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Amir renames Sheikh Jaber as PM, tasks him to form Cabinet

MPs call to appoint competent ministers to avoid disputes

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Two days after the government's resignation, HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah yesterday asked the outgoing prime minister to form the new Cabinet. HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah submitted his Cabinet's resignation to the Amir on Monday following a political dispute with the National Assembly after 10 lawmakers filed a no-confidence motion against a minister after a lengthy grilling over alleged financial and administrative violations.

Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and acting Information Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, who was grilled, categorically denied the allegations. The Cabinet stepped down after a large number of MPs declared their support for the no-confidence motion, which meant he could have been voted out of office.

The new Cabinet will be the 35th since Kuwait's parliamentary life began in 1962 and is Sheikh Jaber's seventh government since he was appointed to the post in Dec 2011. No deadline has been given for the formation of the Cabinet amid reports that it could take longer than normal. Even before Sheikh Jaber was asked to form the Cabinet, lawmakers had emphasized the need for a better selection of ministers and a change of the previous methodology to pick up competent and efficient ministers to avoid disputes with MPs.

Several lawmakers had insisted the need to take into account the fast and grave developments in the region and the risks that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) could collapse over the Qatar rift. Yesterday however, MPs and groups stepped up the pressure. The liberal National Democratic Alliance (NDA) warned that retaining Sheikh Mohammad in his previous post or in any other portfolio will trigger a fresh political crisis. The group urged the prime minister not to aim to appoint ministers who represent various wings of the ruling family or appoint more members from the ruling family rather than competent ministers. It warned that this will lead to more problems.

Opposition lawmaker Mubarak Al-Hajraf warned that if the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh is retained in the Cabinet, he will file to grill her, adding that her grilling is ready. Meanwhile, MP Safa Al-Hashem said yesterday she has proposed to form a high-level delegation comprising the speakers of parliaments in the GCC to meet GCC leaders in a bid to mediate a settlement over the Qatar crisis. She said that she is confident that Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem will embrace the proposal through the Assembly's foreign relations committee.

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah after reappointing him as prime minister yesterday. — KUNA

Nakba Balfour

From the editor's desk

By Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan
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Sir Arthur James Balfour is a name forgotten by many, but will forever ring in the memories of Palestinians. He served as foreign secretary in David George Lloyd's government of the United Kingdom between 1916 and 1919. On Nov 2, 1917, Balfour signed a single paper that arguably destabilized the Middle East for the next 100 years. The paper I speak of is known around the world as the Balfour Declaration. It was an official letter from the British government addressed to Lord Walter Rothschild, who was a prominent leader of the Jewish community in Britain and the Zionist Federation, whose goals were to create a Jewish state. The declaration read:

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by the Cabinet.

His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Signed,
Arthur Balfour

On the centennial of the Balfour Declaration, British Prime Minister Theresa May stated that she would celebrate the occasion with "pride". She will also attend an exclusive event that celebrates the promise that paved the way for the creation of apartheid Israel and rendered millions of Palestinians stateless.

Here is a land that was inhabited by Palestinian Arabs, was ruled by the Ottomans and promised by the British to the Zionist Federation as a homeland for the Jews without consulting a single Palestinian. Other than the fact the British government had no right to make such a declaration, it was absolutely disgraceful to see that letter failed to even mention the Palestinians by name and was rather shy by just addressing the 90 percent of the inhabitants of Palestine as 'the non-Jewish communities in Palestine'.

Even though the declaration may seem to promise civil and religious rights, it completely negated the political rights of Palestinians to self-determination. The omission of Palestinian rights created sustenance for Zionist Jews to completely ignore the rights of Palestinians living in the holy land. From the 'youm al nakba' (the day of catastrophe) till this day, Israel continues to forcefully displace Palestinians from their homes and replace them with Jewish settlers migrating from all around the world.

Israel continues to break several UN resolutions and human rights laws while it continues to be supported by the so-called 'free world'. As the Arabic saying goes, 'Those who are above the law will always break the law', so why would Israel feel the need to abide by any rules or even be trusted to resolve the issue of Palestine if their actions pass without consequences? And if this is the result of sympathy for the victims of the Holocaust, why are the Palestinians paying the bill for the crimes of previous Western governments against the Jews?

We are at a stage where we no longer believe that things can go back to what they were before the declaration. However, it is time for a real solution to stop the atrocities that the Palestinian people are suffering every day of their lives. Instead of celebrating and congratulating the Israel premier, the British government has a moral responsibility to set things straight and apply pressure on the Israeli government to finally give peace and justice to both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

It's high time that the world recognizes the state of Palestine as an independent home of Palestinian people and as the honorable British MP Ms Philippa Whitford said, "You cannot have a two-state solution without fully recognizing both states."

MoH delays decision to hire Indian nurses; duped workers with fake tickets arrested

KUWAIT/MUMBAI: A decision was made to delay the hiring of nurses from India until further regulations and rules are set, Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi said yesterday. Speaking to the press after meeting the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sunil Jain, Harbi said that the decision was made after discussions on the issue were held with the ambassador.

The health ministry is interested to hire the best of the best medical technicians and nurses from India, and this decision was taken accordingly, said the minister. The Kuwaiti and Indian governments will further discuss the issue and announcements will be revealed soon, said the minister.

Separately, Mumbai police arrested 30 men trying to fly to Kuwait on fake tickets and visas and are looking for the unlicensed recruitment agents who charged them 100,000 rupees ($1,500) to arrange their travel for jobs in the state. The men from Uttar Pradesh state in northern India were arrested on Tuesday when they tried checking in at the airport with fake tickets, police said. The men have been charged with cheating and forgery and are being held in custody.

Lata Sirsat, senior inspector with the Mumbai police, said a police team was going to Uttar Pradesh to find the unauthorized recruitment agents who duped these men with fake documents. "All the men are in their 30s and poor," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Indian officials are trying to crack down on unauthorized agents who promise to organize well-paid jobs as cleaners and laborers in the Gulf states but cheat people along the way with complaints ranging from non-payment of wages to physical abuse.

Adverts asking workers seeking jobs overseas to only go through licensed agents are played on the radio daily. Vivek Sharma, the protector of emigrants in Uttar Pradesh, said this case of fraud was rare. "This fake ticket fraud and on such a scale involving 30 people is the first such instance that I have come across," Sharma told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Uttar Pradesh is among the poorest states in India and poverty and lack of jobs force many to migrate to major cities such as Mumbai but campaigners said seeking jobs in the Gulf states is a new development. "This trend started about two to three years ago and now most people going to the Gulf are from Uttar Pradesh. They are very poor people and in many cases their villages don't even have roads," said migrant rights activist Bhim Reddy. Government figures show there are some six million Indian migrants in the six Gulf states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Oman. — Agencies

KUWAIT: Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi meets Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sunil Jain yesterday. — KUNA

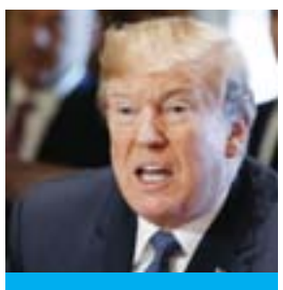
Uzbek planned NY attack for weeks; Trump vows to end green card lottery

NEW YORK: The Uzbek immigrant who killed eight people in New York's worst attack since Sept 11, 2001 planned the assault for weeks and left behind handwritten notes in Arabic hailing the Islamic State group, police confirmed yesterday. The driver, who moved to America legally in 2010, mowed down pedestrians and cyclists at high speed down a bike path on Lower Manhattan's West Side, as children and their parents prepared to celebrate Halloween on Tuesday afternoon.

Police shot 29-year-old suspect Sayfullo Saipov in the abdomen after he crashed into a school bus and exited his pickup truck, brandishing paintball and pellet guns. He has been interviewed in hospital and is expected to survive. New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo, who said the suspect was associated with the IS militant group, called him a "depraved coward". "That's what this was - the actions of depraved coward. There is a no grand statement to what was done," he told a news conference yesterday.

Handwritten notes in Arabic, pledging allegiance to IS were found at the scene in the upmarket neighborhood of TriBeCa, close to schools and not far from the 9/11 Memorial to the victims of the 2001 Al-Qaeda hijackings. "The gist of the note was that the Islamic State would endure forever," said John Miller, the head of New York police intelligence and counter-terrorism. Saipov also reportedly yelled "Allahu Akbar" ("God is greatest") during the attack.

Sayfullo Saipov



Donald Trump

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable to US President Donald Trump expressing condolences and sympathy over the victims of the Manhattan terrorist attack. He expressed condemnation of this criminal act, which targeted lives of the innocent, breaching divine laws and human values. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

Vehicle rammings have been a frequent tactic deployed by IS sympathizers in the West, including in Barcelona, London, Stockholm and in Nice, where a Tunisian suicide truck bomber killed 86 people on Bastille Day last year. Police said it was too early in the investigation to determine when Saipov may have become radicalized, but Cuomo told CNN that it happened after he moved to the United States. He had been a legal permanent resident after arriving in March 2010.

Continued on Page 11

Proposal calls to deport expats for 5 traffic violations

KUWAIT: A high ranking security source said acting Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Maj Gen Fahad Al-Showai presented a proposal to Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah that calls for the deportation of any expat who commits five grave traffic violations - be it in one instance or separately.

The proposal allows an expat to commit a maximum of four violations in five years, but if a fifth is committed, the person will not be able to renew his residency permit and will be deported. If less than five violations are committed in five years, they will be dropped at the end of this period. This will happen every five years. The source said grave violations in the proposal include not using seatbelts, using mobile phones, parking on pavements, parking in pedestrian areas and obstructing traffic.

The source said the proposal, if approved, will be implemented on all expats without exception, adding that a settlement of grave violations will not spare the deportation punishment. Even if the expat receives an innocent verdict by the judiciary, the violation will remain in interior ministry records. The source said the proposal will not be implemented retroactively, Al-Anbaa daily reported yesterday.

Amir receives Speaker Ghanem, Belgian Senate's President

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with President of the Belgian Senate Christine Defraigne. — KUNA

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with President of the Belgian Senate Christine Defraigne.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan palace National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. His Highness the Amir also received President of the Belgian Senate Christine Defraigne and her accompanying delegation. The meeting was also attended by Advisor of the Amiri Diwan Mohammad Dhaifulla Shara and Head of the accompanying mission of honor MP Rakan Al-Nisf.

Ghanem and Defraigne held a meeting later to discuss ways to boost ties, as well as issues of mutual interest and the latest developments within the region and the world. Defraigne, who arrived to Kuwait on Tuesday on a four-day official visit, met with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday as well. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister as well as First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Premier receives chief of illegal residents agency

Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak leads his 7th Cabinet

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met yesterday with Saleh Al-Fadhalah, head of the central agency dealing with the status of illegal residents; a state department that handles the affairs of bedoons (stateless residents) in Kuwait. His Highness also met with members of the Kuwaiti-British friendship society.

His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak was reassigned by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as Prime Minister, making this the seventh occasion in which the official had led the cabinet. During the 35th incarnations of Kuwaiti government, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak first become Prime Minister in December 2011. Since 1962, seven individuals had held the Prime Minister position.

According to article 56 of constitution, the Amir has the sole authority to appoint and relieve the Prime Minister from office. The Amir has the authority to also appoint Ministers and relieve them of office upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister. Ministers shall be appointed from amongst the members of the National Assembly and from others. The number of Ministers in all shall not exceed one-third of the number of the members of the National Assembly.

The first cabinet in the history of Kuwait was chaired by the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah in January of 1962. The second, third and fourth cabinets were chaired by the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah - the 12th ruler of Kuwait - from January 1963 to November 1965.

The 13th ruler of the country, the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, was in charge of the cabinet from December 1965 to December 1977. In his duration, he covered the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth governments. The late His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah governed 11 governments - the longest ruling of a prime minister in the history of the country. Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah chaired the 10th to the 20th cabinets in a period that extended from 1978 to 2001.

In 2003, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah took charge of the 21st government. This followed by the 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th cabinets that were under the presidency of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah - from 2006 to 2011.

Since December 2011, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak have been head of the government. He chaired the 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd and newly named cabinet - the 34th. The smallest cabinet in the history of Kuwait was that of 2011. It comprised of only 10 ministers. While the largest cabinet in the history of the country was that of 1990, consisting of 22 ministers. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Saleh Al-Fadhalah, head of the central agency dealing with the status of illegal residents. — KUNA

Women make up 55.7% of workforce in public sector

GENEVA: Kuwait is keen on protecting and empowering women in accordance with Islamic teachings and international agreed upon accords and laws, said Kuwait's permanent delegate to the UN and international organizations headquarters in Geneva, Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim yesterday.

Submitting Kuwait's fifth report to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) meeting, Ghunaim said that through the government's involvement and protection, Kuwaiti women had done wonders in several sectors, helping to elevate the status of their country in return. Kuwait had issued several laws and legislations since independence that protected the rights of women, said the Kuwaiti diplomat, adding that several legislations have resulted in the establishment of entities geared towards protecting women such as the family court and other bodies.

He indicated that women represented 51 percent of the population in Kuwait, noting that they represented 55.7 percent of the workforce in the public sector and 51 percent of the employees in the private sector. These numbers are integral for Kuwait's development vision 2035, affirmed Ambassador Ghunaim. Kuwaiti women were also encouraged to join the security force in Kuwait, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with their male counterparts in protecting the country from any harm.

He indicated that women were given more chances to get further involved in the judiciary sector with plans to include additional female public prosecutors. Kuwait is eager to cooperate with various global and UN organizations to empower women locally, regionally, and worldwide, said Ghunaim, affirming that Kuwait was eager to fulfill its commitments to CEDAW, noting that Kuwaiti society followed Islamic and social values that provided a platform for women to excel. Ambassador Ghunaim affirmed that the State of Kuwait would continue efforts to fully implement the tenets of the CEDAW. — KUNA

South Korean Embassy celebrates Armed Forces Day

KUWAIT: Ambassador of South Korea to Kuwait Yoo Yeonchul hosted a reception recently to celebrate his country's National and Armed Forces Day. State officials, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Vietnam Embassy celebrates National Day

KUWAIT: Ambassador of Vietnam to Kuwait Trinh Minh Manh hosted a reception recently to celebrate his country's national day. State officials, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Cables thief arrested at Jamal Abdul Nasser Road

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Department said general security officers arrested an Arab man for stealing copper cables from Jamal Abdul Nasser Road. A police patrol noticed a man removing cables from the ground. When policemen approached him, he confessed to stealing the cables and selling them as copper prices are high. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Traffic

The traffic department at Kuwait International Airport issued 6,498 citations, while 68 vehicles were impounded and five accidents were dealt with.

Fire

Fire broke out in a foam factory in Dajeej, and Farwaniya, Jleeb, Mishref and backup centers responded. Fire gutted the entire warehouse, but the blaze was put out without any injuries.

Crackdowns

Jahra municipality violations removal department carried out a campaign against shops encroaching on state property and utilizing unlicensed areas. Ten steel and concrete fences were removed, besides two encroachments by store owners. Meanwhile, Hawally municipality announced that it carried out a campaign against restaurants and shops, which resulted in closing two stores and issuing 62 citations, including dealing in food before receiving a health certificate, employing a worker without a health certificate, roaming without a permit and dealing in expired foodstuff.

Cross dressers arrested

Three Kuwaiti men face legal action after patrolmen caught them dressed up in women's clothes and carrying purses full of makeup in Abu Fateera.

Fight

Two women, Kuwaiti and Jordanian, got into a fight at a five-star hotel. The Jordanian woman claimed that she was beaten up at the hotel by the citizen and provided medical reports to support her claims. Meanwhile, the citizen lodged a complaint against the Jordanian woman. Concerned authorities are investigating.

Smuggling

Airport customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle illicit tablets inside a motorcycle engine. An Arab man confessed of planning the smuggling with people from Egypt. Customs detective Rashid Al-Baraka received a tip about the smuggling attempt, and the recipient was arrested. 2,900 Tramadol tablets were found.

Break in

A Syrian man who attempted to break into a contracting office was caught by pedestrians while attempting to escape in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. He was sent to Farwaniya detectives' department for questioning.

Firefighters tackle a blaze in a foam factory in Dajeej.

MP slams minister for offering 14 tenders simultaneously

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaie criticized a decision made by Minister of Public Works Abdul-Rahman Al-Mutawa to offer 14 different road maintenance contract tenders simultaneously, noting that this action raises suspicions. The lawmaker demanded clarifications from the minister amid speculations that the operation was done as part of agreements made amongst various applying companies to split the tenders without any form of competition, in order to reduce the cost at the expense of public funds. Subaie said that he has filed an inquiry on the matter.

Jleeb plots

Land plots in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh will not be included in the 2017-2018 expropriation plans as no decisions have so far been made, said Fahad Al-Sholah, the Finance Ministry's assistant undersecretary for the affairs of the department of expropriation for public interest. The lands are being expropriated to be used in housing projects.

Deadlock

Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) cancelled plans to offer a tender for the first phase of the Jurassic gas terminals' project for public bidding after a deadlock with Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) concerning the $3.6 billion worth project. Sources said added that KOC will soon issue an official announcement about the project's cancellation. The reason behind the cancellation is not clear, but it is believed to be caused by a disagreement between the oil ministry and KPC, said the sources.

MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaie

Salat Al-Istisqa

Following the tradition of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) when rainfall is late or during droughts, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs decided to perform prayers for rain (Salat Al-Istisqa) in 47 mosques around Kuwait at 10:30 am on Saturday.

Awqaf Ministry responds to MP Ashour

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs issued a statement in response to MP Saleh Ashour's comments in which he criticized the ministry's plans to offer rehabilitation programs to Kuwaitis returning from fighting with the Islamic State (IS) group. The returnees will be enrolled in rehabilitation programs only after the Interior Ministry takes legal action against them, the Awqaf Ministry explained. It added that it had a very clear attitude towards IS ever since the organization was formed, and that it has incriminated all deeds and statements made by the group. It also condemned all the crimes IS members have committed against innocent people. The ministry added that it also issued a document explaining Islam's moderation, and which calls for rejecting violence and urges people not to travel to Iraq and Syria to fight with IS insurgents.

The ministry also explained that taking security measures in this case are out of its jurisdiction, and that it only deals with ideologies in attempts to rectify extremists' beliefs through rehabilitation programs. Further, the ministry explained that rehabilitation takes place in two phases; first for those in prisons and the second deals with prisoners after they are released. Adding that it had participated in rehabilitating the 'Peninsula Lions' and Guantanamo Bay prison returnees through special programs to help them fit back into the society.

Operations resume at Kuwait ports after dust storm subsides

KUWAIT: Regular operations at the Kuwaiti ports have resumed after weather conditions improved across the country, Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) said yesterday. Director of Operations at Shuwaikh Port Captain Bader Al-Enezi said that the normal navigation to and from the harbor resumed at 8:00 pm after activities were temporarily suspended.

Although horizontal visibility has improved, the weather remains unstable, thus vigilance is warranted, he said, alluding to the receding dust storm that peaked throughout the country on Tuesday, causing sea navigation to and from the Kuwaiti ports to be halted.

Horizontal visibility dropped to less than 500 meters on Tuesday. Air aviation was not affected with yesterday's storm. Kuwait often witnesses such storms, latest of which was said to have come from neighboring Iraq. — KUNA

Photo of the Day

KUWAIT: Fish farms built near the Boubyan Island as part of its development project. —KUNA

World Bank commends Kuwait's business atmosphere reforms

Kuwait improves position in Ease of Doing Business Index

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait has done well in improving its business atmosphere, taking vital steps that made it one of the leading GCC countries in implementing economic reforms, Director of the World Bank in Kuwait Dr Firas Raad said yesterday. In a press release, Dr Raad indicated that Kuwait had made improvements that attracted investments and developed economic growth, affirming that the Gulf country must continue on this path in the upcoming years.

Kuwait's economic reforms improved its position within the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index 2018 (DB 2018), jumping six positions to the rank 96 from the list that includes 190 states, said Dr Raad. He indicated that the country managed within a year to decrease the time slot for starting a business from 61 to 38 days, adding that the processes to begin business and register properties have shrunk from 12 to 9 and 49 to 35 days respectively. The World Bank official attributed the improvement to the government's keenness on economic reforms, adding that setting a unified online system for companies' registrations had also played a part in the improved ranking.

Time slot for starting a business dropped to 38 days

Improvement

Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) had announced Tuesday that the country witnessed improvement in its position in the Ease of Doing Business Index 2018 (DB 2018), released by the World Bank Group, and in its Distance to Frontier (DTF) score as well.

This is a direct outcome of actively implementing the National Agenda for Streamlining Business Environment (dubbed as Tahseen Program) developed with technical support by the World Bank, and approved by the Council of Ministers, KDIPA said in a statement. The improvements were reinforced by KDIPA's continuous coordination as head of the Permanent Committee for Streamlining Business Environment; Enhancing Competitiveness in the State of Kuwait (PCK), in accordance with its mandated tasks and designation by the Council of Ministers Decision No. 1551/2013, in close collaboration with relevant government entities, and the private sector.

KDIPA clarified that Kuwait's rank in the Ease of Doing Index 2018 (DB2018), composed of ten topics that measures various regulatory aspects of the lifecycle of business, advanced by 6 places to 96 out of 190 included in this year's report, compared to 102 in DB2017, holding the eighth rank within the Arab countries, and maintaining a leading sixth rank in the Paying Taxes topic. Furthermore, Kuwait DTF score increased by 1.52 percent to 61.23 percent in DB2018 from 59.71 percent (adjusted) in DB2017.

Host of reforms

This favorable outcome was warranted to a host of reforms undertaken during the period covered by the report extending from June 2, 2016 till June 1, 2017. In Starting a Business topic, the number of procedures dropped from 12 to 9, the number of days reduced from 61 to 38, the cost went down from 2.8 percent to 1.7 percent (as percent of per capita income), and the cost of minimum capital dropped from 10.2 percent to 8.5 percent (as percent of per capita income), which yielded a notable rise in Kuwait's DTF score by 10.44 percent reaching 77.21 percent up from 66.77 percent.

This is attributed to the favorable impact resulting from the activation of the Ministerial Decision No. 161/2016 as amended by MD No. 280/2016 establishing the national one stop shop (OSS), whereby both KDIPA and the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise Development (NFK) are part of, along with launching its online version (Kuwait Business Centre "KBC"), which fully utilizes electronic transactions leading to the improvement of online establishment and registration of companies. The report also noted the reforms taken by the Ministry of Justice and Kuwait Municipality in the Registering Property Topic particularly in improving the transparency of the land administration system resulting the halving in the number of days for registering property from 70 to 35.

KDIPA concluded its statement commending the relentless efforts carried out by all the government entities members of the Permanent Committee for Streamlining Business Environment & Enhancing Competitiveness in the State of Kuwait (PCK) and others, who took part in the activities organized by KDIPA.

Lengthy road

Moreover, KDIPA reiterated that the road of reform in still lengthy and needs constant cooperation amongst government, private sector and civil society to fulfill the priority measures approved in the National Agenda for Streamlining Business Environment (Tahseen Program) for the short and medium terms.

The first phase of reforms covered six out of ten topics comprising the ease of doing business index (Starting a Business, Dealing with Construction Permits, Registering Property, Trading Across Borders, Resolving Insolvency, and Getting Electricity), while the remaining four topics (Enforcing Contracts, Protecting Minority Investors, Getting Credit, Paying Taxes) will be realized by end of 2017 with ongoing technical support by the World Bank.

KDIPA hopes that launching Tahseen Portal will effectively support current efforts by serving as an interactive platform to document all laws, decisions, and measures taken and make them available to the general public, as well as using it to measure progress of the implementation of the National Agenda for Streamlining Business Environment (Tahseen Program) and display reforms' achievement rates. In doing so, Kuwait validates its resolve to improve business environment and place it at the core of its reform policy priorities, guided by successful cases in this regard elsewhere in the world. — KUNA

New urban areas expected to stir real estate market

KUWAIT: Kuwait's real estate market has been in recession over the third quarter of the year, but is expected to see recovery in the near future, in particular in new urban areas. The expectations are stirred by the development projects the government is carrying out, together with the rise of oil prices, in addition to the rising demand in the real estate sector.

Director General of Athra Real Estate Company Maitham Al-Shakhs said the new areas would witness noticeable activity over the rest of 2017. Yet, these areas are facing certain problems that need to be solved. These are topped with the completion of the infrastructure in some parts of the Jaber Al-Ahmad New City, he said.

As rent has been slightly on the decline in some parts of South Surra during the third quarter of the year, Al-Shakhs predicted demand on apartments would rise in the neighborhood, mainly in Zahra, Shuhada and Hateen. He noted that demand has also risen on plots of land in Abu Fetira and Masaeil, and more is expected in 2018.

According to Al-Shakhs, the market was negatively impacted over the past period by some MPs' calls for reducing migrant labor in the country, besides the fall of rental value over the past two months in vivid lively areas like Farwaniya, Hawalli and Salmiya. Real estate activities were notably declined during the period January-September 2017, compared to last year chairman of Al Dughaishem Real Estate Company, Abdul Aziz Al-Dughaishem.

However, inquiries have been growing by buyers about the targeted areas, a signal of expected rise in the demand on residential and investment property. Investment property market already active in different districts like Hawalli and Salmiya, and slightly in Al-Mahboula, Al Dughaishem added. He referred to a plenty of offers for such property almost nationwide, making it easy for buyers to choose according to their financial capacity, either for present or future investment.

The real estate market is moderately active, especially in terms of residential demand and long-term investment, said Derwazat Al Safat Real Estate Director General Fahd Al-Mumen. Speculators seem to keeping away from the market for the difficulties they have been facing since the year started, he said.

Mumen foresees a more active market during the second half of 2018, mostly in East Qurain, Abu Fetira, Masaeil and South Surra, as many will prefer such new areas, for their developed infrastructure. He also expected the rental value in Farwaniya, Hawalli and Salmiya, and other areas that are already highly populated, to moderately drop to attract dwellers. Sales in all sectors of the Kuwaiti real estate market have been affected due to pressing, technical factors, geopolitical developments and economic resolutions. Oversupply and declining demand, especially in the investment and commercial sectors, have hit the market, as many investors have also transferred their capital to brisk securities market for rapid revenues due to the temporary recession in real estate. —KUNA

Fight Like a Girl - Round 3: A breast cancer awareness seminar

Organized by American Women's League in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The American Women's League in Kuwait (AWL) in partnership with Activate Event Marketing presented Fight Like a Girl - Round 3, their annual breast cancer awareness event at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa on October 28, 2017. Lawrence Silverman, the Ambassador from the United States of America started the event by cutting the Pink Ribbon to welcome guests.

Following welcome speeches from the ambassador and Savino Leone, General Manager of Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, the famous Kuwaiti fencing athlete Balsam Al-Ayoub stepped onto the stage to welcome guests, followed by a demonstration of a fierce fencing technique, all the while retaining her elegance and femininity in a lovely gown. Fight like a girl, indeed!

Tamara Saab, the noted radio personality, joined her on the stage as the Fight Announcer. AWL and Activate produced an educational four-round battle against breast cancer. Round One saw oncologist Dr Noha Al-Saleh discuss the detection of breast cancer, treatment, and reconstruction options. In Round Two, geneticist Dr Fahad Al-Mulla discussed DNA, including the BRAC 1 and 2 genes. Two breast cancer survivors gave moving and hopeful testimonials in Round Three. The attendees were then treated to Round Four, the musical entertainment and generous exciting giveaways kindly provided by the corporate sponsors for the event.

Kuwaiti fencing athlete Balsam Al-Ayoub attended the event

Commenting on the activity, Leone said: "Social responsibility is a core element of our strategy at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa and we are proud to support initiatives that benefit people in the local community.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a global movement that carries an important message. We believe that as leader in Kuwait's hospitality and tourism sector we have the capacity to help raise awareness of this emotive cause and it is our social responsibility to get behind activities. I take this opportunity to congratulate the American Women's League Kuwait on their constant efforts to make a difference. We can all do something for the betterment of our communities."

Fight Like a Girl - Round 3 was sponsored by: The Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa and Agility (gold sponsors); Royale Hayat Hospital and Alshaya (silver sponsors); as well as Emirates Airlines, Nails on Wheels, and Talise Spa (bronze sponsors).

KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman (third from right) attends the event.

NBK welcomes 14th batch of Al-Shabab trainees

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) welcomed the 14th batch of trainees in Al-Shabab Training Program. This intensive program is specifically designed to develop the skills of newly recruited diploma holding graduates. With 17 participants, the program extends over a period of six weeks aiming at developing and training national youth who recently graduated to attract them to the banking industry.

The program covers different aspects of the banking industry such as: banking principles, credit cards, loans, letters of guarantee, insurance, branches, and branch evaluation, in addition to building interpersonal skills, performance excellence, change and innovation, effective management and communication.

Emad Al-Ablani

Al-Shabab Program trainees were welcomed by NBK executes led by Emad Ahmad Al-Ablani, Director of HR at NBK, Ghadeer Al-Awadhi, Local Branches Manager, and Abdullah Al-Jassim, Head of Recruitment Department.

Commenting on that occasion; Emad Al-Ablani stated that NBK commits to providing Kuwaiti nationals trainees and students with the practical expertise and professional training to equip them to work in the banking field, as part of NBK's Corporate Social Commitment initiatives aimed towards the development of Kuwaiti youth.

He added that Al-Shabab program is unique and distinguished from any other training program offered by the bank. It mainly focuses on practical training method, as it involves the trainees from day one into intensive practical applications. He also highlighted that the Training Department adopts an "NBK Branch Simulation Model" in training the participants in order to hone their skills prior to their actual engagement with clients, which might be an intimidating experience to new staff members.

He pointed out that the program also contributes to the development and further refinement of the trainees' interpersonal skill, as well as accelerating the enhancement of their self-development. He also noted that many of the program participants have felt the difference in the way of carrying on business and how they already acquired various personal skills within a period of just two weeks of joining the program, as per the testimony of their relatives and friends. This confirms the effectiveness of Al-Shabab program and the competence and efficiency of the staff in charge of managing NBK training programs, proving their ability to achieve such amazing results within a very short training period.

Ablani explained that Al-Shabab Program is part of the training programs annually launched by NBK to attract young national talents. The program has been prepared to suit the needs of the labor market by providing training opportunities for distinguished new graduates. It covers learning basic skills of the banking industry, building outstanding performance, change and innovation as well as knowledge of management and effective communication methods, which equip the trainees to directly join the work force.

He confirmed that NBK continues to develop Al-Shabab program, as each course is presented differently from the previous one; through the constant modification and development of the program based on the final evaluation of the latest course offered. NBK also listens to the trainees' comments to avoid repeating those points in its next training session. The program currently runs its 14th session, and reached satisfactory progress in presenting matured course materials.

He also added that Al-Shabab program is a founding fundamental stage in the trainees training program, as it mainly focuses on training the participants to work in the bank's branches. He explained that upon the successful completion of this program, trainees follow the same training course adopted for NBK employees. After the successful completion of Al-Shabab Program, participants join "Hala Watani" for three weeks to be familiarized with all NBK's departments and how each department carries on its business.

Ablani said that NBK framework encourages all employees to successfully complete their education program to the highest levels possible. NBK has affiliated its promotional and financial incentives program with the certificates and courses that the employees attain, in order to ensure the continuous development of NBK staff.

The National Bank provides a number of training programs for graduates and students each year, in addition to specialized professional programs for its employees. The programs offered include the summer training program for students of schools, universities and institutes, and NBK Academy for Kuwaiti university graduates selected to work in the bank, besides a huge array of other programs developed by the Human Resources Group aimed at training and developing staff, as well as various professional development programs across NBK's different groups and departments.

ABK donates all fees from issuance of 'Freedom Prepaid Card' to KRCS

KUWAIT: In line with its ongoing corporate social responsibility initiatives, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) yesterday made a substantial donation to the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS). During Hajj, the Bank offered its 'Freedom Prepaid Card' free of charge to customers, waiving the card issuance fees of KD 10 for each customer till 30th September, which was collected and donated to the Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

Following the success of the campaign, Stewart Lockie, General Manager Retail Banking at ABK presented the cheque to Maha Al-Barjas, General Secretary at Kuwait Red Crescent Society, who expressed his gratitude to the Bank for its contribution. The donation will help people affected by social conflicts, wars and natural disasters.

A multi-currency cash passport solution for frequent travelers offering security, convenience and freedom, ABK's 'Freedom Prepaid Card' locks in the exchange rate of up to 11 currencies. The card can be acquired at any ABK branch by existing customers and non-customers from age 18 and above.

KUWAIT: Maha Al-Barjas (KRCS) receives the donation from Stewart Lockie (ABK) in presence of Lama Al-Othman (KRCS), Sahar Al-Therban (ABK) and Abdulaziz Sadeq (ABK).

USEG hosts edu fair, welcomes young students

KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman (center) interacts with representative of a participating university in the exhibition.

Visitors drop by a participating booth at the exhibition. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: US Educational Group (USEG) along with the US Embassy organized an educational fair yesterday at the Marina Hotel. Students from various local schools attended the event along with their parents. US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman inaugurated the event. Representatives from 26 American universities participated in the event where they promoted and encouraged local and expat students to study in America.

"This is a venue for young Kuwaitis and expatriates to come and see our universities available for educational opportunities in the US," Silverman said.

"The 26 institutions can be approached to know their qualifications and requirements. These universities provide a perfect educational environment, not only in the US but also in other territories. US is known for its best universities in the world, very liberal, top quality standard of education where you will not only learn in the classroom but also outdoors in the university campus." Around 15,000 Kuwaiti students are currently enrolled in various US institutions. The US Embassy have in recent weeks been promoting US educational institutions in various ways including the 10-day 'Discover America' promotional campaign about US products and services.

Homeward bound? Europe mulls fate of jihadist families

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Neighbors worry as China aims for 'world-class army'

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ULVA, United Kingdom: Rebecca Munro, one of the residents of the Isle of Ulva, off Scotland's west coast poses by the shore. —AFP

5 residents bid to buy Scottish island

Russian, Middle Eastern tycoons eye island

ULVA: When tycoons in helicopters began landing on Scotland's Isle of Ulva, its five tenants feared their way of life might be coming to an end. The remote island of pristine beaches, lush hills and craggy coastlines was put on the market this year after decades of ownership by an aristocratic family. Now the islanders are using a law introduced last year by Scotland's nationalist government to suspend the sale and give themselves time to buy the land, hoping a government fund will help them do so.

"I think community ownership is the way forward," said Emma McKie, 33, who remembers a time when a thriving farming community lived on the 12-kilometre long island off Scotland's west coast. They are facing a deadline of June 2018 to buy the island off its "laird" Jamie Howard, who put it up for sale for £4.25 million (4.77 million euros, $5.60 million).

The glossy sales brochure for Ulva offered prospective buyers the unique opportunity to own "one of the finest private islands in northern Europe", when it was first put up for sale in July. Well-groomed tycoons with Russian and Middle Eastern sounding accents began flying in for viewings. McKie said islanders were concerned that any outside buyer may remove the tenants and close off the island. "If you have that kind of money, why would you keep the island open to the public, why wouldn't you keep it for yourself?", said McKie, who runs the island's only cafe with her sister-in-law Rebecca Munro.

The Land Reform Act passed by Scotland's pro-independence First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's government allows for the sale of private assets to be suspended to give community bodies the right to buy the land. The £10 million Scottish Land Fund gives annual grants to worthy projects and Ulva's residents are hoping the fund will go over its usual limit of £1 million. The legislation has far-reaching implications in a region where half the land is owned by just 500 people, many of them absentee aristocratic landlords with castles and vast country estates.

From vibrant to derelict

Ulva is an idyllic location with views of Ben More mountain and the spectacular Eas Fors Waterfall on the neighboring island of Mull. Visitors' first port of call when stepping off the ferry from Mull is The Boathouse cafe. "My husband's family go back several centuries on Ulva," said Munro, 30, who is originally from Dumfries on the Scottish mainland. "They would have Christmas parties and there were a lot more children going to Ulva primary school, so it was just a lot more vibrant."

The islanders taking on the tycoons

The Boathouse attracts around 5,000 visitors a year. But empty cottages, an abandoned church and the disused Ulva Hostel nearby are falling into disrepair. At its height Ulva had a population of over 800 and its decline can be traced back to the Highland Clearances, when landlords conducted a wholesale eviction of Scottish farmers in the 18th century and turned their lands over to sheep grazing. Thousands of Scots emigrated to the British colonies. One of Ulva's most famous sons is Lachlan Macquarie, a high-profile colonial governor in Australia in the 19th century.

'People come together'

Community purchase of land is not a new concept in Scotland. Residents of the Isle of Eigg, also near Mull, still remember life under their playboy lairds before they did their own form of a community buyout under previous legislation in 1997. Motoring tycoon Keith Schellenberg sold up in 1995, shortly after his Rolls Royce mysteriously caught fire, to a German artist called "Professor Maruma". He tried to turn the island into an artists' retreat until the 60 or so islanders bought him out with the help of an anonymous benefactor. The bulk of Eigg's buyout was provided by that benefactor and the rest was raised through small donations from people all over the world, a significant feat in the days before widespread social media.

Eigg's population has almost doubled since the buyout and it now has its own renewable energy grid, fast internet, and an annual music festival. The eight-kilometer long island continues to attract adventurous young souls keen to make a life 30 kilometers from the Scottish mainland."The community is the reason that I am here," said Eigg's newest resident Nan Fee, 33, who started teaching in the island's primary school in August. "It's just so powerful and people come together. It's unlike anywhere I've ever been."— AFP

Putin visits Iran for talks on Syria and nuclear deal

TEHRAN: Russian President Vladimir Putin met Iran's leadership yesterday in Tehran as the two Damascus allies push a Syria peace plan and the Kremlin offers its backing for a landmark nuclear deal facing US opposition. Putin-on his first visit to Tehran since 2015 - held talks with President Hassan Rouhani, before he was due to meet supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The Kremlin strongman will also take part in a three-way summit with Rouhani and the leader of ex-Soviet Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev aimed at bolstering economic ties between their energy-rich nations.

Moscow said Syria will be a focus of Putin's visit, which comes after Russia, Iran and Turkey pledged after negotiations in Kazakhstan on Tuesday to bring the Syrian regime and its opponents together for a "congress" to push peace efforts. Russia and Iran, key military supporters of President Bashar al-Assad, and Turkey, which backs Syrian rebels, have organised a series of peace talks in the Kazakh capital Astana this year, agreeing on the establishment of "de-escalation" zones in various parts of the war-torn country.

Yesterday's talks will also focus on the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which saw sanctions lifted in exchange for limits on Tehran's atomic program and which is under pressure from US President Donald Trump. Tehran signed the deal with six countries including Russia and the United States, but Trump last month refused to certify the agreement, drawing criticism from Moscow which slammed the US president's "aggressive and threatening rhetoric" against Iran.

TEHRAN: Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) meets with Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran yesterday. —AFP

Syria peace push

Ahead of Putin's arrival, Iran's official IRNA news agency reported Russia's chief of staff Valery Gerasimov flew into Tehran for talks with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Bagheri to discuss "Syria...and the fight against terrorism." The military might of Moscow and Tehran in Syria has helped prop up Assad's forces and turn the protracted conflict in his favor with a string of key battlefield victories. Since the start of the year Russia has looked to cement the gains from its game-changing intervention by spearheading the peace push at talks in Kazakhstan, positioning itself as a broker between key players Iran and Turkey and largely bypassing the West.

Up until now the focus has been on quelling the violence on the ground and the three powers have established four "de-escalation zones" around rebel-held territory in the country. The zones were initially credited for bringing about a significant reduction in bloodshed, but international aid groups say they are currently failing to curb the fighting. Now Moscow seems keen on expanding its peace drive in search of a political settlement and on Thursday got Iran and Turkey to agree an initiative for a "Congress of Syrian National Dialogue" that aims to bring together some 33 delegations in the Russian city of Sochi on November 18.

Opposition to US

Putin and the Iranian leadership are also set to find common cause in their fierce opposition to Trump's stance on the 2015 deal to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions. The US leader's decision not to certify the deal has been opposed by the other international powers that signed off on it as they insist the agreement is working. The lifting of the sanctions under the nuclear deal has opened Iran up for business and Russian firms are competing to bolster their involvement in the country. —AFP

Using vehicles as weapons of terror in Europe, America

NEW YORK: A pickup driver ploughed a truck into cyclists and pedestrians in New York on Tuesday, killing eight people in the first deadly "act of terror" in the city since September 11, 2001. Vehicles have previously been used as weapons of terror, often by supporters of the Islamic State (IS) group, attacking nations in the US-led coalition fighting the jihadists in Iraq and Syria.

Barcelona's Las Ramblas

On August 17, a driver deliberately runs a van into crowds on Barcelona's popular Las Ramblas Boulevard, in what police say is a "terrorist attack". It is followed hours later by a car attack in the seaside resort town of Cambrils. Fifteen people are killed in the carnage. All members of the terror cell behind the attacks are either killed or arrested by Spanish police.

Charlottesville

On August 12, at a far-right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, a 32-year-old woman is killed and others injured when a car rammed, deliberately according to eyewitnesses, into a crowd of counter-protesters.

London targeted

On March 22, 2017, a 52-year-old British convert to Islam, Khalid Masood, mows down pedestrians on Westminster Bridge near parliament and stabs a policeman, killing five people and injuring around 50 before being shot dead by police. The attack is claimed by IS. On June 3, the British capital is hit again when three attackers strike pedestrians with a van and go on a stabbing spree wearing fake suicide vests in bars in the London Bridge area. Eight people are killed before the assailants are shot dead by police. The attack is also claimed by IS. On June 19, a van drives into a crowd of Muslim worshippers near a mosque in London's Finsbury Park area. One man dies and another 11 people are injured. A 47-year-old man is arrested and charged with terrorism-related murder and attempted murder.

Nice attack, Champs-Elysees hit

On July 14, 2016, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, a 31-year-old Tunisian, ploughs a 19-tonne truck into a Bastille Day crowd, killing 86 people on the famous beachfront avenue. IS later claims Bouhlel as one of its followers. On June 19, 2017, Adam Dzaziri, a 31-year-old who had sworn allegiance to the IS, is killed when he rams a car loaded with guns and a gas canister into a police van on Paris's Champs-Elysees. No one else is injured. On August 19, 2017, a 36-year-old Algerian man, named as Hamou B., drives a BMW into a group of soldiers outside a barracks in the western Paris suburb of Levallois-Perret, injuring six. After a car chase, police shoot and wound the suspect.

Stockholm shopping street

An April 7, 2017, a truck attack in the Swedish capital kills five people, including an 11-year-old Swedish girl, a Briton, and one Belgian. Fifteen others are injured. —AFP

Hamas cedes border crossings to Palestinian Authority control

Islamist group still dominant armed force in enclave

GAZA: The Islamist group Hamas began ceding control of the Gaza Strip's border crossings with Israel and Egypt to US-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas yesterday under an agreement brokered by Cairo to end a decade of internal schism. The move marked the most concrete implementation of the Oct 11 reconciliation deal that Palestinians hope will ease economic restrictions on Gaza and enable more fruitful negotiations on their goal of setting up an independent state.

Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Al-Hamdallah said in a statement that taking charge of the crossings would help Abbas's Palestinian Authority (PA) fulfill its duty "to improve the living conditions of our people". Israel and the United States have reservations about the intra-Palestinian pact, however, given refusals by Hamas - which has fought three wars with Israel since seizing control of Gaza in 2007 from forces loyal to Abbas - to relinquish its rockets and other arms.

Palestinians hope Israel, Egypt will ease restrictions

Witnesses said PA employees moved into Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings on the Israeli border and Rafah crossing on the Egyptian border, as Hamas counterparts packed up equipment and departed on trucks. "We have handed over the crossings with honesty and responsibility, without bargaining and unconditionally," Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said in a video address. Citing security concerns, Israel maintains tight restrictions on the movement of people and goods at its crossings with the Gaza Strip, including an almost blanket ban on exports from the territory.

COGAT, the Israeli military-run authority that supervises Erez and Kerem Shalom, said a meeting would be held with a PA representative to define joint working protocols and Israeli security conditions, including "the complete absence of any Hamas member or representative" at or near the crossings. Egypt, which in the past has accused Hamas of aiding an Islamist insurgency in its Sinai peninsula bordering Gaza, has kept Rafah largely closed. Hamas denies the allegations and has stepped up security along the frontier.

UN hails transfer

Nickolay Mladenov, UN special Coordinator for the Middle East peace process, said transfer of the crossings was a "landmark development" in the reconciliation process, and he called in a statement for "the positive momentum to be maintained". PA ministers have begun gradually to assume their duties in Gaza in past weeks and on Tuesday took over the revenue accounts of the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings, officials said.

Hamas had used those revenues - taxes and fees collected from merchants and passengers - as part of its Gaza budget, to pay salaries of the 40,000 to 50,000 employees it has hired since 2007. Those wages will now be paid by the PA, under the Cairo agreement. Hamas also maintains an armed wing, which analysts say has at least 25,000 well-equipped fighters. It remains the dominant force in Gaza, an enclave of two million people. The Palestinian Authority will begin operating the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings immediately, officials said, while in Rafah the operation will await further security arrangements such as deploying a force from Abbas's presidential guards and Cairo completing innovations on its side of the facility. —Reuters

Members of the Palestinian Authority share a light moment with a Hamas security man (center) at the Rafah border crossing with Egypt after Hamas handed control of the crossing to the Palestinian Authority yesterday. —AFP

Saudi-led coalition strike kills 29 at a market in Yemen

SANAA: A Saudi-led coalition air strike killed 29 people at a crowded marketplace in the heartland of the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in northern Yemen yesterday, Houthi health authorities said. The coalition, which has faced repeated international criticism over civilian casualties, did not immediately confirm or deny that it was behind the attack in Saada governorate. Residents at the scene picked through the remnants of stalls, some still smouldering, reduced to spindly metal frames and scattered wreckage, AFP photos showed.

The charred bodies of the victims, many of their faces disfigured beyond recognition, were laid on white body bags for families to identify in the courtyard of a hospital morgue. The health service said 29 people were killed and 17 others wounded, while the Houthi-run Saba news agency gave a lower toll of 21 dead, all of them civilians. Saba accused the Saudi-led coalition of carrying out the raid in the Sahar district. The alliance did not respond to requests for comment on whether its forces carried out the strike.

But it enforces an air blockade on rebel-held territory and is the only force whose warplanes are known to operate in Yemen's north along the Saudi border. The United Nations blacklisted the coalition in October for killing and maiming children, drawing fresh calls from rights groups to step up pressure on Riyadh over the conflict. The coalition was briefly included on the annual list of shame last year before a threat by Saudi Arabia to cut off its funding to UN programs forced a reversal. Human rights groups have urged governments backing the coalition, including the United States, Britain and France, to suspend all weapons sales to the Gulf monarchy.

SAADA, Yemen: The bodies of men killed by an air strike on the Sahar district of the northern Yemeni governorate of Saada are seen at the yard of a hospital morgue yesterday. —AFP

Iran, Saudi tensions

The war pits forces loyal to the internationally recognized government of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, which was expelled from the capital Sanaa in September 2014, against the Houthi rebels who drove them out and continue to control swathes of northern Yemen. The conflict intensified in March 2015, when the Saudi-led military coalition joined the government's fight against the rebels. Tehran on Monday rejected as "ridiculous and baseless" accusations by Saudi Arabia that Iran is supporting rebels and blocking peace efforts in Yemen. Saudi Arabia's top diplomat had accused Tehran of smuggling arms to the Houthis and to their allies. Multiple rounds of UN-sponsored talks have failed to broker a political settlement between the Saudi-backed Hadi government and the rebels. The war has left more than 8,600 people dead since the Saudi-led coalition intervened in 2015. A cholera outbreak in the impoverished country has claimed more than 2,100 lives since April, as hospitals struggle to secure supplies amid the air and sea blockade. The United Nations has warned Yemen now stands on the brink of famine. The UN Human Rights Council in September agreed to send a group of experts to investigate alleged violations and abuses in Yemen, overcoming strong resistance by Saudi Arabia's representative. —AFP

News in brief

Saudi cyber security

KHOBAR: Saudi Arabia has set up a new authority for cyber security and named its minister of state Musaed Al-Aiban its chairman, strengthening security in the world's largest oil exporter, a royal decree said. The National Authority for Cyber Security will be made up of the head of state security, the head of intelligence, the deputy interior minister and assistant to the minister of defense, SPA said late on Tuesday. The authority will be linked to the King and is created to "boost cyber security of the state, protect its vital interests, national security and sensitive infrastructure," it said.

Australia nationality crisis

SYDNEY: Australia's dual citizenship parliamentary crisis deepened yesterday with a senior member of the ruling Liberal Party resigning, as calls grew for a nationality audit of all federal lawmakers and investigations continued into decisions made by ministers found to have been ineligible for their elected positions. Australia's High Court on Friday disqualified five lawmakers because they were citizens of both Australia and another country, a breach of an obscure clause in the constitution that only came to light in July. Two other parliamentarians had already resigned. Yesterday, the saga claimed its first victim from Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's Liberal Party in Senator Stephen Parry. Parry had on Tuesday contacted British Home Office officials, who a day later confirmed he held dual citizenship because his late father had been born in the United Kingdom, after which Parry resigned his Senate seat.

Rare protest in Thailand

BANGKOK: Authorities in Thailand's southeastern Chonburi province braced for more demonstrations after hundreds of furious residents gathered a day earlier in a rare protest to complain about bureaucratic incompetence. Residents complained about long lines that lasted more than 12 hours and general disorganization surrounding activities to mark the funeral of late King Bhumibol Adulyadej who was cremated in Bangkok last week in a $90 million funeral. The protest defied a junta ban on gatherings of more than five people that has been in place since a May 2014 coup. It is also rare because anything remotely related to the monarchy is a sensitive topic in Thailand - the royals are protected by a draconian lese-majeste law, which criminalize all perceived insults toward the monarchy. The Chonburi protests, however, were directed at the local authorities and not at the palace.

Philippine drug war victims

MANILA: The families of thousands of victims in the Philippines' bloody war on drugs mourned yesterday at gatherings in churches and cemeteries in the capital, Manila, to call for justice. Priests at a special Catholic service on a gloomy All Saints Day prayed for and blessed photographs of those killed, and some relatives held a protest outside a police station whose officers have been blamed for deaths. President Rodrigo Duterte unleashed his signature anti-narcotics campaign immediately after taking office in June last year. Human rights groups believe many of the 3,900 deaths in police operations were summary executions. The police deny the accusations, saying the drug suspects were armed and had violently resisted arrest. Thousands of Filipinos flocked to cemeteries on All Saints' Day, known as "Todos Los Santos," to pay their respects to the dead by cleaning tombstones, placing flowers and lighting candles.

Nephew takes office; Kurdish leader leaves

ERBIL: Iraqi Kurdish President Masoud Barzani departed office yesterday, leaving his nephew to reconcile with the central government in Baghdad, with regional neighbors and with rival Kurdish parties after a failed referendum on independence. Nechirvan Barzani, who has served alongside his uncle as prime minister, will now be the main authority figure in the executive of the Kurdish autonomous region, following Masoud Barzani's departure as president, Kurdish officials said. "The prime minister will be the key person during this transitional period," said Hoshyar Zebari, a former Iraqi foreign minister, now advisor to the Kurdish government and senior member of the ruling Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

The elder Barzani, a 71-year-old veteran guerrilla leader, had run the Kurdish autonomous region with a firm hand since 2005, during which it prospered while the rest of Iraq was mired in civil war. But he announced his resignation on Sunday, effective on Nov 1, after a Sept 25 referendum on independence backfired, prompting the central government to send troops to recapture territory held by the Kurds outside their autonomous region. The referendum and government backlash have also revealed deep divisions among the Kurds themselves.

During his resignation speech, Masoud Barzani accused his political rivals of "high treason" for yielding territory without a fight. His nephew Nechirvan, 51, who has served as prime minister for all but three years since 2006, is seen in Kurdish politics as a less polarizing figure, having warmer relations than his uncle with rival Kurdish parties. —Reuters

Fatah and Hamas: A decade of strained relations, mistrust

GAZA: The handing over of Gaza Strip border crossings by Islamist movement Hamas to the Palestinian Authority yesterday is the latest step in efforts to end a 10-year rift. The split, which has at times erupted into deadly conflict, has seen rival administrations run by Hamas in the Gaza Strip and by president Mahmud Abbas's Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. Here is a look back at the history of the dispute:

Islamists win at the polls

In 2006, the Islamists of Hamas take part in elections to the Palestinian parliament for the first time, sweeping to a landslide victory over Abbas's Fatah movement, which had dominated it since it was established. A unity government is installed with Hamas taking key posts but it is dogged by international demands, rejected by the Islamists, that they renounce violence and recognize Israel and past peace deals.

Hamas seizes Gaza

In early 2007, simmering tensions between the rival factions erupt into bloody clashes in Gaza. After a week of violence in June, Abbas dismisses the unity government and declares a state of emergency in the territory. But Hamas fighters rout pro-Abbas forces and take control, a move the president calls a coup.

Reconciliation stillborn

In April 2011, Fatah and Hamas say they have reached an understanding to create an interim government to prepare for elections, but implementation is repeatedly delayed. In January 2012, the rivals strike a prisoner exchange agreement. The following month, they agree that Abbas should lead an interim government, but the deal is disputed within Hamas and never implemented. In April 2014, the Abbas-led Palestine Liberation Organization and Hamas finally agree on a unity government. It is sworn in on June 2 but fails to exercise authority over Gaza where Abbas accuses Hamas of setting up a parallel administration. In July-August 2014, the factions put up a united front after Israel launches a 50-day blitz against Gaza in response to rocket fire, but the unity government falls apart months later.

Pragmatism

In May 2017, Hamas makes a major revision to its founding charter, easing its stance on Israel after having long called for its destruction. The Islamist group says its struggle is not against Jews but against Israel as an occupier, and accepts the idea of a Palestinian state in territories occupied by Israel in the Six-Day War of 1967. The group-which remains blacklisted as a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union as well as Israel-is seen as seeking to ease its isolation without marginalizing hardliners in its ranks.

Pressure and concessions

Tensions persist over the formation by Hamas of an "administrative committee" in Gaza which is seen as a rival Palestinian government. Abbas puts the squeeze on Hamas including by cutting payments for electricity supplies to the territory. An Egyptian-led reconciliation push receives a major boost when Hamas agrees on September 17 to dissolve the committee and cede civil power, saying it is ready for talks on a new unity government and elections.—AFP

Century-old Balfour declaration hardens Israeli-Palestinian rift

Israelis celebrate it, Palestinians despise it

JERUSALEM: Israelis celebrate it. Palestinians despise it. The Balfour Declaration, Britain's promise to Zionists to create a Jewish home in what is now Israel, turns 100 this week, with events in Israel, the Palestinian territories and Britain drawing attention to the now yellowing document tucked away in London's British Library. Historians still muse about Britain's motivations and its commitment to the declaration waned in the decades after it was issued. Yet the 67 words penned by a British Cabinet minister still resonate loudly 100 years later, with both the Israelis and Palestinians seizing the anniversary to reinforce its narrative and justify its positions.

Each side is marking the centenary in starkly different ways, shining a light on the chasm between Israel and the Palestinians that some say was cleaved on Nov 2, 1917. "It's so divisive even today because Zionists think that the Balfour Declaration laid the foundation stone for modern Israel - and they're right to think that - and by the same token non-Jewish Palestinians and Arabs see it as the foundation stone of their dispossession and misery," said Jonathan Schneer, a historian who authored a book on the document. "Everything stems from the Balfour Declaration," he said.

The declaration was the result of discussions between British Zionist leaders seeking political recognition of their goals for Jewish statehood and British politicians embroiled in the First World War. Written by British Foreign Secretary Lord Arthur Balfour and addressed to Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild, a British financier and Zionist leader, the declaration promised British assistance to create a Jewish homeland.

"His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object," the declaration goes, continuing with a caveat: "It being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine." British motives for issuing the declaration include imperialist political calculations meant to secure a foothold in the eastern Levant amid the collapse of the Ottoman Empire to the messianism of British politicians steeped in biblical history, hoping to restore Jews to their ancestral home. The declaration served as the basis for the British Mandate of Palestine, which was approved in 1920 by the League of Nations, a precursor to the United Nations. The following decades saw a spike in the number of Jews immigrating to Palestine and the buds of Zionist state institutions taking root. With that came increased friction with the Arab population, setting the stage for conflict that continues to this day.

That fraught history is being reflected today in how both Israel and the Palestinians are using the declaration's centenary to enforce their stances. Israel views the pledge as the first international recognition granted to the Jewish people's desire to return to its historic homeland. It sees Britain as having played a supporting role in a narrative dominated by the determination, heroism and pioneering spirit of the early settlers who fought to build the state.

67 words resonate loudly 100 years later

"While the state would not have arisen without settlement, sacrifice and a willingness to fight for it, the international impetus was, undoubtedly, the Balfour Declaration," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said this week. Israel is planning a major campaign meant to drive home that narrative and zero in on its warm ties with Britain, an important ally when the European Union has taken steps against Israel's West Bank settlements in recent years. Netanyahu will travel to London, where he will mark the anniversary on Thursday at a festive dinner hosted by the current Lords Balfour and Rothschild and attended by British Prime Minister Theresa May.

An "anniversary concert" in London this weekend will feature British performers alongside a Jewish Israeli clarinetist and a pianist who is an Arab citizen of Israel. The anniversary is being marked far more morosely by the Palestinians. They see the declaration as the original sin, a harbinger of their "nakba," or catastrophe, the mass displacement that resulted from the war surrounding Israel's creation in 1948. That refugee crisis reverberates across the region today, and the Palestinians have cast Israel, through the declaration and its imperialist British patrons, as a colonial enterprise.

The Palestinians, who have spent recent years seeking recognition for their state at international institutions, are demanding British accountability. They want an apology and have threatened to sue Britain over the declaration. "We asked them to make it right, to make this historical oppression right by recognizing the state of Palestine and apologizing to the Palestinian people," said Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki. He said they have asked Britain to issue a new declaration that would be more favorable to the Palestinians, a request he said London rejected.

BETHLEHEM: An actor dressed up as Queen Elizabeth and Palestinian children from the Al-Aida refugee camp attend an event held by secretive British street artist Banksy to apologize for the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. The queen revealed a plaque carved in stone saying 'Er, Sorry,' playing on the common initials for Elizabeth Royal. —AFP

Protests are planned in the Palestinian territories, where thousands of students will stand in their schoolyards on Thursday demanding Britain dismiss the declaration, and in Britain, where dozens of cars will be emblazoned with posters condemning the declaration. In Jerusalem, thousands of letters from Palestinian schoolchildren are to be delivered to the British Consulate. Britain, meanwhile, has treaded lightly, casting the anniversary as a commemoration and not a celebration.

"We will mark the centenary with pride and respect, but also with a degree of sadness, as issues between Israel and the Palestinians remain unresolved," Middle East Minister Alistair Burt said last week. By the 1930s, a new government in Britain was backing away from its earlier promise to the Zionists, with an official commission of inquiry deciding that Britain's mandate over Palestine, with its constant internecine violence, proved untenable. The 1937 Peel Commission recommended that the land be split between Arabs and Jews.

Relations between the Jews in Mandatory Palestine and Britain would further deteriorate before Israel declared independence. Israel would later capture more territory in the 1967 Mideast war, including east Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, land the Palestinians want for their hoped-for state. The years since have been pockmarked by repeated spasms of violence and hopes for peace dwindling. "The Balfour Declaration is being used by both sides to advance a present agenda," said Martin Kramer, a historian at Jerusalem's Shalem College. —AP

News in brief

Rare protests in Eritrea

JOHANNESBURG: At least six people have been killed in rare protests in the capital of Eritrea, one of the world's most reclusive nations, an official with the largest Eritrean opposition group said yesterday. Another roughly 50 people were injured in the protests in Asmara that began on Monday and escalated on Tuesday, spokesman Nasredin Ali with the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization said. The group is based in neighboring Ethiopia. The US Embassy in Eritrea late Tuesday reported gunfire "at several locations in Asmara due to protests" and advised US citizens to avoid the downtown area. The statement did not say why the protests occurred. Nasredin said the demand by Eritrea's government to control a Muslim community school in Asmara led to the clashes.

Girls forced into sex

LONDON: At least 15 million teenage girls worldwide have been forced into sex - often by partners, relatives or friends - yet only one in 100 sought help, the United Nations said yesterday. Cameroon had the highest rate of sexual violence, with one in six teenage girls experiencing forced sex, the UN's children's agency (UNICEF) said in a report which examined data from more than 40 countries. "This idea of women being at the disposal of men is a big factor driving the experience of sexual violence of girls," report author Claudia Cappa told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. In the majority of cases, the abuser was known to the victim with acts of sexual violence carried out by husbands, boyfriends, family members, friends and classmates.

'Young girl' suicide bomber

YAOUNDE: Five children were killed Tuesday night and two others wounded by a suicide bomber described as a "young girl" in a northern region of Cameroon plagued by Boko Haram attacks, sources said yesterday. "A suicide bomber blew herself up (on Tuesday) at around 7.45 pm" in the village of Zamga, two kilometers from the Nigerian border, said a security officer responsible for the zone, reached from the capital Yaounde. "Five children were killed and two others wounded," he said on condition of anonymity, adding that the suicide bomber was also killed in the blast. The attack and the death toll were confirmed to AFP by another security source. A group of children was playing when "a young girl slipped in" among them, triggering her explosive charge, the safety officer explained.

Islamist stabs policemen

TUNIS: A hardline Islamist stabbed two Tunisian policemen yesterday in front of parliament, gravely wounding one of them, the interior ministry said. "A Salafist attacked two policemen with a knife. One was struck on the forehead, and the other stabbed in the neck and is in intensive care," ministry spokesman Yasser Mesbah said. Outside one of the entrances to parliament, bloodstains were visible at the site of the attack, which was cordoned off by police. The ministry in a statement said that the assailant was arrested and confessed to having adopted three years ago an extremist line of thought that views members of the security forces as "tyrants".

Rifts, recriminations among Catalonians

BARCELONA: Catalonia's secessionist politicians have admitted that the region's independence declaration failed and recriminations have started to fly. Five days after the Catalan parliament proclaimed a break away from Spain, the new republic's civil servants were working directly for the central government which imposed direct rule without finding any resistance, as had initially been feared.

Catalonia's deposed, separatist leader Carles Puigdemont had travelled to Brussels where he told independence supporters to prepare for "a long stretch" and said it would be better to "slow down" the independence process rather than risk unrest. He also accepted the "challenge" of Catalan elections on December 21 as called by Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy to "restore normality" after he imposed temporary direct rule on the semi-autonomous region in a bid to stop secession.

'Naivety'

"The independence movement hasn't slowed down, it's stopped," retorted a Spanish government source in Barcelona, who refused to be named. Santi Vila, who was Puigdemont's regional business minister until last week when he resigned after the Catalan leader decided against calling snap elections-an option some felt could have eased the crisis-accused his former colleagues Tuesday of naivety. He said Catalonia hadn't been ready to function as an independent republic. "Where's the control over the territory, the control of ports, airports, the management of transport?" he asked. "We lacked the necessary political intelligence," he admitted on Catalonia's Rac1 radio, but denied having misled independence supporters. "But it's true that I have government colleagues who displayed a level of naivety that is surprising at their age."

Separatist parties to stand

Vila put his name forward to lead his Catalan European Democratic Party (PDeCAT) - also Puigdemont's party-into the elections. PDeCAT is part of the separatist coalition that ruled Catalonia until the regional government was axed by Madrid on Friday, along with leftist nationalist ERC, whose leader Oriol Junqueras was vice-president and the region's economic czar. After having encouraged Puigdemont to take the final step towards a unilateral declaration of independence, ERC said it would take part in the regional election. "We're champions of democracy, no democrat can compete with us," Junqueras told Catalonia's TV3 television Monday.

BARCELONA: Catalan dismissed Interior chief Joaquim Forn (2nd left) arrives at El Prat airport in Barcelona after flying from Brussel. —AFP

For its part, the small far-left CUP party, an ally of Puigdemont, asked for time Tuesday to "reflect on what happened, because we've seen the limits of institutional mechanisms." The independence movement sought EU support after scenes of brutal police repression during an outlawed independence referendum on October 1 and the detention of two high-profile separatist civil leaders suspected of sedition-in vain. —AFP

Homeward bound? Europe mulls fate of militant families

PARIS: As the Islamic State group's self-proclaimed "caliphate" crumbles under an international military pounding, Europe's governments are grappling with a shared problem: what to do with returning jihadists and their families. Governments from London to Berlin have made no secret of their reluctance to take back nationals who went to fight in Iraq or Syria but now find themselves, as defeat nears, heading for home. The prospect of taking back extremists poses obvious security risks on a continent that has suffered a wave of jihadist attacks in recent years. Yet the situation also raises ethical dilemmas-particularly whether to abandon European jihadist wives to their fate, even if they have had a change of heart, along with their children.

"Madam Chancellor, I want to come home with my family, help us," a woman identified as 31-year-old Nadja Ramadan, from Frankfurt, pleads in a video addressed to German leader Angela Merkel. "I'm not a terrorist," she insists in the video aired by Die Zeit newspaper, a baby in her arms. Kurdish fighters detained Ramadan and her three children in Raqa, the IS Syrian "capital" which was recaptured this month by a US-backed alliance. So far, Berlin has refused to assist her.

She is one of a growing number of Europeans issuing pleas for help from their governments-either via the media or through their families. Last week, around 20 families wrote to French President Emmanuel Macron urging him to bring their daughters home to face the courts. "It is difficult to accept that our daughters, who did not fight, might be treated in the same way" as their husbands, they wrote. They urged "France, a country of human rights," not to let the women face possible torture or death in Syria or Iraq.

'Kill them'

Of some 5,000 EU jihadists believed to have gone to fight, around a third have already returned home, according to The Soufan Center, a US-based NGO that conducts research on global security. Some will have remained committed to violent jihad, it warned, adding: "It is clear that anyone who wishes to continue the fight will find a way to do so." So far, France, Germany and Britain have tackled returnees on a case-by-case basis. In Britain, where some 425 have returned, the goal is to "put them in court so they go to prison for a long time", said top anti-terrorism police officer Mark Rowley.

For those who cannot be put behind bars, he said, authorities will have to lean on surveillance and other "prevention measures" to keep the country safe. But some in Britain openly tout a tougher line. Junior foreign minister Rory Stewart said last week that there was only one way to neutralize British IS fighters. "These people are a serious danger to us," he told BBC radio. "Unfortunately the only way of dealing with them will be, in almost every case, to kill them." Defense Minister Michael Fallon also said Britons fighting with IS were "a legitimate target", following reports that Sally Jones, a Muslim convert nicknamed the "White Widow", had been killed in a military strike.

Children as a threat

Raphaello Pantucci, International Security Studies director at the British think tank RUSI, said governments "haven't been rushing" to claim responsibility for nationals captured by Kurdish fighters in Raqa and beyond. Although fighters and their wives in most cases ended up in the warzone by choice, "we do have a duty of care to our citizens", he said. "If they are showing up and we are able to put them through due process, that's what we should be doing."

The children of European jihadists can hardly be blamed for their parents' decisions and beliefs, he added. But in Germany at least, even these youngsters are being regarded as a security threat. "We consider the return to Germany of jihadists' children, indoctrinated in a warzone, to be dangerous," German intelligence chief Hans-Georg Massen warned this month. "This could allow a new generation of jihadists to be raised here." —AFP

US pursues direct diplomacy with N Korea despite Trump's rejection

Washington using the so-called 'New York channel'

WASHINGTON: The United States is quietly pursuing direct diplomacy with North Korea, a senior State Department official said yesterday, despite US President Donald Trump's public assertion that such talks are a waste of time. Using the so-called "New York channel," Joseph Yun, US negotiator with North Korea, has been in contact with diplomats at Pyongyang's United Nations mission, the official said, at a time when an exchange of bellicose insults between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has fueled fears of military conflict.

While US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Oct 17 said he would continue "diplomatic efforts ... until the first bomb drops," the official's comments were the clearest sign the United States was directly discussing issues beyond the release of American prisoners, despite Trump having dismissed direct talks as pointless. There is no sign, however, that the behind-the-scenes communications have improved a relationship vexed by North Korea's nuclear and missile tests, the death of US university student Otto Warmbier days after his release by Pyongyang in June and the detention of three other Americans.

Word of quiet engagement with Pyongyang comes despite Trump's comments, North Korea's weapons advances and suggestions by some US and South Korean officials that Yun's interactions with North Koreans had been reined in. "It has not been limited at all, both (in) frequency and substance," said the senior State Department official. Among the points that Yun has made to his North Korean interlocutors is to "stop testing" nuclear bombs and missiles, the official said.

Meanwhile, North Korea slammed US President as "incurably mentally deranged" in a personal attack ahead of his first visit to Asia, as the South's leader insisted Washington could not take military action on the peninsula without his agreement. Trump and the North's leader Kim Jong-Un have traded threats of war and personal insults against each other in recent months, heightening worries about another conflict on the peninsula where the 1950-53 Korean War left millions dead.

The US leader has warned of "fire and fury", telling the UN General Assembly that Washington would "totally destroy North Korea" if it had to defend itself or its allies. Washington and Seoul have been in a security alliance for decades, and the US has 28,500 troops stationed in the South to defend it from the North. Trump dubbed Kim "Rocket Man" in the same speech-Pyongyang has tested missiles apparently capable of reaching much of the US mainland-and days later Kim responded with a personal statement calling him a "dotard", an obscure term for a weak or senile old man.

North Korea this year conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear detonation and has test-fired a volley of missiles, including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that, if perfected, could in theory reach the United States mainland. The possibility that Pyongyang may be closer to attaching a nuclear warhead to an ICBM has alarmed the Trump administration, which in April unveiled a policy of "maximum pressure and engagement" that has so far failed to deter North Korea.

Pyongyang blasts 'incurably mentally deranged' Trump

At the start of Trump's presidency, Yun's instructions were limited to seeking the release of US prisoners. "It is (now) a broader mandate than that," said the State Department official, declining, however, to address whether authority had been given to discuss North Korea's nuclear and missile program. In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said China welcomed any dialogue between the United States and North Korea. "We encourage North Korea and the United States to carry out engagement and dialogue," Hua told reporters, adding that she hoped talks could help return the issue to a diplomatic track for resolution.

SEOUL: South Korean protesters stage a rally against a planned visit by US President Donald Trump near US Embassy in Seoul, South Korea yesterday. The White House said Trump will not visit the Demilitarized Zone during his upcoming trip to Asia - a break from many previous administrations. The signs held by the protesters read: "We oppose Trump's visit." —AP

Sanctions and engagement

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg has urged all United Nations members to fully and transparently implement sanctions against North Korea, which he said has emerged as a global threat. Speaking at the United Nations on Sept 19, Trump vowed to "totally destroy" North Korea if it threatened the United States or its allies, raising anxieties about the possibility of military conflict.

Twelve days later, after Tillerson said Washington was probing for a diplomatic opening, Trump said on Twitter that his chief diplomat was "wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man" - his mocking nickname for the North Korean leader. Democratic US senators introduced a bill on Tuesday they said would prevent Trump from launching a nuclear first strike on North Korea on his own, highlighting the issue days before the Republican's first presidential trip to Asia.

A high-ranking North Korean defector said in Washington on Tuesday that he backed the Trump administration's policy of pressuring Pyongyang through sanctions, coupled with "maximum engagement" with the leadership and increased efforts to get information into North Korea to educate its people. "I strongly believe in the use of soft power before taking any military actions," Thae Yong Ho, chief of mission at Pyongyang's embassy in London until he defected in 2016, told the Center for Strategic and International Studies. —Agencies

Neighbors worry as China aims for 'world-class army'

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping's pledge to build a "world-class army" by 2050 is making his neighbors nervous, but analysts say Beijing's military ambitions do not constitute a strategic threat for now. With purchases and construction of fighter jets, ships and hi-tech weaponry, China's military budget has grown steadily for 30 years, but remains three times smaller than that of the United States. Now, Beijing wants to catch up. "We should strive to fully transform the people's armed forces into a world-class military by the mid-21st century," Xi told 2,300 delegates of the Chinese Communist Party, which he heads and which controls the army.

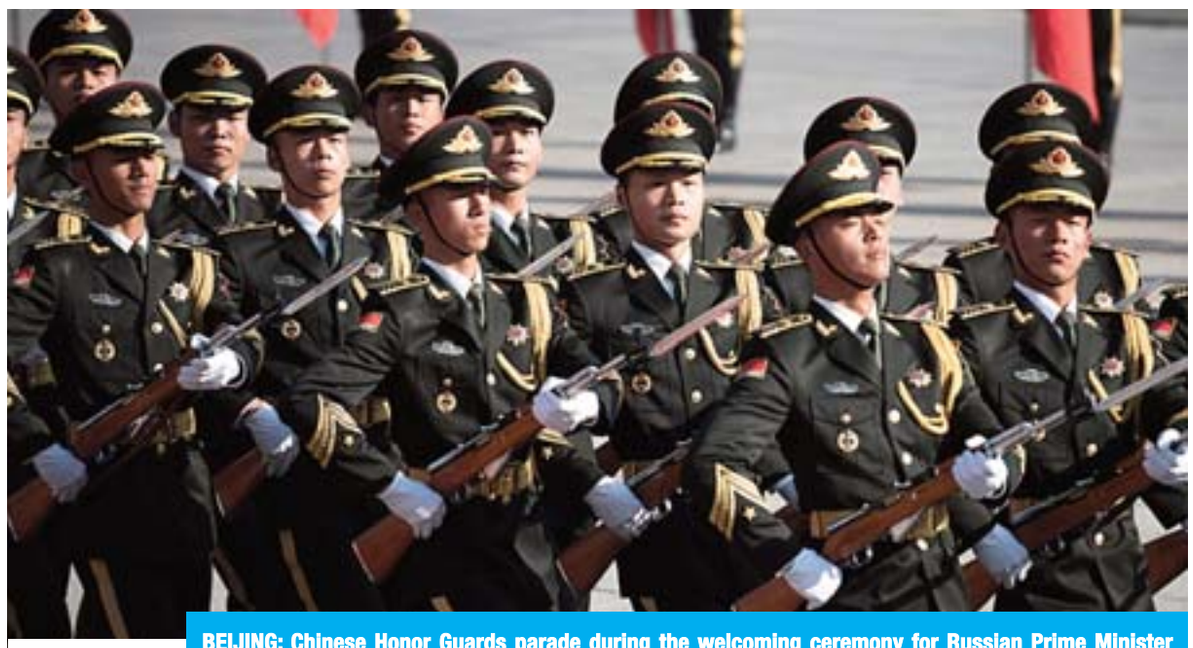
The comments, made during the party's twice-a-decade congress, were aimed in part at domestic nationalists, but also intended to show other countries "China's desire to be strong economically as well as militarily," said James Char, a military analyst at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University. During China's so-called Century of Humiliation, starting around the mid-19th century, the country lost almost every war it fought, and was often forced to give major concessions in subsequent treaties. "That's why China, more than any other country, dreams of a strong army. Not to bully other countries, but to defend ourselves," said Ni Lexiong from Shanghai University of Political Science and Law.

Worried neighbors

But Xi's call to build a military that can "fight and win" has alarmed China's neighbors, several of whom are embroiled in tense border disputes with the superpower. This summer India and China engaged in a bitter, weeks-long military confrontation over a disputed area in the Himalayas. Japan regularly faces off with Chinese maritime patrols close to the Senkaku islands, which are called the Diaoyu in Mandarin and claimed by Beijing. And Beijing asserts sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea, despite rival claims from countries including Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia.

Beijing has reclaimed islands it controls in the sea in order to cement its claims and installed military aircraft and missile systems on them, causing tensions to spiral in recent years. "Chinese activities are a security concern for the region encompassing Japan and for the international community," said a recent Japanese defense report. "It is incontestable that the country's rise as a military power is setting off an arms race in Asia," said Juliette Genevaz, China researcher at the France-based Military School Strategic Research Institute. "This arms race in Asia has several causes," she said, noting North Korea's nuclear weapons program as one of the contributors.

But, "China's military build-up and reclaiming activities in the South China Sea is a major factor." China's military expenditure in 2016 was an estimated $215 billion, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, putting it in first place in Asia, well ahead of India ($56 billion), Japan ($46 billion) and South Korea ($37 billion). The country has not participated in any conflict since a month-long border war against Vietnam in 1979 that killed tens of thousands of people and a 1988 skirmish, also with Hanoi, over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, that left 64 dead.



BEIJING: Chinese Honor Guards parade during the welcoming ceremony for Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang at the Great Hall of the People yesterday. —AFP

But it has been busy boosting its military activities abroad. This year, Beijing opened its first foreign military base, in Djibouti. Since 2008, its navy has participated in anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. The country is the largest contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations among the permanent members of the Security Council, with some 2,500 soldiers and military experts deployed. The moves are all part of a larger, decades-long effort to modernize the country's military, which had become riddled with corruption, incompetence and waste.

'Absolute control'

But while Xi flexed his muscles at the head of China's central military commission during his first term, he is likely to observe more caution in future, having consolidated his power base by bringing down two of the country's highest-ranking army officers for corruption, said James Char. He also reaffirmed the party's "absolute control" over the army during the recently concluded congress. —AFP

Malaysia probes 'leak' of 46 million mobile users data

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is investigating an alleged attempt to sell the data of more than 46 million mobile phone subscribers online, in what appears to be one of the largest leaks of customer data in Asia. The massive data breach, believed to affect almost the entire population of Malaysia, was first reported last month by Lowyat.net, a local technology news website. The website said it had received a tip-off that someone was trying to sell huge databases of personal information on its forums.

The country's internet regulator, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), was looking into the matter with the police, Communications and Multimedia Minister Salleh Said Keruak said yesterday. "We have identified several potential sources of the leak and we should be able to complete the probe soon," Salleh told reporters at parliament. The leaked data included lists of mobile phone numbers, identification card numbers, home addresses, and SIM card data of 46.2 million customers from at least 12 Malaysian mobile phone and mobile virtual network operators (MVNO).

Like Equifax

Cybersecurity researchers said the leaked data was extensive enough to allow criminals to create fraudulent identities to make online purchases. Justin Lie, CEO of Cashshield, a Singapore-based anti-fraud company, compared the Malaysian case in its "degree of complexity" to the cyber attack on U.S. credit-scoring agency Equifax Inc, which said in September that cyber criminals had stolen sensitive information from 145.5 million people. "Now these hackers have more quality information such as birth dates, IC numbers, mobile numbers, email address and passwords," Lie said about the Malaysian attack.

Customers of Malaysia's biggest mobile service providers, including Maxis, Axiata Group's Celcom and DiGi, among others, were affected. MCMC's chief operating officer Mazlan Ismail said on Tuesday the regulator had met with local telecommunications companies to seek their cooperation in the probe, according to state news agency Bernama. Celcom and Maxis said in separate statements they were cooperating with authorities on the investigation. DiGi did not respond to requests for comment.

'Almost every Malaysian'

According to a Singapore-based cybersecurity researcher, the leaked database was initially being sold on several underground forums for 1 bitcoin, which was trading yesterday at around $6,500. At least one other user was posting a link for anyone to download for free. The researcher, who declined to be named, said he had seen at least 10 people on an online forum in the "dark web" download the data before it was taken offline. "Discussion in the dark web shows a huge interest," he said. Time stamps indicate the leaked data was last updated between May and July 2014, Lowyat.net said. "We are urging the telco and MVNO companies mentioned above to alert, and start immediately replacing the SIM cards, of all affected customers, especially those who have not updated their SIM cards since 2014," Lowyat.net said in a post. —Reuters

News in brief

India to buy choppers

NEW DELHI: India will purchase more than 100 armed helicopters for its navy to replace its outdated French-designed fleet in a military deal worth $3.2 billion, an official said yesterday. The defense acquisition council approved funding for the purchase of 111 multi-utility helicopters for attack missions, search and rescue, surveillance operations and medical evacuation. A spokesman for the Indian navy said on Twitter the new aircraft were a huge step toward addressing a "critical void of helicopters" for the naval fleet, which currently uses the French-designed Chetak model. The government will identify a foreign military hardware company and a local defense firm to develop the helicopters in a joint partnership.

Non-smokers rewarded

TOKYO: Non-smoking employees at one Japanese firm are getting six additional days' holiday to compensate for the time their colleagues spend puffing away at work. Piala, a Tokyo-based online commerce consulting and marketing company, kicked off the program in September after an employee complained about the time lost by smoking colleagues who frequently disappear to light up. "Because our office is located on the 29th floor ... it takes at least 10 minutes for a smoker to go down to a common smoking room in the basement and come back," spokesman Hirotaka Matsushima said. "But at the same time, it's true that smoking room conversations are mostly about work ... they exchange ideas and consult each other," he said. "So we decided it's better to give rewards (to non-smokers) than punish the smokers," added Matsushima. Since the start of the program on September 1, four employees out of 42 smokers have kicked the habit. There are 120 people employed in total at the firm.

Blast kills 13 at wedding

NEW DELHI: At least 13 people including a pregnant woman were killed when an electricity transformer exploded outside a wedding ceremony in western India, police said yesterday. Dozens of guests had assembled for the ceremony outside a family home in the western state of Rajasthan when the transformer exploded, spewing hot oil and metal shards. "Four people died on the spot," local police superintendent Rameshwar Singh said. "We are ascertaining the cause of the blast." Singh said several others were being treated for severe burns after the disaster, which triggered protests against the electricity department. Locals said they had raised concerns about the maintenance of the transformer with officials, but nothing had been done.

Indian 'fast-track court'

NEW DELHI: A fast-track court in India has convicted two men of raping their 10-year-old niece in a case that hit the headlines when her appeal for a late-term abortion was rejected on health grounds, a lawyer said yesterday. The girl, who cannot be named, gave birth in August after the Supreme Court rejected her family's plea that she be allowed a late-term abortion on health grounds. India only allows abortions up to 20 weeks except in cases where the life of the mother is threatened by the pregnancy. But many child rape survivors do not realize they are pregnant until after the 20-week limit, a problem highlighted by a slew of high-profile cases in recent months. Lawyer Manjit Singh, who represents one of the two men convicted on Tuesday, said the special court in the northern city of Chandigarh would sentence them on Thursday."

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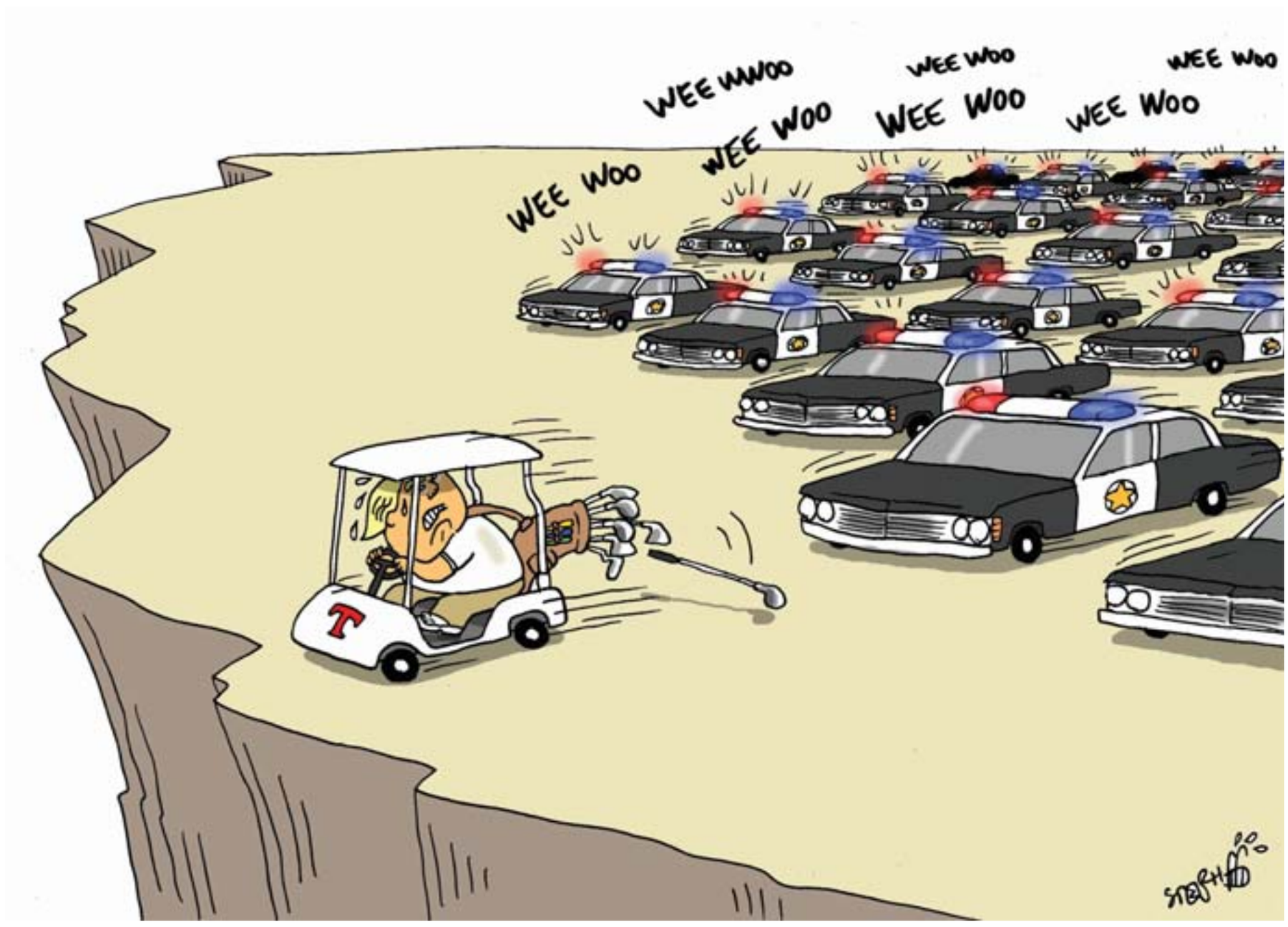


Limbo land for UK maids: Slavery or deportation

A work trip to Britain was the opportunity of a lifetime for Mary - finally a chance to escape slavery in Saudi Arabia. Traumatized by abuse and beatings dished out over six years by her Saudi bosses, Mary, a 37-year-old domestic worker from the Philippines, seized the moment and ran. Yet in the four years since, she has lived in fear. Undocumented and unable to stay legally in Britain, Mary works as a cleaner, sending her pay to relatives back home.

The new family does not hurt her, but subjects her to long days for little pay. She is glad to earn 400 pounds ($530) a week, though rarely gets a good night's sleep. "Every time there is a knock on the door, I can't help but feel scared," Mary told the Thomson Reuters Foundation at a support group for foreign domestic workers in London. "At night, I don't sleep so good. I feel traumatized - I don't want to be detained or deported like other people I know," added Mary, who asked to remain anonymous because of her status.

More than 17,000 domestic workers such as Mary are brought to Britain each year - mainly by wealthy families visiting from Gulf countries - and many complain of being exploited by employers who lock them up, abuse them and withhold pay.

Abuse and fear

Their plight has worsened since April 2012 when the British government introduced tied visas for domestic workers - removing their right to change employer, bring family members with them or stay longer than half a year, according to several charities. Britain last year made reforms, allowing domestic workers to change employers within six months of arriving in the country, vowing to better inform workers of their rights, and granting visas of up to two years for those found to be enslaved.

Yet campaigners say very few workers are aware of their new rights, that six months is too short to move jobs, and much of the abuse they suffer - from starvation to rape - is not considered slavery to the government. With a rising number of overseas domestic workers - about 19,000 visas were granted last year against 15,000 in 2014 - charities fear more women will be exploited behind closed doors. Many of these workers choose to endure any abuse, rather than flee and lose a visa, paycheck and place to live.

Those who escape tend to find themselves in even greater peril - often alone, undocumented, and scared to seek help. "They go into other abusive situations, without passport or visa, or any knowledge, and are too afraid to speak out or come forward for fear of being deported," said Marissa Begonia, founder of campaign group The Voice of Domestic Workers.

'Brainwashed'

The government's reform of tied visas has not lessened the abuse and violence inflicted upon foreign domestic workers, according to Avril Sharp of the charity Kalayaan. Of the workers who entered Britain on the new visa, left their employers then visited the charity for support, 85 percent said they suffered psychological abuse, about two in three were denied regular food or a day off, and a quarter had been beaten. "There has been little to no impact since the changes ... we are still seeing the same or even higher levels of abuse towards domestic workers," said Sharp, a policy officer at Kalayaan.

The Home Office, Britain's interior ministry, said last year it would introduce voluntary information sessions to educate domestic workers and abusive employers, yet activists say there has been no update on when or how they will be implemented. "In most cases, workers have been heavily conditioned ... brainwashed into believing they are people who have no rights," said Emily-Anna Gibbs, a lawyer for the Anti Trafficking and Labour Exploitation Unit (ATLEU), a London-based charity. "Domestic workers are threatened and led to believe that their employers are highly powerful people," Gibbs added. "Changing such beliefs is going to be difficult and take time."

A Home Office spokesman said the government was developing pilot information sessions as part of wider reforms to better protect workers from abuse and slavery. "We will not tolerate modern slavery or criminals seeking to exploit the vulnerable, which is why we have taken world-leading action through the Modern Slavery Act," the spokesman said. Britain passed the landmark law in 2015 to crack down on traffickers, make business check supply chains for forced labour, and protect people at risk of enslavement. At least 13,000 people across Britain are estimated by the government to be victims of modern slavery - police say the true figure is likely to be tens of thousands higher.

No way home

At a weekly Sunday session held by The Voice of Domestic Workers, founder Begonia smiled as she watched dozens of women mingle, gossip and enjoy a rare day off from domestic drudgery. The group provides its 1,500-odd members with counselling, legal advice, English lessons and computer courses, and even rescues abused domestic workers who reach out for help. "We are a family, we are sisters and we encourage domestic workers to speak out about their suffering to raise awareness," said Begonia, who arrived in Britain in 2004 to work as a maid. —Reuters

Assad sets sights on Kurdish areas

Move risks new Syria conflict

With Islamic State near defeat in Syria, Damascus is setting its sights on territory held by Kurdish-led forces including eastern oilfields, risking a new confrontation that could draw the United States in more deeply and complicate Russian diplomacy. President Bashar Al-Assad and his Iranian allies appear to have been emboldened by events in Iraq, where Kurdish authorities have suffered a major blow since regional states mobilized against their independence referendum, analysts say.

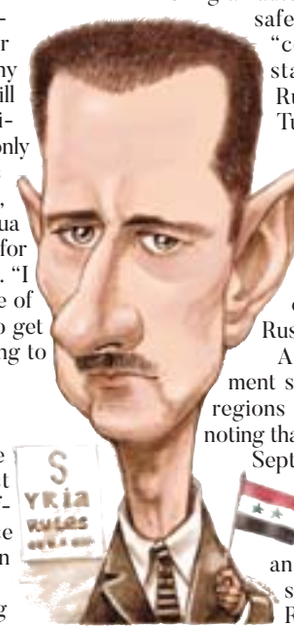
Rivalry between the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), supported by the United States, and the Syrian government backed by Iran and Russia is emerging as a fault line with their common enemy - Islamic State - close to collapse in Syria. Syria's main Kurdish groups hope for a new phase of negotiations that will shore up their autonomy in northern Syria. Assad's government, however, is asserting its claim to areas captured by the SDF from the jihadist group, known in Arabic by its enemies as Daesh, in more forceful terms.

On Sunday, Damascus declared Islamic State's former capital at Raqqa would be considered "occupied" until the Syrian army took control - a challenge to Washington which helped the SDF capture the city in months of fighting. And the eastern oilfields seized by the SDF in October, including Syria's largest, will be a target for the government as it tries to recover resources needed for reconstructing areas it controls, according to a Syrian official and a non-Syrian commander in the alliance fighting in support of Assad.

"The message is very clear to the SDF militants and their backers in the coalition, headed by America: the lands they took from Daesh are rightfully the Syrian state's," said the non-Syrian commander, who requested that his name and nationality be withheld. "Regarding the resources of the Syrian people in the east - oil and so on - we will not allow anyone to continue to control the country's resources and to create cantons or to think about self government," added the commander, who is part of a military alliance that includes numerous Iran-backed Shiite militias from across the region.

The Syrian official said the SDF could not keep control of oil resources. "We won't permit it," said the official, speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity as he was giving a personal view. The United States has not spelt out how military support for the SDF will evolve after Islamic State's defeat, a sensitive point due to the concerns of its NATO ally Turkey. Ankara regards Syrian Kurdish power as a threat its national security as its forces are fighting Kurdish PKK rebels over the border in Turkey.

The US-led coalition, which has established several military bases in northern Syria, has been helping the SDF shore up control of the recently captured Al-Omar oil field in Deir al-Zor province. "Many people will say that will help them with (political) negotiations, but only if the United States remains with them, otherwise they are going to get clobbered," said Joshua Landis, an expert on Syria and head of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Oklahoma. "I think the Syrian government is going to push on some of these oil wells, in the same way as Iraq just pushed to get Kirkuk oil, and in the same way the Iraqi push is going to embolden the Syrian army," he said.



Kirkuk 'Lesson'

Iraqi Kurds took control of large areas outside their autonomous region during the fight against Islamic State. However, last month's independence referendum prompted Western opposition and fierce resistance from Baghdad, Ankara and Assad's Iranian allies, and the Kurdish authorities have since lost much territory to Baghdad, including oil producing areas around the city of Kirkuk. The Syrian official said this should serve "as a lesson for the Kurds in Syria, so they think about the future".

Regional sources say the US unwillingness to stop Iraqi government forces, backed by Shiite militias, from recapturing Kirkuk sent an encouraging message to Assad and his Iranian allies to retake the SDF-held oil areas in Syria. With critical military support from Russia and the Iran-backed militias, Assad has recovered swathes of central and eastern Syria from Islamic State this year, having defeated many anti-Assad rebel factions in western Syria.

The Kurdish YPG militia, the dominant force in the SDF, controls the second largest chunk of Syrian territory - around a quarter of the country. Syrian Kurdish leaders say they are not seeking secession. The YPG and Damascus have mostly avoided conflict during the Syrian civil war, setting aside historic enmity to fight shared foes. Kurdish-led regions of northern Syria have meanwhile focused on establishing an autonomous government which they aim to safeguard. Moscow has called for a new "congress" of Syrian groups that may start work on a new constitution. The Russian Foreign Ministry published on Tuesday a list of 33 groups and political parties invited to a meeting in the Black Sea resort of Sochi on Nov 18. A Syrian Kurdish official told Reuters the administration in northern Syria had been invited to the congress. Kurdish officials said they discussed their political demands with the Russians as recently as last month.

A senior Kurdish politician said government statements directed at the Kurdish-led regions of northern Syria were contradictory, noting that the Syrian foreign minister had said in September that Kurdish autonomy demands were negotiable. "One day they say we are willing to negotiate and then someone else denies this or puts out an opposing statement," Fawza Youssef said in a telephone interview with Reuters. —Reuters

Fewer tuk-tuks, more hardhats: Lanka tackles labor crisis

Asitha Udaya Priyantha has found the dream job: the 22-year-old is already his own boss, cruising Sri Lanka's streets in his autorickshaw, earning good money on his own time. But this is not what the island government wants its young people doing as one million jobs in booming sectors such as construction go unfilled, and businesses look abroad for laborers to get work done. It is a puzzling scenario for Sri Lanka, which for decades has exported labor to the Middle East and reaped the foreign exchange flowing back to an island impoverished from years of war.

But now, amid an economic upswing, the government is trying to lure them back, offering competitive wages and other sweeteners to get workers into blue-collar jobs at home where they are needed. Policymakers are also being urged to tap another source of underutilized labor: The glut of tuk-tuk drivers on Sri Lanka's roads.

There are 1.2 million auto drivers in Sri Lanka - far more than is needed for a small island of 21 million, says the union representing tuk-tuk drivers. The United Three Wheel Drivers and Industry Association says most of the newcomers swelling the already oversaturated ranks are young men keen to make a quick buck. "The trend is for young people to start driving a three-wheeler no sooner they get a licence," said Rohana Perera, association secretary of the national United Three Wheel Drivers and Industry Association. "If we continue like this we will not have young people to do any other job in the country."

School leavers only need 50,000 rupees ($333) for a down payment on a three-wheeler, money they can raise easily in loans from family, he added. Priyantha was attracted to the profession after growing tired of the low pay and long hours at his regular job in a photo studio. "I saved some money and bought a three wheeler and now I am my own boss," Priyantha told AFP. "I have more freedom and I earn twice as much."

Radical changes

The union wants the government to increase the minimum working age for rickshaw drivers from 18 to 35 to curb the flow of new recruits flooding the overcrowded roads. There have also been calls for an import ban on trishaws from neighboring India to curtail supply. The Professional Three Wheel Drivers' Association blames Sri Lanka's lack of vocational training for young graduates getting behind the wheel instead of taking up better paying jobs in under filled sectors.

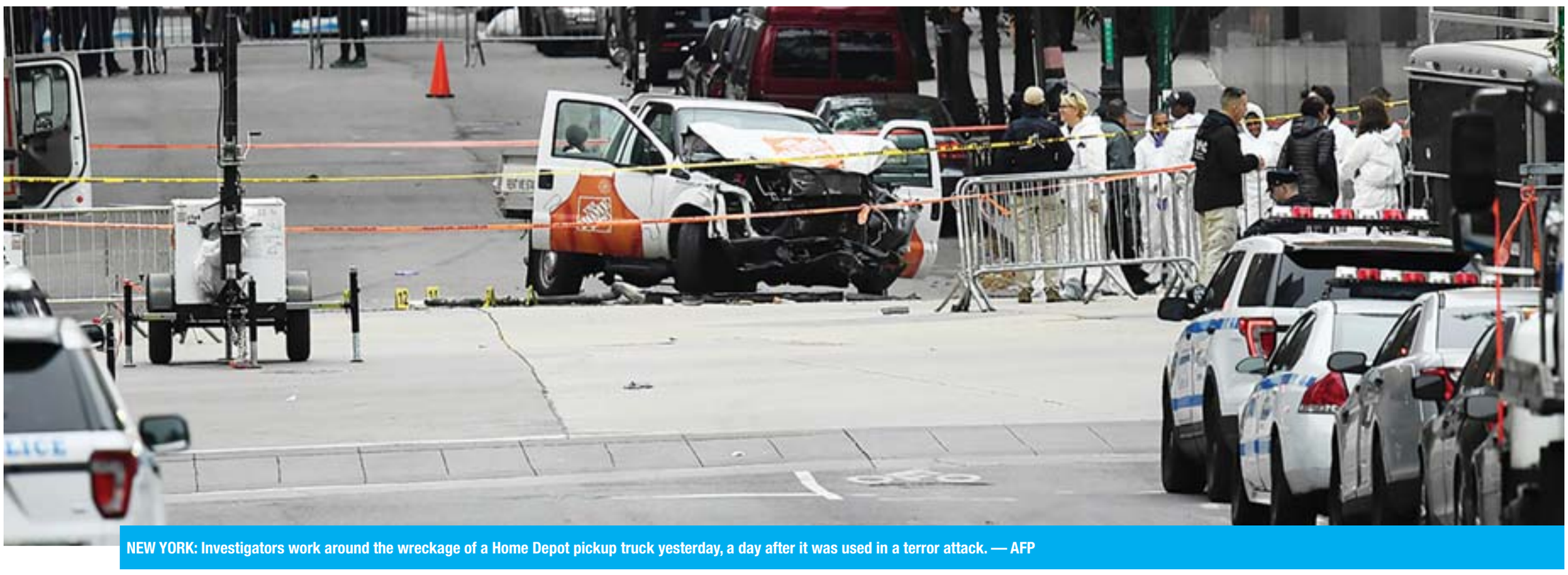
"Unless there are radical changes to prepare school leavers for gainful employment, they will take a short cut and start driving three wheelers," the association's Nishantha Perera told AFP. The drain of young workers into tuk-tuks compounds a labour crisis for the government, which has overseen robust economic growth since the 37-year civil war ended in 2009.

In this photograph taken on July 7, 2017, an autorickshaw drives past a row of parked three-wheel taxis on a road in Colombo. —AFP

The construction industry, undergoing an unprecedented post-war boom, has been forced to turn to India, Bangladesh and Nepal for the 400,000 workers it needs to build the hotels and condominiums springing up in Sri Lanka's cities. Advertisements aimed at Nepali workers placed in industry magazines promote $450-a-month salaries plus annual return airfares and health and accident insurance. Some construction companies are giving away motorcycles and small cars as incentives to retain skilled workers who commit to two to five years of service.

The government meanwhile hopes rising wages and economic optimism will encourage some of the estimated two million Sri Lankan workers abroad to return home and enjoy the good times. "Already in the construction industry, the wages are comparable with what is offered in Middle Eastern countries," said Mangala Samaraweera, Sri Lanka's finance minister. "I am sure many will prefer to return because they will be closer to their families and working conditions are much better here (in Sri Lanka)."

They will be sorely needed. The government expects to create more than a million new jobs within three years as major investments, especially in a new financial zone in the capital Colombo, begin to take shape. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe wants Sri Lankans - whether at home or abroad - filling those vacancies. "I am not asking for a large number of foreign workers to come in, but there should be a way of attracting our own Sri Lankans back here with higher incomes," he said. —AFP



NEW YORK: Investigators work around the wreckage of a Home Depot pickup truck yesterday, a day after it was used in a terror attack. — AFP

Uzbek planned NY attack for weeks...

Continued from Page 1

While The New York Times said the attacker had previously been on the radar of federal authorities, Miller said Saipov had "never" previously been the "subject" of either a New York police intelligence or an FBI inquiry.

New York would remain resilient, Mayor Bill de Blasio insisted, with the annual marathon going ahead as planned on Sunday. Police said the event, which attracts more than 50,000 runners and 2.5 million spectators, would be the most protected ever with rooftop observation posts and sniper teams doubled. "This was an attack on the United States of America and an attack on New York City," de Blasio said. "We will not be cowed, we will not be thrown off by anything."

While officials say preliminary evidence suggests Saipov acted alone and was not part of a wider plot, Cuomo has drastically stepped up security at airports, tunnels and Penn Station, which he called the busiest rail hub in the hemisphere. Still some New Yorkers admitted to feeling nervous. "I am scared," said Megan Brosterman, a 38-year-old mother dropping off two children at school yesterday close to the scene. "It does bring memories from 9/11... I can't change my routine because of this," she told AFP. "Life goes on."

Five of the dead were Argentines, visiting for a school reunion. A Belgian woman was also killed. Of the 12 injured, nine remain in hospital - four critical but stable and the others serious, said fire department chief Daniel Nigro. Injuries include a bilateral amputation, and serious head, neck and back trauma, he said. One Argentine, a German and three Belgians, were among the injured.

Saipov reportedly lived in Florida and Ohio, before moving to Paterson, a former industrial hub in New Jersey about 30 km northeast of New York, where he lived with his wife and three children. The truck was rented in New Jersey. Hundreds of FBI and police detectives are now working 24-seven, following leads in New York, New Jersey and around the country.

Trump, facing what appears to be the worst militant-inspired attack of his less than one year in office, denounced Saipov as an "animal" and said he would "certainly consider" sending him to America's military detention center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. "We also have to come up with punishment that is far quicker and far greater than the punishment these animals are getting right now," Trump told reporters at the start of a cabinet meeting. "We need quick justice, and we need strong justice. Much quicker and much stronger than we have right now."

The US president announced a stepping-up of his "extreme vetting program" for foreign travelers and said he was moving to terminate the green card lottery which enabled the suspect to enter the country. "We have to do what's right to protect our citizens," he told reporters. "We will get rid of this lottery program as soon as possible." Earlier yesterday, Trump called the visa program "a Chuck Schumer beauty" - a reference to the Senate's Democratic leader. Schumer fired back from the Senate floor, accusing Trump of "politicizing" the tragedy.

Saipov came to the US in 2010 with a diversity immigrant visa, the US Department of Homeland Security confirmed yesterday. "DHS can confirm that the individual identified in the New York City terror attack was admitted to the US upon presentation of a passport with a valid diversity immigrant visa to US Customs and Border Protection in 2010," department spokesman Tyler Houlton said. Trump said he wants to move US immigration to a "merit-based system" and not allow immigrants to bring their extended families. "We want to get rid of chain migration," he said.

The diversity visa program provides up to 50,000 visas annually by lottery. Applicants must have a high school diploma or meet work experience requirements. It was created as part of a bipartisan immigration bill introduced by the late Democratic Sen Ted Kennedy and signed into law by Republican President George H W Bush in 1990. In 2015 the green card lottery, applications were received for more than 14 million people, and 49,377 won green cards. That included 2,524 Uzbeks.

Trump's targeting of the lottery - and of Democrats who support it - was immediately criticized in New York, a Democrat-run state and city, which prides itself on the diversity of its more than 8.5 million-strong population. In March 2015, two Uzbeks and a Kazakh living in New York were arrested on charges of supporting IS. One of them, who threatened former president Barack Obama, was sentenced to 15 years in prison last week.

Uzbekistan, a majority Muslim country that borders Afghanistan and formerly part of the Soviet Union, is a landlocked country racked with poverty, corruption and stifling authoritarian regime. In less than a year, three other men with Uzbek links have been blamed for a deadly nightclub shooting in Istanbul, a Saint Petersburg metro bombing and Stockholm attack. — Agencies

Banksy holds Balfour 'apology party' for Palestinians at hotel

BETHLEHEM: Secretive British street artist Banksy held a special event yesterday to apologize for the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration outside his hotel in the occupied West Bank. The typically surreal event involved 50 children hosted by an actor dressed as Queen Elizabeth II for a British-style tea party. Their party hats were bullet-riddled helmets with British flags on them, while tattered Union Jacks were flown. The queen revealed a plaque carved in concrete saying "Er, Sorry," playing on the common initials for Elizabeth Regina.

The apology was etched into Israel's controversial separation wall, which in many areas cuts through Palestinian territory. The children were descendants of Palestinians forced to flee their land in the 1948 war surrounding the creation of Israel. Today marks the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, when the British government said it viewed "with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people".

Palestinians see the document as giving away their homeland, while Israelis see it as helping pave the way to the founding of their country at a time when Jews were facing persecution elsewhere. "This conflict has brought so much suffering to people on all sides. It didn't feel appropriate to 'celebrate' the British role in it," Banksy said in a statement. "The British didn't handle things well here - when you organize a wedding, it's best to make sure the bride isn't already married."

Gemma Bell, a British woman among a group who walked part of the way from London to Jerusalem to apologize for their government's role in Balfour, hailed the work. "It's what we should expect from Banksy - brilliant, unpredictable, dramatic and really getting that message home." The British government has said it will mark today's anniversary "with pride", with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to attend a dinner in London with his British counterpart Theresa May.

Banksy opened the Walled-Off Hotel near Bethlehem in March, with all the rooms facing directly onto Israel's separation wall. At the time, he said it had the worst view of any hotel in the world. Dozens of his works are found inside the hotel. Wissam Salsaa, the hotel's manager, told AFP they wanted to protest against the British government's attitude to Balfour. — AFP

BETHLEHEM: Palestinians stand around an effigy of Arthur Balfour during a protest on the centenary of the Balfour Declaration yesterday. — AP

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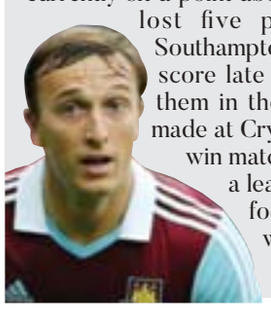
Noble urges West Ham to manage games better



LONDON: West Ham United must learn to hold onto a lead if they are to climb up the Premier League standings, club captain Mark Noble said ahead of Saturday's clash with Liverpool. Slaven Bilic's side have recorded two wins in their opening 10 league games of the season and currently sit a point above the relegation zone in 16th place. They have lost five points from winning positions, allowing Southampton, Burnley and most recently Crystal Palace to score late goals, and Noble said such results could cost them in the long run. "You can't make mistakes like we made at Crystal Palace in the Premier League and expect to win matches, so we really need to learn how to hold onto a lead because we're really shooting ourselves in the foot," the 30-year-old midfielder told the club's website (www.whufc.com). —Reuters

Williams back in Wales squad after Morgan injury

CARDIFF: Centre Scott Williams has been recalled to the Wales squad for their autumn international series after Tyler Morgan was ruled out with an ankle injury. Williams, who has 48 caps but was surprisingly left out of coach Warren Gatland's initial squad, joined up with the team on Wednesday, Wales Rugby Union has confirmed. "Tyler Morgan's ankle injury sustained in the fixture for the Dragons against the Ospreys last weekend will preclude him from taking any part of the Under Armour Series, with this in mind he will continue his management at his Region," WRU said in a press release. Williams' omission from the original squad raised a number of eyebrows as he paid the price for a below-par performance against Samoa in the June international series. Wales host Australia in Cardiff on Nov. 11, with home matches against Georgia, New Zealand and South Africa to follow on consecutive Saturdays thereafter. — Reuters

S Lanka handed Mathews boost ahead of India tour

COLOMBO: All-rounder Angelo Mathews has been declared fit and available for Sri Lanka's tour of India later this month as the islanders strive to end their limited-overs woes against their formidable neighbours. Former captain Mathews missed the two-test series against Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates with a calf injury, the latest setback in the injury-plagued career of the 30-year-old. "Angelo and Kusal Janith (Perera) have both recovered and they will be considered for selection for the Indian series," Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) chief executive Ashley De Silva was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo (www.espncricinfo.com). "Asela Gunaratne is fit as well," he added. Sri Lanka registered a rare test series victory in the UAE but have lost their last 16 limited-overs matches, including one-day and Twenty20 whitewashes at the hands of India and Pakistan. "It's pretty obvious what the mood will be like when you've lost 16 games," interim coach Nic Pothas said. —Reuters

Zibanejad rallies Rangers to 6-4 win over Golden Knights

Red Wings start fast, beat Coyotes

NHL results/standings

Winnipeg 2, Minnesota 1; Detroit 5, Arizona 3; NY Rangers 6, Las Vegas 4.

	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Western Conference						
Central Division						
St. Louis	10	2	1	44	30	21
Winnipeg	6	3	2	33	32	14
Dallas	7	5	0	34	33	14
Colorado	6	5	0	34	34	12
Nashville	5	4	2	27	31	12
Chicago	5	5	2	38	34	12
Minnesota	4	4	2	31	30	10
Pacific Division						
Los Angeles	9	2	1	40	24	19
Las Vegas	8	3	0	41	31	16
Vancouver	6	3	2	31	27	14
Anaheim	6	4	1	35	33	13
San Jose	6	5	0	30	28	12
Calgary	6	6	0	28	33	12
Edmonton	3	6	1	22	33	7
Arizona	1	11	1	33	56	3
Eastern Conference						
Atlantic Division						
Tampa Bay	10	2	1	53	36	21
Ottawa	5	2	5	44	41	15
Toronto	7	5	0	47	43	14
Detroit	6	6	1	37	38	13
Boston	4	3	3	30	33	11
Florida	4	6	1	40	44	9
Montreal	4	7	1	31	45	9
Buffalo	3	7	2	29	44	8
Metropolitan Division						
New Jersey	8	2	0	40	31	16
Columbus	8	4	0	37	30	16
NY Islanders	7	4	1	45	38	15
Pittsburgh	7	5	1	36	50	15
Philadelphia	6	5	1	41	35	13
Washington	5	6	1	36	41	11
Carolina	4	4	2	28	30	10
NY Rangers	4	7	2	40	47	10

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)

NEW YORK: Mika Zibanejad got the tiebreaking goal with 5:39 left and the New York Rangers scored four in the third period to rally for a 6-4 victory over the expansion Vegas Golden Knights on Tuesday night. Jimmy Vesey, Mats Zuccarello, Chris Kreider, Pavel Buchnevich and Michael Grabner scored for the Rangers, and Henrik Lundqvist made 30 saves. Zibanejad also had assists on the first two goals in the third, helping the Rangers win for the third time in seven games (3-2-2). Reilly Smith scored twice, Oscar Lindberg got a goal against his former team and David Perron converted a penalty shot for Vegas, which has lost consecutive games after winning five straight.

Hellebuyck, Jets continue roll with win

Maxime Lagace, the fourth goalie used by the Golden Knights this season, stopped 32 shots in his first NHL start.

JETS 2, WILD 1

Connor Hellebuyck made 28 saves, and Nikolaj Ehlers and Kyle Connor scored in Winnipeg's win over Minnesota. Ehlers scored his team-leading seventh goal and Connor added his second for the Jets, who are 6-1-1 since an 0-2 start to the season. Wild rookie Luke Kunin scored his second goal and Alex Stalock stopped 17 shots for Minnesota, which had won three of four. The Wild were 0 for 5 on the power play.

CLEVELAND: Tim Hardaway Jr #3 of the New York Knicks looks for a pass while under pressure from JR Smith #5 of the Cleveland Cavaliers during the second half at Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland, Ohio. — AFP

RED WINGS 5, COYOTES 3

Anthony Mantha scored his team-leading fifth goal and Dylan Larkin added a goal and an assist as Detroit beat Arizona. Knowing the Coyotes (1-11-1) had played the night before in Philadelphia, where they won in overtime for their first victory of the season, the Red Wings applied pressure at the outset. They fired the first eight shots on goal and scored twice before the game was three minutes old. Gustav Nyquist and Luke Glendening had early goals for Detroit. Darren Helm added a late empty-netter. Jason Demers, Nick Cousins and Clayton Keller scored for the Coyotes. — AP

Burgan Bank, elite sponsor for Kuwait National Arabian Horse Festival

KUWAIT: Keeping in line with its social responsibility strategy to boost the sports sector and long standing customs in Kuwait, Burgan Bank announced yesterday its elite sponsorship of the Kuwait National Arabian Horse Festival 2017. The Egyptian Arabian Horse Competition will take place from 17th- 18th of November 2017, and the 6th National Arabian Horse Competition will take place from 30th of November till 2nd of December 2017.

Annually organised by Bait Al Arab, under the umbrella of Al Diwan Al Amiri, the event is held under the patronage of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Bait Al Arab is an educational and equine oasis supported by the state and breeders of Kuwait. The championships will be held at the facility of Bait Al Arab, the official State Stud dedicated to the breeding of purebred Arabian horses.

The 6th National Championship will be supervised by ECAHO - European Conference of Arab Horse Organizations - the official body responsible for managing similar local and international tournaments. The Kuwait National Arabian Horse Festival receives interest from a large number of enthusiasts of Arabian horses and is widely known for its active participation by Arab horse breeders both locally and regionally.

Burgan Bank's determined support stems from its commitment to promote positive initiatives that encourage the preservation of local heritage and also position Kuwait as a leading hub for world-class sporting events. Playing its part in maintaining Arabian horse-breeding through years of sponsorship, the Bank aims to spread awareness on Arab cultural activities and values throughout the society as a whole.

Red Bull to remain Renault benchmark, says Horner

LONDON: Red Bull expect to remain the Formula One benchmark for Renault next season despite McLaren switching from Honda to the French manufacturer's engines, according to team principal Christian Horner.

Red Bull have won three races this season, including Dutch youngster Max Verstappen's victory in last Sunday's Mexican Grand Prix, while former champions McLaren last tasted victory in 2012. Renault's own works team are currently seventh in the 10 team constructors' championship with two races remaining while McLaren are ninth.

"McLaren's a great team with strong drivers and we look forward to competing with them on (the) track," Horner, whose team won both titles for four years in a row between 2010 and 2013, told Reuters at the weekend. "We've made great progress in the second half of this year and obviously our target and objective is to carry that momentum through into 2018. They (Renault) have a benchmark in Red Bull," he added. Renault and McLaren share oil and fuel partners in BP while Red Bull are with ExxonMobil, the company that sponsored McLaren for 21 years until they left for Red Bull at the end of last year.

That synergy could work to the advantage of McLaren, with Red Bull coming close to a split from Renault at the end of 2015 and their engine now branded as a Tag Heuer-another former McLaren partner. There is also lingering uncertainty about what engines Red Bull will be using after 2018, with media reports in September suggesting Renault no longer wanted to supply the team beyond then.

Both sides have dismissed that as speculation. McLaren, meanwhile, are committed to using the French engines until 2020 after ending their failed partnership with Honda-who will be making the switch from Renault to Red Bull's Toro Rosso team.

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION

ExxonMobil's global sponsorship manager Kai Decker said his company relished the challenge of competition between Renault-powered teams and against its former partners while Horner said fuel developments had contributed significantly to this year's performance.

"We've had Esso Synergy upgrades this year that have enabled us to compete with Mercedes and beat them," he said. "It's not insignificant. It is absolutely noticeable and putting performance on the car."

He gave no exact figures but Red Bull's chief engineer Paul Monaghan said in Malaysia last month, a race also won by Verstappen, that the fuel upgrade had been worth a grid position. Red Bull also have top designer Adrian Newey, whose cars also won titles for McLaren, as a prize asset and Horner said he would continue to split his time between Formula One and other projects with title sponsor Aston Martin.

"We've got pretty much regulation stability so the lessons we take out of RB13 (the current car) will go into 14," said Horner. "Obviously we're hopeful that on the engine side performance and reliability improve over the winter and they are fundamental aspects for us. I think we've demonstrated that we've got a really competitive chassis."

Since the August break, Red Bull have scored more points (156) than Ferrari (137), who have won four races this year and are second to champions Mercedes.

"If we can take these learnings into next year's car then hopefully we can start on a stronger footing than the second or so that we were off in Melbourne at the start of the year," added Horner. — Reuters

Plan set to turn Britain from snow hopers to medal winners

LONDON: Turning Britain into a top-five Olympic nation in skiing and snowboarding might appear about as realistic as climbing the Eiger in a pair of plimsolls, but that is the target Dan Hunt has set himself.

It is unlikely to happen at next year's Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang but Hunt does not have much time for the naysayers who laugh off the prospects of a nation without any Alpine DNA.

For good reason too. Hunt, who became performance director of British Ski and Snowboard (BSS) a year ago, has previous when it comes to mocking conventional wisdom. When he joined British Cycling in 2005, then performance director Dave Brailsford put him in charge of a women's endurance squad used to making up the numbers.

Hunt, who had no expertise in cycling, applied his background in exercise science and physiology to such great effect that Rebecca Romero and Wendy Houvenaghel won gold and silver in the individual pursuit in Beijing in 2008.

Now he believes Britain's skiers and snowboarders can make a similar jump from also-rans to medal winners. "We've set out to become a top-five nation," Hunt said in an interview at a media day for Britain's Pyeongchang hopefuls at Hemel Hempstead's Snow Centre. "As soon as you say something like that, and I've done that a couple of times so I know what's going to happen, you get 33 percent of the team saying 'yeah that's what we want, want to start winning, we want ambition'. "Then you have the "that will never happen brigade". They think just because it hasn't been done means it can't be done. "When we said at British Cycling that we wanted to have a Tour de France champion by 2013 the room burst into laughter.

> We've set out to become a top-five nation

"Then you have the middle group who will take a step to the left or right depending on how it's going to pan out. That's why you have to deliver what you said you were going to deliver." Hunt's second Olympics as a cycling coach was London 2012 where the hosts won 12 medals, after which he joined Team Sky as Sporting Director, before being poached by the Premier League to run its Elite Player Performance Plan. "It's been an interesting journey for me," Hunt, now responsible for all the snow disciplines-including Alpine, cross-country, freestyle, snowboard and ski jumping, said. "There are some fundamental aspects of performance that are very similar across all sports. You take good leadership, good coaching and strap that around a very defensible performance plan. You need a clear vision and strategy." Britain won it's first ever Olympic medal on snow when Jenny Jones came third in the snowboard slopestyle in Sochi 2014. Last year, the team earned 15 World Cup podiums across the various disciplines and heading into Pyeonchang there are realistic medal hopes for the likes of slalom skier Dave Ryding, snowboarders Katie Ormerod and Billy Morgan and freestyle skiers James Woods and Katie Summerhayes.

Hunt said his first year in charge has been about "plugging gaps" and while he does not expect a medal rush in South Korea, he is confident the team can better Sochi. "I'm not Harry Potter with a magic wand saying we are suddenly going to be a competitive nation. But we have a process in place. Pyeongchang is 100 days and I'm hoping it will be our most successful Games.—Reuters

Paul George, Thunder cruise to 110-91 win over Bucks

Booker scores 32, Suns rally late to beat Nets

NBA results/standings

LA Lakers 113, Detroit 93; Oklahoma City 110, Milwaukee 91; Phoenix 122, Rooklyn 114; Indiana 101, Sacramento 83.

	W	L	PCT	GB
Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
Boston	5	2	.714	-
Toronto	4	2	.667	0.5
NY Knicks	3	3	.500	1.5
Philadelphia	3	4	.429	2
Brooklyn	3	5	.375	2.5
Central Division				
Detroit	5	3	.625	-
Milwaukee	4	3	.571	0.5
Indiana	4	3	.571	0.5
Cleveland	3	4	.429	1.5
Chicago	1	4	.200	2.5
Southeast Division				
Orlando	5	2	.714	-
Washington	4	2	.667	0.5
Charlotte	4	3	.571	1
Miami	2	4	.333	2.5
Atlanta	1	6	.143	4
Western Conference				
Northwest Division				
Minnesota	4	3	.571	-
Utah	4	3	.571	-
Portland	4	3	.571	-
Oklahoma City	4	3	.571	-
Denver	3	4	.429	1
Pacific Division				
LA Clippers	4	2	.667	-
Golden State	5	3	.625	-
LA Lakers	3	4	.429	1.5
Phoenix	3	4	.429	1.5
Sacramento	1	6	.143	3.5
Southwest Division				
Memphis	5	2	.714	-
Houston	5	3	.625	0.5
San Antonio	4	3	.571	1
New Orleans	3	4	.429	2
Dallas	1	7	.125	4.5

MILWAUKEE: Paul George scored 20 points, and the Oklahoma City Thunder dominated the paint during a 16-0 run to take control early in a 110-91 win over the Milwaukee Bucks on Tuesday night. Russell Westbrook had 12 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists, while Carmelo Anthony scored eight of his 17 points in the pivotal first quarter. Oklahoma City went from down four to a 20-8 lead on George's jumper with 4:16 left in the first. It was essentially over from there, especially with the way Westbrook kept finding driving lanes. The reigning MVP dished off to Steven Adams in the paint when he wasn't taking it to the hoop himself. Adams finished with 14 points and 11 rebounds. Jerami Grant added 17 points off the bench for the Thunder. Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo had 28 points on 9-of-14 shooting. But the NBA's scoring leader spent much of the first quarter on the bench with two fouls, and the Bucks struggled from the 3-point line, opening 1 of 14.

Sabonis finish with 16 rebounds

PACERS 101, KINGS 83

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 17 points to lead a balanced Indiana offense and help the Pacers to a rout of the Kings. The Pacers (4-3) scored the first nine points and built a 55-30 lead at the half. Indiana second-year forward Domantas Sabonis, coming off a personal-best 22 points and 12 rebounds on Sunday, had a double-double in the first half with 10 points and 12 rebounds. He finished with a career-high 16 rebounds in addition to 12 points and five assists. Rookie guard De'Aaron Fox led the Kings (1-6) off the bench with 18 points.

SUNS 122, NETS 114

Devin Booker scored 32 points, Mike James added 24 and the Suns rallied in the fourth quarter to beat the Nets. T.J. Warren scored 14 of his 20 points during the final period for the Suns, who squandered an 18-point lead in the third quarter when Brooklyn went on a 17-0 run. Phoenix seemed out of it after Ronda Hollis-Jefferson's basket gave Brooklyn a 106-98 lead with 6:35 left in the fourth.But the Suns, who lost a tough one at Portland on Saturday, quickly answered with a 24-8 run for their first win on their five-game road trip. D'Angelo Russell scored 33 points and Hollis-Jefferson had 21 for the Nets, who've lost three straight after beating the Cleveland Cavaliers last Wednesday at home. Warren and James combined on a 7-0 run that closed the lead to 106-101 with 6:15, forcing the Nets to call a timeout. After a miss by the Nets, Warren tipped in Booker's failed layup to initiate a 9-0 run capped by Dragan Bender's 3-pointer that gave the Suns a 116-108 lead with 2:03 left in the game.

MILWAUKEE: Milwaukee Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo tries to drive while being guarded by Oklahoma City Thunder's Paul George during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday. — AP

LAKERS 113, PISTONS 93

Julius Randle scored 17 points, Lonzo Ball added 13 and the Lakers beat the Pistons. Larry Nance Jr. had 14 points and 12 rebounds for his third double-double for the Lakers, who had lost the previous three games against the Pistons. Brandon Ingram and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope each had 13 points. Tobias Harris and Reggie Jackson each had 18 points for the Pistons, who were unable to sweep their three-game California road trip. Andre Drummond had 10 points and 12 rebounds. Pistons head coach Stan Van Gundy was unsure about how his team might handle the adulation associated with a surprising 5-2 start, and those concerns proved to be well-founded as the Lakers took a 58-45 halftime lead when Brook Lopez hit a 3-pointer as the buzzer expired. — AP

Stephens suffers fresh Asian defeat

ZHUHAI: Sloane Stephens was pummelled by Anastasija Sevastova at the WTA Elite Trophy in Zhuhai yesterday, her third successive defeat since winning the US Open. The American, seeded third in the tournament, was beaten by the Latvian fifth seed in two straight sets 7-5, 6-3 in one hour and 28 minutes at the Hengqin International Tennis Centre.

Stephens, 24, was a first-round loser at the Wuhan Open and the China Open in Beijing before pulling out of Hong Kong, but insisted Monday she wasn't feeling under pressure. "I don't think I played terribly," she said of yesterday's match. "I was happy to be playing better than my last matches, so that's a good thing." French top seed Kristina Mladenovic was also defeated yesterday by Slovakia's number one Magdalena Rybarikova 7-5, 1-6, 7-6 (7/5), in a tight match that saw Rybarikova squander six match points before finally sealing her victory. Twenty-four-year-old Mladenovic, ranked at a career-high number 10, still has a chance to qualify for the semis but Rybarikova was confirmed out late Wednesday given the round robin format. "(There were) ups and downs from my side, but... there's a lot of things to take out from this match, lots of positives," Mladenovic told journalists. But her first-match loss in Zhuhai also follows a recent poor run, including an upset by Croatian Jana Fett at the Japan Women's Open in September, where she was again top seed.

Earlier in the season she reached the semi-finals at Indian Wells-a result which saw her break into the world top 20 for the first time, temporarily overtaking Caroline Garcia as French number one. "(It was) a pretty unique season," she said.

"The second part is dramatic, is terrible. The first part is also dramatic but in a positive way." Despite "the tricky journey", the French number two said she had improved a lot. Separately, the tournament's youngest player and ninth seed Ashleigh Barty cruised to victory over Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova in just one hour and 11 minutes, firing nine aces for a 6-4, 6-1 triumph. The 21-year-old, who began the year ranked outside the top 300, made the final in Wuhan and recently became Australia's top player. "I feel like I'm playing really well this whole year," she told media, adding that she wants to finish "strong". Today she faces German Angelique Kerber who she met in Brisbane at the start of the season. Kerber, then world number one, survived a big scare from the Australian wildcard entry.

"I think I'm in a bit of a different position than I was in January when we played against each other," Barty, now ranked 20 in the world, said. — AFP

ZHUHAI: Sloane Stephens of the United States hits a return against Anastasija Sevastova of Latvia during their women's singles match at the Zhuhai Elite Trophy tennis tournament in Zhuhai. — AFP

Zverev knocked out by Haase

PARIS: Fourth seed Alexander Zverev was dumped out of the Paris Masters yesterday by Dutchman Robin Haase in a 3-6, 6-2, 6-2 second-round defeat. The 20-year-old German lost his composure after easing through the first set, as his bid for a third Masters title of the season was abruptly ended at Bercy Arena.

It was the world number 43 Haase's first-ever win over a top-five player. Zverev will next play at the World Tour Finals in London later this month, while Haase goes on to a last-16 tie against either Joao Sousa or 13th seed Juan Martin del Potro.

Zverev was put under pressure from the off as he was forced to save four break points in the opening game, but he broke in game four and served out to take a one-set lead. The unseeded Haase started to mix up his game well at the start of the second set, though, and reeled off three straight games as Zverev became frustrated.

The 30-year-old continued to send winners past his opponent and broke serve again to force a decider. Zverev, the youngest player to break into the world's top five since Novak Djokovic 10 years ago, continued to struggle to make any impact on the Haase serve as he fell 3-2 behind in the third set.

Haase grabbed the crucial break with a stroke of luck from a net cord, before completing one of the biggest victories of his career with a run of four games on the spin.

Home hope Lucas Pouille kept his slim hopes of qualifying for the World Tour Finals alive by seeing off Spaniard Feliciano Lopez 6-3, 6-4. The 17th seed needs to at least reach the final at Bercy to stand a chance of taking one of the final two places for the year-ending eight-man event, but he was handed a boost when given Roger Federer's place in the draw after the Swiss second seed's withdrawal.

American John Isner, who lost in last year's final to Andy Murray, battled to a 7-6 (7/2), 6-7 (11/13) 6-3 victory over Argentinian Diego Schwartzman. The ninth seed saw three match points come and go in a marathon second-set tiebreak, but held his nerve to set up a third-round meeting with either Richard Gasquet or Grigor Dimitrov. Sixteen-time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal can become the oldest year-end world number one in history later on Wednesday with a win over South Korean youngster Hyeon Chung. —AFP

PARIS: Alexander Zverev of Germany returns the ball to Robin Haase of the Netherlands during the Paris Masters tennis tournament at the Bercy Arena in Paris yesterday. — AP

State to appeal for longer Oscar Pistorius sentence

JOHANNESBURG: South African prosecutors tomorrow will argue for Oscar Pistorius to be given a longer jail sentence, saying the six years he is serving for killing his girlfriend is "shockingly low". The National Prosecution Authority will present its case to a one-day hearing at the Supreme Court of Appeal in Bloemfontein. Judges are expected to hand down their ruling at a later date.

The Paralympic athlete shot dead Reeva Steenkamp in the early hours of Valentine's Day in 2013, when he fired four times through the door of his bedroom toilet-an act, he says, that came from mistaking her for a burglar. Pistorius was originally convicted of culpable homicide-the equivalent of manslaughter-in 2014, but the appeal court in Bloemfontein upgraded his conviction to murder in 2015.

Pistorius, 30, who is being held at the Atteridgeville Correctional Centre prison in Pretoria, will not be in court tomorrow. "We believe the sentence is shockingly low," NPA spokesman Luvuyo Mfaku told AFP.

"The court has discretion to deviate from the minimum sentence for murder of 15 years, after considering the circumstances, but we say that you cannot go so far below. "We cannot allow a situation where we create a precedent for a person sentenced for murder. It is inappropriate if you look at the gravity of the offence."

Mfaku denied that the NPA was pursuing Pistorius due to his fame. "It is not personal, we are addressing a principle here, we would have done this for anyone," he said.

'PAY FOR HIS CRIME'

A spokesman for the Pistorius family was not immediately available to comment, but his lawyers have previously said they accepted his current sentence. At his sentencing last year, High Court judge Thokozile Masipa listed mitigating factors, including the athlete's claim he believed he was shooting an intruder.

"He cannot be at peace. I'm of the view that a long term of imprisonment will not serve justice," Masipa said. But Steenkamp's father Barry told the court that he wanted Pistorius to "pay for his crime".

Members of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) women's league, who attended many court sessions, have criticised the sentence for failing to send a message against domestic violence in South Africa. The year before he killed Steenkamp, Pistorius became the first double-amputee to race at the Olympics when he competed at the London 2012 games.

Previously a role model for disabled people worldwide, he was released from jail in 2015 after serving one year of a five-year term for culpable homicide. He returned behind bars after his conviction for murder. Pistorius, who pleaded not guilty at his trial in 2014, has always denied the accusation that he killed Steenkamp while in a rage. He has insisted that he was trying to protect her. In a television interview, he said he believed an intruder was in the house and "instant fear" drove him to grab his gun and walk on his stumps towards the bathroom.—AFP

El Shaarawy nets double as Roma maul Chelsea 3-0

'Roma showed a hunger and desire to beat us'

ROME: Stephan El Shaarawy scored a brace as AS Roma mauled Chelsea 3-0 to claim top spot in Champions League Group C on Tuesday at the expense of the English champions. The rematch in Rome's Stadio Olympico after a 3-3 thriller in London two weeks ago did not disappoint the 55,000 crowd as Chelsea coach Antonio Conte was frustrated on his return to Italy.

El Shaarawy rifled in two first-half goals-the first after less than a minute and the second nine minutes before the break-with Argentine Diego Perotti adding a third on 63 minutes. A second win in four games moves the Romans closer to the last 16, thwarting Chelsea who had been hoping to seal a spot in the knockout rounds with two games to go.

> "We were always dangerous' says Di Francesco"

Eusebio Di Francesco's side are the only unbeaten side in the group and now have eight points from four games, one point ahead of Chelsea, with Atletico Madrid third on three points after being held 1-1 by Qarabag.

"We were always dangerous," said Di Francesco. "It was a great evening for our fans who also deserved this victory. But it musn't stop here, this game must be a starting point. We're closing in on something important." Conte's Chelsea were a shadow of the team that played at Stamford Bridge earlier this month. "I didn't see anything positive in the second half, it was really bad," said Conte. "Roma showed a hunger and desire to beat us. They really deserved this victory."

French midfielder N'Golo Kante, who has just returned from a hamstring injury, was left out by the Italian, along with Nigerian Victor Moses as Greek defender Kostas Manolas started on the bench for Roma. El Shaarawy and Perotti backed up Edin Dzeko in the Roma attack with Chelsea counting on the trident of Eden Hazard, Alvaro Morata and Pedro. After an opening burst the hosts were ahead after just 38 seconds when Dzeko nodded down and El Shaarawy blasted into the back of the net past a stunned Thibaut Courtois.

"These are evenings you remember for your whole life," said El Shaarawy. "Your first Champions League brace doesn't happen every day." Hazard-who scored a brace in the first meeting along with Dzeko-was omnipresent early for Chelsea with Alisson saving twice at the near post, Morata also missing an opportunity in front of goal for the Blues.

But after going close a second time, El Shaarawy broke through again on 36 minutes following a long ball from Radja Nainggolan. A Tiemoue Bakayoko header looked dangerous but Alisson dived to clear four minutes before the break.

'RIGHT ATTITUDE'

Perotti got the third after the break following a Cesc Fabregas error in midfield to pile the pressure on Chelsea, who could thank Belgian keeper Courtois for pulling off some key saves including from a searing Manolas header.

And Perotti could have made it 4-0 minutes later as unmarked he fired over an empty net. Fabregas came off midway through the second half with Danny Drinkwater getting his Champions League debut for Chelsea.

But it was all Roma, as Nainggolan was kept out by Courtois, along with a Dzeko header from the resulting corner. Conte is now under increasing pressure as his side sit fourth in the Premier League ahead of next weekend's game against Manchester United.

"We were unlucky in the first half. The second half was bad all round," said Conte. "We have to understand that this season will be very difficult if we don't have the right attitude and if we don't fight until the end."

He added: "I honestly don't care about the Qarabag result, we have to think about how to improve and to have the new players as soon as possible." Roma next travel to Atletico Madrid with Chelsea facing the long trip to Qarabag in Azerbaijan. — AFP

ROME: Roma's Radja Nainggolan, right, challenges for the ball with Chelsea's Marcos Alonso during the Champions League group C soccer match between Roma and Chelsea, at the Olympic stadium in Rome. —AP

Wales boss Coleman unsure over future

LONDON: Wales manager Chris Coleman said yesterday he has "no idea" if he will stay in the job after holding initial talks with football chiefs. Coleman's current contract expires at the end of this month after friendlies away against France on November 10 and Panama in Cardiff on November 14.

The 47-year-old's position has been under scrutiny since last month's defeat to Ireland cost them a place at the 2018 World Cup in Russia next summer. "I have no idea if these are my last games," Coleman told a press conference near Cardiff. "Initial talks have been undertaken since our last game but we are no further forward. That's where we are."

Coleman was appointed Wales manager in January 2012 following the death of his great friend Gary Speed. He struggled at the start of his reign but the former Fulham manager took Wales to their first major finals for 58 years at Euro 2016 and steered them to the semi-finals in France.

A players' delegation-including star man Gareth Bale and skipper Ashley Williams-met Coleman straight after the defeat to Ireland in attempt to persuade him to stay. "France in Paris is a fantastic game for us and if this is my last camp it's not a bad way to sign off," Coleman said. "It may be the (Euro 2016) final that never took place and of course we've never played Panama. "I have to look and think, 'Can I take it forward? Is the structure and facilities good to take us forward?' So it's not just me personally. All things need to be right for us to take it forward."

Coleman has been linked with Premier League vacancies at Everton and Leicester-the latter since filled by Claude Puel-in recent weeks. But he was reticent when asked if there had been any interest in his services.

"I'm not going to say a club has done this or that," he said. "We're always going to be linked with clubs and vacancies. Some managers are still in their jobs, I've been on the end of that and it's not nice."—AFP

Atletico counting cost of Champions League collapse

MADRID: Atletico Madrid woke up with a Halloween hangover yesterday needing a "miracle" to make it beyond the Champions League group stage after failing to beat Azerbaijani debutants Qarabag for the second time in two weeks.

Since the arrival of Diego Simeone six years ago, Atletico have been transformed into a European powerhouse. Los Rojiblancos won the Europa League in the Argentine's first year and reached two Champions League finals, a semi-final and a quarter-final in the past four seasons.

Simeone, though, was left praying that "destiny" will favour his side, who need to beat Roma and Chelsea in their final two Group C games and hope Qarabag can do them a favour by adding another draw to their impressive first appearance in the group phase.

"I believe you get what you deserve," said Simeone. "We have to try to beat Roma and then destiny will decide if we deserve to continue or are eliminated."

"More than a miracle needed," read the front page of Madrid sports daily Marca alongside a picture of the off-form Antoine Griezmann with his head in his hands.

For years Atletico have punched above their weight. According to Deloitte's Football Money League, they had only the 12th highest income of clubs across Europe in 2016 of 228.6 million euros ($266 million).

Yet, in UEFA's coefficient to judge European performance over the past five years they sit third - behind only cross-city rivals and perennial scourge in the Champions League, Real Madrid, and Bayern Munich.

Atletico now face the cost of failure having just moved into their new 68,000 capacity Wanda Metropolitano home at a cost of 310 million euros.

GRIEZMANN TO GO?

Despite a FIFA ban on registering new players until January, Atletico still splashed out over 90 million euros on Diego Costa's return to the club and Spanish international Vitolo in recent months.

Meanwhile, they also spent big in the summer on new long-term contracts for Simeone and key players like Griezmann, Koke and Saul Niguez.

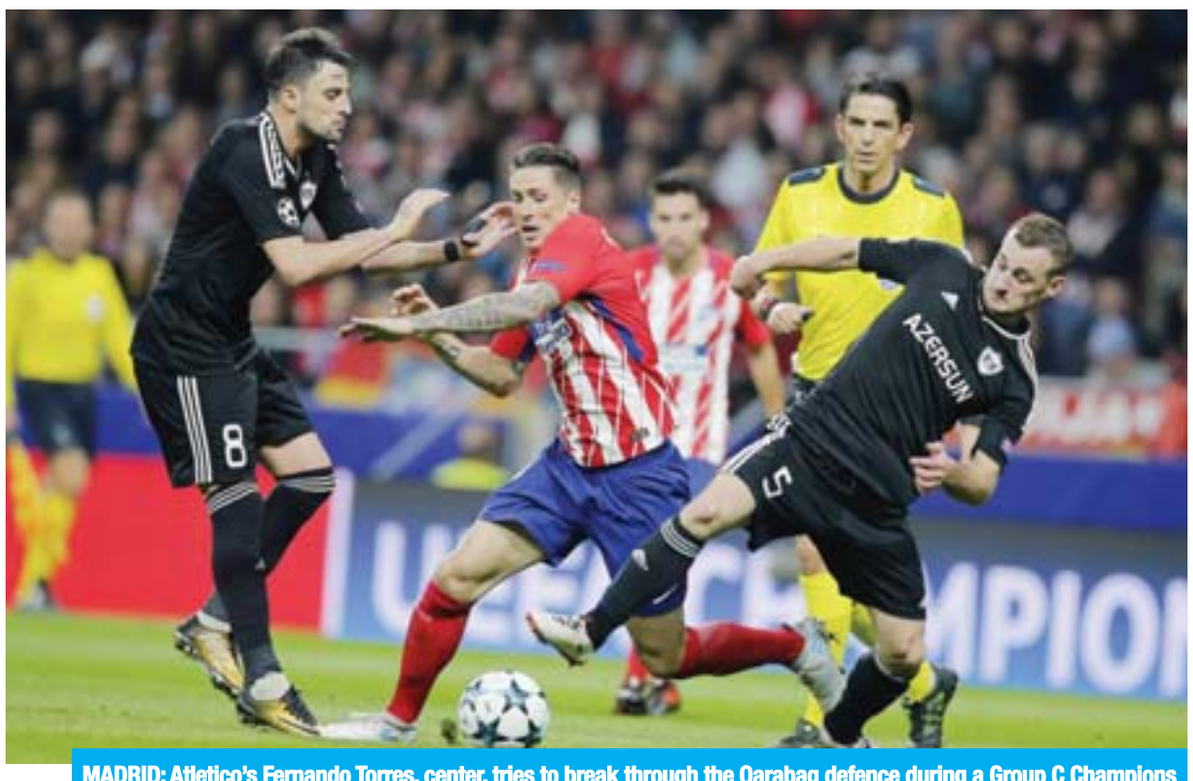
Griezmann did the honourable thing by staying when Atletico lost their appeal against the transfer ban in June, but is unlikely to do so again should his 100-million-euro buyout clause be met by a host of interested suitors, including Manchester United and Barcelona.

The Frenchman has scored just three times this season and, whilst his poor form has played its part, it is trying to muddle through until the new year without Costa that has proved Atletico's downfall.

The Spanish giants have taken just three points from their four Champions League games, but had big chances to win all of them. Playing against 10 men of Qarabag for the final half-hour on Tuesday, Atletico had the most attempts on goal of any side in the Champions League this season (32) for the reward of a solitary goal. "If between now and January we continue with this run of results, the arrival of Diego Costa won't mean a thing," said Atletico captain Gabi. Three years after his departure, Costa was bought back to recreate the spine of Atletico's 2013/14 La Liga title-winning side, but the other core elements of that team are starting to crumble. Once dominant from set-pieces, Atletico again conceded from a corner against Qarabag, as they had in drawing 1-1 at home to Villarreal at the weekend. Indeed, seven of the 10 goals they have conceded this season have come from headers.

"Our calling card was to not concede goals and score the few chances we had. That has turned completely around," added Gabi. After a very public falling out with his former boss Antonio Conte, Costa now faces the ignominy of playing in the Europa League after Christmas, whilst Chelsea progress.

Something that even Gabi, a Europa League winner in 2012, is struggling to stomach. "Right now I would say the Europa League is rubbish, even though it has given me a lot." — AFP



MADRID: Atletico's Fernando Torres, center, tries to break through the Qarabag defence during a Group C Champions League soccer match between Atletico Madrid and Qarabag at the Metropolitano stadium in Madrid. — AP

Late Sheikh Ali Sabah Al-Salem shooting tourney kicks off today

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The late Sheikh Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah annual tournament will kick off today at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex, with a large number of participating shooters from the club, National Guard in addition to shooters from Bahrain and UAE. Competitions are in the trap, double trap, skeet, 10m air rifle and pistol.

Secretary General of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi thanked the family of the late Sheikh Ali Sabah Al-Salem for their annual patronage of the tournament and participation in distributing prizes and medals. He said the club is proud of organizing the tournament each year as it brings memories of one of Kuwait's faithful men who contributed so much, and exerted unlimited efforts that contributed to achieving Kuwait's development and advancements.

Al-Osaimi urged all participants whose number reached 200 shooters of both genders to exert all efforts to win this precious cup. The closing ceremony will be held Saturday, November 4 at the club premises at 5:30 pm.

Ali Sabah Al-Salem

Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi

Crew rip New York City 4-1 in MLS playoffs

NEW YORK: Norwegian striker Ola Kamara scored in the sixth minute and the host Columbus Crew thumped 10-man New York City FC 4-1 Tuesday in a Major League Soccer playoff match. Artur, Justin Meram and Harrison Afful added second-half goals after NYCFC lost Alexander Callens to a red card in the 52nd minute, putting the Manchester City-owned side in a major hole in the two-match, total goals series.

A deciding second leg of the quarter-final matchup will be played Sunday in New York. The winner will advance to the Eastern Conference final against either New York Red Bulls or Toronto. The Canadian side won 2-1 on the road Sunday in the first leg of that series with the rematch next Sunday in Toronto.

Kamara opened the scoring for Columbus in the sixth minute, his right-footed shot finding the lower left corner of the goal. New York's David Villa, who helped Spain win the 2010 World Cup, clanked a right-footed shot off the right post to miss an equalizer in the 37th minute and the 35-year-old Spaniard set up Costa Rican striker Rodney Wallace's shot that went just wide of the right post seconds before halftime.

New York's Callens, a Peruvian defender, was issued a red card in the 52nd minute for a severe foul and the Crew wasted little time in taking advantage, a turnover by New York in its own half setting up Brazilian midfielder Artur's goal in the 58th minute for a 2-0 Crew edge.

Meram, a US-born player for Iraq's national team, scored in the 69th minute on a fast break off a pass from Kamara to make it 3-0 for Columbus.

Villa netted New York's first playoff goal in club history in the 78th minute but Crew defender Afful of Ghana answered for the hosts in the third minute of second half stoppage time to create the final margin.

The Crew played before an especially passionate crowd that cheered "Save the Crew" much of the night, a nod to owner Anthony Precourt's announced intention to move the club in 2019, likely to Austin, Texas.— AFP

PSG hat-trick hero Kurzawa toasts moment in limelight

'Our objective in this group is to finish first'

PARIS: Layvin Kurzawa enjoyed stealing the headlines from Neymar and co as he walked away with the match ball after scoring a second-half hat-trick in Paris Saint-Germain's 5-0 Champions League demolition of Anderlecht on Tuesday.

Kurzawa, a left-back, scored three times in the space of 26 minutes after the break at the Parc des Princes as PSG ran away with the game following first-half strikes from Marco Verratti and Neymar.

A fourth big victory in as many games in the competition, coupled with Bayern Munich's 2-1 win away to Celtic, allowed the big-spending French giants to secure qualification from Group B with two games still to play. "This hat-trick gives me a huge amount of pleasure. It's the first hat-trick of my professional career. We're all enjoying ourselves on the pitch and we're giving our supporters lots of joy as well," said Kurzawa after the game. The 25-year-old French international full-back had scored just once this season coming into the match and had never found the net in the Champions League proper prior to Tuesday's match.

> "Hat-trick is thanks to my teammates"

And the former Monaco player is just the second PSG player to score a hat-trick in the competition, following Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who netted four times in a game against Anderlecht in 2013. "Everyone can be happy tonight-we've won 5-0 and played really well in front of our fans. We need to continue like this," Kurzawa told beIN Sports. "The hat-trick is thanks to my teammates. I am delighted and the goals will give me confidence."

Apart from the rarity of a defender scoring three times in a game, PSG fans packed into the Parc des Princes could also enjoy a rare goal from Verratti and a less rare effort from Neymar.

The world's most expensive player scored in stunning fashion just before half-time and now has 11 goals in 12 appearances for the French club since arriving from Barcelona.

'SIMPLY THE BEST'

PSG have scored 17 goals and conceded none in the competition so far and are through to the knockout rounds for the sixth season running as they aim to erase the memory of their humiliating defeat to Barcelona in the last 16 last season. But they are just three points clear of Bayern so are yet to secure first place with a home game against Celtic and a trip to Munich still to come. "We are happy. The team kept going for 90 minutes and the supporters also enjoyed themselves, but we know we still have a long way to go," said coach Unai Emery.

"Our objective in this group is to finish first and we still have work to do against Celtic here and Bayern to get there." In stark contrast to PSG, Anderlecht have lost all four group games and have failed to score a goal, with this defeat following a 4-0 loss at home to the French side two weeks ago. They will go no further in the Champions League and will need an enormous turnaround just to pip Celtic to third place and the Europa League spot. "If the final were tomorrow I think they would win it," the Belgian club's coach Hein Vanhaezebrouck said of PSG. "Right now they are quite simply the best team in Europe." — AFP

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Uruguayan forward Edinson Cavani (C) vies for the ball with Anderlecht's Serbian defender Ivan Obradovic (L) and Anderlecht's Portuguese defender Josue Sa during the UEFA Champions League Group B football match. — AFP

Barcelona held to goalless draw by battling Olympiakos

ATHENS: Barcelona's seemingly inevitable passage to the Champions League last 16 was postponed by a determined Olympiakos Piraeus side on Tuesday as the Greek champions held the Spanish giants to a 0-0 draw in an absorbing Group D clash.

Ernesto Valverde's in-form Barca team enjoyed the lion's share of possession and chances in an often frenetic, open match at the Georgios Karaiskakis stadium but the La Liga club could not find a way past goalkeeper Silvio Proto.

The Belgian made several fine saves, especially in the first half, to deny a somewhat subdued Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez in a pulsating atmosphere generated by the boisterous home fans.

Barcelona are top of the section with 10 points, having extended their unbeaten run in all competitions to 15 matches with 13 wins and two draws. It was the first Champions League point in four matches for Takis Lemonis' Olympiakos team who are also struggling in the Greek SuperLeague as Barca were held to a goalless draw for the first time since April.

Valverde, who won three league titles as Olympiakos coach in two spells at the club between 2008 and 2012, was given a rousing welcome by the home fans who held up a giant banner which read "Ernesto thanks for everything".

FAST START

Barca started at breakneck speed with right back Nelson Semedo racing clear and forcing a fine low save from Proto. Olympiakos, with midfielder Kostas Fortounis in a lone striking role, were pushed back in the early stages but the Greece international looked lively when he broke forward.

Barca came close to scoring in the 20th minute when Messi struck a shot that was parried clumsily for a corner by Proto. His strike partner Suarez missed Barca's best chance of the half three minutes later, sending a low shot into the side-netting with the outside of his right boot from a tight angle.

Messi's first real run at the defence came in the 28th when the Argentine raced through a flurry of bodies into the box before his shot was saved by Proto's outstretched left boot.

Messi then had a shot blocked before seeing his curling free-kick, won by Suarez, beaten away by Proto. Fortounis should have done much better from Alaixys Romao's lobbed pass on the counter but volleyed straight at Marc-Andre ter Stegan who gathered it comfortably.

The visitors forged their best chance just after the hour but Messi uncharacteristically scuffed a poor first-time effort wide after a neat one-two with Suarez. Barca exerted more pressure as the second half wore on but had little to show for their efforts apart from a couple of blocked and wayward shots by a below-par Suarez, who also lobbed an effort on to the top of the bar with 10 minutes left.

Proto made two more stops to thwart Messi, one from a free-kick and another from a powerful low shot, to ensure Olympiakos secured a creditable draw against their illustrious opponents. — Reuters

Mourinho explains Romelu Lukaku penalty snub

MANCHESTER: Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho defended his decision not to allow misfiring striker Romelu Lukaku to take a penalty during his side's 2-0 Champions League win over Benfica.

Lukaku made a blistering start to his United career after joining from Everton, scoring 11 goals in his first 10 games, but has now gone six matches without finding the net. Mourinho made a point of defending Lukaku after Saturday's 1-0 win over Tottenham Hotspur, but when United won a second-half penalty against Benfica on Tuesday, he instructed Daley Blind to take it.

"I don't understand why everyone asks me the same (question)," Mourinho said when asked about his decision in his post-match press conference at Old Trafford. "I'm paid to take decisions, good or bad. In the first half, the decision was bad because the player I chose to take the penalty (Anthony Martial) missed.

"In the second half I made another decision and I don't see the drama. The penalty taker for this match was Martial. He took in the first half and missed. "He was not even on the pitch when the second one was (awarded). And then I have to make a decision. Romelu wants to take and had the personality to take the responsibility. (Ander) Herrera the same.

"But my decision, based on what we did in training in the past couple of days, was Blind. The players respected my decision. That's it, end of story."

Martial's 15th-minute penalty was turned behind by Benfica goalkeeper Mile Svilar after Douglas had been penalised for handball. But Svilar, who had carried Marcus Rashford's free-kick into his own net to gift United victory in the reverse fixture, proved Benfica's fall guy again when Nemanja Matic's strike hit the post and bounced into the net off his arm.

Blind settled matters in the 78th minute by drilling a penalty down the middle of the goal following a foul on Rashford by Andreas Samaris.

Mourinho had reacted to Saturday's win over Tottenham by performing a shushing gesture and after Blind scored he clacked his fingers together to apparently signify chatter. Asked to explain the gesture, he replied: "I don't remember."

HAPLESS SVILAR

United's fourth successive Group A victory left them six points clear, but CSKA Moscow's 2-1 win at Basel means Mourinho's men require one point from their last two fixtures to rubberstamp a last 16 berth.

Mourinho played down the importance of finishing top of the group, which theoretically guarantees a kinder draw in the next round. Yet with United having graced the tournament only once in the previous three seasons, he would like to see his team win all six of their group matches.

"Sometimes a team finishes first and gets an extremely difficult draw," he said. "Other times you finish second and you are so lucky to get some team that nobody expected to finish first.

"We want to win the maximum possible points. I also know we haven't qualified yet. We are going to try to win the next two matches and finish with 18 points. "The last time Manchester United was in the Champions League (in 2015-16), they finished third and went out. So the year we return, it would be nice to do 18 points."

Benfica head coach Rui Vitoria defended 18-year-old Svilar after his second hapless moment against United in as many weeks. "Svilar is still a junior. He's still 18 years old," said Vitoria. "He did a lot. In today's match he showed what he's capable of. We know what Svilar is capable of and he played well."— AFP

Sharma, Dhawan gift India first T20 win against Kiwis

NEW DELHI: A record opening partnership between Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan powered India to a 53-run win over New Zealand in the first Twenty20 international in New Delhi yesterday.

The pair put on 158 runs - India's best for any wicket - to take the hosts to 202-3 and then restricted the Kiwis to 149-8 and take lead in the three-match series. Notching up their maiden win over New Zealand in the format, the Indian team gave a fitting farewell to veteran paceman Ashish Nehra, who called time on his playing career.

Nehra, 38, who retired after an injury-plagued 18-year-old career, went wicketless but was carried by his teammates in a lap of honour at his home ground Feroz Shah Kotla. But Dhawan, who hit a career-best 80, and Sharma, who also made 80, stole the show. They surpassed the 136-run opening stand between Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir against England in the 2007 T20 World Cup.

Indian batsmen also benefited from a sloppy effort by New Zealand fielders with Dhawan, on eight, and Sharma, on 16, surviving dropped chances. Skipper Virat Kohli also got a reprieve on eight before going on to make an unbeaten 11-ball 26.

Leg-spinner Ish Sodhi claimed two wickets in an over including Dhawan's prized scalp but the damage had already been done. While the left-handed Dhawan smashed 10 fours and 2 sixes in his 52-ball knock, Sharma also entertained the raucous home crowd during his 55-ball stay.

In reply, the New Zealand innings could never take off after losing their openers for just 18 runs inside four overs. Martin Guptill, who scored four, fell to leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal while Colin Munro was bowled for seven by a superb yorker from fast bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

Skipper Kane Williamson tried to revive the innings with his 24-ball 28 but Hardik Pandya got him caught behind to spell trouble for the visitors.

Left-arm spinner Axar Patel struck twice in an over to send back Tom Bruce and Colin De Grandhomme as the wheels came off the Kiwi chase. Tom Latham top-scored with a valiant 39 before becoming Chahal's second victim. The second T20 is scheduled on Saturday in Rajkot. — AFP

NEW DELHI: Indian cricket team players carry their teammate Ashish Nehra during the first T20 cricket match between New Zealand and India at Feroz Shah Kotla Cricket Stadium in New Delhi. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

NEW DELHI: Final scoreboard of the first Twenty20 international between India and New Zealand in New Delhi yesterday:

India

R. Sharma c Latham b Boult	80
S. Dhawan c Latham b Sodhi	80
H. Pandya c Latham b Sodhi	0
V. Kohli not out	26
M.S. Dhoni not out	7
Extras (b5, lb1, nb2, w1)	9
Total (3 wickets; 20 overs)	202

Fall of wickets: 1-158 (Dhawan), 2-158 (Pandya), 3-185 (Sharma)

Did not bat: S. Iyer, A. Patel, B. Kumar, A. Nehra, J. Bumrah, Y. Chahal

Bowling: Santner 4-0-30-0, Boult 4-0-49-1, Southee 4-0-44-0 (w1), Grandhomme 3-0-34-0, Sodhi 4-0-25-2, Munro 1-0-14-0

New Zealand (target 203)

M. Guptill c Pandya b Chahal	4
C. Munro b Kumar	7
K. Williamsonc Dhoni b Pandya	28
T. Latham st Dhoni b Chahal	39
T. Bruce c Sharma b Patel	10
C. de Grandhomme c Dhawan b Patel	0
H. Nicholls run out (Kohli)	6
M. Santner not out	27
T. Southee c Dhoni b Bumrah	8
I. Sodhi not out	11
Extras (lb3, nb1, w5)	9
Total (8 wickets, 20 overs)	149

Fall of wickets: 1-6 (Guptill), 2-18 (Munro), 3-54 (Williamson), 4-83 (Bruce), 5-84 (de Grandhomme), 6-94 (Nicholls), 7-99 (Latham), 8-111 (Southee)

Did not bat: T. Boult

Bowling: Nehra 4-0-29-0 (w3), Chahal 4-0-26-2, Kumar 3-0-23-1, Bumrah 4-0-37-1 (w2), Patel 4-0-20-2, Pandya 1-0-11-1.

Result: India beat New Zealand by 53 runs.

Kuwait Times
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Sport Times

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13 US Open champ Stephens suffers fresh Asian defeat

14 El Shaarawy nets double as Roma maul Chelsea 3-0

15 Sharma, Dhawan gift India first T20 win against Kiwis

PARIS: Spain's Rafael Nadal returns the ball to South Korea's Hyeon Chung during their second round match at the ATP World Tour Masters 1000 indoor tennis tournament yesterday in Paris. — AFP

Nadal seals No 1 ranking for 4th time

Oldest man to finish season at the top

PARIS: Rafael Nadal secured the year-end world number one ranking with a 7-5, 6-3 second-round victory over South Korean Hyeon Chung at the Paris Masters yesterday. The 16-time Grand Slam champion is the oldest man to finish a season at the top of the rankings at the age of 31, after a year that saw him win the French and US Opens.

It is the fourth time the Spaniard has achieved the feat after 2008, 2010 and 2013. Nadal went into the match knowing victory would give him an unassailable lead as world number one over old rival Roger Federer, after the Swiss legend withdrew before the start of the tournament. The 21-year-old Chung put up a brave fight at the Bercy Arena, but a fired-up Nadal proved too hot to handle. Nadal will next face Pablo Cuevas in the last 16, after the unseeded Uruguayan edged out Albert Ramos-Vinolas 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/1), 6-2.

Chung sent out an early warning of his intent with a ripping forehand winner to break Nadal in the third game. The top seed responded, though, taking the next four games to open up a 5-2 advantage. Nadal was broken when serving for the set as Chung hit back, but the turning point came as the world number one saved a break point in game 11, marked with a trademark fist-pump. Chung's inexperience showed at the vital moment, as he threw away his serve to hand Nadal the first set after an hour of play. Any thoughts of a quick end to the match were set to one side when Chung staved off four break points early in the second set.

The world number 55 has enjoyed a breakthrough season in 2017 and will play at the inaugural Next-Gen Finals in Milan later this month, but his resistance was finally ended in the French capital as Nadal broke to move within a service hold of victory.

And he closed it out with the minimum of fuss to add another piece of history to his illustrious career. Earlier yesterday, fourth seed Alexander Zverev was dumped out by Dutchman Robin Haase in a 3-6, 6-2, 6-2 second-round defeat. The 20-year-old German lost his composure after easing through the first set, as his bid for a third Masters title of the season was abruptly ended. It was the world number 43 Haase's first-ever win over a top-five player.

Home hope Lucas Pouille kept his slim hopes of qualifying for the World Tour Finals alive by seeing off Spaniard Feliciano Lopez 6-3, 6-4, but US Open runner-up Kevin Anderson's chances ended with a 5-7, 6-4, 7-5 loss to Fernando Verdasco. — AFP

Dodgers down Astros to keep World Series bid alive

LOS ANGELES: The Los Angeles Dodgers rallied for a 3-1 victory over Justin Verlander and the Houston Astros on Tuesday to force a game seven showdown for the 2017 World Series. Corey Seager's sacrifice fly put the Dodgers ahead for good in the sixth inning and Joc Pederson added a solo homer in the seventh as the Dodgers knotted Major League Baseball's best-of-seven championship series at three games apiece.

The Dodgers host game seven on Wednesday, seeking a seventh title and their first since 1988. The Astros are bidding for a first title since their inception in 1962. "I'm sure it's going to be a battle," said Dodgers center fielder Chris Taylor. "Two teams that really want it."

George Springer's solo home run off Dodgers starting pitcher Rich Hill in the third inning staked the Astros to a 1-0 lead. It was Springer's fourth homer of the series and the 14th for the Astros-tying the World Series record set by the San Francisco Giants in 2002. With Astros starting pitcher Verlander rolling through five one-hit innings, it looked for a time as if that might be enough. But the Dodgers finally broke through against the Astros ace with two runs in the sixth.

Austin Barnes led off the bottom of the frame with a single. Chase Utley, part of a double substitution by Dodgers manager Dave Roberts, reached first when he was hit by a Verlander pitch. That brought Taylor to the plate with no outs and two on. Taylor's double down the first base line scored Barnes to tie the game with two runners in scoring position and still no outs. "I was just focused on staying short and finding a way to put the ball in play," Taylor said. "(Verlander's) got electric stuff. That fastball up and really good slider. So I wanted to be as short as possible, not try to do too much or overswing." Seager's high fly looked like it might be headed for the left-field seats. It was caught at the track but gave Utley plenty of time to race home and give the Dodgers a 2-1 lead.

The Astros threatened in the top of the seventh against Dodgers relief pitcher Tony Watson, but left runners on base for the third straight inning. "The fifth inning, sixth inning, seventh inning, we had pressure on them and they just made pitches or made plays," said Astros manager A.J. Hinch. "Obviously small margin here in this game and these two teams." The Dodgers extended the lead to 3-1 on Pederson's one-out homer off relief pitcher Joe Musgrove in the seventh. It was Pederson's third homer of the Series and his fourth of these playoffs. Closing pitcher Kenley Jansen came on in the top of the eighth and retired the Carlos Correa, Yuli Gurriel and Brian McCann on seven pitches-Gurriel continuing to draw deafening boos from Dodgers fans angered by his racist gesture toward Los Angeles' Japanese pitcher Yu Darvish in game three.

Jansen set down three straight in the ninth to end it. Houston will have to regroup before sending Lance McCullers to the mound against Darvish.

Swept in their only prior World Series appearance in 2005, the Astros came into game six bullish about their chances with Verlander on hill. The former Cy Young award-winner who arrived in a trade from the Detroit Tigers on August 31, had been 4-0 in four prior post-season starts for the Astros.

He ran into trouble in the second inning, needing 23 pitches to work around a one-out single by Yasiel Puig. "I thought he was good, especially early," Hinch said of Verlander, who retired 11 straight batters after allowing a one-out single to Yasiel Puig in the second inning, striking out nine and giving up two runs in his six innings. "He had the one hiccup in the middle of the game, but that was about it." —AFP

New football chief to push FIFA over ban

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti clubs yesterday elected the head of a new football federation that hopes to win recognition from FIFA and end a ban from international tournaments over alleged government interference. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yusef Al-Sabah said his first priority would be to persuade the sport's world governing body to lift the ban. World sports bodies led by FIFA and the International Olympic Committee suspended Kuwait in Oct 2015 for the second time since 2010 over alleged government meddling in sports.

In 2016, authorities dissolved Kuwait's sports bodies including its Olympic committee and football federation. It later set up temporary committees in their place, but FIFA and the IOC have refused to recognize those bodies. With Tuesday's election, the new federation gained the recognition of the majority of the country's football clubs. Sheikh Ahmad said he had "many goals, first and foremost lifting the suspension". The new federation "has given me a bigger responsibility than I was expecting", he added.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yusef Al-Sabah

Analysts say Kuwait's sports crisis, which has blocked the country from taking part in international competitions, is the result of a power struggle within the ruling elite. Kuwait has been barred from taking part in qualifiers for the 2018 World Cup, the 2019 Asian Cup, and before that the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. Kuwait's public sports authority in December wrote to the IOC and FIFA urging them to "lift the ban on Kuwaiti sports activities temporarily until relevant local laws are revised", but they refused.

The world bodies have set out three conditions for accepting Kuwait back: It must issue a new sports law in line with international treaties, drop lawsuits it brought against the world governing bodies and reinstate its original sports committees. Earlier this month a Kuwaiti minister said a new law had been drafted that met FIFA's requirements. — AFP

18 BoE seen hiking rate for first time in decade

19 Tax reforms will help Kuwait build non-oil revenue base

22 'We must do better,' social media giants tell Congress

VIVA reports net profit of KD 28.3 million

Revenues reach KD 204.2 million during first 9 months of 2017

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced the financial results for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2017. VIVA's revenue in Q3 grew to reach KD 71.2 million recording a growth of 0.7 percent; whereas the revenues during the first nine-month period in 2017 reached KD 204.2 million. These results reflect VIVA's marketing, media and advertising vision, in line with the global technology and digital revolution through plans and programs that include modern products and services that meet "more" the needs of customers and reach them anywhere.

Commenting on the nine-month's financial results ended in 30 September 2017, Dr Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulrahman, VIVA's Chairman said: "Despite the high competition witnessed in the Kuwaiti telecom market, VIVA was able to achieve a growth in the profitability and sustain the operational efficiency to ensure generating positive return to our shareholders. VIVA achieved these results due to an integrated management approach by a highly professional team that reinforces VIVA's substantial and positive role as a leading telecommunications company that always provides intelligent communications solutions to satisfy the needs of its customers and meet their needs."

Dr Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulrahman

Eng Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran

He added: "VIVA was able to achieve net profit of KD 28.3 million (earnings per share of 57 fils) during the nine month period ended 30 September 2017 compared to net profit of KD 29.0 million (earnings per share of 58 fils) during the same period in 2016. These results achieved by VIVA during the nine-month period in 2017 reflect the efficient business strategy adopted by the company to achieve outstanding results despite of the increasing competition. In addition, VIVA managed to achieve positive earnings for its shareholders as a result of the commitment to elevate the quality of customer service and improving the operational efficiency".

On his part, Eng Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran, VIVA's CEO said: "Results of the nine-month period ended 30 September 2017 came in line with VIVA's goals and boundless ambitions to achieve an increase in its operational revenues and strengthen its leadership in the telecom market. It is noteworthy to mention that VIVA won this year "Speedtest Award Winner 2017 - Kuwait's Fastest Mobile Network" by Ookla, and it is pioneer in the middle east in providing the latest products and services to its customers among telecom operators in the middle east region, and achieved successfully the establishment of the first Voice Over LTE (VoLTE) interconnection in the Middle East and North Africa region in partnership with local networks, and was the first telecom company in Kuwait that has successfully tested the fifth-generation "5G" in its lab, which fosters its leadership in providing the latest technology that will enable customers to exchange information and communicate at higher speeds."

Al-Badran added: "VIVA has achieved good levels of profitability which improved the company's financial and operational efficiency. As a result, VIVA recorded revenues of KD 204.2 million during the first nine-month period in 2017 and achieved net profit of KD 28.3 million (earnings per share of 57 fils), whereas the operating profit has reached KD 30.1 million during the same period. In addition, VIVA's customer base has reached 2.2 million at the end of September, 2017.

Mohammed Bin AbdulMohsen Al-Assaf, Chief Financial Officer at VIVA said: "VIVA's financial results for the period ended 30 September 2017 reflect its ability to compete, sustain revenues and maintain its position as the second largest telecom operator in the Kuwaiti market in term of revenues in the telecom sector. In addition, it fostered the VIVA's shareholders equity base, which reached about KD 156 million, which reflected the strength and growth of VIVA's financial position. The company managed to decrease the debt level from KD 56.9 million as at 30 September 2016 to KD 29.4 million as at 30 September 2017, due to its prudent financial policy and its leverage ratio reached 0.19x at the end of September 2017 as compared to 0.47x recorded at end of September 2016". He added: "We will continue our hard work in implementing our strategy to maintain our competitive edge and achieve further growth and success in the Kuwaiti telecom market through offering innovative products and services in line with the latest technology to meet our customers' needs."

Kuwait surges 6 places, enters top 100 group at 96th position

World Bank releases 'Doing Business -2018' report

KUWAIT: World Bank released its latest 'Doing Business - 2018' report that measures the ease of doing business in 190 economies based on 11 business-related regulations. According to the report, a majority of the reforms carried out by the countries were focused on starting a business and getting credit followed by trading across borders. In terms of individual country rankings, the top three countries retained their rankings, i.e. New Zealand, Singapore and Denmark, while United States improved its ranking by 2 notches to reach the 6th spot. Within the top ten countries, Georgia made the biggest jump to reach the 9th rank from 16th last year after the country implemented the highest number of business regulation reforms since the inception of the Doing Business report. In terms of regional scores, the high income OECD countries topped the chart with the highest average score for ease of doing business followed by Europe & Central Asia and the East Asia & Pacific regions, respectively.

In terms of the pace of reforms on the regional level, the Sub-Saharan Africa region recorded the highest total number of reforms across all areas measured by the report. The region also had the highest impact of these reforms as compared to other regions globally, primarily due to the low base effect as the region ranked lowest in terms of average score for ease of doing business. In terms of most common topic of reform, the Sub-Saharan Africa region focused on starting a business and trading across borders.

In the MENA region, almost all the countries have seen a change in their ranks, with the only exception of Qatar that retained its 83rd rank. The biggest improvement was seen in Jordan that jumped 15 notches to reach 103rd spot while Tunisia recorded the biggest fall from the 77th position to 88th. According to World Bank, MENA countries have made 29 reforms over the last year and implemented a total of 292 reforms over the past 15 years. These reforms helped the region to bring down the average number of days to start a business from 43 days in 2003 to 17 days in the last year. That said, there is a wide variation between the ranks of individual countries in the region. We believe this can be attributed to the different governing styles, demographic structure as well as the wealth at the government's disposal. The most common topic of reform for the MENA region was related to getting credit as compared to paying taxes for the high income OECD countries. The trend in the GCC rankings was mostly positive with three out of the six economies recording an improvement in their ranks. UAE continued to top the group with a rank of 21, jumping 5 places as compared to previous year. Bahrain along with Oman saw their ranks go down, although the countries maintained their relative rankings in the GCC. While Qatar's ranking was the same as last year, the country made improvements related to credit information and trading across borders. Kuwait's rank witnessed the biggest jump in the GCC and now ranks 96th as compared to 102nd last year. The region's biggest economy, Saudi Arabia, also improved its rank by 2 notches to reach 92nd spot with a total of six reforms carried out in the last year. The Kingdom was among the top 20 reformers in the world during the last year and the 2nd best reformers in the high income and G20 countries.

GCC Highlights

The overall trend in the GCC remains positive with each economy making efforts on a number of fronts to improve their rankings. The six countries in the GCC adopted 15 reforms over the last year to improve the business climate. We believe that the GCC economies are at a crucial juncture in which oil prices are declining and non-oil sector needs a boost by private sector participation.

Comparative Rankings 2018 vs. 2017 Reports

MENA Countries

Ease of Doing Business Ranking	2017	2018	Comparison
UAE	26	21	Improved
Bahrain	63	66	Declined
Morocco	68	69	Declined
Oman	66	71	Declined
Qatar	83	83	No change
Tunisia	77	88	Declined
Saudi Arabia	94	92	Improved
Kuwait	102	96	Improved
Jordan	118	103	Improved
Egypt	122	128	Declined
Lebanon	126	133	Declined
Syria	173	174	Declined

Global Top 10

Ease of Doing Business Ranking	2017	2018	Comparison
New Zealand	1	1	No change
Singapore	2	2	No change
Denmark	3	3	No change
Korea, Rep.	5	4	Improved
Hong Kong SAR, China	4	5	Declined
United States	8	6	Improved
United Kingdom	7	7	No change
Norway	6	8	Declined
Georgia	16	9	Improved
Sweden	9	10	Declined
Macedonia, FYR	10	11	Declined
Estonia	12	12	No change

Source: World Bank - Doing Business Report - 2017 & 2018

United Arab Emirates

The UAE continues to top the GCC with an overall rank of 21, jumping 5 spots as compared to the previous year. The country has been consistent with improvement and had seen a similar improvement in its rank in the 2015/16 report.

UAE made progress on one of the key long pending issues relating resolving insolvency by introducing the option of reorganization for commercial entities as an alternative to liquidation in order to save viable business with prospects of financial recovery. It also adopted global good practices in credit reporting after the credit bureau started giving consumer credit scores to banks and financial institutions to assess creditworthiness of borrowers.

Other reforms that helped the UAE improve its rank were related to getting construction permits and getting electricity. In the construction sector, the UAE reduced the time and cost to obtain a building permit by eliminating a procedure, while for getting electricity, the process was made easier by streamlining the connection process and eliminating interactions between customers and the utility to obtain external works.

Kuwait

The biggest jump in ease of doing business rank was recorded by Kuwait after the country surged 6 places and entered the top 100 group at the 96th position. Key improvements over the last year were related to starting a business and registering property. The country established a one-top shop and improved online registration for starting a business. For property registration, Kuwait slashed the number of days needed to register property to 35 days from 49 days and also improved the transparency of the land administration system.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia also improved its rank by 2 places to reach 92nd position after the Kingdom implemented the maximum number of reforms in the GCC. The six reforms carried out by the Kingdom were related to starting a business, registering property, protecting minority investors, paying taxes, trading across borders and enforcing contracts. The Kingdom was heavy on the use of technology by improving online systems for a majority of the reforms including starting a business, registering property, paying taxes and an electronic cases management system for the use of judges and lawyers, thereby making enforcing contracts easier. The Kingdom made starting a business easier by using an online system and merged name reservation and submission of article of association into one procedure, in addition to improving the online payment system by removing the need to pay fees in person. On protecting minority investors, the Kingdom increased shareholder rights and role in major decisions by clarifying ownership and control structures, requiring greater corporate transparency and regulating the disclosure of transactions with interested parties. In terms of external trade, the Kingdom made trading across border easier by cutting the time required for documentary compliance of exports and imports by reducing the number of documents required for customs clearance.

Qatar

Qatar's rank remained unchanged from the previous year at the 83rd position with improvements particularly related to Getting credit and Trading Across Borders. Qatar improved access to credit information after it started providing consumer credit scores to banks, financial institutions and borrowers. It also made external trade easier by opening the new Hamad Port.

Bahrain

Bahrain ranked 2nd in the GCC with an overall global rank of 66. The country lost 3 spots as compared to its previous ranking primarily due to reforms in relation to paying taxes. Bahrain introduced a new health care contribution that would be borne by the employer that made paying taxes more complicated.

Oman

Oman ranked third in the GCC and fourth in the MENA region on the Doing Business rankings. After improving 4 spots in the previous report, the Sultanate saw its ranking decline by 5 notches this year to reach the 71st position. The decline in Oman's rank was primarily due to relative improvement in other countries' rankings. Nevertheless, Oman made improvement in terms of trading across borders by enhancing its online single window system for exports and imports, and reduced the time required for documentary compliance to 7 hours for export and import documentation from 22 hours and 23 hours, respectively.

KAMCO Investment Research

China factory activity steady in October

BEIJING: Chinese factory activity stabilised in October, according to independent data released yesterday, one day after a disappointing official reading suggested output growth had slowed.

The world's second-largest economy registered 6.8 percent growth in the third quarter of the year, down from 6.9 percent in the first two quarters. But experts have warned of a slowdown ahead as the country tightens financial controls to slow the pace of debt growth and reduces production in the northeast to tackle the country's notoriously bad air quality. —AFP

BoE seen hiking rate for first time in decade

LONDON: The Bank of England, battling Brexit-fuelled inflation rises, is set today to lift its key interest rate for the first time since 2007, according to analysts. BoE policymakers are forecast to vote to increase the central bank's key interest rate to 0.50 percent from a record-low 0.25 percent after a regular gathering, mirroring policy tightening seen in the US and eurozone.

The BoE had cut borrowing costs to ultra-low levels during the global financial crisis and beyond 2008 — and is now mulling a gradual path of monetary policy tightening to combat inflation rising far above the central bank's 2.0-percent target. "It's been over ten years since the last interest rate rise, so investors will have to dig deep in their memory banks to remember what one looks like," said analyst Laith Khalaf at stockbroker Hargreaves Lansdown.

"While a rise in interest rates would mark the start of a new era in monetary policy, we do not anticipate too much disruption in financial markets, as the tightening stretch of the cycle looks like it will be long and shallow," he added. A quarter-point increase would also reverse an emergency rate cut implemented in August 2016 on fears over the economic impact of the shock Brexit referendum, which did not materialize.

The bank's nine-strong monetary policy committee (MPC) had hinted at its last meeting in September that a hike was around the corner as a weak pound ramps up the cost of goods imported into Britain, and therefore consumer prices. Recent official data showed Britain's annual inflation rate accelerated in September to 3.0 percent-the highest for more than five years.

The BoE is not expected today however to alter its quantitative easing (QE), or cash stimulus, policy, which it first embarked upon to encourage commercial lending after the financial crisis. This would be in contrast to the European Central Bank, which last week began weaning the eurozone economy off the high doses of support they prescribed in recent years. From January, the Frankfurt institution will reduce its purchases of government and corporate bonds to 30 billion euros ($35 billion) a month, from 60 billion at present. In the US meanwhile, markets do not expect the central bank to raise benchmark interest rates Tuesday, but instead to move in December.

'Credibility on line'

Kathleen Brooks, an analyst at City Index trading group, said "it is highly likely that the bank will hike rates otherwise its credibility could be on the line". She added: "The bank has been preparing the markets for this hike for some time, so if they do not pull the trigger it is likely to cause a wave of volatility in UK asset prices, and in the pound and gilt (bond) markets in particular." Higher interest rates boost savers who receive a higher return, while increasing repayments for borrowers. The BoE will also publish today its quarterly UK economic growth and inflation forecasts.

The UK economy grew by 0.4 percent in the third quarter, recent data showed, gathering speed despite Brexit fears. The outlook brightened yesterday on news of an expanding manufacturing sector in October, according to the latest Markit/CIPS purchasing managers' index. The BoE's chief regulator meanwhile warned on the eve of the central bank's rate decision that 10,000 financial services jobs could be relocated away from the UK on the first day of Brexit. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.682
Indian Rupees	4.679
Pakistani Rupees	2.875
Srilankan Rupees	1.971
Nepali Rupees	2.928
Singapore Dollar	223.830
Hongkong Dollar	38.891
Bangladesh Taka	3.688
Philippine Peso	5.890
Thai Baht	9.147
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.961
Qatari Riyal	83.386
Omani Riyal	788.462
Bahraini Dinar	806.160
UAE Dirham	82.659
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.500
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.148
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.219
Tunisian Dinar	122.090
Jordanian Dinar	428.110
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.023
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.277
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	303.400
Euro	354.670
Sterling Pound	402.460
Canadian dollar	237.400
Turkish lira	80.910
Swiss Franc	306.160
Australian Dollar	234.380
US Dollar Buying	302.200
GOLD	
20 Gram	260.520
10 Gram	133.180
5 Gram	67.430

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.600
Canadian Dollar	236.995
Sterling Pound	398.745
Euro	352.840
Swiss Frank	303.565
Bahrain Dinar	803.125
UAE Dirhams	82.775
Qatari Riyals	83.600
Saudi Riyals	81.550
Jordanian Dinar	428.080
Egyptian Pound	17.185
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.971
Indian Rupees	4.653
Pakistani Rupees	2.870
Bangladesh Taka	3.713
Philippines Pesso	5.838
Cyprus pound	18.006
Japanese Yen	3.650
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.910
Malaysian Ringgit	72.275
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.945
Thai Bhat	10.080
Turkish Lira	79.610

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
	Europe	
British Pound	0.396713	0.404213
Czech Korune	0.005723	0.017723
Danish Krone	0.043304	0.048304
Euro	0. 347040	0.354540
Georgian Lari	0.115096	0.115095
Norwegian Krone	0.033000	0.038200
Romanian Leu	0.059624	0.076474
Russian ruble	0.005188	0.005188
Slovakia	0.009053	0.019053
Swedish Krona	0.032115	0.037115
Swiss Franc	0.296942	0.307942
	Australasia	
Australian Dollar	0.223838	0.235838
New Zealand Dollar	0.202863	0.212363
	America	
Canadian Dollar	0.229551	0.238551
US Dollars	0.299300	0.303720
US Dollars Mint	0.299800	0.303720
	Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003314	0.003898
Chinese Yuan	0.044260	0.047760
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036799	0.039549
Indian Rupee	0.004186	0.004827
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002577	0.002757
Korean Won	0.000261	0.000276
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067900	0.073900
Nepalese Rupee	0.003028	0.003198
Pakistan Rupee	0.002691	0.002981
Philippine Peso	0.005778	0.006078
Singapore Dollar	0.217149	0.227149
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001632	0.002212
Taiwan	0.009935	0.010115
Thai Baht	0.008795	0.009345
	Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.797779	0.806279
Egyptian Pound	0.014247	0.020155
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000207	0.000267
Jordanian Dinar	0.423321	0.432321
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022793	0.046793
Omani Riyal	0.781734	0.787414
Qatar Riyal	0.079047	0.083987
Saudi Riyal	0.079820	0.081120
Syrian Pound	0.001286	0.001506
Tunisian Dinar	0.118049	0.126049
Turkish Lira	0.075136	0.085436
UAE Dirhams	0.081180	0.082880
Yemeni Riyal	0.000986	0.001066

Tax reforms could help Kuwait build non-oil revenue base: IMF

Symposium discusses economic challenges in Kuwait, Arab world

KUWAIT: The IMF Middle East Center for Economics and Finance in Kuwait, jointly with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, held a high-level symposium that discussed the economic policy challenges faced by Kuwait and the Arab world. The IMF Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) in Kuwait, jointly with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), held a high-level symposium on "The Economic Policy Challenges Faced by Kuwait and the Arab World" on Tuesday.

The event was hosted at the Arab Fund's Headquarters. The panel discussion was chaired and moderated by Dr Yousef Al-Ebraheem, Economic Advisor at Al-Diwan Al-Amiri. Aasim Husain, Deputy Director of the IMF's Middle East and Central Asia Department and Stephane Roudet, who leads the yearly IMF mission to appraise Kuwait's economic situation (the IMF Article IV Consultation mission) started off the conversation with presentations on economic challenges in the Arab world and in Kuwait. This was followed by a discussion with Warren Hauck, Ambassador of Australia to Kuwait, and exchanges of views with the audience.

In his introductory remarks, Dr Yousef Al-Ebraheem indicated that the symposium was the seventh high-level forum organized by the CEF jointly with the AFESD, aimed at stimulating discussion on emerging economic issues that are of special interest to policymakers and scholars in Kuwait and the wider Arab community. He argued that the topic of economic and financial sector reforms was important in Arab countries, given pressures due to persistent conflicts, a refugee crisis, and, especially for GCC countries, the "lower-for-longer" oil price environment.

A common challenge for many countries in the region has been to design and implement reform programs that help lower unemployment and poverty, achieve fiscal consolidation, and raise growth in a manner that is sustainable, inclusive and equitable.

Husain's presentation highlighted that the growth outlook was improving somewhat across the region. Pointing to the recent release by the IMF of its Middle East and North Africa Regional Economic Outlook publication, which includes detailed forecasts for each country, he also noted that there was a diverging growth story between groups of countries. In oil exporters, notwithstanding an improvement in non-oil growth to 2.6 percent this year, overall growth was expected to drop below 2 percent due to the OPEC+ cuts in oil production. In contrast, growth in oil importers was seen as recovering to over 41/4 percent this year, reflecting the global recovery, stronger exports and foreign investment, and more tourism receipts.

KUWAIT: Dr Yousef Al-Ebraheem (second left) chairs the panel discussion as Stephane Roudet (second right)and Warren Hauck (right) look on during the high-level symposium on "The Economic Policy Challenges Faced by Kuwait and the Arab World" on Tuesday.

KUWAIT: Delegates attending the symposium that was hosted at the Arab Fund's Headquarters, Kuwait. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat.

Security scenario

Countries in conflict and their neighbors continued to be affected by a difficult security situation. Husain also stressed the progress being made in adjusting fiscal positions in the region, particularly in oil exporters, where the sharp decline in oil prices had led to the emergence of large deficits.

Husain stressed that, in spite of these positive developments, medium-term growth prospects remained muted, especially in light of the job creation challenge in the region. He noted the IMF projections were pointing to some increase in growth over the medium-term for oil importers, but at a lower level than experienced in the past. Prospects for oil exporters were seen as relatively weaker in a "lower-for-longer" oil price environment that implied continued need for fiscal consolidation efforts. At the same time, however, 20 to 25 million youths were expected to enter the labor force by 2022. Husain stressed that absorbing this rapid increase necessitated much higher growth, driven by the private sector, and rich in jobs to ensure opportunities for all.

Mr. Husain flagged a number of reform areas he saw as critical to achieve these objectives. First, he highlighted the need to improve the quality of education. In particular, he explained training needed to cater to the needs of the private sector as opposed to that of governments. While in some countries, this requires more spending on education, in others, the key is to improve the quality of the education system by reorienting spending.

The second area of reforms was aimed at improving the business environment. While some progress has been made in some areas across the region, Husain made the point that countries outside the Arab world were making more rapid progress and Arab countries are at risk of falling behind in relative terms. That, in turn, could make it difficult to attract foreign investment, which flows to locations with the best business environment. He also highlighted the importance of strengthening access to finance, including in oil exporters, which in spite of having more developed financial markets would benefit from enhanced access to credit, particularly for SMEs. Finally, Husain explained how deeper integration in global value chains would help generate jobs, especially as global economic growth picks up.

Roudet started his remarks by stressing that, with the yearly IMF Article IV Consultation mission just starting, the event provided an early opportunity to reach out to a broad audience and seek views from various stakeholders on the economic situation and policy challenges in Kuwait.

> "Seventh high-level forum organized by CEF, AFESD"

Building on Husain's presentation, he highlighted that Kuwait, like other countries in the region, needed to boost growth and job creation for nationals. He noted that doing so in a more constrained budgetary environment required rethinking the economic growth model, moving away from public-sector and oil-led growth and towards a model based on private sector development and diversification. He focused on a number of important impediments that needed to be addressed as a matter of priority. First, given the limited scope for public sector jobs going forward, he explained that labor market and civil service reforms should encourage Kuwaiti nationals to seek private sector jobs.

Roudet pointed to the large difference between compensation in the public and private sectors, and explained that better aligning public sector wages and benefits in the two sectors would provide more incentives for nationals to seek jobs in private sector firms. This would also help limit wage costs in the private sector and, together with education reforms, aimed at better matching the skills of young graduates with the needs of the private sector, this would in turn encourage Kuwaiti firms to hire nationals, enhance competitiveness, and support higher and more inclusive growth.

Roudet described other steps critical to private sector development, diversification, and job creation for nationals. This included enhanced reliance on privatization and PPPs, which he saw as important to reduce the influence of the State on the economy and level the playing field. This would in turn foster competition and encourage productivity gains and investment.

He also flagged the room to further improve the business climate and facilitate the creation of new businesses and jobs. Roudet noted the progress already made on this front. He also highlighted areas where further steps could help, including for example facilitating access to finance and land, especially for SMEs given their significant potential in terms of job creation, reducing the burden of administrative procedures, easing trade barriers, reducing excessive regulations and fostering competition, and further alleviating restrictions on foreign direct investment.

Given the lower-for-longer oil price environment, he explained why the IMF was encouraging fiscal reforms in Kuwait, highlighting three broad objectives. First, he noted the importance of saving a sufficient part of the oil wealth for future generations, to allow the economy and its citizens to continue to live prosperously even after oil income dries up. He also suggested reforms would help gradually reduce the government deficit and financing needs, while creating room for growth-enhancing investment over the medium term, to reduce the economy's dependence on oil.

Finally, he explained that delinking government expenditure from volatile oil revenue would help maintain macroeconomic stability by avoiding large swings in spending necessitated by sharp oil price movements.

Recognizing the efforts already made by the Kuwaiti authorities in several important areas, including in curtailing wasteful spending and to raise gasoline and utility prices, Roudet highlighted a number of important reform areas that would help further raise government savings.

He explained that tax revenue in Kuwait constitutes an exceptionally small part of total revenue and that the envisaged VAT and excise taxes and profit tax reforms would help build a non-oil revenue base, thereby reducing vulnerability to oil price movements. Roudet also flagged several spending areas where significant savings can be achieved by reducing waste and inefficiency. Redirecting such savings to education, infrastructure, and support for the vulnerable would enhance job creation and opportunities for all.

Dubai hosts summit, positions self as Africa investment hub

DUBAI: African officials, including four heads of state, convened with international CEOs at a summit yesterday in Dubai, part of its push to position itself as a link for huge potential investments on the continent. "We are looking at the fastest growing economy of the world ... Six out of the top 10 fastest growing economies are just next to us in Africa," said the president and CEO of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hamad Buamim.

Experts at the opening of "Next Generation Africa", Dubai's fourth Global Business Forum on Africa, said the continent's 54 countries-home to a fifth of the world's population-require tens of billions of dollars in investment in infrastructure, energy and other sectors. Investment, Emirati officials hope, will be channeled through Dubai, a trading hub and member of the United Arab Emirates.

"We believe that Dubai's strategic goals can be aligned with Africa's ambitions as it enters a new phase of development," said the Dubai chamber chairman, Majid Saif al-Ghurair. The number of African companies registered in Dubai jumped to 17,000 last year, an increase of 41 percent from 2015, according to Ghurair. Trade volume between UAE and Africa totals around $35 billion and has been growing at a double-digit rate annually.

"We see potential of a growing economy that has a lot of future ... Africa is a great market," Buamim told AFP on the sidelines of the two-day forum that has attracted four heads of state from Africa, several ministers and hundreds of investors and experts.

He said the forum is held to help channel investments to Africa through Dubai. Rwandan President Paul Kagame told the meeting that Africa is witnessing speedy reforms and a faster pace of integration, especially among a number of regional economic blocs formed in the continent.

"A number of steps have been taken and progress has been made ... In the next five to 10 years, we will see progress," in the integration between the various economic blocs, Kagame said. The president said a number of economic unity initiatives had been adopted in Africa in the fields of customs unions, infrastructure projects, electricity links and railway networks.

"Later on, the regional economic communities will join together ... integration is happening," said Kagame, as he called for greater investment inflow into Africa. The Infrastructure Consortium for Africa (ICA) said last month the continent must double its spending on infrastructure over coming years after a decline in 2016. Last year, total investment in transport, energy, water and IT/communications amounted to $62.5 billion, down from $78.9 billion in 2015, it said. Investments worth between $120 billion and $140 billion is needed in the short-term, said the report. — AFP

DUBAI: Vice President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (right) sits next to Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni during the opening of the Global Business Forum on Africa, in Dubai yesterday. — AFP

Russian money is key as Balkan retail giant's fate plays out

ZAGREB: Moscow is deeply involved in scandal-ridden Balkan food and retail giant Agrokor's fate as two of its main creditors are Russian state-run banks, with analysts saying geopolitics loom large in what's in store for Croatia's top economic player. Last month authorities issued an international arrest warrant for Agrokor's fugitive owner Ivica Todoric, suspected of falsifying accounts to hide unsustainable debts estimated to total at least 5.4 billion euros ($6.3 billion).

Agrokor is indebted in particular to Sberbank and VTB, two Russian state-controlled banks, to whom it owes about 1.1 billion euros and 300 million euros respectively.

With around 60,000 jobs, two-thirds of them in Croatia, Agrokor is the biggest employer in a region where unemployment runs high. Its network of suppliers means tens of thousands more jobs are at stake. The revenues of the Zagreb-based company make up around 15 percent of Croatia's gross domestic product (GDP) — so when faced with its potentially catastrophic fall, the government in April appointed a crisis manager to lead a restructuring process. The issue figured high on the agenda of President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic on a visit to Moscow in October, the first by a Croatian head of state since 2009. "It is a corporate issue" which should not burden relations between Zagreb and Moscow, she said.

Her Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin told reporters after their meeting that the two banks are "taking part in the program of Agrokor's financial healing". His spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that "Sberbank will protect its interests" and that "the Russian state will support our companies in that."

Geopolitical goals?

Croatian economic analyst Damir Novotny said the two banks were aware of Agrokor's struggle with debts when they began to grant it loans in 2014, suggesting there were "higher geopolitical goals in mind". "This is not only about Agrokor but rather Russia's wider interest in southeast Europe," Novotny told AFP. Alexander Sarayev, a banking analyst at the Russian rating agency RAEX, agreed that the political factor "cannot be ruled out". But the decision "was based on the idea that it was a key company and would be supported by the Croatian authorities", he said.

Agrokor was at the time considered a booming economic jewel of the Balkans, with businesses in Bosnia, Serbia and Slovenia. And Sberbank was anyway engaged in a policy of investments in eastern Europe, which was subsequently undermined by sanctions following the Ukraine crisis.

A member of NATO and the newest entrant to the European Union, "Croatia provided an opportunity for stronger investment and a Russian presence in the region through Agrokor," Croatian international relations expert Radovan Vukadinovic told AFP.

While the EU remained silent over Agrokor's troubles, there was a "quick American response," he said, referring to a 1.06 billion-euro loan led by US-based Knighthead Capital Management, which stabilised operations in June.

'Minimizing losses'

Talking to local media in October, the US ambassador to Croatia, Julieta Valls Noyes, praised a "group of US and other investors" who want to help to "save a company important inside and outside Croatia's borders". Sberbank, which unlike VTB refused to participate in the new loan, accused Croatia of having nationalized Agrokor and said Zagreb should issue state bonds to pay the debt.

The measures by Zagreb "seriously infringe on creditors' rights", Sberbank chief executive German Gref told the Rossiya 2 news channel on October 19. Croatia firmly rejected such claims.

Agrokor in September reported several legal actions targeting its property mostly initiated by Sberbank-in Croatia, Britain and across the Balkans. Sberbank also took the group to the London Court of International Arbitration. — AFP

KFH main sponsor for AAOIFI

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House Group (KFH-Group) is participating in the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) conference as a main Sponsor. The conference will be held in the Kingdom of Bahrain on the 5th and 6th of November 20174.

The event is set to gather several global financial industry experts to address key issues sup-porting and hindering growth in the sector and the development of the Islamic financial services.

Discussions will also center on progress being made in standardization and harmonization of international Islamic financial practices, a key precursor to the effective globalization of the industry and the adoption of Islamic financial instruments and practices worldwide.

KFH is a long standing sponsor of the event and other industry initiatives geared at supporting development and excellence in the Islamic financial services.

As KFH is a leading Islamic financial institution and one which has taken Islamic banking, finance and investing to global markets, it is supporting this annual conference dedicated to strengthening the prospects and performance of Islamic finance industry. KFH has long taken a pioneering role in the development of Islamic finance and fully supporting the work of AAOIFI in seeing Islamic instruments and capital markets further unify and expand. KFH has long played an important role in helping drive the kind of advancement and innovation that this annual conference aims to harness and drive forward. The industry today has achieved significant growth and expansion in the Islamic world and beyond. KFH is keen on joining together with industry leaders to discuss and adopt the right strategies for this next stage of growth.

The conference will be followed by a number of training sessions including those to become an AAOIFI Certified Shari'a Adviser and Auditor.

Global stocks rise on growth optimism

WASHINGTON: Global stocks rose yesterday amid optimism over global economic growth and corporate earnings. The three major US stock indexes added to their recent record run yesterday, as energy shares gained from a jump in oil prices and financials rose after strong private jobs data. JPMorgan and Bank of America rose about 1 percent, while Goldman Sachs' 1.5 percent increase gave the biggest boost to the Dow. The rise was also supported by Facebook's 1.4 percent gain ahead of its earnings report. US private employers hired 235,000 workers in October, the most since March and exceeding a median forecast of 200,000 among economists polled by Reuters, the ADP National Employment Report showed.

"We're in a very positive environment," said Andre Bakhos, managing director at Janlyn Capital in Bernardsville, New Jersey. "Economic data and earnings continue to remain a reason for optimism. The market will look for signs of a robust economy, and I think the momentum is in place." Following the strong ADP data, focus shifts to Friday's non-farm payrolls report for October. The data will reveal if the labor market has strengthened after a hurricane-ravaged September.

Third-quarter earnings have been largely positive, with 72.9 percent of the S&P 500 companies that have reported topping profit expectations, according to Thomson Reuters data. That is above the 72 percent profit-beat rate in the past four quarters.

Estee Lauder jumped nearly 10 percent after the cosmetics maker reported better-than-expected sales and profit. US Steel surged 14 percent and Garmin climbed 3.7 percent after strong earnings.

The Federal Reserve was expected to keep interest rates unchanged at the end of its two-day meeting later today as speculation swirls on who will be its next leader, but will likely point to a firming economy as it edges closer to a possible rate rise next month. Eight of the 11 major S&P indexes were higher, led by gains in energy and financial sectors. Oil hit its highest since mid-2015 on data that showed OPEC significantly improved compliance with its pledged supply cuts and Russia is also widely expected to keep to the deal. Electronic Arts dipped 5 percent after the videogame publisher's revenue forecast for the holiday shopping quarter narrowly missed estimates. Cognizant was the biggest percentage loser on the S&P, dropping 5 percent after results. Advancing issues outnumbered decliners on the NYSE by 1,979 to 578. On the Nasdaq, 1,677 issues rose and 648 fell.

Europe surges

European stocks surged to two-year peaks yesterday, lifted by resilient company earnings and record highs set in Asia and New York, though a 6 percent slump in Standard Chartered shares kept the banking sector under a cloud. At 1000 GMT, the pan-European STOXX 600 rose 0.6 percent to 397.43 points, a level last seen in August 2015. Some of that was down to Germany's DAX index which, playing catch-up after Tuesday's holiday, jumped 1.3 percent to hit a fresh record high.

Markets continued to brush off concerns over Catalonia's independence bid, pushing Spain's IBEX up 0.5 percent. The European benchmark is enjoying its fifth straight day of gains and rose almost 2 percent in October, having also taken a cue from global markets which have been propelled higher by hopes of US tax cuts, economic recovery and a robust tech cycle. — Agencies

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Global

Wednesday 01 November 2017

Index		Change	Closing	Last Closing
Price index	▲	16.25	6,530.08	6,513.83
Weighted Index	▼	-0.64	419.27	419.91
KSX 15	▼	-1.28	966.53	967.81

Volume	67,121,641
Value (KWD)	13,767,410
Number of Trades	2,936

Security	High	Low	Trades Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last		Change
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	390	—	0.0
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	824	—	0.0
ENERGYH	33.3	32.5	13,300	434	6	33.3	▲	0.3
GPI	33.5	33.0	124,100	4,103	6	33.0	—	0.0
ABAR	65	61	64,000	4,156	15	61	▼	-4.0
Oil & Gas			**201,400**	**8,693**	**27**	**991.69**	▼	**-4.30**
KFOUC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	302	—	0.0
BPCC	640	640	1,000	640	1	640	▲	1.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	—	0.0
ALQURAIN	326	326	12,408	4,045	4	326	▲	1.0
Basic Materials			**13,408**	**4,685**	**5**	**1292.44**	▲	**1.80**
KCEM	457	445	255,000	115,400	14	456	▼	-1.0
CABLE	472	463	8,500	3,967	3	472	▲	10.0
SHIP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	216	—	0.0
PCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	980	—	0.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	—	0.0
MRC	88	75	32,050	2,494	35	80	—	0.0
ACICO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	254	—	0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	170	—	0.0
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	174	—	0.0
EQUIPMENT	38.8	38.7	6,900	267	4	38.8	▲	0.8
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	—	0.0
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	—	0.0
SALBOOKH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	63	—	0.0
AGLTY	791	770	2,285,970	1,781,756	205	776	—	0.0
EDU	310	308	570,518	175,974	10	309	▼	-1.0
CLEANING	52	49.5	100	5	2	52	▲	2.4
KGL	62	61	661,187	40,428	16	61	▲	0.1
KCPC	150	150	1,300	195	1	150	▲	12.0
HUMANSOFT	3,944	3,944	7,576	29,880	9	3,944	—	0.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	560	—	0.0
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	64	—	0.0
SHOOTING	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	25.0	—	0.0
CGC	498	480	31,000	14,908	5	498	▼	-1.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	—	0.0
UPAC	610	610	670	409	1	610	—	0.0
ALAFCO	380	373	101,490	38,398	13	378	▼	-7.0
MUBARRAD	73	73	50,000	3,630	1	73	▲	0.6
LOGISTICS	56	55	501,923	28,037	21	56	▲	0.2
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	84	—	0.0
GCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79	—	0.0
QIC	82	82	215,200	17,646	6	82	▲	2.1
FCEM	72	72	118,776	8,552	5	72	—	0.0
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	—	0.0
SPEC	85	85	1,500	128	3	85	—	0.0
Industrials			**4,849,660**	**2,262,074**	**354**	**1771.04**	▲	**1.60**
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	75	—	0.0
CATTL	255	255	40,000	10,200	1	255	▲	1.0
DANAH	71	70	90,000	6,305	6	71	▼	-0.6
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,750	—	0.0
Consumer Goods			**130,000**	**16,505**	**7**	**976.31**	▼	**-0.20**
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	—	0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	175	—	0
Health Care			**0**	**0**	**0**	**1510.51**	—	**0.00**
KCIN	1,380	1,335	7,057	9,673	10	1,380	▲	40
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	—	0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	—	0
CABLETV	23.1	23.1	11	0	1	23.1	▼	-6
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	299	—	0
OULAFUEL	117	115	90,577	10,578	9	117	▲	1
MUNTAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	81	—	0
JAZEERA	650	613	606,925	390,943	59	645	▲	2
SOOR	117	115	17,461	2,029	10	116	▲	1
FUTUREKID	110	110	10,000	1,100	1	110	—	0
ALRAI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	120	—	0
Jiyad	50	50	28,000	1,405	2	50	▲	0
Mezzan	812	812	60,140	48,834	5	812	—	0
Consumer Services			**820,171**	**464,561**	**97**	**938.08**	▲	**5.30**
ZAIN	479	468	7,051,457	3,339,256	492	470	▲	4
OOREDOO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,155	—	0
AAN	32.8	30.5	202,200	6,335	20	31.8	▼	0
VIVA	756	754	12,473	9,425	21	756	—	0
Telecommunications			**7,266,130**	**3,355,016**	**533**	**568.81**	▲	**0.70**
NBK	771	765	1,373,000	1,052,032	68	765	▼	-2
GBK	256	254	217,731	55,320	13	254	▼	-2
CBK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	—	0
ABK	313	308	5,100	1,571	3	313	▼	-2
ALMUTAHED	400	390	87,755	34,806	12	390	▼	-8
KIB	240	237	1,683,503	401,455	40	237	▼	-1
BURG	339	336	60,322	20,377	8	337	▲	1
KFIN	595	588	1,974,137	1,165,404	187	588	▼	-3
BOUBYAN	442	438	110,562	48,702	21	438	▼	-2
AUB	208	206	2,240,823	462,646	51	206	▼	-2
ITHMR	37.9	35.6	2,524,233	93,805	96	37.4	▲	1
WARBABANK	235	233	91,509	21,410	65	235	▲	2
Banks			**10,368,675**	**3,357,527**	**564**	**935.57**	▼	**-2.80**
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	285	—	0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	800	—	0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	450	—	0.0
WINS	68	68	26	2	1	68	▼	-0.1
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	187	—	0.0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	64	—	0.0
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	40.0	—	0.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	—	0.0
Insurance			**26**	**2**	**1**	**1077.56**	▼	**-0.10**
SOKOUK	54	53	799750	40,873	16	54	▼	-0.5
KRE	62	60	1,283,850	77,598	42	61	—	0.0
URC	82	82	1,000	82	1	82	—	0.0
NRE	126	121	132,685	16,441	8	123	▲	2.0
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	360	—	0.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	386	—	0.0
AREEC	188	176	536,000	96,523	10	188	▲	12.0
MASSALEH	40.0	36.5	53,500	2,066	9	40.0	▲	0.5
ARABREC	34.9	33.5	3,189,660	108,074	164	33.5	▼	-0.2
ERESCO	38.8	37.7	63,585	2,397	5	38.5	▲	0.5
MABANEE	784	779	79,640	62,206	12	782	▼	-3.0
INJAZZAT	84	81	84,505	6,890	11	82	▼	-4.9
INVESTORS	17.5	17.0	1,495,110	25,885	50	17.3	▲	0.1
IRC	28.2	28.2	3,000	85	1	28.2	▼	-1.8
ALTUARIA	95	93	1,388,422	130,162	19	94	▲	0.8
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	37.0	—	0.0
AAYANRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	—	0.0
AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	—	0.0
ALAQARIA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	37.0	—	0.0
MAZAYA	111	107	3,128,380	341,581	85	111	▲	5.0
TIJARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	58	—	0.0
TAAMEER	33.0	31.6	7,000	225	6	31.6	▲	0.4
ARKAN	86	86	5,000	428	1	86	▼	-0.5
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	132	—	0.0
ABYAAR	23.9	23.4	340,298	7,980	10	23.8	▲	0.1
MUNSHAAT	77	74	236,300	17,526	10	74	▼	-1.9
FIRSTDUBAI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	46.2	—	0.0
KBT	49.6	48.6	332,247	16,183	12	49.2	▲	0.5
REAM	300	240	30	8	2	300	▲	50.0
MENA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	20.3	—	0.0
ALMUDON	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	38.9	—	0.0
MARAKEZ	37.0	37.0	100	4	1	37.0	—	0.0
REMAL	60	57	5,000	288	2	60	▼	-1.0
Mashaer	80	75	1,898	142	2	80	▼	-0.8
Real Estate			**13,136,960**	**953,644**	**479**	**934.88**	▲	**11.70**
KINV	127	123	2,352,026	293,189	77	126	▲	1.0
FACIL	178	178	30,000	5,340	2	178	▼	-2.0
IFA	33.8	32.5	726,675	23,910	24	33.3	▼	-0.5
NINV	105	104	1,380,675	143,975	50	105	▲	2.0
KPROJ	340	338	140,391	47,543	28	340	—	0.0
COAST	41.4	40.5	138,950	5,701	12	40.5	▲	0.1
SECH	55	53	1,577,497	84,795	34	53	—	0.0
ARZAN	33.3	32.2	381,121	12,458	16	33.3	▲	0.3
MARKAZ	110	102	1,016,250	103,713	49	105	▲	3.0
KMEFIC	24.0	23.0	3,500	83	2	24.0	▼	-3.4
ALAMAN	52	52	100,000	5,200	2	52	▲	0.9
ALOLA	45.0	44.5	653,769	29,148	20	44.6	▲	0.1
ALMAL	29.0	28.2	1,687,683	48,150	80	28.2	▼	-0.7
GIH	24.9	23.7	63,867	1,565	10	23.8	▼	-0.6
AAYAN	45.0	43.9	891,289	39,464	34	44.6	▲	1.0
BAYANINV	44.7	43.0	64,510	2,805	7	44.7	▼	-0.2
OSOUL	62	62	10,000	619	2	62	▲	0.1
KFIC	47.0	46.0	43,000	2,001	5	47.0	▲	0.3
KAMCO	71	71	17,324	1,230	3	71	—	0.0
NIH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	—	0.0
UNICAP	38.5	37.5	152,399	5,844	11	38.5	▲	0.1
MADAR	26.7	26.1	40,000	1,056	3	26.1	▼	-0.7
ALDEERA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	32.0	—	0.0
ALSALAM	45.0	44.5	199,400	8,907	6	45.0	▲	0.3
EKTTITAB	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	36.4	—	0.0
ALMADINA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	43.8	—	0.0
NOOR	65	64	2,377,441	152,484	130	64	▲	1.5
TAMINV	340	340	1,010	343	3	340	—	0.0
EXCH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	158	—	0.0
KSHC	34.5	33.0	322,050	10,862	15	33.9	—	0.0
ASIYA	38.8	37.5	1,093,475	42,093	34	37.5	▼	-0.2
GNAHC	39.3	39.0	660,000	25,827	16	39.3	▼	-0.3
AMWAL	35.0	30.2	41,050	1,429	11	34.0	▼	-1.0
ALIMTIAZ	170	167	11,728,415	1,980,324	133	169	▲	3.0
MANAZEL	38.0	37.0	95,511	3,534	4	37.0	▼	-1.0
NIND	156	155	1,229,302	191,558	23	156	▲	1.0
BIHC	44.0	44.0	52,200	2,297	2	44.0	—	0.0
SENERGY	40.0	39.0	76,033	3,038	9	39.5	▼	-0.5
AGHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	84	—	0.0
KPPC	58	57	827,000	47,452	27	58	▲	1.7
TAHSSILAT	29.3	25.2	60,011	1,521	8	25.5	▼	-6.0
EKHOLDING	226	226	9,075	2,051	1	226	▼	-8.0
GFH	132	131	97,500	12,783	8	132	▼	-1.0
INOVEST	108	108	26,873	2,902	4	108	▲	1.0
Financial Services			**30,367,272**	**3,347,198**	**905**	**671.80**	▼	**-1.10**
Investment Instruments			**0**	**0**	**0**	**1081.97**	—	**0.00**
ASC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	150	—	0.0
OSOS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	109	—	0.0
HAYATCOMM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	—	0.0
Technology			**0**	**0**	**0**	**553.93**	—	**0.00**
SANAD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	—	0.0
AFAQ	121	121	1	0	1	121	▲	13.0
EFFECT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	31.9	—	0.0
AJWAN	60	60	20,000	1,190	2	60	▲	2.5
MASAKEN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79	—	0.0
DALQAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	350	—	0.0
ALEID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	—	0.0
MIDAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,220	—	0.0
THURAYA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	204	—	0.0
AMAR	49.0	39.2	201,000	7,889	2	49.0	—	0.0
Parallel Market			**221,001**	**9,079**	**5**	**1006.28**	▼	**-5.00**

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report

الوطني NBK

At 02:00 PM Previous Day

Global Stock Indices

Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change		Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Dow Jones	23,348.74	23,377.24	28.50	▲	0.12	18.29
NASDAQ	6,698.96	6,727.67	28.71	▲	0.43	24.98
S&P 500	2,572.83	2,575.26	2.43	▲	0.09	15.03
Financial Times	7,493.08	7,503.43	10.35	▲	0.14	5.05
DAX	13,229.57	13,458.65	229.08	▲	1.73	17.22
CAC 40	5,503.29	5,523.88	20.59	▲	0.37	13.63
Swiss	9,242.18	9,270.99	28.81	▲	0.31	12.79
Nikkei 225	22,011.61	22,420.08	408.47	▲	1.86	17.29
Topix	1,765.96	1,786.71	20.75	▲	1.17	17.65
Hang Seng	28,245.54	28,594.06	348.52	▲	1.23	29.97
Straits Times	3,374.08	3,391.61	17.53	▲	0.52	17.73

MENA Stock Indices

Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change		Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait	6,513.83	6,530.08	16.25	▲	0.25	11.76
Saudi Arabia	6,934.37	6,948.49	14.12	▲	0.20	-3.83
Dubai	3,635.87	3,634.72	-1.15	▼	-0.03	2.97
Abu Dhabi	4,479.60	4,485.16	5.56	▲	0.12	-1.47
Bahrain	1,276.69	1,279.09	2.40	▲	0.19	4.61
Qatar	8,165.06	8,171.20	6.14	▲	0.08	-21.77
Oman	5,010.66	5,048.78	38.12	▲	0.76	-13.35
Lebanon	1,157.53	1,162.16	4.63	▲	0.40	-4.55
Jordan	2,093.19	2,102.03	8.84	▲	0.42	-3.55
Egypt	14,342.38	14,309.24	-33.14	▼	-0.23	16.18
Morocco	12,373.04	12,384.82	11.78	▲	0.10	6.36
Tunisia	6,104.53	6,114.48	9.95	▲	0.16	11.22

Global Currencies Exchange Rate

Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwait Dinar		12.2805	3.2884	2.8268	2.4717	3.2910	375.30	4.2862
Saudi Riyal	0.08143		0.2678	0.2302	0.2013	0.2680	30.56	0.3490
US Dollar	0.30410	3.7345		0.8596	0.7517	1.0008	114.13	1.3034
Euro	0.35376	4.3443	1.1633		0.8747	1.1647	132.80	1.5167
Sterling Pound	0.40457	4.9684	1.3304	1.1432		1.3319	151.85	1.7345
Swiss Franc	0.30386	3.7315	0.9992	0.8586	0.7508		114.04	1.3024
Japanese Yen	0.00266	0.0327	0.0088	0.0075	0.0066	0.0088		0.0114
Australian Dollar	0.23331	2.8651	0.7672	0.6593	0.5765	0.7678	87.56	

MENA Currencies Exchange Rate

Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dollar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30410	3.7345	0.3743	3.6270	0.3831	3.6573	17.5295
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2884		12.2805	1.2307	11.9270	1.2599	12.0266	57.6439
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08143		0.1002	0.9712	0.1026	0.9793	4.6939
Bahraini Dinar	2.6720	0.81256	9.9786		9.6914	1.0237	9.7723	46.8390
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08384	1.0296	0.1032		0.1056	1.0084	4.8331
Omani Riyal	2.6101	0.79373	9.7473	0.9768	9.4668		9.5458	45.7534
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08315	1.0211	0.1023	0.9917	0.1048		4.7930
Egyptian Pound	0.0570	0.01735	0.2130	0.0213	0.2069	0.0219	0.2086	

Global Interest Rates

Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.25	1.56	1.81	2.00	2.31
US Dollar	1.20	1.24	1.38	1.57	1.85
Euro	-0.40	-0.39	-0.37	-0.32	-0.23
Sterling Pound	0.38	0.42	0.45	0.56	0.78
Swiss Franc	-0.79	-0.78	-0.73	-0.64	-0.52
Australian Dollar	1.55	1.61	1.60	1.60	1.67
Japanese Yen	-0.02	-0.02	-0.04	0.00	0.11

Global Bond Yields

Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year
United States	1.61	2.03	2.40	2.90
Europe	-0.76	-0.34	0.38	1.25
United Kingdom	0.50	0.82	1.37	1.93

Commodities

Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change		Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait Oil	58.56	58.62	0.06	▲	0.10	9.14
Brent	61.81	62.28	0.47	▲	0.76	11.57
West Texas	54.41	54.31	-0.10	▼	-0.18	1.21
Gold	1271.20	1275.00	3.80	▲	0.30	9.39
Silver	16.69	16.87	0.18	▲	1.08	4.50

Source: National Bank of Kuwait

Cadillac announces Sole DXB as venue for 'Letters to Andy Warhol'

Travelling exhibition reaches Dubai-based street culture fair

DUBAI: Cadillac, in partnership with The Andy Warhol Museum, has announced 2017's final exhibition of 'Letters to Andy Warhol', which is set to take place at UAE's Dubai Design District (d3) as part of Dubai's urban lifestyle event, Sole DXB. Held from 8-16 December 2017, the collaborative project between Cadillac and the cultural institution celebrates Warhol's legacy through imaginative, co-created content and experiences. It includes five pieces of artwork, across varying mediums and techniques, from different periods of Warhol's career, which all share Cadillac as the subject.

Fresh off the back of announcing a heavyweight cultural billing for the 2017 event that includes Kano, Pusha T, and Hiroshi Fujiwara, Sole DXB has announced additional programming news as Cadillac and the Andy Warhol Museum come together for an archive-led exhibition, which will launch at Sole DXB 2017.

Nadim Ghrayeb, Regional Marketing Manager, Cadillac Middle East, said: "We are proud to partner with Sole DXB and bring a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to the Middle East, providing visitors the chance to witness art by one of the world's most famous pop artists, Andy Warhol. We consider Sole DXB an ideal platform for organizing 'Letters to Andy Warhol' and look forward to welcoming the region's pop fans to the world of Andy Warhol and Cadillac."

Rajat Malhotra, Director, Sole DXB said, "Having worked with Cadillac for three years now, this is the level of commitment and caliber of execution we've come to expect from their team. We're thrilled to host the launch of 'Letters to Andy Warhol' at Sole DXB. The exhibition signals how we'd like to approach the representation of art, one of our key pillars, going forward. Andy Warhol played a huge role in our understanding of culture, growing up, and we hope that by looking into our past, this will help to design our future."

As an icon, celebrity and artist, Andy Warhol was among the most influential people who lived in the twentieth century. A daring innovator and remarkable entrepreneur, Andy Warhol blurred the lines between art and commerce, celebrating iconic fixtures of American life - the Cadillac a mainstay in his life's works.

'Letters to Andy Warhol' showcases rarely-seen letters from the likes of Yves Saint Laurent, Mick Jagger, the Museum of Modern Art, the New York State Department of Public Works and a mutual friend of his and Truman Capote that offer a glimpse into Warhol's most personal experiences and relationships. Each letter has inspired artistic contributions and experiences from a roster of talent including Aimee Mullins, Brian Atwood, Chiara Clemente, Derek Blasberg, David LaChapelle, Francesco Clemente, J.J. Martin, Nick Rhodes, Sean Lennon, Sienna Miller and Zac Posen. The exhibition provides a unique dialogue between the era of handwritten notes and our technology-filled present. This rare glimpse into Warhol's private correspondence reveals the bold spirit of a brilliant American icon - a multi-faceted, sensitive and ambitious artist whose determined self-belief and overarching optimism Cadillac is proud to celebrate at Sole DXB this December.

Jazeera Airways offers AED 500 worth shopping voucher on flights to Dubai!

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, launches today an exciting promotion which will run from November 5th to November 29th, 2017 on all Kuwait to Dubai bound flights. All passengers booking a flight for travel Sunday-Wednesdays will automatically go into a draw that will entitle the winner to a voucher worth AED 500, redeemable at the Dubai Airport Duty Free.

Passengers on Dubai bound flights will enjoy a fun experience as the cabin crew will announce one lucky winner on each flight, handing over the card voucher for a unique shopping spree at one of the most sought after and biggest travel retail operators in the world. Jazeera Airways travelers to Dubai can also look forward to exceptional other benefits. Operating three flights a day, Kuwait's low cost champion lands at Dubai International Terminal 1, offering the most convenient route to exit.

Passengers flying to Dubai can also benefit from Jazeera Airways' Park & Fly service free of charge throughout this campaign. Jazeera's Park & Fly service is a unique offer for customers which enables them to avoid the congestion at Kuwait airport car parks by parking at the Park & Fly facility less than 1 km from the terminal, where they can check in for their flight, drop their bags and get their boarding passes. A special bus takes them to the airport. Announcing the special promotion, Rohit Ramachandran CEO at Jazeera Airways said, "We have an extremely attractive proposition for business and leisure travelers alike when flying in to Dubai, making the journey easier and more convenient, so people can maximize their valuable time at their destination. This promotion is making flying to Dubai with Jazeera even more enjoyable".

Recognized internationally as the number 1 airline for best On-Time Performance in the region, Jazeera Airways customers can be assured in reaching their destination with ease and peace of mind. Kuwait's favorite low cost airline was recently also awarded the 'Low Cost Airline of the Year' accolade at the Aviation Business Awards in Dubai in recognition of it serving customers the best value flights and service in the region.

Travelers can book now via Jazeera's revamped website - Jazeeraairways.com, or through the dedicated app or from all travel agents. To book flights or learn more about Jazeera Airways services, offers, promotions and destinations, customers can also contact the Call Center on 177.

Turkish Airlines offers Istanbul Bosphorus Experience

KUWAIT: The Istanbul Bosphorus Experience is a new program, specially designed by Turkish Airlines for its Business Class passengers who have a transfer time of seven or more hours in Istanbul. Turkey's national flag carrier, recently awarded with four Skytrax World Airline Awards, introduces this program to enable its transfer passengers to closely experience the beauty of Istanbul and the Bosphorus, before continuing their trip to their target destination.

"We always strive to offer our passengers the best flight experience possible - on board and on the ground. With the addition of the Istanbul Bosphorus Experience, we continue to improve our wide range of activities and services including our worldwide known "Turkish Airlines Lounge Istanbul", that earned the top spot in the category "World's Best Business Class Lounge" within the Skytrax World Airline Awards 2017, or our innovative Miniport service, and etc. These offerings already transform the layover into a special experience. Passengers can now discover and enjoy the cultural facets of Istanbul at first hand. Besides further diversifying our unmatched offerings to our passengers by launching this service, we can also indirectly contribute to the Turkish tourism economy by this way." said Ahmet Olmustur, Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) of Turkish Airlines. The eligible Turkish Airlines Business Class passengers can make their own reservations with special offers through https://bosphorus.turkishairlines.com/ by using their Passenger Name Record (PNR) Code.

Within the framework of this service, passengers will be welcomed by a guide, who will accompany them during their passport control also, and receive a Prime Class welcoming when they arrive at the Istanbul Ataturk Airport.

Outlines of the program:

- The guide continues to accompany the program participants throughout the entire program. At the first stage, the guide will take the passengers to the marinas of Eminonu or Karakoy, two prominent symbols of Istanbul, with luxurious vehicles.
- Following that, guests have the opportunity to tour around the unique beauty of Bosphorus on a private cruise.
- All following services will be offered during this cruise program:
- A crew will be serving beverages and snacks to the participants,
- And there will also be an available wi-fi connection for their use.
- After the cruise tour, an array of the most famous samples from the legendary Ottoman Cuisine (either breakfast, lunch or dinner) will be offered to the passengers, at the historical Ciragan Palace Kempinski Hotel, located at the Bosphorus.
- After the Ciragan Palace Kempinski visit, the passengers will be taken to their departure terminal, in company with the guide again.

International money transfers now available via CMO mobile app

BEIRUT: For the first time in Lebanon, customers can send international money transfers anytime and anywhere that is convenient to them thanks to the partnership between Cash United, a MoneyGram agent, and CSSBank SAL, the owner of CMO mobile app.

CMO is a new and innovative mobile payment platform that offers an easy and quick way to transform any smartphone into a secure payment tool. Its network includes more than 15 banks and financial institutions.

CMO now lets you transfer money instantly around the globe with a few easy steps! Select the Money Transfer icon from the menu, choose MoneyGram and send the amount of your choice to any destination with just a few taps! The new service was announced during a conference that involved also an anti-money-laundering and consumer fraud protection training delivered by the SIC, MoneyGram and Cash United experts. The meeting, attended by the representatives Lebanon Central Bank and CashUnited/MoneyGram's subagents, is a part of both companies' continuous commitment to compliance and protection of customers using money transfer services to support their family. The compliance training was also an occasion for MoneyGram and Cash United to announce the renewal of the partnership agreement for eight more years. Money transfer services will continue to be available at hundreds of Cash United locations across the country for customers looking for a way to send and receive cash or transfer money directly to a bank account. "Cash United is one of MoneyGram's longstanding agents in the region. We have been working together since 1999 to bring inclusive financial services to the unbanked to provide them with a reliable financial connection to their loved ones abroad. Now we've accomplished another milestone by the addition of a convenient, digital channel to send money across borders," said Paul Hanley, MoneyGram's regional head, GCC & Levant Regions.

"At CashUnited, we believe it is our duty to invest, train and inform our agents about the latest news and compliance techniques when it comes to money laundering and terrorism financing," said Philippe Dagher, CEO of Cash United. "We are also very proud of the launch of mobile service as it makes life easier to our customers to use latest innovations in money transfers," added Dagher.

Lebanon is a dynamic remittance market, typically considered a "receive country" for money transfers, as more remittances are being received that send out. However, in the recent years, the volume of the outbound transactions has been growing significantly. According to the World Bank data, in 2017 nearly $7.9billion flowed into Lebanon, accounting for 14.6 percent of country's GDP. Key sending countries are Saudi Arabia ($1.5 billion), the US ($1.2 billion), Australia ($904 million), Canada ($810 million), and Germany ($835 million).

Agility gold sponsor of fifth e-Government forum

KUWAIT: Agility, a leading global logistics provider, yesterday announced its participation as the Gold sponsor of the fifth edition of the e-Government Forum (EGOV5). Under the auspices of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, EGOV5 will be inaugurated by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Acting Minister of Information, and the Chairman of the Board of the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT).

EGOV5 is the largest e-government event in Kuwait, bringing together prominent senior dignitaries, government officials and heads of industry from across the region, where they will share ideas and best practices to build a sound foundation for the advancement of government services.

Tarek Sultan, Vice Chariman and CEO, said, "Disruptive technologies are constantly changing the way we do business, and the need to stay ahead of the game is crucial. Information sharing between private and government entities to enhance services with efficient tools across all sectors in Kuwait is just one important way to do this. With the top technology experts, companies and government institutions under one roof, EGOV5creates an open dialogue, helping Kuwait forward move forward digitally."

'We must do better,' social media giants tell Congress

Facebook, Google and Twitter seek to assure lawmakers

WASHINGTON: American internet giants told Congress Tuesday they were committed to cracking down on fake news operations on their platforms like the ones Russians conducted to meddle in last year's US presidential elections. A day after bombshell indictments in a US probe of Moscow's election interference and possible coordination between President Donald Trump's campaign and Russia, Facebook,Google and Twitter sought to assure concerned lawmakers that they were taking necessary steps to rid their platforms of disinformation, propaganda and provocation.

In their testimony, the social media companies revealed startling new data showing many more millions of Americans were exposed to the fake news than previously thought. The new information gives the broadest picture yet of the Russian effort to spread discord across US society.

"We are deeply concerned about all of these threats," Facebook general counsel Colin Stretch told the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism. "That foreign actors, hiding behind fake accounts, abused our platform and other internet services to try to sow division and discord-and to try to undermine our election process-is an assault on democracy, and it violates all of our values."

The closely-watched hearing comes as the first charges in a US probe into Russian meddling reverberated through Washington. One of three unsealed indictments brought by US special prosecutor Robert Mueller revealed early contacts between Kremlin-linked figures and a former advisor of Trump's campaign.

In Moscow, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov insisted the US accusations of election-meddling were being made "without one piece of evidence."

MOSCOW: A woman uses a laptop under the ".ru" domain zone sign during the 10th Russian Internet Week in Moscow yesterday.—AFP

WASHINGTON:(From left), Facebook's General Counsel Colin Stretch, Twitter's Acting General Counsel Sean Edgett and Google's Law Enforcement and Information Security Director Richard Salgado, are sworn in for a Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on Tuesday.—AP

Staying ahead of threats

Testimony by the three companies, whose executives face more congressional questioning today, shows that Russian activities were far greater than they had previously reported. Twitter has found that nearly 37,000 automated "bot" accounts with Russian links generated 1.4 million tweets that were seen by a potential 288 million people in the three months before the November 8, 2016 presidential election, the company said.

Twitter's acting general counsel Sean Edgett acknowledged that despite improvements that have helped the company identify and suppress malicious automated and human-generated activity, "we will need to evolve to stay ahead of new tactics." "We agree that we must do better to prevent it," he added. Facebook testified that some 126 million US users, a potentially huge portion of the voting public, may have seen stories, posts or other content from Russian sources.

"Foreign governments like Russia-in the 2016 election cycle-were deeply involved in manipulating popular social media websites with misinformation to sow discord among Americans," Senator Lindsey Graham, the subcommittee's chairman, said in a statement.

He said social media manipulation by terror networks and foreign governments is "one of the greatest challenges to American democracy" and national security. Analysts say Russia's social media interference was part of a broader effort to help Trump defeat Democrat Hillary Clinton. Some lawmakers sounded exasperated about the extent of the meddling, conducted in part by "troll armies" like the Russia-based Internet Research Agency.

"What is really staggering, and hard to fully comprehend, is how easily and successfully they turned modern technologies to their advantage," Senator Dianne Feinstein said. All three executives faced intense questioning about how they will counter such operations.

Google's information security director Richard Salgado said users next year will be able to learn the source of each political ad on YouTube with a single click on an icon above the ads. "We are committed to doing our part," Salgado said. But the social media firms face the difficult challenge of keeping their platforms open, in order to avoid accusations of censorship and bias, and not becoming the curators of truth in society.

The trio has already begun taking measures to try to screen out manipulative Russian content. Researchers have identified efforts in the past year that aimed to make white Americans angry at blacks, to hurt the image of feminists, and other such targeting that may have hurt Clinton and helped Trump.

Twitter announced last week it would no longer accept advertising from Russia Today and Sputnik, two Russian government-backed media groups that allegedly hone their stories and news placement for political impact. Facebook's Stretch said the threat was of a global magnitude.

Asked by Graham whether he believed countries like Iran or North Korea could launch similar social media campaigns of misinformation, Stretch noted it was "certainly" possible. "The internet is borderless," he said. — AFP

Twitter tries to block Russian media

Technology seeks to preserve fading skill: Braille literacy

BOSTON: For nearly a century, the National Braille Press has churned out millions of pages of Braille books and magazines a year, providing a window on the world for generations of blind people.

But as it turns 90 this year, the Boston-based printing press and other advocates of the tactile writing system are wrestling with how to address record low Braille literacy.

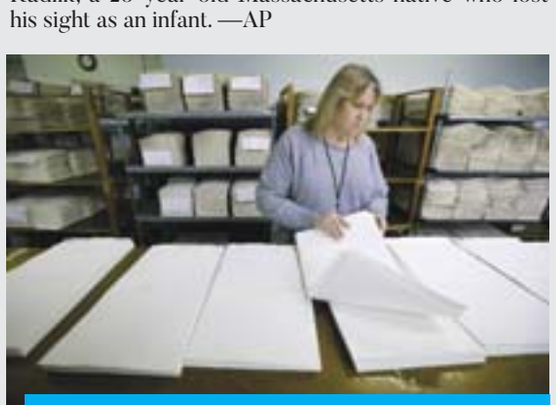
Roughly 13 percent of US blind students were considered Braille readers in a 2016 survey by the American Printing House for the Blind, another major Braille publisher, located in Louisville, Kentucky. That number has steadily dropped from around 30 percent in 1974, the first year the organization started asking the question.

Brian Mac Donald, president of the National Braille Press, says the modern blind community needs easier and more affordable ways to access the writing system developed in the 1800s by French teacher Louis Braille. For the National Braille Press and its 1960-era Heidelberg presses, that has meant developing and launching its own electronic Braille reader last year - the B2G .

"Think Kindle for the blind," Mac Donald said as he showed off the portable machine - which has an eight-button keyboard for typing in Braille as well as a refreshable, tactile display for reading along in Braille - during a recent tour of the press' headquarters near Northeastern University. The venerable press, which started as a Boston newspaper for the blind in 1927, has also looked beyond printing Braille versions of popular books and magazine titles.

Educational materials like school textbooks and standardized tests, as well as business-related publications like restaurant menus, instruction manuals and business cards, comprise an increasingly larger share of revenues, Mac Donald said.

"Braille isn't dead by any means," he said. "But it needs technology to adapt and evolve." Waning interest in Braille has been a challenge since the 1970s, when school districts started de-emphasizing it in favor of audio learning and other teaching methods, said Chris Danielsen, spokesman for the National Federation of the Blind in Baltimore. New technology has allowed people with visual impairments to live more independently than ever, but they're also playing a role in eroding Braille's prominence, said Cory Kadlik, a 26-year-old Massachusetts native who lost his sight as an infant. —AP



BOSTON: In this Oct 17, 2017 photo collator Elizabeth Bouvier, of Natick, Mass, assembles pages of a braille book at the National Braille Press in Boston. —AP

Scientists mine 'star scar' to unlock space secrets

PARIS: Since early September, the denizens of this normally hushed burg in central France have been serenaded by an industrial drill poking holes around town and pulling up cylinders of rock.

That's because Rochechouart, population 3,800, and its medieval castle are built on top of an astrobleme. "An astrobleme-which literally means 'star scar'-is the name given to traces left by a major meteorite impact," explained Philippe Lambert, one of the astrogeologists trying to unlock its secrets. This particular impact crater was made by a massive space rock that crash-landed more than 200 million years ago, and has intrigued scientists since its discovery in the 19th-century.

"You have a nugget under your feet!," the famous Canadian astrophysicist Hubert Reeves enthused in 2011 while visiting the research project here he helped launch.

Since then, scores of scientists-geologists, paleontologists, exobiologists-from a dozen countries have submitted requests to examine the space rock up close.

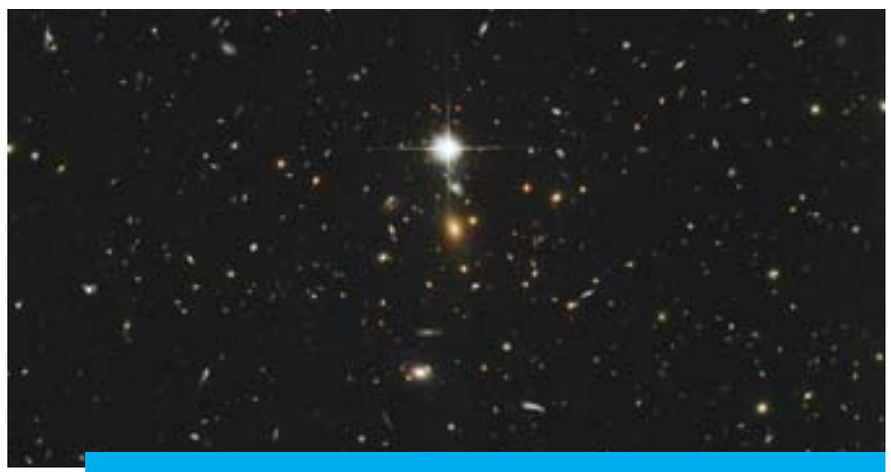
Lambert-who devoted his 1977 doctoral thesis to France's only known astrobleme-today directs the International Center for Research on Impacts at Rochechouart (CIRRI). The centre is coordinating the first-ever drilling and excavation at the site. "About 200 million years ago-before the Jurassic period, and even before the planet's continents split apart-a six-billion-ton meteorite about a kilometer in diameter crashed here," said Pierre Poupart, who overseas a natural reserve set up around the crater. "It was travelling at about 72,000 kilometres (45,000 miles) per hour."

The impact-which vaporized the meteorite-was roughly equivalent to several thousand Hiroshima-sized atomic bombs, and almost certainly destroyed all life within a radius of some 200 kilometres (125 miles). The landscape was changed forever. The Rochechouart astrobleme is unusually close to the surface, making it easier to study.

A natural laboratory

"We are walking on it," said Lambert. "We don't even have to dig through a layer of dirt to reach it." The drilling, scheduled through November, will yield 20 core samples taken one to 120 meters (yards) below the surface from eight different sites across a 50-hectare (124-acres) area.

The 600,000 euro ($700,000) project, funded by the French state and the European Union, could be the beginning of a long adventure, said Lambert. "There's everything here to justify an open-air laboratory," he mused. Some scientists hope to tease out remaining mysteries about how such meteorites form, and what that might tell us about their evolution in space.



This handout photo taken by NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope and released on October 27, 2017 shows a chock-full of galaxies - each glowing speck is a different galaxy, bar the bright flash in the middle of the image which is actually a star lying within our own galaxy that just happened to be in the way. —AFP

Others are on the hunt for chemical traces that could shed light on the emergence of life on Earth, and which of the raw ingredients essential for life came from space. Geologists are curious about how such a cataclysmic impact might have released water held within rock formations, while palaeobiologists are looking at how an event that could massively destroy life also, at the same time, creates conditions for new lifeforms to emerge.

"This doesn't mean that the secret of life is under our feet," said Poupart. "But studying what happened here 200 million years ago could tell us a lot."

Once they are secured, tagged and archived, the Rochechouart rock cores will be made available to researchers around the world, he said.

"We would like to see this site become a natural laboratory benefiting national and international research," France's National Centre of Scientific Research said in a statement. —AFP

Sony revives pet AI project with updated AIBO robot dog

TOKYO: Japan's Sony Corp said yesterday it has brought back AIBO more than a decade since it last made the robotic dog, as the electronics and entertainment firm seeks to rebuild its reputation for innovation after years of restructuring. The announcement comes a day after Sony confirmed its renaissance by forecasting its highest-ever profit this financial year, sending its shares surging to a nine-year high.

AIBO is billed as a pet that behaves like a real dog using artificial intelligence (AI) to learn and interact with its owner and surroundings. The upgrade sees AIBO equipped with new sensing and movement technologies as well as far more advanced AI backed by cloud computing to develop the dog's personality. Sales begin in Japan in January for 198,000 yen ($1,739).

Sony pioneered entertainment robots with AIBO in 1999. It sold about 150,000 dogs in Japan before ceasing production seven years later when its core consumer electronics business struggled in price wars with emerging Asian rivals. "It was a difficult decision to stop the project in 2006, but we continued development in AI and robotics," Chief Executive Officer Kazuo Hirai said at a news briefing.

"I asked our engineers a year and a half ago to develop (new) AIBO because I strongly believe robots capable of building loving relationships with people help realize Sony's mission (to inspire)." The reborn AIBO features new actuator technology allowing it move more smoothly and naturally like a real dog. With sensing and AI technologies, AIBO can run toward its owner and detect smiles and words of praise, and can remember what actions please the owner. Its eyes are made of organic light emitting diode (OLED) displays making it capable of diverse expressions.

TOKYO: Sony's latest entertainment robots "aibo" are displayed during a press preview at the company's headquarters in Tokyo yesterday.—AFP

Sony said it aims to sell at least as many new AIBO as the original, without giving a time frame. It also said it is considering overseas sales. The firm sees AI as a future pillar of growth, hoping to catch up with major technology companies such as Facebook Inc , Apple Inc and Alphabet Inc's Google.

It invested an undisclosed sum last year in Cogitai, a US AI start-up focusing on technology that allows machines to learn continually and autonomously from interaction in the real world. It also established a venture capital fund to build partnerships with researchers and start-up companies in AI and robotics.

Earlier this year, Sony Education launched its first product, Koov, which aims to teach children coding through building and programming robots using plastic blocks. —Reuters

In Portugal, natural oak corks still top the world's screwcaps

'It takes around 50 years for them to bring in money'

CORUCHE: In this natural forest northeast of Portugal's capital, centuries-old cork oak trees are bathed in sunlight, their thick grayish bark standing out among the greenery. "Look at them, it's as if they were human, each one is different," forestry engineer Conceicao Silva says as she inspects tree branches. This forest in the central Portuguese region of Ribatejo is a national treasure as the trees provide the raw material used to produce over half of the world's cork stoppers.

"This one is four years old," Silva says, touching a tree in the natural forest which measures about 1,300 hectares (3,200 acres). The cork trees can live for as long as 300 to 400 years, but they "grow very slowly," she tells AFP. And the process to yield a usable, money-making harvest can take decades. "It takes around 50 years for them to bring in money," said Jean-Marie Aracil with the French Federation of Cork Unions.

The first cork harvest, taken when the trees are between 25 and 35 years, won't yield usable cork, nor will the second, and only a third harvest, two decades after the first, is really productive. But everyone accepts that time passes slowly for these cork trees-found mainly in Portugal, Algeria and Spain-that have been in use since the Ancient Greeks first closed wine jugs with them in 5 BC. And traditional and technical corks are still the world's preferred way to seal bottles, despite inexpensive synthetic screwtops gaining market share in recent years.

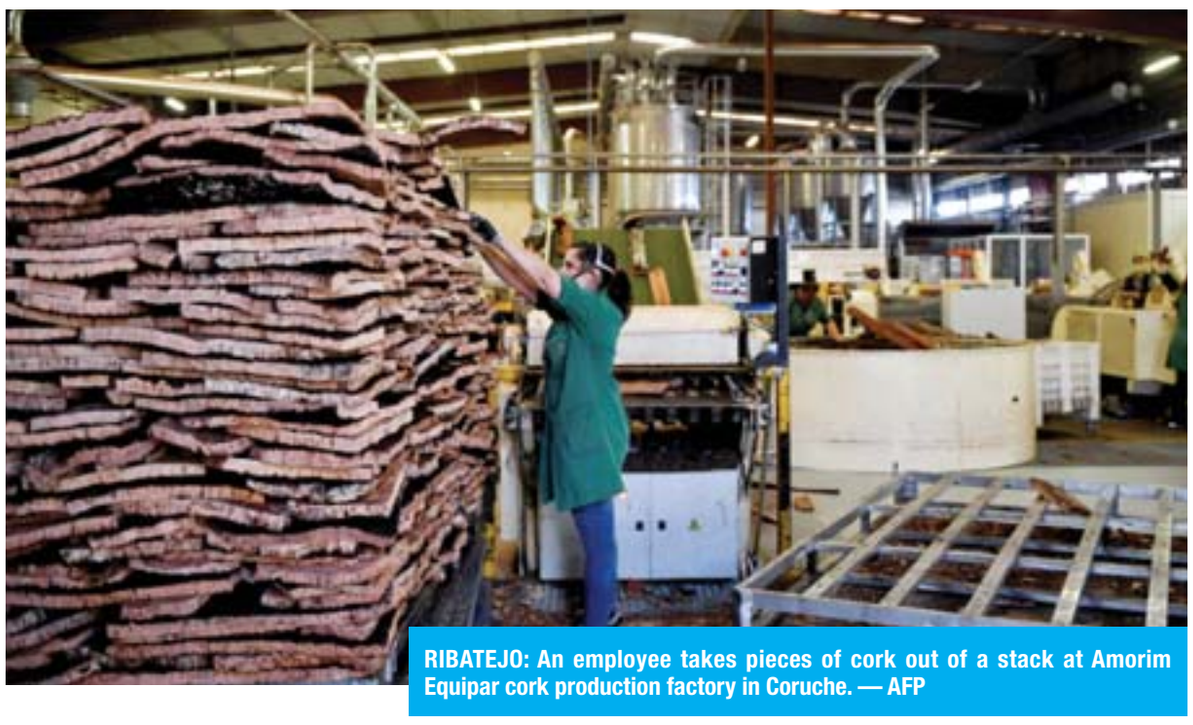
Portuguese region of Ribatejo is a national treasure

Cork 'gaining ground'

Portugal remains the leading producer of cork-seven of 10 wine bottles in the world are topped with Portuguese corks. Just a few kilometers away from the forest in Coruche is a plant owned by Portuguese company Corticeira Amorim, the world's biggest cork producer. Thousands of just-harvested cork parts dry over an area as large as a dozen football fields. After six months of being left out to dry, the raw cork will be boiled in order for it to gain thickness and elasticity and to remove tannins, before it will be cut into strips and perforated as tops. The corks will then be washed, dried, labeled and treated with paraffin or silicone to facilitate export.

Yet only about 15 to 30 percent of the cork will be of sufficient quality to produce whole cork stoppers used to top fine wines, said Jose Pinto, the Portugal general director of French corkmaker Lafitte, based near Porto. The other 80 percent or so will be used for parts, half for plant boilers and the other half to produce technical stoppers-cork slivers glued together that are cheaper than traditional whole cork stoppers.

These stoppers, which look a lot like the traditional variety, are put on wines to be consumed within two to three years. The caps are particularly popular in the United States, France and Italy among mass market wine makers, the main users around the world of inexpensive plastic or metal screwcaps.



RIBATEJO: An employee takes pieces of cork out of a stack at Amorim Equipar cork production factory in Coruche. — AFP

More and more of these types of cheaper stoppers are being produced in Portugal as a way to gain back the third of the market share that has been lost to screwtops."The cork is gaining ground," said Carlos de Jesus, the marketing director of Amorim, which has concentrated production of its "Twin Top" brand of technical stoppers at one factory. "Global wine consumption is increasing by 0.8 to 1 percent per year, Portugal's cork exports are rising by 2 percent a year, or 1.4 percent for cork stoppers". "We are regaining market share," he said, adding that numbers like this haven't been seen since the early 2000's. — AFP

Mammoth projects to make Norway's fish farms eco-friendly

TRONDHEIM: "We could produce five times as much fish by 2050": in a posh hotel in the Norwegian town of Trondheim, a fishing industry representative winds up his presentation on Norway's sky-high fish farming goals. The "potential" for salmon and other farmed fish has been calculated by researchers, Norwegian Seafood Federation spokesman Oyvind Andre Haram tells AFP, noting that each day the Scandinavian country of 5.2 million people produces "14 million meals of salmon."

Worldwide demand for farmed salmon seems to know no end. Norway, which produces 1.3 million tons a year, already accounts for more than half of world production and has no plans to slow down. The country's fish farming industry has in the past been taken to task over environmental issues, but it's determined to resolve those challenges. "There are two major issues... One is sea lice, and the other is escapes of farmed fish from net pens into the sea," says Julie Dovle Johansen of conservation group WWF Norway.

Sea lice is a parasite that requires fish farmers to slaughter large amounts of salmon prematurely, costing the industry between 1.0 and 1.5 billion euros ($1.16-$1.75 billion) a year, according to John Arne Breivik, the head of a sea lice removal company. Sea lice can also spread to wild salmon stocks and kill them.

Cleaner fish

Farmed salmon that escape from their cages also risk muddying the gene pool of wild salmon if they mate, according to Dovle Johansen. Farmed salmon are more fragile to natural threats and have a lower survival rate, a characteristic that can be transmitted to wild salmon, she said. Industry giants are therefore putting a lot of effort into innovative projects to address these problems, raising hopes for the sector-but also concern among environmental activists. "There's an ambition by the salmon industry and the (fisheries) ministry to double the production capacity within the next 10-15 years, which we think is quite crazy," the head of Greenpeace Norway, Truls Gulowsen, told AFP.

In one of the many fjords nestled into the island of Hitra off Norway's western coast, thousands of farmed salmon teem in the ocean water in circular pens belonging to the Leroy fishing group, dancing and gliding in a never-ending water ballet. Leroy is the world's second biggest salmon producer. Lena is a young employee hired just a month ago. "Feeding the fish is the main part of this job," she tells AFP, pointing to camera screens that show the almost adult salmon splashing in the saltwater along with the occasional small wrasse, "cleaner fish" strategically implanted to peck off sea lice from the farmed salmon instead of using potentially harmful pesticides.

Other techniques are also being used, according to Jean-Pierre Gonda, the head of Leroy France. He shows sketches of a so-called "pipe-farm", a giant breeding boat with six basins of ocean water pumped up through pipes from a depth of 30 metres (100 feet), and kept at a constant temperature, unaffected by weather conditions and free of sea lice, Gonda explained. — AFP

Indivior drug to fight opioid addiction by US panel

WASHINGTON, DC: Indivior's experimental drug to help fight America's growing opioid addiction crisis has been recommended for approval by a US advisory panel, boosting its sales prospects as competitors threaten revenues from an older product. Shares in the London-listed company, which specializes in addiction treatment, were 11 percent higher by 0855 GMT on Wednesday on the overnight news, extending gains this week.

The advisory committee to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) voted 18-1 that Indivior's injectable drug, known as RBP-6000, could benefit addicts and the lower of two doses studied had an acceptable safety profile. The FDA, which is due to make a decision on the medicine by Nov. 30, typically follows the recommendations of its advisory panels. The endorsement comes less than a week after FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb announced the agency's plans to encourage widespread use among opioid addicts of less harmful opioids such as methadone and buprenorphine, the active ingredient in RBP-6000.

"I think this is a really promising alternative to what's out there and will be attractive to a lot of patients," said Laurel Habel, a panelist and researcher at Kaiser Permanente in Oakland, California. The United States is battling an opioid abuse epidemic that in 2015 killed 33,000 people. President Donald Trump recently declared the problem a national public health emergency. Indivior studied two dosing regimens. In one, 300 milligrams were given once a month for six months. In the other, two doses of 300 milligrams were followed by four doses of 100 milligrams. There was little difference in effectiveness between the two doses and the higher dose caused more side effects. — Reuters

Alargan International reaffirms commitment to sustainability

During the United Nations Day 2017

As part of its participation in "Kuwait Partnerships for Sustainable Development", held on the occasion of the United Nations (UN) Day in the State of Kuwait, Alargan International Real Estate Company reaffirmed its commitment to sustainability and to creating sustainable development in the real estate sector in Kuwait and every country where it operates, in line with the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that would transform the world.

Over the past decade, the Company's investments in sustainability have translated into a strategy that aims not only to develop sustainable buildings to improve and support an economically and socially viable urban environment, but also shares expertise with institutions which can also support that Company's endeavors towards sustainability, and engages younger generations to whom the torch will be passed to build and maintain development.

Khaled Al-Meshaan

Alargan International Real Estate Company CEO and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, Khaled Al-Mashaan, said: "We believe in our responsibility towards creating a sustainable future and our objective as an organization goes beyond operational performance, as we measure our success by our efforts to make a positive impact around us. We've successfully integrated the notion of sustainability within our organization, delivering responsible products and services that benefit everyone in our community.

"Today, we are proud to say that sustainability is deeply rooted within Alargan's Strategy 2020 and is the driving force to our motto "Life... As You Love It", through which we develop sustainable buildings, and create communities where tenants love to work, live and socialize."

Alargan's sustainability programs support the UN's SGD Number 11, which focuses on developing sustainable cities and communities, as well as SDG Number 9 for industry innovation and infrastructure in which the Company invests in new solutions and standards to improve the industry's framework, SGD Number 15 for life on land by supporting the development of green buildings and landscapes, and SGD Number 4 for quality education through the investment in training programs targeting school and university students.

As part of the United Nations Day, Alargan launched a photography competition among universities in Kuwait, inviting them to share their vision of the future of Kuwait. The competition, held in partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Kuwait's Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCDP), aims to familiarize students with the Sustainable Development Goals identified by the UN as well as the development goals identified in the Kuwait Vision 2035, enabling students to provide their aspirations for the future.

Alargan's commitment to delivering sustainability has earned it the only Platinum ranking for the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program in Kuwait, which is awarded by the US Green Building Council (USGBC), for its development of its green compliant headquarters within the Argan Business Park. Alargan focuses on the development of affordable and middle-income housing in the GCC to serve the growing population and changing income scales.

In addition to its future-looking strategy, Alargan invests in talent by providing them with learning opportunities and growth benefits, a collaborative work environment, and a sense of belonging. This goes hand-in-hand with the company's heavy investment in corporate social responsibility, a key investment that it recognizes as a pillar to long-term sustainability.

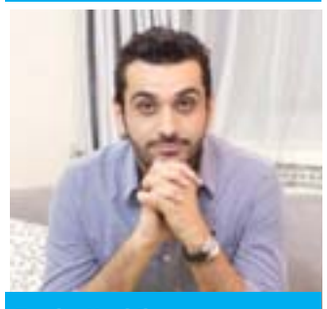
Al-Multaqa Arabic Short Story Prize announces the 2017 shortlist

The Al-Multaqa Arabic Short Story Prize jury has announced the five shortlisted authors for the 2016/2017 prize. Over the past few months, a jury comprised of accomplished writers, critics, and academicians reviewed 239 collections of short stories from published authors from 20 different countries. Al-Multaqa Prize nominees came as follows (listed in alphabetical order):

'Quraba Shajara Aliya' by Luay Hamza Abbas from Iraq (published by Dar Azmina), ' Lam Yakon Dihkan Fahaseb' by Mahmood Al-Rahbi from Oman (published by Dar Fadaat for Publishing and Distribution), 'Daif Ala Alalam' by Mahmoud Al-Rimawy from Jordan (published by Dar Fadaat for Publishing and Distribution), 'Sarir Bint el Malak' by Shahla Al-Ajili from Syria (published by Difaf Publishing) and 'Lithium' by Tamim Hnaidi from Syria (published by Al-Mutawsit Publishing).

Al-Multaqa Jury Members are: Dr Hassan Alnemi (Chair of the Jury), Dr Said Benkrad (Jury Member), Abdo Jubair (Jury Member), Huda Shawa (Jury Member), Khalil Sweileh (Jury Member). The 2017 winner will be announced in the first week of December, 2017 in a ceremony that is to be held at the American University of Kuwait.

Luay Hamza Abbas



Tamim Hnaidi

The author of the winning short story will receive $20,000 (Twenty Thousand US dollars), a trophy and a certificate of recognition, as well as a grant towards the translation of the prize-winning short story into English. The winning writer or publisher will communicate with the translator and arrange for publishing the story with foreign publishers. The other shortlisted writers will receive $5,000, a trophy and a certificate of recognition.

JW Marriott Kuwait hosts breast cancer awareness event

As part of its ongoing 'Spirit to Serve our Community' initiatives and in honor of breast cancer awareness month, the JW Marriott Kuwait, in collaboration with Fadia Survive and Thrive Association for Cancer Patients' Support proudly hosted 'Knowing is half the battle' breast cancer awareness event recently.

The event was held at the hotel's prestigious Al-Thuraya Ballroom and was attended by a huge number of cancer patients and their families, healthcare professionals, and prominent representatives from the society to support this cause besides representatives from the local newspapers and magazines.

The event kicked off by a short speech given by the President of Fadia Survive and Thrive Association, Dr Rania Azmi, in which she thanked everyone for joining today and supporting the cancer awareness cause. She explained the importance of prevention and discussed the agenda for the awareness event, detailing that she will be sharing some best practices and small changes that participants can do daily to prevent cancer and live a happier and healthier life.

She then introduced with much gratitude the distinguished guest speaker Dr Fahad Abdul Rahman Marafi, the President of Kuwait Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging, for sharing his knowledge and time for this cause as he talked about the scientific part of prevention based on his extensive experience.

In addition, some cancer patients and their family members also opened up to share their stories and battle with cancer throughout the open discussion part which was moderated by Fadia Abdel Salam Ibrahim, the founding member of Fadia Survive and Thrive Association.

"The JW Marriott Kuwait is honored to join the fight against breast cancer by hosting this informative awareness session. And we would like to thank Dr Rania Azmi for this opportunity." said George Aoun, Cluster General Manager at Kuwait Marriott Hotels.

"The hotel has established a reputation for serving the society with active involvement in many local and international charities. We are extremely proud to be a part of this great event." Aoun added. "Fadia Survive and Thrive Association is proud on its turn of today's participants from all members of the society and cancer stakeholders. What it takes to believe that we all can change the status quo of current cancer situation is basically to fight together with science and knowledge." Said Dr Rania Azmi, President of Fadia Survive and Thrive Association.

It is also worthy to note that Kuwait Marriott Hotels have held another awareness session on October 23rd, in cooperation with Dr Rania Azmi for their female employees to educate them on the importance of eating healthy to prevent cancer, as well as the importance of a balanced quality of life and key indicators for them to look out for.

Safir negotiates new hotel management agreement with Tatwir Al-Hayat

Kuwait Hotels Company, the parent company of Safir Hotels and Resorts, and real estate development company Tatwir Al-Hayat are in the process of signing a hotel management agreement. Tatwir Al-Hayat is planning to build the tallest hotel development outside Kuwait City, with a scheduled opening in 2020. The hotel component will comprise of at least 220 rooms and will be located in the Abu Halifa area, along the coastal line south of Fintas, overlooking the Arabian Gulf.

Safir Hotels and Resorts is excited to announce the future cooperation with Tatwir Al-Hayat, as it is working to strengthen its position as a national and regional hotel operator. Safir's COO Patrick de Groot met with Tatwir Chairman Rajeh Al-Ajmy to discuss the broad outlook of the development project. The hotel component is part of a mixed-use development on a 4,771 square meter plot, which will include restaurants, commercial retail space and potentially also offices. In the coming months, the development team of Safir Hotels and Resorts will be working closely with the appointed Design Consultant to work out the optimum product mix and finer details of the project.

De Groot said: "in recent meetings with Rajeh Al-Ajmy and his brother Turki Al-Ajmy, we were able to agree not only on commercial terms, but, more importantly, also on how we can best work together as business partners on this project. It's a great opportunity to share our operational and development know-how with regards to hotels at this early stage of the development."

Safir Hotels and Resorts' Chief Operating Officer Patrick de Groot, who recently joined the management team to drive the implementation of several exciting strategic initiatives deployed by the company, is excited about the opportunity. "In recent months we have completed the re-articulation of our upscale hotel concept, which we intend to implement across some of our existing hotels. In addition, we are working with Concept Developers (MerakiandModus, Dubai) on the development of a trend-provoking, midscale hotel concept. Our cooperation with Tatwir Al-Hayat will allow us to introduce one of these concepts to the Kuwait market in the years to come," says De Groot. "Coming up with just the right product mix will be crucial to the future success of this project," he adds.

End-of-Life Care

Patients with life-threatening illnesses are entitled to a quality of life to the end, and a peaceful, dignified, and pain-free death. Join local photojournalist Claudia Farkas Al-Rashoud, who will discuss palliative (end-of-life) care from a personal point of view. Both her parents passed away in Kuwait and both greatly benefitted from palliative care. Come and learn about the excellent services provided free of charge to all nationalities. Sunday, November 5, 2017 at 7:00 pm. Contact address: Villa No 67, Street 413, Block 4, Shuhada Area, Kuwait.

Palestinian Heritage Exhibition next week

The 47th Palestinian Heritage Exhibition is set to take place starting from the 6th to the 9th of November 2017 at the Women's Cultural and Social Society in Khaldiya. The event is organized by the Palestinian Culture Center as part of the Palestinian cultural week of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL). NCCAL Secretary General Ali Al-Youha is set to attend the opening of the event. The exhibition will be open to the public from 10:00 am to 1:30 pm, and from 4:30 pm to 8:30 pm, and entrance is free of charge.

T V

OSN MOVIES ACTION

00:10 Crossing Point
01:45 Cyborg X
03:25 Armageddon America
05:00 Avengers Grimm
06:25 Con Air
08:25 Echo Effect
10:00 Avengers Grimm
11:25 6 Ways To Sundown
13:05 Con Air
15:00 Crossfire
16:35 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part II
18:50 D-Tox
20:25 Rob The Mob
22:10 USS Indianapolis

ANIMAL PLANET HD

00:50 Lone Star Law
01:45 Treehouse Masters
02:40 Bad Dog
03:35 Going Ape
04:00 Going Ape
04:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
05:15 Pet Nation Renovation
06:02 Mutant Planet
06:49 Lone Star Law
07:36 Gorilla School
08:00 Gorilla School
08:25 Going Ape
08:50 Going Ape
09:15 Treehouse Masters
10:10 Bad Dog
11:05 Mutant Planet
12:00 Going Ape
12:28 Going Ape
12:55 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
13:50 Pet Nation Renovation
14:45 Bad Dog
15:40 Mutant Planet
16:35 Lone Star Law
17:30 Treehouse Masters
18:25 Whale Wars
19:20 Whale Wars
20:15 Bad Dog
21:10 Going Ape
21:38 Going Ape
22:05 Whale Wars
23:00 Whale Wars
23:55 North America

BBC FIRST

00:15 Doctors
00:45 EastEnders
01:15 Poldark
02:10 In The Dark
03:10 Doctors
03:45 Maigret
05:15 Cold Feet
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Doctors
07:00 EastEnders
07:30 Father Brown
08:20 Dickensian
09:15 Doctors
09:45 EastEnders
10:15 Father Brown
11:05 The Coroner
11:50 Dickensian
12:40 Call The Midwife
13:35 Doctors
14:05 EastEnders
14:40 Father Brown
15:30 Dickensian
16:15 Call The Midwife
17:10 The Coroner
18:00 Doctors
18:30 EastEnders
19:05 Father Brown
20:00 Holby City
21:00 Bad Move
21:30 Cold Feet
22:20 Benidorm
23:10 Doctors
23:40 EastEnders

crime & investigation network

00:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
01:00 Escaping Polygamy
02:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
03:00 My Haunted House
04:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
05:00 Escaping Polygamy
06:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
07:00 Homicide Hunter
08:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
09:00 It Takes A Killer
09:30 It Takes A Killer
10:00 Homicide Hunter
11:00 Monster In My Family
12:00 Monster In My Family
13:00 Monster In My Family
14:00 Monster In My Family
15:00 It Takes A Killer
15:30 It Takes A Killer
16:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
17:00 The First 48
18:00 The First 48
19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
20:00 It Takes A Killer
20:30 It Takes A Killer
21:00 Homicide Hunter
22:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
23:00 Jack The Ripper

COMEDY CENTRAL

00:05 South Park
00:30 South Park
00:55 Broad City
01:20 Broad City
01:45 Inside Amy Schumer
02:10 Another Period
02:35 South Park
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Inside Amy Schumer
03:50 Another Period
04:15 Kroll Show
04:40 Nathan For You
05:05 Tosh.0
05:30 Disaster Date
05:55 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:20 Sweat Inc.
07:05 Impractical Jokers UK
07:35 Impractical Jokers UK
08:05 The Jim Gaffigan Show
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Workaholics
09:20 Kroll Show
09:45 Nathan For You
10:10 Tosh.0
10:35 Sweat Inc.
11:15 Disaster Date
11:40 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:05 Impractical Jokers
12:30 Impractical Jokers UK
13:00 Impractical Jokers UK
13:30 Nathan For You
13:55 The Jim Gaffigan Show
14:20 Disaster Date
14:45 Workaholics
15:10 Friends
15:35 Disaster Date
16:00 Ridiculousness Arabia
16:25 Impractical Jokers
16:45 Workaholics
17:10 Lip Sync Battle
17:35 Disaster Date
18:00 The Jim Gaffigan Show
18:25 Impractical Jokers UK
18:55 Impractical Jokers UK
19:25 Impractical Jokers
19:50 Friends
20:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
22:00 Problematic With Moshe Kasher
22:25 The Half Hour
22:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:15 The President Show
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

Discovery Family

00:30 Pick A Puppy
00:55 Pick A Puppy
01:20 How To Build... Everything
01:45 How To Build... Everything
02:10 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
02:35 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
03:00 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
03:50 Kids Do The Craziest Things
04:15 Kids Do The Craziest Things
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Pick A Puppy
05:55 Pick A Puppy
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Pick A Puppy
07:25 Pick A Puppy
07:50 Storm Chasers
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Mythbusters
10:20 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
11:10 Weather Gone Viral
12:00 Keiko: The Untold Story Of The Star Of Free Willy
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Mythbusters
14:30 Pick A Puppy
14:55 Pick A Puppy
15:20 Storm Chasers
16:10 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
17:00 Weather Gone Viral
17:50 Keiko: The Untold Story Of The Star Of Free Willy
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Kids Do The Craziest Things
20:45 Kids Do The Craziest Things
21:10 Weather Gone Viral
22:00 Keiko: The Untold Story Of The Star Of Free Willy
22:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
23:40 Storm Chasers

ID

00:50 Obsession: Dark Desires
01:45 Evil Online
02:40 Murder Calls
03:35 I Am Homicide
04:30 Obsession: Dark Desires
05:25 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
05:50 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It
07:10 Unravelled
08:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
08:25 Disappeared
09:15 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
09:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
10:10 Unravelled
11:05 Murder Chose Me
12:00 Grave Secrets
12:55 Disappeared
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 Unravelled
15:40 Murder Chose Me
16:35 Murder Calls
17:30 Disappeared
18:25 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
18:50 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It
20:15 Unravelled
21:10 Murder Chose Me
22:05 Reasonable Doubt
23:00 Six Degrees Of Murder
23:55 The Perfect Murder

Disney Channel HD

00:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Hank Zipzer
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:45 The Hive
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Hank Zipzer
04:15 The Hive
04:20 Hank Zipzer
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:10 Alex & Co.
05:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 The Hive
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Jessie
07:25 Tangled: The Series
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 The Zhuzhus
08:20 Elena Of Avalor
08:45 Bunk'd
09:10 Stuck In The Middle
09:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
10:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
10:25 Lolirock
10:50 Lolirock
11:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
11:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
12:05 Hank Zipzer
12:30 Alex & Co.
12:55 Alex & Co.
13:20 Lolirock
13:45 Lolirock
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
14:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
15:00 The Zhuzhus
15:15 K.C. Undercover
15:40 Bizaardvark
16:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
16:10 Elena Of Avalor
16:35 Stuck In The Middle
17:00 Tangled: The Series
17:25 Bizaardvark
17:30 Bunk'd
17:55 K.C. Undercover
18:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
18:45 Girl Meets World
19:10 Star Wars Forces Of Destiny
19:15 Bizaardvark
19:40 Best Friends Whenever
20:05 Descendants Wicked World
20:10 Liv And Maddie
20:35 Jessie
21:00 Tangled: The Series
21:25 K.C. Undercover
21:50 K.C. Undercover
22:15 Stuck In The Middle
22:40 Bunk'd
23:05 Rolling With The Ronks
23:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
23:45 Lolirock

Disney Junior

00:35 Loopdidoo
00:55 Henry Hugglemonster
01:15 Calimero
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopdidoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopdidoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:10 Art Attack
04:35 Loopdidoo
04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopdidoo
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster
07:15 Calimero
07:30 Loopdidoo
07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
08:00 Sofia The First
08:30 Puppy Dog Pals
09:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
09:30 Doc McStuffins
10:00 PJ Masks
10:30 PJ Masks
11:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
11:30 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
12:00 The Lion Guard
12:30 The Lion Guard
13:00 Sofia The First
13:30 Sofia The First
14:00 PJ Masks
14:30 PJ Masks
15:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
15:30 Doc McStuffins
16:00 Puppy Dog Pals
16:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
17:00 Sofia The First
17:30 Doc McStuffins
18:00 The Lion Guard
18:25 Puppy Dog Pals
18:55 Sofia The First
19:25 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
19:55 PJ Masks
20:25 The Lion Guard
20:55 Doc McStuffins
21:25 Doc McStuffins
21:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
22:15 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
22:45 Doc McStuffins
23:15 Goldie & Bear
23:45 Puppy Dog Pals

Discovery Channel HD

00:20 Street Customs 2008
01:05 Strip The City
01:50 Abandoned Engineering
02:35 Breaking Magic
02:58 Breaking Magic
03:20 Fast N' Loud
04:05 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
04:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Outback Truckers
06:45 Street Customs 2008
07:30 Fast N' Loud
08:15 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
09:00 Auction Kings
09:25 How Do They Do It?
09:48 How Do They Do It?
10:10 Strip The City
10:55 Abandoned Engineering
11:40 Breaking Magic
12:03 Breaking Magic
12:25 How Do They Do It?
12:48 Extreme Collectors
13:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
13:55 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
14:40 Outback Truckers
15:25 Fast N' Loud
16:10 Street Customs 2008
17:00 How Do They Do It?
17:25 How Do They Do It?
17:50 Extreme Collectors
18:20 Auction Kings
18:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
19:40 How Do They Do It?
20:10 How Do They Do It?
20:35 How Do They Do It?
21:00 How Do They Do It?
21:25 How Do They Do It?
21:50 So You Think You'd Survive?
22:40 Supertruckers
23:30 Fast N' Loud

Disney XD

06:00 Disney11
06:25 Supa Strikas
06:50 Marvel's Spider-Man
07:15 Right Now Kapow
07:40 Mech-X4
08:05 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures
08:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
08:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
09:00 Supa Strikas
09:25 Supa Strikas
09:50 Walk The Prank
10:20 Walk The Prank
10:45 Gravity Falls
11:10 Gravity Falls
11:35 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
12:00 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
12:25 Two More Eggs
12:30 Phineas And Ferb
12:55 Phineas And Ferb
13:20 Zeke And Luther
13:45 Zeke And Luther
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
14:40 Gravity Falls
15:05 Lab Rats
15:30 Milo Murphy's Law
15:55 Right Now Kapow
16:25 Walk The Prank
16:50 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Marvel's Spider-Man
18:05 Supa Strikas
18:30 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures
18:35 Disney11
19:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
19:25 Right Now Kapow
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Mech-X4
20:20 Walk The Prank
20:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
21:10 Gravity Falls
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats
22:10 Lab Rats
22:35 Phineas & Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

E HD

00:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:50 E! News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 Botched By Nature
04:40 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
06:55 E! News
07:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
10:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
11:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
12:00 E! News
12:15 Botched
13:10 Botched
14:05 Botched
15:00 E! News
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
17:10 The Platinum Life
18:05 The Platinum Life
19:00 E! News
20:00 Botched
21:00 Botched
22:00 Botched
23:00 E! News
23:15 Botched

food network

00:00 Chopped
01:00 Bakers vs. Fakers
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Chopped
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:25 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:50 Anna Olson: Fresh
07:15 The Kitchen
08:05 The Pioneer Woman
08:30 The Pioneer Woman
08:55 Siba's Table
09:25 Siba's Table
09:55 Bake With Anna Olson
10:25 Bake With Anna Olson
10:55 The Kitchen
11:45 Cooking For Real
12:10 The Pioneer Woman
12:35 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Siba's Table
13:30 Siba's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 Bake With Anna Olson
17:30 Bake With Anna Olson
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Iron Chef America
20:00 Siba's Table
20:30 Siba's Table
21:00 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy
21:30 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped

itv CHOICE

00:10 Guess This House
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 Vera
05:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
06:10 Guess This House
07:05 The Chase
07:55 Vera
09:30 Catchphrase
10:05 Couples Come Dine With Me
10:55 Guess This House
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Guess This House
15:10 The Chase
16:00 Jekyll And Hyde
16:55 Jekyll And Hyde
17:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 Jekyll And Hyde
21:55 Jekyll And Hyde
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street

H2 HD

00:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
01:00 United Stuff Of America
02:00 History's Greatest Blunders
03:00 Engineering Disasters
03:50 Ancient Aliens
04:40 How The States Got Their Shapes
05:30 Your Bleeped Up Brain
06:20 United Stuff Of America
07:10 The Universe
08:00 History's Greatest Blunders
09:00 Engineering Disasters
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 How The States Got Their Shapes
12:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
13:00 United Stuff Of America
14:00 History's Greatest Blunders
14:30 History's Greatest Blunders
15:00 Engineering Disasters
16:00 Ancient Aliens
17:00 How The States Got Their Shapes
17:30 How The States Got Their Shapes
18:00 The Universe
19:00 United Stuff Of America
20:00 History's Greatest Blunders
20:30 History's Greatest Blunders
21:00 Engineering Disasters
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Ancient Aliens

History HD

00:20 Mountain Men
01:10 Ultimate Soldier Challenge
02:00 Mountain Men
02:50 Counting Cars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Mountain Men
05:00 Swamp People
06:00 Fifth Gear
06:50 American Pickers
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Aussie Pickers
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 Fifth Gear
11:50 American Pickers
12:40 Counting Cars
13:05 Counting Cars
13:30 Time Team
14:20 Swamp People
15:10 Alone
16:00 American Pickers
16:50 Counting Cars
17:15 Counting Cars
17:40 Swamp People
18:30 Alone
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 Mystery Pickers
21:00 WW2 Treasure Hunters
21:50 The Warfighters
22:40 Time Team
23:30 Alone

NAT GEO people HD

00:45 Rustic Adventures Argentina
01:10 Route Awakening
01:40 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
02:35 Access 360 World Heritage
03:30 Mega Food
04:25 This Is Brazil
05:20 Route Awakening
05:45 Route Awakening
06:15 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
06:40 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
07:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
08:05 Access 360 World Heritage
09:00 Mega Food
09:55 This Is Brazil
10:50 Route Awakening
11:15 Route Awakening
11:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
12:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
12:40 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
13:35 Access 360 World Heritage
14:30 Mega Food
15:25 This Is Brazil
16:20 Route Awakening
16:45 Route Awakening
17:15 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
17:40 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
18:10 Restoration Man
19:05 This Is Brazil
20:00 Route Awakening
20:30 Route Awakening
21:00 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
21:30 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
22:00 Restoration Man
22:55 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
23:50 Access 360 World Heritage

National Geographic Channel HD

00:10 Positive Energy
01:00 The Next Megaquake
03:00 Incredibly Small World
04:00 Positive Energy
05:00 Street Monkeys
06:00 Highway Thru Hell
07:00 Innovation Nation
07:30 Innovation Nation
08:00 Pond Stars
09:00 Family Guns
10:00 Mega Factories
11:00 Nazi Megastructures
12:00 Richard Hammond's Wildest Weather
13:00 Highway Thru Hell
14:00 Pond Stars
15:00 Innovation Nation
15:30 Innovation Nation
16:00 Reinventing Seoul: Smart City On The Rise
17:00 Nazi Megastructures
18:00 Locked Up Abroad Compilations
19:00 Innovation Nation
19:30 Innovation Nation
20:00 Reinventing Seoul: Smart City On The Rise
20:50 Nazi Megastructures
21:40 Locked Up Abroad Compilations
22:30 Innovation Nation
22:55 Innovation Nation
23:20 Pond Stars

NAT GEO WILD HD

00:20 Cheetah: Fatal Instinct
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Search For King Cobra
02:50 Safari Brothers
03:45 World's Weirdest Pets Compilation
04:40 Chimp School
05:35 Search For King Cobra
06:30 Safari Brothers
07:25 World's Weirdest Pets Compilation
08:20 Chimp School
09:15 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
10:10 Incredible! The Story Of Dr. Pol
11:05 Unseen Islands
12:00 Tiger Shark Terror
12:55 Cat Fight
13:50 Safari Brothers
14:45 Borneo's Secret Kingdom: Weird And Wild
15:40 Kangaroo Kaos
16:35 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
17:30 Caught In The Act
18:25 Wild Indonesia
19:20 Borneo's Secret Kingdom: Weird And Wild
20:10 Kangaroo Kaos
21:00 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
21:50 Caught In The Act
22:40 Wild Indonesia
23:30 Tiger Shark Terror

nick HD

00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:00 The Loud House
07:24 Rabbids Invasion
07:48 Get Blake
08:12 Harvey Beaks
08:36 Sanjay And Craig
09:00 Rank The Prank
09:24 Harvey Beaks
09:48 100 Things To Do Before High School
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 Regal Academy
11:00 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Rabbids Invasion
13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Sanjay And Craig
13:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
14:12 The Thundermans
14:36 100 Things To Do Before High School
15:00 Rufus
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Sanjay And Craig
17:24 Harvey Beaks
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
21:00 The Loud House
21:24 Sanjay And Craig
21:48 Rabbids Invasion
22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

nick jr.

00:15 Shimmer And Shine
00:39 Shimmer And Shine
01:01 Max & Ruby
01:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:47 The Day Henry Met
01:52 The Day Henry Met
01:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:40 Zack & Quack
03:00 Shimmer And Shine
03:23 Nella The Princess Knight
03:35 Paw Patrol
03:58 Little Charmers
04:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
04:22 Dora The Explorer
04:44 Max & Ruby
05:06 The Day Henry Met
05:11 Nella The Princess Knight
05:35 Shimmer And Shine
05:59 Wallykazam!
06:21 Zack & Quack
06:32 The Day Henry Met
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
07:00 Rusty Rivets
07:13 Paw Patrol
07:35 Dora The Explorer
08:00 Zack & Quack
08:21 Bubble Guppies
08:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:07 Paw Patrol
09:30 Shimmer And Shine
09:53 Nella The Princess Knight
10:15 The Day Henry Met
10:22 Paw Patrol
10:45 Rusty Rivets
11:05 Wallykazam!
11:28 Bubble Guppies
11:52 Team Umizoomi
12:15 Shimmer And Shine
12:39 Shimmer And Shine
13:01 Max & Ruby
13:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:47 The Day Henry Met
13:52 The Day Henry Met
13:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:40 Zack & Quack
15:01 Shimmer And Shine
15:23 Nella The Princess Knight
15:35 Paw Patrol
15:58 Little Charmers
16:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
16:22 Dora The Explorer
16:44 Max & Ruby
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21:30 Shimmer And Shine
21:53 Nella The Princess Knight
22:15 The Day Henry Met
22:22 Paw Patrol
22:45 Rusty Rivets
23:05 Wallykazam!
23:28 Bubble Guppies
23:52 Team Umizoomi

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

01:30 Beethoven's Second
03:00 Alone For Christmas
04:30 A Simple Wish
06:05 Inside Out
07:45 Kung Fu Panda
09:20 Capture The Flag
11:00 Beethoven's Second
12:30 Curious George
14:00 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder
15:30 Charlotte's Web
17:10 A Tiger's Tail
18:40 Alpha Dogz: Pups United
20:15 Curious George
21:45 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder
23:15 A Tiger's Tail

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

01:00 Fear Inc
02:40 Big Momma's House
04:25 Murder Of A Cat
06:15 The Bucket List
08:00 Cops And Robbersons
09:40 Big Momma's House
11:25 Murder Of A Cat
13:15 The Bucket List
15:00 Outside Bet
16:45 Sneakers
18:50 The Guilt Trip
20:30 Dirty Work
22:00 Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo
23:25 Puerto Ricans In Paris

OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

01:30 1984
03:25 Far From Men
05:20 The End Of The Tour
07:15 Me Before You
09:15 East Side Sushi
11:15 Far From Men
13:10 All The Wilderness
14:35 Operation Avalanche
16:20 The Lady In The Van
18:15 New York Stories
20:25 Rio, I Love You
22:15 Summer In February

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

00:00 Beyond Beyond
01:45 Quest For A Heart
03:20 The Wish Fish
04:45 Bunny Tales
06:05 The Emperor's Secret
07:40 Vickie And The Treasure Of Gods
09:25 Tom And Jerry: Back To Oz
10:55 Rh+ The Vampire Of Seville
12:25 Quest For A Heart
13:55 The Wish Fish
15:20 Open Season: Scared Silly
16:55 Tom And Jerry: Back To Oz
18:25 Azur & Asmar: The Prince's Quest
20:10 The Fairy Tales Tree
21:35 Open Season: Scared Silly
23:10 Vickie And The Treasure Of Gods

OSN MOVIES HD

00:15 Straight Outta Compton
02:50 Baby Mama
04:30 The Martian
06:55 Hot Pursuit
08:30 Man In The Moon
10:15 Die Hard
12:30 Hanging Up
14:10 Hot Pursuit
15:45 Planes, Trains And Automobiles
17:20 Janie Jones
19:20 Taxi
21:00 Big Fish
23:05 The Big Lebowski

Discovery Science

00:40 Mythbusters
01:30 How Do They Do It?
01:55 Food Factory
02:20 American Titans
03:10 The Gamechangers: Inventing The World
04:00 Junkyard Wars
04:48 Mythbusters
05:36 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Food Factory
06:24 American Titans
07:12 The Gamechangers: Inventing The World
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:26 Junkyard Wars
09:14 Mythbusters
10:02 The Gamechangers: Inventing The World
10:50 How Do They Do It?
11:14 Food Factory
11:38 American Titans
12:26 Junkyard Wars
13:14 Mythbusters
14:02 How Do They Do It?
14:26 Food Factory
14:50 The Gamechangers: Inventing The World
15:38 Junkyard Wars
16:26 American Titans
17:14 Mythbusters
18:02 The Gamechangers: Inventing The World
18:50 Junkyard Wars
19:40 Mythbusters
20:30 Mythbusters: The Search
21:20 How Do They Do It?
21:45 Food Factory
22:10 The Gamechangers: Inventing The World
23:00 Evil Knows! In The Name Of Science
23:50 Junkyard Wars

STAR MOVIES HD

01:30 Welcome To Collinwood
03:00 Snow Cake
04:50 Pretty Woman
06:40 Jane Eyre
08:35 One Day
10:20 The King's Speech
12:15 Bears
13:30 Godsend
15:15 Welcome To Collinwood
16:40 You Again
18:30 The First Time
20:00 Monster's Ball
22:00 King Arthur

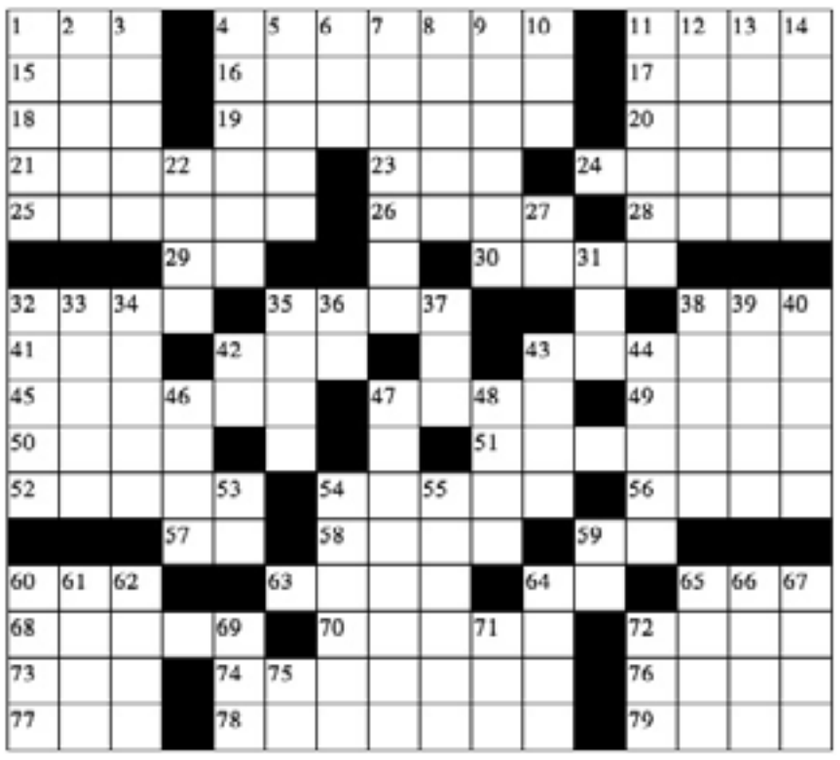
STAR WORLD HD

00:00 Cedar Cove
03:00 Making Mr. Right
04:00 Black Box
05:00 House Of DVF
06:00 Cedar Cove
09:00 Making Mr. Right
10:00 Black Box
11:00 House Of DVF
12:00 Cedar Cove
15:00 Making Mr. Right
16:00 Black Box
17:00 House Of DVF
18:00 Married At First Sight
20:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
21:00 Making Mr. Right
22:00 Black Box
23:00 House Of DVF

TLC HD

00:20 I'm Fat: What's Your Problem?
01:05 Botched Up Bodies
01:50 Bizarre ER
02:35 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
03:20 Little People, Big World
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras
04:50 Dare To Wear
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
06:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
06:45 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
07:30 Say Yes To The Dress UK
08:15 Little People, Big World
09:00 Cake Boss
09:25 Toddlers & Tiaras
10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
10:55 Married By Mum And Dad
11:40 Oprah's Master Class
12:25 Say Yes To The Dress UK
12:47 Say Yes To The Dress UK

CROSSWORD 1751



ACROSS

1. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
4. A port city in southern Kenya on a coral island in a bay of the Indian Ocean.
11. A system of one or more computers and associated software with common storage.
15. A rapid bustling commotion.
16. The slender spear of the Bantu-speaking people of Africa.
17. Fertility goddess in ancient Greek mythology.
18. Any of various systems of units for measuring electricity and magnetism.
19. A cry expressing disapproval.
20. A loose and crumbling earthy deposit consisting mainly of calcite or dolomite.
21. (Jewish folklore) A demon that enters the body of a living person and controls that body's behavior.
23. An accountant certified by the state.
24. Type genus of the Gavidae.
25. King of the Huns.
26. (of persons) Highest in rank or authority or office.
28. Surrealist Spanish painter (1904-1989).
29. The syllable naming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in solmization.
30. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
32. Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
41. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
45. A deceitful and unreliable scoundrel.
49. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
50. The largest continent with 60% of the earth's population.
51. Tall North American reed having relative wide leaves and large plumelike panicles.
52. A weekday on which no feast is celebrated.
56. Long nerve fiber that conducts away from the cell body of the neuron.
57. A state in southeastern United States.
58. The eighth month of the civil year.
60. The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
63. Massive plantigrade carnivorous or omnivorous mammals with long shaggy coats and strong claws.
68. A port in western Israel on the Mediterranean.
70. Wild or domesticated South American cud-chewing animal related to camels but smaller and lacking a hump.
73. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
74. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
76. A collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn.
77. Being one more than eighteen.
78. Dried bark of the cascara buckthorn used as a laxative.
79. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.

DOWN

1. English monk and scholar (672-735).
2. Declare or acknowledge to be true.
3. The state of being unsure of something.
4. A cooler darker spot appearing periodically on the surface of the sun.
5. Port city on southern Honshu on Osaka Bay.
6. Standard time in the 7th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 105th meridian west.
7. Used of riotously drunken merrymaking.
8. With the mouth wide open as in wonder or awe.
9. A deep bow.
10. Aromatic bulb used as seasoning.
11. A large fleet.
12. An Indian tree of the family Combretaceae that is a source of timber and gum.
13. A source of danger.
14. East Indian tree yielding a resin used medicinally and burned as incense.
22. (boxing) A blow with the fist.
27. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
31. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
33. Remove from memory or existence.
34. (Norse mythology) The chief race of gods living at Asgard.
35. (British) An open river valley (in a hilly area).
36. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
37. Electronic warfare undertaken to prevent or reduce an enemy's effective use of the electromagnetic spectrum.
38. Mix or blend.
39. Relating to or containing diazonium.
40. One of the evil spirits of traditional Jewish and Christian belief.
42. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
43. Of or relating to or characteristic of the Republic of Chad or its people or language.
44. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
46. (Old Testament) Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve born after the Fall of Man.
47. A language spoken by a Malaysian people on Formosa.
48. Type genus of the Aceraceae.
53. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
54. United States comedian and film actor (1880-1946).
55. A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone (usually held between the thumb and fingers) that are made to click together (as by Spanish dancers) in rhythm with the dance.
59. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
61. Medium-sized tree having glossy lanceolate leaves.
62. The second largest city in Tunisia.
64. A small cake leavened with yeast.
65. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
66. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
67. A blue dyestuff obtained from the woad plant.
69. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
71. The month following February and preceding April.
72. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
75. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.

Yesterday's Solution

Y	E	A		C	E	P	H	A	L	I	C		S	A	C
A	Y	R		N	E	M	A	T	O	D	A		C	E	O
H	A	E	M	I	C		C	A	B	O	T		A	R	P
I	S	A	A	C		H	E	R	A		N	O	M	I	A
			N	U	N		K	A	R	T	I	K		E	L
A	G	U	I	S	H			X		O	P	E	C		
C	O	M	A			D	M		C	M		H	O	P	I
H	U	B	C	A	P		A	B		B	D		M	R	D
E	N	E		M	A	H	A		G	A	I	N	F	U	L
T	O	R	E	A	D	O	R		U	K	R	A	I	N	E
A	D		S	T	U	N		G	A		A	S	T	E	R
		N	A	I	A	D		E	R	U	C	A			
L	E	A	K			U	S	I	N	G		L	A	M	A
X	L	I	I		E	R	A	S	E	R		E	D	A	M
I	L	K		S	P	A	R	E	R	I	B		A	L	A
I	I	I		B	A	S	I	L	I	C	A		D	A	H

STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)

As an early riser, you have probably already run several miles before your workday begins. More than likely, others are just getting up by the time you have completed a half day of work. This is beneficial to you and helps you to greet the day with a feeling of success. If you are taking a test or an exam or studying, you may have to have a long talk with yourself in order to stay in your chair and keep at it. The same goes for calculating or shuffling papers. Some of your work could be boring and an extra concerted effort may be needed all during this day. Take a break at least twice during the day—if possible, enjoy a bit of fresh air and body movement. End results are positive! Adaptability is essential for a happy relationship.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You could sing positive, upbeat songs—you do your best to eliminate any negative and are a good mentor to others. You could work as a coordinator of events, a social worker or a customer relations manager. You have a boundless amount of optimism with irrepressible energy. Be as self-confident and assertive as you like, because you are resolved to achieve. You are a very attractive and inspiring person—luck and determination is on your side. Any dispute you may have will quickly come to a satisfying end. You move through most problems quickly. A totally new diet or exercise program can improve your life and you are a good influence to others in this way. Love and compassion are wonderful friends this evening.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your self-confidence is high and you feel the nudge to achieve. Outer circumstances are favorable and it should be easy for you to push forward in projects and in all aspects of your life. Things may seem almost magical in the way they work to your favor. This is a great time to get things accomplished. You find that you are able to bring more imagination to bear on your goals and ambitions. You appreciate your particular situation and enjoy support from those around you. This afternoon is a good time for surrounding yourself with friends and for having a good time. If you are celebrating the seasonal activities, now is a good time to order the food or reserve your hotel room. Make plans to enjoy some time with the people you love.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your self-confidence is strong and you feel the nudge from somewhere that says it is time for you to make yourself known in the workplace. This is the day you speak up and make yourself known. This afternoon you may learn new ways to relieve stress. You might be embarrassed about doing yoga and relaxation exercises, but you will enjoy the results. This may mean you sign up to be in a group to learn these techniques. This evening, a friend in need or something you believe in that will suffer from a lack of your support is the issue that comes to your attention. You may be called on to lend a hand—start thinking of ways in which you can be helpful—do not wait until the last minute to solve problems.

Leo (July 23-August 22)

This is a very good day for job-related events. You could represent or speak for your company or communicate about your skills. Things are happening and your career or path depends on your own ambition and drive, which are strong now. Your common sense is good and you move in the right direction for your professional advancement. Taking action now is an important move. You can improve your financial situation and you think about ways in which to do so at this time. Your optimistic outlook helps you to teach other people things you have learned through your own life experiences. This afternoon you think about ways to improve your image, appearance or health. You may end a destructive relationship or become very lucky in love this evening.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You are riding a high now in terms of taking advantage of the cycles in your life. This time may be a high-water mark; however, this is also a time during which you should begin to consolidate and tie down the advances you have made recently. It may be best to begin to dig in and strengthen your current position rather than to expand too quickly. An award may come to you through your work. This afternoon you will find your mind turning away from the external or the material, to become more concerned with spiritual ideas. All of this will become clear soon. You tend towards mental pursuits and admire intelligence. There is an emphasis on communication, expression of ideas and the connection between things, places and people.

Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your energies run effectively toward making yourself felt in the material, tangible outer world. You are an action person who gains the attention of others and seems to get things moving. The circumstances of your life suggest extroversion. Self-discipline is an important issue in your life now as that is what stabilizes your work, as well as your relationships. Today you may be looking for a new vehicle. A better means of transportation has been needed for some time and now is a good time to look around and make some decisions. There are opportunities to improve your career through travel, writing or studying some new technique. A family meeting keeps you on your toes. You are encouraged to express yourself this evening.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

At this time, the key to your career involves attending to nagging details. You could talk someone out of a lawsuit this morning. You will be saving yourself and perhaps someone else from much frustration, and saving money and time. Your attitude and talents move in the direction of self-expression along with your particular ideas and thoughts. You could be leading a group discussion today and it may deal with some sort of academic crusades. You will be able to sway others to your way of thinking. Science, philosophy and religion are likely to seem as if they hold the ultimate answers. True wisdom lies in discovering that there are no ultimate answers, only good questions. A good conversation with those you love is possible tonight.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Skim a little off the top of your paycheck for a rainy day. Some earnings may slip too easily through your fingers. How about a budgetat least give it a consideration. Good health, good marriage, good friends and a good job or career are often more important than money. Gifts do not have to be extravagant—sometimes they can be just as simple as a picture in a frame. People who are good for you enter your life this afternoon. Circumstances arise that give you the freedom and the opportunity to do something you have never done before. This may mean an opportunity to enjoy a hot air balloon ride or perhaps to ask that special someone for a date.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

There are makings for a bright day. You should be able to get your ideas across with ease. Your communication skills are at a high-water mark. You seem to gravitate to those things which last and hold true in your life just now. You could teach better business techniques to executives as well as those that choose to stay at home to work or run a family. Consider teaching your techniques at a junior college this next year. Matters of law, religion and philosophy are where you want more education. This afternoon, you may find a long list of chores to do. You make a good impression on family members by saving energy and accomplishing so many chores so quickly. Some of these short-cuts might be useful in the workplace—take notes.

Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

At heart, you have a deep sense of responsibility and purpose. Others can see your seriousness and they respect your status in the workplace. Someone may need your advice today regarding a problem at work. You seem to enjoy helping others. You have the interest and the energy to achieve long-term personal and professional goals and will many times combine your goals into one. You may decide to own a business instead of managing a business at this time. Your self-confidence is high. You feel the warm urges of ambition and you influence others in positive ways. A story that is hard to believe can be checked out this afternoon. Take advantage of all the opportunities to do some valuable networking this evening as you attend a social event.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Many of you may be in the beginning of a start-up business from your home. You are definitely moving in the right direction, but if you are asking for a loan, be sure to ask for more than you think you need so you will have a payback cushion, so to speak. Whether you are in sales or public relations, you may be wondering if the people you come into contact with today are okay. Everyone seems to be in such a hurry . . . Interruptions, difficult communications, etc. More than one person will seek your advice about sensitive matters this afternoon so, weather permitting, move on outside for a bit of exercise, if possible. You can demonstrate great understanding of and sensitivity to the needs of others-this afternoon and evening belong especially to you-relax.

Wordsearch Puzzle

90's Songs 4

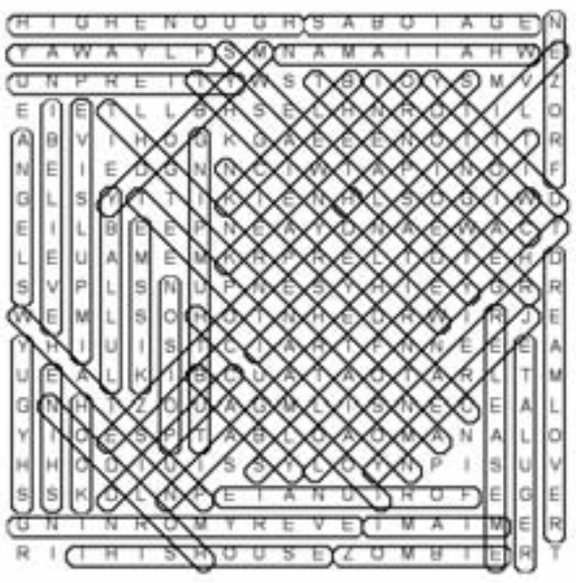
Find and circle all of the 1990's songs that are hidden in the grid.
The remaining letters spell an additional song.

M	S	U	K	I	Y	A	K	I	D	N	U	O	R	A	N	U	R	A
R	S	N	E	V	E	R	Y	T	H	I	N	G	T	E	L	L	M	E
J	A	B	U	N	B	E	L	I	E	V	A	B	L	E	M	I	T	L
O	Y	I	C	R	A	Z	Y	T	H	G	I	N	O	T	E	V	A	S
N	I	G	N	U	O	L	O	R	E	B	M	E	C	E	D	T	T	T
E	T	P	A	N	G	E	L	Y	W	B	E	A	D	H	E	H	H	E
S	G	O	R	A	O	R	E	H	T	S	A	I	I	L	R	G	D	A
T	N	P	E	W	A	F	O	C	L	I	S	N	Y	D	I	I	D	N
W	O	P	M	A	W	D	O	L	E	A	G	N	N	R	A	N	L	Y
O	L	A	R	Y	A	I	U	O	P	I	O	G	L	A	U	O	A	W
P	R	T	O	T	Y	O	T	P	L	B	P	A	I	O	W	T	S	H
R	E	A	F	R	Y	T	E	H	O	I	N	R	R	D	A	T	T	E
I	V	C	N	A	Y	A	O	D	O	Y	S	A	E	M	O	O	K	R
N	E	K	I	I	R	L	Y	O	T	U	P	H	A	T	M	N	I	E
C	I	C	C	N	W	K	L	H	C	M	T	M	G	R	S	S	S	P
E	I	A	N	R	N	O	I	A	U	L	R	Y	A	A	W	A	S	M
S	P	L	R	O	E	N	N	J	N	A	O	S	O	E	M	A	M	U
R	A	B	W	O	G	E	D	K	E	I	I	S	A	U	I	E	S	J
M	I	S	S	I	N	G	P	D	I	D	F	R	E	D	I	L	S	E

ADIA
ALRIGHT
ANGEL
ANYTHING
ANYWHERE
BIG POPPA
BLACK CAT
CRAZY
CREEP
DEAR MAMA
DECEMBER
DISAPPEAR
DISARM
EVERLONG
EVERYTHING
FINALLY
FOOLISH GAMES
HERO
I KNOW
I SWEAR
INFORMER
JUMP AROUND
JUMPER
LAST KISS
LATELY
LOUNGIN
MASTERPIECE
MISSING
MR. JONES
NO DIGGITY
NO RAIN
NOBODY KNOWS
NOT TONIGHT
RUN-AROUND
RUNAWAY TRAIN
SAVE TONIGHT
SAY IT
SLIDE
SUKIYAKI
TELL ME
TIME
TOO CLOSE
TWO PRINCES
UNBELIEVABLE
WANNABE
WHO DAT
WITHOUT YOU
YOU'LL SEE

Yesterday's Solution

90's Songs 3



ANGELS
ANOTHER NIGHT
BABY
BLACK
CANDY RAIN
CUPID
DITTY
DREAMLOVER
EVERY MORNING
FLY AWAY
FORTUNATE
FROZEN
HANDS
HIGH ENOUGH
HOLD ON
HOOK
HYPNOTIZE
I BELIEVE
IMPULSIVE
INSENSITIVE
IRONIC
JEREMY
KISS ME
LAST NIGHT
LULLABY
MIAMI
MY BODY
ONE WEEK
POISON
REGULATE
RELEASE ME
SABOTAGE
SHINE
SHY GUY
SWEET LADY
TEMPTATION
THE POWER
THIS HOUSE
TOGETHER AGAIN
TOO MUCH
TUBTHUMPING
UNPRETTY
WATERFALLS
WHAT'S UP
WHATTA MAN
WILD NIGHT
ZOMBIE

The hidden song title is: SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT

Daily SuDoku

			2	3				9
9	2				6			
5					8			
		4					9	5
		9	6		7	4		
1	7					6		
			5					4
			4				1	2
8				1	3			

Yesterday's Solution

5	4	9	8	7	1	6	2	3
6	2	8	4	5	3	1	9	7
7	3	1	2	9	6	4	8	5
8	5	6	3	4	2	9	7	1
4	7	3	1	6	9	2	5	8
1	9	2	5	8	7	3	4	6
2	6	7	9	3	5	8	1	4
3	1	4	7	2	8	5	6	9
9	8	5	6	1	4	7	3	2

Kuwait Times Classifieds

Thursday, November 2, 2017

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

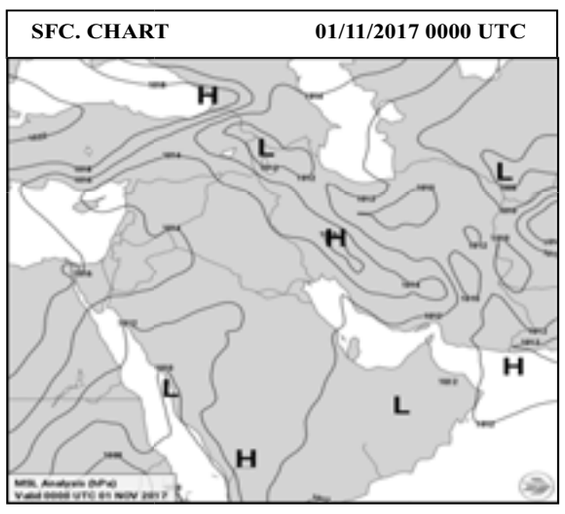
BY NIGHT: Fair and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h .

BY DAY: Mostly Sunny with light to moderate northerly wind to north easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 32 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.
KUWAIT CITY	32 °C	24 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	33 °C	23 °C
ABDALY	33 °C	18 °C
BUBYAN	32 °C	19 °C
JAHRA	35 °C	22 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	32 °C	22 °C
SALMIYAH	31 °C	24 °C
AHMADI	31 °C	26 °C
NUWAISIB	33 °C	21 °C
WAFRA	33 °C	20 °C
SALMY	33 °C	17 °C

SFC. CHART 01/11/2017 0000 UTC



4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures MAX.	Temperatures MIN.	Wind Direction	Wind Speed
Thursday	11/02	Relatively hot	36 °C	21 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Friday	11/03	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for blowing dust over	37 °C	22 °C	S-SE	15 - 40 km/h
Saturday	11/04	Cloudy and Relatively hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	35 °C	23 °C	S-SE	15 - 40 km/h
Sunday	11/05	Partly cloudy and Relatively hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with a chance	35 °C	23 °C	S-SE	10 - 35 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:41
Sunrise	06:02
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:39
Sunset	17:02
Isha	18:20

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	00 °C
MIN. Temp.	00 °C
MAX. RH	00 %
MIN. RH	00 %
MAX. Wind	N 00 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

AIRLINES

American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Air Slovakia	22434940
Olympic Airways	22420002/9
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
Reservation	22433388
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Alitalia	22414427
Balkan Airlines	22416474
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Czech Airlines	22417901/
	2433141
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

REQUIRED

- **Civil Engineer**
  (Roads) 8 years experience, any nationality.
- **Civil Forman**
  (Roads) 7 years experience Pilipino only.

Email: jobs.kuwait.q8@gmail.com

CHANGE OF NAME

The public hereby notified that MOHAMMAD Y M A ALASSAF has filed with the embassy of the Republic of the Philippines, State of Kuwait a Migrant Petition for Correction of clerical errors in the report of birth of YASMINE EMPASE MOHAMMAD AL-ASSAF with registry number KT-ROB-007-2012/2012-4140032. From EMPASE MOHAMMAD to EMPASE (middle name of child) from AL-ASSAF to ALASSAF (last name of child and last name of father) from Y.M. to Y M A. (middle name of father). Any person having knowledge and/or claiming interest or may be adversely affected by said petition, file a written with the Philippine Embassy within ten working days. **(C 5354) 31-10-2017**

For Rent

In Rumaithiya
Super Delux apartment plus roof with 3 bedrooms including one master bedroom + large reception + maid room.

For inquiries call **Rajo:**
66048094
Or **99922262**

Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 2/11/2017

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:40
KAC	102	London	00:50
JZR	539	Cairo	00:55
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15
KAC	544	Cairo	04:25
KAC	418	Manila	04:25
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25
JZR	143	Doha	05:25
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:20
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:30
WAN	342	Sohag	06:35
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50
BAW	157	London	07:10
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10
QTR	8511	Doha	07:35
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00
JZR	1331	Al Najaf	10:00
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	10:00
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00
JZR	1337	Al Najaf	11:10
JZR	1335	Al Najaf	11:10
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20
NIA	161	Cairo	11:35
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:10
FEG	933	Sohag	12:40
FDB	075	Dubai	12:45
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50
FDK	803	Damascus	13:00
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15
KAC	792	Madinah	13:20
JZR	903	GYD	13:30
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:40
KNE	231	Riyadh	13:55
PAL	668	Manila	14:00
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15
KAC	618	Doha	14:15
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
QTR	1078	Doha	14:20
KAC	516	Tehran	14:20
KAC	672	Dubai	14:25
JZR	1333	Al Najaf	14:30
KAC	412	Bangkok	14:35
KAC	352	Kochi	14:35
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40
KAC	304	Mumbai	14:50
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
KAC	788	Jeddah	15:10
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
JZR	787	Riyadh	15:30
KAC	562	Amman	15:30
KAC	502	Beirut	15:30
OMA	645	Muscat	15:35
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
QTR	1072	Doha	15:55
RJD	135	Abu Dhabi	16:00
ABY	127	Sharjah	16:00
SAW	705	Damascus	16:00
KAC	118	New York	16:00
JZR	535	Cairo	16:05
KNE	531	Jeddah	16:05
JZR	779	Jeddah	16:15
FDB	051	Dubai	16:40
RJA	640	Amman	16:55
KAC	542	Cairo	17:05
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	125	Bahrain	17:35
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45
UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
FDB	063	Dubai	18:10
JZR	177	Dubai	18:15
MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
QTR	1080	Doha	18:50
KAC	744	Dammam	19:10
KAC	776	Riyadh	19:20
ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25
RBG	555	Alexandria	19:25
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	19:25
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
KAC	156	Istanbul	19:30
NIA	361	Alexandria	19:40
KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	616	Bahrain	19:55
KNE	381	Taif	20:00
JZR	189	Dubai	20:10
KAC	620	Doha	20:15
OMA	647	Muscat	20:20
KAC	692	Muscat	20:40
DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:45
ALK	229	Colombo	21:20
MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
KAC	168	Paris	21:20
KAC	786	Jeddah	21:25
UAE	859	Dubai	21:35
KAC	676	Dubai	21:40
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:50
WAN	116	Bahrain	22:00
KAC	564	Amman	22:00
QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25
JZR	241	Amman	22:40
JZR	185	Dubai	23:10
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:15
WAN	836	Sarajevo	23:25
BBC	043	Dhaka	23:30
MSC	405	Sohag	23:30
FDB	071	Dubai	23:45

Departure Flights on Thursday 2/11/2017

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	528	Asyut	00:15
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
WAN	341	Sohag	00:30
FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
MSC	412	Asyut	01:00
JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
JZR	502	Luxor	01:30
JZR	142	Doha	01:45
KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
KAC	417	Manila	02:00
THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30
SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45
AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
KAC	351	Kochi	03:05
UAE	854	Dubai	03:40
QTR	1087	Doha	03:40
KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
MSR	607	Luxor	04:05
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
FDB	070	Dubai	05:45
KAC	303	Mumbai	06:05
JZR	1330	Al Najaf	06:20
JZR	560	Sohag	06:25
THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
RJA	643	Amman	07:05
GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
JZR	1334	Al Najaf	07:30
KAC	167	Paris	07:35
JZR	1336	Al Najaf	07:45
JZR	902	GYD	07:50
KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
KAC	413	Bangkok	08:10
FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
KAC	791	Madinah	08:35
KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
KAC	613	Bahrain	08:55
BAW	156	London	08:55
KAC	117	New York	09:00
QTR	8512	Doha	09:05
JZR	534	Cairo	09:10
KAC	561	Amman	09:40
KAC	671	Dubai	09:45
KAC	741	Dammam	09:45
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
KAC	101	London	09:45
KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
IRA	668	Mashhad	10:00
KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
KAC	617	Doha	10:15
QTR	1071	Doha	10:20
KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
JZR	778	Jeddah	10:30
FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
RSB	7684	Baghdad	11:00
SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
IAW	158A	Al Najaf	11:00
JZR	1332	Al Najaf	11:00
IRA	672	Ahwaz	11:10
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
JZR	786	Riyadh	12:00
MSC	404	Alexandria	12:15
QTR	1075	Doha	12:30
VIZ	205	IQA	12:30
NIA	362	Alexandria	12:35
WAN	835	Sarajevo	12:35
MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
VIZ	201	TQD	13:30
FEG	932	Alexandria	13:40
JZR	176	Dubai	13:40
FDB	076	Dubai	13:45
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
FDK	804	Damascus	14:00
UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:15
JZR	124	Bahrain	14:30
KNE	382	Taif	15:00
KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	15:00
KAC	673	Dubai	15:05
FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
KAC	691	Muscat	15:20
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
KAC	785	Jeddah	15:25
JZR	188	Dubai	15:25
QTR	1079	Doha	15:30
SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KNE	530	Jeddah	15:45
KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
KAC	563	Amman	16:10
KAC	619	Doha	16:10
PAL	669	Manila	16:10
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:40
RJD	136	Abu Dhabi	16:55
KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55
SAW	706	Damascus	16:55
KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
QTR	1073	Doha	17:15
KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
JZR	240	Amman	17:15
JZR	266	Beirut	17:15
KAC	283	Dhaka	17:30
FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
KAC	357	Kochi	17:45
UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
RJA	641	Amman	17:55
KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
JZR	538	Cairo	18:15
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	184	Dubai	18:30
WAN	115	Bahrain	18:50
KAC	381	Delhi	18:50
FDB	064	Dubai	19:10
JZR	554	Alexandria	19:20
UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
QTR	1081	Doha	20:00
ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
RBG	556	Alexandria	20:05
GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40
NIA	162	Cairo	20:40
KNE	232	Riyadh	20:45
KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
KAC	301	Mumbai	21:00
KAC	1543	Cairo	21:20
OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
DLH	624	Bahrain	21:30
DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
KAC	205	Islamabad	22:05
KAC	203	Lahore	22:10
ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
KAC	783	Jeddah	22:35
KAC	383	Delhi	22:40
KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
QTR	1083	Doha	23:20

GOMEZ NAMED BILLBOARD'S 2017 WOMAN OF THE YEAR

The 25-year-old star is set to be honored at the annual Women in Music dinner and awards gala on November 30, when Selena will join a star-studded cast of previous Woman of the Year honorees, which includes the likes of Lady Gaga, Beyonce and Madonna. Reflecting on the announcement, John Amato, president of The Hollywood Reporter-Billboard Media Group, said: "Not only is Selena soaring on the charts, but she continuously inspires young women everywhere to be authentic, give back and to not be afraid to use their voice. "She is never afraid to speak her mind and has used her platform to advocate for the needs of others. We are thrilled to be able to honor her as our Woman of the Year." The former Disney star has enjoyed another memorable 12-month spell that has included releasing a string of hit singles, such as 'Bad Liar', 'Fetish' and 'It Ain't Me'. Selena has also had considerable success outside of music, serving as an executive-producer on the hit Netflix drama '13 Reasons Why'. What's more, she has launched partnerships with the likes of Coach and Puma, while Selena has also continued to invest time in her numerous philanthropic efforts. For instance, she helped to raise more than $500,000 for the Lupus Research Alliance, an organization that is working towards finding better treatments and, ultimately, a cure for the inflammatory disease. Selena underwent a kidney transplant earlier this year as part of her ongoing fight against lupus.

JLO DOUBTED HERSELF AFTER 'GIGLI' FLOPPED

The 48-year-old beauty starred in the much-maligned romance movie alongside her former flame Ben Affleck, and Jennifer has admitted the reaction to the film led her to doubt herself. She shared: "I was eviscerated. "I lost my sense of self, questioned if I belonged in this business, thought maybe I did suck at everything." Jennifer and Ben started dating in November 2002 and the couple became engaged to marry in September 2003, only to postpone their nuptials indefinitely one day before the ceremony. The singer admits that their subsequent split in January 2004 was incredibly hard for her to come to terms with, because of the interest that had surrounded their relationship. She told Vanity Fair magazine: "My relationship [with Affleck] self-destructed in front of the entire world." Meanwhile, Jennifer is currently dating baseball legend Alex Rodriguez, and in a recent interview, she claimed they have developed a "pure, true love". The 'On The Floor' hitmaker - who has been married three times, to waiter Ojani Noa, dancer Cris Judd, and singer Marc Anthony - revealed she has never had a relationship like it because they drive one another on to be "better". Jennifer gushed: "I'm in a good relationship. I feel like I can say that for the first time. Not that I didn't have great relationships, full of love and adventure, but this is the first relationship I've been in where I feel like we really make each other better."

Matt Willis has convinced McBusted to reunite

The 34-year-old singer is preparing to reaffirm his commitment to his TV star wife Emma and ahead of their special day, Matt has revealed he can't wait for the supergroup featuring McFly and Busted to get back together for the one-off occasion. Looking forward to his wedding day in July, Matt - who stars in Busted alongside James Bourne and Charlie Simpson - told The Sun newspaper: "I'm going to form a covers band and perform her favourite songs. It's ten years. I can't believe she's still with me." Earlier this year, Matt and Emma, 41, announced plans to renew their wedding vows for their 10th anniversary. The celebrity couple tied the knot in 2008 after three years of dating, and as their milestone anniversary approaches next year, the pair are looking to renew their vows in a "wedding party" that will see their friends dress up in their own old wedding attire. Emma - who has an eight-year-old daughter called Isabelle and a five-year-old son called Ace with Matt - previously said: "I want to go back to where we got married, renew our vows and have a wedding party where everybody that attends who is, or has been, married, wears whatever they got married in. "Brides never get to wear their wedding dresses again, so all brides get to wear their wedding dress. If you've not been married but you've been a bridesmaid, you've got to wear your bridesmaids dress and all of the grooms wear their suits." The TV presenter also revealed she got the idea from listening to her daughter talk about how she wants to be "a bridesmaid".

Justin Bieber is Selena Gomez's 'true love'

The 'Sorry' hitmaker was recently spotted with the brunette beauty in California following Selena's split from The Weeknd, prompting speculation that they could be about to rekindle their romance, and a source close to the situation has claimed Justin has always been her "soulmate". The insider explained: "Since things ended with Justin for good, any other guys that Selena dated were placeholders. "All the other guys were just flings. Justin always had her heart and attention. He was always her soulmate and her one true love." But the source said that Selena also shared something completely unique with The Weeknd, despite the high-profile duo recently deciding to end their ten-month romance. Speaking to Us Weekly, the insider explained: "She met The Weeknd and all that changed - she [could] see a future with him and [felt] different about him than the other flings."She [had] been happy with him but Justin always has the biggest piece of her heart. The situation is a heart string type of thing. She has to figure out what she wants." Justin, 23, previously dated Selena from 2010 until 2012. And following her split from The Weeknd, he is apparently eager to reignite their romance. The insider said: "Justin really wants to get back with Selena. He has been texting her non-stop and hangs out with her whenever he can." Meanwhile, it was recently claimed that The Weeknd prioritized his career over his relationship with Selena. Despite dating Selena for almost a year, the Canadian star considered the chart-topping star to be secondary to his own music career. An insider shared: "Everyone wants love, but his focus is the business. "He's building a legacy. He's young and successful with money and can have any girl he wants. Their relationship kind of came out of nowhere." — Bangshowbiz

Offset spent $500K on Cardi B's engagement ring

The Migos rapper bought his new fiancee a stunning custom piece, featuring a eight-carat diamond surrounded by 2 half-carat pear diamonds and 2 carats worth of other pink and white stones from Pristine Jewelers in New York City and the lavish band cost him $550,000, TMZ reports. The ring took a month and a half to make and was finished on the day Offset - whose real name is Kiari Kendrell Cephus - popped the question to Cardi while she was on stage at the Power 99's Powerhouse concert in Philadelphia last week. The 'Bodak Yellow' hitmaker recently admitted she should have realized her fiance was planning to propose when he urged her to have a manicure. She wrote on Instagram: "OK guys I know I keep posting about this day but I just can't believe it. I keep replaying it in my head. I keep smiling every minute.I should have known something was up since this n—— keep telling me to go get my nails done ... "Like since when you cared about my nails. I love you and I love how you managed to get my mom to come out and witness my engagement. I'm the happiest girl in the world @offsetyrn you a true King (sic)" Cardi was "so emotional" when Offset asked her to marry him and gushed about how he had encouraged her to follow her dreams. The 25-year-old star shared at the time: "Jesus Christ I'm so emotional, @offsetyrn I loveee you so much .Thank you for seeing the potential in me since you met me .For giving me advice molding me and loving me .Your such a amazing man to me your family ,friends ,kids and you are extremely talented. I can't wait to spend FOREVAAAA with you .Lets make a lot money and love together (sic)."

Mila Kunis thinks society will 'fix itself out'

The 34-year-old actress is "proud" a number of women have been able to speak out about their alleged ordeals at the hands of disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein and hopes the controversy - which has been followed by other allegations against the likes of Kevin Spacey, Jeremy Piven, Val Kilmer and the late Michael Winner - will signal a wider societal change. She said: "The abuse of women exists in all industries; it's just the way the world works. "We just happen to have a platform and our voice is the loudest right now. I'm proud of everybody who's standing up and I'm also proud of the fact that we're living in a country where women are able to speak up and not get stoned or hung or berated on the streets. "I love this about this country. There are many faults that are currently happening in the world and this is not one of them. So I'm really proud of that. "Hopefully it fixes itself out. If you remember, back in the day it was, socially-speaking, OK to hit your wife a little bit; it was OK to slap your wife and say: 'She was out of line', give her a backhander. "So we found a way to deal with that and we'll find a way to deal with this." Meanwhile, the 'Bad Moms Christmas' actress - who has children Wyatt, three, and Dimitri, 22 months, with husband Ashton Kutcher - admitted she often feels a "failure" as a parent because of her working commitments, but she's so passionate about her career, she wouldn't change things. Speaking in iweekend, she said: "My husband and I both love what we do. We're a little bit workaholic, and we don't say this proudly, but I do think there's a balance."

Beckham disgusted by people fat-shaming her daughter

The 43-year-old fashion designer and her husband David, 42, have both been left feeling shocked and appalled by the cruel comments of social media users in response to a picture of six-year-old Harper enjoying a day out at the beach with her older brothers, Brooklyn, 18, Romeo, 15, and Cruz, 12. An insider told the Daily Star newspaper: "Victoria was shocked and disgusted by the comments over her little girl. "It really upset her and she would hate for Harper to ever read comments like those and become obsessed about her body image. "David was fuming and wanted to post something about it on social media but was told not to as it may encourage the trolls." Victoria has reportedly told people around her that while she isn't fussed about the criticism she receives, the former Spice Girl will not tolerate cruel comments directed at her children. She was, for instance, angered by the negative reaction to Brooklyn's launch of his photography book 'What I See', which was blasted by critics. The insider explained: "The recent comments over Harper just prove to her and David how vicious and vile people can be about their family." Meanwhile, David previously revealed he intends to adopt a stricter approach to Harper's love life than he's done with his boys. Speaking in 2016, the retried soccer star explained: "Obviously Brooklyn is definitely at that age. "We're strong parents, and strict parents, but we're like most parents. We love our kids and we want the best for them, so we'll see." But asked if things will be different with Harper, David laughed and then added: "Oh yeah. That'll definitely be different!"

Film Review

In 'Last Flag Flying,' an anti-war tale told again

In this era of rampant sequelizing, has any filmmaker more playfully inverted the standard more-of-the-same monotony than Richard Linklater? His Oscar-nominated "Boyhood" was, if nothing else, a compendium of life's chapters, filmed - and lived - year after year. His "Before" trilogy reteamed Julie Delpy and Ethan Hawke, every nine years, for strolling encounters that compressed and marveled at the passage of time. His last film, "Everybody Wants Some!!" was billed as a "spiritual sequel" to Linklater's "Dazed and Confused" - a college movie to bookend a high school one.

In Linklater Land, nothing is ever "rebooted." The ripples of time are interesting enough, just as they are. But Linklater's latest, "Last Flag Flying," is a still more unorthodox kind of sequel. It's a kind of follow-up to Hal Ashby's great 1973 film "The Last Detail," in which two petty officers (Otis Young and a young, blistering Jack Nicholson) who are transporting a naive 18-year-old soldier (Randy Quaid) from Norfolk, Virginia, to the brig in New Hampshire, where he's been sentenced to serve eight years for attempting to steal $40 from a charity box. Ashby's film was a real-time odyssey, glorious in its fiery expletives (courtesy of screenwriter Robert Towne) and seething in its outrage. As a film, it's still alive, and Nicholson's cackle still echoes.

"Last Flag Flying" is a journey mapped over the same terrain, but the central trio are now well into middle age and their reason for reunion, three decades later, is more melancholy still. Larry "Doc" Shepherd (Steve Carell, in a version of Quaid's character) gathers together his old Vietnam War buddies - Sal Nealon (Bryan Cranston, the Nicholson-esque, anti-authoritarian rabble-rouser of the bunch) and Rev. Richard Mueller (Laurence Fishburne, whose character draws partly from Young's real life) - to bury his son, a Marine killed in Iraq.

The source of the tale is author Darryl Ponicsan's 2003 novel, which was a direct sequel to his 1970 book, the one Ashby and Towne turned into a film. But Linklater's film has severed some of those ties, changing the characters names and slightly shifting their background while still maintaining much of the connective tissue to "The Last Detail." It is, in some sense, another "spiritual sequel." Why distance "Last Flag Flying" from "The Last Detail"? Well, not everyone is so familiar with Ashby's film, and perhaps more to the point: Filling the shoes of Nicholson is a fool's game, if ever there was one.

These images released by Lionsgate shows Laurence Fishburne, Bryan Cranston and Steve Carell in scenes from "Last Flag Flying." — AP photos

Balance is off

But while the film's gentle, rolling humanism is indeed its own, "The Last Detail" stands like an unspoken island around which the movie flows. The balance of trio is off, too. Cranston, a very gifted performer, is acting like a funny livewire while Nicholson simply was one. Carell, who can render innocence as well as anyone, gives a performance that feels hollowed out by its grieving solemnity. Fishburne, never one unsure of his footing, alone feels in the right place.

And while "Last Flag Flying" is missing the edge of Towne's dialogue, it's a deeply thoughtful film about how so much changes (in one scene the guys buy cell phones, marveling at the invention) while so much stays the same. It might be 30 years later, but time hasn't altered the injustice for the foot soldiers enlisted to fight ill-conceived wars. When the guys arrive in Washington to see the body of Doc's son, they soon find themselves disagreeing with a hardline Marine colonel (Yul Vazquez) who disapproves of Doc's decision to bury his son at home in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, instead of at Arlington National Cemetery. The colonel and his tone are, to Sal, exceedingly familiar.

There are scenes here that pulsate with anti-war passion, sometimes a little too obviously, sometimes effectively. But despite its flaws, the film gathers an honest force as it burrows deeper into its characters as the group (along with a current Marine played by a memorable J. Quinton Johnson) makes its way up the coast. It's a trip that glimmers with both mournful reflection on the human cost of war and the abiding camaraderie among soldiers.

A more unorthodox kind of sequel

That "Last Flag Flying" is a sequel, with future installments sure to come, is the point. Times change. New wars are fought. The same kids pay the price. "Last Flag Flying," an Amazon Studios release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "language throughout including some sexual references." Running time: 124 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Haiti's first female directed movie bids for Oscars

Haiti is still reeling from the 2010 earthquake that killed more than 220,000 people, but from the debris of its devastated towns, a nascent film industry has begun to emerge. At its forefront is Guetty Felin, whose "Ayiti Mon Amour," a portrait of a post-quake nation mourning its dead, was recently announced as the Caribbean country's first ever entry for the foreign film category at the Oscars.

Haitian-born Felin, who journeyed to Port-au-Prince on a relief airplane 10 days after the disaster, recalls the scenes that met her as she landed, images that have stayed with her as she has pursued a career in filmmaking. "I had never smelled death before, corpses everywhere. I was just like, 'What is this stench?' All throughout the city, it was just devastating," she told AFP.

Laying waste to most of the Caribbean nation's schools, hospitals and infrastructure, the magnitude 7.0 quake injured some 300,000 people and left another 1.5 million homeless in what was already the poorest nation in the Americas.

Seven years on, "Ayiti Mon Amour" marks not only the emergence of a distinct new voice in Haitian filmmaking but a milestone in the country's cultural recovery, as the first ever locally-shot narrative feature directed by a woman. Tapping into her past work in documentary, Felin infuses the realities of modern-day Haiti-the power and water shortages, the looming threat of climate change-with a lyricism that plays up its mystical side.

Brutal dictatorship

Set in Kabic, a small southeast fishing village where the sea is gaining ground thanks to climate change, Felin's camera shows life moving on, five years after the earthquake. A teenager grieving his father discovers he has developed a literally electrifying superpower while an old fisherman who talks to his cow thinks the cure for his ailing wife can be found only in the sea. Elsewhere, the beautiful, mysterious muse of a struggling novelist and the main character in his book, becomes restless and decides to leave him and pursue her own life.

Born in Port-au-Prince, Felin divided her childhood and adolescence between New York and Haiti, although she came of age artistically in Paris, where she studied for a graduate degree in film and ended up staying 20 years. Felin fell in love with cinema at the drive-ins of Port-au-Prince, her escape during the brutal dictatorship of Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier, who was followed by his despotic son Jean-Claude, or "Baby Doc."

"I grew up in this space knowing that the dictatorship existed, but at the time it was a space of joy," she said, recalling her childhood home as a place of music and parties. "There were moments where you were totally afraid someone might get taken away. So the fragility of life-that dance that my parents had to do all the time-totally inspired me." "Ayiti Mon Amour"-which is looking for a US distributor-stars just one professional actor, while the rest of the cast and much of the crew were culled from the local community and Felin's own family.

'Survivor's guilt'

Her French husband, veteran cinematographer Herve Cohen, was in charge of filming and her oldest son Yeelen acted as her assistant, while his girlfriend performed second camera duties. The real star of the movie, though, is Felin's youngest son, Joakim Ethan Cohen, a 17-year-old beginner at the time of the shoot who has won acclaim for an accomplished debut performance.

"He knew that what he was doing meant a lot to me. It was like his gift to me," said Felin. "I directed him but it was so easy-every take was really good-and I think he knew the story inside out." Haiti's film industry was already struggling before the earthquake. Its last picture house closed the year before amid rampant film piracy, and no movies were publicly screened anywhere for five years after that.—AFP

This file photo taken on January 14, 2010 shows a man clearing debris in front of the destroyed Sacre Coeur church in Port-au-Prince on January 14, 2010. — AFP

OSN BRINGS HUGE SELECTION OF EXCLUSIVE SHOWS THIS NOVEMBER

Gripping TV and action-packed entertainment awaits OSN subscribers this November, with a superb line-up of series, blockbuster movies, kids TV and the latest Arabic shows.

OSN Movies Star Wars HD

Experience the world of Star Wars with the complete franchise available on OSN's very own Star Wars dedicated pop-up channel, with the original 6 episodes plus The Force Awakens and Rogue One. OSN Movies Star Wars HD will launch on November 24 (9am KSA) and the channel will run for 16 days concluding on December 9. This is your chance to catch up on all the Star Wars movies before the release of the new Star Wars: The Last Jedi on December 15.

OSN Series First HD

From the director of Fast and Furious comes the most anticipated action series of the year - Season 1 of S.W.A.T. The series follows a locally born and bred S.W.A.T. lieutenant - Daniel 'Hondo' Harrelson - who is torn between loyalty to the streets and duty to his fellow officers when he's tasked to run a highly-trained unit that's the last stop for solving crimes in Los Angeles. Tune in on November 9 (9pm KSA) to catch the action, while viewers can enjoy new episodes every Thursday back-to-back with the other action packed series Lethal Weapon S2.

You can enjoy fresh episodes of your favorite series such as How to Get Away with Murder, Grey's Anatomy, and Scandal every Sunday from (8pm KSA), along with other exciting new episodes of The Good Doctor on Mondays (8pm KSA), The Gifted on Tuesdays (9pm KSA), and The Flash (8pm KSA) and Inhumans (9pm KSA) on Wednesdays.

OSN first HD home of HBO

We have a bumper month of premieres to enjoy such as Season 2 of Berlin Station on November 6 (10pm KSA), which follows Daniel Miller, who has just arrived at the CIA foreign station in Berlin. Miller has a mission to uncover the source of a leak who has supplied information to a now-famous whistleblower named Thomas Shaw. Don't miss Season 2 of Chance on November 10 (9pm KSA) in which a forensic neuro-psychiatrist reluctantly enters a dangerous and violent world; and Season 4 of The Strain on November 15 (10pm KSA) in which vampires ravage New York City in this thrilling horror. Catch the fascinating documentary The Farthest on November 12 (10pm KSA), where more than 12 billion miles away a tiny spaceship is leaving our Solar System and entering the void of deep space - the first human-made object ever to do so.

OSN Series Comedy HD

We have the premiere of The Simpsons S29, the longest running TV show of all time, on November 16 (8pm KSA); American Housewife S2 on November 26 (9pm KSA), in which a strong-willed mother, raising her flawed family in a wealthy town filled with perfect wives and their perfect offspring; and Kevin Can Wait S2 on November 4 (8pm KSA), in which a newly retired police officer looks forward to spending more quality time with his wife and three kids only to discover he faces much tougher challenges at home than he ever did on the streets.

Kids and Family

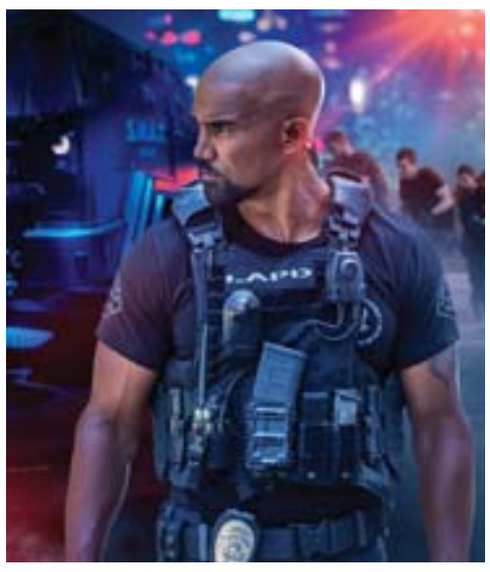
OSN has something for everyone including kids! Based on the hit movie, Series 1 of Hotel Transylvania telecasts on the Disney Channel HD on November 13 from (5.45pm KSA). The Disney XD will feature Avengers Secret Wards on November 4 (6:50pm KSA). If you've always wanted to be a princess then don't miss the brand new adventures of Nella the Princess Knight and her trusty companions on Nick Jr from November 5 (7.50pm KSA) or watch Alvin and the Chipmunks in this computer-animated version of the classic series from November 6 (5.45pm KSA) on Nick Toons.

Factual shows

Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader? is the engaging show for the whole family in a knowledge-test game to win big money from November 4 on Discovery Family HD (7.30pm KSA). Airing November 13 is The LA Riots: 25 Years Later which takes a look at the social issues relating to what caused the 1992 LA riots on the History Channel HD (8.10pm KSA) and not-to-be-missed is the Savage Kingdom: Uprising showing the day-to-day tribulations of wild lions on Nat Geo Wild on November 28 (9pm KSA).

Arabic

New and exclusive Arabic series this month includes A'elat Al Hagg Noa'man, an Egyptian series highlighting conflicts between different family members on November 13 (7pm KSA). Watch Thill El Helm - a social and psychological drama series that focuses on the Saudi community starting November 8 (8pm KSA). Enjoy Fadila Khanum wa Bant'ha, a Turkish series about Fadila Khanum, a mother of two daughters, eager to gain money using her younger daughter's modeling skills. Starts on November 21 (9pm KSA) and airs Sundays to Thursdays. Finishing series includes Ishq w Domou', a Turkish drama where poor meets wealthy ending on November 20 (8pm KSA). Continuing this month is the Middle East's production of the US hit show SNL Bilarabi from 8pm (KSA) every Saturday night all through November.



Bangladeshi auto driver sues over movie mobile mix-up

A Bangladeshi auto-rickshaw driver is suing for damages after his phone number was used in a movie, leading to a barrage of calls from female fans of the film's star that he says nearly destroyed his marriage. Ijajul Mia told AFP yesterday he had received hundreds of calls every day since the release in June of "Rajniti", in which the country's top movie star Shakib Khan is seen giving the number to his girlfriend.

"The use of my number in the movie made my life completely miserable," he said. "Every day I got hundreds of of calls from mostly female fans of Shakib Khan. They would say 'Hello Shakib, I am your fan. Do you have two minutes to talk to me?'" Mia said he had been asked to leave his family home since the movie's release and his new wife had threatened to leave him. He argued that he couldn't take a new number because his clients knew the old one and he would lose business.

"I am a newly married man with one daughter. When these calls started coming, my wife thought that I was having an affair," he said. One fan even travelled 500 kilometers to see him after learning where he lived. Now Mia wants to sue Khan, who also produced and directed the movie, for damages of five million taka ($60,975). —AFP

New Spacey accusations fly as Netflix suspends 'House of Cards' series

A Mexican actor became the latest to accuse Kevin Spacey of sexual harassment Tuesday, predicting more such claims would emerge as Netflix suspended production of the two-time Oscar winner's hit series "House of Cards." Roberto Cavazos, who acted in several plays at London's Old Vic theater when Spacey was artistic director there from 2004 to 2015, said the Hollywood star routinely preyed on young male actors.

"It seems the only requirement was to be a male under the age of 30 for Mr Spacey to feel free to touch us," he wrote in a Facebook post. The accusation echoed the claim made Sunday by American actor Anthony Rapp, who said Spacey made a "sexual advance" on him at a party in 1986, when he was 14 and Spacey was 26. Responding to the allegation-and the outraged backlash in its wake-streaming giant Netflix announced it has suspended production of the sixth season of "House of Cards," the award-winning political drama starring Spacey.

The suspension was "until further notice, to give us time to review the current situation and to address any concerns of our cast and crew," said Netflix and producer Media Rights Capital. Season six, which Netflix had already confirmed on Monday would be the final edition of its flagship production, had been scheduled to air in 2018. It is not yet known whether this will change. On Monday, Netflix and MRC said they were "deeply troubled" by the allegations. Spacey, 58, came under a torrent of criticism over the claims and for appearing to deflect the story by finally confirming that he is gay-an open secret in Hollywood for years.

Hollywood star routinely preyed on young male actors

'Lots more Spacey stories'

As reports emerged that Spacey could face other accusers, Cavazos said he and Rapp were far from alone. "Those of us who crossed paths with (Spacey) in London when he was director of the Old Vic know a whole lot more people will find the courage to tell their stories in the coming days and weeks," he wrote, in allegations first posted to Facebook on Monday and repeated Tuesday on Twitter.

"It wouldn't surprise me if there were similar numbers to Weinstein's," he added, referring to the dozens of women who have accused Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein of sexual assault and harassment, unleashing a torrent of similar accusations against a growing list of rich and powerful men. "There are a lot of us who have a 'Kevin Spacey story'."

Cavazos is a stage and screen actor whose credits include the films "Rush" and "El Beso" and a guest appearance on the British TV series "Doctor Who." He said he fended off two "unpleasant" advances from Spacey that "bordered on harassment." "If I had been a woman, I probably wouldn't have thought twice about calling it that," he said. He said Spacey would regularly invite young male actors to "talk about their careers" and surprise them with a champagne picnic where he would make an advance.

"More commonly, he could be found in the theater bar, pressing up against whoever caught his eye. That's how it was with me the second time. I never gave in, but I know some people who were too scared to stop him," he said. Earlier, the Old Vic said it was "deeply dismayed" by Rapp's allegations and encouraged anyone connected to the institution with stories of abuse to contact the theater via a confidential email address. Rapp and Cavazos both said they felt compelled to speak out after the recent accusations against Weinstein sparked an examination of abuses committed by powerful men in entertainment and other industries. — AFP

This image released by Netflix shows Kevin Spacey in a scene from "House Of Cards." — AP photos

Kevin Spacey, right, presents the award for excellence in television to Dick Van Dyke at the BAFTA Los Angeles Britannia Awards.

Handout picture released on October 31, 2017 by Latina Television showing the new Miss Peru 2017, Romina Lozano, on October 29, 2017, at the Municipal Theatre of Lima. — AFP

Contestants turn Miss Peru pageant into national protest

Contestants broke with tradition and turned the Miss Peru pageant into a protest highlighting violence against women in one of South America's most dangerous countries for females. In elegant ball gowns, the 23 finalists in Sunday's televised pageant at the Lima Municipal Theatre gave voice to thousands of women who are victims of harassment, sexual and physical abuse, and murder.

Instead of giving their bust, waist and hip size, the contestants took turns reciting a litany of shocking facts about violence against women in Peru. "My name is Camila Canicoba, I represent Lima and my measurements are: 2,202 cases of feminicides reported in the last nine years in my country," one said. "Eighty-one percent of people who attack young girls are close to the family," another said. "One girl dies every 10 minutes due to sexual exploitation," said another. Yet another: "more than 70 percent of the women in Peru are victims of street harassment." Each sharply delivered phrase shook the audience, which had been expecting traditional light entertainment.

"I think that the fact that you are looking at your regional representative, at the queen of your department, giving open and real figures about what happens in our country is alarming," contest organizer Jessica Newton told AFP. "Unfortunately there are many women who do not know, and think they are isolated cases," said Newton, Miss Peru 1987.

Record violence against women

So far this year, 82 women have been murdered and 156 cases of attempted murder have been registered against women in Peru, finalist Karen Cueto said from the stage. The figures highlight Peru's ranking as second only to Bolivia as the country with the worst record of violence against women in South America, according to the Observatory of Citizen Security of the Organization of American States. Newton said the pageant contestants themselves were no exception. Of the 150 who began the contest, five have been the victims of violence, including rape, she said.

Violence against women became a front page issue in Peru after the rape of a volunteer for the national census program. Two television journalists then publicly declared they had been victims of violence by their partners, and there have been endless news stories about women being beaten or stabbed, and minors raped. The stream of news has sparked calls in Peru for the death penalty for rapists.

The normally trite question and answer session with the event's host was dramatically different, too. Instead of being asked about favorite hobbies or charities, the women were prompted for their responses on what to do about violence. "Every day we see in the news that more women die at the hands of their partners or their ex-partners. If you had the opportunity to change the laws, what would be the right one for the crime of feminicide?" This was one of the questions.

Andrea Moberg, representing Peru's eastern department of Loreto, answered that rapists should be punished with life imprisonment. Romina Lozano, representing Callao, said her plan would be to "implement a database containing the name of each aggressor, not only for feminicide but for every kind of violence against woman. In this way we can protect ourselves." In the end, the judges elected her Miss Peru 2017. Lozano will walk with the other contestants at the head of a march to highlight violence against women in Lima on November 25. "The national queen must be the ambassador of ordinary women, of all women who have no voice," said Newton. — AFP

SHOE MART UNVEILS HOT OFF THE RUNWAY TRENDS FOR AUTUMN-WINTER 2017

From best winter boots to higher and stylishly tighter heels; there's a silhouette to suit every fashion statement and budget! SHOE MART; region's leading brand in footwear and accessories amps up the fashion game by bringing in trends like 'Design Matters', 'Earthed', 'Nocturne' and 'Infusion' for women, men and kids.

Show-stopping styles make way as 'Design Matters' brings in winter hues and styles that are utterly covetable. Whether you opt for an on-trend metallic flat pair in satin that's curated with fashion and comfort or the suede flats in pearl embellished details; each design is unique to conquer ladies' hearts. Refreshingly designed, the 'Earthed' trend unearths the essence of international fashion in boots. Firm boot uppers in pastel shades complements androgynous wardrobe to make for unique and key styles for the season.

Edgy and red-carpet chic is the game plan of 'Nocturne'. Shimmery leather and suede uppers on block heels make for a must-have style statement for the new generation fashion-connoisseurs who swap feminine etiquettes to become offbeat. Finally, 'Infusion' arrives like flashes of haute trends to walk through the fashion season knowing exactly what you want and where to go. Versatile and sophisticated silhouettes come in line to offer flaunt worthy styles in flats and heels.

'Design Matters'

The accessories for the season are full of urbane vibe. Animal prints and metallic silvers offer occasion worthy arm candies with added embellishments while striped silhouettes in black and whites offer every day must-haves. Silhouettes in box types, duffle-like handbags, and flap over slings, extended totes and backpacks offer roomy interiors for all your essentials.

For men, 'Design Matters' adds a modern edge to winter dressing as a cold palette of hues in steel grey, uniform blue and slate-toned green break the monotony of typical colour choices. Suggestive of its name, 'Earthed' is all about neutral shades and rich darks with references to the falling leaves of autumn. The trend weaves its sophistication around the innate luxury of leather and powerful application of reptile prints.

The 'Nocturne' trend, that's very individualistic in its design and colour palette, is for the adventurous soul. Smarter looks in chiseled formals arrive in combined materials and never-before hues. Rich and luxurious, the 'Infusion' trend is for everyone who likes to spell opulence in their dressing. Contrast pairings in colors, deeper tones and rich treatments have been woven well together to offer a diverse range in smart, casual, formal as well as winter dressing needs.

The collection also includes a coveted range in accessories with styles that will impress. Canvas backpacks in neutral shades have been highlighted with leather straps for an urban appeal. Duffle and portfolio bags have also been curated in navy blues and steel greys; to offer functional everyday choices. Treated leather laptop bags and office essentials portray sleek and formal looks to fulfil corporate needs. Embossed leather treatments and zipped embellishing are also on the design board to woo young tycoons.

Favoring a much needed respite from color palettes that are usually associated with kids, SHOE MART spells out urban-chic sentiments in its 'Design Matters' trend. Washed out hues in contrasting textures perch upon crimped soles to make for fashion-savvy boots that will complement winter dressing choices of both boys and girls. For all the kids who love to have a mini version of their parent's style statements, the 'Earthed' trend tunes up to their wavelength with neutral shades in browns, greys and creams.

Sophistication and glamour

Adding drama to kids dressing, 'Nocturne' ushers in sophistication and galactic glamour to kids' footwear fashion. A display of noirs, stellar silvers and greys sit pretty on fancy designs in boots, shoes, ballerinas and even casual footwear needs. Finally 'Infusion' displays undoubtedly cool gear to keep it high-spirited and sporty. Materials in soft leather, padded insoles, contrasting highlights and a blast of vibrant hues makes it an attractive choice for toddlers and kids alike.

Letting kids be kids, the collection also includes children's favorite tele-companions like Lightning McQueen of Cars, Disney Princesses such as Cinderella and Aurora, Anna & Elsa of Frozen, and Spiderman; to name a few. Masked on cushioned uppers to catch the fancy of their fans, the range is perfect for everyday dressing.

The accessories collection has an inviting range in backpacks and sling bags. Fabrics in shimmer, velvet, suede and leather are neatly tailored to provide style as well as utility to budding fashion icons. Glitter and metal sling bags with cute animal faces make for evening needs of fashionistas. The range also has little heroes' favorites in Lightning McQueen whereas girls sure will have fun with Barbie and her gang. Complete with daily as well as occasion worthy choices, Shoe Mart ensures a complete style statement when it comes to winter dressing.

SHOE MART's Autumn/Winter collection for women, men and kids seems to have the final word when it comes to fashion forward choices in accessories and footwear.do visit Shoe Mart at any of the Centrepoint stores located at Al Rai, Avenues, Salmiya, Fintas, Jahra, Fahaheel, Sulaibhikhat, Kuwait City, Khaitan and Hawally.

Fans mourn S Korean actor after car crash

Grieving South Korean film fans packed a Seoul hospital yesterday to pay their respects after the death of an actor dubbed "Korea's Hugh Grant". Kim Joo-Hyuk, 45, died Monday from head injuries after his Mercedes crashed into an apartment wall and flipped over. No other vehicles were involved, police said. Kim, whose father was also a famous actor, made his debut in 1999 and quickly gained popularity for his roles in several romantic comedies, earning himself the nickname. More recently he moved into grittier parts. He was named Best Supporting Actor at the Seoul Film Awards last week for his role in the movie "Confidential Assignment", in which he played the leader of an organized crime gang from North Korea.

"It is my first time to win a movie award," Kim said at the ceremony. "It is as if my parents, who are in heaven, are giving me this award." Several top celebrities went to pay their respects at a remembrance altar set up in the Seoul hospital where his body was taken. Large arrangements of white flowers-the color of mourning in Korea-lined the corridors, which were crowded with media and sobbing fans. Kim's death was one of the most searched words on South Korea's Naver portal yesterday. "He was one of those actors that made me smile. I still can't believe it," said one user. "I thought he would become a veteran actor like his father, it's very sad. May he rest in peace," wrote another. Kim was the 20th most searched terms on China's Twitter-like Weibo, as overseas fans also grieved his passing. "Kim Joo-Hyuk was one of the very few South Korean actors I liked, my god," posted a Chinese commentator. — AFP

Late S Korean actor Kim Joo-Hyuk

The "Mid Time & Mija Design" collection by Lv Qing.

CHINA FASHION WEEK

The "Yudahua1919" collection by Liu Yong.

The "M.X" collection by Yang Shan.

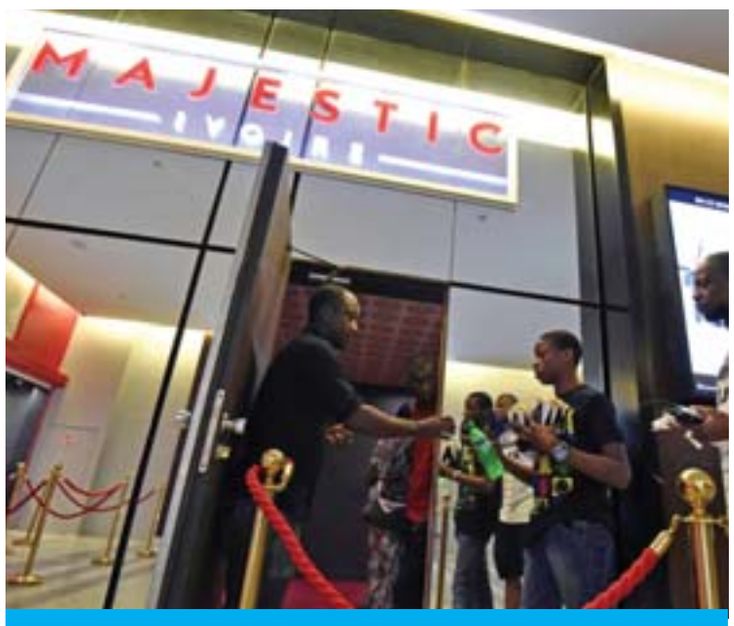
The "Chuhetingxiang" collection by Chu Yan.

Kuwait Times
Established 1961

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2017

People attend the Annual Halloween parade after a man driving a rental truck struck and killed eight people on a jogging and bike path on October 31, 2017 in New York City. — AFP



People queue to enter in the screening room to watch a movie at the Majestic cinema in Abidjan. — AFP photos

People sit in the screening room as they wait for the start of a movie at the Majestic cinema.

A man watches the announcements before the start of a movie.

Modern tech, rising middle class drive cinema revival in Africa

Like the plot in an old-fashioned movie, cinemas in Africa are making a third-reel comeback after years of worrying decline. In many countries south of the Sahara, digital technology, strong investment and modern theatres are bringing about a major revival of movie-going, ending years of cinema closures. But this good news for film-lovers also comes with a drawback: the new cinema complexes tend to give precedence to Hollywood blockbusters rather than films made by African directors.

In the 1980s, a wave of cinema closures began to unfurl across the continent as rundown picture palaces were turned into auto repair shops, supermarkets, restaurants and even churches. The survivors were a number of privately owned venues and cinemas inside international cultural centers. Today, continent-wide figures for the industry are sketchy, but cinema owners say the sector is making a comeback. It is being driven by demographic demand and digital technology that provides immediate, low-cost distribution, compared to the expensive business of printing and trucking around reels of celluloid.

"The demand is there," says Jean-Marc Bejani, the chief executive of the Majestic chain, which has opened three cinemas in Ivory Coast's commercial capital Abidjan in the past two years. Next year, Majestic will open three more in the coastal city's working-class Yopougon district. A senior manager in the oil industry, Bejani threw himself into the movie business on discovering that there were no cinemas left in Ivory Coast. The success of Majestic's venture came fast, with 75,000 tickets sold for a single screen in 2015 and 175,000 in 2016 when all three new screens were in use. "Before this, the movie theatres were old and technically outdated, with films being shown three months later than in Europe," Bejani says. "I wanted high definition pictures, with 3D, comfortable seats and films coming out the same time as in France."

Good news for film-lovers but with a drawback

New 'middle class' market

"I come often," says schoolgirl Marie Benoit, standing in front of the bar selling soft drinks and popcorn inside a Majestic cinema as smart as any European multiplex. The young girl had for years lived in a city with no big screen. Canal Olympia has applied a similar high-tech approach to its bid to conquer west and central Africa. Since 2016, this subsidiary of global entertainment group Vivendi has opened six cinemas in Cameroon, Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso and Guinea.

The group's aim is to construct several dozen multi-role complexes in the coming years. Work is already in hand to build three new venues in Gabon and the Republic of Congo. "A middle class is developing in Africa ... with a desire to be entertained," says Corinne Bach, the head of Canal Olympia. "It's a lot of work to get people used to going to the cinema, notably youngsters who have never been before," she adds. "The first results are encouraging."

To succeed, Canal Olympia is betting on mixed programming of American, African and European films, notably the productions of the Canal+ Group, another Vivendi company playing a major role in cinema as well as television. The new venues are intended to host concerts and popular shows, as well as being available to hire as business conference centers, to make the network economically viable.

But in a number of countries, old cinemas are being upgraded or reopened, including half a dozen in the Angolan capital Luanda, the CineKin in Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Normandie in Chad's capital N'Djamena, renovated in 2011. In Burkina Faso, the poor west African nation that proudly hosts the biennial Pan-African Festival of Cinema and Television (FESPACO), the Guimbi will soon be reborn as a full-fledged cultural centre in the second city, Bobo Dioulasso.

Promote African films

In Dakar, a privately owned triplex is due to open, named after Senegalese film-maker Ousmane Sembene who died in 2007. The Senegalese state is paying for "four projects to renovate theatres with digital technology" around the country, according to Hugues Diaz, the culture ministry official responsible for cinema. On the far side of the continent, in Kenya the renewal of cinema began about a decade ago. The east African nation has some 10 modern cinemas, usually located in shopping malls, in place of the small venues of yore.

South Africa and Nigeria-whose thriving "Nollywood" industry made the 2016 romantic comedy hit "The Wedding Party"-are outstanding exceptions to the rule of past closures. The rapid progress of the film-making business in the past 15 years in Nigeria has led to the opening of modern cinemas run by several different networks in the biggest towns.

The 130 screens in about 30 venues raised $95 million (82 million euros) at the box-office in 2015 in Nigeria, while South African cinemas made $76 million, according to figures from PricewaterhouseCoopers. In most countries, blockbuster movies from the United States dominate releases because they are what makes most money by public demand and "for lack of support from the state", Bejani says.

Franco-Gabonese director Samantha Biffot bemoans the lack of African films. "The cinemas need to screen our work, because most African films are only to be seen at festivals or abroad," she says. FESPACO official Ardiouma Soma argues that the African taste for movies is wide, from big box-office draws to art cinema. "The African public likes African films," Soma says, declaring that the new venues are "an opportunity to be seized". — AFP

People queue to buy popcorn or drinks at the Majestic cinema.