



3 Motorist injured in freak First Ring Road accident



12 Egypt options dwindling in fight against militants



31 India's 'Miami': Putting Art Deco of Mumbai on the map



13 Bottas beats Hamilton in Mercedes one-two finish



Riyadh vows Islamic alliance 'will wipe terrorists from earth'

Kuwaiti defense minister meets MBS, discusses anti-terror cooperation



RIYADH: Prince Mohammed bin Salman poses for a group picture with other defense ministers of the 41-member Saudi-led anti-terror force during their meeting yesterday. — AFP

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's powerful crown prince vowed to "pursue terrorists until they are wiped from the face of the earth" as officials from 40 Muslim countries gathered yesterday in the first meeting of an Islamic counter-terrorism alliance. "In past years, terrorism has been functioning in all of our countries... with no coordination" among national authorities, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who is also the Saudi defense minister, said in his keynote speech at the gathering in Riyadh. "This ends today, with this alliance."

The summit is the first meeting of defense ministers and other senior officials from the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition, which officially counts 41 countries and identifies as a "pan-Islamic unified front" against violent extremism. The alliance was announced in 2015 under the auspices of Prince Mohammed, whose rapid ascent since his appointment as heir to the throne in June has shaken the political scene across the region.

The alliance groups largely, although not exclusively, Sunni-majority or Sunni-

ruled countries. It excludes Saudi Arabia's archrival, Shiite-dominated Iran, as well as Syria and Iraq, whose leaders have close ties to Tehran. Yesterday's meeting coincides with an escalation in tensions between Riyadh and Tehran, particularly over wars in Syria and Yemen and the political structure of multi-confessional Lebanon. Saudi Arabia accuses Iran of supporting armed groups across the Middle East, including Lebanon's Shiite Hezbollah and Yemen's Houthi rebels.

The meeting also comes as several military coalitions, with backers including both Iran and key Saudi ally the United States, battle to push the Islamic State group from its last remaining bastions in Iraq and Syria. The alliance meeting in Riyadh brings together Muslim or Muslim-majority nations including Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Afghanistan, Uganda, Somalia, Mauritania, Lebanon, Libya, Yemen and Turkey. Retired Pakistani general Raheel Sharif has been appointed commander-in-chief.

Continued on Page 11

Iraq offers 9 oil and gas blocks for exploration near Kuwait border

BAGHDAD: Iraq will invite foreign energy firms to bid for the exploration and development of nine new oil and gas blocks bordering Iran and Kuwait, the oil ministry said in a statement yesterday. Iraq is to hold a press conference today to announce details of the exploration blocks which are located in the south and east of the country and include one offshore block in the territorial waters, according to the statement. "The ministry is targeting to boost both production and reserves of oil and gas in cooperation with international companies," said the ministry statement.

Iraq has raised output rapidly in recent years with the help of foreign oil companies to become OPEC's second-largest producer behind Saudi Arabia. The blocks on offer are located in the provinces of Basra, Misan, Muthanna, Wasit and the Central Diyala province. The contracts will be different from previous service contracts Iraq signed with foreign firms to develop the country's giant southern fields, said the statement.

Continued on Page 11

Qatar unveils first 'reusable' stadium for World Cup

DOHA: Qatar yesterday unveiled the design for what it claims is the World Cup's first 'reusable' stadium, the seventh of eight expected venues that will stage games during the 2022 tournament. Ras Abu Aboud is a 40,000-seater stadium that will be built on Doha's southern waterfront and host matches up to the quarter-final stage. After the tournament the stadium will be taken down, with the parts put in to containers in the hope it will be reassembled and used elsewhere.

"This venue offers the perfect legacy, capable of being reassembled in a new location in its entirety or built into numerous small sports or cultural venues," said Hassan Al-Thawadi, secretary-general of Qatar's World Cup organizing committee. Among the materials used are modified shipping containers, according to a statement from Thawadi's Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy. The architects are a Madrid-based company, Fenwick Iribarren. They were also chosen to design another tournament venue, the Qatar Foundation stadium.

Qatar has now revealed the designs for all venues expected to be used in 2022 except the Lusail Stadium, which will host the opening game and World Cup final. Although Qatar's initial bid was for up to 12 stadiums, it is now scheduled to play matches at just eight venues. FIFA is yet to make a final decision on the number of stadiums used during 2022. Since controversially being chosen by FIFA to host the tournament in 2022, Qatar has found itself at the center of a global storm.



A handout computer generated image shows the 40,000-seater Ras Abu Aboud Stadium. — AFP

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. Thawadi said in yesterday's statement that the diplomatic crisis had not 'impacted' on Qatar's preparations for the World Cup. Qatar's government has said it is spending

\$500 million a week preparing for the World Cup.

Finance minister Ali Shareef Al-Emadi told local media earlier this month that 65 percent of all World Cup projects have been completed. Earlier this year Qatar unveiled its first completed World Cup 2022 venue, the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha, which will also be used to host the World Athletics Championships in two years' time. — AFP

Lebanese respond to trash crisis

TABARJA, Lebanon: The Lebanese divers plunge below the surface, scuba tanks on their backs and nets in hand. But what they're looking for under the ocean surface is not treasure, it's trash. The group is conducting a clean-up below the waves, one of many initiatives emerging from Lebanon's civil society and private sector in response to the government's failure to address a long-running garbage crisis.

The dive, off the town of Tabarja, 25 km north of Beirut, proved fruitful: the divers emerged with nets full of plastic and glass bottles, rusted drink and food cans and even tyres, as a few swimmers nearby looked on bemused. "What we saw down there, it makes your heart hurt," said Christian Nader, a 19-year-old student, who has been diving for five years.

The event was organized by Live



BATROUN: A Lebanese diver takes part in cleaning the seabed off this coastal city north of Beirut on Oct 14, 2017. — AFP

Love Beirut, a group of Lebanese working to promote a positive image of their country, who said more than 100 divers joined clean-ups at eight sites throughout the country over two days. "It's sad, it's our sea. There should be awareness campaigns, the state should help us clean," Nader said.

Continued on Page 11

Bali volcano spews smoke and ash, disrupting flights

DENPASAR, Indonesia: A volcano on the Indonesian tourist island of Bali sent plumes of grey smoke and steam thousands of meters into the air yesterday for the third day in a week, triggering flight disruptions and leaving thousands of tourists stranded, officials said yesterday. Mount Agung spewed smoke and ash as high as 4,000 m yesterday morning, causing at least 15 departing or arriving flights to be cancelled yesterday afternoon, according to a spokesman for Bali's airport.

Indonesia's volcanology center has put out a red alert, warning airlines of a possible eruption, with a likely significant emission of ash into the atmosphere. But as of yesterday afternoon, Bali's Ngurah Rai airport was still open. The decision to delay or divert flights was up to individual airlines, said airport spokesman Arie Ahsanurrohmim. "We try to make the airport as comfortable as possible for the passengers affected. So far we have provided special



BALI: A boy takes pictures during Mount Agung's eruption seen from Kubu sub-district in Karangasem Regency on this resort island of Indonesia yesterday. — AFP

rooms for them to unpack their luggage and video entertainment so they can relax a bit," Ahsanurrohmim told AFP. At least 2,000 passen-

gers are affected by the flight disruption, mostly tourists from Australia.

Continued on Page 11

Amir, Crown Prince receive state officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. —KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of State of Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-

Ghanem, Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as well as First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown received

Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of

Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Services Affairs Yasser Abul and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State of Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri. —KUNA

Student Future wins NUKS-USA elections

ATLANTA: The Student Future candidates won elections of the National Union of Kuwait Students-USA (NUKS-USA), defeating rival Al-Wihda by a thin 30-vote margin. The elections, which began Friday evening and lasted until Saturday, were held on fringes of 34th NUKS-USA conference, held in Atlanta, Georgia, with participation of 3,804 students. The Student Futures garnered 1,804 votes against 1,774 votes for Al-Wihda. The Independent list gained 176 votes.

The conference, organized by the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) - USA branch, concluded yesterday under the slogan "The Spirit of Cooperation for a Unified Kuwait." Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah, in a speech at the closing ceremony, congratulated NUKS on the success of this event. He called on the students to be dedicated to their scientific achievements and to be the best to represent the homeland abroad.

He also urged them to abide by laws and regulations of their universities and take into account good behavior. Meanwhile, director of the Cultural Office in Washington Dr Aseel Al-Awadhi pointed to the office's plan of implementing a new electronic system



ATLANTA: Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah delivers a speech at the closing ceremony of the 34th NUKS-USA conference. —KUNA

for the communication among students and the office. The annual conference of NUKS lasted for three days and was attended by about 5,000 students and public figures.

The Kuwaiti Ambassador had stated as he opened the conference on Thursday that the annual event was an



The director of the Cultural Office in Washington Dr Aseel Al-Awadhi delivers her speech.

extension of the Kuwaiti people's relations outside the homeland and a continuation of the historical democratic practice of the people of Kuwait. The three-day conference included many political, sports, humanitarian, economic events in the presence of a number of Kuwaiti parliamentarians and prominent figures. —KUNA

KFAED, KRCS sign aid MoU for Rohingya refugees

KUWAIT: A memorandum of understanding was signed yesterday by Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) to provide \$1 million relief aid to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The MoU was signed by KRCS Board Chairman Hilal Al-Sayer and KFAED Director-General Abdulwahab Ahmed Al-Bader.

Speaking after the signing, Bader reiterated Kuwait's \$15 million pledge to provide relief aid to Rohingya refugees. Out of this figure, \$1 million was offered by the KFAED to fulfill the urgent needs of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, he added.

KRCS Board Chairman Hilal Al-Sayer said the allocated sum includes \$600,000 for food aid and \$400,000 for medical supplies. He estimated the number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh at around 600,000, appreciating this first-of-its-kind cooperative MoU with the KFAED. —KUNA

Chief of Staff inspects Kuwait's troops



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Khalid Al-Khadher (right) and Defense Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah leave for Saudi Arabia yesterday. —KUNA

RIYADH: Kuwaiti Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Khalid Al-Khadher and Defense Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah left for Saudi Arabia yesterday to inspect the Kuwaiti troops in operation 'Restoration of Hope' in Yemen. They were seen off at the Abdullah Al-Mubarak Air Base by Director of Air Force Operations Brig Gen Mohammad Al-Khaffan, and senior Air Force commanders. —KUNA

Ooredoo's packages provide comprehensive solutions

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, reiterated its commitment to being a leader in supporting youth and entrepreneurs through its sponsorship of the B2B 4 SME Symposium which was held last Tuesday under the patronage of her excellency Minister Hind Al-Sabeeh and with the participation of Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, Senior Director B2B at Ooredoo.

Babtain stressed that Ooredoo has always been keen on supporting entrepreneurs and listening to their requests, through its different services and solutions. He explained that Ooredoo's products and services are tailored exclusively to cater for the needs of entrepreneurs. This is especially apparent in Ooredoo's participation in launching the Kuwait Business Center earlier this year, which is a government entity established by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry that is dedicated to streamlining the process of business licensing for microenterprises in Kuwait.

Ooredoo's packages and bundles provide comprehensive solutions at competitive prices, aimed at propelling entrepreneurs towards success, especially in an age where the internet and communication play a major role in all businesses. He noted that all entrepreneur plans and bundles include free upgrades and other perks that help them stay connected more. "This is essential in this day and age where being online is vital for any business owner to connect with his clients and other suppliers," he said. He added: "We are proud to work in sync with the new generations' expectations through our commitment to embracing digitalization."

Babtain concluded by thanking the organizers of the event, the Association for Small and Medium Enterprises of Kuwait (ASMEK) and the main sponsors of the event: the National Fund of Small and Medium Enterprises; the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, and the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation.



KUWAIT: Minister Hind Al-Sabeeh honors Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, Senior Director B2B at Ooredoo.



Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, Senior Director B2B at Ooredoo (right) speaks during the symposium.

Local

Govt presence unnecessary to hold Assembly sessions: MP

Lawmaker inquires about labor towns

By B Izzak

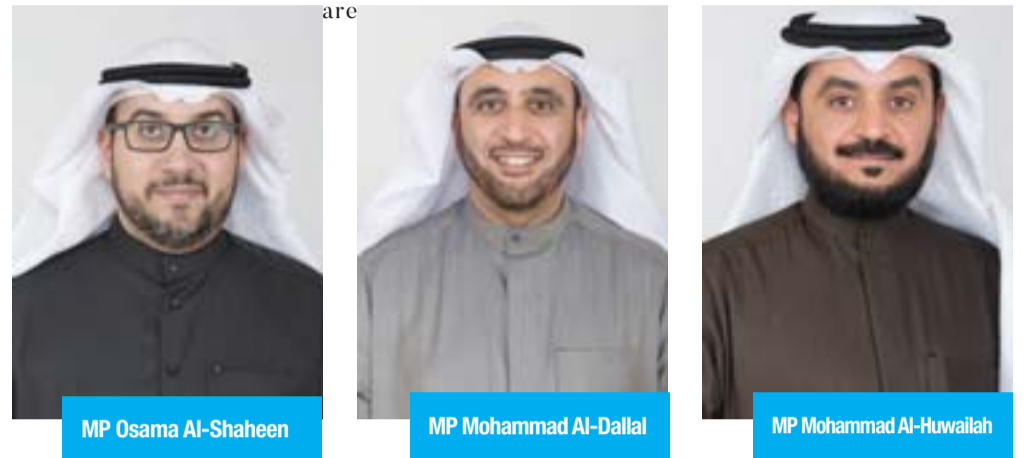
KUWAIT: Opposition MP Osama Al-Shaheen yesterday filed a proposal stipulating that the presence of cabinet ministers is not necessary to hold assembly sessions and called for the assembly to convene immediately.

Shaheen said that he re-submitted the same proposal made by five opposition MPs in the 2009 assembly which stipulates that national assembly sessions are legal when the required quorum is available regardless if those attending are all assembly members and none of them is from the government.

It has become a norm in Kuwait since the establishment of the national assembly in 1962 that assembly sessions are considered illegal if no ministers are attending. The norm stipulates that at least one cabinet member must be present for the assembly sessions to be legal.

The issue has been raised now because the assembly has not held sessions for almost one month because the government has resigned and the new cabinet has not been formed. As a result, assembly sessions are not held because there are no ministers to attend.

The cabinet resigned about four weeks ago after 10 lawmakers filed a no-confidence motion against Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and acting Information Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah following a grilling. As HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has accepted the resignation, ministers are operating as a care-taker government and cannot attend assembly sessions. But Shaheen, a lawyer by profession, insisted that the Kuwaiti constitution takes every care to ensure that assembly sessions



MP Osama Al-Shaheen

MP Mohammad Al-Dallal

MP Mohammad Al-Huwailah

held on regular basis and requires three conditions for holding a legal session, none of them is the presence of ministers. The constitution states that a session is legal if held in the right place, right time and in the presence

adding that the government should inform lawmakers of the developments in light of regional tension.

Meanwhile, opposition MP Mohammad Al-Dallal said that failure to form the new cabinet after one month of the resignation of the outgoing government is an explicit violation of the constitution. Dallal said the delay in government formation has put the country in a state of paralysis unacceptable from a constitutional, political and popular viewpoints.

MP Mohammad Al-Huwailah meanwhile yesterday sent a series of questions about the construction of six labor towns as a way of controlling the inflow of expatriate manpower. He asked the state minister for municipality about the progress in the construction of the six labor cities, the sites that have been allocated and their capacity and the timetable for implementing the cities.

Ministry re-evaluates 'tanker' water prices

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry formed a special committee to re-evaluate the prices of freshwater carried by tanker trucks from distribution pumps to various areas, said informed sources. The committee will make a report to the minister for a final decision. The sources expected that the committee would recommend increasing the price, because the current price of KD 3.75 has remained unchanged for a long time despite the fuel price increases, and is no longer profitable for truck owners. The sources said that the committee was formed to regulate freshwater prices on local markets after the ministry noticed that some vendors did not respect the prices set by the government and usually bargained selling their loads for twice as much. Notably, a large segment of citizens, including farmers, ranchers, residents of new areas, houses under construction and camps use these trucks for water supplies.

Healthcare cards

Member of the parliamentary health affairs committee MP Khaled Al-Otaibi said the committee has contacted the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) to list the numbers of Kuwaiti housewives and people with special needs to add them to those to be covered by the 'Afia' healthcare cards. Otaibi added groups of beneficiaries from Afia will gradually increase, pending including all citizens in the system. He also noted that the total cost would be calculated based on the numbers to be provided by MSAL. 'Afia' is a governmental healthcare program that covers private medical expenses for retired citizens.

Strong cabinet

MP Safa Al-Hashem stressed the need for the new cabinet to be a strong one and fully aware of the tasks and

challenges it ought to overcome by group work and proper executive procedures. "We need a government that works and speaks correctly," she stressed, noting that she expects the new government to fight corruption. "Only then will we be convinced with the new government's performance," she added.

"This is your seventh cabinet. I hope you will be aware that you once said that welfare will not last long," she added, addressing His Highness the Prime Minister, noting that the public debt bill recently sent to the financial committee is a "real massacre" and that the welfare state will actually come to an end through such measures. "Therefore, oh Jaber Al-Mubarak...I urge you to reconsider this bill," Hashem said, noting that nothing much is expected from the new Cabinet since a certain minister has been a member in four previous Cabinets and faced a unanimous no-confidence motion, but was reshuffled and returned in new Cabinets with different portfolios.

Renewable energy

The renewable energy projects' committee is currently consulting the Supreme Planning Council on offering a \$10-billion solar energy project for public bidding, especially since Kuwait had succeeded in using renewable energy to generate electricity at the Shaqaya project which provides the national power grid with 23 million kilowatts. Informed sources said that the project will be built over an area of 40 sq km with an estimated total capacity of 30 million kilowatts per hour. The sources added that the project will annually save KD 15 million of the total cost of generating electricity and that investing in solar and renewable energy is an integral part of Kuwait's 2035 vision.

Suspended

In view of the growing number of families applying to own farmlands, the farming lots department at the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) has temporarily suspended issuing certificates proving that they do not already possess ones. Informed sources said PAAAFR was waiting for the new structural plan and the municipal council's approval to determine the border areas to be allocated for granting Kuwaiti families farmland plots in Abdaly, Salmi and Wafra.

Driver injured in freak First Ring Road accident

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A driver narrowly escaped death when his vehicle landed on the edge of a bridge following a two-car collision reported at the First Ring Road in Sharq on Saturday. Firefighters accompanied by paramedics and police headed to the scene in response to an emergency call, and immediately rushed to save a driver whose vehicle was suspended on top of the bridge's side barricades, with part of it hanging to the outside. The man was successfully rescued then rushed to Amiri Hospital for treatment. An Interior Ministry statement later explained that the fact that the driver was wearing his seatbelt might have contributed to saving his life. No other injuries were reported. An investigation was filed to determine

the cause of the accident.

Slander

The criminal court yesterday sentenced a female blogger to seven years in jail with hard labor in a case filed against her over charges of slandering Saudi Arabia and circulating false news.

Fire

A fire broke out in a garment warehouse located in the basement of a Hawally shopping mall yesterday. Firemen evacuated the entire building, including the parking lot which is located in the same basement where the warehouse is placed. The fire was put out and no casualties were reported.

Crackdown

Kuwait municipality launched an awareness campaign with the aim of promoting public awareness about camping conditions. Jahra municipality teams conducted an inspection campaign to remove illegal camps pitched off the allocated camping zones along Salmi highway. The campaign resulted in removing six camps, three grocery trucks, two cabins and two ice vending trucks, said Nawaf Al-Mutairi, head of the inspection team.



KUWAIT: This picture provided by the Interior Ministry yesterday shows a wrecked vehicle following an accident reported at the First Ring Road on Saturday.

Kuwait Times

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A great white egret enjoys a morning splash at the Jahra Nature Reserve. —KUNA

‘Those Who Inspire’ more than a book on inspiration

Co-creator promises book on Kuwait soon

KUWAIT: ‘Those Who Inspire’ is a book first published in 2011 with the aim of shedding light on inspiring people from various countries from around the world, but the book has transformed into something bigger, an inspiring work and movement.

The idea turned into a movement and a project bigger than just a book, the purpose was to follow-up on those inspirational figures who disseminate their stories to local communities and on to the world, but to continue to follow-up those inspiring people.

Such figures transformed into mentors or role models and become active with their fans, mainly youths, and become integral part of their lives, some of them already famous figures, some of them did not become famous but do deserve to be in the spotlight.

Delphine Baretts, the co-creator/editor and partner of the movement ‘Those Who Inspire’ said that in each country they discover certain issues, like for example in Hong Kong “it used to be possible to disagree with someone without coming to blows,” says former Chief Secretary Anson Chan, a veteran civil servant and democracy advocate who has been described as the “conscience of Hong Kong.” Chan is one of 67 people profiled in ‘Those

Who Inspire’. Hong Kong, a new book that highlights people from all walks of life who have made Hong Kong a better place.

“Our book is for millennials,” Baretts said. The book is just one part of a larger project that Baretts



Project bigger than just a book

launched with Marlene Plomik in 2011. The two Frenchwomen were working on a communications strategy for the Oman government when they realized many stories about the Gulf state were not being told. Rather than create a ‘Who’s Who’ type directory of the country’s elite, they decided to

focus on the full spectrum of those who have made Oman one of the most peaceful places in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, Baretts said there would be soon a ‘Those Who Inspire’ book on Kuwait, covering inspiring people ranging from a 14 years-old girl up to human rights activists, business icons, and various others people.

Baretts praised co-operation she got from the ministry of Youth Affairs, especially for their help and suggestions on figures they should check. The French author noted that after Kuwait, they are planning a ‘Those Who Inspire’ book on Qatar.

‘Those Who Inspire’ soon grew to include workshops and seminars, all of it financed by bulk sales of the book to companies, who donate them to schools and community groups. For each book sold, one is donated, and all of the people profiled list their email address so they can be directly contacted for advice and mentoring. After Oman, Baretts and Plomik went to the United Arab Emirates and Nigeria, before finally coming to Hong Kong in early 2016. Baretts says her goal is to produce at least one book for a country on each continent. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Copies published under the ‘Those Who Inspire’ book series. —KUNA

Kuwait’s 42nd Int’l Book Fair ends with monodrama show

KUWAIT: Kuwait’s 42nd International Book Fair on Saturday came to a close, following the presentation of an interesting monodrama show themed ‘Fog does not Hide Sight.’ The show held at Hall 6 on the Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref was a short psychological monodrama presentation. It was written and directed by Haifaa Al-Sanoussi, a professor of Literature at Kuwait University, and scenography engineer Razan Al-Awda, as well as acted by Mohammad Akryamas, Taha Al-Zein and Ayoub Al-Masri. The show speaks about realms of souls in an attempt to identify the nature of human souls in darkness when surrounded by ghost of fear, illusion and anxiety from the unknown.

In a statement, Sanoussi said monodrama is a theatrical creative act or a story written by a special way that concerns psychological aspects in an excellent way for pleasure, repairing psychological imbalance and self-discovery and development. She noted that monodrama is a creative psychological technique, which pays attention to individuals, lovers of literature, teachers, and social and psychological specialists. She pointed out that she made scientific studies on this specialization and presented them in workshops, research and practical applications in a number of international conferences held in the US, Europe and the Arab world.

The show was presented at the end of the activities of the book fair, which was inaugurated by Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah on November 15. The fair organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters was held under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Scenes from a monodrama themed ‘Fog does not Hide Sight,’ performed during the last day of Kuwait’s 42nd International Book Fair on Saturday. —KUNA

Local

Zain main sponsor of Kuwaiti Otolaryngology Conference

Part of its strategy to contribute to healthcare development

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its sponsorship of the 40th Kuwaiti Otolaryngology Conference, 8th Pan Arab Rhinology Society Conference, and 4th Otolaryngology and Cochlear Implant Symposium. The conference, organized by Zain Hospital, was held under the patronage and presence of the Minister of Health Dr Jamal Al-Harbi.

Zain took part in the opening ceremony, which witnessed the presence of Harbi, Head of Otolaryngology Department at the Ministry of Health Dr Basel Al-Sabah, Director of Zain Hospital Dr Shuaib Al-Marhoun, as well as a number of local and international Otolaryngology professionals, specialists, and experts. Zain's support to the conference came as part of the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the contribution of the development of the Kuwaiti healthcare sector, as well as in continuation of the company's support to Zain Hospital's social and medical programs.

The conference aimed at discussing and researching the latest medical advancements in the fields of Otolaryngology, commonly known as ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat), which is Zain Hospital's field of specialty. The event included a number of research papers, specialized workshops, and discussion panels that witnessed the participation of 38 Otolaryngology professionals, specialists, and experts from 15 Arab, GCC, and international countries.

Zain's support to this conference is an extension of a series of partnerships the company is continuously

adopting to serve its strategic and sustainable goals, ultimately contributing to the wellbeing and health of the community. Zain's contribution falls under the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy and shows its keenness in having a productive role in social and health activities.

Zain's solid Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy primarily focus on the wellbeing of the entire nation. For that reason, the company has maintained its support to all kinds of initiatives that spread awareness and help make a difference. Zain partners with the Ministry of Health, Central Blood Bank of Kuwait, Al Salam Hospital, Dasman Diabetes Institute, and other leading health institutions for several awareness campaigns related to the health sector.

It is worth mentioning that Zain established Zain Hospital, specializing in Otolaryngology (ENT). The hospital was constructed and equipped by the company to address the needs of the patients in the country, giving them the opportunity to head to a state-of-the-art health institution which is fully equipped with the latest medical equipment to serve their health issues.

Since the inception of Zain Hospital, Zain has been firmly committed to providing the latest and most advanced medical equipment for the hospital, which has become one of Kuwait's most important landmarks for specialized Otolaryngology. The significance of this specialized health institution is in the delivery of the best patient care, as it serves a vast number of patients with a full range of state-of-the-art ENT remedies.



KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Jamal Al Harbi and Dr Basel Al-Sabah pose with Zain officials at the company's booth.

Bano Professional upgrades to golden sponsorship for Horeca

KUWAIT: Preparations for the 2018 Horeca Kuwait exhibition are steadily progressing and attracting more companies to take part in it as an event providing a golden opportunity to exchange expertise that meet the local market's needs and demands future expansion plans.

In this regard, Bano Professional Mix Company's General Manager Tawfiq Essam Al-Hashwi announced the company's intention to upgrade its sponsorship this year to become a golden sponsor, especially after the remarkable success Horeca had achieved over the past years. He added that Bano Professional Mix would also sponsor the cooking competition held on the sidelines of the exhibition for the fifth year. He also noted that upgrading the sponsorship's level was decided because of the positive impact on sponsors



Tawfiq Essam Al-Hashwi

on one hand, and to express Bano Professional Mix' keenness on taking part in such a successful forum on the other.

Bano Professional Mix is a prestigious name in supplying raw materials, equipment and machinery for the industries of chocolate, bakery, pastry, and ice cream with a vision of supplying only under the name of quality. Hashwi stressed. BANO has over 22 years of experience in the Middle East, namely in Kuwait and GCC markets, he added.

"Persistence, confidence and experience in this industry drives us for constant success towards a pioneering future with our 'Passion for Excellence' motto, which places us on the map of attainment to be simply who we are," said Hashwi.

The 2018 Horeca Kuwait exhibition is organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Company at the Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref from January 15-17, 2018.

Authority promotes Kuwaiti products worldwide: Official



DUBAI: The Public Authority for Industry's (PAI) delegation participates in the Big 5 Expo. —KUNA

DUBAI: Promoting Kuwaiti industrial products abroad is one of the most important objectives, Public Authority for Industry's (PAI) vice chairman Mohammad Al-Ajmi said yesterday. Ajmi made his remarks on the sidelines of the construction Expo (Big 5), which was launched in Dubai in the presence of the president of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority Sheikh Ahmad Bin Saeed Al-Maktoum.

Ajmi said that PAI has prepared a marketing strate-

gy for Kuwaiti factories, including participating in major industrial events in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe "to introduce the world to Kuwait's industrial potentials in several promising fields." The Big 5 is a series of construction trade fairs originating in Dubai and connecting international suppliers of construction products and services with buyers from the MENA region. —KUNA

KPTC, Gulf research firm join forces for sustainable development



DOHA: KPTC's CEO for transport services Abdullah Nasser and GORD's Chairman Dr Yousef Al-Horr shake hands after signing the memorandum of understanding. —KUNA

DOHA: Kuwait's Public Transport Company (KPTC) has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Qatar-based Gulf Organization for Research and Development (GORD) for global sustainability assessment.

The agreement was signed yesterday on the sidelines of the 'Sustainability Summit 2017', in which KPTC's CEO for transport services Abdullah Nasser and GORD's Chairman Dr Yousef Al-Horr put their names on the dotted line. As per the agreement, KPTC will now join GORD's "Global Sustainability Assessment System", known as GSAS, Nasser said. He pointed out that KPTC's workforce would be attending a number training courses, seminars and workshops provided by GORD, in addition to GSAS-certified joint infrastructure projects between both sides.

Meanwhile, Nasser added that KPTC is in the process of revamping passenger transit stations across the country, where special environment-friendly stations running on alternative energy sources will be constructed. He also revealed that the first such station will be up and running in February, in time for Kuwait's national celebrations.

The Sustainability Summit 2017 kicked off in Doha yesterday with broad participation of practitioners, experts, regulators and researchers. Addressing the opening ceremony, Qatar's Minister of Energy and Industry Mohammed Al Sada stressed Doha's commitment to world's sustainability accords. Sustainability has become integral to the plans of the various state sectors, Al Sada said in a statement delivered on his behalf by chair of the Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (KAHRAMAA) Essa bin Hilal Al-Kuwari. He reviewed some of the major work being carried out by sustainability pioneers in Qatar. He also underlined the importance of the conference as a platform for exchange-

ing views among experts and specialists, as well as setting the proper sustainability frameworks and strategies for the eventual goal of humanity's welfare and maintaining gains for the future generations. Chairman of Gulf Organization for Research and Development (GORD) Dr Yousef Alhorr, Summit President, said that the event comes as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change is entering actual executive phase.

GORD has seriously assumed the responsibility of facing the challenge of climate change, in cooperation with many strategic partners, both in Qatar and overseas, since the start of developing the Global Sustainability Assessment System (GSAS) in 2007, Alhorr added.

GSAS is the first performance-based system in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, developed for rating the green buildings and infrastructures. The primary objective of GSAS is to create a sustainable built environment, considering the specific needs and context of the region. After a decade, GSAS, as it is now is one of the most comprehensive systems for assessing sustainability, he noted. The two-day Sustainability Summit 2017, organized by the GORD, aims to establish a platform for practitioners, experts, regulators and researchers from national and international organizations to share knowledge and ideas, and exchange thoughts and experiences related to enhancement of climate actions and achieve a diversification to low-carbon economy. The forum offers rich discussions on the technological solutions and policy instruments that the region can adopt to meet its commitment to international community under Paris Agreement of UNFCCC. In addition, the summit includes the celebration of success of regional players on the sustainability front. —KUNA

KPC seeks to lure private sector with four investment deals

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its affiliates said yesterday that they have offered the private sector four investment opportunities in efforts to engage an increasingly significant contributor to the national economy. The four offers on the table prove the importance of establishing a closer rapport with the private sector and allowing it the chance to participate in the oil industry's projects, read a state-

ment by the company. The offers deal with projects involving carbon dioxide recovery, extracting metals from catalytic converters and the construction of factories for the production of highly transparent polypropylene sheets as well as cement manufacturing, the statement added.

Meanwhile, the statement cited Kuwait's Minister of Oil and KPC Chairman Essam Al-Marzouq as saying that such projects are crucial to ensure steady economic development. Marzouq added that the company stands to gain from the skill and expertise that the private sector has to offer, which can be instrumental in helping KPC and its affiliates bring their goals to fruition. The Kuwaiti minister also added that a more vibrant relationship with the private sector would provide the nation's workforce with increased job opportunities. —KUNA

Kuwait council in Dubai launches campaign to boost bilateral ties

DUBAI: The Kuwait Business Council (KBC) in Dubai and the Northern Emirates yesterday launched a media campaign themed "I am Kuwaiti, Emirati" to highlight the brotherly ties between the Kuwait and the UAE. The effort coincides with the Kuwait-UAE Week that kicks off today, sponsored by the Kuwait's Consulate General in Dubai. The campaign includes an exclusive artistic work in cooperation with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information, besides interviews with the Kuwaiti business community and a variety of press and media coverages on the deep-rooted Kuwaiti-UAE ties, particularly economic and trade, the KBC said in a press release.

In addition, the council offers a host of exclusive interviews on the solid bilateral economic relations, with leading Kuwaiti and Emirati dignitaries, among them Chairman of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) Majid Al Ghurair, and the UAE researcher Dr Aref Al-Sheikh, who wrote three books on the bilateral ties, KPC's chair Saad Al-Rubaian. —KUNA


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Iran blasts US over Yemen 'atrocities'

Indian police ask interfaith couples: Is it love or terror?



NAGORI: Bangladeshi Christian devotees offer prayers at a church at Nagori, near Dhaka. As Bangladesh's small Catholic community eagerly awaits the first visit by a pope in more than 30 years, many say it has never been more difficult to practice their faith in the Muslim-majority country.—AFP

Fear stalks Bangladeshi Christians

Rise in Islamist extremism sparks fear

NAGORI: As a young man Bidhan Kamol Rosario left his Catholic village to fight for Bangladesh's independence. Now he questions his future in the country after a rise in Islamist extremism that has left minorities living in fear. As Bangladesh's small Catholic community eagerly awaits the first visit by a pope in more than 30 years, many say it has never been more difficult to practice their faith in the Muslim-majority country. Christian leaders say many have left Bangladesh in recent years as the community increasingly finds itself targeted by Islamists. Last year two converts from Islam were murdered and a Catholic grocer brutally hacked to death during a campaign by Islamist extremists that also targeted Hindus and other minorities.

"In the War of Liberation, we wanted a beautiful Bangladesh which embraced all types of people from all races, faiths, creeds and religions," said Rosario, 65, of the 1971 war that brought independence for the former East Pakistan. "I never wanted advantages or favors for myself, only that there be equal rights for all... But now I do not believe there is any equality for us." Christians make up less than 0.5 percent of Bangladesh's 160 million people, but lived for centuries in harmony with the local Muslim majority. They have played a prominent role in the country's history and even today, schools and hospitals run by Catholic missionaries provide a

lifeline for poor communities.

Rosario is part of a small Catholic community descended from Portuguese traders who settled in Nagori, a small cluster of villages near the capital Dhaka, in the 17th century. The area remains a bulwark of Catholicism and is home to a small shrine where hundreds of thousands gather every February to celebrate the life of Saint Anthony. Local Catholics there say they feel increasingly under threat after a spate of attacks by hardline Islamists targeting religious minorities, foreigners and secular bloggers.

Tensions with Bangladeshi authorities have also risen, they say, boiling over in March when villagers accused plain clothes police of raiding the home of a local widow and stealing money. When a group of villagers tried to prevent the plain clothes officers leaving, armed police were sent in, leading to a violent stand-off in which at least

20 people were injured. More than 100 villagers were later charged with obstructing police work. Alcohol has also become an issue. Non-Muslims can drink legally in Bangladesh, but locals say they have come under scrutiny from police, who frequently arrest villagers they suspect of consuming alcohol.



2 converts from Islam murdered; Catholic grocer hacked to death

to Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during a 2015 ceremony to mark Christmas eve. "I have never seen these things before. We grew up in perfect harmony with other faiths," he said. Pope Francis will bring a message of peace and religious tolerance on his visit to Bangladesh, an impoverished country that

has won praise in recent months for taking in more than 600,000 Rohingya refugees from neighboring Myanmar.

He is not scheduled to travel to the overcrowded camps in southern Bangladesh, but will meet a small group of Rohingya during an interfaith meeting in Dhaka on Friday. Ahead of the Pope's visit Gabriel Amal Costa, a Bangladeshi missionary, said a rise in Islamist extremism was straining religious ties. "People had always lived together peacefully in Bangladesh, but unfortunately now Islamist extremism is on the rise," he said in Rome. "This is a very recent phenomenon and the Church is trying to promote interfaith dialogue," he said in comments translated from Italian.

The attacks reached a peak last year, but the situation has improved since a major crackdown in which scores of suspected militants were shot dead and hundreds arrested. Jayanta Gomes, priest at the Saint Nicholas Tolentino church at Nagori, said he was hopeful the Pope's visit would bring further comfort to the community. "I am optimistic," he said as he led an open air service for about 1,000 Catholics who sang Bengali-language hymns in the sun. "The security situation is already much better, and the Pope's visit next week will usher in peace for all of us in Bangladesh." —AFP

Pakistani military silent as Islamists, police clash again

FAIZABAD: Islamist party activists yesterday clashed with Pakistani security forces for a second day outside the capital, Islamabad, burning vehicles before withdrawing to a protest camp they have occupied for more than two weeks, police said. Despite order from the civilian government to the army on Saturday night to help restore order, no troops were at the scene around the protest camp in Faizabad, on the outskirts of the capital, witnesses said.

The military's press department did not respond to queries about the government's order. According to media reports at least six people were killed on the previous day, when several thousand police and paramilitary forces tried to disperse the religious hardliners, who have blocked the main route into the capital demanding that the law minister be fired for committing blasphemy. At least 150 people were wounded in Saturday's clashes, hospitals reported, and police superintendent Amir Niazi said 80 members of the security forces were among those casualties. Reuters could not confirm that there had been any deaths.

Yesterday morning, smoke billowed from the charred remains of a car and three motorcycles burned that morning near the protest camp, where several thousand members of the Tehreek-e-Labaik party have gathered in defiance of the government. After the early morning clashes, the area settled into an uneasy stand-off. The paramilitary Rangers force - which had held back from Saturday's confrontation - was in charge of yesterday's operations, officers said. "We still don't have orders to launch an operation. We will act as the government orders us," said Rangers commander at the scene Colonel Bilal, who gave only one name. "We have surrounded the protesters from all sides. We can move in when the government orders us."

Failed crackdown

Activists from Tehreek-e-Labaik have blocked the main road into the capital for two weeks, accusing the law minister of blasphemy over a wording change in electoral law the party says weakens the Islamic tenet of Mohammad as God's final prophet. "We will not leave. We will fight until end," Tehreek-e-Labaik party spokesman Ejaz Ashrafi said.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani protesters from the Tehreek-i-Labaik Yah Rasool Allah Pakistan (TLRAP) religious group shout religious slogans during a protest in Islamabad yesterday.—AFP

Led by cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi, Labaik is one of two new ultra-religious political movements that became prominent in recent months. Labaik, which campaigns on defending Pakistan's strict blasphemy laws, won a surprisingly strong 6 percent and 7.6 percent of the vote in two recent by-elections. While Islamist parties are unlikely to win a majority they could play a major role in elections that must be held by the summer of next year. Tehreek-e-Laibak was born out of a protest movement lionizing Mumtaz Qadri, a bodyguard of the governor of Punjab province who gunned down his boss in 2011 over his call to reform strict blasphemy laws. Party leader Rizvi has called Qadri, who was executed last year, "a hero".

For a second day, private TV stations were ordered off the air, with only state-run television broadcasting, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were also blocked. After Saturday's failed crackdown by police, the government called for military assistance "for law and order duty according to the constitution". However, there has been no public statement from the military in response and no sign that any troops had left their barracks. On Saturday before the government order, Pakistan's army chief called on the civilian government to end the protest while "avoiding violence from both sides", the military press wing said.—Reuters

Iran warns it would increase its range of missile if threatened

LONDON: The deputy head of Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned Europe that if it threatens Tehran, the Guards will increase the range of missiles to above 2,000 kilometers, the Fars news agency reported yesterday. France has called for an "uncompromising" dialogue with Iran about its ballistic missile program and a possible negotiation over the issue separate from Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. Iran has repeatedly said its missile program is defensive and not negotiable.

"If we have kept the range of our missiles to 2,000 kilometers, it's not due to lack of technology. ... We are following a strategic doctrine," Brigadier General Hossein Salami said, according to Fars. "So far we have felt that Europe is not a threat, so we did not increase the range of our missiles. But if Europe wants to turn into a threat, we will increase the range of our missiles," he added.

The head of Iran's Revolutionary Guards military force, Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, said last month that Iran's 2,000-kilometre missile range could cover "most of American interest and forces" within the region, so Iran did not need to extend it. Jafari said the ballistic missile range was based on the limits set by the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who is the head of armed forces. Iran has one of the Middle East's largest missile programs and some of its precision-guided missiles have the range to strike Israel.

'Political, spiritual support'

The United States accused Iran this month of supplying Yemen's Houthi rebels with a missile that was fired into Saudi Arabia in July and called for the United Nations to hold Tehran accountable for violating two UN Security Council resolutions. Iran has denied supplying the Houthis with missiles and weapons. "Yemen is in total blockade. How could we have given them any missile?" Salami said, according to the Fars report on Saturday. "If Iran can send a missile to Yemen, it shows the incapability of (the Saudi coalition). But we have not given them missiles." —Reuters

International

Indian police ask interfaith couples: Is it love or terror?

Anti-terror agency probes interfaith marriages in Kerala

NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court will begin hearing a case today that prosecutors say shows how Islamic State sympathizers are using "Love Jihad" - marrying Hindu women and converting them to Islam - to win recruits and spread their message. Over the past 28 months, the National Investigation Agency has picked up dozens of interfaith couples in the southern state of Kerala to question them about their marriages. The women - all Hindus who married Muslim men - were asked "extremely personal" questions during the interrogations, two police officers from the agency said: "Did you sleep with your husband before getting married? Did he suggest you visit Islamic shrines before marriage? Did he blackmail you before you converted to Islam?"

They were looking for cases of "Love Jihad", a term publicized by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and other hard-line Hindu groups soon after they helped propel Prime Minister Narendra Modi to power in 2014. It refers to what these groups say is an Islamist campaign to convert Hindu women through seduction and marriage. Police investigations at the time found no evidence of any organized strategy, and the claim was widely ridiculed. But since then, the NIA began focusing on Kerala - a southern state along the Arabian Sea with strong economic links to the Middle East.

It investigated 89 cases of "Love Jihad" and found nine to be alliances planned by people linked to the Islamic State, two NIA sources said, requesting anonymity because the investigation is ongoing. The NIA plans to present evidence in all nine cases to the Supreme Court. The agency declined to disclose the evidence they have. But in two of the cases the agency was examining money sent from an Islamic school in Iraq to the women's bank accounts, and in another case a woman and her husband had shared IS videos among people in their Kerala village, the sources said.

RSS expanding influence

Opposition parties say the investigation shows the government is allowing the RSS and others to use the state apparatus to further an agenda of establishing Hindu dominance in India, where 13 percent of the population is

Muslim. M B Rajesh, a federal lawmaker and member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which rules Kerala, said the NIA and the RSS are trying to prove that marriages between Hindus and Muslims "are forced unions". "The NIA's probe is creating religious fault lines to help Modi's party win (Kerala's) state elections, but we will defeat them," J Nandakumar, an RSS leader who oversees the group's activities in the state, said the NIA probe vindicates the Hindu right's campaign against religious conversions. "Their first step is to convert Hindu boys and girls, hypnotise them and prepare them for jihad," he said.

The RSS, which founded the first iteration of Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party six decades ago, believes India is fundamentally a Hindu nation. Since Modi's election in May 2014, the RSS has expanded its membership and influence across India and either it or its affiliates now run key ministries, such as the home ministry that supervises the NIA and the finance ministry. Muslims - who account for 172 million of India's 1.32 billion citizens - have been under increasing

pressure from the Hindu right. Muslims have been lynched for killing cows - considered sacred in Hinduism - and some of their slaughter houses forced to shut down. Neither Modi's office nor the NIA would comment because the issue is before India's Supreme Court.

'Simple love story'

One of the Muslim men, whose marriage to a Hindu woman was annulled by Kerala's High Court, has appealed the case to the Supreme Court. The NIA has accused the man, Shefin Jahan, in court of trying to recruit people for the Islamic State, a charge he denies. The 24-year-old woman, who converted to Islam before marrying him and changed her name from Akhila to Hadiya, was placed in her father's custody by the high court after he said he feared for her well-being. There is no criminal case against her. India's chief justice has summoned Hadiya to New Delhi to testify on Monday on whether she was converted forcefully. The lower court had rejected her husband's request to have her testify.

"This is for the first time in the history of India the top court will be asking a woman the validity of her marriage and her religious conversion," said Kapil Sibal, a lawyer



MUMBAI: Indian police commandos line in a queue to pay tribute to the victims of the Mumbai terror attacks at the memorial on its ninth anniversary in Mumbai, India yesterday. The attack by Pakistani gunmen in India's financial capital on Nov 26, 2008 killed 166 people and shattered relations between the nuclear-armed neighbors. —AP

and a leader of the opposition Congress party. Sibal is representing Jahan. Jahan, 26, told Reuters he met Hadiya through a matrimonial website for Muslims while he was working in a pharmaceutical factory in Oman. He said he wants to live with his wife, with whom he stayed for only 48 hours before her father complained to the police. "Our simple love story has turned into an ugly religious and legal battle," Jahan said.

Hotbed of recruitment

The NIA's probe started in 2015 after the government identified Kerala, which sends tens of thousands of workers to the Middle East, as a potential hotbed of Islamic State recruitment. Nearly half of Kerala's 33 million people practice Islam and Christianity. Local police and the NIA said at least 100 people from Kerala have joined the IS in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The NIA's nine "Love Jihad" cases were based on complaints lodged by the parents of the Hindu girls and all were

found to have links with IS, the NIA police sources said. The agency dropped the investigations into the other 80 cases because no links to militants were found, the sources said. Across India, over 270 men and 20 women have been arrested for working directly or indirectly with the IS, according to data at the federal Home Ministry. But Kerala was the only state where the NIA found a direct link between cases of "Love Jihad" and the IS, the NIA sources said.

The agency says it has uncovered attempts by IS sympathizers to possibly send the women in "Love Jihad" marriages off to marry or stay with fighters from the militant group, the NIA sources said. Two couples, who were questioned by the NIA last year, told Reuters police searched their homes. "I was shocked when they said maybe my husband was a jihadi, and he could be planning to send me to Syria," said one woman who married a Muslim information technology professional in 2015. Police questioned her for six hours, she said, and before leaving, took pictures of her wedding album. —Reuters

Islamic State raises stakes with Egypt mosque attack

ISMAILIA: The mosque was packed with hundreds of worshippers for Friday prayers in Egypt's North Sinai when gunmen in military-style uniforms and masks appeared in a doorway and at windows. The case with which they mounted an attack - killing more than 300 people in the worst bloodshed of its kind in Egypt's modern history - highlighted the threat militant groups pose in the most populous Arab country.

After four years of battling Islamic State in the Sinai, where the group has killed hundreds of soldiers and police, authorities still face an enemy with growing ambitions in Egypt, despite its defeats in Iraq, Syria and Libya. Carrying the black flag of Islamic State, the assailants arrived in off-road vehicles before opening fire on the cream-colored Al Rawdah mosque in Bir al-Abed, leaving its carpets stained with blood, officials and witnesses said. People scrambled to escape as gunmen opened fire at worshippers, including dozens of children. By the time the shooting stopped,

many of the village's men were lifeless. No group has claimed responsibility.

Attack rattles Egyptians

Egyptians were stunned because the attack was directed at a mosque - a rarity in the country's history of Islamist insurgencies. The possibility that ultra-hardline Islamists are shifting tactics and picking new targets is worrying for Egypt, where governments have struggled to contain groups far less brazen than Islamic State. Egyptian leaders have adopted a zero-tolerance policy, with air strikes, raids on militant hideouts and long prison sentences.

President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has once again threatened to crush the militants. "The armed forces and the police will avenge our martyrs and restore security and stability with the utmost force in the coming period," he said after Friday's carnage. Sisi has called for a comprehensive campaign to counter what he describes as the existential threat of radical jihadism, deploying moderate clerics to promote moderate Islam. For instance, he is expected to run for a second term early next year. Even with a convincing win, he will face pressure to deliver on promises of stability, especially if attacks like that on Al Rawdah persist.

For Islamic State, the village was a target because of its ties to Sufism, a mystical form of Islam that headline Islamist groups consider heretical. Some villagers recalled how these threats were made about a year



SINAI: Photo shows a blood trail on the veranda of Al-Rawdah Mosque in Bir Al-Abed northern Sinai, Egypt. —AFP

ago in an Islamic State internet publication. In a December 2016 issue of Al-Nabaa, one of the group's religious leaders left little doubt that Sufis would be targeted. It mentioned Al Rawdah directly. "Our primary focus lies in the war against polytheism and apostasy, and of those, Sufism, sorcery and divination," he said. More threats were made in early 2017.

Sufis condemned for beliefs

In March, Islamic State's branch in the Sinai posted a video of its religious police

forcing a group of Sufis to renounce their beliefs under threat of death. It showed what it said were militants beheading two elderly Sufi men in the desert after they were found guilty of witchcraft and sorcery. Egypt has about 15 million Sufis, and their shrines and saints appear in villages across the country. Ultra-conservative Salafists abhor Sufi practices and some have in the past threatened to smash their symbols with hammers and iron bars. Five police and army sources said there was no recent specific threat against Sufis in Al Rawdah. —Reuters

Sabbath row rages in Israel; minister quits

JERUSALEM: An ultra-Orthodox minister in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition government quit yesterday in a dispute over work on the Sabbath, the Jewish day of rest. But a spokesman for health minister Yaakov Litzman told AFP that his United Torah Judaism party would remain in the ruling alliance "at this stage", preserving Netanyahu's slim parliamentary majority at least for the time being. Similar disputes have caused Israeli coalition crises in the past, but Netanyahu was reportedly seeking ways to prevent further fallout. "I resign from my cabinet position as health minister," Litzman wrote in his resignation letter, a copy of which was sent to AFP.

"The decision follows the public works conducted on the Sabbath by Israel Railways," he added. "I cannot bear ministerial responsibility for the severe harm to one of the eternal values of the Jewish people, which is the Sabbath," Netanyahu, head of the right-wing Likud party, said he regretted Litzman's decision and sig-

naled he wanted to avoid calling for fresh elections. "The national government headed by the Likud is the best for the state of Israel," he said at the start of a cabinet meeting. "I think that every member of the coalition has an interest in its continued existence; I don't think, I know."

Litzman will retain his seat in parliament. The dispute is over railway maintenance work, which is less disruptive to travelers on the Sabbath, when no trains run. The national rail company says some Sabbath work is necessary in the interests of public safety and to avoid congestion on roads. Litzman says that is untrue. "To my regret Israel Railways has lately made the Sabbath day national maintenance day," he told Israeli army radio after handing in his resignation to the cabinet secretary. "It unnecessarily does all its rail maintenance work on the Sabbath," he said.

Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday. Netanyahu had reportedly been seeking to persuade Litzman not to resign by offering backing for various measures the health minister and his supporters favor. Ultra-Orthodox parties have often played a kingmaker role in Israel's politics. They control 13 seats in Netanyahu's coalition, which has 66 out of 120 seats in parliament. They demand strict adherence to Jewish law, particularly on the



LONDON: Richard Ratcliffe, the husband of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe who is detained in Iran, joins a public demonstration calling for her release. —AP

Sabbath, when no work is allowed. Electricity must not be turned on or off and engines must not be operated between sunset on Friday and sunset Saturday. —AFP

Iranian TV airs more allegations against an Iranian-British

DUBAI: Iranian state television has aired more allegations against a detained Iranian-British woman, something her husband said yesterday appeared timed to further pressure London as it considers making a \$530 million payment to Tehran. The case of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe has gained momentum in recent weeks as British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson faces tremendous criticism at home over his handling of it. Zaghari-Ratcliffe, already serving a five-year prison sentence for allegedly planning the "soft toppling" of Iran's government while traveling there with her toddler daughter, also faces new charges that could add 16 years to her prison term.

On Thursday, Iranian state television aired a seven-minute special report on Zaghari-Ratcliffe. It included close-ups of an April 2010 pay stub from her previous employer, the BBC World Service Trust. It also included an email from June 2010 in which she wrote about the "ZigZag Academy," a BBC World Service Trust project in which the trust trained "young aspiring journalists from Iran and Afghanistan through a secure online platform." Zaghari-Ratcliffe left the BBC in 2011 and then joined the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of the news agency. Both her husband, Richard Ratcliffe, and Thomson Reuters repeatedly have stressed she was not training journalists or involved in any work regarding Iran while there. The state television report comes as the British foreign minister faces criticism after he told a parliamentary committee that Zaghari-Ratcliffe was "teaching people journalism" when she was arrested last year. —AP

Nearly 7 years of conflict in Syria

BEIRUT: From the bloody repression of peaceful protests against the regime of President Bashar Al-Assad to foreign intervention, below are key dates in Syria's nearly seven-year civil war. The complex war has left more than 340,000 people dead, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, while the country lies in ruins.

Revolt and repression

On March 15, 2011, unprecedented protests demand civil liberties and freedom for political prisoners after 40 years of repressive rule by the Assad family. Denouncing "an armed rebellion by Salafist groups", the regime represses demonstrations in Damascus and the southern city of Daraa but protests continue. In July, defecting army colonel Riad Al-Assad sets up the Turkey-based rebel Free Syrian Army (FSA). Islamist groups join the revolt.

Air strikes

In March 2012, regime forces take control of the rebels' stronghold in the city of Homs after a month of bombardments. Other bloody operations are carried out, notably in the central city of Hama after massive anti-regime protests. In July, FSA fighters launch a battle for Damascus, but the government holds firm. From 2013, regime helicopters and planes unleash barrel bombs on rebel zones.

Hezbollah's crucial role

In April 2013, the Iran-backed Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah says it is fighting alongside Syrian government forces. Iran boosts its military support for longtime ally Assad.

Chemical weapons

On August 21, 2013, rebel-backer Washington accuses the regime of killing more than 1,400 people with chemical weapons in rebel-held districts near Damascus. In September, the United States and Assad ally Russia agree a plan to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons, averting punitive US strikes against the regime. But the forces on the ground, in particular the regime, have since been accused of having used chemical weapons. In April 2017, a sarin gas attack on the opposition-held village of Khan Sheikhun leaves more than 80 dead, prompting Washington to attack a regime air base.

Rise of the jihadists

In January 2014, hostilities between jihadists of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and rebel groups turn into an open war in the north. ISIL, which has since become the Islamic State group, take Raqqa, the first provincial capital to fall out of regime control, from rebel forces. The jihadist offensive allows Damascus to justify its fight against "terrorism".

Coalition air strikes

In September 2014, a US-led coalition launches air strikes against IS in Syria. The strikes benefit Kurdish groups, which since 2013 have run semi-autonomous administrations in Kurdish-majority areas and go on to oust the IS from key areas. —Agencies

International

Tehran blasts Washington, condemns Yemen 'atrocities'

Drone kills 7 Al-Qaeda suspects in Yemen

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday accused the United States of responsibility for "atrocities" in Yemen through its support for Saudi Arabia, which is leading a coalition fighting Tehran-backed Houthi rebels. Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghassemi said a White House statement on Friday in support of Riyadh "clearly and without question proves America's participation and responsibility in the atrocities committed by Saudi Arabia in Yemen."

In its statement, Washington had said it was "committed to supporting Saudi Arabia... against the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' aggression and blatant violations of international law." Regional arch-rivals Shiite-ruled Iran and Sunni heavyweight Saudi Arabia back opposing sides in conflicts from Yemen to Syria.

They cut diplomatic relations in January 2016 after Iranian protesters stormed Saudi diplomatic missions in reaction to Riyadh's execution of a prominent Shiite cleric. In early November, Riyadh accused Tehran of "direct aggression" after Saudi forces intercepted a missile fired by Houthi forces towards Riyadh's international airport. But Ghassemi denied that Iran has "any military connection with Yemen", although Tehran says it supports the Houthis politically and regularly denounces Saudi Arabia for allegedly bombing civilians.

Accusing Washington of making "totally unfounded" allegations, Ghassemi said its statement on Friday showed it "openly supports... appalling atrocities" by Saudi Arabia in Yemen. The Saudi-led Arab military coalition intervened

in Yemen in March 2015 to support President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi after the Houthis forced him into exile. Last month, the United Nations put the coalition on its blacklist for killing and maiming 683 children during the conflict last year and carrying out 38 verified attacks on schools and hospitals.

A report published in mid-November by the Congressional Research Service showed that Riyadh had signed arms deals worth more than \$65 billion (55 billion euros) with the United States between 2009 and 2016. "Since 2015, the US-trained Saudi military has used US-origin weaponry, US logistical assistance, and shared intelligence in support of military operations in Yemen," it said. Both parties in the Yemen conflict stand accused of neglecting civilian safety. The United Nations has blacklisted the Saudi-led coalition over the "killing and maiming" of children.

Meanwhile, a drone strike has killed seven suspected members of Al-Qaeda in southern Yemen, a security official said yesterday. The United States is the only force known to operate armed drones over Yemen. "A drone likely to be American" killed all seven overnight as they were aboard three vehicles on the road from the southern province of Shabwa to the central province of Bayda, the official said. Washington considers the Yemen-based Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula to be the radical group's most dangerous branch.

A long-running drone war against AQAP has intensified since US President Donald Trump took office in January.



SANAA: Yemeni children suffering from diphtheria receive treatment at a hospital in the capital Sanaa. The United Nations has warned that war-wracked Yemen faces a mass famine unless aid deliveries are allowed to enter the impoverished country. —FP

AQAP has flourished in the chaos of the country's civil war, which pits the Saudi-backed government against the Houthi rebels.

More than 8,700 people have been killed in the conflict since a Saudi-led military coalition intervened on the gov-

ernment's side in March 2015. Al-Qaeda's jihadist rivals, the Islamic State group, have also carried out several deadly attacks in the country. Last month, the United States said it had killed dozens of IS fighters at training camps in Bayda.—Agencies



Arch-rivals Saudi Arabia, Iran back opposing sides

News in brief

Death sentences upheld

CAIRO: An Egyptian court has upheld death sentences for seven people over the beheadings in Libya of 21 Christians, all but one from Egypt, and for belonging to the Islamic State group, a judicial official said yesterday. In February 2015, Libya posted a video on the internet of the beheadings on a Libyan beach, sparking international condemnation and Egyptian air strikes against jihadist targets in the neighboring country. Saturday's court ruling came a day after an attack on a mosque in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula that killed more than 300 people and for which IS is the main suspect. The court also sentenced 10 people to life in prison - 25 years in Egypt and three others to 15 years in prison, the official said. The ruling can still be appealed. The court first condemned the seven to death in September. Three were condemned in absentia, and an unspecified number of those sentenced were accused of having taken part in the beheadings.

4 die in rollover crash

SAN PABLO: Authorities say a crash involving five vehicles on a California highway has killed four people and injured at least five others. KTVU reports that California Highway Patrol officials say a car traveling in an eastbound lane on Highway 80 in San Pablo crashed into another car on Saturday at about 8 pm. Officials say the second car flipped over, landed in the west-bound lanes and collided with three other vehicles. Officials say four passengers in the car that flipped over were killed, while the driver and other people injured were taken to an area hospital. Authorities say the person in the car that started the initial collision left the area, but was picked up later by officials. No additional information about the people involved in the crash was immediately available.

Nightclub floor collapses

MADRID: Twenty-two people were injured, mostly with broken bones and bruises, after part of the floor of a nightclub on Spain's holiday island of Tenerife collapsed early yesterday, causing them to plunge into the basement, local officials said. Emergency services rushed to the nightclub in Adeje in southwestern Tenerife at about 2:30 am after receiving reports that roughly four square metres (43 square feet) of its floor had collapsed, the regional government of Spain's Canary Islands said in a statement. "After the floor collapsed, the people who were inside fell to the basement from the height of approximately one floor," it said. Firefighters evacuated the nightclub, and the 22 injured were taken to hospital, including two of them in serious condition. The injuries included broken legs, ankle sprains and bruises. Two French nationals, a Belgian and a Romanian were among those hurt.

Zimbabwe's Mugabe 'cried'

HARARE: Zimbabwe's former president Robert Mugabe cried and lamented "betrayal by his lieutenants" when he agreed to step down last week under pressure from the military and his party after 37 years in power, the Standard newspaper said in its yesterday edition. President Emmerson Mnangagwa, a former Mugabe loyalist, was sworn in on Friday and attention is focused on whether he will name a broad-based government or select figures from Mugabe's era. The newspaper quoted sources within Mugabe's inner circle as saying the devout Catholic held a rosary as he told his close associates and a team of negotiators at his "Blue House" Harare mansion that he was resigning. He announced the decision as parliament heard a motion to impeach him. "He looked down and said 'people were chameleons'," one of the sources was quoted as saying.

German far-right relishes its power; Merkel struggles

POTSDAM: The far-right Alternative for Germany party sees Chancellor Angela Merkel's struggle to form a new government as proof of its growing power to upend the country's political order, a top party official said. Parliamentary group leader Alexander Gauland said in an interview that the current turmoil showed that the four-year-old AfD had succeeded in its primary goal in September's general election.

"It's all downhill for Merkel now and that is partly our achievement," Gauland said, sipping a glass of rose wine at a lakeside Italian restaurant in the eastern city of Potsdam. "Her time is up—we want her to leave the political stage." The AfD campaigned on the slogan "Merkel must go", railing against her decision to let in more than one million mainly Muslim asylum seekers since 2015. Its election score was nearly 13 percent, snatching millions of votes from the mainstream parties and entering parliament for the first time with almost 100 seats in the Bundestag lower house.

Although Merkel won a fourth term, she has thus far been unable to cobble together a ruling majority - an unprecedented impasse in German post-war politics. The crisis could trigger snap elections. Yet despite polls indicating that the gridlock could lift the AfD to an even stronger result, Gauland, 76, seemed reserved about heading back into electoral battle. "It is not up to us to call new elections and we aren't asking for them, but we are prepared for them," he said. "None of us is hoping for that with great enthusiasm, but we would probably make gains." Polls indicate that both Merkel's conservative CDU/CSU bloc and the rival Social Democrats would shed support if voters were called back to the ballot box.

'Voice to people's fears'

With his trademark tweed jackets and reading glasses, Gauland cultivates the look of an English country gentleman and expresses pride over the support his anti-immigration message has received from pockets of the British right-wing. In May he sparked outrage by saying that while German fans love star footballer Jerome Boateng, who was born in Berlin to a German mother and Ghanaian father, "they don't want to have a Boateng as a neighbor". With the German economy humming and unemployment at a record low, the AfD has zeroed in on identity as a rallying cry. Gauland, a former CDU member, acknowledged that meant playing to deep anxieties and resentments, particularly in the former communist east, about a multicultural Germany. "We have always said that we give a voice to people's fears," he said. "We don't want the country to



German Chancellor Angela Merkel

change to such an extent that it can't be turned back." Apart from the current political volatility, Gauland sees the wind at the AfD's back due to an announcement this month by one of Germany's biggest employers, Siemens, that it was slashing nearly 7,000 jobs globally. The industrial giant plans to close its sites in Goerlitz and Leipzig, both in the eastern state of Saxony which the AfD won outright in September. "That will probably help the AfD," Gauland said of the layoffs. "In any case it is not very smart public relations when you rake in record profits and then sack people at the same time."

'Brexit and Trump'

Gauland appeared relaxed about parties such as the pro-business Free Democrats trying to poach some of the AfD's signature issues including tougher border policies. "There is the old fight about who is the original and who is the copy," he said smiling. "If the FDP moves in our direction, I can't condemn that as completely wrong." Gauland played down rivalries within the AfD, seen most spectacularly in the resignation of former co-leader Frauke Petry just days after the general election.

Looking ahead to a party congress this week in Hanover, Gauland said the AfD would focus on its platform rather than personnel. "People don't vote for the AfD because of specific people but out of protest at what is happening," Gauland said he did not see the AfD as riding a global populist wave. "Everyone always says 'Brexit and Trump, that will give you a big boost', but I don't see it that way," he said, pointing to the distinct national roots of each movement. —AFP

Belarus nuclear power plant stirs fears in Lithuania

OSTROVETS: Thirty years after the Chernobyl disaster spewed radioactive clouds into the sky and sent shockwaves across Europe, Belarus is building a nuclear reactor on the doorstep of the EU despite fears in neighboring Lithuania. Construction of the facility, located in the northwestern Belarusian town of Ostrovets only around 20 kilometers from the Lithuanian border, is entering its final stages. Its two reactors, each with a capacity of 1,200 megawatts, will be operational from 2019 and 2020 respectively.

The project, approved by strongman Alexander Lukashenko's government in 2008 and spearheaded by the Russian state energy corporation Rosatom, is being nearly completely financed by Moscow with a \$10-billion loan. The construction of the reactor initially revived bad memories

in a country that had a quarter of its territory covered with radiation from the 1986 explosion at the Soviet-era plant in Chernobyl, in present-day Ukraine.

"When we heard that a plant was being built literally outside our windows, we were scared," said Nina Rybik, a writer who was one of tens of thousands evacuated from contaminated zones 30 years ago. "But then the fear passed: we were told that advanced technology is being employed to build the station and that every single thing is being controlled," she said. She said that even those who had gathered signatures against the construction of the plant were now trying to find work there.

As worries about nuclear safety had been magnified by the 2011 Fukushima disaster in Japan, the local authorities and the Russian contractor actively worked to reassure the nearby population. To showcase their commitment to safety, Belarusian authorities demanded in 2016 that Rosatom replace equipment damaged during a fall, even though the Russian corporation insisted that the 330-ton shell had merely touched the ground after sliding down from a four-meter height. —AFP



OSTROVETS: People transport a bundle of straw close to the construction site of the first Belarus' nuclear power plant outside the town of Ostrovets, some 170 km northwest of Minsk. —AFP

Honduras: One of the poorest, most violent countries

TEGUCIGALPA: Honduras, which held a presidential election yesterday, is a small country at the heart of Central America's "triangle of death," an area plagued by gangs and poverty.

Gang war

A country of 9.1 million inhabitants in 2016, Honduras suffers from one of the highest homicide rates in the world outside armed conflict, but which according to the World Bank is greatly decreasing. In 2015 it registered 63.8 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, after a peak of 93.2 in 2011. The government hopes the rate will drop to 45 this year. Honduras is also one of the most dangerous countries for journalists, with 70 killed since 2003.

To fight this scourge current president Juan Orlando Hernandez has created a military police, financed by a new tax, and built special prisons for gang members who previously ordered murders from obsolete places of incarceration. Located in the "triangle of death" with its neighbors El Salvador and Guatemala, Honduras is plagued by the "maras"—gangs that control drug trafficking and organized crime. This phenomenon has caused a wave of illegal immigration to the United States, notably by minors who fear being forced gang enrollment.

Political instability

Independent since 1821, Honduras has gone through many coups, armed uprisings and conflicts with its neighbors, including with Guatemala in 1880 and the brief so-called Football War with El Salvador in 1969. An almost uninterrupted period of military regimes for more than 20 years ended in 1982 with the election of President Roberto Suazo Cordova. Since then the center-right Liberal Party and right-leaning National Party have fought it out every election.

Elected under the liberal banner in 2005, President Manuel Zelaya was overthrown four years later in a military coup backed by the right and the business world, after swinging to the left and cozying up to Venezuela's late socialist leader Hugo Chavez. New elections in November 2009 brought Porfirio Lobo Sosa of the National Party to power. Hernandez of the National Party succeeded him in 2013, after elections disputed by the left. Hernandez is seeking a new term - relying on a controversial decision by the Supreme Court, as the constitution bans the re-election of a president. —AFP

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International

Nepal votes in landmark poll as army blames rogue Maoists for explosions

India and China compete for influence in buffer state

KATHMANDU: Nepalis began voting for a new parliament yesterday with the army on alert as a series of small blasts blamed on a rogue Maoist group reminded the Himalayan nation of the violence and instability it is hoping to leave behind. More than a decade after the end of a civil war between Maoist peasant guerrillas and security forces, Nepal is hoping this election - the first parliamentary polls since 1999 - will complete its long journey from a monarchy to become a federal republic.

A second phase of the election will take place on Dec. 7, and the election commission has said that the final results probably won't be known for several days because of the cumbersome counting procedures. A Maoist splinter group was behind a series of small blasts in the run up to the polls, army spokesman Nain Raj Dahal said, adding that security forces have defused around 30 improvised explosive devices since Friday.

For all the security concerns, voting was largely incident-free. "Except for some minor complaints from a few places, polling in all areas is smooth and peaceful so far," Ila Sharma, a member of the Election Commission said. Suresh Balsami was the first voter at Kagatigaum polling centre, about an hour's drive mostly on a dusty and winding road from capital Kathmandu. "I voted for peace, development and prosperity of the country," said the 32-year-old bus driver, as other voters began to trickle into the polling centre in a public school ringed by pine trees. Candidates have used everything from mules to drones flying their party flags to reach voters in remote areas with no roads, according to media reports.



Nepal holds first parliamentary election since 1999

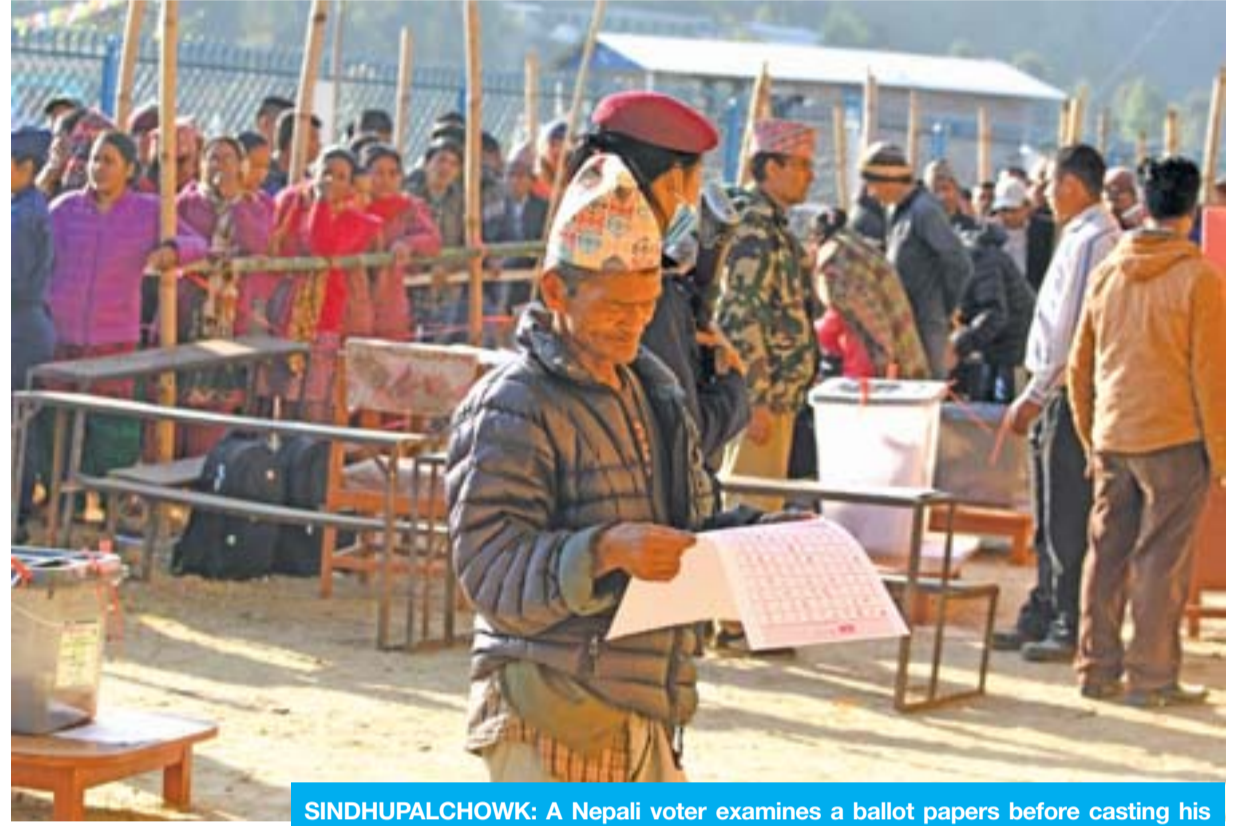
Battle for influence

Nepal voted in 2008 and 2013 for a Constituent Assembly, which doubled as parliament, to write a post-monarchy charter that plotted the course to becoming a federal republic. More than 15 million eligible voters will pick a 275-member legislature, the first under a new constitution agreed after years of wrangling. Simultaneously, voters will choose representatives to seven provincial assemblies for the first time since Nepal abolished the monarchy in 2008.

The centrist Nepali Congress party, considered a pro-India group, has formed a loose electoral alliance with the Madhesi parties from the country's southern plains bordering India and former royalists. Facing the alliance is a tight-knit left coalition between the former Maoist rebels and the main opposition Communist UML party, perceived to be closer to China. Wedged between India and China, Nepal needs to balance ties, but the outcome of the election could determine which of the Asian giants gets the upper hand in the battle for influence in the buffer state. Both are

looking to benefit from Nepal's potential as a source of hydropower.

Home to Mount Everest, and one of the poorest countries in the world, Nepal depends on tourism and aid. More than one-fifth of its 28 million people survive on less than \$1.90 a day, and parts of the country are still recovering from a devastating earthquake that killed 9,000 people in 2015. Rita Shrestha, a 49-year-old housewife whose house was damaged in the tremor, rued the slow pace of



SINDHUPALCHOWK: A Nepali voter examines a ballot papers before casting his vote at a polling station during the general election at Chautara, Sindhupalchowk district yesterday. —AFP

reconstruction. "We need roads, water supply, electricity, health care and jobs so our children are not forced to go abroad to work," Shrestha, wrapped in a red woollen

shawl said after casting her vote. Millions of young Nepalis work mainly as laborers in the Middle East, Korea and Malaysia.—Reuters

News in brief

Cuba honors Castro

HAVANA: With little fanfare, Cuba on Saturday commemorated the first anniversary of the death of revolutionary leader Fidel Castro as it prepares to move into the post-Castro era. Since his death at the age of 90 on November 25 last year, Castro's wishes have been respected. No street, square or building bears his name, and no statue or monument has been erected in his honor. But Castro remains present in the minds of Cubans, and state media daily recalls his exploits, speeches and writings. The most important commemoration will be held at nightfall at Havana University, where Castro often delivered his lengthy and fiery speeches. The Union of Communist Youth has organized a "political-cultural evening" marking the "physical death" of El Comandante. Raul Castro, the 86-year-old leader who took power when his older brother Fidel became ill in 2006, may make an appearance.

Syria bombing kills 19

BEIRUT: Syrian regime air strikes and artillery fire killed 19 civilians yesterday across the rebel-held Eastern Ghouta region outside the capital Damascus, a monitor said. The deaths come despite the area falling within a so-called "de-escalation zone" put in place under a deal between government allies Russia and Iran and rebel backer Turkey. Eastern Ghouta is already in the grip of a humanitarian crisis caused by a crushing regime siege of the area since 2013 that has caused food and medical shortages. Yesterday, government air strikes on the areas of Mesraba and Madira killed 17 civilians, while artillery fire on the town of Douma killed another two civilians, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor said. "The toll could rise further because of the number of wounded people in serious condition," said Observatory director Rami Abdel Rahman.

Correa targets 'traitors'

GUAYAQUIL: Ecuador's ex-president Rafael Correa, one of the feistiest characters in Latin American politics, returned home from Belgium on Saturday vowing to save his party from "traitors." Correa is in a battle with his successor and former ally Lenin Moreno for control of their Country Alliance party. "We will not allow traitors to take Country Alliance," Correa told reporters after arriving in the southwestern city of Guayaquil, where he was greeted by crowds of cheering supporters, but also detractors. Correa will attend the party convention on December 3 in the northwestern city of Esmeraldas. The ex-president wants "professional imposters" Moreno ousted from the party, accusing him of governing with the opposition and breaking with the party's leftist program.

Boko Haram in new raid

KANO: Boko Haram fighters briefly overran a town in northeast Nigeria in a raid to loot food supplies, military and civilian militia sources said yesterday, in the latest attack in the restive region. The attack happened on Saturday evening when a large number of jihadists stormed Magumeri, some 50 kilometers north of the Borno state capital, Maiduguri. The town and surrounding area have been attacked before by fighters loyal to the Islamic State-group supported factional leader of Boko Haram, Abu Mus'ab Al-Barnawi. In July, at least 69 people-most of them soldiers and civilian militia members-were killed in an ambush on a heavily armed convoy escorting an oil exploration team. "It was a huge invasion," a military source in Maiduguri said of Saturday night's attack. "They had heavy weapons and our troops were overwhelmed. After a fierce battle, they were forced to withdraw."

Blast rocks Chinese port city, two dead

NINGBO: A powerful explosion hit China's major port city of Ningbo yesterday, killing at least two people, injuring more than a dozen and wrecking buildings, authorities said. Cars were twisted and mangled by the force of the blast, a plume of grey smoke rose in the sky and debris was scattered for dozens of meters. But there was no official word on its cause. The Ningbo government said on a social media account that the blast occurred in a "vacant lot". Local authorities said two people died, two were seriously injured and an unidentified number were being treated for lesser injuries in one of China's largest ports, just south of Shanghai.

State media said more than 30 people were taken to hospital. The Xinhua news agency said the explosion happened in a demolished factory at around 9:00 am. A later statement by the city's Jiangbei district, the scene of the blast, said 16 people were still being treated for minor injuries while an undisclosed number had left hospital. CCTV said yesterday evening that no one else was believed trapped in the rubble. Industrial accidents are common in China, where safety standards are often lax.

Wasteland of debris

Aerial images posted by the People's Daily on Twitter showed at least four wrecked buildings around a wasteland of concrete debris. Helmeted rescuers were seen carrying injured people away from the area, while others stood over a person lying on the ground. Pieces of concrete, wood and glass were strewn across a wide area. Metal gates were twisted open and windows blown out of buildings. The explosion sent chunks of masonry flying around the area, where buildings were already being demolished, according to Beijing newspaper Xinjing Bao.



NINGBO: Rescue workers search at the site of an explosion in Ningbo, China's eastern Zhejiang province yesterday. —AFP

The Communist Party's People's Daily said on Twitter that no one lived at the scene but garbage collectors might have been working there. An inquiry has been launched to determine the cause of the explosion, the local police in Jiangbei district said on social media.

Ningbo is one of the country's major international container shipping ports. China has been rocked by several industrial accidents in recent years. In 2015 giant blasts killed at least 165 people in the northern port city of

Tianjin, causing over \$1 billion in damage and sparking widespread anger at a perceived lack of transparency over the accident's causes and its environmental impact. A government inquiry into the Tianjin accident released in February 2016 recommended 123 people be punished. The official who was mayor at the time of the accident was sentenced to 12 years in prison for graft in September. Huang Xingguo, 62, had also headed the disaster response committee—AFP

United Nations and Palestinian question

PARIS: From its 1947 vote to share out Palestine to its resolution 242 adopted 50 years ago, the United Nations has regularly intervened in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Here is a timeline:

Palestine partitioned

In November 1947, the UN General Assembly adopts Resolution 181 dividing Palestine, then under a British mandate, into Jewish and Arab states and a special international zone for Jerusalem is created. The Jews accept the vote but the Arabs reject it. In May 1948, Israel declares independence, provoking an eight-month war with Arab states. More than 400 Palestinian villages are razed by Israeli forces and around 760,000 Palestinian refugees flee to the West Bank, Gaza and neighboring Arab countries.

Right of return

The General Assembly in December 1948 adopts Resolution 194 on the right of return of refugees, laying down provisions for resolving the problem.

Resolution 242

The UN Security Council adopts Resolution 242 in November 1967 calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from territories occupied during the Six-Day War of June of that year, including the

West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem. The resolution has never been applied. After the Yom Kippur War, Security Council Resolution 338 in October 1973 reaffirms the principles of Resolution 242 and calls for negotiations aimed at "a just and durable peace in the Middle East".

Jerusalem

In September 1971, the Security Council condemns measures taken by Israel to change Jerusalem's status. The annexation of East Jerusalem in 1980 is denounced several times by the United Nations and is never recognized by the international community.

Arafat at the UN

In November 1974, Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) chairman Yasser Arafat addresses the United Nations, saying he carries "both an olive branch and a gun". The UN general assembly soon afterwards grants the PLO observer status.

Palestinian state

The most significant step towards peace does not, however, come from the United Nations but from Oslo where, after months of secret negotiations, Israel and the PLO in September 1993 sign a Declaration of Principles on Palestinian autonomy. Arafat in 1994 returns to the Palestinian territories after 27 years and forms the Palestinian Authority. In March 2002, Security Council Resolution 1397 mentions a Palestinian state for the first time.

UNESCO

The Palestinians are admitted in October 2011 to the UN cultural agency UNESCO as a full member after a vote that



HEBRON: A picture taken from an elevated position shows a general view of the city centre of the divided city of Hebron in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. —AFP

sparks opposition from Israel and Washington. The Palestinian flag is hoisted at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in December. UNESCO goes on to adopt resolutions on protecting Palestinian cultural heritage in Jerusalem, among others, and declares the Old City of Hebron in the occupied West Bank an endangered World Heritage site. These measures prompt the United States and Israel to withdraw from UNESCO in October 2017.

UN observer state

In November 2012, the General Assembly votes overwhelmingly to recog-

nize Palestine as a "non-member observer state". Palestine uses its new status to join UN agencies and the International Criminal Court. In September 2015, the Palestinian flag is raised for the first time at UN headquarters in New York.

Settlements

In December 2016, the Security Council adopts a resolution condemning Israeli settlement building thanks to the abstention of the United States which declines, under then-president Barack Obama, to veto such a resolution for the first time since 1979.—AFP



Rohingya Muslim refugees walk down a hillside in the Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar yesterday. —AFP

Iraq offers 9 oil and gas blocks...

Continued from Page 1

Under the service contracts used for Baghdad's

post-2003 bidding rounds, including those for its southern fields like Rumaila, West Qurna and Majnoon, the ministry pays companies a fixed dollar-denominated fee for every barrel of oil produced. While the model worked well for Baghdad when oil prices were high, the slump in prices left Baghdad paying the same fees to firms like BP, Exxon, Lukoil and Shell at a time when revenue from oil sales was significantly lower. — Reuters

Riyadh vows Islamic alliance...

Continued from Page 1

The alliance aims to "mobilize and coordinate the use of resources, facilitate the exchange of information and help member countries build their own counter-terrorism capacity," Sharif said. While the alliance officially includes Qatar, which is the target of a six-month boycott led by Saudi Arabia, organizers in Riyadh said no Qatari officials were present at the meeting. Qatar's flag was also absent. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain abruptly cut diplomatic and trade ties with Qatar in June, accusing the emirate of being too close to Iran and supporting Islamist extremism. Qatar denies the allegations. Saudi Arabia also made a point to put Qatar at the end of the list of 41 countries that belong to the anti-terrorism alliance.

Egypt, which sent a military official and not its defense minister to the Sunday meeting, is reeling from a Friday attack on a mosque that killed more than 300 people during prayer time. While IS has not claimed responsibility, Egyptian authorities say the organization is the main suspect as the mosque is associated with followers of the mystical Sufi branch of Sunni Islam, whom IS has branded heretics. Prince Mohammed said Friday's "painful event" was a reminder of the "danger of terrorism and extremism".

"Beyond the killing of innocent people and the spread of hatred, terrorism and extremism distort the image of our religion," he said.

Since his sudden appointment as crown prince, Prince Mohammed has moved to consolidate power, announcing crackdowns on both terrorism and corruption. A corruption purge saw around 200 Saudi elites including princes, ministers and business tycoons arrested or sacked earlier this month.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah met Prince Mohammed bin Salman yesterday on the sidelines of the conference. During the meeting, they discussed Kuwaiti-Saudi cooperation in the fight against terrorism and extremism. Sheikh Mohammad reiterated in a speech during the meeting that Kuwait's eagerness to join the ranks of the alliance stems from its unyielding disapproval of the scourge of terrorism, and underlined efforts to "tighten the noose on terrorists all over the world".

He said that it would behoove the Islamic military alliance to align their efforts to keep the menace of terrorism at bay, which in turn would prevent sectarian strife that threatens the region's stability. The Kuwaiti minister stressed that collective efforts are needed to "prevent terrorist groups and militias from spreading their twisted ideological zealotry". "Today, we send a vociferous message that no part of our society has been spared this plague of terrorism," he added, citing the recent attack on a mosque in Egypt's restive Sinai peninsula as tragic affirmation. — Agencies

Lebanese respond to...

Continued from Page 1

But Lebanon's government has proved serially unable to address the country's rubbish crisis, which reached catastrophic proportions in the summer of 2015. Mountains of trash piled up in the streets of Beirut and its surroundings after the nation's largest dump closed down. That site had been years overdue for closure, and the government had pledged to find an alternative before it was shuttered but failed to do so in time.

So there was nowhere for collectors to send the rubbish produced by the two million residents of Beirut and its environs. Experts warn the nightmare scenario could soon be repeated thanks to the government's continued failure to adopt a comprehensive waste management strategy, even as the country produces 6,000 tonnes of refuse a day.

In response to the 2015 crisis, and the massive demonstrations it provoked, the government in March 2016 approved a "temporary" plan to reopen two long-closed dumps in the Beirut area. But the massive backlog created by months of accumulating and uncollected trash meant the two sites quickly reached capacity. Authorities are now examining the possibility of expanding the sites. "The government must start to think seriously about lasting solutions and start putting them in place, even if it's little by little," said Lama Bashour, head of the Ecocentra environmental consultancy.

Like many experts, she emphasized the importance of "sorting and recycling" waste. European Union funds have helped pay for several sorting and composting facilities in Lebanon, but there are still more than 900 unlicensed dumps nationwide, according to an official study. "The government should first of all have a strategy," said Farouk

Merhebi, a waste management expert. "By 1997, it was an emergency plan. Today we are in 2017, and we are still in an emergency plan. So we are reacting, we don't plan for the future."

He said the failure to produce a proper strategy had dire consequences. "Any region where there is no waste management facility, they are resorting to burning of the waste. Most of the municipalities burn their waste." Despite the large quantity of recyclable material being deposited of each day, just 15 percent of it is actually recycled, according to a source with knowledge of the sector.

The government is reportedly now studying a plan that would seek to decrease waste and boost recycling, something that Ziad Abi Chaker, of the company Cedar Environmental, has long called for. Founded in the late 1990s, Abi Chaker's firm now runs eight sorting centers across Lebanon, including one in the idyllic forested peaks of Mount Lebanon's Beit Meri. In the large metal warehouse, workers sort in a chain, taking apart blue and black garbage bags and pulling out recyclables including glass, plastic and metal.

The company boasts of sorting 80 tonnes a day at its facilities, sending reusable items on to recycling factories. "We've proved that the concept of zero waste, in a decentralised framework, can succeed," said Abi Chaker. But elsewhere, attempts to tackle the waste crisis have been less of a success story. In the southern seaside town of Sidon, a mountain of smelly trash has appeared on the shore, despite the presence of a new waste management facility.

The mountain is made up of what is known as "residues" that can neither be recycled nor composted and ordinarily should be placed in a sanitary landfill. But no such landfill is available yet, so the leftovers are piling up on the facility's site, right next to the water's edge. The municipality says it is planning to build a landfill to address the mountain, now several meters high. In the meantime, residents simply have to put up with the stink. At the mountain's base, fishermen seem almost oblivious to it as they cast their lines into the shallows, hoping for a bite. — AFP



RIYADH: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets Saudi Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammed bin Salman yesterday. — KUNA

Bali volcano spews smoke and ash...

Continued from Page 1

"I am meant to be at work tomorrow. How am I going to pay my bills?" said Sydney-based tourist Jake Vidler. But on the nearby island of Lombok, also a popular tourist destination east of Bali, the airport was closed yesterday evening as wind blew ash from Mount Agung in that direction. "I've received a refund from my airline. Now I'm trying to go to Lombok by boat, hopefully the harbor is open," said Ismono, who like many Indonesians goes by one name.

Mount Agung last erupted in 1963, killing nearly 1,600 people. It rumbled back to life in September and authorities raised the alert to the highest level, forcing 140,000 people living nearby to evacuate. The volcano's activity decreased in late October and many people returned to their home as the alert was lowered to the

second-highest level. But Mount Agung rumbled again last Tuesday, forcing at least 25,000 people to seek shelter. Authorities urged people living within 7.5 km of the mountain to evacuate.

The mountain sent smoke up into the air on Saturday for the second time in a week in what volcanologists call a phreatic eruption - one which is caused by the heating and expansion of groundwater. Officials later yesterday said the activity could be a magmatic eruption - one which involves the decompression of gas and results in the spewing of ash - and advised people near the mountain to wear masks.

But authorities have decided not to raise the alert back to the highest level just yet. "This time the tremors and quakes caused by the volcano's activities are significantly less than in September," said the head of Indonesia's volcanology center Kasbani. In September hundreds of tremors happened daily near Mount Agung, while during the past few days only a couple of tremors could be felt. Mount Agung is one of more than 120 active volcanoes extending the length of Indonesia, which straddles the Pacific Ring of Fire. —AFP

Kuwait Times

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Analysis

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E MAIL : info@kuwaittimes.net
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dwindling in fight
against militants

The scale of the bloodshed was vastly higher than past militant attacks but the Egyptian government response the same: Three days of mourning, reassuring messages in the media that things are under control, and the president promising vengeance. The identical pattern in the aftermath of Friday's attack on a mosque in Sinai, which killed 305 people, raises the question whether Egypt has any options left in the fight against Islamic militants.

The military has thrown tanks, fighting vehicles, fighter-jets, warships and helicopter gunships along with tens of thousands of security forces in three years of conflict with extremists, including an affiliate of the Islamic State group in the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula.

The area has been under emergency law for several years and the entire country since April. Security forces have forcibly evacuated areas adjacent to the border with Gaza, razing residents' houses and farmlands. They have blown up underground tunnels that authorities believe militants used to smuggle weapons and fighters in from neighboring Gaza, ruled by the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

These measures have shown few tangible results. The firepower and troop deployments in Sinai have kept militants from holding territory but have not prevented them from carrying out assassinations that terrorize the population and launching deadly attacks on military and police posts and convoys and recently a daylight robbery in Sinai's largest town.

'Brute Force'

In a televised address, a livid Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, Egypt's general-turned-president, pledged the use of "brute force" in response to Friday's attack. "The armed forces and police will forcefully take revenge for our martyred sons and restore security and stability in the short period ahead," he vowed. There is little public discussion of how to conduct the war and northern Sinai area is closed off to journalists, making it difficult to assess what's going on. In the overwhelmingly pro-government media, talk about the conflict is largely focused on cheering the military and police, commemorating their "martyrs" and urging the public to rally around Sisi.

The closest authorities came to admitting shortcomings was last month when Sisi removed the armed forces' chief of staff and top police generals after a planned attack on militants in the Western Desert went disastrously wrong. The operation left over a dozen counterterrorism police officers dead and exposed poor coordination among security and intelligence agencies.

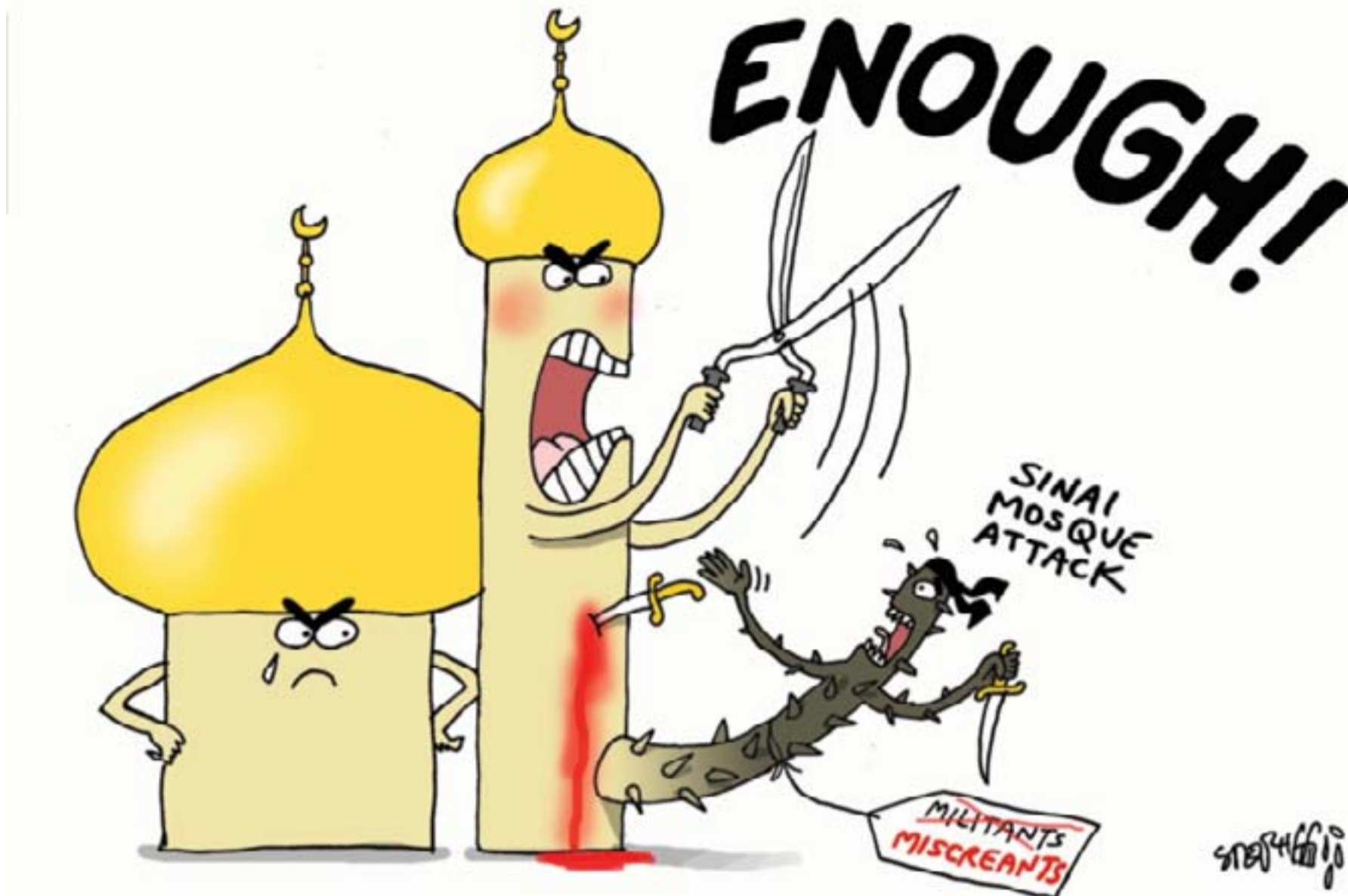
It also illustrated the problem posed by Egypt's long desert border with Libya - a country mired in chaos and rife with armed Islamic militant groups - through which weapons and fighters can be smuggled. That has fueled a second front of militant violence in the west, with signs of arms movements to the Sinai extremists. Egypt's response has been in line with a longstanding model of fighting a conventional war against an opposing army. Indeed, recent years have seen up to \$15 billion in arms deals, largely for big-ticket items such as two helicopter carriers, submarines, assault helicopters and fighter jets.

But critics have called for a counterterrorism strategy in Sinai rather than the reliance on a conventional deployment of overwhelming force. There are some trained counterterrorism soldiers and police deployed, but most are poorly trained regular troops and police conscripts whose main skill is manning a checkpoint. Warplanes and attack helicopters have limits in a rugged mountain terrain that the militants know far better than the military does. And forces moving with tanks and heavy vehicles are often ambushed by the more agile militants using light arms, machine guns, roadside bombs and suicide bombers.

Heavy-handed

Sisi recently said security forces are hampered by the presence of civilians in Sinai, requiring extreme caution which benefits the insurgents. But critics say the military has been heavy-handed as is, deepening the distrust of local tribes who have long claimed discrimination. Male family members are sometimes arrested if another member is suspected of militancy, according to Sinai rights activists. Soldiers and police at checkpoints are notorious for mistreating people, they say. Roads are often blocked and mobile phone services disrupted. Houses have been razed to clear zones for military control and people forcibly evacuated. Even those who oppose the militants become less likely to help security forces.

At the same time, the militants brutally intimidate residents from cooperating with security forces, kidnapping suspected collaborators and dumping their decapitated bodies on the streets of El-Arish, Rafah and other north Sinai towns for all to see. So the locals provide the military with little actionable intelligence.—AP



The inside story of Mugabe's downfall

Inside State House in Harare, Robert Mugabe was in the tightest spot of his 37-year rule. Tanks were on the streets and troops had occupied the state broadcaster, from where the army had announced it had taken control of Zimbabwe. Mugabe, 93 years old but still alert, remained defiant. The only leader the country had known since independence was refusing to quit. At a tense meeting with his military top brass on Nov 16, the world's oldest head of state put his foot down: "Bring me the constitution and tell me what it says," he ordered military chief Constantino Chiwenga, according to two sources present.

An aide brought a copy of the constitution, which lays out that the president is commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Chiwenga, dressed in camouflage fatigues, hesitated before replying that Zimbabwe was facing a national crisis that demanded military intervention. Mugabe retorted that the army was the problem, according to the sources present. Then the beleaguered president indicated that perhaps they could find a solution together.

The meeting marked the start of an extraordinary five-day standoff between Mugabe and Zimbabwe's supreme law on one side, and the military, his party and Zimbabwe's people on the other. The generals wanted Mugabe to go, but they also wanted a peaceful "coup", one that would not irreparably tarnish the administration aiming to take over, according to multiple military and political sources.

The president finally accepted defeat only after he was sacked by his own ZANU-PF party and faced the ignominy of impeachment. He signed a short letter of resignation to parliament speaker Jacob Mudenda that was read out to lawmakers on Nov 21. Mugabe, who had run Zimbabwe since 1980 and overseen its descent into economic ruin while his wife shopped for luxury goods, was gone. The country erupted into ecstasy. Parliamentarians danced and people poured onto the streets in their tens of thousands to celebrate a political downfall that sent shockwaves across Africa and the world.

To many, the end of Mugabe had been unthinkable only one week before. Reuters has pieced together the events leading up to Mugabe's removal, showing that the army's action was the culmination of months of planning that stretched from Harare to Johannesburg to Beijing.

Bitter rivalry

Drawing on a trove of intelligence documents from within Mugabe's feared Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), Reuters reported in September that the army was backing Emmerson Mnangagwa, then vice president, to succeed Mugabe when the time came. The report detailed how Mnangagwa, a lifelong friend and former security chief of Mugabe, might cooperate with Mugabe's political foes in order to revive the economy. It caused furor in Zimbabwe's media and political circles.

Bitter rivalry intensified between Mnangagwa and Grace Mugabe's 52-year-old wife, who also hoped to take over as president and had the backing of a ZANU-PF faction known as G40. In early October, Mnangagwa said he had been airlifted to hospital in South Africa after a poisoning attempt in August. He pointed no fingers - but he didn't need to. Grace's swift response was to deny it and accuse her rival of seeking sympathy; she belittled him as nothing but an employee of her husband, according to a report in the state-run Herald newspaper. As the pressure built, Mugabe became increasingly paranoid about the loyalty of army chief Chiwenga, a career soldier and decorated veteran of Zimbabwe's 1970s bush-war against white-minority rule. Mugabe's spies, who permeated every institution and section of society in Zimbabwe, were warning him the military would not accept Grace as president. "Mugabe is very worried of a coup," one intelligence report, dated Oct 23, said. "Mugabe was openly told by senior CIOs that the military is not going to easily accept the appointment of Grace. He was warned to be ready for civil war."

Reuters reviewed the document, and hundreds of other intelligence reports dating back to 2009, before the coup took place. The documents come from within the CIO, but Reuters could not determine for whom they were written. The CIO is split into factions, some pro- and some anti-Mugabe. In late October, Mugabe summoned Chiwenga to a showdown, according to another of the documents, dated Oct 30. It said Mugabe confronted the army chief about his ties to Mnangagwa and told him that going against Grace would cost him his life.

"Chiwenga was warned by Mugabe that it is high time for him to start following. He mentioned to Chiwenga that those fighting his wife are bound to die a painful death," the intelligence report said. At the same meeting, Mugabe also ordered Chiwenga to pledge allegiance to Grace. He refused. "Chiwenga refused to be intimidated. He stood his ground

over his loyalty to Mnangagwa," the report said. Reuters put questions about this exchange and other aspects of this article to Mugabe's spokesman, George Charamba. In an enigmatic text message dated Nov 23, he replied: "Enjoy Reuters copy. Goodnight." Two spokesmen for Chiwenga declined to comment. After another tense meeting with Mugabe on Nov 5, Chiwenga left Harare on a pre-arranged official trip and travelled to China, which wields significant influence as a major investor in Zimbabwe. A day later, Mugabe sacked Mnangagwa as vice president and purged him from ZANU-PF, the liberation movement that Mnangagwa had served since his youth and for which, as a young militant caught bombing a train, he had nearly been executed. For the generals, Mugabe had gone too far. The military immediately activated a "Code Red" alert, its highest level of preparedness, a military source said.

Assassination plot

Moments after Mnangagwa was ousted on Nov 6, the security details assigned to him and his house were withdrawn, according to a statement he issued later. He was told his life was in danger. "Security personnel, who are friendly to me, warned me that plans were underfoot to eliminate me once arrested and taken to a police station," Mnangagwa said in a Nov 21 statement. "It was in my security interest to leave the country immediately."

From Harare, he managed to escape over the border into neighboring Mozambique, where he caught a plane to China, according to one source familiar with his movements. There he met up with Chiwenga, the source said. Reuters could not confirm the account; but an intelligence report from Nov 13 indicates that Mugabe suspected some of his generals of preparing to overthrow him from China. "A number of generals are now in China ready to plot Mugabe's ouster with Mnangagwa," the report said. It was not clear which generals, and whether their travel to China was authorized.

Mugabe's spies suspected old allies had turned against

Army had backed
Mnangagwa for
months, finally
got its way

the ageing president. An intelligence report, dated Oct 30, said Beijing and Moscow both supported regime change out of frustration at Zimbabwe's economic implosion under Mugabe. "China and Russia are after change," the report said. "They are after change within ZANU-PF as they are sick and tired of Mugabe's leadership. The two countries are even ready to clandestinely supply arms of war to Mnangagwa to fight Mugabe."

Neither China's Defense Ministry nor Foreign Ministry responded to a request for comment. The Foreign Ministry had previously said Chiwenga's visit was "a normal military exchange mutually agreed upon by China and Zimbabwe". Reuters sent written requests for comment to the Kremlin, the Russian Defense Ministry and the Russian Foreign Ministry. None of them responded.

China has long taken an interest in Zimbabwe, having supported Mugabe's forces during the liberation struggle. After independence it developed connections there in mining, security and construction. Russia has also had ties to Zimbabwe since the early 1980s, and in 2014 a Russian consortium entered into a partnership to develop a \$3 billion platinum mining project in the country.

Chiwenga's trip to China culminated in him meeting Chinese Defense Minister Chang Wanquan in Beijing on Nov 10. Two sources with knowledge of the talks told Reuters that Chiwenga asked if China would agree not to interfere if he took temporary control in Zimbabwe to remove Mugabe from power. Chang assured him Beijing would not get involved and the two also discussed tactics that might be employed during the de facto coup, the sources said. Reuters could not establish whether Mnangagwa met Chang.

Having got wind of the talks in China, Mugabe summoned his still-loyal police commissioner, Augustine Chihuri, and his deputy, Innocent Matibiri, to detain Chiwenga on his return to Harare, government and security sources said. The pair assembled a squad of 100 police and intelligence agents. But the plot leaked and Chiwenga supporters managed to pull together a counter-team of several hundred special forces soldiers and agents as their commander's plane approached.

Some were disguised as baggage handlers, their military fatigues and weapons hidden beneath high-visibility jackets and overalls, one security source said. Realizing they were outnumbered and outgunned, Chihuri's police team backed down, allowing Chiwenga to touch down without incident, the security source said. Mugabe's spokesman did not comment on the incident.

'Very alarmed'

Two days later, Chiwenga and a group of military commanders demanded a meeting with Mugabe at his official State House residence in Harare, an ornate colonial villa complete with stuffed leopards and thick red carpets, according to a government source. They said they were "very alarmed" at the firing of Mnangagwa and told Mugabe to rein in his wife and her G40 faction, whom they accused of trying to divide the military, according to the government official, who was present at the discussions. "What do you think should be done?" Mugabe demanded of the soldiers as he sat slumped in an armchair. The generals asked him to give assurances that they too would not be purged. Mugabe's response was lukewarm, the government source said. Chiwenga told Mugabe he would be making his concerns about the G40 faction public. Hours later, Chiwenga summoned reporters to the military's main barracks near Harare to issue a statement. "We must remind those behind the current treacherous shenanigans that, when it comes to matters of protecting our revolution, the military will not hesitate to step in," he said, reading from a prepared text. The following afternoon, Reuters reported six armored personnel carriers heading towards the headquarters of Mugabe's Presidential Guard on the outskirts of Harare. It was unclear whose command they were under. At the time, the city's residents were on edge but still unsure what it all meant.

The line went dead

At around 6 pm on Nov 14, Mugabe's motorcade headed to his private "Blue Roof" residence, a heavily fortified compound in the capital's leafy northern suburb of Borrowdale. Meanwhile, social media buzzed with pictures of armored vehicles driving along roads to Harare, sparking frenzied speculation about a coup.

Increasingly concerned, Grace put in a call shortly after 7 pm to a cabinet minister asking to get WhatsApp and Twitter shut down, according to one source familiar with a recording of the conversation. The minister, whose identity Reuters is withholding for safety reasons, replied that such a move was the responsibility of state security minister Kembo Mohadi. "No-one will stand for a coup. It cannot happen," said Grace, commonly referred to as Amai, which means Mother, according to a source who heard the recording. Mugabe's voice is then heard on the line: "As you have heard from Amai, is there anything that can be done?" The minister gave the same response, about the responsibilities of state security, and the line went dead, the source said. Mohadi declined to comment.

Two hours later, two armored vehicles rolled into the Pockets Hill headquarters of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), according to ZBC sources. Dozens of soldiers sealed off the site and stormed into the studios where they accosted staff, snatching their phones and halting programs. State-owned ZBC, widely seen as a mouthpiece for Mugabe, switched to broadcasting pop music videos.

Mugabe's inner circle, nearly all of them G40 loyalists, had no idea what was under way, according to four sources familiar with their conversations. Information Minister Simon Khaya Moyo called Defense Minister Sydney Sekeramayi to ask if he had any information about a possible coup. Sekeramayi said no, but tried to check with military chief Chiwenga. Chiwenga told Sekeramayi he would get back to him. According to the sources, Chiwenga never did. Moyo remains in hiding and was unavailable for comment. Sekeramayi declined to comment.

Security detail

As ministers in the G40 faction tried frantically to work out what was going on, Chiwenga's men closed in on Mugabe's compound. According to a source briefed on the situation, Albert Ngunube, a CIO director and head of Mugabe's security detail, was driving home around 9.30 pm after visiting Mugabe. He met an armored car on Borrowdale Brooke, a side road leading to Mugabe's house.

When Ngunube confronted the soldiers and threatened to shoot them, they beat him up and detained him, the source said. Ngunube was later released, but had suffered head and facial injuries, the source added. Spokesmen for Chiwenga and Mnangagwa declined to comment. Reuters was unable to contact Ngunube.—Reuters

Sports

Bottas beats Hamilton to win season-ending Abu Dhabi GP

Vettel finish 20 seconds behind in third place

ABU DHABI: Valtteri Bottas won the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix from pole position yesterday, beating his Mercedes teammate Lewis Hamilton as Formula One's season finale petered out into a procession. The Finnish driver comfortably secured the third win of his F1 career, all this season since joining from Williams. It was his 22nd career podium and 13th with Mercedes. With his fourth world title already secure, Hamilton had no need to chase the win. He finished 4 seconds behind and did not get close enough to attack.

"Valteri did a great job to hold me off," Hamilton said. "Congratulations to him." The race started at 5 pm local time with the sun setting on the desert setting of the Yas Marina circuit and finished under floodlights.

Bottas started from pole for the fourth time this season and assuredly held the position into the first corner. Sebastian Vettel, who won the last race in Brazil, finished 20 seconds behind him in third place.

"After three or four laps, I just couldn't go any faster," Vettel said. "Congratulations to Lewis on his season. He was the better man. I hate to say it but he deserved it." Vettel's Ferrari teammate Kimi Raikkonen was fourth and also moved up to fourth in the standings, behind Bottas and second-place Vettel.

Hamilton clinched the world title - his third with Mercedes - in Mexico two races ago when he ended Vettel's fading hopes. Red Bull driver Max Verstappen finished fifth while teammate Daniel Ricciardo retired, dropping from fourth to fifth in the standings.

The other wins for Bottas this season came in Russia

and in Austria - also from pole - and he performed spins on the track to celebrate. Hamilton, who won nine races this year, did the same. Bottas made a clean start while Hamilton held off Vettel, who locked his left front tire angling into the first corner.

The 5.6-mile track is difficult to overtake on and the top grid positions were easily held. After 21 of 55 laps Bottas was 2.5 seconds clear of Hamilton and eight ahead of Vettel, who was the first of the trio to pit for new tires.

Bottas did one lap later, leaving Hamilton briefly in front.

At much the same time, Ricciardo retired, leaving his stranded Red Bull on a patch of grass as he hitched a lift back to the team garage on the back of a scooter. It was the third time in four races - and sixth in 20 this year - that the Australian driver has failed to finish.

Bottas regained the lead when Hamilton came in for his tire change on lap 25. Renault driver Carlos Sainz Jr. joined Ricciardo in the paddock after an apparent steering issue ended his race with about 20 laps to go.

Nico Hulkenberg was sixth - despite a five-second time penalty early on for cutting a corner in his Renault - and placed ahead of Force India drivers Sergio Perez and Esteban Ocon. Two-time F1 champion Fernando Alonso got ninth in McLaren's last race with the under-performing Honda engines before switching to Renault as its supplier for 2018.

Veteran Brazilian driver Felipe Massa, the 2008 F1 runner-up to Hamilton, finished 10th in his last race before retiring. — AP



ABU DHABI: Mercedes' Finnish driver Valtteri Bottas celebrates on the podium at the end of the Abu Dhabi Formula One Grand Prix at the Yas Marina circuit yesterday. — AFP

“After four laps, I just couldn't go any faster.”

Cameron Davis wins Australian Open golf

SYDNEY: Australia's Cameron Davis shot a brilliant final round of seven-under-par 64 to win the 102nd Australian Open after a wild finish to the tournament yesterday. Regarded as one of Australia's most promising young players, the 22-year-old charged home to beat his more experienced rivals and capture his first professional title.

With the blustery conditions testing the nerves and skill of all the players, Davis birdied the last hole to finish at 11-under-par and win by one stroke from Sweden's Jonas Blixt and compatriot Matt Jones, the 2015 champion. "To know that I can play my best golf under the most pressure you can really feel, is so good," Davis said.

"I'm going to take that going forward for sure, and hopefully it's going to help me over the line in the future," Cameron Smith, the only Australian to win on the PGA Tour this year, finished fourth at nine-under after closing with a 68, while overnight leader Jason Day faded to fifth at eight-under after shooting a 73. "You can't be perfect all the time," Day said. "I played three terrific rounds actually, the first three rounds, and I just didn't put it together on Sunday." In a thrilling final round which saw four different players hold the lead at various stages, Davis timed his run to perfection to claim victory. Day led from the outset but

slipped back down the leaderboard when he hit his second shot from a fairway bunker on the ninth hole into the water for a double bogey.

Day's playing partner Lucas Herbert briefly took over in front but made three bogeys and a double in his last 10 holes to fall out of contention and eventually finish tied for sixth.

Blixt recovered from a double bogey on the ninth to reel off four birdies in five holes and join Davis in a share of the lead. But he missed a 15-foot putt on the last to force a playoff. "I haven't been in this position (for a while), so it was kind of fun being in it," Blixt said.

"I felt really comfortable the last four holes and tried to make a run at it and it didn't happen." While his rivals all struggled in the wind, Davis made six birdies and a spectacular eagle-2 on the 12th, when he found the hole from the middle of the fairway. Davis, the 2015 Australian Amateur champion, turned professional after helping his country win the Eisenhower Trophy last year. But he has been struggling to make his mark while playing on the Canadian PGA Tour.

Best known as one of the few ambidextrous players in golf, Davis joined the honour roll of champions to get their name engraved on the Stonehaven Cup for winning the Australian Open, one of the world's oldest tournaments. Ranked 1,494th in the world, he also earned himself a place in his first major, at next year's British Open, but was still trying to grasp the magnitude of his win yesterday.

"There's a whole lot of stuff coming that I'm not really aware of yet, but it's going to be good," Davis said. "I was trying to take my mind off that (but) I'm sure later on today I'm going to start looking



SYDNEY: Australia's Cameron Smith smiles after being presented his trophy after winning the Australian Open Golf tournament in Sydney, yesterday. — AP

around and seeing what this might get me. But at the moment I'm just kind of a little bit numb to it all." Defending Australian Open champion Jordan Spieth eagled his final hole to end a disappointing week on a high and finish eighth at

six under. "I found a nice trigger and I was getting through my putts a lot better than I was at the beginning of the week," Spieth said. "Had that happened the whole week, I would definitely have been in contention." — AFP

Woodward sees 'something special' in Jones's England

LONDON: Clive Woodward believes a "versatile" England are on course to challenge for the 2019 World Cup under coach Eddie Jones. England's 48-14 victory over Samoa at Twickenham on Saturday in their last match of this year meant they have won 22 out of 23 Tests since Jones was appointed after their first-round exit at the 2015 World Cup. Woodward, in charge of England when they beat an Australia side coached by Jones to win the 2003 World Cup final, believes the current team are developing an all-round games that can pose a threat to reigning champions New Zealand in two years' time.

"If I was an England player I would be going back to my club after the autumn games very excited," Woodward told BBC Radio Five yesterday. "They know the big goal is the World Cup in Japan and as a player, deep down, you know you've got a chance and you're going there not to make the numbers."

"What I like about England now is that they can play a whole variety of ways," Woodward added. "They show some great skills, but when they want to play really tough and go physically at teams they can do that as well."

"To win a World Cup you've got to have a team who can play all different ways and also change tactics during the game." Saturday's success saw England end their November campaign with a perfect played three, won three, record following wins over Argentina and Australia.

Woodward said Jones deserved the bulk of the credit for England's revival following their World Cup failure. England's only defeat under Jones was a 13-9 loss to Ireland in Dublin in March in the Six Nations.

"It's been staggering to win (22 out of 23) from, for me, what was a shambles in the 2015 World Cup," Woodward said. "To not get out of the pool and lose to Australia and Wales at Twickenham was not a good time." — AFP

Wales must use frustration against 'Boks'

CARDIFF: Wales skipper Alun Wyn Jones says his team must channel their frustration at having lost to New Zealand into trying to post an unprecedented third successive victory over South Africa next weekend. The Welsh dominated possession and territory for large periods at Cardiff's Principality Stadium on Saturday, especially in the first half, but were never in control of the scoreboard. Down just 12-11 at half-time, Wales had no answer as the All Blacks ran out comfortable winners, with wingers Rieko Ioane and Waisake Naholo each crossing for try doubles in the 33-18 victory that extended the world champions' winning streak over the Welsh to 30 games over 64 years. "It's a cliché, we're fortunate in a way, we've got another game to go," said Jones.

"Hopefully, our frustration will fuel us next week." South Africa have themselves spluttered on their northern hemisphere tour. The Springboks beat Italy 35-6 on Saturday, after having edged France (18-17) a week earlier. But they also went down to a record 38-3 defeat by Ireland.

But their recent form in Cardiff is not great, with Wales running out winners in both 2016 and 2015, rare victories for the home side over one of the big southern hemisphere giants.

"We have got a big week next week," Wales coach Warren Gatland said. "We have beaten them the last

two occasions we have played them. We need to learn from the first three weeks we have been together, and continue to improve."

ABSENTEES MOUNT

Wales will, however, be without a host of players for the Springbok encounter. Rhys Webb (concussion) and Jake Ball (shoulder) both made early exits against the All Blacks, while there is also a doubt over centre Scott Williams (ankle).

Wales will also be without their England-based players who don't have a release for next week's game as it falls outside the international window. Gatland said he still needed to find out the status of Owen Williams, Tomas Francis, Taulupe Faletau, Rhys Priestland and Jamie Roberts - who all play for English clubs - for the Boks.

"There are a few players going back to their clubs next week," Gatland said. "We will see where we are from a physical point of view over the next 24 hours and then start preparing for another tough match." The consolation is that Springbok coach Allister Coetzee must also bid farewell to some of his overseas-based players.

Francois Louw, Franco Mostert and Duane Vermeulen will all be missing from the pack versus Wales, although abrasive flanker Siva Kolisi will rejoin the squad in Cardiff, having missed the Italian Test to be at the birth of his second child.

Former Wales and Lions legend Barry John, in his column for the Wales on Sunday newspaper, was blunt in his assessment of what Wales needed to produce. "Gatland and his team need a victory to end the autumn on a high," John said.

"We don't want to be looking back at three more losses to the southern hemisphere big three (including a 29-21 loss to Australia) and a solitary scrappy victory



CARDIFF: New Zealand's full-back Damian McKenzie (C) runs with the ball during the Autumn international rugby union Test match between Wales and New Zealand at the Principality stadium in Cardiff, south Wales. — AFP

over Georgia... "The Springboks won't be as good as New Zealand and what Wales have to aim for is a

repeat of their first-half performance, only this time sustained for the duration of the match." — AFP

Sports

Australia on brink of victory after England crumble for 195

Openers Warner, Bancroft score half-centuries

BRISBANE: A pulsating Ashes opener that had promised a grandstand finish will more than likely end early with a handsome win to Australia after Steve Smith's side pushed within 56 runs of victory at the close of day four yesterday.

The teams will return to the Gabba today to go through the motions, with Australia openers David Warner and Cameron Bancroft looking to mop up the winning runs after protecting their wickets with aplomb after tea.

Australia were 114 without loss at stumps, with Bancroft (51) celebrating his maiden half-century in his test debut after vice-captain Warner (60) raised his 25th as shadows crept across the ground. "Obviously a great day for our team, to finish the way we did with the bat, none down with 56 runs to get," Australia pace-man Mitchell Starc told reporters.

"Heading over to (the second test in) Adelaide, England will have to chase us. "I'd rather be in our changeroom than theirs." The denouement happens yesterday but the game broke open after lunch, however, when England's middle order suffered a ruinous collapse for the second time in the match.

The loss of captain Joe Root for 51 before the first break was a blow but there was still hope as Moeen Ali and Jonny Bairstow drove England to 155 for five. From there it went sour as the tourists fell for 195, the capitulation triggered by a third umpire decision that may be debated for years to come.

Having breezed to 40, Moeen was beaten by spinner Nathan Lyon and wicketkeeper Tim Paine whipped the bails off in a flash. The all-rounder's foot was planted squarely on the line and long, tortuous deliberations followed as New Zealander Chris Gaffaney pondered various angles.

None of the footage showed Moeen's foot safely behind the line, so Gaffaney sent him packing. It was Lyon's third wicket of a fine test for the offspinner and England's breaking point after three days of mostly valiant cricket.

They lost 4-40 and their last three wickets for 10 runs as Starc awoke to trample on their wafer-thin hopes. All-rounder Chris Woakes added 30 runs with Bairstow but his uneasy 57-ball knock ended on 17 when caught in the slips by Smith after being worked over by a short ball from Starc.

Left to carry the tail, Bairstow instead threw away his wicket for 42 with a ramp shot over the slips that went straight to third man. Stuart



BRISBANE: Australia's David Warner plays a shot against England during their Ashes cricket Test in Brisbane, Australia, yesterday. — AP

Broad was Starc's third victim four balls later when he feathered a nick and Pat Cummins wrapped up England's innings with another

“Obviously a great day for our team”

bouncer that harried Jake Ball sent to fly slip.

Smith's epic, unbeaten 141 on day three will take on an even greater significance, given the scant contributions of England's batsmen in their second innings. Root made the only half-century for his team, but it will be a footnote in the

match and he concedes an emphatic first-up defeat in his ongoing duel with Smith.

"Obviously very disappointed," said Moeen. "I thought the first three days we played well and we were in the game and then today we let ourselves down with the bat. "It was a good pitch to bat on ... We got in and never really got on to get that score that we needed."

England's veteran quicks James Anderson and Broad were left to try to pull off a miracle but they washed harmlessly against the wall of Warner and Bancroft, who opened their shoulders after a watchful hour. In the morning, it was Lyon who turned the screws with two wickets before Josh Hazlewood (3-46) claimed the prized scalp of Root.

After England resumed the day on 33 for two, Lyon had opener Mark Stoneman caught for 27 by Smith at slip. The spinner and captain combined again when Dawid Malan nicked behind to fall for four. — Reuters



SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth day in the first Test between Australia and England yesterday in Brisbane, Australia.

England 1st innings 302 (J. Vince 83, D. Malan 56, M. Stoneman 53)

Australia 1st innings 328 (S. Smith 141no, S. Marsh 51)

England 2nd innings (Overnight: 33-2)

A. Cook c Starc b Hazlewood	7
M. Stoneman c Smith b Lyon	27
J. Vince c Smith b Hazlewood	2
J. Root lbw b Hazlewood	51
D. Malan c Smith b Lyon	4
M. Ali st Paine b Lyon	40
J. Bairstow c Handscomb b Starc	42
C. Woakes c Smith b Starc	17
S. Broad c Paine b Starc	2
J. Ball c Handscomb b Cummins	1
J. Anderson not out	0
Extras (nb-2)	2
Total (all out, 71.4 overs)	195
Fall of wickets: 1-11 A. Cook, 2-17 J. Vince, 3-62 M. Stoneman, 4-74 D. Malan, 5-113 J. Root, 6-155 M. Ali, 7-185 C. Woakes, 8-194 J. Bairstow, 9-195 S. Broad, 10-195 J. Ball	
Bowling: M. Starc 16-1-51-3(nb-1); J. Hazlewood 16-3-46-3; P. Cummins 12-4-23-1; N. Lyon 24-4-67-3(nb-1); S. Smith 3-0-8-0.	

Australia 2nd innings (Target: 170 runs)

C. Bancroft not out	51
D. Warner not out	60
Extras (lb-2 nb-1)	3
Total (for no loss, 34 overs)	114
Fall of wickets:	
To bat: S. Smith, U. Khawaja, P. Handscomb, S. Marsh, T. Paine, M. Starc, P. Cummins, N. Lyon, J. Hazlewood	
Bowling: J. Anderson 8-2-17-0(nb-1); S. Broad 7-2-14-0; M. Ali 4-0-23-0; C. Woakes 7-1-31-0; J. Ball 4-1-17-0; J. Root 4-1-10-0.	

SCOREBOARD

NAGPUR, India: Scoreboard at stumps on day three of the second cricket Test between India and Sri Lanka in Nagpur yesterday:

Sri Lanka 1st innings 205 (D. Chandimal 57, D. Karunaratne 51; R. Ashwin 4-67)

India 1st innings (overnight 312-2)	
L. Rahul b Gamage	7
M. Vijay c Perera b Herath	128
C. Pujara b Shanaka	143
V. Kohli c Thirimanne b Perera	213
A. Rahane c Karunaratne b Perera	2
R. Sharma not out	102
R. Ashwin b Perera	5
W. Saha not out	1
Extras (b4, lb4, w1)	9
Total (6 wickets dec, 176.1 overs)	610
Fall of wickets: 1-7 (Rahul), 2-216 (Vijay), 3-399 (Pujara), 4-410 (Rahane), 5-583 (Kohli), 6-597 (Ashwin)	
Did not bat: R. Jadeja, U. Yadav, I. Sharma	
Bowling: Lakmal 29-2-111-0, Gamage 35-8-97-1, Herath 39-11-81-1, Shanaka 26.1-4-103-1, Perera 45-2-202-3, Karunaratne 2-0-8-0.	

Sri Lanka 2nd innings

S. Samarawickrama b Sharma	0
D. Karunaratne not out	11
L. Thirimanne not out	9
Extras (lb1)	1
Total (1 wicket, 9 overs)	21
Fall of wicket: 1-0 (Samarawickrama)	
Still to bat: A. Mathews, D. Chandimal, N. Dickwella, D. Shanaka, D. Perera, R. Herath, S. Lakmal, L. Gamage	
Bowling: Sharma 4-1-15-1, Ashwin 4-3-5-0, Jadeja 1-1-0-0.	

India cruises to 384-run lead over S Lanka in 2nd Test

NAGPUR: Sri Lanka faces an uphill struggle after reaching 21-1 and still 384 runs behind at the close of play on day three of the second Test against India in Nagpur yesterday. The tourists started their second innings after Virat Kohli (213) scored his fifth test double hundred while Rohit Sharma (102 not out) scored a third century as India declared their first innings at 610-6.

Kohli and Sharma increased their fifth-wicket partnership to 173 runs. They came out and attacked the bowling, scoring 76 runs in less than an hour after tea. In the process, Kohli reached his double hundred off 259 balls. Overall, he batted for 387 minutes, facing 267 balls, in a knock that included 17 fours and two sixes.

Sharma then reached his milestone off 160 balls and India declared their innings with a 405-run lead. Earlier in the day, Cheteshwar Pujara scored 143 runs after a mammoth 50 minutes, when he faced 362 balls and hit 14 fours. He was the only

wicket to fall in the morning session, bowled off a Dasun Shanaka (1-62) yorker.

Pujara passed 3000 Test runs in his 53rd innings, becoming the quickest Indian batsman to do so. He added 183 runs for the third wicket. "Virat is the kind of player who plays the same way in all formats. The way he started off, he kept the momentum through the innings and I don't think anyone else could have played those shots in the way he did," said Pujara after the day's play.

"For me, it was difficult to score on this wicket. Earlier on day two, the boundaries weren't coming easily and we had to rotate the strike as well," he added, recalling his 209-run partnership with Murali Vijay.

Dilruwan Perera (3-202) was the visitors' most successful bowler, picking up the wickets of Kohli, Ravichandran Ashwin (5) and Ajinkya Rahane earlier. "The target is to get 20 wickets. We have not been able to do that against India this year. We have slowed down their pace of scoring a bit, but that is not a compliment in our minds. We now need to take this game into the fifth day," said Sri Lankan bowling coach Ramesh Ratnayake.

With nine overs remaining, Sri Lanka made a poor start to their second innings when Sadeera Samarawickrama (0) was bowled off Ishant Sharma (1-15) early. At stumps, Lahiru Thirimanne (9 not out) and Dimuth Karunaratne (11 not out) were holding the fort but have a long way to go to save the Test. — AP

Alex Ovechkin has hat trick, Capitals beat Maple Leafs

TORONTO: Alex Ovechkin had a hat trick to help the Washington Capitals beat the Toronto Maple Leafs 4-2 on Saturday night. Ovechkin scored two of his three goals in the opening period for the Capitals. Jakub Vrana also scored, and Braden Holtby made 27 saves for his 13th victory of the season. Jake Gardiner and Nikita Zaitsev scored in the third period for Toronto. Ovechkin opened the scoring when he skated with the puck through the neutral zone before taking a wrist shot from just outside the left face-off circle and beating McElhinney at 12:03. It was Ovechkin's 574th goal, which moved him past Mike Bossy for 21st on the career list. The Russian scored his second goal with 47 seconds left in the period on a power play. The goal was Ovechkin's 217th of his career with the man advantage, which moved him into a tie with Jaromir Jagr for the most among active NHL players. Ovechkin added an empty-netter to give him 18 goals this season.

PENGUINS 5, LIGHTNING 2

Sidney Crosby and Phil Kessel each scored twice and Pittsburgh beat Tampa Bay to end a season-high three-game losing streak. Tristan Jarry, making his first home start, stopped 33 shots for his first NHL win. He also assisted on the first goal of the game. Pittsburgh hasn't lost four straight in regulation overall since Dec. 14-19, 2015, the first four games of coach Mike Sullivan's tenure. The Penguins, playing without injured star forward Evgeni Malkin, also ended a two-game home regulation losing streak. Kessel also had two assists, and Crosby had one. Bryan Rust scored a short-handed goal. Ondrej Palat and Cory Conacher scored for Tampa Bay.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 4, COYOTES 2

Tomas Nosek, William Karlsson and Erik Haula scored in a 1:42 span of the second period and Vegas beat Arizona for its fifth straight victory. Jonathan Marchessault had an empty-net goal right before the buzzer and an earlier pair of assists for the Knights. They improved to 3-0 against Arizona and solidified their spot in first place in the Pacific Division in their inaugural season. Oliver Ekman-Larsson and Brendan Perlini scored in a third-period Coyotes comeback. Perlini's

spectacular goal through traffic and past goalie Malcolm Subban cut the lead to 3-2 with 9:25 remaining.

DEVILS 4, RED WINGS 3, OT

Brian Gibbons scored at 2:32 of overtime to lift New Jersey past Detroit. The Devils squandered a 3-1 lead in the third period, but Gibbons was able to get his stick on a pass by Red Wings defenseman Nick Jensen and took control of the puck in front of the Detroit net. He beat Jimmy Howard for the winner, his 11th goal of the season. David Booth scored twice for the Red Wings and Anthony Mantha started Detroit's third-period rally with his 11th goal of the season. Brian Boyle and Taylor Hall scored in the first period for New Jersey, and Nico Hischi added a goal in the third. New Jersey moved past Columbus into first place in the Metropolitan Division.

BLACKHAWKS 4, PANTHERS 1

Jonathan Toews had a goal and two assists and Corey Crawford made 37 saves in his 400th NHL game to help Chicago beat Florida. Brandon Saad had a goal and an assist, and Patrick Kane and John Hayden also scored for Chicago. Jared McCann scored for the Panthers, and Roberto Luongo stopped 35 shots.

BLUES 6, WILD 3

Jaden Schwartz scored twice and Kyle Brodziak added a short-handed goal in St. Louis' victory over Minnesota. Paul Stastny, Dmitrij Jaskin and Sammy Blais also scored for the Blues, who jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the first period. Jake Allen made 22 saves to help St. Louis win for the third time in four games and improve its points total to an NHL-best 35 at 17-6-1. Charlie Coyle, Zack Mitchell and Eric Staal scored for the Wild. Devan Dubnyk made 34 saves.

CANADIENS 3, SABRES 0

Carey Price made 36 saves in his return from a lower-body injury and Montreal beat Buffalo to snap a five-game losing streak. Price missed 10 games with the injury. The shutout was his 40th in the NHL. Jeff Petry, Alex Galchenyuk and Paul Bryon scored. Montreal's last previous victory was against the Sabres two weeks ago. Buffalo has lost eight of its last nine games.

FLAMES 3, AVALANCHE 2

Michael Ferland and Mikael Backlund scored in the final minute of the second period to help rookie goalie David Rittich get his first NHL victory in Calgary's win over Colorado. Dougie Hamilton also scored, and Backlund added an assist for the Flames. Nikita Zadorov and Mikko Rantanen scored for the Avalanche, and Jonathan Bernier stopped 25 shots. — AP

Rebensburg edges Shiffrin for giant slalom win

KILLINGTON: Mikaela Shiffrin had a roaring crowd in her corner, possibly the biggest to watch a women's World Cup race. But it was not enough to overcome Germany's Viktoria Rebensburg in a stirring duel Saturday on Killington's aptly named Superstar trail. Rebensburg won her second straight World Cup giant slalom by edging Shiffrin, the overall points leader who was skiing in the state where she attended school.

The German finished two runs on Killington's Superstar trail in 1 minute, 57.63 seconds, with Shiffrin 0.67 back. Manuela Moelgg of Italy held on for third, 1.49 seconds off the lead. The race took place before about 18,000 fans - organizers believe it the largest crowd for a women's World Cup race.

And what a race they saw. The second run turned into a showdown star skiers, with the last

four each taking over the top spot. Moelgg had been third after the first run and went into the lead with a strong run. Then Shiffrin took her turn. She is a product of Burke Mountain Academy in northern Vermont and was greeted with thunderous cheers as she left the gate. The noise followed her all the way down the course. She had a great run and wound up 0.82 seconds ahead of Moelgg.

But the day belonged to Rebensburg, who had a superlative second run despite what she described as a big mistake at the top of the course. She said she was surprised she came out on top, and by the margin of victory.

"Sometimes when you make a mistake, you know you have to charge, to go 100 percent," Rebensburg said. "Sometimes mistakes can make you faster." Still, Shiffrin was pleased with her progress in giant slalom since the opener in Soelden. "This was a step in the right direction," she said, adding she felt more confident at Killington. She made a few adjustments to her equipment and her attitude. "I felt like I made some good turns," she said.

Stephanie Brunner of Austria was fourth in 1:59.28 and Federica Brignone of Italy was fifth in 1:59.38. Tessa Worley of France - the giant slalom winner at Killington last season in the first World Cup race held at the resort - was sixth. — AP



KILLINGTON: Viktoria Rebensburg #3 of Germany celebrates on the medals podium after winning the Giant Slalom during the Audi FIS Ski World Cup - Killington Cup in Killington, Vermont. — AFP

Sports

IAAF leaves Russia track and field ban in place

Russia prepared to take legal action against IOC

MONACO: The world governing body of athletics yesterday maintained its suspension of Russia, saying the country still had not done enough to clamp down on doping. Rune Andersen, the head of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF)'s anti-doping Task Force, said "several key (milestones) remain outstanding" before the necessary conditions for Russia's return could be met.

Russia was banned from international athletics in November 2015 over claims of state-sponsored doping, preventing its athletes from competing at the 2016 Rio Olympics and this year's World Championships in London. Andersen said that until the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) reinstated Russia's domestic anti-doping agency RUSADA, the IAAF could not allow the country's athletes back into international competition. WADA ruled in mid-November that Russia was still not compliant with international rules on doping.

'STILL NO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT'

At a press conference during the IAAF Council in Monaco, Andersen said the "reinstatement of RUSADA as a fully independent and code-compliant" body was a key condition for Russian athletes to return to athletics. The Norwegian official added that Russian authorities

were still reluctant to accept that they had covered up evidence of doping. "Unless there is an acknowledgement of what happened before, there can be no assurance that it will not happen again," Rune added. IAAF President Sebastian Coe said he accepted Russia was not ready to return, despite expressing optimism in an interview with AFP in October that Russian authorities were moving in the right direction. "We have unanimously, on every occasion, endorsed the recommendations of the Task Force, and we will continue to do that," Coe said. The IAAF decision comes ahead of a crucial International Olympic Committee (IOC) meeting on 5-7 December on whether Russia can compete at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea. On Friday, the IOC annulled the titles that Russia's Alexander Zubkov won in the two-man and four-man bobsleigh at the 2014 Russian-hosted Sochi Winter Olympics following hearings by its commission into state-sponsored doping. That followed punishments announced Wednesday for four Russian skeleton competitors. Russian sports officials responded to that decision by saying they were prepared to take legal action against the IOC.

A rush of rulings this week means that, in total, the IOC has punished 14 Russian Olympians on the recom-

how heated the group stage matches will be.

MONKEY CHANTS, KNIFE FIGHTS

Russian football has long been plagued by hooliganism in which "ultras" pre-arrange fights featuring everything from knives to bats, while racism has become especially pronounced with the infusion of foreign players once the Iron Curtain fell. Brazilian striker Hulk said he heard monkey chants at "almost every match" when he led Zenit Saint Petersburg to a title and two second-place finishes between 2012 and 2016.

Manchester City midfielder Yaya Toure-himself the subject of fan abuse when his club played at CSKA Moscow in a Champions League game in 2013 — warned this month that "if racism situations happen in Russia, it is going to be a big mess". His nation, Ivory Coast, have not qualified. Russia's football governing body has been trying to clean up its act and organisers say they recorded no racist episodes when they hosted the Confederations Cup-the World Cup warmup-this year. But intertwined with that scourge is hooliganism—a culture deeply rooted due to some clubs' affiliation with rival wings of the armed forces as well as the inherent ill will between Moscow and the largely neglected provinces. Hooliganism experts say Russia's powerful FSB security service has cracked down hard on football gangs and blacklisted many of its leaders as the World Cup nears.

Russia is also using Fan ID cards requiring visitors and locals alike to undergo security checks before they can buy match or travel tickets. Authorities will want to avoid the scenes in Marseille during Euro 2016 when Russian hooligans beat up England fans, leaving some in hospital.

MAVERICKS 97, THUNDER 81

Dirk Nowitzki scored a season-high 19 points, rookie Dennis Smith held his own against Russell Westbrook on the rookie guard's 20th birthday and Dallas beat Oklahoma City. A night after blowing a 15-point lead in the second half of a one-point loss to Detroit that followed a dominant win over Kevin Durant and Golden State, the Thunder fell behind for good in the first quarter of the best performance of the season from the suddenly surging Mavericks. Smith finished with 15 points and four assists while Westbrook had 28 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists.

76ERS 130, MAGIC 111

J.J. Redick hit eight 3-pointers and scored 29 points, and Philadelphia cruised without the injured Ben Simmons past skidding Orlando. Joel Embiid shook off a cold to score 18 points and grab 14 rebounds and T.J. McConnell had 15 points and 13 assists filling in at point guard for Simmons, who missed his first game of the season with swelling in his left elbow. Redick hit six first-half 3s, four coming in the final 3:10 of the second quarter, as the Sixers built a 70-55 halftime lead.

TRAIL BLAZERS 108, WIZARDS 105

C.J. McCollum scored 26 points, including seven straight during a 10-0 game-closing run, and Portland overcame a 17-point fourth-quarter deficit to defeat short-handed Washington. Damian Lillard scored 29 points for Portland, which won for a second consecutive night on the East Coast in dramatic fashion after a 127-125 victory at Brooklyn on Friday. Jusuf Nurkic had 17 points and Noah Vonleh grabbed 10 rebounds for the Blazers.

ROCKETS 117, KNICKS 102

James Harden had 37 points and 10 assists as Houston rallied from an early deficit to beat New York. The Rockets erased New York's early 22-point lead by making 18 3-pointers and getting 44 points from their bench, led by 17 from Ryan Anderson. New York starters Kristaps Porzingis and Enes Kanter sat out the game because of back ailments, and Michael Beasley and Kyle O'Quinn started.

RAPTORS 112, HAWKS 78

Norman Powell scored 17 points, Jonas Valanciunas added 16 and Toronto blew out Atlanta. Toronto dominated the game so completely that it needed just 28 minutes from DeMar DeRozan, one of the NBA's most prolific scorers. DeRozan handed out a game-high eight assists and finished with just two points on 1-for-5 shooting before sitting out the fourth quarter. Kyle Lowry had 15 points and a career-high 13 rebounds as the Raptors snapped a two-game skid. Seven players finished in double figures for the Raptors.—AP

“Several key milestones still remain outstanding”

Facing hurdles, Russia gears up to host World Cup

MOSCOW: Russia is gearing up to host the World Cup for the first time while facing the herculean task of eradicating racism and hooliganism and warding off the threat of a terror attack. Organisers also face the tricky task of appeasing beleaguered fans and President Vladimir Putin, who helped wrest the June 14-July 15 tournament from England in a controversial FIFA vote in 2010 and then gave many of the 11 host cities their first post-Soviet facelift.

It is an \$11.5-billion (9.6-billion-euro) gamble with the potential to backfire if it leaves behind "white elephant" stadiums and hotels that fall into disuse and fail to turn Russia into the tourism mecca it has always dreamed of being.

The logistical challenge of the 2,500 kilometres (1,550 miles) separating the western-most stadium in Kaliningrad near Poland and the most easterly one in the Urals city of Yekaterinburg—the same distance as that between Paris and Moscow—will also test fans' resolve. And friction between Russia and the West over Syria and Ukraine make this year's addition of what is arguably the world's biggest sports event one of the most diplomatically-charged World Cups in decades. The draw on Friday in the Kremlin will determine just

Gasol, Aldridge lead Spurs past cold-shooting Hornets 106-86

CHARLOTTE: Pau Gasol and LaMarcus Aldridge each had 17 points and seven rebounds, and the San Antonio Spurs held the Charlotte Hornets to 37 percent shooting in a 106-86 victory on Saturday night. Rudy Gay added 15 points for the Spurs, who snapped Charlotte's three-game home win streak. The Hornets entered the game 7-2 at the Spectrum Center, but shot just 22 percent from the field in the first half, fell behind by 11 at halftime and could never make a serious run at the Spurs. Kemba Walker, who left the game briefly in the third quarter with a left shoulder injury, returned to finish with 18 points on 8-of-12 shooting. He didn't get much help as Charlotte's four other starters — Nic Batum, Dwight Howard, Michael Kidd-Gilchrist and Marvin Williams — were a combined 6 of 29 from the field.

CELTICS 108, PACERS 98

Kyrie Irving scored 25 points and Al Horford added 21 to lead Boston over Indiana. Boston (18-3) outscored Indiana 37-16 in the third quarter to turn a nine-point deficit into an 82-70 lead entering the final quarter. Horford had 12 points during a period that saw Indiana record two three-minute scoring droughts. The Pacers (11-9) were led by Myles Turner, who had 19 points but spent much of the night in foul trouble. Lance Stephenson had 16 points and eight rebounds, and Damontas Sabonis had 17 points and eight boards. Victor Oladipo, leading Indiana with 22.9 points per game, did not play for the first time this season.

WARRIORS 110, PELICANS 95

Stephen Curry bounced back after an 0-for-10 start and scored 14 of his 27 points in the third quarter. Klay Thompson added 24 points and Golden State held on to beat New Orleans. Draymond Green had six points, seven rebounds and eight assists for the Warriors. Andre Iguodala added 14 points. Golden State won its second in two nights without NBA Finals MVP Kevin Durant. Durant sat out for the third time in four games with a sprained left ankle.



MONACO: International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) President Sebastian Coe, Independent chairperson of the IAAF Taskforce for Russia, Rune Andersen (R) and IAAF's communications director, Jackie Brock-Doyle address a press conference in Monaco yesterday. — AFP

mendation of a commission headed by Swiss sports official Denis Oswald set up to investigate evidence of doping with state involvement.

Russia has lost nine medals, including four of its 13 golds, from the Sochi Games they hosted.

Russia's former world champion sprint hurdler Sergey Shubenkov was one of the Russian athletes who

had to compete as a neutral at the athletics World Championships in London because of the ban on his country. He said there should not be a "blanket ban" for Russia's Winter Olympians.

"Everybody who is not involved in the scandal should be allowed to compete wearing their national colours," he told the BBC. — AFP

JIHADISTS AND BOMBINGS

The threat of terror is ever-present and potentially growing because of Russia's military support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. A Saint Petersburg metro bombing that killed 15 in April was just the latest of the numerous strikes to have hit much of Russia since the 1990s. Yet the estimated 2,900 Russian jihadists who have fought alongside the Islamic State group and are now making their way back home are not the only danger. Southern host city Volgograd fell victim to two suicide bombings and a bus blast perpetrated in November and December 2013 by North Caucasus Islamists that killed 39 people. The entire city has since been on heightened alert. Volgograd Mayor Andrei Kosolapov said canine units already check every bus and train carriage for potential explosives.

"Plus, we have installed and are continuing to install video camera where — online—we can monitor every single street," he told AFP.

PLAYING UNDER PUTIN'S GAZE

Perhaps the biggest concern to Russians themselves is the fate of their team—a squad that has so often underperformed despite having Europe's largest potential talent pool.

Singer Mikhail Boyarsky, a Soviet-era legend who is omnipresent on Russian TV and something of a self-appointed football expert, was blunt. "I doubt we will get very far," he told the Sovetsky Sport paper. "There are no miracles in sport." Something close to that happened at Euro 2008 when Russia stunned the Dutch and made the semi-finals. Russia were then thrashed 3-0 by eventual champions Spain and have wallowed in misery ever since. — AFP



CHARLOTTE: San Antonio Spurs' Kyle Anderson (1) passes the ball around Charlotte Hornets' Dwight Howard (12) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Charlotte, N.C. —AP

Napoli beat Udinese to move top of Serie A, Roma draws

MILAN: Napoli moved back to the top of Serie A with a 1-0 win at Udinese yesterday but it was tougher than the title hopefuls would have expected. Jorginho scored the only goal of the match after his penalty had been saved to send Napoli two points above Inter Milan, which won 3-1 at Cagliari on Saturday. Title rival Roma was surprisingly held 1-1 at relegation-threatened Genoa in a match that saw Daniele De Rossi sent off.

Third-placed Juventus hosts Crotone later and will be looking to cut the gap to Napoli back to four points. Napoli had scored 34 goals in its previous 13 matches but struggled to create gooscoring opportunities. However, its pressure paid off shortly after the half-hour mark when Christian Maggio was brought down by Gabriele Angella in the area. Jorginho's weak penalty was easily saved by Simone Scuffet but the Udinese goalkeeper couldn't hold onto the ball and the Italy midfielder tucked away the rebound.

Udinese tested Napoli goalkeeper Pepe Reina on a couple of occasions but Massimo Oddo's debut ended in defeat. The 41-year-old coach had replaced the fired Luigi Delneri on Tuesday.

DE ROSSI SEES RED

Roma had won its last six meetings with Genoa, home and away, but was frustrated at the Stadio Luigi Ferraris. Stephan El Shaarawy broke the deadlock just before the hour, firing Alessandro Florenzi's delightful cross into the bottom left corner. However the match changed eight minutes later when, with Roma seemingly in control, De Rossi was sent off for slapping Gianluca Lapadula in the face. Lapadula converted the resulting penalty. Roma could have won the match late on but Kevin Strootman hit the crossbar. The capital side slipped seven points behind Napoli, although it has a game in hand.

MONTELLA UNDER PRESSURE

AC Milan faltered again as it was held to a 0-0 draw at home to Torino, piling more pressure on coach Vincenzo Montella. Milan, which spent more than 200 million euros (nearly \$250 million) on new players in the offseason, has won just two of its past nine matches. Nikola Kalinic hit the post early on while both Milan goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma and his Torino counterpart Salvatore Sirigu pulled off stunning saves.

Kalinic had a couple of efforts saved and wasted other opportunities. He was jeered by the fans when he was substituted and reacted by sarcastically applauding. Patrick Cutrone had the ball in the back of the net in stoppage time but he was offside. — AP



Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA
Espanyol v Getafe 23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE
Atalanta v Benevento 22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 4

13 Bottas beats Hamilton to win season-ending Abu Dhabi GP



14 Rebensburg edges Shiffrin for giant slalom win



15 IAAF leaves Russia track and field ban in place



HUDDERSFIELD: Manchester City's Fernandinho, centre, is booked for simulation after this fowl during the English Premier League soccer match between Huddersfield Town and Manchester City at John Smith's stadium, in Huddersfield yesterday. — AP

Sterling late strike extend City's lead

HUDDERSFIELD: Raheem Sterling grabbed a late winner for the second time in six days as Manchester City came from a goal down to beat Huddersfield 2-1 and secure a club-record equalling 11th straight league win. Sterling's dramatic intervention meant Pep Guardiola's table-topping side were able to reestablish an eight-point lead over second placed Manchester United in the Premier League title race.

United had briefly closed the gap with a win against Brighton on Saturday. Huddersfield absorbed a barrage of pressure to go in front in first-half stoppage time at the John Smith's Stadium as Nicolas Otamendi diverted Tom Ince's corner into his own net.

City equalised less than two minutes after half-time as Sergio Aguero converted a penalty awarded for a foul on Sterling by Scott Malone. Sterling, who scored the 88th-minute winner as City beat Feyenoord 1-0 in the Champions League on Tuesday, then bundled in a fortunate goal with six minutes left.

As tempers boiled over following Sterling's winner, Huddersfield winger Rajiv van La Parra was sent off at the final whistle for a shove on Leroy Sane.

Huddersfield, looking to respond to a 4-0 thumping at Bournemouth eight days earlier, showed great discipline as they sat back and frustrated City for long periods. City had more than three-quarters of the first-half possession, but struggled to create clear chances before the home side shocked them seconds before the interval.

Vincent Kompany headed well wide under pressure following a corner from Kevin De Bruyne, who then took a quick free-kick that Aguero swept into the net from an offside position, with the goal disallowed correctly. Aguero just failed to connect with a low Sane cross that whizzed across goal, and the Argentina international was only denied by an outstanding tackle from Christopher Schindler after De Bruyne and David Silva combined to play him clear on goal. City's best

first-half opening came six minutes before the interval. Aguero was played in by Silva's flick, and his angled drive was beaten away by

keeper Jonas Lossl. Sterling looked certain to blast in the rebound, but somehow blazed wide from eight yards. Huddersfield, having survived that, then caused a major surprise as they went in front in first-half stoppage time.

BAD TEMPERED

Ince delivered a near-post corner that Schindler flicked on at the near post,

with the ball diverted in off Otamendi's shoulder. City, though, were awarded a penalty just 55 seconds after the restart, as Malone dragged down Sterling. Aguero sent Lossl the wrong way from the spot to score his 11th goal of the season for his club.

That was the signal for City to increase the pressure

on the home side, with Lossl pushing the ball aside after Aguero had been played in by Fernandinho. Sane then struck a dipping free-kick against the bar following a foul by Jonathan Hogg on Silva. The visitors continued to enjoy virtually all of the possession after that. It became an increasingly bad-tempered contest, though, with Fernandinho booked for an outrageous dive, team-mate De Bruyne perhaps fortunate to escape a yellow card for a body check on Van La Parra, and Huddersfield head coach David Wagner spoken to twice by referee Craig Pawson. City looked as if they would go in front when De Bruyne fed a perfectly weighted through pass to Silva, but the Spain playmaker was forced wide and delivered a tame cross straight to Lossl. But the pressure finally told as City got the lucky break their superiority deserved with six minutes left.

De Bruyne's through pass played in substitute Gabriel Jesus, and when Lossl made the save, the loose ball looped into the net off Sterling's thigh. Huddersfield might still have equalised late on as Aaron Mooy's free-kick brushed the side-netting. —AFP



Tempers boiled over following Sterling's winner

Sanchez lifts Arsenal, Everton thrashed again

LONDON: Alexis Sanchez's late penalty gave Arsenal a controversial 1-0 win over Burnley, while managerless Everton endured more misery in a 4-1 thrashing at Southampton yesterday.

Arsene Wenger's side looked set for a frustrating draw as they entered stoppage-time at Turf Moor, but they snatched the points when James Tarkowski was ruled to have pushed Aaron Ramsey.

Sanchez held his nerve to slot home the dramatic late penalty and moments later Arsenal were celebrating a win that lifted them into fourth place in the Premier League. "From outside it (the penalty) looked 100 percent. I don't know why he pushed him in the back. I would like to see it again," Wenger

said. "In the first half we didn't find our game. Burnley defend extremely well and are very dangerous on the direct game." Burnley boss Sean Dyche fumed: "There's a lot of me inside that's raging a lot."

"It was highly unlikely it wasn't going to get given on a day like today, that's all I'll say (about the penalty)." The Gunners are still nine points behind leaders Manchester City, who face Huddersfield Town at the John Smith's Stadium later.

A win for City would reopen an eight-point lead over second-placed Manchester United, who beat Brighton and Hove Albion 1-0 on Saturday. Arsenal were delayed on their journey to Turf Moor from their overnight hotel, only arriving at the ground 50 minutes before kick-off.

They looked out of sync in the early stages and might have fallen behind when Jeff Hendrick teed up Johann Berg Gudmundsson, who beat Nacho Monreal before delivering a fierce shot which Petr Cech did well to touch onto his post.

Without Mesut Ozil, who was ruled out due to illness, Arsenal were struggling to break down Burnley. Alexandre Lacazette was twice denied by Burnley goalkeeper Nick Pope in the second half.

But Chile forward Sanchez stepped up to seal Arsenal's second successive league win with his fourth club goal of the season.

WRETCHED

At St Mary's, Everton's miserable season hit another low point as caretaker boss David Unsworth oversaw a fifth defeat in his seven matches in charge following Ronald Koeman's sacking.

Everton, linked with a move for Republic of Ireland manager Martin O'Neill, are now just two points above the relegation zone. Just days after a 5-1 humiliation against Atalanta in the Europa League, Unsworth's side were put to the sword by Charlie Austin, who hadn't scored a league goal in open play for almost a year.

Having hit just nine goals in their previous 12 league games, Southampton took advantage of woeful Everton defending to win for the first time in four league matches. Dusan Tadic put Saints ahead in the 18th minute when he beat Phil Jagielka to Ryan Bertrand's pass and held off the England international before guiding the ball past Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford. —AFP



BURNLEY: Arsenal's Spanish defender Hector Bellerin (L) is dispossessed by Burnley's Irish midfielder Robbie Brady in the box during the English Premier League football match between Burnley and Arsenal at Turf Moor in Burnley. —AFP

Business

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2017

18 Seminar discusses developments in British real estate market**19** A soft dollar loses ground against major currencies**22** GAC Motor brings signature vehicle models to Dubai Motor Show 2017

LONDON: Sandra Rumkiene poses sitting with her young daughter Jessica in their bedroom in Connect House sheltered housing in Mitcham south west London, on November 20, 2017. — AFP

England struggles with housing shortage

Families in limbo amid growing homelessness

LONDON: In a cramped apartment in an industrial zone in south London, Sandra Rumkiene recounts her struggles to bring up a baby as one of a growing number of poor families forced to live in temporary housing. Lorries race past Rumkiene's building at all hours and the 84 apartments, housed in a chilly converted office rented by the state through a private landlord, is near a waste plant whose stench wafts in.

"It's like God forgot about this place," she said. "At least we have a roof, but we only worry about the baby because she's developing really slow," said the 32-year-old, tearfully, explaining that the stress of her current situation leaves her unable to eat. Hers is one of 78,180 households in England considered on the verge of homelessness and in need of temporary accommodation this year, according to official figures in a parliamentary report in June.

'Desperate' for homes

The situation for families has worsened

since Britain's Conservative government came to power in 2010, with the number of households living in temporary accommodation jumping 60 percent since 2011. The measure is meant to be a stop-gap for families and other vulnerable people before they are placed in permanent social housing, but a lack of suitable homes has left some people stuck in dire conditions.

Finance Minister Philip Hammond in his budget announcement this week promised to "fix the broken housing market" and pledged capital funding, loans and guarantees totalling £44 billion (49.4 billion euros, \$58.5 billion) over five years. Siobhain McDonagh, MP for Mitcham and Morden, put the crisis down to the high costs of housing coupled with the failure to build enough homes in recent years.

"I've seen good times and I've seen bad times, and I've never seen things quite as

hard as they are at the moment," McDonagh, from the main opposition Labour Party, told AFP. She described local councils as "desperate" for accommodation and said the current system is



78,180 households in England need temporary shelter

having an untold impact on people's mental health. Local authorities in England spent £845 million on temporary accommodation in 2015-16, up by 39 percent in real terms since 2010-2011, according to a

September report by the National Audit Office.

Four to a bed

At the building in the industrial area in Mitcham, Victoria Abiodun, 41, said she has been moved to four different places over two years and has been in her current home for 14 months.

She shares a bed with her two girls and newborn placed on a baby mat, while her husband and 10-year-old son have bunk beds. "Life is very difficult for us," she told AFP, clutching her three-week-old baby to her chest. Like other mothers, Abiodun said she worried about her children's safety where there is nowhere to play but the corridors or car park.

"You don't want to leave your children for one second," she said. The family has tried to find a home to rent privately but Abiodun said her husband does not earn

the £40,000 salary that property agents require for a contract.

Peter Mackie, a lecturer at Cardiff University, said wide-ranging measures were needed to make the private renting sector more secure, as well as building homes which are truly affordable.

While temporary accommodation offers a safety net to stop families ending up on the streets, he said an overhaul of the system needs to guarantee good quality homes.

"The problem is we don't have a piece of legislation to require local authorities to accommodate people in good quality temporary accommodation," he said. Rumkiene has been living in Mitcham since January and has been told the council is unable to offer any better accommodation, leaving her in limbo. "Our Christmas last year was really terrible, because we were staying in emergency accommodation, and this year as well we cannot make anything special." — AFP

Airbus set to poach Rolls exec to head jetliner sales

PARIS: Airbus is poised to hire the head of Rolls-Royce's civil engines unit, Eric Schulz, to lead its commercial jetliner sales, after months of uncertainty over the successor to sales kingpin John Leahy, three people familiar with the matter said.

Schulz, president of the civil engines division at the British engineering firm, has been recommended for the post to bring in outside blood as the company faces turmoil over the impact of UK and French corruption investigations. Christian Scherer, chief executive of turboprop maker ATR, jointly owned by Airbus and Italian aerospace firm Leonardo, had also been considered for one of aviation's highest profile roles.

Scherer, an Airbus veteran of 30 years before joining ATR, was seen by many as a leading candidate and enjoys close ties to Chief Executive Tom Enders. But although Scherer has not been linked to the compliance investigations, industry sources said the board is insisting on a break with the past.

A final decision will be taken by the Airbus board based on a panel's decision to put forward one name, that of Schulz. Airbus and Rolls-Royce declined to comment. Schulz and Scherer could not immediately be reached for comment.

Leahy has been in the post since 1994 and is a dominant fig-

ure in the \$100 billion-a-year aerospace industry, making his succession one of the sector's most closely watched moves. He is expected to retire around Jan. 25 after deferring his departure for several months when his hand-picked successor, deputy sales chief Kiran Rao, pulled out of the race.

Close ties

Schulz, an affable 54-year-old French engineer, began his career at one of Airbus's founders, France's former state-owned Aerospatiale, before working at aerospace supplier Goodrich via a stint at two French airlines: UTA and Air Liberte. He is part of a relatively new management team that pulled Rolls-Royce out of its own compliance scandal and financial problems and has been running civil engines since January 2016. His experience reinforces close ties between Airbus and Rolls-Royce on wide-body jets, mirroring last year's decision by rival Boeing to recruit a top executive from its own top supplier, General Electric, to run its commercial unit. "Rolls-Royce and Airbus are joined at the hip so they must know him well, and he them," said Agency Partners analyst Nick Cunningham, adding Schulz came across as "open and realistic". But he will inherit a Toulouse sales organization unsettled by recent defeats against Boeing and widely seen as desperate for stability amid the probes, which center on a now defunct Paris-based unit of Airbus headquarters. — Reuters



Eric Schulz

Small businesses getting into tax optimization game

PARIS: Tax optimization is no longer a matter just for the multinationals. A number of market players are now tailoring strategies originally drawn up for the corporate whales to the minnows, or small businesses and independent entrepreneurs.

Whether the businesses are active in imports and exports, or in services, recent scandals involving document leaks, such as the so-called "Paradise Papers" earlier this month, show that a wider variety of companies are trying to lower their tax bills.

"When people talk about tax evasion, they think about multinationals. But the problem affects smaller companies, too," said Oxfam France spokeswoman Manon Aubry, noting that owners of several small and medium-sized firms have also been caught up in scandals recently.

While tax evasion is illegal, there are a number of strategies that experts have devised for firms to structure their business operations to avoid tax. Called tax planning, tax avoidance, or tax optimization, these strategies stay within the letter of the law, if not the spirit. Nevertheless, they are spreading.

"These are practices that are going mainstream," said Christian Chavagneux, an editor-in-chief at the French magazine, Economic Alternatives, who has written a book on tax havens.

He dubbed it "the democratization of fiscal optimization," noting that the majority of the firms caught up in the Luxleaks scandal in 2014 were medium-sized.

Nevertheless, given the opacity of the practice, it can be difficult to measure exactly how widespread it has become. Jean-Eudes du Mesnil du Buisson, head of the French confederation of small and medium-sized businesses, CPME, said there was "no doubt some small and medium-sized businesses involved, but it is far from being a common practice." By contrast, Paul Duvaux, a Paris-based tax lawyer, said he has seen "frequent use" of these tax schemes by owners of small businesses. — AFP

Business

Seminar discusses developments in British real estate market

Focus on impact of new tax law on property market

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently held a major seminar at Le Notre Restaurant Kuwait, designed to brief its private banking and wealth management customers on the latest developments in the UK real estate market in light of the current market circumstances. The seminar addressed three major subjects: recent and expected changes in real estate and inheritance tax in the United Kingdom, the outlook for and opportunities and challenges seen in the real estate market in London, as well as the latest developments on the Paddington Gardens Project for real estate investment.

The seminar witnessed a large presence of Private Banking customers who were keen to attend the series of seminars organized by Ahli United Bank for the benefit of customers in order to keep them aware of all changes witnessed by the real estate market in the UK. The seminar was also attended by members of Ahli United Bank's executive management including Tareq Muhmood, Senior Deputy CEO - Banking Services Group, Ahmed Zulficar Senior Deputy CEO - Banking Support Group and Medhat Tawfik, AUB's General Manager Private Banking and Wealth Management.

In his opening speech, Medhat Tawfik emphasized that the bank is keen to complement its distinctive services to its customers by holding regular seminars designed to give the Bank's Private Banking customers the opportunity to benefit from the best legal, investment and financial advice in the field of real estate investment in the United Kingdom.

Tawfik added: "The specialized advisory services provided by Ahli United Bank assists our customers in managing their real estate investments in the United Kingdom and helps them to keep pace with the material laws that affect their real estate investments and to address the effects of any tax changes."

Richard Jordan, partner at Aron Mitchell Advocates Office, spoke about British taxes that affect Kuwaiti nationals who own or wish to own residential properties in the United Kingdom. He explained that the UK continues to offer a competitive environment in terms of its tax regime despite the introduction of new, stricter tax laws over the past few years, adding that it is possible to deal with the legal and financial consequences of these changes by obtaining a proper legal advice.



KUWAIT: Richard Jordan in his speech about British taxes that affect Kuwaiti nationals who own or wish to own residential properties in the United Kingdom

During the seminar, Jordan reviewed the basic UK taxes, including stamp duties, capital gain tax, income tax and inheritance tax. In addition, he highlighted to the attendees the new inheritance tax laws related to residential properties in the UK owned by offshore companies, which came into force in April 2017.

Jordan said: "Individuals who reside outside the UK and own a residential property in the UK through a British company are subject to British inheritance tax on their real estate properties since April 2017, in addition to the annual real estate tax on residential properties owned by offshore companies, which was introduced in 2013. This means that if a non UK resident dies while being the owner of a UK real estate property through an offshore company, the beneficiaries from such property will be subject to inheritance tax at the rate of 40 percent of the entire value of the property after deduction of 320,000 Pounds as tax free. Noting, that the tax free



Medhat Tawfik delivers his opening speech

amount of 325,000 pounds applies to the value of all assets in the UK".

Mark Jones, Manager of the Strategic Assets Department at JLL, the leading investment and real estate consultancy, said that Kuwaitis have been buying British properties and have multi-usage investments in the UK over many years. He added: "Interest rates in the UK are still at around their lowest levels at the present time, and the ability to assume a low debt is an important factor in supporting the housing sector in addition to the low exchange rate of the Pound. Both factors tend to increase the trend toward buying properties in London."

With regard to the outlook for growth in Greater London, Jones pointed out that average rent rates are expected to rise by 19.9 percent between 2016 and 2020. While house prices are expected to rise to 22.8 percent in the same period.

Faisal Khokhar, United Kingdom Region Sales and Marketing Director at Country Garden Holdings, spoke about the Paddington Gardens Project in Central London, which was marketed by Ahli United Bank to its customers

in Kuwait in view of the special features enjoyed by this project, making it a preferred destination as a family house or for investment in the real estate sector. He said that the location of the project is quite unique being in the heart of London and a few minutes away from Hyde Park, Paddington Train Station and other vital areas in the city. This comes as the second project that AUB offers to its customers following the huge success the Bank achieved in marketing the Prince of Wales Gardens Project in Battersea, another of London's prime areas.

Khokhar went on to say: "Paddington Gardens Project offers an exciting opportunity for AUB's customers to acquire a home in this high-end project, at current market prices, particularly given the shortage of high-class residential units in the London market at the present time, which by itself is another factor pushing toward increasing demand for the Paddington Gardens Project."

At the end of the seminar, Medhat Tawfik emphasized that AUB will continue to offer new opportunities to its customers in order to cater for their aspirations according to the highest global standards of banking services.



Ahli United Bank holds seminar for its customers

1 job, 2 people: Who'll be in charge at consumer agency?

NEW YORK: Who's the boss? That's the awkward question after the departing head of a government agency charged with looking after consumer rights appointed a deputy to temporarily fill his spot. The White House then named its own interim leader.

One job, two people - and two very different views on how to do it. The first pick is expected to continue the aggressive policing of banks and other lenders that have angered Republicans. The second, President Donald Trump's choice, has called the agency a "joke," an example of bureaucracy run amok, and is expected to dismantle much of what the agency has done.

So much Monday, who will be leading the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau? Senior Trump administration officials said Saturday that the law was on their side and they expect no trouble when Trump's pick for temporary director of the CFPB shows up for work. Departing director Richard Cordray, an Obama appointee long criticized by congressional Republicans as overzealous, had cited a different rule in saying the law was on his side.

In tendering his resignation Friday, Cordray elevated Leandra English, who was the agency's chief of staff, into the deputy director position. Citing the Dodd-Frank Act that created the CFPB, he said English, an ally, would become acting director upon his departure.

Cordray's move was widely seen as an attempt to stop Trump from shaping the agency in the months ahead. The White House cites the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998. Administration officials on Saturday acknowledged that some other laws appear to clash with Vacancies Act, but said that in this case the president's authority takes precedence.

Who prevails in the legal wrangling is seen as important even though this involves just a temporary posting. Getting a permanent replacement approved by the Senate could take months. The president's pick for temporary appointee, Mick Mulvaney, had been widely anticipated. Mulvaney, currently director of the Office of Management and Budget, has been an outspoken critic of the agency and is expected to pull back on many of Cordray's actions in the six years since he was appointed.

Trump announced he was picking Mulvaney within a few hours of Cordray's announcement on Friday. "The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, or CFPB, has been a total disaster as run by the previous Administrations pick," Trump tweeted Saturday from his private Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida, where he is spending a long Thanksgiving weekend. "Financial Institutions have been devastated and unable to properly serve the public. We will bring it back to life!"

Filling vacancy

The Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel had already approved Trump's appointment of Mulvaney, administration officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the White House's thinking. In issuing a memo about its opinion Saturday, the Office of Legal Counsel said the president has the power to appoint an acting director of the agency. Steven A. Engel, newly confirmed head of the office, wrote that, while the deputy director may serve as acting director under the statute, the president still has authority under the Vacancies Reform Act.

"Even when the Vacancies Reform Act is not the 'exclusive' means for filling a vacancy, the statute remains an available option, and the president may rely upon it in designating an acting official in a manner that differs from the order of succession otherwise provided by an office-specific statute," he wrote in a memo.

The clashing appointments raise the question: What happens when the two new heads show up and try to sit at the same desk and give orders?

One of the administration officials said Mulvaney was expected to start working Monday and that English was expected to also show up - but as deputy director.

The agency has been tangled in partisan politics since its creation, with the two competing appointees a reflection of that. English is a trusted lieutenant of Cordray's who has helped investigate and punish financial companies in ways that many Republicans, Mulvaney in particular, think go too far. —AP

Bayt.com hits milestone, enrolls 30m professionals

DUBAI: The leading job site in the Middle East, Bayt.com, announced that it has reached a major milestone: Over 30 million professionals have joined this platform to use it for all their job search and career needs.

The Bayt.com community of job seekers and professionals continues to grow in diversity as well. One out of three job seekers, who have specified their career level on their Bayt.com CV, have more than 10 years of experience. Professionals on Bayt.com come from hundreds of thousands of hotly demanded backgrounds and specializations but also from job roles that are as niche as Oracle and Python Developers, Financial Analysts, Designers, Instrumentation Engineers, Product Managers, Legal and Compliance Advisors, and many more.

Commenting on this new record, Suhail Masri, VP of Employer Solutions at

Bayt.com, said: "As a Middle Eastern institution, we are very proud of this huge success, which has been achieved through our unwavering commitment to help job seekers find career opportunities, to help employers secure their talent needs, and to help the region's overall job market maintain healthiness and growth. We are incredibly grateful for everyone who has entrusted us to provide them with the platform, the tools, and the information and help them pursue and succeed in their careers. We have successfully reached to and connected 30 million professionals on our platform, and we look forward to reaching many more across the region and the globe."

Bayt.com also has been expanding its footprint and its offerings to ensure access to even more job opportunities. In fact, since the start of 2017 alone, more than 125,000 jobs have been posted on its platform, spanning all industries, sectors, career levels and locations in the Middle East and North Africa.

Job seekers can access and apply for over 10,000 jobs on Bayt.com on any given day. Thousands of additional vacancies are regularly filled through Bayt.com's CV Search tool, which allows companies to find and hire job seekers directly and without necessarily making an announcement.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.691
Indian Rupees	4.660
Pakistani Rupees	2.887
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.968
Nepali Rupees	2.914
Singapore Dollar	224.220
Hongkong Dollar	38.748
Bangladesh Taka	3.637
Philippine Peso	5.958
Thai Baht	9.251

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.774
Qatari Riyal	83.194
Omani Riyal	786.642
Bahraini Dinar	804.300
UAE Dirham	82.468

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.700
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.123
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.216
Tunisian Dinar	122.300
Jordanian Dinar	427.120
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.018
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.583

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.700
Euro	357.490
Sterling Pound	402.890

Canadian dollar	237.600
Turkish lira	77.520
Swiss Franc	306.840
Australian Dollar	230.510
US Dollar Buying	301.500

GOLD

20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.000
Canadian Dollar	238.315
Sterling Pound	404.200
Euro	361.675
Swiss Frank	297.460
Bahrain Dinar	801.535
UAE Dirhams	82.615
Qatari Riyals	83.440
Saudi Riyals	81.390
Jordanian Dinar	427.230
Egyptian Pound	17.132
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.965
Indian Rupees	4.669
Pakistani Rupees	2.862
Bangladesh Taka	3.663
Philippines Peso	5.957
Cyprus pound	17.970
Japanese Yen	3.705
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.926

Malaysian Ringgit	74.385
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.200
Thai Bhat	10.230
Turkish Lira	77.050

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.398155	0.405655
Czech Korune	0.006171	0.018171
Danish Krone	0.044420	0.049420
Euro	0.355623	0.363123
Georgian Lari	0.134665	0.134666
Norwegian Krone	0.033192	0.038392
Romanian Leu	0.064677	0.081527
Russian ruble	0.005179	0.005179
Slovakia	0.009004	0.019004
Swedish Krona	0.032479	0.037479
Swiss Franc	0.302593	0.313593
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.222461	0.234461
New Zealand Dollar	0.202289	0.211789
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.232707	0.241707
US Dollars	0.298250	0.302670
US Dollars Mint	0.299750	0.302670
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003293	0.003877

Chinese Yuan	0.044413	0.047913
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036772	0.039522
Indian Rupee	0.004102	0.004743
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002633	0.002813
Korean Won	0.000269	0.000284
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069484	0.075484
Nepalese Rupee	0.003017	0.003187
Pakistan Rupee	0.002643	0.002933
Philippine Peso	0.005818	0.006118
Singapore Dollar	0.219409	0.229409
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001698	0.002278
Taiwan	0.009989	0.010169
Thai Baht	0.008913	0.009463
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.794996	0.803496
Egyptian Pound	0.014484	0.020202
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000185	0.000245
Jordanian Dinar	0.421835	0.430835
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000155	0.000255
Moroccan Dirhams	0.023488	0.047488
Omani Riyal	0.779006	0.784686
Qatar Riyal	0.078758	0.083698
Saudi Riyal	0.079540	0.080840
Syrian Pound	0.001281	0.001501
Tunisian Dinar	0.117872	0.125872
Turkish Lira	0.072146	0.082446
UAE Dirhams	0.080893	0.082593
Yemeni Riyal	0.000983	0.001063

Business

NBK Money Markets Report

A soft dollar loses ground against major currencies

Fed expresses a slightly dovish tone

KUWAIT: Even though the Federal Reserve indicated that it is on track to raise interest rates in December for the third time this year, the Fed's future rate hike path seems uncertain to say the least. Soft inflation figures which, in the past, have been described as "transitory" by Fed policymakers, have cast a shadow of doubt over the central bank's plans to tighten monetary policy. Minutes from the Fed's late October policy-setting meeting indicated that "many participants thought that another increase in the target range for the federal funds rate was likely to be warranted in the near term if incoming information left the medium-term outlook broadly unchanged".

More notably, however, is the fact that while Fed officials remain confident in the labor market and above-trend economic growth, several are looking for stronger signs that price gains will pick up. A few even want to see inflation on an upward path before lifting rates again, underlining a persistent divide on the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee. Inflation has stubbornly fallen short of the Fed's 2 percent target for several years, prompting Fed Chair Janet Yellen to say she is "very uncertain" as to whether inflation will soon rebound toward the Fed's target, and that she is open to the possibility that prices could remain low for years to come.

Inflation is not the only uncertainty following the Federal Reserve. Fed Chair Janet Yellen, as expected, has announced her resignation from the Fed Board and said she will step down from the Board of Governors after new Chairman Jerome Powell is sworn into office. Her departure will leave behind four empty Board of Governors seats out of seven. The unusual pace of the turnover has given Trump the rare opportunity for a president to put his personal stamp on the makeup of the Fed. This is especially true since Fed members have a permanent voting status and make up the majority of the FOMC, the committee in charge of setting interest rate policy. Markets will be keen to find out who Trump appoints, particularly because he has made it known that he favors low interest rates and has been an advocate of looser financial regulations.

In Europe, Germany's September election has set its local political scene for a set of events it rarely faces. The usual mainstream parties have been squeezed by smaller fringe parties, most notably the anti-EU 'Alternative for Germany'. Instead of the usual four or five parties, seven parties are currently represented in an unusually fragmented parliament. As a result, the road to the formation of the new government has been tricky to navigate. Merkel, the chancellor, and her Christian Democrats party now face three unfavorable options after talks of a coalition government with the Free Democrats (FDP) and the Greens broke down last week. The first is to form a minority government. A minority

government would be the first ever in modern Germany, and would require working with other parties on an ad hoc basis in order to pass legislation. However, Merkel has indicated no interest in going down that route, saying that a minority government could not give Germany the stable government it needs. Instead, the Christian Democrats could revive their alliance with the Social Democrats (SPD) as the two parties have governed together since 2013. However, being in government with Merkel has hurt the SPD, pushing its share of the vote down to its lowest-ever level. This has prompted the SPD to rule out the coalition and favor a stint in opposition to revive itself, even though they would hold more than 50 percent of votes in parliament together. Finally, the option that remains would be a new election. However, even though the federal president possesses the power to call for a new election, he is reluctant to exercise it. President Steinmeier fears that fringe parties could yield more votes in a new election, destabilizing an already sensitive situation and setting up Germany for something it already possesses enough of, more political uncertainty. This comes at a sensitive time for Europe, where it needs a strong German presence in its ongoing Brexit negotiations as well as on its path to recovery.

On the currency front, the dollar depreciated against a basket of major currencies last week as a string of mixed economic indicators and a slightly dovish Fed failed to impress markets. While the dollar index opened the week at 93.709, it closed it lower at a level of 92.782. The Euro started the week with a dive as reports out of Germany indicated that coalition talks broke down. However, the single currency managed to bounce back as traders brushed off any worries regarding political uncertainty in Germany. Boosted by strong PMI figures across the Eurozone towards the end of the week, the EUR managed to rally against a soft dollar as the pair reached a 2-month high of 1.1944 before closing 1.16 percent higher at 1.1930.

The cable also managed to capitalize on the weakness of the dollar. The pair opened the week at 1.3216 and managed to reach a high of 1.3359 during trading. Later, a rally towards the end of the week saw the pair close at a level of 1.3335, putting the weekly rise at 1 percent. The Japanese yen followed a similar trend as it appreciated against the US dollar. The pair dipped to a 2-month

low as mixed economic indicators in the US failed to support the dollar. After opening the week at a level of 112.08, the USDJPY pair closed it lower at 111.53. Regarding commodities, US oil prices soared to 2.5-year highs as North American markets tightened on the partial shutdown of the Keystone pipeline connecting Canadian oilfields with the United States as a result of an oil spill. US light crude surged more than 4 percent as it hit highs of \$58.94 per barrel, while benchmark Brent crude reached a weekly high of \$63.95. Meanwhile, markets are tightening ahead of an OPEC meeting on November 30, where the oil cuts are expected to be extended beyond the current March expiry. The likelihood of an extension has risen significantly after reports that a deal between OPEC and Russia has been reached.

Mixed US indicators

US existing home sales rose 2 percent m/m in October to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.48 million units, beating market expectations as the impact of hurricanes started to taper. However, a continuous shortage of houses remains an obstacle that is pushing prices higher. Meanwhile, September's sales pace was revised down to 5.37 million units from the previously reported 5.39 million units.

Also released last week was the core durable goods figure, which measures the change in the total value of new purchase orders placed with manufacturers for durable goods. The figure, a leading indicator of production, unexpectedly fell in October after three straight months of hefty gains, but a sustained increase in shipments pointed to robust business investment and economic momentum as the year winds down. On the other hand, the American economy's prospects were bolstered by data on Wednesday showing a decline in the number of Americans filing claims for unemployment benefits. Strong business investment and tightening labor market conditions will be used as ammunition should the Federal Reserve stay on track to raise interest rates as planned. Moreover, the Chicago Fed National Activity Index also beat market expectation and rose to 0.65 in October, up from 0.36 in September. The Chicago Fed index is a composite indicator which includes an average of 85 economic indicators across the United States.

ECB minutes

Minutes were released from the European Central Bank's late October meeting where the ECB decided to keep interest rates unchanged at 0 percent as well as left the door open to extend the quantitative easing program beyond September or raise the purchase amounts if needed. The minutes revealed a divide amongst officials over whether to announce a concrete end-date for QE. Furthermore, officials did not agree to any extension or wind-down phase after September 2018. In fact, some ECB policymakers were opposed to leaving the QE program open-ended, warning that it might lead investors to believe that the program would be extended again. Markets will be looking for signs that QE is ending, since that will signal the beginning of interest rate rises in the Eurozone.

Europe PMIs

Factories across Europe experienced their most productive month since 2011 in September, while the momentum looks set to continue into October as new order growth accelerated. In Germany, economic growth accelerated in November, driven by a pick-up in performance in the manufacturing sector. Meanwhile in France, the increase in output remained broad-based across both the manufacturing and services subsectors. Commenting on the flash PMI data, Chris Williamson, Chief Business Economist at IHS Markit which compiles the report said: "The message from the latest Eurozone PMI is clear: business is booming. Growth kicked higher in November to put the region on course for its best quarter since the start of 2011. The PMI is so far running at a level signaling a 0.8 percent increase in GDP in the final quarter of 2017, which would round-off the best year for a decade."

Reserve Bank of Australia

The Australian Dollar slipped following the release of a cautious monetary-policy meeting minutes from the Reserve Bank of Australia. In their November 7 meeting, the RBA said there was "considerable uncertainty" as to if, and when, subdued wage pressures might lift. Furthermore they warned that consumption growth is likely to be lower in the year's third quarter. While exports and employment are strong, the heavily indebted Australians need higher wages to spur consumption and raise prices.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar
The USDKWD opened at 0.30150 yesterday morning.



Germany faces a period of uncertainty

KAICO launches the IVECO range "Your partner for sustainable transport" with advanced solutions across new features



Mr Yousef AA Al Shaya - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER- KAICO with Mr Albert Pellegrini- Middle East Area manager-IVECO & Mr Ashish Tandon - GM KAICO & IVECO Kuwait Team



from Left to right, Mr Albert Pellegrini- Middle East Area manager, Mr Yousef AA Al Shaya - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER- KAICO , Mr Ashish Tandon - GM KAICO & Mr Yasser Khedr- Network development manager- Middle-IVECO



Mr Albert Pellegrini- Middle East Area manager, Mr Yousef AA Al Shaya - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER- KAICO , Mr Ashish Tandon - GM KAICO



IVECO SERVICE CENTRE_ARDIYA.

Kuwait Automotive Imports Co WLL (Al Shaya & Al Sagar), a leading automotive and auto products distributor in Kuwait, proudly launched IVECO the leading manufacturer of commercial vehicles and vans in Kuwait! New DAILY, STRALIS and TRAKKER, are now in Kuwait to satisfy your Business needs.

IVECO, the leading Italian brand in the field of manufacturing light, medium and heavy commercial vehicles, was launched by Kaico. Yousef Al Shaya - Chief Executive Officer, Ashish Tandon - General Manager of Kaico, Nader khaled Salmeh, Sr. Divisional manager -vehicles at kaico, Alberto PELLEGRINI - IVECO Area Manager MIDDLE EAST & Yasser Khedr- Network development manager IVECO Middle East were present at the launching event. In the opening speech, The GM of Kaico Ashish

Tandon said that "the partnership with IVECO comes as part of Kaico Company's strategic plan to expand and cooperate with a large brand with a good reputation. Government institutions, construction companies, and truck operators are our target; IVECO range offers a complete solution that meets customers' needs". Explaining the new partnership with IVECO, Mr. Nader Sr. Divisional manager -vehicles said, "With full of hope, Kaico Company has become the distributor of IVECO in Kuwait." He added "DAILY, STRALIS & TRAKKER's superiority comes from: reliability, durability, fuel efficiency & comfort"

STRALIS: The IVECO STRALIS was developed specifically for the domestic and international long distance transportation. The cabin offers plenty of space for the driver; the noise level is

among the lowest that could be measured in this class. This allows for comfort on highest level!

Engine: 10.0 L, 6 cylinder turbo charged diesel, 430 hp, 1900nm of max torque, manual & automated, 16 -speed transmission, tractor 4 X 2 drive, and Dual scale speedometer. All gauge functions monitored using international symbols.

New DAILY: Strong by nature, incredibly light, comfortable and easy to handle. New architecture optimizes vehicle volumes. New wheelbases improve dynamic handling.

Engine: 3.0 L, 4 cylinder turbo charged diesel, 146 horsepower, and 350nm of max torque Transmission 6 speed manual transmission, cargo area 19.6 m3, anti-corrosion protection

for all body, twin rear wheel drive **TRAKKER:** The IVECO TRACKER is for extreme conditions on and off road applications. In short, the IVECO TRACKER is suitable for all heavy loads to be transported under severe conditions. With the new cabin, the comfort of road vehicles could be transferred to the construction site vehicles.

Engine: 13.0 L, 6 cylinder turbo charged diesel, 420 hp, 1900nm of max torque, manual & automated, 16 -speed transmission, rigid 6 X 4 drive, soft feel dashboard with multifunctional steering wheel incorporating touch button menu controls for the real time digital dash display, IVECO range is now available at Kaico Company's Ardiya showroom; we invite you to visit us to see our new brand.



Global markets weekly outlook

Investors add to hedges amid volatility

NEW YORK: With the US stock market at a record high and daily stock gyrations near multi-decade lows, some investors have raised concerns about the lack of fear in the market, but US equity options market data suggests investors are far from complacent. Positioning in options on S&P 500 index and CBOE Volatility Index shows investors have been gradually adding to hedges over the last few months.

"We didn't see it on our desk and no one seems to care much about hedging but somehow it's happening," said Jim Strugger, derivatives strategist MKM Partners in New York.

"It's sort of under the surface, more like

stealth hedging," he said. The S&P 500 index has climbed 16 percent this year and is on pace for its eighth straight month of gains, the longest such streak since just before the 2007-2009 financial crisis.

The CBOE Volatility Index, better known as the VIX and the most widely followed barometer of expected near-term stock market volatility, closed at a record low earlier this month.

Some investors warn that heightened reliance on strategies that profit from continued calm in stocks, and months of frustration over hedges that have gone to waste while the market powered on, have left the market extremely vulnera-

ble to a shock. Boom-time complacency should top the worry list for investors, according to participants in the recent Reuters Global Investment 2018 Outlook Summit in New York.

The options market, however, suggests that investors are not as vulnerable to a sell-off in stocks as the anemic level of the VIX would suggest, analysts said.

For instance, for the S&P 500 index options, there are 2.1 puts open for each open call contract, close to the most defensive this measure has been over the last five years, according to options analytics firm Trade Alert data. An index call option gives the holder the right to buy the

value of an underlying index at a fixed level in the future. A put conveys the opposite right and is usually used to protect against declines in the index.

Protective positions

While some of put activity may be due to investors selling puts to generate income, brisk put volume suggests renewed interest in protective positions, analysts said.

"More often than not, even in the world we live in where volatility is so attractive to sell, you can make a fair assumption that people are buying options," said MKM's Strugger.

VIX options also show similarly elevated positioning in out-of-the-money VIX calls - contracts that are not profitable yet would reap gains if volatility spikes.

"When open interest on VIX out-of-the-money calls is really high, I would tend to think that the market is more aggressively hedged," said Aashish Vyas, director of portfolio strategy at Durango, Colorado-based Swan Global Investments. "To me, that matters more than the absolute level of the VIX," he said.

Positioning in options on SPDR S&P 500, iShares Russell 2000, the

PowerShares QQQ Trust also show healthy defensive positioning. While the data does not suggest that the market is gearing up for an immediate crash, as would be suggested if the VIX were to shoot up, it does imply that investors would not be taken by surprise if volatility starts to trend up in coming months.

"I don't think the market is complacent," said Joe Tigay, chief trading officer at Equity Armor Investments in Chicago. "People have downside protection," he said.

A recent blog post by New York Federal Reserve researchers showed that even as the overall level of volatility priced into options of varying tenure has dropped, investors are still pricing in a lot more volatility in longer dated options than in near-term contracts.

That is a departure from the pre-crisis period when investors demanded relatively similar returns for taking on one-year and one-month volatility risk, essentially betting that the state of calm would persist into the future, the researchers said. They added that the shift in the pricing of risk, despite the low level of the VIX, showed that investors may not be so complacent after all.—Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report									
Sunday 26 November 2017									
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing						
Price Index	▲ 17.30	6,256.67	6,239.37						
Weighted Index	▲ 2.89	398.88	395.99						
KSX 15	▲ 8.94	915.21	906.27						
		Volume	68,630,233						
		Value (KWD)	11,176,625						
		Number of Trades	2,763						
Trades									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change		
IPG	380	380	1,714	651	2	380	▼ -25.0		
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	799	— 0.0		
ENERGYH	28.3	25.5	69,643	1,923	18	28.0	▲ 0.1		
GPI	28.6	28.3	248,100	7,046	9	28.6	▲ 0.2		
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51	— 0.0		
Oil & Gas			319,457	8,620	29	921.20	▼ -6.40		
KFOUC	290	255	5,867	1,594	3	270	▼ -15.0		
BPCO	633	628	17,407	10,968	4	628	▼ -5.0		
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	590	— 0.0		
ALOURAIN	326	324	253,257	82,344	16	326	▲ 2.0		
Basic Materials			276,531	94,896	23	1244.23	▲ 6.10		
KCEM	455	455	2,000	910	1	455	▼ -1.0		
CABLE	414	406	60,478	24,977	15	413	▲ 2.0		
SHP	208	208	20	4	1	208	▲ 3.0		
PCEM	960	930	10,400	9,969	5	960	▲ 50.0		
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	265	— 0.0		
MRC	80	79	200	16	2	79	▲ 1.0		
AGICO	240	232	10,179	2,362	5	232	▲ 2.0		
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	170	— 0.0		
NICBM	192	192	24,500	4,704	1	192	▲ 2.0		
EQUIPMENT	36.9	34.0	68,550	2,332	12	34.0	▲ 0.2		
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	— 0.0		
GYPSPUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0		
SALBOORH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50	— 0.0		
AGLTY	745	737	513,913	381,151	125	744	▲ 3.0		
EDU	307	302	84,196	25,652	21	302	▼ -6.0		
CLEANING	53	52	100,500	5,216	2	53	— 0.0		
KGL	65	64	211,500	13,660	6	65	▲ 1.2		
KCPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	145	— 0.0		
HUMANSOFT	3,799	3,799	48,800	185,391	9	3,799	▼ -1.0		
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	649	— 0.0		
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	75	— 0.0		
SHOOTING	19.7	18.3	40,505	797	10	19.7	— 0.0		
CGC	477	453	4,501	2,108	3	477	▲ 3.0		
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0		
UFAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	585	— 0.0		
ALAFOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	360	— 0.0		
MUBARRAD	72	70	10,100	707	2	72	▼ -1.1		
LOGISTICS	54	53	1,026,962	55,110	43	53	▲ 0.1		
SCEM	92	92	100	9	1	92	▲ 11.0		
GCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	81	— 0.0		
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	— 0.0		
FCEM	74	74	200	15	1	74	▲ 0.2		
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	— 0.0		
SPEC	72	69	92,745	6,541	17	72	▲ 1.0		
Industrials			2,310,351	721,640	282	1747.72	▼ -10.00		
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79	— 0.0		
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	235	— 0.0		
DANAH	68	66	680,249	44,119	27	66	▲ 1.2		
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,699	— 0.0		
Consumer Goods			680,249	44,119	27	923.31	▲ 2.70		
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	— 0		
VIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	175	— 0		
Health Care			0	0	0	1510.51	— 0.00		
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,300	— 0		
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	175	— 0		
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	— 0		
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	27.0	— 0		
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	299	— 0		
DULAFUEL	111	110	4,830	536	5	111	▼ -1		
MUNTAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	72	— 0		
JAZEERA	649	649	2,000	1,296	1	649	— 0		
SOOR	111	110	28,582	3,144	8	110	— 0		
FUTUREID	100	100	30,000	3,000	2	100	▼ -10		
ALRAI	103	102	35,887	3,674	6	103	▼ -4		
Jyad	62	61	1,940,257	118,822	94	62	▲ 1		
Mazzan	770	768	77,000	59,239	7	770	— 0		
Consumer Services			2,118,516	189,813	123	906.33	▲ 8.40		
ZAIN	444	439	1,999,501	883,018	197	443	▲ 2		
ODRDOO	1,076	1,076	666	748	1	1,076	▼ -29		
AAAN	30.0	29.0	314,201	9,326	9	30.0	▲ 1		
VIVA	710	700	50,425	35,793	29	706	▲ 1		
Telecommunications			2,345,822	928,884	236	539.66	▲ 6.80		
NBK	723	715	1,790,143	1,263,994	232	719	— 0		
GBK	240	238	361,000	85,930	10	240	▲ 2		
CBK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	— 0		
ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	305	— 0		
ALMUTAHED	340	338	320,135	106,796	25	340	▲ 1		
KIB	223	222	35,250	7,856	4	223	▲ 2		
BURG	304	300	123,317	37,077	29	304	▼ -1		
KFIN	544	540	2,476,591	1,341,013	173	542	▲ 3		
BOURBYAN	415	409	379,898	156,451	54	415	▲ 3		
ALB	196	195	800,841	156,485	38	196	— 0		
ITHMR	29.4	28.2	1,587,900	45,461	88	29.4	▲ 1		
WARBANK	214	212	112,598	24,024	52	213	▼ -1		
Banks			7,587,841	1,247,038	705	871.75	▲ 7.00		
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	252	— 0		
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	706	— 0		
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	— 0		
WINS	61	57	21,000	1,241	5	61	▲ 4.9		
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	187	— 0.0		
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79	— 0.0		
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	39.9	— 0.0		
BKQWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0		
Insurance			21,000	1,241	5	1017.88	▲ 3.40		
SOHOUK	49.0	48.0	129,000	6,092	10	49.0	▲ 0.9		
KRE	56	54	324,157	17,808	21	56	▲ 1.1		
URC	72	69	54,845	3,830	5	70	▼ -4.0		
NRE	119	119	10	1	1	119	▲ 1.9		
SRE	354	345	42,500	15,028	3	354	▲ 9.0		
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	— 0.0		
AREEC	169	160	45,100	7,217	6	160	▲ 1.8		
MASSALEH	38.0	34.2	10,449	358	2	38.0	▲ 1.8		
ARABREC	30.1	29.9	492,154	14,737	27	30.0	▲ 0.2		
ERESCO	33.6	33.5	421,354	14,140	13	33.6	— 0.0		
MABANEZ	729	722	111,522	80,569	23	727	▲ 4.8		
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	— 0.0		
INVESTORS	17.0	16.7	1,837,972	32,649	52	16.8	▼ -0.1		
IRC	28.5	27.0	390,401	10,577	22	27.6	▼ -1.2		
ALTUARIA	92	88	403,504	35,770	26	89	▲ 0.9		
SANAM	31.0	31.0	1,500	47	1	31.0	— 0.0		

Business

Updated NBK mobile banking app offers bundle of new services

Al-Othman: Digital banking is the new way of banking for the future

KUWAIT: Convenience, reliability and 24/7 access is a key part of National Bank of Kuwait's customer-centric approach. The NBK Mobile Banking app now provides customers with an ever wide array of services to suit their digital lifestyle needs. NBK's Mobile Banking app now allows customers to chat with bank representatives through their mobile. In addition, it now possible for customers to open accounts from the convenience of their home, office or even a restaurant, literally anywhere in the world 24/7 using the NBK Mobile Banking app. It is even possible to apply for a saving or foreign currency account using the Mobile Banking app.

With the NBK SMS Service, transactions on accounts, credit cards and prepaid cards can be monitored in real time providing added peace of mind. Registering for this service is now available through the NBK Mobile Banking app.



Convenient, safe & secure digital banking

Finding out how many Miles Points have been accumulated by using an NBK Miles Credit Card is now available on the NBK Mobile Banking app. NBK Miles Points are earned for all credit cards transactions done in Kuwait as well as those conducted abroad. These can be exchanged for airline tickets, hotel bookings and/ or booking with car rental companies.

Our Loan customers can view their statements on the App. NBK customers can also load, transfer and reload balances on prepaid cards, calculate the loan amounts they are eligible as well as transfer funds locally and abroad.

"Customers want us to complement their lifestyle and enhancing our NBK Mobile Banking App is key to moving with them", explained Mohammed Al-Othman, Deputy General Manager- Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. By downloading the latest version of the NBK Mobile Banking app, customers



Mohammed Al-Othman

can also review exchange rates, order account statements and restrict access in the event of lost or stolen cards.

NBK Mobile Banking app allows customers to browse details of the more than 700 local shops, restaurants and lifestyle service merchants that offer discounts and promotions as part of the NBK Rewards program, the largest loyalty program in Kuwait. Customers can

also request 'cash advances' on their credit cards via the App.

"With our new online messaging service available via the NBK Mobile Banking app, customers can ask bank representatives questions 24 hours, seven days a week," said Mohammed Al Othman, Deputy General Manager, National Bank of Kuwait. "We offer unprecedented convenience, access and most importantly, digitally secure and safe banking - anywhere, anytime - to suit our customers lifestyle needs."



NBK Mobile Banking Gives You More
New Additional Benefits to Give You Peace of Mind

Access to NBK Online Mobile Banking via the updated app also means that customers can do their banking even while traveling abroad. They can message NBK customer service representatives, pay bills, transfer funds, open new accounts and many other services all from the safety and convince of their own smart phone. Customers can download or update the NBK Mobile Banking app for iOS or Android on their smartphone.

Mercedes-Benz Kuwait offering complimentary checks on light, sight and comfort systems

KUWAIT: A R Albisher & Z Alkazemi Company, the Authorized General Distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait, are offering customers a month-long complimentary check-up across lighting systems, windshields, wipers and suspension systems. Taking place from 25 November till 25 December, the visual safety check-up campaign reaffirms the luxury automotive manufacturer's dedication to enhancing customer safety and driving enjoyment.

A team of qualified professionals will be on hand to conduct free diagnostic checks, with customers receiving a 35 percent discount on any necessary related parts. Only genuine Mercedes-Benz parts are used, having undergone rigorous testing to meet the high quality, safety and performance standards of Mercedes-Benz.

Our complimentary service check-ups are an integral way to ensure your vehicle will drive, function and protect you the way it was intended, said Michael Ruehle, CEO of A.R. Albisher & Z. Alkazemi Company. Regular car servicing can monitor the day to day wear and tear expected on our cars, and address minor



issues before they have the chance to become major, costly ones.

Regular lighting system checks are especially important, providing night time visibility and alerting other drivers of your movements. Replacing non-functioning or dimmed lights is essential for keeping you and those on the road around you safe, added Mohammed Abdul Rahman Albisher, Director of Abdul Rahman Albisher & Zaid Alkazemi Company.

Mercedes-Benz customers can avail this offer at all three service centers in Shuwaikh, Al-Rai and Ahmadi. During vehicle check-ups, customers can enjoy complimentary WiFi and browse through the latest collection of lifestyle items and car accessories across the Mercedes-Benz and AMG brands.



Book your big city shopping, break this winter with British Airways

KUWAIT: It's the season to shop and thanks to British Airways, new fashion capitals and old favorites are all easily accessible to fashionistas looking to book their next retail therapy city break. Running until 28 November, with travel valid through to 31 March 2018, British Airways' all-cabin sale offers customers a chance to save on their travel and shop to their hearts' content! Customers gearing up for their shopping spree can book return flights starting from as little as KWT 161 to London, KWT 132 to Paris or KWT 220 to New York. Looking at some of the world's most iconic shopping and retail destinations, the airline's travel experts and crew have put together a few tips on where to shop on your next fashionable holiday.

The British fashion capital

Starting with London, home to British Airways and some of the world's most iconic fashion stores, customers can indulge their shopping desires in the city.

Iconic in the world of fashion labels, Selfridges is a London institution. A huge store on Oxford Street that never disappoints. In Covent Garden, shoppers can find high street brand names and lots of smaller designers with unique creations. Look out for the street performers who will keep you entertained while you shop! Camden, is probably the biggest open-air market in the city offers a variety of fashion styles so there's something to suit everyone's tastes and styles. Before you head home, Heathrow's Terminal 5 has a wealth of stores to browse before a flight including Harrods, Tiffany & Co., Fortnum & Mason, Mulberry, Rolex, Dixons and World Duty Free, making it the ideal spot to pick up a special treat or a gift for a loved one. Book your return flights to London Heathrow for as little as KWT 161.

Fall in love in Paris

A cosmopolitan center famous for its fashion, art, culture and cuisine, Paris never fails to wow and charm visitors looking for a truly fashionable city break. Beyond the iconic Eiffel Tower, there's a plethora of cafes and boutiques to discover as you weave your way through the city's boulevards. For the true fashion soul, visit the original boutique of Chanel on Rue Cambon and step into the exclusive world of one of fashion's leading legacy labels. Another Parisian institution not to miss, head to the flagship Galleries Lafayette department store and prepare to add to your closet the latest fashionable pieces of the season. For a more bohemian shopping style and experience head to Le Marais: those on the lookout for bargains will enjoy the enormous Marche aux Puces de St-Ouen flea market. Paris offers culinary delights for everyone whether you are looking to start your gastronomic journey sam-



pling classic French cuisine at the Four Seasons George V's Michelin-starred Le Cinq or if you're looking to tuck into the famous French pastries and croissants at one of the many bistros and cafes.

Find your style in New York

New York's vibrant art, culture and entertainment life has spurred the birth of numerous fashion trends through the decades. From hip to ultra-chic, the Big Apple is a shopper's paradise that allows you to choose your style with its range of boutiques and department stores. Going glamour shopping? Start with Bergdorf Goodman - a true New York symbol of old-school luxury and class, Bergdorf is a luxury goods department store famous for high-end signature design houses such as Chanel, Gucci and Versace and is just one among many designer flagships stores that line up the streets of Manhattan. Hit the Bohemian quarter if your taste runs towards Bohemian-chic offerings - downtown SoHo and Nolita are home to quirky boutiques with a treasure trove of vintage gems and retro finds. NYC is a true retail haven where you can also expect to find vintage records, artisan chocolate and handmade goods at flea markets. The Chelsea flea market is an excellent spot with its boutique food stores for those looking to indulge their taste buds. For a more hipster flea market experience, the Brooklyn weekend flea market will surprise you with its range of vintage pieces including jewellery and watches, bargains from young designers or deals on a range of bric-a-brac items. Book your return flights to New York via London Heathrow for as little as KD 220.

Luxury in LA

Heading west to the golden coast is the vast city of Los Angeles, shopaholics will never be disappointed with the spread of shopping stores ranging from whole sale areas in



the garment district to stand alone local boutiques and high end international fashion stores.

A city gem is Cerre, a boutique on Melrose, near Robertson, which is owned by a couple that design all of the collections capturing simple, sleek, feminine, strong styles with a little bit of a tomboy edge. La Brea is a fun street to shop on with everything from incredible vintage furniture and clothing stores, to beautiful Persian rugs and pristine vintage finds. Rodeo Drive is indisputably the luxury shopping and dining destination and is home to flagship stores for some of the world's leading fashion labels. If stores on Rodeo Drive only offer you window shopping options, check out Westfield Century City for more affordable stores where you'll find great bargains at Abercrombie & Fitch, American Eagle, Hollister & Macys to name a few. Or head to Third Street promenade down in Santa Monica to catch some sun while you browse. A mix of high-street, high end and independent boutiques are located all outdoors in a pedestrianized area.

KAMCO wins 'Best Investment Research Company - 2017' by World Finance

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, won the "Best Investment Research Company, Kuwait" award for 2017 from World Finance.



Faisal Hasan

The Investment Research Department at KAMCO has succeeded in maintaining its thought leadership position in Kuwait and continues to solidify its reputation as one of the premier investment research houses in the GCC.

KAMCO was picked for the prestigious award, by the World Finance panel, based on set criteria ranked across top research houses in Kuwait, which include qualitative and quantitative parameters that are considered significant in the field of Investment Research. The prestigious title is a testament to KAMCO's comprehensive research offering, as the research desk publishes a number of reports across asset classes, analyzing fundamental and technical parameters, assisting investors to make informed investment decisions. The firm also provides commentary on significant global and regional economic events, and publishes a house view on the market implications of such events.

Commenting on the award, Faisal Hasan, Head of Investment Research at KAMCO, said, "We would like to thank the World Finance team for acknowledging KAMCO as the best investment research company in Kuwait. Our dedicated team of research analysts are constantly looking for ideas and themes to reassess future market trends and provide basis for our agile economic, sector and investment framework. As a market thought leader in Kuwait, we are cognizant of our responsibility in driving investment research in-line with global standards, and making informed investment decisions by providing relevant forward looking data-centric and qualitative analyses. We remain focused on deepening our market presence regionally, as we provide our research expertise and collaborate with strategic organizations and industry associations."

He added that KAMCO's research views are often sourced by the media, and that the readership base is growing internationally, even as the firm's research is available on leading industry platforms such as Bloomberg, Thomson Reuters, S&P Capital IQ and Factset.

Hasan further said, "We will continue to expand our research offering going forward and look for research products across asset classes that our clients and market participants require for their decision making, and will also further KAMCO's brand equity within the industry in the region."

The World Finance Investment Management Awards offers keen insight into investment management firms that have managed to maintain their success, even as the industry transforms around them. The awards panel scoured the industry from one corner of the globe to the next, while also responding to feedback from readers, to offer a truly global view of the brightest names in investment management today.

Technology

GAC Motor brings signature vehicle models to Dubai Motor Show 2017

All-electric SUV the GE3 exhibited at World Trade Center



KUWAIT: GAC Motor, China's leading automaker, showcased its signature vehicle models in the prestigious Dubai International Motor Show on November 14. Models including the GS7, the GS3, the GS8, the GA8, the GS4, and its first all-electric SUV the GE3, have been exhibited at the World Trade Center.

Lei Jin, Commercial Counselor from Economic and Commercial Section Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Dubai, Wendi Xia, General Manager of Sinomach Automobile have participated in the event and launched the GS7 and the GS3 in the Middle East.

"We are thrilled to be back to Dubai Auto Show again with our ground-breaking lineup," said Yu Jun, president of GAC Motor, "Middle East has been a strategic market place for GAC Motor to achieve global outreach as an international automaker that excels in research, manufacturing and sales. We believe the models we bring to the auto show can satisfy the needs of a wide range of consumers in the segmented mid to high-end market."

GAC Motor's models have completed a series of road trip tests against tough weather and environment.

Middle Eastern customers will get uncompromising driving experience even in summer when temperature could be as high as 50°C.

Developed on GAC Motor's G-CPMA (Cross-Platform Modular Architecture) platform, the GS7 is a mid-sized SUV designed for consumers who want a fashionable and carefree driving experience. It made its debut at the 2017 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in January, and was praised as "A New Generation Blockbuster SUV" by The New York Times and as an "Impressive Worldwide Debut" by Forbes at NAIAS. It is powered by the brand new GAC G-series 320T engine that offers a maximum power of 148kW (201.28 horsepower) at 1,750 RPM and peak torque of 320Nm.

The GS3, characteristic of a trendy and sporty design, comfortable cabin, smart technology and engaging driving experience, is a sporty model built for young families. It is also equipped with smart technologies

including human-auto interaction, Carlife smartphone intelligent interconnection feature and a 3-D voice navigation system. It carries GAC Motor's second-generation 200T engine that offers peak torque of 202Nm at 1,500RPM.

In addition, the company's self-developed high-end SUV the GS8 meets the North American SUV roof anti-force standard and redefines the high-end SUV market. It is equipped with i-4WD, the on-demand four-wheel drive system to ensure a comfortable and safe driving experience.

GAC Motor has started its global market strategy in

Dubai since 2014 with an initial emphasis on the Middle East market. Middle East has been a strategic market place for GAC MOTOR to achieve global outreach as an international automaker that excels in research, manufacturing and sales. Since then, it has established mature sales channels in seven countries and regions across the Middle East, especially in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, where GAC Motor has become the No 1 Chinese automobile brand.

The company also set up its North American R&D center in Silicon Valley, which will act as a key growth engine in its international market strategy. The North American R&D center will be responsible for talent cultivation and advanced technology, helping the company to achieve further global outreach. The company plans to enter the North American market no later than 2019, according to Yu.

"In the future, GAC Motor will continue to offer automotive experience with enhanced vitality and creativity to its global customers, by carrying forward the brand philosophy of 'innovation, quality and pleasure' and embracing cutting-edge technologies," Yu said.

“Enhanced vitality and creativity”

China's tech giants reach global elite with gamers, shoppers

BEIJING: Powered by Chinese smartphone users splurging billions on mobile games and online shopping, China's tech giants Tencent and Alibaba are racing up the elite league of the world's most valuable companies.

Hong Kong-listed Tencent, famous for its games and WeChat messaging service, became the first Asian firm to break into the \$500 billion league last week, briefly overtaking Facebook as the world's fifth biggest company in terms of market value. Alibaba is just a few billion shy of joining its Chinese competitor at the top table of public listings-and is already there when taking into account its private affiliates.

While the top five—Apple, Google's parent company Alphabet, Microsoft, Amazon and Facebook—thrive across the world, the two Chinese firms have made their fortunes by cornering China's own vast market of 750 million internet users. Tencent and Alibaba do have a major advantage over American rivals because China severely restricts access to its internet, with Facebook and Google kept outside the "Great Firewall". But they have also deftly tapped into smartphone technology to woo China's large, adaptable population. "Chinese consumers' acceptance of new technology is faster than nearly anywhere," said Zhao Chen, a managing partner at the China office of tech accelerator Plug and Play.

"Even my grandpa, who is 88 years old, uses WeChat and WeChat payment." Tencent boasts nearly one billion monthly active users of WeChat, known as a "super app" for its combination of instant messaging, social media, mobile payment options, games and publishing. Half of WeChat users spend more than 90 minutes a day on the app.

In smartphone games alone, the company's revenues surged by 84 percent in the third quarter, driven by the success of the "Honour of Kings" title. Alibaba, meanwhile, has dominated the e-commerce market, with Chinese consumers flocking to its shopping platforms to buy everything from laundry detergent to Boeing 747s.

The firm created an annual sales promotion held during China's "Singles Day", with consumers spending a record \$25 billion on November 11 — 40 percent up from last year. —AFP

Canon Central and North Africa hosts annual partner conference in Luxor

DUBAI: Canon Central and North Africa (CCNA), a leader in imaging solutions, hosted its second Partner Conference in Luxor, Egypt, over three days. During the event, Canon highlighted its commitment to the region and its strategy to expand its network of partners across new and existing markets in Africa. Canon concluded the conference by organizing a Gala Dinner at the iconic Al Kamak Temple attended by the Governor of Luxor Mohamed Bader.

The event, which brought together more than 135 partners from 45 countries in Africa, further underlines Canon's focus on being closer to its customer and strengthening its regional presence. The Annual Partner Conference served as a key platform for the company to highlight its achievements in 2017 and to outline the strategic growth priorities and opportunities in 2018, which also included organizational enhancements to better serve its partners.

During the gala dinner, Canon unveiled a special photography project that depicts the beauty and rich historical significance of Luxor. The pictures were taken by Wouter Kingma, Canon Explorer, and presented to Luxor's Governor to be utilized in promoting Luxor as a unique tourist destination.

Roman Troedthandl, Managing Director of CCNA, said: "The Annual Partner Conference is a flagship event, and being in Luxor is extremely significant as we reflect on the incredibly history of the past while focusing on the path of the future ahead of us. As we celebrate our achievements, Canon also aims to discuss business growth opportunities



and strengthen our association with our partners, who contribute significantly to our success. Africa region is of strategic importance to us, and with the support of our partners, we have been able to make strong inroads in building our market share."

"While Africa is one continent, we understand that with 1 billion people across 54 countries with several languages, various time zones and climates, Canon can't just adopt one approach to this market. We have invested in representative offices, hired local teams, engaged closely with new and existing partners to communicate and deliver the right products and solutions. In addition, we have expanded our work with local organizations that promote talent in photography and filmmaking."

At the Conference, Roman Troedthandl highlighted the path-breaking initiatives by Canon in the region including expanding its presence with partners in Senegal, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Morocco, all of which reflect Canon's emphasis on being closer to its customers by providing

targeted, on-ground support.

Canon also participated in a number of award ceremonies this year including the Kenya Fashion Awards to help recognize the most talented personalities in the fashion industry in Kenya, and the Uganda Press Photo Awards for which CCNA joined hands with Uganda Press Photo to extend support to African talent, enhance their skills, share knowledge on advanced photography solutions, and celebrate excellence in photography.

CCNA also hosted a series of workshops twice this year with Ghana's National Film and TV Institute as part of a three-year partnership agreement signed in 2016. These workshops aim to strengthen the knowledge, capacity and skills of Africa's creative and professional talents in film and photography, and create rewarding career opportunities for them. These collaborations all complement Canon's sustainability program Mirai, which has been inspired by the company's corporate philosophy, Kyosei, that embodies the idea of living and working together for the common good.

Bitcoin, an 'Uber' currency, not without risk

PARIS: Bitcoin, which this week soared to a new record high of more than \$8,000, is the monetary equivalent of Uber, since it bypasses central bank regulation and could be attractive for financially fragile countries, economists say. Nevertheless, it is precisely the lack of oversight that opens up the users of

cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin to risks and dangers, analysts warn.

"Bitcoin? It's about 'Uber-ising' currency, about not having a central bank that decides the price," said Ludovic Subran, chief economist at credit insurer Euler Hermes, referring to Uber, the ride-hailing app that has set the cat among the pigeons in the taxi sector in recent years.

"Yes, it's exactly that: it bypasses a central regulatory authority. That's the genius of this invention," agreed Yves Chouefaty, founder of the Paris-based asset management firm Tobam, which

this week launched the first European fund investing in bitcoin. Bitcoin is not regulated, but is traded on specialist platforms. It has no legal exchange rate and no central bank backing it. Launched in 2009 as a bit of encrypted software written by someone using the Japanese-sounding name Satoshi Nakamoto, bitcoin is controlled and regulated by its community of users.

Investors are already referring to it as "digital gold", as the bitcoin soared to a new record high of more than \$8,000 this week, a staggering rise in value from just under \$1,000 at the

beginning of the year. "We have no need for central banks," said Yves Chouefaty, suggesting that institutional investors may be behind the recent sharp gains, even if insisted that there was "no bitcoin bubble."

The growing interest in bitcoin is catching mainstream attention: the CME Group of Chicago, one of the world's biggest exchanges, has decided to launch a bitcoin futures marketplace. And prestigious US universities are offering courses in blockchain technology, on which cryptocurrencies are based. —AFP

What's On

Drug addiction seminar organized by ACK

The Security Department of the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) organized an awareness seminar entitled 'You Matter at ACK.' Nabeel Faraj, Senior Manager of the Security department at ACK, discussed drug addiction and its serious consequences for the society, aiming to create awareness amongst ACK students and faculty members about the serious impacts of drug addiction on the individual, family and the society, urging upon all stakeholders to help in discouraging this menace by spreading awareness about Drug Addiction and emphasizing on the need for nurturing moral and ethical values among students.

The Ministry of Interior represented by Captain Mohammad Menawer Al-Mutairi participated in the seminar, who discussed all types of drugs and their negative effects on the addicts, and the mechanism of the Ministry of Interior to reduce its spread. Dr Haya Al-Mutairi,

Psychology Consultant, elaborated by defining addiction and the aggressive behavior of addicts, as well as their painful journey during their long period of treatment.

In the same context, Lawyer Fatima Al-Qanai, from Abdul Aziz bin Naji Legal Consulting Firm, addressed the offenses of possessing, abusing, buying and selling drugs under the Kuwait Penal Code. She stated that abusers, and those accompanying them, are criminalized.

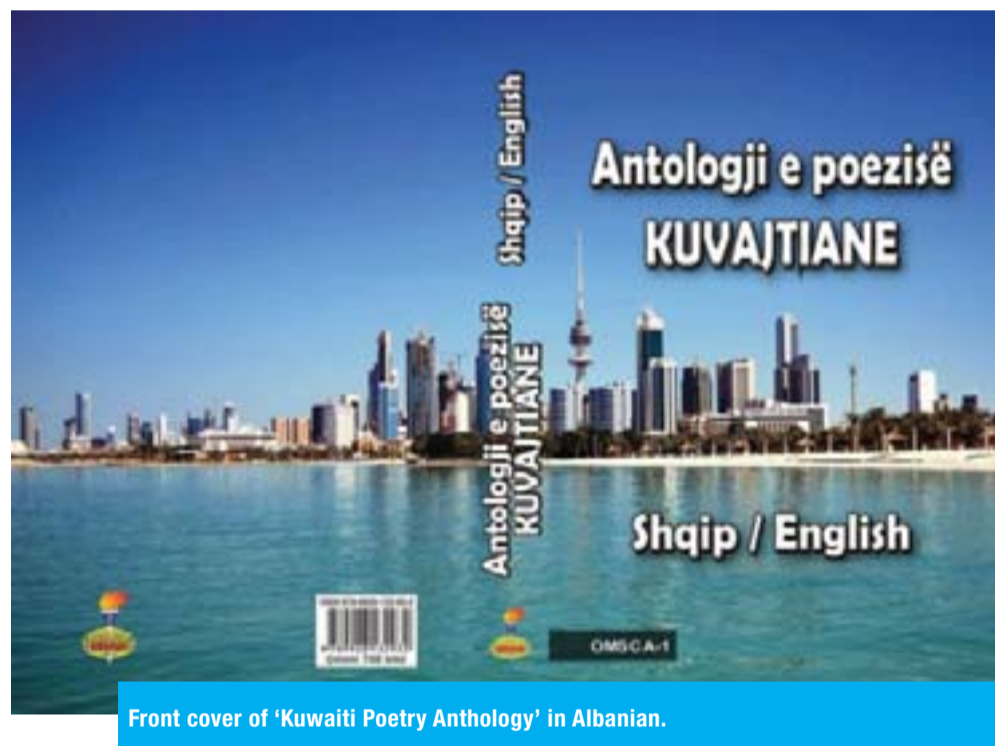
Dr Jasem Hajih, Psychologist and senior Manager of Student Support and Alumni Center at ACK, contributed to the seminar by advising students of ACK to stay away from drugs due to its harmful effects impacting addicts, their families, and their studies. In conclusion of the seminar, lecturers answered the questions and inquiries of the attendees. Speakers were honored for their efforts and effective contribution to the seminar.



Kuwaiti poetry anthology published in Albanian

Albanian publishing house 'OMSCA-1' recently published Kuwaiti Poetry Anthology translated into Albanian by Kujtim Morina, former Ambassador to Kuwait, poet and translator as well. This is a translation of the book 'A Collection of Translated Kuwaiti Poetry' published by the Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait (CRSK) and prepared by Dr Haifa Al Sanousi in 2006. The publication in Albania includes the English version as well.

The press announcement on this publication quotes also the preface by the CRSK Chairman, Prof Abdullah Y Al-Ghunaim: "This publication 'The Echo of Kuwait Creativity: A Collection of translated poems' establishes a considerable background of the creativity of the Kuwaiti poets. They are works that reflect the reality that reigned in Kuwait during the years of peace and war. They are witness and



Front cover of 'Kuwaiti Poetry Anthology' in Albanian.

product of their own time and act as a compendium of the individual and collective ideas. These artistic works prove that Kuwait's fame

hardly depends on oil alone. It is thought, art, literature and other characteristics of the contemporary Arabic civilization."

VIVA recognizes distributors through 'Partners in Success'

VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, recognized distributors through the competitive 'Partners in Success' program launched during October 2017. On this occasion, Engineer Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran, VIVA's CEO recognized the best distributors from different areas in Kuwait who participated in the program, during an event organized by Indirect Sales Division in presence of Adrew Hanna, CCO at VIVA, Ahmed Al-Sakout, Consumer Sales Group Director at VIVA and Abdulaziz Al-Deweesh, Indirect Sales Director at VIVA. The 'Partners in Success' program aims to create a spirit of interaction and direct engagement between VIVA and distributors (mobile stores) all over Kuwait, specialized in prepaid sales services, as they are a key factor in the implementation of VIVA's sales plans.



Boursa Kuwait team visits Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice

A team from Boursa Kuwait recently visited Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH), to meet with their management and offer Boursa Kuwait's collaboration to offer support to the children and families of BACCH as part of their corporate social responsibility initiatives. As part of this initiative, the Boursa Kuwait team presented gift vouchers from Kidzania, one of the major entertainment destinations in Kuwait, for the children of BACCH for a fun and entertaining experience with their families. This visit comes in line with Boursa Kuwait's corporate social responsibility strategy which aims at supporting various segments of the society in diverse ways.

Boursa Kuwait's CSR strategy is focusing on providing job opportunities to young



Kuwaitis and give them an opportunity to excel and shine in their areas of expertise, educating the society through various forums, seminars and internship programs, investing in our employees and provide them with an ideal work environment and finally financially and psychology support children in need. The company is currently working on sustainability related study and planning to publicly share once ready.

Expressing her appreciation for Boursa Kuwait's CSR initiative, Rasha Al-Hamad, CEO

of Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice said: "It was a pleasure to receive the Boursa Kuwait team; we thank them for their generous support of our children and families and look forward to future collaborations." Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice was established to provide the highest standards of Paediatric Palliative Care for children in Kuwait with life-limiting and life-threatening diseases to improve their quality of life and that of their families through the services offered by their specialized multidisciplinary team.

Al-Mulla Exchange announces 1st draw winner of 'Triple your Salary' Campaign

Al-Mulla Exchange unveiled the winner of the first draw of the ongoing promotion "Transact to Triple your Salary" launched by the company in the month of October. Chetturi Moulali transacted his salary at Al-Mulla Exchange and this entitled him to enter the draw and win three times his salary. The delighted Chetturi Moulali thanked Al-Mulla Exchange for all the creative initiatives and promotions it does, appreciating at the same time the attentive, friendly and helpful staff of Al-Mulla Exchange.

Speaking about the promotion, the General Manager of Al-Mulla Exchange, R Shankar said: "innovation, initiatives and exciting campaigns does not stop at Al-Mulla Exchange "Transact to Triple Your Salary" is one

of the many popular promotions designed by Al-Mulla Exchange Company to reward our customers as an appreciation for their loyalty."

"We would like to congratulate our loyal customer Moulali for winning the triple of his salary and we wish all our customers the best of luck." The "Transact to Triple Your Salary" promotion was launched on 5th of October 2017 till 5th of January 2018.

If you have missed the first draw, you still stand a chance to win in two more draws to be conducted on 7th of December 2017 and the 7th of January 2018. The terms and conditions of the promotion can be found on the website, www.almullaexchange.com

Ooredoo awarded for optimized printing project

Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, was awarded by Bader Al-Mullah Group for the successful implementation of optimized printing project that helped Ooredoo achieving the goals and targets assigned, during the recent OPS "Optimized Printing Services" event that was held in Jumeirah Hotel. Ooredoo shifted towards a new way of smart printing as part of its strategy, which includes efficiency, security, flexibility and simplicity. In order to achieve the targeted goal Ooredoo hired the best brand in this field "Konica Minolta" that had supplied and managed all the print-

ers that were set up in the Ooredoo Headquarters and branches.

During the OPS event, many industry experts spoke about the latest technological developments in the area of business visibility with structured process enhancement practices. Moreover, focusing on how to optimize the printing infrastructure with an output strategy and the benefits of smart scan workflows. An Ooredoo representative from the IT infrastructure and end user support department received the award during the event due to proper execution of the newly adapted printing project that helped in saving more than 40 percent in printing costs, advanced secure printing and enhanced flexibility of using the printers that carryout the newest technology. Ooredoo has always been keen to be the pioneer in providing and using the latest technologies internally and externally. This particular major upgrade in the company will aid in boosting productivity, performance and save future costs that will all be beneficial for both the employees and the organization itself.



Indian Embassy holiday notice

The Embassy of India shall remain closed on Thursday, November 30, 2017 on the occasion of the Birthday

of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). However, emergency consular services will be available.

Organized by

Closing ceremony of Celebrate



Deputy General Manager of Kuwait Times Adnan Saad and Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Martine Moreau present a memento to Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Adnan Saad present memento to Martine Moreau.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Martine Moreau present memento to Abed Al-Kareem Al-Enizi.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Martine Moreau present memento to Ezvetlana Arndet.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Martine Moreau present memento to Dr. David Machardy.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Martine Moreau present memento to Didier Jardin.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Martine Moreau present memento to Deline Pereira.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares with Kuwait Times team.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Martine Moreau present memento to Jeanette Jenson and Assad Bunashi.



Adnan Saad and Lama Najeyah



Lama Najeyah and Mamduoh Sameer



(From left) A group photo show Jeanette Jenson, Jury; Ameera Ashkinani, Jury; Abed Al-Kareem Al-Enizi, Jury; Ezvetlan Arndet, Jury; Martine Moreau, Minister of Education and Higher Education; Stefan Schwarz, General Manager Lufthaza; Jassim Al-khodari, Sr. Administrator PIC; Adnan Saad, Deputy General Manager; and Mohammed Al-Mohainy, P.R PIC.

THA

Kuwait Times
Would like to extend its
Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares
Minister of Education, Ministry of Higher Education
Martine Moreau
Ambassador of Canada

Jury Members:
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Ameera Ashkinani
Asaad Bunashi
Ezvetlana Arndet
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#Canada150 student art contest

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 Behind the Screen

Organized by



Adnan Saad receives memento from Martine Moreau.



Sherif Ismail receives memento from Martine Moreau.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Martine Moreau present memento to Ameerah Ashkinani.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Martine Moreau present memento to Tamara Saab.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Martine Moreau present memento to Stefan Schwarz.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Martine Moreau present memento to Cathal Hurley.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Martine Moreau present memento to Moneer Shaban.



Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares and Martine Moreau present memento to Jassim Al-Khodor and Mohammed Al-Mehani.



Kuwait Times staff

Martine Moreau, Ambassador of Canada to State of Kuwait; Moneer Shaban, General Manager EBLA; Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares, Minister of Education; Deline Pereira, General Manager Kuwait Times; Deline Pereira, Key Account Manager Air Canada; David Machardy, President Algonquin college; Asaad



STUDENT ART COMPETITION

SPECIAL EFFORTS CATEGORY



Cathal Hurley, Dr. Mohammed Al-Fares, Martine Moreau, Svitlana Arndt, Didier Jardin and Adnan Saad.



Latifa Khalifa Al Sykhan - Salmiya Secondary school



Amna Abd Al-Khaleq Al-Rashed - Fareaa Bent
 Abi Al-Saalt



Anfal Bu Hamed - Anfal Group



Haya Shaya-MSK



Majed Al-Hindal - Manarat School



Diya Mariam John - Indian Educational School



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Salma Adel Khalil - Salmiya Intermediate School



Ibrahim Abd Allah Al-Amer - Abd Allah Al Jaber School

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy and with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate north easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 26/11/2017 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	22 °C	16 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	08 °C		
ABDALY	22 °C	08 °C		
BUBYAN	22 °C	07 °C		
JAHRA	22 °C	10 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	22 °C	15 °C		
SALMIYAH	22 °C	17 °C		
AHMADI	21 °C	18 °C		
NUWAISIB	22 °C	12 °C		
WAFRA	22 °C	08 °C		
SALMY	21 °C	10 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	11/27	Cloudy to partly cloudy + a chance for scattered rain	22 °C	11 °C	NE-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Tuesday	11/28	Mostly Sunny	23 °C	10 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	11/29	Mostly Sunny	24 °C	08 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Thursday	11/30	Partly cloudy	24 °C	10 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:57
Sunrise	06:20
Zuhr	11:35
Asr	14:30
Sunset	16:50
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	22 °C
MIN. Temp.	08 °C
MAX. RH	59 %
MIN. RH	24 %
MAX. Wind	N 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

AIRLINES

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

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 - Driver license
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 - Carry out all managerial tasks
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I, Neeraj Kumar S/o Subhash Chander, holder of Indian Passport J5752152 & Civil ID No. 285092011066 has changed my name to Neeraj Makan hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5363) 23-11-2017

EMERGENCY 112

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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 27/11/2017				Departure Flights on Monday 27/11/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	501	Alexandria	00:01	MEGA	405	Beirut	12:55
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	RBG	554	Alexandria	13:00
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	JZR	176	Dubai	13:40
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	FDB	076	Dubai	13:45
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	JZR	124	Bahrain	14:30
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	673	Dubai	15:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	785	Jeddah	15:25
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:30
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:45
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:40
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	SAW	706	Damascus	16:55
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	QTR	1073	Doha	17:15
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	JZR	240	Amman	17:15
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:30
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	KAC	357	Kochi	17:45
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40	JZR	538	Cairo	18:15
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	JZR	184	Dubai	18:30
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	WAN	115	Bahrain	18:50
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	KAC	381	Delhi	18:50
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:30	FDB	064	Dubai	19:10
WAN	342	Sohag	06:35	WAN	115	Bahrain	19:20
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
BAW	157	London	07:10	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	QTR	1081	Doha	20:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	1543	Cairo	21:20
IRA	667	Esfahan	10:00	DLH	624	Bahrain	21:30
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ETD	996	Bahrain/Abu Dhabi	21:40
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
AXB	890	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:05
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:15	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
FDB	075	Dubai	12:45	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:35
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	383	Delhi	22:40
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:40	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
KNE	231	Riyadh	13:55	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
KAC	618	Doha	14:15	SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45
KAC	692	Muscat	14:15				
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20				

Lifestyle | Gossip

Robbie doesn't wear wedding ring during the week

The 27-year-old actress announced she was married to her partner Tom Ackerley in December last year, but almost 12 months on and the blonde-haired beauty has admitted she "obviously" does not don the accessory during the week when she is working in fear of losing it. She said: "I can't obviously wear it during the week when I'm working. I don't want to lose it on set." However, Margot will slip her rings back on her left hand on the weekends. She added: "I get to wear this on the weekends." And the 'Suicide Squad' star - who met her director beau in 2013 on set of 'Suite Francaise', in which Margot played Celine - believes nothing has changed between her and her 27-year-old husband since they tied the knot, as they still remain as "best friends and roommates". She said: "That's the thing, we were best friends and roommates before and now we're like best friends and roommates still, so nothing's really changed

at all." Meanwhile, 'The Wolf of Wall Street' icon has admitted her career takes its toll on her, and she has had her fair share of "meltdowns" because of her busy schedule, which means she misses out on family celebrations, holidays and other events. Speaking in the December issue of Vogue Australia, she said: "It's hard, I'm sure a ton of people reading this have their own business and it's so hard. Having a business is stressful and time-consuming, but it's incredibly rewarding. There are obviously a lot of times where I'll have a meltdown and go: 'I can't do it anymore.' And you miss out on a lot of things, like you rarely go on holidays, you miss everyone's weddings, everyone's birthdays. "I haven't been home once this year, I haven't seen my best friends, my nephew. So there's that side to it where it kind of hurts to sacrifice those things, but it's also enormously satisfying to build something and to be part of something."



Paloma Faith has reportedly got married in secret

The 36-year-old singer has been dating her French beau, Leyman Lahcine, for four years, and the couple welcomed their first child into the world in December last year. But it is believed the pair have decided to take their romance to the next step and have tied the knot in what was "a very intimate and beautiful ceremony" in London, England, where the duo were surrounded by close friends and family. Speaking about the marital ceremony to The Sun Online, a source said: "It's something Paloma wants to keep private. It was a very intimate and beautiful ceremony in London, with just close friends and family. "But some of her friends in the industry have recently been talking about Paloma quietly getting married." The 'Never Tear Us Apart' hitmaker also sparked rumours she was married after being spotted at The Royal Variety Performance earlier this year, which was rumoured to be wearing a diamond ring on her the ring finger on her left hand. And it is believed Paloma is keen to keep her love life a secret because she doesn't want people to "know her news", although she is "extremely happy" with how life is panning out for her. The insider added: "Paloma isn't keen for people to know her news but she is extremely happy." And Paloma has previously addressed Leyman as her "husband". Speaking previously about her relationship, she said: "My mum said if you feel trapped, you're in the wrong relationship but if you feel freer than when you're single, you've met the right person. "I'm in that place now. Leyman is my husband." However, Paloma - who was previously married to chef Rian Haynes for four years before they split in 2009 - believes starting a family with her beau is "more bonding" than exchanging wedding vows. The 'I Just Can't Rely On You' vocalist said: "I feel the fact we've got a child together is way more bonding than a piece of paper. "When I'm like 80, I think I want to get married and try heroin." Paloma has yet to confirm the news.

Kerry Katona found a fake Tinder account in her name

The 37-year-old singer has reportedly been targeted by a social media user who has set up a profile on the popular online dating site pretending to be the 'Whole Again' hitmaker. According to The Sun Online, the imposter has included images of the former Atomic Kitten band member on the page, as well as details about the star and her personal life. And where the site asks for the user to explain why they have signed up to Tinder in search for love, it reads: "Why the hell not! (sic)." Kerry's representatives have spoken out about the incident and have denied the fact Kerry is signed up to the service and is swiping left or right on potential suitors, therefore confirming the account is fake. Meanwhile, Kerry has recently been served her divorce papers from her estranged husband George Kay. Kerry's former flame, who she married in 2014, has recently asked to legally terminate their three-year marriage following their split over the summer to ensure the pair are amicable for the sake of their three-year-old daughter Dylan-Jorge and Kerry's kids Molly, 16, Lily-Sue, 14, - who she had with ex-partner Brian McFadden - as well as Heidi, 10, and Maxwell, nine, whom she has from her previous relationship with Mark Croft. Speaking previously George's representative said: "George Kay has served a divorce petition upon Kerry Katona to end their six year relationship. "His absolute priority is the well-being of their three-year-old daughter Dylan-Jorge and his step-children Heidi and Max. Happily all the children are spending time with George during this difficult period.



Hemsworth steals wife's \$500 beauty products



The 'Thor: Ragnarok' actor - who has five-year-old daughter India, and three-year-old twin sons Sasha and Tristan with spouse Elsa Pataky - has his own "area" of the bathroom, but he can't help but pilfer the Spanish actress' luxury lotions and potions, much to her horror. He said: "We both have our own area of the bathroom but sometimes I'll pinch something from her side. "I'll happily be slathering something all over me and then she'll come in and be like, 'What are you doing? That's a \$500 cream.' " Chris loves to surf, which means his skin often takes a "battering", but with Elsa's help, he's learned what products help keep him soft and smooth. He told Marie Claire magazine: "I spend a lot of time outdoors and love surfing so my skin takes a bit of a battering from the elements. "My wife got me into Creme de la Mer Moisturising Cream a while ago and I've been using it ever since, as keeping my skin hydrated makes it feel healthier." The 34-year-old actor prefers to have "stubble" because his skin gets irritated if he shaves off all his facial hair, and his wife isn't a fan of it being any longer. He said: "Stubble is my thing, I don't like having it too short as my skin can get irritated. "I just run a pair of clippers over the hairs. "I've never had a moustache for longer than 10 seconds. I shaved around it, just to see what a moustache would look like, but my wife wasn't a fan so it came straight off."

Lawrence taking time off to work on a farm



The 27-year-old actress has worked non-stop since she shot to fame with the 2010 movie 'Winter's Bone' and she is planning to take a break from the spotlight and move to a remote farm. She told America's Elle magazine: "I want to get a farm. I want to be, like, milking goats." And she plans to dedicate more of her time to the political corruption-fighting non-profit Represent.Us. Jennifer also admitted that she never expected to achieve the level of fame that she has now and always pictured a much more low-key acting career for herself. She said: "I was already an actor [before 'Winter's Bone'] but there's different avenues actors can take. I'd pictured myself being in indies, living a pretty normal life." While she is one of the most sought-after actresses in the world, Jennifer insisted that her popularity could diminish at any time. She said: "I don't put a lot of stock in that. Because, what is that? It's too big to think about before you go to bed at night. Everything changes." However, she does feel some pressure to be successful at the box-office. She said: "The only time I find myself worrying about the result is when I'm filming, because I'm working all day, and then I come home and my brain's just like, 'What should we panic about? After I've finished the process, though, it's done for me. I've done my work, and I've gotten what I need to get out of it-I've fulfilled myself. What happens next doesn't really matter.'" — Bangshowbiz

Naya Rivera has been arrested for domestic battery



The 30-year-old actress has reportedly been charged with the criminal offence after she was allegedly involved in an altercation with her husband Ryan Dorsey on Saturday evening (in Kanawha County, West Virginia. PEOPLE has reported that Naya has been accused of striking the 'Blood' actor over the head and in the mouth during a walk with their two-year-old son Josey in Chesapeake over the weekend. And Ryan is believed to have video footage of the incident on camera. The incident was first reported by local news station WSJZ, and the site have since shared footage of Naya in handcuffs being arraigned. The former 'Glee' star has since been released on bond and she has been picked up by her father-in-law. Naya and Ryan's relationship has been on the rocks over the last few months, as the pair had filed for a divorce in November last year. However, last month the 'Devious Maids' star was believed to have filed a request to dismiss the legal paperwork as her and Ryan - who wed in 2014 after dating on and off since they first met in 2010 - had moved on and their relationship was on the mend. Speaking at the time, a source said: "She is back together with Ryan Dorsey. They want to make it work for the sake of their son." And the trio put on a happy display as they celebrated Thanksgiving as a family. Alongside an image of Naya with her child on the American holiday, she wrote: "Josey is the cutest!! #joseyhollisdorsey #nayarivera #ryandorsey #thanksgiving. (sic)"

Oscar Isaac didn't drink alcohol until he was 24

The 'Star Wars: The Last Jedi' actor had a "glorious" time at a public high school in Florida, and though his family used to "spy" on him to make sure he wasn't up to anything untoward, he insists they had no need to worry about him because he enjoyed the "individuality" of being the only one in his friendship group not to get drunk and preferred to be in control of his actions. He said: "It was glorious, I loved it. I loved it so much. I could walk to the beach every day, and go to this wild school where I became friends with so many different kinds of people. I met these guys who lived in the trailer parks in Boynton Beach and started a band, and my mom and my little brother would come and spy on me to see if I was doing drugs or anything, and I never was. "I didn't drink till I was, like, 24. Even though I stopped being religious, I liked the individuality of being the guy who didn't do that stuff. Maybe it was the observer part of me... I liked being a little bit detached, and I wasn't interested in doing something that was going to make me lose control." The 38-year-old actor - who has seven-month-old son Eugene with wife Elvira Lind - found his twenties "difficult" and it was particularly tough trying to maintain a long-distance relationship in Florida while studying at the prestigious performing arts school Juilliard in New York. He told Esquire magazine: "For me, the twenties were the more difficult part of life. Four years is just... masochistic. We were a particularly close group but still, it's really intense... I was never a mess, I just had a lot of confusion."





As friends and family react, bride-to-be, Stephanie Longo sits in a chair on the street in front of her family's home, as her groom Paolo DiPaolo sings, during a modern version of a centuries-old traditional Italian wedding serenade in Philadelphia. — AP



Cousin of the bride, Vincenzo Longo, plays the guitar as a crowd gathers in the street outside the decorated home of Susan and Larry Longo during the Italian wedding serenade.

That's amore: Italian bridal serenades alive in Philadelphia

Young couples in south Philadelphia are transforming something old into something new with their take on the Italian wedding serenade. The serenade has been a tradition for hundreds of years, particularly in southern Italian regions like Naples, Puglia and Calabria. There, it takes place the night before the wedding, where the groom and a guitarist - or a full accompaniment of accordion, mandolin player and violist if he's splurging - appear on the street outside the bride-to-be's home. They sing traditional love songs as she gazes down from her window. She eventually descends to embrace her rose-bearing husband-to-be as neighbors and family members look on.

The age-old tradition came along with immigrants to Philadelphia in the 1800s and retained its modest flavor until recent years. Now, serenades have taken on an air of a block party, with grooms singing to a choreographed routine with popular songs as guests enjoy a catered meal, full bar and DJ dance party. "It's kind of like a New Year's Eve to your wedding," said Paolo DiPaolo, who serenaded his bride-to-be Stephanie Longo in October at a south Philadelphia street party that mixed the traditional with the popular. "This is one of the main things you look forward to."

Tears and songs

The street outside his now-wife's parents' home was blocked off to traffic as guests ate pasta at tables with white linen cloths. The bride's father made batches of homemade wine, and DJ Johnny Looch - south Philly's serenade expert, John Luciano - spun songs with love and marriage themes like Frank Sinatra's version of "Get Me to the Church on Time" and The Dixie Cups' "Going to the Chapel." To warm up the crowd, the bride-to-be's uncle from Calabria sang traditional songs as he strummed a guitar, while the older relatives crowded around him, some singing, others tearing up.

Then the bride took a seat with a glass of wine, and DiPaolo unleashed his serenade - complete with dance moves - starting with DJ Snake's "Let Me Love You," segueing into "Sexy Love" by Ne-Yo and finishing with the classic "Can't Take My Eyes Off You" by Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, as

the two danced and the crowd clapped and cheered.

Father Nick Martorano has been a guest at a host of serenades during his lifetime, both as his role as pastor of the St. Nicholas of Tolentine for over 30 years and his childhood growing up in the neighborhood. His church, one of the last Italian National parishes in the country, still celebrates one Mass in Italian every Sunday.

He remembers the more traditional serenades of his youth, where the groom and a guitarist would come the night before the wedding, and then be invited inside for coffee and treats. As to why the tradition persists after all these years away from Italy, he thinks it's a simple reason: "Because it's a good, fun time. It's friends, neighbors and the community coming together to celebrate two of their own."

'Fantastic!'

At the height of Italian immigration into the city,

Philadelphia's Little Italy was actually a patchwork of regional neighborhoods, according to an essay by historian Stefano Luconi. For example, people from Abruzzi settled on one street, and people from Calabria settled on another. The serenade tradition settled with them. Diego Mautone is a musician in Naples, Italy, who makes a living as a serenade artist. There, the event still happens the night before the wedding, and grooms reach out to him to help craft a romantic experience, he said. They leave the singing to him.

Although he had never heard of the modern Philadelphia twist on the traditional serenade, he called the new take on it "fantastico!" Newlyweds Dana and Danny Ricciardi had their serenade at the end of October in southern Philadelphia. "I kept joking I was more scared of singing than saying 'I do,'" Danny Ricciardi said, adding that his brother so loathed the idea of a serenade that he kept the tradition from his fiancée so she wouldn't press him on it. Ricciardi serenaded his bride-to-be with a rendition of R Kelly's "Ignition." Dana Ricciardi said she looked forward to the serenade almost more than the actual ceremony, because it was a time have fun and blow off steam from all the stress of wedding planning. "We're a festival people," she said. "The serenade plays off that." — AP

“
We're a festival
people
”

Be our Guest of Honour at The Biltmore Hotel Tbilisi



The Biltmore Hotel Tbilisi is the upscale luxury hotel which is occupying the historical building known as the former Institute of Marxism and Leninism (IMEL) and a striking glass skyscraper, cleverly marrying history and modernity.

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Lifestyle | Features



An epic journey on stage

KANA Kuwait stages its maiden theater production

By Sajeev K Peter

Chronicling a historical tale in a distinctly Elizabethan style, Kerala Arts and Nataka Academy (KANA), Kuwait, staged its maiden production 'Abraham' at the Boy Scouts Theatre, Hawally, on November 16 and 17. The play, whose length exceeded two hours, was presented in three shows. The performance, which was staged in a larger-than-life size canvas with powerful characters against imposing stage settings, was received with enthusiasm by theatre aficionados.

"It was a huge challenge for us to stage a drama of this scale in Kuwait. We could manage this thanks to the veteran stage designer Sujathan Master," said Babu Chakola, the director who also played the lead character in the play.

As the director puts it, the most fascinating aspect of the drama was the effects of the set design such as the Tower of Babel—a myth meant to explain why the world's peoples speak different languages—a warhorse racing across a battlefield, majestic palaces, and the vast expanse of desert lands through which pilgrims march towards their promised land. The scenographic interventions were truly able to add to the epic quality of the performance without reducing it to a mere spectacle.

Ambitious set design

"In fact, for a Kuwait production, it was quite an ambitious task on our part to use 21 curtains and four sets for the play, because it involved a lot of risks. However, we managed it," observed Artist Sujathan after Friday's show. Sujathan, who spent more than 15 days in the theatre camp working on sets and curtains, was instrumental in the success of the stage design. As a veteran theater artist, Sujathan has

witnessed the ups and downs of Malayalam theater over the last 50 years, working with top-notch professional drama troupes for thousands of plays in Kerala.

Not one to hide his preference for realistic theater, Sujathan said, "Over the years, the theatre has been drifting away from people owing to many reasons, the onslaught of technology, the growing clout of cinema or television, etc. Dialogue-based plays of the yesteryear have given way for more visual-oriented dramas of today. The emerging trend of experimentation has also weaned away the audience from theatre that has lost its old charm as an art form of the masses. Fortunately, there are some serious efforts in Kerala today at various levels to restore the old glory to Malayalam theatre."

He applauded theatre activists in the Gulf region, who, according to him, are more committed and dedicated to the art form than their counterparts in Kerala. "It is really commendable the efforts being made by amateur troupes such as KANA Kuwait in producing plays in the region despite several odds," he added. When asked about mediatic interventions in scenography, he quipped that the use of media must enhance theatre and add to its totality rather than reduce it to a mere gimmick.

Innovative lighting

Chirakkal Raju, the artist who came from India to do the stage lighting, not only merely illuminated the stage but aesthetically enhanced both the external setting of the drama and its inner life. He stayed in the rehearsal camp for nearly a month. Veteran musician Manoj Mavelikkara provided background music for the drama enriching the mood for situations.

Penned by well-known playwright Francis T Mavelikkara, the drama unravels



how Abraham answered the calls of God creatively and emotionally. As the director of the play, Chakola has undertaken a single-minded effort to bring a mythical story onto the stage with all its colossal dimension, the exodus of people, consequent

Wars and the poignancy of life. "Around 55 artists both on stage and off stage were involved in the production of 'Abraham'. The successful production is the outcome of nearly six months of our labor," Chakola said. As the protagonist, he played

Abraham dexterously depicting the trials and tribulations of the character. Kumar Thrithala, the associate director, played both his roles well. Manju Mathew, who is also the assistant director and played as Abram's wife Sarah (Sarai) did justice to her role, while Deena, Sarai's maid Hagar, lived up to her character.

The lyrics written by Rajeev Alunkal were composed by Fr James Vennaipallil and Seby Nayarambalam. If the audiences can be seen as a barometer for public opinion about the play, they overwhelmingly cheered the actors with their frequent applause throughout the performance. Shajahan Kodungalloor, Aji Paravoor, Dr Abraham Thomas, Dennis Tharakan, Regi Mathew, Davis Valooran, George Punnoose, Gopakumar, Shiju Paulose, Raju Joseph, Jaison Palakkad, Davis Tharakan, Edwin Babu, Arun Nagamandalam, Sheeja Davis, Axa Edwin, Jancy Jiju, Shailaja Gopakumar, Master Pranavkumar and David Chakola were among the other artists who acted in the drama.

Vegas looks outside the casinos to draw in millennials

Casinos in Las Vegas are upping the ante in their pursuit of coveted millennial visitors with new attractions designed to wow them, provide them Instagram-worthy moments and maybe even get them to gamble a little.

In 2018, a zip line across the street from Caesars Palace and an e-sports arena at the Luxor will join the city's entertainment repertoire geared toward those generally up to age 34. They are becoming majority spenders in today's economy but aren't necessarily interested in traditional casino gambling, such as blackjack and craps.

Fresh out of bankruptcy, Caesars Entertainment plans to build a 1,050-foot-long zip line above its outdoor promenade anchored by the Linq hotel-casino and the world's tallest observation wheel. The attraction — the third of its kind in Sin City, but first on the Las Vegas Strip — will feature 10 lines that will allow thrill seekers to ride seated or Superman-style.

"It's an efficient use of space, but it's exciting," Linq Promenade general manager Shaun Swanger said. "Our core audience is millennials. During the day, you see a lot broader range and a lot more families, but as the sun goes down, it gets a little bit younger, and as midnight approaches, it's one big party." The ride will begin at the top of a 114-foot-tall launch tower that Caesars will build at the west end of the promenade. Photos and video of the rides, bound for social media, will be available. — AP



This undated rendering provided by Caesars Entertainment depicts a 1,050-foot-long zip-line that the casino operator will build above its outdoor promenade that's anchored by the Linq hotel-casino in Las Vegas. — AP

Pickled in 'cognac', Chopin's heart gives up its secrets



Photo shows a general view of the interior of the Warsaw Saint Cross church where the heart of Polish-French pianist Frederic Chopin rests. — AFP photos



School children take pictures as they visit the memorial tablet marking the place where rests the heart of Polish pianist Frederic Chopin.

The heart of Frederic Chopin, among the world's most cherished musical virtuosos, may finally have given up the cause of his untimely death. The prolific 19th-century Polish-French pianist and composer died at the age of 39, of what had long been believed to be tuberculosis (TB). However, in 2008, Polish medical experts raised the possibility that Chopin whose health had always been very frail had actually suffered from cystic fibrosis (CF).

The genetic respiratory illness clogs the lungs with sticky, thick mucus and sufferers on average generally do not survive past their late 30s. Now, Polish scientists, who were the first to use modern technology to study Chopin's heart—preserved for the last 168 years inside a crystal jar in what appears to be cognac—believe they are a step closer to an accurate diagnosis.

"We can say that it is highly possible that it was

tuberculosis," lead researcher Professor Michal Witt, a top specialist in molecular and clinical genetics, told AFP. Unable to open the hermetically sealed jar, his team of medical experts used high-resolution photographs taken in 2014 to make their diagnosis. "The lesions which we saw fit well with the initial diagnosis which was held for years, namely tuberculosis. "The lesions are clearly visible on the pericardium of Chopin's heart," Witt said, referring to the organ's outer membrane typically affected by complications stemming from TB.

'Still debatable'

The findings of Witt and his team are due to be published in the February print issue of the esteemed American Journal of Medicine, complete with a unique photograph of the pickled heart. But without DNA tests, Witt admits that he cannot entirely rule

out the possibility of cystic fibrosis. In 2008, Poland's culture ministry rejected a request by academics to run DNA tests on the relic to check for the CFTR gene, a telltale sign of cystic fibrosis, over fears the procedure could irreparably damage the heart. Whether Chopin suffered from cystic fibrosis "is still debatable", Witt told AFP.

"We cannot prove this for sure, but the likelihood that it was tuberculosis rather than cystic fibrosis is far, far higher. "We can say that with a high degree of confidence." Records show that as an adult weighing 40 kilograms at a height of 1.70 meters, Chopin was chronically underweight, a typical symptom of cystic fibrosis. Without genetic tests, it is also impossible to be entirely certain that the organ itself is Chopin's, although as Witt points out, there "is no reason to believe that it isn't, at least to our knowledge." — AFP

Rance Howard dies at 89

Veteran Hollywood actor Rance Howard, the father of director Ron Howard, died Saturday. He was 89. Ron Howard announced his father's death on Twitter Saturday afternoon. He praised his father for the ability to balance ambition with great personal integrity. "A depression-era farm boy, his passion for acting changed the course of our family history," he wrote. "We love & miss U Dad."

Rance Howard's death also was confirmed by Michael Rosenberg, a spokesman for his son's production company. The elder Howard was the father of actor Clint Howard and grandfather of actresses Bryce Dallas Howard and Paige Howard. Rance Howard had been married to the late Jean Speegle Howard. They met as teenagers doing a touring

children's production in Oklahoma of classic fairy tales like "Snow White" and "Cinderella." They married on the tour dressed in their costumes, with the bride dressed as Snow White and groom as a huntsman.

The elder Howard's acting career spanned several decades since the 1950s. He appeared in several of Ron Howard's films, including "Apollo 13," "A Beautiful Mind," "Splash," "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," "Parenthood" and "Grand Theft Auto." Other film credits include "Chinatown" and the 2013 drama "Nebraska." On television, he appeared on many series including "Seinfeld," "Murder, She Wrote," "NCIS: Los Angeles," "Grey's Anatomy" and Ron Howard's starring series, "Happy Days." — AP



In this Nov 15, 2011 file photo, Ron Howard, right, his daughter Bryce Dallas Howard and his father Rance Howard attend the premiere of "When You Find Me," inspired by Canon's "Project Imagination" contest, in New York. — AP

Lifestyle | Features

India's 'Miami': Putting Mumbai's Art Deco on the map



The Marine Drive seafront in Mumbai. — AFP photos



Pedestrians pass by an Art Deco building near Marine Drive.

The seafront is lined with brightly colored buildings boasting curved corners, stylish balconies and exotic motifs but this isn't Miami's famous Art Deco district—it's Mumbai. Bombay, as the Indian city was formerly called, is known more for its Victorian Gothic edifices than the sleeker architectural designs that swept Europe and America during the 1920s and '30s.

But now, a group of enthusiasts are making Mumbai's hundreds of Deco structures, which include residential properties, commercial offices, cinemas and even hospitals, as famous as their 19th century counterparts. The ambitious Art Deco Mumbai project aims to document every single one and educate residents about the buildings' origins to ensure the "style moderne" architectural legacy of India's financial capital is preserved.

"Bombay has one of the largest collections of Art Deco buildings in the world. It's an incredible heritage," Atul Kumar, keen conservationist and founder of Art Deco Mumbai, tells AFP. Palm trees blow gently along the three-kilometer Marine Drive promenade where Soona Mahal, a symmetrical, yellow-painted building with orange vertical lines and elaborate turret, sits proudly on the street corner.

"It's an iconic building that looks like a ship pushing through waves," says 70-year-old Mehermoh Sidhwa proudly. He is the third generation of his family to live in it after his grandfather had it built in 1937. Around the corner, five-storey buildings sporting elegant Deco fonts, marble floors and spiral staircases line the Oval Maidan playing field while nearby are the popular Eros and Regal cinemas.

'Aspirations'

The areas make up the heart of Mumbai's

Art Deco precinct which in 2012 was submitted to UNESCO for world heritage recognition. A short distance up the coast is Breach Candy hospital, also in Deco style. "There's an interesting amalgamation of classical European Art Deco and Bombay Deco. You have ziggurats, rounded locomotive balconies, tropical images, streamlining, speed lines and Egyptian motifs as well as Indian designs," enthuses Kumar.

The buildings were constructed between the early 1930s and early 1950s after wealthy Indians sent their architects to Europe to come

“One of the largest collections in the world”

up with modern designs different to those of their colonial rulers. They visited as Deco was taking the West by storm following the 1925 Paris exposition. "Mumbai's Deco buildings have always lived in the shadow of the Victorian Gothic structures built by the British," such as the main railway station, museum and high court, says Kumar. "But Art Deco is no less. It's a colourful, vibrant, free, sophisticated style that represented the aspirations of a whole new class. India was under oppressive colonial rule and this was a very unique statement through architecture."

Tour guides are fond of telling foreign visi-

tors to Mumbai that only Miami has more Deco structures internationally. Local legend says the coastal Indian city has 200 such buildings. Kumar and his small team, which is not-for-profit, are working hard to come up with a precise tally for the first time by documenting the entire city and adding all the Deco buildings to a Google map on their website.

Conservation

"We want to establish the accurate number and therefore position Bombay's relevance correctly across the world," explains Kumar, who says they've already counted 136 in 18 months, with several neighborhoods left to investigate. "It's definitely going to be way more than 200," adds the finance professional confidently, before cautiously speculating that the final number could be around 300. The team talks to owners to establish which structures are Deco. They record building and architect names, dates of construction, coordinates and Deco features. Key specifics and photos are then uploaded to an inventory on www.artdecomumbai.com. Images with captions are also published on Twitter and Instagram. "We have 100 percent accuracy. If we are doubtful then we don't include the building," says Kumar, who also organizes walking tours to spread the word.

He laments that a lack of awareness has led many Deco buildings to be demolished or compromised by alterations. Property developers offering lucrative sums to replace them with luxury apartments have also caused destruction. "Ultimately our objective is to conserve this tremendous collection. As we talk to people they become fiercely proud and that translates into a desire to preserve," concludes Kumar. — AFP



Vehicles pass by an Art Deco building on Marine Drive.



Pedestrians walk past the Rajabai Clock Tower in south Mumbai.

Jonathan, St Helena's ancient tortoise, awaits visitors



This file photo taken on October 20, 2017 shows Jonathan, a Seychelles giant tortoise, believed to be the oldest reptile living on earth with an alleged age of 185 years. — AFP

He is a tourist attraction worth travelling a long way to see—Jonathan the giant tortoise is perhaps the world's oldest land animal, living in pampered luxury on the remote British island of St Helena. Aged at least 185 — though no one knows for certain—Jonathan should prepare himself for an influx of visitors now that an airport has opened on the small island in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean.

The island's most famous resident, Jonathan slowly roams the lush gardens of the governor's house, eating carrots, lettuce, cucumber, apples and pears prepared in the governor's kitchen. He appears on the island's five-pence coin, on immigration stamps, and in old black-and-white photographs alongside Boer War prisoners in the early 20th century.

"He is an institution, my V.I.P.—Very Important Patient," said his vet Catherine Man, during her weekly check-up of Jonathan, who stretched out his long, wrinkled neck to eat some chopped carrot. "He knows our voices and is very gentle, but it can be a bit dangerous for my fingers when I feed him. He has a very set routine, he goes to the same places in the paddock at the same time each day." Jonathan originates from the Seychelles but the circumstances of his arrival on St Helena remain a mystery and the exact year is much disputed. Some unconfirmed reports

suggest 1882 — a few decades after Napoleon died in exile on the island on 1821.

Younger days

When younger and more agile, he was known for disrupting croquet matches on the governor's lawn, and for going under tables at tea parties and upsetting the china. Man, the only vet among the island's 4,500 population, says he is now blind, has no sense of smell and is already far beyond his life expectancy of 150 years—but otherwise he is in good health with good hearing.

"Reptiles have a slow metabolism, they breathe slowly, they eat slowly, and live a long time," she said. "But perhaps his stress-free lifestyle here, and the clean air help explain his longevity." St Helena, located 1,200 miles from the African mainland, is one of the most remote places on Earth.

Until now, the island's only link to the outside world was by ship, but the new airport brings tourists on a weekly commercial flight from Johannesburg. They will be able to visit Jonathan, viewing him and his three younger companions—Emma, David, Frederica—from a designated "corridor" to ensure the tortoises are left largely undisturbed. Lisa Phillips, the governor of St. Helena, said that when she arrived to take up the post last year she went to meet Jonathan before she stepped inside the governor's house. — AFP

St Helena: The island that time forgot

Coin-operated telephone boxes, a capital without a cash machine and a local shop with a wooden floor: St Helena is Britain of yesteryear, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. "I don't think I would fit in the outside world," said Ivy Robinson, who runs the Wellington House bed and breakfast, complete with a pale blue Georgian facade, in the village-sized capital Jamestown.

The accommodation, attentively run by the fifty-something proprietor, has no internet connection just like all but one of her competitors. Robinson makes do with a fixed-line telephone to communicate abroad and with the island's other 4,500 people. She has not yet got a mobile phone despite St. Helena, which lies roughly halfway between Angola and Brazil, getting a mobile network two years ago. "As the rest of the world looks chained to their iPads, we continue to watch the horizon for passing ships," said Jeremy Harris, the local director of the National Trust conservation charity. The boats that occasionally call at the territory set the pace of life on the island, supplying the islanders' every need. From fuel to food, furniture to medication, clothes to vehicles, the arrival of fresh cargo aboard the territory's maritime link to the outside world via Cape Town was always much anticipated.

Vow of silence

"When you hear the signal that the Royal Mail Ship is leaving, you think 'oh my goodness: I am in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean, just thousands of miles from anywhere — what if?'" said Lisa Phillips, the island's governor. The sense of isolation is compounded by the dearth of information about official matters on the island — all of its elected councilors take a vow of silence to not divulge their discussions in the name of confidentiality. But times are changing.

The island now boasts an international airport with a weekly air link to South Africa, and the governor decided in August to relax the councilors' code of conduct. Thanks to the new air service, 69-year-old Teddy Fowler was able to return from Britain in time for his mother's funeral on the island. But his children, who emigrated to Britain, did not make the journey — the flights were too expensive. "Even with the plane, it will always be the same for us — the Saints," he said, using the name for the islanders. "We will still be isolated." The airport promises to be a game changer for those who fall ill, permitting aerial medical evacuations for the first time. Some patients have died aboard the postal ship, which takes six days to reach Cape Town. The



This file photo taken on October 20, 2017 shows the Plantation House, the United Kingdom Governor official residence in Saint Helena. — AFP photos



St Helena resident Alonzo Henry looks at a site map in Rupert's valley on October 19, 2017, where the skeletons of 325 former slaves were found near James Town.

life of a newborn has already been saved thanks to the airport, according to the governor. But keeping the island supplied with essentials still depends on ocean-bound cargo — as well as patience, planning and a "make do and mend" attitude. One young "Saint" had to borrow a wedding dress for her big day after the RMS St Helena broke down. Craig Yon, a diving instructor, waited two and a half months for a spare part for his boat.

'Embrace the slow pace'
In October, St Helena suffered a shortage

of flour — affecting the supply of everyday staples. "When you want to cook something, and you can't find all the ingredients, you just have to cook something else," said Phillips. Food production on the island, where exposed rockfaces are punctuated by lush forests and meadows, is mainly limited to salad, tomatoes, cucumber, pork and tuna. "We embrace the slow place. That's the key to life on St. Helena," said Michel Dancoisne-Martineau, the curator of the French historical sites on the island where Napoleon was exiled until his death in 1821. — AFP

Lifestyle

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2017



Dancers perform during the El Delirio show celebrating the 100th anniversary of the La Cumparsita tango by Uruguayan Gerardo Matos Rodriguez (1897-1948) in Montevideo. — AFP

India acid attack victims defiant on the catwalk



Indian acid attack survivor and model Reshma Qureshi presents a creation by designer Archana Kochhar.

Nine women disfigured by acid became defiant models Saturday at the first haute couture fashion show for the survivors of the growing scourge of acid attacks in India. The women, nearly all victims of husbands or close family, paraded in gowns donated by top Indian designers including Rohit Bal, Ranna Gill and Archana Kochhar. None covered their face.

"I was very nervous," said Meena Khatoon, mother of a young son after her venture down the catwalk. But the New Delhi woman, who was attacked by her ex-husband, insisted she had a point to prove. "People often looked away when I went outside. They would walk in the opposite direction when they saw me. I would face a lot of problems," Khatoon told AFP. "But then one day I thought, if that's the way you think, so be it. I have to build my life. I want my son to study and I have to support him." Khatoon now runs her own small business fixing mobile phones.

She has been helped by Make Love Not Scars which organized the New Delhi show. The group helps survivors reconstruct their lives and in many cases their faces. It also backed Reshma Bano Qureshi, 20, who appeared at the New York fashion week last year and who is now writing a book that will come out next year. Qureshi, who was attacked three years ago by her brother-in-law, who had thought he was throwing acid at his wife, was also afraid to leave her home.

"I was scared it would happen again. I was bothered by how people reacted to me on the streets. People would look away. 'People would say what happened to you?"

They would say no one will marry you. They'd say with a deformed face you're not beautiful. But I'm proud and confident of who I am. I want people to know the face is not what makes you beautiful, it is your heart. "I am so happy because the other girls had the same opportunity to enjoy the experience that I had before."

Hidden tragedies

Hundreds of attacks are reported each year, but Tania Singh, vice president of Make Love Not Scars, believes the true figure is in the thousands. She said local governments do not report all cases, some women die before a criminal case is launched and some choose to stay with abusive families. "We had one case where a woman was attacked by her husband three times and she still continues to live with him."

The Lalit hotel, where the fashion show was held, has provided a room for one woman who was attacked two weeks ago and is waiting for help. The fashion show was an important way to boost survivors' confidence, Singh said. "A lot of them are just having a good time, they have never had such a good time." Many of the women at first refuse to take off their scarves when they go to Make Love Not Scars.

"They say 'we can't do it, we are pretty ugly' and we tell them that's not true you are not ugly, society is ugly." The fashion show is "a chance to realize that they deserve acceptance, love and belonging. Now they can go back out there and they can tell the world that they don't have to hide their faces and scars. It is the world that needs to change its thinking." — AFP



Indian acid attack survivor and model Anupanra presents a creation during a fashion show organized by the "Make Love Not Scars" NGO in New Delhi. — AFP photos

“What makes you beautiful, it is your heart”



Indian acid attack survivors pose at the end of a fashion show organized by the "Make Love Not Scars" NGO.



Anupanra has her hair done before the fashion show.



Model Reshma Qureshi prepares ahead of the fashion show.