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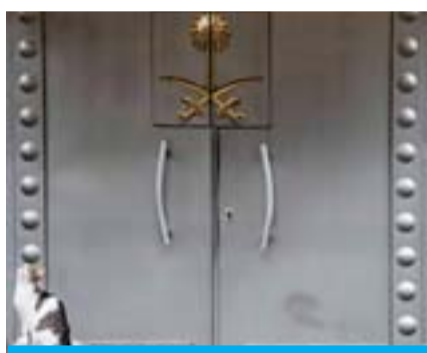
Sisi commends Amir's role in regional stability, security

Egyptian president meets Kuwaiti media delegation to discuss a range of topics

Riyadh slams 'baseless lies'; Trump warns of 'punishment'

ISTANBUL: A delegation of a dozen Saudi officials was in Turkey yesterday for talks on the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi after Riyadh slammed as "baseless lies" Turkish accusations he was killed inside its Istanbul consulate. Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump threatened Riyadh yesterday with "severe punishment" if Khashoggi was killed. Turkey later accused Saudi Arabia of failing to cooperate with a probe into the disappearance of Khashoggi. Comments by Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu represented a hardening of Ankara's hitherto circumspect tone over the case.

With the mystery over Khashoggi unresolved 11 days after he walked into the consulate and failed to reappear, a pro-government Turkish daily said the



ISTANBUL: A cat sits on a stool at the doors of the Saudi consulate yesterday. — AFP

Saudi national had recorded his own interrogation inside the mission on an Apple Watch. Turkish officials have said they believe Khashoggi was killed inside the consulate and lurid claims have been leaked to media that he was tortured and even dismembered.

Saudi insists Khashoggi, a Washington Post contributor whose writings have been critical of powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, left the building safely but has yet to offer visual evidence of this. The outcry surrounding his disappearance threatens to not just harm brittle

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CAIRO: HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah continues to play a pivotal role in maintaining regional stability and security. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi said yesterday. This statement came during Sisi's meeting with heads of Kuwaiti newspapers, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), and board members of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA). Kuwaiti Ambassador to Egypt Saleh Al-Thuwaikh also attended the meeting.

Sisi lauded during the meeting the distinguished relations between Kuwait and Egypt, especially during the era of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah and the previous rulers of Kuwait. "Such a relationship is a model to follow when concerned with brotherly and friendly ties among Arab nations and brethren," affirmed Sisi, who added that the Arab world is not only connected through interests, but also via a unified destiny and future.

The strength of Kuwaiti and Egyptian relations was evident in the 1973 war against Israel and the 1991 liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi aggressors, noted Sisi, who stressed that the security and stability of

Kuwait is an issue of vital importance for Egypt. Asked about the drastic developments in the Arab region since 2011, Sisi pointed out that what transpired was not necessarily the correct reaction to very serious issues and problems. "Arab intellectuals and those who are enlightened must carry on their role to guide future generations through an adequate description of what was really occurring in our countries," stated Sisi, who called on such leading figures to look into the lessons that could be learned from the experiences of the past.

With regards to Egypt, the president said the Egyptian people had spoken when they came out in millions in June 2013 to determine their future and take charge of their own destiny. Touching on Egyptian efforts to deescalate tension between Hamas and Israel, Sisi said peace in the Middle East was a strategic option to bring upon a just and comprehensive solution for the Palestinian cause. He hoped that efforts would lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital.

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CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi meets Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan yesterday. — KUNA

News in brief

Turkey names street after Malcolm X

ANKARA: Turkey yesterday renamed the road where the new US embassy is to be located after the American black Muslim civil rights campaigner Malcolm X, its latest use of a politically-loaded name for the street of a foreign mission. The new embassy building, located in the Cukurambar district on the western outskirts of Ankara, is on what is currently named 1478 Street. But a meeting of the Ankara city council unanimously decided to change the name to Malcolm X Street. The name change comes after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met the daughters of Malcolm X on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York last month. The statement by the Ankara municipality noted that Erdogan had promised to the daughters that the name of Malcolm X would "live on" in the Turkish capital. — AFP

Canada boosts aid to UNRWA

OTTAWA: Canada stepped up aid for Palestinian refugees on Friday, announcing CAN\$50 million (US\$38 million) for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), whose mission has suffered since Washington cut its help. UNRWA was set up in 1950 to help Palestinian refugees who lost their homes because of the 1948 Middle East conflict. Its assistance includes schools, healthcare centers and food distribution. The Canadian contribution is to be spread over two years. CAN\$40 million will go to "meeting the basic education, health and livelihood needs of millions of Palestinian refugees," Ottawa said in a statement. Another CAN\$10 million will be used to provide "emergency life-saving assistance to more than 460,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria and Lebanon," it said. — AFP

Morocco justifies 2015 extradition

RABAT: Morocco confirmed Friday that in 2015 it arrested a Saudi official, wanted by Interpol, and extradited him to Riyadh, denying that this was a "disappearance". Turki bin Bandar bin Mohamed bin Abderrahmane Al-Saud was arrested at Casablanca Airport on Nov 11, 2015 on his way to Paris on an "international warrant issued (the same day) by Riyadh for disrupting public order via the internet and financial crimes", a Moroccan diplomatic source said. Bin Bandar, a former high-ranking Saudi police officer, was extradited to Saudi Arabia the next day "in compliance with legal provisions", the same Moroccan diplomatic source said. His comments came after French newspaper Le Monde on Thursday published an article in which it described the deportation three years ago as an extradition of convenience. — AFP



GAZA: Palestinian protesters carry a youth injured by Israeli forces on the Israel-Gaza border on Friday. — AFP

Gazans mourn 7 killed in clashes; woman killed by Israeli settlers

GAZA CITY: Thousands of Palestinians attended funerals yesterday for seven young men shot dead a day earlier by Israeli troops during fresh demonstrations along the Gaza border, an AFP correspondent said. Mourners, including leaders of the enclave's Islamist rulers Hamas, chanted slogans condemning Israel for shooting civilians and called on the international community to deliver justice. The Israeli army said five Palestinians had been killed during the

protests Friday after they broke through the heavily-guarded border fence and attacked an army post.

Army spokesman Jonathan Conricus said around 20 Palestinians had crossed the border in an "organized attack" after an explosive device destroyed a portion of the fence. About five of those who got through the fence assaulted an Israeli army position and were "repelled", he wrote on Twitter. The enclave's health ministry said seven Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire as thousands of protesters approached the heavily-guarded Israeli border.

Yesterday, the ministry named the victims as: Ahmed Al-Taweel, 27, Mohammed Ismail, 29, Ahmed Abu Naim, 17, Abdullah Daghma, 25, Afifi Atta Afifi, 18, Tamer Abu Armaneh, 25 and Mohammed Abbas, 21.

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#MeToo claims hit head of India cricket board

NEW DELHI: The chief executive of India's powerful cricket board has been given a week to explain allegations of sexual harassment against him, as the country's fledgling #MeToo movement gathers pace. Rahul Johri, CEO of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), was named in an account shared by Indian author Harnidh Kaur on Twitter. The unidentified woman accused Johri of assaulting her at his home, while he was working with a different organization.

"The truth is, it was so sudden and so manipulated that I had no chance at even knowing what the hell this was," the woman said. The Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators, which oversees the BCCI, yesterday asked Johri to explain. Even though the allegations "do not pertain to his employment with BCCI," the committee said it had given him a week to "submit his explanation." Johri, CEO of the world's richest cricket body, has yet not responded to a request for comment.

"There are certain media reports today, including in the social media, pertaining to Rahul Johri," the committee said in a statement. "These reports disclose allegations of sexual harassment made against Mr Johri, by an unnamed persons through a Twitter handle. The allegations also related to his previous employment with a large media house," it added.

India's belated #MeToo movement has made headlines over the last few days with women sharing powerful accounts of alleged harassment by several powerful men including a minister, Bollywood filmmakers, news editors and comedians. On Friday, the production of a Bollywood blockbuster was halted after the film's lead called for harassment claims against its director and co-star to be



NEW DELHI: Indian journalists hold placards at a protest against sexual harassment in the media industry. — AFP

"stringently" investigated.

Star Akshay Kumar said he had requested that the making of "Housefull 4" be stopped following allegations against director Sajid Khan and actor Nana Patekar. Several women, mostly journalists, have also accused India's junior foreign minister M J Akbar of sexual harassment in the last few days. Akbar, who was a top news editor before entering politics, has not yet commented on the allegations or demands for his resignation. — AFP

Taleban confirm meeting with US envoy in Qatar

KABUL: A Taleban delegation has met with US envoy Zalmay Khalilzad in Qatar to discuss ending the Afghan conflict, the militant group said yesterday, the first time either side has officially confirmed talks. The direct negotiations - a longstanding Taleban demand - were held as Khalilzad seeks to coordinate efforts with regional countries, including Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, to convince Afghanistan's largest militant group to engage in talks. The meeting with Khalilzad and other American officials took place in Doha on Friday, Taleban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement.

Taleban and US negotiators discussed a "peaceful end to the invasion in Afghanistan", Mujahid said, referring to the US-led intervention in 2001 that toppled the Taleban regime. But the group made clear that the presence of foreign forces in the country was a "big obstacle" to peace. Both sides "agreed to continue such meetings", he added, without providing further details. In a statement, Khalilzad said all Afghans "must be a part of this reconciliation process", but he did not mention meeting with the Taleban. A spokesman for the US embassy in Kabul declined to comment.

In July, the Taleban reportedly met with US officials, including Alice Wells, the senior official for the State Department's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

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Local



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi meets heads of Kuwaiti newspapers, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) and board members of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) yesterday. Kuwaiti Ambassador to Egypt Saleh Al-Thuwailkh also attended the meeting. —KUNA

Sisi commends Amir's role in...

Continued from Page 1

While Egypt is working on the Mideast peace process, it is also focused on bringing disputing Palestinian factions together, indicated Sisi, affirming that national reconciliation is a vital step to establish a future Palestinian state. During the meeting, Sisi touched on the crises in Yemen, Syria and Libya, noting that what was occurring in these Arab nations should

end peacefully.

On Syria, Sisi stressed that it was important to deny access to extremist elements into the country as part of a comprehensive peace plan. Bringing stability to Syria and elsewhere is within the political and economic interest of the Arab world, said Sisi, who called for eliminating terrorism in the region. Sisi took the chance to honor those who laid their lives in the service of Egypt through combating terrorist elements in the country, affirming that their sacrifice was not in vain.

The Egyptian president also touched on the country's path towards economic development and reform. Sisi revealed that major projects in Egypt were finalized in record time, noting that recent achievements included housing projects comprising millions of apart-

ment units dedicated to some 200,000 families who were living in shantytowns and squatter areas. Sisi invited the Kuwaiti media delegation to visit the completed housing projects in Egypt as well as finalized infrastructure projects to witness the achievements.

Reforms have improved economic indices in Egypt, said Sisi, who revealed that growth in 2017/2018 went up by 5.3 percent while monetary reserves in Egypt reached \$44 billion. He added that there were efforts to reduce the budget deficit to less than 10 percent of the gross national income. Referring to the period after his re-election in 2018, Sisi noted that reforms will also touch the education and higher education sectors, affirming that several accords will be signed soon to elevate the level of education in the country.

On the health sector's development, the president said Egypt is embarking on a major project targeting 50 million Egyptians to eradicate the hepatitis C virus and other contagious diseases. Sisi spoke about developing the capabilities of Egypt youth, stressing that there is no future for a country without the energy of its young generation. There are several programs aimed at connecting the leadership of Egypt with the youth to ensure the country's bright future, said Sisi, who affirmed that the youth would build the future with the wisdom and assistance of the older generation of citizens. Sisi also touched on the situation with Ethiopia and the Al-Nadha dam issue, saying that the two countries were working together to ensure that all involved parties will benefit from the dam project. —KUNA

Speaker arrives in Geneva to participate in IPU conference

Al-Ghanem to give a speech on parliamentary leadership

GENEVA: Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Ali Al-Ghanem arrived yesterday in Geneva to participate in the 139th session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) scheduled on October 14-18. Al-Dustur news network relayed to KUNA that Al-Ghanem was received by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim, Kuwait's Ambassador to Switzerland Bader Al-Tunaib and a number of embassy members from Kuwait.

Al-Ghanem will address the conference with a speech on "Parliamentary Leadership in Promoting Peace and Development in the Age of Innovation and Technological Change". The Speaker and his accompanying delegation will also participate in the coordination meetings of the Arab, Islamic and Asian groups in order to coordinate positions on issues of vital importance. On the other hand, the Kuwaiti delegation will participate in the meetings of

the standing and sub-Committees of the Union, which will discuss several issues including the role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the goals of sustainable and other topics. The Kuwaiti delegation includes several parliamentary officials.

Later, the Speaker met with President of the UAE's Federal National Council Dr Amal Qubaisi. The meeting occurred on the sideline of the 139th session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The two Arab parliamentarians focused their discussions on coordinating Arab and Islamic efforts during the course of the IPU meeting. The latest developments within the regional and international spheres were also discussed. Kuwaiti MPs Rakan Al-Nesf, Safa Al-Hashim and Kuwaiti permanent representative to the UN and International organization's headquarters in Geneva Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim attended the meeting. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The parliamentary delegation attending the conference in Geneva. —KUNA

Oman Shura lauds Amir's efforts to resolve Gulf crisis

BRUSSELS: Sheikh Khaled Hilal Al-Maawali, speaker of the Shura Council of Oman, has expressed his full backing and support to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's efforts to heal the growing rifts in the Gulf region. "We highly appreciate and strongly support and express our gratitude to the Amir of Kuwait HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for all his efforts," he said.

Al-Maawali made his remarks in a speech at the 9th European Union - Sultanate of Oman inter-parliamentary meeting hosted in the European Parliament by the EP's Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula on Thursday evening. "Oman whole-heartedly supports the 'active and dynamic' efforts by HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to heal the rifts. We all are waiting for the historic moment when peace is finally achieved and we pray to God that the day will come soon," he added.

Meanwhile, in answer to a question by the British MEP Wajid Khan during the meeting, on Kuwait's mediation efforts, Kuwait's Ambassador to the EU, Belgium, NATO and Luxembourg, Jassem Al-Budaiwi expressed his appreciation and thanks to Al-Maawali for his kind words and support to exerted efforts by HH the Amir.

"This situation is very painful to us" he said, and hoped that by God's will, a solution to the crisis will be found soon. "We all have one destiny one future and one situation and we cannot live by distancing ourselves from each other," stressed the Kuwaiti diplomat. He noted that the desire and wish of the leaders and the people of GCC countries is to see a solution. Al-Budaiwi concluded his remarks saying "we see that EU-GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) relationship is vital for everybody and we continue to work hard to maintain this relationship." "We invested a lot in this by holding several meetings, dia-



BRUSSELS: Kuwait's Ambassador to the EU, Belgium, NATO and Luxembourg, Jassem Al-Budaiwi speaks during the 9th EU-Sultanate of Oman inter-parliamentary meeting. —KUNA

logue, discussions and Kuwait wants this relationship to develop further." For her part, Michel Alliot-Marie, chair of the Delegation, called for closer relations and cooperation between the EU and Oman and also between the EU and GCC saying the EP wants to see the GCC "more stronger and united." She said the two sides exchanged views on a number of issues of mutual interest including the political, economic and social situation in Oman.

The GCC includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Al-Maawali also expressed his desire to intensify relations between the EU and Oman and praised the EU's positive role in many issues in the region and worldwide. He presented an overview of the development of the Shura council in Oman and about his country's foreign policy which, he noted, is based on neutrality and non-interference. —KUNA

Kuwait Finance minister meets with counterparts

KUALA LUMPUR: Kuwait's Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf met separately with his counterparts in the region at the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group (WBG) in Bali, Indonesia. Al-Hajraf discussed with Qatari Finance Minister Ali Shareef Al-Emadi latest economic and financial developments in the region, and ways to boost bilateral ties, the Kuwaiti minister's accompanying press

team said in a statement Friday.

He also reviewed with Pakistani Finance Minister Asad Umar methods to bolster Kuwaiti-Pakistani ties, and spoke about investment opportunities available in both countries. Al-Hajraf is scheduled to meet with his Omani counterpart Darwish bin Ismail bin Ali Al-Balushi yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti minister and his accompanying delegation took part in the 72nd general session of the 2018 IMF-WBG meetings, inaugurated earlier by Indonesian President Joko Widodo. In his opening speech, Widodo urged member-countries to cooperate jointly in order to face the ongoing worldwide economic disorder and counter fears threatening it through reforming global financial situations, and forming sound financial and monetary policies. —KUNA



BALI: Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf and his accompanying delegation during the meeting.

Local

US Visa applications: What you need to know about the process

Procedures, dos and don'ts and Green Card lottery

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: US visa applications in Kuwait have increased by around 15 percent compared to the same period last year. According to Robin Busse, the US Embassy Deputy Consular Chief/Visa Chief, the increase is propelled in particular by applications from third country nationals. Speaking exclusively with Kuwait Times, Busse said the number of applications by Kuwaitis also increased, as majority of our visa customers continue to be Kuwaitis. The procedures and regulations implemented at the embassy for acquiring a US visa remain the same, except for some minor changes.

"In order to make it known to everyone, we created new pictorial signage that doesn't use words. It is placed at the consular parking lot and at the first security checkpoint to inform the public what not to bring inside the consular section in order to avoid delays," Busse said. Prohibited items include cigarette lighters and all electronic items such as phones, cameras, smart watches, flash drives and headphones.

"These are all items which you cannot bring inside the embassy. If you bring these items, you will be asked to leave them in your car, or worse, you will have to reschedule the appointment. We do not allow things to be kept at the security checkpoint. Normally, delays are self-inflicted because applicants bring prohibited items which should not be brought at the embassy. We do this for security purposes. Once you are permitted to enter the embassy, in about one hour the visa process will be over and you can go back to your workplaces," he added.

Procedures

Visa applicants for the purposes of tourism and business are advised by the consul to visit www.ustraveldocs.com and download the application form. On the website, applicants can set appointments and pay the application fee through Burgan Bank. "Applicants can choose the time to

attend the personal interview. Generally, we receive visa applications three times a week (during low seasons) and four times during summer. Once a week, we entertain immigrant visa applications," Busse said.

Many visa applications at the US Embassy are filled by third party service providers. While they are not illegal, the Embassy cautions people on using their services. "At the end of the day, it is still about you. You are responsible for the application and you should fill it truthfully," he said. "We do not mind vendors - if you channel your application through service providers, you will pay for their services, but you are still responsible for the information provided on the application form and not the vendor. The problem is some people forget to fill even the basic information needed such as the date of birth, home address and email. If the visa is approved, they will get their passport with the visa stamp via Aramex in five days or less. Generally speaking from day one to finish, you only need 10 to 14 days for the entire visa process from scheduling an appointment to receipt of the visa," said Busse.

For student visa applications, the same process is followed except that the student has to provide the I-20 form. "This form is provided by the university in the United States they have applied to - it's a document that certifies they are admitted in that university or college. They also have to bring the receipt showing they have paid the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fee. The application process is the same. The student must also provide the documents mentioning how they are going to pay for the next year. We need to see bank statements of their parents who will be paying for their education. If the Ministry of Higher Education is paying, we want to see the Ministry approval on their scholarship grant. Applicants can and should apply in the country where they live, even if they are not a citizen of that country," Busse said.

Asked if there are instances of visa denial, he said the vast majority of appli-

cants are successful. "The applicant needs to overcome the presumption, built into U.S. immigration law, that they are intending immigrants, by demonstrating that they have strong ties to their country, which will compel them to come back after studying or visiting the United States. We look for the applicant's connections and ties in the country where they live to make sure they will actually come back, in the case of tourist visas. For student visas, we also look for who will finance their studies in the US," he explained.

For Kuwaiti students, normally the US government provides a 5-year visa, and a 10-year tourist visa for Kuwaitis; for Egyptians and Lebanese for instance, it's five years. Busse advised would-be students to the US to maintain their SEVIS status. "The international student advisor is very important to maintain your status. The SEVIS database tracks students. Make sure to maintain contact with the international student advisor who can update your SEVIS status, as needed, in order not to experience a denial the next time you apply for a student visa. Students can transfer their SEVIS number from school A to school B to avoid termination of SEVIS status," he said.

Dos and don'ts

When in the US, students have two ways to learn - inside the classroom and just being in the US, experiencing American culture. When travelling to the United States, he advised visitors to make sure the passport is valid for up to six months. "You'll do what US citizens do. You are subject to our laws and regulations if you are in the US, so abide by the laws of the land. It means if you have driving tickets for speeding, I advise you to pay the fine immediately. If you have a case filed against you in court, go to the court and settle it - don't just leave the country; take responsibility for it. While in the US, driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics is prohibited. We can revoke your visa status on these grounds," Busse



American Citizen Services Chief Harvey Beasley (left) and Robin Busse, the US Embassy Deputy Consular Chief/Visa Chief.

added. Revocation of the visa is usually effective when the visitor leaves the US.

Green Card Lottery

The Trump administration has issued a presidential proclamation banning citizens of six countries from traveling to the US. So is the proclamation effective? "Yes, it is, but there are some exceptions to the Presidential Proclamation and possibility to waive the restrictions, usually based on humanitarian factors," Busse said. "In fact, people who have won the green card lottery from these countries are being considered. Nationals who are restricted from traveling to the US can still apply and follow the same visa application procedures. We examine it carefully and we find ways to help. The presidential proclamation is a complex matter and there are exceptions and waivers in this complex scenario - we consider humanitarian issues," he reiterated.

US citizens/servicemen

Meanwhile, American Citizen Services Chief Harvey Beasley noted the US Embassy provides routine consular services such as issuing new passports, renewing existing passports and processing of birth certificates. Notary services are also available for people to get their necessary documents. A new passport can be obtained in two to three weeks. "My advice to US citizens is to renew their passport early, and to be sure to review our website for details on which application to fill out and what to bring to the Embassy. For example, when renewing the passport of a minor, parents should not forget to bring their child's birth certificate. Also, take care with photos. Photographs should have a white background. US citizens can wear a hijab in their passport photos, but they have to show the hairline, please see our website at kw.usembassy.gov for additional details," Beasley said.



KUWAIT: Her Majesty's Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport (4th right) speaking with local reporters. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

British Ambassador completes one year

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A roundtable discussion with local journalists was held at the British Embassy in Kuwait with Her Majesty's Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport who recently completed a year since taking office. Davenport was accompanied by Matt Nottingham, Head of Political Section (Internal Affairs) at the British Embassy. The new political section head was also formally introduced by Ambassador Davenport before the start of the roundtable with reporters. Davenport spoke about his country's excellent bilateral ties with Kuwait which dates back several decades.

"Our ties have grown ever deeper and closer in the last 12 months of my stay as her Majesty's Ambassador to Kuwait. Our relationship is very dynamic and constantly evolving in all areas of cooperation. We are very optimistic about the future," Davenport said. He lauded the recent vote for Kuwait to become a permanent member in the UN Security Council last January which he stressed is also supported by the British government among other countries.

"We have had opportunities of high level conversation with the exchange of visits. The foreign minister of Kuwait visited London in July, and we discussed

the strong and established framework of our relationship through a joint steering group," he added. "One of the significant highlights of our bilateral relations is in the area of education. The number of Kuwaitis going to the UK to study has been steadily growing; we have now 5,500, some of them I have met recently. That is something that we are really very happy and proud of," he said.

The mobility and travels between the two peoples is also bringing about the introduction of a new electronic visa system. "We see a significant increase in the number of Kuwaitis travelling to the UK and people from UK to Kuwait. We are emphasizing the co-operations we signed that coincided with the visit of Sheikh Salman to London. I also want to highlight the work we are doing in the security side. We have several plans in the short term including training exercises with the Kuwait Armed forces early next year, desert warrior exercises with the Kuwait armed forces. We are also exploring the possibility of training on a more regular basis," he added.

He also highlighted British economic engagement with Kuwait with regards to its vision 2035. "There is on-going cooperation in the health and environment sector especially with the subject of renewable energy. If we are talking about infrastructure, I am happy that British companies are actively involved in several engineering and design departments especially in the construction of the new airport. A British company is also involved in the oil and gas sector to help tackle the challenges of inflating oil prices and the eventually rise in production," he added. Several international issues and concerns were also discussed including Brexit, the Scottish desire for independence, issues within the Middle East and Iran.

37% of Seventh Ring Road completed: Eng Al Hosan

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Director General of Public Authority for Roads and Transport Eng Ahmad Al-Hosan said that 37% of Seventh Ring Road has been completed. He said work is progressing as scheduled for the benefit of developing and upgrading the road network country wide, which is witnessing an unprecedented move in quality due to the efforts of all

the workers who are doing their best to complete the road system and other infrastructure upgrades.

Al-Hosan said in a statement that the project is one of the most important projects being executed by PART, as it will provide links to Fahaeel Road to the area near Kabd. It will stretch over a length of 21.8 Km and will include seven intersections. It also includes a part of the regional road system that links Fahaeel road, through Seventh Ring Road and all the way to Salmy Road covering nearly 93 km. PART Director General said the project will allow traffic to flow freely without traffic signals. The speed limit will also be increased to 120 km/h.

Al-Hosan said the street was designed with 3 lanes on each side with the possibility of adding a fourth lane in the future. This fourth lane would be used as a waiting area for trucks and pedestrian bridges. He said PART is keen on following the execution steps in the



Eng Ahmad Al-Hosan

project and urges workers to increase their efforts so it can be completed as scheduled. This can be achieved through close follow ups, field visits and regular reports from the executive team inside the project to PART. The project team should also work on facing any worker challenges that may arise.

Kuwait always ready to help disaster victims worldwide

TUNIS: Kuwait has always rushed to help people facing natural disasters around the globe, the Gulf country's top fireman said Friday, citing the UN selection of His Highness the Amir

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as Humanitarian Leader as a testament to relentless philanthropy. General Khaled Al-Mekrad, Director General of Kuwait fire Services Directorate (KFSD), said crisis management and disaster risk reduction were part of the humanitarian action.

Al-Mekrad, addressing the Arab-African forum for Disaster Risk Reduction, said HHH the Amir of Kuwait has been leading the country's humanitarian efforts which has helped alleviate the suffering of many people falling victim to disasters around the world. He said Kuwait has been cooperating with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) since January 2017 to establish a national liaison office. This cooperation was within the Sendai

Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, or Sendai Framework, which is the first major agreement of the 2015-30 Sustainable Development Agenda. Kuwait, added Al-Mekrad, increased national awareness about Sendai Framework through organizing workshops with UNISDR.

Al-Mekrad held talks with UN officials to discuss the implementation of Sendai Framework, which has seven global targets and four priorities in action. The priorities are: understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to improve recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. — KUNA



TUNIS: General Khaled Al-Mekrad, Director General of Kuwait fire Services Directorate (KFSD) during the Arab-African forum for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A swarm of flamingos crosses the free trade area. — KUNA

Alghanim Industries committed to UN Sustainable Development Goals

'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the region, recently restated its commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5, to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," as the CEO of Alghanim Industries Omar K Alghanim signed a Statement of Support for the UN Women's Empowerment Principles. The symbolic signing ceremony took place in the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce last week under the patronage of Ms Hind Al-Sabeeh, Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs.

The event was organized by the Women's Research and Studies Center of Kuwait University's College of Social Sciences led by Dr Lubna Al-Kazi, in partnership with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Alghanim Industries participated alongside a number of leading private sector entities, and was represented by the company's Chief Human Resources Officer, Henning Schlutt.

Shedding light on Kuwait's private sector efforts in promoting and accelerating gender equality in the corporate world, the event further solidified Kuwait's commitment to the global 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Commenting on the initiative, Chief Human Resources Officer, Henning Schlutt, said: "At Alghanim Industries, we strongly believe in the principles of diver-

sity and inclusion. Over the past few years, we have launched a number of initiatives and introduced a number of policies to support women leading their careers. Our participation in this initiative stems from our steadfast commitment to gender equality, and to the success of women in the corporate world."

“ We believe in the principles of diversity ”

Alghanim Industries has actively prioritized gender diversity at the company. On March of this year, on International Women's Day, the company launched a nationwide video campaign aimed at inspiring women in the private sector. Alghanim was one of the pioneers in introducing improved maternity and paternity leave policies, which includes extending the paid maternity leave for up to 90 days, as well as paid paternity leave for up to 12 days. It remains committed to empowering women in the community, and continues developing a supportive, enabling environment for its female talent.



Henning Schlutt with Hind Al-Sabeeh and Dr Lubna Al-Kazi

Kuwait lauds IDLO support of developing countries

ROME: Kuwait's Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Al-Khaled Al-Sabah recently praised the International Development Law Organization's role in backing developing countries in order to meet their commitments towards international agreements. The Kuwaiti diplomat made his remarks to KUNA while taking part in IDLO's advisory board meetings with member-country representatives, in presence of Ex-President of Ireland Mary Robinson.

He said the environmental factor is essential for attaining sustainable development and overcoming key challenges facing the international community to achieve peace, stability, and food security, pointing out its significance in eradicating famine and extreme poverty as well. Kuwait is keen on addressing issues related to climate change and their deep fallouts such as causing direct and indirect disasters, including humanitarian, he said, affirming the Kuwaiti leadership's support of IDLO's role in boosting necessary foundations and principals to achieve development.

The Kuwaiti diplomat also pointed out his country's active role inside IDLO, praising the organization's continued cooperation with the GCC-member state that resulted recently in signing a three-decade partnership agreement aimed to enhance the Kuwaiti legislative infrastructure via training and qualifying national legal cadres.

During the meetings, Robinson, also the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, stressed the importance of meeting environmental commitments as part of developing countries' international agreements, including the Kyoto Protocol. Failing to honor such commitments would hinder efforts to fight global warming and have negative effects on developing countries and their islands, she added. — KUNA

NBK partners with Kuwait Achievers for Future Opportunities

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) partnered with The Kuwait Achievers for Future Opportunities "KAFO" second annual Forum that was held on October 9, 2018 at the Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC). "KAFO" is a national database, which is considered to be one of the achievements of the ongoing activities of the National Youth Project that is under the supervision of The Amiri Diwan as per the directives of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Abdul Mohsen Al Rushaid, NBK Public Relations and Communications Executive Manager, said that NBK's sponsorship to the project is driven by its keenness to meet

youth aspirations as per its sustainability approach. NBK's social sustainability approach meets the recommendations of the National Youth Project, initiated by His Highness the Amir in 2013 as a nationwide campaign to outreach youth and involve them in national development plans. "NBK Business Banking Team will create channels of communication and build bridges of professional relationships with the youth and future business owners," he added.

Al Rushaid stated that at the forum, NBK will participate in one of the different activities and various seminars to share opportunities, experience and to display products and services to encourage young Kuwaiti efficiencies. The aim of this project is to establish and develop a database of qualified young Kuwaiti in different academic and professional fields. This is done in order to identify and keep an updated record of the available national wealth of human resources to reinforce and utilize as a valuable national workforce. This year's forum would focus on different topics: Science and Technology, Environment, Media, Culture and Art, Nutrition, Business, Education, Humanitarian and Sports.



Kuwait continues to overcome challenges facing humanitarian aid

KUWAIT: Kuwait continued to provide vital humanitarian aid for refugees and people in need in the region in the past few days through support to various institutes and societies overcoming challenges facing such important field. During the past week, the Commissioner-General for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Pierre Krahenbuhl, praised Gulf countries for their contribution to help the UN agency to overcome its financial difficulties following the US cut of financial allocations to UNRWA.

"In addition to the EU and its member states, the Gulf has played a very crucial role in the current positive dynamic. The four major Gulf countries, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait have contributed USD 50 million each. So we have received pledges of USD 200 million from Gulf countries for our core activities. This is unprecedented and outstanding," he told a news conference in Brussels.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's voluntary team "Shefaa" provided medical care to more than 200 Syrian patients, conducting difficult and delicate surgical procedures during a humanitarian trip to refugee camps in Jordan. Media coordinator for the 12-member medical team Tareq Al-Mulla told KUNA that the trip lasted for 10 days, during which the doctors conduct necessary tests and operations for refugees in agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), charities and Jordanian hospitals. He pointed out that the surgical intervention included the removal of benign and malignant tumors from brains of a number of patients. This was performed with the help of Jordanian doctors. — KUNA

Local

KFSD Director Gen heads Kuwait's delegation to Arab-African forum

65 people rescued from a six-storey Salmiya building



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad headed Kuwait's delegation to the Arab-African forum to limit the risks of disasters organized by Tunisian government in cooperation with the UN office for limiting catastrophic risks from Oct 3 to 9. The forum included sessions and workshops on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Mikrad addressed the forum and explained the work plan prepared by Kuwait's national liaison officer to limit disaster risks Lt Col Mushari Al-Farass to achieve the requirements of the Sendai Framework in Kuwait, and lauded the major role of Kuwait's national team made up of government and nongovernmental organizations.

65 people rescued

Three fire centers rescued 65 people from a six-storey Salmiya building after fire broke out in a fourth-floor flat. There will be legal procedures against the owner because of violations in the building. Firemen from Salmiya, Bidaa and technical res-

cue centers responded and discovered residents were trapped in their flats because of thick smoke, so they were rescued. The blaze was put out without injuries.

Bneid Al-Gar fire

Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's PR Department said a fire broke out in a Bneid Al-Gar building, and Shuhada, Hilali and technical rescue teams responded. The fire was on the sixth floor, so power was cut and the building was evacuated. Firemen were able to reach the source of fire and kept it from spreading.

Tanker flips

A diesel tanker flipped over on Zour Road, injuring the driver. Zour fire center men rushed to the site, headed by Col Mishal Al-Qattan. The driver was freed and handed to paramedics.

Oyoun blaze

Firemen responded to a fire in Oyoun and put out the blaze without injuries. Meanwhile, another fire broke out in Abdullah Al-Mubarak. Power was cut

off, the house was evacuated and fire was put out. KFSD also received a call about a fire in a truck on Taawon St near Salwa. Bidaa fire center responded and put out the fire within seven minutes. A fuel spill was controlled without injuries.

Tarkait tours PAAET

Acting KFSD Director General Khalid Al-Tarkait toured the industrial institute of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training to check the preparedness of conducting capability tests for those applying for the fire engineering diploma. He said 190 people have applied and must pass two tests - the psychiatric and scientific exams.

Municipality complaints

The Municipality's PR department said the number of complaints received through the hotline 139 of the emergency department was 236 during September, including about public cleanliness. The report mentioned that complaints in Ahmadi were 65, Hawally 48, Capital 37, Farwaniya 35, Mubarak Al-Kabeer 29 and Jahra 22, all through the hotline.

Expats in private sector



By Muna Al-Fuzal

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

The local press reported that the Public Authority for Manpower is considering the issues of inefficient employment and population structure by imposing a ban on expats with university degrees entering Kuwait to work in the private sector unless they have a minimum of 'good' GPA. The report said the decision will help resolve Kuwait's demographic imbalance and restructure the local labor market, along with plans to endorse and accredit expats' degrees as a prerequisite to renewing their residency visas.

This step aims to ensure that only highly specialized and skilled people come to work in Kuwait. Other decisions will be issued in the coming months to fight visa trafficking and prevent unqualified labor from coming to Kuwait. I think that the percentage of expatriate labor is not the issue of the hour in Kuwait, but most Gulf countries are now seriously considering how to address this issue. This is because the composition of the population in the Gulf is young, as those who are under the age of 15 form about a third of the population.

It is well known that Gulf countries attracted huge numbers of expats of all nationalities with the discovery of oil, mainly due to the small number of citizens and increased economic development in the 20th century, making it an area that needed foreign labor. But the Gulf societies are now facing the perplexing reality of more of their citizens entering the labor market and the high participation rate of women, as well as an increase of expatriate labor in some administrative or non-technical jobs that can easily be occupied by citizens.

While many nationals work in the public or government sector, foreign labor is concentrated in the private sector. Despite Kuwait's attempt to introduce policies to appoint more Kuwaitis in the private sector, this does not seem to have achieved much success. In 2017, private sector employees amounted to 1.56 million, of which 4.5 percent were Kuwaiti and 95.5 percent non-Kuwaiti.

I think that despite the importance of the state to demand that those who work for them be competent, there are jobs that are not done by citizens because of low wages. So, they have to be given to unskilled labor. This has contributed to keeping prices of goods and services low and fairly stable. International Monetary Fund (IMF) statistics indicate that the annual inflation rate in the GCC countries is lower compared to other developing countries due to the role of expatriate labor.

While some believe that the presence of foreign labor may increase the demand for goods and services in the market, as expatriates are also consumers who can push the wheel of consumption, the income of many expats is limited, and a large proportion of it is usually sent abroad through remittances.

I think that the issue of migrant workers should be seen in terms of the absence of laws that apply the culture of reward for work - a principle of modern economy - in light of the concept of the welfare state, which has ensured the government employs a large number of citizens without relying on their effectiveness, which has led to the spread of masked unemployment.

I believe that the state has an important role to play in the expansion and development of the private sector. If the state wants to regulate and control the numbers of expatriate workers of different professions, it must know the actual needs of the government and the private sector of migrant labor and their jobs and qualifications so that there is no marginal employment without work. I also think there is a need to focus on economic activities that attract national labor by raising the percentages set for them. We need to be compatible between the output of education and professions for expats and Kuwaitis as well.



Massive bust by Shuwaikh customs

KUWAIT: Shuwaikh customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle 980 boxes of liquor, beer and cigars brought in from China. They were discovered in the port's warehouse. Detectives are currently looking for the person responsible for the shipment as no one has come to claim it at the customs office. Customs officers were tipped about the shipment and so it was being tracked ever since it left from China.

used to fertilize females of the species. According to an individual well-versed in pigeon sperm sales, his buyers mainly consisted of pigeon owners who want their pigeon eggs to hatch with healthy chicks.

Fight on Fifth Ring Road

Policemen had to break a fight between two Egyptians on Fifth Ring Road following a traffic accident. Police responded to a call about an accident between two cars one with three passengers and the other with just the driver. A person was injured, and a fight broke out between two men. The injured person was sent to hospital while the two fighters were taken to a police station.

John Doe

The coroner began work on identifying the body of an unknown person, and to determine the cause of death which took place in the Salmy desert. —Al-Anbaa/Al-Rai

Pigeon semen

General Affairs Committee at the Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ministry issued a Fatwa (advisory) banning the sale of a pigeon sperm which is often

KAC issues this month's Buraq issue

KUWAIT: Within its keenness on keeping its passengers and followers updated about its latest news, Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) issued its October-November issue of Al-Buraq Magazine. In this regard, KAC's PR, media manager and Al-Buraq's editor in chief, Fayez Al-Enezi said that the new issue includes many exclusive

topics in addition to a special section dedicated to T4 launching the maiden promotional KU0808 flight to Bahrain, inaugurating Al-Mubarakiya lounge for first and business classes passengers, launching the first commercial flight number KU677 to Dubai and receiving the first flight returning from Hajj via Jeddah. Al-Enezi added that the new issue highlights KAC news and takes passengers on recreational trips inside Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem cultural center. "The new issue also carried the news about launching a new destination to Milan", he added noting that the issue also includes an interview with Kuwaiti businessman, Faisal Abdul Wahab Al-Mutawa.

23 doctors accepted in specialized training courses

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Twenty-three Kuwaiti doctors were accepted in various specialized training courses in six Canadian universities, said the secretary general of the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations (KIMS) Dr Ibrahim Hadi. He added that delegations from Canadian universities had visited Kuwait over the past few weeks and interviewed the doctors, who met their conditions for further training programs in internal diseases, general surgery, ophthalmology, ear, nose and throat diseases, gynecology, anesthesia, brain and nerve surgery and many other specializations.

AC malfunctions

Education Minister Hamed Al-Azmi referred assistant undersec-

tary for public education Fatima Al-Kandari to retirement effective Oct 8, 2018 instead of December as she had requested before going on leave until then. Notably, Azmi had referred his undersecretary Haitham Al-Athari and Kandari for investigations over the problem of malfunctioning air conditioners in some schools at the beginning of the academic year and investigations led to indicting them of failing to do their duties concerning preparations for the new scholastic year.

Men's spa

Municipality Minister Hosam Al-Roumi rejected a proposal by the Municipal Council to allow licensing a men's spa in block one in Ardhya.

Crowd trouble in Dhi Qar

The investment authority in Dhi Qar governorate in Iraq announced that the representative of a Kuwaiti investment company was stoned by groups of angry crowds while examining the land his company plans to build a residential complex on to the north of Nasiriya. Dhi Qar Investment Authority Manager Emad Tareh stressed that the company representative, who is an Iraqi citizen, was not harmed and that he left the site and filed a complaint against the assaulters.



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Hindu hardliners force meat sellers to close

'Yes we are fine': Melania Trump dismisses gossip about marriage

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ISTANBUL: Security barriers are seen outside the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul yesterday. Saudi Arabia has dismissed accusations that Jamal Khashoggi was murdered by a hit squad inside its Istanbul consulate, as Riyadh and Ankara spar over the missing journalist's fate. — AFP

Journalist's disappearance divides Saudis

Fake news or chilling message? Some see growing climate of fear

DUBAI: Some Saudis are treating Turkish allegations that prominent journalist Jamal Khashoggi was killed in their country's consulate in Istanbul as fake news. Others see the alleged murder of Khashoggi, an outspoken critic of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, as a chilling message for opponents of the Saudi government and a sign that the crown prince's much heralded reforms are unlikely to embrace real freedom of expression. Khashoggi, a high-profile commentator on the Middle East, entered the consulate in Istanbul on Oct 2 to obtain marriage documents. Saudi officials say he left shortly afterwards but Turkish officials and his fiancée, who was waiting outside, said he never came out.

Turkish sources have told Reuters the initial assessment of the police was that Khashoggi was deliberately killed inside the consulate. Riyadh has dismissed the allegation as baseless, saying that Khashoggi left the building soon after he arrived. Neither Turkey nor the Saudis have produced evidence to prove their assertions. For some Saudis, the alleged killing is a story cooked up by regional opponents to tarnish the kingdom's reputation. "I cannot talk about these things, but I am sure the accusations against my country's leadership are wrong. We have enemies, you know," Aziz Abdullah, a law student in Saudi Arabia, told Reuters.

For others, though, it is a sign that Saudi Arabia may be headed in the wrong direction. Only a few Saudis interviewed by Reuters were prepared to criticize the

government openly. But several who spoke on condition of anonymity said the allegations called into question the crown prince's promises to open up the deeply conservative Muslim kingdom. "Everyone is spooked. It's like there are flies on the walls listening to everything. I don't believe freedom of expression falls at all into the reform plans, just the opposite," said a Saudi citizen in Jeddah.

"But on the other hand, you get cinemas and entertainment. It's like an unspoken arrangement. No freedom, but you'll have amusements. Let's not mistake 'amusements' for freedom please." A Saudi woman in her mid-thirties described the case as "like watching a movie". "The government thinks they can get away with things like these, whether he was murdered or kidnapped... There is always this feeling that we need to have our guard up and watch what we are saying. We are not entirely safe," she said. Saudi officials did not respond to questions about such perceptions.

But they have consistently said they are committed to the course of modernization charted under Prince Mohammed, which aims to create jobs for young Saudis and make the country a more attractive place to live for

locals and foreign investors. Saudi Arabia's biggest online newspaper Sabq accused the international media, including Reuters, of using Khashoggi's disappearance to try to undermine that reform drive. "They used an incident of a Saudi citizen's disappearance to attack Riyadh and to try to stir international opinion to distort the bold steps of Saudi towards internal reform and to block the bright, new reality of the region," Sabq said.

'Fake news'

The crown prince, who runs the day-to-day affairs of Saudi Arabia, has won admiration from Western powers over the last year for vowing to modernize Saudi Arabia. He has implemented a series of high-profile reforms, including ending a ban on women driving and opening cinemas in the conservative kingdom. But those moves have been accompanied by a crackdown on dissent, a purge of top royals and businessmen on corruption charges, and a costly war in Yemen. He has also put all security entities under his central control. In the week since Turkey alleged Khashoggi was killed, tightly controlled Saudi newspapers have accused Qatar and other enemies of the kingdom of whipping up a cri-

sis over the journalist's disappearance. The aim, they say, is to tarnish Saudi Arabia's reputation.

Saudi Arabia's Okaz newspaper dismissed the reports of Khashoggi's death as Qatari "theatrics," language echoed in a report on Abu Dhabi-based Sky News Arabia. An Okaz columnist accused Khashoggi of pursuing "terrorist objectives" like "inciting public opinion" and "destabilising the country." "When we first heard the news (of Khashoggi's disappearance), we thought this could be true. Authorities would want him for criticizing our leadership," said Fatima, 29, a saleswoman at one of Riyadh's glitzy shopping malls. "But when the Qatari media said they (the Saudis) killed him, we now believe it is definitely fake news, it is a bunch of lies, this is a game from Turkey and Qatar and both support Iran."

Abu Nasir, a 35-year old engineer, believes Saudi Arabia will change for the better, even though Khashoggi's case has drawn fierce international criticism of the crown prince, including from the United States, his most important ally. "We believe in the Vision and support our leadership," he said. "My kids will grow up in a country that is totally different than the one where I grew up. This is all I care about." If MbS, as the crown prince is widely known, is to succeed, he will need billions of dollars in foreign investment, and the confidence of local and international banks and companies. — Reuters



Saudi media say kingdom's foes whipped up crisis

Turkey court frees pastor after crisis with Washington

WASHINGTON: An American pastor held for two years in Turkey was expected back in the United States yesterday after a court freed him in a case that sparked a crisis in Ankara's ties with Washington and trouble for its economy. The court in the western town of Aliaga convicted Andrew Brunson on terror-related charges and sentenced him to three years, one month and 15 days in jail, an AFP correspondent said.

However, he was released taking into account time served and his good conduct during the trial, with the court lifting his house arrest and overseas travel ban. After briefly going back to nearby Izmir to collect belongings, Brunson was driven to the city's airport where he boarded a US military plane. Richard Grenell, the US ambassador to Germany, later tweeted a picture showing Brunson kissing an American flag he was given at an air base where the plane landed for refueling.

"He's almost home thanks to @realDonaldTrump. When I presented him with the US flag, he immediately kissed it. #agratelation," wrote Grenell. The US President had pressed Turkey to release Brunson, who has become a cause celebre for Donald Trump's conservative Christian base. Trump said he would meet the pastor as soon as he returns. "Good news, Pastor Brunson is in the air," Trump told reporters as he arrived in Cincinnati on a campaign stop ahead of congressional elections. "He is coming to the Oval Office, most likely yesterday."

The president opened the rally by telling supporters he was "proud to report" Brunson's release. "I think he's going to be in great shape," Trump said. Brunson, who was first detained in October 2016, faced up to 35 years in jail on charges of aiding terrorist groups and espionage. Prosecutors then demanded a sentence of up to 10 years. He was convicted on charges of aiding terrorist groups while not being a member of them. Brunson and US officials insisted he is innocent of all charges. "I am an innocent man. I love Jesus. I love Turkey," he said in his final



IZMIR: US pastor Andrew Craig Brunson (center left) arrives at Adnan Menderes airport in Izmir, after being freed following a trial in a court in Aliaga in western Izmir province. —AFP

defense. When the verdict was read out, Brunson wept and hugged his wife Norine.

'Navigate a minefield'

Brunson's detention caused not just one of the worst diplomatic rows of recent times between NATO allies Turkey and the US, but also led to a crash in the Turkish lira which exposed the country's economic fragility. But further strains remained. After his release, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged Turkey to free "quickly" other Americans in detention. "The world should know that (Trump and the State Department) continue to work hard to bring home all American hostages and those wrongfully imprisoned and detained," Pompeo tweeted.

NASA scientist Serkan Golge, a dual US-Turkish national, was jailed for seven-and-a-half years in February on terror charges, a term reduced to five years last month. And two Turkish employees of US diplomatic missions remain in jail. One of them, former Adana consulate staffer Hamza Ulucay, was on Friday denied release in a separate court hearing. Anthony Skinner, director of Middle East and North Africa at the Verisk Maplecroft consultancy, said that the US and Turkey had plenty of disagreements beyond Brunson. —AFP

Hackers access data of 29 million Facebook users

Messenger, Messenger Kids, Instagram, WhatsApp, Oculus, Workplace, Pages, payments, third-party apps or advertising or developer accounts, the company said.

'Vulnerability' in the code

Facebook said engineers discovered a breach on September 25 and had it patched two days later. That breach allegedly related to a "view as" feature - described as a privacy tool to let users see how their profiles look to other people. That function has been disabled for the time being as a precaution. Facebook reset the 50 million accounts believed to have been affected, meaning users would need to sign back in using passwords. The breach was the latest privacy embarrassment for Facebook, which earlier this year acknowledged that tens of millions of users had their personal data hijacked by Cambridge Analytica, a political firm working for Donald Trump in 2016.

"We face constant attacks from people who want to take over accounts or steal information around the world," chief executive Mark Zuckerberg said on his own Facebook page when the breach was disclosed. "While I'm glad we found this, fixed the vulnerability, and secured the accounts that may be at risk, the reality is we need to continue developing new tools to prevent this from happening in the first place." Facebook said it took a precautionary step of resetting "access tokens" for another 40 million accounts which had accessed the "view as" function. —AFP

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook said Friday that hackers accessed personal data of 29 million users in a breach at the world's leading social network disclosed late last month. The company had originally said up to 50 million accounts were affected in a cyberattack that exploited a trio of software flaws to steal "access tokens" that enable people to automatically log back onto the platform. "We now know that fewer people were impacted than we originally thought," Facebook vice president of product management Guy Rosen said in a conference call updating the investigation. The hackers — whose identities are still a mystery — accessed the names, phone numbers and email addresses of 15 million users, he said.

For another 14 million people, the attack was potentially more damaging. Facebook said cyberattackers accessed that data plus additional information including gender, religion, hometown, birth date and places they had recently "checked in" to as visiting. No data was accessed in the accounts of the remaining one million people whose "access tokens" were stolen, according to Rosen. The attack did not affect Facebook-owned

International

Violent snowstorm kills 9 climbers on Mount Gurja

One of the deadliest mountaineering accidents in Nepal

KATHMANDU: Nine members of a South Korean climbing expedition were killed after a violent snowstorm swept them off a cliff on Nepal's Mount Gurja, one of the deadliest mountaineering accidents to hit the Himalayan nation in recent years. The bodies of eight climbers - four South Koreans and four Nepali guides - were spotted near the wreckage of their camp by a rescue team yesterday morning, but strong winds were hampering the search effort. A fifth South Korean climber was initially reported missing, but officials later confirmed he was at the camp when the deadly storm hit Friday and also perished.

"A mountain expedition of five South Korean nationals and four foreigners were swept off by strong winds at the base camp during their climb to Mount Gurja. (They) fell off a cliff and died," the South Korean foreign ministry said in a statement. Helicopter pilot Siddhartha Gurung was among the first people to reach the site after the deadly storm and described a scene of total destruction. He said all the tents had been flattened, reduced to a tangled mess of tarpaulin and broken poles, and the climbers' bodies were scattered across a wide area, including some in a river bed some 500 meters away from the main camp.

"Everything is gone, all the tents are blown apart," Gurung said. Gurung landed a helicopter just above the

expedition team's camp and attempted to descend to the campsite with a group of local villagers, but icy and unstable conditions meant they were unable to retrieve any of the bodies. Rescue officials tried to send a second helicopter to the site but it was unable to fly due to strong winds, police spokesman Sailesh Thapa said. Another attempt will be made today, he added.

Deadliest incident

The storm is the deadliest incident to hit Nepal's mountaineering industry since 18 people were killed at Mount Everest's base camp in 2015 in an avalanche triggered by a powerful earthquake. The previous year, 16 Sherpas were killed on Everest when an avalanche swept through the Khumbu Icefall during the busy Spring climbing season. Then in October, a freak blizzard killed more than 40 tourists and their guides in the Annapurna region, a disaster that was largely blamed on poor weather forecasting



Bodies of 4 South Koreans and four Nepalis found

and lackluster safety standards in Nepal's poorly regulated trekking industry. Mountain weather is known for being unpredictable with strong winds capable of throwing a person off balance.

In April, an Italian climber died after he was blown off Mount Dhaulagiri, the world's seventh highest peak which neighbors Mount Gurja. But the Italian was at 6,900 meters when his tent was swept off the mountain, whereas the South Korean team were below 4,000 meters when they were hit by powerful winds. "The fact that they were so low when it happened is unusual," said experienced German climber Billi Bierling, who was forced to call off her own summit bid on Dhaulagiri last month because of heavy snowfall and high winds.

The South Korean team had been on 7,193-metre (23,599-foot) Mount Gurja since early October, waiting for a window of good weather so they could attempt to

reach the summit. Feted South Korean climber Kim Chang-ho, who in 2013 became the fastest person to summit the world's 14 highest mountains without using supplemental oxygen, was leading the expedition, according to a government-issued climbing permit seen by AFP.

The permit listed four South Korean climbers, but a fifth member had joined the team later, according to expedition organizer. A sixth South Korean national was staying in a village in the valley below the mountain when the powerful storm struck and survived, according to a local police report. Rarely-climbed Gurja was first summited in 1969 by a Japanese team but no one has stood on its summit for 22 years, according to the Himalayan Database.

The South Korean team were planning to scale the mountain via a never-climbed route, the Korean Alpine Federation said. Four climbers have previously perished on Gurja's flanks and a total of 30 have successfully reached its peak - a fraction of the more than 8,000 people who have summited Everest, the world's highest mountain. Thousands of climbers flock to Nepal each year - home to eight of the world's 14 highest peaks - creating a lucrative mountain tourism industry that is a vital source of cash for the impoverished country. — AFP

Israel halts Gaza fuel deliveries

JERUSALEM: Israel suspended fuel deliveries to Gaza on Friday in response to border violence which the Hamas-run health ministry said left seven Palestinians dead in the coastal enclave. The Israeli army said five were shot dead after breaking through the border fence and attacking an army post. But the Gaza health ministry said seven Palestinians were killed as thousands of protesters approached the heavily-guarded Israeli border.

It said four died along the frontier east of Al-Bureij in central Gaza, two east of Gaza City and one near Rafah in southern Gaza. It named one of those killed as Mohammed Abbas, who was shot in the head. It said all the victims were males aged between 17 and 29. Israeli army spokesman Jonathan Conricus said around 20 Palestinians had crossed the border in an "organized attack" after an explosive device destroyed a portion of the fence. About five of those who got through the fence assaulted an Israeli army position and were "repelled", he wrote on Twitter.

'Immediate' halt

In response to the violence, Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman ordered deliveries of fuel to the Palestinian enclave be suspended. "Following the serious incidents in the Gaza Strip, the defense ministry orders the immediate halt to the delivery of fuel" to the area, he said in a statement. Four Israeli tanker trucks had delivered fuel to Gaza on Friday morning before "riots" broke out, Lieberman said. The suspension comes just days after a

United Nations-brokered deal to supply the territory with Qatari-bought fuel came into effect.

The terms of the deal saw Doha, a longtime Hamas backer, pledge to pay \$60 million (52 million euros) for fuel to be brought into Gaza over six months to supply the strip's sole power plant. In a rare interview recently, Hamas's Gaza head Yahya Sinwar encouraged world powers to work with it to ease suffering in the strip. Jason Greenblatt, US President Donald Trump's peace envoy, had hailed the fuel agreement. At least 205 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in Gaza since protests began on March 30.

The majority were killed during border demonstrations, though others have died in airstrikes and tank shelling. One Israeli soldier has been killed over the same period. Protesters have sent incendiary devices attached to balloons into Israeli territory during demonstrations, which Israel says has caused hundreds of thousands of dollars-worth of damage to farmland. The protesters are demanding to be allowed to return to lands now inside Israel, from which their families fled or were displaced during the 1948 war surrounding the creation of the Jewish state.

They are also calling for Israel to end its crippling blockade of the strip. Israel accuses the enclave's Islamist rulers Hamas of leading the protests and using them as a cover for attacks. There had been hopes the protests would ease after the UN-brokered agreement to ease the strip's energy crisis took effect this week. But thousands of protestors again gathered Friday in sites along the border, AFP correspondents said. They added that Hamas leader Ismail Haniya also attended the protests east of Gaza City and hailed the ongoing demonstrations. Israel's army said approximately 14,000 "rioters and demonstrators" took part in Friday's protests. — AFP

Major weapons makers rattled over Saudi deals

WASHINGTON: Major US defense contractors have expressed concern to the Trump administration that lawmakers angered by the disappearance of a Saudi journalist in Turkey will block further arms deals with Saudi Arabia, a senior US official said yesterday. Turkish reports that journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a vocal critic of Riyadh, was killed inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul and removed have hardened resistance in the US Congress to selling weapons to Saudi Arabia, already a sore point for many lawmakers concerned about the Saudi role in Yemen's civil war.

Saudi Arabia rejects the allegations in Turkey as baseless. US President Donald Trump said on Thursday he was wary of halting arms sales to Riyadh because of Khashoggi as it would just shift its weapons purchases

to Russia and China. Saudi Arabia, where Trump last year announced a \$110 billion arms package, has been a centerpiece of his overhaul of weapons export policy in which he has gone further than any of his predecessors in acting as a weapons salesman. However, critics say the new approach gives too much weight to business interests versus human rights concerns.

The senior U.S. official declined to identify the companies that had contacted the administration over their Saudi arms deals. Defense contractors did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Lockheed Martin Corp and Raytheon Co have been the most active US defense companies with potential sales to Saudi Arabia since Trump announced the package as part of his "Buy American" agenda to create jobs at home.

In Congress, Democrats and Republicans alike are alarmed by the disappearance of Khashoggi, a US resident who wrote columns for the Washington Post. He entered the consulate on Oct 2 to collect documents for his planned marriage. Saudi officials say Khashoggi left the building shortly afterwards, but his fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, said he never re-appeared. — Reuters



GAZA: Palestinians carry the bodies of Ahmad Al-Tawil (right) and Ahmed Abu Naim (left), who were killed the day before during a protest along the Israel-Gaza border fence, during their funeral in Nuselrat camp yesterday. — AFP

Pope defrocks 2 Chilean bishops for sex abuse

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis has defrocked two Chilean bishops for the alleged sexual abuse of minors, the Vatican said in a statement yesterday after a meeting between the pontiff and the president of Chile. The decision to expel former archbishop Francisco Jose Cox Huneeus and former bishop Marco Antonio Ordenes Fernandez - the latest heads to roll in a country hit hard by the cleric abuse scandal - could not be appealed, it said. Both were stripped of their priesthood "as a consequence of overt acts of abuse against minors".

Defrocking is considered the harshest penalty for priests within the Church and means the offender is forbidden from exercising any clerical duties at all, even in private. Scores of new cases of priestly sexual abuse of minors have come to light in Chile, deepening a crisis in the Roman Catholic church that has also embroiled Pope Francis. Yesterday, Francis met with Chilean President Sebastian Pinera at the Vatican for talks on the "difficult situation" in Chile. They discussed "the painful scourge of abuse of minors, reiterating the effort of all in collaboration to combat and prevent the perpetration of such crimes and their concealment", the Vatican said.

The leaders "shared the hope that the church could live a true rebirth," Pinera said in a statement. A total of 167 bishops, priests and lay members of the church are now under investigation for sexual crimes committed in the South American country since 1960. Pope Francis has already apologized repeatedly to Chileans over the scandal, admitting the church failed "to listen and react" to the allegations, but vowed to "restore justice". In May, the Argentine pontiff accepted the resignation of five Chilean bishops amid accusations of abuse and related coverups. — AFP



VATICAN CITY: Chile's President Sebastian Pinera (left) and his wife Cecilia Morel exchange gifts with Pope Francis during a private audience at the Vatican yesterday. — AFP

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International

'Yes we are fine': Melania Trump dismisses gossip about marriage

US First Lady brushes off speculation

WASHINGTON: Melania Trump has dismissed the widespread talk about her husband President Donald Trump's reported affairs with a porn star and others, saying she has "more important things to think about." Addressing for the first time allegations that have swirled around her husband the first lady brushed off speculation that her marriage is troubled and insisted she loves life in the US capital. In a lengthy ABC television interview, Trump did not deny the many stories of her husband's philandering. But she also made clear she does not dwell on it. "It is not a concern and focus of mine," she said. "I'm a mother and a first lady, and I have much more important things to think about and to do." "I know people like to speculate and media like to speculate about our marriage," she added. "It's not always pleasant, of course, but I know what is right and what is wrong and what is true and not true."

The interview, excerpts of which were released by ABC ahead of a full broadcast Friday evening, came after nearly two roller-coaster years in the White House, during which Melania was frequently thought to be on the verge of breaking with President Trump, as one woman after another came forth claiming they had been paid to be quiet about their affairs with him. But she gave no hint to ABC as to how the stories affected her. Asked whether she loved her husband, she answered: "Yes, we are fine. It's what media speculate, and it's gossip. It's not always correct stuff."

Mysterious, impenetrable

In a White House known for its inability to keep secrets, the 48-year-old Slovenia-born former fashion model, Trump's third wife, remains mysterious and impenetrable to the American public. She gave the interview to ABC while she was on her first solo trip abroad

last week, to Africa where she sought to promote her humanitarian efforts and US Agency for International Development projects. Sitting in jodhpurs with a safari pith helmet at her side, Trump was poised and confident as she responded to uncomfortable questions on her personal life with the real estate billionaire who now leads the United States.

She is not the first lady to suffer gossip about a president's unfaithfulness. Hillary Clinton endured husband Bill Clinton's dalliance with Monica Lewinsky in the Oval Office, and John F. Kennedy, president from 1961-63, was a serial cheater on wife Jackie. But Donald Trump's brash behavior has left his wife constantly under the Washington microscope, facing questions about whether she will leave him and move back to New York with their son Barron. She scoffed at such talk in the ABC interview. "I am enjoying it. I really love to live in the Washington and the White House," she said.

'Most bullied person'

In Africa, she visited hospitals and schools and a wildlife park in Ghana, Malawi and Kenya, speaking to students and feeding a baby elephant, before stopping in Egypt to visit the Giza pyramids. She hinted to ABC that life in the White House was not easy, dealing with people she didn't always trust. "You always need to watch your back," she said. She also explained one reason why she had made fighting cyber bullying a target of her "Be Best" campaign. "I could say I'm the most bullied person in the world," she said, or "one of them, if you really see what people are saying about me." More comfortable facing a still camera than a microphone, Trump has taken much longer than most first ladies to open up to the media. The interview came just over three weeks before the midterm congressional elections, in which

Melania remains mysterious and impenetrable



NAIROBI: US First Lady Melania Trump waves as she travels in a vehicle while on a safari at The Nairobi National Park in this file photo. —AFP

Trump's record is expected to play a big part in how voters cast their ballots.

Flak for fashion choices

Also like past first ladies, Melania is constantly under the microscope for her fashion choices, which lean toward well-cut, refined but not flashy clothes from Ralph Lauren and French-American designer Herve Pierre. She took heavy flak in June when she wore a \$39 Zara jacket that had "I really don't care, do u?" writ-

ten on the back, as she embarked on a trip to the Mexican border to see immigrant children who had been separated from their parents under her husband's much criticized policy. The target of that message was unclear. Donning a pith helmet during her Nairobi stop last week, and then an "Indiana Jones"-style Panama hat while in Egypt, Melania Trump also drew fashion maven reprimands as "insensitive" to the continent's colonial history. Reporters should "talk about my trip and not what I wear," she responded during the journey. —AFP

News in brief

Pipeline fire kills 30

WARRI: At least 30 people were killed when a petrol pipeline caught fire and exploded in southeast Nigeria after a raid by suspected oil thieves, a survivor and officials said yesterday. The incident happened in the town of Aba on Friday when vandals burst the pipeline operated by the state-run Pipeline and Product Marketing Company. "The incident occurred at about 1:30 am. Those burnt are more than 30 with many others sustaining injuries," said Nnamdi Tochukwu, a survivor on his hospital bed in nearby Asaba. A security officer, who did not want to be identified, confirmed the death toll. "Over 30 bodies were burnt at the scene before the arrival of security operatives while many others are currently receiving medical attention at various hospitals within and outside the town," the officer said. The spokesman for Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) said the victims were vandals attempting to scoop petrol from the pipeline. —AFP

Jihadi suspects charged

PRISTINA: Four suspected jihadists have been charged in Pristina on suspicion of planning a series of attacks including at a church in Kosovo, two discos and unspecified assaults in France and Belgium, judicial sources said yesterday. The three men and a woman, all from Kosovo and linked to the group Islamic State (IS), were arrested earlier this year and charged on October 4, according to an indictment seen by AFP. The plot leader, named as 26-year-old Bujar Berhami, is also accused of being an organizer of a thwarted attack on the Israeli national football team during a World Cup qualifier in Albania in 2016. "The idea was to start the attack with a drone against the Israelis, then with Kalashnikovs," Berhami is quoted as saying in the indictment. Eight men were already sentenced in May to up to 10 years in prison for the foiled attack. —AFP

12 killed in bomb attack

KUNDUZ: A motorcycle carrying explosives blew up among supporters of an Afghan election candidate yesterday, killing at least 12 people, officials said, in the latest attack on a political rally. Violence related to the parliamentary vote has killed or wounded hundreds of people in recent months and more militant attacks are expected ahead of Afghanistan's October 20 poll. Another 32 people were wounded in the explosion in the northeastern province of Takhar where parliamentary candidate Nazifa Yousefibeik had been campaigning, provincial governor spokesman Mohammad Jawad Hejri said. Ambulances have been sent to the remote district of Rustaq, but officials also are seeking to airlift the wounded to hospitals, Hejri added. Provincial police spokesman Khalil Assir put the death toll slightly higher at 13. Yousefibeik was not hurt in the blast. —AFP

Atiku picks running mate

LAGOS: Nigeria's main opposition candidate Atiku Abubakar has picked his deputy from the south-east of the country, ahead of a bid to oust President Muhammadu Buhari from power in next year's election. Abubakar, who will stand for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in February's election, on Friday chose Peter Obi, a former governor of Anambra, a south-eastern stronghold for the party since 1999 when Nigeria returned to civilian rule. Buhari, a 75-year-old former military ruler who took office in 2015, has faced criticism from opponents for his handling of the economy, failing health and leadership style. His ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) controls one of the five states in the south-east, while the PDP has three and another opposition party one. Abubakar, a deputy to ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999 to 2007, has run for the presidency four times without success. —AFP

Hurricane Michael death toll hits 17

MEXICO BEACH: The death toll from Hurricane Michael has risen to at least 17 with fears it would continue to climb more as search-and-rescue teams scour the debris of the Florida town that bore the brunt of the monster storm. "Mexico Beach is devastated," Florida Governor Rick Scott said of the town where Michael made landfall as a Category 4 storm on Wednesday. "It's like a bomb went off," Scott said as he toured the town of 1,000 people on the Gulf of Mexico. "It's like a war zone." Rescue teams were using sniffer dogs in Mexico Beach on Friday to search for victims who may be buried under the rubble in the debris-strewn community. US media later reported one death in the town—an elderly man found alone, according to Mayor Al Cathey. Officials said his body was found hundreds of yards from his home.

Brock Long, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), warned that he expected the toll to rise. "I hope we don't see it climb dramatically but I have reasons to believe we still haven't got into some of the hardest hit areas," he said. Dozens of structures in Mexico Beach—homes, shops and restaurants—were lifted off their foundations by storm surge and 155 miles per hour (250 kph) winds and moved hundreds of feet inland or

smashed to bits. "Very few people live to tell what it's like to experience storm surge," Long said. "Storm surge causes the most amount of loss of life."

'Sticks'

State officials said Mexico Beach was under mandatory evacuation orders but some residents decided to stay and try to ride out the storm. "You hope that somehow at the last minute a bunch of people got up and left or went somewhere else," Florida Senator Marco Rubio told CNN. Bob Tenbrunson, a Mexico Beach retiree, rode out the storm at his daughter's house in nearby Panama City and returned to survey the damage to his home.

"I was going to stay here until it turned to a Cat 4," he said. "So I followed the mandatory evacuation order and left with my wife. Luckily we did not get a surge," Tenbrunson said of his home. "I've got two trees on the roof and a couple of holes on the roof. I have been trying to patch it up the best I can." The rest of Mexico Beach did not fare as well, and most beachfront homes, restaurants and stores were obliterated by the storm. "I spent my life savings and retirement to stay here so I can't sell it now," Tenbrunson said. "I just have to be hopeful that (the town) will be rebuilt and fixed."

Some residents arrived Friday with vans or moving trucks, hoping to recover as many personal effects from their splintered homes as they could. Others came with nothing—as there was nothing left to save. Eight deaths from the storm have been reported in Florida, five in Virginia, one in Georgia and three in



MEXICO BEACH: View of the damaged caused by Hurricane Michael in Mexico Beach, Florida. —AFP

North Carolina. The two deaths in North Carolina occurred in McDowell County when a car struck a tree that had fallen across a road, officials said. Hundreds of thousands of people remain without electricity in Florida, Georgia and Virginia, and officials say it could be weeks before power is fully restored.

Trump to visit

President Donald Trump said he planned to visit Florida and Georgia. "People have no idea how hard Hurricane Michael has hit the great state of Georgia," Trump tweeted. "I will be visiting both Florida and Georgia early next week. We are working very hard on

every area and every state that was hit and we are with you!"

Michael was the most intense hurricane to strike the Florida Panhandle since record keeping began in 1851. Many of the damaged Florida buildings were not built to withstand a storm above the strength of a Category 3 hurricane on the five-level Saffir-Simpson scale. About 5,000 US servicemen were deployed to help with relief and recovery efforts, the Pentagon said, using 100 helicopters and 1,800 high-water vehicles. Tyndall Air Force Base, home to F-22 stealth fighters, suffered extensive damage, according to aerial photos of the coastal facility. —AFP

IMF chief 'horrified' by Khashoggi case

NUSA DUA: IMF chief Christine Lagarde said yesterday she was "horrified" by reports about the fate of Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi but still plans to attend an economic meeting in Riyadh this month. As questions swirl over the fate of Khashoggi—a Saudi critic who has not been seen since he walked into the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul on October 2 — some big business names and media outlets have pulled out of the Kingdom's second Future Investment Initiative. But Lagarde said her plans were unchanged for now, despite international uproar over the case.

"Human rights, freedom of information are essential rights and horrifying things have been reported and I am horrified," she told reporters in Bali where the IMF is holding annual meetings. "But I have to conduct the business of the IMF in all corners in the world and with many governments." "When I visit a country, I always speak my mind... So at this point of time my intention is to not change my plans and to be very attentive to the information that is coming out in the next few days." Her comments came shortly after US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said he also still planned to attend the October 23-25 meeting, dubbed "Davos in the Desert".

"The answer is for now I am" still going, Mnuchin said. "If more information comes out over the next week, I will obviously take that into account." "Obviously I want to express concern for Mr Khashoggi and his family," he added. "We look forward to getting results of this investigation." UN chief Antonio Guterres mean-

while told the BBC: "We need to have a strong request for the truth to be clear." "We need to know exactly what has happened and we need to know exactly who is responsible... we need to find ways in which accountability is also demanded," he added.

The UN secretary general said he felt "this kind of incident is multiplying." "I am feeling worried (at) this apparent new normal," he said in Bali. Riyadh yesterday dismissed accusations that authorities there had ordered Khashoggi be murdered by a hit squad inside its Istanbul consulate as "lies and baseless allegations". But the row has intensified with the Washington Post reporting that Turkish officials have recordings made from inside the building that allegedly prove their claims Khashoggi was tortured and killed at the consulate.

Bloomberg, the Financial Times, The Economist and The New York Times have withdrawn as media sponsors from the event amid questions about the missing man's fate. The CEO of ride-hailing app Uber, Dara Khosrowshahi, said that he will no longer be attending the event unless "a substantially different set of facts emerges". British entrepreneur Richard Branson said he would suspend two directorships linked to tourism projects in Saudi Arabia over the issue. Amnesty International demanded the Saudi authorities reveal what happened to Khashoggi as it said Riyadh was "responsible at a minimum for enforced disappearance".

US Treasury Secretary

Meanwhile, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said yesterday that he still planned to attend an economic meeting in Riyadh this month, but would keep his eye on a probe into the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. As questions swirl over the fate of Khashoggi—a Saudi critic who has not been seen since



NUSA DUA: US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin addresses a press conference on the sideline of the IMF/WB Annual meetings in Nusa Dua yesterday. —AFP

he walked into the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul on October 2 — some big business names and media outlets have pulled out of the second Future Investment Initiative.

"Obviously I want to express concern for Mr Khashoggi and his family," Mnuchin told reporters on the sidelines of the IMF's annual meetings in Bali. "We look forward to getting results of this investigation." But Mnuchin added that he had not changed plans to attend the October 23-25 conference in Riyadh, dubbed "Davos in the Desert" after the World Economic Forum in the Swiss resort. "The answer is for now I am" still going, Mnuchin said. "If more information comes out over the next week, I will obviously take that into account." —Agencies

International

Hindu hardliners force meat sellers to shut shops in Delhi

Indian activist, 86, dies while fasting for cleaner Ganges

GURGAON: Indian Hindu hardliners are forcing meat sellers to shut shops in a New Delhi suburb that is home to global outsourcing firms, saying they must respect the feelings of majority Hindus celebrating a nine-day festival. The drive against the mostly Muslim shopkeepers in Gurgaon during the Navratri festival is the highest profile campaign since Hindu vigilantes targeted people engaged in the slaughter of cows, considered sacred to Hindus.

With a national election due by May, some states ruled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government are drawing accusations that they are not doing enough to curb the activities of Hindu hardliners. One meat shopkeeper referred to the 1947 division of British India into the independent India and Pakistan.

"This is the first time since partition that we have been asked to close shops for this long a period," said Sajid Qureshi, whose family has been selling meat for decades. Men are roaming around on motor-bikes and surveying areas to check for shops selling meat, said Rajeev Mittal, head of Sanyukt Hindu Sangarsh Samiti, an umbrella organization of 22 Hindu groups. "Goats, cows are cut and hung up for all to see by the road. So we don't want people who are fasting during the Navratri to see this," said Mittal, who was wearing a red religious mark

on his forehead and a saffron shawl around his neck, told Reuters at his office.

Police detained six people in the region on Wednesday after confrontation which turned violent when Hindu groups allegedly forced a meat shop owner to close. "Any one found forcibly closing meat shops will be dealt with sternly. The municipal corporation will do its enforcement on shops found running without a license," said Vinay Pratap Singh, Deputy Commissioner of

allowed to reopen for another week. Hindu groups argue that they are asking meat shop owners with proper licenses to close only during the nine-day period, but want shops without licenses to be permanently shut down. There are 95 licensed meat shops in the region, while there could be up to 60 without licenses, according to Ashish Singla, medical officer at Gurgaon's municipal corporation.

Indian activist dies

In another development, one of India's most prominent environmental activists has died at the age of 86 after more than 15 weeks of a hunger strike to protest against government inaction on cleaning up the Ganges. The death of GD Agarwal, who held a PhD in environmental engineering from the University of California in Berkeley, prompted an outpouring of grief and tributes from activists. "His demise has shut one of the leading voices of criticism of the government on the Ganga pollution," said environmentalist Rakesh Jaiswal. "He was one of the most important figures in this fight."

The Ganges, worshipped by Hindus, is India's largest river system and one of its most polluted. Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014 with a pledge to clean up the 1,570-mile-long river, used for water by 400 million people, but



AMRITSAR: Indian Hindu devotees offer prayers for the 'Navratri' festival at the Mata Longa Wali Devi Temple in Amritsar. Navratri is celebrated twice a year during the spring and autumn seasons and symbolizes the triumph of good over evil. — AFP

increasingly choked with domestic and industrial waste. A flagship five-year project he launched in 2015 has fallen flat, critics say. Results of a federal audit released in Dec. 2017 revealed lapses in planning and financial management of the scheme and said under a quarter of the funds for the programme had been spent in two years.

Agarwal began his fast on June 22 in the northern Haridwar city, demanding a law to protect the river and the scrapping of construction of hydroelectric projects along its banks that have destroyed its natural flow. In a letter to Modi in August, he threatened to fast unto death unless action was taken. — Agencies



Meat retailers suffer heavy losses

Gurgaon. Qureshi, who was sitting with his friends outside a closed meat shop near a mosque, said they had agreed to the demands of the Hindu groups as they wanted to avoid confrontations.

Four other meat retailers told Reuters they were suffering heavy losses but were scared to keep their shops open, adding that it looked unlikely that they would be

Family of Pakistani Christian on death row pray for freedom

LONDON: The family of Asia Bibi, a Christian mother who faces becoming the first person to be executed for blasphemy in Pakistan, said they hoped the Supreme Court would free her. But in any case they feared for their future living in Pakistan under the blasphemy laws, they told AFP. Bibi, who has been on death row since 2010, is at the centre of the high-profile case that has divided Pakistan and drawn prayers from the Vatican. On Monday the Supreme Court heard her last appeal and said it had reached a judgment, which it has yet to reveal.

"We are hopeful that whatever the court proceedings are it will come out as positive for us," her husband Ashiq Mesih said. Her daughter Eisham Ashiq added: "I will be very happy the day my mother will be released. I will hug her and will cry meeting her and will thank God that he has got her released." Bibi's family are in London on a visit organized by Aid to the Church in Need, a charity which helps repressed and persecuted Christians. Bibi, a laborer, was accused of blasphemy against the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) in 2009 by Muslim women she was working with in a field.

The charge is punishable by death under legislation that rights groups say is routinely abused to settle personal vendettas. Her family said that if Bibi is released, it would be difficult to stay in her homeland.



LAHORE: Supporters of Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP), a hardline religious political party, chant slogans during a protest rally in Lahore demanding for hanging to a blasphemy convict Christian woman Asia Bibi, who is on death row. — AFP

"Pakistan is ours: we were born there, raised there," Mesih said. "The only tension we have is the blasphemy law. It is imposed on Christians. When it is imposed on us our (Muslim) brothers should think that the Christians never say anything bad about the

Quran. "Asia Bibi, after her release, can't stay there in the presence of this law. "Living in Pakistan for us is very difficult. We don't go out of our home and if we go, we come out very carefully." Life in Pakistan "for us is very difficult". —AFP

US senators call on India to soften data localization stance

NEW DELHI: Two US senators have called on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to soften India's stance on data localization, warning that measures requiring it represent "key trade barriers" between the two nations. In a letter to Modi dated Friday and seen by Reuters, US Senators John Cornyn and Mark Warner - co-chairmen of the Senate's India caucus - urged India to instead adopt a "light touch" regulatory framework that would allow data to flow freely across borders.

The letter comes as relations between Washington and New Delhi are strained over multiple issues, including an Indo-Russian defense contract, Indian tariffs on electronics and other items, and India's push to purchase oil from Iran despite upcoming US sanctions. Global tech companies including Mastercard, Visa and American Express have been lobbying India's finance ministry and the Reserve Bank of India to relax proposed guidelines that mandate all payment data on domestic transactions in India be stored inside the country by October 15. — Reuters

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Washington Watch

The Kavanaugh controversy hit close to home

By Dr James J Zogby

US President Donald Trump's nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court exacerbated our nation's deep partisan divide. It has also profoundly affected my neighborhood and my church. My family has lived in Northwest Washington, DC for almost four decades. During all this time, we have gone to the Catholic church that's a few blocks from our home. My five children attended the neighborhood Catholic school, where for 17 years, I coached basketball. After graduating, all five went to three different local Catholic high schools.

The elementary school from which my children graduated is the same school that Kavanaugh's children now attend and where he coaches basketball. We go to the same church. And the high school he attended is the same school where my oldest son went for four years. With this much in common, you might think that my neighborhood, my church, and I would be overjoyed that "one of ours" will be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. To the contrary, I am distraught and my church and neighborhood are deeply divided.

Despite being an upper middle class white community, my neighborhood is largely liberal and votes Democratic (Hillary Clinton won an overwhelmingly majority in this area). There are, of course, some prominent Republicans and conservative political figures who live in the area and who go to our church, but they are a distinct minority.

When Kavanaugh was first nominated, the local reaction was mixed. There were those who rushed to support him out of loyalty because he had long been a part of their circle of friends, or because they were simply overcome by the prospect of one of their neighbors being on the highest court in the US. Others did so because their daughters were on one of the teams he coached and they knew him to be a "nice man".

There were, of course, some, not many, who looked forward to seeing Kavanaugh on the court because they agreed with his philosophy. On the range of issues, both social and political, expected to come before the court, most of my neighbors are on the opposing side of Kavanaugh and the president who appointed him.

The Supreme Court Justice that Kavanaugh is replacing, though not a liberal, on a number of occasions, provided a balancing vote that kept the court somewhat centered. Kavanaugh, on the other hand, is a partisan Republican. He was part of the team that worked to impeach President Bill Clinton. He served as a close aide to President George W. Bush and had been hand-picked for this appointment by the hardline conservative Federalist Society.

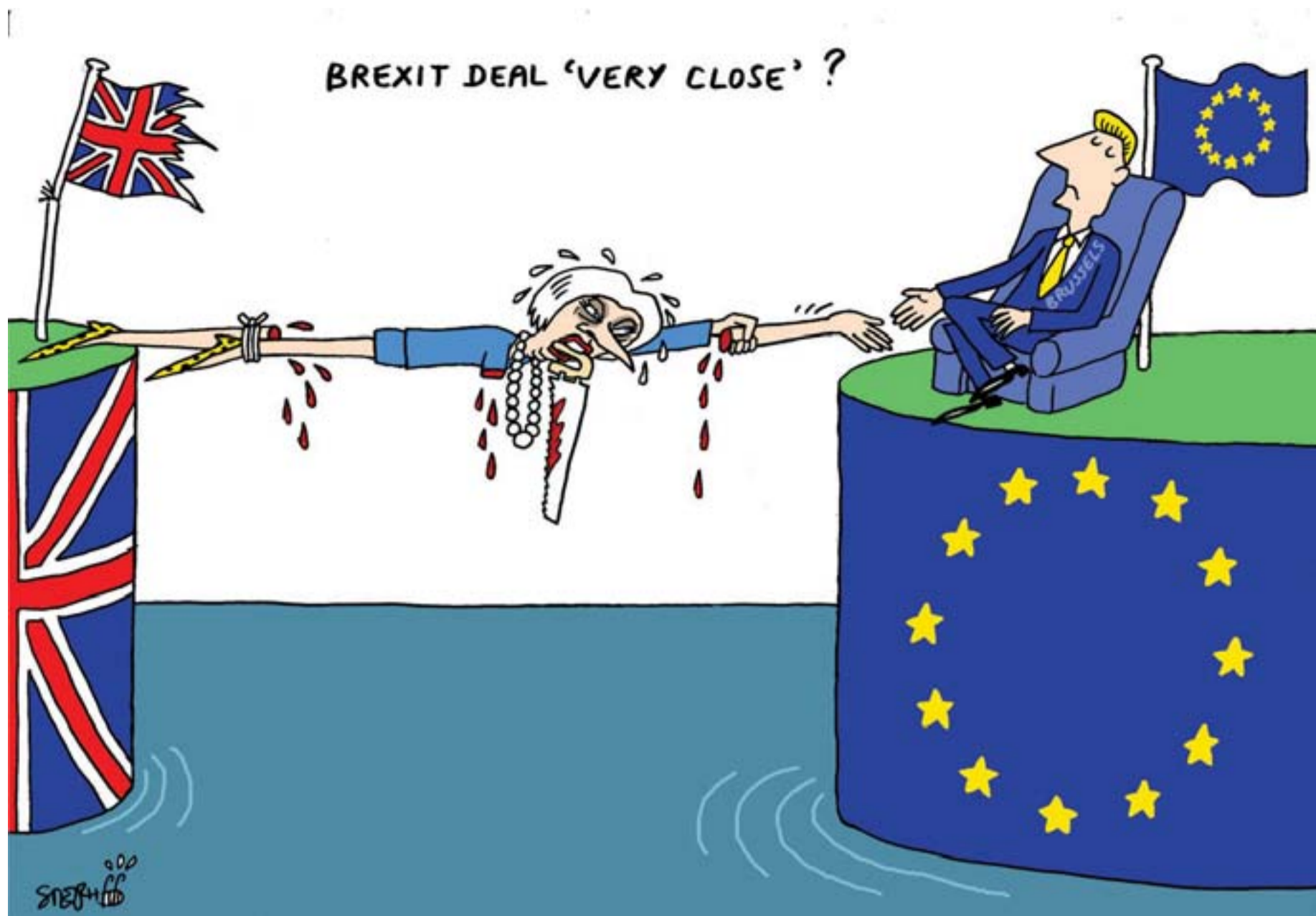
We fully expected that the debate over his nomination would focus on partisan divide over issues like: health care reform, women's rights, voting rights, and environmental protection. But by the time Kavanaugh's confirmation hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee were to begin another set of concerns came to the fore. The Democrats on the committee had asked to review all of the nominee's official communication during his time in the Bush White House. In response, the Trump Administration and the Republican leadership of the Senate refused to release 90 percent of this material.

Nevertheless, from the emails and other correspondence that were made available, it became clear that Kavanaugh had lied under oath during an earlier senate hearing. From the record, it appeared that he lied about his involvement and awareness of: Republican theft of Senate Democratic staff emails, NSA warrantless wiretaps, and the treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo. These matters were of concern to the Democrats, as were the missing 90% of his correspondence. They asked "what else is he trying to hide and should someone who has lied under oath sit on the Supreme Court?"

This was where the matter stood until the public disclosure of allegations by a Dr Christine Blasey Ford, who in a sworn affidavit stated that while in high school she had been sexually assaulted by a drunken Kavanaugh. What followed were more allegations of excessive drinking and other instances of degrading or sexually aggressive behavior toward women while he was in college and law school. These new charges exposed two related and deeply felt grievances that virtually exploded into the public consciousness, both of which also played out in my neighborhood.

Much has already been written about the pain of survivors of sexual assault who were prompted to come forward after Dr Ford told her story. Many women, whether or not they had been direct victims of assault, were profoundly affected by and could relate to her pain and her vulnerability. Dr Ford's courage in revealing her long-suppressed story empowered them to tell their stories, and then the way Ford was treated by the Republicans and demeaned by Trump was like putting salt on their open wounds, stoking justifiable outrage. All of this anger also resonated in Northwest Washington. But there was another more subtle yet still deeply unsettling dimension to this drama that played out here.

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



Hong Kong tightens grip on dissent

As Hong Kong's government hews closer to Beijing, officials are taking a tough line on perceived national security threats, even deploying an elite police unit for political monitoring and surveillance - a sharp escalation in rhetoric and action. In just the last few months, the special administrative region has banned the Hong Kong National Party, which espouses separation from China, and barred some activists from standing in local elections. The Education Bureau sent all secondary schools in the Special Administrative Region letters on Sept 24 saying they must prohibit "the penetration" of the National Party or risk prosecution.

And this month, Hong Kong refused to renew the work visa of Victor Mallet, Asia news editor for the British-based Financial Times newspaper, after he hosted a speech by an independence activist. "We can see them (the government) being much more assertive in using these powers and in shaping their policy decisions to reflect the national interests," said Professor Simon Young of the University of Hong Kong's law school, saying the courts may be a last line of defense against government overreach.

Serving and retired police officers, lawyers and lawmakers describe intensifying political operations by the police force's Security Wing, an elite unit that officially handles sensitive tasks including VIP protection and counter-terrorism investigations. Sources familiar with the wing's work say it led surveillance and monitoring operations against the National Party and more than a dozen other groups. The Hong Kong Journalists Association recently described the prospect of tougher national security enforcement as "a sword dangled above the heads" of reporters.

The Financial Times said it was appealing the decision denying Mallet a work visa. In his role as first vice president of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Hong Kong, Mallet in August hosted Andy Chan, head of the National Party. The party was banned last month as an "imminent threat to national security" as the government invoked lit-

tle-known clauses of a law regulating private groups and societies. Authorities have so far refused to explain their decision on Mallet, except to say that no independence advocacy will be tolerated. Chan, a bespectacled 28-year-old interior decorator, says that his ideology springs from China's broken promises towards Hong Kong and that claims he might destabilise China are preposterous. But Hong Kong's government is treating even the consideration of independence as a vital threat. "Worryingly, they have been parroting the ideological and authoritarian line of

activists such as jailed independence leader Edward Leung, said the situation was worsening fast. "Put simply, if you see Hong Kong as a house built by the British, this house is now crumbling and leaking. It has been hit by a typhoon and close to toppling over," Cheung said.

'Back to the future'

The Basic Law requires the city to create laws against treason, secession and subversion of the national government, effectively updating those from the colonial era. The laws from British rule, while broad, do not outlaw calls for independence or self-determination. Previous attempts to draft a harsher new national security law, known as Article 23, were met with mass protests and abandoned. Chief Executive Carrie Lam, who took office last year, has not yet proposed a new version, a reflection in part of lingering public concern.

But many observers say the government is using the Security Wing to tighten its grip even without Article 23. The wing's officers were deeply involved in producing the 700-page dossier the government used to justify banning the National Party. The document tracked its statements, public appearances and activities. For some, that has echoes of the colonial-era Special Branch, which monitored potentially subversive Chinese and Russian communist activity across Hong Kong during the Cold War. The agency was disbanded in 1995, two years before Britain handed Hong Kong back to China.

"It is clear it (Security Wing) is doing much more political work now," said James To, a veteran democracy advocate who has spent much of his 27 years in the city's parliament scrutinizing the government's security policies. "My worry is that when you monitor people's political life and thoughts you are going against the spirit of the human rights provisions of the Basic Law. There is a need for balance." To said, To said the government had repeatedly refused requests by Hong Kong's legislators to discuss the Security Wing's operations in detail. — Reuters



Govt heeding China's call

Beijing ... irreparably undermining their reputation," one diplomat said of the city's government.

In the letter to schools last month, the Education Bureau said, "should students have erroneous and extreme thoughts, principals and teachers should correct them with facts." Some teachers described this to Reuters as a "gagging order". That appears to run contrary to Hong Kong's mini-constitution, known as the Basic Law, which stresses freedoms of speech and assembly. Some youths who drove the pro-democracy "Umbrella Revolution" street demonstrations in 2014 say there is a growing sense of despair at the pressure on civil society and individual rights.

Daniel Cheung, a 29-year-old photographer who worked on "Chronicle of a Summer," a documentary on

Trump gambles on China endgame

Donald Trump has escalated his feud with China into a full-press offensive that has drawn comparisons to the Cold War. Now the question on both sides of the Pacific is, how will it end? In recent weeks, Trump has slapped \$250 billion worth of tariffs, boosted military support for rival Taiwan, accused China of interfering in US elections, stepped up denunciations of Beijing's human rights record and curtailed its access to US nuclear technology. The real estate mogul, who early in his tenure had described Chinese President Xi Jinping as a friend, was generally presumed to be most interested in trade as he has repeatedly vowed to ramp up US factory production by fighting back the flow of cheaper manufactured imports.

But his administration has expanded its pressure campaign to virtually all fronts, a strategy unprecedented since the time the United States and China established diplomatic relations four decades ago. "It is a full-frontal assault by the US on China," said Elizabeth Economy, director for Asia studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. "There is a general sense in Washington that China is simply too big now, it's simply too large as a country and as an economy, to allow it to continue to violate all sorts of expected international trade and investment norms," she said.

Economy said that the United States was also struck at how Xi has "presented a very different China to the world" with a "much more ambitious and expansive foreign policy." "The US and other countries say, 'Okay, this is the China we have to deal with, not what we anticipated ten years ago.'"

China ready for 'marathon'

Hua Po, a political commentator in Beijing, agreed that trade was only the "superficial" source of friction. He believed that the underlying concern of the United States was the Made in China 2025 plan, under which Beijing has set a goal of rapidly ensuring that a majority of its industry is sourced domestically. The United States accuses China of rampantly stealing technology and seeking an unfair trade advantage by forcing foreign businesses to work with local partners. "Even if the trade issue is resolved, other problems between China and the United States will continue to exist," Hua said.

Hua said that Trump seemed to want "to fight a new cold war." But Hua doubted that the United States would enjoy the support of its allies, especially in Europe, which do not see China as the same type of threat as the former Soviet Union. And amid turbulence on Wall Street, China is expecting the US economy to see growing strains as negative effects emerge from Trump's signature domestic policy of tax cuts, Hua said. "China does believe that this dispute will last for some time. The United States wants to run a 100-meter race with China, but China wants a marathon with the United States," he said.

Tensions soared between the world's two largest economies last month at the annual UN General Assembly session. A closed-door meeting of foreign ministers from the five permanent members of the Security Council turned "icy" as US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo lashed out aggressively against China, whose foreign minister, Wang Yi, responded with similar intensity, according to a witness. Vice President Mike Pence a week later delivered a speech in which he took China to task and made the headline-grabbing claim, a month ahead of congressional elections, that Beijing was intervening in US politics, citing the Asian power's purchase of newspaper advertisements and its imposition of counter tariffs in politically crucial states. — AFP

Dead also not spared indignities

Wenceslao Alvarez's body lay rotting in his house in Maracaibo until the stench spread up the street. His shamed family had no money to bury him. Just days before, another family buried Ender Bracho in his own back patio, covering him with a few shovelfuls of earth until the local state authorities finally stepped in with a coffin and a grave. In February, the corpse of street vendor Francisco Rollos was laid out in front of the city hall in the northwestern city of Turen - a silent but forceful plea for the municipality to take on his burial.

For Venezuela's poor, the living nightmare created by the country's economic crisis - which has forced millions to flee - is lingering beyond the grave. A year before his death, an embolism had left the 78-year-old Alvarez incapacitated. Chicken pox only made the situation worse, and went untreated because of a chronic shortage of medicines. His agony ended on Oct 4 in a poor neighborhood in the port city of Maracaibo. His daughter Lisandra asked for help from local authorities to bury him, but no help came.

"The body was in a state of decomposition and the house was stinking. I couldn't find a way to clean it," said the 43-year-old laundry worker. Three days later, a neighboring municipality donated a coffin and a grave. By that time, the stench coming from the house infiltrated the homes all along the street. "We threw three bags of lime in the coffin and one more on top to contain the smell," said

Lisandra. A year ago, she had to sell the family refrigerator in order to bury her mother. Lisandra has had more than her share of woe: in 2014, her police officer son was shot dead.

Home burial

Days before Alvarez died, Bracho's family dug a hole in his backyard and slipped his body inside. He had succumbed the previous day to blood poisoning - a fate which his relatives said could have been avoided with antibiotics. Even in life, the 39-year-old mason - with his protruding ribs and gaunt facial features - was already looking like a corpse. "Where is the government to help the poor? What they are doing is destroying us!" said Bracho's niece, Milagros. "Look at the state the country is in. We can get nothing."

Wrapped in a blanket, Bracho's body was lowered into the backyard pit. His mother Gladys helped cover his remains with some earth. Neighbors objected, fearing disease could spread if his temporary grave were to end up being his final resting place. Several hours passed before workers from the Zulia state government showed up with a casket and directions to a gravesite.

The economic crisis, coupled with state repression, is hitting ordinary Venezuelans hard, with chronic shortages of basic goods and inflation forecast to top 1.3 million percent this year, according to the International Monetary Fund. "Ninety percent of the people who come to me look for the cheapest service they can get," says funeral parlor owner Luis Mora. "When they come, they have already spent what little resources they have on care and treatments," he told AFP. Mora, who owns two Caracas funeral homes, says costs vary from 8,000 to 25,000 bolivars (\$130 - \$400), set against a minimum monthly salary of \$29. — AFP

Business

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2018

12 Confidence, jobs growth propel Kuwait's consumer spending



13 Burgan Bank Group successfully completes its rights issue



14 KFH 'Safest Islamic Bank in GCC 2018': Global Finance Magazine



NUSA DUA: (L to R) Chair of the International Monetary and Financial Committee Lesetja Kganyago, Managing Director of IMF Christine Lagarde, Finland's Finance Minister Petteri Orpo, and Indonesia's Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati sit for a group photo at the IMF and World Bank annual meetings in Nusa Dua yesterday.—AFP (See Page 13)

Boubyan Bank reports net profit of KD 40.3 million for 9M 2018

Al-Majed: Bank achieved targets by acquiring market shares at various sectors

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank announced net profits of KD 40.3 million for 9M 2018, at a growth rate of 18 percent over the comparable period of last year, with an earnings per share of 15.83 fils compared to 13.21 fils for the same period of 2017.

Adel Abdul Wahab Al-Majed, the Bank's Vice-Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, commented on such positive results by stating: "As we are approaching the end of this year, we feel quite satisfied with our positive results over the past nine months, which meet the expectations of our shareholder."

"Despite the challenges of competition, we managed, thanks to Allah Almighty, and thanks to our human resources, to achieve our targets by acquiring market shares in various sectors whether in retail or corporate banking services," he added.

Al-Majed stressed that this showed the trust the bank enjoyed on different levels, whether among shareholders or customers, and that this reflected positively on all the bank's financial indexes.

Positive Growth of Key Indicators

Al-Majed stated that all of the Bank's main indicators witnessed a remarkable growth until the end of September 2018 where the total assets increased to KD 4.3 billion at a growth rate of 11 percent while the operational revenues increased to KD 105 million at a growth rate of 15 percent in addition to the increase in customers' deposits by 9 percent, amounting to KD 3.6 billion.

He further added that the total equity of the bank increased to KD 396 million during 9M 2018, compared with KD 364 million for the comparative period of last year and that there was a notable increase in



Adel Abdul Wahab Al-Majed

the financing portfolio to KD 3.2 billion with a growth rate of 12 percent in addition to the continuous growth of the bank's customers' base.

Al-Majed stated as well that the market share, in financing, increased to approximately 8.4 percent in the meantime, while Boubyan Bank's share of the retail finance increased specifically to approximately 11.2 percent. Besides, the bank recorded outstanding growth rates in the corporate credit portfolio which stood at 12 percent. This was achieved by building relationship with a number of operational companies known for their financial and economic creditworthiness while continuing to maintain the highest standards of credit quality, monitoring and diversifying risks.

The best in technology

On the other hand, Al-Majed stressed that the bank would continue opening new branches after reaching 43 branches, and he stated: "In line with our domestic geographic expansion to be closer to our clients, we are continuing our investment in e-ser-

vices and e-banking products which placed us ahead of other local banks. We are doing that in order to cater for the various needs of our clients.

Boubyan Bank reiterated its excellence and its ahead-of-the-curve position in digital banking in Kuwait and the Middle East by receiving 3 awards recently from Global Finance. The Bank was named the Best Islamic Digital Bank in the Middle East, the Best Islamic Digital Bank in Kuwait and the Best Innovative Digital Bank.

Al-Majed added: "Such a recognition from a globally renowned institution known for its transparency and fairness stressed that the bank's efforts started years ago are bearing fruits through the recent developments witnessed by the Kuwaiti market which is strongly driven towards investment in digital banking solutions."

Leadership in Creativity and Innovation

Al-Majed went on to add that this year witnessed the introduction of many services and products which were first introduced to the Kuwaiti market by Boubyan Bank, and that kept Boubyan in its leadership position in an attempt to distinguish its clients and provide them with a unique banking experience.

"One of these services is "Msa3ed" which allows clients to perform transactions round the clock on their accounts in addition to the Digital Murabaha Service which helps complete finance application procedures through smart phones and online banking," he added.

Al-Majed also stated: "For the first time in Kuwait, Boubyan Bank clients can now apply for a credit card at any time through online banking by using their PACI-verified digital signature."

He also spoke of the cooperation with the government sector where the bank signed a Mutual Cooperation Protocol with Kuwait Credit Bank to activate and offer a group of digital services which would facilitate banking transactions for the clients of Kuwait Credit Bank.

"This year, we have launched a business banking unit for SMEs to give entrepreneurs access to specially designed services and products to help them and their projects grow," he added.

Al-Majed went on to add: "Boubyan will continue providing the highest levels of service to its client emanating from its slogan "Towards Perfection" which has been reflected in all the services and products of the bank, aiming to make the life of our customers easier and to make all the aspects of their daily life more convenient."

In this context, he stressed that Boubyan Bank continued being at the

top of the pyramid for customer service in Kuwait, supported by receiving two awards from Service Hero, the international consumer-driven customer satisfaction index, namely, the First Place Award in Customer Service as a Country Winner atop all economic sectors in Kuwait, for the third time, in addition to being named the 2017 Best Islamic Bank in Customer Service for the eighth year in a row since 2010.

Al-Majed added: "The confidence of our customers has always been well-placed, and this was fruitful as it resulted in these two special awards in Kuwait". He further stressed that the bank would continue at that remarkable level of customer service.

CSR and HR

Al-Majed stated that the first nine months of this year marked a number of activities and events organized by the bank as a part of its corporate social responsibility to support the

youth as well as many other segments of the society, while adding that the last quarter of this year should witness more initiatives to be launched by the bank in support of health activities and events in cooperation with health organizations and institutions in the state of Kuwait.

"Boubyan Bank gives a special attention to its human resources as a part of the bank's approach being a developed and modern bank keeping up with international and regional changes through its young management, and the Consumer Banking Group, which comprises mostly of youths, testifies to this. The bank is known for placing the youth in leading roles, and this has further helped Boubyan Bank earn the award for the "Replacement and Nationalization of Manpower in Kuwait". The award is given on an annual basis by the Council for the Ministers of Labor for the best GCC institution," Al-Majed concluded.

Boubyan Bank's Key Financial Indicators

In KD Million

Indicator	Until September 2018	Until September 2017	Growth
Net profits	40.3	34.1	18%
Operational revenues	105	91.5	15%
Customers' deposits	3,589	3,298	9%
Financing portfolio	3,193	2,848	12%
Assets	4,253	3,830	11%

Business

NBK Economic Report

Confidence, jobs growth propel Kuwait's consumer spending

Wage growth softens, household borrowing eases

KUWAIT: Consumer spending growth remains healthy, supported by high levels of confidence, a decent pick-up in employment, and an improving economic backdrop helped by higher oil prices. However, some downside pressures remain: wage growth is soft, household borrowing growth is easing, and the number of expatriate dependents is declining. Overall we still expect the consumer sector to remain supportive of the broader economic climate over coming quarters, but may moderate somewhat from recent strong levels.

Central Bank of Kuwait, National Bank of Kuwait

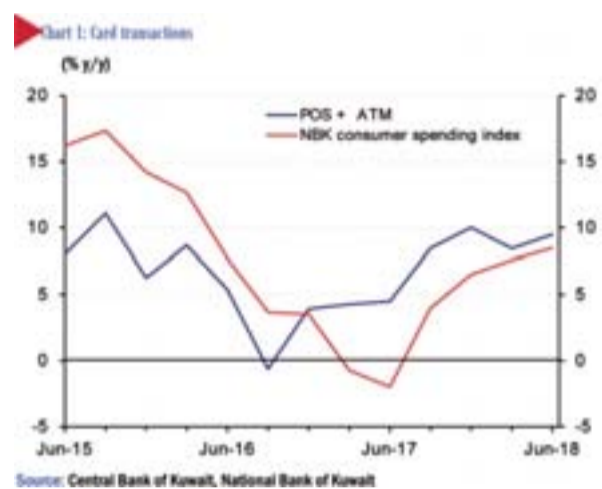
As of 2Q18, consumer spending growth had recovered to near pre-fiscal consolidation era levels. The value of spending on credit and debit cards at POS machines increased by 16.6 percent y/y, its strongest in over four years. Total spending, which also includes ATM withdrawals, increased by a still notable 9.5 percent y/y, outpacing its performance from the previous quarter. This is in line with the NBK consumer spending index, which grew by 8.5 percent at the end of Q2.

Underpinning the pick-up in spending is optimism over the current state of the economy and its future prospects, fostered by expansionary budgets and higher oil prices. Ara's consumer confidence index stood at 117 points in August and averaged 111 over the last 12 months, a level not seen since November 2014.

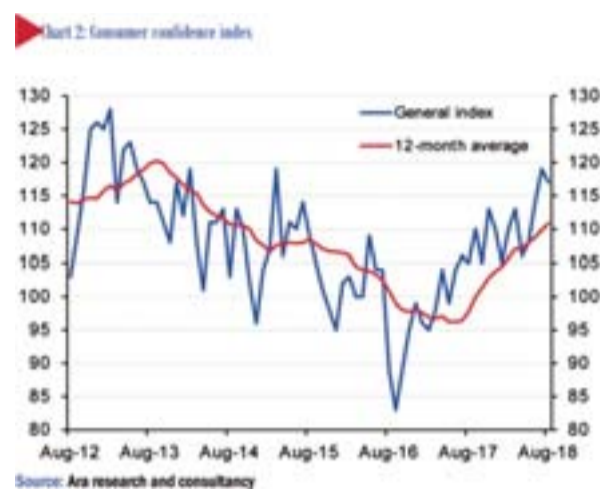
Another contributing factor is improving employment prospects, with the impact of austerity measures implemented over the last two years and the earlier slowdown in economic growth beginning to fade. Jobs were up 2.9 percent y/y in June, with an increase in hiring of both Kuwaitis and expatriates.

In fact, Kuwaiti job growth in June was the strongest in more than two years at 2.5 percent y/y. Public sector hiring continues to be the main driver (+2.9 percent y/y), while growth in private sector employment still lags behind (+0.5 percent y/y). It is, however, displaying some signs of improvement.

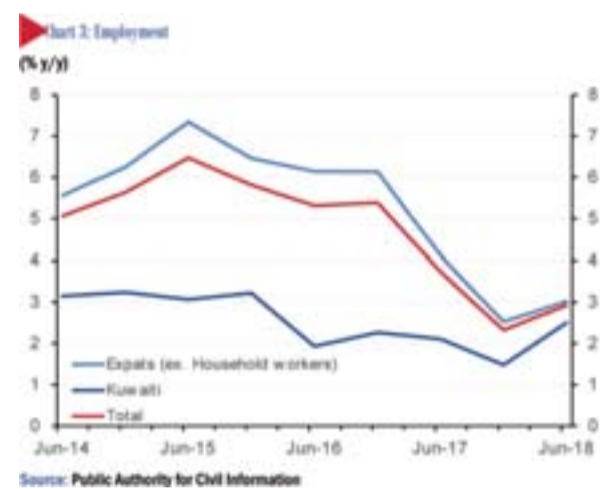
Similarly, expat employment growth, which has slowed sharply over the past three years, appears to



Source: Central Bank of Kuwait, National Bank of Kuwait



Source: Ara research and consultancy



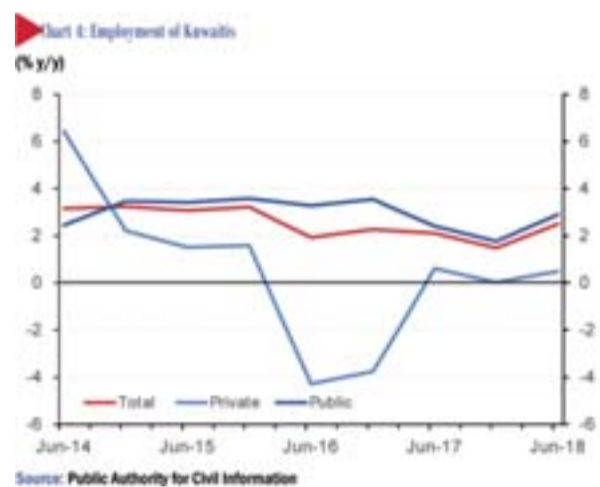
Source: Public Authority for Civil Information

have bottomed out thanks to steady hiring of both skilled and unskilled labor, expanding by 3 percent overall. Expatriates account for more than 80 percent of Kuwait's labor force.

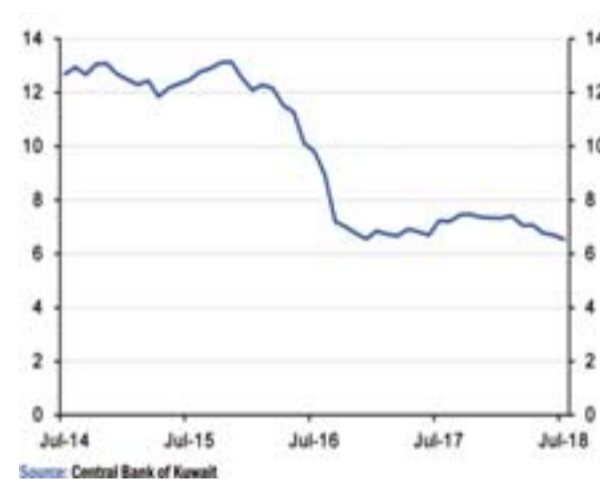
However, some aspects of the consumer sector still exhibit softness. For instance, growth in household debt has moderated recently, easing to 6.5 percent y/y in July, from 7.2 percent a year ago on less borrowing for the purchase of houses, as well as for the purchase of durable goods.

Wage growth has also been weak, with recorded average basic incomes for Kuwaitis enrolled in state pension plans little changed since 4Q16. Growth in gross average income - which includes basic wage income and benefits - eased to 0.6 percent in 1Q18, from a yearly average of 1.8 percent in both 2016 and 2017.

Meanwhile, although the total expatriate population is rising, the number of expatriate dependents continues to decline following increases in living expenses and still relatively soft employment growth. The female expatriate population was down 1.9 percent y/y as of June, its third consecutive decline in a year and a half, while the number of expatriate children below the age of 15 decreased by 1.1 percent.



Source: Public Authority for Civil Information



Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

Overall, the consumer sector will continue to see decent growth going forward but could moderate slightly from recent strong levels, affected by modest wage growth and a slight pick-up in inflation (from a very low base). An expected steady pick-up in non-oil

growth, rising government spending and especially capital spending, as well as improved private sector investment - reflected recently by increased borrowing by businesses - will provide further support to the consumer sector.

Equipolymers presents 'Viridis 25,' an EQUATE initiative

KUWAIT: Equipolymers (EQP), a subsidiary of EQUATE Group for petrochemicals, has announced the launch of the innovative 'Viridis 25,' which will provide a new category of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) used in the production of beverage bottles through (thermoforming).

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Dr Ramesh Ramachandran, President and CEO of EQUATE, said: "The Viridis 25 technology is based on the fact that it contains 25 percent of recycled PET as feedstock, the highest percentage achieved so far." He pointed out that this product is expected to have many benefits and a clear and positive impact on the environment and thus will be reflected on the community as a whole as it will result in higher rates of plastic recycling through the increasing demand for recycled PET flakes. He pointed out that Viridis 25 will contribute to promoting the application of the plastics strategy guidelines in accordance with European standards, which will bring economic and industrial perspectives closer together, decreasing the need for the use of virgin PET and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 54 percent.

Regarding the details for developing the project,

Ramachandran said that EQP had launched in 2009 a project called Viridis; a product of PET containing up to 10 percent recycled PET. He pointed out that the project (Viridis) complies with the European regulations on plastics that are used with food and therefore can be used in the production of beverage bottles and in products that are formed through heat (thermal formation). In 2016, EQP and Coca-Cola started collaborating in Viridis 25, a product of PET containing 25 percent recycled PET.

Ramachandran noted that the Viridis 25 project came as a response from EQP to the requirements of the European Commission's circular economy requirements, which are in line with the guidelines for the European Plastics Strategy. EQP was established in 2004 to produce and market PET, which is used in the manufacture of plastic bottles. EQP is 100 percent owned by MEGlobal, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of EQUATE as part of the EQUATE Group.

He explained that EQP produces PET, which is a raw material for the manufacture of high-quality plastics to produce bottles specifically. Some of the advantages of this product include transparency to ensure optimum product presentation, low weight means that customers carry only the drink while the weight of the package is negligible, as well as strength ensures sturdy, practically unbreakable and safe packaging, he pointed out. EQP produces about 350,000 metric tons per annum of PET. EQP is a leading provider of sustainable solutions for the plastics industry and is fully supported by the EQUATE Group in providing Viridis 25 as a commercial product during Q4 2019.

Jetliner lands in US after world's longest flight

NEW YORK: An Airbus jetliner arrived in Newark on Friday after a nearly 18-hour trip from Singapore, completing the world's longest commercial flight. It marked the revival of a route that had been eliminated in 2013. Singapore Airlines Flight SQ22 arrived at 5.29 am (0929 GMT), having left Singapore's Changi airport at 11.23 pm, the Newark Liberty International Airport website said. That made for a flight of 17 hours and 52 minutes. The flight had been scheduled to take 18 hours and 25 minutes. The plane was carrying 150 passengers and 17 crew members as it traveled 10,250 miles (16,500 kilometers).

"I feel perfectly well rested," said Kristopher Alladin, a 37-year-old Canadian. "I'm lucky because I'm able to sleep on the plane." Flying from New York to Singapore would be a longer journey, lasting an estimated 18 hours and 45 minutes. The first flight in that direction took off from Newark at 11:10 am Friday. Singapore Airlines only offers premium economy and business seats on the

flight-no regular economy seats. "Although you're in premium eco, you feel like you're in first class," said Alladin, adding that he had taken the same flight in 2008. "The flight was very smooth, very quiet."

'Ended too fast!'

"The flight was great, smooth, enjoyable and ended too fast!" said Danny Ong, an engineer and flight enthusiast from Singapore, after landing in Newark.

"We were served a supper of three choices after takeoff. I slept soundly, woke up and realized [there were] around eight hours left," said Ong, who took the first flight back to Singapore, straight after landing in Newark. "The crews were attentive, professional and responded promptly. Highly recommended if you are flying from Singapore to NYC in future."

A one-way ticket from Singapore to New York on this flight costs about \$2,150 in premium economy and \$3,500 for a roundtrip itinerary, according to the Singapore Airlines website.

Singapore Airlines originally flew the route for nine years using the gas-guzzling, four-engine A340-500 plane before abandoning it in 2013 because high oil prices made the service unprofitable. This trip was made with the new, more fuel efficient Airbus A350-900ULR, which consumes 25 percent less fuel than its predecessor. —AFP

Bayan Weekly Market Report

Boursa Kuwait turns bearish, indices drop

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week in the red zone. The Premier Market Index closed at 5,257.16 points, down by 1.09 percent, the Main Market Index declined by 0.49 percent after closing at 4,718.42 points, and the All-Share Index closed at 5,065.81 points down by 0.89 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover decreased by 5.66 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching around KD 11.10 million, whereas trading volume average reached around 66.73 million shares, recording a drop of 11.98 percent.

The Boursa lost around KD 255 million, as the market capitalization for the total listed stocks dropped by the end of last week to reach about KD 28.35 billion against KD 28.60 billion in a week earlier, down by 0.89 percent. The Boursa gains since the application of the new market segmentation contracted to reach around KD 490.50 million or 1.76 percent. (Note: The Market capitalization for the listed companies in the Boursa is calculated based on the weighted average number of outstanding shares as per the latest available official financial statements).

In addition, the weak performance witnessed by the Boursa during the last week was caused by some investors' refrain from trading, especially in light of the waiting state for the listed companies results for the third quarter period of the current year, in addition to the active profit collection operations that the Boursa is witnessing for the past couple of weeks. Also, this performance came in parallel with the drop of the trading indicators, whereas the total number of traded stocks decreased by 11.98 percent reaching 333.67 million stock, while the total trading value declined by 5.66 percent to reach KD 59.99 million.

Moreover, the selling pressures witnessed by the

Boursa concentrated on many listed stocks in the Market, headed by the stocks listed in the Premier Market, which was reflected on the Premier Market Index, the most declining index among the three Market indices, as it recorded a loss of 1.09 percent by the end of last week. Last week witnessed trading over 147 stock out of 175 listed stock in the Market, where prices of 43 stock increased against prices of 88 stock decreased, and prices of 44 stock remained at no change.

Sectors' indices

Eight of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the red zone, while two recorded increases, and the Health Care & Technology sectors remained at no change. Last week's highest loser was the Consumer Goods sector, as its index declined by 2.10 percent to end the week's activity at 815.54 points. The Industrial sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 1.59 percent, closing at 967.69 points, followed by the Real Estate sector, which index declined by 1.49 percent, closing at 871.47 points. On the other hand, last week's highest gainer was the Basic Materials sector, achieving 4.21 percent growth rate as its index closed at 1,225.83 points recording 0.08 percent increase.

Sectors' activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 101.43 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 30.40 percent of the total market trading volume. The Banks sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 28.15 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 93.92 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 31.18 million or 51.97 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Industrial sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 7.22 million representing 12.04 percent of the total market trading value. — Prepared by the Studies & Research Department, Bayan Investment Co.

MARKET ACTIVITY				INDEX PERFORMANCE					
	Last Week	Previous Week	Change (%)		Previous Week	Change (%)			
Volume (K.D)	55,645,307	57,607,747	-3.4%	Premier Market Index (PKI)	5,257.16	-1.09%	5,300.00		
Value (K.D)	59,994,962	63,961,221	-6.3%	Main Market Index (MMI)	4,718.42	-0.49%	4,750.00		
Deal	17,418	15,046	15.0%	All-Share Index (ASI)	5,065.81	-0.89%	5,120.00		
MARKET CAPITALIZATION (K.D)				MARKET SEGMENTATION (K.D)					
	Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch.	Mid Seg. to Date	Weekly Ch.	Mid Seg. to Date			
Total	28,347,428	28,596,701.50	-0.89%	PKI	5,257.16	-1.09%	5,300.00		
Basic Materials	1,225.83	1,225.83	0.08%	MMI	4,718.42	-0.49%	4,750.00		
Health Care	1,225.83	1,225.83	0.08%	ASI	5,065.81	-0.89%	5,120.00		
Industrial	967.69	967.69	-1.59%	Banking	28.15%				
Real Estate	871.47	871.47	-1.49%	Consumer Goods	815.54%				
Technology	871.47	871.47	-1.49%	Financial Services	101.43%				
Consumer Goods	815.54	815.54	-2.10%	Health Care	93.92%				
Financial Services	101.43	101.43	0.08%	Real Estate	87.15%				
Health Care	93.92	93.92	0.08%	Technology	7.22%				
Real Estate	87.15	87.15	-1.49%	Telecommunications	5.66%				
Technology	7.22	7.22	0.08%						
Telecommunications	5.66	5.66	0.08%						
SECTORS TRADING ACTIVITY				SECTORS INDEX PERFORMANCE					
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %	Sector	Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch.	Mid Seg. to Date
BANKS	93,920,000	28.15%	31,177,471	51.97%	BANKS	5,257.16	5,300.00	-0.89%	5,300.00
BASIC MATERIALS	30,400,000	10.71%	3,118,000	5.19%	BASIC MATERIALS	1,225.83	1,225.83	0.08%	1,225.83
CONSUMER GOODS	2,100,000	0.74%	2,100,000	3.50%	CONSUMER GOODS	815.54	815.54	-2.10%	815.54
INDUSTRIAL	1,500,000	0.53%	1,500,000	2.47%	INDUSTRIAL	967.69	967.69	-1.59%	967.69
REAL ESTATE	1,000,000	0.35%	1,000,000	1.67%	REAL ESTATE	871.47	871.47	-1.49%	871.47
HEALTH CARE	939,200	0.33%	939,200	1.57%	HEALTH CARE	93.92	93.92	0.08%	93.92
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	566,000	0.20%	566,000	0.94%	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	5.66	5.66	0.08%	5.66

Business

Burgan Bank Group successfully completes its rights issue

Rights issue oversubscribed with healthy shareholder participation

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, Kuwait's second largest conventional bank by assets, announced successful completion of its Rights Issue, whereby the bank raised KD 62.55 million of equity by issuing 240.58 million shares. The Rights Issue was oversubscribed with healthy participation from its existing shareholders, underscoring the strength of the franchise.

Majed Essa Al-Ajeel, the chairman of Burgan Bank commented: "We are very pleased with the results of the rights issue and grateful for the support and trust that our shareholders have put in us. The oversubscription reflects their confidence in the bank's performance and its future prospects."

The Rights Issue represents a 10.6 percent of increase in the issued share capital of the bank and as a result, the total number of issued shares has increased to 2,500,000,000 shares. The net proceeds of the Rights Issue will be used to further strengthen the Bank's capital position, and for general corporate purposes.

Burgan Bank K.P.S.C. encompasses operations in

Kuwait, and its share from its regional subsidiaries, namely Burgan Bank Turkey, Gulf Bank Algeria, Bank of Baghdad, Tunis International Bank, with one of the largest regional branch networks across Kuwait, Turkey, Algeria, Iraq, Tunisia, Lebanon and representative office in Dubai-United Arab Emirates.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA

region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. 'People come first' is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.

The bank was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2015, making it the one of the few banks in the GCC and Kuwait to receive such certification for the Fifth consecutive time. The Bank also has to its credit the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twelve consecutive years.



Majed Essa Al-Ajeel



IMF: Window 'narrowing' for global economy

NUSA DUA: The window of opportunity for safeguarding global growth is "narrowing" as trade disputes deepen and emerging markets face fiscal crisis, the IMF said yesterday, warning countries against worsening things by weaponising currency and interest-rate policies.

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin had downplayed the global concerns expressed at an International Monetary Fund meeting held this week in Bali under the shadow of US-China tensions, saying the world would benefit if Beijing is forced to change its trade policies.

But the IMF said in a communique that while global growth currently remained "steady", the risks are "increasingly skewed to the downside amid heightened trade tensions and ongoing geopolitical concerns". The Fund kicked off its annual meeting with the World Bank on the Indonesian resort island earlier in the week in a gloomy mood, preoccupied by the trade tussle between the world's two biggest economies, and tightening financial conditions faced by emerging markets.

On Tuesday, it cut its outlook for global GDP growth by 0.2 percentage points to 3.7 percent for 2018 and 2019, citing the trade war.

"The window of opportunity (is) narrowing," the 189-country organization said, adding that members would "refrain from competitive (currency) devaluations and will not target our exchange rates for competitive purposes"-a line apparently aimed at the US and China. Mnuchin this week said he had told the head of China's central bank about his concerns over the

weakness of its currency.

US President Donald Trump has accused Beijing of depreciating its currency to absorb the impact of US trade tariffs.

But Mnuchin, speaking on the Bali meeting's sidelines, declined to comment on whether Washington would declare Beijing a "currency manipulator" in a Treasury report due out next week.

That would be a first for China, triggering a process that could lead to punitive steps.

Differing opinions

Mnuchin also pushed back against the growing global angst over the US-China trade fight, saying that pressuring Beijing into adopting more open trade policies would be good for all. "Our objective with China is very clear: it's to have a more balanced trading relationship," he said.

"I think that if we are successful, this is very good for US companies, US workers, Europeans, Japan, all of our other allies, and good for China."

The argument gained little traction in Bali yesterday. "Trade conflict would be bad for all economies, not just the US and China," Japanese central bank governor Haruhiko Kuroda said.

"This type of thing will not be good for the US economy, the China economy, but also for the economies of Asia and the world." Tensions have soared recently with Trump's administration rolling out billions of dollars in tariffs against China in a bid to tackle its trade deficit and rein in what Washington considers unacceptable Chinese trade practices.

Mnuchin said Washington's ultimate goal was a "free, fair and reciprocal relationship" with Beijing.

Attention has begun to turn toward hopes that Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping could meet on the sidelines of the G-20 summit next month in Argentina and bury the hatchet with some sort of agreement. Mnuchin said no decision had been made



NUSA DUA: Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso reads a document during a meeting at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank annual meetings in Nusa Dua on Indonesia's resort island of Bali yesterday. —AFP

yet and the US was not—"for the moment"—requiring any Chinese concessions before Trump agrees to a meeting. "To the extent that we can make progress toward a meeting, I would encourage that and that's something we are having discussions about," he told reporters. World markets also have been roiled by a plunge in some emerging market currencies—including Turkey and Argentina—as domestic financial crises and higher US interest rates lure returns-hungry investors to the dollar. The IMF statement said it would push to improve the World Trade Organisation and boost confidence in the global trading system.

It added that it would continue to help countries deal with the social and economic costs of "pandemics, cyber risks, climate change and natural disasters, energy scarcity, conflicts, migration, and refugee and other humanitarian crises". —AFP

US-China trade row not a threat to world economy: Mnuchin

NUSA DUA: US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin pushed back yesterday against warnings that Washington's trade fight with China imperils the world economy, saying that pushing Beijing to open up will be good for all. The IMF has warned this week at annual meetings in Bali that the escalating US-China trade confrontation would hobble global economic growth, as the fund lowered its forecasts for this year and next.

But Mnuchin told reporters on the Indonesian resort island that President Donald Trump's drive to punish China with tariffs to encourage it to adopt fairer trade practices would have the opposite effect.

"Our objective with China is very clear: it's to have a more balanced trading relationship," Mnuchin said. "I think that if we are successful, this is very good for US companies, US workers, Europeans, Japan, all of our other allies, and good for China."

Mnuchin said, however that the IMF's warnings were "all the more reason for China to be incited to address these issues with us".

The IMF Tuesday cut its outlook for global GDP growth by 0.2 percentage points to 3.7 percent for 2018 and 2019, saying that "everyone is going to suffer" from a clash between the world's two biggest economies.

Tensions have soared in recent months with Donald Trump's administration rolling out billions of dollars in tariffs against China in a bid to tackle its trade deficit and rein in what Washington views as unacceptable trade practices by the Asian giant.

"Our objective is to increase exports and have a more balanced, fair relationship where our companies can do business there on terms that are similar to how they can do business (in the US)," Mnuchin said. "(A) free fair and reciprocal relationship."

Attention has begun to turn toward hopes that Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping could meet on the sidelines of the G-20 summit next month in Argentina and bury the hatchet with some sort of agreement.

"I don't think any decision has been made in regards to a meeting," Mnuchin said. "To the extent that we can make progress toward a meeting, I would encourage that and that's something we are having discussions about. "But for the moment, there's no



NEW YORK: In this file photo, a man walks past a Chase sign at the company's Manhattan headquarters in New York City. —AFP

preconditions. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Friday the US economy remained strong and this week's decline in the stock market was "just a natural correction."

Stocks crash

After two days of sharp drops in US and global stock markets over fears of rising interest rates and the US trade conflicts, Mnuchin said in an interview on CNBC that markets tended to go "too far in both directions" and then would have to correct.

But he said it was a "good thing" that Wall Street was poised to recover on Friday. He was speaking on the sidelines of the International Monetary Fund annual meeting in Bali, Indonesia.

After an unusually volatile day in which stocks dipped in and out of the red, Wall Street's main indices closed up solidly for the day but, with earlier losses, were all still down about four percent for the week. Investors also were watching the start of corporate earnings season, with major banks posting positive quarterly results on Friday morning.

Analysts said third-quarter earnings could reveal the extent to which US President Donald Trump's trade conflicts might have dented profits.

Mnuchin also downplayed concerns about Trump's repeated and aggressive attacks on the US

Federal Reserve this week, saying Trump "respects the independence of the Fed."

Powell doing a 'great job'

Trump has by turns called the Fed "crazy" and "loco" and said it was being "too aggressive in raising rates," blaming the institution for the market declines that saw the benchmark Dow Jones Industrial Average lose nearly 1,400 points in two days.

"The president's been clear. He likes low interest rates. I think that's really what it was about," Mnuchin said, adding that Fed chairman Jerome Powell was "doing a great job." "I think the fundamentals are still very strong. The US economy is strong, US earnings are strong. So I see this as just a natural correction after the markets were up a lot." Powell in the past has brushed off Trump's taunts, saying political independence was in central bankers' "DNA." Despite Trump's attacks on the central bank, economists say that, with unemployment at its lowest level in 48 years and monthly job creation holding steady, the Fed is likely to stick to its current course of rate hikes, with a fourth increase expected in December, and three or four in 2019.

Some Fed policymakers who in January will take a turn as voting members of the rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee have begun to send more hawkish signals, putting them increasingly at odds with Trump. —AFP

Empty shelves, poor customer service speed Sears' decline

NEW YORK: Sandy Hetrick drove 15 miles from her home to a Sears in Media, Pennsylvania on Wednesday to buy folding chairs and clothes.

Her local Sears in Wilmington, Delaware, the 54-year-old retiree said, was so poorly stocked that she stopped going there, even though there is no Delaware state sales tax. "It's really going down," Hetrick said about Sears, which is weighing whether to file for bankruptcy protection in the coming days.

"You can't find any help. The stores have minimal items," she said as she shopped at the store in Media. A change in sentiment among previously loyal shoppers like Hetrick has contributed to the retailer's sharp decline in sales. Sears losses have continued to mount to over \$11 billion from its last annual profit in 2011.

On Friday, Reuters was first to report that Sears is planning to close 150 stores and keep at least another 300 open as part of a plan to restructure under U.S. bankruptcy protection. On Thursday, Reuters reported Chief Executive Eddie Lampert is exploring a bid for some of the retailer's businesses and real estate.

Sears did not respond to multiple requests for comment. In September, the retailer said it is cutting down on lower-performing products and becoming more aggressive in clearing out seasonal merchandise. It also expanded the assortment on its online marketplace, which allowed it to add more popular brands. Sears also said it continues to take steps to improve its in-store experience for shoppers, without offering details.

It has made attempts to sell its products like tires and Kenmore appliances on Amazon.com Inc's website to offset the decline in traditional shoppers.

Even so, its annual sales have dropped nearly 60 percent to \$16.7 billion.

The retailer's problems, according to shoppers, former employees and vendors interviewed by Reuters, range from its limited assortment of merchandise to poor customer service. In addition, some said, the retailer abandoned basic shop-keeping standards such as clean stores. And Lampert's leadership over the years has hurt it more than helped.

The retailer, which for decades was the Amazon.com of its time, branched into industries as diverse as insurance, real estate and even broadcasting. A sign of its corporate power was the 110-story building called the Sears Tower, once its corporate headquarters in Chicago and the world's tallest building for a period of time.

Hetrick shopped at Sears since she was a child, and said she recalls looking forward to its Christmas catalogs. But nostalgia for the Sears hallmarks, from the catalog to Craftsman tools, has not helped the 125-year-old department store bring customers through its doors in recent years.

The retailer lost its allure with shoppers after shrinking its total store locations by over 70 percent in less than a decade. Sears runs nearly 900 stores, including the Kmart chain. As of February 2018, the retailer said it employed about 89,000 workers in the United States, compared with 246,000 people five years earlier.

Over that time, the number of consumers open to shopping at Sears dropped to 14 percent on June 1, 2018 from 28 percent on June 1, 2013, according to data from YouGov BrandIndex, a company that tracks public perception of brands.

Only 9 percent of US millennials - aged 22 to 37 years - said in 2018 they would consider buying goods from the retailer, it said.

Kmart effect

Some former employees said the retailer started going downhill in 2005 when it merged with Kmart, a deal engineered by Lampert. In 2004, when the retailer announced the merger, it was the third-largest in revenue behind Walmart Inc and Target Corp.

Customers used to be able to check out in any department in the store, and there was always someone to ask for assistance, said Judy Davis, 81, of Banning, California, who retired from Sears in 1999 after working at the Cerritos, California, store for 27 years. After the Kmart merger, the checkouts were placed in one corner near the store exit, and cashiers could not leave their registers, she said.

"They really used to promote customer service. That went out the window," Davis said. —Reuters

Business

KFH 'Safest Islamic Bank in GCC 2018': Global Finance Magazine

KFH-Group CEO receives three prestigious awards at IMF, WBG meetings

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House Group (KFH) won three prestigious awards from Global Finance Magazine which are: the Safest Islamic Bank in the GCC-2018 for KFH, the "Best Islamic Bank in Turkey" for KFH-Turkey, and the "Best Islamic Bank" in Europe for KT Bank AG.

KFH-Group CEO Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh received the awards on the sidelines of the 2018 Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group in Bali, Indonesia.

Al-Nahedh said "receiving such prestigious awards from Global Finance Magazine affirms customers' confidence in the Bank, and reiterates the bank's leadership position in the Islamic finance industry at a global level, indicating the awards culminate KFH's achievements and efforts in offering the best Islamic financial services."

He added that KFH achieves sustainable profitability and is characterized by the growth and diversification of its activities and services, supported by the confidence of customers, the regional and global reliability and credibility, not to mention the prestigious and valuable banking brand.

He continued: "KFH attaches great interest in pursuing professional risk management, while paying great attention to service quality, innovation and investing in human capital development. KFH was established as the First Islamic Bank in Kuwait, and it is now the pioneer of the Islamic banking sector. KFH succeeded in developing several financial products including Sukuk and Ijara."

He pointed out that KT Bank AG, the German Islamic Financial Institution offers comprehensive financial products and services based on the principals of sharia. KT Bank AG's award of "Best Islamic Bank" in Europe for the year 2018 is an impetus for further growth in Germany; the largest and most significant market in Europe.

Moreover, KFH-Turkey continued its efforts in recording new achievements. The Bank offers a wide range of innovative financial products and services, and it diversified its businesses to cope with its ambitious strategy. The Bank has over 400 branches spanning Turkey and 6000 employees. Ufuk UYAN, CEO of KFH-Turkey received KFH-Turkey award.

KFH was selected through an evaluation of long-term credit ratings from Global rating agencies and the total assets of the 1000 largest banks worldwide.



(From right) Ahmad Al-Kharji, Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem, Mazin Al-Nahedh, Ufuk Uyan



Mazin Al-Nahedh receiving the award



The report issued by the Global Finance Magazine, evaluates the safest banks based on the region. This is in line with the great interest of the Islamic finance industry that is increasingly growing in the world financial markets. The selection of KFH, KFH-Turkey and KT Bank AG from Global Finance was

based on a number of professional criteria based on extensive consultation with bankers, analysts and financial experts from around the world. The selection depended on different factors including Banks' technical innovation in service delivery, product quality, enterprise reputation, customer sat-

isfaction, geographical spread, and strategic decisions at multinational companies and financial institutions. Its website offers analysis and articles that are the legacy of 31 years of experience in international financial markets. Global Finance is headquartered in New York, with offices around the world.

Global Finance, founded in 1987, has a circulation of 50,050 and readers in 189 countries. Global Finance's audience includes senior corporate and financial officers responsible for making investment and

strategic decisions at multinational companies and financial institutions. Its website offers analysis and articles that are the legacy of 31 years of experience in international financial markets. Global Finance is headquartered in New York, with offices around the world.

Chevrolet Alghanim continues with its super offers in October

KUWAIT: As part of its series of special offers, Chevrolet Alghanim has launched a new campaign featuring a number of its glamorous cars, the all-new Chevrolet Tahoe and Silverado 2018, in addition to the trade-in offers on Crossovers. Chevrolet Alghanim today offers its customers the opportunity to own one of its internationally acclaimed vehicles thanks to their durability and modern design, at unprecedented prices. The package includes the all-new 2018 Tahoe where you get KD 1500 above trade in, starting at KD 14,499. This exclusive offer is available only in Kuwait.

The SUV has always been renowned for being a technologically advanced luxury vehicle in addition to its high performance and outstanding design. But when we combine the Tahoe with the Z71 for superior performance, the Tahoe rises to new levels of off-road and desert excellence, as well as its innovative performance within the city roads. The new Tahoe 2018 features a V8 Engine 5.3L - 355 Horsepower, front and rear LED, MyLink system with Sinch touch screen with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, front and rear parking assist, remote engine starter. In addition to the front and rear corner assistance system with rear camera, the vehicle also features remote engine operation. Tahoe also puts your safety first and for this reason, it has many advanced safety features that help avoid accidents or protect passengers if accidents occur.

Customers who are looking for driving pleasure have the Silverado as their best option to respond to their desired experience. For the first time ever, the all-new 2018, V8-engine Silverado comes with an offer of a cash gift of up to \$4,000. Silverado's special features include: A V8, 5.3-liter, 355 hp engine, 17" wheels, remote engine and AC start, and unlocking the trunk, chrome front and rear bumpers, Chevy MyLink infotainment system. A muscular front end, sculpted hood and signature LED lighting accents also give the Silverado a bold new look,

while high-strength steel delivers rugged capability that you can depend on at all times. Chevrolet Alghanim offers also include the trade-in offers on Crossovers. Discover the latest line of crossovers from Alghanim Chevrolet and choose the drive that you want with the best trade-in offers of up to KD 500. The package includes the below vehicles: Trax 2018 with 1.8L engine starting from KD 4,899, Traverse 2018 with V6 engine 3.6L starting from KD 8,999, and finally Equinox 2018 with turbo engine 1.5L OR 2.0L starting from KD 6,599.

Along with the latest technology, the all-new Chevrolet Traverse 2018 caters to the adventurous, and family-oriented tourism enthusiasts. Whatever your destination is and how diverse your needs are, Traverse will be the versatile vehicle with advanced security and technology that will bring you to your destination with ease and security. Wherever you are and where your travels are, the standard 3.6-liter V6 engine will give you outstanding driving power, while the 9-speed automatic transmission will provide you with smooth, fuel-efficient transportation. The exterior of the Traverse has been completely redesigned to give it a fresh, bold look. In the cabin, care has been taken to the finest details, including luxurious leather touches and high-end dressings. When you want to have a comfortable and quiet time, the cabin with noise-isolating technology will help you enjoy your trips and fun conversations. Award-Winning Customer Experience: Chevrolet Alghanim Service Center provides a hassle-free and easy experience to customers. Professionally-trained Service Advisors start by checking the vehicle to provide requirements, time and cost estimates for needed services. The service center was designed and built after detailed studies and research for best practices in car servicing, implementing the best standards of advanced technology, services and equipment needed to ensure vehicles are taken care to ensure longevity, safety and customer satisfaction.

Chevrolet Complete Care: All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Yusuf A. Alghanim & Sons benefit of the Chevrolet Care Program, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust. The Chevrolet Care is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance for 4 years. Customers can take advantage of the limited summer offer to own the car of their dreams by visiting any of Chevrolet Alghanim showrooms at the following locations: Shuwaikh, Al-Rai (Safat Alghanim),

and to the determination to bring them to market. This rejuvenated approach to overall brand marketing is the sum of Honda's best thinking and could only come from the company's years of design and innovation.

The company's marketing team has put serious efforts in promoting for the awareness of the campaign's objectives. They cooperated with various local institutions and organizations in order to engage and encourage the youth segment to join the campaign. The idea focused on investing in their activities and creative thoughts, hoping to increase the young generation's performance and contribution in the company.

More to add, 16 successful candidates (locals and residents) were selected for their excellence achievements in various fields. And therefore, they got awarded at the Honda's Youth Achievement Awards, which was sponsored by "Honda Alghanim", more to add, each candidate earned an exclusive press interview with the CP Magazine.

IndiGo marks entry into Kuwait effective October

KUWAIT: Re-establishing the importance of enhancing air IndiGo-Gulf operations,

IndiGo flies to six cities into Gulf including Dubai, Muscat, Doha, Sharjah, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi.

The airline operates 63 daily non-stop flights from India to the Middle East.

- Dubai: 26 return flights
- Muscat: 8 return flights
- Sharjah: 8 return flights
- Doha: 16 return flights
- Kuwait: 3 return flights
- Abu Dhabi: 2 return flights

IndiGo announced Kuwait as its 10th international destination and will operate the first flight 6E-1752 from Kuwait to Chennai on 15th October. Additionally, the low cost airline will provide daily non-stop services between Kuwait-Ahmedabad and Kuwait-Kochi effective November 2018.

The new flights are designed to cater to business and leisure travellers who are constantly on the lookout for new and affordable flying options. Customers who wish to plan their travel can book tickets via our official website www.goindigo.in. The introduction of these flights will provide connectivity between Kuwait-Chennai, Kuwait-Ahmedabad and Kuwait-Kochi with all-inclusive fares starting from KD 37 (on way fares).

William Boulter, Chief Commercial Officer, IndiGo, said, "We are pleased to launch Kuwait as our 10th international destination effective October 2018. IndiGo has completed 12 years of successful operations in the India market as a low cost carrier, and adding Kuwait to



its network will further augment the regional connectivity that we aspire to provide to our customers. With these non-stop flights between Kuwait and India, IndiGo operates 63 daily non-stop flights between the Middle East and India."

Boulter further added, "Kuwait holds immense potential for IndiGo, and this launch is part of organic expansion within the Gulf for us, as we complement our domestic network with international connectivity. IndiGo will continue to provide an on-time, courteous and hassle free service, and affordable fares to our customers, as always."

IndiGo is amongst the fastest growing low-cost carriers in the world. IndiGo has a simple philosophy: offer fares that are low, flights that are on time, and a courteous, hassle-free travel experience. With its fleet of 189 Airbus A320 including 12 ATR aircraft, the airline offers over 1200 daily flights and connects 48 domestic destinations and 11 international destinations.



William Boulter

Honda Alghanim sponsors Honda Youth Achievement Awards

KUWAIT: Honda launched its well-known brand campaign "Honda The Power Of Dreams". The slogan that has long been adopted by the company globally, aiming to reflect the belief in the vision of the Japanese Automaker & founder, who was behind the creation of the intelligent products that enhanced the world of mobility and made a significant fingerprint in people's life. His vision's concept embraces the creativity of the young generation and youths, "The Power of Dreams" philosophy speaks to Honda's belief that drives the company's research and development, and diverse array of advanced-technology products,

and to the determination to bring them to market. This rejuvenated approach to overall brand marketing is the sum of Honda's best thinking and could only come from the company's years of design and innovation.

The company's marketing team has put serious efforts in promoting for the awareness of the campaign's objectives. They cooperated with various local institutions and organizations in order to engage and encourage the youth segment to join the campaign. The idea focused on investing in their activities and creative thoughts, hoping to increase the young generation's performance and contribution in the company.

More to add, 16 successful candidates (locals and residents) were selected for their excellence achievements in various fields. And therefore, they got awarded at the Honda's Youth Achievement Awards, which was sponsored by "Honda Alghanim", more to add, each candidate earned an exclusive press interview with the CP Magazine.

It's worth mentioning that each interview was presented separately on the pages of the CP magazine, taking into account, a lot of photos were taken & published as well in order to cover the steps of each candidate's journey. Each interview reflected the great picture of how these youths could achieve their dreams successfully. Honda's cars were featured in each spread as an aspirational message, along with Honda's Youth Awards illustration showcasing Honda's determination in achieving dreams."

In addition, the General Manager at "Honda Alghanim" Chadi El Chammas, and the Showroom Manager - Alrai "Honda Alghanim", they both honored the candidates at the Youth Achievement Awards ceremony for their excellence in various fields including art, music, dance, science, academics and business. The event was an extension of Honda's efforts to support the dream seekers. The philosophy is routed back to the founder of Honda, who believed in young dreams and aimed to develop them further.



Health & Science

Doctors warn C-sections are at 'epidemic' proportions globally

Doctors tempted to organize C-sections to ease flow of patients

PARIS: Worldwide Caesarean section use has nearly doubled in two decades and has reached "epidemic" proportions in some countries, doctors warned Friday, highlighting a huge gap in childbirth care between rich and poor mothers. They said millions of women each year may be putting themselves and their babies at unnecessary risk by undergoing C-sections at rates "that have virtually nothing to do with evidence-based medicine".

In 2015, the most recent year for which complete data is available, doctors performed 29.7 million C-sections worldwide — 21 percent of all births. This was up from 16 million in 2000, or 12 percent of all births, according to research published in *The Lancet*. It is estimated that the operation—a vital surgical procedure when complications occur during birth—is necessary 10-15 percent of the time.

But the research found wildly varying country rates of C-section use, often according to economic status: in at least 15 countries more than 40 percent births are performed using the practice, often on wealthier women in private facilities. In Brazil, Egypt and Turkey, more than half of all births are done via C-section.

The Dominican Republic has the highest rate of any nation, with 58.1 percent of all babies delivered using the procedure. But in close to a quarter of nations surveyed, C-section use is significantly lower than average. Authors pointed out that while the procedure is generally over-used in many middle- and high-income settings, women in low-income situations often lack necessary access to what can be a life-saving procedure. "We would not expect such differences between countries, between women by socioeconomic status or between provinces/states within countries based on obstetric need," Ties Boerma, professor of public health at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, and a lead author on the study, said. Jane Sandall, professor of social science and women's health at King's College London and a study author, told AFP that there were a variety of reasons women were increasingly opting for surgery.

Legal concerns

These include "a lack of midwives to prevent and detect

problems, loss of medical skills to confidently and competently attend a vaginal delivery, as well as medico-legal issues." Doctors are often tempted to organize C-sections to ease the flow of patients through a maternity clinic, and

“ Incentives for both doctor and hospital ”

medical professionals are generally less vulnerable to legal action if they choose an operation over a natural birth.

Sandall also said there were often "financial incentives for both doctor and hospital" to perform the procedure. The study warned that in many settings young doctors were becoming "experts" in C-section while losing confidence in their abilities when it comes to natural birth. It also identified an emerging gap between wealthy and poorer regions within the same country. In China, C-section rates diverged from 4 percent to 62 percent; in India the range was 7-49 percent. While the US saw more than a quarter of all births performed by C-section, some states used the procedure more than twice as often as others. "It is clear that poor countries have low C-section use because access to services is a problem," said Sandall. "In many of those countries, however, richer women who live in urban areas, have access to private facilities have much higher C-section use."

Alarming trend

C-sections may be marketed by clinics as the "easy" way to give birth, but they are not without risks. Maternal

NASA head this year, observed the launch from the Baikonur cosmodrome with his Russian counterpart Dmitry Rogozin. He said he was "confident" that a new manned mission to the ISS would go ahead as planned in December, praising the "wonderful relationship" between the Russian and US space agencies.

The next Soyuz launch had been scheduled to take a new crew to the ISS on December 20. The Russian space agency said on Friday it may bring forward the launch of the next mission to the ISS. Looking at times emotional, the NASA chief praised "the resilience" of the Soyuz rocket. "Not every mission that fails ends up so successful," he said. He added he had discussed the accident with US Vice President Mike Pence but not with US President Donald Trump.

He said he had also spoken to US astronaut Nick Hague who appeared in high spirits despite the ordeal. "He was very funny," he said. The NASA chief played down tensions between the two countries, saying space remained an area of cooperation. "We can both do more in space together than we can do alone," he said, adding his relationship with Russian space agency chief Rogozin was "very solid." When asked about the accident, Trump said



CARACAS: In this file photo, doctors carry out a caesarean section in a maternity center in Caracas. — AFP

death and disability rates are higher after C-section than vaginal birth. The procedure scars the womb, which can lead to bleeding, ectopic pregnancies (where the embryo is stuck in the ovaries), as well as still- and premature future births. The authors suggested better education, more midwifery-led care and improved labor planning as ways of ensuring C-sections are only performed when medically necessary, as well as ensuring women properly understand the risks involved with the procedure.

"C-section is a type of major surgery, which carries risks that require careful consideration," said Sandall. In a comment accompanying the study, Gerard Visser of the University Medical Centre in the Netherlands, called the rise in C-sections "alarming." "The medical profession on its own cannot reverse this trend," he said. "Joint actions are urgently needed to stop unnecessary C-sections and enable women and families to be confident of receiving the most appropriate care for their circumstances." —AFP

NASA to use Russia's Soyuz rocket again despite accident

MOSCOW: NASA chief Jim Bridenstine on Friday praised the Russian space program and said he expected a new crew to go to the International Space Station in December despite a rocket failure. "I fully anticipate that we will fly again on a Soyuz rocket and I have no reason to believe at this point that it will not be on schedule," he told reporters in Moscow. The NASA administrator spoke to reporters at the US embassy in Moscow a day after a Soyuz rocket failure forced a two-man crew to make an emergency landing in Kazakhstan.

It was the first such incident in Russia's post-Soviet history—an unprecedented setback for the country's space industry. Bridenstine, who is visiting Russia and Kazakhstan for the first time since his appointment as



MOSCOW: NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine meets with the media at the US embassy in Moscow. — AFP

on Thursday that he was "not at all worried" that Americans had to rely on Russians to go to space. — AFP

DR Congo Ebola death toll climbs

GENEVA: Humanitarian workers are struggling to calm community fears in strife-torn eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where 125 people have died of Ebola, and cases of the virus are spreading fast. The World Health Organization said Friday that 200 cases of the deadly virus have been registered in the outbreak first detected on August 1, with 165 of them laboratory confirmed and 35 considered probable.

The UN agency voiced concern over the swelling number of cases in recent weeks, especially in the town of Beni, near the Ugandan border. "Insecurity that has increased in the city is one of the reasons why we are seeing these new cases coming up," WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic told reporters in Geneva. The latest outbreak—the 10th in DR Congo since Ebola was first detected there in 1976 — emerged in the highly-restive northeastern region of North Kivu, which is home to a clutch of armed groups.

The authorities in Beni have announced measures to protect health workers after a number of incidents where response teams were assaulted. Fears and misconceptions about the virus have led to widespread mistrust and resistance to Ebola response workers, including those who come into communities wearing hazmat suits to orchestrate burials.

UN employee taken ill

A staff member of the UN mission MONUSCO was among the latest victims of the virus, the UN and health ministry said on Friday. The employee was exposed in Beni where the health ministry said it was concerned by a "significant increase in the number of confirmed cases". Two Red Cross volunteers were also last week seriously injured when they were attacked during the burial of a suspected Ebola victim.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) told AFP Friday that it was doing everything it could to minimize the risk to its volunteers on the ground. But IFRC Secretary-General Elhadj As Sy stressed that the organization would never resort to using armed escorts in the areas. "We never use military or armed group protection to do our work... That is not part of our modus operandi," he told AFP.

He said it was not surprising that people living in an area affected by armed conflict would be "totally overwhelmed with another shock like the Ebola crisis," and might have "wrong reactions". "It is not unusual for us to experience these kind of difficulties," he told AFP, adding that much of his organization's work involved engaging with community members to build acceptance of the Ebola response work.

While IFRC is taking "additional safeguards" to protect its volunteers, Sy stressed that there were no plans to withdraw from problematic areas. "It is exactly when it is most difficult, in the time that it is most risky, that we are needed most," he said. WHO meanwhile did temporarily suspend its work trying to halt the outbreak in Beni last month amid increased attacks by armed opposition groups.

Jasarevic said Friday that the agency had resumed its work there, but lamented that continued attacks and violence between government and rebels, while not directly targeted at Ebola responders, meant teams were "not able to function fully". "On a daily basis, we can't go for a couple of hours to some areas because there is either a shooting going on, or there is a protest by groups in the city against this violence," he said. —AFP

My child exists: Breaking the silence over infant loss

MADRID: Every year, 2.6 million children around the world die in the womb or shortly after birth but parents say their grief is all too often avoided as a taboo subject. "You don't get over a child, a child is for life, alive or not," Paloma Costa-Jimenez, 38, told AFP during a memorial ceremony in Madrid ahead of Monday's international pregnancy and infant loss awareness day. Her daughter Andrea died on February 13, 2014, right at the end of her pregnancy. Since then, she has had two other children.

"If your husband dies, no one will tell you: 'Don't worry, you're young, you'll find another'. So why say that about my child?", she asks. "For me Andrea is just as real as Inigo and Mateo," her other two children. "Since people didn't see her and she was only with me nine months, some people think 'it doesn't count'. But it does, it really does, she's my daughter." Broken by their loss, parents often struggle to find the necessary support.

That was the case of Jillian Cassidy, who lost her first daughter Uma in 2007 in her third trimester of pregnancy. "Outside Spain, there were lots of resources—information, support, associations, training of health workers. But here, nothing," said the 42-year-old, who is Irish and lives in Spain. So it was that in 2009, she decided to create Unamamita, Spain's first association to help grieving parents.

Speaking out

"Death makes us uncomfortable," said Cassidy. "Given all the joy that a baby brings, when he or she dies, it's even more problematic and taboo." Yet speaking about it is crucial, just



MADRID: Handmade keepsakes made in memory of deceased babies hang from a wire during a memorial ceremony held in Madrid, ahead of the international pregnancy and infant loss awareness day. — AFP

like any other grieving process, she added. "If parents talk about their baby, talk to them about their baby. If the baby has a name and the parents have told you, use the baby's name," she said.

"Many people are scared of hurting them more if they talk about the baby and actually it's not the case, on the contrary." Beyond this, spending time with the deceased child to create memories—however short-lived—is essential for grieving parents, specialists say. Pilar Gomez-Ulla, a psychologist and co-founder of an association called "The hollow in my belly" that supports them, has experienced that grief as she herself lost three children.

She has since specialized in supporting people suffering from perinatal grief and advising health workers on the issue. "It's not just about offering them to see their child," she said. It's about preparing "parents to properly take the decisions they want: see their baby, touch him or her, discover them, get them dressed, give them a bath, invite other important people in the family to come see the baby, meet him or her, kiss them, and take photos."

Everyone is different

Marie-Jose Soubieux, a Paris-

based child and adolescent psychiatrist and psycho-analyst, said it was crucial to let parents choose what they want to do. "It's very delicate and personal as it's also extremely violent to force someone to see their dead baby," she said. "But it's important that the parents know what can be done." Not all parents have been able to make that decision. Cassidy wanted to see her daughter but "we were advised against it," she recalled.

For her part, Jenny Cardenas left her husband to recognize their son Paul, alone. He died during birth and his twin sister Natalia, who has since also passed away, was in intensive care with cerebral palsy. "I was under anesthesia and I wasn't able to say: 'I'll go'." "When we mothers are so bewildered, so lost, all I ask for is a moment," a pause to digest what is going on and "start seeing your harsh reality maybe a little differently," she said. "Because this is something that will last all our lives, it's transcendental in the life of a mother."

It's only thanks to a photo taken by her husband that Jenny was able to discover her son. "It's a photo that I won't ever tire of looking at, I am going to display it with that of his sister," said Paulo Zapata, the father of the twins. A photo they hope to show their third child, due next year. — AFP

Too fat to fight: Pentagon grapples with obesity epidemic

WASHINGTON: Forget about the high-tech military challenges from China and Russia, the Pentagon is facing a fast-growing national security threat that could be even trickier to tackle: America's obesity crisis. A study released this week has found that nearly one-third of young Americans are now too overweight to join up, a worrying statistic for military officials already facing recruitment challenges. "Obesity has long threatened our nation's health. As the epidemic grows, obesity is posing a threat to our nation's security as well," the Council for a Strong America states in its new report.

The Army last month announced it would miss its goal of attracting 76,500 new recruits in 2018. The shortfall is of about 6,500 soldiers—the first time since 2005 the service had missed its hiring targets. A strong US economy and tight jobs market played a role, but the numbers highlight the dwindling pool of applicants the Pentagon has to draw from. According to the Defense Department, obesity is one of the top reasons why a stunning 71 percent of Americans aged 17-24 do not meet the military's sign-up requirements.

"Given the high percentage of American youth who are too overweight to serve, recruiting challenges will continue unless measures are taken to encourage a healthy lifestyle beginning at a young age," states the study, entitled "Unhealthy and Unprepared." Other factors such as prior drug use or a lack of academic qualifications are also taking a toll. The report, compiled by a group of retired generals and admirals, notes that the obesity issue is a particular worry as it comes when fewer young people are interested in joining the military in the first place.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, a retired Marine general, last month said the shrinking pool of Americans eligible to serve was a "big concern." "It's a sad state of affairs when 71 percent of the 18 to 24-year-old males in this country cannot qualify to enter the United States Army as a private," he said. The problem should be addressed at the local level, he said, praising efforts of retired service members who are working in schools "to try to restore physical education where it's been taken out, to try to get school lunches to be things that fuel the body, instead of just giving them crummy food." The obesity problem persists even after boot camp. According to retired Army major general Jeffrey Phillips, the military spends more than \$1.5 billion each year treating obesity-related health conditions and filling positions vacated by unfit troops. —AFP

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Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

مستشفى دار الشفاء Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele: 1802 555 @daralshifa
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
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What's On

Sheikh Mubarak reinforces importance of growth through Accor Hotels partnership

Chairman of Action Hotels, Sheikh Mubarak AM Al Sabah hosted a round of meetings at Kuwait's White Palace recently with the Chairman and CEO of Accor International, Sebastien Bazin. The discussions focused on the further growth of tourism and hospitality in Kuwait and the region, and included Accor's Chief Executive Officer, Gaurav Bhushan, as well as other team members.

Several ideas were discussed regarding the activation and development of tourism in Kuwait, and the enhancement of opportunities for cooperation with France and other countries in which the Accor manages hotels. The spotlight was placed on the underserved demand for economy and midscale

hotels. The Action-Accor relationship is able to design, develop and operate high quality, affordable, branded accommodation catering to the discerning, budget-savvy business and leisure traveler.

Indeed, Action Hotels plc is already the leading owner, developer and asset manager of branded three- and four-star hotels in prime locations in the Middle East and Australia. The Company's portfolio currently consists of 14 operating hotels, of which 10 are in the Middle East and four in Australia. This includes 11 hotels managed by Accor across three flags, ibis, Mercure and Novotel. Meanwhile, the Mercure Riyadh Olaya and the Novotel Dubai Creek are set to open in 2019.



KNES participates in Chief Science Officer program

Two students (Rawan Al Shafei and Retaj Al Shafei) from Kuwait National English School participated in a scientific leadership program initiated by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). The training took place at Kuwait University (Shuwaikh Campus). During the two days event, Retaj and Rawan participated in the Chief Science Officer (CSO) course. The skills needed to be a scientist and lead research in science were discussed. Scientists use technologies to share research findings and work together with peers around the world. Successful results and findings are

organized and published in journals.

Our students were guided on how research ideas are formulated and discussed. Doctors, Engineers, Environmentalists and Technological experts were present on site at Kuwait University to assist and guide our students. A well planned and designed project has a better chance of bringing results and being successful. The next step is to carry out experiments linked to the research. Rawan and Retaj did some interesting scientific experiments under the supervision of KFAS staff.

Generally, experimental results are carefully organized and conclusions are drawn. Conclusive experimental findings are published in international journals. Kuwait National English School would like to take this opportunity to thank KFAS for their commitment towards driving progress in all fields of science and technology and inspiring the culture of development and innovation. We fully support the mission of KFAS in playing a leading role in driving development forward and in making the State of Kuwait a real pioneer in science and technology.



Dr Hongyoungki the Ambassador of Republic of Korea hosted a farewell dinner for the Ambassador of China Wang Di at his residence over the weekend.



The Festival of Egypt 2018 opens at Lulu Hypermarket

Lulu Hypermarket, the leading retailer and high-value brand in the region, launched 'Lulu Festival of Egypt 2018' at its Al-Dajeej branch on 11 October. The event was inaugurated by the Ambassador of Egypt to Kuwait H.E Tariq Al-Kouni in the presence of top management from Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait and a large gathering of shoppers and well-wishers. The 11-day festival, which had its soft-opening on 10 October, will run till 20 October across all Lulu Hypermarket outlets in Kuwait. During the promotion period special prices will be offered on a wide range of branded products from Egypt, including from well-known brands such as Al Marwa, El Zaher, Frost Foods, Mr Freeze, Sea Star and Sun Moon among others.

Among the highlights of the Lulu Festival of Egypt 2018 are special traditional cultural programs designed to enliven the event, as well as large-size cutouts of iconic Egyptian landmarks and monuments that will draw the attention of shoppers. The Egyptian food festival is part of Lulu Hypermarket's commitment to interact with their shoppers throughout the year. In line with this desire, Lulu Hypermarket conducts various events and promotions throughout the year that highlight the foods and products of countries around the world, while introducing shoppers to the cultural and traditional delights of the country.



12 US universities visiting Kuwait for university fair

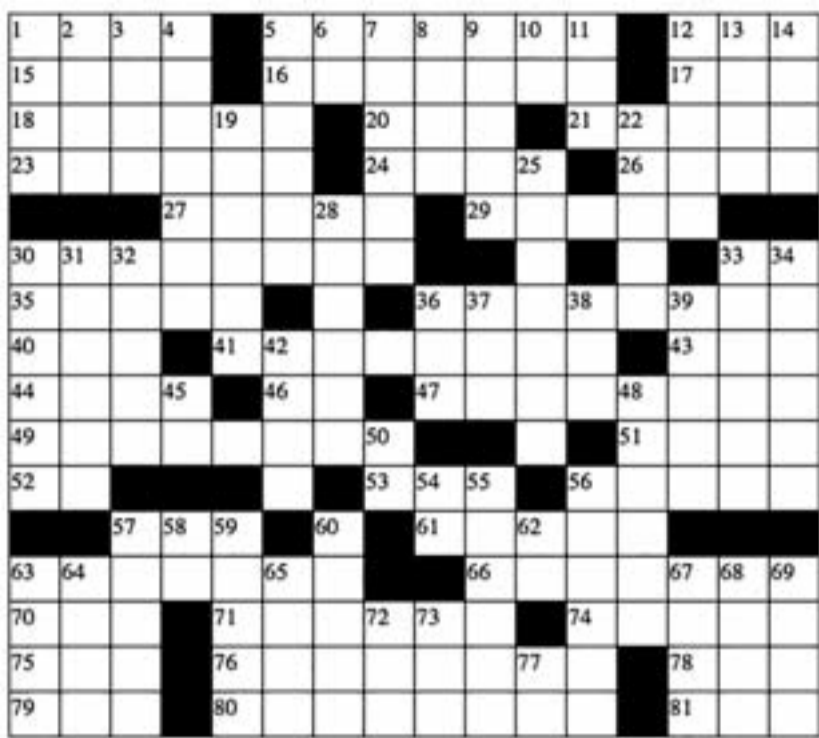
The Linden US University Fair is returning to Kuwait to promote 12 US colleges and universities at the Marina Hotel in Salmiya on Monday, October 15, from 6:00-8:30 pm. At 7:30 pm, the US Embassy's Education USA Adviser will offer a presentation about how to select a college in the United States, followed by a presentation from US Embassy consular officers about the student visa process. The Education USA Adviser and visa officers will be available throughout the fair to answer questions. This fair is free of charge and open to the public. The Linden University Fair gives

students and their parents a chance to meet with representatives from US universities to learn more about education options in the United States. Participating universities include: Babson College, Creighton University, Illinois Institute of Technology, Manhattan College, State University of New York- New Paltz, Susquehanna University, State University of New York- University at Buffalo, University of California-Berkeley, University of California-Santa Barbara, University of Connecticut, University of Illinois - Chicago, and University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.



Stars

CROSSWORD 2033



ACROSS

1. A written agreement between two states or sovereigns.
5. A person who drinks alcoholic beverages (especially to excess).
12. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
15. Beside one another in a row or rank.
16. Causing or able to cause nausea.
17. A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
18. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
20. Marked by skill in deception.
21. Glazed yeast-raised doughnut-shaped roll with hard crust.
23. A port city in southwestern Iran.
24. Large brown seaweeds having fluted leathery fronds.
26. (British) An open river valley (in a hilly area).
27. The recipient of funds or other benefits.
29. Suggestive of the supernatural.
30. (football) The person who plays tail-back.
35. Genus of erect herbs of the Middle East having showy flowers.
40. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
41. An early Christian church designed like a Roman basilica.
43. Alsatian artist and poet who was cofounder of Dadaism in Zurich.
44. A color varying from dark purplish brown to dark red.
46. A radioactive metallic element that is similar to tellurium and bismuth.
47. Not participating in a chemical reaction.
49. Become adolescent.
51. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
52. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
53. A federation of North American labor unions that merged with the Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1955.
61. A summary that repeats the substance of a longer discussion.
63. King of Scotland (died in 1057).
66. A canvas or leather bag for carrying game (especially birds) killed by a hunter.
70. The compass point that is one point north of due east.
71. The soccer or hockey player assigned to protect the goal.
74. An area of sand sloping down to the water of a sea or lake.
75. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
76. Small genus of chiefly American herbs.
78. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
79. A doctor's degree in education.
80. A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade name Clinoril).
81. A serve that strikes the net before falling into the receiver's court.

DOWN

1. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
2. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
3. Large genus of African trees bearing kola nuts.
4. Pretentious or silly talk or writing.
5. (Sumerian) Consort of Dumuzi (Tammuz).
6. A polyvalent metallic element that resembles chromium and tungsten in its properties.
7. The capital of Kyrgyzstan (known as Frunze 1926-1991).
8. A small island.
9. Irish chemist who established that air has weight and whose definitions of chemical elements and chemical reactions helped to dissociate chemistry from alchemy (1627-1691).
10. The square of a body of any size of type.
11. (informal) 'johnny' was applied as a nickname for Confederate soldiers by the Federal soldiers in the American Civil War.
12. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
13. A Gaelic-speaking Celt in Ireland or Scotland or the Isle of Man.
14. (usually followed by 'to') Having the necessary means or skill or know-how or authority to do something.
19. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
22. A river in northern Italy that flows southeast into the Adriatic Sea.
25. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
28. A permanent council of the United Nations.
31. Type genus of the Alaudidae.
32. Small tropical American tree bearing edible plumlike fruit.
33. Immature of its kind.
34. A town in northern Michigan on an arm of Lake Huron.
36. A user interface in which you type commands instead of choosing them from a menu or selecting an icon.
37. Ancient Hebrew unit of liquid measure = 1.5 gallons.
38. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
39. A bar or bars of rolled steel making a track along which vehicles can roll.
42. (Akkadian) Father of the gods and consort of Tiamat.
45. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
48. A native American tent.
50. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
54. A radioactive element of the alkali-metal group discovered as a disintegration product of actinium.
55. A story about mythical or supernatural beings or events.
56. An alloy of copper and zinc (and sometimes arsenic) used to imitate gold in cheap jewelry and for gilding.
57. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
58. A logarithmic unit of sound intensity.
59. Remove gas from.
60. Be going to.
62. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
64. A French abbot.
65. An aromatic balsam.
67. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
68. An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
69. Stairway in India leading down to a landing on the water.
72. Being two more than fifty.
73. An electrically charged particle.
77. A state in midwestern United States.

Friday's Solution

F	T	P	C	O	N	T	R	A	C	T	A	G	E
A	R	A	A	L	V	E	O	L	A	R	G	A	L
R	I	B	A	L	D	G	L	A	R	E	A	L	A
M	O	I	R	A	I	F	R	I	E	D	M	A	N
R	U	B	E	N	S	M	A	D	I	A			
A	S	B	A	H	A	E	M	R	M	G			
B	A	B	A	D	A	G	D	A	S	I	O		
A	N	A	L	A	M	A	S	C	A	L	D		
C	A	R	A	F	A	T	E	B	I	C	A	D	
K	A	N	S	A	N	T	R	I	D	A	C	N	A
C	H	A	G	G	A	N	A	B	O	O	M		
G	A	B	O	R	I	A	U	C	T	E			
H	E	A	T	S	A	A	L	E	D	A	B	A	
A	S	L	C	A	P	I	B	A	R	A	H	A	G
N	O	D	S	P	A	R	E	R	I	B	A	T	E
A	P	R	T	E	R	A	T	O	M	A	B	A	D

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Everything is going your way. It is your time to shine. You may feel as if the world is revolving around you. Enjoy each breath you take. Live life to the fullest and seek the beauty in all that surrounds you. You are beaming with pride and a sense of accomplishment and others will be drawn to you today. Enjoy this feeling and spread joy wherever you go. Keep your chin up and keep going full steam ahead!



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Chaos and clutter have no place in your world today. This is a great time to lighten your load. Take the time to determine what the necessities in your life are and rid yourself of all that isn't. This is a great time to organize not only your surroundings but your thoughts as well. You may find confiding in a friend will lift a burden you have been carrying. A relief and emotional release is on the horizon.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

The sky is the limit. You have set your goals high and by this point you may be looking down on them as you soar above and beyond all expectations you had for yourself. You are on fire. You filled with optimistic feelings and on top of the world. This is a great day for your relationship wise as well as in the workplace. You exude confidence today that so many will find as attractive. Your desires are leading you to crave something new. You are willing to try anything today with your "bring it on" attitude. High energy and happiness fill your world today. Enjoy! You may feel led to take chances concerning your relationship that are led by deep emotions today.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This seems to be a time of great focus on your relationship. You may find yourself searching for and discovering all of the beauty this world has to offer. You find beauty in your surroundings each day, but today you seem to have a greater appreciation for it. This is a very satisfying experience for you. Peace and harmony are great desires in your world and you are entering a phase where you will feel this way often. You may find that your relationships are the key to your emotional success. You may find yourself surrounded with love and support today. Focus on your loved one today and you may find this is where your needs will be fed.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

If an emotional argument is what you are seeking today may just in fact be your day. You may feel a lack of support and blocked at every turn. Use your imagination and ability to think outside of the box to find your answers. Others may see you detached or cool on a personal level today. Your tolerance levels may be low and your temper short. You are drawn now to the unique and unusual in this world. Make your ideas count. Now is a great time to try new things and visit new places. You should find today as one where you are able to make new friends and have great conversations with everyone you cross paths with.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Out with the old and in with the new. Your focus is on ambition, security, and responsibility are areas in your life where you have placed major focus. There are big decisions in your life concerning these areas that need to be made. Knowing you have fallen short of goals in the past has you extremely determined at this point in your life. The easy way is not always the best way. You may reap great reward from your determination. Remember, you can only count on yourself to accomplish your goals. We live in a "what's in it for me" kind of world.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

It is time to get your affairs in order. Focus on your health. Develop new and healthy routines and stick to them. A new and improved you will be the results of these actions. A healthy body will create a healthier mind. Out with the old and in with the new. Treat every day of your life as if the gift it truly is. If you listen to your body, it will tell you exactly what it needs. Aches and pains are there for a reason. Respect what your body is trying to tell you and provide what it is asking for.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

All eyes are on you today and that is just what you crave. You have a great desire to be the center of attention. You crave appreciation for your gifts and talents. This will be a time you are able to look back on with pride. You are drawn to romance. This is a great time to spend with a special someone. Share your passion, whether it be cooking a meal together or painting a picture. Involve the one you love in a project tonight. This may bring you closer and the results good be amazing.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

If an emotional argument is what you are seeking today may just in fact be your day. You may feel a lack of support and blocked at every turn. Use your imagination and ability to think outside of the box to find your answers. Others may see you detached or cool on a personal level today. Your tolerance levels may be low and your temper short. You are drawn now to the unique and unusual in this world. Make your ideas count. Now is a great time to try new things and visit new places. You should find today as one where you are able to make new friends and have great conversations with everyone you cross paths with.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You know who and what are the priorities in your life. Your sense of appreciation is heightened. This is a time you are able to beam with pride when you look at your life situation. You are highly respected and others admire you for what a success you have become. Be sure to appreciate the fact that others seem to always look to you for advice and guidance. Remember to take time for you. You may tend to take the problems of those you love to personally. You can not carry the weight of the world on your shoulders alone. Spend time this evening to unwind. This could prevent you



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may be feeling a need for change. A deep desire for emotional security takes hold now and you feel your most content when surrounded by family and those closest to you. Relationships are a priority in your world now. You feel as if things in your life are monotonous and you are ready to spice things up. This may mean a shiny new car purchase, a vacation, or simply surrounding yourself with a new group of friends. Any direction you choose, this will be a time of excitement and give you a fresh start and a more focused outlook. We all need a bit of change from time to time. Keep life interesting and exciting.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Why me? Why not me? These two questions are motivators for you. When you see others suffering, you realize how fortunate you are. Because you have been given more, you want to give more. When you see something that needs to be done, instead of asking "Why doesn't somebody do something?" you think "What can I do?" You derive satisfaction from bringing happiness to others. Some people are part of the problem; you are part of the solution.

Wordsearch Puzzle

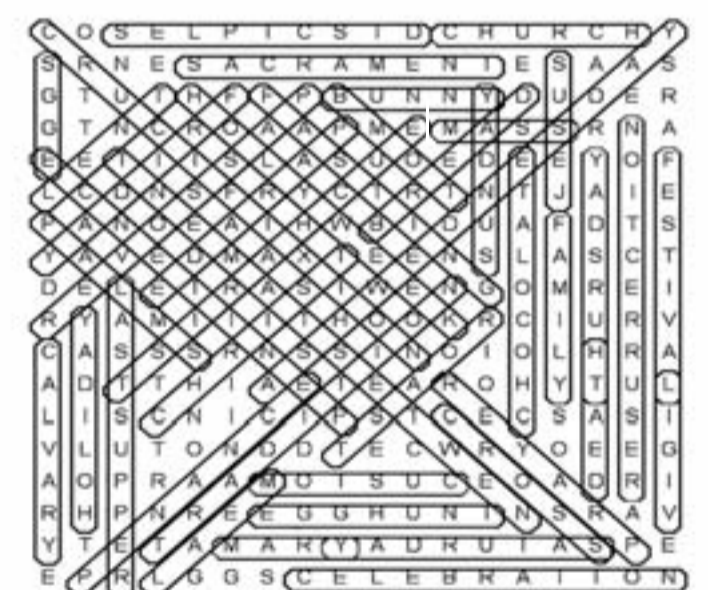
Electronics

Find and circle all of the Electronics related terms that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a common electronic component.



- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| AMPERE | CURRENT | INDUCTANCE | SOLDER |
| ANALOG | DIGITAL | INSULATORS | SWITCHES |
| ANODE | DIODE | LEAD | THYRISTOR |
| CAPACITOR | ELECTRICITY | NEGATIVE | TINNING |
| CATHODE | ELECTRODE | OHMS | TRANSFORMER |
| CELLS | ELECTRON | POSITIVE | TRANSISTOR |
| CHIP | FARADS | POWER | VACUUM TUBE |
| CIRCUIT | FLUX | RESISTANCE | VOLTAGE |
| CONDUCTOR | GATE | RESISTOR | WATT |
| CONTACTS | IMPEDANCE | SILICON | WIRE |

Easter



- | | | | |
|---------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
| ASH WEDNESDAY | DEATH | JESUS | PENITENCE |
| BREAD | DISCIPLES | LAST SUPPER | PRAYER |
| BUNNY | EGG HUNT | LENT | RESURRECTION |
| CALVARY | EGGS | MARY | ROAST |
| CELEBRATION | EUCCHARIST | MASS | SACRAMENT |
| CHOCOLATE | FAMILY | MEAL | SATURDAY |
| CHRIST | FASTING | NEW TESTAMENT | SUNDAY |
| CHURCH | FESTIVAL | PALMS | THURSDAY |
| CROSS | FRIEDAY | PARADE | TOMB |
| CRUCIFIXION | HOLIDAY | PASSOVER | TRADITION |
| CUSTOM | HOLY WEEK | PENANCE | VIGIL |

The hidden message is: ONE EASTER TRADITION IS TO DECORATE EGGS

Daily SuDoku

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

Friday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2018



Britain's Princess Eugenie of York, right, and her husband Jack Brooksbank wave as they emerge from the West Door of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, in Windsor. — AFP

How two 'rebel girls' shook up publishing

Frustrated with children's stories of passive princesses and damsels in distress, two Italian women crowdfunded their way into publishing history with a record-breaking book of inspirational tales for girls. And their revolution has only just begun. The first volume of "Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls" by Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo has become a global sensation, selling more than three million copies with translations in 46 languages.

The 2016 book, telling the life stories of 100 extraordinary women ranging from US author Maya Angelou to Mexican painter Frida Kahlo and Polish-born scientist Marie Curie, was born out of necessity, Cavallo said. "Most books don't feature girls in roles where they take charge of their destiny. In most children's books, when there are female characters, they don't speak," Cavallo told AFP at the Frankfurt book fair.

"We want girls to grow up with the certainty that they can choose the life they want. And never apologize for being too assertive, too ambitious or too brave." Co-authors Cavallo and Favilli, who live in the United States, were determined to change the gender imbalance on the bookshelf—despite

having no publishing experience. "That's our rebel spirit," the 35-year-old laughed.

Over \$1.5 million

The duo had already founded a children's media company in California called Timbuktu Labs, which created the first iPad magazine for children. But to bring out a real-world book, they turned to crowdfunding, setting their goal at a modest \$40,000. They raised over \$600,000, making it the highest funded book ever on Kickstarter. Their second volume of bedtime stories last year smashed that record, raising over \$900,000. The huge appetite

“That's our rebel spirit”

for the books blindsided the traditional publishing industry, spawning a raft of copycat versions as publishers scramble to catch up with demand for empowering stories about women.

Women's moment

At the opening of this week's Frankfurt book fair, the world's largest publishing event, director Juergen Boos cited the Rebel Girls chronicles as an example of how publishing was changing. "We are seeing new ways that literature is being created, bought and received," Boos said, pointing out that it took an online community "to reveal there weren't nearly enough books with female heroines". The second Rebel Girls book, which has sold over 600,000 copies so far, again offers one-page bios of 100 strong women, written in a fairytale-style and paired with a colorful, illustrated portrait.

Beyonce and Oprah are among those featured. Cavallo said it was "no coincidence" the books were so successful at a time when women's voices are growing louder and the #MeToo movement has taken the world by storm, sparking a global debate about sexual harassment. "We are experiencing a moment in history when women are deter-



Francesca Cavallo, co-author of 'Good night stories for rebel girls' poses at the Book Fair in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany. — AFP photos

mined to see women's rights at the front and centre of the political agenda," Cavallo said. "It's probably the best time in history to be a rebel girl. But there is still so much to do."

The third Rebel Girls book is already on the way, an interactive "journal to starting a revolution". It reached its crowdfunding target in just eight hours and will hit bookstores in early December—although backers on Kickstarter will get their copies earlier. The authors have also branched out into podcasts, using famous voices to read out extended versions of some of the biographies. Billionaire philanthropist Melinda Gates is one of the narrators, as is New York Times journalist Jodi Kantor who co-wrote the expose that first revealed the sexual misconduct allegations against Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein.

But what Cavallo and Favilli insist they won't do is expand their brand into rebel books for boys. "We feel it's very important for boys to read books where they are not in the title. Girls have done that their whole lives," Cavallo said. "And a lot of boys tell us they love our stories. Many parents still feel they can't give boys a book about girls. But that's changing too."—AFP



People read books from the series 'Good night stories for rebel girls.'



Books from the series 'Good night stories for rebel girls' by co-authors Francesca Cavallo and Elena Favilli are on display at the Book Fair.

Princess Eugenie shows off back scar in Peter Pilotto wedding dress



Hollywood stars joined Queen Elizabeth and her family for Britain's second major royal wedding this year, as the monarch's granddaughter Princess Eugenie married wine merchant Jack Brooksbank. Eugenie, 28, daughter of the queen's third child, Prince Andrew and his ex-wife Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, tied the knot with Brooksbank, 32, in a traditional ceremony at Windsor Castle's 15th Century St George's Chapel.

It was the same setting as the lavish wedding in May of Prince Harry and his American actress wife Meghan. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, as the couple are now known, were among Friday's congregation. Eugenie's nuptials had much of the same pomp and pageantry as Harry's, but the grandeur for a "minor royal" attracted some criticism.

The 92-year-old queen and her husband Philip, 97, who has retired from official engagements, were joined by other royals and celebrities including Hollywood stars Liv Tyler and Demi Moore, models Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell and singers Ellie Goulding and Robbie Williams. Female guests had to cling on to their hats as a blustery wind threatened their wedding outfits.

Eugenie's dress, by Peter Pilotto and Christopher De Vos of London-based label Peter Pilotto, had a low back to reveal scars from surgery the princess underwent to correct scoliosis when she was 12. "It's a lovely way to honor the people who looked after me and a way of standing up for young people who also go through this," she told ITV's "This Morning" ahead of the wedding. The couple showed clear signs on nerves but beamed happily during the hour-long service.

"This is meant to be a family wedding," Eugenie's father Andrew said earlier. "There will be a few more people than most people have, there are a few more than Harry had, but that's just the nature of Eugenie and Jack - they've got so many friends that they need a church of that size to fit them all in," he told "This Morning" which broadcast the event live. Several hundred singing and cheering well-wishers gathered out-



The scar on the back of Britain's Princess Eugenie of York is clearly visible as she arrives for her wedding.

side in the shadow of the castle, far fewer than the tens of thousands that crammed into Windsor for Harry's wedding.



The groom Jack Brooksbank places a wedding band on the finger of his bride, Britain's Princess Eugenie of York.

"A way of standing up for young people"



Britain's Princess Eugenie of York, left, walks up the aisle with her father Britain's Prince Andrew, Duke of York.—AFP



The bridesmaids and page boys, including Prince George of Cambridge, center right, and Princess Charlotte of Cambridge, left.



Dean of Windsor, David Conner, left, presides over the wedding ceremony.



Britain's Princess Eugenie of York, center, walks up the aisle to marry Jack Brooksbank.



Britain's Princess Eugenie of York is helped into an Aston Martin DB10 by her sister Britain's Princess Beatrice of York.



Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, left, and Britain's Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Lifestyle | Feature



The wedding cake created by baker Sophie Cabot.



Britain's Princess Beatrice of York



Sarah, Duchess of York.



Britain's Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex



British model Cara Delevingne, center, arrives with her brother-in-law James Cook, left, and US journalist Derek Blasberg.

the wife of heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles, as she was carrying out an engagement in Scotland.

After the service, the couple took a horse-drawn carriage tour of Windsor before a reception at the castle hosted by the queen. Eugenie is a director at London's Hauser & Wirth art gallery, and Brooksbank owns a wine wholesale business and is European brand manager for Casamigos Tequila, which was co-founded by US actor George Clooney. Security around Windsor was tight, with airport-style checks and a heavy police presence.

Eugenie does not carry out official royal duties and republicans said it is wrong that the estimated 2 million pound security bill will be paid by taxpayers. "Clearly, a line has been crossed today," opposition Labor lawmaker Emma Dent Coad wrote in the Mirror newspaper, saying even usually pro-monarchist papers had criticized the public funding of the wedding "of a minor member of the royal family". "Whatever our thoughts about the long-term existence of the monarchy, we should know what it costs us," she wrote. "I'm asking for a debate, not a revolution. And it's well overdue."—Reuters



Guests attend the wedding ceremony.



The Great Gatsby

Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli performed during the service led by the Dean of Windsor David Conner. Eugenie's elder sister Princess Beatrice, the maid of honor, read a passage from the "The Great Gatsby" describing the smile of the title character, a rich man famed for throwing parties for the 1920s New York glitterati. The bride had read the F. Scott Fitzgerald novel shortly after meeting Brooksbank in the Swiss ski resort of Verbier in 2010 and it had reminded her of her future husband.

"She decided she wanted eventually to let Jack know how much those words had brought him to mind," Conner said. Princess Charlotte, 3, daughter of Harry's elder brother Prince William and his wife Kate, was a bridesmaid, and her brother, Prince George, 5, a page boy. One noticeable absentee was Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall,



Parents of the groom Nicola and George Brooksbank.



Britain's Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, left, and Britain's Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge.



Singer Ellie Goulding, left



US actress Liv Tyler (R) and her partner Dave Gardner



US actress Demi Moore



Model Naomi Campbell



Pipers from the 2nd Battalion the Royal Regiment of Scotland perform on the roof of Garter Tower.



Britain's Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, left, and Britain's Birgitte, Duchess of Gloucester.



Bridesmaid Theodora Williams, daughter of Robbie Williams and Ayda Field.



Lord Frederick Windsor and his wife Sophie Winkleman



Pippa Matthews

Lifestyle | Music & Movies

India #MeToo claims bring halt to Bollywood blockbuster

India's growing #MeToo storm halted production of a Bollywood blockbuster Friday, with the film's lead calling for harassment claims against its director and his co-star to be "stringently" investigated. Star Akshay Kumar said he had requested that the making of "Housefull 4" be stopped following allegations against director Sajid Khan and one of the film's actors, Nana Patekar. Accusations that Patekar behaved inappropriately on a film set 10 years ago sparked India's #MeToo movement, which has since engulfed Bollywood figures, a government minister and several comedians and top journalists.

Patekar denies the allegations. "I've requested the producers (of 'Housefull 4')... to cancel the shoot until further investigation. This is something that requires stringent action," Kumar said on Twitter. "I will not work with any proven offenders and all those who have been subjugated to harassment should be heard and given the justice they deserve," the 51-year-old actor added. Khan, 46, tweeted his own statement

"I will not work with any proven offenders"

shortly afterwards to announce that he was stepping down from the film "until the time I can allay the allegations and prove the truth".

Three women, an actor, an assistant director and a journalist took to Twitter on Thursday to accuse Khan of sexual harassment. The actress said Khan had insisted that she strip during an audition while the journalist alleged the director had flashed his p**** at her during an interview. Kumar's statement came two days after Bollywood power couple Aamir Khan and his filmmaker wife Kiran Rao announced that they were withdrawing from the film "Mogul" over a molestation case against director Subhash Kapoor.

Kapoor denies the charges. Kumar and Khan's interventions are being lauded for possibly signaling a watershed moment in Bollywood, where established male stars rarely speak out in support of victims. Some Indian actresses have long said that the industry, which is dominated by a few powerful players, needs to create an environment where victims can come forward



Indian Bollywood actress Tanushree Dutta talks during an interview with an Indian media outlet in Mumbai.

without fear of being ostracized. Filmmakers Anurag Kashyap and Vikramaditya Motwane announced at the weekend they were severing ties with Bollywood director Vikas Bahl over a sexual assault allegation.



Indian journalists hold placards at a protest against sexual harassment in the media industry in New Delhi. — AFP photos

Bahl denies that he sexually assaulted a female employee of Phantom Films, the production house behind Netflix original "Sacred Games", in 2015 and has threatened to sue Kashyap and Motwane for defamation.—AFP

Kanye West loves, and hugs Trump

Does rap megastar Kanye West support Donald Trump? He loves him—and proved it Thursday by striding from his chair at a surreal White House meeting to hug the president. "I love this guy right here," the serial

possibly one of the most unusual encounters in the Oval Office's storied history.

Talking loudly and rapidly on everything from Trump's protectionist trade policies to replacing Air Force One with a hydrogen plane, black gun crime, being married to Kim Kardashian and "infinite amounts of universe," Kanye left the normally loquacious president nearly speechless. "That was quite something," Trump finally said to laughter from astonished senior aides and journalists at the end of the soliloquy, which Kanye punctuated with bangs of his fist on the legendary Resolute desk, used by presidents since the 1880s.

"It was from the soul. I just channeled it," the musician said, adding to further gasps that Trump "might not have expected to have a crazy guy like Kanye West supporting him." Trump said Kanye "could very well be" future presidential material, to which the rapper said he would not want to get in the way of the Republican's 2020 reelection. "Only after him in 2024," Kanye said.

Superman

Kanye, who has broken ranks with much of the left-leaning entertainment industry to support Trump, recently took fire for wearing one of the red baseball caps handed out at the president's raucous "Make America Great Again" rallies. Does he care? Kanye not only wore one of the caps into the Oval Office but declared: "There's something about when I put on this hat, I feel like Superman." Trump can only have been delighted.

The president is pushing hard to portray himself as being on the side of blacks, rather than only the overwhelmingly white voter block behind his surprise election. Last year, Trump was heavily criticized for what appeared to be his lukewarm condemnation of a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. He's also locked in an ugly dispute with several black NFL football players who have knelt down dur-

ing the playing of the US national anthem to protest racial inequality.

As recently as August, Trump seemed to be digging himself an even larger hole among African Americans when he got into a Twitter war with basketball great and black icon LeBron James. But he's working to flip that narrative ahead of congressional midterm elections next month. His stump speech includes repeated boasts about record low unemployment for African Americans and he is touting the need for reform of the prison system, where blacks are about 38 percent of inmates, despite being only 13 percent of the US population. Kanye's visit, accompanied by NFL football great Jim Brown, may be the best political advertising he can get.

Black power

In a Fox television interview Thursday, Trump said that Kanye's support had transformed blacks' view of his presidency. "When Kanye came out a couple months ago, something happened," Trump said. "Nobody (has) ever seen it. He has a big following in the African-American community, a big, big following.... The polls went through the roof." Previously, Kanye's reality TV star wife Kim Kardashian has visited the White House to press, successfully, for Trump to grant clemency to Alice Johnson, a woman who was sentenced to life in prison for nonviolent drug crimes.

Trump raised her case again Thursday as an example of why the prison system needs urgent change. Kanye's "terrific" wife opened his eyes, Trump said. "We do need reform. That doesn't mean easy. We're going to make certain categories tougher when it comes to drug dealing and other things, but there has to be a reform because it is very unfair right now," he said. "It is very unfair to African-Americans."—AFP



US President Donald Trump meets with rapper Kanye West in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC.

Grammy winning artist declared in the Oval Office, before taking the president in his arms. The rapper had been invited to lunch to discuss prison reform but turned what would ordinarily have been a staid White House photo-op into

Bollywood king says new age dawning for Indian film

Bollywood box office king Rajkumar Hirani believes a new golden age is dawning for the Indian movie industry as filmmakers look outside the box to tell more varied stories. "Before there was a belief that you had to have songs," said Hirani, the man behind a string of Bollywood hits including the global sensation "3 Idiots". "Now people are completely experimenting with the subject matter."

Even those directors who continue to include songs are also exploring "much darker themes" and still enjoying massive box office success, he said. A case in point is 55-year-old Hirani's latest offering, "Sanju", which the director has brought to this year's 23rd Busan International Film Festival in South Korea, the largest of its kind in Asia. "Sanju" is based on the real-life story of the rise and fall of Indian star Sanjay Dutt, who was born into Bollywood royalty but was jailed after being accused of involvement in the Mumbai terror attacks of 1993.

The director admits the project was a risk given the often grim nature of the story, which includes gritty scenes of drug taking and its lead character's descent into depression. But the strong box office returns have convinced him that audiences want a wider range of options from Hindi language films. "Sanju" has so far grossed \$80 million, placing it third on Bollywood's all-time global earners' list, according to The Times of India newspaper.

"It's very much a human interest story about battling your demons," said Hirani. "It's a very different kind of film than I have done before. "While I was making it everybody thought it was a mistake." But Hirani said he was more confident the film might succeed after seeing the reaction of Dutt, who was released from jail in 2016, at a preview screening. "He saw it three days before its release and I was watching him," said Hirani. "He was crying and after that he sat at home and drank for three days, so I knew it had worked."

No magic formula

As a director and producer Hirani has reaped box office gold with a diverse range of films, from comedies including "3 Idiots" (2009) and alien-on-earth hit "PK" (2014), to the sports drama "Final Round" (2016) and now on to "Sanju". Experts say the Indian film industry is on track for record earnings in 2018, after surpassing last year's \$2.1 billion mark by the end of the first quarter. Across all languages, India now produces more than 1,000 movies a year—several hundred more than come out of Hollywood.

Increasingly these films are finding a global audience. Hirani's "3 Idiots"—the tale of three friends struggling with the pressures of getting an education—was a ground-breaker in terms of international box office success, with around \$30 million in international takings. Hirani said Bollywood filmmakers are expanding their own horizons as their audience grows, both domestically and globally. But the filmmaker stressed he had found no magic wand for making great cinema.

"I don't think there's ever a formula for success in film," said Hirani. "If there was, everyone would share it. I've been fortunate "I guess one of the principles I work with is make the film for yourself not an audience. At least then one person will like it." "You can't judge what the world will like," he added. "If you laugh at the jokes you are writing, if you can cry at the emotional scenes, then hopefully the audience will too."

But for all the guidelines, Hirani says, early on it's hard to predict what the final product will look like. "Every time you start a new film it's like digging a new well. You are not sure what you might find." The Busan International Film Festival runs until Saturday.—AFP

Family of Prince demands Trump stop using his music

The family of Prince has told Donald Trump to stop playing the late icon's songs at rallies, following a phalanx of other angry artists who have told the US president to pull the plug. "The Prince Estate has never given permission to President Trump or The White House to use Prince's songs and have requested that they cease all use immediately," tweeted the musician's half-brother Omarr Baker. The Trump campaign did not immediately respond to an AFP request to comment.

The president's team have reportedly added "Purple Rain," one of Prince's best-loved tracks, to the playlist of recent rallies in the run-up to November midterm elections, including in Mississippi last week. The complaint adds Prince to a long line of musicians or their representatives who have objected to the billionaire Republican head of state blasting out their tunes at his public rallies.

The Rolling Stones, Adele, Neil Young, R.E.M., Aerosmith, Queen and George Harrison are among acts that have lodged objections to the use of their music at Republican gatherings. The family of Italy's late Luciano Pavarotti, one of the most famous tenors of the 20th century, also criticized the use of his signature recording of blockbuster Puccini aria "Nessun Dorma," a fixture at Trump's 2016 rallies.

But during a question-and-answer session on Twitter two years ago Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger was quoted as saying there was nothing he could do under US law to stop Trump playing his music. "If you're in a public place like Madison Square Garden or a theater, you can play any music you want, and you can't be stopped. So, if you write a song and someone plays it in a restaurant that you go to, you can't stop them. They can play what they want," the Daily Beast quoted him as saying.

While US law could allow an artist to ask for his music not to be played at political campaigns, none have yet followed through with any legal action. Prince died aged 57 in April 2016 from an accidental overdose of powerful painkillers. He left no will and had no living children, with his siblings put in charge of keeping his estate afloat.—AFP



Amanda Seyfried



Katy Perry

CATHOLIC 'HEAVENLY' FASHION BREAKS NY MET RECORD

It was the ambitious New York exhibition that brought together haute couture and Vatican treasures, treading delicately so as to keep the Catholic Church on side, and it appears to have paid off. The Metropolitan Museum of Art said Thursday that 1.66 million visitors flocked to its 2018 Costume Institute show, "Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination," making it the institution's most visited exhibition.

That number eclipsed the previous record holder, "Treasures of Tutankhamun," seen by 1.36 million visitors in 1978, the museum said. "Heavenly Bodies," which ran from May 10 to October 8, was the largest exhibition ever mounted by the Met, spread across both its Fifth Avenue premises and Cloisters in Upper Manhattan.

It explored how couture houses have been inspired by church imagery and belief, and included papal robes and accessories from the Sistine Chapel sacristy, many of which had never been seen outside the Vatican. Vogue legend Anna Wintour has spent years raising millions of dollars for the Costume Institute, turning the annual Met Gala into the hottest and most exclusive A-list celebrity party of the year.—AFP

In this file photo Rihanna arrives for the 2018 Met Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. — AFP photos



Classifieds

Sunday, October 14, 2018

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Relatively hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Humid weather specially over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 13/10/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	35 °C	28 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	35 °C	22 °C			
ABDALY	37 °C	23 °C			
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C			
JAHRA	39 °C	24 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	36 °C	29 °C			
SALMIYAH	33 °C	29 °C			
AHMADI	35 °C	29 °C			
NUWASIB	39 °C	24 °C			
WAFRA	38 °C	24 °C			
SALMY	38 °C	24 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	10/14	Relatively hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	39 °C	23 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Monday	10/15	Relatively hot and Humid specially over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	39 °C	22 °C	S-SE	08 - 35 km/h
Tuesday	10/16	Relatively hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear	38 °C	22 °C	S-SE	10 - 32 km/h
Wednesday	10/17	Relatively hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear	38 °C	22 °C	SE-S	12 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:29
Sunrise	05:48
Zuhr	11:34
Asr	14:52
Sunset	17:21
Isha	18:37

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	42 °C
MIN. Temp.	24 °C
MAX. RH	76 %
MIN. RH	12 %
MAX. Wind	SE 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

CHANGE OF NAME

I, undersigned Kurapati Jayaram, holding Indian Passport No: M5452359 issued at Kuwait on 10/02/2015. I would like to change my name to Kamineni Jayaram from Kurapati Jayaram, now onwards and further. (C 5427) 11-10-2018

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Qatar Airways	22423888	PIA	22421044
KLM	22425747	Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6	Indian Airlines	22456700
British Airways	22425635	Oman Air	22958787
Air France	22430224	Turkish Airlines	22453820/1



Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 14/10/2018					Departure Flights on Sunday 14/10/2018				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10	KAC 792 Madinah 13:40	JZR	776	Jeddah 12:05		
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	JZR 779 Jeddah 13:45	QTR	1075	Doha 12:10		
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FEG 341 Sohag 13:50	JZR	176	Dubai 13:10		
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50	IAW 157A Al Najaf 13:55	SAW	702	Damascus 13:30		
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC 672 Dubai 13:55	JZR	144	Doha 13:55		
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	QTR 1078 Doha 14:10	MSR	611	Cairo 14:00		
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	JZR 125 Bahrain 14:15	JZR	552	Alexandria 14:05		
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	GFA 221 Bahrain 14:15	AXB	394	Kozhikode 14:10		
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	FDB 059 Dubai 14:20	UAE	872	Dubai 14:15		
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	KAC 618 Doha 14:20	FEG	442	Asyut 14:50		
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KAC 364 Colombo 14:20	JZR	802	Tbilisi 14:50		
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	KAC 516 Tehran 14:20	IAW	158A	Al Najaf 14:55		
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	JZR 751 Madinah 14:30	GFA	222	Bahrain 15:00		
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	SVA 500 Jeddah 14:45	KAC	673	Dubai 15:00		
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC 788 Jeddah 14:50	FDB	060	Dubai 15:05		
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	ETD 303 Abu Dhabi 15:05	QTR	1079	Doha 15:15		
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC 304 Mumbai 15:05	SVA	501	Jeddah 15:45		
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KNE 529 Jeddah 15:10	KAC	775	Riyadh 15:55		
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KAC 562 Amman 15:20	KNE	530	Jeddah 16:00		
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	OMA 645 Muscat 15:20	KAC	785	Jeddah 16:00		
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	ABY 127 Sharjah 15:35	JZR	606	Kochi 16:00		
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC 502 Beirut 15:35	KAC	563	Amman 16:10		
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	UAE 857 Dubai 15:45	ABY	128	Sharjah 16:15		
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	SYR 341 Damascus 15:55	KAC	619	Doha 16:15		
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	KAC 118 New York 16:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi 16:20		
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	JZR 535 Cairo 16:10	OMA	646	Muscat 16:20		
JZR	551	Alexandria	04:05	QTR 1072 Doha 16:15	SYR	342	Damascus 16:55		
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	FDB 051 Dubai 16:20	KAC	675	Dubai 17:00		
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC 542 Cairo 17:00	KAC	503	Beirut 17:15		
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	SVA 510 Riyadh 17:15	FDB	052	Dubai 17:20		
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	GFA 215 Bahrain 17:30	QTR	1073	Doha 17:25		
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	JZR 145 Doha 17:35	UAE	858	Dubai 17:40		
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:20	JZR 777 Jeddah 17:35	KAC	381	Delhi 17:45		
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	JZR 177 Dubai 17:40	KAC	331	Trivandrum 17:55		
QTR	8511	Doha	05:30	QTR 1080 Doha 18:10	KAC	283	Dhaka 18:00		
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR 483 Istanbul 18:20	GFA	343	Chennai 18:00		
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	MSR 620 Cairo 18:30	SVA	511	Riyadh 18:05		
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	RJA 640 Amman 19:00	JZR	184	Dubai 18:20		
BAW	157	London	06:10	GFA 217 Bahrain 19:05	GFA	216	Bahrain 18:20		
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	UAE 875 Dubai 19:05	JZR	608	Hyderabad 18:25		
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	FDB 063 Dubai 19:10	JZR	240	Amman 18:30		
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	ABY 123 Sharjah 19:20	JZR	538	Cairo 18:35		
JZR	143	Doha	07:00	KAC 156 Istanbul 19:25	JZR	650	Lahore 18:35		
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	KAC 776 Riyadh 19:35	KAC	345	Ahmedabad 19:20		
KAC	358	Kochi	07:35	KAC 674 Dubai 19:40	QTR	1081	Doha 19:20		
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:45	RBG 555 Alexandria 19:40	MSR	621	Cairo 19:30		
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	FDB 057 Dubai 19:50	GFA	218	Bahrain 19:50		
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	KAC 104 London 20:00	FDB	064	Dubai 19:50		
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	DLH 624 Frankfurt 20:05	RJA	641	Amman 20:00		
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	OMA 647 Muscat 20:05	ABY	124	Sharjah 20:00		
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC 620 Doha 20:15	RBG	556	Alexandria 20:20		
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	MEA 402 Beirut 20:15	FDB	058	Dubai 20:30		
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	KAC 166 Rome 20:25	JZR	602	Mumbai 20:30		
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	QTR 1088 Doha 20:40	UAE	876	Dubai 20:35		
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JZR 803 Tbilisi 20:45	DLH	624	Dammam 20:50		
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00	KAC 172 Frankfurt 20:45	KAC	353	Bengaluru 21:00		
IRC	528	Ahwaz	10:00	JZR 553 Alexandria 20:50	KAC	357	Kochi 21:00		
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	UAE 859 Dubai 21:15	OMA	648	Muscat 21:05		
JZR	787	Riyadh	10:30	ALK 229 Colombo 21:15	MEA	403	Beirut 21:15		
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC 676 Dubai 21:35	KAC	301	Mumbai 21:35		
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC 564 Amman 21:50	QTR	1089	Doha 21:50		
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	GFA 219 Bahrain 21:50	DHX	171	Bahrain 21:50		
JZR	903	Baku	11:10	JZR 1082 Doha 22:05	KAC	203	Lahore 22:00		
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	ETD 309 Abu Dhabi 22:10	KAC	1543	Cairo 22:15		
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20	KAC 786 Jeddah 22:15	ALK	230	Colombo 22:20		
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	AIC 981 Chennai/Ahmedabad 22:25	KAC	383	Delhi 22:25		
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	JZR 185 Dubai 22:50	UAE	860	Dubai 22:35		
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	JAI 574 Mumbai 23:00	GFA	220	Bahrain 22:50		
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	MSR 2614 Cairo 23:30	KAC	783	Jeddah 22:50		
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	FDB 071 Dubai 23:35	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi 23:00		
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	JZR 241 Amman 23:40	KAC	411	Bangkok 23:15		
				PIA 205 Lahore 23:40	QTR	1083	Doha 23:20		
					JZR	560	Sohag 23:45		

Malaysia's Anwar returns to frontline politics with big win

China's Belt and Road tempts states, but comes with risks

NUSA DUA, Indonesia: China's massive "Belt and Road Initiative" building push may create debt risks but is also responding to major infrastructure gaps in Asia and could boost global trade, World Bank officials say. The relatively upbeat assessment of a sometimes controversial program comes despite the debt crisis now faced by Pakistan, a recipient of massive Chinese loans. China launched the ambitious plan in 2013 under President Xi Jinping, seeking to link Asia, Europe and Africa with a network of ports, highways and railways.

It has dispersed tens of billions of dollars in loans, often to highly indebted countries, sparking criticism of Beijing for everything from "debt entrapment" to excluding local labor from projects funded by the plan. But, meeting in Bali this week, officials from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund said the BRI filled important gaps, while acknowledging concerns. "There are huge opportunities: improved infrastructure means more trade, more investments, higher growth, bringing in landlocked regions," said Caroline Freund, the Bank's director of trade, regional integration and investment climate.

"But there are challenges as well... There are environmental and social risks, there are issues to do with public procurement, and sustaining public debt becomes an issue because these projects are expensive," she added. The World Bank estimates that BRI-funded infrastructure could boost trade among countries involved by 3.6 percent, and global trade some 2.4 percent. And officials say it is offering funding in areas where it is sorely needed.

Debt fears

"Several countries, especially in Central Asia and Caucasus have benefitted... in order to improve their infrastructure as well as also to promote additional

interregional trade," said Jihad Azour, the IMF's director of the Middle East and Central Asia department. "Central Asia will benefit from any additional investment that will lead to greater integration." He called however for "careful" spending, urged "transparent" procurement processes, and warned that countries should maintain "their debt sustainability".

In the last five years, China's direct investment under BRI has surpassed \$60 billion, leaving several recipients vulnerable. The Centre for Global Development, a think-tank, says BRI investments have "significantly" increased the risk of debt crises in eight countries: Mongolia, Laos, Maldives, Montenegro, Pakistan, Djibouti, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. But Freund said they were the exception, and Chinese loans remained a relatively small part of the total debt burdens of most countries involved in the BRI.

"Most of the countries borrowing from China in this BRI are in a pretty sound fiscal condition and are not in great risk of debt distress," said David Dollar, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a former World Bank official. But for a small number of countries, there are "serious concerns," he acknowledged. Among them is Pakistan, which relied heavily on BRI funding for a \$54-billion project linking its Gwadar port to China. It now faces a balance-of-payments crisis and sent its finance minister to Bali this week seeking an IMF bailout. Rising US interest rates are likely to make the situation worse for many countries, because BRI loans are mostly denominated in US dollars.

'Market forces'

Loan recipients who fail to meet their obligations can face serious consequences, with Sri Lanka forced to cede control of a deepwater port financed by the BRI to Beijing. In August, Malaysia acted preemptively, shelving three China-backed projects, including a \$20-billion railway line, that it said it could no longer afford. "We fully respect Malaysia's decision-making, based on their sustainability situation," Chinese Finance vice-minister Zou Jiayi told a panel at the Bali meeting. "The Chinese government attaches great importance to the sustainability, we are the creditor," she added. — AFP

Taliban confirm meeting with US...

Continued from Page 1

Neither side would go on the record to confirm that meeting, but there has been speculation since then that more talks were planned. The reported July meeting followed an unprecedented ceasefire involving Afghan security forces and the Taliban in June, which fuelled hopes that fighting could be brought to an end after 17 years.

But a wave of attacks by the Taliban and the Islamic State group in recent months and a failed attempt at a second ceasefire have poured cold water on the nascent optimism for peace. The Taliban's decision to issue a statement on the meeting suggests it sees the talks with Khalilzad as a propaganda win, analysts said. The group has long called for bilateral talks with the United States, but Washington has repeatedly refused, insisting the process must be Afghan-led.

But under pressure to break the impasse with the group, Washington appeared to change tack in June when US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said his

country was prepared to "participate" in talks. "The meeting is a success for (the) Taliban. They were demanding to directly meet with the US for a long time and they finally got it," said Afghan political analyst Atta Noori. "Although they have not agreed on anything... they could bypass the Afghan government."

A Western official in Kabul said the Taliban went public on the meeting because "it suits their propaganda". The Taliban statement was issued as Khalilzad returned to Kabul after a regional trip that began with his first visit to Afghanistan since his appointment last month as US envoy. On Monday, he met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and other senior leaders in Kabul before travelling to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Qatar for further talks.

On the same day Khalilzad met with Afghan officials, the Taliban issued a statement vowing to target government security forces in upcoming parliamentary elections, which the United States is helping to finance. Afghan-born Khalilzad, a high-profile former US ambassador to Kabul, Baghdad and the United Nations, is known as a blunt negotiator with hawkish foreign policy views. Fluent in Pashto and Dari, Khalilzad's experience as a foreign policy operative in the country dates back to the 1980s, when he served as an adviser to the Reagan administration. — AFP

Erdogan has so far stopped short of directly accusing Riyadh of wrongdoing. Turkey and Saudi have an uneasy relationship, with disputes over the ousting of the Islamist government in Egypt and the blockade imposed on Ankara's ally Qatar. But Erdogan has generally been wary of needling the oil-rich conservative kingdom and on Saturday again gave a long speech to supporters without mentioning the issue.

The spokesman of Erdogan's ruling party, Omer Celik, acknowledged yesterday that there were "extremely sensational claims" about Khashoggi's fate in the media and said there would be "severe consequences" for anyone found responsible if they were true. "Far from the speculation, work is being carried out in the most sensitive way to find out what happened," he said in televised comments.

The latest claims reported by the pro-government Sabah daily said that Khashoggi had been wearing an Apple Watch when he entered the consulate which was synced with an iPhone left outside with his fiancée Hatice Cengiz. It said that the watch had recorded what happened inside the consulate and this was uploaded to his cloud, although Saudis sought to partially delete it. "The moments of Khashoggi's questioning, torture and killing were recorded on the Apple watch," said Sabah.

Analysts say that Turkey is hoping to find support from its NATO ally the United States in the case, although Ankara-Washington have been in crisis over the detention for the last two years of a Protestant pastor. But the pastor, Andrew Brunson, was freed on Friday and allowed to fly home by a Turkish court, in a move that could help normalize ties.

Meanwhile Prince Mohammed's big October conference - the Future Investment Initiative dubbed by media as the "Davos in the Desert" after the annual conference in the Swiss resort - has suffered a litany of cancellations over the controversy. Key business figures like the chief executive of ride hailing app Uber - into which the Saudi's own investment fund injected money - are no longer showing up while media groups like the New York Times, Financial Times and Bloomberg have pulled their sponsorship. US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said yesterday that he still planned to attend, as did IMF chief Christine Lagarde. She said she was "horrified" by the case but has to "conduct the business of the IMF in all corners in the world and with many governments". — Agencies



PORT DICKSON, Malaysia: Malaysia's People's Justice Party president and leader of the Pakatan Harapan coalition Anwar Ibrahim celebrates after winning in a by-election yesterday. — AFP

PORT DICKSON, Malaysia: Anwar Ibrahim won an overwhelming mandate in a parliamentary by-election yesterday, setting the stage for his return to frontline Malaysian politics and sealing the once-jailed opposition figure's remarkable resurrection. Winning the seat was a key requirement for Anwar to succeed 93-year-old Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who jailed his former protegee and heir apparent on sodomy and corruption charges in 1998 when their relationship soured. Mahathir returned to the premiership this year after a shock election win, saying he would stay in power for only two years before handing the reins to Anwar.

Figures from the Election Commission showed Anwar got more than 71 percent of the total votes cast in a seven-way contest - which included a former aide who lodged the sodomy charges that landed Anwar in prison for a second time in 2014. "I am happy with the results. Allah bless us all," Anwar, 71, said after the victory, which marks the charismatic politician's stunning political comeback from prison to parliament. Anwar was in prison when he forged an unlikely alliance with Mahathir in a bid to unseat then-prime minister Najib Razak, who had called elections for May amid massive corruption allegations. Anwar said late yesterday he told Mahathir about the win and the prime minister was "pleased with the result".

'Influential leader'

"In parliament, I will focus on assisting our MPs to embark on carrying out effective reforms," he declared. But James Chin, a Malaysia specialist at the University of Tasmania, said he expects Anwar to be appointed to the cabinet soon. "A person like Anwar cannot be a back-bencher for long. He has to be in the cabinet," Chin told AFP. "I can guarantee you that people will now be calling this government the Mahathir-Anwar administration, a throw-back to the 1980s."

Underscoring the drama of yesterday's vote, one of Anwar's six challengers was Saiful Bukhari Azlan, the ex-aide who had accused him of sodomy, still illegal in the largely Muslim country. Saiful got only 82 votes. Polls opened under cloudy skies at 8am (0000 GMT) and closed nine and a half

hours later in the sleepy southern coastal town of Port Dickson, home to a sizeable ethnic Chinese community that has traditionally been one of Anwar's pillars of support.

"We are voting for the next premier. We need an influential leader to bring long-overdue progress to Port Dickson," said 60-year-old voter Lee Tian Hock. "This morning, I prayed to Allah for a big win for Anwar," retired truck driver Mat Taib, a member of the country's ethnic Malay majority, told AFP. "I want him to be our eighth prime minister." As Anwar hugged his wife and partymates, dozens of supporters erupted into shouts of "Reformasi" - his battle cry while in opposition - after he was declared winner.

Charismatic politician

There had been little doubt the charismatic politician would win the seat, which was vacated after a member of the ruling coalition stepped down to pave the way for Anwar's return. But he campaigned hard to secure the multi-racial constituency, promising voters development, clean government and a boost to local tourism. Anwar did not discuss the sodomy accusations on the campaign trail. He has always maintained the charges were trumped up to derail his political career. But he has campaigned doggedly on the multi-billion-dollar graft scandal at state fund 1MDB, which led to dozens of corruption charges against former leader Najib and his wife Rosmah Mansor.

Both face the prospect of spending the rest of their lives in jail in a scandal that saw Najib's coalition lose office for the first time since the country declared independence from Britain in 1957. Political heavyweights including Mahathir have campaigned for Anwar during a comeback that was unthinkable even six months ago. The duo went onstage together at one campaign event, prompting wild cheers from supporters. After he was dumped as finance minister and jailed in the 1990s, Anwar led a reformist opposition movement while fighting to overturn his convictions. Mahathir, his mentor turned tormentor and now ally, came back from retirement to lead the Alliance of Hope coalition that won power in May. — AFP

Gazans mourn 7 killed in clashes

Continued from Page 1

The army said approximately 14,000 "rioters and demonstrators" took part in Friday's protests. At least 205 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in Gaza since protests began on March 30. The majority were killed during border demonstrations, though others have died in airstrikes and tank shelling. One Israeli soldier has been killed.

The protesters are demanding to be allowed to return to land now inside Israel, from which their families fled or were displaced during the 1948 war surrounding the creation of the Jewish state. They are also calling for Israel to end its crippling blockade of the strip. Israel accuses Hamas of leading the protests and using them as a cover for attacks. There had been hopes the protests would ease after a UN-brokered agreement to ease the strip's energy crisis took effect this week. But thousands gathered once again on Friday at sites along the border, AFP correspondents said. They added that Hamas leader Ismail Haniya also attended the protests east of Gaza City and hailed the ongoing demonstrations.

Separately, a Palestinian woman died of her wounds after Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank threw stones at the car she was travelling in, Palestinian security sources and media said yesterday. An Israeli police spokesman confirmed a car had been hit by stones but did not identify the perpetrators. He said an investigation was underway but did not give further details. Palestinian official news agency Wafa identified the passenger who died as 48-year-old mother of eight, Aisha Mohammed Rabi.

She died in hospital in the northern West Bank city of Nablus from a head injury sustained in the stone-throwing incident south of the city on Friday, Wafa said, citing medical and Palestinian security sources. Her husband, who was driving the car at the time, escaped with minor injuries, the same sources said. Palestinian witnesses and security sources cited by the news agency said the stones were thrown by Israeli settlers.

Stone-throwing incidents implicating Israeli settlers have risen of late, the Palestinian security sources added. The Israeli army has not commented on the attack. Tensions have been running high in the West Bank over the past week with two attacks against Israelis. On Friday, Israeli forces said they had arrested

a Palestinian on suspicion of stabbing and wounding an army reservist on guard duty at a checkpoint south of Nablus the previous day. Another wanted Palestinian, who is suspected of killing two Israeli colleagues and wounding a third in the northern West Bank last Sunday, remains on the run. Israeli security forces have identified him as Ashraf Naalwa, 23.

Meanwhile, by suspending badly-needed fuel deliveries to the Gaza Strip after deadly overnight clashes, Israel has cast doubts on the viability of the hard-won measure aimed at helping the Palestinian people and easing tensions. The deal, brokered by the United Nations and backed by the United States, Israel and others, had seen thousands of liters of Qatari-bought fuel trucked into Gaza daily to boost the impoverished territory's electricity supply. But only days after being brought into effect, Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman late Friday ordered the deliveries to stop after clashes on the Gaza-Israel border.

The fuel deal had been reached without the agreement of the officially recognized Palestinian government, in what diplomats said was a first for Gaza - which is controlled by the rival Palestinian faction, Hamas. And it had also raised questions on whether Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas is slowly being sidelined. The Palestinian Authority (PA) headed by Abbas has semi autonomy in parts of the occupied West Bank, but lost control of Gaza to Hamas in a near-civil war in 2007. But the PA has long been the only address for most international powers and a senior official declared Thursday it would no longer work with the UN envoy who brokered the deal.

The UN and other parties say they are merely seeking to improve the desperate humanitarian situation in the strip, under a crippling Israeli blockade for a decade. More than two thirds of Gaza's two million residents rely on aid, while there are only four hours of mains electricity a day. Great efforts were made to convince Abbas to agree to the fuel deal, UN and diplomatic sources said, with a decision ultimately made to work around him. "The humanitarian imperative is more important than the relationship with the PA," one diplomat said.

Under the limited agreement which came into force on Tuesday, Qatar, a longtime Hamas backer, was to pay \$60 million for fuel to be brought into Gaza over six months to fuel the strip's sole power plant. At least six trucks have entered the Gaza Strip since Tuesday, bringing more than 200,000 liters of diesel, and there had been plans for it to reach up to 15 trucks a day. On Thursday senior Palestinian official Ahmed Majdalani said UN envoy Nickolay Mladenov, architect of the deal, was "no longer acceptable" to the PA, accusing him of exceeding his mandate. — Agencies

Riyadh slams 'baseless lies'...

Continued from Page 1

Turkey-Saudi relations but also alarm the kingdom's supporters in the West and tarnish the reform drive spearheaded by the crown prince.

"We're going to get to the bottom of it and there will be severe punishment," Trump told CBS's "60 Minutes" program, according to an extract of an interview that was released yesterday. "As of this moment, they (Saudi) deny it and they deny it vehemently. Could it be them? Yes," Trump said in the interview, which was conducted on Thursday. But he again voiced his reluctance to limit US arms sales to the kingdom, which analysts see as one of Washington's key potential levers. Trump, who has become notorious for his attacks on American journalists, added the matter was especially important "because this man was a reporter".

Ankara had said that a search of the consulate had been agreed but this has yet to materialize amid reports the two sides are at odds over the conditions of entry into what is Saudi sovereign territory. "We still have not seen cooperation in order to ensure a smooth investigation and bring everything to light. We want to see this," Cavusoglu said. He said Riyadh must let Turkish prosecutors and experts enter the consulate "to carry out their investigation. "Where did he go missing? There, at the consulate," the Turkish foreign minister said, adding that "talks are continuing" with Saudi officials in a bid to resolve the impasse.

The Saudi delegation was in Turkey and due to have talks this weekend in Ankara and take part in a working group on the disappearance, official Turkish media said. The NTV channel said the 11-person delegation had on Friday inspected the consulate in Istanbul. Riyadh has warmly welcomed the creation of the working group but Interior Minister Prince Abdel Aziz bin Saud bin Nayef slammed claims that the kingdom ordered Khashoggi to be killed inside the consulate. He described the allegations as "baseless allegations and lies".

Ankara has so far trodden carefully in the controversy, with the most sensational allegations splashed in the pro-government press but President Recep Tayyip

Sports

Redzel wins world's richest turf race for second straight time - The Everest crown

Only the Pegasus World Cup in the US carries more prize money

SYDNEY: Redzel won the world's richest turf race for the second straight time in Sydney yesterday, storming to victory ahead of a host of top-rated sprinters to clinch The Everest crown.

With Kerrin McEvoy in the saddle, he took a commanding lead out of the gate at Royal Randwick and was never seriously challenged to collect Aus\$6.0 million (US\$4.2 million) in winnings. Between intermittent showers and before a crowd of 40,000, the Tye Angland-ridden Trapeze Artist was second with Osborne Bulls third.

"I was a bit more relaxed today, last year was a whirlwind," said an ecstatic McEvoy in celebrating his second successive win. "Having done it last year put me in good stead for this year. I had a nice amount of confidence that the horse was going to do well given the rain.

"It's amazing and I'm really thrilled," he added. "This race is just going to get bigger and better." The race over 1200 metres (3/4 mile or six furlongs) brought together some of the world's best sprinters, angling for a slice of a whopping Aus\$13 million in prize money.

The winnings were Aus\$3 million more than in the inaugural race last year and easily top that offered at Australia's iconic Melbourne Cup, where tens of thousands of punters gather in November to watch world champion thoroughbreds race.

Only the Pegasus World Cup in the United States carries more prize money, but it is raced on dirt. Despite the lure of so much cash, The Everest attracted only one overseas entrant-American-bred and European-based US Navy Flag, ridden by Englishman Ryan Moore.

But it was still a cracking field with the runners

boosting countless titles. "It was a masterful ride and Kerrin judged it perfectly," Redzel co-trainer Peter Snowden said. "He did it tough today. He lead from the front and I am just so proud of the horse."

CASHED-UP

Under an innovative concept, buyers were last year invited to purchase a Aus\$600,000 slot in the race and do a deal with owners and jockeys to secure the top horses. Those who splashed the cash were required to commit for three years, ensuring the race's future, but have been able to sell, lease or joint venture their slots prior to the entry date.

Among those invested are private enterprises like Sydney's Star Casino and betting operator Tabcorp. Racing identities such as Max Whitby and Damion Flower also bought in, as did several cashed-up stud farms.

Redzel was run by Yulong Investments, a company established by racing-mad Chinese businessman Yuesheng Zhang, who has emerged as a major player in Australian thoroughbred racing and breeding in recent years.

The idea for The Everest came from Racing NSW chief executive Peter V'landys, who modelled it on the Pegasus World Cup, run over 1800m. But it has been controversial with Racing NSW and the Australian Turf Club scheduling it in Sydney to clash with the Caulfield Guineas meeting in Melbourne.

It has nevertheless proved a huge success and V'landys has plans to swell the prize money even more. "We want it to be the biggest prize money of any race in



Kerrin McEvoy celebrates as Redzel wins the Everest.

the world, not just the biggest on turf," he told reporters ahead of this year's race. "You've got to have dreams, and that's our dream."

While it has caught the imagination, the lead-up this year was overshadowed by a heated row after the New South Wales state government allowed organisers to

promote the race as a light show on the white sails of the Sydney Opera House.

Thousands of protesters argued the world-famous building should not be used to encourage gambling and used flashlights to try and disrupt the projections. — AFP

Gulf Bank 642 Marathon partners with KRCS

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced its partnership with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) for this year's 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon'. The partnership encourages people to donate funds for medical aid to those who are unable to afford medical treatment in Kuwait.

All proceeds will go towards the provision of medical devices such as, pacemakers, cochlear devices, hearing aids, electric wheelchairs and stents. Donations can be made online through the dedicated icon on the marathon's website, or through the web link <https://donation.krcs.org.kw/en-US/Campaign>. There will also be a dedicated donation booth across the four days leading up to the race and on the day of the marathon.

Speaking of the partnership, Ahmed Al Amir, Assistant General Manager of external Communication at Gulf Bank, commented: "Each year, the 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon' partners with a leading organization to raise awareness for a worthy cause. This year, Gulf Bank is pleased to confirm our partnership with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS). It is our honour to aid a local campaign that assists individuals in need of medication or healthcare, including those suffering from chronic diseases and disabilities. We thank you



KUWAIT: Ahmed Al Majed, Pro Vision; Mrs Salma Al Hajjaj, General Manager for Human Resources at Gulf Bank, Anwar Al Hasawi, Vice Chairman - Kuwait Red Crescent Society; Tony Daher, CEO at Gulf Bank and Ahmed Al Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank.

for your support and hope that this initiative will provide a platform to inspire individuals to support a notable cause that leads to the creation of a more empowered society."

Lama Al Othman - Resource Mobilization Director at Kuwait Red Crescent Society, said: "We are thrilled with Gulf Bank's decision to collaborate with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society for this year's Gulf Bank 642 Marathon. The marathon will raise national awareness of the cause, as well as assist us in our goal of providing medical aid to those who need it the most."

The 2017 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon' was an unprecedented success with 6,000 attendees representing over 130 nationalities. This year's fourth Gulf Bank 642 Marathon will take place on November 17th, 2018 and has already received an overwhelming response from the public. The marathon has placed Kuwait on the map for international sporting events. It is the only road race in Kuwait to have received accreditation from the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS). The marathon also has the support of the Kuwaiti government and the private sector.

Doping agency denies trying to bully athletes' representative

LONDON: The World Anti-Doping Agency denied on Friday that it had disrespected or attempted to bully athletes' representative Beckie Scott during a debate in which tensions were "running high" over a decision to reinstate Russia's anti-doping organization.

Scott, chair of the WADA Athlete Committee, said in an interview with the BBC that she was "treated with disrespect" and faced "inappropriate" comments and gestures from the WADA executive committee for her opposition to Russia's reinstatement during a September meeting.

WADA denied that it had mistreated Scott, saying the atmosphere at the meeting was the product of "strong and divergent views." "Following some remarks made by Ms Scott at the executive committee meeting last month, there was discussion among the members on a number of different topics and it is fair to say that during this stage of the meeting, tensions were running high leading to comments from all sides that reflected the strong views held," WADA said in a statement sent to Reuters.

Scott, an Olympic gold medal winner for Canada in cross-country skiing, felt that the tone of the meeting was more dismissive than inclusive, arguing that WADA had little interest in hearing from athletes or their concerns.

"This behavior will never be acceptable. Time to show leadership," said WADA Vice President Linda Helleland, who opposed Russia's reinstatement. "Time to understand one of the reasons WHY WADA Executive Committee exists: To respect and protect the athletes. And listen to their views. It should be no place for bullies!" she said.

Russia's Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA) was suspended in November 2015, after an independent WADA report carried out by Canadian lawyer Richard McLaren outlined evidence of state-backed, systematic doping and cover-ups in Russian sport. WADA laid out a road map to compliance, but on Sept. 20 reinstated RUSADA without Russia having fully met two conditions: recognizing the findings of the McLaren Report and allowing access to stored urine samples at its Moscow lab. — Reuters

Toyota unveils world's first Hybrid Skatepark

TOKYO: As part of its efforts to a mobility company, Toyota has been engaging in long term global partnerships with the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Toyota has launched a global call to action, called "Start Your Impossible". It has also started other mobility initiatives such as the Universal Street Games or the Toyota Mobility Project. To support this approach, the Toyota Wheel Park project aims to bring a smile to multiple generations. It wants to unlock the power of the wheel to transform the way people interact with each other and the world around us.

Toyota has partnered with Rome's Bunker (BNKR) Skatepark to introduce the idea of a

Hybrid Skatepark. It is the first accessible wheel park that brings together both adaptive and non-adaptive wheeled action sports into a single facility.

Toyota's Wheel Park in Rome is more than just a skatepark. Within a single facility, it brings together several wheeled Freesports, including BMX (Bicycle Moto Cross), the newest Olympic sport Skateboarding and one of the youngest action sports on the planet, WCMX (WheelChair Moto Cross). Designed with the needs of athletes with a physical impairment in mind, the park aims to drive social inclusion, urban regeneration and help create new mixed sporting communities.

Whether through the provision of specialist WCMX equipment allowing wheelchair-based athletes to try the sport for the first time or the design and build of new accessible ramps, Toyota has focused on removing all possible barriers to participation. This way of working brings to life the brand's belief that when we are free to move anything is possible.



1968 Olympics, symbol of turbulent times, turn 50

MEXICO CITY: Former Olympic athletes lit a commemorative cauldron Friday to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Games in Mexico City, a symbol of a worldwide year of turbulent times.

At a moment of revolt and upheaval, the Mexico City Olympics brought the worlds of sport and politics crashing together and broadcast the collision live around the globe on color television for the first time.

It was the year that Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated. A year of student protests that exploded in Berlin and Paris and spread around the world. The year the US began to truly question the Vietnam War, and the USSR crushed the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia.

At the Olympics, it was the year of George Foreman, Mark Spitz, Dick Fosbury and his "Fosbury Flop," Bob Beamon's "Leap of the Century," Tommie Smith and John Carlos with their iconic Black Power salute-and so many more.

Fosbury and Beamon returned to the Olympic stadium Friday to take part as veterans of the 1968 Games marched in formation to form the Olympic rings. Mexican sprinter Enriqueta Basilio, the first woman to light the Olympic cauldron, then symbolically re-lit the flame to a burst of applause.

The man who organized the opening ceremony, Luis Armida, recalled the moment five decades ago when Basilio did the same. "This tall, slim girl appeared. She wasn't running, she was flying. Every step looked like a gazelle's," he told AFP.

Now aged 70, Basilio-like all the athletes-was a bit less gazelle-like, but gamely waited atop the steps leading to the cauldron as a succession of torch-bearers passed the flame up to her.

FRAUGHT MEMORIES

The anniversary has brought fraught memories for Mexico, where the winds of change were also blowing in 1968. At the time, capitalizing on the international attention brought by Latin America's first Games, Mexican students took to the streets to call for democracy after four decades of one-party rule.

On the night of October 2, 10 days before the opening ceremony, army troops opened fire on 8,000 peaceful demonstrators in Mexico City, killing between 300 and 500 people.

POWERFUL PLATFORM

Hushed up by the Mexican government, the massacre is little-remembered abroad. But it was certainly noticed by the generation of young, politicized athletes making their way to Mexico City. Smith and Carlos cite it as one of the influences for their defiant protest atop the podium on October 16, 1968, after Smith won gold in the men's 200m-becoming the first person to run the race in under 20 seconds-as Carlos claimed bronze.

On the podium, the African American athletes thrust their black-gloved fists into the air as the national anthem played, a defiant protest against racism in the United States and human rights violations worldwide.

"I came to Mexico City to make a statement. Not to win medals," Carlos said recently after returning to the stadium. Other protests included that by Czechoslovakian gymnast Vera Caslavskva, who won silver in the floor exercise and defiantly bowed her head as the Soviet anthem played for gold medalist Larisa Petrik-recalling how Moscow's tanks had crushed her country's nascent opening. — AFP

Sports

Pant, Rahane give India control in second Test against West Indies

Teenage opener Shaw smash 70 off 53 balls

HYDERABAD: Ajinkya Rahane and Rishabh Pant hit contrasting half-centuries to put India on course for a sizeable first innings lead against the West Indies in the second Test yesterday.

The hosts were 308 for four at stumps, trailing the West Indies by three runs after Rahane, 75, and Pant, 85, put together an unbeaten 146-run fifth-wicket stand in Hyderabad.

Paceman Umesh Yadav also played a part in India's dominance with career-best figures of 6-88 that helped bowl out the West Indies for 311 early in the morning session.

In reply, India were in trouble at 162-4 with West Indies skipper Jason Holder taking two wickets, including his counterpart Virat Kohli's prized scalp in the afternoon session.

But the right-left batting combination of Rahane and Pant then ensured a wicketless final session. Rahane played a cautious knock to register his 15th Test fifty

while Pant was his swashbuckling self, hitting 10 fours and two big sixes in 120 balls.

It was Pant's second successive 50-plus score after his 92 in India's first Test victory at Rajkot.

"We have two set batsmen... Very heartening to see the way Rishabh and Ajinkya have approached the innings because both have been patient and very disciplined," India's batting coach Sanjay Bangar told reporters.

"Ideally if we can bat another two sessions we will be in a great position."

Teenage opener Prithvi Shaw also smashed 70 off 53 balls as India mounted a strong reply, only to lose to their way after lunch.

Shaw fell to left-arm spinner Jomel Warrican after hitting 11 fours and a six and Pujara went for 10 in the very next over off paceman Shannon Gabriel.

Kohli tried to steady the innings with some fluent strokeplay as he built a 60-run partnership with



HYDERABAD: Indian cricketer Prithvi Shaw (R) plays a shot during the second day's play of the second Test cricket match between India and West Indies at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad yesterday. —AFP

Rahane but was denied what could have been his 20th Test fifty.

Holder, who scored 52 in the first innings, trapped Kohli lbw for 45. He also bowled opener Lokesh Rahul for four in the morning session.

CHASE SPECIAL

The West Indies were hit by injury to wicketkeeper Shane Dowrich early in the Indian innings, and were forced to replace him with substitute Jahmar Hamilton behind the stumps.

Hamilton was far from convincing and apart from a few misses down the leg side he dropped Pant on 24 off Gabriel. Earlier, Yadav—who lost his pace partner in debutant Shardul Thakur due to a groin strain on day one—picked all the three West Indian wickets in the morning after the tourists started on 295-7.

Roston Chase top-scored with 106, his fourth Test ton. He was eventually bowled by Yadav. "Umesh got the better of me today but I am still pleased with the century. It is my first century away from home, so it is a special one for me," said Chase. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on day two of the second and final Test between

India and the West Indies in Hyderabad yesterday:

West Indies	
K. Brathwaite lbw K. Yadav	14
K. Powell c Jadeja b Ashwin	22
S. Hope lbw U. Yadav	36
S. Hetmyer lbw K. Yadav	12
S. Ambris c Jadeja b K. Yadav	18
R. Chase b U. Yadav	106
S. Dowrich lbw U. Yadav	30
J. Holder c Pant b U. Yadav	52
D. Bishoo b U. Yadav	2
J. Warrican not out	8
S. Gabriel c Pant b U. Yadav	0
Extras: (b4, lb7)	11
Total: (all out, 101.4 overs)	311
Fall of wickets: 1-32 (Powell), 2-52 (Brathwaite), 3-86 (Hope), 4-92 (Hetmyer), 5-113 (Ambris), 6-182 (Dowrich), 7-286 (Holder), 8-296 (Bishoo), 9-311 (Chase), 10-311 (Gabriel)	

Bowling: U. Yadav 26.4-3-88-6, Thakur 1.4-0-9-0, Ashwin 24.2-7-49-1, K. Yadav 29-2-85-3, Jadeja 20-2-69-0

India

L. Rahul b Holder	4
P. Shaw c Hetmyer b Warrican	70
C. Pujara c Hamilton b Gabriel	10
V. Kohli lbw Holder	45
A. Rahane not out	75
R. Pant not out	85
Extras: (b12, lb2, nb5)	19
Total: (4 wickets, 81 overs)	308
To bat: R. Ashwin, R. Jadeja, K. Yadav, U. Yadav, S. Thakur	
Fall of wickets: 1-61 (Rahul), 2-98 (Shaw), 3-102 (Pujara), 4-162 (Kohli)	
Bowling: Gabriel 13-1-73-1 (nb3), Holder 14-2-45-2 (nb2), Warrican 24-4-76-1, Chase 9-1-22-0, Bishoo 19-4-72-0, Brathwaite 2-0-6-0.	

Morgan guides England to victory over Sri Lanka

DAMBULLA: Captain Eoin Morgan hit 92 decisive runs to guide England to a damp squib win over Sri Lanka with rain halting play for the second straight match in their one-day series.

England were awarded a 31-run victory on a faster run rate after torrential downpour at the Dambulla ground. The tourists scored 278-9 from 50 overs, with Morgan hitting 11 fours and two sixes in his innings, while Test captain Joe Root made 71.

The umpires stopped play with Sri Lanka on 140-5 after 29 of their overs. Thisara Perera was on 44 and Dhananjaya de Silva on 36 when play was halted. They put on 66 for the sixth wicket after Sri Lanka looked in deep trouble at 74 for five.

Heavy rain was still falling an hour after the suspension and England were given victory under the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern run rate system.

Only 15 overs of the first ODI between the two sides was possible on Wednesday before the game had to be abandoned without a result. A warm-up game against a Sri Lanka Cricket XI on October 6 did not start because



DAMBULLA: Sri Lankan cricketer Thisara Perera (R) is watched by England wicketkeeper Jos Buttler (C), Joe Root (L) as he plays a shot during the second one day international (ODI) cricket match between Sri Lanka and England at the Rangiri Dambulla International Cricket Stadium in Dambulla yesterday. —AFP

of rain. "We have had a halted start in training and the first game with the rain," said Morgan.

"I wouldn't say it was our best game. The batting

managed to scrape something together. We should have gone past a par score but ended up scraping to that."

Morgan and Root put England on target to reach 300 but veteran paceman Lasith Malinga took critical wickets at the start and in the lower order to finish on five for 44 on the tricky Dambulla pitch.

He claimed England opener Jason Roy with the fourth ball of the day, brilliantly ended Morgan's innings caught and bowled and also took Moeen Ali, Chris Woakes and Liam Dawson cheaply. Malinga shook England, who slipped from 209 for four. Tailender Adil Rashid's 19 runs off 15 balls helped raise England from 254 for nine to a respectable score. Chris Woakes was England's most threatening bowler, taking three for 26 off just five overs.

Sri Lanka captain Dinesh Chandimal bemoaned the loss of his top order batsmen.

"Apart from the first seven or eight overs when batting we competed really well," he said. "The energy in the field was good to see, and was a plus point today."

"We are always giving away three or four wickets—and that's an area we have to improve as a unit, because that's a winning target." The third 50-over match is in Pallekele on Wednesday. England will also play two Tests and a Twenty20 international against Sri Lanka on the tour, which runs through November 27. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard from the second one-day international between England and Sri Lanka in Dambulla yesterday:

(nb 1, wd 1), de Silva 4-0-19-1

England	
J. Roy c Dananjaya b Malinga	0
J. Bairstow b T. Perera	26
J. Root c Dananjaya b de Silva	71
E. Morgan c and b Malinga	92
B. Stokes c de Silva b Dananjaya	15
J. Buttler b Pradeep	28
M. Ali b Malinga	0
C. Woakes lbw Malinga	5
L. Dawson b Malinga	4
A. Rashid not out	19
O. Stone not out	9
Extras: (lb 3, nb 2, w 4)	9
Total: (9 wickets, 50 overs)	278
Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Roy), 2-72 (Bairstow), 3-140 (Root), 4-190 (Stokes), 5-218 (Morgan), 6-218 (Ali), 7-245 (Buttler), 8-249 (Woakes), 9-254 (Dawson)	
Bowling: Malinga 10-1-44-5 (nb 1, wd 1), Pradeep 10-0-52-1 (wd 2), Dananjaya 10-0-64-1, T. Perera 7-0-37-1, Sandakan 9-0-59-0	

Sri Lanka	
N. Dickwella c Buttler b Stone	9
W. Tharanga c Buttler b Woakes	0
L. Chandimal b Woakes	6
K. Perera c Roy b Dawson	30
M. Shanaka c Buttler b Woakes	8
D. de Silva not out	36
T. Perera not out	44
Extras: (b 1, lb 2, w 4)	7
Total: (5 wickets, 29 overs)	140
Did not bat: A. Dananjaya, P. Sandakan, L. Malinga, N. Pradeep	
Fall of wickets: 1-9 (Tharanga), 2-16 (Dickwella), 3-20 (Chandimal), 4-31 (Shanaka), 5-74 (K. Perera)	
Bowling: Woakes 5-0-26-3 (wd 1), Stone 6-0-23-1 (wd 2), Dawson 6-0-26-1, Ali 10-0-47-0, Rashid 2-0-15-0	
England won by 31 runs under Duckworth-Lewis-Stern rules after the match was interrupted by rain. England lead five match series 1-0.	

Kiwis stave off late Kangaroos rally for 'surreal' win

WELLINGTON: New Zealand and Australia entered a new rugby league era in Auckland on Saturday, with new captains and new faces, and the fresh look brought a new result too with the Kiwis prevailing 26-24.

It was the first time in six years that New Zealand have beaten their nearest neighbours and reigning World champions. Australia mounted a desperate late attack with two tries in the closing five minutes before running out of time.

"It's unbelievable, surreal," Dallin

Watene-Zelezniak, who was captaining New Zealand for the first time, said after the five tries to four victory.

"This is the start. We've set the foundation now, so we've got to keep building on top of that."

Debutants were central figures in the outcome with Joseph Manu and Brandon Smith both scoring tries for New Zealand.

James Tedesco, one of four new faces in the Australian side, scored for the Kangaroos as they rallied from 26-12 down. Australia hit the front in the second minute with a well taken try by Valentine Holmes and regained the lead 12-8 on the stroke of half-time with a try to Dane Gagai, a late addition to the Kangaroos squad.

The 27-year-old South Sydney Rabbitohs flyer only made the squad in a reshuffle when original skipper Greg Inglis was suspended after being caught allegedly drink driving, which saw Boyd Cordner promoted to captain. —AFP



AUCKLAND: Latrell Mitchell of Australia (right) fend off Shaun Johnson of New Zealand (L) during the Trans Tasman rugby league international between New Zealand and Australia at Mt Smart Stadium in Auckland yesterday. —AFP

Warriors seek rare NBA three-peat as Durant ponders move

WASHINGTON: Forget about taking it one game at a time. The Golden State Warriors are embracing their quest for a third consecutive NBA title and they aren't afraid to say so. The Warriors could become the first team to win three crowns in a row since the 2000-2002 Los Angeles Lakers and match the second-longest championship run in NBA history.

"We talk about the three-peat just because it's in front of us," two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Stephen Curry said. "I don't think it's something that's repeated every single day. But when we start the season, obviously we lay everything out on the table, what's at stake in terms of our expectations. We understand that winning a championship is attainable if we take care of our business, and doing it three years in a row is a tremendous opportunity for us that we should not be afraid to talk about and go after."

Only the Lakers, two 1990s Chicago Bulls teams powered by Michael Jordan and the 1952-54 Minneapolis Lakers have won three titles in a row, with the record run of eight belonging to the 1959-1966 Boston Celtics.

But for a seventh-game loss to Cleveland in the 2016 NBA Finals, the Warriors would already be celebrating four crowns in a row instead of seeking a fourth in five campaigns. "You never stop enjoying it. You just start focusing on the next year," said Warriors coach Steve Kerr. "But it's always there. You always see the banner hanging and you see your ring. It never quite goes away. That's the beauty of it."

Fragility adds to the specialness and that comes into play this season, with two-time NBA Finals MVP Kevin Durant and star guard Klay Thompson each set to become free agents next July and the Warriors looking at a salary cap crunch after spending big to assemble and keep a championship lineup.

GREATER EXPECTATIONS

The Los Angeles Lakers, with new star LeBron James, figure to make a bid for Durant, who left Oklahoma City in 2016 to join the Warriors and form a 'superteam' lineup that has gone 8-1 in the NBA Finals.

Just as James left Cleveland and won titles in Miami then departed, the concern is that Durant might arrive to become a champion and then depart, although the Warriors could make the richest offer to keep him and have the lure of a new arena in San Francisco opening with him as a star attraction if he stays, even in a short-term deal.

"There's more expectations now and a little bit more detail," Durant said. "But it's a whole new system and new group of players and more expectations—we'll see how that plays out." The Warriors have endured two-month playoff runs for four years—an extra 83 playoff games amounting to an extra season and less rest than rivals who haven't enjoyed such success. "It's always too short. That's a great problem to have," Thompson said. "Our time in the off-season has been so crunched these last four years so you have to make the most out of every single day... It goes by fast." —AFP

Sports

Salah scores direct from corner, strains muscle in Egypt romp

Ivory Coast crush Central African Republic 4-0, Mali held by second-place Burundi

JOHANNESBURG: Liverpool star Mohamed Salah scored direct from a corner but was later injured as Egypt romped to a 4-1 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying win over eSwatini on Friday.

The striker went down holding his leg as the Group J match drew to a close in Cairo, resumed after receiving treatment, and was almost immediately withdrawn. Speaking after the match, Egypt assistant coach Hany Ramzy told BeIN Sports: "The initial diagnosis, according to the team doctor, is a strong muscle strain. It is not a tear, I think it is not serious."

A spokesman for the team's medical department told the www.kooora.com website: "He (Salah) had a light strain, we will do a scan as soon as possible."

"I doubt he can play next Tuesday. We will be sure after the scan," he added, referring to the return match against eSwatini in Manzini. After scoring 44 goals in all competitions during his first season at Anfield, the striker has netted only three this term, with just one since August.

Salah netted twice and missed two penalties when record seven-time African champions Egypt hammered Niger 6-0 last month in another qualifier.

With eSwatini (formerly Swaziland) ranked even lower than Niger, there were expectations that Salah could get back on the goal trail at the Al Salam Stadium. He blasted a shot wide with Egypt three goals ahead before curling a corner into the net on the stroke of half-time.

Salah fluffed a chance to net again by missing from inside the box during the second half after combining with Arsenal midfielder Mohamed Elneny.

Captain Ahmed Elmohamady, Amr Warda and

Mahmoud Hassan also scored for Egypt and Sibonginkosi Gamedze snatched a late eSwatini goal. Tunisia, who host Niger, and Egypt have six points each in a mini-league both seem certain to qualify from for the 2019 Cup of Nations in Cameroon.

DA COSTA TURNED THE TIDE

Jonathan Kodjia, Manchester United defender Eric Bailly, Cheick Doukoure and Maxwell Cornet scored for the Ivory Coast as they crushed the Central African Republic 4-0 in Bouake.

In the other Group H match, Guinea defeated Rwanda 2-0 in Conakry through goals from Francois Kamano and Ibrahima Cisse to stay three points ahead of the Ivorians.

Angola ended the perfect, two-victory Group I record of Mauritania by recovering from conceding a third-minute goal to triumph 4-1 in Luanda.

Captain Mateus da Costa turned the tide with goals after 12 and 16 minutes, levelling from a penalty before volleying his team into the lead.

Angola and Mauritania have six points and Burkina Faso can join them if they win at home to bottom team Botswana yesterday. An Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting goal earned Cameroon a laboured 1-0 Group B win over Malawi in Yaounde, and Dutch coach Clarence Seedorf his first success as 'Indomitable Lions' coach.

Defending champions Cameroon are guaranteed a place among the 24 finalists next year as hosts, but opted to participate in the mini-league phase to gain competitive match practice. They top the group with seven points, four more than Morocco, who should



BOUAKE: Ivory Coast's captain Serge Aurier (R) vies with Central African Republic's Vivien Mabide (L) during the African Cup of Nations CAN 2019 qualification football match between Ivory Coast and Central African Republic, at the Stade de la paix in Bouake on Friday. — AFP

narrow the gap by defeating the Comoros in Casablanca Saturday.

Group C pacemakers Mali were held 0-0 by second-place Burundi in Bamako after captain Abdoulaye Diaby missed a penalty in the last minute of regular time. Leaders Algeria moved three points

clear of Benin in Group D thanks to a 2-0 win in Blida with Remy Bensebaini and Baghdad Bounedjah scoring. New Gabon coach Daniel Cousin saw his team defeat South Sudan 3-0 in Libreville, Togo snatched a 1-1 draw with the Gambia in Lome and Cape Verde outplayed Tanzania 3-0 in Praia. — AFP

Empty stands for England a reminder football should be for the fans

RIJEKA: "Football without fans is nothing," Celtic's European Cup-winning manager Jock Stein famously opined many years ago. If a reminder of Stein's comment was required, it came during England's 0-0 draw in Croatia, that did neither side's chances of progressing in the Nations League much good.

A goalless draw was fitting of an empty experience with supporters shut out of the 8,000 capacity HNK Rijeka stadium, perched on a hilltop overlooking the Adriatic Sea. Croatia were completing a UEFA sanction to play two matches behind closed doors after a swastika symbol was carved into the pitch during a Euro 2016 qualifier against Italy over three years ago.

It was just the latest in a litany of offences for racism that has seen Croatia consistently punished with fans banned for home matches. However, amid the eeriness of hearing players shake hands before kick-off and shout instructions during the game, the question was raised whether the punishment fits the crime.

"The atmosphere is not easy for anybody, it is sad for football but hopefully this is our last time," said Croatia manager Zlatko Dalic. "Football is played for the fans. It's sad the second and fourth team from the World Cup are playing behind closed doors. I don't know who it is good for."

Croatia finished runners-up to World Cup winners France while England lost to Belgium in the third place play-off. A small band of intrepid England fans did manage to find a nearby hill to catch a glimpse of the Three Lions.

"I could hear the noise," said England boss Gareth Southgate. "It is a shame for the supporters, some of whom haven't missed a game for 10 years or more."

Lukaku strikes twice as Belgium battle past Switzerland

BRUSSELS: Manchester United striker Romelu Lukaku struck twice as Belgium maintained their strong start to the Nations League with a battling 2-1 win over Switzerland on Friday.

When Lukaku found the net with an angled drive on 58 minutes, it looked like Roberto Martinez's men would be giving French World Cup winner Thierry Henry a winning send-off in his final match as Belgium assistant coach ahead of an imminent move to Monaco.

The World Cup semi-finalists took their eye off the ball on 76 minutes, and the King Baudouin Stadium was stunned when Mario Gavranovic poked the ball past Thibaut Courtois from close range in after the Real Madrid 'keeper had been drawn by Nico Elvedi heading Xherdan Shaqiri's floated cross back into play.

But in a busy final period that saw the hosts turn the throttle Lukaku had his second six minutes from time. Belgium's second win of the fledgling tournament keeps them flying high in League A Group 2 following an opening 3-0 win in Iceland.

Fresh from their own 6-0 win over Iceland, Switzerland gave Belgium a run for their money in a fairly balanced opening half in which the hosts mainly flattered to deceive. A Shaqiri effort on two minutes was no trouble for Courtois but Belgium threatening a minute later when Youri Tielemans completed a slick one-two to drive a rasping low shot inches wide of Yann Sommer's left upright.

Yannick Carrasco's header was off-target and then Eden Hazard was allowed to cut in from the left to set up



RIJEKA: England's forward Harry Kane (R) vies with Croatia's midfielder Luka Modric during the UEFA Nations League football match between Croatia and England at Rujevica stadium in Rijeka, on Friday.—AFP

Reversing fixtures so the perpetrators are punished with losing home advantage or even moving games to a neutral venue have been offered as alternative solutions. "While we all endorse the campaign against racism and want to see all that prejudice and bigotry stamped out of the game, the nature of this punishment against the Croatian FA is also punishing the innocent," said Kevin Miles, chief executive of the Football Supporters' Federation in England.

"Because England fans haven't been convicted of anything like that and yet those regular supporters who travel all over the place supporting the team are now locked out of a match and not able to support them."

However, even back in England, the soullessness of seeing the national team play in front of empty stands should be a reminder of the importance of not sacrific-

ing supporters who attend games for increased cash revenue from television deals.

On the same day supporters were shut out in Croatia, the Premier League revealed their TV schedule for the Christmas and New Year period that will see only four days without a match in the fortnight between December 21 and January 3.

UEFA themselves have been accused of prioritising TV for their new competition with the Nations League adopting the "week of football". By spreading matches across six days, many games are taken away from their former weekend sweet spot to attract crowds. England next travel to Spain for a 2045 (1845GMT) kick-off tomorrow night. The football authorities would be well advised to remember the game "without fans is nothing." — AFP



BRUSSELS: Belgium's midfielder Axel Witsel (L) vies with Switzerland's midfielder Remo Freuler (R) during the UEFA Nations League football match between Belgium and Switzerland, at the King Baudouin Stadium, in Brussels, on Friday. — AFP

Carrasco for a decent swipe at goal that inched just wide on 25 minutes. Lukaku showed power and agility to hold off his markers, pivot and complete a one-two with Axel Witsel before testing Sommer's reflexes via a deflection off Fabian Shaqiri's leg.

On 58 minutes Lukaku finally beat Sommer, from the right of the area after an assist from Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Meunier.

From a quickly-take Hazard corner, Mertens' curling drive was spot on but pushed to safety by Sommer at the

far post just after the hour. Minutes later Arsenal's Granit Xhaka fired just wide of Courtois's post.

Barcelona defender Thomas Vermeulen hobbled off to be replaced by Derdrick Boyata on 73 minutes. Minutes later, the Belgian defence were nowhere when Gavranovic poked past the stranded Courtois for a 76th minute leveller. Swiss hopes of a draw crashed when series of passes found Lukaku in space in the area and the big United striker bundled an awkward ball past the splayed Sommer for an 85th minute winner. — AFP

Ex-Italy forward Cassano retires for third time

MILAN: Veteran former Real Madrid and AC Milan forward Antonio Cassano yesterday announced his retirement for the third time just days after the ex-Italian international returned to training.

"The day has come, the day when you decide it really is over," said Cassano, who had returned to training with Serie C side Virtus Entella last Monday. "Over the last few days of training, I realised that I no longer have the mentality to train consistently," said Cassano, whose last competitive match was for Sampdoria in May 2016.

"In order to play football, you need passion and talent, but above all determination and at this moment I have other priorities."

The 36-year-old Cassano—who played for Roma, Real Madrid and both Milan clubs during his career—had first announced he was retiring just a week after signing for Hellas Verona in July 2017.

But he did a swift u-turn saying he wanted to stay with the Verona club for the season, before again calling time after playing two pre-season friendlies. "Now the second half of my life begins, I am curious and fired up to prove first of all to myself that I can do good things even without the help of my feet," added Cassano.

Entella president Antonio Gozzi thanked Cassano for "offering (his) help in the most difficult time (for) Entella." The club from outside Genoa were relegated from the second-tier Serie B after the play-offs last season, but they have played just one Serie C game this season, due to an ongoing dispute over which division they should be playing in.

"I knew it would be a difficult bet to win but it was right to try," Gozzi told Cassano. "For a week our and your dream have flanked reality and the whole world talked about us." Cassano won 39 caps for Italy between 2003 and 2014. He won a Liga title with Real Madrid and Serie A with AC Milan. — AFP

Maradona lashes out at Messi in greatest player debate

MADRID: Argentina great Diego Maradona has hit out at his countryman Lionel Messi, saying the forward is not a leader on the pitch and should not be considered a footballing God. Maradona, who along with Brazil's Pele is widely held to be one of the best players of all time, said Messi was one player at his club Barcelona and another with the national side.

"We shouldn't deify Messi any longer," Maradona said in an interview with Fox Sports. "He's Messi when he plays for Barcelona. Messi is Messi when he wears that shirt and he's another Messi with Argentina."

"He's a great player but he's not a leader. It's useless trying to make a leader out of a man who goes to the toilet 20 times before a game."

The reference was believed to be in connection with Messi's extreme nerves before games that have seen him vomit ahead of some important matches.

Messi, 31, has claimed every possible honour with Barcelona and has won the FIFA World Player of the Year award five times. But he has struggled to reproduce the same scintillating form when wearing the blue and white shirt of Argentina. Messi has been on the losing side in all four of his finals with Argentina - three in the Copa America and at the 2014 World Cup - and has not scored in four World Cup knockout stages. After another disappointing tournament in Russia this year, where Argentina failed to get past the last 16, Messi opted to take a sabbatical from international football. — Reuters

25 Redzel wins world's richest turf race for second straight time - The Everest crown



26 Pant, Rahane give India control in second Test against West Indies



27 Lukaku strikes twice as Belgium battle past Switzerland



Coric stuns Federer in Shanghai

Faces Novak Djokovic in today's Shanghai Masters final



SHANGHAI: Croatia's Borna Coric serves against Switzerland's Roger Federer during their men's singles semi-final match at the Shanghai Masters tennis tournament yesterday. — AFP

SHANGHAI: Roger Federer admitted that he was lacking "punch" after he was turfed out of the Shanghai Masters semi-finals yesterday by 13th-seeded Borna Coric. The Croatian stunned the Swiss great 6-4, 6-4 in what was an unusually error-strewn performance from the 20-time Grand Slam champion. The 21-year-old Coric will face Novak Djokovic in today's final after the Serb thrashed Alexander Zverev 6-2, 6-1, leapfrogging Federer to number two in the world rankings.

Federer has not been at his best all week, dropping sets in the two opening matches of his wobbly title defence. The 37-year-old top seed was more like his old self on Friday, defeating eighth seed Kei Nishikori in two high-quality sets.

But he made a slow start against Coric, ranked 19 in the world, getting broken in the first game. There was a subtle shake of the head when Federer similarly lost his

serve at the start of the second set.

"I thought he was better, I think he had more punch on the ball. He served better," said Federer, proclaiming himself pleased overall with his form.

"I feel like I'm explosive out there, returning well," he added. "Serving, I think, it's okay, could be even a little bit better. "I don't think I played a match where I didn't get broken, so that's something a bit more unusual for me." In contrast, Coric—who is into his first Masters 1000 final—was largely untroubled on his serve. Federer won the Australian Open at the start of this year but has had a mediocre season by his sky-high standards.

He exited the US Open in the last 16 at the hands of unheralded Australian John Millman, ranked 55th, and only made the quarter-finals at Wimbledon.

Coric, who has only two career titles to his name, has

now beaten Federer twice—the previous time was in the final at Halle this year.

Celebrating his 1,000th match in style, the 14-time Grand Slam winner Djokovic was clinical against a shell-shocked Zverev. The 31-year-old is in imperious form and this was his 17th ATP victory in a row, as he taught the rising German star a lesson.

Djokovic will be up to second in the world when the new rankings are released tomorrow, but he is desperate to take injured Rafael Nadal's number one spot before the year is out.

The Serb, who had elbow surgery in February but recovered to win Wimbledon and then the US Open last month, said: "Being number two after this tournament is also a great achievement, considering the first four, five months of the year and considering I had the surgery. "And where I was about four months ago and

where I am today is quite an extreme opposite." The 21-year-old Zverev made an iffy start, beginning his first service game with a double-fault.

The world number five—who beat Djokovic in their only previous meeting, last year in the Rome Masters final—recovered his poise for a time. The first set went with serve, and some big serves at that, until Djokovic grabbed the break to go 4-2 up.

Zverev threatened to unravel and conceded the set in barely 30 minutes after landing a routine smash into the net, to gasps from the arena. The fourth seed, who is yet to win a Grand Slam despite his undoubted talent, angrily threw his racquet at the start of the second set as Djokovic ramped up the pressure. An increasingly exasperated Zverev issued more punishment to his racquet at 3-1 down, earning a code violation and tossing the battered piece into the crowd. — AFP

Thierry Henry named new Monaco coach

MONACO: Former Arsenal star Thierry Henry was yesterday named as Monaco coach, taking his first job in club management after leaving his position with the Belgium national team.

The 41-year-old French World Cup winner, who had been working as an assistant to Belgium coach Roberto Martinez since 2016, returns to the club where he began his professional career.

He has signed a contract with Monaco until June 2021. Henry replaces Leonardo Jardim, who in 2017 guided Monaco to their first Ligue 1 title since 2000. He was sacked on Thursday after a string of poor results left Monaco in the relegation places.

The former striker will be joined by Joao Carlos Valado Tralhao, under-23 coach at Benfica, and Patrick Kwame Ampadu, coach at Arsenal's academy and father of Chelsea player Ethan Ampadu.

Henry graduated from Monaco's youth system and made his debut for the club in 1994. He notably scored seven goals in the 1997-8 Champions League as the Monaco team of the time, then coached by Arsene Wenger, reached the semi-finals, where they lost to Juventus. Henry said it was "fate" that he had returned to the Principality club.

"It is with great pride that I am delighted to announce that I have accepted the position to become the manager of AS Monaco FC," he said on Twitter.

"I was fortunate to receive some very attractive offers over the last few months but Monaco will always be close to my heart. "Having started my footballing career with this great club, it seems like fate that I will now begin my managerial career here too. "I'm incredibly excited to be given this

opportunity but now the hard work must begin. Can't wait." After spending five seasons as a player with Monaco, Henry went on to play for Juventus, Arsenal, Barcelona and the New York Red Bulls.

While at Arsenal, he was the Premier League's top scorer for four seasons and has been tipped as a future manager of the London club.

Henry scored 51 goals in 123 appearances for France, winning not only the 1998 World Cup but also Euro 2000. After the duo oversaw Belgium's 2-1 win against Switzerland in the Nations League on Friday, Martinez said Henry "has the potential to become a great coach". Monaco chief executive officer Vadim Vasilyev, said Henry could "count on our trust and all our support to bring a new dynamic to the team and carry out the mission". "His knowledge of football, his passion for the game, his high standards and his commitment to our colours make his nomination a reality. "Thierry is both aware of the task ahead and eager to start his new job." — AFP



CAEN: In this file photo taken on May 5, 1997 Monaco's players Victor Ikpeba, Thierry Henry and John Collins celebrate after winning the French Ligue 1 championship football match against Caen. Former Arsenal star Thierry Henry was yesterday named as Monaco coach, the struggling Ligue 1 club announced. — AFP