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Gunman mows down 58 at Las Vegas concert, 500 hurt

Trump calls shooting 'act of pure evil' • Amir sends condolences



LAS VEGAS: People scramble for shelter at the Route 91 Harvest country music festival after gunfire was heard on Sunday. — AFP

LAS VEGAS: At least 58 people were killed and more than 500 were injured when a heavily armed "lone wolf" gunman opened fire from a 32 -floor hotel room on an open-air concert on the Las Vegas Strip in the deadliest mass shooting in US history. The Islamic State group claimed the 64-year-old Nevada man behind the Sunday night massacre, Stephen Craig Paddock, was one of its "soldiers" but the FBI said it had found no such connection so far.

Police said Paddock, a retired accountant, killed himself before a SWAT team breached his room in the Mandalay Bay hotel overlooking the venue for the country music concert. US President Donald Trump denounced what he called "an act of pure evil" and said he would visit Las Vegas tomorrow.

Las Vegas Sheriff Joseph Lombardo told reporters more than 10 rifles had been recovered from the gunman's hotel room. Paddock was believed to be a "lone wolf" assailant who acted alone, Lombardo said, declining to speculate as to what may have motivated the attack. "I can't get into the mind of a psychopath at this point," he said.

Lombardo said Paddock had apparently used a hammer to smash the window of his hotel room before opening fire on the crowd below.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable yesterday to Trump, offering his condolences over the victims of the mass shooting. In his cable, the Amir deplored the "criminal attack" that left scores of people dead or injured, wishing those wounded a speedy recovery. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah both sent similar cables.

Police said around 22,000 people were attending the concert when bursts of automatic gunfire erupted shortly after 10:00 pm (0500 GMT). Concertgoers screamed and fled in panic as a steady stream of bullets rained down from the hotel. Lombardo said 58 people had been confirmed dead and 515 injured and he said the toll could rise. The authorities issued an appeal for blood donors.

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Better Snacks For Better Life



Amir praises Boursa Kuwait's emerging market upgrade

Promotion supports investment efficiency, national growth



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (center) meets with Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan (right), as well as Capital Markets Authority Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and Managing Director Nayef Al-Hajraf. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and Managing Director Nayef Al-Hajraf, and other officials.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday hailed local officials' "enormous and ongoing" efforts which led to FTSE Russell's recent promotion of the Kuwait stock exchange to an emerging market for the first time.

He made the remarks as he received the Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting State Minister for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan, Capital Markets Authority (CMA) Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and Managing Director Nayef Al-Hajraf, Board of Commissioner members, Boursa Kuwait's Board Chairman Talal Al-Ghanem and Board Members. During the encounter, held at Seif Palace, His Highness the Amir described the achievement as "important and historic," saying it would bolster confidence in the Kuwaiti market. Also attending was Deputy Minister for Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. In his own remarks at the meeting, CMA Chairman and Managing Director Al-Hajraf said the improved listing was a "global testament" for numerous decisions made by CMA over the past two years. He also dedicated the accomplishment to His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti people, expressing the authority's pride in the new status.

Comprehensive planning

The same officials met later with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who hailed the efforts exerted by CMA and Boursa Kuwait employees in meeting the requirements necessary for the classification after "comprehensive strategic planning," which he described as an "historic achievement." "This will

reflect positively on the Kuwaiti financial market, will increase its investment efficiency and attractiveness and regional and international position and will support national growth," he said.

The officials later met with Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as well, before having a discussion with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem on the expected outcomes of Boursa's recent promotion.

Social security

In other news, His Highness the Amir also received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh and Director General of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) Hamad Al-Homeidhi. They presented His Highness with a special publication celebrating 40 years of enforcing social security in Kuwait from 1977 to 2017. The two later presented copies of the special publication to His Highness the Crown Prince and the Acting Premier.

Separately, His Highness the Amir received a verbal message from China's President Xi Jinping over means to cement bilateral relations between the two countries in various realms. The message was conveyed to Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah by the Chinese Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Wang Di. In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Abdul Mohsen Al-Marzouq, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for the Municipality Mohammad Nasser Al-Jabri, as well as Chief of the National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. — KUNA



Achievement to bolster confidence in the Kuwaiti market

Ministers greatly elated Amir's evaluation of bourse promotion

KUWAIT: The Cabinet held its regular weekly session at Seif Palace yesterday under chairmanship of the Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The ministers expressed deep satisfaction at His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's positive assessment of promoting the national bourse by the FTSE. Following the session, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Information Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah stated that it kicked off by briefing the ministers about contents of a message addressed by His Highness the Amir to His Highness the Prime Minister expressing congratulations on the FTSE certification for Boursa Kuwait as an emerging market.

His Highness the Amir, in his address to the premier, praised the enormous and continuing efforts exerted by the Kuwaiti departments to make such an achievement possible. His Highness named in this respect the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Capital

Markets Authority (CMA), Boursa Kuwait Company and the Kuwaiti Clearing Company, underscoring the arduous work for preparing all data required by the FTSE for the eventful designation. For their turn in this regard, the ministers expressed deep appreciation toward His Highness' felicitations on this achievement, affirming confidence that it would lead to positive impact on the bourse, with respect of luring local and foreign capitals. Moreover, they have noted that this accomplishment has come at a crucial time following other achievements related to executing the State economic reforms' program, which in turn will contribute to making positive impact on the economic activity, in general.

Follow-up report

The ministers turned to some tasks, examining the first follow-up report of the annual plan (2017-2018) for the periods (1-4, 30-6, 2017) and listened to Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (second from left) chairs the Cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh, who spoke about policies on human, social and economic development. The report included strategic projects, execution of a number of development ventures in the oil, health, educational, infrastructural sectors, in addition to housing projects and a recommendation for following up on projects outlined in the annual scheme (2017-2018).

They also examined a recommendation from the committee of economic affairs on the seventh regular report of the permanent committee for overhauling the business environment and boosting competition. It also included executed ventures and the Cabinet approval for including the CMA as a member in the permanent commission for improving the business environment.

The Cabinet hailed election of Dr Saud Hilal Al-Harbi as Chairman of ALESCO, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization.

Competition protection

Meanwhile, the Cabinet approved a draft decree for forming a competition protection apparatus board of directors, Sheikh Mohammad said. The minister added in remarks following the weekly Cabinet meeting that the board of directors would include Dr Rashid Shebib Al-Ajmi as a Chairman, Abdullah Mohammad Al-Efasi as a Deputy Chairman, as well as Ahmad Abdullah Al-Mutairan, As'ad Ibrahim Al-Anbaec and Sameerah Jasim Gharib as members. —KUNA

Special payments common practice since 92: Speaker

KUWAIT: Extraordinary payments given to Kuwaiti MPs has been an established procedure dating back to more than a quarter of a century, Kuwait's top lawmaker said yesterday. Speaking to the press, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem revealed that "MPs had been the recipients of monthly undeclared wages worth KD 650 (\$2,100) since October 20, 1992."

"Parliament speakers have been asking ministers for undeclared salaries for MPs since 1992," Ghanem noted, quashing speculation that the procedure was

a newfound procedure. He denied that the pecuniary process was the brainchild of the current parliamentary lineup, "who have gotten a great deal of flak over this issue, which is totally unjust," he added. Meanwhile, Ghanem pointed out that it was "incumbent upon him as parliament speaker to tell the truth and elucidate this issue to the nation." As the world faces uncertain times, the National Assembly Speaker said that such speculation "only serves to distract us from our priorities and current challenges." — KUNA

KFH strategic partner of Youth Empowerment Symposium

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) took part in a press conference held for announcing the launch of the 6th Youth Empowerment Symposium "Tamkeen" that will kick off under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on October 23rd - 24th amidst wide participation of local and international participants and experts. This comes as part of the bank's social responsibility and efforts to empower the youth and support their initiatives.

Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media at KFH, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh said that the bank's participation in "Tamkeen" for the 6th consecutive year as a strategic partner reiterates the commitment towards supporting the national youths and sponsoring their projects and activities.

He added, on the sidelines of his participation in the press conference, that KFH attaches great importance to the youth. The bank sup-



ports all initiatives that contribute in empowering the youth and achieving the comprehensive and sustainable development in the country. Ruwaieh extended his thanks and appreciation to "Tamkeen" team and to the organizers in recognition of their dedication and keenness to make this annual conference such a huge success.

It is worth noting that "Tamkeen" is a national and academic initiative taken by the youth. It is deemed as one of the significant youth initiatives in Kuwait that aims at investing in the youth while encouraging them to build a promising future by organizing forums and conferences that include elite group of lecturers from different nationalities and backgrounds.

Local

Surgeons Association signs agreement with Life Science Academy

KUWAIT: Kuwait Surgeons Association signed a training agreement with Life Science Academy to train doctors, on the sidelines of the First Conference for Medical and Surgical Innovations. Chairman of the Association Dr Salman Al-Sabah lauded the role of the Life Science Academy as a specialized area for continued training in the health sector in Kuwait and the region.

Sabah said the Life Science Academy will have a major role in training and enhancing the experience of surgeons due to its competent trainers and highly equipped facilities. He added that the college will have a major role in developing Kuwaiti surgeons' performance and train them on the latest developments in surgical procedures.

CEO of Life Science Academy Dr

Mohammad Al-Enezi lauded the role of the association, adding the agreement will be in the interest of both parties, and comes within the academy's keenness on providing the best training service. The Life Science Academy is owned by the Life Science Company (a subsidiary of Kuwait Investment Authority), and is active in the field of providing knowledge and continued education.

Separately, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently co-sponsored Kuwait's First Conference for Medical and Surgical Innovations, which was organized by Kuwait Surgeons Association under auspices of Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi. During the conference, Harbi visited CBK's booth, and was accompanied by the Chairman of Kuwait Surgeons Association Dr Salman Al-Sabah.



KUWAIT: Chairman of the Kuwait Surgeons Association Dr Salman Al-Sabah (left) and CEO of Life Science Academy Dr Mohammad Al-Enezi shake hands after signing the agreement.

Accelerate Pheno System soon in Kuwait



KUWAIT: Central Circle Company has launched a workshop for the first fully-automated solution permitted by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for quantitative antibiotic susceptibility testing direct from patient samples. Accelerate Pheno System enables laboratories to substantially reduce the processing time to provide patients with optimal therapy by up to 40 hours faster than conventional methods. This means that bacteria detection and sensitivity to antibiotics can be assessed faster than before, which will allow rapid and accurate treatment of patients. The system will be available very soon in Kuwait.



Center marks breast cancer month in Oct

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) organized a ceremony in yesterday's celebration of the international month for protection of breast cancer at Faisal Sultan Bin Essa Center for Radiodiagnosis and Radiotherapy. KCCC Director General Dr Kholoud Al-Ali said in press remarks that this event contributes in spreading awareness over the importance of early diagnosis as such step plays a significant role in the healing process up to 90 percent in many cases. She also stressed the importance of the periodical inspection for breast cancer

after the age of forty, as well as the self-inspection for young girls. She also called for following a healthy diet, and avoiding obesity and smoking as they form risk factors and are the main reason behind the breast cancer. More than 70 percent of the cancer cases could be avoided by self-examination at home every month after visiting a specialized doctor, she affirmed. A fair was organized on the sidelines of the event representing all KCCC departments to spread health awareness protection of breast cancer, besides weekly lectures. — KUNA

110 industrial plots allotted in 3 years

By A Saleh and Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry, State Minister for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan said the Public Authority of Industry (PAI) distributed 110 industrial plots from 2014 to 2017. Roudhan said land withdrawals took place after discussing the rejection of grievances from investors by the grievance committee. He said the number of industrial projects that were withdrawn and taken back by the PAI from 2014 until 2017 are 13 industrial projects (a total of 27 plots) in various industrial areas. Roudhan said there are four reasons to take back the lands - the first is investors' lack of execution of the projects according to the set dates.

The second reason is not carrying out production and practicing activities they were licensed for. The third reason is that some plots were taken back because factories were closed and abandoned by

investors. The fourth reason is due to court orders, adding that PAI will continue its procedures to execute the reclaim decisions. In other news, informed oil sources said a lawsuit filed against Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) by an official at the company's London office was rejected by a British court. The plaintiff was seeking €8 million in compensation in the lawsuit. He claimed that he was fired maliciously.

Traffic campaigns

Separately, the traffic department carried out several surprise campaigns, resulting in issuing 31,890 traffic citations, while 911 vehicles were impounded, 13 persons were jailed for grave violations and four were sent for deportation. Meanwhile, fire broke out in a Salmiya building yesterday morning, and Salmiya and South Salmiya fire centers responded. The building was evacuated as firemen battled the blaze on the fourth floor. No injuries were reported.

Defense Undersecretary to retire: Minister

KUWAIT: Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah announced yesterday referring Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Jassar Abdul-Razzaq Al-Jassar to retirement upon his request. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah said during the weekly Cabinet meeting that the Council issued a draft decree appointing Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad as the new Undersecretary for the Ministry of Defense.

Separately, the Ministry of Defense announced yesterday that the Navy will carry out a shooting drill tomorrow and Thursday, using live ammunition. The Moral Guidance and Public Relations Department said in a press release that the exercise will take place in the shooting range, where it will be 16.5 miles east of

Ras Al-Jelaiaa, all the way to Garu island, six nautical miles east of Ras Al-Zor, all the way to Umm Al-Maradem island. Sea-goers are advised to refrain from approaching the identified locations during the drill between 7:00 am till 5:00 pm.

In other news, Kuwaiti Military Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Khaled Al-Khuder held talks with Turkish Military attache Colonel Bahtiar Aren. During the meeting, Khuder and Aren discussed top military topics of common concern, the Ministry of Defense's Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations said in a statement. The talks were attended by Kuwaiti Army's Deputy Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah and Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans Brigadier General Mohammed Al-Kandari. — KUNA

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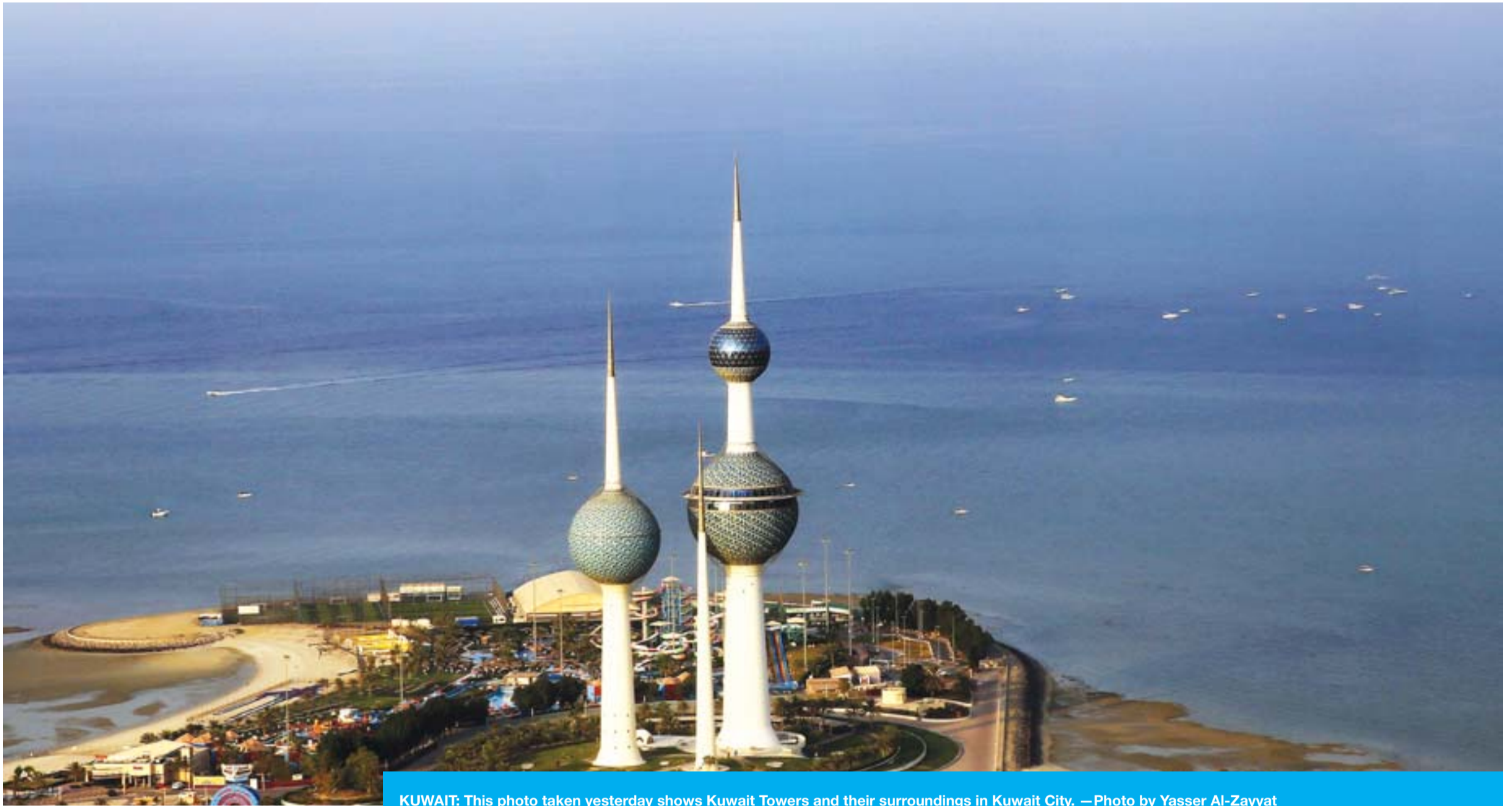
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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: This photo taken yesterday shows Kuwait Towers and their surroundings in Kuwait City. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Cubical Services launches 3rd edition of Fikra startups incubator program

KUWAIT: Under the aegis of Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Khaled Al-Roudhan, the Kuwaiti business incubator Cubical Services launched Sunday the third season of Fikra program for supporting young entrepreneurs. Fikra is an intensive training program that aims to provide young entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to develop their ideas and create their own businesses. Director of Fikra Program at Cubical Services Mariam Al-Rayes said in a press conference held to announce the launching of the new edition of the program.

She went on to say that the business incubator program seeks to create a generation of local entrepreneurs to and help boost the national economy through the expansion of small and medium enterprises. Those willing to benefit from the program services have to register on company's website from today to November 11, she said.

Rayes said that the program, in the previous two versions, supported 30 business ideas, offered training to 48 entrepreneurs



KUWAIT: Officials attend the Fikra' press conference yesterday. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

and held 37 workshops in addition to the administrative, financial and legal consultancy services. She thanked the strategic partners, led by the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises.

Providing youth with skills to develop ideas

Meanwhile, Spokeswoman for the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs Esraa Al-Fadhala said that the ministry's participation in this program came from deep conviction that youth are the most important pillar in the state building. She added that the support of the program is part

of the ministry's strategy to build the capacity of young people to contribute to the national economy. She pointed out that the ministry, since 2013, has backed about 1200 non-profit initiatives to encourage young people to launch their own businesses.

Cubical Services is a Kuwaiti company providing these much-needed services and helping startups in their early stages. The company was launched in 2009 to provide consultancy services about managerial development for small businesses in their early stages. Reviewing, auditing, legal registration, technical support and management of mergers and acquisitions are some of the services this startup provides. Backed by the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises, the Cubical Services has provided services up to 500 projects to date. — KUNA

Kuwait's top investors to gather for second edition of ArabNet

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of Khaled Al-Roudhan, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, ArabNet Kuwait is back in its second edition after its major success in 2016. Taking place on October 17-18, at the Arraya Ballroom, the conference will focus on the Kuwaiti and GCC market. ArabNet Kuwait offers a platform for stakeholders to discuss trends and developments across three major tracks - Adtech, Investment and Innovation, and Digital Commerce, bringing together over 70 speakers and 600 attendees.

The Investment and Innovation Forum - The Kuwait entrepreneurship scene has had a great year, with the acquisitions of Carriage and Masbagti making headlines. ArabNet Kuwait will feature top investors highlighting their investment strategies and market trends, meanwhile successful entrepreneurs will share best practices for fundraising, team-building and scaling. Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of

State for Youth Affairs; Waleed Al-Ballaa, Partner at STVentures; Omar Almajdouie, Founding Partner at Raed Ventures and Rashid Sultan, Founder and Managing Partner at Savour Ventures are a few speakers you can expect to hear from at this forum.

The AdTech Forum - Social Media penetration in Kuwait is at 96 percent (one of the highest globally), and leading the MENA region on platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram. ArabNet Kuwait will bring to focus the best practices for content creation and distribution, as well as technologies that are reshaping marketing and the consumer journey. Speakers include some of the best in the sector such Ian Manning, Regional Head of Agencies - MENA and Pakistan at Facebook and Instagram, Nathan Hull Chief Commercial and Content Officer at Bookchoice and Neil Hardwick CEO of MEC MENA.

The Digital Commerce Forum - Digital commerce is flourishing



KUWAIT: Omar Christidis, Founder and CEO of ArabNet.

in Kuwait, with KNET processing over \$1.6 billion in online transactions in 2016. ArabNet Kuwait will highlight the latest trends in e-retail and e-commerce - including omnichannel and on-demand strategies, fintech and banking innovation, and including mobile banking and the future of the branch.

Experts include Fadi Ghandour Executive Chairman of Wanda Group and Founder of Aramex, Abdullah Al Mutawa Co-Founder and CEO at Carriage

and Walid Barakat Co-Founder of Awfar. ArabNet plays a key role in supporting the most promising regional innovators, and matching them with the right investors through two of ArabNet's signature competitions, Ideathon and Startup Battle. Winners will get to compete at the Startup Championship and assert their business among the best in the region. "The championship gives startups a lot of exposure to the media, potential partners, and most importantly, investors."

Gulf Bank gold sponsor of Fikra Program

KUWAIT: Building on its commitment to support Kuwaiti youth and economic development in the country, Gulf Bank announced its gold sponsorship of Fikra Program for the second consecutive year during a press conference held yesterday at Al-Hamra Business Tower, Kuwait. Now in its third edition, the program provides aspiring entrepreneurs with the tools they need to start their own business. During the press conference, Fikra Program organizers noted that the website for applying to Fikra Program www.fikraprogram.com is open until November 11, 2017.

Esra Al-Habib, Manager for Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank commended Fikra Program saying: "There is an abundance of talent and business potential in Kuwaiti youth and it is inspiring to see business training and incubation programs like Fikra Program being run by talented young Kuwaitis. Gulf Bank is committed to helping the next generation and such is proud to sponsor Fikra Program. We are looking forward to another excellent training program and to successful businesses emerging from Fikra Program." Mariam Hisham Al-Rayes, Fikra Program Manager at Cubical Services Business Incubator stated: "We are passionate about empowering aspiring entrepreneurs with creative business ideas and helping them achieve their dreams and we are proud to have Gulf Bank with us in this life-changing journey."

Fikra Program also plays a fundamental role in advancing the local Kuwaiti market. It is an intensive entrepreneurship training program that provides aspiring entrepreneurs with the technical skills and business knowledge needed to launch their own



Esra Al-Habib, Manager for Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank.

businesses such as leadership skills, comprehensive business plan design, mentorship, financial analysis, media exposure, investment opportunities, and others.

The first edition of the program alone resulted in establishing 33 percent of businesses, while 40 percent are still in the negotiation phase with investors. As for the entrepreneurs of Fikra Program - second edition which ended in May 2017, 20 percent are fully operational and the rest are close to operating. Combined the first and second edition of Fikra Program witnessed above 200 applications, 30 business ideas, 37 training sessions and 48 trained entrepreneurs.

Fikra Program is under the kind patronage of Khaled Al-Roudhan, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs and is proudly supported by Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, The National Fund for SME Development, Al-Hamra Real Estate Company, Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Commercial Company, Markaz Financial Center, Lexus Kuwait as a part of Al-Sayer Group, and Grand Cinemas, and is managed by Cubical Services Business Incubator.

Air-conditioners consume bulk of power in Kuwait: Minister

KUWAIT: Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq said yesterday air-conditioners consume 70 percent of the power in Kuwait. The minister, speaking at inauguration of a workshop themed "power efficiency and cooling technology," revealed that the ministry, this year shifted surplus of electricity to another GCC country via the Council power grid, indicating that power was saved due to rationing plans.

The ministry has addressed the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to ensure that new buildings be equipped with power-saving technology. Chairman of the Kuwaiti Society of Engineers, Faisal Al-Etel, said the gathering aims at discussing means of securing clean energy, cautioning that power consumption in the country is rising due to growth of construction and the population. The society has proposed establishing an apparatus to manage the

power consumption. Meanwhile, Dr Hilal Al-Mkhaini, director of the energy department at the GCC General Secretariat, called for making use of expertise of European and foreign experts taking part in the workshop, organized by the Kuwaiti society. Luci Burger, commercial representative of the EU in Riyadh, noted necessity of cooperation between the GCC and the EU in the energy field.

Clean energy conserves the environment and saves money, she has pointed out. Frank Wouters, Director of the EU-GCC Clean Energy Technology Network, has affirmed that the EU devotes special attention to cooperation with the GCC countries in the field of effective energy noting that it adopted the 2020 strategy for renewable energy to cope with the mounting consumption of power in the EU countries. —KUNA

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International

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2017



Palestinian PM visits Gaza in a reconciliation move

Cameroon restive anglophones declare 'independence'

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COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh: A Rohingya Muslim refugee holds her child as she waits to see a doctor at a medical centre at Balukhali refugee camp near the town of Gumdhum in Cox's Bazar. — AFP

'Skin and bones': Doctors fear for malnourished Rohingya children

14,100 kids are at risk of dying from malnutrition

COX'S BAZAR: The five-year-old Rohingya boy was so emaciated that doctors could not insert a drip into his tiny arm, one of thousands of children facing life-threatening malnutrition in overstretched Bangladeshi refugee camps. "He said he hadn't eaten anything in eight days. Nothing," said Dr SK Jahidur Rahman at a clinic run by Bangladeshi medical charity Gonoshasthaya Kendra. The lucky ones make it to the overwhelmed clinics just in time. But some are not so fortunate, dying before help can reach them or forced to beg by the roadside.

The UN says more than 14,100 children are at risk of dying from malnutrition in wretched camps where half a million mainly Rohingya refugees depend entirely on charities for survival. Food distribution in the vastly overcrowded settlements is still ad hoc and uncoordinated, the UN says, more than a month after refugees began pouring into southern Bangladesh to escape ethnic bloodshed in Myanmar. Huge crowds descend on aid deliveries and soldiers need to herd starving people into bamboo pens where they squat cheek by jowl under the scorching sun for a meal.

Many go hungry as charities scramble to feed 500,000 mouths every day. Children make up the bulk of new arrivals and are most vulnerable to the paucity of food, with 145,500 infants under five needing urgent intervention to stave off malnutrition, aid agencies say. "Lots of

children are showing all the signs of hunger and malnutrition, which is an alarming prospect when they've just fled so much horror," said Save the Children's emergency health unit director Dr Unni Krishnan.

'Skin and bones'

In a field clinic for infants suffering the severest malnutrition, Monura tried to soothe her gaunt 13-month-old daughter Rian Bebe, whose cheekbones jutted out below sunken eyes. A nurse wrapped a measuring tape around her pencil-thin arm and placed her tiny frame on the scales - 5.5 kilograms, less than the weight of a healthy child half her age.

Monura, who like many Rohingya uses one name, said she had little to feed her desperately hungry child on the five-day trek from Myanmar. "Most sip a little water and walk five days," said Dr Rahman. "They hide in the jungle, chewing wood, anything, to beat hunger." Many Rohingya children were already malnourished before making the perilous journey to Bangladesh, doctors say. Their health

has since deteriorated further. The Rohingya come from impoverished Rakhine, where state-imposed restrictions have ensured abysmal living standards for the persecuted Muslim community.

Their children's immune systems are already weakened, leaving them defenseless should a disease outbreak sweep through the camps as charities fear. Monura's little girl, chewing on a high-calorie paste, has been rescued just in time and should make a slow recovery. But for others it is a different story. In the largest district hospital in Cox's Bazar, a skeletal eight-month-old girl died after being admitted with severe malnutrition and pneumonia contracted in her enfeebled state. "Skin and bones," lamented Shaheen Abdur Rahman, the hospital's resident medical officer, of the dying girl brought to his ward. "It was a very grave condition."

Cooking for 10,000

Others drift through the camps desperately seeking

food among the chaotic throngs and begging people in passing cars for morsels. On a roadside near rolling hills of refugee shanties, 15-year-old Sitara Banu worried endlessly about her weak five-month-old son Jahidur Rahman. "He can't get enough milk. I can't manage to get any food for myself either. I fed him a little banana someone gave me, but that made him sicker," she said.

In a nearby canteen, men in singlets sweated over huge cauldrons, toiling throughout the night to make rice, meat and lentils. "They will be working for months like this. It is very hard work to cook for 10,000 people," said Abdul Mukit, a volunteer overseeing the kitchen run by Turkish government aid body Tika. It is a drop in the ocean given the sheer scale of the crisis. But for thousands of children, most of whom survive on boiled rice and high-energy biscuits when they can get them, this could be their only proper meal of the day.

As a truck carrying the 40 kilogram pots approached a relief distribution area, children swarmed the sun-baked clearing from all directions, naked toddlers struggling to keep up with the surge. Corralled into queues by the military, they sprinted to the volunteers clutching outstretched plates, buckets and plastic bags-whatever they had to hand. "It makes me feel good," said head chef Manzar Alam of his part in feeding the youngsters, who carefully take their curry and rice back to their shanties.— AFP

“He said he hadn't eaten anything in eight days”

Mountains of garbage and despair in India dirtiest city

GONDA CITY: Flies throng over piles of faeces, the drains overflow with sewage and the foul smell in the air is inescapable. Welcome to Awas Vikas: one of the most exclusive parts of Gonda, a city suffering the ignominy of being branded the dirtiest in India. Even in such upmarket areas, garbage trucks are rarely seen, green spaces are littered with rubbish, and residents are desperate for their bickering leaders to bring about change.

Gonda, 80 miles from the Uttar Pradesh state capital of Lucknow, was best known as a quiet stopover point for people travelling to Nepal or to see the region's temples. Infamy arrived in May when Gonda came bottom of an Indian government cleanliness survey of 434 cities. The study looked at the use of toilets, waste collection, civic infrastructure and other areas. It is a daily battle for pedestrians and cars to navigate the piles of plastic bottles, discarded food containers and animal excreta.

The stray cows love it, but residents in Awas Vikas are at breaking point. "The filth and the stench have made us infamous across the country," said Durgesh Mishra, gesturing desolately at a crater in the road by his house, which is now filled with dirty water and buzzing with mosquitoes. "It is a really pathetic state of affairs. We've been rated as India's dirtiest—just look around and you can see it's a perfect ranking. You can't imagine how we live here," he added.

Corruption and cholera

Most locals hope the 'dirtiest city' accolade will shame

politicians into action and break the cycle of civic apathy and corruption, which is blamed for the mess. "The manpower and infrastructure issues that we face today are a result of unplanned development over the last 10 years," Rajiv Rastogi, a trader and veteran local politician said. Political rivalry between Gonda and the Uttar Pradesh state government has also bogged down projects.

Signs of the dysfunction are everywhere. Houses have been abandoned and left to decay, while neighborhood parks and ponds have become dumping grounds. Those who can afford it, hire laborers to clear garbage from outside their homes—even if that means discarding it out of sight in another part of town. Kanshiram colony is regarded by some as the most insalubrious part of India's dirtiest city.

"We live in sickness. Diseases like cholera are an everyday issue," Kanshiram resident Sushila Tewari told AFP as she swatted away flies and mosquitoes from a waste-filled pond opposite her home. "We don't see a municipal worker around here for days at a time. When stray animals die and lay rotting here, sometimes we have to cover them with soil ourselves," she added.

Kirti Vardhan Singh, a three-term lawmaker for the area, said he has been "bombarded" with telephone calls and social media messages since the survey. "It was very, very embarrassing," he said. "I explained to as many as I could that, as a parliamentarian, I don't have any say or authority over local civic body matters—the mismanage-



GONDA CITY: A cow lays down amongst garbage along a road in Gonda district, in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. — AFP

ment, inaction and corruption over the last decade." Singh acknowledges that Gonda is dirty but is skeptical that it is really the dirtiest city in the nation. "I feel it got the ranking because of a lack of cooperation and communication between the survey team and the local administration," he said. He feels Gonda's story is typical of other smaller Indian cities that have grown quickly in India's economic boom without a plan or rules.

Dirty campaign

JB Singh, district magistrate for the region, acknowledges there are problems but does not believe Gonda's ranking is fair. "The bottlenecks were the biggest issue

in the past but we are working to bring change, and locals will see it within the next two months," Singh said, adding that new garbage trucks and dustbins are being purchased.

The town is also looking for a private waste collection agency to help tackle the problem and will launch a cleanliness awareness campaign, he explained. Some argue Gonda's ranking and the subsequent media attention has made an issue that is endemic across the nation, seem like a unique local problem. Even if the city's administrative and political problems are solved, many feel the biggest challenge is changing attitudes in a populace often happy to dump at will.— AFP

International

Palestinian prime minister visits Gaza in reconciliation move with Hamas

Unity government to take administrative control of Gaza

GAZA: The West Bank-based Palestinian prime minister crossed into the Gaza Strip yesterday in a move towards reconciliation between Hamas and the mainstream Fatah party, a decade after the Islamist group seized the territory in a civil war. Hamas announced last week that it was handing over administrative control of the Gaza Strip to a unity government headed by Rami Al-Hamdallah, but the movement's armed wing remains the dominant power in the Palestinian enclave of two million people.

"We return to Gaza in order to conclude reconciliation and national unity and end the painful impacts of divisions and to rebuild Gaza brick by brick," Hamdallah said at a welcoming ceremony. Forces loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas lost control of Gaza in fighting with Hamas in 2007. Hamas's reversal was the most significant step towards Palestinian unity since the government was formed in 2014. It failed to function in Gaza - where Israel and Hamas have fought three wars since 2008 - because of disputes between Hamas and Fatah over its responsibilities.

Analysts said narrowing internal divisions could help western-backed Abbas counter Israel's argument that it has no negotiating partner for peace with the Palestinians. "We came with instructions from Abbas to tell the world from the heart of Gaza that the Palestinian state cannot and will not be established without geographical and political unity between Gaza and the West Bank," Hamdallah said.

A Hamas police honor guard and hundreds of Palestinians, many of them waving Palestinian flags, awaited Hamdallah outside the Hamas-controlled checkpoint, down the road from Israel's Erez border crossing through which the prime minister and his motorcade passed. "It is a day of Eid, a national holiday," said Abdel-Majid Ali, 46. "We hope this time reconciliation is for real." Hamas, considered a terrorist group by Israel and the West, made its dramatic step towards unity last month, disbanding its Gaza shadow government, after Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates imposed an economic boycott on its main donor, Qatar, over alleged support of terrorism. Qatar denies the allegation.

Hamas disbands Gaza shadow government

The road ahead will be long and hard, but momentum of reconciliation and peace should not be missed," Nikolay Mladenov, the UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process wrote on Twitter. The unity drive also marked a return to prominence of exiled former Gaza security chief Mohammed Dahlan, once one of Hamas's fiercest enemies and now a leading figure in regional efforts to pull the territory back into the Palestinian mainstream. Dahlan, based since 2011 in the United Arab Emirates, is behind an influx of cash to prop up Gaza and detente between Hamas and Arab states including Egypt, which hosted reconciliation talks.

Israel skeptical

Michael Oren, deputy minister for diplomacy in



BEIT HANUN: A man dressed as the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat walks in the street as the convoy of Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and his government ministers arrive in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday. — AFP

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet, played down the unity drive, saying "it happens every two or three years" and that Hamas remains dedicated to Israel's destruction. "One of the issues is whether Hamas will be able to retain its arms. If it does then it's a non-starter for Israel," he said. Abbas' pressure over the past several months on Hamas to loosen its grip includ-

ed halting electricity payments to Israeli suppliers, a sanction that caused extensive daily blackouts in Gaza.

Abbas also cut wages to civil servants still on the unity government's payroll, a move that deepened economic hardship in an area long under partial blockade by Israel and Egypt, which cite security concerns for border restrictions. — Reuters

Spain in crisis after independence vote

MADRID: Spain vowed yesterday to stop Catalonia from declaring independence after a banned referendum that saw riot police use batons and rubber bullets, as the country grappled with its deepest crisis in decades. The government of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy was holding emergency talks after Catalan president Carles Puigdemont declared Sunday that the region had won the right to break away from Spain. Images of riot police beating up would-be voters with batons and firing rubber bullets to disperse crowds during Sunday's referendum in the wealthy northeastern region shocked many in Spain and its neighbors in Europe.

Puigdemont appealed yesterday for international mediation to help solve the crisis, and called for all police sent in to Catalonia for the vote to be removed. In its first reaction yesterday, the European Union urged all sides to "move very swiftly from confrontation to dialogue" and said violence should not be part of politics. A jubilant Puigdemont said late Sunday that 90 percent of voters taking part in the referendum had voted for independence for Catalonia, defying the police crackdown and the fierce opposition from Madrid.

'Won the right'

The regional government said 2.26 million people actually took part in the vote, or just over 42 percent of the electorate in Catalonia. Puigdemont said his people had "won the right to an independent state" in Catalonia, a region of 7.5 million people which accounts for one fifth of Spain's economic output. But any attempt to unilaterally declare independence is likely to be opposed not just by Madrid but also a large section of the Catalan population which is deeply split on the issue.

His declaration sets the restive region on course for a deeper split with the Spanish government, after Rajoy reiterated his government's position that the vote was an illegal act, to which the state had reacted "with firmness and serenity". Puigdemont has said he would now present the results to the region's parliament, which has the power to adopt a motion of independence. Pro-separatist lawmakers have a narrow majority of 72 seats in the 135-seat Catalan parliament.

'Shameful page'

Reacting to the scenes of violence, Puigdemont said Spain's central government had "written a shameful page in its history with Catalonia" while several top figures in the far-left party Podemos called for Rajoy to resign. At least 92 people were confirmed injured, two of them seriously, out of a total of 844 who needed medical attention, Catalan authorities said. Shocking videos posted on social media showed police dragging voters from polling stations by their hair, throwing people down stairs and attacking Catalan firefighters protecting polling stations. Further adding to tensions, unions and Catalan associations have called a region-wide strike for Tuesday due to "the grave violation of rights and freedoms," urging people to take to the streets.

While Spanish newspapers were unanimous in criticizing Puigdemont for pushing ahead with the referendum despite a court ruling it unconstitutional, they also took aim at Rajoy's handling of the crisis. Conservative daily newspaper El Mundo said the government's wait-and-see strategy of sending the police had led to failure. "It could not prevent dramatic images from going around the world," it said in an editorial. —AFP

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International

Cameroon's restive anglophones declare 'independence'; 7 killed

Security forces deployed in English-speaking regions

BUEA: At least seven people were killed in Cameroon's restive anglophone belt at the weekend as a separatist group made a symbolic declaration of independence. The separatists chose October 1, the anniversary of the official reunification of the anglophone and francophone parts of Cameroon, to declare independence for "Ambazonia", the name of the state they want to create. Since November, the anglophone minority has been protesting against perceived discrimination.

The government deployed security forces at the weekend in English-speaking regions, notably Buea in the southwest and Bamenda, the main town in the northwest and a hub of anglophone agitation. Several people were admitted to hospital in Bamenda Sunday after clashes between demonstrators and police, according to a medical source. "At least one person was injured by live fire" in Bamenda, where the situation was "very tense", a source close to the local authorities said. The "security forces had to resort to tear gas and sometimes to shots to disperse the protesters", the source said by telephone. Bamenda residents contacted by AFP reported "shooting" by the security forces without giving further details.



Separatists create 'Ambazonia' state

one was killed in Kumbo on the sidelines of the protests, city mayor Donatus Njong said. Also in Kumbo, three prison inmates were shot and killed trying to escape while security forces were mobilized for the deployments in anglophone regions, a source close to regional authorities said.

A young man was shot dead by security forces on Saturday in the southwest town of Kumba, known as a rebellious city since the start of the protests, sparking clashes between security forces and the local population. "They fired at him during a security operation," a nurse who requested anonymity said. The incident was confirmed by a security source and several local residents contacted by phone. Cameroon's long-serving president, 84-year-old Paul Biya, took to social media Sunday to condemn "all acts of violence, no matter where they come from or who is responsible."

The European Union called on all sides to be responsible and "respect the rule of law and avoid any act of violence." The crisis provoked by the protests, which was exacerbated at the start of 2017 when internet access was cut for three months, has intensified in recent weeks with the push to symbolically proclaim independence of the English-speaking regions. On September 22, "between 30 and 80,000" people demonstrated across Cameroon's anglophone regions, according to estimates by the International Crisis Group (ICG).

'No longer slaves'

The symbolic declaration of independence was made Sunday on social media by Sisiku Ayuk, who describes



BUEA, Cameroon: Cameroon police officials walk with riot shields on a street in the administrative quarter of Buea some 60kms west of Douala. — AFP

himself as the "president" of Ambazonia. "We are no longer slaves of Cameroon," he said. "Today we affirm the autonomy of our heritage and our territory." Ahead of the declaration, Cameroonian authorities announced a temporary curfews on travel and public meetings across the Southwest Region, adding to a curfew in the neighboring Northwest Region, also English-speaking.

Internet access has been disrupted since Friday, according to an AFP journalist, despite government

assurances that there would be no cutting of access in the anglophone areas. The majority of Cameroon's 22 million people are French-speaking, while about a fifth are English speakers. The legacy dates back to 1961, when a formerly British entity, Southern Cameroons, united with Cameroon after its independence from France in 1960. The anglophone minority has long complained about disparities in the distribution of Cameroon's oil wealth. — AFP

Boy's near-hanging compels town to open discussion on racism

CLAREMONT: In this struggling mill town in western New Hampshire, racism was never something people talked all that much about. There were people who drove around Claremont with Confederate flag bumper stickers in the mostly white town of 14,000 and some instances of high schoolers using racial epithets during football games and on Facebook. But for the most part, residents had other concerns.

That changed Aug 28 after allegations surfaced that several teenagers had taunted a 9-year-old biracial boy with racial slurs and several days later pushed him off a picnic table with a rope tied around his neck. The family of the boy, who was treated for neck injuries and has been released, called it a hate crime while the parents of one of the teenagers told Newsweek it was a terrible accident. The images of the boy's rope-singed neck were shared widely on social media, prompting an outpouring of support for the family and outrage against the teens.

With prosecutors continuing to investigate the case as a potential hate crime, the city known for historic textile and paper mill buildings found itself associated with words like lynching and intolerance. "Certainly people were shocked by the young age of everyone

involved, especially the victim," said Allen Damren, the town's assistant mayor who also grew up in Claremont. "That certainly has an impact on people. When you use the word 'lynching,' that has all sorts of bad connotations to it."

"It happened in our hometown. People responded to that," he added. The case has compelled city leaders to confront an issue that many had associated with bigger cities far away. Most insist Claremont isn't a racist place but say the town must consider how its white majority treats those who don't look like them. The families of the accused teens declined comment. "This is an opportunity to take a very unfortunate event involving children and have some public discussions about how we treat each other," said Middleton McGoodwin, the superintendent of the school district that includes Claremont.

"Just because you may have a different color skin or different color hair or wear certain clothing, that doesn't give me license to make you feel uncomfortable or make fun of you." More than 100 people from Claremont and surrounding towns gathered last month in a downtown city park to speak out against racism. Holding signs reading "Teach Love Not Hate" and "Stand Together," residents listened as city officials and religious leaders



NEW HAMPSHIRE: A chorus of 'We Shall Overcome' rises from a gathering against racism in Broad Street Park in Claremont, NH. — AP

spoke about the near-hanging and the need to confront intolerance.

City and school officials have since met to discuss new strategies to counter racism, and McGoodwin said the district is developing a plan for elementary through high school that examines school culture, including how students treat each other and how staff respond to issues like bullying. Residents are planning to be outside the high school and middle school this week, holding signs calling for an end to violence and bullying. "We are not going to say this was an event that took place in late August, wasn't in school and wasn't about us," McGoodwin said. "It definitely is about us." But not

everyone in the community feels there is a need to have conversations about racism.

While agreeing the teens need to be punished, several residents who were white said the racial component had been overblown and that the city was moving too quickly to embrace the narrative without having all of the facts. "The problem with society is that everybody is quick to say it's racial. We weren't there. We don't know the circumstances," said Bobby Colburn, a white Claremont resident who works as a gas station clerk. "That is the problem with this country. It is so divided. Everybody thinks everything is a hate crime. It could have just been the kid being bullied." — AP

Cuba and Bolivia remember 'Che' 50 years after death

HAVANA: A half-century after his death, Ernesto "Che" Guevara will be remembered in ceremonies next week in Cuba and in Bolivia, whose CIA-trained troops sent shockwaves around the world when they executed the Cold War revolutionary icon in 1967. In Cuba—where schoolchildren still begin their day with a raised fist salute and chant "Pioneers for communism, we will be like Che"—President Raul Castro will lead a ceremony at his mausoleum in the central town of Santa Clara.

The 86-year-old Castro's memories will be deeply personal as he fought alongside Che in the Cuban revolution led by his brother Fidel that in 1959 overthrew dictator Fulgencio Batista. In Bolivia, the army will participate at a public commemoration of his death for the first time. "We want this to be a moment of unity for the Bolivian people," said deputy coordination minister Alfredo Rada, saying the context was different from 1967, when staunch anti-communist president Rene Barrientos gave the order to execute the wounded Che.

Times have changed, and the incumbent President Evo Morales is a fervent admirer of the revolutionary leader. Che's four children will attend the memorial ceremony in the South American country, where the guerrilla leader was executed by a CIA-trained unit of the Bolivian army on October 9, 1967.

The myth of 'Che'

"If he had not died in Bolivia in 1967, Latin America would now be free, sovereign, independent



OLEIROS: Picture shows a monument depicting the image of late Argentinean revolutionary legend Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, in Oleiros, some 10 km from Coruna, northwestern Spain. — AFP

and socialist, which is what he wanted," his brother Juan Martin Guevara said at his home in Argentina. "For if he had remained alive, he would have triumphed - he was all or nothing."

With his death, at the age of 39, the myth of 'Che'—the personification of rebellion—was born. Fidel Castro called him an "artist of revolutionary warfare" in a speech to an estimated one million people during a three-day period of national mourning. In time, through T-shirts, posters and berets bearing his iconic image, he became a symbol of the capitalist consumer society he sought to destroy. "Myths exist because societies create them," said his 74-year-old brother. "What other mythical character is there? I would say that the two

most famous images in the world are those of Christ and Che. "A friend told me: 'you're exaggerating, Christ is much better known.' Of course. He died 2,000 years ago, and Che 50 years ago. We will not be there to see it, but Che in 300 years, will always be Che. And I hope there will be other Che's." Born in the Argentine city of Rosario, Guevara traveled across Latin America in 1952 and 1953 and was shocked to see the economic disparity in the region, a road trip that was immortalized in the 2004 film "The Motorcycle Diaries." It convinced him violence was necessary to overturn Latin America's unjust social order. His life changed dramatically when he met Castro in Mexico in 1955 and joined his guerrilla expedition to Cuba. — AFP

Brother of Islamist radical faces trial

PARIS: The brother of the Islamist radical who shot dead seven people in southwest France in 2012, including three Jewish schoolchildren, went on trial yesterday accused of complicity in the first of a wave of attacks by homegrown jihadists. Mohamed Merah's March 2012 attack on Ozar Hatorah school in Toulouse, where he killed a teacher and three pupils, was the deadliest attack on Jews in France in three decades.

The 23-year-old Toulouse native also shot dead three soldiers in the nearby garrison town of Montauban before being killed by police in a shootout after a 32-hour siege at his home. The attacks, which he carried out in the name of Al-Qaeda, were the first in a wave of jihadist assaults in France that resumed in 2015 with the shootings at satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo and a massacre at a Paris concert hall.

In the most recent killings being investigated by anti-terror police, a man shouting "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) stabbed two women to death at the main train station in Marseille on Sunday. The Islamic State group claimed the attack as the work of one of its "soldiers", though a source close to the investigation said there was as yet no solid evidence linking the man to the group. Merah's brother Abdelkader, 35, is the first person to tried over the spate of killings. — AFP

International

As sanctions bite, N Korean workers leave border hub

Latest sanctions affect 90% of North Korean exports

DANDONG: North Korean workers have begun to leave the Chinese border city of Dandong, following the latest round of sanctions seeking to restrict Pyongyang's ability to earn foreign currency income, local businesses and traders say. Almost 100,000 overseas workers, based predominantly in China and Russia, funnel some \$500 million in wages a year to help finance the North Korean regime, the US government says.

Dandong, a city of 800,000 along the Yalu river that defines the border with North Korea, is home to many restaurants and hotels that hire North Korean waitresses and musicians. Their colorful song and dance performances are a tourist attraction. Thousands of predominantly female workers are also employed by Chinese-owned garment and electronics factories in Dandong, with a significant proportion of their wages going straight to the North Korean state.

The Wing Cafe used to advertise its "beautiful North Korean" waitresses on its shopfront by the Yalu. The sign is now gone, and cafe staff said the waitresses had returned home in recent weeks after their visas expired. "There have been changes in government policy," the manager of another restaurant said. "It's not convenient to say more." Recent videos circulating on Chinese social media appear to show hundreds of North Korean women waiting in line to clear immigration at Dandong's border gate. A Reuters reporter saw a group of around 50 North Korean women waiting to cross the border on Friday morning.

Harder to smuggle

Four traders, who deal in goods ranging from iron ore and seafood to ginseng and alcohol, told Reuters the

sanctions had all but crippled the usual trade. More stringent customs checks and patrols by Chinese border police have also made it harder to smuggle goods across the border, according to the traders, who declined to be named due to the subject's sensitivity. "The impact has been huge. Dandong's economy has always counted on border trade," said one Chinese trader.

In response to Pyongyang's sixth and largest nuclear test last month, the UN Security Council on Sept 11 passed a resolution prohibiting the use of North Korean workers, strengthening an Aug 5 resolution that put a cap on the number of workers allowed overseas.

More stringent checks hitting smuggling trade

Successive rounds of UN trade sanctions have now banned 90 percent of the North's \$2.7 billion of publicly reported exports. The Sept 11 sanctions also ordered the closure of all joint business ventures with North Korea and added textiles to a list of banned exports, which already included coal, iron ore and seafood. In a statement on Thursday, China's Ministry of Commerce ordered the implementation of the new sanctions across the country within 120 days.

Forced to leave

The sanctions allow workers to serve out existing contracts. Business people in Dandong, through which most of trade between the two countries flows, said contracts could not be renewed and new visas were not being approved. A Chinese supervisor at a factory making electronic wiring for automobiles said while most of its 300 North Korean workers were on multi-year contracts expiring at different times, those who arrived in Dandong after Aug. 5 had already been forced to leave. He did not



PYONGYANG: A barbecue chef Ryu Gyong Hui (23) poses for a portrait at her stall outside a trade fair in Pyongyang. —AFP

say how many. The sanctions have come as a rude jolt to Dandong businesses and traders who had long rolled with North Korea's unpredictability but believed their neighbor's economic reliance on China would keep its belligerence in check.

Dandong is one of the larger cities in Liaoning province, whose rustbelt economy has struggled under

national campaigns to curb industrial overcapacity and ease pollution. Liaoning was China's worst performer in the first half of 2017, registering GDP growth of 2.1 percent, compared with the national rate of 6.9 percent, according to official statistics. "The economy hasn't been doing well here for the past two years," said one trader. "This is making a bad situation worse." —Reuters

Tokyo Governor may become the first female PM

TOKYO: Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike has made no secret of her desire to be Japan's first female prime minister - she even named her pet terrier "Sori", Japanese for "premier". But Koike, 65, whose fledgling Party of Hope poses a growing threat to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling bloc in an election this month, faces a tough choice: run now for a seat in parliament so she becomes eligible for the nation's top job, or wait and bet her party positions itself to win the next national poll. Abe called the Oct 22 poll in hopes his Liberal Democratic Party-led bloc could keep its majority in the lower house, where it now holds a two-thirds "super majority", but Koike's party has upended forecasts.

If Koike resigns as governor little more than a year after defying Abe's LDP to run successfully for that post, she would risk a backlash from voters. Waiting might let her best shot at

Thursday, when the Tokyo Metropolitan assembly ends its session. Candidates must register on Oct 10, when the campaign officially starts. "Only she can decide," said one Koike adviser, who declined to be identified because he is not allowed to speak for her. Koike is certain to be watching opinion polls as she weighs her decision. A TV Asahi survey published on Monday showed 72 percent were negative about her potential candidacy. Her close ally, Masaru Wakasa, on Sunday said it was not essential that Koike run this time around.

Next, next election?

"If there is a firm prospect of a change in government, party chief Koike might run for parliament, but if we can achieve a change in the 'next, next' election, she doesn't have to run



TOKYO: Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike delivers a speech during an inauguration press conference on her new political party 'Party of Hope' in Tokyo. —AFP

intention to go back to a place where you can achieve nothing despite spending so much time," she said.

A former TV announcer who speaks Arabic and English and peppers her speeches with foreign words, Koike wants to build a "pro-reform, conservative" party to compete with the LDP, in part by cannibalizing the failed main opposition Democratic Party and luring smaller parties to her side. Her cool, polished demeanor belies a steeliness beneath. "She can take a punch with a smile and sharpen her knives at the same time," said Jesper Koll, head of equity fund Wisdom Tree, who has followed Japanese politics for years.

Like former prime minister Junichiro Koizumi, one of her past mentors, Koike promises to "break free of vested interests", a slogan that resonates with voters looking for an alternative to the LDP - although critics question just how different that alternative would be from Abe's LDP. To differenti-

ate her party from the LDP, Koike has adopted popular policies, such as an end to atomic power amid public safety worries after the 2011 Fukushima nuclear crisis, and proposes to freeze a planned sales tax hike from 2019.

But she also backs Abe's push to expand the role of the military overseas and his goal of revising the post-war constitution - although recently she has avoided focusing on the divisive issue of amending its pacifist Article 9. She has also said in the past that Japan should consider having nuclear weapons, breaking a taboo in the only country to suffer an atomic attack, and, like Abe, has visited Yasukuni Shrine for war dead, seen in China and South Korea as a symbol of Japan's past militarism. Koike entered politics in a small reformist party and migrated through several other groups before joining the LDP and in 2008 became the first woman to run for head of the conservative party. She came in a distant third.—Reuters

Tokyo's Koike faces dilemma ahead of Oct 22 poll

her candidacy, present her ideas about important matters ... and debate policies head on," Abe's ally, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihiko Sugar, told reporters yesterday. Koike, a media-savvy former LDP member and defense minister, has said she would not resign as governor to run now, especially ahead of the 2020 Olympic Games, which Tokyo will host. But her carefully phrased remarks have failed to kill speculation that she will run, perhaps announcing on

sided Wakasa, who led efforts to form the new party, by announcing - on the day Abe announced the snap poll, that she would lead the Party of Hope herself, not entrust it to allies. Yesterday, she told Jiji news agency her party aimed to run more than the 233 candidates needed to take a majority in the 465-seat lower house. "If you don't buy a lottery ticket, you can't win," she said. But she again denied she would seek a seat in parliament now. "I was in national politics for 24 years and I have no

mation about visa applicants. The new policy comes at a time of heightened tensions between the United States and North Korea over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile tests, as well as escalating verbal threats from the country's leader Kim Jong Un.

While the travel restrictions are unlikely to have a broad impact - the number of non-diplomatic travelers from North Korea per year rarely tops 50, according to US State Department data - human rights activists worry it has severed one of the few human bonds between the isolated country and the West. "The main point in inviting these people here is to give them exposure to the US, and see if one can open the door a bit," said Roberta Cohen, co-chair emeritus for the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea. A State Department official said the restrictions were necessary because "North Korea does not cooperate with the United States government in any respect and fails to satisfy all information-sharing requirements" on visa applicants.

Humanitarian purposes

North Koreans wishing to visit the United States must first obtain permission from their own government, then apply for a visa in person at a US embassy, typically in Beijing, said Robert King, former US special envoy for North Korea human rights issues. When North Koreans arrive in the United States they never

go anywhere alone, King said, and are chaperoned by North Korean government minders.

In 2015, 15 North Korean weightlifters along with coaches, reserves and officials traveled to Houston for the International Weightlifting Federation world championships, said Phil Andrews, chief executive officer of USA Weightlifting. North Korea was planning earlier this year to take part in the 2017 world championships in Anaheim, California, in November, Andrews said. However, he does not know whether they will be allowed to come. "The new travel restrictions do not affect people who already have visas, and they include waivers for people with certain ties to the United States.

The State Department declined to comment on individual visa applications. C Jerry Nelson, professor emeritus at the University of Missouri, said some visits serve humanitarian purposes. In 2011, four North Korean scientists traveled to Missouri to collaborate with their US counterparts on soil quality testing methods, he said, in order to boost food production. Referring to the economic officials' trip in 2011, Shirk said they seemed reluctant to express opinions but enjoyed their snapshot of American life, which included visits to a mushroom farm, department store and New York's Carnegie Deli. "We arranged for people to go to families for dinner in San Diego," she said. "They really liked that a lot." — Reuters

News in brief

India, Pakistan trade fire

SRINAGAR: Two children were killed yesterday in an exchange of fire between Indian and Pakistani troops in disputed Kashmir, Indian authorities said. Twelve more civilians, including two women and two teenage girls, were wounded on the Indian side of the heavily-militarized Line of Control (LoC) that divides the restive Himalayan region. A police statement said firing from Pakistan had killed a 10-year-old boy and a 15-year-old girl. Indian army spokesman Colonel NN Joshi said soldiers were retaliating after "unprovoked and indiscriminate firing of small arms, automatics and mortars" from the Pakistan side in the southern Poonch sector of the LoC. Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since the end of British colonial rule in 1947, and both claim the territory in full. The nuclear-armed neighbors regularly exchange mortar fire across the border despite signing a ceasefire in 2003.

Russia busts 'IS cell'

MOSCOW: Russia's intelligence agency yesterday said it had arrested members of an Islamic State group "cell" which was preparing terror attacks. The FSB said in a statement it had "thwarted the illegal activities of... the international terrorist organization Islamic State" on September 30, by detaining all members of a cell in the Moscow region. It said they were all from Muslim-majority republics in the Caucasus but took orders from "foreign emissaries" pledging allegiance to IS. An FSB representative later told Russian media that two of the men arrested were brothers from Russia's Republic of Dagestan, in the north Caucasus. "One is 22 years old, the other is 19," the FSB employee said. The group was planning "significant" terror acts in Russia, including in densely populated places and on public transport, the statement said, without specifying the number held.

African migrants tortured

DUBAI: Migrants making their way from the Horn of Africa to Yemen are frequently abducted and tortured by "criminal gangs", the UN Migration Agency warned yesterday. Despite a war that has killed thousands and pushed Yemen to the brink of famine, some 6,000 migrants enter the country every month, according to the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM). They often come from Ethiopia and Somalia, hoping to make their way overland to the more prosperous Gulf countries to find work. Many are abducted by criminal gangs upon arrival in Yemen and tortured for ransom, according to IOM. "A common technique is to call the migrant's family while allowing burning plastic from an empty water bottle (to) drip on a migrant's skin causing burns and excruciating pain," said IOM director general William Lacy Swing.

Militant monk detained

COLOMBO: A Sri Lankan court yesterday remanded in custody a Buddhist monk charged with leading a mob which evicted Rohingya refugees, including 16 children, from a UN-protected shelter. A magistrate ordered that Akmeemana Dayarathana be held for a week pending an identification parade in connection with last Tuesday's attack on a refugee centre near Colombo. Police told the court in Mount Lavinia that the monk was a member of an unlawful assembly, obstructed police and caused disaffection among peaceful Buddhists.

US travel restrictions jeopardize exchanges with North Koreans

SAN FRANCISCO: When more than a dozen North Korean economic officials visited California and New York in 2011, US organizers hoped the tour would give the delegation ideas for market reforms and business innovations. The North Koreans quickly made clear that was not why they had come: They wanted to secure US investment, particularly from restaurant giant Yum! Brands Inc, said Susan Shirk, a University of California at San Diego professor who helped organize the visit. "They really wanted to get KFC to North Korea," Shirk said, referring to the fried chicken chain. She added that Yum did not reciprocate their interest.

In recent years, a handful of visits from official delegations and athletes have provided rare opportunities for ordinary Americans and North Koreans to come together. Those exchanges are now in jeopardy after President Donald Trump included North Korea in a group of nations that will face travel restrictions to the United States because they do not share enough infor-

Analysis

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FOCUS

Hard choices for industrialists in ruins of Aleppo

When Syria's civil war came to the industrial city of Aleppo in 2012, two textile makers had to choose whether to stay or move their businesses away. Nine months after fighting in Aleppo ended, the struggle of the one who stayed in the city to reopen his factory shows why the other will not return yet from the security of neighboring Jordan. Restoring the Aleppo industries that have for decades underpinned Syria's economy is vital if President Bashar Al-Assad is to turn battlefield success into a fuller return of state power.

Moustafa Kawai, who remained in Aleppo, moved his cotton-weaving machines to a temporary site but now has workers clearing his battered factory of debris to reopen it. "Our biggest problem is electricity. There are also very few workers because everyone's in the army. Sanctions affect the work. Customers can't come here. Transferring money is difficult. It's hard to buy spare parts," he said.

Mahmoud Akkad, a carpet manufacturer who like many Aleppo industrialists left Syria during the war, faces no such problems in Jordan where he has rebuilt his plant and kept up exports to old customers around the world. "What do I benefit if I want to set up a factory and there is no safety," he said, explaining the benefits of moving to an industrial zone in a country unaffected by Middle East turmoil. The International Monetary Fund estimated last year that Syria's economy had shrunk by 57 percent during the conflict and its manufacturing sector by 77 percent. The war has since gone better for Assad as his army and its allies pushed rebels from Aleppo and other enclaves near important cities, and Islamic State from energy fields. Growing confidence is evident in a new banknote bearing Assad's face for the first time and in Damascus holding its once-annual trade fair after a long hiatus.

But the war still dominates Syria's economy, even where the fighting has stopped. Most Aleppo factories were destroyed, badly damaged or looted. Their workers fled as refugees or became combatants. Despite a new power line to the city, there is little electricity, leaving people reliant on expensive diesel generators. Water must be pumped electrically. Fighting continues outside Aleppo. The army and allied militias who control the city operate checkpoints that some Syrians say demand bribes to let goods or workers pass, a charge the military denies. Travel outside the city means using narrow roads to bypass rebel territory and more checkpoints.

Western sanctions make foreign trade much harder, hindering the purchase of new equipment and payments for commercial deals. Although the government urges industry to return to areas where it has regained control, some businessmen say it is not doing enough to bring them back.

Incentives

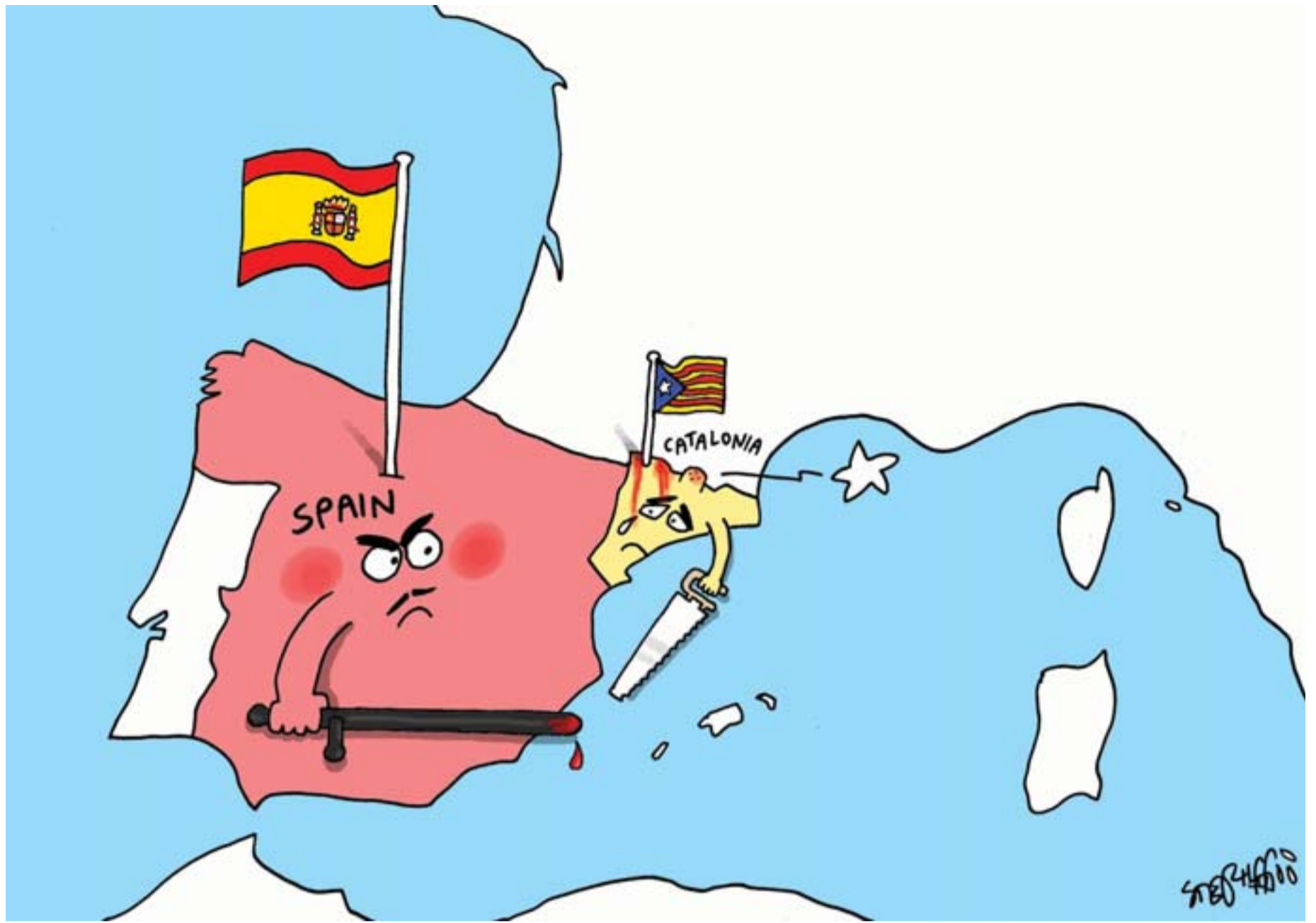
Fares Shehabi, the head of Aleppo's chamber of industry, said that since the fighting ended, the number of factories and workshops had risen sharply. Before the war there were 65,000, he said. When the rebels left in December there were 4,000. There are now 6,000, he said, attributing the rise to returning industrialists who are restarting their businesses. But Shehabi, a supporter of Assad who has been sanctioned by the European Union for backing the government, is also critical of its reconstruction policy.

"There are some incentives but not enough," he said during an interview, citing tax deductions and reduced customs tariffs for industrial imports for all Syrian customers as things the government has done. There were no specific incentives offered for Aleppo. "They should treat us like a devastated area... we don't have the level of administration that is needed to really save this industry, to make it run again," he added.

In Jordan, Akkad said the Syrian government had encouraged him to return and he said he hopes to do so eventually. "It all depends on the circumstances improving," he said. He has built one factory that produces most of the same range of rugs and carpets he once made in Aleppo and is also investing in a new \$5 million plant to make yarn. Some of his most skilled weavers followed him to Jordan and few others remain in Aleppo. "Only five percent of my workforce have remained... Most headed to Germany, to Turkey," he said.

Insecurity

In 2010, Aleppo had about a third of Syria's industrial companies and industry workers, Central Bureau of Statistics figures show. There were about a million people employed in its factories, Shehabi said. During the decade before the war Assad's economic reforms helped Aleppo's businesses to grow more quickly. Akkad was among the first to leave the small inner city workshops and move his operations into Sheikh Najjar, north of Aleppo, the biggest industrial zone in the city. —Reuters



Russia scrutinized system used by Pentagon

Hewlett Packard Enterprise allowed a Russian defense agency to review the inner workings of cyber defense software used by the Pentagon to guard its computer networks, according to Russian regulatory records and interviews with people with direct knowledge of the issue. The HPE system, called ArcSight, serves as a cybersecurity nerve center for much of the US military, alerting analysts when it detects that computer systems may have come under attack. ArcSight is also widely used in the private sector.

The Russian review of ArcSight's source code, the closely guarded internal instructions of the software, was part of HPE's effort to win the certification required to sell the product to Russia's public sector, according to the regulatory records seen by Reuters and confirmed by a company spokeswoman. Six former US intelligence officials, as well as former ArcSight employees and independent security experts, said the source code review could help Moscow discover weaknesses in the software, potentially helping attackers to blind the US military to a cyber attack.

"It's a huge security vulnerability," said Greg Martin, a former security architect for ArcSight. "You are definitely giving inner access and potential exploits to an adversary." Despite the potential risks to the Pentagon, no one Reuters spoke with was aware of any hacks or cyber espionage that were made possible by the review process. The ArcSight review took place last year, at a time when Washington was accusing Moscow of an increasing number of cyber attacks against American companies, US politicians and government agencies, including the Pentagon. Russia has repeatedly denied the allegations.

The case highlights a growing tension for US technology companies that must weigh their role as protectors of US cybersecurity while continuing to pursue business with Washington's adversaries such as Russia and China, say security experts.

'Backdoor Vulnerabilities'

The review was conducted by Echelon, a company with close ties to the Russian military, on behalf of Russia's Federal Service for Technical and Export Control (FSTEC), a defense agency tasked with countering cyber espionage. Echelon president and majority owner Alexey Markov said in an email to Reuters that he is required to report any vulnerabilities his team discovers to the Russian government.

But he said he does so only after alerting the soft-

“It's a huge security vulnerability”

ware developer of the problem and getting its permission to disclose the vulnerability. Echelon did not provide details about HPE's source code review, citing a non-disclosure agreement with the company. FSTEC confirmed Markov's account, saying in a statement that Russian testing laboratories immediately inform foreign developers if they discover vulnerabilities, before submitting a report to a government "database of information security threats." One reason Russia requests the reviews before allowing sales to government agencies and state-run companies is to ensure that US intelligence services have not placed spy tools in the soft-

ware. HPE said no "backdoor vulnerabilities" were discovered in the Russian review. It declined to provide further details. HPE said it allows Russian government-accredited testing companies to review source code in order to win the Russian defense certifications it needs to sell products to Russia's public sector.

An HPE spokeswoman said source code reviews are conducted by the Russian testing company at an HPE research and development center outside of Russia, where the software maker closely supervises the process. No code is allowed to leave the premises, and HPE has allowed such reviews in Russia for years, she said. Those measures ensure "our source code and products are in no way compromised," she said.

Some security experts say that studying the source code of a product would make it far easier for a reviewer to spot vulnerabilities in the code, even if they did not leave the site with a copy of the code. In a 2014 research paper, Echelon directors said the company discovered vulnerabilities in 50 percent of the foreign and Russian software it reviewed. Still, security analysts said the source code review alone, even if it yielded information about vulnerabilities, would not give hackers easy entry into the military systems. To infiltrate military networks, hackers would need to first overcome a number of other security measures, such as firewalls, said Alan Paller, founder of the SANS Institute, which trains cybersecurity analysts. Paller also said HPE's decision to allow the review was not surprising. If tech companies like HPE want to do business in Russia, "they don't really have any choice," he said. HPE declined to disclose the size of its business in Russia, but Russian government tender records show ArcSight is now used by a number of state firms and companies close to the Kremlin, including VTB Bank and the Rossiya Segodnya media group. —Reuters

Dam leaves Egypt fearing for lifeline

The only reason Egypt has even existed from ancient times until today is because of the Nile River, which provides a thin, richly fertile stretch of green through the desert. Now, for the first time, the country fears a potential threat to that lifeline, and it seems to have no idea what to do about it. Ethiopia is finalizing construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, its first major dam on the Blue Nile, and then will eventually start filling the giant reservoir behind it to power the largest hydroelectric dam in Africa.

Egypt fears that will cut into its water supply, destroying parts of its precious farmland and squeezing its population of 93 million people, who already face water shortages. Dam construction on international rivers often causes disputes over the downstream impact. But the Nile is different: Few nations rely so completely on a single river as much as Egypt does. The Nile provides over 90 percent of Egypt's water supply. Almost the entire population lives cramped in the siver of the Nile Valley. Around 60 percent of Egypt's Nile water originates in Ethiopia from the Blue Nile, one of two main tributaries.

Egypt hardly gets by with the water it does have. It has one of the lowest per capita shares of water in the world, some 660 cubic meters a person. The strain is worsened by inefficiency and waste. With the population expected to double in 50 years, shortages are predicted to

become severe even sooner, by 2025. Egypt already receives the lion's share of Nile waters: More than 55 billion of the around 88 billion cubic meters of water that flow down the river each year. It is promised that amount under agreements from 1929 and 1959 that other Nile nations say are unfair and ignore the needs of their own large populations.

Complicating the situation, no one has a clear idea what impact Ethiopia's dam will actually have. Addis Ababa insists it will not cause significant harm to Egypt or Sudan downstream. Much depends on the management of the flow and how fast Ethiopia fills its reservoir, which can hold 74 billion cubic meters of water. A faster fill means blocking more water, while doing it slowly would mean less reduction downstream.

Once the fill is completed, the flow would in theory return to normal. Egypt, where agriculture employs a quarter of the work force, is worried that the damage could be long-lasting. One study by a Cairo University agriculture professor estimated Egypt would lose a staggering 51 percent of its farmland if the fill is done in three years. A slower, six-year fill would cost Egypt 17 percent of its cultivated land, the study claimed.

Internal government studies estimate that for every reduction of 1 billion cubic meters of water, 200,000 acres of farmland would be lost and livelihoods of 1 million people affected, since an average



In this April 17, 2017 photo, holidaymakers enjoy Nile cruises during Sham el-Nessim, or "smelling the breeze," in Cairo. —AP

of five people live off each acre, a senior Irrigation Ministry official said. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the figures.

Other experts say the impact will be far smaller, even minimal. They say Egypt could suffer no damage at all if it and Ethiopia work together and exchange information, adjusting the rate of filling the reservoir to ensure that Egypt's own massive reservoir on the Nile, Lake Nasser, stays full enough to meet its needs during the fill.

Unfortunately, that isn't happening so far. "To my knowledge, this situation is unique, particularly at this scale," said Kevin Wheeler at the Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute. "I just can't think of another case that has two large reservoirs in series without a plan

on how to operate them together." Originating in Ethiopia, the Blue Nile flows into Sudan, where it joins with the White Nile, whose source is Lake Victoria in east Africa. From there it flows through Egypt to the Mediterranean. For Ethiopia, the \$5 billion dam is the realization of a long-delayed dream. Ethiopia's infrastructure is among the least developed in the world, leaving most of its 95 million people without access to electricity. The hydroelectric dam is to have a capacity to generate over 6,400 Megawatts, a massive boost to the current production of 4,000 Megawatts. The dam, around 60 percent complete, is likely to be finished this year or early next. Ethiopia has given little information on when it will start the fill or at what rate. —AP

Before shooting, gunman was settling into retirement

LAS VEGAS: At first glance, it seemed Stephen Paddock, 64, was set for a quiet life in a retirement community in Mesquite, Nevada, where he had bought a new home in 2015 near his beloved casinos. From there, it was only an hour's drive to Las Vegas, where he embarked on the worst mass shooting in recent US history before killing himself on Sunday. His brother, Eric Paddock, said he was a peaceful man who moved back to the red desert hills of Nevada partly because gambling is legal in the state and he loathed Central Florida's humidity.

"He was a wealthy guy and he liked to play video poker and he liked to go on cruises," Paddock said from his doorstep in Orlando, Florida. "He's never drawn his gun, it makes no sense." His brother had a couple of handguns he kept in a safe, perhaps a long rifle, "but no automatic weapons". The two were last in touch last month, texting about power outages after Hurricane Irma slammed into Florida. "He had nothing to do with any political organization and religious organizations" as far as he was aware, Eric Paddock said.

Their father was Patrick Benjamin Paddock, a violent bank robber who was on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Most Wanted list in the 1960s. The shooter himself had no criminal record beyond a traffic violation, police in Las Vegas said. "We didn't know him," Eric Paddock said of their father. In recent weeks, Paddock made gambling transactions worth tens of thousands of dollars, though it was unclear whether they were wins or losses, NBC News reported, citing unnamed law enforcement officials.

'Nothing Out of the Ordinary'

Public records point to an itinerant existence across the American West and Southeast: A few years in California, a few years in other parts of Nevada. Paddock had a hunting license in Texas, where he lived for a while. He got his pilot license, and had at least one single-engine aircraft registered in his name. In early 2015, he bought a modest two-story home in a new housing development for retirees on the dusty edge of Mesquite, a small desert town popular with golfers and gamblers that straddles Nevada's border with Arizona.

"It's a nice, clean home and nothing out of the ordinary," Quinn Averett, a Mesquite police department spokesman, told reporters on Monday. Some guns and ammunition were found inside, though nothing remarkable in a region where gun ownership is high. Roughly an hour's drive southwest is Las Vegas, where Paddock checked into a 32nd-floor room at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino last Thursday with at least



A body is covered with a sheet after the mass shooting. — AP

10 rifles for a shooting spree that would kill least 58 people and hurt more than 500. The FBI said he had no connection with international militant groups.

Before moving to Mesquite, Nevada, he lived in another town called Mesquite in Texas, where he worked as the manager of an apartment complex called Central Park. Records as recent as 2015 list Paddock as single, though it appears he may have married while living in California in the 1980s. Police and public records said he lived with Marilou Danley in the Nevada retirement community. Police said she had no connection with the attack, CNN reported. — Reuters

Gunman mows down 58 at Las Vegas...

Continued from Page 1

The Islamic State said one of its "soldiers" who had "converted to Islam several months ago" was behind the shooting but provided no evidence to back up the claim. The Federal Bureau of Investigation said it has found no such link so far. "As this event unfolds we have determined to this point no connection with an international terrorist group," said Aaron Rouse, special agent in charge of the Las Vegas office of the FBI. "The Intelligence Community is aware of the claim of responsibility by a foreign terrorist organization for the shooting in Las Vegas," CIA spokesman Jonathan Liu said in an email. "We advise caution on jumping to conclusions before the facts are in."

Paddock, who photographs showed as greying with a trimmed beard and moustache, was a former accountant and a licensed private pilot with no criminal record, according to ABC News. Eric Paddock, the gunman's brother, said he was at a complete loss to understand what may have motivated the shooting. "This is an asteroid falling out of the sky," Eric Paddock told CBS News. He said his brother had "no religious affiliation, no political affiliation". "He was my brother. He was a guy. He gambled," Eric Paddock said. He said his brother had no history of mental illness and was "not an avid gun guy at all". Police found several more weapons at Paddock's home in a new golf course development in the desert just outside Mesquite, about 145 km northeast of Las Vegas, Mesquite police spokesman Quinn Averett told reporters.

Witnesses said Paddock opened fire with an initial long burst of gunfire, and then appeared to reload as he continued his spree. "We heard (what) sounded like a glass breaking, so you looked around to see what's going on and then heard a pop, pop, pop," Monique Decker told CNN. "You'd think for a moment okay we're fine, there's no more gunfire, then it starts again."

Country music star Jason Aldean was on stage and near the end of his concert when the shooting began. Aldean initially carried on playing when the first crackle of gunfire could be heard but then hurried off the stage. Robert Hayes, a firefighter from Los Angeles who was in front of the stage, said he first thought the shots were some kind of equipment malfunction. Once he realized what was going on, he joined the first responders, donning one of their vests. "Honestly I probably pronounced 15-20 people" dead, he told Fox News. "It was pretty much like a war scene inside."

Emergency crews used anything to hand as makeshift stretchers, including tables and metal railings normally used to control the crowds, said Hayes. Asked if he thought it was an inexperienced gunman, he responded: "With 30,000 people in the arena area, it was kind of like shooting goldfish ... He didn't have to be good."

Despite an outcry among some lawmakers about the pervasiveness of guns in the United States, the massacre, like previous mass shootings, was unlikely to prompt action in Congress. Nevada has some of the most permissive gun laws in the United States. It does not require firearm owners to

obtain licenses or register their guns. The Second Amendment of the US Constitution protects the right to bear arms, and gun-rights advocates staunchly defend that provision. Trump, a Republican, has been outspoken about his support of the Second Amendment.

"It's time for Congress to get off it's a** and do something," said US Senator Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut, where 26 children and educators were killed in an attack on a school in 2012. Efforts to pass federal legislation after that attack failed. Gun rights advocates argued that restrictions on legal gun sales would leave law-abiding citizens more vulnerable to attacks by criminals.

The Las Vegas attack is the deadliest shooting in recent US history, exceeding the toll of 49 dead in an attack on the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida in June 2016. It was also the latest in a series of recent deadly attacks at concert venues. Twenty-two people were killed while leaving an Ariana Grande concert in the northern English city of Manchester in May when a suicide bomber detonated a nail bomb in the foyer. Ninety people were killed in Nov 2015 at the Bataclan venue in Paris during a concert by US band the Eagles of Death Metal.

A shocked Aldean told his fans via Instagram that he and his band was safe. "Tonight has been beyond horrific," the singer wrote. "It hurts my heart that this would happen to anyone who was just coming out to enjoy what should have been a fun night." Pope Francis said he was "deeply saddened" by the "senseless tragedy" while Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May called it an "appalling attack". — Agencies



A police officer takes cover behind a police vehicle during a shooting near the Mandalay Bay resort and casino on the Las Vegas — AP



Las Vegas police sweep through a convention center area during a lockdown yesterday at the Tropicana Las Vegas following an active shooter situation on the Las Vegas Strip. — AP

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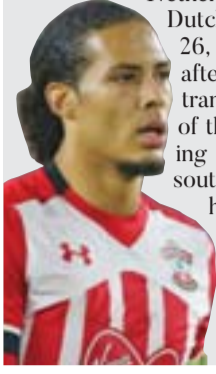
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Sports

Van Dijk receives belated Dutch call-up

AMSTERDAM: Defender Virgil van Dijk, who only returned to Southampton's starting line-up at the weekend, has been called up to the Netherlands squad for their upcoming World Cup qualifiers, the Dutch football association (KNVB) said yesterday. Van Dijk, 26, returns to the national side for the first time this year after injury ruled him out of matches in March and June. A transfer stand-off with Southampton saw him miss the start of the new Premier League season and last month's qualifying matches for Russia. He came on as a substitute for the south coast side against Crystal Palace last month and made his first start on Saturday in the away defeat at Stoke City. Van Dijk has 12 caps for the Netherlands, who must beat Belarus away in Borisov on Saturday and Sweden at home next Tuesday to have any chance of reaching the World Cup finals next year. —Reuters



Ferdinand doesn't plan on lengthy spell as boxer

LONDON: Former Manchester United star Rio Ferdinand says his surprise move into boxing may only last one fight. Ferdinand, who retired from football in 2015, last month announced his decision to step into the ring and said he had ambitions of challenging for a title. But the 38-year-old, who also played for England, West Ham, Leeds and QPR, now admits his boxing career could be short-lived. "I want to see if I can get a licence and become a professional and have one fight," Ferdinand told the BBC on Monday. "I am not looking to have a career here. I am looking to have a professional fight and I will see where I go then." Despite his admission, Ferdinand is adamant his attempt to become a boxer was something he is taking seriously. "This is not a joke. Hopefully, I will get a license, go on to become a professional and fight someone," he said. "Boxing can't be a gimmick. If I take it lightly, I will get hurt." If Ferdinand successfully obtains a license from the British Boxing Board of Control, he will follow fellow former footballers Curtis Woodhouse, Leon McKenzie and Leo Roget in doing so. —AFP

Ribery out for 'weeks' over torn knee ligament

BERLIN: Bayern Munich confirmed yesterday that veteran winger Franck Ribery will be out for "the coming weeks" after tearing a knee ligament. The 34-year-old had to be helped off in the 62nd minute of Bayern's 2-2 draw at Hertha Berlin on Sunday and German media expect the Frenchman to be out for up to three months. Bayern said Ribery's affected left knee will be "treated conservatively and rested for several weeks with a splint". That means he will not undergo an operation. Ribery has already begun rehabilitation but further therapy and training will be decided at a later date depending on the healing process, the Bundesliga champions said. "We are sorry that Franck has injured himself. We wish him a swift and good recovery," said Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge. Earlier, broadcaster Sky had reported that Ribery would be out for between two and three months. —AFP



Busch spoils Elliott's run at Dover for second straight win

DOVER: Chase Elliott rubbed his head and leaned against his car, crestfallen as he replayed the final laps in his mind. Jimmie Johnson, his champion teammate, walked over to offer some encouragement and let Elliott vent.

"I anticipated them being cuss words," Johnson said, "and they were." Elliott had it, the first win in 70 career Cup starts in his sight, the white flag about to drop.

But the son of a NASCAR Hall of Fame driver simply could not find his way out of a thicket of traffic and Kyle Busch was ready to pounce. Busch spoiled Elliott's bid at his first career NASCAR Cup Series victory, taking the lead with two laps left to win Sunday at Dover International Speedway.

Elliott, largely expected to lead NASCAR's next generation of stars, was in stunned disbelief that he let the lead slip away. "I'm just so disappointed in myself," Elliott said. "Golly, I couldn't have had it any easier. I gave it away."

Busch, the 2015 Cup champion, went high on the concrete track and zipped past Elliott to win for the second straight week. He won for the fourth time in the No. 18 Toyota and is streaking at the right time as NASCAR's playoffs head into the second round.

While Elliott was consoled, Busch took his customary bow. He injected a ho-hum race with a thrilling finish and perhaps the best two closing laps of the season. Busch is 24 points behind fellow Toyota driver Martin Truex Jr. for the points lead and was already safely in the field of 12.

"As far as Chase get out there, I wasn't sure I'd run him back down," Busch said. "The only thing Chase could have done differently was just move around and try and get out of the wave of the cars that were in front of him. I was actually surprised he didn't."

Ryan Newman, Austin Dillon, Daytona 500 champion Kurt Busch and Brickyard 400 winner Kasey Kahne were eliminated as the playoff field was cut from 16 drivers. Elliott was second, followed by Johnson, Truex and Kyle Larson.

Elliott followed in some superstar footsteps when he made his Cup debut in 2015. Bill Elliott was a two-time Daytona 500 champion and was named NASCAR's most popular driver a record 16 times. Chase Elliott also took over the No. 24 Chevrolet when four-time Cup champion Jeff Gordon retired.

Gordon attended the race and exchanged words with Newman on pit road. Newman, who finished a lap down in 13th, was one of the drivers that held up Elliott down the stretch and contributed to his collapse.

Newman was clearly frustrated after missing the playoff cutoff by just two points. "You don't think I was racing for my own position," Newman asked Gordon. "I didn't say you weren't," Gordon said.

"Just watch what you say, man," Newman said. Elliott was crushed, Newman was irked, Gordon stirred the pot. About the only one really happy - well, Ricky Stenhouse Jr., who clinched the final transfer spot was thrilled - was Busch. The Joe Gibbs Racing driver followed last week's win at New Hampshire with his 42nd career Cup victory.

Truex won the opener at Chicagoland and followed with a fifth and fourth. With a series-high five wins, he's still the driver to beat for the championship. "Maybe this closes the gap that the 78 had on us a little bit," Busch said. Elliott finished second at Chicagoland but NASCAR penalized the team for a modification to his Chevrolet and he was stripped of playoff point and his crew chief was suspended. The 24 will get another close look in a thorough inspection this week. But Elliott's time as a perennial race contender has arrived, even if his checkered flag was denied at Dover. "I thought if I had a clean track, I could have run as fast as he did, but I didn't, and I should have done something different," Elliott said. "So that's just on me, and he did a better job than I did." Here are other items of note from Dover:

YOU'RE IN

Truex, Larson, Busch, Brad Keselowski,



DOVER: Kyle Busch, driver of the #18 M&M's Caramel Toyota, lifts the trophy after winning the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Apache Warrior 400 presented by Lucas Oil at Dover International Speedway on Sunday in Dover, Delaware. — AFP

Denny Hamlin, Matt Kenseth, Johnson, Ryan Blaney, Elliott, Kevin Harvick, Jamie McMurray and Stenhouse are all in the second round. "The feeling is lucky really," Stenhouse said.

HOT HENDRICK

Elliott was runner-up and Johnson was third, giving Hendrick Motorsports a sorely needed confidence boost in the second.

Johnson had his first top-five finish since he won the first Dover race in June.

"I wished I would have qualified better. I really think we had a shot at winning the race today," Johnson said.

RED FLAG

The race was stopped for 15 minutes, 9 seconds when Jeffrey Earnhardt spun at the pit road entrance and hit sand barrels.

QUIET TRACK

NASCAR again stood in unison for the national anthem, a week after a pair of team owners said they would fire anyone who took a knee. The first race of the second playoff round takes place at Charlotte Motor Speedway. Dillon won his first career Cup race there in May and Johnson won at the track in October 2016. — AP

'Lucky' Hamilton fears Ferrari backlash in Japan

SEPANG: Lewis Hamilton rode his luck for the second race in a row to stretch his world championship lead over Sebastian Vettel but said he fears a Ferrari backlash in Japan this week. After finishing second in the Malaysian Grand Prix, Hamilton was asked by reporters if Ferrari's pace was a big concern. "Yeah, definitely," he said.

"We have some work to do," he added before flying to Japan to prepare for Sunday's race at Suzuka. "These next races are going to be crucial in terms of ironing out some of the creases we have with the car."

Hamilton took his lead to 34 points after finishing behind Red Bull's Max Verstappen at the final running of the Malaysian Grand Prix at Sepang on

Sunday. But the drive of the day was from the flying Vettel who carved his way from the back of the grid to finish fourth. Hamilton's Mercedes also struggled for raw pace in Singapore a fortnight ago.

But there he took a surprise win from fifth on the grid after avoiding the first-lap crash that took out both Ferraris and Verstappen. "We cannot be distracted by the fact we got lucky again this weekend," said Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff.

"Benefiting from Ferrari's problems shouldn't hide that they have caught up 30 seconds this race," he said. "It was clear after just a few laps that both Red Bull and Ferrari had better cars than us today."

Hamilton could be handed another

break in Suzuka as Vettel may incur a grid penalty if he needs a new gearbox after a crazy post-race shunt with Lance Stroll. The incident wrecked the rear of the German's car and he will be demoted five places on the grid in Japan if the gearbox needs changing.

In Malaysia an engine failure saw Vettel fail to set a qualifying time, condemning him to the back of the grid despite Ferrari having been fastest in practice. "It was a much better weekend than we had anticipated after our Friday. Considering the issues we did have with the car this is a good result," conceded Hamilton. Mercedes have dominated Formula One for the past four years but it seems their era of supremacy could be coming to an end as both Ferrari and Red Bull appear to have the better car. "After a weekend where we have lacked a significant chunk of performance, we couldn't have imagined such a good outcome, but we can't let that distract us from the job we have in front of us," said Wolff. "We leave Malaysia with a lot of question marks and we need to find answers to them in the next days." —AFP



Sebastian Vettel

Ferrari speed gives some hope to Vettel

SEPANG: Sebastian Vettel fell further behind Formula One championship leader Lewis Hamilton after Sunday's Malaysian Grand Prix but the Ferrari driver still saw cause for optimism in the title battle.

Starting in last place after a power unit problem prevented him setting a time in qualifying, with his Mercedes rival lining up on pole position, the German made the best of a bad situation. His remarkable recovery drive to fourth, combined with Hamilton being beaten by Red Bull's Max Verstappen, meant Vettel limited the damage to six points.

While that still stretched Hamilton's overall advantage to a hefty 34 points with only five of the 20 races left, it was better than the German might have feared. "I am still optimistic, because we know that we have a quick car," said Vettel, who nearly snatched third from Red Bull's

Daniel Ricciardo. "It's been a difficult weekend, but nevertheless the speed is there." Vettel's title hopes have been dealt a severe blow for two races in a row now. An opening lap crash at the last race in Singapore, where he had started on pole, cost him 25 points to Hamilton, who capitalised to win from fifth.

The four-times champion had gone into the Malaysian weekend 28 points behind his rival. Had Hamilton won on Sunday with Vettel fourth, or outsourced the 30-year-old by more than seven points, the Briton would have moved into a position to win the title no matter what the German did, including winning the next five races.

Kimi Raikkonen's failure to start Sunday's Malaysia race compounded Ferrari's misery. Vettel, meanwhile, could still be hit with a grid penalty at the next race in Japan if he is forced to change his car's gearbox following a bizarre post-race collision with Williams rookie Lance Stroll.

Still, the Maranello outfit can take some heart from the pace Vettel displayed and Mercedes' struggles. Vettel set the fastest lap and a lap record on his charge through the field on Sunday even as Mercedes struggled for the second weekend in a row with a car described by team boss Toto Wolff as "capricious".

"It's further cause to continue to believe in ourselves," said Ferrari boss Maurizio Arrivabene. "We have the car, the men, the drivers, the means and the spirit to fight all the way to the finish." — Reuters



SEPANG: This file photo taken on Sunday shows Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton (front) and Ferrari's German driver Sebastian Vettel driving during the third practice session of the Formula One Malaysia Grand Prix at the Sepang circuit. — AFP

Sports

Ocampos brace helps Marseille stun Nice, moves up to third in Ligue 1

Marcelo sent off as Lyon's winless streak extend to five matches

PARIS: Ten-man Marseille moved up to third in Ligue 1 after Lucas Ocampos hit a brace in a thrilling come-from-behind 4-2 win at Mediterranean rivals Nice on Sunday. Players joined fans in a minute's applause in memory of the two victims of a knife attack in Marseille earlier on Sunday, after which the south coast rivals put on a sparkling show.

In an entertaining first half, Marseille hit back from two goals down to head into the break leading 3-2. Mario Balotelli opened the scoring with a close-range header from a Pierre Lees-Melou corner after just four minutes while Jean Michael Serri doubled Nice's advantage with a heavily-deflected shot from outside the area.

Ocampos bagged his first soon before the half hour mark, prodding in from close range after Nice's defence failed to deal with a cross.



Allan Saint-Maximin blazed over when one-on-one with goalkeeper Steve Mandanda and Nice were made to pay. Five minutes from the break, a sliding Lees-Melou deflected a Florian Thauvin cross past his own goalkeeper.

And in the final minute of the half, Nice imploded again as captain Dante gave away the ball and goalkeeper Yoann Cardinale parried Luiz Gustavo's shot weakly into the air for Ocampos to nod over the line. Two minutes into the second period, more sloppy play handed Gustavo a shooting opportunity the Brazilian gleefully accepted to find the bottom corner. Midway through the half, though, Gustavo was shown a straight red for following through studs up on Lees-Melou.

There was still time for Mandanda to save an Alassane Plea penalty after Saint-Maximin was tripped in the box but Marseille held out.

"It's a great victory, we showed that we had character," said Ocampos. "We wanted to show that

the 6-1 loss to Monaco was an accident, that it wasn't fair."

'GESTURE OF FRUSTRATION'

Earlier, Marcelo was controversially sent off as Lyon's winless streak extended to five matches after letting a two-goal lead slip in a 3-3 draw at Angers. With Bruno Genesio's visitors leading 3-1 in the 50th minute, defender Marcelo was booked for a foul on the edge of the box.

The Brazilian then accidentally knocked the yellow card out of the referee's hand with a dismissive gesture, earning a straight red card just seconds after his booking.

Gustavo was shown a straight red

Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas said that he hoped Marcelo's suspension would be rescinded. "I had the video, so I asked that the referee watch it," he said. "It's not a question about trying to change this match, I was thinking about the next match against Monaco and I wanted him to see the images to show that Marcelo does not make a gesture against him, it's simply a gesture of frustration."

Lyon started quickly as former Real Madrid forward Mariano Diaz scored his sixth league goal of the season in the fifth minute. Rafael put through his own net to draw Angers level on the half-hour mark, but goals from Mouctar Diakhaby and former Manchester United winger Memphis Depay put the away side in control at the break.

After Marcelo's bizarre dismissal, Angers roared back with goals from Karl Toko Ekambi and Ismael Traore. World-record signing Neymar scored twice, including from a penalty, as PSG moved three points clear of champions Monaco at the top by thrashing Bordeaux 6-2 on Saturday. Despite Radamel Falcao's 12th goal of the season, Monaco were held 1-1 by Montpellier on Friday. — AFP



NICE: Olympique de Marseille's French goalkeeper Steve Mandanda (C) jumps to stop the ball during the French L1 football match between Nice and Marseille on Sunday at the "Allianz Riviera" stadium in Nice. — AFP

FIFA fines Germany for Nazi chants at World Cup qualifier

GENEVA: FIFA fined the German soccer federation 32,000 Swiss francs (\$33,000) yesterday because fans chanted Nazi slogans at a World Cup qualifying game in the Czech Republic. The range of "improper conduct" charges against Germany included fans encroaching on the field and setting off fireworks at the game in Prague, FIFA said.

German officials said the offensive fans did not buy tickets through official channels. Germany's next away World Cup qualifier is on Thursday in Northern Ireland. About 200 German supporters chanted slogans during their team's 2-1 win and verbally abused one of the scorers, Timo Werner.

FIFA also fined the Czech federation 5,000 Swiss francs (\$5,150) for crowd disorder. FIFA's attempts to crack down on fans chanting gay slurs saw seven national federations fined for incidents. Argentina was ordered to pay 65,000 Swiss francs (\$67,000), Panama 50,000 Swiss francs (\$51,500), and Hungary 20,000 Swiss francs (\$20,600). Other fines were for Chile (35,000 Swiss francs: \$36,000); Ecuador (20,000 Swiss francs: \$20,600), Brazil (10,000 Swiss francs: \$10,300) and Mexico (10,000 Swiss francs: \$10,300).

Uruguay's federation was fined 25,000 Swiss francs (\$25,750) for "insulting chants" by fans at a home qualifier against Argentina. FIFA imposed fines of 45,000 Swiss francs (\$46,400) on the soccer bodies of Iran and Ukraine.

Iran was sanctioned for incidents at a home game against Syria, including a "pre-match ceremony with religious chants" and improper conduct by fans. Ukrainian fans were guilty of discrimination with chants and banners at a home game against Turkey.

European federations fined for discriminatory behavior by fans included Romania and Montenegro (each 25,000 Swiss francs: \$25,750) and Serbia (20,000 Swiss francs: \$20,600). Romania is also banned for one World Cup qualifier from using the National Stadium in Bucharest. Nigeria was fined 30,000 Swiss francs (\$31,000) for fan disorder at a 4-0 home win over Cameroon.

A ball boy being sent off counted in a charge against Honduras for failure in match organization against the United States, and resulted in a 5,000 Swiss franc (\$5,150) fine. Gabon was ordered to forfeit a qualifying game against Ivory Coast as a 3-0 loss. However, Ivory Coast - which leads Group C in Africa - already won the Sept. 2 game 3-0 in Libreville. Gabon was fined 6,000 Swiss francs (\$6,200). — AP

Shilton wants England to return to old fashioned defending

LONDON: Former goalkeeper Peter Shilton says a return to old-fashioned defending is needed if England are to make an impression in next year's World Cup finals in Russia. While England's relative lack of goal-keeping options, compared to the days when he and Ray Clemence vied for the jersey, is often lamented, Shilton believes the spotlight should be focused further forward. England have conceded only three times in six World Cup qualifying games against modest opposition, but have been found wanting against the world's top strikers in recent years. They recently conceded three in a friendly against France.

"We need to be better in defence in important games and we need to shore it up," Shilton, who holds a record 125 England caps, said in the build-up to this week's World Cup qualifiers when Gareth Southgate's side can seal top spot with victory over Slovenia at Wembley on Thursday.

"We need to look at the options in defence now. We need real defenders who can defend first and foremost. The little bit of football you get from defenders is secondary to me. You have to have tough defenders so when balls come into the box you they are there first. We need leaders too if we are going to have a chance

Klopp searches for solutions to Liverpool's woes

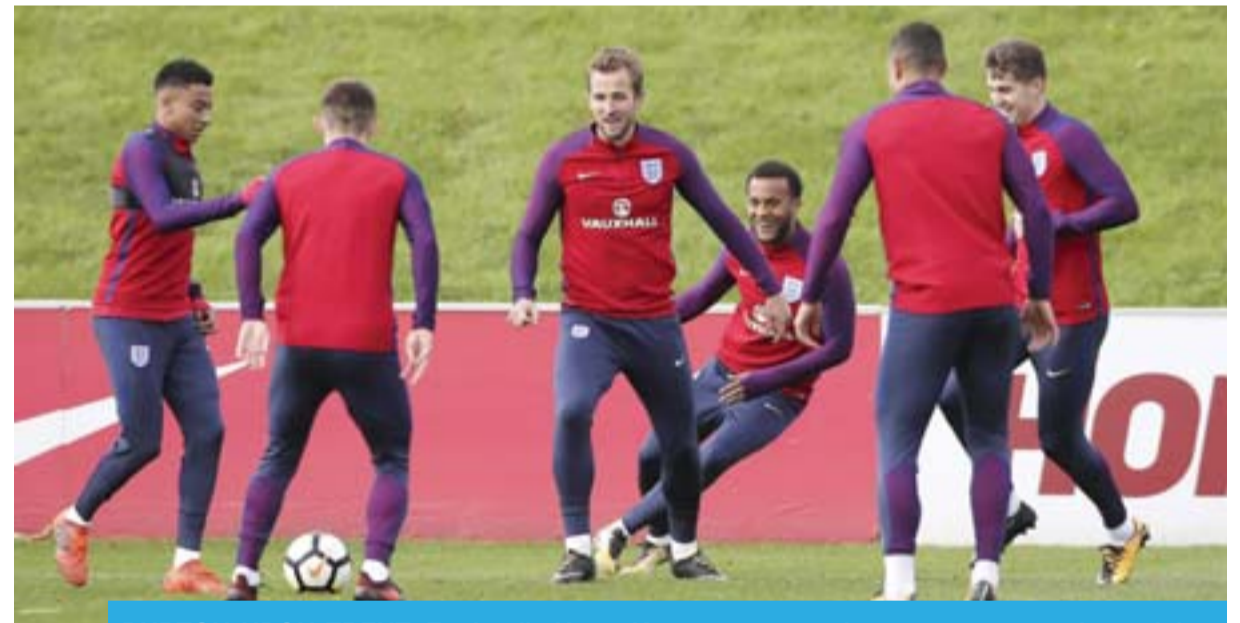
LONDON: Heralded as Liverpool's saviour when he was appointed two years ago, Jurgen Klopp has cut an increasingly tetchy figure in recent weeks as the Reds boss struggles to find the winning formula at Anfield.

In contrast to his success with Borussia Dortmund, Klopp is still looking for his first silverware in England and, after a 1-1 draw at Newcastle on Sunday, Liverpool are already languishing seven points behind Premier League leaders Manchester City.

Klopp's side have won only one of their past seven matches in all competitions and his record to date compares unfavourably to his Liverpool predecessor Brendan Rodgers' statistics over the same period. With in-form rivals Manchester United due on Merseyside for Liverpool's next match on October 14, Klopp must use the international break to solve his team's damaging problems.

LACK OF CUTTING EDGE

If Klopp's colourful description of goals being "the mother of football" is correct, then Liverpool are in danger of being orphaned. With 137 chances created, Liverpool have had the most opportunities to score of



BURTON UPON TRENT: England's Harry Kane, center, and teammates attend a training session at St George's Park, Burton upon Trent, England, yesterday, ahead of their World Cup qualifier match against Slovenia. — AP

at major tournaments."

West Ham United keeper Joe Hart is expected to be between the posts against Slovenia but Shilton questions whether the Manchester City loanee should still be automatic first choice. He believes Stoke City keeper Jack Butland should get the nod against Slovenia or in Sunday's game in Lithuania.

"I think Gareth Southgate has got to play Jack

Butland over the next few games before the World Cup," he said. "It's not a foregone thing with Joe in my opinion. He obviously has competition now and Gareth definitely has to give Jack a game and take it from there depending on how he performs."

"I think Joe has the experience which is important when you go into major tournaments but Butland has never really had a chance to prove himself." — Reuters

any Premier League team this season, but have netted only 13 times. While Manchester United, Chelsea and Arsenal all splashed out on forwards in the close-season, Klopp opted against signing a penalty box predator and the decision looks like coming back to haunt him. Out-of-favour forward Daniel Sturridge is often on the bench and Liverpool are paying for their lack of cutting edge. Anfield legend Jamie Carragher said: "You take it back to Manchester United last season in terms of having a lot of games where they didn't score and had lots of chances. At the end of the season they just went and bought Lukaku and it looks like that problem at the moment is fixed. Liverpool didn't fix the problems that needed fixing."

DEFENSIVE MISHAPS

Only two Premier League teams have conceded more goals than Liverpool this season, with the 12 allowed by Klopp's leaky rearguard a stark contrast to their title rivals.

Manchester City and Manchester United have let in only two goals each, with Tottenham (five) and Chelsea (six) also far more solid. Klopp is clearly aware of Liverpool's defensive malaise as he spent most of the close-season engaged in a failed attempt to sign Southampton centre-back Virgil van Dijk.

Dejan Lovren, Joel Matip, Ragnar Klavan, Alberto Moreno and Joe Gomez comprise a distinctly flawed unit, with Klopp's commitment to attack also leaving his defenders with little protection from the midfield. "If they keep defending the way they are at the minute they've got no chance (of winning the title). The goals they are conceding are far too easy," former Liverpool goalkeeper Chris Kirkland said.—AFP

Serbia wary of awkward Austria: Matic

BELGRADE: Serbia can take nothing for granted against Austria as the Balkan team bid to qualify for the 2018 World Cup after an eight-year absence from major tournaments, midfielder Nemanja Matic said yesterday.

Serbia's only appearance as an independent nation in a showpiece event was a group-stage exit at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. "Austria are a very good team with only pride to play for against us and that's the most awkward opposition in the home straight," Matic told reporters.

"I would prefer if they were still in the running for a World Cup berth because they'd be under as much pressure as we are at the moment." Serbia, who top the group with 18 points from eight games, need one win from their remaining two matches, against Austria or at home to Georgia, to qualify for next year's tournament in Russia. Second-placed Wales (14 points) and third-placed Ireland (13) are likely to slug it out for the runners-up spot and a potential playoff berth while fourth-placed Austria (nine points) are virtually out of contention. Matic stressed the expected mass turnout of Serbian fans - expatriates in Austria and those set to make the trip north - could make all the difference in Vienna.— Reuters

12 Busch spoils Elliott's run at Dover for second straight win



14 Move over Neymar: How rugby players hope to change Brazil



15 Ocampos brace helps Marseille stun Nice



DENVER: Denver Broncos running back Jamaal Charles is tackled by members of the Oakland Raiders defense during the first half of an NFL football game Sunday, in Denver. — AP

Gano goal lifts Panthers over Patriots

Stephen Hauschka kicks tiebreaking 56-yard field goal

FOXBOROUGH: Graham Gano hit a 48-yard field goal as time expired, helping the Carolina Panthers stun the New England Patriots 33-30 on Sunday. The winner served as redemption for Gano, who missed an extra point in the third quarter. It was the second home loss this season for the usually unbeatable Patriots at Gillette Stadium. The defeat marked just the second time since 2012 that Tom Brady has lost two home starts within a season. Cam Newton threw for three touchdowns and ran for another. Jonathan Stewart rushed 14 times for 68 yards to pass DeAngelo Williams and become the franchise's all-time leading rusher. Newton finished 22 of 29 for 316 yards and an interception, picking apart a New England defense that was giving up an NFL-worst 461 yards and 31.7 points per game. The Patriots (2-2) forced a pair of turnovers, but had trouble containing Newton's stable of targets. Carolina (3-1) finished with 444 total yards, marking the fourth straight game the Patriots have given up at least 300 yards. Brady finished 32 of 45 for 307 yards and two scores.

BRONCOS 16, RAIDERS 10

The Broncos throttled running back Marshawn Lynch and sent quarterback Derek Carr to the sideline with a back injury, then sealed their win on safety Justin Simmons' interception of EJ Manuel at the Denver 8 in the closing minutes. Despite holding Lynch to 12 yards on nine carries, the Broncos found themselves in danger of frittering away an AFC West showdown they had dominated. Trailing by six, Manuel heaved a high toss to Amari Cooper just after the two-minute warning. Simmons, who won the job from three-time Pro Bowl safety T.J. Ward this summer, came down with the ball just shy of the goal line and took it out to 8. The Broncos ran out the clock to hit their bye week at 3-1.

SEAHAWKS 46, COLTS 18

J.D. McKissic took the second carry of his career 30 yards for a touchdown and Bobby Wagner scooped up Marcus Smith's forced fumble and rumbled 21 yards for a score in a 13-second span late in the third quarter that helped Seattle beat Indianapolis. Justin Coleman added a 28-yard interception return for a TD in the first half and Seattle overcame a sleepy first 30 minutes from its offense. Russell Wilson threw two touchdown passes and two interceptions, but his most important play was a 23-yard run in the third quarter to give Seattle an 18-15 lead. Adam Vinatieri pulled the Colts even at 18 as the Colts capitalized on Wilson's second interception. Graham dropped a catchable pass and it was intercepted by Malik Hooker, his third straight game with an interception. But Seattle answered with a 75-yard drive that was capped by McKissic's touchdown sprint

CARDINALS 18, 49ERS 12, OT

Carson Palmer threw 19 yards to Larry Fitzgerald with 32 seconds left in overtime for the game's only touchdown. The scoring had been limited to nine field goals on an ugly afternoon in the desert before Palmer directed a seven-play, 75-yard drive with 1:52 to play. Fitzgerald, who had three catches for 13 yards before the winning grab, rose to catch the ball under tight coverage by Rashard Robinson. Robbie Gould kicked his fifth field goal, a 23-yarder with 2:24 left in overtime to put the 49ers ahead 15-12. Phil Dawson kicked four field goals for the Cardinals (2-2), whose two victories both have come in overtime.

EAGLES 26, CHARGERS 24

Carson Wentz passed for 242 yards, LeGarrette Blount rushed for 136 and the Eagles extended their promising start to the season. Rookie Jake Elliott kicked four field goals for the Eagles (3-1), who had thousands of roaring fans in the Chargers' temporary stadium while they hung on to win on the road for the second time in 10 tries. Playing without several injured defensive regulars, the Eagles matched last year's 3-1 start even though they blew most of an early 13-point lead. Rookie Austin Ekeler rushed for a score and Hunter Henry made a one-handed TD catch during the Chargers' fourth-quarter surge.

BUCCANEERS 25, GIANTS 23

Jameis Winston threw for 332 and three touchdowns without an interception, and Nick Folk kicked a 34-yard field goal as time expired. Folk redeemed himself after missing two field goals and an extra point earlier in the day, booting the winner after Winston answered Eli Manning's second TD pass of the day with an impressive drive that began at his 25. The Giants (0-4) lost on a last-second field goal for the second straight week. They took a 23-22 lead on Rhett Ellison's 2-yard TD reception with 3:16 remaining. Manning threw to Odell Beckham Jr., in the rear of the end zone for a 2-point conversion that was disallowed because the receiver had stepped out of bounds before making the catch. Winston threw TD passes of 6 yards to Mike Evans and 58 yards to O.J. Howard in building an early 13-0 lead. His 14-yard scoring pass to Cameron Brate put the Bucs up

22-17 midway through the fourth quarter, setting the stage for an exciting close.

RAMS 35, COWBOYS 30

Todd Gurley scored the go-ahead touchdown on a 53-yard catch-and-run, and Greg Zuerlein kicked a career-high seven field goals. Gurley finished with 215 total yards - 121 rushing and 94 receiving - as the Rams overcame two first-half touchdowns from Ezekiel Elliott the day before a federal appeals court hearing related to the star Dallas running back's blocked six-game suspension over a domestic incident in Ohio. The Rams (3-1) rallied from 11 points down late in the first half and matched their start from a year ago, when they went 1-11 the rest of the way as No. 1 overall pick Jared Goff was sitting and later lost the first seven starts of his career.

BILLS 23, FALCONS 17

Stephen Hauschka kicked a tiebreaking 56-yard field goal with less than five minutes remaining and the Buffalo Bills made a last-minute defensive stand. The Falcons lost star wide receiver Julio Jones to a hip injury and also saw fellow WR Mohamed Sanu (hamstring) leave the game.

Hauschka padded the lead with three minutes remaining. Buffalo's defense stopped the Falcons at the Bills 10 with less than a minute remaining when Matt Ryan couldn't complete a fourth-down pass to Taylor Gabriel, and Atlanta became the last NFC team to lose this season. Tre'Davious White returned a fumble recovery 52 yards for a third-quarter touchdown as the tough Buffalo defense delivered again even when it yielded its first passing touchdown of the season. Bills defensive end Jerry Hughes hit Ryan's arm as Ryan was trying to pass, forcing the fumble.

STEELERS 26, RAVENS 9

Le'Veon Bell rushed for 144 yards and two touchdowns to seize first place in the AFC North. Though held to a touchdown over the final 30 minutes, Pittsburgh (3-1) mounted enough of an attack before halftime to earn its first win in Baltimore since 2012. Ben Roethlisberger went 18 for 30 for 216 yards and a touchdown. Bell did more than

his share, carrying the ball 35 times to help the Steelers amass 381 yards on offense. The Ravens (2-2), meanwhile, looked every bit like the 32nd-ranked offense in the NFL. Baltimore trailed 19-0 at halftime, generated only 154 yards through three quarters and stumbled through a second straight game with only one touchdown.

TEXANS 57, TITANS 14

Rookie Deshaun Watson threw for four touchdowns and ran for another as the Texans scored the most points in franchise history. Watson, the 12th pick in this year's draft, became the first rookie to throw four touchdowns and run for another one since Fran Tarkenton in 1961, and tied an NFL record for most TDs by a rookie quarterback. The Texans (2-2) outdid their previous highest point total of 45 set in a victory over the Titans in 2014 and are the first NFL team to score 50 points since the Jaguars scored 51 in December 2015. Houston's defense got things going when Andre Hal intercepted Marcus Mariota on the game's third play.

LIONS 14, VIKINGS 7

Anthony Zettel led a ferocious performance by Detroit's defense with two sacks, four hurries and a fumble recovery, as the Lions forced three turnovers while holding Minnesota scoreless in the second half. The Lions turned two fumbles lost by the Vikings in the third quarter into 11 points, taking the lead on Ameer Abdullah's 1-yard touchdown run five plays after rookie Dalvin Cook fumbled at the Minnesota 29. The Vikings (2-2) lost more than just possession when Cook limped off with an injury to his left knee and did not return. Tahir Whitehead recovered that fumble for the Lions, plus one by Adam Thielen with 1:43 left at the Detroit 45 that ended the last-chance drive for the Vikings. Detroit (3-1) leads the NFL in turnover margin at plus-9.

SAINTS 20, DOLPHINS 0

Drew Brees threw for 268 yards and two touchdowns and the Saints scored all but three of their points in the second half. Michael Thomas had a touchdown reception in the third quarter, Alvin Kamara added one in the fourth and Will Lutz made two of his three field-goal attempts for New Orleans (2-2), which arrived for the game on Monday and won the lowest-scoring game ever held in London. It was expected to be a big homecoming for the Dolphins' Jay Ajayi, who was born in the city, but the running back finished with 46 yards on 12 carries. Lutz missed his first try, a 41-yarder, wide right on the second play of the second quarter, and the teams threatened to have the first scoreless opening half since Week 14 of the 2011 season until Lutz connected from 43 yards with no time remaining. — AP



Patriots (2-2) forced a pair of turnovers

Business

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BIRMINGHAM: Airport staff talk with passengers at the check-in area for Monarch Airlines, in the departures lounge of Birmingham Airport in Birmingham, central England yesterday. — AFP

Monarch collapses; 110,000 stranded

Govt swings into emergency action to return home holidaymakers

LONDON: British short-haul carrier Monarch Airlines ceased trading suddenly yesterday following a financial collapse in the biggest airline failure in Britain, prompting the government into emergency action to return home 110,000 stranded passengers.

Monarch and its holidays business entered administration, with KPMG appointed to oversee the financial chaos that has left about 2,100 staff likely having to find new employment. The airline had been struggling financially for a while and won a cash injection a year ago that allowed it to continue flying holidaymakers and fund growth plans, as the sector faced turbulence from Brexit and terrorism.

The UK's Civil Aviation Authority described Monday's events as "the biggest ever UK airline failure," adding that "all future holidays and flights provided by these companies have been cancelled and are no longer operating". It added in a statement that "the government has asked the CAA to support Monarch customers currently abroad to get back to the UK at the end of their holiday at no extra cost to them". Passengers are being flown back from numerous countries, including France, Greece, Israel and Turkey on aircraft leased by the CAA.

"It would be nice obviously to get back to our families on Wednesday" as planned, holidaymaker Desmond Morland told AFP in Cyprus after being told he may face a delay returning to Britain. "We are quite upset... we don't know anything. I suppose it's just a waiting game." Among planes being leased were Airbus A320s from Qatar Airways, according to flight-tracker Flightradar24. Hundreds of thousands of customers are affected by Monarch going into administration, most of which have future bookings, the CAA said in its latest update.

The government said that it was overseeing what it said was the biggest repatriation since the end of World War II. "This is a hugely distressing situation for British holidaymakers abroad and my first priority is to help them get back to the UK," Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said in a statement.

"That is why I have immediately ordered the country's biggest ever peacetime repatriation to fly about 110,000 passengers who could otherwise have been left stranded abroad." He added: "This is an unprecedented response to an unprecedented situation." But the Unite union hit back,

saying ministers rebuffed requests by Monarch Britain's tenth largest airline according to Euro monitor International-to provide a bridging loan. "Monarch's workforce has worked tirelessly and loyally, with great sacrifice, to try and turn the airline around in the last year," said senior Unite official

Oliver Richardson. "Their hard work has been undone by a government seemingly content to sit on its hands and allow one of the UK's oldest airlines go into administration." The first plane to arrive back in the UK carried 165 passengers from Ibiza. Affected parties used social media to get their

messages across, mirroring a situation a week ago when Ryanair cancelled thousands of flights as it battles to overcome a shortage of pilots. "Monarch customers in the UK: don't go to the airport. There will be no more Monarch flights," the budget carrier said on Twitter.

Meanwhile customer Holly-Rae Copeland tweeted: "Just when you think you've avoided Ryanair's flight cancellations, #monarchairlines go into administration on the day of your flight."

KPMG partner and joint administrator, Blair Nimmo, said "mounting cost pressures and increasingly competitive market conditions in the European short-haul market have contributed to the Monarch Group experiencing a sustained period of trading losses".

Monarch's collapse meanwhile boosted the share prices of bigger rivals. "Usually what's bad for one airline—higher fuel costs, terror attacks, air traffic control strikes—are bad for the sector," noted Neil Wilson, senior market analyst at ETX Capital. "But the failure of Monarch is good news for rivals. Shares in Ryanair and EasyJet both rose... as the market reacted to the news of the demise of Monarch after 50 years in business." — AFP



UK witnesses biggest peacetime repatriation

Oliver Richardson. "Their hard work has been undone by a government seemingly content to sit on its hands and allow one of the UK's oldest airlines go into administration." The first plane to arrive back in the UK carried 165 passengers from Ibiza. Affected parties used social media to get their

Saudi fund to develop sites in Makkah, Madinah

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) is forming two real estate development firms to boost the capacity of Makkah and Madinah to receive pilgrims, in projects expected to create billions of dollars of business, it said yesterday.

The plans are part of an array of commitments which the PIF, the country's main sovereign wealth fund, is taking on under economic reforms designed to reduce Saudi Arabia's dependence on oil exports. The government is mobilizing the fund, believed to have about \$180 billion of assets, to lead urban development and industrial projects around the country, even as the PIF manages stakes in top Saudi companies and makes foreign investments such as last year's purchase of a \$3.5 billion stake in Uber.

The scope of the PIF's activities has caused concern among some private Saudi businessmen. The reforms aim to stimulate the private sector but with so many huge projects going to the PIF, some businessmen fear they could be crowded out by the deep-pocketed fund. The PIF said the first phase of its development of an area near the Grand Mosque in Makkah would cover 854,000 square meters (9.1 million square feet) and deliver 115 buildings. — Reuters

Gulf retailer Noon.com to ignite e-commerce race

DUBAI: Days after Amazon announced the launch of its first Middle East centers, online retailer Noon.com has gone live in the United Arab Emirates, boosting a rapidly nascent e-commerce sector in the Gulf. The site started working at the weekend and the app is scheduled to launch in days, its backer Dubai-based real estate giant Emaar Properties said in a statement.

Analysts say the arrival of Noon.com—which comes months after retail giant Amazon acquired the Dubai-based Souq.com—is expected to trigger a price war in the developing regional e-commerce market and will likely alter the face of consumerism in the Gulf. "It is important for us to shape a digital marketplace that is relevant to our local markets and serves as a growth platform for brick-and-mortar retailers," said the project's founder, Emaar chief Mohammed Alabbar.

Investors in the \$1 billion project include Saudi Arabia's state-owned Public Investment Fund and leading Kuwaiti business group M.J.L. Al-Shaya Co, one of the largest regional retail groups. Described by Emaar as an "Arabic-first e-commerce platform", Noon.com will offer a range of clothing, home goods, grocery staples and many others. It is also expected to start delivering to Saudi Arabia within the next few weeks.

'Bright future'

The news comes after Emaar offered \$800 million to acquire rival retailer Souq.com but lost to Amazon, which acquired the region's biggest online retailer for \$650 million. On September 25, Amazon Web Services announced a deal with the government of Bahrain to open its first Middle East

data centers in the Gulf, expected to be ready by 2019. Combined with the interest of Amazon and its subsidiaries in regional e-commerce, the rivalry between Noon.com and Souq.com is expected to intensify competition in what consultancy McKinsey has called an untapped e-commerce market. "It will certainly create a flutter in the nascent online retail market," said M.R. Raghu, head of research at asset management company Kuwait Financial Center (Markaz).

Raghu estimates that online sales in the Middle East currently make up a mere two percent of overall retail sales, compared with 15 percent in more developed markets. Competition among online retailers "will help change the culture of shopping in the region in the long-term," said Faraz Mehmood, CEO of Dubai-based Old Town Advisors consultancy.

"I don't think the (e-commerce) market is saturated to such a point" that there is no place for newcomers, Faraz Mehmood told AFP. "There is still room for more." Smaller players in the online shopping market may, however, find it difficult to compete with platforms backed by major companies, Mehmood said. The online retail trade has been developing at a fast pace in the past few years with the spread of the internet and smartphones across the Middle East. E-commerce in the energy-rich Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states alone is expected to grow rapidly from \$5 billion in 2015 to as much as \$20 billion in 2020, according to Raghu. But even that figure would only account for 10 percent of retail sales in a region known for individual consumer spending, he said. — AFP

Kuwait invites bids for advisors to manage IPO

KUWAIT: Kuwait has invited bids for financial advisors to manage the initial public offering of its stock exchange, sources told Reuters.

The country has been considering an initial public offering of its stock market for years, but political infighting and an entrenched bureaucracy have held up the process. If the process moves ahead, advisors will be working on a tight deadline as the current law means the exchange's privatization would have to be completed by June 2018, the sources said.

The Capital Markets Authority, which regulates the stock market, declined to comment when contacted by Reuters yesterday. Kuwait's stock market is one of the oldest in the Middle East. Established officially in the early 1980's, it has shrunk in the past few years as dozens of companies have been delisted.

Under a law passed in 2010, the CMA is supposed to offer 50 percent of the shares to Kuwaiti citizens and 50 percent to ten companies already listed on the stock exchange. The exchange may, however, offer up to 44 percent of its shares to a company that has experience in operating bourses when it goes public, a senior government official told Reuters in 2015.

Such a move would open the way for an international exchange operator, such as Nasdaq Inc (NASDAQ) or Euronext (EXX.PA), to take a stake. — Reuters

GCC markets remain under pressure on lack of catalysts

Kuwait, Saudi witness marginal gains on FTSE upgrade hopes

KUWAIT: GCC investor sentiments remained subdued post the holiday trading during September-17 as most of the major indices trended downward during the month. Qatari market hit the lowest in five years as the ongoing diplomatic rift has started reflecting in corporate growth. The QE 20 index recorded one of the longest running declining streaks as the benchmark declined for eleven straight sessions. UAE markets also declined, as ADX declined for the second consecutive month while Dubai with a 2 percent decline almost reached the level seen at the start of the year. Muscat was the only market that saw noticeable gain during the month but it remains one of the most battered markets in the GCC after Qatar with the second-highest YTD-17 decline of 11.2 percent. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait witnessed marginal gains on FTSE upgrade hopes which saw Kuwait being upgraded to FTSE's secondary emerging market, while the decision on Saudi Arabia was deferred until March-18.

Meanwhile, oil prices had a run-up during the month on the back of declining inventory in the US, as well as Turkey's statement in relation to crude supplies from Iraq's Kurdistan region. However, crude hovering at almost 26-month highs, failed to have a significant impact on markets in the GCC. In addition, the positive sentiments in global markets with the MSCI World index up by 1.7 percent during the month had minimal impact on the GCC markets as seen from the 0.8 percent decline in the MSCI GCC Index.

Average daily trading surged during the month after reaching one of the lowest levels during the previous month, although the total for the month declined due to lesser number of trading days. Total monthly value traded declined by 11.2 percent to \$8.2 billion after trading in almost all of the markets witnessed double digit m-o-m growth. Large-cap stocks remained the pick of the month, as seen in Kuwait, with the Kuwait-15 index up 1.3 percent.

Boursa Kuwait

Following gains over the previous two months, Kuwaiti indices remained flat during September-17 with trading primarily concentrated in large cap stocks, continuing the trend seen in the recent months. This was also reflected in the 1.3 percent return for the Kuwait 15 Index, while the Price index declined by 3.1 percent. Nevertheless, Kuwait continues to remain the best performing market in the GCC with a YTD-17 return of 13.3 percent for the Weighted Index. The monthly performance was also reflected in the sectoral performance with large-cap sectors like Telecom, Financial Services and Basic materials recording gains during the month. The Telecom index topped the monthly sector performance chart with a gain of 1.6 percent solely backed by 2.6 percent gain in shares of Zain, while share prices of Ooredoo and Viva Kuwait remained flat. Meanwhile, the 0.4 percent returns for the



Banking index was primarily led by 2.7 percent gain in shares of NBK and 1.7 percent for KFH. CBK was the best performing banking stock with a return of 4.3 percent during the month.

Trading activity on the exchange was the highest over the past four months. Monthly volume trade surged 20 percent to 2.1 billion shares from 1.7 billion shares during August-17. Monthly value traded also surged by a third to KD 426 million as compared to KD 320 million during the previous month. Moreover, the aforementioned higher trading activity came despite fewer trading days (17 days during September-17 vs. 22 days during August-17) resulting in 55 percent and 72 percent increase in average daily volume and value traded during the month, respectively. Zain topped the monthly value chart with KD 67.2 million worth of shares changing hands during the month followed by KFH and NBK recording KD 63.5 million and KD 43 million worth of trades during the month. The higher trades in shares of KFH also came after newspaper reports suggested that KIA has appointed a global consultant to study the merger of KFH and AUB.

The monthly volume chart was topped by Alimtia Investment Group, which stood fourth on the value chart with KD 35 million worth of trades or 194 million shares. Shares of AUB Bahrain and Zain followed with 134 million and 130 million traded shares, respectively. The monthly gainers chart was topped by Al-Madar Finance & Investment that recorded a gain of 33 percent, however, trades in the shares were minimal. Noticeable gainers for the month included Tamdeen Investment and National

Real Estate recording gains of 12.9 percent and 12.4 percent, respectively. On the other hand, large-cap decliners included last month's best performer GIG that declined by 11 percent followed by 6 percent decline in shares of Warba Bank. In one of the biggest development for Boursa Kuwait, FTSE upgraded the market to secondary emerging market in its annual review based on the reforms the Kuwait CMA made over the past one year. The upgrade is expected to attract passive fund flows to the tune of \$700 million, as per consensus estimates, and is expected to be positive for blue chips stocks on the exchange.

Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)

TASI witnessed marginal gains during September-17 following a volatile month. After a positive start, the index faced downward pressure after speculations that Saudi Arabia may not be upgraded by FTSE. In the review, FTSE did deferred its decision on the Kingdom but the assessment process was brought forward to March 2018, highlighting the progress that the Kingdom made to its processes. The deferment of the upgrade comes after FTSE said it needs more time to test the recently introduced changes by the Saudi CMA. The ADX index declined by 1.6 percent during Sept-17 to close at 4,397.40 points and remained in the red on a YTD basis. Sectoral performance was mostly skewed towards the decliners.

Services index was the worst performing index as it receded by 5.3 percent m-o-m in Sept-17, affected by a 12.9 percent drop in the share price of Abu Dhabi National Hotels and a 10.8 percent drop in the price of National Corp for Tourism & Hotels. The Telecom index

followed, as it declined by 3.9 percent m-o-m, as Etisalat dropped by 3.9 percent m-o-m, while Ooredoo declined by 11.1 percent.

Dubai Financial Market

DFM followed its UAE counterpart for Sept-17 and witnessed declining trends, while barely remaining in the green on a YTD basis. The index declined by 2.0 percent m-o-m and closed at 3563.99 points. Sectoral trends were mostly negative barring the Services and the Industrials indices. The Services indices went up by 1.0 percent m-o-m which was pushed up by Amanat Holdings (+2.7 percent m-o-m), while the Industrial index remained flat for the month of Sept-17. Telecoms index was the primary laggard as it went down by 4.8 percent, led by an equal drop in DU's stock price, while Hits Telecom plunged by 9.9 percent m-o-m.

Qatar Exchange

The QE 20 index was yet again the worst performing market in the GCC for the month of Sept-17, and remains the worst performing market in the region YTD as well. All indices closed in the red for the month. The QE 20 index dropped by 5.6 percent m-o-m, and closed at 8312.43 points. The Qatar All Share index, which maps the broader index, also witnessed a decline as it went down by 5.1 percent m-o-m for the month of Sept-17. Market breadth was poor as 27 companies declined, while 15 companies advanced during the month.

Bahrain Bourse

The Bahrain All Share Index, which remains one of the best performing markets YTD, witnessed a consecutive month of decline in Sept-17, albeit moderately. The index closed 1.5 percent lower on a m-o-m basis during the current month. The index closed at 1283.46 points at the end of the month. Sectoral performance was mostly down, as all indices barring the Industrials index declined during the month. Market breadth for the index was weak as well, as 6 stocks gained ground, while 12 stocks witnessed declines in their share prices.

Muscat Securities Market

Oman recorded the best monthly performance in the GCC during September-17 with the MSM 30 Index up 1.7 percent, a second consecutive month of gain after declining for the previous five months. All the sectoral indices contributed to the gain with the Industrial index surging 4.3 percent followed by Services and Financial indices with monthly gains of 3.3 percent and 0.8 percent, respectively. Nevertheless, the market's YTD-17 performance continues to lag being other GCC markets with a decline of 11.2 percent, second only to Qatar's YTD performance.



Oil prices run up on back of dropping US inventory

Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)

Bahrain Bourse

Muscat Securities Market

US factory activity surged last month to highest since 2004

WASHINGTON: US factory activity rose to the highest level in 13 years last month as hurricanes disrupted supplies but drove up demand for manufactured goods. The Institute for Supply Management, a trade group of purchasing managers, said its manufacturing index rose to 60.8 from 58.8 in August, the highest reading since May 2004. Anything above 50 signals that manufacturers are growing, and the ISM survey shows they've been on a 13-month winning streak. New orders, production, hiring and new export orders all grew faster in September. Seventeen of 18 manufacturing industries reported growth, led by textile mills and machinery.

Only one industry - furniture manufacturing - contracted last month. Factories are benefiting from a strengthening global economy and a drop this year in the value of the US dollar against other major currencies. A weaker dollar makes US products less expensive in foreign markets.

Some industries reported that Hurricanes Harvey and Irma had disrupted supplies and driven up costs. Tim Fiore, chair of the ISM's manufacturing survey committee, said the scramble for supplies for rebuilding in the after-



NEW JERSEY: The Manhattan skyline is seen from Liberty State Park in Jersey City, New Jersey, on Sunday. — AFP

math of the hurricanes may have driven manufacturing activity higher in September. Factories, he said, "are really struggling to meet demand." The overall US economy

expanded at a 3.1 percent annual pace from April through June, fastest rate in more than two years. Unemployment, at 4.4 percent, is near a 16-year low. — AP

Japan business confidence hits decade high: BoJ

TOKYO: Confidence among Japan's biggest manufacturers has jumped to its highest level in a decade, a key central survey showed yesterday, as the world's number three economy picks up pace.

The Bank of Japan's Tankan report—a closely watched quarterly survey of more than 10,000 companies—showed a reading of 22 among major manufacturers in its latest report, the highest since its September 2007 reading when the headline figure sat at 23. The latest survey handily beat market expectations for a reading of 18. The report, the broadest indicator of how Japan Inc is faring, marks the difference between the percentage of firms that are upbeat and those that see conditions as unfavorable.

The mood among major manufacturers—who plan to boost their capital spending—has now risen for a fourth straight quarter.

The index for non-manufacturers came in at 23, unchanged from the previous Tankan, and sitting at its highest level since the final quarter of 2015. The upbeat survey underscores how Japan's prospects have been improving on the back of strong exports, with investments

linked to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics also giving the economy a shot in the arm.

"The continued improvement in business conditions in yesterday's Tankan points to robust economic growth," research house Capital Economics said in a commentary after the report was published. The report came after a batch of broadly positive economic data on Friday, including better-than-expected factory output, offering up some good news for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as he faces a national election on October 22.

Abe swept to power in late 2012 on a pledge to cement a lasting recovery in the world's third-largest economy with a growth plan eponymously dubbed Abenomics. The scheme—a mix of aggressive monetary easing and huge government spending along with reforms to the economy-fattened corporate profits and sent the stock market higher. But it has failed in the goal of shrugging off the deflation that has plagued Japan for years and held back growth.

Household spending—seen as key for Japan's exit from years of deflation edged up and the unemployment rate sat at a more than two-decade low, according to Friday's data. But the inflation rate of 0.7 percent was still nowhere near the Bank of Japan's 2.0-percent target, despite years of record monetary easing.

Japan's economy expanded in the April-June period, capping off six straight quarters of gains in its longest winning streak in over a decade. A key issue in the coming election is a planned sales tax hike in 2019. A levy rise in 2014 hammered spending and pushed the economy into a brief recession. — AFP

Saudi court clears Binladin Group in deadly crane crash

RIYADH: A Saudi Arabian court has cleared the Binladin Group of responsibility for the 2015 collapse of a crane in Mecca which killed 100 people, the Saudi press reported yesterday.

The Saudi-based Binladin construction firm belongs to the family of the late Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. At least 107 people were killed and some 400 injured on September 11, 2015, when the crane toppled over near the Grand Mosque in holy Makkah, just days before the annual Hajj pilgrimage. The Binladin Group's defense team claimed the group could not have predicted the severe thunderstorm and violent winds that caused the crane to fall, according to the Arabic-language Asharq Al-Awsat daily.

The verdict can still be appealed. The Binladin Group was hit by a string of Saudi-issued sanctions after the crash. The construction firm had been working for years on a multi-billion-dollar 400,000-square-metre (4.3-million-square-foot) enlargement of the Grand Mosque to accommodate the increasing numbers of pilgrims to the site. — AFP

British factory growth slows

LONDON: British manufacturing growth cooled last month as cost pressures lurched higher, according to a survey that could put the Bank of England a step closer to raising interest rates, despite a murky outlook ahead of Brexit.

Yesterday's IHS Markit/CIPS UK Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell to 55.9 from a downwardly revised 56.7 in August, undershooting the consensus of 56.4 in a Reuters poll of economists. By contrast, eurozone factories had their best month since early 2011.

While the PMI survey signalled solid expansion at British factories, helped by robust exports, softer growth in new orders and a slowdown among producers of investment goods raised concern about the months ahead. — Reuters

For Rent

In a Luxurious and Privileged Compound at Abou Halifa Region Facing the National Park and the Sea

Special Promotion
Ask about your offer

<p>Duplex & Triplex Villas</p>	<p>3/4 Bedrooms + 3/4 Bathrooms +Big Salon + Separate pool All Master Bathrooms is Marble</p>
<p>Volleyball Court / Basketball Court / Hotel Lobby Pools + Jacuzzi / Billiard / 213 Car Parking Areas</p>	

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Business

US stocks rise despite Las Vegas shooting, euro slips

NEW YORK: Wall Street stocks rose early yesterday adding to records, following strong international economic data and ahead of a heavy calendar of US economic reports. Analysts said sentiment was not affected by a brutal mass shooting in Las Vegas that resulted in at least 50 fatalities.

About 15 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average stood at 22,452.70, up 0.2 percent. The broad-based S&P 500 rose 0.1 percent to 2,522.05. The tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index gained 0.2 percent to 6,509.14. Both the S&P 500 and Nasdaq ended at records last week. Data earlier yesterday showed eurozone unemployment held steady at an eight-year low in August, while Japanese manufacturing industry sentiment rose to a decade high. Key US reports this week include September auto sales and the government jobs report for September.

Analysts said the Las Vegas attack did not register as a market-moving event and that the focus on Wall Street was still on the upcoming third-quarter earnings season, which is expected to be solid. "It has not reacted negatively, because it is under the impression that this is an isolated incident without any official terrorist group linkages," said Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare. "Accordingly, it sees no lasting economic impact from the incident that would derail corporate earnings prospects," he said. "We hate writing that, yet it is the essence of how the market evaluates matters at a time like this."

Catalonia impact

The euro and the Spanish stock market slid yesterday as voting in a banned Catalonia independence referendum was marked by a violent police crackdown. But most other

European markets rose as the weaker euro is positive for exporters in the region, analysts said. "European bourses are starting the new quarter positively as US dollar strength and subsequent sterling and euro weakness help to aid the army of foreign earning and exporting names in the region," said Accendo Markets analyst, Henry Croft. A firmer start on Wall Street also helped underpin prices in Europe. Nevertheless, "traders are clearly a little concerned about the impact that the (Catalan) vote, not to mention how the situation was handled by the Spanish authorities," said Oanda analyst Craig Erlam.

Spain's IBEX stock index was "the worst performing major index in Europe yesterday, down more than one percent, while the euro is also suffering in the aftermath of the vote, down more than half a percent against the dollar," Erlam said. Frankfurt, Paris and London equities post-

ed moderate gains, with the British market buoyed somewhat as the collapse of Monarch Airlines handed a boost to rival carriers. Monarch Airlines ceased trading suddenly yesterday following a financial collapse, the biggest failure of an airline in Britain, prompting the government into emergency action in returning home 110,000 stranded passengers. The news sent EasyJet shares soaring 3.2 percent to 1,256 pence, while British Airways owner IAG rallied 1.43 percent to 602 pence.

Madrid stocks, however, shed nearly two percent on the back of the disputed Catalonia vote, and the European single currency fell sharply against the dollar. Spain will do "everything within the law" to prevent Catalonia from declaring independence, Justice Minister Rafael Catala said yesterday, a day after Catalonia's regional government declared victory in a banned secession referendum. — AFP

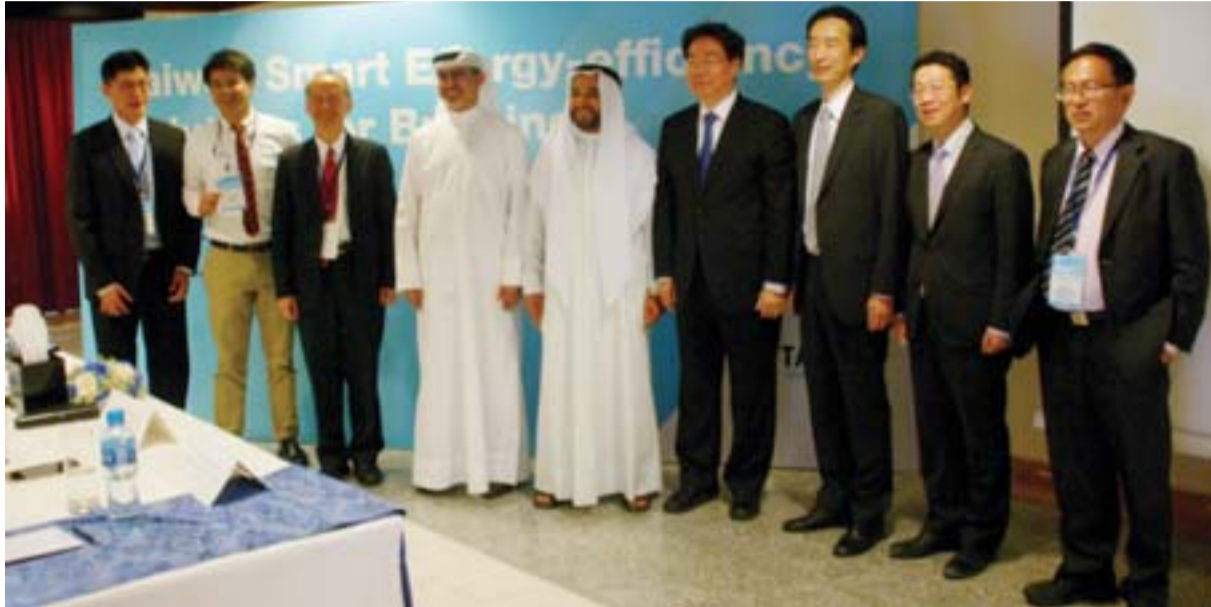
Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Monday 02 October 2017. Table containing market indices (Price Index, Weighted Index, KXS15), Trades, and a list of securities (e.g., IPO, NAPESCO, ENERGYH) with their respective prices, volumes, and changes.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report At 02:00 PM Previous Day. Table containing Global Stock Indices (Dow Jones, NASDAQ, etc.), MENA Stock Indices (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, etc.), Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, Global Bond Yields, and Commodities (Kuwait Oil, Brent, etc.).

Business

Taiwan offers smart energy-efficiency solution for buildings in Middle East

Taiwan External Trade Development Council holds seminar



KUWAIT: Taiwan External Trade Development Council organized a seminar on smart energy-efficiency solution for buildings on Sunday at Radisson Blu, Bubiyan Ballroom. The seminar was sponsored by Bureau of Foreign Trade, MOEA.

Green building brings together a vast array of practices, techniques, and skills to reduce and ultimately eliminate the impacts of buildings on the environment and human health. It often emphasizes taking advantage of renewable resources and using low-impact building materials e.g., using sunlight through passive solar, active solar, photovoltaic equipment and heat insulation solar glass. Taiwan has long been famous for the high quality of its technology exports and prides itself on the strength of our dynamic economy and the tremendous business opportunities available to industries around the world.

The three Smart Energy-efficiency solution providers represented yesterday were leaders in their specializations. They demonstrated ongoing commitment to excellence and have developed world class responses to contemporary energy problems. All delegates represent state of the art research and development in the energy sector and are proudly Taiwanese.

The National Taiwan University of Science and Technology was established in 1974. It's most prestigious

Research Group is introducing a newly developed construction material called Heat Insulation Solar Glass for use with Zero Energy Buildings. The glass can generate solar power.

On the sidelines of the seminar, Chuang, Suo-Hang, vice chairman of Taiwan External Trade Development Council, told Kuwait Times that the seminar is about the smart energy-efficiency solution providers to the Middle East. "The purpose of this visit is to introduce a newly developed construction material for Zero Energy Buildings (ZEB) called Heat Insulation Solar Glass (HISG)."

Chuang added that the ZEB is ideal for energy efficient buildings as it needs no extra power from the grid to supply the energy consumption inside the buildings. "The heat insulation solar glass can possess higher power generation, heat insulation, saving power for air-conditioners in summer time and saving heater in winter time," he explained.

He praised the role of KFAS Director General, Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin for his passion for inventions and in energy saving solutions. "Dr Adnan is a creative man working toward making Kuwait a better place to live," he added.

Regarding the Kuwaiti market, Chuang said that Taiwan External Trade Development Council is seeking to cooperate with Kuwaiti companies that participated in the seminar yesterday to learn more about the Taiwanese products.



Chuang, Suo-Hang, vice chairman of Taiwan External Trade Development Council — Photos by Joseph Shagra



World class responses to contemporary energy problems

KFAS Director General, Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin for his passion for inventions and in energy saving solutions. "Dr Adnan is a creative man working toward making Kuwait a better place to live," he added.

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Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah daily draws

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its Al-Danah daily draws on 1 October 2017 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 24 September - 28 September 2017. The Al-Danah daily draws include draws every working day for two prizes of KD 1,000 per winner.

The winners are:

(Sunday 24/9): Dilafruze Irisova, Hussain Ahmed Abdulkhalq Al-Banna
(Monday 25/9): Adel Abdulaziz Ali Behbehani, Hatem Naser Obaid Mohammed
(Tuesday 26/9): Fatheyah Hasan Gholom Reda, Mona Jaber Obaid Al-Enezi
(Wednesday 27/9): Basel Mahmoud Hassan Al-Shatty, Hamid Abod Hasin Al-Anzi
(Thursday 28/9): Majida Mohammed Yaqoub, Ahmed Abdulhusain Karam Esmacil
Gulf Bank's Al-Danah 2017 draw lineup includes daily draws (2 winners per working day and each receive KD 1,000). Al-Danah's final draw for KD 1 million will be held



on 11 January, 2018 whereby the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced.

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

Five reasons why the Al-Danah account is the best:

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

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

Al-Tijari announces winners of Al-Najma mega draw for 3rd quarter 2017 and daily draw

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the mega draw for the 3rd quarter and the daily draw on Sunday. The draws were held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry represented by Jassim Mohammed Al-Otaibi

The winner of the mega draw of KD 200,000 is Abdulaziz Ali Al-Qandi
The winners of the Al-Najma daily draw are:
Faisal Fahed Al-Rashed— KD 7000,
Mohammad Ameen Ibrahim Amarah— KD 7000,
Ghasem Hojat Khodadaian— KD 7000,
Mohammed Mahmoud Shehata Abdulnaem— KD 7000,
Ali Mohammad Ali Asker— KD 7000.

Al-Najma awards are now brighter and bigger than ever. With the revamped Al-Najma account, all your dreams will be turned to reality.

On top of offering the highest daily prize in Kuwait for KD 7,000, now our Mega prize draws got bigger to reach KD 250,000.

The new prizes scheme for Al-Najma account:

- Daily draw to win KD 7,000
- Quarterly draws to win great prizes that would start from KD 100,000 to KD 250,000
- First quarter — KD 100,000,
- second quarter— KD 150,000,
- Third quarter — KD 200,000 and
- fourth quarter — KD 250,000.

With Al-Najma you have more chances to win greater prizes.

- Each KD 25 kept in your account gives you one chance to win
- Each KD 25 kept in your account for one week will give you a chance to enter the daily draw.



- Each KD 25 kept in your account for 3 months will give you chance to enter the quarterly draw.

Additional features:

- ATM card
 - Issue a credit card against your account
 - Obtain all CBK banking services
- You deserve to win! Open an account now with just KD 500 and you will enter all draws.

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, the second largest bank in terms of assets, announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Waleed Saleh Hasan Al Ali
2. Saleh Ali Khamis Al-Enzi
3. Mohammad Abdullah Ali
4. Gulnaz Tabussam
5. Mohammad Mousa Abbas Bassam

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning.



If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win. For more information on opening a Yawmi account, the new quarterly draw or on any of the bank's products and services, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch. Customers can also log on to Burgan Bank's www.burgan.com for further information.

Capitalism is the only way, says UK finance minister

MANCHESTER: British finance minister Philip Hammond defended capitalism as the only route to prosperity yesterday in an attempt to counter the opposition Labor Party's increasingly popular vision for a more centrally-controlled economy.

In a speech to the ruling Conservative Party, Hammond warned that what he termed Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn's "Marxist" aims would return Britain to the troubled days of the 1970s when it was the weakest major economy in Europe.

Prime Minister Theresa May is grappling with a deep split within her party over Brexit and serious doubts about her leadership after her botched bet on a June snap election lost her party its majority in parliament. Hammond, who was sidelined by May during the election campaign, used his keynote speech to

warn that Labor would catapult Britain, the world's fifth largest economy, towards the kind of "socialist fantasy" seen in Cuba, Venezuela or Zimbabwe. "We saw Labor in the raw, exposed for what it has sadly become: a party taken hostage by a clique of hard-left extremist infiltrators, people who despise Britain's values and talk down our country," Hammond told Conservative Party activists.

Britain can only hope to experience rising living standards "by harnessing the power of the market economy", he added.

At Labor's own party conference last week, Corbyn set out plans for a much more active role for the state in a mixed British economy, including renationalization of key infrastructure, higher government spending, and more taxation and control of the banking sector. — Reuters

Technology

Smash hit: Ping pong robot takes on Olympian at Tokyo tech fair

CEATEC exhibits latest in consumer technology from 670 firms

CHIBA, Japan: A ping-pong-playing robot served up a hit at a top Tokyo tech fair yesterday, while a barely-moving machine in the shape of a sloth aimed to provide a relaxing change of pace.

The alien-looking table-tennis star, named FORPHEUS, had a tough opponent, in the shape of Japan's first-ever Olympic singles medal-winner in a man-versus-machine clash.

Technicians have worked on FORPHEUS's robotics and artificial intelligence technology and had hoped it would be able to return a smash from the Olympian, Jun Mizutani.

"This machine now has the ability to react to a smash by observing the other player's movement," said Masayuki Koizumi in charge of sensing technology research at Omron, the robot's creator. "We hope people with advanced ping pong skills will play with the machine," he said. But Mizutani appeared to have little reason to hang up his bat yet, as the robot failed to retrieve his attacking shot.

"One day it might hit back," Mizutani, 28, said after the match. Omron also showcased a new sensor that can detect whether a driver is concentrating or dozing off in a self-driving car.

The company aims to commercialize its technology by 2020, it said at the Cutting-Edge IT & Electronics Comprehensive Exhibition (CEATEC) near Tokyo.

'Slow robots'

Meanwhile, a new Tokyo start-up aims to

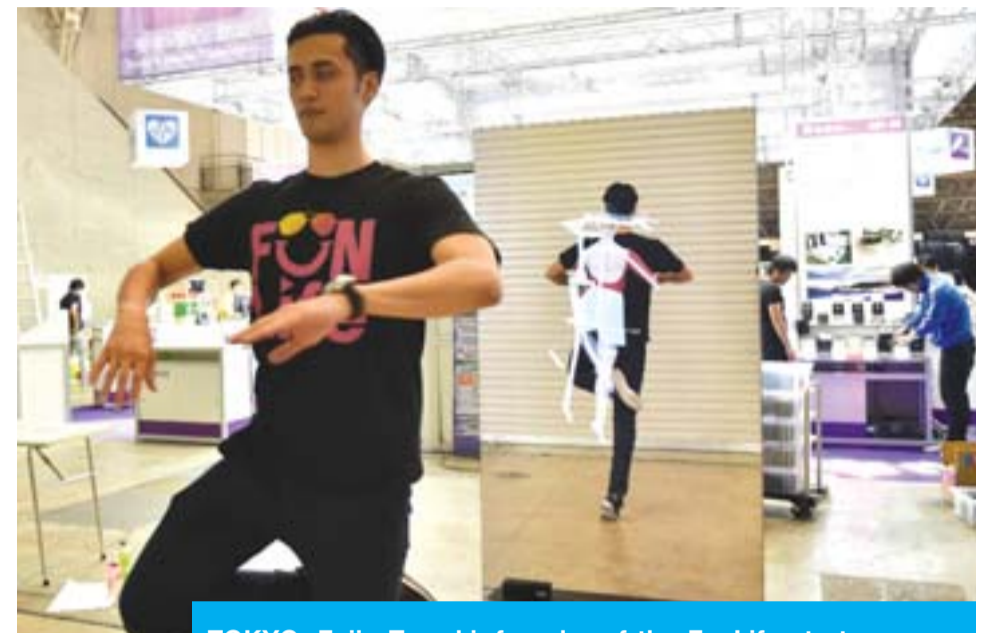


TOKYO: FORPHEUS, a fourth-generation table-tennis robot developed by automation parts maker Omron, returns a shot to Japan's Olympic medalist Jun Mizutani (left) during a press preview at CEATEC Japan in Chiba yesterday. — AFP photos

help budding gymnasts and ballet dancers with a mirror that streams the movements of professional athletes. Using the augmented reality (AR) technology, would-be prima ballerinas can imitate the correct techniques when practicing in front of the mirror by following the images of real experts. "You can consider it as a cyber-coach," said Fujio Tamaki, founder of

FunLife start-up, after demonstrating a pirouette by watching the teacher's moves in the mirror.

"We hope we can provide professional skills that are not easy to access for the wider public—such as kids in remote areas," he said. But such professional coaching does not come cheap—the firm is renting the product for some 200,000 yen (\$1,780) a



TOKYO: Fujio Tamaki, founder of the FunLife start-up, performs a demonstration with a mirror that streams the movements of professional gymnasts and ballet dancers during a press preview at the CEATEC Japan in Chiba yesterday.

month. For robot fans wanting a change of pace, toy maker Bandai showcased its new creation called "Norobo"—a combination of the words "noro" (slow) and "robot" — which comes in the shape of a panda or a sloth. A Norobo hangs from its arms on a tree-like bar, moving only 12 centimeters in eight hours. "Nowadays, technologies are too advanced and we're stressed out by

using them," said Bandai's general manager Shingo Watanabe.

"So why not create the world of slow robots?" Users can look at the sloth-like robot and just relax, he explained. The CEATEC, which exhibits the latest in consumer technology from nearly 670 firms, is open to the public from Tuesday to Friday. —AFP

Google unveils new moves to boost struggling news organizations

WASHINGTON: Google announced new steps to help struggling news organizations yesterday—including an end to a longstanding "first click free" policy to generate fresh revenues for publishers hurt by the shift from print to digital. The moves come amid mounting criticism that online platforms are siphoning off the majority of revenues as more readers turn to digital platforms for news.

"I truly believe that Google and news publishers actually share a common cause," said Google Vice President Philipp Schindler.

"Our users truly value high quality journalism." Google announced a series of measures, the most significant of which would be to replace the decade-old policy of requiring news organizations to provide one article discovered in a news search without subscribing—a standard known as "first click free."

This will be replaced by a "flexible sampling" model that will allow publishers to require a subscription if they choose at any time. "We realize that one size does not fit all," said Richard Gingras, Google's vice president for news. This will allow news organizations to decide whether to show articles at no cost or to implement a "paywall" for some or all content.

Gingras said the new policy, effective yesterday, will be in place worldwide. He said it was not clear how many publishers would start implementing an immediate paywall as a result.

"The reaction to our efforts has been positive," he told a conference call announcing the new policy. "This is not a silver bullet to the subscription market. It is a very competitive market for information. And people buy subscriptions when they have a perception of value." Google said it is recommending a "metering" system allowing 10 free articles per month as the best way to encourage subscriptions.

One-click subscriptions

The California tech giant also said it would work



This July 19, 2016, file photo shows the Google logo at the company's headquarters in Mountain View, Calif. — AP

with publishers to make subscriptions easier, including allowing readers to pay with their Google or Android account to avoid a cumbersome registration process. "We think we can get it down to one click, that would be superb," Gingras said.

He explained people are becoming more accustomed to paying for news, but that a "sometimes painful process of signing up for a subscription can be a turn off. That's not great for users or for news publishers who see subscriptions as an increasingly important source of revenue."

Google would share data with the news organizations to enable them to keep up the customer relationship, he added. "We're not looking to own the customer," he said. "We will provide the name of user, the email and if necessary the address."

Gingras said Google is also exploring ways "to use

machine learning to help publishers recognize potential subscribers," employing the internet giant's technology to help news organizations.

He added that Google was not implementing the changes to generate revenues for itself, but that some financial details had not been worked out.

Google does not intend to take a slice of subscription revenues, he noted. "Our intent is to be as generous as possible," he said. Research firm eMarketer estimates that Google and Facebook will take in 63 percent of digital advertising revenues in 2017 — making it harder for news organizations to compete online.

Facebook is widely believed to be working on a similar effort to help news organizations drive more subscriptions. Google created a "Digital News Initiative" in Europe in 2015 which provides funding for innovative journalism projects. —AFP

'This is what god planned for me'

Iyus Yusuf Fasyiya, an Indonesian factory worker who has two wives, said he used the app to share tips with other users on how to maintain a polygamous marriage. "Many members are looking for wives - they ask about how to start, how to maintain polygamous marriages, and also government regulations," he said from his home village in Bogor, about 90-minute drive from the capital Jakarta.

The 37-year-old dodged questions about whether he was using the app to look for another wife but said he continues to learn about polygamy, after he took on his second wife six years following his first marriage in 2000. "It just happened, this is what God planned for me," said Fasyiya, who takes turns to see his two wives and five children who live in nearby villages. The majority of the app users were men, but there were also about 4,000 women who have registered, the app developer said. Lawyer Rachmat Dwi Putranto, who deals with marriage matters, said polygamy is "not that easily achieved" as Indonesian courts will only give permission if the first wife is disabled, ill or cannot bear children.

But Indriyati Suparno, a commissioner from the government-backed National Commission on Violence Against Women, said the app was trying to "normalize polygamy". "The reality is women tend to be the victims of domestic violence in a polygamous marriage - polygamy is a form of violence against women," she said. —Reuters

'Let's do polygamy': New dating app stirs debate in Indonesia

BOGOR: Scrolling through dating websites a year ago, Indonesian app developer Lindu Pranayama realized there were a lot of married men looking for another wife - but few online services to meet their needs. "When they go to regular dating sites, they don't see options for polygamy. They don't see options for finding second, third or fourth wives," he said.

Enter "AyoPoligami" - a new smartphone app developed by Pranayama, which aims to "bring together male users with women who are willing to make 'big families'."

Loosely translated as "Let's do polygamy", the Tinder-style dating app has already stirred up controversy since its April launch in Indonesia, where over 80 percent of the 250 million population are Muslim and polygamy is legal. Muslim men can take up to four wives in Indonesia,

the world's most populous Muslim country, if permission is granted by a court and the first wife gives her consent.

Court officials could not provide figures of how many people in Indonesia are polygamous, but activists say cases of men giving false information to gain permission and manipulation of women are common.

The app has been downloaded over 10,000 times before it stopped registering new members following concerns of fake accounts were being set up, and men using the site without the knowledge of their first wives.

A new version is set to be launched on Oct. 5, and will impose stricter rules on users including requiring them to provide an identification card, marital status and a letter of permission from their first wives.



'AyoPoligami' app helps users make 'big families'

Facebook catching up with its unintended social consequences

NEW YORK: Years of limited oversight and unchecked growth have turned Facebook into a force with incredible power over the lives of its two billion users. But the social network has also produced unintended social consequences - and they're starting to catch up with it.

House and Senate panels investigating Russian interference in the 2016 elections have invited Facebook - along with Google and Twitter - to testify this fall. Facebook just agreed to give congressional investigators 3,000 political ads purchased by Russian-backed entities, and announced new disclosure policies for political advertising Facebook belatedly acknowledged its role purveying false news to its users during the 2016 campaign and announced new measures to curb it. Founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg even just apologized - more than 10 months after the fact - for calling the idea that Facebook might have influenced the election "pretty crazy."

The company has taken flak for a live video feature that was quickly used to broadcast violent crime and suicides; for removing an iconic Vietnam War photo for "child pornography" and then backtracking; and for allegedly putting its thumb on a feature that ranked trending news stories.

Facebook is behind the curve in understanding that "what happens in their system has profound consequences in the real world," said Fordham University media-studies professor Paul Levinson. The company's knee-jerk response has often been "none of your business" when confronted about these consequences, he said.

Hands-off Facebook

When such issues arise, Facebook generally restricts itself to bland assertions that its policies prohibit misuse of its platform and that it's difficult to catch everyone who tries to abuse its platform. When pressed, it tends to acknowledge some problems, offer a few narrowly tailored fixes - and move on. But there is a larger question the company hasn't addressed direction: Has Facebook taken sufficient care to build policies and systems that are resistant to abuse?

Facebook declined to address the subject on the record, although it pointed to earlier public statements in which Zuckerberg described how he wants Facebook to be a force for good in the world. The company also recently launched a blog called "Hard Questions" that attempts to address its governance issues in more depth.

But Sheryl Sandberg, the company's No. 2 executive, has suggested that Facebook has work to do on this front. —AP



This July 16, 2013 file photo shows a sign at Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif. — AP

Health

Health experts zero in on camels to fight MERS virus

GENEVA: The fight against the deadly Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), which has killed at least 722 people over the past five years, is honing in on its target: camels. MERS coronavirus (MERS-CoV), a member of a virus family ranging from the common cold to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, appears to have emerged in humans in Saudi Arabia in 2012, but has now been traced back in camels to at least 1983. Almost all the outbreaks so far originated in the Arabian Gulf, but MERS-CoV could infect humans wherever there are one-humped dromedary camels - two-humped bactrians are not affected.



Camel vaccines seen as key strategy

That means people across a swathe of Africa, the Middle East, Pakistan and South Asia are potentially at risk. So the hunt is on for vaccinations - both for humans, and camels. "The virus is in camels everywhere. The virus is in Qatar, it's in United Arab Emirates, it's wherever we look," said Maria Van Kerkhove, a disease outbreak expert at the World Health Organization (WHO), where 130 experts gathered last week to collaborate for the first time on tackling the disease. "I know so much more about camels than I ever thought I would," she said.

People have probably caught MERS in Africa but the absence of outbreaks recorded there may be due to poor

disease surveillance, less contact with camels, or lower rates of underlying conditions like obesity and heart problems that make MERS more severe. Saudi Arabia has been heavily criticised for not being transparent about MERS, but Van Kerkhove said that had totally changed. It is now testing 70,000 human samples a year and generating a vast amount of research.

Drive-thru

MERS is hard to spot, and far more deadly than other acute respiratory infections, killing one in three sufferers. It has a habit of infiltrating Saudi hospitals via patients visiting for regular dialysis or cardiac appointments, causing outbreaks that have killed patients and health workers alike. Hospitals are raising their game. "One hospital even has a drive-thru. Literally a drive-thru in their emergency department," said Van Kerkhove, explaining how patients are vetted before being allowed in. "You drive up in the car to the person in the booth and they ask you three

questions. It takes less than 13 seconds." A dozen human vaccines are in development, with vaccine coalition CEPI expected to announce soon which it will fund. But the key to stopping human deaths is controlling MERS in camels. Two camel vaccines have been developed, but only one, developed by the Jenner Institute, is in field trials.

The other, developed at the Erasmus Medical Centre, is still seeking funding. The WHO MERS program is also under-funded, Van Kerkhove said. At last week's meeting, hosted by the WHO, animal health body OIE and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Saudi and Qatari experts were "happy to talk to each other" despite their governments' diplomatic friction, she said.

Collaboration is vital, because camels must be diagnosed, quarantined and vaccinated as they enter the Gulf from the Horn of Africa. The virus must be tracked like bird flu is in birds, Van Kerkhove said. But there is a long road ahead. "I've never seen a really good map showing where camels move," she said.—Reuters

Sea critters hitchhiked across the Pacific on tsunami debris

WASHINGTON: Nearly 300 species of fish, mussels and other sea critters hitchhiked across the Pacific Ocean on debris from the 2011 Japanese tsunami, washing ashore alive in the United States, researchers reported Thursday. It is the largest and longest marine migration ever documented, outside experts and the researchers said. The scientists and colleagues combed the beaches of Washington, Oregon, California, British Columbia, Alaska and Hawaii and tracked the species to their Japanese origins.

Their arrival could be a problem if the critters take root, pushing out native species, the study authors said in Thursday's journal Science. "It's a bit of what we call ecological roulette," said lead author James Carlton, a marine sciences professor at Williams College, in Williamstown, Massachusetts. It will be years before scientists know if the 289 Japanese species thrive in their new home and crowd out natives. The researchers roughly estimated that a million creatures traveled 4,800 miles across the Pacific Ocean to reach the West Coast, including hundreds of thousands of mussels.

Invasive species is a major problem worldwide with plants and animals thriving in areas where they don't naturally live. Marine invasions in the past have hurt native farmed shellfish, eroded the local ecosystem, caused economic losses and spread disease-carrying species, said Bella Galil, a marine biologist with the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History in Tel Aviv, Israel, who wasn't part of the



OREGON: This photo shows marine sea slugs from a derelict vessel from Iwate Prefecture, Japan which washed ashore in Oregon. (Right) This photo shows Japanese sea stars. —AP photos

study. A magnitude 9 earthquake off the coast of Japan triggered a tsunami on March 11, 2011, that swept boats, docks, buoys and other man-made materials into the Pacific.

The debris drifted east with an armada of living creatures, some that gave birth to new generations while at sea. "The diversity was somewhat jaw-dropping," Carlton said. "Mollusks, sea anemones, corals, crabs, just a wide variety of species, really a cross-section of Japanese fauna." The researchers collected and analyzed the debris that reached the West Coast and Hawaii over the last five years, with new pieces arriving Wednesday in Washington. The debris flowed across the North Pacific current, as other objects do from time to time, before it moved north with

the Alaska current or south with the California current. Most hit Oregon and Washington.

Last year, a small boat from Japan reached Oregon with 20 good-sized fish inside, a kind of yellowtail jack native to the western Pacific, Carlton said. Some of the fish are still alive in an Oregon aquarium. Earlier, an entire fishing ship - the Sai sho-Marun - arrived intact with five of the same 6-inch fish swimming around inside. Co-author Gregory Ruiz, a Smithsonian marine ecologist, is especially interested in a Japanese parasite in the gills of mussels. Elsewhere in the world, these parasites have taken root and hurt oyster and mussel harvests and they hadn't been seen before on the West Coast.

The researchers note another huge factor in this flotilla:

plastics. Decades ago, most of the debris would have been wood and that would have degraded over the long ocean trip, but now most of the debris - buoys, boats, crates and pallets - are made of plastic and that survives, Carlton said. And so the hitchhikers survive, too. "It was the plastic debris that allowed new species to survive far longer than we ever thought they would," Carlton said.

James Byers, a marine ecologist at the University of Georgia in Athens, who wasn't part of the study, praised the authors for their detective work. He said in an email that the migration was an odd mix of a natural trigger and human aspects because of the plastics. "The fact that communities of organisms survived out in the open ocean for long time periods is amazing," he wrote.—AP

Biological clock scientists win 2017 Nobel Prize

STOCKHOLM: US-born scientists Jeffrey Hall, Michael Rosbash and Michael Young won the 2017 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for their discoveries of molecular mechanisms controlling our biological clocks, the award-giv-

ing body said yesterday. The mechanisms help explain issues such as why people travelling long distances over several time zones often suffer jet lag and they have wider implications for health such as increased risk for certain diseases.

"(The three scientists') discoveries explain how plants, animals and humans adapt their biological rhythm so that it is synchronized with the Earth's revolutions," the Nobel Assembly at Sweden's Karolinska Institute said in a statement. The laureates used fruit flies to isolate a gene that controls the normal daily biological rhythm and showed how this gene encoded a protein that accumulates in the cell during the night and degrades during the day.

"The clock regulates critical functions such as behavior, hormone levels, sleep, body temperature and metabolism," the

Assembly said on awarding the prize of 9 million Swedish crowns (\$1.1 million). Thomas Perlmann, secretary at the Karolinska Institute Nobel Committee, described the reaction of Rosbash when first informed of the award: "He was silent and then he said 'you are kidding me'." Medicine is the first of the Nobel Prizes awarded each year. The prizes for achievements in science, literature and peace were created in accordance with the will of dynamite inventor and businessman Alfred Nobel and have been awarded since 1901.

Nobel medicine laureates have included scientific greats such as Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin, and Karl Landsteiner, whose identification of separate blood types opened the way to carrying out safe transfusions.— Reuters



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What's On

Honduras Embassy hosts fashion show



The Embassy of the Republic of Honduras, in cooperation with the International Women's Group of Kuwait developed a Fashion Show by Honduran fashion artist, Melissa Valencia, in cooperation with Kuwaiti make-up artist Dana Alsairafi. Melissa Valencia presented her new collection, which is inspired by one of Honduras' most famous painters Ciseron, who is characterized by his colorful, cubistic strokes.

in the heart of Central America, with a multicultural heritage; with there are more than seven ethnic groups, whose origins go back a thousand years ago.

Also, traveling to Honduras brings tourists a wide variety of options. From ruins of ancient Mayan civilization to crystalline beaches in the Caribbean that have the largest coral reef in America and the second largest in the world. Also in Honduras more than 600 species of birds have been identified, making it perfect for outdoor activities for bird watching and hiking.

During the event, the Embassy of Honduras seized the opportunity to expose about Honduras wonders being a small country located



Jumeirah Hotel organizes cooking sessions for children of Kuwait's Down Syndrome Association

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa organized special cooking activities for the children of Kuwait Down Syndrome Association as part of its active involvement in supporting the society and local community. The hotel invited a group of children to engage in pizza and pasta making sessions. The children, who previously expressed their interest in learning to cook, had fun with their culinary creations after which they shared with everyone and enjoyed eating altogether. They also got creative with cupcake-making and marshmallow designing.

General Manager Savino Leone said: "The Kuwait Down Syndrome Association plays an instrumental role

in the lives of these children and we take pride in upholding our strong bond with them every year through various activities. It is heart-warming to see the children enjoying their time and being given the opportunity to develop their abilities, discover their hidden talents and realize their dreams."

Hessa Al-Baloul, Deputy Chairman of Kuwait Down Syndrome Association, said: "We are fully appreciative of the efforts of the team at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa in making our children feel so welcomed every time. These special experiences make a big difference and our long-standing relationship with the Hotel helped us greatly in advocating for this cause."



TRAK organized Onam, Eid celebrations

Trivandrum Non Residents Association of Kuwait (TRAK) organized their Onam and Eid festival recently. Chief guest P P Narayanan, Second secretary, Community welfare of Indian Embassy Kuwait inaugurated the daylong event by lighting the traditional lamp. President Subhash Gomez Presided over the meeting, Paul Manuel gave the Onam message and TRAK Chairman M A Hilal the delivered Eid message.

Felicitations were made by Ajith Kumar, Director Norka welfare



board, Varughese Puthukulangara and Dr Shantha Maria, Principal Indian Central School. Dr Shankar Narayanan, Dr Shukkur, Hudson Sunny, Vidhu Kumar and A Hakim distributed prizes to participants. Ramya Ratheesh, Celin Francis, Mohan, Sivan Kutty, Francis, Radhakrishnan, VijayKumar, and Anil Kumar controlled the whole proceedings. Prinston D'Cruz Compared the event and entertained the audience. Various traditional cultural programs including dances and music were presented By TRAK members. Special lunch (Ona Sadhya) served to all guests on Banana leaf. Hudson Sunny was the program convener for this well organized event. MA Nizam welcomed the audience and Treasurer K R Baiju delivered the vote of thanks.

Stars

CROSSWORD 1725

Crossword grid with numbers 1-81 in a 15x15 grid.

- ACROSS
1. A federally chartered savings bank.
2. Lacking a label or tag.
...
DOWN
1. Loose or flaccid body fat.
2. Stalk of a moss capsule.

STAR TRACK

- Aries (March 21-April 19)
Taurus (April 20-May 20)
Gemini (May 21-June 20)
Cancer (June 21-July 22)
Leo (July 23-August 22)
Virgo (August 23-September 22)

- Libra (September 23-October 22)
Scorpio (October 23-November 21)
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)
Capricorn (December 22-January 19)
Aquarius (January 20-February 18)
Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Wordsearch Puzzle

Transportation wordsearch puzzle grid with a list of 20 transportation-related words for finding.

Yesterday's Solution

Tools wordsearch puzzle grid with a list of 16 tool-related words and a hidden sentence: MEN HAVE BECOME THE TOOLS OF THEIR TOOLS

Daily SuDoku

4x4 grid for a Daily SuDoku puzzle with some numbers filled in.

Yesterday's Solution

4x4 grid for the solution of the previous SuDoku puzzle.

Yesterday's Solution

15x15 grid showing the solution for the crossword puzzle.



Alexander Wang steps down from his namesake brand

The 33-year-old fashion designer has decided to relinquish his title as chief executive officer of his label, and the mogul will be replaced immediately by the former Goop CEO Lisa Gersh, the Business of Fashion website has reported. And the businesswoman is "honored and excited" to take on the new role. Speaking in a statement about her upcoming venture, Lisa said: "I am honored and excited by the opportunity to help Alexander shape this remarkable company." However, Alexander is not leaving the company entirely as he will remain as the creative director and chairman

of the brand's board of directors. And Lisa is "looking forward" to working alongside the creative mastermind and Stephanie Horton, who has been hired as the new chief strategy officer. Alexander - who released his debut Womenswear line in 2007 - has revealed the changes in the company are in a bid to "challenge the status quo" in the fashion industry.

Yara Shahidi carries mementos in her bag

The 17-year-old actress has revealed she cannot leave the house without a pair of flat shoes, a range of snacks that tend to be a packet of nuts, a box of motion sickness tablets, as well as one of her many keepsakes she has collected over time. Speaking to Us Weekly about her essentials, the 'Black-ish' star said: "I like to keep a snack - usually a nut mix from Trader Joe's. I opened my bag the other day and there were almonds everywhere. It's taken a week to get them out. "I always have Bonine in my bag because I get motion sickness. "When I'm at events, my mama will carry ballet flats or sneakers. There's a pair Tory Burch just came out with. I was at the MTV Movie Awards and I popped those on after. "I have different mementos in each bag. I collected Buddha statues when I was little, so sometimes those. Once I was clearing out a bag and a big amethyst fell out. I was like, 'That's where it was!' " And the brunette beauty has revealed she also carries around a jade roller, which is a beauty product that helps to boost circulation in the face, and she has hailed the cosmetic item as a "nice little wake up call". Yara has revealed she also carries a variety of lip products with her as well, including Bert's Bee's Lip Shine in Smooch, two Chanel Rouge Coco Glosses, and a Glossier clear lip gloss.



Diane Von Furstenberg loves to tell people her age

The 70-year-old fashion designer - who founded her eponymous brand in 1972 - believes getting older is an "achievement", and she will share how old she is with people because she "likes the sound of it", but also because she enjoys hearing their reactions. Speaking about growing older at the Fast Forward Women's Innovation Summit, which was held at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, and has been obtained by InStyle.co.uk, the creative mastermind said: "Because it's an achievement. "I turned 70 this year, and I tell everybody because, first of all, I like the sound of it. I like them to say, 'Oh really?' Although they don't mean it." The mogul also enjoys declaring her age because it makes her feel proud she has "made it" to the big milestone. She continued: "But also because it means that I made it." And Diane has encouraged women not to be "afraid" of growing older, and has urged women to embrace ageing. She said: "Don't be afraid of the years.



Nina Dobrev has always wanted to take big risks

The 28-year-old actress decided to leave her multiple roles on 'Vampire Diaries' in order to not be typecast and prove to other people she would be able to do other things. She told Rogue magazine: "I wanted to prove everyone wrong who said I would play this one role my whole life or be stuck playing younger roles. "I've always wanted to take big risks. I started 'Vampire Diaries' when I was 20.... I grew with the show and I wanted to continue to grow outside of it. Mentally, it was a crazy time. I was 27 when I left the show. I was ready to do something different." Nina can next be seen in the reboot of cult 1990 film 'Flatliners', which is about medical students experimenting with near death experiences, and she admitted the appeal of the film was her own curiosity about life after death. She said: "It's such a unique concept, the idea of dying and coming back to life- everybody at some point wonders what happens after we pass away- where do we go? "There are so many questions. I've always wondered about it, so the fact that this film explores that concept was very intriguing to me."



Kylie Jenner has splashed out \$10,000 on a neon sign

The 20-year-old reality star - who is believed to be expecting her first child with boyfriend Travis Scott - paid around \$9,999.99 for a hot pink illuminated artwork reading 'Plastic', which she had installed in her glam room on Friday. According to TMZ, Kylie bought the 48x13 piece from contemporary artist Beau Dunn - who she has purchased from in the past - around a month ago. The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star is flashing the cash at the moment, as she reportedly just splashed out \$70,000 on baby clothes, filling at least one closet with designer pieces. A source said: "This is gonna be the best dressed kid you've ever seen." It comes after it was claimed Kylie's baby is due in February. A source said: "They started telling friends a few weeks ago. The family has known for quite some time. She is really excited and so is Travis!" Whilst another insider added: "It is an unexpected but completely amazing turn of events that she could not be more excited or thrilled about. Everyone is overjoyed for her. This is the happiest she's ever been."



Kourtney Kardashian is open to having another child with Scott Disick

The 38-year-old reality star may have ended her relationship with the 34-year-old entrepreneur - who is now dating Sofia Richie - over two years ago, but she won't rule out getting back with him and having a sibling for their other three children, Mason, seven, Penelope, five, and two-year-old Reign. Speaking on 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' season premiere on Sunday Kourtney - who has been dating Younes Bendjima for around a year - admitted: "I feel like I would [have another baby with him] if the situation was right. "But that doesn't mean, like, tomorrow, guys. So don't get any ideas."



Sam Heughan's most sentimental item of clothing is his father's kilt

The 37-year-old Scottish actor has revealed his most prized possession is his parent's traditional garment, and the star has admitted he has "only" ever worn the pleated skirt in "private", although it is a bit of a squeeze for him as his father had a smaller frame than him. Speaking about his favorite wardrobe item to PEOPLE, he said: "That's the most sentimental thing in my closet. I've worn it, though he had a smaller waist than me. I've only worn it in private." Although Sam has kept his father's clothes, he hasn't taken anything from his 'Outlander' wardrobe because it is covered in "mud and blood". The hunk - who portrays Jamie Fraser in the television series - said: "They keep it tight. To be honest, there is nothing in there I want. It's all covered in mud and blood. None of it I would really want to take home. However, the weapons I would love. And they wouldn't give me my sword, so I eventually bought my own. I've had an armor smith come make me my own particular sword - it's stupid, but I love it." Sam has admitted for his role in the program he has to undergo a major makeover, which sees him dye his blonde locks "a crazy amount" of times throughout the year, and he has admitted the constant beauty alterations have "taken over [his] life".



US rapper pledges song proceeds to Australia gay marriage campaign

US rapper Macklemore has pledged proceeds from his hit gay anthem to Australia's pro-same sex marriage campaign after the song surged to number one in the country amid a national vote on the issue. The artist is due to perform his song "Same Love" at the season-ending rugby league grand final in Sydney on Sunday and last week came under fire from some conservative politicians opposed to gay marriage.

They backed a petition calling for his song to be banned from the sports event. The popular track has since become the most downloaded song on Australian iTunes. The con-

troversy comes as up to 15 million Australians take part in a voluntary postal vote on whether to legalize gay marriage, with the results to be released in mid-November.

"I want to donate my portion of the proceeds from 'Same Love' that I get off that record here in Australia to voting 'yes'," Macklemore told Channel Nine late Saturday. The musician was booked to appear in front of the Sydney audience before the nationwide vote was announced, and has vowed to "go harder" after receiving protests from "angry old white dudes". "It's a testament to where Australia is at right now, in terms of rallying behind the record," he said.

"It gets 'X' amount of signatures to ban me from performing it and there's an over pour of love that is resistance against that hatred." The heated debate has seen many leading Australian sports organizations come out in support of the "yes" campaign, including the National Rugby League.

Former Australian prime minister Tony Abbott, a leading voice on the "no" side, last week endorsed the petition for the league to withdraw its backing. "Footy fans shouldn't be subjected to a politicized grand final. Sport is sport!" Abbott tweeted. This was rejected by Prime Minister

Malcolm Turnbull, a supporter of same-sex marriage, who said trying to censor the song "is not consistent with taking a liberal approach to free speech."

"He (Macklemore) should perform whatever he wants to perform," he told Channel Ten TV show The Project. "It's the half-time entertainment at the Grand Final. They've got a great artist. He will sing his top hits, that's one of them. That's great."—AFP

Transgender Armenians stitch, sew their way out of prejudice

When she was 14, Lilit Martirosyan decided she wanted to start earning money for herself. But finding a normal job was complicated - employers didn't like the way she looked. So, like many transgender women in Armenia, she started selling her body to older men instead. During her years as a sex worker, Martirosyan, 26, was beaten and threatened with a knife several times. Eventually, after eleven years of sex work, she decided to stop selling herself and start helping people like her instead.

"Transgender persons face discrimination and violence in the family, at school: they usually leave school at a very early stage," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in her office in Armenia's capital, Yerevan. "Those who are very strong continue their studies at university, but there is more discrimination there - so they leave university as well," she added, revealing tattoos on her arms as she fiddled with her long, blonde hair.

"That's why they are engaged in sex work: they don't have enough education to work and be competent in the labor market." To curb that trend, activists are organizing workshops to teach transgender people sewing and makeup, and help them find employment in the fashion industry, which they say is one of the most inclusive in the Armenian job market.

Night owls

Armenia is one of the least LGBT-friendly countries in Europe, with only Russia and Azerbaijan ranked worse for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, according to advocacy group ILGA-Europe. In a 2015 survey by PINK Armenia, an NGO that helps the LGBT community, 91 percent of Armenians said they did not know anyone who was gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex. Politicians have repeatedly come out against LGBT people, saying they threaten Armenia's cultural identity.

After Yerevan's only LGBT-friendly bar was burnt down in 2012, Eduard Sharmazanov, a spokesman for Armenia's ruling party, called the attack "right and justified" as supporters of LGBT rights were "defaming the Armenian national identity". While gay, lesbian and bisexual people can hide their sexual orientation, transgender Armenians say their physical appearance makes them recognizable and more likely to encounter discrimination, bullying and physical attacks.

Many are afraid to go out by day and cannot find education or work. So they rely on sex work in the evenings to survive. Drawing on her experience, Martirosyan founded Right Side last year, which she says is the only organization in the Caucasus region focusing on transgender issues. The group campaigns for equal rights for people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, it says.

Stitches and lipstick

In one corner of the organization's large community space in Yerevan, fashion designer Agnes Malkhasyan is showing her pupils how to sew stitches on a piece of red material using a machine. Armed with measuring tape and white chalk, she draws patterns on the fabric, marking the spots she will have to sew over, as her pupils look on attentively. Malkhasyan is keen to help fellow transgender people learn sewing - a job where one can easily make money without having to leave the house and risk abuse.

She says attitudes are improving. "Years ago, if they saw a transgender person on the streets people would scream: 'he's a boy', would discriminate or beat them. Now they are a little more indifferent, more accepting." Still, she admits she is sometimes scared of going outside, and has not told her employer about her gender identity. Over a period of three months, pupils will learn how to make their own clothes. At the end of the course, they will be briefed on how to handle job interviews and put in touch with transgender-friendly employers.

The sewing classes - along with makeup and IT courses - are the first of their kind in the country. Martirosyan, who heads Right Side, is working on a map of potential future employers for her trainees. So far, only two beauty and fashion companies have agreed to employ transgender people. While the employment prospects might be bleak, trainees say the workshops provide a safe space. "It was one of my dreams to be able to sew and now I feel that it's getting real," Kira Schwarz, who identifies as gender-queer, said after finishing her stitches. "Here, people can be free as they are and no one will judge or criticize. Here you can be yourself."—Reuters



'It' scares off competition in tight box office race



It was knocked into second place last week-but as Halloween approaches, freaky box office sensation "It" was back at number one in its fourth week in cinemas, industry estimates showed Sunday. Starring Bill Skarsgard as a creepy clown who terrorizes a sleepy Maine town, "It"-the highest-grossing horror movie of all time-earned \$17.3 million, according to Exhibitor Relations. That is some \$12.4 million less than last week's \$29.7 million takings-but still enough for the top spot, bringing total earnings to a colossal \$291.1 million.

Close behind in the tight race for number one was Universal's newly-released "American Made," which raked in \$17 million. Starring Tom Cruise, "American Made" tells

the story of a commercial airline pilot recruited to carry out reconnaissance missions over South America for the CIA. Espionage comedy-and last week's number one-"Kingsman: The Golden Circle" came in at number three, also with takings of \$17 million.

With a star-studded cast featuring Colin Firth, Channing Tatum, Halle Berry and even Elton John, "Kingsman" sees a British spy organization join forces with its American counterpart to take on a new global threat. But despite its A-list lineup, it took less than half of last week's \$39 million earnings. Sitting comfortably in fourth place, having rung up \$12 million, was animation "The Lego Ninjago Movie"-the third installment of

Warner Bros.' "The Lego Movie" franchise.

Sony's remake of horror film "Flatliners" did just that in its first week in theaters, earning an anti-climactic \$6.7 million. Originally released in 1990, "Flatliners" follows five medical students who try to find out if there is life after death by conducting experiments that cause near-death experiences. Rounding out the top 5 were:

- "Battle Of The Sexes" (\$3.4 million)
- "American Assassin" (\$3.3 million)
- "Home Again" (\$1.7 million)
- "Til Death Do Us Part" (\$1.5 million)
- "Mother!" (\$1.4 million) — AFP

The Great Buddha + grabs 10 Golden Horse nominations



In this file photo, actress Sylvia Chang arrives at the 52nd Golden Horse Awards in Taipei, Taiwan. — AP photos



Actor Huang Bo poses for photographers at the photo call for the Film No Man's Land during the International Film Festival Berlinale in Berlin.

"The Great Buddha +" led the pack Sunday with 10 nominations, including best feature film and best new director, for next month's Golden Horse Awards. The movie is about a security guard at a factory who watches the dash camera footage of his boss's car for fun. He gets more than he bargained for when his rich boss's misdeeds begin to unravel in front of him. Originally a documentary filmmaker, "The Great Buddha +" director Huang Hsin-yao shot the movie in black and white, and wanted to highlight Taiwanese social issues with the film.

Trailing behind with seven nominations are three films, including the family drama "Love Education," the suspense thriller "The Bold, the Corrupt and the Beautiful" and the comedy "See You Tomorrow." Three of the top-nominated films, including "The Great Buddha +," "Love Education" and "The Bold, the Corrupt and the Beautiful," are nominated for best feature film. Also nominated in that category are two Chinese movies - the comedy "Free and Easy" and the coming-of-age film "Angels Wear White."

For the first time in Golden Horse Awards history, three

females are nominated for best director - veteran Sylvia Chang for "Love Education," Hong Kong's Ann Hui for "Our Time Will Come" and Chinese director Vivian Qu for "Angels Wear White." Their male counterparts include Yang Ya-che for "The Bold, the Corrupt and the Beautiful" and Geng Jun for "Free and Easy." In the best actor category, past winner Huang Bo ("The Conformist") will face off against four first-time best actor nominees.

For best actress, past winners including Shu Qi ("The Village of No Return"), Sylvia Chang, who's also nominated for best director for "Love Education," and Kara Wai ("The Bold, the Corrupt and the Beautiful") face off against two first-time nominees. The Golden Horse Awards, which will be handed out Nov. 25 in Taipei, are one of the most prestigious film awards for Mandarin-language cinema, with movies from Taiwan, China and Hong Kong vying for honors.—AP

'black-ish' debuts season four with a 'Hamilton' homage

ABC's sitcom-with-a-conscience "black-ish" returns this week, offering its usual brand of social commentary from diverse voices often denied airtime on primetime TV-but this time with a one-off musical twist. Noted as much for tackling controversial issues like the "N-word," police brutality and President Donald Trump's election as for its on-point jokes, the series has bagged a haul of awards.

Never happy to rest on his laurels, however, showrunner and creator Kenya Barris is throwing out the usual format for the premiere to the fourth season, which airs Tuesday at 9 pm-a new day and time slot. The episode will be an homage to Broadway smash-hit "Hamilton," using music to take potshots at the Columbus Day holiday while also celebrating Juneteenth, the June 19 commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States. Barris, 43, says it was inspired by a conversation he had with his teenage son, who came home from school revealing that he had learned that Christopher Columbus had never been to North America.

"I looked it up, and he never set foot in North America. His name wasn't Christopher Columbus. He was a war criminal," Barris told reporters on a visit to the Disney Studios lot where the show is filmed in Burbank, California. "All the war criminal stuff I'd heard before but he didn't discover the world wasn't flat either-all these things that we bought into growing up. I was like, 'Why are we having a holiday for this?' and it started making me think."

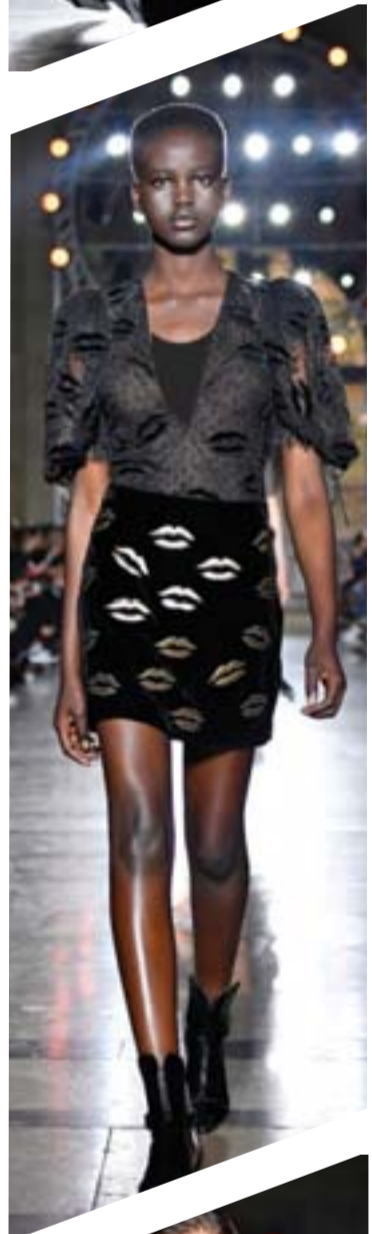
Cultural relevancy

"black-ish" follows the trials and tribulations of Andre "Dre" Johnson (Anthony Anderson) and his wife Rainbow (Tracee Ellis Ross) as they try to carve out a stable, healthy home life for their four children. A successful businessman, Dre worries that the clan is losing touch with its black roots because they are growing up in an affluent, white Los Angeles suburb. Helped out by his father Pops-played by Laurence Fishburne ("Boyz n the Hood," "The Matrix") — Dre tries to imbue his family with a sense of cultural identity.

"We were just talking about the number of episodes where we have dealt with stuff that most people would not even begin to think about, whether it's the 'N-word' or God, the election, these police shootings, being biracial," said Fishburne, 56, in a break from filming. "The fact that we've just touched on all these kinds of things and that they continue to try and find that kind of material is amazing."

The show broke even more ground in January when Ross became the first African-American woman to win the Golden Globe for best TV comedy actress since Debbie Allen for "Fame" in 1982. Around the same time, "black-ish" delivered its own response to Trump's election win in an episode lauded by critics, elevating the series "to another level of cultural relevancy," according to New York magazine's Vulture website.—AFP

Shock as platform Crocs step out on Paris catwalk



Paris fashion was reeling Sunday from Balenciaga's latest outrage/stroke of genius-platform Crocs. The luxury brand, which hit the headlines in April with its \$2,000 (1,700-euro) blue leather "Ikea" bags, has raised eyebrows again by sending out five pairs of the comfortable, indestructible but undeniably ugly sandals in its spring summer collection.

"I'm sorry am I hallucinating or did I just see platform Crocs from Balenciaga?" tweeted Tyler McCall of the Fashionista website. Another Fashionista critic, Alyssa Vingan Klein, added, "There are platform Crocs at Balenciaga. This is not a drill..." Balenciaga's iconoclast designer Demna Gvasalia is known for seeing the beauty in the banal, with some critics accusing him of "poverty chic"—remaking the clothes of the poor for the rich.

But he has a formidable track record of making hugely hot clothes—and particularly shoes—that taste forgot. His thigh-high Spandex boots have become a style sensation, worn and adored by celebrities and fashion mavens alike. The wunderkind has, however, a job on his hands with Crocs, which as one joke goes, have holes in them "so your dignity can leak out".

"Ugly" shoes like Crocs and Birkenstocks have nonetheless been quietly coming up in the world. Last year the Scottish designer Christopher Kane produced a 500-euro (\$590) line of fur-lined and crystal-encrusted Crocs. While Vogue adored their comfort, critic Julia Hobbs said there was no getting over that "Crocs are ugly".



Unrivalled ability to repel

"They have nostril-like pores, and an upturned snout... When worn by grown-ups they have an unrivalled ability to repel onlookers and induce sneers," Hobbs added. Not content with attempting to rehabilitate Crocs, Gvasalia, the man behind the uber-cool Vetements label, also transformed fringed sun umbrellas into skirts and shop awnings into trousers in his Paris show. This collection, however, was more slick than shocking, with very smart use of tartan in trousers, and tops and skirts often paired with chain straps taken from souvenir and duty free shops.

"The inherent possibilities" and the "exaggeration of everyday styles... is the design impulse" behind the show, he wrote in his show notes. Pants made from three different trousers spliced together made a reappearance, suggesting they are on their way to becoming a Gvasalia staple alongside thigh-high boots and buttoned-up charity shop shirts. Alterability too was built into several garments, with parts of the pants interchangeable like modular track-suits.

His new punky "super-spiked stilettoes" also seemed to go down well. Other trousers printed with screensaver shots of the Alps may have been a nod to his new home in Zurich, whose hardcore unfashionableness he seems to relish. But there were also small hints that Gvasalia's notoriety and the hilarity sparked by his Ikea tote—and another that closely resembled a cheap Thai shopping bag—might be hemming him in.

Givenchy's new elegance

In one look, a sweater was tied around a newspaper print blouse like a straitjacket. Yet the Georgian-born creator remains impossible to pin down and as full of surprises as ever. The man who likes to borrow, tweak and hijack seemed to be paying backhanded homage this time to the print king Dries Van Noten in some of the rich palate of colours he used, which oozed a class befitting Balenciaga's aristocratic roots.

All eyes Sunday were also on the debut of designer Clare Waight Keller at Givenchy after her move from Chloe. In the end her transition was very much like the lady herself, low-key and classy. "Seduction is key," she the British-born creator. "The most selective things are not seen, but merely imagined." And that subtlety of thought made for a collection that seemed to give the brand back its quiet but assured elegance. Fellow Brit Phoebe Philo at Celine, another designer whose lead others follow, came up with a trenchcoat that doubled as a cape under which you could keep your bag dry.—AFP



Alicia Keys, Stella McCartney in breast cancer campaign



US singer Alicia Keys and fashion designer Stella McCartney launched a new breast cancer awareness campaign yesterday aimed at African American women who have much higher mortality rates than white women. The British designer, whose mother Linda died from breast cancer in 1998 aged 56, will give a percentage of the proceeds from a new pink lingerie set to the Memorial Sloan Kettering Breast Examination Center in Harlem which provides free testing in New York City.

"This really resonates with me because I was brought up in Harlem and my mother is a breast cancer survivor," Keys said in a campaign video. "We want to really encourage people to break the taboos and go and get checked." She said statistics have shown that African American women have a 42 percent higher chance of cancer

mortality from breast cancer than white women due to lack of access to early screening and prevention programs.

McCartney, in Paris for her label's fashion week show, said, "Sadly I lost my mother to breast cancer 19 years ago. She didn't meet my children." The designer has run three previous annual awareness campaigns fronted by models Kate Moss, Cara Delevingne and comedian Chelsea Handler. Some of the money raised will also go to the Linda McCartney Centre at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital in Britain, which helps cancer patients and their families.—AFP



Fashion designer Stella McCartney acknowledges the audience at the end of the women's 2018 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP photos



Models present creations by Stella McCartney during the women's 2018 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris.

Lifestyle

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2017



A model presents a creation by Comme des garçons, during the women's 2018 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP

Iran's blooming art scene: A bubble of hope

A gallery opening in northern Tehran, and a typical scene: silk scarves barely clinging to the backs of women's heads, young hipsters, gentlemen in that most unrevolutionary of items—the tie. Trendy, wealthy and in their element, the packed crowd edges around abstract sculptures, somewhat grotesque portraits and looped cartoons by US-based Iranian artist Pouya Afshar.

The work has clear Iranian and religious themes, drawing on traditional mourning ceremonies, yet the censorious rulers of the Islamic republic still deeply ambivalent about the liberating and libertine tendencies of the art world—feel a world away. Afshar, 33, himself epitomizes the globe-trotting Iranian middle and upper classes. He teaches at a US university yet is still drawn back “like an itch I always need to scratch”.

“When I'm here, I'm not completely Iranian, and in the US I'm not completely American, but that helps me cook my own stew,” he said. “I'm not trying to re-establish my roots with this work. I enjoy being lost.” Such return

trips have become less fraught since 2013, when a new moderate government eased social pressures and rebuilt ties with the West.

“Even if I'm cynical, it feels more inviting when you have people from the government saying that Iranians from outside should come back and share something,” he said over coffee in a north Tehran cafe that looked like it had been airlifted in from Brooklyn. The past decade has seen the number of galleries in the city explode from just a handful to more than 100. The clerical establishment still meticulously monitors all art for anything deemed un-Islamic or obscene, but a public space has opened up for young creative's to live in a way that would have seemed impossibly

daring just a few years ago. Still, some worry they are just living in a bubble, trying to wish away Iran's harsh censorship and disapproving authorities. Some speak-off the record-of stints in prison and friends who fled the country for little more than their artistic tastes.

“When bad stuff happens we just ignore it”



Iranian artist Nima Zaare-Nahandi, 34, draws at his house in Tehran on Sept 23, 2017.



Iranian Hormuz Hematian, founder of the five-year-old Dastan Gallery in Tehran talks to AFP at his gallery. — AFP photos

“When bad stuff happens we just ignore it. There's no other way to deal with it,” said one Tehran-based curator, who asked not to be named. “There are these 2,000 people who go from one gallery to another, from one pool party to another, living in LA while not really living in LA. It's a psychosis,” he said. “You're sedated by thinking that you're in a party when you're really in a locked room.”

But even he admits the atmosphere is much lighter than in the past, and that this is an exciting time to be part of the art scene as Iran slowly reacquires its traditional status as a paragon of world culture. The freer atmosphere has pushed ordinary artistic concerns to the fore: about authenticity and funding, and what it means to be an “Iranian artist”.

Art is universal

Nima Zaare-Nahandi, whose finely detailed abstract drawings feel unattached to any time or place, pushes back against the idea that his nationality should dictate his style. “Art is universal. Can you say biology belongs to somewhere? The idea of creating an ‘Iranian school’ is what

Westerners demand to make it exotic,” said the 34-year-old in his Tehran studio. “Obviously local culture affects Iranian artists, but we are so exposed to world cultures today,” said Zaare-Nahandi, whose own influences lie more with Japanese cinema, and his time training in Paris and Madrid.

The challenge, he says, is not to create some single idea of Iranian art, but to build the institutions that can nurture future talent. “We need more than just galleries, which are purely commercial. We need education, museums, a good review.” Slowly, those elements are starting to emerge, funded by a booming interest from local and international collectors. But the numbers are still small and many obstacles remain, says Hormuz Hematian, who founded the Dastan Gallery in Tehran five years ago.

“Last year, the whole art scene in Iran made just \$35-50 million. The entirety of the masterpieces of contemporary Iranian art cannot be worth the same as one painting at Sotheby's,” he said. “The problems are everything you can think of, including us—the galleries—the artists, the education system,” he added.

“We need writers, translators. We need visitors not to feel scared to come here: hotels, entertainment and restaurants,” Hematian says the market could grow five or 10 times in the next decade if only the remaining US sanctions on Iran can be lifted. “There's such a rich history of visual culture to draw on—calligraphy, architecture, illustration. “The minute the banking problems are solved and the American, French or British markets open up to Iranian art, the growth will be huge,” said Hematian.

Of course, there is still the censorship issue to deal with, though many put that more on the level of “annoying” rather than repressive. “It's not fear—it's more a question of uncertainty, which is... yes, annoying,” said a Tehran gallery manager, who also asked not to be identified. “We have to be careful about how much skin we're showing and things like that. It's always an issue, although censorship can also make people more creative.” But we are very optimistic these days. Life is getting easier. It's blooming. This is the time to be here.”—AFP

