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sign six
agreements



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school fire kills
24, mostly teens



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FISH FARMING FOR FUN AND PROFIT IN KUWAIT

See Pages 4 & 5



Local Spotlight

STANDING UP FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT STAND UP FOR THEMSELVES



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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In the years before and immediately after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, it was common to read stories about Asian livestock workers, shepherds and farms laborers who lived and worked in desert camps or farms being injured when stumbling upon leftover landmines or occasionally being robbed by marauders.

Now, however, death and attacks on farm workers comes more and more often from their employers or fellow farmhands. Reports surfaced recently about a livestock worker in Kabd who was allegedly beaten to death by his employer. The sponsor called police and alleged that the Bangladeshi worker had fallen from a roof and injured himself but after a post-mortem, it was clear that the man had suffered torture and multiple injuries. The sponsor then confessed to beating the worker, arguing that he was negligent in his duties.

Whatever the excuse, there is no justification for physical violence. No one has the right to physically abuse another. That is a crime and must be punished. We are a law-abiding nation. We must punish all those who break the laws, especially when it comes to the abuse and ill treatment of the weakest members of our society.

I sincerely hope this man will get his due punishment according to the law and he should be an example for all sponsors who treat their workers as slaves. Slavery is over and no sponsor or boss should be allowed to abuse his workers for any reason no matter what the worker's mistake or crime.

I do recall a couple of years ago when I was invited to a friend's farm in the desert. He had several workers tending livestock and all the time, I kept thinking how hard and difficult their lives in the desert must be.

Kuwait's weather is hard enough and the fact that those workers are living in the middle of nowhere, with no transportation or access to basic facilities is horrible. I think that every human needs communication with his kin at least once a week. But these farm workers may go months or even years without leaving the farm or having contact with anyone outside a few workmates and their employers.

I believe the status of farm workers must be seriously considered, whether Asian or Arab. In 2016 a forgery crime occurred in Kuwait when a non-Kuwaiti person transferred 12 Egyptian farm workers from their sponsor, to a car rental company without legal transfer of work permits.

The General Directorate of Residence Investigations conducted an investigation into these workers and the non-Kuwaiti man who ran one of these farms, and uncovered acts of bribery involving the staff of a ministry. Investigations revealed that the transfer of the work permits was illegal and all parties were arrested. The workers had paid KD 700 to the man in exchange for the transfer of their residency.

The fact is that these men were also victims. They lost their jobs and money too. So why did they choose to risk it?

Because the truth is that livestock and farm workers are among the lowliest in Kuwait. They are paid poorly, harshly treated, given few incentives and oftentimes abused.

I think the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor - along with representatives from human rights organizations and NGOs - should regularly conduct surprise inspections tours of local farms and livestock holdings to check on the working and living conditions of the laborers.

These workers have the right to a weekly day off, reasonable food and housing, reasonable working hours and salaries paid on time as well as decent, humane treatment. They are not slaves and its time our society stood up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



A photo of an Arabian fox spotted at the Jahra Pools Nature Reserve where it has adapted to living. The Arabian red fox can be found throughout the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant. It feeds on rodents, birds and fish as well as some desert vegetation and mostly lives a solitary existence. — Photo by Nasser Alfoudari/KUNA

IN MY VIEW

DESTROYING POLITICAL KAYFABE



By Jeri Al-Jeri

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Politicians thrive on the people's dance of temporary beliefs and shifting attitudes in a way that's quite similar to the entertainment industry. To illustrate the point, consider 'kayfabe'. In pro wrestling, kayfabe means the suspension of disbelief. It is the magic that hypnotizes fans into believing - if only temporarily - that what they are seeing is real, meaningful and that the money they paid for the entertainment is well spent. However fragile, Kayfabe is what keeps food on the table for thousands of families.

Political kayfabe, on the other hand, keeps billions safe and sound from all the worries of tomorrow, it avoids wars and boycotts. Kayfabe is how many political groupings in Kuwait's parliament survive, depending on others to ignore factual truths for the sake of appearance and legitimacy.

So what happens when kayfabe fails or is destroyed? What happens when it becomes a tool - both its use and then its destruction - of an entire government?

To exemplify, US President Donald Trump employs kayfabe regularly. Many people bought into his anti-establishment rhetoric and inflammatory tweets about Hilary Clinton only to then be shocked when he began appointing top 'establishment' figures to his Cabinet.

Many people believed his professions of faith even as he tweeted racist, sexist and misogynistic diatribes. This is the result of another kayfabe - where the American middle and lower socioeconomic classes have too much debt on their backs and prefer to vote for any ruthless voice that can channel all their bottled frustration. Trump tapped into their rage and their fears, with the knowledge that the louder he is, the higher his popularity will be.

The securing of political kayfabe is redundant in history. Nazi kindergarten teachers taught it. Gaddhafi's Republic persevered it for the sake of face after demolishing their previous regime, the Egyptian pharaohs employed it to the point of deification.

The timeless lessons of all kayfabe stories are that it always works best for whom ever feeds on others' ignorance, fear and greed. The one who cashes it in earlier will gain a ridiculous amount of "push" regardless of how contradictory his attitude to the agenda of his supporters' ideology.

Kayfabe will forever spontaneously respawn its vice on the masses' psyche via the drama that everyone will play along with, subconsciously. The more tenacious it gets the more "liberating" it feels to oppose it "by any means necessary."

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Ornamental aquaculture in Kuwait



Story and photos by Athoob Al-Shuaibi

When you enter Bassam Al-Azmi's farm in Wafra, you will see a pond with large Japanese koi fish swimming gracefully. The pond is surrounded by a beautiful wooden enclosure designed by him. The farm specializes in cucumbers and ornamental aquaculture, and you have cut across the fields to reach the fish farm. The Azmi farm is unique in Kuwait in the cultivation of ornamental fish.



Bassam Al-Azmi

Azmi spoke to Kuwait Times about his interest in aquaculture. His family used to own a chalet with a fishpond, and he used to take some fish from the sea to raise them at home. Over time, the family sold the chalet and bought a farm. In addition, his work at the ministry of public works in water resources management assisted him to gain enough experience to deal to create an appropriate environment for African and Japanese fish. "I feel relaxed and happy when I'm close to the fish, which is a great passion for me. This is the main reason why I started this business four years ago," he said.

Fish as decor

The fish farm produces cichlid malawi, cichlid frontosa, cichlid peacock, cichlid trevose and Japanese koi. The reason for farming these types of fish is their longevity and beautiful shape. "The fish need a year and a half to reach the right size

and be ready for sale. Each basin contains 30,000 fish," said Azmi. "I put 3,000 fish in each basin, and every two months, I take the eggs from the female fish's mouth to transfer them to a natural incubator until they hatch and grow enough to be able to live in larger basins," he explained.

Does the Kuwaiti market absorb this vast volume of production? "Of course! I sell 300 to 500 fish per week, and in this respect, I should mention the first shopkeepers who are still my most important customers - Thamer Behbehani and Meshaal Al-Saffar. You might be surprised to know that there is a large ornamental fish market in Kuwait. People here are beginning to notice the beauty and the importance of adding ornamental fish in their households," Azmi told Kuwait Times.

"There's significant growth in the demand for indoor aquariums, although some still lack experience in good fish care. On the other hand, outdoor ponds are still new in Kuwait



KUWAIT: Ornamental fish for garden ponds, home aquariums and other decor is a small but growing industry in Kuwait. Friday Times sat down with farmer Bassam Al-Azmi to learn more about the challenges and rewards of raising ornamental fish in Kuwait's countryside.

and people are afraid that the fish won't cope with our climate. But I proved through my personal experience that this can be successful and easy to apply. Showing my pond on social media has majorly contributed to encourage people to learn more," he added.

Azmi suffered huge losses in the early days of this business. But he learned from his failures and managed to overcome climatic challenges and other difficulties, until he became an expert. "The first challenge is the hot climate. I have been able to cool the water through small fountains that pump water to the basins. Shading them also is very important to prevent direct exposure to sunrays. Add to this, when a dust storm occurs, I have to change the water completely and wash all the basins," he said.

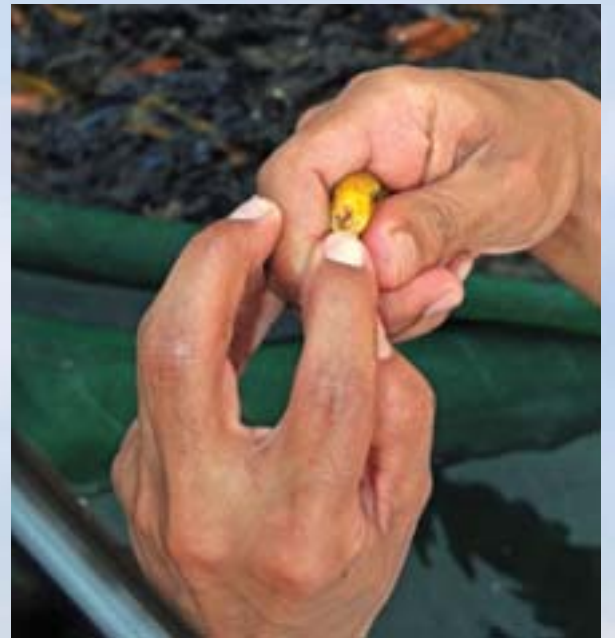
A growing aquaculture market

Notwithstanding, marketing is a tough challenge, because fish sellers force him to sell each fish for 600 fils

instead of his asking price of KD 1.500, but they sell it for KD 4 each, which causes him a big loss. "I hope commercial laws will change to facilitate sales to the Gulf region, or expand this project by giving me space to sell my own fish," Azmi hoped.

The peak season for ornamental fish in Kuwait is nearing with the start of the new academic year. According to Azmi, during this period, demand for ornamental fish increases. "I constantly advise my customers to change the water twice a week, choose fish food that is rich in vitamins, and stay away from commercial brands they find at cooperative stores. Moreover, the fish tank filter must be changed once a week. Most importantly, they should never mix predatory fish with pet fish," he said.

Four workers help Azmi take care of the fish farm, and he personally works with them every Monday, Thursday and Friday. The farm is also populated by dozens of cats, who seem to be very fortunate and contented as they live in a fish paradise!



“ I put 3,000 fish in each basin, and every two months, I take the eggs from the female fish's mouth to transfer them to a natural incubator until they hatch... ”



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DUMB AND DUMBER



By Ramona Crasto

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The dawn of the internet has made the world an easier place to live in. Everything we need or want is one click away, from information to shopping. Just like air, food, water and shelter, the internet has managed to make a place for itself on our basic necessity list. While the internet is everything we need it has also made us its slave in ways that are turning out to be very dangerous.

The power it has over us is astonishing. One single tweet can start a war. One single post can start riots and one single link can convince a person to end his life. Yes, I am talking about games such as the Blue Whale Challenge and the Mariyam App. While the internet has made us smarter, it has also made us dumb. We blindly follow and agree to anything and everything that seems to be going around on the internet. It's like we are hypnotized.

By what I have read so far, it seems that teenagers play such games for thrill and excitement while others find it to be their escape door from their depressed life. It is sad that people find death to be the only option to escaping their problems and reality. Virtual reality is slowly becoming our reality. We are judged by the pictures we upload, likes we receive and number of people that follow us. In a world like this, we need to be smart enough to know the right from wrong and snap out of the illusion that there isn't a life outside these apps. A game cannot let you decide whether you need to live or die.

We cannot take the coward's way out because we think we cannot handle certain problems. We are dumb enough to fall into this pit from which there is no escaping but we are dumber if we don't even try. I

agree social media makes our life entertaining but we can always separate it from our real lives. This is a line we all need to draw, especially young teenagers who think their life revolves around Instagram and Facebook. Maybe, we cannot share everything with our parents but I do not believe that there isn't a way out of the problems that we go through.

This era that we are living isn't like the 60s Or 70s when you had 10 occupations to choose from or limited education concentrating on a subject you didn't even like. Today, you can do what you love, you can choose a career you are passionate about. Family and friends are real. The ones who listen to every detail that you say, they are real. The ones who check on you every night before bed and provide you with a meal every day, they are real.

These are the people worth living for... not those who laugh at your flaws and call you by names in the comment section. Life is hard, for some school homework is too much to bear, for some relationships are too hard to handle, for some straight A's are just impossible to get and for some work load has burdened and broken their back. At such low times in life games like such bring thrill to our boring and unpleasant lives luring us to end it because there isn't anything left for us to do.

Life is a rollercoaster, and sometimes you just want to give up and hide behind games using it as a reason to escape from our problems. If you are not living the life that you want, you fight for that life. We aren't humans if we cannot try one last time. Technology sure has evolved but so have we to know the wrong from the right and how precious our life is.

SOCIAL MEDIA: THE VIRUS AFFECTING TEENAGERS

By Abdulaziz Al-Ashban

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We live in a day and age where social media is dominating the world and our society as well, and its power is undoubtedly strong with how many methods of social media that is at our disposal nowadays, the power of social media is like an angry giant stepping over and destroying everything in its path. That is how formidable it can truly be.

Social media has its pros and cons, for instance, keeping up with the latest happenings in the world and reacting to it in an instant, and connecting and communicating with people which have the same opinion or interests as you etc. However, one of its cons might be that young people, specifically teenagers, can be over-obsessed with posting photos for all of their followers to see, and for their followers to 'like' and comment on them.

The probable consequence of that is that these teenagers could be over-obsessing and potentially brainwashed by how many 'likes' and comments they have, and they act like it is the end of the world if they do not receive a lot of 'likes' and comments on the content that they post on their page after just a few hours removed from posting, when in reality it is certainly not at all. This issue has gotten so bad that it has, without a doubt, become a stereotype now.

According to a recent study conducted by researchers at the UCLA brain mapping center (as reported by CNN) used an fMRI scanner to image the brains of 32 teenagers as they used a custom-built social media app which resembles Instagram. By monitoring the activity inside different regions of the brain as the teens used the app, the team found certain regions became activated by "likes", with the brain's reward center becoming especially active. This study clearly shows us that social media nowadays especially with the amount of 'likes' and comments that a person obtains on a post can result in low self-esteem amongst other mental issues.

Finally, my message to all of those teenagers is to stop over-obsessing with the amount of interactions that you have on a post however many there are. Also, it is not the "end of the world" if you do not reach a certain amount of 'likes' on a particular post, especially if you have just posted a said post a few hours ago. There is a lot more to life and/or your social life than just you posting countless pictures and receiving a certain amount of 'likes' and comments, and over-obsessing over that, like going out to eat or engaging in conversations with your family or friends.



KUWAIT: The Qortuba Co-Op Society. — KUNA

VISION CREATES CO-OP SOCIETY JOBS FOR KUWAITIS: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: As the country continues to implement His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's development plan, known as 'Kuwait vision 2035,' the concerned authorities began to develop and create over 1,800 job opportunities at cooperative societies.

In this framework, the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) launched a campaign to employ and train Kuwaiti nationals eager to work within this field. Secretary General of MGRP Fawzi Al-Majdali said in this regard that various government and non-government entities were cooperating to provide a chance for Kuwaitis to work at cooperative societies. Diversifying career opportunities will eventually develop the national market and offer more jobs to new graduates, said Majdali who indicated that Kuwaitis, depending on their educational degrees, were offered



Fawzi Al-Majdali

between KD 534 and 898 in employment support fees should they choose to work in the private sector. Those who have the necessary documents and academic credentials are welcomed to apply for jobs at cooperative societies and they will be provided with adequate training before embarking on their career, said Majdali, stressing out that applicants must be aged 18 and above. He indicated that since May 28, 2017, some 1,100 individuals have applied for the jobs and the selection process will commence as soon as possible. — KUNA

KUWAIT CHOOSES TO TAKE STAND FOR HUMANITY: OFFICIAL

CAIRO: Kuwait has embraced humanity while volunteerism is a staple of its practices and endeavors, a Kuwaiti official said yesterday. The remarks by Chairman of Kuwait's International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) Dr Abdullah Al-Matouq came in a speech he delivered in an annual Arab League ceremony where he was feted and given a prestigious award recognizing prominent volunteers. "Kuwaitis have never ceased supporting those less fortunate, irrespective of faith or language," he said.

Matouq, who is also an advisor at Kuwait's Amiri Diwan, said that a UN accolade naming Kuwait's Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah a "Humanitarian Leader" was a testament to his altruistic intentions. The Kuwaiti official extolled the merits of volunteerism, saying it was highly evident in the Gulf region, where tremendous efforts have been made to keep conflict at bay. Matouq also said that he was grateful to everyone who participated or contributed in any way towards humanitarian causes. —KUNA



SUMMER ENDS NEXT WEEK

KUWAIT: Temperatures are expected to become moderate in the upcoming days, said Kuwait Meteorological Center. The low pressure will begin to decrease allowing improvement in weather conditions. Moderate to fresh northwesterly wind with speed of 20 - 42 kilometers per hour (kph) with a chance for blowing dust over open areas, official at the center Dhirar Al-Ali said yesterday. On September 22, the summer season in Kuwait will conclude meteorological due to the southward equinox, a phenomenon when daytime and nighttime equal each other.

Today's weather is expected to be hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 28 kph; the highest temperature is expected to reach 47 Degrees Celsius, while the lowest temperature is expected to be 27 Degrees Celsius. On Saturday, the official said it would be relatively hot; the highest temperature would reach 45 Degrees Celsius, while the lowest temperature would be 25 Degrees Celsius. — KUNA

FREE PLANE TICKETS TO IRMA AFFECTED KUWAITI PATIENTS

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health has authorized its bureau in Washington to offer Kuwaiti patients displaced by Hurricane Irma free flight tickets to return to the hospitals where they were being treated. As per instructions from Minister of Health Dr Jamal Al-Harbi, all Kuwaiti patients who have had their treatment disrupted by Irma would be back in hospital by Friday, read a statement issued by the ministry yesterday. Meanwhile, the statement noted that those who choose to return using their personal vehicles can book for their accommodation at a cost of \$200. The statement added that the patients will be compensated by the bureau upon providing their vouchers. — KUNA

Crime

Report

TWO INFILTRATORS ARRESTED IN NUWAISEEB

KUWAIT: Border security men arrested two men who tried to infiltrate their way into Kuwait, coming from a nearby country where they lived illegally. The two Pakistani nationals paid a truck driver to help smuggle them through the Nuwaiseeb border checkpoint. The two were sent to concerned authorities, while search went on for the driver who dropped them off.

Drug abuse

Farwaniya police pulled a taxi over, but as soon as it stopped, the passenger who was inside it got out and ran away. The driver said he did not know the man, adding that he picked him up from Khaitan. But police searched the driver and found with him an envelope containing a white substance. Further search revealed various drugs and paraphernalia on the suspect. Investigations revealed that the driver and the passenger who ran away were abusing drugs when they were stopped by police. The driver was sent to the Drug Control General Directorate and search is on for his accomplice.

DUI

Two policemen were injured when a drunk driver hit their patrol near Abdullah Al-Salem. The Indian man was arrested and taken to the police station. He was charged with suspected drunkenness and damaging state property.

Insult

A citizen accused her son's mother-in-law of insulting her through text messaging. The 69-year-old woman told South Surra police that she was insulted, and filed a complaint. Investigations are ongoing.

Arrest

Hawally police arrested an Egyptian man wanted on a KD 970 debt. The suspect was asked to stop but he ignored the order, so he was chased and arrested. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Hit-and-run

A citizen's car was damaged when another driver hit him then escaped. The citizen was able to note down the license plate number of the suspect's car and handed it to Hawally police.

Charges

The owner of a car rental company filed charges against a female citizen who rented a car and did not return it. Police are looking for the 42-year-old woman. — Al-Rai

1,358,780 TRAVELLERS IN AUGUST

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Passengers' traffic at Kuwait International Airport reached 1,358,780 passengers during August, 74,460 of them are Gulf nationals, passport authorities said in a statement.

Beggars

Residency detectives arrested an Arab man who brought beggars from his country into Kuwait. Detectives launched investigations after receiving tips about a suspect obtaining tourist visas, and told people that he could remove their blacklisting for absconding and deportation in exchange of money. He was arrested after the information was verified, while police believe that the beggars have left the country after learning about his arrest.

Hawally fire

Fire broke out in a Hawally building, prompting Salmiya and Hawally fire stations to respond. No injuries were reported.



ANKARA: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu. — KUNA



Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry as well as Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan meets with Turkish counterpart Nihat Zeybekci.

KUWAIT, TURKEY SIGN SIX AGREEMENTS, ACCORDS

ANKARA: Kuwait and Turkey signed yesterday six accords and agreements to develop relations on all possible domains during the official rounds of talks chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim. A protocol to enhance a previous agreement within double taxation was signed between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Khaled Al-Saleh and counterpart Naci Agbal.

An agreement to develop Kuwaiti-Turkish cooperation within the youth domain was signed between Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry as well as Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan and Turkish Minister of Youth and Sports Osman Askin Bak. Minister Roudhan was also part in signing of an agreement within the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) with Turkish Minister of Technology and Industry Science Faruk Ozlu.

Turkey and Kuwait also signed an agreement in the civil aviation domain with Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Jarallah and director general of the Turkish civil aviation Bahri Kizaci signing the agreement. Jarallah signed an agreement in telecommunication and Information Technology (IT) with head of Turkey's information and telecommunication authority Omer Fatih Zayan. The two nations also signed a security agreement to train Turkish and Kuwaiti personnel with Kuwait National Guard's

(KNG) Lieutenant General Hashim Al-Refaei inking the agreement with Turkey's Gendarmerie General Command General Arif Cetin.

His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak arrived to Turkey yesterday on an official visit. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and handed him a written letter from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Official talks

Earlier yesterday, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and his Turkish counterpart kicked-off official rounds of talks in Ankara. An atmosphere, reflective of the strong and historic ties, highlighted the session between the two officials. The talks focused on bolstering relations on all possible domains and highlighted the developments in the region and the necessity of maintaining security and stability. Both sides also shared a desire to cooperate within the counterterrorism domain, stressing on the importance of regional and international peace and security.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu in Ankara. The two ministers revised cooperation between the two countries in various spheres, regional and international issues of common

interest. Senior officials from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs took part in the meeting. Also, Minister Saleh met on Wednesday with Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek, discussing enhancing economic cooperation between Kuwait and Turkey.

Enhanced relations

Kuwait and Turkey are eager to pursue more ventures and sign additional agreements to enhance relations on all possible spheres especially within the economic domain, Roudhan said late Wednesday. This statement was given after a meeting with Turkish counterpart Nihat Zeybekci held in Ankara.

Roudhan said that the meeting focused on the deals that will be eventually signed between the two countries during the official visit by His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait. The meeting with Zeybekci was "excellent" and both sides expressed eagerness to bolster bilateral ties, said Al-Roudhan.

On His Highness the Prime Minister's meeting with Erdogan, Roudhan said that both officials focused on ways to enhance economic ties and touched on issues of mutual interest. Both countries are working on measures to boost mutual investments to benefit the economies of Kuwait and Turkey, said Roudhan, indicating that the upcoming Turkish-Kuwaiti economic forum in Istanbul was one of the venues gearing towards more progress in ties.

Important visit

Two Turkish officials lauded Wednesday the important visit by His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak to their country, affirming that it would contribute to the development of ties. Member of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Halis Dalkilic said that His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait's visit to Turkey was reflective of the strong bilateral relations.

The visit is also important to coordinate Kuwaiti-Turkish efforts regarding issues pertaining to the region and the world, affirmed Dalkilic. Similarly, Turkish economic expert and chairman of the Arab-Turkish Businessmen Association in Istanbul (ARTIAD) Camaldine Karim stressed on the importance of the visit by the Kuwaiti Prime Minister.

The exchange of high-level visits by Kuwaiti and Turkish officials, the signing of numerous accords in the past, and the possible inking of further deals will bring upon welfare and prosperity to people in both nations, said Karim. Speaking in numbers, the Turkish business official noted that hundreds of thousands of Kuwaitis have visited Turkey in the first portion of this year, revealing that Kuwaitis own about 6,000 real estate properties in Turkey. On Turkish investments in Kuwait, Karim said that the amount of Turkey's investments in Kuwait have reached \$6.5 billion with about \$4.4 billion invested in the new Kuwait Airport project. In relation, Kuwaiti investments in Turkey had reached around \$1.6 billion between 2010 and 2016, said the ARTIAD chairman. — KUNA



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Khaled Al-Saleh meets with Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek.

International

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Fire and Rescue personnel stand outside the Darul Quran Ittifaqiyah religious school. —AFP

FIRE AT ISLAMIC SCHOOL IN MALAYSIA KILLS 24 ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S WORST FIRE DISASTERS

KUALA LUMPUR: Twenty-four people, mostly teenage boys, were killed yesterday when a blaze tore through a Malaysian religious school, in what officials said was one of the country's worst fire disasters for years. The blaze broke out before dawn in the tahfiz—an Islamic religious school—in the heart of the capital Kuala Lumpur. Firefighters rushed to the scene and the blaze was out within an hour but not before it wreaked terrible devastation.

Pictures in local media showed ash-covered, fire-blackened beds, as horrific accounts emerged of the youngsters trying to escape the school as it went up in flames and neighbors hearing their cries for help. "The children were desperately trying to escape the flames," Federal Territories Minister Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor said in a television interview. "There were metal grills which prevented them from exiting the burning building." Kuala Lumpur Police chief Amar Singh said that "the bodies were totally burned".

"Unfortunately there was only one entrance, so they could not escape. All the bodies were found lumped on one another." The Star newspaper reported that people in the area who

had woken for morning prayers heard cries for help and saw flames engulfing the top floor of the building, where children were sleeping in dorms. Khirudin Drahman, director of Kuala Lumpur's fire and rescue department told AFP it was one of the country's worst fire tragedies in 20 years.

Fire safety concerns

Officials initially said 23 students and two teachers were killed in the blaze. Police later revised down the death toll to 22 students and two teachers. Six other students were in hospital in critical condition, police chief Singh said, while a handful escaped unhurt. He said the victims who were students were all boys aged between 13 and 17.

Minister Tengku Adnan said the religious school, called Tahfiz Darul Quran Ittifaqiyah, had been operating without a license, while local media reported that officials had recently raised fire safety concerns about such private schools. "The religious school did not have an operating license from the local authorities," he said. "The school also does not have any

license from the local religious authorities." "There are many other religious schools (that operate illegally) in the country."

Tahfiz are religious schools where children study the Koran in Malaysia, where over 60 percent of the population of about 30 million are Muslim. The fire and rescue department had raised concerns about fire safety measures at unregistered and private tahfiz, and had recorded 211 fires at the institutions since 2015, according to the Star.

In August, 16 people including eight students fled an early morning fire at a family-run tahfiz in Baling, in the northern state of Kedah, the paper reported. It said there was a major fire at a school in 1989 in the northern state of Kedah, which killed 27 female students. Religious schools have been under heightened scrutiny since an 11-year-old boy died after allegedly being beaten last year at one of the institutions in the southern state of Johor. While major fires are rare in Malaysia, they do occur occasionally. In October last year, six people died in a fire that swept through the intensive care unit of a major hospital in the southern state of Johor. —AFP

RUSSIA FIRES MISSILES AT IS STRONGHOLD

ABOARD THE ADMIRAL ESSEN: Russia's military fired seven cruise missiles yesterday at Islamic State targets in the eastern Syrian province of Deir El-Zour as pro-government forces closed in on the militants holed up in the eponymous capital. Journalists on a trip organized by the Russian Defense Ministry watched from the deck of Russia's Admiral Essen frigate as two submarines launched seven missiles from the Mediterranean Sea.

The Syrian government forces, backed by Russian air cover, last week broke a three-year siege around the city on the Euphrates River. Ministry spokesman Maj Gen Igor Konashenkov told reporters later that intelligence showed the missiles hit the targets southeast of Deir El-Zour, destroying a command center, a communications hub, an ammunition depot and an unspecified number of IS fighters.

Russia has provided military backing for Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces since 2015. It has repeatedly fired salvos of such missiles, from both the sea and mainland Russia. An Associated Press reporter on the deck of the Admiral Essen frigate saw three missiles and later four more flying into the air, leaving trails of smoke. Two submarines have emerged and were visible on the horizon shortly afterwards.

Backed by an intense aerial campaign, Syrian and allied forces pushed their way toward the city last week, breaking a nearly three-year siege on its troops on the western edge of Deir El-Zour. It was a major symbolic victory for the pro-government forces. Since then, they have been battling remnants of the militants inside the city, seizing more than 60 percent of it. On Thursday, the pro-government forces were closing in at the extremists from three sides along the river, pounding Al-Bogheliyah neighborhood on the northwestern edge of the city.

Significant losses

The militants are currently encircled by Syrian troops from three sides, with their backs to the Euphrates River. However, they still control rural areas outside the city and the border with Iraq. As IS reels from significant losses in Syria and Iraq, there is a race for control of the border with Iraq, currently still in the militants' hands. US-backed Syrian forces are meanwhile advancing in the surrounding province from the east and north, on the other side of the river.

Bassem Aziz, a spokesman for the US-backed and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, said his troops have taken control of an industrial area on the eastern bank of the river, a few miles from the government troops. Aziz said they are about 6 kilometers away from the city's eastern entrance.

In its statement last week, the U.S.-led coalition said it will back its partners on the ground to defeat IS and "will do our utmost to ensure that (IS) terrorists do not move toward the border of our Iraqi partners. Overnight, a convoy of Islamic State militants and their relatives being evacuated from the border with Lebanon has crossed into Deir El-Zour from a desert area in central Syria, ending a standoff with the US-led coalition that briefly overshadowed the race for the province.

The evacuation, negotiated by Lebanon's Hezbollah group, removed the militants from the Syria-Lebanon border but angered Iraq and the US, which said they should have been killed on the battlefield not moved to the Iraq border. The deal reached at the end of August allowed hundreds of militants and their families to relocate to Boukamal, an IS-held Syrian town near the Iraqi border, in exchange for IS-held prisoners and the remains of Lebanese soldiers captured in 2014. One surviving Hezbollah fighter was returned to Lebanon Thursday.

The head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights Rami Abdurrahman said buses and vehicles carrying about 400 militants and civilians crossed into Deir El-Zour province Wednesday. It was not clear where the buses went. The US-led coalition struck the road the convoy was traveling on, leaving it stranded in the desert for about two weeks, though some vehicles were able to slip into militant-held territory. The US said it did not strike the convoy itself because of the presence of civilians. — AP



ARBIL: Iraqi Kurds gather in the street waving Kurdish flags as they urge people to vote in the upcoming independence referendum. —AFP

IRAQ DISMISSES GOVERNOR AMID DISPUTE WITH KURDS

MOVE COULD ESCALATE ONGOING TENSIONS

KIRKUK: Iraq's parliament yesterday voted to dismiss the Kurdish governor of the ethnically mixed Kirkuk province, in a move that could escalate tensions ahead of a planned Kurdish referendum on independence. To the south of Baghdad, meanwhile, militants attacked a checkpoint and nearby restaurant in the southern Thi Qar province, killing at least 60 people and wounding 83, according to provincial Gov. Yahya Al-Nassiri.

Iraq's Kurds plan to hold the vote on Sept. 25 in three governorates that make up their autonomous region as well as disputed areas like Kirkuk that are controlled by Kurdish forces but claimed by Baghdad. Late last month, Kirkuk's provincial council voted to take part in the referendum. Iraq's central government has rejected the polls as unconstitutional and illegal.

Lawmaker Hussein Al-Maliki said parliament voted to dismiss Kirkuk Gov Najmiddin Karim based on consultations with Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi. Mohammed Al-Karboli, another Arab lawmaker, said Karim "threatens the country's unity and civil peace in Kirkuk." All Kurdish members boycotted Thursday's session, while 187 mainly Arab and Turkmen legislators voted in favor, the two lawmakers said. The governor has the right to appeal the decision, Al-Karboli added.

Oil rich home

Shortly after the session, the Kirkuk governor rejected the parliament decision in a statement, describing it as "invalid" and insisting that he'll stay in office. "The parliament decision ... doesn't mean anything to Kirkuk and its governor who is still in office," said the

statement. Oil-rich Kirkuk is home to a mix of Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen and Christians. Kurdish forces took control of the province and other disputed areas in the summer of 2014, when the Islamic State group swept across northern and central Iraq and the Iraqi armed forces crumbled.

Iraq's Kurdish region has enjoyed a high degree of autonomy since the US imposed a no-fly zone over northern Iraq after the 1990 Gulf War. It has its own parliament and armed forces, flies its own flag, and has been a close US ally against IS and other militant groups. But relations with Baghdad have grown strained in recent years over oil and the disputed areas.

The attack in Thi Qar started with mil-

itants opening fire at the checkpoint and the restaurant on the main highway that links Baghdad with the southern provinces, Al-Nassiri said. That was followed by two suicide bombers, including one driving an explosives-laden car, he added. Three policemen were among the dead and the majority of those killed were expected to be Iranian pilgrims en route to visiting religious shrines who were resting inside the restaurant, he said. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. The Islamic State group often claims responsibility for large-scale attacks targeting security forces and Shiite civilians in Iraq. Shiite Muslim-dominated Thi Qar is located about 200 miles (320 kilometers) south-east of Baghdad. —AP

QATARI EMIR DUE IN TURKEY

ANKARA: Turkey said yesterday it wants Qatar and its Arab neighbors to overcome differences through dialogue and a "brotherly" manner as Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani was set to arrive in Ankara on his first foreign trip since a diplomatic crisis erupted. Al Thani is scheduled to meet with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to discuss ties as well as the three-month-old diplomatic rift between the Gulf neighbors. "We support a resolution of the crisis through a brotherly manner and through dialogue," Ibrahim Kalin, Erdogan's spokesman, told reporters. "This crisis only serves the enemies of this region."

Turkey has been trying to mediate between Qatar and its Gulf neighbors

but has also shown solidarity with Doha in the crisis by delivering food and other supplies and boosting military ties, including sending troops to a Turkish base there. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates cut ties with Qatar in June over its close ties to Iran and its alleged support for extremists. Qatar has denied supporting extremism, saying the crisis is politically motivated. The prime minister of Kuwait, which is mediating the crisis, was also in Ankara yesterday for talks with Turkish leaders. It was not clear if Al Thani and Kuwait's Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah would meet in Ankara. Al Thani is scheduled to travel on to Germany for a meeting with Chancellor Angela Merkel. —AP

PORTUGAL STRUGGLES TO RISE FROM THE ASHES

PEDROGAO GRANDE: Joaquim Godinho and his wife Edite watch with blank faces and heavy hearts as a bulldozer demolishes the charred remains of their home of nearly 30 years. "This house represented a lifetime of work, of struggling day and night," Joaquim Godinho, who built the house himself, said. After the deadliest fire in Portugal's history devastated the central region of Pedrogao Grande, residents are now confronted with the massive task of starting over.

When the fire broke out on June 17, speeding down the hill that overlooks the village of Vale da Nogueira, 54-year-old Godinho tried in vain to save his

property. "It was impossible, I almost stayed there," the unemployed truck driver said, showing burns from the fire on his hands and face. "We must start all over, move forward... but it's very difficult. We lost everything," said Edite, 53, who was in charge of the couple's modest family farm.

More than 1,200 firefighters worked over five days to extinguish the blaze, which burned more than 50,000 hectares and caused damage worth about 200 million euros. The flames killed 64 people and injured 250. A total of 460 houses in the region were damaged by the fire, including 84 that were gutted beyond repair.

'Roof over our heads'

The ravaged landscape surrounding Vale da Nogueira has changed little since the fire, but fern and eucalyptus shoots have added a touch of green to the grey hills, which bristle with burnt trees. The air is filled with the buzz of chainsaws and rumble of trucks as locals rush to sell the blackened wood before it loses all value. But despite a wave of solidarity that caused the Portuguese to donate around 10 million euros to the cause, rebuilding projects—which remain volunteer-driven—are few.

The Godinhos, along with their 24-year-old son, will be among the first to move into one of two free houses built

by a group of Portuguese construction companies. "At least we will have a roof over our heads, but it will be smaller than before," Edite said. Forest ranger Vitor Neves, 58, lost his partner and a cousin in the fire after they were trapped inside their car attempting to flee their village in Pobrais. He said he is as "appalled" today as he was right after the tragedy, accusing Portuguese civil protection authorities of having "badly estimated" how long it would take the fire to spread when it started. Now busy cutting scorched fruit trees in the village of Vila Facaia, Neves also said he was disappointed by how long public aid took to reach the region. —AFP

WHO WILL TANGO WITH MERKEL? GERMAN POLL BATTLE HEATS UP

PARTIES JOSTLE TO RULE WITH HER

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is the clear frontrunner in general elections 10 days away, but a sleepy campaign is now heating up as other parties jostle to rule with her. The battle over the make-up of Merkel's fourth government would potentially impact Berlin policy on everything from immigration and Russia relations to climate. "The coalition building process will be more exciting than the vote itself because there are many possible coalitions," political analyst Oskar Niedermayer said, adding that this "will pose difficulties". Merkel's conservative CDU/CSU bloc holds a double-digit poll lead, but it is short of an absolute majority that would allow it to rule alone. Now all eyes are on the smaller parties.

Would Germany keep its right-left "grand coalition" of the past four years where the junior partner is the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPD) of Merkel challenger Martin Schulz? Or could the chancellor team up with just one small party—either the liberal and pro-business Free Democrats (FDP), who plan a comeback after dismal results in 2013, or the left-leaning and ecologist Greens?

Or would she need both the FDP and Greens for what in Germany's colour-coded politics is called a "Jamaica coalition", grouping the Caribbean country's national colours black (CDU), yellow (FDP) and, well, Green. Timo Lochocki of the German Marshall Fund think-tank said it is unclear whether Merkel will need just one or two smaller parties to govern.

"Because the statistical error in the opinion polls is between 2.5 and 3 percent, Merkel's CDU could theoretically still get 41 percent and with that, it would only need one small party," he told AFP. As small parties are poised to make a big difference, undecided voters could drastically change the picture, Lochocki said, meaning the election "is way more volatile than it seems currently".

'Grosse Koalition'

A new grand coalition-known in German by the uncharming shortform GroKo for "Grosse Koalition"—would guarantee Merkel stability because of a crushing parliamentary majority. But the



ESSEN: Posters of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, left, and social democrat challenger Martin Schulz, right, for the upcoming general election in Germany are displayed at a street. —AP

SPD is lukewarm about staying on as Merkel's sidekick, a role that has damaged its voter appeal. While both sides have been aligned on major policies, the SPD has seen support plunge as it has been unable to shine in "Mutti's" shadow.

Fears are also growing that the cosy centrist partnership, by depriving Germany of a real opposition, is driving disgruntled voters to the fringes. For the first time, the right-wing populist and nationalist Alternative for Germany (AfD) is poised to clinch seats in the election, on the back of an Islamophobic and anti-migrant campaign. The AfD is expected to be a pariah party in the Bundestag—all mainstream parties already shun the group—but some observers fear this will only help the party which sees itself as an anti-establishment force. "If Merkel forms a new alliance with the SPD, there's a threat that over the next four years, the right will grow where the AfD is already proliferating wildly," warned news weekly Die Zeit.

'No-one with no-one'

Most Germans now are lukewarm about another GroKo, with only 16.1 percent hoping for such a big-party lineup, a survey commissioned by Bild daily showed. The most popular duo seems to be of the CDU/CSU and FDP, with the survey showing 18.4 percent in favor.

But current polls suggest that they would fall short of, or only narrowly reach, a majority—which means such a coalition risks instability.

The FDP is traditionally a natural fit for the conservative CDU, and its young and photogenic leader Christian Lindner won praise from Merkel's Bavarian allies CSU over his call for an "overhaul" of migration policy. But the party may not benefit from an alliance as "it's going to be most tricky to tell their voters they are starting out as an anti-establishment party but then they join the government," said Lochocki. If, on the other hand, the Greens are needed for a "Jamaica" coalition, Germany could expect a quarrelsome government as the three parties have different visions on issues from eurozone integration to migration. The FDP's tough migration policy and criticism of clean-power wind farms, for example, are jarring to the Greens.

The environmentalist party in turn would make uncomfortable bedfellows for the conservative CSU, protectors of Germany's scandal-tainted automobile sector. "No-one with no-one, that seems to be the motto," said the Spiegel weekly. It added, however, that the parties' statements now are mostly tactical as campaign-mode politicians try to "drive up the price for their participation in any government". — AFP

ARE YOUR CHOCOLATE BARS FUELLING DEFORESTATION?

LONDON: Your afternoon chocolate bar may be fuelling climate change, destroying protected forests and threatening elephants, chimpanzees and hippos in West Africa, research suggests. Well-known brands, such as Mars and Nestle, are buying through global traders cocoa that is grown illegally in dwindling national parks and reserves in Ivory Coast and Ghana, environmental group Mighty Earth said.

"Every consumer of chocolate is a part of either the problem or the solution," Etelle Higonnet, campaign director at Mighty Earth, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "You can choose to buy ethical chocolate. Or you're voting with your dollar for deforestation." Nestle did not immediately respond to requests for comment while Mars said in an email: "We take a responsible approach to sourcing cocoa and have committed to source 100 percent certified sustainable cocoa by 2020."

Both companies have committed to join the Cocoa and Forests Initiative, a major effort to end deforestation in the global cocoa supply chain, launched in March. Almost one-third of 23 protected natural areas in Ivory Coast that researchers visited in 2015 had been almost entirely converted to illegal cocoa plantations, the report said.

Researchers said the practice is so widespread that villages of tens of thousands of people, along with churches and schools, have sprung up in national parks to support the cocoa economy. Ivory Coast, Francophone West Africa's biggest economy, is the world's top cocoa grower.

While the bulk of its 1 million cocoa farmers ply their trade legally, Washington-based Mighty Earth estimates about a third of cocoa is grown illegally in protected areas. Deforestation for cocoa happens in sight of authorities and chocolate traders are aware of it, they said. Loss of natural forests is problematic because they act as a home for the region's wildlife, and a key weapon against climate change, absorbing carbon dioxide - a major driver of climate change - as they grow.

Available land for new cocoa plantations in Ivory Coast ran out long ago, so farmers have moved into parks and reserves, taking advantage of a decade of political crisis that ended in 2011. Ivory Coast's now has about 2.5 million hectares (6 million acres) of natural forest, a fifth of what it had at independence in 1960, according to European Union figures. Most of the losses have been due to expanding agriculture. The government has struggled to evict farmers from forest reserves amid accusations in 2013 of human rights abuses by security forces.

Details of the Cocoa and Forests Initiative, which is initially focusing on Ivory Coast and Ghana, will be announced by November's global climate talks in Bonn. — Reuters

SPAIN THREATENS 700 PRO-REFERENDUM MAYORS

MADRID: Spain's public prosecutor on Wednesday ordered a criminal probe of over 700 Catalan mayors who are cooperating with an October 1 independence referendum deemed illegal by Madrid. The move increases the pressure on Catalan officials just one day before the pro-separatist camp officially kicks off its referendum campaign in the Mediterranean port of Tarragona.

Furious at the decision to instigate a probe, Catalan municipal associations called on all the region's mayors to protest in Barcelona on Saturday to show their "rejection of a Spanish judicial system that goes after the media, ballot papers, ballot boxes... and now mayors". The prosecutors' office ordered the mayors who have agreed to help stage the vote be summoned to court as official suspects and if they do not appear to "order their arrest", according to a copy of the ruling obtained by AFP.

Pro-independence Catalan president Carles Puigdemont dubbed the move an "atrocious scarcely worthy of a democracy", and said he would attend Saturday's protest. Catalonia's pro-separatist government has asked the wealthy northeastern region's 948 mayors to provide facilities for polling stations for the plebiscite. So far 712 mostly smaller municipalities have agreed to participate, according to a list posted on the website of Catalonia's Municipal Association for Independence (AMI) which represents 750 municipalities.

"They can arrest us! They're crazy!" David Rovira, the pro-separatist mayor of L'Espluga de Francoli, a town of some 3,800

residents, told AFP by phone, adding that Madrid had "proposed nothing" to appease Catalonia's demands for greater autonomy. Jordi Turull, spokesman for the Catalan government, told reporters that the executive would support the region's mayors and would "respect their decision".

The ruling comes a day after prosecutors ordered police in Catalonia to seize ballot boxes, election flyers and any other item that could be used in the referendum. Prosecutors have already launched an official complaint against Puigdemont and members of his government over their referendum plans, accusing them of civil disobedience, misfeasance and misappropriation of public funds—the latter carrying jail sentences of up to eight years. And on Wednesday, the official referendum website was shut down following a court order, the Guardia Civil police force said, prompting Puigdemont to immediately tweet the address of a new website.

'Don't go'

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's conservative government has vowed to do everything in its power to stop the referendum. It argues that Spain's 1978 constitution stipulates that regional governments cannot call an independence referendum. Rajoy on Wednesday urged Catalans to boycott the referendum.

"If anyone urges you to go to a polling station, don't go because the referendum can't take place, it would be an absolutely illegal act," he said. Spain's Constitutional Court has suspended a referendum law that was fast-



ARCHIDONA: A Spanish flag flies at Ochavada square. — AFP

tracked through Catalonia's regional parliament last week but the Catalan government has vowed to go ahead with the vote nonetheless. Catalan authorities routinely ignore the court's decisions as they do not recognize its legitimacy.

In his first public comments since the Catalan government signed a decree calling

the referendum, Spain's King Felipe VI said the rights of all Spaniards will be upheld against "whoever steps outside constitutional and statutory law". But constitutional law professor Javier Perez Royo said it would be difficult for the state to stop the referendum if huge numbers of Catalans disobey the law and vote. — AFP

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ST BERNARD: In this Sept 16, 2005, file photo, a wheelchair with a slipper still on the footrest sits in the mud left behind by Hurricane Katrina at St Rita's Nursing home, where 34 people died while waiting to be rescued from the floodwaters. — AP

FLORIDA'S NURSING HOME DEATHS SPUR EFFORTS TO PROTECT ELDERLY

HOLLYWOOD: Emergency workers around hurricane-scarred Florida worked to make sure elderly residents were safe, evacuating multiple assisted-living facilities, after eight people died in a sweltering nursing home that lost its air conditioning in the storm. In one of the latest actions to protect older residents, firefighters helped relocate 122 people late Wednesday from two assisted living centers near Orlando that had been without power since Hurricane Irma. Elsewhere, facilities lacking electricity statewide tried to keep residents cool with dampened cloths and urged utilities to work quickly.

Stepped-up safety checks came after the eight deaths at the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills, which shocked Florida's top leaders even as they surveyed destruction from a storm that spread its punishing effects across the entire state. "Unfathomable," Gov. Rick Scott said of the nursing home deaths. "Inexcusable," US Sen Bill Nelson added. Around the state, 81 nursing homes lacked electricity as of Wednesday night, according to the Florida Health Care Association.

In Coral Gables, an apartment building was evacuated after authorities said its lack of power made it unsafe for elderly tenants. And at the 15,000-resident Century Village retirement community in Pembroke Pines, where there were also widespread outages, rescue workers went door to door in the 94-degree heat checking on residents and bringing ice, water and meals.

For the elderly outside assisted living facilities, such as 94-year-old Mary Dellaratta, getting help can depend on the attentiveness of neighbors, family and local authorities. The widow evacuated her Naples condominium with the help of police the day before the storm hit. After the hurricane passed, a deputy took her back home and another brought her food. A deacon from her

Roman Catholic church has also stopped by. But with no family in the area and neighbors who are gone or unwilling to help, the New York native feels cut off from the world. "I have nobody," she said. The electricity is out in her condo, so there's no television for news. She also can't raise the electric-powered hurricane shutters that cover her kitchen windows. Near the point of despair, remembering to take her medicine or locating her cane are almost insurmountable challenges.

Trump to visit

"I don't know what to do. How am I going to last here?" she said, as a tear rolled down her cheek. Though the number of people with electricity had improved from earlier in the week, some 6.8 million people across the peninsula continued to wait for power, and utility officials warned it could take a week or more for all areas to be back up and running. As recovery continues, President Donald Trump was due to visit Naples in southwestern Florida on Thursday.

Including the nursing home deaths, at least 25 people in Florida have died under Irma-related circumstances, and six more in South Carolina and Georgia, many of them well after the storm had passed. The death toll across the Caribbean stood at 38. In Hollywood, the Rehabilitation Center said the hurricane had knocked out a transformer that powered the air conditioning. Broward County said the home alerted officials Tuesday that it had lost power, but when asked if it had any medical needs or emergencies, it did not request help.

Early Wednesday morning, after responding to three calls about patients there in distress, firefighters went through the facility and found three people dead and evacuated more than 150 patients to hospitals, many on

stretchers or in wheelchairs, authorities said. By the afternoon, five more had died. Others were treated for dehydration, breathing difficulties and other heat-related problems.

Hollywood Police Chief Tom Sanchez said investigators believe the deaths at the Rehabilitation Center were heat-related and that a criminal investigation has been launched. The chief said authorities have not ruled anything out in the deaths, including carbon monoxide poisoning from generators. Authorities performed safety checks on other facilities around the city Wednesday. Glendale Owens, the daughter of one of the men who died, said she visited her father in the nursing home Monday and everything seemed fine. She said Bobby Owens had been at the facility for more than 10 years.

"People are telling me different things," she said Wednesday evening. "But nobody from the facility has told me anything yet." Paulburn Bogle, a member of the housekeeping staff, said after the air conditioning failed, the staff used fans, put cold towels and ice on patients and gave them cold drinks. The medical examiner's office said the victims were five women and three men, ages 70 to 99.

Calls to the owner and other officials at the Hollywood home were not immediately returned, but the facility's administrator, Jorge Carballo, said in a statement that it was cooperating fully with authorities. The governor said he's directed state officials to issue an emergency moratorium to prevent the facility from admitting new patients. Nursing homes in Florida are required by law to file an emergency plan that includes evacuation plans for residents. County officials released documents showing that the Hollywood facility was in compliance with that regulation and that it held a hurricane drill with its staff in October. —AP

TRUMP: CLOSE TO DEAL ON YOUNG IMMIGRANTS

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump yesterday said he was "fairly close" to a deal with congressional leaders to preserve protections for young immigrants living illegally in America, and is insisting on "massive border security" as part of any agreement. Trump, speaking to reporters before surveying hurricane damage in Florida, pushed back against Democratic leaders who claimed there was a deal on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) initiative. He also said his promised wall along the US-Mexico border would "come later."

"We're working on a plan subject to getting massive border controls. We're working on a plan for DACA. People want to see that happen," Trump said. He added: "I think we're fairly close but we have to get massive border security." Trump, in a series of early morning tweets, had contradicted the characterization of a private White House dinner on Wednesday night by his guests, Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York and Rep.

Nancy Pelosi of California, the top Democrats on Capitol Hill. Trump denied there was a deal. Schumer and Pelosi said in a statement after that get-together that they had agreed to "enshrine the protections of DACA into law quickly" and to work out a package on border security, excluding Trump's planned border wall. No so, shot back White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who said that "while DACA and border security were both discussed, excluding the wall was certainly not agreed to."

'No final deal'

Trump's tweets prompted a fresh response from Schumer and Pelosi, who said his words were "not inconsistent with the agreement reached last night," and that while there was "no final deal," the president had said he would "support enshrining DACA protections into law, and encourage the House and Senate to act." They said in a statement that the details on border security needed to be negotiated, that both sides agreed "the wall would not be any part of this agreement" and that Trump said he would pursue the wall later.

And soon after, Trump appeared to confirm that approach. "The wall will come later, we're right now renovating large sections of wall, massive sections, making it brand new," he told reporters before his Florida trip. He also said Republican congressional leaders, House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky favored his approach on the immigration program. "Ryan and McConnell agree with us on DACA," Trump said, adding that he had spoken to them by telephone.

It was a head-snapping turn of events for a president inclined recently to turn to Democrats to jump-start legislative imperatives. Only days ago, Trump and the Democratic leaders agreed to back a three-month extension of the debt limit in order to speed hurricane assistance. "The WALL, which is already under construction in the form of new renovation of old and existing fences and walls, will continue to be built," Trump tweeted early Thursday.

At the same time, he expressed sympathy for the hundreds of thousands of younger immigrants vulnerable to deportation even though they were brought to the United States as toddlers or children. He had announced last week that his administration was rescinding the program and gave Congress six months to come up with a legislative fix. "Does anybody really want to throw out good, educated and accomplished young people who have jobs, some serving in the military, really?" Trump wrote. "They have been in our country for many years through no fault of their own - brought in by parents at a young age. Plus BIG border security." Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill had said after the White House dinner "the president was clear he would press for the wall but separate from this agreement."

Either way, it was the second time in two weeks that Trump cut out Republicans to reach a deal with Pelosi and Schumer. A person briefed on the meeting, who spoke on condition anonymity about the private get-together, said the deal specifies bipartisan legislation that would provide eventual citizenship for the young immigrants. House Republicans would normally rebel over such an approach, which many view as amnesty for lawbreakers. It remains to be seen how conservatives' loyalty to Trump would affect their response to a policy they would have opposed under other circumstances. —AP

TEEN GIRL WEINER TEXTED WANTED TO AFFECT ELECTION

NEW YORK: Disgraced former New York congressman Anthony Weiner is no predator and should be spared from prison at his sentencing for sexting with a 15-year-old North Carolina girl who dreamed about affecting the US presidential election, his lawyers told a judge on Wednesday. The submission in Manhattan federal court referenced "Anthony's operatic self-destruction," describing the crime as "the final act ... born of deep sickness." But it blamed the girl, saying she has told government investigators it had been a goal of hers to affect last year's election.

The court filing included letters from Weiner and his estranged wife, Hillary Clinton aide Huma Abedin, who appeared with him in state court earlier in the day at a divorce proceeding, looking more like a couple than not. In a heavily blacked-out letter, Abedin wrote: "With Anthony, I have repeatedly found myself in circumstances I never imagined. I am devastated by Anthony's actions, and I understand he must face their consequences."

The lawyers described Weiner, a once powerful Democrat, as having

committed a crime, though "one far less egregious than any sexting case that has been prosecuted in this district." They said he never sought out teenagers on the internet and didn't engage in other predatory behaviors typical of those arrested in similar cases. "He responded to the victim's request for sexually explicit messages not because she was a teenager but in spite of it," the lawyers said.

The lawyers said Weiner had caught the eye of "a curious high school student, looking to generate material for a book the government has disclosed she is now shopping to publishers." They said the girl documented their interactions from the outset, photographing her phone to preserve messages, before selling her story to a British tabloid for \$30,000. The lawyers said the investigation of Weiner was "quite improperly injected into the US presidential election, quite possibly affecting its outcome."

'Same antics'

"After the election was over, the high school student told government

investigators that this had been one of her goals from the outset," Weiner's lawyers wrote. The girl told Inside Edition in an interview she knew that Clinton, a Democratic former US secretary of state, senator and first lady, would be running for president last year. "I wanted to see if Anthony was still up to the same antics," she said.

In a letter to US District Judge Denise Cote, who will sentence Weiner on Sept. 25, Weiner wrote that "regret for my crime is profound" and that he had endangered the well-being of a 15-year-old girl. "My continued acting out over years crushed the aspirations of my wife and ruined our marriage," he said. Hours earlier, Weiner and Abedin appeared briefly before a judge in their divorce case. They sat side by side and chatted casually while their lawyers met with state Supreme Court Justice Michael L. Katz.

An FBI investigation into Weiner's online relationship with the girl became a factor in the presidential election. Then-FBI Director James Comey announced in late October 2016 that an investigation into emails

that had been kept on Clinton's private server needed to be reopened while the bureau looked at emails found during the Weiner probe.

Although Comey announced two days before the November election that nothing was found in the new search that would result in charges against Clinton, she has cited it as a reason for her loss to Donald Trump. Trump, a Republican, became president in January and dismissed Comey in May. Weiner, who unsuccessfully ran for mayor in 2005 and 2013, is eligible for a harsh term of years in prison in the sexting case but is likely to face less time. As part of his plea bargain, he agreed not to appeal any sentence between 21 and 27 months. In his sentencing letter, Weiner wrote that he now attends daily "mutual support meetings" as part of treatment and mentors those new to the program. He said he was profoundly sorry to his victim.

"My life isn't big and loud anymore," he said. "Every day I quietly do what I can to keep getting better and to fix the damage I've done." —AP

RUSSIA-BELARUS WAR GAMES SET TO BEGIN

MINSK: Military officials in Belarus have sought to calm Western fears about major war games with Russia involving thousands of troops, tanks and aircraft, just hours before they are due to get underway. The Zapad (West) 2017 maneuvers, mainly in Belarus this year, have caused concern at NATO and in neighboring countries. Some members of the alliance, including the Baltic states and Poland, have criticized a lack of transparency about the exercises and questioned Moscow's real intentions. "We are not threatening anyone," Oleg Voinov, an adviser to the Belarusian Defense Minister, told journalists Thursday. "We have chosen military bases that are significantly removed from the borders with Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia."

Russia-West relations have hit their lowest point since the Cold War following Moscow's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and continuing fighting between Russian-backed separatists and troops loyal to Kiev in eastern Ukraine. Western worries about the planned maneuvers have ranged from allegations that Russia could use them to permanently deploy its forces to Belarus to fears of a surprise attack on the Baltics.

Poland's National Security Bureau head, Pawel Soloch, said Thursday that the exercises were a demonstration "of the Russian state's capacity to hold full-scale war action." "The degree of mobilization is really impressive," Soloch said on private Radio Zet. Russia and Belarus have said the exercises, which last until Sept. 20, will involve 5,500 Russian and 7,200 Belarusian troops. Russian military officials have said up to 70 aircraft and about 250 tanks, 200 artillery systems and 10 navy ships will also be involved.

Russia's Defense Ministry said Thursday that elite parachute units in several Russian cities had been placed on alert to be deployed during the exercises. Organizers have invented three "aggressor countries" - Veishnoriya, Lubeniya and Vesbasriya - to whose attacks the Russian and Belarusian militaries will simulate a response. The Baltic States and Poland fear that these monikers are just poorly disguised terms for their own countries. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told NATO troops in Estonia last week that the alliance will be closely monitoring the war games. — AP

VENEZUELA RIVALS HOLD EXPLORATORY CRISIS TALKS

SANTO DOMINGO: Talks between Venezuela's government and opposition inched closer Wednesday as delegates from both sides began exploratory contacts with mediators in the Dominican Republic. Jorge Rodriguez, a close ally of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, said some progress had been made towards face-to-face negotiations. "We are very close to resolving many of the points on the agenda," he told reporters in the capital of the Caribbean state.

The opposition delegation was expected to meet Dominican President Danilo Medina, who is trying to broker a breakthrough in the crisis along with ex-Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. The talks were announced late Tuesday by Maduro who told a cabinet meeting that he had accepted Medina and Zapatero's offer and would send Rodriguez with a delegation to the Dominican Republic.

Rodriguez was accompanied his sister Delcy Rodriguez, who chairs the all-powerful Constituent Assembly, and the veteran Venezuelan diplomat Roy Chaderton. Rodriguez did not say if he expected to have a face-to-face meeting with the opposition delegation. One of the opposition delegates, Julio Borges, warned Wednesday that a formal dialogue would only be possible if Maduro accepted the opposition's conditions and if there was international involvement.

The conditions include setting a timetable for elections and freeing political prisoners. Borges is speaker of the opposition-dominated parliament, which was superseded in July by the Constituent Assembly packed with Maduro allies. An opposition MP said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was seeking to broaden the international mediation in the talks.

"Antonio Guterres is trying to form a



SANTO DOMINGO: Dominican Republic's President Danilo Medina (center), Dominican Republic's Foreign Relations Minister Miguel Vargas Maldonado (L) and former Spanish prime minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero leave the Dominican Foreign Ministry in Santo Domingo after meeting with Venezuelan government representatives Delcy Rodriguez and Jorge Rodriguez as well as with representatives of the Venezuelan opposition to resume brokered talks. — AP

group of countries that will mediate and guarantee a dialogue and compliance with the results," Henry Ramos Allup told reporters in Caracas. He said the proposal was that each side choose two countries to participate in the talks. Ramos Allup said, however, that the idea of extending the mediation process had not gone beyond a proposal at this point. Opposition leader Henrique Capriles, who has accused Zapatero of siding with the government, called for the Vatican and the UN to be involved in the talks process. The opposition walked out of the last negotiations, brokered by the Vatican last year, accusing the government of not fulfilling pledges made during the talks.

Conditional dialogue

A repeat of that failure in Santo

Domingo would likely worsen the already catastrophic situation in Venezuela where Maduro had to weather a wave of opposition protests that left 125 people dead between April and July. The invitation by Medina and Zapatero "to move towards a process of negotiation and political accord" was welcomed by the governments of France and Spain, among several countries which have been heavily critical of Maduro.

However, Spain's Foreign Minister Alfonso Dastis warned that action by the Maduro government was needed, following talks with his Venezuelan counterpart Jorge Arreaza in Madrid. "It is not enough that the Venezuelan government expresses its desire to maintain a dialogue with the opposition," said Dastis.—AFP

MYANMAR'S REFUGEE CRISIS: MAIN PLAYERS

BANGKOK, Thailand: Violence coursing through western Myanmar has sparked an exodus of hundreds of thousands of stateless Muslim Rohingya, generating international alarm at the blistering animosity fuelling a cycle of bloodshed in the region. Here are the main players in the spiraling crisis.

The refugees

The United Nations says some 380,000 Rohingya—about 60 percent of whom are children—have fled to Bangladesh since violence broke out in Rakhine state in late August. That's a third of the Rohingya population in Myanmar. They have arrived in Bangladesh with scant belongings and harrowing tales of attacks from Myanmar's military and Rakhine Buddhists. It is the latest tragedy for the persecuted Rohingya. Many of the Muslim minority trace their lineage in Myanmar back generations, but were rendered effectively stateless by the former junta and are demonized among the Buddhist-majority population as illegal immigrants.

The group has been subjected to suffocating restrictions on movement, employment and access to basic services since a previous outbreak of violence in 2012. That left more than 100,000 trapped in squalid camps near the Rakhine state capital Sittwe. Nearly 30,000 ethnic Rakhine Buddhists as well as Hindus have also been displaced inside Myanmar in the latest violence. The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) Originally calling themselves Harakah Al-Yaqin (the Faith Movement), this group burst to prominence in October 2016 with deadly attacks on Myanmar border police. Bigger attacks on August 25 triggered the latest violence, with the army launching a counter offensive that has left hundreds dead and driven a tide of refugees from their homes. ARSA is fronted by Ata Ullah, a commander who is believed to have been born to a Rohingya family in Karachi, Pakistan, and to have lived in Saudi Arabia.

Rohingya leaders have long rejected attempts by outside militants to radicalise the population, believing them to be counterproductive. But observers say oppressive restrictions imposed since the 2012 violence have allowed support for militancy to take root. The group may only have had several hundred trained militants when it launched its attacks, but local Rohingya men are thought to have taken up crude weapons to join the fight in recent weeks.

Aung San Suu Kyi

As the figurehead for Myanmar's civilian leadership, Nobel laureate Suu Kyi has been a lightning rod for international condemnation of the country's response to the crisis. A flock of fellow Peace Prize winners have decried her for staying silent on the plight of the Rohingya.

Suu Kyi has long faced criticism for failing to champion religious tolerance in Myanmar, where a powerful monk-led Buddhist nationalist movement has fed on seething anti-Muslim sentiment. Her party shed all its prominent Muslim figures to contest 2015 polls. Statements from her office attempting to justify the army's assaults have appeared clumsy at best. But the crisis has also underscored the government's inability to control the military, which retains sweeping powers from its years of junta rule and is not subject to civilian oversight.

The military

Myanmar army chief Min Aung Hlaing commands one of the region's largest armies, a fighting force that has for decades waged wars within the country's borders against fighters from minority groups. Myanmar's army, which ruled the country with an iron fist for nearly half a century, has often used scorched-earth tactics against communities it believes are sympathetic to rebel groups. The military can whip up support among many in the country by presenting its operations as defending local Rakhine Buddhists against what the government has insisted are "extremist terrorists". But the severity of the latest fighting may further unsettle ethnic armed groups engaged in fragile peace talks. And the unrest looks to sour international hopes of engaging with the military to entice it into giving up its autocratic habits.

Bangladesh

The fresh exodus of Rohingya has generated a humanitarian crisis in Bangladesh, where existing UN-run refugee camps are already packed with Rohingya who fled from previous waves of Myanmar violence. Dhaka, which has refused to permanently absorb the Rohingya, said it plans to build a huge new camp that will house a quarter of a million refugees. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called on Myanmar to "stop oppressing innocent people". —AP



BANGLADESH: A Rohingya Muslim woman, who crossed over from Myanmar into Bangladesh, shouts for help as a relative lies unconscious after the boat they were traveling in capsized minutes before reaching shore at Shah Porir Dwip, Bangladesh yesterday.—AP



BANGLADESH: A Rohingya Muslim woman Hanida Begum, who crossed over from Myanmar into Bangladesh, kisses her infant son Abdul Masood who died when the boat they were traveling in capsized just before reaching the shore of the Bay of Bengal, in Shah Porir Dwip, Bangladesh.—AP

NEARLY 3 WEEKS INTO ROHINGYA CRISIS, REFUGEES STILL FLEEING

COUNCIL CALLED FOR 'IMMEDIATE STEPS TO END THE VIOLENCE'

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh: Nearly three weeks into a mass exodus of Rohingya Muslims fleeing violence in Myanmar, thousands were still flooding across the border yesterday in search of help and safety in teeming refugee settlements in Bangladesh. The crisis has drawn global condemnation, with UN officials demanding Myanmar halt what they described as a campaign of ethnic cleansing that has driven some 400,000 Rohingya to flee Rakhine state. One of the dozens of boats carrying Rohingya to the Bangladeshi border town of Teknaf capsized yesterday and at least two people drowned, police said. That brought known drownings in the Naf River to 88 since the crisis began.

'Complete denial of reality'

Those who arrived Wednesday in wooden boats on beaches near Shah Porir Dwip fishing village described ongoing violence in Buddhist-majority Myanmar, where smoke could be seen billowing from a burning village - suggesting more Rohingya homes had been set alight. One Rohingya man said his village of Rashidong had been attacked six days earlier by Myanmar soldiers and police. "When military and police surrounded our village and attacked us with rocket launchers to set fire, we got away from our village and fled away to any direction we could manage," Abdul Goffar said.

Myanmar presidential office spokesman Zaw Htay said that out of 471 "Bengali" villages in three Rakhine townships, 176 were now completely empty while at least 34 more were partially abandoned. Many in Myanmar use that term as part of the long-standing refusal to accept Rohingya as citizens of the country. Myanmar has accused the Rohingya of burning their own homes and villages - a claim the UN human rights chief criticized as a "complete denial of reality."

The crisis and refugee exodus began on Aug 25, when Rohingya insurgents attacked police posts. Myanmar's military retaliated with "clearance operations" to root out the rebels, but the

fleeing Rohingya say Myanmar soldiers shot indiscriminately, burned their homes and warned them to leave or die. Others have said they were attacked by Buddhist mobs. Hundreds have died, mostly Rohingya, and some of the refugees have needed treatment for bullet wounds.

Facing growing condemnation globally, Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi will not attend UN General Assembly meetings Sept 19-25 to instead deal with what the government said were domestic security issues. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters Wednesday that ethnic cleansing was taking place against Rohingya in Rakhine state. The term "ethnic cleansing" is defined as an effort to rid an area of an unwanted ethnic group - by displacement, deportation or even killing. The UN Security Council called for "immediate steps to end the violence" and ensure civilian protections. Rohingya have faced decades of persecution in Myanmar, and are denied citizenship despite centuries-old roots in the Rakhine region.

Violence-related injuries

The thousands of Rohingya flooding into Bangladesh every day have arrived hungry and traumatized. Many need urgent medical care for violence-related injuries, severe infections or childbirth. "The women who are coming for check-ups all have a terrified and exhausted look," said Sumaya, a midwife at the Nayapara refugee camp working in association with the UN population fund. "We keep hearing stories from them of walking through jungles and across hills for days without food, their children carried over their shoulders. They've lost their homes."

Two existing refugee camps were packed beyond capacity, and Bangladesh has said it would free land to build a third. Many of the new arrivals were huddling in makeshift shelters along roads or in open fields. Near the camp of Balukhali, some were setting up tents made of bamboo and plastic along hillsides muddy from days of rain.

Children walked uphill to capture rain-water before it spilled into the teeming settlements below. Food, clean water and other necessities were scarce.

Panic erupted yesterday along roadsides where local volunteers were distributing food, water and other supplies haphazardly from parked vehicles. Local officials shouted through bullhorns for volunteers to coordinate their efforts with aid agencies to avoid spreading chaos. "There are acute shortages of everything, most critically shelter, food and clean water," UNICEF country representative Edouard Beigbeder said.

Anti-Muslim riots

The UN children's agency said it needed \$7.3 million to help just the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya children now at high risk of contracting water-borne diseases. Yesterday afternoon, a scuffle broke out at a makeshift relief center at Kutupalong, where some refugees tried to break into the center and were beaten back by at least four security guards wielding sticks. Those who managed to receive some aid after waiting hours in line were dismayed by the meager hand-out. "I have just got a tarpaulin sheet but no food," said 55-year-old Osman, who gave only one name. "I need rice to eat, I need to feed my family. They said they can't give us anything else. What will I eat now?"

The head of the UN High Commission for Refugees said humanitarian assistance would increase "very, very quickly." Asked why the response has been slow, Filippo Grandi alluded to difficulties working in Bangladesh, but said he hoped this will change as the scale of the crisis becomes more apparent. It is the Myanmar government's "responsibility to ensure that security returns to Rakhine," Grandi told The Associated Press at the Stockholm Security Conference in Sweden.

Bangladesh already was housing some 500,000 Rohingya who fled earlier flashes of violence including anti-Muslim riots in 2012. Rakhine state had up to 1 million Rohingya before the latest violence. —AP

POWERFUL PHOTOS OF ACID ATTACK SURVIVORS SPOTLIGHT VICIOUS CRIME

LONDON: The young Cambodian woman strikes a confident pose as she stares defiantly at the camera. Her pink T-shirt states "I am not perfect but I am limited edition". Her face is badly disfigured by acid burns. The striking portrait features in an exhibition of photos of acid attack survivors from around the world which opened in London this week. Photographer Ann-Christine Woehrl hopes her work will raise awareness of the devastating impact of acid attacks and show the courage and dignity of survivors. The exhibition coincides with an upsurge in acid attacks in Britain which has prompted the government to promise new measures to tackle the issue. Woehrl said the woman in her photo, Sokneang, was working as a singer in a club at the time of the attack. It is believed the assailant was the wife of a man who often visited the club.

Sokneang has since retrained as a tai-

lor with the help of a Cambodian charity which helps acid attack survivors. "The pose is so strong and self-confident," Woehrl said. "I thought that's exactly what my work should be about. It's her saying, 'That's me, and so what?'" Thousands of acid attacks happen every year, mostly targeted at girls and women. But few perpetrators are brought to justice. Acid causes skin and tissue to melt leaving victims facing permanent disfigurement, medical complications, psychological trauma and social ostracisation.

Some victims even get blamed for causing the attacks. "Society is so cruel," says a Bangladeshi woman, Farida, in a statement next to a series of photos documenting her daily life. "When (people) hear that my husband threw acid at me, they immediately assume that I am a bad person." Farida's husband attacked her after she threatened to leave him over

his gambling. He threw acid over her as she slept and then locked the door.

Inner beauty

Some of the girls and women photographed were burnt after spurning suitors. Other attacks were triggered by dowry arguments or jealousy. One woman from India was doused with acid by her husband and mother-in-law after giving birth to a girl rather than a boy. But there are also positive stories behind the photographs. Woehrl points to an image of a Ugandan couple Moses and Christine. When she was 16, Christine was attacked by Moses' ex-girlfriend, leaving her with severe burns over her face and body. Moses stood by her and they now have a daughter.

The photographer said she was also moved by a young Ugandan woman called Flavia who spent seven months in hospital after she was attacked in her

first year at university. Flavia, who has heavy scarring over her face and upper body, hid herself away for a long time, but has since trained as a counselor and is also a passionate salsa dancer.

"People just have to accept me the way I am. And I actually love myself now," Flavia said in a statement. "It has taught me to appreciate inner beauty more." The exhibition is mounted by the Acid Survivors Trust International, a UK-based charity campaigning to end acid attacks across the globe.

Woehrl hopes to take the show to some of the worst affected countries such as India and Pakistan. Although most victims of acid attacks worldwide are women, most victims in Britain are men, with cases often linked to robberies or gang violence. Britain is looking at how to tighten controls on the sale of corrosive substances and the possibility of life sentences for offenders. — Reuters

CAMBODIA SUSPENDS COOPERATION WITH US IN FINDING WAR REMAINS

PHNOM PENH: Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said yesterday he was suspending cooperation with the United States to find the remains of Americans killed in the Vietnam War in the latest ratcheting up of tensions between the two countries.

Hun Sen has accused the United States of plotting treason with opposition leader Kem Sokha, an accusation rejected by the US embassy, which has called for the release of the prime minister's main rival. "The search cooperation is postponed until a number of issues are resolved between Cambodia and the United States," Hun Sen said according to pro-government website Fresh News.

Hun Sen said that a total of 80 American soldiers had gone missing in Cambodia during the war in neighboring Vietnam and that half of them had been found. Hun Sen said the suspension will be lifted after Cambodia-US ties are restored. Washington announced on Wednesday that it would stop issuing some visas after Cambodia refused to accept Cambodian citizens deported from the United States after being convicted of crimes there.

Hun Sen said the policy of deporting them back to Cambodia "break them up as families, as parents and children, and it's an inhumane (situation) in which some have committed suicide". The Vietnam War that ended in 1975 remains an emotive issue in Cambodia.

Hun Sen says the United States has never apologised for its role in bombing his country to try to kill Vietnamese communist guerrillas and should forgive debts built up by a pro-US junta that ruled until it was ousted by the genocidal Khmer Rouge. On a separate issue, Cambodia's Foreign Affairs Ministry said it would accept deportees from the United States. The US Embassy in Phnom Penh declined to comment. — Reuters

INDONESIA RAISES ALERT LEVEL FOR BALI VOLCANO

JAKARTA, Indonesia: Indonesia raised the alert level yesterday for the Mount Agung volcano on the tourist island of Bali following an increase in volcanic earthquakes. The National Disaster Mitigation Agency said the alert has been raised from normal to vigilance. The country's geological agency recommends villagers and visitors stay further than 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) from the mountain's crater. The surrounding Karangasem district, an area of about 840 square kilometers (324 square miles), has a population of 408,000.

The disaster agency said the volcano last erupted in March 1963, killing some 1,100 people and hurling ash as high as 10 kilometers (16 miles). It warned against panic, saying there would be further increases in volcanic activity and changes to the alert level before an eruption. The Indonesian archipelago straddles the Pacific "Ring of Fire" and is prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. — AP



AHMEDABAD, GUJARAT, India: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (seventh left) and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (sixth left) look on during a ground breaking ceremony for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high speed rail project in Ahmedabad yesterday. — AFP photos

INDIA'S FIRST BULLET TRAIN PROJECT DEEPENS JAPANESE TIES

EYEING CHINA, TWO LEADERS PLEDGE MORE DEFENSE, SECURITY PROJECTS

GANDHINAGAR, India: The leaders of India and Japan agreed yesterday to deepen defense ties and push for more cooperation with Australia and the United States, as they seek to counter growing Chinese influence across Asia. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe arrived this week in his counterpart Narendra Modi's home state, skipping the tradition of visiting the capital of New Delhi, for the tenth meeting between two leaders since Modi came to power in 2014. Relations have deepened between Asia's second and third largest economies as Abe and Modi, who enjoy a close personal relationship, increasingly see eye-to-eye to balance China as the dominant Asian power.

"Almost everything that takes place during the visit, including economic deals, will in part be done with China in mind," Eurasia analysts said in a note. Abe's visit comes days after New Delhi and Beijing agreed to end the longest and most serious military confrontation along their shared and contested border in decades, a dispute that had raised worries of a broader conflict between the Asian giants.

In a lengthy joint statement, India and Japan said deepening security links was paramount. This included collaboration on research into unmanned ground vehicles and robotics and the possibility of joint



AHMEDABAD, GUJARAT, India: Photo shows Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (right) and Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe exchanging agreements at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar, near Ahmedabad in Gujarat state.

field exercises between their armies. There was also "renewed momentum" for cooperation with the United States and Australia. Earlier this year, India rejected an Australian request to be included in four-country naval drills for fear of angering Beijing.

"Relations between India and Japan are not only a bilateral relationship but have developed into a strategic global partnership," Abe told reporters in Gandhinagar,

the capital of western Gujarat state. "We (India and Japan) will strengthen our collaboration with those countries with whom we share universal values." Abe flew to Gujarat to lay the foundation stone of a \$17 billion bullet train project, India's first, that was made possible by a huge Japanese loan.

Tokyo wants to win other high-speed rail lines India plans to build, to edge out Chinese ambitions to do the same and provide a boost for its high-end manufacturers. The visit was light on specific announcements, but India said it welcomed proposals for increased Japanese investment into infrastructure projects in its remote northeast, a region New Delhi sees as its gateway to Southeast Asia. China claims part of India's northeast as its own territory.

Japanese investment into the northeast "would give legs to our Act East policy," Indian Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar told reporters. Modi and Abe also said they would push for more progress on the development of industrial corridors for the growth of Asia and Africa. Analysts say the planned \$40 billion Asia-Africa Growth Corridor takes direct aim at China's Belt and Road project, envisaged as a modern-day "Silk Road" connecting China by land and sea across Asia and beyond to the Middle East, Europe and Africa. — Reuters

WORLD'S OLDEST PANDA DIES AGED 37 IN CHINA

SHANGHAI: The world's oldest captive giant panda has died at age 37 — more than 100 years in human years - her handlers in China said yesterday as they gave "Basi" an emotional send-off befitting a minor celebrity. Basi outlived most of her peers by nearly two decades-Pandas in the wild have an average lifespan of about 20 years, but those in captivity generally live longer.

She was something of a beloved star in China and her birthdays were often celebrated with gusto. State television reported live yesterday from the zoo where Basi lived in southeastern China, which held a memorial in her honor. "With a heavy heart, we solemnly announce today that the original model of 'Panpan', the mascot for the first Asian Games (in China, 1990), and an angel of friendship both at home and abroad, giant panda star Basi died at 8:50am on September 13, 2017 at the age of 37," the Straits Giant Panda Research and Exchange Center in Fuzhou said.

Basi had lived at the facility since being rescued from the wild after she fell into a river in southwestern China at the age of four or five, it said. She was named after the valley where she was found. Basi spent some time abroad when she was loaned to the San Diego Zoo for six months in 1987. Giant pandas have a notoriously low reproductive rate, a key contributor-along with habitat loss-to their status as vulnerable on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of threatened species. The black and white bear, which symbolizes wildlife protection efforts worldwide, was previously classified as endangered. — AFP



FUZHOU: This file picture taken on January 18, 2017 shows giant panda 'Basi' sniffing a birthday cake prepared by her keepers at Fuzhou Panda World in Fuzhou, east China's Fujian province. — AFP

N KOREAN GROUP DEMANDS US BE TURNED TO 'ASHES AND DARKNESS'

TOKYO IS 'DANCING TO THE TUNE OF THE US'

SEOUL: A North Korean organization demanded yesterday that the United States be "beaten to death" like a "rabid dog" for spearheading fresh UN sanctions on Pyongyang over its latest nuclear test, adding ally Japan should be "sunken into the sea". The UN Security Council unanimously imposed an eighth set of sanctions on the North Monday, banning it from trading in textiles and restricting its oil imports, a week after Pyongyang tested what it said was a hydrogen bomb small enough to fit onto a missile, raising tensions on the peninsula.

A spokesman for the North's Korea Asia-

Pacific Peace Committee (KAPPC) denounced the "heinous sanctions resolution" and said there were mounting calls for strong retaliation against the US and its allies. "The army and people of the DPRK are unanimously demanding that the Yankees, chief culprit in cooking up the 'sanctions resolution', be beaten to death as a stick is fit for a rabid dog," he said in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency.

"Now is the time to annihilate the US imperialist aggressors. Let's reduce the US mainland into ashes and darkness," it said. North

Korea has a long history of issuing dramatic threats against the US and its allies but not carrying them out. According to the South's unification ministry, the KAPPC acts as "a window for improving relations with countries like the US and Japan... while campaigning to change North Korea's closed and negative image". But the KAPPC statement accused Tokyo of "dancing to the tune of the US" and warned of a "telling blow" against Japan, noting the missile test that overflowed the Asian island nation last month.

The North's launch of an intermediate

range missile over Hokkaido triggered alarm bells, sparking emergency sirens and mass text alerts in northern Japan. "The four islands of the archipelago should be sunken into the sea by the nuclear bomb of Juche," KAPPC warned, referring to the North's national philosophy of "Juche" or self-reliance. North Korea says it needs nuclear weapons to protect itself from "hostile" US forces. Experts believe Pyongyang's weapons program has made rapid progress under leader Kim Jong-Un, with previous sanctions having done little to deter it. — AFP

TOSHIBA: JAPAN'S FADED TITAN SELLING THE FAMILY SILVER

TOKYO: At a train station used by hundreds of workers at struggling Japanese electronics giant Toshiba, an advert is apparently trying to poach staff worried by their employer's precarious financial position. "Do you work for 'that' electronics company? If so, come and work for us!" screamed the ad for Toyota. The mere fact Toshiba staff are apparently being urged to jump ship by rivals underscores the difficulties suffered by the former industrial titan. Strapped for cash, the firm is soon expected to be forced to sell off part of the family silver-its key memory chip business, which accounts for around a quarter of its total annual revenue.

Toshiba has been stuck in tortuous negotiations over selling the segment, which could raise as much as \$20 billion. Three parties have been vying for the prize: a US-South Korean consortium led by investment fund Bain Capital, Toshiba's US chip factory partner Western Digital and Taiwan's Hon Hai Precision, better known as Foxconn. On

Wednesday, Toshiba said it had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Bain consortium but this did not prevent them still talking to others. Selling the profitable chip division is seen as key to Toshiba's survival, as one of Japan's best-known firms battles to recover from multi-billion-dollar losses at its US nuclear operations. It could also face the humiliating prospect of being delisted from Japan's stock exchange if the sale does not raise the sufficient funds.

Fall from grace

The move to sell represents something of a fall from grace for Toshiba, which can trace its history back as far as 1875 when the company set up a telegraph factory in the now swanky area of Ginza in Tokyo. In the 1930s, the firm manufactured the first Japanese vacuum cleaner, the first fridge and the first washing machine, which still works today-albeit with an almighty racket. It has been involved in the manufacture of an astonish-

ing array of items from tiny electronic chips to nuclear reactors, with everything from televisions, computers and highway toll gates in between.

But Toshiba is not the only once-mighty Japanese conglomerate to feel the pain from ferocious foreign competition. Household names Panasonic and NEC have been forced into major restructuring, and Sharp was acquired by Foxconn. Toshiba's problems stem in large part from what Yasuyuki Onishi, a specialist in the sector, described as its "reckless" purchase of US nuclear unit Westinghouse, which racked up billions of dollars in losses before being placed in bankruptcy protection.

This is the "main cause of the crisis that the group is suffering", Onishi told AFP. Those huge losses came to light as the group was still recovering from revelations that top company executives had pressured underlings to cover up weak results for years after the 2008 global financial meltdown. — AFP

RECORD RAIN AS TYPHOON BATTERS SOUTHERN JAPANESE ISLANDS

TOKYO: A strong typhoon lashed islands in southern Japan yesterday, packing gusts of up to 252 kilometers an hour and leaving thousands without power as it headed towards the mainland. Authorities warned of landslides and high waves as Typhoon Talim battered the southern Okinawan island chain, dumping the most rain seen over a 24-hour period in 50 years on the city of Miyako. According to Okinawa Electric Power, more than 18,000 homes were without power in Miyako, a city of around 54,000 people some 1,840 kilometers (1,143 miles) southwest of Tokyo.

Japan's Meteorological Agency said the typhoon was expected to approach the Kyushu island by early Sunday. Local media said it was poised to cross Japan's mainland-which includes Tokyo-on Monday. Big storms regularly strike Japan, with 22 people killed when Typhoon Lionrock pounded the country last September. Last month, Typhoon Noru killed two and injured 51. — AFP



Models walk the runway at the Jia Liu fashion show during New York Fashion Week. — AFP

'The Insult' takes on taboos of Lebanon's civil war

Epic quest to document 'miracle' of Hebrew language

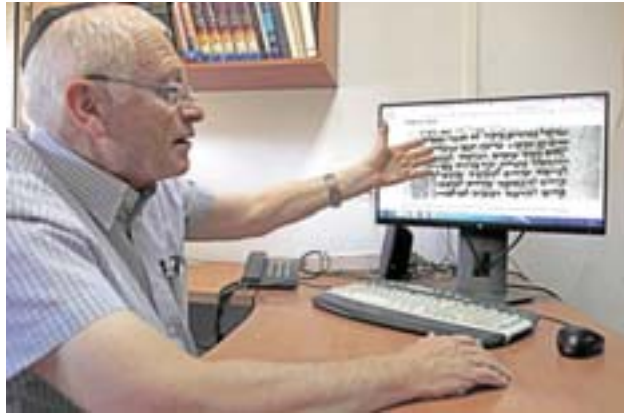
The bespectacled man with two pens in his shirt pocket and a black skullcap atop grey hair points to his computer screen and explains an epic project spanning generations. Gabriel Birnbaum, 66, is a senior researcher helping document and define every Hebrew word ever from ancient texts such as the Dead Sea Scrolls to the contemporary novels of Israeli literary figures like Amos Oz. It is a mammoth task under way since 1959, and even though a milestone has been reached on the digital project, there are still many years to go. Called the Historical Dictionary Project at Israel's Academy of the Hebrew Language, it will serve as an invaluable resource for scholars, writers and linguists.

But it will also act as an anchor for Hebrew, the ancient language revived in spoken form in the 19th century after some 1,700 years. Work completed so far is already available to the public online. For Birnbaum, who has been working for the project for about 13 years and is charged with writing dictionary entries for the words, the project's researchers "understand that we do something very important for the Jewish people." "For linguistics in general also, because it's a huge linguistic project in itself," he added.

At his book-lined office at the project's headquarters in Jerusalem, he clicked through to various entries. The Hebrew word for table, for example, brought up almost 3,000 occurrences, including from the Bible's Book of Exodus in a section where God tells Moses to create a tabernacle. But it is not all business for Birnbaum. Another tab on his browser was open to a song by Leonard Cohen, the late musician whose songs include references to Jewish tradition. Birnbaum is a big fan.

A dramatic revival

While such historical dictionaries exist for other languages—perhaps most notably the monumental Oxford English Dictionary—Hebrew's status may give the project added importance. Earlier incarnations of the language were spoken by ancient Jewish communities where the modern state of Israel is



Gabriel Birnbaum, senior researcher at Historical Dictionary Project at Israel's Academy of the Hebrew Language in Jerusalem, shows an old Hebrew text on his personal computer at his office. — AFP

located today. As Jews were forced into exile, Hebrew as a spoken language began to fade, though it remained in use in written form. After some 1,700 years, it was revived in the late 19th century as part of the push by Zionist Jews to resettle in the lands from where their ancestors fled. It is now an official language of Israel and is considered history's sole example of such a dramatic revival.

"It's a miracle," said Birnbaum, a father of five who moved to Israel from Hungary when he was six years old. The headquarters of the project includes furniture and books from Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, seen as the father of the effort to revive Hebrew. Ben-Yehuda, who died in Jerusalem in 1922, began work on the first modern Hebrew dictionary, and slips of paper on which he wrote entries by hand are included in the project's collection.

Around 25 people currently work on the project. When it started in 1959, there were only five people, said Birnbaum, and they used an early form of computers for the work. Most of the ancient manuscripts and inscriptions are located outside Israel, requiring researchers early on to rely on photostats. More recently, images of many are online, including the Gezer calendar, considered by some to be the oldest known Hebrew writing, dating to the 10th century BC.

'Task is great'

All ancient literature will be included because examples are relatively few, but for later eras, representative samples are chosen. In the beginning, researchers did not focus on the Bible because reliable biblical dictionaries already existed, opting to delve into other ancient works such as the Talmud. Since then, biblical texts have been added. Researchers study texts for words and input them by hand. Some 50,000 entries are already included along with linguistic analysis, and definitions began to be written in 2005 — a milestone for the project.

"The idea is that it will be an electronic database," said Steven Fassberg, the project's associate editor. "I don't think anybody would even venture how many years" it will take to complete, he said. Charlotte Brewer, a professor at Oxford's Hertford College who researches the Oxford English Dictionary, said the project "has obviously been carefully planned". "Dictionary projects which set out to chart the history of a nation's language are usually closely bound up with cultural and ideological beliefs about nationhood, patriotism, etc, and this project looks to be no exception," she said. Birnbaum takes pride in the work begun by Ben-Yehuda. He points out a plaque in the room where Ben-Yehuda's furniture is displayed and which once hung above his desk. Quoting a traditional Jewish teaching, the plaque says: "The day is short and the task is great." — AFP



This picture shows the construction site of the Grand Maitreya Spiritual Centre on the outskirts of Ulan Bator. — AFP photos



This picture shows a boy playing in the construction site of the Grand Maitreya Spiritual Centre.

Mongolia's blossoming Buddhism faces money problems

On a barren patch of land outside Mongolia's capital, a former herder guards a half-finished pedestal and abandoned golden Buddha's head—testament to the money problems keeping Buddhism from flourishing in the country. When 68-year-old Tsegmid Lunduv, a longtime nomad, was hired to patrol the spot in 2013, the project seemed full of promise: a proposed sprawling complex of meditation centers and spiritual retreats, tucked into the rolling steppes outside Ulan Bator and under the spiritual guidance of the Dalai Lama.

But two years ago, construction was suspended pending additional funding, leaving two partially built legs, the unattached head and a hand with fingers curled into the gesture for teaching and understanding. Only Lunduv, his wife, grandson and their yellow puppy were standing sentry on a recent visit to the holy site-to-be. "Once the project comes to fruition, all of Mongolia's troubles will go away," said Lunduv, a portly man with a tattered white tunic and a gap-toothed smile.

He added: "It will usher in a new era." One of the project's main financial backers, the Genco group, is owned by new Mongolian President Khaltmaa Battulga, who took office in July and must now navigate the country out of its maze of debt with a \$5.5 billion International Monetary Fund-led bailout. Buddhism has returned to prominence after being quashed over years of Soviet control, with over half of the population now identifying as Buddhist, according to official figures. But the debt-laden country's money troubles have severely limited the infrastructure

needed for the religion to fully flourish, with monasteries lacking proper residential facilities for monks.

Heavy influence

Buddhist traditions in Mongolia predate the rule of Genghis Khan, who established close ties with a Tibetan Buddhist school. Khan's grandson, Kublai Khan, even commissioned his spiritual guru to create an easier form of the Tibetan script to be used in the territories under his command. Even under Tibetan Buddhism's heavy influence, however, Mongolians gave the religion their own cultural touch: inspired by shamanistic invocations using vodka, Mongolian Buddhists consider the Russian liquor sacred just as wine is to Christians.

And because the Mongolian Empire suffered from a population shortage, the Dalai Lama at the time permitted Mongolian monks to marry and have children—though mistresses remained strictly forbidden. The biggest challenge to Mongolian Buddhism came during the country's years as a Soviet satellite state, from 1924 to the early 1990s, when the Arts Council of Mongolia estimates that more than 1,250 monasteries and temples were demolished and countless religious artifacts lost.

Monks, if they were not killed, were forced to marry. "After 60 years of oppression, (Mongolia's) monkhood was pretty much destroyed," said Glen Mullin, an expert on Tibetan Buddhism. Only one monastery, Ulan Bator's Gandan monastery, was permitted to stay open during that period to support the Soviets' claims

of religious tolerance. In 1996, in a newly democratic Mongolia, 18-year-old Batchunuun Munkhbaatar left his countryside home in central Tuv province to join the monastery in the capital.

Gandan was home to just 25 monks then, but Munkhbaatar stayed and immersed himself in the Buddhist practice. Now 800 monks belong to the monastery, the country's largest. "During the (Soviet era), the party controlled the faith of the people, but they couldn't control their inner devotion," Munkhbaatar said, recalling that his grandfather "didn't quit his chanting or prayers, even during the communist time." "He would do all these things behind locked doors. If someone approached the house, the dog would bark and he'd put away his scriptures and images of Buddha."

'A Buddhist country'

The revival of Buddhism has been a sticky issue for the Mongolian government, which pledged not to extend any more invitations to the Dalai Lama after his visit to Ulan Bator last November angered China, its neighbor and

biggest trade partner. There are now 3,500 monks across the country, said Munkhbaatar, who handles Gandan's foreign relations. Mullin expects these numbers to swell as the first wave of young Mongolian Buddhists return from studying in India and Tibet.—AFP



Lebanese-French director Ziad Doueiri poses with actors at the pre-screening of 'The Insult' in Beirut on Tuesday. — AFP photos



Lebanese actor Adel Karam and Palestinian actor Kamal El-Basha (right) pose at the pre-screening of "The Insult" in Beirut.



Lebanese-French director Ziad Doueiri (right) poses with actor Adel Karam at the pre-screening of 'The Insult'.

'The Insult' takes on taboos of Lebanon's civil war

Nearly three decades after it ended, Lebanon's civil war returned to haunt Beirut this week at a screening of the film "The Insult," which forcefully explores the taboos of the conflict. The movie opened to rave reviews at the Venice Film Festival, earning accolades for its French-Lebanese director Ziad Doueiri and a Volpi Cup for Palestinian actor Kamel El Basha.

The advance screening on Tuesday was overshadowed somewhat by Doueiri's brief detention for filming in 2012 in Israel despite Lebanese legislation banning citizens from visiting the Jewish state. But viewers still packed multiple halls Tuesday night to watch the film at a cinema in central Beirut, which was ravaged by the bitter 1975-1990 war that divided Lebanon's capital. "The Lebanese civil war haunted me all the way to Los Angeles," Doueiri, who fled war-ravaged Beirut in 1983, told AFP.

"The division between east and west Beirut stayed with me even though the war ended, the checkpoints reopened, and the capital was reunited." "The Insult" is Doueiri's second movie about the civil war, after his 1998 film on teenage life in the battle-torn capital, "West Beirut". The conflict erupted in 1975 between Lebanese Christians and armed Palestinian factions and eventually drew in Syria, Israel, the United States, and other Western countries. The 1990 peace accord that ended it never brought a reconciliation process. Instead, Lebanon's parliament issued a general amnesty absolving all parties of war crimes.

Opening old wounds

Almost 20 years later, "The Insult" carves out an ambitious goal: opening old wounds to pave the way to a much-needed, if belated, redemption. The movie, set in the post-war era, centers around a legal dispute between Christian nationalist Tony, played by Lebanese actor and comedian Adel Karam, and Palestinian refugee Yasser, played by Basha. A disagreement between the men over a water pipe snowballs into a court case and then into a violent, national crisis, opening up a Pandora's box of old grievances, prejudices, and trauma.

The film has been praised by Lebanese critics for dealing frankly with the unresolved issues of the civil war. "The movie opens a necessary window to look on the remnants of Lebanese memory that we are not allowed to go near, discuss, or ask questions about," Lebanese movie critic Nadim Jarjoura told AFP. "The Insult also deals with a lot of other issues, including reconciliation with oneself. You cannot reconcile with the other without reconciling with yourself," he added.

"You need to return to the past to leave it." The film contains sequences of forceful language and communal tension rarely depicted in Lebanese cinema. "Sharon should have annihilated you," Christian Tony screams at Palestinian Yasser as their tiff escalates into a feud, referring to Israel's former prime minister Ariel Sharon. Sharon was accused of "indirect" responsibility for the 1982 massacre of hundreds of Palestinians by Israel's Lebanese Christian Phalangist allies in Beirut's Sabra and Shatila camps.

'Still at war'

Tony in turn finds himself assaulted with screams of "Zionist dog" during a court hearing between the men, evoking the still-controversial alliance that formed between some Christian factions and the Jewish state against Palestinians in Lebanon. "There's no side in the war that can say it, alone, was persecuted," 54-year-old Doueiri told AFP. "No single side can say it was the only one that was hurt. There will always be another side that has the right to say that the war spilt its blood, too."

"The Insult" depicts the Lebanese as not yet having turned the page on the civil war, while their country is riven by new divisions including tensions related to the conflict in neighboring Syria and the issue of the arsenal of the powerful Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. When Tony's lawyer asks if he would take up arms today, he replies: "We're still at war." "I'm not Jesus Christ to turn the other cheek," he says elsewhere in the film. "No, we are not all brothers."

The film offers no easy answers, but a path to gradual reconciliation emerges between the men. The screening ended with a heavy silence, with the audience sitting quietly as the titles scrolled. But it provoked discussions, including between a father and son who were still locked in animated debate nearly an hour later. "You can't think like that, Dad, the civil war is over," the teenager could be heard telling his white-haired father. — AFP

John Prine takes home artist of the year at Americana Awards



John Prine accepts the artist of the year award during the Americana Honors and Awards show Wednesday. — AP photos

Folk singer songwriter John Prine was awarded the artist of the year, while one of his proteges, country singer Sturgill Simpson, took home album of the year at the Americana Honors and Awards show. Americana artists spanning generations and backgrounds were honored Wednesday night in Nashville, Tennessee, including lifetime achievement honorees Van Morrison and Graham Nash of the band Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. Prine, at 70, delighted the audience with a couple of performances and received standing ovations throughout the night. "I've been waiting for this award for a while," he joked.

Early in the night, Prine stepped on the Ryman Auditorium stage to introduce his friend and duet partner Iris Dement, who received the trailblazer lifetime achievement award, and was greeted with a standing ovation before he even said a word. "I was going to come out and tell you who I was, but I'll go

with whoever you think I am," Prine told the audience. Simpson, who was not in attendance and won for his Grammy-winning record "A Sailor's Guide to Earth," shares a songwriting office with Prine in Nashville. He is one of several young singers and songwriters in rock, country and Americana who have looked to Prine as a mentor.

Rodney Crowell won song of the year "It Ain't Over Yet," featuring Rosanne Cash and John Paul White, but was not able to attend the awards show. Amanda Shires, who won emerging artist of the year, started her career as a fiddle player for the Texas Playboys and has five solo albums, in addition to playing in the backing band for her husband, Grammy-winning Americana artist Jason Isbell. "I know there are several people here who let me sleep on their couches and dog beds," Shires said in her acceptance speech.—AP



A group of artists performs the finale "Tulsa Time" on the stage of the Ryman Auditorium during the Americana Honors and Awards show.



Marc Jacobs closes out Fashion Week with an operatic finale

Marc Jacobs closed out New York Fashion Week with an operatic finale, playing the aria from "La Wally" used in the movie "Diva." And the rest was silence. Literally. The models walked in the cavernous, unadorned Park Avenue Armory with no soundtrack, their every footstep audible. At Michael Kors, the soundtrack was live: Sara Bareilles sang four songs, ending with her hit "Brave." Some highlights of the final day of shows:

Marc Jacobs' holiday of the mind

Marc Jacobs is known for beginning his shows exactly on time, so at 6:01 pm on Wednesday, the last few ticketholders were scurrying frantically on their stilettos, heels clacking on the wooden floor to avoid getting caught in the center of the cavernous space as the models began their journey. This fashion show was waiting for no one. Like he did in February, Jacobs held his runway show in a spare, undecorated Park Avenue Armory, rendering it utterly unrecognizable from the beginning of the week, when Tom Ford had turned it into a luxe nightclub setting bathed in purple light, with waiters serving vodka cocktails. Jacobs also had his models walk slowly and deliberately in total silence, playing music only at the finale, when the aria from "Diva" was piped into the space.

But the clothing was anything but spare: Jacobs' models wore brilliant colors like orange and yellow, and big, bold floral prints. Silhouettes, as he explained in his show notes, were "exaggerated, decadent and exotic" - a result of a vacation over the last few months. But it was a vacation of the mind only. "While friends vacationed, we took a holiday in our heads and went somewhere," he said, adding that the collection had come from a reimagining of previous seasons, "somewhere beyond the urban landscape of

New York City." The most notable look: turbans. Everyone had them, and they came in all colors - partly inspired, Jacobs said, by Kate Moss, who famously wore a gold one to the Met Gala with Jacobs in 2009.

As they were at Calvin Klein, tassels were definitely a favored touch for accessories like bags and shoes. Speaking of bags, some were enormous, and some were tiny - part of those exaggerated shapes Jacobs spoke of. Some were fanny packs. Much-followed models Kendall Jenner and Gigi and Bella Hadid all walked, but the honor of closing the show went to the week's breakout star, newbie Kaia Gerber - daughter of supermodel Cindy Crawford. In the audience: Zosia Mamet, Courtney Love and Nicki Minaj, in a revealing black bustier. "It just seemed super surreal," Minaj said on her way out. "Everything was next level. Colors! I loved it."

Marchesa inspired by adventures of an heiress

Design duo Keren Craig and Georgina Chapman of Marchesa say they were inspired by the travels of an heiress adventurer when dreaming up their latest collection. "We were looking at a rather incredible Edwardian (era) woman called Aimee Crocker who wrote a book called 'And I'd do it Again' and she had a rather fabulous life," Craig said backstage Wednesday. "Ultimately it's a very quintessentially Marchesa collection," added Chapman. "I think we view our collections as a storybook continuing from one season to the next. ... Our pieces we want to see as timeless, not as pieces that are done for the season."

Looks on the runway featured a one-shoulder ball gown in blush and a tulle gown with cape sleeves, pearl necklace embroidery, and a plunging neckline. There was also an ivory cocktail





Models walk the runway at the Marc Jacobs 2018 Spring/Summer fashion show during Fashion Week, Wednesday in New York. — AP/AFP photos

dress with a satin bodice and ostrich feather skirt. Craig and Chapman co-founded the Marchesa label in 2004. "It makes it so much easier working with your best friend," said Craig. "We always have a laugh together so I think that always takes the edge off. Sometimes something gets really stressful and then you can just end up laughing about it and being like, "Well this is a ridiculous situation." Actresses Jennifer Morrison, Victoria Justice, Dylan Penn, Olivia Culpo and Nina Dobrev sat in the front row.

Evening dresses with flip-flops

Sara Bareilles offered the live soundtrack, singing Otis Redding's "(Sittin' On) the Dock of the Bay," Carole King's "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" and her own "Love Song" at Michael Kors She closed out the sleek and feminine show with her hit "Brave." Inspired by his first trip to the South Pacific, Michael Kors created a beach collection for spring, dressing his models in very relaxed, wearable pastel dresses and skirts featuring palm frond patterns and tie-dye. His choice of footwear was downright carefree. "I thought, 'How can we blend that sort of big city life with this barefoot beach life? Certainly in my career we have never shown evening clothes with flip-flops. We are!" Kors said Wednesday.

The male and female models - including Kate Upton, Kendall Jenner and Bella Hadid - strutted along weathered wood planks meant to resemble a boardwalk in front of a downtown audience that included Nicole Kidman, Naomi Watts, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Yang Mi. There were chunky sweaters, classic trench coats and double-breasted blazers. The dresses and skirts were in linen and crepe, in shades of pale pink, lavender and loads of blue.

Strips of material streamed out of some of the cuffs, and shirt tails spilled free from jackets. Kors said much of the tailoring was

meant to "catch the wind." Sequins sparkled seductively on some of the most interesting layered dresses. Backstage, Kors said his customers know what works on them and his clothes know no political divide. Michelle Obama wore Kors and Melania Trump wore one of his belted coat dresses on Monday.

"It's so modern and cutting edge," Watts said. "Always strong, standout pieces, but also really wearable." Zeta-Jones came with her daughter, Carys, who complimented her famous mom for her fashion sense. "I should put her in front of the camera more often," joked Mom.

A desperate housewife, at fashion week

Before her first runway show at New York Fashion Week, Eva Longoria buzzed around backstage Wednesday like a seamstress. She cut extra threads from garments, examined hemlines and pointed out clothing that needed steaming. "This has been months of preparation," said Longoria, who said she has been sewing since she was a child. "It's been so much fun and it's a dream come true, really." The show opened with a segment she calls #SetLife, based on Longoria's own career. After starring as Gabrielle Solis on "Desperate Housewives" for eight seasons, Longoria has spent more time behind the camera as a producer and as a director.

"I didn't want to look, you know, like a schlep behind the camera directing," she said. "I said, 'I want to look cute but I need to be comfortable and I need to be functional and I need to get down on the floor and I need to set up shots. ... And so I really created this line for the women who do it all.'" After "athleisure" wear, the catwalk transitioned to jumpsuits made of printed crepe and washed twill and midi-length dresses with asymmetrical stripes.

Longoria also featured skinny high-rise jeans and mid-rise



boyfriend destructed denim. "It's my global lifestyle brought to women at a great price, something that's fashion forward, something that's wearable, something that's relatable, something that's buyable and I think that's important to women," Longoria said. "They want to invest in themselves but in pieces that are not trends and they're gonna throw away the next season, classic pieces that have a modern twist." —AP



NY Fashion Week: Top trends

New York Fashion Week wrapped Wednesday in an explosion of glowing colors, greater inroads into diversity, designers still pondering the point of the runway and younger talent given a chance to shine. As the global style bandwagon now flits to Europe, with London Fashion Week kicking off today before moving onto Milan and Paris, here are top trends New York offered this season:

1990s throwback

Tom Ford kicked off the week by going back to his Gucci heyday, mining for inspiration the decade that made him famous. There were plenty of low-slung pants, hip-grazing cut-out bodysuits and boxy jackets. Italian label GCDS also went for low-slung and bodysuits, while Oscar de la Renta and Victoria Beckham showed oversized jackets.

Oh, and 1990s supermodel Cindy Crawford officially passed the baton to the next generation—her 16-year-old daughter Kaia Gerber made her runway debut for the Calvin Klein, Alexander Wang and Marc Jacobs.

Rainbow colors

Collections were a riot of every color from the rainbow—hot pink paired with red: the color combo of the season for the brave Tom Ford shopper. Marc Jacobs went orange, green and psychedelic. Spain's luxury pret-a-couture label Depolzo luxuriated in green, pale pink and bright yellow. Yellow was a statement color at Carolina Herrera and also Ralph Lauren, in tulle with a black biker jacket.

Check mate

Fine check-or the graph-paper look as Victoria Beckham told AFP—is having a moment. See Rosie Assoulin, Public School, Christian Siriano, Monse, Calvin Klein and rag & bone among others.

Stripe right

Traditionally the preserve of old-fashioned pajamas, blue was the color of choice for vertical stripes. Seen at Rosie Assoulin, Zero + Maria Cornejo, Phillip Lim, Sies Marjan, Monse and Jason Wu.

Flamenco

With flamenco an ultimate and timeless summer fantasy, there were flounces and ruffles galore for a flirty, sensuous look. See Carolina Herrera, Oscar de la Renta, Phillip Lim and Jeremy Scott.

Politics

Disgust with Donald Trump continues to bubble over in New York and resonates well with the largely female clientele of luxury fashion labels—not to mention a Democrat-voting, diverse group of designers. Tory Burch offered an ode to happiness to escape troubled times. Retailer alicia + olivia had a model pose in front of a feminist wall and offered a Super Woman clutch.

Raf Simons, whose show for Calvin Klein was the week's stand out, meditated on the American dream meets American horror. Rihanna-favorite Matthew Adams Dolan said that in times of "relentless civil unrest and widening political divides," he reimagined a "working wardrobe for an inclusive and celebratory generation."

Diversity

Continuing a theme, perhaps snubbing their nose at Trump's assault on minorities, the notoriously snooty world of fashion is starting to relax its rules of membership. Plus-size models are having a moment in the sun, see Ashley Graham walking for Prabal Gurung and Michael Kors, not to mention plus-size only collections from Addition Elle and Chromat.

Giving others a chance

With Raf Simons the lone standout and the departure of established trend setters Rodarte, Proenza Schouler, Thom Browne and Altuzarra to Paris, it gave editors, bloggers and buyers time to check out shows several confessed they would never have bothered to see otherwise.

One was Mexican-born Victor Barragan, 25, who got a packed house for his third New York show, offering an original take on what it means to be masculine/feminine, the female body and defying conventions.

End of the runway

A hot topic of conversation for some time, an increasing number of designers are searching for something different. Ralph Lauren unveiled his collection out of town alongside his collection of racing cars. Duchess of Cambridge favorite Jenny Packham, who next year celebrates her eponymous evening label's 30th anniversary, ditched the runway in favor of a photographic and video campaign to be released later. "I got what I wanted really and I just felt it needed a bit more integrity really," she told AFP. — AFP



Fashion from Marchesa collection is modeled during Fashion Week, Wednesday.



The Michael Kors Spring 2018 collection is modeled during Fashion Week in New York.

Ahli United Bank organizes a training program on sign language for staff

KUWAIT: Continuing its on-going efforts to enhance communications with special needs customers who have special hearing or speech needs, Ahli United Bank (AUB) has organized a specialized training program on sign language for its employees. The program, which will last two weeks and is being held from 10 to 25 September at the bank's new training center at its Mishref branch, will be delivered by Dr Najat Mokhtar, a translator and expert in sign language in Kuwait.

The program is part of a series of special programs on sign language started by AUB last year demonstrating the bank's keen desire to provide continuous training to its employees on sign language to guarantee the best banking services for special

needs customers with hearing or speech impairment while communicating with the bank's employees.

About these programs, Amer Najem, Head of Branches at AUB, said: "The present program complements the series of sign language programs started by Ahli United Bank last year with the aim to help our valued customers who have special hearing or speech needs to perform their banking transactions without the assistance of a sign language translator. The program is part of AUB's continuous efforts to provide high quality personalized banking services to its special needs customers. By implementing the series of programs, the bank ensures that its branches are ready and equipped to serve these customers and to help them

complete their banking transactions smoothly and efficiently and in accordance with their individual personal needs."

Najem explained, "Through having staff with knowledge of sign language readily available at many of our branches the bank underscores its continuous development and its deep commitment to provide the highest quality of banking services to all segments of society, with particular emphasis on individuals with special needs, in line with the bank's social responsibility and its role in facilitating the assimilation of special need individuals within society."



COOKING ON DEADLINE:

Pear Tarte Tatin

By Katie Workman

Taxi cab confession: Before now, I had never made a tarte tatin. It sounded just plain scary - flipping a pan over so that the fruit ends up on top and the crust ends up on the bottom. Such drama! Why would anyone put themselves through such angst?

But there I was just minding my own business, and suddenly it was pear season, and the voluptuous, colorful, squatty fruits were everywhere. I bought some puff pastry, gave myself a big old pep talk, and turned up the music. An hour later, my first pear tatin was a success. A few pears stuck to the pan when I inverted it, but I pulled them off and settled them back into place on the tarte, and no one was the wiser.

And while I will have to accomplish a few more successful tarte tatins to feel as though it is no longer intimidating, I am now on my way. I can envision that day when I will be able to say with casual confidence: "Oh, can I bring a dessert? How about a tarte tatin?" You want your pears to be just ripe, but not soft. They need to hold their shape in the baking. Buy yourself some good ice cream for this - you and your tarte tatin deserve it. In closing, I take a moment yet again to profess my abiding love for premade puff pastry. I may be excited to add tarte tatins to my repertoire, but I'm pretty far away from wanting to make my own puff pastry.

Ingredients

Serves 6 to 8

Start to finish: 1 hour

1/2 cup sugar

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice

4 just-ripe but firm Anjou or Barlett pears

All-purpose flour for rolling out the pastry

1 sheet (1/2 of a 17/3 ounce package) puff pastry, either refrigerated and cool, or, if frozen, thawed according to package directions but still slightly chilled

Vanilla ice cream or sweetened whipped cream to serve

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. In a 10-inch, heavy ovenproof skillet, preferably cast iron, stir together the sugar with 2 tablespoons of water. Cook over medium heat, without stirring, until the mixture starts to turn a golden color, about 6 minutes. Stir in the butter, and continue stirring occasionally until the mixture is a rich golden color, but not too dark. Stir in the lemon juice.

While the sugar mixture is cooking, slice the pears in half, then into quarters, remove the cores with a paring knife, and cut the halves lengthwise into two thick slices each (so, eight slices total per pear). When the sugar mixture is golden, arrange the pear slices in concentric circles in the pan. Reduce the heat to medium low and cook until the pears are slightly tender, about 3 minutes.

Meanwhile, lightly flour a clean work surface. Roll out the puff pastry to a square slightly larger than the pan's diameter. Trim the pastry into a circle just barely larger than the



circumference of the pan, and prick the puff pastry in several places with a fork. Place the pastry over the pears and carefully tuck the edges around the tops of the pears (you may want to use a rubber spatula, as the pan will be hot). Bake for about 25 minutes until the pastry is golden brown and puffed.

Place the pan on a wire rack and let cool for 15 minutes. Run a knife around the edge of the skillet, place a serving plate (larger than the pan) on top of it, and carefully invert

the tarte tatin onto the plate. If any pears cling to the pan, remove them and place them back in their rightful spots. Let cool a bit more, and then serve warm, with ice cream or sweetened whipped cream. — AP

FIVE-INGREDIENT CHICKEN WINGS ARE A CROWD-PLEASING DINNER

By Sara Moulton

At the end of a long fall day - after dealing with all the seasonal demands of work and school - you don't want making dinner to be a big deal. What's called for is something that's idiot-proof and crowd-pleasing. This recipe for Five-Ingredient Mexican-Style Chicken Wings presents us with everything that makes chicken delicious - skin, bones and meat - in miniature form. And the best part for the home cook is that they require no cutting up or detailed preparation. Season them, toss them in the oven and you're done.

Whole chicken wings consist of three segments: The plump part is called the drumette (because it is a smaller version of the bird's drumstick). The skinny segment is called the flat. And the small aerodynamic part attached to the end of the flat is called the wing tip. Ideally, you'll pick up a package of drumettes at the store and call it a day. But dealing with whole wings is hardly

a heavy lift. Just cut through the joint that connects the segments to sever the drumette from the flat. Then snip off the wing tips. (These you can toss or save to use in a stock.)

Here I've gussied up the wings with some Mexican ingredients, starting with chipotle-flavored garlic mayo and ending with crushed tortilla chips. If you're scared by the amount of chipotle, just add less of it - although, trust me, the rest of the recipe's ingredients tend to tamp down the heat. And you can reduce the total number of calories by using low-fat mayo and oven-baked tortilla chips. But do make sure the tortilla chips are seasoned. If they aren't, mix them with a little salt after you've crushed them. The finishing touch? A spritz of lime - just the thing to brighten up the baked wings.



Ingredients

Start to finish: 1 hour (20 active)

Servings: 4 to 6

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1 1/2 teaspoons minced garlic

1 tablespoon minced chipotle in adobo

12 chicken wing drumettes or 6 whole chicken wings, cut into joints

1 1/2 cups finely crushed tortilla chips

Lime wedges for garnish

Preparation

Preheat oven to 400 F. Place a rack inside a rimmed sheet pan. In a medium bowl combine the mayonnaise, garlic, chipotle and 1 tablespoon water. Add the chicken wings and toss them so that they are coated well on all sides. Roll them in the tortilla chips, making sure they are well coated on all sides and transfer them to the rack on the sheet pan. Bake the wings on the middle shelf of the oven for 30 to 35 minutes or until they are golden brown and cooked through. Let stand for 5 minutes. Transfer to plates and serve with lime wedges. - AP

Nutrition information per serving

323 calories; 208 calories from fat; 23 g fat (5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 87 mg cholesterol; 332 mg sodium; 13 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 0 g sugar; 14 g protein.

Friday Times

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2017

Travel



**Living the
high life
in Lahaul and Spiti**





Prayer flags flutter above the rooftops of Nako village

Imagine an arid land set high in the Indian Himalaya, a high-altitude desert punctuated by small patches of green and miniature villages of white, flat-roofed houses perched below stark rocky hillsides and jagged snow-covered peaks. Picture high passes blocked by snow and ice for half the year, and scattered stabs of color from fluttering prayer flags and precariously perched Buddhist monasteries.

This must be Ladakh, you might be thinking - the legendary Himalayan playground for lovers of extraordinary landscapes, wilderness adventures and spiritual horizons. But no, I'm talking about the wild valleys of Spiti and Lahaul, abutting the rugged western fringes of the Tibetan Plateau, and overlooked by thousands of travelers who rush headlong towards Ladakh in search of their own little piece of Shangri-La.

Gateway to the Himalaya

South of Ladakh in the state of Himachal Pradesh, Spiti and Lahaul have historically fallen more under the influence of Tibet than of India, and they remain far less known to the outside world. Travel here remains one of Asia's great adventures, whether you get around by car (4WD essential), on bone-shaking buses, or by motorbike, on some of the world's most challenging mountain roads.

Many travelers approach Lahaul and Spiti via the 3978m-high Rohtang La pass, which rises north of the tourism hub of Manali - a spectacular experience in itself and only passable from about May to October - but I took a more circuitous route into the region from the east, starting out from India's most famous hill station, Shimla. This backdoor to Spiti traced the valley of the Sutlej River through Kinnaur district, where the mountains got steadily higher, the gorges more precipitous, and the terrain starker and drier, with every passing kilometer.

The culture, too, gradually changes, from Hindu to Buddhist as you gain altitude and lose vegetation in the rain shadow of the Himalaya. From the Sutlej's confluence with the Spiti River, the road zigzags endlessly upwards to the village of Nako - a cluster of medieval-looking stone and mud-brick houses set beside a sacred lake 3660m above sea level. By the Buddhist culture and Tibetan

facial features of Nako's hardy inhabitants, you know you have indubitably reached Spiti.

I visited the four 11th-century chapels of Nako Gompa (Monastery), peering in dim light at their elaborate Tibetan Buddhist murals and sculptures, before clambering up to the panoramic Nako Pass, an hour above the village. On the way back down, I paused at a wind-driven prayer wheel surrounded by

strings of colourful, flickering prayer flags. The wheel, turning at speeds dictated by the wind, rang a bell with each revolution as if marking the passage of time, and here in this lonely spot, it seemed that time slowed every time the breeze dropped, and speeded up when stronger gusts blew.

Mountains, monasteries and magic

From Nako the dusty road climbed higher into the Spiti Valley, at times snaking along beside the rushing, turquoise-grey river, at times clinging to cliffs high above. At the neat, whitewashed village of Tabo, I stopped to visit Tabo Gompa, founded, according to legend, in AD 996, by Ringchen Zangpo, the 'Great Translator' - a key figure in consolidating the hold of Buddhism on the Tibetan plateau. Five of the nine shrines inside the gompa's curious, mud-walled buildings bear outstanding murals painted by some of the best Buddhist artists of their time. The centerpiece is the main assembly hall, the Tsuglkang, whose walls are lined with stunning near-life-size clay sculptures of 28 bodhisattvas (enlightened beings).

Tabo has a handful of simple but appealing guesthouses and cafes, and I was glad of a warm bed and a hot meal before continuing on to Dhankar, where the most spectacularly-sited of all Spiti's monasteries hugs the edge of a high cliff, hemmed in by eroded rock pinnacles.



Monks perform costumed chaam dances in the courtyard at Ki Gompa

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Ki Gumpa, rising dramatically above the Spiti River

Its main courtyard contains a stuffed goat hanging above the stairwell, a room where the Dalai Lama slept, and a meditation cave - there are monasteries with greater treasures, but the views over the confluence of the Spiti River and its tributary the Pin, and soaring mountains in every direction, are phenomenal.

Hiking, homestays and high-altitude spectacles

From Dhankar, I rolled along the valley to Kaza, Spiti's rough and ready capital, with a modest 1700 inhabitants - not a particularly pretty place but offering by far the best selection of places to stay and eat in the region. Despite its small size, Kaza felt like a teeming metropolis compared to other settlements in the valley.

If you fancy a spot of trekking but dread the logistics of a camping trek, the perfect solution awaits in the form of a string of high-altitude villages in the mountains above Kaza. The tiny, remote settlements of Langza, Komic and Demul are home to several homestays offering basic accommodation and meals, and you can hike from one to the next and on to lower-lying Lhalung and Dhankar, either on your own or with a local guide. There's no better way to get a feel for the lifestyle of Spiti's amazingly resilient people in this harsh mountain environment.

Back in Kaza, I learned that the monastery at nearby Ki, a hilltop cluster of cube-shaped houses and monks' cells, was approaching the climax of its annual week-long Gutor festival, marked by whirling chaam dances performed by masked lamas (Tibetan Buddhist priests), a ritual request to the gods for good fortune for the year ahead. It was indeed a mesmerizing occasion, pulling in villagers from across Spiti, plus most of the tourists lucky enough to be within reach of the monastery. The lamas, in technicolor costumes and masks, spiraled around the monastery courtyard through the morning and into the afternoon, to the sound of clashing cymbals, beating drums and droning chants, pausing only to partake in a quick lunch, served free to all who attended.

The main Spiti valley road eventually

climbs to the 4551m-high Kunzum La pass which marks the end of Spiti and the beginning of Lahaul. At the foot of the narrow, switchback descent down to the Chandra valley, a wonderful detour takes you 13km north to inspiring beautiful Chandratol, a 2km-

long glacial lake tucked among snow peaks, whose blue hue changes constantly following the moods of the sky. In summer, you can break the journey for a night or more amidst the serenity and silence at a cluster of seasonal tented camps.



The Chandra River surges like molten lead through mountainous Lahaul

Leaving Spiti for Lahaul

Heading west down the Chandra valley there's little to distract from the sight of the Chandra River raging along between towering peaks ribboned with waterfalls plunging from high-level glaciers - except the awful state of the road. After hours of being shaken like a cocktail and swung out over perilous drops, you'll eventually lurch your way into the four-hut village of Gramphu, at the junction of the road linking Manali and Ladakh across the Rohtang La.

Keylong, Lahaul's main town (population: 1150), stands on a hillside above the Bhaga River, but most of the hundreds of travellers who arrive here every day in summer rush on to Manali or Ladakh. Some spend a night at Keylong or in villages a bit further up the highway to reduce the risk of altitude sickness, but few stay to explore, so walks around the steep-sided Bhaga Valley, home to several picturesque and historic gompas, are a pleasure that you may well have all to yourself.

An even more off-the-beaten-track experience awaits if you follow the Pattan Valley, carved by the combined Chandra and Bhaga Rivers as they surge westwards from their confluence, 8km below Keylong. Despite the snow peaks rising above the steep-sided, rocky valleys, you're back in Hindu territory, but the idol in the ancient temple at Triloknath is worshipped by Hindus as Shiva, and revered by Buddhists as Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion.

Beyond the village of Udaipur, the river and road curve northward into the even more remote and beautiful Pangi Valley. Here you're a long way off the standard tourist radar. Past Killar, Pangi's biggest village, lies what has been dubbed the world's most dangerous road, a hair-raising strip of dirt and gravel that leads eventually to Kishtwar in southern Kashmir.

The rudimentary highway bumps over bare rocks and clings to terrifyingly narrow cliff ledges high, high above the river, but that's all part of the appeal; for travel in Spiti and Lahaul, only the adventurous need apply. -(www.lonelyplanet.com)



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You enjoy working hard and being organized and you exercise skill and discipline in anything that affects your career. This is a perfect combination for excellent manager skills. Your disappointments come when people do not show respect for each other. Continue to keep your own personal standards—one of your duties in this life is to teach through example. You will have many students—some you are not aware of just now. There is a temptation to spend or give away money today. It is important for people to feel that they can supply their own needs; you might be helpful in guiding them toward a sensible budget. The planetary energies show a bit of anxiety on your part this evening but a little dinner and a little music puts all that anxiety to rest.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Perhaps there is a sense of challenge or blockage just now. You may not find the support you need so, if possible, back away from what you know may be stressful and try again later—another day. Pace yourself and rethink your expectations. You enjoy working hard and being organized and you exercise skill and discipline in anything that affects your career and reputation. Getting to the core of most any problem is becoming much easier now. Your friends are your main interest this afternoon and you might find a group or team sport the perfect activity to relieve the stresses of the day. You are quite able to manage a very active and strong emotional life. Strong spirit; attractive. This can be a period of healing and may mark a time of increased vitality.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You accomplish more while working with others today. Your directional abilities are in high focus. Lightning fast when it comes to the business deal, you seem to have direct insight into what is worthwhile and worthless in a situation. You have new and unconventional ways to cut through the red tape and get at what is important. This may be a period when you take your work more seriously than usual. A lot of energy goes into getting things scheduled and organized. Anything out of place gets your attention. This evening you may be more involved with neighbors than usual. If you are not involved in a love relationship now, you may meet someone new this evening. Tonight is certainly a great time for having romantic feelings.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You will rise to the occasion and pull off a magic trick in order to meet a deadline today. Your inner resources and emotions are accented. Expect the positive and stay strong in that thinking—pleasant results happen. You should be noticing an increase in income now. If you have not received a promotion, it is time to request one. This is a period of manifestation and marks a time when you are better able to coordinate all the factors necessary to achieve success or to realize your goals. Take a little trip, or get outside this afternoon. You may want to break that routine and try something new or different. You may discover insights into day-to-day problems that will be of great value later. A hobby or some creative endeavor may bring you much joy this evening.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may find that both your personal growth and your career may depend on how you can handle some fairly sensitive psychological material coming up now. You will benefit from analytical insights, getting to the heart of things—penetrating. This is not the best time to attempt to get your ideas across to others, but there is success along the lines of opening up some communication barriers—listening. You should be able to achieve some real breakthroughs in the form of ideas, communications and the mind in general. There are opportunities to push forward in your career through teaching or expanding your skills. Insights into your own mental workings, original thoughts and the like are possible now. A hobby occupies your mind tonight.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may have insights or breakthroughs regarding work issues now. Others are interested in what you have to say as your judgment and insights are valued. At heart, you have a deep sense of responsibility and purpose and this seriousness is genuine and felt by others. Law and religion may be of strong interest to you and an emotionally charged drama will gain your attention. Friendships and involvement in group activities usually play a fun part in your life and by this afternoon, you are ready to be with your friends. Friends are our only true riches and the satisfaction that comes from accomplishing things in cooperation with others is something no one can take away from you. You set examples that others will follow.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Any emotional problem today deserves a bit of thought. Let a day or so pass, if possible, and then return to the problem. A work problem that involves math, sales, shelving, timing, cutting back or building up the stock, transporting, etc. Should have your full attention. Do not make assumptions—get all the facts. You could be helping another co-worker as well as yourself. This afternoon you will find a common ground between you and a customer—the result is a positive. You will find yourself more concerned with maintaining and strengthening your position, rather than pushing outward. This can be a very rewarding attitude. You are very attentive when it comes to financial security—you may find opportunities for wise investments later today.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are driven when it comes to fulfilling your ambitions and carving out a career. There is no lack of energy or drive here and nothing will stand in your way. Everything is poured into making the right moves and the correct decisions. You are outgoing, enthusiastic and diplomatic—everybody's favorite. A career in psychology and in areas of the mind and self that are vulnerable and sensitive is indicated. You not only like change and transforming experiences, you pursue them for their own sake. You head straight for whatever challenges your sense of identity and puts you through changes. A creative talent is due for recognition now and rewards are within your reach. Display your creative talent with pride.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Psychological values and material possessions become very important for you now and they are in a state of change: what is old and familiar is left behind or changed so thoroughly as to be unrecognizable. This can be a very productive time in your life. You may be reviewing your investments and perhaps, changing some of your ideas about which ones are most profitable. You can go out of your way to be clear minded and practical—removing every vestige of imagination and dreaminess. This is an attempt to ignore your more spiritual and mystical side, which seems to challenge you at every turn. Invest in your creative side this evening. Get back in touch with this side of you by becoming involved in some creative writing or music.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Opportunities appear all around you and seem to challenge your social standing just now. You must decide whether the risk of participating in these changes will be worth the effort. If you are looking to change position within your company, it might be good to show your participation and attitude are positive . . . Come on, get ready, go. Unusual ideas and novel ways of expressing them play a bigger than usual part in your life now. A neighbor could play a part in this—or perhaps a brother or sister. The ways you get around and stay in touch at the everyday level are changed by technology or social circumstances. This may mean you get to drive a hybrid car or an all-electric car this day. A little romance this evening is possible.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your family can provide you with tremendous incentive to move forward in your career and vice versa. You will receive a little boost of encouragement today. You are able to dispense with some of the unessential and develop what is most basic and true in your environment. You encourage good support. You may feel that you are in touch and in harmony with others; the lines of communication are open. The support you need is available. Being successful in life is easy; you have a built-in sense of how to approach and unravel even the most difficult problems. You have an instinct for justice and the law and you always know how to approach a problem from just the right angle. This ability makes you a natural counselor or guide for others.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Career insights and breakthroughs are possible at this time. You might discover that unconventional solutions to life's problems or new directions and paths are in order. You could find a teacher or guide—a new approach to your career, etc. You could discover yourself through creativity and self-expression. An increased confidence and a more outgoing manner may be the keys that open doors in your career now. There are opportunities available—your job is to pick and choose. Having and appreciating things of beauty and value play a bigger role in your life. Provided you do not spend it all on the fancy things that catch your eye, this can be a financially favorable period. There are opportunities to pursue your artistic interests this evening.

COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Kuwait	00965
Albania	00355	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Algeria	00213	Laos	00856
Andorra	00376	Latvia	00371
Angola	00244	Lebanon	00961
Anguilla	001264	Liberia	00231
Antigua	001268	Libya	00218
Argentina	0054	Lithuania	00370
Armenia	00374	Luxembourg	00352
Australia	0061	Macau	00853
Austria	0043	Macedonia	00389
Bahamas	001242	Madagascar	00261
Bahrain	00973	Majorca	0034
Bangladesh	00880	Malawi	00265
Barbados	001246	Malaysia	0060
Belarus	00375	Maldives	00960
Belgium	0032	Mali	00223
Belize	00501	Malta	00356
Benin	00229	Marshall Islands	00692
Bermuda	001441	Martinique	00596
Bhutan	00975	Mauritania	00222
Bolivia	00591	Mauritius	00230
Bosnia	00387	Mayotte	00269
Botswana	00267	Mexico	0052
Brazil	0055	Micronesia	00691
Brunei	00673	Moldova	00373
Bulgaria	00359	Monaco	00377
Burkina Faso	00226	Mongolia	00976
Burundi	00257	Montserrat	001664
Cambodia	00855	Morocco	00212
Cameroon	00237	Mozambique	00258
Canada	001	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Cape Verde	00238	Namibia	00264
Cayman Islands	001345	Nepal	00977
Central African Republic	00236	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Chad	00235	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Chile	0056	New Caledonia	00687
China	0086	New Zealand	0064
Colombia	0057	Nicaragua	00505
Comoros	00269	Niger	00227
Congo	00242	Nigeria	00234
Cook Islands	00682	Niue	00683
Costa Rica	00506	Norfolk Island	00672
Croatia	00385	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Cuba	0053	North Korea	00850
Cyprus	00357	Norway	0047
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Oman	00968
Czech Republic	00420	Pakistan	0092
Denmark	0045	Palau	00680
Diego Garcia	00246	Panama	00507
Djibouti	00253	Papua New Guinea	00675
Dominica	001767	Paraguay	00595
Dominican Republic	001809	Peru	0051
Ecuador	00593	Philippines	0063
Egypt	0020	Poland	0048
El Salvador	00503	Portugal	00351
England (UK)	0044	Puerto Rico	001787
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Qatar	00974
Eritrea	00291	Romania	0040
Estonia	00372	Russian Federation	007
Ethiopia	00251	Rwanda	00250
Falkland Islands	00500	Saint Helena	00290
Faroe Islands	00298	Saint Kitts	001869
Fiji	00679	Saint Lucia	001758
Finland	00358	Saint Pierre	00508
France	0033	Saint Vincent	001784
French Guiana	00594	Samoa US	00684
French Polynesia	00689	Samoa West	00685
Gabon	00241	San Marino	00378
Gambia	00220	Sao Tome	00239
Georgia	00995	Saudi Arabia	00966
Germany	0049	Scotland (UK)	0044
Ghana	00233	Senegal	00221
Gibraltar	00350	Seychelles	00284
Greece	0030	Sierra Leone	00232
Greenland	00299	Singapore	0065
Grenada	001473	Slovakia	00421
Guadeloupe	00590	Slovenia	00386
Guam	001671	Solomon Islands	00677
Guatemala	00502	Somalia	00252
Guinea	00224	South Africa	0027
Guyana	00592	South Korea	0082
Haiti	00509	Spain	0034
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Sri Lanka	0094
Honduras	00504	Sudan	00249
Hong Kong	00852	Suriname	00597
Hungary	0036	Swaziland	00268
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sweden	0046
Iceland	00354	Switzerland	0041
India	0091	Syria	00963
Indian Ocean	00873	Taiwan	00886
Indonesia	0062	Tanzania	00255
Iran	0098	Thailand	0066
Iraq	00964	Toga	00228
Ireland	00353	Tonga	00676
Italy	0039	Tokelau	00690
Ivory Coast	00225	Trinidad	001868
Jamaica	001876	Tunisia	00216
Japan	0081	Turkey	0090
Jordan	00962	Tuvalu	00688
Kazakhstan	007	Uganda	00256
Kenya	00254	Ukraine	00380
Kiribati	00686	United Arab Emirates	00976



00:45 Treehouse Masters
01:40 Bad Dog
02:35 Swamp Brothers
03:00 Swamp Brothers
03:25 Whale Wars
04:15 Whale Wars
05:02 Bahama Blue
05:49 Untamed & Uncut
06:36 Going Ape
07:00 Going Ape
07:25 Swamp Brothers
07:50 Swamp Brothers
08:15 Treehouse Masters
09:10 Bad Dog
10:05 Bahama Blue
11:00 Swamp Brothers
11:28 Swamp Brothers
11:55 Whale Wars
12:50 Whale Wars
13:45 Bad Dog
14:40 Bahama Blue
15:35 Untamed & Uncut
16:30 Treehouse Masters
17:25 Wild Animal Rescue
18:20 The Vet Life
19:15 Bad Dog
20:10 Swamp Brothers
21:05 Wild Animal Rescue
22:00 The Vet Life
22:55 Bahama Blue
23:50 Untamed & Uncut

02:10 Bionic Builders
03:00 Finding Bigfoot
03:50 Destroyed In Seconds
04:15 Destroyed In Seconds
04:40 How It's Made
05:30 Pawn Queens
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Awesome Adventures
07:25 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
07:50 K9 Cops
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Nextworld
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 K9 Cops
12:00 Finding Bigfoot
12:50 How It's Made
13:40 Pawn Queens
14:05 Pawn Queens
14:30 Awesome Adventures
14:55 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
15:20 Destroyed In Seconds
15:45 Destroyed In Seconds
16:10 Nextworld
17:00 Dynamo: Live At The O2
18:15 The Carbonaro Effect
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 How It's Made
20:20 Destroyed In Seconds
20:45 Destroyed In Seconds
21:10 Dynamo: Live At The O2
22:25 The Carbonaro Effect
22:50 Finding Bigfoot
23:40 Destroyed In Seconds

17:00 Disappeared
17:50 Murder Chose Me
18:40 Swamp Murders
19:30 I'd Kill For You
20:20 Blood Relatives
21:10 Grave Secrets
22:00 Forbidden: Dying For Love
22:50 Evil Lives Here
23:40 Who Killed Angie Dodge: Keith Morrison...



00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

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

12:55 K.C. Undercover
13:20 The Suite Life On Deck
13:45 The Suite Life On Deck
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 The Suite Life On Deck
14:40 The Suite Life On Deck
15:05 Meet The Robinsons
16:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
16:50 Disney11
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Gravity Falls
18:05 Milo Murphy's Law
18:30 Marvel's Ant-Man
18:35 Lab Rats
19:00 Kirby Buckets
19:25 Walk The Prank
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Right Now Kapow
20:20 Mech-X4
20:45 Disney11
21:10 K.C. Undercover
21:35 Marvel's Ant-Man
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats
22:10 Lab Rats
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

17:00 Cooking For Real
17:30 Cooking For Real
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Guy's Grocery Games
20:00 Ching's Amazing Asia
20:30 Ching's Amazing Asia
21:00 Jenny Morris Cooks Morocco
21:30 Jenny Morris Cooks Morocco
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



00:10 Don't Tell The Bride
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
04:20 Tonight At The London Palladium
05:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
06:10 Don't Tell The Bride
07:05 The Chase
08:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
09:00 Tonight At The London Palladium
10:00 Couples Come Dine With Me
10:55 Don't Tell The Bride
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Emmerdale
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Don't Tell The Bride
15:10 The Chase
16:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
17:15 Tracey Ullman's Show
17:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Emmerdale
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
22:15 Tracey Ullman's Show
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Emmerdale
23:40 Coronation Street



00:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
00:55 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
01:50 E! News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 Botched
04:40 Botched
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
06:55 E! News
07:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Second Wives Club
10:10 Second Wives Club
11:05 Second Wives Club
12:00 E! News
12:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
13:10 Life Of Kylie
13:35 Life Of Kylie
14:05 Life Of Kylie
14:30 Life Of Kylie
15:00 E! News
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Botched
17:10 Botched
18:05 Botched
19:00 E! News
20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
21:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
22:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
23:00 E! News



00:10 Holby City
01:05 Uncle
01:35 Agatha Raisin
02:25 Benidorm
03:15 New Tricks
04:10 Doctors
04:40 EastEnders
05:10 Agatha Raisin
06:00 Holby City
06:50 Doctors
07:20 EastEnders
07:50 The Musketeers
10:35 Doctors
11:05 EastEnders
11:35 Holby City
12:30 Doctors
14:30 EastEnders
15:05 The Musketeers
16:00 The Musketeers
17:00 Doctors
17:30 Doctors
18:00 Doctors
18:35 Holby City
19:30 I Want My Wife Back
20:00 Top Of The Lake
21:00 Top Of The Lake
22:00 Benidorm
22:50 Uncle
23:20 Mum



00:05 Tosh.0
00:30 The Half Hour
00:55 Idiotsitter
01:20 Another Period
01:45 Tosh.0
02:10 Russell Howard's Stand Up Central
02:35 Russell Howard's Stand Up Central
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
04:15 Gym Rescue
05:05 Bondi Ink.
05:55 Hungry Investors
06:50 Frankenfood
07:15 Frankenfood
07:40 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
08:30 Coaching Bad
09:20 Bondi Ink.
10:10 Catch A Contractor
11:00 Ridiculousness
12:55 Disaster Date
13:20 Disaster Date
13:45 The It Crowd Special
14:35 Impractical Jokers UK
15:05 Impractical Jokers UK
15:35 Lip Sync Battle
16:00 Lip Sync Battle
16:30 Impractical Jokers
16:55 Impractical Jokers
17:20 Impractical Jokers
17:45 Brotherhood
18:10 The It Crowd Special
18:59 Key And Peele
19:22 Key And Peele
19:46 Kroll Show
20:09 Workaholics
20:32 Comedy Central Presents
21:00 Comedy 3alwagef
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 South Park
22:00 Sean Lock - Purple Van Man
22:50 Show Me The Funny



00:30 American Monster
01:20 I Am Homicide
02:10 Murder Comes To Town
03:00 Evil Online
03:48 Disappeared
04:36 Murder Chose Me
05:24 Swamp Murders
06:12 I'd Kill For You
07:00 Disappeared
07:50 Grave Secrets
08:40 Swamp Murders
09:30 I'd Kill For You
10:20 Blood Relatives
11:10 Evil Online
12:00 Disappeared
12:50 Murder Chose Me
13:40 Swamp Murders
14:30 I'd Kill For You
15:20 Blood Relatives
16:10 Murder Chose Me

05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 The Hive
05:50 Rolling With The Ronks
06:00 Jessie
06:25 Liv And Maddie
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 Lolirock
07:20 Elena Of Avalor
07:45 Bunk'd
08:10 Stuck In The Middle
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
09:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
09:25 Lolirock
09:50 Lolirock
10:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
10:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
11:05 Hank Zipzer
11:30 Alex & Co.
11:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
12:00 Rolling With The Ronks
12:15 Lolirock
12:40 Lolirock
13:05 Star Darlings
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
13:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
14:00 Jessie
14:25 Lolirock
14:50 The Zhuzhus
15:15 Elena Of Avalor
15:40 Stuck In The Middle
16:05 Liv And Maddie
16:30 Bad Hair Day
17:55 K.C. Undercover
18:20 Bizaardvark
18:45 Best Friends Whenever
19:10 Tsum Tsum Shorts
19:15 Liv And Maddie
19:40 Elena Of Avalor
20:05 Jessie
20:30 Crackle
20:35 K.C. Undercover
21:00 Austin & Ally
21:25 Stuck In The Middle
21:50 Sunny Bunnies
21:55 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
22:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
22:45 Lolirock
23:05 Disney Mickey Mouse



00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
00:15 Calimero
00:30 Art Attack
00:55 Zou
01:05 Loopdidoo
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 Calimero
01:50 Zou
02:05 Art Attack
02:30 Henry Hugglemonster
02:40 Loopdidoo
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:10 Art Attack
03:35 Loopdidoo

00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:05 What On Earth?
01:50 So You Think You'd Survive?
02:35 Impossible Engineering
03:20 Fast N' Loud
04:05 The Island With Bear Grylls
04:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Harley And The Davidson's
07:30 Cooper's Treasure
08:15 Deadliest Catch
09:00 How Do They Do It?
09:25 The Island With Bear Grylls
10:10 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
10:55 Last Chance Hospital
12:25 How Do They Do It?
12:47 Fast N' Loud
13:32 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre
14:17 Street Outlaws: New Orleans
15:02 Street Outlaws: New Orleans
15:47 Street Outlaws: New Orleans
16:35 Street Outlaws: New Orleans
17:25 Street Outlaws: New Orleans
18:20 Street Outlaws: New Orleans
19:15 Street Outlaws: New Orleans
20:10 How Do They Do It?
20:35 How Do They Do It?
21:00 Street Outlaws
21:50 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre
22:40 Street Outlaws: New Orleans
23:30 Deadliest Catch



00:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
06:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
06:25 Disney11
06:50 Gravity Falls
07:15 Right Now Kapow
07:40 Mech-X4
08:05 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
08:10 K.C. Undercover
08:35 Milo Murphy's Law
09:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
09:25 Supa Strikas
09:50 Supa Strikas
10:20 Kickin' It
10:45 Kickin' It
11:10 Mighty Med
11:35 Mighty Med
12:00 Lab Rats
12:30 Lab Rats



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



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10:25 Cooking For Real
10:55 The Kitchen
11:45 Bake With Anna Olson
12:10 The Pioneer Woman
12:35 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Siba's Table
13:30 Siba's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen



00:00 America: The Story Of The U.S.
01:00 Clash Of Warriors
02:00 America's Book Of Secrets
02:50 Ancient Aliens
03:40 Bible Secrets Revealed
04:30 Serial Killer Earth
05:20 America: The Story Of The U.S.
06:10 The Universe
07:00 Clash Of Warriors
08:00 America's Book Of Secrets
09:00 Ancient Aliens
10:00 Bible Secrets Revealed
11:00 Serial Killer Earth
12:00 America: The Story Of The U.S.
13:00 Clash Of Warriors
14:00 America's Book Of Secrets
15:00 Ancient Aliens
16:00 Bible Secrets Revealed
17:00 The Universe
18:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
19:00 Clash Of Warriors
20:00 America's Book Of Secrets
21:00 Ancient Aliens
22:00 The Lost Evidence
23:00 Serial Killer Earth



00:20 Alcatraz: The Search For The Truth
02:00 Ax Men
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 Hunting Hitler
06:50 Time Team
07:40 101 People Who Made The 20th Century
08:30 Ronnie O'Sullivan's American Hustle
09:20 Swamp People
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 American Pickers



00:00 The First 48
01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
02:00 Fred Dineage: Murder Casebook
03:00 It Takes A Killer
04:00 The First 48
05:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
06:00 Cold Case Files
07:00 Cold Case Files
08:00 It Takes A Killer
08:30 It Takes A Killer
09:00 Homicide Hunter
10:00 The Killing Of Jonbenet: Her Father Speaks
12:00 Footsteps In The Snow
14:00 It Takes A Killer
14:30 It Takes A Killer
15:00 Cold Case Files
16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
17:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
19:00 It Takes A Killer
19:30 It Takes A Killer
20:00 Homicide Hunter
21:00 Cold Case Files
22:00 Monster In My Family
23:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover



00:05 Destroyed In Seconds
00:30 Pawn Queens
00:55 Pawn Queens
01:20 Space Dealers

11:50 Mystery Pickers
12:40 American Restoration
13:30 Pawn Stars South Africa
14:20 Pawn Stars
15:10 Counting Cars
16:00 Alone: Lost And Found
16:50 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
17:40 Billion Dollar Wreck
18:30 Counting Cars
20:10 Mountain Men
21:00 American Pickers
21:50 Pawn Stars
22:15 Storage Wars
22:40 Forged In Fire
23:30 101 People Who Made The 20th Century



00:45 Poh & Co.
01:10 Carnival Eats
01:40 City Chase Rome
02:35 Warrior Road Trip
03:30 Around The World In 80 Dishes
04:25 Bangkok Airport
05:20 Carnival Eats
05:45 The Food Files
06:15 Dog Whisperer
07:10 City Chase Rome
08:05 Warrior Road Trip
09:00 Around The World In 80 Dishes
09:55 Bangkok Airport
10:50 Carnival Eats
11:15 The Food Files
11:45 Dog Whisperer
12:40 Places We Go
13:05 Places We Go
13:35 Warrior Road Trip
14:30 Around The World In 80 Dishes
15:25 Bangkok Airport
16:20 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
16:45 Carnival Eats
17:15 Dog Whisperer
18:10 Cesar To The Rescue
19:05 Bangkok Airport
20:00 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
20:30 Carnival Eats
21:00 Dog Whisperer
22:00 Cesar To The Rescue
22:55 Places We Go
23:20 Places We Go
23:50 Warrior Road Trip



00:10 Megastructures
01:00 Big Fix Alaska
02:00 Best Of Hard Time
03:00 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
03:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
04:00 Megastructures
05:00 Ultimate Airport Dubai
06:00 No Man Left Behind
07:00 Airport Security: Colombia
08:00 Seconds From Disaster
08:30 Seconds From Disaster
09:00 Ultimate Airport Dubai
10:00 Best Of Hard Time
11:00 Nazi Megastructures
12:00 Mega Bridges
13:00 The Food Files
13:30 The Food Files
14:00 Seconds From Disaster 2.5
14:30 Seconds From Disaster
15:00 Airport Security: Colombia
16:00 Best Of Hard Time
17:00 Underworld, Inc.: Sex Trade
18:00 Year Million
19:00 Rare
20:00 Best Of Hard Time
20:50 Underworld, Inc.: Sex Trade
21:40 Year Million
22:30 Rare
23:20 Seconds From Disaster 2.5
23:45 Seconds From Disaster



00:20 Hippo vs Croc
01:10 Secrets Of The Wild
02:00 Lion Warrior
02:50 World's Deadliest Animals
03:45 Wild Case Files
04:40 Animals Gone Wild
05:35 Lion Warrior
06:30 World's Deadliest Animals
07:25 Wild Case Files
08:20 Animals Gone Wild
09:15 Snakes In The City
10:10 Paradise Islands

11:05 1000 Days For The Planet
12:00 Wild Caribbean's Deadly Underworld
12:55 Jaguar: Catching The Cat (Aka Hunt For The Shadow)
13:50 World's Deadliest Killers
14:45 Wild Case Files
15:40 Animals Gone Wild
16:35 Snakes In The City
17:30 Paradise Islands
18:25 1000 Days For The Planet
19:20 Wild Case Files
20:10 Animals Gone Wild
21:00 Snakes In The City
21:50 Paradise Islands



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



00:04 Max & Ruby
00:27 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:38 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:48 The Day Henry Met
00:53 The Day Henry Met
00:58 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:20 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:42 Zack & Quack
02:03 Shimmer And Shine
02:25 Olive The Ostrich
02:31 Olive The Ostrich
02:36 Paw Patrol
02:59 Little Charmers
03:11 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
03:22 Dora The Explorer
03:45 Max & Ruby
04:06 The Day Henry Met
04:12 Nella The Princess Knight
04:35 Shimmer And Shine
04:58 Dora And Friends
05:21 Zack & Quack
05:31 The Day Henry Met
05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
06:00 Rusty Rivets
06:12 Paw Patrol
06:37 Dora The Explorer
07:00 Zack & Quack
07:21 Bubble Guppies
07:45 Blaze And The Monster

Machines
08:08 Paw Patrol
08:32 Shimmer And Shine
08:54 Nella The Princess Knight
09:16 The Day Henry Met
09:22 Paw Patrol
09:45 Rusty Rivets
09:57 Bubble Guppies
10:21 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
10:43 Zack & Quack
10:54 Team Umizoomi
11:18 Shimmer And Shine
11:41 Shimmer And Shine
12:04 Max & Ruby
12:27 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:38 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:49 The Day Henry Met
12:54 The Day Henry Met
12:59 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:20 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:43 Zack & Quack
14:03 Shimmer And Shine
14:26 Olive The Ostrich
14:31 Olive The Ostrich
14:36 Paw Patrol
14:59 Little Charmers
15:11 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
15:23 Dora The Explorer
15:45 Max & Ruby
16:06 The Day Henry Met
16:12 Nella The Princess Knight
16:35 Shimmer And Shine
16:58 Dora And Friends
17:21 Zack & Quack
17:32 The Day Henry Met
17:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
18:00 Rusty Rivets
18:12 Paw Patrol
18:37 Dora The Explorer
19:00 Zack & Quack
19:21 Bubble Guppies
19:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines
20:07 Paw Patrol
20:31 Shimmer And Shine
20:54 Nella The Princess Knight
21:16 The Day Henry Met
21:22 Paw Patrol
21:45 Rusty Rivets
21:58 Bubble Guppies
22:21 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
22:43 Zack & Quack
22:54 Team Umizoomi
23:17 Shimmer And Shine
23:40 Shimmer And Shine



00:15 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
00:40 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
01:05 Kevin Can Wait
01:30 Kevin Can Wait
01:55 Man Seeking Woman
02:20 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
03:10 Late Night With Seth Meyers
04:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
04:50 George Lopez
05:15 Happy Endings
05:40 American Housewife
06:05 Malibu Country
06:30 Mom
06:55 Cougar Town
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
09:50 George Lopez
10:15 Happy Endings
10:40 Mom
11:05 Cougar Town
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 Fresh Off The Boat
12:45 Black-ish
13:10 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
13:35 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
14:00 George Lopez
14:25 Happy Endings
14:50 Mom
15:15 American Housewife
15:40 Malibu Country
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
17:00 Fresh Off The Boat
17:30 Black-ish
18:00 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
18:30 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
19:00 Powerless
19:30 Powerless
20:00 People Of Earth
20:30 New Girl
21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
22:00 Kevin Can Wait



00:40 Star
01:30 Claws
02:20 The Unit
03:20 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
04:10 Code Black
05:00 Good Morning America
07:00 The View
07:45 The Chew
08:30 Star
09:20 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
10:10 Code Black
11:00 The Unit
11:45 The Night Shift
12:30 The View
13:15 The Chew
14:00 Live Good Morning America
16:00 Code Black
17:00 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
18:00 The Unit
19:00 Time After Time
20:00 The Fosters
21:00 Star
22:00 Feud
23:00 Blood Drive



01:35 Life On The Line
03:25 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part II
05:45 Age Of Tomorrow
07:20 The Last Rescue
09:15 Life On The Line
11:00 Grosse Pointe Blank
12:50 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part II
15:10 Being Evel
16:55 Tracers
18:30 The Last Witch Hunter
20:20 Momentum
22:00 The Dead Lands



00:50 Race To Witch Mountain
02:35 Max Keeble's Big Move
04:10 The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement
06:10 Toy Story 2
07:55 Race To Witch Mountain
09:40 Gnomeo & Juliet
11:15 The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement
13:15 Toy Story 3
15:00 Wall-E
16:40 The Game Plan
18:35 James And The Giant Peach
20:00 Turbo: A Power Rangers Movie
21:45 Toy Story 3
23:30 Wall-E



00:00 Claws
01:00 Claws
01:50 Falling Water
02:40 Star
03:30 Claws
04:20 The Unit
05:20 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
06:10 Code Black
07:00 Good Morning America
09:00 The View
09:45 The Chew
10:30 Star
11:20 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
12:10 Code Black
13:00 The Unit
13:45 The Night Shift
14:30 The View
15:15 The Chew
16:00 Live Good Morning America
18:00 Code Black
19:00 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
20:00 The Unit
21:00 Time After Time
22:00 The Fosters



01:35 Awful Nice
03:15 Clifford
04:55 Mr. Popper's Penguins
06:40 Liberal Arts

08:20 Clifford
09:55 Mr. Popper's Penguins
11:35 Liberal Arts
13:15 The Guilt Trip
14:55 Ride
16:35 Under The Tuscan Sun
18:35 Love The Coopers
20:30 Death At A Funeral
22:10 The Night Before
23:55 Jackass 3



01:05 Danny Collins
03:00 New York Stories
05:10 Jappeloup
07:25 Hoosiers
09:25 New York Stories
11:35 The Better Angels
13:15 Brooklyn
15:10 The Selfish Giant
16:50 The Great Gatsby
19:20 Amores Perros
22:00 Barry Lyndon



00:20 Oops Noah Is Gone
01:55 Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins
03:15 The Adventures Of The American Rabbit
04:50 Pacific Pirates
06:20 Oops Noah Is Gone
07:55 The Fairy Tales Tree
09:15 Amila's Secret
10:50 Bunny Tales
12:10 Tom And Jerry: Back To Oz
13:40 The Adventures Of The American Rabbit
15:15 Pacific Pirates
16:45 Zodiac: The Race Begins
18:20 Bunny Tales
19:40 Last Wizard
21:00 Bonta
22:30 Zodiac: The Race Begins



00:25 End Of Days
02:30 Concussion
04:35 Jurassic World
06:40 Finding Forrester
08:55 The Ladykillers
10:40 Seventh Son
12:25 Jurassic World
14:30 The Horse Whisperer
17:20 Rocky
19:20 Norbit
21:05 Reality Bites
22:45 Boyz In The Hood



00:30 How Do They Do It?
00:55 Food Factory
01:20 Food Factory USA
01:45 Food Factory USA
02:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
03:00 Dangerman
03:48 Mythbusters
04:36 How Do They Do It?
05:00 Food Factory
05:24 Food Factory USA
05:48 Food Factory USA
06:12 NASA's Unexplained Files
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:26 Dangerman
08:14 Mythbusters
09:02 NASA's Unexplained Files
09:50 How Do They Do It?
10:14 Food Factory
10:38 Food Factory USA
11:02 Food Factory USA
11:26 Dangerman
12:14 Mythbusters
13:02 How Do They Do It?
13:26 Food Factory
13:50 NASA's Unexplained Files
14:38 Dangerman
15:26 Food Factory USA
15:50 Food Factory USA
16:14 Mythbusters
17:02 NASA's Unexplained Files
17:50 Dangerman
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 You Have Been Warned
20:20 How Do They Do It?
20:45 Food Factory
21:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
22:00 You Have Been Warned
22:50 Dangerman
23:40 Mythbusters



00:20 Say Yes To The Dress UK
00:42 Say Yes To The Dress UK
01:05 Diana: Tragedy Or Treason?
01:50 Say Yes To The Dress UK
02:12 Say Yes To The Dress UK
02:35 Belief
03:20 Sister Wives
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras
04:50 Dare To Wear
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
06:00 Sister Wives
06:45 Sister Wives
07:30 Sister Wives
08:15 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
09:00 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
09:25 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
10:55 Love, Lust Or Run
11:17 Love, Lust Or Run
11:40 Love, Lust Or Run
12:02 Love, Lust Or Run
12:25 Love, Lust Or Run
12:47 Love, Lust Or Run
13:10 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
13:55 Belief
14:40 Cake Boss
15:02 Cake Boss
15:25 Cake Boss
15:47 Cake Boss
16:10 Cake Boss
16:35 Cake Boss
17:00 7 Little Johnstons
17:50 The Undateables
18:50 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
19:40 Cake Boss
20:10 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
20:35 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
21:00 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
21:50 Sister Wives



00:30 Monster Jam
01:30 WWE Smackdown
03:00 Formula-E Championship Highlights
04:00 WWE Wal3ooaha
04:30 World Of X Games
05:00 Pro Bull Riders
06:00 Monster Jam
07:00 Red Bull X-Fighters Highlights
08:00 Pro Bull Riders
09:00 This Week In WWE
09:30 World Of X Games
10:00 WWE Wal3ooaha
10:30 World Of X Games
11:00 Red Bull X-Fighters Highlights
12:00 WWE Bottom Line
13:00 WWE Afterburn
14:00 Pro Bull Riders
15:00 WWE Wal3ooaha
15:30 World Of X Games
16:00 Formula-E Championship Highlights
17:00 Monster Jam
18:00 Arena Esports
18:30 World Of X Games
19:00 World Of X Games
20:00 WWE Experience
21:00 WWE Wal3ooaha



00:00 Glory Rewind
01:00 UFC Countdown
01:30 Legends Football League
03:00 The Ultimate Fighter: A New World Champion
04:00 UFC Main Event
05:00 Goodwood Festival Of Speed
06:00 MotoGP Highlights
07:00 Mobil 1 The Grid
07:30 FIM Speedway Grand Prix Highlights
08:30 V8 Supercar Series Highlights
09:30 V8 Supercar Series Highlights
10:30 Motul FIM Superbike Highlights
11:35 Live Motul FIM Superbike World Championship
13:00 Mobil 1 The Grid
13:30 UFC Countdown
14:00 One Weekly
14:30 UFC NOW
15:30 UFC Countdown
16:20 Live Motul FIM Superbike World Championship
19:00 UFC Countdown
19:30 The Ultimate Fighter: A New World Champion
20:30 Glory Rewind

WORD SEARCH

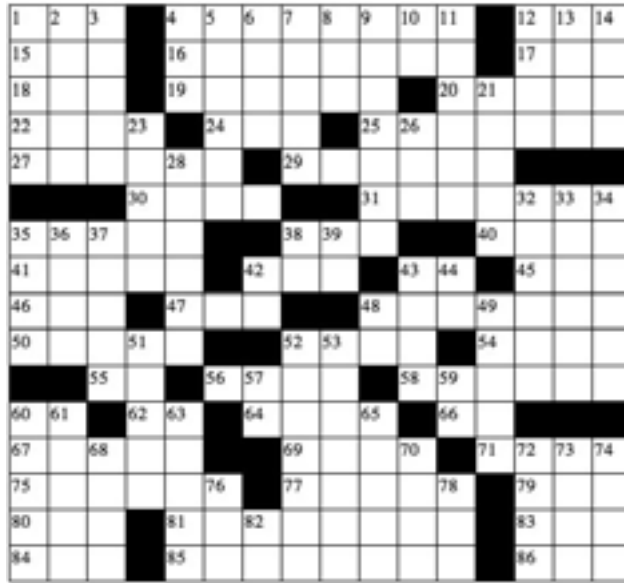
Songs From the Year 2001

Find and circle all of the songs from 2001 that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 22 letters spell an additional song title from 2001.



- AGAIN
- ALL FOR YOU
- ANGEL
- AUSTIN
- BE LIKE THAT
- BEAUTIFUL DAY
- BUTTERFLY
- CONTAGIOUS
- CRAZY
- DANCE WITH ME
- DIFFERENCES
- DIS IN
- DRIVE
- EMOTION
- EVERYWHERE
- FAMILY AFFAIR
- FIESTA
- FILL ME IN
- FOLLOW ME
- HERO
- I WISH
- IRRESISTIBLE
- JACED
- KRYPTONITE
- LADY MARMALADE
- LOVE
- MISSING YOU
- MOST GIRLS
- MUSIC
- MY BABY
- ONE MORE DAY
- ONLY TIME
- OOOHE WALLY
- OUTSIDE
- PLAY
- PROMISE
- RIDE WITH ME
- SOUTH SIDE
- STUTTER
- SURVIVOR
- THANK YOU
- U REMIND ME
- VIDEO
- WALK ON
- WHO I AM

CROSSWORD 1711



ACROSS

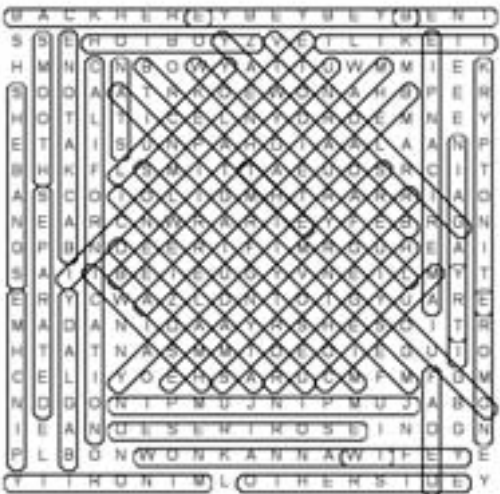
- A master's degree in business.
- Characterized by friendship and good will.
- Any of numerous hairy-bodied insects including social and solitary species.
- An associate degree in applied science.
- Author of satirical attacks on medieval scholasticism (1494-1553).
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Water that has condensed on a cool surface overnight from water vapor in the air.
- (botany) Of some seeds.
- Of or relating to or containing cerium especially with valence 4.
- The sixth month of the civil year.
- The sign language used in the United States.
- Provide with nourishment.
- A starch made by leaching and drying the root of the cassava plant.
- A member of the Iroquoian people formerly living east of Lake Ontario.
- A small nail.
- Slang for 'drunk'.
- Afflicted with or marked by anxious uneasiness or trouble or grief.
- A genus of Mustelidae.
- Property that is leased or rented out or let.
- Resonance of protons to radiation in a magnetic field.
- (British) Your grandmother.
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- Jordan's port.
- A self-replicating protein molecule that occupies a fixed place on a chromosome.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- In the Roman calendar.
- Regarded with deep or rapturous love (especially as if for a god).
- A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- Half the width of an em.
- Spicy fruit of the cubeb vine.
- A cord that is drawn through eyelets or around hooks in order to draw together two edges (as of a shoe or garment).
- Tropical starchy tuberous root.
- A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
- (possibly Roman) Goddess of horses and mules and asses.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Group insurance that entitles members to services of participating hospitals and clinics and physicians.
- A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
- Annual grass of Europe and North Africa.
- A large estate in Spanish-speaking countries.
- A person's brother or sister.

DOWN

- A woman of refinement.
- English monk and scholar (672-735).
- An ancient city on the Nile in Egypt.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone (usually held between the thumb and fingers) that are made to click together (as by Spanish dancers) in rhythm with the dance.
- Wading birds of warm regions having long slender down-curved bills.
- A large stringed instrument.
- Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
- That which is below standard or expectations as of ethics or decency.
- Being one more than fifty.
- The basic monetary unit of Portugal.
- Capital city of the Apulia region on the Adriatic coast.
- Armor plate that protects the chest.
- (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
- Remove from memory or existence.
- A flowering shrub bearing currants or gooseberries.
- A slippery or viscous liquid or liquefiable substance not miscible with water.
- Nicaraguan statesman (born in 1945).
- Located at or near the back of an animal.
- The expensive white fur of the ermine.
- Expletives used informally as intensifiers.
- Of a period of maximal use or demand or activity.
- The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- An informal term for a father.
- Being ten more than one hundred forty.
- An informal term for a father.
- Gone by.
- A short high tone produced as a signal or warning.
- Freshwater fish of Central America having a long swordlike tail.
- Someone who escapes.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- A Mid-Atlantic state.
- Tropical tree of Central America and West Indies and Puerto Rico having spikes of white flowers.
- Cause to be embarrassed.
- Fruit of the oak tree.
- A blemish made by dirt.
- A town in north central Oklahoma.
- A platform raised above the surrounding level to give prominence to the person on it.
- An Iranian language spoken in Afghanistan.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- An accountant certified by the state.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.

Yesterday's Solution

Songs From the Year 2000



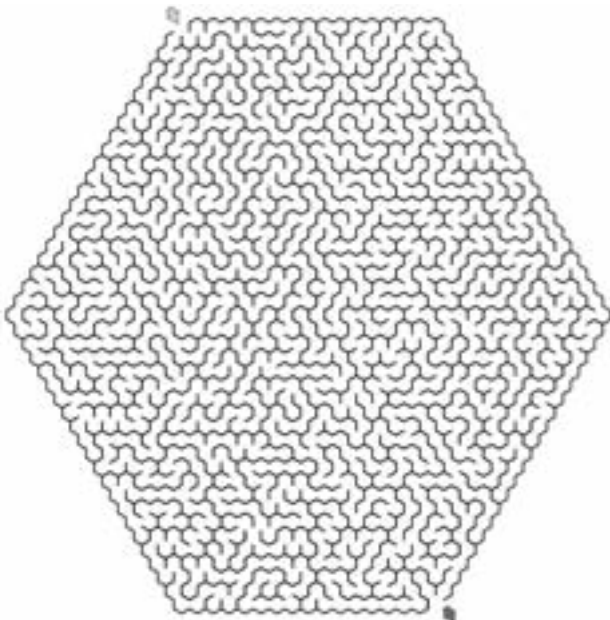
- AMAZED
- AMERICAN PIE
- BACK AT ONE
- BACK HERE
- BAG LADY
- BE WITH YOU
- BEAUTIFUL DAY
- BENT
- BREATHE
- BROADWAY
- BYE BYE BYE
- CALIFORNICATION
- DESERT ROSE
- FADED
- GIRL ON TV
- HIGHER
- HOT BOYZ
- I LIKE IT
- I NEED YOU
- I TRY
- I WANNA KNOW
- I WISH
- INCOMPLETE
- JUMPIN JUMPIN
- KRYPTONITE
- LUCKY
- MARIA MARIA
- MEET VIRGINIA
- MONGRITY
- MOST GIRLS
- MUSIC
- NO MORE
- OTHERSIDE
- PINCH ME
- SAY MY NAME
- SEPARATED
- SHE BANGS
- SMOOTH
- STAN
- STRONGER
- THERE YOU GO
- TRY AGAIN
- WIFEY
- WONDERFUL

The hidden message is: SHOW ME THE MEANING OF BEING LOVELY

Yesterday's Solution



CHALLENGING MAZE



Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

ATTACKED IN BED, SAFE FEW FEET AWAY: CUBA MYSTERY DEEPENS

WASHINGTON: The blaring, grinding noise jolted the American diplomat from his bed in a Havana hotel. He moved just a few feet, and there was silence. He climbed back into bed. Inexplicably, the agonizing sound hit him again. It was as if he'd walked through some invisible wall cutting straight through his room.

Soon came the hearing loss, and the speech problems, symptoms both similar and altogether different from others among at least 21 US victims in an astonishing international mystery still unfolding in Cuba. The top US diplomat has called them "health attacks." New details learned by The Associated Press indicate at least some of the incidents were confined to specific rooms or even parts of rooms with laser-like specificity, baffling US officials who say the facts and the physics don't add up.

"None of this has a reasonable explanation," said Fulton Armstrong, a former CIA official who served in Havana long before America reopened an embassy there. "It's just mystery after mystery after mystery."

Suspicion initially focused on a sonic weapon, and on the Cubans. Yet the diagnosis of mild brain injury, considered unlikely to result from sound, has confounded the FBI, the State Department and US intelligence agencies involved in the investigation.

Some victims now have problems concentrating or recalling specific words, several officials said, the latest signs of more serious damage than the US government initially realized. The United States first acknowledged the attacks in August - nine months after symptoms were first reported.

It may seem the stuff of sci-fi novels, of the cloak-and-dagger rivalries that haven't fully dissipated despite the historic US-Cuban rapprochement two years ago that seemed to bury the weight of the two nations' Cold War enmity. But this is Cuba, the land of poisoned cigars, exploding seashells and covert subterfuge by Washington and Havana, where the unimagin-



HAVANA: The Hotel Capri in Havana, Cuba, is photographed Tuesday, Sept 12, 2017. — AP

able in espionage has often been all too real.

Unidentified

The Trump administration still hasn't identified a culprit or a device to explain the attacks, according to interviews with more than a dozen current and former US officials, Cuban officials and others briefed on the investigation. Most weren't authorized to discuss the probe and demanded anonymity.

In fact, almost nothing about what went down in Havana is clear. Investigators have tested several theories about an intentional attack - by Cuba's government, a rogue faction of its security forces, a third country like Russia, or some combination thereof. Yet they've left open the possibility an advanced espionage operation went horribly awry, or that some oth-

er, less nefarious explanation is to blame.

Aside from their homes, officials said Americans were attacked in at least one hotel, a fact not previously disclosed. An incident occurred on an upper floor of the recently renovated Hotel Capri, a 60-year-old concrete tower steps from the Malecon, Havana's iconic, water-side promenade.

The cases vary deeply: different symptoms, different recollections of what happened. That's what makes the puzzle so difficult to crack. In several episodes recounted by US officials, victims knew it was happening in real time, and there were strong indications of a sonic attack.

Some felt vibrations, and heard sounds - loud ringing or a high-pitch chirping similar to crickets or cicadas. Others heard the grinding noise. Some victims awoke with ringing in their

ears and fumbled for their alarm clocks, only to discover the ringing stopped when they moved away from their beds.

At night

The attacks seemed to come at night. Several victims reported they came in minute-long bursts. Yet others heard nothing, felt nothing. Later, their symptoms came. The scope keeps widening. On Tuesday, the State Department disclosed that doctors had confirmed another two cases, bringing the total American victims to 21. Some have mild traumatic brain injury, known as a concussion, and others permanent hearing loss.

Even the potential motive is unclear. Investigators are at a loss to explain why Canadians were harmed, too, including some who reported nosebleeds. Fewer than 10 Canadian diplomatic households in Cuba were affected, a Canadian official said. Unlike the US, Canada has maintained warm ties to Cuba for decades.

Sound and health experts are equally baffled. Targeted, localized beams of sound are possible, but the laws of acoustics suggest such a device would probably be large and not easily concealed. Officials said it's unclear whether the device's effects were localized by design or due to some other technical factor.

And no single, sonic gadget seems to explain such an odd, inconsistent array of physical responses. "Brain damage and concussions, it's not possible," said Joseph Pompei, a former MIT researcher and psychoacoustics expert. "Somebody would have to submerge their head into a pool lined with very powerful ultrasound transducers." Other symptoms have included brain swelling, dizziness, nausea, severe headaches, balance problems and tinnitus, or prolonged ringing in the ears. Many victims have shown improvement since leaving Cuba and some suffered only minor or temporary symptoms. — AP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

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 فهد علي المخيزيم
 Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
 M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

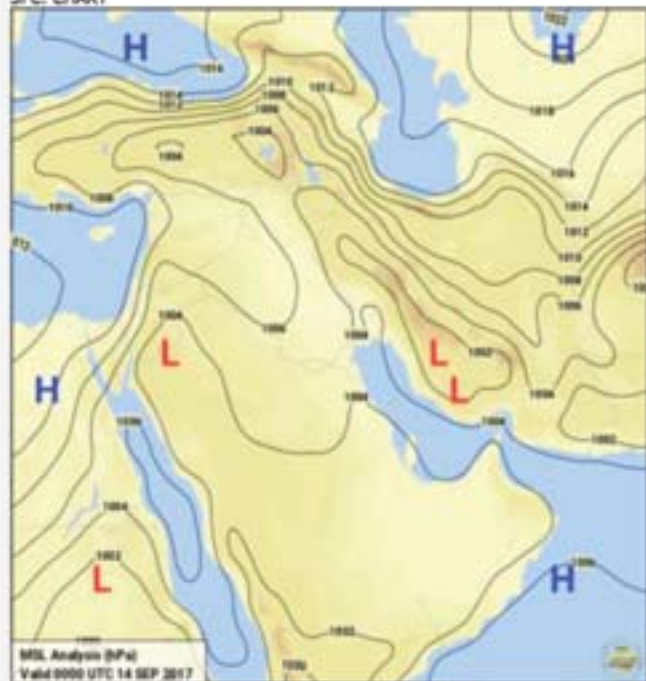
Issued 14/09/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 47 °C

By Day : Very hot with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 42 km/h with a chance for blowing dust over open areas.

By Night : Relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h .

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Expected Weather	Hot	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas
Min Temp °C	27	26	25	27
Max Temp °C	44	43	42	42
Wind Direction	northerly westerly to variable	variable to south easterly	variable to south easterly	variable to south easterly
Wind Speed km/h	06 - 28	06 - 26	06 - 28	08 - 30

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	34	46
KUWAIT AIRPORT	28	47
ABDALY	28	47
BUBYAN	23	46
JAHRA	32	46
FAILAKA ISLAND	30	43
SALMIYAH	34	42
AHMADI	34	43
JAL ALIYAH	29	46
QAROH ISLAND	35	38
UMM AL-MARADEM	34	41
NUWAISIB	31	46
WAFRA	32	47
SALMY	26	45
MUTRIBA	28	47

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	47
Min Temp (°C)	27
Max Rel Hum (%)	49
Min Rel Hum (%)	05
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	64 N
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	05:32
Sunset	17:55

Prayer Times

Fajr	04:12
Sunrise	05:32
Zuhr	11:44
Asr	15:14
Sunset	17:55
Isha	19:13

URGENTLY REQUIRED

- Automobile Mechanic
- Motorcycle Mechanic
- Mechanic helper
- Metal fabricator and welder

To work in well equipped workshop in Shuwaikh.

Contact: **66322222**

Email: poarsche@gmail.com

Job Opportunity

A flower shop is seeking to recruit professional for the following position:

FLORIST

- Female
- At least two years experience in flower coordination
- Fluent in English, Arabic speaking and writing
- Should have excellent communication skills
- Transferable residence

Please send your resume with recent photograph to the following:

E-mail : hrcompany61@gmail.com

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322

AIRLINES



American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Air Slovakia	22434940
Olympic Airways	22420002/9
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
Reservation	22433388

British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Alitalia	22414427
Balkan Airlines	22416474
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Czech Airlines	22417901/2433141
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2017

GASOLINE, RENTS BOOST US CONSUMER INFLATION

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Merkel urges car giants to win back trust



LONDON: In this file photo taken on March 17, 2017 shows a Sky logo on a sign next to the entrance to pay-TV giant Sky Plc's headquarters in Isleworth, west London. — AFP

UK ORDERS PROBE INTO MURDOCH'S SKY TAKEOVER BID

CONCERNS ABOUT MEDIA PLURALITY AND BROADCASTING STANDARDS PROMPT PROBE

LONDON: The British government yesterday referred a planned takeover of pan-European satellite TV giant Sky by Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox entertainment group to UK regulators for an in-depth probe. Karen Bradley, the Conservative government's minister for culture, media and sport, said she had referred the deal to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) owing to concerns about media plurality and broadcasting standards.

Last year, 21st Century Fox bid £11.4 billion (\$15.1 billion, 12.7 billion euros) for the 61-percent of Sky it does not already own. The takeover has already been approved by regulators in Austria, Germany, Ireland and Italy as well as the European Union, but not yet in Britain.

The blockbuster deal has raised concerns in Britain about the influence of the Australian-born US tycoon over the country's media landscape, in addition to worries that the controversial reporting style of Murdoch's Fox News channel could be adopted by Britain's Sky News.

Bradley told MPs yesterday that she was referring the deal for an "investigation on media plurality and genuine commitment to broadcasting standards grounds" after mulling for weeks on whether to proceed with such a probe. "From the point of referral, the CMA has 24 weeks in which to investigate the merger and provide me with advice. I must then come to a final decision on whether or not the merger can proceed, including any conditions." A spokesman for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport said the referral would be put in place formally by the end of the week.

21st Century Fox hopeful

Responding to the decision, Sky said in a brief statement



Rupert Murdoch

that it would "engage constructively" with the process, while its share price showed little reaction, gaining just over 0.1 percent to 933.25 pence.

As for 21st Century Fox, it separately said it hoped Bradley

would respect the independent findings of the CMA and voiced confidence that the deal would be completed by the middle of next year.

"Subject to any further delays in the decision-making process, we anticipate that the transaction will close by June 30, 2018," its statement said. Britain media watchdog Ofcom has warned of the "increased influence" the deal would give Murdoch over the country's media landscape.

Britain's main opposition Labor party had meanwhile turned up the pressure on Bradley to act.

With yesterday's decision widely expected, Labor's cultural affairs spokesman Tom Watson heaped praise earlier this week on the Conservative minister.

"I think it's the first time a minister in the current government has ever stood in the way of what the Murdochs want, and frankly not before time, so well done," he told an audience of MPs.

Amid all the concerns regarding the planned takeover, 21st Century Fox announced last month that it was ending its broadcast of Fox News in Britain, citing commercial reasons.

Murdoch had previously failed in 2011 to buy the pay-TV group, then known as BSkyB, owing to a phone-hacking scandal at his now-defunct News of the World tabloid newspaper.

21st Century Fox is one of the world's largest entertainment companies with a vast portfolio of cable, broadcast, film, pay-TV and satellite assets across six continents. Sky broadcasts a similar offering, including the 24-hour Sky News channel and Premier League football, and also provides internet and telephone services. In late 2014, Sky changed its name from BSkyB after buying Sky Italia and a majority holding in Sky Deutschland. —AFP

GASOLINE, RENTS BOOST US CONSUMER INFLATION

WEEKLY JOBLESS CLAIMS DROP 14,000; IMPACTED BY HURRICANES

WASHINGTON: US consumer prices accelerated in August amid a jump in the cost of gasoline and rental accommodation, signs of firming inflation that could allow further monetary policy tightening from the Federal Reserve this year.

Other data yesterday showed an unexpected drop in the number of Americans filing applications for unemployment benefits last week. Though the data was impacted by hurricanes Harvey and Irma, the labor market remains healthy with increasing reports of worker shortages in some industries.

The Labor Department said its Consumer Price Index rose 0.4 percent last month after edging up 0.1 percent in July. August's gain was the largest in seven months and lifted the year-on-year increase in the CPI to 1.9 percent from 1.7 percent in July. Economists had forecast the CPI rising 0.3 percent in August and climbing 1.8 percent year-on-year. The Labor Department said Harvey had a "very small effect on survey response rates in August."

Gasoline prices surged 6.3 percent, the biggest gain since January, after being unchanged in July. Further increases are likely in September after Harvey forced temporary closures of refineries. Labor Department officials said it was difficult to say whether the storm, which slammed Texas towards the end of August, impacted on gasoline prices last month.

Stripping out the volatile food and energy components, consumer prices increased 0.2 percent in August. That followed four straight monthly increases of 0.1 percent. In the 12 months through August, the so-called core CPI rose 1.7 percent. The year-on-year core CPI has now increased by the same margin for four straight months.

Core CPI picks up

While Fed officials are likely to treat the gasoline-driven rise in the CPI as temporary, they could take comfort in the pickup in the monthly core CPI. The Fed's preferred inflation measure is the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index excluding food and energy. The annual increase in the core PCE has consistently undershot the US central bank's 2 percent inflation target since mid-2012. The core PCE rose 1.4 percent in July, the smallest year-on-year increase since December 2015.

The dollar rose against a basket of currencies on the CPI data, while prices for US Treasuries fell. US stock index futures extended losses. Economists expect the Fed will announce a plan to start reducing its \$4.2 trillion portfolio of Treasury bonds and mortgage-backed securities at its Sept. 19-20 policy meeting. Low inflation, despite the labor market being near full employment, is seen causing the Fed to delay raising rates for a third time this year until December.

In a second report yesterday, the Labor Department said initial claims for state unemployment benefits declined 14,000 to a seasonally adjusted 284,000 for the week ended Sept 9. Claims have now been below 300,000, a threshold associated with a robust labor market,



DES MOINES: This Tuesday photo shows a T J Maxx store price tag on a shirt, in Des Moines, Iowa. The cost of clothing, auto insurance and health care rose in August 2017, according to consumer price information released yesterday.—AP

for 132 consecutive weeks. That is the longest such stretch since 1970, when the labor market was smaller. Economists had forecast claims rising to 300,000 in the latest week. In addition to high gasoline prices, inflation in August also was lifted by a 0.4 percent increase in the cost of rental accommodation. Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence rose 0.3 percent after advancing by the same margin in July. There were

also increases in the cost of food, prescription medication, doctor and hospital visits. Prices for apparel rose last month as did the cost of household furnishings.

But the cost of mobile phone services continued to fall as did prices for used cars and trucks. Price wars by mobile phone service providers have contributed to restraining inflation growth.—Reuters

'CAT BONDS' MAY TURN INTO DOGS FOR INVESTORS

MONACO: Investors in "cat bonds"—or catastrophe bonds—may find themselves in financial straits after insurers tot up their losses from hurricanes Harvey and Irma and put the nascent alternative reinsurance market to the test. In recent years, cat bonds have enjoyed incredible growth in the United States as insurers seek a more affordable option than taking out a contract with traditional reinsurers.

Much like with a traditional bond, investors hand over a sum of money to obtain a cat bond, and are paid interest. They have been attractive to investors in the current low-rate environment as they often offer higher interest. The catch is that if the natural disaster specified in the bond takes place the insurer may not pay back part or all of the bond and use the funds to cover its losses or replenish its capital. However, without a major hurricane in recent years, investors have been snapping up cat bonds.

In 2016, the alternative reinsurance market was worth \$81 billion, after expanding by nearly 13 percent for two straight years, according to data from British reinsurance broker Aon Benfield. That put it at just under 14 percent of the size of the traditional reinsurance market.

Testing times

But the favourable winds may be over. "Harvey and Irma are significant

events for the sector... They will be a test for alternative capital," said Torsten Jeworrek, a member of the management board at German reinsurance giant Munich Re, at an industry conference in Monaco this week.

Jeworrek also estimated Harvey, which lashed Texas and Louisiana with unprecedented rain last month, could end up costing insurers between \$25 and \$30 billion (21 and 25 billion euros). Damage estimates for Hurricane Harvey, which made landfall in Texas on August 26 before returning out to sea to then lash Louisiana, vary from around \$50 billion to well in excess of \$100 billion.

However, not all property was insured or fully insured. Nevertheless, with Harvey and Irma, certain "cat bonds will be triggered, the expected profitability won't be there and there may even be losses," said Claude Tendil, the organizer of the annual insurance conference known as September Rendezvous. "The alternative finance market could experience a sudden stop," he added. Before Hurricane Irma struck Florida, ratings agency S&P Global Ratings identified 13 cat bonds that could get triggered, depending on its path and the severity of damage. "Ever since the first catastrophe bond was issued, the question 'How would the market react to a major event?' has loomed, and Hurricane Irma could very well be that event," the agency wrote in a recent report.—AFP

DIFFERENT WAYS TO ZAP YOUR DEBT: WHICH IS FOR YOU?

NEW YORK: American consumer debt has rebounded to prerecession levels, and the category that includes credit cards hit a record \$1.02 trillion this summer. Maybe your credit card debt has crept up too, setting your own personal record. It makes sense to pay particular attention to your credit cards, because their interest rates are typically higher than other types of debt, like student loans or a mortgage. Carrying balances on this more costly debt may derail goals such as building a retirement fund.

If your other types of debt are manageable, but your credit cards feel out of hand, you need to assess your situation first. Then you can choose a way to handle that debt, whether it's a self-guided payoff strategy or some type of debt relief, perhaps even bankruptcy.

First, take stock by:

- Making a list of all your credit card balances. Note the interest rate and minimum payment for each.
- Comparing that debt to your income. Add up your total credit card debt and divide it by your annual income. For example, if you owe \$5,000 on your cards and make \$50,000 a year, your credit card debt is 10 percent of your income.
- Determining what you can pay monthly. See if you can pay extra on top of your minimums.

The path you pick from here depends on your debt level and whether you can pay more than the minimums.

When to try DIY

If your credit card debt is under 15 percent of your income and you can pay more than the minimums, take a do-it-yourself approach. Two common methods are "debt avalanche" and "debt snowball." Here's how they work. Avalanche: Arrange debts by interest rate and pay off in order from highest to lowest. Keeping your focus on the most-expensive debt saves money on interest.

● Snowball: Arrange debts by balance and pay them off from smallest to largest. This can give you some quick victories to build momentum toward tackling bigger debts later.

With either method, pour all your extra payment money into the debt you're focusing on and pay the minimums required on the others. After wiping out the first debt, stack what you had been paying toward it on top of the minimum for debt No. 2 and keep going. You'll end up plowing an ever-larger payment toward your targeted debt, speeding up progress.

Tip: Take advantage of nonprofit credit counseling agencies that offer financial advice, much of it for free, on budgeting, for example.

When to consider debt relief

Debt relief - getting a lower interest rate or a reduction in what you owe - can make bigger debt loads more manageable. You may need it if you're having difficulty paying the minimums or your credit card debt has exceeded 15 percent of your income.—AP



This June 10, 2015 file photo shows a credit card in Philadelphia. Carrying credit card balances from month to month is costly and can derail goals such as saving for a home or building a retirement fund.—AP

WORLD'S MOST WIRED CITIES HAVE MONEY, IDEAS AND WIDE INTERNET REACH

LONDON: A few extra-keen cities in developed countries are using internet technology to cut energy bills, fight crime and ease traffic congestion. Now everyone else wants to know how they got so far.

New York, Singapore, Taipei, Barcelona and London are regarded now as what techies call "smart cities" due to efficient use of a speedy internet and wireless connections. Lesser known hotspots include Charlotte in the United States and Lyon, France. These cities make up just a partial list.

Policy and technology experts met 3,000 people at the 2017 World Congress on Information Technology in Taipei this week to share tips that might bring everyone else to the levels of these places. "Generally, it is difficult to judge the overall progress that a city has made in adopting smart technologies," said Jimmy Liu, an analyst with the market research firm TrendForce in Taipei. But "policy decisions, funding and technological capability" make a difference, he said.

Governments central or local must first kick in money, speakers at the Congress said. The US government announced in 2015 a \$160 million initiative to help cities become more connected, for example. Funds often pay for infrastructure. They may also encourage local internet technology companies to invest, without leaving town, in ways that help the public, former French culture and communications minister Fleur Pellerin said at the event.

"If you let the private sector and the market operate, then it can happen that very promising tech teams do not find the financing because the projects are considered too risky," she said.

A city should also decide it wants to be connected, speakers said. That way it requires departments to share data and collect the same from private firms electronically for use in something such as energy reduction. India, for instance, has pledged to wire 100 cities so they can attract foreign investment.

Cities in developed countries with mature 4G mobile and Wi-Fi networks lead the world in use of high-tech to improve services, said Gan Dai-you, an analyst with the Market Intelligence & Consulting Institute in Taipei. "Cities less connected and less smart are those either that lack complete infrastructure and funds, are prone to weather disasters, or have a government that requires redefining itself," Gan said. Brazil and India grapple with weather, she noted.

Internet-based services should reach any rural areas, where 4G signals may be weak and networks more expensive to build per end user, to ensure they feel included, speakers added. Rural populations are often the hardest to reach in a disaster where rescue is aided by new technology, noted Congress speaker Noah Kroloff, principal of the American security consultancy Global Security and Innovative Strategies. Cities should further ensure contractors avoid spreading personal data, without end-user consent, gathered while providing public services, Pellerin said.

A well connected city pays in a list of ways. Some cities can rescue people in disasters and solve crimes faster now, speakers said at the Leaders' Roundtable during the 21st Congress on Monday. Cities can save energy by rigging up an internet-of-things system to monitor electricity used by common home appliances. "You don't know if your home refrigerator is an energy waster," said Taiwan government Minister without Portfolio Wu Tsung-Tsong, one of Monday's panelists. "Now with smart meters, one at the power company and the other in your home, you can have a set to let your home conserve."

Taiwan, a world high-tech hardware manufacturing hub, is pushing now what President Tsai Ing-wen calls a "digital nation" plan. High-tech totals about one-fifth of the \$519 billion Taiwan economy.

Tsai's government wants to shift from pure hardware, which Taiwan's exporter rivals can make more cheaply, toward software and development of internet-of-things technology. To help get there, by 2023 Taiwan will open a zone near Taipei called Asian Silicon Valley for tech startups, university-industry cooperation and internet-of-things firms. — AFP



SHANGHAI: A Chinese man holds an umbrella as he rides a scooter in Shanghai yesterday. — AFP

CHINA ECONOMY LOSING STEAM AS INVESTMENT GROWTH EASES

OVERALL GROWTH STILL, SEEN HITTING 2017 TARGET

BEIJING: China posted a rare flurry of disappointing data yesterday—including its slowest growth in investment in nearly 18 years—suggesting the world's second-largest economy is finally starting to lose some momentum as borrowing costs rise.

Factory output and retail sales also grew less than anticipated, though a rebound in property sales and construction starts is likely to keep China's overall growth relatively robust and comfortably on target ahead of a key leadership reshuffle next month. "I think the risk (for China) isn't in the next couple of months but rather the next couple of years," said Capital Economics' Julian Evans-Pritchard.

"Progress on key structural reforms that really matter, such as boosting the performance of state-owned enterprises, has been quite slow and the structural drags on growth remain quite strong and are real risks." Analysts had widely expected China's August data to show industrial output and retail sales growth had accelerated after fading slightly in July, while investment was seen as only marginally softer.

That would have fit into a pattern of stronger-than-expected readings from China in the first half of the year and upbeat surveys on August factory activity. A year-long, government-led construction boom has lifted demand and prices for everything from cement to steel to glass, helping offset an expected drag from property cooling measures and a regulatory crackdown on riskier types of financing.

But August's data suggested the strong boost from Beijing's infrastructure building spree may be starting to fade. Fixed-asset investment, a key growth driver for the world's second-largest economy, grew 7.8 percent in January-August from a year earlier, the weakest pace since December 1999 and cooling from 8.3 percent in January-July.

The main drag appeared to be a slowdown in infrastructure investment due to a significant drop-off in government fiscal spending over the past two months, analysts said. China front-loaded fiscal spending this year to produce rosy growth ahead of the once-in-five-years Communist Party Congress next month, Evans-Pritchard said. But local governments are constrained by annual budgets and have had to pare back spending in the second half of this year, he added.

That likely had a knock-on effect on industrial output, which rose 6.0 percent in August on-year, the weakest pace in nine months, statistics bureau data showed. Analysts polled by Reuters had predicted output would grow 6.6 percent in August, up from 6.4 percent in July.

The statistics bureau said unusually hot and wet weather weighed on industrial output last month, adding that the economy remained on a steady, improving trend. On a monthly basis, output rose nearly half a percent. China's crackdown on pollution may have also dented industrial output, as Beijing looks to close older, smog-belching mines and factories, said Nie Wen, an economist at Hwabao Trust in Shanghai. Still, economists at Nomura maintained their view that the economy would expand 6.8 percent in the third quarter from a year earlier, easing only slightly from 6.9 percent in the first half.

That would keep China on track to easily beat the government's full-year growth target of around 6.5 percent, even if there is some further softening late in the year.

Property

Overall investment may have softened further if not for an unexpected rebound in the property market, which directly affects 40 other business sectors in China. Despite a series of government curbs which have largely succeeded in cooling red-hot housing prices, activity in the property market snapped back in August, possibly as developers turn their focus to smaller cities with fewer restrictions. Property investment, which mainly focuses on residential real estate but also includes commercial and office space, grew 7.8 percent in August on-year, versus 4.8 percent in July, according to Reuters calculations from yesterday's data.

New construction starts measured by floor area, a telling indicator of developers' confidence, were up 5.3 percent after contracting in July for the first time since last September.

Growth of private investment slowed to 6.4 percent in January-August from 6.9 percent in the first seven months of the year, suggesting small- and medium-sized private firms still face challenges in accessing investment-finance. Private investment accounts for about 60 percent of overall investment in China.

Retail sales also miss

Retail sales also confounded market expectations, rising 10.1 percent in August on-year, the slowest pace in six months and cooling from 10.4 percent in July. Analysts had expected a slight pick-up in demand. Again, however, sales rose at a decent clip from a month earlier, and shoppers are expected to throng the stores and online sites as usual in October over the long Golden Week holidays. — Reuters



LONDON: One of the new British 10 pound notes is posed for photographs outside the Bank of England in the City of London yesterday. The new polymer note, released for circulation yesterday, features the renowned novelist Jane Austen and is the first UK banknote with a tactile feature to support blind and partially sighted users. — AP

BOE PAVES WAY FOR FIRST RATE HIKE IN A DECADE

MPC VOTES 7-2 TO KEEP BANK RATE ON HOLD FOR NOW

LONDON: The Bank of England said it was likely to raise interest rates in coming months if the economy and price pressures kept growing, flagging Britain's first rate hike in a decade. Policymakers voted 7-2 yesterday to keep rates on hold for now at a record-low 0.25 percent, as expected. But in a week when data showed UK prices rising faster and unemployment falling to a four-decade low, they said their tolerance for above-target inflation was lessening.

The Brexit vote has put the BoE in a dilemma as it sought to balance the need to support the economy through the shock of leaving the European Union in March 2019 while also keeping a grip on fast-rising inflation. It said that, if the trend towards shrinking spare capacity and rising underlying inflation continued, "some withdrawal of monetary stimulus was likely to be appropriate over the coming months."

Sterling leapt by a cent against the dollar after the statement and 10-year gilt yields increased by 4 basis points to 1.18 percent, their highest level since the BoE's last meeting on Aug. 3. "I would describe (a rate hike in) November as being live," Nomura economist George Buckley said. But weaker than expected inflation or disappointing growth in jobs or wages could still throw the BoE off course, he added.

The BoE and its Governor Mark Carney have previously signalled the probability of rate hikes ahead, only to be caught out by unexpected changes in the economy. Yesterday, it said the economy was doing a little better than it had expected last month, and that inflation was likely to rise further above its 2 percent target to exceed 3 percent in October - slightly more than previous forecasts - after reaching 2.9 percent last month. But it said it was "unclear how sustained any increase in GDP growth might be over the medium term", citing unknowns about how households and businesses would react to the Brexit process. The BoE repeated a previous message that all nine MPC members thought rates could rise faster than financial markets expected but any increases would be gradual and limited.

More inflation-prone

Economists polled by Reuters had mostly expected a 7-2 vote in favour of keeping the extra stimulus brought in from August 2016 when the economy appeared to be reeling from the shock of the Brexit vote. But a minority had seen a chance that BoE chief economist Andy Haldane would join Ian McCafferty and Michael Saunders in backing an immediate increase in rates to 0.5 percent. Haldane - previously viewed as a dove - said in June that he expected to support a rate rise later in 2017. After performing better than the BoE expected in 2016, Britain's economy slowed in the first half of 2017 as the highest inflation in four years squeezes consumer demand.

The central bank is concerned that Britain's ability to grow strongly over the medium term without generating excessive inflation has weakened. It says the immediate surge in inflation above its target is due to the fall in the pound after the Brexit vote. Sterling fell to a nine-month low on a trade-weighted basis on Aug. 29, though it has since recouped these losses and is little changed from its level at the time of the BoE's last rate decision on Aug. 3. This strengthening partly reflects growing market expectations of a rate rise. Short sterling interest rate futures price in a 44 percent chance of a move by the end of this year. The pattern over recent years has been for such expectations to fade rapidly, however, and most economists polled by Reuters at the end of August did not expect a rate rise until 2019.

The BoE said that wage growth of 2.1 percent in the three months to July was stronger than it had expected, although it was still unclear if there would be the sustained pick-up it is forecasting. Unemployment at a 40-year low of 4.3 percent is also a more positive development than the BoE had expected. There is no news conference following this month's policy decision. Carney is due to speak at the International Monetary Fund in Washington on Monday. —Reuters

BOE RATE HIKE WARNING LIFTS STERLING TO NEW HIGH

LONDON: Sterling jumped after the Bank of England warned it could raise interest rates for the first time in a decade in the coming months while the dollar rose after above-forecast inflation data that could allow the Federal Reserve to hike for a third time this year.

Wall Street was set to open lower, index futures showed after the inflation data. Earlier, weak Chinese data had weighed on European and Asian shares and pulled an MSCI measure of world stock prices down from record highs hit on Wednesday. Britain's blue-chip FTSE 100 share index fell sharply after the BoE warning, which followed a monetary policy meeting, and was last down 0.7 percent at a two-week low.

Policymakers kept rates unchanged at a record low 0.25 percent but warned a hike was likely to be needed in coming months if the economy keeps growing and inflationary pressures continue to build.

Britain's vote last year to leave the European Union has raised doubts about the long-term health of the economy and strong short-term inflationary pressures. Sterling rose to as high as \$1.3358, adding a cent and a half to touch its strongest in more than a year, and to 89.11 pence per euro after the decision.

Britain's 10-year gilt yield rose to its highest since early August at 1.21 percent, up 7 basis points on the day. The rate-sensitive two-year yield was on course for its biggest weekly rise in over two years.

"After recent warnings that markets were under-priced for potential interest rate hikes, the MPC appears close to following through and tightening its policy in response to above-target inflation," said Timothy Graf, head of macro strategy for EMEA at State Street Global Markets.

The dollar reversed earlier falls and rose against a basket of major currencies after data showed consumer price inflation edged up to 0.4 percent last month, beating forecasts for 0.3 percent. — Reuters



KUWAIT: The European Central Bank (ECB) is pictured in Frankfurt/Main. —AFP

STRONG EURO NO PROBLEM AS ECONOMY GROWS: ECB

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank believes its long-term support to the eurozone economy will overcome the strong euro's braking effect on inflation, board member Benoit Coeure said yesterday. Compared with previous central bank interventions, monetary policy "will remain more accommodative for longer," Coeure told a Frankfurt conference, compensating for the impact of the euro's appreciation. The ECB's historic low interest rates and 60 billion euros (\$72 billion) of monthly bond purchases are designed to boost growth in the 19-nation single currency area, driving inflation towards policymakers' goal of just under 2.0 percent.

Some observers have sounded the alarm as the euro appreciates against the dollar. They argue that the stronger single currency will slow growth by making eurozone exports more expensive abroad and slow inflation directly by making imports cheaper. The euro has strengthened in recent months as growth has picked up in the European economy, but currency markets are also pricing in their expectations that the ECB will begin winding down stimulus in the coming months.

ECB President Mario Draghi said Thursday that central bank governors would decide in October on the next steps for their "quantitative easing" (QE) bond-buying program, currently slated to expire at the end of the year. — AFP

News

in brief

Musk now targets Oct to unveil Tesla semi-truck

SAN FRANCISCO: Tesla Inc Chief Executive Elon Musk said the electric carmaker is tentatively scheduled to unveil its planned semi-truck in late October, about a month later than the billionaire had earlier estimated. "Tesla Semi truck unveil & test ride tentatively scheduled for Oct 26th in Hawthorne," Musk said in a tweet yesterday. The entrepreneur has tantalized the trucking industry with the prospect of a battery-powered heavy-duty vehicle that can compete with conventional diesels, which can travel up to 1,000 miles on a single tank of fuel. Tesla's plans for new electric vehicles including a commercial truck called the Tesla Semi were announced last year and in April Musk said the release of the semi-truck was set for September.

BP, Azerbaijan extend contract

BAKU: British oil giant BP and energy-rich Azerbaijan yesterday prolonged their sharing deal for the Caucasus nation's largest oilfields until 2050. "This time round, the contract is being signed on better terms for Azerbaijan," the ex-Soviet nation's President Ilham Aliyev said during a signing ceremony in the capital, Baku. Azerbaijan's state energy company SOCAR's share in the consortium will rise to 25 percent under the new deal-up from 11.7 percent in the current contract, which was due to expire in 2024, Aliyev said, adding that foreign investors will pay Azerbaijan a \$3-billion (2.5-billion-euro) bonus. BP's share will stand at 30.37 percent in the consortium that also includes the United States companies, Chevron (9.56 percent) and ExxonMobil (6.79 percent), Japanese Inpex (9.31 percent) and ITOCHU (3.65 percent), Norwegian Statoil (7.27 percent), Turkish TPAO (5.73 percent), and Indian ONGC Videsh (2.31 percent).

China shuts down bitcoin exchange

BEIJING: One of the biggest bitcoin exchanges in China and the world announced yesterday that it would stop all trading following new Chinese government regulations clamping down on crypto-currencies. The international value of bitcoin has plunged in recent days amid speculation that the Chinese authorities will shut down the trading platforms following last week's ban on initial coin offerings. BTCC-China's second bitcoin platform in terms of volume and the world's third largest-said on its Twitter account that "after carefully considering" the announcement by Chinese regulators, it will "stop all trading" on September 30. The Chinese central bank's announcement last week meant that Chinese firms would no longer be able to issue electronic currency units to raise funds.

RYANAIR LOSES EU COURT CASE TO IMPOSE IRISH LABOR LAW ON CABIN CREW

LUXEMBOURG: Low-cost airline Ryanair yesterday lost an EU court battle for the right to impose Irish labor laws on its cabin crew working elsewhere in Europe. The European Court of Justice, the bloc's top court, ruled in favor of six Ryanair workers of different nationalities based at Charleroi airport in Belgium, who argued that they should be subject to Belgian employment law.

The no-frills carrier considered their work to be done in Ireland because the planes they worked on were registered there, though the contracts stated their "home base" was Charleroi, where they started and ended their working days. In its judgment, the court said European rules on legal jurisdiction were aimed at protecting the weaker party and gave the employee the right to sue their employer in the courts "closest to his interests"—either the country where the employer is based or where the employee actually works.

A clause in the crew's contracts stating that Irish courts had jurisdiction and seeking to prevent employees bringing proceedings elsewhere was not enforceable, the court ruled. —AFP

MERKEL URGES CAR GIANTS TO WIN BACK TRUST OF DRIVERS**'DIESELGATE' EMISSIONS SCANDAL OVERSHADOWS IAA**

FRANKFURT: Chancellor Angela Merkel urged car giants to win back the trust of "deceived" drivers as she opened the Frankfurt auto show yesterday, walking a fine line between berating the scandal-hit industry and praising its role as the backbone of the German economy.

With 10 days to go until a general election, the 'dieselgate' emissions cheating scandal has emerged as a top campaign issue and cast a shadow over the glitzy Frankfurt International Motor Show (IAA).

Once nicknamed the "car chancellor" for her cozy relations to the industry, Merkel's tone has shifted in recent weeks to include more robust attacks on auto company bosses. "Auto industry firms excessively exploited regulatory loopholes, they haven't only damaged themselves, but above all deceived and disappointed consumers and the authorities," she said in stern remarks at the IAA opening ceremony.

But Merkel, who is on track to win a fourth term, was also careful not to alienate the car sector, highlighting its role as a "key industry" that employs some 870,000 people nationwide and is an important engine of growth for Germany and Europe. "The auto industry must do its utmost to win back credibility and trust as soon as possible, in their own interest and in the interests of their employees and of Germany as a whole," she said.

Her knuckle-rapping speech at the biennial IAA comes as pollution-plagued German cities mull diesel bans and voters worry about the resale value of their cars, while Merkel has herself faced criticism for going too easy on the sector in the past. "It's somewhat frustrating for Angela Merkel to see that the close ties she has nurtured with the auto sector are not helping her right now," said industry expert Stefan Bratzel of Germany's Center for Automotive Management. "The mood has changed and the government is now looking at the sector and its main players more soberly," he said.

'Avoid bans'

In her speech, Merkel welcomed efforts by German carmakers to step up their push towards zero-emissions electric cars, while continuing to defend diesel. "There's no escaping that we will need the combustion engine for decades to come," she told the audience, which included Facebook number two Sheryl Sandberg.

"On the other hand, we need to invest more than ever in the research and development of new driving technologies," she said. "This is the only way we can avoid diesel driving bans."

The dieselgate crisis erupted at the height of the last IAA in 2015 when Volkswagen stunningly confessed to installing cheating software in 11 million diesel cars worldwide designed to dupe pollution tests. In reality, the cars were spewing up to 40 times the permissible levels of toxic nitrogen oxides (NOx).

Similar suspicions have since spread to other carmakers, highlighting just how much the industry has resorted to skirting the rules, or outright cheating,



FRANKFURT: German Chancellor Angela Merkel (center), VW group CEO Matthias Mueller (left), and VW Cars CEO Herbert Diess (right), stay beside a 'VW I.D. Buzz' concept car at the booth of the German car manufacturer Volkswagen during Merkel's visit at the Frankfurt Auto Show IAA in Frankfurt yesterday. —AP

to cover up high NOx emissions. The scandal deepened in July on reports that Daimler, BMW, Volkswagen and its Audi and Porsche subsidiaries for years colluded on technical specifications—including emissions technology.

The revelations prompted some 70 cities, including the car industry bastions of Stuttgart and Munich, to consider banning dirty diesels from their smog-clogged roads, fuelling concern among drivers.

'Crucial' diesel

The beleaguered sector has since tried to make amends by shifting gears to the cleaner cars of the future, with BMW, VW and Daimler all announcing ambitious goals for hybrid and electric cars at the IAA. But take-up among consumers has been slow for now, with e-cars accounting for barely one percent of sales in Europe. And after years of

heavy investments in diesel, which was invented in Germany, the nation's vaunted auto giants aren't ready to let go yet. "We know that some trust has been lost. Winning this back is our biggest concern," Matthias Wissmann, president of the VDA auto industry association, said in his own speech at the IAA ceremony, while opposing calls for driving bans.

Long touted as more environmentally friendly than petrol because of its lower climate-altering carbon dioxide emissions, diesel has a key role to play in helping countries meet the targets of the Paris climate accords, carmakers argue. "The latest generation of diesel vehicles is crucial for our continuous efforts to decarbonise road transport," Dieter Zetsche, Daimler chief executive and head of the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), said at the IAA yesterday. —AFP

GKN CEO TO RETIRE, AEROSPACE HEAD TO LEAD ENGINEERING FIRM

LONDON: GKN said yesterday Chief Executive Nigel Stein would retire at the end of 2017 to be replaced by the head of aerospace, a unit the British engineering group has said was growing faster than the rest of the market. Kevin Cummings, who joined the company in North America in 2008 and who has been head of the aerospace division since 2014, would take over from Stein on Jan. 1, the company said, adding that Finance Director Adam Walker would also leave the firm.

"GKN Aerospace is now of a scale and maturity where it could stand alone. We believe the deckchairs are moving - and it is ultimately likely to be more than a shuffling," Jefferies analysts said in a research note after the move.

The analysts at Jefferies, which has a "buy" rating on GKN, said Thursday's announcement by Sweden's Autoliv,

which competes with GKN in the automotive business, could encourage GKN to review its strategy.

"That Autoliv believes the separation can create additional value must concentrate minds at GKN," the analysts wrote. GKN, which supplies components for Airbus and Boeing aircraft and to car makers including Volkswagen, said the new finance director would be Jos Sclater, who now heads strategy and mergers and acquisitions (M&A).

Shares in GKN were up 3.4 percent at 338.3 pence at 0952 GMT, making it London's second largest blue-chip gainer. GKN reported a 12 percent rise in profit in February, and said it would grow ahead of both its main aerospace and autos markets in 2017, boosted by investment in new technology. —Reuters

INDIANS SET RECORD WITH 21ST STRAIGHT WIN

CLEVELAND: Making history almost every time they take the field, the Cleveland Indians won their 21st straight game on Wednesday, 5-3 over the Detroit Tigers, to set an American League record and join only two other teams in the past 101 years to win that many in a row. Jay Bruce hit a three-run homer off Buck Farmer (4-3), and Mike Clevinger (10-5) won his consecutive straight start as the Indians matched the 1935 Chicago Cubs for the second-longest winning streak since 1900. The run has put Cleveland within five wins of catching the 1916 New York Giants, who won 26 straight without a loss but whose century-old mark includes a tie.

Roberto Perez added a homer in the seventh and four Cleveland relievers finished. Cody Allen got his 27th save, giving the Indians the league's longest streak since the AL was founded in 1901. During the streak, which began with a 13-6 win over Boston ace Chris Sale on Aug. 23, the Indians have outscored their opponents 139-35 and trailed in only four of 189 innings. Cleveland starters are 19-0 with a 1.70 ERA, and the Indians have totaled more homers (40) than runs allowed. Cleveland opens a four-game series Thursday night at home against Kansas City, which was outscored 20-0 during its three-day visit last month.

YANKEES 3, RAYS 2

A disappointed Jaime Garcia didn't even look at manager Joe Girardi when the pitcher was removed one out shy of qualifying for his first win with the Yankees, and New York edged Tampa Bay to take two of three games in a series moved from Florida to Citi Field because of Hurricane Irma. Making his first appearance since Aug. 30, Garcia allowed only Kevin Kiermaier's solo homer in 4 2/3 innings. Chad Green (5-0) struck out three of his four batters and Aroldis Chapman got four outs for his 18th save in 22 chances. Chapman fanned four and earned his first save of more than three outs since Game 5 of last year's World Series for the Chicago Cubs. The Yankees won their fourth straight series.

A pro-Yankees crowd of 13,159 raised the total for the series to 49,510. Tickets were \$25 each day. Tampa Bay was heading back home after the game and returns to Tropicana Field for a five-game homestand starting Friday against Boston. Chris Archer (9-10) dropped to 0-3 in his last four starts, giving up three runs in four-plus innings. He needed 92 pitches to get 12 outs. New York took a 3-0 lead in the second, when Todd Frazier hit an RBI single and Brett Gardner had a two-run single.

WHITE SOX 5, ROYALS 3

Jose Abreu hit a tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the ninth inning, and Chicago won a series in Kansas City for the first time since 2015. Tim Anderson singled, went to second on a wild pitch by Scott Alexander (4-4) and stole third before scoring on Abreu's fly ball. Avisail Garcia added an RBI single to make it 5-3. Juan Minaya (3-2) pitched 1 1/3 scoreless innings for the win. Last-place Chicago took two of three at Kauffman Stadium, winning its first road series since June 16-18 and damaging the Royals' wild-card hopes. Adam Engel hit a two-run double for Chicago, which has won four of five. White Sox starter Lucas Giolito gave up only Salvador Perez's solo homer in 6 1/3 innings.

DODGERS 4, GIANTS 1

Yu Darvish and two relievers combined on a five-hitter, Cody Bellinger hit his 37th home run and Los Angeles won back-to-back games for the first time in nearly three weeks, beating San Francisco. The win lowered the Dodgers' magic number to seven for clinching the NL West crown. Los Angeles secured at least a wild-card berth in the playoffs Tuesday night with a victory that ended its 11-game losing streak, the club's longest since moving to the West Coast in 1958. Darvish (9-12), acquired from Texas at the July 31 trade deadline, was 2-3 with a 5.34 ERA in six previous starts with Los Angeles but was crisp in his first career outing against San Francisco. The All-Star right-hander pitched three-hit ball over seven scoreless innings. He struck out five and walked none. Bellinger hit a two-run drive off Matt Moore (5-14). It's the Dodgers' first series win in San Francisco since September 2014.

ANGELS 9, ASTROS 1

Los Angeles scored five runs in the first inning and rode Tyler Skaggs' finest start of the season to beat Houston. The victory kept the Angels two games behind Minnesota for the second AL wild card, while the Astros' magic number to clinch the AL West title remained at five. Skaggs (2-5) threw seven shutout innings, holding Houston to three hits. He struck out



CLEVELAND: Cleveland Indians fans celebrate a 5-3 victory over the Detroit Tigers in a baseball game. — AP

five and walked one in his first victory since April 22. Spot starter Mike Fiers (8-10) was charged with eight runs and 10 hits over 3 2/3 innings for the Astros, who have lost five of six. The Angels finished with 13 hits, eight for extra bases. Luis Valbuena and Justin Upton homered. Upton reached 100 RBIs.

DIAMONDBACKS 8, ROCKIES 2

AJ Pollock homered and drove in four runs to back another strong outing by Patrick Corbin, and Arizona defeated Colorado to expand its lead in the wild-card race. Paul Goldschmidt had two hits for Arizona, including the 1,000th of his career. Pollock launched a three-run homer in the seventh inning and finished with three hits. The win gave the Diamondbacks a four-game edge over the Rockies for the top National League wild card. Arizona lost four of its previous five, including the first two games of this series. Corbin (14-12) held the Rockies to one run over 6 2/3 innings. The left-hander is 6-1 in seven starts since Aug 12. Arizona got 11 hits off starter German Marquez (10-7), who lasted only 3 2/3 innings. He gave up four runs.

REDS 6, CARDINALS 0

Reds rookie Tyler Mahle threw five innings for his first major league win, Eugenio Suarez hit a grand slam and Cincinnati blanked St Louis. Jesse Winker added a home run and Joey Votto had two hits and an RBI for the Reds, who had lost four of five. The Cardinals had won four straight and eight of nine. Mahle (1-2) allowed four hits and struck out four in his fourth career start. He threw 100 pitches and stranded eight runners. Cardinals starter Jack Flaherty (0-1), also a rookie right-hander, gave up three runs and four hits in 4 1/3 innings.

TWINS 3, PADRES 1

Eddie Rosario hit a two-run homer with two outs in the 10th inning, lifting Minnesota over San Diego to maintain its two-game cushion for the second AL wild-card spot. Joe Mauer hit a one-out single off Phil Maton (3-1) before Rosario connected for his 23rd homer. Matt Belisle (2-2) retired all five batters he faced for the Twins, who improved to 15-5 against the Padres. Ervin Santana gave Minnesota six scoreless innings. Rosario also doubled and scored. Austin Hedges homered for San Diego to tie it in the eighth.

BREWERS 8, PIRATES 2

Eric Thames hit his team-high 30th homer, Chase Anderson pitched effectively on three days' rest and Milwaukee beat Pittsburgh. Center fielder Brett Phillips added three RBIs and

threw out a runner at the plate for the Brewers. They have won five of six as they try to keep pace with the NL Central-leading Cubs. Milwaukee got to Tyler Glasnow (2-7) for five runs, four hits and six walks over 2 2/3 innings in his first start since returning from the minors Sunday. The Brewers also learned they will host a three-game series this weekend against the Marlins instead of traveling to Miami, as South Florida recovers from Hurricane Irma. Milwaukee will be the visiting team in its own stadium, Miller Park. Anderson (10-3) gave the battered pitching staff a lift in his first career start on three days' rest. He allowed Andrew McCutchen's first-inning solo shot - the slugger's 200th career homer - before exiting with the bases loaded and one out in the sixth.

CUBS 17, METS 5

Javier Baez homered and had four hits, Albert Almora Jr. also went deep and drove in six runs after coming off the bench in the seventh inning, and Chicago routed New York. Jon Lester (11-7) threw six solid innings to win his third straight start. The left-hander gave up two runs and six hits. The first-place Cubs matched a season high for runs after pouring on 12 over their final three at-bats. Chicago remained 2 1/2 games ahead of the Brewers and moved three up on St. Louis in the NL Central. Kris Bryant had three hits and scored four runs. Ben Zobrist also scored four times, and Willson Contreras had three RBIs. Mets starter Matt Harvey (5-5) lasted just 3 1/3 innings in his third start back from a right shoulder injury. He allowed five runs and seven hits. Jose Reyes homered leading off the game for New York, and Dominic Smith had a two-run drive. But the Mets clinched their first losing record since 2014 after making the playoffs the past two years.

MARINERS 8, RANGERS 1

Mike Zunino homered twice, Jean Segura also went deep and Seattle jumped over Texas in the AL wild-card chase while handing Martin Perez his first loss in eight starts. Zunino broke a scoreless tie in the fifth with a rare shot into the second-level club deck in left field. His second solo homer, to right-center in the seventh for his third multihomer game this season, capped a five-run outburst by the Mariners. Mike Leake (10-12) allowed one run in 5 2/3 innings to win his third consecutive start for the Mariners since they acquired him from St Louis on Aug. 30. The right-hander was 7-12 in 26 starts for the Cardinals this season. Perez (12-11) had won seven consecutive starts since losing Aug. 4 at Minnesota, and missed the chance to match Kenny Rogers' franchise record of eight in a row set in 2005. The lefty allowed three runs over 5 1/3 innings. — AP

DOLPHINS WR STILLS WANTS MORE KAEPERNICK SUPPORT

OXNARD: Kenny Stills wants to know why more athletes aren't standing with Colin Kaepernick. The Miami Dolphins receiver has restated his questions from a series of tweets Tuesday questioning the support across sports for Kaepernick, the former 49ers quarterback currently out of football after his protests during the national anthem last season.

"I just feel like the league, it's majority African-American, and you would think more people would come to have one of our guys' back," Stills said Wednesday. "We talk about the NFL being a brotherhood," Stills added. "They give us this presentation every year about the NFL being a brotherhood, and (if) something wrong is going on to one of your brothers, I feel like we should be there to have his back and speak up for him."

Stills spoke after practice in Oxnard, where the Dolphins are spending the week ahead of Sunday's game against the Los Angeles Chargers. They traveled to the West Coast early due to Hurricane Irma's devastation of South Florida. Kaepernick spoke up against police abuses and racial injustices last season, sparking many players to join him in activism. Those players included Stills, who knelt during the national anthem along with three teammates.

Stills had previously said he won't take a knee this year, but said Wednesday that he might re-evaluate his plans. "It's definitely something that I thought about, but I continue to think that the protest has been really divisive," said Stills, who grew up in San Diego before attending Oklahoma. "I'm trying to do everything I can to get people on the same page. ... I really want to bring people together, and I'm open to having conversations with people and trying and getting all of us on the same page."

Those aren't just postures to Stills, who has participated in public meetings with police and taken ride-along tours in an effort to find common ground. He is also a key contributor to the Dolphins' offense with 42 catches for 726 yards and a team-leading nine TDs last season. Stills is expected to start for Miami this year after getting a four-year, \$32 million contract extension in March.

Questions

Stills' tweets Tuesday began with a series of questions, which he said were directed particularly at fellow athletes: "Why aren't more players speaking up or protesting? Do you not believe there's a problem? Do you not believe you can create change? Are you worried about sponsors or your contract? Do you not care?"

Stills asked why the NFL hasn't released a statement condemning unarmed shootings of black people. He also asked why the NFL didn't create "a positive narrative about Kap and what he started," but instead stayed silent. "How can we expect the league to care about something we're not showing we care about?" Stills added.

Although he got plenty of online responses, Stills doesn't think he got many from his fellow NFL players. "I was really hoping to reach more players," he said. "I don't think many players wrote me back or responded, so that's what it really was for: Hollering at the players. I wanted to see where their minds were at."

Stills also said he was in contact with Seahawks star Michael Bennett, who claims he was racially profiled and had excessive force used against him by Las Vegas police officers last month. "We've talked through text message, and we're all just trying to be here for each other," Stills said. "I feel like the narrative is kind of going the wrong way sometimes, and so, just to have each other's back and support each other, and I'm really happy to see the things that he's doing. I was kind of at a loss for words hearing what happened to him after the Mayweather fight, and so (I'm) just continuing to reach out to guys and letting each other know that we have our back, and the NFL actually being a brotherhood like we talk about." —AP



MONZA: McLaren driver Fernando Alonso of Spain steers his car during the second free practice for Sunday's Italian Formula One Grand Prix, at the Monza racetrack. —AP

ALONSO HINTS AT MCLAREN STAY WITH ENGINE DEAL IMMINENT

SINGAPORE: Fernando Alonso could end up staying at McLaren. Amid growing speculation that McLaren will split with Honda and work with Renault as its engine supplier next year, the two-time Formula One champion hinted he is prepared to continue with the team for another year. "After they take a decision, I will take mine," the Spanish driver said Thursday at the Singapore Grand Prix. "I want to stay loyal to them and not make any decisions without them first making their decisions."

McLaren is in its third troublesome year with Honda and there has been scant sign of any improvement. Alonso has grown increasingly agitated at Honda's lack of reliability, completing only three races this season with a best finish of sixth. Alonso has scored 10 points so far, while McLaren teammate Stoffel Vandoorne has managed only one. Renault has a far more reliable engine than Honda, with Nico Hulkenberg consistently in the points for Renault and completing 10 of 13 races. With Alonso behind the wheel, and using a Renault engine, McLaren could expect a significant performance boost next year.

Despite being one of the oldest drivers on the grid, the 36-year-old Spaniard is still widely considered to be one of the best. He has done well in trying circumstances with McLaren and remains ambitious. "If I remain in F1 it is because I believe I can win next year," said Alonso, whose last of 32 F1 wins was at the Spanish GP in 2013 when driving for Ferrari. "I will not be around in any series to be fighting for top 10."

New signings

With Alonso likely staying at McLaren, Renault is expected to sign Spanish driver Carlos Sainz Jr from Toro Rosso as a replacement for British driver Jolyon Palmer, who has failed to score a point this season. Palmer expects to see out the season, at least, amid reports he could be replaced imminently. "I've got seven more races this year," Palmer said. "I'll be racing until Abu Dhabi."

Official engine changes are expected to be announced today. Representatives of Renault, McLaren, Honda and Red Bull are

all scheduled to appear at a news conference after practice ends in Singapore. Toro Rosso, a feeder team to Red Bull, is set to split with Renault next year and switch to Honda engines until 2020. Renault's relationship with Red Bull has also been difficult, and Renault will also reportedly cut ties with Red Bull in 2019. This would give Toro Rosso the opportunity to use the Honda engines for one season until both teams use it from 2019.

Red Bull has slipped further behind Ferrari and Mercedes this season and is a long way from the all-conquering team that won four straight drivers' and constructors' championships from 2010-13. Christian Horner, Red Bull's team principal, has been highly critical of Renault's performance since the move to turbo hybrid engines in 2014. "We pay a hell of a lot of money for the engine," Horner said after last month's Belgian GP. "They need to sort it out." However, a move to Honda

could come at a cost as it could lead to Red Bull drivers Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen pondering their futures. Moving from one under-performing engine to the most unreliable one on the grid is hardly an enticing prospect for two of the most highly-rated drivers in F1. Both are under contract for 2018 but would easily find options elsewhere.

Although Ricciardo has won one race and secured five other podium finishes this season, Verstappen has made no secret of his utter frustration with his car's engine failures. Since placing third in China at the second race, the 19-year-old Verstappen has failed to finish six times. He already counts twice as many DNFs - failures to complete a race - as last season, with seven GPs remaining. Verstappen was so exasperated after his engine cut out in Belgium that he sarcastically compared his car to Alonso's malfunctioning McLaren in terms of unreliability. — AP

GOLOVKIN SKIPS BIRTH TO TRAIN FOR TITLE FIGHT

LAS VEGAS: Gennady Golovkin is one of the most dedicated boxers in the world and even the birth of his daughter couldn't pry him out of the gym. The three-belt champion missed the birth because he was training for his upcoming world middleweight title fight. Golovkin stayed in the gym for two hours after his wife, Alina, gave birth to the couple's second child. They also have a son.

"He didn't leave the gym until 6 pm," Golovkin's trainer Abel Sanchez said. "The baby was born at 4 pm. His wife was in the hospital for one day. She came home next day so he was home with them." Golovkin, who holds the World Boxing Council, World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation middleweight belts, will face Canelo Alvarez in a 12-round mega title fight on Saturday in Las Vegas. Sanchez

said he was concerned during the long training camp about how Golovkin was doing with the baby on the way and the most important fight of his career around the corner.

"I started to voice my concern. 'The baby's not here'. He said 'coach the baby is going to come whether I am there or not. I have already done my part.'" Sanchez said Golovkin has been in high spirits as the fight preparation shifted this week from their training camp to Las Vegas. "He is in a great mood."

I don't know if it is because of the baby being here or if because he finally got the fight he wanted," Sanchez said. Sanchez says Golovkin is a good father and just as dedicated to his family as he is to his work. "Golovkin is a family man. He has always been very, very, very focused," Sanchez said. —AFP

ICC BACKING PAKISTAN'S BID TO HOST FULL CRICKET SERIES

LAHORE: World cricket's governing body wants international teams back in Pakistan after an eight-year absence due to security concerns but cautioned that it could be a "long process." The Pakistan Cricket Board is currently hosting a three-match Twenty20 series between Pakistan and a World XI in Lahore amid heavy security.

"ICC has already agreed to invest in security and develop security capabilities (of Pakistan) for a three-year period," International Cricket Council chief executive David Richardson said Wednesday. "Certainly I think the intention would be to bring member countries to tour Pakistan, not a World XI tour, and that would be the ideal to have international cricket return to Pakistan in normal circumstances." Richardson said it was too early to say when the PCB could host a full bilateral series and organize international games in other big cities like Karachi and Rawalpindi.

"It's a long process," Richardson said. "This is a stepping stone in the right direction. I think the next step is to improve capabilities to areas and cities outside of Lahore itself." Only Zimbabwe has toured Pakistan for a short limited-overs series in 2015 since an attack on the Sri Lanka team bus in Lahore in 2009. But Lahore is expected to host four T20 internationals over the next two months ó a one-off match against Sri Lanka and a three-match series against West Indies in November.

The ICC will give the PCB \$1.1 million over the next three years to improve security and will also share its expertise. ICC security experts are in Lahore, monitoring arrangements to protect the World XI team. Fourteen players from seven countries ó South Africa, Australia, England, West Indies, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and New Zealand ó formed the World XI which is led by South Africa's Faf du Plessis. Richardson explained why no Indian player was part of the World XI team. "The fact is you can't ignore the situation that exists between India and Pakistan at a political level," he said. —AP



LAHORE: World XI batsman Hashim Amla, right, runs between the wickets with his partner Thisara Perera during the second Twenty20 match at the Gaddafi Cricket Stadium. — AP

AMLA, PERERA POWER WORLD XI TO 7-WICKET WIN VS PAKISTAN

LAHORE: Hashim Amla smashed a half century and Thisara Perera provided an excellent finish with a 19-ball 47 as World XI defeated Pakistan by seven wickets in the second Twenty20 international on Wednesday. "Hash (Amla) told me to stay till the last moment because we can catch up," man-of-the-match Perera said. "It's a habit for me to be in this situation."

Amla hit five fours and two sixes in his unbeaten 72 off 55 balls, but it was Perera's explosive knock which included four sixes that got World XI to the target of 175-3 in 19.5 overs. Pakistan, which was restricted to 174-6, looked on top in the 14th over when it dismissed captain Faf du Plessis for 106-3. But Perera took charge in the last five overs as he cut loose against Pakistan seamers Sohail Khan and Rumman Raees.

Still needing 33 runs off the last two overs, Perera and Amla took 20 off Sohail's 19th over that saw Shoaib Malik dropping the Sri Lankan left-hander's easy catch at long off. Perera ensured World XI takes the series to the decisive game Friday when he reached victory in style by hoisting left-armer Raees over the long-on boundary. Pakistan won the first match by 20 runs on Tuesday but struggled to contain World XI's strong batting line-up after its frontline fast bowler Hasan Ali was ruled out of Wednesday's game due to back strain.

Earlier, Pakistan's top order batsmen couldn't convert good starts after captain Sarfraz Ahmed won the toss and opted to bat first. Left-hander Fakhar Zaman (21) hit Australian seamer Ben Cutting for three boundaries in the second over of the innings

but was trapped leg before wicket by West Indies leg-spinner Samuel Badree (2-31). Badree was one of two changes made by World XI along with England's Paul Collingwood - playing his first international since retiring in 2011.

Top-scorer Babar Zaman (45), who hit a career-best 86 in the first game on Tuesday, and Ahmed Shehzad (43) added 59 runs off 39 balls before both holed out in the deep while looking to accelerate the run rate. Perera then accounted for the wickets of Imad Wasim (15) and dismissed captain Sarfraz Ahmed without scoring in the

19th over as Pakistan slipped to 157-5. Pakistan's experienced batsman Malik (39) lifted the total when he hit Cutting for two sixes in his 23-ball knock.

Malik, playing in his 88th T20 international, became Pakistan's highest scorer in the format and surpassed Umar Akmal's total of 1,690 runs before he holed out off the last ball. "We were a little sloppy today in the field," Ahmed said. "The score was good enough, but if the execution was better in defending, we would have pulled it off." — AP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at the end of the second Twenty20 international between Pakistan and World XI at the Gaddafi Stadium on Wednesday:

Pakistan		World XI	
Fakhar Zaman lbw b Badree	21	T Iqbal c Malik b Sohail Khan	23
Ahmed Shehzad c Miller b Tahir	43	Hashim Amla not out	72
Babar Zaman c Miller b Badree	45	Tim Paine b Wasim	10
S Malik c Collingwood b Cutting	39	F Plessis c Shadab Khan b Nawaz	20
Imad Wasim c Tahir b Perera	15	Thisara Perera not out	47
Sarfraz Ahmed c Tahir b Perera	0	Extras: (1lb, 2w)	3
Sohail Khan not out	1	TOTAL: (for 3 wickets)	175
Extras: (1lb, 1nb, 8w)	10	Overs: 19.5	
TOTAL: (for 6 wickets)	174	Fall of wickets: 1-47, 2-71, 3-106	
Overs: 20.		Did not bat: David Miller, Paul Collingwood, Ben Cutting, Samuel Badree, Morne Morkel, Imran Tahir	
Fall of wickets: 1-41, 2-100, 3-135, 4-156, 5-157, 6-174		Bowling: Imad Wasim 4-0-27-1, Sohail Khan 4-0-44-1 (1w), Usman Shinwari 1-0-10-0, Rumman Raees 3.5-0-36-0 (1w), Mohammad Nawaz 3-0-25-1, Shadab Khan 4-0-32-0	
Did not bat: Mohammad Nawaz, Shadab Khan, Usman Shinwari, Rumman Raees		Result: World XI won by 7 wickets. Series: 1-1 with a game left.	
Bowling: Morne Morkel 4-0-20-0 (3w), Ben Cutting 4-0-52-1 (2w), Samuel Badree 4-0-31-2 (1w), Paul Collingwood 2-0-18-0 (1w), Thisara Perera 3-0-23-2 (1nb), Imran Tahir 3-0-29-1 (1w)			



LAHORE: Pakistani cricket fans watch a match between World XI and Pakistan at Gaddafi stadium.— AP

DHAWAN TO MISS FIRST THREE AUSTRALIA ODIS

NEW DELHI: India opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan has been released from the team for the first three one-day internationals against Australia to tend to his unwell wife, the country's cricket board (BCCI) said yesterday. "Dhawan has requested to be released from the team for the first three ODIs... to attend to his wife, who is unwell," the BCCI said in a statement.

The hosts would not name a replacement for the left-handed batsman, with Ajinkya Rahane and KL Rahul both able to play at the top. Dhawan had also missed the last ODI and the one-off Twenty20 in Sri Lanka to fly home to tend to his sick mother. He scored an unbeaten 132 and 49 in the first two ODIs against Sri Lanka but then managed nine runs in the third and fourth match. Virat Kohli's India will face Australia in the first ODI in Chennai on Sunday before matches in Kolkata and Indore. Dhawan is expected to return for the final two games in Bengaluru and Nagpur before the two teams take part in a three-match Twenty20 series.

India squad for first three ODIs:

Virat Kohli (Captain), Rohit Sharma (vice-captain), KL Rahul, Manish Pandey, Kedar Jadhav, Ajinkya Rahane, MS Dhoni (wicket-keeper), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Umesh Yadav, Mohammed Shami. —Reuters

INTER EMERGING AS DARK HORSE FOR TITLE

MILAN: Inter Milan is emerging as a dark horse for the Serie A title. Napoli, Roma and perhaps AC Milan were expected to present the toughest challenges to Juventus' bid for a seventh straight league title. But after beating Roma comprehensively in the Italian capital as well as collecting victories over Fiorentina and Spal, Inter could pose a serious threat.

"We know that despite our three victories we still have not achieved anything," Inter midfielder Matias Vecino said. "To finish at the top you have to leave no point

behind and for this reason there is still a lot of work to do. "We must not let our guard down and we need to keep working because the season is long. The objective is to win all of our matches up until the next break."

And Vecino, who joined from Fiorentina in the offseason, said much of the credit is due to Luciano Spalletti, the team's new coach. "Spalletti has given me confidence, which is fundamental for a player when arriving at a new team," said Vecino, who also plays for Uruguay's national team. "He

looks at every little detail so you know exactly what to do when you go out onto the pitch."

Spalletti, a former Roma coach, has seemingly provided some much-needed stability to Inter after a tumultuous campaign last season that included four coaching changes.

"My job has been easier, because having talented material I just needed to put it in order," Spalletti said. "(Mauro) Icardi and (Ivan) Perisic are talented players and exceptional professionals.

"In general we are on the right path. We are working hard because, going forward, the hope is to become even stronger." Inter has scored eight goals and conceded only one, which doesn't bode well for its next opponent as Crotona is the only Serie A side yet to score in its three opening matches. Inter will be expected to pick up all three points at Crotona and continue its unbeaten run into October, as it next faces Bologna, Genoa and Benevento before two much sterner tests against Milan and Napoli. — AP

BAYERN LIVE UP TO FC HOLLYWOOD TAG

BERLIN: Bayern Munich are again living up to their FC Hollywood tag, as a combination of lackluster performances, public disagreements and talk of a successor to coach Carlo Ancelotti has provided an abundance of early-season drama. Bayern's start to the season has not been particularly bad with two wins and a defeat in the Bundesliga, and a 3-0 win over Anderlecht in the Champions League on Tuesday. But expectations are so high at the Bavarian club that even a minor slip-up, or failure to score five or six goals against supposedly inferior opponents, causes headlines.

Forward Thomas Mueller was the first to wash his laundry in public when he complained about being left out of the starting line-up for the match against Werder Bremen three weeks ago. Then it was Robert Lewandowski's turn. In a magazine interview, the Polish forward criticized Bayern's refusal to match the huge transfer fees splashed out by the likes of Paris St Germain and Barcelona. "If you want to compete at the top, you need to have these quality players," he said.

Lewandowski was criticized by Bayern's chief executive Karl-Heinz Rummenigge who in turn was questioned by the club president Uli Hoeness. Rummenigge, like Hoeness a former Bayern player, said the club had a "serious and successful philosophy that has brought us big success." He regretted Lewandowski's comments. But Hoeness felt that players should be able to think for themselves and suggested that Rummenigge had over-reacted.

In the midst of all that, Bayern were humbled 2-0 by Hoffenheim last Saturday, increasing the pressure on former Real Madrid and Chelsea coach Ancelotti whose first season was regarded as underwhelming despite retaining the Bundesliga. Former Bayern Munich midfielder Mario Basler said in a television interview that his sources had told him that Ancelotti would cut short his contract in January and go to work in China - something the Italian quickly brushed aside.

"I prefer to speak about serious things, but that's a joke," he said. The win over Anderlecht, although comfortable, failed to ease the pressure as Bayern's performance was considered insufficient against opponents who had Sven Kums sent off after 10 minutes. Forward Arjen Robben admitted it was not good enough. "We have to question ourselves. We have to talk about this and we have to improve it," he said.

Hoffenheim's coach Julian Nagelsmann inadvertently stirred things up further by giving a television interview where he said that coaching Bayern would make him even happier than he was now and that his wife and children were planning to move to Munich. As German media talked of flirtation, Nagelsmann said in a subsequent statement that he had been misinterpreted and was not after Ancelotti's job. He said he had merely been talking about a lifelong ambition. In the midst of the intrigue, the home match with Mainz 05 on Saturday seems almost incidental. — Reuters



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Luis Suarez, left, and Jordi Alba, right, celebrate with Lionel Messi who scored 3-0 during a Champions League group D soccer match between FC Barcelona and Juventus at the Camp Nou stadium. — AP

BARCA EMERGE FROM GLOOM TO SET THE PACE IN LA LIGA

MADRID: Barcelona have emerged from a cloud of pessimism to make a perfect start to their La Liga campaign and travel to Getafe on Saturday looking to stretch their advantage over Real Madrid, whose early optimism has been dampened. A pall of gloom hung over the Catalans in the close season following the departure of Neymar to Paris St Germain and other failures in the transfer market, leading club members to sign a petition of no confidence against the club president.

Yet their off the pitch problems have seemingly had no effect on their performances. Three wins from three has put them top of the table and with a four-point advantage over rivals Real, who have stumbled with two draws in their last two games in the absence of the suspended Cristiano Ronaldo.

Barca, fresh from Tuesday's emphatic 3-0 Champions League victory over Juventus, will have the chance provisionally to move seven points clear of Real and Atletico Madrid and coach Ernesto Valverde has indicated he will give game time to fringe players. "Up to now some players have played more than others but everyone will get their chance," he said. "I picked the best set of lads to get the job done against Juve and I'll see who I think the best are for Getafe."

Spanish and European champions Real Madrid began the campaign by winning the continental and Spanish Super Cups to firmly establish themselves as the country's dominant force, but their last

two league results have brought them down to earth. They travel to high-flying Real Sociedad in Sunday's late kickoff without the suspended duo of left back Marcelo and Ronaldo, who serves the final match of a five-game domestic ban for pushing a referee.

Real, who are also without injured French striker Karim Benzema, are desperately missing Ronaldo's goalscoring instinct. The Portuguese's importance was further illustrated as he scored twice in Wednesday's 3-0 Champions League victory over APOEL Nicosia. Sociedad sit alongside Barcelona at the top with nine points from their first three games and Real coach Zinedine Zidane said his side will need to improve this weekend as he looks to compensate for attacking absentees.

"Ronaldo is a key player for us, he's always there and always scores," Zidane said. "I hope it's the last game of the season that we're without him. We've not got Cristiano nor Benzema, but we will have other players and we'll do well. "We've won two trophies in spectacular fashion already and we played well (in the 2-2 draw) against Valencia. Against Levante (1-1) we weren't good and we weren't against APOEL in the first half either. Against Real Sociedad this weekend we need to start in a different manner." Atletico Madrid will play their first game at their new Wanda Metropolitano stadium as they host pointless Malaga while Levante host Valencia in the Valencian derby. — Reuters

LEIPZIG HOLD MONACO ON CHAMPS LEAGUE DEBUT

LEIPZIG: Yuri Tielemans leveled a minute after Emil Forsberg's opener for RB Leipzig to salvage a 1-1 draw for French champions Monaco in the Champions League on Wednesday. With Leipzig making their competition debut, Forsberg's goal raised the roof at the Red Bull Arena. It will go down in history as his club's first on European football's biggest stage, though it is unlikely to be their last. "It's something special to have score Leipzig's first ever goal in the Champions League," said Forsberg after the game. "I'm very proud."

Despite their inexperience at this exalted level, Leipzig appeared undaunted in this Group G tie. Teenager Dayot Upamecano was imperious at the back, while in-form striker Timo Werner looked dangerous up front. With Monaco's back line holding firm, and their wingers Djibril Sidibe and Adama Diakhaby struggling to strike on the counter-attack, there were few chances to speak of in the opening half an hour. But in the 33rd minute, Leipzig struck.

Swedish winger Forsberg found space on the left and blasted the ball past Diego Benaglio at the near post. The euphoria, though, was short-lived as a deep cross from Sidibe found Diakhaby, who nodded the ball down for Tielemans to prod past Peter Gulacsi. "The coach told me I'd play as the second attacker and talked to me about my positioning and I think it went well for me," said Tielemans.

Werner, who had twice come centimetres from scoring in the first half, was threatening again after the break, and began to pick up more space as he was switched to a wider position on the left. "It was obviously an incredible feeling today," said 21-year-old striker Werner. "We were desperate to win today, but sadly we couldn't quite do it." Several half-chances fell Werner's way, but it was Jean-Kevin Augustin who came closest to breaking the deadlock, denied in a one-on-one with Benaglio.

He had another chance in injury time, breaking free of the defence in the Monaco penalty area, only

to be called offside. Yet on a night where neither side reached their penetrative best, it ended a point apiece. Leipzig's Champions League debut crowned a blistering rise from the lower leagues since their founding in 2009.

After finishing second in the Bundesliga last season, the club were celebrating the biggest night of their history against Monaco. Against more experienced opposition and without their star midfielder Naby Keita, it was not a given that they would avoid defeat in their maiden Champions League appearance. Many of those on the pitch had played for Leipzig since the club was in the second or third division. Few had any idea how RB's still young squad would react to the pressure of playing on club football's biggest stage. The more dangerous side over long periods, Leipzig will nonetheless be as happy as Monaco with the draw. Leipzig next face Besiktas in Turkey, with Monaco hosting Porto. — AFP



MADRID: Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo reacts after scoring the first goal during a Champions League group H soccer match between Real Madrid and Apoel Nicosia at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium. — AP

RONALDO RETURNS TO SMASH DOUBLE IN ROUTINE REAL WIN

MADRID: Cristiano Ronaldo wasted no time in showing Real Madrid what they have been missing during his five-game domestic suspension, by scoring twice as the holders began their Champions League defence with a routine 3-0 win over APOEL Nicosia on Wednesday. Ronaldo, banned for pushing a referee after being sent off in the first leg of the Spanish Super Cup, opened the scoring after just 12 minutes from Gareth Bale's low cross.

The Portuguese doubled his tally from the penalty spot before Sergio Ramos's overhead kick rounded off the scoring. Real move to the top of Group H alongside Tottenham Hotspur, who ended their Wembley hoodoo with an impressive 3-1 win over Borussia Dortmund. Ronaldo has now struck 12 times in his last six Champions League games. "He is the best in the world. We know he will always score goals," said Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane. "With a bit more luck today he could have scored four."

Ronaldo described the length of his

ban as "persecution" on the part of the Spanish football federation and his absence has been felt by Real in profligate performances in being held at home by Valencia and Levante. "We are on a run of games without scoring many goals, but you can't thrash teams all the time," said Ramos. "Cristiano has so many goals in him and we feel it. "Hopefully he stays in form. You can't question the levels he reaches every year."

Bale excelling

Zidane admitted that the club's failure to replace Alvaro Morata had left his striking options limited, particularly in the absence of Karim Benzema through a hamstring injury. However, with Bale excelling back on the left, Ronaldo filled that void as he swept home at the back post from the Welshman's cross. Ronaldo then headed into the side-netting from a similar position from another Bale delivery moments later.

Real suffered an injury setback mid-way through the half as Mateo Kovacic

limped off to be replaced by Toni Kroos. And the hosts' rhythm was disrupted as they struggled to create more clear-cut chances against the dogged Cypriot champions before the break. Ronaldo thought he had doubled his tally a minute into the second half as his volley from Dani Carvajal's pinpoint cross came off the underside of the bar, but didn't cross the line despite his protests.

Madrid's luck turned moments later when Roberto Lago was very harshly penalized for handball from Bale's deflected cross and Ronaldo smashed home the resulting penalty. Ronaldo showed his hunger for more goals as he retrieved the ball from the net and raced back to the halfway line. However, it was Ramos who struck next in acrobatic fashion from point-blank range. Ronaldo thought he had bagged an eighth Champions League hat-trick when he swept home Luka Modric's cross. But he was denied by the offside flag as Real had to settle for three as they began their quest for a 13th European Cup. — AFP

CORREA GOAL SPOILS LIVERPOOL RETURN

LIVERPOOL: Roberto Firmino's first-half penalty miss proved costly for Liverpool as Joaquin Correa scored a dramatic equalizer to grab Sevilla a 2-2 Champions League draw on Wednesday. Anfield was in jubilant mood as the English club welcomed back Champions League football after a two-year absence, but it took Sevilla just four minutes to dampen the enthusiasm. After Wissam Ben Yedder had given the Spanish side an early lead, goals from Firmino and Mohamed Salah put Liverpool ahead, only for Firmino to miss a penalty.

On the hour, Sevilla manager Eduardo Berizzo was dismissed for throwing the ball away from Liverpool's Joe Gomez as he tried to take a throw-in, but his disappointment was eased, thanks to Correa, on 72 minutes. All four sides in Group E are level after the opening round of matches, as Maribor played out a 1-1 draw with Spartak Moscow in Slovenia. The opening goal was the product of a poor defensive mistake by Dejan Lovren, who completely miskicked while trying to clear a cross from Sergio Escudero at his near post.

Instead of producing a routine clearance, the defender allowed the ball to run across the face of goal where Ben Yedder had the simple task of sliding the ball into an open net. Following on from the weekend 5-0 thrashing at Manchester City, it was the worst possible start for Jurgen Klopp's side, although their attacking play was promising. Emre Can had curled a shot directly at goalkeeper Sergio Rico inside the opening minute and Sadio Mane came closer still as his shot was saved low down by Rico.

Firmino equalizer

Firmino struck the important equaliser after 21 minutes following an incisive attack and a Jordan Henderson pass which sent Alberto Moreno away down the left. He crossed low into the six-yard box, where Firmino lunged ahead of Gabriel Mercado to turn in the equalizer. Minutes later, the Reds should have been in front after a blistering counter-attack ended with Mane playing Can clean through on goal only for the German international to roll his shot inches beyond the post. — AFP



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Jordan Henderson, top, is tackled by Sevilla's Simon Kjær during the Champions League group E soccer match between Liverpool and Sevilla at Anfield stadium. — AP

SHAKHTAR UPSET NAPOLI

KHARKIV, Ukraine: Facundo Ferreyra scored one goal and set up another as Shakhtar Donetsk upset Napoli 2-1 in the Champions League on Wednesday. With Shakhtar starting its fourth consecutive European campaign away from its home city due to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, the club's South American contingent shone in its opening win in Group F. Argentine forward Ferreyra flicked the ball to Taison with a neat backheel for the Brazilian to score Shakhtar's opener from the edge of the box in the 15th

minute. Ferreyra made it 2-0 in the second half when he headed in at the far post after Napoli goalkeeper Pepe Reina was stranded by Taras Stepanenko's left-wing cross. Stepanenko gave Napoli a route back into the game in the 70th when he sliced down Dries Mertens in the penalty area. Arkadiusz Milik stepped up to hit the resulting penalty low and hard past Andriy Pyatov.

Ferreyra came close to making sure of victory in the 83rd but hit the post and watched as Viktor

Kovalenko missed the rebound from close range. Napoli charged up the pitch but couldn't find an equalizer as Milik blazed over the bar and Pyatov saved an effort from Jose Callejon. In the first half, Shakhtar defender Ivan Ordets had come agonizingly close to an own-goal when his attempt to cut out a cross instead looped toward his own goal, flying narrowly wide. Napoli fans clashed with stewards at halftime after they were stopped from trying to enter a sector filled with home fans. Police broke up the skirmishes. — AP

STONES STARS AS MAN CITY HAMMER FEYENOORD 4-0

ROTTERDAM: Manchester City thrashed Dutch champions Feyenoord 4-0 as defender John Stones scored twice to get Pep Guardiola's side off to a flying Champions League start on Wednesday. Stones headed home on two minutes after a sublime chip by skipper David Silva, and after Sergio Aguero and Gabriel Jesus had made the win safe, the England centre-back capped off the evening with a second powerful header for a memorable brace.

"The most important thing and what pleased me the most (about the win) is the way in which we did it," said City coach Guardiola. "We did not play back... We were aggressive... We had the legs to run on the side, especially on the right and created the chances. Enough to win the game comfortably." To complicate matters for City however, in the other Group F game, fancied Napoli were beaten 2-1 at Shakhtar Donetsk.

In Rotterdam, City tore Feyenoord to pieces as hard-working midfielders Bernardo Silva and Kevin De Bruyne punched holes in the home defence, which was in all sorts of trouble on a stormy evening at a packed De Kuip. Aguero made it 2-0 after 10 minutes when he hammered in a half-volley from a sublime cross from Kyle Walker, which flew past goalkeeper Brad Jones. The Argentinian striker has now scored 172 goals for Manchester City and is only five short of former England international Eric Brook's all-time record of 177.

Merciless City

City continued their merciless onslaught, giving the hosts very little space to create chances while continuing to threaten with lightning-fast attacks down the right flank. The weather did little to improve the fanatical Feyenoord supporters' mood, as the fans began jeering the players each time the ball was passed back to Jones, who had a busy evening.

The keeper blocked a blistering shot from Aguero which rebounded for Benjamin Mendy to take another shot, bouncing off the Australian again. Jones could not hold on however and an unmarked Jesus performed the simple task of booting the ball into the back on the net for a debut Champions League goal. Feyenoord regained some composure in the second half, but it did not take the visitors long to find the back of the net again, this time in the form of a blistering header by Stones from a finely-floated De Bruyne corner. — AFP



ROTTERDAM: Manchester City's Sergio Aguero, center, kicks the ball past Feyenoord goalkeeper Bradley Jones during a Champions League Group F soccer match between Feyenoord and Manchester City at the Kuip stadium. — AP



LONDON: Tottenham's Harry Kane is about to score during the Champions League group H soccer match between Tottenham and Borussia Dortmund, at the Wembley stadium. — AP

KANE DOWNS DORTMUND AS SPURS END WEMBLEY WOE

LONDON: Harry Kane banished Tottenham Hotspur's Wembley curse as the England striker's double sealed a 3-1 win over Borussia Dortmund in their Champions League opener on Wednesday. With White Hart Lane being redeveloped, Tottenham are playing their home matches at the English national stadium this season and that had been bad news for Mauricio Pochettino's side.

Already scarred by damaging Wembley defeats in the Champions League and FA Cup semi-finals last term, Tottenham had lost to Chelsea and drawn with Burnley this season, sparking alarmist talk that they were jinxed at the hallowed north London venue. But, after losing eight of their previous 12 matches at Wembley, Kane's predatory finishing ensured Tottenham finally enjoyed a night to remember in their temporary lodgings.

Son Heung-Min's first goal of the season put Tottenham ahead early on and, although Andriy Yarmolenko conjured a sublime equalizer, it was the hosts who possessed the killer instinct thanks to Kane's latest heroics. Kane, who scored twice in Saturday's win at Everton, restored Tottenham's advantage before the interval and wrapped up the victory with his second goal after half-time.

Pitted in a tricky group that also includes holders Real Madrid, Tottenham's commanding display secured only their third win in 13 Wembley appearances and gave them an early boost in the battle for a place in the knockout stages. The only blemish for Tottenham was a late sending off for a second bookable offence for Jan Vertonghen, who swung his forearm into Mario Gotze's face.

"It was so important to win, we are so happy. We increased our level in the second half and were very clinical," Pochettino

said. "It is more than three points. The team is more mature now. Harry Kane was fantastic." Dortmund boss Peter Bosz added: "It's clear we weren't properly organized at the back in decisive moments. "We didn't cover spaces behind the back four and that was crucial."

Dortmund arrived in London unbeaten so far this season, but their squad had been ravaged by injuries, with Marco Reus, Raphael Guerreiro, Andre Schurrle and Marcel Schmelzer among the key players sidelined. It took Tottenham just four minutes to expose the fault lines in Dortmund's under-strength line-up as Son scored a fine individual goal. Set free down the left flank, Son drove into the penalty area unchecked by Dortmund's defense and, with goalkeeper Roman Burki failing to guard his near post, the South Korean smashed a powerful strike into the roof of the net. If that seemed like the perfect way for Tottenham to banish their Wembley angst, the positives vibes lasted just seven minutes.

Carbon copy

When Yarmolenko played a one-two with Shinji Kagawa out on the right wing, there appeared little danger, but the Ukrainian darted onto the return pass and hit a superb curling effort over Hugo Lloris and into the far corner. Yarmolenko's bolt from the blue could have been a hammer blow for Tottenham, but they recovered their composure impressively and regained the lead in the 15th minute. In a carbon copy of Tottenham's first goal, Kane sprinted onto a long ball down the left wing, muscled his way into the area and slammed a perfectly-placed shot past Burki, who once again left his near post fatally exposed. Dortmund ended the half frustrated after Christian Pulisic's strike was disallowed for offside. — AFP

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Amla, Perera power World XI to 7-wicket win vs Pakistan

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LAHORE: World XI captain Faf du Plessis hits boundary during the second Twenty20 match at the Gaddafi Cricket Stadium. — AP

