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Saudi sovereign wealth fund to surpass \$600 billion target

Saudi Arabia to privatize more than 20 companies

ASWF facilitates peer-to-peer learning



DUBAI: Dr Ziad Al-Alyan CEO of Central Circle Medical Company in Kuwait (center left) and Ramesh Subrahmanian, the President of International, Acelity LP Inc attend the event with the company team. (See Page 3)

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman said the kingdom's main sovereign wealth fund (PIF) will surpass its target of increasing its assets to \$600 billion by 2020, as part of a plan to reduce the economy's dependence on oil. "We are now above \$300 billion, we're getting close to \$400 billion. Our target in 2020 is around \$600 billion. I believe we will surpass that target in 2020," the prince said in a Bloomberg interview published on Friday.

He added that the fund, with more than 50 percent of its investments located in Saudi Arabia, will be investing in more places next year. The fund would invest another \$45 billion in Softbank Vision fund, the world's largest private equity fund, backed by Japan's Softbank Group and the PIF, which invests in technology sectors such as artificial intelligence and robotics.

"We have a huge benefit from the first one. We would not put, as PIF, another \$45 billion if we didn't see huge income in the first year with the first \$45 billion," the prince said. Locally, one of the biggest investments for the PIF is a planned \$500 billion business and industrial zone called NEOM extending into Jordan and Egypt, announced in October 2017. Prince Mohammed said the first town in NEOM will be ready in 2019 or 2020, with the entire site completed by 2025.

The Crown Prince said his country will privatize

more than 20 companies in 2019, helping the government's strategy of diversifying away from oil exports. "In 2019, we will have more than 20 services that will be privatized, most of them in water, agriculture, energy and some of it in sports", the prince said in an interview with Bloomberg published on Friday. In April, the Saudi government said it aims to generate 35 billion to 40 billion riyals (\$9 billion to \$11 billion) in non-oil revenues from its privatization program by 2020 and create up to 12,000 jobs.

The privatization initiative targets 14 public-private partnership (PPP) investments worth 24 billion to 28 billion riyals. It includes the corporatization of Saudi ports and the privatization of the production sector at the Saudi Saline Water Conversion Corp (SWCC) and the Ras Al Khair desalination and power plant, according to official document published in April. The prince said unemployment, which now stands at a record level near 13 percent is part of the side effects of restructuring the economy.

He added that the kingdom's economy today was much more powerful, with 2019 budget planned to exceed one trillion riyals (\$267 billion) for the first time, and with non-oil revenue rising by 300 percent. "I believe the unemployment rate will start to decline from 2019 until we reach 7.0 percent in 2030 as targeted," he said. — Reuters

Kuwait condemns offensive remarks

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanim has condemned a Kuwaiti newspaper's offensive remarks directed at "our brothers in Lebanon," in a phone call with his Lebanese counterpart Nabih Berri on Friday. Al-Ghanim went on to underline the strength of relations between Kuwait and Beirut and Kuwait's appreciation of the Lebanese parliament speaker.

In response, Berri said that "dozens of articles" would not affect the relationship between Lebanon and Kuwait. Yesterday, Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khalid Al-Jarallah voiced "categorical rejection" and deep regret over the contents of an editorial in the Kuwaiti newspaper.

The opinions outlined only express the views of the writer and do not reflect the views of the Kuwaiti government, he highlighted.

In response to a question by KUNA, Al-Jarallah said that Kuwait deeply regrets the editorial offenses against "our brethren in Lebanon". Al-Jarallah stressed that the editorial does not reflect the official view of the State of Kuwait. Kuwait is keen on having great relations with Lebanon and does not condone offenses against it, he said. He reiterated that Kuwait, out of its firm rejection of such offenses against Lebanon and its officials, immediately referred the editorial writer to the competent authorities to take relevant legal action. — Agencies

China tight-lipped as Interpol chief Meng disappears

BEIJING: China remained silent yesterday over the disappearance of the head of Interpol, deepening the mystery over the international police chief's fate after reports said he was detained for questioning on arrival in his homeland. Meng Hongwei, 64, was last seen leaving for China in late September from the Interpol headquarters in Lyon, southeast France, a source close to the enquiry said. His wife has since reported him missing. It is the latest high-profile disappearance in China, where a number of top government officials, billionaire business magnates and even an A-list celebrity have vanished for weeks or months at a time.

Beijing has so far said nothing on Meng's case. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not respond to a request for comment from AFP. But news of his absence was swiftly followed by speculation that Meng - who also serves as a vice-minister of China's Ministry of Public Security - had been swept up in Beijing's secretive anti-corruption campaign. Citing an anonymous source, the South China Morning Post said authorities from the country's disciplinary commission had snatched



Meng Hongwei, president of Interpol

Meng upon arrival in Beijing.

China's recently established National Supervisory Commission holds sweeping powers to investigate the country's public servants with few requirements for transparency. While the law requires authorities to inform family members of a detention, it makes exceptions for cases involving national security, terrorism, or concerns over destruc-

tion of evidence or witness tampering. People have been known to disappear into the commission's custody for weeks or even months without a word. Interpol has also kept quiet on Meng's whereabouts. "This is a matter for the relevant authorities in both France and China," the police agency said on Twitter, adding it would make no further comment.

Continued on Page 24

India suspends driver for letting a monkey 'drive'

BANGALORE: An Indian bus driver who let a monkey behind the wheel of his vehicle was suspended yesterday after a video of the incident went viral, sparking outrage and humor. The 36-year-old driver is seen smiling and patting the langur monkey as it sits atop the wheel of the moving bus in footage shot by a passenger. "Driver M Prakash has been taken off duty for allowing the monkey to sit on the steering wheel and handle it," T.S Latha, a spokesperson for the government's road transport corporation in southern Karnataka state said.

"Passengers' safety is paramount and the driver cannot risk it by allowing a

monkey on the steering." The incident took place Monday but authorities only learnt of it after the video was shared on social media, Latha added. There were around 30 passengers on the bus at the time and none of them complained. Local media reports say the langur boarded with a passenger and was at the wheel for almost ten minutes.

The bus was on its regular trip around Davangere, around 170 miles from regional capital Bangalore, when the incident took place. "So sweet. Why suspend. He should have been warned not to repeat this," tweeted Parag Heda. Another local quipped that the driver was in the wrong profession. "Good that action is taken and he suspended, but clearly he is in wrong job. This man is a sensitive animal lover (see how langur trusts him) and could be an asset in wildlife related jobs," he said. The state transport authority said an investigation was being conducted. — AFP



Human-like robots spark fascination and fear

MADRID: Sporting a trendy brown bob, a humanoid robot named Erica chats to a man in front of stunned audience members in Madrid. She and others like her are a prime focus of robotic research, as their uncanny human form could be key to integrating such machines into our lives, said researchers gathered this week at the annual International Conference on Intelligent Robots.

"You mentioned project management. Can you please tell me more?" Erica, who is playing the role of an employer, asks the man. She may not understand the conversation, but she's been trained to detect key words and respond to them. A source of controversy due in part to fears for human employment, the presence of robots in our daily lives is nevertheless inevitable, engineers at the conference said.

The trick to making them more palatable, they added, is to make them look and act more human so that we accept them into our lives more easily. In ageing societies, "robots will coexist with



MADRID: A robot produced by Japan's Hiroshi Ishiguro Laboratories called Erica is presented at the IROS 2018 International Conference on Intelligent Robots in Madrid. — AFP

humans sooner or later", said Hiroko Kamide, a Japanese psychologist who specializes in relations between humans and robots. Welcoming robots into households or workplaces involves developing "multipurpose machines that are capable of interacting" with humans without

being dangerous, said Philippe Soueres, head of the robotics department at a laboratory belonging to France's CNRS scientific institute. As such, robots must move around "in a supple way" despite their rigid mechanics and stop what they

Continued on Page 24

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and UAE pledge \$10bn in aid for Bahrain

Aimed at stabilizing the kingdom's budget by 2022

MANAMA: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will jointly provide assistance worth USD 10 billion to Bahrain, including financing and soft loans, aimed at stabilizing the kingdom's budget by 2022. The support was granted after the finance ministers of the four neighboring Gulf countries signed a framework agreement in Manama, according to Bahrain's state news agency, BNA.

It follows earlier pledges made by the three countries, in accordance with "brotherly ties, constructive cooperation and a common destiny." The move targets support for Bahrain's financial stability, the encouragement of economic growth and development, and achieving a balance between government revenues and expenditures.

Bahraini Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, earlier received Kuwaiti Minister of Finance Dr Nayef bin Falah Al-Hajraf, Saudi Minister of Finance Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Jadaan and UAE Minister of State for Financial Affairs Obaid bin Humaid Al Tayer. During the meeting, the Crown Prince expressed gratitude to sisterly Kuwait,

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for their firm support to the Kingdom of Bahrain in all areas, according to Bahrain News Agency (BNA).

The meeting took place at Gudaibiya Palace following the signing of USD 10-billion aid package from the three countries to Bahrain. The Crown Prince underscored the importance of the long-standing and deep-rooted relations between Bahrain, on one hand, and Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, on the other.

He stressed the significance of regional cooperation in accelerating economic and social development. He asked his guests to convey the greetings of Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The meeting also gathered Bahrain's Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Khaled bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, and Minister of Finance Sheikh Ahmad bin Mohammad Al Khalifa.

Cloud computing

On Friday, Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) and Bahrain's Information and eGovernment Authority (IGA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding within the remote server practice of cloud computing. CITRA's Chairman and CEO Eng Salem Muthib Al-Othainah said in a press statement that the authority was keen on bolstering cooperation with Bahrain in cloud computing, affirming that the agreement would boost efforts to protect data and information online. The MoU is part of the Kuwait 2035 vision, said Al-Othainah, adding that Kuwait was eager to be involved in GCC countries' development plans.

On his part, IGA CEO Mohammad Al-Qaed commended Kuwait on its keenness to bolster cooperation with Bahrain within the IT domain, stressing that the MoU was part of an ongoing cooperation between the two sides. He hoped that Kuwait and Bahrain would continue to IT coordination in the future to benefit both countries' plans for development and progression. In its 2017 plans, the government in Bahrain had set its eye on becoming a part of the global cloud-



MANAMA: Bahraini Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa with Kuwaiti Minister of Finance Dr Nayef bin Falah Al-Hajraf. — KUNA

computing scene, becoming the first Arab nation to adopt this branch of computing. Cloud computing is a practice that uses remote reserves to store data and information in an effort to protect them against harm and digital crime. — KUNA

Kuwait has been relentless in humanitarian aid

KUWAIT: Kuwait has been relentless in offering humanitarian aid to the people in need both in the region and around the world in areas affected by natural disasters or conflicts. Kuwait Zakat (alms) House recently opened schools complex in Saadnayel town in the Bekaa area, eastern Lebanon, to educate Syrian refugees.

Adel Al-Jerry, Kuwait Zakat House Foreign Operations chief, said the complex was part of humanitarian projects to offer education and health for Syrian refugees. Zayed Taqtaq, executive director at Gheras society, which built the schools, commended Kuwait for philanthropic activities in Lebanon and the rest of the world. The schools complex consists of ready-made small houses which can accommodate more than 250 students at morning and evening shifts.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) sent a team to Indonesia to distribute food for victims of earthquake and tsunami that struck Sulawesi. KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said the team would be providing food and medical kits for victims of the natural disaster. He hoped aid would alleviate suffering of Indonesians who lost their homes.

Al-Sayer also said another team was in India to offer aid for victims of monsoons which displaced 14,000 families. Kuwait non-resident ambassador to Kosovo Fayed Al-Jassem inaugurated Kuwait Health Center and Kuwait orphans village, all part of Kuwait's philanthropy abroad. KRCS handed out food aid, electrical appliances, and clothes to families inside Kuwait registered in KRCS.

African Union

Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi announced the campaign during the celebration of the humanitarian working day, to help the families in cooperation with Kuwait-based Ambassadors of South Africa, Swatini, Lesotho, Botswana, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Malawi. "The support of the disadvantaged families is of great importance to the Kuwaiti Red Crescent, as one of its humanitarian projects and programs with its partners in charitable work", said Al-Hasawi.

He explained that the participation of a number of African ambassadors comes on the occasion of the National Week of the African Union and the celebration of the International Day of Nelson Mandela, which began on September 28 and ended on October 4 in Kuwait. South African ambassador to Kuwait, Mzolisa Bona appreciated humanitarian efforts of the Red Crescent at all levels, especially the aid of disadvantaged families in Kuwait.

Bona also appreciated role of KRCS in supporting people affected by natural disasters and alleviating their suffering, while also commending spreading the culture of volunteerism. Bona pointed out how Kuwait had become a model of humanitarian work, as reflected in the generous assistance it has provided to all people, including people in Africa.

In the region

On the other hand, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UN and International Organizations in Geneva, Jamal Al-Ghunaim, told the executive commission of UN Refugee agency (UNHCR) in Kuwait hosted three international donor conferences to help Syrian people, co-chaired in a Syrian meeting in London in 2016, and participated in a follow-up conference in Brussels in 2017. Those conferences contributed to USD six billion in pledges for the Syrian people, in addition to USD 3.7 billion for the period between 2018 and 2020.

Kuwait continues to coordinate with Syria's neighboring countries to secure medical, health care for Syrian children, in addition to



Kuwait Red Crescent Society hands out food aid, electrical appliances, and clothes to families inside Kuwait. — KUNA photos



KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer

contributions to UN agencies and international NGOs to relieve the Syrian refugees. Moreover, Kuwait has coordinated with the World Health Organization (WHO) to fight polio, rampant among the refugees in these neighboring countries.

On Yemen, Al-Ghunaim said repercussions of the coup against the legitimacy and absence of a political settlement have led to aggravating the humanitarian conditions in the country — in an unprecedented manner. Affirming keenness on Yemen's stability, Al-Ghunaim said Kuwait has continuously provided humanitarian and development aid to the "brothers there since decades ago," in addition to presenting soft loans to fund development enterprises.

As for Iraq, he noted that the Iraqi authorities have backed the international community and has succeeded in liberating the country of the "dangerous terrorist organizations." Out of its unwavering belief that post-war

security and peace cannot be established without repairing the destruction, Kuwait had hosted the international community for rebuilding Iraq where aid pledges reached up to USD 30 billion.

Myanmar

Regarding the Muslims' plight in Myanmar, he urged the international community to help in downgrading their suffering. Kuwait had headed a delegation representing the UN Security Council that visited Bangladesh and Myanmar in May to shed light on the Muslim Rohingya's hardships. In New York, Kuwait called on all the UN nations to band together to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including humanitarian ones.

Abdulrahman Al-Shatti, of Kuwait's Mission to the UN, told a UN committee meeting Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), which has around 960 projects in 106 nations, allocated loans worth KD 6.2 billion (around USD 21 billion) since establishment in the 1960s to help achieve development and equality. Meanwhile, Al-Salam humanitarian work society said it was planning urgent winter aid in Yemen, Syria, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Philippines.

Society Board member Dr Nabil Al-Oun said the society was preparing convoys to help poor, refugees and homeless in the three countries who would face harsh winter. He said the society would be providing food and clothes. Al-Oun said the society was also supporting development projects that would help provide jobs for people, building villages for orphans and widows. — KUNA



The school complex in Saadnayel town (Bekaa area) opened by Kuwait Zakat (alms) House.

PART completes roads projects ahead of schedule

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Roads and Transportation announced on Friday that a major portion of its contractual projects has been completed ahead of schedule. Among the achieved projects are Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway Doha Link, East Jahra, First Ring Road-Second Phase, Fifth Ring Road-West Section, Al-Ghous Road-First Phase, Seventh Ring Road, Al-Wafra Road, Al-Zour Road, Al-Nowaiseeb Road and Al-Salmi Road Eng Ahmed Al-Hassan,

PART's Director General and Board Member, stated to KUNA.

"The authority is advancing significantly towards achieving all its projects aimed to enhance the road network in Kuwait and to elevate its efficiency effectively", Al-Hassan said. "Such projects would contribute in solving the traffic crisis in the country and giving public roads more flexibility", Al-Hassan added.

"PART is determined to accelerate the pace of achieving all its projects and complete them ahead of time in accordance with the plan that aim to modernize road network in the country as part Kuwait 2035 Vision", he noted. The authority had previously announced an integrated scheme to implement around 74 projects aimed to enhance roads and infrastructure and facilitate traffic in the country. It had also mentioned allocating KD 500 million, nearly USD 1.65 billion, to implement all its projects. —KUNA

Egypt's ambassador recalls Kuwait's many sacrifices in October war

KUWAIT: Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait Tareq Al-Qouni yesterday affirmed the deep-rooted bilateral relations between his country and Kuwait, during the past century, including both nations' sacrifices in the wars of Kuwait's liberation and October 6th War. The diplomat added in remarks to the media, on the occasion of celebrating the 45th anniversary of October War's victory, that this epic war witnessed the contribution of many Arab nations with soldiers, weapons, military equipment and oil supplies.

Al-Qouni recalled the great sacrifices of Kuwaiti soldiers who lost their lives in this war, defending the Arab national security. On October the 6th, Arab nations united to regain the occupied Arab territories from the grips of Israel through a historic war fought amid political, economic, regional and international challenges.



Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait Tareq Al-Qouni

"This war reflected the Egyptian people's great capabilities of overcoming all obstacles and difficulties to achieve and fulfill their aspirations", he said. He recalled with great appreciation Kuwait's contribution in the October War and The War of Attrition, as the Kuwaiti army took part in the fighting with Al-Yarmouk brigade, and many Kuwaiti men were martyred in the wars, he affirmed. —KUNA

Re:Food: A Kuwaiti youth social welfare initiative

KUWAIT: Food and sustenance are vital parts of living for almost all human beings, but for some, such resources are hard to find and difficult to attain. As part of its social responsibility and humanitarian mission, the 'Re:Food' non-profit Kuwaiti youth initiative focuses on distributing food to those who are really in need.

The head of Re:Food's public relations and media Haya Al-Maqroun said that the initiative began in reaction to the World Bank's report on Kuwait, which revealed that food wastes represented around 50 percent of the two million tons of solid wastes produced annually. The overflow of food waste

and surplus of sustenance coming of restaurants and households were an integral part of launching the Re:Food initiative, said Al-Maqroun. She indicated that instead of food being wasted, there are families in need of such resources and that is why the initiative is there. There are some 44 needy families registered at House of Zakat, said Al-Maqroun who added that 'Re:Food' served so far some 1,200 families throughout the country.

"Re:Food volunteers are the backbone of the whole project and they make sure that no family would sleep without proper food", she affirmed. On volunteering, Re:Food's head of the volunteers program Hussein Redha said that the number of people partaking in this honorable endeavor jumped from 15 individuals to 700 members. Any person could be part of Re:Food, he affirmed, saying that the group's official website offers all the necessary details for anyone to join the cause. The Re:Food initiative won several accolades this year and was chosen among 30 projects in the "Operation Hope Kuwait". — KUNA

Local

The Acelity Surgical Wound Forum: Fostering a culture of partnership

Content delivered by renowned faculty from across the globe



Dr Ziad Al-Alyan CEO of Central Circle medical company in Kuwait attended the event with the company's team.

DUBAI: The Acelity Surgical Wound Forum (ASWF) began in Dubai on Friday. It aims to facilitate peer-to-peer learning, the exchange of innovative concepts in surgery and wound care and educate delegates on the safe and effective use of new technologies.

In addition to a high-impact plenary session with content delivered by renowned faculty from across the globe, ASWF 2018 hosted four specialty-dedicated breakout sessions in which current surgical practices and challenges will be addressed are Orthopedic and orthopedic-trauma surgery, plastic surgery, cardiothoracic and vascular surgery and General and trauma surgery. Muneera bin Nikhy, Consultant plastic & reconstructive surgeon specialized in reconstructive microsurgery and super-microsurgery in Al Adan hospital, Kuwait had also given a talk at the event.

Dr Muneera is a consultant plastic & reconstructive sur-

geon specialized in reconstructive microsurgery and super-microsurgery. She did her plastic and microsurgery fellowship in Seoul/Korea at Asan Medical Center. She is a member in many societies such as World Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery and American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery. Dr Muneera has had many publications and participated in many national, regional, and international conference as invited speaker.

Dr Muneera is currently working in Al Adan hospital, which covers a population of two million people (40% of Kuwait population) and has the highest trauma rate in Kuwait. Dr Muneera established the plastic surgery unit from zero and she is the head of plastic and reconstructive surgery unit in Adan hospital and consultant plastic & reconstructive surgeon in Taiba hospital.

Gaurav Agarwal, Chief Commercial Officer, KCI: An

Acelity Company said "thank you for taking the time away from your family, patients and clinical work to join us for the 2018 The Acelity Surgical Woundcare Forum.

The Acelity Surgical Woundcare Forum 'ASWF' was founded in 2015 as a medical education event focused on increasing peer to peer engagement and fostering a culture of clinical partnership for early and mid career surgeons. Our aim since conception is to ensure an extremely high standard of diverse and engaging topics and speakers.

Our theme for this meeting is 'Go Beyond-Innovate, Integrate, Interact'. I welcome each of you interact with our Faculty, Acelity personnel and each other to ensure maximum engagement and the opportunity to share your innovation and skills with one another. I look forward to spending some time with you over the coming days." The Acelity Surgical Wound Forum is set to end today.



Muneera bin Nikhy

Kuwait produces some of the best quality honey in world, say experts

BEIRUT: Kuwait's honey industry has seen significant developments in recent years, leading its products to gain worldwide quality recognition, a Kuwaiti beekeeping expert affirmed on Friday. "Such developments are due for the efforts exerted by the honey industry sector in Kuwait, as well as the increasing number of honey keepers", Nael Al-Saif, Secretary of Kuwait Beekeepers Association, told KUNA.

Al-Saif made his remarks on the sidelines of the 11th meeting of Arab Beekeeping Union in Beirut. He said the Association strives for highlighting the distinctive quality of Kuwaiti honey to the world, adding it has, so far, won two gold medals in its first international participation in Seoul, South Korea in 2015. Furthermore, Al-Saif said there are currently around 350 registered beekeepers in the Association, noting there is more than that number as non-registered members in Kuwait, including women. "Beekeeping has gained a wide popularity among Kuwaitis over the years due for its ease of learning, economic returns, and health benefits", said Al-Saif.

The Arab Beekeepers Union (ABU) launched its 11th conference on Friday in the coastal city of Al-Jiyeh south of Beirut, Lebanon with a delegation from the Kuwait Beekeepers Association partaking in the Conference whose motto is "Let's Bee united." The Lebanese presidency's representative and conference sponsor MIP Shamel Roukoz assured during his introductory speech the importance of bees as they "represents a lifestyle of discipline, perseverance, and hard work" while also pointing to the benefits of preserving systemic nature and using natural medicine cures.

Roukoz also mentioned the danger revolving around the Bee sectors such as pesticide abuse, pasture degradation, and the absence of beekeepers support, as he was reflecting on the personal efforts of the beekeepers in Lebanon. On his part, President of the ABU Fathy Al-Beheary stressed on the need to further develop the beekeeping profession as technology has become a part of all modern developments today, as these efforts will ensure the preservation of this profession regional-



BEIRUT: Kuwait's delegation at the Arab Beekeepers Union. — KUNA photos

ly and yielding better quality honey as a solid instructional plans are put forth as a basis to develop the skills through this association.

This development process should also aid in protecting the local bee breeds which should be categorized for each member country to help produce even

better queen bees, added the President of the ABU. Al-Beheary stressed on the issue of funding as it is noteworthy produce in the Arab region which requires more involvement by the state and authorities in the same field to not miss out on this "long forgotten valuable treasure. — KUNA

Kuwait Dive Team replaces 24 cables as part of maintenance campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Dive Team (KDT) affiliated with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation (EVF), replaced and installed 24 cables on the island of Kubbar as part of a maintenance project to the sea and surrounding southern islands, and most importantly the sites of coral reef. "This project is one of the most important preventive environmental projects to protect coral reefs from destruction due to boats or yachts wastes," head of the team Waleed Al-Fadhel told KUNA yesterday. Al-Fadhel noted that such cables provides safe and easy means to enable boats or yachts to dock easily without using traditional means, pointing out that this project requires great efforts and continuous follow-up by the team throughout the year. Al-Fadhel added that the marine project began in 1997 and developed over the past years to reach the current levels that provide maximum safety and durability even in the most difficult climatic conditions. He pointed out that the project has a clear impact on the rehabilitation of the waterfront sites, and KDT has great knowledge and experience in this field. Al-Fadhel has also praised efforts exerted by the General Directorate of Coast Guard, the General Authority for Environment, and the General Authority for Agriculture and Fisheries in implementing laws that help preserve marine environment and maritime safety. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Dive Team affiliated with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation replaces and install cables on the island of Kubbar as part of a maintenance project. — KUNA photos

Scouting 'important' part of social development, says Kuwaiti official

KUWAIT: "Scouts, whether they were boys or girls, are an important part of the social construct, and they are helping in the development of Arab society as a whole", said a Kuwaiti official yesterday in his statement at the opening of the Arab scouting forum. The event is co-organized by the Arab Union of Pioneer Scouts and Guides and Kuwait Boy Scouts Association — the Kuwaiti association's chairman Abdullah Al-Terji said that the event would focus on exchange expertise within the field of scouting.

"Scouting is an integral part of social development and both Arab boys and girls' scouts and guides are interested in giving

back to their respective Arab societies", said the Kuwaiti official. The forum, which will last until October 10, will be interested in addressing challenges facing Arab scouts and guides and hopefully such exchange would lead to fruitful results, said Al-Terji.

On his part, member of the Arab union and chair of the forum Dr Ahmad Al-Dousri lauded the efforts of the Kuwaiti association and its contributions to the Arab scouting union. He called on all participants to provide their vital input and expertise during the course of the forum, saying that such action will help propel the Arab scouting and guiding scene forward. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The opening of the Arab scouting forum — an event co-organized by the Arab Union of Pioneer Scouts and Guides and Kuwait Boy Scouts Association. — KUNA photos

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KUWAIT: A raving display of lights and water captured at Al-Shaheed Park in Sharq. — KUNA



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KTS celebrates International Translation Day

KUWAIT: Kuwait Translators Society (KTS) held its second annual forum at Dr Suad Al-Sabah Theater recently as part of its celebrations to mark the International Translation Day. The forum, themed "translation enriches cultural heritage at changing world," gathered dozens of intellectuals and academics who

reviewed the contributions of KTS to the translation movement in the Arab world.

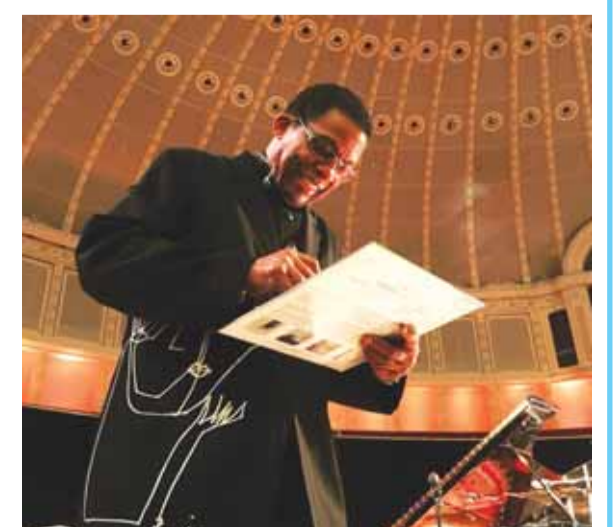
Speakers at the event included KTS Secretary Dr Dhiya Brusly who appreciated KTS Secretary-General Talal Al-Romeidhy's support to the Society, associate professor of philosophy at Kuwait University Dr Abdullah Al-Jasmi, and associate professor of translation at KU Faculty of Arts Dr Mohammad bin Nasser. KTS President Dr Tareq Fakhr-Eddin reviewed his experiment in compiling and publishing a range of articles relating to the study of translation and the challenges facing Arab translators today. The International Translation Day is celebrated on September 30, the death anniversary of St Jerome (347-420 AD) who translated most of the Bible into Latin and is considered the patron saint of translators. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Photos from the event held at Dr Suad Al-Sabah Theater. — KUNA photos

Sheikh Jaber Centre hosts jazz legend Herbie Hancock

KUWAIT: As part of its Bridging Cultures program, Kuwait's Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre hosted legendary jazz pianist Herbie Hancock for a first of a two-day set on Friday evening. The world-renowned jazz practitioner, whose career spans over 50 years, has released more than 40 albums and has been awarded 14 Grammys and an Oscar for his work on the jazz drama, 'Round Midnight'. He is known for his contributions to the emergence of the post-bop and jazz fusion styles of the genre. The jazz icon will hold one more performance at Kuwait's state-of-the-art venue before heading home for a show in California ahead of a tour of South America starting next month. — KUNA



Jazz legend Herbie Hancock

Local

Kuwait Fire Safety Department holds forum at the Symphony Style Hotel

The forum is a step on the path to achieving ideal safety levels



KUWAIT: Under the auspices of deputy PM and minister of state for cabinet affairs, KFSD director, Lt General Khaled Al-Mekrad recently inaugurated the Kuwait Fire Safety Forum which was organized by Kuwaiti Association for protection from Fire Risks (KFPA) at the Symphony Style Hotel. The forum saw the participation of a number of KFSD officials including Deputy Director for Prevention Maj General Khaled Abdullah Fahad, KFPA chairperson Eng

Adel Al-Nassar, KFPA advisor Yousif Al-Ansari, Civil Defense and National Guard officials. Speaking on the occasion, Maj General Khaled Fahad stressed that KFSD's strategy involves utilizing all possible potentials and developing them to interpret His Highness the Amir's vision on turning Kuwait into a regional financial and commercial hub through following up the execution of various health, cultural and recreational projects.

Fahad added that many projects were being currently executed such as air, marine and land aviation terminals 4 and S, T2, Mubarak port, Jahra road, Jabber Stadium and other sport grounds. He also mentioned that strict measures and safety conditions would have to be applied to keep those projects safe against any fire risks. On his part, KFSD's PR manager, Brigadier Khalil Al-Amir highly commended KFPA's organization of the forum noting that such activities usually have a positive impact on safety and fire protection measures.

Also speaking on the occasion, KFPA's advisor, Yousif Al-Ansari stressed on the importance of combining all efforts to achieve HH the Amir's vision noting that the forum is a step on the path to achieving ideal safety levels, environmental suitability and saving lives against fires, and other natural disasters. KFPA chairperson, Adel Al-Nassar

stressed that the forum had gathered researchers and those interested in fire-fighting sciences to discuss the best methods and techniques of dealing with various types of fires. He added that the forum held in collaboration with IQPC company was a great opportunity to exchange ideas and expertise through endless specialized papers and researches discussed on its sessions.

Bangladeshi hangs self in Jahra room

By Hanan Shadooun

KUWAIT: A Bangladeshi was recently found hung to a rope tied to the ceiling of his room in Jahra, said security sources. The man was already dead when paramedics released his neck of the rope. Inquires from acquaintances of the deceased testified that the man was suffering from depression for a long time.

Farwaniya fire

A fire recently broke out in a Farwaniya house, said security sources noting that firemen from Farwaniya and Ardhiya rushed to the scene and managed to control the fire before it spread. No casualties were reported at the scene.

Massive drug bust

An Iraqi jeep was recently detained at Abdali land border exit. The 4X4 vehicle was driving into Kuwait with over 41 kilograms of Hashish and 400,000 captagon tablets concealed in within it, said security sources. A case was filed and the driver was referred to the relevant authorities.



The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently took part in a ceremony organized by Jahra governorate to celebrate the International Day for Older Persons and honor geriatric people. The ceremony was attended by Ouyoon mayor, Melouh Al-Harbi. In this regard, CBK's deputy director for corporate communication, Amani Al-Wer'a said that the bank's contribution comes within its social responsibility sphere, especially those addressing senior citizens.

Tweeter arrested for insulting leadership

KUWAIT: Police authorities arrested a tweeter for insulting the political leadership and police dignitaries as well as the people's honor. Police sources said the suspect was arrested before on drugs charges, was released on bail and banned from traveling. Yet he went back to tweeting using the name of a detective, and used it to start insulting the leadership of Kuwait. His account was swiftly closed and he was also charged for posing as a different person. This time however, after being released he started using

his real identity and resumed his insulting tweets, so he was arrested again.

Police chase in Farwaniya

Farwaniya police arrested a citizen following a chase during which the suspect collided with several cars. Police who were on a patrol asked the driver to pull over, but he quickly sped away. Police initiated a chase, and the reckless driver hit several cars during his escape. Police found drug paraphernalia on him. — Al-Anbaa

DGCA intends to use Iris scan

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait Directorate General for Civil Aviation (DGCA) intends to apply eye-identification using Iris recognition scan on all passengers, including citizens and expats, with the aim of preventing forgery, said DGCA official sources. The sources added that the Iris scan would include complete data report about the passport holder and stressed that the new system would be put into practice after contracting a specialized

company and the scanners are installed.

Insurance deposit

MMSAL undersecretary, Saad Al-Kharraz recently issued a ministerial decision directing the community development department to collect an extra KD 100 fee as an insurance deposit in addition to the usual KD 100 paid on renting wedding halls. Moreover, informed sources said that MSAL also intends to increase the halls rent value to about 300-400KD instead of its earlier plans to double it to KD 200.

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Kids born aboard floating hospital in quake aftermath

Melania Trump rounds off Africa tour in Egypt



WASHINGTON: Alessandra Mondolfi joins fellow protesters against US Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh as they demonstrate at the US Supreme Court in Washington, DC yesterday. —AFP

US Senate poised to confirm Kavanaugh

President Trump eyes a big political victory

WASHINGTON: The US Senate is expected to confirm conservative judge Brett Kavanaugh as the next Supreme Court justice-offering President Donald Trump a big political win and tilting the nation's high court decidedly to the right. The months-long battle over Kavanaugh's nomination has gripped Washington, laying bare the partisan gridlock on Capitol Hill and the political polarization of America just a month before midterm elections.

The Senate vote, set to begin from 3:30 pm, will bring an end to a raucous nomination process defined by harrowing testimony from a woman who says Kavanaugh tried to rape her when they were teenagers-and his fiery rebuttal. If Kavanaugh is confirmed, Trump will have succeeded in having his two picks seated on the court-a major coup for the Republican leader less than halfway through his term.

His promotion to the Supreme Court will also stand as a demoralizing defeat for Democrats who battled hard to block the 53-year-old judge at all costs. Kavanaugh's confirmation was all but sealed on Friday when he won the support of key Senate Republican Susan Collins and conservative Democrat Joe Manchin. Their statements of support brought the number of senators supporting Kavanaugh to 51 in the 100-member chamber. "This is a great day for America," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell told Fox News late Friday, congratulating his colleagues for "refusing to

roll over under all of this intense pressure."

'Presumption of innocence'

Kavanaugh's nomination as a replacement for retiring justice Anthony Kennedy was controversial from the start-but the initial focus was solely on the conservative views held by the married father of two. But his ascent to the Supreme Court was thrown into doubt last week after university research psychologist Christine Blasey Ford testified that he had sexually assaulted her at a Washington area party in the early 1980s. The brutal hearing sparked a supplemental FBI dive into Kavanaugh's background and a week-long delay of the Senate vote. While many senators say they were satisfied with the FBI probe, her lawyers say the investigation was insufficient.

"An FBI investigation that did not include interviews of Dr Ford and Judge Kavanaugh is not a meaningful investigation in any sense of the word," they said in a statement quoted in US media. Collins-a moderate Republican from Maine-said Kavanaugh was entitled to the "presumption of innocence" as the allegations

against him were not substantiated with corroborating evidence. While acknowledging that Blasey Ford's testimony was "sincere, painful and compelling," Collins added: "We will be ill-served in the long run if we abandon the presumption of innocence and fairness."

Immediately after that speech, Manchin announced his support, calling Kavanaugh a "qualified jurist" who "will not allow the partisan nature this process took to follow him onto the court." Manchin faces extraordinary political pressure. He is up for re-election in West Virginia, a state Trump won overwhelmingly in 2016. The stage was set for the final confirmation when the Senate ended debate on the nomination on Friday with a procedural 51-49 vote-a move cheered by Trump, who said he was "very proud."

'Elevator screamers'

If he wins confirmation, Kavanaugh-who has faced a bruising process that raised questions over his candor, partisan rhetoric and his lifestyle as a young man-will seal a conservative majority on the nine-seat high court, possibly for decades to come. His nomination has been met with loud protests, both in Washington and

other cities across the United States. On Friday, more than 100 people were detained. Trump dismissed the mostly female anti-Kavanaugh protesters-and claimed that billionaire financier George Soros, a frequent target of conservatives, was behind their demonstrations. "The very rude elevator screamers are paid professionals only looking to make Senators look bad. Don't fall for it!" he tweeted. Trump's reference to Soros, who has supported the US Democratic Party for years, appeared aimed at inciting more support and anger from the president's conservative Christian base.

'Agonizing'

Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski was the only Republican to break ranks. She described her decision to oppose Kavanaugh as "agonizing," and said that while she hopes he will be a "neutral arbiter" on the court, he was not "the right person for the court at this time." However, while she plans to vote "no", Murkowski said she would ask to be recorded as "present" in the final tally "as a courtesy" to a fellow Republican so he can attend his daughter's wedding instead of returning to Washington to vote. "It will not change the outcome of the vote, but I do hope that it reminds us that we can take very small, very small steps to be gracious with one another," Murkowski said late Friday on the Senate floor. "We owe it to the people of America to return to a less rancorous process." —AFP



A major coup for Republican leader

Gay marriage: Europe splits

PARIS: A referendum in Romania this weekend to define marriage explicitly as between a man and woman underlines the largely East-West split in Europe over same-sex unions.

Western Europe: pioneers

In 2001 the Netherlands became the first country in the world to allow gay and lesbian couples to marry in a civil ceremony. Fifteen European countries have followed: Belgium, Britain (but not Northern Ireland, which only accepts civil partnerships), Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, with Austria due to join next year. In several of these countries, gay marriage had been preceded by civil partnerships, which come with fewer rights, Denmark being the pioneer in 1989. Some European countries still only allow such partnerships, rather than marriage, including Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Switzerland. Slovenians also allow civil partnerships but in 2015 rejected in a referendum a proposal to legalize gay marriage.

Bans in the east

In June 2018 the Czech government backed draft legislation that would make the country the first post-communist member of the European Union to legalize same-sex marriage. But most Eastern European countries allow neither gay partnerships nor marriages, including Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. In 2014 Estonia became the first former Soviet republic to authorize same-sex civil unions. In Russia homosexuality was considered a crime up to 1993 and a mental illness until 1999. Now legal, a 2013 law however punishes the promotion of homosexuality among minors.



BUCHAREST: Romanian Prime Minister Viorica Dancila casts her ballot in a referendum to change the constitutional definition of 'family', at a polling station in Bucharest yesterday. — AFP

West opens to gay adoption

Western Europe also leads the way on the rights of same-sex couples to adopt children, whether within marriage or civil partnerships. This is allowed in Austria, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Malta and The Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. Other countries, like Finland and Slovenia, allow gay people to adopt their partner's children.

Medically Assisted Procreation (MAP) is allowed for lesbian couples in Austria, Belgium, Britain, The Netherlands, Spain and the Nordic countries. France is examining whether to make such a move. Most European countries however ban surrogacy although the use of surrogate mothers is allowed-as long as they are not paid-in Belgium, Britain and The Netherlands. In an exception, Greece in 2014 authorized paid surrogacy. Further afield, homosexual couples can also marry in Canada since 2005 and in the United States since 2015, as well as in four Latin American countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay. South Africa in 2006 became the sole African nation to allow gay marriage. —AFP

#Metoo in Europe: The new laws on consent, catcalling

PARIS: From France, where seduction is treated as a high art, to Sweden, a trailblazer for gender equality, the #MeToo movement has had a mixed impact in Europe, stirring debate about consent and the banality of street harassment. Here is a look at how five countries were affected.

France

In France, where come-ons from men-even when unwanted-have long been treated as gallantry, the #MeToo movement has been divisive. Thousands of women shared accounts of harassment or assault using the #MeToo or #Balancetonporc (Squeal on your pig) hashtags, but the wording of the French slogan rankled many, who accused the accusers of a witch hunt. Among those who hit back was screen legend Catherine Deneuve, who signed an open letter by a group of 100 prominent French women defending men's freedom to "hit on" women and railing against the new "puritanism." Deneuve, who drew hefty criticism over the letter, particularly among younger women, later apologized to sexual assault victims while saying she remained opposed to social media "denunciations". Elected before the Weinstein affair broke, President Emmanuel Macron had already made fighting sexism a priority. In August, parliament passed a new law that makes

catcalling in the street a crime punishable by on-the-spot fines.

Britain

In Britain, sexual harassment revelations made heads roll in government. Defense Minister Michael Fallon quit after being accused of groping a journalist and Prime Minister Theresa May's deputy, Damian Green, also resigned after being accused of inappropriate behavior by a young activist. Anti-poverty charity Oxfam and other NGOs also suffered severe damage to their reputations after several aid workers were accused of sexually exploiting people during missions in crisis-hit countries such as Haiti. The government has promised to get tougher on harassment, particularly upskirting. British police are also investigating assault claims against disgraced former House of Cards star Kevin Spacey, when he was in London between 2005 and 2008.

Sweden

Sweden, a bastion of progressive gender policies, has not been spared scandal. The venerable Swedish Academy, which awards the annual Nobel Literature Prize, was thrown into flux after several women accused the French husband of one of the academy members of sexual assault. Jean-Claude Arnault, who headed an influential cultural club in Stockholm, was sentenced this month to two years in jail for rape. The allegations prompted the academy to postpone the 2018 Literature Prize by a year-a first in 70 years. The government meanwhile seized the #MeToo momentum to push through a new law defining all sex without explicit consent as rape, irrespective of whether violence or threats are applied. —AFP

International

Russia spy saga shows darker side of Dutch 'City of Peace and Justice'

Netherlands finds itself in Russian crosshairs

THE HAGUE: The Hague brands itself as the "City of Peace and Justice", but this week the stately seat of the Dutch government also revealed a darker side with the exposure of four alleged Russian spies. The sedate city bordering the North Sea is home to a slew of international organizations that have also made it increasingly attractive to espionage and cyber-attacks, officials and experts say. The scale of those normally undercover activities was suddenly thrust into the daylight this week when the Netherlands said it had busted a Russian plot to hack the world's chemical watchdog.

In scenes that could have come from a spy film, the four alleged members of Russia's GRU military intelligence agency were caught red-handed with a car full of electronic gear in a carpark next to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. "The Hague as a UN city focusing on issues of human security is attracting judicial bodies and international organizations... also illicit activities," Jan Melissen, a diplomacy expert at Leiden University and the Clingendael institute said. "In the past, diplomacy and intelligence used to be seen as almost two concepts as almost watertight compartments. Now they are coming much closer as we see here in The Hague."



Alleged Russia spies exposed

The Netherlands has found itself in Russian crosshairs too during the investigation into the shooting down of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in 2014 over Ukraine as it flew from Schiphol to Kuala Lumpur. A laptop belonging to one of the four Russians expelled in April had been linked to Malaysia and activities related to the MH17 probe.

"I often hear people say that the Netherlands is too small and insignificant to interest hackers, but this is of course not the case," said Ben de Jong, a Dutch specialist in Russian intelligence agencies. "We've got important organizations here, like the OPCW... Besides if you have an in into one NATO country, you effectively have an in into all of them." De Jong told the popular Algemeen Dagblad tabloid. Melissen said that "clearly, this sort of thing has been going on since time immemorial-also in The Hague." "There is much greater transparency these days so there is greater awareness of illicit activities-also among The Hague's diplomatic corps," Melissen said.

'No James Bond'

The spying activities that do go on are a far cry from the glamorous world of James Bond-as the arrest of the Russian agents showed. The manager of the Marriott hotel said that Dutch agents had simply come in and asked at reception to see the four men-and that by coincidence they came down in the elevator at that moment. "The police officers simply told the men: 'Will you please follow me'-and they did!," manager Vincent Pahlplatz said. "No Aston Martins, no revolving number plates, nobody sky diving from the rooftop." Indeed, perhaps The Hague's only appearance in the fictional spy world to date is more apt-a bleak beachfront scene in the John Le Carre classic "The Spy Who Came In From The Cold", a novel in which no one really knows who is who until it is too late. — AFP

'A small city'

Ever since The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 that helped set down the laws of international warfare, it has drawn a growing array of international bodies. Their grand headquarters lining The Hague's leafy, orderly streets now offer rich pickings for spooks. Apart from the OPCW, it also hosts the UN's top International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals-the former Yugoslavia war crimes court.

The EU's police agency Europol and judicial body Eurojust are just around the corner. The Dutch prime minister's official residence meanwhile is across the road from the OPCW. A stone's throw away, one of The Hague's best-known museums the Museon, last month was one of the venues of the city's annual "Just Peace" festival. Over two days, the festival saw a host of events relating to "peace and justice"-including an exhibition focusing on UN peacekeeping.

"The Hague is very much at the centre of the re-framing of what security, justice and human rights values and violations are all about," said Melissen. "This takes The Hague

out of proportion. For a small UN city... it's becoming very visible." For a small country, the Netherlands generally attracts plenty of unwelcome attention from spy services. The two Russians named by Britain as being behind the Salisbury nerve agent attack on a Russian double agent allegedly passed during their travels through Amsterdam's Schiphol airport-the same gateway that the four alleged OPCW hackers came through and were then expelled from.



THE HAGUE: This undated handout document shows parts of Russian diplomatic passports of alleged Russian agents as the Netherlands expelled the four alleged Russian agents after uncovering a spy-novel-style bid by Russia's GRU military intelligence agency to target the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague. — AFP

State polls a regional test for India's Modi

NEW DELHI: Poll dates were announced for five Indian states by the country's election commission yesterday, opening a long election season that will present Prime Minister Narendra Modi a regional test ahead of his national reelection bid in 2019. Modi's right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rules three of the five poll-bound heartland states-western Rajasthan, central Madhya Pradesh and eastern Chhattisgarh.

BJP's performance in these states, part of India's bell-

wether Hindi speaking heartland, will reflect both on Modi's personal popularity and the state of the main, Nehru-Gandhi dynasty led opposition Congress party before 2019. Congress party president Rahul Gandhi has been facing questions over his leadership after a series of electoral setbacks for the party since 2014, when Modi took office.

The BJP hopes to wrest power in northeastern Mizoram, one of only two states directly ruled by the Congress, and will challenge a popular regional party in southern Telangana state. India's chief election commissioner O P Rawat announced a single phase election in all states except Chhattisgarh, which is at the heart of country's raging Maoist insurgency. "Rajasthan and Telangana will vote on December 7, Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram on November 28 and Chhattisgarh on November 12 and November 20," Rawat told journalists in New Delhi. — AFP

Japan military joins historic Philippine war games



SAN ANTONIO: Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAV) of the US marines emit white smoke during an amphibious landing exercise at the beach of the Philippine navy training center facing the south China sea in San Antonio town, Zambales province, north of Manila yesterday. — AFP

SAN ANTONIO: Japanese troops stormed a beach in the Philippines yesterday in joint exercises with US and Filipino troops that officials said marked the first time Tokyo's armored vehicles rolled on foreign soil since World War II. The small Japanese contingent played a humanitarian support role in the drill after US and Filipino marines made an amphibious landing to retake Philippine territory from a "terrorist" group.

Fifty unarmed Japanese soldiers in camouflage marched behind their four armored vehicles and picked up Filipino and American troops playing the role of wounded combatants while moving inland over sand and sparse bushland. The exercise, codenamed Kamandag (Venom), marked the first time Japanese armored military vehicles were used on foreign soil since the country adopted a pacifist constitution after its 1945 defeat, said Japan's Major Koki Inoue.

"Our purpose is to improve our operational capability and this is a

very good opportunity for us to improve our humanitarian assistance and disaster relief training," Inoue said, adding Japan was not involved in the drill's combat component. The exercise was held at a Philippine navy base facing the South China Sea some 250 kilometers (155 miles) from the Scarborough Shoal, a territory claimed by Manila that was seized by China during a 2012 naval stand-off. The Philippines has since ramped up military cooperation with Washington, its

long-time ally, and also held joint naval exercises with Japan near Scarborough Shoal in 2015.

Japan has its own maritime territorial dispute with Beijing in the East China Sea. The US military stressed that yesterday's exercise was not aimed at China, which has also built artificial islands on disputed areas of the South China Sea and installed military facilities on them. "It has nothing to do with a foreign nation or any sort of foreign army. — AFP

On the previous leg of her tour in Kenya, her choice of a white colonial-style pith helmet while on safari drew some criticism on Twitter, with one person comparing her look to that of a "colonial administrator". Melania Trump, in Africa to promote her children's welfare program, began her trip in Ghana, where she visited mothers and their newborns, and toured a former slave trading fort. She then made a brief stop in Malawi where she toured a primary school. — AFP

Melania Trump rounds off Africa tour in Egypt

CAIRO: US First Lady Melania Trump held talks in the Egyptian capital yesterday on the final leg of a solo four-nation tour of Africa that will also see her visit the Pyramids. The low-key tour, during which she has made no comment to reporters, has contrasted with the political tumult back home where her husband was set to score a big political win after days of acrimonious deadlock inside and outside the Senate over his Supreme Court pick. The former model stepped off a plane at Cairo international airport wearing high-waisted white pants, a pleated white shirt and a black tie with a beige jacket hung over her shoulders. She was welcomed by Egyptian First Lady Intissar Amer al-Sisi, an observant Muslim who wore an ankle-length blue dress and matching headscarf.

Security was tight with police deployed along the route and on rooftops as her convoy drove from the airport to the presidential palace. The visit comes as security forces face a persistent jihadist insurgency in the Sinai Peninsula across the Suez Canal to the northeast. The First Lady held a one-hour meeting with President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and his wife at the palace, the longest of her tour, and was then driven to the US embassy before heading to the Pyramids of Giza. During her whistlestop five-hour stay in Cairo, she was also scheduled to visit the new National Museum under construction next door to the Pyramids.



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International

White cop convicted of murder for shooting dead a black teen

Van Dyke fired 16 bullets into 17-year-old Laquan McDonald

CHICAGO: A white Chicago police officer was found guilty of murder Friday for fatally shooting a black teenager and triggering months of protests in America's third largest city. Jason Van Dyke fired 16 bullets into 17-year-old Laquan McDonald during the 2014 confrontation. The slaying was captured on police video that showed the knife-wielding teen appearing to walk away from officers when he was shot. The 12-person jury reached a verdict just one day after beginning deliberations. They chose to dispense of first-degree murder charges, and instead convicted Van Dyke of lesser second-degree murder. The officer was also found guilty of 16 counts of aggravated battery with a firearm—for each bullet he fired—and acquitted of one count of official misconduct. "This is a victory for America," said McDonald's great-uncle and family spokesman Marvin Hunter. "Laquan McDonald represents all of the victims that suffered what he suffered." The city of Chicago had already reached a \$5 million civil settlement with McDonald's family. A jubilant crowd—some of whom told local media that they were in shock over the outcome—grew steadily in the city's downtown business district, demanding additional resignations of city officials and more police reform.



Fatally shooting triggered months of protests in US

'Historic for Chicago'
"This is historic for Chicago," community organizer Janette Wilson told reporters. "I would hope that the people of Chicago will really look at this case as a model for the nation." The city had been on edge in advance of the verdict, since the case had already caused political upheaval and months of earlier protests.

City officials and business owners beefed up security

as the trial neared an end, while thousands of police officers were deployed to the streets. Lead prosecutor Joe McMahon said he hoped the verdict "begins a new chapter in the relationship between law enforcement and the community." "It provides validation and a sense of justice for many residents," he said. The jury reached its verdict after 10 days of testimony in which the officer claimed self-defense, while the prosecution accused him of making a rash and unjustified decision to shoot.

The trial had hinged on the video footage showing Van Dyke continuing to fire bullet after bullet—even after the teen falls to the ground and lies motionless. Crucially, Van Dyke is also seen taking steps toward McDonald before firing, even though he testified that he shot because the teen had gotten too close with his knife. Several jurors told reporters under condition of anonymity that convicting had been straightforward—although they went for the lesser second-degree murder verdict because they believed

Van Dyke's claim that he felt threatened. "Instead of escalating the situation, he should have de-escalated," one said, however.

'Sacrificial lamb'

Van Dyke was taken straight into custody. Under Illinois state law, he faces four to 20 years for the murder finding while aggravated battery with a firearm carries six to 30 years. The head of Chicago's police union, which funded Van Dyke's defense, promised an appeal and criticized the jury for punishing an officer for simply doing his job. Van Dyke's attorney Dan Herbert said the officer had been made into a "sacrificial lamb" by politicians who wanted to appease an angry public.



CHICAGO: Demonstrators protest as they celebrate the verdict in the murder trial of Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke along Michigan Avenue in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

Van Dyke wasn't criminally charged until the day the video was made public—which itself did not happen until a year after the shooting and only after a judge forced city officials to do so. The shooting became emblematic of decades of police abuse in the Midwestern city—often targeted at Chicago's African-American population. There were months of protests and calls for resignations. Activists accused city officials of an attempted cover up. Similar cases of deadly police encounters between police and African Americans have rarely been prosecuted. And

when officers have been charged, they have rarely been convicted. In Chicago, the aftermath of the McDonald shooting convulsed the city's politics and led to significant changes in its police department. The city's police chief and lead prosecutor both lost their jobs. The new police chief, Eddie Johnson, recommended that seven officers be fired for filing false reports about McDonald's shooting. Three of the officers have been charged with conspiring to mislead about the threat McDonald had posed. They are awaiting trial. —AFP

News in brief

50 killed, 100 burnt

KINSHASA: About 50 people died and 100 were burnt yesterday after an oil tanker collided with a vehicle on an arterial highway in the west of DR Congo, the acting governor of the region said. "We have about 50 dead and a 100 people have suffered second degree burns," said Atou Matabuana, the interim governor of Kongo Central region, according to the actualite.cd website. The accident occurred on a highway linking the capital Kinshasa to the country's sole port at Matadi on the Atlantic Ocean. It took place near the city of Kisantu, about 120 kilometers (100 miles) west of Kinshasa. The UN's Okapi radio said "the flames spread rapidly engulfing nearby houses." Overloaded trucks carrying goods as well as oil tankers regularly ply this highway. — AFP

Yemen students protest

SANAA: Yemeni rebels yesterday detained dozens of students protesting in the capital Sanaa against poverty in the war-torn country, activists and witnesses said. Local activists, asking not to be named, told AFP that the Shiite Houthi movement detained at least 55 students, including 18 women, near Sanaa University. Houthi authorities had warned it would "beat and arrest" anyone taking part in demonstrations in the rebel-held capital, residents said, after local activists called for a mass protest against inflation and famine. The Houthi rebels did not immediately comment on the arrests. Witnesses said the detained men and women were chanting: "We will sacrifice our soul, our blood for you, Yemen." The students were taken to a nearby Huthi-run police station, after which they were transported to "unknown locations", the activists said, adding the rebels closed the university as part of security measures. —AFP

Dutch scramble F-16s

THE HAGUE: The Dutch air force scrambled two F-16 fighter jets to escort a flight from Abu Dhabi to Amsterdam after an onboard fight broke out with an aggressive American passenger, authorities said yesterday. "A 29-year-old American man became aggressive after being asked by a pursuer to return to his seat," Joanna Helmonds said. "A scuffle broke out and the cabin crew, together with other passengers managed to restrain the man," she said, declining to name the airline or flight. A number of passengers were lightly wounded including two passengers who were given black eyes, said Helmonds. The plane was then given special clearance to land immediately at Schiphol airport with police arresting the man shortly afterwards. Helmonds said the man was examined at the airport and officers determined that he came across as disoriented. —AFP

Turkey arrests 137

ANKARA: Turkish authorities have arrested 137 people in a country-wide operation over two days aimed at the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), state news agency Anadolu said yesterday. The PKK, designated as a terror group by Turkey and its Western allies, is regularly targeted in security forces raids. The authorities are still battling the over three-decade insurgency of the PKK which initially took up arms for a separate state but now demands a degree of autonomy. The clashes between Turkish security forces and PKK members have resumed after a fragile ceasefire collapsed in 2015. The PKK's armed struggle with the Turkish government has killed more than 40,000 people since 1984. On Thursday, eight soldiers were killed by an improvised explosive device in southeastern Turkey in an attack the government blamed on the PKK. — AFP

Cameroon's under 35s have known one leader: Biya

YAOUNDE: "We should let him finish, and afterwards we can judge," said Denis. "No, he should go!" responded Bernardin, debating with his friend the long legacy of Cameroonian President Paul Biya who has ruled since 1982 and will seek a seventh term in today's election. Denis and Bernardin sat on a low wall in the Nkol Eton district of the capital Yaounde discussing the future of their country, where 75 percent of the population have only known Biya as their president. Across all of Africa, only Equatorial Guinea's Teodoro Obiang Nguema has been in power longer.

"He should have time to complete the projects he started, or else they will fail," said Denis. Since coming to power three-and-a-half decades ago, Biya has launched many high-profile prestige projects, several of which have never seen the light of day. "If he hasn't managed to do something I think that's enough, he's not going to do it later," responded Bernardin, who voted for Biya in the last presidential election in 2011. "I was deceived," he sighed. "Now I'm 30 years old. In 2011 I was 23 and I believed in him. But now if he's reelected? I will be 37 and I will only have ever known him. Ouch!"

'Biya has experience'

The two friends' cigarette-fuelled, late afternoon con-

versation turned to politics even though Biya himself has been all but invisible during the campaign, except for a brief appearance in the country's far north last weekend. Thousands of Biya posters have been put up across the country proclaiming the 85-year-old to be "the force of experience". "Have faith in him, he's the father," said Denis, exhaling as he leant on a nearby car.

"No, no! That's not the way to look at it," interrupted Hugues, a 44-year-old casual laborer who had been listening to Denis and Bernardin's debate. "My son just graduated from high school. But me, I'm not in the system, I want to know what to do so he has opportunities. I don't have the money to give." But Denis insisted that Biya "is not the problem. It's his entourage. I don't think he knows what's going on, with corruption and all that". "It's up to you young people to take charge," said Hugues. "What young-sters? Can you imagine handing power to a young person? Look at the state of the youth, it would be a disaster. At least Biya has experience," said Denis.

'The youth candidate'

But despite his defense of Biya, Denis admitted he would not be voting for the president on Sunday and had not even collected his polling card. "What's the point, he'll be elected without me, and that's good. I don't need to vote," he said. All three men agreed that the election would have no impact on their daily lives. For them, Cameroonian politics is defined by self-advancement rather than deeply held values.

The young people campaigning for Biya "don't have political motives, but they have to drink, they have to eat and so people take the money, that's just the way it is," said Bernardin. The ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) party's youth wing has descended on



YAOUNDE: Supporters of Joshua Osih, the candidate in the Cameroonian presidential election of the SDF (Social Democratic Front), an opposition party to the ruling party, wait for their candidate to arrive during an election rally. — AFP

communities across the central African nation to hand out shirts, hats and key-rings bearing Biya's likeness, hoping to mobilize voters.

"But for me, even if they gave me 10,000 CFA francs (\$17, 15 euros) this year, I wouldn't vote for Biya!" laughed Bernardin. Of the seven opposition contenders, Cabral Libii is Bernardin's favorite "because he is the youth candidate!" Libii, a TV news analyst who is new to politics, is the youngest presidential candidate at the age of 38. He was just three years old when Biya began his first term. Bernardin is reluctant to imagine yet another Biya victory. "In this system, those who have nothing will have nothing, and those who already have something will still have something," he said, grimly. — AFP

Sex: Elephant in the room at Vatican synod

VATICAN CITY: "We mustn't be afraid of sexuality!" French prelate Emmanuel Gobillard urged the Vatican synod on the role of young people, trying to break down the enduring taboo in the 1.3 billion-member Church. But while the young insist that sex is an unavoidable topic at the month-long meeting of world bishops, the subject has a low profile in the gathering's 70-page working document.

The text notes "the beauty and depth of affective and sex life" that can be "disfigured" by "early sexual activity, multiple sexual partners, digital pornography, exhibiting bodies online and sexual tourism". It admits that the Church is no longer the moral compass it once was: "Sociological studies show that many young Catholics do not follow Church teachings on sexual morals," it says. But the fact that it mentions, once, the term LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) was too much for Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia, a member of the synod's permanent committee.

"There is no such thing as an 'LGBTQ Catholic' or a 'transgender Catholic' or a 'heterosexual Catholic' - as if our sexual appetites defined who we are," he told the meeting on Thursday. The working document, which will be the basis for a final text, notes the existence of LGBT "who wish to benefit from greater closeness and experience greater care by the Church". But Chaput objected. "LGBTQ" and similar language should not be used in church documents, because using it suggests that these are real, autonomous groups, and the church simply doesn't categorize people that way," he argued.

'Prism of pornography'

Auxiliary Bishop of Lyon Gobillard said he had spent the summer listening to what young people had to say. "As this synod begins, it is essential to remember how important it is to be able to speak freely about sexuality, for our



VATICAN CITY: Chinese Bishop Guo Jincai (left) and Chinese Bishop Yang Xiaoting take a selfie before Pope Francis' meeting with the youth and the Synod fathers at the Paul VI Hall in Vatican yesterday. — AFP

youths and seminarians to be educated so that they can educate," he told the meeting of bishops and Pope Francis. "Too often, young people discover sexuality through the prism of pornography or the embarrassed silence of (previous) generations," he said in his four-minute address.

He called for a change in mentality that would see sexuality and celibacy discussed in schools and seminaries. Even Pope Francis has approved of young lovers living together provided it leads to marriage. "Sexuality is no longer a taboo within the Church but it's still difficult to talk about it in simple terms," Gobillard told journalists before the synod. Dealing with the controversial topic is complicated by the presence of bishops from cultures with more or less conservative attitudes to sexuality, including some countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. An international seminar on youth in September 2017 in preparation for the synod invited French sexologist Therese Hargot to speak.

"We took part in a series of conferences on young people and political engagement, social engagement, migrants... but not a word on sexuality, friendship, love, not one discussion about love!" she said in a book of conversations with Gobillard. "Love and whatever you want to do, do it!" she said. The official response from an unnamed Vatican official during the 2017 seminar was not encouraging, she added. —AFP

Latvia votes as Russians and populists eye power

RIGA: Polling stations in Latvia opened yesterday for a general election that could propel a populist, pro-Kremlin coalition to power as the Baltic state celebrates the centenary of its birth as an independent state. Though lauded for righting the economy, the governing centre-right coalition has lost ground, opinion polls suggest. But with a quarter of voters still undecided according to pollsters, the election is still wide open. After casting his ballot, President Raimonds Vejonis from the Green Party called on fellow Latvians to come to the polls, pointing to the Brexit vote as an example of what might happen if they didn't.

"It shows us that we should not stay at home and that we should express our opinions," he said. Latvia is a member of both the euro-zone and NATO, having joined the military alliance in 2004. Latvia's ethnic Russian minority makes up about a quarter of the country's 1.9 million population and Harmony, which was formerly allied with Putin's United Russia party, is popular with them. The party has won the largest number of votes in the last three elections, and did not enter government only because it failed to attract coalition partners. But this time could be different.

Along with fellow Baltic states Estonia and Lithuania, Latvia declared independence in 1918 after the Tsarist Russian empire collapsed. But it was occupied by Nazi Germany during World War II, and then by the Soviet Union for nearly half a century until 1991. After the last election in 2014, the centre-right Greens and Farmers Union, the right-wing National Alliance and the centre-right Unity formed a three-party coalition to run the country. On their watch the economy, hit hard by the 2008 financial crisis, has resumed growth. —AFP

International

'We just find bodies': Quake survivor hopes turn to search for the dead

'This is no longer a search for the living'

PALU: Wearing masks to ward off the stench of death, Indonesian soldiers trudge over mountains of mud and concrete, moving slowly as they poke and prod the wreckage. Eight days after a quake-tsunami disaster erased parts of Palu on Sulawesi island, this is no longer a search for the living, but a collection of the dead. They don't have to look very hard. Sergeant Syafaruddin, from an army unit in Makassar south of Palu, asks for a body bag. He is standing near the remnants of an Islamic school, and two of his soldiers have emerged from the ditch with a body bag sagging in the middle.

The load is too light for a corpse—they say they found just the heads of two adults and a child. "There are no survivors here. We just find bodies, everyday," says Syafaruddin, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. There are no signs of life peeking from beneath this devastation in Balaroa, where a vast government housing complex was all but swallowed when the sheer force of the quake turned the earth into mud. There are fears that vast numbers of decomposing bodies could still be buried beneath this once-thriving neighborhood, perhaps 1,000 or more. The twin disasters are already known to have killed more than 1,500 people, and counting.



Indonesian quake death toll mounts

photo album—perhaps the only trace of loved ones he will ever recover. None of Riadi's still-missing family has been seen since the disaster carved a path of destruction through Palu. His sister Hermawati points to a spot amid the carnage. She thinks their home once stood there—she can only guess its position from a familiar tree. There is nothing else recognizable left in the vast wasteland of debris.

The area is strewn with shards of her past life—a shoe, some text books, a smashed cup, a set of measuring spoons. Around her, troops in camouflage fatigues and floppy hats to shield them from the unyielding tropical sun clamber past in wellington boots. They start digging afresh, but it is not long before they need to call in a digger. It swoops a few times and with almost no effort brings up the body of a long-haired woman buried in mud.

In Petobo, another hard-hit district in Palu, the mud is hardening as the days pass by, frustrating an already herculean effort to find the dead entombed below. Teams struggle to extract bodies from the muck, often dislodging limbs loosened by decomposition after more than a week exposed to the elements. They must drag the bodies hundreds of metres to waiting trucks, unable to traverse the morass, as authorities up in the hills of Palu bury hundreds of other bodies. Many will never be found. The government plans to declare the worst-hit zones as mass graves, the victims forever entombed in mud. —AFP



PALU: A part of a collapsed mosque is seen along with debris at Perumnas Balaroa village in Palu in Indonesia's Central Sulawesi yesterday, following the September 28 earthquake and tsunami. —AFP

Past life

Desperate to find any sign of 11 missing relatives, Rahmat Riadi spots a photograph amid the rubble, then another, and another. He finds the torn pages of a family

Kids born aboard floating hospital in quake aftermath

PALU: Dinar was lucky to survive the Indonesian quake-tsunami that leveled her home. But she didn't have much time to count her blessings—she was nine months pregnant and about to give birth in a disaster zone. The 38-year-old confronted a terrifying scene: the city of Palu was in ruins, its damaged hospitals overflowed with injured patients and doctors treated the wounded outside in the cracked, rubble-strewn streets. "I was so worried after the earthquake," she told AFP. "I had so much on my mind." But then a miracle arrived out of the blue in devastated Palu port—the KRI Dr Soeharso, an Indonesian naval ship, kitted out with a top-rate medical clinic.

Dinar was rushed aboard and safely delivered her fifth child on Friday, a week after the twin disaster leveled parts of the city on Sulawesi island, killing more than 1,500 people. "I am so happy, and lucky this ship was here," she said. Dinar named her newborn daughter Suharsi—a feminine adaptation of Soeharso, after the ship where she gave birth. The warship was moored in Bali, at the ready ahead of an International Monetary Fund conference slated for the holiday island next week. But it charted a course for disaster-struck Sulawesi after Palu suffered a double blow on September 28 that wiped villages off the map and left the coastal city crippled on doctors and medical supplies.

I had to help

A local doctor stepped up to deliver Dinar's baby, and three others so far born aboard the Soeharso since the quake, when an urgent call went out for an obstetrician. Dr Sasono, who like many Indonesians goes by one name,



PANTOLOAN, Indonesia: Indonesian Dinar, 38-year-olds, tends to her newborn baby named after the KRI floating hospital Dian Suharsi in Pantoloan yesterday. —AFP

packed up whatever belongings remained after the quake and prepared to flee Palu with his wife and two children when he heard the appeal.

"I saw so many people in need of help coming to the hospital so I abandoned plans to evacuate with my family and wanted to assist," he said. "Of course, I was afraid of staying back to help when there were still tremors. "It was my first time helping deliver a baby aboard a ship." One of the children born aboard died shortly after birth—compounding a tragedy for the parents who survived the trauma of the quake. "We bought baby clothes and everything. But God

had a different plan," said the mother, Kusniran.

For Huzria, who gave birth to a healthy child Sunday on the floating hospital, it was the second miracle in as many days. She had been on the beach as the quake hit—and watched in horror as the ocean began bubbling and receding before it crested into the tsunami that roared towards the coastline. Many were too slow and died on the sand. But Huzria, aided by her husband, managed to hobble to safety, reaching a hilltop from where they could survey the destruction unfolding below. "Now, I can breathe easily," the 33-year-old told AFP. "I am so happy." —AFP

Troops and Taleban battle for control of Ghazni highways

KABUL: Heavily armed Taleban fighters destroyed bridges near the central city of Ghazni yesterday, closing the main highway between the capital Kabul and southern Afghanistan, officials said. Sporadic clashes erupted between Afghan soldiers and Taleban insurgents who were trying to gain control over parts of Ghazni province nearly two months after being pushed back from the city by US-backed Afghan forces, officials added.

Mohammad Arif Noori, the governor's spokesman in Ghazni, said fighting was ongoing and the Afghan army had deployed helicopters to prevent the militants from entering the city centre. "We are fully prepared to attack them. This time the province will not fall into the hands of the Taleban," Noori said. Five militants were killed as they were planting bombs on three bridges on the Kabul-Kandahar highway, Noori added.

The attack on Ghazni was a show of strength for the Taleban, underscoring how volatile the security situation remains two weeks before the parliamentary elections. Polling has already been called off in Ghazni province after the Taleban overran it in August and besieged the city for five days. That confrontation killed 150 Afghan security forces and 95 civilians dead, as well as hundreds of Taleban fighters, said officials then. President Ashraf Ghani's Western-backed government pledged \$20 million for relief and reconstruction of Ghazni after security forces defeated the Taleban fighters in that battle. —Reuters

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In a divided UN, China blazes quiet path to power

Criticized by the White House for alleged interference in US politics, China has quietly blazed a path at the United Nations where it is, little by little, becoming one of the most influential members. At the Security Council, where China holds one of five permanent veto-wielding seats, its statements remain bland, often recalling fundamentals of the United Nations Charter such as national sovereignty and principles of non-interference.

"In their interpretation, democracy is optional, as are human rights," a European diplomat said. Yet in peacekeeping missions or when jobs are available in the UN's executive arm at the New York headquarters, Beijing is increasingly making its presence felt. More than 2,500 Chinese military personnel wear UN blue helmets on peacekeeping missions in Libya, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan.

China has also "enormously increased" its voluntary financial contributions to the world body while the US under President Donald Trump has slashed its own financing, one diplomat said. Funding reports and missions allows China to buy some "influence" and push its candidates into top positions, the diplomat added, adding that to have Chinese in multiple roles across the UN provides "a source of information and influence." Another diplomat, also speaking anonymously, said: "China is taking power at the United Nations."

Spheres of influence

In 2017 and 2018, the Asian giant, which is economically expanding in Africa and elsewhere, became a key player on two major international crises: North Korea and Myanmar. Under American pressure, Beijing imposed unprecedented economic sanctions against Pyongyang, but with the hope that an accord on denuclearization of the Korean peninsula will lead to the departure of about 30,000 US troops based in South Korea — China's behind-the-scenes strategy in the region. China meanwhile considers the crisis of Myanmar's Muslim minority Rohingya, 700,000 of whom fled a military crackdown to Bangladesh, as a bilateral issue between those two countries, and succeeded in preventing any firm Security Council action.

Power and erosion

European diplomats have noted that China's rise at the United Nations has come at a time when Beijing and Moscow are no longer automatically offering each other immediate reciprocal support. When Moscow makes use of its veto power, China sometimes simply abstains. Even in lower-profile situations, such as negotiating texts among the 15 Security Council members at the experts level, China is "present on all subjects," one diplomat said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Beijing, for example, is now seeking to become chief author on texts about Afghanistan, replacing the Netherlands, which on January 1 will leave its non-permanent Security Council seat, several diplomats said.

The vast majority of UN resolutions still are written by the United States, Britain or France — a reflection of an older world order. China, like Russia, is rarely the author, although it was in charge of the Somalia file in the past. So how far will China go? Some say this is only the tip of the iceberg. "For China, multipolarity is just one stop on the underground metro line," one diplomatic source said. For Beijing, it then sees a Group of Two — China and the US, and eventually, China will reign supreme, a diplomat said. "They are long-term players. They don't want to create a commotion," another diplomatic source said.

The United States has imposed \$250 billion in tariffs on Chinese goods and Trump has gone so far as alleging that Beijing is interfering in the November midterm elections in hopes of helping defeat his Republican Party due to his tough trade stance. Speaking to a US think tank last week, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi dismissed fears that his country was seeking to overtake the US as the pre-eminent world power. Concluding that China is about to seek hegemony, he said, is "a serious strategic misjudgment." — AFP



China President Xi Jinping



Kavanaugh on US Supreme Court: Sparks or harmony?

When Clarence Thomas took a seat on the US Supreme Court in 1991, he had only barely survived a series of bitter Senate hearings on allegations of sexual harassment that divided the country. But he said he was quickly welcomed by his eight fellow justices. "After going through all those difficulties, the members of the court were just wonderful people to a person," Thomas said in an appearance at the Library of Congress earlier this year.

"So the court itself is quite different from the ordeal. It's almost the opposite of the ordeal it took to get there." Brett Kavanaugh will be counting on those strong traditions of collegiality if, as expected, he is confirmed by the Senate as a Supreme Court justice this weekend. Kavanaugh's nomination hearings were rocked by university professor Christine Blasey Ford's allegations that he sexually assaulted her in 1982, when they were both high school students.

Two other women also alleged sexual misconduct by the conservative Kavanaugh. The accusations as well as Kavanaugh's angry denials and fierce criticism of Senate Democrats widened the US political divide just weeks before congressional elections and raised concerns about the court's reputation in US society. Like Thomas in 1991, Kavanaugh will be joining a right-leaning court. He succeeds retired Justice Anthony Kennedy, who was often the decisive 5-4 swing vote on social issues, and consolidates conservative control of the nine-member Court.

But the four liberal justices include 85-year-old feminist icon Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who made her name as an advocate for women's rights. Ginsburg voiced support for the #MeToo movement against sexual misconduct even as Kavanaugh was about to face a grueling Senate hearing into the allegations against him, saying that unlike in her youth "women nowadays are not silent about bad behavior." Still, Supreme Court experts believe the justices are likely to move past any differences, as they have done in

the past. "I think the justices care very much about collegiality and not purely for the sake of collegiality. They think it's important for people who disagree with each other to work together," said Carolyn Shapiro, who served as a law clerk for liberal Justice Stephen Breyer. The liberal justices — Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor — need to seek support from at least one conservative in ideologically divisive cases, so they have a strong incentive not to alienate the new arrival, court experts said. Kagan, known for her strategic nous, has an existing relationship with Kavanaugh. In her former role as dean of Harvard Law School, she hired Kavanaugh to teach there.

"She is practical enough that she is going to put that behind her and have the best relationship she can with someone she is going to have to put up with for 30 years," said one Washington lawyer, who declined to be named because he argues cases at the court. "The bigger question is Sotomayor and Ginsburg," the lawyer added. Sotomayor has stressed the importance of collegiality, recounting at a 2016 event how the justices often eat together after oral arguments. "There is no topic that's off limits. But we try to avoid controversy, so we're very guarded about raising topics that we think might create hostility in the room," she said.

Friendships among justices

Ginsburg was herself famously close friends with the late conservative Justice Antonin Scalia, with the two bonding over a shared love of opera despite their ideological differences. And Thomas is himself seen as a popular figure among the other justices. Aside from his belligerent Senate appearance and his reputation as a doctrinaire conservative, Kavanaugh has been seen as a calm, easy-going judge on the federal appeals court in Washington. He is also a self-declared fan of sports and beer.

Supreme Court justices do not always get on, however.

Most notably, several justices chafed at the leadership of Chief Justice Warren Burger, who served from 1969 to 1986. The broader problem facing the court may be whether the circumstances of Kavanaugh's confirmation have damaged not just Kavanaugh's reputation but also the institution itself. "This is going to make the court seem more political, and I think that's dangerous because the legitimacy of the court turns on the belief that law is distinct from politics," said Ernest Young, a conservative law professor at Duke University.

At the Sept. 27 Senate hearing into Ford's allegations against Kavanaugh, he fought back with a blistering partisan attack in which he described the allegations against him as a "calculated and orchestrated political hit" masterminded by the Democrats and left-wing groups. "I had hoped and still hope that if confirmed he will be a non-partisan justice," said Yale Law School Professor Akhil Amar, who supported Kavanaugh's nomination. "But the savage and ugly partisanship in late September may make that harder, psychologically, to happen." Retired Justice John Paul Stevens, a Republican appointee, said on Thursday that Kavanaugh's remarks in that hearing should disqualify him from serving on the high court.

Kavanaugh, in an opinion piece in the Wall Street Journal article this week, said he regretted some of his comments. "I was very emotional last Thursday, more so than I have ever been. I might have been too emotional at times. I know that my tone was sharp, and I said a few things I should not have said," Kavanaugh wrote.

The concern for some on the left is whether Kavanaugh will be able to put aside several bruising weeks and give all who come before him a fair shake. "We should fully expect that there will be parties that appear before him in the future who will be deeply skeptical about receiving a fair opportunity to be heard," said Kristen Clarke, president of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a civil rights group. — Reuters

'The Children Gone to Poland' traces North Korea war orphans abroad

A new documentary sheds light on the little-known story of North Korean war orphans sent to Poland, where they formed an unlikely bond with their teachers before their traumatic return home. "The Children Gone to Poland" — which premiered Saturday at the Busan International Film Festival in South Korea — traces the journey of the 1,200 orphans sent from the North during the 1950-53 Korean War. The devastating conflict, which sealed the division of the flashpoint peninsula, killed at least half a million civilians and left at least 100,000 children without parents. The North's then-leader Kim Il Sung sent thousands of orphans to countries including the Soviet Union, Hungary and Poland from 1951, pleading with his communist allies to take care of them.

The group of 1,200 orphans arrived in 1953 at the small, forested village of Plakowice, where they lived in a former hospital building for six years under the care of Polish teachers. Famed South Korean actress Choo Sang-mee, who directed the film, visits Poland to find traces of the war orphans, alongside a North Korean defector with her own distressing childhood memories of separation from her family. "Trains full of children arrived (over) several days," retired teacher Jozef Borowiec said in the film, adding many were in a "state of shock and trauma" after witnessing the horrors of war.

'Heartbreaking memories'

The orphans, infested with lice and suffering from disease, insisted on sleeping under the bed in fear of the bombing campaigns they lived through at home, while constantly screaming and crying in their sleep. But they quickly learned Polish and formed bonds with their teachers and caregivers, who knew from personal experience the horrors of war. "Back then, we also went through horrible wars and had many heartbreaking memories ourselves," Borowiec, 91, told Choo. "We told them to call us mum and dad... We wanted to do everything to help these (North Korean) orphans erase the memories of war and



This undated handout photo shows a scene from South Korean film 'The Children Gone to Poland'. A new documentary shed light on the little-known story of North Korean war orphans sent to Poland where formed unlikely bond with their Polish teachers and an ongoing tragedy under Pyongyang's authoritarian regime. — AFP

have a sense of family in Poland," he said, wiping away tears. Old photos and videos showed the orphans laughing, studying Polish, dancing and singing, or playing with teachers and other Polish children — a typical childhood denied in their homeland. The teachers soon got to know each of them — whose names they tearfully remember even decades later. "The children were brought here as part of international propaganda (to cement diplomatic ties)," Jolanta Kryszowata, a Polish journalist who wrote a book about the North Korean orphans, says in the film. "But the teachers developed real compassion for these orphans... the human feelings they shared with the children had little to do with politics," said Kryszowata, whose book inspired the latest documentary.

Forced return

North Korea eventually ordered the children to return and join the country's post-war reconstruction efforts, prompting some to lie on the snow and even pour cold water over themselves in a desperate bid to fall sick and avoid repatriation. Many sent letters back to the teachers, describing their days in Poland as the best time of their

lives and bemoaning the backbreaking labor they faced back home.

One child even died during a failed attempt to illegally cross the border to neighboring China, after sending multiple letters begging Borowiec to take him back. All letters came to a sudden stop in 1961 as the North's regime limited contact with the outside world. The film juxtaposes the fate of the orphans with those of today's North Korean child defectors, traumatized by the harrowing escape from their homeland.

The impoverished, isolated state is still under the tight grip of the Kim dynasty that has ruled through three generations with an iron fist and has little tolerance for dissident. The film shows young North Korean refugees in Seoul telling their childhood memories of losing parents to famine, or witnessing the gruesome death of a sibling in a gulag. "There are always children who suffer at times of historic turmoil, but they are forgotten as the history eventually heals itself and moves on," said director Choo. "History erases the story of these children in its path to the future. But some children transform their pain to the strength to live, and they grow." — AFP

Business

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Zain expands in digital transformation to achieve goals of 'New Kuwait 2035': Al-Roudhan

Company to participate in GITEX Technology Week during Oct 14-18

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading integrated telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its participation - for the first time - at the 38th edition of The Gulf Information Technology Exhibition (GITEX Technology Week 2018). The international event, hosted in the United Arab Emirates, is organized by the Dubai World Trade Center, and features the biggest global companies, organizations, and entities from the Telecom and IT industry.

Zain's participation in this global event, considered one of the biggest of its kind in the world, comes as part of the company's strategy to enrich its transformation into a fully integrated digital service provider. Zain started its digital transformation journey by launching many smart services and solutions to both consumers and businesses throughout the past two years.

Eaman Al-Roudhan, Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer, commented: "today we are thrilled to announce Zain's participation at the 38th GITEX Technology Week as the only telecom company that



Eaman Al-Roudhan

represents the State of Kuwait in this leading global and regional event amongst the presence of international companies. Through this participation, we hope to showcase our capabilities as an active partner in achieving the goals of the Kuwait National Development Plan (New Kuwait 2035) that stems from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's con-

- Zain to showcase capabilities of 5G technology, AI, and IoT applications.
- Company will introduce models of latest smart life solutions to empower a smart life, safe community, and efficient business sector.
- Zain to enrich economic development and digital diversity with strategic partners.
- NXN, Zain's smart city arm, to showcase smart life strategies and innovative solutions.

ceptualized vision of a new Kuwait by 2035, which will contribute to the further progress of our beloved nation".

Al-Roudhan explained: "Zain is committed to expand in smart life and digital transformation applications, and our participation at GITEX is a step to confirm and showcase our capabilities to participate with the public sector in executing the seven pillars of the New Kuwait 2035 vision. Along with our strategic partners, we will be showcasing various models of enriching economic development and digital diversity, as well as offer our latest innovative solutions for empowering a smart life, a safe community, and

an efficient business sector".

5G technology

Al-Roudhan added: "during our participation at GITEX, we will greatly focus on showcasing the full capabilities of the integrated 5G technology that we started investing in last June, which represents a quantum leap in the operational efficiency of our network in Kuwait, and makes Zain one of the first companies in Kuwait and the region to adopt this solution to meet the ever-growing needs of our individual and enterprise customers, as well as support the expansion of digital transformation applications".

Al-Roudhan further explained:

"Zain's participation at GITEX will also include the showcasing of our Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) solutions, which extend to serve numerous essential sectors and industries. We designed these solutions specifically to enrich Zain's leadership as an active partner in creating the future of smart life in Kuwait. In addition, NXN, Zain's smart city arm, will be present with us at GITEX to offer strategies and innovative smart solutions that achieve the New Kuwait vision goals, especially in relation to increasing the efficiency of the infrastructures of the various government entities in the country, as well as developing areas of education, health, security, community safety, and economic progress".

Al-Roudhan pointed out that Zain's digital transformation journey began two years ago with the company's partnership with the Ministry of Electricity and Water through the Smart Meters project. Zain considers itself an active partner in creating the future of smart life in Kuwait, as well as empowering the

community through the use of advanced technologies such as IoT and more. This motivated Zain to take part in this regional event to enrich the role played by private sector companies in achieving the developmental goals of the country.

Zain's strategy is centered around digital transformation leadership and empowering the community to enjoy a smarter portable lifestyle, as well as using advanced technology and Zain's long experience to enable an easier and more flexible life. The company places itself as an active partner in creating the future of smart life in Kuwait.

Zain's participation at GITEX Technology Week will contribute to prove the company's full potential in triggering the digital community, and will enrich its collaborations in Telecom and IT areas with its strategic partners on multiple levels. The company's participation in such global events will motivate its efforts to becoming a fully integrated digital lifestyle provider.

Record US imports drive goods trade deficit with China to new high

WASHINGTON: The US trade deficit ballooned in August to its highest level in six months as exports of tariff-targeted goods fell while American consumers snapped up imported cars and mobile phones, the government reported Friday.

The result, which showed mounting pressures on trade from US President Donald Trump's entrenched conflict with China, still came at a triumphant moment for the American leader, who has revealed in a new agreement to remodel North America's trading system. The August figures suggested retaliatory tariffs imposed by China continued to whipsaw American farmers, whose rural counties Trump's Republican party traditionally counts on for political support.

The numbers also reflect reports that businesses have rushed to import goods before tariffs hit on China in late August and September, including importing products needed in stores for the holiday shopping season, driving up the trade gap. Economists said the unexpectedly poor trade numbers could slow economic growth in the third quarter.

"Even adjusting for price changes, it looks like the trade deficit widened significantly in the third quarter, greatly slowing growth," economist Joel Naroff said in a client note.

With US imports of goods and services at their highest on record, the result pushed the goods deficits with China and Mexico to all time-highs, according to the Commerce Department report.

Weighing on GDP

The total US trade deficit rose 6.4 percent over July to \$53.2 billion, overshooting analyst forecasts which had called for a smaller five percent increase. That was on exports of \$209.4 billion and record imports of \$262.7 billion. Despite Trump's efforts to attack the trade deficit, so far this year it has risen 8.6 percent over the same period in 2017.

The gap in goods trade with China rose to \$38.6 billion for August and with Mexico hit \$8.7 billion-both the highest monthly totals ever.

At \$31.1 billion, imports from Mexico also were the highest ever. And soybean exports, a sector highly dependent on trade with China, plunged a painful \$1 billion from July, when Beijing unveiled retaliatory duties in response to Trump's escalating trade fight. Meanwhile, US exports of crude oil and other petroleum products fell by a combined \$1.6 billion for the month, but this was offset by \$1.6 billion jump in exports of artwork, antiques and pharmaceuticals, the Commerce Department reported. Exports of corn, juices, auto parts, crude oil and gold also fell.

On the other side of the ledger, imports of autos rose \$1 billion while imports of mobile phones and other household goods rose by \$900 million. Americans and US companies also bought more foreign gems, jewelry, telecommunications equipment and aircraft parts.

But imports of lumber fell for the month. Washington has put steep tariffs on Canadian lumber in a long-standing dispute with Ottawa that has seen costs rise for newly built homes in the United States.

nation's stock and bond markets, and stoked fears of outflows from the mutual fund industry which has a large exposure to such financing companies. In a 36-page petition filed by India's Corporate Affairs Ministry at the company law tribunal, the government does not pull its punches, referring to IL&FS as a "titanic ship" and accusing its board of mismanagement.

The petition, which sought permission for the board takeover and the right to replace executives and was approved by the tribunal, has not been made public, though some media outlets have quoted from parts of it in recent days. Reuters was able to review the entire petition.

Saving IL&FS was critical as nearly two-thirds of the firm's accumulated debt of 910 billion rupees (\$12.36 billion) was from public sector banks. Moreover, IL&FS accounts for 16 percent of the total exposure of banks to India's non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), the government said in the petition. "The future impact of more defaults in the group may be catastrophic for the (country's) financial stability," it said.

"Any impairment in its ability to finance and support the infrastructure projects would be quite damaging to the overall infrastructure sector, financial markets and the economy," the government added.



LONG BEACH: In this file photo taken on September 29, 2018 the US flag flies over Chinese shipping containers that were unloaded at the Port of Long Beach, in Los Angeles County. — AFP

Jim O'Sullivan of High Frequency Economics said trade had boosted GDP growth in the second quarter-adding perhaps 1.2 percent as Chinese importers rushed to stock up on American soybeans before a round of tariffs by Beijing hit in July.

But now "net exports are likely to subtract at least

1.5 points in Q3," he said in a research note. Wall Street closed down sharply lower following the news, amid a sell-off sparked by a sudden jump in bond yields that accelerated after jobs numbers suggested the Federal Reserve is likely to continue tightening interest rates. — AFP

Saving the Titanic: India took control of IL&FS to avert catastrophic damage

NEW DELHI: The Indian government said it was forced to take control of ailing shadow banking firm Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) as it feared its collapse would cause "catastrophic" damage to the financial markets and the economy, a court filing shows.

In the largest intervention of its kind, India this week replaced the board at IL&FS, a construction and infrastructure firm that had defaulted on a series of repayments to creditors as it struggled under a debt pile of more than \$12 billion.

The company's downfall has undermined confidence in India's shadow banking sector, triggered declines in the

IL&FS, whose top shareholders are state-run Life Insurance Corporation, the State Bank of India, Japan's Orix Corp and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, is one of the largest of thousands of NBFCs which have mushroomed in India in recent years. The NBFCs, that currently manage an aggregate loan book of nearly \$300 billion, have played a key role in lending growth in India as the main banking sector struggled to tackle a bad-debt burden of \$150 billion.

It is rare for the Indian government to take control of a private company. In 2009, it took over Satyam Computer Services following an accounting scandal at the firm.

But the rescue was critical for Prime Minister Narendra Modi who can ill afford a financial crisis months before he faces voters at the next election, due by May 2019. His administration is already facing public ire over high fuel prices, a falling rupee currency and farmer protests due to low crop prices.

In a "critical lapse", IL&FS' risk management committee, which was tasked to keep tabs on liquidity, credit and market risks, met just once between 2015 and 2018, the government said.

IL&FS' proposed restructuring plan, announced just days before the government takeover, was a "sham" and a

"disguised way" to further dupe the stakeholders and misguide the general public, the government said. The board was "responsible for negligence, incompetency and putting veil on the misleading intent by presenting rosy financial statements," the petition said.

The "unscrupulous" manner in which public money has been managed and is stuck in projects indicates that the management not only failed but was involved in "operation cover up" till the end and willfully created a financial mess, the government alleged.

IL&FS' former managing director and board member, Hari Sankaran, did not respond to a request for comment. Reuters could not immediately contact the other former board members of IL&FS, who have not commented publicly on the matter.

IL&FS has 348 entities and has over the years developed marquee road, township and water-treatment projects in India and abroad. The group's debt levels rose to more than \$12 billion this year, from \$6.6 billion in 2014. The government said IL&FS was not making enough profits to take care of its interest expenses, leading to defaults and rating downgrades. The over exposure to loans had been without "prudent commercial practices", it said. — Reuters

Business

Gulf Bank launches Kuwait's highest rewarding Cashback Program

KUWAIT: Today, Gulf Bank launches the Gulf Bank Cashback Program, the most rewarding Cashback Program in Kuwait. The all-new Cashback Program is designed to add value to your credit card usage experience by providing instant cash rewards on all your day to day spends. Customers are rewarded with cashback of up to 10 percent on grocery items and up to 5 percent on all other spends locally and internationally.

The all-new Gulf Bank Cashback Program provides cardholders with instant, tangible rewards on all local and international spends. From grocery and department store shopping, to fashion and lifestyle, to airline, hotel bookings and dining out, all point-of-sale and e-commerce transactions are eligible to receive cashback rewards. In other words, the more customers spend, the more they earn, with up to 10 percent cashback on all purchases. To be eligible for the program cardholders must spend a minimum of KD 100 per month, on either their Mastercard Titanium Cashback Credit Card or their Visa Platinum Cashback Credit Card.

Speaking of the program, Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications, Gulf Bank commented, "In today's fast-paced, evolving world, customers look for instant gratification and convenience. The Gulf Bank Cashback Program, allows us to cater to those



Ahmad Al-Amir

needs, providing customers with added-value and rewards. By analyzing customers spending patterns in Kuwait, we have created a specific program where individuals can earn cash rewards in relation to distinct purchase slabs for groceries and other spends. We are also providing the highest cashback rewards of any ongoing cashback program in Kuwait. Gulf Bank prides itself on continually expanding its products and services to meet the modern lifestyle needs of loyal and new customers, while offering them a wide array of rewards and sought-after benefits".

Gulf Bank Cashback Rewards can be accessed and redeemed through the Gulf Bank online banking portal or using the dedicated Gulf Bank mobile banking app, in multiples of 10 KD with no restrictions on the



number of redemptions. With a maximum cashback amount of KD 250 per month, the highest cap in Kuwait, Cashback Rewards are valid for 24 months from the date of rewards earned.

The benefits of Cashback

KUWAIT: Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications, Gulf Bank outlines the benefits of cashback.



For over 200 years, the world has used cash as the basis of economic activity, and Kuwait has primarily been a cash-based society. However, recent adoptions of technology and innovation, has seen the rise in cashless payments across the country. As innovation continues to drive new payment technologies, it is important for banks to remember to place consumers at the centre of their developments. Knowing what's coming next in order to meet rising consumer expectations, in terms of both innovation and convenience.

As society moves towards digital and cashless payments, it is important to find ways to reward a loyal and growing customer base. Anyone who is interested in getting the best savings and deals shouldn't ignore programs such as the Gulf Bank Cashback Program, which allows customers to earn more while spending more, with rewards being automatically applied to their card statement.

Societies, businesses, consumers in Kuwait have started to experience the benefits of electronic payment solutions, but there is still a lot of potential for all stakeholders to realize the full potential of creating a cashless society. Technology and innovation are key drivers of this transformation process and Gulf Bank's goal is to meet the changing tides of payments by building relationships and rewarding consumers. Innovative payment solutions are turning all devices into simple, safe and secure payment tools.

This is driving better efficiencies for the payment ecosystem, leading to higher productivity for businesses and supporting greater financial inclusion.

Our strategy towards banking innovation is simple. As technology innovations deliver new ways of connecting consumers with their accounts, Gulf Bank is putting the full power of these solutions to work. The Bank is focused on providing the technology, expertise and flexibility needed to give consumers anytime, anywhere, solutions-now and in the future.

Gulf Bank has always been committed to finding new and innovative ways to reward its customer base, and we are committed to fulfilling customer needs and exceeding customer expectations, and the launch of the highest paid rewards program in Kuwait demonstrates our appreciation for their trust and loyalty.

Why is the Gulf Bank Cashback Program the best in Kuwait?

- Up to 10 percent cashback on all groceries and supermarkets and up to 5 percent on ALL spends locally and internationally.
- Gulf Bank Cashback Program is providing consumers with the highest cashback in Kuwait. It will revolutionize the banking sector.
- The program has been built around the spending patterns of our customers and the distinct rewards slab is a direct reflection of those patterns.

Grocery and Supermarkets		Other Spends	
Cash Spends	Cashback	Cash Spends	Cashback
0 KD to 100 KD	2%	0 KD to 2000 KD	2%
101 KD to 300 KD	5%	2001 KD to 3000 KD	3%
301 KD & above	10%	3001 KD to 4000 KD	4%
Maximum cashback amount – KD 30 per month		4001 KD & above	5%
		Maximum cashback amount – KD 220 per month	

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Technology

Ooredoo sponsors startup gathering

An event by some of Kuwait's brightest entrepreneurs



Abdul Aziz Al-Babtain



Youth Public Authority." Al-Babtain participated in the event, and he showcased the different solutions the company provides to help entrepreneurs with realizing their ambitions. Al-Babtain also showcased the different challenges that are facing the entrepreneurial eco system in Kuwait. Among the event participants, who discussed challenges and obstacles and ways to overcome them, included: Eman Al-Abdulghani, CEO of Startups; Suleiman Al-Tarrah, one of the founders of Bleeems; Rakan Al-Faldala co-founder of Chocolateness, Abdullah Al Ghanim, CEO of Global Identity; Dawood Marafi, President of the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises - Kuwait; and Ahmad Al-Essa, CEO of ESG Kuwait.

Ooredoo Kuwait offers a diverse portfolio and comprehensive solutions tailored especially to help entrepreneurs through Ooredoo Business, offering fixed and mobile internet bundles with the most advanced devices.

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait announced its sponsorship of Kuwait's Startup Gathering under the title of "Evaluating Entrepreneurship in Kuwait", which took place last Thursday in Nouriyah Residence - Bneid Al Qar. The event was powered and organized by Startups Magazine and Platform and was attended by a number of Kuwait's most distinguished entrepreneurs. This sponsorship comes in line with the company's ongoing efforts to support and empower youth, and is in alignment with its core values of caring, connecting, and challenging.

Commenting on this entrepreneur-centric sponsorship, Ooredoo Kuwait's B2B Senior Director Abdulaziz Al-Babtain said: "At Ooredoo Kuwait, we are committed to our support for youth to help them reach their aspirations. Over the years, Kuwaiti youth have proven time and time again their ability to propel the economy with their contribution in small and medium enterprises, and it is without a doubt a necessity today for such businesses to embrace digitalization and rely on innovative advanced technologies. We are proud to be part of their success."

He added: "We're very pleased to participate in this event and interact with some of Kuwait's most successful young leaders. We have demonstrated over the years our commitment and dedication to supporting youth by partnering with a number of reputable entities, such as the Ministerial Council's Central Agency for Information Technology, the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, and the



Dawood Ma'rafi and Yousif Al-Shallal



Abdullah Al-Ghanim, Iman Abdul Ghani, Abdul Aziz Al-Babtain, Khaled Al-Mutawa, Thamer Al-Tahous and Ahmed Al-Wazzan



Yousif Al-Shallal, Abdul Aziz Al-babatin, Abdul Aziz Alloughani and Thamer Al-Tahous



Dr. MUSAED AL-RAQQI, RAKAN AL-FADHALAH, SULAIMAN AL-TARRAH AND FAHAD AL-SAEED.



Khaled Al-Mutawa, Iman Abdul Ghani and Manaf Al-Mulaifi

Bayt.com weekly report

Four ways to keep the money pouring in

Many argue that money doesn't buy happiness, which might be true in some cases. But, no matter how well off you are when it comes to income, there can always be room for more. So, how do you get the cash to start flowing? You'll actually need to plan this out and form strategies that aim to increase your earnings and cut costs.

Increasing income can be challenging for many of us. Depending on your day to day expenses, how many dependents you have under your care or whether you're paying off a loan, improving your income might even seem impossible at times.

Then again, if it really was impossible, you wouldn't be here reading this, would you?

Bayt.com, the Middle East's #1 Job Site, is committed to help job-seekers progress in their career and reach their goals. So, our experts have written this article to discuss the best ways in which you can improve your income and increase your net worth by the end of 2018.

Here are a few things you can try in order to get there:

1. Turn up!

First thing you can do is to try to get a raise. Sounds obvious, but it really is a great way to increase inflow of cash. If you are reading this, however, it is possible you're either reluctant to ask for a raise or unsure you can. You need to know how promotions work and when it's time to climb up the career ladder. Let's break down the main points pertaining specifically to raises.

A lot of employees find it difficult to ask their bosses for a salary raise, even if they are aware of the employee's skills and abilities and confident in his or her performance. Bringing up the conversation might seem stressful to you and you might worry that it will put an awkward strain on your relationship if your manager declines.

If you believe that you don't deserve to warrant a raise, then you should start taking steps to change that. What you could do is focus on learning new

skills or developing your existing ones in order to prove your value to your employer and show your commitment to the organization. You could search for training and development courses available in your location. But, if you are unable to find any or feel that you don't have enough time, there is an abundance of courses you can take online from the comfort of your desk on Bayt.com.

You should certainly consider asking for a raise if you are confident that you have shown your employer your commitment and feel that you have delivered above and beyond what is expected of you. Bear in mind, of course, that if the company is going through a rough spot financially or is sizing down, it might not be the best time to ask for a salary upgrade. Otherwise, a well-structured and open conversation with your manager is all that stands in between you and a potential pay raise.

2. Every Hero Needs a Side-Kick

Working on the weekends or a few hours after work sounds like torture. But, investing time into a freelancing gig or a "side-hustle" as some call it can be a lucrative source of supplementary income. This usually involves capitalizing on the skills you currently have by offering non-contractual services to small business and startups that are not looking to hire someone full time.

Don't let that think freelancing does not bring money. On the contrary, it is a win-win situation for both you and an employer. Instead of hiring someone and paying them a monthly salary, the employer pays a one-time fee on the rare occasion they need expertise their employees do not have. Subsequently, that money goes to you instead.

Also, freelancing gigs are generally related to your career, skills and goals, it will also help you hugely in the future. The experience you will be gaining in your area of interest will prove useful when applying for future jobs.

Now, if you're a fresh graduate undertaking your very first job, then don't fret. Even if you don't feel that you have the skills and expertise to compete with other freelancers, there are other things you can do in order to earn some extra cash. We would recommend private tutoring, which can also bring home a couple extra hundred a month, babysitting or part-time work on the weekends.

3. Stacks in the City

Hopefully, I've convinced you to consider freelancing, let's move onto the next money maker on the list: monetizing a hobby.

Alternatively, you could find a job in a city that has a higher average salary. You can use Bayt.com Salaries in order to see how much you should expect based on job role and location.

4. Do What You Love

Capitalizing on a hobby is different; it is taking something you enjoy doing and turning it into banknotes. For example, you could be a talented artist and sell digital or traditional prints of your work.

Perhaps you make amazing jewelry or knit incredible scarves. You might even enjoy baking and decorating specialty cakes in your spare time. Whatever it is, it can be the ticket to increasing your income if you play your cards right. You will need to invest some time into branding yourself, networking to reach more people and potential clients and marketing your services to them. This might sound like work, but it's a small price to pay to do what you love (and get paid for it!).

Also, this is especially useful for fresh graduates and candidates with little professional background as it is an easy way to get their CV populated with impressive experiences and new skills. Remember that there are over 10,000 available across the Middle East on Bayt.com alone for you to sift through.

Worried Zimbabweans fill up cars and stockpile goods

HARARE: Zimbabwe's central bank governor sought to reassure the public yesterday as people again formed long queues to fill up their cars in the capital, with others panic-buying basic goods like cooking oil and sugar.

The panic has been caused by recent changes introduced by the government and a worsening US dollar crunch, but the governor, John Mangudya, told Reuters that people should not be worried and that he expected an improvement in the next 48 hours.

"The problem is that we did not explain things. This economy is a sentiment driven economy so we need to communicate more with the society," he said. The southern African nation dumped its hyper-inflation-wrecked currency in favor of the US dollar in 2009 but a shortage of cash dollars has worsened following a disputed election won by President Emmerson Mnangagwa in July.

Fuel queues started building up this week and on Saturday outlets in Harare had either run out or had long queues as drivers patiently waited for their turn to fill up their tanks.

"I have been here for an hour because the queue is moving slowly. I have no choice because I need the petrol," said one motorist, who identified himself as Pascal, at a service station in the Avondale suburb in Harare. At some outlets owned by Total, attendants only served motorists with pre-paid cards. Other outlets refused mobile payments, preferring bank cards and cash. Zimbabwe spends \$80 million on fuel imports every month. Mangudya told Reuters the fuel shortages had been caused by an introduction of a 2 percent tax on electronic payments last Monday, which meant oil firms would incur weekly bank charges of \$400,000 for fuel imports but were not allowed to pass the cost to consumers.

The companies had stopped supplying fuel as a result, Mangudya said, but he added the situation would improve in the next 48 hours because the government on Friday night scrapped the tax on foreign payments. Zimbabweans were also stocking up on basic goods like rice, cooking oil, sugar and juice. At some branches owned by Zimbabwe's biggest grocery chain OK Zimbabwe, management limited sales of sugar, cooking oil and a popular local juice.

"Management reserves the right to limit quantities," read a notice to customers. A shortage of US dollars in banks has forced importers to purchase them on the black market, which has pushed up premiums and the price of imports. On the black market, the premium for the US dollar spiked to a new record on Saturday, reaching 165 percent from 120 percent on Monday, traders said. — Reuters

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

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What's On

Scientific competition being held by Al-Saad Charity



Aisha Al-Houli speaking during the press conference



Al-Saad Charity for Knowledge and Scientific Research recently announced the opening registration for its 19th season of Sheikhha Fadya Saad Al-Sabah scientific competition for female students' researches and projects. They added that registration would be accessible through

the following website: www.ibtikar.com.kw.

In this regard, the competition manager, Dr Aisha Al-Houli said that the competition aims at encouraging scientific talents and molding a new generation capable of developing Kuwait in various fields. She added that the initiative was purely

Kuwaiti and that it inspired its principles from the Amir of Humanity, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah.

Furthermore, Al-Houli stressed that the competition's vision focuses on investing in female human resources to create a well-aware genera-

tion and develop its talents and skills in various fields. In addition, Al-Houli said that registry deadline would be October 21st so that the names could be categorized and prepared in each educational stage before launching the competition in November.

Fahed Abushaar of Sheraton Kuwait wins 'GCC's Best General Managers'

Fahed Abushaar, complex General Manager for the Sheraton Kuwait Hotels, was awarded the "GCC's Best General Managers" award. The award was received at a recent ceremony held in Dubai for the best managers within the Gulf region and was presented by the CMO Asia - a company that specializes in the sectors of industry, economics and hospitality.

He stated that: "This award is another tribute to the achievements of the entire team of the hotel, a proof of excellence for the Sheraton Kuwait Hotels for five decades and

continues in making a great effort to work hard on keeping the successful chain that has enhanced our guests' confidence in the services that both our properties offer.

It is worth mentioning that Sheraton Kuwait Hotel has achieved more than half a century of success and innovations in the service of the guests of Kuwait and its citizens, making it the ideal destination for an exceptional experience for a luxurious stay and enjoy all the methods of luxury, hospitality and many services from the lobby, to the luxurious suites and its luxurious rooms, representing a hotel rich in history, where luxury meets elegance with modern day facilities.



Fahed Abushaar



Modi government working towards an 'Inclusive India': MP

By Sajeev K Peter

A visiting parliament member from India said on Friday that India government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working towards building an inclusive India through implementing projects that 'touch upon the lives of every Indian'.

"The Modi government was able to make a difference in people's lives through human development and there is not a single scheme or activity of this government that has not touched upon the lives of the people," said Meenakshi Lekhi, the spokesperson of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the MP from the high-profile New Delhi constituency.

Addressing the media along with BJP's Kerala state President P S Sridharan Pillai and the legislative assembly member from Mangalore City from Karnataka, Veda Vyas, she listed out the achievements of Modi government over the last five years. The leaders arrived in Kuwait to attend a conference organized by the Pravasi Bharatiya

Parishad, Kuwait.

She said United Nations Environment has bestowed Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the 2018 'Champion of the Earth' award for his leadership in promotion of solar energy. "It is a proud moment for every Indian because a recognition for the PM means a recognition for every Indian. Because, your attitude towards the earth changes with sustainable development and the realization that raising a nation's GDP is not in confrontation with the environment," she pointed. She also spoke in detail about various development projects undertaken by the government such as smart city projects, PM's Awaz Yojana, Inclusive India project, Mudra loan scheme, Startup India initiative etc.

Oil price crisis

"Oil price is determined by multiple factors, not just the central government alone," she said answering a query relating to the mercurial increases in petrol and diesel prices in India over the last few years. She attributed the present petroleum prices to certain composite factors from global oil prices to state-level taxes, to the repayment commitment made by the previous government.

Regarding the continued nose-diving of Indian rupee, she said it is controlled by international economy. Regarding FDI inflow, she said, "we have received the highest volume of investments compared to any other country in the last two years. It shows people's faith in Indian economy", she said.

Responding to a specific question about the demonetization, she said the goal was achieved. More than 99 percent of the currency that India declared void in a surprise announcement in 2016 was returned to the country's banks in subsequent weeks, according to an RBI report. The figures suggest the demonetization policy, which likely wiped at least 1 percent from the country's GDP and cost at least 1.5 million jobs, failed to remove significant hordes of unaccounted wealth from the Indian economy - a key rationale for the move.

"The fact that within four months' time, the entire demonetized rupee was brought back to the system speaks about the efficiency and efficacy of the system. This exercise was not in futility, but it was carried out with good intention," she argued. About the benefits of demonetization, she said terror funding and funding for all the disruptive activities around the country through hawala transactions came to a standstill," Lekhi pointed out.

Sridharan Pillai, who also addressed the press conference, sought to toe a moderate line on the controversial issue of women's entry to Sabarimala temple following a court verdict. In a recent judgment, India's top court opened the doors of the temple in Kerala dedicated to Lord Ayyappa to the women in the age group of 10-50. Pillai however said the party's state unity will however support the believers and seek to safeguard their belief. Veda Vyas MLA also spoke on the occasion. BPP Kuwait president A K Sumod welcomed the gathering.

G4S Kuwait successfully organizes medical camp

G4S Group Policy continuously enforces the duty of care to its employees plus their families as employees are the integral part of an organization. As such, G4S Kuwait successfully organized a Free Medical Camp with the theme "Health is Wealth" for its employees on 21st September 2018 at their Mahboula Camp Facility. A total number of 475 + employees—male and female benefited from this medical camp and were tested for blood pressure, hb1ac, full lipid, sugar, cholesterol, eye, ear, nose and throat, oncology, gynecology, sonography and General Physician consultations.

This event was attended and jointly coordinated with the support of the generous team of local medical

volunteer doctors from the Indian Doctors Forum in Kuwait who sent a total number of 33 specialties volunteers plus two USG Machines, the Kuwait Heart Foundation and five specialty volunteers from Pharmacia Kuwait who were responsible for providing Full Lipid and Hb1ac tests.

G4S Kuwait, a joint venture between Al Mulla Group and G4S plc, is one of the leading integrated security solutions provider in Kuwait with almost 3,000 employees at present. This medical camp facility is just one of the fundamental initiatives of the company to promote employees Welfare, Health & Safety Awareness towards the realization of the Zero Harm goal which was aimed at delivering basic medical consultation and services to its employees and their families in Kuwait at no cost. G4S Kuwait management team led by their new Managing Director, Atanu Sanyal were delighted to have concluded this event and is committed to sustaining further health and safety awareness campaigns to promote healthy living practices and reaching out to their employees through such initiatives.



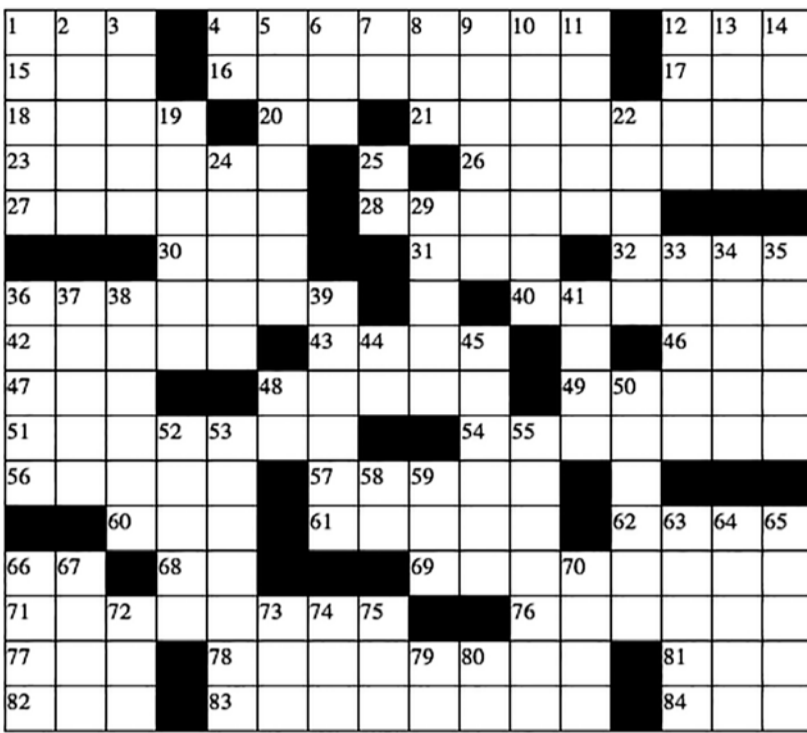
Baby dedication



It was a wonderful moment at the Life Abundant International Fountain Church on Friday as families, friends and well-wishers gathered to celebrate with Mr/Mrs Odenyo as they dedicated their baby girl Danah Gillian to the Lord. May God guide and protect you as you grow to be blessing to your family Amen.

Stars

CROSSWORD 2027



ACROSS

- 1. A guided missile fired from shipboard against an airborne target.
4. A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade name Lodine).
12. An enzyme that catalyzes the oxidation of many body compounds (e.g., epinephrine and norepinephrine and serotonin).
15. The capital and largest city of Japan.
16. A single great stone (often in the form of a column or obelisk).
17. (Judaism) Sacred chest where the ancient Hebrews kept the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
18. City in northern Austria on the Danube.
20. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
21. Direct opposite.
23. Agile long-legged rabbit-sized rodent of Central and South America and West Indies.
26. Somewhat tall.
27. Larval mite that sucks the blood of vertebrates including human beings causing intense irritation.
28. Any of various deciduous or evergreen ornamental shrubs of the genus Abelia having opposite simple leaves and cymes of small white or pink or purplish flowers.
30. Antibacterial drug (trade name Nydrizid) used to treat tuberculosis.
31. Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
32. A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary.
36. Distilled rather than fermented.
40. Advance evidence for.
42. (with 'in') Guardianship over.
43. The state of needing something that is absent or unavailable.
46. A (usually rectangular) container.
47. Not in.
49. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
51. Resembling or characteristic of or appropriate to an elegy.
54. Closely related.
56. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
57. Of a yellowish brown color similar to olive drab.
60. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
61. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
62. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
66. The eleventh month of the civil year.
68. 16 ounces.
69. Dried out by heat or excessive exposure to sunlight.
71. Of or pertaining to atmospheric phenomena, especially weather and weather conditions.
76. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
77. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
78. (physics) Material in a nuclear reactor that absorbs radiation.
81. A decree that prohibits something.
82. An ugly evil-looking old woman.
83. Furnished with or made of wood or timbers.
84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

- 1. Big-eyed scud.
2. A river in northern Italy that flows south-east into the Adriatic Sea.
3. French biochemist who (with Francois Jacob) explained how genes are activated and suggested the existence of messenger RNA (1910-1976).
4. The square of a body of any size of type.
5. The present or immediately coming night adv.
6. Used of a single unit or thing.
7. An uproarious party.
8. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
9. Horizontal beam used as a finishing piece over a door or window.
10. Unarmed leather palms of central and northern South America.
11. (Mexican) Ground beef and chili peppers or chili powder often with tomatoes and kidney beans.
12. Any of a group of antidepressant drugs that inhibit the action of monoamine oxidase in the brain and so allow monoamines to accumulate.
13. Acute lung injury characterized by coughing and rales.
14. An endorsement.
19. (Sumerian) Evil storm god represented as a black bird.
22. A cloth having a crisscross design.
24. The capital and principal port of Tunisia.
25. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
29. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
33. Of or relating to or characteristic of Cuba or the people of Cuba.
34. An area in which something acts or operates or has power or control.
35. The cardinal number that is the sum of five and one.
37. United States physicist (born in Austria) who proposed the exclusion principle (thus providing a theoretical basis for the periodic table) (1900-1958).
38. An advanced student or graduate in medicine gaining supervised practical experience ('houseman' is a British term).
39. (usually in the plural) Pants for casual wear.
41. Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
44. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
45. An industrial city in southern Poland on the Vistula.
48. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
50. (anatomy) Situated farthest from point of attachment or origin, as of a limb or bone.
52. The vertical triangular wall between the sloping ends of gable roof.
53. A ship with a reinforced bow to break up ice and keep channels open for navigation.
55. A woman who is engaged to be married.
58. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
59. The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
63. Jordan's port.
64. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
67. Prolific Spanish playwright (1562-1635).
70. A lyric poet.
72. A label made of cardboard or plastic or metal.
73. A run that is the result of the batter's performance.
74. A belief (or system of beliefs) accepted as authoritative by some group or school.
75. Nut of any of several trees of the genus Corylus.
79. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
80. A nonmetallic largely pentavalent heavy volatile corrosive dark brown liquid element belonging to the halogens.

Friday's Solution

Grid for Friday's Solution crossword puzzle with filled-in letters.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your way may not be the only way. You may need to put some time, thought, and consideration into the decisions you have to make today.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You long for peace in your life. Today is the day to make that call. Give the apology, or take whatever steps necessary to make amends.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You seem to be desiring a change in your world. You desire to not only change your views on life but change the way you live it.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

There is a reason they make chocolate AND vanilla. What appeals to one may not always appeal to the other. People are different.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may feel as if you want all eyes on you! You are on top of the world. It seems as if everything is going your way.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You have a desire to get to the bottom of things. You are inquisitive and curious. Answers are what you seek and answers are what you will get.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your self-confidence may be a little off today. Not to worry. Confidence is not something you are born with. It is not part of your DNA.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Intellectual and literary interests seem to be where your focus is now. You may find opportunity seems to fall into your lap when it comes to being able to develop your talents in this area.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

People sometimes wonder about the secret to your contentment. It's not something you think about. You just go about each day being helpful and kind.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are ready to get serious about taking care of you! Meal planning seems to appeal to you. Organized and healthy are a great combination.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Look for a rainbow today. Something good is happening in your life. It may lead to something important in your career or your personal life.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are feeling some financial stress. That's because you have trouble distinguishing between "Needs" and "Wants." Solve the problem by listing your expenditures in the two categories.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Dance crazes

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

Wordsearch grid with letters Z through J.

- BALLROOM, BOLLYWOOD, CALYPSO, CHA CHA SLIDE, CHARLESTON, CHICKEN DANCE, DA DIP, DISCO, ELECTRIC SLIDE, FLAMENCO, FOOTLOOSE, FOXTROT, GANGNAM STYLE, HAND JIVE, HIP HOP, HOKEY POKEY, JITTERBUG, JUMP ON IT, LIMBO, LINDY HOP, LINE, MACARENA MAMBO, MERENGUE, MODERN, MOONWALK, QUICKSTEP, RIVER, ROBOT, RUMBA, SALSA, SAMBA, SHIMMY, SINGLE LADIES, SQUARE DANCE, SUZIE Q, SWING, TANGO, YMCA, ZUMBA, TEXAS TWO-STEP, THE BUNNY HOP, THE HUSTLE, THE JERK, THE RUNNING MAN, THE TWIST, THRILLER, VOGUE, WALTZ, WATUSI, YMCA, ZUMBA, TAP.

Friday's Solution

Countries of Europe

Wordsearch grid for countries of Europe.

- ALBANIA, ANDORRA, ARMENIA, AUSTRIA, AZERBAIJAN, BELARUS, BELGIUM, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA, BULGARIA, CROATIA, CYPRUS, CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, ENGLAND, ESTONIA, FINLAND, FRANCE, GEORGIA, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY, ICELAND, IRELAND, ITALY, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MACEDONIA, MALTA, MOLDOVA, MONACO, NETHERLANDS, NORTHERN IRELAND, NORWAY, POLAND, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, SAN MARINO, SCOTLAND, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, TURKEY, UKRAINE, SERBIA/MONTENEGRO, VATICAN CITY, WALES.

Hidden sentence: IN RESPECT TO AREA EUROPE IS THE SECOND SMALLEST CONTINENT IN THE WORLD

Daily SuDoku

9x9 grid for Daily Sudoku puzzle.

Friday's Solution

9x9 grid for Friday's Solution Sudoku puzzle.

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2018



Comic Con fan in costume arrives for the 1st day of the 2018 New York Comic-Con at the Jacob Javits Center. — AFP

Legless Venezuelan rapper, surfer, overcoming odds in Colombia



Alca performs in a bus in Barranquilla, Colombia.



Alca offers a conference for young people in vulnerable situation.

Venezuelan migrant Alfonso Mendoza was born without legs. Abandoned by his parents, he flirted with suicide. But everything about him shouts: "Believe in Yourself!"—ask anyone who attends his motivational classes. His main mode of movement is on a shabby skateboard, which he kept close during a dangerous crossing into Colombia with his wife. "It was difficult because of the guerrillas and the Venezuelan National Guard; it is a very difficult journey."

The skateboard, its wheels squeaking over the rutted path outside his wood and corrugated iron shack, has been a constant since he swapped it for his wheelchair. Lithe and muscular, Alca—as he prefers to be known—hoists himself into buses. With a boom box and microphone, the charming, good-looking 25-year-old perches on a railing and belts out rap songs. The passengers look on, fascinated at the apparent trompe l'oeil as he appears to levitate on the railing, the lower half of his body missing.

But it's not part of an elaborate magic act, as everyone can see when Alca eases himself down onto his skateboard, and rolls down the aisle to collect his tips. Rudimentary it may be, but the mobility provided by his skateboard appears to allow him to move more swiftly and easily than most able-bodied people in Barranquilla, the Colombian port that has become his adopted home. On a good day, he can come home with 30,000 pesos—around 10 dollars. A monthly salary back home in Venezuela is just 30 dollars.

Migrant hardships

Severely disabled since birth, Mendoza added another level of hardship to his life this year when he joined the legion of Venezuelan migrants spilling over the border from Colombia's poverty-wracked neighbor. In Barranquilla, a new challenge awaits: bringing up baby Aurahs, their little girl born just last month. "At the moment when I knew I was going to be a father, I had to come to Colombia."

"Despite his disability, he is much more complete than other parents, since we have everything we need, he has always been there for us," says his wife Mileidy Pena. Later, he goes to the skate park to work out, using his arms to rapidly flip the board under him, barely getting a glance from the other boarders. Acceptance didn't always come so easily. After being abandoned as a child, he was placed under the care of his grandmother, who died when he was nine years old.

Then came the years in a wheelchair and the bullying at school. "The children used to put me in the wastebaskets or lock me in the bathrooms." Depressed, he dwelled on suicide when he was 13. But music—and a friend who helped him swap his wheelchair for a way-cooler skateboard—"saved my life." After working selling raffle tickets and



handicrafts, Alca found he could make more money rapping on the public transport system.

"I am not embarrassed to be singing on a bus. I would be embarrassed if I arrived at home one day and my wife tells me there are no diapers or clothes for my daughter. I believe my life has changed a lot now regarding responsibilities."

Venezuelan migrant and rap singer, Alfonso Mendoza aka "Alca", 25, practice with his skateboard in a park in Barranquilla, Colombia. — AFP photos

Breaking waves

When he can, Alca hits the beach, where he has parlayed his skill on the skateboard into surfing. "Today I can see how a wave is a barrier that I can breakthrough with my board," he said. His own personal breakthroughs and positivity have opened the way for motivational speaking. Dressed in a freshly-pressed shirt, he gives a motivational class to children and teachers at a private school. Propped on a table, microphone in hand, he tells them: "You have to have a positive attitude." A power-point projection behind him says: "Believe in Yourself!" "God didn't give me legs, but he replaced them with talents," he tells his audience.—AFP



Alca enjoys surfing in Puerto Colombia.

“ Believe in Yourself! ”

Lifestyle | Features



Square dancers perform at the final round of a city-wide square dance competition at a local theatre in Shanghai. — AFP photos



Square dancers perform at a public park in Shanghai.

Forever young: China's dancing aunties kick up their heels

In a sparkling white cap and oversized sunglasses, 55-year-old retiree Zhang Yongli and dozens of neighbors live up a Shanghai park by doing the jitterbug, part of a public dance craze that has become China's national pastime. Every day, an estimated more than 100 million people—dubbed “dancing aunties” as they are primarily older women—take over squares and parks to tango, waltz, and grind out everything from flamenco to Chinese traditional dance.

Complaints over speakers blaring late at night have ensued, and even physical brawls pitting aunties against others vying for park turf. But toes are tapping to an ever-quickening beat as “square dancing”—as it is known in China—booms. Teams are competing in dance-offs featuring thousands of contestants, while a thriving market of dance-related paraphernalia and mobile apps catches the attention of the business world.

Even the government has jumped on the bandwagon to extol the health benefits. “Square dancing happens wherever there is a square,” said Wang Guangcheng, a fitness instructor and choreographer who helps the government devise dance routines and is widely known as China’s “Square Dance Prince”. “It has become a venue for the masses to exercise.”

Shaping up

More than 240 million Chinese are 60 or older, a number expected to double by 2050. By then, the government estimates China will be spending more than one-quarter of GDP on elderly care and medical services, compared to around seven percent in 2015, placing increasing importance on healthy, active lifestyles. Zhang “was sitting at home, doing nothing” after retiring five years ago from her travel-agency job, undergoing treatment for diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol.

“Since I started dancing, my (health) indicators are now normal. I no longer need medication,” she said as her neighborhood dance group’s red skirts twirled in Shanghai’s Zhongshan Park. “I also look younger,” said

Zhang, who has jitterbugged away 11 kilograms of bodyweight. A 2016 national fitness plan stresses “square dancing” as a team sport to be “vigorously developed” and last year it became an official event at China’s National Games along with old reliables like athletics and swimming. Local contests are proliferating.

Shanghai retiree Li Zhenhua’s team worked with a professional instructor for weeks, enduring the winter chill and the summer heat of their local square to train for a months-long citywide contest that culminated in August. The team, drawn mostly from China’s ethnic Korean minority, took the title with their traditional Korean dances, beating out 750 other troupes. “I was happy to find a Korean ethnic dance team in Shanghai, not only to exercise and dance but also to pass along our ethnic culture,” Li said.

Silver economy

Mass public dancing took root after the 1949 Communist takeover as the government organized communal activities to foster unity and loyalty to the party. But it has really taken off lately as an increasingly prosperous China finds more leisure time, and nearly every neighborhood park or square today is enlivened by dancers availing themselves of the free exercise.

Taobao, the leading Chinese e-commerce site owned by Alibaba, and other businesses are expressly targeting the new market to sell clothing, speakers, and gadgets for watching and learning new dances, and market studies say the industry is booming. Han Xiaoyuan, 28, founded a mobile platform for organizing competitions and purchasing gear. User numbers quintupled over the past two years to more than 500,000. It is also one of many business initiatives seeking to tap into the wider “silver economy” represented by dancers, by selling travel packages, financial services and other products geared towards retirees.

Han said the elderly “have time (and) money.... They are our best business target group”. Square dancing is even changing age-old gender



dynamics, as grandmothers are often away training for long stretches. “Several of our team members’ husbands have learned to change diapers and taken over feeding the grandchildren as a way of supporting us,” said 65-year-old Hong Aizhen, a competitor in the Shanghai-wide contest. But many men are showing off their dance moves as well.

Late one recent weekend, hundreds of people filled a tree-lined park in central Shanghai amid a cacophony of musical styles as men and women waltzed or formed conga lines, and children did the cha-cha. Often, they dance to old Chinese revolutionary standards or other patriotic tunes. “We are not only delivering a fitness culture, but also the concept of a prosperous country,” said choreographer Wang.

“Many songs we choose express our national characteristics and values.” But dance enthusiast Zhang prefers the zesty jitterbug. “It’s quick and rhythmic. I forget all my worries when I dance, sometimes even my age,” she said.—AFP

“It’s quick and rhythmic”

Kazakhstan embraces Latin script in break with past

The classrooms of school number 76 in Kazakhstan’s capital Astana are buzzing with change as old words take on new forms and teachers struggle to keep pace. Number 76 is one of several pilot schools in the city where a Latin alphabet consisting of 32 letters is being test driven for the country’s state language, Kazakh, which has been written in Cyrillic for nearly 80 years. The long-planned return to Latin, which Kazakh was briefly written in from 1927 after the Bolsheviks phased out Arabic scripts for a number of non-Slavic languages, should be completed by 2025. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has called the reform a modernizing move to make it easier to use the internet and learn English. The Soviet Union encouraged the use of Cyrillic letters in its republics and a move to the Latin alphabet would break symbolic ties with its former master, Russia. The transition has been bumpy so far, sparking philological mudslinging—notably over apostrophes.

But school administrations in the ex-Soviet country with close ties to Moscow have expressed confidence that the younger generation can take all the upheaval in their stride. “Children understand the language of computers, they know some English. So they will grasp Latin script very quickly,” Ernur Omarkhanov, the state-funded school’s deputy director, told AFP. For their class mentors, who spent their formative years living in the Soviet Union, it may be harder, Omarkhanov added. “Tests showed that a task in Latin that might take a teacher two and a half hours can be completed by pupils in 20-25 minutes,” he said.

When AFP correspondents visited the school in September, the class was preparing for a competition with the other pilot schools known as an Olympiad in former Soviet republics. One of the participants in the competition that features a spelling contest using the new alphabet, among other games, 15-year old student Amirbek Talipbayev said he supported the switch. Using a Latin alphabet would help him “understand more English” and grasp how speakers of other Latin alphabet languages speak, he told AFP, adding he expected people his age to “master it quickly.”

Apostrophe soup

The reform has sparked heated discussions. Some opposition has come from those who are happy enough to transition away from Cyrillic in a republic where Russian is also widely spoken but dislike the specific alphabet adopted by state philologists. Arman Baikadam, whose business supports online education projects in the country, warned that Kazakhstan could be committing “a historic mistake” after introducing the latest 32-letter version of the alphabet in February.

“We should have a 26-letter alphabet like the German and English alphabets. Our alphabet needs to be in harmony with other Latin alphabets,” he told AFP. But if this latest version is seen as too bulky, it is at least free of the nine apostrophes that troubled its predecessor, introduced in October, and which conjured a storm of public criticism. The apostrophes were the philologists’ attempt to represent specific Kazakh sounds but were criticized as impractical in an era of computing.

Corruption and political risks?

Kazakh is a Turkic language with similarities to Turkish and other Turkic tongues like Uzbek and Turkmen, both of which shifted back to Latin after those countries gained independence from Moscow in 1991. The language’s short-lived, Soviet-era Latin alphabet had a keyboard-busting 42 letters and a return to that set was immediately discounted by policymakers. But each of the recent attempts to better it has triggered furor on social networks like Facebook, which is popular in the Muslim-majority republic of 18 million people.

A trial-balloon alphabet preceding the ill-fated, apostrophe-laden version gained notoriety for its rendering of the Kazakh word for carrot as “saebiz”, which read like a harsh Russian swearword. The unhappy coincidence created such a buzz that it inspired entrepreneurs in the former capital, Almaty, to brand their new diner “Saebiz”. The restaurant that cheekily sports a carrot as its logo has been busy ever since it opened last year. More serious considerations include the cost of the whole exercise and “corruption risks”, said Daniyar Kussainov, a visiting fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs in Oslo.

Kussainov pointed to a “high possibility” of misallocation of resources for changing signs, texts and other items in Cyrillic to Latin during the transition period. The country’s name, which appears everywhere, is spelled “Qazaqstan” in the new alphabet, for instance. The analyst was less concerned, however, by the shift’s geopolitical implications, which he believes are negligible despite speculation about Russia’s disgruntlement.

Nazarbayev has reassured Russian speakers that their language’s privileged status will not be affected and Kussainov believes Astana had a similar conversation with powerful ally, Moscow, before the switch was announced. Had it not, the move would have been “reckless and even quite dangerous,” he told AFP.—AFP



These pictures show children attending a class at Astana’s school number 76. — AFP photos

Artist to issue Swiss passports in London installation

Ever wanted to hold a Swiss passport in these uncertain times? If you head to London’s upscale Mayfair district this weekend, you can check out an art installation by American sculptor Tom Sachs called “Swiss Passport Office”, which for 20 euros will issue a fake version of the highly coveted document. Set up on the sidelines of London’s annual Frieze Art Fair, the installation “encompasses contemporary concerns relating to Brexit, Syria and (US President Donald) Trump’s immigration policies”, according to a press release. “The Swiss passport represents the ultimate status in nationality... It is a tax haven.

No one is going to bomb Switzerland because the good guys and the bad guys both have their money there. It is the centre of Europe,” Sachs said. At desks set up in front of a large Swiss flag - which features a white cross on a red background - applicants are asked personal questions, have their photograph taken and their name typed onto a serial-numbered “Tom Sachs Studio passport”. The document is stamped with a studio endorsement and its number put into a database. The “passports” are being issued for 24 hours only, starting at 1700 GMT on Friday, at the installation, housed in the Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac in Mayfair.

“They are not authorized by the Swiss government,” the 52-year-old Sachs told Reuters. “They are authorized by my studio and you can use them. You can make the world not the way it is but how you want it to be by believing and that is how you affect change.” Sachs, known for his bricolage recreations of engineering and design works, said in a statement that his project aimed to expose the artificiality of borders “at a time when our liberal democracies are being threatened and oppressed people all over the world live in danger and without refuge”. After Saturday, the installation will remain on display until November. — AFP

New theatre comedy dramatizes Brexit break-ups

Friends shunned, lovers torn apart and emotions exploding: a new play running in London this month tackles the very personal divisions in British society caused by Brexit. "People Like Us", a tragi-comedy by the columnist Julie Burchill and novelist Jane Robins, asks whether it is possible to stay friends with people who hold opposing views. The play was sparked by what the Brexit-backing writers felt was a social out-casting of Leave voters by more vocal, self-righteous Remainers-particularly in the fervently pro-EU London artsy circles.

the one to be blamed." Burchill's stinging columns about Remainers' "pathetic petulance" and the social backlash aimed at Leavers chimed with Robins. The two met via a mutual friend and set about penning a drama. They found rich inspiration in the aftermath of the referendum. The vote was bitterly contested and led to relationship break-downs, friends falling out and even inter-generational conflict between Leave-voting children and Remain-voting parents.

London epicenter of right-on thinking.

The book group's first monthly meeting takes place just before the Brexit vote and tensions are beginning to stir. But afterwards, divisions surface and emotions boil over. Ralph is consumed by "numbing, excruciating grief; with a top note of despair", while for Stacey, Brexit was "a revolution I could witness" and the first thing that "actually made me feel something". The sniping from both sides culminates in a catfight. The book group breaks up, each side unable to bear the other's attitude. Though pegged around Brexit, the drawing-room comedy focuses on the boundaries of modern friendship.



play to the Brexit heartlands. Robins said: "We really hope that people come who don't generally go to the theatre because it's alienating for them."—AFP

An undated handout picture released by the Union Theatre shows actors during a rehearsal for the play 'People Like Us' by columnist Julie Burchill and novelist Jane Robins. — AFP

A revolution I could witness

"It's what they call projection. Everything they accuse us of, they are: a small, monocultural clique," Burchill, 59, told AFP. "They call us bigots—but they won't listen to us for a second! "By projecting all their sins onto us, they are cleansed." Robins, 60, said she was invited to several Christmas parties in 2016, six months after the Brexit vote—and avoided the lot. "I knew they would all be so miserable. Christmas wakes," she told AFP.

"Every single one was going to be Remainers moaning in despair—and they would look at me as

the one to be blamed." Burchill's stinging columns about Remainers' "pathetic petulance" and the social backlash aimed at Leavers chimed with Robins. The two met via a mutual friend and set about penning a drama. They found rich inspiration in the aftermath of the referendum. The vote was bitterly contested and led to relationship break-downs, friends falling out and even inter-generational conflict between Leave-voting children and Remain-voting parents.

Book group bust-up

"People Like Us" centers on five friends in a book group and takes place around the 2016 Brexit referendum.

It features pompous Ralph, his self-righteous French girlfriend Clemence, fence-sitting eternal optimist Will, judgmental mix Stacey and her non-nonsense, wine-guzzling friend Frances. Ralph, Stacey and Will are old mates from Oxford University. Ralph, Clemence and Will are Remainers, while Stacey and Frances are Leavers. The setting is Ralph's flat in Islington: the north

Brexit derangement syndrome

"Now it's like a mob mentality," said Robins. "Because we voted for Brexit, they think we're evil. "Brexit derangement syndrome is a real thing. "What the hell's happened to our society that we can't be friends with people anymore because of this vote? It's bizarre." The play, which runs until October 20 at the 70-seat Union Theatre, sold out before it opened—much to the writers' surprise.

Given the Remain-dominated atmosphere in the London arts world, they doubted the play would even get put on—and were prepared to stage it in the back room of a pub. Now the writers hope to transfer to a bigger London theatre and take the



Buyers inspect fish before the final tuna auction.

Going, going, gone! Tokyo's Tsukiji holds last tuna auction

Tokyo fishmongers gathered before dawn yesterday for one final tuna auction at the world-famous Tsukiji market before it closed its doors to move to a new site. It was an emotional moment for veterans of the market, the beating heart of Tokyo's culinary scene for decades, which many acknowledged had become too rundown to support its mammoth operations.

"I'm almost crying," said Hisao Ishii, a retired seafood auctioneer who was back at the market for its final day. "Today is a sad day of goodbyes. Tsukiji tried to meet the times, but it is getting older," the 68-year-old told AFP. "I came here today to tell Tsukiji thank you and goodbye." In the weak early-morning sun, traders filed into a warehouse for the last tuna auction, an indispensable ritual in Tokyo's culinary world, and a major tourist draw.

Hundreds of fresh and frozen tuna tagged with their weight and port of origin were laid out in lines in a refrigerated warehouse, as buyers in rubber boots quietly inspected the wares. They rubbed slices between their fingers and shone torches into the insides of the fish, swapping information with rivals before the show-down began. At 6:00 am sharp, handbells rang to signal the auction was under way and the air filled with the sound of auctioneers yelling prices at buyers, who raised fingers to indicate interest.

The highest bidder at yesterday's auction paid 4.4 million yen (\$38,700) for a bluefin tuna—a threatened species—weighing 162 kilograms (357 pounds) caught off Aomori, northern Japan, according to the market. It was far below the record 155.4 million yen paid at the first auction of 2013. Buyers traditionally offer eye-watering prices as a "New Year gratuity" when the market resumes operation after winter holidays.

Pass the baton

Fish wholesaler Takeshi Yoshida said

Tsukiji had left "its mark on history" but it was time to "pass the baton". Tsukiji's inner market, known as "Japan's Kitchen", will now move to Toyosu, a site in eastern Tokyo, where operations will begin on October 11. "It will be the first massive move in our history," said Hiroyasu Ito, chair of the market association. "We want to club together and get through it," he told reporters.

The move has been in the works for years, prompted by Tsukiji's dilapidated state. Wholesalers had raised concerns about the antiquated facility's earthquake resistance, sanitation and fire safety, as well as the structure's use of asbestos and its crumbling walls. The crowds of tourists who would mob the market, including groups who lined up for hours to win one of just 120 spots for the tuna auction, would also irk wholesalers by interfering with business. The new site will feature state-of-the-art refrigeration, while tourists will be confined to special galleries behind glass.

But the move has proved controversial, with rows breaking out over pollution and the loss of Tsukiji's globally recognized brand. Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike was forced to delay the move after a series of problems at Toyosu, formerly home to a gas plant, including soil and groundwater contamination. Local authorities paid hundreds of millions of dollars to clean up the new facility and Koike took the final decision to move the market there in late 2017, ending years of delays.

Hopes and fears

The move affects not only the famed fishmongers, but also fruit and vegetable vendors, restaurants and other shops in the inner market. "I feel nostalgic as Tsukiji has been my home ground for 15 years. We are sad to lose the Tsukiji brand," vegetable wholesaler Tsukasa Kujirai told AFP. He acknowledged the need for the move but said he was torn between "hopes and

fears" about the new site. The final day of the market looked much like any other in the decades since it opened on the site.

Cars and small "turret trucks" used by vendors whizzed along the roads around the market, which was full of buyers. As the market closed at noon, workers busily mopped the empty floor after the auction, while hundreds of tourists flocked to the gate, taking pictures of the market's name-board. "It's so sad to hear that this very popular and interesting tourist spot will be closed," said Rodolfo Hernandez, a 28-year-old graduate student from Mexico.



Buyers, workers and auctioneers attend the final tuna auction at the landmark Tsukiji fishmarket, the last day of the market's operations before closing its doors, in Tokyo. — AFP photos

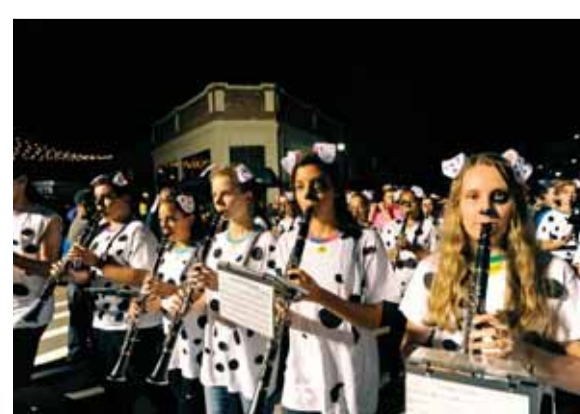
'We just got Banksy-ed': Balloon girl painting self-destructs at sale

A painting by mysterious British artist Banksy shredded itself into pieces at the moment it sold for more than 1 million pounds at a London auction on Friday. "Girl with Balloon", one of Banksy's best-known works, disappeared into a shredder hidden in its frame as the hammer fell at 1,042,000 pounds (\$1.37 million), a sum that matched the artist's previous record sale, auction house Sotheby's said. "It appears we just got Banksy-ed," Alex Branczik, senior director and head of contemporary art, said in a statement on Sotheby's website.

Banksy himself posted an Instagram picture of shocked onlookers watching the painting disintegrate, with the caption: "Going, going, gone..." Sotheby's said this was "certainly" the first time a work of art started to shred itself after coming under the hammer. The auction house was not immediately available for comment on the whereabouts of the painting's remains, or how its value might have changed in light of its self-destruction.

Banksy, whose real identity is unknown, is known for sharply ironic outdoor graffiti with political themes, including at Israel's barrier at the West Bank and Disneyland where he painted a life-size figure of a Guantanamo Bay detainee. Once a small-time graffiti artist from the English city of Bristol, Banksy's work has become hugely valuable.—Reuters

23rd Annual Salem Grand Parade



People participate in the 23rd Annual Salem Chamber of Commerce Haunted Happenings Grand Parade, which launches the Halloween season in Salem, Massachusetts.



GIZA, Egypt: US First Lady Melania Trump visits the Giza Pyramids and sphinx yesterday, during the final stop of her week-long trip through four countries in Africa. — AFP (See Page 7)

Nobel Peace Prize wide open; Global leaders, or grassroots campaigners?

OSLO: The bookies' odds point towards the Koreans, or Donald Trump. The experts are betting on the fight against sexual violence or defenders of the press. But all speculation ends Friday when the Nobel Peace Prize is unveiled in Oslo. At 0900 GMT, the annual Nobel prize-giving week reaches its peak as the five-member Norwegian committee ends the guessing game by announcing this year's winner. And anticipation is likely to be heightened after the postponement of this year's Literature Prize for the first time in 70 years over a rape scandal that came to light as part of the #MeToo movement which took off exactly a year ago.

This year, a total of 331 individuals and organizations were nominated for the prestigious peace award, almost a record number. But with the list a closely guarded secret, guessing who might be a contender is largely a game of chance. Among the bookmakers, the choice was largely unanimous with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his South Korean counterpart Moon Jae-in frontrunners for the prize for their efforts at rapprochement between the two nations.

But choosing Kim may be a step too far for the Norwegian committee, given the UN's damning verdict on North Korea's "long-standing and ongoing systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights". Another unexpected favorite is Donald Trump, who at 7-1 is one of three frontrunners flagged by online bookies Betsson, with the odds suggesting the bombastic American president is 10 times more likely to win than figures like France's Emmanuel Macron or Russia's Vladimir Putin.

Taking a step back from the international spotlight, several Nobel experts see the prize honoring those involved in the fight against sexual violence at a time when the aftershocks of the #MeToo movement are still making waves around the globe. A top contender would likely be Congolese gynaecologist Denis Mukwege, better known as "Doctor Miracle", who has spent two decades helping women recover from the violence and trauma of rape in war-torn eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Another possible laureate is Nadia

Murad, a 25-year-old Yazidi woman who was kidnapped by Islamic State militants in 2014 and endured three months as a sex slave before managing to escape.

One area yet to be honored by the Nobel committee is the campaign to protect press freedom, which has been spearheaded by organizations like the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Reporters Without Borders (RSF). Such an award would be a nod to the role of a free press as a pillar of democracy at a time when the profession is increasingly under threat from repression, violence and the proliferation of "fake news".

Other potential laureates include the World Food Programme, the UN refugee agency UNHCR, jailed Saudi blogger Raif Badawi and Russian human rights champions like the NGO Memorial and opposition newspaper Novaya Gazeta. Last year, the prize was won by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). The 2018 Nobel season opened on Monday with two immunologists, James Allison of the US and Tasuku Honjo of Japan, winning the Medicine Prize for research into how the body's natural defences can fight cancer.

Tuesday's Physics Prize was won by three scientists, Arthur Ashkin of the United States, Gerard Mourou of France and Donna Strickland of Canada, for inventing optical lasers that paved the way for advanced precision instruments used in corrective eye surgery. And on Wednesday, US scientists Frances Arnold and George Smith and British researcher Gregory Winter won the Chemistry Prize for applying the principles of evolution to develop proteins used to make everything from biofuels to medicine.

This year's award season will end on Monday with the economics prize. Up to three nominees can share the prize, which consists of a gold medal, a diploma and a cheque for nine million Swedish kronor (around \$1 million or 867,000 euros). The award will be presented at a ceremony in Oslo on December 10, the anniversary of the 1896 death of prize creator Alfred Nobel, a Swedish philanthropist and scientist. — AFP

which he developed in the 1970s, states that we react positively to robots if they have physical features familiar to us but they disturb us if they start looking too much like us. "You can't ever make a perfect human face" and this imperfection provokes a feeling of "rejection" among humans, said Miguel Salichs, a professor at the robotics lab of Madrid's Carlos III University. As such, he chose to fashion his robot Mini Maggie into a small cartoon animal.

In Japan, robots like Erica are already used as receptionists. But for one of their makers, Hiroshi Ishiguro, a professor at Osaka University, humanoids are above all "a very important tool to understand humans". Researchers have to think hard about the human form and how humans interact to develop robots that look like them. "We understand the humans by using robots, the importance for example of eye gazing," said Ishiguro, who has also made robots that look like dead celebrities, or "moving statues".

He believes that humanoids are best to improve interactions between robots and humans. "The human brain that we have has many functions to recognize humans. The natural interface for the humans is the humans," said Ishiguro. For Jurgen Schmidhuber, president of artificial intelligence start-up NNAISENSE, robots-be they humanoid or not-will be part of our future. They won't just imitate humans but will solve problems by experimenting themselves thanks to artificial intelligence without "a human teacher," he believes. Sitting on her chair, Erica nods her head. — AFP

Saudi backs down from blocking the UN climate report

INCHEON: Oil giant Saudi Arabia backed down at the last minute yesterday from obstructing the adoption of a major report by the UN's climate science panel, sources said. With the threat removed, the meeting of the 195-nation panel in Incheon, South Korea-deep into overtime-swiftly approved the report on how to cap global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit), and what a 1.5C world might look like.

The Saudis had objected to the inclusion of a passage emphasizing the need for sharp reductions in the use of fossil fuels-Saudi Arabia's main export. "Saudi Arabia withdrew its blockage of the passage when their objection was about to be formally recorded in a footnote," said a participant in the meeting. "It was a game of chicken, and the Saudi's blinked first." The 500-page report-based on 6,000 peer reviewed studies-under review at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a collaborative effort of the world's top climate scientists.

Under the IPCC's consensus rules, all countries must sign off on the language of a 20-page Summary for Policymakers, designed to provide leaders with objective, science-based information. After six hours of fruitless negotiations yesterday morning, the chair of the IPCC meeting adjourned the plenary around midday, warning: "The report hangs in the balance." A break-out group-or "huddle," in UN jargon-made no

progress in resolving the deadlock. Finally, when the plenary resumed, the Saudi's withdrew their objection just before their demand was to be rejected and noted in the record.

"We expected tough negotiations on this landmark report and we are happy that governments have delivered a good reflection of the underlying science," said Stephen Cornelius, WWF's chief advisor on climate change and a former IPCC negotiator. "Current country pledges to cut emissions are insufficient to limit global warming to 1.5°C-you can't negotiate with science." A email to Saudi officials was not answered, and delegates at the closed-door meeting were not available for comment.

At issue was a passage in the summary stating that voluntary national commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, annexed to the 2015 Paris climate treaty, will fail to limit warming to 1.5C. Current pledges would at best yield a 3C world by century's end, far above the 2C cap mandated by the Paris Agreement. These so-called "nationally determined contributions" run from 2020 to 2030 for most countries, including Saudi Arabia, and to 2025 for a few others. The passage goes on to note that capping global warming under 1.5C "can only be achieved if global CO2 emissions start to decline well before 2030". As a consequence, scientists and climate activists have called on countries to ratchet up their carbon-cutting pledges as soon as possible.

In the case of an impasse, the chairs of an IPCC meeting can override an objection from one or a few countries, recording it in a footnote. "It's quite rare that a government will be willing to have their name on the bottom of the page with an asterisk," Jonathan Lynn, head of communications for the IPCC, said last week. "We do everything we can to avoid it." — AFP

Human-like robots spark fascination...

Continued from Page 1

are doing in case of any unforeseen event, he added. That's why people are choosing "modular systems shaped like human bodies" which are meant to easily fit into real-world environments built for humans. For instance Atlas, a humanoid robot made by Boston Dynamics, can run on different types of surfaces. In Madrid, Marc Raibert, founder of the US firm, played a video showing Atlas doing a backflip.

In a sign of fears over the potential future uses for these humanoids, Amnesty International has accused Atlas, financed by an agency of the US Department of Defense, of being a "killer robot" made for future warfare. Another example of humanoids presented in Madrid is Talos, a robot made by Spanish company Pal Robotics shown testing his stability on a balance board. While it may not be the only form used for those coming into contact with humans, "it's easier for people to accept the robots when they have human-like faces because people can expect how the robots will move, will react," said Kamide.

That's comforting, but it also has its limits. Japanese researcher Masahiro Mori's "uncanny valley" theory,

China tight-lipped as Interpol chief...

Continued from Page 1

It is not clear why Meng - the first Chinese president of Interpol - would be under investigation. Chinese president Xi Jinping has presided over a popular anti-graft drive since coming to power in 2012 that has punished more than one million officials, with critics comparing it to a political purge. Meng rose up the ranks of the country's domestic security apparatus when it was under the leadership of Zhou Yongkang, a rival to Xi and the highest-ranking official to be brought down on corruption charges. Zhou - who was sentenced to life in prison in 2014 - was subsequently accused of conspiring to seize state power and authorities have continued working to root out his influence. He appointed Meng vice security minister in 2004.

In the role Meng has been entrusted with a number of sensitive portfolios, including heading up the coun-

try's counter-terrorism division, which saw him in charge of the response to several major incidents in China's fractious western region of Xinjiang. Critics of Meng's 2016 election to Interpol's presidency said he would use the position to help China target dissidents abroad under the guise of pursuing corrupt officials. Interpol has downplayed the concerns, saying the president has little influence over the organization's day-to-day operations, which are handled by secretary-general Juergen Stock, a German.

The Chinese effort to track down corrupt officials abroad, known as Operation Fox Hunt, has led to claims in some countries that Chinese law-enforcement agents have been operating covertly on their soil without the approval or consent of local authorities. China currently has 44 outstanding red notices, mostly related to murder, intentional injury and drug smuggling, according to Interpol's web site. During Meng's tenure, Interpol issued a red notice for fugitive Chinese billionaire real estate tycoon Guo Wengui, who threatened to reveal corruption at the country's highest levels. Authorities in China and Hong Kong have accused Guo, who resides in the United States, of laundering billions of dollars among other crimes. — AFP

Sports

Hamilton storms to 80th pole in Japan, Sebastian Vettel eighth

Mercedes secure second successive front row lockout

SUZUKA: Formula One leader Lewis Hamilton seized a record-extending 80th pole position at the Japanese Grand Prix yesterday, timing his sole flying lap to perfection while Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel will start eighth.

The Mercedes driver, in dominant form all weekend at the Suzuka circuit, pumped in a one minute 27.760 second lap on the super-soft tyres while it was still only just spitting with rain.

Vettel and Ferrari team mate Kimi Raikkonen, who went out on intermediate tyres in the final part of qualifying with the track still dry, lost time coming back in to fit the super-soft tyres.

The German then made another mistake on his first flying lap and was unable to get another one in as the intermittent drizzle turned into a full-blown shower that drenched the track. Meanwhile, Hamilton—who along with team mate Valtteri Bottas had gone out straight away on the super-soft tyres to beat the rain—was lighting up the timing screens.

"The team have done an amazing job this weekend, and the call that we made for Q3 was probably the most difficult," said the Briton, joined by Bottas on the front row after the Finn completed a second successive Mercedes front row lockout.

"It's so difficult when the pressure is on to make the right call but that's the big difference between us this year and that's why we're the best and the team deserve it," added Hamilton. Vettel trails his fellow four-times champion by 50 points in the standings with just four races left after Japan. His hopes are fading fast and he needs a huge stroke of luck now to reignite his challenge.

"Obviously it's not the position we deserve to be in," said the 31-year-old, who qualified ninth but moved up a place after Force India's Esteban Ocon was handed a three place drop for a red flag infringement in final practice. "Anything can happen tomorrow. Tomorrow is a new day."

RICCIARDO FUMES

Vettel's misfortune allowed 21-year-old Dutch driver Max Verstappen to qualify third for Red Bull.

"We have a bigger chance now to be on the podium," said Verstappen, doubting that he would need to worry too much about the others' title battle: "Is it still a battle? I'm not sure," he said.

While the Dutchman celebrated, team mate Daniel Ricciardo was left hoarse with anger after a power unit problem sidelined him during the second phase of qualifying before he had set a time.

The Australian, as a consequence, is set to start 15th. "I just can't catch a break," said Ricciardo, who is leaving Red Bull for Renault at the end of the year. Toro Rosso started in what is a home race for engine-supplier Honda with New Zealander Brendon Hartley sixth ahead of French team mate Pierre Gasly in seventh.

"I'm stoked with that. I was actually a bit emotional on the in-lap," said Hartley, who has had a tough time this year and faces an uncertain future. Rivals McLaren, who dumped Honda for Renault after three frustrating years, meanwhile could do no better than 18th and 19th.

The retiring Fernando Alonso beat Stoffel Vandoorne but neither driver made it past the opening



SUZUKA: Pole position winner of the qualifying session Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton (C), second pole position Mercedes' Finnish driver Valtteri Bottas (L) and third pole position Red Bull racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen (R) pose after the qualifying session of the Formula One Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka yesterday. —AFP

18-minute part of the session. Sweden's Marcus Ericsson briefly brought out the red flags when he crashed his Sauber at the fast left-handed Dunlop curve early in the session.

Renault's German Nico Hulkenberg, who crashed in the final practice session ahead of qualifying, made it back out on track but was also knocked out in the first

phase having set the 16th quickest time. That could be bad news for the fourth-placed French team, with their closest rivals Haas having Romain Grosjean qualify fifth. Hamilton has won five of the last six races and is already in a position where he does not need to win again this year to clinch the title. The Briton won from pole in Japan last year. — Reuters

Farah, Rupp face African challenge in Chicago

CHICAGO: The spotlight will be on former training partners Mo Farah and Galen Rupp but African runners could prevail in what promises to be a stellar but wet Chicago Marathon today.

Ethiopians Mosinet Geremew and Birhanu Legese and Kenyans Dickson Chumba, Abel Kirui and Kenneth Kipkemoi all have run faster than British marathon record holder Farah and reigning champion Rupp with Kirui and Chumba former Chicago winners.

Kenyan world championship gold medalist Geoffrey Kirui is also a major threat. "You've got guys who've run 2:04," Farah told Runner's World. "There are seven or eight good guys. I don't even know who to think could win that race."

But the intriguing story of two former partners chasing the same goal makes for high theatre. US Olympic marathon bronze medalist Rupp and Farah, four times an Olympic gold medalist on the track, trained together in Oregon for six years before Farah returned to Britain in 2017.

Now they face off on the roads with American Rupp still coached by Alberto Salazar and Farah, now 35, running his first U.S. marathon under the guidance of Gary Lough, the husband and former coach of women's



CHICAGO: Sir Mo Farah on a training run alongside Lake Michigan ahead of the 2018 Bank of America Chicago Marathon yesterday in Chicago, Illinois. —AFP

world marathon record holder Paula Radcliffe.

"It's part of making the race exciting—it's what people want to see," Farah said when asked about the rivalry. "Like, when you go to watch boxing you want to see the best boxers fight each other. There's a lot of talk, you know? That's how athletics is and why all the fans support us. Only the best man will do it on the day. It's nice to give the people who've seen us throughout our careers something to watch."

Both profess to be in top shape. Farah, who claimed the British record with his 2:06:21 for third in April's London Marathon, hopes to eclipse Norwegian Sondre Nordstad Moen's European record of 2:05:48.

"For me satisfaction will be to run a personal best," he said. Rupp, who clocked 2:06:07 at Prague in May, also wants to go faster. "This is probably the best situation I've ever been in to run fast," said the 32-year-old American, who won last year's race in 2:09:20. The US record is 2:05:38.

Kenyans Brigid Kosgei, the 2017 runner-up, and Florence Kiplagat, a two-time Chicago winner, will likely headline the women's field along with Ethiopians Roza Dereje and Birhane Dibaba. All have run 2:20 or better. Wet weather, however, could affect racing. There is a 50 percent chance of showers. — Reuters

'I've never had criminal involvement': Rakhimov

BUENOS AIRES: Gafur Rakhimov, the interim president of the International Boxing Association (AIBA), whose sport has been threatened with expulsion from the Olympics, has told AFP he has "never been involved in transnational criminal organisations."

In an exclusive written response to questions from AFP, Rakhimov said he was "sorting out the mess" and added "I hope that I will not be the only candidate for president" in the upcoming AIBA election.

On Friday, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said it was "freezing contacts" with AIBA and would refuse Rakhimov accreditation for the Youth Olympics, starting on Saturday in Buenos Aires.

Rakhimov, from Uzbekistan, has been interim president of AIBA since January, replacing CK Wu who was ousted late last year. AIBA has not ratified any other candidates and under its constitution that means Rakhimov will be elected by acclaim at the conference in Moscow on November 2-3.

The IOC on Wednesday listed its concerns with AIBA's governance saying "these include the circumstances of the establishment of the election list." Rakhimov said he was trapped by the constitution drawn up by the previous leadership.

"These somewhat bizarre regulations, which were prepared and put in place by the former President and his Executive Director,



LAUSANNE: File photograph taken on July 27, 2017, shows The International House of Sport (Maison du Sport International) complex which hosts the International Boxing Association (AIBA) in Lausanne. Gafur Rakhimov, the interim president of the International Boxing Association (AIBA), whose sport has been threatened with expulsion from the Olympics, has told AFP yesterday, that he has "never been involved in transnational criminal organizations." — AFP

also had the objective of making it difficult for others than the leadership to run for positions in AIBA," he wrote.

"We in the new leadership of AIBA could not change these regulations prior to our congress next month, because only the congress has the authority to do so," Rakhimov said he could not interfere with the AIBA Election Committee, but he had "asked our lawyers and the administration to see if anything can be done to eliminate such doubts or questions, and if possible allow for more potential candidates to run."

'ALLEGATIONS ARE FALSE'

In a letter to Rakhimov in August, Paquerette Girard Zappelli, the IOC Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer, referred to a "decision by the US Department of The

Treasury to consider you as part of, or linked to, two transnational criminal organisations."

Rakhimov said: "This of course made me very sad and it has been stressful - not least for my family. 'I felt that it would not help AIBA and the boxers worldwide if I should spend time and energy on responding to this, no matter how unfair and insulting it appeared to me. Instead I spend my all my days - and many nights - sorting out the mess that the former AIBA leadership had left behind."

"The truth is that I, of course, have never been involved in transnational criminal organisations or whatever has been said about me." He said he had been framed by political enemies in Uzbekistan who "provided all the false allegations about me to the US Department of The Treasury." — AFP



KUWAIT: Head of Kuwait Winter Games Club, Fuhaid Al-Ajmi presenting a trophy to Speaker, Marzouq Al-Ghanim in appreciation for his support.

Osaka 'stressed out' by great expectations

BEIJING: Naomi Osaka admitted that she gets "stressed out" trying to live up to "the hype" after the US Open champion was beaten in the China Open semi-finals yesterday. The 20-year-old Japanese, who struggled with a back injury in losing 6-4, 6-4 to unseeded Anastasija Sevastova, opened up afterwards on dealing with ramped-up expectations.

The world number six made headlines last month when she stunned Serena Williams in New York to win her maiden Grand Slam, in a final overshadowed by the American's bitter row with the chair umpire.

Osaka's shock triumph—at such a

young age and against one of the greatest tennis players of all time—propelled her into the limelight. It is a place that she is not altogether comfortable in.

"I think definitely as the weeks go by, I have this feeling of wanting to prove myself. I think that sort of takes a toll on me a little bit because I stress myself out in a way," said Osaka. "If you don't win a tournament, then people will say, 'Oh, she hasn't won a tournament.'"

"If you haven't won a Slam, they'll say, 'She hasn't won a Slam.' 'Then if you win one Grand Slam, they're like, 'Oh, she only won one Grand Slam.' 'I know it's bad, but I sort of read the comments. I'm just like, 'Oh, I guess I have to do more, to be better.'"

Osaka, who was attempting to reach a third straight final after New York and Tokyo's Pan Pacific Open, was unhappy with her behaviour in Friday's quarter-final victory over Zhang Shuai. Osaka had been close to tears during the second set and threw her racquet, before recovering her poise. — AFP

Marquez seizes historic pole at Thailand MotoGP

BURIRAM: Championship leader Marc Marquez made history as he became the first rider to climb out of Q1 and claim pole position at the inaugural Thailand MotoGP yesterday. The Spaniard had to fight his way through the first qualifying session after a crash in practice, but in Q2 he stormed to a time of 1min 30.088secs for his 50th pole.

It underlined the superb form of the Honda rider, who holds a 72-point lead over Andrea Dovizioso with five races remaining as he closes on a fifth world title. "Of course I was happy how I finished the day," Marquez, 25, told reporters, describing his morning

practice session as "unlucky".

Seven-time world champion Valentino Rossi, who along with Marquez is a firm favourite among Thai fans, was 11-hundredths behind Marquez with Dovizioso third fastest. Yamaha's Rossi described his time as a "great result" after he qualified just 18th quickest last month in Aragon, his lowest grid position since 2006.

However Jorge Lorenzo, who arrived carrying a foot injury and then damaged his wrist in a heavy crash during practice Friday, is out after he withdrew before qualifying. Italian riders Marco Bezzecchi and Lorenzo Baldassarri will start from pole in the Moto3 and Moto2 races respectively.

Thailand's first MotoGP is being held in the rural town of Buriram, which is several hours' drive from Bangkok and has a population of only about 30,000. More than double that size turned out yesterday, according to organisers. The 25-lap race is at the Chang International Circuit, the only Formula One-grade track in the country. — AFP

Sports

Dier fires Tottenham to victory as Mourinho prepares for crucial test

Man Utd have lost patience, will sack Mourinho regardless of the result: Report

LONDON: Tottenham got back on track after their European mauling at the hands of Lionel Messi as Eric Dier sealed a 1-0 win over Cardiff, while the pressure mounts on Jose Mourinho ahead of Manchester United's clash with Newcastle.

Mourinho has presided over United's worst start to a season for 29 years amid the breakdown of his relationship with star midfielder Paul Pogba and several other key players. United's goalless draw against Valencia in the Champions League on Tuesday meant Mourinho had gone four home matches without a win for the first time in his managerial career.

A report on Friday evening claimed United's hierarchy have lost patience with the toxic atmosphere and will sack Mourinho regardless of the result in the 1630 GMT Premier League kick-off at Old Trafford.

Senior United sources strongly denied the suggestion Mourinho will be dismissed this weekend, insisting he retains the board's support despite last Saturday's wretched loss at West Ham and a shock League Cup exit against second-tier Derby.

However, if Mourinho is to prolong his United reign, the former Chelsea boss surely needs to go into the international break with a morale-boosting win over old rival Rafael Benitez's Newcastle. At Wembley, Tottenham recovered from Wednesday's damaging 4-2 Champions League loss to Barcelona.

Messi had tormented Tottenham with a mesmerising display, capped by two goals, that left the north Londoners in danger of missing the knockout stage. But Mauricio Pochettino's side recovered against Cardiff to move into third place in the table.

Cardiff boss Neil Warnock joked he would play 10

defenders in a bid to stifle Tottenham and he might have regretted not doing exactly that as the hosts went in front after eight minutes. Davinson Sanchez saw his header blocked by Joe Bennett and it span into the path of England midfielder Dier, who swept home from close-range for his first club goal since April 2017.

WARNOCK INCENSED

Cardiff were reduced to 10 men when Joe Ralls was sent off for chopping down Lucas Moura in the 58th minute, with Warnock incensed after Tottenham's players surrounded the referee to demand a red card.

Matt Doherty condemned Crystal Palace to more misery on home turf as Wolves won 1-0 at Selhurst Park. Wolves boss Nuno Espirito Santo set a Premier League record by naming an unchanged starting line-up for an eighth game in a row at the start of the season. Doherty's 56th-minute strike rewarded Nuno's faith and left Palace without a goal or a win in their first four home games. Everton's Gylfi Sigurdsson scored a sublime goal to clinch his side a 2-1 win at 10-man Leicester.

Brazilian forward Bernard, signed from Shakhtar Donetsk in the close-season, marked his first Premier League start for Everton with an assist for his compatriot Richarlison, who bagged his fourth goal of the season with a simple finish in the seventh minute.

Portugal defender Ricardo Pereira equalised for Leicester in the 40th minute, firing home to celebrate his 25th birthday with his first goal since his pre-season move from Porto. But Leicester centre-back Wes Morgan was sent off in the 63rd minute, booked twice for fouls on Richarlison, and Sigurdsson



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's English defender Eric Dier (R) scores the team's first goal during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Cardiff at Wembley Stadium in London, yesterday. — AFP

ensured the visitors took advantage when he produced a superb turn and long-range strike into top corner in the 77th minute.

Burnley drew 1-1 with Huddersfield after Sam Vokes puts the hosts ahead and Christopher Schindler snatched the equaliser. —AFP

Bournemouth rout Watford

LONDON: There were a plethora of red cards in the Premier League yesterday but nowhere was one more devastating than at Vicarage Road where 10-man Watford were humbled 4-0 by Bournemouth.

David Brooks had already given the Cherries the lead after a quarter of an hour before Watford's Christian Kabasele received a second yellow 17 minutes later for bringing down Joshua King in the penalty area.

King converted the resulting spot kick and added another goal on the stroke of halftime as Bournemouth began to run riot. Callum Wilson grabbed the fourth two minutes after the break as Eddie Howe's men continued their hugely impressive start to the season, moving up to fifth in the standings. Watford, who are now winless in four league games, are eighth. However, Tottenham never looked in serious trouble and came through 1-0 winners thanks to Eric Dier's early goal. Leicester City were in the midst of a comeback from going a goal down to Everton before Wes Morgan was sent off for a second booking just after the hour mark.

Ricardo Pereira's drilled effort following a brisk counter-attack had cancelled out Richarlison's early strike for the visitors at the King Power Stadium. But with a numerical advantage, Everton's Gylfi Sigurdsson made sure of all three points 13 minutes from time with a right-footed effort from just outside the area. The Icelandic international's 50th Premier League goal gave Marco Silva's men their first away win of the season, 2-1.

Meanwhile, Huddersfield Town scored only their fourth goal of the season in a 1-1 draw at Burnley. Sam Vokes headed in to give the home side the lead after 20 minutes. However, a second-half header from Christopher Schindler levelled the tie and made sure



LONDON: Bournemouth's Norwegian striker Joshua King (2L) vies with Watford's Argentinian midfielder Roberto Pereyra during the English Premier League football match between Watford and Bournemouth at Vicarage Road Stadium in Watford, north of London yesterday. — AFP

Huddersfield came off the bottom of the standings.

Wolverhampton Wanderers claimed a Premier League record by naming an unchanged first XI for their opening eight games of the season - and it paid

dividends as they won 1-0 at Crystal Palace.

Matt Doherty found the bottom right corner from a difficult angle shortly before the hour mark as Palace's struggles in front of goal continued. — Reuters

Alcacer hat-trick keeps Dortmund top after 7-goal thriller

BERLIN: Substitute Paco Alcacer claimed a stunning hat-trick as his superb 96th-minute free-kick kept Borussia Dortmund top of the Bundesliga after a dramatic 4-3 win over Augsburg yesterday. Having already scored two late goals off the bench in last Saturday's 4-2 comeback victory at Bayer Leverkusen, and netted again in the 3-0 Champions League win over Monaco on Wednesday, the 25-year-old Alcacer, on loan from Barcelona, again proved deadly off the bench.

In front of 81,365 fans at Signal Iduna Park, Dortmund slipped 1-0 down after Alfred Finnbogason's first-half goal. But Alcacer equalised in the 62nd minute, just three minutes after coming on, with the Spain international smashing home a cross by teenage winger Jadon Sancho, who was called up by England on Thursday for the first time.

Philipp Max restored Augsburg's lead by taking advantage of some poor Dortmund defending, only for Alcacer to claim his second equaliser on 80 minutes when he fired in off the post. Dortmund led for the first time on 84 minutes when midfielder Mario Goetze, another second-half replacement, latched onto a great through ball and fired home on his first Bundesliga appearance this season.

The game swung again as Augsburg equalised when Michael Gregoritsch headed home a Max cross to make it 3-3 with just three minutes left. However, the stage was set for Alcacer to seal the three points after Augsburg's Sergio Cordova gave away a free-kick.

The stunning win means Niko Kovac's Bayern Munich, who trail Dortmund by four points down in fourth, cannot regain top spot even if they later beat Borussia Muenchengladbach at the Allianz Arena.

Elsewhere, Hertha Berlin missed the chance to claim



DORTMUND: Dortmund's Spanish forward Paco Alcacer takes the ball after scoring the 1-1 against during the German first division Bundesliga football match Borussia Dortmund vs FC Augsburg in Dortmund, western Germany, yesterday. — AFP

second from Werder Bremen, who won 2-0 at Wolfsburg on Friday, as they were held to a goalless draw at Mainz. Hertha captain Vedad Ibisevic missed a great chance when he hit the Mainz woodwork with a first-half chance. After losing their first five games, Schalke continue their rise up the table with a 2-0 win at Fortuna Duesseldorf. US international Weston McKennie who scored in their 1-0 Champions League win at Lokomotiv Moscow in midweek, and Guido Burgstaller grabbed Schalke's goals to put them 14th.

US striker Bobby Wood scored with two perfectly-

timed headers as Hanover 96 picked up their first win of the season with a 3-1 home win against Stuttgart. Wood gave Hanover the lead when he guided a header inside the far post after 30 minutes.

The 25-year-old added a second just before the break with another bullet header, expertly guided past Stuttgart's goalkeeper. Former Germany striker Mario Gomez, with a bandaged head after a first-half clash, scored Stuttgart's consolation goal soon after the break before Hanover's Togo striker Ihlas Bebou added their third in the 91st minute. — AFP

Live		
Matches on TV		
(Local Timings)		
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Fulham v Arsenal		14:00
beIN SPORTS HD 2		
Southampton v Chelsea		16:15
beIN SPORTS HD 2		
Liverpool v Manchester City		18:30
beIN SPORTS HD 2		
SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA		
Real Valladolid v Huesca		13:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
Atletico de Madrid v Real Betis		17:15
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
RCD Espanyol v Villarreal CF		19:30
beIN SPORTS HD 9		
Sevilla FC v Celta de Vigo		19:30
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
Valencia CF v FC Barcelona		21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
SC Freiburg v Bayer 04 Leverkusen		14:30
beIN SPORTS HD 5		
TSG 1899 Hoffenheim v Eintracht Frankfurt		16:30
beIN SPORTS HD 5		
RB Leipzig v FC Nuremberg		19:00
beIN SPORTS HD 5		

Kovacic setting standard for Chelsea's England hopefuls

SOUTHAMPTON: Gareth Southgate's latest England squad announcement brought mixed news for Ross Barkley and Ruben Loftus-Cheek, but at club level, the immediate obstacle confronting both players is the outstanding form of Chelsea team-mate Mateo Kovacic.

Having both featured in Thursday's Europa League defeat of Vidi-Barkley replaced Loftus-Cheek midway through the second half-the pair will be back on the sidelines should Kovacic return to the starting line-up at Southampton today.

And if the Croatia international maintains the form he has shown since his season-long move from Real Madrid, the two England hopefuls will be given another reminder of the standards they must attain if they are to become regular starters.

England manager Southgate had kept faith with Loftus-Cheek, who was a member of the World Cup campaign, for the last round of internationals, despite the midfielder's lack of early season game time under Maurizio Sarri at Stamford Bridge.

This time however, Loftus-Cheek's inaction has led to him being dropped from the squad to face Croatia and Spain, while Barkley has been recalled for the first time since May 2016 after overcoming the serious hamstring injury that ended his hopes of making the plane to Russia this summer.

The position of both players on the fringe of Southgate's squad will fuel discussion about the opportunities available to young English players at the Premier League's leading clubs.

But in the case of Barkley, 24, and Loftus-Cheek, two years his junior, Kovacic's impressive start to life in England highlights the limitations of that debate. Chelsea pulled off a considerable coup when they persuaded Real Madrid to allow the Croat to move in the opposite direction when keeper Thibaut Courtois travelled to the Bernabeu Stadium at the end of the transfer window.

This, though, was no attempt by the Spanish club to offload a player who was surplus to requirements. By letting the 24-year-old move to Stamford Bridge, Real knew Kovacic would be a regular starter at a club competing for a return to the top four in the Premier League and Europa League. The player would continue to develop at a high level, and with no agreement in place to transform the move into permanent arrangement, Kovacic should progress before returning to La Liga. —AFP

25 Hamilton storms to 80th pole in Japan, Sebastian Vettel eighth

26 Kuldeep five-for-57 gives India record Test win against W Indies

27 Dier fires Tottenham to victory as Mourinho prepares for crucial test



United fightback spares Mourinho

Man Utd's first win in five games in all competitions



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's French midfielder Paul Pogba (R) takes a shot during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Newcastle at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Jose Mourinho was given a stay of execution as Manchester United staged a stirring fightback to beat Newcastle 3-2 thanks to Alexis Sanchez's last-gasp winner, while Tottenham recovered from their European misery with a 1-0 victory over Cardiff yesterday. Mourinho had presided over United's worst seven-game start to a season for 29 years amid the breakdown of his relationship with star midfielder Paul Pogba and several other key players.

A report on Friday evening claimed United's hierarchy had lost patience with the toxic atmosphere and would sack Mourinho regardless of the Newcastle result. But senior United sources strongly denied the suggestion Mourinho would be dismissed this weekend, insisting he retains the board's support following a series of abysmal

results. Despite that vote of confidence, it was looking increasingly bleak for Mourinho when winless Newcastle raced into a two-goal lead in the first 10 minutes at Old Trafford.

But United clicked into gear and Chile forward Sanchez, who had been dropped by Mourinho, came off the bench to bag the winner after goals from Juan Mata and Anthony Martial dragged the hosts level.

United's first win in five games in all competitions could buy Mourinho some much-needed breathing space heading into the international break. Mourinho was in typically combative mood when he walked to the bench before kick-off, squirting a television camera with a water bottle, and within seven minutes the mood turned even more fractious. United fell behind when Kenedy parted Mourinho's

defence with alarming ease, running onto Ayoze Perez's pass and turning away from Ashley Young before firing home as Mourinho gestured furiously on the touchline.

There was worse to come for Mourinho three minutes later as Newcastle punished more shambolic defending. Young and his team-mates failing to get in a challenge as Japanese forward Yoshinori Muto scored on his first Premier League start. Rafael Benitez's side were the first visiting team ever to score two goals in the first 10 minutes of a Premier League game at Old Trafford.

Mourinho responded by making a bizarre 19th minute substitution as he hauled off defender Eric Bailly—one of the group said to be unhappy with the manager—and sent on Mata, once again moving young midfielder Scott

McTominay to play at centre-back.

Jeers rang around Old Trafford at half-time and Mourinho, looking increasingly desperate, made more changes at the interval with Marouane Fellaini sent on for McTominay. United finally responded to Mourinho in the second half, playing with far more passion as Mata reduced the deficit with a fine 70th minute free-kick before Martial fired the equaliser six minutes later.

That set the stage for Sanchez to apply the finishing touch in the 90th minute as Mourinho celebrated while his name was sung by relieved United fans at full-time. Elsewhere, Wolves won 1-0 at Crystal Palace, Everton beat Leicester 2-1, Bournemouth routed Watford 4-0 and Burnley drew 1-1 with Huddersfield. —AFP

Real troubles deepen with loss at Alaves

VITORIA: Real Madrid's miserable run of results continued as they slid to a shock 1-0 La Liga defeat at Alaves by conceding a goal deep in stoppage time yesterday, marking their longest run without scoring in over 33 years.

Veteran midfielder Manu Garcia headed home after the ball hit crossbar following a corner in the fifth minute of added time to send the raucous home crowd into ecstasy as Alaves climbed to third in the standings.

The triple European champions had been shackled by Alaves for most of the match and they were fortunate not to concede before Garcia struck when Alaves's Jony fired narrowly wide on the break.

Alaves are the fourth team in a row to stop Real scoring and coach Julen Lopetegui will face further scrutiny with this defeat, which came after a 1-0 loss at CSKA Moscow in the Champions League, a 3-0 thrashing at Sevilla and a goalless draw with Atletico Madrid.

Real are still joint top of the standings with 14 points after eight games but they could drop down if leaders Barcelona, Sevilla and Atletico Madrid all win today. —Reuters



VITORIA: Real Madrid's Spanish-Dominican forward Mariano (L) vies with Alaves' Spanish defender Ximo Navarro during the Spanish league football match between Deportivo Alaves and Real Madrid CF at the Mendizorrosa stadium in Vitoria yesterday. —AFP

Embattled Ronaldo scores as Juventus beat Udinese

UDINE: Cristiano Ronaldo shrugged off damaging rape allegations to score for Juventus as the Italian champions beat Udinese 2-0 to stretch their lead at the top of Serie A yesterday. The Portuguese forward lashed in the second goal in the 37th minute from Mario Mandzukic's pass, four minutes after Rodrigo Bentancur's opener.

It was Ronaldo's fourth goal this season for Juventus, with the 33-year-old celebrating wildly with his teammates. Juventus—with a maximum 24 points from eight games—opened up a nine-point lead on second-placed Napoli who host Sassuolo later.

Ronaldo showed no sign of being under pressure despite the accusations made against him which threaten his multi-million euro sporting empire. US police on Monday re-opened an investigation into accusations by former American model Kathryn Mayorga that the five-time Ballon d'Or winner raped her in a Las Vegas hotel in June 2009. Ronaldo has strenuously denied the claims, and Juventus have so far stood behind their superstar, who moved to Turin in the summer in a 100-million-euro (\$115 million) deal from Real Madrid. He arrived at Udinese's compact Stadio Friuli and was greeted by the enthusiastic cries of dozens of children waiting for the two team buses. During the warm-up before the game he was even approached by a child who came onto the pitch to ask for his autograph. —AFP