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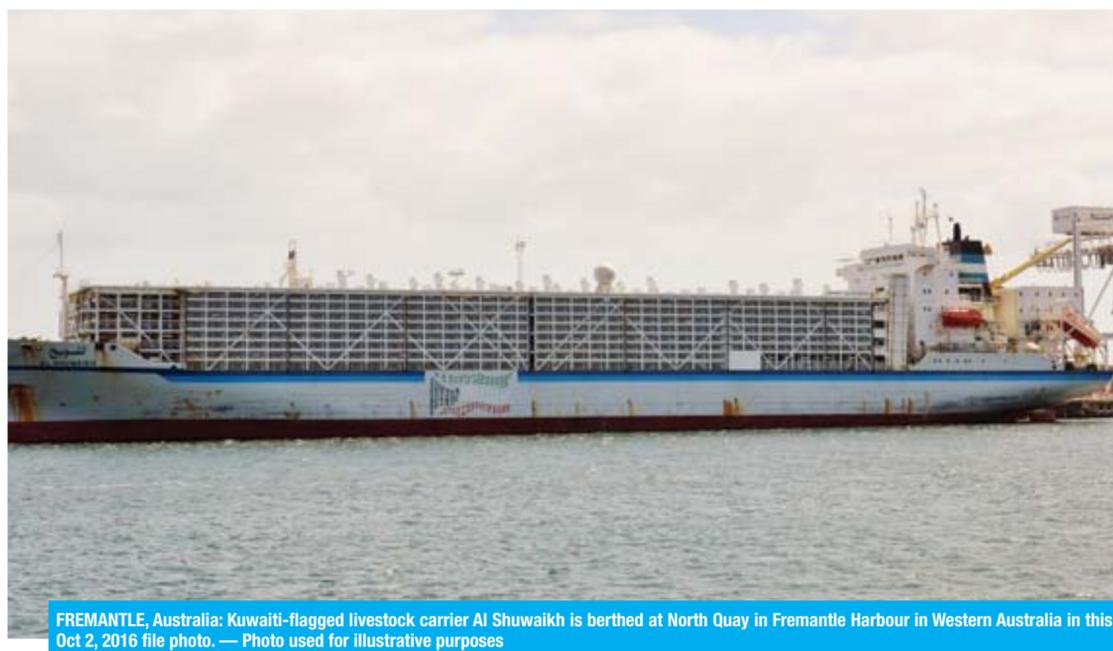


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# Controversy in S Africa over shipment to Kuwaiti abattoir

## Animal rights groups claim conditions dire on Kuwaiti livestock ship



FREMANTLE, Australia: Kuwaiti-flagged livestock carrier Al Shuwaikh is berthed at North Quay in Fremantle Harbour in Western Australia in this Oct 2, 2016 file photo. — Photo used for illustrative purposes

**PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa:** Animal rights activists in South Africa are trying to stop over 60,000 goats, sheep and cows being shipped to a Kuwaiti abattoir, saying many of them would die en route. An inspection of the Al Shuwaikh vessel revealed miserable and cramped conditions, the National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSPCA) said. "Disease, overcrowding, pneumonia, motion sickness, physical trauma and injuries, and stress creates the perfect environment for excruciating suffering and many animals will die in transit," it warned.

The Kuwaiti-flagged vessel is docked in the southeastern port of East London. The animals will be packed like sardines and "not be able to lie down or rest," NSPCA spokeswoman Meg Wilson told AFP. An online petition against the shipment has gathered 77,000 signatures so far. The NSPCA also conducted two inspections at a farm where the sheep are being raised which it said revealed abysmal conditions.

"The sheep were fighting for food, there was no shelter, including in the hospital pens, some animals looked underfed with ocular and nasal discharge. Some were blind, limping and bruised all over their bodies," Wilson said. Authorities in the Eastern Cape province, where East

London is located, said they were not aware that a ship was due to leave for Kuwait shortly carrying live animals. However, they added that all vessels had to meet "strict requirements" for animal welfare, agrarian reform ministry spokesman Ayongezwa Lungisa said.

According to the NSPCA, the ship was supposed to have left in mid-September but could not confirm if it had departed. This is the first time the Al Shuwaikh is attempting to import live animals from South Africa. Previously for a decade, it had imported animals from Australia. Last week, Australia lifted a temporary ban on controversial live sheep exports, with the first ship departing for Kuwait from Fremantle in Western Australia state last Tuesday with about 60,000 animals on board.

Australian live export trade has been under scrutiny since horrific footage of dead and dying heat-stressed sheep on vessels bound for the Middle East was released in April 2018, prompting a public outcry and forcing sweeping reforms to the industry. Though the government resisted calls to outlaw the practice entirely, a review led to a temporary embargo on live exports during the northern-hemisphere summer from June to September this year. — AFP

## Ban on shisha in indoor areas

**KUWAIT:** The Municipal Council yesterday approved a proposal to ban smoking hookah in indoor areas of cafes and restaurants. The decision will now be referred to Minister of Municipal Affairs Fahd Al-Shoula for final approval. The council also approved another proposal to seek retirees' services for preserving marine life and public parks. Moreover, it agreed to a plan to employ state-of-the-art methods and equipment for waste transport in cities and suburbs. The council turned down a request to allow contractors to use plots of land not larger than 500 sq m to erect temporary offices or warehouses throughout the country. — KUNA

## Indian workers in Kuwait, Gulf face new test

**CHENNAI:** As producer of a long-running television show that spotlights the problems faced by Indians working in the Gulf, Rafeek Ravunther is used to hearing their heart-rending stories of exploitation. But a few years ago, he started noticing something

new. Migrant workers, many of them women, were calling the show from Gulf countries saying they were being held for ransom. Their stories all followed a similar pattern - recruitment agents were holding them hostage, demanding large sums of money from their families in exchange for their release.

"The journey back home has become even more difficult for these migrants because of the demands for ransom by the agents," Ravunther told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Many are just stuck there, often under house arrest, because their families can't pay this ransom." Ravunther's account chimes with what labor activists say is a new and growing

form of exploitation in the Gulf states, where the International Labor Organization estimates 9 million Indians work.

Last month, relatives of three victims lodged a petition with India's highest court criticizing official complaint mechanisms - the first time the government has been taken to task in court for its perceived inaction. Many victims are unskilled or semi-skilled workers lured by job agents' promises of good pay and easy work who find themselves trapped in low paying domestic jobs, often working up to 15-hour days and having to endure verbal or physical abuse.

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## MBS prefers political solution to Iran crisis

**WASHINGTON:** Saudi Arabia's crown prince warned in an interview broadcast on Sunday that oil prices could spike to "unimaginably high numbers" if the world doesn't come together to deter Iran, but said he preferred a political solution to a military one. Speaking to the CBS program "60 Minutes", Mohammed bin

Salman also denied ordering the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi operatives last year, but said he ultimately bears "full responsibility" as the kingdom's de facto leader.

While Khashoggi's death sparked a global uproar and tarnished the crown prince's reputation, the Trump administration's tense standoff with Saudi arch-foe Iran has more recently dominated US policy toward Riyadh, especially after Sept 14 attacks on the heart of the Saudi oil industry. "If the world does not take a strong and firm action to deter Iran, we will see further escalations that will threaten world interests," Prince Mohammed, known as MBS, said through a translator.

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Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

## Iran to open oil terminal outside Gulf

**TEHRAN:** Iran said yesterday that it is on track to create a new oil terminal on the Sea of Oman that would open a new export route for its crude and allow tankers to bypass the strategic Strait of Hormuz. The National Iranian Oil Company signed a contract worth around \$52 million yesterday with three local companies to supply 50 pumps for the pipeline project, according to the Iranian oil ministry's Shana website.

The pipeline will run from Bushehr province on the Gulf to Bandar-e-Jask on the Sea of Oman, on the other side of the Strait of Hormuz. "Construction of the Goreh-Jask pipeline and the crude oil export terminal at Jask Port are among the priority plans," Shana reported. The approximately 1,000-km pipeline will bring oil from Goreh in Bushehr to Jask, making it "strategically important as the country's second-largest crude oil export terminal," Shana reported. According to Tehran's official IRNA news agency, Jask will export its first crude within 18 months.

In Sept 2018, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced "a major part" of Iran's exports would be shifted to Jask from the Kharg Island terminal - deep in the Gulf. He said the project would be completed by the end of his term in summer 2021. To reach the oil terminal on Kharg Island, tankers must pass the chokepoint Strait of Hormuz - through which most Gulf oil passes - slowing deliveries by several days.

Iran has in the past repeatedly threatened to block the strait - which is used by its Gulf rivals including Saudi Arabia - when faced with sanctions on its oil exports and possible military action by the US. Washington and Tehran came close to armed conflict in June following a military escalation in the Gulf. — AFP



PATNA, India: Patients and their relatives rest in beds amid floodwaters during heavy monsoon rain at the waterlogged Nalanda Medical College and Hospital in the northeastern state of Bihar on Sept 28, 2019. — AFP

## Late monsoon fury kills 113 in north India

**LUCKNOW, India:** Heavy rains have killed at least 113 people in India's Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states over the past three days, officials said yesterday, as floodwaters swamped a major city, inundated hospital wards and forced the evacuation of inmates from a jail. India's monsoon season that begins in June usually starts to retreat by early September, but heavy rains have continued across parts of the country this year, triggering floods.

An official said that at least 93 people had died in most

populous Uttar Pradesh since Friday after its eastern areas were lashed by intense monsoon showers. Rising water levels forced authorities to shift 900 inmates from a prison in eastern Ballia district, police officer Santosh Verma said. In neighboring Bihar, an impoverished agrarian region that was hit by floods earlier this year, the death toll from the latest bout of rain had reached 20 yesterday, a state government official said.

Bihar's capital city of Patna, home to around 2 million, has been badly hit, with waist-deep flood waters across many streets, and entering homes, shops, and even the wards of a major hospital. In some parts, authorities deployed boats to rescue residents.

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## Iran now 'capable' to destroy Israel; Iraq blames Israel for base attacks

**TEHRAN/BAGHDAD:**

The commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards said yesterday that destroying archrival Israel has become an "achievable goal" thanks to his country's technological advances. "This sinister regime must be wiped off the map and this is no longer... a dream (but) it is an achievable goal," Major General Hossein Salami said, quoted by the Guards' Sepah news site. Four decades on from Iran's Islamic revolution, "we have managed to obtain the capacity to destroy the imposter Zionist regime", he said.

Salami's comments, while not unusual for Iranian officials, come amid particularly heightened international tensions over Iran's nuclear program and a series of incidents that have raised fears of a confrontation

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Hossein Salami