

3 Kuwait makes progress in rehab of ex-militants



11 Houthis rally after killing ex-strongman



17 EU blacklists 17 tax havens, including Bahrain and UAE



Amir calls for mechanism to resolve GCC disputes

FM stresses summit a success • UAE, Saudi Arabia form new alliance

By B Izzak and Agencies

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah called yesterday for the formation of a committee that will look into modifying the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) statute to establish a clear mechanism for resolving disputes between member states. In his address to the 38th Gulf Summit, the Amir affirmed that this step will help the council to continue its leading role. The Amir said that he was pleased with the proceedings of the current summit, adding that it was important for the GCC members to continue such gatherings.

"Any dispute on the Gulf level must not affect the continuation of the summit," HH the Amir said. He noted that despite "negative developments and sorrowful events" over the last six months, GCC leaders managed to calm the situation, which is an important step in addressing the recent feud. "We have been stormed in the past six months with painful and negative developments... but we managed to achieve calm," he said.

Sheikh Sabah has been mediating to try to resolve a bitter dispute between Qatar on one side and Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt on the other. On June 5, the Saudi alliance cut off all diplomatic and economic ties with Qatar, accusing it of links to extremist groups. Doha has denied the allegations. "We will continue this role (mediation) in the dispute," HH the Amir said. "Our meeting today is a reason to continue the mediation which fulfills the ambitions of our people."

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, who with Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Sabah were the only heads of state to attend the meeting, acknowledged that the summit took place in "highly sensitive circumstances" in the



KUWAIT: (From left) General Secretary of the Gulf Cooperation Council Abdullah Al-Zayani, Kuwaiti Crown Prince HH Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Al-Thani, Kuwaiti Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister of Oman Fahd Al-Said, Bahrain's Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Al-Khalifa, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir and UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash pose for a group picture during the GCC Summit at Bayan Palace yesterday. - KUNA (See Pages 2 & 3)

life of the GCC. "I am full of hope that the summit will lead to results that will maintain the security of the Gulf and its stability," Tamim said, according to the Doha-based Al-Jazeera.

The summit's closing statement urged commitment to the six-nation bloc's system and for the region's media to

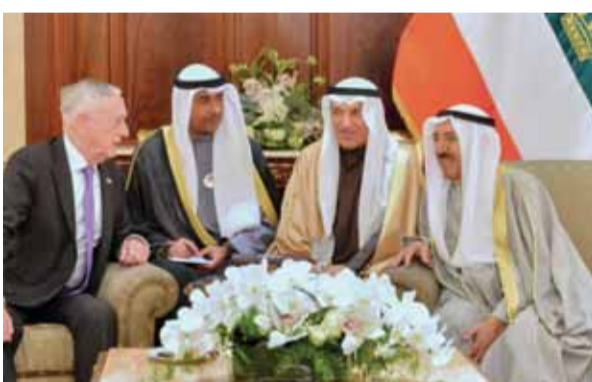
"bear their responsibility" in encouraging unity. Reading out the 'Kuwait Declaration' at the session's conclusion, GCC chief Abdullah Al-Zayani said it was imperative that Gulf states unite in their efforts to face challenges and threats to their security and stability.

Zayani said Gulf leaders see eye-to-eye on achieving

"unity and coordination" and strengthening their ties in the economic, security and military domains, particularly regarding the fight against terrorism. Gulf states are also keen to continue working on several joint projects, including the GCC joint market and their customs union.

Continued on Page 11

Amir receives US Defense Secretary



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, accompanied by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace US Defense Secretary James Mattis and his accompanying delegation. Mattis conveyed greetings and appreciation on behalf of US President Donald Trump and his wishes to HH the Amir, and prosperity to the people of Kuwait. In turn, the Amir expressed his appreciation to Trump and his best wishes to the United States and further progress and prosperity. — KUNA

Trump to move US embassy to Jerusalem; Erdogan warns of 'red line'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump faced down warnings of widespread Middle East unrest and untold damage to the peace process yesterday, telling anxious Arab leaders he still intends to move the US embassy to Jerusalem. Amid a frantic round of telephone diplomacy, Trump told Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and Jordan's King Abdullah that the deeply controversial move was coming, but crucially did not give a timeframe.

Trump "informed the president (Abbas) on his intention to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem," the Palestinian leader's office said in a statement that was echoed in Amman. Trump must this week decide whether to sign a waiver keeping the embassy in Tel Aviv or fulfill a campaign promise and move it to Jerusalem - de facto recognizing Israel's claim on the disputed city. Such a move would please Trump's conservative and evangelical donors and voter base.

US officials said he will hold off on moving the



Donald Trump

embassy right away, but may issue a statement reiterating his intent and even go as far as recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. That could upend a decades-old Western policy - observed by both Republican and Democratic presidents - that stated Jerusalem's status can only be decided by negotiation. The White House argues that such a move would not prejudice final talks and would represent the reality that



Recep Tayyip Erdogan

west Jerusalem is and will continue to be part of Israel under any settlement.

Still, it risks extinguishing Trump's efforts to broker Middle East peace and igniting the flames of conflict in a region already reeling from crises in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Qatar. "Mr Trump! Jerusalem is a red line for Muslims," Turkey's President Recep Tayyip

Continued on Page 11



BAABDA: Lebanese President Michel Aoun (right) speaks with Prime Minister Saad Hariri at the Presidential Palace yesterday. — AP

One month on, Hariri rescinds shock resignation

BAABDA, Lebanon: Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri said yesterday that he had withdrawn his resignation, a month after his shock announcement that he was quitting sparked political upheaval. The announcement brought some respite to Lebanon, which had been gripped by fears of new political and economic instability in a country riven by deep divisions and caught up in regional rivalries. Minutes after Hariri's announcement, Paris said the Lebanese premier would attend talks Friday in France on the situation in Lebanon, which US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will also attend.

"The council of ministers thanks the prime minister for rescinding his resignation," Hariri said, reading from a cabinet statement issued after its first meeting since his return two weeks ago. Hariri announced he was stepping down on November 4 in a televised address from Saudi Arabia, a move widely seen as part of the boiling tensions between the Saudi kingdom - a long-time Hariri backer - and its regional rival Iran.

Continued on Page 11

Bid to smuggle 110 kg hashish by sea foiled

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

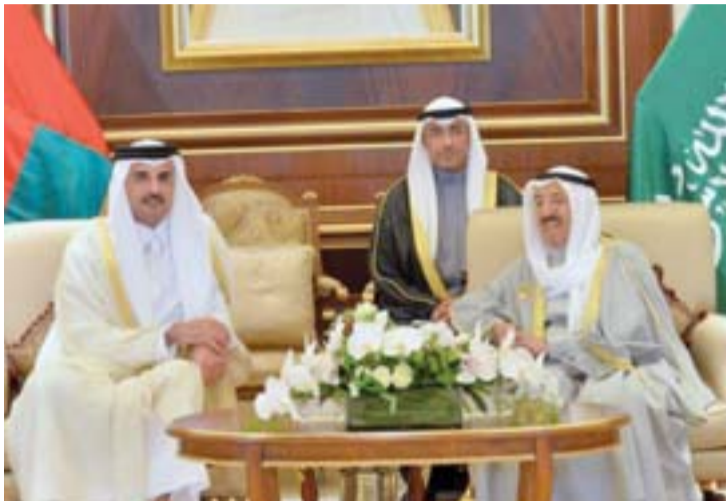
KUWAIT: Interior ministry authorities, in cooperation with the coastguard and defense intelligence officers, yesterday foiled a bid to smuggle into Kuwait 110 kilos of hashish by boat from Iran. Two Kuwaitis and five Iranians were arrested red-handed. Authorities had received information that a 42-year-old Kuwaiti with a criminal record planned to smuggle in the hashish, so he was put under surveillance. Narcotics detectives followed the suspect yesterday, who went out to sea in a boat from Fintas along with a



Kuwaiti accomplice. A dhow with five Iranians and the contraband was waiting to meet them. They were intercepted by the detectives, and the seven men and 110 kg of hashish were seized, along with their boats.

Amir meets with Qatar's Sheikh Tamim, GCC chief delegates

Summit important for regional stability, security: Qatari Emir



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the representative of Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed of Oman, Deputy Prime Minister for Cabinet Affairs Fahad bin Mahmoud Al-Saeed.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the representative of Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, and Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, ahead of attending the 38th Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit yesterday.

Receiving the Qatari Emir at Kuwait International Airport were His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary General Abdullatif Al-Zayani, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister for Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh, State Minister for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Information Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-

Mubarak Al-Sabah, ministers and senior officers in the military, police, National Guard and Kuwait Fire Services Directorate.

Regional stability

Sheikh Tamim had hoped that the 38th Gulf Cooperation Council Summit would contribute to the security and stability of the region.

In a press statement upon his arrival at the airport, Sheikh Tamim expressed sincere gratitude towards His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti people for their warm generosity and hospitality. Sheikh Tamim stressed that the current situation in the region required the council's members to band together against all odds and challenges.

His Highness the Amir also received representative of Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir, as well as representative of Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed of Oman, Deputy Prime Minister Fahad bin Mahmoud Al-Saeed, and Bahrain's chief delegate Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Mubarak Al Khalifa. Senior Kuwaiti officials also attended the meetings. — KUNA



Sheikh Tamim grateful for Kuwait's generosity



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Bahrain's chief delegate Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Mubarak Al Khalifa.



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Local

GCC will continue leading role despite challenges: Amir

Sheikh Sabah hails victories against terrorism

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah affirmed that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) will carry on its leading role in the region despite the numerous challenges and upheavals. Delivering his speech at the inauguration of the 38th Gulf Summit in Kuwait yesterday, His Highness the Amir welcomed the participation of various delegations in the grand meeting. The holding of the summit proves to the world that the GCC, as an important entity, needs to continue to address the needs of the people of the region, said His Highness the Amir. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah thanked the Bahraini King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa for hosting the previous summit in Manama, saying that the Bahraini leadership and people always contributed to the success of the GCC since its inception. His Highness the Amir touched on the Gulf countries' joint accomplishments since the formation of the council, adding that the future still holds more goals to achieve and milestones to surpass. Uniting the Gulf countries' efforts against regional and international challenges will ensure the security and stability of the council, His Highness the Amir affirmed.

“Iran still violates principles of int'l law”

Victories against terrorism

The International community managed to achieve victories against terrorism in both Iraq and Syria; however, the threat of extremism is still at large, said His Highness the Amir who called for more efforts in this regard.

His Highness the Amir lauded the Saudi efforts in uniting the front of the Syrian opposition, hoping that this policy will bring peace to the war-torn country. Focusing on Yemen, His Highness the Amir commended the efforts carried out by the coalition, which supports the legitimacy in Yemen, adding that it was important to continue providing

all forms of assistance, especially humanitarian relief, to the Yemenis. His Highness the Amir called on the Houthis group to abide by the political solution in Yemen, saying that the UNSC resolution 2216, the Gulf initiative, and national dialogue were part of the solution.

Peace process

Concerning the peace process in the Middle East, His Highness the Amir expressed hopes that such stalemate in the process be moved forward in order to reach a just and everlasting peace agreement for the sake of substantiating the stability of the region and the world in accordance to the Arab peace initiative and international resolutions in this regard. His Highness the Amir also congratulated the Iraqis for liberating areas that were under the control of the so-called Islamic State (IS/Daesh). He reiterated the GCC's bid to continue working with the Iraqi government to maintain stability of Iraq, stressing the significance of participating in the conference slated for mid-February in Kuwait dedicated for the reconstruction of Iraqi areas affected by Daesh. On Iran, His Highness the Amir said that the Islamic Republic of Iran was still violating principles of international law. He called on Iran to abide by rules, which respect the sovereignty and internal affairs of neighboring states, affirming that this was an integral condition, which ensures the stability of the region. His Highness the Amir asked Allah Almighty to preserve stability of the GCC states and continue bestowing his blessings and welfare on the GCC peoples.

Good opportunity

At the conclusion of the summit, His Highness said that the summit was a good opportunity to meet with GCC brothers in their second home Kuwait, adding that they



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivers his speech at the inauguration of the 38th Gulf Summit in Kuwait. — KUNA

exchanged points of view regarding various challenges facing the region. His Highness the Amir added that the participants succeeded once again in affirming the strength of "our Gulf entity and its ability to defy challenges through our adherence to the mechanism of convention of these meetings, besides the decisions we have reached that will contribute with no doubt in enriching our blessed experience and our joint GCC march in order to meet aspirations of the Gulf peoples." His Highness the Amir thanked the Secretary General of the GCC and the General Secretariat and all committees, which have exerted enormous efforts to prepare for this meeting. He expressed wishes to meet in the Sultanate of Oman in the hospitality of Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed.

Meanwhile, GCC Secretary General Abdullah Al-Zayani said that Gulf states are confident in the wisdom of His Highness the Amir. Speaking in his address at the Kuwait-held talks, Zayani said Gulf officials attending the six-nation bloc's 38th session were keen to maintain their unity. Zayani expressed confidence that the Kuwait-hosted talks would support reaching the people of the region's aspired goals and aspirations. He also underlined the importance of "unity and integration" and keeping the GCC "cohesive and united in the face of current and future challenges." He also thanked Bahrain for hosting the summit's past session, and congratulated the Kingdom, along with the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman on their national days. — KUNA

US Defense Secretary concludes visit to Kuwait

KUWAIT: United States Defense Secretary James Mattis and an accompanying delegation left Kuwait yesterday after a three-day visit. Mattis was seen off by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the Ministry of Defense's Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations. Kuwait's Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khodir, Deputy Chief of Staff Lt Gen Abdullah Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah and the US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman were present, together with senior military commanders.

Separately, Kuwait First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah had received a phone call Monday from US

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, during which they discussed regional and international developments, and means of boosting bilateral ties.

Grave consequences

In other news, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the Arab League Ambassador Ahmad Al-Bakr has warned of grave consequences if the US goes through with a plan to move its embassy to Jerusalem and recognize the city as the capital of Israel. In a speech during an emergency meeting of the Arab League on the level of permanent representatives in Cairo, Bakr, who heads the Kuwaiti delegation to the meeting, described the prospect as "worrying and a threat to the peace and security of the region."

"The Palestinians retain a historic right of sovereignty over the holy city of Jerusalem," the Kuwaiti envoy said. He underlined Kuwait's support to the Arab Peace Initiative, which calls for a broad and comprehensive peace plan to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "We deplore any practices or measures that tamper with the status quo in Jerusalem and urge the US to make a prudent decision on this issue," Bakr added. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sees off US Defense Secretary James Mattis as he leaves Kuwait yesterday. — KUNA

Kuwait makes progress in rehabilitation of ex-militants

KUWAIT: Kuwait has taken concrete and effective measures to assimilate the flow of militants returning from war zones, a Kuwaiti diplomat said yesterday. Addressing a workshop hosted by the foreign ministry germane to this issue, Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah spoke of a strategy to rehabilitate the former fighters after they are guaranteed a fair trial.

On Kuwait's efforts to address the issue, he said that tremendous headway has been made in the fight against terrorism and extremism, a matter he pointed out was of paramount significance to the Kuwaiti leadership. The statement was delivered by Assistant Foreign Minister for Development and International Cooperation affairs Ambassador Nasser



KUWAIT: Ambassador Nasser Al-Sabeeh speaks during the workshop. — KUNA

Al-Sabeeh on behalf of Jarallah. Jarallah said that this workshop proves Kuwait's determination to ensure that peace and stability is restored to areas where conflict runs rampant. The Kuwaiti envoy added that the scourge of terrorism continues to threaten global peace and security, leaving destruction and the spread of malicious ideologies in its wake.

Jarallah expressed hope that initiatives such as this workshop, which brings together a number of anti-terrorism experts as well as local and foreign officials, would prove instrumental in protecting youth from the ill effects of radicalization and terrorism. — KUNA

Kuwait Times

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A white-eared bulbul perched on a tree branch in Kuwait University. —KUNA

‘Wings of Mexico’ descending in Kuwait

Sculpture unveiled at Museum of Modern Arts

By Jeri Al-Jeri

KUWAIT: Arts are a silent yet penetrating form of communication. The sculptor Jorge Marin have created two golden wings that have traveled the world with him, with critics wanting to theorize about the hidden meanings behind this simple yet magnificent piece of art.

The ‘Wings of Mexico’ sculpture was unveiled at the Museum of Modern Arts in Kuwait City yesterday. The Mexican Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel Angel Isidero and Dr Ali Hussain Al-Youha, Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters attended the unveiling of the sculpture which is displayed in Kuwait as part of Marin’s international tour. In his own words, the Mexican artist explains the reason behind his enthusiasm for sharing his art with people around the globe: “The way that Mexicans have appropriated these wings and the way people around the world have interacted with them, made me want to bring the universality of Mexican art to all frontiers. It is a gateway to Mexico, and from Mexico to the world.” The artist also had some words to say about the arrival of his ‘Wings of Mexico’ piece to Kuwait: “It is a privilege to bring this art to Kuwait, where it will achieve its goal of becoming a meeting point between people and cultures.”

In a speech during the event, Ambassador Isidero explained that these glorious wings that are more than four meters high and weigh 1.6 tons, were created in a studio in Mexico City. “It has begun its flight in 2010, and have dazzled millions of people in four continents,” he said.

The Embassy of Mexico, the Ministry of Foreign affairs of Kuwait, and the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID), the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters of Kuwait, KGL logistics, AirFrance-KLM, and Kuwait International Bank, were all thanked by Jorge Marin for making the graceful landing of the wings of Mexico in Kuwait a reality.



Mexican Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel Angel Isidero delivers his speech.



The ‘Wings of Mexico’ sculpture.



KUWAIT: Officials pose for a group photo in front of the ‘Wings of Mexico’ sculpture at the Museum of Modern Arts. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



Guests pose in front of the sculpture.

US Exchange opportunity

The application period for the US Department of State-sponsored Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (Global UGRAD) is now open through December 31, 2017. Global UGRAD provides a

scholarship for one semester of non-degree academic study at a US college or university to a diverse group of emerging leaders. Successful applicants can expect an in-depth exposure to US society, culture, and academic institutions, as well as an opportunity to enhance their professional skills. All participants will be enrolled in full-time, non-degree, undergraduate course work chosen from their US host institution’s existing curriculum.

Eligibility for the Global UGRAD Program

- Applicants must be studying in the country in

which they apply for the Global UGRAD Program. So, those who apply from Kuwait, must be studying in Kuwait.

- Scholarships will be granted to students who currently are enrolled in full-time undergraduate programs only, having completed a minimum of their first semester of study. Participants must have at least one semester or an equivalent term to complete at their home institutions upon completion of the Global UGRAD Program.

- Applicants should demonstrate leadership potential

through academic work, community involvement, and extracurricular activities.

- Applicants must demonstrate a command of written and spoken English. The TOEFL exam will be required of those selected as finalists. Preference will be given to those who have had little or NO experience in the US or outside of their home countries.

- Applicants must be over 18 years of age.

US citizens and permanent residents of the United States are not eligible for the Global UGRAD Program.

Local

Declaring the Truth

Universal catastrophes



By Dr Yousuf Al-Sultan

local@kuwaittimes.net

We do believe that God has complete power, control and knowledge over everything we might be affected by as a result of natural disasters. Nevertheless, such beliefs do not deviate from scientific, theological and research observations and conclusions, since the universe and personal attitudes are completely governed and controlled by Almighty God, even prior to the creation of the universe.

In August 2017, an Indian scientist named Babu Kalyil predicted via research and scientific calculation that before December 31, 2017, the world would experience a vicious series of earthquakes and tsunamis, specifically in the Indian Ocean associated with Seesham Storm (with velocity of 120-180 km per hour), combined with heavy rain. Seaside cities and areas would be affected severely and dramatically.

According to Kalyil, such disasters would affect the following countries: India, China, Japan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

The Holy Quran mentions in Surat Al-Hadeed that catastrophes affecting the world or human beings are documented and have been predetermined by God even prior to the creation of the universe. However, our limited knowledge of such heavenly issues hampers our ability to assess the justification of God's doings which affect the universe or us. The only measures that we could employ is to predict the extreme damages resulting from such disasters, and to minimize their adverse and severe impacts.

Iraq yet to approve proposed imported gas price: Oil Minister

Co-ops suspended for not recruiting enough citizens

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti and Iraqi officials will soon meet to discuss the final terms of an agreement by which Kuwait would import natural gas from Iraq. Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq said yesterday. "We are still waiting for the Iraqi side's approval on the proposed price," he underlined. Marzouq met with his Iraqi counterpart at the sidelines of the recent OPEC meeting held in Vienna to discuss reducing oil productions.

In other news, Marzouq signed yesterday a KD 14 million (\$46 million) contract to build a water pipeline system stretching from a water distribution plant in Mina Abdullah to the areas of Julaiia and Nuwaiseeb. A 30-month timeframe has been put on the mega project, involving the construction of a 1,200 MM pipeline that connects Mina Abdullah to the border of the two areas, read a statement by the Ministry of Electricity and Water. The project is being carried out, given the soaring demand for fresh water in these areas and to keep other ongoing development enterprises afloat, the statement added.

Grilling suspended

MP Abdul Kareem Al-Kandari announced suspending a grilling motion he had intended to file against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and stressed that the suspension came in

consolidation with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's efforts to hold the GCC Summit. The decision also came in response to news he received about forming the new cabinet next week, Kandari added.

Co-ops suspended

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) tends to suspend the applications and transactions of ten co-operative societies upon the minister's instructions as the concerned co-ops had not been cooperating in recruiting more citizens. Controversy took place concerning an agreement signed by MSAL, co-ops and the Manpower and

Supreme Council of Planning and Development, as well as the Finance Ministry. The sources added that the project's estimated cost would be KD 90 million and that it will be executed in two years to develop 1.8 kilometers of the seafront and achieve substantial development in its public services. The project includes building restaurants, cafes, an outdoor sports club, jogging lanes, facilities for various marine and beach activities and parking spaces for 1,950 vehicles. "A meeting will be held on May 10 between MPW and the Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) to discuss further details," the sources concluded.



Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq

KPC budget

A governmental document showed that Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) budget by the end of the fiscal year 2016-2017 included extra KD 4 billion it had made in the years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 making the 2016-2017 fiscal year's actual revenues add up to KD 17 billion with a 31.2 percent increase higher than the estimate. The document also revealed that KPC's expenditure had increased by 23.6 percent compared to budget estimates making KD 15.6 billion that is 3 billion higher than estimates.

MOH violations

The parliamentary budgets and final statement committee yesterday discussed the State Audit Bureau report and remarks for the fiscal year 2016-

2017 as well as the remarks made by the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) recruitment supervisors in 2017. The committee explained that the report included monitoring 59 government bodies and showed that violations detected in 2016-2017 had dropped by 8,400 compared to the previous year. The report also showed that the Ministry of Health (MOH) made the highest number of violations with 13,700. The committee also noted that auditors usually faced obstacles on performing their duties in some government bodies where internal auditing departments are too weak. A job vacancy ad made by the State Audit Bureau sought the employment of experienced auditors and stressed that it should rather employ new graduates to help them acquire knowledge and experience.

Lawmaker suspends plans to grill PM



Government Restructuring Program to provide more job opportunities for Kuwaitis.

Seafront development

Sources at the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) said that the ministry had included a project to develop the seafront within the development plan projects for the fiscal year 2018-2019, which was recently submitted to the

Food Authority urges public to avoid unlicensed vendors



KUWAIT: EPA Director Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah looks on as students from the Hamad Essa Al-Rujaib High School pedal to generate clean electricity. — KUNA

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition recently urged both citizens and expatriates to be more careful when dealing with unlicensed food vendors, especially those who provide home delivery services. The authority's general manager and chairman Essa Al-Kandari warned unlicensed individuals

and corporate vendors to abide by the authority's law number 112/2013 in order to avoid legal accountability.

Environment-friendly school

Environment Public Authority (EPA) Director Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah recently visited Hamad Essa Al-Rujaib High School in Kaifan; the first environment-friendly school

in Kuwait, to explore students' activities in using solar, wind and kinetic energies to generate electricity. Sheikh Abdullah thanked the students and teachers for their efforts and expressed hopes that other schools would follow the same example. The students were awarded with golden medals and certificates of appreciation from international conferences in Switzerland and Germany.

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Spain drops arrest warrant for sacked Catalan leader

UN envoy in N Korea as nuclear tensions soar



CHONDE, Malawi: Members of the Lhomwe tribe of Malawi rehearse their traditional dances at Chonde, in the southern district of Mulanje. Southern Malawi has been at the heart of a recent panic spread by rumors of vampire activity. Witchcraft and vampire activity are widely believed in the country, which has sparked revenge mobs that kill those suspected of black magic. — AFP

Vampire scare rattles Malawi

Panic as vengeful mobs kill those suspected of black magic

MULANJE: Jamiya Bauleni is one of the people claiming to have fallen victim to a wave of alleged vampire attacks that have triggered deadly vigilante violence in Malawi. She recounted her experience before barefoot children in Ngolongoliwa village in the country's south, which has been at the heart of recent panic over rumors of vampire activity. Her story is part of a long line of similar testimonies in Malawi, where belief in witchcraft and vampire activity is widespread and rouses revenge mobs that kill those suspected of black magic.

Bauleni, a 40-year-old single mother with one child, said that an attacker sucked her blood on the night of October 2 at her home in Thyolo district. "This is not hearsay," she told a fascinated crowd as people edged closer to listen. "I know my blood was sucked." "I saw light on the corner of my roof. I failed to stand up from my bed and felt something piercing my left arm," she

said, pointing near her breast. Bauleni, who makes a living selling wild pea stew, said that before she fell unconscious she heard someone fleeing the scene. She was taken to a clinic and later discharged after being given vitamin supplements, but she chose not to report the attack.

'Like a needle'

The latest bout of vampire rumors allegedly originated in Mozambique and spread across the border to Malawi's districts of Mulanje and Phalombe, according to the United Nations. At least seven people have been killed in Mulanje district after being hunted down, police say. As public anger over supposed vampires grew, UN workers and US Peace Corps volunteers were pulled out of the region in October but they have now returned.

One purported victim, Florence Kalunga, 27, says she was sleeping alongside her husband in their home when she saw a light "like fire". "I heard the door open. I felt some-



Woman claims an attacker sucked her blood

thing like a needle in my finger," she said. The people targeted by vengeful mobs are often wealthier individuals in rural parts of

the southern African country, where grinding poverty and poor educational standards are the norm.

Entrepreneur Orlando Chaponda narrowly avoided an attack when 2,000 villagers, some carrying machetes and stones, stormed his home in Thyolo on September 30. "They said I was keeping blood suckers," said Chaponda, who was out at the time. "They could have killed me if they found me." He called the police who fired tear gas to disperse the crowd after a five-hour standoff. "There is no truth about blood suckers, but jealous people and thugs want to take advantage to attack rich people," Chaponda said. "If you have a nice car, you are a bloodsucker."

'Rich versus poor'

Anthony Mtuta, assistant lecturer in

anthropology at the Catholic University of Malawi, said the roots of the vampire scares were in "economic hardships and inequalities". "It's the rich versus the poor. The poor believe the rich are greedy and are sucking the blood of poor people," he said. Malawi is largely reliant on foreign aid, but some locals view the assistance with suspicion. "To villagers, the thinking is that no gift is for free... you pay back through blood," said Mtuta. He has researched the vampire phenomenon and has warned that violence would "resurface unless the government learns how to handle contemporary issues".

McDonald Kolokombe, a clerk at the state-run Likhubula forest reserve, noted that the number of tourists visiting the Mulanje area had collapsed since mid-September. "The communities rely on visitors to feed their families working as tour guides, porters and selling curios," he said. — AFP

6 months of crisis in GCC

KUWAIT: The Gulf oil monarchies' annual summit was opened yesterday in Kuwait, six months to the day after a diplomatic crisis erupted between Qatar and Saudi Arabia and its allies. A timeline:

Ties cut

On June 5, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt along with Yemen and the Maldives sever diplomatic ties with Qatar. They accuse Doha of supporting "terrorists" and of being too close to Iran, Saudi Arabia's regional rival. In the biggest diplomatic crisis to hit the region in years, Riyadh and its allies close land and maritime borders, suspend air links and expel Qatari citizens. Saudi Arabia also closes the Riyadh bureau of Qatari broadcaster Al Jazeera. Qatar claims its neighbors are pursuing a "policy of domination and control" and insists it will not back down. On June 6, Mauritania joins the boycott and Jordan trims its diplomatic presence in Doha. On June 19, the UAE state minister for foreign affairs Anwar Gargash says Qatar's diplomatic isolation could last "years". Doha demands the "blockade" be lifted before talks on resolving the standoff.

Ultimatum rejected

On June 22, Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE send a list of 13 demands to Qatar, giving it 10 days to comply. Among the demands are shutting down Al Jazeera, curbing relations with Iran and closing a Turkish military base in the emirate. On July 4, as the



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti and foreign journalists gather in the media centre hall during the GCC summit in Kuwait City yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

deadline approaches, Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani says the list of demands "is unrealistic and is not actionable". A day later, the four-nation Saudi-led bloc threatens new sanctions. On July 25, Saudi Arabia and its allies unveil a "terrorist" blacklist of 18 organizations and individuals suspected of links with Islamist extremism that they say have ties with Qatar. The list now includes almost 90 names.

Breaking isolation

On August 1, Qatar announces an order for seven warships from Italy. In June, it had signed an accord with the United States for the sale of F-15 fighter jets. Washington approves the \$1.1-billion contract in early November. On August 4, Brazilian footballer Neymar arrives in Paris to join his new club Paris Saint-Germain owned by Qatar, which

put up more than 220 million euros (\$257 million) for his transfer. On August 9, Qatar introduces a visa-free entry program for 80 nationalities to stimulate air transport and tourism.

First contact, suspicion

On September 9, Saudi state media say Qatar's ruler Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani phoned Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to express interest in talks to resolve the crisis. Shortly afterwards an official Saudi spokesman says Riyadh is "suspending all dialogue and all contacts with Qatar" until Doha clarifies its position. On October 19, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson plays down prospects of a breakthrough in the crisis. On November 15, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan pledges his country's continued military support for Qatar during a visit to Doha. — AFP

Nigerian state gets 'happiness minister'

LAGOS: It has been ranked among the happiest places in the world despite widespread unrest, political crisis and recession. Now one Nigerian state has a minister in charge of contentment. The commissioner for happiness and couples' fulfillment is the brainchild of Rochas Okorocha, governor of the southeastern state of Imo. Okorocha, who was previously widely criticized for using public funds to erect statues of prominent African leaders, on Monday appointed his sister to the post.

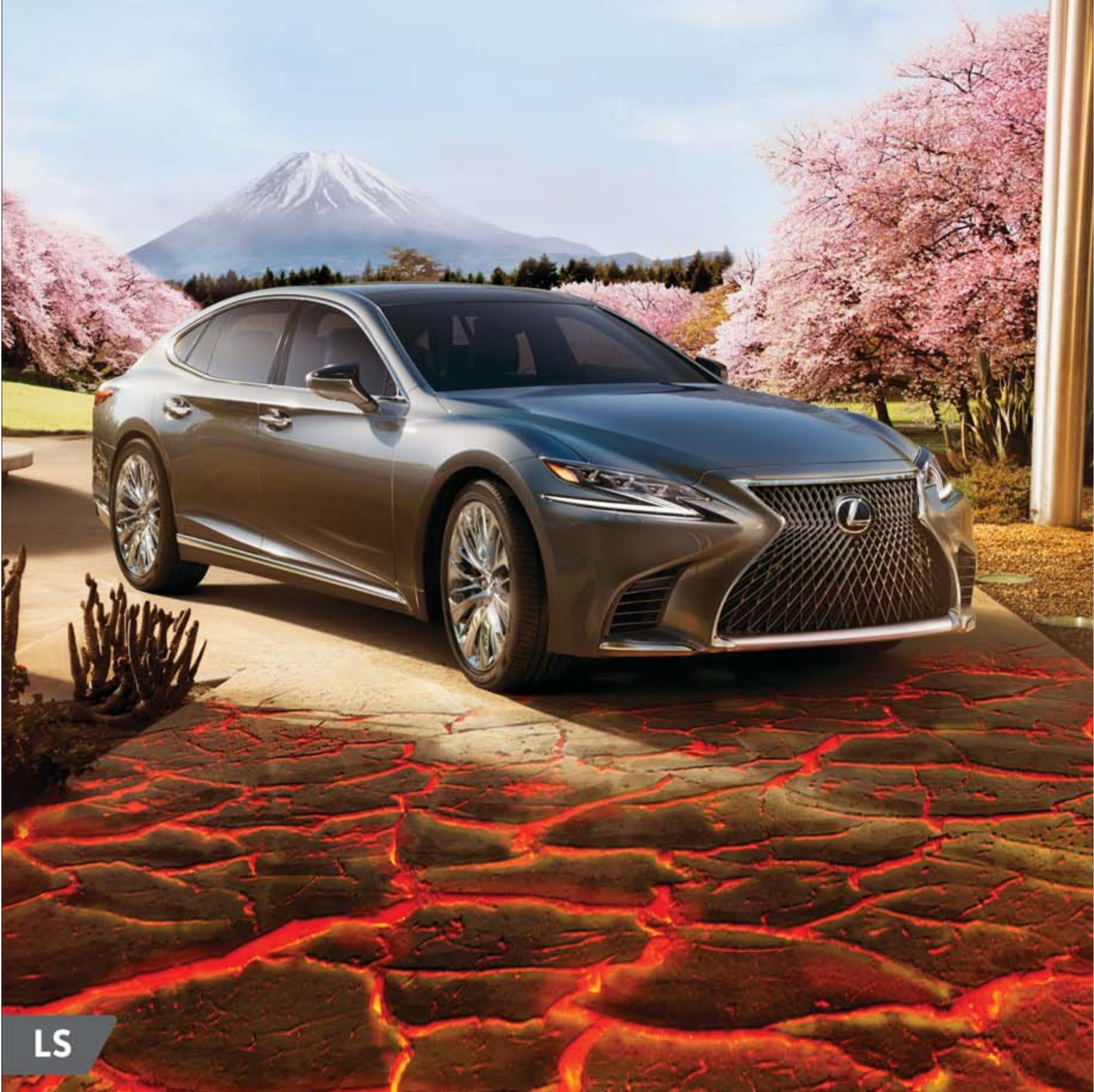
Ogechi Ololo now takes up the first such portfolio in Nigeria. She previously served as Okorocha's deputy chief of staff and special adviser on domestic matters, in charge of Christmas decorations. The governor's spokesman, Sam Onwuemeodo, could not provide exact details of Ololo's responsibilities when contacted by AFP yesterday, but said: "There is nothing unusual about the appointment". "The governor is a man

of ideas, always introducing new things to governance."

The commissioner's job "is an innovation that should be copied by other governors," he added. He "wants to always make the people happy. That's why he has created a ministry for that purpose." The remote Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan is known for measuring its success by Gross National Happiness rather than Gross Domestic Product. Criteria taken into account include psychological well-being, health, education, vitality in the community and the living standards enjoyed by the population. Okorocha, a leading member in President Muhammadu Buhari's All Progressives Congress party, is one of Nigeria's best-known but also controversial state governors.

He has been accused of appointing family members and cronies to government offices without regard to the state's lean finances, including naming his son-in-law as chief of staff. In recent months he has honored Liberia's outgoing President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and South Africa's Jacob Zuma with statues in the state. Zuma's statue was reported to have cost 520 million naira (\$1.4 million, 1.2 million euros). Okorocha was criticized for the expense as public sector workers in Imo were owed several months' salary. He has also been criticized for spending millions of naira to put up a Christmas tree reputed to be one of the biggest in the world. — AFP

THE FLAME OF LUXURY IS REIGNITED



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International

May scrambles to win over Northern Irish kingmakers

UK and EU scrambling to thrash out a Brexit deal

LONDON: Britain said it was confident of a deal on Brexit just hours after a tentative agreement with the European Union over the Irish border was dashed by Prime Minister Theresa May's kingmakers in Belfast. After a tumultuous day which saw a choreographed attempt to showcase the progress of Brexit talks thwarted at the last minute, May will try to gauge what her supporters in Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) might accept. May, who is now scrambling to thrash out a deal with the EU while keeping the DUP, which props up her minority government, and her own party onside, may return to Brussels as early as Wednesday to continue talks, a Downing Street official said.

"We're very confident that we will be able to move this forward," finance minister Philip Hammond said as he arrived for a meeting with EU counterparts in Brussels. "Discussions are going on right now and will go on throughout the day," Hammond said. A European Commission spokesman said it was ready to resume Brexit negotiations as soon as London signals it is ready. Brexit minister David Davis will respond in parliament to an urgent question on the negotiations from the opposition Labor party at 1230 GMT.

May wants the EU to open the so-called second phase of Brexit negotiations, about the trading relationship after the United Kingdom's withdrawal at 2300 GMT on March 29, 2019. But the EU will only move to trade talks if there is enough progress on three key issues: the money Britain must pay to the EU; rights for EU citizens in Britain and British cit-

izens in the EU; and how to avoid a hard border with Ireland. Sterling fell by a cent against the dollar on Monday after hopes of a deal were disappointed and was a further 0.5 percent lower at \$1.3414 yesterday.

Ireland

All sides say they want to avoid a return to a hard border between EU member Ireland and the British province of Northern Ireland, which might upset the peace established after decades of violence. But they have found it difficult to find a way to satisfy both the Irish government and DUP law-

makers who say Northern Ireland must quit the EU on the same terms as the rest of the UK. That includes leaving the single market and customs union, which is May's official policy but complicates the border issue.

A tentative deal on the border, promising "regulatory alignment" on both sides of the island of Ireland, was agreed on Monday when May sat

down to lunch with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker but later rejected by the DUP. The DUP says it cannot allow any divergence in regulation between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom. Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, who has been tipped as a potential future leader of May's party, said that one way to solve the riddle would be for the whole country to remain in the single market and customs union.

"If regulatory alignment in a number of specific areas is the requirement for a frictionless border then the prime



LONDON: Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) Deputy Leader Nigel Dodds (center) speaks to journalists outside the Houses of Parliament in central London, as demonstrators wave a Union (left) and European Union (EU) flags behind. —AFP

minister should conclude this must be on a UK-wide basis," Davidson said. Her comments were retweeted by DUP leader Arlene Foster. The Daily Telegraph newspaper said

the DUP was still far away from agreeing to May's Brexit plans, which were criticized by supporters and opponents of Brexit alike.—Reuters



Britain confident as British officials, DUP hold talks

News in brief

Southern California fire

SANTA PAULA: Ferocious winds in Southern California whipped up an explosive wildfire that prompted evacuation orders for nearly 8,000 homes, authorities said. The blaze broke out Monday and grew wildly to more than 48 square miles in the hours that followed, consuming vegetation that hasn't burned in decades, Ventura County Fire Sgt Eric Buschow said. At least 150 structures have burned so far, fire officials said. There was no immediate word whether the structures were homes or businesses. More than 27,000 people have been evacuated and one firefighter was injured. There was no word on the extent of the injuries. The winds were pushing it toward Santa Paula, a city of some 30,000 people about 60 miles northwest of Los Angeles. Many of the evacuated homes were in that city. However, evacuation orders were expanded to houses in Ventura, which is 12 miles southwest and has 106,000 residents.

Tillerson meets EU leaders

BRUSSELS: US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met his European counterparts in Brussels yesterday to shore up ties, with allies insisting he still plays a "key role" despite doubts over his future. Tillerson held talks over lunch with European Union foreign ministers and the bloc's diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini, before a two-day NATO meeting set to focus on North Korea's missile program and concerns over perceived hostility from Russia. But his visit comes against a difficult backdrop—a rift with President Donald Trump has led to reports he could be replaced within weeks, calling into question his authority to speak for Washington. And there are major differences between Washington and Europe on a number of key policy areas, notably the Iran nuclear deal which Trump has vehemently condemned but which Brussels is desperate to preserve. President Donald Trump's possible decision to recognize the contested holy city of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital could also prove to be thorny, after the EU warned the move could provoke "serious repercussions".

'Peace Diamond' auctioned

NEW YORK: Sierra Leone sold one of the world's largest uncut diamonds for \$6.5 million at a New York auction on Monday to raise funds for development projects in the West African country. The egg-sized gem-known as the "Peace Diamond"—was bought by British luxury jeweler Laurence Graff, said Martin Rapaport, chairman of Rapaport Group, a network of diamond companies that managed the auction. "One hundred percent of the value of this diamond, of the auction sale of this diamond, is going to go to the government and the people of Sierra Leone. Never before has this happened," Rapaport told reporters. The gem was unearthed in March in Sierra Leone's eastern Kono region by a Christian pastor who gave it to the government to handle the sale. It was the government's second attempt to sell the diamond after it rejected the highest bid of \$7.8 million at an initial auction in the capital Freetown in May. Ahead of Monday's auction the diamond was shown to some 70 potential buyers and received seven bids, Rapaport said.

Nigeria fuel shortages

ABUJA: Nigeria's state oil company assured motorists yesterday there was no shortage of petrol and urged them not to engage in panic buying after long queues built up at filling stations. Lengthy fuel queues were reported by motorists yesterday across Nigeria, including in the commercial capital Lagos, in the southwest, the northwestern city of Kaduna and the capital, Abuja, in the centre of the country. The state oil company, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), said rumors that pump prices would increase in the run-up to Christmas had contributed to the increased demand for petrol. It said the price rise fears were unfounded. "I wish to call on all Nigerians to stop panic buying. We have said times without number that NNPC has sufficient products to cater for the needs of all consumers," Maikantu Baru, the NNPC's group managing director, said in an emailed statement.

Spain drops arrest warrant for sacked Catalan leader

MADRID: Spain has withdrawn a European arrest warrant for Catalonia's sacked leader Carles Puigdemont and four of his deputies, who fled to Belgium after the regional parliament declared unilateral independence, the Supreme Court said yesterday. In a ruling, Judge Pablo Llarena decided to withdraw the warrant as the five "appear to have shown their intention to return to Spain" to take part in regional elections on December 21.

But Llarena, who is in charge of the case, has retained the Spanish arrest warrant, which means they will be detained upon arrival in the country, court sources said. The judge said the European warrant would complicate the overall probe into the region's leaders. Some of them are still in Spain—either in jail or out on bail—and are facing charges of rebellion, sedition and misuse of public funds.

He said Belgium could reject some of the reasons for the warrant, meaning it could agree to the extradition of Puigdemont and the four others—but with restrictions, and only for certain offences. This in turn would stop Spain from investigating the restricted offences, thereby creating inequalities with those already held in Spain who would be probed on the full charges, Llarena argued. It is unclear what charges would have posed a problem, but there has been controversy in Spain over the offence of rebellion, which carries up to 30 years in jail and has been criticised as "disproportionate" by some critics in the legal world.

Electioneering

The unexpected decision comes a day after Puigdemont and his four colleagues attended an extradition hearing in Brussels, with the Belgian judge due to give a decision on December 14. Jaume Alonso Cuevillas, one of Puigdemont's lawyers, told Catalonia's TV3 channel he was pleasantly surprised. "This means yesterday's hearing went much better than we thought," he said. "It pushed Spain's judicial authorities to withdraw the European warrant to

Northern Ireland's DUP: Brexit's new gatekeeper

LONDON: Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party, which is being widely blamed for holding up a Brexit deal, is a party with incendiary views and a virulent past whose negotiating tactics were forged in a war. The DUP's 10 MPs have propped up Prime Minister Theresa May's government ever since an election in June in which her Conservatives lost their majority and were forced to turn to the fellow right-wing party for help.

The agreement came at the price of a promise of £1.0 billion (1.1 billion euros, \$1.3 billion) in extra funding for Northern Ireland and the party has done little to risk undermining the government until now. But the importance of guaranteeing the Irish border issue before talks can begin on future trade ties has now put a party known for its harsh rhetoric and steely determination in the driving seat of Brexit. DUP leader Arlene Foster on Monday insisted that any deal could not create a "regulatory divergence" between Northern Ireland and the rest of Britain, despite the fact that many laws such as those against abortion and gay marriage are already different.

"The economic and constitutional integrity of the United Kingdom must not be compromised in any way," she said, just as British and EU negotiators in Brussels appeared to be on the cusp of a deal. The DUP campaigned in favor of Brexit and has supported the government in a series of crucial votes, but is also faced with public concern in Northern Ireland about the prospect of a reimposition of a hard border with the Republic of Ireland. The self-styled "Christian fundamentalist" party has softened its fiery anti-Catholicism and other harsh stances since it was founded by Protestant evangelical minister Ian Paisley in 1971.

But the party that in 1977 launched the "Save Ulster (Northern Ireland) from Sodomy" campaign still holds tight to what critics call its puritanical views, particularly on social issues such as abortion. Its influence has prompted warnings that a disrupted balance of power in Belfast could harm a delicate peace struck after decades of sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland known as the Troubles. Irish republicans Sinn Fein have blamed the power deal for the failure to restart a power-sharing executive with the DUP in Northern Ireland.

That arrangement collapsed in January because of a row over the DUP leader Arlene Foster's handling of a botched renewable heating funding scheme. The government agreement also sparked protests in mainland Britain over the DUP's opposition to gay marriage and abortion, as well as many senior members' support for teaching creationism, and a history of links to paramilitaries who fought Catholic national-



BARCELONA: People applaud after unveiling an electoral billboard with the image of Carles Puigdemont, and reading in Catalan "Puigdemont, our president" during the campaign opening meeting in Barcelona.—AFP

avoid getting a slap from Belgian judicial authorities."

The decision also comes after the Catalan election campaign kicked off, with Puigdemont speaking to supporters in Catalonia on Monday night via video link. The Madrid authorities "want to raise as many difficulties as possible so we can't campaign on an equal footing with the other candidates," he told a party rally in Barcelona.

Madrid called the new elections after the independence declaration on October 27, while dismissing Catalonia's government and suspending the region's autonomy. It hopes the polls will restore normality to the region. Twelve of the 13 members of the sacked Catalan government are standing in the election, with Puigdemont and his deputy Oriol Junqueras—who is still in jail—competing to head the separatist camp. In the last regional election in 2015, separatist parties captured 47.8 percent of the vote, giving

them an absolute majority of 72 seats in the 135-seat Catalan regional parliament.

A house divided

A poll published Monday by the central government's Sociological Research Centre (CIS) predicted the three pro-independence parties would get 44.4 percent of the vote and 66 to 67 seats this time—just short of the absolute majority of 68. The three parties firmly opposed to independence would get 44.3 percent and gain 59 to 60 seats, the poll suggested. While the separatists are united against what they say is "repression" from Madrid, they are divided over the future of their region, which itself is deeply split over independence. Puigdemont's PDeCAT party and Junqueras' ERC ran on a joint list two years ago but are running separately this time around.—AFP



BELFAST: Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader Arlene Foster (center) gives a statement to the press at Stormont Castle in Belfast.—AFP

ists during the Troubles. Jon Tonge, a professor at Liverpool University who has written extensively about the DUP, has said that while the party has become less dogmatic, it certainly cannot be described as pluralist.

In his 2014 book "The DUP: From Protest To Power", Tonge found that 54 percent of party supporters "would mind a lot" if someone from their family married a person of another religion and 58.4 percent would not want their child to go to a non-Protestant school. So it was a surprise

to many political commentators in 2005 when the party agreed to enter a power-sharing arrangement with Sinn Fein, once the political mouthpiece of the Irish Republican Army, which fought an armed campaign for Irish unity.

Although the Belfast assembly appeared to operate with reasonable cordiality for much of a decade, months of talks between the DUP and Sinn Fein have failed to re-establish a Northern Irish executive. The province's finances are currently run by London.—AFP

International

Myanmar forces 'may be guilty of genocide' against Rohingyas

Hospitals fill as Rohingya refugees shiver through winter

GENEVA: Myanmar's security forces may be guilty of genocide against the Rohingya Muslim minority, the United Nations' top human rights official said yesterday, adding that more were fleeing despite an agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh to send them home. Zeid Ra'ad Al-Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that none of the 626,000 Rohingyas who have fled violence since August should be repatriated to Myanmar unless there was robust monitoring on the ground.

Myanmar's ambassador Htin Lynn said that his government was working with Bangladesh to ensure returns of the displaced in about two months and "there will be no camps". Zeid, who has described the campaign in the past as a "textbook case of ethnic cleansing", was addressing a special session of the UN Human Rights Council called by Bangladesh, which is struggling to accommodate Rohingyas who have fled.

He described "concordant reports of acts of appalling barbarity committed against the Rohingyas, including deliberately burning people to death inside their homes, murders of children and adults; indiscriminate shooting of fleeing civilians; widespread rapes of women and girls, and the burning and destruction of houses, schools, markets and mosques." "Can anyone - can anyone - rule out that elements of genocide may be present?" he told the 47-member state forum.

The United Nations defines genocide as acts intended to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group in whole or in part. A UN convention requires all countries to act to halt genocide and to punish those responsible. Shahrar Alam, Bangladesh's junior foreign affairs minister, told the session in Geneva that his country was hosting nearly one million "Myanmar nationals" following summary executions and rapes "as a weapon of persecution". Mainly Buddhist Myanmar denies the Muslim Rohingyas are its citizens and considers them foreigners. These crimes had been "perpetrated by Myanmar security forces

and extremist Buddhist vigilantes", Alam said, calling for an end to what he called "xenophobic rhetoric...including from higher echelons of the government and the military".

Criminal investigations

Zeid urged the Council to recommend that the UN General Assembly establish a new mechanism "to assist individual criminal investigations of those responsible". Prosecutions for the violence and rapes against Rohingyas by security forces or by civilians "appear extremely rare".

Zeid said. Marzuki Darusman, head of an independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar, said by video from Malaysia: "We will go where the evidence leads us...Our focus is on facts and circumstances of allegations in Myanmar as a whole since 2011." His team has interviewed Rohingyas refugees, including children in the Bangladeshi port city of Cox's Bazar, who recounted "acts of extreme brutality" and "displayed signs of severe trauma".

Refugees shiver

Meanwhile, Bangladesh doctors warned yesterday of a sharp escalation in Rohingyas children suffering from pneumonia as hundreds of thousands of refugees shiver through winter in overcrowded camps with little protection from the cold. A sudden cold snap in southeastern Bangladesh has caught refugees off guard in the makeshift Rohingyas camps along the border with Myanmar, with aid workers rushing to distribute blankets to families struggling for warmth in their open-sided shanties.

Medics running hospitals and clinics in Cox's Bazar district—where more than 620,000 Rohingyas have arrived in the past three months—are reporting huge spikes in ill-equipped refugees falling sick from exposure to the elements. "The number of patients with cold-related illnesses has increased at least five-fold in the last week. Most are children suffering with pneumonia," Zakaria Mahmud, a



COX'S BAZAR: This combination of pictures shows Rohingya children holding objects they use as toys to play with in refugee camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar. —AFP

duty doctor at a local hospital in Teknaf town said. The hospital was so overcrowded that those awaiting treatment were sleeping on the floors of the wards, Mahmud added. Children were especially vulnerable to the cold, he said, because they did not have proper clothing to ward off the chilly nights. Overnight temperatures in Cox's Bazar had fallen to around 14 degrees (56 Fahrenheit), far from freezing but cold enough to test limits for refugees-partic-

ularly children—living in tarpaulin tents on the bare ground, aid workers say. Zafrullah Chowdhury, head of a Bangladeshi medical charity, said the cold threatened to worsen the health of children whose immune systems are depressed. More than half of those to flee violence in Myanmar for Bangladesh since August are children, and many arrived malnourished or suffering from bronchitis or diarrhoea.—Agencies



Survivors testify 'acts of extreme' brutality, attacks

Cox's Bazar, who recounted "acts of extreme brutality" and "displayed signs of severe trauma".

Astrologers hold sway over Nepal's political leaders

KATHMANDU: Nepal's prime minister is confident his party will win a general election being held this month—because his astrologer told him. In deeply superstitious Nepal, astrologers hold enormous sway in political circles and the seers have been busy ahead of a general election that could herald change after more than two decades of turbulence in the Himalayan nation. Leaders regularly consult the stars for guidance on a range of matters from the most auspicious moment to hold elections to the challenge posed by a rival, anything that might give them an edge in this hotly-contested poll.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has been in regular contact with his fortune teller ahead of the historic vote, the final step of a drawn-out peace process which began in 2006 with the close end of bloody civil war. Deuba was told he would be prime minister seven times—he is currently on his fourth term—and boldly claimed his party would win in response to taunts from opposition leader KP Oli. But Deuba's Nepali Congress faces a tough challenge in the polls from Oli's Communist CNP-UML party, which has formed an alliance with the main Maoist party that will be tough to beat. Deuba's astrologer, Angiras Neupane, said that according to Deuba's birth chart—calculated on the date, time and location of his birth—he would serve at least one more term in top office.

But he told AFP that it wouldn't necessarily be the next one. He predicted that Oli would in fact be the next prime minister but that his coalition would quickly crumble, allowing Deuba to retake the reins. "There will be instability in the country yet again," Neupane said at his home in a village on the edge of Kathmandu. That is hardly welcome news in Nepal, which has endured a tumultuous



DUWAKOT, Nepal: A Nepali astrologer waits for customers in the Pashipatinath area in Kathmandu. —AFP

transition from monarchy to democracy. In the last 27 years, Nepal has had 26 prime ministers, suffered a brutal Maoist insurgency and ousted an unpopular monarchy. There was also a devastating earthquake in 2015.

Political idol

It is not only in Nepal where politicians are gripped by seers. In Sri Lanka, former president Mahinda Rajapakse lavished his astrologer with a house, limousine and chauffeur—until he counseled the strongman to hold the snap election that ended his decade-long hold on power. Nepal's Deuba has a reputation for being particularly superstitious—even delaying his move into the prime minister's house at the start of his latest term in June on the advice of his seer. But politicians from all sides consult the stars. "It is not mandatory for politicians to visit fortune tellers, but every politician does because they want luck to

be on their side for every step that they make in their career," said Raghu Karki, a member of the NC's student wing. "Even the Marxist politicians believe in astrology." Other politicians contacted by AFP were reluctant to discuss their luck however. "All kinds of people visit fortune tellers. Common as well as high profile people visit and take my advice. But they don't want to disclose they've visited an astrologer for fear of being thought of as weak," said fortune teller Ojraj Lohani, who used to advise Deuba. Lohani also said Deuba's astrological chart indicated he would be prime minister once more.

The answers to Nepal's political future could also lie with a stone idol in remote Dolakha district, 135 kilometers east of Kathmandu. A statue of the Hindu god Lord Shiva at the small Bhimeswor Temple is said to sweat when political change is imminent—and it began to perspire in late September.—AFP

News in brief

Iraq child marriage bill

NEW YORK: A proposed law that could allow marriage for children as young as 9 years old in Iraq would rob boys and girls already scarred by war of their childhoods, top UN officials said yesterday. The bill, which would allow religious leaders to govern marriage contracts and wed children, has prompted public demonstrations by women's rights groups and activists in Iraq. "The boys and girls of Iraq, already victims of grave violations resulting from years of conflict, are now at risk of being deprived of their childhood," Virginia Gamba, UN children and armed conflict envoy, said in a statement. "The government of Iraq must take all necessary actions to protect every child by preventing the adoption of policies that can harm children already exposed to armed conflict," she said. About one in five girls is married before turning 18 in Iraq, where the legal age for marriage is 18 but girls can wed at 15 with parental consent, according to the United Nations' children's agency (UNICEF) and global charity Girls Not Brides.

Biggest cocaine busts

MADRID: Spanish authorities have netted nearly six tons of high-grade cocaine worth 210 million euros (\$249 million), in one of the biggest seizures of the drug ever made in Europe, the interior ministry said yesterday. Police and customs officials found 5.88 tons of cocaine on November 28 in a container supposedly transporting bananas which arrived in the southern port of Algeciras from Medellin in Colombia, it said. Police arrested a Spaniard who headed the import department of the company using the container, and two alleged accomplices, a Honduran and a Portuguese national. Two other people are under investigation. The seizure is "one of Europe's biggest" and the second largest of cocaine ever carried out by Spanish authorities, the statement said. The country's biggest was a haul of 7.6 tons, made on the high seas in 1999.

US teen hangs herself

LOS ANGELES: A 13-year-old girl who was the target of taunts and insults for years at her California school has died after she hanged herself, leaving a message describing herself as "ugly" and a "loser". Rosalie Avila hanged herself in her room on November 28 and was rushed to hospital, where she was declared brain dead a day later. The teen was kept on life support until Monday so her organs could be donated, local media reported. "My daughter is a victim of bullying," Rosalie's mother Charlene Avila wrote on the GoFundMe crowdfunding site, in which she sought money for funeral and medical expenses. "She was a beautiful person inside and out. She was a great artist, very lovable (and) loving." Avila, who was a student at a public middle school in the town of Calimesa some 114 kilometers east of Los Angeles—left a farewell note for her parents.

Georgia ex-leader arrested

KIEV: Ukrainian security services yesterday arrested former Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili after he climbed onto the roof of his apartment building and addressed supporters during a police raid. Saakashvili, who was also a regional governor in Ukraine, dramatically fell out with the country's President Poroshenko over accusations that Kiev was failing to make good on the fight against corruption and was stripped of his Ukrainian passport. In September, he defied the Ukrainian authorities and forced his way back into the conflict-riven country. "Poroshenko is a thief, Poroshenko is a traitor to the people of Ukraine," Saakashvili said from the roof, a video broadcast on Ukrainian television showed.

UN envoy in North Korea as nuclear tensions soar

BEIJING: A senior United Nations official arrived in North Korea yesterday for a rare visit aimed at defusing soaring tensions over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. Jeffrey Feltman's visit—the first by a UN diplomat of his rank since 2010—comes less than a week after North Korea said it test-fired a new ballistic missile capable of reaching the United States. Feltman shook hands with a North Korean foreign ministry official after flying into Pyongyang from Beijing on the North's Air Koryo.

His trip comes a day after the United States and South Korea launched their biggest-ever joint air exercise—maneuvers slammed by Pyongyang as 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. Feltman, the UN's under secretary general for political affairs, arrived in China on Monday as Beijing is one of the few transit

points to North Korea in the world. He met with a Chinese vice foreign minister while there. China, which is Pyongyang's sole major diplomatic and military ally, has called on the United States to freeze military drills and North Korea to halt weapons tests to calm tensions. In the North, Feltman will discuss "issues of mutual interest and concern" with officials, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said, adding he was unable to say whether the envoy will meet the reclusive state's leader Kim Jong-Un. "The first step—that North Korea agreed to have (Feltman) visit—is a positive sign," Wang Dong, an international studies professor at Peking University said. "If the diplomatic effort is successful, then they will certainly be able to exercise some persuasion."

Missile progress

It will be Feltman's first visit to North Korea since he took office five years ago. "After declaring that the country has achieved full nuclear statehood, the North is likely to reaffirm to the UN envoy its promise that... it will use its nuclear weapons only for defense purposes," Koh Yu-Hwan, a professor at Dongguk University in Seoul said. The UN Security Council has hit the isolated and impoverished North with a package of sanctions over its increasingly powerful missile and nuclear tests, which have rattled Washington and its regional allies South Korea and Japan.

Pyongyang ramped up already high tensions 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.

A Cathay Pacific crew flying from San Francisco to Hong Kong said they spotted what they believed was the missile, with one airline official saying the crew described seeing it "blow up and fall apart". In recent years, Pyongyang has accelerated its drive to bring together nuclear and missile technology capable of threatening the US, which it accuses of hostility. US President Donald Trump has engaged in months of tit-for-tat rhetoric with Kim, pejoratively dubbing him "Little Rocket Man" and a "sick puppy".

'Moth flying into fire'

In a new editorial yesterday, North Korean state media blasted the joint US-South Korean drills as going "beyond the danger line" adding the two allies were like "a group of tiger moths flying into fire only to perish in it". As well as featuring the latest generation of stealth fighters, this year's war games involve simulated precision attacks on the North's military installations, including its missile launch sites and



PYONGYANG: Jeffrey Feltman, the UN's Under Secretary General for Political Affairs, arrives at the Pyongyang International Airport yesterday. —AFP

artillery units, Yonhap news agency said, citing unnamed Seoul sources.

Over the weekend Trump's National Security Adviser HR McMaster told a security forum that the potential for war with the North "is increasing every day". But some Trump advisers say US military options are limited when Pyongyang could launch an artillery barrage on the South Korean capital—only around 50 kilometers from the heavily-fortified border and home to 10 million people. China's foreign ministry yesterday said it "welcomes the UN to play a constructive role in properly settling the Korean peninsula nuclear issue".—AFP

Analysis

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Buy sterling on a 'Brexit breakthrough'? Not yet

Sterling investors remain hesitant about chasing the rallying pound higher even as the British government said it was close to an agreement with the European Union on how to move Brexit talks onto trade next year. British hopes of securing a deal with the European Union were dashed on Monday by Prime Minister Theresa May's kingmakers in Belfast. The government is holding fresh talks and said on Tuesday it remained confident of reaching an agreement.

After spending most of 2017 on the back foot against a broadly weak dollar, market expectations on sterling have shifted considerably in recent weeks towards betting on a breakthrough in Brexit negotiations with the British currency rising to more than a two-month high last Friday. High-frequency indicators of market positioning and options market hedging have also shifted markedly to show green shoots of optimism emerging.

Speculative bets on sterling, shown in data compiled by the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission and often seen as a proxy for hedge fund positioning, outweighed those betting on a fall in sterling for the first time since the Bank of England raised interest rates in early November. Prior to that brief pre rate rise flurry, there had not been a net long position in sterling since Oct 2015. What's more the cost of one-month options to buy sterling in the derivatives market exceed that of options to sell it for the first time since October 2017.

But despite sterling's bounce in recent days, investors remain wary about the currency's outlook pointing to the long complicated negotiations before Brexit becomes a reality in 2019 and the underlying weakness of the British economy. "There is still a lot of work to be done before we get any clarity and to take big positions in this headline-driven market is fraught with dangers," said James Binny, head of currencies at US financial group State Street Global Advisors in London.

So despite a cautious return in long sterling bets in the currency markets, the duration of those positions have become shorter, indicating how nervous markets are. So far, these net sterling long bets are only a week old, compared to in October which remained for a month. The longest duration of long sterling bets was for a year between Sept 2013 to late 2014, according to CFTC data. At the heart of this nervousness is a view that any Brexit outcome, either "soft" or "hard", will weigh on the economy at a time when other major world economies such as Europe and the US are firing on all cylinders.

"The key issue for sterling is that from an economic standpoint it looks tough and any bounce after a Brexit talks breakthrough will be a buy-the-rumor and sell-the-fact trade," said Richard Benson, co-head of portfolio investments at Millennium Global Investments Ltd in London. Annual growth forecasts will average 2.4 percent this year and 2.2 percent next year across the 19-member eurozone currency bloc compared with UK growth of 1.5 percent in 2017 and 1.2 percent in 2018, according to OECD forecasts.

Transition Deal

To be sure, a breakthrough in the talks would lift the fog of uncertainty hanging over British companies, encouraging them to invest more and ultimately lift economic activity in itself. Despite the breakdown in talks at the last minute on Monday the border issue with Ireland, foreign exchange derivative markets are betting on a breakthrough. Three-month 'risk reversals' on sterling, which shows the relative pricing of puts and calls on the pound, have flipped to a bias of more sterling strength in the last week, though they remain below a 2017 high hit in early September.

Kallum Pickering, senior UK economist at Berenberg in London expects a transition deal to materialize by late 2018 an outcome that would boost economic growth to 1.8 percent. It would also lead to a significant revaluation on sterling which according to SSGA's Binny is trading about 15 percent cheaper against the dollar on a valuation basis. On a trade-weighted basis, sterling is trading at a six-month high and just one percent below a 2017 peak.

Walking a Fine Line

But even assuming a successful negotiation of the complex series of Brexit talks, sterling still has considerable headwinds against its two major rivals, namely the dollar and the euro. Some market participants expect the US may end up raising interest rates by as much as four times over the next 12 months after a landmark tax code overhaul over the weekend. John Taylor, senior fixed income portfolio manager at Alliance Bernstein in London said the UK will have to raise rates by two times "at least to hang on to the coat tails of the Fed."

"The Bank of England can't afford to not tighten at all as that would weaken the currency a lot and if they hike more they may end up tipping the economy into recession well before Brexit kicks in," Taylor said who is underweight duration on UK debt. Bond markets in the UK only expect one rate hike over the next twelve months. Against Europe, it is more of a differential growth story with growth in the currency bloc expected to pick up steam relative to the UK. "Sterling movements have become kneejerk and Pavlovian depending on the headline of the day and institutional investors are now focusing on the economic data," said Marc Ostwald, market strategist at ADM Investor Services. —Reuters



Mueller edges toward White House

Special Counsel Robert Mueller's indictment of President Donald Trump's former advisor Michael Flynn has ratcheted up tensions in Washington, with the White House girding for possible obstruction charges against Trump himself. Flynn, the president's former national security advisor, was the most senior of the four people charged so far in Mueller's investigation into whether the Trump campaign colluded with Moscow to swing last year's presidential election, and whether Trump tried to block the probe by firing FBI director James Comey.

By allowing Flynn, a former defense intelligence chief and a campaign insider, to plead guilty to a simple charge of lying to investigators, Mueller signalled that he expects to go higher up the ladder of political power in his investigation. But Mueller's endgame - who precisely is in his sights and for what - remains unclear. The tall, gangly 73-year-old former FBI director, who almost never appears in public, is playing his cards tight to the chest, dropping hints in court filings rich enough to stir fears high into the White House, but too scant to discern his next moves. "With Flynn's plea deal, Mueller has nowhere to go but up the chain," Asha Rangappa, a former FBI agent now lecturing at Yale University, told Politico.

Hard-nosed investigators

Mueller's team of hard-nosed investigators are particularly skilled in tracking money through international financial thickets, "flipping" witnesses against their bosses, and dealing with counter-intelligence probes. Those skills have driven the indictments so far. On October 30 Mueller unveiled charges against former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and his deputy Richard Gates, for conspiracy, money-laundering and related financial crimes tied to their work with pro-Moscow Ukrainian politician Viktor Yanukovich.

On the same day, separately, a Trump campaign foreign policy advisor, George Papadopoulos, pleaded guilty to

lying to the FBI about his Kremlin contacts. Then on Friday Mueller revealed Flynn's plea deal, on charges he lied to investigators about discussions he had with Moscow's ambassador Sergey Kislyak in Dec 2016.

Attacking from the edges

Each case shows Mueller attacking around the edges, probing vulnerabilities, deliberately stirring fear in potential targets, and meanwhile recruiting witnesses. Papadopoulos was a minor Trump campaign figure. But documents in his



Prosecutor playing his cards tight to the chest

plea deal reveal that he built up contacts with Russians in London with the knowledge and support of his campaign supervisors.

Mueller described what Papadopoulos told campaign officials in emails about his Russian contacts, but did not reveal the names of whom the emails went to, and little about their replies. Court filings described them as "high ranking" campaign officials. Two things are clear from the Papadopoulos case: His contacts help establish a pattern of engagement with the Russians by the campaign, and Mueller knows who in the campaign were directing them.

Pinning down potential witnesses

As for Manafort and Gates, by going after them on significant crimes only obliquely related to the focus of his probe - including laundering some \$75 million - Mueller has in effect pinned them down for possible future use as witnesses. Both were in position to know whether the campaign was actively communicating with Russians when the election meddling took place. Manafort took part in a suspect June 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer who had offered the campaign dirt on Clinton. The Flynn case seems to show Mueller headed in another direction. The Russian contacts he lied about came after Trump's election victory. But analysts say Flynn helps Mueller build his cases on three fronts. First, Flynn would have had to promise Mueller something substantial against other, more senior targets of the investigation, to earn his plea deal, which amounts to a hand-slap.

Second, as a book-end to Papadopoulos, Flynn confirms the campaign had standing contacts with Russians. Again, no one specifically is named. Court filings by the Mueller team reference Flynn's communications with a "senior" and then a "very senior" campaign official about his discussions with Kislyak. They make clear that Flynn was operating at the direction of the campaign. Media reports have said that Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner is one of those referenced anonymously.

Third, Trump's handling of Flynn, who was fired from the White House in February, could conceivably bolster a case for obstruction of justice against the president or others. That is, at least, the message the White House took, since Mueller remains steadfastly quiet. Trump lawyer John Dowd felt it necessary to tell the political news website Axios that the president cannot be guilty of obstruction of justice "because he is the chief law enforcement officer under (the Constitution) and has every right to express his view of any case". "There's been absolutely no collusion," Trump meanwhile said. —AFP

Wooden dams and river jams: US strains to ship record grains

America's worst traffic jam this fall occurred on the Ohio River, where a line of about 50 miles of boats hauling grains and other products turned into a waterborne parking lot, as ship captains waited for the river to reopen. Such delays are worsening on the nation's waterways, which are critical to commerce for the United States, the largest grain exporter in the world. Of the country's \$40 billion in annual grain and soybean exports, about 60 percent is moved by barges on rivers, including the Ohio.

The shutdown, caused by worn or missing sections of a dam, snarled traffic from early September into early November through Locks & Dam No. 52 near Paducah, Kentucky. It was the second shutdown in two months at No. 52, which is among the country's busiest locks with about \$22 billion a year of commodities flowing through it. The lock, which has been earmarked for replacement by the Army Corps of Engineers for three decades, is one of many chokepoints along 25,000 miles of waterways used to transport everything from grains to consumer goods to coal.

It is a system increasingly under strain. Surging shipments of soybeans and corn - due to record harvests - are overwhelming parts of the antiquated network and causing more frequent and severe backups, according to interviews with farmers, shippers, grain merchants and barge operators. Reverberations have cut across the US agricultural supply chain - and international markets. This fall, delays in moving crops downriver bumped up grain prices at export terminals along the Gulf Coast, opening up an advantage for global competitors such as Brazil.

Most of the country's 239 locks have exceeded their half-century design lives, and nearly half the vessels that use the nation's inland waterways now experience delays, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers. The

average delay per lock has nearly doubled on the waterways since the beginning of the century, rising to 121 minutes in 2014 from 64 minutes in 2000, the group said. An October National Waterways Foundation study said a major lock failure in the Midwest could cost shippers \$1.5 billion per year in added costs and overwhelm existing rail and road capacity. Every barge can hold as much grain as 16 rail cars or 70 trucks.

Swollen Stocks

The delays here and elsewhere are boosting prices for key goods including soybeans, and eating away at the nation's competitive edge against rival exporters like Brazil. US soybean export prices normally drop in the autumn, as newly harvested supplies flood the market. But the delays caused prices to rise, making it harder for the United States, the second-largest soybean exporter, to compete with Brazil, which ranks first.

In mid-August, the price of soybeans loaded for export at US Gulf Coast terminals was about \$14 per metric ton below the cost of soybeans loaded at Brazil's Paranaguá port, according to industry data. By mid-November, the US advantage had been cut to less than \$4 per ton. Brazil's soybeans have a higher protein content, and therefore attract a premium. Top soy importer China is expected to buy twice as many soybeans from Brazil in the fourth quarter as it did last year, much of it at the expense of US shipments.

Export markets are key for farmers and grain processors due to rising crop yields. In the past two decades, US corn output has outpaced domestic use by 20 percent, and soybeans by more than 70 percent. "Being near the river used to be an advantage, but now having to wait on dams and infrastructure is more of a liability to farmers," said Marc Bremer, a farmer in Metropolis, Illinois.

Bremer sells most of his corn and soybeans to facilities known as elevators, which receive and store grain and load barges on the Ohio River. This autumn, he lost up to \$30,000 in revenue when prices tumbled because disruptions caused crop stockpiles to swell at these facilities. He said he may delay buying new farm equipment as a result. The logjams hit local grain buyers - the elevators - who cut bids on crops to the lowest levels since the Port of New Orleans was shuttered by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Elevators, including those owned by Bunge Ltd, Cargill

Inc and Archer Daniels Midland Co, typically fill barges with corn and soybeans en route to the Gulf of Mexico. But the backup meant they were unable to ship out supplies - overwhelming their storage, too.

'Hidden Cost'

Along the river in Shawneetown, Illinois, Bunge piled soybeans outside on the ground, putting them at risk of damage from rain or animals, because the elevator's bins were full due to the backlog, local farmers said. An employee of Bunge's elevator said it took this step because of "market conditions". Randy Anderson, a farmer from Galatia, Illinois, said he was told to hold back pre-arranged deliveries of crops to the Bunge elevator. Instead, he was forced to take time away from harvesting to load the crops into his own storage bins. "That could have been time I could have been in the field," he said. "That's a hidden cost."

The effect was also felt by shipping companies, which make more money the more trips their barges make. Barge operator Campbell Transportation Company of Pittsburgh estimated a loss of \$1 million in revenue in September and October because of the delays. "This was the difference between a small profit and a big loss," said Peter Stephaich, Campbell chief executive.

Replacing Locks and Dam No. 52 and nearby No. 53 on the Ohio River has been on the US Army Corps of Engineers' to-do list for about thirty years, even as its backlog of other projects has grown. Known as the Olmsted Locks and Dam, the replacement is set to finally be completed next year. Its cost has risen to about \$3 billion from an original estimate of \$775 million.

In the meantime, the short-term work to fix the dam continues. Divers working in pitch-black water needed a week to repair the largest hole in the 90-year old dam, one of the last on the river made of wooden slats. Repairs to three other worn and corroded sections may be completed this month. For the seven-man crew of the Oliver C Shearer, one of 70 towboats hauling hundreds of barges carrying goods, the delay at Locks & Dam No. 52 meant killing time. But there was only so much paperwork, repairs, or waxing the checkerboard floor of the vessel that the crew could do. "You start beating your head against the wall," Michael McCloud, the boat's captain, said in October as he looked out at idle barges on the Ohio River from the vessel's bridge. —Reuters

News

Houthis rally after killing ex-strongman

SANAA: Thousands of Houthi supporters rallied in Sanaa yesterday as the rebels cemented their grip on the Yemeni capital after killing their former ally ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh. Following Saleh's death at the hands of Houthi fighters on Monday, fears had mounted of an uptick in the violence that has devastated the Arab world's poorest country over the past few years. A night of heavy air strikes followed in Sanaa as well as skirmishes between the Houthis and Saleh's supporters in southern districts that had been loyal to the slain strongman.

But there was no repetition of the fierce fighting that had rocked the capital for the five previous nights. A least 234 people have been killed and 400 wounded in those clashes, the International Committee of the Red Cross said yesterday. New checkpoints manned by rebels sprung up across Sanaa as their leaders hailed their control of the capital, rallying supporters and pledging that backers of Saleh were safe. Houthi supporters massed in their thousands near the capital's international airport, shouting "Sanaa is free and the state still stands!" and "Yemenis are one!"

Rebel chiefs struck a conciliatory tone, meanwhile, declaring they were "ensuring the safety" of members of Saleh's General People's Congress party. Senior Houthi official Saleh Al-Sammad had announced "the end of security operations and the stabilization of the situation" on Monday, saying he had ordered the security forces to "take steps against the saboteurs and all those who collaborated with them".

The rebels rallied their supporters in the capital yesterday, pledging that backers of Saleh were safe despite his death. Sanaa was awash with unconfirmed rumors of widespread arrests of suspected Saleh supporters in the army and the rebel government. The former strongman retained the loyalty of some of the best equipped units of the army after he was forced to step down as president in 2012. Saleh, who ruled Yemen for three decades, had joined forces with the Houthis in 2014 when they took control of large parts of the country, including the capital. But that alliance unraveled over the past week as the former leader reached out to the Saudi-led coalition that has waged an air campaign against the Houthis since March 2015.

The Saudi-led coalition stepped up its bombardment of the capital overnight, carrying out at least seven strikes on the rebel-held presidential palace, witnesses said. There was no immediate word of any casualties. Yemen's war 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, who both took a firm stand on the Yemen conflict yesterday.

Saudi Arabia called for a Yemen free of "militias supported by Iran" in its first official statement since the Saleh killing. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani meanwhile warned that those attacking Yemen would regret it. "The people of Yemen will make their aggressors regret their actions," he said in a televised speech. The commander of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards, Mohammad Ali Jafari, said Saleh was killed because he had been trying to overthrow the Houthis.

Arab League chief Ahmed Abul Gheit condemned Saleh's killing, saying that the "way it was done reveals to everyone the criminal nature" of the Houthis. The United Nations called for a "humanitarian pause" in the air strikes and fighting as it seeks to deliver aid to people



SANAA: Houthi rebel fighters inspect the damage after a reported air strike carried out by the Saudi-led coalition targeted the presidential palace in the Yemeni capital yesterday. — AFP

trapped in Sanaa. "Our ability to get to people over the last five days has been impeded because of the air strikes, because of the fighting, and our life-saving support activities were blocked," UN humanitarian coordinator Jamie McGoldrick told reporters in Geneva by phone from the Yemeni capital.

Saleh was forced to step down in 2012, after his forces waged a bloody crackdown on peaceful Arab

Spring-inspired protests calling for his ouster. The 75-year-old had survived civil war, rebellion in the north, an Al-Qaeda insurgency in the south and a June 2011 bomb attack on his palace that wounded him badly. The Houthis announced his death on television, and 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. — AFP

One month on, Hariri rescinds...

Continued from Page 1

In his resignation, Hariri lambasted Tehran and its Lebanese ally, the powerful armed movement Hezbollah, for destabilizing his country and the Middle East. He later said he would consider coming back as premier if Hezbollah stopped intervening in regional conflicts, including the wars in Syria and Yemen. In recent days, consultations across the political spectrum have sought to find a compromise between the Saudi-backed camp led by Hariri, and Hezbollah's Iran-backed bloc. Yesterday, Lebanon's cabinet, which includes both blocs, reaffirmed its official policy of "disassociation", or

remaining neutral in regional conflicts.

"The Lebanese government, in all its political components, has committed to distance itself from all conflicts, wars, and internal affairs of Arab states," according to the cabinet statement read out by Hariri. This "disassociation" is intended to "preserve Lebanon's political and economic relations with its Arab brothers", the statement added. The policy had already been adopted by Hariri's cabinet, formed in 2016 after a settlement across political divides that saw Michel Aoun appointed president and the creation of a government including Hezbollah deputies.

Hezbollah has been accused of violating the policy, however, by fighting in neighboring Syria to support the Damascus regime as well as by dispatching military commanders to Iraq and allegedly backing Shiite rebels in Yemen. "A reaffirmation of Lebanese 'disassociation', notwithstanding its manifest hypocrisy and the impossibility of it being translated concretely, makes it possible

to save face and win a little time," said Karim Bitar, an expert at the Paris-based Institute of International and Strategic Affairs.

During the cabinet meeting, according to a statement obtained by AFP, Hariri expressed the hope for "a new chance to defend the country together". "We see how the region is boiling and we must be aware that any misstep could bring the country to a dangerous precipice," he told his cabinet. Lebanon has been buffeted by regional instability in recent years, particularly by the war in neighboring Syria which has sent more than one million refugees into its tiny neighbour, seeking safety.

The conflict in Syria has also deepened existing tensions, with Hariri's bloc backing the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad while Hezbollah's fighters battled alongside the regime's troops. Hariri's resignation raised fears that Lebanon could be plunged into chaos, and provoked widespread speculation about whether Riyadh had forced him to step down. He deliv-

ered his resignation announcement from Saudi Arabia and spent the next two weeks there amid rumors that Riyadh was holding him "hostage".

He denied those claims, and after top-level French intervention returned to Beirut where he announced he had "paused" his resignation to hold consultations across the political spectrum. France's foreign ministry said Friday's meeting was intended to "support the political process (in Lebanon) at a crucial moment". "It will send a message both to the various parties in Lebanon and to countries in the region," the ministry added.

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council - the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China - will be represented at the meeting, along with Germany, Italy and Egypt. French officials said the goal was to shore up Lebanese institutions, by strengthening the army and supporting Hariri's economic program, with a view to encouraging foreign investment. — AFP

Amir calls for mechanism...

Continued from Page 1

In conclusion, the declaration also warned that media representatives and intellectuals throughout the region should "bear their responsibility" in supporting efforts aimed at cooperation amongst the bloc's member states.

Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim accepted an invitation to attend, but just hours before the talks were due to begin, Saudi King Salman sent his foreign minister, Adel Al-Jubeir, in his stead. Bahrain sent its deputy premier and Emirati media said the state minister for foreign affairs would represent Abu Dhabi, sparking anger online by Kuwaitis that the nations boycotting Qatar had slighted their leader. Oman's Sultan Qaboos bin Said rarely attends Gulf-wide meetings. The meeting, scheduled to last until today, was cut to a single day. The UAE's state minister for foreign affairs Anwar Gargash said on the sidelines of the summit that it had taken place under "sensitive circumstances and is a positive step".

Speaking at a press conference after the summit, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah said that the holding of the GCC summit during these delicate situations reflects the GCC leaders' conviction and faith in the GCC and its continuity. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said that Kuwait respects the level of represen-

tation and highly values that the six states attended, rejecting claims that the summit was not a success. Asked about the shortening of the session from two days to one, he said that this was "not the first time this has happened" throughout the summit's 38 sessions, mentioning that the decision was taken unanimously by the bloc's attending chief delegates.

Casting further doubt on the group's future, the UAE yesterday announced a new partnership with Saudi Arabia, separate from the GCC - a move that could undermine the council amid the diplomatic crisis with Qatar. The Emirati foreign ministry announcement came just hours ahead of the GCC meeting in Kuwait. The ministry said the new "joint cooperation committee" was approved by the UAE's ruler and president, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nayhan. Saudi Arabia did not immediately comment on the new partnership.

The Emirati ministry said the new committee "is assigned to cooperate and coordinate between the UAE and Saudi Arabia in all military, political, economic, trade and cultural fields, as well as others, in the interest of the two countries". The UAE and Saudi Arabia have cultivated close ties in recent years. Emirati troops are deeply involved in the Saudi-led war in Yemen. Abu Dhabi's powerful crown prince, Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nayhan, also is believed to be close to Saudi Arabia's young Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The Emirati announcement did not say whether any other Gulf Arab countries would be invited to join the new group, but the development puts pressure on the GCC. — Agencies

Trump to move US embassy...

Continued from Page 1

Erdogan said in a raucous televised speech, echoing alarm expressed by Palestinian and Arab leaders. In his address, Erdogan warned that any move to back Israel's claim to the city would mobilize "the entire Islamic world" and even prompt Ankara to sever its recently-renewed diplomatic ties with the Jewish state.

The armed Islamist Hamas movement has threatened to launch a new "intifada" or uprising. 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 in final status negotiations. Following talks in Brussels with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, top EU diplomat Federica Mogherini warned that any move which risked undermining efforts to jumpstart moribund peace talks "must absolutely be avoided". "A way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both states, so that the aspiration of both parties can be fulfilled," she said.

In Cairo, Arab League chief Ahmed Abul Gheit warned it would be viewed as an act of "clear aggression" against the Arab and Muslim world. Saudi Arabia

also expressed "grave and deep concern" about the impact it would have on both the conflict and peace efforts, while the Palestinians said it would shatter any illusion about Trump's ability to fairly mediate in any talks. "That totally destroys any chance that he will play a role as an honest broker," said Nabil Shaath, an adviser to Abbas.

In Israel, however, hardline Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman hailed the moment as a "historic opportunity" for Trump, expressing hope he would see the US embassy in Jerusalem "next week or next month". The US Congress has already made its aim clear in the so-called Jerusalem Embassy Act, which was passed in 1995 and which stated that the city "should be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel" and 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, meaning the law has never taken effect. Israel seized the largely-Arab eastern sector of Jerusalem during the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it, claiming both sides of the city as its "eternal and undivided capital". But the Palestinians want the eastern sector as capital of their future state and fiercely oppose any Israeli attempt to extend sovereignty there. Several peace plans have unraveled over the issue of how to divide sovereignty or oversee sites in the city that are holy for Christians, Jews and Muslims. — AFP

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Sports

Salah's attacking armada gets Liverpool shipshape

Liverpool have returned to the Premier League top four

LONDON: Mohamed Salah has hogged the headlines this season, but as Liverpool's 5-1 demolition of Brighton and Hove Albion demonstrated, he is but one component in a scintillating attacking armada. Salah took a back seat at the Amex Stadium on Saturday, contenting himself with an assist as Roberto Firmino scored twice and Philippe Coutinho found the net with a delightful free-kick beneath the jumping Brighton wall.

With five wins in their last six games, Liverpool have returned to the Premier League top four for the first time since August. Their one misstep in recent weeks was the 3-3 draw at Sevilla in the Champions League, in which their failure to protect a 3-0 lead left them requiring at least a point at home to Spartak Moscow on Wednesday to reach the last 16.

But having scored 25 goals in their last eight games in all competitions, Liverpool are playing with as much verve and confidence as in any previous phase of manager Jurgen Klopp's two-year tenure. Liverpool's display at Brighton moved beaten manager Chris Hughton to dub Klopp's side "the best team we have played this season", despite his men having also lost 2-0 to Pep Guardiola's runaway league leaders Manchester City.

Although Klopp's team struggled to beat some of the league's lesser lights last season, he downplayed their performance on the south coast, saying it had simply been a case of "doing the job". The German was more forthcoming in his praise of Brazilian forward

Firmino, who finished off two superb counter-attacks to take his tally of goals for the season to 11 in all competitions. "Roberto scored twice, but what he did around these goals is what excites me the most, to be honest," Klopp told the Liverpool Echo newspaper.

"In all the counter-attacks, pretty much, he won the ball. By being here, by being a little annoying-a little foot, a little toe-that for us is important. "With all the rest around him, you need to get used to it. They are all different and all good. I really like these players. That's why they are here."

“Being little annoying that for us is important”

MORE ROBUST

Coutinho, for now, appears to have put his aborted close-season move to Barcelona behind him, his artful free-kick bringing him a sixth league goal. Salah continues to dazzle, having surpassed former Liverpool luminaries such as Robbie Fowler, Fernando Torres and Luis Suarez by scoring 12 goals in his first 15 Premier League appearances for the club.

Klopp could even afford the luxury of leaving Sadio Mane, the final member of his 'Fab Four' of attackers, on the bench, ensuring the Senegalese flier will be primed for action against Spartak.

Liverpool have maintained their form despite injury problems in defence that obliged Klopp to align midfielders Emre Can and Georginio Wijnaldum as makeshift centre-backs in an experimental back three at Brighton.

They have also become more robust defensively, having shipped only three goals in their last six league games-one of which was a Brighton penalty, another a



STOKE-ON-TRENT: File photo shows Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah (C) celebrates scoring their second goal during the English Premier League football match between Stoke City and Liverpool. — AFP

fluke by Chelsea's Willian-compared to 13 in the previous six.

Liverpool's momentum has not been affected by the fact Klopp has made 54 changes to his starting line-up in the Premier League this season, which is more than any other manager. By regularly shuffling his pack,

Klopp seems determined to avoid a repeat of last season's January slump, when a worn-out team won just once in 10 games, fatally compromising their objectives for the season. Eleven months on, with their array of attackers in clinical form, Liverpool appear to be in much finer fettle. —AFP

Sterling bounces back from City brink

LONDON: From the "hated one" to the hero of Manchester City's record-setting run, Raheem Sterling has come a long way in the last 18 months. When Sterling arrived for pre-season training with City, the England winger faced an uncertain future amid talk Arsenal wanted to sign him as part of a deal that would send Alexis Sanchez to Manchester. Being mooted as a makeweight in a deal that eventually fell through was hardly an encouraging sign for Sterling, who had struggled to live up to the hype after his £45 million (\$60 million) move from Liverpool in 2015. But Sterling has flipped the script so effectively that he is now firmly established as one of City's key men as they chase Premier League and Champions League glory.

Sterling has become so essential to City's success that when his team face Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions League today, he could find himself in the privileged position of being rested by Pep Guardiola ahead of Sunday's crunch derby clash at title rivals

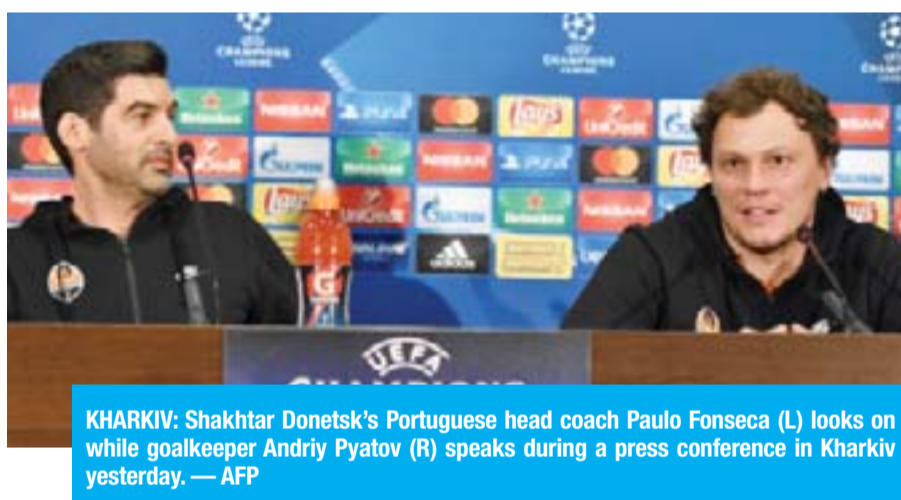
Manchester United. City are already guaranteed to finish as winners of Group F and with an eight-point lead over United in the league, Guardiola is likely to prioritise the Manchester derby.

Few would criticise Guardiola for wrapping Sterling in cotton wool after his incredible form helped City win a record-equalling 13 successive league games and establish an all-competitions unbeaten run of 28 matches. The 22-year-old's last-gasp winner against Southampton last week was his 13th goal of the campaign, taking him past his total for last season in just under four months.

That goal was his third late deciding goal in as many games after winning matches against Feyenoord and Huddersfield with similar strikes. Aware that Real Madrid have been linked with Sterling in the past, City are determined to ensure he remains at Eastlands.

Sterling has two years left on the £180,000-per-week deal he signed in 2015. But City's Abu Dhabi-based owners are reported to be lining up a £300,000-per-week contract that would make him the Premier League's highest paid player.

Should Sterling sign that deal, it would complete a remarkable reversal of fortune for a player who became a target for social media abuse during his acrimonious departure from Liverpool and



KHARKIV: Shakhtar Donetsk's Portuguese head coach Paulo Fonseca (L) looks on while goalkeeper Andriy Pyatov (R) speaks during a press conference in Kharkiv yesterday. — AFP

again following England's Euro 2016 exit. Sterling found himself targeted by England fans after an embarrassing Euro 2016 defeat against Iceland, and he even branded himself the "hated one". Guardiola's troubled trophy-less first season at City was a further burden as Sterling battled to make his mark in a squad packed with world-class attacking talent. He emerged from that torrid period thanks to a helping hand from Guardiola, who insisted the youngster must limit his social media presence and focus on his career instead. "He's a nice guy, loved in the locker room, stable, less

into social media, more focused on football and his private life. That's good," Guardiola said recently.

Yet Guardiola refuses to take credit for Sterling's resurgence, praising the player for knuckling down and maximising the potential he showed with Liverpool. "I didn't discover Raheem. He did that at Liverpool, he played amazing."

That's why City paid a lot of money," he said. "I don't feel guilty if he's not playing good and at the same time I don't feel responsibility for Raheem playing good. All the credit goes to him." —AFP

Matches on TV (Local Timings)	
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE	
Feyenoord Rotterdam v Napoli beIN SPORTS HD 3	22:45
Shakhtar Donetsk v Manchester City beIN SPORTS HD 2	22:45
Real Madrid v Borussia Dortmund beIN SPORTS HD 4	22:45
Tottenham Hotspur v Apoel Nicosia beIN SPORTS HD 7	22:45
Leipzig v Besiktas beIN SPORTS HD 8	22:45
Porto v Monaco beIN SPORTS HD 6	22:45
Maribor v Sevilla beIN SPORTS HD 5	22:45
Liverpool v Spartak Moscow beIN SPORTS HD 1	22:45



Nissan Al Babtain supports 'Ultimate Soccer' Academy talents

KUWAIT: As part of its continuous efforts to support all segments of the society with particular focus on

rising Kuwaiti talents, Nissan Al Babtain sponsors "Ultimate Soccer Academy" for the second consecutive year.

Nissan Al Babtain is proud to announce the outstanding success of the academy's talented athletes. The academy has intensively trained each to be qualified in order to join the most prestigious Kuwaiti clubs such as Al Qadsia Sports Club, Al Arabi Sports Club and Kuwait Sports Club. The players that joined Al Qadsia Club are Jassim Al-Matar born in 2006, Hamed Al-Anzi born in 2005, Abdulaziz Al-Kandari born in 2005 followed by Ali Al-Kandari born in 2005. The other talented players, Rashed Nassar was

born in 2006 and Abdulaziz Al-Saifan in 2007 who had both joined Al Arabi Sports Club while Talal Al-Manea joined Kuwait Club.

The participants in this academy receive training programs in accordance to the highest international standards under the supervision of a large number of experts in the field. They are also provided the opportunity to participate in external camps that strengthen their commitment to teamwork. In addition to refining the capabilities and skills of the members of the "Ultimate Soccer" Academy within and outside of the soccer field through engaging and competitive games.

As a substantial commitment to social responsibility in Kuwait, Nissan Al Babtain seeks to encourage the youth to further develop their talents and hopes to build a strong and wholesome society that benefits future generations. This sponsorship is part of a long series of similar initiatives that cement its role in serving the wider community and various sectors.

Since its inception, Nissan Al Babtain continues to implement its strategic role and plans in encouraging young people and stands as a pillar of support for diverse community effort. The brand is driven by its inherent principles to model passion, integrity and commitment throughout Kuwait and the region.

13 Minister stops S Lanka team leaving for India



14 US bobsledder Ryan Bailey hit with 2-year doping ban



15 Salah's attacking armada gets Liverpool shipshape



PHILADELPHIA: Phoenix Suns' Tyson Chandler (4) blocks a shot by Philadelphia 76ers' Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot (7) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Philadelphia. — AP

12th straight win as Love, James gore Bulls

Curry injury fear as Warriors comeback stuns Pelicans

CHICAGO: Kevin Love scored 24 points and grabbed 13 rebounds and LeBron James finished with 23 points, seven rebounds and six assists as the Cleveland Cavaliers won their 12th straight game with a 113-91 victory over the Chicago Bulls on Monday. The Cavaliers (17-7) can tie a franchise record for consecutive victories with a win today at home against Sacramento. Dwayne Wade, who is flourishing as a reserve with the Cavaliers following a season playing for his hometown Bulls, also finished with 24 points to help pace the Cavaliers. Jeff Green added 14 points for Cleveland. Kris Dunn scored 15 points to lead Chicago (3-19), which has lost nine straight games. Robin Lopez and Justin Holiday also scored 14 points for the Bulls, who also got 13 points from Lauri Markkanen and 10 from Bobby Portis.

SUNS 115, 76ERS 101

Devin Booker scored a season-high 46 points, 13 in a clinching 16-3 run late in the game, as Phoenix beat Philadelphia to snap a two-game losing streak. Booker shot 17 of 32 from the floor, including 5 of 8 from 3-point range, as Phoenix won for just the second time in seven games. TJ Warren added 25 points for the Suns.

JAZZ 116, WIZARDS 69

Alec Burks scored 27 points to spearhead a balanced offensive effort from Utah as it ran past Washington. Donovan Mitchell added 21 points for Utah. Rudy Gobert returned to the Jazz lineup after missing 11 games with a knee contusion, and he collected 10 rebounds and two

blocks in 21 minutes. Utah won its sixth straight game overall and fifth consecutive home contest.

SPURS 96, PISTONS 93

LaMarcus Aldridge scored 17 points, including San Antonio's final six points of the game, and took 10 rebounds as San Antonio came from behind to beat Detroit. Detroit led 86-82 with 4:42 to play before Patty Mills canned a long 3-pointer from well beyond the top of the circle to begin a 14-2 San Antonio run that granted the Spurs a 94-88 advantage with 1:51 remaining. The Pistons then forged a final charge, getting to within 94-93 with 23.5 seconds left on a put-back by Andre Drummond. Aldridge then sank two free throws with 5.2 seconds remaining to increase San Antonio's lead to 96-93.

MAVERICKS 122, NUGGETS 105

Denver started a six-game road trip desperately trying to figure out how to win away from home. It didn't happen as it fell behind by 25 points early in a loss to Dallas. Denver fell to 3-8 on the road. With games coming up at New Orleans, Detroit and Boston on this road swing, the Nuggets could find themselves at .500 if they can't put together four solid quarters on enemy territory. Add key injuries to starters Nikola

Jokic (left ankle), whose return date is uncertain, and forward Paul Millsap (left wrist), who will be out the next several months, and the Nuggets are missing a pair that brings nearly 31 points and 17 rebounds.

WARRIORS 125, PELICANS 115

Stephen Curry scored a team-high 31 points and Nick Young and Klay Thompson combined for 18 points in the fourth quarter as Golden State erased a 20-point halftime deficit and defeated New Orleans. The Warriors trailed by as many as 21 points late in the second quarter and by 20 at halftime. The comeback was their second best of the season. They overcame a 24-point deficit against Philadelphia on Nov. 18. The Warriors, who have beaten New Orleans in 20 of their last 21 meetings, outscored the Pelicans 76-47 in the second half after trailing 69-49 at the half.

GRIZZLIES 95, TIMBERWOLVES 92

Marc Gasol scored 21 points as Memphis held on to defeat Minnesota, ending an 11-game losing streak. Minnesota shooting guard Jimmy Butler, who had a game-high 30 points, launched an off-balance 3-point attempt at the buzzer that would have tied the game, but the shot missed. Memphis won for the first time since Nov. 7 at

Portland, prevailing for the first time under interim coach J.B. Bickerstaff. The previous head coach, David Fizdale, was fired last week.

PACERS 115, KNICKS 97

Thaddeus Young scored 20 points and Bojan Bogdanovic added 19, propelling Indiana to a romp over short-handed New York. Seven players scored in double figures for Indiana. Victor Oladipo added 16 points for the Pacers. Domantas Sabonis contributed 12 points and 12 rebounds, and Darren Collison had 10 points and 10 assists. The Knicks played without their two top scorers, Kristaps Porzingis and Tim Hardaway Jr., for the second consecutive game. Porzingis is out with sprained right ankle and an illness. Hardaway is sidelined with lower left leg injury.

NETS 110, HAWKS 90

Caris LeVert scored a season-high 17 points, and Brooklyn broke the game open with a 17-0 run to open the second half as the Nets beat Atlanta. LeVert, a second-year guard from Michigan, entered the game averaging 10.3 points. He almost equaled that with nine first-half points. He shot 7-for-13 from the field and matched his career best with seven assists. LeVert's previous best scoring night was a 16-point effort against the Hawks on Oct 22. The Nets avenged a 114-102 loss to the Hawks in Brooklyn on Saturday, and they have won two of three meetings against Atlanta this season. Brooklyn has won three of its past five games overall. Atlanta has lost three of its past five.— Reuters



Seven players scored in double figures for Indiana

Ronaldo deserves more respect: Zidane

MADRID: Cristiano Ronaldo deserves more respect, Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said yesterday as he backed the usually prolific Portuguese to come good in the second half of the season amid his worst domestic campaign in Spain.

Ronaldo has scored two goals in 10 league games and came in for criticism in the Spanish media for his display in Real's goalless draw against Athletic Bilbao on Saturday which left the Liga champions eight points behind leaders Barcelona.

The 32-year-old is still expected to pick

up the Ballon d'Or award tomorrow for firing Real to Champions League glory last season, scoring hat-tricks against Bayern Munich and Atletico Madrid in the quarter and semi-finals and a double in the 4-1 win over Juventus in the final. If he wins the award, Ronaldo will tie Lionel Messi's record of being named the best player in the world five times. "I think Cristiano deserves more respect because he is such a great player that when things don't quite go his way everyone has something to say about him," Zidane told a news conference yesterday ahead of Real's final Champions League Group H game with Borussia Dortmund.

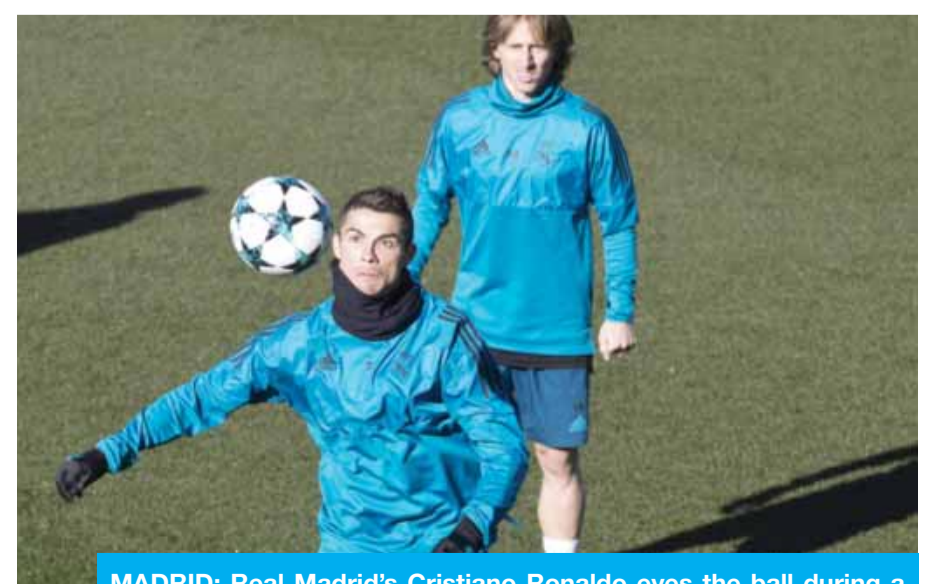
"The club and the fans who love Cristiano Ronaldo know what he is doing. Just last season he had a phenomenal campaign. We are halfway into the season, we still have six months left of the season. Six months is a very long time for Cristiano."

Ronaldo has lived up to his high standards

in the Champions League in which he is the top scorer with eight goals from five games and on course become the top marksman in Europe's elite competition for a sixth straight year. "For me he deserves to win the Ballon d'Or because he's had an incredible year," Real midfielder Mateo Kovacic said.

"I'm very happy for him, the Ballon d'Or means a lot to him and to us although the most important thing is that we win together as a team. "I see Cristiano train every day and he is doing fine. He's going to score a lot of goals this season. Right now the ball doesn't want to go in for him, but there's a long way to go and he's going to start scoring again."

Real are guaranteed to finish second in Group H behind Tottenham Hotspur, while Dortmund need to win to secure third spot in the group and a place in the Europa League as they are locked on two points with fourth-placed APOEL Nicosia but have a superior head-to-head record.— Reuters



MADRID: Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo eyes the ball during a training session in Madrid yesterday. — AP

Business

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2017

18 Boursa Kuwait ties up with global firm Oliver Wyman**21** KFH turns into a success icon in Islamic banking over 4 decades**22** China says its 'open' internet accounts for a third of economy

BRUSSELS: Oxfam activists stage a happening mimicking wealthy people hiding their money in tax haven yesterday near the European institutions in Brussels, within a meeting of European Union ministers over a credible blacklist of non-EU tax havens. — AFP

EU blacklists 17 tax havens

Paradise Papers leak gave a new impetus to the plan

BRUSSELS: European Union ministers adopted yesterday a blacklist of 17 non-EU tax havens including Panama, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates after a year of tough negotiations.

The Paradise Papers leak last month gave a new impetus to the plan, making public some of the intricate ways the world's rich evade tax using offshore havens. "We have adopted at EU level a list of states which are not doing enough to fight tax evasion. This blacklist includes 17 states," French finance minister Bruno Le Maire told reporters in Brussels. The EU has struggled for over a year to finalize the blacklist, with smaller, low-tax EU nations such as Ireland, Malta and Luxembourg worried about scaring

off multinationals. The countries on the list are: American Samoa, Bahrain, Barbados, Grenada, Guam, Macau, the Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Namibia, Palau, Panama, Saint Lucia, Samoa, South Korea, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. A further 47 countries are on a "grey list", sources said.

Other jurisdictions are understood to have been given leeway after suffering severe damage during hurricanes in the Caribbean earlier this year. Britain fought particularly hard against the list, afraid that its crown dependencies, including Jersey and the Virgin Islands, would be singled out. Senior officials from member states had whittled down an initial draft of 29 countries,

with divisions still strong in recent days on who would make the final version. EU Economic Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici said ahead of the official announcement that this was fewer than the 20 countries he had hoped for but would be a "initial victory".

Enforcement problem

Enforcement is the biggest problem, with EU countries split over whether blacklisted countries should be subjected to financial sanctions or if the list itself is shaming enough. Several states, including France, support tough measures against the listed tax havens such as exclusion from EU and World Bank funding, though the

debate is still open. Other countries are reluctant to draw up common sanctions, believing that responsibility is better left to member states. "To be on a blacklist is in itself bad enough and of course there will be consequences for these countries," Luxembourg Finance Minister Pierre Gramegna said. An existing list of tax havens compiled by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) currently includes only Trinidad and Tobago.

The EU originally screened a total of 92 jurisdictions and once the list is compiled it is expected to be continuously updated. In a blow to activists, states that charge no corporate tax are not automatically considered at risk of

breaching EU tax criteria. However, the criteria do single out countries that facilitate the creation of shell companies and other structures that could aid tax avoidance. Countries in the EU's firing line have been given an opportunity to stay off the list if they provide a political commitment and a detailed plan to comply.

All countries, which initially included the US, were given until yesterday's meeting of the EU's 28 finance ministers to provide feedback and possible measures to satisfy EU demands. The list is the latest international effort to clamp down on tax avoidance increasingly seen as a moral issue-following the OECD's move to compile a list of "uncooperative tax havens". — AFP

US trade deficit rises to \$48.7bn on record imports

WASHINGTON: Record imports lifted the US trade deficit to \$48.7 billion in October, highest since January. The Commerce Department said yesterday that the trade gap rose 8.6 percent in October from \$44.9 billion in September. Imports hit a record \$244.6 billion in October, and exports were unchanged at \$195.9 billion. A trade deficit means that the United States is buying more goods and services from other countries than it is selling them. A rising trade gap reduces US economic growth.

President Donald Trump views America's massive trade deficits as a sign of economic weakness. He blames them on bad trade deals and abusive practices by China and other trade partners. Conventional economists argue that trade deficits are largely caused not by flawed trade agreements or cheating by particular countries but by a bigger economic force: Americans spend more than they produce, and imports have to fill in the gap. So far this year, the United States is running a trade deficit of \$462.9 billion, up 11.9 percent from a year earlier. US exports are up 5.3 percent this year; a weaker dollar has



WASHINGTON: The sky over The Capitol is lit up at dawn as Senate Republicans work to pass their sweeping tax bill in Washington. — AP

made US goods less expensive overseas. Imports are up 6.5 percent the first 10 months of 2017. The politically sensitive trade deficit in goods with China rose 1.7 percent to \$35.2 billion from September to October and is up 7 percent this year to \$309 billion. In October, the United States ran a surplus of \$20.3 billion with the rest

of the world in services such as banking and tourism. But that was overwhelmed by a \$69.1 billion deficit in the trade of goods.

Crude oil imports were up \$1.5 billion in October. Imports of drilling and oilfield equipment climbed by \$304 million, and imports of cellphones rose by \$303 million. — AP

Russian tycoons, fearing new sanctions, float new bond idea

MOSCOW: Wealthy Russians facing the prospect of targeted US sanctions next year have floated the idea of a special treasury bond to facilitate favorable terms for bringing their cash home, three sources familiar with the scheme said.

The bond, denominated in foreign exchange, would be offered at a higher yield than bank rates and be more liquid than Eurobonds, the sources said. Crucially, unlike with bank accounts, holders would be able to remain anonymous. "There is information that a number of people want to bring their foreign cash assets back here," said an executive from a major Russian state company, who like others spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the topic.

"The idea they came up with is that you

open some sort of account, with that you buy special bonds which the finance ministry will issue." There was no indication that the Russian government was seriously considering such a move, and the finance ministry declined to comment. Two sources close to the ministry said they did not look favorably on the idea. A senior executive in a Russian state bank said it would accelerate a move that has already started.

The banker said wealthy people in President Vladimir Putin's inner circle were putting modest amounts of foreign currency into Russian bank deposits. "But the interest rates on foreign currency deposits are low, whereas investing in finance ministry forex instruments can secure them good returns," he said. "They can make money on that."

A source in the Russian financial markets said he had also heard from wealth managers about new cashflows from abroad. "They are moving their money to Russia," he said.

Special forex bonds have been issued in the past and even have a nickname, "Vebovki", after state development bank VEB which issued them, according to a person with close ties to the Kremlin and to leading oligarchs. "Now the sanctions could be an additional argument," for issuing such an instrument, he said. — Reuters

Business

NBK-Egypt partners with MasterCard to launch a wide array of payment cards

Bank enhancing its banking services to better serve customers

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt has unveiled its new partnership with MasterCard, a leading technology company in the global payments industry, launching a range of credit cards and debit cards that cater to the customers' diverse needs.

Among the newly launched cards is the World MasterCard Credit Card, which offers a range of exclusive benefits and services that meet the needs of distinguished customers, including, but not limited to, free access to over 550 airport lounges in 120 countries around the world. The card also gives customers access to the NBK Miles Points program enabling them to redeem mileage points for airline tickets at more than 800 airlines or in hotel reservations at more than 150,000 hotels around the world. In addition to the opportunity of using the points when renting cars from major companies, and cash back value given in return to the earned mileage points. MasterCard World cardholders also enjoy several other benefits and travel insurance services.

The bank also introduced the Platinum MasterCard Credit Card that offers a wide range of features and highest levels of security and convenience to its privileged customers. The Platinum MasterCard Card gives cardholders the purchasing power they need both in Egypt and abroad, as well as the privileges of the "NBK Miles Points Program" and free access to the exclusive waiting areas at some airports in Egypt and the Middle East.

On this occasion, Amr Elalfy, Chief Business officer at NBK - Egypt, said: "We are very proud with the launch of various kinds of global MasterCard cards, which are deemed among the most popular cards around the world as they carry several advantages for a distinctive segment of bank customers, especially customers who want to travel, whether for tourism or to take advantage of high-end exclusive promotions offered by their unique MasterCard cards, as well as enjoying safe banking transactions with the "smart chip" technology away from the risk of having a card lost or stolen since it is easy to get a replacement card anywhere in the world".

He added that the launch of NBK - Egypt MasterCard cards comes as part of the Bank's exclusive electronic services designed to meet the needs and requirements of all of the Bank's customers in line with NBK's regional and international position.

In turn, Magdy Hassan, General Manager Egypt and North Africa - MasterCard, said: "In light of the ongoing change in consumers' behaviors and spending patterns, MasterCard recognizes the importance of providing modern customers with fast, convenient and secure way to pay and that matches their lifestyles. Our partnership with the National Bank of Kuwait not only brings value to cardholders regardless of their location while complementing their bespoke needs, but the newly introduced cards also provide distinct facilities and attractive offers with a view to encourage more individuals to adopt digital payment".

NBK - Egypt is a subsidiary of NBK Group. It was founded in Egypt in 1980 under the name of the National Bank of Egypt. Its network of branches spreads to key areas in governorates and cities including Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, the Delta, Sinai, the Red Sea and Upper Egypt, as well as industrial areas such as the city of the Sixth of October and the Tenth of Ramadan. It is also one of the few banks in the Egyptian market that has an Islamic license in addition to the conventional license. It has two Islamic branches which allow the

Bank to offer sharia-compliant products as well as traditional products.

The National Bank of Kuwait, established in 1952 as the oldest national bank and financial institution in the State of Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf region, is one of the largest and most prominent Arab banks and it has the highest credit rating in the Middle East. The global agencies Moody's, Standard & Poor's, and Fitch unanimously confirm the robustness of its financial indicators, the quality of its high assets, its strong capitalization, the experience of its management, the clarity of its strategic vision and the availability of a stable funding base. The National Bank of Kuwait also maintains its position among the top 50 safest banks in the world for the twelfth consecutive year. NBK Group today has the largest network of local and international branches, reaching 153 branches and subsidiaries covering four continents around the world and spread across the United States of America, Europe, the Gulf States, the Middle East, China and Singapore.



Amr Elalfy



Safe banking with smart chip technology

Upper Egypt, as well as industrial areas such as the city of the Sixth of October and the Tenth of Ramadan. It is also one of the few banks in the Egyptian market that has an Islamic license in addition to the conventional license. It has two Islamic branches which allow the

Citi alumni network holds its 4th annual event in Kuwait

KUWAIT: After a disconnection of two years, Citibank Kuwait's alumni got together at the recently held dinner event at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Kuwait. In 2012, and on the occasion of the 200 year anniversary of Citi, the Bank began holding annual alumni events in all the countries it operates in. In Kuwait, the first alumni event was a celebration of Citi's 200 year global anniversary and the first Kuwait alumni event. At the time, the database had only 7 alumni most of whom had worked at Citi in other countries but now work and reside in other financial institutions in Kuwait. After 5 years, the list has exceeded 50 alumni who worked at Citi in Kuwait and in other countries around the world but currently reside in Kuwait.

The event is an annual one initiated by Citi to thank its former employees for their commitment, hard work, and loyalty which contributed to the franchise's success in Kuwait and elsewhere.

Speaking at the event, Citibank Kuwait CEO and General Manager, Fatah Adour said: "I am pleased to stand before you today and to see all of you. The banking sector in Kuwait continues to develop and grow along with all the big projects planned for the State of Kuwait. The rise in the number of alumni working in Kuwait is a clear evidence of the need for reputable bankers like yourselves and proves Citi was a great school for all of you to learn from so as to apply later in your careers".

The Citi Alumni Network is open to all alumni who worked with Citi for at least one year. Alumni are encouraged to sign up at www.citalumninetwork.com. Once the registration is complete, an email confirmation will be sent, and members can start submitting relevant news articles as well as their own alumni stories.

Citi has been in the Arab World for nearly 50 years and continues to view the region as critical to its global franchise. It is currently present in eleven Arab countries including Kuwait, Egypt, UAE, Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Iraq, Bahrain, and Qatar. Citi is the fourth foreign bank to set-up a branch in Kuwait, and



Group picture of Alumni and Citibank Kuwait employees during the fourth alumni event.



Raj addresses alumni attendees.



Fatah Adour speaks during fourth alumni event.

currently offers corporate and investment banking services, private banking and wealth management services.

Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah daily draws



KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its Al-Danah daily draws on 4 December 2017 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 26 November - 29 November 2017. The Al-Danah daily draws include draws every working day for two prizes of KD 1,000 per winner.

The winners are:

- (Sunday 26/11): Khalid Naser Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Khalil Ibrahim Khalil Gharbia
- (Monday 27 /11): Mohammed Naser Saleh Al-Rekaf, Ali Safi
- (Tuesday 28/11): Eissa Hajji Mousa, Halemah Abdullah Mohammed Al-Rashedi
- (Wednesday 29/11): Mahmoud Sayed Mandany Rajab, Sahar Abdulla Abdulmohsen Al-Ibrahim

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah 2017 draw lineup includes daily draws (two winners per working day and each receive KD1,000). Al-Danah's final draw for KD 1 million will be held on 11 January, 2018 whereby the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced.

Gulf Bank encourages you to increase your chances by depositing more into your Al-Danah account, immediately from any local bank, using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's Online and Mobile Banking.

Five reasons why the Al-Danah account is the best

- 1) Kuwait's single biggest yearly cash prize of KD 1 million and the largest international bank prize according to Guinness World Records
- 2) Kuwait's biggest quarterly cash prizes, up to KD 500,000
- 3) Two winners of KD1,000 every working day
- 4) The most chances to win
- 5) Only Bank that transfers your chances to win from the previous year to the current year

Only Al-Danah makes millionaires. Al-Danah also offers a number of unique services including: the Al-Danah deposit only ATM card which helps account holders deposit their money at their convenience; as well as the Al-Danah calculator to help customers calculate their chances of becoming an Al-Danah winner.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD200 to open an account and the same amount must be maintained as for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD200 at any given time, a KD2 charge will be made on a monthly basis to the account until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/ or deposit more will enter the daily draw within two days.

Malabar Group Chairman MP Ahammed awarded as the 'Most Promising Business Leader of Asia'

KUWAIT: MP Ahammed, Chairman - Malabar Group has been selected for the most promising Business Leaders in Asia award 2017 by The Economic Times Daily. He has been selected in gold and diamond business category along with other top corporate leaders in Asia. MP Ahammed, Chairman - Malabar Group received the business excellence award from Dato Sri Mustapa Bin Mohammed, Minister of Industrial and International Trade, Malaysia; in presence of S Tirumurti, Indian High Commissioner for Malaysia and Deepak Lamba, President - TSSL and CEO, Worldwide Media at the Economic Times Asian Business Leaders Conclave 2017 held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The jury has selected the winners for the award based on their performance track record measured on a number of criteria including their leadership quality in respective business verticals, quality to guide the establishment to excellence in business as well as making their contribution to society as best corporate citizens, the organizers of the conclave said. The jury had selected the winners after doing the necessary due diligence tracking their performance continuously over a period of time, they added.



Statoil presents \$5.9bn Castberg oilfield plan

OSLO: Norway's Statoil presented long-awaited investment plans yesterday for its Arctic Johan Castberg oil discovery, which is expected to cost 49 billion Norwegian crowns (\$5.89 billion) to develop ahead of a 2022 production start-up. Statoil initially

estimated a cost of more than 100 billion crowns for Castberg, making the field unprofitable at current oil prices, but had vowed to work with suppliers to reduce the investment.

In June, Statoil said revised Castberg plans would be presented by the end of the year. "This makes the Johan Castberg project the biggest offshore oil and gas development to be given the go-ahead in 2017," the company said, adding that it would be the sixth field to come on stream off the coast of northern Norway.

Partners in Castberg, which is believed to hold between 450 million and 650 million barrels of oil equivalents, are Statoil with 50 percent, Italy's Eni with

30 percent and Norway's state-owned Petoro with 20 percent. As part of the announcement, engineering company Aker Solutions won a contract worth 4 billion Norwegian crowns to build subsea systems and provide design and procurement services.

"The field is essential for continuous production growth on the Norwegian continental shelf for Statoil from 2022 onwards," Danske Bank analyst Anders Holte said.

"The field is one of the few remaining large developments offshore Norway and as such it's important for the long term outlook for Statoil's liquids production." —Reuters

Business

Technology stocks attempt rebound

NEW YORK: Technology stocks edged higher yesterday and signaled a pause to two days of selloff, while a rally in bank and other stocks powered by tax-cut optimism stalled, capping gains on the S&P 500 and the Dow.

profits. But technology companies that already pay the lowest effective tax rates of the 11 sectors in the S&P 500 skidded.

At 9:41 am ET (1441 GMT), the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 1.32 points, or 0.01 percent, at 24,291.37, the S&P 500 was up 0.61 points, or 0.02 percent, at 2,640.05 and the Nasdaq Composite was up 29.50 points, or 0.44 percent, at 6,804.87.

Autozone shares climbed 6.37 percent after the auto parts retailer's quarterly revenue and profit topped estimates. McDonald's rose 1.67 percent, providing the biggest boost to the Dow, after brokerage Jefferies slapped a "buy" rating.

Toll Brothers shares slid about 10 percent after the company's quarterly profit and revenue missed estimates and it forecast a decrease in full-year 2018 adjusted gross margin.

Declining issues outnumbered advancers on the NYSE by 1,441 to 1,076. On the Nasdaq, 1,315 issues rose and 1,072 fell. TOKYO (AP) - World stock markets mostly fell Tuesday as investors digested the possible impact of the US tax legislation and the stalled Brexit negotiations.

Germany's DAX slipped 0.3 percent to 13,015 and the CAC 40 of France lost 0.4 percent to 5,365. Britain's FTSE 100 climbed 0.1 percent to 7,344. Wall Street looked set for a positive start, with S&P 500 futures up 0.2 percent and Dow futures gaining 0.3 percent.

The European Union and Britain ended a flurry of top-level diplomacy on Monday without a deal on the terms of their divorce, as agreement on how to maintain an open Irish border after Brexit slipped out of the negotiators' grasp.

"The two overarching macro themes the market honed in on overnight have been the response

from European and US traders to the Senate passing its tax plan and that no deal has yet been formally reached in the Brexit negotiations," Chris Weston of IG said in a commentary. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index slipped 0.4 percent to 22,622.38 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index dropped 1.0 percent to 28,842.80.

The dollar rose to 112.61 Japanese yen from 112.41 yen late Monday. The euro slipped to \$1.1853 from \$1.1866, and the British pound fell \$1.3419 from \$1.3479. Benchmark US crude gave up 34 cents to \$57.13 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It slumped 89 cents on Monday. Brent crude, the international standard, lost 19 cents to \$62.26 per barrel. It fell \$1.28 the day before. —Agencies

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Tuesday 05 December 2017. Includes tables for Price Index, Weighted Index, KXS 15, Trades, and various stock categories like Basic Materials, Industrials, Consumer Goods, etc.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. At 02:00 PM Previous Day. Includes tables for Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, Global Bond Yields, and Commodities.

Business

KFH turns into a success icon in Islamic banking over 4 decades

Kuwait Finance House celebrates 40th anniversary



High demand from customers on Islamic transactions.



KFH's Bo Nejbel and Bo Nasser at a staff member's social occasion.

KUWAIT: On 23rd March 1977, an Amiri decree was issued to establish Kuwait Finance House (KFH) as a Kuwaiti shareholding company, where the government holds 49 percent. These shares were divided as follows: The Ministry of Finance 20 percent, Ministry of Justice 20 percent, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs 9 percent, while the remaining 51 percent were to be offered as initial public offering with a capital of KD 10 million (KD 1 per share). The establishment of KFH was a result of the visions of intellectuals who were seeking Sharia compliant banking alternatives.

The dream of establishing an Islamic bank has come true, and after 4 decades of establishment, KFH became one of the largest Islamic banks in the world and a leader of the Islamic finance industry.



First Islamic Bank in Kuwait

made governments ask KFH to operate on their lands by offering it facilities and benefits, which reveals the value of its achievements that were a result of the sterling efforts of a group of men.

KFH offers more than 200 different advanced and sharia-compliant services in all commercial, investment, financing, and banking fields. During the past years, KFH

has leaped to be the first in the local market, and reinforced its presence in global markets, in addition to its social role and its participation in many major developmental plans in Kuwait and the world. KFH currently seeks to innovate more products and services to meet the growing demand of its clients.

Three points distinguished the period that proceeded after KFH's establishment in the late 1980s, which are overseas investments and KFH global expansion, offering clients prime investment opportunities and innovating products that suit the investors and achieves good revenues. Moreover, KFH prioritizes global expansion to cement its plans to become international, diversify investment opportunities, and offer new fields of business.

In 1988, KFH established an Islamic bank in Turkey: KFH-Turkey that has now over 400 branches.

KFH-Bahrain works in all economic fields, and is rendered to be an added value to the economic business in Bahrain as a result of its banking, commercial, investment, and financing businesses. One of its famous projects in



The Father Amir speaks during the launch ceremony of KFH.



Ahmed Bazea Al-Yasseen

Signing the decree

The Minister of Finance at that time Abdul Rahman Al-Ateeqi called Dr. Eissa and told him that he is keen on executing the project. He also sent him an employee from the ministry to receive the files related to the studies conducted by the committee since 1968. The Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs at that time Youssef Al-Haji assisted Al-Ateeqi in overcoming any obstructions that faced them. Later on, Al-Ateeqi discussed with the late Amir Sheikh Jaber A-Sabah the importance of this project, since it is the only solution for people who seek Islamic banking products and services, which prompted Sheikh Jaber Al-Sabah to sign the decree that was issued by the late Amir at that time Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem A-Sabah.

IPO

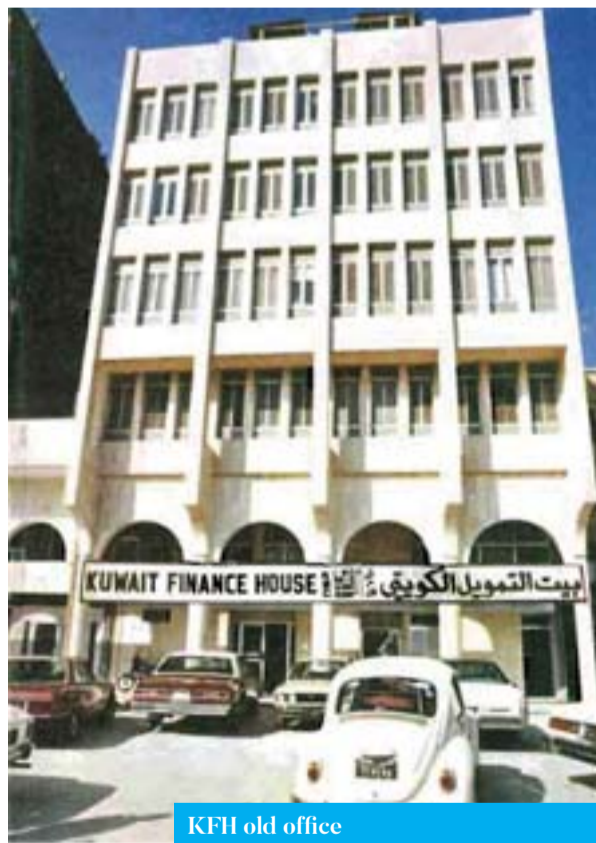
Many Kuwaitis were eager to acquire shares in the initial public offering, since KFH was the first and only local Islamic bank, and the first board was formed by Ahmed Bazea Al-Yasseen as the Chairman and Managing Director, Mohammed Bu Hendi as Deputy Chairman, Khaled Al-Ateeqi, Abdul Hameed Al-Obeid, Abdul Mohsen Al-Toweiresh, Ali Al-Fozan, the late Fahad Al-Dabbous who was replaced by Ali Al-Modaf, Mohammed Al-Roumi, Mereikhan Saqer, Hadi Al-Huweila, and Bader Al-Mukhaizeem was appointed as General Manager.

It took KFH 9 months since it was enlisted in the Trade Registry in December 1977 until the end of August 1978, where its management succeeded in such a short time to provide the bank with all means, tools and manpower required to start working.

On 28th of Ramadan, 1978 KFH opened its doors to its clients, where 170 accounts were opened during the first day. In 1983, KFH moved out from its temporary offices in Ahmed Al-Jaber Street to Al-Emad Commercial Center on the same street, until it finally settled in its current building in Abdullah Al-Mubarak Street in 1986.

Success partner

KFH is known to be an Islamic institution made by its customers who are considered to be partners in the success. The past 4 decades were not easy, but they were definitely effective because of the accomplishments done, which turned KFH into an icon for Islamic banking, and



KFH old office

Durrat Al-Bahrain, which is a \$3 billion real estate investment project, and Diyar Al-Muharrag.

The Malaysian government granted KFH a license to establish an Islamic bank in Malaysia, which comes as an appreciation of its pioneer role in Islamic banking. KFH-Malaysia is one of the most important banks in Malaysia, has 12 branches, and takes part in the biggest two real estate projects in south East Asia and China.

Al-Sharjah Islamic Bank was the first attempt to transfer a traditional bank into an Islamic, where KFH led the bank to become Islamic in a matter of two years.

In 2015 KFH penetrated the Euro zone market by establishing KT Bank AG "KFH-Germany" as the first Islamic bank. KFH is the first bank to operate according to sharia in Kuwait, offer women their own branches, issue credit cards with chip technology, provide its clients with three banking services in one machine, issue prepaid cards for the family's expenses, issue quarterly reports about the local real estate rates, offer more than 150 free services through its website kfh.com, issue Ijarah card that allows its holder to own commodities in Bahrain, offer cooperative marketing with the full support of the merchants, gather all car agents in one place, and offer electronic sharia-compliant trading services, and it has the largest network of social media among peers.

Deals

KFH participated in the first tranche of financing worth KD1.2 billion for the KNPC where it that has been the leader of Islamic lenders. KFH is continuing its efforts in playing a key role in the development process in the country.

Also, Kuwait's debt issuance program is good for KFH. This opens new horizons for financing and increases the credit growth.

KFH also acted as Program Arranger for sukuk offering under the \$2.0 billion Trust Certificate ("Sukuk") Issuance Program for EQUATE. KFH has strongly contributed in financing the Kuwait's budget deficit through Islamic Tawarruq issues.

Digital banking

KFH offers over 200 e-services. KFH lately launched a state-of-the-art banking service: XTM, in addition to several innovative e-services such as KFH Wallet, Visa Checkout for innovative payment, Banking transaction Push notifications through KFH mobile app, open gold account online, buy/sell gold, Login to KFH mobile app using Face ID feature, new innovative service for the CRM, Euro Vostro Account Services etc.



KFH general assembly meeting.



Technology

China says its 'open' Internet accounts for a third of economy

Annual cyberspace conference releases report

SHANGHAI: China's digital economy accounts for nearly a third of gross domestic product, according to a report released at an annual cyberspace conference staged by the government to justify its strict internet censorship.

Beijing this year has dramatically strengthened its already tight regulation of the internet, but officials and local media have used the fourth World Internet Conference to declare Chinese cyberspace is "open" - but subject to controls for the greater good.

The report unveiled on Monday in the eastern city of Wuzhen by the state-linked Chinese Academy of Cyberspace Studies, said China's digital economy reached 22.58 trillion yuan (\$3.4 trillion) in 2016, according to conference organizers. That figure is second only to the United States and accounts for 30.3 percent of the country's overall economy, the report said.

The report assessed global internet development from a number of factors including industry capacity and "governance". China's code word for restrictions. "China's experience suggests that both factors are crucial to a sound development of the internet that aims to serve the fundamental interests of the people," Xu Yunhong, an official from the academy, told a news conference in Wuzhen.

The three-day conference, which closed yesterday,

was set up to counter western criticism of its internet restrictions, which include blocking Facebook, Twitter and other foreign platforms, and bans on a range of content deemed politically threatening to the Communist Party.

China has cracked down even harder this year, including enacting new rules requiring foreign tech companies to store user data inside the country, imposing fresh content restrictions, and making it more difficult to use software tools that allow users to circumvent censors. Ironically, however, Wuzhen attendees from around the world enjoy unfettered web access during the conference.

Despite criticism of the conference by the US Congress and overseas right groups, Apple CEO Tim Cook and his Google counterpart Sundar Pichai made brief appearances this year, illustrating the pull of China's huge digital market. Apple has come under fire recently for cooperating with Chinese authorities in purging its app store of software such as Skype that feature secure communications. And Google is thought to be seeking a return to China after pulling out years ago in a row over censorship and alleged cyberattacks. Both executives seem to have steered clear of any contentious comments in Wuzhen. Company representatives did not respond to AFP requests for further information.

Official estimates emerging from the conference said



WUZHEN: This photo taken on Monday shows a man taking pictures of internet security data displayed on a screen at the Qihoo booth during the 4th World Internet Conference in Wuzhen in China's eastern Zhejiang province. —AFP

that as of June 2017 there were 3.89 billion internet users around the world, with 751 million of them in China, Xinhua news agency said.

China's digital economy has exploded in recent years

due to a surge in e-commerce and the use of smartphone apps for a range of daily activities including ordering food, hailing taxis, messaging and playing electronic games. —AFP



Report assesses global internet development

Ireland to start collecting \$15bn in tax from Apple



NEW YORK: In this file photo, a person stands near the Apple logo at the company's store in Grand Central Terminal, in New York. —AP

LONDON: Ireland has struck a deal with Apple to collect up to 13 billion euros (\$15 billion) in back taxes and hold it in an escrow account pending an appeal before the Court of Justice of the European Union. The government said in a statement Monday that an agreement had been reached "in relation to the framework of the principles that will govern the escrow arrangements."

The European Commission had ordered Ireland to collect the money after concluding that two Irish tax rulings allowed Apple to pay less tax than other businesses - thus giving them an unfair advantage. The Commission ordered Ireland to collect back taxes for the years 2003-2014, which it estimated to be as much as 13 billion euros plus interest. Ireland disagreed with the Commission's analysis and appealed the decision.

Apple said in a statement that it remains confident the court will overturn the commission's decision once it has reviewed the evidence. "The Commission's case against Ireland has never been about how much Apple pays in taxes, it's about which government gets the money," Apple said in a statement. "The United States government and the Irish government both agree we've paid our taxes according to the law." —AP

Ford ups electric push in China

NEW YORK: At least 30 percent of the new vehicles Ford will roll out in China by 2025 will be electric, with Beijing pushing hard to improve air quality for people living in smoke-choked cities.

The Detroit automaker said yesterday that the 15 new electric vehicles, part of the 50 new vehicles it is introducing to China's massive market in the next 18 years, will be Lincolns and Fords. Its joint venture with Anhui Zotye Automobile Co., announced last month, will produce a separate range of electric vehicles under a new brand. China has the world's most aggressive government plans to promote electric cars. It's stepped up pressure on automakers to accelerate development of electric cars by raising the first-year target for a planned system of production quotas. —AP

Retailers brace as Amazon launches in Australia

SYDNEY: US internet giant Amazon launched in Australia yesterday in time for Christmas, with retailers scrambling to cut costs and boost their online offerings as they brace for an expected shake-up of the sector. The arrival of the behemoth - which has grown from an online bookstore to one of the world's largest firms - poses a threat to a market already grappling with weak consumer confidence amid tepid wages growth.

The American giant is offering "millions" of products from well-known Australian brands, as well as small and medium-sized Australian businesses selling on Amazon Marketplace.

They will be shipped from a warehouse in Melbourne. Online shopping only accounts for between 8-13 percent of total sales in Australia, leaving room for growth in a sector estimated to be worth more than Aus\$300 billion (US\$227 billion) annually. "We believe Amazon's full entry into Australia will likely be a success," UBS analysts said in a note ahead of the launch, adding that Australia was an "attractive market where online is under-penetrated". "Australian online shoppers spend the

third-most globally of Amazon's markets." Retail categories most likely to be hurt by Amazon's entry include electrical, appliances, apparel and cosmetics, UBS added.

Faces challenges

The US firm was likely to absorb losses initially to boost its market share, IBISWorld senior analyst Kim Do said, pressuring the profitability and margins of its competitors. Several top Australian retailers have recently succumbed to pressure from foreign giants such as Japan's Uniqlo and Sephora of France, while others have cut back on bricks-and-mortar stores.

But Australian Retailers Association executive director Russell Zimmerman welcomed Amazon's arrival, saying it provided an additional platform to boost sales.

"With over 300 million active users already on Amazon's Marketplace, the majority of Australian retailers view Amazon's platform as a supplementary channel to their current retail offering," he said.

Some analysts warned Amazon would face challenges, such as low access to broadband and the large size of the island continent. "A key reason why Australia lags behind its peers (in the development of the e-commerce sector) is the low access to broadband," BMI Research, Fitch Group's research arm, said in a note.

Broadband subscriptions in Australia stand at 57.3 per 100 people, rising to a forecast 60 in 2021, in contrast to markets like Singapore which is projected to have subscriptions of 75.3 per 100 that year,

Nissan undaunted by bid to stop electric vehicle tax credits

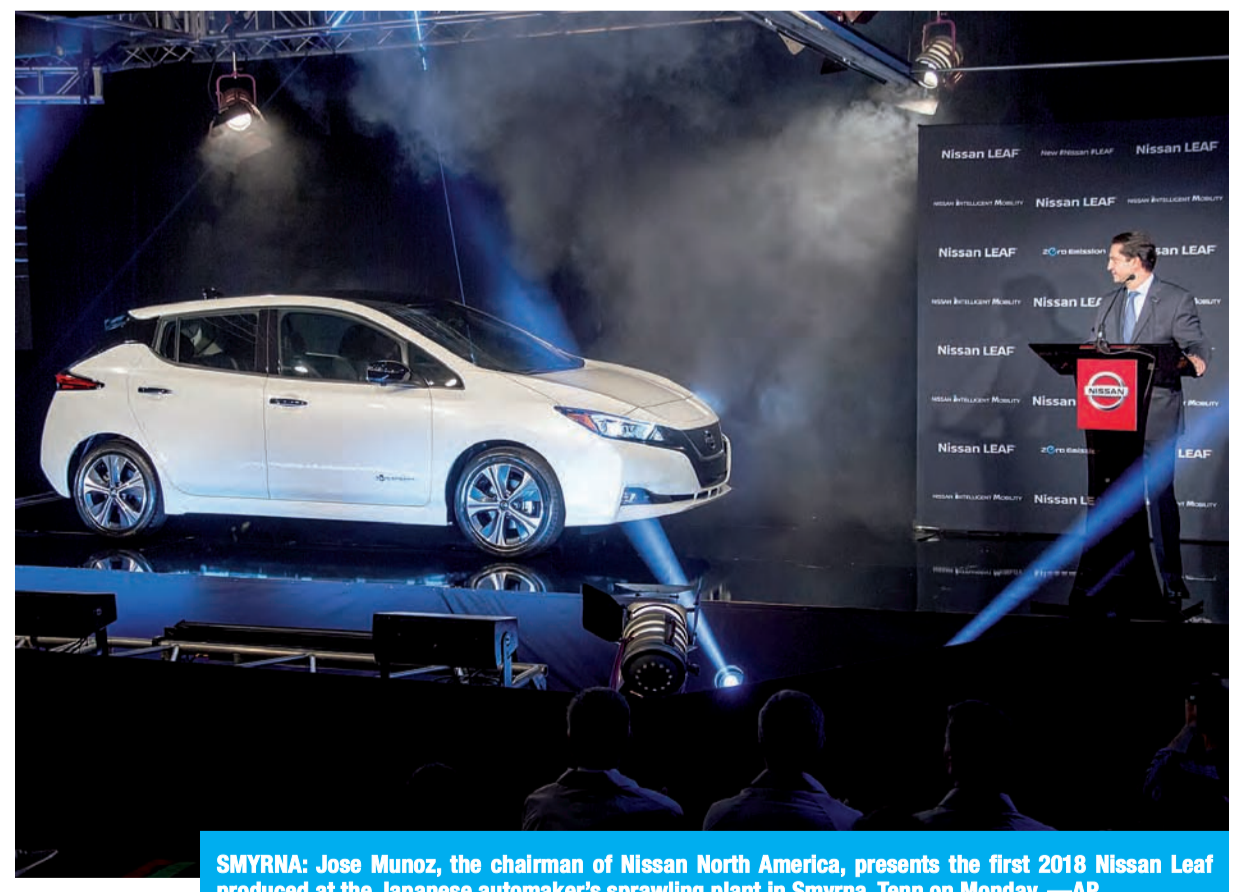
SMYRNA, Tenn: The head of Nissan Motor Co's operations in North America said Monday that the company is undaunted by congressional efforts to do away with a federal tax credit for plug-in electric vehicles. Boasting a 40 percent increase in battery range to 150 miles (240 kilometers), the 2018 Leaf will hit dealerships early in the new year with a sticker price of just under \$30,000. But that's before a \$7,500 federal tax credit that has been a major selling point for buyers of the previous version of the Leaf or other electric offerings from companies like Tesla or General Motors.

The tax credit could disappear if the House version of a federal tax overhaul bill prevails in negotiations with the Senate, which included the incentive in the bill it passed last week.

The Japanese automaker on Monday celebrated the production of the first new Leaf at its sprawling plant on the outskirts of Nashville. Jose Munoz, the chairman of Nissan North America, told reporters afterward that there is "very clear, strong natural demand" for electric vehicles even without the incentives. "Obviously we welcome support to the EV business," Munoz said. "At the same time, we've built a very strong foundation because we are global leaders on EV."

The Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance announced in September that it plans to produce 12 new electric models by 2022 and that electric cars will make up 30 percent of its overall output. "We're going to continue betting on this," Munoz said.

Munoz declined to say whether Nissan would adjust the pricing on the Leaf if the federal tax credit ends. Volkswagen last week showed off its I.D. Crozz, a pro-



SMYRNA: Jose Munoz, the chairman of Nissan North America, presents the first 2018 Nissan Leaf produced at the Japanese automaker's sprawling plant in Smyrna, Tenn on Monday. —AP

duction electric SUV, and said it will go on sale in the US by 2020. Although the first of the new SUVs will be made in Germany, Volkswagen brand chief Herbert Diess said he hopes it will also be produced at the German automaker's lone US plant in Chattanooga. Volkswagen is urging Congress to keep the federal tax credits in place.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam said he has discussed the credits with Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn. The state's

junior senator, Bob Corker, was the only Republican to vote against the tax bill, citing concerns about adding to the federal deficit.

Haslam said he expects sales of electric vehicles to continue to grow in the long term, though that pace could be slowed if the federal tax credit ends.

"It's just a matter of how long it takes us to get to where the electric vehicle is the dominant method of propelling vehicles," he said. —AP



This combination of pictures show photo of Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos (left) in Seattle, Washington and Co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Bill Gates in Brussels. —AFP

Health

CVS purchase of Aetna pitched as antidote to US health maze

NEW YORK: CVS Health's proposed takeover of insurer Aetna is being pitched as a cost-effective antidote to the complex and at times frustrating American health care system, with pharmacies playing a broader role in patient care. Architects of the \$69 billion deal unveiled Sunday said CVS's nearly 10,000 stores could be remade to include wellness and medical testing areas, allowing customers easy access to medical professionals and treatment while containing costs. The shift could encourage more preventive care and cut unnecessary emergency room visits, including by the almost 60 percent of the American population who do not have a regular doctor, executives said on a conference call with analysts.

The goal is to create a "new front door to healthcare," CVS chief executive Larry Merlo said, noting that the morass of health care players including the government, insurers and medical providers can be confusing for consumers to navigate. The transaction creates a health care giant by fusing one of America's biggest pharmacy chains with an insurer that serves about 46.7 million people, nearly 15 percent of US population. Analysts see the deal as partly preemptive in case internet retail powerhouse Amazon enters the pharmacy business, as it has entered groceries through its takeover of Whole Foods Market. But the reactions were not all positive. S&P placed CVS and Aetna on credit watch negative, saying their financial risk profile would be impacted by the deal, which could lead to a one-notch downgrade for CVS and as much as three notches lower for Aetna. While Aetna represents an "attractive" acquisition, it will likely require time before the deal boosts earnings for CVS, which will need to issue debt to finance the transaction, the ratings agency said.

Regulatory concerns

Wall Street analysts expect the deal to receive heavy scrutiny from government regulators, who have often been hostile to big health care deals. The FTC blocked Aetna's 2015 proposed takeover of rival insurer Humana and balked at Walgreens Boots Alliance's proposed takeover of Rite Aid, forcing the pharmacies to radically scale back the transaction. "While we believe (Federal Trade Commission) risk is ultimately relatively low, we would expect the deal to be tied up

in the regulatory review process for an extended period," JPMorgan Chase said.

Unlike those deals, the CVS-Aetna transaction is a "vertical" merger that unites companies from different sectors, which has not usually sparked government action. An exception is the government's suit to block telecom giant AT&T's vertical takeover of Time Warner, a sign President Donald Trump's administration may be taking a different approach. The deal also sparked misgivings among some critics on Twitter about the risks of consolidation. Still, as of midday yesterday, major groups such as AARP had not taken a stance on the merger. Public Citizen, a consumer advocacy organization, was studying the bill, a spokesman said. The companies do not expect to complete the transaction until late next year.

More direct care

Founded in 1963 in Lowell, Massachusetts and now based in Rhode Island, CVS had revenues of \$177.5 billion in 2016. It already provides insurance under its pharmacy benefits management system. It also has introduced "one-minute clinics" into some stores that provide vaccines and some other basic services. CVS envisions building on these programs following the Aetna deal, repurposing more store space to enable more direct consumer health services.

Noting that 41 percent of health care costs are shouldered by consumers out of pocket, Aetna chief executive Mark Bertolini said a key objective was to "offer people a better cost experience." And perhaps more critically "people are really confused" about health care, and are "wandering through the systems, multiple doctors, multiple medications." "So I would say eliminate the confusion, number one consumer issue," Bertolini said.

An integrated process also would aim to help patients with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, allowing for face-to-face counseling or assistance with home monitoring of the condition. Executives said they plan to test various concepts, with all retailers in the chain sharing some common offerings and some stores having enhanced services. The executives likened the concept to the Apple Genius Bar in Apple's retail stores, that allow customers the "ability to walk in a store and get help." —AFP

“
New front door to healthcare
”

Kuwaiti doctor shadows world-leading experts in London



Dr Yaser Adel Kheraibet

KUWAIT: Kuwait clinician, Dr Yaser Adel Kheraibet participated in the Observership program at Great Ormond Street hospital (GOSH) in London. The program enables international medical collaboration between countries, allowing doctors from all corners of the world to share their expertise, observe clinical practice and witness the latest research and technologies that will facilitate better treatment for their patients.

Dr Yaser Adel Kheraibet, a specialist in Paediatric Neurology at Ahmadi Hospital, had the chance to join the GOSH team of experts for a week as part of his third observership. He received a warm welcome at the hospital where he attended daily lectures and meetings and discussed various cases with the other doctors. Dr Yaser noted that GOSH uses treatment plans that are in line with the latest research and he is now in the position to bring back this knowledge to his hospital and incorporate this in treatment plans, for better disease management.

"The system at GOSH is one based on respect between all members of the team. Everyone is heard - from junior doctors to senior ones. The focus is on providing the best patient care, and all contribute to sharing ideas to develop the best management plan for the patients," says Dr Yaser. "I feel part of a bigger and wider team now and know that I can pick up the phone and ask for the help of the doctors at GOSH if I need help on a case".

His enthusiasm was noted by the doctors, especially his supervising consultant Dr Prab Prabhakar. "Dr Yaser showed great enthusiasm and motivation during his time here. He had the chance to be exposed to several complex cases where he contributed with valuable treatment ideas. I believe that he would benefit greatly from our paediatric neurology course in the New Year which will allow him to take strong knowledge back to Kuwait and implement it," concluded Dr Prab Prabhakar.

CLINIC
PAGE

248 33 199

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What's On

ALARGAN International inaugurates ARGAN Square; community development for youth

Announced photography competition winners



ALARGAN International Real Estate Company yesterday inaugurated the ARGAN Square dining, retail and leisure development, catering to a dynamic young segment of the population in the heart of the Salmiya area in the State of Kuwait, where they can gather, study and socialize in a vibrant and active environment.

Designed in line with the Company's motto "Life... As You Love It" and extending over 4,800 square meters, ARGAN Square is surrounded by Sabah Al-Salem Street and the Gulf Road, and is situated directly opposite from the American University of Kuwait (AUK). ARGAN Square positions itself as a social and cultural platform in addition to being a leisure destination where

students can engage in activities ranging from arts, music, photography, fitness, health and much more.

ALARGAN International Real Estate Company CEO and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, Khaled Al-Mashaan, said: "At ALARGAN, we are committed to delivering sustainable development. This means that our objective as an organization goes beyond operational performance, as we measure our success by our efforts in making a positive impact around us. ARGAN Square delivers on that objective, providing a key segment of our society with a sustainable development that channels the energies of the younger generations and enables them to share ideas, socialize and grow together."

As part of the inauguration of ARGAN Square, a photography competition organized by ALARGAN in partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Kuwait's General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD), in which university students were invited to present their vision and aspirations of the future. The photography competition aimed to familiarize students with the Sustainable Development Goals identified by the United Nations (UN) as well as the development goals identified in the Kuwait Vision 2035. 29 students participated in the competition judged by the UN Resident Coordinator, Zineb Touimi-Benjelloun and renowned photographers, Mohammad Al-Sultan and

Faisal Al-Bisher. Winners of the competition were announced during the inauguration. The first-place winner, Ali Zidi from Kuwait University, received a KD400 voucher from the photography store, AAB World, while the second-place winner, Fahad Al-Enezi from Kuwait University received a KD300 voucher and the third-place, Noura Zaher from AUK, a KD200 voucher. A parallel competition was held on ARGAN Square's social media platforms, inviting followers to vote for their favorite photography. Winner of the social media competition, Gamila Eid, received a KD100 voucher. ALARGAN heavily invests in corporate social responsibility, a key investment that it recognizes as a pillar to long-term sustainability.

GUST VP accepts Boardmanship at ICERP

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) announced yesterday the nomination and acceptance of Dr Salah Al-Sharhan Vice President for Academic Affairs on the Advisory Board of the International Center for Educational Research and Practice (ICERP) at the Vista Innovation Center, based in San Diego, California. ICERP, which was recently launched in May 2017, will be run with support of its three primary partners, the University of California at San Diego Graduate School of Education (UCSD GSE), the San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP) and the Vista Unified School District, which collectively have close to 150 years' experience in education.

This three-way partnership represents some historical firsts, in that this is the first UCSD GSE research initiative physically located on a school district campus, and will serve as the first physical location in the northern part of San Diego County for SDWP.

The center's primary purpose is to conduct neuro-scientific and cognitive scientific research in a school-community setting, so that the usual lag time between research and practice-based findings is significantly reduced. Secondly, the center is also designed to serve as a crossroads for global partnerships that promote international col-

laboration and benchmarking. Lastly, ICERP will facilitate "inter-sectionality of thought" among partners so that the impact of the research can serve the disciplines of lifelong learning, college & career readiness, family & community engagement, and societal-scale thinking. Working together, the partners are creating a spectrum of programs designed to make school more relevant and prepare students better for a knowledge-based society and globally competitive economy.

Professor Donald Bates, GUST University President, said, "Whenever someone from the GUST family is offered such a powerful advisory position, I am reminded by the wealth of knowledge and experience our university has. As a knowledge-hub, it is important that we be guided by such competent individuals, and we are proud that through Dr Al-Sharhan, we can say that GUST is helping establish such an innovative and scientifically advanced center that is destined to make a huge contribution to science." In order for the center to realize its goals, it has extended an invitation to Dr Salah Al-Sharhan, to join as a board member, and to impart his leadership skills to help expand learning opportunities for students as they prepare for careers in an increasingly competitive and complex world.

Selection to the board was based on a nomination process which comprises a number of criteria such as one's professional position, previous contributions towards innovative education, and the potential to contribute to the board in terms of adding a wider perspective to achieve the goals of its mission, by providing guidance on where research should be focused, which will then amplify knowledge dissemination practices to solve societal issues on a large scale. The center will officially begin operation in January 2018 with



Professor Donald Bates



Dr Salah Al-Sharhan

the launch of the advisory board.

Dr Salah Al-Sharhan, Vice President of Academic Affairs at GUST, said, "My role will be to contribute to the board's expertise in education transformation, future career readiness, and to represent the perspective of the Middle East. I will also aim to foster cooperation between the ICERP, GUST's Center for Teaching Learning and Research, and other institutions in Kuwait and the region."

Dr Al-Sharhan earned his PhD in Systems Design Engineering, with an emphasis in Computational Intelligence, from the University of Waterloo in 2002, and has extensive teaching experience in the fields of computer science, computer engineering, MIS, and intelligence system areas, and has taught in several institutions such as GUST, Kuwait University, and the University of Waterloo on both undergraduate and graduate levels. Among Dr Al-Sharhan's major accomplishments are the development of several e-learning and e-health models, and his participation in developing the strategic plans for different sectors in the State of Kuwait, such as the e-learning strategy of the Ministry of Education which led to the introduction and implementation of e-learning throughout all schools in Kuwait.



nations gather for prayer. He is the first Gulf Arab to become head of a Protestant church.

The Guest Speaker Pastor Odoje prayed for peace and security in Kuwait. He lauded Kuwaiti leaders for their efforts in maintaining stability in the region. He called on all

Christians to follow the footsteps of Christ. In his message to the faithful, the host pastor Bishop Jonathan underscored the need for Christians to live a life worthy of emulation. Bishop prayed for peace and stability in the region.



South Africa among top 10 countries you need to visit in 2018



For those not already lucky enough to be living in South Africa,

'Lonely Planet' has selected South Africa as one of the Top 10 countries travellers need to visit in 2018. Apart from South Africa's beautiful beaches, majestic mountains, delicious wine and wildlife, Lonely Planet also gives a shout out to the country's vibrant culture and cosmopolitan city, Cape Town.

The travel guide book publisher says South Africa has long been one of the world's most alluring countries, and next year it will be even more so ... as the country celebrates Nelson Mandela's Centenary with an official program of events from sports to the arts.

"So with more to see than ever, and favorable exchange rates offering great value, 2018 is a phenomenal year to visit South Africa," says Lonely Planet. Chile clinched the top spot in the list as it celebrates its 200 years of independence next year... and has just added non-stop flights from London and Melbourne straight to Santiago. Other countries from Africa featured in the Top 10 list are Mauritius at number eight and Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa, at number four.

SA Universities

Meanwhile, nine South African universities have been ranked among the best in the '2018 Global Best Universities' survey. This is according to a US News and World Report released recently. The rankings were produced to provide insight into how universities compare globally.

"Since an increasing number of students plan to enroll in universities outside of their own country' the Best Global Universities rankings - which focus specifically on schools' academic research and reputation overall and not on their separate undergraduate or graduate programs - can help those applicants accurately compare institutions around the world" US News said.

The rankings include the top 1,250 institutions spread across 74 countries - up from the top 1,000 universities in 65 countries ranked last year. The University of Cape Town scored 64 in the rankings' while the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Stellenbosch scored 50.4 and 49.6' respectively.

Other South African universities featured in the rankings include the University of Pretoria' the University of Johannesburg' the University of the Western Cape' North West University' the University of the Free State and the University of South Africa.

Secretary General

In other news, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, has welcomed the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Council of Ministers' appointment of Ambassador Dr Nomvuyo N'Nokwe as the new IORA Secretary General.

The Minister took the opportunity to thank and congratulate Ambassador Bhagirath for his outstanding and dedicated leadership of the IORA Secretariat over the last six years. Ambassador Dr Nokwe is a dynamic African woman who was previously South Africa's High Commissioner to the Republic of Mauritius also accredited to the Republic of Seychelles. Prior to this, she served as South Africa's Consul-General in Milan, Italy. Dr Nokwe is a seasoned diplomat and possesses the requisite skills to sufficiently manage the Secretariat of IORA and further lead the association to greater heights. She will take up her new post in January 2018 for a period of three years. Significantly, Ambassador Dr Nokwe's appointment presents an historic milestone as the first female Secretary General of IORA, and gives direct expression and impetus to IORA's efforts to promote women's economic empowerment.

LAIF holds annual convention

The Life Abundant international Fountain Church (LAIF) held its annual convention at the National Evangelical Church Kuwait (NECK) premises. The four-day power packed program featured praise worship, bible ministration, anointing service, picnic etc. Addressing the congregation, Kuwaiti pastor Emmanuel Gharib urged Christians in Kuwait to be good ambassadors of Christ. He praised Kuwait leadership for promoting peace and religious tolerance - thanking the Amir for his wisdom and fatherly care. Pastor Emmanuel is the chairman of the National Evangelical Church of Kuwait, a campus where nearly 100 Christian denomi-



TV



00:25 We Still Kill The Old Way
02:10 Bermuda Tentacles
03:55 Larceny
05:35 Batman: Return Of The Caped Crusaders



00:50 Untamed & Uncut
01:45 Treehouse Masters
02:40 Cats 101
03:25 Meet The Orangutans



00:40 Doctor Who: The Husbands Of River Song
01:40 Orphan Black
02:20 Silent Witness



00:00 Campus Nightmares
01:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
02:00 It Takes A Killer



00:05 The Half Hour
00:30 The Half Hour
00:55 The President Show

16:55 Friends
17:20 Friends
17:45 Disaster Date



00:05 Origins
00:30 Destroyed In Seconds
00:55 Destroyed In Seconds



00:50 Hear No Evil
01:45 Who Killed Angie Dodge: Keith Morrison...
02:40 Guilty Rich



00:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

00:05 The Half Hour
00:30 The Half Hour
00:55 The President Show

And Cat Noir
21:00 Tangled: The Series
21:25 K.C. Undercover



00:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
00:25 Bungalingievable
00:35 Loopdidoo

00:20 The Lion Guard
20:00 P-King Duckling
20:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers



00:20 Street Outlaws
01:05 American Tarzan
01:50 Bushcraft Build-Off

06:00 Disney II
06:25 Supa Strikas
06:50 Marvel's Spider-Man

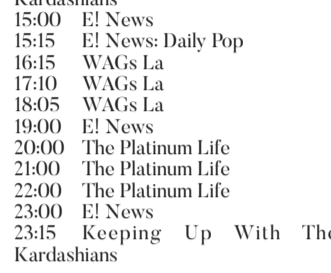


00:00 Million Dollar Genius
01:00 America's Book Of Secrets
02:00 Command Decisions

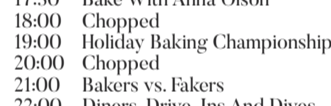
22:10 Lab Rats
22:35 Phineas And Ferb



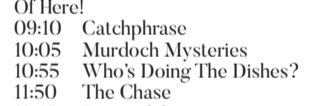
00:10 WAGs La
01:00 WAGs La
01:50 E! News



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:00 Man Fire Food



00:10 Yukon Gold
01:00 Cold Water Gold
02:00 Air Crash Investigation



00:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street



00:01 Million Dollar Genius
01:00 America's Book Of Secrets
02:00 Command Decisions

03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Time Team

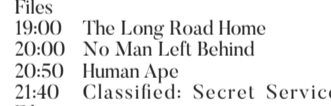
00:15 What's For Sale?
00:45 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia



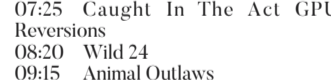
00:15 Yukon Gold
01:00 Cold Water Gold
02:00 Air Crash Investigation



00:10 Yukon Gold
01:00 Cold Water Gold
02:00 Air Crash Investigation



00:20 Man-Eater Of The Congo
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Attack Of The Big Cats



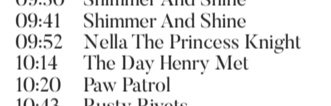
00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Sanjay And Craig

08:12 Harvey Beaks
08:36 Sanjay And Craig

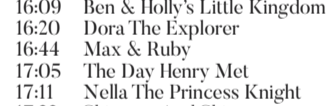
00:15 Shimmer And Shine
00:38 Shimmer And Shine
01:01 Max & Ruby



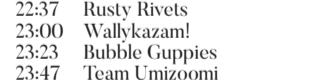
00:15 Shimmer And Shine
00:38 Shimmer And Shine
01:01 Max & Ruby



00:10 Yukon Gold
01:00 Cold Water Gold
02:00 Air Crash Investigation



00:10 Yukon Gold
01:00 Cold Water Gold
02:00 Air Crash Investigation



00:25 The Adventures Of Pepper And Paula
02:00 The Secret Life Of Pets
03:30 The Sound Of Music Live!



00:45 True Confessions
02:40 The Descendants
04:45 The Shamer's Daughter



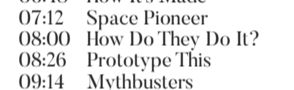
00:25 Rainbow Valley Heroes
02:00 Two Buddies And A Badger
03:30 Zodiac: The Race Begins



01:05 Primal Fear
03:20 13 Going On 30
05:00 The Internship



00:40 Mythbusters
01:30 How Do They Do It?
01:55 Food Factory USA



00:40 Mythbusters
01:30 How Do They Do It?
01:55 Food Factory USA



01:30 Man About Town
03:15 Love And Other Impossible Pursuits



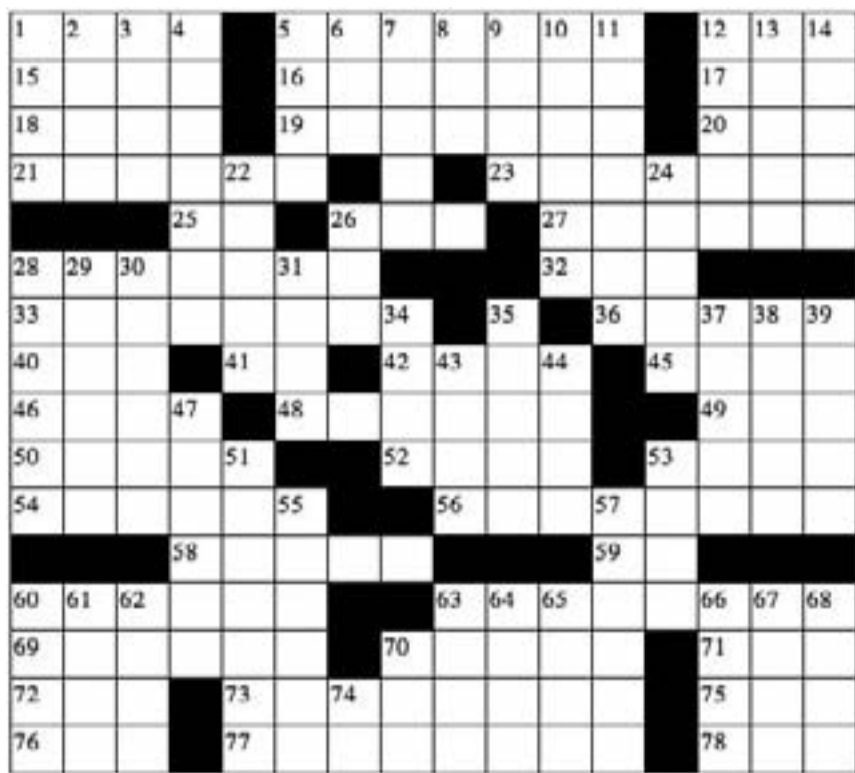
00:00 Grey's Anatomy
03:00 MAFS: The First Year
04:00 Project Accessory



00:20 My Giant Life
01:05 Fai Chance
01:50 Monsters Inside Me

Stars

CROSSWORD 1777



ACROSS

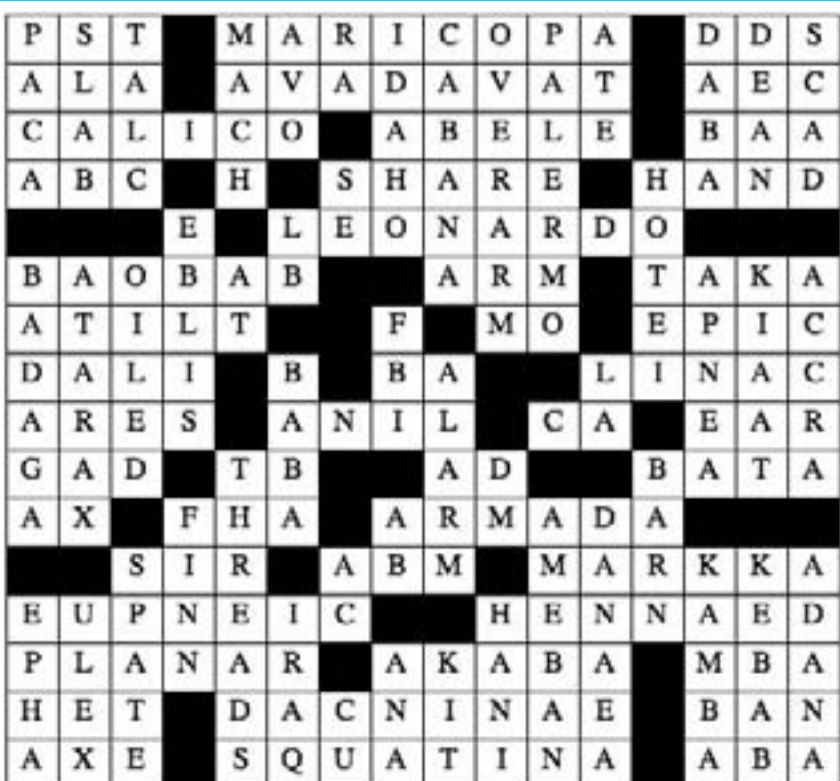
1. A heavy open wagon usually having two wheels and drawn by an animal.
5. 100 tambala equal 1 Kwacha.
12. A health resort near a spring or at the seaside.
15. The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
16. A B vitamin that prevents beriberi.
17. An extension at the end and at right angles to the main building.
18. A disorderly outburst or tumult.
19. A flowering shrub.
20. Someone (especially a woman) who annoys people by constantly finding fault.
21. Argentinian carriama.
23. Any of numerous plants of the genus Begonia grown for their attractive glossy asymmetrical leaves and colorful flowers in usually terminal cymes or racemes.
25. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
27. A covered passageway.
28. Graded markings that indicate light or shaded areas in a drawing or painting.
32. Resinlike substance secreted by certain leaf insects.
33. Of or relating to or characteristic of Europe or the people of Europe.
36. English businessman who created a retail chain (1888-1964).
40. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
41. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
42. Sweet pulpy tropical fruit with thick scaly rind and shiny black seeds.
45. Injure or wound seriously and leave permanent disfigurement or mutilation.
46. Very dark black.
48. An expression forming a grammatical constituent of a sentence but not containing a finite verb.
49. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
50. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
52. Make reference to.
54. Inability to walk.
56. Artificially high.
58. A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
59. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
60. North American bluebirds.
69. A severe or trying experience.
71. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
72. The syllable naming the sixth (submedian) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
73. A midwestern state in north central United States in the Great Lakes region.
75. Having leadership guidance.
76. Either extremity of something that has length.
77. Nocturnal burrowing mammal of the grasslands of Africa that feeds on termites.
78. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.

DOWN

1. (computer science) A kind of computer architecture that has a large number of instructions hard coded into the cpu chip.
2. A hormone produced by the anterior pituitary gland that stimulates the adrenal cortex.
3. Radioactive iodine test that measures the amount of radioactive iodine taken up by the thyroid gland.
4. A localized and violently destructive

- windstorm occurring over land characterized by a funnel-shaped cloud extending toward the ground.
5. The basic unit of money in Western Samoa.
6. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
7. A faint constellation in the polar region of the southern hemisphere and containing part of the Large Magellanic Cloud.
8. And nothing more.
9. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
10. In a straight unbroken line of descent from parent to child.
11. A word or phrase spelled by rearranging the letters of another word or phrase.
12. Any of various plants of the genus Senna having pinnately compound leaves and showy usually yellow flowers.
13. A cloth having a crisscross design.
14. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
22. Informal terms for objecting.
24. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
26. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
29. Loud confused noise from many sources.
30. Small space in a tissue or part such as the area between veins on a leaf or an insect's wing.
31. A less than average tide occurring at the first and third quarters of the moon.
34. A lawman concerned with narcotics violations.
35. A riblike part of a plant or animal (such as a middle rib of a leaf or a thickened vein of an insect wing).
37. The capital of Morocco.
38. Deciduous South African tree having large odd-pinnate leaves and profuse fragrant orange-yellow flowers.
39. Perennial mountain rice native to Mediterranean region and introduced into North America.
43. Marked by or showing unaffected simplicity and lack of guile or worldly experience.
44. French physicist noted for research on magnetism (born in 1904).
47. Speak in a nasal voice.
51. A Bantu language spoken in the coastal regions of eastern Kenya.
53. A man who is the lover of a girl or young woman.
55. A port city in southwestern Turkey on the Gulf of Antalya.
57. Beer brewed for immediate consumption.
61. A theocratic republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
62. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
63. A knife used as a weapon.
64. The capital and largest city of Mongolia.
65. Massive plantigrade carnivorous or omnivorous mammals with long shaggy coats and strong claws.
66. A landlocked republic in northwestern Africa.
67. In bed.
68. A quantity of no importance.
70. A doctor's degree in theology.
74. A hard brittle blue-white multivalent metallic element.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

A very active day is forecasted at this time. You are under a bit more pressure this morning than you have been recently, but that's okay; you are finishing up a lot of overdue projects as a result. Although you are assigned to do a lot more than usual, you are able to take it all in stride. Trying to establish a plan to get new projects and people organized could take up much of your time this afternoon. Fortunately, you are most interested in work-related matters at this time, as well as the co-workers. This afternoon could be a period of very involved study and thought. A sudden inspiration will resolve a long-standing worry. If you can clear out enough space tonight and tomorrow, you will be able to make some fun changes around the home front.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your recent investments will be showing results soon—patience! Figuring things out is just the thing that takes on a special significance. A career plan that you have been thinking about recently can now be put into action. You also have a heightened interest in health and diet, as well as an urge to get things organized into a rational system. There is much mental busywork today—at home and at work. If you are thinking about picking out that new car soon, check out all the internet reports or purchase money-guide magazines before you sign on the dotted line—you will be glad you did. Use discretion in making purchasing decisions; you could find it easy to make some wrong choices—especially those that may affect your living situation.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Assuming risks can bring great rewards. Someone younger than yourself could look to you for answers to problems of great importance. You may figure out how to proceed with plans and decisions with respect to your professional world. You should discover that your talents are in demand by others—whether you are at home or at work. Perhaps you will find yourself involved in some in-depth discussions or probing conversations; you are at your mental best just now. Sweethearts, children and other folks or things that you consider near and dear to your heart are accented at this time. There may not be a more powerful need in your life than knowing that you are appreciated and admired for your special talents; do this for others.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your innate ability to understand the needs of others puts you in the driver's seat when it comes to communicating regarding groups or society in general. Knowing what people really want and need is the main key to your success. You may find yourself more involved in getting things and people organized at this time. You are not willing to accept the opinions of others strictly on their say-so, unless they have some proof or authority. Small problems that arise this afternoon may slow down your progress. Your creative and intuitive talents may surface, bringing with them some new and unique thoughts and ideas. There will be those that you are close to that will be very supportive of your eccentricities. Tonight there is some welcome news!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may find it easy to make some clear evaluations that affect others at this time. Your ability to make commonsense decisions will be valued. You just seem to naturally know what the public wants and you are not afraid to seek help with finances, if necessary. Something or someone is instrumental in helping you to understand some difficult task that may be needed this morning. Underneath that hard-working shell is a very creative and intuitive being; an invention may be seen before much time has passed. Extra incentive and drive insures that you will have a successful future. Diet, exercise and work will somehow be important to you, as you sincerely want to feel good about yourself and the way that you do things. You encourage family harmony.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Those in authority know of your ability to manage and direct other people and could be seeking you out to take the responsibility for a particular job requiring this talent. It is a great time to be with others and to work together. This is a super time for you to use your imagination and creative ability when it comes to new ideas. This, along with the ability to put your thoughts into words, will allow you to delight and fascinate those around you. You may find a good book or movie to enjoy with your cup of tea, this afternoon. You should find no problem in entertaining others or caring for people that just need a little guidance. You may feel especially kindhearted toward a friend. Although this is a very busy time of year, you find time to enjoy yourself.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Someone who truly understands your situation and how you feel will be sympathetic today. You may take heart in realizing just how appreciated or valued you are for your feelings or your ability to take action and get things done. You are kindhearted, understanding and sensitive to the needs of others just now and that puts you in an excellent position to communicate with all concerned. You find more time to broaden your thinking and reach for the truth. You feel the need to involve yourself in more areas like education, politics, religion, law or something travel related. This could find you searching far from your established roots. Company may drop by at an inconvenient time. Be prepared to invite them on an evening walk for good health.



Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

Figuring out how to organize people is likely to be a topic of special appeal. This is also a time of concentrated study and thought. You are extremely resourceful and can find a way for you to make a little extra money at doing practically anything. You might also teach others your ideas or techniques. Major financial changes will show positive results. Seek investments you believe in and making money becomes doubly rewarding. You seem to understand your emotions and drive and you have no problem in discussing your feelings with great insight and fluidity. This evening should be a particularly pleasant time to be with loved ones. You might want to spend some quality time with a few fun games and a little snack, popcorn, chips, drinks, etc.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your patience is rewarded as you work to solve a problem or busy yourself to get things accomplished. You feel a clear sense of direction and are learning to keep your priorities in the right place. There will be no snags now as you work to accomplish a couple of long-term goals for yourself before the year is ended. Enlightenment and relationships are what brings you the most emotional satisfaction at this time. Meaningful ties to other people are a focal point for your feelings and you may find marriage and other partnerships being a means of access for this. Compassion and comprehension are emotional qualities that take on greater importance for you now. You make yourself available to listen and give advice.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You support a friend this morning by giving encouragement and a little push to go for some new position within the company. Conditions are perfect for self-expression and work very well with your special way of guidance. You stay focused on your responsibilities, even though there are many interruptions. With only a few kind words of encouragement you can help your co-workers gain a focus as well. There are a number of treasures that you have uncovered this year and you are in an appreciative mood. Through your words and ideas, you can capture an audience. Poetry and art may be a part of this activity. You may decide to take some kind of art class after the holidays to enhance your talents. You use your inventive mind to make decisions tonight.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Work conditions may be active and possibly stressful during the day. You will succeed in accomplishing whatever you set out to do this day. Your desire to try something totally new and different could lead you on an investigation of some rather far-out ideas. Everything is working in your favor to help bring out your more unique and unusual qualities. It may surprise you just a little to realize who will understand and support your rather eccentric behavior. There are new solutions to a long-held problem and you may discover an idea that would bring in a welcomed addition to the savings account. Socially, you could be the star of the next big dance. You have a unique vision of how to put together some beautiful material, styles and colors.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your thoughtful appreciation for ideas and thoughts should make this an excellent time to begin a new project in the workplace. This is also a positive and productive period for you, and others are very enthusiastic about something you have to offer. Those around you will have no problem in knowing just where you are coming from, as you are quite eloquent in your ability to communicate. You may find yourself in the middle of a very enjoyable conversation, writing a letter, or getting caught up on a bit of reading. You draw to yourself an abundance of beautiful and harmonious relationships to your life. Partnerships and marriage could be some of the key elements in this now. You aim for a balanced life.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Clothing

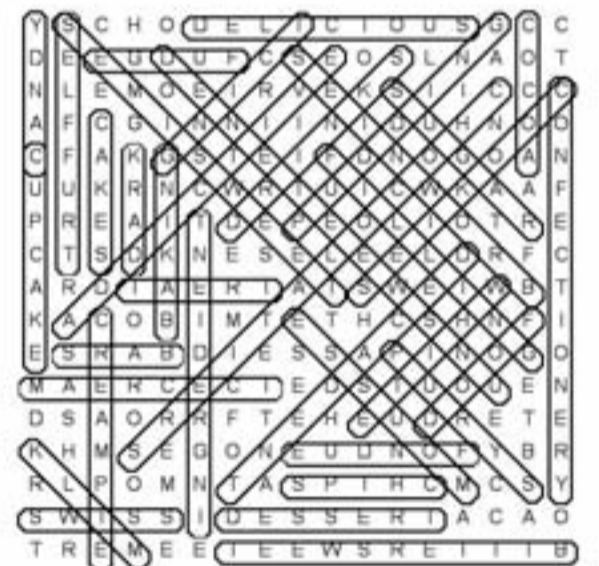
Find and circle all of the clothing items that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional piece of clothing.



- | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| BELT | JACKET | SCARF | SWEATER |
| BLOUSE | JEANS | SHIRT | TANK TOP |
| BOOTS | MITTENS | SHOES | TIE |
| CARDIGAN | OVERALLS | SHORTS | UNDERWEAR |
| CORDUROY | PANTS | SKIRT | VEST |
| DRESS | PARKA | SLIPPERS | |
| GLOVES | ROBE | SOCKS | |
| HAT | SANDALS | SUIT | |

Yesterday's Solution

Chocolate



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

The hidden message is: CHOCOLATE ORIGINATES FROM THE SEEDS OF THE THEOBROMA CACAO TREE

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Fact or Fiction?

Get the scoop on 10 common health beliefs that may or may not be true

Ever wonder if an apple a day really keeps the doctor away, or if going out in the cold with wet hair will make you sick? Like family heirlooms, health beliefs tend to get passed from one generation to the next, even if they don't always make sense. A few, of course, are easy to discount once we put them to the test. For instance, my grandmother insisted that eating bread crusts would give me curly hair; it didn't. Others, however, are a lot harder to debunk through experience alone.

We decided to put 10 persistent health beliefs under the microscope to determine if they have any merit. Here's what we found.

—Leslie Garisto Pfaff, FamilyFun magazine

1

CARROTS ARE GOOD FOR YOUR EYES

Bugs Bunny didn't wear glasses, but his uncanny ability to spot a hunter at a hundred paces had nothing to do with his favorite food. While carrots do have a lot going for them, including fiber and vitamin A, eating them won't improve your vision. Truth is, the British Royal Air Force started this myth during World War II to explain its pilots' phenomenal success at locating enemy bombers in near-total darkness. In reality, it was the development of one of the first radar systems that gave the pilots "superior vision."

Bottom line: If you don't get enough vitamin A, your vision can suffer. "But vitamin A is stored in the body," says Dr. Clyde Kitchen, author of "Fact and Fiction of Healthy Vision." "so you'd have to be on a starvation diet for a long time before you'd run short of your natural reserves of it."



SUGAR MAKES KIDS HYPER

This is one of the most pervasive health myths around. It's even spawned a popular phrase: "sugar buzz." But when researchers put it to the test, they found no evidence that sugar led to hyperactivity in kids or adults. So what turns an otherwise calm kid into a human pinball after an encounter with a birthday cake? Blame it on the excitement of the party — or the caffeine in the soft drinks — but not on the sugar in the cake.

Bottom line: "Sugar may have an effect on kids with established hyperactivity, but it won't make a nonhyperactive child hyperactive," says professor Richard Surwit, Ph.D., vice chair of the Department of Psychology and Behavioral Science at Duke University.



2

DRINK AT LEAST EIGHT GLASSES OF WATER A DAY

Dr. Heinz Valtin, a retired Dartmouth Medical School professor who spent his career studying the mechanics of thirst, wondered where this rule got its start. His findings: "After 10 months of very careful searching, I couldn't find its exact origin or any scientific evidence for the number eight whatsoever." And a more recent study showed that it's difficult to upset the body's finely tuned hydrating mechanism, whether you drink gallons a day or just a cup or two.

Bottom line: Kids and adults need to stay hydrated, but if you live in a temperate climate and are not engaging in strenuous exercise, it's probably fine to let your thirst dictate how much you drink versus strictly adhering to eight glasses. And keep in mind that water comes from lots of sources: juice, soups, veggies, fruits, even bread (a slice of white bread, in fact, is one-third water!).

3



4

AN APPLE A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY

"I don't know if it would keep the doctor away, but your basic apple is a pretty good and healthful food," says Dr. Gerard Mullin, director of Integrative GI Nutrition Services at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Apples contain Vitamin C and are high in fiber, and they're particularly abundant in quercetin, an antioxidant that revs up the immune system and helps protect against various diseases, including heart disease.

Bottom line: Apples may help you stay healthy, but even an apple a day can't replace the benefits of a balanced diet.



PHOTOS BY PETER N. FOX/ FAMILYFUN MAGAZINE

FEED A COLD, STARVE A FEVER

This one has been confounding folks for centuries. For one thing, half of us have it backward. Either way, "it's not good medicine," says Dr. David Donnersberger, a clinical instructor at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. The saying may have arisen hundreds of years ago, when people believed illness was the result of the body's being chilled (bringing on a cold) or overheated (a fever), and food was considered a fuel that could add more heat. In fact, says Dr. Donnersberger, "during any infection, the body needs increased intake of calories and fluid."

Bottom line: Feed a cold. And feed that fever too.

7

8

GOING OUTSIDE IN THE COLD WITH WET HAIR WILL MAKE YOU SICK

If you'd asked your doctor about this one a few years ago, she would have laughed and told you there was no correlation between the two. But a recent study in which half of the volunteers stuck their feet in ice water indicated that some people may be more susceptible to colds if they become chilled after exposure to a virus.

Bottom line: Although it's not definitive, your mom may have been right to nag you about wet hair. "If you've run your immune system down — chilling might be one way of doing that — and you've been exposed to a virus, you could be more likely to come down with a cold," says Diana Noah, Ph.D., a research virologist at Southern Research Institute.

5

SWALLOWED GUM STAYS IN YOUR BODY FOR SEVEN YEARS

Despite what you may have heard, the Hubba Bubba you swallowed as a kid didn't stick around for long. Although the main ingredient in gum is an indigestible synthetic base, "it moves through the digestive tract at the same rate as any other food and isn't likely to get stuck in your intestines," says Dr. Mitchell Shub, a gastroenterologist at Phoenix Children's Hospital.

Bottom line: Always try to spit out your gum, but if you accidentally swallow it, just remember that it too shall pass.

CHICKEN SOUP CAN CURE A COLD

Grandma may have been on to something. "Chicken soup has long been esteemed as a traditional remedy for colds," says integrative medicine expert Dr. Andrew Weil. "And a growing body of evidence suggests there's more than folk wisdom at work here." A 1978 study, for example, found that sipping hot liquids, such as soup, helps temporarily clear clogged nasal passages. More recent research showed that chicken soup has the power to slow neutrophils, the white blood cells that cause many of your nastiest cold symptoms.

Bottom line: It won't cure your cold, but a nice bowl of chicken soup might help you get over it faster — and help you feel better while you've got it.

9

READING IN DIM LIGHT OR SITTING TOO CLOSE TO THE TV WILL HURT YOUR EYES

You can breathe easy: all those hours spent under the covers with a book and a flashlight or nose-to-nose with your favorite cartoon characters haven't hurt your vision, and they won't hurt your child's either. "The eyes are remarkably durable for reading, seeing and tracking," says Dr. John Hagan, an ophthalmologist and editor of Missouri Medicine. And kids' eyes are even better than adults' at adjusting to different levels of light.

Bottom line: Both practices could cause some minor — but strictly temporary — eyestrain.



6

DON'T SWIM FOR AT LEAST 30 MINUTES AFTER EATING

When you eat, your body moves oxygen-rich blood to your digestive system; when you exercise, blood is redirected to your muscles. So, the notion goes, if you swim after downing that PB&J, your gut could be deprived of oxygen, which might lead to cramping and trouble swimming. However, "I've never seen a patient who reported this problem, and I've never read about it in a medical journal," says Dr. Jonathan Schreiber, a gastroenterologist at Baltimore's Mercy Medical Center.

Bottom line: While there's no evidence that swimming after eating has resulted in even a single drowning, it makes sense to avoid strenuous exercise on a full stomach.



10

Lifestyle | Gossip

Ed Sheeran is Spotify's most streamed artist of 2017

Ed Sheeran is Spotify's most streamed artist of 2017. The 'Castle on the Hill' hitmaker topped the list of artists on the streaming service, thanks to the release of his hit album '+'. 'Shape of You' was the top track streamed in both the UK and globally with 1.4 billion streams whilst '+' was the most streamed album at 3.1 billion streams. Ed's 'Castle on the Hill' and 'Galway Girl' also made the top five most streamed tracks in the UK as well as Luis Fonsi, Daddy Yankee and Justin Bieber's 'Despacito' and French Montana's 'Unforgettable'. And on the top streamed albums, Ed's previous release 'X' also sat at fifth position in the top five alongside Drake's 'More Life', The Weeknd's 'Starboy' and grime star Stormzy's 'Gang Signs & Prayer'. Stefan Blom, Spotify's Chief Content Officer, said: "Ed Sheeran absolutely dominated this year with the release of his record-breaking album, Divide. There is no doubt that 2017 was The Year of Ed Sheeran, and we are thrilled that so many millions of music fans have discovered, listened to, and shared his music on Spotify. Congratulations to Ed on an amazing achievement." Ed topped the most streamed UK artists worldwide list alongside the likes of Coldplay, Calvin Harris, Dua Lipa and ZAYN whilst in the female artists' category, Rihanna took home the prize for the third year in a row with Taylor Swift, Selena Gomez, Ariana Grande and Sia following closely behind. Drake, The Weeknd, Kendrick Lamar and Daddy Yankee were the most streamed male artists alongside Ed. Camila Cabello, Harry Styles and Liam Payne - who all went solo this year - were the top breakout artists for the year whilst Coldplay, Maroon 5 and Linkin Park - who tragically lost their frontman Chester Bennington this year - were the most streamed groups.



Camila Cabello had to 'prove' herself as an artist

Camila Cabello felt she had to "prove" to her collaborators that she was a real artist. The 'Havana' hitmaker felt it was important to make sure her fellow artists know that she was a great songwriter as well as a singer and says hitting the studio with the likes of Diplo and Shawn Mendes "taught her a lot". She said: "I just really wanted to prove to people that I had something to say and that I wasn't just a singer, that I was an artist, that I had a point of view and knew exactly the song that I wanted to write or the lyrics. The first few weeks were me really wanting to prove that to people and prove to myself too. People I was writing with were like, that's actually a really great lyric, or that's a really good idea, or oh yeah we should do that! That made me less and less insecure to the point where by the end of it, I feel like the last studio session I went to, I would come in and know exactly what I want and not be afraid to say it. And all of that is just experience and finding confidence in yourself. All the people I worked with were so nice and encouraging. It taught me a lot definitely." And the 20-year-old singer has recalled how she suffered from acid reflux when she hit the studio with Diplo. Speaking to MTV, she added: "I think in the beginning it was really nerve-wracking. I remember the first time I had a writing session with Diplo, I was so nervous that I got acid reflux. Emotionally, I can just like feel it in body so it was just like that for the first few months. So the first time I went into the studio with him, I was so nervous."



Noel Gallagher rules out Rock and Roll Hall of Fame 2019

Noel Gallagher says an Oasis reunion at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame isn't going to happen. The Britpop group's former guitarist has poured cold water on speculation that the 'Wonderwall' rockers are going to reform for the one-off gig. Noel was approached by bosses of the ceremony, who tried to persuade him to get the 'Some Might Say' hitmakers to perform and accept the opportunity to be inducted into the Hall of Fame at the 2019 event. However, the 50-year-old rocker says it will never happen because of his fractious relationship with his brother and the former group's frontman, Liam Gallagher, who he's barely spoken to since the band split up after a backstage bust-up at a festival in Paris in 2009, which resulted in Liam throwing his guitar around his older sibling's head. Noel said: "I've already been approached by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame... The fella from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame came to me and said, 'Do you know in two years you'll be eligible for the Hall of Fame?' I said, 'Is that right?' He said, 'Yes.' "And he started going on, and I said, 'Let me stop you there. I know what it is. I know what it entails, and it won't be happening, OK?' "He invited me down to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame itself and showed me all these exhibits of Oasis stuff. It's a great place and all that, but I won't be doing it, I don't think." The 'Holy Mountain' singer - who recently released his third solo LP 'Who Built The Moon?' - said that he thinks he is worthy of being inducted, but not his 44-year-old brother, who released his debut solo album 'As You Were' in October. Asked if he thinks Oasis deserve the accolade, he told Rolling Stone magazine: "I certainly think I do... There could be a little miniature of me somewhere - a tiny little thing with a wobbly head." It comes after their rivals Radiohead said they won't attend the ceremony in 2018 if they are chosen to be inducted. The 'Creep' group - made up of Thom Yorke, Jonny Greenwood, Colin Greenwood, Ed O'Brien and Philip Selway - are on the long list of nominees for next year's honourees, which will be narrowed to five inductees this month ahead of the show in April. However, a representative for the band - nominated alongside the likes of Rage Against The Machine, Kate Bush, Bon Jovi and Nina Simone - confirmed that they won't be going to the ceremony.



Paul McCartney's biggest fear



Sir Paul McCartney has had the same dream that he's flopping on stage for 50 years. The Beatles legend might have been attracting massive crowds to his shows for more than five decades, but the 75-year-old musician is left in "cold sweats" at the thought of turning up to perform and stadiums full of people getting up and leaving. McCartney - who has four adult children with late wife Linda and 13-year-old Beatrice with second spouse Heather Mills - admitted: "Ever since I started performing there is a dream I still have which is you are in a stadium playing with The Beatles or with this band and people start leaving and it is like 'OK what are we doing wrong' we try to pull out the big ones but they're still leaving. You wake in a cold sweat." The 'Come Together' hitmaker is currently in Australia for his sold-out 'One On One Tour'. It's the first time in nearly 25 years that McCartney has paid a visit to the country, the last time was for his 'The New World Tour' in 1993. The 'Four Five Seconds' star still looks forward to performing all of the iconic Liverpool band's classic hits as he likes to "rediscover" them each night. He's particularly fond of the uplifting reaction he gets from playing 1968's 'Hey Jude', which was originally called 'Hey Jules', and was written by McCartney to comfort John Lennon's son, Julian, during the late frontman's divorce from his mum Cynthia Lennon, which was granted in November 1968 on the grounds of Lennon's adultery with his now-widow Yoko Ono. On playing the tracks time and time again, McCartney - who with Ringo Starr are the only surviving members of the band, which was also comprised of the late George Harrison - told ABC: "It's like rediscovering them. When everyone is singing 'Hey Jude' it is like we all don't care about the bad news and are concentrating on this great little moment."

The Killers announce 2018 UK stadium shows

The Killers have announced two huge UK stadium shows for 2018. The 'Somebody Told Me' hitmakers - made up of Brandon Flowers, Dave Keuning, Mark Stoermer and Ronnie Vannucci, Jr. - will take to the stage at Swansea's Liberty Stadium on June 23, 2018 in Wales and then head to north west England to Bolton's Macron Stadium for a show on July 13, 2018. Confirming the news on their official Twitter account, the group wrote: "Double the trouble, twice the fun. We've added two more shows in the UK. Tickets on sale Friday (sic) Tickets for both gigs will be available from 9.30am on Friday. This comes shortly after The Killers played two dates at London's The O2 on November 27 and 28. Earlier this year, the group performed a secret set at Glastonbury, taking to the stage in the John Peel tent on the final day of the annual music festival at Worthy Farm in Somerset, south west England. Speaking to the crowd, Brandon said: "It's good to be here. They say you play the John Peel Stage twice in your career - once on the way up, and once on the way down. It's great to be back." They wowed those fans lucky enough to be in attendance with hits including 'Human', 'All These Things That I've Done' and 'When We Were Young', while also introducing new single 'The Man' by saying: "This one is for the ladies." The Killers also played British Summer Time Hyde Park in London earlier this summer before going on a 12-date UK tour in November, which included their two O2 shows.



John on Gallagher's Beatles style

Sir Elton John has told Noel Gallagher his new album reminds him of The Beatles. The former Oasis musician is a guest on the latest edition of the music legend's Beats 1 radio show 'Rocket Hour' and Elton was not afraid to tell Noel just what he thinks of 'Who Built The Moon'. Elton, 70, told Noel: "I can hear certain things on this album that you probably wouldn't. I can hear a bit of T-Rex. There's a bit of Steve Miller I can hear. I can hear Beatles things obviously. But it's all things that I love." A long-time criticism of Oasis' music by some is that it is too derivative of The Beatles. Overall, the 'Rocket Man' star is very positive of Noel's new record, telling him he can't stop playing it. Elton said: "It's one of these albums that you just can't stop playing and it makes you happy." The 50-year-old High Flying Birds frontman agreed, saying he wanted it to be a positive album. Noel said: "Yeah that was my overriding feeling about it. When I finished the thing it was like, there's an overriding sense of joy in it which I've been saying in all the interviews is almost revolutionary these days because if you're a guy playing a guitar in a band you're almost obliged to write about the news. And the news, as we all know, is boring, it's the same old same old. To get that amount of joy in a record is unique these days I think." The 'Wonderwall' star recently claimed it was easy to write sad songs. The 'Don't Look Back In Anger' has largely avoided writing sad records and has instead focused his material on "joy and togetherness". Asked why he has avoided the songwriter cliché, Noel said: "Because it's easy. It's easy to write sad songs. It's very difficult pulling off this magic trick of joy and togetherness. And, you know, Oasis had it, where you go to an Oasis gig, you feel good about yourself. "U2 have got this thing where, if you go to one of their gigs, not only do you feel good about yourself, but you feel good about the next person too. It's difficult to do, which is why many people don't want to try to do it because it can be really cheesy."

Isle of Wight Festival headliners announced

Isle of Wight Festival will be headlined by Liam Gallagher, The Killers, Depeche Mode and Kasabian for its 50th anniversary. The prestigious Newport event returns in June 2018 to celebrate half a century as one of the UK's biggest music extravaganzas, and organizers have announced a stacked lineup befitting of the occasion. The four acts have been named as headliners, with Kasabian rounding off the Friday night on June 22, while Depeche Mode and Liam Gallagher will have joint billing the following evening, with The Killers concluding the festival on June 24. Kasabian last headlined the event in 2011, having first played it four years previously, and they admitted the history of the site means a great deal to them. They said: "We're hugely honored to play at the Isle of Wight Festival. It's kind of a big deal Jimi Hendrix played in the 70s, 50 years on and we're playing it! That's pretty phenomenal, thanks for having us back! We promise Friday night will be the one!" Meanwhile, further names have been confirmed with Blossoms, The Script, James Bay and Van Morrison all part of the first announcement. Isle of Wight Festival promoter John Giddings described the milestone as a "special year" for the event, which he revived in 2002 more than 30 years after the Isle of Wight County Council Act 1971 prevented 'overnight open-air gatherings of more than 5,000 people' without a special license from the council. He said: "This year's line-up brings together the best bands of the moment. This is a special year as it celebrates 50 years since the festival's first incarnation so it's fantastic to celebrate with returning artists and those appearing for the first time."



Lifestyle | Gossip

John Boyega wants Yoda origin story

John Boyega wants to see a Yoda origin story. The 25-year-old actor made his first outing as Stormtrooper-turned-Resistance fighter Finn in 2015's 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' and will reprise this role in 'The Last Jedi'. Recently Disney and Lucasfilm have announced they are working with Rian Johnson - who helmed the eighth installment of the hit sci-fi franchise - on a brand new trilogy separate from the current Skywalker saga and more spin-offs are planned. Boyega believes there are some great "fan theories" that could be used as story ideas for the big screen. Speaking to Collider, Boyega said: "I think they need to go back to the Old Republic, how they do in the games, and discover what's going on there. 'There's some cool stuff in the 'Star Wars' universe they can use, there's cool fan theories they can use that could be part of the movies too, I mean, why not? Personally, I want to see a Yoda origin story.' Yoda is the fan favorite, tiny green Jedi Master who appeared in two of the three original trilogy films and all the prequels. The character died during 'Episode VI: Return of the Jedi' but was seen as a Jedi-Force ghost alongside Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker at the end of the film. Yoda has also appeared in the animated TV spin-off series 'Star Wars: The Clone Wars'. The 'Star Wars' universe has already been expanded away from the main movies with 'Rogue One: A Star Wars Story' and the upcoming Han Solo spin-off. Also there are reports circulating of an Obi-Wan Kenobi film in the works and Boyega admitted he would love to see that film made. He said: "I'm there, I want to know what he was like, I want to know where he originated from in terms of him being a character being young."



Christie inspired by Princess Leia

Gwendoline Christie was inspired by Princess Leia. The 39-year-old actress joined the 'Star Wars' franchise as villain Captain Phasma in 'The Force Awakens' back in 2015 and will reprise her role as the First Order stormtrooper commander this December in the eighth installment 'The Last Jedi'. When she was growing up, Gwendoline admits the character Leia - who was played by the late Carrie Fisher - "stayed" with her as she didn't fit in with the "homogenized view" of women on presented on screen in the 1980s. Speaking to The Hollywood Reporter, Christie said: "I watched TV and film obsessively from such a young age but [Leia] really stayed with me through my formative years. She doesn't care what people think and isn't prepared to be told what to do ... That was really instrumental to me as someone who didn't feel like I fit in that homogenized view of what a woman is supposed to be and there was inspiration there." 'The Last Jedi' marks Fisher's last outing as the iconic character after the actress tragically died last December at the age of 60. Recently, Christie revealed she was overwhelmed with shyness when she joined the franchise and came face-to-face with her idol. She said: "Princess Leia spoke to me ... she felt different, she was smart and she was strong. When I meet someone I admire like that, I keep myself as far away as possible from the person, you know, don't bother them, eyes to the floor - I am overcome with shyness." But Christie found Fisher to be an "incredibly warm" person and was able to relax more around her. She added: "Everyone around her felt electrified by her wit and humanity. She was so open about her struggles with mental illness. The sheer force of personality is ravishing."



Sir Ridley Scott to make AI led Alien movie

Sir Ridley Scott wants to do more 'Alien' movies but with more focus on artificial intelligence. The 80-year-old filmmaker cemented his status as a sci-fi legend with his breakthrough 1979 movie and also went on to helm 1982 cult classic of the genre 'Blade Runner'. After having no involvement with the three 'Alien' sequels, Scott revisited the cinematic universe in 2012 with prequel 'Prometheus', which explored the origins of the human race and the deadly Xenomorph creature, and released follow-up film 'Alien: Covenant' in May this year. Scott has previously confirmed he will making a sequel to his last movie which will act as a bridge to the original 'Alien' and he has now spilled that the story will focus on dangerous Artificial Intelligence beings. Speaking about the future of his prequel series to 'Entertainment Weekly', Scott said: "We are [going to make another], we are. I think what we have to do is gradually drift away from the alien stuff. People say, 'you need more alien, you need more face pulling, need more chest bursting', so I put a lot of that in 'Covenant' and it fitted nicely. But I think if you go again you need to start finding another solution that's more interesting. I think AI is becoming much more dangerous and therefore more interesting." [Michael Fassbender was an AI. Ian Holm 'Alien' was an AI; Roy Batty 'Blade Runner' was an AI; so was Rachael 'Blade Runner']. 'Alien: Covenant' follows members on board the colony ship 'Covenant' discover what they think to be an uncharted paradise. However, while there they meet David (Michael Fassbender) - the synthetic survivor of the doomed Prometheus expedition. The world soon turns dark and dangerous when a hostile alien-life form forces the crew into a deadly fight for survival. The acclaimed 'Alien' was followed by director James Cameron's all-action romp 'Aliens' in 1986, David Fincher's atmospheric 'Alien 3' in 1992 and Jean-Pierre Jeunet's much derided 'Alien: Resurrection' in 1997 - written by 'Avengers' creator Joss Whedon. Two panned 'Alien vs. Predator' spin-offs came in the Noughties, inspired by a video game series which pitted the Xenomorph against the Predator intergalactic hunter - a being established in a separate series of movies which began in 1987 with Arnold Schwarzenegger in the lead role.



TARANTINO TO DIRECT STAR TREK MOVIE



Quentin Tarantino wants to direct the next 'Star Trek' movie. The 'Pulp Fiction' director has reportedly shared his idea for the next Starship Enterprise adventure with J.J. Abrams, who is said to have agreed to produce the film if it works out. According to Deadline, Tarantino is keen to take the helm of the 'Star Trek' franchise and has come up with a storyline for the next movie. J.J. - who helmed the last two 'Star Trek' films for Paramount, but is now busy working on the 'Star Wars' franchise - has apparently agreed for Tarantino to meet with a team of writers to take his idea to the next level. The 'Kill Bill' filmmaker tends to write and direct his own original ideas on the big screen, most recently taking on the Western genre with his last two films 'Django Unchained' and 'The Hateful Eight'. He has worked with franchises on the small screen, directing episodes of 'CSI' and 'ER'. Tarantino is currently prepping a movie about Charles Manson, which he had begun work on before the cult leader died in November this year. Margot Robbie and Jennifer Lawrence are among the actresses he is said to have approached to play Sharon Tate - the pregnant wife of director Roman Polanski - who was stabbed to death by members of the Manson Family in August 1969. Tom Cruise, Leonardo DiCaprio and Brad Pitt are all said to have been in discussions for two male lead roles.

Andy Serkis: The Last Jedi is a powerful and emotional story

Andy Serkis was blown away by 'Star Wars: The Last Jedi' because it is such an "emotional" story. The 53-year-old actor plays Supreme Leader Snoke in the new trilogy in the sci-fi saga and will feature a lot more in the upcoming eighth movie - helmed by Rian Johnson - than he did in 'The Force Awakens'. Serkis admits when saw the final cut of the movie he was stunned by how moving the story is on the big screen. Speaking at a press event in Los Angeles, Serkis said: "I was so caught up with it not least because it was really intimate and very emotional and I wasn't expecting that at all. It's very very powerful, and it touches you. What Rian's done incredibly is make this dance tonally, between these great epic moments, and hilarious antics, literally flipping on a dime and then going right through into the heart of these beautiful characters and you really care." Filmmaker Johnson also confirmed that the film will be darker than the previous movies and said it is "intense". He said: "I think we've been kind of trained to expect it will be a little darker and obviously it looks a little darker. We're going to go to some intense places in the movie but I hope also it's fun." 'The Last Jedi' is set directly after 2015's 'The Force Awakens' and will show Mark Hamill return as Jedi Master Luke Skywalker - who briefly appeared at the end of the last film - to train mysterious force sensitive character Rey. The film marks the last outing of Carrie Fisher as the iconic General Leia Organa after she tragically died last December. — Bang Showbiz



Sam Rockwell needs laughs on set



Sam Rockwell think you've "got to have some levity" when working on a heavy topic. The 49-year-old actor stars alongside Frances McDormand, Woody Harrelson and Peter Dinklage in the new dark comedy movie by Martin McDonagh 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri', which tackles the tale of the kidnapping and murder of a teenage girl. However, despite the heavy topic, Rockwell admitted he likes to keep the mood on set light and said he always needs to "have some laughs" when he's filming. Speaking to The Hollywood Reporter, Rockwell said: "I think when you're doing a heavy topic, you've got to have some laughs, don't you think? I mean, you've got to have some levity in between. It's too heavy for 12, 14 hours. I go home and watch 'The Simpsons' or something." The film follows months after the murder of teenager Angela (Kathryn Newton) and there is still no culprit so her mother Mildred Hayes (McDormand) makes a bold move by painting three signs leading into the town with controversial messages directed at police chief William Willoughby (Harrelson). When Willoughby's second-in-command Officer Jason Dixon (Rockwell) gets involved, the battle is only exacerbated. Newton, 20, also admitted she felt the pressure to be at the top of her game because of who her castmates were. Speaking previously to BANG Showbiz in October, she said: "I'm a huge fan of everybody in the movie. I love all of them so when you get to be in a movie you're like, 'OK I better not mess up.' That's how I acted. I couldn't pass this opportunity I would have done anything." 'Game of Thrones' star Dinklage also revealed that he knew that the script was going to be fantastic. He said: "It's Martin McDonagh. I knew when I read the script it was one of the best scripts I've ever read."

Singer 'sacked' from Bohemian Rhapsody

Bryan Singer has confirmed he is no longer directing 'Bohemian Rhapsody', claiming 20th Century Fox refused to give him time off to look after an unwell parent. The 52-year-old filmmaker has claimed his services were "terminated" by the studio after he asked for some time off to go back to the US to deal with "pressing health matters concerning one of my parents". In a statement to the Hollywood Reporter, Singer said: "I wanted nothing more than to be able to finish this project and help honor the legacy of Freddie Mercury and Queen, but Fox would not permit me to do so because I needed to temporarily put my health, and the health of my loved ones, first. "'Bohemian Rhapsody' is a passion project of mine. With fewer than three weeks to shoot remaining, I asked Fox for some time off so I could return to the US to deal with pressing health matters concerning one of my parents. This was a very taxing experience, which ultimately took a serious toll on my own health. Unfortunately, the studio was unwilling to accommodate me and terminated my services. This was not my decision and it was beyond my control." Singer has denied speculation his exit was down to "a dispute" with lead star Rami Malek - who will play the band's late frontman Freddie in the motion picture - but admitted they did have "creative differences" on set at times. He added: "Rumors that my unexpected departure from the film was sparked by a dispute I had with Rami Malek are not true. "While, at times, we did have creative differences on set, Rami and I successfully put those differences behind us and continued to work on the film together until just prior to Thanksgiving." 20th Century Fox confirmed Singer had departed the role, but didn't say why. They said in a statement: "Bryan Singer is no longer the director of 'Bohemian Rhapsody'" The studio revealed over the weekend that filming for the upcoming



movie had been temporarily suspended due to a personal "health matter" affecting Singer. They said: "Twentieth Century Fox Film has temporarily halted production on 'Bohemian Rhapsody' due to the unexpected unavailability of Bryan Singer due to a personal health matter concerning Bryan and his family... Bryan hopes to get back to work on the film soon after the holidays." 'Bohemian Rhapsody' will chart the rock band's story up to their appearance at the Live Aid charity concert in 1985. As well as Malek, Ben Hardy will portray drummer Roger Taylor, Joe Mazzello is in line to star as bassist John Deacon and Gwilym Lee will play lead guitarist Brian May.

Lifestyle | Features



This undated image provided by the National Park Service shows Yosemite Falls in Yosemite National Park in California in winter.



Skiers on a lift at Yosemite National Park in California in winter. — AP photos

Ho, Ho, Ho, Yosemite

A Magical Winter Destination

Yosemite National Park might not seem like an ideal winter destination, particularly if you're from a part of the country where you'd like to trade in road salt for rim salt on your margarita and leave the words "wind chill" behind.

But Yosemite in winter is magical, as I discovered last year on a trip there with my family just after Christmas. There's snowboarding and skiing, both downhill and cross-country, as well as sledding (pick up a plastic saucer at a sporting goods store on the way). You can also ice skate at a rink in the shadow of the famed granite formation known as Half Dome. Park rangers also lead snowshoe walks (free with \$3 suggested donation).

Many of Yosemite Valley's shops and restaurants remain open. And at the Majestic Hotel, one of the country's most storied national park lodges, there are holiday decorations and a

seven-course dinner with costumed performers called the Bracebridge Dinner. The wood-and-stone hotel, formerly known as the Ahwahnee, opened in 1927 and has hosted everyone from Presidents John F. Kennedy and Barack Obama to Queen Elizabeth and Walt Disney. Winter can also be a time to enjoy the park's scenery without summer's crowds. But the weather can pose challenges as well. Here are some details.



This undated photo provided by Yosemite Hospitality shows a scene from the annual holiday-themed Bracebridge Dinner at the Majestic Hotel in Yosemite National Park in California.

The scenery

Naturalist John Muir once wrote that Yosemite was "full of God's thoughts." Driving in, thick forests of snow-dusted pine and fir trees block your view at first of the park's famous granite monoliths towering over Yosemite Valley. But there's nothing like that first glimpse. El Capitan rises 3,600 feet (914 meters) from the valley floor, more than twice



This undated photo shows the Majestic Hotel in Yosemite National Park in California in winter.

the height of the Empire State Building. On the other side of the valley is Half Dome, rising 4,700 feet (1,400 meters) off the valley floor.

In winter, the options for seeing these landmarks from anywhere other than the valley are limited, as some roads in the park are closed until the snow thaws. The cables that climbers use to ascend Half Dome are also removed for the season.

But there are walking tours led by National Park Service rangers that explain how these huge chunks of granite came to be. They're not just the result of erosion, but were also formed by melting glaciers and forces under the ground that over the millions of years pushed them higher and higher. It's a way to understand the massive forces that formed the earth itself. Visitors can also follow the footsteps of famed photographer Ansel Adams, who made his home here for a quarter century. You can even snap your own pictures from where

Adams stood when he took some of his most iconic photographs. Classes cost about \$100 but the Ansel Adams Gallery also offers free camera walks on certain days (tours fill up; reserve ahead).

Getting there

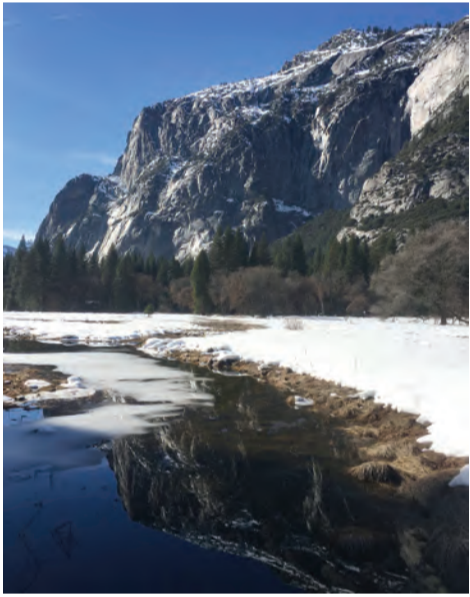
Getting there can be a challenge on roads that are potentially snowy and icy. Car rental places may tell you - as they told me - that snow chains aren't necessary. They are, to be blunt, lying. "California law says if you are entering a chain control area, you have to carry chains," said Scott Gediman, a park ranger and a public affairs officer in Yosemite. "Everybody needs to have chains, even if you have four-wheel drive."

Rangers don't enjoy checking car trunks for chains and cables but they do it and they will send you out of the park if you don't have them. The good news is that chains are not that

expensive, costing as little as about \$40, and can be purchased at any auto supply store nearby. Snow chain technology has improved dramatically, making it far easier to put the chains on than it used to be. But if you still feel like you can't do it, there are services along the road that will put the chains on for you for \$30 or so. Yosemite Valley is about 210 miles (338 km) from San Francisco. But if the winter drive sounds intimidating, use the YARTS bus service which runs year-round between Yosemite and Merced, a city located about 130 miles (210 km) from San Francisco. —AP



A cross-country skier in Yosemite National Park in California in winter with the famous Half Dome formation in the background.



Yosemite Valley in Yosemite National Park in California in winter.

Box office top 20

'Coco,' 'Justice League' stay on top

With no major new releases hitting theaters, Pixar's acclaimed "Coco" again topped the North American box office with \$27.5 million in its second week of release, according to final figures yesterday. Strong family films such as "Coco" and Lionsgate's "Wonder," along with an expanding list of Oscar contenders like "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" and "Lady Bird," helped drive the box office to its best post-Thanksgiving weekend in five years.

The top 20 movies at US and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday by comScore:

1. "Coco," Disney, \$27,533,304, 3,987 locations, \$6,906 average, \$110,108,708, 2 Weeks.
2. "Justice League," Warner Bros., \$16,651,104, 3,820 locations, \$4,359 average, \$197,407,025, 3 Weeks.
3. "Wonder," Lionsgate, \$12,147,182, 3,449 locations, \$3,522 average, \$87,679,805, 3 Weeks.
4. "Thor: Ragnarok," Disney, \$9,885,936, 3,148 locations, \$3,140 average, \$291,633,535, 5 Weeks.
5. "Daddy's Home 2," Paramount, \$7,572,390, 3,403 locations, \$2,225 average, \$82,886,836, 4 Weeks.
6. "Murder on the Orient Express," 20th Century Fox, \$6,767,002, 3,201 locations, \$2,114 average, \$84,839,515, 4 Weeks.
7. "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing Missouri," Fox Searchlight, \$4,396,537, 1,430 locations, \$3,075 average, \$13,537,057, 4 Weeks.
8. "Lady Bird," A24, \$4,291,590, 1,194 locations, \$3,594 average, \$16,837,041, 5 Weeks.
9. "The Star," Sony, \$4,078,423, 2,822 locations, \$1,445 average, \$27,358,076, 3 Weeks.
10. "A Bad Moms Christmas," STX Entertainment, \$3,385,484, 2,251 locations, \$1,504 average, \$64,737,307, 5 Weeks.
11. "Roman J. Israel, Esq.," Sony, \$1,958,702, 1,669 locations, \$1,174 average, \$9,526,792, 3 Weeks.
12. "The Disaster Artist," A24, \$1,211,345, 19 locations, \$63,755 average, \$1,211,345, 1 Week.



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Jason Momoa, from left, Gal Gadot, Ezra Miller and Ray Fisher in a scene from "Justice League." — AP photos

13. "The Man Who Invented Christmas," Bleeker Street, \$882,836, 673 locations, \$1,312 average, \$3,170,258, 2 Weeks.
14. "Titanic 20th Anniversary," Paramount, \$438,602, 87 locations, \$5,041 average, \$438,602, 1 Week.
15. "Blade Runner 2049," Warner Bros., \$401,403, 515 locations, \$779 average, \$90,785,165, 9 Weeks.
16. "Junior Major," Entertainment One Films, \$345,710, 87 locations, \$3,974 average, \$1,198,440, 2 Weeks.
17. "Call Me By Your Name," Sony Pictures Classics, \$295,561, 4 locations, \$73,890 average, \$922,456, 2 Weeks.
18. "Marshall," Open Road, \$247,772, 651 locations, \$381 average, \$9,150,000, 8 Weeks.
19. "Jigsaw," Lionsgate, \$222,803, 301 locations, \$740 average, \$37,603,791, 6 Weeks.
20. "Loving Vincent," Good Deed Entertainment, \$213,066, 162 locations, \$1,315 average, \$5,503,561, 11 Weeks. — AP



In this image released by Disney-Pixar, character Hector, voiced by Gael Garcia Bernal, left, and Miguel, voiced by Anthony Gonzalez, appear in a scene from the animated film, "Coco."

K-pop titans BTS break into US Top 40



Boy band BTS, pop mega-stars in South Korea known for their dance moves and social media prowess, yesterday broke into the Top 40 on the US singles chart for the first time. "Mic Drop" debuted at number 28, driven by a particularly strong showing in downloads, on the Billboard Hot 100 chart for the week through Thursday. The band incorporates more R&B and hip-hop into its sound than most K-pop groups. "Mic Drop," driven by a dark percussion line, features a contribution by star New York rapper Designer and mixing by leading electronic dance producer Steve Aoki.

The song appears on the EP "Love Yourself: Her," which earlier this year hit number seven on the US album chart, the highest ever for a Korean act. Formed in 2013 by the Big Hit Entertainment company, the seven-member boy band has quickly become a top act in South Korea, Japan and other Asian markets. The group is a constant social media presence in tech-savvy South Korea. Guinness World

Records recently said BTS had more "Twitter engagements" than any other music group, defined as the average number of retweets.

The group has been seeking a greater presence in the United States, the world's largest music market, and performed last month on the televised American Music Awards. But BTS has yet to reach the global viral proportions of fellow Korean star Psy's "Gangnam Style," whose 2012 video with its equestrian-themed dance routine was the first to hit one billion views on YouTube.

"Gangnam Style" controversially only reached number two on the Billboard Hot 100 — before tracking firm Nielsen Music made changes to give greater weight to YouTube views. Only one Asian-language track has ever made it to number one on the Hot 100 Japanese singer Kyu Sakamoto's "Ue o Muite Arukou," marketed to English speakers by the unconnected title "Sukiyaki," in 1963. —AFP

Bollywood bids farewell to Indian film legend Shashi Kapoor



In this May 10, 2015 file photo, Bollywood actors, clockwise from left, Karisma Kapoor, Ranbir Kapoor, Rekha and Neetu Singh pose for a selfie with Veteran Bollywood actor Shashi Kapoor, sitting, at a ceremony where Shashi Kapoor was conferred the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, in Mumbai, India. — AP/AFP photos

Bollywood stars paid their last respects to screen legend Shashi Kapoor at his funeral yesterday as tributes poured in for the multiple award-winning actor who died after a long illness. Veteran Indian cinema icon Amitabh Bachchan, who starred alongside Kapoor in several hit Hindi films of the 1970s, and actor Shah Rukh Khan were among mourners at the ceremony in Mumbai, the home of Bollywood. Kapoor appeared in more than 150 films and was a member of Indian cinema's most famous acting dynasty. He died on Monday aged 79 after a years-long battle with kidney disease.

Actors and directors from across the Hindi movie industry paid tribute to Kapoor who was one of the first Indian actors to work abroad, appearing in several Merchant Ivory films. He often played the role of romantic action hero and was known for his suave good looks. In a blog post yesterday Bachchan described Kapoor as an "incredibly handsome man" with a "devastating smile complementing the twinkle in his eyes". Shashi was the youngest son of Prithviraj Kapoor, a pioneer of Hindi film and theatre. His eldest brother Raj Kapoor, who died in 1988, was also a famous Hindi movie star. Shashi's most memorable roles were in such films as "Jab Jab Phool Khile" (Whenever The Flowers Bloom, 1965), "Kabhi Kabhie" (Sometimes, 1976), and "Kalyug" (Age of Downfall, 1981).



This file photo taken on October 4, 2015 shows Indian Bollywood actor Shashi Kapoor receiving a lifetime achievement award at the closing ceremony of the Jagran Film Festival in Mumbai.

He was also adored for his role opposite 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 a mother). Shashi appeared in the Merchant Ivory films "The Householder" (1963), "Heat and Dust" (1983) and "Shakespeare Wallah" (1965). In 1972 he starred alongside actress Simi Garewal in the American film "Siddhartha". Garewal said she was "deeply saddened" by Kapoor's death. "The last of that generation of Kapoors is gone. A gentleman and friend is gone. All that remain are his memories," read a post on her Twitter page.

Acclaimed director Karan Johar described Kapoor as "the most charming and enigmatic actor ever... a gentleman movie star!" "His legacy in film and theatre is exceptional... thoughts and prayers with the family... his work will always live on..." Johar wrote on Twitter. "Innumerable Bollywood dreams came to life watching your iconic dialogue, 'Mere paas maa hai'," tweeted actor Akshay Kumar, adding: "Your tremendous contribution to cinema will always be remembered. RIP #ShashiKapoor ji". Shashi Kapoor was married to English actress Jennifer Kendal for 26 years until her death in 1984.

He won numerous acting prizes and in 2011 was honored with the Padma Bhushan, one of India's highest civilian awards. Shashi's nephew Rishi Kapoor and Rishi's son, Ranbir, both also famous actors, attended yesterday's funeral held in unseasonal rain brought by Cyclone Ockhi off India's west coast.—AFP



Friends and relatives carry the body of Bollywood actor Shashi Kapoor during his funeral in Mumbai, India yesterday.



This file photo taken on May 10, 2015 shows Indian veteran Bollywood actor Shashi Kapoor (left) and his daughter Sanjana Kapoor interacting during the presentation of the 'Dadasaheb Phalke Award' for his contribution to Indian cinema at Prithvi Theater in Mumbai.



Indian Bollywood actors Sanjay Dutt (left) and Anil Kapoor (right) attend the funeral of Indian veteran Bollywood actor Shashi Kapoor.



Indian Bollywood actress Sanjana Kapoor (left), with her son Hamir, attends the funeral of her father veteran Bollywood actor Shashi Kapoor.



Indian Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan.



Indian Bollywood actor Jackie Shroff.



Indian Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan attends the funeral of Indian veteran Bollywood actor Shashi Kapoor in Mumbai.



Indian Bollywood actor Karan Kapoor.



Indian Bollywood actor Kunal Kapoor attends the funeral of his father Shashi Kapoor.



Indian Bollywood actors Naseeruddin Shah (right) with his wife Ratna Pathak.

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2017



This photograph shows Pakistani horse riders charging across a course holding a lance to pick up pegs at a tent-pegging competition during an annual festival at the village of Kot Fateh Khan in Attock district in Punjab province. — AFP photos

Jousting for support, Pakistan's bid to keep cavalry sport alive



A Pakistani horse rider charging across a course holding a lance to pick up pegs at a tent-pegging competition.



Pakistani traditional drummers performing at a tent-pegging competition.



Pakistani horse riders holding lances that are used to pick up pegs at a tent-pegging competition.



Pakistani horse riders charging across a course holding a lance to pick up pegs at a tent-pegging competition.

Festooned with garlands and colorful bridles, turbaned riders mounted on horseback in full gallop lower their lances at tiny wooden blocks as they practice the centuries-old tradition of tent-pegging in Pakistan. Less than a two-hour drive from the capital Islamabad, thousands gather at a freshly ploughed grounds to watch the equine festival in a competition that can see riders tossed from their mounts, breaking bones or worse during the dangerous spectacle.

Tent-pegging competitions have been held in the subcontinent for hundreds of years but now have largely been reduced to the odd festival, with Pakistan's most populous Punjab province hosting the majority of such events. Diehard fans of the cavalry sport worry that the tradition is on its last legs, in the absence of official support and a lack of popularity among the young, urban Pakistani masses. But in northern Punjab's Kot Fateh Khan, fans show up droves to cheer on the brazen riders, decked out in pristine white tunics and multi-coloured waistcoats on freshly polished saddles.

As announcers wail into microphones, riders with lances spur their steeds into a sprint toward small wooden blocks wedged in the earth, aiming to pierce the targets with their jousts. "This festival has taken place

“ The love of breeding horses has been... reduced to a few families ”

from the 18th century," Malik Atta Muhammad Khan tells AFP after taking a stab at a wooden block from horseback. Khan, who claims his great, great grandfather "eight generations back" once ruled Kabul, says over one thousand horses will

participate at the week-long festival. But despite the abundance of horses, participants fear their beloved sport is in dire need of fresh blood, as the number of breeders raising steeds and riders training for the competition continues to wane nationwide.

"The love of breeding horses has been... reduced to a few families," says Haroon Bandial, a World Cup gold medalist. "Tent pegging is played a lot in Punjab, but it's limited to only three to four families in KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhawa), a couple of families in Balochistan and in Sindh also one family or so," he adds, citing the enormous cost of raising horses as a barrier to entry. Aficionados of the sport say they begin training the horses at 16 months of age, a process which can take over two years to complete, while riders need at least three years in the saddle to prepare. However, Khan remains hopeful that the tradition still has the potential to grow. "There are many events compared to previous years," he explains. "Tent pegging is growing in every village and many people have started to take new horses." — AFP



Pakistani horse riders holding lances that are used to pick up pegs at a tent-pegging competition during an annual festival at the village of Kot Fateh Khan in Attock district in Punjab province.