calls a "plot" against Turkey could see one or more Turkish banks fined, a move analysts say would hurt the country's economy.—AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.714
Indian Rupees	4.670
Pakistani Rupees	2.864
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.967
Nepali Rupees	2.921
Singapore Dollar	225.470
Hongkong Dollar	38.750
Bangladesh Taka	3.579
Philippine Peso	5.974
Thai Baht	9.266

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.680
Qatari Riyal	83.097
Omani Riyal	785.733
Bahraini Dinar	803.370
UAE Dirham	82.373

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.000
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.084
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.214
Tunisian Dinar	122.160
Jordanian Dinar	426.630
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.017
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.651

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.350
Euro	362.060
Sterling Pound	404.240

Canadian dollar	238.730
Turkish lira	77.230
Swiss Franc	309.940
Australian Dollar	231.300
US Dollar Buying	301.150

GOLD

20 Gram	260.520
10 Gram	133.180
5 Gram	67.430

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.250
Canadian Dollar	238.380
Sterling Pound	408.505
Euro	360.315
Swiss Frank	298.580
Bahrain Dinar	802.195
UAE Dirhams	82.680
Qatari Riyals	83.505
Saudi Riyals	81.460
Jordanian Dinar	427.585
Egyptian Pound	17.175
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.968
Indian Rupees	4.698
Pakistani Rupees	2.865
Bangladesh Taka	3.666
Philippines Peso	5.988
Cyprus pound	17.988
Japanese Yen	3.680
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.936

Malaysian Ringgit	74.985
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.170
Thai Bhat	10.245
Turkish Lira	77.310

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.402513	0.410013
Czech Korune	0.006128	0.018128
Danish Krone	0.044418	0.049418
Euro	0.354686	0.362186
Georgian Lari	0.134710	0.134710
Norwegian Krone	0.032536	0.037736
Romanian Leu	0.064704	0.081554
Russian ruble	0.005176	0.005176
Slovakia	0.009009	0.019009
Swedish Krona	0.032186	0.037186
Swiss Franc	0.303646	0.314646
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.222235	0.234235
New Zealand Dollar	0.202358	0.211858
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.233443	0.242443
US Dollars	0.298350	0.302770
US Dollars Mint	0.298950	0.302870
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003295	0.003879

Chinese Yuan	0.044289	0.047789
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036785	0.039535
Indian Rupee	0.004103	0.004744
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002628	0.002808
Korean Won	0.000268	0.000283
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070140	0.076140
Nepalese Rupee	0.003018	0.003188
Pakistan Rupee	0.002644	0.002934
Philippine Peso	0.005865	0.006165
Singapore Dollar	0.219935	0.229935
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001699	0.002279
Taiwan	0.009992	0.010172
Thai Baht	0.008932	0.009482
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.795261	0.803761
Egyptian Pound	0.014491	0.020209
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000185	0.000245
Jordanian Dinar	0.421976	0.430976
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000155	0.000255
Moroccan Dirhams	0.023500	0.047500
Omani Riyal	0.779266	0.784948
Qatar Riyal	0.078786	0.083726
Saudi Riyal	0.079567	0.080867
Syrian Pound	0.001282	0.001502
Tunisian Dinar	0.117538	0.125538
Turkish Lira	0.072374	0.082674
UAE Dirhams	0.080921	0.082621
Yemeni Riyal	0.000983	0.001063

Business

BOJ is resolved to keep ultra-easy policy: Kuroda

Global economy 'fairly strong and robust'

TOKYO: The Bank of Japan does not plan to change its massive stimulus program and will "immediately act" if risks to the economy undermines the momentum toward achieving its inflation target, central bank Governor Haruhiko Kuroda said yesterday. While offering a sanguine view of the global economy, Kuroda warned of factors that could threaten the recovery including geopolitical risks and the rising tide of protectionism.

"Particularly, what I'm concerned about are protectionist tendencies in some countries and geopolitical risks surrounding the world economy," Kuroda told a Europlace financial forum.

"I sincerely hope that the multilateral trading system would be maintained in coming years," he said. US President Donald Trump's "America First" approach has raised concerns among some policymakers in Asia, where many export-reliant economies including Japan

benefit from free trade and advocate multilateral trade agreements.

Asked if he has become more worried about the demerits of ultra-loose policy, Kuroda said the BOJ had not changed its message since revamping its policy framework last September. The BOJ changed its strategy by revamping its framework last September, when it noted the yield curve had become "too flat" and wasn't good for the banking system, Kuroda said. "We have been able to maintain yield curve control quite effectively and efficiently without creating financial problems," he said, adding that current levels of the BOJ's yield targets were "quite appropriate".

"We will continue our current extremely accommodative monetary policy to achieve the 2 percent inflation target as soon as possible," the governor said. The BOJ has been dropping subtle, yet intentional, hints that it could edge away from crisis-mode stimulus

earlier than expected, sources have said. Kuroda said that while geopolitical risks were "very difficult to predict," the BOJ would be mindful of the possibility they could threaten Japan's economic recovery.

"If anything happens to undermine the momentum toward achieving our price stability target, we would immediately act in accordance to specific needs," Kuroda said.

"At this stage, I'm not concerned about that," since the global economic outlook is "fairly strong and robust". The BOJ revamped its policy framework last September to one targeting interest rates from the pace of asset purchases after three years of heavy money printing failed to fire up inflation to its 2 percent target.

It now guides short-term interest rates at minus 0.1 percent and the 10-year government bond yield around zero percent. —Reuters



Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda

Bayt.com poll

95.5% of job-seekers use online job sites to find and apply for jobs

DUBAI: When it comes to job searching in the Middle East and North Africa region, there are many different steps that job seekers can follow to find their ideal opportunity. The internet is a good start and it can be used to streamline just about any task, including the job search. In order to measure how job seekers find their ideal jobs in the region, Bayt.com - the Middle East's #1 Job Site - conducted a poll titled 'Job Seeker Journey in the Middle East and North Africa', in which almost all respondents (95.5 percent) claimed that they use online job sites to find and apply for jobs.

Applying for jobs online

Almost all of those surveyed (81.1 percent) said that job sites are an easy and user-friendly way to apply for jobs, compared to only 7.4 percent who disagreed. 11.5 percent of job seekers were neutral in response to this question. Further, the majority (83.4 percent) of respondents also agreed that they can find many relevant jobs online related to their background and experience, while 7.7 percent of respondents were neutral in response to this statement and only 8.9 percent disagreed.

When asked why online job sites are effective, nearly two thirds (66.2 percent) of respondents said that online job sites are useful because they "group all available jobs into one easy to access place". In addition to this benefit, more than one in five (22.2 percent) respondents said that online job sites are useful because they help job seekers "improve their CV and professional profile", allow job seekers to "track their application" and "provide them with "job alerts". When respondents were asked about how useful they find online job search tricks, tips and information, more than three in four respondents (76.5 percent) said that they find them "very" useful, compared to 14.0 percent who said they find them "somewhat" useful, and only 9.5 percent who said they don't find them useful. "As the leading job site in the Middle East, it is important for us to regularly conduct thorough research regarding job seekers' opinions and experiences and share that information with the region. The 'Job Seeker Journey in the Middle East and North Africa' poll has allowed us to collate highly useful data on the way job seekers go about applying for new career opportunities. For instance, the majority of respondents believe online job sites, such as Bayt.com, to be very effective, user-friendly, and easy for finding and applying for jobs," said Suhail Masri, Vice President of Employer Solutions, Bayt.com. "At Bayt.com we want to be there every step of the way for job seekers in the region, and we are proud to provide the necessary tools and technologies for nearly 30 million professionals. It is important for us to regularly check in with job seekers and find out that they are, in fact, making great use of our technologies and information."

Managing the job seeker journey

When it comes to creating a CV more than four in five (80.7 percent) respondents claimed that they have a picture on their CV and five in eight (62.5 percent) respondents claimed that they "always" send a cover letter with their application. 22 percent of job seekers said that they "sometimes" send a cover letter, while only 15.5 percent said they "never" send one.

When it came to looking at how often job seekers search for jobs online, more than seven in ten (71.8 percent) respondents claimed that they look for jobs on a daily basis, this was followed by respondents saying that they look for jobs two to three times per week (16.5 percent), and 6.9 percent who said they look only a few times a month.

More than half of job seekers (56.9 percent) also claimed that they wait up to one week before applying for a different job, whereas 23.5 percent of them said that they don't wait at all. Moreover, almost all (96 percent) respondents agreed that it is useful to know if their application has been viewed by the employer or not. This way they can more strategically plan their search activities. When respondents were asked about whether they research a company before going to an interview, more than four in five respondents (85.4 percent) said that they "always" research the company, compared to 11.4 percent who said they "sometimes" do, and only 3.2 percent who said they "never" do.

Preferred Job Search Device

Discussing the device that job seekers like to use when searching for a job, the majority (81.6 percent) of respondents said that they prefer to use a desktop or a laptop computer, this was followed by 13.5 percent who said they prefer to use a smartphone or a tablet, and 4.9 percent who claimed that they have no device preference. However, when applying for jobs more than six in 10 respondents (61.6 percent) said that they like having a job search mobile application because they can "search and apply for jobs on the go". 25.4 percent of respondents agreed and also said that a job search mobile application gives them "24/7 access to their application status", "sends them job alerts", and is "easier and more efficient to use".

Masri adds: "Job seekers like to have many options. Some prefer using their computers, while others relish the efficiency and convenience of Bayt.com's job seeker application. On top of that, the region's job seekers are stepping up their game by focusing on all the elements they have to add to their CV and application when they apply for jobs online. They are also heavily utilizing technologies such as automated job alerts, and 'who viewed my profile' and applications on Bayt.com." Data for the 2017 Bayt.com 'Job Seeker Journey in the Middle East and North Africa' poll was collected online from July 30th, 2017 to September 13th, 2017. Results are based on a sample of 9,481 respondents. Countries that participated are the UAE, KSA, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Iraq and others.

KFH wins 'Best Islamic Bank in Middle East, Kuwait 2017' awards



KUWAIT: The global EMEA Finance Magazine Europe, Middle East and Africa has awarded Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Best Islamic Bank in the Middle East, Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait, and Best Bank in Kuwait awards, in addition to Most Innovative Bank in the Middle East 2017 award. Also, the magazine awarded KFH- Bahrain Best Islamic Bank in Bahrain 2017.

The awards came in recognition of KFH outstanding performance in the field of Islamic finance and its distinguished methodology of offering high end and innovative banking services and products as per highest standards of technology and quality.

The awards reflected the bank's success throughout 40 years of operation since establishment in 1977. KFH established concrete pillars for Islamic financing industry by developing staff, offering

innovative services and products. KFH expanded globally where it operated in Bahrain, Saudi and in 1989 in Turkey. Then, the bank penetrated Asia by KFH Malaysia and Europe by KT Bank AG "KFH-Germany".

KFH's performance and professional commitment underscore its reputation that is based on its robust financial status, and its leadership in the Islamic finance industry.

The awards are of great importance, since such awards highlight the bank's integration and performance locally, regionally, and globally. EMEA Finance magazine is published six times a year. Relevant and informative supplements that provide analysis and investigation of special topics are frequently included with the magazine. EMEA Finance produces a premier magazine, related conferences, and a website.

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Business

Wall St cheers tax bill approval, Gulf surges

NEW YORK: Wall Street indexes surged yesterday after the US Senate passed its version of a tax code overhaul, bringing the Republicans closer to implementing corporate tax cuts. Some of the biggest gainers included bank and industrial stocks. Bank of America and JPMorgan rose more than 3 percent, while Caterpillar and Boeing gained about 2 percent.

"This is a positive reaction to the Senate's passage," said Randy Frederick, vice president of trading and derivatives for Charles Schwab in Austin, Texas. The Senate on Saturday approved their version of tax bill in a narrow 51-49 vote. The Senate and the House of Representatives will have to settle differences in their respective versions before it becomes a law.

"That (reconciliation) can be a bit of a challenge because there are differences and the number of approvals to pass it is a little bit higher than it was for the individual two sides of the Congress," said Frederick. The S&P 500 has risen about 18 percent this year on strong corporate earnings and solid economic growth and also on hopes that Trump's agenda of corporate tax cuts and looser regulations could come through.

At 9:35 am ET (1435 GMT), the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 203.98 points, or 0.84 per-

cent, at 24,435.57, the S&P 500 was up 18.35 points, or 0.70 percent, at 2,660.57 and the Nasdaq Composite was up 41.45 points, or 0.61 percent, at 6,889.04.

Aetna shares rose 1.7 percent after drugstore chain operator CVS Health agreed to buy the health insurer for \$69 billion in the year's largest corporate acquisition. CVS shares were down about 4 percent. General Cable jumped about 34 percent after Italian rival Prysmian agreed to buy the cable maker in a deal that could value it at about \$3 billion, including debt.

Blue Apron rose 6.2 percent after Barclays upgraded the meal-kit delivery company's stock to "equal-weight", supporting its move to promote its chief financial officer as the chief executive.

Advancing issues outnumbered decliners on the NYSE by 2,099 to 544. On the Nasdaq, 1,994 issues rose and 518 fell.

Emerging equities rose from two-week lows yesterday helped by a key growth-boosting US tax overhaul, but currencies fell against the stronger dollar, led by the Turkish lira under pressure from rising inflation.

MSCI's benchmark emerging stocks index rose 0.5 percent, ending three straight days of losses. Both South Korean and Indonesian stocks rose over 1 per-

cent, whilst Chinese blue chips gained 0.5 percent.

The moves reflected a broad-based rally in global equity markets following the US Senate's approval of a tax overhaul on Saturday, which investors hope will ultimately boost corporate earnings and growth.

Even Turkish banks, which have been under pressure due to worries about potential US fines, bounced 1 percent, with the broader Turkish stock market up 0.5 percent.

"People are pleasantly surprised by the Senate passage of the US tax bill, which is pushing up short-term interest rates and US growth expectations," said Koon Chow, an emerging markets strategist at UBI. "This is good for equities globally, but not so good for currencies relative to the dollar."

The dollar firmed 0.3 percent, adding to headwinds for emerging currencies such as the lira, which plumbled record lows in November. The lira weakened 0.25 percent after data showing inflation spiked to 12.98 percent in November, the highest in 14 years.. Turkish assets have also been in the firing line due to an ongoing US court case which has raised tensions between Ankara and Washington.

JPMorgan said its monthly survey showed investors had sharply cut lira overweight positions in November,

while the fall in Turkish local debt positioning was larger than in any other surveyed market. Expectations are mounting that the central bank will act at its Dec. 14 meeting to put a floor under the tumbling lira and tame inflation. Chow predicted a rate rise of around 100 basis points.

The South African rand was one of the few currencies to firm, up 0.4 percent on indications that Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa was doing well in nominations to become the next leader of the ruling ANC party. Ramaphosa is seen as more business-friendly than rival candidate Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

Gulf stocks

In the Gulf, Qatar stocks bounced over 2 percent to near one-month highs on hopes that Doha can resolve its diplomatic dispute with four other Arab countries at a summit this week. Saudi stocks were trading at almost two-month highs after jumping 1.2 percent on Sunday, and Abu Dhabi shares gained 1 percent. In emerging Europe, the Polish zloty firmed 0.2 percent against the euro. The Polish central bank is expected to keep interest rates on hold at a record low of 1.5 percent at its meeting today despite a rise in inflation coupled with robust economic growth. —Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report									
Monday 04 December 2017									
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing						
Price Index	▲ 7.81	6,221.94	6,214.13						
Weighted Index	▼ -0.66	399.47	400.13						
KXSX 15	▼ -3.05	910.87	913.92						
Trades									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KDI)	Trades	Last	Change		
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	380	▲ 0.0		
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	771	▲ 0.0		
ENERGYH	30.5	30.5	800	24	2	30.5	▲ 0.5		
GPI	30.0	28.7	2,403,660	70,203	74	30.0	▲ 1.1		
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	81	▲ 0.0		
Oil & Gas			2,404,460	70,227	76	30.12	▲ 2.80		
KFOUC	269	263	11,126	2,949	4	269	▲ 3.0		
BPCC	630	626	238,473	149,768	14	627	▼ -3.0		
ALKOUT	600	580	31,596	18,525	10	580	▼ -19.0		
ALQURAN	319	314	1,323,807	418,379	74	315	▼ -8.0		
Basic Materials			1,695,002	569,620	102	1223.39	▼ -10.19		
KCEM	490	490	36,780	18,022	6	490	▲ 18.0		
CABLE	434	434	380	195	1	434	▲ 5.0		
SHIP	212	212	10,000	2,120	1	212	▼ -2.0		
PCEM	621	602	13,635	12,439	7	602	▼ -20.0		
PAPER	300	290	11,200	3,929	4	300	▲ 4.0		
MRC	75	68	1,540	105	7	68	▲ 3.0		
ADCO	249	239	34,911	8,468	8	249	▲ 10.0		
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	170	▲ 0.0		
NCBIM	204	202	44,400	8,972	9	204	▼ -1.0		
EQUIPMENT	35.0	33.9	310,600	10,598	19	34.1	▲ 0.1		
NOCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0		
GYPNUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▲ 0.0		
SALBOOKH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0		
AGLTY	813	805	1,216,770	965,682	163	805	▲ 0.0		
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	308	▲ 0.0		
CLEANING	52	52	870,000	45,145	7	52	▼ -1.0		
KGL	64	60	180,000	11,115	13	60	▼ -3.5		
KCPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	150	▲ 0.0		
HUMANISOFT	3,700	3,700	63,486	234,868	13	3,700	▼ -60.0		
NAFAIS	550	500	918,739	505,274	4	550	▲ 50.0		
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	76	▲ 0.0		
SHOOTING	19.0	18.5	55,973	1,063	7	18.5	▼ -0.4		
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	476	▲ 0.0		
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0		
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	985	▲ 0.0		
ALAFICO	370	365	19,242	7,117	2	370	▲ 0.0		
MUBARRAD	73	71	6,370	565	3	71	▲ 0.0		
LOGISTICS	51	47.9	2,971,424	144,162	129	48.7	▼ -1.0		
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	92	▲ 0.0		
GCEM	83	82	2,000	154	2	83	▲ 0.5		
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▲ 0.0		
FCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	76	▲ 0.0		
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	▲ 0.0		
SPEC	71	69	1,170	81	7	71	▼ -1.8		
Industrials			6,771,620	1,999,186	412	1727.62	▲ 18.50		
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	▲ 0.0		
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	244	▲ 0.0		
DANAH	70	68	124,600	8,598	15	70	▼ -0.2		
FOOD	1,400	1,139	19,621	24,160	7	1,140	▼ -260.0		
Consumer Goods			144,221	32,758	22	847.42	▼ -42.10		
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	▲ 0		
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	176	▲ 0.0		
Health Care			0	0	0	1610.51	▲ 0.00		
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,300	▲ 0		
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	178	▲ 0		
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	▲ 0		
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	27.0	▲ 0		
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	299	▲ 0		
QULAFJEL	112	108	173,836	19,200	21	111	▼ -1		
MUNTAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	76	▲ 0		
JAZIERA	690	645	4,609	2,998	4	658	▲ 0		
SOOR	112	110	219,510	24,501	39	110	▼ -2		
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	▲ 0		
ALRAI	113	105	11,460	1,204	2	113	▼ -1		
Jiyad	68	66	2,543,653	169,914	158	68	▲ 1		
Mezzan	770	764	817,219	626,962	118	768	▲ 8		
Consumer Services			3,770,387	846,768	342	919.38	▼ -8.90		
ZAIN	452	446	3,745,490	1,883,694	212	449	▲ 3		
OOREDOO	1,080	1,080	580	626	3	1,080	▼ -18		
AAN	30.0	29.0	187,102	5,514	13	29.0	▼ -1		
VIVA	714	711	96,296	40,116	40	714	▼ -4		
Telecommunications			3,989,428	1,729,950	268	535.26	▼ -3.60		
NBK	729	722	2,509,189	1,821,673	106	723	▲ 2		
GBK	243	241	569,780	137,755	34	241	▲ 0		
CBK	400	400	277,018	110,807	26	400	▲ 0		
ABK	304	297	187,576	56,475	15	304	▼ -1		
ALMUTAHED	342	336	381,117	128,903	40	337	▼ -1		
KIB	230	226	1,306,958	311,696	66	229	▲ 3		
BURG	314	304	502,911	153,347	67	304	▼ 7		
KFIN	573	568	5,161,540	2,944,572	253	571	▲ 4		
BOURAYAN	424	420	483,793	204,680	64	421	▲ 0		
AUB	208	205	1,784,478	367,118	57	205	▲ 0		
ITHMR	31.8	30.9	6,588,564	205,272	167	31.3	▲ 0		
WARBANK	229	224	879,438	190,551	87	226	▲ 2		
Banks			20,692,362	6,641,250	1,042	886.93	▲ 2.50		
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	274	▲ 0.0		
GINS	700	700	1,258	881	1	700	▼ -18.0		
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	▲ 0.0		
WINS	64	58	21,370	1,306	9	64	▲ 0.0		
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	187	▲ 0.0		
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	▲ 0.0		
WETHAQ	40.0	40.0	750	30	1	40.0	▲ 4.9		
BOKWV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0		
Insurance			23,378	2,277	11	1016.67	▲ 13.00		
Trades									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KDI)	Trades	Last	Change		
SOKOUK	48.1	47.1	284,200	12,802	9	48.1	▲ 0.1		
KRE	59	56	141,625	8,025	16	56	▼ -0.2		
URC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	75	▲ 0.0		
NRE	128	125	265,070	33,504	24	126	▲ 0.0		
SRE	352	326	89,938	30,708	15	344	▼ -8.0		
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	▲ 0.0		
AREEC	176	170	25,025	4,345	5	176	▲ 7.0		
MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	39.0	▲ 0.0		
ARABREC	29.7	29.0	420,801	12,310	23	29.0	▼ -0.6		
ERESCO	33.9	33.5	332,120	11,145	8	33.7	▼ -0.3		
MAHANE	746	743	183,592	121,853	17	746	▲ 4.0		
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	▲ 0.0		
INVESTORS	17.9	17.5	4,196,666	74,130	81	17.5	▼ -0.2		
IRC	29.0	28.6	7,116	204	3	29.0	▲ 0.5		
ALTUARIA	93	90	454,176	41,373	13	91	▲ 0.9		
SANAM	33.5	33.0</							

Business

The Banker names NBK Bank of the Year in Kuwait for 2017

Fawzi Al-Dajani receives award at a ceremony in London

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has been named "The Bank of the Year in Kuwait 2017 by the leading and internationally renowned Financial Times magazine "The Banker".

The prestigious Banker award was presented to Fawzi Al-Dajani, NBK London General Manager, on behalf of NBK, at a glittering awarding ceremony specially held in London for the occasion and attended by a host of international and regional senior bankers and executives. "NBK's market-leading position in corporate banking in Kuwait is of particular note in 2017, with the lender acting as mandated lead arranger for a number of mega-deals," said The Banker.

The Banker noted that the strength of NBK's corporate banking offering means it has an estimated market share of 75 percent of foreign corporates operating in the country. Similarly, its dominance in trade finance has seen the bank secure about an 80 percent share of export letters of credit. It is also

the only Kuwaiti lender to have 100 percent of the business of the Kuwait National Petroleum Company, underscoring its expertise in the oil and gas industry.

NBK continues to enjoy collectively the highest ratings among all banks in the Middle East from the three international rating agencies Moody's, Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's. The Bank's ratings are supported by its high capitalization, prudent lending policies, and its disciplined approach to risk management, in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team. NBK was also named among Global Finance's list of the 50 safest banks in the world for the 12th consecutive time.

NBK enjoys the widest banking presence with a local and international network reaching 4 continents. NBK's international presence spans many of the world's leading financial centers including New York, Europe, GCC, Middle East, Singapore as well as China (Shanghai).



NBK enjoys highest ratings among all banks in ME



NBK London GM Fawzi Al-Dajani receives the award.

KAMCO GCC Markets Monthly Report

Market volatility led to risk-off trades and profit booking

KUWAIT: GCC markets remained volatile in November-17, as investor sentiment towards the region's equity markets was more skewed towards risk-off trades. The MSCI GCC index declined by 1.1 percent for the month, and was down 2.6 percent YTD. Most markets slid during the month, while Saudi Arabia's TASI stayed resilient and moved up by 1.0 percent m-o-m. Qatar's equity indices continued its downward spiral (-5.5 percent m-o-m) on fears of deterioration of Qatar's operating environment due to the ongoing diplomatic rift in the region.

GCC earnings growth for 9M-2017 and Q3-2017 was positive on a y-o-y basis, as total GCC 9M-17 earnings increased by 7.6 percent to \$51.9 billion from \$48.6 billion in 9M-2016, and Q3-17 net profits for GCC stocks improved by 13.6 percent to \$13.1 billion. Oil market participants cheered the much anticipated extension of the oil production cut to keep 1.8 mb/d off the market through the end of 2018. OPEC oil prices gained by around \$3/bbl from the start of the month and remain above \$60/bbl.

UAE indices saw the Real Estate names come under extensive pressure on the ADX and DFM, due to broad based sector weakness, which also led to declines in the share price of Emaar Development, post its IPO listing. Kuwait witnessed declines as well, as the Weighted index dropped by 5.0 percent during the month, while large caps witnessed higher selling pressure as the Kuwait-15 index dropped by 6.1 percent m-o-m during November-17.

Trading activity during the month however recovered, but unlike last month, the drivers of higher activity were different. While in October-17 almost all the markets except for Qatar contributed to the higher trading activity, Saudi Arabia single handedly drove the increase in value traded in November-17. Monthly value traded reached an eight-month high level of \$25.95 billion after trading activity in Saudi Arabia increased by more than 13 percent m-o-m to reach \$20.1 billion.

Kuwait

Kuwait's equity indices witnessed their worst performing month for 2017 in November-17. Both the Weighted Index and the Price index declined by 5.0 percent and 4.9 percent primarily, as traders booked profits across the board. As a result, the Kuwait-15 index also declined by a higher 6.1 percent m-o-m during the month. Nevertheless, Kuwait continues to remain one of the only two markets in the green on a YTD basis with a return of 4.9 percent for the Weighted index and 7.8 percent for the Price index. All the major sectors were down with Banks seeing the highest declines for the month as it went down by 5.8 percent m-o-m. The declines in banks were mostly driven by NBK and KFH as the stocks were down by over 6 percent for the month. Financial Services and the Real Estate sector followed as they receded by 5.4 percent and 4.8 percent for the month.

However earnings growth for companies on the KSE in 9M-17 was strong, as net profits grew by 15.4 percent y-o-y to reach KD 1.49 billion. Q3-17 earnings growth was also equally strong as net profits grew by 15.1 percent y-o-y as compared to Q3-16. Trading activity on the exchange dropped during the month, to a three month low.

Monthly value traded declined by close to 30 percent to reach KD 328 million as compared to KD 466 million during the previous month. Monthly volume receded by a higher 32 percent m-o-m to 1.7 billion shares from 2.5 billion shares during October-17. Al-

Intiaz Investment Group remained the top stock traded in terms of volume as 148.7 million shares were traded during the month. KFH came in second on the volume chart with a volume of 117.8 million shares followed by Investors Holding.

Group with volumes of 99.3 million. On the monthly value chart, KFH was the most widely traded stock as KD 64 million worth of shares were traded. NBK came in second with 46.5 million worth of shares traded during the month, followed by Zain and Al-Intiaz with KD 43.8 million and KD 23.9 million in monthly value traded, respectively.

Prominent monthly decliners included Kuwait Remal RE as the stock plunged by over 35 percent for the month of November-17. National Shooting Co and Salbookh Trading Co followed with declines of 27.6 percent and 27 percent m-o-m. Amongst the gainers, Jiyad Holding led all stocks as its share price surged by over 30 percent for the month. Other gainers included Al-Argan International Real Estate and National Industries Co as their stock prices gained by over 19.7 percent and 19.0 percent respectively m-o-m. The monthly market breadth was skewed towards decliners with 119 companies losing ground while 23 companies gained.

In economic releases, the IMF expects real non-oil GDP growth to come in at 2.5 percent for 2017 and forecast real non-oil GDP to grow by 3.0 percent in 2018. Over the medium term the IMF expects non-oil growth to increase gradually to around 4 percent, driven by accelerated project implementation under the 5-year development plan and improved confidence. Despite the impact of higher energy and water prices, inflation is on track to reach a multiyear low of 1.75 percent in 2017, due to a decline in housing rents and lower food prices.

Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)

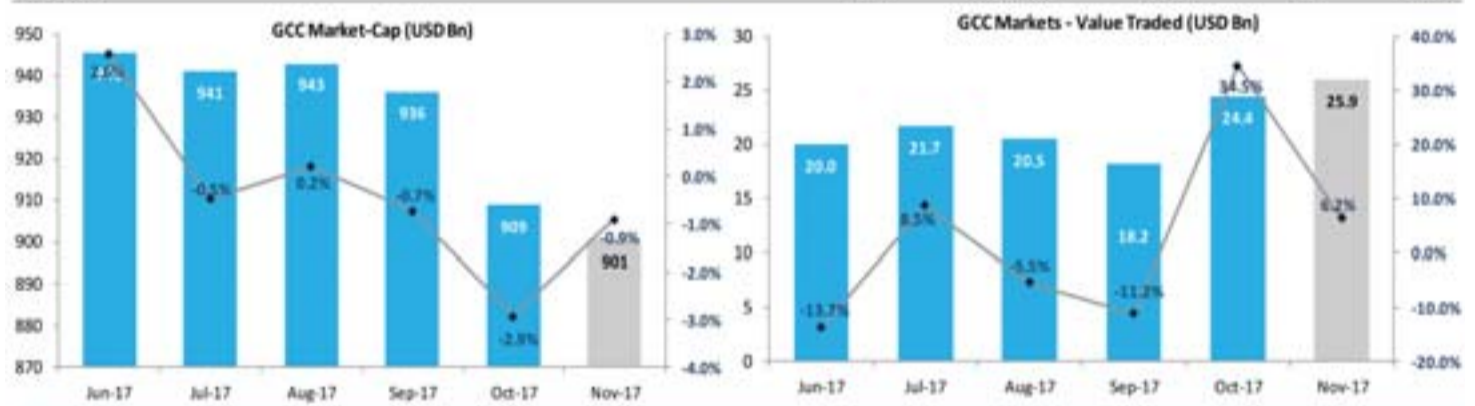
Saudi Arabia's benchmark TASI index was one of the best performing markets in the GCC for the month of November-17, as it gained m-o-m, while all other major markets lost ground during the month. The benchmark improved by 1.0 percent during the month while the performance of sectoral indices were mixed. Major indices such as Banks, Materials and Real Estate Management and Development were largely responsible for the TASI ending in the green, as there was a preference for large cap indices and names during the month, as more risk off trades were witnessed. Real Estate Mgmt. & Development was the best performing index as it went up by 2.3 percent m-o-m, as Dar Al-Arkan and Makkah construction both gained by double digits for the month. Banks followed with gains of 2.1 percent in November -17, driven mainly by a 7.4 percent increase in the share price of NCB. Amongst the decliners, Diversified Financials, Consumer Services and Media were major laggards as they registered double-digit declines for the month. Kingdom Holding and Assir Trading, Tourism & Manufacturing pulled down the Diversified Financials pack as both stocks declined by over 21 percent each.

Majority of the Consumer Services lost ground during the month, led by Al-Tayyar Travel Group, as the stock saw a fifth of its market cap erode m-o-m. Both 9M-17 and Q3-17 earnings growth for listed companies on the index were positive, 9M-17 earnings improved by 12.1 percent y-o-y from SAR 79.4 billion from a year ago to SAR 89.0 billion. Q3-17 earnings growth was higher as growth came in at 18.7 percent y-o-y from SAR 27.6 billion in Q3-16 to SAR 32.8 billion in Q3-17. Banks were the key growth drivers as they clocked an earnings growth of 14.3 percent y-o-y in Q3-17 to reach SAR 11.4 billion.

Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

The ADX index also witnessed declining trends, as the index lost ground by 4.4 percent during the month of November-17. The index closed at 4283.1 points, and remained

GCC Equity Markets	Index Closing	MTD Chg%	YTD Chg%	M-Cap (USD Bn)	Monthly Value Traded (USD Mn)	P/E (x) TTM	P/B (x) TTM	Div. Yield
Kuwait - Weighted Index	398.8	(5.0%)	4.9%	89.5	1,084.5	14.6	1.2	4.8%
Kuwait - 15 Index	908.5	(6.1%)	2.7%					
Kuwait - Price Index	6,196.5	(4.9%)	7.8%					
Saudi Arabia	7,004.0	1.0%	(2.9%)	442.9	20,063.2	14.8	1.6	4.4%
Abu Dhabi	4,283.1	(4.4%)	(5.8%)	119.4	685.3	10.9	1.5	5.6%
Dubai	3,420.2	(5.9%)	(3.1%)	101.8	2,612.0	9.4	1.2	5.0%
Qatar	7,714.3	(5.5%)	(26.1%)	114.8	1,168.1	11.2	1.0	5.3%
Bahrain	1,283.7	0.5%	5.2%	20.4	40.4	8.5	0.8	5.2%
Oman	5,109.6	2.0%	(11.6%)	11.7	296.1	11.1	1.0	5.9%
Total GCC				900.6	25,949.5	12.7	1.4	4.8%



in the red on a YTD basis. Sectoral performance involved mainly decliners, barring the Investment and Financial Services index remained stable and grew by a marginal 0.9 percent m-o-m. Telecoms were the worst performing index as they plunged by 8.1 percent m-o-m in November-17, as Etisalat dropped by 8.1 percent during the month, while Sudatel declined by 7.9 percent m-o-m as well. The Real Estate sector followed with declines of 7.4 percent m-o-m as the sector and related stocks saw weakness across the UAE during the month. Aldar Properties declined by 7.6 percent for the month, while Eshraq Properties dropped by a higher 8.9 percent m-o-m. Banks were also down by 2.4 percent m-o-m, First Abu Dhabi declined by 2.4 percent m-o-m, while ADCB receded by a higher 4.6 percent for the month of Nov-17.

GCC Equity Markets Monthly Dubai Financial Market

DFM was the worst performing index in the GCC for the month of November-17, as weakness was witnessed across the board, which sent the index into the red on a YTD basis. The index plunged by 5.9 percent m-o-m and closed at 3420.17 points. Sectoral indices were mostly negative for the month barring the Services index and the Industrials sector, as they moved up by 1.4 percent and 0.7 percent respectively. Banks also remained relatively resilient as they receded by 1.6 percent m-o-m in November-17. The worst performing sectoral index was Consumer Staples as it witnessed double digit declines of 10.6 percent m-o-m for the month, primarily due to the 10.8 percent drop in the share price of Dubai Parks and Resorts. Real Estate and Construction companies followed as all traded stocks saw lower levels led by Arabtec which plunged by over 16.7 percent m-o-m,

as investors look to avoid the sector. Weakness was also seen on the IPO market, as shares of Emaar Development that had an IPO price of AED 6.03/share, saw declines in early trades, ascribed to the weakness in the real estate market.

Qatar Exchange

The QE 20 index continued its declining trend for the fourth consecutive month and remains the worst performing market in the region YTD by far, declining eight out of the eleven months of 2017. The QE 20 index dropped by 5.5 percent m-o-m, and closed at 7714.3 points and has lost over a quarter of its market cap from the start of 2017. The Qatar All Share index, which maps the broader index, also witnessed a higher decline, as it went down by 6.6 percent m-o-m for the month of November-17. All indices closed in the red for the month. Market breadth was poor as 37 companies declined, while 6 companies advanced during the month. The Real Estate index was the main laggard, as the index plunged by 12 percent m-o-m, as Mazaya Qatar dropped by 16.7 percent m-o-m, while large caps Ezdan and Barwa declined by 15.8 percent and 6.7 percent respectively. The Insurance index with declines of 9.1 percent m-o-m followed, along with Industrials and Consumer Goods & Services as both indices receded by 7.4 percent each. Banks and Financial Services also saw declines, albeit lower and receded by 4.2 percent on the index, as QNB dropped by 3.7 percent m-o-m, while CBQ gained ground and went up by 1.9 percent m-o-m for the month of November-17.

Bahrain Bourse

The Bahrain All Share Index, continued to stay resilient amongst overall market volatility in the region's stock markets, and closed in the green for the month of November-17. It remains the best performing market YTD,

as the index closed 0.5 percent higher on a m-o-m basis for the month, which has extended YTD gains to +5.2 percent. The index closed at 1283.71 points at the end of the month. Sectoral performance was mixed but was more skewed toward indices that were down, as only the Investment Index and Industrials index gained during the month. Market breadth for the index showed weakness as well, as 8 stocks gained ground, while 17 stocks witnessed declines in their share prices. The Investment index was up 1.0 percent m-o-m, led by GFH was gained by 4.6 percent for the month of November-17. The Industrials index jumped by 10.8 percent m-o-m during November-17, as Aluminium Bahrain single-handedly led to the surge in the index, gaining by 10.8 percent.

Muscat Securities Market

Oman's benchmark MSM 30 index was the best performing index in November-17, as it gained by 1.9 percent m-o-m, despite being amongst the worst performing markets YTD. Sectoral indices were up as well led by the Financials index, which went up by 4.3 percent m-o-m, driven mainly by National Bank of Oman which was up by 11.4 percent m-o-m. The Services index followed with gains of 1.4 percent m-o-m in November-17, while the Industrials index went up marginally by 0.5 percent m-o-m. Earnings declined for companies on listed on the MSM in 9M-17, as net profits dropped by 19.0 percent y-o-y to reach OMR 489 million. Q3-17 earnings dropped as well y-o-y, as net profits declined by 11.3 percent y-o-y to OMR 169.3 million as compared to OMR 191 million in Q3-16.

The Financials sector witnessed a drop of 3.4 percent y-o-y in Q3-17 profits to OMR 91.1 million from OMR 94.4 million in Q3-16, mainly due to the 33.4 percent drop in National Bank of Oman's net profits during the period.

Technology

Apple, Google at Chinese fest shows lure of market

Tech firms promote Beijing's vision on Internet

HONG KONG: The high-profile attendance of the leaders of Apple and Google at a Chinese conference promoting Beijing's vision of a censored internet highlights the dilemma for Western tech companies trying to expand in an increasingly lucrative but restricted market.

The event in Wuzhen, a historic canal town outside Shanghai, marked the first time chiefs of two of the world's biggest tech companies have attended the annual state-run World Internet Conference.

Apple CEO Tim Cook told the gathering as the conference opened Sunday that his company was proud to work with Chinese partners to build a "common future in cyberspace."

His and Google CEO Sundar Pichai's presence along with other business leaders, diplomats and other experts, some analysts say, helped bestow credibility on Beijing's preferred version of an internet sharply at odds with Silicon Valley's dedication to unfettered access.

Chinese President Xi Jinping vowed, in remarks to the conference conveyed by an official, that "China's door to the world will never close, but will only open wider." As in previous years, organizers allowed attendees unrestricted access to the internet, contrary to official policy under which internet users face extensive monitoring and censorship and are blocked from accessing many overseas sites by the so-called Great Firewall of China.

Since Xi came to power in 2013, he has tightened controls and further stifled free expression, activists say. Beijing's restraints also extend to Western companies like Google, Twitter and Facebook, which have largely

been shut out from the market, leaving it to homegrown internet giants like Tencent.

Apple has a large production base in China, which is one of its biggest markets, though domestic smartphone makers are catching up.

It has been criticized by some app developers for complying with Chinese censorship demands. In July, companies that let people get around the government's internet filters - known as virtual private network providers - said their programs had been removed from Apple's app store in China. One such company, ExpressVPN, said Apple was "aiding China's censorship effort."

Apple said that China began requiring this year that developers of virtual-private networks have a government license. The California-based tech giant said it had removed apps "in China that do not meet the new regulations." Two Apple spokeswomen couldn't be reached by phone for comment.

"The problem is that these companies are between a rock and a hard place," said Rogier Creemers, a China researcher at Leiden University who attended the conference. They covet China's huge market but if they do make it in, as in Apple's case, local law "requires things that Western observers generally are uncomfortable with," he said.

Cook's speech drew a big crowd. He said the company supports more than 5 million jobs in China, including 1.8 million software developers who have earned more than 112 billion yuan (\$17 billion).

It's Apple's responsibility to ensure that "technology is infused with humanity," he said, avoiding mention of any sensitive topics. Google shut the Chinese version of



WUZHEN: Apple's CEO Tim Cook delivers a speech at the opening ceremony of the Fourth World Internet Conference in Wuzhen town in Tongxiang, East China's Zhejiang province on Sunday — AP

its search engine in 2010 over censorship concerns. Pichai has talked about wanting to re-enter China, and he told a panel discussion in Wuzhen that small and mid-sized Chinese businesses use Google services to get their products to other countries, according to a report in the South China Morning Post. A Google spokesman declined to comment. The tech giants may have chosen to appear at the conference because the

current political climate in the United States encourages a pragmatic approach in pursuing business regardless of other concerns, said Jonathan Sullivan, director of the University of Nottingham's China Policy Institute.

"There has never been a time when an American company is less likely to be called out by the White House for pursuing a business-first approach," said Sullivan. —AP



Silicon Valley advocates unfettered internet access

University who attended the conference. They covet China's huge market but if they do make it in, as in Apple's case, local law "requires things that Western observers generally are uncomfortable with," he said.

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Facebook opens new London hub, to create 800 UK jobs

LONDON: Facebook opened its new London office yesterday and said it would add another 800 jobs in the capital next year, underlining its commitment to Britain as the country prepares for Brexit.

The investment, which makes London the biggest engineering hub for Facebook outside the United States, was welcomed by finance minister Philip Hammond, who was given a tour of the new building located off the main shopping thoroughfare of Oxford Street.

"It's a sign of confidence in our country that innovative companies like Facebook invest here," he said. Facebook announced the new investment in November last year, shortly after Google said it was building a new hub in the city that will be able to accommodate more than 7,000 employees in total.

The twin announcements were seen as a vote of confidence in London's future as a technological hub despite the decision to leave the European Union which has thrown Britain's future trading relationships into doubt. "The UK's flourishing entrepreneurial ecosystem and international reputation for engineering excellence makes it one of the best places in the world to build a tech company," EMEA vice president Nicola Mendelsohn said.

"And we've built our company here - this country has been a huge part of Facebook's story over the past decade, and I look forward to continuing our work to achieve our mission of bringing the world closer together." The site will also house Facebook's first in-house start-up incubator, called LDN_LAB, designed to help kick start fledgling British digital businesses.

"The emphasis on engineering and the 800 new jobs being created shows London remains at the forefront of global innovation," London Mayor Sadiq Khan said in a statement.

"What's more, the launch of the company's incubator is set to play a crucial role in attracting vital talent to London and will help to pave the way for the next generation of successful start-ups."

The new jobs, which come 10 years after the company set up its first London office, will take Facebook's total British workforce to more than 2,300 by the end of 2018, it said.

Facebook's new office in the capital's West End, designed by architect Frank Gehry, will house engineers, developers, marketing and sales teams working on products like Workplace, its business product which was built in London, it said. —Reuters

Facebook launches parent-controlled Messenger app for kids

NEW YORK: Facebook is coming for your kids. The social media giant is launching a messaging app for children to chat with their parents and with friends approved by their parents.

The free app is aimed at kids under 13, who can't yet have their own accounts under Facebook's rules, though they often do. Messenger Kids comes with a slew of controls for parents. The service won't let children add their own friends or delete messages - only parents can do that. Kids don't get a separate Facebook or Messenger account; rather, it's an extension of a parent's account.

A kids-focused experience

While children do use messaging and social media apps designed for teenagers and adults, those services aren't built for them, said Kristelle Lavallee, a children's psychology expert who advised Facebook on designing the service.

"The risk of exposure to things they were not developmentally prepared for is huge," she said. Messenger Kids, meanwhile, "is a result of seeing what kids like," which is images, emoji and the like. Face filters and playful masks can be distracting for adults, Lavallee said, but for kids who are just learning how to form relationships and stay in touch with parents digitally, they are ways to express themselves. Lavallee, who is content strategist at the Center on Media and Child Health at Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard University, called Messenger Kids a "useful tool" that "makes parents the gatekeepers." But she said that while Facebook made the app "with the best of intentions," it's not yet known how people will actually use it.

As with other tools Facebook has released in the past,

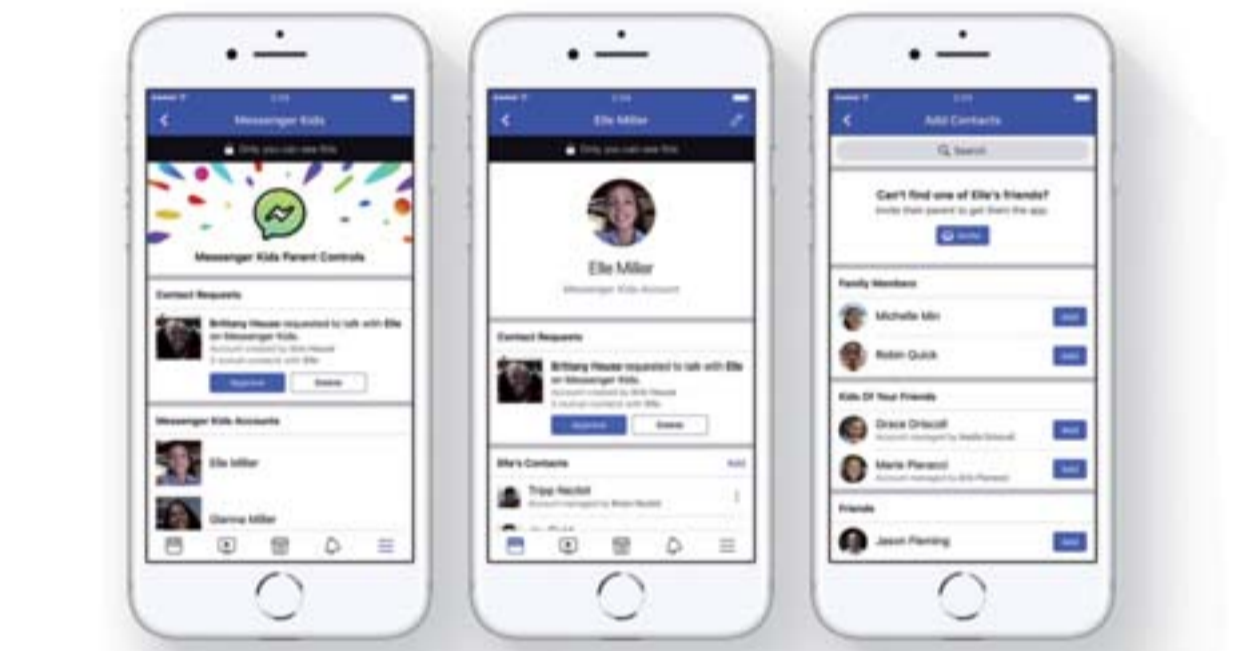
Singapore researchers' underwater robot inspired by manta ray

SINGAPORE: Researchers in Singapore have built an underwater robot that looks and swims like a manta ray, using only single motors and flexible fins to propel it through water in a manner uncannily like its biological cousin. It's not the first of its kind - academics have spent years trying to mimic the wing-like movements of rays' pectoral fins - but Chew Chee Meng of the National University of Singapore says it's the first to use single motors for each fin and rely on the interplay of fluid and fin.

One of nature's most efficient and graceful swimmers, manta rays have long fascinated scientists with a unique propulsion method to cruise through even turbulent seas, flapping their pectoral fins effortlessly to drive water backwards.

So-called bio-locomotion, says Keith Moored, an assistant professor of mechanical engineering and mechanics at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, has been studied for about 30 years.

But there is still a lot of work to be done on understanding the fluid flow around bio-robotic fins and the interaction between fluid and structure in flexible fins



This photo provided by Facebook demonstrates parental controls on Facebook's new Messenger app for kids. —AP

intentions and real-world use do not always match up. Facebook's live video streaming feature, for example, has been used for plenty of innocuous and useful things, but also to stream crimes and suicides.

Hooked on Facebook

Is Messenger Kids simply a way for Facebook to rope in the young ones? Stephen Balkam, CEO of the non-profit Family Online Safety Institute, said "that train has left the station."

Federal law prohibits internet companies from collecting personal information on kids under 13 without their parents' permission and imposes restrictions on advertising to them. This is why Facebook and many other social

media companies prohibit younger kids from joining. Even so, Balkam said millions of kids under 13 are already on Facebook, with or without their parents' approval.

He said Facebook is trying to deal with the situation pragmatically by steering young Facebook users to a service designed for them. Facebook said Messenger Kids won't show ads or collect data for marketing. Facebook also said it won't automatically move users to the regular Messenger or Facebook when they get old enough, though the company might give them the option to move contacts to Messenger down the line. Messenger Kids is launching Monday in the US on Apple devices - the iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch. Versions for Android and Amazon's tablets are coming later. —AP

Facebook's Sandberg warns of backlash against women

NEW YORK: Sheryl Sandberg is warning of a potential backlash against women and is urging companies to put into place clear policies on how allegations of sexual harassment are handled. In a Facebook post over the weekend, Sandberg said she has experienced harassment while doing her job but never by anyone she's worked for. The Facebook executive said "too many workplaces lack clear policies about how to handle accusations of sexual harassment." She recommends every workplace start with clear principles and put in place policies to support them. That includes creating training sessions on proper workplace behavior, taking all claims seriously, establishing an investigation process and taking swift, decisive action against wrongdoing. Sandberg said she hopes the "#metoo" movement will result in a "stronger, more equitable workplace." —AP



Sheryl Sandberg

Health

Sea turtles' sad fate: From restaurant menus to plastic 'soup'

Turtles confuse plastic for jellyfish

WATAMU, Kenya: Gently, Kenzo the sea turtle is lowered onto a beach where a scattering of bottle caps, candy wrappers, yoghurt cups and discarded flipflops scar an otherwise idyllic setting. As its human handlers step aside, Kenzo struggles out of the harness, pushes hard with its flippers on the sand, and slides into small waves speckled with bits of plastic trash. With a final gulp of air, the hawksbill turtle executes a perfect butterfly stroke and disappears into deeper water—a rare lucky escape for one of Kenya's sea turtles, increasingly under siege from humanity's plastic binge.

Dozens of the endangered creatures need rescuing every year around the coastal town of Watamu, where plastic litter accumulates in the Indian Ocean and the beach from as far afield as Indonesia, Madagascar and Yemen, according to the product labels. Most common are bottle tops, but there are also cigarette lighters, toothbrushes, food containers, different lengths of string, drinks bottles and of course, the ubiquitous plastic shopping bag.

Turtles confuse these items, bobbing and fluttering about in the ocean currents, for jellyfish or other prey. To their peril. "It causes a blockage... but they're still hungry so they keep eating and it compounds, compounds, compounds and they explode on the inside," said Casper van de Geer, manager of Local Ocean Conservation, which runs the Watamu turtle rescue. "Or they are in such pain that they recognize that they have to stop eating and they basically starve," he said at Watamu's Blue Lagoon as he repeatedly bent down to pick up one piece of beach litter after the other.

'Sometimes they can't'

Many turtles are found floating, barely alive, having eaten so much plastic that they become buoyant and can no longer dive into the depths where they live and feed. Once they reach this point, few can be saved. At a turtle "clinic", van de Geer and his team tube-feed laxatives to the turtles in hopes that the intestinal plug can be loosened. "It takes a while but eventually after a lot of pain, and I mean it's a reptile so it can't express pain like a mammal can in its face, but you can see that it's just closing its eyes and its all sort of tensed up and all of a sudden 'poof', it all comes out," he said.

But "sometimes they can't. More (often) than not, the ani-

mal will... die." Plastic ocean pollution is a key item on the menu for ministers from over 100 countries gathering in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi for a three-day UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) starting yesterday. The problem is a global one, affecting all the oceans and hundreds of animal and plant species. According to environmental group WWF, 8.8 million tons of plastic enters the ocean every year, the equivalent of a garbage truck dumping a full load every minute. Plastic is cheap, versatile and high-indestructible. And by now it is pretty much everywhere. A shopping bag is estimated to degrade over hundreds of years, and harder plastics could be around for millennia before they are broken down and absorbed in the environment.

A very successful story

In July, US researchers said more than 9.1 billion tons of plastic had been produced to date, most of it dumped into landfills and the oceans. Ahead of the UNEA meeting to tackle the scourge of pollution, UN Environment Program head Erik Solheim urged action to stop the oceans becoming a "plastic soup". On current trends, he warned, "by 2050 there will

Plastic ocean pollution, a key item



be more plastic in the seas than fish." In Watamu, the locals do what they can. Mohamed Iddi, a 42-year-old fisherman, proudly proclaims that he voluntarily collects two or three large garbage bags full of plastic along the Blue Lagoon beach every day.

"Some plastic is brought from the sea. Some others is from... when people they come for the enjoyment on the beach, for the barbecue, the picnic," he says, pointing to large piles of collected rubbish, divided into categories, with a special heap for shoe soles. "Sometimes I find (plastic) in the stomachs" of the fish he catches. "Ropes, the small ones. Because when the fish goes to look for some prey... when it finds something like this... it will think maybe it is something to eat." Elsewhere in town, a project called Regeneration Africa melts and treats the plastic gathered by volunteers such as Iddi, and molds it into paving stones and other materials to sell for funds to continue the anti-plastic drive. Fisherman-turned-environmentalist Kahindi Changawa, 40, looks with a smile over the tank for Kai, a green turtle which has been recovering from plastic ingestion at the Watamu rehabilitation center for nearly a month. —AFP



QUINCY: A sea turtle swims in a tank at New England Aquarium's Sea Turtle Hospital in Quincy, Massachusetts. —AFP

Brigitte Macron fetes first panda born in France

PARIS: Named "godmother" to France's first panda cub in August, French First Lady Brigitte Macron helped baptize her fluffy charge yesterday in one of her most high-profile outings since her husband's election. The male cub was the first ever born in France where its mother has been on loan from China since 2012, as part of Beijing's "panda diplomacy" efforts.

The 64-year-old French first lady cooed over the infant bear at Beauval Zoo and then watched as China's junior foreign minister unveiled his name as Yuan Meng, which means "making a dream come true" in Chinese. President Emmanuel Macron's wife has kept out of the spotlight since his victory in

May, assisting with major state visits and foreign trips but avoiding speaking engagements or interviews.

Faced with a hostile online petition and damaging headlines, Macron dropped plans in August to create an official First Lady status for Brigitte which would have given her a formal legal role. Making her first speech yesterday, Brigitte said France had been "proud and happy" to host the pandas from China and that the cub was a symbol of the historic ties between the countries. "Through him, we have a responsibility to work on building Franco-Chinese friendship," Brigitte said in a message addressed to her Chinese counterpart and fellow "godmother" Peng Liyuan, who was meant to attend the ceremony but was absent.

Panda reproduction, in captivity or in the wild, is notoriously difficult because the female panda is only in heat once a year for about 48 hours. But the number of pandas worldwide has rebounded since the black-and-white bear was declared an endangered animal in the 1980s, thanks to efforts to protect it and its habitat. China has dispatched its national treasure to only about a dozen countries, using the animal as a symbol of close relations. —AFP

CLINIC

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What's On

Jumeirah hotel to go under extended renovation in 2018

Hotel to stop receiving guests from mid-May to early October

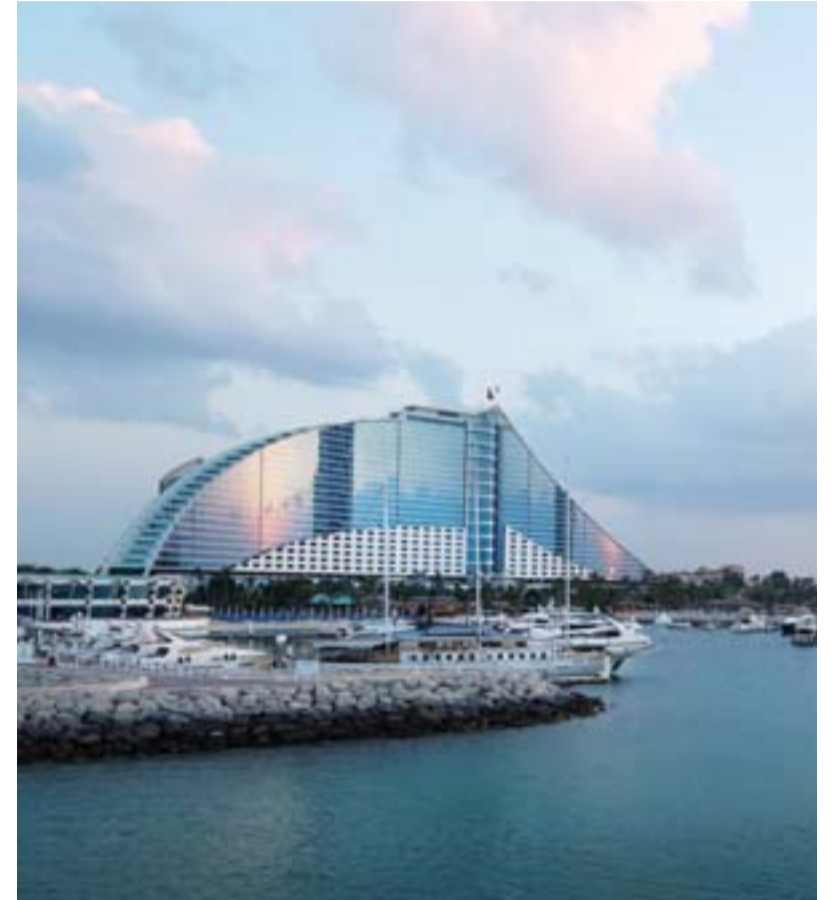
The ultimate family lifestyle destination, Jumeirah Beach Hotel is to undergo a significant makeover next summer, starting from Mid-May to early October 2018 during which the hotel will stop receiving guests to allow for the completion of a two year renovation program of the whole hotel.

The hotel will relaunch in early October, in time for its 21st anniversary celebrations in December 2018, with a fresh look and new guest facilities designed to create memorable experiences for years to come. The work will extend to 425 guest bedrooms, the public spaces, lobby, retail areas, beach and outdoor facilities, restaurants and dining outlets. This follows initial renovation work completed in 2017, that covered 172 rooms and 3 suites, the Kids Club, beach and beachfront restaurants.

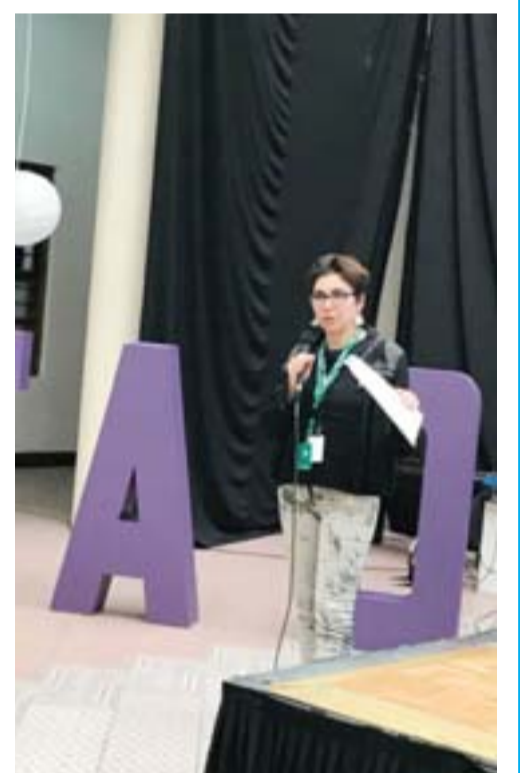
Sven Wiedenhaupt, General Manager, Jumeirah Beach Hotel commented: "We are very excited that Jumeirah Beach Hotel is to undergo such a significant transformation. The refurbishment project has taken careful planning and consideration, and although both our loyal guests who stay with us year after year and the Dubai community will miss visiting their favorite hotel and restaurants during its renovation, I can assure them that a brand new Jumeirah Beach Hotel experience is coming, that will be well worth the wait. The famed wave-shape exterior of the hotel will remain untouched but the experience inside will be revamped, ensuring we are geared up to create another twenty years of memories."

Although the hotel and its restaurants will be taking an extended summer break, Wild Wadi Waterpark will operate as normal for both external guests, and on an unlimited and complimentary basis for all guests staying at Burj Al-Arab Jumeirah, Madinat Jumeirah, Jumeirah Zabeel Saray, Jumeirah Emirates Towers and Jumeirah Creekside Hotel. Other facilities that will also remain open and unaffected will include Talise gym and café, certain parts of the beach, The Kids Club for Talise members and La Veranda restaurant for lunch.

All guests who have reservations at the Jumeirah Beach Hotel during the renovation period will be offered alternative stays in Dubai at one of the premier beachfront properties within Madinat Jumeirah, the Arabian Resort.



LAPA launches Festival of Arts and Dancing



LOYAC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA) launched its five-day Festival of Arts and Dancing (FAD) this past weekend, with events taking place daily from 4:30 pm to 9:00 pm. The festival started by the 'Level Up' children solo dancing performances, where children performed before a jury comprising Helen Alexander, Carina and Salem Al-Harassi. The following dance was titled 'Battle' in which dancers demonstrated various dancing techniques. The festival also includes workshops on break dance, hip hop in addition to the story of the first Saudi female hip hop dancer Khadija Al-Sheikh.

ICSK philanthropic gesture to the needy



The Indian Community School (ICSK) Senior Kuwait has continued its efforts in ameliorating the burden of the less affluent, through financial donations. ICSK Senior has committed itself to this worthy cause since 2014, and continues to imbue a charitable heart in all of its students. The staff and students of the school reliably partake in this endeavor through its many tributaries such as the 'Birthday Charity Fund'. The school offers students with the unique opportunity to give, out of their own inclination, and resurrect a spirit of chivalry in a world where students are spurred into receiving alone.

In response to news that an Indian national, Jayesh, 32, had been undergoing treatment as he met with a horrifying accident five months ago, in which he lost his right leg, the ICSK Senior family generously contributed toward his special treatment in India after he had spent a few months at Adan Hospital, Kuwait. Jayesh is one of many beneficiaries that ICSK Senior has supported for the past four years - many of whom were cancer survivors. Up until now, a sum total of INR. 25 lakh has been provided to underprivileged patients struggling against the harrowing costs of medical treatment in Kuwait.

X-cite participates in IGN Convention

As part of its commitment to taking part in activities that add value to its customers, X-cite by Alghanim Electronics, Kuwait's largest electronic retailer and one of the largest showrooms in the Middle East, was a main sponsor for the IGN Convention for video games which was held from 23 to 25 November 2017 at the Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref.

During the Convention, X-cite was present through the events and activities that were held and included many competitions and interactive gaming sessions which attracted fans of these games and visitors. Among these video games were three competitions for the League of Legends, Tekken and Super Smash Bros. The Convention also comprised a host of other world-renowned activities and games such as Forza 7, Marvel vs Capcom and Mario Kart.

X-cite also distributed giveaways to visitors of its corner, where they were able to play the most recent video games and test the recently launched XBOXIX, in addition to a marketing section in which visitors were able to choose and reserve their favorite games.

A key significance to X-cite's corner was the participation of HP which places strong confidence in X-cite and its showrooms. Large and modern screens were placed in the corner to enable gamers to enjoy the ultimate image quality and sound clarity thanks to the best brands designing these computer screens such as Lenovo, Dell and Asus.

IGN Convention is one of the most interactive video games events that showcases the latest in the world of video games and entertainment. The Convention is held regularly in a number of countries and attracts large numbers of visitors.



TV



00:05 As Above, So Below
01:50 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part II
04:15 Tremors 5: Bloodlines
06:00 Independents' Day
07:40 Batman: The Killing Joke
09:00 Frontera
10:45 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part II
13:05 The Last Rescue
14:55 Batman: The Killing Joke
16:15 Nick Of Time
17:50 Warcraft: The Beginning
19:55 Face/Off
22:15 The Transporter
23:50 Revenge Of The Green Dragons



00:50 Untamed & Uncut
01:45 Treeshouse Masters
02:40 Preposterous Pets
03:35 Meet The Orangutans
04:00 Meet The Orangutans
04:25 Monsters Inside Me
05:15 River Monsters
06:02 Wildest Indochina
06:49 Untamed & Uncut
07:36 Escape To Chimp Eden
08:00 Orangutan Island
08:25 Meet The Orangutans
08:50 Meet The Orangutans
09:15 Treeshouse Masters
10:10 Preposterous Pets
11:05 Wildest Indochina
12:00 Meet The Orangutans
12:28 Meet The Orangutans
12:55 Monsters Inside Me
13:50 River Monsters
14:45 Preposterous Pets
15:40 Wildest Indochina
16:35 Untamed & Uncut
17:30 Treeshouse Masters
18:25 Glory Hounds
19:20 Africa's Trees Of Life
20:15 Cats 101
21:10 Meet The Orangutans
21:38 Meet The Orangutans
22:05 Glory Hounds
23:00 Africa's Trees Of Life
23:55 Wildest Indochina



00:35 Call The Midwife: Christmas Special 2015
01:25 SS-GB
02:25 New Tricks
03:15 Call The Midwife
04:10 The Coroner
05:00 Casuality
06:00 Casuality
06:50 The Coroner
07:45 Doctors
08:15 Casuality
10:05 The Coroner
10:55 New Tricks
11:55 Doctor Who
12:45 Call The Midwife
13:40 Casuality
14:35 The Coroner
15:30 Doctor Who
16:20 Call The Midwife
17:15 New Tricks
18:10 Holly City
19:05 The Coroner
19:50 Doctor Who: The Husbands Of River Song
20:50 Five By Five
21:00 Silent Witness
23:00 Orphan Black
23:45 Holly City



00:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
01:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
02:00 It Takes A Killer
02:30 It Takes A Killer
03:00 The Jersey Slayings
04:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
05:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
06:00 It Takes A Killer
06:30 It Takes A Killer
07:00 Homicide Hunter
08:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
09:00 It Takes A Killer
09:30 It Takes A Killer
10:00 Homicide Hunter
11:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
12:00 Escaping Polygamy
13:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
14:00 It Takes A Killer
14:30 It Takes A Killer
15:00 Homicide Hunter
16:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
17:00 The First 48
18:00 It Takes A Killer
18:30 It Takes A Killer
19:00 The First 48
20:00 The First 48
22:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
23:00 The First 48



00:03 The Roast Of Rob Lowe
01:25 Graves
01:55 Nightcap
02:15 Broad City
02:38 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Tosh.0
03:50 Broad City
04:15 Kroll Show
04:40 Key And Peele
05:05 Important Things With Demetri Martin
05:30 Impractical Jokers UK
05:55 Disaster Date
06:20 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:50 Frankenfood
07:15 Frankenfood
07:40 I Live With Models
08:05 Impractical Jokers UK
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Workaholics
09:20 Kroll Show
09:45 Key And Peele
10:10 Important Things With Demetri Martin
10:35 I Live With Models
11:00 Impractical Jokers UK
11:25 Disaster Date
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:15 Impractical Jokers
12:40 Frankenfood
13:00 Important Things With Demetri Martin
13:55 Friends
14:20 Friends
14:45 Workaholics
15:10 Key And Peele
15:35 Kroll Show
16:00 Comedy Central Presents
16:30 Impractical Jokers
16:55 Friends
17:20 Friends
17:45 Disaster Date

18:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:35 Frankenfood
19:25 Impractical Jokers
19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
20:12 Friends
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Idiotsitter
22:00 Broad City
22:25 Another Period
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:05 Origins
00:30 Destroyed In Seconds
00:55 Destroyed In Seconds
01:20 Tethered
02:10 Somebody's Gotta Do It
03:00 Ultimate Survival
03:50 Destroyed In Seconds
04:15 Destroyed In Seconds
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Origins
05:55 Origins
06:20 Nextworld
07:00 Destroyed In Seconds
07:25 Destroyed In Seconds
07:50 Origins
08:15 Origins
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Nextworld
10:20 Ultimate Survival
11:10 React To That
11:35 React To That
12:00 Kids Do The Craziest Things
12:25 Kids Do The Craziest Things
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Nextworld
14:30 Destroyed In Seconds
14:55 Destroyed In Seconds
15:20 Origins
15:45 Origins
16:10 Ultimate Survival
17:00 React To That
17:25 React To That
17:50 Kids Do The Craziest Things
18:15 Kids Do The Craziest Things
18:40 Nextworld
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Destroyed In Seconds
20:45 Destroyed In Seconds
21:10 React To That
21:35 React To That
22:00 Kids Do The Craziest Things
22:25 Kids Do The Craziest Things
22:50 Ultimate Survival
23:40 Origins



00:50 Six Degrees Of Murder
01:45 Who Killed Angie Dodge: Keith Morrison...
02:40 Obsession: Dark Desires
03:35 I Speak For The Dead
04:30 Six Degrees Of Murder
05:25 The Locator
05:50 The Locator
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It
07:10 Swamp Murders
08:00 Young, Hot & Crooked
08:25 Disappeared
09:15 The Locator
09:40 The Locator
10:10 Swamp Murders
11:05 Suspicion
12:00 Murder Calls
12:55 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 Swamp Murders
15:40 Snowed Out Of Doubt
16:35 Gone
17:30 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
18:25 The Locator
18:50 The Locator
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It
20:15 Swamp Murders
21:10 Snowed Out Of Doubt
22:05 Murder Chose Me
23:00 Guilty Rich
23:55 American Monster

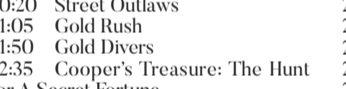


00:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Hank Zipzer
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Hank Zipzer
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
04:20 Hank Zipzer
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:10 Alex & Co.
05:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Jessie
07:25 Tangled: The Series
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
08:20 Elena Of Avalor
08:45 Bunk'd
09:10 Stuck In The Middle
09:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
10:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
10:25 LoloRock
10:50 LoloRock
11:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
12:05 Hank Zipzer
12:30 Alex & Co.
12:55 Alex & Co.
13:20 LoloRock
13:45 LoloRock
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
14:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
15:00 The Zhuzhus
15:15 K.C. Undercover
15:40 Stuck In The Middle
16:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
16:10 Elena Of Avalor
16:35 Bizaardvark
16:50 Tangled: The Series
17:00 Descendants Wicked World
17:30 Bunk'd
17:55 K.C. Undercover
18:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
18:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
19:10 Star Wars Forces Of Destiny
19:15 Stuck In The Middle

19:40 Girl Meets World
20:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:10 Liv And Maddie
20:35 Jessie
21:00 Tangled: The Series
21:25 K.C. Undercover
21:50 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
22:15 Bizaardvark
22:40 Bunk'd
23:05 Rolling With The Ronks
23:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
23:45 LoloRock



00:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
00:25 Unbungalievable
00:35 Loopdidoo
00:55 Henry Hugglemonster
01:15 Calimero
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopdidoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopdidoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:10 Art Attack
04:35 Loopdidoo
04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopdidoo
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster
07:15 Calimero
07:30 Loopdidoo
07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
08:00 P-King Duckling
08:30 Puppy Dog Pals
09:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
09:30 Sofia The First
10:00 Vampirina
10:30 PJ Masks
11:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
11:30 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
12:00 The Lion Guard
12:30 The Lion Guard
13:00 Sofia The First
13:30 Sofia The First
14:00 PJ Masks
14:30 PJ Masks
15:00 P-King Duckling
15:30 Doc McStuffins
16:00 Puppy Dog Pals
16:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
17:00 Sofia The First
17:30 Doc McStuffins
18:00 PJ Masks
18:30 Puppy Dog Pals
19:00 Sofia The First
19:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
20:00 The Lion Guard
20:30 P-King Duckling
21:00 Doc McStuffins
21:30 PJ Masks
22:00 Vampirina
22:30 Sofia The First
23:00 P-King Duckling
23:30 Puppy Dog Pals



00:20 Street Outlaws
01:05 Gold Rush
01:50 Gold Divers
02:35 Cooper's Treasure: The Hunt For A Secret Fortune
03:20 Diesel Brothers
04:05 Deadliest Catch
04:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Gold Divers
06:45 Street Outlaws
07:30 Diesel Brothers
08:15 Deadliest Catch
09:00 Container Wars
09:25 How Do They Do It?
09:47 How Do They Do It?
10:12 Gold Rush
10:57 Gold Divers
11:42 Cooper's Treasure: The Hunt For A Secret Fortune
12:25 How Do They Do It?
12:48 Storage Hunters UK
13:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
13:55 Deadliest Catch
14:40 Gold Divers
15:25 Diesel Brothers
16:10 Street Outlaws
17:00 How Do They Do It?
17:25 How Do They Do It?
17:50 Storage Hunters UK
18:20 Container Wars
18:50 Deadliest Catch
19:40 How Do They Do It?
20:10 How Do They Do It?
20:35 How Do They Do It?
21:00 American Tarzan
21:50 Bushcraft Build-Off
22:40 Ed Stafford: Left For Dead
23:30 Diesel Brothers



06:00 Disney II
06:25 Supa Strikas
06:50 Marvel's Spider-Man
07:15 Right Now Kapow
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:45 Mech-X4
08:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
08:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
09:00 Supa Strikas
09:25 Supa Strikas
09:50 Walk The Prank
10:20 Walk The Prank
10:45 Gravity Falls
11:10 Gravity Falls
11:35 Lab Rats
12:00 Phineas And Ferb
12:25 Phineas And Ferb
13:00 Zeke And Luther
13:25 Zeke And Luther
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
14:40 Gravity Falls
15:05 Lab Rats
15:30 Milo Murphy's Law
15:55 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures
16:20 Two More Eggs
16:25 Walk The Prank
16:50 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Marvel's Spider-Man
18:05 Supa Strikas
18:30 Marvel's Ant-Man
18:35 Disney II
19:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
19:25 Right Now Kapow
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Mech-X4
20:20 Walk The Prank
20:45 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures
21:10 Gravity Falls
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot

21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats
22:10 Lab Rats
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am



00:10 Famously Single
01:00 So Cosmo
01:55 So Cosmo
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 Mariah's World
04:40 Mariah's World
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
06:55 El News
07:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
08:10 El News: Daily Pop
09:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
10:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
11:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
12:00 El News
12:15 WAGs La
13:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
14:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
15:00 El News
15:15 El News: Daily Pop
16:15 The Platinum Life
17:10 The Platinum Life
18:05 The Platinum Life
19:00 El News
20:00 Fashion Police
21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
22:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
23:00 El News
23:15 WAGs La



00:00 Restaurant: Impossible
01:00 Mystery Diners
01:30 Mystery Diners
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Chopped
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa
06:25 Barefoot Contessa
06:50 Bake With Anna Olson
07:15 The Kitchen
08:05 The Pioneer Woman
08:30 The Pioneer Woman
08:55 Siba's Table
09:25 Siba's Table
09:55 Bake With Anna Olson
10:25 Bake With Anna Olson
10:55 The Kitchen
11:45 Cooking For Real
12:10 The Pioneer Woman
12:35 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Siba's Table
13:30 Siba's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 Bake With Anna Olson
17:30 Bake With Anna Olson
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Holiday Baking Championship
20:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
20:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
21:00 Man Fire Food
21:30 Man Fire Food
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



00:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
04:20 Tracey Ullman's Show
04:50 Raised By Wolves
05:15 Murdoch Mysteries
06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
07:05 The Chase
08:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
09:00 Tracey Ullman's Show
09:35 Raised By Wolves
10:05 Murdoch Mysteries
10:55 Who's Doing The Dishes?
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?
15:10 The Chase
16:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
17:25 Gino's Hidden Italy
17:50 Murdoch Mysteries
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
22:25 Gino's Hidden Italy
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Million Dollar Genius
01:00 America's Book Of Secrets
02:00 Command Decisions
03:00 Missing In Alaska
03:50 Ancient Aliens
04:40 Hoard Hunters
05:30 Million Dollar Genius
06:20 America's Book Of Secrets
07:10 The Universe
08:00 Command Decisions
09:00 Missing In Alaska
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Hoard Hunters
12:00 Million Dollar Genius
13:00 America's Book Of Secrets
14:00 Command Decisions
15:00 Missing In Alaska
16:00 Ancient Aliens
17:00 Hoard Hunters
18:00 The Universe
19:00 America's Book Of Secrets
20:00 Command Decisions
21:00 Missing In Alaska
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 UFO Files



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club

02:50 Counting Cars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Time Team
05:00 Counting Cars
05:25 Counting Cars
06:00 Ultimate Wheels
06:50 American Pickers
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Aussie Pickers
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 Ultimate Wheels
11:50 American Pickers
12:40 Counting Cars
13:05 Counting Cars
13:30 Time Team
14:20 Swamp People
15:10 Alone
16:00 American Pickers
16:50 Counting Cars
17:15 Counting Cars
17:40 Swamp People
18:30 Alone
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 Pawn Stars
20:35 Pawn Stars
21:00 Mountain Men
21:50 Forged: Iron & Fire
22:15 Milwaukee Blacksmith
22:40 Time Team
23:30 Alone



00:15 Fusion Forager
01:10 Rustic Adventures Italy
01:40 Restoration Man
02:35 Cool Spaces
03:30 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
03:55 My Dubai
04:25 Wineroads
04:50 Wineroads
05:20 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
06:15 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
06:40 Stepping Out
07:10 Restoration Man
08:05 Cool Spaces
09:00 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
09:25 My Dubai
09:55 Wineroads
10:20 Wineroads
10:50 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
11:45 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
12:10 Stepping Out
12:40 Croatia's Finest
13:05 Sara's Australia Unveiled
13:35 What's For Sale?
14:00 What's For Sale?
14:30 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
14:55 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
15:25 Wineroads
15:50 Wineroads
16:20 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
17:15 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
17:40 Stepping Out
18:10 Miguel's Feasts
18:35 Maximum Foodie
19:05 Wineroads
19:30 Wineroads
20:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
21:00 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
21:30 Stepping Out
22:00 Miguel's Feasts
22:25 Maximum Foodie
22:55 Croatia's Finest
23:20 Sara's Australia Unveiled
23:50 What's For Sale?



00:10 Facing...
01:00 Live Free Or Die
02:00 Planes That Changed The World
03:00 Machine Impossible
04:00 Facing...
05:00 Building Wild
06:00 Route Awakening
06:30 Route Awakening
07:00 Bad Trip
08:00 Air Crash Investigation
09:00 Building Wild
10:00 Yukon Gold
11:00 Cold Water Gold
12:00 Brain Games
13:00 How To Win At Everything
14:00 Bad Trip
15:00 Science Of Stupid
16:00 Route Awakening
17:00 Yukon Gold
18:00 Air Crash Investigation
19:00 Seconds From Disaster
20:00 Yukon Gold
20:50 Cold Water Gold
21:40 Air Crash Investigation
22:30 Brain Games
23:20 Brain Games
23:45 How To Win At Everything

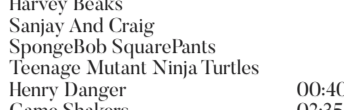


00:20 Original Fight Club
01:10 World's Deadliest Killer Three
02:00 Brutal Killers
02:50 Monster Fish
03:45 The Invaders
04:40 Ultimate
05:35 Brutal Killers
06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 The Invaders
08:20 Ultimate
09:15 Savage Kingdom: Uprising
10:10 Deadly Instincts
11:05 Prehistoric Predators
12:00 Fish Tank Kings
12:55 Man-Eater Of The Congo
13:50 Monster Fish
14:45 The Invaders
15:40 Animal Fight Club 4.5
16:35 Savage Kingdom: Uprising
17:30 Deadly Instincts
18:25 Secret Life Of Predators
19:20 The Invaders
20:10 Animal Fight Club 4.5
21:00 Savage Kingdom: Uprising
21:50 Deadly Instincts
22:40 Secret Life Of Predators
23:30 Fish Tank Kings



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club

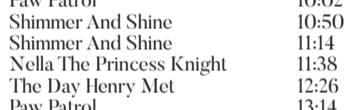
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:24 Rabbids Invasion
07:48 Get Blake
08:12 Harvey Beaks
08:36 Sanjay And Craig
09:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
09:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
09:48 Henry Danger
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 Regal Academy
11:00 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Rabbids Invasion
13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Sanjay And Craig
13:48 Hunter Street
14:12 I Am Frankie
14:36 The Thundermans
15:00 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
15:24 School Of Rock
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Alvin And The Chipmunks
17:24 I Am Frankie
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
20:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
20:60 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
21:24 Sanjay And Craig
21:48 Rabbids Invasion
22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



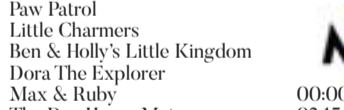
00:40 1984
02:35 Pawn Sacrifice
04:35 Wildlife
06:25 The Education Of Little Tree
08:25 Me Before You
10:20 Pawn Sacrifice
12:20 The Education Of Little Tree
14:20 The Shamer's Daughter
16:05 All The Wilderness
17:30 Meru
19:10 The Descendants
21:10 Lucky Them
22:55 Dream Lover



00:15 Shimmer And Shine
00:38 Shimmer And Shine
01:00 Max & Ruby
01:23 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:34 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:45 The Day Henry Met
01:49 The Day Henry Met
01:55 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:18 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:40 Zack & Quack
03:01 Shimmer And Shine
03:23 Nella The Princess Knight
03:35 Paw Patrol
03:58 Little Charmers
04:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
04:21 Dora The Explorer
04:44 Max & Ruby
05:06 The Day Henry Met
05:12 Nella The Princess Knight
05:35 Shimmer And Shine
05:46 Shimmer And Shine
05:58 Wallykazam!
06:21 Zack & Quack
06:31 The Day Henry Met
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
07:00 Rusty Rivets
07:12 Paw Patrol
07:37 Dora The Explorer
08:00 Nella The Princess Knight
08:21 Bubble Guppies
08:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:07 Paw Patrol
09:30 Shimmer And Shine
09:41 Shimmer And Shine
09:54 Nella The Princess Knight
10:16 The Day Henry Met
10:21 Paw Patrol
10:44 Rusty Rivets
11:07 Wallykazam!
11:29 Bubble Guppies
11:52 Team Umizoomi
12:15 Shimmer And Shine
12:38 Shimmer And Shine
13:01 Max & Ruby
13:23 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:34 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:45 The Day Henry Met
13:50 The Day Henry Met
13:55 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:18 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:40 Zack & Quack
15:01 Shimmer And Shine
15:23 Nella The Princess Knight
15:35 Paw Patrol
15:58 Little Charmers
16:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
16:21 Dora The Explorer
16:44 Max & Ruby
17:06 The Day Henry Met
17:12 Nella The Princess Knight
17:34 Shimmer And Shine
17:46 Shimmer And Shine
17:58 Wallykazam!
18:21 Zack & Quack
18:31 The Day Henry Met
18:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
19:00 Rusty Rivets
19:12 Paw Patrol
19:37 Dora The Explorer
20:00 Nella The Princess Knight
20:22 Bubble Guppies
20:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines
21:07 Paw Patrol
21:30 Shimmer And Shine
21:41 Shimmer And Shine
21:52 Nella The Princess Knight
22:14 The Day Henry Met
22:20 Paw Patrol
22:43 Rusty Rivets
23:06 Wallykazam!
23:29 Bubble Guppies
23:52 Team Umizoomi



00:40 Mythbusters
01:30 How Do They Do It?
01:55 Food Factory USA
02:20 X-Machines
03:10 Space Pioneer
04:00 Prototype This
04:48 Mythbusters
05:36 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Food Factory USA
06:24 X-Machines
07:12 Space Pioneer
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:26 Prototype This
09:14 Mythbusters
10:02 Space Pioneer
10:50 How Do They Do It?
11:34 Food Factory USA
11:38 X-Machines
12:26 Prototype This
13:14 Mythbusters
14:02 How Do They Do It?
14:26 Food Factory USA
14:50 Space Pioneer
15:38 Prototype This
16:26 X-Machines
17:14 Mythbusters
18:02 Space Pioneer
18:50 Prototype This
19:40 Mythbusters
20:30 How It's Made
20:55 How It's Made
21:20 How Do They Do It?
21:45 Food Factory USA
22:10 Space Pioneer
23:00 How It's Made
23:25 How It's Made
23:50 Prototype This



00:00 The Alamo
02:15 The Matador
03:50 Ironclad
05:50 The Assignment
07:30 02:22
09:15 A Long Way Down
10:45 Drowning Mona
12:20 Into The Woods
14:20 The Matador
16:00 Big Hero 6
17:45 The Alamo
20:00 The Illusionist
22:00 Love And Other Impossible Pursuits
23:45 The Last Kiss

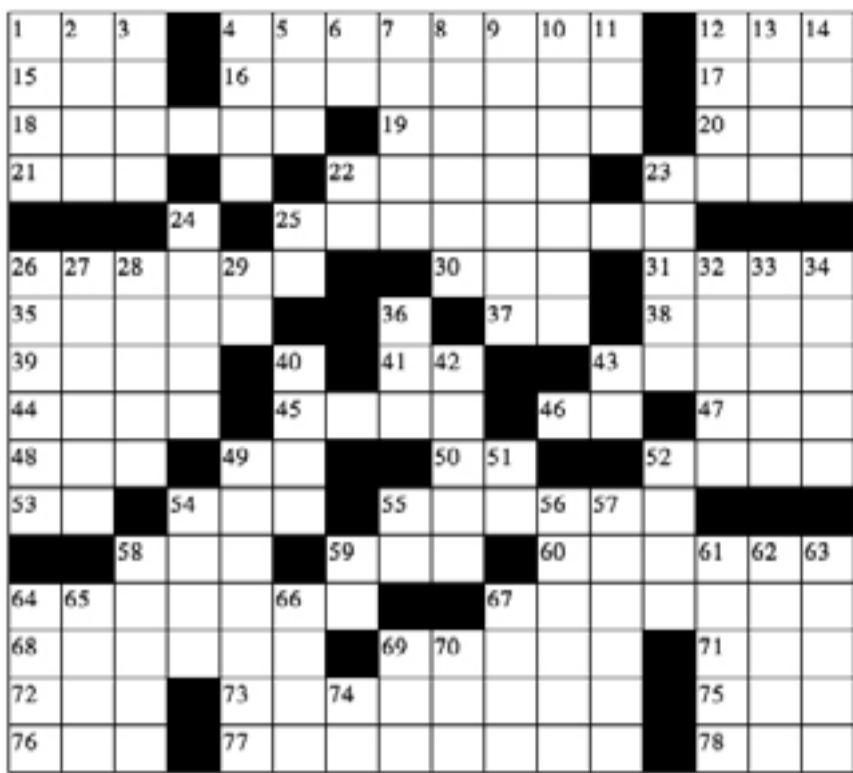


00:20 The Peanuts Movie
01:50 Storm Rider
03:35 Kung Fu Panda
05:10 A Royal Christmas
06:50 The Peanuts Movie
08:20 Storm Rider
10:05 The Angry Birds Movie
11:45 Kung Fu Panda
13:20 A Miracle On Christmas Lake
15:20 The Adventures Of Pepper And Paula
16:55 Kung Fu Panda 3
18:35 The Secret Life Of Pets
20:05 The Sound Of Music Live!
22:25 A Miracle On Christmas Lake



Stars

CROSSWORD 1776



ACROSS

1. Standard time in the 8th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 120th meridian west.
4. A member of a North American Indian people of the Gila river valley in Arizona.
12. A doctor's degree in dental surgery.
15. A flat wing-shaped process or wing-like part of an organism.
16. Red Asian weaverbirds often kept as cage birds.
17. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
18. Made of calico or resembling calico in being patterned.
19. A poplar that is widely cultivated in the United States.
20. The cry made by sheep.
21. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
26. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
30. A human limb.
31. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
35. Departing or being caused to depart from the true vertical or horizontal.
37. A polyvalent metallic element that resembles chromium and tungsten in its properties.
38. Surpassing the ordinary especially in size or scale.
39. Surrealist Spanish painter (1904-1989).
41. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
44. (Greek mythology) Greek god of war.
45. A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
46. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
47. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
48. An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.
50. A public promotion of some product or service.
53. An edge tool with a heavy bladed head mounted across a handle.
60. The basic unit of money in Finland.
64. Passing or able to pass air in and out of the lungs normally.
68. Involving two dimensions.
71. A master's degree in business.
72. Made warm or hot.
73. The honeycreepers.
75. A decree that prohibits something.
76. An edge tool with a heavy bladed head mounted across a handle.
77. Type genus of the Squatitidae.
78. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
2. Block consisting of a thick piece of something.
3. A fine grained mineral having a soft soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.
4. Austrian physicist and philosopher

5. 100 avos equal 1 pataca.
6. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
7. A state in the Rocky Mountains.
8. A small tent used as a dressing room beside the sea or a swimming pool.
9. (sports) With hand brought forward and down from above shoulder level.
10. The capital of Sicily.
11. Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
12. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
13. An administrator in charge of a division of a university or college.
14. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
22. A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.
23. One of the 7 gods of happiness.
24. The principal evil jinni in Islamic mythology.
25. 16 ounces.
27. A drug (trade names Atarax and Vistaril) used as a tranquilizer to treat anxiety and motion sickness.
28. Treated with oil.
29. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
32. Transient cessation of respiration.
33. Deciduous South African tree having large odd-pinnate leaves and profuse fragrant orange-yellow flowers.
34. The capital and largest city of Ghana with a deep-water port.
36. The law enforcement agency in the Justice Department.
40. A small cake leavened with yeast.
42. Fear resulting from the awareness of danger.
43. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
49. Informal terms for clothing.
51. Diabetes caused by a relative or absolute deficiency of insulin and characterized by polyuria.
52. An outlying farm building for storing grain or animal feed and housing farm animals.
54. A native or inhabitant of Finland.
55. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
56. Pertaining to or resembling amoebae.
57. Fairly small terrestrial ferns of tropical America.
58. (often followed by 'of') A large number or amount or extent.
59. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
61. A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
62. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
63. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
65. Genus of Eurasian spiny shrubs.
66. A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
67. A Lolish language.
69. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
70. A case for containing a set of articles.
74. A ductile malleable reddish-brown corrosion-resistant diamagnetic metallic element.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Everything is coming together to show you off at your finest in the workplace. You may be teaching or lecturing during the day. You have an expanded knowledge of abstract and spiritual things and you are blessed with the ability to help others, although you may not think it a blessing. Your friends may have a special way of utilizing some of your talent, or it could be that you find circumstances bearing down on you that may encourage you to reorganize and be more conservative. This should all work out just fine. Your more reserved qualities serve you well at this time. You may find a kind of romantic wisfulness characterizing your approach to life. This could even mean a longing for a soul mate or a yearning to save the world.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Talking should be quite unconstrained to you, as your mind is usually quite clear and natural. Ideas could come flowing to you with ease. You find your taste in artistic things and appreciation in general is keen now. This may be the perfect time for you to pick out furnishings, colors and so forth—the finer things in life. Your sense of value is to the front. Later today you may want to just sit back and enjoy what you have. You may actually prefer to spend more of your time with loved ones and family later this afternoon. Your mood is just one of wanting to enjoy the home environment. Someone special wants to cook for you this evening and you may lend a helping hand, perhaps to chop, peel and steam. Yum!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your emotional direction is toward taking care of business—you want an organized and practical outcome with the effort you put forth. You want to get things accomplished. Health and work goals take on importance and you are appreciative of the days when everyone works well together. Your way with words and your sense of humor are some of the things that endear you to others. Some competition today is fun and rewarding as you use your sharp mind to surpass the others. Jot down some of your brilliant techniques to help others learn how to memorize or work through a customer file or close a deal. Away from work, you could find that real estate may tweak your imagination. You envision a future home and may spend time with design ideas.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have many projects developing at this time and your professional progress is running smoothly. Now you have the ability for sustained work that allows you to coordinate events and complete tasks like never before. Your open-mindedness makes it easy to work with most people. Today you may be asked to complete difficult tasks and although you are worried that you will not finish, you are successful and you are able to help others complete their tasks as well. Those that you find nearest and dearest to your heart, like your mate and perhaps a child or two, are emphasized this afternoon. You love to make little trinkets that always seem to endear you to your loved ones. Feeling appreciated for your gifts and talents is a powerful need.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Circumstances may increase an appreciation and enjoyment of your life situation. Your system of values may deepen, providing you with a better sense of discrimination. Others depend on your past experience and your expertise at purchasing, selecting colors, etc. Others will find your helpful comments important. Co-workers may find you especially dynamic and assertive; you have an abundance of energy and drive at your fingertips. Continued success may point to your ability to be as flexible as possible—perhaps reworking some of your goals. Devote some time to the one who means the most to you this evening. Harmony is your mindset now. Harmony is what you get! A quiet evening may consist of some organizing pictures for a wall or an album.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Financial knowledge and a practical turn of mind are qualities that take on greater importance in your life. You may have the job of accountant for a company and there are appointments to meet that give you an opportunity to expand your business. You are good at what you do, no matter what that business is; however, you may work in some type of financial business and can find many people taking a breath of relief to discover that you can save them money. As a wheeler-dealer, you have a knack of knowing how to put people, ideas and things together profitably. Playing the role of a leader has its rewards. Others will discover just how practical you are when it comes to working and dealing with you. You look forward to a visit with friends this evening.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

There could be some very important matters that require your attention and have you serving as a guide to someone younger than yourself. You may, at long last, figure out new ways to proceed with plans and decisions that affect some business concerns. Some in-depth discussions and probing conversations find you at your mental best. Your analytical abilities are at a high point. Expect some good practical job-related thoughts and ideas. The ability to communicate with superiors or describe what you see is strengthened during this time. Having a big understanding of conceptual and spiritual ideas and knowing just how to present them goes a long way in increasing your popularity. A neighborhood event finds you on your toes this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find much of your energy being used on romance and creative pursuits. This is not a waste of time as whatever results happen will be beneficially used in the workplace as well as in your personal life. You may own your own business but more than likely you are serving others, which is often where you like to be these days. You are entering into a very aesthetic and competitive phase now, one in which you want to be appreciated for what you do and who you are. As a new cycle starts in your life, there arises a passion for details, a need to do just the right thing at just the right time. This can give you indignation if you take it to extremes! Knowing that you did a job well gives you lots of satisfaction and is a high priority at this time.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Taking care of business could be one of your major themes this morning. Much of your emotional support and security comes from your friends, moral integrity and social involvement during this time. You could definitely be feeling a need to make some changes in your life, and to break away from some of the outdated things of your past. You just want to embrace the new, innovative, different and unique. The old has become boring and common and it is time to upgrade your way of doing and looking at things. It may be easy for you to enjoy and value your own life situation, or to feel especially kind toward a friend or loved one. There could even be some special compliments coming your way regarding your tastes or belongings.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

A temporary obstacle may appear this morning, but never fear... It is short-term. You may be very pleased with the results of your quick thinking and hard work by the time this day has ended. You organize projects and people. People's opinions are not quite enough for you now, they must be backed up by authority or evidence and that is what you will be receiving. Those in authority take notice and you will be rewarded for your successes soon. There is a great opportunity to expand your mind and educate yourself now. Children come to you for practical help and others are pleased at the way you can organize a crowd—particularly with children. Talk about any celebration concerns with a partner or loved one now—travel may be in the forecast.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You have a natural god-given gift for knowing just what the public wants and needs when they come to see you. This could mean anything from perfume, cologne, vitamins, haircut, etc. There is a great feeling that comes with the ability to make successful and wise decisions and to use your skill to help others. Time is moving much too quickly and when asked, you find just the thing that will make a particular customer happy. You might enjoy working as a concierge in a fine hotel, a wedding consultant or a cruise ship's entertainment coordinator. There is no escaping the fact that you have plenty of work to do just now and it is not good to ignore it. You may be secretly planning a trip around the world in your own yacht—you will make it happen.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

It may be necessary to do some penetrating analysis, particularly with a group or in relation to your situation. Others may come to you for help in understanding or psychoanalyzing their predicament. This could be a time when it would be beneficial to make some changes in your environment. Being able to communicate and get your message across to others is essential. Your timing should be good and those around you will appreciate your effort on their behalf. Time spent alone this evening can be very healing. Meditate and get your thoughts together, or refresh your energies before going shopping or attending a group get-together. You seem to be full of exciting plans for the future and for you and a loved one.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Chocolate

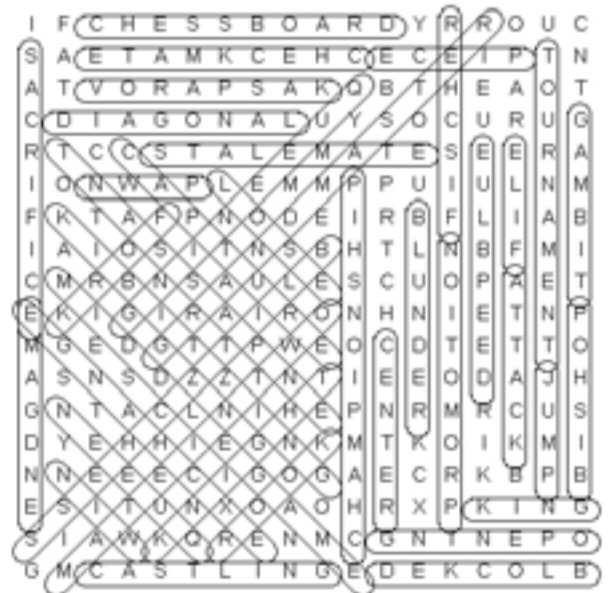
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 55 letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------|-------------|
| ADDICTIVE | CONFECTIONERY | FILLING | PUDDING |
| BAKING | COOKIES | FOODIE | SEMI-SWEET |
| BARS | CREAM PIE | FOOD | SUGAR |
| BITTERSWEET | CUPCAKE | FUDGE | SWISS |
| BROWNIES | DARK | ICE CREAM | SYRUP |
| CAKES | DECADENT | ICING | TREAT |
| CANDY | DELICIOUS | INGREDIENT | TRUFFLES |
| CHIPS | DESSERT | MILK | UNSWEETENED |
| CHOCOLATIERS | DRINKS | MOUSSE | WHITE |
| COCOA | | | |

Yesterday's Solution

Chess



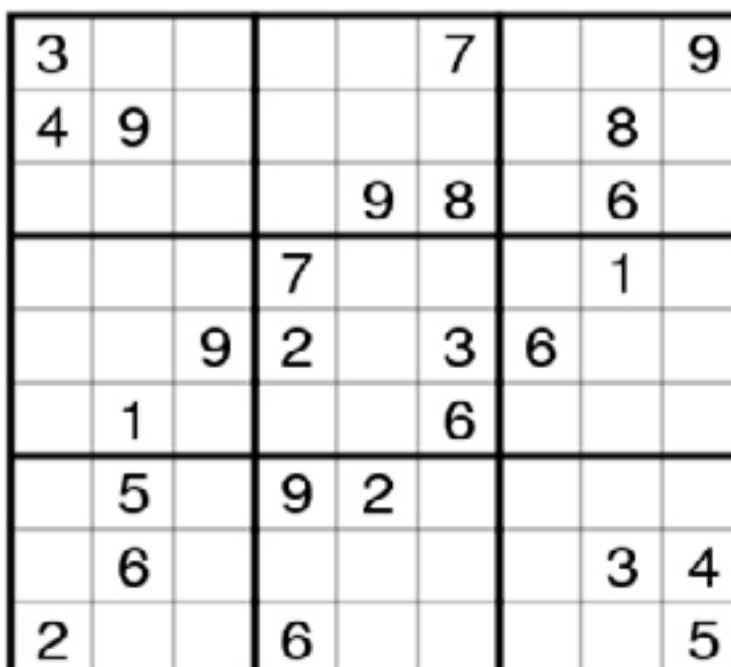
- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| ATTACK | CHAMPIONSHIP | GRANDMASTER | PAWN |
| BISHOP | DEEP BLUE | JUMP | PIECE |
| BLITZ CHESS | DIAGONAL | KASPAROV | PROMOTION |
| BLOCKED | EN PASSANT | KIBITZING | QUEEN |
| BLUNDER | ENDGAME | KING | QUEENING |
| CAPTURE | EXCHANGE | KNIGHT | ROOK |
| CASTLING | FILE | LOSE | SACRIFICE |
| CENTER | FISCHER | MATE IN TWO | STALEMATE |
| CHECKMATE | FORK | MIDDLEGAME | TOURNAMENT |
| CHESSBOARD | GAMBIT | OPENING | WIN |

Hidden sentence: IF YOU CAN'T BEAT YOUR COMPUTER AT CHESS, TRY KICKBOXING

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle Features

1. Are barbecuing and grilling the same style of cooking?

Grilling is cooking directly over the heat source, flames or coals, for short periods of time at high temperatures, up to 900 degrees in some commercial kitchens. Barbecuing is cooking with an indirect heat source at temperatures in the 180- to 225-degree range for hours.

2. Which is better for grilling, charcoal or gas?

While 68 percent of Americans own gas grills, there are no hard facts that determine the better of the two. Gas grills deliver a slightly lighter flavor in the end product; unlike charcoal, gas contributes no taste. But gas grills offer push-button lighting and a constant and consistent heat source, and a propane tank can burn for as long as 20 hours.

Charcoal grills are messier, the heat source is less predictable and they need to be restoked. But charcoal grills generally cook hotter, burning wood helps flavor food, and charcoal gives you "the primal thrill of lighting and playing with fire," according to www.barbecuebible.com.

3. Who invented the charcoal briquette?

Orin F. Stafford developed and patented a process in which wood scrap was converted into charcoal, pulverized, then bound and compressed into little pillow shapes. Automaker Henry Ford used the process to turn the tons of wood scraps left over from building his Model Ts into a new moneymaker, the briquette. In 1921, a briquette plant was in full production at the site one of his relatives, E.G. Kingsford, had brokered. The Ford Charcoal Co. was later renamed Kingsford Charcoal in his honor.



4. How much do grills cost?

Hibachi grills cost as little as \$10, while high-end stainless steel gas models run as high as \$10,000. The cost of a basic charcoal grill runs in the \$50 to \$100 range, while basic gas grills run from \$129 to \$300. Simple vertical grill/smoker units fall in the \$40-to-\$200-and-up range, while horizontal units start around \$100 and run into hundreds of dollars.

5. What kind of tools do I need when grilling?

- Long-handled tongs and spatulas grab, turn and flip food easily.
- Long-handled forks should only be used on larger food. Each time you pierce the food you lose flavorful juices.
- Grill baskets hold vegetables and smaller cuts of meat, while hinged fish baskets snap together tightly, holding the fish in place so it will not fall apart.
- A meat thermometer is essential for checking food's internal temperature.
- Flame-retardant mitts and gloves, a basting brush and a wire brush for cleaning the grill are good additions.



6. Is it necessary to season a grill?

According to Gordon Grant, a manager at the Grapevine, Texas, Barbeques Galore, new grills, especially gas models, offer cooking grids that have surface coating and/or are made from heavy-duty stainless steel that require no seasoning. A few charcoal models still have cast-iron grids that have to be seasoned in order to create a natural, non-stick cooking surface and prevent rust. Some manufacturers recommend that you extend the preheating time 20 to 30 minutes, with the cover on, the first time any grilling unit is used to burn off residue or solvents that may have accumulated in the manufacturing and shipping process. This also tempers the unit.

7. How do I know coals are ready to cook with?

After lighting, it should take about 20 to 30 minutes for the coals to be covered with ash and glow red. You can check the cooking temperature of the coals by how long you can hold your palm about 6 inches above the coals before



Fiery facts, tips and trivia about the backyard art

pulling it away. Measure the seconds by counting, "one thousand one, one thousand two," etc.

- **HOT:** About two seconds indicates a temperature of 365 degrees
- **MEDIUM HOT:** Three seconds, 350 to 375 degrees
- **MEDIUM:** Four seconds, 300 to 350 degrees
- **LOW:** Five seconds, 200 to 300 degrees

8. How can I keep food from sticking to the grill?

- Clean the grill thoroughly after each use, according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Brush or spray the grill with vegetable oil prior to cooking.
- Preheat grills before using.
- Use a marinade or a light coating of vegetable oil on food before grilling.
- Be patient. Wait a few minutes after placing the food on the grill and let the heat sear the food before turning.

9. How does marinating help when I cook?

Marinades add flavor and tenderize. They can include vinegar, wine or citrus juice, olive oil, and herbs and spices. The acidic ingredients help soften the tissues of the meat. A few tips:

- The more tender the meat, the



less time soaking in the marinade. Soak tender cuts two hours or less, tougher cuts for several hours or overnight.

- Always marinate meat in the refrigerator.
- Never use containers that will react to the acidic ingredients, such as metal bowls. Use glass or plastic bowls or plastic bags you can seal.
- Meat that has been marinated for a long period of time will take less time to cook. Twelve hours of marinating can reduce cooking time by 30 percent to 35 percent.

10. Can I use the marinade after I cook the meat?

The only way marinade can be reused is to boil it thoroughly to kill any bacteria transferred from the raw meat. Even then, it should only be used as a basting liquid or as sauce for the meat.

11. What about using dry rubs on the meat I grill?

These dry mixes of herbs and spices are rubbed into the raw meat to flavor the meat. The prepared meat is usually placed in a container in the refrigerator overnight before grilling.

Ingredients that can be used for a dry rub include black pepper, cumin, chili powder, crushed red pepper, celery seed, garlic powder or fresh crushed or minced garlic, salt, seasoned pepper and brown sugar. Use sugar sparingly as it melts and

burns during cooking. Not only can burnt sugar provide unpleasant results in taste, it is very difficult to clean off the grill once it cools and hardens.

12. What are the easiest fish to cook on the grill?

Choose fish that have a firm, meaty texture that will not fall apart easily when moved or turned. The best choices include tuna, salmon, swordfish, mahi mahi, halibut, whitefish, redfish, red snapper and monkfish. Shellfish, such as shrimp, work well, too.

13. What are the most popular foods to grill?

Hamburgers rule the grill, followed by steaks, chicken parts, hot dogs and bratwurst.

14. When should I flip a burger?

A 1/2-inch-thick burger should take eight to 10 minutes to cook, so be patient and wait for a few minutes before you flip. About halfway through the cooking time, juices will boil up through the burger to the surface. Take a look at the face-down side of the patty. If it is dark-brown ... flip it!



15. How do you hand test a steak for doneness?

There are various hand tests that direct you to poke the steak and compare its firmness at various stages of doneness to that of your hand. In one, you make a

tight fist and push down on the fleshy part between the index finger and thumb. This firmness indicates a steak that is probably well done. The firmness when you relax your grip about halfway indicates medium; total relaxation indicates rare. In another, you poke the fleshy part of the palm beside the thumb while holding the tips of your index finger and thumb together. The firmness here represents rare to medium-rare. As you touch each finger to the thumb in succession, working your way down to the pinky, the firmness will indicate medium, medium-well and well done. The only reliable way to test doneness is with a meat thermometer.



16. How do I know when food is fully cooked?

Using a meat thermometer to check internal temperatures will ensure you have cooked your food safely and to a certain level of doneness.

- Whole chicken, turkey: 180 degrees
- Chicken thighs and wings: 180 degrees
- Chicken breasts: 170 degrees
- Pork, well done: 170 degrees
- Pork, medium: 160 degrees
- Beef, well done: 170 degrees
- Beef, ground: 160+ degrees
- Beef, medium: 160 degrees
- Beef, medium rare: 145 degrees
- Beef, rare: 140 degrees
- Fish, turns from translucent to opaque: 145 degrees

17. Is there a cancer risk involved with grilling?

The grilling process generates two organic chemicals that do increase the risk of breast, colon, stomach and prostate cancer. When fat from food drips into the fire and burns, the smoke carries polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) onto the food.

Heterocyclic amines (HCAs) can also form on meat, poultry or fish when grilled. You can lower the risk by pre-cooking meats and shortening the cooking time on the grill, cooking low-fat meats and trimming off as much fat as possible, not letting flames touch and char the meat, and cutting off charred portions before serving.

18. What are the occasions when most people fire up the grill?

A survey sponsored by grill manufacturer Weber-Stephen found that the most popular grilling occasions (in order of popularity) are Independence Day, Labor Day, Memorial Day, birthdays, Father's Day, Mother's Day, Thanksgiving Day, graduations and Christmas.

19. What is the largest cookout on record?

The Guinness world record for largest barbecue was a one-day event attended by 44,158 people at a race-course in Sydney, Australia, in 1993. What went on the grill? More than 300,000 sausages, 100,000 steaks and 50,000 chicken burgers.

20. What are some tips for safe grilling?

The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association lists nearly three pages of safety tips for outdoor grilling at www.hpba.org/consumer/bbq/safety.shtml.

- A few of them are:
 - Barbecue grills are designed for outdoor use only. Never barbecue in your trailer, tent, house, garage or any enclosed area.
 - Use long-handled barbecue utensils to avoid burns and splatters.
 - Never use gasoline or kerosene or other highly volatile fluids as a starter. They can explode.

— Fort Worth Star-Telegram

SOURCES: WWW.ALLRECIPES.COM, WWW.ARMADAZINE.COM, WWW.FBI.USDA.GOV, WWW.HFSA.ORG, WWW.JONLINE.COM, WWW.PARENTS.PLAZE.COM, WWW.HSTV.COM, WWW.TEXASCOOKING.COM, WWW.WEBER.COM, WWW.KINGSFORD.COM, WWW.FDA.GOV, WWW.CBQA.COM, WWW.DUCANE.COM, WWW.RELUCTANTGOURMET.COM, WWW.BARBEQUEBIBLE.COM, WWW.BUSINESSWORLDRECORDS.COM, WWW.WISH-BONE.COM, WWW.HORNEL.COM, WWW.DZNET.KSU.EDU, WWW.TENNESSEAN.COM, WWW.TXBEER.ORG, WWW.WEGMANS.COM, WWW.FOODSAFETY.COM, WWW.BROU.NET, "THE GRILLING BOOK," "ALL FIRED UP," "GREAT GRILLING," "THE GREAT AMERICAN BARBECUE & GRILLING MANUAL," "THRILL OF THE GRILL" MCT

FIRE IT UP



Lifestyle | Music & Movies

Met Opera suspends legendary Levine after sex abuse allegations

New York's Metropolitan Opera said Sunday it was suspending its famed longtime music director James Levine after multiple allegations of sexual misconduct. The premier US opera house said Levine would no longer appear at the Met this season and that it had hired a former US prosecutor to investigate the accusations. "Based on these new reports, the Met has made the decision to act now, while we await the results of the investigation," Peter Gelb, the general manager of the Met, said in a statement.

"This is a tragedy for anyone whose life has been affected," he said. Gelb said that Robert J. Cleary, the former US attorney for New Jersey best known for prosecuting the anti-technology mail-bomb assailant dubbed as the Unabomber in the 1990s, would lead the Met's probe. The suspension came after fresh allegations of misconduct against the 74-year-old Levine. The New York Post on Saturday first reported on a 2016 police report alleging that Levine abused a boy for years, starting in 1985 when the purported victim was 15.

Late Sunday, The New York Times published accounts by three more musicians who described similar experiences—the older Levine pressuring them into sex when they were teenage students. Chris Brown, who went on to play principal bass at the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, told the newspaper that Levine forced him to masturbate him during a summer at the Meadowbrook School of Music in Michigan. When Brown told Levine he did not want to repeat the sexual encounter, he said the conductor shunned him for the rest of the summer. Now 66, Brown said he has suffered emotional trauma for years.

Legend in opera

The suspension marks a spectacular fall from grace for Levine, who had guided the Met's orchestra for 40 years before retiring at the end of the 2015-16 season as he struggled with Parkinson's disease. A legend in the opera world as the Met sought a wider public audience, Levine notably conducted some of the "Three Tenors" concerts that brought together Plácido Domingo, Jose

Carreras and Luciano Pavarotti. Levine had stayed in a role of music director emeritus and led a youth artist program. He conducted what may turn out to be his final Met performance on Saturday—fittingly, Verdi's "Requiem." The Met earlier said that Levine denied the charges in the Illinois police report when asked last year. The conductor has not been criminally charged and the alleged misconduct likely took place too long ago for prosecution. Levine's suspension comes amid a flurry of revelations about the sexual misdeeds of powerful men, sparked by allegations of widespread abuse by Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein.



This file photo shows US conductor James Levine and the Boston Symphony Orchestra performing in Paris. — AFP

pension comes amid a flurry of revelations about the sexual misdeeds of powerful men, sparked by allegations of widespread abuse by Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein.

New question on 'Tosca'

Levine's departure causes one immediate programming headache for the Met—finding a conductor for its new "Tosca," one of the most popular works in the opera canon, which is due to premiere at a gala on New Year's Eve. The Met has been hoping for a triumphant return of "Tosca"—seen as a key money-maker for an opera house that has long struggled to stabilize its finances—but the production has been marred by repeated changes. — AFP

Interview with YouTube star Adam Saleh

By Faten Omar

YouTube star and rapper Adam Saleh loves Kuwait and its friendly people. Saleh, a 24-year-old American of Yemeni descent born and raised in New York, spoke to Kuwait Times after a performance at Discovery Mall. "This is my second time in Kuwait - the first time I had four

“ Stay positive and strong ”

sold-out standup comedy shows. This time, we had two sold-out shows. We have a world tour coming soon too. Kuwait was the first country chosen for my 'Chapter II' album that I just released, which has English and Arabic songs," he said.

"Kuwait was the first country that came to my mind to do a 'test show' before I start the tour of 22 countries in the summer of 2018. The show went well - I sang from my album, and the fans liked my rap and dance moves," he said. Saleh expressed his attachment to Kuwait. "The last time I visited Kuwait, I didn't explore it. This time I went to The Avenues mall, and it was one of the best malls I have ever visited in my entire life, I'm planning to go to Souq Mubarkiya to buy souvenirs for my family," he added.

He pointed out that his fans liked his new album's songs. "My songs are about my personal life, and everyone can relate to my life and emotions that I went through. The 'Wynak' song, which means 'where are you' in Arabic, tells a sto-



Photo by Joseph Shagra

ry of a girl that I used to know. "The Motto" is about the people who hate me. Everyone can relate to this," he said.

"I filmed a documentary that will change the world. I went to around 3-4 cities of Trump supporters and offered them a free trip to Egypt to get to know real Muslims - we chose Egypt because it is a cultural place. After asking hundreds of people who are afraid of Muslims, six of them agreed to take the trip," Saleh told Kuwait Times. "The whole trip was documented - how they felt on the plane till they arrived in Egypt, visited mosques and the pyramids and spoke with Egyptian Muslims. It is now going through the

editing process. We will then discuss with distributors about releasing it, and probably it will come out on Netflix, and is going to be available worldwide. Their perspective changed for the better during this trip. This documentary will send a message that real Muslims are not what the media shows - Islam is about love and peace," he said.

Saleh revealed he will be launching a book in 2019 about growing up as an Arab Muslim American in New York post 9/11 "Ours was the only Muslim family in our neighborhood and school." He advised people to surround themselves with positive people - "stay positive and strong and don't let people let you down".

‘Star Wars’ sisters hail girl-powered galaxy

Carrie Fisher's death caused a huge disturbance in the Force, but the women of "The Last Jedi" vowed Sunday to honor her legacy in the latest girl-powered "Star Wars" chapter. The cast came together in a secret location in Los Angeles with director Rian Johnson to build buzz for the latest chapter in the blockbuster space saga, which hits theaters on December 15. "You get to see women that are not big and strong just because they're acting like men. They're doing something else," said Gwendoline Christie, 39, who plays stormtrooper commander Captain Phasma.

"And also you're seeing a developed character, or a developing character, that is showing some complex character traits. I'm delighted that something as legendary as 'Star Wars' has decided to reflect our society." "The Last Jedi"—filmed on the west coast of Ireland and at Pinewood Studios near London—sees the return of the characters introduced in 2015's seventh installment, "The Force Awakens." Christie, flanked by red-robed Praetorian guards as she took the stage, was joined by returning stars Daisy Ridley, John Boyega, Adam Driver, Oscar Isaac, Andy Serkis, Domhnall Gleeson, and Luke Skywalker himself, Mark Hamill. There were new faces too: Kelly Marie Tran as Resistance maintenance worker Rose Tico and Laura Dern, who plays Vice Admiral Amilyn Holdo.

Ridley, 25, spoke of growing up in London in a liberal household where sexism wasn't an issue and of being overwhelmed by the rapturous response to her appearance as a rare female action star in "The Force Awakens." "When I got involved, I knew it was a big deal, but the response was so beyond anything I could have imagined, that it was only afterward that I was like 'Oh-oh yeah,'" she said.

The girls 'kick butt'

Tran, 28, spoke of the "honor and responsibility" of playing a prominent female character and wanting to do the role justice. "And the girls in this movie kick some butt. Every single one is so good," she said. Fisher—who played General Leia Organa when she was known simply as Princess Leia in the original 1977-83 trilogy—died last



This file photo shows (L-R) Israeli film producer, Ram Bergman; British actress, Daisy Ridley; US film director, Rian Johnson and US actor Mark Hamill posing for photographers during a red carpet in Mexico City. — AFP

December, having already wrapped her scenes for "The Last Jedi." "I watched TV and film obsessively from such a young age, but [she] stayed with me throughout my formative years," said Christie, who plays warrior Brieenne of Tarth on HBO's "Game of Thrones."

"She's really interesting, she's really smart, she's really funny, she's courageous, she's bold, she doesn't care what people think, and she isn't prepared to be told what to do." Written by Johnson, "The Last Jedi"—the eighth installment in the franchise—picks up where "The Force Awakens" left off, with Rey looking to Luke to teach her about The Force. Lucasfilm has released various trailers for "The Last Jedi," hinting at dark times ahead for the Resistance—and prompting comparisons with "The Empire Strikes Back."

"It's the second movie in the trilogy, and I think we've been kind of trained to expect it will be a little darker, and obviously it looks a little darker," said Johnson, 43.

Dire situation

But he added that he was still aiming for movie

that "makes you come out of the theater, run around your back yard, grab your spaceship toy and fly around." Hamill, 66, has stirred controversy in the past with candid comments about his thoughts on his character and direction of the story, but was one of the least vocal in the news conference. He confirmed that his role was "twice as big" as his last-minute cameo in "The Force Awakens"—but gave almost nothing else away. Like Fisher and Hamill, Harrison Ford is a "Star Wars" institution as loveable rogue Han Solo.

But the character is missing from the latest chapter, having been killed off by director J.J. Abrams in the previous installment. The cast was asked if the Ford's absence was a wrench but Boyega said central characters Finn, Rey and Poe weren't given much time to mourn and that "everyone's keeping it moving" in the new film. "Rey's off training, she's got stuff to go. I got a back injury, I've got stuff to do," he said. "It's a dire situation, the Resistance is on its last legs," added Isaac, who plays Poe. "The First Order is right on top of us. You have to keep moving to try to survive." — AFP

‘Coco’ rules at the box office

The animated Disney and Pixar hit "Coco" ruled at the North American box offices for a second week, figures out Sunday showed, beating out superheroes, dramas and Christmas comedies. The film tells the story of a 12-year-old Mexican, Miguel (Anthony Gonzalez), who longs to become a musician but faces a generations-old family ban on music. It netted an estimated \$26 million for the three-day weekend and \$109 million since it opened over the Thanksgiving Day holiday, Exhibitor Relations said.



"Coco," which takes Miguel into the magical Land of the Dead, where trickster Hector (Gael Garcia Bernal) helps him unravel a deep family secret, received a rare A+ rating from audiences surveyed by CinemaScore. In second place again this weekend was Warner Bros. film "Justice League," with a three-day take of \$16.6 million in its third week out. The superhero all-star cast of Gal Gadot as Wonder Woman, Ben Affleck as Batman,

Henry Cavill as Superman, and Jason Momoa-Khal Drogo of "Game of Thrones"—as Aquaman joining to fend off supervillain Steppenwolf (Ciaran Hinds).

Third, also in its third week out, was Lionsgate's feel-good film "Wonder," which netted \$12.5 million over the weekend. The movie, starring Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson and Jacob Tremblay, tells the story of a fifth-grade boy with a facial deformity who must deal with other children's shock and bullying when he first attends a mainstream school.

"Thor: Ragnarok," from Disney-owned Marvel, claimed fourth place with \$9.7 million. The film features the self-effacing humor of Chris Hemsworth as the powerful Norse god and Cate Blanchett as death goddess Hela. "Thor" has netted \$291.4 million since its debut five weeks ago.

In fifth place was the Christmas comedy "Daddy's Home 2" from Paramount, netting \$4.5 million over the weekend. It stars Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg as the less-than-competent co-parents of Wahlberg's kids as they cope with their own visiting fathers (John Lithgow and Mel Gibson). The movie has netted \$88 million since its debut four weeks ago. None of the week's newly released movies cracked the top 10 list. Rounding out the list were:

"Murder on the Orient Express" (\$6.7 million)
"Lady Bird" (\$4.54 million)
"Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" (\$4.53 million)
"The Star" (\$4 million)
"A Bad Moms Christmas" (\$3.48 million) —AFP

Deck the TV schedule with Rudolph, Stefani and 'Love'

Welcome back, Donner and Blitzen! And thanks for bringing along Gwen Stefani, Taraji P. Henson and "Love Actually" to a holiday TV lineup that mixes the familiar and the fresh. We want "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "It's a Wonderful Life" again, for the pleasure and the memories they summon. But no complaints if the punch is spiked with new music specials, comedy and original movies. Settle in to wrap gifts, slurp nog and choose among these highlights, all times EST:

Movies

"Christmas at Holly Lodge," 8 pm Dec 3, Hallmark. There are sparks between lodge owner Sophie (Alison Sweeney) and Evan (Jordan Bridges), who's been sent by a developer to check out the property. Will love and the lodge prevail? Sheryl Lee Ralph co-stars.

"Instrument of War," 7:30 pm Dec 10 and 23,

BYUtv (carried on DirecTV and DISH Network). Inspired by the real-life WWII story of American bomber pilot Clair Cline who, held in a Nazi POW camp, painstakingly crafts a violin to lift his spirits and bring the music of Christmas to his fellow prisoners. Jack Ashton stars.

"Love Actually," Netflix, Dec 14. Filmmaker Richard Curtis' witty, romantic cream-puff that weaves together stories featuring, among many, Hugh Grant, Emma Thompson, Bill Nighy, Keira Knightley and the late, great Alan Rickman. Add the hit tune "All I Want for Christmas is You" and, of course, many happy endings.

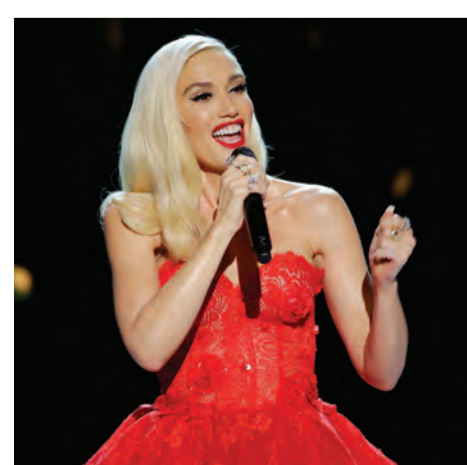
"It's a Wonderful Life," 8 pm Dec 24, NBC. Watch it for the 100th time or the first and try to resist the sentimental pull of the 1946 Frank Capra fable about a self-doubting man (Jimmy Stewart) who gets perspective from a dotty but caring angel (Henry Travers). Future TV mom Donna Reed also stars. "The Carol Burnett 50th Anniversary Special," 8 pm Dec 3, CBS. TV's

great funny lady gets a deserved two hours to celebrate "The Carol Burnett Show" milestone, joined by cast members Vicki Lawrence and Lyle Waggoner and admirers including Jim Carrey, Harry Connick Jr. and Bernadette Peters.

"Lidia Celebrates America: Homegrown Heroes," 10 pm Dec 15, PBS (check local listings). Inventive chef Lidia Bastianich travels to the West Virginia and Kentucky countryside to meet and honor veterans who are making productive new lives for themselves and others as farmers and caretakers.

"A Home for the Holidays," 8 pm Dec 19, CBS. Music stars including Josh Groban, Kelly Clarkson, Kacey Musgraves and Kane Brown align to bring attention to the issue of adoption with inspirational stories and songs.

"I Love Lucy Christmas Special," 8 pm Dec 22, CBS. Irrepressible redhead Lucy (Lucille Ball) shines even brighter in two colorized episodes of the classic sitcom: 1955's



This image shows singer Gwen Stefani in her Christmas special, "Gwen Stefani's You Make it Feel Like Christmas." — AP

"Christmas" episode and "The Fashion Show," in which Lucy goes over-budget on a dress and pays the price for showing off.

Tunes

"Gwen Stefani's You Make it Feel Like Christmas," 9 pm Dec 12, NBC. The singer-songwriter mixes music, sketches and friends including duet partner Blake Shelton, Chelsea Handler, Ken Jeong, Seth MacFarlane and Ne-Yo. Stefani's new album gives the special its title and tunes, including "Silent Night."

"Taraji's White Hot Holidays," 8 p.m., "Showtime at the Apollo: Christmas," 9 pm Dec 14, Fox. This double bill opens with Taraji P. Henson offering classic holiday tunes with help from Chaka Khan, Faith Evans, Leslie Odom Jr. and others. In "Showtime," artists including Snoop Dogg and Boyz II Men and aspiring newcomers performing their Christmas favorites at the famed New York City theater. — AP

2017 Kennedy Center Honors recognize artists, bypass drama



2017 Kennedy Center Honoree Norman Lear attends the 40th annual Kennedy Center Honors at the Kennedy Center in Washington. — AP photos



LL Cool J



Gloria Estefan



Lionel Richie



Leona Lewis

A few months ago, it looked like the annual Kennedy Center Honors program was in danger of being engulfed by the country's current divisive political mood. 2017 Honoree Norman Lear, whose political activism goes back decades, threatened to boycott rather than attend any aspect of the ceremonies that involved President Donald Trump. With other members of the 2017 class of inductees expressing support for Lear's position, a nasty showdown appeared to be looming - until Trump announced in late August that he and First Lady Melania Trump would not attend.

Trump's withdrawal cleared the way for a Kennedy Center Honors ceremony Sunday night that actually managed to skip the political drama and focus entirely on the artists being honored. Lear, the iconic television producer behind "All in the Family" and a string of other hits, reacted with mock surprise when asked about Trump's absence. "Really? Wow!" Lear said as he entered the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. "I'm expecting a warm, funny, wonderful evening. My guess is that the focus tonight will be on the arts."

Lear's prediction came true and the 40th annual Kennedy Center Honors event progressed with almost no mention of politics. In addition to Lear, Sunday night's ceremony honored rapper and actor LL Cool J, dancer and choreographer Carmen de Lavallade and musicians Lionel Richie and Gloria Estefan. LL Cool J, (real name James Todd Smith) called the evening "an amazing, amazing moment" for a hip-hop artist who officials said was the youngest-ever Kennedy Center Honors recipient at 49. He said there were many deserving rappers and performers from his generation but would not go so far as to say that anybody deserved the honor over him. "I'm humble, but I'm not going to play pseudo-humble," he said before the program. "I'm the one!" Each honoree received a lengthy and personally tailored onstage tribute sprinkled with surprise guests. Estefan was greeted with performances of her greatest hits and a solo performance by her daughter Emily. For LL Cool J, they recreated a club onstage with performances by Busta Rhymes and members of The Roots as well as a testimonial by Queen Latifah.

For Lear, a series of quick changes transformed the stage into the sets from "Good Times," "All in the Family" and "Maude," with tributes from Rob Reiner, Dave Chappelle and Anthony Anderson from the current hit show "Black-ish." De Lavallade received a personal testimonial from 2011 Kennedy Center Honors recipient Meryl Streep, who was her student at Yale University. Richie was honored with a surprise performance of his hit "Hello" by Stevie Wonder, and the evening ended with everyone in attendance standing and dancing to "All Night Long."

In addition to the Sunday ceremony, this year's recipients were honored Saturday at a gala State Department dinner. The program will be televised Dec 26 on CBS. The president usually sits in the same box with the honorees and other guests. In the past, most US presidents have attended the ceremony, but it's not unprecedented for a sitting president

to skip it. Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton all missed ceremonies during their terms in office, but in all previous cases the first lady attended.

Kennedy Center officials didn't hide their relief when Trump announced he wouldn't attend this year. Kennedy Center President Deborah F. Rutter and Chairman David M. Rubenstein released a statement saying they were "grateful" to the Trumps for avoiding a conflict that would overshadow the ceremony. "In choosing not to participate in this year's honor's activities, the administration has graciously signaled its respect for the Kennedy Center and ensures the honors gala remains a deservedly special moment for the honorees," the statement said.

On Sunday night, Rutter repeated her appreciation of Trump's decision, but wouldn't speculate if his absence would become a reality for the next three years of his presidential term. "I believe it's important to have the President of the United States appearing here and paying tribute to the arts community on nights like this," she said. — AP



Nicole Richie



Carmen de Lavallade



Ballerina Stella Abrera (2L) and her husband. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features

It's the most wonderful time to celebrate Earmuffs

Earmuffs are all the rage on at least one day of the year. With the arrival of the holiday season and winter around the corner, the town of Farmington celebrated Chester Greenwood Day with a parade Saturday honoring the folk hero who's credited with the invention that has kept ears warm for more than a century. Earmuffs festooned floats and cars, and people and pets, too. A flag featuring with supersized earmuffs was hoisted outside the courthouse.

Behind all the silliness, though, there is pride in the famous tinkerer and his creation. "They're just ubiquitous. People continue to wear them.

It's something Mainers can be proud of," said Angela Goebel-Bain from the Maine State Museum. Greenwood was just 15 when he fashioned his first muffs out of farm wire and his grandmother sewed fur onto them in 1873. He made improvements to his creation, obtained a patent and manufactured hundreds of thousands of Champion Ear Protectors.

During World War I, his factory made earmuffs for the US Army "doughboys" fighting in the frozen trenches on the western front. Greenwood enjoyed tinkering. He came up with more than 100 contraptions but received patents for only five of them, Goebel-Bain said.

His earmuff design represented improvements by incorporating a spring that conformed to the head and kept muffs in contact with the ears, according to his 1877 patent.

Other patents included a rake, a tea kettle and a wood-boring machine. He also ran a bicycle shop, built a plumbing and heating business and created a local telephone company. His earmuff factory closed a few years after his death in 1937. Forty years later, the Maine Legislature declared Chester Greenwood Day on the first day of winter. These days, it's celebrated on the first Saturday of December. Festivities include a polar dip, gingerbread



Courtney Austin of the 21st Century Kids of Franklin after school program hands a candy cane to Abigail Toothaker, 5, during the Chester Greenwood Parade in Farmington, Maine. — AP

house contest, tree lighting and carriage rides.

"People have stepped up to the plate to make it fun," said Nancy Porter of Farmington, who authored the self-published "Chester: More Than Earmuffs." As the story goes, Greenwood hatched the idea for the earmuff to

protect his generous-sized ears after a day of ice skating on a frigid day. Over time, some elements of the Greenwood story may have been embellished, but not the part about the size of his ears, Porter said. "He had pretty good-sized ears. There's no question," she said. — AP



LuLu Hypermarket launches 'Get ready for winter'

LuLu Hypermarket, the undisputed regional leader in retailing, has launched its annual 'Get ready for winter' promotion, offering most fashionable and comfortable winter wear at very special prices. The winter 2017 promotion, which is being held simultaneously at all outlets of LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait, includes a wide array of stylish winter clothing and accessories for all ages, and is designed to keep the wearer warm and comfortable throughout the cold winter months ahead.

Exclusive offers available during the special 'Get ready for winter' promotion include not only fashionable winter clothing but also chic cold-weather footwear and other winter accessories.

Among the top brands offering their unparalleled quality of winter wear at unbeatable prices are such well-known

names such as Cortigiani, Debacker, Eten and John Louis. Among the items in the winter clothing range are a number of stylish suits, jackets, cardigans, sweaters, innerwear and winter clothing accessories that combine affordability with chic style. The promotional offer also extends to a wide collection of warm and colorful kids' wear that is both casual and dashing at the same time, enabling your child to proudly make a fashion statement while engaged in fun-filled activities, all at reasonable prices.

LuLu Hypermarket has built a strong and loyal customer-base that continues to expand with the years, mainly on the back of providing shoppers with high-quality products at very reasonable prices. Promotions such as the 'Get ready for winter' make visit to LuLu Hypermarket an enjoyable and affordable shopping experience.

Benin encouraged by Macron's pledge on African heritage

French President Emmanuel Macron made a surprise announcement during his recent African tour, saying in Burkina Faso's capital that one of his priorities was to restore African cultural treasures. African cultural heritage "should be highlighted in Paris, but also in Dakar, Lagos, Cotonou", Macron told a crowd of students at a university in Ouagadougou. "This will be one of my priorities. In five years, I want the conditions to be met to return African heritage to Africa."

Delivered at the end of his speech, this sentence resonated especially in Benin, which in July last year called for France to return treasures taken during French colonial rule from the end of the 19th century. President Patrice Talon—who railed against French influence in its former colony during the election campaign that brought him to power last year made a formal request to France's foreign ministry in September.

He said the repatriation of such treasures would allow people "to get to know better our cultural and historic assets" and also allow the tiny West African nation to develop tourism as "an important cornerstone of the Beninese economy". France ruled the country, then called Dahomey, until 1960, when it was granted independence and changed its name to Benin. Dahomey included the kingdom of the same name that dates back to about 1600.

France's stockpiling of treasures from Dahomey happened during colonial fighting between 1892 and 1894, but it was also carried out by missionaries who "robbed communities of what they considered to be charms", said Irenee Zevounou, Benin's ambassador to UNESCO, the UN's cultural body in Paris. Most of the artefacts have not



been documented, but Zevounou said he believed 4,500 to 6,000 items are in France, including in private collections. Many are now on display in French museums, including the Quai Branly in Paris, which exhibits indigenous art from around the world.

Historic break

"This is the first time a French president has tackled the issue head-on and expressed his willingness for restitution," Marie-Cecile Zinsou, creator of the Zinsou Foundation in Cotonou, wrote afterwards on her Facebook page. "The Ouagadougou speech may mark a major turning point in future proceedings," the French-Beninese art historian said. Others who support Benin's call for the return of its treasures—which include royal thrones, statues and swords—have since spoken up as well.

Louis-Georges Tin, president of a coalition of associations representing black French people known as CRAN, has urged the UN Human Rights Council to participate in negotiations between the two countries. In an editorial, Tin described Macron's speech as a "historic break". "Indeed, it is a question of

culture, but also a question of rights," wrote Tin, who regularly presses the French government over the issue. But the main stumbling block is legal. France's foreign ministry has relied on "the legal principles of inalienability and imprescriptibility of public collections" in its refusal to return the cultural assets, which are now considered French treasures. For Yves-Bernard Debie, who specializes in art sales law, Macron's speech broke with French legal tradition established in 1566 by the "Edict of Moulins".

"Since that time, the royal domain became public property, which is inalienable and imprescriptible," he said. "It is forbidden, except under rare exceptions, for the prince, king or president of the republic, to dispose of this property". "Heads of state change, the public domain remains". A restitution would require a change in the law but Macron has formalized negotiations and the Beninese authorities are expected to reiterate their demand shortly. "It may be a bit naive on my part, but I hope that relations are improving between France and its African partners," Ousmane Aledji, director of the Benin cultural center Artistik Africa, said. —AFP

Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi



TREES, LIGHTS, HOLIDAY MAGIC: CHRISTMAS EVENTS AND DISPLAYS



Destinations around the US are dressing up for Christmas with trees, lights and holiday magic. Here's a look at a few events, displays and other attractions.

New York City

The city's tried-and-true Christmas attractions include Rockefeller Center's tree, this year a 75-foot Norway spruce wrapped with 50,000 lights topped with a Swarovski star; the American Museum of Natural History's origami tree; the Metropolitan Museum of Art's baroque creche; decorated windows at department stores like Macy's, Barneys, Lord & Taylor and Saks; holiday markets at Bryant Park, Union Square and Grand Central; and A Slice of Brooklyn's bus tour of the holiday lights of Dyker Heights, Brooklyn.

A few new attractions: "Sea of Light" interactive display at South Street Seaport, opening today, and a winter "ONederland" at the observatory atop One World Trade with weekend visits from Santa, animated snowy owl mascot and a snow globe selfie spot with the city skyline below.

Trees and lights

The Indianapolis Museum of Art hosts Winterlights at Newfields features more than a million multi-colored lights. Also on museum grounds, the historic Lilly House, decorated inside for the season, with a Landscape of Light on the lawn. Elsewhere in Indy: The Indianapolis Motor Speedway, home to the Indy 500 race, hosts Lights at the Brickyard where you can drive your car on the famous track to see over 2.5 million lights, 500 light displays and 40 holiday scenes.

Minneapolis hosts a Holidayz festival, Thursday-Sunday through Dec. 23 at Loring Park, with ice skating, outdoor family movies, Kids Zone, illuminated art, Santa, fireworks, food vendors, shopping and heated tents. New Orleans City Park has 25 acres of light displays, with its famous oaks wrapped in thousands of twinkling lights. The NOLA ChristmasFest runs Dec. 21-31 at the New Orleans Convention Center featuring the city's only skating rink, rides and events. The Creole holiday feast known as Reveillon is offered in restaurants across the city.

In Hawaii, Kauai's Festival of Lights in the Historic

County Building focuses on environmental sustainability with themed trees, wreaths, ornaments, nativity scenes and more made from recycled objects like plastic bottles and aluminum cans. Kansas City, Missouri, is known for the Mayor's Christmas Tree at Crown Center - this year a 100-foot Douglas fir decorated with 6,000 white lights, 1,200 red, gold and silver balls and 150 snowflake and snowman ornaments.

In St. Louis, Missouri, Winterfest at the Arch includes an ice rink and Salvation Army Tree of Lights in Kiener Plaza. In Asheville, North Carolina, Winter Lights Downtown in

Pack Square includes a 10-foot gilded purple snowflake designed for selfies. At the North Carolina Arboretum, you'll find a 50-foot animated tree, model trains and lighted Quilt Garden, plus interactive motion-sensor games.

The Biltmore mansion hosts Candlelight Christmas Evenings, and its Banquet Hall hosts a 35-foot tree with 500 ornaments, one of 100 decorated trees found around the estate. New this year, illumination of Antler Hill Village, and at Biltmore Winery, 7,000 globe-shaped ornaments displayed to make guests feel like they're inside a bottle of sparkling wine. Richmond, Virginia, offers the Lewis Ginter

Botanical Garden's GardenFest of Lights, themed on fairy tales, folklore and other classic stories.

Theme parks

In Anaheim, California, Disney California Adventure Park's Festival of Holidays features performances, crafts, food and more inspired by diverse cultural celebrations including Three Kings Day, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. In Lake Buena Vista, Florida, Disney's Hollywood Studios host a Flurry of Fun, including an immersive new nighttime experience on Sunset Boulevard with decorations, treats and characters. Christmas Town at Busch Gardens is lit with more than 8 million lights, one of North America's largest light displays, including 1,500 Christmas trees, 800 lit snowflakes and stars, 20,000 ornaments and 900 window candles and luminaries. Sesame Place hosts A Very Furry Christmas, with Rudolph the reindeer and other characters. Dollywood's Smoky Mountain Christmas festival offers parades and shows including "Christmas in the Smokies" and "It's a Wonderful Life." In Branson, Missouri, Silver Dollar City's An Old Time Christmas festival includes holiday lights, parades, musicals and more. Universal theme parks in Orlando, Florida, and Hollywood, California, are sprucing up their Harry Potter-themed attractions with lights, music and holiday decor. Universal also hosts Grinch-themed activities.

Trains and boats

Many scenic railways around the country offer train rides themed on Santa. They often have limited dates and sell out in advance, so plan ahead. In Arizona, the Grand Canyon Railway brings to life the children's classic book "Polar Express." In Pennsylvania, Koziar's Christmas Village offers a Santa train ride, Pennsylvania Dutch holiday food and more. Model train shows with replicas of landmark buildings, decorated for the holidays, can be found at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx, at the Missouri Botanical Garden and in St. Louis. The Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade in California runs Dec. 13-17, celebrating its 109th year, with decorated boats from kayaks to yachts on a 14-mile course. — AP



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2017



This photo released by Madison Square Garden shows the dress rehearsal for the 'Radio City Christmas Spectacular,' currently performing through Jan 1 at Radio City Music Hall in New York. — AP photos

Ice baths and M&Ms: Secrets of Rockettes revealed

All the backstage secrets revealed

One of the biggest draws in New York this time of year is the "Christmas Spectacular" featuring the iconic Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall. Everyone knows about their high kicks but do you know how many calories each burns? What do they snack on? What's the best place to be in their famous kick line? Two veterans - Bailey Callahan of Melbourne, Florida, and Alissa LaVergne of Houston - reveal all the backstage secrets.

By the numbers

There are 80 Rockettes, split into two teams of 36 dancers and four standbys. The 36 women can fit shoulder-to-shoulder along the 66-foot (20-meter) stage. They perform eight dance numbers per show, up to four shows daily, 200 shows a season. The show produces 350 laundry loads weekly.

Height and calories

Rockettes must stand between 5-foot-6 and 5-foot-10½ (roughly 1.7 to 1.8 meters) and be proficient at tap, jazz and ballet. Candidates must be ready to do 300 eye-high kicks a show. One Rockette used a fitness tracker and discovered that she burned 1,000 calories every show. "When we do four shows a day, that's a lot of pizza that we get to eat," says Callahan.

Where are they from?

Rockettes this year come from 27 states, plus Canada and Australia. New Jersey sent the most dancers, 12. Ohio is next with six.

“

We don't touch each other

”

Pennsylvania, Florida and California each have five; Michigan, New York and Arizona, four each; Maryland, three; Georgia, North Carolina, Indiana, Connecticut, Texas, Nebraska and Virginia, two each. Louisiana, Rhode Island, Kentucky, Washington, Kansas, Wisconsin, Alabama, Illinois, Utah, Massachusetts and New

Hampshire, one each. Two come from Australia, five from Canada.

Same height?

Heels? Optical illusion? "The way we line up is we put the taller girls in the center and gradually go down to the shorter girls on the end," says LaVergne. "There's a bit of an illusion but it's actually really simple." The costumes are made proportionately, helping the illusion.

High kicks

Prepare to be astonished: "We actually don't touch each other," says LaVergne. The dancers just lightly brush the women beside them with outstretched arms. They call it "feeling the fabric." That ensures they're in line without pushing or leaning. "It just looks like you're actually holding onto your neighbor but we don't," says LaVergne.

Best place to be on the line?

Doesn't matter. "Whether you're on the end or the center, you're still kicking on your own," says LaVergne. Each dancer relies on back muscles,

core strength and hamstring and quad power, not pushing off another dancer. "Whether you're standing on zero or 36, you're going through the exact same experience," says Callahan.

Quickest costume change

Between the "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers" and "New York at Christmas," the Rockettes have just 78 seconds to change outfits. That means taking off socks, shoes, pants, jackets, gloves, cheeks and hats, and then putting on dresses, shoes, jackets, earrings, gloves and new hats. Wait, what's that about "cheeks"? The Rockettes wear red cloth cheeks for "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers" and "Rag Dolls" for rosy complexions.

What do Rockettes eat?

Everything. CATERED foods include proteins, veggies, salads, carbs, desserts. Bottles of sports drink Powerade are everywhere. In her dressing room, LaVergne has chips, popcorn, yogurt and apples. Callahan's go-to snack is a peanut butter and banana sandwich. She also has a stash of M&Ms.

Before the curtain rises...

They're onstage in reindeer costumes, the overture is playing, and they're hidden by a curtain. Some stretch, some pray, some test their antler lights. Others do a clap routine, high fives or dance with a friend. Callahan does three splits, every time. "Because it's so perfect and precise onstage once the curtain opens," says LaVergne, "to see everyone doing something different is hysterical."

Staying healthy

Vitamins, water, rest, good nutrition, CleanWell hand sanitizer. LaVergne likes Emergen-C packets. Callahan is partial to electrolyte tablets. Year-round, Callahan likes yoga, Pilates and barre classes. LaVergne leans toward boot camp, boxing and interval training.

Cool down like a Rockette

Many dancers take an ice bath before heading home. Callahan sits in a tub in 45-degree F water to reduce inflammation.

Is that tapping real or recorded?

Oh, it's real. For the tap-dancing numbers

"Rag Dolls" and "The Twelve Days of Christmas," wireless microphones are hidden in their tap shoes' arches.

Most embarrassing moment

For Callahan, it was a 2013 fall onstage, opening night in "The Twelve Days of Christmas" tap number: "It felt like an eternity on the floor but was probably two seconds. You had to keep smiling, keep going, pretend like nothing ever happened."

LaVergne recalled the time a fellow Rockette's shoe came off during a high kick and went sailing 6' luckily away from the audience. She kept going. Santa picked up the shoe like nothing happened.

Is there any hazing for newcomers?

Are you crazy? This show demands absolute precision and teamwork. There's no room for veterans to make freshmen feel lousy. They might offer advice, but no bullying. "We're all in it together," says LaVergne. "If you don't have that camaraderie and we don't have that bond, it will show onstage." —AP

