

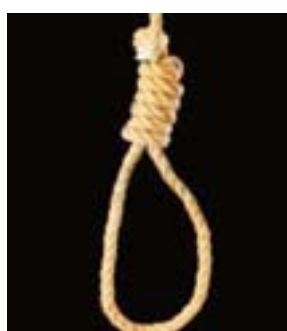
World's heaviest woman dies in UAE hospital

6



Iraq hangs 42 militants on death row

8



Gulf Cup run into problems as row rages

11



Late rule call helps Falcons pound Lions

16



## NA WILL NOT BE DISSOLVED; SPEAKER DENIES RUMORS

NEXT ASSEMBLY TERM TO OPEN OCTOBER 24



Min 28°  
Max 44°  
High Tide 02:38 & 16:05  
Low Tide 09:44 & 21:37

150 FILS  
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32 PAGES

### KURDS SHRUG OFF THREATS, VOTE IN REFERENDUM

ARBIL: Voting began in northern Iraq yesterday in an independence referendum organized by Kurdish authorities, ignoring pressure from Baghdad, threats from neighboring Turkey and Iran, and international warnings it may ignite yet more regional conflict. The vote, expected to deliver a comfortable "yes" for independence, is not binding.

However, it is designed to give Massoud Barzani, who heads the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), a mandate to negotiate the secession of the oil producing region with Baghdad and neighboring states. For Iraqi Kurds - the largest ethnic group left stateless when the Ottoman empire collapsed a century ago - the referendum offers a historic opportunity despite the intense international pressure to call it off.

"We have seen worse, we have seen injustice, killings and blockades," said Talat, waiting to cast a vote in the regional capital of Arbil, as group of smiling women, in traditional colorful Kurdish dress, emerged from the school showing their fingers stained with ink, a sign that they voted. The Kurds also say the vote acknowledges their crucial contribution in confronting Islamic State after it overwhelmed the Iraqi army in 2014 and seized control of a third of Iraq.

But with roughly 30 million ethnic Kurds scattered over international borders across the region, Tehran and Ankara fear the spread of separatism to their own Kurdish populations.



ARBIL: Members of a Kurdish Peshmerga battalion show their ink-stained fingers in front of a Kurdish flag after voting in the Kurdish independence referendum in Arbil yesterday. — AFP

Continued on Page 11

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouk Al-Ghanem yesterday denied rumors that claim the Assembly will be dissolved soon, saying the rumors are politically motivated to create tension. Ghanem said that such rumors have been circulating since the start of the first legislative term by "sides well known to all" with the aim to incite tension and encourage MPs to escalate threats notwithstanding the domestic and regional developments.

The Speaker however did not name any sides. "There is nothing related to the dissolution of the Assembly at present. This decision is part of the powers enjoyed by the Amir," Ghanem said. Asked about expectations that the next term will be hot taking into account a large number of threats by MPs to grill ministers, the Speaker said that grillings and other constitutional tools are part of the lawmakers' constitutional rights and its use is subject to their decisions.

Ghanem also announced that the next Assembly term will open on October 24 as an Amiri decree was issued yesterday authorizing the Assembly to start the term on October 24. The Speaker said the date had been chosen after coordination with the Amir and the government.

In the meantime, more MPs announced their backing of a draft law calling to reduce the retirement age for men and women and make the retirement optional for beneficiaries. A large number of lawmakers have submitted a request to give priority to debating the draft law at the start of the new Assembly term next month.

MP Mubarak Al-Harees said that retirement for Kuwaiti employees must be granted after 15 to 20 years of service without linking it to a specific age.

Continued on Page 11

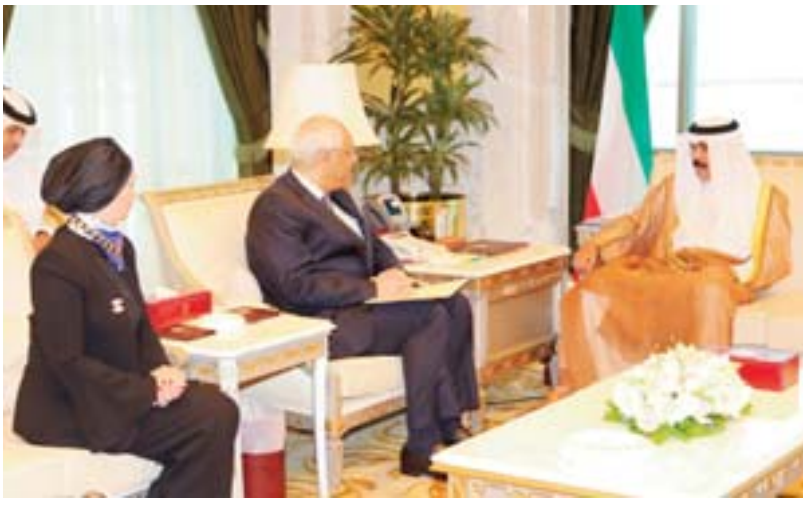


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**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Yasser Atef. —KUNA photos



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Security Bureau Chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah.



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Engineer Abdulaziz Abdullatif Al-Ibrahim.

## CROWN PRINCE RECEIVES EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Yasser Atef at Seif

Palace yesterday. Ambassador Atef delivered a letter during the meeting to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, including an invitation from Egyptian

President AbdelFatah Al-Sisi to attend the World Youth Forum in Sharm El Sheikh from 4th to 10th of November, 2017. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri

Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Director of protocols and ceremonials at His Highness' Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. Meanwhile,

His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received National Security Bureau Chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah. His Highness also received Engineer Abdulaziz Abdullatif Al-Ibrahim. —KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Khadija Meftah, JW Marriot Hotel's Cluster Director of Marketing Communications presented a cake to Kuwait Times yesterday in celebration of its 56th anniversary. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

## GERMANS IN KUWAIT WITNESS MERKEL'S WIN

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** The German community in Kuwait gathered around a big screen at the ambassador's residence in Mishref Sunday evening to witness the announcement of the winner in the German elections. As expected, incumbent Chancellor Angela Merkel won, and will now serve the European powerhouse for a fourth term.

"For me, I want continuity and I like [Merkel's] style of leadership," said one German voter who asked that his name be withheld. "We expected Merkel to win again," Ambassador of Germany to Kuwait Karlfried Bergner said. "The sentiment of many Germans in my country are almost similar to our expats community around the world, so we expect continuity of programs introduced by our leader. The new government will be formed after Merkel was announced winner."

There around 500 Germans in Kuwait, the ambassador said, adding that he is aware that only 200 of them may have cast their votes. "We do not need to register. We do not have voting precincts here, so we cannot specifically site the exact number of voters from Kuwait," he indicated. "Overseas vote should come by today for counting so obviously the vote of Germans from around the world was done earlier. As Germans, we do not reveal to anyone our votes; it is a sacred vote and we support whoever wins."



**Ambassador of Germany to Kuwait Karlfried Bergner**

"We expect that the economic policy implemented during 12 years of Merkel in power will continue," he said.

Asked about Germany's stand regarding the UK's plans for Brexit and the impact it will have on the European Union, Bergner said: "We believe that exiting the European Union is bad for British people, but we cannot control the policy of the United Kingdom. They voted, and Brexit won. We have to accept the democratic process taking place in Britain. For us, we consider Brexit as a painful divorce."

## EGYPT, KUWAIT DETERMINED TO BOOST TIES: OFFICIAL

**CAIRO:** Egypt and the State of Kuwait are determined to bolster the brotherly bilateral relations between the two countries, said a senior Kuwaiti official yesterday. The affirmation was made by the Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs, Ambassador Sami Al-Hamad, in his address to the fourth

round of the joint consular commission. Meetings at this level are in line with an agreement to act for serving the two peoples' interests, Ambassador Hamad said during the meeting, where the Egyptian side was headed by the assistant foreign minister for consular affairs and Egyptians in diaspora, Ambassador Khaled Rizk.

Ambassador Hamad noted the two leaderships' keenness on bolstering the relationship at the diplomatic, legal, labor and health levels. He praised joint accomplishments in the previous sessions, such as tackling cases of persons awaiting expulsion, extradition of convicts, information swap about detainees and appointing liaison officers. He indicated at other issues such as tackling violators of residency regulations, pardon for inmates, medical care for Egyptian workers and settling labor issues. The estimated 600,000 Egyptians in Kuwait are being taken care of by the authorities, he stressed. — KUNA



**Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs Ambassador Sami Al-Hamad**



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

## ACTING PM BRIEFS MINISTERS ABOUT EXTERNAL MISSIONS

**KUWAIT:** The Cabinet held its regular weekly session at Seif Palace yesterday, under chairmanship of the Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Following the session, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah stated that Sheikh Sabah Khaled briefed the officials about his latest visit to Turkey where he partook in a Kuwaiti delegation headed by His Highness the Prime Minister. The mission to Turkey tackled cooperation in the economic and investment domains, he said, also noting that the talks with the Turkish leaders dealt with means of bolstering international peace and security.

**UN General Assembly**  
Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled addressed his fellow executives about his participation in a

recent mission, headed by His Highness the Premier, participating in the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly in New York. During the session, His Highness the Premier called for bolstering global security and stability and combating terrorism. He also spoke about the coordination meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, held on sidelines of the UNGA session, addressing peace and security in Arab and Islamic nations.

Moreover, he shed light on his participation in the latest Arab ministerial meeting, discussing the Palestinian cause and other regional issues and his partaking in a meeting by the international coalition for combating the IS terrorist group.

The ministers examined a recommendation by the economic affairs committee regarding custom facilities, where the ministers tasked the General Directorate for Customs to minimize

procedures for entry of imported products. They studied another recommendation on Touristic Enterprises Company's seaside projects. They decided to form a special panel to tackle any snags obstructing execution of the ventures.

**Mexico's earthquake**  
Meanwhile, the Cabinet expressed condolences to the United Mexican States on the recent earthquake rumbled across the nation claiming scores of deaths. The Cabinet expressed heartfelt condolences to the Mexican president, government, people and families of the victims. Also, the Cabinet mourned the demise of Hamad Mubarak Al-Ayyar, a lawmaker and ex-minister who passed away recently. The ministers recalled his sincere efforts at various levels for serving Kuwait and prayed for his blessed soul. — KUNA

## GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE TO BOOST EFFICIENCY: MP

**KUWAIT:** A forthcoming conference on governance will prove instrumental in improving performance within state institutions, particularly, in the fields of finance, legislation and administration, a Kuwaiti lawmaker said yesterday. MP Mohammad Al-Dalal, who heads an ad hoc committee dealing with legislative legal affairs, told the press that the conference slated

for October 10-11 would help prop up inspection bodies in the country. On the conference, he revealed it would revolve around the notion of governance in the realms of legislation, finance and administration. Dalal pointed out that the conference will also examine the government's contributions to anti-corruption efforts and measures to ensure transparency and integrity

in the government sector.

The Kuwaiti lawmaker pointed out that the event will bring together senior officials and parliamentarians, all of whom will delve into the correlation between solid governance and rapid development. He added that he is sanguine that the conference would yield concrete steps that would lead to better governance. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** MP Mohammad Al-Dalal speaks during a press conference yesterday. — KUNA

## ANTI-CORRUPTION AUTHORITY REFERS SIX OFFICIALS TO PUBLIC PROSECUTION

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (KANCOR) announced yesterday that six officials have been referred to the Public Prosecution for not submitting their financial disclosures on the dates provided by the law.

KANCOR explained that these referrals were the result of the authority's follow-up with the cases relating to the officials required to submit financial disclosure and after matching them with the submission dates provided by the law. KANCOR pointed out that the officials referred to the Public Prosecution in fact submitted their financial disclosures, but they submitted

them late and missed the dates provided by the law.

As per Article 2 of law 2/2016, the authority invited the officials addressed by the law to take the initiative and submit their financial disclosure on the specified dates in order to avoid penalties. KANCOR called upon the officials to be in touch with the Authority whether by calling the hotline 118 or attending personally to its headquarters during official working hours to inquire about their status on financial disclosure, submission dates, and request assistance in filling out and submitting the disclosure. — KUNA



**The Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority.**

## IICO AIDS 8,212 DISPLACED ROHINGYA FAMILIES

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) had provided aid and shelter to 8,212 of displaced Rohingya Muslim families in Bangladesh. The aid is part of an urgent humanitarian program launched by the organization to help Muslims who fled the violence in Myanmar, said IICO Chairman, Amiri Diwan Advisor and consultant of UN Secretary General Abdullah Al-Matouq in a statement yesterday. The program involved distributing 7,700 food packages and building 512 houses, he said. IICO also aims to fund a project to shelter 250 families, with a cost of KD 200 per house. Moreover, the organization will launch another project to deliver 2,000 food packages worth KD 25 per package, said Matouq, adding that one package contains supplies that will last for two months.



**IICO Chairman Abdullah Al-Matouq**

Meanwhile, Matouq called on philanthropists to take part in aiding Rohingya Muslims living in worsening humanitarian conditions. He noted that the Rohingya are facing one of the worst humanitarian crisis as their homes, schools and villages were destroyed and burned. The IICO's aid program is launched in cooperation with Al-Najat Charity, Turkey's Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief and the Islamic Relief organization. — KUNA



# CSC BUILDING EVACUATED DUE TO FACADE COLLAPSE



**KUWAIT:** Civil Service Commission's President Ahmad Al-Jassar, as well as Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah inspect the damage inside the building. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** Hundreds of employees of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) in Industrial Shuwaikh were evacuated as a precautionary measure following a minor collapse in the building's facade. According to a statement from the Kuwait Fire Services Directorate, the collapse of part of the decoration was a result of an explosion in the water pipes used by the firefighting sprinklers. No injuries were reported.

"All staff members and other people who were at the building are safe," CSC President Ahmad Al-Jassar told reports, adding that a committee was formed to find ways to prevent similar incidents from happening in the future. Jassar toured the building along with the Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah to check on the situation and make sure of everyone's safety.



## INTERIOR: NO OFFICERS RESHUFFLE

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Interior denied yesterday the authenticity of news reports circulated recently in a local newspaper and some media outlets and social networking sites about an intention to rotate a number of Interior Ministry's Undersecretaries and senior officials.

The ministry appealed to the media in a press release to please contact its Department of Security Media, noting that its doors are open to answer any questions and queries.

On Monday, a local Arabic newspaper reported that several undersecretaries in the Interior Ministry would be subject to a reshuffle.

The Arabic newspaper, Al-Qabas, reported that the reshuffle was nearly finalized and ready to be submitted to Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah for approval. Quoting unnamed sources, the report listed the names of several senior Interior officials

who would be confirmed in their positions if they are now 'acting' and others would be reshuffled. It noted that the following undersecretaries would take up new roles or be confirmed as noted below with some changes still possible:

- Major General Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah, Assistant Undersecretary for Border Security
  - Maj General Ibrahim Al-Tarrah, Assistant Undersecretary for General Security
  - Maj General Fahad Al-Shuwai, Assistant Undersecretary for National and Passports
  - Maj Genral Talal Maarafi, Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic
  - Maj General Shukri Al-Najjar, Assistant Undersecretary for Special Security
  - Maj General Mohammad Al-Sharhan, Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Detectives
  - Maj General Abdallah Al-Hajiri, Assistant Undersecretary for Residency Affairs
- The Interior Ministry refuted the report.

## LAWMAKERS SLAM CO-OP DISSOLUTION

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** MP Abdelkareem Al-Kandari said Social Affairs Minister Hind Al-Sabeeh "does not know that dissolving Kaifan Co-op Society confirms that she will be ousted in the upcoming grilling." He added that the minister "knows the homes and families of Kaifan and she will not be able to distort that reputation by dissolving the co-op."

Kandari, who spoke during a gathering held by the dissolved co-op's board of directors in Kaifan warned Sabeeh that she "is following a method that attacks unions and co-ops, and we will have our say at the grilling and you can hear it live during your grilling session." "Dissolving of the co-op is a cheap political deal and you will pay the price," he said, addressing Sabeeh. Meanwhile, MP Waleed Al-Tabatabai said the minister made gains from the dissolution and came up with electoral key holders for some lawmakers as appointed members "who know nothing about the cooperative action." He demanded that the dissolution be cancelled, and elected members be restored.

MP Adel Al-Demkhi said there is a war

declared against the cooperative action, though the minister should be on the side of the cooperative and popular action. He said what happened is a distortion of history and reputation of families without enabling them to defend themselves, and there are several court rulings against the minister and her malicious action.

"We give the minister a week to cancel her decision, otherwise we will continue our action," MP Ahmad Al-Fahdel said. "My goal is not the minister, and her problem is placing people in the wrong place. We hope the minister to do reform. Her decisions harmed many people, and I am on the side of the oppressed." MP Abdelwahab Al-Babtain said meanwhile that the minister relies on people who do not know anything, and if she was deliberate, then the harm is deliberate as well.

The Kaifan Co-op Society's board was dissolved last week by an order of the Social Affairs and Labor Ministry, which oversees co-op boards and activity in Kuwait. The board is under investigation for embezzlement and corruption though no charges have been filed until now.

## PEOPLE SMUGGLING GANG BUSTED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and agencies

**KUWAIT:** Residency Affairs Detectives busted a gang that accepted bribes in exchange for allowing banned persons to enter Kuwait. The gang worked through land borders, coordinating with a truck driver to smuggle individuals banned from entering Kuwait across the border. All three Arab men confessed to charges and led police to the driver who helped them, the Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Department said in a statement.

### Abandoned cars removed

Farwaniya Municipality workers carried out campaigns in Farwaniya and Jleeb shoyoukh which resulted in the removal of

18 abandoned cars in Farwaniya. Also, a ton of furniture and electric equipment were confiscated from Jleeb, while 12 citations were issued to roaming vendors.

### Visitor overdoses in Salmiya hotel

The body of an Egyptian man was recovered by the coroner. The man allegedly died of an overdose in a Salmiya hotel. A security source said the man arrived on a visit visa and was staying at the hotel. After workers noticed that the man had not left his room since his arrival, the police and detectives were called. Police obtained a warrant and upon entering the room, found the man dead. Police are investigating to find out the source of the drugs found with the corpse.

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In Brief

KUWAITI RESEARCHER FETED

**SHARJAH:** A Kuwaiti maritime researcher was named person of the year yesterday in a literary forum that brought together a bevy of Arab and international authors. In its 17th edition, the 'Sharjah International Narrator Forum' feted Dr Yaqoub Al-Hajji for his contributions to maritime research and efforts to protect national heritage. Kuwait has been chosen as the guest of honor for this year's installment of the event, a testament to the country's vast literary accolades. — KUNA



NEW ROADS OPEN

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Public Works announced it would open five new roads in Kuwait, which are the Shehik Jaber Al-Ahmad Bridge with Sulaibiya and Doha connections, including parts of Al-Jahra Road and Jamal Abdunnasser and the western parts of Jamal Abdunnasser road as well as roads leading into Jaber Al-Ahmad city. The ministry is keeping track of all the infrastructure projects including upgrading the First Ring Road and Al-Ghaus Street. Plans for infrastructure upgrades include Al-Salmi Road, The Avenues, Al-Mutlaa, Al-Abdali and other roads. —KUNA



THIRD TOP BUYER

**ANKARA:** Kuwaitis rank third in terms of foreigners buying real estate in the country after the Iraqis and Saudis, Turkish Statistical Institute said yesterday. According to latest statistics, Kuwaitis bought 135 properties last August to be ranked third after Iraqis who bought 317 and Saudis with 198 units. House sales for foreigners reached 1,684 increasing 11.4 percent compared to the same month of previous year. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



**KUWAIT:** Vehicles lined up at a square outside the building of the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) in Reggae yesterday. MGRP is a state department that helps Kuwaitis find jobs in the private sector or start their own businesses. It also oversees payment of monthly allowances that the government grants to citizens in the private sector. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION SET FOR OCT 25

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Financial Technology Conference and Exhibition (FINTECH) is set to take place on October 25, 2017 in JW Marriott. K-NET is set to be the main sponsor of the event, which is held under the patronage of the Deputy Chairman of the Central Agency of Information Technology (CAIT) Engineer Qusai Al-Shatti. The conference will bring together decision-makers and those responsible and interested in the financial technology industry from the public and private sectors.



Engineer Qusai Al-Shatti

Shatti stated in a press release that FINTECH is a platform for financial technology companies, banks, as well as international and local information technol-

ogy firms to meet under one roof in order to discuss the rapid development of payment solutions under the impact of financial technology companies in the region. "Several global reports indicated the growth of the region's financial technology sector, and therefore there should be focus on the importance of making the most out of modern technology solutions to enhance the efficiency of the financial sector in the region," he said. "The Middle East is moving towards relying more on financial technology in the coming years," he noted. "Over the past 10 years, several emerging companies

appeared in the field of financial technology, and their number is expected to increase in the coming years." The conference will discuss financial innovation, financial services' transactions, financial regulation, lending and financing, payments and transfers, wealth management, data protection, information security, blockchain techniques, bitcoin, financial technology strategies in the Arab World as well as fraud and financial crimes. "The Central Agency for Information Technology is sponsoring the Kuwait Financial Technology Conference and Exhibition based on the importance of organizing such specialized events, which seek to achieve developments financial technology and how to invest new technologies in the banking sector and other sectors," Shatti concluded.

KUWAITI CAPITAL MARKETS AUTHORITY TAKES PART IN IOSCO CONFERENCE

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Capital Markets Authority (CMA) stressed on the importance of developing permanent financing, based on emerging capital markets, to help them face challenges. In a statement to the press yesterday, the CMA noted that it had taken part in the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) annual conference, which was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, with a delegation headed by Deputy Chairman of Board of Commissioners of Kuwait Capital Market Authority (CMA) Mishaal Al-Osaimi.

This is the first time CMA takes part in an IOSCO conference as a member. Previously, it has taken part in such conventions as an observer. The conference discussed effect of technology in financing capital markets, how capital markets could benefit from modern technology without violating their regulations, it added.

It also tackled establishing an electronic system to exchange information among IOSCO members for facilitating procedures and boosting cooperation among them for sake of attracting investors to emerging markets. The gathering also discussed

protection of capital markets' information networks as well as enacting the accessibility of supervisory authorities in the field of information security. IOSCO, an international body that brings together the world's securities regulators, is recognized as the global standard setter for the securities sector. IOSCO develops, implements and promotes adherence to internationally recognized standards for securities regulation. It works intensively with the G20 and the Financial Stability Board (FSB) on the global regulatory reform agenda.

Boursa Kuwait, formally known as Kuwait Stock Market, is a candidate to join FTSE Emerging Markets Index, as part of the annual indices revision that will be announced by the end of this month.

The FTSE Emerging Index is a free-float market-capitalization weighted index representing the performance of around 850 large and mid-cap companies in 22 emerging markets.

The FTSE further divides emerging markets into an advanced emerging market category and a secondary emerging market category. —KUNA

EUROMONEY KUWAIT 2017 CONFERENCE KICKS OFF TODAY

**KUWAIT:** The 'Euromoney Kuwait 2017' conference opens today to discuss the economic and financial reforms launched by the Kuwait government according to Kuwait's new vision (2035). According to a statement issued by the conference organizers, the Kuwaiti government's economic and financial reform package "New Kuwait" is a bold government initiative that reflects intentions to set an example in the region.

The one-day conference according to the reform package, brings together those concerned from the government, local and international financial sectors to discuss the mechanisms and policies of implementing this plan successfully and their possible impact on Kuwait and abroad.

Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh will present the Kuwait Vision and economic and financial reforms at the conference, while the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel will address the monetary situation in the country and the region, chiefly global monetary developments, in addition to participation of local banks and representatives of the Kuwait Stock Exchange and clearing companies.

The conference will be attended by head of Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) Mutlaq Al-Sane, who will present the experience of Kuwait in the partnership projects, especially after the successful experience in the first power station project, which was established in partnership between the public and private sectors. —KUNA

ALECSO'S EXECUTIVE BOARD HOLDS MEETING IN KUWAIT

**KUWAIT:** Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) executive board will hold a meeting today to follow up with member countries on latest nominations to choose its new Director General. Voting for a new director general is necessary following demise of the former chief manager, Abdullah Hamad Muharib, in May. Kuwait nominated Dr Saud Al-Harbi, Education Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Research and Curriculum, for the post.



Dr Saud Al-Harbi

The Ministry of Education completed its preparation to host the meeting in

record time, amid great efforts for supporting the Kuwaiti candidate.

Eminent figures from Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania and Tunisia were nominated too, said Dr Harbi in a statement.

Today's meeting will discuss each candidate's agenda and vision, while a ministerial meeting will be held on Sept. 28 to name ALECSO's new director general. Delegations from participating countries have already started arriving in

the country for tomorrow's meeting. Dr Harbi appreciated the efforts made by Ministries of Education and Interior to support his nomination. — KUNA



PREK CHILDREN TO BE TESTED FOR KUWAITI DIALECT PRONUNCIATION

**KUWAIT:** The Arabic language is rich with different dialects that represent the diversity of Arab societies, despite their similar traditions and culture. An individual's dialect is a way to identify his/her identity, origins and society, depending on vocabulary and how one pronounces different Arabic words.

Language is acquired at an early age, as children start mimicking sounds before learning their own dialects. Therefore, ensuring that children receive proper care in learning language is essential.

In this context, Dr Hadeel Ayyad from the Communication Disorders Department in the College of Life Sciences at Kuwait University conducted a specialized study on difficulties facing children in language learning.

The study involves a test titled "KAAP-Test", related to pronunciation and sounds of the Kuwaiti dialect. The test targets children between four to five years of age, studying sounds they had fully acquired, Ayyad said yesterday. The test aims to

improve word pronunciation for children to prevent them from having any dialect-learning disorders in the future, she added.

Early medical intervention for children with hearing and speech disorders can play a big role in improving their condition and allow them to blend in with their society, Dr Ayyad said.

Ayyad noted that the test involves studying the ability of children to pronounce necessary sounds needed to fully acquire the Kuwaiti dialect. She added that the test covered all of Kuwait's governorates. The test also aims to tackle any pronunciation difficulties to ensure that children will be ready to enter kindergarten without language barriers, she noted.

Meanwhile, Ayyad called for equal teaching of English and Arabic languages in foreign and bilingual schools in Kuwait. She noted that English is a universal language, but "we have to make sure that Kuwaiti students will know their Arabic language and Kuwaiti dialect very well." —KUNA

VISIT TO SWITZERLAND TO BOOST TIES: ENVOY

**BERN:** The visit of the Kuwaiti parliamentary friendship group to the Swiss parliament is part of the continuity of "distinguished" relations between parliamentarians in various fields, said Kuwait's Ambassador to Switzerland Bader Al-Tunaib yesterday.

The exchange of experiences in the parliamentary fields and benefiting from the various experiences in the mechanisms of democratiza-

tion will be one of the main topics to be discussed by the Kuwaiti delegation, Tunaib said in a statement.

Tunaib stressed the depth and strength of the relations between the Kuwaiti and Swiss parliaments, which is reflected in the high-level official visits, including the visit of the National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem to the Swiss parliament in 2014.

He pointed out that the mutual visits between both parliaments' officials have strengthened bilateral ties as both countries share many common issues.

The delegation of the sixth parliamentary friendship group is headed by MP Askar Al-Enezi and consists of MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaie, MP Dr Muhammad Al-Huwaila and MP Hamoud Al-Khudair. — KUNA





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**N KOREA, CHAD AMONG COUNTRIES ON NEW US TRAVEL BAN**



**BALUKHALI:** A Rohingya Muslim, who crossed over from Myanmar into Bangladesh, beats other refugees as a fight broke out during a distribution of aid near Balukhali refugee camp. — AP

**MYANMAR'S CRUCIBLE OF COMMUNAL HATE**

**NO WAY BACK FOR ONCE PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES**

**SITTWE:** Hindus once sold food to Rohingyas, spoke the same language and even cut the hair of their Muslim neighbors. But co-existence among the collage of ethnicities in Myanmar's Rakhine state has been ruptured—perhaps irreversibly—by the bloodshed of the last month. Violence has periodically cut through the western state, where communal rivalries have been sharpened by British colonial meddling, chicanery by Myanmar's army and fierce dispute over who does—and does not—belong in Rakhine. But the events of August 25, when raids by Rohingya militants unleashed a swirl of violence across the north, have sunk Rakhine to new depths of hate.

"All of our family died at the village... we will not go back," said Chaw Shaw Chaw Thee, one of hundreds of displaced Hindus seeking shelter in the state capital Sittwe. The 20-year-old said she lost 23 family members as Rohingya militants swarmed the clutch of Hindu villages in Kha Maung Seik, near the Bangladesh border.

On Sunday the army said 28 badly-decomposed bodies of Hindu men, women and children had been pulled from two mass graves in the same area. It was not immediately clear if they belonged to Chaw Shaw Chaw Thee's family. Heavily pregnant when she fled, she gave birth at a disused football stadium in Sittwe, where hundreds of traumatized Hindus now sleep on grubby mats in the overcrowded concourse.

An army lockdown has made it impossible to independently verify what happened in the villages of northern Rakhine, an area dominated by Rohingya Muslims who are

a minority elsewhere in the mainly Buddhist country. But allegations, carved along ethnic lines, are spinning out as conspiracy and competing identity claims override empathy between former neighbors. Hindus, who make up less than one percent of Rakhine's population, accuse Rohingyas of massacring them, burning their homes and kidnapping women for marriage.

Meanwhile the Rohingya, some 430,000 of whom have fled to Bangladesh, trade accusations with ethnic Rakhine Buddhists of grisly mob attacks and army "clearance operations" that have emptied their villages. Small ethnic groups such as the Mro, Thet and Diagnet have also been caught up in the killings and chaos of the last month. "We were barbers for Muslims, our women sold things in Muslim villages, I had Muslim friends, we had no problems," said Kyaw Kyaw Naing, a 34-year-old Hindu who can dance across linguistic divides in Hindi, Rakhine, Burmese and Rohingya. Community ties in what is also Myanmar's poorest state have now unraveled. "We want to go back, but we will not if the Muslims are there."

**Bitter history**

Last week Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi told the international community that Rohingya refugees were welcome back if they were properly "verified". But delivering on that promise will be almost impossible in a country where the status of the Rohingya is incendiary. The Rohingyas say they are a distinct ethnic group whose roots stretch back centuries.

Myanmar's powerful military insists they are "Bengalis" who were first brought to the country by British colonizers and have continued to pour in illegally ever since. "It can't be solved in the short-term... to be stable and harmonious could take decades," Oo Hla Saw, a lawmaker for the Arakan National Party, which represents Rakhine Buddhists, told AFP. Rakhine's history is bitterly contested and flecked by rivalries.

Once a proud a Buddhist kingdom with a deep Muslim influence from trade and settlement, Rakhine's demographics were overhauled by British colonial administrators. They shunted in large numbers of Hindu Indians and Bengali Muslims as farm hands to an area already populated by a soup of ethnicities including the Rohingya and Rakhine.

The Japanese invasion during World War II saw Rakhine clash with Rohingyas, who were perceived to have been favoured by the retreating British. Since 1962 the military has kindled anti-Rohingya sentiment, painting itself as the protector of the Buddhist faith from conquest by Islam. Three major campaigns—in 1978, the early 90s and now—have driven Rohingyas from Myanmar in huge numbers.

The army, which ran the country for 50 years and still has its hands on key levers of power, has also gradually rubbed out the group's legal status. A 1982 law stripped Rohingyas of citizenship, subjecting them to suffocating controls on everything from where they can travel to how many children they can have. "The army wants to clear the Muslim community from Rakhine state," says Kyaw Min, a

Rohingya and former MP, who has had his citizenship revoked. "The intention is to drive down the Rohingya population. They have achieved that in the south of Rakhine, now they are targeting the north." Repression has fed Rohingya militancy, according to analysts.

**'Next time no escape'**

Last month a government-backed commission on Rakhine's troubles, led by former UN chief Kofi Annan, urged "all communities to move beyond entrenched historical narratives". But a few hours after its report was published, the militants attacked, sparking a ferocious military response that the UN believes amounts to "ethnic cleansing".

The report also urged the government to boost the economy to uplift a poor population and build community bonds. Business ties and personal relations once defied communal lines, with Rohingyas who could not legally own property relying on Rakhine neighbors to secure deeds for them on the sly. Now the fearful displaced inside Rakhine say there is no way they can ever again live alongside Rohingyas neighbors.

Khin Saw Nyo, 48, an ethnic Rakhine, said nearby Muslim villagers suddenly turned on her community near the Bangladesh border, forcing them to flee to the mountains. "We will die if we go back," she told AFP from inside a monastery sheltering refugees in Sittwe, adding Rohingyas militants are still preparing to strike. "They warned us to eat well... they said the next time we will not escape." — AFP

**'WORLD'S HEAVIEST WOMAN' DIES IN ABU DHABI**

**ABU DHABI:** An Egyptian believed to be the world's heaviest woman died yesterday of heart and kidney failure at an Abu Dhabi hospital, following months of treatment to help her lose weight and one day walk again. A team of more than 20 doctors had been caring for the bedridden Eman Ahmed Abd El Aty, 37, since her arrival at Burjeel Hospital in May.

El Aty first sought treatment in India, traveling from the port city of Alexandria to Mumbai aboard a specially modified Airbus in early February. She had a long wait as no airlines were willing to fly her due to her health complications. She had not left home in more than two decades and weighed around 500 kilograms. Her request for an Indian visa was initially denied, but she was granted passage after the doctor who volunteered to do her initial surgery tweeted a plea for help directly to India's foreign minister, who intervened.

She underwent bariatric surgery—a stomach-shrinking bypass procedure—the following month, initially shedding 100 kilograms at Saifee Hospital. Her family told the doctor that as a child she was diagnosed with elephantiasis, a condition that causes the limbs and other body parts to swell, leaving her almost immobile.

By the time she left Mumbai, doctors said El Aty had lost more than half her original



**ABU DHABI:** This file photo taken on July 24, 2017 shows Egyptian national Eman Ahmed Abd El Aty waving during a press conference at the Burjeel Hospital. — AFP

weight. El Aty left Mumbai when her sister clashed with the hospital, disputing her progress and treatment. In Abu Dhabi's Burjeel Hospital, doctors were hoping to help El Aty walk again, according to a report in the Indian

Express. El Aty celebrated her birthday last month with her family and doctors by her side. The Alexandria native had dreamed to one day visit the beach again, the Indian Express said, quoting her sister. — AFP

**QATAR SAYS TRUMP WANTS TO FIX GULF CRISIS WITH DIALOGUE**

**PARIS:** Qatar's foreign minister said yesterday that US President Donald Trump was stepping up efforts for a diplomatic solution to the crisis in the Gulf. Trump initially took a hard line against Qatar, calling it a "high level" sponsor of terrorism after Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt shook the region by cutting political and trade ties with the small state in June. The action suspended air and shipping routes with the world's biggest exporter of liquefied natural gas, which is home to the region's biggest US military base. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani told reporters in Paris that he had seen a "greater desire" from Trump to fix the stand-off through discussion.

"He has stated very clearly that he doesn't want to see conflict among friends. So there is a determination by the US to solve this by dialogue." There was no immediate comment from the White House. In Trump's initial comments in June, he suggested he had helped plan the Qatar action with Arab leaders, though last week he said he expected the dispute to be solved quickly. The nations say Doha supports regional foe Iran and Islamists, charges Qatar's leaders

deny. Al-Thani said Qatar was doing well economically despite the sanctions, but said the Arab action was actually driving Qatar closer to Tehran, something Doha has acknowledged in the past.

"They said Qatar was now closer to Iran. By their measures they are pushing Qatar to Iran. They are giving Iran, or any regional force, Qatar like a gift," he said. "Is that their objective, to push one country, a GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) member state towards Iran? This is not a wise objective," he added.

Al-Thani said Qatar's position over Syria had not changed. Both Qatar and Saudi Arabia have backed Syrian rebels, despite their differences. "After eight months, after the militarisation of the (Syrian) revolution, this is when Qatar decided to take a side. We decided to stand with the people," said al-Thani. "Our position - will it be changed because blockading nations have a dispute with us? That would mean our principles that we are fighting for our worthless. Our position and the values which we have stuck to from the beginning have remained the same. War criminals need to be held accountable," he added. — Reuters



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## PALESTINIAN PM TO VISIT GAZA FOR RECONCILIATION EFFORTS

**JERUSALEM:** Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah will travel to Gaza on October 2 as part of a fresh push to end a decade-long split between Fatah and Hamas, which runs the enclave, his government said yesterday. The visit follows concessions by Islamist group Hamas after discussions with Egypt, which has urged it to take steps towards reconciliation with Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah, based in the occupied West Bank.

Fatah and Hamas have been divided for a decade, with separate administrations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. "Prime minister Rami Hamdallah has

decided after consulting with President Mahmud Abbas that the government will hold its weekly meeting in Gaza next week," government spokesman Yusuf Al Mahmoud said in a statement published by official Palestinian news agency WAFA.

"Hamdallah and members of the government will arrive in Gaza next Monday to start taking over government responsibilities after Hamas announced its agreement to dissolve the administrative committee and enable the government to assume its full responsibilities." Hamdallah, who is not believed to have travelled to the

Gaza Strip since 2015, also wrote about the visit on his Facebook page. "I am heading to the beloved Gaza Strip next Monday with the government and all bodies, authorities and security services," he wrote. "We hope all parties and all Palestinians will focus on the national interest to enable the government to continue carrying out all of its functions in a way which serves the Palestinian citizens first."

Hamas said a week ago that it had agreed to steps towards resolving the split with Abbas's Fatah, announcing it would dissolve a body seen as a rival government-known as the administra-

tive committee-and was ready to hold elections. The statement came after Hamas leaders held talks with Egyptian officials and with the Gaza Strip facing a mounting humanitarian crisis.

The UN envoy for the Middle East peace process, Nickolay Mladenov, urged the two factions not to "miss this last opportunity to bring unity". "Everybody recognises that the situation in which Gaza's humanitarian problems risk exploding is extremely dangerous for everyone," he said while on a visit to Gaza yesterday. "If we miss this opportunity, I don't think another opportunity will come anytime soon."

It remains unclear whether the steps will result in further concrete action towards ending the deep division with Fatah. Hamas for now continues to run a de facto separate administration in the Gaza Strip and is in charge of security forces there.

Previous attempts to resolve the split have repeatedly failed. The last attempt at a unity government fell apart in 2015, with the two sides exchanging blame. Hamas has run Gaza since 2007, having seized it in a near civil war from Fatah following a dispute over parliamentary elections won by the Islamist movement the previous year. —AFP

## N KOREA, VENEZUELA, CHAD AMONG COUNTRIES ON NEW US TRAVEL BAN

### 8 COUNTRIES CITED FOR POOR SECURITY, LACK OF COOPERATION

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump issued a new open-ended travel ban Sunday that saw North Korea, Venezuela and Chad among a list of eight countries cited for poor security and lack of cooperation with US authorities. The new restrictions replace an expiring 90-day measure that had locked Trump in political and legal battles since he took office in January over what critics alleged was an effort to block Muslims from the country.

But the White House stressed that the measure was to protect the United States from terror attacks. "We are taking action today to protect the safety and security of the American people by establishing a minimum security baseline for entry into the United States," Trump said in a statement. "We cannot afford to continue the failed policies of the past, which present an unacceptable danger to our country. My highest obligation is to ensure the safety and security of the American people, and in issuing this new travel order, I am fulfilling that sacred obligation."

#### Iraq kept off list

Sudan, one of the six majority-Muslim countries on the original travel ban, was removed from the list. The US has recently praised Sudan's efforts in fighting terrorism ahead of a decision expected in October on whether to lift decades-old sanctions on Khartoum. Full bans were newly placed on nationals from North Korea and Chad, and extended for five countries on the original list: Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen.

Limited restrictions meanwhile were placed on Venezuela, for officials from government agencies including interior and foreign ministries, the main police and intelligence services, and other agencies. Trump's order said Caracas was not cooperating on security issues. Officials speaking on background stressed that the decision was taken after an extensive review of high-risk countries by the Department of Homeland Security, which were all given the opportunity to improve their security standards. The DHS report also said that Iraq did not meet its baseline security requirements. But because Baghdad is a close ally and supports the presence of large numbers of US troops and civilians, officials said, the White House opted not to place Iraq on the list. But US-bound travelers there will face much tougher vetting.

"If you can't screen people effectively to know who's coming into your country, then you shouldn't allow people from that country to travel," said White House National Security Advisor HR McMaster. Trump administration officials stressed that the restrictions are "conditions-based, not time-based," indicating that significant improvements by countries could see them delisted from the travel ban.

#### Not a 'Muslim ban'

The officials also said the addition of North Korea and

Venezuela demonstrated that the measure was based on security standards and was not a "Muslim ban," as detractors have argued. That accusation was accepted by federal appeals courts in lawsuits that blocked the first efforts by Trump to set the ban, in January and March. The ban, which also included a broader, 120-day ban on refugees that expires next month, will be argued in the Supreme Court on October 10.

"Religion, or the religious origin of individuals or nations, was not a factor," a senior government official told reporters. "The inclusion of those countries, Venezuela and North Korea, was about the fact that those governments are simply not compliant with our basic security requirements." But Becca Heller, director of the International Refugee Assistance Project, said that of the three countries added, "Chad is majority Muslim, travel from North Korea is already basically frozen and the restrictions on Venezuela only affect government officials on certain visas. You can't get any more transparent than that."

On the decision to remove Sudan, she said: "Last week, the government ended Temporary Protected Status for

Sudan, suggesting that the government of Sudan was pressured into agreeing to accept massive numbers of deported Sudanese nationals from the US in exchange for being dropped from the travel ban." "President Trump's original sin of targeting Muslims cannot be cured by throwing other countries onto his enemies list," added Anthony Romero of the American Civil Liberties Union.

North Korea, locked in a dangerous face-off with Washington over its nuclear weapons program, was added, the order said, because Pyongyang "does not cooperate with the United States government in any respect." Chad was added to the list even though Trump's order called it "an important and valuable counterterrorism partner." It pointed to the presence in the northern African country of designated terror groups like the so-called Islamic State, Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram, and said the government does not adequately share security and terrorism-related information. The bans for the five countries from the previous 90-day order, which expired Sunday, would immediately continue under the new order. For North Korea, Chad, and Venezuela, the restrictions will be implemented starting October 18. —AFP



**PYONGYANG:** In this June 27, 2015, file photo, passengers board an Air Koryu plane bound for Beijing, at the Pyongyang International Airport. —AP

## SEARCHERS DIG AS MEXICO CITY REOPENS JUST 1% OF SCHOOLS

**MEXICO CITY:** Search teams were still digging in dangerous piles of rubble yesterday, hoping against the odds to find survivors at collapsed buildings in Mexico City, where the death toll from the Sept. 19 earthquake rose to 186, and 324 nationwide. Officials said they had cleared only 103 of Mexico City's nearly 9,000 schools to reopen yesterday. The need to inspect 98 percent of the capital's public and private schools nearly a week after a magnitude 7.1 earthquake killed at least 182 people in the city and 138 in nearby states was a stark indicator of just how long the path back to normalcy will be.

Federal Education Secretary Aurelio Nuno said it could take a couple more weeks to inspect all of the schools, and the government will announce each day which schools have been cleared to resume classes. For schools found to have structural damage, students could be put in temporary classrooms. "For the safety of the boys, the girls, the teachers and for the peace of mind, of course, of all the fathers and all the mothers, all schools will be inspected," Nuno said.

Rescue operations aimed at finding living survivors remained active in at least three sites in Mexico City - two apartment buildings and an office building - but hope dimmed every time rescuers had to retreat due to instability of debris. But no one has been found alive since Wednesday, when a woman was pulled from debris. As darkness fell Sunday, prayers were held by families who have been gathered near the collapsed office hoping missing relatives will be found.

#### 'Distrust of authorities'

A crowd of onlookers watching swelled, and so did the number of volunteer workers. Teachers at one corner tried to entertain children of some of the waiting families. There also appeared to be more people offering psychological support. Hugo Luna, whose cousin Erika Gabriela Albarran was believed trapped in the fallen building, complained that officials had not immediately informed families when two bodies were removed Saturday night. "There is a lot of distrust of authorities," he said.

His aunt, who was also inside the building when the quake hit but escaped, is traumatized, he said. "Nothing happened to her, but now she has panic attacks," Luna said. "You open the door, she hears a noise and she gets scared." For the family of Adrian Moreno, a missing 26-year-old human resources worker at an accounting firm, the emotional roller coaster is getting to be too much. Moreno's mother had a look of anguish and largely stopped being able to speak. His boyfriend, Dario Hernandez, also looked lost, his gaze tear-stained and unfocused. —AP

## SYRIANS PLAN JOYOUS RETURN TO RAQA

**AIN ISSA:** Nariman Abdullah has plans for her return to her Syrian home town Raqa: she's going to walk through the streets in full make-up, something the Islamic State group strictly forbade. The jihadists who ravaged Raqa are on the verge of losing their one-time Syrian bastion, and in a camp for those displaced from the city, talk is now turning to resuming life in a liberated Raqa.

Abdullah, 19, was a care assistant before IS seized Raqa in 2014. She finally fled the city three months ago, after the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces broke into it as part of their campaign to oust the jihadists. Like thousands of others, she found shelter at a camp in Ain Issa, some 50 kilometers north of the city.

"When I go back to Raqa, I'll wear make-up again... I'll listen to the music that we missed, because it was forbidden," she tells AFP, dressed in a fuchsia robe with a headscarf framing her face. IS's ultra-radical interpretation of Islam forced women under their rule to cover themselves from head to toe when outside, wearing a black robe, face veil and even gloves. Make-up, music and celebrations were all strictly forbidden. "I'll wear trousers, like before... I'll put on headphones and stroll through the streets again listening to music," she says excitedly. "I miss everything about Raqa... even the water is different there."

#### 'We'll sing in the streets'

Elsewhere in the camp, women ask the newest arrivals from Raqa for news of their city. "When can we go home?" one asks plaintively. Beside them, children with their faces covered in dust play barefoot, laughing loudly and flying paper planes. One sings a traditional song from Raqa as they play. When a group of displaced learn that an AFP photographer has been inside Raqa recently, they clamor to see photos on his camera of their city. In a frenzy of excitement, they point to familiar streets and places in the pictures, but their faces fall as the extent of the destruction dawns on them. Qais Al-Buqan, 27, has just a

single dream: to return to his home town and open a music school.

He taught a number of instruments before the jihadists arrived, including the piano and accordion. "For years now I haven't been able to play or teach. I want to go back, open a music school and teach again," the skinny young man tells AFP, refusing to be photographed. He also hopes to organize a concert in the Al-Rashid garden, which was the largest in the city and, he says, the most beautiful. He wants to "play before an audience in an atmosphere of joy". Buqan says he dreams about Raqa, and cannot wait to go back. He and his musician friends will "sing in the streets and everyone will hear us".

#### 'War has taken everything'

For Ahmad Al-Nawfal, the desire to go home is as much about leaving the Ain Issa camp, where the displaced have few resources. "We hate the camp and living in it. We're waiting for the moment when they say

'you can go back to Raqa'-it'll be a day of celebration," the 45-year-old says. But he does admit he is anxious about how he will find the city upon his return.

"We're afraid that our houses will be mined and our children will die and we'll lose our lives after we have lost everything," he says outside his tent, holding a cup of tea. Near Nawfal's tent, a woman brushes her daughter's hair, while others prepare a meal. In a large tent with subdivisions that shelters several families, Amal Jassem Al-Jomaa sits alone on the ground, listening to her radio.

The 35-year-old lost her husband during the war, and her in-laws took custody of their seven children, accusing her family of being IS sympathizers. "This war has taken everything from me-my husband, my children, my home," she says sadly. "I hope that my children will return to me and we'll live together in Raqa, and forget all the pain we have lived through in this war." —AFP

## IRAQ HANGS 42 MILITANTS CONVICTED OF TERRORISM

**BAGHDAD:** Iraq yesterday executed 42 Sunni Muslim militants convicted on terrorism charges ranging from killing members of security forces to detonating car bombs. The biggest mass execution this year in Iraq came after the government came after Sunni suicide attacks killed at least 60 people near the southern city of Nassiriya, a Shiite area, on Sept 14, prompting Shi'ite demands for tougher judicial action.

The Justice Ministry said on Sunday the 42 had been hanged at a prison in Nassiriya, three months after 14 other militants were executed following convictions for terrorism. Islamic State claimed responsibility for three suicide attacks targeting restaurants and a security checkpoint near Nassiriya.

Relatives of victims were invited to witness Sunday's executions, the justice ministry said.

"Despite all the pain inside me after losing my two brothers in the suicide attacks, when I saw the terrorists dangling from the rope I felt relief," said Fadhil Abdul Ameer from Nassiriya.

Islamic State's self-declared caliphate, declared in 2014 after it captured wide areas of northern and western Iraq, effectively collapsed in July when U.S.-backed Iraqi forces captured Mosul, the group's de facto capital in Iraq.

But recent deadly bomb attacks in Baghdad and other cities show the jihadists remain capable of guerrilla-style warfare, a tactical shift away from seeking territorial conquest. —Reuters

## News

in brief



**COLOMBO:** This handout photo released by the Sri Lanka Customs Office yesterday shows a Sri Lankan customs official displaying gold that had been found stuffed in a man's rectum at the country's main international airport. —AFP

#### Sri Lanka arrests man with gold-filled bottom

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka customs arrested an India-bound air passenger attempting with "difficulty" to smuggle nearly one kilogram of gold stuffed in his rectum, a spokesman said yesterday. Officials were alerted when the 45-year-old Sri Lankan behaved "suspiciously" at Colombo airport's departure lounge on Sunday, spokesman Sunil Jayaratne said. "He was called for a thorough screening after customs officers noticed him walking with difficulty and appearing to be in pain," Jayaratne told AFP. He said a close examination revealed the gold wrapped in black plastic sheets. Among the 904 grams of gold recovered were seven yellow "biscuits" and six chains. The haul was valued at 4.5 million rupees (\$30,000). He described him as a courier for an organized smuggling ring.

#### Indian woman burned for leaving boyfriend

**NEW DELHI:** A father and son have been arrested in India for allegedly burning a woman alive over a soured relationship, authorities said yesterday. The 18-year-old was beaten by her former boyfriend and his father before being doused in kerosene and set alight in a district of Rajasthan state in western India, police said. "She was attacked by the father-son duo and later burnt alive," local police officer Manish Charan told AFP. He said the woman was returning home when the pair accosted her late Saturday in a local market. The ex-lover poured kerosene on the victim, but she was unsure who set her ablaze, the officer said quoting her dying statement.

#### British climber dies on Nepal mountain

**KATHMANDU:** A British climber has died while attempting to climb Nepal's Mount Manaslu, the world's eighth tallest peak, the expedition organizer said yesterday. The mountaineer fell ill at the last camp before the 8,156-meter summit and died as he was being taken down the mountain. "We have confirmed that one person, a British national, has died between camp two and three. He went up to camp four but was not feeling well and was descending with our staff," said Iswari Poudel, head of the Himalayan Guides Nepal climbing agency. The agency did not name the man.

#### Papua New Guinea market fire kills 10

**SYDNEY:** Ten people believed to be Chinese died when a supermarket caught fire in Papua New Guinea while they were sleeping, reports and officials said yesterday. The disaster at the Splendid Star shop was made worse by the lack of any proper fire-fighting equipment in Manus province in the impoverished Pacific nation's north, where the blaze started early Friday. The dead included six women and four men. Manus provincial police commander Chief Inspector David Yapu said the fire in Lorengau town quickly engulfed the building, trapping the 10 inside. "The fire spread out quickly and into the bedrooms where the 10 were sleeping," Yapu told The National newspaper.

#### Man arrested over train bomb attack

**LONDON:** Police yesterday arrested a 20-year-old man in Wales in connection with the London Underground train bombing this month, bringing the number of people in custody to four. The man was arrested before dawn by counter-terrorism officers in the Welsh capital Cardiff and has been taken to a police station in London for questioning. Police did not name the suspect but said he was arrested under the Terrorism Act. An 18-year-old man, Ahmed Hassan, was charged on Friday with attempted murder and the use of explosives. Two other men, aged 25 and 30, who were arrested in Newport in Wales last week, are still being questioned.

#### Fireworks factory blast in India kills 9

**NEW DELHI:** A blaze at an illegal fireworks factory in eastern India killed nine workers who were stocking up ahead of the Hindu festival of Diwali next month, police said yesterday. The fire broke out at the factory in Jharkhand state late Sunday after an explosion. "The unit was being run illegally and there was a huge stock of fireworks in preparation for Diwali," district police superintendent Prabhakar Kumar told AFP. "The fire started at 4:30 in the evening. Police and fire officials reached there soon. But intermittent explosions continued till midnight." —Agencies



## FROM 'GHOST' TO RISING STAR: KENYA'S FIRST ALBINO SENATOR

**NAIROBI:** Isaac Mwaura always thought he was a normal kid growing up in Kenya, never once looking in the mirror and realizing his pale, white skin was different. That innocence vanished when 12-year-old Mwaura was walking home from school with friends, a fellow albino among them. "Suddenly a stranger started pointing at us and calling us albinos," said 35-year-old Mwaura, who last month became Kenya's first senator with the pigment disorder.

It is the latest in a series of firsts he has achieved after rising to public prominence in 2013 as the first Kenyan with albinism to join parliament. Both are nominated positions. People with albinism - estimated at one in 15,000 Sub-Saharan Africans - lack melanin, which absorbs ultraviolet rays, making their skin and hair white. Lack of pigment can leave the skin vulnerable to sunburn and skin cancers; it is also associated with vision problems. The psychological fallout is another matter. After the taunting, schoolboy Mwaura waited patiently for his

mother to come home. "I asked her who an albino was and why we were being called albinos, yet all of us had our own names," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from his office in downtown Nairobi.

As his mother explained the condition, the world suddenly became a different, dangerous place, he said. Albinism is seen as a curse in Kenya, and people with the condition are often called "zeru", which means "ghost".

People with albinism are frequently shunned, attacked and even killed in Africa. In many countries, their body parts are believed to bring wealth and are prized for use in witchcraft. They are often abandoned by their parents or kept out of school because they are seen as mentally retarded.

### Hospitalized

Mwaura, who hosts a radio talk show every Saturday, is determined to change such beliefs. He organised the world's first beauty pageant for people with albinism in

2016 to challenge perceptions. "We wanted people with albinism to feel good about themselves, know that they are as attractive as anyone else," said Mwaura, founder of the Albinism Society of Kenya, which organized the contest. Rejection starts young. Most people with albinism in Kenya grow up in single-parent homes, experts say. "My father walked out of our home immediately I was born," said Mwaura, who recently became a father himself. "He said I could not be his child," he said, sitting in a swivel chair beside a wall of photographs. The centerpiece is a 2015 picture of Mwaura with his bride, Mukami, walking down a red carpet in the lush grounds of Nairobi's State House, with President Uhuru Kenyatta smiling in the background. Mwaura never tried to make contact with the man who abandoned his mother to deal with a condition of which she was largely unaware. She raised her two sons alone, letting Mwaura play in the sun with other children.

"My mother initially thought I was just a

light-skinned baby," he said. "She didn't think there was anything wrong with me." After Mwaura was hospitalized several times for sunburn, a visiting aunt told his mother to buy sunscreen and glasses and send him to school. He went on to earn master's degrees in Britain and South Africa, and worked for several charities before becoming, in 2010, a policy adviser to the prime minister.

### Cowboy

Prejudice was rife in parliament, ranging from the comical to humiliating. One hot day, jeers and whistles erupted when Mwaura walked into the chamber wearing a wide-brimmed hat. "A member of parliament stood up and asked why a cowboy had been let into the house," he said. Even worse - the time when he was forced to sit in the corner and silently listen to a governance workshop, along with representatives of the disabled whom he had invited.

"We were not allowed to participate," said Mwaura. "This made me feel inade-

quate, yet I knew we had so much to offer." One of his key achievements was persuading MPs to create a fund to pay for sunscreen, eye care and cancer treatment for people with albinism.

This year, Mwaura achieved another first in Kenya by standing as a parliamentary candidate in the party primaries as the "muthungu wa Ruiru", or the white man from Ruiru, some 30 km north-east of Nairobi. Given the weight of prejudice facing Africans with albinism, few have succeeded in its rough and tumble politics. Neighboring Tanzania elected its first man with albinism to parliament in 2010, while Mali and the Republic of Congo each have one minister with the condition. Although Mwaura came last, and his car was even shot at during the campaign, he feels victorious. "The thousands of people living with albinism now know they can run for any political office," he said, attributing his loss to the fact his pockets were not as deep as his rivals. "My point was made." — Reuters

## INFIGHTING HITS HARD-RIGHT AfD AFTER ELECTION SUCCESS

**BERLIN:** The nationalist Alternative for Germany was hit by party infighting yesterday, just hours after winning its first seats in parliament, with its co-chief Frauke Petry declaring that she won't join its Bundestag group. Citing "dissent" with more hardline colleagues, Petry dropped her bombshell at a morning party press conference, catching other key AfD figures by surprise as she abruptly left the room.

The spectacle played out before the media put the spotlight on the tug-of-war within the party between radical and more moderate forces at the top, and raised questions on how far right it planned to position itself. Although its beginnings as an anti-euro party were rooted in populism, the AfD's rhetoric veered further right in the run-up to Sunday's elections.

Key members challenged Germany's culture of atonement over World War II and the slaughter of six million Jews in the Holocaust. It also rolled out provocative posters declaring "Burkas? We prefer bikinis" and "New Germans? Let's make them ourselves" featuring a heavily pregnant white woman, to push its Islamophobic and anti-migrant campaign.

Outraged mainstream politicians have heaped on criticism, including Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel who had labeled leaders of the party "real Nazis". But even Petry herself had openly criticized one of her party's two key candidates Alexander Gauland over his claim that Germany should be proud of its war veterans, saying that would lead voters to shun the party.

Yesterday, seated next to Gauland, she declared that "there is dissent in the AfD over the issues". "I decided after careful reflection that I will not sit with the (AfD) parliamentary group" in the Bundestag, said Petry who added she will serve as an independent MP. Hours later, four AfD local MPs said they were leaving party ranks and forming their own group in the state parliament of Mecklenburg-Pomerania. The open

squabbling put a damper on the party's success, and pointed to a potentially rocky future for the party in parliament.

### 'Get our country back'

Alice Weidel, another top AfD candidate in the election, revealed that Petry had not spoken to either her or Gauland "for months" even though the duo were the leading faces of the AfD's campaign. For now, Weidel and Gauland appear to have prevailed, as they basked in the fact that the party has become Germany's third biggest political force with 12.6 percent of the vote.

It even came in just on top of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union in the eastern state of Saxony, home of the anti-Islam PEGIDA protest movement, as it lured away voters angry with the arrival in Germany of more than a million asylum seekers since 2015. Gauland, who had also come under fire from Petry over his vow to "go after" Merkel and her government, stood firm on his tone.

"No one would be surprised in the British parliament if someone said they would go after the government," he said, adding that "of course one must go after a government, go after it in a parliamentary debate." Gauland also minced no words about his party's anti-migrant platform, declaring that "we will get our country back." "I don't want to lose Germany to an invasion of foreign people from foreign cultures," he vowed.

Reiterating his opposition to double nationality, Gauland took aim at ethnic Turks in Germany, saying he had "little understanding" for those who have German citizenship but who still voted in favor of a referendum in Turkey to increase President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's powers. "On that, one can at least ask the question whether these people have really arrived in this country and whether they are really part of the German society," he said. — AFP



BERLIN: Workers remove an election poster of the Christian Democrats with a photo of German chancellor Angela Merkel. — AP

## MERKEL FACES TRICKY COALITION TALKS AFTER 'NIGHTMARE VICTORY'

### 'THE CHANCELLOR SQUANDERED THE PEOPLE'S FAITH'

**BERLIN:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel huddled with her party yesterday after winning a fourth term with a far weaker score, now facing the double headache of an emboldened nationalist opposition party and thorny coalition talks ahead. If the campaign was widely decried as boring, its outcome was a bombshell as populist hard-right surge poached votes from Merkel's conservatives as well as the centre-left Social Democrats, handing both their worst results in decades. "A nightmare victory for Merkel," said Germany's top-selling daily Bild. "The governing parties and the chancellor squandered the people's faith in them."

After 12 years in power and running on a promise of stability and economic strength, Merkel's CDU/CSU bloc scored 33 percent, according to final results, against 20.5 percent for the Social Democrats under challenger Martin Schulz, who pledged to go into the opposition. The election marked a breakthrough for the anti-Islam Alternative for Germany (AfD), which with 12.6 percent became the third strongest party and vowed to "go after" Merkel over her migrant and refugee policy. News weekly Der Spiegel said Merkel had no one but herself to blame for the bruising she got from voters. "Angela Merkel deserved this defeat," the magazine's Dirk Kurbjuweit wrote, accusing her of running an "uninspired" campaign and "largely ignoring the challenges posed by the right".

### 'Excessively feisty'

The entry of around 90 hard-right nationalist MPs to the glass-domed Bundestag chamber breaks a taboo in post-World War II Germany. "We will take our country back," vowed the AfD's jubilant Alexander Gauland, who has recently urged Germans to be proud of their war veterans and said a government official who is of Turkish origin should be "dumped in Anatolia".

While joyful supporters of the AfD-a party with links to the far-right French National Front and Britain's UKIP-sang the German anthem at a Berlin club late Sunday, hundreds of protesters shouted "Nazis out!" But just hours after its triumph, the party's long-simmering infighting between radical and more moderate forces spilled out into the open at a dramatic morning news conference.

AfD co-leader Frauke Petry stunned her colleagues by saying she would not join the party's parliamentary group and would serve as an independent MP. She then abruptly left the room in a move Gauland criticized as "excessively feisty". Political scientist Suzanne Schuettmeyer of the University of Halle in eastern Germany said despite it remaining an opposition party, the AfD's presence in parliament would harm Germany's image abroad. "It's Germany and it will change the way we are perceived, because AfD will speak a language that we thought we had overcome, that was outside of our political consensus," she told AFP.

### 'Bitter disappointment'

All other political parties have ruled out working with the AfD, whose leaders call Merkel a "traitor" for allowing in more than one million asylum seekers since the height of the refugee

influx in 2015. While Germany still digests the rise of the right-wingers, Merkel's inner circle was preparing for what could be protracted coalition talks with smaller parties.

Merkel vowed to put together a reliable alliance, insisting late Sunday that "the stability of German governments is of the utmost value". Speaking on public television, she appealed "to all sides to take their responsibilities seriously". But the leader of her Bavarian CSU allies, Horst Seehofer, a vocal critic of Merkel's asylum policy, called the poll outcome a "bitter disappointment" and vowed to close the "open flank" on the right before state elections next year, signaling more trouble ahead.

A humbled Merkel must now find a new junior partner after the Social Democrats (SPD) declared they would go into opposition, to recover the support they lost while governing in Merkel's shadow. Schulz, putting a brave face on the defeat, vowed Monday that the 150-year-old traditional workers' party would be "a strong opposition force in this country, to defend democracy in this country against those who question it and attack it".

This will likely force Merkel to team up with two smaller, and very different, parties to form a lineup dubbed the "Jamaica coalition" because the three parties' colors match those of the Caribbean country's flag. One is the pro-business and liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP), which scored a 10.7-percent comeback after crashing out of parliament four years ago.

The other is the left-leaning, ecologist Greens party, which won 8.9 percent on campaign pledges to drive forward the country's clean energy transition. The far-left Die Linke, traditionally an opposition party, took 9.2 percent of votes. Months of horse-trading could lie ahead to build a new government and avert snap elections. But the FDP's leader Christian Lindner has pointed to new "red lines", voicing skepticism especially on French President Emmanuel Macron's plans for a single eurozone budget, which Merkel has cautiously greeted. The Greens, meanwhile, sharply differ with the FDP and CSU on key issues from immigration to the environment, pushing to expand wind farms, phase out coal and take to task car makers over the "diesel-gate" emissions cheating scandal. — AFP



BERLIN: (L-R) Frauke Petry, co-leader of Germany's nationalist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, AfD top candidate Alexander Gauland, AfD co-leader Joerg Meuthen and AfD top candidate Alice Weidel arrive for a press conference of the AfD. — AFP

## 'WE ARE ALSO CATALANS': SCOTS VOICE REFERENDUM SOLIDARITY

**EDINBURGH:** Sympathy with Catalonia's bid to hold an independence referendum next week is running high in Scotland, where lawmakers are increasingly vocal in condemning Spain's actions and a group of volunteers is heading out to help. Veterans from Scotland's failed bid for independence in its own referendum in 2014 said they were travelling to Barcelona next week to offer their support for a vote deemed unconstitutional by Spain.

"We back the Catalans," Rory Steel, vice conveyor of the Scottish National Party's youth wing, who will be heading out with around 20 people said. "We're basically going over to find out a bit more about them, trade our experiences and expertise and that sort of thing, but also to support them." Another delegation of politicians and writers is also planning to head over for the October 1 vote as observers, after a crack-down on the team organizing the referendum and mass protests.

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, head of the Scottish National Party, voiced her concern about the situation and called for dialogue in a debate in Scotland's semi-autonomous parliament last week. "The right of self-determination is an important international principle and I hope very much that it will be respected," said Sturgeon, calling for an agreement based on the deal that led to Scotland's own independence referendum in 2014.

The support is coming not only from nationalists. An open letter to Spanish Prime Mariano Rajoy calling his actions "in no way democratic" received support from more than a dozen Scottish lawmakers including some opposed to Scottish independence. Scotland's referendum vote was won 55 percent to 45 percent by those who wanted to stay part of Britain.

But Sturgeon has said that Scotland, which voted overwhelmingly to stay in the European Union in last year's referendum on EU membership, should have a right to vote again once the terms of a Brexit deal become clear. Former SNP MP George Kerevan, who founded the All Party Parliamentary Group on Catalonia, said: "The worst thing that we could do now is let that regime in Madrid crush Catalan democracy."

"If you believe in a Scottish democracy, if you believe in a Scottish right to vote, then you have to defend Catalonia's right to vote. We are Catalans and Catalans are Scottish," he said. There is a long-running affinity between Scottish and Catalan separatists. In the Scottish referendum, a group of Catalan fire-fighters came to Scotland to lend their support to the independence movement in a convoy including a vintage car painted in the colors of Catalan flag. Last year, Barcelona fans threatened to fly the Scotland flag at the Copa Del Rey final in Madrid after the government banned the Catalan flag, until the prohibition was overturned in court. — AFP

## EU ASSESS POLAND OVER RULE OF LAW

**BRUSSELS:** The EU assessed yesterday whether there is backing for unprecedented sanctions against Poland's rightwing government over fears its court reforms threaten the rule of law. The evaluation by European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans comes as Polish President Andrzej Duda prepares to unveil new versions of laws that have alarmed Brussels.

"I am going to inform the council (of EU ministers)... about the progress, or the developments rather, and then see how the council reacts," said Timmermans, a former Dutch foreign minister, as he entered the ministerial talks in Brussels. "We will of course carefully study the amended laws if they are presented today by the president."

Timmermans was seeking the support of member states to take action if Poland's Law and Justice Party (PiS) refuses to back down over controversial judicial reforms that Brussels says pose a "systemic threat" to the rule of law. If Warsaw fails to halt the measures, the commission has also warned it could trigger Article Seven of the EU's treaties-the so-called "nuclear option" that could freeze Poland's EU voting rights. Hungary has vowed to veto any such step against its Polish ally.

### Timmermans gets tough

Timmermans, the right-hand man to European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker, has been leading efforts for months to get Poland to comply with EU democracy standards. Now he is taking a tougher approach and seeking the support of the European affairs ministers from the 28-nation bloc meeting in Brussels to move ahead with firm steps, if necessary. In July, Timmermans said the Commission

was ready to trigger Article Seven if Poland goes ahead and sacks supreme court justices, the most extreme of the laws. Article Seven can be invoked by the Commission-the executive arm of the bloc-if an EU state is deemed to pose a systemic threat to the rule of law, and EU states can approve this by a majority. But moving on to actual sanctions against Poland must be approved by all the remaining member states, meaning it could be vetoed by Budapest, which has also clashed with Brussels over democracy issues. And Timmermans is also waiting to see how the Polish president, an independent allied with PiS, moves ahead with judicial reforms, an EU official said.

### Progress report

In July, Duda surprised many when he vetoed one bill that would have reinforced political control over the Supreme Court and another that allowed parliament to choose members of a body designed to protect the independence of the courts. In Warsaw, a spokesman said Duda would publish his amended draft laws yesterday. Poland said the veto from Duda had made the EU's concerns futile.

"A good part of the recommendations we have received from the EU are plainly unfounded," said Poland's deputy foreign minister for European affairs, Konrad Szymanski. It was not immediately clear whether the proposed changes will be cosmetic or whether they will reduce the justice minister's role in appointing judges. In July, the Commission also launched separate legal action against Poland over one of the reforms which could see Warsaw hauled before the EU's top court and fined. — AFP



## US DEFENSE CHIEF IN INDIA TO IMPROVE MILITARY TIES

**NEW DELHI:** Stronger military ties between India and the United States should not affect relations with neighbors such as Pakistan, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said ahead of a visit to New Delhi. The Pentagon chief arrived yesterday for a 48-hour trip—the first to India by any member of President Donald Trump's cabinet.

"This is a historic opportunity for our two democracies at a time of strategic convergence," Mattis told reporters on his flight. He is to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his new defense minister in New Delhi. The trip comes weeks after Trump unveiled a new Afghanistan strategy and urged India to

increase assistance to the war-torn nation's economy. The US president also chided Delhi's arch-rival Pakistan for offering safe haven to "agents of chaos".

When asked how he would balance the India-Pakistan dynamic, Mattis stressed that the relationship the United States is pursuing with India is "not to the exclusion of other countries." "Any nation that is living by the traditional rules of non-interference in other states in today's age of anti-terrorism, they will not find this relationship in any way adversarial," he said. India has long vied with Pakistan for influence in Afghanistan, building dams, roads and a new parliament in the troubled country.

Last year it offered some \$1 billion in aid. Trump's new Afghan strategy includes the deployment of more than 3,000 additional US troops.

### Defense cooperation

In 2016 the United States designated India a "Major Defense Partner" with the aim of improving military cooperation, increasing information-sharing and cutting red tape to ease defense deals. Mattis's predecessor Ash Carter pushed hard for stronger defence ties and the Trump administration has the same aim. The two sides will be "discussing joint efforts to advance common goals through a broader strategic exchange of views,"

Mattis said. "India from our perspective is clearly a pillar of regional stability and security: we share a common vision for a peaceful and prosperous future in the Indo-Pacific region." Trump has praised India for contributing to regional stability and for buying US military equipment. India is contemplating buying Lockheed Martin's F-16 Block 70 aircraft in a deal potentially worth \$15 billion.

The US firm has offered the most upgraded version of the jet fighter to India, the world's largest weapons importer. It is competing with Swedish defense giant Saab, whose Gripen E made its maiden flight in June. A drone deal for the Indian Navy will also likely

be up for discussion, a source familiar with the negotiations told AFP. "Since Chinese assets have started to dominate the Indian Ocean region, the Trump administration is keen on fast-tracking the acquisition of the drones," the source said.

Many commentators have said US-India cooperation could act as a counterweight to an increasingly assertive China, which has been developing its military capabilities. But Afghanistan will dominate talks when Mattis meets Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who will host her highest-level foreign delegation since being appointed this month. —AFP

## MYANMAR SEARCHES FOR MORE HINDU CORPSES AS MASS GRAVE UNEARTHED

### A MASSACRE BY ROHINGYA MUSLIM MILITANTS

**YANGON:** Myanmar troops yesterday searched for dozens of missing Hindu villagers feared dead after the discovery of a grave containing 28 corpses in Rakhine state, evidence of what the army says is a massacre by Rohingya Muslim militants. Northern Rakhine has been ravaged by communal violence since Rohingya insurgents staged deadly raids on police posts on August 25, unleashing an army crackdown that has displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians.

The vast majority—more than 430,000—are Rohingya Muslims who have fled across the border to Bangladesh from a military campaign which the UN says likely amounts to ethnic cleansing of the stateless minority. But tens of thousands of ethnic Rakhine Buddhists, and the region's small population of

Hindus, have also been internally displaced, saying they were attacked by Rohingya militants. On Sunday the army said it had discovered two mud pits filled with 28 Hindu corpses, including women and children, outside the village of Ye Baw Kyaw in northern Rakhine.

"The security troops continue searching for remaining Hindu people around the places of the pits," said in a statement posted on army chief Min Aung Hlaing's Facebook page yesterday, blaming Rohingya militants for the killings. Displaced Hindus from the area told AFP last week that Rohingya fighters stormed into their communities on August 25, killing many and taking others into the forest. They showed AFP a list of 102 people from two villages—Ye Baw

Kyaw, where the bodies were found, and Taung Ywar—feared dead by distraught relatives, who wept as they described the bloodshed. A Hindu community leader in the area, Ni Maul, confirmed to AFP that the search was going on. "Soldiers and police are here with us to find the rest of the bodies around this area," he said, adding that authorities are still working to identify the 28 corpses exhumed on Sunday. With the government blocking access to the conflict zone, it is difficult to verify the maelstrom of accusations that have further fuelled ethnic hatreds in Rakhine. But the army has steadfastly blamed violence on the Rohingya—a Muslim minority it has been trying for years to eject from Myanmar—while highlighting the suffering of other ethnic groups swept up in the violence.



**TOKYO:** Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe gestures as he answers questions during a press conference at his official residence. —AFP

## JAPAN'S PM ABE WILL CALL SNAP ELECTION FOR PARLIAMENT

**TOKYO:** Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced yesterday he will call a snap election for parliament's more powerful lower house for next month. Abe said at a news conference that he will dissolve the 475-seat chamber on Thursday when it convenes after a three-month summer recess. The election is to be held Oct. 22.

Support ratings for Abe's government have started to rebound after attacks on him over cronyism scandals faded during the recess. Also, opposition parties are regrouping and unprepared for an election. Opposition lawmakers have said there is no need to hold an election now. "I expect opposition criticism is going to focus on (the scandals), and it's going to be a very difficult election," Abe said.

Analysts believe his ruling Liberal Democratic Party will retain a majority, but could lose the two-thirds majority it holds with its coalition partner, the Komei party. Still, a big enough victory could help Abe extend his hold on power. His three-year term as party leader ends next September, and he will have to fend off any challengers from within the LDP to remain prime minister. "For Mr Abe, now is the time. He is taking advantage of unprepared opposition parties as he seeks to prolong his leadership," said Yu Uchiyama, a University of Tokyo politics professor.

Support ratings for his government plunged to below 30 percent in July following repeated parliamentary questions about allegations that Abe helped his friend obtain approval for a veterinary college. Recent media polls show the support ratings recovering to around 50 percent, helped by parliament's recess and a Cabinet reshuffle in August that removed the defense minister and several other unpopular ministers.

It's a significant turnaround from June, when the Liberal Democratic Party suffered a devastating loss in a Tokyo city assembly election to maverick Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike's new regional party. Opposition lawmakers are scrambling to regroup. Earlier yesterday, Koike announced the launch of a new national party that she will head, though she will remain as governor to focus on hosting the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and other issues.

She said her Hope Party will be conservative and push for transparency in government, women's advancement, elimination of nuclear energy and other reforms. Several parliamentarians, including defectors from the main opposition Democratic Party, have announced their intention to join her party.

"This is going to be a new force formed by members aiming to achieve reforms and conservatism," Koike said. "We are going to create a Japan where there is hope for everyone that tomorrow will certainly be better than today." The Democrats, which held power in 2009-2012, have lost ground largely due to internal disagreements. —AFP

## BRITISH LESBIAN WINS HER HK VISA RIGHTS

**HONG KONG:** A British lesbian yesterday won the right to live and work in Hong Kong with her partner in a landmark legal decision that could reduce more hurdles for same-sex couples in the city. QT, as she is referred to in court, entered into a civil partnership in Britain in 2011 and moved to Hong Kong the same year after her partner was offered a job in the city. But she was denied a dependant visa and has instead stayed in Hong Kong on a visitor visa, which does not allow her to work.

The Court of Appeal overturned a lower court's decision last year, which rejected her efforts to secure a visa to settle in Hong Kong. Yesterday's decision, reached unanimously by a panel of three judges, said immigration authorities "failed to justify the indirect discrimination on account of sexual orientation that QT suffers." "Whilst one-ness, together-ness, joint-ness and mutuality are hallmarks of a heterosexual marriage relationship, they are not, or no longer, exclusive to such a relationship," the judgment added. Campaigners have described the case as a landmark for the socially conservative southern Chinese city, which does not recognize gay marriage and only decriminalized homosexuality in 1991.

### 'Big win'

Activists and members of the LGBT community applauded the decision. Ray Chan, a pro-democracy politician and first openly gay lawmaker in Hong Kong, called the case a "big win for same-sex dependants to apply for visa to stay in Hong Kong". Some say the decision could pave the way for broader equality and LGBT rights in the former British colony.

"The judgment is a step towards greater rights for same-sex couples in Hong Kong and is a recognition of same-sex couples as valid relationships," Geoffrey Yeung, member of Progressive Lawyers Group, told AFP. The court also made an economic case, saying that preventing a partner from joining a foreign worker is "counter-productive to attracting the worker to come to or remain in Hong Kong to work in the first place." —AFP



**GUMDHUM:** Bangladeshi soldiers distribute rice to young Rohingya refugees at the refugee camp of Balukhali. —AFP

## COUNTING BY THE MILLIONS: WORKING FOR DEMOCRACY

**ISLAMABAD:** Nancy Stiegler has participated in the counting of nearly half a billion people, in African deserts, Pacific archipelagos and the teeming megacities of Asia. She is one of just a handful of technical experts—and only two women—travelling the world to advise countries on obtaining solid census data in troubled regions. "You have to fight for a month (for them to understand) that you're not a dumb blonde," said Stiegler, who argues that reliable census data is a foundation of democracy. "But once you make yourself heard, it becomes an advantage (to be female as) a relationship of trust is better established."

In Pakistan, where she has been assisting the militancy-struck nation with its first census in almost two decades, the ash blonde is hard to miss among the burly beards and covered heads at the Bureau of Statistics office. In the deeply conservative Muslim-majority country, she has helped train officials to ensure that the population is as accurately assessed as possible—especially making sure that all women were counted. In Pakistan, women can be reluctant to respond to census officials who are almost always male, while some men are hesitant to name female family members to a stranger. "Statistically, you can correct... the underestimation of women but only to a certain point," Stiegler said.

She has helped the country devise awareness campaigns aimed at persuading civil society groups, religious figures, and politicians to endorse the census. The weeks-long surveying process kicked off this spring, a challenge that required a team of more than 300,000 people and involved 55 million forms.

Following the completion of the survey in May, Stiegler is now helping oversee the detailed data analysis of the census results, which could take months. But not all have welcomed the survey, with politicians nervous about electoral maps being redrawn and militants threatening violence. In April, a Taliban suicide attack targeting a census team killed seven people and wounded 19 others in Lahore.

Such challenges are nothing new for 40-year-old Stiegler. "The census is a very sensitive exercise, a political and economic tool that can prevent politicians from doing whatever they want," says Stiegler, who has also worked on projects during delicate transition periods in Myanmar, Sudan and Timor Leste. "The census has all the more impact because it affects the electoral map... and the redistribution of resources are often based on the population," she explains.

### 'Adrenaline'

Stiegler was first attracted to challenging environments during her childhood as she watched broadcasts of Biafra refugees fleeing violence during the Nigerian civil war on television. Inspired to make a difference, she pursued demography studies in Bordeaux and at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin, one of the most recognized research centers in the field.

In 2003 she moved to South Africa where she founded the Institute of Population Studies at the University of the Western Cape, which she still runs. Stiegler juggles university life and fieldwork, returning to South Africa during holidays to teach intensive courses on social demography and survey methods. "I like this fieldwork... perhaps it's because I have a bit of a taste for risk," she smiled, recounting an incident when she was surrounded by a crowd of enraged enumerators in Nigeria who threatened her over unpaid wages. "The best time is when the adrenaline kicks in on the first days of the census, when we see the first problems emerge." —AFP



**ISLAMABAD:** In this picture taken on July 19, 2017, Nancy Stiegler, Census Operation and Training Adviser to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics for UNFPA, poses for photographs after an interview. —AFP

## NEARLY 50K FLEE AMID FEARS OF BALI VOLCANIC ERUPTION

**KARANGASEM:** Nearly 50,000 people have evacuated their homes for fear of an imminent volcanic eruption on the Indonesian resort island of Bali, disaster officials said yesterday. Mount Agung, 75 kilometers from the tourist hub of Kuta, has been shaking since August and threatening to erupt for the first time in more than 50 years. The disaster mitigation agency said 48,540 people had fled and the number was expected to rise because more than 60,000 people lived in the danger zone.

"There are still people who don't want to be evacuated," Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, an agency spokesman, told a press conference. "The reason is firstly, the mountain hasn't erupted yet. Secondly, they are worried about their livestock." Officials announced the highest possible alert level on Friday following the increasing volcanic activity, and told people to stay at least nine kilometres (5.6 miles) from the crater.

Trekking tours on the mountain have been banned but officials have otherwise been at pains to assure tourists the island is safe. Dozens of anxious visitors, worried their vacation plans may be ruined, have taken to social media to ask for updates. Others have adopted a more philosophical view, determined not to let the warning disrupt their holiday.

"Being in Bali of course there's a volcanic mountain here, earthquakes and other risks," Susan, who was visiting the town of Ubud from the United States,

told AFP. "You just have to deal with it." But German national Frederic Kramer, 33, said he was worried about a possible eruption and wanted to help by providing food to those affected. Evacuees have packed into temporary shelters or moved in with relatives.

Some 2,000 cows have been also moved from the flanks of the volcano. Nengah Satiya left home with his wife three days ago but said he had been returning to the danger zone to tend to his pigs and chickens. "There are many livestock in our village but nobody is taking care of them," he told AFP at an evacuation centre. "We take turns going back to feed them."

### Sign from the gods

The Indonesian Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation said the mountain was still being rocked by hundreds of volcanic tremors. "Sometimes the intensity increases, sometimes it decreases, it's hard to tell when the mountain will erupt," said senior volcanologist Gede Suantika. Mount Agung is one of more than 120 active volcanoes extending the length of Indonesia, which straddles the so-called Pacific "Ring of Fire".

It last erupted in 1963, killing more than 1,000 people and sending ashes as far as the capital Jakarta. The mountain, the highest point in Bali, is an important spiritual site for Balinese, who are predominantly Hindu in Muslim-majority Indonesia. —AFP





ARBIL: Female members of a Kurdish Peshmerga battalion queue inside a polling station as they wait to cast their vote in the Kurdish independence referendum in Arbil yesterday. —AFP

## DOUBTS OVER GULF CUP; DRAW TAKES PLACE WITHOUT BOYCOTTING NATIONS

DOHA: The draw for the Gulf Cup of Nations went ahead yesterday despite serious doubts that the Qatar-hosted competition will take place largely due to ongoing regional political tensions. In bizarre circumstances, an elaborate ceremony saw Qatar drawn with Bahrain, Iraq and Yemen in Group A, while Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and possibly Kuwait will make up Group B.

However, as many as half of the teams may not play in the eight-nation tournament, scheduled to take place in Doha between December 22 and January 5. Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain could boycott the event because of its increasingly bitter political standoff with Qatar, now in its fourth month. Notably, no representatives of the three associations were in Doha for the draw. And even though the cup is not a FIFA event, Kuwait's football association remains suspended by the world's governing body and it is not clear if its team can take part in the tournament.

Asked if the tournament would take place, Jassim Al-Rumaihi, general secretary of the Arab Gulf Cup Football Federations (AGCFF) said: "We will see what happens. Qatar is ready to organize and host this tournament," he told reporters after the draw. "It will be clearer in the coming

hours and the coming days." He added: "In the current situation, I hope we don't mix sport and politics." Rumaihi said that if Saudi, UAE and Bahrain pulled out, the remaining teams would play a round robin tournament.

However, if there are only four teams available to play, a fresh decision would be taken by the AGCFF whether to stage the tournament. If some countries boycott the event, they could face fines and may also be ordered to compensate broadcasters, said Hamid Alshaihani, chairman of the competitions committee. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE have isolated Qatar, cutting all ties with Doha since June 5, accusing the emirate of supporting extremism and fostering ties with Iran. World Cup 2022 host Qatar denies the charges, claiming the dispute is an attack on its sovereignty.

Regardless, the dispute has now lasted more than 100 days and shows few signs of ending soon. This latest edition of the Gulf Cup of Nations, which is held every two years, has already run into problems. It was meant to be played in Kuwait in 2016 but due to the country's FIFA ban the tournament was moved to Qatar and scheduled to be played a year late. Qatar are the current holders of the trophy, having beaten Saudi Arabia 2-1 in the 2014 final. — AFP

## KURDS SHRUG OFF THREATS, VOTE...

Continued from Page 1

The US State Department warned the KRG last week that "holding the referendum in disputed areas is particularly provocative and destabilizing." The KRG is holding the referendum not only in the long-standing Kurdish autonomous region of Iraq, but also in wider areas in the north of the country into which its forces have advanced in the fight to defeat Islamic State.

These areas also have large non-Kurdish populations. The Turkish Foreign Ministry said Ankara did not recognize the referendum and would view its outcome as null and void, adding that the Iraqi Kurdish government was threatening the peace and stability of Iraq and the whole region. Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said that his government was evaluating steps regarding its border gates with northern Iraq and air space in response to the vote.

Ankara would make decisions in more direct talks with the Iraqi central government after the referendum, adding that economic, political, diplomatic and military steps were being discussed, he said in an interview with Turkish broadcasters. Ankara's forces are again fighting a Kurdish insurgency in Turkey following the collapse of a peace process.

### Flight ban

Polling stations opened their doors at 8:00 am and should close at 6:00 pm. The final results should be announced within 72 hours. The voting is open to all registered residents, Kurds and non-Kurds, in the Kurdish-held areas of northern Iraq aged 18 and over, according to the referendum commission. The commission estimates the number of eligible voters at 5.2 million, including those living abroad and who started casting electronic ballots two days ago.

Voters should tick yes or no on the ballot asking them just one question in Kurdish, Turkish, Arabic and Assyrian: "do you want the Kurdistan Region and Kurdistan areas outside the (Kurdistan) Region to

become an independent country?" Iran declared a ban on direct flights to and from Kurdistan on Sunday, while Baghdad asked foreign countries to stop direct oil trading with autonomous region and demanded that the KRG hands over control of its international airports and border posts with Iran, Turkey and Syria.

Tehran supports Shiite groups who have been ruling or holding security and government positions in Iraq since the US-led invasion which toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003. Opposition to the vote simmered among non-Kurdish populations in areas disputed by the KRG and Baghdad, and mainly the multi-ethnic oil-rich region of Kirkuk. "Iraq is against the Kurds, so are the Kurds, the Iranians, the whole Arab region and Europe."

"They are going to live in a cage," said Mohammed Mahdi Al-Bayati, a Shiite Turkmen and a local leader of the Iranian-backed Badr Organization paramilitary group in Tuz Khurmato, south of Kirkuk. In Sulaimaniya, a bastion for political groups opposed to Barzani, queues in front of the polling stations were shorter than those in Arbil, and there were fewer signs and billboards celebrating the referendum, reflecting resentment that a yes vote could be seen as a plebiscite for the Kurdish leader.

"I will not vote, the referendum is not good, it could be dangerous because of the threat from Turkey and Iran," said a shop owner of Sulaimaniya, Ali Ahmed. Despite Turkey's threatened retaliation, it has so far kept the Kurdish oil export pipeline that crosses its territory open. After World War One, the victorious powers Britain and France carved up the Ottoman empire leaving the Kurds scattered mainly over four countries: Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria.

All of them suffered persecution and were often denied the right to speak their language. Those in Iraq were uprooted under Saddam Hussein's regime and suffered an attack using chemical weapons. Syria is embroiled in a devastating civil war and its Kurds are pressing ahead with their own self-determination. — Reuters

## NA WILL NOT BE DISSOLVED; SPEAKER DENIES...

Continued from Page 1

At present, retirement is granted after 30 years of service or when employees reach 55 years of age. MP Nasser Al-Dossari said that approving the law urgently has become a necessity and warned the government against attempting to obstruct its approval. The lawmaker said the draft law must be discussed and approved in the first session of the

Assembly. Meanwhile, the Court of Cassation has postponed its ruling on the government decision to hike fuel prices until Thursday.

The lower court had annulled the government decision and called for scrapping the increase in petrol prices but the ruling was overturned by the Court of Appeals. Now, the final ruling will be made by the Court of Cassation whose rulings cannot be challenged.



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## Focus

IS IT FAR-RIGHT?  
GERMANY'S AfD  
SPARKS DEBATE

The Alternative for Germany, which sparked a political earthquake after becoming the first openly anti-immigration and Islamophobic party to win dozens of seats in parliament, has unleashed a debate on whether it can be called "far-right". Launched as a populist anti-euro party in 2013, the AfD has veered sharply to the right since and in the run-up to Sunday's election campaigned with slogans such as "Bikinis Not Burkas" and "Stop Islamization". But as its co-chief Frauke Petry made clear yesterday, there is dissent within the AfD, especially between her and leading candidate Alexander Gauland. Just hours after the results confirmed its 12.6 percent score, the simmering dispute exploded. Petry declared she would not join the AfD's parliamentary group, and four state-level MPs also said they would form a regional splinter group.

## Why is AfD far-right?

In Germany, given its dark Nazi history, the label "far-right" carries heavy weight and automatically triggers monitoring by the BfV domestic intelligence agency. Holocaust denial and the use of Nazi slogans and symbols such as the swastika are illegal. The BfV agency monitors extremists—mostly neo-Nazis, the far-left and jihadis—and has long kept tabs on the extreme-right NPD, which has several locally elected officials. The spy service says it does not monitor the AfD, but there have been calls for it to do so after several party leaders have made public comments widely condemned as racist or revisionist.

## Why is AfD controversial?

Petry, at the height of the refugee crisis in 2015, said German police should be allowed, as a last resort, to shoot illegal immigrants, evoking orders given to Cold War-era communist guards along the Berlin Wall. The party's Bjoern Hoerck has called Berlin's Holocaust memorial a "monument of shame" and said Germany should take a 180-degree turn away from its guilt and atonement over World War II and the Holocaust. Similarly, Gauland during the campaign said that Germans "have the right to reclaim not just our country, but also our past".

"If the French are rightly proud of their emperor (Napoleon), and the British of (Admiral Horatio Lord) Nelson and (Prime Minister Winston) Churchill, then we have the right to be proud of the achievements of German soldiers in two world wars," he said. Gauland also sparked outrage when he said Germany's integration commissioner Aydan Ozoguz should be "dumped in Anatolia", suggesting that she will never be German because of her Turkish family roots.

## Who has the leading voice?

The AfD has had two co-chiefs—Petry, 42, and Joerg Meuthen, 56—but also two top election candidates, who happen to be Petry's bitter rivals—Gauland, 76, and Alice Weidel, 38. Weidel has revealed that she and Gauland have not spoken to Petry "for months", confirming discord between the party HQ and candidates, and raising questions over its wider organization. Highlighting the rift, Petry has distanced herself from Gauland's comments that Germany should take pride in its veterans, warning that they would turn off many voters. There are other contradictions. Gauland declared Monday that he "does not want to lose Germany to an invasion of foreign people from foreign cultures", but Meuthen insisted that the AfD would "tolerate neither xenophobic nor racist positions". The "good cop, bad cop" dynamic has made it hard to pin down who has the final say in the party, which Petry has herself described as "anarchic".

## Germany's National Front

The party says no, although the AfD has reached out to Marine Le Pen's far-right National Front (FN) and other European anti-immigration groups. Le Pen and Dutch anti-Muslim politician Geert Wilders saluted the election advance of the AfD on Sunday. Britain's former UKIP party leader Nigel Farage during the campaign rallied AfD supporters in Berlin, although he insisted he was there to support AfD candidate Beatrix von Storch rather than the party as a whole. Gauland said Monday he is "always very sceptical" when comparisons are drawn with other countries' parties. The AfD only had close links with Austria's far-right FPÖ, he said, "out of a historical tradition, a common language and other considerations". "All others are nationalist in formulation as we are," he said, but "I don't see the similarities".—AFP

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## INTERNET GIANTS, ONCE ABOVE THE FRAY, ON THE DEFENSIVE

By Dustin Voz

Internet giants, including Alphabet's Google and Facebook, are moving to compromise on several major policy issues as they adjust to an abrupt shift in the political winds in Washington. Just last week, the US Senate took a big step toward advancing legislation that would partially strip away the internet industry's bedrock legal protection, a 1996 law that shields companies from liability for the activities of their users.

At the same time, Democratic senators are writing legislation that would create new disclosure rules for online political ads after Facebook this month revealed that suspected Russian trolls purchased more than \$100,000 worth of divisive ads on its platform during the 2016 election cycle. The US Federal Election Commission is considering bringing in Facebook and other tech firms for a public hearing.

Unlike in Europe, where they have faced a bevy of new rules and billion-dollar fines, internet giants have avoided virtually all types of government regulation in the United States, even as their market power continues to grow. Amazon, for example, controls more than a third of US online commerce, while Google and Facebook combined account for more than sixty percent of the US digital ad market.

Internet firms have from their inception urged US politicians in both parties to treat their industry as a nascent sector in need of unique protections. These firms enjoyed an especially close relationship with the Democratic administration of former

President Barack Obama, which saw several officials go to work for Google upon leaving the White House. But some Democrats, still bitter over Russia's alleged meddling in the 2016 election, are now expressing alarm at the industry's power.

Virginia Senator Mark Warner, the vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, this month compared political ads on social media to the "wild, wild West" and is working on legislation to require more disclosure. On the Republican side, President Donald Trump has been hostile to the tech industry in many of his public remarks. Google and Facebook have been repeatedly attacked from the right for alleged liberal bias and a globalist outlook. Now, the Internet firms are backpedaling from earlier positions as they seek to avoid regulation, according to congressional aides, industry lobbyists and company sources.

"Tech is no longer the golden goose," said one technology industry source, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Maybe it's a good thing we start behaving like a rational part of the economy." Silicon Valley lobbyists and congressional aides in both parties were quick to temper talk of a sweeping regulatory crackdown, in part because the government agencies that could move against the industry, notably the Federal Trade Commission, remain severely understaffed. But the shift in tone is palpable.

On Thursday, Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg said the company, for the first time, would make it possible for anyone to see details about political ads that

run on Facebook, which, unlike television ads, do not fall under US law requiring disclosure of who pays for them. Requiring such transparency is one of the key provisions of the proposed legislation on online political ads. The company also said it would turn over to congressional investigators political ads that it says were likely purchased by Russian entities during and after the 2016 US presidential election.

The moves marked an about-face for Zuckerberg, who after the November election said it was a "crazy idea" to think that activity on Facebook swayed the vote. Facebook has also shifted its stance on proposed changes to the liability protections for internet companies, formally known as Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act. The legislation, which is aimed at stopping online sex trafficking, has been fiercely opposed by companies that see it as a threat to openness and innovation on the internet.

But after an emotional hearing last week featuring testimony from the mother of a murdered sex-trafficking victim—which followed two big tech companies, Oracle and Hewlett Packard Enterprise, breaking ranks with industry peers on the issue—Facebook and Google have opened the door to negotiation on the bill, according to congressional aides and industry sources. In a statement, Erin Egan, Facebook's vice president of US policy, said the company believed a legislative solution was possible to "address this terrible problem while ensuring that the internet remains open and free and that responsible companies can continue to work to stop sex trafficking

before it happens."

The tech industry in recent years has neutralized other ideas percolating in the halls of Congress that it perceived as threatening, including calls to weaken encryption and demands that social media companies report "terrorist" activity to the government. But the effort to amend Section 230 is seen as different. The fast progress of legislation, introduced in August, has alarmed lobbyists and company representatives who initially predicted it would not go far in an otherwise gridlocked Congress.

The bill comes after years of law enforcement lobbying for a crackdown on the online classified site backpage.com, which is used for sex advertising. The measure would make it easier for states and sex trafficking victims to sue social media networks, advertisers and others who fail to keep exploitative material off their platforms. Republican Senator Rob Portman of Ohio, the lead architect of the Section 230 legislation, said in an interview with Reuters that he was confident his measure would become law this congressional term, with or without Silicon Valley's cooperation.

The bill has attracted bipartisan support from nearly a third of the Senate; a companion measure has similar backing in the House of Representatives. Portman said he had met with Trump's daughter and advisor, Ivanka Trump, who expressed strong support. "Frankly, I am disappointed (that) more in the technology industry are not joining us on this effort," Portman said. "It is in their interest to be supportive of a solution on this problem."—Reuters

## IRAQI KURDISTAN, AUTONOMOUS AND OIL-RICH

Iraq's Kurdish region, which is holding a referendum on statehood yesterday, has been autonomous since 1991 and has played a major role in the war against jihadists.

## Oil rich, financially strapped

Situated in the rugged, mountainous north of Iraq, the oil-rich region is home to about five million people. It is mainly made up of Kurds, who are mostly Sunni Muslims, alongside Christian and Turkmen minorities.

Officially comprising Arbil, Dohuk and Sulaimaniyah provinces, Iraqi Kurdistan also claims other territory including oil-rich Kirkuk province—a dispute that is a major source of contention with Baghdad. Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga forces have been in sole control of a chunk of Kirkuk province since federal forces withdrew when faced with an offensive by the Islamic State group in the summer of 2014, while the jihadists hold the southwest of the province. Iraqi Kurdistan has major oil resources, but has been hit

hard by falling crude prices, which have cut into its main source of revenue.

## War against IS

Kurdish forces have played a significant role in the war against IS, and have been an important ally of the US-led coalition against the jihadists. They took part in the massive operation to retake Mosul from IS, which was launched in October 2016, capturing territory near the city but stopping short of entering it. The region has also taken in hun-

dreds of thousands of people driven from their homes by the jihadists.

## Autonomy since 1991

Iraqi Kurdistan, whose capital is Arbil, became formally autonomous in 2005 under the constitution which set up a federal republic. But it had gained de facto autonomy after the 1991 Gulf War over Kuwait when Western powers intervened to protect Kurds against an onslaught by the forces of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein that led hundreds of thousands to flee to neighboring countries. The United States and its allies set up no-fly zones in north and south Iraq, with the former helping to shield the Kurds.

Elections in 1992 established the regional parliament, with seats split between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Disputes between the two parties led to deadly clashes between 1994 and 1998. Kurds then joined US troops in 2003 to help overthrow Saddam. The Iraqi Kurds have kept their dialects, their traditions and a clan-based organization, with regional politics dominated by two main families. Massud Barzani, the leader of the KDP who was elected president of Kurdistan in 2005, has remained in power despite the expiration of his term amid criticism from the opposition.

## 'The time has come'

Barzani declared on February 3, 2016 that the "time has come" for the country's Kurds to hold a referendum on statehood. "This referendum would not necessarily lead to (an) immediate declaration of statehood, but rather to know the will and opinion of the people of Kurdistan about their future," he said. On eve of the referendum, Barzani vowed to press ahead with the vote "whatever the risk and price". Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi responded by threatening to take the "necessary measures" to protect Iraqi unity, as his government urged all countries to deal only with it on oil transactions.—AFP

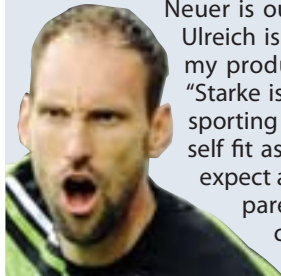


KIRKUK: An Iraqi Kurdish man poses as he carries a child wearing the Kurdish flag on his head during a celebration in the northern city of Kirkuk yesterday as Iraqi Kurds vote in a referendum on independence.—AFP



### BAYERN ADD STARKE TO CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SQUAD

**BERLIN:** Bayern Munich have reacted to Manuel Neuer's long-term injury by naming retired goalkeeper Tom Starke, now a coach in their academy, in their Champions League squad. Bayern face Paris Saint-Germain away tomorrow in a key match in a Group B which also contains Celtic and Anderlecht. Starke, 36, has been Bayern's goalkeeping co-ordinator in their academy since the start of the season having retired in May. Neuer is out until January after fracturing his foot, so Sven Ulreich is now Bayern's first-choice goalkeeper with academy product Christian Fruechtl, 17, acting as his back up. "Starke is our number three goalkeeper," confirmed Bayern sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic. "Tom is keeping himself fit as an alternative to Ulreich and Fruechtl. "We don't expect a goalkeeper to get injured, but we want to be prepared for everything and the transfer market is now closed until the winter break." —AFP



### FELLAINI RULED OUT OF UNITED CLASH IN MOSCOW

**MOSCOW:** Belgian midfielder Marouane Fellaini will miss Manchester United's Champions League game against CSKA Moscow tomorrow. Fellaini has not recovered from an ankle injury he suffered in a tackle by Shane Long in the 1-0 Premier League win over Southampton on Saturday and was not in the squad which departed for Russia yesterday. Nemanja Matic, who also suffered an injury against Southampton, flew out with the rest of the squad along with defender Eric Bailly, who could make his Champions League debut for the club. Fellaini scored United's opening goal in their 3-0 Champions League Group A victory over Basel this month. United, who are unbeaten this season and are joint top of the Premier League with Manchester City, are in confident mood for Wednesday's tie although they will again be without Paul Pogba, who suffered a hamstring strain against Basel and could require surgery. —Reuters

### JUVENTUS PRESIDENT ANDREA AGNELLI BANNED FOR ONE YEAR

**ROME:** Juventus president Andrea Agnelli has been banned for one year by the Italian soccer federation for his role in selling tickets to hard-core "ultra" fans that encouraged scalping. The court also fined Juventus 300,000 euros (\$350,000). The federation's prosecutor had requested a 2 1/2-year suspension, a fine and an order to force Juventus to play two home matches behind closed doors. Agnelli allegedly authorized the sale of season passes and other tickets. He has acknowledged meeting with Rocco Dominello, an "ultra" fan linked to the Calabrian 'ndrangheta crime mob who has since been sentenced to nearly eight years in prison for scalping. But Agnelli said the meetings came only with large numbers of other fans at celebratory occasions and that the club never intended to engage in illegal activity. —AP



LOS ANGELES: Pablo Sandoval #48 of the San Francisco Giants tags out a diving Yasmani Grandal #9 of the Los Angeles Dodgers at third base in the sixth inning of the game at Dodger Stadium on Sunday in Los Angeles, California. —AFP

BASEBALL

## MARTINEZ LIFTS DIAMONDBACKS TO TOP WILD CARD

**PHOENIX:** J.D. Martinez lined a two-out RBI single to deep left field with the bases loaded in the ninth inning as the Arizona Diamondbacks beat the Miami Marlins 3-2 on Sunday to clinch the top wild card in the National League. The Diamondbacks, who won only 69 games a year ago but are 90-66 this season, were assured a playoff berth in the fourth inning after St. Louis and Milwaukee lost. The comeback victory ensured Arizona will host the NL wild-card game Oct. 4. Fernando Rodney (5-4) pitched a perfect inning for the win. A throwing error by Justin Nicolino (2-3) on Kristopher Negron's sacrifice bunt helped load the bases with no outs in the ninth.

#### ROCKIES 8, PADRES 4

Gerardo Parra hit a tiebreaking single in a two-run third inning, Pat Valaika and Charlie Blackmon hit consecutive home runs in the ninth as Colorado opened a two-game lead over Milwaukee for the second NL wild card. At 41-40, the Rockies tied their record for road wins, set in 2009. German Marquez (11-7) allowed two runs, five hits and three walks in five innings. Luis Perdomo (8-11) gave up four runs and six hits in five innings.

#### CUBS 5, BREWERS 0

Jose Quintana (7-3) pitched a three-hitter and struck out 10 in his second big league shutout as Chicago opened a 5 1/2-game lead over second-place Milwaukee in the NL Central. Kris Bryant hit a go-ahead double in the fourth off Chase Anderson (11-4). Ben Zobrist had a two-run homer in the seventh and Anthony Rizzo added a two-run double in the eighth against Carlos Torres.

#### PIRATES 4, CARDINALS 1

South Korea's Seung Hwan Oh (1-6) allowed a go-ahead, two-run homer in the fifth to Starling Marte and rookie Jordan Luplow also went deep as St. Louis fell 2 1/2 games behind the Rockies. Jameson Taillon (8-7) allowed one run and four hits in five

innings. Five pitchers combined for hitless relief, with Felipe Rivero striking out two in a perfect ninth for his 19th save.

#### BLUE JAYS 9, YANKEES 5

Jose Bautista had two hits and a walk in what was likely his final home game with the Blue Jays, leaving to a standing ovation during the ninth inning. Bautista, who turns 37 next month, is hitting .203 with 22 homers and 62 RBIs, and Toronto appears unlikely to exercise its half of a \$17 million mutual option. Aaron Judge homered twice for the Yankees, increasing his AL-leading total to 48 - one shy of the major league rookie record set by Mark McGwire in 1987. Judge has 11 home runs in September. A day after clinching a postseason berth, New York dropped five games behind AL East-leading Boston with seven games to play. Jaime Garcia (1-3) jeopardized his chance of making New York's postseason roster, allowing five runs, four hits and three walks in 2 1/3 innings.

#### RED SOX 5, REDS 4

Mookie Betts hit a tying three-run double in the eighth off Raisel Iglesias (3-3) and dashed home from second base on Rafael Devers' infield single as Boston won for the 14th time in 17 games. Robby Scott (2-1) won, and Craig Kimbrel pitched the ninth for his 35th save and hasn't allowed a run in his last 11 appearances. Billy Hamilton helped the Reds go up 4-1. He tripled home a run and brought the crowd to its feet by scoring after getting caught in a rundown between first and second. Second baseman Dustin Pedroia made a wild throw, and Hamilton kept going when nobody covered home.

#### DODGERS 3, GIANTS 1

Clayton Kershaw (18-4) became the NL's first 18-game winner, pitching shutout ball until Mac Williamson's home run in the eighth, his final inning. Kershaw lowered his league-best ERA to 2.21 and struck out six to become the first Dodgers pitcher to reach 200 seven

times. Brandon Morrow worked a perfect ninth for his second save. Yasmani Grandal hit a sacrifice fly in the first against Chris Stratton (3-4) and a homer in the fourth.

#### INDIANS 4, MARINERS 2

Corey Kluber (18-4) won his sixth straight start and struck out 10 in becoming the AL's first 18-game winner, allowing Ben Gamel's tying two-run homer in the fifth, which stopped his scoreless streak at 26 2/3 innings. Jose Ramirez's 29th home run put Cleveland ahead in the sixth against Mike Leake (3-1). Cody Allen worked the ninth for his 29th save as Cleveland won for the 29th time in 31 games and eliminated Seattle from postseason contention.

#### TWINS 10, TIGERS 4

Jorge Polanco hit a solo homer in the first off Buck Farmer (4-5). Eduardo Escobar welcomed Victor Alcantara with a three-run drive in the sixth and Minnesota completed a four-game sweep, outscoring Detroit 39-12. Jose Berrios (13-8) won for the first time since he beat the Chicago White Sox on Aug. 30, allowing two runs and five hits in six innings. Minnesota opened a five-game lead over the Los Angeles Angels and a 5 1/2-game advantage over Kansas City and Texas for the second AL wild card. The Twins outscored the Tigers 39-12 in the sweep. Detroit has lost seven straight and 14 of 16.

#### ANGELS 7, ASTROS 5

Luis Valbuena hit a tiebreaking two-run double in the seventh inning and Justin Upton tacked on an insurance run with a solo homer in the eighth, helping the Los Angeles Angels snap a six-game skid with a win over the Houston Astros. It was a much-needed victory for the Angels, who are 4 1/2 games behind Minnesota for the second AL wild card. The Astros used a four-run third inning to lead 4-1. Brandon Phillips pulled the Angels closer with a solo homer in the fourth before they tied it in the fifth by scoring on back-to-back bases-loaded walks. Valbuena hit his bases-loaded, go-ahead double with no outs off Chris Devenski (8-5), making it 6-4.

#### WHITE SOX 8, ROYALS 1

Lucas Giolito (3-3) allowed one run in seven innings, Avisail Garcia drove in three runs with his 18th homer and Chicago dropped Kansas City 5 1/2 games behind the Twins. Ian Kennedy (4-13) allowed five runs in 5 1/3 innings as he lost his seventh straight decision.

#### ATHLETICS 8, RANGERS 1

Khris Davis hit his 41st home run, a drive off Martin Perez (12-12) in a five-run fifth inning, as Oakland extended its winning streak to a season-high seven. Jharel Cotton (9-1) pitched five shutout innings of one-hit ball to win his fourth straight decision, dropping the Rangers 5 1/2 games behind Minnesota.

#### ORIOLES 9, RAYS 4

J.J. Hardy hit a crowd-pleasing, go-ahead two-run homer off Chris Archer (9-12) in what was likely his last home game with Baltimore. Rookie Chance Sisco also homered for the Orioles, who earned a split of the four-game

series to finish 46-35 at home. Mychal Givens (8-1) got five outs for the win, dropped the Rays six games behind Minnesota with six to play.

#### NATIONALS 3, METS 2

Max Scherzer (16-6) struck out 10 and allowed three hits over six innings as Washington clinched home-field advantage in the NL Division Series. Trea Turner hit a go-ahead, two-run homer off Jacob deGrom (15-10), and Jose Lobaton had an RBI single. Brandon Kintzler worked the ninth for his 29th

save, retiring Nori Aoki on a game-ending groundout with runners at second and third.

#### PHILLIES 2, BRAVES 0

Nick Pivetta (7-10) allowed five hits in six innings to outpitch Luiz Gohara (1-3) in a matchup of rookies, and Mikael Franco hit a tiebreaking home run in the fifth as Atlanta finished 37-44 in its first season at SunTrust Park. Aaron Altherr added an RBI double in the eighth off A.J. Minter. Hector Neris pitched out of trouble for his 24th save. — AP

## BUSCH GETS NASCAR PLAYOFF WIN IN NEW HAMPSHIRE MOTORSPEDWAY

**LOUDON:** Kyle Busch saw little but billowing white smoke that engulfed the track and blinded enough drivers that it caused a tremendous wreck that notably altered the race running order. In his No. 18 Toyota, the driver nicknamed "Rowdy" knew there was only one way to handle the sudden pollution: Drive through it!

Busch slinked through the smoke clouds formed in the multi-car crash on the backstretch and dominated the rest of the way to win Sunday at New Hampshire Motorspeedway. "That was pretty intense," Busch said. "That was some 'Days of Thunder' stuff over there. You couldn't see anything."

He held on and saw a victory lane celebration for the third time this season. Busch earned a berth in the second round of NASCAR's playoffs and took his customary bow on the track. He even stuck a bag of M&M's on the claws of Loudon the Lobster, the 18-pound crustacean given to the race winner. Busch, who won from the pole, put together a complete effort once the wreck derailed race leader Martin Truex Jr. Truex, who won the playoff opener at Chicagoland, and Busch both earned automatic spots in the second round. Kyle Larson and Brad Keselowski advanced on points. Truex led 112 laps until his run ended in the accident, though he rallied to finish fifth.

The playoff standings were shaken up in the wake of massive multi-car wreck that sent playoff drivers Kurt Busch and Kevin Harvick to the garage. Harvick's car was hit by Austin Dillon on the last lap of the second stage. Harvick spun and smoke billowed over the track, leaving drivers almost blinded to the traffic ahead. Busch, Harvick's teammate at Stewart-Haas Racing, slammed into Harvick. Truex backed up to straighten himself out and instead suffered left-rear damage when he smacked another car.

Kurt Busch, the Daytona 500 champion, will likely have to win next week at Dover to advance to the second round. "It's all-in. We'll go there with everything we've got like we have been," he said. Harvick, the 2014 series champion, had accumulated enough playoff points that one DNF shouldn't cost him a spot in the top 12.

"I couldn't really tell where I was with all the smoke and everything that was happening,

but just got hit from behind and spun out," Harvick said. Playoff drivers filled the top five spots: Larson was second, followed by Matt Kenseth, Keselowski and Truex. "We had damage and had to fight from the back of the pack the rest of the day," Truex said.

Kyle Busch, who had his shot at victory at Chicagoland end because of pit road miscues, survived the wreckage to lead 187 laps and showed that Joe Gibbs Racing will be a player in the postseason. He found the opening between the wall and Harvick and won his 41st Cup race. Maybe next time, Busch will have a clear path to the checkered flag. "That was a close call," Busch said. "The cloud of smoke was so large that you literally couldn't see anything." Other items of note at New Hampshire:

#### PLAYOFF RESULTS

Larson and Brad Keselowski also advanced on points to the second round. Austin Dillon, Ryan Newman, Kurt Busch and Kasey Kahne are the bottom four drivers in the playoff standings. Larson was second in both New Hampshire races this season.

#### NATIONAL ANTHEM

It appeared no drivers, crew or other team members participated in a protest during the national anthem. Several team owners and executives had said they wouldn't want anyone in their organizations to protest. Richard Childress, who was Dale Earnhardt's longtime team owner, said of protesting, "It'll get you a ride on a Greyhound bus." Childress said he told his team that "anybody that works for me should respect the country we live in. So many people gave their lives for it. This is America."

Hall of Fame driver Richard Petty's sentiments took it a step further, saying: "Anybody that don't stand up for the anthem oughta be out of the country. Period. What got 'em where they're at? The United States." When asked if a protester at Richard Petty Motorsports would be fired, he said, "You're right."

Another team owner, Chip Ganassi, said he supports Pittsburgh Steelers coach Mike Tomlin's comments. Tomlin said before the Steelers played on Sunday that players would remain in the locker room and that "we're not going to let divisive times or divisive individuals affect our agenda." —AP

### MLB Results/Standings

LA Angels 7, Houston 5; Colorado 8, San Diego 4; Cleveland 4, Seattle 2; Arizona 3, Miami 2; LA Dodgers 3, San Francisco 1; Oakland 8, Texas 1; Chicago Cubs 5, Milwaukee 0; Chicago White Sox 8, Kansas City 1; Philadelphia 2, Atlanta 0; Pittsburgh 4, St. Louis 1; Baltimore 9, Tampa Bay 4; Boston 5, Cincinnati 4; Washington 3, NY Mets 2; Toronto 9, NY Yankees 5; Minnesota 10, Detroit 4.

American League				National League			
Eastern Division				Eastern Division			
	W	L	PCT		W	L	PCT
Boston	91	64	.587	Washington	94	61	.606
NY Yankees	86	69	.555	Miami	73	82	.471
Tampa Bay	76	80	.487	Atlanta	70	84	.455
Baltimore	75	82	.478	NY Mets	66	89	.426
Toronto	73	83	.468	Philadelphia	62	94	.397
Central Division				Central Division			
Cleveland	98	58	.628	Chicago Cubs	87	68	.561
Minnesota	82	74	.526	Milwaukee	82	74	.526
Kansas City	76	79	.490	St. Louis	81	74	.523
Chicago White Sox	63	92	.406	Pittsburgh	71	85	.455
Detroit	62	94	.397	Cincinnati	66	90	.423
Western Division				Western Division			
Houston	95	60	.613	LA Dodgers	99	57	.635
LA Angels	77	78	.497	Arizona	90	66	.577
Texas	76	79	.490	Colorado	84	72	.538
Seattle	75	81	.481	San Diego	70	86	.449
Oakland	72	83	.465	San Francisco	61	95	.391



## CRICKET

## KOHLI URGES HIGH-FLYING INDIA TO BE 'RUTHLESS'

**NEW DELHI:** Captain Virat Kohli has called on his players to be "ruthless" after the crushing one-day series win over Australia took India top of the world one-day rankings to add to their number one Test status. A five-wicket win in the third game of the five-match series on Sunday gave India an unassailable 3-0 lead over Steve Smith's Australia.

It also stretched India's winning streak to a record 12 matches across all formats. Kohli's side have been on a roll for the past year since regaining the number one Test spot with a 3-0

home whitewash of New Zealand.

The in-form captain has led from the front with 1,137 runs in 21 50-over matches this year, ahead South Africa's Faf du Plessis as the highest one-day scorer in 2017. Kohli praised his team after the latest win against the once mighty Australians, who have been outplayed in India. Smith's team also lost a Test series 2-1 in India this year.

"Credit to the whole squad for the series win, but the journey stops only after the final game," said Kohli, the top ODI and T20 batsman in the International Cricket Council (ICC) rat-

ings. "We may give opportunities for people from now, but all 15 guys know that we got to be ruthless once we step onto the field," Kohli added. The series has seen new Indian stars emerge, with all-rounder Hardik Pandya and left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav making an instant impact.

While Pandya's crucial 78 led the team's run chase in Indore, Yadav impressed with his maiden hat-trick in the second international. However legendary spinner Bishan Singh Bedi believes India have not been tested by opposition teams, barring the

Champions Trophy final in June against Pakistan which they lost by 180 runs.

India won 10 of their 13 Tests on home soil in the 2016-17 season and then went on to rout hosts Sri Lanka over nine games in all three formats. "Realistically speaking Indians are not even fielding their best XI and beating the opposition hands down, whether it is Sri Lanka or Australia," Bedi said.

"We are loving the ratings, but if we are a little more pragmatic then you will realise that the Indian team in the last year or so haven't been stretched by the opposition. "Just that one game

in the Champions Trophy final against Pakistan, other than that we have not seen them in a tight situation.

"We will get to know the character of the team when they come out of a tight situation," Bedi added. Left-arm spinner Axar Patel returns to the Indian squad in place of Ravindra Jadeja for the final two ODIs that will be played in Bangalore and Nagpur on Thursday and Sunday. Patel, who sprained his ankle at the start of the series, will join Chahal and Yadav as the third spinner in the 15-man squad. —AFP

## GABON STRIKER AUBAMEYANG CONTINUES TO WREAK HAVOC

**PARIS:** Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang continued outstanding early-season form for German outfit Borussia Dortmund with a hat-trick at the weekend. The treble for the 2015 African Footballer of the Year came a week after he bagged a 58-second Bundesliga brace. Scoring three goals in a 6-1 rout of Borussia Moenchengladbach lifted his Dortmund tally to 132 from 198 games.

## ENGLAND

## OUMAR NIASSE (Everton)

Senegalese forward Niasse seemed unlikely to carve out a career at Everton a year ago after manager Ronald Koeman banished him to the Under-23s and then sent him out on loan to Hull City. But Romelu Lukaku's departure to Manchester United has created an attacking vacancy and after finding the net in the mid-week League Cup win over Sunderland, Niasse came off the bench to score twice and earn Koeman's men a 2-1 win over Bournemouth.

## MOHAMED SALAH (Liverpool)

Salah continued his fine start to life at Liverpool by scoring his sixth goal in nine appearances in an entertaining 3-2 win at Leicester City. The Egypt winger squandered a good chance by shooting wide after Emre Can's shot came back off the post, but he atoned in the 15th minute by putting Liverpool ahead with a powerful back-post header from Philippe Coutinho's cross.

## SERGE AURIER (Tottenham Hotspur)

Former Paris Saint-Germain right-back Aurier had a full Premier League debut to forget as he was sent off in Tottenham's 3-2 win at West Ham United. Booked in the 64th minute for tripping Andy Carroll, the Ivory Coast international saw red six minutes later after launching himself into a wild and unnecessary challenge on the same player.

## SPAIN

## FAYCAL FAJR, AMATH NDIAYE (Getafe)

Moroccan Fajr replaced Senegalese Ndiaye as a second-half substitute and went on to provide the free-kick from which Angel Rodriguez headed home his second goal as Getafe smashed Villarreal 4-0.

## CEDRIC BAKAMBU (Villarreal)

Democratic Republic of Congo striker Bakambu fired Villarreal's best chance over the bar in the first half before being replaced on the hour in the midst of a three-goal surge from Getafe in 13 minutes early in the second period.

## ITALY

## ADEL TAARABT (Genoa)

Moroccan Taarabt were sent off in injury time along with Belgian of DR Congo origin Stephane Omeonga as the club from Liguria lost 1-0 to Inter Milan to remain winless in their opening six games.

## ORJI OKWONKWO (Bologna)

Nigerian Okwonkwo scored a minute from time as Bologna snatched a last-gasp victory in the Emilia-Romagna derby. After Sassuolo captain Francesco Magnanelli was sent off, substitute Okwonkwo sealed the winner.

## FAOUZI GHOUAM (Napoli)

Napoli had Ghouam to thank as they stumbled to a 3-2 win at SPAL Ferrara to seal a record-breaking start to the Serie A season. The Algerian struck with seven minutes left with a stunning left footed strike after a run down the left flank, for a perfect record of six wins from six games—a club record as Napoli sit top of Serie A, ahead of champions Juventus on goal difference.

## GERMANY

## PIERRE-EMERICK AUBAMEYANG (Borussia Dortmund)

The Gabon striker hit a hat-trick for Bundesliga leaders Borussia Dortmund in a 6-1 trouncing of Borussia Moenchengladbach to strengthen his partnership with Maximilian Philipp, who scored the first two goals. This was Aubameyang's second hat-trick of the season after netting a treble in Dortmund's German Cup first-round clash at minnows Rielasingen.

## FRANCE

## RACHID GHEZZAL (Monaco)

The Algeria international notched his first goal for Monaco in a 4-0 rout of Lille. Ghezal, 25, drilled home a clinical finish from Almamy Toure's driven cross on the half hour as the defending champions claimed a sixth win in seven matches. —AFP



**WUHAN:** Caroline Garcia of France hits a return against Angelique Kerber of Germany during their first round women's match at the WTA Wuhan Open tennis tournament in Wuhan, in China's central Hubei province yesterday. — AFP

## TENNIS

## US OPEN WINNER STEPHENS TUMBLES OUT AT WUHAN

**WUHAN:** US Open winner Sloane Stephens suffered a shock defeat at the hands of China's Wang Qiang in the first round of the Wuhan Open yesterday, hours after fellow Flushing Meadows finalist Madison Keys tumbled out.

Stephens, the 14th seed, lost 6-2, 6-2 in her first WTA event since her surprise victory against Keys in New York. Despite a strong fight by Stephens in the second set, Wang—spurred on by the home crowd in the 15,000-capacity stadium—proved too strong for the 24-year-old American.

"I didn't play a great match. But my opponent played very well," Stephens told a post-match press conference. "I mean, it's difficult. It's the end of the year. Even though I played five

tournaments, I feel like I played 25."

Stephens, who ranks number 17 in the world, added she had been taking it easy since her US Open win. "I went to see my grandparents. So no partying for me. I don't party. I don't drink. I don't do any of that stuff," she added.

Keys also crashed out at the first hurdle in the hot and steamy Chinese city, losing to US qualifier Varvara Lepchenko after struggling to overcome a longstanding wrist injury.

The 22-year-old American 10th seed fell 6-2, 7-6 in what was also her first WTA tournament since the Flushing Meadows final. Keys, the world number 12, called a medical timeout early in the second set and looked close to tears as she examined her left wrist, which has twice

needed surgery in the past.

Keys had chances to level the match in the second set but Lepchenko saved two set points to hold at 5-5, before taking the tiebreak 7-4. "The strength (of my wrist) has been the biggest issue... I've been dealing with it over the summer," she told journalists.

"But we kind of all knew it (would be like this) until we had a solid chunk of time to strengthen it." Elsewhere, Agnieszka Radwanska, the ninth seed, beat Magdalena Rybarikova 6-4, 7-5. Lepchenko, ranked 79 in the world, will play either Kiki Bertens of the Netherlands or Romanian Monica Niculescu in the second round. Wang, ranked 57, will play Romanian Sorana Cirstea. — AFP



**DORTMUND:** Dortmund's Gabonese striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang reacts during Borussia Dortmund's training session ahead of their UEFA Champions League Group H match against Real Madrid at the BVB training center yesterday in Dortmund, Germany. —AFP

## HOENESS SLAMS 'UNACCEPTABLE' TRANSFERS BEFORE PSG CLASH

**BERLIN:** Bayern Munich president Uli Hoeness has launched a thinly-veiled attack on tomorrow's Champions League opponents Paris Saint-Germain by slamming the "unacceptable" nature of recent inflated transfer fees.

Qatar-owned PSG signed Neymar from Barcelona for a world record 222 million euros (\$264m) and recruited Kylian Mbappe from Monaco just before the transfer deadline last month on an initial loan deal which is set to be made into a permanent move for 180 million euros next year. Hoeness has been a vocal opponent of such inflated transfer fees and the group games between PSG and Bayern, starting tomorrow at Paris' Parc des Princes, will fan debate with the two clubs having opposing financial philosophies. "I have made it clear that a player costing 100 million euros is unacceptable for Bayern", Hoeness told German magazine Kicker.

"The time will come when all those who are currently bouncing so much money around will lower their sights, because the sporting success they imagined won't match what they have spent." Bayern, who are backed by main sponsors and shareholders Adidas, Allianz and Audi, have been European champions five times in their history, last lift-

ing the Champions League trophy in 2013.

The fact that PSG have not got past the quarter-finals of the Champions League in the last 20 years is not lost on Hoeness. Because "only one team" can win the Champions League per year, Hoeness believes investors in Europe's top clubs will eventually get bored.

"Those who pay out will say 'we have invested so much money and achieved nothing like what we wanted to achieve, now we have had enough!' and that will be our time (for Bayern)," added Hoeness.

Bayern striker Robert Lewandowski recently broke ranks by criticising the club's relatively conservative transfer policy, claiming they risk getting left behind by their big-spending European rivals. "We have been criticised for missing out on the market and preparing for our decline by refusing to buy very expensive players," said Hoeness.

"However, we should be singing our own praises because we succeed through our own work and with our own forces." Last season, Bayern were knocked out of the Champions League in the quarter-finals by eventual winners Real Madrid. They lost in the semi-finals in the previous three seasons under Pep Guardiola. —AFP

## RUGBY

## IRELAND, FRANCE AND S AFRICA PITCH FOR 2023 WORLD CUP

**LONDON:** Ireland, France and South Africa all promised millions in the bank, great stadiums and "the best tournament ever" before figuratively plucking on the emotional heartstrings as they sought to earn the right to host the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

The Irish, who have never been the main host, are the bookmaker's favourite, ahead of South Africa, which hosted a tournament against an extraordinary emotional, social and political backdrop in 1995, with 2007 hosts France the outsider ahead of yesterday's presentations in London.

The host nation for the 10th edition of the event will be announced on Nov. 15 though it would be a huge surprise if the Council of the sport's governing body World Rugby were to go against the World Cup board, which will declare its recommended candidate on Oct 31. The 2015 World Cup in England set records in terms of ticket sales, TV viewing figures and income but Japan, hosts of the first Asian World Cup in 2019, will make much less money.

Consequently, cash was a big feature of all three 2023 bids, with each making a big issue of their governmental financial securities and guaranteed profits, as well as great existing stadiums and minimal travel - meaning points of difference needed to be found elsewhere.

The French bid included the innovative idea that teams knocked out in the pool stage would be invited to stay through the tournament as guests and they will, also for the first time, include a closing ceremony. Sports minister Laura Flessel said that hosting the event along with the already-secured 2024 Olympics would provide "synergies of organisation" and that despite recent bomb attacks in the country, security was an equal concern of all bidding countries.

Slightly bizarrely, the bid party included the sons of the late New Zealand rugby superstar

Jonah Lomu. Dhyreille (7) and Brayley (8) were presented to declare how much they loved French rugby, with Dhyreille having been born in Marseille, where Lomu played three matches at the end of his career in 2009-10.

Ireland hosted matches in the 1991 and 1999 World Cups, principally hosted by Wales and England, but is now bidding for sole rights for by far the biggest sporting event to be held there. The Irish have been buoyed by the opportunity of using previously unavailable Gaelic sports stadiums, highlighted by Dublin's 82,000-capacity Croke Park. While French president Emmanuel Macron was "too busy" to attend, Ireland's Taoiseach Leo Varadkar was in London and underlined the fact by saying: "I wouldn't have missed this for the world."

"This bid represents the hopes and aspirations of the entire island of Ireland," he added,

reinforcing how rugby is one of the few sports where the north and south play as a combined national team and how the tournament would appeal and galvanise the country's far-flung diaspora.

Varadkar said he had addressed World Rugby's questions about any potential impact of Brexit and its uncertainties, making it clear that the Common Travel Area between the Republic and Northern Ireland would remain in place, while ambassador and former captain Brian O'Driscoll said the bid's biggest draw was the fan and player experience.

"It will be the party of a lifetime," he said. The sight of Nelson Mandela in a Springbok shirt presenting the Webb Ellis Cup to Francois Pienaar as South Africa triumphed on home soil in 1995 is probably the most iconic image in the tournament's history. — Reuters



**LONDON:** Top row from left, Director of the French 2023 World Cup bid Claude Atcher, Minister of Sport Laura Flessel, President of the French Rugby Union Bernard Laporte and France 2023 leader and bid ambassador Sebastian Chabal, pose with two children of late rugby legend Jonah Tali Lomu, Dhyreille Lomu, right, and Brayley Lomu, after presenting their bid for the 2023 Rugby World Cup in London, yesterday. South Africa, Ireland and France will bid for the rights to hold the RWC in 2023, following the next RWC which will be held in Japan in 2019. — AP



## WITH RECORD IN SIGHT, AGUERO AMONG WORLD'S BEST: GUARDIOLA

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero could equal the club's all-time goalscoring record in today's Champions League match against Shakhtar Donetsk and his manager Pep Guardiola believes he has become one of the best strikers in the world.

Aguero's goal in the 5-0 win over Crystal Palace on Saturday took him to within one goal of equalling Eric Brook's record for City with his 176th goal for the club in all competitions.

"I hope as soon as possible he can

achieve that record so at least we cannot talk about that. I am pretty sure that in the next game it is going to happen," Guardiola told reporters yesterday. "Last game again he scored a goal and had two or three chances more so that is essential for a striker that you have (chances). "It helps a lot that Ras (Sterling) got two more goals (against Palace). We are able to score more goals with more people. The opponents are more focused on other guys then he is more free to score more goals. Sergio is in no doubt one

of the best strikers in the world," he said. Guardiola says Argentine Aguero has kept his ability to be deadly in the penalty area while becoming more a part of the team's overall play. "Maybe now we play more with him. We are looking not just in the finishing. Before maybe Sergio just scores a goal," the Spaniard added.

"Now in the process. ...we know always he is there. His first metres is so quick and he is so powerful in the legs and I am so happy he is doing that." City, who thrashed Feyenoord 4-0 in

their opening group game, will be without captain and central defender Vincent Kompany who is sidelined with a calf injury and Ilkay Gundogan who is out with a knee problem.

French left-back Benjamin Mendy faces a fitness test on his knee injury. Guardiola said it was vital his team did not under-estimate their Ukrainian opponents who got their Group F campaign off to a good start by beating Napoli 2-1. The City manager said he had always had difficult games against Shakhtar during his time at

Barcelona.

"Always was so tough for me. For Barcelona, we have good results but it was so tough. "They beat one of the best teams in Napoli. Napoli are one of the three or four or five best teams, they are leading the Italian league and Shakhtar beat them.

"That group is tricky. The players today are going to see how good they (Shakhtar) are and hopefully I can convince them to take them seriously. At this level you cannot concede a lot of minutes not playing well." — Reuters

## GUARDIOLA URGES CITY FORWARDS TO BE RUTHLESS

**LONDON:** Pep Guardiola has urged Manchester City's free-scoring forwards to stay hungry for goals and says there are many ways in which the Premier League leaders can improve despite their ominous early-season form.

City, who lead Manchester United on goal difference, have been in impressive form in recent weeks, thumping Liverpool, Watford and Crystal Palace in their past three Premier League games by an aggregate score of 16-0. Combined with a 4-0 thrashing of Feyenoord in the Champions League, and a more modest 2-1 victory over West Brom in the League Cup, City's momentum since the last international break has been formidable. The results have pleased manager Guardiola but he is still not satisfied, as shown in the visible signs of frustration he displayed during a scoreless opening 44 minutes of Saturday's 5-0 defeat of Palace. He says his players must keep gunning for goals. "It is the best way to respect the opponent and the fans, everything," he said. "We play to do it as much as possible.

"People expected before we arrived (on Saturday) it would be easy, but you know how complicated it was in the first half. It's good but the way we play we can improve in many, many things and concepts." The key to retaining sharpness up front could be the fierce competition for places that now exists among City's attacking players. The impressive Gabriel Jesus was the man to sit out at the weekend as Leroy Sane,

one of last season's stars, was handed only his second league start of the campaign.

### ROTATION

The German made the most of the opportunity, scoring the opener and providing an assist for another player who is having to get used to rotation, Raheem Sterling.

Sergio Aguero was among the substitutes for last month's trip to Bournemouth and summer signing Bernardo Silva has so far been used sparingly. David Silva and Kevin De Bruyne have been firm fixtures but even they are well aware of the need to stay on top of their games. "They know that," said Guardiola. "It is not necessary to tell them. They feel it. They feel the teammate alongside them, they say 'wow'. It is good. "That is the best way. You cannot play the same players (every) three days for 11 months. We need the next guys, they have to play good. If you want to win they have to have the best performance.

"We need (Ilkay) Gundogan to come back to put pressure on Kevin and David. Fab (Delph), playing left-back, was outstanding. He is a midfielder player who doesn't lose the ball easily. Every player has to push the other one." City rejected an Arsenal inquiry for Sterling before last month's transfer deadline and Guardiola remains equally dismissive following fresh reports of Gunners interest. Guardiola said: "There is no question of that. He is not going to move. He is going to stay here." — AFP



**DORTMUND:** Dortmund's Dutch head coach Peter Bosz (L) and Dortmund's midfielder Mario Goetze attend a press conference on the eve of the Champions League Group H football match Borussia Dortmund against Real Madrid yesterday in Dortmund, Germany. — AFP

### SOCCER

# DORTMUND OUT TO RUIN RONALDO'S MILESTONE

**BERLIN:** Borussia Dortmund will aim to maintain their unbeaten record at home to Real Madrid in the Champions League today and spoil Cristiano Ronaldo's 150th European appearance. Dortmund and title holders Real meet in the group stage for the second year running.

The teams drew both games 2-2 last season as the Germans topped the section before bowing out in the last eight while Real went on to win a record 12th title. Dortmund have won three and drawn three of their meetings at Signal Iduna Park, including their dazzling 4-1 first-leg win in the 2013 Champions League semi-final when Robert Lewandowski scored all four goals. Defending champions Real opened their group campaign with a 3-0 win at home to Apoel while Dortmund suffered a 3-1 defeat at Tottenham Hotspur a fortnight ago.

The Germans' main task will be containing four-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo, who has scored 110 goals in European competition but failed to find the net in his last two outings. The Portuguese superstar is among the final three nominees for the Best FIFA Men's Player 2017 award and the winner will be announced on October 23. Dortmund flexed their muscles ahead of the heavyweight showdown with a 6-1 home drubbing of Borussia Moenchengladbach in the German league on Saturday as Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang netted a hat-trick.

The Gabon striker has now scored eight goals in six league games. He has forged a partner-

ship-dubbed 'Philameyang' by the German media with left-winger Maximilian Philipp, who has scored four goals in his last three games.

### 'MISTAKES WILL BE PUNISHED'

"Things couldn't have gone better," beamed Dortmund's World Cup winner Mario Goetze, who is back in form after a metabolic disorder, following the Gladbach win. "However, we know that it will be a mammoth task against Real on Tuesday." While Dortmund shone in attack, they struggled at the back against Gladbach, who had half a dozen clear chances to score which went begging. Zinedine Zidane's Real are unlikely to be as forgiving. "Against Real, mistakes like that will be punished totally differently," warned Dortmund director Michael Zorc.

Dortmund's big win came with forwards Marco Reus, Andre Schuerrle and Raphael Guerreiro injured while new signing Andriy Yarmolenko, Nuri Sahin and Gonzalo Castro were not used. Real traditionally have a terrible record in Germany with 19 defeats, seven draws and only five wins.

However, four of those victories have come in their last seven visits and they enjoyed a 2-1 win at Bayern Munich in last season's quarter-finals. Madrid's run of scoring in 73 successive matches in all competitions ended when they lost 1-0 at home to Real Betis on 20 September. But they rebounded with a 2-1 win at Alaves on Saturday as Dani Ceballos scored his first goals for Madrid



### Matches on TV (Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE	
Napoli v Feyenoord Rotterdam	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 4	
Manchester City v Shakhtar Donetsk	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Borussia Dortmund v Real Madrid	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
Apoel Nicosia v Tottenham Hotspur	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 7	
Besiktas v Leipzig	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 8	
Monaco v Porto	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 6	
Sevilla v Maribor	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Spartak Moscow v Liverpool	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 5	

on his first competitive start. Zidane is without a left-back as Marcelo (hamstring) and Theo Hernandez (shoulder) are both out, so Nacho is set to fill in. Karim Benzema is missing with a hamstring injury, but Luka Modric and Gareth Bale were both rested at the weekend and Toni Kroos is expected to return after injury. — AFP

## LIVERPOOL, MAN UNITED FANS TRIGGER MOSCOW SECURITY JITTERS

**MOSCOW:** As thousands of British fans head to Moscow for Champions League matches involving Manchester United and Liverpool, Russia faces a crucial test of its security measures just months ahead of the 2018 World Cup.

Some 2,000 British fans are expected to arrive for matches today and tomorrow against Moscow teams known for problems with hooliganism and racism in the stands. Liverpool play Spartak Moscow on Tuesday and Manchester United plays CSKA Moscow on Wednesday, both kicking off at 1845 GMT. The head of the Russian Football Union's security committee, Vladimir Markin, warned them to behave or face an extended stay behind bars. "I don't want to scare anyone but I warn those who plan to come here not to support their side and see the country but to commit hooliganism: the law is the same for all, not just for Russians," Markin told TASS state news agency on Sunday.

"Those who break it will face a suitable punishment, possibly in the form of a long stay in Russia, in conditions our guests won't like." The influx of supporters raises the spectre of a repeat of the violence at Euro-2016 in France when street battles erupted in central Marseille ahead of the match between England and Russia on June 11 — 35 people were injured and three Russian hooligans jailed.

Russia has vowed to ensure fans' safety when it hosts the World Cup next year and has cracked down on its own hooligans who model themselves on the hooligan gangs that dogged English football in the past. For the Liverpool and Manchester United games, tightened controls will be in place at stadium entrances and nearby metro stations — as happened when Russia hosted the Confederations Cup in June and July without incident. A multi-lingual telephone help line (Fans Hotline 8-800-775-76-88) is set to open 24 hours between Monday and Wednesday to offer British fans' legal support if needed.

Both Liverpool and Manchester United

have warned fans to be on their best behaviour. "You can expect there to be a visible police presence wherever groups of LFC and Man United fans congregate," a Liverpool statement said. Manchester United called for "impeccable" behaviour from its supporters and advised them not to "attract attention" and to avoid wearing the team's colours in public.

### RISK OF JAIL

In April, President Vladimir Putin approved new legislation toughening punishments for foreign fans responsible for crowd trouble at sports events. The legislation makes it possible to bar known foreign hooligans or those suspected of planning trouble from entering Russia. The law increases the fine for such offences to 50,000 rubles (\$868, 733 euros) and also makes them punishable by up to 15 days of detention in police cells followed by deportation. After the Marseilles clashes, the Russian interior ministry's counter-extremism division also cracked down on Russian fans, leading to more detentions and convictions.

"The atmosphere at football matches has on the whole improved. You feel safer," said one Spartak fan, who gave his name as Alexander. "Even if the number of aggressive fans hasn't gone down, the clubs have learnt to organise matches better," the 24-year-old said, praising a decision to reinforce crowd control using volunteers in plain clothes rather than "the police, who irritate the fans."

Nevertheless Spartak supporters fired a flare at the German referee during a match with Slovenia's Maribor earlier in September. UEFA fined the Russian club 60,000 euros and banned it from selling tickets for its next away match.

On Friday, Spartak's Italian manager Massimo Carrera urged fans "not to repeat such actions," TASS reported. "I hope they will take seriously the risk of not being allowed into the stadium next time," Carrera said. — AFP



**MOSCOW:** Liverpool's players attend a team training session at the club's Melwood training complex in Liverpool, north west England, yesterday, on the eve of their Champions League Group E football match against Spartak Moscow in Russia. — AFP

## HOMESICK CONTE READY TO RETURN TO ITALY

**MILAN:** Chelsea manager Antonio Conte has revealed he misses his native Italy and plans to return home soon. "Yes, I miss Italy. And in my mind, there's no doubt I will be home before long," Conte said in an interview Monday with Italian radio station Anchio Sport.

"Italy is my homeland, so once I have had some good experiences, important and life-changing experiences, I'll be back. I don't know when but that's the aim."

The 48-year-old from Lecce in the heel of Italy led Chelsea to the Premier League title in his first season in England. "For me, it was my first year abroad and it was great to win at the first attempt. A special feeling was created with the fans," he said. But despite being unsure what the future holds the former Juventus and Italian national team boss ruled out working in China. "In China, no, absolutely, I'm nostalgic for Italy. I'll be back but perhaps in the future I won't be a manager. Perhaps I'll work as a director of football. I don't know," he continued.

Conte believes it will be tough for Chelsea third this term behind Manchester City and Manchester United after six games to defend their title. "Six teams are in contention for the title, this year will be even tougher because Manchester United are back and there is also Tottenham, not to mention Liverpool and Arsenal." Next up is Wednesday's Champions League clash at Atletico Madrid after cantering past Azerbaijani side Qarabag 6-0 in their opener, with AS Roma playing in Stamford Bridge on October 18. "In our corner, there's Roma, who have all the cards to go far," he said. "Ours wasn't

a lucky draw, but we want to overcome it so we can prepare for the last 16, where I hope to avoid the Italian teams." As for club football in his homeland Conte believes "Serie A is in the process of coming back, but all the best players

want to play in the English championship".

And he has no doubt Italy will make the World Cup in Russia next year. "I'm not afraid about us not going to the World Cup. I have no doubt, Italy will be there." — AFP



**NICOSIA:** Apoel's Mexican goalkeepers Raul Gudino (R) and Dutch Boy Waterman take part in a training session at the GSP Stadium in Nicosia, on the eve of the UEFA Champions League Group H football match between Apoel FC and Tottenham Hotspur, yesterday. — AFP



# Sports

**Martinez lifts  
Diamondbacks to  
top wild card**



**Dortmund out to  
ruin Ronaldo's  
milestone**



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US OPEN WINNER STEPHENS TUMBLES OUT AT WUHAN

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DETROIT: Eric Ebron #85 of the Detroit Lions runs with the ball after a catch against Ricardo Allen #37 of the Atlanta Falcons at Ford Field on Sunday in Detroit, Michigan. — AFP

## LATE RULE CALL HELPS FALCONS BEAT LIONS

DETROIT: Matthew Stafford's pass to Golden Tate was ruled to be just short of the goal line in the final seconds, overturning the call on the field and allowing the Atlanta Falcons to hold on for a 30-26 win over the Detroit Lions on Sunday. Stafford threw a slant to Tate and a video review determined he was down just inside the 1 with 8 seconds left. By rule, 10 seconds had to run off the clock, and that ended the game because the Lions didn't have any timeouts. Former NFL officiating chief Dean Blandino, now a Fox analyst, explained the call in a tweet: "To recap in DET: ruling on the field was a TD which stops the clock. After review, Tate was short which would have kept the clock running ... This carries a 10-sec runoff. Had the call on the field been correct initially, the clock would have run out. That's the spirit of the rule." The defending NFC champion Falcons (3-0) overcame Matt Ryan's three interceptions and many other mistakes, including on Detroit's last drive. Detroit (2-1) never led in the game and failed to pull off another comeback in the fourth quarter.

### EAGLES 27, GIANTS 24

Jake Elliott kicked a 61-yard field goal as the clock expired. Eli Manning threw three touchdown passes in the fourth quarter, including a 77-yard score to Sterling Shepard, but Philadelphia (2-1) rallied twice. Carson Wentz tossed a 19-yard pass to Alshon Jeffery to set up Elliott's kick. The rookie was a fifth-round pick by the Bengals and joined the Eagles after Caleb Sturgis was injured in Week 1. He was carried off the field by two teammates. Elliott hit a 46-yard field goal to tie it with 51 seconds left after Aldrick Rosas kicked a 41-yarder to put the Giants ahead. The Giants (0-3) hadn't scored 20 points in eight straight games before Manning led them to 21 in a span of 5:21. He tossed TD passes of 10 yards and 4 yards to Odell Beckham Jr. to tie it at 14. Manning then connected over the middle to Shepard, who broke a couple tackles and sprinted all the way for a 21-14 lead. But Philadelphia (2-1) answered quickly. A 36-yard penalty for pass interference on Eli Apple put the ball at the 15 and rookie Corey Clement ran in on the next play for his first career TD to make it 21-21.

### PATRIOTS 36, TEXANS 33

Tom Brady connected with Brandin Cooks for a 25-yard touchdown pass with 23 seconds left, his fifth TD throw of the game. Brady finished 25 of 35 for 378 yards as New England (2-1) won its fifth straight regular-season meeting with Houston (1-2) and seventh of eight overall. Cooks caught five passes for 131 yards and pair of scores. It was the fifth multi-touchdown game and eighth 100-yard game of his career. Texans rookie Deshaun Watson was strong in his second career start. The Patriots were thin on the edge without linebacker Dont'a Hightower for the sec-

ond straight week, and Watson took advantage, completing 22 of 33 passes for 301 yards and two touchdowns. But he did have two interceptions, including one that set up a New England first-half touchdown. The Patriots extended their halftime lead to 28-20 in the third quarter before Houston used a 12-yard TD pass from Watson to Ryan Griffin, and a 31-yard Ka'imi Fairbairn field goal to edge back in front 30-28 early in the fourth quarter.

### BEARS 23, STEELERS 17, OT

Jordan Howard scored on a 19-yard run in overtime to lead the Bears. Howard's winning score came two plays after rookie Tarik Cohen broke off an electric run for what appeared to be a 73-yard winning touchdown. But he was ruled out at the Pittsburgh 37. Howard took over from there, and the Bears (1-2) came away with a surprising victory. Howard had 138 of Chicago's 220 yards rushing, making up for a lackluster performance by quarterback Mike Glennon. The Steelers (2-1) stayed off the sideline for the national anthem in the wake of President Donald Trump's comments that players who kneel in protest should be fired. Left tackle Alejandro Villanueva, an Army veteran, stood near the tunnel with his hand over his heart. Once the game ended, they found themselves in a familiar spot - losing to a lesser team and losing in Chicago, where they are 1-13.

### PACKERS 27, BENGALS 24

Mason Crosby kicked a 27-yard field goal with 6:26 left in overtime set up by Aaron Rodgers' 72-yard pass to Geronimo Allison. Crosby's kick completed the Packers' comeback from a 21-7 halftime deficit. On third-and-10 from his 21, Rodgers took advantage of yet another free play after defensive end Michael Johnson was whistled for offside. Officials let the play continue and the two-time NFL MVP found Allison on about a 69-yard run. The Chiefs (3-0) beat the Chargers for the seventh straight time and have won 12 straight AFC West games. Los Angeles' Philip Rivers threw three interceptions and the Chargers fell to 0-3 in their first season playing in the 27,000-seat StubHub Center after moving

### CHIEFS 24, CHARGERS 10

Alex Smith threw two touchdown passes in the first 9 1/2 minutes against what used to be his hometown team, Terrance Mitchell had two interceptions and rookie Kareem Hunt scored on a 69-yard run. The Chiefs (3-0) beat the Chargers for the seventh straight time and have won 12 straight AFC West games. Los Angeles' Philip Rivers threw three interceptions and the Chargers fell to 0-3 in their first season playing in the 27,000-seat StubHub Center after moving

from San Diego. After a quick start, the Chiefs held on through a defensive struggle in the second half. They got two huge plays in the closing minutes: Justin Houston's sack of Rivers and then Hunt's sensational run when he cut back against the flow and raced 69 yards down the left sideline with 1:49 left. The rookie finished with 172 yards on 17 carries. The game couldn't have started more differently for Smith, who grew up in the San Diego area, and Rivers.

### TITANS 33, SEAHAWKS 27

Marcus Mariota threw for 225 yards and two touchdowns as the Titans scored 21 straight points in rallying to beat the Seahawks. Pro Bowl running back DeMarco Murray rushed for 115 yards, including a 75-yard TD run. Ryan Succop also kicked four field goals as Tennessee (2-1) scored at least 30 points for a second straight week. The Seahawks (1-2) finally scored a bunch of touchdowns with Russell Wilson throwing for 373 yards and four TDs. His second TD, a 10-yarder to Chris Carson, put Seattle up 14-9 in the third quarter. Then the Titans took control with Mariota answering with TDs on the next two drives for Tennessee. Wilson pulled Seattle within 33-27 with his fourth TD, an 8-yarder to Paul Richardson with 1:50 left. But Titans tight end Delanie Walker recovered Seattle's onside kick. The Seahawks had one last chance with the Titans lined up to punt on fourth-and-3 with 11 seconds left. Then officials flagged the Seahawks for 12 men in the formation, giving Tennessee the clinching first down.

### REDSKINS 27, RAIDERS 10

Kirk Cousins threw for 365 yards and three touchdowns and Chris Thompson had 188 all-purpose yards and a score as Washington sacked Derek Carr four times and held Oakland to 128 yards in a dominating victory. Cousins was a spectacular 25 of 30, including TD passes to Thompson, Vernon Davis and a 52-yarder to Josh Doctson. Thompson had 150 yards receiving and 38 yards rushing, joining Jamaal Charles as the only running backs to put up 150 yards receiving against the Raiders (2-1) since they moved to Oakland in 1995. Thompson was again a difference maker and has four of Washington's seven offensive touchdowns this season. The Redskins (2-1), who piled up 472 yards, improved to 4-6 in prime-time games under coach Jay Gruden and tied the Philadelphia Eagles for first place in the NFC East.

### BILLS 26, BRONCOS 16

Tyrod Taylor threw two touchdowns and the Bills intercepted Trevor Siemian twice in the final 19 minutes. Taylor went 20 of 26 for 213 yards with a 2-yard touchdown to Andre Holmes and a 6-yarder to Charles Clay. Taylor got lucky on the touchdown pass to Holmes, as the ball deflected off the hands of Zay Jones just inside the goal

line and bounced directly to Holmes in the back of the end zone. The Bills (2-1) overcame their struggling running attack courtesy of Taylor's arm and a stout defense in a game LeSean McCoy was limited to 21 yards on 14 carries. Though he had seven catches for 48 yards, McCoy's latest poor outing came after he was limited to 9 yards rushing in a 9-3 loss at Carolina. The Bills allowed just one touchdown, while Brandon McManus rounded out Denver's scoring with three field goals.

### JETS 20, DOLPHINS 6

Josh McCown threw a 69-yard touchdown pass to Robby Anderson, Bilal Powell ran for a score, and the Jets' defense dominated Jay Cutler and the Dolphins. While a lot of the focus heading into the season was on whether the revamped Jets roster would be good enough to win any games, New York made Miami look like the team in the middle of a rebuild. McCown finished 18 of 23 for 249 yards, Chandler Catanzaro kicked two field goals, and the Jets (1-2) forced Cutler and the Dolphins (1-1) into mistakes all game. The Jets also avoided their first 0-3 start since 2003. New York just missed having its first shutout since blanking Cincinnati 37-0 on Jan. 13, 2010 - in the Jets' last game at the old Giants Stadium. Cutler threw a 3-yard touchdown pass to DeVante Parker on the final play. Cody Parkey missed the extra point, capping a miserable day for Miami in 88-degree heat at MetLife Stadium.

### JAGUARS 44, RAVENS 7

Mercedes Lewis caught three of Blake Bortles' four touchdown passes as the Jaguars won in their fifth game in Britain's capital. Allen Hurns and Leonard Fournette also scored touchdowns for the Jaguars (2-1), who have won each of their last three games played at the venue. This one, by far, was the easiest. The Ravens (2-1) managed just 186 yards of total offense, including minus-1 yard in the first quarter. They managed 15 yards in the first half, and picked up only 12 first downs. A 6-yard pass from Ryan Mallett, who entered in relief of Joe Flacco in the fourth quarter, to Benjamin Watson with 3:24 remaining prevented the shutout. It was their worst defeat since Nov. 9, 1997, when they lost 37-0 at Pittsburgh. Baltimore crossed midfield three times - and not until the third quarter, when Terrance West gained 7 yards to reach the Jaguars 45. On the next play, West failed to secure a handoff and fumbled, leading to line-backer Telvin Smith returning it 52 yards to set up Lewis' third touchdown.

### VIKINGS 34, BUCCANEERS 17

Case Keenum gave Minnesota a brilliant performance in relief of Sam Bradford, passing for three touchdowns and a career-high 369 yards without a turnover. Stefon Diggs had 173 yards

receiving and caught two of Keenum's throws for scores, one short and one long. Dalvin Cook produced 169 total yards plus his first NFL touchdown, which capped a 75-yard drive by the Vikings (2-1) to start the game. They never slowed down, building a 28-3 lead by early in the third quarter on their way to compiling 494 yards. Trae Waynes and Harrison Smith each picked off Jameis Winston in the end zone, and Andrew Sendej returned an interception 36 yards in the fourth quarter to set up one of two field goals by Kai Forbath. Winston completed 28 of 40 passes for 328 yards, but the Buccaneers (1-1) simply couldn't overcome having to play from behind all afternoon. They converted only one of six third downs.

### COLTS 31, BROWNS 28

Jacoby Brissett ran for two touchdowns, threw for another and the Colts held off Cleveland's late charge. Brissett, acquired in a trade with New England earlier this month, looked much more comfortable in his second start, going 17 of 24 with 259 yards and running five times for 14 yards. Indy (1-2) avoided its first 0-3 start in six years. Cleveland (0-3) lost its 15th consecutive road game despite being favored for the first time since 2015 and a road favorite for the first time since 2012. Brissett was the primary reason for the Browns' latest loss. He started the scoring with a 5-yard TD run, broke a 7-7 tie by spinning away from pressure and scooting 7 yards for his second score, then hooked up with T.Y. Hilton on a 61-yard TD pass to make it 21-7 - all in the first half. Frank Gore's 4-yard scoring run made it 28-7.

### SAINTS 34, PANTHERS 13

Drew Brees shredded the league's top-ranked defense, throwing for three touchdowns and 220 yards. Brees led six scoring drives and threw TD passes to Michael Thomas, Brandon Coleman and ex-Panthers wide receiver Ted Ginn Jr. as the Saints avoided an 0-3 start. Rookie Alvin Kamara put the game away with a 25-yard TD run with 4:42 left. Carolina (2-1) had allowed six points in its previous two games. The Saints' defense, which came in ranked 32nd in the league, intercepted Cam Newton three times and sacked him four times before he was replaced late in the fourth quarter. Many of Newton's throws were either too hard or high as the seventh-year quarterback continued to struggle with his rhythm following offseason shoulder surgery. The Panthers, who were already without injured Pro Bowl tight end Greg Olsen, lost wide receiver Kelvin Benjamin in the first quarter to a knee injury; his leg got bent back awkwardly after being dragged down from behind. Carolina's only real offense came from rookie running back Christian McCaffrey, who had 101 yards receiving on nine catches. — AP





All-new 2018 Chevrolet Equinox soon in Kuwait

## CHINESE TRADERS GET DOWN TO BUSINESS IN NORTH KOREA



BERLIN: (L-R) Lucas Floehter, insolvency administrator in charge of the case of the German airline, German airline's "Air Berlin" CEO Thomas Winkelmann and German lawyer Frank Kebekus leave after a press conference on the future of the airline company in Berlin yesterday. — AFP

# AIR BERLIN PICKS LUFTHANSA, EASYJET BIDS

## SELLOFF OFFERS HOPES FOR 8,000 EMPLOYEES, 140 AIRCRAFT

BERLIN: Insolvent Air Berlin confirmed yesterday it was negotiating with German airline giant Lufthansa and Britain's EasyJet to sell off parts of its business, offering hope for the future of its 8,000 employees and 140 aircraft.

"Negotiations with Lufthansa AG and the British airline EasyJet will now continue until 12 October," the firm said in a statement following a board meeting. Technical details around winding up the carrier to be thrashed out in the coming weeks and any final deal will need to be approved by European regulators. EasyJet is interested only in parts of the passenger airline, while Lufthansa's bid includes subsidiary LGW and Austrian airline Niki as well as parts of Air Berlin.

At stake are the carrier's 140 leased aircraft including those wholly owned by Niki-coveted landing and takeoff slots at German airports, some prime Berlin real estate and the liveli-

hoods of thousands of employees. "We are on the way to achieving good job prospects for around 80 percent of our colleagues with our bidders," Air Berlin chief executive Thomas Winkelmann said. The company has some 8,600 employees, including part-time workers, according to DPA news agency.

Air Berlin suffered recently as huge numbers of pilots called in sick in a protest action sparked by the uncertainty over looming job losses.

At the time, Winkelmann said the wildcat strike posed an "existential threat" to Air Berlin.

"Stable flight operations in the coming days and weeks are essential for success" in the sell-off negotiations, administrator Frank Kebekus said yesterday. Air Berlin triggered bankruptcy proceedings in mid-August after losing a cash lifeline from its biggest shareholder Etihad Airways, giving potential buyers a month to make their offers. In the race to strip down Air Berlin,

Lufthansa reportedly beat out IAG-owner of Iberia and British Airways—and three bids of between 500 million and 600 million euros (\$600 million and \$715 million) apiece from private investors. Despite media reports to the contrary, there was no sign yesterday that German competitor Condor was still in the bidding process. Irish low-cost airline Ryanair stayed out of the bidding as its outspoken chief Michael O'Leary denounced a German "stitch-up" designed to favour Lufthansa's expansion of its low-cost subsidiary Eurowings.

### 'Absurd'

"Rumors that politics had influenced the selection of investors are... completely absurd," insolvency administrator Lucas Floehter said in the statement. The German government, which extended a 150-million-euro bridging loan to Air Berlin to keep its aircraft aloft, ruled out any one

competitor taking over the carrier whole for competition reasons. Neither details of the bids from Lufthansa and EasyJet nor the amounts of their offers have been made public.

But the airline said "there is a good chance" that the government's loan can be repaid to public investment bank KfW. German newspaper Bild and Berlin tabloid B.Z. reported at the weekend that creditors expected the sale of Air Berlin assets to bring in 250-350 million euros.

Lufthansa chief Carsten Spohr told journalists last week that the carrier was interested in buying up to 78 Air Berlin planes.

### Long-hauls to be scrapped

Lufthansa has signaled it could hire up to 3,000 people to go with its new planes, possibly including some from Air Berlin's ranks. As European low-cost airlines engage in dogfights for control of the skies, trade union Verdi fears

that some buyers plan to use their own staff to profit from Air Berlin's aircraft and landing slots, rather than offering existing employees opportunities. Verdi's Christine Behle said last week the union expected the successful bidders to "take on responsibility for Air Berlin's employees and offer them good opportunities for the future."

But the clock is ticking. Despite the government's cash infusion, Air Berlin is running on fumes. It has already been forced to slash most long-haul flights and plans to end the service all together by October 15. Some domestic flights are also being cancelled from the end of the month. Air Berlin, which transported 36 million passengers in 2016, has assured anxious travellers it will operate its other flights as scheduled until bankruptcy proceedings are completed. Passengers who bought plane tickets after August 15 can be reimbursed for their reservations. — AFP

# GREECE LEAVES EU'S DEFICIT SIN BIN

ATHENS: The EU turned a page on the eurozone debt crisis yesterday as it formally removed Greece from its excessive deficit procedure, the bloc's penalty box for overspending by member states. Three countries now remain in the procedure—Britain, Spain and France—which is down from 24 at the height of the eurozone debt crisis in 2011.

The decision, formally approved by the EU national governments yesterday, "is recognition

of the tremendous efforts and sacrifices the Greek people have made to restore stability to their country's public finances," said the EU's Commissioner for Economic Affairs, Pierre Moscovici. "This turnaround has no parallels in Europe," he added. Greece's deficit soared to above 15 percent of GDP in 2009, an amount that shocked the world and triggered the crisis that nearly saw the end of the euro single currency. After three painful EU-IMF bailouts, Greece

last year posted a surplus equivalent to 0.7 percent of GDP and is forecast to strike a deficit ratio of a still low 1.2 percent in 2017. The latest rescue program, runs to August 2018 and Athens then hopes to fully return to borrowing on the financial markets. Under European Union rules, eurozone countries are not allowed to run up deficits in excess of 3.0 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and must aim to balance their public finances in the medium term.

However, Greece will remain under supervision after it exits its current bailout and Athens must achieve "economic and political stability," the head of a group of Eurozone finance ministers said Saturday. Greece has received two multi-billion euro bailouts since 2010. The third rescue program, currently financially supported by EU states alone, runs to August 2018 and Athens then hopes to fully return to market financing.

"The viability of Greek public debt (179 percent of GDP) will be reviewed at the end of the program if Greece respects its commitments," Dutch Finance Minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem told the Ta Nea newspaper in an interview.

"In all cases where we have had support programs, the countries have had to submit to a program of supervision after it ended as happened in Ireland, Spain or Cyprus," he said.

"In Greece we will also have a supervision program especially since there are outstanding debts with long repayments." But he said the Greek economy "is performing better". Earlier this month, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said the country's Grexit status had changed and it was now attracting investors in droves. "In 2016, direct foreign investments were the highest in the last 10 years and in 2017 further improvement is expected," Tsipras said. — AFP



ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (left) welcomes Chair of the eurogroup finance ministers, Jeroen Dijsselbloem in Athens yesterday. The EU turned a page on the eurozone debt crisis yesterday as it formally removed Greece from its excessive deficit procedure, the bloc's penalty box for overspending by member states. — AFP

# LEBANON PLANS TAX HIKES TO FUND PUBLIC SECTOR PAY RISE

BEIRUT: Lebanon still aims to increase taxes to finance a public sector pay rise, a senior official said yesterday, after the plan was thrown into doubt last week when the constitutional council annulled the new tax law.

Many public sector workers went out on strike yesterday after the constitutional council, an arm of the judiciary, decided on Friday to reject the tax law passed by parliament to finance a \$917 million public sector pay rise. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity as deliberations were still underway, said the government would adjust its proposed tax hikes as they were the only way for the heavily indebted state to pay for the wage increase. The proposals included increases in value-added tax, corporate tax, taxes on alcohol and tobacco, lottery prizes and interest on bank deposits, as well as increases in fees and fines. The official said the government would address the points raised by the council. "The direction is to reapprove the same taxes ... after clarifying the points tabled by the constitutional council," the official told Reuters.

Some economists had expressed concern about the tax hikes and the constitutional council said they were unlawful for a number of reasons, including the government's failure to approve them as part of a state budget. Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri's government in March agreed the first state budget in 12 years, but it has yet to be approved by parliament.

"Time is running out and we have no alternative to taxes," the official said. "We cannot finance (the public sector pay rise) without these taxes because this will create a financial imbalance and increase the strain on the economy and increase the public debt, representing a

danger to Lebanon's credit rating," Beshara Al-Asmar, head of the general confederation of Lebanese workers, said workers at all public sector institutions went out on strike yesterday, but did not say how many joined the industrial action. "I call on the state to come up with a quick solution, today, before tomorrow," he told Reuters, urging the cabinet to take the "brave decision" and increase public sector salaries from this month. The strike could continue indefinitely.

"It is an open strike that will be determined on a day by day basis. We will follow developments and take the necessary steps," Al-Asmar said. Central bank Governor Riad Salameh said on Sunday the public sector pay increase must be financed through taxation. The Hariri-led government assumed office last year as part of a political deal that made Christian politician Michel Aoun head of state. The cabinet includes all of Lebanon's main groups apart from the Christian Kataeb party, the faction which lodged the complaint against the tax law with the constitutional council. Lebanon has a debt-to-GDP ratio of 148 percent, one of the highest in the world, and recorded a fiscal deficit of \$4.9 billion last year. Moody's ratings agency downgraded Lebanon's sovereign debt in August citing its debt burden, but both S&P and Fitch affirmed their existing ratings.

The finance minister has previously said the public sector wage rise would cost an estimated 1.38 trillion Lebanese pounds (\$917 million), while the tax hikes would bring in revenue of 1.65 trillion pounds (\$1.1 billion). The government is due to convene today as part of its efforts to resolve the crisis. — Reuters



SPECIAL REPORT

# KUWAIT'S ICT INDUSTRY POISED FOR GROWTH

By Oxford Business Group

Tech businesses are expected to be among the beneficiaries of several new initiatives being rolled out in Kuwait targeting start-ups and e-government expansion.

The raft of projects will be introduced under the Kuwait National Development Plan (New Kuwait), which aims to transform the country into a regional financial and cultural leader by 2035. Unveiled in January, the wide-ranging roadmap is supported by seven pillars: global position, infrastructure, human capital, public administration, health care, economy and living environment. Given its growing role across sectors, ICT looks set to become a major driver of non-oil growth in the coming years as Kuwait moves to further diversify its economy.

**Drive to boost entrepreneurial activity**

Initiatives planned under New Kuwait include the launch of a KD 5.3 million incubator for small and medium-sized enterprises, which is expected to finance

100-150 businesses and create 200-300 permanent job opportunities each year.

The government expects the incubator to support its goals of increasing the non-oil sector's contribution to GDP from an average of 45.3 percent between 2010 and 2014 to 83.9 percent in FY 2017/18, as mapped out in New Kuwait. Other targets include reducing commodity and service imports by 7.8 percent in 2017/18 from the 2010-14 average.

Stakeholders in the ICT industry will also be looking to benefit from a KD 12.9 million plan to expand e-government and civil information system applications in the public administration pillar of the plan. The e-government expansion initiative will include the setting up of an integrated electronic portal linking family care, charity, medical and social welfare services alongside the implementation of a security system to safeguard individual data.

It will be delivered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, and supports social pillar targets including reducing and simplifying the documentary cycle,

streamlining service provision, and improving ICT adoption and usage up to 2035.

**Start-ups building momentum**

The number of tech-based start-ups is already expanding, in line with efforts under way to boost entrepreneurial activity. Ventures making the news in 2017 include Kuwaiti food delivery start-up Carriage, which was acquired by Germany's Delivery Hero in May. Media reports put the sale price at \$100 million to \$200 million. Launched initially with \$1.3 million in seed funding and operating across the Gulf, Carriage allows users to order food via its app from more than 200 outlets.

Commenting at the time of the acquisition, Niklas Ostberg, CEO of Delivery Hero, said the deal would provide the Berlin-based firm with a foothold in a region that offered "significant growth potential".

The sale follows the well-documented success of fellow Kuwait-based food delivery site Talabat, which was

acquired by German e-commerce group Rocket Internet for \$170 million in February 2015. Other local start-ups gaining ground include Waterworks, a car-washing and valeting service launched in October 2016 that can be accessed via WhatsApp, and Baims, an online marketplace for Arabic educational content, which began operating one month earlier and has since built up a user base of 15,000.

Masbagti, a laundry app initiative launched in April 2016, is also establishing its place in the market. The venture provides pick-up and drop-off services for customers, with orders made via the app and payments accepted through electronic banking service K-Net, or as cash on delivery.

Private sector interest in Kuwait's ICT sector is also on the rise. In October 2016 Huawei Kuwait announced the launch of an ICT training center and Seeds for the Future, a program which will work with Kuwaiti entrepreneurs and the government on initiatives including the internet of things and smart city development.

The center will train Kuwaitis in ICT skills in a bid to increase their participation in the sector, while also supporting localization initiatives.

**Licensing issue risks curbing growth**

Though the long-term prospects for the ICT sector look bright, recent legal decisions could weigh on near-term start-up growth. In June, Kuwait City's municipal government said it had halted a move by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to allow home business licenses, which would have provided a critical support mechanism for seed and early-stage start-ups.

Explaining its decision, the municipality said the ministry's plans were in violation of rules banning commercial businesses within residential areas. While the move is set to weigh primarily on retail and service businesses, such as tailors, barbers, laundrettes and grocery shops, it will also impact start-up development. Addressing the issue of home licensing will thus be critical to supporting start-up growth.



## KUWAIT REAL ESTATE ACTIVITY REMAINED STABLE IN AUGUST

### NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

**KUWAIT:** Real estate activity remained relatively stable in August. Seasonality pulled the monthly sales figure down slightly to KD 154.5 million. Sales across all sectors totaled KD 1.5 billion year-to-date (ytd), down 5.4 percent from the same period last year. The residential sector was particularly strong in 2017, compensating for the subdued activity in the investment and commercial sectors. Prices continue to stabilize, though they remain down 5 percent-10 percent year-on-year (y/y).

2017 witnessed the resurgence of investor interest in the residential sector, following weaker demand since end-2015. Year-to-date, sector sales improved by 23 percent y/y. Over the last eight months, 1,134 homes were sold at an average of 173 home per month, 24 percent higher than during the same period last year. Similarly, regained interest in residential land has been noticed in 2017, with 924 plots sold so far; however, it remains substantially lower than the 1,432 plots sold during the first 8 months of 2015.

Despite this improvement, August residential sector sales were soft, recording the lowest monthly sales in almost a year. Since the spike in May 2017, sales have trended down to reach KD 67.2 million in August, which was down by 6.4 percent y/y. 217 residential transactions were recorded in August, more than two thirds of which were homes, while the rest were plots. Home sale activity was prominent in the Ahmadi governorate, totaling 49 transactions, as well as in the Jahra governorate that numbered 34 in total.

More robust demand this year continued to see the NBK residential price index firm up. This resulted in a stronger NBK residential home price index that reached 155.1 in August, the highest so far in 2017. The NBK residential land price index registered its first monthly increase in six months from 164.8 in

	Monthly average		2017			Aug 2017	
	2015	2016	June	July	August	% m/m	% y/y
<b>Sales (KD mn)</b>	<b>253.5</b>	<b>194.7</b>	<b>163.6</b>	<b>161.5</b>	<b>154.5</b>	<b>-4.3</b>	<b>17.8</b>
Residential property	113.4	78.7	102.0	90.3	67.2	-25.5	-6.4
Investment property	102.2	68.1	50.8	57.5	34.8	-39.4	-35.3
Commercial property	37.9	47.9	10.9	13.8	52.5	281.0	846.8
<b>Number of transactions</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>-19.4</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Residential property	323	237	308	268	217	-19.0	-1.4
Investment property	120	108	74	100	68	-32.0	-10.5
Commercial property	8	8	4	4	15	275.0	275.0
<b>Transaction size (KD '000)</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>423.9</b>	<b>434.2</b>	<b>515.1</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>17.8</b>
Residential property	352	332	331.2	336.8	309.7	-8.0	-5.1
Investment property	882	646	686.1	574.9	512.0	-10.9	-27.7
Commercial property	5,185	5,204	2712.5	3444.5	3499.9	1.6	152.5

July to 166.7 in August, easing its pace of decline to 8.6 percent y/y.

**Improvement**

Activity in the investment sector, which has not seen a similar improvement in 2017, was particularly weak in August, with sales at their lowest since 2010. Sector sales have been anemic since early 2016. August was no different, with sector sales of KD 34.8 million, down 35 percent y/y and transactions down 10.5 percent y/y. This trend has coincided with rising apartment vacancies. According to the Public Authority of Civil Information (PACI), the number of vacant apartments has risen since June 2015. Rental rates have also suffered, with the housing component in the CPI registering the first decline of 2.3 percent y/y in years through June 2017. The investment sector

may continue to face some challenging months ahead as residents try to adjust to the utility price hike that went into effect on 22 August, albeit smaller than what was initially announced.

The slow activity in the sector and the rise in vacant apartments continue to exercise negative pressure on investment property prices. The NBK investment building price retreated to 179.3 in August down 5.1 percent y/y. The price index has settled at levels last seen at the end of 2013. Commercial property sales witnessed their best performance in August, relative to the preceding two months, and had lent support to the August real estate sector sales as a whole. Fifteen transactions took place in August, the largest being a commercial building in Khaifan for KD 15 million, followed by two buildings in Salmiya worth KD 11.7 million and KD 8.8 million, respectively.



**NEW YORK:** In this file photo, Target Chairman and CEO Brian Cornell speaks to a group of investors at the company's annual meeting in New York. —AP

## TARGET TO RAISE HOURLY BASE PAY TO \$15 BY END OF 2020

**NEW YORK:** Target Corp is raising its minimum hourly wage for its workers to \$11 starting next month and then to \$15 by the end of 2020 in a move it says will help it better recruit and retain top-quality staff and provide a better shopping experience for its customers.

The initiative, announced yesterday, is part of the discounter's overall strategy to reinvent its business announced earlier this year that includes remodeling stores, expanding its online services and opening up smaller urban locations. Target quietly raised entry-level hourly wages to \$10 last year from \$9 from the previous year, following initiatives by Walmart and others to hike wages in a fiercely competitive marketplace. But Target's hike to \$15 per hour far exceeds not only the federal minimum of \$7.25 per hour but the hourly base pay at Walmart, the nation's largest private employer, and plenty of its other retail peers whose minimum hourly pay now hovers around \$10.

As part of its \$2.7 billion investment in workers, Walmart Stores Inc. had raised its entry-level hourly pay for workers to \$9 in 2015 and then to \$10 in 2016. With Target's outsized influence in the retailing world, its hike could force rivals to match the pay in order to compete. "We see this not only as an investment in our team but an investment in an elevated experience for our guests and the communities we serve," Brian Cornell, CEO of Target, told reporters on a call Friday.

The changes come at a time when there's growing concern for the plight of the hourly worker. Thousands of workers have staged protests to call attention to their financial struggles and to fight for

\$15 hourly pay. Last November's election of a Republican-controlled Congress dampened hopes of an increase in the \$7.25 per-hour federal minimum wage. But advocates have continued to press for hikes on the state and local level.

At the same time, competition for lower-skilled workers has heated up, and retailers, likely hobbled by the threat of e-commerce, are falling behind. As shoppers get more mobile-savvy, retailers are seeking sales staff who are more skilled at customer service and in technology such as using iPads to check out inventory. But with the unemployment rate near a 16-year low, the most desirable retail workers feel more confident in hopping from job to job.

Thirty-two percent of all first jobs in the US are in retail, according to The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail group, and stores overall have more job openings now than they did a few years ago. Hourly pay at restaurants and hotels is up 3.5 percent from a year earlier, a much better raise than the 2.5 percent gain for all employees. For workers at transportation and warehousing companies, where e-commerce growth is fueling hiring, pay is up 2.7 percent in the past year.

Retailers, however, have lifted pay just 1.8 percent in the past year. That may be spurring more workers to leave for better opportunities: Separate government data shows the number of retail workers quitting their jobs this year and last is at the highest in a decade.

The average hourly pay for cashiers is now \$10.14, according to the Hay Group's survey of 140 retailers with annual sales of at least \$500 million. The survey was conducted in May. —AP

## EXCHANGE RATES

**AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.**

**ASIAN COUNTRIES**

Japanese Yen	2.726
Indian Rupees	4.718
Pakistani Rupees	2.867
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.972
Nepali Rupees	2.953
Singapore Dollar	225.820
Hongkong Dollar	38.678
Bangladesh Taka	3.702
Philippine Peso	5.900
Thai Baht	9.164

**GCC COUNTRIES**

Saudi Riyal	80.627
Qatari Riyal	83.042
Omani Riyal	785.213
Bahraini Dinar	802.840
UAE Dirham	82.318

**ARAB COUNTRIES**

Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.300
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.044
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.214
Tunisian Dinar	125.900
Jordanian Dinar	426.650
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.014
Syrian Lira	2.014
Morocco Dirham	329.860

**EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES**

US Dollar Transfer	302.150
Euro	363.640
Sterling Pound	413.950

Canadian dollar	249.170
Turkish lira	88.610
Swiss Franc	317.720
Australian Dollar	243.990
US Dollar Buying	300.950

**GOLD**

20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

**DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD**

**Rate for Transfer Selling Rate**

US Dollar	301.950
Canadian Dollar	245.525
Sterling Pound	408.985
Euro	362.385
Swiss Frank	294.295
Bahrain Dinar	801.400
UAE Dirhams	82.600
Qatari Riyals	83.425
Saudi Riyals	81.380
Jordanian Dinar	427.160
Egyptian Pound	17.124
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.977
Indian Rupees	4.662
Pakistani Rupees	2.865
Bangladesh Taka	3.719
Philippines Peso	5.936
Cyprus pound	17.970
Japanese Yen	3.695
Syrian Pound	1.585
Nepalese Rupees	2.919

Malaysian Ringgit	73.145
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.260
Thai Bhat	10.120
Turkish Lira	86.660

**BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY**

**CURRENCY BUY SELL**

British Pound	0.402457	0.412457
Czech Korune	0.005816	0.017816
Danish Krone	0.044350	0.049350
Euro	0.354809	0.363809
Georgian Lari	0.120183	0.120183
Norwegian Krone	0.034607	0.039807
Romanian Leu	0.078242	0.075242
Russian ruble	0.005231	0.005231
Slovakia	0.009002	0.019002
Slovenia Krona	0.033744	0.038744
Swedish Franc	0.304704	0.315704

**Australasia**

Australian Dollar	0.232315	0.244315
New Zealand Dollar	0.213097	0.222597

**America**

Canadian Dollar	0.239626	0.248626
US Dollars	0.298200	0.302620
US Dollars Mint	0.298700	0.302620

**Asia**

Bangladesh Taka	0.003240	0.003824
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Chinese Yuan	0.044371	0.047871
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036603	0.039353
Indian Rupee	0.004244	0.004932
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002607	0.002787
Korean Won	0.000257	0.000272
Malaysian Ringgit	0.068153	0.074153
Nepalese Rupee	0.003016	0.003186
Pakistan Rupee	0.002756	0.003046
Philippine Peso	0.005847	0.006147
Singapore Dollar	0.218930	0.228930
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001624	0.002204
Taiwan	0.009987	0.010167
Thai Baht	0.008799	0.009349

**Arab**

Bahraini Dinar	0.794970	0.803470
Egyptian Pound	0.014481	0.020389
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000193	0.000253
Jordanian Dinar	0.421764	0.430764
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021143	0.045143
Omani Riyal	0.778775	0.784455
Qatar Riyal	0.078744	0.083684
Saudi Riyal	0.079527	0.080827
Syrian Pound	0.001281	0.001501
Tunisian Dinar	0.120405	0.128405
Turkish Lira	0.081242	0.091542
UAE Dirhams	0.080880	0.082580
Yemeni Riyal	0.000982	0.001062



## INDIA'S BULLET TRAIN PROJECT REIGNITES DEBATE ON LAND FOR 'PUBLIC PURPOSE'

**MUMBAI:** Plans for India's first bullet train, a \$17-billion-dollar project, have sparked a debate on the definition of "public purpose" for land acquisitions which have become increasingly contentious.

The 500-km- (310-mile-) long high-speed rail link promises to cut travel time between the financial hub of Mumbai and the industrial city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat state by more than half to under three hours. The project, inaugurated earlier this month, will need about 825 hectares (2,000 acres) of land. The government has said it will complete the

line by 2022, even as farmers along the proposed route held protests against giving up their land.

They may have little say in the matter, as the state has a legal right to take private property for public purposes. But analysts say the definition of what constitutes public purpose needs revisiting, even for infrastructure projects.

"When projects - airports, private colleges, bullet trains - benefit only a small percentage of the population, some debate over public purpose needs to be had, for moral if not legal reasons," said Aseem Shrivastava, an environmental

economist. "When the state is brokering land deals, should only the state decide what is public purpose?" Conflicts have increased in India as land is sought for industrial use and development projects. A law passed in 2013 was meant to protect the rights of farmers, ensuring consensus over land acquisitions, rehabilitation for those displaced, and adequate compensation.

But several states have diluted these provisions to speed up acquisitions. Over the years, the state has extended public purpose from public schools, railways and highways to also include private hospitals

and educational institutions, factories and Special Economic Zones.

Officials say these are key to accelerate economic growth and generate jobs that benefit the community. But land rights experts say defining such projects as public purpose leaves vulnerable people with little judicial recourse.

"To say that jobs are created by setting up a factory, and that therefore it is public purpose, is a facetious argument," Shrivastava told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. In a rare victory for campaigners, the Supreme Court last year ruled that land purchased by West

Bengal state for a Tata Motors factory could not be deemed to have been acquired for a "public purpose" and must be returned to farmers.

In an analysis of all land acquisition cases decided by the Supreme Court from 1950, the top court invalidated the government's view of public purpose in less than 1 percent of cases, according to think tank Centre for Policy Research. "We have a virtual laundry list of what makes up public purpose now," said Namita Wahi, director of the centre's Land Rights Initiative. "This permissive interpretation is very problematic." — Reuters

## JAPAN RAISING UP TO \$11.6BN IN POSTAL GIANT SHARE SALE

**TOKYO:** Japan said yesterday that it expects to raise more than \$11.6 billion by selling off another chunk of the country's massive postal service. The government will sell 914 million Japan Post shares at 1,322 yen apiece, it said in a regulatory filing, with the offering set to raise as much as 1.3 trillion yen (\$11.6 billion) if domestic and foreign investors snap up an extra allotment of stock.

Shares of Japan Post—which has about 24,000 branches nationwide—closed at 1,349 yen on Monday, down 1.03 percent. The huge sale comes as after an initial public offering (IPO) in 2015 that began a long-delayed privatization of the state-owned behemoth. Two years ago the government raised about 1.43 trillion yen in the IPO, which included shares in Japan Post's banking and insurance units. It was the country's biggest privatization since Nippon Telephone & Telegraph's 1987 listing.

The bulk of the proceeds from the Japan Post sale were earmarked for reconstruction after Japan's 2011 quake-tsunami disaster. There are hopes that starting to privatize

what is effectively the world's biggest bank by deposits could improve investor sentiment and spur efforts to free up Japan's highly regulated economy. The sprawling postal group sits on assets worth more than 290 trillion yen. The branches offer services for cash deposits and insurance, with many ageing retirees withdrawing their pensions from local branches. That system has long drawn criticism both inside and outside Japan. Financial institutions, courier services and foreign governments argue the public body is operating in sectors where it unfairly competes directly with private businesses.

The government of former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi split the state-owned giant into units in 2007, to handle deliveries, savings, insurance and counter services at each of its post offices. Tokyo initially retained full ownership of the firm. But Japan is struggling with a debt load equal to more than twice the size of its economy—one of the heaviest in the world—and has been looking to sell off state assets to fund spiraling social-welfare costs. — AFP



PYONGYANG: Exhibitors and vendors wait to enter the 13th International Trade Fair in Pyongyang yesterday. — AFP

## CHINESE TRADERS GET DOWN TO BUSINESS IN NORTH KOREA

## 13TH PYONGYANG INTERNATIONAL TRADE SHOW OPENS

**PYONGYANG:** It was a tale of just two economies when the 13th Pyongyang International Trade Fair opened in the North Korean capital yesterday, with two-thirds of the exhibitors domestic firms, and almost all the others Chinese. Eight sets of progressively tighter United Nations Security Council sanctions imposed on Pyongyang over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs have left its economy progressively more isolated.

The latest, passed earlier this month after its sixth atomic test—which it said was a hydrogen bomb—bans all joint ventures with North Korean entities, with just a few exceptions, and requires existing ones to be closed within 120 days. The only European firm at the show was Italian shipping company OTIM, which in 2001 was the first EU freight forwarder to open a representative office in Pyongyang.

Initially business was good, said company president Mario Carniglia, but "then the sanctions came and it became more and more difficult." Now the firm mostly handles inbound humanitarian shipments under UN and European Union aid programs, with its commercial cargoes "practically nil at this stage." Chinese customs inspections were becoming increasingly strict, a colleague added. Among the few North Korean items still being exported to Europe, said Carniglia, were spare parts for accordions, a musical instrument that is unusually popular in the North.

"Just parts because if it is a complete accordion it is considered a luxury good and you can-

not import it in Europe." Russian ambassador Alexander Matsegora told AFP that unlike in the past, there were no Russian companies taking part. "Maybe they have not much interest in this market." Some foreign firms were doing business with North Koreans, he said, but "most of those companies are of Chinese origin".

## Cooking pots, health tonics

Organizers said there were 253 exhibitors at the fair, held in a cavernous hall on the outskirts of the capital, with 81 from overseas. Pride of place at the entrance went to an official Syrian stall displaying a small selection of famous Damascus Aghabani cloth and a few bars of green laurel soap from war-torn Aleppo.

Cuba and Indonesia were the only other embassies to take exhibition space. Most of the Chinese firms were traders bringing cooking implements and domestic appliances to sell to retail buyers, rather than manufacturers looking for long-term deals or state-owned enterprises promoting infrastructure projects.

Li Likun, of Shenyang Xiangbo Trading Company, offered a selection of belts and electric massage machines. It was his fifth or sixth visit, he said, and business was good. "Every time I come here it's getting better and better."

North Korea has quietly engaged in some market reforms under leader Kim Jong-Un, and Seoul believes it enjoyed its fastest growth since 1999 last year. However, officially it insists that it is sticking to the orthodoxy of Kim's father and grandfather Kim Jong-Il and Kim Il-Sung, the

founder of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Buyers at the fair paid in US dollars and some products were aimed squarely at Pyongyang's growing middle class—two bottles of New Zealand green-lipped mussel extract capsules supposed to help joints from Australian food supplements firm Koast cost \$110.

For now trade was "okay," said Kim Kum-Ran, from its local agent, "but it will get tougher".

"I wish the Americans will stop torturing us with useless sanctions and recognize us as a nuclear state so that all trade can be done freely and there will be peace in the world." Leadership 'under pressure' -

The North does not publish any official trade statistics of its own, regarding them as a state secret—shrouding the exact details of its commerce in mystery. But according to the South's Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), the North had exports of \$2.8 billion and imports of \$3.7 billion last year, with China accounting for more than 90 percent.

"The trade with China of course is continuing and ongoing," said Peter Ross, who works for an EU development program in Pyongyang. "That is a fact and a reality that sustains most of the business here." Sanctions, he said, were "definitely making it more and more difficult for this country" particularly against a backdrop of popular expectations for growing personal prosperity. "That's a challenge which the government has to meet," he added. "Sanctions are making this harder and harder, so in that indirect way they are putting pressure on the government." — AFP



Members of trucker trade unions block the access to La Mede Total refinery, in Chateaufort-La Mede, southern France, yesterday. French truck drivers plan nationwide protests against President Emmanuel Macron's changes to labor laws, as discontent builds over new rules that Macron says are essential to reviving the French and European economies. — AP

## FRENCH UNIONS BLOCK FUEL DEPOTS IN PROTEST

**PARIS:** French trade unionists blocked access yesterday to several fuel depots in protest against an overhaul of employment laws, seeking to test the government's will to reform the economy.

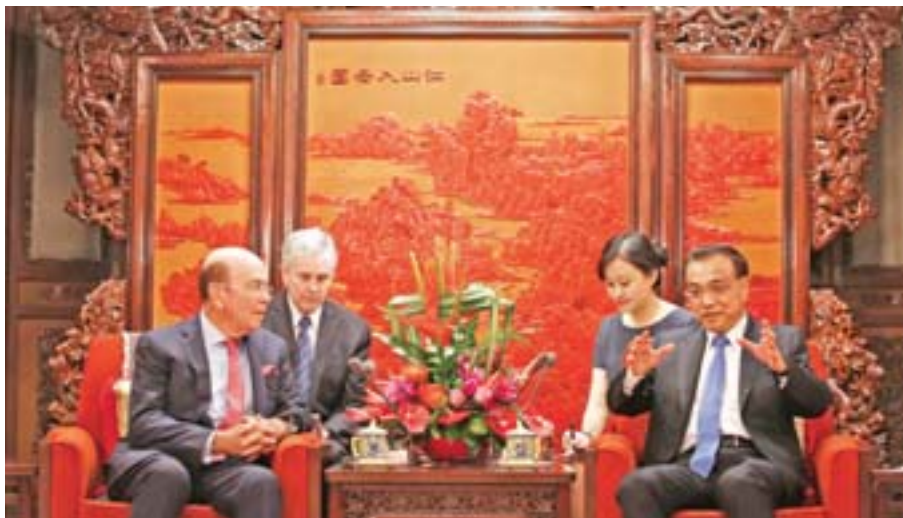
In southern France, protesters' unions set up a road-block in front of Total's La Mede refinery, while in western France fuel depots were blocked near Bordeaux and the coastal city of La Rochelle. Union members also held go-slow operations on highways near Paris and in northern France.

"We're determined. We're going to stay as long as possible while hoping that other blockades take place elsewhere, maybe that'll make Mr. Macron move," Force Ouvriere union official Pascal Favre told Reuters. Eager to avoid fuel shortages, centrist President Emmanuel Macron's government deployed

police at some sites before dawn to ensure by force that protesters could not block access. "It's not in blockading the country's economy and by preventing people from working, that one best defends one's cause," junior economy minister Benjamin Griveaux told RTL radio.

The labor reform is due to become law in the coming days after Macron formally signed five labor form decrees on Friday, in the first major economic reforms since he took power in May. The new rules, discussed at length in advance with unions, will cap payouts on dismissals that are judged unfair, while also giving companies greater freedom to hire and fire employees and to agree working conditions.

While unions have failed to derail the reform, the considerable political capital Macron had after his landslide election victory in May is quickly evaporating. — Reuters



BEIJING: US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross (L) speaks with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (right) during their meeting at the Zhongnanhai state guesthouse in Beijing yesterday. — AFP

## US COMMERCE SECRETARY VISITS BEIJING AHEAD OF TRUMP TRIP

**BEIJING:** US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said yesterday that Washington is hoping for concrete progress during President Donald Trump's planned trip to China amid rising trade tensions. Ross met with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, the country's top economic official, during a three-nation Asian tour. Trump is due to visit Beijing later this year and meet President Xi Jinping, who visited the United States in April.

"We hope there will be some very good deliverables," Ross said at the start of a meeting at the Zhongnanhai compound where Chinese leaders live and work in central Beijing. That "would be the best single outcome for both countries," Ross said. Ross gave no details, but Trump has criticized China's large trade sur-

pluses with the United States and threatened to raise tariffs on steel. He has ordered an investigation into whether Beijing improperly pressures companies to hand over technology in exchange for market access.

Chinese leaders have tried to head off punitive US action by emphasizing the benefits of the world's biggest trading relationship. "I think it is fair to say that our common interests far outweigh our differences," said Li, the premier. "This important trade and economic relations has benefited enormously our two peoples as well as the whole world." Ross met Sunday with his Chinese counterpart, Zhong Shan. He was due to visit Hong Kong on Tuesday and then travel to Thailand and Laos. — AP

## SIEMENS AND ALSTOM ON BRINK OF RAIL MERGER

**BERLIN:** France's Alstom and Germany's Siemens have a deal ready to sign that would merge their rail businesses in the face of Chinese competition, German business daily Handelsblatt reported yesterday.

Alstom, which makes the French TGV high-speed train, confirmed Friday that it was talking to Siemens about a possible railway tie-up, but said no decision had been taken. Handelsblatt however, citing "insiders" familiar with the deal, said yesterday the two groups have overcome past reservations about a joint venture with a "balanced agreement acceptable to both sides."

But Siemens has also been courting Canadian firm Bombardier, whose European operations are based in Berlin, and the two companies have their own detailed plan for two joint ventures covering rolling stock and signalling. The Munich-based group's supervisory board is set to meet Tuesday to discuss the two options, Handelsblatt reported, while Alstom's executive board will also meet.

## Waiting for board meetings

Both companies declined to comment on the report when contacted by AFP, but a source familiar with the talks backed it up, adding that the firms would make a statement on their plans once the boards have met. Siemens and Alstom discussed a rail tie-up in 2014-15, but the French firm decided in the end to partner with General Electric, selling its energy division for 9.5 billion euros (\$11.3 billion) to become a rail specialist.

A joint venture would bring together the engineering giants that make their countries' flagship high-speed trains, including the world-famous TGV. Siemens would hold the presidency of the supervisory board under the plans, leaving Alstom chief Henri Poupart-Lafarge in place as chief executive.

The German firm brings in 7.8 billion euros of revenue annually from rail, while Paris-based Alstom boasts sales of 7.3 billion euros. Combined, they would be more of a match for the 18.1 billion euros in revenue at Chinese giant CRRC, which is eyeing Skoda Transportation in the Czech Republic as a potential foothold in Europe.

Handelsblatt reported that European authorities were expected to smile on the deal as it would create an EU-based champion on global markets. French government officials under President Emmanuel Macron are especially keen on creating an "Airbus for rail", and according to media reports have pushed for the idea in talks with their opposite numbers in Berlin. French business daily Les Echos reported last week that Paris recently sent an envoy to meet with Chancellor Angela Merkel. Before winning a fourth term in office Sunday, Merkel gave her "green light" to deepen the discussions, the French daily reported.

A Franco-German deal would limit competition concerns in Germany compared with a Siemens-Bombardier tie-up and mean fewer politically difficult job cuts, according to Handelsblatt. — AFP

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# LARGE TECH SHARES SLIDE AS US STOCKS RETREAT

**NEW YORK:** Wall Street stocks retreated early yesterday, with large technology stocks stumbling, as markets assessed German election results and looked ahead to the week's US data releases. German Chancellor Angela Merkel won Sunday's election, as expected, but her victory was muted due to the strong performance of the nationalist, anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany party, AfD, which became the country's third strongest party.

Key US data releases this week include the Conference Board's consumer confidence reading for September and the final reading on second-quarter growth. Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen is scheduled to give an address Tuesday, but no major announcements are expected so soon after last week's policy statement and news conference.

About 20 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was at 22,325.70, down 0.1 percent. The broad-based S&P 500 shed 0.1 percent to 2,498.82, while the tech-rich Nasdaq

Composite Index dropped 0.6 percent to 6,386.64. Tech giants Apple, Amazon, Facebook and Google-parent Alphabet each fell about one percent or more. General Electric gained 1.1 percent following news it sold its industrial solutions business to Swiss-Swedish engineering group ABB for \$2.6 billion.

General Motors jumped 2.8 percent following an upgrade from Deutsche Bank.

European shares edged higher in cautious trade yesterday after German Chancellor Angela Merkel secured a fourth term but saw her party weakened by a surge in support for the far-right. At 1027 GMT both the pan-European STOXX 600 and eurozone blue chips were 0.1 percent higher - a more moderate reaction than the currency market where the euro took a hit.

European bourses were mixed, with France's CAC 40 down 0.1 percent, Germany's DAX up 0.3 percent and Milan flat. Financials were the biggest drag on European stocks while healthcare, energy and industrials helped offset those

losses. "We had a small negative surprise", Lionel Melin, a senior cross asset strategist for Lyxor, said. Some traders said they were worried the vote might lead to a new coalition government less keen on pushing eurozone integration. French train maker Alstom rose 1.5 percent to its highest level since March 2013 after confirming on Friday it was in talks with German engineering group Siemens on a possible tie-up.

Switzerland's ABB rose 0.6 percent on its announcement it was buying General Electric's Industrial solutions unit in a deal worth \$2.6 billion. Shares in ABB have risen around 12 percent so far this year, in line with the broader European industrials index.

Unilever, which announced it would buy cosmetics firm Carver Korea for 2.27 billion euros (\$2.71 billion), added 0.7 percent.

Unicredit slipped 0.1 percent after its deputy chairman said on Friday that the speculation about his bank wanting to take over Commerzbank was nonsense. The German bank lost 1.2 percent.

Swedish construction firm NCC was the worst performer on the STOXX, falling 7.2 percent, after it said it expected third-quarter operating earnings to come in far below market forecasts. Politics continued to play spoiler in Spain where Madrid's IBEX lagged its peers, off 0.7 percent. The mounting political crisis over Catalonia's campaign for independence, which dragged stocks sharply lower last week, intensified over the weekend. CaixaBank took the most points off the index, retreating 2.3 percent.

Recent strength in sterling and a more hawkish tone from the Bank of England have put pressure on UK equities, as the more internationally-exposed blue chips had benefited from an accounting boost thanks to a plunge in the pound in the immediate aftermath of last year's Brexit vote. "We are underweight UK equities against European equities at the moment which is largely due to what we are seeing (as) a convergence in earnings growth," Maximilian Kunkel, Chief Investment Officer for Germany, UBS Wealth Management, said.

"We've recently seen very, very strong earnings growth in the UK largely helped by the weakness of the pound, and relatively strong local growth also - we think that that is going to revert," Kunkel added. Among individual stock moves, a price target cut from Jefferies weighed on shares in Mediclinic, which fell around 3 percent, with analysts saying that they expected Mediclinic's upcoming update to disappoint the market. Moves were more pronounced among smaller UK firms, with shares in mid cap Tullow Oil jumping 6.6 percent after the oil producer said that expected to resume drilling at its TEN fields following an international ruling on an ocean boundary between Ghana and Ivory Coast. Small-cap Imagination Technologies was on track for its best day since June 2009, shooting 32 percent higher after Canyon Bridge Capital Partners said that it would buy the British firm.

Imagination Technologies saw its shares slump more than 60 percent earlier this year after it was ditched by Apple, its biggest customer. — Agencies

### UK shares fall

The UK's top share index retreated yesterday, pulling away from a one-week high as losses among heavyweight financials and commodities-linked sectors weighed, though small cap Imagination Tech soared after a buyout fund agreed to buy the chip designer. The bluechip FTSE 100 index fell 0.2 percent to 7,298.30 points by 0849 GMT, underperforming a slightly positive European market following the result of the German general election.

While Chancellor Angela Merkel won a fourth term in office, the result pointed to a potentially fragile coalition. Falls among British financials such as HSBC, Barclays and Lloyds took the most points off the index as investors scaled back their exposure to risky assets.

Cyclical mining stocks also pulled back, with Rio Tinto, Anglo American and BHP Billiton each slipping around 0.7 percent due to a weaker copper price, while a dip in oil prices also dampened shares in heavyweights Royal Dutch Shell and BP.

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report									
Monday 25 September 2017									
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing						
Price Index	▼ -27.75	6,767.52	6,795.27						
Weighted Index	▼ -5.28	438.97	434.23						
KSEI 15	▼ -17.01	301.64	1,008.65						
Trades									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change		
IRG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	346	▼ 0.0		
NAPESCO	827	827	15	12	1	827	▲ 7.0		
ENERGY	34.8	34.0	223,800	7,868	14	34.4	▲ 0.4		
GPI	37.9	36.8	1,706,700	65,569	66	37.6	▼ -0.4		
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▲ 0.0		
Oil & Gas			1,988,516	73,279	81	399.29	▲ 11.40		
KFOLC	295	295	5,000	1,475	1	295	▼ -0.0		
SPCC	556	554	148,403	87,239	30	556	▼ -0.0		
ALIKUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	616	▲ 0.0		
ALQURAN	347	343	136,246	47,876	23	343	▼ -2.0		
Basic Materials			262,649	146,689	44	1313.71	▼ -13.00		
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	404	▲ 0.0		
CABLE	527	525	147,343	75,359	17	515	▼ -0.0		
SHIP	217	217	17,460	3,756	2	217	▲ 0.0		
PCOM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,860	▲ 0.0		
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	310	▲ 0.0		
MNC	110	109	103	11	1	110	▼ -2.0		
ACGO	275	267	22,064	5,917	5	275	▼ -0.0		
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	▲ 0.0		
NCRM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	176	▲ 0.0		
EQUIPMENT	45.7	45.7	25	1	1	45.7	▲ 1.1		
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	▲ 0.0		
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▲ 0.0		
SALBOOH	82	86	5,448	328	8	83	▼ -3.3		
AGLTY	880	888	3,198,862	2,740,829	271	889	▼ -4.0		
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	318	▲ 0.0		
CLEANING	52	49.8	805,200	30,069	11	49.6	▲ 0.0		
KGL	56	56	303	18	2	59	▲ 0.2		
KCPK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	165	▲ 0.0		
HUMANSOFT	3,990	3,900	171,267	869,885	25	3,900	▼ -190.0		
NAFAB	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	▲ 0.0		
GFC	82	82	16,701	1,221	1	82	▼ -0.0		
SHOOTING	26.7	25.3	82,046	2,066	13	26.7	▲ 0.2		
CGC	535	525	2,100	1,124	4	535	▼ -13.0		
MFCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0		
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	656	▲ 0.0		
ALAFCO	367	365	146,300	53,001	21	367	▼ -2.0		
MUBARRAD	72	72	276,364	19,834	9	72	▼ -0.7		
LOGISTICS	52	52	407,446	21,162	19	52	▲ 0.0		
SCRM	83	83	8,240	804	1	83	▼ -0.1		
GCEM	81	80	4,350	303	3	80	▼ -0.8		
GCC	82	82	301,818	24,752	8	82	▲ 0.0		
PCEM	78	78	52,865	4,106	4	78	▲ 0.4		
RKYD	80	80	96,200	4,956	2	83	▲ 0.6		
SPCO	96	92	46,300	4,256	17	93	▼ -0.4		
Industrials			6,544,917	3,843,787	445	1042.88	▼ -17.00		
PAPOO	90	90	1	0	1	99	▼ -4.0		
CATEL	279	279	18,561	5,031	6	279	▲ 4.0		
DANAH	72	70	800,540	47,210	19	79	▲ 0.1		
FOOD	1,590	1,550	621	1,167	2	1,500	▼ -28.0		
Consumer Goods			679,873	63,409	28	1043.88	▼ -6.00		
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	▲ 0		
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	▲ 0		
VIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	176	▲ 0		
Health Care			0	0	0	0.00	▲ 0.00		
KCR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,379	▲ 0		
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	▲ 0		
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	▲ 0		
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	28.0	▲ 0		
EYAS	540	565	58,215	30,135	19	639	▼ -1		
FAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	▲ 0		
OURAFUEL	122	121	128,809	16,818	21	121	▲ 0		
MINTAZAH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	▲ 0		
JAZEERA	580	580	56,006	26,021	6	600	▼ -4		
SOOR	122	119	333,835	40,308	27	119	▼ -3		
FUTURECO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	123	▲ 0		
ALRAI	120	120	87,184	10,462	7	120	▼ -1		
Jyal	56	54	2,750	149	7	54	▼ -1		
Mozan	530	515	126,464	104,652	34	515	▼ -36		
Consumer Services			787,127	231,642	128	958.10	▼ -6.00		
ZAIN	534	500	10,224,909	5,180,579	403	505	▼ 6		
DOREDDO	1,204	1,175	3,887	4,562	11	1,204	▲ 0		
AMN	37.1	36.5	2,504,905	83,965	59	37.1	▲ 1		
VIVA	815	803	41,727	33,559	46	815	▲ 12		
Telecommunications			12,826,438	6,297,782	699	615.63	▲ 4.80		
NBC	776	760	4,596,310	3,580,849	375	760	▼ -20		
GBK	246	243	10,569,225	2,582,558	67	244	▼ -2		
CEK	376	376	4,990	1,876	3	376	▲ 0		
AIK	310	308	278,875	85,177	6	310	▲ 1		
ALMUTAHED	421	415	131,800	55,009	24	415	▼ -7		
KIB	248	245	874,320	215,470	37	246	▼ -2		
BURG	306	300	285,907	92,488	25	302	▼ -4		
KFRN	805	579	8,756,805	6,772,945	694	692	▼ -12		
SOUBYAN	446	427	561,325	243,156	71	429	▼ -7		
AUB	216	210	8,576,381	2,028,729	161	210	▼ -7		
ITHMR	39.1	38.8	540,252	20,934	21	39.1	▲ 0		
WABIBANK	260	260	487,869	125,538	108	264	▲ 0		
Bank			27,881,059	14,759,726	1,592	954.31	▼ -19.00		
KNS	280	275	167,850	46,903	6	276	▼ -6		
QINS	900	901	2	1	2	900	▲ 0.0		
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	430	▲ 0.0		
WMB	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	▲ 0.0		
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	187	▲ 0.0		
IFI	82	86	36,501	2,008	5	82	▲ 0.0		
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	47.5	▲ 0.0		
IKOVT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	356	▲ 0.0		
Insurance			263,363	48,913	13	1121.79	▼ -2.80		
Trades									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change		
SOEKUK	48.8	47.0	142,006	68,941	29	48.2	▼ -0.8		
KRE	95	92	4,019,968	250,967	82	92	▼ -2.3		
URC	85	85	3,421	302	5	95	▼ -0.5		
NRE	142	133	1,281,900	173,468	43	138	▲ 1.6		
SRE	356	355	6,900	3,373	1	356	▼ -0.9		
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	406	▲ 0.0		
AREEC	152	152	10,300	1,520	1	152	▲ 1.6		
MASSALEH	41.9	39.1	90,060	1,958	2	41.9	▼ -0.7		
ARABREC	37.5	36.0	145,100	5,254	14	38.2	▼ -0.8		
ERESCO	40.9	39.8	176,523	7,107	11	40.9	▼ -0.3		
MABANEE	805	792	576,568	458,984	62	793	▼ -14.0		
NAZZAF	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	87	▲ 0.0		
INVESTORS	23.5	23.1	1,156,282	26,800	21	23.1	▼ -0.4		
IRG	34.0	32.5	44,361	1,440	2	34.0	▲ 0.0		
ALTIARSA	96	94	2,531,161	241,964	102	96	▼ -0.8		
SANAM	41.5	41.5	2,940	151	1	41.5	▼ -1.2		
AYANRE	31	31	56,300						



# ALL-NEW 2018 CHEVROLET EQUINOX SOON IN KUWAIT

## THE BEST-SELLING CHEVROLET CROSS-OVER IN US!

From 17th of September 2017, customers will be able to pre-book the all-new 2018 Chevrolet Equinox that will go on sale in Kuwait in October 2017. This marks the Equinox's very first presence in the region after amassing great success in the other markets since its introduction in 2005.

The 2018 Equinox provides customers with a powertrain that balances performance, efficiency and capability. All-New 2018 Equinox will be available with 2 Turbo engines, 1.5 Liter that delivers 170HP and 2.0 Liter delivering a 252HP, 352 nm of torque and paired to GM's all-new 9-speed automatic transmission.

### Key features

- The new Equinox's expressive exterior has a lean, muscular skin echoing the global Chevrolet design cues and sculpted shapes seen in the new Malibu.
- The interior takes advantage of the Equinox's all-new architecture to offer new elements such as available denim-style seat fabric which blends high style with high durability. More safety features

- include the New Safety Alert Seat, and the New Low-Speed Forward Automatic Braking

- The Equinox offers exceptional fuel efficiency, with a combined 12.3km per liter, helping you go further for less.

- It incorporates the latest in weight reduction technology, that contributes to vehicle balance and efficiency.

- The 2018 Equinox is available in All Wheel Drive, with an AWD disconnect feature that promotes fuel efficiency when the rear axle is not needed.

- Chevrolet's 7- and 8-inch MyLink infotainment systems, designed to support Apple CarPlay and Android Auto

- Panoramic reinforced rooftop
- A standard feature is the ability to change speeds

- Switchable AWD system that enhances efficiency by disconnecting from the rear axle when not needed

- LED headlamps and taillamps

- Extensive aero development in the wind tunnel for fuel-efficient on high-speed roads
- Standard noise reduction feature

- Leather front seats with a ventilation feature
- Unique kneeling rear seat that enables a flat rear load floor and maximum cargo space.

### Safety features

The all-new Equinox's expanded safety features are rooted in a stronger body structure and a range of available advanced driver safety assistance features, which include folding pedal set when colliding.

Other safety features include Rear Parking Assist, Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Lane Change Alert with Side Blind Zone Alert and external mirrors with signal lamps. The advanced active safety features also include the New Low-Speed Forward Automatic Braking, radar- and camera-based adaptive technologies that can provide alerts to potential crash threats such as the New Forward Collision Alert with Following Distance Indicator, New Lane Keep Assist with Lane Departure Warning, New Rear Seat Reminder and the IntelliBeam headlamps that offer automatic high-beam control.



## EXCLUSIVE AUTOMOTIVE OFFERS IN COOPERATION WITH GULF BANK

KUWAIT: Reinforcing its keenness to provide convenient and added value services to its customers, Gulf Bank announced exclusive automotive offers for its customers, in cooperation with top car dealers in Kuwait. Gulf Bank customers can benefit from these offers when visiting the cars showrooms and meeting the bank's representatives to finance their new car through Gulf Bank.

The top car dealers in Kuwait included in this offer are: Lexus, Nissan, Toyota, Chevrolet, Cadillac, Honda, KIA and Ford. The offers with Lexus, Nissan, Toyota, Chevrolet and Cadillac are valid until 4

October 2017, and the last offers for KIA and Honda are valid till 4 November 2017, whereas Ford offer is valid until 11 November 2017.

Gulf Bank representatives are available at all car dealers across Kuwait, to present the best services and facilities to the bank's customers and non-customers when purchasing their dream car.

Gulf Bank will continue to embark on collaborations with car dealers to present the best offers throughout the year, in its effort to cater to its customers' various needs while offering the best services.

## BURGAN BANK LAUNCHES NEW WHATSAPP SERVICE FOR ADDED CONVENIENCE

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently launched its new WhatsApp service on 55804080 to accommodate general customer queries. The new service attends to customer's expectations of excellent services from the Bank as it provides instantaneous communication and represents the bank's pursuit for customer convenience.

The new WhatsApp service is among the quickest interactive, easy-to-use platforms that aim to reach out to a wide cus-



tomers base. No personal or confidential information will be displayed and the platform will serve as a reliable tool both domestically and when travelling abroad.

Burgan Bank's Deputy CEO - Kuwait Raed Al-Haqhaq said: "Driven by innovation, Burgan Bank is a leader in adopting technological trends while ensuring security in all of its operations. This new service reflects our commitment to deliver a consistent banking experience across different touch points, bringing value and conven-

ience to all of our customers."

Enhancing connectivity between the bank and its customers, the free WhatsApp service is available 24/7, including during official bank holidays. The new service is managed by Burgan Bank's dedicated staff who are well trained to provide immediate assistance to all types of queries. It is worth noting that the service terms dictate that only general inquiries be answered over WhatsApp and that no private information can be shared to protect customers' data privacy.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial Bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENA region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks. The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. "People come first" is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.

The bank was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2008, making it the first bank in the GCC, and the only bank in Kuwait to receive such accreditation for the third consecutive year. The Bank also has to its credit the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twelve consecutive years. Burgan Bank, a subsidiary of KIPCO (Kuwait Projects Company), is a strongly positioned regional Bank in the MENA region.

# HUAWEI TIES UP WITH KDIPA TO LAUNCH ICT SKILL COMPETITION

## PROGRAM AIMS TO UNEARTH AND NURTURE LOCAL TALENT

KUWAIT: Huawei Technologies Kuwait has announced the launch of its Kuwait ICT Skill Competition 2017 in a strategic partnership with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA). Aimed at university students, the program seeks to unearth and nurture Kuwait's finest ICT talent. In line with Huawei's mandate to support Kuwait's 2035 Vision for growth of critical industries and the government's digitization strategy, the nationwide competition will foster development for the young leaders of tomorrow responsible for driving the country's digital transformation. Interested students can register online from now until October 10, 2017 through our online portal, [www.huaweiacad.com](http://www.huaweiacad.com).

The competition is a critical initiative for enhancing the quality of future ICT professionals, a key pillar in Kuwait's agenda of building a knowledge-based economy. The competition increases national ICT competitiveness and contributes to local communities. The generation of students involved is expected to lead Kuwait's ICT industry into the future by embracing the digital transformation. The ICT Skill Competition is specifically designed to prepare this generation for such a responsibility.

Students from Kuwait's leading universities will be selected to participate in the competition and undergo rigorous tests. Fifteen among them will then compete in Kuwait's finals that will take place between 5 and 10 November. Kuwait's three finalists will be given the opportunity to travel to Huawei's home in Shenzhen, China, where the final stage of the competition will take place between 11 and 15 December. In the past, the competition has attracted top talent globally,

with competitors hailing from countries ranging from the Netherlands to Malaysia to Pakistan.

Not only will the winners of the competition receive certificates, trophies, and prizes, they will also have an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel to China and gain insider access to a top global ICT company. Huawei will grant the winners an exclusive fully paid trip to the company's international headquarters in Shenzhen and the chance to meet with the brand's leadership. They will gain unrivaled exposure to Huawei's expertise in telecommunications, enterprise, and consumer business, not to mention a priceless cultural experience and knowledge exchange.

The competition is part of Huawei's longstanding effort to have a positive impact on the community in which it operates. Huawei has already implemented a 'Seeds for the Future' program offering training and internships opportunities to promising students across Kuwait. The ICT Skill Competition offers students additional opportunities to gain valuable experience in the industry. Participants will work in a real laboratory, and tackle some of the industry's most complex challenges. The competition material is based on advanced IP and IT material, and tests competitors on their knowledge of cloud computing, switching, routing, and network security. It is a unique opportunity for students to test their abilities in ICT's most cutting edge fields.

The ICT Skill Competition works in partnership with local government authorities to ensure Huawei is doing all it can, in collaboration with Kuwait's leading universities, to nurture local ICT talent and empower industry leaders of tomor-

row. As one of the world's leading innovators, the promotion of innovation and creativity among ICT students is essential to Huawei.

"Advancing local ICT skills is central to Huawei and we are thrilled to bring our global ICT Skills Competition to Kuwait for the very first time. We strongly believe that investing in the next generation of technology leaders is an investment for the future and would like to thank Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and other local partners for their unwavering support. Huawei remains committed to collaborate with the Kuwaiti government, business leaders, academic institutions and other key stakeholders to drive the country's digital transformation forward," said Trevor Liu, Huawei Technologies Kuwait CEO.

In addition to awarding US\$ 30,000 cash prize to the most outstanding team, the next two teams will claim second place and three teams will be awarded third place. The next seven teams will receive Excellence Prizes, while 6 tutors and 5 academic institutions will also be recognized with the 'Excellent Tutor' and 'Best Academy' Prizes. Winners of the Kuwait Finals will be granted traineeship or employment opportunities with Huawei, as part of its Enterprise Business Group, where they will be exposed to a combination of innovative technologies, including cloud computing, Software-Defined Networking (SDN), Big Data, and Internet of Things (IoT) and interact with ICT experts from different industries such as government, oil & gas and banking. All Competition winners will be rewarded with Huawei's latest laptops and smartphones.

## VIVA REVEALS WINNERS OF 'ALLO' PREPAID CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, revealed the 8th week winners of the all new "allo" draw for its prepaid customers.

The names of the \$1,500 daily prize were as follows: Yousef Abdullah Yousef Bohamed, Mohammad Jassim Abdullah Al-Zamel, Abouelhamd Faragalla Seddik Mohamed, Gita Magar, Mohammed Jahanjeer Alam Abdulmalik, Samitha Sambath Lakmal Arasheelaji, Dalal Fahad Al-Otaibi.

Winners will be announced throughout the campaign with a grand total of almost \$150,000 to give away! VIVA customers can enjoy this wonderful opportunity to win amazing cash prizes of \$ 1,500 daily and \$ 30,000 monthly, throughout the campaign by simply buying a new "allo" line or recharging their current line through Direct Debit, VIVA website, VIVA's Kiosks, VIVA App or by calling 102. Every KD 1 spent, earns VIVA customers 10 chances

to win, increasing their winning chances the more they spend. VIVA is the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait. Launched in December 2008, VIVA makes things Possible for its customers by transforming communication, information and entertainment experiences. The company has rapidly established an unrivalled position in the market through its customer centric approach.

VIVA's quest is to be the mobile brand of choice in Kuwait by being transparent, engaging, energetic and fulfilling. VIVA continues to take a considerable share of the market by offering an innovative range of best value products, services and content propositions; a state of the art, nationwide network and world-class service. VIVA offers internet speeds of more than 100 Mbps, due to the implementation of the most advanced fourth generation (4G LTE) network in Kuwait resulting in superior coverage, performance and reliability.



## WIN 100 KILOS OF GOLD AT MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS THIS FESTIVE SEASON

KUWAIT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one among the BIG 5 jewelry retailers globally has revealed their offers to celebrate the upcoming festive season. This time around, they have announced an opportunity to win 100 kilos of gold. This is the first time that a jewelry retailer has announced an offer of this magnitude. It is no surprise that the biggest offer this time is from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, who are leaders in jewelry retailing. This campaign will run at all Malabar Gold & Diamonds outlets globally from 27th Sept to 28th October 2017. A true shopper's delight, Malabar Gold & Diamonds has also unveiled a huge collection of jewelry in gold, diamonds and precious gems from different parts of the world to enthral the jewelry lovers.

With every purchase of gold & diamond jewelry worth KD 40, customers get a chance to enter raffle draws to win 1/4 (Quarter) kg of gold each in 6 raffle draws. Adding to the above, customers also get two gram gold coin on diamond jewellery purchase of KWD 400 and a one gram gold coin on purchase of diamond jewellery worth KWD 250. Not only that, customers can protect the gold rate at Malabar Gold & Diamonds by paying 10 percent of the entire amount on the selected gold jewelry until 17th Oct 2017

# SOUTH EUROPE BONDS LAG AS HARDLINERS GAIN IN GERMANY

LONDON: Southern European government bonds underperformed yesterday after an unexpectedly weak election result for Germany's Angela Merkel led to concerns about the emergence of a more hardline stance towards the eurozone in the bloc's largest economy.

Merkel secured a fourth term as chancellor but was weakened by a surge in support for the far right and investors were unsettled by the possibility that she may have to form a coalition with the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) and Greens - the so-called "Jamaica" coalition.

Some also said the German result could complicate the ECB's policy path as it looks to scale back its monetary stimulus program, which has driven down borrowing costs since its launch in 2015.

"The pro-market Free Democrats, as well as part of the CDU/CSU, oppose deeper financial integration in the euro area," analysts at Morgan Stanley said in a note. "This suggests headwinds to the euro and periphery." The concerns come a day before French President Emmanuel Macron is due to announce his proposals for European Union reforms in a speech in Paris. Lower-rated Spanish, Italian and

Portuguese government bonds sold off and 10-year yields rose 3 basis points across the board in early trade. They later clawed back the losses, but underperformed on a day when higher-rated euro zone government bond yields fell.

The Italy-Germany 10-year government bond yield spread hit its widest in 2-1/2 weeks at 168 basis points at one stage. The yield on Germany's 10-year government bond, the benchmark for the region, hit a 10-day low of 0.42 percent, down 3 basis points on the day.

Yields on most other highly rated government bonds, such as those of Austria and the

Netherlands, also fell. Demand for those bonds comes at a time when investors are also wondering what the implications of the German election are for European Central Bank policy. The ECB is largely expected to announce the end of its bond-buying scheme next month, as it seeks to unwind years of extraordinary post-crisis stimulus.

### Les stable

Pictet Wealth Management economist Frederik Ducrozet said the prospect of a less stable German government could lead to concerns about the eurozone economic outlook,

potentially making the ECB more dovish. Rabobank strategist Richard McGuire took a different view.

"On paper, the election should have no impact on the ECB, which is an independent body," he said. "But I think it's fair to say if you see a 'Jamaica' coalition, it would not be a constructive environment to continue to provide stimulus going into next year."

This may explain why investors are more willing to buy high-grade euro zone bonds than lower-rated Southern European ones, which are seen benefiting most from the ECB's largesse. — Reuters



## UBER SAYS SORRY OVER LONDON MISTAKES, BUT VOWS TO APPEAL

**LONDON:** The head of Uber apologized yesterday for "mistakes" made by the US ride-sharing app after London authorities refused to renew its license, but still vowed to appeal the decision. "While Uber had revolutionized the way people move in cities around the world, it's equally true that we've got things wrong along the way," Uber chief executive, Dara Khosrowshahi, wrote in an open letter. "On behalf of everyone at Uber globally, I'd like to apologize for the mistakes we've made."

But he insisted: "We will appeal this decision on behalf of millions of Londoners, but we do so with the knowledge that we must also change." Transport for London (TfL) on Friday said it would not renew Uber's license to operate in the capital on expiry, owing to public safety concerns. Uber, which has about 40,000 drivers and some 3.5 million customers in the British capital, has 21 days



**LONDON:** This file photo shows taxi drivers blocking Whitehall as they demonstrate in central London against Uber.—AFP

to lodge its appeal and can continue to operate until that process has concluded.

Khosrowshahi added in the letter: "We won't be perfect, but we will listen to you; we will look to be long-term partners with the cities we serve; and we will run our business with humility, integrity and passion." Uber has seen its global popularity explode since it launched in 2009, but also faces bans in other hubs including Cape Town, Mumbai, and New Delhi. TfL has slammed the company for its approach to customer safety, claiming it was "not fit and proper" to operate in London and blamed "public safety and security implications" for its decision.

The transport body cited Uber's approach to reporting serious criminal offences, how drivers' medical certificates are obtained, how criminal record checks are carried out, and its use of technology which allegedly helps it to evade law enforcement. The capital's mayor, Sadiq

Khan, yesterday declared that Uber has "got to play by the rules". He attacked also the firm for "making aggressive threats" and hiring an "army of PR experts and lawyers" to fight the ruling.

Uber came under scrutiny in Britain after it emerged that dozens of rape and sexual assault claims had been made against their drivers and when one of their drivers used his vehicle in a recent terror attack on Buckingham Palace.

It questioned also the process through which drivers obtain their medical certificates and the practice of "grey-balling", when the company uses a fake version of its app to fool regulators in cities in which it is banned.

More than 750,000 Londoners have so far signed a petition calling for the TfL decision to be reversed, while the move has sparked concern over the plight of Uber drivers, many of whom have car finance deals in place.—AFP

## JAPAN'S EMOJI CREATOR SAW NUANCE IN PICTURES

**TOKYO:** The tiny smiley faces, hearts, knife-and-fork or clenched fist have become a global language for mobile phone messages. They are displayed in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. They star in a new Hollywood film. The emoji is heir to a tradition of pictographic writing stretching back millennia to Egyptian hieroglyphics and the ideograms used to write Chinese and Japanese. Despite their ubiquity, they started in 1998 with one man: A 25-year-old employee of mobile phone carrier NTT DoCoMo who created the first set of 176 in one month as he rushed to meet a deadline.

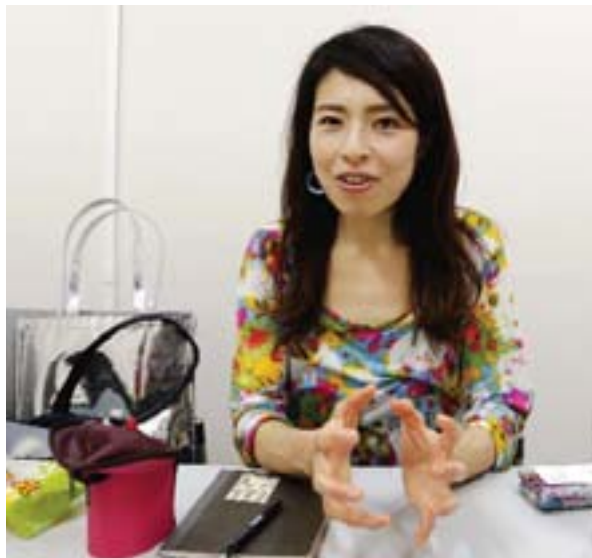
"I happened to arrive at the idea. If I hadn't done it, someone else would have," said Shigetaka Kurita, who now is a board member at Dwango Co., a Tokyo technology company. Kurita's challenge: NTT DoCoMo's "i-mode" mobile internet service limited messages to 250 characters, which cried out for some kind of shorthand. A message that said, "What are you doing now?" could be menacing or nose, but adding a smiley face softened the tone. "Digital messaging was just getting started, and so I was thinking about what was needed," said Kurita.

Following i-mode's launch in 1999, that nuance made emoji an immediate hit in Japan, where the demands of courtesy make for a complex art and a tiny mistake can prove costly. Emoji combines the Japanese for "picture," or "e" (pronounced "eh"), and "letters," or "moji" (moh-jee). Kurita collected common images including public signs, weather symbols, the zodiac and comic book-style pictures such as a light bulb or a ticking bomb. With simple lines, he made five faces - happy, angry, sad, surprised and perplexed. The heart and a smiley face are still his favorites.

### Emoji: A global phenomenon

Some visuals transcend culture. A drop of sweat rolling down a cheek means exasperation or anxiety. Others confuse: A camcorder was misread by many as a fish. "Japanese tend to excel at making the most of limitations. It's a nation filled with limitations, a small piece of land," said Kurita. "We do well at carrying out tasks within a framework, rather than being given a free hand." Western players Apple and Google made emoji a global phenomenon.

"Perhaps because of the popularity of the iPhone, Apple's art style for its emojis also became extremely influential, to the point that when most people think of emoji imagery, they're thinking of Apple's take on it," said Jason Snell, a tech journalist and podcaster. Kurita shrugs that off. The dozen-member team designing i-mode was making something for Japan long before smartphones. "Japanese always are too ahead of our time," said Kurita, an unpretentious



**TOKYO:** In this photo, Yuka Kubo, researcher at the University of Tokyo, speaks during an interview in Tokyo.—AP photos

man with a quick smile. "I think Galapagos is OK. It's cool," he said, referring to the remote Pacific Island, used in Japan to describe the nation's insularity. "After all, how can Japan hope to win as a global standard?" "And so we go ahead with our Galapagos ways in Japan, and people abroad will see it as wonderfully Japanese." Kurita's invention inspired "The Emoji Movie," an animated film by Sony Pictures about emojis that live inside the world of a smartphone. It has yet to be shown in Japan but was modestly popular in the United States.

### Pixel designs

In 2010, the 12-by-12-pixel designs were adopted as a global standard by the Unicode Consortiums. That means any phone or operating system that follows the standard will use the same images, making them a universal language. Some initially opposed making emoji a Unicode standard, according to Yasuo Kida, a technology expert who was involved in their adoption. Among the arguments: emoji was mere pictures, too infantile and uniquely Japanese. But Kida said companies that saw Japan as an important market won out.

What began as primitive digital drawings is growing into an elaborate tool for communication with more choic-



**TOKYO:** In this photo, Django Co., Ltd. Director Shigetaka Kurita speaks during an interview.

es for pictures and animation, such as Apple's latest Animoji, Kida said. Unlike Kurita, Kida finds it sad Japanese lose out on opportunities to reap benefits of their innovations on a global scale due to lack of language skills and international influence. Yuka Kubo, a researcher at the University of Tokyo, is working on a book about how young Japanese women pioneer innovations such as selfies and use of emojis as art that are ridiculed but become hits.

"The young women are expressing their rebellion against the adult world, but in a playful way," said Kubo. These days, Kurita works on a popular live video streaming service called Niconico. He believes such services will become more interactive, building online communities, possibly with artificial intelligence. Kurita doesn't feel all that involved with emoji today because they have evolved beyond his original set. He receives no royalties and is little-known in Japan outside technology circles.

He paid his own air fare to New York last year to see the Museum of Modern Art exhibit, which cited him by name. Kurita was overcome with emotion. "There they were, something I'd been involved with, although I'm neither an artist nor a designer," he said. "The museum saw value in the design that had the power to change people's lifestyles."—AP

## PUERTO RICANS HUNT FOR WI-FI AND CELL SIGNALS

**SAN JUAN:** Margarita Aponte and her relatives cleared the road in front of her house with two oxen Sunday, then drove an hour from her devastated hometown in central Puerto Rico to the old telegraph building in the capital of San Juan. There, thousands of Puerto Ricans gathered for a chance at a resource nearly as precious as power and water in the wake of Hurricane Maria - communication. "It's ringing, it's ringing, it's ringing!" Aponte, a janitor, screamed as her phone connected to free Wi-Fi and her Facetime call went through to the mainland.

Her eyes filled with tears as she talked with nephews, uncles, brothers and sisters in Florida and Massachusetts for the first time since Maria destroyed nearly every cellphone and fiber optic connection on this US territory of 3.4 million people. The low murmur at one of two government-provided free Wi-Fi hotspots is occasionally interrupted by the cheering of someone getting through the largely jammed network. Most spend hours frowning at their phones, unable to connect.

"There's no communication. We're in God's hands," Yesenia Gomez, a kitchen worker, said as she left a message for her mother in the neighboring Dominican Republic. Dozens of other Puerto Ricans opted to pull over to the side of the road along various highways where cellphone signals were strongest. Carlos Ocasio, a maintenance worker, picked his way through tree branches and broken glass bottles as he found a spot with a good signal. Soon, he was able to reach his brother in New Jersey.

"My throat got a little choked up and I couldn't talk for a minute," he said. "They're calling me from everywhere, asking when I'm going to arrive." Others in Puerto Rico and abroad called a local radio station to provide names, numbers, exact addresses and pictures of their loved ones in hopes of reconnecting. But for hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans living on the U.S. main-

land, there has been only silence from the island.

Shirley Rodriguez, a resident of New York's Brooklyn borough, said she has more than 30 relatives in Puerto Rico but she is especially concerned about her 66-year-old mother, Mildred Rodriguez, who has diabetes and pulmonary hypertension and lives in Hormigueros on the island's west coast. Rodriguez last spoke to her family before the storm and her relatives were planning on being together for it. Since then, calls to their cellphones have gone to voicemail.

"I'm absolutely numb at this point. It's a rollercoaster of emotion," she said. "Not knowing is extremely agonizing." Her mother-in-law is in the San Juan area and somehow managed to connect with someone who works for the mayor of Hormigueros, who was able to tell Rodriguez that the area where her parents live escaped flooding. But she still doesn't know what the actual conditions are like. Some in Puerto Rico expressed anger over what they said was a lack of communication from cellphone providers about which towers were working so they could drive in that direction.

### Zero communication

"They're not giving us any information," said Ricardo Castellanos, a business consultant. "We're in a state of emergency." Castellanos visits the Wi-Fi hotspots twice a day to try to reach his two daughters in the central town of Gurabo and has been able to send a few pictures to friends on social media of the devastation the hurricane left behind. As people continued to search for a connection in silence, some occasionally spoke up to offer unsolicited advice. "I didn't move my phone around, and I got a signal," said one woman to a man complaining that he was in a dead zone.

Nearby, retiree Sylvia Calero tapped her phone with impeccably manicured bright orange fingernails as she tried to reach three brothers and three grand-



**SAN JUAN:** People congregate at a Wi-Fi hotspot in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria with many cell phone towers down in San Juan, Puerto Rico.—AP photos

children in the hard-hit coastal town of Aguadilla in northwest Puerto Rico. She spent an hour walking up and down the upscale Condado district unable to find a signal before driving to the free Wi-Fi hotspot. "Zero communication," she said. Leaning against a boarded-up window, illustrator Avalon Clare from Colorado worried about getting off the island.

She and her partner were supposed to fly out of Puerto Rico on Saturday but the flight was canceled. It was rescheduled for Thursday, but Clare said she had no way to confirm whether that was still the case. "The only thing I can do is text," she said. "We're trying to leave because we can't work without internet ... We only have half a tank of gas. We're running out of cash. It's just getting harder." Jennifer Gonzalez, Puerto Rico's non-voting representative in Congress, urged people to remain calm, noting that the towers of one cellphone provider that had constant coverage after the hurricane collapsed Sunday.

"Don't become desperate," she said, adding that if anyone was in danger, local officials would have been notified by now. Only about 25 percent of towers were working in the San Juan metro

area. Cell service provider T-Mobile said it reached a deal with other providers to help reconnect their customers, saying callers should use the roaming data option to find a connection. Officials said customers would not be charged extra.

Claro was installing 40 generators to power up its towers, and expected 50 more generators to arrive from the Dominican Republic once a ferry from the neighboring island is operational. Gov. Ricardo Rossello said a major underwater cable had been repaired, which would allow people to make long-distance calls and improve internet service. Two planes from Spain's telephone company also arrived over the weekend to help re-establish services.

Persistence paid off for many who waited up to three hours to find a signal, including Wanda Nieves, a government worker who stood at one of the free Wi-Fi hotspots. She heard about it on the radio and drove 30 minutes to reach the site. Nieves spoke to family in Florida and Michigan and did not plan to return for more calls or messages. "We've already given signs of life," she said. "Now we just wait for Puerto Rico to recover."—AP

### GAME REVIEW: FIFA 18



## BUILDING ON LAST SEASON

In the Age of the Internet, where we demand everything faster and our attention spans shrink to that of a goldfish, it's interesting that both PES and FIFA are slowing down. It's a trend aimed at making soccer games more realistic, but up to and including FIFA 17, it had caused EA's series to suffer, with every title since FIFA 15 feeling less responsive than its predecessor. Finally, with FIFA 18, the franchise has managed to arrest its decline, and while the series' latest entry still feels slow, it at least feels a little more responsive, and less frustrating as a result. Combined with outstanding presentation and more ways to play than ever, FIFA 18's on-pitch improvements represent the beginnings of a recovery for the series.

FIFA 17's problem, I realized after far too many sleepless nights, was that it slowed players' turning speeds to Titanic levels but left much of the rest of the game at a higher velocity. That meant you could sprint pretty quickly, but would take an age to accelerate or change direction. This is still a problem in FIFA 18, where players' continued slow turning circles and lengthy animations can feel like there's a split-second of input lag-but their slower sprinting does mean the game's speed as a whole feels more consistent.

This results in a more thoughtful game that's less concerned with beating defenders using trickery or pace and more about-as your youth coach probably told you every week-letting the ball do the work. AI teammates now make more frequent and intelligent runs to give you greater options when you're on the ball, and players' first touches keep the ball closer to their body, finally making driven passes a viable option in the attacking third. Unfortunately, however, non-driven passes remain as limp as before: long passes and chipped through balls still slowly float towards their target before inevitably getting cut out, and ground passes are similarly weak, rarely possessing enough zip to carve a defense open.

Many attacks end in your wingers or full backs crossing the ball into the area or an attacking midfielder having a pop from the edge of the box. It's a good job, then, that these are the areas that have seen most improvement. Shots carry a little more weight than before and are responsible for the game's most satisfying moments-seeing a volley fly into the top corner is a great feeling, and it happens far more frequently in FIFA 18 than last year.

Crosses, meanwhile, have been reworked, dropping the old low cross in favor of a new three height system: holding R1 / RB while crossing produces a driven, ground cross; L1 / LB creates a floaty ball similar to FIFA 17's efforts; and just the standard X / Square input whips the ball behind the defenders with pace. Crucially, unlike last year, it is now actually possible to score by crossing it into a target man or poacher, and doing so feels better than it has in any FIFA to date.

That doesn't translate to set pieces, however, which are still useless-even if penalties are slightly less complicated than FIFA 17's approach, which felt like trying to solve a Rubik's cube with your hands tied. They're still unnecessarily obtuse, requiring you to be mindful of shot power, direction, and height, as well as your run-up, all at the same time, but at least you now have time to think about your approach, rather than the run-up being mapped to the same stick as shot direction.

Elsewhere, EA has finally got the balance of individual's pace just right-slow players feel slow and fast players feel fast, and utilizing the latter no longer feels over- or under-powered. However, despite the numerous small-but-important enhancements, there is a number of lingering flaws holding FIFA back. Different players still don't feel unique enough: other than Ronaldo and a handful more of the world's elite, every footballer in the game feels roughly the same, the vast majority of them displaying the same animations and only feeling different in their heights and speed stats.

This year's gimmick, quick subs-which allow you to press R2 / RT during stoppages in play to substitute a player without having to pause the game-are a nice touch that is limited by the fact you can only apply it to three pre-planned changes organized before the match or go with the game's suggestion. That suggestion is rarely a good fit for the situation at hand, and mapping it to the same button as sprint meant I was constantly activating it by mistake.

Finally, The Journey's influence has spread beyond Pro Clubs and into Career Mode, whose transfer negotiations have been overhauled-aesthetically at least. Instead of submitting your offer as an email, transfer talks are now conducted in real-time through interactive cutscenes. It's a largely superficial change since the only actual new feature is the ability to add release clauses and sell-on percentages to signings' contracts-the rest of the process is exactly the same, except with a human face rather than an inbox in front of you-but it's at least more exciting than seeing the same offer letter template written down for the hundredth time.—www.gamespot.com



## GOING UNDER THE KNIFE IN CHINA'S PLASTIC SURGERY STAMPEDE

**SHANGHAI:** Chen Yan is 35 and fears middle age is upon her, so like all of her friends she sees cosmetic surgery as the solution: time to get a new nose. Plastic surgery is booming in China, fuelled by rising incomes, growing Western influences, and the imperative of looking good on social media. Some parents are even paying for teenage children to get work done to help their employment prospects. "We Chinese think that after you've married, given birth to a kid and you're past 30, they call you a middle-aged woman," said Chen.

"I don't want to be a middle-aged woman that early." The shop owner travelled from the central province of Hunan to pay 52,515 yuan in a quest for the perfect nose at Shanghai's private Huamei Medical Cosmetology Hospital. Spread over four floors and featuring a peaceful convalescent roof garden complete with tea house, the vast majority going under the knife are young women. It offers an array of options including breast augmentation, ear shaping, bone shaving, pubic-hair transplants and a procedure that promises to reduce armpit odor.

### Summer rush

Stepping inside the hospital is like entering a five-star hotel. In the immaculate foyer, patients are greeted by bowing hostesses in striped blouses, short black skirts and high heels as soothing music plays. A sign outside entices

teachers and students with a 20-percent summer discount. The surgeon Li Jian says 90 percent of his patients are women aged 16 to 70. The under-40s want to look more beautiful, the over-40s want to look younger.

The most requested procedures involve removing bulk from the face and body, and nose jobs—Chinese women typically seek slimmer, more "Western-looking" noses. This year 14 million Chinese are expected to have cosmetic surgery, a 42 percent surge from last year, according to SoYoung, a popular app on the industry that used data from several sources including international consultancy Deloitte.

Summers are especially busy at the Shanghai clinic because recent university graduates believe better looks lead to better employment prospects, particularly in the entertainment business. Increasing numbers seek plastic surgery in their teens, although the hospital does not treat those under 16, while 16 and 17 year olds require parental consent. "Most Chinese people believe the thinner the face or nose, the more beautiful they look," Li said. "Some people want to make themselves more beautiful when they take pictures of themselves. So they want themselves to become more European," he added. "As a plastic surgeon I don't think that is beautiful, at least that is not Chinese style. So I refuse many girls who have that kind of opinion."

### Becoming addicted

Sun Yibing, now 22, had her first procedure at 17 and has since become something of a celebrity after going under the knife 12 more times. Bullied at school because of her looks and weight, she had operations on her eyes, nose, jaw, temples and elsewhere, and now sports rounder eyes, as well as a sharper nose and jawline. But as her appearance has morphed, so has her view of surgery.

"I got addicted to surgery and yet was never satisfied with myself. I am not against plastic surgery but you have to be yourself instead of turning into others," Sun, who is from the central province of Henan, said. Sun partly blames minor celebrities who make their names on the internet in China—often by live-streaming themselves singing or dancing and boasting about their surgery—for hastening the stampede.

She now fears that the rush to cash in has brought growing numbers of unscrupulous and poorly trained surgeons into the industry. "A couple of years ago people still were quite conservative about having cosmetic surgery," she said. "But I am afraid that the plastic surgery industry is a mess now with good and bad clinics mixed so customers don't know what is what," she added.

### 'I'm the last one'

Back at the hospital a woman in a waiting room peers out from beneath



**SHANGHAI:** In this photograph, doctor Wang Yang takes measurements during a consultation with Yu Linlin at Huamei Medical Cosmetology Hospital in Shanghai.—AFP

her bandaged eyelids. Another, in obvious pain after surgery, appears almost to be trying to hold her head together. Chen had already done minor work to her nose and had a crease inserted in her eye lids—so-called double eyelid surgery aimed at creating rounder, more Western-looking eyes is one of the most popular in China. But it took her six years to summon the courage for a full nose job, finally taking the plunge after all her friends did so.

"I got here later. I'm the last one to come," she said. Following surgery,

she said that the hospital recommended a bone-shaving operation to narrow her jawline using a surgical drill. Some Chinese women hanker for a more "V-shaped" visage, but the procedure comes with potential complications including infection or even facial paralysis.

"I just want to make myself look more beautiful," said Chen, who is unsure whether to proceed. She explained: "No matter how old a woman is, she should make herself more and more beautiful."—AFP

## WHALE CARCASS DUG UP FROM AUSTRALIAN BEACH OVER SHARK FEARS



**SYDNEY:** A handout photo taken and received from the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council shows a digger being used in the removal of a massive humpback whale buried on Nobbys Beach at Port Macquarie some 400 kilometers north of Sydney.—AFP

## JAPAN'S BABY PANDA NOW HAS A NAME: XIANG XIANG, OR FRAGRANCE

**TOKYO:** Japan's baby panda now has a name: Xiang Xiang, or fragrance. Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike announced yesterday that the 3-month-old giant panda is called Shan Shan in Japanese, or Xiang Xiang in Chinese. The name, whose Chinese characters mean fragrance, was chosen from more than 320,000 suggestions and was approved by Chinese authorities. The Ueno Zoo in Tokyo says the panda is healthy and growing rapidly. She now weighs 6 kilograms and measures 65 centimeters long, nearly twice as big as she was a month ago, according to the latest measurement marking the 100th day since birth. Videos released last week showed the fluffy black-and-white cub crawling, and some teeth coming in. Xiang Xiang was born on June 12 to the zoo's resident giant panda, Shin Shin.—AP



**TOKYO:** This photo released by Tokyo Zoological Park Society, shows a female giant panda cub on the 100th day since her birth, at Ueno Zoo in Tokyo.—AP

**SYDNEY:** A massive humpback whale buried on a popular Australian beach after it washed up dead was being exhumed yesterday because locals feared its rotting carcass was attracting sharks. The 18-tonne animal came ashore entangled in fishing ropes last week at Nobbys Beach in holiday hotspot Port Macquarie on the New South Wales coast, 400 kilometers north of Sydney. Authorities tried to drag the 12-metre whale back to sea, but gave up when it became caught on rocks.

With only a pedestrian pathway leading to the beach and no road access, the local council winched down a small digger to bury the dead creature. But concerns that oil and decaying blubber were seeping into the ocean soon sparked a community backlash, with a spate of shark sightings close to shore ahead of school holidays, when beaches in the area are usually packed. Under mounting pressure, the state government stepped in with enough cash to fund the removal of the decomposing animal.

A large crane was set up on the cliff edge yesterday and mechanical excavators lowered to the sand, where they set about digging up the carcass and ripping it apart to be taken to a landfill site. "We are using an excavator with big teeth on its bucket to actually cut the whale in pieces. It's quite a job," Port Macquarie council's environment director Matt Rogers told reporters. "There are overseas experiences where whales have been taken off beaches... but nothing like we're seeing here with skip bins being winched up an escarpment, a crane reaching out 60 meters."

Surf school owner Wayne Hudson said locals were delighted the council had acted. "The community got behind the idea of pulling out the whale carcass for a varied number of reasons and we went to council and respectfully asked for it to be removed," he told broadcaster ABC. "Council listened and jumped on... everyone I've been speaking to in the community's just so stoked about it." Each year humpback whales migrate north from the Antarctic to the warmer climate off Australia's north coast to mate and give birth.—AFP



**CANBERRA:** A file photo shows a general view of the 70 meter dish while tracking NASA's Mars science laboratory car-sized rover Curiosity at the Canberra Deep Space Communication Station at Tidbinbilla in Canberra.—AFP

## AUSTRALIA TO CREATE NATIONAL SPACE AGENCY

**SYDNEY:** Australia yesterday committed to creating a national space agency as it looks to cash in on the lucrative and fast-evolving astronautical sector. The announcement came at a week-long Adelaide space conference attended by the world's top scientists and experts including SpaceX chief Elon Musk. It brings Canberra—which already has significant involvement in national and international space activities—into line with most other developed nations, which already have dedicated agencies to help coordinate the industry and shape development.

"The global space industry is growing rapidly and it's crucial that Australia is part of this growth," acting science minister Michaelia Cash said in statement. "A national space agency will ensure we have a strategic long-term plan that supports the development and application of space technologies and grows our domestic space industry." According to the government, the global space sector-encompassing innovation, defense, and

telecommunications—has been growing annually since the late 1990s at almost 10 percent, driving revenue each year of US\$323 billion.

Thousands of the world's top scientists and space experts are attending the week-long International Astronautical Congress in Adelaide. SpaceX chief Musk is set to give an update on his ambitious vision of establishing a Mars colony.

Also among those presenting is defense giant Lockheed Martin, which is working with NASA on plans to reach the Red Planet. Lee Spitler, from Macquarie University's astronomy department in Sydney, said Australia's space industry currently operated "as a grassroots movement across a small number of companies, university groups and the defense sector".

"It will help bring to the forefront all the great work that has been going on in Australia in the space sector, and increase the potential for our country to play a key role in the international space scene in the future," said Spitler.—AFP

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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem  
مؤيد علي المخيزيم

استشاري أطفال  
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

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





## The Palms Beach Hotel & Spa back in modest style



The Palms Beach Hotel & Spa came back in modern and luxury style to meet all demands of the hotel guests. The hotel went through deep renovations with the latest and luxuries technology for all of the ballrooms, restaurants and remaining outlets, especially

Nassima ballroom which is now drawing attention with its fabulous design and special equipment.

Nassima ballroom which is extended to 1050 square meters prepared with latest audiovisual and high tech equipment to suit all kind of events including the social

and official events. In addition the ballroom can fit more than 850 guests. Nassima has a lot of renovated aspects to satisfy all categories and offers a wide selection of the finest oriental and western buffets with special dishes prepared by selective international expert chefs.

## Cozmo entertainment opens its 10th branch in Khairan



Cozmo Entertainment celebrated the opening of its second Branch in Khairan on July 27, 2017 at the Khairan Jalboot Village. After the success of Cozmo Branch at the Grey Mall Khairan, Cozmo Jalboot Village will positively earn the adoration of its customers with its unique facilities. Located at the marina, Cozmo Jalboot Village is exceptionally beautiful with its mesmerizing white lanes, huge sedations glow graffiti wall, enchanting LED lighting, 8D cinema, trampoline, billiards, VR games, arcades and much more, meeting the entertainment needs of all ages.

Ali Al-Oqab, Marketing Manager at Cozmo Entertainment stated: "Opening a second branch in



Khairan indicates the company's continued efforts to seek further prosperity for the family entertain-

ment industry. We seek to introduce the latest high-quality technologies and make sure to dedicate

our resources to deliver an unforgettable experience." Cozmo Entertainment was established in 2003 and since then it has been Kuwait's premiere family Entertainment Company.

With 10 Branches in the finest locations - Salmiya, Khairan the Grey Mall and Jalboot Village, Mahboulah, Kuwait City, Kaifan, Sulaibikhat, Sabah Al Salem, Jahra Cozmo is easily accessible and is the ultimate one stop family destination for all activities. Considering the diversity of games, Cozmo Entertainment excels in organizing Birthdays, Team Building Corporate Events and School Field Trips. Cozmo Entertainment has just what you need to ensure that everyone has the best time ever.



## US universities to speak with students in Kuwait

On October 18, 2017, a group of admissions counselors representing a variety of accredited universities from across the United States will be speaking with students during a university fair at the Marina Hotel Kuwait from 6:00 - 9:00 pm. The event, which is free and open to the public, is organized by Linden Educational Services which is an organization dedicated to helping students from around the world connect with prestigious US universities.

For the past 25 years, Linden has been visiting Kuwait and helping students pursue their goals in higher education. Linden works closely with EducationUSA and AMIDEAST to ensure events of the highest caliber. University admissions officers visit-

ing Kuwait this year represent a wide variety of schools in the United States, from large, public universities to small, private colleges including top tier flagship universities such as University of California Berkeley, University of Minnesota Twin Cities and Duke University.

The range of academic programs at these schools is extensive, and while most schools offer Business, Marketing and Engineering programs, students will also find schools offering degrees in the sciences, fine arts and liberal arts. Pre-registering online at [www.LindenFairs.com](http://www.LindenFairs.com) will provide students quicker access to the fair. The Marina Hotel Kuwait is located at Salmiya, Opp. Marina Mall, Arabian Gulf Road, Kuwait.



## MOVENPICK HOTEL KUWAIT - FREE TRADE ZONE APPOINTS NEW GM

Movenpick Hotel Kuwait - Free Trade Zone has announced the appointment of its new general manager, Wajdy (WES) El Char. With over 20 years of high end operational experience in the hospitality industry in several countries such as UAE, Lebanon, Canada, Venezuela, Jordan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as hotels openings and rebrandings. El Char said, "I believe my international experience will add value to the Movenpick Hotel Kuwait team. The hotel has great potentials located in an amazing



secluded location, about 15 minutes from Kuwait international airport and from other major shopping areas. It is a great business hotel with resort facilities and relaxing attitude, offering luxurious rooms and various F&B outlets to meet all tastes."

"Our strategy to ensure complete guest satisfaction with our friendly associates and their passionate attitude to serve, while maintaining the high level of service. Luxury is not a business, it is a way of living and we plan to implement it in our hotel," he added.





00:05 Hardcore Henry
01:55 Blackhat
04:15 The Darkest Hour
06:00 The 5th Wave
07:55 The Tower
10:00 Blackhat
12:15 The Last Rescue
14:10 The 5th Wave
16:10 Batman: The Killing Joke
17:35 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part II
19:55 Warcraft: The Beginning
22:00 The Huntsman: Winter's War
23:55 REC 2

16:30 Disaster Date
16:55 Disaster Date
17:20 Ridiculousness
17:40 Ridiculousness
18:10 Impractical Jokers
18:35 Key And Peele
18:59 The Jim Gaffigan Show
19:22 Brotherhood
19:46 Ridiculousness Arabia
20:11 Key And Peele
20:34 Ridiculousness Arabia
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Inside Amy Schumer
22:00 Inside Amy Schumer
22:25 Broad City
22:50 Broad City
23:15 Idiotstiter
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:45 Treehouse Masters
01:40 Tigers Attack
02:35 Swamp Brothers
03:00 Swamp Brothers
03:25 Expedition Mungo
04:15 Sharkzilla
05:02 Wildest Indochina
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 Tigers Attack
10:05 Wildest Indochina
11:00 Swamp Brothers
11:28 Swamp Brothers
11:55 Expedition Mungo
12:50 Sharkzilla
13:45 Tigers Attack
14:40 Wildest Indochina
15:35 Untamed & Uncut
16:30 Treehouse Masters
17:25 Pit Bulls & Parolees
18:20 After The Attack
19:15 Tigers Attack
20:10 Swamp Brothers
20:38 Swamp Brothers
21:05 Pit Bulls & Parolees
22:00 I Survived An Animal Attack
22:55 Wildest Indochina
23:50 Untamed & Uncut



00:05 Destroyed In Seconds
00:30 Pick A Puppy
00:55 Pick A Puppy
01:20 Life On A Wire
02:10 Dirty Jobs
03:00 Finding Bigfoot
03:50 Destroyed In Seconds
04:15 Destroyed In Seconds
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Pick A Puppy
05:55 Pick A Puppy
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Awesome Adventures
07:25 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
07:50 K9 Cops
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Nextworld
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 America's Cutest Pets
12:00 Finding Bigfoot
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Pick A Puppy
14:05 Pick A Puppy
14:30 Awesome Adventures
14:55 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
15:20 Destroyed In Seconds
15:45 Destroyed In Seconds
16:10 Nextworld
17:00 Incredible Food Race
17:50 World's Top 5
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Destroyed In Seconds
20:45 Destroyed In Seconds
21:10 Incredible Food Race
22:00 World's Top 5
22:50 Finding Bigfoot
23:40 Destroyed In Seconds



00:30 Doctor Foster
01:25 Doctor Foster
02:20 Casualty
03:15 Class
04:05 Class
05:00 New Tricks
06:00 Casualty
06:50 Father Brown
07:40 Stella
08:30 New Tricks
09:25 Casualty
10:15 Father Brown
11:00 Holly City
11:55 Stella
12:45 New Tricks
13:40 Casualty
14:35 The Detectivists
15:05 Father Brown
15:55 Stella
16:45 New Tricks
17:45 The Detectivists
18:15 Holly City
19:05 Father Brown
20:00 Line Of Duty
21:00 Line Of Duty
22:00 Silent Witness
23:00 Doctor Foster
23:55 Holly City



00:30 The Coroner: I Speak For The Dead
01:20 Sin City Justice
02:10 Who Killed Angie Dodge: Keith Morrison...
03:00 I Am Homicide
03:48 Disappeared
04:36 Murder Chose Me
05:24 Nowhere To Hide
06:12 Obsession: Dark Desires
07:00 Disappeared
07:50 Murder Chose Me
08:40 A Crime To Remember
09:30 Obsession: Dark Desires
10:20 Blood Relatives
11:10 Betrayed
12:00 Disappeared
12:50 Murder Chose Me
13:40 Nowhere To Hide
14:30 Obsession: Dark Desires
15:20 Blood Relatives
16:10 Disappeared
17:00 Disappeared
17:50 The Perfect Murder
18:40 Nowhere To Hide
19:30 Obsession: Dark Desires
20:20 Blood Relatives
21:10 Unravellled
22:00 Murder In Lehigh Valley: Keith Morrison...
23:40 Forbidden: Dying For Love



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
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 The Zhuzhus
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 Whisker Haven Tales With The Palace Pets
14:40 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
15:05 Milo Murphy's Law
17:00 K.C. Undercover
17:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
17:50 Girl Meets World
18:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:20 Bizaardvark
18:45 Best Friends Whenever
19:10 Liv And Maddie
19:15 Elena Of Avalor
20:05 Jessie
20:30 Cracke
20:35 K.C. Undercover
21:00 The Zhuzhus
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
23:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



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
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 Micky And The Roadster Racers
08:30 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
09:00 PJ Masks
09:30 Miles From Tomorrow
10:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
10:30 Micky 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 Micky And The Roadster Racers
16:00 Sofia The First
16:25 Miles From Tomorrow
16:50 Doc McStuffins
17:00 Doc McStuffins
17:15 The Lion Guard
17:45 Sofia The First
18:15 Goldie & Bear
18:45 Micky And The Roadster Racers
19:15 Little Mermaid
19:45 PJ Masks
20:15 The Lion Guard
20:45 Micky Mouse Clubhouse
21:15 Goldie & Bear
21:45 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
22:15 Little Mermaid
22:45 Micky Mouse Clubhouse
23:15 PJ Masks
23:45 Loopdidoo



00:20 Misfit Garage
01:05 Telescope
01:50 Deadliest Catch
02:35 Walking The Nile
03:20 Fast N' Loud
04:05 The Island With Bear Grylls: USA
04:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Deadliest Catch
06:45 Misfit Garage
07:30 Fast N' Loud
08:15 The Island With Bear Grylls: USA
09:00 Storage Wars Canada
09:25 How Do They Do It?
09:47 How Do They Do It?
10:10 Telescope
10:55 Deadliest Catch
11:40 The Island With Bear Grylls
12:25 How Do They Do It?
12:47 Storage Wars Canada
13:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
13:55 The Island With Bear Grylls: USA
14:40 Deadliest Catch
15:25 Fast N' Loud
16:10 Misfit Garage
17:00 How Do They Do It?
17:25 How Do They Do It?
17:50 Storage Wars Canada
18:20 Storage Wars Canada
18:50 The Island With Bear Grylls: USA
19:40 How Do They Do It?
20:10 How Do They Do It?
20:35 How Do They Do It?
21:00 The Island With Bear Grylls
21:50 Bear Grylls: Mission Survive
22:40 Boy To Man
23:30 Fast N' Loud



06:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
06:25 Disney11
06:50 Marvel's Spider-Man
07:15 Right Now Kapow
07:40 Mech-X4
08:05 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
08:10 Gravity Falls
08:35 Milo Murphy's Law
09:00 Phineas And Ferb
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
12:55 The Suite Life On Deck
13:20 The Suite Life On Deck
13:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty...
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse

14:15 Kirby Buckets
14:40 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
15:05 Milo Murphy's Law
17:00 Walk The Prank
15:55 Right Now Kapow
16:25 Supa Strikas
16:50 Disney11
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Marvel's Spider-Man
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 Gravity Falls
21:35 Marvel's Ant-Man
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats
22:10 Lab Rats
22:25 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



00:10 Life Of Kylie
00:35 Life Of Kylie
01:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
01:55 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 Hollywood & Football
04:40 Hollywood & Football
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 EJ NYC
06:55 EJ News
07:10 EJ NYC
08:10 EJ News: Daily Pop
09:10 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
10:10 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
11:10 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
12:00 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
13:00 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
14:00 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
15:00 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
16:00 Celebrity Style Story
16:30 Celebrity Style Story
17:00 Ryan Seacrest With The Kardashians: An El...
18:00 Beyond Candid With Giuliana
19:00 EJ News
20:00 Reunion Road Trip
20:30 Eric And Jessie
21:00 Second Wives Club
22:00 Life Of Kylie
22:30 Life Of Kylie
23:00 EJ News
23:15 WAGS Miami



00:00 Restaurant Stakeout
01:00 Mystery Diners
01:30 Mystery Diners
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
12:15 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
17:00 Cooking For Real
17:30 Cooking For Real
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Guy's Grocery Games
20:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
20:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
21:00 Man Fire Food
21:30 Man Fire Food
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



00:10 Chopping Block
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 Victoria
04:20 Grantchester
05:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
06:10 Chopping Block
07:05 The Chase
08:00 Victoria
09:00 Grantchester
10:00 Couples Come Dine With Me
10:55 Chopping Block
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Chopping Block
15:10 The Chase
16:00 Doctor Thorne
16:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
17:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 Doctor Thorne
21:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Ancient Discoveries
01:00 Clash Of Warriors
02:00 America's Book Of Secrets
02:50 Ancient Aliens
03:40 America's 9/11 Flag: Rise From The Ashes
04:30 Serial Killer Earth
05:20 Ancient Discoveries
06:10 The Universe
07:00 Clash Of Warriors
08:00 America's Book Of Secrets

09:00 Ancient Aliens
10:00 How 2 Win
11:00 Serial Killer Earth
12:00 Ancient Discoveries
13:00 Clash Of Warriors
14:00 America's Book Of Secrets
15:00 Ancient Aliens
16:00 How 2 Win
17:00 The Universe
18:00 Ancient Discoveries
19:00 Clash Of Warriors
20:00 America's Book Of Secrets
21:00 Ancient Aliens
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Serial Killer Earth



01:10 American Pickers
02:00 American Ripper In London
02:50 Storage Wars
03:50 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 Lost In Transmission
06:50 Duck Dynasty
07:15 Duck Dynasty
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Storage Wars
09:45 Storage Wars Texas
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Time Team
11:50 Duck Dynasty
12:15 Duck Dynasty
12:40 Counting Cars
13:05 Counting Cars
13:30 Ozzy And Jack's World Detour
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Lost In Transmission
16:00 Storage Wars
16:25 Storage Wars Texas
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Pawn Stars
17:40 Detroit Steel
18:30 Aussie Pickers
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Mountain Men
21:50 Road To 911
23:30 American Pickers



00:15 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
00:45 Places We Go
01:10 Places We Go
01:40 World's Greatest Food Markets
02:35 My Pacific Quest
03:30 Fish Of The Day
03:55 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
04:25 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
04:50 Places We Go
05:20 Places We Go
05:45 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
06:15 Warrior Road Trip
07:10 World's Greatest Food Markets
08:05 My Pacific Quest
09:00 Fish Of The Day
09:25 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
09:55 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
10:20 Places We Go
10:50 Places We Go
11:15 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
11:45 Warrior Road Trip
12:40 Restoration Man
13:35 My Pacific Quest
14:30 Fish Of The Day
14:55 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
15:25 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
15:50 Places We Go
16:20 Places We Go
16:45 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
17:15 World's Biggest Festival: Kumbh Mela
18:10 Route Awakening
18:35 Route Awakening
19:05 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
19:30 Places We Go
20:00 Places We Go
20:30 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
21:00 World's Biggest Festival: Kumbh Mela
22:00 Route Awakening
22:25 Route Awakening
22:55 Restoration Man
23:50 My Pacific Quest



00:10 Hard Time
01:00 Highway Thru Hell Bombers
02:00 Inside The Hunt For The Boston Bombers
04:00 Hard Time
05:00 4 Babies A Second
06:00 Brain Games
06:30 Brain Games
07:00 Genius
08:00 Rare
09:00 4 Babies A Second
10:00 Big Fish, Texas
11:00 Wicked Tuna
12:00 Air Crash Investigation
13:00 Rare
14:00 Brain Games
14:30 Brain Games
15:00 Genius
16:00 Big Fish, Texas
17:00 Wicked Tuna
18:00 Air Crash Investigation
19:00 Seconds From Disaster
19:30 Seconds From Disaster
20:00 Big Fish, Texas
20:50 Wicked Tuna
21:40 Air Crash Investigation
22:30 Seconds From Disaster
22:55 Seconds From Disaster
23:20 Brain Games
23:45 Brain Games



00:20 Africa's Blood River
01:10 Ultimate Animal Countdown
02:00 Wild Australia: Kangaroo King
02:50 Monster Fish
03:45 Ultimate Predators GPU
04:40 Snakes In The City
05:35 Wild Australia: Kangaroo King
06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 Ultimate Predators GPU
08:20 Snakes In The City
09:15 Secret Life Of Predators
10:10 Predator Patrol
11:05 Secrets Of The Wild
12:00 Wild Dolphins

12:55 Secrets Of The King Cobra
13:50 Monster Fish
14:45 Predator Falls
15:40 Snakes In The City
16:35 Safari Brothers
17:30 Super Squirrel
18:25 India's Lost Worlds
19:20 Predator Falls
20:10 Snakes In The City
21:00 Safari Brothers
21:50 Super Squirrel
22:40 India's Lost Worlds
23:30 Wild Dolphins



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 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Rabbids Invasion
13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Sanjay And Craig
13:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
14:12 Henry Danger
14:36 The Thundermans
15:00 School Of Rock
15:24 Breadwinners
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Regal Academy
17:24 Winx Club
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
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



00:17 Max & Ruby
00:41 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:52 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:03 The Day Henry Met
01:14 The Day Henry Met
01:08 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:37 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:59 Zack & Quack
02:21 Shimmer And Shine
02:44 Olive The Ostrich
02:49 Olive The Ostrich
02:55 Paw Patrol
03:18 Little Chamears
03:30 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
03:42 Dora The Explorer
04:05 Max & Ruby
04:29 The Day Henry Met
04:34 Nella The Princess Knight
04:46 Nella The Princess Knight
04:58 Shimmer And Shine
05:21 Wallykazam!
05:44 Zack & Quack
05:56 The Day Henry Met
06:01 Blaze And The Monster Machines
06:23 Rusty Rivets
06:36 Paw Patrol
07:00 Dora The Explorer
07:21 Bubble Guppies
07:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
08:07 Paw Patrol
08:30 Shimmer And Shine
08:53 Nella The Princess Knight
09:05 Nella The Princess Knight
09:15 The Day Henry Met
09:22 Paw Patrol
09:45 Rusty Rivets
09:57 Wallykazam!
10:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
10:42 Zack & Quack
10:52 Team Umizoomi
11:15 Shimmer And Shine
11:39 Shimmer And Shine
12:01 Max & Ruby
12:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:47 The Day Henry Met
12:52 The Day Henry Met
12:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:41 Zack & Quack
14:03 Shimmer And Shine
14:25 Olive The Ostrich
14:30 Olive The Ostrich
14:35 Paw Patrol
14:58 Little Chamears
15:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
15:22 Dora The Explorer
15:44 Max & Ruby
16:06 The Day Henry Met
16:11 Nella The Princess Knight
16:23 Nella The Princess Knight
16:35 Shimmer And Shine
16:59 Wallykazam!
17:21 Zack & Quack
17:32 The Day Henry Met
17:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
18:00 Rusty Rivets
18:13 Paw Patrol
18:37 Dora The Explorer
19:00 Zack & Quack
19:21 Bubble Guppies
19:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
20:07 Paw Patrol
20:30 Shimmer And Shine
20:53 Nella The Princess Knight
21:05 Nella The Princess Knight
21:15 The Day Henry Met
21:22 Paw Patrol
21:45 Rusty Rivets

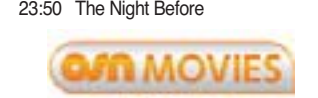
21:57 Wallykazam!
22:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
22:42 Zack & Quack
22:52 Team Umizoomi
23:15 Shimmer And Shine
23:39 Shimmer And Shine



00:05 Inspector Gadget
01:25 The Muppets
03:10 Stitch! The Movie
04:15 Beverly Hills Chihuahua
05:50 Inspector Gadget
07:10 Houlbal On The Trail Of Marsupilami
08:55 Atlantis: Milo's Return
10:20 The Muppets
12:05 Lilo & Stitch 2
13:15 Houlbal On The Trail Of Marsupilami
15:00 The Dog Lover
16:45 The Wild
18:10 James And The Giant Peach
19:35 A Sunday Horse
21:25 Lilo & Stitch 2
22:35 The Dog Lover



01:35 5 To 7
03:20 Fan Girl
05:00 Hard Promises
06:45 Ride Along 2
08:35 Fan Girl
10:15 Hard Promises
12:00 Ride Along 2
13:50 Turner & Hooch
15:40 Liberal Arts
17:25 Other Plans
18:55 Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son
20:45 Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot
22:15 People Places Things
23:50 The Night Before



00:55 Once Upon A Time In America
04:35 The Yellow Handkerchief
06:20 The Portrait Of A Lady
08:50 No God No Master
10:35 The Yellow Handkerchief
12:20 Jappeloup
14:30 Operation Avalanche
16:15 Boychoir
18:05 Land Of Mine
20:00 Miller's Crossing
22:00 Nixon



01:20 A.R.C.H.I.E.
02:55 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
04:15 Yugo & Lala 2
05:40 Oops Noah Is Gone
07:15 The Adventures Of The American Rabbit
08:50 Krazy Planet
10:05 Ghosthunters On Icy Trails
11:50 The Incredible Adventures Of Professor Branestawm
12:55 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
14:15 Yugo & Lala 2
15:40 Big Baby
17:10 Ghosthunters On Icy Trails
18:55 Ductales: The Movie
20:15 Kim Possible: So The Drama
21:35 Big Baby
23:05 Krazy Planet



00:00 St. Elmo's Fire
01:50 Changeling
04:10 The Guardian
06:35 Concussion
08:45 Air Force One
10:55 Changeling
13:20 Finding Forrester
15:40 Jurassic World
17:50 The Legend Of Zorro
20:05 Lucy
21:40 Dangerous Minds
23:20 Straight Outta Compton



00:30 How Do They Do It?
00:55 Food Factory
01:20 NASA's Unexplained Files
02:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
03:00 Junkyard Wars
03:48 Mythbusters
04:36 How Do They Do It?
05:00 Food Factory
05:24 NASA's Unexplained Files
06:12 NASA's Unexplained Files
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:26 Junkyard Wars
08:14 Mythbusters
09:02 NASA's Unexplained Files
09:50 How Do They Do It?
10:14 Food Factory
10:38 NASA's Unexplained Files
11:26 Junkyard Wars
12:14 Mythbusters
13:02 How Do They Do It?
13:26 Food Factory
13:50 NASA's Unexplained Files
14:38 Junkyard Wars
15:26 NASA's Unexplained Files
16:14 Mythbusters
17:02 NASA's Unexplained Files
17:50 Junkyard Wars
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
20:20 How Do They Do It?
20:45 Food Factory
21:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
22:00 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
22:50 Junkyard Wars
23:40 Mythbusters



00:15 When In Rome
01:45 Kate & Leopold
03:00 Kate & Leopold
03:45 The Pledge
05:45 My Boss's Daughter
07:15 Bears
08:30 Finding Neverland
10:15 The English Patient
12:50 The Alamo
15:00 When In Rome
16:30 Carjacked



00:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
01:00 It Takes A Killer
01:30 It Takes A Killer
02:00 Cold Case Files
03:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
04:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
05:00 It Takes A Killer
05:30 It Takes A Killer
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 Monster In My Family
11:00 Monster In My Family
12:00 Monster In My Family
13:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
14:00 It Takes A Killer
14:30 It Takes A Killer
15:00 Cold Case Files
16:00 Gangs Of Britain With Gary & Martin Kemp
17:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
18:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
19:00 It Takes A Killer
19:30 It Takes A Killer
20:00 Homicide Hunter
21:00 Cold Case Files
22:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
23:00 Evil Up Close



00:05 Lip Sync Battle
00:30 South Park
00:55 Show Me The Funny
01:45 Tosh.0
02:10 Broad City
02:35 Broad City
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
04:15 Lip Sync Battle
04:40 Ridiculousness
05:05 Disaster Date
05:30 Catch A Contractor
06:20 Bondi Ink
07:15 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
08:05 Disaster Date
08:30 Impractical Jokers
08:55 Ridiculousness
09:20 Key And Peele
09:45 Lip Sync Battle
10:10 Ridiculousness
10:35 Disaster Date
11:00 Coaching Bad
11:50 Disaster Date
12:15 Catch A Contractor
13:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
13:55 Frankenfood
14:20 Frankenfood
14:45 Lip Sync Battle
15:10 Lip Sync Battle
15:35 Ridiculousness Arabia
16:00 Impractical Jokers



CROSSWORD 1719



ACROSS

1. (Brit) A tough youth of 1950's and 1960's wearing Edwardian style clothes.
4. Made uninhabitable.
11. Decapod having eyes on short stalks and a broad flattened carapace with a small abdomen folded under the thorax and pincers.
15. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
16. A genus of Pleuronectidae.
17. A long walk usually for exercise or pleasure.
18. Capital and largest city of Iraq.
20. A distinct part that can be specified separately in a group of things that could be enumerated on a list.
21. Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.
22. In truth (often tends to intensify).
23. (biology) Having branches or flower heads that bend downward.
25. The eleventh month of the civil year.
26. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
29. Horny plate covering and protecting part of the dorsal surface of the digits.
30. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
32. An artistic form of nonverbal communication.
34. Date used in reckoning dates before the supposed year Christ was born.
37. A body of poetry that conveys the traditions of a society by treating some epic theme.
39. An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
42. Relating to bees or beekeeping.
46. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
48. (Greek mythology) Goddess of wisdom and useful arts and prudent warfare.
49. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
51. Remote city of Kazakhstan that (ostensibly for security reasons) was made the capital in 1998.
53. Marked by skill in deception.
54. A state in midwestern United States.
55. Liquid containing proteins and electrolytes including the liquid in blood plasma and interstitial fluid.
57. Register formally.
60. A peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.
62. Stem of the rattan palm used for making canes and umbrella handles.
65. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
68. An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
69. The compass point that is one point east of due south.
71. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
72. Bar temporarily.
73. Wood of a sumac.
78. Type genus of the Aceraceae.
79. Informal terms for a mother.
80. A mark left by the healing of injured tissue.
81. The arch of bone beneath the eye that forms the prominence of the cheek.
82. Double star 15.7 light years from Earth.
83. A small cake leavened with yeast.

DOWN

1. A sock with a separation for the big toe.
2. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
3. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
4. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
5. Having or covered with a lid or lids.
6. Before noon.
7. An island in the southern Mariana Islands that is the administrative center of the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.
8. Explosive consisting of a yellow crystalline compound that is a flammable toxic derivative of toluene.
9. Any place of complete bliss and delight and peace.
10. The friend of Phintias who pledged his life that Phintias would return (4th century BC).
11. A family of Afroasiatic tonal languages (mostly two tones) spoken in the regions west and south of Lake Chad in north central Africa.
12. Brightest star in Centaurus.
13. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
14. A large mass of ice floating at sea.
19. The act of devising something.
24. A Chadik language spoken south of Lake Chad.
27. An informal term for a father.
28. One millionth of a gram.
31. Strike with disgust or revulsion.
33. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
35. An artificial language intended for international use as an auxiliary language.
36. An advantageous purchase.
38. Containing an unusual amount of grease or oil.
40. The cry made by sheep.
41. 100 agorot equal 1 shekel.
43. A wheeled vehicle adapted to the rails of railroad.
44. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
45. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
47. Of or related to the amnion or characterized by developing an amnion.
50. The academic world.
52. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
56. The sixth day of the week.
58. A member of the Dravidian people living in southern India.
59. A person holding a fief.
61. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
63. Any of several tall tropical palms native to southeastern Asia having egg-shaped nuts.
64. A brief description given for purposes of identification.
66. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
67. All the plant life in a particular region.
70. The act of hitting a baseball lightly without swinging the bat.
74. American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
75. 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
76. A state-chartered savings bank owned by its depositors and managed by a board of trustees.
77. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Co-workers may want to know more than you are willing to contribute. You may have a tendency to avoid sensitive subjects and take refuge in duties and responsibilities rather than face issues that are shallow. You enjoy the practical and the truthful. This is a good time to launch a public-relations campaign to advance your career—you can be a good politician. Certainly, a time of progress and stability has begun. It is also a good time to be more involved in education, as a student or teacher. Either way, you will be learning. Recalculating the budget brings good news! There are many rewards for being thrifty. This afternoon there is an opportunity for you to perform a special favor for a friend that seldom receives favors.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You could find yourself working overtime today—you have a lot of energy to pour into a work project. You may appear commanding and assertive—whatever the mood—this is the time to push ahead. Breakthroughs in your career could open up during this time—making it possible for you to solve problems and find new opportunities to move forward and upward in your career. This evening you will be moved to appreciate and discover the beauty in your life—perhaps a sunset, a baby animal or a child—and the beauty in those around you. At the same time, everything takes on added value. Be careful that you do not overspend or indulge too much just now. Enjoy the simple things in life and teach your loved ones to do the same. Un-complicate your life.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

The issue this day seems to be in how you will live in your body if you do not take better care of it. Conversations about diet, nutrition, etc., can be easily begun. You may strive to learn about nutrition and good health. Exercise is important—avoid over-exertion. Have fun as you work and as you play—you will encourage others in this game of life. This afternoon a shopping expedition shows off your excellent taste. You could be an expert in all matters of art and discrimination. You can always pick out the valuable and worthwhile. You appreciate all that is fine and beautiful. You will charm an older person this evening with your fascinating stories and theories. Later this evening there is a chance to have some special time with a loved one.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Outer circumstances are favorable and it should be easy for you to push toward new projects in all aspects of your life. Life may seem almost magical in the way situations work out in your favor. There is time to begin a plan to become better organized on the home front. Good fortune and plain old luck surround you today. It is easy for you to make correct decisions, find the right path and move forward where community concerns are in question. Politics would not be out of the question for you. There is a burning zeal for humanitarian goals, what is best for the many, in the community. With little patience for detail and superficialities, you insist on getting right to the heart of any question. People will come to depend on your strength and wisdom.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There is an instinctive urge to get serious about taking care of your health at many levels. You may have tried a multitude of methods to get your body into the shape you desire. However, now it is time to settle on one method and stick to it. Many methods work—however, the secret to your success is consistency. Others value you for your ability to make practical decisions—now it is time to have faith in the decisions you make. This is a very nice day, perhaps filled with some renewed appreciation for all that is beautiful and fine. You might feel love or value for an older person. You have a sense of value and valuing that may find you lavishing affection on those near you. General good feeling and a sense of support makes this a happy time.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A deliberate sense of responsibility comes across today. This sense of responsibility is central to your personality and the way you relate to other people. Everything is run through your checkpoint to see if it holds up and can pass the test—you can be a stickler for details. Try now to break up old habits and get out of ruts, etc. You may feel very passionate at this time, or you could feel that your feelings, emotions and basic life urges undergo change and possible transformation. You feel more personal and direct and find that you waste less time with hurt feelings than before. There is a sense of support and goodwill from those around you. You work well with others. Young people in your work group amuse you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Take a deep cleansing breath—this is going to be a day where you need to put extra effort into thinking things through to the long-term. You have a yearning to reach for what seems to be the impossible. There is a kind of spiritual wanderlust that takes center stage. Law, politics, education, travel and religion are some of the areas where an emotionally charged drama occurs. A bit of a rebellious urge within you presents an emotional challenge. You may have to resist attempts to divert your drive and energy in directions that will take you nowhere. You become more focused than ever! You can dispense now with all that is unsound and move in a most positive and determined direction. This evening is good for soothing music.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Deep and penetrating analysis, particularly with a group or in relation to your situation may be in order now. Others could seek you out for your understanding. You could be teaching a class in personal development. This could also be a time to make changes in your work environment. Others value you for your independence and unique qualities. You will not have difficulty in getting recognition for your efforts or accomplishments. You should, however, place your efforts into work or ventures that you really love doing. Career insights are possible. You might discover that unconventional solutions to life's problems are in order as well. You and your friends enjoy each other's company this evening—bingo perhaps.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

The main focus today is on the manner in which you handle responsibilities in the workplace. You are also likely to fall into a greater position of authority. You make progress in your profession—an increase in stability. Ideals and a sense of belonging become a greater focus in your life at this time. You attach a lot of importance to friendship and taking part in group activities that center on idealistic goals. Someone you care about—a child or lover, perhaps—may be a cause for concern. Self-control and setting limits are important in love and other games of chance; think long-term and be realistic in your approach to these things. Careful—there is a possibility of overindulgence in whatever you become interested in just now.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You could be the main attraction today, especially in relation to your work. You may find that you enjoy your job or the responsibility it entails. Independence, as well as anything unusual or different, is valued. You may enjoy getting away from routine and doing something completely different after work today. You could be entering a phase of changing or creating habits, which may be a good way to delve into something different. Good habits bring us everything we want but bad ones can turn our lives into a mess. You are wise to take the time to write down some of what you want to change in yourself, with regard to habits. This could involve eating, exercising, being on time, etc. Write down some new habits you would like to create.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You find ways to broaden your horizons—both intellectually and spiritually. Education, publishing, broadcasting, legal and political interests as well as advertising offer wonderful opportunities just now. Making suggestions for solving problems can make a big difference in your professional status. You may not be the creator of an advertisement or a play, but you will give ideas to others that can benefit the business for which you work. Rewards are in the making. Assimilating information and experience, learning lessons and putting them into practice—these are the main focus this afternoon. It's a time for prudence and stewardship and tending to the details. Make it a point to really listen to your loved ones this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You can really communicate and express yourself to others right now. You have a lot of energy and come across as assertive and dominant. Conflict between time at home and time on the job may cause you to stop and rethink your purpose for working so hard. If the pay is not beneficial for the time away from loved ones, it is time to reassess. Encourage, praise and support your loved ones often. You will be pleasantly surprised at what happens in return. Check out the balance of your week and ask yourself if everything, including you, gets a fair share of your time. It could be time for some adjustments. Circumstances may conspire to limit and hinder your sense of independence. Loved ones are able to help with errands this evening—just ask.

WORD SEARCH

Summer Olympics

Find and circle all of the Summer Olympic events that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.

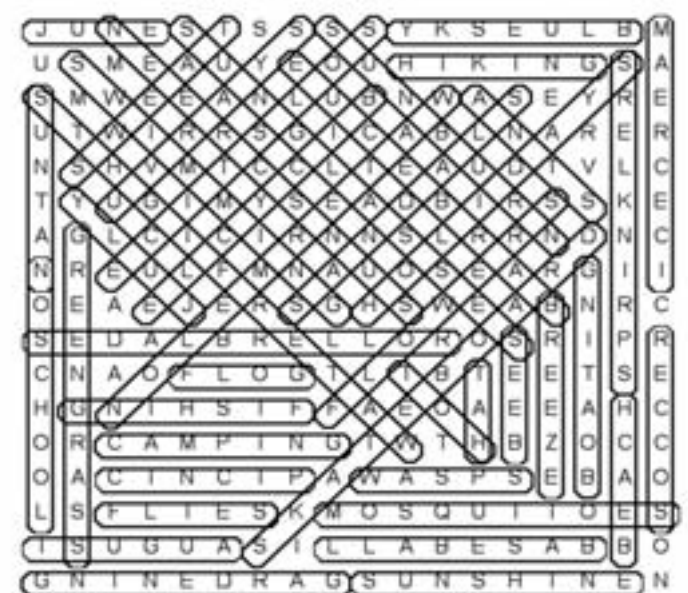
Note: Similarly named events are hidden separately. For example, SWIMMING and SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING do not overlap.



- |                  |                       |               |
|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| ARCHERY          | FOOTBALL              | TABLE TENNIS  |
| ATHLETICS        | GYMNASTICS            | TAEKWONDO     |
| BADMINTON        | HANDBALL              | TENNIS        |
| BASEBALL         | HOCKEY                | TRAMPOLINING  |
| BASKETBALL       | JUDO                  | TRIATHLON     |
| BEACH VOLLEYBALL | MODERN PENTATHLON     | VOLLEYBALL    |
| BOXING           | RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS   | WATER POLO    |
| CANOEING         | ROWING                | WEIGHTLIFTING |
| CYCLING          | SHOOTING              | WRESTLING     |
| DIVING           | SOFTBALL              | YACHTING      |
| EQUESTRIANISM    | SWIMMING              |               |
| FENCING          | SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING |               |

Yesterday's Solution

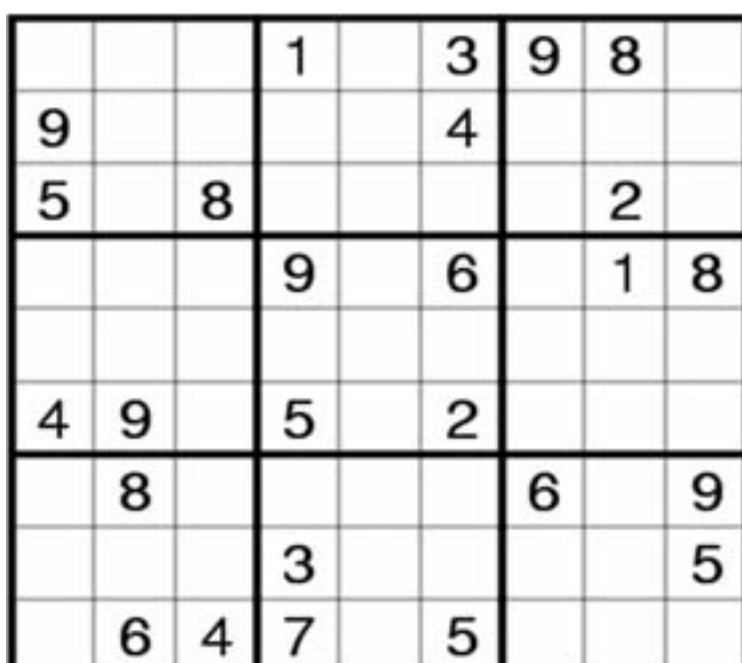
Summer



- |          |             |               |              |
|----------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| ANTS     | FISHING     | JULY          | SUNBURN      |
| AUGUST   | FLIES       | JUNE          | SUNGLASSES   |
| BARBECUE | FLOWERS     | MOSQUITOES    | SUNSCREEN    |
| BASEBALL | GARDENING   | NO SCHOOL     | SUNSHINE     |
| BEACH    | GOLF        | PICNIC        | SUNTAN       |
| BEES     | GREEN GRASS | ROLLER BLADES | SWEAT        |
| BICYCLE  | HAY         | SANDALS       | SWIMMING     |
| BLUE SKY | HIKING      | SKATEBOARD    | U V RAYS     |
| BOATING  | HOLIDAYS    | SOCCER        | WASPS        |
| BREEZE   | HOT         | SOLSTICE      | WATER FIGHTS |
| CAMPING  | ICE CREAM   | SPRINKLERS    | WATERMELON   |

The hidden message is: SUMMER VACATION

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution

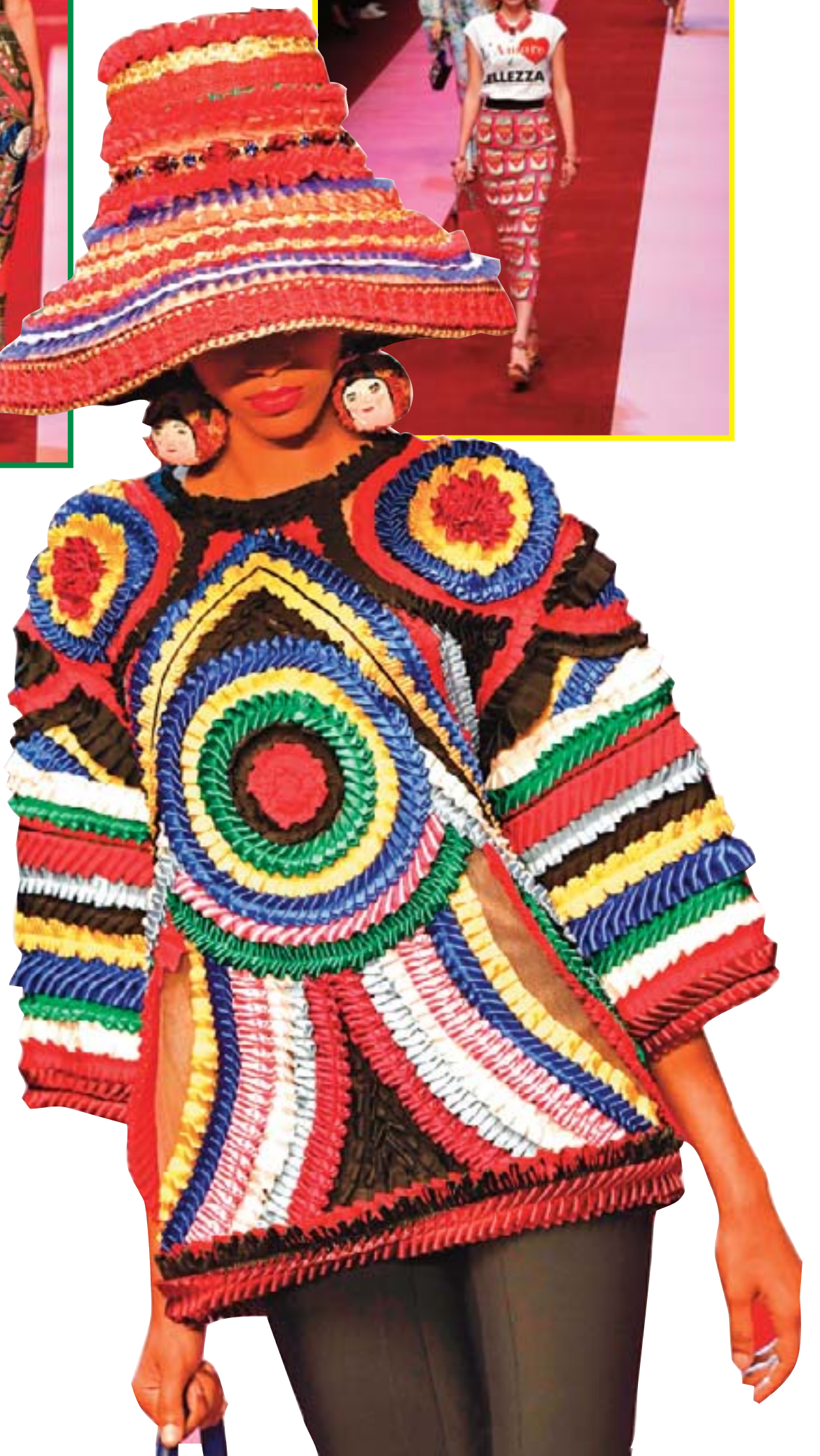
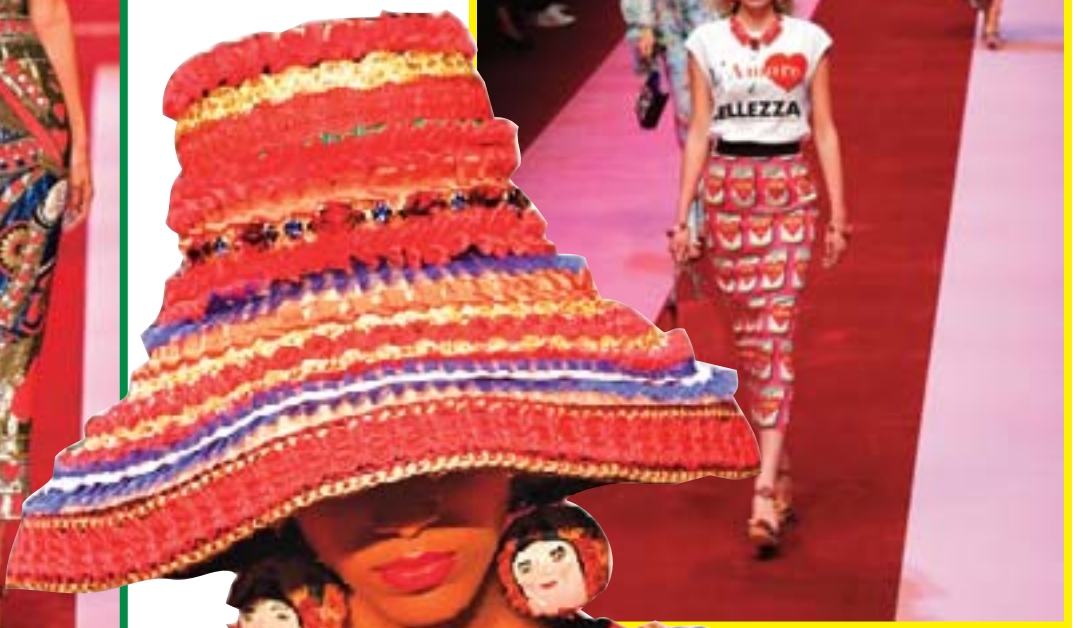








# Dolce & Gabbana court youth with offbeat looks in Milan



Milan designers are breathing fresh air into Milan Fashion Week, quite literally. Many fashion houses are showing their collections outdoors this season, or at least throwing open the windows on their grand palazzi venues, betting on Mother Nature with open-air shows. The late summer-early fall weather has cooperated fully. Here are some highlights from Milan as previews for next spring and summer's womenswear collections mark their fifth and penultimate day on Sunday:

famously wore to a summit in Sicily. Could the message be that there is a queen - or first lady - in everyone? While Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana maintained their pact to supply the world with sexy dresses for day and evening, they also gave the collection some decidedly off-beat touches. The Melania floral jacket, for example, was worn over a vegetable print dress that is unlikely to attract the First Lady's eye for clean lines.

### Shades of Melania at Dolce&Gabbana

There was something for everyone on Dolce&Gabbana's "Queen of Hearts" runway - even an elaborate, colorful applique jacket reminiscent of the \$51,000 number that Melania Trump



FASHION



**Dolce&Gabbana go offbeat**

Dolce&Gabbana's Queen of Hearts was a central theme for the season, appearing in its most elaborate version in heavily bejeweled dresses or as brightly sequined tops and leggings. But prints featuring vegetables, Sicilian deserts or animals of the savannah certainly competed for billing - paired with funky eyewear featuring fringe or tiny jeweled hands or ornamental earrings shaped like eggplants or holiday decorations.

In a more unusual turn for the designers, a wrap dress with an abstract print was paired with yellow tights with oversized blue polka dots - a more eccentric, or perhaps just more youthful, combo than usual Dolce&Gabbana look. It suggests the designers are taking some cues from the Millennials who have packed their front rows in recent season. A raffia weave top in primary colors definitely fits the duo's Sicily vibe, but a rainbow weave corset over a matching diaphanous evening gown had Harlequin feel that veered toward costume.



Models accept applause at the end of the Dolce & Gabbana women's Spring/Summer 2018/19 fashion collection, presented in Milan, Italy, Sunday. — AFP/AP photos



An office worker changes her footwear from high-heeled to flat shoes outside her office in Makati, Manila's financial district. — AFP

## Philippines bans compulsory high heels in workplace

**MANILA:** The Philippines has banned companies from compelling women to wear high heels to work under a government order hailed by a labor group yesterday as a victory against sexism and pain. The labor department order took effect on Sunday as the government took up the cudgels for long-suffering shopping mall clerks, hotel receptionists and flight attendants.

Employers should implement the use of "practical and comfortable footwear" to improve the health of workers who stand for long periods, said the order, which applies to heels measuring 2.54-centimeters or higher unless the employee chooses to wear them. "It's a form of torture. It's a form of oppression and slavery. Imagine having to endure that pain for eight to 10 hours a day," Alan Tanjusay, spokesman for the Associated Labor Unions, said.

"It's also a form of sexism because culturally employers say women wearing high heels look taller and sexier and are then more attractive, more effective in selling products. They don't know the women are suffering." The department order said female sales clerks and security guards who

had been compelled to work in high heels suffered from sore feet, aching muscles and "hazardous" pressure on joints.

"These (work shoes) should not pinch the feet or toes; are well-fitted and non-slip; provide adequate cushion and support to the arch of the feet; either flat or with low heels that must be wide-based or wedge type," it said. The labor department also ordered companies to give these workers rest periods or seats to reduce the time they spend standing or walking. Tanjusay said unions lobbied the labor department last month following complaints from saleswomen, hotel receptionists and flight attendants.

Malls are a mainstay in the Southeast Asian nation, mainly employing women as sales clerks, cashiers and so-called "promo girls". Most of these women are short-term contract workers, Tanjusay said. Under the department order female workers can still wear high heels if they prefer them, Tanjusay added. — AFP



## ROBOTIC FASHION: WEAR YOUR HEARTBEAT ON YOUR SLEEVE

**D**utch designer Anouk Wipprecht has a vision for a world in which people stop telling themselves little lies about their emotions-and she believes high-tech fashion is the key. Her creations, which combine digital technology with haute couture, play with social norms and aim to engineer a cold-turkey solution to our dearest deceptions, she told AFP on the sidelines of Milan Fashion Week. The 32-year-old has already seen her stuff worn by former Black Eyed Peas star Fergie during a performance at American football extravaganza the Super Bowl. She has also created 3-D printed outfits for Canadian super troupe Cirque du Soleil.

Yet one of her most deviously disruptive designs is a piece she is developing with crystal-maker Swarovski that uses built-in sensors to blink in time with the wearer's heart beat. It sounds simple, and maybe even poetic to put one's vital force on display, but it also is incredibly revealing. Imagine wearing the thing while talking to a special someone you'd like to be more than just friends with or how about a job interview? They'll be able to see that your heart is pounding with fear or excitement.

"It's sort of almost like you are having goosebumps, you cannot control it or you start to be red in your face. So in a really pure sense, you are able to broadcast your emotions," she said. "If you are wearing your heartbeat on your sleeve it is a really pure thing. It also gets you in a lot of really awkward situations that for me are super interesting." This fascination with where human behaviour and digital couture meet has already led Wipprecht to conjure similarly striking experiments. One of the most famous is called, appropriately enough, the "Spider Dress". The 3-D printed garment is topped with a collar that is studded with robotic spider legs.

### Clothes with brain and heartbeat

The legs jump out, or "attack" as Wipprecht says, when someone moves too far into the wearer's personal space. Yet, after showing off the dress in Europe, China and the United States she has made some interesting discoveries. "People in the Netherlands, they go very fast, very close by, while in America they are more gentlemen... they stand further away," she said. "I sometimes need to push people into the person's space a little bit... because they really have the notion of respect." Her journey to a creator's life, lived mostly in New York and California's Silicon Valley, started early for Wipprecht.

She was about 14 years old when she fell in love with fashion because it's "expressive and you can communicate with it" and began to study design. Then came her discovery of robotics.

"For me the robots had basically a brain and a heartbeat. That's what I wanted my fabrics and garments to have," she said. In the mid-2000s when she was still strapping big computers to the body, she discovered the so-called Arduino community. Named for a bar where its founders met in the northern Italian town of Ivrea, Arduino is an open source computer hardware and software company. But it is also a collection of people who use its kits to build their own digital devices, like Wipprecht.

She is optimistic that her work will one day lead to a ready-to-wear collection coming down the catwalk, but at the moment she is focused on pushing boundaries. "The things I do are out there to provoke and to be more experimental," she said. "If we would all just make dresses that light up and change color it would be super... boring." — AFP



FEATURES

# The waste-collecting cyclists who caught the UN's eye

Putting an end to the unnecessary burning of biodegradable waste, one restaurant at a time, has become the forceful mission of a team of French cyclists. Their creative initiative, which relies largely on volunteers, has even impressed the United Nations. La Tricyclerie, a neat play on the French words for sorting out rubbish, recycling and biking, turns vegetable, coffee, and other organic waste into compost.

Coordinator Valentine Vilboux, 29, travels on her electric bicycle to restaurants in the western city of Nantes, collecting peels otherwise destined for the bin. "It's simple; we take everything, even the eggshells and citrus fruits. Everything apart from bread, meat and fish," she says. "It's a lot! It proves the food is fresh and homemade," she says, of one cafe after weighing out 20 kilos (44 pounds) of vegetable peels. Launched at the end of 2015 with just eight restaurants on board, the anti-waste tour has grown to include 23 restaurants and nine businesses, catching the attention of the United Nations.

La Tricyclerie and its founder Coline Billon, 26, are one of 12 world finalists, whittled down from 2,400 candidates, for the UN's "Young Champions of the Earth" competition. The prize, to be awarded in November, is \$15,000 (12,500 euros). "It's very rewarding, even if you don't feel like you've invented something incredible," said Vilboux.

### Black gold

While paper and glass recycling is becoming automatic to many, biodegradable waste generally ends up in landfill or incinerators in France. This "black gold" could serve as fertilizer for farmers once it's been composted, and currently represents a third of French household rubbish. Salad bar manager Colette Marghier wanted to join the scheme, even though



there is no legal obligation to separate biodegradable rubbish. "At the start, I had some doubts about the sorting but it's easy and it doesn't disrupt the service at all," she said.

Fellow restaurant manager Guenole Clequin said: "It's simple and very effective. We can see how much used to be thrown away." La Tricyclerie, which has two paid staff and about 10 volunteer collectors on bikes, receives a financial contribution of 40 euros per month and an annual membership fee of 50 euros from each business. "A real community with the

restaurants has built up around the reduction of rubbish and the creation of compost—we are real environmental actors," said one of the volunteers, Pierre Briand, stirring smoking compost.

Cyclists call at each restaurant twice a week to pick up the waste. The compost is redistributed free of charge to community gardens or to students of the Nantes horticultural school. La Tricyclerie, which collects around 1.5 tons of waste a month, has set itself an objective of reducing the volume of restaurant food waste in the city by 40 percent. And the impact could

spread out of town. The initiative has already been contacted by interested individuals in the southern French city of Perpignan, the Belgian capital Brussels, and the Indian Ocean island of La Reunion. "It's a little drop, but the potential is enormous," Vilboux said confidently. — AFP



Books by Elena Ferrante are displayed in a bookstore in Rome. — AFP

## STORIES BEHIND THE MASK: WRITERS AND THEIR NAMES

From George Eliot to John le Carré, writers reaching out for the disguise or anonymity offered by a pseudonym is nothing new in the literary world. But the phenomenon has been put back in the spotlight by Italian publishing sensation Elena Ferrante's assiduous efforts to keep her real identity a secret, at a time when new reasons are emerging for publishing from behind a mask. For Ferrante, who was reported last year to have been outed as Rome-based literary translator Anita Raja, anonymity was a choice; born of a desire to avoid the pitfalls of celebrity and a conviction that "books, once written, have no need of their authors".

Some of her predecessors did not have that luxury. Alberto Moravia, author of "The Woman of Rome" and one of the greatest figures in 20th Century Italian literature, was born Alberto Pincherle. He opted to drop his Jewish family name as part of his efforts to escape censorship and persecution at the hands of Benito Mussolini's 1922-1943 fascist regime. Natalia Ginzburg's first novel, published during the fascist period, appeared under the name of Alessandra Tornimparte and Giorgio Bassani became Giacomo Marchi for similar reasons, journalist Mario Baudino recounts in his recently published, "Lei non sa chi sono io" ("You don't know who I am").

That was literally the case for the judges of France's top literary prize, the Goncourt, when, in 1975, they awarded it to Emile Ajar for "The Life Before Us", unaware that Ajar was actually a pseudonym for writer Romain Gary. The latter had already won the prestigious award, in 1956 for "The Roots of Heaven", and, under the Goncourt's rules, was excluded from getting it again.

### Real-life spy

Gary got round that problem by getting a young cousin to pretend to be Ajar a subterfuge that was only definitively revealed to the world with the publication of "The Life and Death of Emile Ajar", an essay written before the writer shot himself in his Paris flat in 1980. It was not the only time Gary, a World War II pilot, a diplomat and filmmaker as well as writer, managed to hoodwink the literary establishment. Capable of writing equally well in French and English, he would translate his texts himself under other pseudonyms.

He even occasionally published as Romain Kacew, the name he was born with. "I've had a lot of fun. Goodbye and thanks," was how he signed off his posthumously published farewell note to the world. "Romain Gary used pseudonyms partly out of his taste for provocation but also because he had the literary concept of the 'total novel' in

which the author is a character in his own book," Baudino told AFP. Gary was a case apart but the journalist found many recurring themes in the stories of writers and their alternative monickers.

Le Carré was adopted when the real-life David Cornwell began writing his spy thrillers while still active in Britain's M16 intelligence agency. Algeria's Mohammed Moulessehouli, who began writing when he was an army officer, published under his wife's name Yasmina Khadra to avoid military censorship, only revealing his true identity when he moved to France. "And there have been many writers who have been exposed like Ferrante," says Baudino.

### Rejected manuscript

Stephen King, the American master of horror, was a famous example, having eventually been revealed as being the creative force behind the seven novels of a certain Richard Bachman. Prodigiously productive, King adopted the pseudonym to sidestep his publisher's requirement that he release no more than one book per year under his own name. And he also wanted to know whether his success was down to his talent, or the good fortune of having got the breaks that made him an established name: he got a sort of answer when sales of the Bachman books surged following his unmasking.

Nobel literature prize winner Doris Lessing tried something similar when she gave her agent a work under the name Jane Somers: her own publisher rejected the manuscript. "The choice of a pseudonym is never completely random," said Baudino, explaining how Henri Beyle became the 19th Century French literary giant Stendhal to distance himself from his hated father. A few decades earlier, a similar desire to escape the clutches of family led a certain Francois-Marie Arouet to publish under the name Voltaire. A trend reflecting the prevailing sexism of the time saw many accomplished female writers publish their work under masculine names: George Eliot's real name was Mary Ann Evans, George Sand was Aurore Dupin and the Bronte sisters were first published as Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell.

Lately, partly because of female readers becoming more important to the market for new writing, there has been a trend towards gender neutral pen names. Thriller writer Tom Knox (real name Sean Thomas) opted for SK Tremayne when he turned to family-based drama, while JK Rowling famously opted for initials on the Harry Potter books for fear her first name, Joanne, would put boys off reading them. — AFP

## Cape Town gallery showcasing modern African art opens



A woman gestures at the sculpture garden on the top floor of the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art in Cape Town.



Visitors look at a sculpture by South African artist Nicholas Hlobo in the main hall of the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art.

Africa's largest museum dedicated to the continent's contemporary art opened to the public in Cape Town on Friday, becoming the region's most significant new cultural space in decades. The Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa is housed in a clutch of abandoned grain silos at the V&A Waterfront that have been transformed with honeycomb lattice windows reflecting the ocean and Table Mountain. Its main backer is Jochen Zeitz, a former chief executive of sportswear company Puma, and many of the museum's pieces are from his personal collection.

"Some of the greatest talents in visual arts come from Africa and what a privilege it is for me to support these artists... Today is one of the high points of my

life," he said at the opening. Anti-apartheid icon, former Archbishop Desmond Tutu blessed the opening ceremony and the South African Youth choir sang and danced to mark the event. "It's just so fantastic. This beautiful, beautiful art museum," said Tutu, 85, who also danced with the choir.

"You warm the cockles of my heart—and I don't know what cockles are. Thank you all of you who have made this creation possible!" Cape Town mayor Patricia De Lille called for art lovers worldwide to add the museum to their bucket lists. "From the Cape to Cairo we are all Africans... this today is the confidence that the world is showing in Africa," she said. The journey to this week's opening began over a decade ago when the owners of the V&A Waterfront, a popular tourist

and shopping destination, set out to rejuvenate a neglected corner of the harbor.

At stake was the future of the hulking grain elevator made up of 118 separate storage compartments that had long since fallen into disuse and filled with pigeon droppings. After years of extensive remodeling, the silos themselves are now a work of art, their bare concrete cylinders contrasting starkly with the geometric, glass-clad office blocks nearby. "They were filled with quantities of pigeon poo that I've never seen in my life... There were square tubes, round tubes, cruciform tubes, all to store grain," said architect Thomas Heatherwick. — AFP

## The 9th annual Surf City Surf Dog event



Surf dog Samson rides a wave in the Small Dog event during the 9th annual Surf City Surf Dog event.



Surf dog Skyler rides the nose as she competes in the Tandem event.



Surf dog Jojo the Corgi rides a wave in her heat of the Medium Dog event.



Surf dog Derby and owner Kentucky Gallahue wait to compete in the tandem event.



Surf dog Cherie rides a wave in her heat of the Medium Dog event.



## MOVIE

## J.Lo donates \$1mn to hurricane-hit Puerto Rico

Pop star and actress Jennifer Lopez on Sunday offered \$1 million for Puerto Rico as she helped launch an effort by New York state to support the hurricane-battered US island. Lopez, born in New York City to Puerto Rican parents, said she was donating the money to assorted charities and would work with fellow Latin stars to do more after Hurricane Maria killed at least 33 people in Puerto Rico and Dominica just after the devastation of mega-storm Irma. "This was the strongest hurricane to hit Puerto Rico in nearly 20 years and the damage is horrible," Lopez told a news conference with New York Governor Andrew Cuomo.

"We urgently need to dedicate attention and support to Puerto Rico and the Caribbean through donations and

any help," she said in Spanish. Lopez, who is dating baseball legend Alex Rodriguez, said the couple were working with athletes to arrange two aircraft to deliver supplies. New York-based airline JetBlue also promised \$1 million in-kind by transporting people and cargo for relief efforts. Lopez was named co-chair of a New York state initiative to assist Puerto Rico, which will include public donation centers and government monitoring for potential abuses in aid solicitation.

The initiative comes two days after Cuomo visited Puerto Rico with donations that included 34,000 bottles of water and 9,600 ready-to-eat meals. New York has historically been a hub for Puerto Ricans who move to the mainland United States. More than 700,000 residents of New

York City identify as Puerto Rican, along with nearly as many people elsewhere in the state, according to non-governmental studies.

"We know how much destruction has been done, and how hard it is going to be to rebuild Puerto Rico," Cuomo said. "We also know that given the financial pressures that the island was under before, it makes the task even more difficult," he said. — AFP

This file photo shows Jennifer Lopez attending the 'World of Dance Celebration' in Los Angeles, California. — AFP



Kesha, left, and Macklemore perform at the 2017 iHeartRadio Music Festival Day 2 held at T-Mobile Arena on Saturday in Las Vegas. — AP

## Macklemore gets back to the fun on solo 'Gemini'

It feels wrong to say Macklemore's latest solo album, "Gemini," is better than "This Unruly Mess I've Made," his 2016 project released alongside longtime collaborator Ryan Lewis. For goodness' sake, "This Unruly Mess I've Made" saw Macklemore reflecting on important issues: dissecting white privilege, addressing police brutality, confronting the music industry. But the end result was neither fun nor easy to listen to, and, quite simply, "Gemini" is. That's thanks in no small part to a long list of the new set's featured guests, whose good-time vibes seem to put Macklemore back in the space that gave way to his and Lewis' 2012 smash single "Thrift Shop."

Undoubtedly, that Grammy Award-winning song is the one that put Macklemore "in Obama's iPod" as the rapper boasts on the delightfully off-kilter "Gemini" track "Willy Wonka," featuring Migos rapper Offset. There's the sticky sweet "Marmalade" featuring Lil Yachty, with its "Chopsticks"-esque piano and playful lyrics. Then there's the electric funk boogie of "Levitate" featuring Seattle-based newcomer Otieno Terry. "I pulled up in that purple thang/ dressed like Prince in 'Purple Rain,'" Macklemore raps.

Even Macklemore's ruminating is limited to lighter fare, like on the guitar-driven "Intentions," where he runs down a laundry list of to-dos he's been falling short on. "I wake up in the morning, first thing I do is look at a screen. I should read a book, but I keep watching this TV," he raps, adding, "I want world peace, but still want to watch Worldstar." (We can presume he's there for the fight videos.)

So as it turns out, Macklemore is, indeed, a regular dude. One who misses his youth, as on the starchy, piano-driven "Good Old Days" featuring Kesha. He's a guy who notices when his ex deletes photos from Instagram "like history didn't happen if we can't see it," as he raps on "Over It" featuring singer Donna Missal. And he's a dad who's proud of his kid: "Hearing her sing along to Chance (the Rapper)/and being like, 'yeah, that's my kid,'" he raps on "Excavate" featuring Saint Claire. This time around, Macklemore may have stayed away from the heavy messages. But with everything going on in the world, some fans might say "Gemini" is the perfect feel-good distraction. — AP



In this file photo, Sarah Jessica Parker attends the Broadway opening night of "Hamilton" in New York. — AP

## Airbnb launches local tours in NYC with Sarah Jessica Parker

Airbnb is launching local tours and other experiences in New York City this week, with one listing promising "an unforgettable shoe-shopping experience" led by a New Yorker whose bio describes her as "an actor, producer, businesswoman ... and a proud New Yorker." That host is Sarah Jessica Parker. Each participant will get a pair of shoes from her SJP Collection at Bloomingdale's, with a stop at the department store's Forty Carrots cafe for frozen yogurt before the guests head off to the ballet. The listing for Parker's Oct 6 experience will go live today morning, with four spaces bookable at \$400 each, first come, first served. The money will go to the New York City Ballet, where Parker is a board member.

Parker said in a phone interview with The Associated Press that she gave a lot of thought to making sure that her tour "speaks to the very colorful identity that is New York. We could have

gone to MOMA or the Whitney or walked through Chinatown or certainly had a nice walk on the High Line or just strolled the streets of the East Village or Midtown East." She decided on Bloomingdale's because it's "an iconic destination" where she hopes to "be of service" in helping her guests pick out the perfect footwear.

The ballet, she added, is "one of the great cultural experiences anybody can have" in New York, whether they live here or are visiting. Parker's listing is one of several Airbnb "social impact experiences" being offered in New York by celebrities for charity. Others include former NFL player Michael Strahan taking guests golfing at Chelsea Piers to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and actor Ansel Elgort leading a visit to his Brooklyn neighborhood to benefit AmeriCares hurricane relief efforts.

Airbnb has been offering experiences in other cities since November as part of a larger "trips"

platform. It's now in 40 markets worldwide, including Barcelona, Havana and Tokyo. A handful of New York experiences have been listed since March, all in Harlem, but the trips rollout this week will expand to 150 experiences city-wide, from "secrets of the subway" to a walk through New York's "tattoo history."

Prices for experiences in other markets range from under \$10 to more than \$100, depending on location and what's offered. Hosts get 80 percent of the fee, Airbnb the rest, except for the social impact experiences, where 100 percent goes to charity. Fans of the HBO series "Sex and the City," which Parker starred in, still seek out places around New York where the show was filmed. — AP



In this file photo, Czech actor Jan Triska attends a press conference during Febio film festival in Prague, Czech Republic. — AP

## 'Ronin' actor Jan Triska dies after Prague bridge fall

Czech-American actor Jan Triska has died at the age of 80 after falling off Prague's historic Charles Bridge, Czech media reported yesterday. Triska fell off the bridge on Saturday and was rescued from the Vltava river by two tourists on a boat but died in hospital on Sunday, according to the website of the DNES daily. Czech firefighters said he had jumped while emergency services said the fall was accidental.

Triska, who played the sniper who shot Larry Flynt in compatriot Milos Forman's 1996 "The People vs Larry Flynt", and the Russian gunman in John Frankenheimer's "Ronin" in 1998, was born in the former Czechoslovakia in 1936. A close friend of former Czech anti-Communist dissident and later president Vaclav Havel, the popular actor emigrated from Communist Czechoslovakia to the United States in 1977. His films were then banned from local cinemas and TV screens until the fall of communism in 1989. Besides his Hollywood roles, Triska starred in several Czech films after 1989, including the Oscar-nominated "The Elementary School" in 1991. — AFP

## 'Victoria & Abdul' illuminates only half the title



In this image released by Focus Features, Judi Dench, from left, Ali Fazal and Tim Pigott-Smith appear in a scene from "Victoria and Abdul." — AP photos



In this image released by Focus Features, Judi Dench, right, and Ali Fazal appear in a scene from "Victoria and Abdul."

Stop us if this sounds familiar: A tall, dark, bearded servant of rough breeding comes from far away to suddenly charm a grumpy, widowed Queen Victoria and thus upend Britain's royal court at the turn of the 20th century. You were perhaps thinking of the film "Mrs. Brown," starring Judi Dench as the monarch and Bill Connolly as her Scottish underling, John Brown? Well, hold on. A new movie has come along exactly 20 years later with an eerily similar plot. Either Victoria was a creature of habit in her attachments or her filmmakers are.

Substitute Connolly with Ali Fazal and you get "Victoria & Abdul," a film about the then-most powerful woman on earth's second unusually intimate relationship with a commoner. In this case, a Muslim from India in 1887. Fascinatingly, Dench is back as the monarch, two decades after she played Victoria and earned an Oscar nomination for it. It's a privilege to watch her revisit the crusty, we-are-not-amused queen, who is now in the twilight of her life. Dench is riveting, unsentimental, impatient and gloriously brittle. Sometimes all she does is offer an irritated sigh, speaking volumes. "Everyone I loved has died and I just go on and on," she cries.

Dench is well supported - the cast includes the marvelous Eddie Izzard, the late Tim Pigott-Smith and the imperious Michael Gambon - and the pomp and highly choreographed English ceremonialism is captured beautifully by director Stephen Frears, who knows a thing or two about royalty, having directed Helen Mirren in "The Queen." Much of this film is composed of stuffy royal banquets with hundreds of servants scurrying about or soaring landscapes with hundreds of servants scurrying around. There's only one major problem: The man

at the center, Abdul Karim. He remains a blank canvas, his motives unexplored, his interior or domestic life uncaptured. He is called "the brown John Brown" and offers no riposte. The title of the film promises us two people but we only get one.

### 'Magical Negroes'

Perhaps screenwriter Lee Hall ("War Horse," "Billy Elliot") meant to leave him a cypher, allowing the English to try to define him, but that's being generous. It's hard to leave this film and not think that Spike Lee's concept of "magical Negroes" needs to be expanded for other people of color. The movie is based on journalist Shrabani Basu's book "Victoria & Abdul: The True Story of the Queen's Closest Confidant," which told of Victoria's close friendship with an Indian servant sent to the court with the sole task of offering a gift of a ceremonial coin. The filmmakers have taken factual liberties - the film is "based on real events... mostly," which is very cute but meaningless.

Fazal's Karim smiles a lot, seems absolutely enchanted by English weather and, at their second meeting, without provocation, prostrates himself to kiss Victoria's feet. Why? He thought it would "cheer her up." What does Karim think of colonialism, of English state-sponsored brutality toward his people? We never know. "It is my humble privilege to serve Her Majesty," he says. Later, he puts on his best Forrest Gump to tell the queen that "Life is like a carpet." He means that all kinds of things are woven into our fabric but he really comes off as no more than a doormat. (At least Connolly got to show some grit as the queen's previously adored servant - "Are you deaf as well as stupid?" he told the Prince of Wales in one scene.)

## 'Sing! China' concert in Taiwan halted amid protests

A music concert in Taiwan descended into chaos over the weekend when independence activists clashed with pro-China groups, with three people injured in the scuffles. The incident comes amid heightened tensions between the self-ruled island and the mainland since Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen took office in May last year, with Beijing cutting off all official communications. The event Sunday at the National Taiwan University in Taipei was meant to showcase performers from the Chinese reality TV show and singing competition "Sing! China"-the country's equivalent of US talent show "The Voice."

About 100 to 200 people attended the concert, which was free to the public and co-hosted by the city government and a Shanghai association promoting cross-strait exchange,

organizers said. But it quickly became a hotbed of political protests as pro-independence groups waved banners and sounded horns inside the venue, with some calling the event another ploy by Beijing to influence the island. A group of students also protested against the university renting the field out for the event and preventing students from using it.

After organizers decided to end the concert early, clashes broke out between the protesters and pro-China groups. Footage in local media showed protesters taking over the stage chanting: "We are the National Taiwan University, not the China Taiwan University!" Three people were injured, with one student nicknamed Chang saying he suffered a bloody head and injured arm after being attacked by pro-China groups. Police took one man in for questioning. Emotions are

running high in Taiwan as locals become increasingly wary of Beijing's efforts to cast its influence.

China sees Taiwan as part of its territory waiting to be reunified and wants its president to acknowledge the island is part of "One China", which she has refused to do. The ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) condemned the violence yesterday, calling on police to investigate the case. "Sing! China" sees aspiring singers compete against each other for a chance at fame, and features heavyweight Asian popstars such as Taiwan's Jay Chou and Hong Kong's Eason Chan. Outside of China it has also gained a following in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. — AFP





Newly crowned Miss Lebanon 2017 Berla Halo (left) reacts after being elected at Casino Du Liban in Jounieh, north of Beirut, on September 24, 2017. — AFP

## Berla Halo crowned Miss Lebanon 2017



Newly crowned Miss Lebanon 2017 Berla Halo reacts after being elected at Casino Du Liban in Jounieh.



Lebanese singer Carole Samaha performs on a stage during the Miss Lebanon 2017 beauty pageant.



Newly crowned Miss Lebanon 2017 Berla Halo reacts after being elected at Casino Du Liban in Jounieh.



Berla Halo performs during Miss Lebanon 2017.



Newly crowned Miss Lebanon 2017 Berla Halo reacts after being elected.



Lebanese singer Carole Samaha performs on a stage during the Miss Lebanon 2017 beauty pageant.



Contestants perform on a stage during the Miss Lebanon 2017 beauty pageant at Casino Du Liban in Jounieh, north of Beirut.