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Dark clouds on horizon as govt scrambles to contain rain fallout

More rain forecast • All schools closed • MEW declares emergency • Damages sought



KUWAIT: The Cabinet holds an extraordinary session yesterday. — KUNA

By B Izzak and Agencies

KUWAIT: The meteorological office issued weather warnings for the coming period, as clouds are accumulating above Kuwait, signaling possible heavy rain in the next hours and boosting the likelihood that floods may recur, particularly in some areas where the soil has been saturated with water from previous downpours. Meteorologist Abdulaziz Al-Qerawi said in a statement to KUNA that the deluge might begin in western parts of the country and gradually spread to central areas. Rainfall is forecast throughout today, with downpours in southern regions amid gales exceeding 60 km per hour, low visibility and seven-foot waves at sea.

The government meanwhile declared a public holiday today for all schools due to the deteriorating weather conditions. Schools will reopen tomorrow after assessing the situation, the education ministry announced. Minister of Oil and Electricity and Water Bakheet Al-



Damaged cars are seen following heavy rain in Fahaheel yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Pages 2 & 3)

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Rasheed held a meeting yesterday of top ministry officials, announcing a state of emergency due to the forecast of torrential rain. Rasheed directed the leaders to follow up on all services provided round the clock and keep in touch with all ministry administrations to secure production, transport and distribution stations. Plans were also announced to establish an "administrative zone" in north and south Kuwait to deal with the impact of torrential rain.

A large number of lawmakers yesterday called on the government to resign, accusing it of complete failure to face heavy torrential rains and thunderstorms that lashed the country for the second time in less than a week, causing the first casualty and severe damage. MPs insisted that the government had totally failed under the situation and accordingly it must resign immediately. Several MPs headed by opposition MPs Shuaib Al-Muwaizri

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CBK issues new rules for personal loans, financing

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait yesterday issued new regulations for granting loans and personal financing for consumer and housing purposes and issuance of credit cards. Governor Dr Mohammad Al-Hashil told KUNA that the new instructions come within the framework of the Central Bank's interest in regularly reviewing its instructions and regulatory controls in light of economic and banking developments.

In this regard, the bank, in cooperation with a global consulting company, reviewed the instructions issued on the mechanisms of granting loans and other financing operations. He added that the study took into account changes in macroeconomic performance indicators since the last adjustment to the maximum limits of these loans in 2004, including changes in population growth rates, inflation rates and rising prices of consumer and durable goods.

The increase in wages and salaries was also reflected in light of the loans' connection to a large segment of citizens and residents, and their relative importance in the lending and financing portfolios of both banks and finance companies, with the importance of controlling growth in these loans to maintain monetary and financial stability. Hashil added that based on the findings of the study and tests of the application of alternatives and the most important observations revealed by the Central Bank of Kuwait to practice the granting of these types of loans and financing operations, the bank issued new instructions for granting loans and personal financing for consumer and housing purposes and the issuance of credit cards.

The new regulations aim at regulating the granting of loans by banks, investment and financing companies based on the actual needs of customers and aimed at reducing the excessive use of these loans in the framework of strengthening the principle of flexibility and balance in a way that preserves the rights of the two parties. Hashil pointed out that these instructions include increasing the maximum amount of loans and Islamic financing operations for consumer purposes to a limit not exceeding 25 times the net monthly salary of the client and a maximum of KD 25,000 (\$82,000).

He concluded that in terms of loans and Islamic financing operations for housing purposes, the maximum limit remained KD 70,000 (\$231,000). Thus the total amount that can be obtained by a customer in loans and Islamic financing is KD 95,000 (\$313,000), adhering to other regulations. — KUNA

Jordan floods kill 12, tourists flee Petra

AMMAN: Flash floods killed 12 people in Jordan and forced nearly 4,000 tourists to flee the famed ancient desert city of Petra, emergency services said yesterday. Search teams were scouring valleys near the historic hill town of Madaba for a young girl who was still missing after Friday's floods, civil defense spokesman Iyad Amru told state television. Among those confirmed dead after torrential rains swept the south of the kingdom were six people found in the Madaba area southwest of the capital Amman.

To the east, three people were killed near Dabaa on the Desert Highway, one of Jordan's three main north-south arter-

ies, while one was killed near Maan in the south. It was not immediately clear where the other two died. Amru said two girls had gone missing in the Madaba region, later announcing that one of their bodies had been found.

Government spokeswoman Jumana Ghneimat said authorities had found alive four Israeli tourists who had gone missing in the Wadi Rum desert in southern Jordan but were looking for two more. "Our embassy in Tel Aviv contacted the Israeli foreign ministry for information on the identities of the missing Israelis," Ghneimat said in statements carried by the state news agency Petra. A spokesman for the Israeli foreign ministry confirmed that contact had been lost with two Israeli tourists who were in Wadi Rum. The Jordanian army deployed helicopters and all-terrain vehicles to help with search and rescue operations after floodwaters cut off the Desert Highway in both directions.

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MADABA, Jordan: Rescuers are seen at the scene of a flood in this city near Amman on Friday. — AFP

Calif wildfires rage, Trump blames 'forest mismanagement'

PARADISE, California: Two monster wildfires burned out of control yesterday in northern and southern California, having already killed at least nine people and forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes. Nine people were found dead in and around the Northern California town of Paradise, where more than 6,700 homes and businesses were burned down by the Camp Fire, making it the most destructive blaze in California history, according to state's department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

"This event was the worst-case scenario. It was the event we have feared

for a long time," Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea said at a Friday evening press conference. "Regrettably, not everybody made it out." About 800 km to the south in Los Angeles County, the 35,000-acre Woolsey Fire was threatening 75,000 homes and more than 200,000 people were under mandatory evacuation early yesterday. Some of the evacuation orders were for residents within the City of Los Angeles in the West Hills area. It was unclear how many homes have been evacuated within the City of Los Angeles.

Trump early yesterday tweeted that "gross mismanagement of forests" was to blame for the two unchecked wildfires. "There is no reason for these massive, deadly and costly forest fires in California except that forest management is so poor," he wrote in a Twitter post. "Billions of dollars are given each year, with so many lives lost, all because of gross mismanagement of the forests."

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PARADISE, California: Firefighters push down a wall while battling a burning apartment complex north of Sacramento on Friday. — AFP

Local



KUWAIT: A street in Fahaheel submerged with water. —KUNA and Ministry of Defense photos

Kuwait govt bodies mobilized to deal with heavy rainfall

Oil sector declared emergency due to unstable weather

KUWAIT: Kuwait government bodies have been mobilized amidst heavy rainfall in the country Friday evening, fully prepared to help either people stranded, make traffic as smooth as possible to offering medical assistance. Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor said it was opening its halls, originally used for social occasions, to allow people stranded in streets to seek shelter until weather improves. Hanaa Al-Hajri, Assistant Undersecretary for Social Development, said the ministry would be opening halls in areas of Saad Al-Abdullah, Al-Naseem, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Ardihiya, Firdous, Omariya, Farwaniya and Al-Herbesh. She said the other halls were in areas of Khaitan, Jee'an, Qabazard, Salmiya, Sabah Al-Salem, Jaber Al-Ali, Sabahiya, Reqqa, Bader Al-Mohammad, Qurain, Nasser Al-Mohammad, Al-Shallahi, Sabah Al-Jaber, Martyr Fahad Al-Ahmad, Fahad Al-Ahmad, Abdullah Al-Mubarak and Mishref. Ministry of Health said it was activating the emergency plan with full staff on alert. Ministry Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha said doctors, nursing staff and paramedics were doing their best to deal with aftermath of heavy rainfall. Director of Ambulance Services at the Minister Jassem Al-Foderi said the ministry received 278 calls for cases mostly about asthma, heart diseases and house calls. He confirmed readiness of emergency departments at all hospitals were ready, and the ministry was in contact with interior ministry, fire department and civil defense to coordinate action.

Kuwait Army and National Guard also announced mobilization to deal with heavy rainfall. The National Guard said it was upgrading readiness to Level Two, which means mobilization of 50 percent of forces. Six National Guard teams were formed to support government departments deal with impacts of rain, like dealing with swamps and secure smooth traffic. The army said forces were at Farwaniya and Adan Hospitals as well as Ahmadi Bridge and Manqaf Area to remove rain water.

Kuwait Municipality also activated emergency plan in all six governorates. It added in a statement teams were ready to help remove rain water in residential areas and major roads, in addition to removing falling trees and large quantities of sand. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said the government was following up closely the situation across the country amid the unstable weather conditions and heavy rains. There are direct instructions to all ministries to take necessary measures to maintain safety of citizens and their properties, His Highness the Prime Minister said. Officials who will not fulfill their duties well, will be held accountable, he vowed. In conference call with the concerned ministers, His Highness the Premier affirmed the necessity of making sure that all government bodies are ready to deal with the current weather conditions. Earlier in the day, the Interior Ministry urged motorists to be cautious enough while driving on roads during heavy rains hitting the country. The motorists also are advised to leave an enough space ahead of other vehicles, as well as avoid sudden stops.

Stay indoors

The Ministry of Interior and Kuwait Fire Service Directorate had urged the public to stay indoors, unless it is necessary, due to waterlogged roads in some areas in the country. "We call on citizens and residents to stay indoors unless it is absolutely essential due to some waterlogging in most of the country's roads," KFSM's Director General Lieutenant-General Khaled Al-Mekrad said in a press statement. Firefighting teams are currently on alert to deal with any situation and answer emergency calls via security line (112), Al-Mekrad said. KFSM received more than 170 emergency calls, most of which, over 80, from Ahmadi governorates reported electric short circuit accidents, people stuck inside their vehicles due to waterlogging, and some house basement flooding incidents, he noted, adding his teams dealt with these situations successfully, and that no injuries were reported. Meanwhile, MoI mentioned that security teams, in cooperation with public works ministry, are currently working on the roads that closed due to waterlogging, urging drivers to cooperate with traffic police in order to facilitate traffic, commit to traffic rules, and take all necessary and safety precautions.

Maximum readiness

Kuwait's National Guard has announced a state of maximum readiness at the administrative support units due to weather conditions engulfing the country. National Guard's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Hashem Al-Refaie has raised readiness to the maximum level at the administrative support units, the National Guard said in a statement Friday. It added that Al-Refaie took part in a meeting, which included Minister of Health Sheikh Bassel Al-Sabah and ministries' officials within the framework of activating the emergency plan to tackle impacts of the heavy showers hitting the country. The guard earlier in the day announced the formation of six technical emergency teams to follow up the exerted efforts to back the government bodies tasked with tackling the impacts of rains and accumulated water to ensure smooth traffic on roads and face any emergency, in implementation of the 2020 strategic goals' document.

Oil sector declares emergency

A state of emergency was announced at the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries on Friday due to the current unstable weather, spokesman for the oil sector Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah said. He added that the emergency rooms of the oil institutions were activated. Sheikh Talal said all concerned teams are existing at all oil institutions. They are on alert to deal with emergencies caused by heavy showers, he added, stressing that situation is currently stable regarding the production and export process. The KPC and its subsidiaries are keen on the safety of all workers, through a maximum readiness of concerned teams to respond to any emergency, he noted.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) on Friday declared a state of emergency because of weather



Ministry of Defense personnel help drain water from a submerged street.

er conditions engulfing the country. The concerned teams are dealing with all complaints regarding the heavy showers, KOC spokesman and deputy CEO for financial and administrative affairs Ahmad Al-Hamad said in a press statement. Complaints are dealt with in line with the followed measures in the company, he said. "We put into consideration the safety of all company's staff and all citizens of Al-Ahmadi city," he affirmed.

Also, the Kuwait National Petroleum Company's spokesman Bassem Al-Isa said showers did not cause any damage to refineries. He added that the company is operating normally in line with its planned program. Some units sustained limited and ineffective damage, he said, adding that teams are dealing with this matter efficiently. Water leak into Al-Ahmadi refinery's gate was tackled, he noted, referring that action has not been effected due to the leak.

All resources

Meanwhile, Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Chairperson of the Kuwait Voluntary Work Center (KVWC), announced yesterday placing the center resources at disposal of the concerned authorities to aid citizens due to heavy rain and weather instability. Sheikha Amthal said in a statement that she contacted the cabinet, expressing readiness to back up its efforts in the face of the current problems due to the rainy weather. She appealed to citizens to support the political leadership, cooperate with the competent authorities and neglect rumors. Solidarity of the Kuwaiti people under the current circumstances depict such a stance in hard conditions. All disabled people totaling 594 at Sulaibikhat and South Sabahiya complexes are safe and unharmed amid the heavy rains hitting the country, head of emergency committee at the Public Authority of The Disabled (PAD) Amer Al-Enzi said on Friday. The emergency team are still fulfilling their duties towards the disabled and staff until the end of the current unstable weather, he added in a press statement Friday evening.

Industrial facilities safe

In the meantime, a senior industry official said yesterday that all state-owned industrial installations and utili-

ties in Kuwait have not been affected by the current wave of heavy rains in the country. "All services and infrastructures of industrial zones have not been harmed. They are all operating normally," Director-General of the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) Abdelakareem Taqi said. Drains at Al-Shuaiba Industrial Area are operating in a normally efficient mode, in spite of some cracks, he added. All industrial areas nationwide have been put on high alert and all senior officials on duty round-the-clock, the PAI chief pointed out. The authority is putting all potentials at the disposal of emergency teams who are doing their utmost to check and maintain all industrial zones, Taqi confirmed.

Flights unaffected

Air navigation via Kuwait International Airport was proceeding regularly yesterday despite the unstable weather. Official Spokesman of Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Saad Al-Otaibi said in a statement that the authority had begun implementing a contingency plan since Tuesday. The emergency state will remain in force until normal weather conditions are restored. Teams of technicians have been working round the clock to ensure normal work at the airport facilities.

Meteorologist Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi said the current rainy weather was expected to continue through today morning. Kuwait's meteorological office had issued weather warnings yesterday for 'an increasing potential for spotty and thundery showers.' "The unstable weather gripping the country is likely to persist later (yesterday) with a chance of intermittent downpours at varying intensities, Qarawi said, adding that weather conditions were expected to gradually improve after midday today.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Friday affirmed that the government was following up closely the situation across the country amid the current weather conditions. He vowed that officials who fail to fulfill duties well would be held accountable for any negligence. On the wake of this, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Hossam Al-Roumi submitted his resignation over damage of properties of both citizens and expatriates. — KUNA





KUWAIT: The Mangaf tunnel completely submerged with rain as seen yesterday morning. — Photos by Joseph Shagra and Yasser Al-Zayyat

Interior Ministry issues instructions to follow during heavy rain and flooding

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's relations and security information department said citizens and expatriates should follow the instructions below under the current circumstances:

- Follow the news when there are warnings about flooding.
- Be cautious and do not ignore warnings and instructions.
- Helping others should not constitute a danger to you or those you are helping.
- If there is heavy flooding with the possibility of reaching inside the home, move your belongings to the upper floors, provided you have time, and cut the power.
- Do not attempt to move or touch fallen objects or wires.
- Do not use radios or mobile phones in open areas.
- Inform the civil defense department on 1804000 in case of any danger.
- Do not go to a place where water has gathered, because you may obstruct rescuers and emergency work.
- Do not use wet electric appliances until you are sure they are dry and safe to use.
- If you are driving, stay away from low-lying areas.
- Leave the vehicle if it encounters any problem during flooding.



Heavily damaged vehicles in Fahaheel.



local spotlight

The big test



By Muna Al-Fuzal

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People love winter and the rainy season, since we rarely get rain. But this year, heavy rainstorms flooded several major roads in Kuwait on Friday and Saturday, for the second time in days. The rains are a big test for government bodies like the ministry of public works, the roads authority and municipality, especially with meteorologists expecting rainfall to continue. Some roads were closed because of waterlogging and some streets and parking lots were flooded. Streets and main roads also witnessed a presence of heavy security and traffic police.

The ministry of social affairs has opened shelters for people, which is a good step in such cases, but people have remained indoors to protect their homes and themselves. I believe you have to protect yourself and your children from danger by following some instructions, and the first is never take risks. Those on the streets during heavy rain must remain in a safe place until the end of the rainfall due to the risk of torrential floods. Also, do not allow anyone in your family to swim in the rainwater, and you must prevent your children from going out to play during heavy rainfall.

Most important is to follow the news and official media channels' warnings about the possibility of heavy rain or flooding, and the instructions and guidance by the ministry of interior. Newspapers have published some analyses of the causes of the floods and drainage failures. Some have blamed the municipality because drainage chambers in all parts of the country have become waste dumps. The accumulation of large amounts of waste means no access for the rainwater, causing a decline in the efficacy of the network.

Some called for the importance of changing the municipality's plan to collect garbage during expected rain, to be transported to designated places so as not to drift on the streets. I think the role of the municipality is no less important than the role of the ministry of public works and the roads authority - it should not be seen merely as a waste-disposal body.

Some people have blamed contractors, and even shared pictures showing several potholes on the recently-opened Jahra bridge after the surface asphalt layer eroded due to the rain. Some activists questioned what will happen to the bridge after several years, demanding the need to review the file of the contractors. Every government body is responsible for its duties, but most important is the need to look at the role of contractors and follow up the work they perform. People's lives are not something that should be jeopardized.

Local

Iraqi president begins official visit to Kuwait today as part of Gulf tour

Top priority is fate of missing citizens in Iraq: Diplomat

KUWAIT: President of Iraq Barham Saleh, accompanied by an official entourage, is due to begin an official visit to Kuwait today for holding official talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. This was announced by an Amiri Diwan statement yesterday. Earlier in Baghdad, Iraqi Presidency said in a statement that the president would begin a Gulf tour starting in Kuwait to discuss with leaders of the regional countries how to build "best relations" with Baghdad. The official Iraqi statement said that the president, during his talks with the Kuwaiti leaders, would discuss ways of boosting the bilateral relations, noting that his regional whirlwind will include the UAE. This regional mission is part of Iraq's efforts to build the best form of ties with the Gulf and Arab states, it said, in addition to setting up bases for good neighborliness, examining "economic and development integration."

Missing citizens

Meanwhile, a Kuwaiti senior diplomat underlined that unveiling fate of 369 Kuwaiti people missing in Iraq is on top of the Foreign Ministry's priorities. Nasser Al-Hayyen, Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations, made his remarks ahead of receiving part of Kuwait properties and national archive from Iraq,

scheduled tomorrow. He said the foreign ministry has been pressing Iraqi authorities to intensify efforts to determine fate of missing Kuwaitis. Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 and occupied the Gulf country for seven months



Iraq to pay Kuwait 1.5 percent of oil proceeds

before being ejected by an international coalition. During the occupation, Iraqi forces killed many Kuwaiti people and arrested hundreds others, as well as stealing public and private properties.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his Deputy Khaled Al-Jarallah always call upon Iraqi officials they meet to



Iraqi President Barham Saleh

double efforts regarding the issue of missing Kuwaiti persons, said Hayyen. He added Iraq would hand over tomorrow books, films, a painting and a sword. The Iraqi authorities had handed over in the past some properties found in Iraq, said Hayyen who commended the authorities in Baghdad for their cooperation. The Iraqi government said Tuesday it would hand state TV and radio archives back to Kuwait, in line with relevant Security Council resolutions. Iraqi Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Hazem Al-Yousefi informed Kuwait's Ambassador in Baghdad, Salem Al-Zamanan, of the transfer, read a ministry statement. Baghdad took the move in the wake of its commitment to enhancing bilateral relations, mainly in political and economic domains, and to resolve all unresolved predicaments, the archive matter included. It comes "after efforts were exerted to search for and gather the Kuwaiti archives, in accordance with Security Council resolution

2107," ordered by Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Al-Hakim, added the official. United Nations representatives will be in attendance during the hand over, he said.

Compensations

The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) Governing Council had stated on Thursday that Iraq would pay, effective early next year, 1.5 percent worth of oil sales' proceeds to the UNCC compensations fund. The council said in a statement said this move would be in line with its resolution 276/2017 with respect of installments' payment in 2018. Kuwait, during inauguration of the current council session, expressed appreciation of the commission secretariat and its role in distributing repatriation installments.

Chairman of Kuwait's Public Authority for Assessment of Compensation Resulting From Iraqi Aggression Khaled Al-Mudhaf stated that Kuwait received, earlier this year, three compensation installments, each valued at \$90 million. The remaining sum that should be paid to Kuwait is approximately \$4.4 billion. The UNCC was formed in 1991 as a United Nations Security Council body, with the aim of processing claims and paying compensation for losses and damage Kuwait suffered after it was invaded by its larger neighbor. — KUNA

Local photographer talks taking advantage of smartphones' 'huge advances'

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: On the sidelines of the Phototalk forum, Kuwait Times spoke with Kuwaiti photographer Abdul Aziz Al-Duwaisan, who has gained wide fame on social networking sites, especially Instagram, because of his creative methods of taking pictures. Duwaisan has been in the photography field for nearly 16 years. "When I started as a photographer, my passion was to own the finest cameras. I paid a lot of money for cameras, lenses and accessories just to take a photo. After the development of mobiles, I started to use a Huawei phone and saw the difference. I'm almost four years with them now - from the Mate 9, then Mate 10, Pro 20, P 29 and Mate 20 Pro," he said.

Duwaisan said smartphones are witnessing huge advances. "I used to use a lens for every shot. Now the new Huawei smartphone has three features - with one click you can have wide angle, super zoom, or micro. If you're a social media influencer or just addicted to taking photos for social media, this phone will be more than enough for your social photos, and you won't need a camera to take high-resolution pictures," he said. He affirmed that the image's resolution is enough for printing photos with a size of 2 x 1.80 x 1.90 m. "We printed a poster with high resolution and high quality with that size at Phototalk last year."

Huawei has a smart camera where it suggests the best feature to apply. It tells you if you're taking pictures of food, people or wide shots for nature. It suggests you to change the mode of the light at night or yellow lighting to blue. Duwaisan added the Huawei Mate 20 Pro captures amazingly clear and detailed photos, including colors and low-light shots.

"One of the key differences, however, is that with the Mate 20 Pro, we now have an ultra-wide angle lens in the mix. The Huawei Mate 20 Pro really shone in low-light situations. However, I didn't notice a great deal of difference in the outcome between 'night mode' and the normal photo mode, though 'night mode' may have produced a slightly crisper image. Either way, the quality of photos in dark settings is pretty exceptional," he said.

He mentioned that the Mate 20 Pro can charge other devices too. Practically anything that supports the Qi standard can be charged wirelessly. "I want to tell people to try it. I'm now specialized in shooting pictures with my phone, because it's easy, fast and high-resolution, and it's allowed to take photos by phones in public spaces," Duwaisan said.

The Mate 20 Pro has a Leica-powered triple-lens camera system arranged in a grid-like setup alongside the flash. In terms of lenses, it constitutes a 40-megapixel wide angle, 20-megapixel ultra-wide angle, and 8-megapixel telephoto.



Photographer Abdulaziz Al-Duwaisan

Prime Minister patronizes 6th E-Gov Forum

KUWAIT: NoufEXPO announced in a press release yesterday the convening of the '6th E-Government Forum - Managing Change towards Digitization' in collaboration with the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) from 4 - 6 December 2018 at Al-Baraka Ballroom - Crowne Plaza Hotel, Kuwait. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah will patronize EGOV6. Anas Khalid Al-Saleh, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and the Chairman of the Board of the Central Agency for Information Technology, will represent His Highness during the opening ceremony. EGOV6 proceedings will focus on one of the most important factors that guarantee the success of the development of E-Government programs, which is Change Management. This factor should go hand in hand with a robust and professional governance framework in order to pave the way for developing integrated government services in the information-based society.

E-Government programs are considered, by far, one of most complex automation projects that governments embark on. The complexity stems from the need to destabilize the prevailing norm that governed government procedures and practices for decades. Business processes, in government agencies, have been paper based or partially automated silos. Each government agency has its processes independent from those of other government agencies. E-Government agencies have to deal with this complexity and bring everybody into a streamlined, integrated, automated, and always available government service status. E-Government agencies have, at the same time, to keep pace with the ever-changing information and communications technologies. EGOV6 will also discuss the need for highly qualified and specialized human resources. Specifically, EGOV6 will focus on change management aspects in the areas of computing infrastructure, business processes, cybersecurity, and information systems management.

Zain concludes strategic partnership of 7th Youth Empowerment Symposium

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, concluded its strategic partnership of the seventh Youth Empowerment Symposium held at Four Seasons Hotel under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from 5-6 November with the attendance of Zain Kuwait's Chief



Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah



Anas Khalid Al-Saleh

A NoufEXPO spokesperson said that CAIT would continue the tradition of announcing the E-Services Excellence Award results during EGOV6. The E-Services Excellence Award is granted to the government agency that deploys the best E-Service on Kuwait electronic portal (www.e.gov.kw) according to the criteria that CAIT sets based on the international practices. The Award boosts e-government initiatives of Kuwait's government agencies and encourages these agencies to implement a speedy, yet coordinated, e-Services development effort.

The NoufEXPO spokesperson concluded his statement by saying that EGOV, and since it was launched 2013 and till present, hosted many world-class leading technology vendors like Microsoft, IBM, EMC, CISCO, Fortinet, Symantec, FireEye, EY, Aruba, and many others as well as major Kuwaiti enterprises such as ZAIN, Al-Ghanem Industries, Gulf Cable and Electrical Industries Company, KFH, KNET, ATC, Qualytinet and many others. Moreover, EGOV features the participation of many government IT Departments that demonstrate their e-Services and e-Government plans. The event's Scientific Committee, as well as other organizing committees, are finalizing EGOV6's program and proceedings. We urge all interested technology vendors and specialists to contact the Scientific Committee or NoufEXPO on +965 22469921 or send their messages to info@noufexpo.com.kw in order to reserve their spot in this annual and unique technology event. More about EGOV6 on its website www.noufexpo.com.kw/egov6.

Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan. Zain's strategic partnership of the Youth Empowerment Symposium for the seventh consecutive year came in line with the company's long term strategy of providing the necessary support to national initiatives aimed at uplifting the capabilities and skills of Kuwaiti youth. The company has always been a main supporter of such national academic initiatives that cater to developing and nurturing the skills of Kuwait's youth to help empower them in the community for a better tomorrow.

The Youth Empowerment Symposium's second day program witnessed the participation of Zain Kuwait's Chief Technical Officer Nawaf Al-Gharabally in the fifth panel discussion entitled "Youth Opportunities in the Private Sector." During the panel discussion, Gharabally affirmed Zain's role as a leading private sector company in supporting national talents, presenting them with technical and administrative career opportunities, as well as continuously offering adequate training programs to nurture their

Montreal Protocol most successful agreement: Kuwait

KUWAIT: Head of the Ozone division and National Ozone officers at Kuwait's Environmental Authority Yaqoub Al-Matouq affirmed that the Montreal Protocol which protects the stratospheric ozone layer with 197 member states, is one of the most successful agreements in the field. In a statement yesterday, Matouq said that as Kuwait's representative, he headed the 30th Meeting of the Parties (MOP 30) to the Montreal Protocol which was held in Quito, Ecuador. He expressed deep satisfaction towards member states' efforts in successfully halting depletion of the ozone layer, announcements of gradual recovery and a full recovery by 2060.

Matouq added that Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno opened the meeting which was scheduled for the 5-9 of November, with presence of a number of Ministers and Officials from more than 150 countries. The participating nations discussed many important environment issues, especially those linked to protecting the ozone layer and the involvement of the members in this issue along with contributions of some cooling modes from new technologies on the phenomenon of global warming, Matouq added. The participants shed light on opportunities to improve energy efficiency in alternative technologies in reducing hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), which affects energy consumption due to excessive use of Air Conditioning devices especially in those hot environments of which Kuwait is amongst. The member also discussed "with great concern and attention" the unexpected emissions of Methane Chloride Gas (CFC-11) after worldwide nations in January of 2010 announced halting the production and trade of this gas, significantly benefiting the ozone layer. — KUNA

skills. Gharabally also stressed on the importance of attracting local talents and giving them the responsibility to flourish and contribute in achieving the company's strategic goals.

The Youth Empowerment Symposium, held 5-6 November, provided local youth with an ideal opportunity to gain valuable insights from a number of internationally and locally renowned industry pioneers, academics, and experts. This year's speakers included Mitch Lowe, CEO of Movie Pass, former co-founding executive of Netflix and former President of Redbox, Jason Wheeler former Vice President of Finance at Google and former Chief Financial Officer of Tesla Motors, and more.

Zain's presence in this national event showcased the company's dedication to empowering the entrepreneurial skills of youth in Kuwait. The symposium delivered outstanding knowledge to talented young people to be able to progress in their fields of interest as well as to spark the light of enthusiasm within them.



KUWAIT: Eaman Al-Roudhan and Nawaf Al-Gharabally with Zain's team at the company's booth.

Local

Durra opens recruitment of domestic helpers from Philippines

Company sets recruitment cost at KD 850 per maid

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Al-Durra Domestic Helpers Company's Chairman Ali Al-Kandari announced opening of recruiting domestic helpers from the Philippines after the resolution of the recent crisis, adding that the recruitment cost would be KD 850 per maid. Kandari added that recruitment will officially open in a few days, starting with limited numbers. Notably, recruitment of Filipina maids had been suspended for around 10 months after a maid was killed in Kuwait.

Replacement policy

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah stressed that the ministry is committed to applying the government's 'replacement policy' in all public positions occupied by expats. Responding to an inquiry by MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari about the number of expats in his ministry, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled stressed that only one expat over 55 is working in a public position as an advisor, while 24 others work in assistant technical jobs as



couriers, assistant electricians, office boys and assistant office boys, electricians, waiters, assistant chefs and drivers, whose contracts had been renewed because their services are needed. He added that the total number of expats working for the ministry is 135, including only five in public positions as advisor, senior legal advisor, translator, typist and technician.

Jordanian universities

The National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality is currently reviewing lists of accredited Arab universities, said informed sources, noting that a new list of accredited Jordanian universities will be released soon. The sources added that accredited universities are determined according to their academic levels and performance.

Airport management issues statement on staff member's assault

KUWAIT: The management of Incheon International Airport - Kuwait International Airport (T4) said in an explanatory statement in response to what was published in some local newspapers and social media sites about the sexual assault of a South Korean security staff, as she was sexually assaulted by a Ministry of Interior's staff in Terminal 4, but her colleagues saved her after hearing her screaming.

Incheon International Airport - T4 would like to clarify that the female security staff was not 'raped' as claimed in some local media, but was subjected to an 'attempted rape.' Using such word as 'rape' is a false allegation and has no grounds, it stressed. The above mentioned Ministry of Interior's staff was arrested and referred to the Public Prosecution for the necessary action.



Kuwait's Al-Salam society for humanitarian and charity work launched a campaign to collect donations to support Syrians and Yemenis ahead of the Winter.

Weekly roundup of Kuwait's humanitarian action

KUWAIT: Living up to its UN recognition as 'International Humanitarian Center', Kuwait continued aiding people in need throughout the world last week. Starting with UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and a Kuwaiti private company launched early of last week a campaign to revive hope among refugee children, in which 20,000 students would take part. UNHCR said in a statement the "Let us Revive Hope for Refugee Children" campaign, launched in cooperation with Al-Jeri Holding Group for educational services, would feature participation of 20,000 students, aged between 12-18 years old, to encourage them share common things with the refugee children. The campaign, due until end of next March, aims at helping refugee children feel safe, thus the students would use painting or recycled materials to express their feelings towards the refugees, said the agency. UNHCR said the campaign also aimed at increasing awareness through culture and art, noting that the best five paintings would be rewarded. Dr Hanan Hamdan, head of UNHCR office in Kuwait, said the UN agency was cooperating with all segments of the society to support the cause of refugees around the globe, of them over 50 percent were children.

On another front, Kuwait announced voluntary contributions worth \$6.4 million for various UN bodies and pro-

grams for 2019. The contributions included \$2 million for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and \$1 million for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said member of Kuwait's permanent mission to the UN Talal Al-Fassam at the UN Pledging Conference for Development Activities for 2019 late last Monday. He said that the contributions also include \$1 million for the Emergency Response Fund, \$570,000 for the UN Development Program's (UNDP), \$500,000 for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and \$500,000 for the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (OHCHR). He added that Kuwait's contributions will also cover many UN programs dedicated for children, environment, women and many other vital fields.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Al-Salam society for humanitarian and charity work, launched a campaign to collect donations to alleviate the suffering of people of the war-torn Syria and Yemen Syrians and Yemenis ahead of the winter. The society's Public Relations Director, Dhari Al-Baijan said that they aim to send 50 trucks of aid to Syria and Yemen. The aid would include foodstuff, clothes, blankets, he pointed out. He stated that the trucks will station at Kazma's sports club parking for 10 days to collect donations. On another international front, Director of Arab administration in the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Basil Al-Khatib praised the level of cooperation between Kuwait and the organization in achieving sustainable developments. Khatib said in a statement marking the occasion of The Arab International Aluminum Conference (ARABAL), which is scheduled to be held today, adding that Kuwait encourages industrial and comprehensive developments in the world to exert efforts to eradicate poverty. — KUNA



Defense Minister won't receive well-wishers

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah will not, due to bad weather, receive well-wishers today following his return to Kuwait from an overseas treatment trip on Friday, the Ministry of Defense announced. Sheikh Nasser will not be able to receive well-wishers due to heavy rainfall, the ministry added in a brief statement. The ministry announced earlier that Sheikh Nasser would be receiving the well-wishers today between 5:30 pm and 8:30 pm at the Armed Forces Officers Club on Gulf Street.

Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad had returned home following an overseas treatment trip. A ministry statement quoted the First Deputy Premier as saying "I would like to take this opportunity to express my utmost appreciation and gratitude to our father His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the patriarch of Al-Sabah family and Chief of Kuwait National Guard His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, and Al-Sabah

family for their constant following up of my condition during my treatment and recovery period." "I would like also to thank the National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Ministers, MPs, citizens, and personnel and staff of the defense ministry for their prayers," said Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah. He prayed to Allah Almighty to bless everyone with perpetual good health and wellness.

Kuwait's Army General Staff extended utmost congratulations to Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad on his safe return home after spending a period of medical treatment abroad. Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Khaled Al-Kheder and Army's Deputy Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Abdullah Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah congratulated, on behalf of all Kuwaiti army personnel and staff, Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah on his return home, the army's directorate of moral guidance and public relations said in a press statement. They also prayed to Allah Almighty to bless the defense minister with long-lasting good health and wellness to resume his duties and achieve further progress for Kuwait. The military top officials also prayed to Allah Almighty to perpetuate the grace of security, safety, and wealth on the country under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Farm owners to be compensated: Minister

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammed Al-Jabri stressed his full support to farmers so that they can do their jobs properly to achieve sustainable agricultural development. Speaking after receiving a delegation from Kuwait Farmers Union headed by Chairman

Abdullah Mohammed Al-Dammak, Jabri wished all success to the new board in supporting food security. Jabri also expressed hopes to continue the union's cooperation with the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR). He also stressed that the owners of licensed buildings on the planned railway project's route will be compensated and given alternative lands.

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2018



US denies 'Cold War' with China

Running for a reason: Refugees race in Hong Kong

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HODEIDA, Yemen: Yemeni pro-government forces gather on the eastern outskirts of Hodeida, as they continue to battle for the control of the city from Houthi rebels yesterday. — AFP

110 rebels, 22 loyalists killed in Hodeida

Saudi coalition halts refueling deal with US

HODEIDA: A total of 110 Houthi rebels have been killed in 24 hours of clashes in western Yemen's Hodeida along with 22 pro-government troops fighting to retake the port city, medical sources said Friday. The latest deaths raised to 382 the number of fighters killed on both sides since the battle for Hodeida intensified on November 1. According to two doctors at two different hospitals in Hodeida, 55 rebels were killed during clashes and an air strike inside the city and across the province. A third doctor and a rescuer said that 55 other Houthis were killed in fighting inside the port city and that their bodies had been transferred to the capital Sanaa, which the rebels control. A loyalist military official reported the deaths of 22 pro-government fighters also during the past 24 hours.

Refueling deal

Meanwhile, a controversial refueling arrangement between the United States and the Saudi-led coalition that is bombing Yemen was ended yesterday, halting a key part of Washington's involvement in the conflict. The move came as warplanes pounded the key strategic port city of Hodeida and after Washington's support for the campaign was placed under increased scrutiny following the brazen murder of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi by a Saudi intelligence team. Pentagon chief Jim Mattis said he supported Saudi Arabia's "decision" after the official Saudi Press Agency said

the coalition asked for the "cessation of inflight refueling support" from the United States. Riyadh's grinding war in Yemen as caused growing international outcry, particularly after a string of high-profile coalition strikes that have killed scores of civilians, many of them children.



Warplanes pound strategic port city

"Recently the Kingdom and the coalition has increased its capability to independently conduct inflight refueling in Yemen," the SPA said. "As a result, in consultation with the United States, the coalition has requested cessation of inflight refueling support for its operations in Yemen." Mattis said: "We support the decision by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." In August the defense secretary warned that US support for the coalition was "not unconditional,"

noting it must do "everything humanly possible to avoid any innocent loss of life." The Pentagon had provided refueling capabilities for about 20 percent of coalition planes flying sorties over Yemen.

Fresh offensive

Saudi Arabia and its allies intervened in the conflict between embattled Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, whose government is recognized by the United Nations, and the Houthis in 2015. The Shiite Houthi rebels on Friday launched fierce barrages of mortar fire as they battled to slow an advance by pro-government forces deeper into the port city of Hodeida, military sources said.

Their chief has vowed his troops would never surrender despite being vastly outnumbered, shelled government positions in the south of the Red Sea city, loyalist officials said. But despite the "intense attacks", loyalist forces made fresh advances in eastern sectors of Hodeida. Over one week into the renewed offensive, civilians reported relentless air strikes, low-flying jets and Apache helicopters, mortars and missiles on the outskirts of the city and within five kilometers (three miles) of its strategic port, the Norwegian Refugee Council said in a statement.

The Iran-backed rebels said their fighters had cut off government supply routes in four sectors of Hodeida province, although there was no confirmation from the loy-

alist side. On Friday medical sources said that 110 Houthi rebels and 22 pro-government forces had been killed in 24 hours of violence, bringing to at least 382 the number of combatants killed since the battle for Hodeida intensified on November 1. Backed by Saudi air raids, loyalist troops for the first time entered residential neighborhoods on Thursday, using bulldozers to remove concrete road blocks installed by the rebels.

Ceasefire plea

Mattis last month made a surprise call for a ceasefire in Yemen and urged warring parties to enter negotiations within the next 30 days. The United Nations has now pushed that deadline back to the end of the year. Nearly 10,000 Yemenis have been killed in the conflict since 2015, according to the World Health Organization. Human rights groups say the real death toll may be five times higher. UN agencies say some 14 million people are at risk of famine in the country - described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with the World Food Program saying it will nearly double food aid to the country to avert "mass starvation". International criticism over US support for Saudi Arabia grew further following the slaying of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. The US sees Saudi Arabia as a key ally, especially in terms of providing a counter to Iranian influence in the region. — Agencies

US weighs cuts to funding for 'bad deal' UN

UNITED NATIONS: The United States is seeking to reduce its funding for the United Nations, US Ambassador Nikki Haley said Friday, stressing that multilateralism had, at times, been a "bad deal" for Americans. By far the UN's largest financial backer, the United States provides for 20 percent of the operating budget, 25 percent of the separate peacekeeping costs and contributes major funding to UN agencies.

Haley told a Security Council debate on defending multilateralism that US taxpayers were questioning whether the financial contribution to the United Nations was worth it. "There are times when we are tempted to believe that multilateralism has been a bad deal for the United States, that we could be more effective advancing our principles and interests on our own," Haley said.

"And there are times when that conclusion is correct." Haley, who is set to leave her post at the end of the year, said US "aid dollars shouldn't be on autopilot" and stressed the need to consider ways of "re-balancing how we finance the United Nations and our peacekeeping operations." The UN's 193 member-states are beginning negotiations on the peacekeeping budget, which last year was cut under US pressure by \$600 million to a total of \$6.7 billion.

Haley said that at 25 percent, the US share of the peacekeeping budget was "disproportionate," and called for new burden-sharing in negotiations set to wrap up in December. "This is not just a question of fairness. It is a question of the ongoing success of multilateralism itself," she warned. Peacekeeping financing is determined by a complicated formula that takes into account a country's wealth, its standing as a permanent Security Council member and other factors. China's strong economy has meant that its share of the peacekeeping budget has grown significantly to reach 15 percent, but other permanent council members, such as Russia, pay less than five percent. — AFP

Somalia blasts leave 20 dead

MOGADISHU: About 20 people were killed and dozens wounded Friday in a string of explosions near a popular hotel in the Somali capital Mogadishu, police said. "We are getting (information that) about 20 people died in the attack and more than 40 others were wounded. Most of these people were civilians who were passing by the area when the attack occurred," Abdulahi Ahmed, a Somali security official, said.

Twin car bombs exploded in the capital within moments of each other, followed by gunfire and a third blast, sending thick plumes of black smoke into the sky, according to an AFP reporter. Mogadishu faces frequent bombings at the hands of Al-Shabaab, an Al-Qaeda affiliate which has been fighting to overthrow the internationally-backed Somali government for over a decade. The blasts occurred near the Sahafi hotel and Criminal Investigation Division (CID) police headquarters. "The target of the attack was the Sahafi hotel and even though the attackers used car bombs to make their way into the premises, the security forces stopped them," said Ahmed. "All of the four Shabaab attackers were killed outside" the hotel building, he stressed. An initial

"two blasts struck the perimeter of the Sahafi hotel along the main road," said police official Ibrahim Mohamed, who earlier gave a preliminary toll of more than 10 dead. Witnesses said a third blast came from a suicide bomber who detonated an explosives-laden vest at the hotel's front entrance, as three attackers in Somali military uniform were shot at the rear entrance.

Fatalities

Abdulkadir Abdurahman, director of Mogadishu's Aamin ambulance service, earlier said his team had recovered 10 bodies and 40 wounded. But Bashir Hassan Farah, another ambulance medic, later said he saw 20 dead bodies, most of them civilians. According to sources, the fatalities included the son of the owner of the hotel, Abdirashid Ilqeyte, who was killed in a Shabaab attack on the establishment in November 2015.

The bombs destroyed parts of the hotel perimeter despite layered security, and several shops and other buildings nearby were destroyed. Sources said several civilian minibuses and rickshaws that were passing by when the blast occurred, were destroyed and passengers killed and wounded. "There was chaos after the blast. Some of the vehicles were buses, which caught fire. I could see people screaming as they fled the buses," witness Fadumo Ali said. "This area is always dense and traffic jams are normal. This increased the casualties. Most of



MOGADISHU: People rescue a wounded person following three blasts of suicide bomb car attacks in Mogadishu, on November 9, 2018. — AFP

the dead and wounded were civilians," added Awil Mohamed, another witness. The Shabaab claimed responsibility. "Armed members from the Shabaab Al-Mujahideen carried (out) a complex attack targeting Sahafi hotel in Mogadishu where senior Somali government officials stay," the militant group said in a statement quoted by a pro-Shabaab website. "The attack was opened with a martyrdom car bomb blast and the fighters made their way into the building." The Shabaab were forced out of the capital by African Union troops in 2011. But they still control parts of the countryside and attack government, military, and civilian targets, seemingly at will, in Mogadishu and towns in the region. — AFP

International

Sri Lanka crisis escalates as president calls snap election

President and ousted PM battling for power

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka plunged deeper into crisis yesterday after President Maithripala Sirisena sacked parliament and called a snap election, leaving the country facing a further two months of damaging political paralysis. Political parties representing a majority of members in the 225-member parliament closed ranks to denounce the Friday night dissolution as illegal and unconstitutional. Shortly before sacking the legislature, Sirisena took over the police department by attaching it to his defense ministry. He also took control of the state printer, a crucial institution that publishes decrees and proclamations. He had already taken control of all state media outlets soon after dismissing Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on October 26. Sirisena set elections for January 5, almost two years ahead of schedule, after it became clear that his designated prime minister - former president Mahinda Rajapakse - could not prove his majority when the assembly was set to reconvene on Wednesday.

Rajapakse, 72, was prime minister for two weeks without ever stepping into parliament. He would now continue as a caretaker premier until a new parliament meets on January 17. A leader of Rajapakse's party, Susil Premajayantha, said Sirisena sacked the legislature to end the power struggle and allow people to elect a new parliament. "Now we have a caretaker government with limited functions," Premajayantha said. "We will conduct a free and fair election." He accused sacked premier Wickremesinghe of causing instability by refusing to vacate his official residence, a charge rejected by him as well as several other parties who together command a majority in parliament.

Power struggle

Rajapakse and ousted Wickremesinghe have been bat-

ling for power for two weeks as international concern grew over the mounting turmoil in the strategically important island nation. Sirisena signed a decree dismissing the legislature in a bid to head off any revolt against his actions which included suspending parliament for nearly three weeks. Wickremesinghe's finance minister Mangala Samaraweera described the parliament sacking as a desperate move by Sirisena. "A desperate president without a majority, now resorts to more desperate measures by illegally dissolving parliament," Samaraweera said.

"All those who cherish democracy, decency and rule of law, must now rally around and defeat the emerging tyranny," Rajapakse was yet address the nation after his disputed elevation, but yesterday attempted to justify the dissolution. "... A general election will truly establish the will of the people and make way for a stable country," he said on Twitter. There was no immediate comment from Wickremesinghe, but his United National Party (UNP) said it will challenge Sirisena's sacking while several civil society groups were also planning to petition the Supreme Court against what they see as an illegal action of the executive.

US 'deeply concerned'

The United States, the United Nations and the European Union have become increasingly concerned, and Washington's criticism of Sirisena's move was swift. "The US is deeply concerned by news the Sri Lanka parliament will be dissolved, further deepening the political crisis," the US State Department said in a statement. "As a committed partner of Sri Lanka, we believe democratic institutions and processes need to be respected to ensure stability and prosperity," it said. Australia's foreign minister expressed concern and said



COLOMBO: A general view of the Sri Lanka parliament building in Colombo yesterday. Sri Lanka will hold a snap election in January, the country's president announced hours after dissolving parliament when it became clear his prime minister nominee did not have a majority. —AFP

Sirisena's action "undermines Sri Lanka's long democratic tradition and poses a risk to its stability and prosperity".

Just before sacking the parliament, Sirisena also inducted more ministers into his cabinet. The move was seen as giving them access to state resources in the run up to the January vote. The leftist People's Liberation Front (JVP), which regards the sacking of Wickremesinghe as unconstitutional, accused Sirisena of trying to consolidate his power grab. "Dissolving parliament at this time is illegal and goes against the constitution," JVP general secretary Tilvin Silva told reporters. Sirisena suspended parliament to give himself more time to engineer defections but failed, according to the opposition.

Several legislators have said they were offered millions of dollars to switch allegiance and at least eight had already jumped to the president's side. Under international pressure Sirisena had agreed three times to lift the suspension but changed his mind each time. Wickremesinghe had late Thursday thanked his supporters in a Facebook video for not letting Sri Lanka be "plunged into the darkness of dictatorship". It was not immediately clear if he would vacate the official Temple Trees residence following the dissolution of parliament. The power struggle on the island of 21 million people has paralyzed much of the administration, according to legislators on both sides of the dispute. —AFP

The three key men in Sri Lanka's crisis

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's political crisis has dramatically escalated, with the president calling snap elections and dissolving parliament, two weeks after sacking the prime minister. Here are the main players in the volatile political scene of back-stabbing and shifting sands in the strategically important Indian Ocean island of 21 million people.

The quiet Sri Lankan

Mild-mannered but steely-nerved President Maithripala Sirisena, 67, was a relative unknown until his shock defeat of Mahinda Rajapakse in presidential elections in 2015. Sirisena had walked out of Rajapakse's government a day after the two men had dinner together, and accused his former ally of plotting to assassinate him if he lost the election. "If I had not won the presidency, I would be six feet under by now," he told a public rally after his win. Usually dressed in spotless white, Sirisena vowed to do all in his power to stop the highly divisive Rajapakse

becoming prime minister and appointed Ranil Wickremesinghe instead. Two weeks ago—almost four years after he first turned his back on Rajapakse—Sirisena dismissed Wickremesinghe and appointed Rajapakse in his place. Late Friday he called elections and dissolved parliament.

Macho Mahinda

Having loaned his government billions, China swiftly congratulated Rajapakse, 72, on his new appointment but India and the West were less pleased—to say little of the Tamil minority. As president from 2005 until 2015, Rajapakse ended Sri Lanka's four-decade civil war in 2009 by crushing the Tamil Tigers. But 40,000 ethnic Tamils were allegedly massacred in the process. Sri Lanka's media, remembering the 17 journalists and media workers killed under Rajapakse, are also fearful about his comeback. He and his family are also accused of corruption. But with his trademark macho moustache, traditional national dress and outsize personality, Rajapakse remains a hero for many Sinhalese, deftly portraying himself as a man of the people. "A general election will truly establish the will of the people and make way for a stable country," he tweeted in the early hours of yesterday.



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena waves to supporters at a rally in Colombo. —AFP

I will not be moved

But Wickremesinghe, 69, calls his sacking, the snap elections and the suspension of parliament illegal, and is refusing to vacate the prime minister's official residence, where he has been holed up since October 26. Silver-haired and often in Western-style suits, Wickremesinghe has been prime minister four times, the first time after the Tamil Tigers assassi-

nated the then-president in 1993. During his 2001-4 time in office, Wickremesinghe is credited with pulling Sri Lanka out of its first ever recession, in part with reforms that have endeared him to the West. "You have not let this country be plunged into the darkness of dictatorship," Wickremesinghe said in a video message on Thursday thanking his supporters. —AFP

Melbourne knife attacker named as known extremist

MELBOURNE: A Somali-born Australian who carried out a deadly knife rampage in Melbourne held extremist views and was known to intelligence services, authorities said yesterday, as they carried out raids and interviewed dozens of witnesses. Australian Federal Police said 30-year-old Hassan Khalif Shire Ali—who was shot dead after driving a 4x4 laden with gas cylinders into the city centre and stabbing three people—fled to Australia as a child with his family in the 1980s.

He stabbed three people before being confronted by members of the public and armed officers who eventually shot him in the chest. One of his victims died at the scene while two others were wounded. Authorities have questioned around 35 people who saw the rush hour attack, which although crude, was said to have been designed to "cause terror and cause maximum casualties" in the heart of Australia's bustling second city.

Difficult questions

Armed officers raided two addresses in the west and northeast of the city, linked to the perpetrator's family and associates, although there is not thought to be an ongoing threat. The man killed by Shire Ali was named by local media as 74-year-old Sisto Malasina, an icon of Melbourne's thriving culinary culture who ran a famous Italian cafe. Two other men wounded in the attack are still being treated but are expected to make a recovery.

Australian authorities now face difficult questions about how Shire Ali, who was known to the Australian Security Intelligence Organization for at least three years, was able to carry out an attack. He had his Australian passport revoked in 2015 amid fears he was trying to travel to Syria to join the Islamic State group. His brother will go on trial next year on separate terror-related charges—accused of trying to acquire a firearm and kill people in a New Years' Eve crowd. "The assessment was made that whilst he had radicalized views he didn't pose a threat to the national security environment," Ian McCartney, a federal police counterterrorism official said of Shire Ali.

McCartney described the attack as a "wake up call" even as the Islamic State loses territory in Iraq and Syria, where Australian forces are part of a coalition fighting the group. "The circumstances of how he and when he moved from having these radicalized views to carrying out this attack yesterday will be a key focus of the investigation," McCartney added. The Islamic State group—which often claims responsibility for such attacks—said via its propaganda arm that the perpetrator was an "Islamic State fighter and carried out the operation."

It provided no evidence to back its claim. Witness footage showed police struggling for at least a minute to corral the towering man as he lunged, slashed and stabbed wildly at two officers. At least two members of the public stepped in to help police. One man was armed with a cafe chair while another—swiftly dubbed an "Aussie hero" on social media—repeatedly tried to ram the suspect with an empty metal shopping cart. But the attacks continued unabated



MELBOURNE: Police question a man near the scene where a man was killed in knife rampage in Melbourne. —AFP

before one officer opted for lethal force, shooting the suspect in the chest.

'Tried to deescalate'

The officers "tried to verbally deescalate" said Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Graham Ashton. "Once the officer is off the view that there is an imminent threat to life," he added. "That is when firearms are drawn." Witness Chris Newport, 60, described how he had been returning from a job interview when he heard a loud noise and saw a truck on fire, rolling across the tram tracks before a second, louder bang.

"In a split second everything changes" Newport told AFP, describing Shire Ali manically brandishing a knife. "You can't imagine someone deciding to do that." Police said that his improvised explosive device was made up of gas cylinders and some form of lighter and "certainly wasn't

sophisticated". Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the country would be unflinching in the fight against "radical, violent... extremist Islam that opposes our very way of life". Shire Ali "sought to instill fear in our nation. Like those who tried before him, this terrorist failed," he said.

He cited more than a dozen foiled terror plots as evidence that Australians could have faith in their counterterrorism authorities. Melbourne is Australia's second largest city, a cosmopolitan metropolis of almost five million people famed for its cafes, bars, restaurants and high standard of living. Friday's attack was a double blow for the city as it coincides with an ongoing murder trial of 28-year-old James Gargasoulas, accused of ploughing his car into crowds in the same area in 2017, killing six people. The motives for that attack are still unclear. —AFP

Libya in chaos

TRIPOLI: Libya has been mired in chaos since the ouster and killing of dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, with two rival authorities and a multitude of militias still vying for control of the oil-rich country. The capital Tripoli is the seat of an internationally-backed government led by Fayez Al-Sarraj, while a parallel administration operates out of the east supported by military strongman Khalifa Haftar. Ahead of peace talks due to start Monday in Sicily, here is a timeline of the Mediterranean country's descent into anarchy:

Gaddafi killed

Triggered by uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, demonstrations erupt in Libya in February 2011. A coalition led by Washington, Paris and London lends its backing to an armed revolt. Gaddafi, who has ruled for 42 years, flees the capital. He is captured and killed on October 20, 2011 during a battle for his hometown Sirte, east of Tripoli. Three days later, the rebel National Transitional Council (NTC) declares Libya's "total liberation". In August 2012, it hands power to a transitional authority, the General National Congress (GNC), elected a month earlier.

Embassies targeted

US ambassador Chris Stevens and three American staff are killed in a September 11, 2012 attack on their consulate in Libya's second city Benghazi. An Al-Qaeda-linked jihadist group is blamed. A car bomb in April 2013 targets France's embassy in Tripoli, wounding two French guards. Most foreign delegations withdraw from the country.

Rival governments

Dissident army general Haftar launches an offensive in May 2014 against jihadist groups in Benghazi. He is backed by Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. Several military officers from the east join his self-styled Libyan National Army. As nationalists and Islamists vie for power, legislative elections are held in June and the General National Congress is replaced by a parliament dominated by anti-Islamists. Islamist-led militias contest the results and group under the banner of "Fajr Libya" (Libya Dawn) and storm Tripoli in August, installing their own "national salvation" government and restoring the GNC.

The elected house, which has international recognition, takes refuge in the eastern city of Tobruk near the border with Egypt. Thus the country finds itself with two governments and two parliaments. After months of negotiations and under international pressure, lawmakers from the rival parliaments sign a December 2015 accord in Morocco to set up a UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA). In March 2016, GNA prime minister Sarraj arrives in Tripoli to set up the new government. Haftar's rival administration, however, refuses to recognize its authority.

Peace talks in Paris

In July 2017, rival leaders Sarraj and Haftar meet for talks near Paris where they agree to a ceasefire and commit to elections the following year. They meet again in Paris in May 2018, weeks after Islamic State group suicide attackers kill 14 people at Libya's electoral commission, and commit to holding parliamentary and presidential polls in December. But the unrest continues. In June 2018, a militia attacks two northeastern oil sites under Haftar's control through which oil is exported. After days of fighting, Haftar's forces announce they are back in "full control" and have also seized the city of Derna from radical Islamists.

Month of deadly clashes

The UN brokers a ceasefire in early September but fighting resumes within days, with the capital's airport attacked with rocket fire and rival militias clashing nearby. In nearly a month, the clashes around Tripoli leave more than 110 dead and some 400 injured. The GNA calls for UN "security and stability" support as the world body's envoy, Ghassan Salame, says in late September that the latest fighting has made it difficult to hold elections before spring 2019. —AFP

International

History, modern-day tensions mix at WWI commemorations

Rising nationalism destabilizing the world

PARIS: World leaders will put on a show of unity this weekend as they commemorate 100 years since the end of World War I, but modern-day tensions will be bubbling under the surface at the remembrances in Paris. French President Emmanuel Macron will host around 70 leaders today for a ceremony on the Champs-Élysées to mark the signing of the Armistice between Germany and Allied forces that ended the fighting in Europe. It will cap a week packed with symbolism to remember the silencing of the guns, with memorials held across the world for a conflict that claimed around 18 million lives and involved more than 70 current-day nations.

Macron, a centrist, has repeatedly invoked the war in recent weeks to hammer home his message that rising nationalism around the globe is again destabilizing the world. In a speech after the commemorations, he will "remind everyone of the need to defend and reinforce global multilateralism", an aide said this week. Two figures seen by Macron as responsible for undermining the rules-based world order and its institutions - US President Donald Trump and Russian leader Vladimir Putin - will both be in Paris at the weekend.

Macron reportedly requested that they postpone a planned meeting amid fears that the resulting headlines would overshadow the commemorations at the Arc de Triomphe, a memorial to France's war dead. "It should be a beautiful period of time," Trump said of his Paris visit before leaving Washington on Friday. "We will have many countries' leadership there, especially since they heard the United States will be there." The US leader has badly strained the alliance of Western countries since his election in 2016 by pulling out of international agreements covering climate change, Iran's

nuclear program, and missiles.

Putin's decision to annex Crimea in 2014 and redraw Ukraine's border by force plunged his relations with European leaders into their biggest crisis since the Cold War. World powers find themselves at loggerheads on a host of issues, from trade to climate change and even the use of chemical weapons—which were first deployed to devastating effect during World War I. In the Syrian civil war, Russian, American, European and Middle Eastern forces are all in action in a complex web of alliances.

Fightback against nationalism

Trump is set to meet Macron for talks, but he will snub a conference dedicated to international institutions and global governance on Sunday which has been organized by his French host. While Macron and Trump struck up a warm relationship initially, particularly during Trump's first visit to Paris as president in July 2017, they have repeatedly clashed since over a growing list of disagreements. "Their personal relationship is excellent," US National Security Advisor

John Bolton told reporters in Paris on Friday.

"There have been disagreements on substantive policy issues, for sure, but that's because leaders pursue what they perceive to be their national interests," he said. He played down Trump's decision not to attend the inaugural Paris Peace Forum to be opened by Macron on Sunday afternoon along with German Chancellor Merkel and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. "The president's schedule is tight. There are a lot of pressing issues that the president has to attend to," explained Bolton, an arch-hardliner and advocate of using US power unilaterally.

The Paris Forum is part of the "fightback" against



PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron (right) and his wife Brigitte Macron (2nd right) bid farewell to US President Donald Trump and US First Lady Melania Trump as they leave the Elysee Palace in Paris yesterday. —AFP

the rising tide of nationalism worldwide, chief organizer Justin Vaisse told AFP in a recent interview. "The aim of the forum is to show that there are lots of forces in the international system—states, NGOs, foundations, intellectuals, companies—who believe we need a world of rules, an open world and a multilateral world," he said. Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan are expected to join a host of European heads of state and African leaders, including Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari and Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta, at the forum.

On Monday and Tuesday, philanthropists, corporate leaders and leading figures from international institutions will debate ways to tackle global challenges such as climate change and policing the internet. But recent events, particularly Brazil's decision to elect far-right president Jair Bolsonaro, have left some participants more concerned than ever about the future. "My mood is pretty grim," Jeremy Shapiro, research director at the European Council on Foreign Relations said. The forum "is obviously pushing against the tide and it's all the more admirable for that," he said. —AFP



French President hosts around 70 world leaders

Points of dispute between Kosovo and Serbia

PRISTINA: Normalizing Pristina-Belgrade ties seems a long way off as distrust between the former foes still remains strong two decades after the Kosovo war, the last conflict that accompanied Yugoslavia's collapse. Kosovo President Hashim Thaci and his Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vucic met Thursday in a tense atmosphere in Brussel to restart stalled talks. Here are the key points of dispute:

Recognition of Kosovo

In 2008, a decade after the 1998-1999 war between Serbia's forces and ethnic Albanian guerrillas, Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia. Serbia refuses to recognize Kosovo's independence, although more than 100 countries, including the US and most EU member states, have done so. But Kosovo has made recognition by Belgrade the sine qua non for any deal. Serbia has enshrined in its constitution its jurisdiction over its former ethnic-Albanian majority province. Dubbed the "Serb Jerusalem", many Serbs see Kosovo as their national and religious cradle. However, according to a recent survey, a quarter of Serbian citizens are now convinced that Kosovo is lost.

Punitive tariffs

Backed by Russia and China, Belgrade closed the doors of the United Nations to Kosovo. In addition, Serbia claims that a dozen countries, such as Papua New Guinea, Surinam or recently the Comoros, have withdrawn their decisions following their diplomatic initiative. Pristina argued it was a "Serbian propaganda". In response, Kosovo raised taxes on Serbian goods by 10 percent earlier this week, sparking criticism not just from Belgrade but from the European Union. With annual exports of 400 million euros (\$454 million), Serbia is Kosovo's top regional trade partner.

Kosovo's Serbs

There is no official census, but Kosovo is still home to about 120,000 ethnic Serbs. They live in the region of the divided city of Mitrovica, but also in a dozen predominantly Serb territories where Pristina can not impose its sovereignty. The most important Orthodox religious places, such as the Decani monastery, enjoy an extraterritorial status and are under international protection. In 2013, an agreement provided for the creation of an association of 10 "municipalities" for the territories populated mainly by ethnic Serbs. But it has never been implemented, as Belgrade and Pristina cannot agree on the powers these communities would have. Belgrade accuses Pristina of delaying tactics. In response, Kosovo says Serbia intends to create autonomous structures with executive powers like those of Bosnia's Serb-majority entity, Republika Srpska.

Territorial disputes

Serbia claims ownership of property located in Kosovo, notably the Trepca industrial-mining complex in the northern Mitrovica region and the Gazivode artificial lake, called Ujman by Kosovo Albanians. But for Pristina, they are inalienable. Located in an area populated by ethnic Serbs, the lake plays a crucial role for Kosovo's water supply and energy independence. Trepca and its minerals also represent a rare source of wealth of the rather poor region, even if its industrial infrastructure is in an appalling state. While most mines are on the Albanian side of Mitrovica, the industrial complex is on the Serb side. —AFP

Michelle Obama slams Trump in new book

WASHINGTON: Former US first lady Michelle Obama says she can "never forgive" Donald Trump for questioning her husband's American citizenship, saying the president and other "birthers" put her family at risk, in her holly anticipated new memoir. Obama also says she was surprised that so many American women voted for the "misogynist" Trump over Hillary Clinton, "an exceptionally qualified female candidate," in the 2016 election.

The book, "Becoming," hits stores on Tuesday. Obama, 54, will head out on a multi-city arena tour to promote the memoir, with celebrity friends like Oprah Winfrey and Reese Witherspoon tapped to moderate the events. It is one of the most awaited books about US politics in years, and Obama does not mince words about her husband's successor-and his involvement in promoting the idea that Barack Obama was born abroad.

"The whole [birther] thing was crazy and mean-spirited, of course, its underlying bigotry and xenophobia hardly concealed," she writes, in excerpts of the book published by ABC News and The Washington Post. "But it was also dangerous, deliberately meant to stir up the wingnuts and kooks," she adds. "What if someone with an unstable mind loaded a gun and drove to Washington? What if

that person went looking for our girls? "Donald Trump, with his loud and reckless innuendos, was putting my family's safety at risk. And for this I'd never forgive him."

Obama also said her body "buzzed with fury" after hearing the "Access Hollywood" tape on which Trump bragged about being able to grab women with impunity. Trump did not waste time in responding. "Michelle Obama got paid a lot of money to write a book and they always insist you come up with controversy. I'll give you some back," he told reporters at the White House before heading on a trip to France. "I'll never forgive him for what he did to our United States military by not funding it properly. (...) What he did to our military made this country unsafe."

Personal history

In the book, America's first black first lady goes beyond politics, digging deep into some personal issues from a miscarriage to using in-vitro fertilization to conceive her daughters to marriage counseling. "I felt lost and alone, and I felt like I failed because I didn't know how common miscarriages were because we don't talk about them," Obama told ABC News in an interview. "We sit in our own pain, thinking that somehow we're broken." Fertility treatments allowed her to conceive daughters Malia, now 20, and Sasha, 17. "It turns out that even two committed go-getters with a deep love and robust work ethic can't will themselves into being pregnant," she writes. "We had to do IVF," she told ABC, in excerpts of an interview that will air in full today.

Even from jail, 'El Chapo' looms large in Mexican home state

CULIACAN: He has lost weight in his New York jail cell, and some of his larger-than-life aura, but Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman still looms large over Mexico's Sinaloa, where he launched his narcotics empire. With his head and trademark mustache shaved, held in solitary confinement 23 hours a day when he is not in court, Guzman is a far cry from the brazen billionaire capo whose Sinaloa cartel brought this lawless western state to world fame.

But even as he goes on trial Tuesday in US federal court, charged with smuggling 155 tons of cocaine into the United States, "El Chapo" remains a constant presence on the streets of Sinaloa's capital, Culiacan, where he was feared and beloved in equal measure during his days as the world's most-wanted drug lord. Street vendors still sell figurines of a gun-toting Guzman, and hats stamped with the number 701 - the spot he once held on Forbes magazine's list of the world's richest people, with an estimated fortune of \$1 billion.

There is an avid fan base here for the



Former US First Lady Michelle Obama

She revisits the thrill of her romance with Barack, which began when she was his advisor at a Chicago law firm, describing it as a "toppling blast of lust, gratitude, fulfillment, wonder." But she admits the couple on occasion turned to counseling, where they "learned how to talk out" problems. Upon Trump's election, the Obamas faded from the spotlight for a time, retreating to their mansion in an upscale area of the US capital and refraining from overtly political statements. That silence has now passed, with the former president campaigning actively for Democratic candidates in the run-up to the midterm elections and the for-

mer first lady speaking at get-out-the-vote rallies.

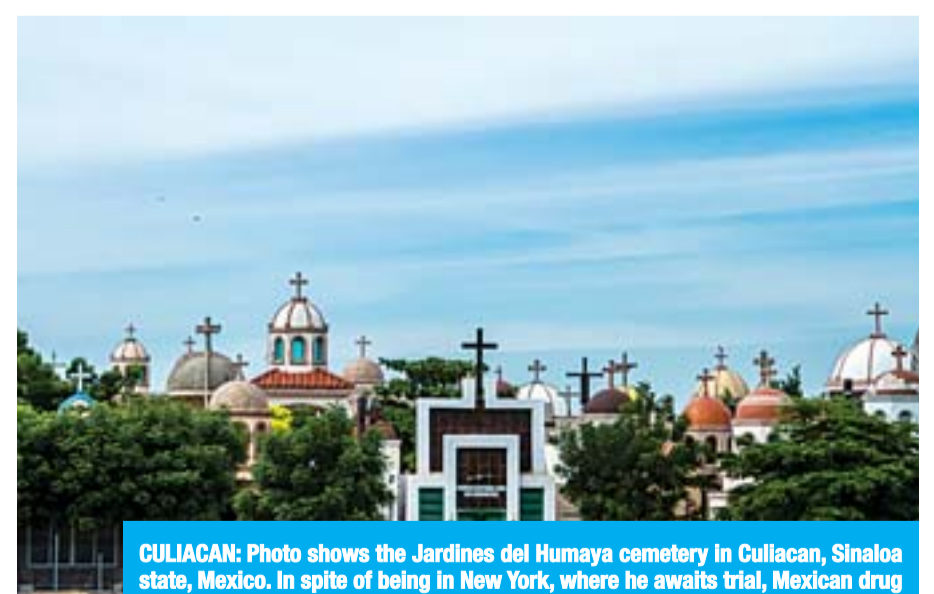
Michelle Obama will have more opportunity to speak out as her book tour, which begins in her hometown Chicago, rolls on to New York, Washington, Los Angeles, Boston and other cities. Some are hoping she will eventually decide to enter politics herself, perhaps as soon as 2020, but her comments in "Becoming" make that seem unlikely. "I've never been a fan of politics, and my experience over the last 10 years has done little to change that. I continue to be put off by the nastiness," she writes. —AFP

different movies and television series inspired by his life, surely one of the most colorful to come from this region known for its outlaws. Guzman, 61 - whose nickname means "Shorty" - grew up dirt-poor in the town of Badiraguato, where he sold fruit on the street as a boy and started growing marijuana and opium poppies at age 15. Recruited into the powerful Guadalajara cartel, he then struck out on his own, eventually turning his home-grown cartel into a multi-billion-dollar empire with ruthless efficiency.

Later came his two audacious jailbreaks - once in a laundry cart, in 2001, and once through a tunnel outfitted with a motorcycle on rails, in 2015. Less legendary - though still laced with a hint of Hollywood glamor - was the humiliation of being recaptured, six months later, after the Mexican authorities picked up his trail when he gave an interview to the actor Sean Penn that was published in Rolling Stone magazine. "El Chapo was a media star. He had a theatrical streak, and that put the spotlight on him even more," says Tomas Guevara, a sociologist at the University of Sinaloa.

'Narco culture'

Guzman may be behind bars, but the Sinaloa cartel remains a massive business, now led by his right-hand man, Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada. "The capture and extradition of 'Chapo' Guzman was largely sym-



CULIACAN: Photo shows the Jardines del Humaya cemetery in Culiacan, Sinaloa state, Mexico. In spite of being in New York, where he awaits trial, Mexican drug lord Joaquin 'El Chapo' Guzman is still present in the Mexican northwestern state of Sinaloa, where he was born. —AFP

bolic," says Mike Vigil, former head of international operations and the US Drug Enforcement Administration. Sinaloa is home to some of Mexico's most famous drug barons, including the men who dominated the game in the 1980s, Ernesto Fonseca and Rafael Caro Quintero.

That has given rise to a local "narco culture," visible in the ballads that local musicians dedicate to drug traffickers and the fashion sense sometimes found on the

streets of Culiacan, a unique blend of Country Western and bling. It is also visible in the Jardines de Humaya cemetery, where late kingpins repose in luxurious tombs outfitted with bullet-proof glass, soaring domes and air-conditioning. Nearby, there is a chapel dedicated to Jesus Malverde, the so-called "narco saint" - a folk hero who, according to legend, stole from the rich to give to the poor in early 20th-century Sinaloa. —AFP

International

US denies 'Cold War' with China as deep gaps persist

US, China meet to explore path forward from tensions

WASHINGTON: The United States yesterday insisted it was not pursuing a new "Cold War" with China, but the Pacific powers could only paper over deep differences during high-level talks. The defense chiefs and top foreign affairs officials of the two countries met in Washington for a regular dialogue that had been pushed back amid months of spiraling tensions between the world's two largest economies. After President Donald Trump's barbed comments against China in the runup to this week's congressional elections, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo turned conciliatory in tone if not always in substance.

"The United States is not pursuing a Cold War or containment policy with China," Pompeo told a joint news conference. "Rather, we want to ensure that China act responsibly and fairly in support of security and prosperity in each of our two countries," Pompeo said. But Pompeo also was upfront about US concerns. While the Trump administration has generally been soft-spoken on human rights, at least with allies, Pompeo denounced China's "repression" of religious and minority groups including the Uighur community, citing a UN report that up to one million members of the mostly Muslim ethnic group have been rounded up in detention camps.

And on Taiwan, while assuring his guests that the United States only recognizes Beijing, Pompeo was increasingly forthright in advocating for the self-ruling democracy, criticizing Beijing's efforts to isolate the

island it considers a renegade province. The United States also took Beijing's military to task over its assertive posture in the dispute-rife South China Sea, which has witnessed a series of incidents including the buzzing of a US Navy surveillance aircraft last year by a Chinese warplane.

Talking, but not agreeing

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said the talks were "candid" but that the two militaries looked to improve communication and avoid "miscalculation" at sea. "And we made clear that the United States will continue to fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows," Mattis said. Senior Communist Party official Yang Jiechi, a veteran architect of Beijing's foreign policy, insisted that China allows freedom of religion and criticized the United States for what he saw as its own "militarization" of the South China Sea.

"There is no such problem of freedom of navigation and overflights being obstructed, so to use this issue as an excuse to military action is unjustifiable," he said. "The Chinese side made it clear to the United States that

it should stop sending its vessels and military aircraft close to Chinese islands and reefs and stop actions that undermine China's sovereignty and security interests," he said. The talks come several weeks before Trump is set to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of a Group of 20 summit in Argentina—a potential occasion for big announcements on resolving disputes.

While the Washington talks focused on security, trade is at the heart of tensions between the world's two biggest economies. Trump has slapped \$250 billion worth of tariffs on Chinese goods, accusing Beijing of nefarious trading practices. Retaliatory measures quickly followed. Yang voiced hope for a quick resolution. "A trade war, instead of leading to any solution, will only end up hurting both sides and the global economy," he said. "The door to negotiation remains open.

And let's not forget how our two sides have successfully navigated through previous rough patches in our economic and trade relations," he said.

Hard line on trade

But just as he was speaking, a top advisor to Trump,

Peter Navarro, vowed to press China hard on trade. Navarro, the head of the White House National Trade Council who is known for his unorthodox economic views, said China had made empty promises to previous presidents and that Trump would not back down.

"The game that China has played—and they played people in the Bush administration like a violin—is to do the tapdance of economic dialogue," Navarro said at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "That's all they want to do. They want to get us to the bargaining table, sound reasonable, and talk their way while they keep having their way with us," he said. Washington has been especially incensed at what it believes is widespread theft of technology from US companies—a charge that China denies. "How do you have a deal with somebody if they don't even acknowledge your concern? I mean, it's Alice in Wonderland," Navarro said.

Pompeo has previously dubbed China as the primary adversary of the United States, but during the talks called Beijing "essential" in key areas—including North Korea. Trump has made reaching a denuclearization agreement with North Korea a top priority since his landmark summit in June with the totalitarian state's leader Kim Jong Un. Yang said that China, North Korea's main lifeline, would enforce UN sanctions but voiced hope that Washington and Pyongyang "will meet each other halfway" and "accommodate each other's legitimate concerns." —AFP



Pompeo denounces China's 'repression'

As Delhi smog hits 'severe' level, city chief under fire

NEW DELHI: As pollution in India's capital hit "severe" on the air quality scale yesterday, the New Delhi chief minister came under fire following reports he had left the city for an overseas family trip. For a second year the chief minister, Arvind Kejriwal, has likened Delhi to a "gas chamber" because of the pollution. Seasonal burning of crop stubble and smoke from fireworks let off to celebrate the Hindu festival of Diwali on Nov. 7 have aggravated already high smog levels in the past few days from vehicle emissions, industrial gases and construction work.

Local television news channels said Kejriwal had left the country on a private family trip to Dubai, triggering a backlash on social media and finger pointing on Twitter by the Delhi arm of India's governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the party of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Arvind Kejriwal cares about his family so much that he urgently booked tickets and ran away to Dubai with them as soon as Delhi started choking with pollution," said one Twitter user.

A member of Kejriwal's party, the Aam Aadmi (Common Man) Party (AAP), told Reuters that the chief minister was not in the city. He declined to elaborate or be identified because he is not authorized to speak to the media. A city government spokesman did not



NEW DELHI: Motorists are seen along a busy road amid heavy smog in New Delhi. —AFP

respond to telephone calls seeking comment. Neither the governing party at federal level nor the main opposition are in power in the capital, giving them little incentive to co-operate with city authorities. Environmental activists say residents need to be more vocal about holding political leaders to account over the pollution.

"Public pressure has to be much sharper and demand compliance. Directions, policies have been issued but stringent implementation is needed," said Anumita Roychowdhury, an executive director at the Centre for Science and Environment, a think-tank. Still, there is little sign in Delhi that residents are doing much to protect themselves from the smog. Activists

say the apparent lack of concern about the pollution gives federal and local politicians the cover they need for failing to adequately address the problem.

The Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority has banned all construction activity and ordered use of sprinklers in the city until Nov. 10, among other measures. Yesterday, it indicated the measures would be extended until Monday. The city government has banned heavy vehicles from entering Delhi until Sunday and it was not clear if that order would be extended. It had also urged drivers to avoid using private diesel-powered vehicles, but there has been no ban. — Reuters

Running for a reason: Refugees race in Hong Kong

HONG KONG: Refugees took to Hong Kong's trails yesterday in one of the newest fixtures in the city's busy race calendar as they carve out a place in its running community. Hong Kong does not give refugees a permanent home in its own territory and they can spend years hoping for sanctuary in a third country, with most cases unsuccessful. In the meantime they are unable to work because of government restrictions and subsist on handouts from authorities and NGOs in a city with spiraling living costs.

But they have been embraced by Hong Kong's tight-knit trail running community and regularly compete on its mountainous routes. Yesterday's RUN charity race said refugees had been instrumental in organizing the event as well as competing in it. Now in its second year, 25 refugees, mainly from Africa, lined up in a field of more than 300 people who were running either 14-kilometre or 19-kilometre

distances. "I love running—if I have any opportunity to do it, I don't hesitate," African refugee and competitor Ali, 35, told AFP. "It makes me feel free, have less stress and be healthy."

Another African refugee and runner Sam, in her 40s, said the sport was "in her blood" and RUN had given her the opportunity to do it in Hong Kong. "It makes us feel like we are accepted, it makes us feel like we have another community apart from what we left back home," she said. RUN says it seeks to help refugees over trauma through sport as well as providing education and training. "When people run alongside refugees, people realise they're normal people like you and me—all the barriers fall away," said co-founder of the NGO, Virginia Goethals.

"Sport and nature is really a human equalizer," she added. Hong Kong resident Joyce Li, 35, who was running yesterday, said she was aware refugees had a "hard time" in the city and wanted to support them. There are around 6,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Hong Kong, a city of 7.4 million. "They are always unfairly being associated with human trafficking or abusing welfare," Li said. An international refugee Olympic team made a historic debut in Rio in 2016 and a refugee team will again compete at the Games in Tokyo in 2020. —AFP

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Washington Watch

This election deepened US' tribal divide

By Dr James J Zogby

This election was the meanest, dirtiest, and most disgraceful in my lifetime - and it will have consequences. Even before the results began to be reported on late Tuesday night, we already knew who the losers were going to be - the American people and our political culture. The damage done by President Trump's divisive rhetoric will be with us for a generation.

While Trump's advisers had urged him to focus on the good news about the economy during the last few weeks of the election, he opted instead to preach a message of fear. His target was the "caravan" of refugees coming northward from Guatemala hoping to find refuge from the violence and poverty of their homeland.

Reporters covering the ragtag group of refugees found them largely to be mothers with their children and boys and girls in their early teens. In Trump's speeches, however, they became more ominous "dangerous violent gang-members" with some "Middle Easterners" thrown in for good measure. They were "invaders" and the effort to enter our country was portrayed as an act of war. And so the president announced that he was sending troops to protect the border. As he continued to hype the threat posed by the "invasion," the number of troops being sent increased - from 2,000 to 5,000 to 15,000.

For three weeks Trump crisscrossed the country, speaking in rally after rally to mobilize his supporters to vote for Republican candidates. He warned of dire consequences if the Democrats won: He might be impeached, the country would be overrun by dangerous immigrants, the economy would collapse (despite the fact that the recovery and massive job creation began during Obama's term), and we'd be less safe and more taxed. And by the way, should Democrats win, they'll act violently against those who oppose them. The central message was always fear.

To drive this home, Trump's team produced a TV ad that featured a frightening foul-mouthed rant by a convicted serial killer who committed his crimes while in the US illegally. The ad continued with footage of Latin Americans storming an unidentified fence. The message was clear, "these are the violent people Democrats want to let into our country. Be afraid, very afraid."

The problem with the ad was that the killer in question had been deported by President Clinton, and had stolen his way back into the country and committed his crimes during the Bush Administration. It wasn't the dishonesty of the ad, however, it was its overt racist appeal that caused the networks (including Trump's favorite - Fox News) to refuse to run it. Media executives called the ad the "most racist ad ever put forward by a campaign".

Fear

To some extent, the appeal to fear worked. Despite some of the more bizarre and flagrantly distorted claims that Trump made during his post-election press conference (that people really like him, the election was a victory of historic proportions, that his polling numbers among black voters are great, etc.), one observation that he made was true. His intervention during the last few weeks of the campaign did make a difference in boosting a few Republicans to victory.

Until Trump's tour, the energy of this election was on the Democratic side. Trump's appeal to fear and his dire warnings about the country being overrun by dangerous foreigners, and the violence and economic disaster that would accompany a Democratic victory, succeeded in energizing Republican voters. But it did so at a cost to our democracy.

The final results of this election are still somewhat uncertain, as there are a few key races that are too close to call. Despite that, as it stands right now, it's clear that Democrats did well. They flipped the Congress from 235 Republican and 193 Democrats to a Democratic controlled body with 230 Democrats and 205 Republicans. Seven governorships changed from Republican to Democrat. And in down-ballot state legislative contests, Democrats added almost 300 seats to their ranks. Only in the US Senate, did the Republicans make slight gains, possibly adding two to their ranks.

Beyond the vote tallies and the final determination of who won and lost, my concern is that after two years of Trump and his behavior in the final weeks of the campaign, the country is more polarized than ever. Looking at election day exit polls what comes through is that while there are issue differences that separate Republicans and Democrats, more to the point are the splits between the two parties that appear to be driven more by demographics than by ideas.

On the Democratic side are young people, the college educated (especially women), and minority communities. Voting Republican are middle-aged, less educated working-class whites, gun owners, and white "born-again Christians". It is as if we have become two distinct tribes at war. In fairness, the attacks in this war have been largely coming from one side.

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

NORTH KOREA 'REALLY ANGRY' AT THE US ...



US midterm message resonates across Atlantic

One of the major political messages of the US midterm elections has been that rural voters dominate the cities. While the Democrats made enough gains in urban areas to take control of the House of Representatives, Republicans were able to expand their majority in the Senate, where each state gets two senators regardless of population size. In an election where neither side can claim a sweeping victory, President Donald Trump's party did as well as it did because the small towns and the more sparsely populated rural areas of the United States are still, in the main, Trump country. Meanwhile, Democrat votes pile up in the cities, uselessly, from an electoral point of view.

There's more to the observation than an urban-rural split, though it may be the most important. There's the north-south divide, deep among Americans, but not confined to them. Britain too has long had one, between, in its case, northern areas often still suffering the effects of de-industrialization and mine closures, and a wealthy south-east, London embedded within it. So does Italy, with a wealthy, relatively dynamic north and a poor, sluggish, mafia-infested south. Both impact heavily on political choices. These divides depend, not on geography, but on where the wealth has concentrated - usually, over centuries.

The US split is often thought to be a matter of racial history - a legacy from the Civil War that pitted the slave-owners of the South against the more industrialized north. But in the 21st century, it's become more complex. In a deeply researched piece, the African-American writer Michael Harriot shows that actions (rather than words) often show the south similar to the north in matters of racism. He finds, for example, that blacks in southern states are hired slightly more often than the national average, and that while blacks are more likely than whites to be shot by police nationwide, they are slightly less likely to be shot in the south than in the north.

Where, arguably, the greater difference lies is in education. There the disparity is not racial - a black Southern student is "more likely to receive an education closer to that of his or her white counterparts than in any other region in the country," says Harriot - but geographic. Harriot states flatly that "the South has the worst schools. Full stop. Almost every education ranking shows it."

Educational attainment, everywhere in the world,

runs with the grain of the country-city split. That's not so much because the best universities are always in urban areas - Harvard and Yale are in relatively small cities, as are Oxford and Cambridge in the UK - but their alumni cluster in the big metropolitan centers, push up housing costs, and push out the low-paid workers who service them.

Education divide

Education levels, like the city-country divide, have surged into prominence in these populist times. In the United States, college-educated voters are more likely



Immigration a large motor of political turbulence

to vote Democrat and recent Democratic presidents like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama were educated at elite universities like Georgetown, Oxford and Yale (Clinton) or Columbia and Harvard (Obama). By contrast, the joint leaders of Italy's populist government, Matteo Salvini and Luigi di Maio, attended university but never graduated. Nor did Jeremy Corbyn, the populist-left leader of Britain's Labour Party. Theresa May, the Conservative Prime Minister, went to Oxford. French President Emmanuel Macron passed through ENA, one of France's elite Grandes Ecoles.

This education divide isn't new. The 1968 US presidential election saw the Republican victor Richard Nixon win smaller cities and the country, but lost most of the large cities. In a caustic comment, the columnist Murray Kempton wrote that "there seems no place larger than Peoria from which has not been beaten back. Richard Nixon is president of every place in this country which does not have a bookstore."

Why is this so? In part, the life of the country and of small towns is usually slower and more tradition-based

than the cities, where change, especially from recent immigration surges, is constant. In London, Europe's most ethnically diverse capital, successive waves of immigration - Huguenots (French Protestants), Jews, Irish, later West Indians, Pakistanis, Indians, later still Central European workers and Russian oligarchs - were building a highly diverse city from the 19th century, a movement which accelerated through the 20th into the 21st centuries.

This wasn't a peaceful process. A fascist movement, the Blackshirts, staged anti-Jewish demonstrations in London's East End in the 1930s. In 1968, workers from London's docks marched in support of the Conservative politician Enoch Powell, who had forecast "rivers of blood" to flow from largescale West Indian immigration. In 1985, black youths rioted in the south London district of Brixton after the accidental shooting by police of a black woman.

Yet more recently, the UK capital seems to have become more comfortable with its ethnic jumble. Tending to vote left, it elected, in 2016, the son of a Muslim Pakistani immigrant family, the Labour politician Sadiq Khan, as mayor - a choice much derided by President Trump. Europe's city-country and educational splits all impact on elections, but, as in the United States, the issues of immigration, of identity and of relative deprivation now overlay, often exacerbate, the older divides. In Sweden, for example, migrants are blamed for crime and in Germany anti-immigrant riots have cast shadows on what was seen to be - and often still is - relatively trouble-free acceptance of many of the immigrants.

As in the United States, immigration remains a large motor of political turbulence. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's opening of the borders to immigrants caused splits in her center-right coalition, weakening her to the point where she is now likely to face a leadership challenge before she finishes her mandate in 2021.

The common element in all of these issues, in all Western countries, is a revolt, greater or lesser in extent, against rapid change, against liberal elites and against a loss of identity - white, in the main, but also of settled communities of past waves of immigrants. Populists, right to signal these concerns, are wrong to claim that answers are simple. But arguments of complexity are, in an impatient time, suspect. Divisions, not only in the United States, presently deepen. — Reuters

Monkey business: Hungry 'vermin' steal food from Ugandan farmers

When Bwakahwihire Buhikire moved to Nyarubungo village three decades ago, he hoped his family would be able to grow more crops on their new, larger plot of land. Instead they found themselves competing with monkeys for food. Buhikire was shocked by how people in south-west Uganda's Mbarara district hunted and killed the vervet monkeys they view as pests - but the grey-haired primates with black faces were starving his family. "They would not wait for us to harvest potatoes, bananas and beans," said Buhikire, now 68.

When crops matured, children would have to miss school to keep the monkeys away from the fields, he added. As the animals were killed and people settled on the reclaimed wetlands and grazing land where the primates lived, their numbers gradually dwindled. But in the past decade, as the government has moved to protect wetlands, and predators like pythons and eagles have declined, the population of vervet monkeys is on the rise again, said Jonathan Baranga, former professor of wildlife at Mbarara University of Science and Technology.

As climate change and illegal human activity in the swamps curb their food supply, the swelling ranks of hungry monkeys are back raiding gardens. Unauthorised farming and sand mining in

the wetlands are making the problem worse, as plants on which the monkeys feed are cleared, according to Jaconious Musingwire, a scientist and southwest focal point for Uganda's environment watchdog.

According to Buhikire, farmers in three villages close to the Nyakaguruka-Rwizi swamps are suffering regular losses as the largely herbivorous monkeys steal crops to survive. A troupe of 20 monkeys with 15 of their young in a garden at any one time is a common sight, said Buhikire. "It is survival of the fittest," he said. In neighboring Isingiro district, the monkeys often move in groups of 30, according to James Byaruhanga. The local resident said many trees that once bore fruit on which the monkeys fed, such as palm, had been felled to make charcoal. Monkeys do not eat the grass and small trees that now make up most swamp vegetation, he added.

Withering wetlands

Environment official Musingwire also blamed the disappearance of the monkeys' food supply on climate change. Prolonged droughts have affected tree-fruiting in the wetlands, he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Warmer temperatures have reduced budding and flowering rates, meaning trees yield fewer fruits and berries, he noted. That is pushing wildlife in the remaining wetlands that have survived human settlement, slash-and-burn agriculture and climate change impacts to feed on human crops, he added.

Uganda lost close to 35 per cent of its wetlands between 1990 and 2017, according to government data, worsening the risks of water shortages and pollution, soil erosion, increased floods, siltation and biodiversity loss. Farmers have erected scarecrows in their gardens to keep off the primates, but this has not worked. Frustrated, some are resorting to hunting down or poisoning the wild animals.

Josephine Kateba, whose farm is adjacent to Rugando wetland, lost her cassava, maize, beans and groundnuts to the monkeys, who also eat bananas and guava. Almost half her crops were scavenged, she said, noting the problem has caused hunger and malnutrition among local children. She wants the monkeys to be relocated to national parks, although officials say parks are already home to enough.

Out of control?

By law, the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) is mandated to manage all wild animals, whether in or outside national parks. In some districts, local governments are also tasked with controlling "vermin", including monkeys, bush pigs and baboons. The UWA defines "vermin" as problem animals that cause damage to people, farms and other assets. Geoffrey Owoyesigire, the UWA's deputy director in charge of community conservation affairs, said vermin could be killed if judged a major threat but only in an orderly, organized manner. The problem of human-monkey conflicts has persisted for several years in different parts of the country, he added.

The UWA is raising awareness of the problem by organizing village meetings and asking people to report vermin raids to local leaders, who should then inform the authority. Between 2000 and 2010, it allocated two guards per sub-county to prevent and report vermin attacks on fields. But the effort petered out in most districts as local and national government could not find the funds to keep it going.

Sergeant George Mwebaze, a community conservation ranger in Lake Mburo national park, said the innovative programme should be revived to stop the monkeys harming crops and livestock. Tackling the problem needs to be a joint effort, he said. "Wildlife is for us all, but if it becomes a challenge then we (must) step in," he said. — Reuters

Business

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BASRA: This picture shows Iranian rials at a change desk in Basra on November 6, 2018. — AFP

Sanctions have no effect on Iran: Rouhani

US grants Iraq 45-day waiver over Iran sanctions to import gas, electricity

DUBAI: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said yesterday that US sanctions announced last week have had no effect on Iran's economy because Washington had already practically reimposed them earlier.

The restoration of sanctions is part of a wider effort by US President Donald Trump to force Iran to curb its nuclear and missile programs as well as its support for proxy forces in Yemen, Syria, Lebanon and other parts of the Middle East. "The sanctions have had no impact on our economy because America had already used all the weapons at its disposal and there was nothing new to use against us," Rouhani said in remarks carried live on state television. "They just issued a long list of banks, their branches ... and airlines and their planes. And this shows that they are merely trying to affect the Iranian nation psychologically," Rouhani said.

The United States said it would temporarily allow eight importers to keep buying Iranian oil when it reimposed sanctions last Monday aimed at forcing Tehran to curb its nuclear, missile and regional activities. "It has now become clear that America cannot cut Iran's oil exports to zero," Rouhani added, speaking after a weekly meeting with the heads of the parliament and the judiciary.

Iraq can continue to import natural gas and energy

supplies from Iran for a period of 45 days, the United States has said, several days after reimposing sanctions on Tehran's oil sector.

"The United States has given Iraq a temporary relief from the sanctions for 45 days to continue purchasing natural gas and electricity from Iran," the US Embassy in Iraq said in a video published on its official Facebook page on Thursday.

"This relief gives Iraq time to start taking steps towards energy independence," the video said. Iraq central bank officials said in August that the country's economy is so closely linked to Iran that Baghdad would ask Washington for exemptions from some of the sanctions. The current temporary waiver is conditional on Iraq not paying Iran for imports in US dollars.

Sanctions, which had been lifted under a 2015 nuclear deal negotiated by President Barack Obama's administration and five other world powers, were reimposed on Nov 5. They cover 50 Iranian banks and subsidiaries and more than 200 persons and vessels in its shipping sector, as well as targeting Tehran's national airline, Iran Air, and more than 65 of its aircraft.

Iran is likely to ride out the storm from US oil sanctions, suffering recession but no economic meltdown, thanks to

rising crude prices and deepening divisions between the United States and other major powers, officials and analysts say. "Iran's situation is better than pre-2016 because of high oil prices and the fact that the US is isolated this time," said a European diplomat who asked not to be further identified. Iran emerged in early 2016 from years of global sanctions under a deal with world powers that curbed its disputed nuclear programme. But President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the deal in May, calling it flawed to Iran's advantage, and reimposed far-reaching US sanctions in phases, with the most damaging oil and banking penalties taking effect on Nov 5.

Trump aims to force Washington's longtime adversary to accept tougher restrictions on its nuclear activity, drop its ballistic missile program and scale back support for militant proxies in Middle East conflicts from Yemen to Syria. But the broadly united front of world powers that enforced sanctions on Iran previously, pushing Iran into nuclear restraint, has unravelled since Trump took office and clashed with allies over everything from trade to collective security.

The other signatories to the nuclear deal - Germany, France, Britain, the European Union, Russia and China - have condemned Trump's walkout from the pact. The EU

is preparing a special mechanism to enable payments for Iranian oil and other exports without US dollars, possibly through a barter system.

"It will be a difficult period but Iran's economy will withstand it for various reasons," a second diplomat said, "including (the fact of) Russia being under (US and EU) sanctions, Saudi Arabia having its own financial and political issues, and (trade war) between China and the United States."

Big power disunity and EU moves to circumvent Trump's sanctions regime have given Tehran a psychological boost - but not dissuaded foreign businesses ranging from oil majors to trading houses and shipping concerns from pulling out of Iran for fear of incurring new US penalties. Still, while the US clampdown will probably trigger recession in Iran next year, economic meltdown should be avoided, with a reduced but still significant volume of oil exports continuing, a Fitch solutions analyst said. "Tehran is still likely to see a substantial share of its foreign exchange earnings maintained," Andrine Skjelland told Reuters. "This will enable Tehran to continue subsidising imports of selected basic goods, keeping the costs of these down and thus limiting inflation to some extent." — Reuters

ISC, UIC hold seminar on 'What Makes Politics Tick'

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Investment Studies Center (ISC) at the Union of Investment Companies (UIC), in collaboration with Aberdeen Standard, recently held a seminar on 'What makes politics tick' at KIPCO Tower.

Fadwa Darwish, UIC Technical Support Manager, while discussing the broader rise of political populism and it continues to challenge investors, said financial markets are resilient but are not immune against major events happening in the world. "Capital markets do not operate in a vacuum - turbulence on the global political scene has a significant impact on their performance. Political instability and frequent regime changes create economic uncertainties that may impact growth," she noted. "So, at the end of the day, it's important to not take speculations of the effect of political change on financial markets to heart. Instead, trust the advice of people who are in the industry," Darwish said.

This was behind inviting senior political economist Stephanie Kelly from Aberdeen Standard Investments

to present this seminar and discuss how the rise of populist politics challenges the traditional investment approach, as polls have proven unreliable and markets struggle to price political risk. "I think investors can struggle to understand what exactly they need to be looking at, in order to bring political risk into their approach when they look at fundamental analyses for their investment," Kelly told Kuwait Times. "We provide a process that allows for that to be pulled in. So it's not just about saying there is political risk, but actually it becomes part of your fundamental analysis to go alongside economic valuation and other elements of the fundamental analyses we already use," she added.

The seminar discussed various issues. "In my presentation I also applied this to Italy, the US and to Brexit. In each case, it shows the eventual certainty and the degree of space there is for us to move both positively and negatively," explained Kelly.

The presentation also showed the difference between actual results and polls, and that fallible pollsters have brought political risk to the fore, in addition to the broader rise of political populism that continues to challenge investors. Kelly also mentioned that political risk includes institutional and cyclical factors. She also spoke about the scenarios that suggest escalation which could come from China. She concluded with explaining long-term investment outlook and strategic asset allocation.



KUWAIT: Stephanie Kelly speaks during the seminar. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Al-Sayer opens brand new Toyota showroom at Jahra

New showroom to offer even better customer experience



KUWAIT: Al-Sayer Board of Directors and Chairman Faisal Bader Al-Sayer, CEO Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer and Executive Board member Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer with Toyota Motor Corporation Project General Manager Koji Nagata and Chief Representative for Middle East and North Africa Regional Office Yugo Miyamoto during the inauguration of new showroom for Toyota cars at Al-Jahra. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons EST CO, a subsidiary of Al-Sayer Holding held an opening ceremony to inaugurate the brand-new showroom for Toyota cars at Al-Jahra. The spacious showroom features retail floor to display 30 cars, sales consultant and administration offices, accessory outlet, banks and insurance offices, parking area for around 25 cars to offer better convenience for customers.

Al-Sayer Board of Directors and Chairman Faisal Bader Al-Sayer, Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer, CEO, Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer, Executive Board Member, welcomed and acknowledged the presence of attendees from Toyota Motor Corporation Koji Nagata, Project General Manager and Yugo

Sayer said "Investing in new facilities and expanding our geographic footprint is one of our key strategies. This is a symbol of Group's commitment to provide our customers with the highest satisfaction and peace of mind. We are confident about growing our network of showrooms and service facilities, to stay close to our customers by being a part of their neighborhood - to make them feel at home when they are visiting us. Today we announce the launch of brand new Jahra showroom for our Toyota customers."

The building

- The new facility spreads on a total built-in area of 2000 M2



Faisal Bader Al-Sayer, Chairman and Al-Sayer Board of Directors along with distinguished guests attend the opening ceremony of new Toyota showroom at Al-Jahra

Miyamoto, Chief Representative for Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, valued partners from the press and medias along with team members from Toyota Group Sales.

Distinguished guests attended the ribbon cutting ceremony to inaugurate the showroom and later joined the official press conference.

Bengt Schultz Chief Operating Officer, Scott McNicol General Manager Toyota Sales, Mike Smith Group Chief Financial Officer, Desmond Lew Business Director Group Parts, Accessories and Logistics, Jacques Feghali Chief Services Officer, Stephen Cleary Chief Marketing Officer were also present at the event.

Speaking on the occasion Mubarak Naser Al-

- The total foot print of the facility is divided as:
- Toyota New cars retail showroom - where customers can conveniently engage with our sales team and explore our exciting line-up of cars
- Sales consultant and administration offices and meeting rooms
- Accessories display zone
- Dedicated area for offices for financial services and insurance
- Ample outdoor parking space for customers

Al-Jahra Governorate, with a population of over 560 thousand Jahra operates competitive sectors actively contributing to Country's GDP. Kuwait Government has ambitious plans to boost business and economy in line with its New Kuwait

2035 vision. One of the strategic projects is South Al-Mutlaa City that is under construction and set to be Kuwait's largest housing project.

According to Koji Nagata "On behalf of Toyota Motor cooperation, firstly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Kuwait and its people who granted us their support and patronage for over 60 years. In addition, thank you very much for all MNSS members' tireless effort to promote Toyota and Lexus product and services with great passion for over 60 years. Toyota motor cooperation considers MNSS is our irreplaceable partner and one of the best distributors among the world."

"We share the same values as Toyota and Lexus that customer satisfaction cannot be delivered through facilities alone. We focus to deliver an unsurpassed customer experience and fulfil "putting a smile on every customers face," com-

mented Mubarak Al-Sayer.

The Group believes State of the art facilities is a good beginning, but to make them come alive and to provide an outstanding customer experience a team of dedicated, well trained and enthusiastic employees is essential. The design of this building has also been aligned with the Group's strategic focus on sustainable business solutions. This includes advanced technology in construction and Solar system for power generation, large glass facades for natural day light, latest LED light fittings, auto water mixers.

To align with ambitious development plans of Kuwait, the Group is continuing to focus on facility expansion. A new service facility in Fahaheel will be opening soon. Despite the expenses involved the Management is committed to bring World's best technicians, services and facilities for our customers.



Behbehani Motors opens world's largest modular Volkswagen showroom in Kuwait

The new \$32.5m state-of-the-art showroom is the largest of its kind in the world



KUWAIT: Wolfgang Ratz, Abdulmohsen Ali Behbehani, German Ambassador to Kuwait Karlfried Bergner, Ali Morad Behbehani, Achim Schaible, Hussein Morad Behbehani, Andrew Savvas and Deesch Papke.

KUWAIT: Behbehani Motors Company, the official distributor of Volkswagen in Kuwait has opened the world's largest modular Volkswagen showroom as part of a wider investment in facilities worth a total of \$145.6m.

The impressive showroom located in Al-Rai is set to offer customers an unparalleled experience and spans across 22,134 square meters. It has the capacity to display 46 vehicles including Light Commercial Vehicles (LCV) and Used Cars and offers state-of-the-art facilities alongside a unique mezzanine area which overlooks the display of cars.

Designed in line with the Volkswagen Modular Concept, the showroom spans across five levels, above and below ground, and includes ample cus-

tomers parking. The roof top has an advanced solar system installed allowing the energy produced to be stored for a variety of uses including solar cooling, lighting and electricity. The minimalist interior space features crisp white walls, natural wood and clean lines, providing an open and inviting atmosphere for customers.

The showroom will display Volkswagen's latest SUVs including the new Touareg and the all-new 7-seater Teramont, alongside other popular models including the Golf, Golf GTI, Tiguan and Passat.

Ali Morad Behbehani, owner of Behbehani Motors Company, said: "Our new modular showroom marks a significant milestone in Kuwait's expansion strategy.

Kuwait is a growing market, and an investment of this size not only expands our presence in Kuwait, it is also a clear symbol of the strength of our partnership with Volkswagen."

As part of the significant investment from Behbehani Motors, the next year will also see the launch of a new Volkswagen sales, service and spare parts facility as well as a body shop, both located in Shuwaikh. In recognition of the company's outstanding contribution to the business and Retailer Network globally, Behbehani Motors has been awarded a Gold Pin from Volkswagen AG (headquarters) - an honor within the Volkswagen community.

Commenting on the opening, Andrew Savvas,

Brand Director of Volkswagen Middle East said: "It is a privilege to have the Behbehani Group as an investor in Volkswagen. It is a relationship that has developed over several decades, and we will continue to support them in these exciting years ahead. In opening the world's largest Volkswagen showroom in Kuwait, we remain on track to become a world leader in customer satisfaction and innovation."

Behbehani Motors Company, which joined the Volkswagen Middle East retail network in 1957, has enjoyed on-going success in Kuwait. The state-of-the-art showroom opening will undoubtedly offer a special customer experience as the brand expands its showroom centre and services across the country.



KUWAIT: Ali Morad Behbehani, Hussein Morad Behbehani and Abdulmohsen Ali Behbehani receive token of appreciation presented by Andrew Savvas and Achim Schaible.



KUWAIT: Left to Right: Wolfgang Ratz, German Ambassador to Kuwait Karlfried Bergner, Ali Morad Behbehani, Achim Schaible, Hussein Morad Behbehani, Andrew Savvas and Abdulmohsen Ali Behbehani.



Business

AUB wins Citibank's coveted STP award for the sixth year running

Award acknowledges bank's outstanding performance in payments processing

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced yesterday that it has won the coveted Citibank Straight-Through-Processing (STP) award for the sixth consecutive year. The award recognizes AUB's excellent quality and accuracy in delivering commercial payments and processing transactions, and its continued efforts and keenness to win this high profile award on an annual basis.

AUB's latest award demonstrates its excellence in SWIFT automated processing of transfers and deposits along with applying the latest ground breaking technologies to drive STP-compliant services that have been outlined by Citibank.

AUB Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Banking Support Group, Jehad Saud Al-Humaidhi said, "We are proud to win Citibank's STP award. AUB has once again succeeded in adopting strict measures in relation to international electronic payment transfers that fully comply with Citibank's rigorous correspondent banking and processing accuracy criteria. This important recognition is a testimony to the Bank's operational excellence and efficiency, and one which showcases how crucial STP is to AUB's customer service operations."

"AUB continues to strive to ensure fast, accurate and reliable execution of payment instructions through continuous investment in information technology systems and people," added Ms. Al-Humaidhi.

The STP award is a tribute to the high caliber and superior efficiency of AUB's operational capabilities. With state-of-the-art technology and operational infrastructure, the Bank's team of seasoned professionals is well placed to meet the complete needs of individual and corporate customers alike.



Jehad Saud Al-Humaidhi receives the Citibank STP Award

32% surge on spend volume on KFH Visa cards used overseas during 2018 summer

KUWAIT: Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Waleed Khaled Mandani said that the spend volume on KFH Visa cards used overseas climbed 32 percent during the June to August period over the same period last year.

Mandani indicated this considerable surge confirms the Bank's strong position in the banking cards market. It clearly demonstrates the value KFH cardholders perceive in KFH card products as they enjoy a variety of exclusive and special rewarding features and prizes, not to mention the widespread banking network and twenty-four/seven services.

He added: "The use of cards to make payments has continued to gain momentum. KFH set a new internal record for the total value of transactions made by its Visa cardholders abroad this year."

Mandani continued: "This achievement is attributable to the efficiency of KFH-Visa cards and the newly developed campaigns KFH launched for customers where the feedback, by the Grace of Allah, beat estimates as KFH has been always keen on staying on top of evolving customer expectations."

KFH launched KFH-Wallet, a 'Mobile Wallet Payment Service', for the bank's Visa credit and prepaid cardholders as part of the Bank's effort to continue providing better customer experience and more flexible payment options for customers when using KFH cards payments solutions.

KFH has launched "KFH" Visa Signature Credit card that offers customers a unique experience for enjoying a world of exclusive privileges, luxury and convenience that are carefully selected and tailored

to suit their lifestyle. Cardholders are eligible to get up to 6 percent cashback on their monthly spends in addition to a plethora of enhanced benefits.

Also, with the recent KFH and Visa Debit card campaign, 6 KFH customers had won a unique 6-day trip to London in a private jet for themselves and their companions, in addition to accommodation in a 5-star hotel premium suite, luxury car with chauffeur service and KD 2000 cash credit to enjoy a unique shopping experience.

KFH had recently launched "Your KFH card, the key to your house in Turkey" campaign where 3 winners will win the house of their choice in Turkey with furniture and home appliances, in addition, fly business class to Turkey with a companion and stay in a 5 star hotel for 5 nights when using any of "KFH" Visa cards (Debit, Credit or Prepaid) to pay for their domestic or international purchases.

He revealed that there are many more exciting campaigns and products that KFH and Visa will be launching very soon to offer customers rewarding experiences for using their KFH Visa Cards. KFH is tirelessly striving to better serve customers by offering high-end products and services based on an in-depth study and analysis.

Shashank Singh, Visa General Manager for Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar said: "We are delighted to see that our partnership with KFH has generated strong results for the bank and helped bring value to its customers. As the global payments company, our goal is to work closely with our partners such as KFH to deliver customers an enhanced payment experience so that they are able transact in a convenient, secure and frictionless way."



Waleed Mandani

Exclusive offers to holders of NBK Al-Shabab Visa prepaid card

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait is committed to rewarding its Al-Shabab account customers with value-added services and valuable offerings all-year-long, as part of the Bank's ongoing efforts to provide the best banking experience to its young customers.

Al-Shabab account offers a variety of services and special offers, beginning with the Bank's campaign "Triple Your Student Allowance" launched this year, to special discounts for those who transfer their student allowance and holders of Al-Shabab Visa Prepaid Card. The offers include 50 percent discount when ordering from Talabat.com on specific days, periodical discounts of up to 50 percent on electronics from Eureka when shopping on Eureka's website, and 50 percent discount on cinema tickets valid at Cinescape during the weekend (Friday and Saturday).

Al-Shabab Visa Prepaid Card also provides a wide range of exciting features such as the ease and safety of using it for online shopping. Customers may also use their Visa Prepaid Card to withdraw cash, without fees, from any NBK ATM. They can also transfer money from their card to the customer's account.

"NBK continues to provide Al-Shabab customers with new and unique offers that are tailored to the needs of the youth," said Amal Al-Duwaisan, Senior Manager Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. "We give great attention

to our Al-Shabab customers, that is why we have recently relaunched the 'Triple your Student Allowance' campaign. The campaign provides an opportunity for new or existing Al Shabab account holders to qualify for the daily draw when the student allowance is transferred to NBK, in addition to the ongoing offers that run all year."

Al-Duwaisan added: "Al-Shabab account customers do not only benefit from ongoing offers but also of the technologically-advanced services that provide them with the convenience and ease to conduct transactions anywhere and anytime by using the NBK Mobile and Online banking services."

Al-Shabab customers have access to many services provided by NBK like 'Quick Pay', which is a fast and easy way to receive money, pay bills and transfer due amounts to friends, anytime and anywhere, even on weekends and official holidays. They can also benefit from the newly enhanced ATMs and Cash Deposit Machines (CDMs) through which they can enjoy cardless cash withdrawals by simply using their mobile number or Civil ID, and also use the NBK Tap & Pay debit card or any NFC-enabled debit card to withdraw or deposit money with only a tap and without inserting their card in the machine.

In addition to these features, customers can benefit from the ITM machine available at The Avenues to complete many transactions. NBK's Airport branch is also available 24/7, the only bank in Kuwait to be open round the clock for both departure and arrival areas.



Amal Al-Duwaisan

Bayt.com weekly report

How to make it after graduating

Are you an ambitious fresh graduate who is looking to get employed, but don't really know how? How do you get started? There's an endless amount of information online, and everyone's telling you different things. Who do you listen to?

Job hunting can be perceived as a daunting task by many graduates, especially those who don't have any work experience. Not to worry, experts at Bayt.com are here to help with this detailed article to help pave the way for you to land a good job and kick-start your career.

What kind of jobs are available for fresh graduates?

When it comes to high ranking job roles, it might be quite rare for companies to hire fresh graduates who lack any kind of work experience, as they might be too incompetent to meet the job requirements. Don't waste your time and effort on applying to jobs that you know are way out of your skill reach. There is no problem in aiming high and being ambitious, but you need to know your capabilities.

However, many companies are still very much interested in new graduates. They like to tap into the fresh innovative ideas, new talent and updated knowledge that fresh graduates can bring with them into the company, where they can then be trained up for more senior level and challenging roles.

The main types of job roles that companies offer new graduates are often labelled as "entry level" or "junior level" roles. They may also be categorized under different programs such as Graduate Programs, Internships, Training Schemes and Junior Talent Programs. These types of jobs provide fresh graduates with the opportunity to reach their full potential and develop, as they are usually supported by the hiring company through systematic training and mentoring.

How to find entry/junior level jobs?

In order for you to find and secure the right job that best suits you, you will need to approach your job search the right way. Firstly, you will need to decide on what type of job that best interests you and compare it with your career objectives, in order for you to see if they are compatible. For example, let's say that you are interested in starting your career with an internship, you will need to dig deep and ask yourself some questions before applying, such as "Is it the type of work experience that I am looking for?" "Do I want to test out this career path or am I aiming to develop certain skills such as data analysis?" "When will I be able to start?"

Don't forget to also examine the nature of the job, the responsibilities, the industry, and the company itself, to ensure they are well-aligned with what you like to do.

Now for the searching part:

* Network

As a fresh graduate, you might suppose that you don't have many contacts, but that's just a misconception that many graduates have. Your friends and family can definitely act as contacts within your network, so you should consider informing them that you are actively searching for a job. They might personally know of an opportunity that is right for you, or even connect you with their contacts.

But in order to take things to the next step, consider

being very active and visible on Bayt.com and the various offline and online networking platforms you can access. Always ensure you are building your personal brand: which is what makes you unique as a job seeker and is powered by your achievements, activities, and network.

Thankfully, through "Bayt.com People" you can build your professional network in the Middle East, where you can search and connect with people who share your interests.

* Online

Sign up on bayt.com and be the first to hear about new job opportunities. Bayt.com provides job seekers with the ability to browse through thousands of jobs within the MENA region. Also, bayt.com offers job seekers with "Job Search Strategy Workshops" and various tools and resources that can help you in searching, identifying and applying for the jobs that best fit you.

* Build your strategy

Besides applying for what interests you from the 10,000+ jobs that are available daily on Bayt.com, you should consider doing the following:

1) Keep your profile complete, fresh, and relevant on Bayt.com. Many companies search for candidates without always posting an announcement. So be prepared for that phone call.

2) Apply to companies using a speculative approach, where you'll need to proactively contact potential employers and ask if they have any unadvertised opportunities. This is also where you use the power of networking and personal branding online.

Make your CV stand out

Your CV is one of the first ways to make a good first impression to your potential employer, therefore, it is of extreme importance for you to write and structure it in the best way possible.

* Writing your CV

Your CV has to be written and structured in a certain way so that it can effectively highlight your qualifications and skills that are appropriate for the job you are applying for. As a fresh graduate with no work experience, you probably need a bit of guidance on writing a sound CV. Thankfully, bayt.com offers various CV writing services that fresh graduates can take advantage of such as CV Writing Support, CV Writing Service, and CV Templates.

* Develop your skillset and qualifications

As you don't have any work experience, you should emphasize on your skills and qualifications, and try your best to further enhance them. Everyone knows how competitive the job market can get. So, you will need to impress recruiters with skills and qualifications that they are looking for such as accounting, analytical thinking, time management, project management and presentation skills. You can do this by using bayt.com's learning services such as online courses and training courses.

Finally, you must be comfortable with the fact that not all job applications are successful. If you were not selected for a job role, that definitely doesn't mean you are incompetent or that you don't have what it takes. Don't let self-doubt shatter your confidence and resilience. Believe in yourself. No matter what.

Warba Bank announces 5 winners of Al-Sunbula draw

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, held its week 41st draw for Al-Sunbula Account. The draw announced the 5 lucky winners in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Bank officials.

The bank proudly announces the lucky 5 winners who received KD 1000 each are: Sulaiman Fahad Mohammad Bozobar, Ahmad Mnabi Sanhat Al-Osaimi, Mutlaq Saad Znaifer Al-Azemi, Abdullah Awadh Sagheer Al-Enezi and Huda Ali Matar Al-Rasheedi.

Al-Sunbula Account is the perfect choice for all cus-

tomers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while simultaneously have the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year. Due to the high traffic on this account, for its offerings of unparalleled opportunities, Warba Bank has worked on enhancing Al-Sunbula account to provide customers with more benefits. Such enhancements include increasing the number of winners and the frequency of the draws. Now, on every Thursday the Bank holds draws for 5 weekly winners of KD 1,000 each. In addition, the Bank continues its monthly draws held on the first Thursday of every month, with cash prizes of KD 30,000 divided amongst 4 winners: two winners getting KD 10,000 each, and two winners getting KD 5,000 each.

Thus, the new development of Al-Sunbula account has increased the total number of winners to 24, and the total amount of prizes to KD 50,000 instead of KD 30,000. As for the chances for winning, each customer is eligible to enter the draw against each KD 10. It is noteworthy, that Warba Bank has recently launched the Al-Sunbula Fixed Deposit, which provides depositors with high returns of up to 3%, as well as getting monthly chances to win in Al-Sunbula Account draws.

What's On

McGraw-Hill Education, AOU to make powerful digital learning materials available to students



A new agreement that expands the collaboration among Arab Open University (AOU), McGraw-Hill Education and Growmore will make McGraw-Hill's high quality digital content available to students at AOU's nine branches in the Middle East and Africa. Students in all major first- and second-year course areas will have access to McGraw-Hill Connect digital course materials, which research has shown help improve grades, pass rates and retention.

Learning science company McGraw-Hill and Arab Open University have a longstanding relationship, having worked together in recent years towards the digital transition of the university. The two organizations have now decided to take a step further with a three-year agreement. McGraw-Hill will not only supply customized McGraw-Hill Connect materials specially designed to meet the needs of AOU's instructors and students, but will also act as a strategic partner in AOU's marketing and social responsibility initiatives.

McGraw-Hill Connect uses adaptive technology to

personalize the learning experience for students and help instructors become even more effective. It is used by millions of students globally, and gives educators the flexibility to teach their course their way, while providing students with affordable, engaging products that help them achieve learning outcomes. Growmore, which is McGraw-Hill's exclusive distributor in Kuwait, is amongst the largest learning solutions providers in the region with 14 campus bookstores serving federal and private higher education institutions.

"Guided by the strategic vision of HRH Prince Talal Bin Abdulaziz, Head of the Board of Trustees, and the other Board members, the AOU has been committed to providing quality higher education for students in all Arab countries since its establishment in 2001," said Prof. Mohammed Al-Zakari, President, AOU. "To accomplish this, the University adopts the notion of Open Learning involving high academic standards, employing state-of-the-art educational and information technologies and establishing strategic partnerships with highly

reputable organizations. This partnership with McGraw-Hill is a consequence of such a strategy. The University hopes that this relationship with McGraw-Hill will be conducive to strengthening the quality and value of the educational services the AOU provides to its students."

"One of the AOU strategic objectives is not only to figure out how to make the electronic educational material scalable and more widely affordable at the AOU level, but also to adopt new technologies such as Adaptive Learning to enhance the students' engagement and retention rates," said Prof. Ashraf Hussein, Vice President for Education and Information Technology, AOU. "Meanwhile, we are aiming to provide our tutors with a wide variety of interactive, digital learning tools to improve the performance of the academic delivery. This partnership will streamline the relationship between AOU and McGraw-Hill, moving further to achieve the aforementioned objective."

"We're proud to extend our relationship with Arab Open University, which has become a symbol for inno-

vation and quality education in this part of the world," said Murray St Leger, Managing Director, Europe, Middle East and Africa at McGraw-Hill International. "We work hard to create digital content and build course materials in line with what we know about learning science, tailored to the needs of institutions and students whom we support. We're excited that thousands more students will benefit from adaptive technology because of the leadership of AOU."

"Growmore believes in creating a better future by delivering effective and affordable learning solutions to enhance teaching and learning experiences," said Shailendra Srivastava, CEO of Growmore. "We are ecstatic that our efforts have resulted in bringing together our strategic partners Arab Open University and McGraw-Hill into a long-term partnership for digital transformation. Our collaboration will transform the way learning resources disseminate and the region will experience a tectonic shift in the way education is getting delivered."

Al-Bayan Bilingual School's College & University night

As always delegated Al-Bayan Bilingual School has been supporting its students and always had faith in the student's dedication to education. Al-Bayan Bilingual School held a college and university night in Dalal Waleed Al Humaidhi Theater - Hawally Campus and welcomed a number of guest speakers such as Kuwait University, the American University of Kuwait, Education USA - US Embassy and Kuwait University Assessment Office.

The night was also attended by BBS students and families and a number of Non-BBS students and their families, along with the school administration and High School Counselors who organized this successful night in collaboration with Dr Duna Al Mashaan, Educational Consultant for Schools and Families, Educational Futures and Score Plus Learning Center Kuwait - The Princeton Review, USA.

The main topics covered during this event were about the 4 year Planning University Process, College Admission Regional Requirements, College Search: Bridge U Program College and Career Exploration Tools, College Entrance exams (PSAT, SAT,



ACT, TOEFL, ILETS) and Student Visas, types of universities and colleges, getting an early start, Ministry requirements, tuition and living expenses, and finally Testing Prep by the Princeton Review Master Trainer Dennis Ortiz who said "Sunday evening's College and University night was a great opportunity to connect with students and their parents.

Many times the admissions process is such a mystery to parents, especially if they have never sent off a child to college before. This was an opportunity for all stakeholders in the process to answer wildly varying questions. Test preparation is such a central piece of the puzzle that I enjoyed very much fielding questions and allaying parental concerns".

GUST concludes 17th IFIP Conference

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) concluded the 17th annual International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) Conference. The event brought together approximately 75 scholars from around the globe to present research findings conducted on the subject of this year's conference: Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Era. Among these, 11 are from GUST. The event was held over a period of four days on GUST's campus, and it is the first time that this symposium was held in Kuwait.

With the exponential growth of digital forums across the world on a multitude of platforms, it is imperative the academic community explore different ways of adapting to new realities to conduct business. This is especially true today as opportunities afforded to consumers - due to the sheer volume of information accessible to them - presents challenges to companies that need to constantly create innovative strategies to remain relevant. Similarly, consumers are also challenged as they seek optimal ways of sifting through information which inundates them, and makes the process of selecting the best product or service provider increasingly difficult. Prior to the conference, a doctoral colloquium was held to give Ph.D. candidates and research students an opportunity to



present their work to a panel of experts to get feedback and gain further insight in their area of study.

Conference Co-Chair and GUST Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr Salah Al-Sharhan, said, "As the world around us changes, so must we. As academics, we must consistently strive to find ways to relate to and connect with the wider world. This conference was a prime opportunity to learn from other scholars and academics, learn how their findings can be applied locally, and also cement GUST's place as a veritable regional knowledge hub."

Presenting findings on behalf of GUST will be Nabae Asfar, Dr Saeed Askary, Dr Ahmed El Morshidy, Dr Ahmed Hassanein, Dr Khalid Kisswani, and Professor Taher Ali, who explored the topics of e-Business, e-Services, and e-Society. Also in attendance, were prominent scholars such as Professor Yogesh Dwivedi from Swansea University in Wales,

Professor George Balabanis from City University in London, Dr Winfried Lamersdorf from the University of Hamburg, and Professor Matti Mantymaki, from University of Turku, Finland.

Conference Co-Chair and Dean of College of Business Administration, Prof Antonis Simintiras, said, "This conference yielded some interesting results, and I was excited to hear the different perspectives scholars from around the world presented to us. I'd also like to thank Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and That Al Salasil for their support in helping put together such a high profile and prestigious conference. The IFIP conference has taken place annually for the last 16 years, however, this is the first time that it has taken place in Kuwait. The previous conference was held in The Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi, and explored the topics of Smart Cities, Innovation, and Sustainability.

50% discount at VOX Cinema for @Tijari account customers

The Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced its cooperation with VOX Cinema where @Tijari youth account holders receive an exclusive 50% discount on 2D MAX and 2D regular tickets. By offering this discount, CBK is the first bank in Kuwait to take such initiative and offer its youth customers a special offer when booking their tickets at VOX Cinema. The offer is valid all week long, including weekends, at VOX Cinema Avenues and tickets

must be purchased at the cinema box office. It is worthwhile to mention that the @Tijari account is designed for clients aged 14-24 years old with the aim of helping them achieve their goals and build their future. It offers various discounts in a number of restaurants, gym, retail stores and more; in addition to that college and university students get a 50 KWD welcome gift deposited in their account once they transfer their social allowance to the account.

IESK Bhavans qualifies for CBSE Basketball Championship

Jeeb Indian Educational School Kuwait made history when the school's under 17 boys' team won the 20th CBSE Kuwait Cluster Basketball Tournament 2018 held at New United Indian School from October 24 to 27, by trashing United Indian School, the host, at their own backyard, by a convincing score of 41-10. The spirited team is qualified to represent Kuwait in the CBSE

National Basketball championship which will be held in India in December 2018.

The Team members are Julian Gigimon, Aswin Binesh, Vignesh Sivakumar, Abel Koshy Abraham, Ninan Christy, Devnarayan Jiju, Rahul Pradeepkumar, Sricharan Sridhar, Ramakrishnan Vinush, Aditya Gupta, Jude Gigimon and Abin Philip. Rahul Pradeepkumar received the best player of the tournament award.

T Premkumar, the principal, Indian Educational School exalted the remarkable achievement of the proud boys, and appreciated the dedicated work of the P Ed Department in general, and the effective coaching methods of the head coach, Mr Mathiyalagan in particular. Celebrating these exemplary achievements of the sports stars in the making, Bhavans hosted its tenth Annual Athletic Meet with the theme "Superheroes".



Technology

'Business 2 Digital' launches today for first time in Kuwait

An exhibition for Ooredoo's partners to showcase their latest products and services

KUWAIT: Under the patronage and attendance of Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudan, Ooredoo launches "Business 2 Digital" forum today for the first time in Kuwait witnessing the attendance of the country's most prominent guests and attendees from the leading IoT/ICT companies. The event will take place at the Four Seasons Hotel and will be a one day event with two sessions, morning and evening. This event comes in tandem with the Ooredoo's strategy of being a leader in the market in terms of Digital Transformation.

This event is being held under the supervision of the Ooredoo Business department and aims at shedding the light on the major milestones and achievements for the company and also announcements will be made on the future plans for Ooredoo Business. The forum will also feature multiple presentations from leading IoT/ICT companies and will focus on the challenges and changes that have taken place in this sector whether it was technical related or vital issues such as Cyber Security.

The forum will include participations from leading companies in IoT/ICT like Cisco, Fortinet, Honeywell, HP Aruba, Sap and Ericsson. Issues will be raised about the future of the corporate sector, and the key objectives of the next phase of digital transformation. As well as discussing the benefits of cloud services and data centers. The forum will also fea-



The launch of Kuwait App Market

ture a panel discussion with guests from Ooredoo Group, HP, Cisco and Fortinet. A special exhibition will be held at the forum in which Ooredoo partners will participate to showcase their latest products and services.

In the evening, the forum will witness a special event with the launch of the Kuwait App Market. The market will embrace the creativity of around 50 young Kuwaiti's who have designed unique, successful applications. The event will be held in collaboration with Brilliant Lab from 4:40 pm to 8:30 pm. This event is in line with the company's strategy to support the youth through the organization of the Kuwait App Market which will include the most prominent local applications.



Robots reading news in China

WUZHEN: Chinese news readers may have some new competition - artificially intelligent robot anchors that can mimic human facial expressions and mannerisms while reading out reports. The AI anchor, developed by state news agency Xinhua and tech firm Sogou Inc, was on display at the World Internet Conference in the eastern Chinese town of Wuzhen, drawing in curious passers-by.

The anchor, modeled on real-life Chinese news reader Qiu Hao and sporting a black suit and red tie, is part of a major push by China to advance its prowess in AI technology, from surveillance equipment to self-driving cars. In another video presentation from Xinhua, a different robot presenter said it was his "very first day" at the news agency and promised to "work tirelessly to keep you informed as texts will be typed into my system uninterrupted".

At the internet summit, Sogou marketing staff said it wasn't clear when the technology would actually go into use, but crowds gathered nonetheless to take selfies with the digital anchor and Qiu himself who was at the event. The conference is China's top tech event of the year, and has in the past attracted names like Apple Inc CEO Tim Cook and Alphabet Inc head Sundar Pichai. — Reuters

Google outlines steps to tackle harassment

SAN FRANCISCO: Google recently outlined changes to its handling of sexual misconduct complaints, hoping to calm outrage that triggered a worldwide walkout of workers last week. "We recognize that we have not always gotten everything right in the past and we are sincerely sorry for that," chief executive Sundar Pichai said in a message to employees, a copy of which was shared with AFP. "It's clear we need to make some changes."

Arbitration of harassment claims will be optional instead of obligatory, according to Pichai, a move that could end anonymous settlements that fail to identify those accused of harassment. "Google has never required confidentiality in the arbitration process and it still may be the best path for a number of reasons (e.g. personal privacy, predictability of process), but, we recognize that the choice should be up to you," he said in the memo.

Pichai promised that Google will be more transparent with how concerns are handled, and provide better support and care to those who raise such issues with the company. Google will provide "more granularity," regarding sexual harassment investigations and their outcomes, according to Pichai. A section of an internal "Investigations Report" will focus on sexual harassment to show numbers of substantiated concerns as well as trends and disci-

plinary actions, according to the California-based company. He also said Google is consolidating the complaint system and that the process for handling concerns will include providing support people and counselors. Google will update its mandatory sexual harassment training, and require it annually instead of every two years as had been the case.

Less booze

Google is also putting the onus on team leaders to tighten the tap on booze at company events, on or off campus, to curtail the potential for drunken misbehavior. "Harassment is never acceptable and alcohol is never an excuse," Google said in a released action statement. "But, one of the most common factors among the harassment complaints made today at Google is that the perpetrator had been drinking." Google policy already bans excessive consumption of alcohol on the job; while on company business, or at work-related events.

Some teams at the company have already instituted two-drink limits at events or use ticket systems, Google said. Google executives overseeing events will be expected to strongly discourage excessive drinking, according to the company, which vowed "onerous actions" if problems persisted. The company also promised to "recommit" to improving workplace diversity through hiring, retention, and career advancement.

'Googleplex' walkout

Thousands of Google employees joined a coordinated worldwide walkout a week ago to protest the US tech giant's handling of sexual harassment. A massive turnout at

the "Googleplex" in Silicon Valley was the final stage of a global walkout that began in Asia and spread to Google offices in Europe. Some 20,000 Google employees and contractors participated in the protest in 50 cities around the world, according to organizers.

Demma Rodriguez, head of equity engineering and a seven-year Google employee, said during the walkout that it was an important part of bringing fairness to the technology colossus. "We have an aspiration to be the best company in the world," Rodriguez said. "But we also have goals as a company and we can't decide we are going to miss those." The protest took shape after Google said it had fired 48 employees in the past two years — including 13 senior executives — as a result of allegations of sexual misconduct.

Demands posted by organizers included an end to forced arbitration in cases of harassment and discrimination for all current and future employees, along with a right for every Google worker to bring a co-worker, representative, or supporter when filing a harassment claim. In a statement organizers commended Google for the response, but said more changes are needed.

"We demand a truly equitable culture, and Google leadership can achieve this by putting employee representation on the board and giving full rights and protections to contract workers," organizer Stephanie Parker said in the statement. Along with sexual harassment, Google needs to address racism and discrimination that includes inequity in pay and promotions, organizers said. "They all have the same root cause, which is a concentration of power and a lack of accountability at the top," Parker said. — AFP



PARIS: These three photos show from top: the Google logo displayed on a screen and reflected on a tablet. — AFP

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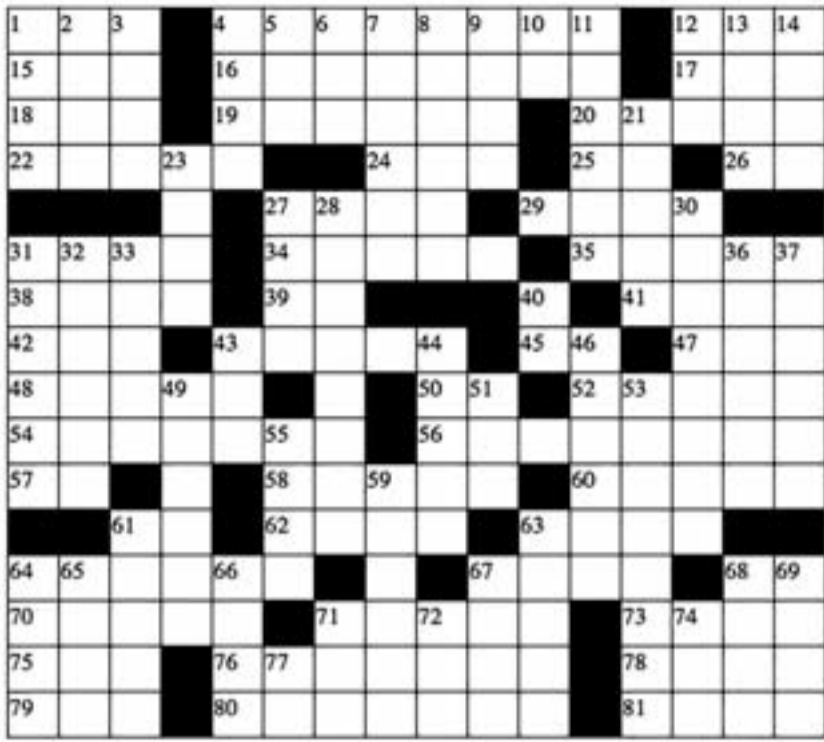
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2057



ACROSS

- 1. Grass mowed and cured for use as fodder.
4. Any of various plants of the genus Sabatnia having usually pink cymose flowers.
12. Any of several small ungulate mammals of Africa and Asia with rodent-like incisors and feet with hooflike toes.
15. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
16. Emitting moisture in the form of vapor or mist.
17. The basic unit of electric current adopted under the System International d'Unites.
18. Aromatic bulb used as seasoning.
19. Revise or reorganize, esp. for the purpose of updating and improving.
20. (folklore) A corpse that rises at night to drink the blood of the living.
22. United States physicist (born in Austria) who proposed the exclusion principle (thus providing a theoretical basis for the periodic table) (1900-1958).
24. Any of numerous hairy-bodied insects including social and solitary species.
25. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
26. Before noon.
27. The face of a timepiece.
31. A battle (1590) in which the Huguenots under Henry IV of France defeated the Catholics under the duke of Mayenne.
34. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
35. Collect or gather.
38. A drop of the clear salty saline solution secreted by the lacrimal glands.
39. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
41. (prefix) In front of or before in space.
42. A pilgrimage to Mecca.
43. Minor or subordinate.
47. An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
48. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
50. A soft gray malleable metallic element that resembles tin but discolors on exposure to air.
52. Large west African tree having large palmately lobed leaves and axillary cymose panicles of small white flowers and one-winged seeds.
54. Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
56. Type genus of the Haemulidae.
57. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
58. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
60. A poplar that is widely cultivated in the United States.
62. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
64. People of the same race or nationality who share a distinctive culture.
70. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
73. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
75. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
76. Having or manifesting or inspiring hope.
78. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
79. A master's degree in education.
80. A stiff protective garment worn by hockey players or a catcher in baseball to protect the shins.
81. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.

DOWN

- 1. A collection of objects laid out top of each other.
2. The capital of Western Samoa.
3. River in eastern Asia.
4. An antidepressant drug that acts by blocking the reuptake of serotonin so that more serotonin is available to act on receptors in the brain.
5. Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
6. The money risked on a gamble.
7. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
8. Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
9. A flat thin rectangular slab (as of fired clay or rubber or linoleum) used to cover surfaces.
10. Not out.
11. (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
12. A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
13. Type genus of the Amidae.
14. (trademark) A tinned luncheon meat made largely from pork.
21. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
23. (Welsh) Corresponds to Iris Ler.
27. A Loloish language.
28. A mooring line that secures the bow of a boat or ship to a wharf.
30. Small translucent lancet-shaped burrowing marine animal.
32. Included seven times in every 19 years.
33. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
36. Any of a group of natural steroid alcohols derived from plants or animals.
37. Characterized by absence of emotional agitation.
40. A unit of magnetomotive force equal to 0.7958 ampere-turns.
43. A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
44. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
46. Saudi Arabian minister of petroleum who was a central figure in the creation of OPEC (born in 1930).
49. (Roman Catholic Church) A devotion consisting of prayers on nine consecutive days.
51. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
53. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali metal group.
55. Slanting diagonally across the grain of a fabric.
59. A city in western Germany near the Dutch and Belgian borders.
61. A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.
63. A burn caused by hot liquid or steam.
65. The periodic rise and fall of the sea level under the gravitational pull of the moon.
66. United States newspaper publisher (1858-1935).
67. Largest known land species.
68. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
69. Free from favoritism or self-interest or bias or deception.
71. (computer science) A measure of how densely information is packed on a storage medium.
72. An abnormally large amount of this fetoprotein in the fetus can signal an abnormality of the neural tube (as spina bifida or anencephaly).
74. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
77. A midwestern state in north central United States in the Great Lakes region.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are one of a kind. Today all things seem to work to bring out all that is unique and special about you. A kind spirit with a soft heart. You seem to accept others as they are. This is a great day for a breakthrough concerning a new creation for you. Do not be surprised when others turn to you for advice. You are looked at as a role model. You may find much admiration and attention seem come your way today. When it comes to getting to the root of a problem, you are the person for the job. Solution oriented with a quick mind is how others may be describing you today.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Plan a special outing with someone near and dear to your heart. Special time with someone you love will be very emotionally satisfying to you today. You are in a loving mood. You are focused on building a stronger relationship and you will find this very satisfying. This is the ideal time to tap into your creative energy. Look around for a need that is not being met. The answer could be a simple invention with a huge impact. Your mindset is perfect for this. You will be able to not only use your talent to benefit your needs, but also help others. This could be a win-win situation for you.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Prepare for a major event. This may put an end to your old way of life. You may find independence is a necessity now rather than a choice. You are on your own and this may mark a time of increased responsibility and accountability. Some soul searching may be in order to face this new life. Take your time and spend some time meditating or relaxing to access your new situation. Do not ask yourself. Why me? You know why. Because you can handle any obstacle that is put in your path.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your words have more power than you could ever imagine. Use them wisely. This is a time others will find you very persuasive. You are a natural born leader and may find yourself asked to lead the pack today. You are starting to discover may career opportunities will begin to present themselves to you. Choose your friends wisely and be sure to keep only those who have your best interest at heart in your circle. You may find not everyone is supportive. Jealousy and envy may rear its head in your world today. Keep your chin up and keep going full steam ahead!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today may find you feeling as you encounter a road block at every turn. Perhaps, today is not the day for big decisions. You may find yourself a bit frustrated and preferring a bit of isolation. You are simply not in the mood for people. You may feel as if you are not able to get your point across to anyone and may feel greatly misunderstood. You could find yourself at odds with those close to you and should remember to try and remain calm as conflict and confrontation seem to be seeking your company today. Today would be a great day for reorganizing and reflection to get yourself back where you want to be.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This is a time that choices you make concerning your living situation could leave you in a bind. Think long and hard before you act and look for alternate solutions to any problems you are dealing with. You may feel isolated and as if you are not getting the support you need now. A desire for a social life may come over you. Be sure to choose your company wisely. Remember when it comes to friends, quantity is never better than quality. Good times could go south quickly this evening if you make the wrong selection of company. Try to clear your mind and make an attempt to connect with one of your longtime true friends this evening.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Hockey

Find and circle all of the Hockey words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Rodney Dangerfield quotation. Grid of letters containing hidden hockey terms and a secret message.

Hip-Hop Artists

Grid of letters containing names of hip-hop artists. A hidden sentence is also present: EVERYTHING IS EVERYTHING.

Daily SuDoku

A 9x9 grid for a Daily Sudoku puzzle with some numbers pre-filled.

Friday's Solution

A 9x9 grid showing the solution to the Daily Sudoku puzzle from the previous block.

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2018



US model Bella Hadid walks the runway at the 2018 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show on November 8, 2018 at Pier 94 in New York City. — AFP

Hockney, Hopper chase headlines at NY art sales

A year after the art market was changed forever by the eye-watering \$450.3 million sale of a Leonardo da Vinci, fall auction season is back, looking to crack new records for artists, albeit from less illustrious heights. The headliners next week in New York, the capital of the international art market, are an Edward Hopper, America's most popular modernist, valued at \$100 million, and British living legend David Hockney, whose iconic swimming pool picture painted after a break-up is estimated to fetch \$80 million.

In the spring, Christie's sale of the iconic Rockefeller art collection for \$832 million set a new benchmark for billionaires and millionaires who might be looking to offload their own collections. This fall, several other collections will go under the hammer, as the wealthy who amassed art in the mid-20th century either die off or look to pass the baton to a new, increasingly international generation.

Chief among them is the remarkable collection of 20th century American art of US entrepreneur Barney Ebsworth, who made his fortune in travel and cruises. He died in April this year. The highlight of his holdings is 1929 canvas "Chop Suey" by Hopper, which Christie's will be auctioning for an estimated \$70-100 million. That would be a whopping profit. Ebsworth bought the work in 1973 for \$180,000 and the painting should easily set a new auction record for the artist—currently \$40.4 million paid in 2013 for "East Wind Over Weehawken."

Several other works this season could also cross the symbolic threshold of \$100 million, which these days won't even necessarily make the top 10 works of art sold at auction. The Rockefeller sale "proved that the market is deep enough to absorb a vast quantity of works of art when they are offered at the same time," says Adrien Meyer, Christie's co-chairman of impressionist and modern art. "If we managed to pass that test, anything is possible," he added.

Generational shift

Hockney is also in the running with his "Portrait of an



In this file photo people look at 'Chop Suey' by US artist Edward Hopper, part of the Barney A Ebsworth Collection, during a presentation at Christie's auction house in Paris.

Artist (Pool with Two Figures)," valued at \$80 million. It is likely to set a new record for work by a living artist, until now held by Jeff Koons and his "Balloon Dog (Orange)," which sold for \$58.4 million at Christie's in 2013. "We rarely can say 'This is the one opportunity to buy the best painting from the artist,'" said Ana Maria Celis, vice president of post-war and contemporary art at Christie's. "This is it." Advertising more than 1,000 works expected to fetch a billion dollars in sales, Christie's is once again expected to out-dazzle old rival Sotheby's across town. Sotheby's might not be chasing the same kind of headlines, but it's still offering buyers dozens of lots in the \$10 million plus category.

One leading light is 1913's "Pre-War Pageant" by Marsden Hartley, one of the prominent American painters in the first half of the 20th century. Valued at \$30 million, the canvas is also likely to set a new auction record for Hartley. Records could be broken for Rene Magritte, Wassily Kandinsky and Willem de Kooning, in what dealers call evidence of the strong market. "If you don't want



In this file photo a woman looks at David Hockney's "Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)" during a press preview at Christie's New York. — AFP photos

to overflow the market, you have to curate," says Gregoire Billault, head of the contemporary art department at Sotheby's.

"We tried to be different and be relevant," he said, "and what the younger generation is telling you is that they want to buy." The biannual marquee art auctions offer a chance to see works often not viewed in public for decades and theatrical displays of purchasing power by a new generation of buyers, spread more widely around the world than ever. "Great collections which were formed in the '50s, '60s, '70s are now owned by collectors who are no longer with us or are about to move on to the next generation," explained Meyer. "The art market is indeed going to see major collections coming up in the very near future. We've only seen the tip of the iceberg, I think, of what's going to happen," he added. The New York art auctions run from Sunday to Thursday. — AFP

French court fines Jeff Koons guilty of plagiarism

A French court on Thursday ruled that celebrity US artist Jeff Koons copied an idea from an advertisement used by a French clothing chain, fining him along with the museum which exhibited the contested work. Franck Davidovici, a French advertising executive, had sued Koons for plagiarism over Koons' "Fait d'Hiver" from 1988, which shows a pig standing over a woman lying on her back, her arms sprawled behind her head. It bore a striking resemblance to a campaign created by Davidovici for the Naf Naf chain in the mid-1980s, down to the woman's facial expression and hairstyle and the cask hanging from the pig's neck. And the Naf Naf campaign was also called "Fait d'Hiver," a play on words suggesting "Winter News in Brief".

Davidovici sued Koons after the work was shown at the Pompidou museum in Paris in 2014. There are four copies of "Fait d'Hiver", and one was sold for around \$4.7 million at Christie's auction house in New York. The court ordered Koons, his business, and the Pompidou museum to pay Davidovici a total of 135,000 euros (\$154,000 dollars) in compensation. Jeff Koons LLC was also fined 11,000 euros for reproducing the pig on the artist's website, while the Flammarion publishing firm was fined 2,000 euros for selling a book which contained the work. But the court did not order the sculpture's seizure, as demanded by the plaintiff.

It was not the first time Koons has been found guilty of forgery. In March 2017, a Paris court ruled he had copied a French photographer's picture as the basis for his "Naked" sculpture, also part of the artist's Banality series which contained "Fait d'Hiver". — AFP



The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra performs during a rehearsal at the Kennedy Center.



Argentine-born pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim (center) and The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra are seen at curtain call at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. — AFP photos



Iranian-Austrian cellist Kian Soltani (left), who plays on a 1680 cello by the brothers Giovanni and Francesco Grancino, and Miriam Manasherov (right) stand after playing solos in Richard Strauss's "Don Quixote" at the Kennedy Center.

Orchestra brings message of peace to divided America



Iranian-Austrian cellist Kian Soltani performs during an interview with AFP at the Kennedy Center.

Israeli, Palestinian and other Middle Eastern musicians brought a message of peace this week to an America torn by caustic political discourse. For nearly 20 years, youths from sworn enemy countries have performed classical music together at the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, the brainchild of conductor Daniel Barenboim and late Palestinian American scholar Edward Said. "We are looking for something almost impossible, but still we try," said Kian Soltani, 26, a rising Austrian Iranian cellist who gave a fiery performance Wednesday at Washington's John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The orchestra opened its program with Richard Strauss's symphonic poem "Don Quixote," inspired by the early 17th century novel about the romantic knight-errant who combats imaginary tyrants.

In many ways, the piece is a metaphor for the orchestra itself. "If somebody would tell us that peace in the Middle East was impossible, we wouldn't stop fighting. We would still continue like this because we believe it's possible," Soltani, who played the title role, told AFP. "It's the same for Don Quixote. He thinks he's a knight, he thinks his dream is possible. Everyone is telling him it's not,

but he doesn't care." Quixotic as it may be, the project is making its first coast-to-coast American tour just as the United States reels from a series of deadly hate crimes.

Politics and war have thwarted a goal to perform in all the members' home countries. There was a concert in the West Bank city of Ramallah, in 2005, and none in Israel. "It's a pity," violist Miriam Manasherov, 37, told AFP. "The day that will come that we can all play in Israel or in the other Arab countries that I can't go to, that will be a huge success." She plays the rotund Sancho Panza, who supports his master gone mad as he pursues his ideals on love, justice and peace in an ugly world.

The pair also performed with their sections for Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, which evolves from dark to light in four movements linked by a recurring "Fate" theme. In "Don Quixote," the hero ultimately gives up on his dream, returns home and dies among his loved ones. The orchestra is hoping to march toward a different future.

Changing attitudes

While he acknowledges that the orchestra-

which borrows its name from Goethe's German lyrical poems inspired by Persian poet Hafez-has not had much impact on the ground in the Middle East, Barenboim says the project has left a "terrific" stamp musically. "It has changed the attitude of every person who has been through it. That's about 1,000 people," said Argentine-born Barenboim, who also claims Israeli, Palestinian and Spanish citizenship. "Nobody who comes into this with whatever preconceptions he has, goes away thinking the same way."

The orchestra's first coast-to-coast US tour is a homecoming of sorts for Barenboim, 75, who stepped down as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's director in 2006 after more than four decades that also saw him serve as conductor and pianist there. The Midwestern city was the tour's first stop, on Monday, ahead of performances in Washington, New York's Carnegie Hall, Berkeley, California and Los Angeles.

During their last US visit, in 2013, the orchestra performed the Beethoven symphony cycle at Carnegie Hall, as well as in Boston and Providence, Rhode Island. "It is a conflict between two people who are deeply convinced they have a right to the

same little piece of land, preferably without the other," Barenboim said about the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "You cannot solve this militarily, unless you kill everybody, and you cannot solve it politically. You can only solve it by coming to the point where both sides understand that their destinies are inextricably linked and therefore accept the existence of the other."

Deceptively simple as it may seem, that is the thrust behind the orchestra and the Barenboim-Said Akademie in Berlin, which trains gifted musicians mainly from the Middle East and North Africa for a professional career. To drive the point home, the concert's closing encore was the overture of Richard Wagner's "The Mastersingers of Nuremberg," a work widely used in Nazi propaganda and subverted once more by the orchestra's unique make-up, to raucous applause and a standing ovation. — AFP

Met Opera reinvents 'Marnie' in the #MeToo era

Operas often revolve around flawed heroines who fall into tragic-even sordid-love affairs. But rarely does one combine a Hitchcockian edge, costumes straight out of "Mad Men" and a storyline that feels tailor-made for the #MeToo era. "Marnie"—now making its US debut at the Met in New York—tells the story of a glamorous yet troubled young woman in late 1950s England who embezzles money from her employers and moves on. One theft too far leaves her prey to unscrupulous men whose unwanted advances, crude even six decades ago, resonate as America stumbles through a nationwide reckoning about sexual misconduct.

"I wanted the audience to leave where they think, 'I kind of like them and I kind of don't like them' all at the same time," star Isabel Leonard told AFP in an interview about her title character and the men around her. "So they're left with something to think about." The opera is Nico Muhly's reworking of a dark 1961 novel by Winston Graham that was later adapted for the silver screen by Alfred Hitchcock—whose star Tippi Hedren has revealed that the legendary director repeatedly harassed her. The formula and timely subject matter is certainly a departure for the 135-year-old Met, but falls into its current strategy of trying to make the art form more accessible to younger audiences.

After seeing the Hitchcock film again a few years ago, director Michael Mayer pitched the idea to Met brass, who commissioned the work from Muhly, a young American composer who calls opera a "magical idiom." "Marnie" will be simulcast in cinemas worldwide this weekend as part of the Met's "Live in HD" series—another outreach project aimed at drawing in new fans.

'Extra icky' in post-Weinstein world

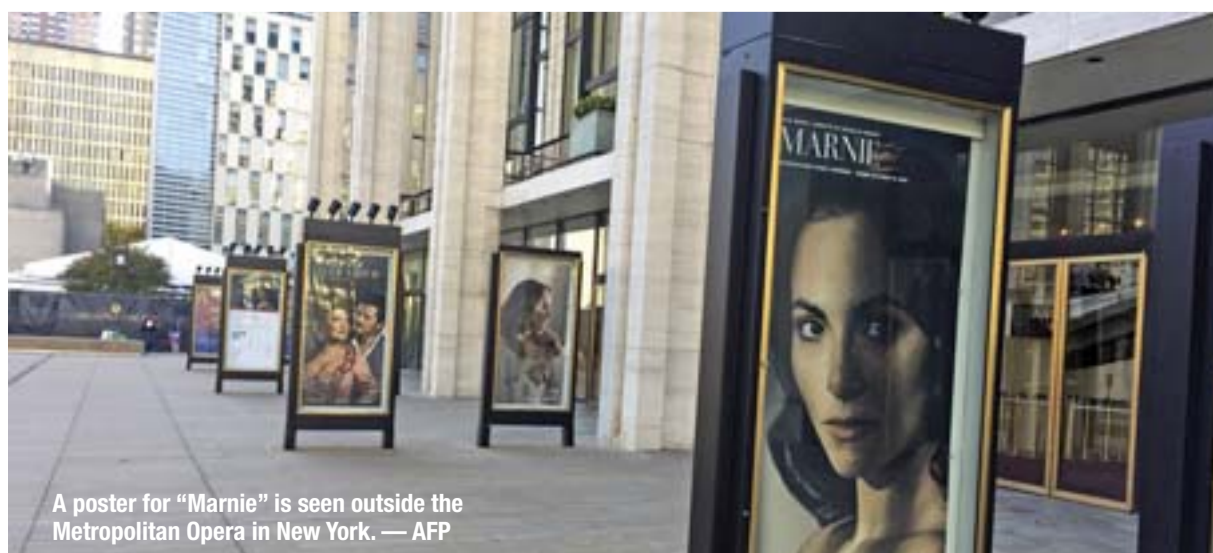
"Marnie" opens with flashing images of the show's vic-

main character in various incarnations past and present. The opera unfolds in a world of gray offices, transient city bars and psychological tension. But Marnie and her madrigal-like choir of Shadows—four other lookalikes who help explain her inner turmoil—pop off the stage in bright-colored dresses and coats reminiscent of the Technicolor world of "Mad Men" and the Hitchcock film. Muhly built the piece as a series of episodes occasionally broken up by asides in which Marnie ruminates on what just happened and plots her next move.

These interludes "serve as momentary windows into her train of thought," Muhly wrote in a note about the production, adding that her music was written to be "disjointed" to reflect her shattered state of mind.

The audience is forced to confront some unpleasant truths about Marnie's prospects vis-a-vis men—the character is ogled, groped and nearly raped. But her relationships with men are left ambiguous. To prepare for the part, Leonard, a mezzo-soprano, said she read the Graham book, but avoided the movie because she didn't want the images to influence her performance, and also because she found the preview "sort of exploitative." The opera's creative team was in rehearsal in London last fall when the Harvey Weinstein story broke, ushering in the #MeToo era, Mayer recalled.

The production has not been changed in light of those events, but the indignities suffered by Marnie feel "extra icky now because we're so hyper-aware of the lines of behavior," Mayer told AFP. "These men are treating her in a wildly inappropriate way," he said. "That would have been true 10 years ago and 40 and 50 years ago, but it just seems to have extra resonance at the moment." — AFP



A poster for "Marnie" is seen outside the Metropolitan Opera in New York. — AFP



Deliverymen unload packages from a truck in Beijing ahead of the annual November 11 Singles Day shopping spree. — AFP photos



Deliveryman Nan Shan drives his three-wheeler vehicle as he makes his rounds in Beijing.

Happiness on three wheels: China's parcel deliverymen

Defly weaving through peak-hour Beijing traffic on a three-wheeled bike, Nan Shan has no time to chat as he races to deliver nearly 80 packages across China's sprawling mega-capital. Nan, 29, is one of an estimated 1.1 million deliverymen who fan out across China delivering some 109 million packages daily to fulfill the country's insatiable demand for online shopping. His job will get even more intense on Sunday, when the country holds its annual Singles Day shopping spree—China's answer to Black Friday, which saw \$25 billion spent in just one day last year. "It's not that more people are buying things but the same number of people are buying twice the number of things," he told AFP.

A university graduate with a degree in international trade and commerce, Nan fell into the delivery business after a tight market in 2013 meant jobs were limited in Beijing. "They said it was a good living being a deliveryman, so I tried it out and haven't turned back ever since," he told AFP. "The money I earned wasn't much to begin with, but as time went by and I got more familiar, I now make over 6,000 yuan (\$860) a month." But the work is tough and relentless: no matter the season, Nan rises at the crack of dawn to collect his assigned packages for the day at a distribution point.

The packages are loaded into the cargo hold of his

three-wheeled bike—sometimes even strapped down on the roof—as he makes his way across the Jianguomen district, a mix of traditional commercial buildings and apartment blocks. On a recent Wednesday, faced with a building without an elevator, Nan was forced to lug a sack of parcels up several flights of stairs. Despite racing to his delivery destinations, it still takes him about five hours to complete his rounds—allowing time for a quick lunch before he hits the road again, this time collecting packages. "One time, five minutes after I dropped off a package, the recipient called me to say she wanted to return the product, so I had no choice but to turn back and pick it up," he said. "An occasion like Singles Day is a double-edged sword for us, we have to work harder but we also earn more. "It's tiring, the life of a deliveryman is very tough."

But Nan, who is from Shanxi in central China, rarely takes a day off because "there's nothing much to do". Asked if he would put his degree to use and take on another job, Nan demurred. "I'm used to delivery work now. It's not that I don't have dreams but the right opportunity just hasn't come up," he said. "For now, I'm happy where I am." — AFP



Deliverymen sort packages in Beijing.

Lifestyle | Features



This aerial photo shows houses along the Xuyen Tam canal in Ho Chi Minh City. — AFP photos

Living on edge: Vietnam's 'black canal' dwellers

On the banks of Ho Chi Minh City's Xuyen Tam canal the houses come in many forms. Short or tall, pieced together from scraps of wood, or metal or plastic. Some tilt precariously over the polluted water's edge. The makeshift homes are set to be demolished under long-promised government plans to redevelop the city's "black canals"—nicknamed for the darkened hue of their waste-strewn waters—where thousands live with no legal title to the land. That worries grandmother Nguyen Thi My, who for the past 28 years has lived on the downtown Xuyen Tam canal, eking out a living selling snacks.

"It'll be a pity to move, I know this area well... and it's good for business," she told AFP from her busy home where she lives with family. It's a familiar woe in the city where land fights frequently flare up between residents and a government seen to be in the pockets of powerful developers. My's is one of 20,000 remaining households on Ho Chi Minh City's serpentine

waterways slated to be demolished by 2020 as part of the city's massive renewal project that promises to replace some of the polluted canal banks with Parisian-style riverside promenades, paved roads, modern shops and buildings.

Around 36,000 homes along the city's canals have already been cleared, forcing residents to move to the outskirts or accept compensation that is often lower than soaring market rates. Some canal dwellers like Le Thi Thanh are fed up with the trash-and stench-and say they'd happily move. "People just throw trash and defecate in the canal, so we have to live with the pollution," 61-year-old Thanh, who has been on Xuyen Tam canal for 20 years, told AFP. Thanh runs a boarding house, mostly for rural migrant laborers, and sells lottery tickets from the slanted porch of her home pieced together with old wooden doors and metal sheets.

The canals of Ho Chi Minh City have not always been so coveted. Under the French, they were the city's main arteries used to move goods

and people around, but as roads modernized and as the population boomed with war refugees in the 1960s, they became places to illegally settle. Today, the tide may be turning again. "There's a new elite that's emerging that's retransforming (canals) into an aesthetic place where you might sit and capture cool breezes and have views," Erik Harms, author of "Luxury and Rubble" about development in the city, told AFP.

The relocations have not been easy for some former canal residents like Nguyen Van Muc, who said he was forced to move into government housing three years ago. His new house, though outfitted with ceramic tiled floors and plastered walls, is half the size of his old clapboard model on Nuoc Len canal—and 20 kilometers (12 miles) away. "I've sent several complaint letters to central and local authorities but received no response," the former police officer told AFP. — AFP



This photo shows a man washing dishes on the banks of the Xuyen Tam canal in Ho Chi Minh City.

Global grad show to host world's leading educators at A.I. conference

Artists, engineers, academics, designers and computer scientists will come together tomorrow for the first 'Belief in A.I.' conference at Dubai Design District. A key element of this year's Global Grad Show, in partnership with the Investment Corporation of Dubai, the conference will address the complex and challenging subject of Artificial Intelligence; where it is now, how it is interpreted in different cultures and where it could take us in the future.

Guests from organisations working in the fields of automation, urban development, infrastructure, transport and aviation will attend the Belief in A.I. conference, which will aim to challenge commonly-held assumptions about the nature of Artificial Intelligence and our relationship to it.

Co-curated by Ben Vickers, Chief Technology Officer of the Serpentine Galleries in London, and Kenric McDowell who leads the Artist + Machine Intelligence program at Google Arts & Culture, the line-up of speakers includes some of the world's leading philosophers and academic minds from leading universities. Consisting of a series of keynotes, talks, panel discussions, presentations and performances from those working in the field, the conference will examine how the underlying beliefs of a person, nation, company or religion, shape and influence the development of a technology. Topics that will be explored, include: Creative Machines and their Human Collaborators, Education in the Age of

Automation, Designing for Intelligence and the Future of A.I in Dubai.

Ben Vickers, Chief Technology Officer, Serpentine Galleries, London said: "We recognise that we live in a moment where design choices made to a simple user interface can change the lives of over a billion people simultaneously, impacting the way they think, how they interact and the realities they produce in the world. The aim of the conference is to analyse this new phase of development in technology that includes the creation and introduction of A.I., and where in some cases control of the decision-making process is being handed over entirely to non-human entities."

Experts on the speaker panel will include Rana Dasgupta, British Indian novelist and named one of Britain's best novelists under 40; Benjamin Bratton, American sociologist, architectural and design theorist, known for his writing on the cultural implications of computing and globalization; Yuk Hui, philosopher and one of the foremost contemporary theorists on digital technology; Noah Raiford, the Chief Operating Officer of the Dubai Future Foundation; and one of the most influential figures in the world of art, Hans Ulrich Obrist, artistic director of the Serpentine Galleries, London.

Brendan McGetrick, Curator, Global Grad Show, added: "A.I. is a powerful, poorly understood technology, and its application is now defined by narrow interests. It holds immense potential value to governments and corporations: as their citizens and customers, we'll have to reckon with A.I. one way or another. At this still early stage, it's essential that we examine exactly whose notion work or play, health or happiness we're adopting when we allow this technology to infiltrate our daily lives."

Douraid Zaghoulani, Chief Operating Officer, Investment Corporation of Dubai, commenting on the conference, said: "Belief in AI' is a major highlight of the programme for this year's Global Grad Show and offers a unique forum for exploring the role of technology in design. Taking place in Dubai, a city synonymous with enabling innovation and championing ambitious design, the conference is the ideal setting for exploring AI and the role it plays in creativity, design, and art."

Belief in A.I. conference will be held as part of Global Grad Show during Dubai Design Week. Both events are owned and managed by Art Dubai Group. Taking place at Dubai Design District, building 4, the Belief in A.I. conference will be streamed live on Facebook @GlobalGradShow. To register your interest, and be part of the debate email: RSVP@globalgradshow.com



Brendan McGetrick, curator of the Global Grad Show.



Ben Vickers

Fashion as an inspiration: Kaspersky Lab uncovers the art of technology while launching new generation of beyond-AV Consumer Solution

The fusion of fashion and technology is a reminder of the rising influence of technology on design, and the ubiquity of creativity across sectors. Our modern and highly connected world gave rise to the concept of 'Digital Art', wherein art is created and stored digitally. As a security company, Kaspersky Lab not only monitors trends in the cyber space, but also constantly transforms its threat intelligence and security expertise into next generation security solutions. The same way artists and designers transform their creativity and imagination into pieces of clothes that will be worn by people in coming seasons.

In order to literally showcase the connection between art and technology, Kaspersky Lab has partnered with Emirati designer Ayten Al-Khayat, who took her inspiration from technology to create a special collection sought to express the world of digital code, gadgets, and smart devices through cloth and texture, forms and femininity - with a flavor of Arabic culture.

Ayten Al-Khayat, Fashion Designer and owner of Raw by Ayten commented: "When first ideating this collection, it was certainly a challenge as I've never delved this deeply into technology before. As I progressed with sketching and continued researching, however, I was surprised to see the many similarities between our professional interests, such as having an eye for detail, and following the latest trends in order to create something appealing to customers."

Artistry comes in many forms and, in the field of cybersecurity artistry is always staying a step ahead of cybercriminals and developing cutting edge security solutions that are advanced and forward looking. Thus, the company's portfolio has been upgraded with a completely new consumer product - a patent-



ed adaptive security service called Kaspersky Security Cloud, which has the ability to adapt to your lifestyle to keep you safe online.

Individuality applies to our online behavior as well, therefore, each person's online behavior differs from others. This is why Kaspersky Lab experts invented this unique patented solution Kaspersky Security Cloud. This solution combines all the best elements of the company's flagship solutions, including the market leading protection against cyberthreats, and adaptive "scenarios". Adaptivity means that the service offers protection exactly when it is needed, depending on the individual's behavior and the device they use.

Kaspersky Security Cloud operates accord-

ing to the unique security-as-a-service scheme. It is "attached" not to the device, but to its owner via their account on the My Kaspersky portal. In addition, the service is available on both an annual and monthly subscription basis. However, the uniqueness of the solution lies in the fact that, with the appropriate settings, the product behaves like an "adviser" that promptly tells you what to do in order to maintain a connection when it is most needed, or to avoid jeopardizing your personal data when such a risk occurs. Thus, the new adaptive service allows people to always stay connected while ensuring that their data is protected.

"While developing Kaspersky Security Cloud, we were guided by the desire to create a service that could provide the right protection at the right time. Each person has their own domain, which means each person needs special protection that suits their unique digital lifestyle. We believe that the future lies with security solutions that will adapt to the individual, to each member of their family, to their environment and behavior. Kaspersky Security Cloud is our first step towards this future", says Aman Manzoor, Head of Consumer Sales in the Middle East, Turkey and Africa at Kaspersky Lab.

Kaspersky Security Cloud starts to be available in the Middle East on November 8th. There will be several versions of the solution: the free version has a limited number of scenarios, it only applies to one account and three devices at a time, while the Personal version provides full service functionality for one account and five devices. The Family version covers up to 20 accounts and up to 20 devices.



Lifestyle | Features



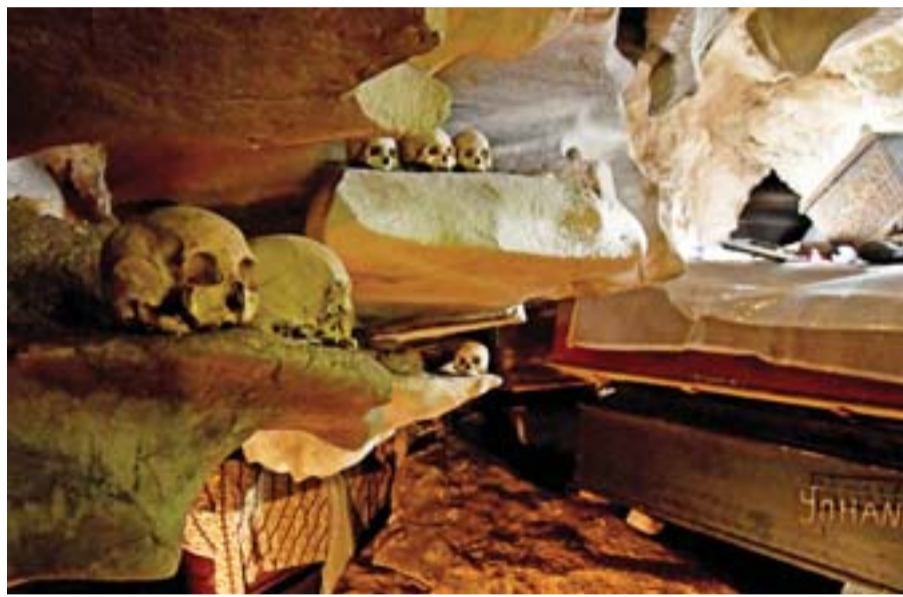
This picture shows coffins at the entrance to a burial cave in Londa in Tana Toraja regency. — AFP photos



This shows the entrance to a burial cave in Londa in Tana Toraja regency, where wooden dolls known as Tau Tau are dressed in Torajan traditional clothes and displayed to represent deceased nobility.



Torajan villagers performing a dance during a funeral ceremony known as 'Rambu Solo' in Londa in Tana Toraja regency.



The remains of bodies interned in a burial cave in Londa in Tana Toraja regency.

Journey to the afterlife: Indonesia's Toraja live among the dead



Coffins at the entrance to a burial cave in Londa in Tana Toraja regency.

Martha Kande's family lived with her greying, shriveled corpse at their home in Indonesia for seven months, as they prepared an elaborate funeral that is central to the Toraja people's centuries-old death rituals. "We keep the body in a coffin at home," Meyske Latiuhmallo, the 81-year-old woman's granddaughter, told AFP. "But it's kept open before they are buried because we see them as sick so they are brought food and drink every day." Torajans—an ethnic group that numbers about a million people on Sulawesi island—have few qualms when it comes to talking with an embalmed corpse, dressing them up, brushing their hair or even taking pictures with a mummified relative.

Traditionally the embalming process involved sour vinegar and tea leaves but these days families usually inject a formaldehyde solution into the corpse. "After a week, there's no odour anymore", local tourist guide Lisa Saba Palloan told AFP. It may seem a ghoulish practice to some: living side-by-side with an embalmed body for months—or even years—before paying homage in a ritualistic display of blood and guts. But the Toraja believe that a person is only dead—and their soul freed—after an elaborate funeral known as "Rambu Solo".



The exterior view of a burial cave in Londa in Tana Toraja regency.



Traditional Torajan performers waiting for the start of a funeral ceremony known as 'Rambu Solo' in Londa in Tana Toraja regency.

'Preserve tradition'

Wild boars howled and blood poured from a sacrificial buffalo's throat as Kande's family prepared her mummified body for the afterlife. Following the five-day ceremony, the octogenarian was placed in one of the many burial caves scattered around the mountainous region, where skeletal remains are arranged by social hierarchy. They sit alongside wooden dolls in traditional clothing, representing deceased nobility, while some bodies are kept in coffins that hang from steep cliffs—owing to limited space. "These are the customs of our ancestors," said Kande's 72-year-old nephew Johannes Singkali. "We maintain them to preserve these traditions and keep them sacred from outside influences." Although most Torajans are Christian—a product of Dutch colonialism—they have held onto earlier traditions rooted in animistic beliefs.

The more elaborate a funeral the more likely the person's spirit will reach the level of the gods. But it comes at a cost. As many as 100 buffalo could be slaughtered for a noble person, while as few as eight will suffice for a middle-class Torajan. Funerals can set a family back up to two billion rupiah (\$133,000) — an extravagant

amount in a country where more than half the population live on less than \$5.50 a day, according to the World Bank. "We used to be animists, so we buried people with boars and buffalos to offer the spirits on the way to the afterlife," Singkali said.

"It costs a lot and there are a lot of preparations while all the relatives living outside Toraja must come too."

'Time of celebration'

Hundreds gathered in La'Bo village for Kande's spiritual send-off, along with dozens of picture-snapping tourists. Her body was put into a red coffin—in the form of a traditional, boat-shaped house—which was then placed in front of her home. Relatives clad in black dragged dozens of pigs into the centre of the village for slaughter as family members danced. At midday, a prized buffalo was led out onto a blue tarpaulin where its throat was slit—confirming the woman's death—and the carcass butchered for a big dinner to follow.

Finally Kande's coffin was carried around the neighborhood in a symbolic goodbye. It's not for the squeamish, but American visitor Ellie Eshleman took a philosophical view. "I am passionate about death," the 29-year-old said. "I would like to help restore it to its spiritual place in the Western world. So, I came here to see their death customs and how it can be a time of celebration."

Death tourism

The Indonesian government is trying to promote Torajan death rituals as part of ambitious plans to boost tourism across the sprawling Southeast Asian archipelago. While the Toraja region draws tens of thousands of tourists annually, it is a fraction of the millions who descend on holiday hotspot Bali. Growing Toraja tourism faces several hurdles, although opposition from locals does not appear to be among them. Rather, poor infrastructure and the absence of a major airport in the highland region make travel difficult.

Furthermore, it is difficult to plan a trip to see a Rambu Solo ceremony because dates can change as families struggle to save enough money for one. But many visitors are still willing to take a chance and drive for hours from the nearest major airport to see one of the world's most unique funeral rites. "Toraja is a piece of heaven on earth," said Harli Patriatno, North Toraja's head of culture and tourism. "Its natural beauty combined with the Toraja people's spiritualism and funeral rites is extraordinary." — AFP



Visitor poses with the remains of bodies interned in a burial cave in Londa in Tana Toraja regency.

Great for writers, terrible for citizens: The world according to Irvine Welsh

Twenty-five years ago Irvine Welsh's debut novel "Trainspotting" burst out of the housing schemes and back alleys of post-industrial Scotland in a whirlwind of drugs, sex and violence that horrified and delighted critics alike. The novel's protagonists have long since scammed, snorted and stolen their way to cult status—helped along by a hugely successful film adaptation. And Scotland's most famous ex-heroin addict is still delivering the goods, and says he is as far as ever from settling for "carpet slippers and a cottage on the coast".

In town for the Hong Kong International Literary Festival Welsh told AFP the world right now "is a terrible place to be a citizen in but it's a great place to be a writer in". He is tight-lipped about his current project—which is set in a Trumpian future and will have mass shootings as its main theme—other than to say that like every other, he is "constantly engrossed in it," and that it's "nearly finished."

Creating post-Trainspotting

Welsh is happy that "Trainspotting", his first creation, is still "bubbling" away in the age of the smartphone-toting millennial. In 2013 it was voted readers' favorite Scottish novel of the past 50 years. And last year Historic Environment Scotland awarded listed status to Edinburgh's "Banana Flats", a textbook example of New Brutalist architecture made famous by the novel as the home of one of its characters, Simon "Sick Boy" Williamson. Since 1993, Welsh has gone on to write 15 more books as well as a number of plays and adaptations, casting deeper into the murky lives of Edinburgh's pimps, bent cops, burglars and dealers.

He has also moved from brutal chronicling of the dismantlement of post-war Britain, to America, where he takes violence and aggression off the football terraces and into the basement of a serial killer. Welsh has spent 10 years Stateside—in San Francisco, Chicago and now Miami—and says it's "probably enough". He has laid into President Donald Trump in expletive-ridden Tweets and has criticised his brand of populism as a sham, but says he still feels compelled to write about America.

"With everything that's going on in the States it's difficult not to write about it," he says. "Just in the last few days a lot of things in the book are now rendered irrelevant in a way, because events have just moved on so quickly, so it might need a redraft again."



Scottish novelist Irvine Welsh poses during an interview with AFP in Hong Kong. — AFP

The Union 'has to go'

His homeland is in flux too as Brexit asks new questions of what the UK stands for and how those living in its constituent parts see themselves and each other. He recalls 1970s London and spending summer holidays there with an aunt, where he felt "very British then. I felt very Scottish too... there was a kind of unity... all that stuff was wrecked by thirty years of neoliberalism, and I don't think it's coming back." "Now I'm not so much pro-Scottish independence, but anti-UK," he says, terming the more than 300-year-old Union "false, artificial... and detrimental to the development of progressive forces". "As it currently is, it has to go." He says he is "neither pro nor anti-Brexit: the EU is an absolute mess and a shambles but the British ruling class are a mess and a shambles as well".

'Sanitized' music

Welsh does not limit himself to the written word. He is on a personal quest to inject some fun back into an electronic music scene he sees as too sanitized, serious and obsessed with technology. "A lot of the young DJs today, they've been doing it since they were 10 years old in their bedrooms...the bedroom's been their studio. You've got people playing dance music who don't dance... they sit, masters of the technology but they don't go out and have any fun."

An album of his own is in the works, a "counterblast" offering of electro/techno that he is confident will bring some humor and fun back to the dance floor. "especially me singing with a German accent". But that doesn't mean he's giving up writing. Far from it. "The writer's life is absolutely fantastic," he says. And still one that permits the odd juvenile relapse. "I shouldn't really say I don't party hard these days after the past couple of nights in Singapore," he says coyly. "Singapore's not known for that, more for locking you up forever for that sort of thing. But I think that's what appealed to me, the transgression element to it. I had quite a whale of a time." — AFP

Olive tree sabotage plagues W Bank Palestinian farmers

NABLUS: Palestinian farmer Mahmoud Abu Shinar surveys two rows of severed olive trees - something he says has become a sadly familiar sight. He didn't see who took a chainsaw to them at night, but he blames residents of an Israeli settlement a few hundred meters away. "We came on Sunday and were shocked that all these trees were cut down," Abu Shinar said. "I called the landowner. They came and the (Israeli) army and security forces came too. But of course it was useless."

Olives are perhaps the most well-known and abundant Palestinian product, with trees lining valleys and terraced hillsides throughout the occupied West Bank. The first rains after the hot summer months are the signal for farmers to begin harvesting their crop, but it can come with risks. In many places, farmers say they face intimidation and violence from nearby settlers and call in support from foreign and Israeli supporters, including Jewish rabbis, to protect them and their crops.

Some of the incidents are seen as attempts at revenge following Palestinian attacks on Israelis, even if the farmers targeted were not involved. In other cases, say rights groups, there is little motivation other than just to destroy Palestinian property. Some rights groups have distributed video footage of such incidents in a bid to pressure Israeli authorities to act.

Israeli settlers charge that their crops have also been damaged by Palestinians, including an incident in May when around 1,000 grapevines were allegedly destroyed. More than 7,000 Palestinian-owned trees have been vandalized so far this year, according to the United Nations. In the whole of 2017, it was less than 6,000, the year before only 1,600. Abu Shinar said that in recent weeks around 200 trees had been destroyed in fields he works on near Ramallah in the central West Bank, costing thousands of dollars in lost earnings. "They want the land," he said, of the settlers. "Who else would come and commit a crime like this?"

The body that represents West Bank settlements said there was also an increase in attacks on Israeli-owned farms, labeling it "agricultural terror". Israeli police said they were "investigating a number of incidents when damage was caused to olive trees". "There have also been a number of complaints made by Jewish owners of fields of damage caused to olive trees." Patrols have been stepped up, police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said.

But rights groups charge that Palestinian crops have long been vandalized by settlers without any serious



TURMUS AYA: Palestinian farmer Mahmoud Abu Shinar stands next to destroyed olive trees near this West Bank village north of Ramallah on Oct 22, 2018. — AFP

effort by the authorities to stop it. Around 400,000 Israelis live in settlements that dot the West Bank and range in size from large towns to tiny hamlets. The international community considers them illegal. A few dozen kilometers north of Abu Shinar's trees near the city of Nablus, a small group huddles under a tree, picking through the leaves for olives.

Just 10 m away stands an abandoned house daubed with Hebrew graffiti, while the Israeli settlement of Har Brakha is over a hill. Israeli forces patrol the area, with one soldier telling the Palestinians they are "there to help". But the farmers said that two days earlier settlers had run down and damaged trees. They claimed the

army is often slow to react and sides with settlers. They invite international and Israeli supporters to attend the picking season to help protect themselves.

Retired British woman Caroline, who declined to give her full name, said she had been coming each year for a decade to work with Palestinian communities close to "particularly difficult settlements". This year, she said, she went with a female farmer to her land near a settlement, but the army blocked their path. "When she eventually got into the groves, 100 of her trees had been chainsawed down by settlers. There weren't even any olives for us to pick," she said.

Rabbi Gil Nativ makes sure to wear his kippa cap

as he picks olives to show Palestinians not all Jews support Israeli settlement expansion. "Some (Israelis) consider us as traitors," said Nativ, who volunteers for the Rabbis for Human Rights organization. "For me the main principle of the Jewish faith is all men are created in the image of God and all human beings are descendants of the same Adam and Eve." Yigal Dilmoni, CEO of the Yesha Council which represents Israeli settlements, said in a statement to AFP that they "deplore all acts of vandalism and purposeful destruction of property". He highlighted a series of Palestinian attacks on Israeli settlements. — AFP

After back-to-back mass shootings, America grows numb

WASHINGTON: When a gunman entered a California music bar this week and started firing, some of the patrons ran out of back doors, they smashed windows to escape, they hid. Unlike some mass shooting victims, they were not paralyzed by fear. But their quick action was not necessarily instinctive. Several of those at the Borderline Bar and Grill in Thousand Oaks on Wednesday had been through a mass shooting before - when a gunman opened fire on a crowd of country music fans in Las Vegas last year, killing 58.

"Unfortunately, these young people have learned that this may happen," Ventura County Sheriff Geoff

Dean said following Wednesday's shooting by a Marine combat veteran that left 12 dead in Thousand Oaks. Even in a country that has become accustomed to gun massacres, the idea that some Americans have lived through not one, but two attacks is startling. "It's insane is the only way to describe it," California's Democratic Governor-elect Gavin Newsom said. "The normalization, that's the only I can describe it. It's become normalized."

The southern California slaughter came on the heels of another massacre, when Robert Bowers, who openly spewed extreme anti-Semitic invective, allegedly burst into a Pittsburgh synagogue and killed 11 Jewish worshippers. The Gun Violence Archive, which tracks mass shootings in which at least four people were shot or killed, said the Thousand Oaks assault was the 307th mass shooting this year. In other words, a mass shooting takes place somewhere in America almost daily.

Back-to-back shootings have left many Americans feeling jaded to the horror, said Gregg Carter, a soci-

ology professor at Bryant University in Rhode Island. "A constant bombardment of bad news is unhealthy for us both mentally and physically," he told AFP. "Americans are turning themselves off emotionally to mass shootings as a self-protection mechanism." A sort of switch-off can be seen in the media too. Whereas a mass shooting used to dominate the news cycle for a week or more and garner saturation cable news coverage, such incidents nowadays are receiving much less air time.

This "public fatigue or fatalism" is partly due to a barrage of other big events crowding out the story, and partly it's because political debate about how to address the problem is stuck, noted Robert Spitzer, political science professor at the State University of New York, College at Cortland. Guns rights are enshrined in the 2nd Amendment to the US Constitution and Republicans are loathe to discuss any sort of gun control, often reacting to gun violence by offering "thoughts and prayers" to the victims but little else.

"However, the gun issue is more on the minds of voters than ever, and there is good reason to believe that support for stronger gun laws is a winning issue for candidates this year," Spitzer told AFP. The mother of a young man who survived last year's gun massacre in Las Vegas, only to be killed by the California gunman, made an impassioned plea for gun control. "I don't want prayers, I don't want thoughts, I want gun control and I hope to God nobody else sends me more prayers. I want gun control. No. More. Guns," said Susan Schmidt-Orfanos, whose son Telemachus was a 27-year US Navy veteran.

Another somber reflection of America's mass shooting crisis can be seen around Washington and across the country, where flags on government property are flying at half-mast. In a flag-obsessed nation, the frequency with which the Stars and Stripes now flutters in mourning is hard not to notice. When it was lowered Thursday, barely a week had gone by since it was raised again following the mass shooting in Pittsburgh. — AFP

Dark clouds on horizon as govt...

Continued from Page 1

and Adel Al-Damkhi warned that if the government does not resign, they will grill Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. Minister of Public Works Hussam Al-Roumi submitted his resignation in the face of devastation and material losses, but his resignation has not yet been officially accepted. Roumi yesterday toured the areas that have borne the brunt of unusually heavy downpours.

National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem called for a meeting of the government and MPs in his office today to discuss the consequences of the rainfall, but several opposition MPs said they will not attend. Ghanem said cooperation with state agencies should be given top priority in order to overcome the aftershock of the heavy rains. Speaking to reporters while checking the situation at a waterlogged bridge, he said it is now significant to work hard to reduce reflections and save lives, but later affected people will be compensated and those found negligent will be brought to book. He urged everyone to work together with concerned state agencies, primarily the ministry of interior, the army and National Guard to ensure the safety of people.

Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber yesterday chaired an extraordinary session of the Cabinet at the interior ministry's headquarters to follow up on repercussions of the rain. The special session was held to follow up on results of the torrential rain and closely examine contingency plans for coping with conditions throughout the country for safeguarding people and properties, announced Deputy Premier and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

At onset of the session, the prime minister greeted the First Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on his safe return following recuperation abroad. The ministers then examined detailed reports on preparedness to cope with the extraordinary situation. The premier stressed during the session on the necessity of following up on the preparations to deal with all prospects, in light of the persistent

bad weather.

He has affirmed that any flaws or cases of complacency and slackness will be pinpointed, emphasizing that officials responsible for the irregularities or who have failed to fulfill their duties properly will be named and shamed. Instant interrogations of the slack officials will be held, he warned. Saleh has also announced that the Cabinet session is open-ended - to proceed till the end of the extraordinary situation.

The ministry of education announced earlier yesterday that a number of schools are experiencing some technical problems. Classes at some schools with electrical problems may be suspended because "we do not want to risk our students' lives," said Ministry Acting Undersecretary Yousef Al-Najjar during an inspection tour in Ahmadi governorate. Najjar affirms that work is underway to clean schools that have experienced some problems, but the difficulty lies in how to access some others due to conditions of surrounding streets.

Last week the government sacked two senior public works officials, holding them responsible for failing to make the necessary preparations. Several MPs called on the government to compensate people for the losses sustained during the powerful thunderstorms that saw several areas in Kuwait receive more than the average annual rainfall of just over 100 mm.

MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari submitted a draft law calling for setting up a committee headed by a senior judge to look into compensating people for damages. Kandari also said all suspicious contracts must be investigated and the culprits should be referred to the public prosecution. Many areas, roads, bridges and houses were submerged and an unidentified number of vehicles were washed away.

Muwaizri said he will not attend the proposed MP-government meeting today, adding that this government does not deserve the confidence and if it does not step down, he vowed to grill the prime minister. MP Majed Al-Mutairi said the resignation of the entire government is not enough "because what happened is a disaster by all means and all those responsible - from officials to contracting companies - must be held to account". Opposition MP Abdulwahab Al-Babtain said the government must resign immediately because it has contributed to damaging the properties of people as a result of its mismanagement.

Calif wildfires rage, Trump

Continued from Page 1

Remedy now, or no more Fed payments!" he added. The remains of five of the victims in Northern California were discovered in or near burned out cars, three outside residences and one inside a home, Butte County's Honea said. Another 35 people had been reported missing and three firefighters had been injured. The flames descended on Paradise so quickly that many people were forced to abandon their cars and run for their lives down the sole road through the mountain town. The Camp Fire, which broke out on Thursday at the edge of the Plumas National Forest northeast of Sacramento, has since blackened more than 90,000 acres and was only 5 percent contained as of nightfall on Friday.

The Woolsey Fire broke out on Thursday and quickly jumped the 101 Freeway, a major north-south artery, in several places. On Friday, it moved over the Santa Monica Mountains toward Malibu, where flames driven by hot Santa Ana winds gusting up to 80 kph raced down hillsides and through canyons toward multi-million dollar homes. Early yesterday, fire was nearing Pepperdine University, a private residential college with 7,700 students, where students remained sheltered on the school's main campus in Malibu.

Jordan floods kill 12, tourists...

Continued from Page 1

A rescuer was also among the dead, the civil defense spokesman said. State television said the waters had reached as high as four meters in parts of the red-rock ravine city of Petra and the adjacent Wadi Musa desert. It broadcast footage of tourists sheltering on high ground on both sides of the access road to Jordan's biggest attraction. The government spokeswoman said 3,762 tourists were evacuated.

Designated a UNESCO world heritage site in 1985, Petra draws hundreds of thousands of tourists a year to its rock-hewn treasury, temples and mausoleums. Its

School officials told students gathered in a common area that they have been assured by fire officials that the school's buildings were built to withstand fire. "It's very clear that both L.A. County Fire and Pepperdine are thinking this our best course of action at this point," said Connie Horton, vice president for student affairs, on a video posted on Twitter that showed some students wearing paper masks over their mouths. She warned students to anticipate "more smoke and maybe even ash and probably some frightening visuals, things like a tree on fire".

Thousands of residents took to the Pacific Coast Highway to head south or took refuge on beaches, along with their horses and other pets. Among those forced to flee were celebrities including Lady Gaga and Kim Kardashian, who said on Twitter that flames had damaged the home she shares in nearby Calabasas with Kanye West. "Fire is now burning out of control and heading into populated areas of Malibu," the city said in a statement online. "All residents must evacuate immediately."

Some 95,000 residents have been evacuated in Ventura County alone, the county's fire department said on Twitter on Friday night. The blaze also threatened parts of the nearby town of Thousand Oaks, where a gunman killed 12 people earlier this week in a shooting rampage. Elsewhere, the Hill Fire in Ventura County's Santa Rosa Valley had charred about 6,000 acres as of Friday evening, according to Cal Fire. In Los Angeles, another, smaller fire in Griffith Park forced the Los Angeles Zoo to evacuate a number of show birds and some small primates on Friday as flames came within less than 3 km of the facility, zoo officials said in a statement. — Reuters

buildings have been used as sets for several Hollywood blockbusters including Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. Wadi Rum, also a UNESCO world heritage site, has attracted generations of tourists with its spectacular sandstone and granite rock formations. Its moonlike landscapes served as a backdrop in the filming of the Hollywood classic Lawrence of Arabia.

The latest deaths came after Oct 25 flash floods in the Dead Sea region of the kingdom killed 21 people, most of them children on a school trip. Jordan's education and tourism ministers both resigned last week over failings in the government's response to those floods. The education ministry ordered schools closed nationwide on Saturday amid warnings of more heavy rains. Jordan's minister of water and irrigation, Raed Abu Al-Saoud, said yesterday that the country's 14 main dams had filled up by some 26 percent of full capacity in the past 48 hours because of the torrential rains. Jordan is a water-poor country that is 90 percent desert. — AFP

Sports

World record for India and two Asian records for China, Kuwait

China, India continue their dominance at Airgun Championship



By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait's trap shooters Sarah Al-Hawal took the silver medal for the women's individual trap event, though she was so close to win gold during the sixth day of the 8th Asian Shotgun and 11th Airgun Championships which witnessed a world record for India and two Asian records for China and Kuwait.

Al-Hawal lost a shot-off round to the Chinese shooter who placed second in the 2018 World Cup Xiaojing Wang with a difference of one target (44 to 45). Meanwhile China's Xinqiu Zhang won bronze. Kuwait also won the bronze medal of the team's event with the team of Sumaiyah Al-Juhail, Sarah and Shahad Al-Hawal. Meanwhile, China won the gold medal with a new Asian record of 344 hits, and Kazakhstan won silver. In the individual junior women trap event China's Wendi Gao won gold, and her compatriot Yewei Duan won silver while Kazakhstan's Sarsankul won bronze. In the team's event China was first followed by Kazakhstan.

China and India continued their control over the Airgun events as China's Jiayu Wu

and Ranxin Jian won the gold mixed team medal in the 10m air pistol event, followed by Yiayu Wu and Ranxin Jiang won silver and Ting Kuan Kuo from Chinese Taipei won bronze. While Kuwait's Hamad Al-Namshan and Amira Awadh ended in fifth place. In the 10m mixed junior event India's Chaudhary Saurabh and Manu Bhaker won gold followed by China's Keyi Wang and Xie Yu. The Indian team broke the world record by scoring 485.4 points while the previous record was 483.

China has won (21 gold, 13 silver and 9 bronze) medals, followed with India with (5 gold, 5 silver and 2 bronze), Kazakhstan (2 gold, 4 silver, 4 bronze), Thailand (2 gold), Kuwait (1 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze), Singapore (4 silver, 3 bronze) Chinese Taipei (1 silver, 5 bronze), UAE (1 silver, 1 bronze each), Japan, Bahrain and Qatar (1 bronze each).

Kuwait shooter Sarah Al-Hawal said she was happy with the silver medal following the strong competition with the Chinese shooter, who won gold. Sarah said she was affected somehow with the unstable weather. She thanked all those involved in Kuwait shooting who did not spare a thing

in order to allow shooters make the best of results.

Sponsor of alternative medicine forum Sheikh Suhaila Salem Al-Sabah who visited Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex congratulated Sarah Al-Hawal for her achievement as she competed with the best shooters of the world.

Sheikha Suhaila thanked the KSSC board for their care of this sport and making it possible for Kuwait shooters to compete in all championships.

Assistant Treasurer at Kuwait Shooting Sport Club Adnan Al-Ibrahim said the championship is going as planned technically and administratively. He said activities are proceeding as planned and the organizing committee did not receive any complaint all along the past days, and this is what we hope for until the last day of the championships.

Al-Ibrahim lauded the officiating of the tournament being led with 24 Kuwaiti referees in addition to guest referees from Asia. Al-Ibrahim spoke about the weather adding that it did not affect the tournament, as ranges officials were at the ready and had all ranges prepared to start com-



petitions on time.

Al-Ibrahim lauded the major support the shooting sport club receives from HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

and appreciated the cooperation of all concerned government bodies to bring out the championship at its best.

O'Brien still has plenty in tank, says O'Driscoll

DUBLIN: Sean O'Brien has been ravaged by injuries in the past four years but the flanker would be one of the first names on the Ireland team list for Irish legend Brian O'Driscoll who described his countryman as a "real leader".

O'Brien-known as "The Tullow Tank" for his bullocking runs-makes his latest comeback for Ireland against Argentina at Lansdowne Road yesterday. It is almost a year since the 31-year-old farmer-a star for the British and Irish Lions in their 1-1 series draw with world champions New Zealand in 2017 — pulled on the green jersey, coincidentally against the same opponents.

Hip and shoulder injuries left him kicking his heels as the Irish secured the Six Nations Grand Slam and then a 2-1 Test series win in Australia. However, his former Leinster team-mate O'Driscoll, while acknowledging the back row has a deep well of talent for head coach Joe Schmidt to call upon, says O'Brien is the one player would select in a crucial match.

"Dan Leavy's been great last season, Josh (van der Flier) has been excellent this year and Jordi Murphy's done nothing wrong," commented O'Driscoll, speaking at a media event organised by Guinness in Dublin.

"But when everyone's fit I still like Sean O'Brien as my openside starting for a World Cup quarter-final against whoever it might be. "He's rated, he's got respect from those he's played with and against." O'Driscoll, who under Schmidt

at Leinster won two European Cups alongside O'Brien, said the flanker is someone who leads from the front. "He's a real leader, you can hear his voice on every ref cam, every scrum, every ruck, he is literally barking away," said O'Driscoll.

"He's a Duracell bunny, he just does not stop. That brings a confidence. When someone's able to verbalise for 80 minutes, you know they're fit." "The first thing that goes is the chat. I think he's a terrific player."

O'Driscoll, Ireland's record try scorer with 46 in 133 appearances, says that seeing O'Brien's name on the team sheet gives a confidence boost because of his combative qualities. "There's some intangibles with Seanie, I think the confidence he brings when you see his name on the team sheet," said O'Driscoll.

"His experience, having done it before and delivered, there's not too many bad games that Sean's ever had. "He is so confrontational and so aggressive that there's no backward step with him."

O'Driscoll, who experienced the joys of a Six Nations Grand Slam with the 2009 team, says that O'Brien is not just a wrecking ball breaking up opponents plays. "It's comforting seeing that with one of your leaders, one of your leading ball-carriers, a guy that's destructive but also has really developed his skill-set," said O'Driscoll.

O'Driscoll, who has forged a successful career as a pundit since retiring, admits O'Brien does not only deal roughly with opponents. "He's the sort of player that if you rub up the wrong way he could do serious damage to you in training," he said. "Those sorts of players are always frightening to have in your environment, but you're so thankful that they're on your side. And I think that says it all." — AFP



Brian O'Driscoll

Kuchar sinks eight birdies to take lead in Mexico

MEXICO CITY: Matt Kuchar sank eight birdies in a second round 64 to take a two-stroke lead over fellow American Cameron Champ at the Mayakoba Classic in Mexico on Friday.

It was the second consecutive day that Kuchar shot seven under par at the El Camaleon in Playa del Carmen after his bogey-free opening round. The seven-times PGA Tour winner's most impressive shot of the day came on the par-four 12th, where he sank a 19-foot putt to limit the damage to a bogey, his only one of the day.

Champ was sensational in just his third career PGA Tour start on Friday, mixing eight birdies and an eagle with one bogey for a round of nine-under par 62 that gave him the outright lead before Kuchar overtook him later in the day.

The big-hitting 23-year-old, who is coming off his first PGA Tour win at last month's Sanderson Farms

Championship, said he is feeling more comfortable on the course, which has allowed him to get into a groove on Friday. "I forgot what par was, to be honest," he said.

"I was just flowing, I just kind of felt in the zone, really. I was just trying to execute each shot at a time." The tournament will go into the weekend with slightly less drawing power after three-time major champion Jordan Spieth failed to make the cut after rounds of 71 and 69.

But Masters runner-up and world number nine Rickie Fowler is still in the hunt after shooting a three-under par 68 on Friday to go into the weekend tied for 20th with 13 other players. — Reuters

George ready to go in for the kill against All Blacks

LONDON: England's Jamie George is happy to be among coach Eddie Jones's "finishers" with the potential to close out a famous victory over the All Blacks at Twickenham yesterday. Jones has taken to describing his replacements as finishers to highlight their equal importance to starters in his side, even suggesting on Thursday that they should have the same shirt numbers.

Saracens hooker George came on for Dylan Hartley to help England to secure a 12-11 win against South Africa last week. The hosts go into the match having recorded only one victory in their past 15 matches against New Zealand, with the solitary win also at Twickenham six years ago.

But with the world champions having been exposed as mortal when South Africa repelled a late fightback to cling on to a memorable 36-34 victory in September, George is confident that he and his team mates can be relied on to finish the job.

"The last 20 minutes are going to be hugely important. We have seen that in the last few Tests New Zealand have played against South Africa," he told a news conference on Friday. "We know our role is very important. That is something for us to get hugely excited about."

"It is very important for us to stay engaged throughout the game because we never know when we are going to come on. But when we do, we know it is going to be an important part of the game. Hopefully we can make a big impact."

Jones has made three changes to his line-up from last week's tussle against South Africa, including giving Sale's Chris Ashton his first international start in four years in place of winger Jack Nowell. Ashton, who came on for the final 15 minutes against the Springboks, played and scored a try in England's 38-21 win against the All Blacks in 2012.

But George is also a player who has tasted victory over the three-times world champions. He was part of the British and Irish Lions squad that triumphed in the second test in Wellington last year.

It was a moment the 28-year-old described as the "best feeling in my rugby career so far" and one he believes can be repeated. "Half of us have beaten the All Blacks before. We have drawn on those experiences this week," he said.

"We have spoken about what we need to do, what we did to beat them previously ... We focused on why we won those games and hopefully we can bring that into tomorrow." — Reuters

Sports

Wheeler's five-point night jolts Jets past Avalanche

Wings win in OT, stop Rangers' run at 4

NHL results/standings

Toronto 6, New Jersey 1; Columbus 2, Washington 1; Detroit 3, NY Rangers 2 (OT); St. Louis 4, San Jose 0; Winnipeg 5, Colorado 2; Minnesota 5, Anaheim 1.

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Tampa Bay	12	3	1	59	42	25
Toronto	11	5	0	57	41	22
Montreal	8	5	3	53	51	19
Boston	8	5	2	44	39	18
Buffalo	8	6	2	49	49	18
Ottawa	6	7	3	55	67	15
Detroit	6	8	2	43	57	14
Florida	4	5	3	38	42	11

Metropolitan Division

Columbus	9	6	1	52	53	19
NY Islanders	8	5	2	47	38	18
Washington	7	5	3	53	52	17
Philadelphia	8	7	1	53	60	17
Carolina	7	7	2	44	48	16
NY Rangers	7	7	2	45	50	16
Pittsburgh	6	5	3	47	47	15
New Jersey	6	7	1	43	49	13

Western Conference

Central Division

Nashville	12	3	0	51	31	24
Minnesota	10	4	2	51	42	22
Winnipeg	9	5	1	46	40	19
Dallas	9	6	1	46	43	19
Colorado	7	6	3	55	49	17
St. Louis	6	5	3	50	48	15
Chicago	6	7	3	49	60	15

Pacific Division

Vancouver	10	6	1	57	58	21
Calgary	9	6	1	54	53	19
San Jose	8	6	3	53	54	19
Edmonton	8	7	1	45	50	17
Anaheim	7	8	3	42	53	17
Arizona	7	6	1	41	34	15
Las Vegas	7	8	1	39	45	15
Los Angeles	5	9	1	33	49	11

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).

WINNIPEG: Blake Wheeler had a goal and four assists and Mark Scheifele added a goal and two assists to lead the Winnipeg Jets to a 5-2 victory over the visiting Colorado Avalanche on Friday night. It was the first five-point game in the career of the 31-year-old Wheeler, who has scored 20 or more goals in each of the last five seasons. Kyle Connor, Nikolaj Ehlers and Patrik Laine also scored for Winnipeg and Connor Hellebuyck finished with 28 saves as the Jets improved to 7-1-3 in their last 11 games. Erik Johnson and Tyson Jost each scored goals for Colorado and Semyon Varlamov had 19 saves for the Avalanche, who lost their fifth straight game.

RED WINGS 3, RANGERS 2 (OT)

Dylan Larkin scored with 5.1 seconds remaining in overtime as host Detroit snapped New York's four-game winning streak. Larkin tapped a backhanded pass from Andreas Athanasiou over Henrik Lundqvist's shoulder for his team-high seventh goal. Athanasiou scored the tying goal late in regulation as Detroit wiped out a 2-0 third-period deficit. Justin Abdelkader had the other Wings goal. Jimmy Howard made 28 saves. Kevin Shattenkirk and Neal Pionk scored for New York, who also received 28 saves from Lundqvist.

MAPLE LEAFS 6, DEVILS 1

Morgan Rielly and Nazem Kadri each had one goal and one assist to help Toronto defeat visiting New Jersey. John Tavares, Connor Brown, Andreas Johnsson and Tyler Ennis also scored for the Maple Leafs, who have won three straight games. Par Lindholm and Ron Hainsey added two assists each for the Maple Leafs in the annual Hall of Fame game. Toronto goaltender Frederik Andersen made 38 saves. Travis Zajac scored for the Devils, who have lost five of the first six games on their seven-game road trip that ends in Winnipeg on Sunday. Keith Kinkaid added 26 shots for New Jersey.

BLUE JACKETS 2, CAPITALS 1

Anthony Duclair scored the tiebreaking power-play goal 5:09 into the third period and Sergei Bobrovsky made 33 saves as Columbus beat host Washington. In the first meeting between the teams since the first round of last spring's playoffs when Washington beat Columbus in six games, the Blue Jackets scored two power-play goals for the third time this season. Duclair snapped a 1-1 tie with his seventh goal of the season for Columbus and Oliver Bjorkstrand, who filled in for Cam



TORONTO: Frederik Andersen #31 of the Toronto Maple Leafs tends net against the New Jersey Devils at the Scotiabank Arena on Friday in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The Leafs defeated the Devils 6-1. — AFP

Atkinson (illness), also scored for the Blue Jackets, who upped their record to 4-0-1 in one-goal games this season.

BLUES 4, SHARKS 0

Chad Johnson stopped all 33 shots he faced for his first shutout of the season and eighth of his career as St. Louis pulled away over visiting San Jose. Jaden Schwartz and Alexander Steen each had a goal and an assist to lead the Blues. Alex Pietrangolo and Ryan O'Reilly also scored as St. Louis won for the second game in a row and fourth time in the past five contests. Johnson made six saves in the first period, 13 in the second and 14 in the third to notch his first shutout since Nov. 30, 2016. The Sharks have dropped back-to-back games and were shut out for the second time this season.

WILD 5, DUCKS 1

Mikael Granlund had two goals and an assist, and Jason Zucker added a goal and two assists to lead visiting Minnesota to its ninth win in 11 games in beating Anaheim. Jonas Brodin also had a goal and an assist, Jordan Greenway scored a goal and Jared Spurgeon added a pair of assists for Minnesota. The Wild, who won at Los Angeles 3-1 on Thursday night, completed their first back-to-back road sweep of the Kings and Ducks since Dec. 14-15, 2007. Alex Stalock had 20 saves for Minnesota, which improved to 4-2 after six games of a seven-game road trip that concludes on Sunday afternoon in St. Louis. Pontus Aberg scored the lone goal for Anaheim. John Gibson stopped 38 shots for the Ducks, who matched a season high by allowing five goals. — Reuters

Federer, Djokovic top the bill for London finale

LONDON: Roger Federer is aiming to complete a century of titles at the ATP Finals but will likely have to find a way past the irrepressible Novak Djokovic, who is looking to round off his astonishing season in style. The two men, with 34 Grand Slams between them, are the twin titans at the season-ending event at London's O2 arena. But the tournament, which starts today, lacks an element of star power without the injured Rafael Nadal and Juan Martin del Potro, both of whom were forced to pull out of the season finale.

Former champion Andy Murray, still making his way back from injury, and defending champion Grigor Dimitrov are other star names missing. The title is contested by the eight players who have accumulated the most ranking points over the season and is in a round-robin format, with the best four players reaching the knockout semi-finals stage.

Federer is expected to emerge from Group Lleyton Hewitt, also featuring Kevin Anderson, Dominic Thiem and Kei Nishikori, while Djokovic is highly fancied to top Group Guga Kuerten, which also includes Alexander Zverev, Marin Cilic and John Isner. After a stunning 2017 season which saw the Swiss capture seven titles, including Grand Slam crowns at the Australian Open and Wimbledon, Federer was clear that his 2018 season has been a success despite a mixed run of results in recent months. The 37-year-old has won a record six titles at the ATP Finals—including two in London—but has not lifted the trophy since 2011. "I don't think it matters really where I win my 100th as long as it's going to happen at one point," said Federer, who has 99 titles in his illustrious career.

"I love playing this event. I always have, ever since I qualified for the very first time back in 2002." Federer will have been buoyed by his battling performance against Djokovic in the semi-final of the Paris Masters last week but he still lost the match—his fourth consecutive defeat against Djokovic, with the Serb now leading their head-to-head 25-22.

Djokovic has made an incredible comeback following elbow surgery early in the year, overcoming indifferent form to win Wimbledon and the US Open and haul himself back to the number one spot.

The 31-year-old, who slipped to 22nd in the world in May, admitted that after his surgery it looked improbable that he would finish the year as number one. "But there was always part of me that believed I could make it back and I never thought it was impossible," he said. "I just thought at the time it might take more time than I wished it to be."

"It turned out to be a perfect five months of the year, with two Grand Slam titles," he added. Nadal this week pulled out of the tournament in London—guaranteeing Djokovic will end the season as the world number one.—AFP

Pressure eases on Australia after ODI win, says Hazlewood

MELBOURNE: Australia's victory over South Africa in a one-day international on Friday helped lift the pressure following a poor run of results for a side coming to terms with plenty of off-field distractions, according to vice-captain Josh Hazlewood.

Cricket in Australia has been mired in controversy since the side were embroiled in a ball-tampering scandal in South Africa in March, with a damning report into the sport's administration leading to a slew of resigna-

tions and sackings.

The team had also not won a limited-overs match since January, which may have been one of the reasons behind a crowd of fewer than 18,000 turning up at the vast Adelaide Oval to watch them set up a series decider in Hobart today.

The seven-run win, however, could be the catalyst for the team as they looked ahead to India's visit Down Under later in the Australian summer, Hazlewood told reporters in Adelaide yesterday.

"It will probably relax the guys a little bit, if anything," the fast bowler said of the victory, which snapped a seven-match losing streak in white-ball cricket. "It's a little bit of relief, I guess."

"It's a good step moving forward to get one on the board... (but) we know one win doesn't make a summer. It makes tomorrow (Sunday) a pretty important game for us to try and win the series."

Kaur first Indian woman to hit T20 century



Harmanpreet Kaur

PROVIDENCE: Captain Harmanpreet Kaur became the first woman from her country to smash a T20 international century on Friday as India defeated New Zealand by 34 runs on the opening day of the Women's World Twenty20.

Kaur battled cramps to lift India to a winning 194-5

at the Guyana National Stadium with Jemimah Rodrigues hitting 59. She finally fell for 103 off 51 balls having hit eight sixes and seven boundaries.

In reply, the White Ferns could only reach 160-9 despite opener Suzie Bates providing a solid foundation with a top score of 67. — AFP

Smith, Warner play together for first time since ban

SYDNEY: Banned opener David Warner shared a home field with Steve Smith for the first time since the ball-tampering scandal yesterday, but he didn't last long as Steve Waugh's son claimed his wicket.

The two appeared for their respective Sydney club teams in a game at Coogee Oval also featuring Shane Watson and with Test great Waugh and bowling legend Mitchell Johnson watching from the grandstands.

Both players were given a warm reception by a bumper crowd and spent time signing autographs and posing for pictures, with no sign of animosity towards them, according to cricket.com.au.

Warner's Randwick Petersham was sent in to bat by Smith's Sutherland and he spanked two boundaries before cutting a ball from Austin Waugh to backward point on 13. Smith fared better when his turn came to bat, compiling 48 before being stumped. Former Test all-rounder Watson overshadowed them both with a 41-ball 63 to help Sutherland win by three wickets.

It marked the first time Smith and Warner had shared a pitch since being sent home in disgrace from Australia's tour of South Africa in March for their role in attempting to alter the ball with sandpaper.

They were both banned from international and state cricket for a year, but are allowed to play at club level. They have not been seen together publicly since the scandal turned their lives upside down, but according to the Sydney Daily Telegraph they have been in regular weekly contact and continue to get along well. — AFP

Sports

Jurgen Klopp wrestles with Liverpool's midfield dilemma

Salah, Firmino and Sadio Mane have failed to hit last season's heights

LIVERPOOL: As Jurgen Klopp tries to maintain Liverpool's challenge for the Premier League title, the need to sort out his midfield is becoming an increasingly pressing issue. A home match against bottom club Fulham on Sunday may just offer the opportunity to start to put that right by giving both Naby Keita and Fabinho crucial game time to build momentum and confidence.

Both players were signed at great expense during the summer with a view to strengthening Liverpool's midfield options. Keita was seen as a replacement for the attacking guile of Philippe Coutinho while Fabinho was viewed as the player to prove a defensive shield following Emre Can's departure.

Neither has yet managed to establish themselves as a powerful presence in England, with Reds boss Klopp relying largely on the players used last season. Klopp has suggested both signings need time to settle in a new country, with Guinea international Keita arriving from German club RB Leipzig, and Brazilian Fabinho joining from French Ligue 1 side Monaco.

While it is understandable that neither player would hit the ground running, the need for them to find form has become more urgent, given the lack of creative spark in Liverpool's midfield. If the front three of Mohamed Salah, Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane have failed to hit last season's heights, the same is true of the midfield, where the injured Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain has been sorely missed.

Liverpool defender Andy Robertson has seen the difference for himself. "Last season everyone was used to us scoring four or five goals. That can't be possible every single game," Robertson said.

"Maybe we are missing a bit of a spark in terms of

not winning 4-0 or 5-0 in most games but if the manager thinks that then we need to try to get it back. "We need to come together as a team and try to give what the gaffer wants, try to get the spark and try to win games more comfortably."

Liverpool, currently third in the Premier League, have not been as threatening a force as they were last season en route to the Champions League final. The midfield has looked particularly vulnerable in their past two matches, a 1-1 Premier League draw at Arsenal last Saturday and a surprisingly meek 2-0 Champions League group defeat at Red Star Belgrade on Tuesday.

Neither Keita nor Fabinho played in Serbia, while their other major outfield signing of the summer, Xherdan Shaqiri, was left in England, amid concerns about the reception he would receive from the home supporters because of his Kosovan heritage. Klopp's three-man midfield on Tuesday failed to distinguish itself, with hamstring injury victim Jordan Henderson clearly missed. James Milner's error led to the home side's second goal, with Georginio Wijnaldum shrugged aside too easily before Milan Pavkov scored. Adam Lallana, making a rare start, was anonymous.

Fabinho was an unused substitute in Belgrade, having struggled against Arsenal, and is clearly not up to speed with the English game yet. Keita started well in England, then hit injury problems, as he suffered a back spasm during October's Champions League defeat by Napoli, and a hamstring problem playing for Guinea.

Klopp has shuffled around his midfield this season, but appears reluctant to repeat the experiment he tried in September's Premier League win over Southampton, when Shaqiri was used in an advanced midfield role.

The Switzerland international was substituted at



BELGRADE: File photo shows Liverpool's German coach Jurgen Klopp (L) gives instructions to Liverpool's Egyptian forward Mohamed Salah during the UEFA Champions League Group C second-leg football match between Red Star Belgrade and Liverpool FC at the Rajko Mitic Stadium in Belgrade on November 6, 2018. — AFP

half-time that day, because Klopp felt the match was too open. His best hope of regular game time now would appear to be as part of the attacking three, which means dislodging Salah, Firmino or Mane.

Fabinho still has work to do to earn his starting spot too. Keita, though, will surely become a regular once he gets up to speed and a meeting with struggling Fulham could be the ideal place to start. — AFP

Homeless World Cup to honour memory of late co-founder

LONDON: As more than 500 soccer players gather in Mexico City next week for the 16th Homeless World Cup, the tournament will take place against the backdrop of the death last month of its co-founder Harald Schmied at the age of 50. The Austrian, diagnosed two years ago with Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), created the tournament with Mel Young almost 20 years ago to improve the lives of impoverished people through the beautiful game.

The first edition, held in Schmied's home country in Graz in 2003, was won by the hosts and it has been an annual event since. More than 40 countries now take part, with 400 games of four-a-side taking place in a week-long football festival which has garnered support from European soccer body UEFA and global professional players' union FIFpro.

Two competitions take place, a men's/mixed event and a women's programme, with 48 teams set to compete in Mexico in the former from Nov. 13-18. However, even with organisers expecting 200,000 spectators and millions of online viewers, the sadness at Schmied's death will not be far from anyone's minds.

"He was a lovely person and a great friend," Young told Reuters in an email. "And of course he loved football. He could see the power it had and he was often quoted when

he talked about the highlight of the annual event being the look on the players' faces at the opening parade.

"That look of genuine happiness, of being included and what life might offer. There is always the same great atmosphere, same friendship and warm-heartedness," he said. "If there were more people like Harald around in the world then it would be a much better place."

One player eagerly anticipating kickoff is Marco Chairaz, a 23-year-old from Port Townsend, Washington who will play for the United States. "I am so honoured to be a part of this amazing programme that has helped me turn my life around," Chairaz told Reuters.

"Because of organisations like these people are able to do something incredibly productive with their lives. As a homeless youth I know that can be the key to opening many doors. "The people that make these tournaments possible need to know that they have created a positive impact in my life and in many others that have suffered from homelessness."

HUGE UNDERTAKING

The goodwill involved helps facilitate a huge logistical undertaking. Seventy countries are involved with the Homeless World Cup Foundation and teams are selected by national soccer initiatives, which pay for flights to the host city. Tournament organisers cover the players' accommodation, food and travel costs during the event. "I hope to go and just have fun, play soccer, meet people, make friends and learn from other players," Chairaz added.

Chairaz and his team mates may find it hard going should they play Brazil, the most successful team in the tournament's history with three titles. Mexico can equal them if they win on home soil - something they failed to do



Harald Schmied (sitting)

when they last hosted the event in 2012, losing 8-5 to Chile in the final. Of course, no sporting event can eradicate the many social inequalities around the world, with global housing body Habitat for Humanity estimating that 1.6 billion people lack adequate accommodation.

The United Nations is still off track in its bid to end extreme poverty which covers eight percent of the world's population. The target is to get an average 1.6 people escaping poverty per second. The current rate is 1.1. Still, football offers a welcome respite from the horrors of living on the streets and Young insisted that Schmied's legacy be celebrated. "We will miss him for sure but his final message was typical of Harald when he urged people to turn their sadness into positive energy," he said. — Reuters

Gritty Torreira brings added steel to Arsenal

LONDON: Lucas Torreira has been at Arsenal just a matter of months but the tough-tackling midfielder already looks like the kind of player the club has been missing for years. The Uruguay international will make only his seventh Premier League start when Wolves visit the Emirates Stadium today, yet his importance to Unai Emery's rapidly improving team is clear.

Operating in central midfield, Torreira has offered a combative presence, providing his back four with protection while his use of the ball has been similarly impressive. Other players in Emery's line-up may have provided more spectacular moments during the Gunners' 15-game unbeaten run.

However, it is the contribution of Torreira and Granit Xhaka, transformed from the inconsistent player of recent seasons, that have given reason to believe this Arsenal side has the steel to sustain their early charge.

The pair have instilled a balance in the team that was lacking for long periods during the final years of Arsene Wenger's reign. Having built his early success in north London around a midfield led by Patrick Vieira, Wenger's failure to resolve the apparent frailties of his later sides was at times baffling.

Gilberto Silva provided admirable service but since the Brazil international left for Panathinaikos 10 years ago, few players have shown themselves capable of filling what often appeared to be an obvious gap. The arrival of Torreira in a £27 million (\$35 million) deal from Sampdoria this summer, however, appears to have ended the wait.

Emery eased the 22-year-old into his new life in English football, introducing the player from the bench for the first five league games, before deciding Torreira was up to speed.

And his gritty performance in last weekend's 1-1 draw with Liverpool confirmed he has settled into his new surroundings. "You have to give credit to him because he's someone who works hard, who wants to work hard and who shows that on the pitch as well," said Arsenal defender Shkodran Mustafi.

"Against Liverpool he recovered a lot of balls, and that makes it not only easier for the defenders, but for the whole team. — AFP



MILAN: Barcelona's Spanish defender Gerard Pique (L) and Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi (R) look on during a training session at San Siro stadium. — AFP

Messi ready as Barca drop Dembele

BARCELONA: Ernesto Valverde has indicated Lionel Messi and Samuel Umtiti are both ready to return for Barcelona against Real Betis on Sunday but Ousmane Dembele has been dropped.

Messi has been out since breaking his arm against Sevilla on October 20 while Umtiti has been nursing a knee problem and has not played since September 26. Both are included in the squad to face Betis in La Liga this weekend but there was a surprise omission for Dembele.

Valverde said the 21-year-old had been left out after a "sporting assessment". Messi's return would come as a major boost to Barca. Their captain was included in the travelling squad to face Inter Milan on Wednesday but was not deemed fit enough even for the bench.

Asked if he could play 90 minutes against Betis, Valverde said: "We will see, but he's lost his fear of falling or struggling against an opponent. "You have to get that out of your head, you cannot be thinking if you are about to make a bad movement. I have seen him training well and with confidence."

Messi's absence should have been a golden opportunity for Dembele but the winger's form has been mixed in recent weeks, while Luis Suarez, Philippe Coutinho, Rafinha and Malcom have all impressed.

"Everyone can interpret it how they want but this is a team," Valverde said. "I'm looking for the best for the team and that's it." Barcelona paid around 105 million euros to sign Dembele from Borussia Dortmund last year but injury and inconsistency have plagued his career in Spain so far.

"Let's hope he can make the most of all his talent so the team benefits and also the club, which has made a great investment in him," Valverde added. Umtiti has been a key player for Barca but the defender's place in the starting line-up this weekend is not guaranteed, given Clement Lenglet has done well alongside Gerard Pique during the team's strong run.

"It is great news that Lenglet has shown his level," Valverde said. "Far from being a problem, it is perfect to have more possibilities, we will see tomorrow who plays." Barcelona sit three points clear at the top of La Liga and will hope for another victory against 14th-placed Betis, before the start of the international break.

Valverde also praised his full-back Jordi Alba, who earned a recall to the Spain squad for the first time under new coach Luis Enrique. "We have seen Jordi improve every day," Valverde said. "Every coach asks for something and his start to the season is spectacular. A call-up to the national team is well-deserved." Coutinho will not play against Betis. The midfielder is recovering from a hamstring strain. — AFP



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Liverpool v Fulham FC	15:00
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Chelsea FC v Everton FC	17:15
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Arsenal FC v Wolverhampton Wanderers FC	19:30
beIN SPORTS HD 7	
Manchester City v Manchester United	19:30
beIN SPORTS HD 2	

SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA

Deportivo Alaves v Huesca	14:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
FC Barcelona v Real Betis	18:15
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Rayo Vallecano v Villarreal CF	20:30
beIN SPORTS HD 13 EN	
Sevilla FC v RCD Espanyol	20:30
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Celta de Vigo v Real Madrid CF	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 3	

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE

Atalanta v Internazionale Milano	14:30
beIN SPORTS HD 4	
AS Roma v UC Sampdoria	17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 4	
AC Chievo Verona v Bologna FC	17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
Empoli v Udinese Calcio	17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 8	
US Sassuolo Calcio v SS Lazio	20:00
beIN SPORTS HD 8	
AC Milan v Juventus FC	22:30
beIN SPORTS HD 4	

Barkley fears hostile reception against Everton

LONDON: Chelsea midfielder Ross Barkley is braced for a hostile reception when his old club Everton visit Stamford Bridge today. Barkley left Everton to join Chelsea in January after 13 years at Goodison Park and this weekend faces the Toffees for the first time since that controversial move. The 24-year-old did not play for Everton in the last seven months of his time on Merseyside due to a hamstring problem and eventually moved to Chelsea in a cut-price £15 million (\$19 million) deal.

With his contract winding down, Barkley had initially been linked with Tottenham before the Chelsea switch and his desire to further his career away from Everton, combined with the protracted nature of the transfer, soured his time with Toffees fans.

Barkley expects those Everton supporters to make their feelings known when he comes face to face with them in west London, but although he admits it will be a "strange" experience he is determined not to be intimidated.

"I don't think the reception will be the best," Barkley told the Evening Standard. "I'm not nervous, I'm excited to play against my former club and team-mates. I understand how some of them play, so that could be an advantage for me. "On the day I might get a few nerves as it will feel a bit strange. I'm looking forward to catching up with some of the staff there who I used to get on really well with." After struggling to break into the Chelsea team under previous boss Antonio Conte last season, Barkley has impressed new manager Maurizio Sarri.

The England international has become a regular under Sarri, scoring three goals in his last five Chelsea appearances. "I was approaching 25 and I felt looking back I could have improved a lot more (at Everton)," Barkley said. "At Chelsea I knew I'd improve a lot quicker around better players, world-class players." — AFP

25 World record for India and two Asian records for China, Kuwait

26 Wheeler's five-point night jolts Jets past Avalanche

27 Homeless World Cup to honour memory of late co-founder



Embiid scores 42 in OT win over Hornets

Ingles spoils Hayward's return as Jazz top Celtics



PORTLAND: Malcolm Brogdon #13 of the Milwaukee Bucks shoots the ball during the game against the Portland Trail Blazers on Tuesday at the Moda Center in Portland, Oregon. — AFP

PHILADELPHIA: Joel Embiid had a season-high 42 points to go along with 18 rebounds and four blocked shots to lift the Philadelphia 76ers past the visiting Charlotte Hornets 133-132 in overtime Friday night. It was the eighth game for Embiid this season with at least 30 points and 10 rebounds. Ben Simmons racked up 22 points, eight rebounds and 13 assists. Dario Saric added 18 points and nine rebounds while JJ Redick added 17 off the bench as the Sixers improved to 7-0 at home for the first time since 2002-03. Kemba Walker scored 22 of his 30 points in the fourth quarter and overtime as Jeremy Lamb added 17. Dwayne Bacon scored 15 for the Hornets, who had their two-game winning streak snapped.

JAZZ 123, CELTICS 115

Joe Ingles tied a career high with 27 points and Rudy Gobert added 17 points and 15 rebounds as the Jazz spoiled the return of Gordon Hayward to Utah with an energetic victory over visiting Boston in Salt Lake City. Jazz fans booed every move of Hayward, who left Utah for Boston via free agency before the start of last season. Hayward then suffered a fractured ankle injury in the Celtics' season opener last year and

did not play the remainder of the season. He scored 13 points on 3-for-9 shooting from the field. Donovan Mitchell had 21 points, former Celtics forward Jae Crowder scored 20 points and Ricky Rubio added 17, as the Jazz won consecutive games after losing four in a row. Ingles added five rebounds and seven assists while going 10-for-14 from the field, including 5-for-9 from 3-point range.

NETS 112, NUGGETS 110

Caris LeVert hit a jumper in the lane with less than a second left, and Brooklyn rallied to beat host Denver. Left with 0.3 seconds, the Nuggets got a 3-point attempt at the buzzer from Malik Beasley, who missed it. LeVert finished with 17 points, D'Angelo Russell had 23 and Jarrett Allen scored 18 for the Nets, who have won three in a row and four of five. Nikola Jokic broke out of a funk to score a season-high 37 and tied a career-high with 21 rebounds, but Denver lost its first home game of the season after winning the first six.

PISTONS 124, HAWKS 109

Andre Drummond had 23 points and 11 rebounds to lead the way as Detroit jumped to a 24-point lead late

in the first quarter and coasted to a victory over host Atlanta. The Pistons made a season-high 20 of 47 attempts from behind the 3-point arc and rolled to their second straight win after a five-game losing streak, despite just six points from Blake Griffin, their leading scorer at 27.3 per game coming in. He missed eight of his 10 shots, but had nine rebounds and nine assists. Stanley Johnson had 22 points for the Pistons and Langston Galloway scored 16 as the two players combined to hit nine 3-pointers off the bench.

MAGIC 117, WIZARDS 108

Orlando prevailed at home over Washington in a matchup of the worst offense in the league against the worst defense. Orlando came in averaging only 101.3 points per game, but tied its season high in points and shot a season-high 51.2 percent from the floor-only the second time it had made more than 50 percent of its field goals this season. Nikola Vucevic led the way for Orlando with 21 points and 14 rebounds, and Aaron Gordon scored 20. Magic rookie Mo Bamba made 7 of 8 field goals, including a 3-pointer and three long-range jump shots. The 7-foot center had 15 points in only 17 minutes.

KINGS 121, TIMBERWOLVES 110

Willie Cauley-Stein scored 25 points to help Sacramento to a victory over visiting Minnesota. Iman Shumpert scored 17 points, De'Aaron Fox had 16 points and 10 assists and Buddy Hield added 15 points and 10 rebounds for the Kings. Nemanja Bjelica tallied 14 points against his former team. Karl-Anthony Towns established season highs of 39 points and 19 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who completed an 0-5 road trip. Derrick Rose added 21 points and Jimmy Butler had 13 for Minnesota, which has lost all eight of its road games.

PACERS 110, HEAT 102

Bojan Bogdanovic hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 56.5 seconds remaining, sending Indiana to a victory over host Miami. Myles Turner and Victor Oladipo also buried key shots, as the Pacers rallied from a 102-98 deficit by scoring the game's final 12 points over a stretch of 1:26, snapping Indiana's two-game losing streak in the process. Hassan Whiteside had 11 points and a game-high 20 rebounds for the Heat, which saw a two-game winning streak come to an end. — Reuters

Manchester derby will not define City's season: Guardiola

LONDON: Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola does not think today's derby against Manchester United will define his team's campaign, but is still keen to avoid a repeat of last season's defeat by the same opponents.

City were in control against United in the corresponding fixture at the Etihad Stadium last term, leading by two first-half goals, only for United to stage a second-half rally and win 3-2. "We have to play good," Guardiola told a news conference on Friday. "If we play good, we have a chance to win. You cannot

imagine we are going to play amazingly for 90 minutes against top teams.

"I would like to play the same game as last season when we were on top for 75 minutes but United showed us that they just need 10 or 15 minutes to create chances. "When they have the ball, they can create something because they have incredible talent."

Both teams are in good form, with seventh-placed United on a three-game winning streak and league leaders City having gone 11 games unbeaten in all competitions. Guardiola is looking forward to the battle but believes the fixture has come too soon to have significant bearing on the title race.

"We are in November so maybe the game at Old Trafford (in March) will be more decisive," the Spaniard said. "Of course we are on a good run, United as well. It's a good derby. All of them are special."

The manager also reiterated his faith in the club in the wake of allegations that they had circumvented financial fair play rules. "If people want to undermine what we have done, no problem," he said. "We live our lives. Opinions

are opinions. I have said I trust the club a lot.

"If there is something wrong, we will be punished. FIFA or UEFA have to say if we were wrong. If we were wrong, we will accept it but I hear what my club said to me and I trust them." The allegations against City stem from the release of the "Football Leaks" documents, which include emails, contracts and presentations. The documents were obtained by German publication Der Spiegel and reviewed by Reuters in partnership with international media consortium European Investigative Collaborations.

The City manager's news conference ended in uproarious laughter after he responded to his former player, Brazilian Dani Alves's comment that being coached by Guardiola at Barcelona was "better than sex".

Alves made the comment in a documentary about Guardiola's all-conquering spell at Barcelona, where they won three La Liga titles and the Champions League twice. "I prefer the sex," a grinning Guardiola said in response to a question on Alves's comment. "By far!" — Reuters



Pep Guardiola