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MPs accelerate attacks on MoI over vehicle seizures

Panel debates amending audiovisual law

Amir and Iraqi president hold official talks

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in the presence of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, received at Bayan Palace yesterday visiting Iraqi President Fuad Masum and his accompanying delegation. After the reception, the two Arab leaders held a meeting, commencing the official talks between Iraq and Kuwait.

The meeting was attended by Sheikh Nawaf, Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, in addition to senior Kuwaiti and Iraqi officials. Deputy Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah said the



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes Iraqi President Fuad Masum upon his arrival at Kuwait International Airport yesterday. — KUNA

meeting focused on ways to bolster ties as well as issues of mutual interests. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Lawmakers yesterday continued their criticism of the interior ministry for insisting to apply a controversial decision to impound vehicles for committing a series of traffic offences, mainly not wearing the seatbelt and using mobile phones while driving. MP Riyadh Al-Adasani, who threatened to grill the interior minister if he is included in the new Cabinet, yesterday reiterated that the harsh traffic decision was a ploy to divert the attention of the public after allowing the entry of allegedly contaminated Egyptian vegetables and onions into the country.

Adasani claimed that the government does not apply the law on members of the ruling family and MPs, adding that interior minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah will have an opportunity to rectify wrong procedures in awarding contracts to certain companies. The lawmaker, who has already grilled the prime minister, said he is not concerned with reports that the prime minister may submit a non-cooperation motion to HH the Amir against the National Assembly. Under Kuwait law, if the Amir receives a non-cooperation motion by the government, he will either dissolve the Assembly and call for snap polls, or sack the Cabinet. Adasani also claimed that the government is expected to introduce the five-percent

value added tax (VAT) as agreed among the GCC states because the state budget is facing a deficit.

Regarding the traffic decisions, opposition MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri said the decision is not in line with the constitution and aims to divert the attention of the public and to humiliate them. MP Jamaan Al-Harbash said the decision is unconstitutional and bad, and criticized the exemptions on humanitarian grounds, saying these exemptions will be misused by authorities. He called on the interior minister to suspend the decision and then discuss it with the Assembly's interior and defense committee if he seeks cooperation.

But pro-government lawmaker Ahmad Al-Fadhil said he totally supports the interior minister's resolve to apply the law – especially traffic rules – to safeguard the lives of people. He said studies have shown that 94 percent of traffic accidents are caused by lack of attention, mainly by the use of mobile phones, adding that many lives will be saved by the decision.

Meanwhile, Fadhil said the Assembly's legal and legislative committee studied yesterday a number of proposals to amend the audiovisual law, which stipulates harsh penalties for some "opinion" violations. The lawmaker said the law is bad and restricts freedom of speech, because it was introduced under special circumstances.

As Germany sinks into crisis, president urges compromises

BERLIN: Germany's president yesterday urged political parties to find compromises and avoid snap elections, hours after the collapse of high-stakes coalition talks plunged the EU's top economy into crisis. President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who holds the power to call a new vote, made it clear that this was not his favored option, as he told mainstream parties to rethink their positions and return to the negotiating table.

Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose fourth term in office is now in danger, was forced into seeking a coalition with an unlikely group of parties after inconclusive elections in September left her without a clear majority. But after more than a month of grueling negotiations, the leader of the pro-busi-

ness FDP, Christian Lindner, walked out of talks overnight, saying there was no "basis of trust" to forge a government with Merkel's conservative CDU-CSU alliance and the left-leaning Greens.

Voicing regret at the FDP's decision, Merkel vowed to steer Germany through the crisis, saying she would "do everything to ensure that this country emerges well from this difficult time". But the reality is that Germany now faces weeks, if not months, of paralysis with a lame-duck government that is unlikely to take bold policy action at home or on the European stage.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who has sought Merkel's backing for an ambitious EU reform plan, expressed concern about Germany's political dead-



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel meets German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier at Bellevue Palace yesterday. — AP

lock, adding that he hoped Berlin would remain a "stable and strong" partner to allow the two partners to "move forward together," his office said. The euro and Germany's blue-chip DAX stock market index fell slightly on the news of the stalemate, but later clawed back early losses.

The acrimonious negotiations stumbled on a series of issues, in

particular immigration. Merkel has let in more than one million asylum seekers since 2015, sparking a backlash that allowed the far-right AfD party to win its first seats in parliament.

The AfD's parliamentary co-leader Alexander Gauland welcomed the collapse of the talks, saying that Merkel had "failed"

Continued on Page 11

Qatar urges Gulf neighbors to let nationals attend 2022 World Cup

DOHA: Qatar is urging the four countries imposing a diplomatic and trade boycott against it to allow their nationals to attend the World Cup in Doha in 2022, a senior Qatari organizer said yesterday. "We separate politics from sports," Hassan Al-Thawadi, secretary general at Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, told reporters in Doha. The committee is responsible for planning and operations for the tournament.

"We hope that the blockading nations see reason in this matter and allow for their people to be able to participate in this once in a lifetime opportunity." Qatar is expecting some 1.5 million fans during the tournament, the majority from the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia.

Thawadi also said there were no regrets in bidding for the 2022 tournament, despite the "abuse" it claims it has

received since being chosen as host. "It will always be worth it, it will always continue being worth it," he said. "We suffered abuse. Did we ever regret it? No, we will never regret it. He added: "Anything of value will never come easy."

Since controversially being chosen by FIFA to host the tournament in 2022, Qatar has found itself at the center of a global storm. It has been criticized over human rights and labor abuses and blighted by allegations of corruption. Most recently it has found itself accused of supporting terrorism as part of a bitter dispute involving Doha and its Arabian Gulf neighbors Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain, as well as Egypt.

The crisis, which threatens to destabilize the region, has seen Qatar politically and economically boycotted by those countries over its alleged support for extremist groups and relations with Iran. Qatar denies the charges. The World Cup in Qatar starts on Nov 21, 2022. Doha has had to find new suppliers of construction materials for its World Cup projects since the boycott was imposed, but the timeline for those projects has not changed, said Thawadi. "Our plans are put in place, alternative supply chains are put in place and the projects are continuing on schedule and on cost," he said. — Agencies

Israeli minister reveals covert contacts with Saudi Arabia

JERUSALEM/RIYADH: An Israeli cabinet minister said on Sunday that Israel has had covert contacts with Saudi Arabia amid common concerns over Iran, a first disclosure by a senior official from either country of long-rumored secret dealings. The Saudi government had no immediate response to Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz's remarks. A spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also did not respond immediately to a request to comment.

Both Saudi Arabia and Israel view Iran as a main threat to the Middle East and increased tension between Tehran and Riyadh has fuelled speculation that shared interests may push Saudi Arabia and Israel to work together. Saudi Arabia maintains that any relations with Israel hinge on Israeli withdrawal from Arab lands captured in the 1967 Middle East war, territory Palestinians seek for a future state. US President Donald Trump's peace envoys, seeking an Israeli-Palestinian agreement with regional support, have visited Saudi Arabia several times since he took office.

Continued on Page 11

Mugabe, facing impeachment, calls Cabinet meeting

HARARE: Zimbabwe's ruling party yesterday ordered impeachment proceedings to begin against longtime President Robert Mugabe and expressed confidence that he could be voted out within two days, while the world's oldest head of state ignored the party's midday deadline to resign and instead summoned ministers to a Cabinet meeting today morning.

The ruling ZANU-PF party's deputy secretary for legal affairs Paul Mangwana said lawmakers would move a motion for impeachment today and set up a parliamentary committee, and on Wednesday the committee would report back to all lawmakers and "we vote him out".

The main charge against the 93-year-old Mugabe is "allowing his wife to usurp government powers" and that "he is too old and cannot even walk without help," Mangwana told reporters. He said the ruling party needs the backing of the MDC opposition group to have enough votes in Parliament but "we have talked to them and they are supporting us."

Zimbabweans were stunned by Mugabe's defiance during a national address Sunday night in which the increasingly isolated president, put under military house arrest last week, had been expected to step down. Mugabe did acknowledge "a whole range of concerns" about the chaotic state of the government and the economy, which has collapsed since he took power after independence from white minority rule in 1980.



HARARE: A man holding a flag of Zimbabwe takes part in a demonstration at the University of Zimbabwe yesterday. — AFP

A notice by Mugabe's chief secretary announced today morning's Cabinet meeting at State House and said all ministers "should attend". However, a tweet by one minister, Jonathan Moyo, indicated that several had left the country.

The military appears to favor a voluntary resignation for Mugabe, one of Africa's last remaining liberation leaders, to maintain a veneer of legality in the political transition and avoid accusations of a coup. Mugabe, in

turn, is likely using whatever leverage he has left to try to preserve his legacy or even protect himself and his family from possible prosecution.

Amid the political confusion, the government yesterday urged Cabinet ministers to pursue business as usual. Meanwhile, opposition activists and the influential liberation war veterans association announced more demonstrations to pressure Mugabe to go.

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Iraqi President meets Prime Minister, Speaker



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi President Fuad Masum, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. —KUNA



Iraqi President Mohammad Fuad Masum meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: The visiting Iraqi President Mohammad Fuad Masum received yesterday afternoon His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem at his residence in Bayan Palace. The meetings were attended by Head of the mission honor Advisor at the Amiri Diwan Dr Yousef Al-Ibrahim attended the meetings. The Iraqi President and his accompanying delegation arrived in Kuwait yesterday on an official visit where he met with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Iraqi President was received at Kuwait International Airport by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Ghanem, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign

Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, senior officials at the army, police, Kuwait National Guard (KNG) and Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD). Advisor at the Amiri Diwan Yousef Hamad Al-Ibrahim heads the mission of honor that accompanies the visiting president. Iraqi Interior Minister Qasim Al-Araji, Iraqi Health Minister, Dr Adeela Hammoud Hussein, Iraq's Transport Minister Kazem Finjan and a number of officials, accompanied President Masum. —KUNA



Iraqi President Fuad Masum meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

Jarallah denies Lebanese PM to visit Kuwait after Egypt

Kuwait hopes compensations issue with Iraq ends soon



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah (center left) participates in Oman Embassy's national day ceremony. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah denied reports that Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri would visit Kuwait after his visit to Egypt. "The State of Kuwait always welcome Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri," Jarallah told reporters on sidelines of a reception held by the Omani Embassy to mark the Sultanate's national day Sunday night. Meanwhile, Jarallah said that Kuwait's file of compensations of damage caused by the Iraqi invasion and occupation in 1990-91 is being discussed with the Iraqi officials. He expressed his hope that the two sides would reach a solution to end this issue very soon.

Detained citizen

In the meantime, Jarallah said that Kuwaiti diplomats in Tehran visited Kuwaiti citizen Faleh Al-Azmi who was detained after mistakenly entered a military zone. He hoped Azmi would be released soon. According to Jarallah, the diplomats assured Azmi was in a good health and commended the Iranian authorities for the good treatment of the Kuwaiti citizen. Iran promised to allow family of Al-Azmi to visit him soon, he said. Iranian security authorities arrested Azmi last September after entering, en route to Kuwait, a military zone on the Iran-Turkey borders by mistake.

Critical circumstances

Jarallah said in the meantime that the Arab foreign ministers' meeting, held in Cairo Sunday, convened amidst 'critical' regional circumstances. The foreign ministers discussed thoroughly the Iranian interference in the regional countries, Jarallah told reporters. Kuwait First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah reiterated, during the meeting, condemnation of the ballistic missile fired from the Houthis in Yemen towards the Saudi capital, Riyadh, and the bombing of an oil pipeline in Bahrain.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled affirmed full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain in all measures taken to maintain their security and stability. Jarallah was asked about the upcoming GCC summit in Kuwait, and said there was nothing new on this issue. He said the summit was preceded by a ministerial preparatory meeting. The GCC, said Jarallah, was experiencing difficult times, however "it gets sick but does not die." Jarallah meanwhile said Kuwait was following its own convictions regarding some issues because there was no unified Arab or Gulf position. —KUNA



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah (second from right) attends the ceremony.



Diplomats attend the event.



Local

Authorities foil attempt to smuggle 150 kg of cannabis

Worth KD 300,000

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Police managed to foil an attempt to smuggle around 150 kilograms of cannabis into the country, the Interior Ministry said yesterday. Police also arrested a bedoon man who tried to smuggle the cannabis, worth KD 300,000, through a sea shipment, the ministry's Public Relations department said in a statement. The suspect, who has connections to networks in nearby countries, confessed to the crime, said the department, adding investigations will continue on the matter in an effort to block narcotics from entering the country.

Crackdowns

Several surprise security campaigns were carried out under the supervision of acting interior ministry undersecretary for general security affairs Major General Ibrahim Al-Tarrah, resulting in the arrest of 20 wanted persons for various offenses and three residency law violators. Seven were arrested over drugs and a liquor brewery was busted.

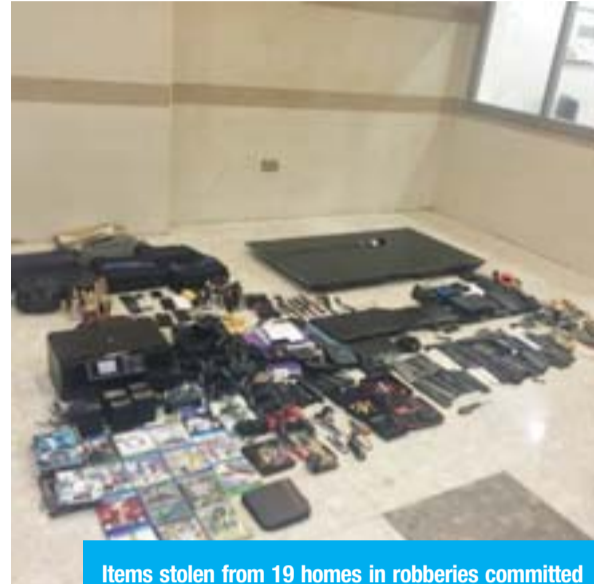
Duo stole 32 cars, robbed 19 homes



Criminal detectives arrested a Kuwaiti man and an Arab woman who stole cars whose owners left them with their engines running, and used the vehicles to commit home robberies. The two were caught while attempting to steal a car with its engine running. The two resisted arrest using sharp objects and one of them was injured. The two confessed to committing 51 thefts, including stealing 32 cars and robbing 19 homes. Much of the stolen material was found in their home.



Vehicles stolen by two suspects arrested yesterday.



Items stolen from 19 homes in robberies committed by two people arrested yesterday.



KUWAIT: This picture provided by the Interior Ministry shows 150 kilograms of cannabis that were seized before being smuggled into Kuwait yesterday.

Thieves caught

Criminal detectives arrested a Kuwaiti man and an Arab woman who stole cars whose owners left them with their engines running, and used the vehicles to commit home robberies. The two were caught while attempting to steal a car with its engine running. The two resisted arrest using sharp objects and one of them was injured. The two confessed to committing 51 thefts, including stealing 32 cars and robbing 19 homes. Much of the stolen material was found in their home.

Girl went missing

A woman went to Abu Halifa police station and told them her daughter did not return home and was not answering her phone. Policemen asked the mother to call relatives and friends to ask about her, so she left and did not come back. The woman then found her daughter's car at Farwaniya Hospital, so she called police and told them her daughter was kidnapped, then lost consciousness. Police patrols went to the hospital and found the mother was undergoing treatment. Meanwhile, detectives are looking for the missing girl.

Immoral act

An Egyptian told police about an immoral act between a man and woman at a Jleeb mall. The Egyptian was shocked to see such indecent behavior, so he called police, who did not find the duo. The Egyptian said the man works in the mall and gave police his details. Detectives are investigating.

Domestic dispute

A citizen fired shots at his family's house in Farwaniya after a domestic dispute. A citizen called police and told them his brother fired shots at the house due to family differences and gave them the address. Detectives are looking for the suspect.

Abducting

Ahmadi police arrested a woman who had been absconding for 10 years and wanted on a KD 34,000 debt. She was sent to Sabahiya police station. The woman was arrested during a routine patrol.

Liquor brewery busted

Salwa police closed down a liquor brewery run by two Indians and two Nepalese. A police patrol noticed a man with a large bag, who when approached, ran into a house. Police followed him, and were surprised the place was a liquor factory. They found six bottles in the bag and 725 bottles ready for sale, in addition to 166 gallons of liquor and four machines. Three other men were arrested and sent to concerned authorities.

Legalese

Divorce

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Lawyers are taught not to share emotions or to avoid getting emotional with their clients, but how can lawyers efficiently do this when knowing how a client feels? Or the client's needs may be vital to a case, and of course caring about a client is also very important as well. One thing I find very difficult as a lawyer is to work with families. Think about it - parting ways with a lifelong partner can be one of the most difficult decisions a person can make, and being a lawyer in this situation can be very difficult. No one wants to see a family split up or argue - it is a horrible sight - but I can only imagine how much harder it is for family members to find a lawyer and understand the actions and consequences.

I am not a professional in family law, but there is an increasing concern as divorce cases rise in Kuwait. I have been getting a lot of enquires, and therefore I decided to put together the most common basic concerns and answer them from a practical point of view and not necessary theoretical. As always, I have carefully chosen simpler words that are not necessary diplomatic or legal, but are understood by the general layman and therefore the most number of readers can benefit from this article.

Long time

Question: I have heard that divorce generally takes a very long time - is this true? What should I expect?

Fajer: It really depends on the circumstances - if there was any physical abuse, if there are kids involved, which court were you married in, if the husband and wife are agreeing to disagree or not, and so on.

Something to keep in mind though is that the judge will not look into the divorce without referring you to a marriage counselor first. There is a team of experienced professional counselors who seek to make both parties work on the marriage. Sometimes a partner doesn't want to cooperate, or both parties agree not to go for counseling. If this is the case, then a paper is signed by both parties and is taken back to the court, where the proceedings will start. I know quite a few married couples who were determined to obtain a divorce, but came out of the marriage counseling program to reevaluate their marriage.

Uncomfortable

Question: I want to file for a divorce but I am not sure how safe is it to go to a police station alone as a woman. I am hearing mixed responses and I know you wrote about it, but I have to go, because my husband is abusing and mistreating me. I am also afraid that the investigators/police officers will not understand as they are men, and I need to discuss issues that I am only comfortable discussing around woman.

Fajer: To be completely honest with you, I had to think twice about using your question. I want my articles to be honest, because I believe that honesty can bring about change, but I also do not want to write negative things about my country that I love so much and I want to see it change to the better.

I am sure that there are a lot of police officers in the country who are working day and night to keep us safe. I feel very grateful for all their hard work and commitment, and it's not an easy job. I really appreciate them, but this does not mean that the stories that we have heard do not have some truth behind them. With that said, I think you will be perfectly safe going to a police station - just dress respectfully and be aware of what is going on.

Most police stations in residential areas now have multiple female investigators working morning and night shifts, and there are female police officers too. Regardless, I think if you go to the police station in the mornings on a weekday in your residential area, you should find friendly woman investigators working there who are very helpful.

Divorce in Kuwait

Question: I am an American married to an Indian and seeking a divorce. We were married in Morocco, but it is not working out. Can we get a divorce here in Kuwait? And what law would be applicable?

Fajer: This is a very common question in Kuwait, especially with how diverse the people here are. You can get a divorce in Kuwait if you reside in Kuwait regardless where you are from and where you were married. With that said, the applicable law will depend on your religion and what was stated in your marriage certificate. Some divorces can take longer than expected as international laws need to be translated and submitted to court.

Should you have any questions or concerns, or you require a consultation, please email me at ask@fajertlawyer.com.

New energy tariffs in public sector starting tomorrow

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Ministry of Electricity and Water Undersecretary Mohammad Bushehri headed the 31st meeting of the executive committee to nationalize power and water use in government departments, in the presence of several ministry officials and representatives of ministries and government institutes. Bushehri lauded the efforts of committee members as well as procedures taken in their departments.

He said the new energy consumption tariffs will be applied to the public sector from Nov 22, and asked government departments' representatives to inform their ministries. He said the one kilowatt in the government sector will be priced at 25 fils, while the 1,000 gallons of water will cost KD 4.

Head of the rationalization committee Khalifa Al-Furaih said the ministry plans to hold its first power rationalization symposium on Dec 6-7 in order to shed light on ministries' efforts, authorities, voluntary committees, companies and individuals in the field of spreading the culture of rationalizing the use of power and water.

Non-profit companies

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry opened the door for establishing and licensing non-profit companies of individuals with limited liability. The ministry said companies of individuals (non-profit) are under the rules of limited liability companies as mentioned in the companies law no. 1/2016, its amendment law no. 15/2017 and its executive bylaws. These companies are not allowed to practice or support political, religious and ideological activities or any activity that is under any supervisory authorities without obtaining its approval, as well as transfer to a for-profit company. It said these companies are allowed to use their profits and returns only to serve the purpose they are founded for. It added the company cannot distribute profits directly or indirectly to any of the partners. These companies cannot issue bonds or sukuk or receive donations. The ministry said establishment of the one-person company can be done through the website of the one-window department (www.kbc.gov.kw), starting with a capital of only KD 1,000.

Age limit

The Public Authority for Manpower reached an agreement with the commerce and interior ministries whereby the age of licensed consumer delivery vehicles will be limited to 10 years, director of manpower estimation at the authority Sultan Al-Shaalani said. Another agreement with the farmers' union will allow labor requirement estimation inspectors to make field visits to farms and markets that belong to the union to find out the scale of work.

Construction material

Informed sources at the commerce and industry ministry said most linking operations with the Kuwait Supply Company and the Credit Bank are complete to make sure construction material is provided to beneficiaries, with quantities allocated to each beneficiary from the bank's loan. Sources said supervisory authorities asked the ministry to review its procedures and use systems that confirm the quantities distributed and that they conform to ministerial decree 638/2012.

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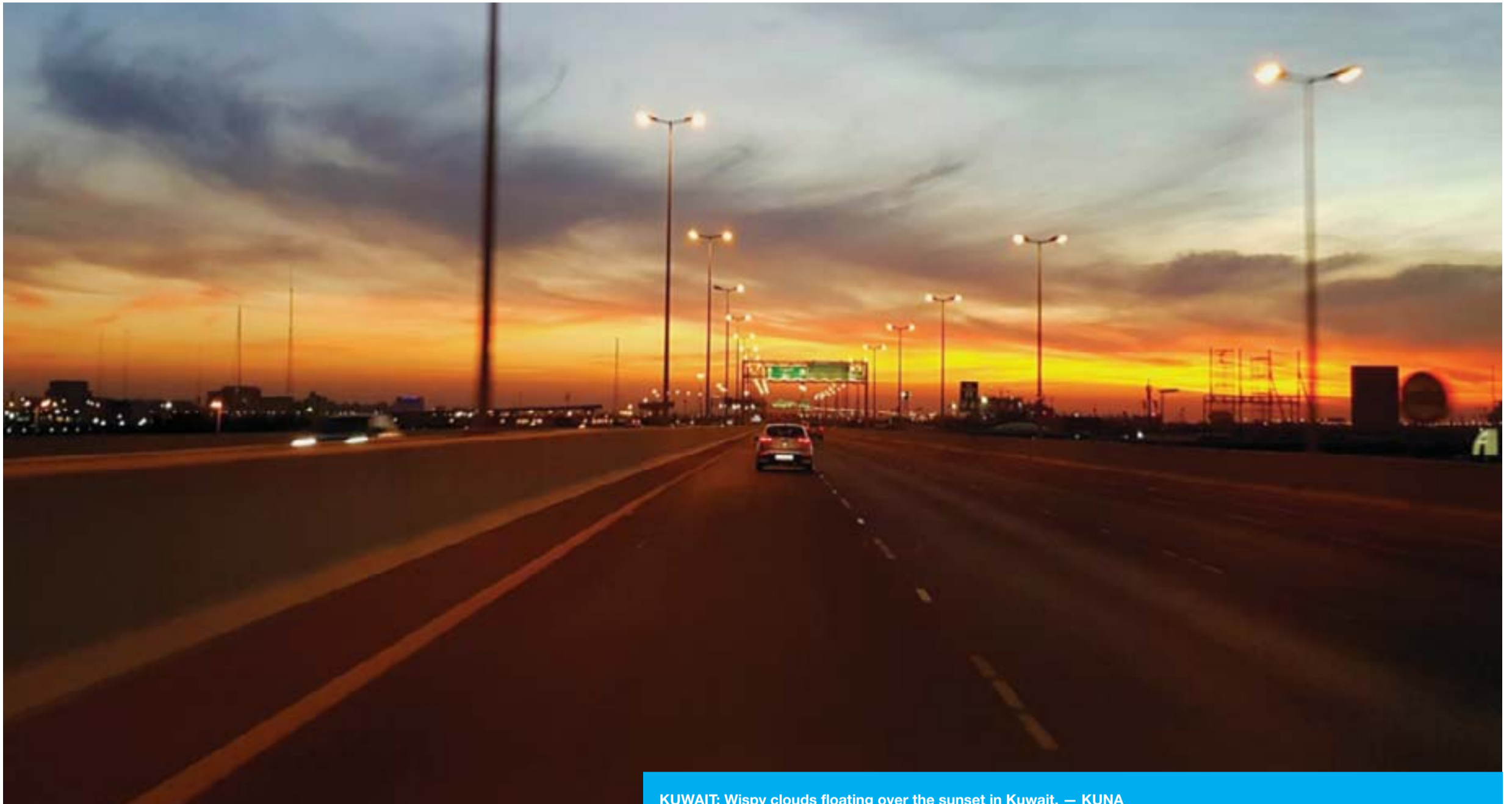
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* This campaign is limited to participants in Kuwait only. Ministries and their departments, companies and NGOs cannot enter the festival.
* Kuwait Times employees, spouses and their second-degree relatives also cannot participate.

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Wispy clouds floating over the sunset in Kuwait. — KUNA

Ministry of Health holds 2nd educational campaign on Hepatitis C

Kuwait works with WHO to eradicate disease by 2030

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Under the auspices of Minister of Health Dr Jamal Al-Harbi, sponsorship of AbbVie Pharmaceuticals and in collaboration with the National Committee for fighting communicable Hepatitis C, the Ministry of Health of Kuwait held the 2nd educational campaign on communicable Hepatitis C which was attended by many sponsoring patrons, organizers and a large number of media personnel representing various media sectors in Kuwait.

During her speech, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Dr Majda Al-Qattan said that the ministry made progress at rectifying public misconceptions about the disease and to confirm that the medication to fight the disease is readily available and that the disease can be treated provided the initiative to start the treatment exists.

She added that the Ministry of Health has taken great strides on several levels in order to eliminate all types of hepatitis, in line with Kuwait's commitment to eradicate Hepatitis C by 2030 where the Ministry of Health is working closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) to develop a national strategy to combat hepatitis viruses through which data is collect-

ed from infected cases to assess the situation in Kuwait and to create a system for monitoring and evaluation.

Complications

Qattan noted that the ministry focuses at this stage on viral hepatitis C because of the high proportion of complications in the infection, where the risk of cirrhosis of the liver is 15-30 percent in 20 years and the development of it to liver cancer. There is currently a treatment that can cure the disease by more than 95 percent and has been provided by the Ministry of Health, according to the recommendations of the World Health Organization.

Professor Fouad Al-Ali, gastroenterology and liver consultant, said that in 2014, with the introduction of a new batch of drugs, it became possible to treat with grain instead of needles, with almost no side effects,

and the proportion of treatment of the virus exceeded 95 percent. Ali added that the Ministry of Health in Kuwait is one of the few countries in the world that has provided medicine that is considered expensive for all patients, at a time when it decided to provide treatment for advanced cases.

On the other hand, digestive system and liver diseases consultant Dr Ahmed Al-Fadhli said that the first



KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health's Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Dr Majda Al-Qattan (center) speaks during the press conference. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

campaign is to explore the cases in the community. "We are trying to detect cases that currently do not show symptoms of the disease. Most of patients in these cases do not even know they are infected, and this makes it more difficult for us. During the next six months, we will try to examine a large number of cases," he added.

Al-Fadhli stressed that Kuwait's need for liver transplant facilities is very high, adding that the operations will start soon at Mubarak Hospital. It is expected that these operations will begin within two months especially that the list of patients who need liver transplants is ready.



Treatment can cure disease by more than 95%

Linking aid with development vital: Official

ROME: Kuwait is taking pioneering steps to link between its efforts within the humanitarian domain and Sustainable Development Goals, said Kuwait's representative to the UN's World Food Program (WFP) Yusuf Jhail. Participants in the second annual session of the program's executive council, held last week, have agreed on the human factor in achieving sustainable development, Jhail, who's chairing the council said yesterday.

The meeting also agreed on the responsibility of UN member-countries in supporting reforms in different UN bodies, including WFP to boost their performance to meet the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs) and create a hunger-free world, he said. The work of the WFP had moved from providing food aid to those in need to providing job opportunities, education and means of development aiming to fight poverty and hunger, he noted. Meanwhile, Jhail said Kuwait had executed hundreds of projects in poor countries in Asia and Africa, worth over \$16 billion, aiming to



develop these countries and end hunger. He added that the meeting came out with vital decisions including funding ongoing humanitarian rescue operations and closely monitoring the performance of the program to ensure delivery of food aid to all those in need.

The executive council includes 36 of the UN member-countries and is tasked with monitoring and evaluating the program's projects and performance. The council presents annual reports to the UN's Economic and Social Council and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on the outcome of WFP's operations. WFP provides food aid to about 80 million people in over 80 countries each year. —KUNA

Facilities' closure deprive families of recreation: Report

KUWAIT: Leaders Group for Consulting and Development, the representative of the World Tourism Organization in Kuwait, issued its monthly report on recent developments in the tourism sector in Kuwait. Leaders Group General Manager Nabila Al-Anjari said the closure of parks and other recreational facilities raise questions about this important sector on how to resolve its problems and manage it. She added that both citizens and lawmakers have been complaining.

Anjari said when opened in the 1980s, the Entertainment City, parks, beaches and recreational clubs were social, cultural and touristic breakthroughs that showed the significance of recreation for any society, namely one like Kuwait. She added that this was evident for both citizens and expatriates living in

Kuwait when the Entertainment City opened in 1984, and when Shaab Amusement Park opened in 1988. The great appeal of all Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) facilities built in 1976 proved the significance of recreation for any community that needs to spend leisure time away from the stress caused by work and modern lifestyles. Anjari pointed out that this encouraged private sector investment in such projects in various areas around Kuwait, but as a result of the sluggish performance of various governments in terms of developing Kuwait's tourism sector, these projects deteriorated.

"According to recent reports, Paris Disneyland annually attracts 15 million visitors," Anjari said, noting that the Al-Kadijah project in Saudi Arabia is listed as one of the world's largest entertainment cities, to be located over an area of 334 sq km, with a total cost of tens of billions of riyals. "This project will surpass Disneyland in Florida, which is only located over an area of 110 square kilometers," she underscored.

Moreover, the report stressed that closure of recreational facilities happened at short intervals as indicated in the table below, while the remaining facilities are totally neglected. The report added that this negligence deprives families from recreational facilities that used to be suitably priced for people



Nabila Al-Anjari

with limited income. The report also noted that most of those facilities were built with public funds in outstanding locations.

"With some development, facilities such as Entertainment City, which is situated over an area of one square kilometer, could have been ranked in a leading position after Hong Kong Disneyland, for instance," Anjari said, noting that it is becoming urgent to reconsider maintaining all recreational facilities more than ever.

Local

ACKCT organizes forum on Kuwait's sustainable future

'Kuwait's future begins with sustainable corporate culture'

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Australian College of Kuwait Corporate Training (ACKCT) organized a forum on 'Kuwait's future begins with sustainable corporate culture' at College Theater yesterday to highlight the role of economic institutions in supporting national cadres and to create an environment conducive to their creativity. The forum discussed the Kuwaiti dream, loyalty and productivity in workplace, corporate engagement in Kuwait's economy, corporate social responsibility and positive attitude and youth and talent innovation.

In his opening speech, Professor Isam Zabalawi, President of ACK said that the forum's idea was created from the Kuwait Vision 2035: a new plan to transform Kuwait into a regional financial and cultural hub. To achieve that vision, the government and private sectors along with the youth of Kuwait should work together.

The forum focused on the new Kuwait as stated in the Kuwait national development plan and how corporate social responsibility could help achieve the vision of new Kuwait. The importance of young men and women can help with sustainable development. Kuwait has a good number of innovators and entrepreneurs in different areas and platforms. "We believe that providing the youth with cultural and business expertise will help them utilize their time and energy in Kuwait's future," Zabalawi said.

Most successful phase

Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan stressed that Kuwait today is going through the most successful phase where it has overcome the challenges and is providing a lot of opportunities. He

said that last year, commercial licenses reached 2,800, but now over 10,000 licenses were issued after the government made the licensing process easy for investors. "Kuwait now has eased the commercial laws wherein the equity capital was reduced to minimum KD 1,000. We are now giving licenses to individual investors, also home licenses and microcredit to small and medium enterprises," he said.

Roudhan added that the Kuwaiti economy has made several strides, such as increasing direct investment by 300 percent and attracting 400 million dinars in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector. "Thanks to intensive efforts in the area of SMEs, also real GDP growth rate has been raised from about 0.5 percent in 2014 to 1.8 percent in 2015." He noted that the efforts are under way to increase the number of tourists and create employment opportunities for young people in the tourism sector by 2020. "We have also attracted major companies to Kuwait, to invest in and contribute to the development plan, especially Chinese companies such as Ali Baba, Sani, JD.com, Jena Jizuba, Xena North Industries and Zenava Energy," he added.

"So I must say to students and professors that Kuwait is changing and we have got great opportunities with balanced relationships with all countries. Kuwait is going to invest in the human element and the refinement of talent and motivation to give serious impetus to the process of construction and development and achieve national goals in line with the vision of His Highness the Prince in achieving development plans," Roudhan stressed.

Youth empowerment

The Australian College in Kuwait (ACK) seeks to be an active partner in the national efforts to support and empower the Kuwaiti youth and to encourage

"France has an international and attractive economy with over 25,000 foreign companies employing 1.8 million people. France successfully recovered from the financial crisis, and has bright growth prospects with favorable investment environment. GDP has grown by almost 6 percent since the crisis, which is 2 percent above the eurozone average," he explained.

France is an attractive location. "Setting up business in France provides access to a domestic market with over 66 million consumers with high purchasing power (gross national income was \$42,510 per person in 2016). Located in the heart of Europe, France is a point of entry to markets of the European Union, which is the world's largest economic area with over 500 million consumers," he said.

"France's geographical location also makes it an ideal platform for Middle East and African markets. Between 2000 and 2016, France saw annual demographic growth of 0.6 percent, higher than the average in European and Central Asian countries. In 2016, France had the highest fertility rate in the European Union (2.01 children per woman, compared to 1.81 in the United Kingdom and 1.5 in Germany)," added Galli.

Education system

"France invests almost five percent of its GDP in its education system, more than Germany, Italy and Spain. French higher education is world renowned and attracted 324,000 international students in 2016/2017 (the world's fourth most popular host country). With 1.6 million scientists and engineers aged 15 to 64, France ranks third in Europe," he pointed out.

"France is in seventh place in terms of hourly labor productivity, ahead of Germany in eighth and the United Kingdom (18th). France has high quality infrastructure and an ideal setting. Paris-Charles de Gaulle is Europe's number one airport for freight and number

Nasser Al-Hayn and Vice President of ICRC Christine Beerli.

"This year marks a very important occasion that depicts the strong relations between ICRC and Kuwait. ICRC has been working in Kuwait for the past 25 years on different files related to the humanitarian field," said Yahia Alibi, the Head of the Regional Delegation of GCC countries.

According to Alibi, the search for those who went missing during the Gulf War continues. He said the current scope of work of the regional delegation of the GCC countries in Kuwait has evolved dramatically due to the strong support provided by the Kuwaiti authorities, and thanks to the ICRC's partnership with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

Berli expressed gratitude to Kuwait for its continued support to ICRC and its operations worldwide. She explained that ICRC's work in Kuwait and the GCC wouldn't have been possible without the strong cooperation and support provided by Kuwait and national societies, namely the Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society. "We hope that today's celebration will not only mark our joint past achievements, but will also mark the continuation of a noble working relationship that aims to alleviate human suffering," she said.

In order to search for those missing during the war, the ICRC chaired the tripartite commission involving Kuwait, Iraq and members of the coalition. "Despite the success in determining the fate of

many of the missing, we continue our relentless efforts to uncover the fate of those who remain unaccounted for," Beerli said.

The regional delegation has been able to deepen its roots and expand its activities in Kuwait and the GCC region by monitoring the conditions and treatment of detainees, providing services related to restoring family links, tracing missing persons and exchanging communications between prisoners and their families. "This work would not have been possible without the strong cooperation with national societies, in particularly the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, and we are truly honored by their presence here today," she said.



KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan speaks during the forum. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



Professor Isam Zabalawi, President of ACK.

them as they are present in the homeland and in their future and foundation. ACK has been training and preparing Kuwaiti cadres equipped with scientific method that is supported by an advanced practical approach that qualifies them to fulfill their responsibilities and work requirements in achieving the vision of 2035.

The main elements of the forum are Kuwait's development plan, commonly referred to as the "New Kuwait 2035" strategy, and its impact on the Kuwaiti economy and the country as a whole, and the importance of concerted efforts and institutions to provide with the best and contribute effectively to the development of services to promote development in Kuwait. The forum will also focus on the need to link Kuwaiti youth to the economy by improving the business environment, encourage them to enter the private sector and develop projects and programs that helping the economic aspect of development, and the importance of spreading positive thinking and strengthening the identity of the young Kuwaiti to form a youth figure. The



Nowair's Positivity Initiative Founder Sheikhha Intisar Al-Sabah.

forum's speakers include Minister of Commerce and Industry, Nowair's Positivity Initiative Founder Sheikhha Intisar Salem Al-Sabah, learning and development expert Dr AKL Kairouz and Entrepreneur Dana Winner.

France seeks to boost business exchanges with Kuwait

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Business exchanges between Kuwait and France are growing, but Paris aims to boost them even more. The French Embassy in Kuwait held media gathering on Sunday at the Kuwait Towers to speak about the French economy and investment opportunities in France. Philippe Galli, Business Attache at the embassy, noted that the value of trade exchange between France and Kuwait is worth €500 million. "France's exports to Kuwait reached €300 million till the end of September, an increase of 15 percent comparing to 2016. Imports reached around €191 million, a decrease of 36 percent comparing to last year," he said.

"Ninety-five percent of Kuwait's imports to France is oil. The drop in the value of Kuwaiti exports is due to the drop in oil prices. France exports textiles, cosmetic and medical products, industrial equipment and food to Kuwait. We aim to improve bilateral exchange, and we are confident that it will grow," said Galli.

Sixth largest economy

According to him, France is the sixth largest global economy, second largest market in Europe and the seventh in the world for foreign direct investment.



KUWAIT: Philippe Galli, Business Attache at the French Embassy. —Photo by Joseph Shagra

two in terms of passenger traffic. Paris-Le Bourget is Europe's leading business airport. France has the third most efficient rail network in Europe," Galli said. France ranks fifth in the world on the ability of its health sector infrastructure to meet health needs of society. Paris ranks fifth in terms of quality of life, mainly due to its cultural vitality.

France is pursuing ambitious reforms. "Our transformation strategy is based on four pillars - unlocking the creative potential of the economy including labor law reforms; investing in the future that includes investing in capital, human resources and human capital; inclusive growth that includes the European fund project for strategic investments; and finally the rebalancing of our public finances, which includes reducing public deficit, taxation, public spending and debt," concluded Galli.

Kuwait signs \$42.5 million loan deal with Egypt



BAGHDAD: A delegation from Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development visits a KFAED-funded project in South Iraq. —KUNA

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed a loan agreement on Sunday with Egypt worth KD 12.5 million (\$42.5 million) to fund a project that will provide drinking water in the Sinai Peninsula. The project is targeting some of Egypt's most underdeveloped areas, including the Sinai Peninsula's capital city of Al-Arish, all of which suffer from a dearth of drinking water, KFAED's Director General Abdulwahab Al-Bader told the press after the loan deal was sealed. He revealed that the loan deal was the 45th that the Arab world's most populous nation has received from the Kuwaiti fund, with a collective value of KD 833 million (\$2.8 million).

Meanwhile, Egypt's Minister of Investment and International Cooperation Dr. Sahar Nasr pointed out that the loan agreement would be instrumental in providing adequate drinking water to residents of Al-Arish. She added that such projects help improve the quality of life in a restive region long plagued by terrorism, saying that "the only solution to counter terrorism is through economic and social prosperity." Among the most venerable institutions in the Middle East, KFAED provides loans to prop up development in some of the most impoverished nations across the world.

Separately, a delegation from KFAED visited Sunday a KFAED-funded residential complex and a medical center in southern Iraq to get acquainted with construction process first-hand. The visit aims at getting first-hand account of construction in Umm Qasr residential complex and Kuwait Surgical Complex, Kuwait Consulate in Basra said in a statement.

The delegation's visit is to hold meetings with authorities building the two projects, Yusuf Al-Sabbagh, Consul General, said in a statement. Nawaf Al-Mahmel, head of KFAED delegation, said construction in the presidential complex was over 40 percent. Umm Qasr project includes 228 housing units, four schools, services and entertainment facilities. —KUNA

ICRC marks 25 years of Kuwait, GCC humanitarian work

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: If something good resulted from the 1990-91 Gulf War, it was the establishment of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the region. Humanitarian work started as the result of the war, focusing on the respect and application of principles of international humanitarian law on prisoners of war, detainees, missing persons and displaced civilians.

Yesterday, the ICRC marked its 25th anniversary in Kuwait and the GCC region. The ceremony was held at Sheraton Hotel in the presence of Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Development and Planning Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh, President of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, deputy director of the international organizations' department at Kuwait's foreign ministry



KUWAIT: President of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society Dr Hilal Al-Sayer (left) and Yahia Alibi, Head of the ICRC Regional Delegation of GCC countries (right) honor Vice President of ICRC Christine Beerli. —Photo by Joseph Shagra



CANADA 150

CANADA - KUWAIT TRADE AND INVESTMENT, PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE LINKS HAVE INCREASED



By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Canada and Kuwait enjoy excellent bilateral ties on all fronts. This year Canada marks its 150th anniversary, a festivity that will commemorate the country's confederation. Martine Moreau, Ambassador of Canada to Kuwait, shared with Kuwait Times her insights about Kuwait, plus her views on the political, economic, military, education and tourism relations with her host country. Some excerpts:

KT: How are Canada-Kuwait relations?

MOREAU: The foundations of the Canada-Kuwait relationship are strong and can be readily discerned in the two countries' common views and interests in several key areas, including peace and security, humanitarian affairs, trade and investment and increased "people-to-people" links.

The friendship between Canada and Kuwait was never better demonstrated than in 1991, when Canadian Armed Forces personnel served with those of the Armed Forces of Kuwait and coalition allies in the Gulf conflict and its aftermath. Of particular note was the major role played by Canadian firefighters and well control specialists, who worked tirelessly with Kuwaitis in extinguishing massive oil well fires and blowouts.

This strong bilateral relationship, forged in peace and war, continues to reinforce our common values, strengthen our economies and enhance our shared expertise in a wide range

of areas. Today, more than 6000 Canadians live in Kuwait and are employed in key areas such as the oil industry, academic institutions, government, health, financial services and engineering. Canada and Kuwait enjoy the benefits of varied bilateral agreements and arrangements currently in force. These include:

- the agreement on "Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion" (2002);
- the Air Transport Agreement (provisionally in force since 2007);
- the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (2014);
- the Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Cooperation (2009);
- the Arrangement concerning the Establishment of a Support Base and Related Logistics Operations (2014);
- the Defense Cooperation Arrangement (2014); and
- the Memorandum of Understanding between the Canadian Commercial Corporation and the Ministry of Health of the State of Kuwait (2016).

KT: What is the current trade exchange volume? Do you expect an increase in trade between Canada-Kuwait in the coming period?

MOREAU: In 2016, our bilateral trade in goods amounted to CAD 182 million (approx KWD 43 million) of which \$167.5 million represent Canadian exports. This figure though is well below the real value of our exports, given that many Canadian goods are actually shipped through the UAE before being reshipped to Kuwait and don't appear in the statistics of merchandise destined to Kuwait. We have noted an increase of 10 percent during the first eight months of 2017 over last year's figures and hope to see this positive trend continue.

Furthermore, these figures also do not account for trade in services such as engineering and consulting.

KT: Do you have companies from Canada operating here?

MOREAU: We have a few companies that are operating out of Kuwait, some of which have invested under the new KDIPA process. Examples of these include:

Kentz, a division of SNC Lavalin which provides engineering services in oil & gas; MMI Kuwait offers Medical training and solutions; NTG Clarity provides IT solutions; WSP provides engineering and consulting services, the Algonquin College which offers a Canadian Curriculum. Of course many more are active in Kuwait but work through local agents and partners. Our businesses for the most part focus on oil and gas, engineering services, health and medical services, agrifood and the defense and security sectors.

KT: Do they face any issues/obstacles/challenges when doing business here?

MOREAU: While we have seen some improvement in the ease of doing business here with such initiatives as KDIPA's one-stop window for investors, companies still face some challenges, and these mainly pertain to the length of time required for tenders and contracts to be finalized, bureaucratic red tape, figuring out local rules and regulations and the investment in time and resources required to establish solid business relationships.

KT: What are the main businesses Kuwaitis are doing in Canada?

MOREAU: Kuwait investment is largely focused in two areas: Oil & gas and equity invest-

ments/real estate. We have also noted in recent years a sharp interest in exploring new investment opportunities.

KT: How do you evaluate the Kuwaiti investors' experience in Canada's market?

MOREAU: In order to assess investors' experience in Canada, we keep in touch with investors and speak with them regularly to ensure their investments meet expectations. Investors tell us that they are happy with their investments in Canada. They find it easy to do business in Canada. In particular, they like the fact that businesses operate in a stable and predictable environment, with clear and transparent regula-

tion. They appreciate the support they receive at all levels of government, whether at the federal, provincial and municipal levels.

KT: How do you evaluate Kuwait's business environment and government measures to empower the private sector?

MOREAU: Diversification of the economy is essential in the long term, as this will not only lead to more revenues for Kuwait, but will also provide a source of business opportunity for foreign business. The efforts Kuwait is deploying to increase entrepreneurship in particular, amongst the younger generation, is key. Bringing in the private sector in public private partnership projects is also a good approach that will boost the private sector and allow for the transfer of knowledge and expertise. Still

more needs to be done, especially in cutting bureaucratic red tape for new SMEs. But this is a work in progress, and it is therefore important to keep refining the process and making it easier and more appealing to work in the private sector.

KT: How do you evaluate the size of economic-related visits and delegations between the two countries and which sectors hold promise for bilateral economic relations?

MOREAU: We have had regular visits of small delegations in the oil and gas sector, and also are expecting visits this year in the healthcare and food/beverage products sectors. As well, there are three groups of Canadian universities and colleges which visit Kuwait each year for education fairs. We have seen successes come for companies who have participated in the visits, but it's well known that Kuwait is a market where long-term efforts are required, so we encourage them to be present as often as possible.

Sectors that hold promise: Oil & gas, healthcare, IT & IT Security, security and defense and agrifood. We would like to see more linkages and relationships in terms of science and technology, research and development, and innovation overall.

KT: How many Kuwaitis are studying in Canada?

MOREAU: The Times Higher Education World Universities in a poll carried out between August and September 2017 found that 62 percent of student respondents listed Canada as their first choice. This is probably a reflection of several factors, such as the fact that our educational institutions are public and boast the highest academic standards, the excellent job opportunities available upon graduation, the diverse, safe and welcoming environment, along with very competitively priced tuition rates. This global enthusiasm towards Canadian universities and colleges has however not seemed to have reached Kuwait to the same degree.

There are currently between 300 and 350 Kuwaiti students studying in Canada. But we would certainly like to see many more. While certain programs, such as medicine and dentistry, are popular amongst Kuwaiti students, we would love to see enrolments increase in other programs such as engineering, business, public administration and many more.

In order to increase awareness of Canada as an education destination, the embassy organizes education fairs three times a year, during which each time a dozen colleges and universities come to Kuwait to meet with students, parents and school advisors.

KT: What are your personal observations on Kuwait's economic future?

MOREAU: With the adoption of its 2035 national development plan, Kuwait appears to be on the right course to secure its economic future. A successful economy requires a successful enabling environment and many pillars of the plan address factors critical to such an environment: namely, creative human capital, an effective public administration, strong and progressive infrastructure, quality healthcare, a sustainable living environment, openness to the world and most importantly, a sustainable, diversified economy.

Many of the critical enablers to ensure a sustainable and diversified economy, such as facilitating foreign direct investment, building capacity through SME and entrepreneurship programs, public private partnership programs, privatization and building a knowledge economy, are also currently taken into account. This is all very positive and assuming the implementation of these initiatives is successful, the outcomes should be very favorable.

KT: How do you see the future of investments between Canada and Kuwait?

MOREAU: We believe there are great opportunities on both sides, in particular for Kuwaiti investors to invest more heavily in Canada. As I mentioned previously, Kuwait investors presently active in Canada are very pleased with their investments and many are considering re-investments.

We would obviously like to see more Kuwaitis consider Canada as a destination for investments. Given the fact we are blessed with abundant natural resources (minerals, petroleum, gas, uranium), have vibrant manufacturing sectors (automobile, aerospace, renewable energy, plastics, etc), expertise in the service industries (health, engineering, information technology, education), renowned research institutes and centers of excellence, there are opportunities in virtually every industrial sector.

Furthermore, Canada will offer huge opportunities for foreign sovereign wealth funds, large asset managers, or pension funds in the infrastructure sector with the creation of a new Infrastructure Bank. The government of Canada has announced it will be investing CAD 35 billion in this bank and is going to be leveraging private sector involvement in order to reach an overall capital of CAD 120 billion.



Martine Moreau, Ambassador of Canada to Kuwait

Furthermore they find that Canada offers plenty of business opportunities given its diversified and strong economy, the overall low cost of doing business, a highly educated and skilled workforce, low corporate taxes and active innovation research and development. They often mention that Canadians are friendly and particularly open to foreign companies and newcomers and appreciate Canada's diverse and tolerant society generally.

KT: How do you evaluate Kuwait's efforts to attract foreign investment? Do you see a posi-

GCC, often preferring Dubai or Abu Dhabi.

KT: How do you evaluate Kuwait's business environment and government measures to empower the private sector?

MOREAU: Diversification of the economy is essential in the long term, as this will not only lead to more revenues for Kuwait, but will also provide a source of business opportunity for foreign business. The efforts Kuwait is deploying to increase entrepreneurship in particular, amongst the younger generation, is key. Bringing in the private sector in public private partnership projects is also a good approach that will boost the private sector and allow for the transfer of knowledge and expertise. Still





Rahul Gandhi to take over from his mother

Mass killer, cult leader Manson dies in jail

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PYONGYANG: North Korean men and women use computer terminals at the Sci-Tech Complex in Pyongyang, North Korea. Ever so cautiously, North Korea is going online. This is all done with a two-tiered system where the trusted elite can surf with relative freedom while the masses are kept inside the national intranet, painstakingly sealed off from the outside world and meticulously shrieved. — AP

North Korean women suffer rape, malnutrition

Domestic violence, sexual assault in workplace common

GENEVA: North Korean women are deprived of education and job opportunities and are often subjected to violence at home and sexual assault in the workplace, a United Nations human rights panel said yesterday. After a regular review of Pyongyang's record, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women voiced concern at rape or mistreatment of women in detention especially those repatriated after fleeing abroad.

North Korean women are "under-represented or disadvantaged" in tertiary education, the judiciary, security

and police forces and leadership and managerial positions "in all non-traditional areas of work", the panel of experts said. Domestic violence is prevalent and there is "very limited awareness" about the issue and a lack of legal services, psycho-social support and shelters available to victims, it said. North Korea told the panel on Nov 8 that it was working to uphold women's rights and gender equality but that sanctions imposed by major powers over its nuclear and missile programs were taking a toll on vulnerable mothers and children.

The panel said economic sanctions had a dispro-

portionate impact on women. North Korean women suffer "high levels of malnutrition", with 28 percent of pregnant or lactating women affected, it said. The report also found that penalties for rape in North Korea are not commensurate with the severity of the crime, which often goes unpunished. Legal changes in 2012 lowered the penalties for some forms of rape, including the rape of children, rape by a work supervisor and repeated rape.

The revised legal code had led to "reducing the punishment for forcing a woman in a subordinate posi-

tion to have sexual intercourse from four years to three years", the report said. Women trafficked abroad and then returned to North Korea, "are reportedly sent to labor training camps or prisons, accused of 'illegal border crossing', and may be exposed to further violations of their human rights, including sexual violence by security officials and forced abortions," it said. North Korean women living in China can transmit their nationality to their children, but many are believed not to register them "for fear of being forcibly repatriated", it said. — Reuters

Video of Indian politician peeing in public goes viral

MUMBAI: An Indian ruling party politician has been left red-faced after a video of him urinating in public went viral on World Toilet Day, despite government efforts to stop people relieving themselves in the open. Ram Shinde, a minister for water conservation in the western state of Maharashtra, was filmed answering the call of nature in a field by the side of a road Saturday. The clip spread online the following day. November 19 marks the United Nations' official World Toilet Day, which aims to raise awareness about the health risks caused by a lack of lavatories.

Shinde—a member of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party—defended his actions with an excuse familiar to many, effectively saying: "When you've got to go, you've got to go." "I have been travelling continuously for the last one month reviewing the Jalukta Shivar scheme," he told the Press Trust of India (PTI), referring to drought-prone Maharashtra's water conservation program. "Continuous travelling in high temperatures and dust made me ill. I was suffering from fever and when I couldn't find a toilet while travelling, I had to relieve myself in the open."

India is notorious for its lack of toilets. Some 70 percent of Indian households do not have them while around 600 million people, nearly half the population, defecate



AMRITSAR: An Indian shopworker cleans toilets in a hardware shop in Amritsar as India marks 'World Toilet Day'. The United Nations marked November 19 as 'World Toilet Day'. — AFP

in the open, according to UNICEF. Three years ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged to build toilets for everyone by 2019. The government has so far helped install more than 50 million lavatories across the country of 1.25 billion people and has been encouraging citizens to break

old habits and use them. Calls by AFP to Shinde's mobile phone went unanswered yesterday. PTI and other news outlets said the incident occurred on a stretch of road between the cities of Barshi and Solapur in the south west of Maharashtra, of which Mumbai is the state capital. — AFP

Online abuse silences girls and women, fuels violence

LONDON: Pervasive online abuse and harassment pressure women and girls into censoring themselves on social media and fuel gender-based discrimination and violence, rights groups said yesterday. About one in four women in Britain, the United States and six other countries said in a survey they had experienced online abuse or harassment. More than 40 percent said the online abuse made them fear for their physical safety and more than half reported trouble sleeping, loss of self-esteem and panic attacks after the incidents, according to rights group Amnesty International.

About a third stopped expressing their opinions online or withdrew from public conversations as a result, Amnesty said. "It's no secret that misogyny and abuse are thriving on social media platforms, but this poll shows just how damaging the consequences of online abuse are," said Amnesty researcher Azmina Dhrodia. "This is not something that goes away when you log off." Online harassment starts at a young age and may be more common for girls and teenagers

than adults, according to UK-based child rights group Plan International. Nearly half of girls aged 11-18 in the UK said they had experienced abuse or harassment on social media. Plan found in a survey earlier this year.

Like women, most of the girls said they stopped sharing opinions or otherwise changed their online behavior out of fear, according to Plan. "Very young girls are learning that they need to take responsibility for harassment and abuse," Kerry Smith of Plan told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "What they are saying is that they are holding themselves back." Parents, teachers and police often respond to online abuse by taking away girls' phones or telling them to go offline, which teaches victims that they are responsible for the problem, Smith said.

Online harassment, including crude comments on pictures or sexual references, teaches boys that it is okay to treat girls as sexual objects and to exercise power over them, which can lead to physical abuse and rape, she added. Social media attacks are so common for female politicians that they deter women from running for office around the world, advocates and female lawmakers have said. "Social media companies have a responsibility... to ensure that women using their platforms are able to do so freely and without fear," said Amnesty's Dhrodia. — Reuters

International

Kenyan Supreme Court upholds Kenyatta's presidential victory

Odinga blasts government as illegitimate

NAIROBI: Kenya's Supreme Court yesterday unanimously upheld the re-election of President Uhuru Kenyatta in last month's repeat presidential vote, paving the way for him to be sworn in next week. Chief Justice David Maraga said all six judges dismissed the two legal challenges to the vote. The opposition coalition NASA insisted the government was illegitimate.

Kenyatta's main challenger, NASA's Raila Odinga, said in a statement by his adviser Salim Lone that the ruling "did not come as a surprise" and said "it was a decision taken under duress". "We in NASA had repeatedly declared before this Supreme Court ruling today that we consider this government to be illegitimate and do not recognize it. This position has not been changed by the court ruling," the statement said. It referred to security concerns raised by the opposition about the judges after one of their bodyguards was shot the day before the court was to deliberate on an 11th-hour request to delay last month's election.

The chief justice said at the time police had "enhanced" security after the shooting. The court could not immediately be reached yesterday to comment on NASA's allegation. Yesterday's ruling clears the way for Kenyatta's swearing-in on Nov 28, but it is unlikely to end the worst political crisis in East Africa's most developed economy in a decade. Residents in the western city of Kisumu, where Odinga has strong backing, barricaded roads in protest at the court's decision, and police later fired in the air to disperse them, according to a Reuters witness.

Odinga had called for a "National Resistance Movement" after Kenyatta's victory last month. Kenyatta had said he would not engage in dialogue with the opposition until "constitutional options" had been exhausted. The prolonged election process has disrupted the economy and forced the government to cut its growth forecast. Rights groups say at least 66 people have died in bloodshed surrounding the votes in August and October. The petitioners had argued that the outcome should be voided because the election board did not seek fresh nominations after the Aug 8 poll was invalidated, and because the vote was not held in each of the 291 constituencies.



Decision paves way for Kenyatta to be sworn on Nov 28

Kenyan flags
The repeat election on Oct 26 had been ordered by the Supreme Court after it nullified the results of the August election, citing irregularities in the tallying of votes - an unprecedented move on the continent. The opposition boycotted the poll, which

Kenyatta won with 98 percent of the vote. Some opposition supporters mobilized to prevent polls from opening in the west of the country.

"The court has unanimously determined that the petitions are not merited," Maraga said. "As a consequence, the presidential election of 26th of October is hereby upheld." The court did not detail its reasons. It said it would issue a full judgment within 21 days. The decision was met with applause in the courtroom from lawyers for the election commission and Kenyatta. The commission said the ruling affirmed its "resolve and deliberate efforts to conduct free, fair and credible



KISUMU: A man throws a stone on a burnt car as supporters of Kenya's opposition party National Super Alliance (NASA) demonstrate in Kisumu yesterday after Kenya's Supreme Court dismissed two petitions to overturn the country's October 26 presidential election re-run, validating the poll victory of Kenyatta. — AFP

elections". There was no immediate reaction from Kenyatta. Kenya, a US ally in the fight against Islamists and a trade gateway to East Africa, has a history of disputed elections. A row over a 2007 poll, which Odinga challenged after being declared loser, was followed by weeks of ethnic bloodshed that killed

more than 1,200 people. Police said on Sunday at least four people were killed overnight in a Nairobi opposition stronghold. Odinga accused the government of being behind the killings, which followed at least five deaths on Friday as police tried to disperse opposition supporters. — Reuters

Mugabe's end game: How the president could leave power

HARARE: Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe has defied expectations by not resigning, but the 93-year-old veteran leader could now face an impeachment process initiated by his own party. Following the army's seizure of power last week, the ruling ZANU-PF party sacked him as its leader over the weekend and the influential veterans' association has called for further mass demonstrations. Here are some of the possible routes by which Mugabe could leave power:

Resignation

Article 96 of Zimbabwe's constitution says that the president can resign if he submits a letter to the parliament speaker who must publicly announce it within 24 hours. Resignation would be the fastest, simplest and least risky way for Mugabe to leave power-but that looks unlikely. During his first meeting on Thursday with the general who led the military takeover, he bluntly refused to step aside. And on Sunday he showed once again that he intends to resist all calls to resign.

Another sticking point is political. The constitution says that in the event of a presidential resignation, he will be replaced by the vice president. But the military's preferred candidate to succeed Mugabe, Emmerson Mnangagwa, was sacked by Mugabe on November 6 in a move which triggered the current crisis. There is, however, a second vice president-Phelekezema Mphoko, who is loyal to First Lady Grace Mugabe-who would be automatically be named as interim leader in a development the army would want to avoid. If Mnangagwa was to have any chance of taking over, the army would first have to persuade Mugabe to reappoint him.



HARARE: Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe delivers a speech in Harare, following a meeting with army chiefs who have seized power in Zimbabwe. — AFP

Impeachment

The National Assembly and the Senate can begin proceedings to remove the president if both pass simple majority votes against him-either on grounds of "serious misconduct", "violation" of the constitution or "failure to obey, uphold or defend" it, or "incapacity". Once the votes are passed, the two chambers must then appoint a joint committee to investigate removing the president. If the committee recommends impeachment, the president can then be removed if both houses back it with two-thirds majorities, according to section 97 of the constitution. The vast majority of elected ZANU-PF representatives, like the opposition, are now in favour of removing Mugabe-but the process could be slow. And like the resignation route, it would also result in Mphoko becoming head of state. — AFP

Iraq fires a new salvo in political row with Kurds

BAGHDAD: Iraq's top court yesterday declared the Kurdish north's independence referendum in September to be unconstitutional, firing a new salvo in the political crisis with the autonomous region. The legal move marked the latest stage in the dispute between Baghdad and Kurdish regional capital Arbil sparked by the referendum, which resulted in a resounding "yes" vote for independence in the Kurdish area.

A statement said the Supreme Court "rendered a decision declaring unconstitutional the referendum held on September 25, 2017 in Iraqi Kurdistan... and cancelling all the consequences and results". Last week, as the deadline announced by the court for its decision on the constitutionality of the referendum approached, the Kurdistan government said it "respected" the decisions taken by Iraq's highest court.

It also said it respected a previous decision on Article 1 in the constitution insisting on Iraqi unity, which could be a basis for dialogue. Yesterday, the court again cited this article in its ruling, saying that the holding of the Kurdish independ-

ence referendum "contradicts and contravenes it", its spokesman Ayas Al-Samuk said in the statement. Parliament in Baghdad is currently reviewing the federal budget for the coming year, including the allocation for the Kurdish region. There was no immediate response to Monday's ruling from the Kurdish authorities. But Abdel Salam Barwari, a former deputy and member of former Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party, denounced it.

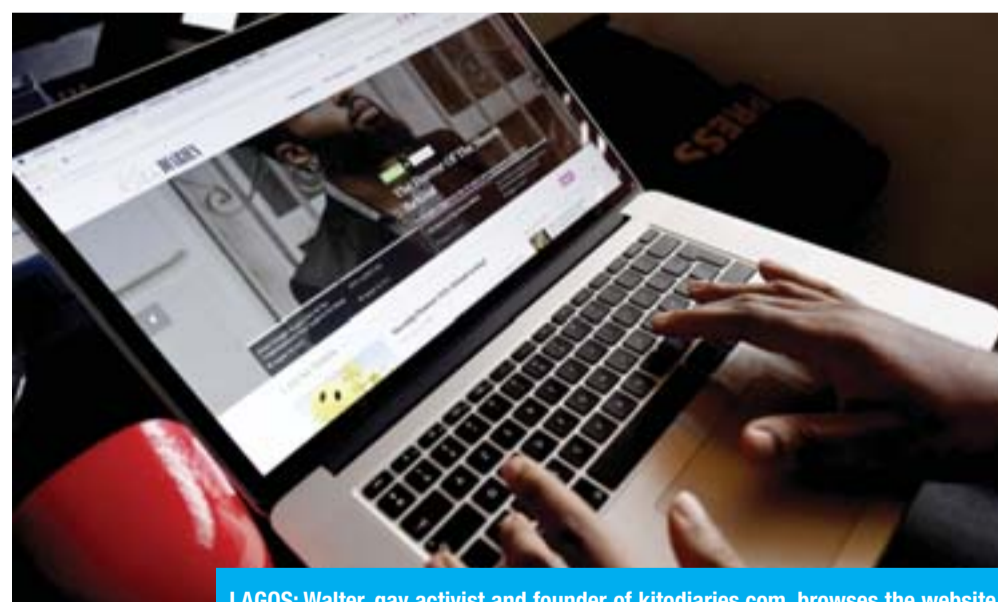
'A predictable decision'

"It was a predictable decision given the past of this court and the fact that it has now become a political tool," he said. Last month, the UN Security Council urged the Iraqi government and regional leaders in Kurdistan to set a timetable for talks to end the crisis. The world body's appeal came after Baghdad dismissed an offer from Iraqi Kurdish leaders to freeze the outcome of the referendum and hold talks. Rejecting the freeze offer, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi instead demanded the annulment of the independence vote. September's referendum was initiated by Barzani, for whom the repercussions were severe. At the end of October he announced he was stepping aside, having lost almost all of the territory disputed between Arbil and Baghdad. On October 16, Iraqi government and paramilitary forces had moved in to take over all of the disputed areas. — AFP

Nigerian and gay: Dodging police and Yahoo Boys

LAGOS: It was a life-changing moment for Daniels when five police officers in Nigeria's biggest city, Lagos, locked him in the back of a van two years ago. The officers scrolled through the photos on his mobile phone and mocked the hand gestures he used when he spoke. They also threatened to ring his father to tell him his son was gay. Eventually, they asked for a bribe so he could leave. "I didn't give them anything, A-ny-thing," he stressed, recalling the incident. "If they caught me while I was with another man, maybe... but I knew my rights. You don't arrest someone because you don't like the way he walks," he said.

"I kept strong in front of them," he added. "But the truth is I cried in my room. It was a life-turning point... Something inside of me broke." Daniels, who comes from a working-class area of Lagos, was 19 when he was detained. He had only just come to understand and accept that he was gay in a country where homosexuality is banned. Now he takes care to cultivate what he says is an "androgenous look", watching how he walks, talks and what clothes he wears. He has even grown a thin beard over his delicate features. "I'm going to keep myself alive, so I can make a difference," he told AFP defiantly, dressed in a black T-shirt and washed-out jeans, just like any other student in the city.



LAGOS: Walter, gay activist and founder of kitodiaries.com, browses the website on a laptop in Lagos. — AFP

'Gay activities'

Memories of that day in 2015 came flooding back to Daniels when he heard that more than 80 people had been arrested at a Lagos hotel in early August. The Lagos state government said those detained had been engaging in "gay activities" and "permitting male persons to have carnal knowledge of themselves against the order of nature". Twenty-eight are expected to appear in court in the coming days and risk up to 14 years in prison if they are convicted. Twelve minors have been tried behind closed doors but it is unclear what has happened to them. Cases involving the remainder appear to have been lost in the judicial system. Bisi Alimi, a Nigerian gay rights activist who came out on

television in 2004 and now lives in London, said cases often disappear if someone has the means or connections.

Legislation against gay marriage and same-sex unions was passed in early 2014, reinforcing existing laws on homosexuality. The legislation, which imposes a maximum 14-year sentence, was condemned by human rights groups but was widely applauded in religiously conservative Nigeria, both Christian and Muslim. No-one has yet been convicted but activists say it encourages corruption and extortion. "If you're gay and rich you can get away with it. But if you're gay and poor, you'll end up rotting in jail for the rest of your life," said Daniels, who, like other Nigerian gays, wouldn't give his full name. — AFP

Anti-graft agency arrests Indonesian parliament speaker

JAKARTA: Indonesia's parliament speaker, Setya Novanto, has been taken into custody by the anti-corruption agency after being arrested over his alleged role in causing state losses of \$170 million linked to a national electronic identity card scheme. Novanto, clad in an orange vest worn by detainees of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), was transferred from a hospital on Sunday night into a KPK detention facility. He is one of the most senior politicians to be detained by the agency, popular among ordinary Indonesians for targeting members of the establishment suspected of abuse of power. Novanto was arrested on Friday night but his detention was postponed while he received treatment for injuries suffered in a car crash the day before.

"Delay of the arrest is no longer needed," as a medical statement showed Novanto did not need further hospital treatment. Laode Muhammad Syarif, the deputy head of the agency, said in a video on its official Periscope page. On Sunday night, Novanto told reporters he was still suffering from vertigo after the crash that he said had injured a leg, an arm and his head. "I thought I would be given time for recovery, but I obey the law," Novanto was quoted by news website Kumparan.com as saying. Novanto will be held for 20 days for questioning, said KPK spokesman Febri Diansyah. He will be detained in a sparsely-furnished holding cell with some mattresses and a shared toilet.

Graft agency officials tried to arrest Novanto, the chairman of Golkar, Indonesia's second-largest party and partner in the ruling coalition, at his house in Jakarta late on Wednesday. But they failed to find him, sparking speculation that he had gone into hiding. Later, Novanto was involved in a car accident and his lawyer, Fredrich Yunadi, said a journalist was driving the vehicle and interviewing his client at the time. The car crash was found to be an accident, media cited Jakarta's deputy director of traffic police as saying, dismissing speculation that the mishap was staged. — Reuters

International

Clamor for justice: Yugoslav court leaves global legacy

UN's Yugoslav tribunal first of its kind since Nuremberg

BELGRADE: When a court on the Dutch North Sea coast issues its final verdict this week, it will signal the end of an experiment that has reverberated around the world, from the killing fields of Rwanda to the CIA's secret cells in Europe. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), set up by the United Nations in 1993, marked the biggest leap in the field of international criminal law since the Allies tried the Nazis in Nuremberg.

Created in answer to the worst war crimes in Europe since World War Two, it set a precedent of accountability that has since put the Khmer Rouge and Liberia's Charles Taylor in the dock and paved the way for a court with global ambition. Almost 25 years later, its legacy is under threat. The International Criminal Court (ICC), opened in 2002, is undermined by renewed West-Russia rivalry, stone-walling and revolt in Africa, barrel bombs in Syria and a boycott by three of five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council.

Supporters of the Yugoslav tribunal say it will remain a beacon inspiring a growing demand for justice and creativeness in delivering it - from ad hoc tribunals in Africa to the conviction in one country of a dictator from another and that of a Syrian in Sweden after a post on Facebook. The glass is either half full or half empty, said Alex Whiting, professor of practice at Harvard Law School. "You can say we haven't come far enough and the new institutions, particularly the ICC, have not repli-

cated the success of the ICTY, but you can just as easily say it's remarkable how far we've come in just 25 years," he said. "The ICTY is the North Star."

'Rulings will write history'

The Yugoslav tribunal owes a debt to history, born as it was between the end of the Cold War and the 9/11 attacks on the United States, when Russia was weak and the West was united in collective action. For decades before, conflicts from Vietnam to

Milosevic, recognized sexual violence as a crime of war and advanced the definition of genocide.

With the UN tribunal for Rwanda, it assembled the hybrid case law used by tribunals in Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Lebanon and ultimately the ICC. Its 2.5 million pages of transcripts offer a forensic and often harrowing account of a state's dissolution that dispels the fog of wartime propaganda. More than 4,500 witnesses took the stand. "I committed myself to speak on behalf of those who did not survive," said Nusreta Sivac, a former judge in Bosnia who testified to her rape by Bosnian Serb captors. "The tribunal rulings will write history."

Detractors say the court was slow, expensive and damaged by a number of high-profile acquittals. Milosevic died in 2006 while still on trial, while some cases were plagued by witness intimidation. The tribunal was supposed to help with reconciliation, but revisionism is rife and convicted war criminals often feted as heroes. Critics argue the indictment of Milosevic, at the height of NATO air strikes against him, only complicated the conflict and encouraged him to cling on, which he did for another 17 months. Similar arguments have been made against the ICC's pursuit of some African leaders.

Insurmountable obstacles

Established by treaty and boycotted by the United States, China and Russia, the ICC has little of the clout of the ICTY. With



Hybrid efforts to meet growing demand for accountability

Algeria, Afghanistan to Sri Lanka escaped major judicial scrutiny. Backed by the arrest-power of Western peacekeepers and the readiness of the European Union to condition integration with Yugoslavia's successor states on their cooperation, the tribunal issued 161 indictments and secured 83 convictions. Tomorrow's verdict in the trial of Bosnian Serb wartime commander Ratko Mladic will be its last, bar appeals. The Yugoslav court was the first to indict a sitting head of state in Serbia's Slobodan



SARAJEVO: Survivor of Srebrenica 1995 massacre, Fatima Gurdic (right), arrives at passport control at Sarajevo International Airport yesterday. Gurdic and several other activists of the movement departed Sarajevo, on their way to The Hague, where they will follow the verdict in the trial of General Ratko Mladic. — AFP

only one Arab member, it has found the bulk of its work in Africa. Alleging bias, Burundi quit the court last month. Kenya and South Africa have threatened to follow. The court's credibility has already been tested by the collapse in 2014 of a case against Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir's eight-year evasion of arrest. Most glaring is its impotence in the face of nearly half a million dead in Syria, its hands tied by Russian and Chinese vetoes in the Security Council, which can refer a case to the court in a

non-member state such as Syria. The ICC denies any bias against Africa and is at various stages of investigation in Georgia, Iraq, Ukraine, Colombia and Palestine, though it can expect to make little progress in investigating conflicts involving Russia or the United States. In a watershed moment, prosecutors this month called for a formal investigation into war crimes in Afghanistan, including the mistreatment of detainees by US forces in the country and at CIA 'dark sites' in Poland, Romania and Lithuania. — Reuters

Mass killer, cult leader Manson dies in jail at 83

LOS ANGELES: Charles Manson, the psychopathic guru who masterminded a savage killing spree in the United States in the late 1960s that shocked the world, has died aged 83, California prison officials said. Manson "died of natural causes at 8:13 pm on Sunday" at a hospital in Kern County, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation said in a brief statement.

Debra Tate—the sister of Manson's most famous victim, Sharon Tate—told celebrity website TMZ that she received a call from prison officials notifying her of Manson's death. Manson was earlier moved from the Corcoran State Prison to a hospital in the city of Bakersfield, in Kern County, to be treated for an unspecified illness, US media reported. In the late 1960s, Manson headed an apocalyptic cult that committed random murders in upscale mostly white neighborhoods of Los Angeles—unleashing a wave of panic in the city and beyond. The aim was for African Americans to be blamed, in the hope of sparking what he believed to be an impending and apocalyptic race war.

His "Family" disciples committed at least nine murders, but it was the horrific killing spree of seven people on August 9-10, 1969 that sealed his notoriety—and earned him life in prison. The famous victim was 26-year-old

movie actress Sharon Tate, the heavily-pregnant wife of director Roman Polanski, who pleaded for the life of her unborn child before she was stabbed to death. Manson was not present, but ordered the killings. One of his followers, Susan Atkins, carried out Tate's murder, after which she tasted the actress's blood and wrote "PIG" with it on the home's front door.

A loner

Manson, who has never shown remorse, was sentenced to death in 1971 along with four of his disciples for having led the killings of seven people. The sentences were later commuted to life in prison when California abolished the death penalty. During his marathon trial, Manson—with a beard, long unwashed hair, and a swastika tattooed on his forehead—was portrayed as a drug-crazed loner with mesmerizing powers of persuasion. Upon his death, he had been in prison in California since 1971, during which he applied for parole 12 times, telling the court on the last occasion in 2012 that he was "a very dangerous man." In each case, he was denied release and was not eligible to apply again until 2027. In a 1981 interview conducted from jail, Manson said he had already spent most of his life in prison and felt at home there.

At home in prison

Manson was born on November 12, 1934 in Cincinnati in the Midwestern US state of Ohio to a 16-year-old mother, and grew up without knowing his father. After he was repeatedly caught stealing, as a 13-year-old teen he was placed in a juvenile correctional facility and remained in detention, shifted between vari-



CALIFORNIA: This file photo shows inmate Charles Manson. Notorious US killer Charles Manson, who led a California cult that killed pregnant Hollywood star Sharon Tate, died yesterday. — AFP

ous facilities, until he was freed on parole in 1954. The following year, Manson married a hospital waitress named Rosalie Jean Willis, but a year later was convicted again, this time for stealing a car. While back in jail he learned that his wife had given birth to a son, but she asked for a divorce and left with the child. Released again in 1958, Manson was married again a year later, to a prostitute who went by the name Candy Stevens and who would remain his wife until 1963. By then, Manson was already back in prison for violating his parole, and would remain there until 1967 when he was released at the height of the hippie era. — AFP

UK queen, husband celebrate 70 years of marriage quietly

LONDON: Queen Elizabeth and husband Prince Philip mark their platinum wedding anniversary with a small family get-together yesterday, a far cry from the pomp and celebration which greeted their marriage 70 years ago. The couple married at London's Westminster Abbey on Nov 20, 1947, just two years after the end of World War Two, in a glittering ceremony which attracted statesmen and royalty from around the world and huge crowds of cheering well-wishers.

Seventy years on, no public events are planned. Elizabeth, now 91, and her 96-year-old husband, who retired from active public life in August, will celebrate the milestone with a private party at Windsor Castle, the monarch's home to the west of London. That contrasts with their silver, golden and diamond wedding anniversaries when they attended thanksgiving services at the thousand-year-old Abbey, where the queen was crowned and where her grandson and his wife, William and Kate, were married in 2011.

However, the Abbey itself will mark the



LONDON: Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip (2nd left) arrive at Westminster Abbey in central London. — AFP

occasion with a full peal of its bells involving 5,070 change of sequences, with the 70 reflecting the anniversary, which will last more than three hours. "Congratulations to The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh as they celebrate their Platinum Wedding anniversary," Prime Minister Theresa May said on Twitter. "They have devoted their

lives to the service of the UK and the Commonwealth - my best wishes to them both on this special occasion." The wedding of Princess Elizabeth, as she then was, to the dashing naval officer Philip Mountbatten was seen as raising the nation's spirits amid an austere background of rationing and shortages that followed the war. — Reuters

What happens after collapse of German coalition talks?

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel's failure to forge a three-way coalition government has plunged Europe's largest economy into uncharted waters, raising pressure on the three-term conservative chancellor to maintain stability. The pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) abruptly pulled out after more than four weeks of negotiations with Merkel's conservative bloc and the ecologist Greens, citing irreconcilable differences. The euro recovered from a two-month low on Monday as investors brushed off the broader political risks.

But Germany now faces a prolonged period of political wrangling and uncertainty. The path to a new election would be difficult and involve more than one vote in parliament. Many fear a new election could further strengthen the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party that surged into parliament in the Sept. 24 election after winning nearly 13 percent of the vote.

AfD leaders have pushed for new elections for weeks as the coalition talks failed to reach agreement.

Current opinion polls predict little change compared to the September vote. A Forsa poll released last week showed conservatives on 32 percent, the Social Democrats on 20 percent, the FDP 12 percent, the Greens 10 percent and the AfD 12 percent. It was not immediately clear what impact the latest development would have on the parties' support. Leaders of the other parties expressed shock about the FDP's move since negotiators had been on the cusp of an agreement. The Greens accused the FDP of a premeditated move to oust Merkel. Here's what could happen next, and possible scenarios for the coming weeks:

The political crisis hands significant power to German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a member of the Social Democrats (SPD) and a former foreign minister under Merkel who assumed the normally ceremonial post in February. Merkel was to meet with Steinmeier yesterday to discuss the most serious political crisis to confront Germany in the post-war era. Steinmeier had already urged negotiators on Saturday to uphold their civic responsibilities and avoid new elections. He is expected to repeat that message in a statement later Monday, according to the RND newspaper chain. — Reuters

FBI report on black 'extremists' raises fears of targeting

WASHINGTON: An FBI report on the rise of black "extremists" is stirring fears of a return to practices used during the civil rights movement, when the bureau spied on activist groups without evidence they had broken any laws. The FBI said it doesn't target specific groups, and the report is one of many its intelligence analysts produce to make law enforcement aware of what they see as emerging trends.

A similar bulletin on white supremacists, for example, came out about the same time. The 12-page report, issued in August, says "black identity extremists" are increasingly targeting law enforcement after police killings of black men, especially since the shooting of Michael Brown roiled Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014. The report describes cases in

which "extremists" had "acted in retaliation for perceived past police brutality incidents." It warned that such violence was likely to continue.

Black leaders and activists were outraged after Foreign Policy revealed the existence of the report last month. The Congressional Black Caucus, in a letter to FBI Director Christopher Wray, said the report "conflates black political activists with dangerous domestic terrorist organizations" and would further erode the frayed relationship between police and minority communities. "I have never met a black extremist. I don't know what the FBI is talking about," said Chris Phillips, a filmmaker in Ferguson.

Before the Trump administration, the report might not have caused such alarm. The FBI noted it issued a similar bulletin warning of retaliatory violence by "black separatist extremists" in March 2016, when the country had a black president, Barack Obama, and black attorney general, Loretta Lynch. But black voters overwhelmingly opposed Donald Trump. And they are suspicious of his administration, which has been criticized as insensitive to racial issues, including when Trump was slow to condemn white nationalist protesters following a deadly rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. — AP

International

Suu Kyi blames world conflicts partly on 'illegal immigration'

Illegal immigration 'spreads terrorism, violent extremism'

NAYPYITAW: Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi said yesterday that the world is facing instability and conflict in part because illegal immigration spreads terrorism, as her country faces accusations of violently pushing out hundreds of thousands of unwanted Rohingya Muslims. Suu Kyi did not directly mention the refugee exodus in a speech to European and Asian foreign ministers in Myanmar's capital, Naypyitaw. But her speech highlighted the views of many in the country who see the Rohingya as illegal immigrants and accuse them of terrorist acts.

The ongoing Rohingya exodus is sure to be raised by the visitors at the meetings today. Suu Kyi said the world is in a new period of instability as conflicts around the world give rise to new threats and emergencies, citing "Illegal immigration's spread of terrorism and violent extremism, social disharmony and even the threat of nuclear war. Conflicts take away peace from societies, leaving behind underdevelopment and poverty, pushing peoples and even countries away from one another."

Myanmar has been widely criticized for the military crackdown that has driven more than 620,000 Rohingya to flee Rakhine state into neighboring Bangladesh. The United Nations has said the crackdown appears to be a campaign of "ethnic cleansing," and some have called for re-imposing international sanctions that were lifted as Myanmar transitioned from military rule to

lected government.

Foreign ministers and representatives of 51 countries are meeting in Naypyitaw in a forum that aims to further political and economic cooperation but takes place against the backdrop of the ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis. A flurry of diplomatic activity preceded yesterday's opening, with the foreign ministers of Germany and Sweden joining the EU's foreign policy chief in a visit to the teeming refugee camps in Bangladesh. China's Wang Yi was also in

speech to the visiting foreign ministers. Suu Kyi also cited natural disasters caused by climate change as compounding the world's problems.

She said mutual understanding of problems like terrorism would be crucial for peace and economic development. "I believe that if policymakers develop a true understanding on each of those constraints and difficulties, the process of addressing global problems will become easier and more effective," she said. "It is only through mutual understanding that strong bonds of partnership can be forged." The European Union's top diplomat said earlier yesterday that she is encouraging Suu Kyi to implement the recommendations of an expert panel on ensuring stability in Rakhine state and work was still needed on that.

The commission, led by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, called for promoting investment and community-directed growth to alleviate poverty in Rakhine, which Myanmar officials have supported. But it also called for Myanmar to grant citizenship and ensure other rights to the Rohingya, which are hotly disputed and effectively render most of them stateless. The commission, established last year at Suu Kyi's behest, issued its report the day before a Rohingya insurgent group killed dozens in attacks on multiple police posts on Aug 25. The military's response has been called disproportionate and a textbook example of



Myanmar military crackdown sparks Rohingya exodus

Bangladesh and met privately with Suu Kyi on Sunday in Myanmar following that trip.

Suu Kyi is Myanmar's foreign minister and state counselor, a title created for the country's once-leading voice for democracy since she is constitutionally banned from the presidency. She does not command the military and cannot direct its operations in northern Rakhine state, but her remarks in seeming support of the brutal crackdown have damaged her global reputation. In her



UKHIA, Bangladesh: Rohingya refugee men carry sewer rings at Balukhali refugee camp in Ukhiya district of Bangladesh yesterday. An estimated 618,000 Muslim Rohingya have fled mainly Buddhist Myanmar since a military crackdown was launched in Rakhine in August triggered an exodus, straining resources in the impoverished country. —AFP

ethnic cleansing.

Rohingya now in Bangladesh have described indiscriminate shootings, rapes and arsons that wiped out whole villages. Some survivors bear wounds from gunshots and land mines. "Stopping the violence, stopping the flow of refugees and (guar-

anteeing) full humanitarian access to Rakhine state and safe, sustainable repatriation of the refugees is going to be needed," said Federica Mogherini, the high representative for EU foreign policy. She said the EU was encouraging Bangladesh and Myanmar to work on that issue. — AP

Singapore rolls out tough measures to keep cars off roads

SINGAPORE: In the battle against the car, space-starved Singapore has deployed road tolls, massive spending on public transport, and a license fee that bumps the cost of an average vehicle to over \$80,000. But urban planners looking for solutions to gridlock may find the draconian measures hard to replicate in other less-compliant cities. Singapore has gone further than any other major city to avoid the monster jams that have blighted Asian metropolises such as Jakarta or Manila.

The tough approach has been possible as Singaporeans are used to strict control-with media closely monitored and harsh punishments for minor crimes and are fearful the city-state will be flooded with vehicles without the curbs. However the model faces mounting criticism thanks to rush-hour jams that have frustrated commuters, surging vehicle prices after a freeze on car numbers, and public transport breakdowns. "I think the system can be made better and fairer," Joel Lee, a 28-year-old technician said. He said authorities should make "a dis-

inction between those who need cars, be it for work or family commitments, and those who just want more cars as a status symbol".

Six times the price

Authorities' main tool is the certificate of entitlement, or COE. Every potential car buyer must bid for a certificate and the cost is added to the vehicle price. The current cost of a COE for an average family car is almost Sg\$50,000, pushing the price of a Toyota Corolla to Sg\$114,000 (US\$83,000). But COEs fluctuate depending on demand and at their high point four years ago the same car was Sg\$159,000 (US\$127,000 at the exchange rate at the time) six times the price in the US.

The certificates are valid for 10 years, after which the car must be scrapped or the certificate renewed. Despite the high price, many in the financial centre, home to hordes of wealthy expats and millionaires, have bought cars, with some 600,000 on the streets—a considerable number for a limited road network. Other key measures include controlling the number of vehicles on the road and charging tolls on main roads at busy times. Authorities last month decided to freeze the number of private cars on the road from February for at least two years, citing land scarcity. But the decision sparked anger and was followed by a jump in the price of COEs by several thousand dollars, in what the Straits Times newspaper described as "panic buying".

To mitigate its tough policies, Singapore has built a modern public



SINGAPORE: Motorists entering the central business district in Singapore. — AFP

transport network with a subway, overland trains and buses, and the government recently announced a plan to spend Sg\$28 billion to upgrade the system. Ride-hailing apps Grab and Uber have helped those unable or unwilling to spend on a car, and the government plans to build 700 kilometers of cycle paths. But the subway has recently been hit by repeated delays and breakdowns during rush hour. In the most serious incident for years a tunnel on the network flooded last month, crippling a main line for 20 hours, and sparking widespread anger.

'Car-lite' woes

Some are now questioning the government's plan to make Singapore a

country where most people walk, cycle or take public transport. "The government has been trying to make the city 'car-lite' but you have a train system that's not very reliable," Jason Lin, a 66-year-old retiree said. "If you take a bus, because there are so many cars, it'll take a long time. It can be very frustrating." Speaking in parliament this month, Lam Pin Min, a senior minister of state for transport, insisted there significant growth in the transport network was planned and there would be "less need to own a car". Singapore has not heavily promoted electric cars as it pushes public transport-unlike rival financial hub Hong Kong-but an electric-car sharing scheme starting next month is a first step to changing that. — AFP

Rahul Gandhi to take over from his mother as party leader

NEW DELHI: India's opposition Congress party will hold leadership elections next month, an official said yesterday, amid growing speculation Rahul Gandhi will take over from his mother as its leader. Rahul, whose father, grandmother and great-grandfather all served as prime minister, was the centre-left party's front man in the last general election. But his 70-year-old mother Sonia remains its president and still calls the shots. She has not publicly announced a decision to stand down as Congress president, but party official Mullanappally Ramachandran said after a meeting of senior leaders yesterday that an election would be held next month.

The announcement followed months of speculation that the 47-year-old scion of the Gandhi dynasty would soon take over from his mother. Party sources said

he would likely stand unopposed for the role. Rahul Gandhi was elected vice-president of the Congress party in 2013 and has long been his mother's presumed successor. He was strongly criticized for a lackluster campaign for the 2014 general election, in which Congress recorded its worst ever showing and lost power to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party.

But few inside the party, which has since suffered a series of state election defeats, have been willing to publicly criticize the family that has been at its helm for generations. Rasheed Kidwai, a political journalist and author of a book on Sonia Gandhi, said Rahul's promotion was now a "foregone conclusion", warning he would be under huge pressure to turn the party's fortunes around. "In the party's history, no Gandhi has failed to win elections and get results," Kidwai told AFP. "Rahul is yet to pass that test." Kidwai said Rahul was more "temperamental and impulsive" than his Italian-born mother, widow of the assassinated former premier Rajiv Gandhi, and would be taking over at a challenging time for the party.

Sonia Gandhi wielded huge influence over Congress administrations despite having no official government role. But the state of her health has been the subject of much speculation in India since 2011, when she went to the United States



NEW DELHI: Indian National Congress party President Sonia Gandhi (right) and Vice-President Rahul Gandhi (left) look on during the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting at the Congress party headquarters in New Delhi. — AFP

for surgery. Rahul has long had the reputation of a reluctant leader who lacks the charisma to revive the flagging political dynasty. Some Congress supporters have called for his sister Priyanka to take a more prominent role, but she has always refused.

Party supporters however said Rahul had displayed greater political acumen in recent years. "Earlier, he was too young and didn't have a lot of experience, so he used to make mistakes sometimes. But now he has become more sea-

soned," veteran party leader Virbhadr Singh told AFP ahead of the announcement. Congress has ruled India for most of the period since independence in 1947 and has almost always been led by the Nehru-Gandhi clan, beginning with the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Yesterday the party set a December 4 deadline for nominations for president and said any vote would be held on December 16. It held its last leadership election in 2010, when Sonia Gandhi stood unopposed. — AFP

News in brief

Japan 'Twitter killer'

TOKYO: Japan's "Twitter killer", who is suspected of murdering and dismembering nine people he met on social media, was charged with his first count of homicide yesterday. Takahiro Shiraishi, 27, is believed to have lured his mostly female victims aged between 15 and 26 - to his apartment near Tokyo, where he killed them and cut up their bodies. He has admitted murdering all nine, and was Monday charged with the homicide of Aiko Tamura, 23. Shiraishi, who allegedly stashed bits of bodies in coolers around his small apartment, is believed to have made contact with suicidal victims on Twitter and offered to help them die. After Tamura went missing in October, her brother managed to hack into her Twitter account and noticed a suspicious handle, according to local media.

Nigerian poll peaceful

AWKA: A gubernatorial poll in Nigeria's Anambra state passed off largely without incident, despite fears of violence after pro-Biafran separatists called for a boycott. The incumbent governor, Willie Obiano, of the All Progressives Grand Alliance, was announced the victor on Sunday, scoring a widely-expected win. But attention was focused on turnout because of the call by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) group for people to stay at home. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) representative in the state, Nkwachukwu Orji said: "Saturday's election was smooth and peaceful. The turn-out of voters was not bad in view of the prevailing circumstances. The turnout was about 22 percent of eligible voters."

Bus accident kills 14

BOGOTA: At least 14 people were killed and 35 injured when the bus they were traveling in plunged down a ravine in rural northwestern Colombia, officials said Sunday. The bus skidded off the road when the driver swerved in an attempt to avoid hitting a motorcycle rider, Sabanalarga Mayor Cesar Cuadros told reporters. The Sabanalarga hospital could not cope with the sudden influx of victims, most of whom were local farmers, so many of the survivors were rushed to nearby towns for treatment. "We are going through a cold period and it has rained heavily," Cuadros said.

Philippine chief justice warns

MANILA: The Philippines' Supreme Court chief justice warned yesterday that an attempt by allies of President Rodrigo Duterte to impeach her could threaten the country's democracy. Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno gave the warning as legislators in the House of Representatives prepared to begin impeachment hearings against her following a threat by Duterte that Sereno would be forced out. Sereno has been one of the few voices willing to criticize Duterte for allegedly disregarding due process and attacking other branches of government as part of his brutal anti-crime campaign. Duterte in turn vowed last month to impeach Sereno for alleged corruption. His allies in Congress will begin hearings on the impeachment complaint this week. "This is getting to be larger than myself. This is no longer just about me. It is about democracy," Sereno told broadcaster ABS-CBN in a live interview.



Residents watch as a downhill rider competes during the Urban Bike Inder Medellin race final at the Comuna 1 shantytown in Medellin in Colombia on Sunday. —AFP

Israeli minister reveals covert...

Continued from Page 1

In an interview on Army Radio, Steinitz, a member of Netanyahu's security cabinet, did not characterize the contacts or give details when asked why Israel was "hiding its ties" with Saudi Arabia. He replied: "We have ties that are indeed partly covert with many Muslim and Arab countries, and usually (we are) the party that is not ashamed. It's the other side that is interested in keeping the ties quiet. With us, usually, there is no problem, but we respect the other side's wish, when ties are developing, whether it's with Saudi Arabia or with other Arab

countries or other Muslim countries, and there is much more ... (but) we keep it secret."

In an interview with Reuters on Thursday, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir, asked about reports of cooperation with Israel, cited a Saudi peace initiative, first adopted in 2002 by the Arab League, as key to forging any relationship. "We have always said that if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is resolved on the basis of the Arab peace initiative that Israel would have enjoyed normal relations, economic, political, diplomatic relations with all of the Arab countries, and so until that happens, we don't have relations with Israel," he said. That plan makes those relations contingent on a full withdrawal by Israel from territory it captured in the 1967 Middle East war, including East Jerusalem. Netanyahu has expressed tentative support for parts of the initiative, but there are many caveats on the Israeli side.

Hussein Ibish, senior resident scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, said Steinitz's remarks "won't surprise anyone who's been paying attention to the budding courtship between Israel and Saudi Arabia, which is being especially pushed by the Israeli side". Last week, the Israeli military chief, Lieutenant General Gadi Eizenkot, told an Arabic language online newspaper that Israel was ready to share "intelligence information" with Saudi Arabia, saying their countries had a common interest in standing up to Iran.

Saudi Arabia has ratcheted up pressure on Iran, accusing Tehran of trying to expand its influence in Arab countries, often through proxies including the Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah group. Ibish said that given the mutual threat perceptions shared by Israel and Gulf Arab countries, it is unlikely that covert ties aren't developing. But he said Israeli officials have tended to exaggerate such

interactions in a bid to "drive down the price they may have to pay, especially on Palestinian issues, to expand strategic relations and ties with Arab countries".

In public remarks in September, Netanyahu pointed to covert relationships with Arab states, saying, without mentioning any by name, that cooperation exists "in various ways and different levels". Also in September, Israel Radio reported that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had secretly met officials in Israel that month, drawing an official denial from Riyadh. Last month, Saudi former intelligence chief Prince Turki bin Faisal shared a stage with ex-Israeli Mossad spy agency director Efraim Halevy at a debate on Iran in a New York synagogue. In 2016, former Saudi general Anwar Eshki visited Israel, where he met Israeli legislators, to promote - as he has at various academic forums - the Saudi peace initiative. — Reuters

As Germany sinks into crisis, president...

Continued from Page 1

and that his party "looks forward to potential new elections" in which it hopes to make further gains.

The negotiating parties also differed on environmental issues, with the Greens wanting to phase out coal-fired power plants and combustion-engine cars, while the conservatives and FDP emphasized the need to protect industry and jobs. Quitting the lengthy talks around midnight, Lindner declared that "it is better not to govern than to govern badly". He added that the parties simply did not share "a common vision on modernizing" Germany.

The Greens angrily deplored the failure to form a government, saying they had believed a deal could be done despite the differences and accusing the FDP of negotiating in bad faith. Lindner, who had taken a harder line on refugees as the talks progressed, "opted for his kind of populist agitation instead of political responsibility", Reinhard Buetikofer, a Greens MEP, said on Twitter.

Sternly reminding politicians of their duty to voters, Steinmeier said: "Building a government has always been a difficult process of give and take, but the mandate to form a government is... perhaps the highest mandate giv-

en by voters to a party in a democracy. And this mandate remains." "This is the moment where all participants need to reconsider their attitude," he added.

Steinmeier said he would now hold talks with leaders of parties involved in the coalition talks. But crucially, he also told the Social Democratic Party (SPD) to make itself available for coalition talks. After suffering a humiliating loss at the ballot box, the SPD's leaders have repeatedly said that they will not renew an alliance with Merkel and that the party's place is now in the opposition.

Minutes before Steinmeier's statement, SPD chairman Martin Schulz had reiterated that his party was "not available to form a new grand coalition" with Merkel's conservative bloc. Merkel, who has been in power for 12 years, could also lead a minority government, though she had signalled that she is not in favor of such instability. If parties will not be moved to forming a viable alliance, Steinmeier could call new elections.

But that is not without peril for Merkel, who would face questions from within her party on whether she is still the best candidate to carry its banner into a new campaign. Voters in central Berlin expressed shock about the sudden injection of high drama into the often staid world of German politics. Sarah Untheim, 23, said she feared the "very chaotic" outcome could help the AfD mobilize more supporters. But law student Alexander Streb, 20, said he believed the upheaval did not spell "the end of the Merkel era". "She stands for stability, that's also why young people like her," he said. — AFP

Mugabe, facing impeachment, calls...

Continued from Page 1

"Your time is up," veterans association leader Chris Mutsvangwa said at a press conference. He suggested that the military was still beholden to Mugabe and compelled to protect him because he is officially their "commander in chief". The war veterans' association will go to court to argue that Mugabe is "derelict of his executive duty," Mutsvangwa said.

Mugabe was stripped of his party leadership on Sunday by the ruling party's Central Committee but said in his speech he would preside over a party congress next month. That congress is expected to ratify his firing as party chief, the expulsion of the unpopular first lady and the naming of Mugabe's recently fired deputy, Emmerson Mnangagwa, to succeed him.

The firing of Mnangagwa and the positioning of first lady Grace Mugabe to succeed her husband as president led the military to step in last week. Mugabe has discussed his possible exit on two occasions with military commanders. The military has said it was making progress against "criminals" close to the first lady who had been accused of harming the country's economy.

But yesterday, a Cabinet minister close to Grace Mugabe who went silent after the military moved in last week reappeared on Twitter, saying he was "rela-

tively fine outside the country". Minister of higher education Moyo had been said to be detained along with a number of other ministers. But Moyo, the most outspoken of the first lady's allies, tweeted that he was outside Zimbabwe with "at least 50 others" who include lawmakers and ruling party officials.

Amid the political chaos, some people in the capital, Harare, have become more cautious about talking to reporters. That contrasted with the jubilation and open condemnation of Mugabe over the weekend, when the bulk of Harare's population of roughly 1.6 million appeared to be in the streets, dancing and taking selfies with soldiers in an event backed by the military.

At the University of Zimbabwe, students protested and refused to sit for exams, demanding that Mugabe step down. The spokesman for the Zimbabwe National Students Union, Zivai Mhetu, said they want all universities shut down until he does. The once-formidable Mugabe is now virtually powerless, largely confined to his private home by the military.

Yet he sought to project authority in his speech Sunday night, which he delivered after shaking hands with security force commanders. The army commander himself leaned over a couple of times to help the president find his place on the page he was reading. "I, as the president of Zimbabwe, as their commander in chief, do acknowledge the issues they have drawn my attention to, and do believe that these were raised in the spirit of honesty and out of deep and patriotic concern for the stability of our nation and for the welfare of our people," Mugabe said. — AP

Kuwait Times

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Sports



'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon' puts Kuwait on the international sporting map

6,000 attendees from more than 130 countries



The start of Gulf Bank 642 Marathon.



Social media influencers with Gulf Bank team at the marathon.

KUWAIT: The 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon' was an unprecedented success with 6,000 attendees and more than 130 nationalities represented in Kuwait's most exciting walk/run event. The event kicked off at 7:30 am on Nov 18, and Souq Sharq was buzzing with anticipation and energy. Enthusiasm for the event was high and three distance categories (5km, 10km, and 21km) were sold out before the day.

Ms Laila Al-Qatami, Assistant General Manager for Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank said: "The atmosphere at this year's edition of the 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon' was exhilarating and the event was a tremendous achievement. This is a very dear initiative for us, as it demonstrates both our commitment to social responsibility and our commitment to our beloved country, Kuwait. It is also a reflection of Gulf Bank's strong support for Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, when we met the Pro-Vision team in 2015, we saw Kuwaitis with a vision and determination to hold successful sporting events. We strongly believe that we've created, through our partnership with them and in cooperation with our partners and supporters, an event that our entire country can be proud of, and puts Kuwait on the international sporting map."

Commenting on the support received from Kuwaiti government ministries and authorities, as well as from the sponsors, Ms Al-Qatami noted: "The strong support we received from the Kuwait government for this event is part of what made this world-class event flow so smoothly, we extend our sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Interior, the Public Authority for Sport, the Kuwaiti Municipality, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center, and the Ministry of Information for their backing. We also thank our platinum sponsors Zain and Chevrolet Alghanim, along with other many other sponsors. The companies and non-profit organizations who had space in our village area, brought even more life to the 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon.' We also strongly thank all the enthusiastic participants who came out early as early as 6:30am to take part in the big day. It was also fantastic to see so many companies who had teams participating in the day, it is inspiring to see so many people leading an active lifestyle. Congratulations to all the winners!"

Ahmed Al Huzaimi, CEO of Pro-Vision Sport Management said: "When we partnered with Gulf Bank, we set a vision to develop an event that would put Kuwait on the international sporting map. We believe we have certainly done that and have created something that exceeds our

growing expectations, we know that the 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon' is truly unique. This is the only road race in Kuwait to have three of its longer distance categories accredited by the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS), meaning they serve as qualifying events for major international marathons. Due to high demand, the three distance categories (5K, 10K, and 21K) were sold out days before the event, with many marathon runners from overseas joining the race."

With regard to route path, Al-Huzaimi added: "One of the things that sets this event apart from all others, is that participants are able to tour the landmarks of Kuwait. The race path began at Souq Sharq and moved on the Arabian Gulf Road, where participants passed by Al Seif Palace, the Grand Mosque; Boursa Kuwait; the Gulf Bank head office; and Souq Al Mubarakiya where the vendors are always upbeat and add so much excitement of the event. Then, depending on the distance category in participants chose (5km, 10km, 21km, or 42km) they continued to tour Kuwait's landmarks such as Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center; the National Assembly; the Ministry of Oil, and even the Kuwait Towers."

For the second consecutive year the 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon' partnered with the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees), also known as the UN Refugee Agency, and its campaign, #Voices4Refugees. UNHCR launched the #Voices4Refugees campaign in 2015, which is an electronic initiative inviting you to register your names in a global petition claiming the right of every refugee to live in safety and dignity regardless of religion, nationality or race, and to equal treatment in terms of protection, assistance and resettlement opportunities. The campaign also seeks to gather your signatures and express your moral solidarity with these refugees through the campaign's marathon website <https://voices.unhcr.org/en/gulfbank> as this solidarity shows them that the world is aware of their suffering and supports them in facing these challenges. By adding your voice to the #Voices4Refugees campaign, you will be calling for immediate and practical steps that can improve humanitarian access and the delivery of aid to those in need.

The day also had some special surprises in the village area. Popular radio station 88.8 FM Kuwait Pulse and their hosts were broadcasting live at the event. The leading social media influencers also made special appearances during the event. But the biggest surprise was the attendance of



Gulf Bank team at the marathon.



Kuwait's soccer legends.

Kuwait's soccer legends at this sporting event. We thank Saad Al Hooti; Fathi Kameel; Jasim Yacoub; and Salah Al Hasawi for coming out for the day and inspiring everyone.

Gulf Bank also had the village area buzzing with their always fun, 'Catch the Cash' game. This game is exclusive to Gulf Bank and the crowd was eager for their chance in the money box. Teams of two persons, who correctly answered questions posed the MC, were able to get in the box and catch as much cash as they could within the time limit. There

were more than 20 booths in the village which added fun to the event. Gulf Bank and Pro-Vision Sports Management would like to thank the Kuwait government and governmental agencies whose contributions were crucial to a successful event day. A special thanks to the Ministry of Interior and Kuwait Police whose support and efforts were crucial to making race day safe and secure for all those who took part. Our appreciation is also extended to Souq Sharq who have been hosts of this ever growing event. Thank you Kuwait!



42KM winners - females

Sports

Kohli hits 50th century as Sri Lanka cling on for draw

Paceman Bhuvneshwar Kumar takes four wickets

SCOREBOARD	
KOLKATA: Scoreboard at stumps on the fifth and final day of the opening Test between India and Sri Lanka in Kolkata yesterday:	
India 1st innings 172 (C. Pujara 52, W. Saha 29; Lakmal 4-26)	
Sri Lanka 1st innings 294 (R. Herath 67, A. Mathews 52; B. Kumar 4-88, M. Shami 4-100)	
India 2nd innings (overnight 171-1; L. Rahul 73, C. Pujara 2)	
L. Rahul b Lakmal	79
S. Dhawan c Dickwella b Shanaka	94
C. Pujara c Perera b Lakmal	22
V. Kohli not out	104
A. Rahane lbw b Lakmal	0
R. Jadeja c Thirimanne b Perera	9
R. Ashwin b Shanaka	7
W. Sahac Samarawickrama b Shanaka	5
B. Kumar c Perera b Gamage	8
M. Shami not out	12
Extras (b7, lb1, nb1, w3)	12
Total (8 wickets dec, 88.4 overs)	352
Fall of wickets: 1-166 (Dhawan), 2-192 (Rahul), 3-213 (Pujara), 4-213 (Rahane), 5-249 (Jadeja), 6-269 (Ashwin), 7-281 (Saha), 8-321 (Kumar)	
Did not bat: U. Yadav	
Bowling: Lakmal 24.4-4-93-3 (wl), Gamage 23-2-97-1 (nb1), Shanaka 22-1-76-3 (w2), Perera 13-2-49-1, Herath 6-1-29-0.	
Sri Lanka 2nd innings (target 231)	
S. Samarawickrama b Kumar	0
D. Karunaratne b Shami	1
L. Thirimanne c Rahane b Kumar	7
A. Mathews lbw b Yadav	12
D. Chandimal b Shami	20
N. Dickwella lbw b Kumar	27
D. Shanaka not out	6
D. Perera b Kumar	0
R. Herath not out	0
Extras (lb1, nb1)	2
Total (for 7 wks, 26.3 overs)	75
Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Samarawickrama), 2-2 (Thirimanne), 3-14 (Thirimanne), 4-22 (Mathews), 5-69 (Chandimal), 6-69 (Dickwella), 7-75 (Perera)	
Did not bat: S. Lakmal, L. Gamage	
Bowling: Kumar 11-8-8-4, Shami 9.3-4-34-2 (nb1), Yadav 5-0-25-1, Jadeja 1-0-7-0.	
Result: Draw	
Series: Three-match series level 0-0	

KOLKATA: Skipper Virat Kohli scored his 50th international century yesterday as India gave Sri Lanka a major scare before the first Test ended in a nerve-racking draw. Sri Lanka were reduced to 75-7 — with paceman Bhuvneshwar Kumar taking four wickets—as they chased 231 for victory. Under intense pressure, Dasun Shanaka (six not out) and Rangana Herath (0) nervously played out the final few deliveries before bad light at Kolkata's Eden Gardens came to the rescue.

Kohli's 119-ball 104 not out had put India on top and allowed them to declare their second innings on 352-8. The captain hit 12 fours and two sixes as he flayed the bowling. "Feels good," Kohli said of his 18th Test century, to add to his 32 one-day centuries for India.

"My journey hasn't been long but I want to continue contributing, especially in situations like these," the 29-year-old captain said. "If I can step up and perform,

“My journey hasn't been that long”

that will give me more pleasure than thinking about the number of hundreds I have. The mindset is always to go forward and help the team forward, and win Test matches." Kumar struck in the very first over when Sadeera Samarawickrama chopped a delivery onto his stumps and was out for 0. Mohammed Shami then had left-hander Lahiru Thirimanne bowled for one as the visitors slipped to 2-2 in 3.3 overs. Umesh Yadav, India's third seamer, joined in by trapping former Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews lbw for 12.

The match became even more tense when Shami bowled current skipper Dinesh Chandimal for 20 and Kumar, who returned impressive match figures of 8-96, trapped Niroshan Dickwella lbw for 27.

PRaise for Kumar

"He's grabbing his chances and is a massive contender to start every Test match for India. He'll do us good in overseas conditions and not just in home con-



KOLKATA: India's Mohammed Shami celebrate the wicket Sri Lankan captain Dinesh Chandimal during the final day of the first Test between India and Sri Lanka at the Eden Gardens cricket stadium in Kolkata. — AFP

ditions," Kohli said of India's man of the match. "He's going to be an important part of our plan going forward in all formats."

The hosts had resumed the day on 171-1 after Lokesh Rahul (79) and Shikhar Dhawan (94) staged a 166-run opening stand that saw India overcome a 122-run first innings deficit. Sri Lanka's fast bowlers Suranga Lakmal and Shanaka took three wickets each to rattle the Indian top and middle-order.

But Kohli displayed his class in taming the attack towards the end of the innings. He let out a roar and pumped his fist after getting to 100 with a six off Lakmal, who ended with match figures of 7-119.

India's Cheteshwar Pujara, who fell to Lakmal in the morning session, joined an elite list to have batted on all

five days of a Test. Pujara, who top-scored with 52 in India's first innings 172, put on his batting pads on each day of the game, which was marred by bad weather. Only 32.5 overs were possible on the first two days before the weather cleared for the final three.

Sri Lanka's premier spin bowler Herath also made an impact this time with the bat-hitting 67 in Sri Lanka's first innings of 294. "I'm really happy that Rangana scored the runs but unfortunately spinners didn't come into play. We'll have to learn to bat in the second innings," said Chandimal.

"Lakmal is unbelievable, especially over the last one or two years. He's one who you can trust as a captain," he said of his pace spearhead. The second of the three Tests start in Nagpur on Friday. — AFP

Teravainen scores twice as Hurricanes beat Islanders

RALEIGH: Teuvo Teravainen continued his offensive surge by scoring two goals as the Carolina Hurricanes defeated the New York Islanders 4-2 on Sunday. Teravainen, who also posted an assist, has five goals in the last two home games combined. Overall, he has 10 points in four games, and linemate Sebastian Aho has nine points in the same span. Aho had a goal and two assists on Sunday, and Elias Lindholm also scored for the Hurricanes. Aho has scored in four consecutive games. Justin Faulk also posted two assists for the Hurricanes. Nick Leddy notched a goal and an assist, and John Tavares also scored for New York, which had its three-game winning streak end.

Avalanche 4, Red Wings 3 (overtime)

Nathan MacKinnon scored 2:55 into overtime, lifting Colorado to a come-from-behind win over Detroit. MacKinnon joined Erik Johnson with a goal and an assist, and Nail Yakupov and Carl Soderberg also scored for Colorado, which trailed 3-1 in third period. Tyson Barrie had two assists, and Jonathan Bernier stopped 21 shots. Justin Abdelkader, Andreas Athanasiou and Niklas Kronwall scored for Detroit. Red Wings goalie Jimmy Howard made 33 saves.

Rangers 3, Senators 0

Henrik Lundqvist turned aside 20 shots as New York ended a two-game slide by defeating Ottawa. Kevin Hayes, Michael Grabner and Mika Zibanejad had the goals for the Rangers, who had to kill off a five-minute penalty midway through the third period to preserve the win. Craig Anderson stopped 24 shots for the Senators, who dropped their third game in a row.

Ducks 3, Panthers 2

Brandon Montour scored the decisive goal and John Gibson posted 50 saves as Anaheim defeated Florida. The Ducks scored two power-play goals to record their second consecutive victory. They had lost their prior three meetings with the Panthers, including an 8-3 drubbing in Florida last month. Josh Manson and Rickard Rakell added goals for Anaheim. The Panthers dropped their second game in a row despite outshooting their opponents in both games. Vincent Trocheck and Keith Yandle each had a goal and an assist for the Panthers, who scored one power play goal on six chances. Aleksander Barkov assisted on both Florida goals.

Golden Knights 4, Kings 2

William Karlsson scored two first-period goals, and Maxime Lagace made 27 saves to lead Vegas past Los Angeles. Cody Eakin had a goal and an assist. Alex Tuch added an empty-net goal and Reilly Smith notched two assists for the Golden Knights, who improved to 8-1-0 at home. Trevor Lewis and Tanner Pearson each scored a goal for Los Angeles, which lost for the sixth time in seven games. Kings goalie Jonathan Quick was pulled after surrendering three goals on nine shots at the 11:22 mark of the first period. It was the fifth straight game that Quick has lost in net. — Reuters



beIN MEDIA GROUP acquires rights to broadcast England & Wales Cricket Board content

DOHA: The best of English cricket will soon be broadcast across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) following a deal signed today by the England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and broadcaster beIN MEDIA GROUP.

Under the six-year deal, beIN MEDIA GROUP will screen premium cricket clashes including India's 2018 and 2022 tours to England, as well as the Ashes series in the UK in 2019. beIN MEDIA GROUP last week announced an exclusive deal to broadcast Cricket Australia content in the MENA region, starting with the 2017-18 Ashes on 23 November.

Adding to the international matches, the ECB deal means beIN MEDIA GROUP will screen selected matches from ECB's domestic programme including action from the T20 Blast, Royal London One-Day Cup and the Specsavers County Championship - as well as ECB's new eight-team T20 competition from 2020.

Alongside the agreement, beIN MEDIA GROUP has announced plans to introduce a dedicated beIN SPORTS cricket channel in the MENA region in 2018. The channel will screen the broadcaster's portfolio of premium international and domestic cricket, including ECB and Cricket Australia content, as well as original programming, documentaries and magazine shows.

Today's agreement with the ECB will cover the home

international programme for both England's men's and women's teams across all three formats of the game. All ECB games will be available in HD via subscription channels and online. Cricket fans in MENA can also look forward to watching selected games in Ultra HD over the coming years with the recent launch of beIN MEDIA GROUP's 4K channel.

beIN MEDIA GROUP will broadcast cricket in more than 24 countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and Morocco.

Today's deal expands beIN MEDIA GROUP's premium cricket offering and follows a number of rights renewals over the past six months, including the exclusive rights to broadcast the UEFA Champions League and Europa League in the MENA region for a further three years.

Commenting on the announcement, Yousef Al-Obaidly, Deputy CEO, beIN MEDIA GROUP, said: "Today's announcement strengthens beIN MEDIA GROUP's sports portfolio, bringing more of the world's best cricket to fans across the Middle East and North Africa."

"We are thrilled to partner with the ECB at such an exciting time for English cricket, building on a similar agreement signed this month with Cricket Australia. Together, these acquisitions and the upcoming launch of our dedicated cricket channel will deliver high quality, in-depth cricket coverage to the rapidly growing audience in the MENA region."

"These agreements are the latest in our ambitious plans to deliver more sports coverage across the region and further enhance our position as the undisputed first choice sports and entertainment broadcaster."

Tom Harrison, CEO of the England and Wales Cricket Board, said: "We're very pleased to welcome beIN MEDIA GROUP to our broader family of broadcast partners and excited by their plans to create their own dedicated cricket channel for the first time. Our international and domestic teams are attracting an ever-expanding global audience and this new partnership will give even more cricket fans worldwide an opportunity to follow all the action and excitement from our game."

Aussies turning up heat ahead of Ashes series versus England

BRISBANE: David Warner isn't the only Australian player talking about hatred when it comes to the Ashes. Nathan Lyon, one of two other remaining members of the Australia squad which swept England 5-0 in the last Ashes series Down Under, backed his vice-captain on Monday when asked if hatred would be a factor in the series.

"Yeah, 100 percent. It's Ashes cricket, mate," the veteran spinner said. "It's England vs Australia. There's going to be banter. There's going to be heated moments ... and so there should be. "It's Ashes cricket. I'm all for it. There's a line. We'll head-butt the line but we won't go over it."

The Australians aren't keeping their game plan a secret heading into the series, which starts on Thursday at the Gabba in Brisbane: A barrage of pace bowling from Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins, tipped to be in the same vein as Mitchell Johnson's intimidating bursts in the 2013-14 series, accompanied by a barrage of banter.

Vice-captain Warner drew criticism from Britain last month when he spoke openly about his feelings for England when the countries are meeting for the oldest prize in test cricket. Warner said he developed a "hatred" of the England team to motivate himself.

Lyon, who is coming off his best tours to India and Bangladesh and is an automatic choice in the team - even at the Gabba, where headlines in past years have predicted an all-pace attack - didn't shy away from picking up the thread.

Retired wicketkeeper Brad Haddin, now fielding coach, has been urging the likes of Warner, Lyon and skipper Steve Smith to share their Ashes memories with the players in the team who haven't experienced success against England. They've been watching replays of the Johnson spells that intimidated some of England's batsmen as he took 37 wickets in the series.

"Different players will get themselves up to challenging and competing," Lyon said. "I've played enough test match cricket to know what I need to do to make certain I'm firing at 100 percent. Davey Warner is the same, Steve Smith is the same. No doubt, whoever it is, there's going to be banter there ... It's going to be heated. It's going to be a great contest."

England regained the Ashes at home in 2015 and has had three tour matches against inexperienced opposition in Perth, Adelaide and Townsville - in north Queensland state - to prepare. — AP

Sports

Stephen Curry has 39 points, 11 rebounds as Warriors beat Nets

Lonzo Ball's triple-double sends Lakers past Denver

NBA results/standings

L.A. Lakers 127, Denver 109; Phoenix 113, Chicago 105; Detroit 100, Minnesota 97; Golden State 118, Brooklyn 111; Indiana 120, Miami 95; Toronto 100, Washington 91.

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	15	2	.882	-
Toronto	11	5	.688	3.5
NY Knicks	8	7	.533	6
Philadelphia	8	7	.533	6
Brooklyn	6	10	.375	8.5

Central Division

Detroit	11	5	.688	-
Cleveland	9	7	.563	2
Milwaukee	8	7	.533	2.5
Indiana	9	8	.529	2.5
Chicago	3	11	.214	7

Southeast Division

Washington	9	7	.563	-
Orlando	8	8	.500	1
Miami	7	9	.438	2
Charlotte	6	9	.400	2.5
Atlanta	3	13	.188	6

Western Conference

Northwest Division

Minnesota	10	6	.625	-
Portland	9	7	.563	1
Denver	9	7	.563	1
Oklahoma City	7	8	.467	2.5
Utah	7	10	.412	3.5

Pacific Division

Golden State	13	4	.765	-
L.A. Lakers	7	10	.412	6
Phoenix	7	11	.389	6.5
L.A. Clippers	5	10	.333	7
Sacramento	4	12	.250	8.5

Southwest Division

Houston	13	4	.765	-
San Antonio	10	6	.625	2.5
New Orleans	8	8	.500	4.5
Memphis	7	8	.467	5
Dallas	3	14	.176	10

NEW YORK: Stephen Curry totaled 39 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists before fouling out as the Golden State Warriors held on for a 118-111 victory over the Brooklyn Nets on Sunday night. The defending NBA champions took the lead in the first quarter and survived a lull in the fourth quarter. Less than 24 hours after rallying from a 24-point deficit in Philadelphia, the Warriors did not experience any similar problems in the first half Sunday. Golden State led for most of the final 42:08, held a 22-point lead at halftime and a 28-point edge early in the third before the Nets got close. Curry shot 14 of 24 from the floor and hit four 3-pointers, guiding the offense in the absence of Kevin Durant,



Wizards John Wall has a swollen left knee

who sat out due to a sprained left ankle. Allen Crabbe scored 25 points and Spencer Dinwiddie added 21 for the Nets.

LAKERS 127, NUGGETS 109

Lonzo Ball recorded the second triple-double of his rookie season, and Los Angeles rolled to a victory over Denver. Ball finished with 11 points, 11 assists and 16 rebounds, though he hit just 5 of 13 shots from the floor. Julius Randle scored a season-high 24 points and Brook Lopez added 21 for the Lakers. Gary Harris led the Nuggets with 20 points, while Wilson Chandler scored 17. Each team had seven players produce at least 10 points apiece.

RAPTORS 100, WIZARDS 91

DeMar DeRozan scored 33 points, grabbed eight rebounds and added six assists as Toronto defeated Washington. The Raptors had a three-point lead entering the fourth quarter and built it to nine. When the Wizards moved to within five, Raptors reserve guard Fred VanVleet made a 3-pointer with 1:15 to play. The Wizards were playing without guard John Wall, who has a swollen left knee. Bradley Beal paced Washington with 27 points.



NEW YORK: Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors steals a pass in the second half against the Brooklyn Nets during their game at Barclays Center. —AFP

PACERS 120, HEAT 95

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 26 points and Myles Turner added 25 as Indiana ended its six-game losing streak at AmericanAirlines Arena with a win over Miami. Indiana shot 60 percent from the floor for its easiest win of the season. Turner, who made 11 of 14 shots from the field, added seven rebounds, four assists and three blocks. Indiana also got 15 points from shooting guard Victor Oladipo, who leads the Pacers in scoring on the season.

PISTONS 100, TIMBERWOLVES 97

Detroit rallied in the fourth quarter and then held on to beat Minnesota. Andre Drummond had 20 points and 16 rebounds to lead Detroit, while Avery Bradley and Tobias Harris each added 18 points. The Pistons bounced back after dropping back-to-back games for

the first time this season. The Timberwolves saw their three-game winning streak end. Jimmy Butler had a team-high 26 points and 10 rebounds for Minnesota. Andrew Wiggins added 24 points, and Karl-Anthony Towns chipped in 16 points and nine rebounds for the Timberwolves.

SUNS 113, BULLS 105

TJ Warren scored nine of his 27 points in the fourth quarter, and the Phoenix bench contributed 50 points in the Suns' win over Chicago. Devin Booker had 15 points and reserves Mike James and Troy Daniels combined for 29 as the Suns won their second straight and beat the Bulls for the third time in the past four tries. Rookie Lauri Markkanen had career-high 26 points and added 13 rebounds for Chicago, which missed a chance to win back-to-back games for the first time this season. — Reuters

Bulgarians hail Dimitrov after London triumph

SOFIA: Grigor Dimitrov has been hailed as the new lord of tennis by his home fans and media after the Bulgarian won the biggest title of his career when he captured the season-ending ATP Finals in London on Sunday.

The 26-year-old made headlines across the Balkan country after overcoming some early nerves to beat fellow debutant David Goffin 7-5 4-6 6-3 in an epic final with millions of his countrymen glued to their television screens.

The thrilling two-and-a-half-hour contest was always guaranteed a huge audience in Dimitrov's homeland, the match shown live on three Bulgarian TV channels, including state broadcaster BNT1, and streamed on several local websites.

"Dimitrov brought tears of happiness thousands of Bulgarians at the O2 Arena and millions in front of TV screens," sports website www.tennis24.bg wrote.

Dimitrov's unbeaten run in London earned him a cool \$2.5 million, with the 1,500 ranking points catapulting him to an impressive third place on the end-of-year rankings—behind only tennis greats

Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer.

The three Maleeva sisters, Manuela, Katerina and Magdalena, who took turns to feature in the world's top six in the 1980s and 1990s, made the women's game successful in Bulgaria. However, Orlin Stanoytchev was the highest-ranked Bulgarian male player after reaching world number 96 in 2000 before Dimitrov's emergence on the tennis scene a decade ago.

Dimitrov, who received raucous support from flag-waving Bulgarian fans during his matches in London, has become hugely popular in the Black Sea country of 7.1-million in recent years and is seen as an inspiration for future generations.

"Grigor is a successful role model," national tennis centre manager Georgi Donchev said. "In the last two or three years, there has been a boom in the number of children taking up tennis."

Soccer is the most popular sport in Bulgaria and the national team's run to the 1994 World Cup semi-finals remains the most inspirational sporting event in the country's history, triggering a euphoria that few believe will ever be repeated.

Bulgaria have slipped into decline since that impressive showing in the United States, failing to qualify for a string of major tournaments, and a number of local supporters have subsequently turned their attention to other sports. — Reuters

Patrick crashes in final NASCAR race as full-time driver

HOMESTEAD: Danica Patrick climbed out of her burning, smoke-filled, wrecked race car and trudged toward pit road. She pulled off her gloves and helmet in frustration before being taken to the infield care center.

It was a much earlier exit than Patrick wanted in her final NASCAR race as a full-time driver. "There's still racing in my future," she said. "I still have a thousand miles to go." Indeed, the "Danica Double" awaits.

But the thought of future endeavors did little to improve another disappointing day. Patrick finished 37th in her final race with Stewart-Haas Racing. She bowed her head outside the care center before answering questions about her season finale and her future. "It just seemed like every time things were going better, something would happen - my fault or sometimes not my fault," she said. "This was just another case of that. It was fun for a little while there at the end. It was absolute misery for the first stint."

Patrick started the weekend by announcing she plans to retire from full-time racing, holding an emotional news conference that began with a tearful goodbye.

The season finale prompted more of the same. "It was a little bit emotional, but I've been working through levels of that," she said. "I was just kind of looking forward to getting in the car finally, actually."

She will be back behind the wheel in



HOMESTEAD: Landon Cassill, driver of the #34 Love's Travel Stops/Roller Bites Ford, and Danica Patrick, driver of the #10 Aspen Dental Ford, ride in the pre-race introduction prior to the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Championship Ford EcoBoost 400 at Homestead. — AFP

February for the Daytona 500, the final race of her NASCAR career. She also will return to IndyCar next May and drive in the Indianapolis 500 for the first time in seven years. Asked if there's a silver lining in being able to return for the Daytona 500, Patrick paused several seconds before mustering an answer. "Yeah, sure," she finally said. "Let's hope I don't end up in the medical center."

The 35-year-old Patrick is the only woman to lead laps in both the Daytona 500 and the Indianapolis 500. She ran the Indy 500 from 2005 through 2011. Her highest finish was third in 2009, and she was the first woman to lead laps there when she paced the field for 19 trips around the Brickyard as a rookie.

Patrick was highly marketable early in her

career even though wins were rare. She won the pole for the Daytona 500 in 2013, but finished 24th in the standings the last two seasons. She won her only IndyCar race in 2008, in Japan. Patrick never scored a top-five finish in NASCAR and had only seven top 10s in 189 career starts.

Patrick has not revealed which team she will drive for in 2018, but surely a package deal with the same owner and same sponsor for the biggest races in motorsports would make her again racing's most marketable driver. "I have a higher chance of crashing at Daytona than I do here, so I don't know if I feel like, 'Well, that's my shot,'" she said. "I have one left and then another one after, which is the Indianapolis 500." — AP



LONDON: David Goffin of Belgium holds his runners up trophy after being defeated by Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria in their ATP World Tour Finals singles final tennis match at the O2 Arena in London. — AP

Boks confident of Etzebeth fitness

PADUA: Springbok captain Eben Etzebeth should be fit for this weekend's third and penultimate Tour match against Italy in Padua, the South African medical team said yesterday. The 26-year-old was forced off just five minutes into Saturday's 18-17 win over France in Paris after a blow to his lower leg, but x-rays revealed no problems. "We expect it just to be a soft tissue injury and will manage it accordingly. He has a

good chance to play on Saturday," said team doctor Konrad von Hagen. Hooker Malcolm Marx will have tests in Padua on Monday after injuring his shoulder during the game in Paris, with forward Pieter-Steph du Toit recovering well from concussion. "It's great to have Pieter-Steph back because he was excellent for us prior to the concussion," said Springbok head coach Allister Coetzee. Coetzee is under pressure after Ireland recorded their biggest win over South Africa, a 38-3 hammering at Lansdowne Road in their opening Test. Coetzee also suffered a shock 20-18 defeat in Florence in the 2016 autumn internationals—the first time South Africa were beaten by Italy. "The whole idea for us this week is to play with our strongest possible team so that we can build more momentum and continuity," said Coetzee. — AFP



Eben Etzebeth

Sports

West Brom fires Tony Pulis with team in relegation danger

Fifth manager to lose job in Premier League this season

WEST BROMWICH: Struggling Premier League team West Bromwich Albion fired manager Tony Pulis yesterday despite his reputation as a virtual guarantee against relegation. The move seemed inevitable after West Brom's 4-0 loss at home to Chelsea on Saturday, which dropped the team to within a point and a place of the relegation zone. It left West Brom with just two wins in its last 21 league games stretching back to last season.

"We are in a results business," West Brom chairman John Williams said, "and over the back end of last season and this season to date, ours have been very disappointing."

Assistant coach Gary Megson will take temporary charge of the team, whose next match is against Tottenham on Saturday. Pulis, who was in charge for nearly three years, has never been relegated in 25 years and more than 1,000 league games in soccer management.

Only 12 of 38 rounds have been played in the Premier League, so there was still plenty of time for Pulis to turn things around. Yet there was no sign of West Brom's form improving and the club's fans had

lost patience with Pulis and his pragmatic style of football. A disgruntled section of the support has called for his departure in recent games. West Brom came under new ownership last year, with Chinese businessman Guochuan Lai becoming the majority shareholder. Lai was at the game against Chelsea.

The club from central England had a net spend of about 30 million pounds (\$40 million) last summer and enriched the squad with some trumpeted arrivals like Poland midfielder Grzegorz Krychowiak from Paris Saint-Germain, left back Kieran Gibbs from Arsenal, and winger Oliver Burke from Leipzig.

Pulis had better players and a deeper squad at his disposal, but failed to get the most out of them. He clearly missed Darren Fletcher, the club captain who surprisingly left in the offseason to join Stoke. Dovetail that with continued criticism of his approach - direct, risk-averse - and it was no surprise there were calls for change.

West Brom has scored just nine goals in 12 games this season. Pulis is the fifth manager to lose his job in the Premier League this season. — AP



LONDON: In this file photo dated Monday, Dec. 26, 2016, West Brom's manager Tony Pulis gestures during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and West Bromwich Albion at Emirates stadium in London. — AP

“We are in a results business”

Benzema the fall guy as Real Madrid flounder

MADRID: In a recurring theme of Real Madrid's stuttering season, Zinedine Zidane protested all his side lacked was a goal as they fell 10 points behind La Liga leaders Barcelona after firing more blanks in a bad-tempered Madrid derby. Yet, in attempting to defend a lacklustre performance from Saturday's stalemate at Atletico Madrid, Zidane turned the spotlight once more on the misfiring Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema.

Ronaldo's run of one goal in eight La Liga games has attracted more attention because it is so out of character for a man who has plundered 414 goals in 408 games as Madrid's all-time top scorer.

The World Player of the Year has also bagged six goals in four Champions League games to compensate for a slow La Liga start. Benzema, by contrast, has just two goals in nearly 1,000 minutes on the field this season in all competitions and patience with the Frenchman is wearing thin. Madrid-based sports daily Marca described the repeated presence of Spanish wonderkid Marco Asensio on the bench for Real's biggest games as "incomprehensible", after Asensio posed more of a threat for the final 15 minutes than Benzema had for 75 before being hooked at the Wanda Metropolitan.

Marca's rival publication AS described Benzema as a "ghost striker" for his lack of end product. Former England great Gary Lineker has even provoked a fierce reaction from both Zidane and Benzema in recent weeks for labelling the latter "overrated".

Benzema's eight-year stint at the Santiago Bernabeu has been filled with highs and lows. Jose Mourinho complained of his meek nature claiming he wanted a "hunter" whilst describing Benzema as a "cal" when Real boss, and Benzema has often found himself whistled by the demanding Bernabeu crowd for his lack of killer instinct.

REAL BACKING

However, in a huge show of support, Benzema, 29, was handed a bumper new four-year contract in September. Madrid also bet big on Benzema by cashing in on Alvaro Morata when Chelsea offered £60 million (\$81 million, 68 million euros) in July and failed to replace the Spanish international. Morata scored more goals than Benzema last season despite playing fewer minutes and his sensational start to his Chelsea career has left even Ronaldo question-



MADRID: Atletico Madrid's Spanish midfielder Koke (bottom) vies with Real Madrid's French forward Karim Benzema during the Spanish league football match Atletico Madrid vs Real Madrid at the Wanda Metropolitan stadium in Madrid. — AFP

ing Madrid's transfer policy. The Portuguese admitted Real lacked the same experience in a depleted squad this season after a first defeat in the Champions League group stages for five years at Tottenham Hotspur in their last European outing.

Yet it is Ronaldo's presence that has played a huge role in preserving Benzema's status as Madrid's number nine with the latter seen as the perfect unselfish foil for Ronaldo. "He is more egotistical than me, but that is normal," Benzema told Canal+ France last week on his relationship with Ronaldo. "I score goals but there is someone alongside me who scores 50 goals a season."

Zidane has been a fierce defender of Benzema's role as a team player not just a goalscorer. "Karim won't score 60 goals a season, but he will score 25 or 30 and make 30-

40," he said in response to Lineker's criticism.

However, having saved their money as rampant inflation swept through the transfer market in the summer, time is running out for Benzema to prove his worth with Real well-placed to splash out on a new Galactico at the end of the season. Harry Kane, Robert Lewandowski and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang have all been linked with a move to the Bernabeu. The one competition where Benzema does have a formidable record is in the Champions League.

Only Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Raul and Ruud van Nistelrooy have scored more than his 51 goals in the competition proper. A return to form to secure Real's place in the knockout phase for a 21st consecutive season when they travel to Cypriot champions APOEL Nicosia today is needed to quieten the critics once more. — AFP

score at least two goals to keep their hopes alive. The Italian side lost 2-1 in Ukraine in the reverse fixture, so need to level their head-to-head record with Shakhtar to take the group to a final matchday. Pep Guardiola's Manchester City will wrap up top spot in the group with a home win over pointless Feyenoord, or with a draw if Shakhtar lose in Naples.

Group G Besiktas v Porto Monaco v RB Leipzig

Turkish champions Besiktas are on the cusp of the last 16 and will secure top spot with a draw. If Leipzig fail to beat Monaco, then they will finish in the top two regardless. Two-time champions Porto will book their ticket to the knockout stage with a victory in Istanbul if Leipzig do not win in the principality. Last season's semi-finalists Monaco have to win and hope Porto do not to have any chance of replicating their feats from last term.

After their famous 3-1 win over the holders at Wembley last time out, Spurs just have to match Real's result on Tuesday to secure first place. Zinedine Zidane's Spanish champions will qualify with a win over Cypriots APOEL, and with a point if struggling Dortmund fail to see off Tottenham. A pair of draws against the Germans have kept APOEL's slim chances alive, but they will be out if they do not pull off a shock win over Real.

Playing Wednesday

Group A CSKA Moscow v Benfica (1700 GMT) Basel v Manchester United

Manchester United require just a point away to Basel to

qualify and secure top spot as Jose Mourinho's team close in on a first appearance in the knockout phase since 2013-14. Paul Pogba's return from injury at the weekend inspired United to a 4-1 rout of Newcastle, just their second win in five league outings, while Zlatan Ibrahimovic also made his comeback following a serious knee injury. Basel could also qualify with victory over United if CSKA Moscow lose at home to Benfica, who must win to retain any outside chance of advancing.

Group B Paris Saint-Germain v Celtic Anderlecht v Bayern Munich

Paris Saint-Germain and Bayern Munich are already guaranteed of their spots in the last 16, with Celtic and Anderlecht scrapping to continue their continental adventure in the Europa League. Unai Emery's PSG have scored 17 goals without conceding to record four straight group-stage wins, while Edinson Cavani scored twice more as they pulled six points clear in France following a 4-1 defeat of Nantes. Bayern have been rejuvenated by the appointment of 72-year-old Jupp Heynckes, winning all eight matches since he replaced Carlo Ancelotti.

Group C Qarabag v Chelsea (1700 GMT) Atletico Madrid v Roma

Roma can seal their place in the next round with a point at Atletico Madrid, while Chelsea will progress with victory over Qarabag-or if Atletico fail to win in Spain. Diego Simeone's side-finalists twice in the past four seasons-have drawn four of their matches so far and appear heading to a premature exit. Buoyed by their 2-1 derby win over local rivals Lazio, Roma can wrap up first place with victory if Chelsea are denied all three points in Azerbaijan.—AFP

Real, Barca eye progress as Atletico fear exit

PARIS: Holders Real Madrid, Barcelona and Manchester United headline a selection of teams who can secure a place in the last 16 of the Champions League this week. Liverpool, Chelsea and Juventus are also within reach of a spot in the knockout phase, but Atletico Madrid appear destined for an early exit, with Serie A high-flyers Napoli also in deep trouble.

AFP Sport looks at who can qualify from each group going into the fifth round of matches:

Playing today Group E Spartak Moscow v Maribor Sevilla v Liverpool

The winner of Liverpool's match at Sevilla will qualify. The two sides played out an entertaining 2-2 draw at Anfield on the opening matchday, and another point for five-time European champions Liverpool would still see them book a last-16 spot for the first time since 2008/09 if Spartak lose at home to Maribor. Russian champions Spartak cannot be eliminated on Tuesday and would secure at least third place with a draw. Slovenian outfit Maribor have to win and hope Sevilla lose to Liverpool to stay in knockout round contention.

Group F Manchester City v Feyenoord Napoli v Shakhtar Donetsk

Serie A leaders Napoli host Shakhtar needing to win and

Focused Coutinho heals Liverpool rifts

LONDON: Philippe Coutinho's long-term future might lie away from Liverpool, but the Brazil star's ability to focus on the present has helped heal the wounds from his flirtation with Barcelona. When Jurgen Klopp's side travel to Sevilla for a crucial Champions League clash today, they will rely on Coutinho to lead their bid to get the win that would book their place in the last 16.

For Coutinho to be at the centre of Liverpool's season is a testament to the peace-making skills of Klopp and the forward's refusal to let his failed attempt to force a move to Barcelona make him public enemy number one on Merseyside.

Just two months ago, Coutinho's relationship with his club and their fans was badly frayed after he handed in a transfer request while Barca tried to convince Liverpool to sell their prize asset with bids rising to over £100 million (\$132 million).

Liverpool's American owners were adamant Coutinho wasn't for sale at that late stage of the transfer window, prompting mutterings from the 25-year-old's camp that he was angry with the decision.

Klopp cleverly kept both his employers and the player happy toeing the company line without criticising Coutinho. When he finally returned to action after an injury-hit start to the season, Coutinho repaid his manager for his diplomacy.

On a red-hot streak of late, Coutinho bagged his fifth goal of the season in Liverpool's 3-0 win over Southampton on Saturday. It was Coutinho's fifth strike in his last seven appearances, but the Brazil forward's value to Liverpool is measured in more than just goals. When Coutinho first arrived at Anfield following his £8.5 million move from Inter Milan in 2013, he believed he was in danger of being pigeon-holed as solely a playmaker.

Quickly adjusting to the unique demands of the frenetic Premier League, Coutinho realised it was important to work on the defensive side of his game. He also focused on developing a more nuanced understanding of how to thrive in a team structure rather than playing on instinct alone.

"I have grown immensely since I've been here," Coutinho told Goal.com recently. "I have become stronger here in every way. Every year, I've felt like I've taken more on and become better, more complete and mentally prepared, not only with football but life in general."

"I have never wanted to settle because I know that improvement is something that doesn't stop. "There are always new things you can pick up and many ways to develop. I'm happy with how much I've grown, but I'm not finished yet. "When I arrived, I had only been seen or thought of as a playmaker.—AFP

Matches on TV (Local Timings)	
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE	
Besiktas v Porto	20:00
beIN SPORTS HD 5	
Spartak Moscow v Maribor	20:00
beIN SPORTS HD 4	
Manchester City v Feyenoord Rotterdam	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Napoli v Shakhtar Donetsk	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 4	
Apoel Nicosia v Real Madrid	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
Borussia Dortmund v Tottenham Hotspur	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 5	
Monaco v Leipzig	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 6	
Sevilla v Liverpool	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 3	

12 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon' puts Kuwait on the international sporting map



14 Bulgarians hail Dimitrov after London triumph



15 West Brom fires Tony Pulis with team in relegation danger



MEXICO CITY: New England Patriots' Dion Lewis (C) is tackled by Oakland Raiders' Bruce Irvin (L) and Nicholas Morrow (R) during the 2016 NFL week 11 regular season football game against Oakland Raiders. — AFP

Patriots dominate Raiders in Mexico

WASHINGTON: Tom Brady threw for 339 yards and three touchdowns and Stephen Gostkowski kicked four field goals, including a franchise-record 62-yarder, in New England's blowout of Oakland in Mexico City. Brady, 30 of 37 passing, notched his sixth 300-yard game this season and 82nd of his career. Coach Bill Belichick broke a tie with Tom Landry and moved into sole possession of third place on the NFL's all-time coaching wins list. The Patriots have won a team-record 13 straight road games, 12 of them led by Brady, the second-longest quarterback streak in NFL history.

SAINTS 34 REDSKINS 31 (OT)
Wil Lutz kicked a 28-yard field in overtime, climaxing a furious fourth-quarter rally that lifted New Orleans to its eighth consecutive victory. The Saints (8-2) trailed Washington 31-16 when Kirk Cousins completed a seven-yard touchdown pass to tight end Jeremy Sprinkle with 5:58 to play. But Drew Brees led back-to-back touchdown drives of 75 and 83 yards, throwing three yards to tight end Josh Hill and 18 yards to rookie running back Alvin Kamara to draw the Saints within 31-29 with 1:05 left. Kamara converted the tying two-point conversion by taking a pitch around left end. The Redskins (4-6) moved to a first down at the New Orleans 34 — within range of a potential game-winning field goal-but Cousins was

flagged for intentional grounding on first down, moving Washington out of field-goal range.

EAGLES 37, COWBOYS 9

The Philadelphia offense clicked in the second half, and the Eagles motored past the Dallas Cowboys 37-9 for their eighth consecutive win. Carson Wentz threw a pair of touchdown passes as Philadelphia scored on its first three possessions of the second half. He finished with 168 yards on 14-of-27 passing. The Eagles (9-1) held Dallas (5-5) to 225 yards of offense. Philadelphia's defense also came up with the exclamation point on the win when defensive end Derek Barnett sacked Dallas quarterback Dak Prescott and forced a fumble. Eagles linebacker Nigel Bradham scooped the ball and returned it 37 yards for a touchdown.

RAVENS 23, PACKERS 0
Baltimore's defense bent, but never got close to

breaking in shutting out Green Bay. It was the first time the Packers were held scoreless since 2006, when they were blanked by the Bears and Patriots in head coach

Mike McCarthy's first season. The Ravens (5-5) forced three consecutive turnovers at the start of the game and got a pair of fourth-down stops and two more turnovers in the second half. Packers quarterback Brett Hundley, starting his fourth game in place of Aaron Rodgers, was intercepted three times and fumbled once as Green Bay fell to 5-5.

VIKINGS 24, RAMS 7

Latavius Murray ran for 95 yards and two touchdowns and Minnesota's defense held down Los Angeles' top-scoring offense. Case Keenum was 27-of-38 passing for 280 yards and a touchdown, and Adam Thielen added six catches for 123 yards and a 65-yard touchdown reception for Minnesota (8-2). Running back Todd Gurley had five carries for 20 yards and a touchdown for Los Angeles (7-3) on the first possession of the game, but

was held to 17 yards on 10 carries the rest of the way.

GIANTS 12, CHIEFS 9 (OT)

Aldrick Rosas delivered the game-winning 23-yard field goal to give New York the overtime victory over Kansas City (6-4). The Giants (2-8) snapped a three-game losing streak in their first home win of the season. New York's winning drive was set up by a 36-yard reception by receiver Roger Lewis, who drew a pass interference penalty on Chiefs cornerback Phillip Gaines.

BENGALS 20, BRONCOS 17

Andy Dalton passed for three touchdowns and Cincinnati (4-6) won in Denver for the first time in 42 years. Dalton completed 15 of 25 passes for 154 yards, including scoring passes to A.J. Green, Alex Erickson and Tyler Kroft. Denver (3-7) lost its sixth consecutive game.

CHARGERS 54, BILLS 24

Los Angeles quarterback Philip Rivers threw two touchdown passes to Keenan Allen and Buffalo rookie Nathan Peterman tossed five first-half interceptions in his NFL debut. The Chargers (4-6) snapped a two-game slide as Rivers started his 186th consecutive regular-season game, the NFL's second-longest active streak behind Eli Manning (209). — Reuters

Former Wimbledon champion Jana Novotna dies aged 49

PRAGUE: Emotional tributes poured in for former Wimbledon champion Jana Novotna after she died at the age of 49 following a long battle with cancer. Novotna, who won the Wimbledon title in 1998 when she defeated France's Nathalie Tauziat in the final, died on Sunday in her native Czech Republic surrounded by her family, a WTA statement said.

She played in two other Wimbledon singles finals, losing to Steffi Graf in 1993 and to Martina Hingis in 1997. The picture of a distraught Novotna being comforted by the Duchess of Kent after losing the 1993 final when she had led 4-1 in the final set is one of the memorable

Wimbledon moments.

Novotna also won four Wimbledon doubles titles with compatriot Helena Sukova in 1989 and 1990, with Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario in 1995 and with Hingis in 1998. Wearing her distinctive headband, she won doubles titles at all four Grand Slam tournaments.

Czech-born American great Martina Navratilova led a number of players—both past and present—expressing deep sorrow at Novotna's death. "The tennis world is so sad about the passing of Jana Novotna...I am gutted and beyond words—Jana was a true friend and an amazing woman..." Navratilova tweeted.

Former US player and now tennis commentator Pam Shriver—who along with Zina Garrison beat Novotna and Sukova to Olympic doubles gold in 1988 — remembered her rival fondly. "Jana was as kind as she was athletic, as smart as she was competitive. I can't believe she is gone this soon. Her smile lives forever young," Shriver tweeted.

Lucie Safarova, the 2015 French Open finalist, also paid an emotional tribute to her fallen compatriot. "Still shocked about this terrible

news...you will be always remembered as our legend amazing athlete and a great person!" Safarova wrote on her Instagram page alongside a picture of Novotna clutching the Wimbledon trophy.

Steve Simon, chief executive of the WTA, said: "Jana was an inspiration both on and off court to anyone who had the opportunity to know her. Her star will always shine brightly in the history of the WTA. Our condolences and our thoughts are with Jana's family."

Born on October 2, 1968, Novotna won a total of 24 singles tournaments and 76 doubles tournaments in her career that spanned from 1987 to 1999. She reached a high of world number two and became the oldest first-time Grand Slam singles champion at 29 years and nine months—a record since eclipsed by Francesca Schiavone and Flavia Pennetta.

Novotna also won the Fed Cup with the former Czechoslovakia in 1988, as well as two Olympic doubles silver medals, and a bronze in singles at the 1996 Games in Atlanta. She was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 2005. — AFP



VILLANOVA: In this Nov. 17, 1996 file photo, Jana Novotna, of the Czech Republic, is all smiles after taking home a \$79,000 check from the Advanta Tennis Championship in Villanova, Pa. — AP

Business

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2017

18 Kuwait credit growth remains steady at 3.1% in September**21** Kuwait tourism delegation visits Russian city of Sochi**22** Flydubai showcases its first Boeing 737 MAX 8 in Dubai

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel (right) meeting with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier in Bellevue Palace in Berlin, after the pre-talks on forming a new government failed the night before. —AP

German investors remain calm amid crisis

Booming Germany can weather political impasse: Analysts

LONDON: German bond yields steadied near 1-1/2 week lows yesterday after talks to form a coalition government failed. Yields struggled to push much lower as investors brushed off initial concerns about rising political risk in Europe's biggest economy.

Both the euro and European shares recovered from early selling as confidence about the outlook for the eurozone economy helped investors brush off worries about the risk of new elections in Germany. That in turn limited demand for safe-haven bonds - an early rally in German debt ran out of steam as the session wore on.

"The reaction in markets has not been dramatic," said Antoine Bouvet, rates strategist at Mizuho. "At the end of the day, it's not that easy to call for another election in Germany and there is still the potential outcome for a minority government."

Germany's robust economy can weather the immediate fallout from Chancellor Angela Merkel's failed coalition talks, experts said yesterday, but warned that a lengthy political paralysis could delay much-needed reforms and jeopardize future growth. The collapse of attempts by Merkel's conservatives, the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) and the left-leaning Greens to form a new government has plunged Europe's powerhouse into turmoil, raising the prospect of snap polls.

But the markets kept their cool, with Europe's blue-chip indices largely unmoved by the drama in the normally staid world of German politics. Germany's DAX index was up 0.1 percent by 1250 GMT, while the euro slipped by 0.1 percent against the greenback to \$1.1785.

The breakdown of coalition talks was "not that surprising", said the head of the DIW economic think tank Marcel Fratzscher, given the rifts between the parties on key issues such as migration, climate and eurozone reforms. But there is no denying that the setback, which leaves Merkel fighting for her political life, is "a disappointment for the German economy", said Eric

Schweitzer, president of the DIHK chambers of industry and commerce. "There's a danger that work on important issues for the future of our country will now be delayed for a long time," he said.

'Future at risk'

The German economy has been enjoying a stellar growth streak, powered by brisk domestic and foreign demand, record-low unemployment and low interest rates.

The government last month sharply lifted its growth forecast for 2017 from 1.5 to 2.0 percent, with recent business and consumer confidence surveys adding to a picture of an economy in glowing health.

But economists have long warned that the momentum can only continue if the government takes the necessary steps to modernize a country with a rapidly ageing population and creaking infrastructure.

"The collapsed talks will probably have no impact in the short run," said economist Carsten Brzeski of ING Diba bank, pointing to Belgium and the Netherlands as examples of caretaker governments not doing "any harm".

"However, given the lack of structural reforms and the urgent need for investments in digitalization and education, German politics should not waste too much time if they don't want to put the economy's future at risk," he warned.

His comments echo those of Germany's "wise men" council of economic advisors who this month urged the next government to take urgent action to future-proof the economy, notably by reducing the tax burden and cutting red tape.

Late on Sunday, the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) unexpectedly pulled out after more than four weeks of negotiations with German Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative bloc and the ecologist Greens, citing irreconcilable differences. Germany now faces

two possible options unprecedented in the post-World War Two era: Merkel forms a minority government, or the president calls a new election if no government is formed.

"The collapse of the talks was a surprise and there is little clarity on how things will unfold from here," said Rainer Guntermann, rates strategist at Commerzbank.

Merkel said yesterday she would stay on as acting chancellor and consult President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on how to proceed. Steinmeier said all parties have a responsibility to try and form a government in the near future. The yield on Germany's benchmark 10-year government bond, perceived as one of the safest assets in the world, initially dipped around 1.5 basis points to around 0.35 percent, its lowest level since Nov. 9.

But it then pulled back to 0.36 percent as the euro and stock markets recovered. Other euro zone bonds yields were also flat to a slightly lower on the day. The euro recovered from a two-month low against the yen hit in Asian trade, with investors brushing off the broader political risks in Germany.

Germany's blue-chip stock index meanwhile reversed early falls, pushing into positive territory in line with regional peers. Merkel was damaged by the Sept. 24 election in which people upset over her decision in 2015 to open German borders to more than a million asylum seekers punished her conservatives by voting for the far-right Alternative for Germany party. —Agencies



Prolonged crisis could hit reforms

tax burden and cutting red tape.

S&P affirms Saudi Arabia's credit ratings

RIYADH: S&P Global Ratings yesterday affirmed Saudi Arabia's credit ratings, saying the kingdom's sweeping reforms could make it attractive to investors in the medium term despite underlying risks. The agency maintained its "A-/A-2" ratings on Saudi Arabia and said its outlook was stable, citing expectations the government would take steps to consolidate public finances in the next two years.

"Recent shifts in Saudi Arabia's political power structures and societal norms, alongside various regional stresses, could increase the risk of policy mistakes that could result in increased domestic and geopolitical tensions," S&P said. "However, we also consider that these structural reforms could empower Saudi citizens and make Saudi Arabia more attractive to investors over the medium term, as the authorities intend." Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman last year

unveiled his Vision 2030 program of economic and social reforms for a post-oil era and has recently announced a host of multi-billion-dollar mega projects, including a futuristic megacity with robots and driverless cars.

But this month's wide-ranging crackdown on dozens of elites, ostensibly to tackle corruption, coupled with increased tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, have provoked concern among investors. Analysts have warned the uncertainty could intensify capital flight or derail reforms at a time when the kingdom is seeking to attract badly needed investments to offset a protracted oil slump.

Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil supplier, has posted more than \$200 billion in budget deficits in the past three years and has withdrawn heavily from its reserves. Following the energy slump, the kingdom undertook reforms and fiscal measures to cut public spending and boost non-oil revenues. The kingdom has also introduced a series of price hikes, imposing fees on expats and preparing to introduce value-added tax in the new year. —AFP

UK listens to bankers' Brexit worries

LONDON: A few hours before Theresa May lost her second cabinet member in a week, the British prime minister found time amidst the crisis to meet one of the world's most powerful bankers.

With May renowned for keeping finance chiefs at arm's length, some commercial rivals suspected special treatment in her willingness to sit down with Jamie Dimon, chief executive of US investment bank JPMorgan. Others, however, sense a subtle but significant change in the political climate with May listening more to the worries of an industry struggling to fathom out Britain's departure from the European Union. Her talks with Dimon on Nov. 8 raised eyebrows - and some hackles - around the City of London financial centre.

"It's a bit outrageous," said a senior executive at one of Britain's top banks. "What other bank CEO is getting as much one-on-one face time with the prime minister? We certainly aren't."

From Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s to David Cameron last year, British prime ministers have traditionally held the door open for

leaders of a finance industry that pays more than 70 billion pounds (\$92 billion) in UK tax every year and employs more than a million Britons. Not so May, who has appeared reluctant to meet bank executives. Still, Dimon secured the face-to-face talks between the abrupt departures of her defense and international development ministers which rocked the minority government. Shortly before last year's Brexit referendum, Dimon warned that 4,000 out of JPMorgan's 16,000 British jobs might have to move abroad to ensure the bank could continue selling services across the remaining nations of the EU.

Dimon has since softened his tone, but the British bank executive asked whether the original estimate had won JPMorgan the access. "I don't know if it's because they've threatened to move the most jobs - maybe we should say we're moving 4,000 too," he said.

But something is afoot. Reuters has spoken to more than a dozen executives at large banks and government officials, with many saying May is showing greater willingness to press the City's cause in Brexit negotiations. In return, the bankers are scaling back their plans to move jobs to rival financial centers such as Frankfurt, Paris and Dublin, at least during any transitional period after Britain leaves the EU in March 2019.

Better clarity

Britain and the EU have yet to begin discussing financial services at the Brexit talks,

worrying bankers who fear the government has left it too late to negotiate a transition period or secure a good deal.

"Our view is that the government frankly is in chaos," said another senior executive at a US bank. "We are really nervous." However, May outlined to Dimon her vision for a transition period after Brexit day - March 29, 2019 - and a future trade deal with the EU, easing concerns that Britain may crash out of the world's biggest trading bloc without any agreement.

A JPMorgan spokeswoman expressed cautious optimism after the Downing Street talks. "While some uncertainty remains, we feel that the government understands the concerns of international firms such as ours, and the economy more broadly," she said. "We were grateful for better clarity on the government's objectives in the Brexit negotiations."

A spokesman for the prime minister did not respond to requests for comment.

However, sources with knowledge of the meeting noted that she can make promises on her intentions for the Brexit talks but not on their outcome. "We got clarity on what they're looking for, not on how it will unfold," said the source. The bankers pressed their case for a period of adjustment to the post-Brexit financial services regime, rather than an abrupt change as soon as Britain leaves. "We're all looking for transition and a good future deal," said the source. —Reuters

NBK Economic Report

Kuwait credit growth remains steady at 3.1% in September

Credit witnesses net gain of KD 231 million in Sept

KUWAIT: A solid gain in credit was recorded in September, though 3Q17's overall performance was visibly weaker. Credit saw a net gain of KD 231 million on the month, with the number boosted by usual end-of-quarter gains. Growth, however, slipped to 3.1 percent year-on-year (y/y). Credit's performance for 3Q17 as a whole was underwhelming, registering at a quarterly annualized pace of 3.2 percent, compared to 7.3 percent for the first half of 2017. The bulk of September's gains came from lending for the purchase of securities. Private deposits saw a second month of strong gains, while interest rates held steady.

Household lending was subdued in September, though growth was steady at 7.4 percent y/y.

Personal facilities excluding securities lending added a net KD 27 million during the month, well below its year-to-date average of KD 69 million. This followed a strong performance the previous month.

All remaining credit (excluding nonbanks) saw a relatively modest gain in September, though this was largely from the regular end-of-quarter jump in

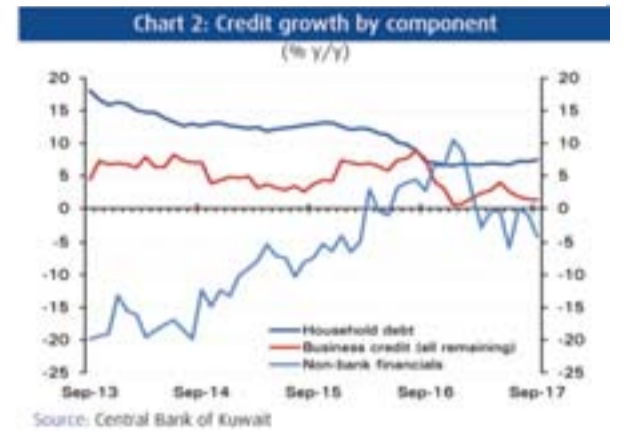
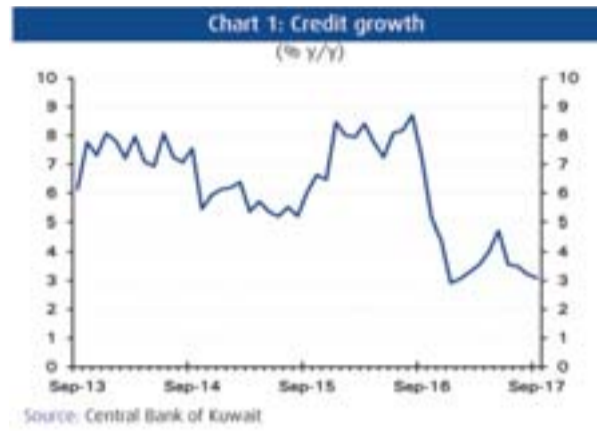
lending for the purchase of securities. Credit gained KD 206 million, with growth slipping to 1.3 percent y/y. Outside securities lending, there were some gains in trade and "other sectors", but these were offset by declines in real estate and construction.

While "productive" business sectors saw only a small gain during the month, growth in this segment remained relatively robust. Productive business credit, which excludes real estate and financial sector lending (i.e. lending to nonbanks and lending for securities), ticked up to 5.1 percent y/y. This figure continues to be held back by the large settlements made in 4Q16. Nonetheless, growth in "productive" sector credit thus far in 2017 averaged an annualized 10 percent compared to 5.9 percent for total credit.

Private deposits saw a second month of solid gains in September. Deposits rose by KD 358 million largely on the back of gains in KD time and KD sight deposits. Yet despite the pick-up, money supply (M2) growth slipped slightly to 2.5 percent y/y. Meanwhile, government deposits declined by KD 51 million, with growth easing further to 3.4 percent y/y.

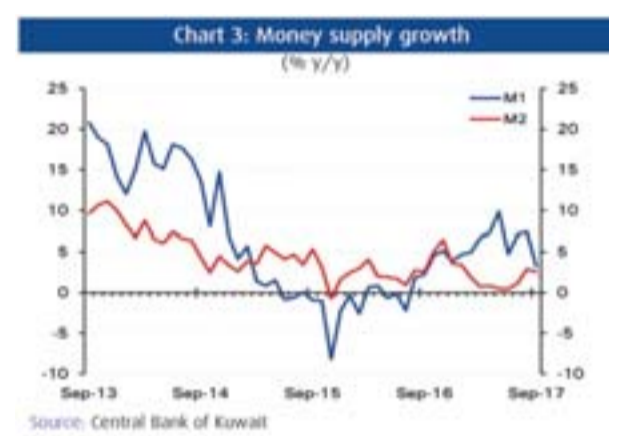


Third quarter performance visibly weaker



The banking system's liquid reserves, or "excess liquidity", edged lower in September to 6.6 percent of bank assets. Bank reserves (cash, deposits with the CBK, and CBK bonds) decreased by KD 273 million to KD 4.2 billion. This coincided with KD 400 million in net issuance of public debt in September. This increased outstanding domestic public debt instruments (PDIs) to KD 4.97 billion, or an estimated 13 percent of GDP.

Domestic interest rates in September were little changed from August. The 3-month interbank rate edged up 2 basis points to settle at 1.76 percent, though rates have moved slightly higher since. Customer deposit rates were unchanged on the month.



Audi Kuwait's special end of the year offer

KUWAIT: Audi Kuwait, represented by Fouad Alghanim & Sons Automotive Company, announce their special Year-End Offer. With the approach of the new year, Fouad Alghanim & Sons Automotive Company is celebrating a successful 2017 with a special year end proposal to their customers on select Audi models. This offer includes an additional 5 year maintenance program on top of the existing peace-of-mind package, which includes 3-year warranty, 5-year service, and 3-year roadside assistance benefits.

"Audi continues to grow as a brand

in Kuwait with an increasingly loyal customer base, who constantly seek the best options that Kuwait's premium car market has to offer. Owning an Audi has become an easy choice, given the diverse range of models available and attractive ownership benefits. We welcome customers to celebrate another successful year with our unique year-end-offers offers," said Tarek Al-Shafie, General Manager of Fouad Alghanim & Sons Automotive Company. The current offer is applicable on a wide range of Audi models including the A3 sedan, the elegant A7, the youthful Q2 and the all-new Audi A5 Coupe and Sportback models.

The full range of Audi models are on display and available for test-drives 6 days a week at the Audi Kuwait showroom, located in Shuwaikh Industrial Area - Pepsi Cola Street. Working hours are from 9:00am to 1:00pm and 4:30pm to 8:30pm.



GymNadz' Nadya Jaghbir awarded at Arabian Business StartUps awards

KUWAIT: At the Arabian Business StartUps awards for 2017, the co-founder of the health and fitness app GymNadz, Nadya Jaghbir, emerged as the winner of the People's Choice Award for the Entrepreneur of the Year 2017, voted by readers from the Gulf region among 50 other startups nominated to the award.

Nominated for its contributions to entrepreneurship, the spirit of innovation, pursuit and achievement of excellence in business, GymNadz has gained great success since its launch in February 2016, achieving over 500K downloads on both Apple and Android stores, and promoting fitness and health programs against a growing obesity epidemic in the region.

Commenting on the award, Jaghbir said: "We are extremely proud to have been voted by independent readers to win this prestigious award, a seal of success to our ongoing endeavors to change mindsets on health and nutrition in the region and make a positive difference in the lives of the community."

GymNadz was founded with a vision to reach out to the largest number of women possible and motivate them to move more and lead a healthier lifestyle. Co-founder Nadya Jaghbir, a fitness and personal trainer by profession and passion, aimed at sharing



her experience in fitness and nutrition with women in the Arab world and promote for a more active lifestyle in a culture increasingly driven by a sedentary lifestyle and a focus on excess eating.

Jaghbir added: "To achieve our vision, we created the health and fitness app to facilitate reaching out to women, and be easily accessible through their smartphones in the comfort of their homes. A crucial element which differentiates the app is the interactive platform that allows members to customize their programs based on their physical abilities and objectives, monitor performance and learn at their own pace about nutrition. We are not creating a stereotyped transformation of a body, we are educating women on leading a healthier and more active lifestyle on the long-term."

Continuously updating its content, interface and features, the bilingual (English and Arabic) app has recently been featured on the Apple store as a recommended application in its category, a step that recognizes both demand and content of the GymNadz app. The app has also been ranked among leading grossing applications in several countries in the Middle East. Jaghbir concluded: "Our inspiration behind GymNadz is the empowerment of women to overcome challenges they may face, such as lack of time, guidance, knowledge and a need for a support system. And we want to achieve that at an international level. We are therefore constantly upgrading the app, introducing new features and nurturing a community of women to cheer each other up in their journey to a healthier lifestyle."

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.702
Indian Rupees	4.667
Pakistani Rupees	2.870
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.969
Nepali Rupees	2.928
Singapore Dollar	224.830
Hongkong Dollar	38.775
Bangladesh Taka	3.639
Philippine Peso	5.961
Thai Baht	9.247

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.140
Qatari Riyal	83.235
Omani Riyal	787.032
Bahraini Dinar	804.700
UAE Dirham	82.509

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.750
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.145
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.216
Tunisian Dinar	122.860
Jordanian Dinar	427.330
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.020
Syrian Lira	19.750
Morocco Dirham	32.600

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.850
Euro	359.480
Sterling Pound	402.640

Canadian dollar	238.750
Turkish lira	78.876
Swiss Franc	308.720
Australian Dollar	231.680
US Dollar Buying	301.650

GOLD

20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.000
Canadian Dollar	239.540
Sterling Pound	399.145
Euro	354.630
Swiss Frank	303.680
Bahrain Dinar	804.185
UAE Dirhams	82.885
Qatari Riyals	83.710
Saudi Riyals	81.660
Jordanian Dinar	428.645
Egyptian Pound	17.208
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.973
Indian Rupees	4.642
Pakistani Rupees	2.873
Bangladesh Taka	3.704
Philippines Peso	5.906
Cyprus pound	18.030
Japanese Yen	3.665
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.913

Malaysian Ringgit	72.220
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.005
Thai Bhat	10.145
Turkish Lira	78.895

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
	Europe	
British Pound	0.393746	0.401246
Czech Korune	0.005868	0.017858
Danish Krone	0.043628	0.048628
Euro	0.349427	0.356927
Georgian Lari	0.110826	0.110826
Norwegian Krone	0.032556	0.037756
Romanian Leu	0.064772	0.081622
Russian ruble	0.005088	0.005088
Slovakia	0.009020	0.019020
Slovenia	0.031807	0.036807
Swedish Krona	0.299344	0.310344
Swiss Franc		
	Australasia	
Australian Dollar	0.220282	0.232282
New Zealand Dollar	0.200055	0.209555
	America	
Canadian Dollar	0.231224	0.240224
US Dollars	0.298600	0.303020
US Dollars Mint	0.299100	0.303020
	Asia	
Bangladeshi Taka	0.003298	0.003882

Chinese Yuan	0.044119	0.047619
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036656	0.039406
Indian Rupee	0.004107	0.004748
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002615	0.002795
Korean Won	0.000265	0.000280
Malaysian Ringgit	0.068596	0.074596
Nepalese Rupee	0.003020	0.003190
Pakistan Rupee	0.002647	0.002937
Philippine Peso	0.005802	0.006102
Singapore Dollar	0.217542	0.227542
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001700	0.002280
Taiwan	0.009941	0.010121
Thai Baht	0.008879	0.009429

	Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.795924	0.804424
Egyptian Pound	0.014506	0.020224
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000186	0.000246
Jordanian Dinar	0.422330	0.431330
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.023529	0.047529
Omani Riyal	0.779916	0.785596
Qatar Riyal	0.078854	0.083794
Saudi Riyal	0.079633	0.080933
Syrian Pound	0.001283	0.001503
Tunisian Dinar	0.117764	0.125764
Turkish Lira	0.073258	0.083558
UAE Dirhams	0.080989	0.082689
Yemeni Riyal	0.000984	0.001064

The charismatic All-New MEGANE is a real head-turner



By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Renault Al Babin invited Kuwait Times to test drive the new MEGANE 2018. The charismatic All-New MEGANE is a real head-turner. With its sedan body, dynamic lines and generous proportions, it has a style of its own, both lively and elegant.

Representing the next level in the compact saloon category, the new MEGANE designed to accommodate customers who enjoy success with a distinct social appeal, the new C-segment model brings with it record-breaking roominess and a boot volume reaching 503dm³.

Its muscular bonnet, broad shoulders, tight curves and sculpted slides emphasize its modern, sophisticated

character. The signature lighting make it stand out from the crowd! Thanks to its front and rear lighting signature with 3D effect LED technology, you are visible from a distance, day or night.

The new MEGANE is equipped with generous space for its occupants i.e. dimensions of 4.63m long and 1.81m wide, and a record wheelbase in its class of 2.71m. It comes with a 1.6-litre engine, 115hp designed to enhance driving enjoyment and reduce fuel consumption.

Travelling comfort is further enhanced by the careful attention that has been paid to the interior finish, to the quality of the soft-to-the-touch materials, which are within easy reach of the driver and passengers. It presents a wide range of unique features ranging from a configurable 7-inch TFT color screen instrument display and

the R-LINK 2 multimedia tablet available in two formats (7-inch landscape format, or 8.7-inch portrait format), as well as MULTI-SENSE. With the assistance of MULTI-SENSE technology, the driver is able to adjust the engine sound with a choice between three different settings: Neutral, Comfort and Sport.

Ensuring complete customer satisfaction is met, another feature that sets the high-end model apart is Easy Trunk Access (ETA), a hands-free boot opening system that works by detecting movement underneath the rear bumper. Additionally, the new MEGANE is equipped with Blind Spot Warning (BSW) to ensure safe overtaking maneuvers.

The new MEGANE also benefits from the very latest driving aid (ADAS) technologies that also equip

Renault's high-end models (Talisman, new KOLEOS) like Easy Park Assist which caters for three different types of parking: parallel, perpendicular and angle; Rear View Camera & Front, rear and side parking sensors, cruise control & speed limiter.

MEGANE is also furnished with the latest-generation electronic stability control (ESC), traction control, braking assist, electronic brake force distribution, hill start assist, and tire pressure monitoring system as standard equipment.

To experience a whole new level of the dynamic compact saloon in Kuwait, customers are urged to visit its showroom in Rai.

For more information on Renault Al Babin, please visit www.renault-kuwait.com



European stocks brush aside German woes

LONDON: Stock markets in Europe and the euro currency held their own yesterday despite political uncertainty in Germany after talks on forming a new government collapsed stoked talk of new elections.

In Europe, Germany's DAX was up 0.3 percent at 13,026 while France's CAC 40 rose 0.3 percent to 5,333. Britain's FTSE 100 index of leading British shares was 0.2 percent higher at 7,394.

Germany faces an uncertain political future after the collapse of weeks of talks on forming a new government, with Chancellor Angela Merkel set to consult the country's president and the possibility of new elections looming.

two-party conservative bloc seeking a coalition with the pro-business Free Democrats and the traditionally left-leaning Greens. The combination of ideologically disparate parties hadn't been tried before in a national government, and came to nothing when the Free Democrats walked out of talks Sunday night.

In the immediate aftermath of the news, Europe's single currency endured a knee-jerk sell-off but that didn't last long with most economists skeptical about whether the developments in Germany will curtail the economic recovery in the continent's biggest economy.

"Germany's solid economic fundamentals should dampen the impact of heightened political uncertainty," said Lee Hardman, an analyst at MUFG. "The eurozone economic recovery will remain on track and we see no reason to materially alter our

outlook for a stronger euro."

With the US gearing up for Thanksgiving on Thursday, trading levels across financial markets are expected to be constrained. However, traders will be monitoring developments in Congress over President Donald Trump's tax reform package.

Tokyo stocks ended lower yesterday, hit by a stronger yen with Toshiba plunging after the embattled Japanese conglomerate announced plans to issue new shares.

"Major shares are being sold as investors don't like a higher yen," said Yoshihiro Ito, chief strategist at Okasan Online Securities in a commentary. For the Japanese shares to rebound, investors "want to see some sort of catalysts such as a progress in US tax reforms or a good start for the Christmas shop-

ping season in the US," said Masayuki Doshida, senior analyst at Rakuten Securities.

The dollar bought 112.01 yen, down from 112.15 yen in New York and well off the 112.54 yen in Tokyo earlier Friday. Toshiba tumbled 5.82 percent to 275 yen after unveiling plans to issue new shares to raise a total of 600 billion yen, with financing expected to close on December 5.

Toshiba is on the ropes after the disastrous acquisition of US nuclear energy firm Westinghouse, which racked up billions of dollars in losses before being placed in bankruptcy protection. Nissin slipped 0.23 percent to 1,067.5 yen after it submitted the results of a probe into an inspection scandal to the transport ministry. But Honda ended 0.46 percent higher at 3,687 yen, despite a weekend recall of 800,000 minivans in the US, as a brokerage upgraded its evaluation of the shares. — Agencies

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Monday 19 November 2017. Table listing market indices (Price Index, Weighted Index, KSX 15), trades by sector (Oil & Gas, Basic Materials, Consumer Goods, etc.), and individual stock prices with changes.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, Global Bond Yields, and Commodities. Includes line graphs for market trends and detailed data tables.

Business

Kuwait tourism delegation visits Russian city of Sochi

Turkish Airlines ready to meet tourism boom into Russia



The Russian city of Sochi.



The Kuwaiti tourism delegation poses for a photograph.

KUWAIT: In collaboration with Turkish Airlines, Basel Aero and Toronto Travel & Tourism Co, the Russian Tourism Office in Kuwait organized a trip for representatives of Kuwaiti travel agents to the Russian city of Sochi on the Black Sea. During the visit, the delegation met a number of officials in the Russian government and tourism sector to discuss enhancing cooperation and organizing trips for Kuwaiti tourists to Sochi during the summer, winter and other holidays. The delegation also toured a number of hotels and apartment buildings such as the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Rosa Khutor and Gorki resorts.

Sochi's deputy mayor Sergey Yurchenko said the city annually receives seven million tourists. It has a hotel capacity of 100,000 rooms. He added that it is a modern destination with highly developed infrastructure overlooking the Black Sea, where various water sports are played. He said the city has 50 mineral water springs and one of the largest spas, in addition to luxury ski resorts, which make it the Russian 'Switzerland'.

Yurchenko invited Kuwaiti tourists to place Sochi on their destination plans, especially during the summer, where they can enjoy its weather with temperatures varying between 20 degrees on the Black Sea coast and minus five degrees on the mountains.

Yurchenko pointed out that there are many potential touristic cooperation opportunities with Kuwait, as the city is ready to host conferences due to its security and low population of only 400,000. He added that the city can also host Kuwaiti sports teams, as it hosted the 2014 Winter Olympics and will host 2018 World Cup games.



Sergey Yurchenko

Basel Aero's commercial manager Asyat Hasanova expressed her keenness on cooperating with Kuwaitis to operate direct flights and provide them with all needed facilities. Head of the Russian national tourist office in Kuwait Basel Al-Osoud emphasized the Russian side's keenness on promoting Russian touristic destinations in Kuwait and GCC states, especially during the summer, in addition to providing all requirements for Islamic tourism and family needs.

Representing Yaish Travel, Osoud stressed that Sochi is qualified to become a major destination for around half a million Kuwaiti tourists who annually



spend around \$13 billion. He noted that other Arabs residing in Kuwait were also expected to visit Russia, because more than one Arab football team has qualified for the World Cup. Turkish Airlines stressed its keenness on meeting the expected tourism boom into

Russia from various GCC states, since Turkish Airlines flies to Moscow, Sochi, Kazan, St Petersburg and other cities. The airline also announced its readiness to increase its destinations after boosting its fleet from 298 to 421 aircraft by 2020.

Chevrolet Alghanim displays its best-ever line-up at the Avenues



KUWAIT: Celebrating its fresh and best ever line-up campaign, Chevrolet Alghanim displayed its line-up at The Avenues mall over the weekend. The display also gave the chance to Chevrolet fans and customers to participate in Chevrolet's region-wide #iamarecorder campaign. The campaign called on all fans and customers to be record breakers and contribute to break a world record.

Going in to 2018, Chevrolet's offering is bigger and better than ever before. Its line-up of award-winning cars, is one of the most diverse, and among the youngest portfolios on offer. The brand's best ever line-up boasts a combination of cutting-edge automotive engineering, innovative technologies, advanced safety features, sleek design and unrivalled practicality.

Highlighting Chevrolet's freshest line-up, visitors to the stand were able to take a first look at crossovers and SUVs such as the all-new Chevrolet Traverse which has already garnered huge attention since its debut. Chevrolet Alghanim also showcased the Tahoe Special Edition, accessorized to attract a younger segment.

Chevrolet's award-winning passenger car, the Malibu, and its award-winning pickup-up, the Silverado, were also on display, underpinning the brand's remarkable breadth of driving dynamics and design capabilities.

To celebrate the wealth and breadth of its offering with the wider public, Chevrolet and its regional dealer partners are looking to set its first new world record in the 'largest online photo album of people holding a sign' category, breaking the current record of 32,216 photos held by a Dubai based entity.



KFH, KT Bank AG sign Euro Vostro Account Services agreement

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has signed a bilateral cooperation agreement with KT Bank AG, the first bank in Germany and in the Eurozone with Islamic business model, in terms of Euro Vostro Account Services. From now on, KT Bank would provide Euro clearing and settlement services for KFH, one of the

foremost Islamic financial institutions in the world, and main shareholder of KT's mother bank Kuveyt Turk Katilim Bankasi AS. With the signature of the Vostro account agreement, Kuwait Finance House, Kuveyt Turk and KT Bank AG, jointly renowned to be the driving pioneers of Islamic banking in the Eurozone, are moving even closer together as a group.

KT Bank AG as a direct member of Target 2 and SEPA payment schemes, provides Clearing and Settlement Services in Euro currency to financial institutions and automatically routes all incoming and outgoing Euro payments all over the world according to EU standards.

Group Chief Treasury Officer at KFH, AbdulWahab Al-Roshood said: "With the launch of KT Bank via our subsidiary Kuveyt Turk in the year 2015, KFH has become strongly invested in Germany. Now we are also

able to use KT Bank as our Euro clearer which provides added value for the whole group."

KT Bank's Chairman of the Management Board Ahmet Kudsi Arslan emphasizes: "With creating such correspondent banking synergies within our group, we strengthen our overall market position in the Euro area." A vostro account is the account a correspondent bank holds on behalf of another bank. These accounts are an essential aspect of correspondent banking in which the bank holding the funds manages the account of a foreign bank.

A vostro account is established to enable a foreign correspondent bank to act as an agent or provide services as an intermediary for a domestic bank to execute wire transfers, withdrawals and deposits for customers in countries where the domestic bank does not have a physical presence.

KAMCO awarded 'Fixed Income Manager of the Year'

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMS in the region, has been awarded the "Fixed Income Manager of the Year 2017" at the Global Investor Group MENA awards ceremony, held recently in Dubai - UAE. KAMCO was awarded the prestigious title in recognition of the Firm's exceptional performance and regional exposure in managing fixed income securities.



Khaled Fouad

KAMCO was first nominated for the award given the Firm's track-record and lead manager roles in executing key bond and sukuk issuances in the local and regional market during the year. In addition to the issuances, the Firm primarily invests in a portfolio of MENA Conventional and Sukuk bonds diversified by country, sector, issue and credit structure.

Commenting on the award, Chief Investment Officer of KAMCO, Khaled Fouad, said, "This award is a testament to the success of serving our clients. Our team delivered excellent results using our risk management framework, research-driven approach and investment philosophy in a variety of market environments."

Fouad also added that the fixed income market in the region has seen a strong growth as compared to last year as regional economies raise money to plug budget deficits and fund infrastructure investments. Corporate bond issuance have also remained very active across the region. The growth was led by issuances in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and the market is expected to see additional issuances catering to the long pending need for fixed income investors, for both Islamic and conventional investments.

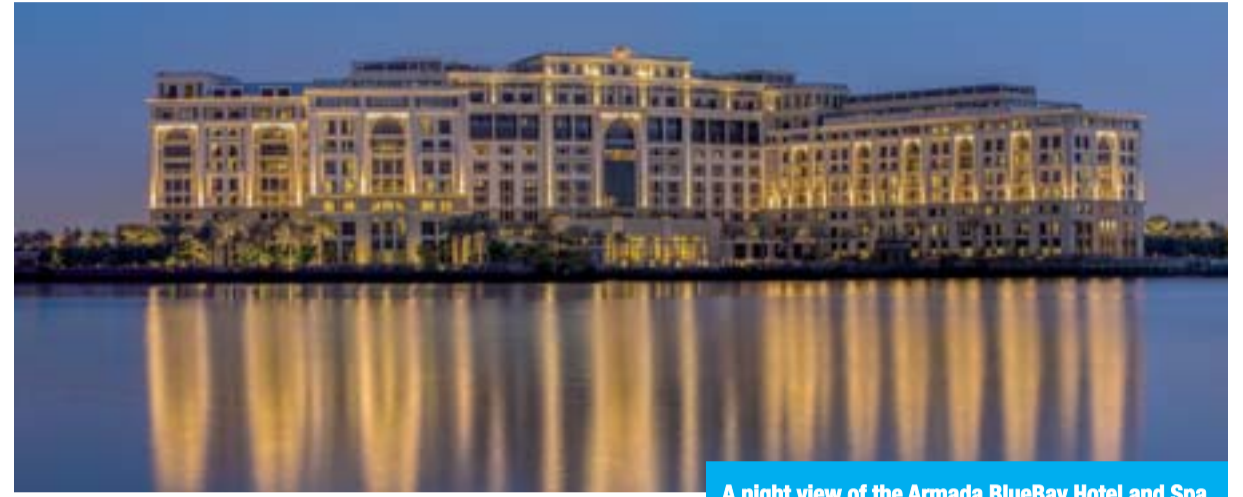


Al-Roshood and Al-Sumait with Arslan

Technology

Flydubai showcases its first Boeing 737 MAX 8 in Dubai

Airline expands network to 95 destinations, operates 1,700 flights per week



A night view of the Armada BlueBay Hotel and Spa

By Nawara Fattahova

DUBAI: Flydubai was one of the main participants of the Dubai Airshow held from November 12 to 16, 2017. During this event, flydubai showcased its first Boeing 737 MAX 8, in which the visitors got the chance to see the model and took a tour of the aircraft. This is the first aircraft to be delivered from the largest single-aisle Boeing aircraft order placed in the Middle East in the 2013 edition of the show. The new aircraft, bearing the UAE registration mark A6-MAX, is the first of 76 aircraft on order from Boeing; all of which will be delivered by 2023.

Since the beginning of 2017, flydubai has launched six new destinations and grown its network to more than 95 destinations, increased the schedule to more than 1,700 flights per week as well as rolled out its new uniform worn by more than 2,500 staff members. Media from all over the world came to witness this big event and Kuwait Times was among the media teams invited by Flydubai to visit the show.

Journalists from different countries were divided into groups. During the event, reporters representing GCC media took a tour of the new Flydubai Boeing 737 MAX 8 and met Hamad Obaidalla, Chief Commercial Officer who spoke about the new fleet and other issues. "This aircraft started operating in November 15, and its first destination was Bangkok, to where Flydubai has two flights daily. The Boeing 737 MAX 8 will save fuel consumption by 15 percent compared to the previous aircrafts, due to its modern technology and light weight," he noted.

More luxury

"In the Business class of the new plane we have placed 10 seats instead of 12. It consists of a seat that transforms into a bed, making this the first aircraft from this model to have this seat. Flydubai received the first and only order in the region for this model, and we have an order for 75 aircraft in addition to 25 optional," added Obaidalla. "We provide everything that the passengers need. We noticed high demand of the business class since we first provided this service in 2013. So we decided to

improve this section through launching new far destinations such as Prague," he further said.

Flydubai's fleet will include 75 Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft. "The average life of our aircraft is seven years, while it reaches 10 years in other companies. Some of these aircraft will replace the existing ones, while the others will just be added to our fleet. By the end of 2017, we will have 62 planes in the fleet, out of which six are brand new. We will conclude this year with flying 12 million passengers," he explained.

Saving fuel, investing in comfort

"We came up with the business class as a result of saving 15 percent of the fuel. Boeing 737 MAX 8 carries fewer passengers, thus providing more space for the passengers. This year we launched new summer destinations including Georgia, Azerbaijan and Montenegro. These destinations were welcomed by

the passengers and we noticed the success," stated Obaidalla. Gulf and Middle East regions are the most frequent destinations for Flydubai. "We fly to 13 airports in Saudi Arabia, with 168 flights from Dubai to Saudi Arabia per week. In total, we fly to 95 destinations around the world. Till now, we have transported 12

million passengers," he pointed out.

The Kuwaiti market is one of the most important markets for Flydubai. "There are 12 flights between Dubai and Kuwait daily. We have our own terminal at the Sa'ad Al-Abdullah Airport. We started with only two flights, which reached 12 and is increasing. Kuwait Airways and Emirates also have their flights, and competition is healthy for the passengers. Without mentioning figures, Flydubai has the biggest share market of flights in Kuwait," he said.

More destinations in the region

"We have six flights daily to Bahrain. Iran is an important market for Flydubai, we fly to seven destinations including Mashhad, Tehran, Shiraz, Esfahan, Ahwaz, Bandar Abbas and Lar. We are planning to open a new destination in Iran: Tabriz. We also fly to Alexandria and we would appreciate if we could serve our passengers in Cairo," concluded Obaidalla.

“ 12 daily flights between Dubai, Kuwait ”



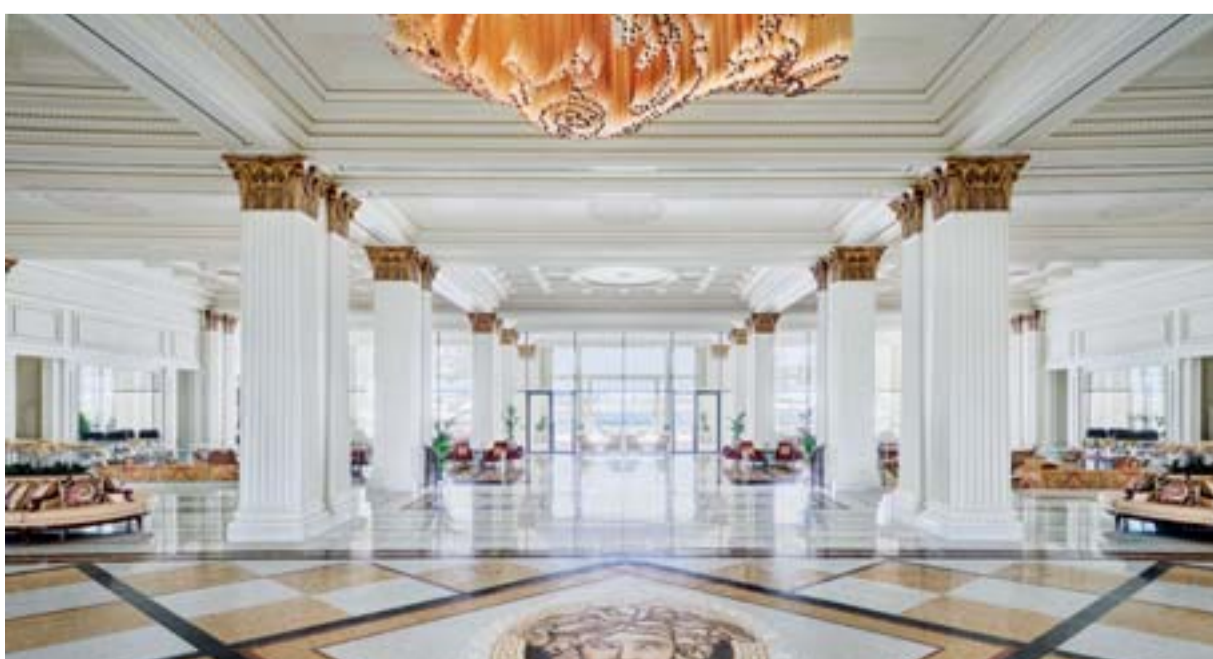
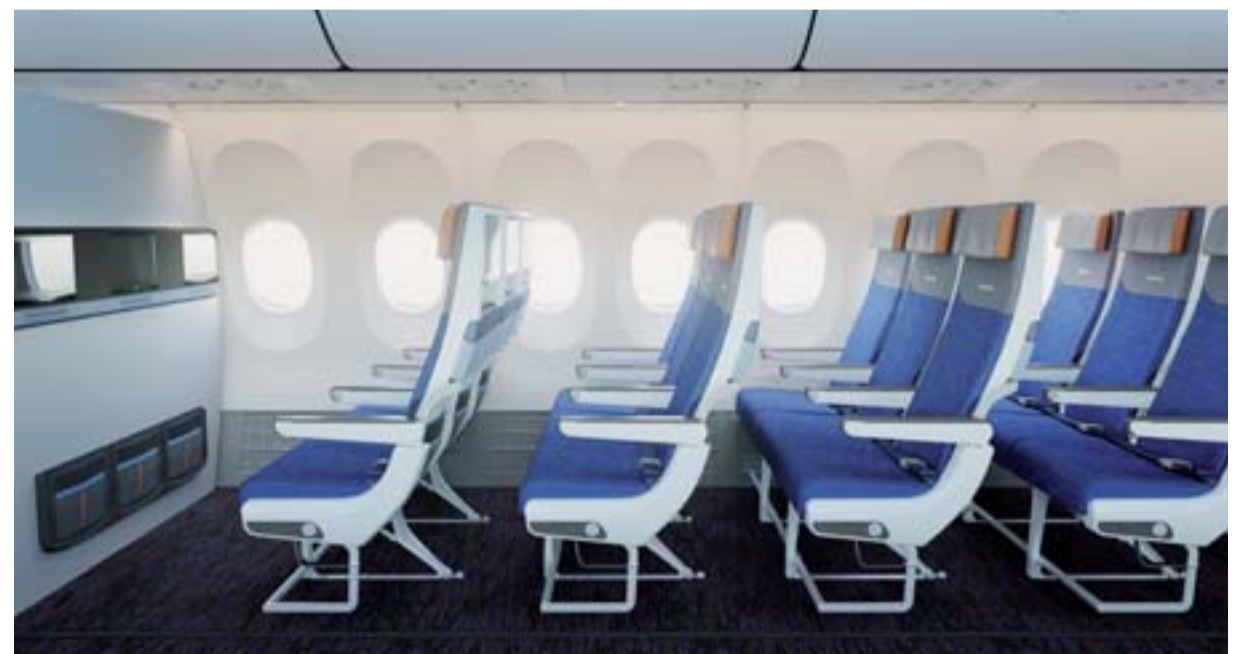
DUBAI: Hamad Obaidalla, Chief Commercial Officer addresses the media delegation on board Boeing 737 MAX 8.



The media groups stayed at the Armada BlueBay Hotel and Spa, which provided a joyful stay for the journalists with comfortable rooms, and other leisure facilities such as the spa, pool, health club and a friendly staff. As part of the trip, the journalists also visited the Palazzo Versace Dubai hotel and residences for a media dinner. Sandra Tikal, General Manager of Palazzo Versace Dubai and Russell Loughland gave a brief about the luxury hotel and the facilities provided to its guests.

The architectural style of Palazzo Versace Dubai hotel and residences represents the merging of a traditional neo-classical Italian palace with recognizable

Arabic architectural elements. The interiors showcase the Versace lifestyle through contemporary eyes of Artistic Director Donatella Versace. The iconic motifs of Versace are present in every detail such as the Medusa head, Greek key and the House's legendary prints, with many designs created exclusively for Palazzo Versace Dubai. The Imperial Suites cover 1200 sqm and each has two levels. Both feature an entrance hall, a magnificent marble staircase, a dining room, a living room, an office, a lounge and entertainment room, a cocktail room, two master bedrooms with walk-in closets and en-suite bathrooms, a gym and sauna. The terrace unveils an outdoor private pool and garden.



Versace executive lounge

Health

New ARV drugs, early diagnosis 'key' to beating AIDS epidemic

Around 21 million people receiving ARV treatment

CAPE TOWN: Developing new antiretroviral (ARV) drugs and using technology for early diagnosis are among steps needed to sustain momentum in fighting HIV/AIDS and ending the disease as a public health threat by 2030, UNAIDS said in a report yesterday. The UNAIDS agency said that by June this year around 21 million people were receiving life-prolonging ARV treatment, with rapid progress seen over the past five years when the numbers of people accessing medication nearly doubled. "The pace of scale-up has been particularly remarkable in eastern and southern Africa, the region most affected by the epidemic," said the "Right to Health" report, released in Khayelitsha township, some 30 km from Cape Town.



New ARVs work more quickly, saving money

The number of people on treatment in the region surpassed all other regions combined in 2010 and presently accounts for 60 percent of all people on treatment. South Africa led the world with the number of people on treatment, at 4.2 million, followed by India, Mozambique and Kenya which have more than 1 million being treated. UNAIDS said the worldwide expansion of ARV therapy was the main factor behind a 48 percent decline in deaths from AIDS-related illnesses, from a peak of 1.9 million in 2005 to 1 million in 2016.

cause fewer side-effects and suppress viral loads more quickly, will help countries such as South Africa save money and treat more people, Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi said at the report launch. "In the next six years South Africa is going to save 11 billion rand (\$783 million) on HIV/AIDS treatment, meaning that we are going to treat more people with the same amount of resources," he said. In September, Reuters reported a new deal for combination pills using dolutegravir that caps prices at \$75 per patient a year, with Africa expected to benefit first.

Last year a major milestone was reached, when for the first time more than half of all people living with HIV worldwide were accessing ARV therapy, said the report. But the disease, which attacks the immune system making the body more susceptible to illness, remains a significant killer. AIDS-related illnesses remain the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age (15-49 years) globally, and they are the second leading cause of death for young women aged 15-24 years in Africa, said the report. "The problem that is coming is complacency... We still have 17 million people waiting for treatment and if we stop now, we will have a rebound in this epidemic," UNAIDS executive director, Michel Sidibe, told the Khayelitsha community. —Reuters



BEIJING: Chinese singer Wu Mochou performs at an event to raise awareness ahead of World AIDS Day in Beijing. The event was hosted by Danlan Public Welfare ahead of the 30th World AIDS Day to promote the use of mobile technology to prevent the spread of HIV in the LGBT community. —AP

Endangered orcas compete with seals, sea lions for salmon

SEATTLE: Harbor seals, sea lions and some fish-eating killer whales have been rebounding along the Northeast Pacific Ocean in recent decades. But that boom has come with a trade-off: They're devouring more of the salmon prized by a unique but fragile population of endangered orcas. Competition with other marine mammals for the same food may be a bigger problem than fishing, at least in recent years, for southern resident killer whales that spend time in Washington state's Puget Sound, a new study suggests.

Researchers used models to estimate that from 1975 to 2015, marine mammals along the US West Coast ate dramatically more chinook salmon - from 6,100 metric tons to 15,200 metric tons, according to a study published Monday in the journal Scientific Reports. In the same period, salmon caught by commercial and recreational fishing from Northern California to Alaska declined from 16,400 to 9,600 metric tons.

"This really quantifies yet another pressure on recovering the salmon population," said co-author Isaac Kaplan, a research fishery biologist with the Northwest Fisheries Science Center, part of NOAA Fisheries. Other threats to salmon include habitat damage, dams and pollution. The emphasis typically has been on managing how fishing affects salmon. But this study brings the rest of the ecosystem, including predators, into the picture, Kaplan said. Researchers have known marine mammals gorge on salmon in certain hotspots, including the Columbia River between Oregon and Washington. But the predators may be eating even more in the ocean than thought.

The authors estimated how much salmon in different life stages four marine mammals ate based on a number of assumptions, including their weight, diet and size. The species included California sea lions, Stellar sea lions, harbor seals and fish-eating killer whales. The study does a very

good job of accounting for who eats chinook salmon during its various life stages, said Andrew Trites, professor and director of the marine mammal research unit at the University of British Columbia. He was not involved in the study. "They've identified some of the major players, but they haven't identified them all," such as other fish, marine birds and porpoises, he said.

The study found killer whales, which increased from 292 to 644, ate the most salmon in terms of biomass, or weight, while harbor seals ate the greatest numbers of salmon, mostly juvenile fish. Scientists also found certain populations of fish-eating resident killer whales in southeast Alaska and Canada waters ate a lot more salmon. But the orcas that spend time in Puget Sound ate about the same volume they did 40 years ago, mostly because their numbers have been relatively constant.

Puget Sound orcas, also known as southern resident killer whales, face greater challenges than their orca counterparts farther north because they have a narrower menu of fish stocks and fewer available fish compared with what they need, Kaplan said. These whales have struggled due to lack of food, pollution and impacts from boats since they were listed as endangered in Canada in 2003 and 2005 in the US. There are now just 76, down from a high of 140 decades ago.

Marine mammal protection efforts including the Marine Mammal Protection Act in 1972 have meant good news for other populations. Harbor seals, for example, increased 210,000 to 355,000. Puget Sound orcas consume adult chinook salmon - also called king salmon because they're the largest - that migrate back to Puget Sound waters. "Every other one of those predators has a chance to eat that salmon before. They're the last ones to sit at the table and get a chance to eat," said Brandon Chasco, lead author of the study and an Oregon State University postdoctoral student.

Meanwhile, harbor seals feast on millions of smaller, juvenile salmon as they migrate to the ocean from local rivers. "They're first in line to eat the prey before they become adults," Chasco said. "The question is whether those fish would have died in the ocean, or if they're taking prey out of the mouths of predators farther downstream." The authors say efforts to restore threatened salmon runs may be masked by the increasing numbers eaten by these marine mammals. The study was paid for by the Pacific Salmon Commission, which was formed by the governments of Canada and the United States in 1985. —AP

'Robo-taxis' hold promise, perils, for automakers

PARIS: It's November 22, 2018 and Sarah, a young mother, gives her two children a kiss goodbye before buckling them into the driverless car that will bring them to school. Sarah doesn't have a car and has no plans to buy one. Living in a suburb, she has run the numbers and the result is clear: It's much cheaper to order a car only when she needs one. The "robo-taxi" has also made her life easier, but only after such vehicles upended the business models which car-makers had relied on for decades.

The revolution is already underway, with every major brand racing to create autonomous electric cars and trucks that will always be just a few clicks of a smartphone away. Fully electric cars are expected to make up 12 percent of the global market in 2025, before jumping to 34 percent in 2030 and 90 percent by 2050, analysts at Bank of America Merrill Lynch forecast last month.

The motivations are clear: Smog is becoming a serious menace in cities around the world, with China in particular demanding cleaner vehicles for its rapidly growing

market. Traffic jams are also eating up hours of commuters' time, meaning car ownership is already no longer a given for many city dwellers. And carmakers have nimble new rivals: Apple, Google and Tesla-which last week unveiled an all-electric semi truck-see a chance to dominate a market that will soon depend as much on software as on engineering.

Industry chiefs aren't waiting: France's PSA is betting on car-sharing and other "services" with its Free2Move division, which it hopes will let it get back into the huge US market. In Germany, Daimler is working with Bosch to develop self-driving electric cars that could be on the road by the early 2020s, and has already launched its own car-sharing service, Car2Go, in some two dozen cities worldwide.

Its German rival Volkswagen has created Moia, a "social movement" unit exploring e-shuttles, ride pooling and car hailing. "Even if in the future not everyone is going to own a car, with Moia we're trying to make sure everyone will be a client of ours one way or another," VW's chief Matthias Mueller said. Robo-taxis could generate 40 percent of auto industry profits by 2030, according to German consulting firm Roland Berger, which expects demand for private vehicles to drop 30 percent in the period. And industry experts warn that the automakers which fail to adapt to the shift risk might not survive. —AFP

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What's On

Ooredoo family gathers together under slogan 'One Team One Spirit'

Event held at Abulhussain Abdulredha Theater



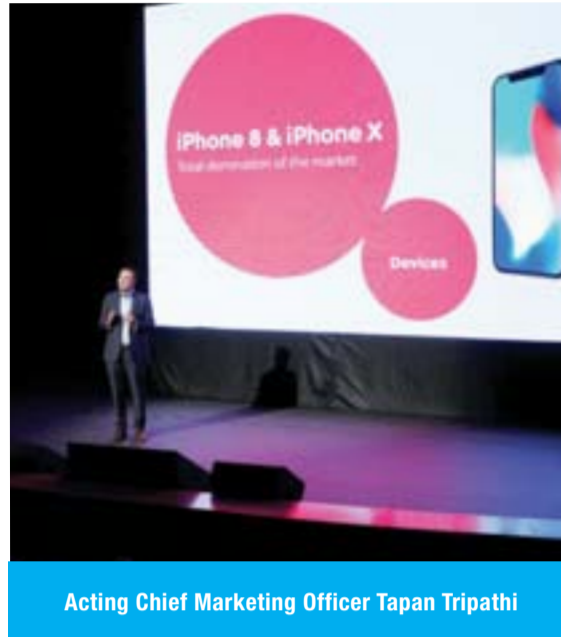
CEO and General Manager Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani



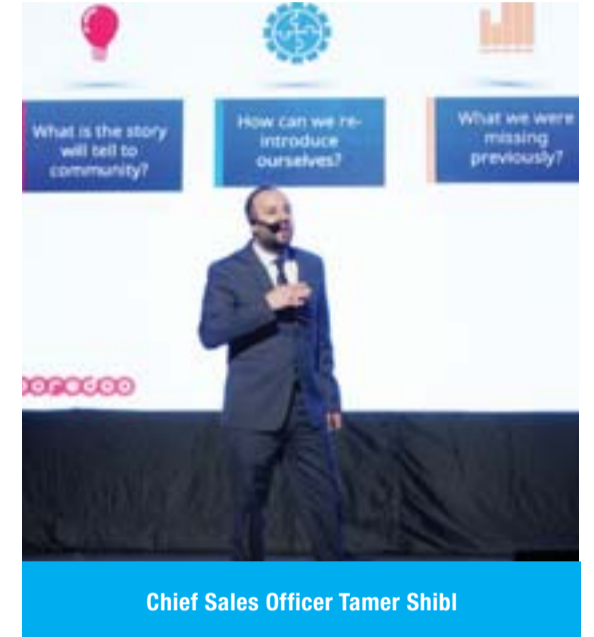
Senior Director of Corporate Communications Mijbil Alayoub



Chief Technology Officer Hendrik Vorster



Acting Chief Marketing Officer Tapan Tripathi



Chief Sales Officer Tamer Shibli

Ooredoo Family gathered at its yearly Town Hall meeting last week at Abulhussain Abdulredha theater, part of the National Board for Culture and the Arts. The Town Hall took place under the slogan 'One Team One Spirit,' where the light was shed on the most important achievements during the year and the strategic plans that the company will implement during 2018.

CEO and General Manager Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani launched the Town Hall by shedding the light on the company's most important achievements during the year 2017, stressing on the fact that the team should continue to work as one team and in unison to ensure the further success of the company and the success of each employee. Al Thani reiterated, "We believe that dedication at work is the essence that drives any company forward, and we highly believe that we should continuously motivate all the talents available in the company. Our aim is to show our appreciation to our employees for their hard work during the year, and we are keen on providing them with various opportunities as they are assets to the company and are the reasons behind our success". Al Thani further thanked the employees for their hard work and dedication during the iPhone 8 and iPhone X launches and expressed that the success of these events would have not occurred without the dedication of the employees. Al Thani expressed his hope that the One

Team, One, One Spirit culture will continue to be engrained within the Ooredoo culture and should be considered as one of the building blocks of Ooredoo's culture to ensure the success of the company along with the values of caring, connecting, and challenging.

Ooredoo's upper management under the leadership of CEO and General Manager Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani, along with the Acting Chief Financial Officer, Sridhar Dandu, Chief Human Resources and Administration Services Officer Omar Al-Bassam, Chief Technology Officer Hendrik Vorster, Chief Sales Officer Tamer Shibli, Senior Director B2B Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, Head of Strategy and CEO Support Office Amine Tazi, Acting Chief Marketing Officer Tapan Tripathi and Head of FastTelco and General Manager of Phono, Noor Sulaiti. They presented the most important achievements for the year 2017 and their expectations for the year 2018.

Speaking about the Town Hall, Senior Director of Corporate Communications Mijbil Alayoub stated, "Our aim was to meet with our employees during working hours in a different and dynamic environment, which is why we choose Abulhussain Abdulredha Theater. Our goal was to strengthen the professional ties between our employees. I would like to thank the staff at Abulhussain Abdulredha Theater for their cooperation in ensuring the success of the Town Hall."



A general view of the audience.

MMF Kuwait holds inter-school essay competition

Malayali Media Forum (MMF), Kuwait, the association of Kerala expats working in the media industry, held an inter-school essay competition on Saturday for students from Indian schools in Kuwait. Indian Community School (Senior), Salmiya, Principal and ICSK Administrator Dr V Binumon inaugurated the competition as the chief guest and briefly addressed the participants. The participating students of Standard 9, 10, 11 and 12 were given 'Demonetization in India: Merits and Demerits' as the topic for the essay. The topic was given 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the competition.

MMF Kuwait is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year and the competition was organized as part of the cele-

brations. MMF General Convener T V Hikmat presided over the function while event coordinator Sajeew K Peter welcomed the students. MMF Convener Girish Ottapalam proposed a vote of thanks. Program committee member Riyas Muhammad and MMF conveners Nijas Kasim were also present during the inaugural function. MMF Executive members Anil Nambiar, Ismayeel Payyoli, Hamza Payyannoor, Sathar Kunnil, Habeeb, Aziz Thikkodi, REji Bhaskar and Salim Kottayil also attended the program.

Aimed at senior school students, the essay competition seeks to unearth and nurture the finest Indian school talent with brilliance in writing and proficiency in current affairs. We have designed this program with an insight into future, considering the fact that the new idea of text-speak has weaned away the importance of error-free language. The students who win First, Second and Third positions will be awarded gold medals and certificates of appreciation during the valedictory ceremony of the MMF's annual conference. All participants will be given certificates of appreciation. The winners will be announced by the second week of December.



OSN unveils new digital flagship showroom at Marina Mall

OSN, the region's leading entertainment network, has transformed its flagship showroom in Kuwait's Marina Mall. Introducing an all-new digital customer journey, the new showroom reinvigorates the customer experience to become an entertainment destination in its own right.

Boasting holograms, relaxed seating areas, an in-store cinema experience, dedicated content exploration zones, interactive kid's entertainment, and a virtual reality pod, the new smart showroom in Kuwait is the first in a line-up of digital transformations planned for OSN's retail network around the region.

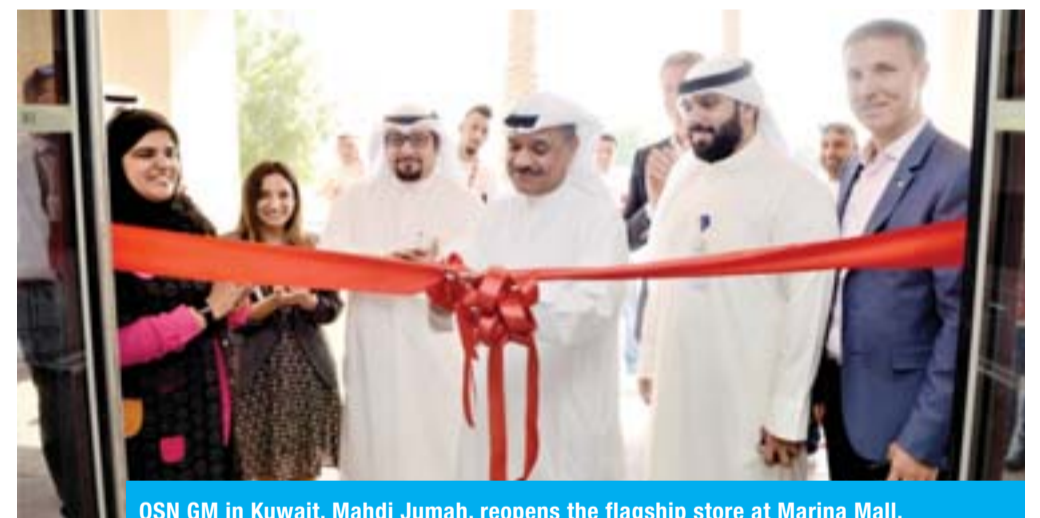
Created around an interactive and technological retail experience, the paperless 50 square meter showroom provides an immersive and entertaining journey which can be enjoyed by new and existing customers.

Steve MacDiarmid, Chief Customer Officer, said, "The transformation of our showrooms is part of the NewOSN strategy which puts customers at the forefront of everything we do. We believe that by combining a streamlined and digital concept with our friendly and professional customer service agents, we can immerse customers in a new world of OSN, where they can discover more about our channels, our outstanding exclusive content and all of our online and direct-to-home products and services."

Mahdi Jumah, General Manager, OSN Kuwait, added, "The new smart showroom is testimony to OSN's commitment to delivering excellent service, content and experiences to our customers in Kuwait. In this digital space, customers can interact with all our products and services in a new, relaxed and comfortable setting. This flagship showroom in Kuwait's Marina Mall is now a place where people can truly understand what it means to be an OSN customer, through the actual exploration of our products in a new digital environment."

The reimagined showroom was designed following extensive research and customer feedback. The multimedia environment reflects consumer demands, whilst diversifying OSN's physical retail space.

Further enhancing the customer journey, OSN's customer service agents will be able to process queries and transactions using tablets, allowing customers to be assisted anywhere in the showroom.



OSN GM in Kuwait, Mahdi Jumah, reopens the flagship store at Marina Mall.



Mahdi Jumah, GM, OSN Kuwait experiences the new showroom.



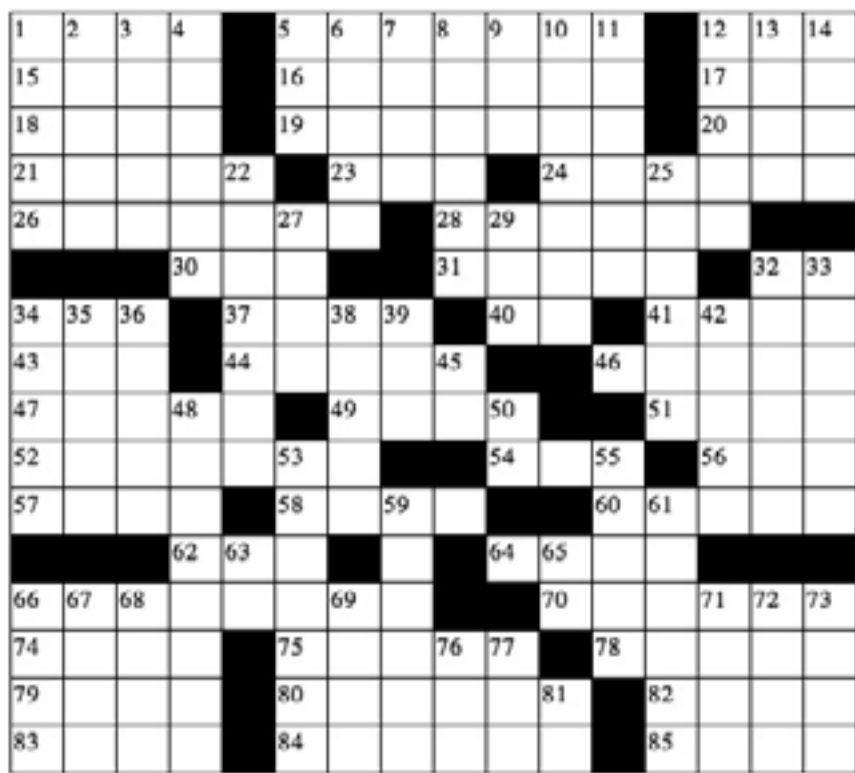
OSN's flagship showroom in Kuwait's Marina Mall now transformed.

Services available at the showroom include purchasing new subscriptions, activating OSN Play, processing renewals, latest movies and events box office orders or simply just

exploring the amazing world of OSN in a relaxing and fun environment. Discover OSN's new hi-tech retail experience showroom for yourself at the Marina Mall, Kuwait.

Stars

CROSSWORD 1767



ACROSS

1. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
5. (Greek mythology) One of the 7 Pleiades.
12. A decree that prohibits something.
15. A sensation (as of a cold breeze or bright light) that precedes the onset of certain disorders such as a migraine attack or epileptic seizure.
16. The state of being behind in payments.
17. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
18. Broken husks of the seeds of cereal grains that are separated from the flour by sifting.
19. An unintentional but embarrassing blunder.
20. A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
21. Valuable fiber plant of East Indies now widespread in cultivation.
23. Any of numerous hairy-bodied insects including social and solitary species.
24. The face or front of a building.
26. Surveying instrument consisting of the upper movable part of a theodolite including the telescope and its attachments.
28. A genus of tropical American plants have sword-shaped leaves and a fleshy compound fruits composed of the fruits of several flowers (such as pineapples).
30. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
31. United States screenwriter and filmmaker (born in 1944).
34. (computer science) A computer that is running software that allows users to leave messages and access information of general interest.
37. A material effigy that is worshipped as a god.
40. A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
41. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
43. Informal abbreviation of 'representative'.
44. American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
46. (Scandinavian folklore) A supernatural creature (either a dwarf or a giant) that is supposed to live in caves or in the mountains v.l.
47. (Greek mythology) A giant Boeotian hunter who pursued the Pleiades and was eventually slain by Artemis.
49. A pointed instrument used to prod into motion.
51. Using speech rather than writing.
52. A baroque musical composition (usually for a keyboard instrument) with full chords and rapid elaborate runs in a rhythmically free style.
54. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
56. A branch of the Tai languages.
57. A form of energy that is transferred by a difference in temperature.
58. Belonging to some prior time.
60. The mission in San Antonio where in 1836 Mexican forces under Santa Anna besieged and massacred American rebels who were fighting to make Texas independent of Mexico.
62. An association of countries in the western hemisphere.
64. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
66. The wife or widow of a czar.
70. Type genus of the Blattellidae.
74. (prefix) Indicating difference or variation.
75. The capital and largest city of Ghana with a deep-water port.
78. Any of various usually white herons having long plumes during breeding season.
79. Tall palm tree bearing coconuts as fruits.

80. The occurrence of a change for the worse.
82. The basic monetary unit of most members of the European Union (introduced in 1999).
83. English actor noted for his portrayals of Shakespeare's great tragic characters (1789-1833).
84. A port city in southwestern Iran.
85. A large quantity of written matter.

DOWN

1. A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
2. Of or pertaining to hearing or the ear.
3. A native or inhabitant of Iran.
4. A nation in northern North America.
5. A guided missile fired from shipboard against an airborne target.
6. A social division of (usually preliterate) people.
7. Any of several related languages of the Celts in Ireland and Scotland.
8. Seal again.
9. Annual grass of Europe and North Africa.
10. A short introductory essay preceding the text of a book.
11. A parliamentary monarchy in southwestern Europe on the Iberian Peninsula.
12. A pale rose-colored variety of the ruby sapphire.
13. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
14. The compass point that is one point east of northeast.
22. Genus of South and Central American heathlike evergreen shrubs.
25. Cuban socialist leader who overthrew a dictator in 1959 and established a socialist state in Cuba (born in 1927).
27. An informal term for a father.
29. A small lump or protuberance.
32. A deep bow.
33. An unimaginably large amount.
35. Delicately iridescent thimble-shaped ctenophores.
36. The brightest star in Virgo.
38. A fully differentiated structural and functional unit in an animal that is specialized for some particular function.
39. A toilet in England.
42. Belgian architect and leader in art nouveau architecture (1861-1947).
45. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
48. An offspring of a Quadroon and a White parent.
50. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
53. A flat tortilla with various fillings piled on it.
55. A telegram sent abroad.
59. Grayish baboon of southern and eastern Africa.
61. (South African) A camp defended by a circular formation of wagons.
63. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
65. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
67. Wild plum of northeastern United States having dark purple fruits with yellow flesh.
68. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
69. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
71. Consistent with fact or reality.
72. A three-tone Chadic language.
73. (physics and chemistry) The smallest component of an element having the chemical properties of the element.
76. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
77. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
81. Half the width of an em.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

A friend may confide in you this day and you may find yourself tossing the information around in your head most of the day. Think about this—perhaps this person confided in you because he or she needs a listening ear, not necessarily for feedback. You will be able to help—patience. Follow your heart. You contribute to harmonious relationships with family members today. Financial problems can be settled. When you invest... Seek investments you believe in—making money can become doubly rewarding. Start by supporting a good cause. Time spent alone this evening can be very healing. Meditate and get your life together before going out. A new group or club offers traveling opportunities and you may very seriously consider joining.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Close personal ties to other people are a focal point for your feelings—marriage and other partnerships could be a key arena for your activities. You may be able to bring the family or perhaps a group of your friends together to enjoy a play, a musical or an art exhibit. Achievement in poetry and art may be possible now. Your whole world may seem trancelike or dreamy. Movies, books and all other forms of escape could prove enjoyable. This is a great time to reflect and understand your own path and any changes you might want to make. Your emotions and the feelings of those around you may be very easy to understand. A special relationship is highlighted this evening. It is your turn for happiness. Romance is possible.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There is time this morning to complete unfinished business, organize your desk and place a few plants around your work space. Make room for an extra sweater and some rain gear... Just in case. This afternoon you may be asked to lead a group in some project where a conservative mind is an important factor. In working with so many different age groups of people, you are still able to mold the group into one mind so that every person can contribute as one. You are wise to encourage each individual in the group for suggestions and help. Working within a group can include trust and fair play and some backing that adds up to a successful end result for your company. A loved one needs your support this evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This is a good time for clear deliberation and problem solving. This is a vital day in which much energy and action is utilized. You could find yourself able to really communicate and get your ideas across to others. You are in a serious frame of mind and may find yourself dealing with matters of much concern and responsibility. A clear-minded insight serves you well. This is a very good time to communicate your goals and put them into words. Perhaps it is time for an employee review, but if not, it is certainly a good time to take your own notes that will help you focus on a few goals. An old neighborhood or school friend may drop by your house this afternoon to give you some material on a class reunion.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may find your attention drawn to subjects like law, politics, education, travel and religion. These are certainly some of the areas in which an emotionally charged drama will be played. Perhaps this is a better time to think and study—you have a real appreciation for ideas. You may find yourself enjoying a long conversation, writing a letter or making a special phone call. You may find yourself being put to good use by your friends, or it could be that circumstances force you to reorganize and be more conservative. All of this should go rather smoothly. Your more commonsense qualities are valuable. A yearning for the stimulation of new ideas and goals is emphasized for now and new friends supply you with plenty about which to think.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Hectic emotional energy, especially this morning, slows you from that long-desired camping trip or out-of-town visit with friends. Patience wins out and you will be on your way soon. Fun and adventure are on the schedule this day. Take a chance on something exciting, creative and fun. Socializing is your talent and you can use it to your best interest—networking. This evening, new energies seem to fill you up with fresh ideas and thoughts. You could be at your most imaginative. New creative endeavors, including writing, will be well worth your time and effort. You could become published before the end of next year. It is easy for you to find the proper motivation to fulfill your ideals or make your dreams into reality. Luck is with you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

The home and family scene are likely to be in a state of change now—this may mean moving, an addition to the family, or such. High-tech equipment impinges on the domestic environment somehow. An eccentric relative attracts some notice. You like for things to go smoothly and sometimes the bumps in the road are difficult to work through but you have the strength and enthusiasm to succeed and not become unsettled. You will do your best to close the gap between any misunderstandings among family members or between friends just now. Close personal ties to other people are a focal point for your feelings—marriage and other partnerships could be a key arena for this. A yearning for adventure stirs in you now.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

At heart, you have a deep sense of responsibility and purpose and this seriousness is genuine and felt by others. Your inner resources and emotions are accentuated. A group discussion may find you stepping in to lend a focus. Expect a sense of support and goodwill from those around you. You may be able to enjoy and value your own life situation today or feel especially kind toward a friend or loved one. A visitor to your home may want to know about a fun sightseeing tour, or a play. Your unique and unusual qualities make you the center of conversation; everything is positive. You may find that others are supportive of your ideas. You could come up with new solutions. The good life and all that comes with it are what you aim for now.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may feel more reflective rather than expressive this morning. A new project is looming before you and a time limit may be involved. You might want to discuss the preliminaries with the most available supervisor. Pulling in a temporary helper may be of some importance. You, however, are good at isolating what doesn't work. You find ways to eliminate any difficulty and you move forward. Tonight you may find yourself helping someone move or caring for children so that friends can have some time alone. One kid fighting with another brings about an opportunity to give an example in right thinking. Joy begins in the mind and can overwhelm negative thinking. Energy follows thought and can have the most positive results.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Family and security are things that rattle your chain more than ever now. These are areas where you make new beginnings and bold moves—things you are willing to fight for... Things in which it pays to be careful. Unconventional hobbies and other forms of self-expression may be enjoyed today. Too much time spent with your own project, however, may play havoc with someone else's plans. Refinement and relationships are the keys to emotional satisfaction for you. Harmony and beauty are deeply satisfying—and the lack of them can be emotionally unsettling. Be sure to set aside time for others today. This may mean an elderly person needs to hear your voice or a young child needs your assistance. Think before you speak!



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your love of truth makes philosophy and religious ideas lifelong habits. You appreciate things of a global or universal level and travel or studies of foreign lands could be a part of this interest. You may enjoy the company of friends this afternoon. Appearances mean little to you and you value honesty and sincerity in friends and partners. This is a time when you may feel very passionate, or during which your feelings, emotions and basic life urges undergo change and transformation. You feel more personal and direct and find that you waste less time with hurt feelings than before. Your home environment, friends and surroundings in general get attention and receive encouragement. Your life finally seems to have harmony and balance.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

An outgoing and very expressive cycle of experience has begun for you at this time. Now more than ever, you want to be admired and appreciated by others, to do and create things that stir their hearts. This is child's play; this is romance; this is taking a chance. This may be a time you find yourself among friends or family that look to you for guidance. Figuring things out takes on special significance for you. A heightened interest in health and diet, as well as an urge to get things organized into a rational system, is a part of this. Much mental busywork goes on today. Friends, group projects and community concerns could play a key role that effects your career direction. Altruism and humanitarian efforts can affect your work and life-path.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Birds

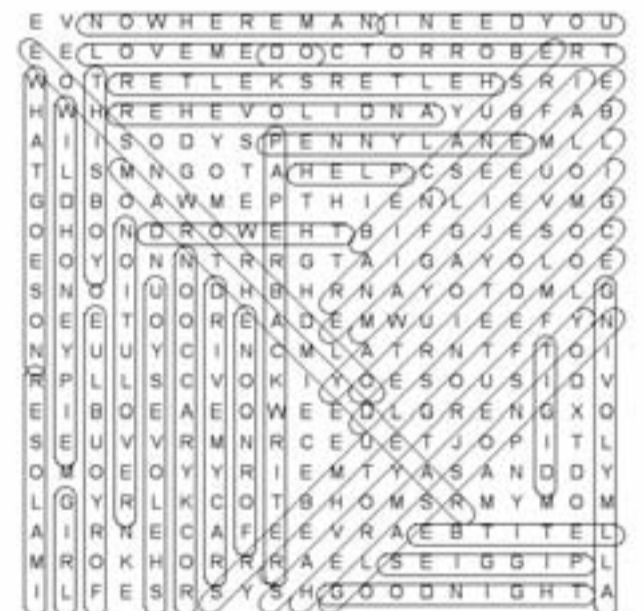
Find and circle all of the birds that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional bird.



- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|
| BLACKBIRD | EAGLE | MARTIN | ROBIN |
| BUDGIE | EMU | MOCKINGBIRD | SEAGULL |
| CANARY | FALCON | MYNA | SPARROW |
| CARDINAL | FINCH | OSTRICH | SWAN |
| CHICKEN | FLAMINGO | OWL | TURKEY |
| CRANE | GOOSE | PARAKEET | VULTURE |
| CROW | HAWK | PARROT | WOODPECKER |
| DOOD | HERON | PELICAN | WREN |
| DOVE | JAY | PIGEON | |
| DUCK | MAGPIE | RAVEN | |

Yesterday's Solution

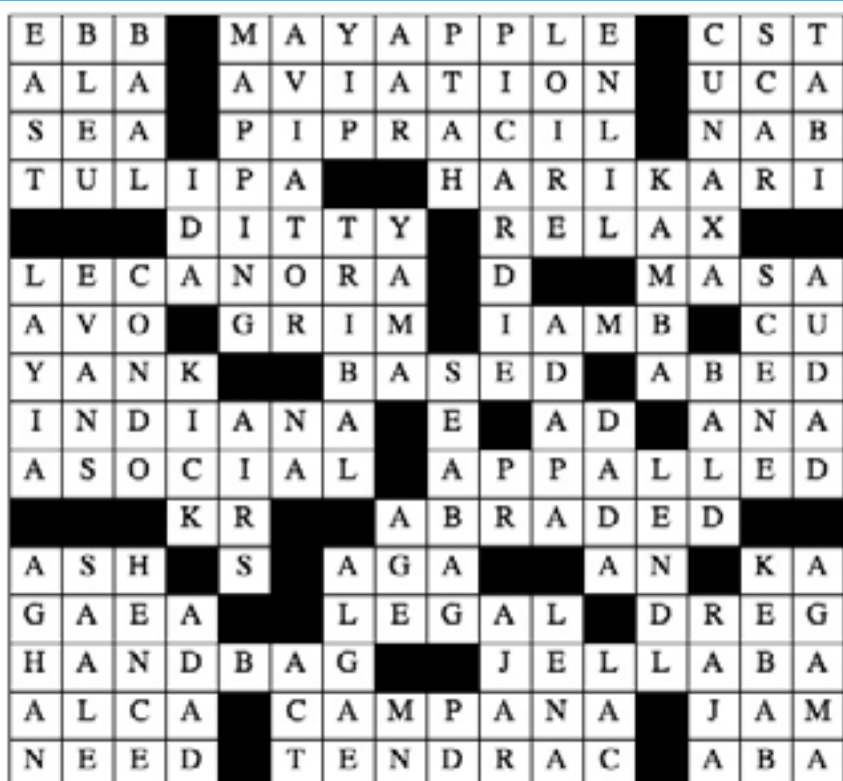
Beatles Songs 2



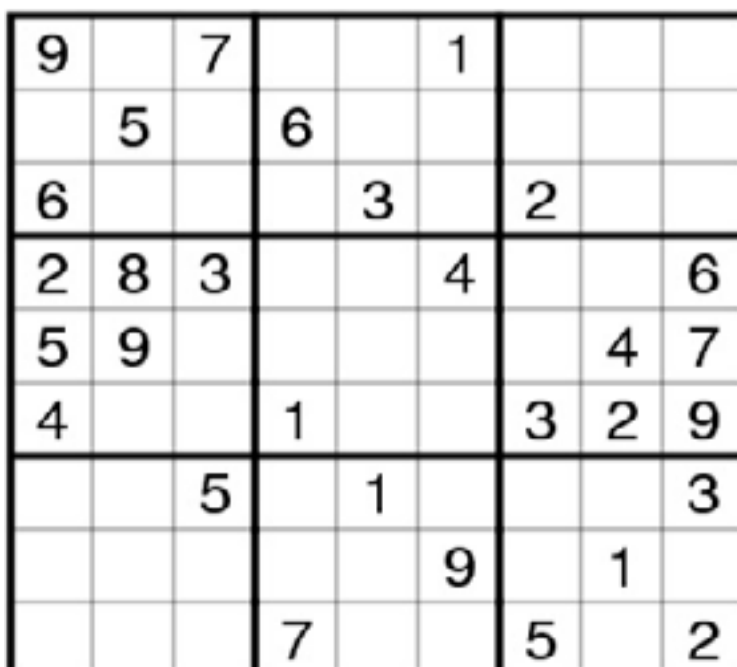
- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| ALL MY LOVING | GIRL | I'M SO TIRED | PIGGIES |
| AND I LOVE HER | GLASS ONION | LET IT BE | RAIN |
| BECAUSE | GOLDEN SLUMBERS | LOVE ME DO | REVOLUTION |
| BLUE JAY WAY | GOOD NIGHT | LOVE YOU TO | ROCKY RACCOON |
| COME TOGETHER | HELP | MAGGIE MAE | SAVOY TRUFFLE |
| DOG IT | HELTER SKELTER | MARTHA MY DEAR | SHE LOVES YOU |
| DOCTOR ROBERT | HER MAJESTY | NOWHERE MAN | THE WORD |
| DRIVE MY CAR | I FEEL FINE | OLD BROWN SHOE | THIS BOY |
| FOR NO ONE | I NEED YOU | PAPERBACK WRITER | WHAT GOES ON |
| FOR YOU BLUE | I'M A LOSER | PENNY LANE | WILD HONEY PIE |

Hidden song: EVERYBODY'S GOT SOMETHING TO HIDE EXCEPT ME AND MY MONKEY

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle | Features



Film Review

As moving as it is colorful, 'Coco' a joy for all



At first, Disney-Pixar's latest, "Coco," sounds a lot like the 2014 Fox film "The Book of Life." Both are animated features steeped in the aesthetics and customs of Day of the Dead: the Mexican tradition of creating elaborate altars, painted skulls and paths of marigolds to welcome the spirits of dead loved ones for a temporary visit to the world of the living. And both films focus on a young boy who follows his musical dreams at the risk of disappointing his family. So it seemed like familiar territory, which made it all the more unexpected to find myself transported into a fabulously colorful, slightly psychedelic and entirely magical world where I was so wrapped up in the story about families connecting across generations that the tears on my cheek took me by surprise. Pixar has always had a knack for tugging at

the heartstrings of grown-ups while delighting younger viewers with good-natured characters and eye-popping visuals. Those elements are also at work here, but not since "Up" has an animated film delved so deeply into the web of relationships woven on the way to old age, nor has Pixar ever looked so closely at a specific cultural tradition.

The result is a rich experience for any audience: a story of family and culture, death and transcendence, all set to vibrant Latin music - including a new song by Oscar winners Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez ("Frozen") - and awash in the brilliant colors and dazzling designs the imaginative talents at Disney and Pixar are known for.

"Coco" centers on Miguel (newcomer Anthony Gonzalez), a 12-year-old with the heart

of a musician born into a family of shoemakers who've banned music for generations. His great-great-grandfather was a guitarist who left his great-great-grandmother alone to raise their young daughter, Coco, and the Riveras forbade all music after that.

A celebration of life

By the time Miguel comes along, Coco is the elderly matriarch of the family: a kind-faced collection of wrinkles who sits quietly in her room all day. Miguel feels disconnected from his family history and resentful that it would prevent him from being like his idol: Ernesto de la Cruz (Benjamin Bratt), Mexico's most beloved musician. As Miguel's family prepares for the Dia de Muertos holiday, stacking a colorful altar with food, flowers and family photos, he defiantly

takes off in pursuit of music, hoping to compete in a neighborhood showcase that would confirm his talents. But his attempts to procure a guitar accidentally lead him across the golden bridge into the realm of the dead.

In this otherworldly place, Miguel uncovers a mystery, connects with a quirky guy named Hector (Gael Garcia Bernal), and meets generations of relatives he's only known through old photos. He encounters magical alebrijes, fantastical spirit animals that help guide the lost. And he realizes that his musical dream could be more meaningful than he thought - especially for Mama Coco - but he'll need his family's support to return to the land of the living.

With "Coco" (which is a bit of a misnomer, since it's really Miguel's journey), director Lee Unkrich ("Toy Story 3") and screenwriter/co-

director Adrian Molina have crafted a timeless and beautiful tale that's classically Pixar: playful, inventive and profound. It's a universal story of love and belonging set in a kaleidoscopic world of brilliant apparitions and lively, well-dressed skeletons. The animation is exceptional: Realistic elements, like Mama Coco's gnarled, arthritic hands, look absolutely lifelike, while the spirit world is populated by buildings and bodies that defy gravity. Like the multicolored, flying tiger-dragon that swoops through Miguel's adventure into the land of spirits, "Coco" is a thrilling and joyous vision, a celebration of life and the loving tradition of the Day of the Dead. "Coco," a Disney-Pixar release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America for "thematic elements." Running time: 109 minutes. Four stars out of four. — AP

Legendary country singer, songwriter Mel Tillis dies

Mel Tillis, the affable longtime country music star who wrote hits for Kenny Rogers, Ricky Skaggs and many others, and overcame a stutter to sing on dozens of his own singles, has died. A spokesman for Tillis, Don Murry Grubbs, said Tillis died early Sunday at Munroe Regional Medical Center in Ocala, Florida. He was 85.

Grubbs said Tillis battled intestinal issues since 2016 and never fully recovered. The suspected cause of death is respiratory failure. Tillis, the father of country singer Pam Tillis, recorded more than 60 albums and had more than 30 top 10 country singles, including "Good Woman Blues," "Coca Cola Cowboy" and "Southern Rain."



In this July 6, 2013, file photo, Mel Tillis performs at the Oklahoma Twister Relief Concert at the Gaylord Family-Oklahoma Memorial Stadium in Norman, Oklahoma. — AP photos



In this Feb. 13, 2012, file photo, country music singer Mel Tillis holds up his 2011 National Medal of the Arts after it was presented to him by President Barack Obama, in the East Room of the White House in Washington.

Among the hits he wrote for others were "Detroit City" for Bobby Bare; "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town," by Rogers and the First Edition; and "Thoughts of a Fool" for George Strait. Bare was a bandmate of Tillis'

in Old Dogs, along with Waylon Jennings and Jerry Reed. Bare said in a statement that he had been friends with Tillis since the late 1950s, when they met in Nashville. "I've lost another fishing buddy and a talented, talented brother," Bare said. "Without Mel and 'Detroit City,' I probably would not have had a career." Country music stars Charlie Daniels, Crystal Gayle, Tanya Tucker, Naomi Judd and Blake Shelton also offered their condolences and talked about their memories of Tillis on social media and in statements from publicists. "He once spent an entire day at his place in Tennessee showing me all the memorabilia he'd gathered over the years where he gave me a pair of his stage boots," Shelton's Twitter account said. "He even took time to talk me through some hard times in my life on a couple phone calls."

Unique blend of warmth and humor

Although his early efforts to get a record deal were rebuffed because of his stutter, he was a promising songwriter in Nashville in the 1950s and 1960s, writing tunes for Webb Pierce and Ray Price. In all, the Country Music Hall of Fame member wrote more than 1,000 songs and in 2012 received a National Medal of Arts for bringing "his unique blend of warmth and humor to the great tradition of country music." He also dabbled in acting, appearing in such feature films as Clint Eastwood's "Every Which Way But Loose," and the Burt Reynolds movies "Cannonball Run I and II" and "Smokey and the Bandit II." He starred in several television movies and briefly had a network TV show, "Mel and Susan Together," with Susan Anton.

In 2007, Tillis became a regular performer on the Grand Ole Opry country music show. "You know what? Another part of the dream has been fulfilled," he said at the time. "It's been a long, hard road." Tillis was raised in Pahokee, Florida, and developed his stutter as a child while being treated for malaria. He dropped out of the University of Florida and instead served in the Air Force and worked on the railroad before relocating to Nashville in 1957.

Musical from an early age, he started performing in the early 1950s with a group called The Westerners, while stationed in Okinawa and serving as a baker in the Air Force. He held a variety of odd jobs before breaking out, including being a truck driver, a strawberry picker, a firefighter on the railroad and milkman, which inspired his breakthrough song. Feeling down one day he began singing to himself, "Oh Lord, I'm tired. Tired of living this way." He turned his lament into "I'm Tired," which became a hit for Webb Pierce. Price, Skaggs, Brenda Lee and hundreds of others would cover his songs.

Model accuses Russell Simmons of sexual misconduct

Model Keri Claussen Khalighi has come forward to accuse Def Jam Records mogul Russell Simmons of sexual misconduct in 1991 when she was 17 years old. In a report Sunday in the Los Angeles Times, Khalighi says that Simmons coerced her to perform a sex act and later penetrated her without her consent in his New York apartment. She said the film producer and director Brett Ratner, who has also been accused by multiple women of sexual harassment, was present. Khalighi said she asked Ratner, then a music video director and Simmons protege, for help.

"I'll never forget the look on his face," she told the Times. "In that moment, the realization fell on me that they were in it together." Simmons, now 60, has denied the allegations in a statement, which he also posted to his Twitter account. He says everything that occurred between himself and Khalighi was completely consensual and with her "full participation." "I'm deeply saddened and truly shocked to learn of Keri's assertions as to what happened over the course of that weekend," Simmons said in the statement. He also detailed his own support of the #MeToo movement and the "brave men and women who have spoken out over the past month." Simmons' state-

ment, issued through his spokesman Eric W. Rose, also included three witness statements in his defense. Two were anonymous and one was from Simmons' former assistant Anthony McNair, who said that he did not notice any visible signs of distress from Khalighi during that time.

Boy's club

The Times report also includes four additional allegations against Ratner, who was previously facing at least six allegations of misconduct from women including actress Olivia Munn. His attorney, Martin Singer, has denied all allegations. Among the new accusers are, Tanya Reid, who was working as a hotel employee in Miami 1994 when she was 18. She says that Ratner, who had asked her if she wanted to appear in a music video he was shooting, exposed himself to her and pressured her into sex acts. Representatives for Ratner did not immediately respond to requests for comment Sunday.

The article also describes a "boy's club" culture among Ratner and Simmons' circle of friends, which includes disgraced writer-director James Toback, who has been accused of sexual misconduct by hundreds of women, Roman Polanski and producer



In this Feb 6, 2015, file photo, hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons presents the Vanguard Award on stage at the 46th NAACP Image Awards in Pasadena. — AP

Robert Evans. Ratner's home in Beverly Hills, Hillhaven Lodge, was a frequent gathering spot and the alleged site of some of the improprieties.

Khalighi told the Times that she was motivated to come forward after reading the Nov. 1 report about Ratner. She says she called Simmons first and "urged him to disclose his past behavior" during a 27-minute conversation in which she says he did not deny her claims. She also says she spoke to Ratner about the matter 15 years ago. "I'm coming out because what I've experienced privately is not matching what they are saying publicly and hypocrisy to me is repugnant," Khalighi said. "It's time for the truth to come out." — AP

Jeffrey Tambor quits 'Transparent'

After two women on the set of "Transparent" accused him of sexual harassment, Emmy-winning actor Jeffrey Tambor announced Sunday he is leaving the Amazon series, the latest Hollywood star embroiled in allegations of misconduct. "Playing Maura Pfefferman on 'Transparent' has been one of the greatest privileges and creative experiences of my life," Tambor told Deadline Hollywood magazine about the transgender role. "What has become clear over the past weeks, however, is that this is no longer the job I signed up for four years ago."

Deadline said the show had already been considering writing off the character played by the US actor, who has also won a Golden Globe for the role, after allegations first emerged against him earlier this month. "I've already made clear my deep regret if any action of mine was ever misinterpreted by anyone as being aggressive, but the idea that I would deliberately harass anyone is simply and utterly untrue," Tambor said. "Given the politicized atmosphere that seems to have afflicted our set, I don't see

how I can return to 'Transparent.'"

Tambor has won critical acclaim for his portrayal of a transgender woman whose family is coming to terms with the transition. The claims against him have been brought by his former assistant, transgender actress Van Barnes, and another transgender actress featured on the show, Trace Lysette. Barnes said her former boss had propositioned her on several occasions, made lewd comments, groped her and threatened to sue her if she made the behavior known. Lysette said Tambor had made lewd remarks of a sexual nature to her repeatedly, and had been "physical" with her at least once. After those claims were made public, Tambor insisted that "I have never been a predator- ever." The accusations against Tambor come amid a surge of claims of sexual harassment leveled at senior male figures in the entertainment, media and political establishments, including Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein and Oscar-winning actor Kevin Spacey. Actress Lena Dunham, the creator of HBO series "Girls," apologized to fans after she backed one of her



In this Sept 18, 2016 file photo, Jeffrey Tambor arrives at the 68th Primetime Emmy Awards at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles. — AP

show's male writers, who has been accused of sexual assault, and cast doubt on the claims. Dunham—who faced serious backlash over the comments—said it was the "wrong time" to make such a statement, adding: "Every woman who comes forward deserves to be heard, fully and completely." — AP

Lifestyle | Gossip



Victoria Beckham won't squeeze herself into a PVC catsuit

The artist formerly known as Posh Spice and Mel C refused to take part in a reunion with the other three members, Geri Horner, Mel B and Emma Bunton, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the release of their debut single 'Wannabe' and first album 'Spice', scuppering plans for new music and a massive concert in Hyde Park in London. In the last few years Victoria, 43, has established herself as one of the leading lights of the fashion world with her eponymous label and she is content to leave her girl group days in the past. Speaking about the possibility of a Spice Girls reunion in an interview on 'This Morning', she said: "It's not happening. At some point you have to know that was great ... Girl power is still out there, and I still believe in it. But I won't be slipping into a PVC catsuit any time soon." When inter-

viewer Alison Hammond cheekily responded, "Just in the bedroom!" Victoria - who is married to David Beckham - replied: "You said that and not me!" Victoria gave a joint interview with Eva Longoria to the UK TV show to talk about the Global Gift Gala charity event that the former 'Desperate Housewives' actress hosted in London at the weekend. The fashion designer always helps her friend with the Gala and she insists she and David, 42, try and instill philanthropic ideals in their four kids, Brooklyn, 18, Romeo, 15, Cruz, 12, and six-year-old Harper. Victoria said: "Harper knows that Mummy and Daddy, and Auntie Eva do things to help other people, and she wants to do that as well. She understands, even at six, that she is very blessed. She's very lucky to have what she has."

SIR PAUL SMITH THINKS KEY TO SUCCESS IS TO NOT BE 'SNOBBY'

The 71-year-old fashion designer has been at the helm of the fashion business for over five decades, and the mogul thinks designers should not act as if they are superior to others if they wish to have longevity in the business. Speaking to Esquire Online, the creative mastermind said: "If you want to be in business for a long time, you can't be snobby or stuck in the mud. You have to just flow with the river. So many people get formulaic. They're so proud that they won't change: 'I do it this way.' No, you don't. You did do it that way, but now you need to do it this way. "I've been here a long time. We've never gone like a rocket. Never borrowed money. We've always done it very gently and very carefully. And slowly, slowly, you build it up." And the entrepreneur has hinted he thinks the business has become much more competitive than ever before. He said: "When I started, the whole idea about being a designer is that you have an idea in your head and your heart, and you hoped somebody liked it. Now it's all about. "Prada are doing this, Gucci are doing that." And everyone's nervous. And it used to be just about: this is what I do. "Where a lot of designers get it horribly wrong is they do things just to get attention from the press. That does a huge disservice to our industry, and it doesn't do any good for themselves most of the time, because people just think it's silly. "A lot of fashion is about having a carrier bag that has a particular branding on it, something that says 'I am rich', or 'I am fashionable', or 'I am part of this club'. In my opinion, that's linked to insecurity."



Ambrosio to appear in her last Victoria's Secret fashion show

The 36-year-old supermodel was tapped to represent the brand in 2000, but after having represented the fashion house for almost 20 years the brunette beauty will be hanging up her angel wings after she graces the runway in this year's showcase, which will take place in Shanghai, China, and will be aired on November 28, and the catwalk icon has decided to bow out of working with the fashion house in future because she wants to spend more quality time with her children Anja, nine, and Noah, five. 'Entertainment Tonight' has reported. Alessandra has forged a great legacy with the lingerie giant, which saw her grace the runway for the label in 2005, and adorn two Fantasy Bras in 2012 and 2014, which marks the first ever time a model has donned the highly coveted garment more than once in the brand's entire history. However,

the Brazilian star has made it known she doesn't want to be in the fashion business "forever", and she felt it was inevitable she would have to stop modeling for Victoria's Secret later down the line. Speaking previously about her career, she said: "I feel the opposite of her. I don't want to go on forever. I know there comes a time that I'll have to hang up my wings, and I'm OK with that. Everyone moves on eventually." Although this month's showcase will be Alessandra's last time in the highly anticipated catwalk show, she has been counting down the days until she slips into a raunchy underwear set. The style muse has shared a string of images of her in the run up to the annual show, including throwback pictures to her sporting black angel wings and matching underwear from a previous show, as well as her en route to china, and her training with fellow models on her Instagram account.

NICOLE SCHERZINGER'S BOYFRIEND PUBLICLY THANKED HER



Grigor Dimitrov, 26, was full of praise for the Pussycat Dolls singer after he clinched the 2017 ATP Singles in London on Sunday with a final win over David Goffin, and he admitted his significant other "deserves quite a bit of credit" for the victory. He said: "I want to thank one person here, my girlfriend Nicole. "She's somewhere hiding. She deserves quite a bit of credit this week, she's been amazing." Nicole, 39, was unable to attend the match at London's O2 Arena because she was filming 'The X Factor', on which she is a judge. The couple are said to have been dating since around July 2015 after the hunk split from fellow tennis star Maria Sharapova. Nicole also broke up with Formula 1 driver Lewis Hamilton in the same year. The 'Don't Hold Your Breath' hitmaker recently admitted making her career a priority in life has left her feeling "lonely" at times, but she is thankful to her pals for being a "great support system". She said: "Anybody who is successful in what they do is making sacrifices. It's juggling and finding the balance. I've absolutely missed out on things in life. It is hard. I'm not going to lie. It can be lonely. I'm always on the road, I'm always by myself. I think anybody in this industry feels lonely. I would say it generally gets harder to find the balance the older you get. Timing is everything. When things are aligned then it will be easier. There's always a sacrifice to be made but it's either worth it or not. "For me, I'm very spiritual. What guides me the most is my purpose. Everything in its own time and to start on track with my purpose. "I've got a great support system around me, a select group of friends. I don't have quantity, that's for sure, I have quality. I've always been more introverted. Gratitude is key."

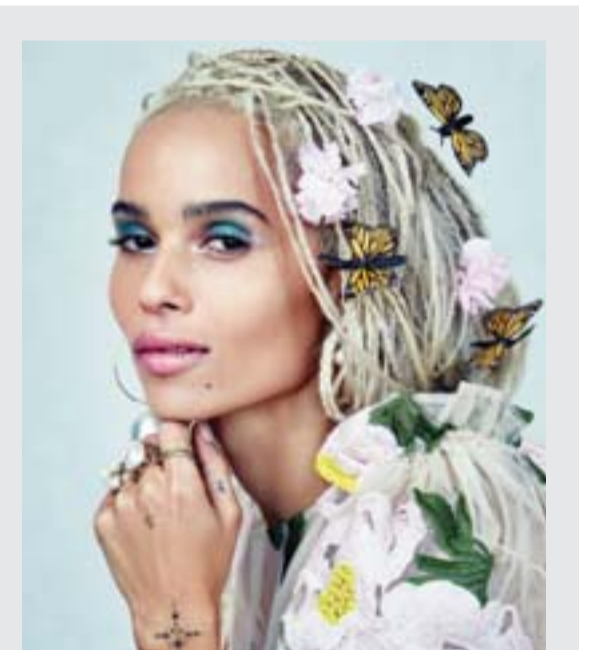
Piven passed lie detector test when questioned on assault

The former 'Entourage' star had previously denied sexual assault accusations alleged by the actress and two other women - Amy Meador and Tiffany Bacon Sourby - and he is now said to have taken a polygraph to try to prove his innocence, and passed all of the tests. According to The Blast, Jeremy took polygraph tests regarding the three claims, and a blanket lie detector test to determine if he had ever assaulted a woman, and he passed with no signs of deception. The publication obtained the lie detector test report relating to Ariane's claims, and the document stated it was to "determine if Mr. Piven had ever 'grabbed' or touched Ms. Ariane Bellamar, without consent or otherwise, on the buttocks and/or breast area, while on the set of 'Entourage' and/or at the Playboy Mansion, approximately five years ago (sic)". The polygraph was administered by



a member of the American Polygraph Association with Chapman Investigations on November 13, and saw Jeremy asked questions such as: "Did you ever 'grab' and/or fondle Ms. Ariane Bellamar's breasts? (sic)", to which he answered "no". He was also asked if he had ever "cornered" Ariane in his trailer "so that

you could 'grab' her breasts and/or buttocks?", and if she had ever been in his trailer on the set of 'Entourage', both of which he also answered "no" to. The concluding notes of the test stated: "After a careful evaluation of all test questions, including relevant, irrelevant and control questions, it is the examiner's analysis and professional opinion that Mr. Piven showed no reactions indicative of deception to any of the relevant questions. The results indicate Mr. Piven "PASSED" as to his answers on all questions." Jeremy had previously vowed to take such a test, insisting the allegations made against him were "absolutely false and completely fabricated". In a statement on Twitter, he said: "Let me begin by saying that the accusations against me are absolutely false and completely fabricated. I would never force myself on a woman. Period."



Zoe Kravitz felt she had to 'protect' her parents

The 28-year-old actress was like a "tiny gatekeeper" trying to keep her father, Lenny Kravitz, and mother, Lisa Bonet - who was married to the 'Fly Away' hitmaker from 1987 to 1993 - safe from bad people because they were "so nice to everyone". She said: "I was like a tiny gatekeeper trying to protect my parents, especially my dad, who's so nice to everyone. He lets people in. But I have a fiery side." Zoe admits she is more of a "confrontational character" than her "patient" 'Big Little Lies' alter-ego Bonnie Carlson, and she felt "warm and fuzzy" starring in a series alongside so many talented actors. She said: "She's a lot more patient than I am, and a lot more passive. I love Bonnie. She's the type just to sit back and let things happen organically. I'm more of a confrontational character. "I think we were all thrilled to be surrounded by so many wonderful women telling such an intriguing story. It's very rare to work with and be around such supportive women. Not that men aren't supportive, but it's just that women are more vocal about the way they feel. "It was all, 'That was beautiful work,' and, 'That was a wonderful scene.' It really made me feel warm and fuzzy." The 'Mad Max: Fury Road' star admitted she has always wanted to be an actress even before she knew what her parents did, but had to work "very hard" to prove herself as a talent in her own right rather than someone who is offered roles because of their famous family. Speaking to Stella magazine, she added: "I've wanted to be an actor from a young age. From when I was six or seven I fell in love with films like 'The Wizard of Oz' and 'Grease', and I would always perform for my parents and grandparents. "I wasn't even fully aware of the extent to which my family was involved in the entertainment industry. It was just a natural thing for me."

Gwyneth Paltrow has filed case against stalker

The 45-year-old actress is seeking the protective order against a 35-year-old man who has previously targeted stars including Kim Kardashian West and Ivanka Trump. He is currently being held in jail after being arrested by police over three outstanding warrants. The Blast reports that it is currently unclear what the man did to lead Gwyneth to file her protective order but he "has a history of harassing his targets over social media and through email". This is not the first time Gwyneth has been targeted by an obsessive fan. In 2016, she testified in court about her alleged stalker, Dante Soiu - who was previously found not guilty of stalking Gwyneth by reason of insanity in 2000 and sent to a mental

institution for several years. However, after his release he was accused of sending the actress up to 66 letters between 2009 and 2015, which she found "disturbing". Mr Soiu - who was accused of stalking the actress for 17 years - denied all charges. Gwyneth's testimony referred to letters and packages dating back to 1999 which she received from Soiu and contained pornography, earrings and a statement that he wanted to "excise her sin with a scalpel". He also said he wanted to marry her. Deputy District Attorney Wendy Segall said that Soiu has shattered the mother-of-two's sense of security. His lawyer said Soiu has simply written letters to Paltrow, and that recent letters haven't included pornography.



Lifestyle | Gossip

Nick Jonas

hopes to be best man at brother's wedding



The 28-year-old DNCE singer is in the early stages of organizing his special day after popping the question to actress Sophie Turner earlier this year, and his younger brother and former Jonas Brother band mate is ready to take on the important role to help him with his planning. When asked if he knows who will be the best man, Nick said: "I think my brother Kevin, when he got married, he had all of us be the best men. That's kind of the diplomatic approach, but I don't know. It's up to him." The 'Jealous' singer, 25, would be happy in any role Joe decides to give him, including being the wedding singer, although he isn't overly keen about the idea as it won't give him time to "dance [his] a** off." Speaking to 'Entertainment Tonight', he said: "If he wants me to sing, I'll sing, but I kind of just want to be able to enjoy the night and dance my a** off." It comes after Nick previously labeled Joe and Sophie's relationship as "beautiful", and claimed his brother had found the love of his life in the 'Game of Thrones' star. He said: "I can tell you that he found his partner and love of his life. That's all that matters. It's a beautiful thing." Joe and Sophie, 21, announced their engagement back in October by posting photos of her ring on Instagram, and Nick later posted the pic on his Instagram complete with words of praise for the pair. He wrote: "Ahh! Congratulations to my brother... and sister in law to be on your engagement. I love you both so much.(sic)" Meanwhile, Sophie previously admitted she and Joe are trying to keep their romance "private". She said: "I'm in a relationship, but it's a very private relationship. I'm happier than I've been in a very long time. "I very much isolated myself for a while and forgot what was fun. Going out with friends, going out to eat, not really having a care."



David Cassidy

is reportedly out of his coma

The 67-year-old actor was rushed to hospital last week after suffering from liver and kidney failure, and whilst he was placed into a medically induced coma upon admission to the hospital, it has now been claimed that over the weekend he regained consciousness. It was previously reported that David's family, including son Beau Cassidy, ex-wife Sue Shifrin - whom he was married to from 1991 to 2016, and with whom he has Beau - and brother Patrick Cassidy had rushed to the Florida hospital to be by his side, and sources say the star was "delighted" to see his loved ones. A source told People magazine: "There had been many family issues because of his alcoholism, but they are all reuniting in support of him. He was delighted to see them." The 'Partridge Family' star - who also has daughter Katie Cassidy with Sherry William - is said to be in need of a liver transplant, but insiders believe the search for a healthy organ is "futile". One source said previously: "There's really no issue anymore for a transplant. It's futile." Whilst another added: "It's looking grim." This comes as the latest health scare for David, who revealed earlier this year he was battling with dementia, which is a persistent disorder of the mental processes caused by brain disease and marked by memory disorders and personality changes. The 'Daydreamer' singer took to his website to share a touching message where he thanked his fans for supporting him throughout his career, and for sending "messages of concern and care" during his struggle with the illness.

GOMEZ PERFORMS FOR FIRST TIME SINCE KIDNEY TRANSPLANT

The 25-year-old singer wowed the star-studded audience with an emotional performance of 'Wolves' - with collaborator Marshmello joining her on stage - after being introduced by Julia Michaels as "one of the most incredible women" she knows at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles on Sunday night. The 'Fetish' hitmaker also used the ceremony to show off her new beach blonde hairdo. Sharing a picture of her newly-dyed hair on Instagram, she captioned the post: "so i am blonde now (sic)" And after reportedly rekindling her romance with ex-boyfriend Justin Bieber - following her split from The Weeknd - the 'Sorry' hitmaker appears to approve of her new do as he hit the like button on the photo. Justin and Selena - who dated on an off from 2011 to 2015 - are believe to have reconciled after recently spending



time together, and she is said to have "always had feelings" for the pop star. An insider said recently: "Selena and Justin are back together. "Selena and

The Weeknd just fizzled and ended amicably — it wasn't dramatic and it wasn't about Justin. But Selena always had feelings for Justin." However,

Selena's pals are said to be hoping she treads carefully with the 23-year-old star because she is "in a good place" after undergoing her transplant. The insider added: "Her friends want her to be cautious because she has been in such a good place post-surgery." The news comes after Selena and The Weeknd - whose real name is Abel Tesfaye - called time on their 10-month romance in October. A source close to the situation previously revealed it was the 'I Feel It Coming' hitmaker who instigated their split. The pair are said to have been so busy they'd rarely seen each other in months and had barely been speaking over the phone. The break-up is said to be completely unrelated to Selena hanging out with Justin once again. Though, despite this, recent reports have suggested Justin has always been seen as Selena's "soulmate".



Aguilera

hopes she made Whitney Houston 'proud'

The 36-year-old singer paid tribute to the iconic singer - who passed away in February 2012 aged 48 - at the annual ceremony by performing a number of songs from her 1992 movie 'The Bodyguard' in honour of the film's 25th anniversary. Clips from the movie, which also starred Kevin Costner, were played out on the screen as Christina sang 'I Will Always Love You', followed by 'I Have Nothing', 'Run To You' and 'I'm Every Woman', earning a standing ovation from the audience at the end. Christina later thanked Whitney's "beautiful family" for giving her permission to perform the tracks, admitting the segment was a "dream come true". In a video posted on Twitter, she said: "To the AMAs to Whitney's beautiful family, thank you so much for this incredible opportunity. Thank you so much for making a little girl's dream come true. I've had the time of my life. "I hope I did you

proud Whitney. Love you forever." Christina - who has son Max, nine, with her ex-husband Jordan Bratman, and Summer, three, with fiancé Matthew Rutler - also shared images of her on stage on her Instagram account. The string of photographs were captioned: "honoring an angel @amas this Sunday @amas tonight at 8/7c on abc #WhitneyxChristina (sic)." The 'Candyman' singer later shared a picture of her sprawled out across a bed, wearing a black mesh embroidered bodice, and hinted she was still overwhelmed by the moment. She titled the post: "still reeling... (sic)." And following her performance, fellow musicians took to social media to praise Christina, including Pink, who admitted she is "in awe" of the star. The 'What About Us' artist tweeted: "Christina f***ing killed it tonight for one of our favorite singers ever. This about Whitney, and I am in awe of Christina's talent. (sic)"

ROBERT PATTINSON REVEALS THE SECRET TO HIS SUCCESS

The 31-year-old Hollywood thunk joked that before he got his big break as vampire Edward Cullen in 'The Twilight Saga' he was terrible at auditions. Speaking at Vulture Festival Los Angeles, he said: "All you have to do is f**k up auditions for five years and then get 'Twilight'." Pattinson played Cullen in five films

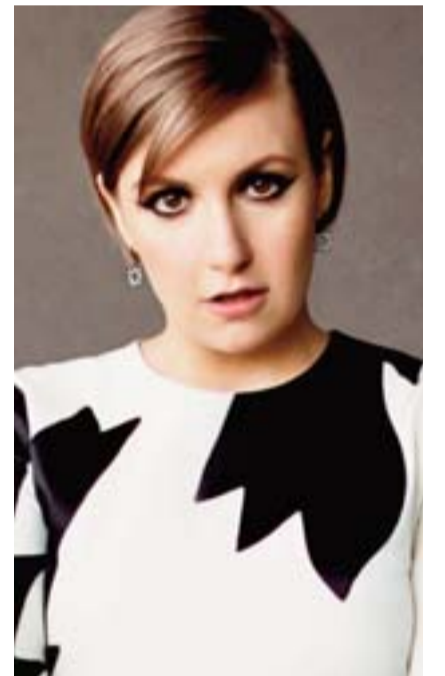


and those performances and his real-life romance with his co-star Kirsten Stewart - who played Edward's human lover Bella Swan in the fantasy series - made him one of the most famous men in the world. Robert also opened up about his new movie 'Good Time', which he called "the best story ever". He explained: "This guy lived in this hole in the ground and burrowed through into someone's

house. He would sneak into the daughter's bedroom every day. It was a parent's absolute nightmare. He lived in a hole attached to these people's house." Robert had to lose a considerable amount of weight for the role and he was inspired by his co-star Guy Pearce from the 2014 movie 'The Rover'. He said: "I remember going into his room and there were hundreds of cans of tuna. But, by the end, you smell very strange." Meanwhile, Robert recently revealed that he missed out on going to college because of 'Harry Potter'. The actor was only 17 when he starred in 2005 film 'Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire' as student wizard Cedric Diggory, but revealed due to the filming schedule he had to make a choice as to whether to continue his studies or appear in the hit movie franchise. Pattinson picked the latter and it set him on a path to movie stardom and his most famous role in the 'Twilight Saga'. He said: "It was so nice to be a part of it. That, more than anything, changed my life. It's the reason I didn't go to college. It went so far over schedule, I couldn't go. It was supposed to be four months, but it ended up being 10 or 11. I'd turn up to set every day but not work for weeks at a time. "I was 17 and I was the only person who wasn't in school. I'd just hang about." — Bangshowbiz

Dunham sorry for defending 'Girls' writer accused of assault

After Murray Miller was accused of assaulting actress Aurora Perrineau when she was just 17, Lena and 'Girls' co-creator Jenni Konner issued a statement supporting their friend and claiming that the allegations were "one of the three per cent of assault cases that are misreported every year". They said: "During the windfall of deeply necessary accusations over the last few months in Hollywood, we have been thrilled to see so many women's voices heard and dark experiences in this industry justified. It's a hugely important time of change and, like every feminist in Hollywood and beyond, we celebrate. But during every time of change there are also incidences of the culture, in its enthusiasm and zeal, taking down the wrong targets. We believe, having worked closely with him for more than half a decade, that this is the case with Murray Miller. While our first instinct is to listen to every woman's story, our insider knowledge of Murray's situation makes us confident that sadly this accusation is one of the 3% of assault cases that are misreported every year. It is a true shame to add to that number, as outside of Hollywood women still struggle to be believed. We stand by Murray and this is all we'll be saying about this issue." However, after they were widely slammed for their remarks, Lena issued an apology on her Twitter page. She said: "I never thought I would issue a statement publicly supporting someone accused of sexual assault but I naively believed it was



important to share my perspective on my friend's situation as it has transpired behind the scenes over the last few months. "I now understand that it was absolutely the wrong time to come forward with such a statement and I am so sorry. Every woman who comes forward deserves to be heard, fully and completely, and our relationship to the accused should not be part of the calculation anyone makes when examining her case."

Morrissey claims Kevin Spacey has been 'needlessly attacked'



The 58-year-old singer insists it is "ridiculous" that the Hollywood actor was replaced in forthcoming film 'All the Money in the World' in the wake of sexual harassment allegations made against him. 'Star Trek: Discovery' star Anthony Rapp has alleged 'The Usual Suspects' actor tried to seduce him at a party in his house in 1986 when he was just 14, a claim which the 'American Beauty' star said he was "beyond horrified" to hear, but didn't remember. When asked what he thought about Kevin being replaced in the movie, Morrissey told German newspaper Der Spiegel: "I think that's ridiculous. As far as I know, he was in the bedroom with a 14-year-old. "Kevin Spacey was 26, the boy 14. In that case, you ask yourself where the parents of the boy were? You ask yourself whether the boy sensed what could happen. "I don't know how things are with you, but I have never been in situations like these in my youth. Never. "I was always aware of

what could happen. If you're in somebody's bedroom, you need to be aware of where that could lead. "Because of that, all of that doesn't seem very credible to me. To me it seems as if Spacey was needlessly attacked." As well as Spacey - who offered an apology over the alleged incident, despite insisting he didn't remember it - Morrissey has also said to have spoken about the multiple sexual misconduct allegations made against producer Harvey Weinstein - but insisted he "hates" sexual assault. Speaking about stars who have claimed they were victims of incidents in hotel rooms with the movie mogul, Morrissey added: "The people know exactly what is happening and they are playing along. "Afterwards they find it embarrassing or they didn't like it. And then they turn it around and say, 'I've been attacked, I've been surprised, I was dragged into the room.' "But if everything had gone just fine and made possible a great career, they wouldn't talk about it."

BRUNO MARS WINS TOP PRIZE AT AMAS ON A NIGHT OF DIVAS



Diana Ross accepts the lifetime achievement award surrounded by friends and family at the American Music Awards at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles.



DJ Khaled poses in the press room.

Bruno Mars took the top prize at the American Music Awards on Sunday at a show that paid glowing tribute to legendary divas Diana Ross and the late Whitney Houston. Mars, the retro star who found fresh success with the funky beats and R&B harmonies of his latest album "24K Magic," accepted Artist of the Year with a brief but enthusiastic speech recorded in a moving minivan, as Mars explained he was traveling.

Unveiled at a made-for-television gala in Los Angeles, the American Music Awards select winners based on fan voting, unlike the more prestigious Grammys which are decided by professionals. The awards presented a lifetime achievement award to 73-year-old Ross, the towering voice of Motown, who ended the show with a medley of her hits starting with gay anthem "I'm Coming Out."

Ross-whose daughter, "Black-ish" television series star Tracee Ellis Ross, was the awards' host-was introduced by a video from Barack and Michelle Obama, with the former president revealing that the Motown great's music was still frequently on rotation at their post-White House home.

The awards also honored Houston to mark 25 years since her blockbuster film and soundtrack "The Bodyguard," which featured her classic cover of Dolly Parton's "I Will Always Love You." Houston, 48, was found dead in her hotel bathroom in February 2012 on the eve of the Grammy Awards. A coroner ruled that she died of accidental drowning, with cocaine and heart disease listed as contributing factors.

Christina Aguilera signed up for the daunting task of doing justice to Houston and reached the high notes with flair despite briefly veering off-key. But the night's most memorable performance came from Pink who dangled off the edge of a 54-story building. Pink, singing "Beautiful Trauma" on a headset, was attached



BTS performs "DNA" at the American Music Awards.

by rope to a high floor of the LA Live hotel and entertainment complex as she slid acrobatically with dancers on her side and above.

Pleas for tolerance

The broadcast switched to Washington where Lady Gaga was putting on an intricately choreographed performance of "The Cure" with pyrotechnics raining from above. Her concert was later interrupted as she was told she won Favorite Female Artist. A visibly moved Gaga thanked fans and voiced her familiar plea

for tolerance, saying, "Remember that if you feel different or you feel not understood, don't you dare give up."

Tracee Ellis Ross had said the awards were showcasing "earth-shattering, groundbreaking women." But the focus came after criticism that the awards for the first time had no women in contention for Artist of the Year, despite the national spotlight on sexism in the entertainment industry. At a time of intense tensions in the United States, the show began with a call against violence and hate but avoided overt

mentions of President Donald Trump. The awards opened with a tribute on politically safe ground-honoring first responders to emergencies across the United States. Pink-on the ground rather than above-and Kelly Clarkson serenaded assembled first responders with a cover of R.E.M.'s "Everybody Hurts," a track off the rockers' influential "Automatic for the People" album which came out 25 years ago last month. In one of the show's most poignant moments, the award for alternative rock act went to Linkin Park, whose frontman

Chester Bennington killed himself in July after years of struggling with depression and substance abuse. To a standing ovation, bandmate Mike Shinoda dedicated the prize to Bennington. "All of you tonight, whether you're a fan or an artist, I want you to take a moment to appreciate what you've got and make Chester proud," he said. — AFP



Shawn Mendes performs "There's Nothing Holdin' Me Back".



Demi Lovato performs onstage.



Ciara presents the award for favorite song rap/hip-hop.



Niall Horan accepts the award for new artist of the year.

MUSICIANS UNITE AT AMAS IN WAKE OF TUMULTUOUS YEAR

The 2017 American Music Awards marked a night of unison, positive vibes and American pride as musicians spoke about coming together in a year dominated by natural disasters, violence and divisive politics. Kelly Clarkson and Pink kicked off the three-hour show Sunday with a performance honoring those affected by tragic events of the year, from hurricanes to hate crimes. First responders stood behind Jamie Foxx, who gave a heartfelt speech before the pop stars sang R.E.M.'s "Everybody Hurts."

This year "was a year that tested our faith. In these moments of crisis, heroes emerged," he said. "As this year comes to a close, we look forward to 2018 with hope ... together we can unite as a people and a nation." "Black-ish" actress Tracee Ellis Ross said the show - taking place in the wake of multiple sexual allegations against powerful men in Hollywood, the media, business and politics - would honor women who "own our experiences, our bodies and our lives." "This is the country I know, which is of powerful women, talking about our women, talking about empowering our LGBTQ youth," said Dan Reynolds of the band Imagine Dragons, which won favorite pop/rock duo or group. "May we continue to progress as a nation as one of love and equality. No divide. There's been way too much of that this last year."

Gaga in tears

Before her performance, Demi Lovato said, "There's so much hate in this world. We have to rise above and never say sorry for who you are." And while Lady Gaga performed "The Cure," a song about healing, she told the audience: "Who's gonna be there? We got to be there for each other America. Hands up!" Gaga sang from her concert in Washington, DC. Later in the show, she was in tears when she was named favorite female pop/rock artist. "If you feel different ... don't you dare give up on who you are," she said.

Bruno Mars was also not in attendance at

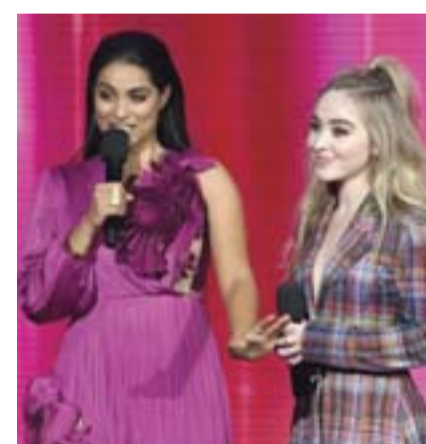


Pink (L) and Kelly Clarkson perform onstage.

the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles. Mars, who is on tour in South America, picked up seven awards, including artist of the year. "I wish I could be partying with y'all," said Mars, who appeared in a video. Iconic entertainer Diana Ross was honored with Lifetime Achievement Award, and she received touching video messages from Barack and Michelle Obama, and Taylor Swift. The 73-year-old was cheerful and energetic as she ran through well-known songs onstage like a veteran, singing "I'm Coming Out" and "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," among other hits, with her signature big hair. Foxx, Berry Gordy, Smokey Robinson and others sang along, while some of Ross' grandchildren danced onstage near the end of the performance. "This is all about love," said Ross, who had several members of her family standing behind her. "This says it all. This is my family."

Tributes and inspirations

Pink was also impressive as she continued to show her athleticism and acrobatic skills during a second performance at the AMAs, performing from the side of a high-rise building alongside aerial dancers. The K-pop group BTS, who have a feverish and fanatic social media following, earned the night's loudest applause after they performed their song, "DNA." Another highlight of the night came when Linkin Park -



Lilly Singh (L) and Sabrina Carpenter speak onstage.



Host Tracee Ellis Ross speaks during the show.

whose lead singer Chester Bennington killed himself earlier this year - won favorite alternative rock artist. "We want to dedicate this award to him, to his memory, to his talent, to his sense of humor, to his joy," band member Mike Shinoda said onstage. "I want you guys to take a moment to appreciate what you've got and make Chester proud." Selena Gomez, who had a kidney transplant this year due to her struggle with lupus, sang "Wolves" while lying on the floor in a short nightgown. Her knees, hands and forehead



Christina Aguilera performs onstage during the 2017 American Music Awards at Microsoft Theater. — AFP/AP photos

covered in faux bruises and blood.

Christina Aguilera was shaky when she sang a medley of Whitney Houston's songs to honor the 25th anniversary of Houston's film, "The Bodyguard." The Man, who sang their pop hit "Feel It Still," opened their performance with the words: "No computers up here, just live instruments." And rapper Macklemore gave his grandmother a birthday shout out at the end of his performance. Like Mars, Keith Urban also won multiple awards, including favorite country album, country male artist and country song. "Absolutely you should be sharing these, my love," the country singer said as "This Is Us" actor Justin Hartley passed two of the trophies to Urban's wife, actress Nicole Kidman, who sat in the audience. Shawn Mendes won favorite adult contemporary artist, beating Mars and Ed Sheeran. "Ed and Bruno are basically the two reasons I started singing," he said.

Former One Direction singer Niall Horan won new artist of the year; the Chainsmokers were named favorite electronic dance artist; and Luis Fonsi, Daddy Yankee and Justin Bieber won collaboration of the year for the hit song "Despacito." DJ Khaled won favorite rap/hip-hop song for "I'm the One," his No. 1 hit featuring Bieber, Quavo, Chance the Rapper and Lil Wayne. While the performers at the AMAs were evenly split between men and women, the nominees were not - a reflection of the year in pop music where male acts dominated. — AP

A list of the winners at the 2017 American Music Awards

- Artist of the year: Bruno Mars.
- New artist of the year: Niall Horan.
- Collaboration of the year: Luis Fonsi, Daddy Yankee and Justin Bieber, "Despacito."
- Video of the year: Bruno Mars, "That's What I Like."
- Tour of the year: Coldplay.
- Favorite pop/rock male artist: Bruno Mars.
- Favorite pop/rock female artist: Lady Gaga.
- Favorite pop/rock duo or group: Imagine Dragons.
- Favorite country male artist: Keith Urban.
- Favorite country female artist: Carrie Underwood.
- Favorite country duo or group: Little Big Town.
- Favorite rap/hip-hop artist: Drake.
- Favorite soul/R&B male artist: Bruno Mars.
- Favorite soul/R&B female artist: Beyonce.
- Favorite alternative rock artist: Linkin Park.
- Favorite adult contemporary artist: Shawn Mendes.
- Favorite Latin artist: Shakira.
- Favorite contemporary inspirational artist: Lauren Daigle.
- Favorite electronic dance music artist: The Chainsmokers.
- Top soundtrack: "Moana."
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Diana Ross.

Lifestyle | Features



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



This image released by Lionsgate shows Jacob Tremblay, left, and Julia Roberts in a scene from "Wonder."

'JUSTICE LEAGUE' DISAPPOINTS IN US WITH \$96 MILLION OPENING

Only in the modern era of superhero films could a \$96 million opening weekend be considered anything less than impressive. But that's the situation Warner Bros. and DC's "Justice League" find themselves in. The big-budget superhero mashup came in well under expectations, which had pegged it for a \$110 million launch in North American theaters. If studio estimates hold, it will also have the dubious distinction of being the lowest-opening film in the DC Extended Universe.

It has been a rollercoaster for the DC Universe since "Man of Steel" kicked off the comic book franchise in 2013, with films battling high expectations, critical reviews and the impossible standard of competing against the Marvel Cinematic Universe. "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" may have been a critical dud in early 2016, but it still opened to \$166 million and went on to net \$873.3 million worldwide by the end of its run.

"Justice League" comes on the heels of the widely well-received "Wonder Woman," the first DC Extended Universe film to score with both critics and audiences. It reunites Ben Affleck's Batman and Gal Gadot's Wonder Woman to fight a new threat facing earth while introducing new characters

like Ezra Miller's The Flash, Jason Momoa's Aquaman and Ray Fisher's Cyborg. "Justice League" didn't impress critics, but neither did "Batman v Superman" or "Suicide Squad," which still managed to earn \$133.7 million out of the gates.

Big vacation week

Warner Bros is remaining optimistic about "Justice League's" prospects, even with the lower than expected launch against a production budget that's reported to be in the \$250 million to \$300 million range, which doesn't include marketing expenses. "I did have a higher expectation for the three days," said Jeff Goldstein, who heads up domestic distribution for Warner Bros. "(But) this is a big vacation week, and we have an opportunity to get a big audience to see us in a different pattern."

“Clearly there is interest in the movie”

Goldstein said he is also encouraged by a few factors, including the overall B+ CinemaScore, the fact that women, who accounted for 42 percent of the audience, gave it an A-overall, and that Saturday earnings were up from Friday's. "Clearly there is interest in the movie," Goldstein said.

"Justice League" pulled most of its weight abroad, where it launched to \$185.5 million from 65 markets, boosting the worldwide debut to \$281.5 million.

One film that did have a heroic showing this weekend is "Wonder," an adaptation of R.J. Palacio's novel about a child with a facial deformity that stars Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson and Jacob Tremblay.

The family-friendly drama opened in second place with \$27.1 million against a \$20 million production budget and could be on its way to becoming a sleeper hit. Lionsgate distributed the film, which was

financed and produced by Participant Media.

"Any time you have a big superhero movie opening, a movie like 'Wonder' could be overshadowed. But it's one of the brightest spots of the weekend," said Paul Dergarabedian, a senior media analyst for comScore. "This could be a \$100 million movie as people get the word out." Disney and Marvel's "Thor: Ragnarok" fell to third place in weekend three with \$21.8 million, bringing its North American total to \$247.4 million. "Daddy's Home 2" took fourth with \$14.8 million and "Murder on the Orient Express" landed in fifth with \$13.8 million. Both are in their second weekend in theaters.

Opening outside of the top 10, the faith-based animated film "The Star," from Sony's AFFIRM label, took sixth place with \$10 million. And both "Lady Bird" and "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" continue to thrive in their expansions. The Thanksgiving holiday should not be discounted either in its potential to boost a film's earnings, and the only, albeit formidable, competition will be from Disney and Pixar's latest "Coco." "Thanksgiving is the perfect second weekend for any movie," Dergarabedian said. "Including 'Justice League.'" — AP

India ruling party member offers bounty for director, star

A member of India's Hindu nationalist ruling party has offered a 100 million rupee (\$1.5 million) reward to anyone who beheads the lead actress and the director of the yet-to-be-released Bollywood film "Padmavati" over its alleged handling of the relationship between a Hindu queen and a Muslim ruler.

Suraj Pal Amu, a Bharatiya Janata Party leader from the northern state of Haryana, offered the bounty against actress Deepika Padukone and filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali on Sunday. The film's producers postponed the release of the film, which was set to be in theaters Dec. 1, the same day. Speaking at a public rally that was reported by several local news outlets, Amu also added that the film would not be allowed to release at all.

"Padmavati" is based on a 16th century Sufi epic poem, "Padmavat," a fictional account of a brave and beautiful Rajput queen who chose to kill herself rather than be captured by the Muslim sultan of Delhi, Alauddin Khilji. Over centuries of its retelling, the epic has come to be seen as history, even though there is little historical evidence. Padukone plays the role of Padmini, the legendary queen who committed "jauhar," the medieval Rajput practice in which women of royal households walked into funeral fires to embrace death over the dishonor of being taken captive. "Padmavati" has been in trouble since the beginning of the year, with fringe groups in the western state of Rajasthan attacking the film's set, threatening to burn down theaters that show it and even physically attacking Bhansali in January.

Distorted history

Most of the anger at the film appears to stem from allegations that Bhansali has distorted history by filming a



Members of India's Rajput community hold placards as they protest against the release of Bollywood film "Padmavati" in Mumbai.

romantic dream sequence between the main protagonists of the film. Bhansali has denied the allegations. Earlier this month, the head of the Rajput Karni Sena in Rajasthan said Padukone should have her nose cut - a symbol of public humiliation - for being part of a film that allegedly insulted the famed queen. India's 1.3 billion-strong democracy is the largest in the world, but despite significant economic progress over the last few decades its politics are held hostage by a complex mix of religion and caste. Books and movies have found themselves at the receiving end of threats of violence and bans because they either offend one religious or caste group, or are deemed offensive to



In this June 25, 2016 file photo, Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone poses for photographers at the International Indian Film Academy Rocks Green Carpet for the 17th Edition of IIFA Weekend & Awards in Madrid, Spain.

Indian culture in general. In the past, India's film censor board rejected the erotic drama "Fifty Shades of Grey," and Hollywood movies that appear on Indian screens are routinely scrubbed of sex scenes. "The Da Vinci Code" was banned in the Indian state of Goa, which has a large Christian population, because religious groups objected.

In 2014, the publishing house Penguin India pulled from shelves and destroyed all copies of American historian Wendy Doniger's "The Hindus: An Alternative History" after protests and a lawsuit from a Hindu right-wing group. The group's main objection was that the book described Hindu mythological texts as fictional. India-born writer Salman Rushdie's book "The Satanic Verses" has been banned here since 1998, since many Muslims consider it blasphemous. Rushdie was forced to cancel a 2012 appearance at the Jaipur Literary Festival amid protests and threats by prominent Muslim clerics. — AP

Women-only festival for Sweden after rape complaints

A Swedish comedian announced Sunday the launch of a women-only music festival, after the country's largest event was cancelled following a string of sexual assault and rape complaints. Organiser Emma Knyckare said the two-day music festival called Statement will be held next summer in the western city of Gothenburg and will allow women to party and drink "without having to look over your shoulder".

"Together we are making a statement against sexual assaults by creating a safe space for women, non-binary and trans people that want to attend festivals and feel secure at the same time," the radio host tweeted. "We don't think this is too much to ask for!" It comes after organisers of Bravalla announced they were cancelling the 2018 event after police received four rape and 23 sexual assault reports at the festival in July.

In 2016 local media also reported that five women were allegedly raped at the four-day camping festival, the largest in Sweden, attended by thousands of people each year. Statement organisers explained the launch of the festival on its website. Under the heading "Will it not make things worse?", organisers explain their long-term goal is to shut down the event. "Our wish is that a festival like Statement, as a free zone from sexual assaults, would not be necessary," it says on its website. "But sadly society keeps proving that this is needed, and that is why we are creating this festival." Organisers have already been forced to apologise for previously describing the festival as "dude free" - a term which was criticised for not including transgender men. — AFP

Josh Gad on 'Frozen', Christmas and the wonder of childhood

When "Frozen" was being planned five years ago, its star Josh Gad was relatively unknown and its writers' grandest ambition was simply to tell a story that "didn't suck." Now, Gad is a household name and Disney's movie is the highest-grossing animated feature in history, its infectious refrain of "Let It Go" ringing out in homes worldwide all year long.

The 36-year-old returns with his lovable magical snowman character in a new Disney short, "Olaf's Frozen Adventure," which premieres in the US on Tuesday, to be shown before Pixar's "Coco." "Olaf is such a refreshing character because there's this pureness, this naivete about him, this childlike wonderment," Gad told AFP in an interview at Disney Animation Studios in Burbank, California.

"It is very much at odds with a lot of the cynical things that we see in our daily lives and on screen." "Frozen," directed by Jennifer Lee and Chris Buck, told the story of newly-crowned Queen Elsa (Idina Menzel), who cannot control her special powers to turn things into ice, cursing her home with infinite winter. Her sister Anna (Kristen Bell) teams up with a mountain man, his playful reindeer and Olaf to redeem Elsa and change the weather.

Since its release in 2013, its \$1.3 billion box office and even more lucrative sprawling industry of theme park rides, toys, clothing, video games and home media has made it a cultural touchstone.



Olaf in Disney's 'Frozen' voiced by Josh Gad

'Front row seat'
"Frozen" is the third highest-grossing original movie in history and, until this year's "Wonder Woman," the most successful movie ever made by a woman. Gad, one of three brothers, says he has had a "front row seat" on the precious sisterly bond at the heart of the movie since

becoming a father of two girls, now aged three and six. "That idea of two little girls watching 'Frozen' and seeing in many ways a reflection of their own relationship is something you can't even put into words," he said. "It's so magical being able to share in this process and this experience with them... It's a dream come true."

Gad grew up near Miami, in a town fittingly called Hollywood, his imagination fed by a glut of animated classics during what has become known as Disney's "golden age." "It was just back-to-back-'The Little Mermaid,' 'Beauty and the Beast,' 'Aladdin,' 'The Lion King.' That was a crazy time to be a kid and see those movies for the first time in a movie theater," he recalled. "At some point, I remember saying, 'Man, how cool would it be if one day I could grow up and do that?'"

Although he declares himself more spiritual than formally religious, he grew up in a Jewish household and remembers lighting menorahs and eating Chinese food during the festive period. When he married his Catholic wife, he was thrilled to be able to co-opt fun Christmas traditions—the tree and the lights—into his Hanukkah celebrations.

'Addicted to Christmas'

"I'm making up for lost time and I love it. My wife laughs because she's like, 'You're addicted to Christmas—I'm not sure what's wrong with you,'" he said. One imagines the holiday period being a delight for little Isabella Eve and big sister Ava, with stories from the "Frozen" universe being narrated by Olaf himself. "They're still tickled by the fact that I can read a 'Frozen' book to them and I can't help but play Olaf as Olaf," Gad said. "For them, it's a cool parlor trick. I think they would be thrilled if one day they found out their mom was Moana." A class-



US actor Josh Gad

sically trained actor who drifted into TV comedy via Jon Stewart's "The Daily Show," Gad went on to star as Le Fou in Disney's live-action remake of "Beauty and the Beast," the highest-grossing movie worldwide this year. He can be seen displaying his dramatic chops in the recently released "Marshall," alongside Chadwick Boseman, and Kenneth Branagh's "Murder on the Orient Express." He confirmed that production has begun on "Frozen 2" but was keeping his cards close to his chest on where the sequel may take Olaf, Elsa and Anna. After that, the world is his oyster. "I have some opportunities coming up that I think are really interesting and challenging. I've never played a villain. I think that would be really fun," he said. "I'd like to do something completely transformative, and there's something I'm working at that could be that, and I'd also love the opportunity to eventually direct." — AFP

Lifestyle

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2017



A picture taken on November 16, 2017 shows a minibus loaded with balloons driving along the coastal road by the beach in Gaza City. — AFP

Artists find their voice in Turkey's 'difficult' climate

A mute Syrian boy, using just body movements, gives a harrowing description of life under the Islamic State group in Syria. A crowd gathers of passionate anti-establishment protesters. And a galaxy of white ceramic CCTV cameras keeps a Big Brother-like watch over a city. These are just some of the images from this season's contemporary exhibitions in Istanbul as artists grapple with issues of censorship and political turbulence in Turkey and raging violence across the border in Syria.

And while critics of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan say the government is riding roughshod over freedom of expression, many artists are openly defying the trend by tackling big issues head-on in a still punchy scene. Almost immediately after the failed coup against Erdogan last year, Turkish authorities launched widespread purges which opponents say have gone beyond suspected coup plotters and are affecting intellectual and artistic circles. Some artists have self-censored or even left the country. But others have sought to develop new ways of addressing the situation. "The artistic scene in Istanbul is not in the process of shrinking—it is in the process of becoming more interesting," said artist Safak Catalbas. "The difficult circumstances make us more creative," she added.

'Find a new language'

This year's Istanbul Biennial, the most important contemporary art event in Turkey, did not shy away from controversial topics like the refugee crisis or conflicts in Syria and Iraq. The event, which was curated by Scandinavian duo Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset and closed its doors on November 12, also contained more than just coded references to the current situation in Turkey.

Turkish artist Erkan Ozgen, a Kurd, presented the video installation of the Syrian mute boy, Mohammed, in a short video entitled "Wonderland". A spectacular wall mural by French-Moroccan designer Latifa Echakhch showed the crowd of protesters in a reference to anti-government ral-

lies in Turkey crushed in 2013. Another example came from Turkish artist Burcak Bingol, who used ceramic CCTV cameras scattered across the city to recall the inquisitive eyes of the authorities in a country which has been living under a state of emergency for more than a year. "All exhibitions must, in one way or another, address the local political-social context to be relevant," said Biennial director Bige Orer. "We have tried to find a new language to deal with the current context," she added. "We felt that a new energy was emerging."

'Becoming more resistant'

Few dispute that the climate in Istanbul has changed greatly since 2005, when in the early days of Erdogan's rule Newsweek magazine famously dubbed the Turkish metropolis "the coolest city in the world". The repression of the spring protest movement in 2013 — which many artists were involved in—marked the end of a certain carefree attitude in the country.

At least eight people were killed and more than 8,000 injured by police during anti-government protests against plans to build on land occupied by Gezi Park in central Istanbul, according to Turkish NGOs. Asli Sumer, who runs a gallery in the waterside district of Karakoy, said, however, that instead of criticising the authorities directly, artists are interested in ways of overcoming these hardships.

"An artist with whom I work is especially interested in plants and their capacity to grow back by being more resistant," she said. In addition to the Biennial, the international contemporary art fair in Istanbul welcomed more than 80,000 visitors between September 14 and 17, a turnout that also showed the resilience of the Turkish arts scene.

This year, one of the main exhibits on display was the "Box of Democracy" by Bedri Baykam, one of the seminal modern works of Turkish three-dimensional art. The exhibit—a kind of large telephone box inside which the viewer is able to enjoy a totally free space—was created in 1987 to criticize the years of



People look at works during the 15th Istanbul Biennial. — AFP photos

repression inherited from the 1980 military coup. Maintaining such creative freedom is made possible through the financing of contemporary art by private funds without fear of state meddling. The Istanbul Biennial is organized by the privately-run Istanbul Foundation For Culture and Arts (IKSV) and funded primarily by family-run industrial conglomerate Koc Holding. "As a result, the state has little leverage to use pressure," said Orhan Esen, an expert on urban history and

Istanbul's art scene. In addition to the political situation, several recent acts of vandalism have shaken the art scene. A statue of a naked man by Australian artist Ron Mueck was damaged on the Asian side of Istanbul in late October. Last year, several assaults in the Tophane district on the European side of Istanbul, an area long inhabited by an uneasy mix of expats, Istanbul hipsters and conservative Turks, forced galleries to move to Kadikoy, a district on the Asian side. — AFP

