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Gulf states say goodbye to tax-free reputation

UAE doubles tobacco prices, hikes soft drink prices by 50%



KUWAIT: A picture taken on Sept 29, 2017 shows a man inspecting water-pipes at a shop in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

DUBAI: Hard hit by a drop in oil income, energy-rich Gulf states will next year introduce value-added tax to a region long known for being tax-free. Some have hailed introducing VAT as the start of "exciting, dramatic" change in the region, but the measure is also expected to push prices up for all residents including citizens and low-income workers. Yesterday, the United Arab Emirates doubled the price of tobacco and increased soft drink prices by 50 percent, ahead of the more general VAT on goods and services from Jan 1.

The UAE is one of the six Gulf Cooperation Council states to have agreed to introduce VAT at five percent next year as they seek to revitalize their economies. The UAE and Saudi Arabia have said they will implement VAT from Jan 1, 2018, while the other GCC states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar are expected to follow suit during the year.

Economies in the Gulf - home to the world's biggest exporters of oil and liquefied natural gas - took a major hit after a global supply glut triggered a drop in prices in 2014. Their

balance sheets have remained in the red despite government austerity measures recommended by the International Monetary Fund, including freezing wages, benefits and state-funded projects, cutting subsidies and raising power and fuel prices. Governments across the region have also drawn hundreds of billions of dollars from their massive sovereign wealth resources in an attempt to curb the deficit.

The six states are now taking austerity measures a step further with the plan to introduce VAT, ending their decades-old reputation for being tax havens. Accounting and consultancy firm Deloitte has said the progressive implementation of VAT from next year "marks the start of some of the most exciting, dramatic and far-reaching socio-economic changes in the region since the discovery of oil" more than half a century ago.

But the move is expected to increase prices across the board including for nationals, who make up roughly half of the GCC's overall population of 50 million. Gulf nationals have for decades

Continued on Page 11

Future looks daunting for low-income workers



Guterres reiterates strong support of Kuwaiti mediation

NEW YORK: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres yesterday reiterated his strong support for the continuing Kuwaiti mediation efforts aimed at ending the crisis in the Arabian Gulf region. Guterres, in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), praised the efforts exerted by HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on finding a solution to the crisis. The Secretary General called on all parties to resolve their differences by sitting at the negotiating table and showing a spirit of good-neighborliness and respect. He stressed that the United Nations is ready to support these efforts and mediation led by HH the Amir.

Guterres visited Kuwait late last August where he praised Kuwait's role in hosting the Yemeni negotiations and its position on the reconstruction conference of the destroyed areas in Iraq, which was under the control of the so-called Islamic State (IS) and the terrorist organizations. The UN Secretary General expressed his deep thanks and appreciation for the outstanding leadership role of HH the Amir in the field of humanitarian work and expressed his sincere gratitude for the efforts of Kuwait in all political and humanitarian issues. Guterres also expressed his pride over the status of Kuwait among the countries of the world as a center for humanitarian action as well as its constant efforts to host humanitarian and relief conferences.

HH the Amir also received a letter from Guterres yesterday, appreciating Sheikh Sabah's kind words on the opening of the 72nd session of the UN's General Assembly. In his letter, Guterres said: "I refer to your letter of 25 September 2017 and would like to express my profound gratitude for the kind words about the opening and the work of the United Nations staff in preparing the session. The challenges in front of us are enormous, but not insurmountable if we work together towards common goals and for the benefit of the people of the region and the world."

He noted that "your letter wisely noted the importance of connecting humanitarian, political and development issues to achieve sustainable peace". "In this regard, please allow me to reiterate my deepest gratitude for the efforts that you personally and the State of Kuwait have invested in both providing much-needed humanitarian assistance to people in dire need across the region and beyond, and also for conducting or supporting critical mediation efforts aimed at bringing these conflicts to an end," Guterres added. "Your support for the Yemen peace talks, to mention one initiative, is well known and welcome," the UN chief added.

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Hayef slams inhuman treatment of bedoons

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Islamist opposition MP Mohammad Hayef yesterday demanded that the central agency for stateless people (bedoons) should come under the purview of interior minister in order to hold officials politically accountable for the ill-treatment of bedoons in the country. The lawmaker urged the prime minister and concerned ministers to take necessary measures to grant bedoons their humanitarian and civil rights in order to end their sufferings that have continued for half a century.

He said the call to place the bedoon agency under the interior ministry comes after the agency backed down on pledges to the National Assembly to issue

identification cards to bedoons who had obtained fake third-country passports. These people have been deprived of basic humanitarian rights and are unable to send their children to schools because they do not have the required ID normally given to other bedoons.

Hayef insisted that he will not remain silent over the oppression against bedoons, saying that he is prepared to go till the end to stop the wrong and inhuman practices against the bedoons. The lawmaker stressed that the central agency is committing a full-fledged crime against the bedoons, adding that MPs are not demanding that the government grant bedoons citizenship now, but at least treat them fairly and not prevent them the right to education, health, marriage and other rights.

He said that what is being done by the central agency is rejected from a legal, religious and logical point of view that is not in any constitution of the world, urging the prime minister and the government to resolve this issue. Hayef said bedoons must be given identification cards even if the central agency believes they do not qualify for citizenship, adding that the illegal practices

against bedoons aim at forcing them to produce citizenships that do not exist.

There are around 120,000 bedoons who or their forefathers have been living in the country for several decades claiming the right to citizenship. The government has insisted that most of them do not deserve Kuwaiti nationality and has urged them to produce their original citizenships.

In another development, MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei said he will submit a motion to the National Assembly calling to refer the controversial issue that some MPs are being paid an additional "exceptional" salary to the constitutional court to rule whether the issue is in line with the constitution.

Tabtabaei, who is one of around 20 lawmakers benefiting from the salary, said he will return what he has received if the court rules that the pay is illegal. The issue was raised after a newspaper said the exceptional salary could have been part of a deal with the government. MPs benefiting from the salary said they get it because they had not been given any pension benefits in the past.

OJ Simpson freed from jail on parole

LOS ANGELES: Disgraced American football star OJ Simpson, whose racially charged 1995 murder trial riveted the nation, was released from jail on parole early yesterday after nine years behind bars for armed robbery. Simpson, 70, left the Lovelock Correctional Center in the western state of Nevada just after midnight local time, prison spokesperson Brooke Keast said. "I don't know where he was headed," Keast told AFP.

Simpson was granted parole at a hearing in July and his earliest release date was set for Oct 1, but he had widely

been expected to be freed no earlier than today. Why the early release? "To ensure public safety and avoid possible incident," Keast said, commenting on Simpson's release at eight minutes past midnight (0708 GMT yesterday). Simpson plans to relocate to Florida following his release from the medium-security prison where he has been serving his sentence, Malcolm LaVergne, his lawyer, said.

Simpson was famously found not guilty in 1995 of the grisly murders of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and a male friend, Ron Goldman, in a case that transfixed the country and became known as the "Trial of the Century". But the former National Football League running back and actor was sent to prison in 2008 for his role in an armed robbery the previous year of two sports

Continued on Page 11



LOVELOCK, Nevada: OJ Simpson signs documents before leaving Lovelock Correctional Centre early yesterday. — AFP

Saudi university to open driving school for women

RIYADH: A university in Saudi Arabia has said it will open a driving school for women, in a first for the ultra-conservative country after a ban on women driving was lifted. "Princess Nourah University is preparing to set up a driving school in cooperation with the relevant authorities," the women's university said on Saturday. "This is the first such announcement following this week's order by King Salman to allow women to drive," it said.

Saudi Arabia on Tuesday said it would allow driving permits for women under a royal decree to take effect in June, sparking euphoria and disbelief among activists who long fought the ban. The Gulf king-

dom was the only country in the world to ban women from taking the wheel, and it was seen globally as a symbol of repression in the Gulf kingdom. Princess Nourah University says it has more than 60,000 female students in Riyadh and other cities.

Tuesday's decision is expected to push women into the workforce and boost car sales, especially in the coming months before a scheduled imposition of a government value-added tax in Jan 2018. Car makers including Nissan, Chevrolet and Ford have rushed to congratulate Saudi women, as millions of women are expected to hit the road in the kingdom in coming years. — AFP



RIYADH: A Saudi woman gets out of her car as others wait for their drivers at a hotel in the Saudi capital on Sept 28, 2017. — AFP

Amir congratulates Premier on Kuwait bourse's promotion

Status puts Kuwait on course for growth: Minister



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 Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday on promoting the national stock market 'Boursa Kuwait' to an emerging market by the Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) Russel. In his cable, His Highness the Amir hailed the great efforts that led to such historic achievement, including those of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Capital Markets Authority, Boursa Kuwait and Kuwait Clearing Company. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also sent a similar cable to His Highness the Prime Minister.

Stronger economy

Boursa Kuwait's recent promotion to an emerging market is a step towards a stronger economy that can lure foreign investment, a Kuwaiti minister said. In a press conference organized by Kuwait's Capital Market Authority (CMA), Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan said that the country has reached a critical juncture, where new legislations need to be introduced to keep up with rapid change.

On FTSE Russel's classification of Kuwait's stock exchange as an emerging market, Roudhan, who is also Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs, said that it means to an end. Meanwhile, CMA Chairman Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf hailed the promotion as a historic achievement that would be instrumental in gaining the trust of local investors.

With this promotion, "we have moved from a local to an international level," Hajraf pointed out, thanking Boursa Kuwait's workforce for their efforts to make this long-awaited accomplishment a reality. He said

that the capital market is on the cusp of an epoch-making transition, marked by advancements in research and studies, in a country with the fourth biggest emerging market in the Arab region.

Hajraf went on to dedicate this accomplishment to the Kuwaiti leadership. A reputable source for index data and a default reference for investors all around the world, FTSE Russel also provides information on the stock market's performance.

Hurricane victims

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable yesterday to US President Donald Trump, expressing his condolences over the victims of Hurricane Maria. The hurricane continues to strike the US-administered territory of Puerto Rico, killing over a dozen people. His Highness the Amir also wished those injured a quick recovery.

His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister both sent similar cables.

Instrumental achievement to gain local investors' trust



Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince at Bayan Palace. He also received Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, as well as Deputy Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness also received, Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Foreign Minister meets Vietnam's outgoing envoy



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Vietnam's outgoing Ambassador Nguyen Hong Thao. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with Vietnam's outgoing Ambassador Nguyen Hong Thao. In his meeting with the Vietnamese diplomat, who had just completed his tenure as ambassador to Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled commended him for his efforts to bring both nations closer together. The encounter between the two



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Sulaiman Al-Jarallah meets with Ambassador of Morocco Ja'faar Hakim.

officials also brought together a number of senior Kuwaiti diplomats. Meanwhile, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Sulaiman Al-Jarallah met with Ambassador of Morocco Ja'faar Hakim. They discussed bilateral ties and latest developments on regional and international arenas. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Arab World Affairs, Ambassador Aziz Rohayem Al-Daihani. — KUNA

Diwan Minister hosts chairman of surgeons' association



KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received yesterday Dr Sheikh Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Kuwaiti Association of Surgeons. The meeting also involved a delegation taking part in a currently-held conference, grouping Kuwaiti and American surgeons.

Discussions during the meeting dealt with latest surgery innovations. In the end of the session, Dr Sheikh Salman presented a memorial present to Sheikh Nasser. Later in the day, Minister Sheikh Nasser received General Director of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) Samira Omar. — KUNA

Local

Legalese

Annual leave

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Many of you know that changes were made to the Kuwait labor law in July that were greatly for the benefit of the employee. Since then though, the law has led to confusion over calculations of indemnity and annual leave, and since the law has not yet been implemented by the court, this has led to even more confusion. My readers send me questions on a daily basis asking about annual leave - therefore, today I am going to be answering concerns regarding annual leave and leave in general.

Late payment

Question: My company informed us that we can only get our annual leave payment after we return from our vacation. May I ask if it is right for them to make this decision even though it is different from the Kuwait labor law?

Fajer: It is general practice in Kuwait for employees to receive their vacation pay before going on holiday or leave. Your employer has no right to go against the Kuwait labor law unless it is to the benefit of the employee and with permission from the employer.

45 days

Question: Is it true that now we can take 45 days off instead of 30 a year?

Fajer: Article 70 before the amendments used to state "The worker shall be entitled to a 30-day paid annual leave. However, the worker shall not be entitled to leave in the first year of work except after at least nine months of service for the employer. Official holidays and sick leaves during the year shall not be counted as annual leave. The worker shall be entitled to leave in fractions of the year in proportion to the period he spent in actual service, even the first year of service." (Rough translation, as there is no official English version yet). The new text reads: "The worker shall be entitled to a 30-day paid annual leave. However, the worker shall be entitled to leave after six months of service for the employer. Weekends, official holidays and sick leaves during the year shall not be counted as annual leave. The worker shall be entitled to leave in fractions of the year in proportion to the period he spent in actual service, even the first year of service."

We can see two major amendments here:

1. Employees are entitled to leave after six months instead of nine months.
2. Weekends are no longer calculated in the annual leave.

So to answer your question, no. Employees are not entitled to 45 days of annual leave, but now only five days a week should be deducted from their leave (while currently it is common practice to calculate Saturday as a working day when it usually is not). This will give the employee six weeks in total a year, if they are taking their annual leave at one go.

Eligibility

Question: I have seen your responses on the Kuwait labor law in Kuwait Times and would like to get your valuable suggestions on an issue which I am unaware of. I joined a company in Jan 2016 and left the company in Sept 2016. So basically, my total service with the company is around 9 months. In this regard, I would like to know whether I am eligible for claiming my annual leave cashable amount, if I have not used any leave from the start.

Fajer: Yes you are eligible for leave for every month you have worked, which is 2.5 off days for every month worked usually (depends on your contract). Therefore, you should be getting around 9 x 2.5, which totals to 19 days. This you should receive in cash. Kindly note that you have one year to request any monetary benefits from your employer, and since you left more than a year ago, you might not be eligible for your benefits.

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

Court looks into fingerprints suspension plea Nov 14

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The administrative court yesterday set a hearing to be held on Nov 14 to review a case filed demanding the suspension of the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) decision number 8/2017 mandating that all government employees use the fingerprint system to check in and out. The case was filed by lawyer Mohammed Al-Ansari, who said that thousands of employees have been going to work daily and that they had never thought their workplaces might be places where they might catch diseases that would eventually lead to cancer. "These devices can carry infec-

tious viruses from one employee to another," he underlined.

Private colleges

Kuwait Municipality is currently considering allocating 22 land plots for private colleges and universities, including 10 to be included in Kuwait's fourth structural plan 2040, said informed sources. The sources added that the municipality had received a letter from the private universities' council secretary general Dr Habib Abul requesting allocating the new plots.

Unlawful payments

The State Audit Bureau yesterday

urged the Ministry of Education to suspend the payment of incentives that had been unlawfully paid to certain employees. The bureau also urged the ministry to re-collect KD 181,156 that had been paid in this manner to some Kuwaiti employees.

Overpricing

In preparation for next year's hajj season, undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Faeed Emadi said that the supreme hajj and umrah committee will issue a new package of decisions to control the overpricing of hajj trips. Emadi explained that pilgrims would be divided into four categories - regular, gold, platinum and diamond - leaving the choice to the pilgrims themselves. Emadi said that a study on hajj prices was concluded in April and the final decisions were made

in July, but could not be applied to the recent hajj season. Moreover, Emadi said that on direct instructions from Minister Mohammed Al-Jabri, low-cost hajj packages of no more than KD 1,300 were provided, in addition to five hajj convoys for bedoons with a maximum cost of KD 1,200 per pilgrim.

Non-Kuwaiti workers

Minister of Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Faleh Al-Azb said the total number of non-Kuwaitis working for the justice ministry is only 4.56 percent of its workforce, while Kuwaitis form 95.44 percent. Azb explained that the ministry had to hire expats in some jobs that Kuwaitis refrain from doing, such as court secretaries, and said that when appointed in such positions, citizens soon demand a transfer to other jobs.

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AUB announces Hassad Account prize winner

KUWAIT: On September 27, 2017, Ahli United Bank (AUB) held its Lifetime Salary annual grand prize draw as part of the Al-Hassad Islamic Savings Account program, which is the largest prize draw in Kuwait. It was a momentous occasion for Mrs. Veronica Patrick Mills who won KD 250,000 as a lifetime salary over 250 months.

Ahli United Bank congratulates Veronica who is now able to achieve her dream of acquiring a house or her favorite car, to travel abroad, establish a new business or any dream she might have along with her aspirations - and all this, simply by having an account with AUB in Kuwait.

The Hassad Islamic Savings Account program is the largest in Kuwait with a total annual prize draw of KD 3,400,000 aimed at realizing the dreams and ambitions of customers since inception. The program also provides 26 weekly prizes, which represents the biggest number of weekly winners.

To qualify for the Hassad Islamic Savings Account prizes, customers only need to open a saving account with a minimum of KD 100. For every KD 50 of quarterly balance in the account, customers earn one chance to enter the quarterly draw. Moreover, customers earn one chance to enter the weekly draws for every KD 50 of balance. This means the more deposits made, the higher the chances of winning. The Al Hassad Islamic Savings Account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the account's terms and conditions.

Local



KUWAIT: Shiite Muslims in Kuwait took part yesterday in traditional mourning events during Ashura commemorations that mark the killing of Imam Hussein, one of Shiite Islam's most revered figures. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

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

NBK launches breast cancer awareness campaign

KUWAIT: On the occasion of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) launches its annual 'Be Aware' campaign to raise awareness for female health during the month of October. The 'Be Aware' campaign is a part of NBK's continuous efforts to increase social awareness on breast cancer and promote ways of prevention.

NBK's Public Relations Assistant General Manager, Manal Al-Mattar, said that this awareness campaign reflects NBK's commitment towards corporate social responsibility alongside many other activities and events that had been carried out to show its support the society and all its members. Mattar added: "This breast cancer initiative aims at educating our society on the importance of early detection and encouraging women to get routine checkups."



Manal Al-Mattar

"NBK understands the needs of women and supports their lifestyles through such initiatives. This awareness campaign reflects NBK's commitment towards corporate social responsibility alongside many other activities and events that had been carried out to show its support the society and all its members," she noted. As part of NBK's awareness campaign, NBK extends the campaign to official NBK social media channels NBK - Official Page, Twitter and Instagram @NBKPage by including awareness tips about the cause.

VIVA launches campaign about breast cancer prevention

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched an awareness campaign 'more care' to prevent breast cancer, coinciding with annual breast cancer awareness month in October, in cooperation with the New Mowasat Hospital in Kuwait.

VIVA will spread out videos focusing on breast cancer tips and advices for specialized doctors at the New Mowasat Hospital, on VIVA's official social media platforms, Instagram and Snapchat, to urge periodic examinations and how to prevent and treat this disease.



On this occasion, Abdulrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director at VIVA commented: "Launching this campaign is part of our CSR plans, as VIVA always keen to support different activities that aim to serve the society and spread the awareness among its members."

VIVA is keen to continue its ongoing socially responsible role in the community by spreading the spirit of goodness amongst Kuwaiti society. We believe at VIVA in taking a holistic approach to our CSR activities, one that engages our employees, and creates goodwill in our communities with a focus on helping to grow and develop the State of Kuwait.

Message for US citizens: Update to Social Security Services

KUWAIT: The US Embassy in Kuwait sent the following routine message to US citizens in Kuwait: "Starting on October 1, 2017, the Consular Section at the US Embassy in Kuwait will cease performing the majority of Social Security-related federal benefits services. The Social Security Administration (SSA) now requires all beneficiaries and most applicants living overseas to contact their specially-designated Federal Benefits Units (FBUs) abroad who

are better equipped to handle such inquiries. The Unit designated for Kuwait is located at the US Consulate General in Jerusalem.

"For any questions regarding your application or your benefits and for contact information for FBU Jerusalem, please visit their webpage at: <https://jru.usconsulate.gov/u-s-citizen-services/social-security/>. For comprehensive information on SSA's services abroad, please visit SSA's webpage Service Around the World.

Local

القيس

Al-Qabas

Kuwaitization

By Qais Al-

Media reports about the expatriates' issue will give the reader an impression that we are facing a global war by the government and National Assembly to get rid of expats, because of the grilling some MPs plan to file against social affairs minister Hind Al-Sabeeh about her alleged decisions to appoint expats in sectors belonging to her administration.

Yet, no one took an effort to ask about the hundreds of people on the streets, and who brought them into Kuwait? Or whether they paid for the entry visa? The number of expats in the government sector is not huge, and they for sure do help in some medical specialties, nursing, general education university and technical institutes. The question is how many physics teachers are there at the education ministry?

This issue is presented as an example on the impossibility to Kuwaitize government jobs completely. We realize that it is the season of political out-talk, but the government must deal with the issue more seriously while safeguarding people's dignity and care for their good living, while not sacrificing all of that just to keep a chair for an official. If one wants public interest and to maintain a good percentage for population structure, marginal labor is the ideal place, but the challenge takes place when facing visa traders, as we all know their ability to penetrate all fortresses and high towers. If you aim at the right target, we will support you, but encroaching on the dignity of thousands of expats who serve this society sincerely will be rejected, and we are strongly against that. Was my message delivered? I hope so.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

CRIMES

Man faces charges for harboring missing teenager

KUWAIT: Police patrols spotted a car with a man and a girl in it behind a co-operative society. The man had a clean record, but when asked about the girl, who is under 20, he claimed she was his cousin. But the girl, who was afraid, told them that he compelled her to leave her home and live with him, adding that he prevented her from calling her family. Police arrested the man and referred him to concerned authorities. Meanwhile, the girl will be questioned and handed over to her family.

Thieves arrested

Criminal detectives arrested three bedoons who were part of a dangerous gang in Kuwait. They targeted rich expats by abducting them and asking for ransom to avoid being killed. A security source said a Syrian told Jahra detectives he was kidnapped late at night by three persons he did not know, who took him to a farm and beat him before putting him in an empty grave. He said the suspects asked for KD 150,000 to free him. He said he needed 12 hours to get the money. The trio took the victim to an open area in Jahra after agreeing on the time and place to hand the money over. The man then went to detectives, who were able to identify one of the suspects, who was arrested in front of his father's house. He told them about the farm. Another member was arrested in a popular market, while the third had left the country. The detainees were sent to concerned authorities.

Airport brawl

Three citizens were arrested at Kuwait airport for fighting. A video showing the fight went viral on social media, in which the three are seen exchanging blows and kicks in front of others. The three were taken to Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh police station and questioned. Separately, a Syrian man suffered a black eye following a violent fight with his cousin in a Hawally apartment. Police and paramedics rushed to the apartment, and the injured man was taken to Mubarak Hospital. Investigations revealed the fight was over a financial dispute.

Drug possession

A campaign in the Capital, Hawally and Ahmadi governorates resulted in the arrest of six citizens, including two women with drugs and alcohol. During a routine patrol in Dasma, four citizens were found with four used joints and two Lyrica tablets. In Salmiya, two female citizens were arrested with drugs, in addition to a used joint suspected of containing hashish. Separately, police suspected a man, so they stopped him to check his ID. He was in an abnormal condition, and when searched, 21 Tramadol tablets were found on him. He was sent to the Drugs Control General Department. Meanwhile, a bedoon was arrested by Farwaniya police over suspicions that he had a bag of marijuana. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Bootlegger caught

In Ahmadi, an Indian who was driving on the wrong side was caught with 130 bottles of homebrewed liquor. Also in Ahmadi, a patrol caught a man with liquor as he tried to escape. The man had several bags with 79 bottles in them. He was sent to concerned authorities. —Translated from the Arabic press

KFH holds training program on advancements in auto industry

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held a training program on car technology and advancements in the auto industry for its staff working in the technical operations center in the Leasing Department. The training program tackled the latest developments in the American automotive industry and the leading car brands among automakers in the world.

The training program, which was held in collaboration with Al-Mulla and Behbehani Motor Company, affirms the bank's keenness to improve the skills and capabilities of its employees in order to offer superior customer service.

Moreover, the training program served in improving the level of post leasing services, while strengthening ties with car dealerships in effort to serve the common interests and raise the bar on the performance of technical operations employees who deal directly with car leasing product.



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Hezbollah warns Israel as Shiites mark Ashura

Britain's May vows to deliver policies, Brexit

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BARCELONA: Spanish police officers walk in the street after seizing ballot-boxes in a polling station in Barcelona on the day of a referendum on independence for Catalonia banned by Madrid. — AFP

Police storm Catalonia polling station

Catalans defy Spain, turn out for banned independence vote

BARCELONA: Spanish riot police smashed their way into a polling station in Catalonia yesterday as they sought to shut down a banned independence referendum and there were reports of officers firing rubber bullets in the regional capital Barcelona. Catalan emergency services said 38 people were hurt, mostly with minor injuries, as a result of police action. Police burst into the polling station in a town in Girona province minutes before Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont was due to vote there. They smashed glass panels to force open the door as voters, fists in the air, sang the Catalan anthem.

Police also fired rubber bullets in central Barcelona, El Periodico newspaper reported, at the intersection of two streets as violence erupted during the vote which has thrown Spain into its worst constitutional crisis for decades. Officers with riot shields jostled with hundreds of voters outside one station at a school in Barcelona as the crowd chanted "We are people of peace!" Armored vans and an ambulance were parked nearby. The referendum has been declared illegal by Spain's central government in Madrid, which says the constitution states the country is indivisible and has drafted in thousands of police from around Spain into Catalonia to prevent the vote.

The Catalan regional government had scheduled voting to open at 9 am at around 2,300 stations, but Madrid said on Saturday it had shut more than half of them. Voting

started at some sites in the region of 7.5 million people, which has its own language and culture and is an industrial hub with an economy larger than that of Portugal. Leader Puigdemont changed plans and voted at a different station after the police action, the regional government said. People had occupied some stations with the aim of preventing police from locking them down. Organizers smuggled in ballot boxes before dawn and urged voters to use passive resistance against police.

In a school used as a polling station in Barcelona, police in riot gear carried out ballot boxes while would-be voters chanted "out with the occupying forces!" and "we will vote!". The Catalan government said voters could print out ballot papers at home and lodge them at any polling station not closed down by police. "I have got up early because my country needs me," said Eulalia Espinal, 65, a pensioner who started queuing with around 100 others outside one polling station, a Barcelona school, in rain at about 5 a.m. "We don't know what's going to happen but we have to be here," she said.

A minority of around 40 percent of Catalans support independence, polls show, although a majority want to hold a referendum on the issue. A "yes" result is likely in the referendum, given most of those who support independence are expected to cast ballots while most of those against it are not. The ballot will have no legal status as it



SANT JULIA DE RAMIS: Catalan President Carles Puigdemont holds a carnation in Sant Julia de Ramis during a referendum on independence for Catalonia banned by Madrid. — AFP

declares independence. Organizers had asked voters to turn out before dawn, hoping for large crowds to be the world's first image of voting day. "This is a great opportunity. I've waited 80 years for this," said 92-year-old Ramon Jordana, a former taxi driver waiting to vote in Sant Pere de Torello, a town in the foothills of the Pyrenees and a pro-independence bastion. He had wrapped his wrists in Catalan flags, among 100-150 people who gathered at a local school that had been listed as a polling station, ready to block any police from entering. A tractor also stood guard, though no police had yet arrived. Leading up to the referendum, Spanish police arrested Catalan officials, seized campaigning leaflets and occupied the Catalan government's communications hub.

But Catalan leaders urged voters to turn out in a peaceful expression of democracy. Families have occupied scores of schools earmarked as voting centers, sleeping overnight in an attempt to prevent police from sealing them off. "If I can't vote, I want to turn out in the streets and say sincerely that we want to vote," said independence supporter Jose Miro, a 60-year-old schools inspector. Only the Catalan police, or Mossos d'Esquadra, had so far been monitoring polling stations. They are held in affection by Catalans, especially after they hunted down Islamists accused of staging deadly attacks in the region in August. — Reuters

has been blocked by Spain's Constitutional Court and Madrid has the ultimate power under its 1978 charter to suspend the regional government's authority to rule if it

Syria's deadliest month claims 3,000 lives

BEIRUT: Syria's war killed at least 3,000 people including 955 civilians in September, the deadliest month of the conflict this year, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor said yesterday. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have been killed and millions displaced since the war erupted in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-government protests. It has since spiraled into a complex conflict involving world powers, with Russia-backed regime forces and a US-supported alliance separately battling the Islamic State jihadist group in the country.

The 955 civilians killed in September included 207 children, said the Britain-based Observatory, which relies on a wide network of sources inside Syria for its information. "More than 70 percent of the civilians were killed in regime and Russian air strikes, or in air raids of the international coalition" fighting IS, the monitor's head Rami Abdel Rahman said.

Backed by Russian air strikes, the forces of Syria's President Bashar Al-Assad are pressing a battle to retake IS-controlled areas in the eastern province of Deir Ezzor. A US-led international coalition has been providing air support to a Kurdish-Arab alliance, the Syrian Democratic Forces, also fighting the jihadists in their former northern bastion of Raqa city and in Deir Ezzor.

The number of people killed in September was higher because of increased fighting and "intensified air raids of the international coalition and Russia against jihadist bastions in the north and east of Syria, but also due to increased Russian and regime strikes on rebel-held areas," Abdel Rahman said. Russian and regime warplanes have in the past two weeks increased their strikes on the northwestern province of Idlib, which is largely controlled by Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS), a group led by Al-



JISR ASH SHUGHUR, Syria: A Syrian man rides his bicycle past a destroyed building in the district of Jisir Al-Shughur, in the northwestern Idlib province. — AFP

Qaeda's former Syria affiliate. Eight children were among at least 34 civilians killed in strikes overnight Friday-Saturday on the town of Armanaz in Idlib, the Observatory said. HTS is not party to a deal brokered by Russia, Turkey and Iran for a safe zone in the province, one of four such zones nationwide. The Observatory said the September toll also included 790 regime troops and loyalists, 738 jihadists from IS and HTS, and 550 rebels and SDF members. Syria's conflict has killed more than 330,000 people since 2011.

Early yesterday, IS retook the town of Al-Qaryatayn in the central province of Homs, previously a symbol of religious coexistence. Government troops have now surrounded Al-Qaryatayn, where several Christian families are believed to be living, the Observatory said. Regime forces recaptured Al-Qaryatayn in April 2016 after eight months of jihadist control. In August 2015, IS abducted 270 Christians from the town, transporting them around 90 kilometers away deep into the Syria desert and then locking them up in an underground

dungeon. They were freed 25 days later. The same month, IS ravaged a monastery in the town and reduced a fifth-century mud brick church to rubble with explosives and bulldozers. Earlier this week, the jihadists launched an assault on government positions in Syria's vast Badiya desert, killing at least 128 regime troops. Russia-backed Syrian troops have been battling for months to retake the Badiya, which stretches from the country's centre to the Iraqi and Jordanian borders and has been held by IS since 2014. — Reuters

International

Hezbollah warns Israel amid tension; Shiites mark Ashura

Israel accused of pushing the region to war

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Hezbollah accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government yesterday of pushing the region to war in Syria, Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, and said nowhere in Israel would be safe if such a conflict were to erupt. Tensions have risen this year between Iran-backed Hezbollah and its arch enemy Israel, which last fought a major conflict in 2006. Israel has said it would use all its strength from the start in any new war with Hezbollah.

In a speech to followers, Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said the Israeli government did not have "a correct assessment of where this war will lead if they ignite it", and did not know how it would end. "They do not have a correct picture about what is awaiting them if they go to the idiocy of this war," Nasrallah said. Israel does not know where such a conflict would be fought, or who would take part, he added.

Nasrallah said earlier this year that a future Israeli war against Syria or Lebanon could draw thousands of fighters from countries such as Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen and Pakistan, and could take place inside Israel. Israel is concerned by Tehran's steadily increasing influence in the region during the six-year-old Syrian conflict, whether via its own Revolutionary Guard forces or the groups it backs, especially Hezbollah. Nasrallah was speaking yesterday on the occasion of Ashura, when Shiites commemorate the slaying of the Prophet Mohammad's grandson, the Imam Hussein, at Kerbala in 680.

He called on Jews who emigrated to Israel to "leave and return to the countries from which they came so they are not fuel for any war that the idiotic Netanyahu government takes them to". Were war to erupt, he said, they might not have long to leave. "They will have no secure place in occupied Palestine," he said. Netanyahu said in August that Iran was building sites to produce precision-guided missiles in Syria and Lebanon, with the aim of using them against Israel.

Tens of thousands of Shiites wearing mourning black marched through the Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs of Beirut to commemorate Ashura, when Hezbollah rallies supporters around its political



NABATIEH, Lebanon: A Lebanese Shiite Muslim man takes part in a flagellation ceremony marking Ashura in the southern city of Nabatieh yesterday.

causes. Men with boxes of tissues weaved through the crowds, handing them to those weeping in mourning. "All of these crowds are answering Nasrallah's call, Hussein's call, saying we are ready to give our selves and souls and blood and children and all we own in sacrifice to this religion," said Deeb Hussein al-Annan, whose son was killed fighting for Hezbollah in Syria in 2014.

"We are defending the cause and our existence [in Syria]," he added, holding a flag emblazoned with a picture of his son.



BEIRUT: Lebanese Muslim Shiite women affiliated to Hezbollah student movements march during a parade marking Ashura in a southern suburb of Beirut yesterday. — AFP photos

The group's role in Syria is the focus of controversy in Lebanon. Hezbollah's opponents say it has dragged Lebanon into the conflict. Hezbollah says it has stopped extremist groups such as Islamic State

from advancing into Lebanon from Syria. Nasrallah said the battle against Islamic State must continue "in every place to eliminate Daesh", using an Arabic acronym for the group.— Reuters

Mud and mourning as Iranians mark Ashura

KHORRAMABAD: A huge burst of flame lights up a pre-dawn backstreet, silhouetting the young men caked from head to toe in brown mud, as chants from Iran's most revered imam rend the air. Khorramabad, a city of around 400,000 sheltered among the Zagros mountains of southwestern Iran, has always done things a little differently on Ashura, the holiest day in Shiite Islam.

Drawing on burial traditions in their native Lorestan province, the men cover themselves in mud as a sign of their grief over the death over 1,300 years ago of Imam Hossein, grandson of the Prophet Mohammed. It is unique to the area, and adds a slightly more festive spirit to a religious day that is known elsewhere in Iran for reducing the faithful to tears as they reflect on the tragic injustice of Hossein's final stand against rival claimants to the leadership of Islam—a battle that remains at the heart of the split between Sunnis and Shiites.

As elsewhere, there are huge processions in which men whip themselves rhythmically to pounding drums—though these days the whips are ceremonial, with the practice of actually lacerating one's back banned by the government and driven underground. The other familiar trappings of Ashura—and the preceding 10-day period of Moharram—are also present, from the near-ubiquitous black clothing, to the stalls that sprout up at every



KHORRAMABAD, Iran: Iranian Shiite Muslims sit after rubbing mud on their body during the 'Kharrah Mali' (Mud Rubbing) ritual to mark the Ashura religious ceremony in the city of Khorramabad yesterday. — AFP

street corner offering free food and drinks to passers-by. But in Khorramabad, there is added mud. Men—and a very few women—come out into the street shortly after the first call to prayer and gather around sandboxes which they fill with rosewater to form a mud bath.

Over the next few hours, thousands of men submerge themselves in the mud and position themselves around burning woodpiles to dry, before proceeding through the streets. "It goes back to our ancient traditions," said Mohammad, a teacher in his thirties, fresh from the mud bath.

"People would rub mud on themselves when someone died. The

more the person was loved, the more mud people would rub on themselves. Later it was used to mark the death of Hossein because he is really dear to people."

'For the people'

Chants of "Hossein, Hossein, our Lord!" take up periodically and the crowds beat their chests in time to the religious chants playing over loudspeakers. But there are noticeably far fewer tears on display here than in other parts of Iran, and clerics are almost entirely absent from the muddy sections. "This is a celebration for the people, it has nothing to do with the authorities," says one man on the sidelines.—AFP

Nigerian president denounces Biafran separatists, corruption

ABUJA: President Muhammadu Buhari yesterday railed against separatists seeking Nigeria's "dismemberment" as it marked its 1960 independence from Britain and said corruption remained the African oil giant's "number one enemy". Buhari, who fought in the 1967-70 Biafran war, said those seeking to carve up the country had no idea of the havoc they could potentially wreak. "As a young army officer, I took part from the beginning to the end of our tragic civil war costing about two million lives, resulting in fearful destruction and untold suffering.

"Those who are agitating for a rerun were not born by 1967 and have no idea of the horrendous conse-

quences of the civil conflict which we went through," he said. "I am very disappointed that responsible leaders of these communities do not warn their hot-headed youths what the country went through. Those who were there should tell those who were not there, the consequences of such folly." The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) movement wants an independent state for the Igbo people who dominate the southeast region.

Tension has been building since October 2015 when the group's leader Nnamdi Kanu was arrested and held in custody until he was released on bail in April this year. His trial on charges of treasonable felony is expected to resume this month. The army earlier this month flooded Abia state with troops, ostensibly as part of an operation against violent crime, but IPOB suspected it was an attempt to curb its activities. Supporters clashed in Abia and neighboring Rivers state, while the violence threatened to take on a wider ethnic dimension when unrest flared in the central city of Jos.

Nigeria's government has since formally proscribed IPOB as a terrorist organization and accused it of stoking tensions by making false claims online of genocide against Igbos.—AFP

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International

Taking on critics, Britain's May vows to deliver policies, Brexit

PM offers young people new policies, money

MANCHESTER: Apologizing for a June election when she lost her Conservative Party's majority, Prime Minister Theresa May responded to her critics yesterday by saying she had the right strategy to lead Britain and win a Brexit deal. May, who has faced calls from within her party to step down, wants to use the Conservatives' annual conference in the northern English city of Manchester this week to try to reset her agenda, offering money to students and those people she once described as "just about managing" in Britain.

In an interview with BBC television, she played down the rifts among top ministers, saying they were united on their program and more importantly Brexit. That came a day after foreign minister Boris Johnson, perhaps May's biggest rival, set out four personal red lines in the complex talks with the EU. "We've listened to the message that came from that election. But I've been very clear, I called the election, I led the campaign, I take my responsibility and I'm sorry that some very good members of parliament lost their seats," May said in an appeal to those party members still angry over the vote.

"What I have is a cabinet that is united in the mission of this government ... and agreed on the approach that we took in Florence," May said about a speech she made in Italy last month to try to kick-start Brexit talks that had all but stalled. "Boris is absolutely behind the Florence speech and the line that we have taken." Divisions in her cabinet have broken out into the open, with ministers using the British media to air their differences on not only Brexit, but the government's approach to austerity - with many in the ruling party concerned about the growing

appeal for the main opposition Labor Party.

After ministers agreed to seek a transition period following Britain's departure from the EU in March 2019, Johnson said on the eve of the conference that this should last for two years at most; that Britain should not accept new EU or European Court of Justice rulings during transition; must not make payments for single market access when the transition ends; and should not agree to shadow EU regulations to gain access.

Weakened

Following a Labor conference last week that struck a triumphant tone, May hopes to fire up thousands of Conservative members who feel let down by what some describe as an awful election campaign, when their leader was dubbed "the Maybot" for her repetition of catch-phrases. May is now dependent on a small Northern Irish party to be sure of passing legislation in parliament, and opinion polls indicate Labor is a growing threat, persuading rivals in the party not to try to topple her quite yet.

Before the conference, she unveiled new policies to extend a program to help people buy their own homes and a freeze in student tuition fees to try to win back younger people, who have flocked to support Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn. But despite pledging to spend billions of pounds more, May will have to step carefully to avoid widening divisions in her party, with vocal pro-Brexit supporters fearful she is going off course in the EU talks. In a message to them, she said the government was working on plans should it be impossible to agree a Brexit deal. "Government departments are looking to see

Critics say UK leader needs to do more to convince doubters



what changes are needed, what we need to put in place." Her ally and effective deputy, Damian Green, said he was convinced she could lead the Conservative Party into the next election in 2022 but she will have a lot to prove and may struggle to win over voters, who have seen wages stagnate for nearly a decade as prices rise. "If you

run any organization ... and something goes monumentally wrong, as did the election ... then the buck does have to stop with that individual," said Grant Shapps, former Conservative Party chairman. "The reality is, every serious person knows, of course she can't lead us into the next election." — Reuters



MANCHESTER: A protestor holds up a placard during an anti-Brexit march on the first day of the Conservative Party annual conference yesterday. — AFP

Paris experiments 'car-free' day across the city

PARIS: Parisians were encouraged to roller-blade, bike or stroll through the City of Light yesterday for a "car-free" day intended to leave the streets vacant for slower, clean forms of transport. Yesterday marked the third time the French capital has experimented with a car ban, but it is by far the most ambitious with the zone set aside for pedestrians or cyclists covering the entire historic heart of the city - 105 square kilometers. "This initiative requires an enormous amount of preparation," city mayor Anne Hidalgo told Le Parisien newspaper yesterday. "Particularly because this year the zone has been enlarged to the whole of Paris."

Hidalgo, a Socialist, was elected in 2014 promising to tackle pollution in the capital and she has focused on building new bus and cycle lanes and reclaiming roads-leading critics to see her agenda as too radical and anti-car. "What's it for?", grumbled Pierre Chasseray, the head of the lobby group "40 million drivers" when asked about the car-free day by AFP.

"It's just PR to say that cars aren't good." The restrictions came into force at 11:00 am local time (0900 GMT) and will last until 6:00 pm (1600 GMT). Although billed officially as "The Day without Cars", some exceptions apply, meaning the streets are not completely deserted: taxis, buses and emergency or social services vehicles are allowed to drive.

Residents who need to use their vehicle to visit an elderly or handicapped person or with a genuine emergency are also allowed to ply the streets, though they must respect a 30 kilometer an hour (20 miles an hour) speed limit in place. Hundreds of police and city officials have been deployed to check on drivers, with fines for unauthorized driving ranging from 90-135 euros (105-159 dollars). "The aim is simply to enjoy the city in a different way," said Paris city transport official Christophe Najdovski on Friday. "It's a day that is meant to be educational, fun and friendly." — AFP



PARIS: Cyclists ride across Place de la Bastille during a 'car free' day in Paris yesterday. — AFP

Two women stabbed to death in Marseille knife attack

MARSEILLE: A suspected Islamist knifeman killed two women at the main train station in the French Mediterranean city of Marseille yesterday before being shot dead by soldiers on patrol, local officials and police said. One of the victims had her throat slit by the assailant, a man with a criminal record believed to be in his 30s who shouted "Allahu Akbar" (God is Greatest) at the start of his rampage.

Soldiers serving in a special force known as Sentinelle set up to guard vulnerable areas in terror-hit France responded to the stabbings and shot dead the attacker, whose identity remains unknown. "I was on the esplanade just in front of the station," Melanie Petit, an 18-year-old student, told AFP. "I heard someone shout 'Allahu Akbar' and I saw a man who seemed to be dressed all in black." Heavily armed police sealed off and evacuated the ornate rail terminus in the bustling heart of France's second-biggest city, stopping all train traffic on some of the country's busiest lines.

The latest deaths came with France still on high alert and under a state of emergency following a string of attacks in recent years by extremists linked to the Islamic State group or Al-Qaeda. Since 2015, a total of 239 people have been killed in France by jihadists, according to an AFP count before yesterday's incident. After the lunchtime attack, anti-terror prosecutors said they had opened an investigation into "killings linked to a terrorist organisation" and the "attempted killing of a public official".

Travellers around the station described "controlled panic" as security forces evacuated passengers and looked for possible accomplices, while another witness said white sheets were placed over the bodies of the victims. "There were police everywhere," said Francois Jacquel, a retired traveller who was in a waiting room.

Terror-hit France

The incident came only days after the Islamic State group released a recording of what it said was its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi urging his followers to strike their enemies in the West. France has deployed troops and its air force to the Middle East and is a leading partner in the US-led international coalition fighting IS in Iraq and Syria, where the militants are being driven back.

The country has suffered several major terror attacks since 2015, including on satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in January of that year followed by an assault on Paris bars and the Bataclan concert hall by gunmen 10 months later. In Nice in July 2016, 86 people were killed when an extremist drove a truck into crowds after a fireworks display on Bastille Day.

But there have also been numerous smaller attacks on police officers, soldiers or members of the public since then, sometimes carried out by people with severe psychological problems. Since November 2015, the country has been in a state of emergency which gives the government and security forces greater powers to combat extremists and launch anti-terror raids.



MARSEILLE: French police point a gun at a man on the ground (center) as a stabbed woman is seen (left), while soldiers secure the area following an attack yesterday at the Saint-Charles main train station in this French Mediterranean city. — AFP

Controversial security law

New centrist President Emmanuel Macron has vowed to end the state of emergency with a new and controversial security law that will make many of the provisions of the emergency regime permanent. Despite criticism from rights groups that the law reduces judicial oversight over the actions of the police, the lower house of parliament is set to vote on a first draft of the legislation tomorrow. French Interior Minister Gerard Collomb posted on Twitter that he would travel to Marseille yesterday, while Prime

Minister Edouard Philippe sent his condolences and said "we will not lower our guard".

In August, a man driving a van killed one person and seriously injured another after ploughing into a bus stop in Marseille, raising fears of another terror incident. But doctors said later that the man had severe mental problems and discounted any terror link. The soldiers who shot the knifeman yesterday were part of the Operation Sentinelle force composed of 7,000 troops who guard high-risk areas such as transport hubs, tourist sites and religious buildings. — AFP

“
We will not lower
our guard
”

International

Thousands march to defend Hong Kong's rule of law against China

Protesters fret over judicial independence in Hong Kong

HONG KONG: Tens of thousands marched in China-ruled Hong Kong yesterday in an "anti authoritarian rule" march that called for the resignation of the city's top legal official over the recent jailing of young democracy activists. The march, an annual fixture over the past few years on China's October 1 National Day, comes at a time of nascent disillusionment with Hong Kong's once vaunted judiciary. "Without democracy, how can we have the rule of law," the crowds yelled as they marched through sporadic downpours, from a muddy pitch to the city's harbor-front government headquarters. Organizers estimated about 40,000 people joined the march.

Many protesters, some clad in black, expressed dismay with Hong Kong's Secretary of Justice, Rimsy Yuen, who Reuters reported had over-ruled several other senior public prosecutors to seek jail terms for three prominent democrats: Joshua Wong, Nathan Law and Alex Chow. "We believe he (Yuen) has been the key orchestrator in destroying Hong Kong's justice," said Avery Ng, one of the organizers of the rally that drew a coalition of some 50 civil and political groups. Around one hundred Hong Kong activists are now facing possible jail terms for various acts of mostly democratic advocacy including the "Umbrella Revolution" in late 2014 that saw tens of thousands of people block major roads for 79 days in a push for universal suffrage.



About 100 activists facing possible jail sentences

Rule of law

While the October 1 march is a regular annual fixture, this was the first time the rule of law has been scrutinized like this, with the judiciary—a legacy of the British Common Law system—long considered one of the best in Asia and a cornerstone of Hong Kong's economic success. "It's like mainland (Chinese) laws have intruded into Hong Kong," said Alex Ha, a teacher of classical guitar, who was walking alone in the crowd.

The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index last week downgraded Hong Kong's judicial independence ranking by five spots to number 13 in the world. In response, however, Yuen stressed at the time that Hong Kong's judiciary remained strong and independent. "We cannot rely on subjective perceptions, we have to look at the facts," he told reporters. Hong Kong, a former British colony, returned to Chinese rule in 1997 with the promise that Beijing would grant the city a high degree of autonomy and an independent judiciary under a so-called "one country, two systems" arrangement.

But over two decades of Chinese rule, differences have deepened between Communist Party leaders in Beijing and a younger generation of democracy advocates, some of whom are now calling for the financial hub to eventually split from China. Hong Kong's Chief Executive, Carrie Lam



HONG KONG: Activists hold banners and placards as they take part in an annual protest march on China's national day in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

spoke of a need for unity during a speech to assembled dignitaries at a National Day reception to mark the 68th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China by the Communists. "As

long as we capitalise on our strengths, stay focused, seize the opportunities before us and stand united, I am sure that Hong Kong can reach even greater heights," she said. — Reuters

Thinking the unthinkable in China: Abandoning N Korea

BEIJING: North Korea's nuclear antics have rattled its alliance with China to the point that Beijing is allowing the previously unthinkable to be discussed: Is it time to prepare for the renegade regime's collapse? While China's official goal is to bring Washington and Pyongyang to the negotiating table, it is also permitting once taboo debate on contingencies in case war breaks out in the isolated nation across its northeast border.

Observers say the public debate might be a tactic to try and coerce Pyongyang into cooling its weapons program, with its nuclear and missile tests visibly angering Beijing, which has backed tough new United Nations sanctions on the country. But it may also indicate growing calls to overhaul its relationship with the North, a longterm ally that it defended during the 1950-53 Korean War and has a mutual defense pact with.

Jia Qingguo, dean of the School of International Studies at Peking University, raised eyebrows earlier in September when he published an article entitled: "Time to prepare for the worst in North Korea". The paper was published in English in East Asia Forum, a website of the Australian National University, but it is unlikely that he could have released it without the approval of

Chinese authorities. Jia urged Beijing to start discussing contingency plans with the United States and South Korea—talks that the two nations have sought in the past but China has resisted for fear of upsetting Pyongyang. "When war becomes a real possibility, China must be prepared. And, with this in mind, China must be more willing to consider talks with concerned countries on contingency plans," Jia wrote. Beijing, he said, could discuss who would control North Korea's nuclear arsenal—either the United States or China.

To prevent a massive flow of refugees across the border, China could send its army to North Korea to create a "safety zone", Jia said. Another touchy issue would be who would "restore domestic order in North Korea in the event of a crisis". China, he said, would object to letting US soldiers cross the 38th parallel into North Korea. An August editorial in state-run nationalist tabloid Global Times said China should remain neutral if North Korea launches missiles against the US and Washington retaliated, and only intervene if the US and South Korea tried to overthrow the Pyongyang regime.

'Better without them'

Discussions about the end of the North's regime could be aimed at scaring Kim Jong-Un and pleasing Trump



DANDONG: Police officers monitor trucks returning from North Korea at a customs checkpoint on the Chinese side of the Friendship Bridge, at the Chinese border city of Dandong, in China's northeast Liaoning province. — AFP

before the US leader's trip to Beijing in November, a Western diplomat said. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met President Xi Jinping and top Chinese diplomats in Beijing on Saturday to discuss the North Korean nuclear crisis.

"If the international community can unite and pretend there's going to be a real war, there is a chance that North Korea will freeze its nuclear tests," Wang Peng, research fellow at Fudan University in Shanghai said. But there are also signs of a genuine shift in perceptions over how China should handle North Korea.

David Kelly, director of research at Beijing-based consultancy China Policy, said the thinking among Chinese academics was: "We could do better with-

out them, a unified Korea would be incredibly good for China, the northeast would boom".

China has long supported North Korea because it serves as a buffer from US troops stationed in South Korea, but Barthelemy Courmont, a China specialist at the Institute of Strategic and International Relations in Paris, said Pyongyang's downfall could be good for Beijing, especially economically. "China now believes that a collapse of North Korea would not necessarily be to its disadvantage," Courmont said. "If North Korea were to fall in a peaceful way, China would be best positioned for its reconstruction. China is the only country capable of overseeing the reconstruction of North Korea," he said. — AFP

News in brief

Indian policeman arrested

NEW DELHI: An Indian policeman has been arrested on suspicion of raping a seven-year-old girl, allegedly while he was drunk, a senior officer said yesterday. Colleagues raised the alarm after finding the girl naked in the officer's quarters in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh late on Saturday, local police superintendent Vipin Tada said. "We sent her for a medical examination and are awaiting a final report," Tada said. "The policeman will be undergoing medical tests to confirm whether he was consuming alcohol inside his quarters." The Press Trust of India news agency said angry locals had tried to attack the local police post in protest. But Tada said the crowd was pacified when they learned the officer had been arrested. India has a grim record of sexual assaults on minors, with 20,000 cases reported in 2015, according to government data.

N Korea envoy expelled

ROME: Italy has ordered North Korea's incoming new ambassador to leave the country in a protest over Kim Jong-Un's missile launches and nuclear tests. Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano announced the move in an interview with Italian daily La Repubblica, published yesterday. "We have taken the firm decision to interrupt the accreditation procedure. The ambassador will have to leave the country," Alfano said. "We want to make Pyongyang understand that isolation is inevitable if it does not change course." Alfano stressed however that Italy was not breaking off diplomatic relations, "because it can always be useful to maintain a channel of communications." North Korea nominated long-serving foreign ministry official Mun Jong-Nam as its new ambassador to Rome in July, filling a post that had been vacant for over a year, according to South Korean reports. The diplomat had started working in Rome but not completed his registration with the Italian authorities.

Israel denies Turkish claim

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday denied Turkish claims of covert involvement in Iraqi Kurdistan's recent independence vote, reiterating however his "sympathy" for the Kurdish people. On Saturday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Israel's intelligence agency played a role in the September 25 referendum, citing as proof the waving of Israeli flags during celebrations for the overwhelming "yes" victory. "This shows one thing, that this administration (in northern Iraq) has a history with Mossad, they are hand-in-hand together," Erdogan said in a televised speech. Speaking at the start of his weekly cabinet meeting, Netanyahu noted Turkey's support for the Islamist Hamas movement which rules Gaza, before denying Erdogan's charge. "I can understand why those who support Hamas want to see the Mossad wherever things don't work out for them," Netanyahu said in remarks relayed by his office.

A fatal missile misfire

TAIPEI: Three naval personnel have been jailed for up to two years for mistakenly launching a missile towards China that killed one person and triggered a stern response from Beijing last year. They were convicted of causing death by negligence while on duty over the misfiring of the Hsiung-feng III (Brave Wind) supersonic missile, the district court in the southern city of Kaohsiung announced over the weekend. The missile, dubbed "Aircraft Carrier Killer", flew about 75 kilometers before hitting a trawler on July 1, 2016 in waters off Penghu, a Taiwanese-administered island group in the Taiwan Strait.

Germany celebrates first gay marriages

BERLIN: Two German men made history yesterday by saying "I do" and becoming the first same-sex couple to marry after decades of struggle, but campaigners say the battle for equal rights isn't over. Wedding bells were to ring out in Berlin, Hamburg, Hanover and other German cities where local authorities have exceptionally opened their doors on a Sunday, allowing weddings on the day the law comes into effect.

Bodo Mende, 60, and partner Karl Kreile, 59, exchanged their vows at a desk decked out with white flowers and rainbow flags. Then, they turned to offer a shot of their first embrace as a married couple to the throng of photographers and TV crews from around the world who packed the south Berlin registry office alongside their friends and family. "I'm unbelievably satisfied, this is extremely symbolic to be recognized as a completely normal couple and no longer to have a second-class marriage," Kreile said after the two cut a slice of rainbow cake.

Mende and Kreile, longtime gay marriage campaigners who have been together since 1979, wanted to tie the knot as soon as possible—after being among the first to enter a civil partnership back in 2002. "This is a day we can really call historic," Angelika Schoettler, mayor of the capital's Tempelhof-Schoeneberg district, told the pair. "I hope a great many couples will seal a bond for life in this room, or

others like it." The dash to exchange vows comes three months after lawmakers voted to give Germany's roughly 94,000 same-sex couples the right to marry, following a shift in position by Chancellor Angela Merkel. Germany becomes the 15th European nation to legalize gay marriage. The Netherlands led the way in 2000, followed piecemeal by other European countries including Spain, Sweden, Britain and France. Same-sex relationships have become so normalized that polls show around 75 percent of Germans are in favor of gay marriage.

Merkel's change of heart

By extending existing law to same-sex pairs, Germany's gay couples automatically gain the same tax advantages and adoption rights as heterosexual families. Along with Germany's Greens party, the gay and lesbian rights organization LSVD began its battle for equal marriage rights around the year 1990. But progress was slow and since 2001 gay couples have had to make do with a civil partnership law, broadened over the years to remove more and more gaps between gay and straight couples' rights.

The final breakthrough came quite suddenly in the end, sparked by Merkel's unexpected announcement in June that she would allow her conservative MPs to vote their conscience on the issue. Merkel said her thinking changed after a "memorable experience"

when she met a lesbian couple who lovingly care for eight foster children in her Baltic coast constituency. Her surprise shift in position—after 12 years of blockade by her Christian Democrats and their Bavarian allies—was seen by some as a cynical ploy to rob her challengers of a popular cause ahead of September's general election.

The chancellor herself voted against the bill, arguing that the German constitution still defines marriage as "the union of a man and a woman". "I still think it was indecent to delay for so many years, and the fact that she voted no," lawmaker Johannes Kahrs, gay and lesbian affairs commissioner for the Social Democratic Party said. June was a memorable month for gay rights in Germany, as MPs also voted to quash the convictions of thousands of men convicted under a Nazi-era law against same-sex relationships which had remained on the statute book until 1994.

But there are still an array of issues familiar across Western democracies, like blood donations or access to reproductive medicine, where homosexuals can be treated differently. And the constitution must still be amended to fully protect against discrimination over gender or sexual orientation, Kahrs insisted. "These are all things that we'll tackle bit by bit," he said. "The important thing is that we've pushed through the opening of marriage, and that's the signal everyone needed." — AFP

Analysis

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FOCUS

Social media and democracy: Optimism fades as fears rise

Just a few years ago, Facebook and Twitter were hailed as tools for democracy activists, enabling movements like the Arab Spring to flourish. Today, the tables have turned as fears grow over how social media may have been manipulated to disrupt the US election, and over how authoritarian governments are using the networks to clamp down on dissent. The latest revelations from Facebook and Twitter, which acknowledged that Russian-backed entities used their network to spread disinformation and sow political discord, have heightened concerns about the impact of social networks on democracy.

"Both services are ripe for abuse and manipulation by all sorts of problematic people, including hostile intelligence services," says Andrew Weisburd, a non-resident fellow with the Alliance for Securing Democracy. The Alliance, a project created this year to counter what it claims are efforts by Russia to undermine democracy and democratic institutions, includes US and European researchers worried about Moscow's efforts. "What we have seen from the Kremlin in recent years is a direct by-product of what they have done to the Russian people in order to keep (President Vladimir) Putin and his cronies in power," Weisburd said.

Researcher Tim Chambers writes in a paper for the left-leaning New Policy Institute that the proliferation of political "bots" or automated accounts to make topics go "viral" such as those employed in 2016 are dangerous for elections and democracy. "They fake petition signatures. They skew poll results and recommendation engines," Chambers said. "Deceptive bots create the impression that there is grassroots, positive, sustained, human support for a certain candidate, cause, policy or idea. In doing so, they pose a real danger to the political and social fabric of our country."

Oxford University researchers said in a June report that social networks like Facebook and Twitter, which were intended to be a platform for free expression, "have also become tools for social control" in many countries. Governments employ large numbers of people "to generate content, direct opinion and engage with both foreign and domestic audiences," said the report by the university's Project on Computational Propaganda. The researchers, who studied social media in 28 countries, concluded that "every authoritarian regime has social media campaigns targeting their own populations."

Bots, cyber troops

In Turkey, for example, that has led to targeting of opposition leaders' social media accounts so that others can launch a smear campaign. In other countries, governments create "bots" which amplify some voices to create an artificial sense of popularity, the researchers said. Some regimes employ "cyber troops" or private contractors for this purpose.

Zeynep Tufekci, a North Carolina University sociologist who studies social networks and activist movements, said the platforms which helped enable the Arab Spring are now being used against dissenters. "This is not necessarily Orwell's 1984," she writes in her 2017 book, "Twitter and Tear Gas: How Social Media Changed Protest Forever." "Rather than a complete totalitarianism based on fear and the blocking of information, the newer methods include demonizing online media and mobilizing armies of supporters or paid employees who muddy the online waters with misinformation, information overload, doubt, confusion, harassment, and distraction."

Russian ads in US

In the United States, the disclosures by Facebook and Twitter fueled concerns that disinformation campaigns, likely from Russian entities, sought to manipulate public opinion and polarize the electorate ahead of the November election. Twitter shared data with congressional investigators about ads from Russia Today, a television group with links to the Moscow government and which has been accused by US intelligence services of meddling in the election.

Twitter said RT spent \$274,000 in 2016 on ads on its site that may have been used to try to influence the US election. Facebook also acknowledged foreign entities linked to Russia paid to promote political messages on the leading social network, potentially violating US election laws. The Oxford researchers said in a report Thursday that the campaign to spread "junk news" during the 2016 presidential election via Twitter appeared to target key states which could sway the Electoral College results.

The researchers said that in the days leading up to the election, "Twitter users got more misinformation, polarizing and conspiratorial content than professionally produced news." Weisburd said the social media firms are "largely immune from responsibility" in the legal sense, but that "in the court of public opinion it is a different matter, and future US legislation seems likely if they don't address these issues in a meaningful way." —AFP



Trump winning week proves anything but

It was meant to be a rebound of sorts after his summer slide in polls, but the past week has proved another series of stumbles for Donald Trump, beset by his own propensity to stir controversy. The US president's approval rating had ticked up slightly in recent weeks after bottoming out following his contentious reaction to violence in Charlottesville, Virginia in August. And he was all in as his Republican Party unveiled its plan to reform the tax system, a move he hopes will lead to his first major legislative accomplishment of his term.

But politics, Mother Nature, and Trump's penchant for posting his infamous Twitter barbs intervened, and the positivity evaporated in a series of bruising confrontations and defeats. Trump has courted controversy and faced numerous crises during his turbulent eight-month presidency. But he has endured and caused both over the past week, in extraordinary measure.

In the last eight days Trump has: Waged war against American football players who kneel in protest during the national anthem; saw his party's latest Obamacare repeal plan defeated; accepted a cabinet member's resignation for using expensive charter planes for government travel; and faced a mounting crisis in hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico.

He also made what appeared to be a major political miscalculation in a Republican Senate primary race, backing the incumbent who wound up losing

definitively to a firebrand conservative in the Tuesday run-off. On Saturday, as he hunkered down in his golf club in leafy central New Jersey for a second straight weekend, he unloaded on San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulin Cruz, who had spent days pleading for more and quicker aid to help her shattered US island territory.

Her forceful requests were met by venom by a president angry about her criticism of the response. "Such poor leadership ability by the Mayor of San Juan, and others in Puerto Rico, who are not able to

get their workers to help," Trump fumed on Twitter Saturday. "They want everything to be done for them when it should be a community effort." Trump claimed there were now 10,000 federal workers on the island "doing a fantastic job". But for days Trump's administration

appeared slow to respond, as Puerto Rican residents struggled to find sufficient food, water, fuel, medical care and electricity. Trump said reports critical of the response were "fake news." He is scheduled to tour the US island of 3.4 million tomorrow.

'Help, not bullying'

For many, his attacks on Mayor Cruz were beyond the pale. "PR needs help, not bullying, from the (president)," Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren said. Conservative commentator Erick Erickson also weighed in. "I was going to say something in the President's favor this morning. I have deleted it. He

doesn't deserve it," Erickson said on Twitter. Trump had won accolades for his administration's handling of two previous hurricanes: Harvey which hammered coastal Texas, and Irma which lashed Florida.

But in the days after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, Trump appeared obsessed instead over the racially charged debate about game-time protests by National Football League players, the majority of whom are black. Trump has fanned anger over the symbolic protests against racial injustice, by claiming they disrespect America and its veterans.

The controversy mushroomed, and led to several NFL team owners joining in the on-field protests and even criticizing the president's remarks. After his mayoral assault, he offered a series of more politically correct messages about the need to unite to help Puerto Rico "in their time of great need". There were other issues, too, that required his focus, including recent revelations that Washington has opened a channel of communication with North Korea to discuss its nuclear program, and the US withdrawal of half its embassy personnel in Cuba over mysterious attacks that have sickened diplomats.

But by late Saturday, a full week after the NFL controversy swelled so dramatically, Trump was at it again, tweeting a threat of sorts to the league and its players. "Very important that NFL players STAND tomorrow, and always, for the playing of our National Anthem," he wrote. Critics have warned that issues like Trump's anger over such protests are distractions from a potential crisis that threatens the president: Russia's meddling in last year's US election. The FBI and congressional panels are conducting investigations into whether Trump's team colluded with Russia to sway the election in his favor. —AFP

Trump has courted controversy and faced numerous crises



How blood money, diplomacy and desperation are reuniting Palestine

A decade on, Rawda Al-Zaanoun is at last willing to forgive the gunmen who killed her son during the civil war that split Palestine. It has been painful, but she says it is time. "He was hit with a bullet in the back. He was a martyr," the 54-year-old said at an event in Gaza city to mark the public reconciliation of families of people killed in the war. "The decision was not easy because the blood of our son is precious. But we have given amnesty."

Her son Ala, a married father of two and an officer in the Palestinian Authority security forces, was killed in June 2007 after he rushed out of his house in Gaza City, having heard that his uncle was injured in clashes between rival Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah. Since that war a decade ago, Fatah, led by the secular heirs of Yassir Arafat, has run the West Bank, headed the internationally recognised Palestinian Authority and been responsible for all negotiations with Israel.

Its rivals, the Islamist group Hamas, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, drove Fatah out of Gaza and has run the tiny coastal strip that is home to 2 million people, nearly half of the population of the Palestinian territories. The schism is set to end today, when Hamas hands over control of Gaza to a unity government. Although it agreed to the arrangement three years ago, the decision to implement it now marks a striking reversal for Hamas, which is considered a terrorist group by Israel, the United States and most of the most powerful Arab countries. "Hamas has made big concessions,

and every coming concession will be stunning and surprisingly bigger than the one that passed, so that we can conclude reconciliation and this division must end," the chief of Hamas in Gaza, Yehya Al-Sinwar, said during a meeting this week with social media activists. If Hamas has swallowed a bitter pill by ending the feud, perhaps bitterest of all is the role played by exiled former Gaza security chief Mohammed Dahlan, once Hamas's fiercest foe who is now a leading player in regional efforts to pull Gaza back into the Palestinian mainstream.

Officials on both sides of the Palestinian divide and in other Arab countries say Dahlan, based since 2011 in the United Arab Emirates, is behind an influx of cash to prop up Gaza, and a detente between Hamas and Arab states including Egypt. His office did not respond to a Reuters request for comment. Dahlan's return to prominence could have consequences for Palestinian politics as profound as the reconciliation itself. As hated as he once was in Gaza for trying to uproot Hamas, he is perhaps even more reviled by the Fatah leadership in Ramallah for challenging the authority of President Mahmoud Abbas. Ambitious and charismatic, he has long been suspected of harbouring designs to succeed the 82-year-old Abbas.

'For the sake of Palestine'

Among the initiatives Dahlan has promoted in Gaza is the reconciliation program of families like the Zaanouns and 19 others, who each accepted a \$50,000



Shadi Abu Obeid (left), a member of the Palestinian Fatah movement, is greeted by a relative after his release from a Hamas prison in Gaza City yesterday. —AFP

blood money payment from an Egyptian-Emirati charity fund in return for publicly renouncing the demand to avenge the deaths of their sons. Old wounds will be hard to salve. Activists on both sides hold memories of their enemies shooting out kneecaps or torturing each other in partisan prisons.

Zaanoun said her family took the decision to reconcile, despite their intense grief

over the loss of their son, "for the sake of preventing bloodshed, for the sake of blockaded Gaza and for the sake of Palestine". Dahlan has raised millions more, financing mass weddings for hundreds of young couples and distributing cash aid for several thousand needy families. He has also used a close relationship with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi in particular to regain his influence. — Reuters



This photo taken on Saturday shows the Manaro Voui volcano on Vanuatu's Ambae island, where the volcano is threatening a major eruption. The Vanuatu government announced last week that all 11,000 residents on Ambae - in the north of the Pacific archipelago - would be moved, after the Manaro Voui volcano rumbled to life and rained rock and ash on villages. — AFP

Gulf states say...

Continued from Page 1

benefited from a generous cradle-to-grave welfare system, and have largely been spared by austerity measures so far. VAT, a consumption tax imposed on goods and services, is generally paid by individual consumers to businesses, which then transfer the funds to tax authorities.

"Citizens won't be happy about the price hikes from the VAT. I don't think it will be acceptable as it will affect people's budgets," said Khaled Mohammed, a Saudi working in Dubai's property sector. The IMF has insisted the introduction of VAT will not drive away millions of expatriates until now lured by a tax-free environment. But the future looks daunting for the region's tens of thousands of low-income workers. "It's going to be tough for all those who draw small salaries," said Rezwan Sheikh, an Indian restaurant worker in Dubai. "We're already struggling with finances. How much are we going to save after the VAT?" asked Sheikh, who sends most of his salary home to his parents and pregnant wife.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE alone make up 75 percent of the GCC's \$1.4-trillion economy and are home to 80 percent of the Gulf population, citizens and expatriates. Under the agreement between GCC states, some goods and services will be exempt from the tax. Bryan Plamondon of the US-based IHS Markit Economics says food, education, and healthcare, as well as renewable energy, water, transportation, and technology, are likely to receive preferential treatment.

He estimates that VAT will raise between \$7 billion and \$21 billion annually - or between 0.5 percent and 1.5 percent of GDP. The IMF has said the returns could reach around two percent of GDP. But inflation rates will also increase. Faisal Durrani, who heads research at Cluttons Dubai, expects inflation to double to four percent in the UAE next year. Capital Economics has projected Saudi inflation could reach 4.5 percent, a stark shift from the current 0.4 percent deflation.



KUWAIT: A picture taken on Sept 29, 2017 shows a close up shot of a man smoking a cigarette. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Finally, says leading Kuwaiti economist Jassem Al-Saadoun, governments will need more than numbers to ensure a successful introduction of VAT. "People must be convinced that there is social justice, that raised funds will be used for development projects and that corruption is checked," the head of Al-Shall Consulting told AFP. "None of these factors is guaranteed." — AFP

OJ Simpson freed...

Continued from Page 1

memorabilia dealers at a Las Vegas resort. Simpson claimed at his trial that he was just seeking to recover personal items from the dealers, and he repeated that explanation at his parole board hearing in July, where the four-member panel voted unanimously for his release. At that hearing Simpson initially did not express any remorse for his actions but eventually offered that he was "sorry that things turned out the way they did." "I had no intent to commit a crime," he said. "If I would have made a better judgment back then, none of this would have ever happened."

LaVergne told KTNV-TV that Simpson planned to relocate to Florida, play golf and be around his friends and family. His lawyer said he did not anticipate that Simpson would pose any problems. "He's had perfect performance as a prisoner," LaVergne said. "I anticipate he's going to have perfect performance as a parolee." At the hearing, Simpson said he was "at a point in my life where all I want to do is spend time, as much time as I can, with my children and my friends." "Believe it or not I do have some real friends," he added.

Simpson was convicted in Oct 2008 of armed robbery, assault, kidnapping and other offenses after he and five associates - two of whom were armed -

ambushed the two sports memorabilia dealers in a casino hotel room. He was sentenced to a minimum of nine years in prison and a maximum of 33 years. Orenthal James "OJ" Simpson shot to fame in the 1970s with the NFL's Buffalo Bills after winning the prestigious Heisman Trophy - the award for the best player in American collegiate football - as a running back at the University of Southern California.

He retired from football in 1979 after setting numerous rushing records and went on to become an advertising pitchman and a Hollywood actor ("The Towering Inferno," "The Naked Gun"). In June 1994, Simpson's 35-year-old ex-wife and Goldman were found stabbed to death outside her Los Angeles home. Simpson was arrested after a low-speed car chase through Los Angeles that was broadcast live by television stations and watched by millions.

He was acquitted in Oct 1995 after a nine-month trial, a verdict that was greeted with disbelief by many Americans. Public views on the African-American athlete's guilt or innocence divided sharply along racial lines. Simpson was subsequently found liable for the deaths in a 1997 civil suit and was ordered to pay damages totaling \$33.5 million to the families of the victims.

He has been out of the limelight while behind bars, but fascination with his story lives on. "O.J.: Made in America," a nearly eight-hour documentary about his murder trial, won the best documentary Oscar in February. And a television mini-series, "The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story" starring Cuba Gooding Jr, won nine Emmy awards. — AFP

Guterres reiterates...

Continued from Page 1

"You are also uniquely placed to play a central role in the mediation efforts aimed at bringing the crisis in the Gulf to an end. You are a friend to both sides of this dispute and I am sure they carefully listen to your

advice," Guterres said. "The United Nations strongly supports the continuation of your country's mediation efforts and stands ready to assist you in any way and at any time you deem most appropriate," he noted.

Guterres concluded his letter by saying that "I always personally value your wise advice on this matter, as I was able to convey this during my recent visit to the State of Kuwait. I thank you for your generous support for the efforts of the United Nations to have the logic of peace prevail over conflict." — KUNA

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Sports

Wozniacki wobbles on way to China Open round two

BEIJING: Caroline Wozniacki had a fright against a local favourite in the China Open first round yesterday before she composed herself to go through 6-1, 6-7 (4/7), 6-1. The Dane, ranked six in the world, made an early exit from the Wuhan Open last week, stunned by Maria Sakkari of Greece. She appeared determined to put that disappointment behind her in making a lightning-fast start in Beijing, punishing China's Wang Qiang in the first set. But if the fifth seed thought she was going to have it easy, she was mistaken, as the 55th-ranked Wang harnessed the support of the crowd to fight back. The 25-year-old Wang sprang a surprise in taking the second set on the tie break to level the match. But former number one Wozniacki, the 2010 China Open champion, regained her poise to seal the deciding set with ease. — AFP



Dettori wins record 5th Arc as Enable caps brilliant season

CHANTILLY: Frankie Dettori won an unprecedented fifth Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe yesterday as Enable capped a memorable season. Enable, the 10-11 favorite, led for most of Europe's richest horse race to claim her fifth consecutive victory after wins in the Epsom Oaks, the Irish Oaks, the King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes and the Yorkshire Oaks. The John Gosden-trained filly won by 2 1/2 lengths over Cloth Of Stars, ridden by jockey Mickael Barzalona and trained by Andre Fabre. The Michael Stoute-trained Ulysses, ridden by Jim Crowley, was another length and a quarter back in third. "I said to John last week she is the best she has ever been. To keep this filly at 100 percent all year is fantastic," Dettori said. "I had position 'A', I knew I had no weight and she stays, so I kicked and she gave me four lengths and the race was over. "She's amazing and is an absolute freak. I love her. John is a genius." It was Dettori and Gosden's second Arc win in three years, after the popular Italian won on Golden Horn. — AP

Dettori wins record 5th Arc as Enable caps brilliant season

SHENZHEN: It was seventh time lucky for David Goffin after the Belgian beat Alexandr Dolgoplov over three sets to win the Shenzhen Open yesterday. The world number 12 Goffin tasted defeat in his last six finals, a bitter run stretching back to 2014. But the 26-year-old made up for three years of disappointment with a determined display against the Ukrainian Dolgoplov to seal the title 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3 in just over two hours in southern China. He adds the Shenzhen trophy to the two he won in 2014 in Metz, France and Kitzbuehel in Austria. "This one is really special because you know it's always tough to come back from injuries," said Goffin, who retired from the French Open and missed Wimbledon with an ankle injury. "I cannot be happier today." — AFP



Birthday boy Verstappen takes cake in Sepang swansong

SEPANG: Red Bull's Max Verstappen won the final running of the Malaysian Grand Prix yesterday as Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton finished second to extend his championship lead over Sebastian Vettel to 34 points.

Verstappen, who celebrated his 20th birthday a day earlier, overtook pole-sitter Hamilton on lap four before clinching the second victory of his career and first this season. Mercedes driver Hamilton finished second with Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo third and Vettel, who started at the back of the grid, fourth. With five races to go, Hamilton is edging ever closer to the title but Ferrari had a weekend to forget, after Kimi Raikkonen didn't even make the starting grid and Vettel lost a rear wheel in a bizarre smash after the

Verstappen's Red Bull team-mate Ricciardo fought off a strong challenge from Vettel, who had started from the back following engine problems in qualifying.

"Seb came really quick at the end and I thought he was going to be a handful," said Ricciardo. "But he only had one strong attack and then we were able to pull away." Ferrari's fortunes had dimmed when Kimi Raikkonen's car suffered a turbo failure before the start. He was pushed back to the pit and the race was over before it had even begun for the former world champion, who had enjoyed his maiden win at Sepang in 2003.

'WE RAN OUT OF TYRES'

"Obviously we had some issue. I don't think any of us know what it is exactly. I'm pretty certain I would have had a very good car today," a disappointed Raikkonen told reporters. Vettel, who led the championship until just a month ago, now has only five races left to overhaul Hamilton's big lead, starting next week in Japan.

"I think we have a very good car. If we start ahead, we win the race," he said. "We had a little bit of sniff at the podium but unfortunately we ran out of tyres." Once past Hamilton, Verstappen started to pull away and by lap 14 he had a seven-second cushion.

Vettel was picking off the back markers with ease courtesy of his second new engine of the weekend, and emerged in fourth in front of Mercedes' Valtteri Bottas after they both pitted for new tyres. As the top four entered the final 10 laps of the 56, Vettel set a new race lap record of 1min 33.864sec, smashing Juan Pablo Montoya's 2004 mark of 1:34.223, and was closing fast on Ricciardo's exhaust



SEPANG: Race winner Red Bull driver Max Verstappen, center, of the Netherlands with teammate and third placed Daniel Ricciardo, third from left, of Australia celebrates with the teams after the Malaysian Formula One Grand Prix in Sepang. — AP

pipe. Vettel made one daring attempt to grab the last podium spot up the inside of Ricciardo at the end of the pit straight with seven laps to go. But the Australian closed him off and Vettel was forced to drop back and settle for fourth as his front tyres started to

degrade. The drama didn't end there as on his slow-down lap, Vettel collided with the Williams of Lance Stroll which left his Ferrari with one rear wheel on top of his car.

"That's impossible," Vettel thundered over the radio. "Stroll wasn't looking where he was

going!" It was the 19th and last Malaysian Grand Prix at steamy Sepang. The race will disappear from the calendar after Malaysia's government decided it would no longer cover the \$67 million a year cost of staging the loss-making event. — AFP



Big congratulations to Max and happy birthday

finish line. Verstappen won by nearly 13 seconds from Hamilton to embellish what has been a tough season after he failed to finish seven races and only once reached the podium. "The car was unbelievable, if I had to speed up I could. It was a very tough race and incredible to win," said the Dutchman.

Hamilton admitted the Mercedes had been second-best. "Big congratulations to Max and happy birthday, he did a fantastic job today," he said. "The race was a tough one, obviously they just had the upper hand on us today... I feel good but I think we have some work to do with the car. Obviously we didn't have the pace this weekend."

New Zealand beats Argentina 36-10 in Rugby Championship

BUENOS AIRES: Captain Kieran Read scored two tries and earned a yellow card as New Zealand flaunted its depth in a 36-10 Rugby Championship win over Argentina. The All Blacks took the field knowing they had secured the Rugby Championship title for the fifth time in six years after South Africa and Australia played a 27-27 draw in Bloemfontein.

New Zealand named a weakened lineup for Saturday's match, resting five frontline players ahead of next weekend's final round match against South Africa and promoting several second tier players into the starting side. The changes did nothing to break the momentum the All Blacks gained from their record 57-0 win over South

Africa two weeks ago. Read's double and tries to Damian McKenzie and Waisake Naholo gave them a 29-3 lead by halftime and David Havili scored a try on debut in the second half. For Argentina, backrower Juan Manuel Leguizamón marked his 80th test match with a second half try.

The All Blacks side was similar to that which met the Pumas in New Plymouth three weeks ago and was lucky to keep alive New Zealand's unbeaten record against Argentina. Argentina led that match until midway through the second half before the All Blacks overcame an error-ridden performance to win 39-22.

The New Zealand selectors gave many of the players involved in that

match a chance to improve on that performance and they largely did so in a bright first half, then through a scrappy second half when strong defense suppressed the Pumas' attempted comeback.

Flyhalf Beauden Barrett and full-back McKenzie sparked the All Blacks' attacking game in the first half, which contrasted the dour style adopted by the Pumas. Argentina was able to grind away more effectively in the second half, gaining a better share of possession and territory which helped stifle New Zealand.

South African referee Jaco Peyper had a major role in the match, issuing three yellow cards. He sin-binned Pumas lock Tomas Lavanini - a serial offender - for a dangerous tackle in the first half, dismissed All Blacks flanker Matt Todd for a maul infringement and Read in the second for a high tackle.

"It was certainly what we expected in that first half but we managed four tries so I suppose we got up a few points," Read said. "You've got to credit the boys' character, we defended pretty well and I guess two yellow cards didn't help us.—AP



BUENOS AIRES: New Zealand's All Blacks Kieran Read holds the trophy as he celebrates with teammates winning the Rugby Championship after a match with Argentina in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Saturday. — AP



NANNING: File photo shows Kohei Uchimura competes on the rings during the men's all-around final at the 2014 Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in Nanning, China.

'King Kohei' aiming for seventh heaven at world championships

MONTREAL: Japanese superstar Kohei Uchimura is on the threshold of a place in history as he eyes more gold medal glory at the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships which get under way here today. The reigning 2012 and 2016 Olympic all-around champion is chasing a seventh straight world championship gold in the category as he takes the first steps on the long road to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The 28-year-old has already amassed a staggering 19 medals at the worlds since his first appearance at the championships in London in 2009, with 10 golds, five silvers and four bronze. Two more gold medals in Montreal this week would see Uchimura draw level with the legendary Vitaly Scherbo, the Belarussian who has 23 world championship medals including 12 golds.

Uchimura, who once again will come up against Ukraine's Rio 2016 all-around silver medalist Oleg Verniaiev, said he has set himself a lofty target for this week's championships, which begin with qualifying on Monday. "I have no particu-

lar objectives when it comes to results," Uchimura said. "But as I've never had the feeling that my performances were perfect at the six World Championships I've done in the past, my principal objective is to give perfect performances," he said in comments on the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) website.

"If I manage that, the results should follow. I want to do my best, particularly to obtain medals on the events I qualify for." Three days of qualification rounds get under way today, with the first medals up for grabs on Thursday where Uchimura will attempt to defend his individual all-around title. Uchimura, who beat Ukraine's Verniaiev by just 0.099 points to win all-around gold in Rio last year, admitted he is finding it more challenging to arrive at each championships in peak form as he gets older. "When I participated at the World Championships for the first time, I was 20 years old, and now I'm 28 now and at my seventh Worlds. So the question of age is a new element," he said. "With age, one loses some muscle tone and also makes mistakes in complicated routines. Maintaining strength and muscle tone requires a completely different kind of preparation beforehand." While Uchimura is preparing to defend his title, the women's field looks more open after the decision of reigning Olympic and world champion Simone Biles to take a sabbatical from the sport.

Biles, a four-time gold medalist at the Olympics last year and winner of 10 world championship golds, including the all-around title in 2013, 2014, and 2015, has not trained at all this year but is looking at a competitive return in 2018. With Biles absent, — AFP

Sports

Wenger savours 21st anniversary as Arsenal sink Brighton 2-0

Arsene breaks record he shared with Alex Ferguson

LONDON: Arsene Wenger celebrated the 21st anniversary of his arrival at Arsenal in winning style as the Gunners cruised to a 2-0 victory over Brighton yesterday. There are many reasons for Arsenal fans to look back fondly on the day Wenger was hired but, after several years of underachievement, the Frenchman finds himself engaged in a fight to restore his tarnished reputation. It is too early to predict whether Arsenal can end their 13-year wait to win a fourth Premier League title under Wenger, but there were some encouraging signs as Brighton were put to the sword at the Emirates Stadium. Nacho Monreal opened the scoring in the first half before Alex Iwobi, converting Alexis Sanchez's majestic assist, wrapped up the points after the interval. Arsenal's sixth win from their last seven matches in all competitions moved them to within six points of leaders Manchester City heading into the international break. Fittingly, Wenger marked his milestone date with a notable record of his own. Brighton are the 45th different Premier League club to be defeated by Arsenal since Wenger took over in 1996, breaking the record he shared with Manchester United legend Alex Ferguson.



'Brighton put to the sword at the Emirates Stadium'

start after just 65 seconds when his fierce drive flashed past Albion goalkeeper Mat Ryan, only to cannon back off a post. Albion striker Tomer Hemed was serving the first of a three-game suspension, so Izzy Brown started up front and the youngster went close with a header from Pascal Gross's free-kick. That effort aside, it was one way traffic as Wenger's men left Brighton trailing in their wake time and again.

IRREPRESSIBLE

Sanchez and Iwobi tested Ryan from long-range before Monreal gave Arsenal the lead in the 16th minute. Granit Xhaka's free-kick to the far post was headed back by Lacazette and after Shkodran Mustafi had his shot cleared off the line, Monreal chested down and fired home from 10 yards. It was Monreal's first league goal for Arsenal since March 2013 and the Spanish defender celebrated with a fist-pumping roar of delight. Solly March nearly silenced Arsenal's cheers moments later when he unleashed a powerful 20-yard shot that crashed back off a post. The Gunners should have doubled their lead before half-time when Brighton defender Lewis Dunk slipped, putting Lacazette through on goal. But Lacazette let Brighton off the hook with a tame shot straight at Ryan, while Aaron Ramsey saw his low strike repelled by the Australian keeper following an incisive Arsenal counter.

Those misses didn't prove a source of regret as Sanchez produced a sublime contribution to set up Iwobi's first goal since January in the 56th minute. Exchanging passes in a blur of movement, Ramsey and Lacazette worked the ball smoothly into Sanchez



Huddersfield: Tottenham Hotspur's Moussa Sissoko scores his side's fourth goal of the game during the English Premier League soccer match between Huddersfield Town and Tottenham Hotspur at the John Smith's Stadium, Huddersfield, England, yesterday. — AP

inside the penalty area. Faced with three Albion defenders, Sanchez knew a shot would be blocked, so he instinctively guided a back-heel towards the unmarked Iwobi, who had the simple task of firing

home from eight yards. Sanchez was in irrefutable mood and it took a combined of Dunk and Ryan to keep out his goal-bound shot, before Sead Kolasinac's header was cleared off the line by March. — AFP

Yasir double leaves S Lanka in trouble

ABU DHABI: Pakistan leg-spinner Yasir Shah grabbed the key wicket of Dinesh Chandimal to leave Sri Lanka fighting to avoid defeat after the fourth day of the first Test in Abu Dhabi yesterday. The prolific wicket-taker took 2-25 as Sri Lanka struggled to 69-4, needing a rear-guard action to save the Test.

Pakistan will be expecting to push for victory in the opening match of a two-Test series on the fifth and final day. It was tough to negotiate spin on a fourth-day Sheikh Zayed Stadium pitch, but despite a 32nd Test five-wicket haul for veteran Sri Lankan spinner Rangana Herath, Pakistan posted 422 to take a slender three-run lead. Sri Lanka had made 419 in their first innings. At the close, Kusal Mendis was batting on 16, with nightwatchman Suranga Lakmal on two, after a day of fluctuating fortunes. Herath's 5-93 in 40 overs were well foiled by a brilliant 76 by Test debutant Haris Sohail, as initially it looked as though Sri Lanka would take a first-innings lead.

Pakistan then hit back in the second innings through Shah, who first had opener Dimuth Karunaratne caught for 10 and then dismissed first-innings centurion Chandimal, caught at slip, for seven. Sohail followed his responsible knock by claiming Kaushal Silva's wicket, whom he trapped leg before for 25, while part-timer Asad Shafiq had Lahiru Thirimanne for seven.

The 28-year-old Sohail's impressive Test bow has come despite a career-threatening knee injury which required surgery in 2015. "The last two years were tough for me as there was a lot of talk on my injury," he said.

"But thankfully I am here and played a responsible knock. I was under pressure because we needed to take the lead, so I had to play a responsible knock which I did." Earlier in the day, Pakistan too were struggling at 316-6 and were in danger of conceding a healthy lead with Herath using all his experience and guile.

The 39-year-old left-arm spinner, who now has 394 wickets in 84 Tests, gave his team the much-needed wicket of a resolute Azhar Ali, luring him into an uppish drive which was brilliantly caught at short mid-wicket by a diving Mendis.

Azhar's defiant knock of 85 lasted more than five hours and included four boundaries, but with his dismissal Pakistan's hopes of building a lead looked slim. But Sohail had other ideas as he added an invaluable 50 for the ninth wicket with tail-ender Hasan Ali to lift Pakistan from 340-8. Sohail hit seven fours and two sixes before holing out to paceman Nuwan Pradeep, who finished with 2-77.

Hasan's whirlwind 25-ball 29 featured three sixes and two fours. The second and final Test—a day-night affair—will be played in Dubai from October 6. —AFP

High-scoring Napoli beat Cagliari 3-0 to stay perfect

ROME: It was more target practice for high-scoring Napoli in a 3-0 win over Cagliari yesterday that extended the southern club's perfect record in Serie A. Captain Marek Hamsik ended his scoring drought, Dries Mertens got his seventh goal in seven matches and Kalidou Koulibaly also found the net for the Partenopei.

Napoli has now outscored the opposition 25-5 by producing at least three goals in each of the club's Italian league games this season. Coach Maurizio Sarri's side was two points above Inter Milan after the Nerazzurri won 2-1 at last-place Benevento.

Six-time defending champion Juventus had a chance to extend its perfect record later at Atalanta. Having finished in the top three spots in five of the last seven seasons, Napoli is looking more and more like it could win its first title since Diego Maradona led the club to its only two Serie A championships in 1987 and 1990. But Sarri remains cautious. "It's been six years that people have been saying we could bother Juventus but in the end they still win, which means that they're still a step above everyone else," the coach said. "We've played seven matches, which is just 40 days of the season. Let's see how things develop long-term. Anyone can do it for a month, few for six months and only one squad for a year," Sarri added. "I saw signs of growth today but it will be continuity that will tell us if we've really improved." Hamsik scored his first of the season four minutes in at the San Paolo stadium with a low, angled shot after trading passes with Mertens.

It was Hamsik's 114th goal in all competitions for Napoli, moving him within one score of Maradona's club record. Mertens earned a penalty and converted the spot kick to



NAPLES: Napoli's Italian striker Lorenzo Insigne (R) eyes the ball during the Italian Serie A football match Napoli vs Cagliari yesterday at San Paolo stadium in Naples. — AFP

double the advantage before the break and Koulibaly added another two minutes into the second half from within the box after a free kick was floated in. Napoli was coming off a 3-1 win over Feyenoord in the Champions League.

BENEVENTO BLUES

Attempting to shake off the label of "worst squad in Europe's five major leagues," Benevento deserved more against Inter. The southern club hit both the crossbar and post but couldn't overcome two early goals from Marcelo Brozovic, the second of which was a perfectly curled free kick. Marco D'Alessandro pulled one back for Benevento before the break with an angled shot that went in off the post after a slight deflection from Inter goalkeeper Samir

Handanovic. It was Benevento's second goal this season - against 18 conceded.

RACIST CHANTS

Fourth-place Lazio came back from a goal down to beat visiting Sassuolo 6-1 with braces from Luis Alberto and Marco Parolo, plus goals from Stefan de Vrij and Ciro Immobile. The match was marred, however, by racist chants from Lazio fans directed at Sassuolo players Claud Adjapong and Alfred Duncan. Lucas Castro also had a brace for Chievo Verona, which overcame an early goal from Giovanni "Cholito" Simeone in a 2-1 win over Fiorentina. Hellas Verona scored two late goals for a 2-2 draw at Torino and Spal and Crotone drew 1-1. — AP

Sharma's ton takes India to victory against Australia

NAGPUR: Opening batsman Rohit Sharma smashed 125 to guide India to a convincing seven-wicket win against Australia in the fifth and final one-day international in Nagpur yesterday, for a 4-1 series victory. Chasing 243, the hosts cantered to their target with over seven overs remaining as Australia's listless bowling attack failed to pose any serious challenge.

Australia lost the first three ODIs of the series to concede an unassailable 3-0 lead but regained some pride with a 21-run win in the fourth match at Bengaluru. They would have wanted to gain some momentum with another victory ahead of the three-match Twenty20 series, starting on Saturday, but a clinical performance from India barely gave them an opportunity.

Sharma and Ajinkya Rahane, who completed his third consecutive half-century, gave India a rollicking start with an opening stand of 124 before the latter was out for 61. It was Sharma's 14th hundred in the 50-over format and he brought it up with a massive six over mid-wicket against paceman Nathan Coulter-Nile.

The stylish right-handed batsman, who had scored 71 and 65 in the last two matches, hit 11 fours and five sixes in his 109-ball knock. Sharma and captain Virat Kohli (39) added 99 in their second wicket partnership to take India to the brink of victory before both were out caught in the deep in the same over to leg-spinner Adam Zampa.



NAGPUR: Indian cricket team pose with the trophy after winning the fifth one-day international cricket match against Australia at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium in Nagpur yesterday. — AFP

Earlier, Australia failed to build on a solid start from their openers and finished on 242 for nine after winning the toss and opting to bat. David Warner followed up his match-winning knock of 124 in the last ODI with a fine 53 and added 66 with Aaron Finch in a brisk opening stand.

All-rounder Hardik Pandya dismissed Finch for 32 to break the dangerous stand, who had combined in a partnership of 231 to set up Australia's win in the last encounter. Australia were moving along nicely at 100-1 but

then suffered a mini collapse, losing captain Steve Smith, Warner and Peter Handscomb in quick succession to be reduced to 118-4.

India's spinners pulled back the scoring rate with left-arm spinner Axar Patel the most devastating, finishing with three for 38. India pace duo Jasprit Bumrah (2-51) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar also bowled accurately during the closing overs to restrict Australia, and made up for their average opening spells. — Reuters

13 Birthday boy Verstappen takes cake in Sepang swansong



14 Red Sox clinch second consecutive AL East title



15 Sharma's ton takes India to victory against Australia



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Lionel Messi (center) is challenged by Las Palmas' Michel Macedo during the Spanish La Liga football match between Barcelona and Las Palmas at the Camp Nou stadium yesterday. — AP

Barcelona win behind closed doors

Barca fans' groups threatened peaceful pitch invasion

BARCELONA: Lionel Messi scored twice as Barcelona beat Las Palmas 3-0 in a match played behind closed doors after the Spanish league refused Barca's plea to postpone the game on the day of the highly-charged Catalonia referendum.

At least 91 people were injured as Spanish riot police fired rubber bullets and forced their way into activist-held polling stations over the independence vote deemed illegal by the Spanish government yesterday. Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu said the club made the decision to play behind closed doors as a protest against the violent clashes rather than security concerns. "FC Barcelona condemns the events which have taken place in many parts of Catalonia today in order to prevent its citizens exercising their democratic right to free expression," Barcelona said in a statement.

"We have done it behind closed doors so that everyone can see our opposition at what is happening," added Bartomeu. In a statement, La Liga insisted "there was no motive for the game to be abandoned".

Had Barca refused to play the game they could have faced a three-point deduction from La Liga on top of forfeiting the

match against Las Palmas. "La Liga's refusal to cancel the game and play it another day... would mean the loss of six points for the team," said Bartomeu. A section of Barcelona fans' groups had threatened a peaceful pitch invasion to show

their disgust at events at the polling stations if the game was not suspended. "It was strange, I didn't like it at all," Barca midfielder Sergio Busquets, a Catalan and World Cup winner with Spain, told BeIN Sports Spain. "We were aware of what had happened. I think the club evaluated the possibility (of not playing) but on a sporting level that penalised us a lot."

Indeed, despite the closure of the stadium, one fan did make it onto the pitch after Barca's second goal before being quickly hauled off by stewards.

Huge queues of fans waited outside the 99,000 capacity Camp Nou for hours until a final decision was made less than 30 minutes before kick-off. A Barca spokesperson confirmed that all fans who bought tickets would be reimbursed.

“There was no motive for the game to be abandoned”

top in the colours of the Catalan Senyera flag over their traditional blue and red home kit. Meanwhile, Las Palmas wore a small Spanish flag on their shirts as a show of support for a united Spain.

MESSI UNMOVED

The match itself was an understandably low key affair as Barca opened up a five-point lead at the top of La Liga and moved 10 points clear of Real Madrid, who host Espanyol later on Sunday.

Barca's players entered the field wearing a training top in the colours of the Catalan Senyera flag over their traditional blue and red home kit. Meanwhile, Las Palmas wore a small Spanish flag on their shirts as a show of support for a united Spain.

However, all the off-field distractions seemed to affect the hosts in the first-half as Jonathan Calleri came closest to opening the scoring when he hit the post for Las Palmas. Busquets settled Barca early in the second-half by heading home the opener from Messi's corner. Messi then took over himself as he calmly rounded Leandro Chichizola from Denis Suarez's excellent pass to make it 2-0.

And the five-time World Player of the Year then smashed home Luis Suarez's through ball for already his 14th goal of the season.

Barca have long supported Catalonia's right for a vote on independence, without throwing their weight behind the yes or no camp. Last week the club released a strongly-worded statement condemning arrests of regional Catalan government figures in "the defence of the nation, to democracy, to freedom of speech, and to self-determination". According to Spanish media reports, Barca vice-president Carles Vilarrubi has resigned over the club's decision to play the game. — AFP

Liverpool frustrated by former manager Rafa Benitez

NEWCASTLE: Rafa Benitez's Newcastle United held his former team Liverpool to a 1-1 draw at St James' Park yesterday, a result that left the visitors seven points off the Manchester clubs at the top of the Premier League.

The game encapsulated Liverpool's season as they took the lead through a superb Philippe Coutinho strike from 25 metres on 29 minutes, only to concede seven minutes later after shambolic defending allowed Joselu to latch on to Jonjo Shelvey's pass through the middle.

As the striker broke clear, Joel Matip's attempted tackle only diverted the ball on to Joselu's shin and past the diving Simon Mignolet. Juergen Klopp's mood on the sidelines was not improved when Daniel Sturridge, who was starting in place of Roberto Firmino, squandered a chance from close range after a miskick from Newcastle defender Ciaran Clark.

The visitors looked hesitant at the back and tentative in front of goal with Sturridge too often caught off-side. Firmino, Dominic Solanke and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain were all brought on but Newcastle held on as Benitez kept his unbeaten record in five games as a manager against Liverpool. — Reuters



NEWCASTLE: Liverpool's English striker Daniel Sturridge vies with Newcastle United's Spanish midfielder Javier Manquillo (R) at St James' Park in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. — AFP

Burnley win piles pressure on Koeman

LIVERPOOL: Everton manager Ronald Koeman was set for an uncomfortable international break after Jeff Hendrick's goal gave visitors Burnley a 1-0 win in the Premier League at Goodison Park yesterday. Defeat left the big-spending Toffees, who have won just twice in seven league matches so far this season, a mere two points above the relegation zone. The Dutch great's side came into this match on the back of a disappointing 2-2 Europa League draw at home to Cypriot club Apollon Limassol on Thursday.

That result halted something of a mini-revival after Everton had won back-to-back matches against Sunderland in the League Cup and Bournemouth in the Premier League after losing four in a row in a six-game winless streak. Prior to yesterday's match, Koeman said: "It's not time to find any more excuses, because that's not counting for you. With a win, everyone will be happy and maybe 'Everton are back',

that will be the newspaper today.

"If we don't win, the newspaper will be totally different. But that's football and I accept that way of thinking." But after the match, Koeman told Sky Sports: "I'm not unhappy what I saw from the team, they showed today how we had to play.

"If you play against a team who are defending so strong you need to be at your best. We didn't have that creativity." Everton striker Wayne Rooney thought he should have had a penalty late on when his flick-on from Gylfi Sigurdsson's cross bounced on to Matthew Lowton's arm and Koeman said: "You know, sometimes you get the help of a referee.

"I don't say it was a penalty because it wasn't his intention to touch the ball-but on other occasions I've seen a penalty given. "Of course we can play better on the ball, this situation is really disappointing. But we'll continue because what I saw today is how to come out of this difficult situation."

Hendrick crowned a brilliant team move to score the only goal of the game in the 21st minute. There were 23 passes involved in a move that started with a crossfield ball from Robbie Brady to Stephen Ward.

His cross in turn was headed down by Chris Wood, Scott Arfield was then involved before the ball came back to Ward, who cut the ball back to Hendrick and he sidestepped a challenge from Morgan Schneiderlin before finishing from 15 yards.—AFP

Business

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WASHINGTON: Shoppers coming out of a supermarket in Washington. American consumers remain confident despite catastrophic storms, deepening political alienation, violent marches and talk of war. — AP

Americans keep calm and go shopping

Storms? North Korea? Trump?

WASHINGTON: Consumer sentiment in the United States is riding high on a tide of good economic news, despite political turmoil at home and inflamed geopolitical tensions abroad. Analysts say consumers remain confident despite catastrophic storms, deepening political alienation, violent marches and talk of war-things that might otherwise make households cut spending and hunker down for safety—because such events are far from their day-to-day economic lives.

"In the past year, there has been a long list of issues that could have derailed consumer confidence, including the unprecedented partisan divide, North Korea, Charlottesville, as well as the hurricanes," Richard Curtin, chief economist at the University of

Michigan's Surveys of Consumers, said Friday in a statement. Curtin released the university's twice-monthly index of consumer sentiment, which slipped 1.6 points between August and September but remained elevated even though three hurricanes had struck US territory in the space of a month. "Confidence has nonetheless remained very favorable," he said. In the first nine months of the year, the index even hit its highest level in 17 years.

"One of the reasons Americans can be optimistic is the extent to which many of these events have not affected what they are able to do and what they are not," Frederick Wherry, a professor of sociology at Princeton University, told AFP. According to Edward Berkowitz, pro-

fessor of history and public policy at George Washington University, the deadly violence at a far-right march in Charlottesville, Virginia in August was "not a major enough event to influence the national psyche or interrupt economic trends."

Consumers do have reasons to be optimistic. The economy grew by 3.1 percent in the second quarter, its fastest pace in nearly two years, and unemployment, currently estimated at 4.4 percent, is at historically low levels.

A place to 'practice freedom'

The economic devastation of Hurricanes Harvey, which slammed into Florida and Southeast Texas in a two-week period, "was quite small and has already begun to fade," according to Curtin. For the fourth straight month, consumers also reported improving personal finances, he added. Two thirds of homeowners surveyed, the highest level in ten years, also reported rising property values. "Historically people enter the marketplace as a place for practicing our freedom," said Wherry.

"The marketplace becomes a refuge for us here in the US." Confident consumers with rising incomes spend more. Consumer spending is a prime driver of growth in the world's largest economy and Curtin estimates it will grow by 2.6 percent this year and in the first half of 2018. But according to Berkowitz, a few weeks of rising gasoline or grocery prices could reverse the trend and "contribute to an overall sense that the economy, and the nation itself, are sputtering."

Berkowitz said it would be wise to wait before concluding that current confidence levels are sustainable. "I would say stick around and see what happens," he added.

Tom Smith of the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center said consumer sentiment surveys were narrowly focused and should not obscure broader public opinion. "Given the objective economic situation and the narrow focus of the measures you mention, I am not surprised that they had generally been positive," he told AFP. "But the other measures tell us that these consumer confidence measures are only part of the larger picture."—AFP



Consumer sentiment in US riding high on a tide of good economic news

Branson to invest in Saudi Red Sea project

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia: Virgin airlines founder Richard Branson will invest in a Red Sea project that aims to turn 50 Saudi Arabian islands into luxury tourism destinations, the Saudi government announced yesterday.

Branson is the first international investor to commit to the project, Saudi Arabia's information ministry said, in what officials called "a clear sign that Saudi Arabia is opening its doors to international tourism". Branson also visited the tombs at Madain Saleh—an UNESCO World Heritage site located near a string of new hotels—in a trip to the Gulf kingdom that appears to be aimed at attracting further international attention, both investment and tourism.

"This is an incredibly exciting time in the country's history and I've always felt that there's nothing like getting a firsthand impression," Branson said in a statement released by the information ministry. Saudi Arabia is one of the most conservative countries in the world, only last week passing a decree allowing women to drive.—AFP

Specter of Zimbabwe hyperinflation triggers panic-buying

HARARE: Driving to work last week, Dennis Zhemu found his usually busy neighborhood garage in the Zimbabwean capital Harare deserted and a forecourt attendant signalling "no fuel". For Zhemu, it was a worrying sign that Zimbabwe's chronic economic collapse could be heading for another vicious downwards spiral of basic shortages, hyperinflation and social chaos. Zhemu's heart sank as he drove on, hoping to refuel at the next station, but at least 40 other cars were queuing on the side of the road towards the petrol pumps. "Immediately, I was reminded of 2008 when we slept in fuel queues and I prayed silently that we don't return to those days," the 43-year-old human resources consultant told AFP. He left his car at the garage as he did not have enough fuel to reach his office, and caught a bus to work.

A decade ago, hyperinflation in Zimbabwe wiped out personal savings, left shops empty and made it all but impossible to buy a tank of petrol or daily groceries. Inflation peaked at 500 billion percent before the national currency was abandoned in a favour of the US dollar, and the economy never recovered. Fears of a repeat of those desperate days have grown in recent weeks in Zimbabwe, and panic-buying has seen prices rocket.

Worthless money?

The stockpiling has been driven by a collapse in confi-



HARARE: This file photo taken on November 28, 2016 shows a man holding bond notes released by the Reserve Bank Of Zimbabwe in Harare central business center. — AFP

dence in the parallel "bond note" currency that was launched by 93-year-old President Robert Mugabe's government nearly a year ago.

Bond notes dispersed by banks and ATMs are in theory worth the same as the US dollar, but consumers worry

the currency could be rendered worthless like the old Zimbabwe dollar that was scrapped in 2009. "We are already witnessing shortages of basic commodities," Peter Mutasa, president of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, told AFP.—AFP

Business

iPhone 8, iPhone 8 Plus launched officially at VIVA store in Kuwait

Launch witnesses a huge turnout of excited customers



KUWAIT: iPhone 8 and iPhone 8 Plus was launched officially on September 30, 2017 at the VIVA store in Marina Mall and other branches. The launch saw a huge number of customers excited to see the phone and its new features. Though the launch took place at midnight, VIVA store was crowded with excited audience. To know more about the new plans, customers can visit VIVA's stores (more than 71 stores) or e-store at viva.com.kw, or contact VIVA's customer care line by just dialing 102.

VIVA also announced its new "iPhone for life" program which gives you the fantastic opportunity to own the latest iPhone every 12 months from your commitment date by visiting any VIVA branch to subscribe and exchange you old iPhone for a new device by signing a new commitment period of 24

months. It also allows you catch up with the latest launches of your favorite device and stay ahead of the trend.

Kasem Suleiman, was amid the lucky ones who got iPhone 8. He expressed his happiness as the first customer to own this new device. He added: 'I've been a customer with VIVA so many years, and I am loyal to this company which keeps its customers posted with the latest technology and devices.

iPhone 8 is visually just like iPhone 7. Apple played safe with this one and it isn't as expensive as iPhone X. The switch to the glass rear with cornered rims gives the phone a good grip but the glass body makes the phone very fragile. With wireless charging and an upgraded camera, this piece comes in three colors: Blush Gold, Space Gray and Silver.



VIVA also announces its new 'iPhone for life' program

Good corporate earnings preventing market correction

By Hayder Tawfik

So many investors and market watchers are talking about an imminent correction on the way affecting the US stock markets. Market corrections are usually triggered by some unknown and unexpected news or a sudden change in the fundamentals that affect market valuations. None of these are on the horizon at least for the time being. So, as investors are expecting a market correction we rest assure that it unlikely to happen.

So, what is preventing a market correction?

I think subdued optimism and a strong consumer spending that account for nearly 70 percent of US, Gross Domestic Product standing on the way of stock market correction. Those pessimists are using extended valuation and tighter monetary policy as reasons for stock market correction. But, these factors are known to the market and I believe they are fully discounted. Let's say that investors are right and a stock market correction is going to happen, this means that investors are so worried and I assume that they have already either reduced their exposure to the market or have put some risk strategy in place as a hedge against any correction.

The supply demand factor is still in favor of continuous equity investments. Although US retail investors have pulled \$90 billion from the stock market this year, Equity Traded Funds (ETF's) have poured a staggering \$300 billion into the stock market. So, yes there has been withdrawals by individual investors but institution and mutual investors are still buyers of US equities. Most developed stock markets have been supported by strong fundamentals that are the base of raising markets. Most stock market pessimists are focusing on the modest and measured tightening by the Federal Reserve. The brighter picture for the stock market and corporate earnings is encouraged by the cheap US\$ and low official interest rates and low bond yields. At some time, the stock market will decline rather than face a correction but that is only



when its underlying economic and corporate earnings falter.

US corporate earnings have improved quarter on quarter and that helped to improve future equity valuation. Added to this US corporates and individual tax reform can only be good for the market. Talks of reforming the tax bracket to only three levels and reducing corporate tax to between 15 percent and 20 percent from 35 percent at present should be very stimulative to spending and can only enhance corporate earnings and could boost the stock market. President Donald Trump has proposed corporate tax reform as a means of promoting economic growth and improving the business environment for US companies and individuals, this is being highlighted by reduction of federal corporate taxes.

Retaining a higher or greater portion of before tax profits can only be attractive to investors. Investors should be aware that the corporate tax reform is not going benefit all sectors of the economy. For sure it will benefit some sectors more than others. Based on the latest reporting, in aggregate, US companies paid tax at a 21.5 percent rate.

Supply-demand factor still in favor of investments

Some sectors such as food and beverage, consumer discretionary and telecommunication companies paid in excess of 25 percent. These companies that pay high taxes at present would realize the bigger benefit from any corporate tax reduction. Real estate companies that benefit from corporate tax exempt, real estate investment trusts and utilities that enjoy tax deductions from depreciations that are related to heavy capital expenditure already pay modest tax rates and unlikely to see much benefits from the corporate tax reform.

I believe that the proposed US corporate tax reduction will take time to come into effect but lower US corporate tax rates may deliver good benefit for equity investors and the continuous outperformances of some companies that are already paying high tax rates suggest that investors and the markets are confident the reduction in US corporate tax rates will finally becoming permanent policy. @Rasameel

US dollar rallies on tax reform and interest rate hike hopes

Last week, the dollar recovered on the back of interest rate hike expectations and the proposed tax reform from the Trump administration. Fed Chair Janet Yellen admitted that trends in employment and wage and price pressures have shifted from what central bank forecasters expected. "My colleagues and I may have misjudged the strength of the labor market, the degree to which longer-run inflation expectations are consistent with our inflation objective, or even the fundamental forces driving inflation," Yellen said. The speech comes less than a week after the policymaking Federal Open Market Committee approved the first steps in unwinding some of the stimulus the Fed has provided since late-2008. The central bank will begin rolling off some of the bonds it holds on its \$4.5 trillion balance sheet. In addition, Yellen added that regular pace of rate hikes ahead is still likely warranted, though Fed officials are looking closely at the assumptions underlying those projections.

Furthermore, addressing current economic conditions, Yellen said the Fed still expects longer-run inflation to trend toward the 2 percent target policymakers believe is healthy for economic growth. However, she said they are making room for the possibility that they're wrong. "How should policy be formulated in the face of such significant uncertainties?" she said. "In my view, it strengthens the case for a gradual pace of adjustments. Moving too quickly risks over adjusting policy to head off projected developments that may not come to pass." While lower inflation and interest rates sound beneficial, Fed officials worry that keeping rates lower allows little room for stimulus when another economic slowdown hits. Yellen's comments reflected those from a paper released this week from the San Francisco Fed, where economists worried that a lower "neutral rate," or that which keeps the economy in equilibrium, also limits the monetary policy options. It is worth mentioning that interest rate expectations in the US reached 70 percent after Yellen's speech.

On the tax reform plan, President Donald Trump and Republican leaders will launch an urgent effort to get a major legislative win this year, announcing a long-awaited tax plan that will immediately set off a fight over how much top earners should pay. The framework proposes cutting the top individual rate to 35 percent, yet leaves it up to Congress to decide whether to create a higher bracket for those at the top of the income scale. The rate on corporations would be set at 20 percent, down from the current 35 percent, and businesses would be allowed to immediately write off their capital spending for at least five years. However, the market is mixed on the ability of the White House to pass such critical legislation as the cost of cutting taxes after the destructive hurricanes might hinder the effort for the much anticipated legislation.

On the currency front, the dollar was on its way to record the highest weekly gain in the year. The dollar index started the week at 92.327 reaching all the way to 93.666 but the mixed views of the market on the Trump administration to be effective in pushing the tax reform proposal had the dollar close the week at 93.071.

The Euro lost ground to the bull run of the dollar, opening the week at 1.1909 yet continuously depreciated to reach a low of 1.1718 amid the increasing expectations of an interest rate hike in the US reaching 70 percent for the December meeting. The single currency closed the week at 1.1812.

The cable traded on a relatively narrow range opening the week at 1.3489. The Sterling lost ground to the dollar rally last week

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

reaching a low of 1.3343, yet the pair was supported by the probability of an interest rate in the November meeting which is at 70 percent. The currency closed the week at 1.3396.

The Japanese yen opened the week at 112.18, and had a volatile trading week due to the widening divergence of monetary policy between the BOJ and other major central banks. The pair reached a high of 113.25 as comments from the Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe on the status of the Japanese economy drove investors away from the yen. The yen ended the week at 112.47.

Regarding commodities, oil prices are recovering, US storm damage and strengthening economies may have finally dislodged sentiment away from resignation to a future of low oil prices. That's the story, but it isn't the whole picture. And while OPEC and other countries that have cut production will undoubtedly take comfort from Brent near \$60 a barrel, they should be wary of taking too much of the credit and certainly can't relax their output restraint. They are not yet out of the woods.

US Housing market

New home sales came at 560K versus the forecasted 585K, a second straight decline in purchases of new US homes and combined with downward revisions for prior months, showed a declining market as results begin to be clouded by the fallout from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.



Fed Chair Janet Yellen

Carney on Brexit

BoE governor Mark Carney emphasized on the limited power of the policy makers of the central bank to offset any economic hardships caused by Brexit. "The biggest determinants of the UK's medium-term prosperity will be the country's new relationship with the EU and the reforms it catalysis," he said. As all related stakeholders are awaiting a clearer picture on the direction of the Brexit negotiations, the Sterling Pound is holding its ground at the current level against the dollar.

Japan inflation

National core CPI, the BoJ's core measure, rose 0.7 percent y/y in August, up 0.2 percentage points from July and in line with consensus. The headline CPI was 0.7 percent also, constituting a marginal beat, while the ex-fresh food and energy measure rose 0.1 percent to 0.2 percent. However, timelier Tokyo figures for September showed less momentum. The core measure rose 0.1 percent to 0.5 percent y/y, while the headline and ex-fresh food and energy prints were unchanged from August at 0.5 percent and 0.0 percent, respectively. Meanwhile, service producer prices rose 0.2 percent to 0.8 percent y/y in August, and corporate goods prices increased 0.3 percent to 2.9 percent. Overall, inflation appears to be rebounding nicely.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30185
The USDKWD opened at 0.30185 yesterday morning.

Business

Huawei brings together top Chinese entrepreneurs, regional companies

'The Future of Innovation' panel discussion in Dubai

DUBAI: Huawei Consumer Business Group hosted "The Future of Innovation" event in Dubai, UAE on 20th September 2017. The event highlighted the key innovations Huawei is driving in the consumer smartphone industry, both globally and regionally, as well as Huawei's brand ambition to become a global iconic technology brand. The event also saw Huawei bring together innovative minds from China and top regional companies to participate in an open panel discussion focusing on the theme of innovation.

ePanda, the Chinese start-up facilitating connections between China and the Middle East, was a key cooperation partner for the event.

The engaging panel discussion was attended by thought leaders from some of the region's top innovative companies, including Souq.com, Etisalat, Sony Music Entertainment Middle East, Lamsa, Digital Media Services (DMS), and the SmartStart Fund. Together with leading Chinese entrepreneurs, the group explored opportunities for innovative Chinese companies to expand their reach into the growing Middle East market. The panel covered two vital topics. The first topic highlighted the changing perception of Chinese products and services in the region, and the eagerness for growing the innovation sector in the Middle East through partnerships with Chinese entities. The second topic focused on digital entertainment, bringing to light the need for innovation in content and the importance of localization of content for the region.



Event highlights key Huawei innovations

Justin Chen, Managing Director of MENA Consumer Cloud Services, Huawei CBG, said, "China is the world's leading innovation hub, offering highly intelligent consumer products, created using high-end manufacturing processes. The perception of Chinese products has shifted drastically over the last few years and China is now recognized as offering uniquely innovative and highly customizable goods. We are pleased to be able to bring together Chinese entrepreneurs with like-minded entities in the Middle East, who are a driving force for innovation in the region."

Given the region's increasing focus on driving innovative technologies, the panel provided an opportunity to highlight the importance of the Middle East as the next global innovation hub, as well as how Chinese entrepreneurs' learnings and successes can be applied to this region's burgeoning entrepreneurship space.

Prashant (PK) Gulati, Founder of The SmartStart Fund and moderator of the panel commented, "The rise of China and Chinese products in the level of innovation and sophistication is extremely impressive and continues to grow. The interaction of innovation thought leaders from China with their counterparts in the Middle East has been a great learning experience for both, leading to a new era of collaboration. There is a lot for both sides to share and learn from each other and grow together."

Rita Huangzhen, Founder of ePanda, commented, "China and the Middle East have a long history of trade



and recently we have seen more Middle East consumers embracing products and technology from China. The reputation of 'Made in China' is continuing to grow with a positive perception. For example, China's electricity business in the Middle East GMV is expected to reach \$1 billion in 2017."

Wang Feng, Chief Reporter of Harvard Business Review (Chinese version), added, "Innovation is inseparable from the globalization thinking, and to create value

for consumers one must localize. In line with that, localization of Chinese innovations is significant, regardless of the size of an enterprise. We are now seeing that emerging enterprises are adapting to globalization and this is something small businesses have to pay close attention to succeed."

The panel discussion closed with Huawei highlighting the brand's support for the Middle East region's commitment to innovation growth.

Alghanim Lotus takes the 2018 legendary Evora 400 to Arraya

KUWAIT: Alghanim Lotus unveiled the legendary and globally acclaimed Lotus Evora 400 2018 at Arraya Mall during the month of September, bringing visitors and car enthusiasts closer to the top-of-the-range sports car, which has redefined driving, speed and pure advanced engineering.

Always committing to adding value to customers' experience and providing them with the best quality of service and products, Alghanim Lotus launches an exclusive offer during the unveiling, giving customers competitive financing solutions starting from KD625 monthly installments, in addition to the three-year unlimited mileage warranty which includes three years of free service and a one-year full coverage insurance policy for free.

The exclusive offering runs throughout the duration of the exhibition until the end of the month of September, giving customers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to own of the limited number of Lotus Evora 400 hand-built this year.

About the legendary Evora 400

The new Lotus Evora 400 is one of the latest pure and focused supercars engineered by Lotus, combining high performance with the legendary Lotus benchmark handling. With a maximum speed of 300 kilometers per hour, and an acceleration of 0-100 kilometers in 4.2 seconds, the new Evora is a more agile and involving drive that enables it to lap the challenging test track at the



Lotus Headquarters in Hethel, Norfolk at a scintillating six seconds faster than previous models.

Over two thirds of the Lotus Evora 400 is new, including its supercharged and charge-cooled mid-mounted 3.5-liter V6 engine that produces a horsepower of 400 and 410 Nm of torque. A new aluminum chassis incorporates a new interior, and the lightweight composite body has changed significantly both in the front and rear of the miracle car.

The new Evora is 22 kilograms lighter, an accomplishment that has been achieved through careful and clever design and attention to details. This weight reduction is even more impressive considering that the supercar has more



power and a higher standard specification than before.

Alghanim Motors, the mother company of Alghanim Lotus, is dedicated to providing customers with superior products, outstanding services and features that continue to position the company as a leader in the automotive market.

Experience the purity of speed and unique experience of the 2018 model of Lotus Evora 400 by visiting Arraya Mall in Sharq, Kuwait City, before the end of the month to take advantage of an unprecedented sportscar engineering experience and exclusive offers.

Car enthusiasts can also be the first to know what is new by following Alghanim Motors on Instagram at @AlghanimLotusKW

Honda Alghanim launches Virtual Reality tour of its showrooms

KUWAIT: In a new leap that enhances its leadership in Kuwait, Honda Alghanim, the exclusive distributor of Honda cars, motorcycles and marine equipment in Kuwait, launched its integrated Virtual Reality Tour service for its showrooms, enabling customers to walk through any showroom from the comfort of their home by simply connecting via the Internet to enjoy a smooth experience of products, especially cars, motorcycles and marine and power equipment available.

By simply clicking on the Virtual Reality Tour link, customers become in control of the way they wander through the showrooms, stopping in front of preferred products to have a closer look whether it's cars, bikes, engines, marine equipment or household power and gardening equipment, making it a pleasant visit and a rich experience without having to physically visit the showrooms.

All the customer needs to do is to wear a VR Headgear, which consists of glasses and earphones of simulated reality viewing. Subsequently, the customer needs to click on one of the touring links available on Honda Alghanim website or social media in order to automatically enter the Honda showroom which they chose to tour, and enjoy the experience! Customers can also easily share what they like with family and



Customers invited to VR Experience

friend, allowing them to discuss products and choose among their favorites in a fun and easy process during the virtual visit.

With this new and exciting service, Honda Alghanim confirms once again its commitment to developing its services in all ways and through all channels and means available to make their customer experience more valuable and satisfactory. Honda's interest in modern technology comes in line with its global and local vision to adopt the latest technological revolution around the world and implement it in its products and services.

In addition to the Virtual Reality Tour service, Honda Alghanim brings exclusive surprises every month by launching unbeatable offers on various models, in an aim to provide customers with a peace of mind and reliability, be it in a new Honda model of cars, motorcycles, marine engines or gardening equipment.

Honda Al-Ghanim invites customers to this Virtual Reality Experience to enjoy exciting moments in a virtual world where they are the decision-makers who control every movement and what they want to see. The new Honda showroom is also part of the Virtual Reality tours. It is located within Safat Alghanim and spans over 9,000 square meters. The new



showroom was designed to reflect the commitment of Alghanim Industries to achieve a prestigious status that Honda deserves as a leading global brand. The showroom is characterized by elegant futuristic architecture, contemporary designs, as well as services that put the customer and customer satisfaction at the heart of it all. The new showroom features three multi-service floors and a service center with the capacity to accommodate 70 cars per day, making it the largest in the Middle East and North Africa.

Alghanim Motors is the exclusive distributor in Kuwait of the giant Japanese Honda products from cars to power products and equipment, as well as engines, marine equipment and motorcycles. The company is committed to providing the most appropriate services and solutions, from flexible payment solutions to the highest quality of service. Honda Alghanim car service center features a state-of-the-art waiting area that offers outstanding customer services, including massage chairs, a video games corner, satellite TV and free Wi-Fi.

Nissan celebrates 150 million vehicles produced globally

KUWAIT: Nissan Motor Co. Ltd has reached a new milestone with 150 million vehicles produced globally. It took 73 years for Nissan to produce its first 100 million vehicles after the company was founded in 1933, and another 11 years to build the last 50 million.

Nissan sees this achievement as the result of 84 years of continued support from all of its stakeholders worldwide, including employees, dealers, suppliers and local communities, as well as the numerous customers who have chosen cars produced by Nissan.

When Nissan reached the 100 million vehicle milestone in 2006, 76.5 percent of the total vehicles had been produced in Japan. Localization of production accelerated in the past 11 years, during which 76.5 percent of the 50 million Nissan vehicles were made outside Japan - driven in particular by the US and China.

Following this latest milestone, Nissan remains committed to delivering cars that satisfy its customers.

Nissan is a global full-line vehicle manufacturer that sells more than 60 models under the Nissan, Infiniti and Datsun brands. In fiscal year 2016, the company sold 5.63 million vehicles globally, generating revenue of 11.72 trillion yen. Nissan engineers, manufactures and markets the world's best-selling all-electric vehicle in history, the Nissan LEAF. Nissan's global headquarters in Yokohama, Japan, manages operations in six regions: Asia & Oceania; Africa, Middle East & India; China; Europe; Latin America; and North America. Nissan has a global workforce of 247,500 and has been partnered with French manufacturer Renault since 1999. In 2016, Nissan acquired a 34 percent stake in Mitsubishi Motors. Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi is today the world's largest automotive partnership, with combined annual sales of almost 10 million vehicles. For more information about our products, services and commitment to sustainable mobility, visit nissan-global.com. You can also follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn and see all our latest videos on YouTube.



Technology

Ooredoo launches iPhone 8 with the strongest offer in Kuwait

Thousands gather at Ooredoo head office until early morning

KUWAIT: Continuing its annual Apple launch event, Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, took the lead in launching Apple's latest devices; iPhone 8 and 8 plus; at midnight last Saturday amidst a vast number of customers who came to the headquarters in the heart of Kuwait City in order to get the devices which were paired with an exclusive unprecedented offer making this the biggest and most exciting launch event in Kuwait.

The head office branch welcomed thousands of customers who went above and beyond to ensure that they gain from this exclusive offer which was available for 5 hours only. The offer consisted of the KD20 shamel package with either an iPhone 8 or an iPhone 8 plus inclusive of unlimited local calls and SMS; 500GB internet and unlimited GCC data roaming. This offer was also available at the branches located in Kuwait International Airport, Jahra and Salmiya at the same time.

In addition to the heavy attendance of customers; a number of celebrities participated in the launch including Aboudka, Hamad Qalam, Ahoud Al-Enizi, Sazdell, Dana Altuwaresh, Bashayer Al-Shaibani, Ali Najem, Hessa Al-Loghani and Vintage Baza. They ensured to convey a vivid picture of the event with details before and after the launch. Also taking part in the launch were Ooredoo's ambassadors; triathlon champion Abdulaziz Al-Rashed and Equestrian champion Rakan Al-Hassawi.

Representatives of Apple were also present at the event and joined the leaders of Ooredoo; employees and customers in the launch of the latest devices. They also praised the activities of this celebration and expressed their thanks for the efforts of all employees involved in the success of the launch. The representatives also stressed on the continued strong partnership between Apple and Ooredoo Kuwait.

The company was also keen on ensuring that the customers received special hospitality while they waited in line and allocated a place for 14 restaurants and cafes where the audience enjoyed the most delicious and best food vendors in Kuwait varying from burgers and pizza to ice cream, coffee and others.

In addition, the company in collaboration with Chips store, gifted each customer a special iPhone

8 case and screen protector after their transaction was complete. The customers praised this gesture and chose from a variety of cases that were available to them at a special booth placed near the exit of the event. Due to the high demand of the packages and arrival of thousands of customers; Ooredoo ensured that their employees would also be a part of this launch; and from their end multiple employees volunteered at the event which started at 10pm on Friday evening and ended at 5am on Saturday morning. The employee volunteers supported in organizing the queues inside and outside the branch alongside the external volunteers from Ooredoo's volunteer program where they set an example in facilitating the entry and exit of customers into the branch; helping them and answering any queries they may have had.

In celebration of Apple's 10 year anniversary since the launch of the first iPhone; Ooredoo designed a glass museum inspired by the architecture of the main Apple store in New York city and portrayed all the iPhone's since 2007 (the iPhone's were: 3G/3Gs - 4/4S - 5/5c/5s - 6/6 Plus/6s - 7/7 Plus and of course 8/8 Plus).

In continuation with the support and promotion of youth talent; Ooredoo gave the chance to the GUST music club to take part in this celebration where they played various music live in a unique atmosphere with the audience.

From his end, Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Al-Ayoub weighed in by stating "we are pleased to be celebrating with our customers for the fourth year in a row the launch of the new iPhone, in the biggest event in Telecoms for this year. This year we ensured that we continue to give customers the best and latest packages with competitive advantages and products; this comes from our values of caring and connecting. We also ensured that each customer who purchased the best offer in Kuwait receives a gift as gratitude for their attendance and support."

Ooredoo has re-launched the package for all customers who were unable to attend the special 5 hour offer. Customers are now able to purchase the new iPhone on the KD 35 Shamel package; inclusive of unlimited local minutes and SMS, 500GB data and unlimited GCC roaming data. This package can be found at any of our Ooredoo branches and franchises for more details visit www.ooredoo.com.kw



Apple representatives join launch, praise success



Ali Najem, Ahoud Al-nizi and Vintage Baza



Fatima Dashti and Mijbil Al-Ayoub



Dr Hamad Al-Nuami with Aboudka

New generation of iPhone

iPhone 8 and iPhone 8 plus come with a glass design that is the most durable. They are available in 3 colors: space grey, silver and gold. They come with an all new Retina HD display, in addition to a fast processor through the A11 smart chip. The world's favorite camera has become even better with the all new features including a bigger and faster sensor and a new color filter, it also includes a portrait lighting feature to give pictures a more professional studio effect.

Thank you Ministry of Interior

Ooredoo praised the Ministry of Interior for all its hard work; headed by Director of the traffic department in the Capital Governorate Col Nayef Al-Hajraf and Acting Director of the general security department in the Capital Governorate Col Nasser Al-Adwani; as they were present throughout the night and supported in keeping the customers safe.

iPhone X

Many customers inquired about the launch date of the much anticipated iPhone X, the sales executives have confirmed the launch to be in November, as Apple stated in their press conference last month.

Restaurants and Cafés

Around 14 restaurants and cafes took part in this celebration, they included: Slice - Just C - Dhahia juice - burger company Shawarma Shuwaikh - chili pepper - Kofe - iCream - Cucina bistro - Home berry - gathering - Sajco - AJ's foodtruck - sauce.

Apple Co-founder's signature

The special custom made apple museum inspired by the architecture of the New York Apple store had a rare iPhone 3G signed by Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak also known as "woz".

Ooredoo geo filter on Snapchat

Ooredoo designed a special geo filter for this event on snapchat on the night of the launch; the filter had the Ooredoo building with the hashtag of the night along with the company's logo. This filter was used by all who attended the event and also by people around the area who were able to find the filter by location.



Employees working at the launch



Dr Hamad Nuami with the volunteers



Hamad Qalam with his fans

Health

Bagels, pretzels, Boo! How to explain science Nobels

STOCKHOLM: What do a pretzel, a lock of hair and a scream have in common? They've all been used to explain the highly complex scientific research honored with a Nobel Prize to the general public. In recent years, the various Nobel science prize committees have gone to great lengths to make the pioneering discoveries understandable to a broad audience, occasionally finding creative and amusing ways of getting their message across. "I think we're sometimes a little scared of being too adventurous when presenting the Nobel Prize because it's serious and important," Sven Lidin, who served for 12 years as a member of the Nobel chemistry committee said.

This year's Nobel Prize season kicks off on October 2 with the medicine prize, followed by the physics prize on October 3 and the chemistry prize on October 4. The prizes for literature, peace and economics will be announced in the days that follow. The tough task of conveying the prizes' significance beyond academic and scientific circles is one the various committees take seriously. "If you're going to reach out to others than scientists then you have to make a lot of effort and also make sure it's accurate," said Lidin, who chaired the Nobel chemistry committee from 2012 to 2014.

Currently a chemistry professor at Lund University, Lidin stunned the audience and elicited laughs when he shouted "Boo!" under a painting inspired by Edvard Munch's "The Scream" to explain the 2012 Nobel chemistry prize. "Do you remember the last time you got really scared? The dryness of the mouth, the heart that skips a beat... These are signs that your body is getting ready for flight or fight," he said at the time. Lidin was explaining the discovery of "G-protein-coupled receptors". Not many people may know what they are, but they're crucial: they help our cells react to adrenaline and hormones, explaining

how cardiac cells know to raise the heart rate when we are startled, for example.

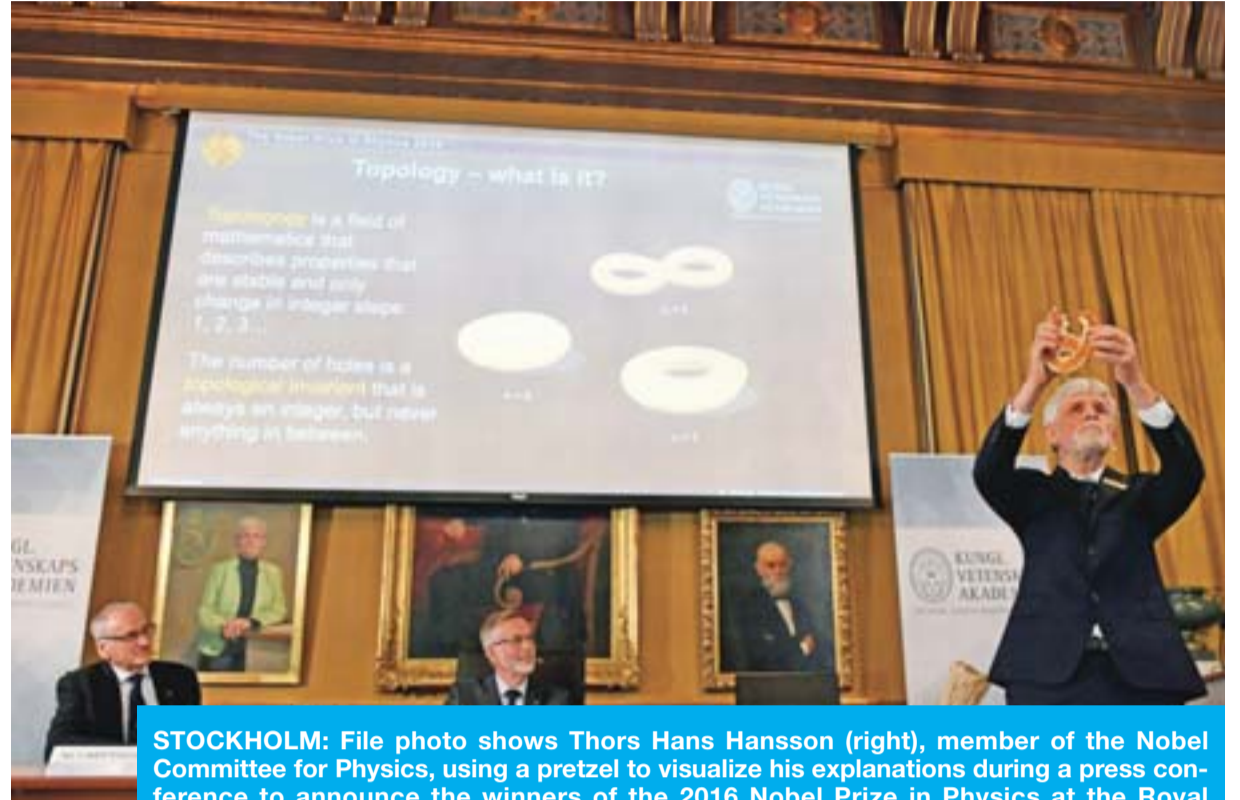
And in 2014, the chemistry Nobel honoured "the development of super-resolved fluorescence microscopy", according to the prize citation. Hmm. Once again, you're not alone if you don't know what that is. To explain it, Lidin surprised the audience by pulling out a lock of his own hair to show how the prizewinners had laid the foundations for the development of nanoscopy, an ultra-powerful microscope that enables scientists to closely look at the inner workings of a cell, revolutionizing disease research. "It's very important to not just make a show out of (the announcement), but to also make it relevant," he said.

'Not trained celebrities'

Thors Hans Hansson, a member of the Nobel physics committee, made headlines last year when he brought a cinnamon bun, a pretzel and a bagel to explain the field of topology, a highly specialized mathematics field studying unusual phases or states of matter.

Referring to the two holes in the pretzel, the one hole in the bagel, and the shape of a bun, Hansson demonstrated that topology explains how a material's shape can be completely deformed into a new one without losing its core properties. The committees are also keen to explain why the public should care about the research, providing examples of practical applications.

The G-protein-coupled receptors discovery, for instance, has led to life-changing methods for antihistamines and psychiatric medications with fewer side effects. And for topology, the physics committee noted that it may one day yield superfast and small computers. But the pretzel-bagel-bun example-which Hansson said was "fun"-didn't just come out of the blue.



STOCKHOLM: File photo shows Thors Hans Hansson (right), member of the Nobel Committee for Physics, using a pretzel to visualize his explanations during a press conference to announce the winners of the 2016 Nobel Prize in Physics at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm. — AFP

The Nobel physics committee has a large staff of social media and web experts responsible for making sure the information they provide is comprehensible.

"We are scientists... we are not trained celebrities," Hansson said with a chuckle, adding that committee members get advice from media experts before the prize announcements. "People give you comments: 'Is what you said understandable? Or did you go into lots

of technical garbage that no-one would understand?'" But Hansson warned that a vivid illustration should never jeopardize the prize's prestige. Clearly, "it shouldn't be simplified to the extent that it is wrong," he stressed. "We try to protect this (award). We want to see that every year... when people see who won this prize, they will say 'Wow, this was really something, it was really worth it.'" —AFP



We are scientists... we are not trained celebrities

Madagascar plague kills 24, triggering WHO fears

ANTANANARIVO: The World Health Organization said yesterday it was boosting its response to a plague outbreak in Madagascar that has killed 24 people, as the government banned public meetings to reduce infections. In a televised address Saturday, Prime Minister Olivier Mahafaly Solonandrasana said no public meetings or demonstrations would be allowed in the capital Antananarivo, which has seen six deaths in recent days. "At airports and bus stations, measures will be taken for passengers to avoid panic and to control the disease," he added after an emergency meeting with the UN health agency.

Madagascar has suffered plague outbreaks almost every year since 1980, often sparked by rats fleeing forest fires. The current outbreak was unusual as it had affected large urban areas, increasing the risk of transmission, the WHO warned. The outbreak is a mix of bubonic plague, which spreads by infected rats via flea bites, and pneumonic plague

spread person-to-person. The highly infectious disease killed millions of people across the world in the past before being largely wiped out. "WHO is concerned that plague could spread further because it is already present in several cities and this is the start of the epidemic season," Charlotte Ndiaye, WHO representative in Madagascar, said in a statement yesterday. "Our teams are on the ground in Madagascar providing technical guidance." The first death this year occurred on August 28 when a passenger died in a public taxi en route to a town on the east coast. Two others who came into contact with the passenger also died. Officials are trying to identify people who came into contact with a basketball coach from the Seychelles who died of plague in Antananarivo on Wednesday while visiting the island for a sports event. Plague can be cured with antibiotics but can be fatal within 24 hours if it affects the lungs.

On Saturday, the health ministry said the death toll had risen to 24 from 19 on Thursday, with more than 100 infected. The recurrent outbreaks in Madagascar have been attributed to poor hygiene and insufficient healthcare. The government said one girl among the dead had apparently been involved in a ceremony retrieving the bodies of deceased family members, rewrapping their remains and dancing with the corpses. WHO has released \$300,000 in emergency funds, as well as extra supplies of antibiotics and protective equipment. It appealed for \$1.5 million to fund the emergency response. —AFP

Ghana wakes up and smells the coffee

LEKLEBI FIAPE, Ghana: Like many people around the world, 80-year-old Kofi Afadi can't start his morning without a cup of coffee. "Every morning when I take coffee I feel happy and go about my day," the farmer said in his village in the green hills between Lake Volta in Ghana and the border with Togo. "When there is no coffee it seems I am the most miserable person around here," he said.

In common with many of his fellow coffee farmers, Afadi, whose dark hair and moustache are speckled white, also grows cocoa-Ghana's biggest crop. The country is the second largest cocoa exporter in the world behind neighboring Ivory Coast. Production of coffee, which was introduced to Ghana at the same time in the 18th century, trails in comparison. But it has rebounded in recent years, thanks to a growing overseas demand and a blossoming domestic market that is giving farmers hope of growing a major cash crop.

A collapse in the price of coffee in the 1980s caused many Ghanaian farmers to

abandon the crop, according to Michael Owusu-Manu, a researcher at Ghana's Cocoa Board. But a government scheme launched in 2011 to revive the sector has transformed production and marketing of Ghanaian coffee. It led to 2,400 hectares (5,930 acres) of new and revitalized coffee plantations, with farmers attracted by the introduction of fair prices for the crop.

Owusu-Manu said the impact of the scheme is easy to overlook because much of Ghana's coffee is sold in West Africa and does not appear in official export statistics. The beans that stay in Ghana are sold to local roasters, who must compete in a market where most coffee is imported. Owusu-Manu now wants to connect local cafes popping up in Accra with local sellers. Afadi hopes government support and a planned coffee farmers' association will help them to wean locals off imports and establish Ghanaian beans in the home market.

Rising global demand

Ghanaian coffee is a matter of heritage and personal pride for the country's farmers. Afadi's coffee farm in Leklebi Fiape, some 200 kilometers northeast of the coastal capital, Accra, is on the same plot where his father grew coffee in the 1920s. As a child, he remembers watching his father roast and grind his own beans, transforming them into a rich black brew—just like the ones he enjoys every day. He is disdainful of the jars and single-serving sachets of instant coffee granules



LEKLEBI AGBESIA, Ghana: Photo shows the fruit of a Robusta coffee plant on a coffee farm in the village of Leklebi Agbesia in the Volta Region of Ghana. — AFP

found on sale in supermarkets and shops. "It doesn't taste like coffee," he says firmly. For now he gets his coffee from neighboring farms, including the one run by nursery manager George Klu. But Afadi is in the process of planting 900 seedlings that the government gave him for free. He expects to harvest his first crop in four years' time when he hopes global demand will only be higher. The International Coffee Organization reports that global annual coffee consumption has grown an average of 1.3 percent every year since 2012. —AFP

CLINIC
PAGE

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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
فهد علي المخيزيم

Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FFAFP. PEM

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What's On



Various Kuwait University (KU) faculties saw students cast their votes yesterday for students' elections for the 2017-2018 academic year. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

KFH Conducts Evacuation Drill at Dhaher Branch



Kuwait Finance House (KFH) organizes an evacuation drill for the workers at Dhaher Branch in cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Interior and its various bureaus. The evacuation drill aimed to determine the branch actual readiness technically in such emergency cases, evaluate and develop emergency plans to be more effective in various conditions and circumstances, train employees on dealing with emergency cases, apply safety instructions and observe applicable regulations prior to evacuation.

Al-Mulla Exchange launches 2018 Calendar painting contest

Al-Mulla International Exchange, the leading exchange company in Kuwait, is taking the creativity of their yearly calendar to their customer's children. Their calendar which has a wide spread distribution in Kuwait becomes an ideal canvas for young budding artists to showcase their talents and design.

Open for children under the age of 15 years, the competition runs for a month from September 27, 2017 until October 27, 2017. The 12 winners, one for each page of the calendar will be announced on the 05th of November by a special panel of experts.

Speaking about the competition, the General Manager of Al-Mulla Exchange, Rakesh Joshi, explained "A calendar is something which adorns our table throughout the year and is very personal to most people. Through this competition, we have not only found a wonderful way to engage with our customers but also have a positive and deep impact on the artistic talents of our customer's children. Winners take home some very attractive cash prizes as well as a certificate of recognition from Al-Mulla Exchange. I would like to take this occasion to wish our customers and their children all the very best for their endeavors in the competition."

The rules and regulation of the competition is given in detail in the Al-Mulla Exchange website, www.almullaexchange.com. Alternatively for any enquiries on the matter, Jennifer Valdez from the marketing department can be reached on Jennifer.valdez@almullagroup.com.



CBK receives 2nd winner of 'Your Dream Trip'

The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently received the second winner in the 'Your Dream Trip' campaign this month. Lafi Rashed Awwad Al-Azmi won cruise and Business Class tickets to Europe or the United States, with accommodations at a five-star hotel before taking the eight-day cruise with a companion. In this regard, CBK's assistant manager for individual banking, Lina Darwish welcomed the winner and presented him with the prize. Darwish explained that holder of CBK credit or debit cards would get a chance to enter the draw for each KD 10 they spend using those cards in Kuwait, and three chances for spending the same amount abroad.



TIES hosts Tafseer class

You are cordially invited to our Tafseer class (Divine Wisdom from the Last Testament) today at 7:00 pm. In this class, we will focus on Surat Al-Qalam (The Pen) from verse 15 till 19. We will discuss some characteristics of Allah's enemies who, instead of thanking Him for His blessings, chose to disbelieve in Him and deter others from belief. We will also compare the punishment meted out to the Quraishi polytheists with that of the owners of a lush garden in Yemen who betrayed the generosity of their deceased father. Finally, we will discuss the importance of the phrase, 'In sha'Allah.

International Student Network holds education fair in Kuwait

The International Student Network (ISN) returns to Kuwait today for an educational fair at the Regency Hotel from 5-9 pm. Cultural Attache Zennia Paganini will provide opening remarks. The fair will include representatives from seven US Colleges and universities who will provide information about their schools and answer questions from students and parents about educational opportunities in the United States. The three-hour educational

fair is organized by ISN in cooperation with the US Embassy. The following universities will attend the event: Jackson College, Grand Valley State University, Adelphi University, West Virginia University, Bradley University, Snow College and Drury University.

EducationUSA advisers will be present at the fair to answer students' questions about higher education in the US, including the admissions process and will give a presenta-

tion on "What to expect on your first year of University" from 5-6 pm. US Embassy consular officers will also be present to answer questions about the student visa application process. Additional information about the fair can be found at http://www.studentlane.com/en_us/. For more information about studying in the United States please visit <http://www.educationusa.state.gov/>.

TV

AM MOVIES ACTION
01:25 Snake Eyes
03:15 Virtual Revolution
05:00 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation

ANIMAL PLANET HD
00:45 Treehouse Masters
05:02 When Turkeys Attack
05:49 Killer Hornets From Hell

BBC FIRST
00:00 EastEnders
00:35 The Level
01:25 Luther

crime & investigation network
00:00 Killer Kids
01:00 Homicide Hunter
02:00 I Didn't Do It

COMEDY CENTRAL
00:05 Live At The Apollo
00:55 The Alternative Comedy Experience
01:20 Tosh.0

Discovery Family
22:25 The Alternative Comedy Experience
22:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood

Discovery Family
00:05 Finding Bigfoot
00:55 Destroyed In Seconds
01:20 Destroyed In Seconds

ID
00:30 Paranormal Lockdown With Nick Groff
01:20 Haunted Towns
02:10 Forbidden: Dying For Love

Disney HD
00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 The Hive

Disney Junior
00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
00:15 Calimero
00:30 Art Attack

Discovery Channel HD
01:05 Loopidoo
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 Calimero

Discovery Channel HD
00:20 Misfit Garage
01:05 Idris Elba: No Limits
01:50 Harley And The Davidsons

FX HD
06:00 Disney11
06:25 Supa Strikas
06:50 Marvel's Spider-Man

EHD
00:00 El's Look Book
00:30 El's Look Book
01:00 WAGS Miami

Keeping Up With The Kardashians
13:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
14:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

food
00:00 Chopped South Africa
01:00 Siba's Table
01:30 Siba's Table

itv HD CHOICE
00:10 Chopping Block
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street

F2 HD
01:00 The Lost Evidence
02:00 United Stuff Of America
02:50 In Search Of Aliens

NAT GEO people HD
00:45 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
01:40 Cruise Ship Diaries

Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
00:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
03:30 Places We Go

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD
00:10 Wicked Tuna
01:00 Year Million
02:00 Seconds From Disaster

NAT GEO WILD HD
00:20 Safari Brothers
01:10 Survive The Wild
02:00 Africa's Blood River

nick HD
00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion

nick jr.
00:01 Max & Ruby
00:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom

Blaze And The Monster Machines
00:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:41 Zack & Quack

Blaze And The Monster Machines
00:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:41 Zack & Quack

AM MOVIES HD FAMILY
00:00 Mars Needs Moms
01:30 The Game Plan
03:25 Return To Oz

AM MOVIES HD COMEDY
01:10 Baby, Baby, Baby
02:40 Yoga Hosers
04:25 Three Men And A Little Lady

AM MOVIES HD FESTIVAL
00:35 Born To Be Blue
02:20 The Apartment

AM MOVIES HD KIDS
01:05 Pooch's Heffalump Movie
02:15 Memory Loss
03:40 Mickey, Donald, Goofy: The 3 Musketeers

Discovery Science
00:30 The Unexplained Files
01:20 The Unexplained Files

Discovery Science
00:30 The Unexplained Files
01:20 The Unexplained Files

STAR MOVIES HD
00:15 Hanna
02:15 Bears
03:30 Million Dollar Baby

STAR WORLD HD
00:00 Black Box
01:00 Black Box
02:00 Black Box

TLC HD
00:20 Finding My Twin Stranger
01:05 My Big Fat Fabulous Life

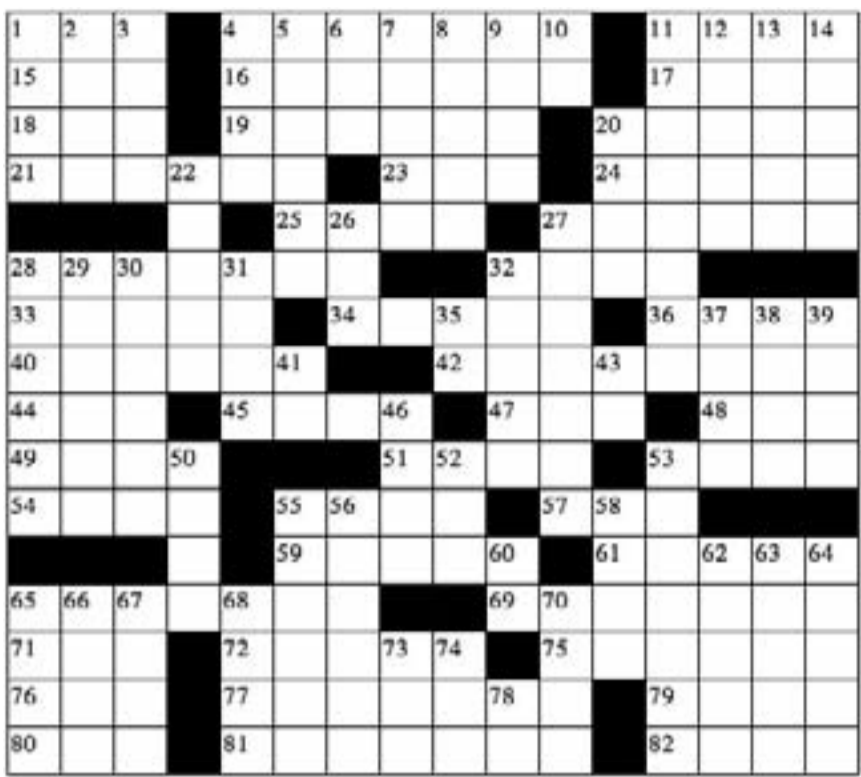
AM MOVIES HD COMEDY
01:10 Baby, Baby, Baby
02:40 Yoga Hosers
04:25 Three Men And A Little Lady

AM MOVIES HD COMEDY
01:10 Baby, Baby, Baby
02:40 Yoga Hosers
04:25 Three Men And A Little Lady

travel CHANNEL
00:00 Most Terrifying Places In America
01:00 Top Secret Swimming Holes
02:00 Xtreme Waterparks

Stars

CROSSWORD 1724



ACROSS

- 1. The compass point that is one point east of due south.
4. United States humorist and writer of satirical short stories (1885-1933).
11. Leafless East Indian vine.
15. Someone who is morally reprehensible.
16. Lift forcefully from beneath.
17. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
18. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
19. An offensive name for an unskilled Asian laborer.
21. Having or resembling a beak.
23. Imperial dynasty that ruled China (most of the time) from 206 BC to 221 and expanded its boundaries and developed its bureaucracy.
24. Lap at the front of a coat.
25. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
28. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
33. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
34. Valuable fiber plant of East Indies now widespread in cultivation.
36. Agency of the United States government charged with mediating disputes between management and labor.
40. A slight convexity (as of the surface of a road).
42. An opaque adjustable flap on a lamp fixture.
44. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
45. A Hindu prince or king in India.
47. Tag the base runner to get him out.
48. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on the sea or ships.
49. A British peer of the highest rank.
51. Remove with or as if with a ladle.
54. Any of the forms of Chinese spoken in Fukien province.
57. A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived.
59. A minor Hebrew prophet (8th century BC).
61. Be or do something to a greater degree.
65. The dialect of Ancient Greek spoken by Arcadians.
69. Instrument of execution consisting of a wooden frame from which condemned persons are executed by hanging.
71. The cry made by sheep.
72. (Akkadian) Mother and earth goddess in Gilgamesh epic.
75. Submerged freshwater perennials.
76. Any of various systems of units for measuring electricity and magnetism.
77. A member of a subgroup of people who inhabit Lesotho.
79. Humble in spirit or manner.
80. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
81. The Uto-Aztecan language spoken by the Aztec people.
82. A small cake leavened with yeast.

- 7. A city in north-central India.
8. Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
9. Divisible by two.
10. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
11. Music composed for dancing the saraband.
12. Similar to the giraffe but smaller with much shorter neck and stripe on the legs.
13. Someone who is dazzlingly skilled in any field.
14. Administer an oil or ointment to.
20. Pompous or pretentious talk or writing.
22. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
26. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
27. A Japanese shrub that resembles members of the genus Spiraea.
29. Wild ginger.
30. The capital of Mali.
31. Type genus of the Aceraceae.
32. Either of two large African antelopes of the genus Taurotragus having short spirally twisted horns in both sexes.
35. A unit of information equal to one million (1,048,576) bytes.
37. Large genus of erect or climbing prickly shrubs including roses.
38. United States physiologist (born in Germany) who did research on parthenogenesis (1859-1924).
39. (informal) Exceptionally good.
41. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
43. A soft gray ductile metallic element used in alloys.
46. By bad luck.
50. Long-bodied long-tailed tropical American wildcat.
52. How long something has existed.
53. A unit of electrical charge equal to the amount of charge transferred by a current of 1 ampere in 1 second.
55. A city in central southwestern Iran.
56. Migratory grasshoppers of warm regions having short antennae.
58. The rounded seed-bearing capsule of a cotton or flax plant.
60. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
62. A genus of delicate ferns belonging to the family Osmundaceae.
63. A person of unquestioning obedience.
64. Port city on southern Honshu on Osaka Bay.
66. Avatar of Vishnu.
67. part of the peritoneum attached to the stomach and to the colon and covering the intestines.
68. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
70. (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.
73. Fish eggs or egg-filled ovary.
74. Greenwich Mean Time updated with leap seconds.
78. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.

DOWN

- 1. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
2. A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria.
3. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
4. United States publisher of magazines (1898-1967).
5. (of snakes and eels) Naturally footless.
6. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Do not take chances or risks just now. Be satisfied with the ordinary and the usual. Someone may try to tell you an untruth today but your mind cuts right through all the window dressing and gets right down to the quick.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You feel a love of order and law—an appreciation for responsibilities and duty. Problems are valued for the lessons they teach, rather than considered as obstacles.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

The way you deal with necessities and obligations—health and work in particular—is in a state of transformation. Your job situation may change radically. Improvements are in the works.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

There are possibilities that you will run into a snag with a person or become blocked in a situation this morning. Quietly and respectfully stating your opinion may not be the answer in this situation.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Although you could overdo and find yourself feeling cross, you can pat yourself on the back for learning how to rise above the profit you have set for yourself at this time.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

There is a push to complete your home chores. Travel opportunities are available all month. This is a great time, when anything is possible.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your career or life path, the way you make your living or get through life, is quite unique. There are opportunities now to reach beyond your current situation and to expand your horizons.



Scorpio (October 23-November 18)

This is a rewarding day. Others may seek you out for your advice regarding very personal issues. You have a prolific mood-altering way of interacting with others and today you may find depressed conversations easy to manipulate into a most positive outlook.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This whole day gives you the opportunity to bring some focus to a family matter. There is new understanding and compassion on the home front.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is an easy, calm day that you should find running in a smooth manner. Ideas and interaction with family members may be in the forecast sometime during the day.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may find that you must hurry through the day sewing costumes, accounting for lost funds, experimenting with a science project for a child or dealing with a plethora of other subjects to be allocated over to others.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Important financial decisions require more information than you realize. It's important to gather all the facts necessary to give you a realistic idea of whatever subject is at hand.

Wordsearch Puzzle

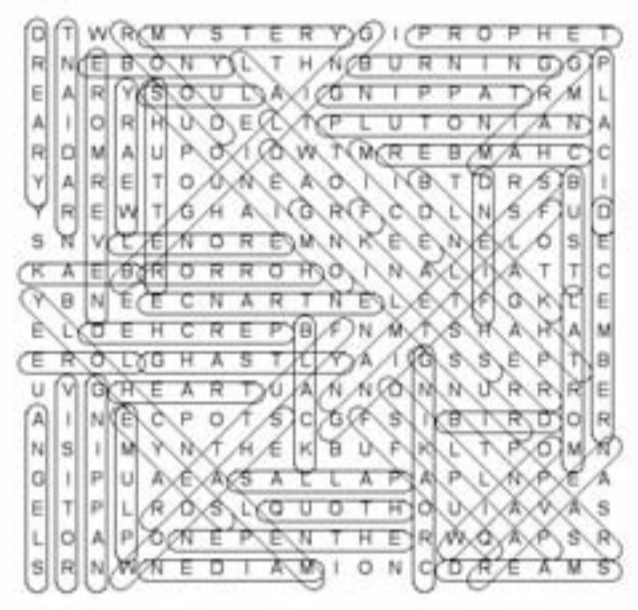
Tools

Wordsearch puzzle grid with instructions: Find and circle all of the Tools that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Henry David Thoreau quotation.

- BAND SAW, FILE, POLISHER, SPRAY GUN, BOLT CUTTER, GRINDER, PROTRACTOR, SQUARE, BRUSH, HAMMER, PRY BAR, STAPLE GUN, BUFFER, HAND SAW, PUNCH, STUD FINDER, CALIPER, HEX KEY, RASP, TABLE SAW, CHALK, JIG SAW, RATCHET, TAPE MEASURE, CHISEL, JOINTER, ROUTER, TAPS AND DIES, CLAMP, KNIFE, SANDER, TINSNIPS, COPING SAW, LATHE, SAWHORSE, VISE, CROWBAR, MALLET, SCREWDRIVER, WOOD RULE, DADO, MITER BOX, SCROLL SAW, WRECKING BAR, DIVIDER, PLANE, SOCKETS, WRENCH, DRILL PRESS, PLIER.

Yesterday's Solution

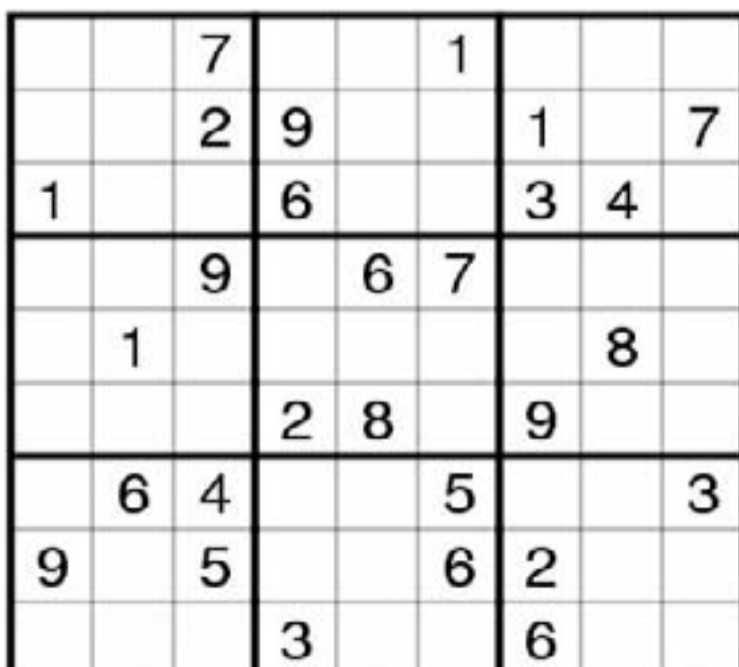
The Raven



- ANGELS, DOOR, GRIM, NAPPING, QUOTH, BEAK, DREAMS, HEART, NEPENTHE, RADIANT, BEGUILING, DREARY, HORROR, NEVERMORE, RAPPING, BIRD, EBONY, LATTICE, OMINOUS, RAVEN, BLACK, ENTRANCE, LENORE, PALLID, RUSTLING, BLEAK, EYES, LORE, PERCHED, SHADOW, BURNING, FEATHER, MAIDEN, PERCHED, SHUTTER, BUST, FIEND, MELANCHOLY, PLACID, SOUL, CHAMBER, FLITTING, MIDNIGHT, PLUME, TAPPING, CREAKING, FLUTTER, MORTEL, PLUTONIAN, VISITOR, DARKNESS, FOWL, MYSTERY, PROPHET, WEARY, DECEMBER, GHASTLY, NAMELESS, QUAFF, WIND.

Hidden sentence: WITH ME POETRY HAS NOT BEEN A PURPOSE, BUT A PASSION

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle | Features

Cartoon Network at 25: Sketching out a cutting-edge future

Yesterday marked a quarter century since the Cartoon Network burst upon the pastel-colored landscape of American television animation, redefining the way kids' entertainment was beamed into homes. Launched when ratings for morning cartoons were dropping and "The Simpsons" was starting to dominate primetime, many thought Turner Broadcasting Systems' \$320 million purchase of the Hanna-Barbera library was lunacy.

But Ted Turner, whose company already owned extensive back catalogues from MGM and Warner Bros., believed there was a gap in the market for a round-the-clock, seven-day channel showing cartoons that young and old could enjoy. His vision has been spectacularly vindicated, with CN growing from a modest start-up to one of cable TV's most popular programmers, seen in around 100 million American homes and in more than 170 other countries.

"The thing that separates us is that we have artists driving the process here for everything," chief content officer Rob Sorcher said and other media outlets on a recent tour of its headquarters in Burbank, California. "That is a fundamental difference from most other studios, because the artists are telling the stories through drawings. There aren't scripts getting done in most cases, and then animators animating them." In its infancy, the network showed re-runs of "The Flintstones," "The Jetsons," "Scooby Doo Where Are You!," "Tom and Jerry," "Popeye" and many other classics.

It went into original programming with "The Moxy Show" in December 1993, following up with "Space Ghost Coast to Coast" and, from 1997, "Johnny Bravo," which raised eyebrows with its adult humor but became iconic. More recently the network has churned out numerous hits including "Steven Universe," "Star Wars: Clone Wars," "Powerpuff Girls," "Regular Show" and "Adventure Time."

Devouring information

"Ben 10," its longest-running franchise about a

boy that can turn into aliens, has enjoyed widespread critical acclaim, winning three Emmys, with the associated merchandising estimated to have been worth almost \$5 billion. Writer Steven T. Seagle, whose Man of Action Entertainment studio produces the show, said one of the challenges has been to crank up the pace for viewers who are getting increasingly quicker at devouring information in the smartphone age.

"When I was a kid, if I found out about something I liked, I'd have to go to a library which might take a day to get to. I'd have to find some book somewhere and read it," he said. "Now if anything peaks their fancy, they usually have a device, they find out about it immediately and they exhaust it. They're through it completely by the end of the day and on to something else."

Marking CN out from other animation studios, the network has a "shorts unit" in which artists aren't expected to pitch their ideas, instead just making their seven-minute films and then showing the executives the result. It is a process that has spawned nine full series-including big hits like "We Bare Bears"-and accounts for 80 percent of the company's development of new projects. "We Bare Bears"-about the adventures of three ursine brothers-is made by Annie Award-winning creator Daniel Chong, 38, whose credits include Pixar's "Inside Out" and "Cars 2," and Disney's "Bolt."

Creative control

"It's great to be part of the Pixar machine-but it is a machine. You're taking a script and boarding it at the behest of the director," he said. "I'm now in control of the product, every decision goes through me. We don't have the budget of Pixar or the time, but I get to tell the stories that interest me." With many entertainment networks losing primetime viewership, CN has been making gains, finishing number one among ad-supported cable networks in its core kids 6-11 demo for the first time in 2015.

As well as competition from traditional rivals like Nickelodeon, CN is under increasing pressure from Netflix's burgeoning slate of children's pro-



This file photo shows, left to right, Shelby Rabara, Charlyne Yi, Jennifer Paz, AJ Michalka, Rebecca Sugar, and Tom Scharpling of 'Steven Universe' at New York Comic Con in New York City. — AFP

gramming, not to mention Google's YouTube Kids and many other video apps. Keen to stay ahead, CN delivered triple-digit growth in 2015 for its app and, earlier this year, launched TV/mobile app hybrid "OK K.O.! Let's Be Heroes"-about a young wannabe who lives in a world populated by superheroes.

While it may be a brave new world in terms of technology, some things never change, says "OK K.O.!" creator Ian Jones-Quartey, whose team spends about nine months making each 11-minute

episode. "Our method of working on the cartoons is we sit in a room, we look at pictures and drawings and we pitch them to each other, and we work on the jokes individually," the 33-year-old said. "That's the same exact way Warner Bros. cartoons were made back in the day. That's how all the Disney movies were made, like 'Pinocchio,' 'Snow White'-all those cartoons." —AFP

Don't bathe more than once a week, says designer Westwood



Models present creations by Comme des garçons, during the women's 2018 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris. —AFP

Famboyant fashion designer Vivienne Westwood revealed the secret of her eternal youth Saturday-only taking a bath once a week. The 76-year-old queen of punk fashion let it slip after watching her husband Andreas Kronthaler's spectacularly idiosyncratic show at Paris Fashion Week. Asked by reporters how she managed to look so young, Westwood smiled and said, "Don't wash too much." "She only takes a bath every week. That's why she looks so radiant," said Kronthaler, who Westwood has described as "the world's greatest designer."

"I only wash once a month," joked the Austrian-born creator, who is 25 years Westwood's junior. Westwood, an environmentalist and vegetarian who has campaigned against the meat trade depleting water supplies, has previously said that "I just wash my bits and rush out in the morning and more often than not get in the bath after Andreas."

Kronthaler—who is said to have inspired comedian Sacha Baron Cohen's 2009 fashion satire "Bruno"—lived up to his reputation for decadent excess in his Paris show which featuring no less than 68 looks and a dozen more human sculptures wrapped in duvets. "There is nothing better than giving people choice," he told AFP of a collection he said was filled with

"lust, desire, sex and sadness. "We travelled quite a bit this summer and I tried to put it all into it."

Named dresses after cows

He said he spent some of his time on holiday in a Tyrolean cowshed and named the dresses in his collection after the cows. One outfit is called Vivienne after a calf his wife helped deliver. Two others are called Naomi and Donatella, two names more redolent of the runway than alpine pastures. "Now I am ready for something different... I cannot wait to get my hands on the next mess," Kronthaler added.

The designer said his Austrian country childhood with its corsets and traditional drind dresses was the springboard for his at times wildly experimental collection that included two models wearing a set of curtains complete with rails. A painted satin dress fit for a Chinese empress, however, drew spontaneous applause from the front row. "Folklore gets a bad name but we should use tradition," Kronthaler said.

"I had a completely secluded safe and happy life growing up, and when that is embedded in you, you go through life in that way. If you can give someone the chance to live in the



Designer Vivienne Westwood, right, is joined by Andreas Kronthaler at the end of the Vivienne Westwood Spring/Summer 2018 ready-to-wear fashion collection presented in Paris. — AP

countryside I would always tell them to do so," he added. But Kronthaler, whose Andreas Kronthaler for Vivienne Westwood range alternates with his wife's collections, said he did not always appreciate his rural idyll. "For a long time I did not like my name and where I came from. I always wanted to be called Maximilian or Augustus. I wanted to come from somewhere like Rome. Today I'm okay with it all. The older I get the more sensual I feel."

Kronthaler's show was one of a clutch of eye-catching original shows on Saturday. The Japanese Comme des Garçons label—whose shows also push the boundaries of the wearable, and those between art and couture — sent out a line of gravity defying outfits and colorfully printed double coats, one worn inside the other. Earlier former Comme des Garçons stalwart Junya Watanabe wowed critics with his two-tone punk designs made from prints from the famous Finnish textile house Marimekko. —AFP



In this photograph, Rosario Esposito La Rossa poses in his bookshop 'Scugnizzeri' in Scampia on the outskirts of Naples. — AFP

Naples fights mafia - with first bookshop in 50 years

In the hinterlands of Naples a revolution is afoot: locals tired of drug lords are taking the fight to the mafia and their weapon of choice is the humble book. Tucked away between squats and roadside traders of broken toys rises the first bookshop in nearly 50 years. The concrete sprawl of Scampia, a bastion of the ruthless Camorra organized crime group, was immortalized in the 2006 bestselling book "Gomorra" by Roberto Saviano and in a popular spin-off film and television series. Now one of the poorest areas in southern Italy is attempting to cast off the stereotype of Kalashnikov-wielding teens and get its young off the streets by flooding the turf with theatre, cinema and literature associations. The tower blocks, riddled with asbestos and divided by rubbish-strewn no-man's lands, were thrown up in the 1970s. "There has never been a bookshop here. We had to travel 10 kilometers to buy a book," Rosario Esposito La Rossa, whose shop "Scugnizzeri" opened a week ago, told AFP.

Widespread illiteracy

The idea for the small store, which also has a room for

theatre and study groups, followed the death of La Rossa's disabled relative Antonio, caught in the crossfire of a 2004 shootout and labelled a trafficker by the state. "He was hit by two bullets as he played table football, but police said he had links to the Cali cocaine cartel in Colombia. We fought for 10 years to clear his name and it became a cultural battle for our neighborhood," he said.

When La Rossa inherited the Marotta&Cafiero publishing house in 2010 he moved it to Scampia to continue the fight. "There were those who said we would close within a few weeks because no-one reads in Scampia, it has the highest illiteracy rate in southern Italy. Seven years on and we have published 88 books," he said. The 29-year old is just the tip of an iceberg of change slowly edging its way across the northern suburb of Naples. The government has pledged to demolish three of the four remaining Sails of Scampia, notorious tower blocks shaped like sails where staircases boast metal gates installed by traffickers to slow down police during raids. —AFP

Director turns to virtual reality to tastefully show tragedy

For 25 years filmmaker Gina Kim wanted to make a movie about the true story of a South Korean sex worker killed by an American soldier, but struggled with how to do so without feeling she was exploiting the victim. Then virtual reality arrived. Through a partnership of storytelling and technology, Kim finally brought the 1992 murder to life in "Bloodless," a 12-minute piece that won the award for best VR story at this year's Venice Film Festival. The director said virtual reality is providing new ways to depict tragedies without making them into a spectacle.

"It allows you to feel the pain of others as if your own," Kim said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "VR is not cinema. It's something else." Kim was a college freshman in 1992 when South Korea exploded in rage at the incident involving the soldier and sex worker in the town of Dongducheon, home to a US military base 40 kilometers north of Seoul. Protesters, including Kim, took to the streets, trying to shed light on the grim conditions of sex workers and to urge the South Korean and American governments to bring the soldier to justice.



Yet it was during those protests that Kim first saw how apparently well-intentioned people could exploit the very person they were trying to help. Protesters seeking to highlight the case had printed fliers and posters of a leaked crime scene photo showing the unclothed body of the 26-year-old woman brutally disfigured and damaged. The image led to an outpouring of anger that eventually led to the soldier's hand over for trial in South Korea, where he was convicted of murder. Yet Kim and others lamented how the reprinted image was a form of violence against the woman and her family.

"I felt extremely disturbed and awful about it," Kim recalled. It was that memory that stifled Kim's efforts to bring the story to cinema for so many years. "I worked on it and stopped trying to come up with a better way of telling the story with the right ethics of representation and it was extremely difficult," Kim said. The "cinematic medium is such a voyeuristic medium and the viewers enjoy what unfolds on screen as a spectacle." Only after she was introduced to virtual reality, was she able to find a way to portray the death. —AP

Korean K-fashion dreams of emulating K-pop on the catwalk



With insults being traded almost daily between Washington and Pyongyang, Koreans could be forgiven for feeling they are dancing on the edge of a geo-political volcano these days. Yet South Korea could not be more hip. The political tension on the peninsula has done nothing to dull the huge international success of South Korean K-pop singers who dominate the charts in much of Asia and beyond. The country has also become a style destination for thousands of young Chinese visitors eager to copy the looks of their K-pop idols, with top luxury brands like Dior and Chanel competing to clothe them.

With the country's cosmetics industry also booming, South Korea's fashion houses are now daring to dream big. Young K-fashion designers hope to cash in on the style-ic status of K-pop stars to compete with Japanese labels, which have long been Asian fashion's big hitters. Unlike Japan, where brands such as Comme des Garçons, Issey Miyake and Yohji Yamamoto are global names, few Korean labels have made an impact beyond their shores.

This weekend the Seoul government brought five of its rising talents to show at Paris Fashion Week as part of its "K-Fashion Project" charm offensive that has already made stops in New York, Beijing and Shanghai. "We Koreans are very fashion conscious. We love fashion," Ju Tae Jin of the Korea Research Institute for Fashion Industry said before the show in the French capital.



Fashion designers of the K Fashion Project acknowledge the public at the end of the K-Fashion Project women's 2018 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP photos



Phono sapiens

Eunae Cho has an altogether different thing brewing. She called her collection Tibaeg ("teabag" in English) — with tea-leaf prints and green as her signature color. Using light-as-a-feather glittery synthetic organzas and flower embroidery, she rethought the long flowing traditional Korean hanbok dress, as well as sending some rather dramatic pleated pants done the catwalk. The 36-year-old started her own brand in 2011 after leaving Yonsei university in Seoul and her clothes have since been sold in Los Angeles, Canada, Kuwait, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Sporting a French beret, tattoos and sunglasses, Bumsuk Choi the creator behind the General Idea label, cuts a very different figure. His rise has been a lot less conventional. He left school at 17 "because I needed to make money" and learned to sew in a factory. He made his first T-shirts at 20 and "cried I was so stressed... It's quite a different story from people that have a lot of money and go to fashion schools," he said.

Two decades later after showing his clever and quirky creations at New York Fashion Week on his own bat, he has made inroads in Milan, Hong Kong, the United States, China and France. He has a clean and distinctive style and likes to link the new millennial generation with the hippies of the 1960s-just with "added IT"—jokingly calling them the "phono sapiens" because of how they live through their phones.—AFP

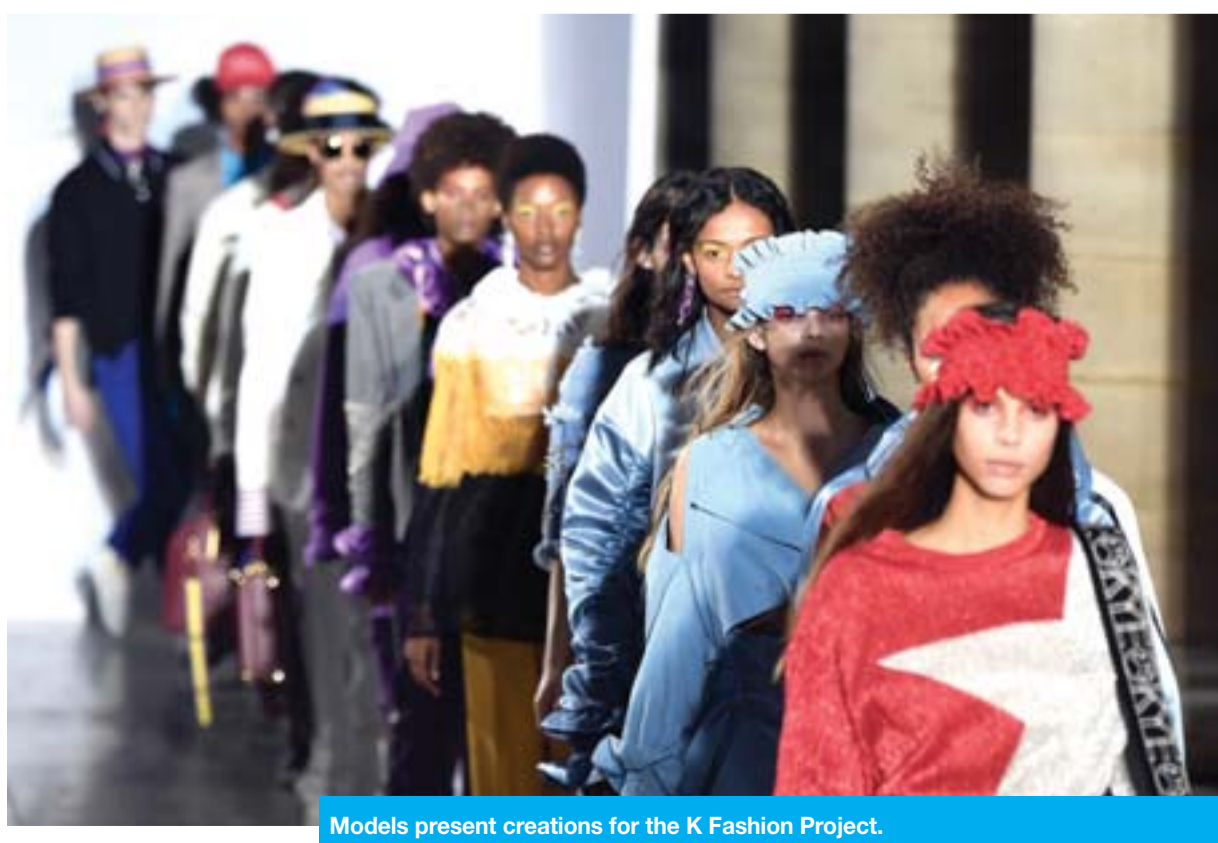
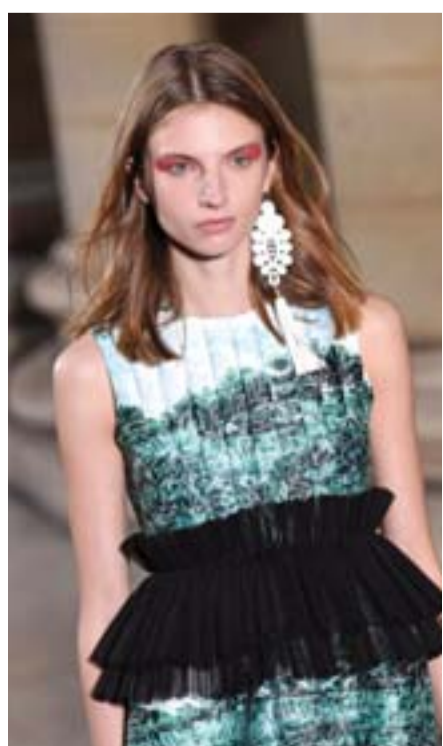


Seoul's hip street fashion

"The young designers have grown up in that environment and they know how to interpret street fashion into their design DNA. They are very dynamic and they are very good at presenting themselves on social media," she said. Ju said that Korean designers were particularly gifted for their amusing take on streetwear, with Seoul giving Tokyo a run for its money in terms of youth style. That fizzy creativity came across most in the five designers showing in the French capital late Saturday.

"I wonder what the fashion people here will think of the collection," said Kathleen Kye, whose designs have been worn by K-pop star G-Dragon, leader of the group BIG-BANG. "So yes, it is quite important to me." A graduate of London's prestigious Central Saint Martins, she launched her own label Kye in 2011, and is one of the better known names taking part in Seoul Fashion week later this month.

The five featured brands, who were chosen from around 100 up-and-coming designers, are also having their clothes featured at the Colette store in Paris, a temple for fashionistas. Kye's highly colored street wear collection was inspired by superstitions and fortune-telling-both popular Korean obsessions. Her tops scattered with stars and the seams embroidered with silver pearls, sell from around 80 euros with jackets going for 400.



Models present creations for the K Fashion Project.





Models wear creations for Vivienne Westwood Spring-Summer 2018 ready-to-wear fashion collection presented in Paris. — AP photos

Amazonian color, dramatic silhouettes hit the Paris runways

Amazonian color and exaggerated silhouettes reigned at Paris Fashion Week shows, as actresses Abbie Cornish and Emily Robinson joined it-girl Olivia Palermo on the coveted front row seats. Here are the highlights of the spring-summer 2018 ready-to-wear collections on Saturday.

Elie Saab's Amazon fever

Elie Saab always adds a little bite to his creations - and this season, the Lebanese designer evoked the verdant Amazon - in all its danger, wildness and tropical vivacity. Saab used the vivid colors of the forest to show off his daring designs. Saturday's flesh-baring collection opened with a frayed mini-dress in python with a dangerously plunging neckline. The python motif morphed into a floor-length Charlie's Angels dress with diaphanous neck scarf and giant, retro circular shades. That established a 70s-theme that infused much of the 61-look collection. Foliage and leaf shapes made up the bodice of one beautiful dark green cinched-waisted gown, with a sheer silk skirt frayed to look like creeper tendrils. A Cerulean blue peaked-shoulder tuxedo mirrored the shards of blue sky in between trees, and a loose safari jacket in blinding Cadmium yellow evoked the sun.

Mugler's robotic chic

David Koma, the talented Mugler designer, showed off a hyper-kinetic vision of women in Saturday's graphic, angular collection that riffed on the robotic. A dark, structured corset sported trompe l'oeil lines that exaggeratedly cinched the waist on an android-looking model with slicked back hair. Her pants tapered out at a circular jutting waist that gave the look a clever, off-kilter quality.

"His minimalist and sophisticated styles with metallic details constitute the new timeless wardrobe of the Mugler woman," the house said in its notes. Koma's designs became more fluid as the show progressed - with loose acid-yellow and flame red silk gowns making an appearance. Still, the floaty gowns were stylishly truncated at the top, as if the shoulders had been slashed by a guillotine.

Andreas Kronthaler for Vivienne Westwood

Vivienne Westwood's other half, Andreas Kronthaler, her Austrian former fashion student, certainly brings ideas to the table as the house's principle designer. Gleaming boxers' trophy belts, 18th-century prints, flame red head sculptures and colorful men's swimming trunks sound like they shouldn't all be in the same sentence - but they all mixed together in Saturday's wacky fashion spectacle. Color and prints were the only unifying themes.

A fluid printed silk dress was worn with pale blue knitted rugby socks and colored sneakers with a frothing voluminous tongue. The socks and shoes showed off Kronthaler's clever eye and sense of humor - they perfectly evoked the style of an 18th-century nobleman though the medium of contemporary clothing.

A well-known 18th-century oil painting - a pastoral featuring tigers, stags, rhinos and swans - appeared on several street-wise dresses as a flurry of color and busy movement. And one thick, tight-fitting dress in gray and black looked almost like Renaissance peasant garb.

The Yves Saint Laurent museum

To coincide with Paris Fashion Week, the much-anticipated Paris Yves Saint Laurent museum is finally opening its doors. The project has been years in the making, and was initiated by the late designer's former partner Pierre Berge, who

died in September at 86. Housed in the revamped 5 Avenue Marceau, where the famed French couturier designed his work from 1974 to 2002, the museum will host a special retrospective of Saint Laurent's fashions.

The iconic YSL women's tuxedo will be included, as well as other famous boundary-pushing creations such as the Sahara jacket, the jumpsuit and the trench coat. The designer, who died in 2008, was also an avid art lover. His vivid Mondrian dress, which shook the fashion world in 1965, will also be showcased.

"Trailblazers and fighters, Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Berge were tireless. This museum is an example, the result of a long labor of conservation," French Culture Minister Françoise Nyssen said. "They both shared ... the same urge to push back the borders of creativity."



Models wear creations for Elie Saab's Spring-Summer 2018 ready-to-wear fashion collection presented in Paris.



Supermodel Cindy Crawford

For over two decades, Cindy Crawford's chiseled looks have been almost synonymous with the luxury watch brand Omega. Now, it's time for the 51-year-old supermodel's children - and their equally sculpted faces - to follow in their mother's footsteps. At a Friday night event, Crawford introduced her teenagers Presley, 18, and Kaia Gerber, 16, as OMEGA's newest ambassadors. Gerber, a debuting model who bears a striking resemblance to Crawford, has already made a splash walking the runway for top houses such as Fendi and Chloe.—AP

Camila Cabello went through a 'rough patch' with eyeliner

The 20-year-old singer has admitted she can't shake the nightmare she suffered five years ago when she failed to apply a sleek of black liner on her eyelid because she has "the worst hand eye coordination". Speaking to E! News about her beauty blunder, the 'Crying in the Club' hitmaker - who was announced as the L'Oreal Paris ambassador earlier this year - said: "Eyeliner and I went through a

rough patch at the beginning! I have the worst hand eye coordination and not the best handwriting. I usually use a brush, angle it at the same spot every time, and then follow the line. If I'm really in a rush, I use Voluminous Lash Paradise Mascara from L'Oreal Paris, which makes my lashes look super full really fast." But the musician has revealed she has found a method to apply the cosmetic

product that best suits her. She explained: "The perfect cat eye all depends on what works for your eye shape and what works best for your eyes. For me, I learned it's best to not do thick liner all the way, but to make it super thin and make it thicker at the ends. Also using the darker shades of shadow in the outer corners."



Lifestyle

MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2017



A model wears a creation for Vivienne Westwood Spring/Summer 2018 ready-to-wear fashion collection presented in Paris. — AP

Hong Kong migrant mothers sing for their distant children

Each Sunday, a choir of Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong gathers to sing songs that remind them of the children they left back home. Known as the "Unsung Heroes", these initially shy performers now regularly take the stage around Hong Kong and feature in a new documentary about the lives of the city's maids, known locally as "helpers". The theme of maternal sacrifice runs through the film—many domestic helpers are mothers working their way out of poverty, looking after other people's children to improve life for their own. In an empty kindergarten classroom on a Sunday afternoon, the choir races through a series of crowd-pleasers, from Katy Perry's "Roar" to Bob Marley's "One Love". But the songs they know best were written especially for them and relate to



'Unsung Heroes', a choir of Filipina domestic workers

their situation. Their signature ballad "Kiss You Goodnight" tells of a wish to be with a child to put them to bed. Choir member Analyn Tapil, 49, wipes away tears as she recalls how she left her two sons, one aged four months, the other a year and seven months, over 20 years ago to earn a better living in Hong Kong.

"It is a very big sacrifice to leave your children but I didn't have a choice," said Tapil, who sent most of her salary home to fund her sons' education. Now grown up, they have graduated and are working, which she says makes it all worthwhile. "My children are a success," she smiled. Fellow choir member Vergie Anos, 51, has been in Hong Kong for 22 years after leaving her one-year-old son in the Philippines to create a better life for him.

She also sheds tears as she remembers that decision. "Even until now it makes me feel very emotional," she explains. Both women say the choir has



In this picture, Joy Carbonell takes a selfie with fellow members of the 'Unsung Heroes' choir, a group of Filipina domestic workers, during a practice session inside a kindergarten school's classroom in Hong Kong. — AFP photos

helped them overcome their daily struggles and show they are more than just household employees. "We are here to make our children, our family proud of us," says Anos.

A wonderful thing

In a city of 7.3 million there are more than 300,000 domestic workers, most of them from the Philippines and Indonesia. While Anos and Tapil say they are well-treated by their employers, a string of abuse cases has highlighted the suffering some maids endure. They are legally obliged to live with their employers and have only two weeks to find another job if they are sacked or quit. It is common for helpers to sleep on floors or in tiny cubicles, with no proper bedroom provided.

They are paid a minimum monthly wage of HK\$4,310 and can never achieve permanent resident status however long they are employed in the city, unlike other workers who can apply after seven years. But the salary they receive is much higher than at home and convinces many to put up with tough con-

ditions. On Sundays, their only statutory day off, thousands gather in public squares, parks, on pavements and walkways to chat and eat with friends. The choir is an extension of that community. Jane Engelmann, head of performing arts at a Hong Kong primary school, launched the group three years ago for anyone in the migrant community to join. But the word spread most among Filipina helpers, who make up its membership of around 40 singers. It was she who wrote "Kiss You Goodnight".

"I can't imagine not being able to do that with my own children," says Engelmann, who is a single parent and relied upon domestic helpers so she could go out to work. Through dedicated practice, the choir is now a polished outfit, even performing alongside international stars at Hong Kong's largest music festival. Engelmann calls the choir "one of the most wonderful things" in her life. "It's not a paid job, but I've been paid in so many ways," she says. —AFP



In this picture, Joanna Bowers, Hong Kong-based writer and director of new documentary 'The Helper' poses during an interview with AFP in Hong Kong.



In this picture 'Unsung Heroes' choir founder Jane Engelmann, right, leads her group of Filipina domestic workers during a practice session inside a kindergarten school's classroom in Hong Kong.



In this picture, Filipina domestic workers who are members of the 'Unsung Heroes' choir take part in a practice session inside a kindergarten school's classroom in Hong Kong.