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THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

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KUWAIT SHAVES KD 1 BILLION OFF SPENDING

ECONOMIC REFORMS PROVING EFFECTIVE • KIA SEES 34% GROWTH IN 5 YEARS



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By Nawara Fattahova and Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Kuwait's financial leadership heralded a positive outlook for the country's slow growing economy, pointing to a significant reduction in government spending and growth in assets under management as key achievements. Kuwait shaved off "more than KD 1 billion in government expenditure between 2016 and 2017," said Anas Al-Saleh, Deputy Premier and Finance Minister during the annual Euromoney conference in Kuwait City.

"To reach this result the public financial bodies implemented measures including adjusting cap and growth rate of public spending and treating the waste in this spending, accelerating the process of collecting late state debts, shifting from the annual budget system to the medium-term budget system, limiting the violations of the social allowances, and other measures," he explained.

Income growing, projects on track

Kuwait sets one of the lowest price per barrel break evens in the region. Its 2017/2018 budget includes a \$45 per barrel break even for oil revenue. But forecasts expect Kuwait crude to earn an average \$52.50, according to Fitch Ratings. This will bolster the state's finances and could reduce a projected deficit of KD 7.9 billion (this includes transfers to the Future Generations Fund, part of the country's sovereign wealth fund).

Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) also grew its assets by more than 34 percent over the last five years, noted the Finance Minister during the Euromoney conference yesterday. According to Al-Saleh the state's reserves and assets managed by the KIA are stable. "This is considered the safety vale to our national economy during any crisis and for the future generations, in addition to enhancing state's high creditworthiness," he said.

The minister did not divulge the exact size of KIA's assets under management. The Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute ranks KIA as the world's fourth-biggest sovereign fund, managing \$524 billion. Increased government spending on megaprojects under the New Kuwait 2035 reform program is also expected to bolster the local economy. "Two weeks ago an initial public offering (IPO) of the first partnering project was launched, which



KUWAIT: Anas Al-Saleh, Deputy Premier and Finance Minister speaks during the annual Euromoney conference in Kuwait City. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: Mohammad Y Al-Hashel, Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait speaks during the annual Euromoney conference yesterday.

SEE PAGES 17 AND 18

is the first phase of the North Zour Refinery Project," said Al-Saleh. "We are now preparing the tenders for three other partnering projects including the Kabd station for solid waste, the sewage network project at Um Al-Haiman, and the public schools development project," he noted.

Stable, strong banks

At the same time, reforms of the investment sector are also tracking gains. "The daily average of stock trading value at the Kuwait Bourse hiked by 139 percent during the first eight months of 2017 compared to the same period last year," the Finance Minister noted, adding that the growth indicated increased confidence and trust by local and international investors in Kuwait's economy.

Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel, Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, noted the soundness of Kuwait's banking sector during the conference, pointing to a slate of reforms intended to protect local banks against global economic uncertainty. "We have enhanced our capital adequacy regime by setting out higher and better quality capital. As highlighted in our flagship Financial Stability Report for 2016, CAR of the banking industry stands at 18.6%, well above the Basel benchmark. We have also put up additional capital requirements, up to 2%, for our systemically important banks," Al-Hashel said.

Kuwaiti banks stand at 10.1%, substantially higher than the 3% global benchmark where the CBK strengthened banks' capacity to withstand liquidity stress and to make their funding structure more stable by implement-

ing Liquidity Coverage Ratio and Net Stable Funding Ratio. He added that the CBK improved, with banks' non-performing loan ratio steadily declining to reach 2.2%, a historic low. Also ensured the justified buildup of sufficient provisions; consequently, coverage ratio has climbed to a record high of 237%.

The Central Bank government also called for further reform: "Progress on many structural fronts is needed; further rationalizing expenditures, increasing non-oil revenues, reforming the labor market, increasing the role of the private sector and in general diversifying the economy are some key areas that would continue to require unremitting attention."

Investment legislation

Kuwait's parliament is likely to approve a law to extend the country's borrowing limits, enabling 30-year debt issues, a senior finance ministry official said yesterday. The law would allow Kuwait to increase its debt ceiling to KD 25 billion (\$83 billion) from 10 billion currently. It would also allow the Gulf state to issue debt instruments with maturities of up to 30 years, from a current limit of 10 years.

"We're optimistic that the parliament will pass the law as it is, it's a matter of getting it through the process," Abdulaziz Al-Mulla, head of the debt management department at the ministry of finance, said during a Euromoney conference. Kuwait issued a debut \$8 billion international bond in March with maturities of five and 10 years. The government decided to extend its borrowing limit to 30 years after noting interest from pension and insurance funds for long-term paper when the bond sale was presented to international investors, said Al-Mulla.

"We believe time is a very important aspect, as we need to finance this fiscal year, from the beginning of April to the end of March 2018, and as we all know there are windows in the market," he added, without specifying when a new bond issue is likely. Kuwait is also working on a law that would allow the sovereign to issue sukuk, said Al-Mulla, adding he did not know when such a law would be in place. The current legal framework does not allow the government to raise financing through Islamic bonds.



KUWAIT: Security officers inspect the scene of the accident that left three people dead and three others injured.

THREE PERISH IN FATAL ACCIDENT

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: First Lieutenant Ahmad Al-Dousari, son of Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Mahmoud Al-Dousari died in an accident that left two more people dead and three others injured. Firefighters, paramedics and police rushed to scene at Riyadh Road, in front of Faiha where an accident was reported at dawn yesterday.

Three people were found dead; includ-

ing one man who was identified as the son of senior Interior Ministry official and two Egyptian workers, while three others were rushed to the nearest hospital for treatment of injuries sustained during the crash. According to eyewitnesses, the accident happened when a vehicle crashed into a group of cars and road construction laborers. One of the vehicles burst in flames due to the impact. An investigation has been launched to determine the circumstances behind the accident.

SAUDI TO ALLOW WOMEN TO DRIVE IN HISTORIC DECISION

US HAILS SAUDI U-TURN ON WOMEN DRIVERS

UAE TACKLES FORCED LABOR, HARASSMENT

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates, criticized globally for its treatment of migrant workers, issued a law yesterday to combat abuse of domestic staff, state news agency WAM said. It includes prohibitions on sexual harassment, forced labor, and the employment of domestic workers under 18.

It also stipulates that workers are entitled to one paid day off each week, 30 days of paid vacation per year and up to 30 days of sick leave. President Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan approved the law, which was praised by human rights organizations when its draft was passed by the country's legislative body in May. The UAE relies heavily on migrant labor with an estimated 8 million workers making up more than 80 percent of its population, according to the International Labor Organization.

Many domestic workers come from southeast Asia. The Gulf Arab state has in the past been sharply criticized by groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch for allowing

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RIYADH: Saudi Arabia will allow women to drive from next June, state media said yesterday, in a historic decision that makes the Gulf kingdom the last country in the world to permit women behind the wheel. The longstanding driving ban was seen globally as a symbol of repression of women in the ultra-conservative kingdom and comes after a years-long resistance from female activists. The decision, which risks riling religious conservatives, is part of powerful Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman's reform drive aimed at adapting to a post-oil era and improving its battered global reputation due to its harsh human rights record.

"The royal decree will implement the provisions of traffic regulations, including the issuance of driving licenses for men and women alike," the Saudi Press Agency said. It added that the decree would be implemented from June 2018. Conservative clerics in Saudi Arabia, an absolute monarchy ruled according to

sharia law, have justified the ban over the years, including one who claimed that driving harmed women's ovaries. Many women's rights activists were jailed over the years for defiantly flouting the ban.

The shock announcement was met in Riyadh with a mix of euphoria and disbelief. "I am very excited and shocked at the same time... I expected this to happen 10 or 20 years later," Haya Al-Rikayan, a 30-year-old bank employee in Riyadh said. The announcement follows a dazzling gender-mixed celebration of Saudi national day at the weekend, the first of its kind, which aimed to spotlight the kingdom's reform push, analysts say, despite a backlash from religious conservatives. Men and women danced in the streets to drums and thumping electronic music, in scenes that are a stunning anomaly in a country known for its tight gender segregation and an austere vision of Islam.

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RIYADH: File photo shows a fully veiled woman driving in Riyadh ahead of a then-planned nationwide day of defiance of the ban on women driving. — AFP

ERDOGAN THREATENS KURDS

ARBIL: The Iraqi government ruled out talks on possible secession for Kurdish-held northern Iraq yesterday and Turkey threatened sanctions after a referendum in the region showed strong support for independence. Initial results of Monday's vote indicated 72 percent of eligible voters had taken part and an overwhelming majority, possibly over 90 percent, had said "yes," Kurdish TV channel Rudaw said. Final results are expected today.

Celebrations continued yesterday in Arbil, capital of the Kurdish region, which was lit by fireworks and adorned with Kurdish red-white-green flags. People danced in the

squares as convoys of cars drove around honking their horns. In ethnically mixed Kirkuk, where Arabs and Turkmen opposed the vote, authorities lifted an overnight curfew imposed to maintain control.

In neighboring Iran, which has a large Kurdish minority, thousands of Kurds marched in the streets to show their support for the referendum, defying a show of strength by Tehran which flew fighter jets over their areas. The referendum has fuelled fears of a new regional conflict. Turkey, which has fought a Kurdish insurgency within its borders for decades, reiterated threats of eco-

nom and military retaliation. Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) President Masoud Barzani says the vote is not binding, but meant to provide a mandate for negotiations with Baghdad and neighboring countries over the peaceful secession of the region from Iraq.

But Iraq's opposition to Kurdish independence did not waver. "We are not ready to discuss or have a dialogue about the results of the referendum because it is unconstitutional," Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi said in a speech on Monday night.

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His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

AMIR ARRIVES IN KUWAIT TODAY

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will leave the United States of America, arriving in Kuwait today after concluding a visit to Washington, DC where he met with US President Donald Trump. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. The cable as follows:

"It pleases me to congratulate you on the success you have achieved in opening the works of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and to express to Your Excellency my appreciation of Your Excellency's efforts and those of the United Nations staff in the preparation and organization of this Session. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincerest thanks and appreciation for your pronouncements in support of the Kuwaiti mediation efforts in the gulf crisis, working with various parties in order to reach a solution to this crisis. In addition, I would like to cite your support of the efforts of the State of

Kuwait in sponsoring peace consultations among the Yemeni parties, particularly since the State of Kuwait hosted those consultations for about three months. The State of Kuwait, with the support and backing of the international community; shall contribute to work, in order to achieve peace and stability in the region, and to contribute significantly in alleviating the human suffering of those affected by events in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, thus affirming the firm position of the State of Kuwait, in supporting the United Nations, and its role in achieving universal peace, and meeting requirements of sustainable development for all states, proceeding from its belief that the antithesis of peace is chaos, and the antithesis of coexistence is conflicts, and dialogue is definitely better than conflict. Wishing Your Excellency and the Staff of the organization good health, happiness, and continued success in your lofty endeavor. Accept, Your Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration." — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Dr Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Director of the Directorate General for Civil Aviation Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

CROWN PRINCE RECEIVES RULING FAMILY COUNCIL MEMBER, OFFICIALS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday Dr Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah, Deputy head of the ruling family council. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also received Director of Kuwait's Directorate General for Civil Aviation (DGCA) Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel, head of the central agency for illegal residents Saleh Al-Fadhla, President of the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (NAZAHA) Abdulrahman Al-Nemash, and the authority's deputy head Riyadh Al-Hajeri. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with head of the central agency for illegal residents Saleh Al-Fadhla.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with President of the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority Abdulrahman Al-Nemash, and the authority's deputy head Riyadh Al-Hajeri.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel.

CONDOLENCES

Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief, Management and Staff

convey their deepest condolences to

Ministry of Interior Undersecretary

Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Dousari

on the sad demise of his son

First Lt Ahmad Mahmoud Al-Dousari

May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on him



KUWAIT: Saudi Ambassador Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez (third from left), His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah (center), Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah (third from right), and other officials cut the cake during a ceremony to celebrate Saudi Arabia's national day. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Saudi Ambassador Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez welcomes Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT BOASTS HISTORICAL TIES WITH SAUDI ARABIA

SAUDI DIPLOMACY PROMOTES SECURITY AND PEACE: AMBASSADOR

KUWAIT: Senior Kuwaiti officials took pride in the exemplary relations between their country and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The two countries are bound by history and mandatory interaction in all fields and at all levels, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem told reporters. He made the comments on the sidelines of a reception hosted by Saudi Embassy in Kuwait Monday evening to celebrate the Kingdom's 87th national day that falls on September 23. The celebration also gathered Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, and Saudi Ambassador Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez as well as dozens of senior officials from both countries.

Ghanem said the deep-rooted relationship between the two sisterly countries has kept growing since their foundation based on mutual respect and supportive stances, thanks to the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. The Kuwaiti top lawmaker quoted late king of Saudi Arabia Fahad bin Abdulaziz as saying in 1990 when Kuwait was invaded by Iraq: "Kuwait and Saudi Arabia must exist together or end together."

"The Kuwaiti people cherish this memory and amicable relationship that are handed down from one generation to another," he went on. Ghanem congratulated the Saudi leaders and people on the national day, voicing his best wishes to the Kingdom.

Test of time

Meanwhile, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said the relationship between the two countries stood the test of time

and provide an example for other countries to follow. "The achievements made by the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in all areas over the last 87 years are a source of pride for all Arab countries," he told reporters on this occasion.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled noted that the Kingdom's vision 2030 constitutes a significant milestone in development taking stock of the potentials of the Kingdom and requirements of the time. He congratulated King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz as well as the Saudi people on the national day, voicing his best wishes for the Kingdom.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah said the peoples of the Arabian Gulf states and the Muslim nation share the joy of this celebration with the Saudi people. The love for the Kingdom testifies that these nations hold the Kingdom in high esteem, the acting minister of information said, wishing Saudi Arabia more prosperity and progress under the wise leadership of King Salman bin Abdulaziz.

Active diplomacy

In the meantime, Ambassador Fayez reaffirmed the commitment of the Saudi leaders to defend the fair issues of the Arab and Muslim nations, citing their active diplomacy to promote security and peace across the region and beyond. "The Kingdom's active diplomacy has recently culminated in the convention of the Arab-Islamic-US summit in Riyadh in last May," he noted.

On the Kuwaiti-Saudi relations, he said they proved to be a good example for other countries to follow thanks to the close contacts between Saudi King and His Highness the Amir of Kuwait. He congratulated King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz as well as the Saudi people on the national day. — KUNA



First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah participates in an 'Ar'dha' during the event.



Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem (second left), Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah (second right) and other dignitaries attend the ceremony.



Officers pose with children during the event.

KUWAIT ALL FOR MAINTAINING IRAQ'S UNITY: JARALLAH

'STATE COMMITTED TO CEMENTING GULF UNITY'

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said Monday evening that Kuwait always supports the unity, security, sovereignty and independence of Iraq. Jarallah was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a reception hosted by Saudi Embassy to celebrate the Kingdom's 87th national day that falls on September 23.

"We hope that the referendum would neither breach Iraq's constitution and unity, nor damage the relations between Baghdad and Irbil," he said, commenting on the referendum on independence of Iraq's Kurdistan region. "We also hope that the polls will not hamper the tremendous efforts being made by Iraq to free its territories from the grip of terrorists and the so-called Islamic State," he noted. Jarallah affirmed that countries inside the region and beyond are working together to deescalate the tensions between Baghdad and Irbil in order to avoid any adverse impacts of the referendum.

Gulf unity

Meanwhile, Jarallah reiterated that Kuwait would continue its mediation in Gulf crisis with a view to restoring the unity of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. "We are confident that our brothers in the GCC states and Egypt will be able to overcome this regrettable row and turn over a new leaf in order to be better able to address the numerous challenges," he said. "We are optimistic about future of the Gulf unity and early solution of this crisis," he added, lauding the efforts being made by US President Donald Trump to support the Kuwaiti mediation.



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah speaks to reporters during the event. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

"Thanks to Kuwait's credible diplomacy and the eminent status of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti mediation efforts gained unprecedented support from around the globe," he pointed out. Jarallah urged the mass media in the GCC states to tone down their rhetoric and adopt a more balanced and credible approach in order to help overcome the current crisis. He voiced hope that the crisis will be resolved before the GCC summit, due in Kuwait in December. — KUNA

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In Brief

AUTISM SOCIETY CHOSEN AS ADVISOR FOR ECOSOC

KUWAIT: The United Nations NGOs committee recently recommended granting Kuwait's Autism Society an advisory position at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In this regard, head of the society Dr Samira Al-Saad stressed that this position is considered an international shift for both Kuwait and the society and provides chances to actively participate in UN organizations' activities. This participation followed six years of hard work to highlight the society's efforts to enhance Kuwait's position as a center for humanity, she added in a press release.



MEDICAL INNOVATIONS CONFERENCE THIS WEEKEND

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Association for Surgeons said yesterday that they are due to host a four-day conference for innovations in the medical and surgical field on September 30th. The conference, the first of its kind, aims to introduce current doctors to innovations, also to develop new doctors to the medical situations they will face in their respective fields, through workshops and activities. The conference will host international speakers including members from the American Association, President of the Kuwait Associations for Surgeons Dr Salman Al-Sabah said. —KUNA



RED ARROWS PERFORM IN KUWAIT THURSDAY

KUWAIT: The Red Arrows, the world-renowned aerobatics display team of the Royal Air Force (RAF), will put on an air show tomorrow near Kuwait Towers, said a statement by the Defense Ministry yesterday. The Defense Ministry's public relations department said that the show, to be attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, would commence at 3:30 pm tomorrow. The Red Arrows did a show in Kuwait back in November. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Kuwait City skyscrapers as seen from Al-Shaheed Park.— KUNA photo

NA SECRETARY GENERAL COMMENTS ON PENSIONS REPORTS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Responding to news reports speculating that exceptional pensions were paid to some MPs, the National Assembly's Secretary General Allam Al-Kandari stressed that this procedure is not new, and that it was not the first time that the government agreed to pay an exceptional pension to some lawmakers as per article 80 of the social security law. Kandari added that ever since the 1992 parliament, this pension has usually been paid at the beginning of each term to MPs who were not paid any pensions before they were elected, or to those who used to get paid less compared to their colleagues.

Teaching French

Two years after teaching French in intermediate schools, the Ministry of Education (MOE) decided to call off the experiment and transfer all French teachers from intermediate to secondary schools, said informed sources. The sources said that the experiment failed because of the fact that the idea was not duly studied prior to implementation, saying that the decision was hastily made. The sources said that studying the subject was optional and that learners only had to attend one class of French per week while the subject should have been a basic one so that all learners could benefit from it. "Even parents themselves were not aware enough," the source added, noting that learning French was beyond the capabilities of an intermediate stage learner, particularly since they already study another foreign language; English, in addition to Arabic, in which they are already weak in general.

KFA elections

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousif Al-Sabah, Al-Samiya Sports Club's representative in Kuwait Football Association's (KFA) presidency elections, is getting closer to winning the post by acclamation as no opponents registered to run the elections until yesterday morning. Candidate Fawaz Al-Hasawi reportedly withdrew from the elections, which are set for October 31, without providing a clear reason for his sudden decision. Hasawi had made a decision to run for the elections, but Al-Qadsiya Club officials rejected his candidacy, before he finally decided to withdraw, wishing Al-Yousif good luck.

US EMBASSY ORGANIZES 1ST ALUMNI RECEPTION

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The US Embassy in Kuwait organized its first ever reception for Kuwaiti alumni of US State Department educational, professional, cultural and training programs. In his welcoming speech, US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman lauded the largest gathering of alumni in Kuwait which they organized for the first time. "Wherever they take place, all of our programs have a common goal: To increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and people living in Kuwait," he said.

According to Silverman, there are nearly 2,000 alumni in Kuwait since the establishments of International Exchange Alumni. "Those of you who are alumni of our programs form part of a network of over one million program alumni worldwide. You are certainly in good company: International alumni of Department of State programs include former British prime ministers Margaret Thatcher, Gordon Brown, and Tony Blair, for example, who all participated in International Visitor Leadership Programs. Altogether, 565 of our alumni are current or former heads of state - so far," he added.

"We would love to see more of you registered on alumni.state.gov to continue networking with other distinguished peers. Our alumni build on the experiences they gain and the networks they form through our programs; we want to nurture those networks, and help them grow," explained Silverman.

The US State Department offers a variety of resources, educational cultural and professional development programs. More than 100 English language teachers in Kuwait have had distance learning through English language professionals available to them including the American English E-Teacher Program, the American English Webinar Series, and the Massive Open Online Courses. The recent US-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue has reaffirmed that cultural and educational exchange is more important than ever to the bilateral relationship.

Eyad Zaben, the US embassy's new Alumni Coordinator said there is a need for the creation of this department so as to help alumni in Kuwait. "As Alumni Coordinator, my main goal is to increase the involvement of Kuwait-based alumni of US Government exchange and study programs, facilitating collaboration on topics of mutual interest. This helps our Kuwait-based alumni share and deepen their expertise once they have returned from different exchange programs in the United States," he said. The invitation-only reception was held at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Salwa.



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman delivers his speech. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



Eyad Zaben, the US embassy's new Alumni Coordinator speaks during the event.



A general view of people in attendance.

AID FOR MEXICO EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

KUWAIT: The Mexican embassy in Kuwait released the following statement yesterday, urging people to continue donating for victims of the earthquake that hit the North American country last week:

Regarding the earthquake that occurred in Mexico on September 19, 2017 and following the demonstrations of support and affection of those who have expressed their desire to help, listed below are different ways to make donations:

1. Cash donations can be made

through the Mexican Red Cross website (<https://cruzrojadonaciones.org>). The steps are as follows:

- a. Enter the website and follow the on-screen instructions to create an account.
- b. The credit card data is captured through a PayPal account (the amount is in Mexican pesos MXN) and select "SISMO 19/09/17"
- c. The website confirms that the transaction was successful and allows the issuance of a receipt.

2. In kind donations can be made

through global companies such as Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com.mx/>. The steps are as follows:

- a. Enter the website and select "Fuerza Mexico. Donar y ayudar nos une".
- b. Choose the option "Cruz Roja Mexicana". There you will find a "wishlist" that is updated in real time according to the needs of the Mexican Red Cross (Cruz Roja Mexicana), as well as instructions on how to make the donation step by step.
- 3. As the next phase will focus on the

efforts for reconstruction, the private sector created the "FUERZA MEXICO" trust, in which leaders from the main business chambers will participate to accompany the reconstruction actions in the states that were affected by recent earthquakes. In this regard, data are sent for international transfers:

Account Number Mexican Pesos: 012180001109759075 or

Account Number USD: 012180001109759156

For both bank accounts:

Account Name: NACIONAL FINANCIERA SNC COMO FIO DEL F 80755

FUERZA MEXICO Swift: BCMRMXMM Bank: BBVA Bancomer Branch: 0095

Address: Av. Paseo de la Reforma N. 510 Col. Juarez, CP 06600

4. Donations may also be made through the Kuwait Red Crescent Society <https://donation.krcs.org.kw>

The Embassy thank you in advance for your participation and remains attentive to any questions or comments on the matter.

الأنباء

Al-Anbaa

A CENTURY-OLD TRICK

By Thaar Al-Rasheedi

During World War II, media machines of all the parties involved in that universal war that claimed the lives of millions produced special movies and documentaries that are still available on YouTube today, and through which everyone can see the efforts used to demonize certain people, despise them and make fun of their culture and religion. The US movie industry played a major role in creating stereotype images of the German and Japanese that still dominate Americans' minds today.

The same media mobilization was used during the East-West cold war, giving the upper hand to US and British media, as the most popular movie series have been used to slander the Soviet people. Such movies and animations produced by Disney were used to slander the people and countries that were then deemed as enemy to the United States.

This does not mean that they did not achieve the goal of promoting public hatred towards the enemy.

Today, screening of such movies and documentaries is banned on any national TV channel in the US because they involve racist calls and phrases against certain people, races and religions. These include movies produced by Warner Brothers and Colombia that only call for mockery of their content and of their producers. Nonetheless, this does not mean that they did not achieve the goal of promoting public hatred towards the enemy.

However, when the war was over and such productions became a bad media archive that everybody is trying to forget, the Arab World still unfortunately uses such media campaigns that were used over hundred years ago before the revolution of the press, telegrams, radio and telephones. The same is being done with the revelation of social media networks and satellite TV channels that are being used as means of silly, superficial yet hostile propaganda.

The real problem is that we have developed stereotype images of each other that are used on social media networks in cheap disgusting media wars. What is even worse is that we have a hidden reserve of racial and regional hatred that is being used in this war leaving us no option but to rely on Arab recipients' awareness to be the final judge in attempts to put an end to the bad use of social media as cheap and old means of propaganda.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



@m_thalib



— Al-Anba

INTERIOR NEWS LEAKER SENTENCED

KUWAIT: An Interior Ministry officer was court-martiated and sentenced to seven days in jail for leaking ministry news through an account on Twitter. A source said the officer took advantage of his position in a sensitive department to share news and information about citizens and expats. His superiors referred him to a military council for disciplinary action.

Fugitive caught on Failaka

Failaka policemen arrested an Iranian man who has received a 10-year jail sentence for drugs. The man was caught while trying to flee Kuwait via boat. He confessed that an accomplice helped him reach Failaka and then dropped him there. Police saw the man at night and when they approached, he ran but was unable to escape. Once his fingerprints were taken, it was discovered that he was wanted. He was sent to concerned authorities.

House breaker arrested

A young man was arrested after entering a house with criminal intent and being in possession of illicit drugs. A citizen heard noise in his house and when he went to see, he found the accused. The homeowner tackled the stranger

and called police. Police found drugs on the man when he was searched.

Drug users arrested

A young woman was caught with hashish and shabu while in the company of two citizens and admitted to using drugs with the two. Police stopped the three during a routine patrol and upon checking, they found the two citizens wanted for financial cases involving more than KD 13,000. The citizens were discovered to have hashish on them and when the woman's bag was searched, she was also found to be in possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia. All three were sent to Drugs Control General Department.

Drug addict fails at suicide bid

A suspected drug addict failed in his attempt to commit suicide by jumping from a water tank. A security source said a man called police about a person climbing on top of a water tank at the Jahra stables. The man was yelling and threatening to jump. Police, paramedics and technical rescue officers rushed to the scene and convinced the man to come down. He was found to be under the influence of a narcotic substance and was charged with attempted suicide and drug use.

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

THE SHEEP'S FUTURE

By Fahad Al-Bassam

The ship arrived at its final destination loaded with sheep. The sheep were unloaded, driven into barns to be fed before their slaughter. Meanwhile, tycoon sheep merchants met to discuss what to do. The quantity is so big and endless profits are expected, yet the question remains: Who will slaughter all the sheep?

This question remained unanswered as the former butcher was so passionate and merciful. He had inherited the profession from his ancestors though he was not fit for the job. His mercy was harmful to both merchants and the sheep because he preferred slaughtering the sheep while listening to Mozart and Chopin symphonies thinking that classic music would calm down the sheep while facing their destiny and butchers' knives.

Slaughtering slowed down as it took a whole year to get the job done as each sheep listens to only one sonnet, and one would never manage to

No one cares about courtesy and favors if interests are at stake

slaughter even one quarter of the entire quantity. In addition, the butcher's tenderness and shaking hands would only torture the sheep during the process. But it is still his ancestors' career and tycoon merchants still respect their good historic relation with the butcher's folks.

Nevertheless, no one cares about courtesy and favors if interests are at stake. That is when they started considering a new butcher; some suggested bringing someone from outside while others rejected the idea on the grounds that a country's sheep should only be slaughtered by its own butchers. Others suggested distributing the sheep amongst themselves so that each can slaughter their share as they please. Again, some merchants opposed the idea on grounds that they were only merchants who knew nothing about butchery.

A third team of minor merchants expressed willingness to do the slaughtering, but the older ones refused the proposal, noting that those young merchants lacked enough experience to do the job because trading and butchery were two different things completely. More and more unusual and extraordinary ideas were suggested, according to sources who stated that the meeting is still ongoing to determine the future of slaughtering sheep. Meanwhile, the sheep are waiting in boredom and depression without even listening to any music.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

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German IS leader on trial for recruiting jihadists

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ABU GHOSH, Israel: Mourners carry the coffin of Arab Israeli man, Youssef Ottman, one of three Israeli guards killed in a Palestinian shooting attack on a Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank, during his funeral yesterday. — AFP

PALESTINIAN GUNMAN KILLS THREE ISRAELIS

ISRAELI PM DEMANDS CLEAR CONDEMNATION OF ATTACK

HAR ADAR: A Palestinian opened fire at Israeli security personnel at the entrance to a West Bank settlement yesterday, killing three and wounding another before being shot dead, police said. The attack, which came as US envoy Jason Greenblatt was due in Jerusalem for talks on relaunching the moribund Middle East peace process, drew condemnation from Israeli officials who called for action from the Palestinian leadership. It also occurred in the middle of the Jewish high holiday period, when Israeli-Palestinian violence has erupted in the past, and led police to order reinforcements to prevent further unrest.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu demanded a clear condemnation of the attack from Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, adding that the gunman's home would be demolished and Israeli work permits withdrawn from his extended family. The target of the attack was Har Adar, a well-to-do settlement northwest of Jerusalem, high in the hills close to the Green Line

that separates the occupied West Bank from Israel.

The windows of the guard booth at its northern entrance, where Palestinian day laborers are required to undergo security checks, had been shattered by the shooting, an AFP correspondent reported. Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said that the gunman, who had a permit to work in the settlement, had concealed himself among other Palestinian laborers. "He hesitated and then all of a sudden, several meters before a security check, pulled out a nine millimeter weapon and opened fire directly at the two private security guards, who were shot and killed directly at the scene," Rosenfeld said. "He also opened fire to a border police officer that was also located here. "And another two officers, that were standing approximately where we are at the moment, responded, opened fire and shot and killed that terrorist."

Work permits under review
Israel's Shin Bet internal security service identi-

fied the gunman as Nimer Aljamal, a 37-year-old father of four from the nearby Palestinian village of Beit Surik with no previous "security background". Rosenfeld described Aljamal's profile as "very unusual" by comparison with others who have carried out lone-wolf attacks during a wave of unrest that has hit Israel and the Palestinian territories over the past two years. He said there would have to be a security review of work permits for Palestinians to work in Israel and the settlements, with thousands granted.

Netanyahu called on the Palestinian president to condemn the attack. "I expect (Abbas) to condemn the attack and not try to justify it," he said. Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas, which rules Gaza, hailed the attack as "revenge for the crime of occupation against our people." The UN envoy to the Middle East Nickolay Mladenov condemned both the attack and the Hamas reaction. "It is deplorable that Hamas and others continue to glorify such attacks, which undermine the possibility

of a peaceful future for both Palestinians and Israelis," he said. Police named the border policeman killed as Solomon Gavria, 20. Har Adar resident Steve Leibowitz, 65, said the settlement's proximity to the Green Line had always made it feel safe. "This place is quiet. We're inside the West Bank but we have a border fence and we feel as though we are inside Israel and safe," he said. "Until today I haven't locked my doors in years. Now I will be locking the doors." The latest attack comes nearly two years after a wave of unrest broke out. The violence had greatly subsided in recent months but Shin Bet chief Nadav Argaman warned in a briefing to the cabinet earlier this month that the risk of new attacks was ever present.

Reception for US envoy

Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely said the Palestinian leadership needed to take action or there would be no point in following up on the US initiative to relaunch peace talks. "The terrible

attack at Har Adar is the Palestinian reception for US envoy Jason Greenblatt," she said. Hotovely renewed the Israeli government's call for the Palestinian Authority to stop paying allowances to the families of those who lost their lives carrying out attacks. The issue is a deeply divisive one, with many Palestinians seeing those killed carrying out attacks against the "occupation forces" as martyrs, while Israelis see them as "terrorists". West Bank settlements are a source of significant tensions between Israel and the Palestinians and have been a major sticking point in peace talks. The UN envoy told the Security Council on Monday that Israel continues to build settlements "at a high rate," in defiance of Security Council demands for an end to their expansion. The international community regards all Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, including Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, as illegal. They are seen as major stumbling blocks to peace as they are built on land the Palestinians see as part of their future state. —AFP

QATAR LABORER 'SACKED' AFTER SPEAKING TO UN TEAM

DOHA: A Nepalese construction worker in Qatar was "sacked" the day after speaking to a UN delegation visiting the 2022 World Cup host country to examine labor conditions, sources said. The incident is considered serious enough that the UN's International Labor Organization (ILO) said it would be on the agenda when its governing body meets in two months to discuss an investigation into allegations of forced labor by Qatar.

"The ILO has been following closely this case and continues to do so with a view to ensuring that the rights of this Nepalese worker are fully respected and protected," Corinne Vargha, director of the ILO's international labor standards department, said in a statement. The case was raised in a

previous meeting of the ILO governing body in March 2017, Vargha said, in the context of a complaint against Doha for non-compliance with two ratified ILO international conventions—namely the Forced Labor Convention and the Labor Inspection Convention. "The complaint will be further discussed by the Governing Body at its November 2017 session," she added.

That meeting could see the ILO launch a formal investigation into Qatar over its treatment of migrant workers. The construction worker's plight has also been confirmed by two separate unions. The incident occurred in March 2016, but could only now be reported because of sensitivities surrounding the case. It happened when a six-strong

team from the ILO visited a labor camp in Qatar.

As well as losing his job after telling the UN body about unpaid wages and employers illegally holding his passport, the laborer was also handed a one-way ticket home to Nepal by bosses, unions said. Officials at the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) say the timing of the dismissal "indicates it was a retaliatory act by his employer." "This is a violation under international labor standards and contradicts the commitments Qatar has repeatedly made before the ILO," said ITUC head Sharan Burrow.

The union said the 29-year-old worker never got on the plane, but was subsequently jailed for two weeks due to losing his work sponsor. Under the "kafala" system, the prevailing law at the time of the incident, all foreign workers in Qatar required a local sponsor in order to work and maintain residency. That sponsor, whether an individual or company, must grant permission for the laborer to switch jobs or leave the country.

The Nepalese national was not working on a World Cup project, but the 2022 event has put a spotlight on labor conditions in Qatar. The man's case was cleared earlier this year and he opted to stay in Qatar, working for a new employer and earning around 1,600 Qatari Riyals per month—an average salary for a laborer in Qatar. Despite requests there was no immediate comment from the Qatari government.

In recent years Doha claims to have made great strides in labor relations, including reforms to ensure wages are paid promptly, improved accommodations and the abolition of kafala for a new, contract-based system. — AFP



DOHA: A general view shows boats moored in front of the skyline of the Qatari capital, Doha. A Nepalese construction worker in Qatar was 'sacked' the day after speaking to a UN delegation visiting the 2022 World Cup host country to examine labor conditions. — AFP

N KOREA BOLSTERS DEFENSES

SEOUL: North Korea has boosted defenses on its east coast, a South Korean lawmaker said yesterday, after the North said US President Donald Trump had declared war and that it would shoot down US bombers flying near the peninsula. Tensions have escalated since North Korea conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear test on Sept 3, but the rhetoric has reached a new level in recent days with leaders on both sides exchanging threats and insults.

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho said Trump's Twitter comments, in which the US leader said Ri and leader Kim Jong Un "won't be around much longer" if they acted on their threats, amounted to a declaration of war and that Pyongyang had the right to take countermeasures. South Korean lawmaker Lee Cheol-woo, briefed by the country's spy agency, said the reclusive North was in fact bolstering its defenses by moving aircraft to its east coast and taking other measures after US bombers flew close to the Korean peninsula at the weekend.

Lee said the United States appeared to have disclosed the flight route of the bombers intentionally because North Korea seemed to be unaware. Ri, the foreign minister, said on Monday the North's right to countermeasures included shooting down US bombers "even when they are not inside the airspace border of our country." "The whole world should clearly remember it was the US who first declared war on our country," he told reporters in New York on Monday, where he had been attending the annual United Nations General Assembly.

"The question of who won't be around much longer will be answered then," he said. White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders

denied on Monday that the United States had declared war, calling the suggestion "absurd". Speaking in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said war on the Korean peninsula would have no winner. "We hope the US and North Korean politicians have sufficient political judgment to realize that resorting to military force will never be a viable way to resolve the peninsula issue and their own concerns," Lu told a daily news briefing.

"We also hope that both sides can realize that being bent on assertiveness and provoking each other will only increase the risk of conflict and reduce room for policy maneuvers. War on the peninsula will have no winner."

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, speaking on the sidelines of a UN meeting in New York, said the situation on the Korean peninsula was at a very dangerous stage, the foreign ministry said yesterday. The urgent task was to prevent North Korea's nuclear and missile programs progressing, to avoid a further escalation in tensions and to especially prevent resorting to arms, Wang added.

While repeatedly calling for dialogue to resolve the issue, China has also signed up for increasingly tough UN sanctions against North Korea.

China's fuel exports to North Korea fell in August, along with iron ore imports from the isolated nation, as trade slowed after the latest UN sanctions, but coal shipments resumed after a five-month hiatus, customs data showed yesterday. South Korean President Moon Jae-in urged Kim Jong Un to resume military talks and reunions of families split by the 1950-53 Korean War to ease tension. — Reuters

News

in brief

PM Modi promises electricity for every Indian house by 2018

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has vowed that every home in India will have electricity by December 2018 as he moves to shore up voter support amid doubts over his handling of the economy. The \$2.5 billion scheme announced Monday would see the country's 40 million households without electricity linked up to power for free. "Forty million of the total 250 million households still don't have power, which means 25 percent of people are living in the 18th century. The government will electrify every household, whether it's in a village, city or a remote region," Modi said in a speech.

Thousands evacuated from Vanuatu as volcano erupts

SYDNEY: Vanuatu has declared a state of emergency and evacuated thousands of residents from an island in the Pacific archipelago after a volcanic eruption rained rocks and ash on nearby homes, reports and officials said yesterday. After weeks of rumbling, activity from the Manaro Voui volcano at the centre of the northern island of Ambae increased in recent days, the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department said. The department on Saturday raised the alert level from three to four, which represents a "moderate eruption state", and warned of "flying rocks and volcanic gas" affecting villages up to 6.5 kilometers from Manaro Voui.

Malaysian Muslim-only launderette stirs anger

KUALA LUMPUR: A Malaysian launderette that banned non-Muslim customers sparked anger yesterday as fears grow of creeping religious conservatism in the multi-ethnic country. The self-service shop in the town of Muar, in the southern state of Johor, put up a sign saying that it would only allow Muslim customers. Malay Muslims make up the majority of Malaysia's approximately 30 million inhabitants but the country is also home to sizeable ethnic Chinese and Indian minorities, and restricting shops or services to a certain religion is rare.

Japan man nabbed for trying to steal car with cops inside

TOKYO: A would-be car thief in Japan has been nabbed after he tried to steal a vehicle with several police officers inside. Ushio Sato, 23, was caught red-handed trying to make off with the unmarked police car in his failed pre-dawn heist on Monday, said a police spokeswoman in the central city of Numazu. She declined to give more details. Japanese media reports said the luckless Sato did not notice there were officers inside the unlocked vehicle, which was at a local parking lot. He immediately fled but was quickly caught, according to the Sankei newspaper. It was not clear if the officers were wearing uniforms or were on duty at the time.

Bangladesh plans separate shelters for Rohingya children

DHAKA: Bangladesh is planning to build separate shelters for 6,000 Rohingya Muslim children who entered the country without parents to escape violence in neighboring Myanmar, a government official said yesterday. Children make up about 60 percent of the more than 420,000 Rohingya Muslims who have poured into Bangladesh over the last four weeks to flee persecution in Buddhist-majority Myanmar. Junior minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed said the social welfare ministry has asked local authorities for 200 acres of land to build facilities for the children without parents, and about 1,580 such children have already been registered.—Agencies

UN LAUNCHES NEW PLAN TO END LIBYA'S POST-REVOLUTION TURMOIL

TUNIS: The United Nations launched a new push yesterday to stabilize Libya by getting rival factions to revise a stalled peace plan and set the country on the path to elections. The effort aims to end the turmoil that developed in Libya after a 2011 NATO-backed uprising ended Muammar Gaddafi's 42-year rule, giving space to Islamist militants and smuggling networks that have sent hundreds of thousands of migrants to Europe.

Political and military splits have left the North African country mired in conflict and the OPEC member's economy in freefall. Rival parliaments and governments have vied for power. Last week, UN envoy Ghassan Salame announced a one-year "action plan" for a transition towards presidential and parliamentary elections.

The plan got underway yesterday with negotiations between delegations from rival parliaments from eastern Libya and Tripoli, which are meant to draw up amendments to a previous UN-mediated plan signed in December 2015. As the delegations convened in Tunis, Salame urged them to set aside their differences and complete their work in a timely fashion. "All Libyans are fed up. They are going from transition to transition with no horizon," he said.

"We have sleeping institutions that need to be awoken, divided institutions that need to be united, and hijacked institutions that need to be rebuilt." The 2015 deal had only had limited support from power-brokers on the ground and was never endorsed by factions aligned with powerful military commander Khalifa Haftar that control eastern Libya. An UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli has been hamstrung by internal splits and has been unable to halt a slide in living standards or tame the power of armed groups.

"We're here to move the political process forward for the sake of the country's stability," said Moussa Faraj, head of the delegation from the High Council of State in Tripoli, according to a tweet from the United Nations from the meeting which got closed to the press after Salame's speech. Under the new UN plan, once amendments have been agreed a national conference drawing on a much larger number of representatives from across Libya is meant to select the members of a transitional government that would run the country until elections.

The eastern parliament, or House of Representatives (HOR), is expected to devise laws for national elections and for a referendum to approve a much-delayed constitution. The chamber has barely functioned over the past two years and has been boycotted by a large number of its members. "Our task is difficult," said Abdusalam Nasia, head of the HOR delegation, according to the United Nations. "I call on all to leave personal interests behind and focus on common interests."—Reuters

NETANYAHU CONGRATULATES MERKEL AFTER GERMAN BALLOT

ISRAELI PM VOICES ANTI-SEMITISM CONCERNS ON LEFT, RIGHT

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu voiced concern over anti-Semitism on the left and right in a congratulatory phone call to German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday after an election that returned her to power but brought the far right into parliament. Merkel's conservative bloc remains the largest group in Germany's lower house, but bled support in Sunday's poll to the far right and may need to cobble together a hitherto untested coalition with environmentalist and liberal parties.

Jewish groups in Europe and the United States expressed alarm at the success of the nationalist Alternative for Germany (AfD) in Sunday's ballot and urged other parties not to form an alliance with it. Those parties have pledged to shun the AfD. The AfD, which has surged in the two years since Merkel opened Germany's borders to more than 1 million migrants mainly fleeing Middle East wars, says immigration jeopardizes Germany's culture but denies it is racist or anti-Semitic.

A statement issued by Netanyahu's office did not mention the AfD by name in calling on Merkel's future government to "strengthen forces in Germany that accept historical responsibility" for the Nazi Holocaust. It



JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opens the weekly cabinet meeting at his Jerusalem office.—AFP

quoted Netanyahu as having "congratulated Merkel on her victory" and voicing confidence the "special relationship between Germany and Israel would deepen and prosper under her leadership". Merkel has

been Germany's chancellor since 2005.

In the statement, a recap Netanyahu gave his cabinet of his conversation with Merkel, the conservative Israeli leader pointed to anti-Semitism as not being sole-

ly a threat from the right. "Israel is concerned over the rise in anti-Semitism in recent years among political elements on the right and the left and also among Islamic elements," the statement said, without naming any parties.

Last month, Netanyahu's 26-year-old son, Yair, drew public criticism in Israel for suggesting on social media that hard-left organizations now pose more of a danger than neo-Nazi groups. Yair Netanyahu spoke after a protester was killed during a white nationalist rally in the US state of Virginia in August. US President Donald Trump stirred controversy at the time by insisting that left-wing protesters who showed up to counter the ultra-rightist rally were also to blame for violence.

The far-right has not been represented in the German parliament since the 1950s, a reflection of German efforts to distance themselves from the horrors of the Holocaust. Germany, home today to about 200,000 Jews, has built a reputation in recent decades as a tolerant, safe place for Jews to live. But data show anti-Semitic crimes reported to German police rose 4 percent to 681 in the first eight months of 2017 from the same period last year.—Reuters

RETURNING HOME, SYRIANS FIND RAQA BEYOND RECOGNITION

RAQA: Bashar Hammoud thought he knew his native Raqa like the back of his hand, but a months-long offensive against the Islamic State group has scarred the Syrian city so badly he can barely recognize it. Hammoud, a 26-year-old member of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, was floored when he entered the battered northeastern district of Al-Rumeilah on Monday for the first time in years. "I used to come here a lot because my uncles lived here and the college of literature, where I studied, was here," the bony member of the SDF's media office tells AFP.

"I don't even know where we are. If I got out of the car now, I wouldn't know how to go back. It's all gone. I know we're in Al-Rumeilah-but where in Al-Rumeilah, I don't know," he says. The district's two-storey homes have been smashed to the ground by bombardment. Fighters from the US-backed SDF, which broke into Raqa in June after spending months encircling the city-are roaming the rubble-littered streets, but no civilians are in sight.

When a pair of air strikes send consecutive booms echoing across Al-Rumeilah, Hammoud furrows his brows. His family home lies in Al-Maarri, an IS-held district about 500 meters to the west, and he has not seen it since fleeing Raqa in December 2014. "Standing or destroyed, my only wish now is to see my home, but I know that that neighborhood hasn't been liberated yet," he says. "My comrades told me hopefully today, it will be liberated. If my house is gone, it'll be a shock to me."

Colors are coming back

More than three years after IS declared a self-styled "caliphate" across swathes of Syria and Iraq, the SDF's Arab and Kurdish fighters hold around 90 percent of its one-time de facto



RAQA: Displaced Syrians are pictured after they fled central Raqa as Syrian fighters backed by US special forces are battling to clear the last remaining Islamic State group jihadists holed up in their crumbling stronghold.—AFP

Syrian capital Raqa. The Raqa natives among them say it has been dizzying to see neighborhoods they had known for years being called different names by people who lived under IS's iron fist. An area called Al-Hukmah—"government"—has become known as Al-Hikmah, or "wisdom."

The Al-Bassel Mosque, named after President Bashar al-Assad's older brother, was renamed Al-Nur. And most infamously, the Al-Naim roundabout where IS carried out beheadings and crucifixions was renamed "Al-Jaheem"—the Roundabout of Hell. At the eastern entrance to the city, Hammoud points to two large triangular flags hanging from a metal frame: one belonging to the SDF, and the other to the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).

"There used to be a big black flag there with the phrase everyone knows—the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.' Now

look at the SDF flag. Colors are coming back to Raqa," Hammoud says. Still, the once-bustling neighborhood just ahead is jarring for him: "I was shocked when I came here. The shops are empty. It's like we went back 100 years." Farther along the route lies Al-Meshleb, the first district that SDF fighters entered in June—and the neighborhood where Fahed al-Meshlebi grew up.

At the time, Meshlebi was living in a displacement camp north of Raqa and decided to join the SDF's battle against IS. "I haven't gone to Al-Meshleb yet. I want to finish here first," he says, his thick tangle of hair pulled back from his eyes by a colorful bandana as he stands on the western edge of Al-Rumeilah. "I don't know this neighborhood anymore. The street I used to know here has been completely wiped out," Meshlebi tells AFP, saying he could barely make out "hints" of familiar shops or landmarks.—AFP

DOCTORS, HOSPITALS AMONG TALEBAN CASUALTIES OF WAR

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan: After the Taliban closed his local health clinic, Afghan farmer Haji Fazel Ahmad was forced to rent a car to take his sick wife to the nearest hospital six hours away. To his dismay the insurgents had shut that too. It is a scenario being played out across Afghanistan as medical facilities and workers come under attack from all sides of the bloody conflict, denying ordinary people access to even the most basic healthcare.

Since January more than 200 medical centers have been forced to close—most temporarily—while 13 aid workers have been killed and over 150 injured, figures show, underscoring the growing violence as Afghan forces struggle to beat back a resurgent Taliban and other Islamist groups.

In recent days Taliban fighters have closed scores of medical facilities in the impoverished southern province of Uruzgan in what authorities say is an attempt to force the local government to set up more clinics in areas under control of the insurgents, apparently to treat their own fighters.

"We were in the clinic when a number of armed men came in and asked us to give them the keys and told us we could no longer stay there," Ehsanullah, a doctor based on the outskirts of the provincial capital Tarinkot, said. Other facilities shuttered by the Taliban were located in Charchino district where Ahmad and his wife live. "There were no health services available so I spent 2,500 Afs on a car fare to Tarinkot but unfortunately the situation is no better," Ahmad said. The poor farmer then had to borrow more money to rent another car to drive to Kandahar city in the neighboring province of the same name in the hope of finding treatment for his ailing wife.

The 2014 withdrawal of US-led NATO combat forces has fuelled the insurgency, driving up casualties and increasing pressure on healthcare providers. Medical facilities and workers have been targeted by all sides of the conflict including the Taliban, Islamic State, Afghan military and international forces, experts say. The motives include denying wounded enemy combatants medical treatment, killing those already inside a facility or using the centre as a shelter during battle.

They are also sometimes used as a bargaining chip, like in Uruzgan, to improve medical access for fighters while on other occasions they appear to be the unintended target such as the deadly US airstrike on a Doctors Without Borders trauma centre in northern Kunduz province in 2015.—AFP

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FEMALE US MARINE BECOMES 1ST WOMAN TO PASS INFANTRY OFFICER TRAINING

NEW YORK: A female US Marine has become the first woman to complete the Corps' notoriously grueling infantry officer course, seeing off dozens of male candidates who failed the selection training. The physical and mental tests include hikes carrying loads up to 152 pounds, swimming, obstacle courses, land navigation and weapons assembly. Typically a quarter of Marines who take part fail to make the grade.

Under former President Barack Obama, the US military opened all positions to women, including combat roles, for the first time in 2016 in a bid to make the armed forces more inclusive. The female lieutenant, who wanted to keep her identity private, was one of 88 Marines out of 131 who started the course in July to make it through the 13-week program - graduating in Quantico, Virginia, on Monday, the military said.

"Proud of this officer & her fellow leaders," tweeted Marine Corps commandant Gen. Robert Neller

alongside a photo of the woman during training. The Marine Corps says its "grueling 13-week course trains and educates newly selected infantry and ground intelligence officers in leadership, infantry skills, and character required to serve as infantry platoon commanders". The lieutenant's next assignment will be at the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton in California, it said. As an officer she is expected to lead a platoon of typically around 40 Marines.

"Marines expect and rightfully deserve competent and capable leaders, and these... graduates met every training requirement," Neller said in a statement. About 15 percent of more than 1.3 million US active duty troops are women, according to the Department of Defense. Earlier this year, the Corps was rattled by nude photo sharing scandal involving a private Facebook group and its surreptitious distribution of explicit images of women in the armed forces, often with obscene, misogynist commentary. —Reuters



CALIFORNIA: This US Marine Corps photo shows an unidentified Marine as she participates in an exercise during the Infantry Officer Course at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California. — AFP



GERMANY: Policemen secure the area around the Higher Regional Court in Celle near Hanover, central Germany, where a trial started against notorious hate preacher Abu Walaa, described as the Islamic State group's de facto leader in Germany. —AFP

GERMAN IS LEADER ON TRIAL FOR RECRUITING JIHADISTS

IF FOUND GUILTY, ACCUSED TO FACE 10 YEARS IN PRISON

CELLE, Germany: Notorious hate preacher Abu Walaa, described as the Islamic State group's de facto leader in Germany, went on trial yesterday accused of radicalizing young men and running a jihadist network linked to the Berlin Christmas market attacker. Nicknamed "the faceless preacher" for showing his back to the camera in propaganda videos, the 33-year-old Iraqi was arrested last November on suspicion of being the "central figure" in an IS recruitment ring.

Walaa-named by the authorities as Ahmad Abdulaziz Abdullah Abdullah-appeared before a court in the northern German city of Celle alongside four co-defendants accused of supporting IS. The five created a "pan-regional Salafist-jihadist network" in which Walaa "took on the leading role as the representative of the so-called Islamic State in Germany," prosecutors said in their indictment. "The goal of the network was to send people to IS in Syria or Iraq."

The closely-watched terror trial, expected to run until early 2018, opened under heavy security with armed police on patrol outside the courthouse. "For a long time little has been known about the backroom men, those who seduce and incite to jihad," Der Spiegel news weekly wrote. "The proceedings against Abu Walaa promise to give deep insights into these mechanisms, which makes this one of the most interesting Islamist tri-

als in recent years." If found guilty, the accused would face up to 10 years in prison, according to DPA news agency.

Deadly attacks

A shadowy figure who long evaded capture, Walaa has been linked to some of Germany's most high profile jihadist attacks since arriving in the country in 2001. After setting up his base in Hildesheim, a northern town seen as a hotbed of Islamic radicalism, he made a name for himself delivering extremist sermons at the notorious DIK mosque, which has since been shut down. Walaa, who has two wives and several children, also gave seminars across the country calling for jihad.

He notably spoke at a Berlin mosque frequented by Amri, who drove a truck through a crowded Christmas market last December, killing 12 people. German intelligence services took pictures of Amri in Hildesheim some 10 months earlier, prompting speculation he had ties to the network. Amri was shot dead by police in Italy days after his rampage. Walaa's four accomplices—a Turkish national, a German, a German-Serbian and a Cameroonian, aged between 27 and 51 — are likewise accused of indoctrinating young men with jihadist ideology.

German media reported that among their "students" was at least one of the three teenage boys

who last year set off a home-made bomb at an Indian wedding, badly wounding a Sikh priest. Much of the prosecution's case rests on evidence collected by an unidentified informant who infiltrated the network for months. But the witness is not expected to testify at the trial after Walaa urged his followers to kill the mole. Walaa and his co-accused have not been charged with planning any attacks in Germany.

But according to the indictment, they provided logistical and financial support to smuggle at least eight fighters into IS-held territory. Among them were German twins Mark and Kevin K., who blew themselves up in separate suicide blasts targeting Iraqi security forces. Together, they killed more than 150 soldiers. Another recruit was Anil O. who joined IS in Syria but fled after becoming disgusted with the terror group's tactics. He returned to Germany, where he was arrested in September 2016.

According to Spiegel, he turned on Walaa and provided crucial information in return for a reduced sentence. Walaa's lawyer Peter Krieger has dismissed the former fighter's testimony as "lies". Germany's security services estimate there are around 10,300 radical Islamists in the country, compared to some 3,800 in 2011. About 700 of them are considered dangerous and capable of a violent attack. —AFP

TRUMP TWITTER TIRADES DEEPEN ASIA ALARM OVER CONFLICT RISK

SEOUL: Donald Trump may have stumbled into dangerous new territory with tweets that North Korea interpreted as a declaration of war, alarming a region used to living on the edge but now seriously considering the possibility of conflict. Observers say the US president's fondness for Twitter diplomacy is creating a situation ripe for dangerous misunderstandings as he pursues an increasingly personal row with Kim Jong-Un.

Trump's tweet that the Pyongyang regime "won't be around much longer" elicited alarm from North Korea, with its foreign minister saying the US had "declared a war". Although the White House dismissed this reading as "absurd", the damage may have been done—North Korea takes a very dim view of what it perceives as threats against its leadership. "If we get into a war it's because of misperception," said Robert Kelly, professor of political science at Pusan National University. "In the real world there is no need to have conflict."

Nevertheless, tensions are surging. Pyongyang's missile program has stepped up a gear with two of its most recent launches sailing over a nervous Japan. This month it conducted its largest ever nuclear test—what it claimed was a hydrogen bomb. In the wake of the nuclear test, academics in China began openly calling for a reassessment of Beijing's long-term policy of support for North Korea. Pyongyang has "largely ignored China's efforts" to resolve the situation with dialogue, said Jia Qingguo of Peking University, in an article entitled "Time to prepare for the worst in North Korea".

The commentary, the first of several from Chinese academics in what some observers see as a sharp warning to Kim, urged Beijing to consider contingency talks

with Washington and Seoul. "When war becomes a real possibility, China must be prepared," the article said. The more hopeful interpretation of Trump's tweeting, said Kelly, is that Kim is not the target at all; rather it is intended to persuade China to "stop looking the other way".

Beijing has traditionally provided an economic lifeline to its isolated neighbor, fearful of the destabilizing consequences of regime collapse or conflict. But after the latest nuclear test, it signed up to tough new sanctions, including potentially damaging restrictions on crude oil, aimed at squeezing Pyongyang. Even so, Trump continues to poke the hornet's nest, either unaware of, or maybe in spite of, Pyongyang's growing outrage.

Dotard

With few of the normal contacts that grease the wheels of interaction between two countries—no embassies, infrequent chances for diplomats to meet the US and North Korea often conduct their relationship in full public view. That this relationship has descended into playground insults—Trump is a "mentally deranged... dotard"; Kim is "Little Rocket Man"—carries risks, says Kim Hyun-Wook, professor at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy.

"The US and North Korea don't want to drive this to a military conflict but if this psychological warfare persists, one side could unintentionally cross the red line which will prompt the other to launch a counteraction, leading to an armed clash," he said. Those actions and counteractions are already starting to play out. A hint late last week that Pyongyang might respond to Trump's insults with an atmospheric nuclear test raises the stakes—and the chance of miscalculation—next time the regime fires a missile, say analysts. —AFP



IN FLIGHT: This US Air Force handout photo shows a US Air Force B-1B Lancer, flanked by Republic of Korea Air Force F-15K Slam Eagles, dropping a 2,000 pound live munition at Pilsung Training Range, South Korea as part of a show of force mission in response to unlawful North Korean ballistic missile tests. — AFP

IN MEXICO'S EARTHQUAKE, TRAGEDIES AND MIRACLES

MEXICO CITY: More than 300 people were killed in last week's earthquake that rocked Mexico—and behind the numeric toll are hundreds more poignant stories that survivors will always remember. Here is a collection of accounts from the hard-hit capital Mexico City:

A sister's love

"We're here, the whole family. We will not move until we have you with us," Karina Ganoa cried out through a megaphone. The young woman clung to the hope that her brother Erick might still be alive—even after he was buried under the rubble of an office building in the city's Roma district. "Your wife is fine! Your parents are fine! Your siblings—you know that I love you," she shouted, her desperate message chilling viewers of the channel ForoTV as it was broadcast throughout Mexico. But tragically, her 35-year-old brother was found dead Thursday, Mexican media reported. Arms raised, rescuers held a minute of silence in his honor.

A final embrace

The lifeless bodies of Gabriel Morales and his wife Agueda Mendoza were found locked in an embrace, said their nephew Juan Carlos Williams, speaking on the day of their funeral. Married for 23

years, the pair in their fifties had an 18-year-old daughter. They had met while working for a state-owned enterprise, he as a topographical engineer and she as a lawyer. "They stayed together, united," the young man said. "That's what we'll remember."

Hope, then mourning

The sons of Maria Ortiz lived three days of anguish peppered with moments of hope. Their 57-year-old mother, a housekeeper, was trapped in the rubble of an elegant yet dilapidated building in the chic Condesa neighborhood. For long hours, they hoped she had survived. "She tried to go down but missed a few steps to reach the hallway before everything collapsed," said Leobardo Lopez Ortiz, 36, during his mother's wake over the weekend.

When they learned the building had fallen, the sons along with uncles and cousins left their neighborhood further east in the hope they could rescue her, working through the rubble alongside military officers. "Virtually all the steps of the staircase fell on her," said the eldest son Richard, 38. Her lifeless body was finally found Friday. Despite the pain, Richard said he was trying to stay calm: "I want to believe that under the weight, she died on the spot." —AFP

MERKEL SEEKS PARTNERS IN SPLINTERED GERMANY

BERLIN: Chancellor Angela Merkel got down to work yesterday in the fractured political landscape left by Germany's "earthquake" election, seeking a ruling majority to help neutralize a newly empowered hard right. Merkel was to hold meetings at the Bundestag lower house, where her conservative CDU/CSU group saw its number of seats axed to 246 from 309 previously following its worst poll showing in seven decades.

Joining her at the glass-domed Reichstag parliament building for the first time were the 93 deputies of the Alternative for Germany, a party branded far-right by many German media outlets and officials. "The language of the campaign is different than the one in parliament," one of the party's leading members, Alexander Gauland, told reporters outside the main chamber. "We know that we have a big responsibility in parliament, also to our voters."

Gauland, a CDU defector, had sparked outrage in the run-up to the election for incendiary comments, including urging Germans

to be "proud" of their WWII veterans and calling for a government official who is of Turkish origin to be "dumped in Anatolia". The AfD poached support from both mainstream camps, the conservatives and the Social Democrats (SPD), junior partners in the "grand coalition" that has led Germany for eight

of Merkel's 12 years in power.

A total of five million voters turned their backs on the governing parties, and 1.5 million of them voted for the AfD. According to opinion polls, most of those voters pointed to anger over Merkel's border policy, which allowed more than one million asylum seekers

into the country since 2015. But after the SPD scored a humiliating 20.5 percent, a post-war record, it ruled out further cooperation with Merkel, meaning her search for a ruling alliance became infinitely more complicated.

From Bavaria to Jamaica?

Commentators said Tuesday that Merkel's only other option—trying a link-up with the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) and the ecologist Greens—would be fraught with risk. The grouping has been dubbed a Jamaica coalition for the parties' colors matching the Caribbean nation's flag. The daily Bild, which had called the election a "political earthquake," reported that party leaders had spoken by phone late Sunday about the possibility of working together in Merkel's fourth term. Germans also seem to have warmed to the idea, with a poll by the independent Infratest dimap institute showing 57 percent support. However strong ideological differences could hinder the alliance. —AFP



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel leaves after giving a press conference at the headquarters of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party in Berlin one day after general elections. — AFP

NO INDIAN BOOTS ON THE GROUND IN AFGHANISTAN

NEW DELHI: India will not deploy troops to Afghanistan as part of a new US strategy for the war-torn country, the Indian defense minister said yesterday, but she promised to boost support for the recently unveiled effort. After talks with US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Nirmala Sitharaman said India was prepared to increase training for Afghan personnel and help develop critical civilian infrastructure such as schools and hospitals.

"India's contribution to Afghanistan has been for a very long time, and has been consistently on developmental issues," Sitharaman said at a news conference with Mattis. The "contribution has been on these grounds and we shall expand if necessary. However as we have made it very clear, there should not be boots from India on the ground." Mattis' trip to India is the first by any member of President Donald Trump's cabinet. It comes just after Trump unveiled a new Afghanistan strategy and urged New Delhi to help. "We applaud India's invaluable contributions to Afghanistan and welcome further efforts to promote Afghanistan's democracy, stability and security," Mattis said. India has long vied with arch-rival 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.

Bite the bullet

In Afghanistan, the Taliban are continuing to mount deadly attacks, control large areas of territory and are killing Afghan forces in the thousands. Under the plan, the US is sending more than 3,000 additional troops to Afghanistan to train and advise the country's security forces. There is no timeline on when the US may pull its troops out-a change from under Barack Obama, who set dates for when he wanted troops home.

But critics have questioned what the extra US soldiers can accomplish that previous forces—who numbered some 100,000 at the height of the fighting—have not. Earlier this year Afghan President Ashraf Ghani ordered a near doubling of the country's elite fighting force from 17,000 as part of a four-year roadmap that also aims to strengthen Afghanistan's air force. While Trump's commitment to increase American troop numbers and leave them there indefinitely has been welcomed by Afghan authorities, they know it will take time to improve the fighting abilities of their security forces.

Asia expert Michael Kugelman of the Woodrow Wilson Center was not surprised India is avoiding putting troops into the fight. "The risks of provoking Pakistan are perceived to be too great," Kugelman said. He outlined another, riskier possibility—that India might be more open to ship arms to Afghanistan. "New Delhi has rarely sent large, lethal weaponry to Kabul, other than a small fleet of fighter helicopters some months back," he said. "But it may well bite the bullet and contend that the need to strengthen the Afghan security forces outweighs the risk of angering the Pakistanis." —AFP

It has also trained more than 4,000 Afghan National Army officers and provided helicopters to the Afghan Air Force. Unveiling his Afghanistan policy last month, Trump angered Pakistan by saying it offered safe haven to "agents of chaos." "There can be no tolerance of terrorist safe havens," Mattis said yesterday, without referencing Pakistan. "As global leaders, India and the United States resolve to work together to eradicate this scourge."



BALI: Indonesian President Joko Widodo, center, and his wife Iriana, right, are greeted by children during their visit at a temporary shelter for villagers who were evacuated from their homes on the slope of Mount Agung in Karangasem, Bali, Indonesia. — AP

FOOD, FACEMASKS DISPATCHED TO BALI AS 75,000 FLEE VOLCANO

INDONESIAN PRESIDENT FLIES IN TO VISIT AID CENTERS

KARANGASEM, Indonesia: Vehicles laden with food, facemasks and bedding have been sent to help more than 75,000 people who have fled a volcano on the tourist island of Bali, as the Indonesian president flew in to visit crowded aid centers. Mount Agung, 75 kilometers from the resort hub of Kuta, has been rumbling since August and threatening to erupt for the first time since 1963 — a potential blow to the country's lucrative tourism industry.

Increasingly frequent tremors show the molten magma is still rising towards the surface, with the mountain entering a "critical phase," said the national disaster mitigation agency. It said the number fleeing their homes had increased as fears grow that the mountain could blow. "The local mitigation agency reported that until 12 pm yesterday, the number has reached 75,673 people, spread across 377 evacuation centers in nine districts," said agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho.

Around 62,000 people lived in the danger zone before the evacuations, according to the agency, but residents just outside the area have also left as a precaution. "The number is expected to continue to rise," Nugroho said. The

Indonesian Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation said there has been an increase in volcanic tremors, with a total of 564 recorded Monday. Evacuees have packed into temporary shelters or moved in with relatives. Some 2,000 cows have also been evacuated from the flanks of the volcano.

Speaking in Klungkung district, President Joko Widodo told evacuees the government would do its best to reduce economic losses incurred during the evacuation. "It is not easy to handle a volcanic eruption because there is no certainty when it's going to happen, or if it's going to happen at all," he said. "I ask everybody near Gunung Agung to listen to the officials, the governor, and the mayor's instruction so we can all minimize the impact of this volcano."

Balinese residents, international NGOs and the central government have begun organizing aid. Vehicles loaded with noodles, mineral water and blankets have been sent to the evacuation centers, while residents around the island have been collecting donations. Bali's "sister village" program and tradition of communal assistance means evacuees have been able to stay in villages outside the danger zone. I Ketut Subandi,

head of logistics at the village of Tana Ampo, said basic food items like rice, instant noodles, cooking oil and water were most needed.

"This morning we were worried because we had limited rice supply, but now we have received more rice stocks from donors," Subandi said. Indonesia's national disaster agency has sent 640,000 face masks, 12,500 mattresses, 8,400 blankets and 50 tents. The central government has a relief fund totaling nearly \$150 million to meet the cost of natural disasters, which could be tapped in case of an eruption. Officials announced the highest possible alert level on Friday due to the increasing volcanic activity and warned people to stay at least nine kilometers away from the crater.

Operators have cancelled trekking tours on the mountain but officials have otherwise been at pains to assure tourists the island is safe. The airport in Bali's capital Denpasar, through which millions of foreign tourists pass every year, has not been affected, but several countries including Australia and Singapore have issued a travel advisory. Flights to and from the island have not been interrupted but airlines are watching the situation closely. —AFP



NEW DELHI: Indian Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, center right, shakes hands with US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis center, upon his arrival at the Defense Ministry office, in New Delhi, India, yesterday. —AP

US, PHILIPPINE TROOPS SIMULATE PLANE HIJACKING, HOSTAGE RESCUE

MANILA: US and Philippine forces have staged an exercise simulating the seizure of an American plane by Islamic State and a hostage rescue, as they look to refocus their military alliance towards counter-terrorism. The five-day training exercise which ended yesterday was the first of its kind and saw more than 400 troops, airport police and hostage negotiators create a mock hijack of a plane by an IS cell that forced it to land at Clark airport north of Manila, officials said.

Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the drill was in line with President Rodrigo Duterte's wish to refocus the two countries' 1951 mutual defense pact towards counter-terrorism and disaster relief. Since coming to power, Duterte has sought to weaken ties with the country's former colonial ruler and pivot towards China and Russia. He previously said military exercises with America were a "humiliation" for the Philippines and threatened to sever defense ties completely. —AFP

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Subscription period: 21 days starting on 1 / 10 / 2017 and ending on 21 / 10 / 2017 during the official working hours from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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Subscription of the surplus shares: The surplus shares that have not been subscribed to by the shareholders who have a priority to subscribe thereto, may be subscribed to by any existing shareholders of the company who wish to subscribe to additional shares.

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- Whoever wishes to subscribe should visit the company's office at Sharq, Jabar Al-Mubarak Street, Bebbhani Building, Third Floor, at 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. to receive a notice stating the name and number of the shareholder, and the number of shares owned by him as at the due date.
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SAUDI OFFICIAL AXED OVER KING IMAGE WITH 'STAR WARS' ICON

RIYADH: A Saudi education official has been sacked over a schoolbook that accidentally included a doctored photograph of a former ruler sitting next to a "Star Wars" character, triggering online ridicule. The black-and-white image shows King Faisal, Saudi Arabia's third monarch, signing the United Nations Charter in 1945, with the diminutive Jedi master Yoda perched next to him.

Saudi Arabia scrambled last week to withdraw the textbook. The government has sacked Mohammad Bin Atiyah Al-Harithi, the Deputy Education Minister for Curricula, saying that new versions of the textbook are being printed after the 'inadvertent error.' Education Minister Ahmed Al-Eissa to terminate the mandate of ... Harithi and all those responsible for reviewing and approving textbooks," the education ministry said in a statement Monday.

The photo was a creation of 26-year-old Saudi artist

Abdullah Al-Shehri, who has gained renown for mixing pop culture icons into historic photographs. Shehri said he was surprised to see his photograph end up in the school textbook. He told the New York Times that he paired King Faisal and Yoda as they were both intelligent and because Yoda's green skin and lightsaber match the green of the Saudi flag.

He stressed he had meant no offence to the king, seen widely as the architect of Saudi Arabia's modernization. The error prompted light-hearted banter on social media. One Saudi schoolteacher joked that this error symbolized "payback" after the Education Ministry introduced an extra hour of classes in schools earlier this year. "Remember when Yoda signed the United Nations charter back in 1945 with Faisal of Saudi, @starwars? "Saudi Ministry of Education does!" one Twitter user said. — AFP

SAUDI TO ALLOW WOMEN TO DRIVE IN HISTORIC...

Continued from Page 1

Women were also allowed into a sports stadium-previously a male-only arena-to watch a musical concert, a move that chimes with the government's "Vision 2030" plan for social and economic reform as the kingdom prepares for a post-oil era. With more than half the country aged under 25, Prince Mohammed, the architect of Vision 2030, is seen as catering to the aspiration of the youth with an array of entertainment options and promoting more women in the workforce.

Tight restrictions

The gambit to loosen social restrictions, which had so far not translated into more political and civil rights, seeks to push criticism over a recent political crackdown out of the public eye, some analysts say. Authorities this month arrested more than two dozen people, including influential clerics and activists, in what critics decried as a coordinated crackdown. Ultra-conservative Saudi Arabia has some of the world's tightest restrictions on women, despite ambitious government reforms aimed at boosting female employment.

Under the country's guardianship system, a male family member—normally the father, husband or brother—must grant permission for a woman's study, travel

and other activities. But the kingdom appears to be relaxing some norms as part of the Vision 2030 plan. Yesterday's announcement comes at a crucial time for Saudi Arabia. The OPEC kingpin is in a battle for regional influence with arch-rival Iran, bogged down in a controversial military intervention in neighboring Yemen and at loggerheads with fellow US Gulf ally Qatar.

The 32-year-old Crown Prince Mohammed is set to be the first millennial to occupy the throne, although the timing of his ascension remains unknown. Already viewed as the de facto ruler controlling all the major levers of government, from defense to the economy, the heir apparent is seen as stamping out traces of internal dissent before any formal transfer of power from his 81-year-old father King Salman.

Meanwhile, United States yesterday welcomed Saudi Arabia's decision to join the rest of the world in allowing women behind the wheel. Washington is a firm friend of the Saudi kingdom, but has often been embarrassed by its ally's conservative religious and social attitudes. "We're happy to hear that," State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert told reporters when informed of the Saudi decision. "It's a great step in the right direction. We're just happy today. A very positive sign." — Agencies

ERDOGAN THREATENS KURDS

Continued from Page 1

The Kurds held the vote despite threats from Baghdad, Iraq's powerful eastern neighbor Iran, and Turkey, the region's main link to the outside world. "This referendum decision, which has been taken without any consultation, is treachery," Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said, repeating threats to cut off the pipeline that carries hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil a day from northern Iraq to global markets.

He warned that Iraqi Kurds would go hungry if Turkey imposed sanctions and said military and economic measures could be used against them.

Iraqi Kurds - part of the largest ethnic group left stateless when the Ottoman empire collapsed a century ago - say the referendum acknowledges their contribution in confronting Islamic State after it overwhelmed the Iraqi army in 2014 and seized control of a third of Iraq.

Voters were asked to say 'yes' or 'no' to the question: "Do you want the Kurdistan Region and Kurdistan areas outside the (Kurdistan) Region to become an independent country?" With 30 million ethnic Kurds scattered across the region, mainly in Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria, governments fear the spread of separatism to their own Kurdish populations. Iraqi soldiers joined Turkish troops for military exercises in southeast Turkey yesterday near the border with Iraq's Kurdistan region. Turkey also took the Rudaw TV channel off its satellite service TurkSat, a Turkish broadcasting official said.

State department

The US State Department said it was "deeply disappointed" by the KRK's decision to conduct the referendum but added that Washington's "historic relationship" with the people of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region would not change. Asked about the referendum, White House

spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said on Monday: "We hope for a unified Iraq to annihilate ISIS (Islamic State) and certainly a unified Iraq to push back on Iran."

The European Union regretted that the Kurds had failed to heed its call not to hold the referendum and said Iraqi unity remained essential in facing the threat from Islamic State. The Kremlin signaled its opposition to a Kurdish breakthrough in northern Iraq, saying Moscow backed the territorial integrity of countries in the region. Iran banned flights to and from Kurdistan on Sunday, while Baghdad asked foreign countries to stop oil trading with the Kurdish region and demanded that the KRK hand over control of its international airports and border posts with Iran, Turkey and Syria.

Iranian Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, a top adviser to the Supreme Leader, called on "the four neighboring countries to block land borders" with the Iraqi Kurdish region, according to state news agency IRNA. Tehran supports Shiite Muslim groups that have ruled or held security and government positions in Iraq since the US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003. Syria, embroiled in a devastating civil war and whose Kurds are pressing ahead with their own self-determination, rejected the referendum.

KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani said he hoped to maintain good relations with Turkey. "The referendum does not mean independence will happen tomorrow, nor are we redrawing borders," he said in Arbil on Monday. "If the 'yes' vote wins, we will resolve our issues with Baghdad peacefully." British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson reiterated London's opposition to the vote, urging "all sides to refrain from provocative statements and actions in its aftermath. "The priority must remain the defeat of Daesh and returning stability to liberated areas," he added, a reference to Islamic State militants who continue to control parts of Iraq and Syria. — Reuters



KUTUPALONG, Bangladesh: Rohingya refugees reach up for relief supplies at the Kutupalong refugee camp. — AFP

MUD, MISERY FOR REFUGEES AS BANGLADESH TENT CITY GROWS

KUTUPALONG: Two hours' walk from the nearest road, with no toilets or clean water and little proper shelter, the vast area of scrubland Bangladesh has set aside for more than 400,000 Rohingya refugees is a miserable place to call home. Over the last week, Bangladesh authorities have cleared hundreds of thousands of newly-arrived refugees from roadsides and private land near the border with Myanmar where they had set up camp, and ordered them to head for the 2,000-acre site, an extension of the largest existing camp at Kutupalong.

But almost nothing has been set up for them there. Bangladesh has for decades been home to Rohingya refugees who live in camps run by the United Nations where they have access to food, sanitation and clean water. But the poor, overpopulated country is no haven for the estimated 436,000 Rohingya who have arrived in the last month after fleeing violence that the UN has called a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing".

The unprecedented speed and scale of the latest influx has completely overwhelmed the existing camps. Some of the new arrivals, who now make up the majority of the refugees in Bangladesh, have been taken in by relatives already in those camps, others by local families. But many more have had to fend for themselves and have headed to the new site known as the Kutupalong Extension, where tents set up by the UN refugee agency quickly filled up. Newer arrivals have had to haul bamboo poles and tarpaulins up steep, muddy slopes and across rivers swollen by the recent monsoon rains to build makeshift shelters that appear unlikely to survive the upcoming cyclone season.

Those makeshift shelters now stretch as far as the eye can see—even though the United Nations says the site, allocated by the government just 10 days ago, is unfit for habitation. Every year, cyclones batter this part of the Bangladesh coast, and the season is just weeks away. As if that wasn't enough, the area is part of a forest reserve that is home to elephants. Last week two elderly Rohingya refugees were trampled to death as they slept in another part of the reserve.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, who visited the area over the weekend, said he had been struck by "the incredible magnitude" of the refugees' needs. "They need everything—they need food,

they need clean water, they need shelter, they need proper health care," he said. "Perhaps most urgent is to find them proper accommodation as most of them are in makeshift shelters in areas outside the proper camps."

Quagmire

Bangladesh has only just given the army clearance to start work on constructing an access road to the new site. Aid agency sources said that last week it was given the funds to build a 20-kilometre road and two bridges. Until that happens, no aid can be transported in, meaning the refugees have to walk long distances to collect food and water.

But the heavy rains that have turned the area into a quagmire could bring further delays. No work has yet been done on the construction of 14,000 large shelters that the government said would be built within 10 days after it allocated the land on September 16. One aid agency source said the government was still figuring out what kind of shelters it should build—meaning that the process is unlikely to start soon. The UN says it is not even clear how many people have settled on the new site—further complicating the already daunting task of providing aid.

An estimated 60 percent of the new refugees are children, but there are no schools for them—even the ones in the established camps have now been occupied by new arrivals and desks turned into makeshift beds. Action Against Hunger, which is providing hot meals for new refugees, reports "alarming" rates of child malnutrition, with around six percent of under-fives severely malnourished. Doctors Without Borders, which has operated in the Rohingya camps for decades, says existing medical facilities are now completely overwhelmed.

It has warned that a public health emergency may be just around the corner, with refugees having to drink water from streams or shallow wells contaminated with excreta. Nosima Khatun, 30, says she arrived in Bangladesh five days ago with her husband and five children after fleeing her village in Myanmar. Unable to find space at the established camps, they went to the new site, and now face a four-hour round trip to the main aid distribution spots. "It takes more than two hours on foot, but we have no food left where we are staying," she said, as her baby wriggled in her arms. — AFP

UAE TACKLES FORCED LABOR, HARASSMENT

Continued from Page 1

domestic staff to endure long hours, unpaid wages and abuse. The new law covers 19 service work occupations, including guards, parking valet workers, gardeners, domestic workers, cooks, and nannies, as well as private trainers, nurses, and drivers.

It is set to take effect two months after its publication in the official gazette. While welcoming the legal change, rights organizations have voiced concerns about its enforcement and implementation—like how labor inspections will be conducted. Another area of concern is the 'kafala' or sponsorship system, which forces foreign workers to seek their employer's consent to change jobs or leave the country. — Reuters



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Focus

PUTTING THE PIECES
TOGETHER: MERKEL'S
COALITION JIGSAW

With six different party blocs in Germany's parliament after Sunday's election, conservative Chancellor Angela Merkel faces a jigsaw puzzle of unprecedented complexity to build a coalition. As her current partners, the Social Democrats (SPD), plan to head into opposition after bruising losses, Merkel's best prospect for a parliamentary majority is an alliance of her conservatives, the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) and the Greens - the first three-way government since the 1950s.

All parties aim to have a new government established by January, but many regard that timetable as optimistic and expect. In 2013, a relatively simple two-party agreement with the SPD took almost 100 days. Until the Bundestag, the lower house of parliament, confirms a new coalition, Merkel's existing government remains in place. Following is a summary of what happens next:

Lower Saxony election

Parties are likely to be reluctant to make the compromises necessary for a coalition before Lower Saxony's snap regional election on Oct 15, for fear of alienating supporters in a key state.

New parliament convenes

The new Bundestag has until Oct. 24 to convene, by which time a new president or speaker must be chosen. The six blocs must also elect their parliamentary group leaders and other officials by then. The current president of the Bundestag, Norbert Lammert of Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), is not up for re-election. One



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel (center), leader of the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), shakes hands prior to a meeting with the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in Berlin yesterday. — AFP

option that has been floated is for Wolfgang Schaueble, 75 and finance minister since 2009, to become Bundestag president to make way for one of the likely junior coalition partners to take the finance portfolio.

Exploratory talks

Traditionally, the winner of the election invites potential coalition partners to exploratory talks to establish if they have sufficient common ground to work together. Keen to maximize her room for maneuver, Merkel has said she wants to invite the SPD as well as the Greens and the FPD, even though the SPD's top leaders have already said they want to go into opposition. All parties have ruled out working with the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, while the conservatives rule out working with the radical Left party, which has its origins in the East German Communist Party. If talks with the FPD and Greens fail, pressure could grow on the SPD to revisit its decision. However, this would make the AfD the largest opposition party, with a privileged role in parliamentary committees - something the rest of the political establishment will want to avoid. The Lower Saxony election may mean the exploratory talks will be slower to start than usual.

Coalition talks

Once exploratory talks have been completed, the parties that have agreed in principle to work together hold formal talks to thrash out a government program that they are committed to implementing. This process, which involves painstaking policy negotiation, can take over a month, even when only two parties are involved. If party members demand a vote on the program, further delays can occur. After the 2013 election, it took more than four weeks for formal coalition talks to begin, and they lasted another month. Merkel's new government was confirmed on Dec 17 after SPD members approved the coalition deal, almost three months after the Sept 22 election. — Reuters

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COULD JAPAN'S ABE 'DO A THERESA MAY'?

By Richard Carter

Seeking to capitalize on a fractured and weak opposition and a healthy lead in the polls, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stunned Japan by gambling on a snap election more than a year before it was due. The parallels with another world leader-Britain's Theresa May-are striking. In April, May caught the country off guard by calling an election, hoping to take advantage of a 20-point poll lead over the opposition Labor party and secure her own mandate to take Britain out of the European Union.

"Both leaders called a snap election at a time their public support was not going to get better," said Sadafumi Kawato, professor of political science at the University of Tokyo. But in May's case, the gamble backfired spectacularly. After a campaign widely seen as lackluster and where May came across as distant and robotic, she lost 13 seats and was forced into a controversial deal with Northern Ireland's ultra-conservative DUP party to cling onto a majority.

Meanwhile, Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn defied predictions of an electoral meltdown and campaigned strongly, being seen as close to the voters in contrast to an

aloof May, dismissed in one paper as a "dead woman walking." British voters were also furious that May called an election after repeatedly insisting this was not on the cards. Some experts warned Abe could face a similar backlash. Yoel Sano, head of Global Political and Security Risk from BMI Research, said Japan's leader may have "underestimated the electorate's potential to switch to the opposition" and could lose support if voters see the vote as a ploy to cling onto power.

"The Japanese public may view it as a cynical and opportunistic move, especially given the severity of the North Korean crisis," said Sano. Polls show voters generally approve of Abe's hawkish policy on Pyongyang-which fired two missiles over Japan in the space of a month-and he is counting on the electorate seeing him as a steady pair of hands.

'Giant among dwarves'

Jeff Kingston, Director of Asian Studies at the Temple University Japan, said Abe's gamble was more likely to pay off as he faces a weaker opposition than May did with Corbyn. "Unlike in Britain with Labor, there is no opposition worthy of the name

in Japan. (The ruling party) LDP is a giant among dwarves. It would take a major scandal to derail the Abe express," Kingston said. "He may not retain his super majority but given the fractured and unprepared state of Japan's opposition parties, it's hard to see much risk for a commanding majority." The conservative LDP and its junior coalition partner Komeito enjoy a so-called super majority of two-thirds of the 475 House of Representatives. This is crucial if Abe wishes to press forward with a constitutional overhaul to strengthen the Japanese military in the face of the North Korean threat. Another reason Abe may be rushing ahead with an election is to cut the ground under the popular mayor of Tokyo, Yuriko Koike, who unveiled a new party "Kibo no To" (Party of Hope), just hours before the vote was called. Here again there are parallels with Britain as some commentators believed May wanted to fight Corbyn rather than the well-liked Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, widely seen as a future Labour leader. "Koike annihilated the LDP in Tokyo but taking that movement national will not be easy and they are not ready," said Kingston.

'Ill-doings'

Abe's opponents have cried foul, with Kazunori Yamanoi, parliamentary head of the main opposition Democratic Party, saying it was "unthinkable" for the premier to call a snap vote "for his own reasons... at a time when Japanese citizens are frightened by the North Korean missile crisis." Others view the election as a way of deflecting attention from a series of scandals that have rocked Abe in recent months, including allegations of favoritism to a friend in a business deal-which the prime minister strongly denies.

"I think this will be a general election to cover up his ill doings, to move people's attention away from the scandals," said one voter, 33-year-old call-centre employee Mayumi Chikagawa. But a year after 2016 produced vote surprises from Brexit to the election of Donald Trump, Temple University analyst Kingston said there was little chance of a repeat in Japan. There was "not much enthusiasm for Abe or his policies," acknowledged the expert. "Half of those who support him say they do so because there is no alternative. And that's why Abe will win. Disaffected voters have no place to go." — AFP

CENTURIES OF FRICTION BETWEEN CATALONIA AND SPAIN

By Adrien Vicente

The crisis pitting Spain's government against leaders in Catalonia over an independence referendum banned by Madrid is but the latest episode of centuries of friction between this region and central authorities. The separatists who currently govern the wealthy region in northeastern Spain often make references to the short-lived 1931-1939 republic crushed by general Francisco Franco after a three-year civil war.

Last week, after a wave of detentions and police seizures of items such as ballots aimed at stopping the referendum on October 1, Catalan independence supporters shouted "No pasaran!" (Spanish for "they shall not pass"), the anti-fascist slogan of the bloody conflict. Franco's troops only

took Catalonia months before the war ended in April 1939, sparking a mass exodus to neighboring France.

"The first thing Franco did in Catalonia was to abolish the Generalitat," the autonomous regional government, says Jordi Canal, a historian at the Paris-based School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences. "The trauma of 1939, of exile, is very present" in Catalonia, adds Joan Baptista Culla, a historian at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Even before this during the fledgling republic, the Generalitat's president Lluís Companys proclaimed a "Catalan state in the Spanish federal republic" in 1934 to oppose the conservatives who governed in Madrid.

With little support, he resisted "six or seven hours, and he came out, under arrest, his hands up," says Canal. But the photos of

the leader in his cell were widely shared, galvanizing Catalans. Which is "exactly what the Spanish government is trying to avoid now," says the historian, pointing out that Spanish authorities have so far spared separatist leaders and have instead detained lower-level-if key-members of the team organizing the vote. Exiled in France, Companys was denounced by the Nazis in 1940 and handed over to Spain where he was executed. "It's the fundamental image of the martyr president," says Culla.

Way back when

But Catalonia's history is marked by symbols dating from far earlier in time. The Diada, the region's annual holiday on September 11 which since 2012 has been the scene of big separatist rallies, commemorates the fall of Barcelona in 1714 to

troops of the Spanish King Philip V, the grandson of France's Louis XIV. After this battle, Catalonia, which until then had its own institutions and laws as part of the kingdom, was "subjected to the laws of (the Crown of Castile)," says Culla. Andrew Dowling, a Catalonia specialist at Cardiff University, says Catalans did lose "their rights and privileges but it was not a nationalist war." "The Catalans were punished because they backed the wrong side of the war," supporting archduke Charles of Austria during the 1701-14 European war for the Spanish throne.

He says the first Catalan nationalist party only emerged in 1901. "The Catalans perceived themselves as an economically advanced, culturally advanced people and looked at Spain as a kind of backwards, illiterate society," says Dowling, at a time when Spain was declining with the loss of its last colonies. For Canal, this feeling came from the fact that the Catalans had their own language, civil law, and "a much stronger industrial past and present than elsewhere." It was around that time that the Catalan hymn was created, with lyrics pointing to a peasant revolt in the 17th century against the presence of soldiers belonging to the crown.

Rise of separatism

But the role of these symbols in the rise since 2010 of separatism, which had until then been marginal in Catalonia, divides historians. "The current pro-independence movement is buoyed by what happened over the past seven or eight years," says Culla. The Catalans were angered in 2010 when Spain's Constitutional Court cancelled a key part of an official text that gave them bigger autonomy and the status of "nation," and Madrid's subsequent refusal to negotiate.

Canal believes it stems more from the role of "schools and media" in Catalonia, which have "convinced the Catalans, especially the younger ones, that they are members of a nation that deserves to be a state." Culla, though, doesn't think schools have systematically promoted nationalism. "In Catalonia, there are tens of thousands of teachers," he says. "To think they are robots and that they are all radical separatists is grotesque." — AFP



MADRID: Spanish flags hang from the windows of a residential building in Madrid yesterday. Patriotic protests have multiplied in Spain five days before the banned referendum on the independence of Catalonia. Polls show Catalans are split on the issue of independence, but a large majority want to vote in a legitimate referendum to settle the matter. — AFP

FLEETWOOD TO MISS BRITISH MASTERS FOR CHILD'S BIRTH

NEWCASTLE: Race to Dubai leader Tommy Fleetwood will miss this week's British Masters in Newcastle for the possible birth of his child, while Andrew Johnston pulled out injured yesterday. Fleetwood, 26, has elected to stay with his partner and manager Clare, who is soon to give birth to the couple's child. "I wanted to give myself every chance of playing this week, but being there at the birth of your child is a special moment in anyone's life and I would not want to miss it," said Fleetwood. "I look forward to returning to playing soon and hopefully I can have a strong end to the season and compete for the Race to Dubai title." Fleetwood, who has won twice this season, currently leads the Race to Dubai by nearly one million points from Spain's Sergio Garcia, who is also playing the tournament hosted by former world number one Lee Westwood at Close House. —AFP



EX-NEWCASTLE CHAIRMAN SHEPHERD DIES AGED 76

LONDON: Former Newcastle chairman Freddy Shepherd, a pivotal figure in the club's 1990s success, has died aged 76, his family announced yesterday. Shepherd was Newcastle chairman for 10 years from 1997 and eventually sold his share of the club to current owner Mike Ashley. "Freddy Shepherd sadly passed away peacefully at his home last night," his family said in a statement. "At this difficult time the family have asked that their privacy be respected." Tyneside-born Shepherd became a Newcastle director in 1992 and served as vice-chairman to John Hall as the club finished Premier League runners-up in both 1996 and 1997. Shepherd played a key role in the appointment of Kevin Keegan as manager in the early 1990s, a move that helped transform the then struggling second tier side into a top-flight force. Under Keegan's management, Newcastle went toe to toe with Manchester United in the Premier League title race before losing out to Alex Ferguson's team. —AFP

LAS PALMAS COACH MARQUEZ QUILTS

BARCELONA: Las Palmas coach Manolo Marquez has become the third La Liga manager to leave his job this season, calling a surprise news conference yesterday to announce his resignation after losing four of the first six games of the campaign. Las Palmas are 15th in the standings with six points and Marquez's last game in charge was a 2-0 home defeat by Leganes on Sunday. Marquez had never coached a top-flight side before landing the job in July after leading the club's reserve team to promotion. "We all thought it was the best option at the time and I would agree to it 80 times out of 100 but as the days went by I began to feel out of place," Marquez told reporters. "We can't deny that everything happened very quickly and in a hurry. I had the sensation that I couldn't transmit what I wanted to the players but that is more my problem than theirs." —Reuters



USOC CHIEF BACKS ATHLETE PROTESTS

PARK CITY: Athletes should feel free to express their political opinions during next February's Winter Games in Pyeongchang despite strict Olympic rules barring such demonstrations, the head of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) said on Monday.

Referring to Sunday's protest by over 100 NFL players, who went down on one knee during the national anthem to protest against racial inequality, USOC CEO Scott Blackmun said athletes had a right to air their opinions. "The athletes you see protesting are protesting because they love their country, not because they don't," he said. "So we fully support that our athletes and everybody else to express themselves." Blackmun acknowledged that the situation is trickier given the International Olympic Committee charter, which specifically bans "demonstrations of political, religious or racial propaganda" at Olympic venues.

"We have a little bit of a different state of play when it comes to the Olympic Games," Blackmun praised the 1968 Olympic protest by American track and field athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos, who gave a black power salute from the podium in Mexico City, sparking controversy. Smith later stated that the gesture was a "human rights salute".

"That was a seminal moment not only for the Olympic movement but the US Olympic team and we recognized them last year by bringing them to the White House," he said. Several Olympic hopefuls backed the protesting NFL players but said on Monday that it was too soon to say what they may do if they find themselves in a similar position.

"I respect what those guys did and I do believe there is a lot of room for social change. As a person of color I do think it's something that we need to address," said Elana Meyers, an American bobsled pilot and two-time Winter Olympic medalist.

But at the Olympics, the only time you get to hear your national anthem is if you win a gold medal. "So it is going to come down to a game time decision," Julia Mancuso, an alpine skier and four-time Olympic medalist, also supports the NFL players but said the dynamics are different for Olympic athletes.

"When it comes to the Olympics, I like to think that it's a special event not just like the NFL or pro sports teams that compete every weekend. For us it's every four years," she said.

"I'm proud of athletes that stand up for what they believe in... but I also like to think of us all as very patriotic athletes." —Reuters



GLENDALE: This file photo taken on September 25, 2017 shows Quarterback Dak Prescott #4 of the Dallas Cowboys diving into the endzone to score on a ten yard rushing touchdown against the Arizona Cardinals during the second quarter of the NFL game at the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Arizona. — AFP

CHINA REFUSES VISA TO ELDERLY INDIA RUNNER

NEW DELHI: A 101-year-old Indian runner said yesterday that China has refused to grant her a visa to participate in the Asian Masters Athletics Championships, robbing her of a potential medal. Man Kaur, dubbed the "miracle from Chandigarh" after winning the 100-metres gold at the World Masters Games in Auckland in April, had been training hard for the competition at home in Punjab state.

"I felt very bad when my visa was rejected," she told AFP. "Wherever we used to go we would come back winners and even this time around I was confident of victory." But it's not the end of the road. I will continue training and look forward to competing in future events," she added. Kaur, who took up athletics eight years ago at the tender age of 93, was looking to compete in the 100m, 200m, shot put and javelin categories in the China Masters in Rugao.

She had no prior running experience before her 79-year-old son Gurdev Singh, who said his Chinese visa was also refused, suggested she join him in competing on the international masters games circuit. "We have travelled all over the world, from

England to America to New Zealand but never has our visa been rejected," Singh, a permanent resident of Canada, told AFP.

"The Chinese Embassy said we don't have a personal invite but we carried a letter from the Indian Masters Athletics Association which should have been enough. "Don't people go to China as tourists, do they need some invite? What problem can a 101-year-old and a 79-year-old create in China apart from competing in the event," he added.

Singh and his mother will be travelling to Toronto next month where Kaur will be bestowed with the 'Lifetime achievement award' during a function. Kaur is one of the nominees for the coveted Laureus World Sports Awards 2017 in the new category - 'Best Sporting Moment of the Year'. Singh said "a healthy diet and strict training regimen" kept the mother-son duo in good shape as they eye more medals in next year's World Masters Athletics Championships in Spain. "Our body is God's gift and if we don't preserve this, our next generation will be weak," he said. The Chinese embassy in New Delhi did not comment on the case. — AFP



AUCKLAND: In this photograph taken on April 24, 2017, Indian runner Man Kaur, 101, celebrates after competing in the 100m sprint in the 100+ age category at the World Masters Games at Trusts Arena in Auckland on April 24, 2017. A 101-year-old Indian runner said yesterday that China has refused to grant her a visa to participate in the Asian Masters Athletics Championships, robbing her of a potential medal. —AFP

NFL

COWBOYS REBOUND FROM LOSS TO TOPPLE CARDINALS

PHOENIX: The Dallas Cowboys proved Monday they can take a punch and deliver one too. Dallas overcame a slow start but eventually looked like their old selves again, bouncing back from a crushing loss the week before to defeat the Arizona Cardinals 28-17 on Monday.

Dak Prescott threw for two touchdown passes and going airborne for another score as the Cowboys snapped a four-game losing skid to Arizona. Dallas needed some good news after being humbled 42-17 by the Denver Broncos the week before.

"We showed the character of this team," Prescott said. "Last week we got hit in the mouth pretty good. We did the things we needed to do to get the win tonight." Ezekiel Elliott finished with 80 yards and also ran for a touchdown as Dallas improved to 2-1 on the season. It was also a rebound performance for Elliott who had a career low eight yards against the Broncos.

In Monday's victory, the Cowboys looked more like the team that went 13-3 last season and started 2017 off with lopsided 19-3 win over the New York Giants. Prescott opened the scoring for the Cowboys with a just over a minute left in the first half by keeping the snap and running 10 yards before somersaulting into the end zone. Prescott got hit at the last second and launched into the air.

"I just told myself I had to jump in the air. I was hoping I didn't helicopter so I was glad I went straight over," he said. Elliott capped the scoring with an eight-yard touchdown run. The score was tied 7-7 after two quarters that had the Cardinals lamenting the fact they weren't ahead. Dallas gained just 57 total yards in the first half.

Before the game, the Cowboys and Cardinals added their voices to the wave of protests against racism and division across the United States as the players collectively took a knee.

NFL Results/Standings

Dallas Cowboys 28 Arizona Cardinals 17															
American Football Conference							National Football Conference								
AFC East							NFC East								
W	L	T	OTL	PF	PA	PCT	Philadelphia	Washington	Dallas						
New England	2	1	0	0	99	95	.667	2	1	0	0	77	68	.667	
Buffalo	2	1	0	0	50	37	.667	2	1	0	0	64	62	.667	
Miami	1	1	0	0	25	37	.500	NY Giants	0	3	0	0	37	70	0
NY Jets	1	2	0	0	52	72	.333	NFC North							
AFC North							Minnesota	2	1	0	0	72	62	.667	
Pittsburgh	2	1	0	1	64	50	.667	Green Bay	2	1	0	0	67	67	.667
Baltimore	2	1	0	0	51	54	.667	Detroit	2	1	0	0	85	63	.667
Cleveland	0	3	0	0	56	76	0	Chicago	1	2	0	0	47	69	.333
Cincinnati	0	3	0	1	33	60	0	NFC South							
AFC South							Atlanta	3	0	0	0	87	66	1.000	
Tennessee	2	1	0	0	86	69	.667	Carolina	2	1	0	0	45	40	.667
Jacksonville	2	1	0	0	89	51	.667	Tampa Bay	1	1	0	0	46	41	.500
Indianapolis	1	2	0	1	53	90	.333	New Orleans	1	2	0	0	73	78	.333
Houston	1	2	0	0	53	74	.333	NFC West							
AFC West							LA Rams	2	1	0	0	107	75	.667	
Kansas City	3	0	0	0	93	57	1.000	Seattle	1	2	0	0	48	59	.333
Oakland	2	1	0	0	81	63	.667	Arizona	1	2	0	0	56	76	.333
Denver	2	1	0	0	82	64	.667	San Francisco	0	3	0	0	51	76	0
LA Chargers	0	3	0	0	48	67	0								

JONES TAKES A KNEE

The Cowboys were joined by team owner Jerry Jones in kneeling down at mid-field, but they chose to do so before former "American Idol" winner Jordin Sparks sang the national anthem in front of a crowd of 65,100 at the University of Phoenix Stadium.

The Cowboys said they wanted to take a knee as a statement of equality and a representation of unity but without protesting "The Star-Spangled Banner." A smattering of Arizona fans booed the Cowboys when they took a knee. As a further indication of just how divisive the issue has become, others cheered loudly when a giant US flag was unfurled and covered almost the entire pitch.

Sparks, an African American, also wanted to send a message of unity as she wrote on her left hand '31:8-9'-a Bible verse that reads: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute." The Cardinals also locked arms during the anthem, but nobody appeared to take a knee or raise a clenched fist. US President Donald Trump has been locked in a days-long feud with NFL players, owners and league officials over the symbolic protests aimed at drawing attention to racial injustice. On Friday, he called protesting players "sons of bitches" who should be fired. Jones lives in the Republican stronghold of Texas and was one of seven NFL owners to donate to Trump's inauguration. —AFP

RUGBY

WORLD RUGBY SLAMS CALLS FOR TACKLING BAN IN SCHOOLS

LONDON: World Rugby chiefs have slammed a controversial study that claims tackling and scrums should be banned in schools. Allyson Pollock and Graham Kirkwood from the Institute of Health at Newcastle University argue that most injuries in youth rugby occur due to the collision elements of the game.

Writing in the British Medical Journal (BMJ), they said that ministers should "put the interests of the child before those of corporate professional rugby unions".

Removing collisions from school rugby is likely to "reduce and mitigate the risk of injury" in pupils, they said. The researchers called on the UK chief medical officers to advise the UK Government to remove "harmful contact" from the game.

The article comes at a time when issue of concussions in professional rugby is become a major concern. But World Rugby hit back at the claims in a strongly worded statement that defended their sport's approach to safety issues.

"World Rugby and its member unions take player safety and welfare very seriously and proactively pursue an evidence-based approach to reduce the risk of injury at all levels," a World Rugby statement read.

"The continual claims made by Prof Pollock are not based on like-for-like injury statistics and her extreme and alarmist conclusions are simply not supported by the data. "For example, it is well documented that, for most sports, injury

rates increase with age and yet the research quoted mixes 9-12 with 18-20 age groups.

"Contrary to Pollock's opinion, the systematic published studies where injury has been properly defined and monitored, suggest the risk for pre-teens is not unacceptably high compared to other popular sports.

"Of course, as with all sports there is some risk of injury associated with rugby and governing bodies have a responsibility

to mitigate that risk as far as possible. "That is why rugby for young people at schools or clubs exists in different forms, both contact and non-contact, and significant work has been undertaken over a number of years to develop a structured progression.

"The responsibility for every sport is to manage the risk as best as possible banning the tackle supports reducing activity and reducing activity is associated with risk." —AFP

DEPLETED S AFRICA NOT TAKING BANGLADESH LIGHTLY

DHAKA: South Africa will be hoping to ease new coach Ottis Gibson into his job in a two-test series against Bangladesh where the home side defend a one-sided record against their opponents but are light on fast bowlers and still tinkering with their top order.

South Africa have won by an innings in each of their four previous home tests against Bangladesh and not lost to them away either. But after losing a

four-match series in England this year and still without key elements of their pace attack, there will be no air of complacency about the home team.

Chris Morris, Vernon Philander and Dale Steyn remain sidelined, leaving Morne Morkel and Kagiso Rabada to lead a thin seam attack while 22-year-old Aiden Markham will make his debut as the latest opening partner for Dean Elgar. "We have a good understanding

of each other's games and how we operate. I am excited to go with him," Markham told reporters. For Gibson the injury toll among the bowlers is a primary concern. "That's a problem straight away. To win test matches, you need to take 20 wickets and having your best four fast bowlers fit and ready gives you a chance to do that," he said.

Gibson asked all the test players to play in last week's first round of the

domestic four-day series in order to get match practice. "I don't want to get into any thinking that Bangladesh is an easy series," he added.

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan misses out after he asked for time off to recover from exhaustion. Shakib has played 50 international matches across all formats of the game since 2016, and plays for Twenty20 teams in multiple franchise-based leagues around

the world. Opening batsman Tamim Iqbal is expected to be fit despite not batting on the last day of the warm-up match against a South African Invitation XI. He strained a thigh muscle on the first day of the match. The first test in Potchefstroom, which starts on Thursday, will mark the introduction of a number of new rules to the game including umpires being able to send players off for serious offences. —Reuters

PLAYERS FACE SENDING-OFF, UMPIRES TO GET BAT GAUGE

NEW DELHI: Players could be sent off for the first time in cricket, starting with Test matches in South Africa and the United Arab Emirates this week, as new regulations come into force. Changes governing umpire referrals and bat sizes will also come into force Thursday when South Africa host Bangladesh and Sri Lanka play Pakistan in Abu Dhabi, said the sport's governing body the International Cricket Council. The Decision Review System (DRS) — in which a TV umpire reviews decisions made by umpires on the field — will be allowed in Twenty20 internationals after its success in Test and one-day matches.

Under the new rules, a player can now be sent off for the rest of the match for serious misconduct. This could include threatening to assault an umpire, making inappropriate and deliberate physical contact with an umpire, assaulting a player or any other person and any other act of violence.

To maintain the balance between bat and ball, there are new restrictions on the size of bat edges and its thickness. The per-

mitted length and width of bats remains unchanged but the edges cannot be more than 40mm thick and the overall depth is limited to 67mm. Umpires will use a new gauge to check legality.

The ICC said all changes "will be applicable across all (three) formats". "Most of the changes to the ICC playing conditions are being made as a result of changes to the laws of cricket that have been announced by the MCC," ICC general manager Geoff Allardice said in a statement. "We have just completed a workshop with the umpires to ensure they understand all of the changes and we are now ready to introduce the new playing conditions to international matches." If a team refers an umpire's decision to the TV umpire and the on-field decision remains unchanged because the DRS shows "umpire's call", the team will not lose that review. But teams will now have only two unsuccessful reviews for the entire innings of a Test. Previously the unsuccessful reviews were replenished after the first 80 overs. — AFP

CRICKET

ENGLAND DROP STOKES AFTER ASSAULT ARREST

LONDON: England all-rounder Ben Stokes has been arrested on suspicion of causing actual bodily harm in Bristol and dropped for today's fourth one-day international against West Indies. The 26-year-old Durham star was arrested early on Monday in the Clifton district of the city and released under investigation-without charge—the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced Tuesday. Both Stokes and England opening batsman Alex Hales, 28, who was with him on Sunday night, will miss the game at The Oval.

A statement issued by Avon and Somerset police said: "We were called to a disorder in Queens Road, Clifton, at around 2:35am (0135 GMT) on Monday. "A 27-year-old man was found to have suffered facial injuries and was taken to the Bristol Royal Infirmary for treatment. "A 26-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of causing actual bodily harm and has since been released under investigation." The police statement also asked anyone who was in the Clifton Triangle area in the early hours of Monday "who saw any part of this incident" to contact them.

The incident happened following England's 124-run win in the third ODI where Stokes made 73 — in southwest city Bristol on Sunday that put them 2-0 up in a five-match series against West Indies.

Today's fixture at The Oval takes place just hours after England are due to unveil their squad for the Ashes tour of Australia at the south London ground. ECB England cricket director Andrew Strauss, confirmed that both Durham star Stokes—a Test regular—and Nottinghamshire batsman Hales, a fringe candidate who played the last of his 13 Tests 11 months ago, will be considered for the Ashes squad on cricketing grounds alone by the selectors. Strauss, reading from an ECB statement to reporters at The Oval on Tuesday, said:

"Ben Stokes and Alex Hales will not be available for today's (Wednesday's) one-day International match against West Indies at The Oval.

HELD OVERNIGHT

"Stokes was arrested in the early hours of Monday morning, 25 September, following an incident in Bristol," the former England captain added as he continued to read out from the statement.

"He was held overnight and released under investigation-without charge — late on Monday and will not join the team in London. "Hales, who was with Stokes on Sunday night, did not train yesterday morning and has returned voluntarily to Bristol today to help police with their enquiries.

"You will understand that we cannot offer further detail at this stage but will provide any updates when we can," Strauss, in a subsequent interview with Sky Sports News, confirmed Stokes and Hales remained available for Ashes selection, saying: "The selectors have been instructed to select the Ashes squad based on form and fitness." Stokes was arrested for obstructing police on a night out in 2011 and ultimately cautioned.

The following year saw him sent home from an England Lions or A-team tour in Australia, alongside team-mate Matt Coles, for repeatedly flouting curfews and bans on late-night drinking.

Stokes was also sidelined from the 2014 World Twenty20 after breaking his hand as a result of punching a dressing-room locker in Barbados in frustration at a run of poor form. In an interview with The Times magazine published on Saturday, Stokes was asked if his previous experience meant he no longer drank alcohol on evenings out during a five-day Test match. "Yeah, why not?" he replied. "We're grown men, go out for dinner, have a few pints. "I'm 26, not 14. I don't have to drink Diet Cokes with dinner." — AFP



ST LOUIS: Jon Jay #30 of the Chicago Cubs hits an RBI single against the St Louis Cardinals at Busch Stadium on Monday in St Louis, Missouri. —AFP

JUDGE SETS HR RECORD AS YANKEES BEAT ROYALS

NEW YORK: Aaron Judge broke Mark McGwire's Major League Baseball record for home runs by a rookie, hitting a pair for the second straight day to raise his total to 50 and lead the New York Yankees over the Kansas City Royals 11-3 Monday. The 6-foot-7, 25-year-old slugger tied the mark with a two-run drive to right-center off Jakob Junis (8-3) in the third inning that put New York ahead 3-0. His solo shot to left against Trevor Cahill in the seventh made it 7-3 and earned him a rare curtain call. Judge has 13 home runs in September and six in five games, and he is second in the majors behind Miami's Giancarlo Stanton, who has 57. Judge has four multihomer games this month and seven this season. McGwire hit 49 homers for Oakland in 1987. Greg Bird added a two-run homer in the sixth. Gary Sanchez followed Judge in the seventh with back-to-back homers for the third time this year, raising his total to 33. CC Sabathia (13-5) took a 6-0 lead into the seventh, when Salvador Perez hit a two-run homer and Mike Moustakas chased the left-hander by going deep four pitches later. Sabathia improved to 9-0 in 11 starts this year after Yankees losses. New York moved within four games of AL East-leading Boston with six to play. Kansas City was pushed to the brink of postseason elimination.

CUBS 10, CARDINALS 2

Addison Russell hit a three-run double in the first inning, then made a food run for a fan in enemy territory while Chicago beat St. Louis to move within a victory of clinching its second straight NL Central title. Kris Bryant and Javier Baez homered for the Cubs, who can wrap up the division with a win yesterday against the Cardinals or a loss by Milwaukee against Cincinnati. Russell helped the Cubs get to starter Luke Weaver (7-2) early, then made some friends out of rival fans. After diving into the stands chasing a foul ball down the third-base line and spilling a fan's tray of chips, Russell emerged from the dugout a few innings later with a plate of nachos and delivered it to the fan. Russell stopped to take a selfie before heading back to play shortstop. The loss eliminated St. Louis from NL Central contention and dimmed the Cardinals' wild-card hopes. Cardinals catcher Yadier Molina was taken out of the game in the seventh after he took two foul balls off his mask. St. Louis announced he is in concussion protocol. Jon Lester (12-8) allowed one run in six innings. Chicago is 11-2 in its last 13 games. Weaver gave up eight runs in three innings. He had won seven consecutive starts, the longest by a Cardinals rookie since Ted Wilks in 1944.

BLUE JAYS 6, RED SOX 4

Josh Donaldson homered and drove in three runs, powering Toronto past AL East-leading Boston. Boston's six-game winning streak was snapped and its magic number to clinch a second straight division title remained at three. Eduardo Nunez and Mookie Betts both left with injuries for the Red Sox. Nunez aggravated a right knee

injury that sidelined him for 13 games, and Betts came out with pain in his left wrist. Ryan Goins hit a solo homer and Teoscar Hernandez had a two-run double for the Blue Jays. Brett Anderson (2-2) allowed three runs in five innings. Red Sox lefty Drew Pomeranz (16-6) had his shortest start of the season, giving up five runs and seven hits in two innings. He had only lost once in his last 18 outings. Roberto Osuna got three outs for his 38th save.

WHITE SOX 4, ANGELS 2

James Shields tossed seven strong innings and Nicky Delmonico hit a two-run double as Chicago damaged Los Angeles' slim playoff hopes. With six games remaining, the Angels trail Minnesota by five games for the second AL wild card. Mike Trout hit his 30th homer for the Angels, who have dropped seven of eight. Shields (5-7) allowed two runs and four hits. Juan Minaya got three outs for his seventh save. Ricky Nolasco (6-15) allowed four runs, two earned, in five-plus innings.

ASTROS 11, RANGERS 2

Marwin Gonzalez had four hits and three RBIs as AL West champion Houston put Texas on the brink of elimination in the wild-card race. Astros second baseman Jose Altuve, the American League leader with 199 hits and a .348 batting average, left in the eighth inning after he was hit by a 95 mph fastball. The team said X-rays were negative and Altuve had a bruised forearm. Gonzalez had two hits and scored twice in an eight-run fourth, including a two-run single that chased starter Andrew Cashner (10-11). Gonzalez later hit his 23rd homer, a solo shot in the sixth. Collin McHugh (4-2) struck out six while throwing 112 pitches in five innings. The right-hander is 15-0 with a 2.94 ERA in 19 starts in September or October during his four seasons with the Astros. Texas (76-80), division champs the past two years, had an early 2-0 lead before losing its fourth straight game. The Rangers dropped

six games behind idle Minnesota for the second AL wild card with six to play. Only one of the eight runs in the Astros' fourth was earned.

NATIONALS 3, PHILLIES 1

Michael Taylor homered and A.J. Cole allowed one run while pitching into the sixth inning as Washington defeated Philadelphia. The NL East champion Nationals extended their franchise record with 50 road wins. Bryce Harper remained out of Washington's lineup with flu-like symptoms. The team had said it was possible he would return Monday from a knee injury that's kept him out since Aug. 12. Odubel Herrera homered for the last-place Phillies. Cole (3-5) struck out five and walked two. Sean Doolittle worked a perfect ninth for his 21st save in 21 chances with the Nationals since being acquired from Oakland on July 16. Aaron Nola (12-11) allowed Taylor's two-run homer in the second but otherwise pitched well.

BRAVES 9, METS 2, 1st game
METS 3, BRAVES 2, 2nd game

Seth Lugo pitched two-hit ball over six innings and Travis d'Arnaud hit a record-setting homer for New York in the nightcap of a doubleheader split. D'Arnaud hit his solo shot in the eighth inning. It was the 219th homer for the Mets, a franchise season mark. The sparse crowd at Citi Field jeered when the home run apple didn't rise after d'Arnaud's homer, then cheered when it finally came out of its bin three batters later. Lugo (7-5) struck out seven and didn't walk anybody. Jeury Familia got his fifth save and second since returning from surgery to repair a blood clot in his right arm. Max Fried (1-1) gave up two runs over 5 1/3 innings for Atlanta. In the first game, Lucas Sims (3-5) turned in his second strong performance since returning to Atlanta's rotation, allowing two runs and five hits over a career-high 6 2/3 innings. Chris Flexen (3-5) took the loss. — AP



LONDON: In this Thursday, Sept 7, 2017 file photo, England's Ben Stokes holds up the ball after taking his sixth wicket on the first day of the third Test match between England and the West Indies at Lord's cricket ground in London. The England and Wales Cricket Board says all-rounder Ben Stokes was arrested after incident in Bristol. — AP

MLB Results/Standings

LA Dodgers 9, San Diego 3; Seattle 7, Oakland 1; San Francisco 9, Arizona 2; Miami 5, Colorado 4; Chicago Cubs 10, St. Louis 2; Chicago White Sox 4, LA Angels 2; Houston 11, Texas 2; NY Mets 3, Atlanta 2; Toronto 6, Boston 4; Washington 3, Philadelphia 1; Atlanta 9, NY Mets 2; NY Yankees 11, Kansas City 3.

American League				National League			
Eastern Division				Eastern Division			
W	L	PCT	GB	W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	91	65	.583	Washington	95	61	.609
NY Yankees	87	69	.558	Miami	74	82	.474
Bay	76	80	.487	Atlanta	71	85	.455
Baltimore	75	82	.478	NY Mets	67	90	.427
Toronto	74	83	.471	Philadelphia	62	95	.395
Central Division				Central Division			
Cleveland	98	58	.628	Chicago Cubs	88	68	.564
Minnesota	82	74	.526	Milwaukee	82	74	.526
Kansas City	76	80	.487	St. Louis	81	75	.519
Chicago White Sox	64	92	.410	Pittsburgh	71	85	.455
Detroit	62	94	.397	Cincinnati	66	90	.423
Western Division				Western Division			
Houston	96	60	.615	LA Dodgers	100	57	.637
LA Angels	77	79	.494	Arizona	90	67	.573
Texas	76	80	.487	Colorado	84	73	.535
Seattle	76	81	.484	San Diego	70	87	.446
Oakland	72	84	.462	San Francisco	62	95	.395

BEN YEDDER HAT-TRICK EASES SEVILLA PAST MARIBOR

SEVILLE: French forward Wissam Ben Yedder hit a hat-trick as Sevilla soared to the top of Champions League Group E by cruising to a 3-0 win over Slovenian champions Maribor yesterday. Ben Yedder produced clinical finishes from close range twice in 11 first-half minutes to put the hosts well on

course for victory before completing his hat-trick with a penalty seven minutes from time. Liverpool's 1-1 draw at Spartak Moscow sees the Spaniards lead the group with four points to Liverpool and Spartak's two. Ben Yedder's inclusion was one of seven changes made by Sevilla boss Eduardo

Berizzo from Saturday's 2-0 defeat at Atletico Madrid. And Sevilla carried much more of a potent threat in the final third with he and Joaquin Correa recalled up front.

The two combined for the opening goal when Correa's cut-back was slotted home at the near post by Ben Yedder. A

flowing team move saw Sevilla double their advantage seven minutes before the break as Ben Yedder latched onto Franco Vazquez's through ball inside the area before firing with unerring accuracy in off the far post. Sevilla were happy to take the sting out of the game after the break with an important three

points assured. However, Ben Yedder got the chance to take his Champions League tally to six in four games this season when Sebastian Corchia was felled inside the area. And the striker didn't disappoint by slotting low into Jasmin Handanovic's bottom left-hand corner. — AFP

STUNNED MONACO SUFFER HOME DEFEAT BY PORTO

MONACO: AS Monaco's Champions League campaign suffered a huge blow as last season's semi-finalists fell victim to a Vincent Aboubakar double in a 3-0 home defeat by Porto yesterday.

Cameroon striker Aboubakar scored in each half and Miguel Layun rounded off the win in the closing stages to put Porto second in Group G with three points from two games, three behind leaders Besiktas who won 2-0 at home to Leipzig.

Monaco, who lost 3-0 to Porto in the 2004 Champions League final, are third with Leipzig bottom also on one point. It was the principality side's biggest Champions League home defeat. The hosts lost many of their top players in the close season, including exciting teenage striker Kylian Mbappe, but they managed to create some early chances.

However, Porto stayed calm as Monaco pined on the pressure and were more clinical in a lively encounter at Stade Louis II. Monaco had a clear chance after four min-

utes when Radamel Falcao was perfectly set up in the box by Rachid Ghezzal, only for the Colombian to shoot straight at the goalkeeper.

The home side dominated, with Ghezzal proving a constant threat on the right flank, but they lack accuracy in the area. Despite a few early bursts, Porto were on the back foot, but they went ahead in the 31st minute.

Danilo Pereira's shot was parried by keeper Diego Benaglio into the path of Aboubakar, whose first shot bounced off the post before his second attempt hit the roof of the net. Porto were even more composed after the break while Monaco looked short of ideas and the visitors were rewarded in the 69th when Aboubakar tapped in Moussa Marega's cross from the right.

Porto rubbed salt in the home side's wounds in the 89th minute, second-half substitute Layun eventually firing the ball home after a goalmouth scramble. — Reuters



MOSCOW: Liverpool's Mohamed Salah, top, jumps over Spartak's Salvatore Bocchetti during the Champions League soccer match between Spartak Moscow and Liverpool in Moscow, Russia, yesterday. — AP

COUTINHO SCORES AS LIVERPOOL HELD TO 1-1 DRAW IN MOSCOW

MOSCOW: A sparkling Philippe Coutinho goal was not enough to earn Liverpool victory as they were held to a 1-1 draw by Spartak Moscow in the Champions League yesterday. Coutinho cancelled out Fernando's free-kick in the 31st minute, but Liverpool's quest for a winner came to nothing, leaving them still without a win after two games in Group E.

Liverpool have now gone seven matches without victory in the Champions League—their longest such run in the competition—and trail group leaders Sevilla by two points. The five-time champions paid the price for some wasteful finishing, substitute Daniel Sturridge and Mohamed Salah both spurning good chances to secure victory in the closing stages.

On the plus side, Jurgen Klopp's men looked more solid defensively than in recent weeks, but Fernando's goal raised questions about Klopp's decision to bring goalkeeper Lorik Kariu into the team in place of Simon Mignolet. While Russian champions Spartak have gone nine games without victory in the Champions League, this was a result to warm the hearts of their vocal fans on a chilly night at Otkrytiye Arena.

From a Liverpool perspective, the match was notable for the fact Coutinho started alongside Salah, Sadio Mane and Roberto Firmino for the first time. With their 'Fab Four' on the pitch, the visitors settled quickly and twice went close to taking the lead. Trent Alexander-Arnold volleyed wide from Salah's

lay-off and Firmino drew an agile save from Artem Rebrov with a forceful header. But Coutinho's first telling intervention was to give away the free-kick that led to Spartak's 23rd-minute opener.

REBROV INJURED

The Brazilian came through the back of Aleksandr Samedov and his compatriot Fernando swept the set-piece past a flat-footed Kariu from 25 yards. Liverpool have kept only two clean sheets in their 11 games to date this season.

Thankfully for Liverpool, Coutinho had the good grace to atone, a sudden burst of energy seeing him swap passes with Mane on the left before placing a shot into the roof of Rebrov's net. Coutinho has scored in successive games since being brought back into the team following his unsuccessful attempt to engineer a move to Barcelona. Liverpool twice squandered chances to go ahead before the break, Firmino miscuing from Jordan Henderson's cross and then a 4 v 2 situation breaking down when Mane strayed offside.

Coutinho worked Rebrov with a free-kick early in the second half, but even after the Spartak goalkeeper was forced off by injury, with Aleksandr Selikhov replacing him, the visitors could not find a path to goal. Andrei Eschenko served a reminder of Spartak's threat with a drilled effort that Kariu boxed away.

Klopp added Sturridge and Georginio



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE	
Qarabag Agdam v Roma	19:00
beIN SPORTS HD 6	
Basel 1893 v Benfica	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 7	
CSKA Moscow v Manchester United	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 5	
Paris Saint v Bayern Munich	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
Anderlecht v Celtic	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 8	
Atletico de Madrid v Chelsea	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Sporting v Barcelona	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Juventus v Olympiacos	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 4	

Wijnaldum to the mix and saw teenage full-back Alexander-Arnold thrash wide with his left foot after cutting in from the right. His side procured two golden opportunities to snatch victory at the death, but Sturridge slashed a volley over from Henderson's cross and Salah could not beat Selikhov with a header from Alexander-Arnold's cross. —AFP



MONACO: Porto's Brazilian defender Felipe (2nd-R) heads the ball during the UEFA Champions League Group G football match AS Monaco FC vs FC Porto yesterday at the Louis II stadium in Monaco. — AP

BESIKTAS STAYS PERFECT WITH WIN OVER LEIPZIG

ISTANBUL: Besiktas stayed perfect with a 2-0 win over Leipzig in the Champions League with first-half goals from Ryan Babel and Talisca yesterday.

The Turkish side has six points from two games in Group G, three more than Porto,

with last year's semifinalist Monaco and Leipzig on one point. Porto won 3-0 at Monaco in the group's other match. Besiktas had never beaten German opponents in seven previous attempts in European matches. — AP



ISTANBUL: Besiktas' forward Cenk Tosun (C) fights for the ball with Leipzig's Willi Orban (R) and Stefan Ilsanker (L) during the UEFA Champions League group G football match between Besiktas and RB Leipzig at Vodafone Park stadium in Istanbul yesterday. — AFP

MOURINHO WANTS MAN UTD TO STAY GROUNDED

MOSCOW: Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho has encouraged his players to remain "humble" as they look to take control of Champions League Group A by beating CSKA Moscow today. United are level on points with leaders Manchester City in the Premier League after winning five and drawing one of their first six games and some of their football has been dazzling.

They beat Basel 3-0 in their Champions League opener, but Mourinho criticised his players for playing "PlayStation football" in the game's latter stages and he warned the wheels could quickly come off if they lose focus. "We cannot guarantee this line of success, but the way to try to keep it is to do what we are doing," said Mourinho, whose side won 1-0 at Southampton in their most recent game on Saturday.

"We try to play well and in some moments of the match, if the opponent has moments of superiority, we have to be humble-like we were against Southampton—and cope with the difficult moments of the game. "In the second half we had to be

humble. We had to accept that the opponent was in a high and we had to fight hard.

"So it's a mixture of our quality-being dominant like we always want to be—but accepting the reality of high-level football. When the opponent has a strong moment, you have to cope with it." In-form attacking midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan said Mourinho's words after the Basel game had made United's players doubly determined not to let their levels drop even once games are in the bag.

"Of course everyone knows that Jose Mourinho is very demanding and what he said, he's right," the Armenian told United's pre-match press conference at CSKA's VEB Arena yesterday. "He didn't say exactly names, but everyone thinks that they've done something bad or done some mistakes.

"But we're trying to improve that aspect and play more focused during the whole game and not start doing some fantasy football, as he said, or playing some PlayStation in the last 20 to 25 minutes." — AFP

NAPOLI TAKE FIRST POINTS IN GROUP F AS FEYENOORD SQUANDER PENALTY CHANCE

NAPLES: Napoli bounced back from a poor start to its Champions League campaign with a convincing 3-1 win over Feyenoord yesterday. Dries Mertens extended his red-hot form by scoring one goal and setting up another, while Lorenzo Insigne and Jose Callejon also found the net, and goalkeeper Pepe Reina saved a penalty.

Sofyan Amrabat pulled one back for Feyenoord in added time. Having lost its Group F opener at Shakhtar Donetsk, Napoli played with an urgency that produced effective results.

Insigne scored with an impressive solo effort seven minutes in at the San Paolo stadium, Mertens found the net with a precise angled shot four minutes after the break and Mertens set up Callejon's goal in the 70th.

Manchester City leads the group with a maximum six points after beating Shakhtar 2-0. Shakhtar and Napoli are next with three points each and Feyenoord is last with zero. The hosts dominated from the start.

After gathering the ball near midfield, Insigne dribbled forward and hit the target with a low strike from the edge of the area. Insigne celebrated by holding aloft the No. 99 jersey of recently injured teammate Arkadiusz Milik. Marek Hamsik and Insigne came close to doubling Napoli's lead before the break.

A through ball from Faouzi Ghoulam set up Mertens' goal, the eighth in 10 appearances in all competitions this season for the Belgium international. Ghoulam then conceded the penalty for a foul on Steven Berghuis, only for Reina guess right, lunging to his left to stop Jens Toornstra's spot kick.

For Napoli's third, Mertens turned provider and set up Callejon inside the area. Feyenoord

remained winless against Italian opposition since a 1-0 victory over Inter Milan in the semifinal first leg of a triumphant UEFA Cup campaign in 2002. Dutch fans were banned from the match as a safety measure due to rioting by Feyenoord supporters during the club's last visit to Italy for a Europa League match in Rome in

2015. Still, many Feyenoord fans descended on Naples. Three were arrested Monday for throwing rocks at police and seven were denied entrance at the stadium gates, according to the ANSA news agency. More than a hundred Feyenoord supporters roamed downtown watched closely by police. —AFP



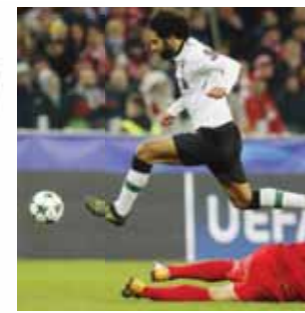
NAPLES: Napoli's Jorginho, right, and Feyenoord's goalkeeper Brad Jones vie for the ball during the UEFA Champions League, Group F soccer match between Napoli and Feyenoord at the San Paolo stadium in Naples, Italy, yesterday. — AP

Sports

Cowboys rebound
from loss to
topple Cardinals



Coutinho scores
as Liverpool
held to 1-1
draw in Moscow



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

JUDGE SETS HR RECORD AS YANKEES BEAT ROYALS

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DORTMUND: Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo, second right rear, jumps to block the ball from a free kick by Dortmund's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, front right, and Dortmund's Gonzalo Castro, front left, during a Champions League Group H soccer match between Borussia Dortmund and Real Madrid at the BVB stadium in Dortmund, Germany, yesterday. — AP

RONALDO NETS TWICE AS REAL WIN IN DORTMUND

DORTMUND: Cristiano Ronaldo marked his 150th European game with two goals as Real Madrid sealed a 3-1 victory at Borussia Dortmund yesterday to top their Champions League group. Ronaldo claimed two second-half goals after Gareth Bale's stunning early volley gave Real the lead at Dortmund's Signal Iduna Park. The Germans fought back when Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang finally netted with just over half an hour left, but there was to be no repeat of last year's 2-2 draw in Dortmund between the teams.

This is the first time Dortmund have lost at home to Real in seven European games while holders Madrid have now scored in 38 successive Champion League games. "We knew after so many years we'd finally win here and today was the day," said Real captain Sergio Ramos, who was lucky not to have given away a first-half penalty after replays showed the ball

touched his hand. "It was tough but we showed our personality and authority."

"We're on the right track after all that's been said. We want to rediscover our best and I think tonight was a step in the right direction. In the Champions League it is important to win with authority and we did that."

The result leaves Real top of Group H, just ahead of Tottenham Hotspur, who beat APOEL 3-0 away, with Dortmund third and six points adrift of Spurs, who they also lost 3-1 to in London.

Having also netted twice against APOEL, Ronaldo has now scored four goals in just two Champions League games this season. He marked his 400th appearance for Madrid in total with another pair to leave him with 411 goals in the famous white shirt. "Real were simply ruthless and used their chances," said Dortmund midfielder Gonzalo Castro.

"We had the chance to make it 1-1, but instead we went 2-0 down and then it is always hard against Real." Dortmund should have been awarded a penalty with 13 minutes gone when Sergio Ramos cleared Maximilian Philipp's shot off the line and the ball deflected off his hand.

Andrey Yarmolenko's initial cross sailed tantalisingly over the head of Borussia's top-scorer Aubameyang in the build up. Real took the lead three minutes later when right-back Daniel Carvajal whipped in a cross and Bale's nonchalant volley sailed over Dortmund goalkeeper Roman Burki for a stunning goal. With half an hour gone, Dortmund turned the screw with Carvajal having to rescue Real by whipping the ball off Aubameyang's toes with the Gabon striker bearing down on goal.

Aubameyang had the ball in the net on 38 minutes,

when he spun and fired home Lukasz Piszczek's pass, but the goal was ruled offside as it stayed 1-0 to Real at the break. Real lived dangerously after the break when Mario Goetze tried to find Aubameyang, but centre-back Raphael Varane cleared the danger. The Spanish giants doubled their lead on 49 minutes when Ronaldo met Bale's inch-perfect cross.

Dortmund pulled a goal back on 54 minutes when Aubameyang slipped his marker to convert Gonzalo Castro's cross, then hit the side netting as Borussia pushed for the equaliser. With 15 minutes left, Burki had to push Isco's shot around the post as Real kept the pressure.

Ronaldo, who was left in acres of space, settled the tie by blasting home Luka Modric's cross on 79 minutes with Madrid's third goal on the break to take the game out of Dortmund's grasp. — AFP

DE BRUYNE ROCKET FIRES CITY

MANCHESTER: Kevin De Bruyne's superb strike and a late Raheem Sterling goal maintained Manchester City's impressive form in a 2-0 Champions League win over Shakhtar Donetsk yesterday. De Bruyne struck in the 49th minute with a magnificent 20-yard strike into the top right-hand corner of the Shakhtar goal after David Silva's run had ended with the Spaniard teeing up the opening.

It was the Belgian's first goal of City's free-scoring season - a reflection of his new, deeper role under Pep Guardiola - but certainly a goal worth waiting for given its quality. Although City striker Sergio Aguero failed with a penalty, Sterling's 89th minute finish from 12 yards, after a sprint and cross from fellow substitute Bernardo Silva, spared his team-mate's blushes and wrapped up the points at Eastlands.

Aguero could have doubled the lead, and equalled City's club record of 177 goals currently held by Eric Brook in the 1930s, after Leroy Sane was brought down by Ivan Ordets after 71 minutes. But Aguero hit his spot kick too close to goalkeeper Andriy Pyatov who dived smartly to his right to keep out the effort.

A game which featured eight Brazilians - five of them from Shakhtar - and just three English players predictably provided plenty of entertainment and admirable football, even if goals were hard to come by. Both sides had good opportunities to break the first half deadlock, Shakhtar's best falling to the Brazilian Fred on 11 minutes as he appeared

on the end of a flowing move to ghost clean through on goal, only for countryman Fernandinho to make a superb covering tackle. There was also a firm strike from Marlos who forced City goalkeeper Ederson into the game's first meaningful save as he dived sharply to his right.

BREATHTAKING

But most of the other promising moments came from the hosts, looking unstoppable in a recent five-game spell which had seen them score 22 goals. De Bruyne, one of many of the crop of City stars in a rich vein of form, unexpectedly missed the target, shooting wide after a Gabriel Jesus pass had slipped him through. And Sane first tested Pyatov with a low shot from the edge of the area then worked his way skilfully through a couple of unconvincing challenges before rolling a shot inches wide of the far upright.

As the half ended, it might have appeared that City's record of never having experienced a goalless draw in the 37 Champions League group stage fixtures was under threat. But it took just three minutes of the second half for De Bruyne to ensure the streak would continue, a development that opened up the contest even further.

Sane soon tested Pyatov with a darting run and near-post shot and it looked as if Aguero was destined to edge a goal closer the record, when Silva's breathtaking chip forward offered up a volley which the Argentinian



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's English defender Kyle Walker (R) clashes with Shakhtar Donetsk's Brazilian defender Ismaili during the Group F football match between Manchester City and Shakhtar Donetsk yesterday. — AFP

struck directly at the keeper.

There might have been more glory for De Bruyne, after another penetrating run down the left from Sane, but this time defender Ismaili managed to block his long-range effort. De Bruyne almost turned provider after 69 minutes with an enterprising run down the right and perfect cross which substitute Sterling side-footed wide on the volley.

Aguero and Sane, twice, came close in the closing stages although the hosts also had to survive a strong penalty appeal from Shakhtar after the ball appeared to strike John Stones' arm. — AFP

KANE HAT-TRICK SEALS EASY VICTORY FOR SPURS IN CYPRUS

NICOSIA: A Harry Kane hat-trick saw Spurs notch their second win in as many games in Group H of the Champions League, beating Cypriot champions APOEL Nicosia 3-0 in Cyprus yesterday.

With the Premier League side missing the creative spark of both Christian Eriksen and Dele Alli, it was down to the English striker to pick up the slack, and despite a spirited effort from the home side, Spurs ran out easy winners.

Apoel started shakily and could have been behind on more than one occasion, Heung-Min Son missing the best chance for Spurs when he headed over unmarked from five yards out. The Cypriots slowly grew into the game, striking the bar and coming inches from opening the scoring themselves, following a calamitous clearance from Tottenham goalkeeper Hugo Lloris just after the half-hour mark.

But it was Spurs who went ahead in the 38th minute when Kane finished coolly after he was left unmarked, 18 yards out. He was expertly found by

Toby Alderweireld, placing the ball past the on-rushing Boy Waterman, despite appeals for offside from the home side. Lloris was forced into his first meaningful save in the 47th minute when he was equal to Hungarian forward Roland Sallai's volley from just inside the penalty area.

The French number one was tested again shortly after, this time by the lively Stathis Aloneftis, who was put through by Nuno Morais down the left. His high shot was tipped over by Lloris.

Spurs doubled their lead and Kane got his second in the 62nd minute when Moussa Sissoko found the forward on the edge of the box and the Englishman made no mistake with his right foot. Kane completed his 'perfect' hat-trick five minutes later by heading in a Kieran Trippier cross from the right to seal the win for Spurs.

Tottenham now have six points, along with Real Madrid who beat Borussia Dortmund 3-1 in Germany. Both APOEL and Dortmund remain without any points. — Reuters



Kuwait's development plan moving on fast-track: NBK Page 18

US NEW HOME SALES SINK IN AUGUST

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KUWAIT: (From left to right) Adel Abdul Wahab Majed, Deputy Chairman, Kuwait Banking Association and Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Boubyan Bank, Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf, Chairman of the board of Ahli United Bank, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Vice Chairman & Group CEO - Zain Group, Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Chairman of Gulf Bank and Majed Essa Al-Ajeel, Chairman of Burgan Bank, during the Euromoney Conference Kuwait, yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Euromoney Conference Kuwait

EDUCATION, KUWAIT'S BIGGEST CHALLENGE: ALGHANIM

GULF BANK EMPHASIZES ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR IN 'NEW KUWAIT VISION'

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank successfully concluded its seventh consecutive lead sponsorship of the Euromoney Conference which took place yesterday under the theme of 'New Kuwait - Financial Challenge or Financing Opportunity?' Held in partnership with the Ministry of Finance at the JW Marriott, this financial conference gathered together policy makers, financiers, and investors to explore the Kuwait National Development Plan, commonly referred to as the New Kuwait 2035, and the changes it will bring to Kuwait's economy and the nation as a whole.

The opening session included remarks from Anas Al-Saleh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, as well as Dr. Mohammed Al-Hashel, Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait. Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Chairman of Gulf Bank and CEO of Alghanim Industries, participated in the morning's first interview session with Kuwaiti banks.

Discussing the New Kuwait plan, Alghanim said: "I want what's best for our country. In order to build the economy envisaged by the New Kuwait strategy, we will need financial capital and a banking system that is ready, willing, and able to support on multiple fronts. We must also have the right human capital in place to help realize the plan."

Highlighting the complexities in implementing the New Kuwait vision, Alghanim noted: "It's one thing to have an ambitious plan, but it's quite another to implement it. As a businessman, I know how hard it is to drive change in a single company, it's obviously much harder to change an entire country. It requires hard work, determination, and a real sense of urgency. It's also critical to have clear metrics for measurability and accountability, as well as transparent and detailed reporting on the plan's progress."

Noting the importance of human capital in delivering the plan, Alghanim remarked: "Education is greatest challenge we face as a nation. Kuwait's spending per student is far greater than per student spending in many developed countries like Germany, Canada, United Kingdom, and France."

Continued on Page 18



KUWAIT: Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Chairman of Gulf Bank during his interview session at Euromoney Conference Kuwait.

Interview

BOURSA KUWAIT BEING UPGRADED TO EMERGING MARKET BY FTSE

KUWAIT MARKET EYES MAJOR SPURT IN TURNOVER, FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

KUWAIT: Following the latest meeting of The Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) Russell Governance Board, the FTSE could announce the upgrade of Boursa Kuwait from a Frontier Market to a Secondary Emerging Market and the impact of being classified within this index for Kuwait can mean a significant increase in turnover and foreign investments in the market, said Khaled Al-Khaled, CEO of Boursa Kuwait during an interview on the sidelines of Euromoney conference in Kuwait yesterday. Excerpts:

Question: We have heard that Boursa Kuwait will be upgraded from a Frontier Market to Secondary Emerging Market by FTSE and that there is a potential impact on boosting the foreign investments to Kuwait. Would you kindly provide your views?

Al-Khaled: I would like to thank the CMA who led the way in coordination with Boursa Kuwait and KCC in order to implement the initial infrastructural changes for FTSE initiative.

Following the latest meeting of The Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) Russell Governance Board, the FTSE could announce the upgrade of Boursa Kuwait from a Frontier Market to a Secondary Emerging Market and the impact of being classified within this index for Kuwait can mean a significant increase in turnover and foreign investments in the market.

Playing a major role in this outcome, are the infrastructural changes including the settlement cycle, trading efficiency, transparency and disclosures that were implemented in the market, and the additional services offered such as extended auction, special trades and market makers.

Question: What does this achievement mean for Boursa Kuwait and its investors?

Al-Khaled: The new FTSE status has been a key objective of Boursa since the inception in April last year. It highlights its mission to enhance the current level of performance in Kuwait, enable Boursa Kuwait to compete with regional peers and build a market reflecting the strength, depth and flexibility of the Kuwaiti private sector.

The FTSE classifications will provide investors an objective and consistent approach to the classification of markets with a global context. With the Secondary Emerging Market status, Boursa Kuwait will continue to work in close partnership with the Kuwait Clearing Company to provide



KUWAIT: Khaled Al-Khaled, CEO of Boursa Kuwait during his interview session at Euromoney Conference Kuwait.

sound local and foreign investment opportunities.

Question: We Heard About Market Segmentation. What are the main underlining factors of this Market-Wide Activity?

Al-Khaled: Boursa Kuwait is introducing Market Segmentation for the first time in Kuwait and in the region as a whole. This approach to manage the market, which is an internationally recognized practice undertaken by some of the world's largest markets, will allow Boursa Kuwait to achieve major changes and improvements in the operations of the exchange.

The market will be segmented into three main categories: Premier, Main and Auction. Each category has been designed based on certain criteria and more importantly, in a means to cater to and accommodate the current Kuwait market status.

Market Segmentation will allow Boursa Kuwait to address major setbacks in the exchange:

- Decline in liquidity.
- Creating an attractive issuer's base.

Question: What are the Continuous Achievements of Boursa Kuwait?

- **Al-Khaled:** Launched an initiative to upgrade the markets infrastructure which includes increasing the settlement cycle to T+3 Settlement, in accordance with The Guidelines of the Capital Markets Authority. Furthermore, this upgrade has led way to successful Implementation of Standardized Corporate Actions, New Tick Size, Increase in Price Limits, Randomized Closing Auction, ability to support Market Maker and Short Selling etc.
- Introduced Special Trades for Listed Shares, which are designed for large volume transactions.
- Introduced the Company Information Portal (CIP) which is a tool designed by Boursa Kuwait with the aim of providing an advanced information platform for all listed companies and to increase transparency.

EUROMONEY CONFERENCE

KUWAIT'S DEVELOPMENT PLAN MOVING ON FAST-TRACK: NBK

MORE ACTIVITY IN PROJECT AWARDS SINCE 2014: SHAIKHA AL-BAHAR

KUWAIT: Implementation of Kuwait's development plan has been moving more rapidly in the last few years. The country's needs are more urgent, and the government is, and has been, more dedicated, said Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer, National Bank of Kuwait, in an interview during the Euromoney Conference Kuwait yesterday. "Indeed, we have seen more activity in project awards since 2014 than we had before and \$18 billion has been awarded last year and \$7 billion in 1H17," she said.

As a result, project financing opportunities have been more plentiful, in oil and non-oil areas. The sectors that benefited the most are construction, power and oil. The government is moving ahead with a number of roadwork projects and new residential areas. At the same time, investment in Kuwait's power and water capacity has been ramped up thanks to a series of PPP projects, one of which has already been completed. Of course, it's also been a priority for the government to develop the oil and gas sector, both upstream and downstream. Excerpts from the interview:

Question: Is NBK innovating a new way of financing new style projects - smart grids, communications infrastructure, education and healthcare?

Al-Bahar: NBK is one of the few financial institutions in the country to have a specialized project finance department to assist in origination, structuring and distribution of non-recourse or limited recourse assets. The department is manned by officials with large experience in financing of projects. NBK has been supporting most of the project financings in the country. Historically, NBK was the main institution to support the first BOT project of Sulabiya Waste Water Treatment Plant in 2002, which was quite an innovation for the financing in the country at that time. In 2014 NBK lead arranged the expansion financing of Sulabiya Waste Water Treatment Plant. The facility was structured, arranged and distributed to local banks by NBK.

Recently NBK has played a lead role in using innovative solutions for financing in the country such as:

Structured financing for Projects - Clean Fuel Project

NBK has been using structured financing to support the projects. To illustrate the KD 1.2 billion Clean Fuel Facility to KNPC, envisages cash flow superiority for repayment of institutional loans over large feedstock payments to KPC. The facility was structured, originated and distributed to local banks by NBK.

Public Private Partnership - financing Innovations

NBK is a leading player in all project financings in Kuwait and has supported most of the consortia in their bids for infrastructure projects such as AZN 2 IWPP and Kabd Waste to Energy project. The PPP projects are governed under the PPP law of 2014 and its executive regulations. The financing structure of the project is explicitly specified under guidelines laid down by Kuwait Authority of Partnership Projects (KAPP). NBK has been engaging regularly with KAPP on finding innovative solutions to financing. The Kabd Waste to Energy project, based on suggestions of the bank has a local currency financing component.

Question: What impact will new technologies have on the way banking works in Kuwait? What is NBK doing and why?

Al-Bahar: New technologies have a direct impact on the way banking works in Kuwait. NBK is investing in technology and innovation as these are the basic means on the journey towards digital maturity. We use



KUWAIT: Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer, National Bank of Kuwait, in an interview during the Euromoney Conference Kuwait yesterday.

innovation and technology to digitally transform our offered services and the culture of the organization. We observe everything through the prism of innovation, product development, services, methodologies and processes.

New technologies are and will continue to have significant and disruptive impact on our customers' lifestyle; on the way they grow up, socially interact, travel, work, shop, bank and pay each other and for goods and services they buy; customers, especially the new millennials, seek instant gratification and in the new world of social media are both the creators and consumers of news content.

To meet this challenge, we at NBK are focusing on our twin objectives of strengthening the already strong leadership position in the market and to make NBK future safe. Bank is very fortunate to have the largest market share in the country and also a strong product-segment continuum, with the ability to be relevant to the entire community across the strata of the society.

We have products and services for the youngest starting from Zeina account for kids to products and services for our youth (students without and with allowances), first jobbers, mass market, mass affluent, affluent, and right up to private banking, business banking, and corporate banking.

NBK is the largest and most significant banking player in all major social media platforms. We have one of the strongest instant gratification program for the new millennials. We have transformed the payment industry and continue to do so. We have the largest POS network in the industry and one of the largest e-Payment gateways in the private sector and have within a record period of three months, launched NFC technology for the ease and convenience of the customers, with NBK Tap and Pay. We are proud to be the first bank in GCC to launch Tap and Pay NFC wearables.

We continue to innovate across products and services with the first in Kuwait to

launch special needs ATM. We continue to be focused on simplifying our customers' life. Strategically we target cash and paper, both as our enemies and opportunities

• With customers, especially new millennials, more comfortable with transacting online, we would like to continuously focus on changing the habits of our customers from cash usage to digital money.

• And every time we spot paper, we would like to automate the process and eliminate paperwork in order to provide our customers with efficient and secure seamless customer experience.

This along with MOBILE FIRST will continue to be our governing strategy going forward.

BANK IN YOUR HANDS is what we constantly aspire towards.

Question: The region remains both economically and geopolitically challenging - what does this mean for NBK's regional strategy?

Al-Bahar: The Middle East region has always been characterized by being a relatively higher risk market, economically or geopolitically. We, at NBK, view this as a normal characteristic for all frontier and emerging markets globally. But that said, this relatively higher risk profile is what leads to higher returns and more attractive growth opportunities.

NBK was among the first banks in the region to capture those opportunities as we started our expansion strategy in early years and we are today present in 15 countries of which 9 are in the Middle East. This is key to our diversification strategy and positions us ahead of competition with most consolidation and merger risks behind us. We now reap the benefits of these earlier expansions.

NBK strengthened its position in the region few years back, where its expansion was part of a strategy to diversify revenue streams and to achieve growth. More recently, we made further consolidation of our

regional operations, bringing the full benefits of the unrivalled core management and treasury functions to extract synergies and enable closer integration.

Our regional operations are very stable as we continue to focus on less volatile markets with emphasis on GCC countries. As I mentioned earlier Kuwait remains our top priority market considering the improved operating environment and the existing growth opportunity on the back of infrastructure spending. Nevertheless, we focus regionally on Saudi Arabia, where we have one Branch in Jeddah (with a potential for expansion) and United Arab Emirates, where we have one branch in each of Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Our offering in those two markets is mainly focused on the general macroeconomic backdrop with more emphasis on wholesale banking while building corporate relationships with blue chip companies and GRs. We also have a niche affluent retail offering as well as efforts for potential private banking market penetration to capture the wealth management opportunity with the

growing number of HNWI's. Other than our GCC offering, Egypt represents a strong growth opportunity going forward. NBK emphasis in Egypt is on positioning itself for growth as Egypt emerges from a period of instability and while the economic reform program starts to deliver stability and attracts foreign investments. Egypt is among the largest Middle Eastern markets, with a well-diversified economic base and the largest population in the region. That offers us a great opportunity in Egypt especially with the very low banking penetration rate that currently exists. We have been in Egypt since 2007 and have done tremendous work improving our operations there with focus on both retail as well as whole sale products.

Otherwise, and under our presence in international key markets (London, New York, Paris and Singapore), we continue to see a strong inflow of capital and deposits from HNWI's, financial institutions, oil companies, correspondent banks and government agencies, all seeking the safety and stability of NBK. We continue to leverage our strong franchise along with our high credit ratings to attract funds in international markets. The recent debt issuance under our GMTN program was a great testimony to the attractiveness on NBK's name among global investors, where we raised \$750 million of senior unsecured debt paying one of the lowest rates regionally in recent history. It also confirms NBK's access to international markets and the availability of high quality funding if and when needed.

To conclude and going back to the core of the discussion, since we operate in relatively higher risk markets, diversification is key to our strategy as I mentioned. In addition to geographically, we also tend to be well-diversified by business segment. In addition to our conventional domestic offerings of corporate, consumer and private banking, we have recently made significant inroads in Islamic banking and investment banking.

Boubyan Bank, NBK's 58.4 percent owned sharia-compliant subsidiary allows the bank to leverage opportunities in the growing importance of Islamic Finance in Kuwait. Moreover, our ambitions to develop a regional investment bank are executed through our investment banking arm, NBK Capital. NBK Capital has offices in Kuwait, Dubai, Cairo and Istanbul and offers the highest standards in investment products and financial services under three main divisions; Asset Management, Investment Banking, and Brokerage. The company's role grew recently in the financial advisory services in Kuwait as we have supported some of the major private and public sector players in their initiatives and advised on several mega transactions across different industries.

EDUCATION, KUWAIT'S BIGGEST...

Continued from Page 17

But, while our spending is among the highest, our output isn't. Put simply, we're not getting our required rate of return - in fact, strictly on a yield basis, we have a worse rate of return than most of the world when it comes to education spending. We must shift the focus of our educational system to one that knows how to inspire, motivate, and empower students. Critical thinking skills are areas in which we must improve. We must also address the issue of female labor participation, as our gender participation gap is still high. At our companies, we place great importance on ensuring our workplaces empower women and offer opportunities for them to advance in their careers."

Alghanim concluded by affirming his com-

mitment to Kuwait: "At Gulf Bank and Alghanim Industries, we are fully committed to helping the next generation. Our in-house programs ensure our employees have the training and support they need to advance in their careers. On the social responsibility front, we also have quite a number of training, education, and mentorship programs, which help youth develop the social and intellectual skills needed to be successful in the future."

The Euromoney Conference is the world's leading organizer of conferences for cross-border investment and capital markets for portfolio and direct investors, financial intermediaries, corporations, governments, banks and financial institutions. The annual Euromoney Conference provides Gulf Bank an unparalleled platform to discuss Kuwait's fiscal, monetary and economic diversification strategy.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.710
Indian Rupees	4.624
Pakistani Rupees	2.868
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.973
Nepali Rupees	2.923
Singapore Dollar	224.540
Hongkong Dollar	38.709
Bangladesh Taka	3.690
Philippine Peso	5.945
Thai Baht	9.146

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.707
Qatari Riyal	83.125
Omani Riyal	785.993
Bahraini Dinar	803.640
UAE Dirham	82.400

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.800
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.070
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.215
Tunisian Dinar	124.210
Jordanian Dinar	426.890
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.016
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.697

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.450
Euro	359.610
Sterling Pound	409.970

Canadian dollar	245.400
Turkish lira	88.440
Swiss Franc	313.910
Australian Dollar	241.360
US Dollar Buying	301.250

GOLD

20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer Selling Rate

US Dollar	302.100
Canadian Dollar	244.875
Sterling Pound	408.660
Euro	359.530
Swiss Frank	293.695
Bahrain Dinar	801.800
UAE Dirhams	82.640
Qatari Riyals	83.465
Saudi Riyals	81.420
Jordanian Dinar	427.375
Egyptian Pound	17.133
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.975
Indian Rupees	4.631
Pakistani Rupees	2.866
Bangladesh Taka	3.721
Philippines Peso	5.947
Cyprus pound	17.979
Japanese Yen	3.705
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.902

Malaysian Ringgit	72.835
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.145
Thai Bhat	10.105
Turkish Lira	85.730

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY BUY SELL

British Pound	0.400593	0.410593
Czech Korune	0.005724	0.017724
Danish Krone	0.044046	0.049046
Euro	0.352483	0.361483
Georgian Lari	0.121429	0.121429
Norwegian Krone	0.034564	0.039764
Romanian Leu	0.077741	0.077741
Russian ruble	0.005250	0.005250
Slovakia	0.009009	0.019009
Slovenia	0.033506	0.033506
Swedish Krona	0.305902	0.316902
Swiss Franc		
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.231559	0.243559
New Zealand Dollar	0.212527	0.222027
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.238907	0.247907
US Dollars	0.298350	0.302770
US Dollars Mint	0.298850	0.302770
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003219	0.003803

Chinese Yuan	0.044289	0.047789
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036621	0.039371
Indian Rupee	0.004201	0.004889
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002625	0.002805
Korean Won	0.000255	0.000270
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067931	0.073931
Nepalese Rupee	0.003018	0.003188
Pakistan Rupee	0.002742	0.003032
Philippine Peso	0.005850	0.006150
Singapore Dollar	0.218262	0.228262
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001595	0.002175
Taiwan	0.009876	0.010056
Thai Baht	0.008773	0.009323

Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.795367	0.803867
Egyptian Pound	0.014491	0.020399
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000193	0.000253
Jordanian Dinar	0.421976	0.430976
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021159	0.045159
Omani Riyal	0.779164	0.784844
Qatar Riyal	0.078786	0.083726
Saudi Riyal	0.079567	0.080867
Syrian Pound	0.001282	0.001502
Tunisian Dinar	0.120207	0.128207
Turkish Lira	0.080538	0.090838
UAE Dirhams	0.080921	0.082624
Yemeni Riyal	0.000983	0.001063

EGYPT ON TRACK FOR YEAR-END IMF PAYMENT

CAIRO: Egypt has made a "good start" to its reform program despite seeking waivers for missing targets in June and a deeper-than-expected currency depreciation, the International Monetary Fund said yesterday. It should get its \$2 billion IMF loan payment after the year-end review, the Fund said, but inflation-running at just under 32 percent in August remains the key risk for stability.

Egypt agreed a three-year, \$12 billion IMF loan program in November that is tied to sweeping reforms such as spending cuts and tax hikes.

They are designed to help revive an economy hard hit by a shortage of foreign currency and investment in the turmoil that followed its 2011 uprising. In a review since the deal, the IMF said Egypt should receive a third loan instalment

around \$2 billion after a second check of progress at the end of this year, but indicators pointed to progress and consolidated economic growth.

"Stabilization is already gaining a foothold, and we have seen positive trends," Subir Lall, IMF mission chief for Egypt, Middle East and Central Asia, said in an online briefing.

"This is a very ambitious program. It takes time to work, but it's well-calibrated and over the course of this economic program of three years, we should definitely be seeing the payoff." The IMF has already approved \$4 billion in loan instalments, most recently releasing \$1.25 billion for Egypt.

Inflation, however, reached three-decade highs in July after fuel price hikes under the IMF deal. It has since dipped a

bit although high costs have hit many Egyptians hard in the import-dependent state. Since the Egyptian pound was floated last year, the currency has roughly halved in value.

Lull said Egypt's inflation is expected to fall to "slightly above" 10 percent by the end of fiscal year 2017/2018 and to single digits by 2019. Annual urban consumer price inflation dipped to 31.9 percent year-on-year in August from 33.0 percent in July, according to the official CAPMAS statistics agency. Core inflation, which strips out volatile items like food, decreased to 34.86 percent from 35.26 percent, according to the central bank.

The finance minister last week gave a more cautious outlook saying he expects inflation to drop below 15 percent by the end of the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

"The inflation target of 10 percent by June 2018 seems optimistic. We agree more with the (Central Bank of Egypt's) target of 13 percent (3 percent) by the end of 2018," said Radwa El Swaify, head of research at Pharos Securities Brokerage in Cairo.

In a statement earlier, the IMF said Egypt's transition to a flexible exchange rate went smoothly with the parallel market disappearing and central bank reserves increasing significantly. Foreign currency shortages hampered the country's ability to purchase abroad, creating a black market and slowing economic growth. But foreign reserves have been recovering since the currency float, rising to \$36.14 billion by the end of August. They rose \$4.73 billion between June and July alone.

"Market confidence is returning and capital flows are increasing. These augur well for future growth. The authorities' immediate priority is to reduce inflation, which poses a risk to macroeconomic stability," the IMF said.

It said it had agreed to a request for a waiver after Egypt missed primary fiscal balance and fuel subsidy bill requirements for end-June. The waiver was granted in part because of planned strong fiscal adjustments in the next two years.

The IMF said the country's current account deficit was seen narrowing to 4.6 percent of GDP in 2017/18 fiscal year and to 3.8 percent in 2018/19. It said its primary fiscal deficit seen at 1.8 percent of GDP, exceeding the program target of 1 percent. — Reuters

KUWAIT INVITES BIDS TO DEVELOP GAS FIELDS

KUWAIT: Kuwait invited bids to develop non-associated gas fields in the north, Platts reported yesterday.

Quoting unnamed sources, the report noted that engineering, procurement and construction companies have been invited to submit bids, with the closure date end of February 2018.

Kuwait has so far failed to develop the high-pressure, sulfur-rich sour gas deposits in the northern part of the country, despite a project launched in 2010. Kuwait currently produces around 180 MMcf/d of non-associated gas, notes Platts, an international energy publica-

tion. However, Kuwait Oil Co. is already working to raise this to 510 MMcf/d, along with 200,000 b/d of light oil, by the end of the year.

The tender follows two contracts signed last February worth more than \$1 billion with oilfield services giant Schlumberger and a Kuwaiti company for the development of oil and gas facilities at the East Raudhatain field, as part of the second phase of the Jurassic gas project. The local Safwan Petroleum Technologies Co. was awarded the West Raudhatain field development.

BIKE BOOM NIBBLES ON ASIA, GASOLINE DEMAND GROWTH

MORE PEOPLE DROPPING CARS, BUSES FOR BICYCLES TO COVER LAST-MILE

SINGAPORE: It is not quite going back to the horse, even if the bicycle was the first contraption to replace beasts as a means of personal transport. This is a new two-wheeled animal, though, that millions of consumers in Beijing, Taipei, Singapore and cities across Asia are renting via phone apps to cover the last mile of journeys, leaving cars and motorcycles at home, and forgoing taxis.

The two-year bike-share boom has put over 16 million bikes in China alone, according to its Ministry of Transport, with more than 100 million riders registered, eating into car use and gasoline demand growth already expected to stagnate by 2025. "I often use bike-sharing services because it's very convenient. I can find it anywhere and will not worry about losing the bike," said life-long Beijing native Wei Zhang, 36, who uses a shared bike several times a week on her commute, riding 5 km or more.

Analysts can't keep up with bike numbers, let alone estimate how much gasoline consumption growth has dropped off due to the rapid rise in bike-sharing. But it is clear from industry estimates, government reports and a Reuters survey that bike services are resulting in fewer trips by motor vehicles. "Bike-sharing has been crazy since late last year ... The general belief is that (it) boosts the utilization of public transport as shared bikes help to complete the journey," said Harry Liu, downstream consultant with IHS Markit. Even before the number of bike-share units began growing by multiples, analysts had already been saying greater fuel efficiency in autos and the rising use of electric cars meant gasoline's big growth story was over.

China's gasoline demand growth is expected to slow to nearly 4 percent this year, compared

with 6.5 percent growth last year, said Sri Paravaikarasu, head of East of Suez oil at FGE.

And Chinese demand for gasoline is expected to peak as early as 2025, according to state-owned China National Petroleum Corp. "There used to be long queues of taxis waiting for customers outside train stations, but I don't see them anymore," said a Beijing analyst, who took part in a Reuters survey of bike-share users and wanted to be known only by her surname Wang. For a story on the Reuters survey results, see:

Asian bikes, Asian cities

Just in the past month, Chinese bike-sharing start-up Mobike introduced its services in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Bangkok, Thailand, as well as in US capital Washington, D.C.

Mobike, which launched in April 2016, and China-owned rival Ofo have attracted combined funding of more than \$2 billion from venture capital and private equity firms that include Temasek Holdings, Tencent Holdings, DST Global and Ant Financial.

Ofo - which has more than 10 million bikes globally to Mobike's 7 million - says it is on track to increase its global bike units to 20 million over the next three months.

The investments "demonstrate investors' confidence in the global bike-sharing industry," said Lawrence Cao, head of Asia Pacific business for Ofo. Consultancy Roland Berger said the "unforeseeable" amounts of venture capital put into bike schemes made it almost impossible to estimate the growth potential of bike operators, particularly in China, over the last two years.

Taiwan, where the government backs a bike-sharing scheme, is aiming to have bikes account for a 12 percent share in trips to work by 2020,

up from about 5 percent now.

The Taipei city government is expanding bike-sharing program Youbike - which uses docking stations - to have a bike station within a 10-minute walk of every citizen by 2018. Singapore-owned Obike and US-based VBikes - both free-range systems - are also operating in Taiwan. "Once bike-sharing pushes it really to the limit, to the extent to impact the way people think of mobility, then it could be disruptive," said IHS's Liu.

Four wheels bad

A survey done by Mobike of 100,000 customers across 36 cities in China found that car trips among the respondents had more than halved since its service was introduced. A report from the Transport Commission of Shenzhen, one of China's richest cities, said more than 500,000 bike-share units there had replaced nearly 10 percent of travel by private car or 13 percent of gasoline consumption.

Bike-sharing could pose a risk to gasoline consumption "if a stronger state push to reduce carbon intensity and improve air quality translates to more drivers replacing shorter-distance driving with bike rides," said Peter Lee, an oil and gas analyst at BMI research. Chinese growth of passenger car sales, which grew an average annual rate of 10.1 percent over 2011 to 2016, is expected to slow to 2.5 percent over the next five years, said BMI's Lee. Still, mismanagement of bike numbers and misuse of some bicycles may attract legislation that could curb their use. New shared bikes were recently banned in some areas in the Chinese cities of Wuhan, Shanghai and Guangzhou, because of bicycles being discarded in public spaces. — Reuters

US NEW HOME SALES SINK IN AUGUST



CHICAGO: This file photo taken on May 14, 2017 shows workers installing windows in a townhome complex under construction in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

WASHINGTON: US new home sales slowed sharply for the second straight month in August, relieving some pressure on a tight market, the Commerce Department reported yesterday. The decline brought the sales rate to its lowest level in since December while prices fell and inventories rose.

Sales fell 3.4 percent from July to an annual rate of 560,000, seasonally adjusted, surprising analysts who forecast a decline of only 0.5 percent. And the sales pace was 1.2 percent below the rate in August 2016. Meanwhile, July's numbers were revised upwards slightly, somewhat muting the drop from June to 5.5 percent.

Officials said Hurricane Harvey, which made landfall in southeast Texas late last month, slowed the flow of data from some disaster stricken areas but its precise effect on the numbers was not immediately clear. At the current sales rate, the volume of homes for sale represented a supply of 6.1 months, up seven percent from July and the highest level in three years.

Meanwhile, the median home price fell 6.2 percent for the month to \$298,000. Sales fell sharply in the US South, dropping 4.7 percent, and in the West and Northeast, declining by 2.7 percent and 2.6 percent, respectively. Though they can see big swings from month to month, August's sales numbers could mean pressure is momentarily easing on would-be homebuyers. But analysts say the current economic recovery, with steady job creation and slowly rising wages, has created strong demand for housing and this trend is likely to continue. Impediments to construction, including scarce labor and rising costs for materials, have meant that supply has not kept pace with demand. Mickey Levy of Berenberg Capital Markets said the hurricanes' destruction came at a moment when barriers to homebuilding already were stifling supply levels.

"The necessary rebuilding in the South will strain a housing sector already constrained by various supply factors," he said in a note to clients, highlighting in particular workers shortages. "Builders will have difficulty finding skilled construction workers that are in short supply-residential construction employment is just touching 2002 levels, as employment in other sectors have long-passed 2002-07 levels."

Consumer confidence

US consumer confidence slipped in September, partly weighed down by hurricanes Harvey and Irma which slammed into Texas and Florida, according to a

monthly survey released yesterday. The monthly decline was less than forecast by analysts, who said the result actually showed underlying strength in consumer sentiment. However, some parts of the Conference Board survey showed signs of increasing pessimism. The consumer confidence index fell 0.6 points to 119.8, reversing two straight months of gains and bringing the level to its lowest point since June, according to the Conference Board.

A consensus forecast had expected the index to fall even further, to 119.4. "Consumer confidence decreased slightly in September after a marginal improvement in August," Lynn Franco, the board's head of indicators, said in a statement. "Confidence in Texas and Florida, however, decreased considerably, as these two states were the most severely impacted by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma."

But on the whole, consumer attitudes about current conditions remained "quite favorable," she added, saying that short-term expectations were also bullish. However, consumers views of the current situation did darken slightly. The share of those saying conditions were "good" fell 0.6 points to 33.9 percent, while those saying conditions were "bad" rose by the same amount to 13.8 percent. The short-term outlook also showed some signs of increasing concerns, as the share of those expecting conditions to worsen rose 1.9 points to 9.9 percent, while those foreseeing an improvement rose just 0.4 points to 20.2 percent. The hit to confidence in the hurricane-affected zones was pronounced. In Texas, it fell 25.5 points to 119.9. And in Florida, it dropped 8.4 points to 126.7.

Economists say the storms, which forced millions to evacuate, caused tens of billions in damages and shuttered much of US oil production and refining capacity, should slow third-quarter GDP growth but spark a rebound at the end of the year.

Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics said 2005's Hurricane Katrina, which caused nearly 2,000 deaths in New Orleans, had caused a far larger dent in consumer sentiment.

"This report continues the pattern of much less bad post-hurricane data than after Katrina, despite the much bigger areas affected by Harvey and Irma," he said in a research note. "It might not be the last word, and we can't rule out a further decline in October, but so far it seems likely that the overall national economy will suffer only a brief and modest hit from the hurricanes." — Agencies

MACRON GOVERNMENT TO UNVEIL BELT-TIGHTENING FIRST BUDGET

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron's government is set to unveil its first annual budget today, balancing tricky priorities as it seeks to cut taxes while also slashing the deficit. The young centrist president has pledged to find 16 billion euros (\$20 billion) of savings next year, seeing a reduction in the deficit as key to boosting France's credibility in Europe as he eyes a shake-up of the European Union.

France is one of the few remaining nations in the EU's bad books for spending beyond the bloc's deficit limit of three percent of gross domestic product. Macron wants the deficit to come in lower than that this year for the first time in a decade.

But the former investment banker is also eyeing tax cuts for companies and families worth a total 10 billion euros, leaving his government with less cash to make up the balance.

"Its ambitions are three-fold: considerable tax cuts, higher spending in certain sectors, and bringing down the deficit," said Alain Trannoy, head of research at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences.

"That inevitably creates a tension." Prime Minister Edouard Philippe has warned there will be tough choices, saying last month that he was "not here to be nice."

An interim budget for 2017 finalized in July included cuts to housing subsidies and defense spending which sparked a backlash from left-wingers in parliament and the head of the armed forces. Social security is set to see a 5.5-billion-euro cut next year, according to a source close to budget preparations, while nearly 1,600 civil service jobs will be axed.

In better news for many families, some 80 percent will see their household tax reduced in a move the government hopes will increase the spending power of consumers.

Open for business?

Macron came to power in May promising to make France a more attractive destination for investment, starting his presidency by pushing through reforms to the country's famously complex labor laws. "France suffers from two ills: a lack of attractiveness and a lack of competitiveness," said Geoffroy Roux de Bezieux, vice president of business lobby Medef.

The budget "essentially responds to the first problem," he said. Macron's Socialist predecessor Francois Hollande had already pledged to bring down corporate tax from the current 33.3 percent to 28 percent by 2020. The new president plans to cut this again to 25 percent by 2022 as he seeks to cast off France's reputation for being a difficult place to do business.

Despite the tax cuts, the budgets of several ministries are set to go up in 2018 — notably that of defense, after the armed forces chief quit in a blazing row this summer over Macron's



PARIS: This file photo taken on July 12, 2017 shows French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire (right) and Public Action and Accounts Minister Gerald Darmanin (left) leaving the Elysee Palace in Paris after a weekly cabinet meeting. — AFP

plans to slash military spending.

People with diesel cars meanwhile face a 10 percent tax rise to 7.6 cents (\$0.09) a litre as his government seeks a greener economy. The environment was at the center of a 57-billion-euro investment fund unveiled Monday which

includes cash incentives for drivers to trade in heavily polluting cars. France is forecast to post economic growth of 1.7 percent this year, but Macron has vowed to make a priority of lowering unemployment stuck at around 9.5 percent — about twice that of Britain or Germany. — AFP

QATAR AIRWAYS ANNOUNCES \$2BN BOEING PLANE ORDER

DOHA: Qatar Airways announced yesterday it has placed an order worth more than \$2 billion for six Boeing planes, which it said reflected the airline's continued expansion in the United States.

A statement on the Gulf carrier's website said it had placed an order for two Boeing 747-8 Freighters and four 777-300ERs. It added that the order was valued at \$2.16 billion (1.8 billion euros) "at list prices". "The order, a sign of the airline's continued expansion and contribution to the US economy, adds to the airline's current fleet of nearly 100 Boeing widebody airplanes and its more than 100 additional Boeing aircraft on order," read the Qatar Airways statement.

The announcement was made at Boeing's

manufacturing plant in Everett, Washington, in the US. The decision to buy the new planes may be seen as strategically as well economically important.

Gas-rich Qatar has made it clear it is seeking further investment opportunities in the US. In 2015, it said it would invest up to \$35 billion in the United States over the following five years, after targeting high-profile acquisitions in Europe. Last December, Doha also announced the fund would invest \$10 billion in US infrastructure projects. The purchase also comes at a time of high political tensions within the Gulf. Qatar has found itself regionally isolated since June 5 after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut all ties. — AFP

WALL ST SLIPS ON MOUNTING N KOREA TENSIONS

NEW YORK: US stocks gave up early gains yesterday as rising tensions between the United States and North Korea weighed, while investors awaited Fed Chair Janet Yellen's speech for more clarity on interest rate hikes. North Korea has boosted defenses on its east coast, a South Korean lawmaker said, following Pyongyang's threat that it would shoot down US bombers flying near the peninsula.

US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Joseph Dunford said the United States should assume that North Korea has the ability to hit US mainland and that it has the will to use

that capacity. Yellen's speech is also in focus after Fed officials gave differing views on inflation, keeping investors guessing about the path that the central bank plans to take on interest rates.

"The Fed is in a bit of a quandary," said Phil Blancato, chief executive of Ladenberg Thalmann Asset Management in New York. "The market is concerned about the Fed being aggressive, perhaps pushing us to a place where we don't want to be, whether it's an inverted yield curve or recession".

At 11:31 am ET (1531 GMT), the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 1.8 points, or

0.01 percent, at 22,294.29, the S&P 500 was down 0.53 points, or 0.02 percent, at 2,496.13 and the Nasdaq Composite was down 1.82 points, or 0.03 percent, at 6,368.77.

Nine of the 11 major S&P sectors were higher, with the technology sector's 0.22 percent rise leading the gainers. The sector had taken a beating on Monday, recording its worst daily performance in five weeks, on increasing worries that the top-performing tech shares were falling out of favor.

Apple rose 1.5 percent to \$152.54, posting its first rise in four sessions and propping up the three major indexes, after Raymond James

raised price target by \$10 to \$170. Nvidia was up more than 4 percent, following a launch of an artificial intelligence-related software product. Financial index though was the biggest laggard, falling 0.14 percent. Among stocks, credit reporting firm Equifax fell 1.67 percent after the company said its Chief Executive Richard Smith would retire in the wake of a massive cyberattack.

Red Hat rose 2.22 percent after the Linux distributor's quarterly profit came in above estimates and the company raised its full-year forecast. Advancing issues outnumbered decliners on the NYSE by 1,584 to 1,161. On the Nasdaq, 1,536 issues rose and 1,206 fell. The Standard & Poor's 500 index jumped 6 points, or 0.3 percent, to 2,503 as of 10:15 a.m. Eastern time. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 64 points, or 0.3 percent, to 22,360. The Nasdaq composite gained 29 points, or 0.5 percent, to 6,399 after a drop of 0.9 percent on Monday. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks picked up 3 points, or 0.2 percent, to 1,455.

SAILING ALONG: Carnival's third-quarter profit and revenue surpassed Wall Street's expectations. The cruise line raised its annual forecasts and said bookings and prices for next year are higher than they were at this time a year ago. Carnival gained \$2.20, or 3.5 percent, to \$65.70 and competitor Royal Caribbean Cruises rose \$4.77, or 4.2 percent, to \$118.65.

TECH RESET: Big technology companies recovered after sharp losses a day earlier. Apple picked up \$2.32, or 1.5 per-

cent, to \$152.87 and chipmaker Nvidia rose \$6.52, or 3.8 percent, to \$177.52. Facebook added \$2.28, or 1.4 percent, to \$165.12. Open-source software maker Red Hat climbed \$4.59, or 4.3 percent, to \$110.35 after a better-than-expected second quarter.

EQUIFAX DEPARTURE: Equifax CEO Richard Smith is retiring as the credit reporting agency tries to clean up a mess left by a data breach that exposed highly sensitive information about 143 million Americans. Smith had been CEO since 2005 and is also stepping down as chairman. The company said Smith won't receive his annual bonus or other benefits until Equifax finishes its investigation into the data breach it disclosed earlier this month. Two other company executives left on Sept. 15. Equifax lost \$1.27, or 1.2 percent, to \$103.82.

ENERGY: Benchmark US crude slid 48 cents to \$51.74 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, the standard for international oil prices, fell 69 cents, or 1.2 percent, to \$57.74 a barrel in London.

BONDS: Bond prices declined. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.24 percent from 2.22 percent.

CURRENCY: The dollar rose to 112.16 yen from 111.61 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1786 from \$1.1846.

OVERSEAS: Germany's DAX rose 0.2 percent and France's CAC 40 added 0.1 percent. In Britain the FTSE 100 was unchanged. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 lost 0.3 percent and the Hang Seng of Hong Kong gained less than 0.1 percent. The South Korean Kospi declined 0.3 percent. — Agencies

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report									
Tuesday 26 September 2017									
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing						
Price Index	▼ -0.82	6,764.70	6,767.52						
Weighted Index	▲ 0.77	429.74	428.97						
KSX 15	▲ 3.25	994.89	991.64						
Trades									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change		
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	345	▲ 0.0		
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	827	▲ 0.0		
ENERGYH	34.4	33.6	5,250	177	5	33.6	▼ -0.8		
GPI	37.6	37.2	764,000	28,598	34	37.6	▲ 0.1		
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▲ 0.0		
Oil & Gas	769,250	28,775	39	994.46	▼ -6.80				
KFOUC	291	291	5,000	1,455	2	291	▼ -4.0		
BPCC	664	650	517,006	341,964	22	664	▲ 8.0		
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	615	▲ 0.0		
ALQURAN	340	341	327,630	112,744	24	344	▲ 1.0		
Basic Materials	849,647	456,163	48	1316.39	▲ 1.70				
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	464	▲ 0.0		
CABLE	525	506	82,260	31,662	13	510	▼ -5.0		
SHIP	217	216	28,900	6,261	4	217	▲ 0.0		
PCEM	1,025	1,001	33,010	33,714	10	1,001	▼ -9.0		
PAPER	280	280	10,000	2,800	1	280	▼ -30.0		
MRC	110	100	2,140	215	4	110	▲ 0.0		
ADCO	270	270	20,000	5,400	2	270	▼ -5.0		
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	▲ 0.0		
NCBM	172	172	11	2	1	172	▼ -3.0		
EQUIPMENT	45.8	44.5	440,783	20,322	23	44.5	▼ -1.2		
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0		
GYPBUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▲ 0.0		
SALBOOKH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	63	▲ 0.0		
AGLY	877	870	754,836	659,147	94	871	▲ 2.0		
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	318	▲ 0.0		
CLEAN	52	49.1	390,000	19,964	7	52	▲ 2.3		
KSL	59	56	10,050	563	2	59	▼ -0.2		
KDPC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	165	▲ 0.0		
HUMANASOFT	3,950	3,940	263,100	1,039,242	71	3,950	▲ 50.0		
NAFAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	▲ 0.0		
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	62	▲ 0.0		
SHOOTING	26.6	26.0	112,530	2,932	10	26.5	▼ 0.2		
CGC	545	500	12,032	6,084	7	538	▲ 3.0		
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0		
UPAG	632	625	18,181	11,377	2	625	▼ -30.0		
ALAFCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	367	▲ 0.0		
MUBARRAD	73	73	6,000	438	2	73	▲ 1.6		
LOGISTICS	53	52	1,308,904	68,038	52	52	▼ -1.1		
SCEM	83	83	40,000	3,324	1	83	▲ 0.1		
GCEM	81	81	10,000	810	1	81	▲ 0.9		
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▲ 0.0		
KCEM	76	76	15,000	1,137	3	76	▼ -1.9		
RKWC	85	83	26,500	2,202	3	83	▲ 0.0		
SPEC	95	80	317,800	28,787	37	92	▼ -1.1		
Industrials	3,891,037	1,844,403	340	1834.94	▼ -6.10				
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0		
CATL	270	270	11,899	3,213	1	270	▼ -9.0		
DANAH	72	70	171,650	12,099	9	70	▼ -0.1		
FOOD	1,980	1,980	250	466	1	1,980	▲ 0.0		
Consumer Goods	183,809	15,806	11	1032.13	▼ -11.50				
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	480	▲ 0		
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	▲ 0		
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	175	▲ 0		
Health Care	0	0	0	0.00	▲ 0.00				
KCN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,339	▲ 0		
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0		
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	▲ 0		
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	28.0	▲ 0		
EYAS	586	535	105,440	56,928	23	588	▲ 49		
IFHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	280	▲ 0		
OULAFUEL	122	120	41,348	5,009	14	120	▼ -1		
MUNTAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	▲ 0		
JAZERA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	580	▲ 0		
BOOR	122	120	35,083	4,235	8	120	▲ 1		
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	123	▲ 0		
ALRAI	118	118	73,510	8,674	5	118	▼ -12		
Jiyad	89	89	101	7	2	89	▼ -17		
Mazzan	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	815	▲ 0		
Consumer Services	255,482	74,852	52	958.05	▲ 1.00				
ZAIN	510	505	4,643,543	2,361,104	181	510	▲ 5		
OOREDOO	1,204	1,176	30	35	3	1,204	▲ 0		
AAN	37.1	36.6	1,146,256	42,396	26	37.0	▼ 0		
VIVA	815	803	21,990	17,092	25	804	▼ -11		
Telecommunications	5,811,825	2,421,227	235	613.20	▼ -2.40				
NBK	768	763	782,706	599,566	112	765	▲ 5		
GBK	246	236	11,458,114	2,744,144	264	236	▼ -8		
CBK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	375	▲ 0		
ABK	310	310	300,000	93,000	5	310	▲ 0		
ALMUTAHED	415	414	53,725	22,285	10	414	▼ -1		
KIB	248	247	637,734	157,745	22	247	▲ 1		
BURG	359	358	7,822	2,808	3	359	▼ -3		
KFN	600	588	2,625,121	1,563,914	258	595	▲ 3		
BOUBAYAN	440	436	411,376	180,593	90	439	▲ 2		
AUB	213	211	2,304,770	489,055	96	212	▲ 2		
ITHMR	30.1	30.7	742,507	28,709	25	30.0	▼ 0		
WARBANK	250	248	397,808	99,319	70	248	▼ -6		
Banks	19,721,733	5,981,218	891	952.04	▼ -2.30				
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	275	▲ 0		
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	800	▲ 0.0		
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	430	▲ 0.0		
WINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	▲ 0.0		
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	187	▲ 0.0		
FTI	82	59	11,291	668	4	82	▲ 0.0		
WETHAQ	48.0	44.0	12,500	552	2	44.0	▼ -3.5		
BKQWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0		
Insurance	23,791	1,220	6	1108.21	▼ -13.60				
SOKOUK	48.5	47.6	87,100	4,209	8	48.5	▲ 0.3		
KRE	64	62	1,878,696	118,118	24	63	▲ 0.9		
URC	94	94	5,000	470	2	94	▼ -8.5		
NRE	141	139	1,583,299	221,593	41	140	▲ 2.0		
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0		
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	405	▲ 0.0		
AREFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	152	▲ 0.0		
MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	41.9	▲ 0.0		
ARABREC	36.8	36.2	121,499	4,446	8	36.7	▲ 0.5		
ERESCO	40.8	40.0	349,200	13,979	20	40.2	▼ -0.7		
MABANEE	798	798	81,510	65,045	7	798	▲ 5.0		
INUZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	87	▲ 0.0		
INVESTORS	23.5	23.0	578,538	13,322	25	23.5	▲ 0.4		



AL-SAYER CELEBRATES YOKOHAMA'S 100 YEARS OF SAFE DRIVING MNSS UNVEILS GEOLANDER SUV TIRES FROM YOKOHAMA RUBBER WITH CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY

KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons (MNSS), a subsidiary of Al-Sayer Group Holding and the authorized distributor of Yokohama tires in Kuwait held the third raffle draw of the special promotion celebrating Yokohama's 100th Anniversary at the Yokohama Center - Canada Dry on 14 September 2017 to announce winners of special summer promotion.

100 gold coins in 100 years celebration
The draw was organized under the supervision of Ministry of Commerce & Industry - for Consumer protection affairs along with Krishna Kumar General Manager Tires Oil Paint (TOP) and Garage Equipment Division MNSS, Inderpal Singh Senior Manager, Tire

Sales from Al-Sayer Yokohama and Mohammad Amin Nasimi Senior Manager After-Sales Marketing. Krishna Kumar General Manager appreciated the great response from customers and thanked them for making this promotion a big success. Yokohama special promotion entitled customers to enter the draw upon purchase of Yokohama tire from an authorized dealer for a chance to win Gold coins.

Introducing SUV Tires with leading-edge technology
Yokohama Rubber has also recently launched The "Geolander G055", an SUV tire based on the Company's leading-edge "BluEarth" tire technology.

In addition to delivering the utility performance required for driving on various road surfaces, "Geolander G055" tires contribute to the vehicle's superior fuel-efficiency, comfort and safety. The "BluEarth" technology mark is prominently displayed on the tire's sidewall. "Geolander G055" tires are targeted at SUVs designed primarily for use on road, including urban crossover models and small and midsize SUVs, which are popular around the world. Yokohama Rubber is dynamically developing tires employing its leading-edge "BluEarth" tire technology, and many of these tires have been adopted by automakers as original equipment, especially on new eco car and hybrid vehicle models.

List of the 10 winners are as below

Prize	Names
First Prize	10 Gold Coins Abdullah Sarhan Abdullah
Second Prize	5 Gold Coins Ali Nasser Abdullah
Third Prize	4 Gold Coins Abdulaziz Musad Al-Dosari
Fourth Prize	3 Gold Coins Eid Saud Al - Azmi
Fifth Prize	2 Gold Coins Mubarak Barak Al - Hifi
Sixth Prize	2 Gold Coins Salman Mohammed Al Ajmi
Seventh Prize	2 Gold Coins Yasser Asaad Yousef
Eighth Prize	2 Gold Coins Mohamed Sobhi Mulla
Ninth Prize	2 Gold Coins Awad Musayah Awad Al - Azmi
Tenth Prize	2 Gold Coins Ali Hani AlHaddad



INNOVATIVE LOYALTY POINTS SYSTEM BENEFITS AL MULLA CUSTOMERS

KUWAIT: Al Mulla International Exchange's customers have a lot to look forward to while doing their transaction in their favorite Exchange house. Apart from the wonderful service, ambience and technological sophistication in remittances, they also benefit from the free loyalty points that are accorded with the transactions.

Although loyalty points are given in the service industry by different companies, the loyalty points accorded by Al Mulla Exchange to customers are different and highly innovative. There are loyalty points given at different levels at Al Mulla Exchange for customers doing transactions with them.

Speaking to the media, the customers expressed joy at the benefits that came their way for no extra cost or effort. "We are only using the services of Al Mulla Exchange and we end up winning points. As the points awarded are generous, we are able to collect redeemable points in a short span of time. Therefore, we don't have to wait for a long time to enjoy the benefits."

Speaking to the media, Rakesh Joshi, General Manager of Al Mulla

International Exchange, stressed the flexible nature of the loyalty program that makes it unique. "It works at various levels enabling customers to earn points through many different means such as early transactions, referring a friend, online transactions and so on."

Explaining the details of the program, the general manager said customers can redeem the loyalty points against their commission once the benchmark of 1000 or multiples of 1000 points are achieved. In addition to the loyalty points earned for each transaction, customers can also enjoy a bonus of 500 points for every new customer referred, 250 bonus points for transactions done online at www.amxremit.com, 3,500 points for transactions that meet certain criteria. Transactions done by association members attract further bonus points.

Al Mulla Exchange Company has always laid great emphasis on technology, spearheading innovation on all fronts to the benefit of their customers. In this instance, the company has taken a conventional loyalty program and restructured it to provide maximum benefit to the customers.

FLYDUBAI ANNOUNCES FLIGHTS TO PODGORICA

AIRLINE OFFERS 2 FLIGHTS A WEEK TO MONTENEGRO CAPITAL

KUWAIT: Dubai-based airline flydubai has announced the start of flights to Montenegro's capital Podgorica, which will begin on 01 November. With two flights a week, the flights include a stopover in Sarajevo, a popular destination on the flydubai network. Podgorica joins the airlines network in Central and Eastern Europe, which includes Belgrade, Bratislava, Bucharest, Prague, Skopje, Sarajevo and Sofia. Flydubai will become the only UAE-based carrier to offer direct air links to Podgorica.

Commenting on the launch, Ghaith Al-Ghaith Chief Executive Officer of flydubai, said: "With the launch of our flights to Podgorica, we continue to offer passengers more ways to explore and discover Montenegro. The popularity of our summer flights to Tivat has shown a continuous demand for more access to this part of the world and we are delighted to be offering flights to Montenegro on a regular basis."

Podgorica offers its visitors plenty to explore, with its charming architecture, green spaces and scenic surroundings, along with a bustling cafe culture and numerous museums to visit. Skadar Lake National Park, home of the largest Lake in Southern Europe, is a short drive outside of the city, while the popular coastal city of Tivat can be reached with a 90-minute drive.

"With the launch of this new route, flydubai will become the first airline to offer regular services between Podgorica and Sarajevo," said Jeyhun Efendi, Senior Vice President Commercial (UAE, EU, ME, CIS) at flydubai. "We look forward to the new opportunities that this will provide along with the flows of trade and tourism that these flights can offer." Flydubai is dedicated to providing its customers with a better travel experience by offering greater choice and flexibility. With flydubai's Business Class, passengers can enjoy a more personalized flying experience while Economy Class offers comfortable seating and a convenient way to travel.



GLOBAL FINANCE: KFH IS THE 'SAFEST ISLAMIC BANK IN KUWAIT AND REGION'

KUWAIT: The safest banks chart prepared by Global Finance Magazine has shown that KFH has maintained its leading position as the safest Islamic bank in Kuwait, second at the GCC level, seventh at the Middle East level and ranked 24 among 50 banks considered by Global Finance Group as the safest banks at the emerging markets level. The chart is issued by Global Finance for the last 25 years and considered as the most trusted magazine which covers more 500 banks. The magazine is dependent on certain facts including assets volume, financial indicators, profit ratios, operational revenues, and governance and compliance standards.

KFH leading position among the safest banks has reiterated the soundness and credibility of KFH trends and the success of the bank's performance on its 46th anniversary in addition to the soundness of its financial position and volume of business.

KFH has spread its business through 500 branches worldwide. Accordingly, the well-studied resolutions and prudent policies have achieved for KFH in all aspects of safety and security. The sound and literal implementation of professional and Sharia compliance standards has contributed to the continuity of the "Safety & Security" policy in accordance with methodological standards. KFH a vivid vision has achieved sustainable and well balanced growth, qualitative performance, solid market share, remarkable series of products and services, highly significant human resources skills to cope with grand global banks.

KFH has achieved sustainable growth and



faced various market challenges, thus increasing customers trust and expanding its share in the market. KFH remains leading in local market, competitive worldwide with a set of highly developed and creative products. Good reputation, distinguished trade mark and continuous performance development shall increase global interest in Sharia compliant products and services and increase KFH share in the market.

KFH was established in Kuwait in 1977 and is enlisted in the Kuwait Stock Exchange. KFH Group is a global pioneer in the field of Islamic banking services, where it offers a wide array of Islamic products and services, not to mention a high standard of innovation and client service.

KFH manages its operations in the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 480 branches, including KFH-Turkey, in order to offer services for the

bank's clients in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Germany, Jordan and Dubai.

KFH's mission is to achieve highest levels of excellence and innovation in the field of client service, while developing common interest for all those concerned with the financial institution. KFH's vision is to spearhead the global development in Islamic financial services, and to upgrade the bank into the level of becoming the most sustainable profitable Islamic bank in the world. KFH's values include cementing leadership through all its businesses, including leadership in the Islamic banking services worldwide, through innovation and in client service and the development of its employees. In addition, KFH is committed to all its procedures, and to setting up long-life partnerships with the concerned authorities.

BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNER OF KD 125,000 CASH PRIZE IN YAWMI DRAW

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced Rodoslaw Danial Pelczynski as the new KD 125,000 cash prize winner in the Yawmi quarterly draw. The winner expressed his excitement for being the winner of the rewarding cash prize with Yawmi Account from Burgan Bank.

The Yawmi quarterly draw offers customers chances to win higher rewards, entitling one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 cash prize every three months.

To enter Burgan Bank's Yawmi quarterly Draws, customers should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for 2 months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning.

For more information about the Yawmi quarterly draw, customers are advised to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch, or call the bank's call center where customer service representatives will be delighted to assist with any questions on the Yawmi account or any of the bank's products and services. Customers can also log on to Burgan Bank's www.burgan.com for further information.

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 MENAT 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.

RUSSIA THREATENS TO BAN FACEBOOK IN 2018

MOSCOW: Russia's internet watchdog yesterday warned Facebook it would be banned in 2018 unless it complies with a law on storing local users' data. "The law is compulsory for all," the head of Roskomnadzor telecoms watchdog Alexander Zharov told journalists in Moscow, quoted by Interfax news agency.

"We will work on getting Facebook to observe the law," Zharov said. "This will all

happen in 2018 definitely." A controversial law passed in 2014 requires foreign messaging services, search engines and social networking sites to store the personal data of Russian users inside Russia.

The law, which was fiercely opposed by the telecommunications industry, is an apparent move to pressure sites such as Facebook and Twitter into handing over user information.

"In any case we will either get the law

carried out or the company will stop working in Russia, as unfortunately happened to LinkedIn," Zharov said. "There are no exceptions here," he added.

Russian internet providers last year blocked the LinkedIn professional networking site after Roskomnadzor said it broke the law on personal data storage. Zharov's comments came after Facebook revealed that Russia-linked fake accounts paid for ads that may have

influenced last year's US election. Facebook said it was sharing its findings with the US authorities. The threat of a ban also comes as Russia is gearing up for presidential elections in March next year. Facebook is widely used by the opposition to President Vladimir Putin to coordinate protests and make political statements.

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who intends to stand against Putin but

will almost certainly be barred, uses Facebook to communicate with supporters. The online platform allows him to bypass state television, which only gives him negative coverage.

"We understand very well that Facebook has a significant number of users in Russia, but on the other hand, we understand that it's not a unique service, there are other social media sites," said Zharov. — Reuters



TURIN: From left, EU Commissioner for the Digital Single Market Andrus Ansip, German deputy economy minister Matthias Machnig, deputy US chief technology officer at the White House Michael Kratsios, Canadian minister of innovation, science, and economic development Navdeep Bains, Italian Economic Development minister Carlo Calenda, French junior minister for the digital sector Mounir Mahjoubi, British minister of state for digital and culture Matthew Hancock, Japanese member of the House of Representatives Shinsuke Okuno and Japan's member of the House of Councillors Daisaku Hiraki pose for a group photo during a G7 Industry ministers meeting, in Turin yesterday.—AP

EU DIGITAL SUMMIT UPSTAGED BY GERMANY AND BREXIT

TALLINN SESSION SEEKS TO CHART OUT EUROPE'S DIGITAL FUTURE

BRUSSELS: A summit of European Union leaders in Estonia intended to chart out a digital future for the continent is set to be upstaged by less utopian issues including Brexit and the unexpected rise of the far right in Germany.

The EU's 28 leaders, including British Prime Minister Theresa May, are to meet for two days in Tallinn starting tomorrow to discuss how Europe can more efficiently transform to the digital age.

Estonia, which holds the EU's six-month rotating presidency, bills itself as the avant-garde of the digital revolution and called the talks to help bring the rest of the bloc up to speed.

Instead, the national leaders are expected to focus on the next steps for the EU over the coming years, after the shock of Britain's vote to leave the bloc and the lingering presence of populism in the continent. At a dinner on Thursday, the leaders will be given an open forum for a "frank and informal" discussion, EU President Donald Tusk said in a letter inviting them to the meeting.

Macron's eurozone plans

The gathering of leaders will be the first since Europe's most powerful leader, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, won a fourth term on Sunday, but with a disappointing result that

included historic gains for the country's hard-right nationalist party, the AfD.

It will also follow a major speech by French President Emmanuel Macron in which he will set out ambitious eurozone reform proposals that he kept under wraps until after the German election. His plans include creating a budget for the eurozone which would be overseen by a finance minister and a new parliament-proposals that are sure to be greeted wearily in Berlin.

This skepticism will be even greater if Merkel enters a coalition government, as expected, with the pro-business Free Democrats party, which in the campaign poured cold water on French pleas for closer eurozone ties. The Tallinn summit also follows a state of the union speech by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker which called for deeper integration across the board, not just in the eurozone.

This included calling for more states to join the euro and the passport-free Schengen area, and a simplification of leadership at the EU.

'Very glad' to have May

A senior EU diplomat firmly denied that the presence of Britain's May would stifle debate, saying the leaders were "very glad" she would be in Tallinn. "We reject talk that we cannot talk

with Prime Minister May in the room," the diplomat said. May will arrive in Tallinn as a fourth round of official Brexit negotiations wraps up in Brussels. In a closely watched speech last Friday, May called for a two-year transition period while promising to meet Britain's existing EU budget commitments at least until Brexit, and outlining new legal guarantees for the rights of the roughly three million EU nationals living in Britain. Both of these are key demands of the EU, along with the need to find a solution for how to handle Northern Ireland's border with EU-member Republic of Ireland. But the top negotiators from each side immediately issued clashing demands as the talks got underway on Monday.

The talks in Tallinn are coming after other EU summits on the bloc's future in Slovakia, Malta and Italy were all held without Britain. At the Rome summit in March, the EU's 27 remaining leaders renewed their vows, celebrating the troubled bloc's 60th anniversary with a commitment to a common future.

Formerly part of the Soviet Union, Estonia has reinvented itself by taking a jump to the digital world, modernizing and digitizing all aspects of public life. The discussions on digital issues will cover cybersecurity and the free movement of data in the EU, a priority for Estonia.—AFP

CHINA DISRUPTS WHATSAPP AHEAD OF COMMUNIST PARTY MEETING

BEIJING: Chinese authorities appear to have severely disrupted the WhatsApp messaging app in the latest step to tighten censorship as they prepare for a major Communist Party congress next month.

Users in China have reported widespread disruptions in recent days to the Facebook-owned service, which previously malfunctioned in the country over the summer. Experts said the problems began on Sunday, but text messaging, voice calls and video calls appeared to be working again on Tuesday, though voice messages and photos were not going through.

WhatsApp provides message encryption technology that likely does not please Chinese authorities, which closely monitor and restrict cyberspace through their "Great Firewall".

Many Chinese activists favor WhatsApp over local messaging apps because of its end-to-end encryption function. China has tightened online policing this year, enacting new rules that require tech companies to store user data inside the country as well as imposing restrictions on what is permissible content.

Chinese cyberspace regulators said Monday they slapped "maximum" fines on major Chinese tech firms Baidu and Tencent for allowing the publication of pornographic, violent and other sorts of banned material on their social media platforms. The amount of the fines was not disclosed. Websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and a slew of foreign media have been blocked for years. The WhatsApp troubles emerged ahead of the Communist Party congress on October 18, when President Xi Jinping is expected to be given a second five-year term as the party's general secretary. "It smells like Party congress pre-emptive blocking," said Jason Ng, who researches China's internet at the Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto. China usually steps up surveillance around major events, Ng said.

'Extreme censorship'

While the WeChat messaging app owned by China's Tencent company is more widely used in the country, many

WhatsApp users complained about the disruptions. "As we get closer to the Party congress, I think authorities will use more extreme censorship measures. The public knows that WeChat isn't safe," prominent Beijing-based activist Hu Jia told AFP.

"Me and other dissidents use WhatsApp to communicate 70 percent of the time. For the few days WhatsApp was completely inaccessible, we didn't talk at all," Hu said.

Earlier this month, WeChat informed its users in a new privacy policy that it would "retain, preserve or disclose" users' data to "comply with applicable laws or regulations"—confirming long-held public assumptions about the company's practices. Other users in China noted that the WhatsApp disruptions would make it difficult to work with clients abroad.

"Facebook, Twitter, Gmail, Viber were blocked before. Now even WhatsApp is blocked? Without good messaging tools, it will reduce the efficiency of the foreign trade industry," wrote one person on Weibo, China's Twitter-like social media website. I can live without the others (applications), but blocking WhatsApp is driving me crazy," said another. WhatsApp declined to comment. The Open Observatory of Network Interference, a global censorship detection group, said China started blocking WhatsApp on Sunday.

Growing firewall

To operate in China, some foreign tech companies have complied with local regulations. But others such as Google have chosen to pull out completely from mainland China.

In July, Apple removed software allowing internet users to skirt China's "Great Firewall" from its app store in the country, drawing criticism that it was bowing to Beijing's ever-growing web censorship. Such software, called virtual private networks (VPN), allow people in China to access any website, even those that are blocked. Beijing mandated in January that all developers must obtain government licenses to offer VPNs and there has been concern that it might ban them outright.—AFP



This photo illustration shows the WhatsApp application logo (C) on a smartphone screen in Beijing yesterday. Chinese authorities appear to have severely disrupted the WhatsApp messaging app in the latest step to tighten censorship as they prepare for a major Communist Party congress next month.—AFP



LYON: Co-creator, with his twin brother Benjamin, of the Lyon-based startup TwinswHeel, Vincent Talon presents an industrial droid assistant on Monday at the SNCF (French National Railway Corporation) technicentre in Oullins, near Lyon.—AFP

CHINA FINES TECH FIRMS OVER ONLINE CONTENT

BEIJING: China has fined several of the country's biggest technology firms for failing to remove illegal online content as the authorities intensify their policing of the internet.

Three web giants operating popular social media services have received "maximum penalties" for allowing the publication of pornographic, violent and other sorts of banned material, the Cyberspace Administration of China said. Internet users had shared the content on Baidu's online forum Tieba, the microblogging site Weibo, and Tencent's WeChat application, according to the watchdog.

The companies also failed to block content that "promoted ethnic hatred," it said in

a statement on Monday. The amounts of the fines were not made public. The companies were also ordered to immediately remove illegal content as well as increase platform management measures.

A Baidu spokeswoman told AFP the company is "actively cooperating with the government" to "purge bad information" from its Tieba forum. Regulations in force since 2000 say websites are responsible for ensuring the legality of any information posted on their platforms.

China has tightened online policing this year, enacting new rules that require tech companies to store user data inside the country as well as restrictions on what is permissible content.—AFP

ALSTOM AND SIEMENS RAIL DEAL RUNS INTO FRENCH POLITICAL CONCERNS

MUNICH/PARIS: French politicians voiced concerns yesterday that a planned multibillion dollar merger of the rail assets of Alstom and Siemens could give the German company the upper hand. Two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters that the French company plans to pay shareholders a special dividend if the deal does go through. Siemens is expected to opt for a deal with Alstom rather than an alternative with Canada's Bombardier, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

Siemens Mobility is set to be merged into Alstom, in which Siemens would hold 50 percent plus one share, while the chief executive would be Alstom's current boss Henri-Poupard Lafarge. The likely transaction has political ramifications, since the French state owns around 20 percent of Alstom. A special dividend would even out the value of Siemens and Alstom, which has too much cash on its balance sheet, to smooth the intended 50-50 joint venture, one of the sources said. "Will there be a special dividend? Yes," said the second person.

Siemens and Alstom are strong in high-speed intercity trains with their ICE and TGV models. Siemens is also the leader in signaling technology, while Bombardier - whose transportation headquarters are in Berlin - is stronger in commuter and light-rail trains. Siemens stands to gain control of Alstom's main business, since all of Alstom's divisions deal with the railways and transportation industries.

Signs of backlash

Several politicians and French trade union activists expressed concerns over France losing control of its TGV high-speed train - a symbol of national pride that has highlighted French engineering skill - and over possible job losses.

Shares in Alstom, which had rallied in recent sessions on anticipation of a deal, slipped 0.25 percent while Siemens shares were broadly flat. "The problem is that at the end of the day, it

would likely be a Siemens company, although we still need clarification on the capital structure," said Prime Partners fund manager Francois Savary, whose firm holds Siemens shares. French right-wing politician Nicolas Dupont-Aignan criticized the likely deal on Tuesday as being more favorable to Germany than France, as did far-right politician Nicolas Bay, the National Front's secretary general.

"The Franco-German partnership must not result in the eradication of French industry!" Bay said on Twitter. Eric Woerth, a member of the right-wing Republicans' party, voiced similar views on his Twitter account.

"Is this now the end of Alstom? Will TGV become German? Why does the government accept such an imbalance?"

A tie-up between the two - aimed at creating a European champion in the railway sector similar to Airbus in aviation - would represent a reconciliation of sorts between Siemens and Alstom.

Alstom snubbed the German company in 2014 to sell its energy division to General Electric in a deal that also saw Paris take a 20 percent stake in Alstom, under a temporary agreement with construction group Bouygues.—Reuters



BELFORT: This file photo taken on September 12, 2016 shows a person walking in front of the French power and transport engineering company Alstom factory in Belfort (eastern France). 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.—AFP



VARENA: In this grab taken from video, young boys collect mushrooms at the foraging festival, some 60 kilometers (nearly 40 miles) south of the capital of Vilnius, Lithuania.—AP

ON THE HUNT: LITHUANIANS RACE TO PICK MUSHROOMS

VARENA: Hundreds of Lithuanians ran around with baskets and buckets Saturday in a southeastern pine forest. Why you ask? It's the national championship of wild mushroom picking - a competition always held on the last Saturday in September. That's when conditions are "not too dry, not too wet, the humidity is perfect," explained mushroom hunter Janina Juodine. A rainy, relatively warm summer created ideal conditions for the foraging festival in Lithuania, where forests cover more than 33 percent of the Baltic country and mushroom-hunting is considered the second-most popular sport after basketball.

"Walking between trees and looking for big brown mushrooms is a great way of spending a Saturday," said Julius Sostakas, an IT engineer from Vilnius. "It is a part of our cultural heritage." Mushrooms - fresh, dried, salted or marinated - are considered an essential element in Lithuanian cuisine,

used in many dishes to add special flavor to meat, fish and potatoes. More than four hundred edible varieties can be found in Lithuania's forests, including edible boletus, slippery jacks, chanterelles, blewits and morels.

The festival Saturday took place 60 kilometers south of the capital, Vilnius, close to the border with Belarus. It drew thousands of onlookers as well as local mushroom sellers dressed in Lithuanian folk costumes - colorful knee-long skirts with embroidered aprons and woven sashes. "This is a great event," contest judge Rimute Aviziniene said. She said 21 teams had participated, adding that the largest picked edible boletus - known in the country as the king of Lithuania's forests - weighed 621 grams (22 ounces). A local team called Mushroom Nightmares won Saturday's contest by delivering 58 kilograms (128 pounds) of mushrooms—AP

BIKE-SHARING TAKES OFF AMONG YOUTHS IN MAJOR ASIAN CITIES

COST, CONVENIENCE DRIVE SHARED-BIKE USE

SINGAPORE: Orange, yellow and other brightly colored bikes have been popping up in cities across Asia, surprising residents and frequent visitors with their sudden ubiquity outside train stations and condo gates over the last two years. The bikes, which users can rent for around \$51 (\$0.74) an hour or less via mobile phone apps, are meant to complete the last kilometer or more of a journey, and are also being used for outings in urban parks and trips to the supermarket. The two biggest bike-share operators, China-owned Ofo and Mobike, plan to be in more than 200 cities by end-2017 and end-2018, respectively. They will have a combined total of nearly 30 million bikes in operation by the end of this year, having together attracted more than \$2 billion in funding.

"We will consider expanding into any city

where our smart bike solution can address local transportation needs and where we have ... support from local officials," said Florian Bohnert, head of global partnerships at Mobike. In an informal survey by Thomson Reuters across Beijing, Shanghai, Seoul, Taipei and Singapore, 60 bike-share users talked about how the services had changed their travel patterns. Eighteen percent of survey respondents - 11 out of 60 - said they were using the bikes instead of taking cars, taxis or motorcycles, a sign that some are moving away from carbon-intensive vehicles.

The other 82 percent would have walked or taken public transport, the survey showed. Among the five cities, users in Beijing were the most committed, with six out of 15 respondents riding shared bikes daily, and the other nine

using the bikes several times a week. In Shanghai, five out of 10 people surveyed used a shared bike daily or several times a week. Most of the respondents were males in the 20-40 age group. About half of the respondents used the bikes to commute to work or school.

Singapore had the highest percentage of people who changed from a private car or taxi to a bicycle. Taipei came in second, and Beijing and Shanghai tied for third. All the respondents in Seoul switched from public transport or walking to the app-leased bikes, although the city-backed service there used docking stations instead of free-range bikes. "It's super cheap and convenient and there are stations everywhere. It's easy to use and it's a bit of exercise too," said office worker Park Yongwon, 30, who cycled 1,000 km in the past year.—Reuters



KANUMA, TOCHIGI PREFECTURE, Japan: This picture shows an instructor (left) interacting with an elderly student at a driving school for senior citizens, managed by the Japan Automobile Federation (JAF), in Kanuma, Tochigi prefecture.—AFP photos



KANUMA, TOCHIGI PREFECTURE, Japan: This picture shows an instructor addressing participants of a driving school for senior citizens, managed by the Japan Automobile Federation (JAF), in Kanuma, Tochigi prefecture.—AFP photos

OLD AND DEADLY: JAPAN'S DRIVE TO BEAT ELDERLY ROAD MENACE

KANUMA: A series of fatal crashes caused by elderly drivers in Japan has left authorities desperately grappling for ways to clamp down on a problem that experts warn is only going to get worse as the population ages. Drivers over 65 were responsible for 965 deadly accidents in Japan—more than a quarter of the total—in 2016, according to the National Police Agency. In one of the most shocking cases, an 87-year-old crashed his truck into a group of schoolchildren killing a six-year-old and injuring others, prompting demands for action on the issue.

In tranquil countryside outside the town of Kanuma, north of Tokyo, on a track surrounded by rice paddies and mountains, a group of elderly drivers are taking public safety into their own hands and completing refresher courses behind the wheel. The pensioners pilot their cars gingerly between cones while instructors bark out orders via loudspeaker through open car windows as high-tech sensors measure reaction times for emergency stops.

Emiko Takahashi, a 73-year-old woman taking the course, admitted she had "no confidence" in her driving as she got older. "That's why I came here," she said, adding that she has no choice but to drive her ailing husband, seven years her senior, to hospital every day. Takahashi said her ability to concentrate had declined as she aged and her reaction times have waned. "I have become slow," she admitted.

'Drive until I die'

Fatal accidents caused by geriatric drivers now account for 28.3 percent of the total, up from 17.9 percent a decade ago, NPA records state. And with the elderly set to account for 40

percent of the population by 2060, there are increasing fears for public safety. Authorities in some regions have resorted to novel ways to encourage some of the 4.8 million drivers over 75 in Japan to hand over their licence. These include deals for cheaper funerals and discounts on ramen noodles, along with more conventional methods such as cheap or free taxis and buses. But 67-year-old Kiyotaka Ukita, also taking part in the course, scoffed at these efforts.

"Free bus tickets aren't attractive at all for older drivers to return their licences," said Ukita, sporting a lengthy shock-white goatee beard. "The advantage (of driving your own car) is that you can go wherever and whenever you want. I hope I can continue driving until I die," he said. Most accidents caused by elderly drivers result from them mixing up the accelerator and the brake or losing control of the steering wheel, the police agency said, calling it a "pressing problem."

Masato Zenyouji, an instructor at the Japan Automobile Federation (JAF), said one of the problems lay in the declining ability of older drivers "to instantly make a judgement, such as suddenly hitting the brake." "When the speed increases, their field of view narrows down, which could lead to accidents," he said. The driving course attempts to address this by physical exercises such as stretching as well as drills to improve cognitive functions.

Another factor in accidents is overconfidence from drivers who have often been behind the wheel for decades, said Masabumi Tokoro, a professor at Rissho University who has been studying elderly drivers. According to a survey Tokoro conducted, 10 percent of drivers in their 30s thought they were capable of avoiding acci-

dents, while the figure stood at 53 percent for those aged 75 and older. "They think they can avoid accidents with their driving skills," he said. Authorities have taken steps with legislation, introducing laws in March forcing drivers aged 75 or older to pass cognitive tests when renewing their licences.

And carmakers are trying to do their bit as well, installing features such as a system that stalls acceleration if the driver steps on the gas pedal instead of the brake. But this is being rolled out only gradually and only for new models. According to the transport ministry, the system to slow acceleration was installed in around one third of 4.4 million new passenger cars manufactured in 2015.

'I'm fine now'

Tokoro believes the problem will not be solved with cognitive tests or bribing older drivers to return their licenses. "It's inconvenient in rural Japan and you cannot do anything without a car. That's why (older drivers) won't let go of their permits," he explained. Tokoro said the government needed to foster an environment in which older people can lead a normal life even after handing in their licence.

He cited as examples reasonably priced taxi-sharing services and a drive to encourage older residents to move to city centres from suburban areas. Japanese IT firm DeNA has been testing self-driving cars to provide a new means of transportation in ageing rural communities by 2020. Back at the track, Takahashi said she was hoping to continue driving until 85 years old. She added: "I think I can keep driving if I study and become confident. I'll stop driving if I feel I have health problems."—AFP

AS HEALTH BILL TEETERS, MEDICAID RECIPIENTS WATCH NERVOUSLY

WASHINGTON: With the latest Republican health care overhaul teetering near collapse, one group in particular is watching with heightened anxiety. The debate in Congress is personal for many of those who gained coverage through Medicaid in the 31 states that expanded the program under former President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act.

Alan Purser, who lives in eastern Arkansas, credits expanded Medicaid with saving his life, after a routine doctor's visit ended with him being hospitalized and treated for multiple blood clots in both lungs. The 60-year-old diabetic said he would not be able to afford his insulin medication because he does not qualify for traditional Medicaid.

"I am going to be up a creek if it goes through," he said. The Medicaid expansion brought health insurance to some 11 million lower-income Americans, helping drive the nation's uninsured rate to just 9 percent. That program would have ended in three years under the initial version of the Republican's latest health care bill, triggering widespread uncertainty for both recipients and states facing the prospect of winding down their coverage.

The latest GOP effort appeared to be doomed late Monday when Republican Sen Susan Collins of Maine announced her opposition, citing in part the proposed cuts to Medicaid that she described as "devastating." With Democrats united in opposition, the only way Republicans can revive the bill is to alter it in ways they hope will change opposing senators' minds. The bill's demise is welcome news to New Jersey

state Sen. Joseph Vitale, a Democrat, who says the legislation would have been devastating for people who are covered through the Medicaid expansion.

"They can now go to sleep at night like the rest of us who have health insurance, knowing that if something happens to them or something befalls a family member," state Sen. Joseph Vitale, a Democrat from New Jersey said Tuesday, "that they have access to affordable care and quality care." States signed up for the Medicaid expansion under the promise that the federal government would pick up the vast majority of the costs.

Experts and officials in several of the states that opted for it said that under the GOP plan they would not have the ability to cover the costs of all those who benefited. "I don't want to have to look those people in the eye and say you are losing your health insurance," said Nevada state Assemblyman Michael Sprinkle, a Democrat. In his state, more than 300,000 people gained health insurance through the expansion, which extended coverage to more lower-income Americans by raising the income limit. Most were adults with no children at home.

Kentucky was another state seeing big gains under Obama's health care law, its uninsured rate dropping from 14.3 percent before it took effect to 5.1 percent last year. The 64 percent decline was the largest of any state, according to data from the US Census Bureau. Nearly all that gain was because Kentucky's former Democratic governor opted to expand Medicaid, which provided coverage to 461,000 Kentuckians.—AP

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First Place Winner Ahmad Muqeem



Second Place Winner Omar Jassim Althafiri

CADILLAC HOSTS EMERGING ARTISTS AT ART NIGHT 2017

As patrons of the arts and culture, and as part of their outreach program, Cadillac Alghanim organized an art exhibition in their showroom in Al-Rai for six local emerging artists: Omar Jassim Althafiri, Zainab Dashti, Yaqoub Yousef Al-Ali, Ahmad Muqeem, Mariam Hamad Al-Ghaith and Anwar Nasser.

To further encourage the artists, Cadillac Alghanim held a competition where each artist submitted a work depicting one of Cadillac's models. A panel of highly renowned established Kuwaiti artists including Redha Salem, Suheila Al-Najdi and Ibrahim Al-Atiyi were joined by Nadeem Ghareeb, Regional Marketing Manager

for Cadillac Middle East, to judge the awards.

The audience also had a say in the voting and each attendee was handed a link where they could cast their votes. The final combined scores of the judges and audience determined the winners. Cadillac Alghanim awarded the first two winners with a 3-night, all expenses paid, business trip to Dubai with tickets to attend an art exhibition and 'Sole DXB', a highly-regarded lifestyle event in the city. The first winner also received a cash prize of KD500.

The first prize went to Ahmad Muqeem, and the second prize went to Omar Jassim Althafiri. All 6 participants were commemorated by

Cadillac Alghanim's General Manager, Mohamed Eltalkhawi, for their contributions, efforts and artistic talents and each received the gift of a two-day test drive of a Cadillac.

Eltalkhawi commented "We are very proud of the youth in Kuwait and the artistic talents they exhibit, it is indeed Cadillac's ethos to collaborate with them to highlight the importance of culture and the arts in building the future. I want to take this opportunity to thank our esteemed judging panel who have given their time in the promotion of the arts, and to all those who have attended today for their belief in art as a mission. We look forward to more collaborative events to come."



SOUL AND SPICE RESTAURANT AT COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT KUWAIT LAUNCHES NEW MENU

Soul and Spice, the renowned Indian Restaurant at the Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait, held an opening ceremony to launch its brand new menu. The event was attended by His Excellency Sunil Jain, the Ambassador of India to Kuwait, representatives of different companies in Kuwait and the local media.

The attendees were treated to a mouthwatering selection of food and beverages, including laal mass, chicken curry, shrimps biryani and a lot more. The invitees were impressed with the rich variety of food, breathtaking dEcor and comfortable seating, which make 'Soul and Spice Restaurant' the ideal venue to enjoy the true flavors of India.

Soul and Spice Restaurant offers a delectable approach to contemporary modern Indian cuisine, which is prepared using a unique blend of authentic Indian spices and crafted with the finest seasonal ingredients. The result is an exquisite creation that is sure to delight the senses.



Said George Aoun, The hotel's General Manager. "Through our newly launched menu, we want to introduce the most authentic and popular Indian delicacies at very affordable prices," he added.

The new menu includes a large selection of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes from mouth-watering starters to scrumptious main courses and desserts. In addition to a range of curries and dal, along with biryani and freshly baked naan.

"The Indian cuisine is very rich in terms of flavors, colors and heritage."



AL-MULLA EXCHANGE CELEBRATES ONAM WITH CUSTOMERS

Al-Mulla Exchange celebrated Onam in a grand manner for their customers at American International School. A star cast featuring Suraj Santhosh, Ranjini Jose, Jithin Raj and troupe, along with renowned comedians Manoj Guinness and Pandalam Ullas enthralled customers for the three hour period.

The first program, held on Friday September 22nd, had George Varghese as the Chief Guest. George Varghese was the first ever customer of Al-Mulla Exchange when they started operations nearly 16 years ago in 2001. The second day chief guest on Saturday September 23rd was prominent doctor Dr Unnikrishnan Nayanar who works as ENT Surgeon and Medical Director at Al-Nahil International Clinic KUWAIT. Both of them complimented on the growth of Al-Mulla Exchange and the fascinating programs that were being showcased time to time in Kuwait.

The logistics support for the program came from City Van while the printing of the cards was taken care by German Press. With 72 branches in Kuwait and steadily growing month on month, Al-Mulla Exchange has roared to the forefront of remittances in Kuwait. Through innovation, excellent customer service, technological upgradation and best rates in the market Al-Mulla Exchange is the Exchange company of choice for anyone wanting to send a remittance or exchange currencies.





00:45 Trehouse Masters
01:40 Tigers Attack
02:35 Swamp Brothers
03:00 Swamp Brothers
03:25 Pit Bulls & Parolees
04:15 I Survived An Animal Attack
05:02 Wildest Indochina
05:49 Untamed & Uncut
06:36 Going Ape
07:00 Going Ape
07:25 Swamp Brothers
08:15 Trehouse Masters
09:10 Tigers Attack
10:05 Wildest Indochina
11:00 Swamp Brothers
11:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
12:50 After The Attack
13:45 Tigers Attack
14:40 Wildest Indochina
15:35 Untamed & Uncut
16:30 Trehouse Masters
17:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
18:20 Trehouse Masters
19:15 When Turkeys Attack
20:38 Swamp Brothers
21:05 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
22:00 Trehouse Masters
22:55 Wildest Middle East
23:50 Untamed & Uncut

11:30 Alex & Co.
11:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
12:00 Rolling With The Ronks
12:15 Loloock
13:05 Star Darlings
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug
And Cat Noir
14:00 Jessie
14:25 Loloock
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
16:35 Bunk'd
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 Tsum Tsum Shorts
19:15 Liv And Maddie
19:40 Elena Of Avalor
20:05 Jessie
20:30 Cracked
20:35 K.C. Undercover
21:00 The Zhuzhus
21:25 Stuck In The Middle
21:50 Sunny Bunnies



00:00 The Jail Atlanta: 60 Days In
01:00 It Takes A Killer
02:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
03:00 Evil Up Close
04:00 The Jail Atlanta: 60 Days In
05:00 It Takes A Killer
06:00 Cold Case Files
08:00 It Takes A Killer
09:00 Homicide Hunter
10:00 Campus Nightmares
13:00 Holloway: Women Behind Bars
14:00 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
20:00 Homicide Hunter
21:00 Cold Case Files
22:00 My Haunted House
23:00 Escaping Evil: My Life In A Cuit



00:05 Destroyed In Seconds
00:30 Pick A Puppy
01:20 Incredible Food Race
02:10 World's Top 5
03:00 Finding Bigfoot
03:50 Destroyed In Seconds
04:40 How It's Made
05:30 Pick A Puppy
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Awesome Adventures
07:25 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
07:50 America's Cutest Pets
08:40 How It's Made
09:30 Nextworld
10:00 Mythbusters
11:00 America's Cutest Pets
12:10 Finding Bigfoot
12:50 How It's Made
13:40 Pick A Puppy
14:30 Awesome Adventures
14:55 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
15:20 Destroyed In Seconds
17:00 The Big Brain Theory
17:10 Don't Drive Here!
17:50 Hello World!
18:15 Mythbusters
19:30 How It's Made
20:20 Destroyed In Seconds
21:10 Don't Drive Here
22:00 Animal Nation With Anthony Anderson



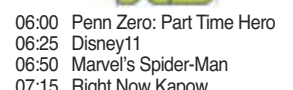
00:30 The Coroner: I Speak For The Dead
01:20 Murder In Lehigh Valley: Keith Morrison...
03:00 Forbidden: Dying For Love
03:48 Disappeared
04:24 Nowhere To Hide
06:12 Obsession: Dark Desires
06:20 Disappeared
07:50 Murder Chose Me
08:40 Nowhere To Hide
09:30 Obsession: Dark Desires
10:00 Blood Relatives
11:00 Disappeared
12:00 Disappeared
12:50 The Perfect Murder
13:40 Nowhere To Hide
14:30 Obsession: Dark Desires
15:20 Blood Relatives
16:10 Unravalled
17:00 Disappeared
17:50 The Perfect Murder
18:40 Nowhere To Hide
19:30 Obsession: Dark Desires
20:20 Blood Relatives
21:10 Evil Online
22:00 Evil Online
22:50 I Am Homicide
23:40 Sin City Justice



00:20 Misfit Garage
01:05 The Island With Bear Grylls
01:50 Bear Grylls: Mission Survive
02:35 Boy To Man
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 The Island With Bear Grylls
10:55 Bear Grylls: Mission Survive
11:40 Boy To Man
12:25 How Do They Do It?
12:47 Storage Wars Canada
13:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
13:55 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 Hunters UK
18:20 Storage Hunters UK
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 Harley And The Davidson's
22:40 Breaking Magic
23:30 Fast N' Loud



00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Evermore 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 Loloock
09:50 Loloock
10:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
10:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
11:05 Hank Zipzer



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
15:30 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
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am



00:05 WAGs Miami
00:55 WAGs Miami
01:50 El News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 Celebrity Style Story
04:50 So Cosmo
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 El NYC
06:55 El News
07:10 El NYC
08:10 El News: Daily Pop
09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
17:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
18:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
19:00 El News
20:00 Life Of Kylie
20:30 Life Of Kylie
21:00 Life Of Kylie
21:30 Life Of Kylie
22:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
23:00 El News
23:15 Reunion Road Trip
23:40 Eric And Jessie



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:00 Man Fire Food
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
04:00 Man Fire Food
05:00 Chopped
06:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:50 Anna Olson: Fresh
07:15 The Kitchen
08:05 The Pioneer Woman
08:30 The Pioneer Woman
08:55 Siba's Table
09:25 Siba's Table
09:55 Cooking For Real
10:25 Cooking For Real
10:55 The Kitchen
11:45 Bake With Anna Olson
12:10 The Pioneer Woman
12:35 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Siba's Table
13:30 Siba's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 Cooking For Real
17:30 Cooking For Real
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Guy's Grocery Games
20:00 Chopped
21:00 Chopped South Africa
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 Doctor Thorne
04:20 The Jonathan Ross Show
05:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
06:10 Chopping Block
07:05 The Chase
08:00 Doctor Thorne
09:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
09:05 Couples Come Dine With Me
10:00 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 Midsomer Murders
17:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 Midsomer Murders
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street

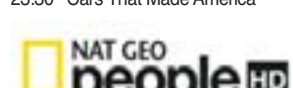


00:00 Ancient Discoveries
01:00 Clash Of Warriors
02:00 America's Book Of Secrets
25:00 Ancient Aliens
03:40 Ancient Aliens
04:30 Serial Killer Earth
05:20 Ancient Discoveries
06:10 The Universe
07:00 Clash Of Warriors
08:00 America's Book Of Secrets
09:00 Ancient Aliens
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Serial Killer Earth
12:00 Ancient Discoveries
13:00 Clash Of Warriors
14:00 America's Book Of Secrets
15:00 Ancient Aliens
16:00 Ancient Aliens
17:00 The Universe
18:00 Ancient Discoveries
19:00 Weapons At War
20:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
21:00 Ancient Aliens
22:00 United Stuff Of America
23:00 Million Dollar Genius

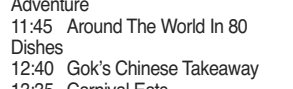


00:20 Mountain Men
01:10 Road To 9/11
02:50 Storage Wars Texas
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 Lost In Transmission
06:50 Duck Dynasty
07:15 Duck Dynasty
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Storage Wars Texas
09:45 Storage Wars Texas

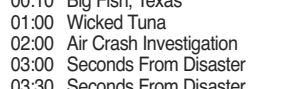
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Car Hunters
11:25 Car Hunters
11:50 Duck Dynasty
12:15 Duck Dynasty
13:05 Counting Cars
13:30 Time Team
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Lost In Transmission
16:00 Storage Wars Texas
16:25 Storage Wars Texas
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Pawn Stars
17:40 Mountain Men
18:30 Swamp People
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 Cars That Made America
21:50 Forged In Fire
22:40 Forged In Fire
23:30 Cars That Made America



00:45 Fish Of The Day
01:10 Chocolate Covered
01:40 World's Greatest Food Markets
02:35 Tripping Out With Allie & Georgia
03:00 Carnival Eats
03:30 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
03:55 One Man & His Campervan
04:25 My Restaurant In India
04:50 Chocolate Covered
05:20 Chocolate Covered
05:55 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
06:15 Around The World In 80 Dishes
07:10 World's Greatest Food Markets
08:05 Tripping Out With Allie & Georgia
08:30 Carnival Eats
09:00 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
09:25 One Man & His Campervan
09:55 My Restaurant In India
10:20 Chocolate Covered
10:50 Chocolate Covered
11:15 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
11:45 Around The World In 80 Dishes
12:40 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
13:35 Carnival Eats
14:00 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
14:30 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
14:55 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
15:25 Chocolate Covered
15:50 Chocolate Covered
16:20 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
16:45 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
17:15 Around The World In 80 Dishes
18:10 My Pacific Quest
19:05 Chocolate Covered
19:30 Chocolate Covered
20:00 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
20:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
21:00 Around The World In 80 Dishes
22:00 My Pacific Quest
22:55 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
23:50 Carnival Eats



00:10 Big Fish, Texas
01:00 Wild Tuna
02:00 Air Crash Investigation
03:00 Seconds From Disaster
03:30 Seconds From Disaster
04:00 Big Fish, Texas
05:00 Britain's Greatest Machines With Chris Barrie
06:00 Salvage Code Red
07:00 Genius
08:00 Dog Whisperer
09:00 Britain's Greatest Machines With Chris Barrie
10:00 Rare
11:00 Inside The Hunt For The Boston Bombers
13:00 Salvage Code Red
14:00 Dog Whisperer
15:00 Genius
16:00 Nazi World War Weird
17:00 Pope vs Hitler
19:00 Attack Of The Zeppelins
20:00 Nazi World War Weird
20:50 Pope vs Hitler
22:30 Attack Of The Zeppelins



00:20 Secrets Of The King Cobra
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 World's Deadliest Snakes
02:50 Monster Fish
03:45 Man V. Animal (Outdowns)
04:10 Man V. Animal (Outdowns)
04:40 Caught In The Act
05:35 World's Deadliest Snakes
06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 Man V. Animal (Outdowns)
07:50 Man V. Animal (Outdowns)
08:20 Caught In The Act
09:15 Ultimate Rivals: Cat V. Dog
10:10 World's Deadliest Killers
11:05 Wild Scotland: Highlands
12:00 Tiger Shark Terror
12:55 Man-Eater Of The Congo
13:50 Monster Fish
14:45 Man V. Animal (Outdowns)
15:10 Man V. Animal (Outdowns)
15:40 Caught In The Act
16:35 Warrior Bees
17:30 World's Deadliest Killers
18:25 Strangest Bird Alive
19:20 Man V. Animal (Outdowns)
19:45 Man V. Animal (Outdowns)
20:10 Caught In The Act
21:00 Warrior Bees

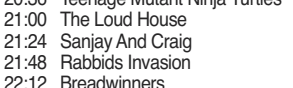


00:15 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
00:40 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
01:05 Brooklyn Nine-Nine
01:30 The Last Man On Earth
01:55 The Detour
02:20 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
03:10 Late Night With Seth Meyers
04:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
04:50 George Lopez
05:15 Happy Endings
05:40 Dr. Ken
06:05 Dr. Ken
06:30 Guy Unmarried
06:55 Cougar Town
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
09:50 George Lopez
10:15 Happy Endings
10:40 Guy Unmarried
11:05 Cougar Town
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 Fresh Off The Boat
12:45 Black-ish
13:10 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
13:35 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
14:00 George Lopez
14:25 Son Of Zorn
14:50 Guy Unmarried
15:15 The Orville
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
17:00 Fresh Off The Boat
17:30 Black-ish
18:00 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
18:30 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
19:00 Dr. Ken
19:30 Dr. Ken
20:00 New Girl
20:30 New Girl
21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
22:00 Brooklyn Nine-Nine
22:30 The Last Man On Earth
23:00 The Detour
23:25 Late Night With Seth Meyers

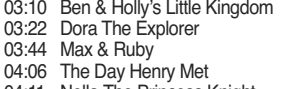


00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob 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

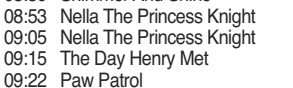
13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Sanjay And Craig
13:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
14:12 Henry Danger
14:36 The Thundermans
15:00 School Of Rock
15:24 Breadwinners
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Regal Academy
17:24 Winx Club
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
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21:00 The Loud House
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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



00:01 Max & Ruby
00:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:47 The Day Henry Met
00:52 The Day Henry Met
00:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:41 Zack & Quack
02:03 Shimmer And Shine
02:25 Olive The Ostrich
02:30 Olive The Ostrich
02:35 Paw Patrol
02:58 Little Charmers
03:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
03:22 Dora The Explorer
03:44 Max & Ruby
04:06 The Day Henry Met
04:11 Nella The Princess Knight
04:23 Nella The Princess Knight
04:35 Shimmer And Shine
04:59 Wallykazam!
05:21 Zack & Quack
05:32 The Day Henry Met
05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
06:00 Rusty Rivets
06:13 Paw Patrol
06:37 Dora The Explorer
07:00 Zack & Quack
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
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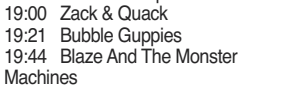
01:25 The Last Rescue
03:20 The Huntsman: Winter's War
05:20 Batman: The Killing Joke
06:45 Warcraft: The Beginning
08:55 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part II
11:15 Batman: Return Of The Caped Crusaders
12:35 Tracers
14:10 Warcraft: The Beginning
16:15 The Huntsman: Winter's War
18:10 Twister
20:05 Entrapment
22:00 Everly
23:35 REC 3 Genesis



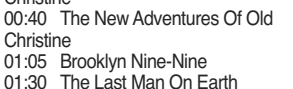
01:25 Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot
03:10 Liberal Arts
04:55 Other Plans
06:25 Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son
08:15 Liberal Arts
10:00 Other Plans
11:30 Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son
13:20 Holiday Joy
14:55 Sister Act 2: Back In The Habit
16:45 Ride
18:20 Joe Somebody
20:00 A Thousand Words
21:35 Absolutely Anything
23:05 Adventures Of A Pizza Guy



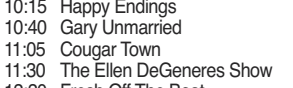
01:20 What's Love Got To Do With It
03:25 Land Of Oz
05:20 Jappeloup
07:30 Operation Avalanche
09:15 Boychior
11:05 Land Of Mine
13:00 A Country Called Home
14:40 Healing
16:40 New York Stories
18:45 12 Angry Men
20:30 Never Let Me Go
22:20 The Survivorist



00:20 The Incredible Adventures Of Professor Branestawm
01:25 Ducktales: The Movie
02:45 Kim Possible: So The Drama
04:20 Big Baby
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08:25 Funny Little Cars
09:40 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
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12:40 Ducktales: The Movie
14:00 Kim Possible: So The Drama
15:20 Pooch's Heffalump Halloween Movie
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01:55 The Legend Of Zorro
04:04 Lucy
05:34 Finding Forrester
07:55 Jurassic World
10:00 Forces Of Nature
11:50 The Legend Of Zorro
14:00 Beaches
16:05 Emory Of The State
18:20 Sahara
20:25 It's Complicated
22:25 There's Something About Mary



00:30 How Do They Do It?
00:55 Food Factory
01:20 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
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 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
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 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
11:26 Junkyard Wars
12:14 Mythbusters
13:02 How Do They Do It?
13:26 Food Factory
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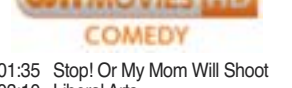
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01:30 Riverdale
02:20 The Unit
03:20 Chicago Justice
04:10 Training Day
05:00 Good Morning America
07:00 The View
07:45 The Chew
08:30 Star
09:20 Chicago Justice
10:10 Training Day
11:00 The Unit
11:45 Taken
12:30 The View
13:15 The Chew
14:00 Live Good Morning America
16:00 Training Day
17:00 Chicago Justice
18:00 The Unit
19:00 The Voice
20:00 The Flash
21:00 Star
22:00 Star
23:00 Taken
23:50 American Crime



00:20 James And The Giant Peach
01:50 A Sunday Horse
03:45 The Wild
05:15 Lio & Stitch 2
12:25 James And The Giant Peach
08:05 A Sunday Horse
10:00 The Dog Lover
11:50 The Wild
13:20 Hercules (1997)
15:00 Brave
16:00 Race To Witch Mountain
18:25 High School Musical 3: Senior Year
20:25 Eight Below
22:35 Hercules (1997)



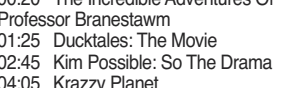
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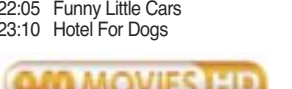
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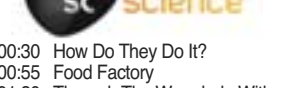
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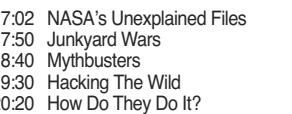
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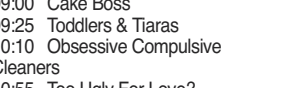
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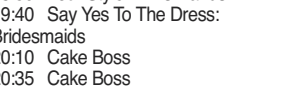
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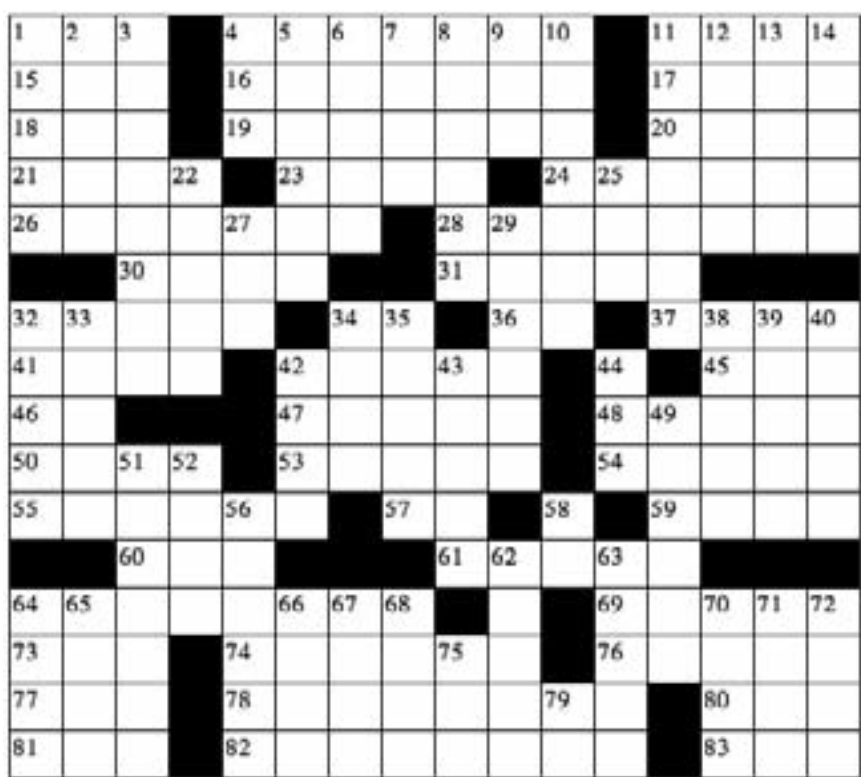
17:02 NASA's Unexplained Files
17:50 Junkyard Wars
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 Hacking The Wild
20:20 How Do They Do It?
20:45 Food Factory
21:10 The Unexplained Files
22:00 Hacking The Wild
22:50 Junkyard Wars



00:20 Tina Malone: Pregnant At 50
01:05 An Hour To Save Your Life
01:50 Monsters Inside Me
02:35 The Undateables
03:20 Sister Wives
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras
04:50 Your Style In His Hands
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
06:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
06:45 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
07:30 Oprah's Master Class
08:15 Sister Wives
09:00 Cake Boss
09:25 Toddlers & Tiaras
10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
10:55 Too Ugly For Love?
11:40 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
12:25 The Undateables
13:10 Say Yes To The Dress UK
13:32 Say Yes To The Dress UK
13:55 Toddlers & Tiaras
14:40 Sister Wives
15:25 Too Ugly For Love?
16:10 Love At First Swipe
16:35 Cake Boss
17:00 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
17:50 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
18:50 Your Style In His Hands
19:40 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
20:10 Cake Boss
20:35 Cake Boss
21:00 My 600lb Life: Where Are They Now?
21:50 The Day I Almost Died
22:40 Bizarre ER



CROSSWORD 1720



ACROSS

1. Piece of solid food for dipping in a liquid.
4. Having hair on the cheeks and chin.
11. Having or denoting a low vocal or instrumental range.
15. A Kwa language spoken by the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria.
16. A B vitamin that prevents beriberi.
17. A collection of things (goods or works of art etc.) for public display.
18. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
19. A habitual liar (after a New Testament character who was struck dead for lying).
20. The granite-like rocks that form the outermost layer of the earth's crust.
21. Someone who copies the words or behavior of another.
23. A book of the New Testament.
24. Speak in a nasal voice.
26. French racing cyclist who won the Tour de France five times (born in 1954).
28. Small genus of North American herbs having mostly basal leaves and slender racemes of delicate white flowers.
30. A software system that facilitates the creation and maintenance and use of an electronic database.
31. An orderly arrangement.
32. Jordan's port.
36. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
37. A hormone produced by the anterior pituitary gland that stimulates the adrenal cortex.
41. A shop selling delicatessen (as salads or cooked meats).
45. Step on it.
46. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
47. A pilgrim who journeys to Mecca.
48. God of wealth and love.
50. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
53. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
54. A long flexible steel coil for dislodging stoppages in curved pipes.
55. A port city in southwestern Iran.
57. Being one more than fifty.
59. Soft white semisolid fat obtained by rendering the fatty tissue of the hog v 1.
60. A room equipped with toilet facilities.
61. Collect or gather.
64. A Chemakuan language spoken by the Chemakum people.
69. Yellow-fever mosquitos.
73. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
74. Of or relating to or characteristic of religious rituals.
76. The basic unit of money in Nigeria.
77. A spacecraft that carries astronauts from the command module to the surface of the moon and back.
78. Extinct order of jawless vertebrates.
80. Horny projecting mouth of a bird.
81. The United Nations agency concerned with international maritime activities.
82. A great raja.
83. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.

DOWN

1. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
2. Similar to the giraffe but smaller with much shorter neck and stripe on the legs.
3. Of or relating to or near the pudendum.
4. The cry made by sheep.
5. Reports of the work of a society or learned body etc.
6. Show a response or a reaction to something.
7. The act of hitting a baseball lightly without swinging the bat.
8. Bristlelike process near the tip of the antenna of certain flies.
9. Brief episode in which the brain gets insufficient blood supply.
10. Take or catch as if in a snare or trap.
11. Genus of North American spring wildflowers.
12. Of or relating to or resembling an axis of rotation.
13. A fragment broken off from the edge or face of stone or ore and having at least one thin edge.
14. Type genus of the Soleidae.
22. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation.
25. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
27. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
29. Conducive to peace.
33. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
34. By bad luck.
35. An award for winning a championship or commemorating some other event.
38. A Bantu language spoken by the Chaga people in northern Tanzania.
39. A fierce or audacious person.
40. Detected or perceived by the sense of hearing.
42. The protruding part of the lower jaw.
43. A genus of Platealea.
44. A master's degree in business.
49. Small genus of erect balsam-scented herbs.
51. The capital of Sicily.
52. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
56. Evergreen Indian shrub with vivid yellow flowers whose bark is used in tanning.
58. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
62. Type genus of the Meliaceae.
63. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
65. A complex red organic pigment containing iron and other atoms to which oxygen binds.
66. The basic unit of money in Papua New Guinea.
67. A state in the western United States.
68. Type genus of the Musaceae.
70. A couple who both have careers and no children.
71. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
72. A island in the Netherlands Antilles that is the top of an extinct volcano.
75. The month following March and preceding May.
79. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your keyword today is responsibility. You are able to find yourself in others—a mirror or clear pool. You are a genius at bringing out others and getting them to do things for themselves or for you—you are a born strategist. You like to discuss and communicate, usually at a psychological and very personal level. Careful—some may find you a bit too intense. Your love of the spiritual and the eternal is clear to all who meet you. You could find yourself involved in long conversations while visiting with friends this afternoon. You love to solve the problems of the world, at least in words and images—and when you tell it, all are enchanted. A favorite hobby may take up the evening: building, admiring, plotting to make additions, etc.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taking care of business is a major theme where your emotional orientation is concerned. You crave organization and practicality and you want to get things accomplished. Your hard work pays off today and much can be accomplished. You have a mind for what is practical, organized and logical. Your employer is probably happy to get you—you are a natural for any management position or in dealing with the public. Some past investment needs review and perhaps revising. You may find that now is a good time to reinvest this old investment in some other direction—there is the possibility of additional gains. If you have not had communication with the eldest person in your family, you may want to show that person some consideration now.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your efforts really pay off and life seems to run smoothly. Now you have the ability for sustained work that allows you to coordinate and organize like never before. You will bring uncompleted tasks to completion. This is a nice day that should just flow along. The schedule you set for yourself today can be helpful but taxing. If you can work in some focused exercise program later today, you will find it easier to relax this evening. Children have your attention this evening and it is a good time for play. Really join in and enjoy the play that children can create. This may mean creating something out of clay or simply coloring in a book. You could feel real connections and harmony at this time for circumstances and those around you.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Taking care of business is a major theme. You desire successful organization and practicality and you want to get things accomplished. Things are happening and your career or path depends upon your own aspirations which are strong now. You are able to use good common sense and you can feel the trends and make the right moves. You will be pleased with the results of your actions. You are most persuasive with others. You have eloquent skills in speech. The circumstances are good today for self-expression. A good conversation with those you love is possible later this evening. Any misunderstandings of the past have a good opportunity to be healed. Enjoy a brisk walk with your friend this evening.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There is a certain amount of transition taking place. This could mean job advancement soon. You may find yourself uninterested in sidetracks—what is not essential for future advancement. You can really tune in on how to solve problems and get where you want to go when it comes to your profession. This could be a crucial time during which—depending upon your age when this takes place—you reach new highs of accomplishment. This will bring great discipline and a concentration or focus that could make or break you. You have the ability to work hard. You draw emotional sustenance and a sense of security from ideals, friends and social involvement. There is a need for change, a desire to break with outmoded patterns.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Individual competitiveness does not seem to work as well as projects that have a cooperative effort. Address the need to improve working conditions. Remember that the bottom line is to increase productivity, not to cater to the whims of others. Investments are best for you at the first of next month; financial advice is a good thing. Charisma, self-transformation and the development of personal power are the things that play a big role in your life now. Remember that tiny causes can lead to big effects. There are profound changes on the personal level—psychological and perhaps physical as well—as if you are transforming into an entirely new person. Think about what a relationship means... A relationship has some reflection on you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a productive day. You have insight into your professional life and you are developing future plans that will be valuable. Your path is toward cooperation and union with others, even at the expense of the practical and selfish. This may mean you are working toward some goal that involves legal or psychological subjects. You enjoy the interaction with others and may find yourself in volunteer programs so as to feel useful and complete. You may often wonder if you are doing your job well and if you take a look at the results, you will be pleased to see the successes. Sometimes it is good to just reach around and pat yourself on the back for a job well done; you are getting better and better every day. Music fills the air this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may appear very cool and collected today. Review contracts and reconsider legal actions during the next few days—avoid jumping into a risky opportunity that has too many unanswered questions. Also, reconsider the cost before you personally take on large expenditures. Researching a product is important—you could get into something that is not as useful as you thought. A natural transformation of your values, the way you appreciate and love yourself and others, is taking place now. You may cease to waste time and money and may develop an eye for that which is lasting and worthwhile. Circumstances can throw you into positions where you may deal with education, psychology, spiritual enlightenment or teaching principles and techniques.



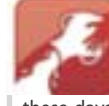
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

There is time this morning to complete unfinished business. This morning you will also accidentally find an item that has been missing for some time. This could be a possession that belongs to you or to someone that is close to you. Your decision-making ability in the work area shows some well-directed action is called for today. However, you must be watchful for possible moments of pride. Challenging authority and striving for success are on your agenda. Ambition is a powerful motivation and can lead you into conflict if you let it get out of control. If properly channeled, ambition results in great achievements and recognition. Some fun time with friends this evening brings plenty of opportunity for laughter, song and gossip your way.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are a great doer, and can accomplish quite a lot. You will find yourself working with the public today. This could mean solving customer-relations problems. The skillful ways you handle people make you a natural for working with or for the public. You would make an excellent teacher, career counselor or financial advisor—and could enjoy performing these tasks quite well. The only problems in your career are the fears you might have toward qualifying for work with which you are not familiar. Your career is never really a problem—you have the kind of drive that others could only dream of having. This evening there is an opportunity to use your imagination to improve your living environment. Simplicity works.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You somehow manage to gravitate to the center of almost any happening these days. Others accept you, for they sense you are a leader and they admire your almost regal manner. You talk with someone new and find a different vision. You may decide to ask for a raise or request a loan today. Refinement and relationships are the keys to emotional satisfaction. Close personal ties to other people are focal points for your feelings; marriage and other partnerships could be key arenas for this. If you smoke, or have some other habit that is bad for your health, this is the day you will create another avenue where you can express yourself. Insights into your deeper, more spiritual nature are available now. Harmony surrounds you this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Working in groups affords the opportunity to strengthen a unit. You may be required to lead or lend advice. Your management abilities are good and your sense of responsibility is so well developed that you always end up managing the situations in which you become involved. You may have to be careful in this area since others could take advantage of you quite easily. You display your eagerness for your work and much can be accomplished. This is a particularly good day in that a new piece of equipment or technique is something you are already familiar with, and others could be asking for your advice. Your greatest pleasure this month is the time you are recognized for the progress you have made. You charm someone special this evening.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Surgery

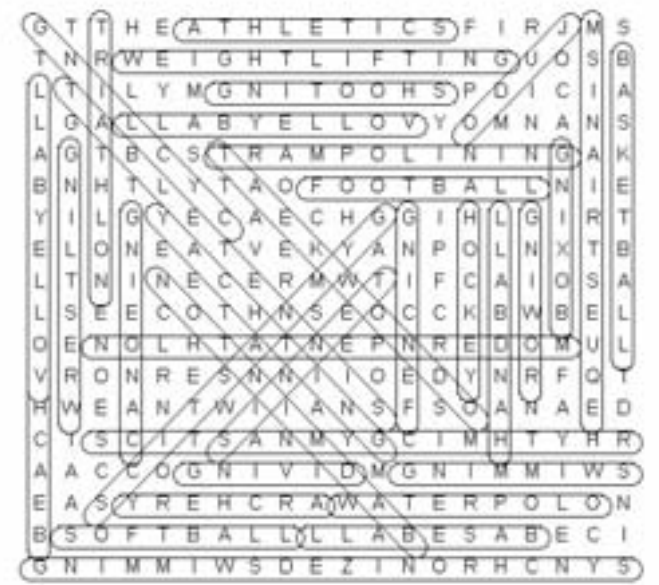
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- ANESTHESIA
- APPENDIX
- BIOPSY
- BLOOD
- BONE SAW
- BRAIN
- CALIPER
- CANNULA
- CATHETER
- CLAMPS
- COLON
- DILATORS
- DISTRACTION
- DRILL
- ENDOSCOPE
- FORCEPS
- GRASPERS
- HEART
- HEMOSTAT
- HOOK
- INCISION
- INJECTION
- IRRIGATION
- KIDNEY
- LANCET
- LIVER
- LUNGS
- MALLET
- NEEDLE
- OCCLUDERS
- PROBE
- RETRACTORS
- RIBS
- RULER
- SCALPEL
- SCISSORS
- SKIN
- SPECULA
- SPLEEN
- SPLINT
- SPONGE
- STAPLER
- SUCTION
- SURGEON
- SUTURE
- SYRINGE
- TISSUE
- TRACHEOTOME
- TRANSPLANT
- TREPANE
- TROCAR
- TWEEZERS

Yesterday's Solution

Summer Olympics



- ARCHERY
- ATHLETICS
- BADMINTON
- BASEBALL
- BASKETBALL
- BEACH VOLLEYBALL
- BOXING
- CANOEING
- CYCLING
- DIVING
- EQUESTRIANISM
- FENCING
- FOOTBALL
- GYMNASTICS
- HANDBALL
- HOCKEY
- JUDO
- MODERN PENTATHLON
- RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS
- ROWING
- SHOOTING
- SOFTBALL
- SWIMMING
- SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING
- TABLE TENNIS
- TAEKWONDO
- TENNIS
- TRAMPOLINE
- TRIATHLON
- VOLLEYBALL
- WATER POLO
- WEIGHTLIFTING
- WRESTLING
- YACHTING

The hidden sentence is: THE FIRST OLYMPIC GYMNAST TO ACHIEVE A PERFECT SCORE OF TEN WAS NADIA COMANECI

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



CLASSIFIEDS

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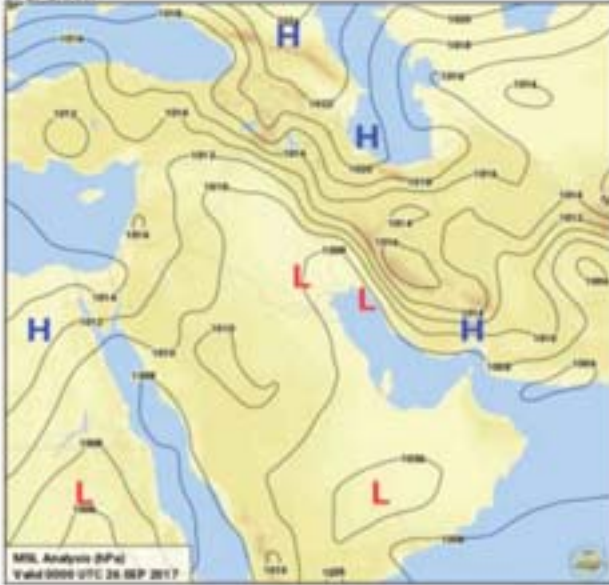


Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Max Temperature 44 °C

By Day: Hot and with light to moderate north westerly wind to northerly wind, with speed of 10 - 35 km/h.
By Night: Fair and with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Expected Weather	Hot	Hot	Hot	Hot
Min Temp °C	25	26	24	25
Max Temp °C	44	43	42	43
Wind Direction	northerly westerly to northerly easterly	northerly westerly to variable	northerly westerly to northerly	variable to south easterly
Wind Speed km/h	08 - 28	06 - 28	06 - 26	06 - 28

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

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	Min °C	Max °C
KUWAIT CITY	30	41
KUWAIT AIRPORT	24	44
ABDLY	25	44
BUBYAN	22	38
JAHRA	28	44
FAILAKA ISLAND	26	41
SALMIYAH	33	36
AHMADI	33	36
JAL ALIYAH	25	45
QAROH ISLAND	33	40
UMH AL-MARADEM	32	39
NUWAISIB	24	45
WAFRA	28	44
SALMY	26	43
MUTRBA	24	45

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	42
Min Temp (°C)	26
Max Rel Hum (%)	87
Min Rel Hum (%)	19
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	25 SE
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	05:39
Sunset	17:40

Prayer Times

Fajr	04:20
Sunrise	05:39
Zuhr	11:40
Aar	15:05
Sunset	17:40
Isha	18:57

AIRLINES

American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Air Slovakia	22434940
Olympic Airways	22420002/9
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5
Reservation	22433388
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Alitalia	22414427
Balkan Airlines	22416474
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Czech Airlines	22417901/
	2433141
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

REQUIRED
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
 (from Indian Sub-continent)

- At least 10 years of experience required
- Fluent in English Language
- Knowledge of Computer Skills.
- Short Hand typing.

Work requirement
 Good Communication, Banking LC's and Correspondence

Send CV's to Email:
yazco@email.com

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is
1889988

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Podadurthi Mastanaiah S/o Podadurthi Narayana, holder of Indian Passport No. H0375492 & Civil ID 275070104836 has changed my name to Pandhalooru Mastanaiah, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5346) 26-9-2017

EMERGENCY 112

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	04:19
Shorook:	05:38
Duhr:	11:40
Asr:	15:05
Maghrib:	17:40
Isha:	18:57

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation available immediately for a Christian family or 2 working ladies in Salmiya, block 10, near Blue Diamond restaurant. Contact: 66195097. (C 5345) 24-9-2017

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)
DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 27/9/2017				Departure Flights on Wednesday 27/9/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
JZR	553	Alexandria	00:15	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	MSR	2615	Cairo	00:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	MSC	406	Sohag	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:55	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
BRZ	211	TBS	01:00	WAN	341	Sohag	01:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	THY	773	Istanbul	01:40
JZR	539	Cairo	01:20	KAC	363	Colombo	01:55
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	MSR	619	Alexandria	02:35
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	KKK	6505	Istanbul	02:55
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	PGT	831	Istanbul	03:10
PGT	830	Istanbul	02:10	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
QTR	1086	Doha	02:10	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:30
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	QTR	1087	Doha	04:10
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	417	Manila	04:20
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15	JZR	560	Sohag	04:45
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	RBG	550	Alexandria	05:00
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	KAC	103	London	05:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:45	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
KAC	544	Cairo	03:50	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:50
KAC	796	Madinah	03:55	FEQ	954	Asyut	05:55
RBG	559	Alexandria	04:10	UAE	874	Dubai	06:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	RJA	643	Amman	06:25
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	THY	771	Istanbul	06:25
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
FEQ	931	Alexandria	05:00	FDB	070	Dubai	07:05
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	JZR	164	Dubai	07:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	501	Beirut	07:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	613	Bahrain	07:55
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50	KAC	156	London	08:20
BAW	157	London	06:05	FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	KAC	741	Dammam	08:30
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	KAC	773	Riyadh	08:35
WAN	342	Sohag	06:40	KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	08:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	08:45
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	BRZ	212	TBS	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	101	London	09:00
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	JZR	902	GYD	09:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	117	New York	09:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	KAC	691	Muscat	09:30
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	KAC	561	Amman	09:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JZR	534	Cairo	09:30
IRC	6511	ABD	09:50	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
IRM	1188	Mashhad	09:55	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:40
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	UAE	856	Doha	09:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:25
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	153	Istanbul	10:30
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:05	QTR	1071	Doha	10:35
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:15	IRC	6522	Lamerd	10:40
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45	AAG	146	QIA	11:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	IRM	1189	Mashhad	11:10
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	MSC	416	Sohag	11:15
KAC	774	Riyadh	12:45	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50	SYR	342	Latakia	12:00
FEQ	953	Asyut	12:55	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
KIS	7136	Mashhad	13:00	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:05
WAN	954	GYD	13:00	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	VIZ	205	QIA	12:30
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	13:15	KAC	511	Mashhad	12:45
CLX	792	Luxembourg	13:15	KAC	513	Tehran	12:45

FASHION



Models present creations for Italian fashion house Ssheena at Piazza Duomo during the Women's Spring/Summer 2018 fashion shows in Milan. —AP/AFP photos

AWARDS FOR TITANS, SHOWS BY YOUNG TALENT CLOSE MILAN



Models present creations for fashion house Daizy Shely.



For once, even the designers had a reason wear their finest creations as Milan Fashion Week closed with a star-studded gala promoting sustainability in fashion. The four giants of Made-in-Italy - Armani, Gucci, Prada and Valentino - were among the honorees of the awards promoted by the Italian Fashion Chamber working with Livia Firth's Eco-Age consultancy. That left a trio of young talent to close out the final day of spring-summer womenswear previews on Monday. Here are some highlights:

Punk invasion from Ssheena

Sabrina Mandelli walked her punk-inspired Ssheena collection straight from the runway into Milan's Piazza del Duomo, scattering pigeons and giving passers-by a rare glimpse into the invitation-only world of Italian ready-to-wear shows. The brand founded in 2015 takes its name from the Ramones song "Sheena Is a Punk Rocker," an extra S added for Mandelli's first name. For her Milan runway debut, the designer presented a soft-to-hard progression of looks.

She started with satiny athletic wear in deep burgundy parachute material, extending into a pleated skirt with a plastic layer, fluid dresses and then trousers adorned with garters and split at the ankle. Teardrops were a motif that showed up on eyewear as a long glass ornament hanging from some frames and as beaded fringe on other designs. The fringe was repeated dramatically as the extension of pinstripes on a jacket mini-dress. Another motif was the monocle, represented in circular prints on handkerchief dresses, to reference a lesbian club of that name in 1930s Paris. "They went there to be themselves. My girls now can express themselves in Piazza Duomo. I hope something has changed," Mandelli said.

Love's contradictions by Daizy Shely

Israeli designer Daizy Shely commissioned a print by artist Umberto Chiodi for her latest collection, a colorful and kinetic tour de force that examines love's contradictions. The print features dreamy cupids and female figures, but also more disturbing details like ropes tightening around necks. "I wanted to create a personal collection talking about love. Not only romantic love, but your relationship with your friends. The good parts of it and the bad parts of it. Putting that contrast together," the designer said backstage.

Milan-based Shely displayed her tailoring in a denim dress made pretty with pleated tiers in blue shirt cloth and her detailing with daisies embroidered on a denim jacket. There was a burst of color and movement in a series of asymmetrical fringe dresses in acid green and yellow. French lace tops are decorated with ostrich feathers. "I put a lot of attention to details because this is what makes the difference between the regular commercial world and the designer," Shely said.

Ujoh softens deconstructions

Japanese designer Mitsuru Nishizaki plays with tailoring and pattern cutting in the latest collection for his Ujoh brand, which had its Milan debut last year. The looks started out in dark, matte colors and then exploded into colorful patterns featuring red flowers and some flashes of gold. Designs for a woman's wilder side followed more masculine cuts. During the first half of the collection, Nishizaki featured asymmetrical and cut-through details on deconstructed jackets. A favorite silhouette is an off-shoulder jumper, seemingly cut from men's trousers, paired with spilling out soft tops. In the second half, he moved toward lighter pieces, including billowing, parachute-like jackets, skirts and jumpers.



Models present creations for Japanese fashion house UJOH during the Women's Spring/Summer 2018 fashion show in Milan.

FASHION



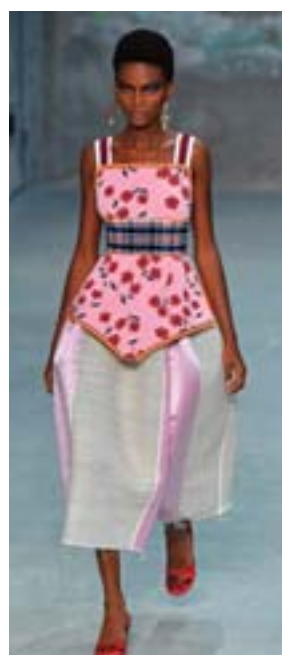
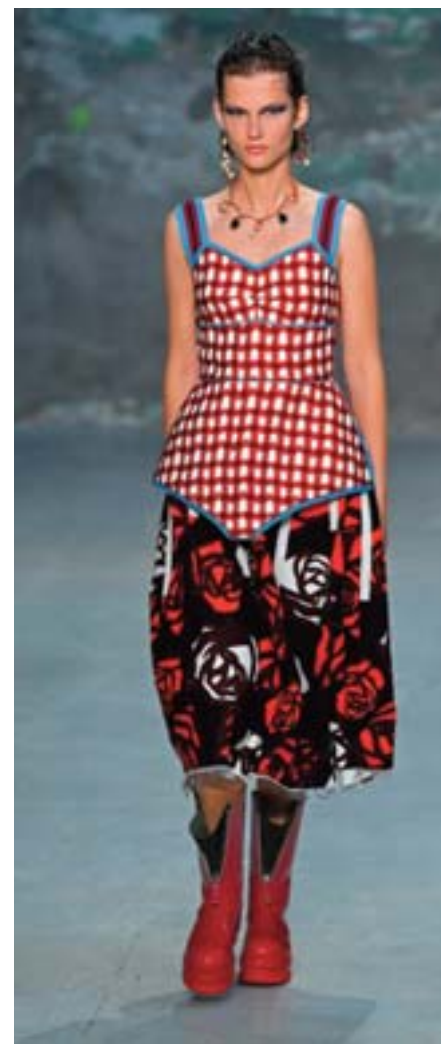
Marni treasure hunt

Marni is undergoing a color and floral revival in Francesco Risso's second womenswear collection at the 23-year-old fashion house. Risso said the collection represents a treasure hunt of objects collected by a scavenger, who then adopts and incorporates them into her life. There's a vein of nostalgia that runs through the collection, in both the prints and the slightly retro silhouette made contemporary by its proportions. So in Risso's fashion treasure hunt, a 1950s-style bathing suit in sturdy yesteryear cotton becomes a top, worn with a seafoam green floral skirt. The hemlines are left unfinished and the proportions slightly oversized.

The florals aren't mere prints but attic-trove brocades that offered texture or dainty, orderly granny flower prints. Other pieces are bejeweled, as if for some off-beat royal court. The silhouette had a strong daywear vibe and primarily consisted of dresses and skirts, with some boxy boyish pants and bowling shirt combs. The brand's trademark furs included one inspired by Cruella Deville. The Marni woman "has this sort of '20s languor, that is sculptural at the same time," Risso said backstage.

With Livia Firth's Eco-Age spearheading the Green Carpet Fashion Awards, it was fitting that her husband, actor Colin Firth, help out as a presenter in Milan since he was granted Italian citizenship last week. Livia Firth is Italian. The awards were held at Milan's famed La Scala opera house. Giorgio Armani wore a tuxedo as he stood on the stage alongside Miuccia Prada in a double-breasted coat. And there was Valentino creative director Pierpaolo Piccioli wearing a suit and tie alongside more casually attired Alessandro Michele of Gucci, in a suit-and-T-shirt combo with his trademark baseball cap.

Other honorees included Brazilian supermodel Gisele Bündchen, for her work in the Amazon; the seamstresses of the Valentino fashion house for artisanal tradition; designer Brunello Cucinelli for his project to beautify the Italian valley where he produces his luxury collections; and the Gucci fashion house for supply chain innovation. Also on hand were songstress Annie Lennox, actors Andrew Garfield and Dakota Johnson, actor-model Lauren Hutton and Vogue editor Anna Wintour. After the awards, everyone moved across the piazza to City Hall for a gala dinner. — AP



Models present creations for fashion house Marni.

Plant releases new track, announces 2018 tour

Robert Plant is going on tour in North America next year to support his upcoming album, "Carry Fire." The former Led Zeppelin frontman announced yesterday that his 2018 tour will begin Feb 9 in Raleigh, North Carolina. He'll also visit New York, Boston, Toronto, Chicago and Los Angeles, among other cities. More dates will be announced later. Plant will be joined on the tour by his backing band, the Sensational Space Shifters. Plant has also released a cover of Ersel Hickey's "Bluebirds Over the Mountain" as the first track from "Carry Fire." The album is set to hit music stores and begin streaming on Oct 13. — AP



In this file photo, Robert Plant and The Sensational Space Shifters perform at the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival in Manchester, Tenn. — AP

MUSIC & MOVIES

Black Entertainment Television heads to Korea in Asia first

Black Entertainment Television, the premier US network geared toward African Americans, is launching yesterday a version in South Korea in its first expansion into Asia. The South Korean BET channel, available both on traditional television and through streaming, will feature the network's signature shows as well as local productions, it said. South Korea puts a concerted effort on promoting pop culture and, while the country is highly homogeneous, it has witnessed a boom in hip-hop thanks in part to Koreans' strong ties to rap capital Los Angeles. Changmo, a South Korean rapper who has entered the country's top 10 singles chart through collaborations, this year became the first Asian nominated at the BET Awards, competing in the fan-decided International Viewers' Choice category. The network

will come to South Korea in a partnership with SK Broadband, a unit of conglomerate SK Telecom. "We believe the BET channel will find a fan base among Korean youth, who are globally recognized as fashion and cultural trendsetters — similar to the BET audience," Lee Hyung-Hee, CEO of operator SK Broadband, said in a statement.

BET, a unit of international media giant Viacom, already has a presence in Britain, France and sub-Saharan Africa as well as Canada and the Caribbean. Among the network's most popular offerings are the BET Hip Hop Awards, which will take place on October 6 in Miami and be broadcast on October 14 in South Korea. — AFP



Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BET, the parent company for Black Entertainment Television, Debra L Lee receives an award during the annual Clive Davis pre-Grammy gala in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP

Gunslinging Pakistani girls in lawless land shoot for Academy Award

British-born filmmaker Sarmad Masud was inspired to make a feminist Western in Pakistan when he heard how two gun-toting teenage girls fought off 200 men trying to take their home. "My Pure Land", which is Britain's foreign language entry for the Academy Awards, highlights how patriarchy and corruption make it hard for women in Pakistan to claim land. "What appealed to me was the courage of this young girl who stood up to 200 armed men for her home and the family's honor," Masud told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, referring to the chief protagonist, Nazo Dharejo.

"Land disputes are not as glamorous as other themes, but this was an important story that needed telling." The low-budget Urdu-language film tells the story of two sis-

ters and their mother who defend their home from their uncle and his hired goons after the death of their father and brother. Land ownership defines social status and political power in Pakistan, and disputes often target single women who have inherited property. The girls are taught to shoot at a young age by their father, who tells them their land is their honor and must be protected, and gives them boys' names to empower them.

"Pakistan gets a bad rap when it comes to feminism - but we've had some incredibly strong women from there, including Benazir Bhutto, Malala and this young woman," Masud said, adding that Dharejo has joined a political party to tackle corruption. More than a million property disputes are pending in Pakistani courts, Masud's research

showed. Disagreements are often settled by force, and village elders and the police are complicit in a corrupt system that does not always respect legal claims, least of all by women.

While women do have inheritance rights, men generally control ownership, passing land from father to son. "It is a classic good versus evil battle in a lawless land where everything goes," Masud said. "It is also very specific to Pakistan, where land disputes are so prevalent because honor is everything, and it is closely tied to land, with which people have an almost spiritual bond." — Reuters

Lee Daniels pushes through fear with shows 'Empire,' 'Star'

Oscar-nominated director Lee Daniels says he's consumed by fear each time he films a new scene. Even after Daniels found meteoric success through films such as "Monster's Ball," "Precious" and "The Butler," along with his popular TV series "Empire," he still worries that his work won't live up to people's lofty expectations. "Right before I yell 'action' in whatever I'm doing, I am as scared as a 9-year-old child," the producer-director-writer says. "All of my past has given me the courage and confidence on whatever I'm going to do next, because I have to challenge myself. But I'm still scared."



In this file photo, Lee Daniels, creator of the FOX series "Empire," poses for a portrait. — AP

Daniels expects to experience the same anxiety before his shows "Empire" and "Star" premiere back-to-back today night starting at 9 pm EDT on Fox. The two music dramas will combine their story lines in their two-hour separate episode season premiere with some characters from each show appearing in the other.

Daniels said he originally felt nervous after Fox executives approached him with the idea of doing the crossover of the shows, which both delve into the drama-filled environment of the music industry. "With that 9 o'clock time slot, I feel like all eyes are on me. In Hollywood, they build you up to tear you down. So, it's a little terrifying," he says. "But I think without risk, without throwing the dice up against the wall... You have to go (for it). Otherwise, what's the point of life?"

"Empire" kicks off its fourth season after Terrence Howard's character Lucious Lyon has awakened from a coma with amnesia. The series stars Golden Globe winner Taraji P. Henson as Lyon's ex-wife Cookie who along with their three sons is fighting for a share of the family entertainment company. On "Star," in its second season, three young women are looking for a fresh start in Atlanta in hopes of becoming music stars as an all-girl group. The series stars Jude Demorest (Star), Brittany O'Grady

(Star's sister Simone) and Ryan Destiny (Alexandra).

Queen Latifah, who plays Carlotta Brown, the girls' surrogate mother, is calling the premiere of both shows "Lee Daniels Night." She's known Daniels for nearly 10 years, and believes he's capable of successfully meshing both shows together. "He's particularly qualified to do this," she said. "He has a skill, a talent. He's able to bring people to life and bring stories to life and characters to life that you might not see. He can do that like nobody else, and he should. He's not afraid to tackle any subject. He has a signature. He has a lane."

Social media

Daniels has explored homophobia in the African-American community through "Empire" and tells the story of a transgender woman on "Star." He feels the best way to enlighten viewers on these topics is through music, but there has been some backlash for the gay story lines on "Empire." Some of the criticism has come from social media and even Daniels' brother who told him, "We are black men and we should be perceived in a certain way, because the world is already against us." Daniels, who is gay, said he found the comments hurtful but felt he needed to push forward.

"I'm here to elevate the gay, LGBT and black cause. It's ultimately about human rights. From the very beginning of my career, everything has been about elevating the human cause. And not just in front of the scenes, but behind the scenes," he says. Whether people like it or not, Daniels is creating more content. He's developing a couple of drama series projects with Fox, he's teaming up with Oprah Winfrey to remake the 1983 film "Terms of Endearment" and he wants to tell the story about Bayard Rustin, a civil rights leader who fought for gay rights. Ultimately, Daniels wants to build a school for young filmmakers who cannot afford it.

"This is about telling stories and giving a voice to people who don't have one - and a face for people who are not seen," he said. "Earlier on, I thought it was all about me. It's not. As you grow older, and you realize that your time on this Earth is ... a gift from God to pass along what you've learned - to inspire others what you have done. Make them fearless so they can break down barriers that are in front of them." — AP

Residente leads Latin Grammys nominations with 9 nods



In this file photo, singers Luis Fonsi, left, and Daddy Yankee perform during the Latin Billboard Awards in Coral Gables, Fla. — AP

Puerto Rican rapper Residente's first solo album post-Calle 13 has received a leading nine nominations for this year's Latin Grammys, including for record, song and album of the year. Colombian sensation Maluma follows him with seven, Shakira's comeback gathered six, and Juanes, Mon Laferte and producer Kevin Jimenez ADG received five nominations each, the Latin Recording Academy announced Tuesday. The announcement was delayed by nearly a week after last year's devastating earthquake in Mexico and hurricanes Irma and Maria, which have devastated the Caribbean.

This year's ceremony could provide Juanes with the opportunity to break his record tie with Calle 13: Both acts have won 21 awards each. Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee's megahit "Despacito" got four nominations: record and song of the year, as well as best urban fusion/performance for its remix with Justin Bieber and best short form music video for its clip. The video, the most watched on YouTube with over 3.8 billion views since its January release, was produced and directed by Carlos R. Perez and highlights the color and beauty of now

devastated Puerto Rico, which was hit by a Category 4 hurricane, Maria, less than a week ago.

Ten acts are vying for album, song and record of the year, unlike the traditional Grammy Awards where five nominees compete. Album of the year nominees also include Ruben Blades with Roberto Delgado & Orquesta, Antonio Carmona, Vicente Garcia, Nicky Jam, Juanes, Mon Laferte, Natalia Lafourcade, Shakira and Danay Suarez. The record of the year list is comprised by a diverse group of artists, genres and collaborations that include Residente's "Guerra," "Amarrame" by Mon Laferte, featuring Juanes; Shakira and Maluma's "Chantaje," "El Ratico" by Juanes with Kali Uchis, Jorge Drexler's "El Surco," Maluma's "Felices Los 4," Blades' "La Flor De La Canela," Alejandro Fernandez's "Quiero Que Vuelvas" and Ricky Martin's "Vente Pa' Ca," also featuring Maluma. The Latin Grammys will air live on Univision on Nov 16 from Las Vegas. — AP

Box office top 20: 'Kingsman' crowned No 1

"Kingsman: The Golden Circle" came in a little shy of expectations but still managed to move New Line's horror hit "It" off the top spot at the North American box office. Fox's spy comedy sequel to 2015's "Kingsman" debuted with \$39 million, according to final figures Monday. The film cost \$104 million to make, but improved little on the original's \$36 million opening two years ago. After two weeks atop the box office, New Line's "It" slid to second with \$29.8 million in its third weekend of release.

Ticket sales were disappointing for Warner Bros.' "The Lego Ninjago Movie," which opened with \$20.4 million. The release was the second "Lego Movie" spinoff of the year, following "The Lego Batman Movie," possibly hurting the performance of "Ninjago." The top 20 movies at US and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday by comScore.

1. "Kingsman: The Golden Circle," 20th Century Fox, \$39,023,010, 4,003 locations, \$9,748 average, \$39,023,010, 1 Week.
2. "It," Warner Bros, \$29,757,494, 4,007 locations, \$7,426 average, \$266,096,375, 3 Weeks.
3. "The Lego Ninjago Movie," Warner Bros, \$20,433,071, 4,047 locations, \$5,049 average, \$20,433,071, 1 Week.
4. "American Assassin," Lionsgate, \$6,255,617, 3,154 locations, \$1,983 average, \$26,185,076, 2 Weeks.
5. "mother!" Paramount, \$3,290,780, 2,368 locations, \$1,390 average, \$13,459,798, 2 Weeks.
6. "Home Again," Open Road, \$3,232,156, 2,685 locations, \$1,204 average, \$22,267,987, 3 Weeks.
7. "Friend Request," Entertainment Studios Motion Pictures, \$2,002,863, 2,573 loca-

8. "Stronger," Lionsgate/Roadside Attractions, \$1,611,899, 574 locations, \$2,808 average, \$1,611,899, 1 Week.
9. "The Hitman's Bodyguard," Lionsgate, \$1,608,722, 2,037 locations, \$790 average, \$73,356,701, 6 Weeks.
10. "Wind River," The Weinstein Company, \$1,257,881, 1,431 locations, \$879 average, \$31,645,630, 8 Weeks.
11. "Spider-Man: Homecoming," Sony, \$1,063,712, 1,006 locations, \$1,057 average, \$331,857,374, 12 Weeks.
12. "Leap!" The Weinstein Company, \$959,668, 1,301 locations, \$738 average, \$20,262,222, 5 Weeks.
13. "Brad's Status," Annapurna Pictures, \$953,193, 453 locations, \$2,104 average, \$1,066,530, 2 Weeks.
14. "Annabelle: Creation," Warner Bros, \$727,734, 682 locations, \$1,067 average, \$101,104,430, 7 Weeks.
15. "Dunkirk," Warner Bros, \$582,713, 678 locations, \$859 average, \$186,292,020, 10 Weeks.
16. "Battle Of The Sexes," Fox Searchlight, \$515,450, 21 locations, \$24,545 average, \$515,450, 1 Week.
17. "Despicable Me 3," Universal, \$505,200, 539 locations, \$937 average, \$261,809,115, 13 Weeks.
18. "The Emoji Movie," Sony, \$417,727, 573 locations, \$729 average, \$84,568,848, 8 Weeks.
19. "Nikka Zaildar 2," Grand Showbiz Media & Entertainment, \$385,484, 42 locations, \$9,178 average, \$385,484, 1 Week.
20. "Wonder Woman," Warner Bros, \$338,279, 355 locations, \$953 average, \$411,990,490, 17 Weeks. — AP



This image released by Twentieth Century Fox shows Channing Tatum, left, and Halle Berry in "Kingsman: The Golden Circle." — AP



This file photo shows Shania Twain performing at the opening night ceremony of the 2017 US Open Tennis Championships in New York. — AP

Shania Twain bounces back with 'Now'

Life has been tough for Shania Twain in the past decade, but the Canadian country-pop artist who ruled the charts in the late 1990s is hitting a high note again in her career. Twain, 52, will release her first studio album in 15 years this week after a long struggle with Lyme disease and a devastating divorce. "The album is really about a place that I've come to, and I've been for longer than I'd like in a transition period," Twain said in an interview.

"I'm just so relieved that I'm finally here now on the other side of that ... so I thought it was really fitting to call the album 'Now' as this is where I've landed." With hit songs like "Man! I Feel Like a Woman!" and the romantic "You're Still the One," Twain won four Grammys for her 1997 best-selling album "Come on Over."

But in 2004, her vocal chords were damaged by Lyme disease, which also afflicts people with lethargy and joint pains. Four years later she split with her husband and musical partner Robert Lange, alleging he had cheated on her with her best friend. Twain said she has worked hard to overcome the vocal damage. "There's a lot I can do about regaining my vocal competency, my vocal ability and I've gone through all of that, so I'm really grateful about that," she said. "But I'll never be able to remove the problem. It's a permanent injury."

Twain, who remarried in 2011, said she now aims to balance her career and personal life. "I've been through a marriage already and I don't ever want to be divorced again so I'm invested in my relationship in a different way now. I have to spread myself out and organize my mental energy and my physical time differently and I can't just be only working on my career all of the time," she said. Although Twain spent two years doing a nightly show in Las Vegas from 2012-2014 and toured North America in 2015, "Now" is her first album of new music since "Up!" in 2002. It goes on sale on Friday. Twain is also filming a race car movie with John Travolta that is due for release in 2018. "This has all just come out of just a phase that was a transition for me. So hey! I'm feeling good," she said. — Reuters



In this file photo, singer Idina Menzel looks over her shoulder at photographers at the 2016 AFI Life Achievement Award Gala Tribute to John Williams at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. — AP

Idina Menzel marries one-time 'Rent' co-star Aaron Lohr

"Frozen" star Idina Menzel has married actor Aaron Lohr. Menzel posted wedding pictures to her Facebook page on Monday, writing: "Wanted to let you know... married the love of my life Aaron Lohr this weekend at our home. Dad & son walked me down the aisle. It was magical." The 46-year-old Menzel and Lohr, who's 41, appeared in the 2005 film adaptation of the musical "Rent."

They also share a Disney background. Menzel provides the voice for Queen Elsa and her "Let It Go" anthem in "Frozen." Lohr appeared in Disney's Mighty Ducks movies and the company's 1992 adaptation of Broadway's "Newsies." This is the second marriage for Menzel, who shares a son with ex-husband Tave Diggs. — AP



A view shows the Bulgarian village of Momchilovtsi. — AFP photos



Chinese participants take part in the third Chinese-Bulgarian yoghurt festival in the village of Momchilovtsi.



Bulgarian women wearing traditional costume dance during the third Chinese-Bulgarian yoghurt festival in the village of Momchilovtsi.



Young Bulgarians play bagpipes during the third Chinese-Bulgarian yoghurt festival in the village of Momchilovtsi.



A Chinese tourist (right) buys herbs during the third Chinese-Bulgarian yoghurt festival in the village of Momchilovtsi.



Chinese tourists attend the third Chinese-Bulgarian yoghurt festival in the village of Momchilovtsi.

Bulgarian village goes Chinese in yoghurt craze

The Bulgarian villagers hunker over their books, struggling with their Mandarin words and characters. But they are not going to China—the Middle Kingdom is coming to them. Because of yoghurt. "It's difficult. You have to be quite tough not to give up," says pensioner Tsvetka Radkova, 66, as she puffs and pants in the classroom in the village of Momchilovtsi in southern Bulgaria.

But her daughter Veselina, 37, accompanied in the lessons by her nine-year-old little girl, trots out whole sentences in Chinese, to the cheers of her classmates. Few Europeans, and not many Bulgarians for that matter, have heard of Momchilovtsi, perched high on the slopes of the Rhodope mountains in south-eastern Europe near the border with Greece. But in China, Momchilovtsi conjures up images of mystery, wonder and longevity, having given its name to a kind of drinking yoghurt that is all the rage for Chinese consumers.

This summer Momchilovtsi played host to hundreds of Chinese visitors attending the village's third Chinese-Bulgarian yoghurt festival. Signs in Chinese are everywhere, directing visitors to the village hall for lectures on yoghurt's prodigious health benefits or to yoghurt and cheese tastings. Children run around chirping "Ni Hao" ("Hello" in Chinese) and giving out festival brochures and village maps in Bulgarian, Chinese and English. A beauty pageant on the festival's second day picked the new "Yoghurt Queen" to adorn the Momchilovtsi packaging. "There's two things every Chinese knows about Bulgaria—yoghurt and roses," said one visitor, Lei Lin from Shanghai.

Village of longevity

The people of Momchilovtsi have been used to the sight of Chinese visitors ever since Chinese firm Bright Dairy in 2009 took back home the bacteria found in the local yoghurt. Crucially, the strain enabled Bright to develop for Chinese consumers drinking yoghurt-drinkable with a straw, so easier to consume than the thicker stuff that doesn't need to be chilled. But Bright didn't forget its roots, branding its product "Momchilovtsi", its label featuring a Bulgarian maiden in traditional dress and cultivating links with the village.

Known in Chinese by the shorter name "Mosili'an", it's the top seller in this booming sector, on sale in most supermar-

kets and its adverts a common sight on bus stops and on television. Its popularity has been helped by the contaminated milk powder scandal in China in 2008 pushing many consumers towards brands seen as international or traditional and therefore safer. With its slogan "The miraculous secret of the village where people live a long life—Momchilovtsi", sales were 6.0 billion yuan (765 million euros, \$910 million) last year, a Bright spokesman told AFP.

"Momchilovtsi has been famous as 'the village of longevity' because of the high number of centenarians living here," Pan Jianjun, the spokesman, said on the sidelines of the festival. Indeed, at least three participants in the language course—for which 40 locals have enrolled—told AFP they had family members who had lived to be over 100. "Our research showed that one of the secrets of this longevity is the local yoghurt," Pan said.

Long and winding road

The 1,200 inhabitants of Momchilovtsi already host about 1,000 Chinese tourists annually out of a total of 5,000-6,000 visitors, mayor Svyka Surkova told AFP. "The numbers are growing every year and this is only normal considering the huge advertising campaign for the yoghurt in China that also benefits us," she added. In 2014, the Chinese version of reality TV show "Survivor" was set in Momchilovtsi, with seven contestants thrown in with a local family armed only with a Chinese-Bulgarian dictionary.

But with just 18,500 Chinese visitors last year, Bulgaria is seriously lagging in the Europe-wide drive to attract Chinese tourists. Direct flights between the two countries are only but a dream, experts said. Visitors to Momchilovtsi have to take an internal flight within Europe to Sofia or Plovdiv. And from there it's a long and winding journey of several hours up to the village—but worth it. — AFP



Bulgarian children pose with their Chinese language diplomas during the third Chinese-Bulgarian yoghurt festival in the village of Momchilovtsi.

Diwali festivals grow in US, from Disney to Times Square

The holiday of Diwali is starting to light up mainstream America. Diwali, a festival of lights celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and others in India and other countries, has long been observed in immigrant communities around the US. But now public celebrations of the holiday are starting to pop up in places ranging from Disneyland and Times Square to parks and museums. The Times Square event is the brainchild of Neeta Bhasin, who says that while many Indian immigrants have found great success in the US, "still people don't know much about India. I felt it's about time that we should take India to mainstream America and showcase India's rich culture, heritage, arts and diversity to the world. And I couldn't find a better place than the center of the universe: Times Square."

Bhasin, who came to the United States from India 40 years ago, is president of ASB Communications, the marketing firm behind Diwali at Times Square. The event, now in its fourth

year, has drawn tens of thousands of people in the past. It's scheduled for Oct 7, from 2 pm to 9 pm, with dance performances, Bollywood singers, a bazaar of food, saris and other goods, and a lighting ceremony. While Diwali celebrations are held throughout the fall, the holiday's actual date is Oct 19. Also called Deepavali, it's an autumn harvest festival held just before the Hindu new year. Celebrations include lighting oil lamps or candles called diyas to symbolize "a victory of knowledge over ignorance, light over darkness, good over evil," said Bhasin.

The Diwali celebration at Disney California Adventure Park in Anaheim, California, includes performances of traditional Indian dances and a Bollywood dance party for guests. It's part of a festival of holidays at the theme park reflecting cultural traditions from around the world. The Disney festival begins Nov 10 and runs through Jan 7.

San Antonio, Texas, has one of the nation's largest city-sponsored celebrations of Diwali, drawing more than 15,000 people each year. The 2017 event, scheduled for Nov 4 at La Villita, a historic arts village, will be its ninth annual Diwali celebration with Indian dance, entertainment, food, crafts, fireworks and the release of lighted candles into the San Antonio River along the city's River Walk.

New York City's Rubin Museum will mark Diwali with an overnight Ragas Live Festival featuring more than 50 Indian classical musicians performing amid the museum's collection of sacred Himalayan art. The event begins Oct 21 at 10 am and continues all day and night through Oct 22 at 10 am.

Chai and mango lassis will be served, visitors will have access to all the galleries and pop-up events like meditation and sunrise prayer will be offered. Special tickets will be sold for the opportunity to sleep beneath the artwork.

Other places hosting Diwali celebrations include Cary, North Carolina, in Regency Park, Oct 14; Flushing Town Hall, Queens, New York, Oct 29; the Seattle Center, Oct 21; the Dulles Expo center in Chantilly, Virginia, Oct 7-8; and Memorial Park in Cupertino, California, Sept 30. In Columbus, Ohio, the Ohio History Center is hosting a photo exhibit about the city's fast-growing population of immigrants from Nepal, Bhutan and India, with a Diwali event Oct 8. Bhasin said Diwali's message is particularly timely now. "It is extremely important to be together and showcase to the world, not only Indians, but the entire immigrant community, to be together with Americans and to show the world we are one, we are all the same human beings," she said. — AP



This Nov 1, 2014 provided by Visit San Antonio shows Punjabi dancers performing Bhangra dance during San Antonio's annual Diwali Festival - the largest City-sponsored Diwali celebration in the nation. — AP photos



This Oct 16, 2016 image shows performers at a Diwali celebration in Times Square in New York.



This Nov 13, 2016 photo shows performers in a Diwali celebration at Disney California Adventure Park in Anaheim, Calif.

Lifestyle

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Going deaf has sharpened my art, David Hockney says

Renowned British painter David Hockney says his hearing loss has helped sharpen his sense of space and perspective. Speaking yesterday at a retrospective of his work at Paris' Pompidou Center, Hockney said: "If you lose one sense, you gain other senses, and I feel I could see space clearer. I put it down to the hearing loss. ... I can't tell what sound is coming from where."

Ever curious and innovative, the 80-year-old artist said he's currently working on reverse perspective paintings. Hockney donated a huge work to the Pompidou Center, "The Arrival of Spring in Woldgate, East Yorkshire," that's part of the traveling retrospective opening in Paris this week. Hockney's depictions of sun-dappled Los Angeles swimming pools and wooded Yorkshire hills are among the best-known images in contemporary art. — AP

Renowned British painter David Hockney poses during the unveiling of a huge painting he is donating to the Pompidou Center, 'The Arrival of Spring in Woldgate, East Yorkshire' in Paris, France, yesterday. — AFP

Egypt concert-goers arrested for raising rainbow flag

At least six people have been arrested in Egypt after raising the rainbow flag of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community at a Cairo concert, security and judicial sources said. They are accused of "public indecency" and "inciting immorality among young people", the sources said following Monday's arrests. Egypt's state security prosecutor has been

tasked with carrying out the investigation into the incident on Friday at a concert of Lebanese band Mashrou' Leila, according to a judicial source.

Egyptian law does not expressly ban homosexuality, but gay men have previously been arrested on charges including debauchery and contempt for religion in the deeply conservative Muslim society. In April 2016, an

Egyptian court sentenced 11 men to jail terms of up to 12 years after convicting them of "debauchery and incitement to debauchery", provoking international criticism. Egyptian police use US-based social networking application Grindr to monitor homosexuals. Monday's rainbow flag incident has sparked controversy pitting conservatives against advocates of civil liberties in the media and

on social networks. Egypt's conservative musicians syndicate said Mashrou' Leila, whose singer Hamed Sinno is openly homosexual, would not be authorized to perform again in Egypt. The group has previously been banned from performing in the Jordanian capital. — AFP



Syrian refugee children rehearse before their graduation concert in Beirut, Lebanon. — AP photos

Syrian children in Lebanon find music school away from home

'Art gives strength. It emanates from the ability to create and appreciate creativity'

Hassan Youssef was 10 years old when a local Syrian composer discovered his talent: a deep powerful voice that was particularly resonant for traditional songs. It wasn't long, however, before Syria's grinding civil war nearly shattered Youssef's hope of polishing his natural gift. He and his family left their home in a suburb of Damascus and traveled to Lebanon's Bekaa Valley to become one of the millions of Syrians living in refugee camps around the region.

When the Action for Hope Music School announced it was seeking talented children among the refugee community in Lebanon to train, Youssef's family were the first to encourage him to enroll. A year and half later, the now 14-year-old Youssef is one of two dozen children who graduated from the program, which was capped by a busy and lively concert in a central Beirut theater Friday. Youssef, a lead singer in the concert, had come a long way from the early days of the war when a mortar round fell near his family's home.

"We only heard the sound of a mortar, it fell near us," said Youssef, whose shy manner contradicts a deep and impressive performance of traditional Syrian songs. "When we looked it had apparently brought down a whole building.

That is all I remember." Music, he says, "makes one forget everything. Music is the most important thing." Youssef is one of nearly 3 million children who have been displaced by the war. In Lebanon, there are more than 1 million registered refugees, nearly half of them children. Some observers believe many more are not registered.

The UNESCO-funded Action for Hope program Youssef attended has trained 24 of those displaced children for over a year and a half. It also aims to preserve the musical heritage of Syria and the region, offering classes in theory and the history of Arabic music, and teaching students the oud or Buzuq, two-string instruments used in classical Arabic and Turkish music, as well as traditional songs from different parts of Syria and the region.

The crowd at the graduation concert, many of them proud family members, cheered enthusiastically as the children played a repertoire of over a dozen songs from Syria, Egypt and Turkey. The crowd sang along and clapped to their performance of "muwashahat" from Aleppo, a form of poetic ballad for which the Syrian city is famous. The band also performed famous old Egyptian songs, stumbling some as they pronounced the Egyptian dialect. The spirit during the more than 60-minute per-

formance was elated, and Youssef drew a long cheer after performing an old deep-voiced song. Youssef said he is now planning with colleagues to form a new band to play commercially whenever they can. Director of Action for Hope, Basma El-Husseiny, said the music school offers children traumatized by the war and displacement an avenue to express themselves and overcome the sense of being a victim. The organization also has a video and theater program. "Art gives strength. It emanates from the ability to create and at the same time to appreciate creativity," El-Husseiny said. "This strength is needed by people who are marginalized, deprived and undergoing difficult circumstances much more than the rich."

Fawaz Baker, a Syrian music adviser for the project and the former head of a music academy in Aleppo, said he picked 24 children from a total of 200 students who applied. He chose to train them in a diverse set of songs from Turkey, Egypt and Syria's region. "We tried to diversify, so that the children can choose in the future," he said. Action for Hope is now taking its program to Jordan, where 20 new Syrian students have also enrolled to learn music. — AP

