

Bedoons to get Comoros citizenship soon: Jarrah



At NATO, Turkey remains defiant over Russian jet



For some people, the older the smartphone, the better



Bryant says this is last season of his epic career



WORLD LEADERS LAUNCH BID FOR CLIMATE BREAKTHROUGH

HOLLANDE: WORLD AT 'BREAKING POINT' • OBAMA: WORLD AT 'TURNING POINT'



Min 13°
Max 28°
High Tide 02:03 & 14:29
Low Tide 09:25 & 21:52



KUWAIT: Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait Dr Mohammad Yousef Al-Hashel (left) presents HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah a set of commemorative coins issued in his honor at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA

CBK ISSUES COMMEMORATIVE COINS ON AMIR'S UN HONOR

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) has issued commemorative coins to mark the first anniversary of the UN honoring of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a "Humanitarian Leader" in 2014, CBK Governor Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel said. The award by the UN was present-

ed to HH the Amir in recognition of his contributions to alleviating the suffering of people around the world, his support and efforts regarding humanitarian causes and promoting amicable resolution of disputes, Hashel said in a press statement yesterday.

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PARIS: World leaders launched an ambitious attempt yesterday to hold back the earth's rising temperatures, with French President Francois Hollande saying the world was at "breaking point" in the fight against global warming. Some 150 heads of state and government, including US President Barack Obama and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, urged each other to find common cause in two weeks of bargaining to steer the global economy away from its dependence on fossil fuels.

They arrived at United Nations climate change talks in Paris accompanied by high expectations and armed with promises to act. After decades of struggling negotiations and the failure of a summit in Copenhagen six years ago, some form of landmark agreement appears all but assured by mid-December. Warnings from climate scientists, demands from activists and exhortations from religious leaders like Pope Francis have coupled with major advances in cleaner energy sources like solar power to raise pressure for cuts in carbon emissions held responsible for warming the planet.

Most scientists say failure to agree on strong measures in Paris would doom the world to ever-hotter average temperatures, bringing with them deadlier storms, more frequent droughts and rising sea levels as polar ice caps melt. Facing such alarming projections, the leaders of nations responsible for about 90 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions have come bearing pledges to reduce their national carbon output, through different measures at different rates.

For some, climate change has become a pressing issue at home. As the summit opened in Paris, the capitals of the world's two most populous nations, China and India, were blanketed in hazardous, choking smog, with Beijing on "orange" pollution alert, the second-highest level. Over the next two weeks, negotiators will hammer out the strongest international climate pact yet. The deal will mark a momentous step in the often frustrating quest for global agreement, albeit one that - on its own - will not be enough to prevent the earth's temperatures from rising past a damaging threshold.

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PARIS: French President Francois Hollande (left) meets Kuwaiti Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah on his arrival for the opening of the UN conference on climate change yesterday at Le Bourget on the outskirts of the French capital. — AFP

POPE VISITS MOSQUE IN STRIFE-TORN CAR

KUWAITI RAISES FLAG AT EVEREST

KUWAIT: Another Kuwaiti mountaineer succeeded in reaching the Mount Everest Base Camp and raised the Kuwaiti flag and pictures of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

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Kuwaiti mountaineer Fuad Qabazard waves the Kuwaiti flag at the Mount Everest Base Camp. — KUNA



BANGUI: Pope Francis (center) looks on alongside Imam Nehedid Tidjani (second left) during a visit to the Central Mosque in the capital yesterday. — AFP

BANGUI, Central African Republic: Pope Francis yesterday said Christians and Muslims were "brothers" and urged them to reject hatred and violence as he visited a mosque in the Central African Republic's capital which has been ravaged by sectarian conflict. On the last leg of a three-nation tour of Africa, the leader of the world's 1.2 billion Catholic visited a flashpoint Muslim neighborhood in Bangui on what was the most dangerous part of his 24-hour visit.

Thousands of people gathered at the roadside, cheering as his popemobile drove down the red dirt roads. As his vehicle passed, many waving Vatican flags and dressed in long traditional robes, ran down the road after it, an AFP correspondent said. "Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters," he said after meeting Muslim leaders at the Koudoukou mosque in the PK5 district, the last Muslim enclave in

Continued on Page 13

ASSEMBLY WARNS GOVT OVER FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT LAWS

DASHTI: CHANGE NAME OF ROAD

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly yesterday sent a rare warning to the government for failure to apply legislations passed by the National Assembly in the past two years. MP Yousef Al-Zalzal said after chairing a meeting of Assembly panels that MPs are prepared to go as far as sending a non-cooperation letter with the government, which means urging HH the Amir to change the government. Zalzal told reporters that the government is obliged to prepare and issue bylaws for legislation approved by the Assembly in order to start implementing them, but the government has lagged behind.

He said that in case of facing difficulties to apply the laws, concerned ministers should come back to Assembly panels in a bid to find appropriate solutions to the obstacles. Zalzal also criticized the government for failing to properly select its priority issues as failure to do so has confused assembly panels and hindered its work.

In another development, MP Abdulhameed Dashti yesterday urged changing of the name of a main road in Rumaithiya named after Hassan Al-Banna,

the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. Dashti proposed to name the street after martyr Ahmad Qabazard, who was killed during the Iraqi invasion of 1990-91. He said Qabazard was a resident of the area and naming the street in his honor will please residents and all Kuwaitis.

Meanwhile, MP Mohammad Al-Hadiya yesterday totally rejected any government measures that target low income people as a means of narrowing the budget deficit due to the sharp fall of oil revenues. He said there are many solutions to meet the budget deficit away from placing any financial burdens on the people. Hadiya insisted that he and other MPs will stand against any government measure that could hurt the income of the people.

The lawmaker was commenting on reports that the finance ministry was planning to cancel food subsidies to citizens whose monthly income is over KD 1,300. The finance ministry has already denied the report, reiterating that no decision has been taken yet regarding subsidies on services and commodities, except on diesel and kerosene. The ministry said that the issue is still under consideration.

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MIXED VERDICT IN BURNING OF PALESTINIAN TEEN

JERUSALEM: A Jerusalem court found two Israelis guilty yesterday of the burning alive of a Palestinian teen in the run-up to last year's Gaza war, but held off on convicting the alleged ringleader, raising the risk of fresh tensions. The ruling comes amid two months of Palestinian attacks and the court's decision to delay the main suspect's conviction to evaluate his mental state drew criticism from the victim's family and Islamist movement Hamas.

In yesterday's ruling, two Jewish Israelis who were minors when they were charged were convicted by the court of the July 2, 2014 abduction and murder of Mohammed Abu Khdeir, 16. The third defendant, a 31-year-old Israeli settler viewed as the ringleader, was found to have committed the crime, but the court held off on convicting him after his lawyers submitted a report in recent days arguing his mental state meant he was not responsible for his actions.

Abu Khdeir's father denounced the delay in the verdict and called for the trio's houses to be demolished, as Israel does for Palestinian attackers. "The court behaves one way with Arabs and another way with Jews," Hussein Abu Khdeir told reporters outside the court, calling the last-minute psychiatric report by Yosef Haim Ben-David's lawyers a "trick" and asking why it was not submitted earlier.

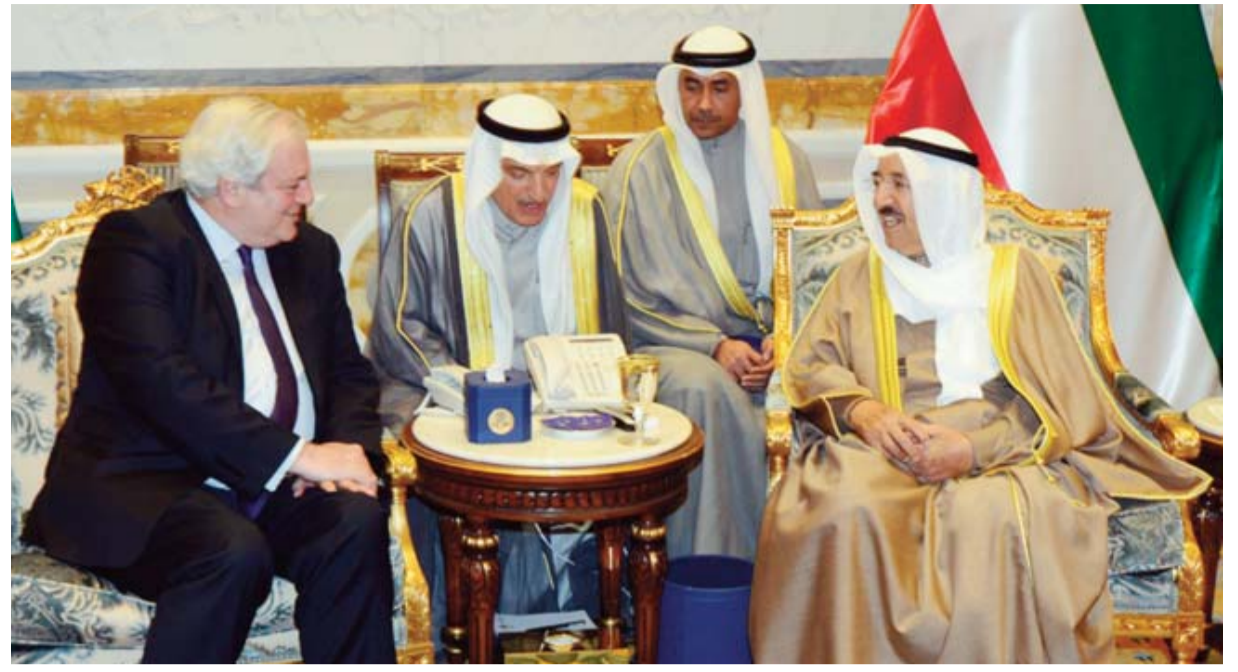
Continued on Page 13



JERUSALEM: The father Hussein and mother Suha of Palestinian teenager Mohammed Abu Khdeir, who was killed last year, stand with posters of their son outside the district court yesterday. — AFP



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Canada's Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets United Nations' Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen Rothwell O'Brien.

OMAIR TAKES OATH AS PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER BEFORE AMIR UN OFFICIALS LAUD AMIR'S HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday, with attendance of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Acting Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, who presented to His Highness Dr Ali Saleh Al-Omair for taking the oath on the occasion of his appointment as the minister of public works.

The swear-in ceremony was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Acting Oil Minister Anas Al-Saleh, General Secretary of the Cabinet Abdul-Latif Abdullah Al-Roudhan, Director of His Highness the Amir Bureau Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad and Head of the Amiri Protocols, Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Deputy Prime Minister and

Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah accompanied by Canada's Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan along with his accompanying delegation.

Humanitarian requirements

His Highness also received the United Nations' Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen Rothwell O'Brien, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres, besides the participants in the 5th Annual Conference on "Effective Partnership and Information Sharing for Better Humanitarian Action", which is held in Kuwait.

Following the meeting, O'Brien said: "I was able to have a discussion over the challenges that we face particularly in this region and how we need to continue to maintain a strong collective commitment meeting the dire needs of people with humanitarian requirements

because of the difficulty of the conflict."

Meanwhile, Guterres lauded the Kuwaiti leader for his support to the Syrian refugees' cause by hosting three donors' conferences. "There was a moment in which the Syrian refugees were forgotten where no one cared and in that moment it was His Highness the Amir that has convinced the international community to make them understand that the Syrian people would need the support of the international community," he said. He added that Kuwait is striving to create a peaceful balance in "a troubled region" by playing the role of "equilibrium of peace." Separately, His Highness the Crown Prince received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas Al-Saleh, National Security Apparatus Chairman Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Canada Abdulhamid Al-Failkawi and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Mauritania Khaled Mohammad Al-Shaibani. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes minister Dr Ali Saleh Al-Omair.



Dr Ali Saleh Al-Omair takes oath as the new Minister of Public Works.



KUWAIT: The Foreign Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghanem and Ambassador of Laos to Kuwait Phouangkeo Langsy cut the ceremony's cake. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



Guests attend the ceremony.



Ambassadors attend the event.

LAOS EMBASSY CELEBRATES NATIONAL DAY

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Foreign Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghanem stressed that both Kuwait and Laos are keen on having outstanding and strong bilateral relations, adding that the recent opening of Kuwait's embassy in Vientiane reaffirms that notion.

Ghanem was speaking on a ceremony held by the Embassy of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to celebrate the country's national day. Asked about a diplomat

who was accused recently of embezzlement, Ghanem stressed strong faith and trust in the judiciary, adding that the ministry fights all forms of corruption. "The ministry provided the court with needed documents", he said. The criminal court recently sentenced a Kuwaiti ambassador to seven years with labor and dismissal from office and sentenced another to five years with labor and dismissal from office on embezzlement charges. Meanwhile, Ambassador of Laos to Kuwait Phouangkeo Langsy stressed that his country's national day on December 2nd was a turning point in Laos' history.

CABINET HOLDS WEEKLY MEETING

KUWAIT: The cabinet held its customary weekly meeting at Bayan Palace yesterday under chairmanship of Acting Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Emerging from the meeting, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said in press statements that the cabinet had been apprised of a decree on His Highness the Amir's acceptance of Minister of Public Works and Minister of Electricity and Water Ahmad Al-Jassar's resignation. The cabinet voiced thanks and appreciation to the minister's achievements and sincere efforts during his career.

It was also informed of a decree appointing Anas Al-Saleh as Acting Minister of Oil, along with his current post as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Ali Al-Omair as Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah as Acting Minister of Electricity and Water, along with his current post as Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs.

The ministers were then notified of a letter sent to His Highness the Amir from Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega Saavedra, appreciating His Highness the Amir and the State of Kuwait for seeking to develop bilateral relations. They were also apprised of the outcomes of the recent visit by Nicaragua's vice-president Moises Omar Haleslebens Acevedo to Kuwait, focusing on ways of developing and bolstering bilateral relations between both friendly nations, the latest regional and international developments and several issues of mutual interest.



KUWAIT: The chair of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, who is currently in Paris to attend the United Nations climate change conference, is seen empty during yesterday's cabinet session. — KUNA

GCC ministers

The Acting Prime Minister and Interior Minister briefed the meeting on the outcomes of the recent meeting of the GCC interior ministers in Qatar, which mainly explored security situations and challenges in the GCC member states.

Afterwards, the cabinet approved draft decrees bearing on a memo of understanding (MoU) for insurance cooperation between Kuwait and Jordan, a MoU on cooperation between Kuwait and UAE in the field of air services, a MoU on cooperation between Kuwait and Korea in land

transport and a MoU on cooperation between Kuwait and Japan in the areas of electricity and water.

It also approved a draft law providing military insurance to GCC citizens working in any GCC member state, thus giving Gulf military personnel pensions or retirement benefits. Discussing the overall Arab and international situation, the cabinet congratulated UAE leaders on the 44th anniversary of their country's National Day, wishing it everlasting security, stability, progress and welfare. — KUNA

'KUWAIT KEEN ON ALLEVIATING SUFFERING'

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah reaffirmed yesterday Kuwait's firmness on strengthening capabilities to cope with lingering humanitarian crises.

Speaking on behalf of Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah made the comments during the 6th Conference on Effective Partnership and Information Sharing for Better Humanitarian Action.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said that the Arabian Peninsula is bearing the brunt of deteriorating human conditions, calling on increased cooperation amongst international organizations to combat these crises that have plagued the world for generations.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled underscored the calamity of the Syrian crisis, highlighting the fact that the war has claimed a staggering 250,000 lives, resulting in the biggest group of refugees in the world. He also decried international inaction in bringing an end to such an immense humanitarian crisis.

The Foreign Minister also extolled Kuwait's persistent efforts in mitigating the suffering of Syrian refugees. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled looked forward to the first ever World Humanitarian Summit to be hosted by Turkey in May 2016, saying the summit provides an opportunity for action needed to alleviate human suffering across the globe. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Suleiman Al-Fahad meets Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Murat Tamer. — KUNA

UNDERSECRETARY, TURKISH ENVOY DISCUSS COOPERATION

KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Suleiman Al-Fahad held talks yesterday with Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Murat Tamer on boosting security, military and education. During the meeting, Turkish ambassador delivered the Kuwaiti official a letter from the Undersecretary of the Turkish Defense Industries. Fahad stressed

the importance of developing security cooperation in various fields, especially equipment and security mechanisms. He also expressed Kuwait's desire to promote security cooperation, pointing to the need to exchange information and experiences in the field due to distinctive Turkish expertise. — KUNA

MAIDS RECRUITMENT COMPANY DECLARED BEFORE DEC END

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait Investment Authority recently received authorizations from relevant authorities concerning the establishment of a shareholding company to bring and hire domestic laborers, said MP Kamel Al-Awadhi, noting that the company would be declared by the end of December 2015.

Comics banned

MP Fares Al-Otaibi said that he had spoken with the information minister about comics containing pornographic material that were reportedly displayed at the Kuwait International Book Fair. The lawmaker said that the minister told him that the images circulating on social media were taken from comics that did arrive but were banned and withdrawn before display. He added

the images were leaked to social media.

Educational difficulties

The parliament's committee for the special needs' affairs is currently working on adding people with educational difficulties to beneficiaries of the disability law, said the deputy chairman MP Madhi Al-Hajri.

Expat technicians

The parliament's budgets and final statements committee yesterday met with the Minister of Awqaf Yaqoub Al-Sane to discuss his ministry's final statement and the report made by the State Audit Bureau for the fiscal year 2014-2015. The committee also inquired about hiring expatriate information technology technicians, leaving 'long queues' of Kuwaiti IT specialists unemployed.



KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Subaih is seen during a tour at the Capital labor department. — KUNA

MAJOR COMPANIES TO APPLY FOR WORKERS' VISAS ONLINE

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih said owners of major companies will be allowed to apply for visas online and that this measure will end many problems resulting from crowding. Speaking during a surprise tour at the Capital labor

department, Subaih said that she had given direct instructions to automate transaction applications and online applications as soon as possible. She added that the tour was part of many others of various labor departments to probe the progress of work and listen to both employees' and citizens' complaints in person. The minister added that she would ask for full lists of the number of employees

working in each department so as to know understaffed ones and work on ending the shortage.

The Municipal Council yesterday approved a proposal made by member Meshari Al-Motoutah concerning cancelling an auction to sell blocks three and four in south Khaitan. The council also approved another proposal on building a special track for drag racing and stunt driving.



A picture from the scene where a tent burst in flames in Sabah Al-Ahmad, killing a man inside.

MAN KILLED IN TENT FIRE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A man died in a fire that broke out in a tent in Sabah Al-Ahmad City. Wafra firemen responded and put out the fire, and the charred body of an Asian man was found. Investigations are underway. Meanwhile, a fire broke out in Dajeej, prompting Farwaniya fire center to dispatch its team. The fire was in a foam and wood warehouse. The fire was put out and no injuries were reported.



The scene after firefighters tackled a blaze in a Dajeej warehouse.

SMUGGLER ARRESTED

Kuwait International Airport customs' supervisor Suleiman Al-Fahd said officers arrested an Asian maid for attempting to

smuggle one kilogram of heroin in the bottom of her suitcase. She was sent to concerned authorities.

KPC, KISR SIGN SOLAR POWER CONTRACT

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) have signed contracts for a model project to use photovoltaic systems (PV) to generate electricity for the latter's building.

They also cover examining the quality of indoor and outdoor air and the impact on the surrounding environment of the Oil Sector Complex. The trend is part of the continuous cooperation between KISR and KPC, KISR Director Nagui Al-Mutairi said ahead of signing the two contracts. He added that the first contract involves a pilot project, expected to be completed in two years, to produce renewable energy worth 10 percent of electricity consumed by the KPC building annually.

The project constitutes a model step toward the use of the scientific applications of renewable energy, and will help enhance public awareness on the use of relevant technologies, Mutairi said. In addition, it will help develop a new local market for solar power.

According to Mutairi, KISR is carrying out a host of major projects for the variation of sources of renewable power, such as the Al-Shaqaya Complex, whose first phase is expected to be completed by the end of 2017. Such ambitious initiatives and projects enjoy close support and follow-up of His Highness the Amir

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, he noted.

As for the second contract, that will also take two years to be completed, Mutairi said that it will focus on assessing the quality of air inside and outside the Oil Sector Complex, based on recommendations of previous studies.

Meanwhile, CEO of KPC Nizar Al-Adsani, said they are keen on making utmost benefit from scientific research to promote work at the corporation. On the first contract, Adsani said that the KPC, through cooperation with KISR, seeks to implement His Highness the Amir's view, namely benefiting from renewable energy for generating electricity to reduce reliance on oil, the chief source of income, and lessen the environment effects of fossil fuels.

Budget of the project is KD 1 million (\$3.28 million), and it will use photovoltaic systems (BV) to generate electricity through solar cells, he said. Referring to the second contract, Adsani said that the KPC is eager to reinforce concepts of security, safety, and environment, as a social culture and an ethical value, through adopting and financing relevant environment projects. Budget of this second project hits KD 150,000, and it is considered extension of previous studies KPC and KISR conducted over the period 2006-2008. — KUNA



Two environment police officers walk by a lake of industrial waste dumped by a tanker truck driver who was arrested yesterday.



An abandoned boat is removed during a campaign in the Khuwaisat chalets' area.

BLOCK REMOVED TO ALLOW PAYING TRAFFIC FINES

TANKER DRIVER ARRESTED FOR DUMPING WASTE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Major Gen Abdallah Al-Muhanna said the department is exerting all possible efforts to allow citizens and expatriates to process their transactions easily and simply without any complications. He said this comes at the instructions of Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah. He said that within this measure, the block on all traffic violations for 2014 will be removed so that citizens and expats can pay their fines. He said as for 2015 violations, the block will be removed except for driving a vehicle without a license, racing without a permit, recklessness, endangering passengers' lives and using the vehicle for purposes other than what it was licensed for (transporting passengers for money), as the block will remain until the legal process is taken. The block will be lifted for one month starting Dec 1, 2015. Muhanna said paying fines can be done through the interior ministry website and violation departments in all governorates or service centers.

Camping season

The Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for

General Security Maj Gen Abdelfattah Al-Ali said his sector is ready for the camping season, as part of the interior ministry's efforts to maintain security and face all negative activities during the season. He said departments participating in the security are security, traffic, civil defense, detectives, emergency, municipality, fire and medical emergencies. He said the plan covers all areas of Kuwait, and asked citizens to cooperate with policemen and comply with the law.

Children found

The Interior Ministry's Department of Relations and Security Information said that three children reported missing by their Kuwaiti father were found safe and sound with their mother. The department said in a statement that the children were in good health, and were sent to the concerned police station to take legal action. Criminal detectives carried out extensive efforts to determine the whereabouts of the children, who went missing due to family disputes.

Industrial waste

Environment police arrested a tanker truck driver dumping industrial waste in a sandy area near the airport runway wire fence on the Seventh

Ring Road. Airport security noticed the truck and a very large black spot in the area, so they called environment police, who called Mubarak Al-Kabeer hazardous material center to analyze the substance, and found it was a caustic chemical. The driver said the industrial waste is from a petrochemical factory he deals with, and he was supposed to take the material to the Wafra industrial waste treatment station. He was sent to the Environment Public Authority. Article 29 of the Environment Protection Law includes a ban on disposing waste of all types in environmentally undesignated areas. Article 131 of the same law says any person who violates article 29 will be jailed for a minimum of three years and a maximum of 10 years, and a fine of a minimum of KD 20,000 and a maximum of KD 200,000.

Abandoned boats

Environment police also carried out a campaign to remove abandoned boats in the Khuwaisat chalets' area in cooperation with the Municipality, Jahra Governorate and the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR). Ten boats were removed and a vehicle used to tow the boats.

MIDEAST HAS LOWEST NUMBER OF HIV CASES

GENEVA: According to UNAIDS 2014 Fact sheet, the Middle East and North Africa is the region with the lowest number of people living with HIV. However, the HIV burden is increasing with rising numbers of AIDS-related deaths and new infections in several countries.

"In 2013, there were some 230,000 160,000-330,000 adults and children living with HIV in the region and there were an estimated 25,000 14,000-41,000 new HIV infections in the region. New HIV infections rose by seven percent between 2005 and 2013," said Ibon Vilelabeitia, Media specialist at the Global Fund against AIDS, TB and malaria in an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

The average of estimated number of people who died of AIDS-related causes in 2013 is 15,000 10,000-21,000 and 15,000 10,000-21,000 people died of AIDS-related causes in the same year. Five countries—Algeria, Iran, Morocco, Somalia and the Sudan—account for 88 percent of these, he said. Iran accounts for 30 percent of all HIV-positive people in the region, with an estimated average of 70,000 47,000-110,000 people living with HIV.

In Sudan, there are 49,000 34,000-70,000 people are living with HIV, representing 21 percent of the regional burden. The HIV burden is mainly concentrated among people who inject drugs, migrants, sex

workers and men who have sex with men, he explained.

Antiretroviral therapy

According to the Global Fund, the sharp increases in AIDS-related deaths can be attributed in part to the very low levels of access to lifesaving antiretroviral therapy across the region. "Only two countries Djibouti and Morocco provided treatment to 20-40 percent of adults and children living with HIV. In seven of the ten countries in the region, fewer than 20 percent of people living with HIV had access to treatment," the Global Fund media specialist said.

Currently, 13 countries in the Middle East/North Africa region are benefitting from Global Fund investments and implementing programs to deal with the fight against the three diseases including HIV.

The Global Fund is also investing in building resilient and sustainable systems for health as part of many of these grants. The fight against AIDS, TB and malaria will only be won "if we make health care and health systems affordable, accessible and effective for all those who need it, particularly vulnerable populations who might not have access due to stigma, ability to pay or distance," said Vilelabeitia.

Activities of the Global Fund by mid-2015 in the region show that 16,000 People are currently on ARV

therapy, 1,400 HIV-positive pregnant women receiving ARV prophylaxis for Prevention from Mother to Child Transmission and 7,800 Basic care and support services provided to orphans and vulnerable children.

The fund dealt with 2,300,000 persons and 2,900,000 people received treatment for sexually transmitted infections. "The global fund is seeking to engage with NGOs in the region as it is recognized they have an important role to play in the implementation of programs, in the communication on the prevention of HIV and in advocacy for political and financial support to address HIV," said Vilelabeitia.

Good example

A good example for the cooperation with global fund and WHO in fighting AIDS is Morocco. Morocco as a low-middle income country has demonstrated important leadership in responding to HIV, particularly in regards to facilitating the meaningful participation of women, civil society and key populations, said the Global Fund. Key populations identify people who experience a greater epidemiological vulnerability to HIV in this case, and may have reduced access to services. They include men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, female sex workers and prisoners. — KUNA

In Brief

FM RECEIVES MESSAGE FROM US COUNTERPART

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday received a written message from US Secretary of State John Kerry. The message handles ways of bolstering and consolidating bilateral cooperative relations between both friendly nations in all fields. — KUNA



AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA DISCUSSES BOOSTING TIES

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ambassador to Australia Najeeb Al-Bader discussed yesterday with First Assistant Secretary of the Middle East and Africa Division at the country's Department of Foreign Affairs Marck Innes-Brown means of developing bilateral cooperation in all levels. The two sides also tackled means of enhancing investments and economic cooperation between both nations. — KUNA



SPANISH CULTURAL ACTIVITIES LAUDED

KUWAIT: Information Minister and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah Sunday welcomed the holding of Spanish cultural and artistic activities in Kuwait, which would further cement bilateral relations. He praised during a meeting with Spanish Ambassador in Kuwait Carlos Saenz de Tejada a photo exhibition, held recently at Dar Al-Athar Al-Isamiyyah. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Fresh 'Zubaidi' or silver pomfret is displayed for sale at the fish market in Sharq. Fishing for the silver pomfret (Pampus argenteus) in Kuwaiti waters is banned between June 1 and July 15 every year to allow it to reproduce and protect it from overfishing. Zubaidi is widely considered the most preferred seafood item in the Kuwaiti cuisine. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

THANKS, INTERIOR MINISTER

By Abdullah Abbas Bowair

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Today, I am talking about a senior official who has devoted himself to serving his home country Kuwait - Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah. The man is well-known and is not a stranger to the interior ministry. He is one of its sons. The man is very righteous and fair, and at the same time, does not tolerate any law violation.

I still recall what he said years ago during what is known as the 'Khatan incident' that caused a lot of damage to public and private property. "There is no courtesy when it comes to security," he said. Yes, your excellency. Those were well-said words!

During the Imam Al-Sadeq mosque incident in Ramadan, you were the first to arrive to the crime scene after His Highness the Amir. You closely watched the procedures and never rested until you identified and caught the culprits who committed such a terrible crime in record time and brought them to justice. You also did very well during Muharram when you provided all husseiniyas with more than enough security.

We all witnessed this first hand and did not hear about it as hearsay. You toured various husseiniyas yourself daily to check how secure they were and provided security for both citizens and expatriates. You had a firm grip towards whoever thought of harming our beloved Kuwait. We cannot also forget how you chased terrorism supporters a few days ago when your men arrested a number of people affiliated to IS in Kuwait and brought them to justice.

Your excellency, we cannot thank you enough, and call to honor you with the highest awards and medals for your sincere efforts and devotion because you are truly the right man in the right place. May Almighty Allah protect you to serve our beloved Kuwait!

KUWAITI IT EXPERT LEADS PROTEGES TO CLAIM EYA

KUWAIT: Under the tutelage of Kuwaiti IT expert Manar Al-Hashash, a team comprised of tech-savvy youth clinched this year's prestigious European Youth Award (EYA) in the Austrian city of Graz yesterday.

In comments to KUNA, Hashash said that she had taken a team of Polish youth under her wing to take part in an initiative dubbed, 'The Wings of Success'. She also explained that a total of 12 European judges were selected to monitor the contest with the IT buff being the only foreign member of the panel. Moreover, Hashash also participated in informative seminars and presentations that tackled various aspects of the world of information technology.

The Kuwaiti IT expert was grateful for being chosen by the EYA as a member of its mentoring team for the second consecutive year. Endorsed by the European Council and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the EYA aims to motivate the youth to adapt to the latest technological breakthroughs. Hashash, one of Kuwait's eminent IT experts, has enjoyed a prolific career in the multimedia world, having amassed a slew of local and international awards. — KUNA

EQUATE CONTINUES SUPPORT OF KUWAIT BLIND ASSOCIATION

KUWAIT: EQUATE Petrochemical Company, Kuwait's first international joint venture in this industry, continued its support for the Kuwait Blind Association (KBA) by providing its members with Esys Braille machines, which allow the person with visual impairment to independently access and use the internet.

EQUATE Senior Executive for Corporate Communication and Government Affairs Abeer Al-Omar said, "Our overall partnership with KBA is based on achieving sustainability in every relevant field, such as community awareness about visually impaired individuals and integrating them with the society."

To achieve these strategic objectives, EQUATE and KBA launched during 2014 the Painting Smiles 2 campaign with the participation of our employees, their families, school students and the association's members. The campaign included holding an exhibition to display the artworks developed by participants, with all proceeds being dedicated to KBA.

Al-Omar, who also heads the EQUATE Sustainability Committee, added, "Understanding the importance of developing the capabilities of KBA's members,



EQUATE is pleased to present them with Esys Braille machines as we continue our mutual journey in being 'Partners in Success' by enabling them to independently access, enjoy and benefit from the internet by utilizing the most advanced equipment and technology."

KBA Board Chairman Fayez Al-Azemi said, "Since its inception in 1972, KBA has been doing its best to integrate visually impaired individuals with all members of the society through various cultural and social activities. Throughout the years, Kuwaitis with visual impairment have

proven their unique skills and innovative competencies that are appreciated by the society. Overall collaboration between KBA and business entities is a critical factor in developing our activities, especially our partnership with EQUATE which has played a critical role in supporting our members. Through this partnership, EQUATE has enabled visually impaired persons to deal with modern technology by supporting our efforts to obtain Esys Braille machines. EQUATE's overall support to organizations relevant to persons with special needs is not a surprise to any of us, as the company has always proven its sincere national sentiment and overall commitment to sustainability. In conclusion, much appreciation and gratitude to EQUATE for its overall support to KBA and other relevant organizations in Kuwait."

EQUATE's contribution was presented during a meeting with KBA Board Member Awadh Al-Azemi and Administrative Coordinator Adel Al-Otaibi by members of EQUATE Sustainability Committee represented by Technology Improvement Department (TID) Leader Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi and Emergency Services and Security (ESandS) Leader Abdulqader Al-Qabandi.



KUWAIT: Deputy Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Anwar Al-Hasawi with Vice-President of Barzan Charity Foundation Mousa Ahmad. — KUNA

BARZAN CHARITY HAILS KUWAIT'S SUPPORT TO IRAQ

KUWAIT: Vice-President of Barzan Charity Foundation Mousa Ahmad praised yesterday the Kuwaiti humanitarian aid for displaced Iraqis in Iraq and Kurdistan. Ahmad told (KUNA) after his meeting with Kuwait Red Crescent Society's (KRCS) Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi here yesterday that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's recent generous aid of USD 200 million has contributed to alleviating the suffering of displaced Iraqis.

He applauded the role of Kuwait's Red Crescent Society in support of humanitarian issues, especially in Iraq, pointing to the leading position of the society regionally and internationally in the humanitarian work arena which is worthy of appreciation and respect. Moreover, he

praised the cooperation with Kuwait's Red Crescent Society in the distribution of relief assistance to displaced Iraqis in Irbil, referring to the distribution of 40,000 food parcels to displaced families in the cities of Kurdistan region of Iraq.

Meanwhile, Hasawi stressed the political leadership's keenness in helping displaced Iraqis in response to the call of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in providing assistance and humanitarian aid in various Iraqi provinces including Kurdistan region. The Barzan Charity Foundation is a non-governmental charitable society founded in 2005 in Irbil, the capital of the Kurdistan region. It provides aid to the internally-displaced, refugees as well as vulnerable locals. — KUNA

OOREDOO PARTICIPATES IN THE YOUTH VOLUNTEER FORUM

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, announced that it will take part in the Youth Volunteer Forum, an event organized by the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, aimed to promote the culture of volunteerism. The event will be held from 5 to 11 December, 2015 at Four Points Kuwait, under the patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Arab League.

The forum aims to highlight the significance and promote the culture of volunteerism among youth through where volunteers from across the region will share their experiences and success stories that support the concept of volunteerism. There will also be an exhibition open to all participants and an index with the voluntary groups across the whole region for youth to consider.

Yousef Alshallal, Senior Manager, CSR, Sponsorships and Social Media at Ooredoo Kuwait said: "We are excited to be part of the Youth Volunteer Forum, an event that will encourage young workers and entrepreneurs to speak up about their different experiences, success stories and hardships. By establishing a culture of volunteerism, we plant a sense of responsibility in individuals that encourages them to become an active part in society by following suit and



Yousef Alshallal

believing that they could inspire others. We would like to thank the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs for giving us the opportunity to be part of something, we believe, can help shape the mind set of our youth."

Ooredoo Kuwait has recently launched a volunteer program as a basic part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy. The program aims to prepare volunteers through intensive world-class activities, including workshops and a training camp, in a bid to create a generation of Kuwaiti youths aware of the importance of volunteerism and giving.



KUWAIT: US Charge d'Affaires Joey Hood speaks at the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Education Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities Faisal Al-Muqaseed speaks.

KUWAIT-US FRIENDSHIP GROWING STRONGER: HOOD

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Education along with the US Embassy and the US military is organizing a series of programs in various schools in Kuwait to mark the 25th anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait. In this regard, a commemoration was held at the Masoud bin Sinan Boys Middle School in Salaam yesterday. The event was attended by US Charge d'Affaires Joey Hood accompanied by Education Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities Faisal Al-Muqaseed.

Also present during the ceremony were school Principal Akeel Hussein, embassy representatives, Colonel Wayne Blanchette, vice chief of the office of military coordination at the embassy and dozens of students of the school. Members of the US military forces, several of whom were among the 700,000 US military personnel who helped liberate Kuwait, were in attendance too.

Activities

Various activities including a film about the invasion and a dance presentation were

the highlights of the event. "To celebrate the strong relations between the United States and Kuwait, more than 2,000 students have participated in cultural, photography, musical, theatre and arts activities to commemorate Kuwait's liberation anniversary," Hood mentioned. "These are economic relations, military relations and cultural relations, but more importantly, they are relations between friends.

This friendship was tested 25 years ago. And I am proud to say that the United States stood with Kuwait when it most needed our

help. As a result, our friendship grew stronger," he added.

Sacrifices

"We are here to remember your history. Remember the sacrifices of your parents and grandparents to provide you the freedom that you enjoy today," Hood said. "Remember the suffering the people of Kuwait endured during the occupation. And remember your friends, the people of the United States and the people of the allied nations represented here, who also sacrificed to make Kuwait the country it is

today. But as you remember the past, know that all the sacrifices were for you and the future generations of Kuwait. And because of those sacrifices, the future of Kuwait belongs to you. And you have the responsibility to move Kuwait forward into a better future," he concluded. The film about Kuwait's invasion and liberation was titled 'The Seven Minutes' are put together and directed by Abdulrahman Al-Kandari. Before the presentation of plaques of appreciation to the guests and visitors, performances by a Kuwait folklore band and US soldiers were presented onstage.



GULF BANKS CONCLUDES PLATINUM SPONSORSHIP OF NUKS-US CONFERENCE

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank concluded its platinum sponsorship of the 32nd National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) conference in the United States. The conference took place 26-28 November at the Hilton Bayfront in San Diego, California and is the largest annual gathering of Kuwaiti students outside of Kuwait.

The conference took place over three days and included numerous formal and informal activities. These included: lectures; workshops; a career fair; elections for the new NUKS board; and the opportunity to network amongst themselves and the institutional representatives taking part in the event.

Gulf Bank played an important role in the conference. On the first day the Bank's representatives Mrs. Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager for Human Resources, and Mr. Tareq Al-Saleh, Assistant General Manager for Investments, led a youth focused discussion at the post-graduate workshop. First, participating students gave presentations on their studies, then workshops on youth, politics, environment, and media were held. Later that evening Mrs. Al-Hajjaj gave an opening speech at the dinner where the Bank's Graduate Development Program (Ajyal) was showcased in a short video which highlighted the strategic importance the Bank places on nurturing local talent and providing opportunities to Kuwaiti nationals to assume leadership positions within the Bank.

The next day Mr. Tareq Al-Saleh joined the panel of judges in the "Start-Up Panel" where students presented business ideas. The judges then selected the winners who were awarded total prizes of \$3,500. During the conference, students were able to register for Gulf Bank's special raffle prize draw at the Bank's booth in the career fair.

The raffle winners were announced at the conclusion of the "Start Up" Panel (Tajriba Al Oula). The winners are as follows:

- * \$ 2,500: Hamad Talal Al-Ghareeb
- * \$1650: Hamad Ahmed Al-Sherida and Fahad Faisal Mohammed
- * \$1,000: Yousef Farhan Al-Enezi; Hamid Tiffouni; Ahmed Mohammed Al-Thuwaini;



Salma Al-Hajjaj, Gulf Bank General Manager for Human Resources, speaks during the opening night ceremony.

and Meshal Hady Al-Azmi

- * \$500: Abdullah Nasser Al-Mutairi; Yousef Dherar Al-Sumait; Talal Waleed Al-Oumi; Salman Khaled Al-Kandari; Mohammed Khaled Al-Azmi; Ahmed Abdulrahman Al-Seram; Ali Al-Beloushi; and Sulaiman Ahdy Al-Sabej

Mrs. Salma Al-Hajjaj also held a "Gender Diversity and Women in the Workplace" where she discussed the challenges she overcame in her successful professional journey and shared ideas about diversity in the 21st century workplace. The other Gulf Bank workshop by Mr. Tareq Al-Saleh was on the "Global Investments Firms Landscape: Introduction to Asset Management Firms and Investment Banking" who provided an overview of the investment industry, including career options.

Gulf Bank remains strongly committed to supporting youth events and initiatives and doing its part to help empower the next genera-

tion of Kuwaitis. For more information on the NUKS-USA conference please see their website at: <http://www.nuks.org> or its social media channels at nukuksa.



Tareq Al-Saleh, Gulf Bank Assistant General Manager for Investments, and Dari Al-Bader, Senior Manager for Corporate Strategy at Alghanim Industries, during the start-up panel.

PRICES OF PRIVATE HOUSES INCREASED IN PAST 7 YEARS

KUWAIT: Plots' prices in the local private property sector drastically increased in the past few years due to low supply and mounting demand, according to a report released on Monday by the Kuwait Real-Estate Union.

Prices of land plots allotted for private housing significantly increased, in the past seven years. Rate of a square meter which stood at KD 334 in 2007 jumped to KD 698 in 2014, rising by 109 percent. Lands' prices have been climbing by 11 percent per year since 2014. However, in 2013, they jumped by 27 percent, the report said.

Property prices' high jumps add to financial burdens, suffered by Kuwaiti families, compelled to save, totally, their income for 10 years to be able buy a residence. Residential areas in Kuwait are built on 1,000-sq-km lands. The population is estimated at four million and the national income at \$200 billion, thus the property hikes are at the level of the increases in the Europe and American sectors.

Up to 118,000 plots of lands can be specialized for the private housing in Kuwait. Nearly 141,000 others have been developed for constructing houses. The remaining 44,000 plots are occupied, however they are centered, by 61 percent proportion, in Sabah Al-Ahmad residential district, seaside Al-Khairan, Jaber Al-Ahmad and northwest Al-Sulaibikhat.

With exemption of the above-mentioned districts, percentage of lands proper for housing does not exceed 10.8 percent of the overall number of these lands. This situation pushes the high prices of houses and lands to higher levels in most regions.

Despite very low numbers of private houses, rental sector has witnessed noticeable activity. The report mentions several kinds of leased houses; such as those that are part of large residences, leased by the landlord to Kuwaiti families - estimated at more than 4,300 units, the rent of which reaches as high as KD 371 as compared to KD 313 for apartments. — KUNA

ZAIN LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN FOR ONLINE GAMING ENTHUSIASTS

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the launch of its latest campaign for online gamers entitled "Do Not Disturb", wherein Avenues Mall visitors can enjoy an interactive and live online gaming experience on Zain's ultrafast LTE-A network.

The new campaign runs from 26 Nov - 5 December, and all Zain customers and Avenues Mall visitors are welcome to visit the company's dedicated booth at Grand Avenue and enjoy trying the fastest online gaming experience on the most advanced nationwide LTE-A network in the country.

Zain is offering an exclusive postpaid package for booth visitors, which is specifically designed to meet the needs of online gamers. The exclusive promotion of KD 23 offers a monthly cap of 1 TB, one free LTE-A router, one free PlayStation 4 device, free one-year PSN Plus subscription, Gamer Pass that allows unlimited online gaming on PlayStation Network without affecting the customer's Internet plan, as well as one free PSN gift card with \$70 credit.

Zain was keen to take an extra step to meet the demands of gamers and provide them with the ultimate online gaming experience, as it offers everyone the opportunity to try its most advanced LTE-A network through eight PlayStation 4 devices available at its dedicated booth. Zain will also be organizing an exciting online video gaming tournament during the last two days of the campaign with valuable prizes to be offered to the winners. The introduction of this campaign highlights Zain's eagerness in keeping pace with the ongoing changes of needs and wants of its customers. With this latest announcement, Zain strengthens its leading position in providing special services and offerings designed for the gaming community.

In efforts of providing the best gaming experience, Zain specially designed the latest campaign to surpass customers' expectations. The company is well aware of the rising demands of Internet usage by online gamers, and thus has presented this campaign and exclusive offer to elevate their telecommunications experience.

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التبليغ Al-Anbaa

PATRIOTISM AND CITIZENSHIP

By Saleh Al-Shaeyji

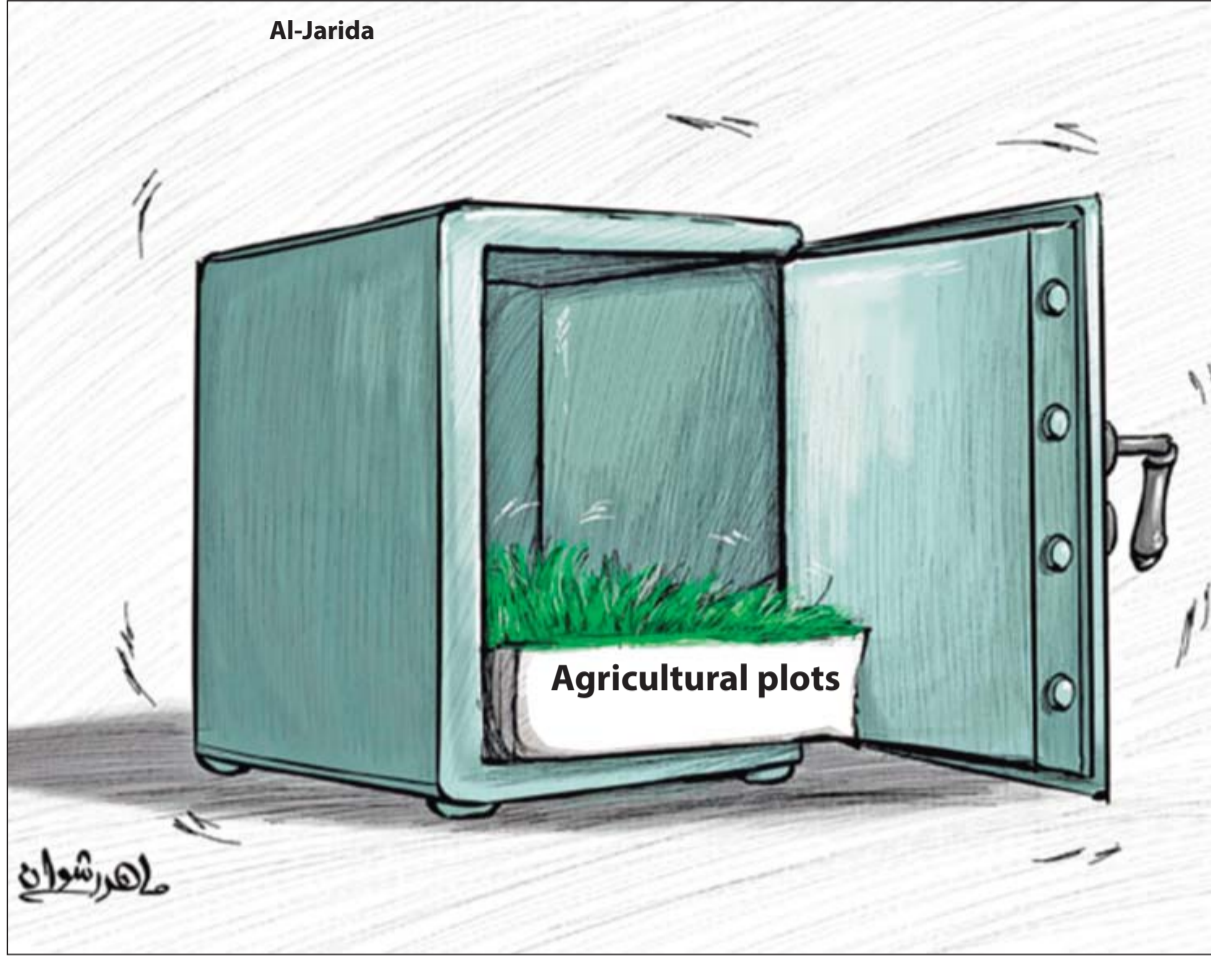
Some people argue that citizenship is not necessarily granted by nationality certificates, which means that a man does not actually need to hold a certain country's citizenship to belong to it - it is his love and devotion to that country that determines his identity and nationality. Well, this cannot be more wrong, because patriotism is directly linked to citizenship on which many duties, responsibilities and rights rest that are not given to nor asked from anyone who does not belong to a country.

People who promote such an argument actually mix up between patriotism and citizenship. To love a country of which you do not hold its citizenship means that you are patriotic and love that particular country but are not one of its citizens, and thus have no rights or duties towards it. Patriotism does not require direct belonging to a certain country or holding its identity, which is unlike citizenship that conditions holding the country's nationality and administratively belonging to it.

We have been hearing much about such blind confusion between both concepts and some people may go as far as brag to be more patriotic towards a certain country than its own subjects, which might be true in some cases without any liabilities or commitment. In other words, patriotism is not a door to citizenship even though it is preferable that citizens are patriotic.

For instance, to like Sweden for its order, laws, nature and lifestyle does not necessarily make one a Swedish citizen. Such love does not entail any duties or rights. Some countries do sell citizenship to whoever wants it, but they can never sell patriotism, simply because citizenship is a sellable item whereas patriotism is an internal feeling involving spiritual belonging to the country one loves without holding its nationality.

Many people hold more than one nationality, which means that they are citizens of those countries without feeling patriotic towards them. Some countries even grant honorary citizenships to certain people. —Translated by Kuwait Times



BEDOONS TO GET COMOROS CITIZENSHIP SOON: JARRAH

KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Citizenship and Passports Affairs Major General Mazen Al-Jarrah stressed that many illegal residents have been claiming to be bedoons (stateless) while those registered in the 1965 census and the central apparatus for illegal residents number only 34,000. "It is not mandatory to grant them citizenship though they can apply to get it," he stressed, noting that the central apparatus had only contacted the ministry concerning 8,000 people whose files were clean.

Speaking in a TV interview, Jarrah added that many of those claiming to be bedoons were children or husbands of Kuwaiti women who ought to register with the fathers' countries' embassies. "The marriage certificate includes the husband's nationality, you know," he underlined, adding the term bedoon was scrapped in 1987 because it used to be used for tribes that used to enter Kuwait to graze their cattle and sheep. "However, after the Iraq-Iran war, some Iranians claimed to be bedoons from the desert. How is that possible?!"

Former MPs' statements
Responding to a question regarding some former MPs' statements about bedoons, Jarrah stressed that former parliament speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun was the one who criticized bedoons most since the 1980s, describing them as a 'time bomb'. He refused to comment on former MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei's statements. Jarrah also noted that the central apparatus chief Saleh Al-Fadhlah had visited UAE to study how they solved the bedoon problem there, noting that they had been given Comoros citizenship and passports

and were now legal residents. "We will not get them Comoros passports and deport them," he underlined, noting that many bedoons were businessmen working in local markets and that registration to get Comoros passports and citizenship would be open soon. "Some bedoons have already legalized their status and got Dominican, Somali and Yemeni citizenships, yet they have to keep their passports valid to be deemed legal residents,"



Major General Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah

he explained, noting that an agreement with the Comoros was not yet signed.

Citizenship withdrawal
Responding to a question about withdrawing nationality, Jarrah said that in cleric Nabil Al-Awadhi's case, it was withdrawn for involvement in plotting against the regime and that he was originally granted citizenship, which authorizes withdrawing it if indicted by a court of law. Commenting on withdrawing Ahmad Al-Jabr's citizenship, Jarrah stressed that Jabr did not hold 'first degree' citizenship that cannot be withdrawn and that its holders can

only be referred to court in case of any legal violation. "Jabr was naturalized and Barghash got his citizenship without due right by forgery and claiming to belong to a certain family," he explained, adding that Saad Al-Ajmi is a dual citizen and accordingly, his citizenship was lawfully withdrawn. "It took us long to get documents proving Saad Al-Ajmi's other nationality, which is not an easy task. However, we can do it if we want to, for all those with dual citizenships," he said.

Citizenship calcifications
Commenting on a proposal made by Dr Shafiq Al-Ghabra to unify all citizenship calcifications under one article for all citizens, Jarrah strongly disagreed. "With all due respect, Ghabra himself only got his citizenship 'yesterday' (recently). How come he wants to be treated like original Kuwaitis. Just relax doctor. The state has honored you with this citizenship," he said adding that getting US citizenship is not as worthy as that of Kuwait. "It does not guarantee a decent job, housing and marriage loans. Remove those privileges and no one will demand Kuwaiti citizenship," he said. Jarrah strongly denied abusing bedoons, noting that many of them were university graduates and hold degrees in various disciplines. Responding to a question whether security forces make suspects confess using torture, Jarrah stressed that Kuwait was a country of law and that he could not deny it because some officers had been indicted with up to death penalty for abusing their powers. "Beating is essential and we were all beaten at school," he said, remarking that no confessions were nevertheless extracted or made under compulsion. — Al-Rai



VIVA GOLDEN SPONSOR OF 10TH ANNUAL CEREMONY OF COMMSMEA

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced its golden sponsorship of the 10th annual ceremony of CommsMEA magazine, specialized in telecom and information technology sector, held recently this month in Dubai city, in presence of a number of leaders and experts in technology industry in the region.

Abdulrazaq Bader Al-Essa, Director of Corporate Communications Division at VIVA, represented VIVA at the event and received an award in recognition of VIVA's golden sponsorship. CommsMEA gives a thorough insight on the latest in telecommunications and highlights the latest moves in the fast paced world of ICT. CommsMEA is dedicat-

ed to the interests of its readership in the Arab League states and the African continent. The magazine covers every aspect of communications equipment, products, services and usage in those regions, with a particular emphasis on the provision of cost-effective solutions to problems encountered by users and service providers.

التبليغ Al-Anbaa

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

By Dr Nermin Al-Houti

I heard an MP, during a parliamentary session, confirm that Kuwaiti society in its entirety is satisfied with the parliament's performance! Here comes the great shock because of those words, which start with a direct question to all "deputies of the nation" to whom we gave our votes to become our support and backup to build a better society - did you conduct a popular survey about your parliamentary performance to reach this conclusion?

I believe that my following statements reflect the opinion of the majority of Kuwait's society, which is still not enjoying all its constitutional rights, and here are some, not all, of the questions to our members of parliament:

- Did you provide our students with model schools?
- Do we now have many hospitals that are equipped at the highest medical level?
- Are all our youth who are at home waiting for a government job employed?
- Did we get universities that receive all our graduate students from the secondary stage?
- Is security and safety available completely to the Kuwaiti society?
- Have crimes and killings ended in Kuwait?
- Were those who committed medical errors in our society punished?
- Was the traffic crisis solved?
- Did you bring justice to every person that submitted a complaint to you?
- Did you discuss and settle the domestic help price rise?
- Did you give the right of each one deserving it in employment?
- Did you reform the employment graduation scale?
- Are our streets and our infrastructure in agreement with correct and sound specifications?
- Did every citizen get a house?
- Does the Kuwait citizen enjoy his constitutional rights?

A last word, among the sublime messages of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad on Oct 30, 2016:

"Among the most important basics of parliamentary work is to comply with what was mentioned in the constitution in the form of principles, headed by separation of powers, while they maintain cooperation, and this is a national and constitutional duty, because it is the foundation of any successful institutional work. So members of the two authorities are asked to transform the cooperation wishes into reality and actual practical method through an agreement on national priorities that determines the fundamental issues, which we need to achieve during the current parliamentary term, be it in the fields of security, planning, development and other important issues that are on the citizen's mind."

—Translated by Kuwait Times

NO FREE PRIVILEGES FOR MINISTERS, OFFICIALS

KUWAIT: The Cabinet recently reviewed recommendations made by Finance Minister and Acting Oil Minister Anas Al-Saleh with the aim of reducing expenditure in the 2015-2107 budget. In this regard, high-ranking sources said that the recommendations revolved around ministers' and senior officials' spending and included annulling a previous Cabinet decision to allocate a new vehicle worth KD 25,000 per minister to be registered in the minister's own name. The decision also includes cancelling mobile phones subscriptions and prepaid fuel coupons. Accordingly, the Cabinet notified the Audit Bureau with the aim of avoiding the violations detected in the Bureau's final statements submitted to both the Cabinet and the parliament. —Al-Anbaa

7% OF POPULATION DRUG ADDICTS

KUWAIT: Addiction treatment expert Maith Al-Ustad warned the number of drug users of both genders in Kuwait was increasing at a "scary rate". He said the percentage of drug users of all types reached 7 percent, which is more than double the known percentage around the world, which is 2.5 percent.

He said the most dangerous drugs are "chemical" and "shabu", which destroy brain cells and lead to insanity. He cautioned that this epidemic is spreading very fast, and the government's reaction is not at the required level. About the age groups of drug users, he said they used to start at 17 years earlier, but it has fallen to 12 years lately, after the addition treatment center received a female student in the intermediate stage using drugs. He said 80 percent of drugs traders are central prison inmates and all are non-Kuwaitis, who run sales operations over the phone. He said the law should be activated against those "organized gangs" by carrying out capital punishment or deporting them. — Al-Qabas

DRIVING LICENSES ISSUED BEFORE APRIL 2013 RENEWED AUTOMATICALLY

KUWAIT: Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Major General Abdullah Al-Muhanna said that a ministerial decision number 393 issued on April 1, 2013 states that if a driver or company representative (mandoub) changes his profession or cancels his residency visa, his driving license will be automatically cancelled and will not be renewed for two years pending a new application and procedures. "This decision only applies to these two professions who had licenses issued after April 1, 2013," he explained.

Muhanna said that the decision will not be applied to driving licenses issued before that date. "The recent decision number 5598 issued on Nov 25, 2015 confirms this and includes all professions changed after issuing driving licenses to ones not included in or exempted from the regular conditions of getting a minimum wage of KD 600, university degree, at least two years' residency in Kuwait and limiting the license validity to that of the residency visa," he explained, underlining that all driving licenses issued before April 1, 2013 are not included in the decision and are renewed automatically. —Al-Anbaa

Crime

Report

MAN DISMANTLES FRIEND'S CAR, SELLS PARTS TO FAHAHEEL GARAGE

KUWAIT: Nuwaiseeb detectives arrested a citizen who made his friend believe that he shipped his car to a Gulf country, although he dismantled it and sold it as spare parts to a Fahaaheel garage. A security source said a Gulf national told Nuwaiseeb police that his 19-year-old Kuwaiti friend tricked him into believing that he will help him ship his car to a Gulf country as soon as the paperwork is completed. When a long time passed by and nothing happened, the friend began to avoid him, until finally the Gulf national lodged a complaint. Detectives took over the case and located the residence of the suspect and arrested him. He confessed to the charges, adding that he dismantled the car and sold the parts to a Fahaaheel garage. Detectives went to the garage and found the parts the suspect had sold and they were confiscated.

Forgery

The criminal court sentenced a businessman and four municipality employees, one of whom is an engineer, to three years in jail for forging official documents. Detectives found that the businessman wanted to get a specifications certificate for six plots of land to merge and register them in the name of a company without inspection by the municipality because of violations. He asked one of the engineers to process the certificate. The engineer agreed and told him an expat said he is ready to help them for KD 30,000. The businessman obliged and the forgery was done.

Fake detective

A citizen who was impersonating a detective stopped a young man in Jleeb Al-Shuyiukh, made him get out of his car and swore at him, before telling him "I will forgive you this time." The young man went to the police station, and officers arrested the fake detective.

Drunk man arrested

A drunk man was arrested and detained at Fahaaheel police station after he disturbed shoppers inside a mall. Police responded to a call about a man bothering shoppers at a mall and forcing them to talk to him. He was charged with public drunkenness.

Domestic violence

A Filipina woman injured her husband's lower back when she attacked him while asleep. The victim told Qurain police, after he handed them a medical report stating his injuries, that he woke up after his wife attacked him with a sharp object. Investigations are underway.

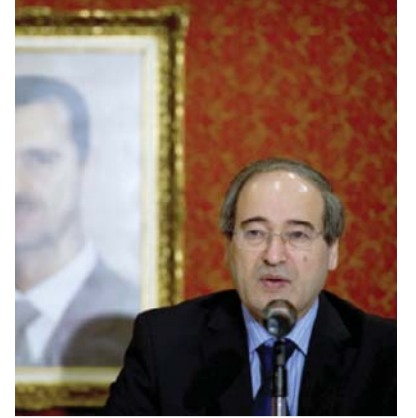
Contrabands

Capital police arrested a man in Yarmouk with possession of seals and official documents suspected of being forged, along with drugs and liquor, and he was sent to concerned authorities. A police patrol stopped the Indian man who looked nervous, so he was searched and the seals and documents, 30 illicit tablets and two liquor bottles were found. The Indian attempted to flee on foot but was caught.

Break-in at Ambassador's house

The house of a Gulf ambassador was broken into while he was outside the country. The thief stole receivers, smartphones and TV subscription cards, and it is still not known if there are other things missing, because the diplomat who informed Adailiya police about the theft said the ambassador is still outside the country. —Al-Rai

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2015



Syria denies using chemical weapons

GANG PRISON FIGHT IN GUATEMALA KILLS 16

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BRUSSELS: Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (left) shakes hands with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg after addressing a media conference at the NATO headquarters yesterday. — AFP

TURKEY REMAINS DEFIANT OVER RUSSIAN JET

ANKARA WILL NOT APOLOGIZE: PM • TALKS HELD AT NATO HQ

BRUSSELS: Turkey's prime minister dismissed yesterday any suggestion Ankara should apologise for downing a Russian warplane in its airspace last week, after winning strong NATO support for the right to defend itself. Six days after NATO member Turkey shot down the Russian bomber in the first known incident of its kind since the Cold War, calls for calm have gone largely unheeded as Ankara refuses to back down and Russia responds with sanctions. "No country should ask us to apologize," Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu told reporters following a meeting with NATO's secretary general at alliance headquarters in Brussels. "The protection of our land borders, our airspace, is not only a right, it is a duty," he said. "We apologise for committing mistakes, not for doing our duty."

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Nov 26 he was waiting for an apology after Turkey's air force shot down the Su-24 fighter jet close to the Turkey-Syria border. Russian officials have said the plane was at

no time over Turkey. Putin has also said Russia told the United States of the Russian jet's flight plan, something the US envoy to NATO denied yesterday, saying US-Russia cooperation in Syria was limited to broader rules on safety measures.

"The US data that I have seen corroborates Turkey's version of events. The airplane was in Turkey, it was engaged in Turkey, it had been warned repeatedly," Ambassador Douglas Lute told reporters. "There was no flight plan issued for a violation of NATO airspace." Following the meeting with NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg, in which Turkey won the alliance's firm support for the right to self-defence, Davutoglu also warned that such incidents continued to be a risk as long as Russia and the US-led coalition bombing Islamic State in Syria worked separately. "If there are two coalitions functioning in the same airspace against ISIL, these types of incidents will be difficult to prevent," Davutoglu said, referring to Islamic State

militants.

Seeking to calm the situation, Stoltenberg called for new emergency procedures to be agreed with Moscow to avoid triggering conflict by accident, whether that was during bombing raids in Syria or war games conducted by Russia and NATO.

Vienna Document

NATO foreign ministers are expected to discuss such procedures at a meeting in Brussels on today and tomorrow as Russia's military activities from the Baltics to the Middle East come right up to - and sometimes stray over - NATO borders. Stoltenberg suggested revamping the Cold War-era treaty known as the Vienna document, which sets out the rules for large-scale exercises and other military activity, as well as telephone hotlines and other military communication channels. "It has to be modernized because there are several loopholes," Stoltenberg said.

Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon on Sunday underscored the coordination with Russia that allowed Israel to avoid flare-ups after a Russian warplane operating in Syria strayed into Israeli-controlled airspace. It turned back after the two countries conferred. Moscow's surprise intervention in the four-year-old Syrian civil war in September wrong-footed the West and put Turkey, which shares a long border with Syria, directly at odds with Russian support for the Assad regime there.

The downing of the Russian warplane has wrecked both Turkish-Russian relations and the French-led diplomatic effort to bring Moscow closer into the fold of nations seeking to destroy Islamic State through military action in Syria. While Russia says it is also targeting Islamic State, most of its air strikes have been against other Assad opponents, including groups actively supported by Turkey. "Their bombing is taking place in areas where ISIL is not present at all," Stoltenberg said. — Reuters

IRAN: SAUDI PLAN ON SYRIAN OPPN VIOLATES TALKS

TEHRAN: Iran said yesterday that Saudi Arabia's plan to host a meeting of armed and political opponents of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad would breach declarations made during recent international peace talks. Tehran and Riyadh are on opposite sides of the conflict in Syria but both have taken part in two major meetings in Vienna aimed at finding a political solution. The planned meeting in Riyadh in December could boost unity in the Syrian opposition to enter talks on ending the conflict, in which 250,000 people have been killed, the UN envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, has said.

But Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Iran's deputy foreign minister for Arab and African Affairs, slammed the planned gathering of anti-Assad political and military groups, calling it "hasty and unconstructive". "It was agreed in Vienna that the UN representative in Syrian affairs try to determine a list of opposition groups by broad consultation," he was quoted as saying on state television's website. "Tehran does not approve of measures outside this declaration." He added: "Saudi Arabia has not had a positive and constructive role with regard to the people of Syria in the last five years."

The last Syria peace talks in Vienna, on November 14, brought together 17 countries including Russia, the United States, Saudi Arabia and Iran. A common statement set a fixed calendar for a ceasefire followed by a transitional government in six months and elections one year later. However, Syrian opposition figures said the plan was unrealistic.

Samir Nashar, a member of the opposition National Coalition, derided the Vienna plan, insisting it "will not lead to a political solution". "How do they expect that after everything that has happened in Syria, people will just kiss each other in the streets?" he said. With millions displaced and the country's infrastructure devastated, Nashar said Syria would need much longer to hold free and fair polls. He warned that the omission from the Vienna statement of a key goal of the uprising - the departure of Assad - would strengthen claims by jihadist groups that the international community is "conspiring against the Syrian people". At the Vienna talks, Iran insisted that a demand from several countries that Assad be excluded from future elections be withdrawn. —AFP

PUTIN SNUBS ERDOGAN AS PILOT BODY RETURNS

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin snubbed a meeting with Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan in France yesterday as the body of a pilot killed when Ankara downed one of Moscow's warplanes returned home. Turkish authorities meanwhile again pledged not to apologise over last Tuesday's downing of the Russian jet on the Syrian border

as Moscow rolled out its sanctions aimed at exacting economic revenge on Ankara. Putin and Erdogan have been locked in a furious war of words since the incident and the Kremlin strongman rejected the Turkish leader's offer of face-to-face talks on the sidelines of a climate summit outside the French capital.

"No meeting with Erdogan is planned. There is no discussion of such a meeting," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists. The downing of the Russian jet on the Turkey-Syria border - the first time a NATO member has shot down a Russian plane since 1952 - has seen ties shattered between the two rival players in the Syria conflict. Putin did meet with US President Barack Obama, who "expressed his regret" over the loss of life in the plane downing and called for a "de-escalation between Russia and Turkey", a White House official said.

Russia yesterday laid out more details of retaliatory economic sanctions aimed at denting Turkey's key tourism and agricultural sectors. Moscow announced it will halt fruit and vegetable imports from Turkey after Putin signed a decree over the weekend banning charter flights and the sale of package holidays, and scrapping Russia's visa-free regime with the country. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev called the moves a "first step" as Moscow also said it would limit Turkish transport firms and tighten controls on construction contracts. The authorities however stopped short of targeting Russia's major joint energy projects with Turkey.

Pilot's Body Returned

The announcement on the economic reprisals came as the body of pilot Oleg Peshkov, who was killed when the plane was

shot down, arrived back in Russia from Ankara. A plane carrying the corpse of Peshkov - who was posthumously awarded Russia's highest award - was met by Russia's defence minister outside Moscow after the body was bought from Syria to Turkey and handed over to Russian diplomats. Both pilots aboard the Su-24 warplane ejected and parachuted to the ground on the Syrian side of the border after being shot down by Turkish F-16s in the Nov 24 incident.

Moscow's defence ministry said Peshkov was shot dead from the ground while his comrade Konstantin Murakhtin was rescued by Russian and Syrian special forces. One Russian serviceman was also killed trying to rescue the pilot. Local reports said Peshkov will be buried tomorrow after his body arrives in his hometown Lipetsk, an industrial city in central Russia.

After the downing of its jet Moscow has bolstered its firepower in Syria - where it is flying a bombing campaign at the request of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad - and yesterday said its planes were now equipped with air-to-air missiles. Russian media has portrayed the handover of the remains as a goodwill gesture on the part of Ankara after several days of heated rhetoric over the downing. But as the pilot's body was flown back, the diplomatic tit-for-tat rumbled on with neither side looking set to back down. —AFP



ANKARA: Turkish and Russian army officers salute as a Turkish honor guard carries the coffin of Russian pilot Lt Col Oleg Peshkov after a ceremony at the Gulhane Medical Academy yesterday. — AP

WAR-WEARY SYRIANS FIND UNLIKELY SHELTER IN SUDAN

KHARTOUM: Among the simmering pots and sizzling grills of a Khartoum kitchen, Umm Mohammed has escaped from the thunderous shelling that forced her to flee Aleppo, joining a growing number of Syrians finding an unlikely shelter in Sudan. The 50-year-old now cooks Middle Eastern dishes in the Hawa Kitchen in Khartoum along with 24 others on a project to support Syrians who have arrived since 2011. While many Syrians fleeing the conflict still aim for Europe or neighbouring Turkey, a shared language and similarities in culture has made Sudan an alternative for some, the United Nations says.

With an ailing economy and millions displaced by civil war, Sudan is an improbable first choice, but Umm Mohammed - not her real name - remembers the day last year she decided to escape her Aleppo neighborhood at all costs. "In the morning we heard the sound of shelling and my son, a young man of 25, was sleeping on his bed when a shell hit," she said quietly. The blast smashed nearby windows, sending shards of glass flying and cutting him badly. "He almost died," she said quietly.

She planned to join hundreds of thousands of refugees in Jordan, but one of her adult sons who had travelled to Sudan for work told her Syrians didn't need visas to enter. She immediately booked tickets for Khartoum with her four other sons and

soon after started working in the kitchen. In the quiet courtyard where she works preparing traditional Syrian stuffed vine leaves, syrupy sweets and chicken with flavoured rice, she has found safety. "People here are very good," she said, smiling.

The Sudanese have not just been welcoming to the arrivals, she said, but have taken to the business. Many of the 35-50 meals they sell daily are bought by Sudanese customers now instead of the homesick Syrians who bought the dishes initially. The women hope to expand the kitchen, possibly to include a restaurant, as more Syrians arrive.

'Opportunity to Escape'

The kitchen was launched last November by the Committee to Support Syrian Families, one of several groups run by Khartoum's Syrian diaspora to help the 40,000 to 45,000 the government estimates have arrived since 2011. Its head, Mazin Samih, a lightly bearded businessman in his 40s, arrived from Damascus in 2002 to run a food produce company and admits sanctions-hit Sudan is an unlikely shelter. "If anyone who has been hit with barrel bombs and shelled with rockets and artillery finds an opportunity to escape, whatever the opportunity, they will escape," he said.

Established in 2012, his committee registers families, asking they find work but giv-

ing them the extra financial or food support they need to make ends meet. Many of those who have come to Sudan did so because they knew members of the diaspora, but this number has increased drastically with the deteriorating situation in Syria. "The work started with 20 Syrian families in 2012 and the number of Syrians settled in Sudan has increased so that today we have more than 500," he said.

Those fleeing war have opted for Sudan instead of Europe because of language and culture, UNHCR Sudan deputy head Angela Li Rosi said. "Their preference is to be in a country where there are similarities and the language they speak is the same," she said. The government doesn't consider Syrians as refugees but allows them access to state healthcare and education. Nonetheless some 1,400 have registered with the UN for help. The UN says it expects a steady number to arrive, putting the diaspora under greater strain to care for the most vulnerable.

'I Would Go Back'

Hawa Kitchen provides livelihoods for such families, Samih said, with the women receiving a monthly wage of about 1,500 Sudanese pounds (\$246), with profits going to help other families. The kitchen's administrator, Nuseiba Ayoubi, a 43-year-old native of Damascus, came to Khartoum two



KHARTOUM: Syrian women cook at the Eve Kitchen (Hawa in Arabic) on Nov 25, 2015 as part of a project to support Syrians who have taken refuge in the Sudanese capital since 2011. — AFP

years ago after her son-in-law moved to Sudan for work. She was glad to escape the tense atmosphere and worsening financial situation in Damascus but was worried about Sudan after seeing news reports about the country. "They give you the image of Sudan as a country in conflict," she said. She said that it took her some time to settle in, but found the Sudanese kind and helpful. However, with high unemployment

and living costs in Sudan she struggled financially to start with, and is proud of her work helping other women at the kitchen. "We don't just give them a fish. We teach them how to fish," she said. Umm Mohammed is grateful for the work and happy have found safety. But she still dreams of home. "If the situation returned to normal, I would go back to Syria. It is our homeland." — AFP

CLIMATE CHANGE THREATENS OLIVE FARMING IN TUNISIA

MORNAG, Tunisia: Tunisia's 3,000-year history of olive farming is under threat with warnings that production is at risk of halving by 2030 because of the extremes of climate change, from floods to droughts. "Before it used to rain regularly and the harvest was good. Today, everything is different," said 65-year-old olive farmer Amor Slama. This year at least, his country's battered economy can count on record olive oil exports. But climate change can wreak havoc in the North African state, where only a few hundred kilometres separate the fertile lands on the shore from the first dunes of the Sahara desert.

The Slama family has for generations cultivated tens of thousands of olive trees on 230 hectares in Mornag, south of Tunis, where the fields are parched in the summer and turn green in the springtime. "When I started olive farming 30 years ago, I never thought that one day I would have to water the trees," Slama said. Extreme weather can add to the perils, with heavy rains inundating the land, sweeping away the earth and damaging trees.

In the short term, Tunisia's olive oil sector, which accounts for more than 40 percent of revenues from agricultural exports and five percent of total exports, has cause to celebrate. Official figures project a record output of 340,000 tonnes in 2015, with 312,000 tonnes for export, making Tunisia - for the first time - the world's leading exporter of the prized product.

In a rare spot of good news for an economy rattled by jihadist violence and political instability since Tunisia's 2011 revolution, the sector has brought in almost one billion euros (\$1.07 billion) this year, said Anis Rayani, an adviser at the agriculture ministry.

Frequent Droughts

But farmer Slama remains pessimistic.

"It's been more than 20 years now that I've been noticing the impact of climate change, especially rising temperatures, on the crop," he said. "From one year to the next, olive oil production can go from 300 tonnes to 30 tonnes." Chokri Bayouh of the agriculture ministry said olive crops have always been at the mercy of the elements. "But before we used to have severe drought one year out of five. Now it's an average of two in five."

Climate change affects the entire olive oil sector that employs 390,000 of the country's 560,000 agricultural workers and provides a source of revenue for one million Tunisians. As things stand, out of Tunisia's 80 million olive trees, 80 percent are not irrigated and depend entirely on rainwater. Moreover, a high percentage of them are to be found in central and southern Tunisia which has the most arid soil.

A joint study by the agriculture ministry and the German cooperation agency warns production could be cut in half by 2030, leaving many farmers in ruin. "To water the trees we've had to spend a lot of money: digging a deep well and constructing basins to retain rainwater," Slama said. "But with the drought the well water turned salty and then dried up," said the farmer, whose basins on a land of cracked earth today stand empty.

The ministry's Bayouh said Tunisia has been taking action to face the challenge of climate change. "We've started to implement a plan to stabilise production within the next few years," he said. Tunisian authorities are encouraging farmers to plant local species of olive trees that are more resistant to drought and plan themselves to plant up to five million in the north of the country where average rainfall is the highest. The \$18 million project has been officially launched and runs until 2020. "We have to adapt," said Bayouh. — AFP



DAMASCUS: Syrians walk in the Midhat Pasha Souq in old Damascus yesterday. — AFP

SYRIA DENIES USING CHEMICAL WEAPONS

DAMASCUS INSISTS IT'S COOPERATING

THE HAGUE: Syria yesterday denied ever using chemical weapons in its four-year-old civil war, telling a global watchdog it was cooperating fully with the destruction of its toxic stockpile. Damascus's rebuttal comes amid growing accusations it is not being transparent with the world's chemical watchdog and as United Nations efforts are stepped up to track down the perpetrators of deadly chlorine gas attacks in the war-torn country last year.

"We wish here to state categorically that we have never used chlorine or any other toxic chemicals during any incidents or any other operations in the Syrian Arab Republic since the beginning of the crisis and up to this very day," Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Moqdad told the annual meeting of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Damascus rejected "the false accusations against Syria with respect to its supposed use of chlorine as a weapon in military operations," he added, speaking in Arabic through an interpreter. The accusations "only serve political agendas, which also aim at diverting our successes in eliminating our chemical weapons," Moqdad said.

'Many Uncertainties'

But Western countries including the United States and Canada, as well as the European Union, have lambasted Syria, raising doubts about whether President Bashar Al-Assad's regime is truly committed to ridding his country of all chemical arms. There are "many uncertainties regarding the dismantling of Syria's chemical weapons program, notably the gaps and contradictions contained in Syria's declarations," EU representative Jacek Bylica told the meeting in The Hague, attended by delegates from the OPCW's 192 states. "These uncertainties lead to doubts as to compliance by Syria with its obligations under the Convention," Bylica said at the opening of the five-day assembly. Last week the OPCW itself voiced "grave concern" at the continued use of toxic arms in Syria, despite the regime's ratification of the UN Convention banning chemical weapons. The OPCW investigations did not directly blame any of the parties in the four-year civil war, aimed at ousting Assad and in which civil groups say more than 250,000 people have been killed.

French ambassador Laurent Pic told delegates some reports indicated the presence of helicopters at the time of chemical attacks. "We all know what that means: The pursuit of relent-

less oppression by any means, including the most abominable, by a criminal regime against its own people."

Mustard Gas Attack

Accusations have also mounted that extremists with the Islamic State group, which has captured a swathe of territory in both Syria and Iraq, have resorted to such tactics. The OPCW - which won the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize - confirmed earlier in November with "utmost confidence" that mustard gas was used in Syria in August during fighting between rebels and jihadists, and "likely" killed a child. OPCW experts also concluded that chlorine gas was likely used in an attack in Idlib province in March.

OPCW director general Ahmet Uzumcu said a joint UN task team, approved by the Security Council in August to probe chlorine attacks in Syrian villages last year, was up and running in New York and in The Hague "with plans to set up

in Damascus". The panel, which comprises 24 experts, is expected to deliver its first report to the Security Council in February, Uzumcu said.

The watchdog's top official told yesterday's meeting "significant progress" had been made in destroying Syria's declared chemical weapons stockpile. Under a deal hammered out in 2013 between Russia and the United States following a sarin gas attack on the outskirts of Damascus in which hundreds died, the regime joined the UN Convention against chemical weapons and pledged to hand over all such arms to the OPCW for destruction. Some 1,300 tonnes of chemical weapons were handed over by Syria, including mustard and sarin gas. The last of the stockpile will be destroyed in the United States by the end of the year, Uzumcu said. But Canadian ambassador Sabine Nolke said: "More than two years after acceding to this treaty, Syria has failed to demonstrate that it deserves treatment similar to that of any other ordinary member." — AFP



BEN AROUS, Tunisia: A picture taken on Nov 6, 2015 shows a woman harvesting olives in the village of Mornag near the capital Tunis. — AFP

LESS TO TURKEY-EU DEAL THAN MEETS THE EYE

BRUSSELS: An EU-Turkey deal struck at a summit in Brussels is unlikely to significantly slow the flow of migrants to Europe or bring Ankara much closer to joining the bloc, analysts said yesterday. European Union leaders pledged Sunday to give Turkey three billion euros (\$3.2 billion) in aid for Syrian refugees and kick start its stalled membership bid in return for Ankara's cooperation in tackling the worst migrant crisis since World War II.

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said the first such summit in 11 years was a "historic day" and vowed that his country would keep its promises, in the face of skepticism from some countries in the 28-member EU. "What the Europeans are asking of Turkey is unrealistic and unrealizable," said Cengiz Aktar, a political scientist from Istanbul's Bahcesehir University. "They must be dreaming. Nobody can prevent these migrants from heading to Greece or

Bulgaria because they have no future in their own country or in Turkey," Aktar said.

Turkey hosts more than two million refugees from the Syrian conflict and is the main launching point for migrants coming to Europe, via Greece. EU president Donald Tusk said 1.5 million people have illegally come to Europe this year. Davutoglu conceded Turkey's efforts were likely to end in failure even while promising to fulfill all the terms of the deal. "I wish to say to you that 'yes, the number of the migrants will decline,' but we cannot say this because we don't know what will be going on in Syria," the premier told a press conference late Sunday.

Meanwhile Turkey's EU membership bid is likely to remain in the doldrums despite the deal, analysts said. At the summit the EU agreed to open a new "chapter" of Turkey's accession bid next month and look at opening others in 2016. — AFP

IRANIAN PILGRIMS BREAK THROUGH IRAQ BORDER

BAGHDAD: A mass of Iranian pilgrims heading to Iraq for religious rites broke down fences and injured border guards in a stampede, the interior ministry said yesterday, blaming Tehran. Iranian officials said measures were taken to control the flow of pilgrims at the border while the security forces said they foiled two suicide attacks in Baghdad against the Shiite pilgrims. The Zurbattiyah border point has seen heavy traffic as the pilgrims cross from Iran to take part in mourning rituals for Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), who is buried in Iraq.

On Sunday, it was discovered that tens of thousands of people attempting to cross had not obtained visas, causing confusion, crowding and a stampede, the ministry said in a statement. This led to the "smashing of the gates and fences and caused property losses and injured some of the border guards", it said. "We hold the Iranian side responsible," the ministry said, adding that the breach of the border was meant "to put pressure on the crossing officials to open the border illegally". A fence was broken by a crowd of pilgrims

at the same crossing last year. "Two million Iranian pilgrims have already entered Iraq," Iran's ambassador to Iraq, Hassan Danifar, told Iranian television yesterday. "We have asked for the flow of pilgrims to be slowed" on the Iranian side, he said. Iran's official IRNA news agency said some roads leading to Iraq had been closed to pilgrims. Millions of people take part in Arbaeen commemorations each year. Huge numbers walk to the shrine city of Karbala, leading to the closure of major roads in Baghdad and elsewhere in the country.

The rituals will culminate on Thursday, 40 days after the anniversary of the death of Imam Hussein, who was killed at Karbala in 680 AD. What is sometimes described as the biggest annual religious gathering in the world is a security headache for Iraq, which is still battling the Islamic State jihadist group on several fronts. Tens of thousands of security forces are mobilized for weeks across the country to enable the pilgrims to walk to Karbala.

Yesterday, security officials said two suicide attacks targeting Shiite faithful marching down the road in Baghdad were foiled. — AFP

HIGH STAKES FOR BALTIMORE AS GRAY TRIALS BEGIN

BALTIMORE: In Baltimore, this year can be divided into two parts: What came before Freddie Gray died and what happened afterward. Gray, 25, suffered a mysterious injury in the back of a police transport van and died April 19, inspiring thousands to take to the streets to protest what they believed was the mistreatment by police of another young black man. The narrative of Gray's life and death instantly became a thread in the fabric of the Black Lives Matter national movement.

Six police officers were indicted in Gray's death. Jury selection in the first trial begins Monday. A verdict is likely to set the tone for the city: If Officer William Porter is acquitted there could be protests and possibly more unrest. A conviction could send shockwaves through the city's troubled police department. "Everything is at stake. The future of the city is at stake," Police Commissioner Kevin Davis said.

The demonstrations were mostly peaceful for several days, but on the day Gray was buried, looting and rioting started. Businesses were burned down and the unrest ended up costing the city millions of dollars in property damage. The troubles forced an incumbent mayor in the throes of a re-election campaign to drop out of the race, and toppled the career of a reform-minded police chief who was unceremoniously fired. The homicide rate soared and the blood continues to spill on

Baltimore's streets at a pace unseen in decades. Porter faces charges of assault, manslaughter, reckless endangerment and misconduct in office. He is being tried first in part because prosecutors want to use him as a witness in the trials of several other officers. Porter is accused of failing to get medical help for Gray during several stops the van made on its 45-minute trip. At the end, officers found Gray unresponsive and he was taken to a hospital. He died a week later. Gray was initially handcuffed. Later during his van ride, his legs were shackled and he was placed back in the van without a seatbelt, a violation of department policy, prosecutors have said.

'Big Scene'

Porter told police investigators that arresting Gray "was always a big scene", according to a pretrial filing by defense attorneys. Porter indicated that he knew of a previous arrest in which Gray allegedly tried to kick out windows of a police vehicle. "You know, so he was always, always, like, banging around," Porter said in the statement excerpted in the filing. "It was always a big scene whenever you attempted to arrest Freddie Gray."

Defense attorneys say that helps explain Porter's actions during Gray's April arrest. Porter is black. Two other officers are black and the three others are white. They will be tried separately beginning in

January; their trials are expected to last until the spring. The trials, much like Gray's death, are a microcosm of larger, systemic issues within the city, and the verdicts will have consequences on the city's immediate future, as well as its healing. Nearly eight months after the city burned, the stakes for the police, the politicians and the public remain high.

When violent crime began surging in May, residents of predominantly poor black neighborhoods that bore the brunt of the bloodshed blasted the police for abandoning their posts - a side effect, some said, of the charges against the officers involved in Gray's death. The police union, in turn, criticized the former commissioner for failing to protect and support them during the riot.

An independent review of the police response revealed "major shortcomings," and painted a portrait of an overwhelmed and under prepared department that made tactical errors and endangered officers. Hours before Police Commissioner Anthony Batts was fired in July, the police union issued its own scathing report, and its president called for Batts to "step up." The US Department of Justice announced a patterns and practice probe into the department stemming from allegations that officers hassled people and used excessive force. Davis stepped in as police chief in July, after a crime spike that saw 45



BALTIMORE: William Porter (right), one of six Baltimore city police officers charged in connection with the death of Freddie Gray, walks into a courthouse with his attorney Joseph Murtha (center) for jury selection in his trial yesterday. —AP

homicides in a single month. Since then, Davis has tried to repair the broken relationship between the department and the public.

Political Landscape

Apart from the police, the political landscape has changed since Gray's death.

A Democratic primary in April will likely decide who will be the new mayor next November. Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake was harshly criticized in the wake of the civil unrest for failing to publicly appear for five hours as the city burned and the images were displayed on national television networks. —AP

GANG PRISON FIGHT IN GUATEMALA KILLS 16

GUATEMALA CITY: Sixteen people died in a fight between rival gangs in a maximum security Guatemalan prison where security forces are still working to regain control, Deputy Interior Minister Elmer Sosa said yesterday. The perimeter of the Granja Penal Canada facility has been surrounded by army and police officers, Sosa said, adding that authorities had avoided entering the prison Sunday when the fight broke out amid reports that several inmates were

carrying firearms.

The decision was meant to mitigate risk to security forces and other inmates, he said. "We are coordinating an investigation into the death of 16 inmates with prosecutors," Sosa told journalists, adding that the fight was believed to be due to a clash between rival gangs. The maximum security prison is home to nearly 3,100 detainees and is located just 75 km south of Guatemala City. — AFP

CARSON: SYRIAN REFUGEE FACILITIES 'QUITE NICE'

WASHINGTON: Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson said on Sunday that he found facilities at a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan to be "really quite nice" and that people there would rather stay or return home to Syria than come to the United States. But Carson, one of the leaders in the polls in the contest for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016, offered few details in a round of television interviews from Jordan about how he would work to defeat Islamic State militants and stabilize Syria to enable the refugees' return.

After meeting with refugees at a camp in Jordan, Carson, 64, told CNN that "their true desire is to be resettled in Syria." "But they are satisfied to be in the refugee camps if the refugee camps are adequately funded. Recognize that in these camps they have schools, they have recreational facilities that are really quite nice. And there (are) all kind of things that make life more tolerable," he added.

Speaking from Jordan, told ABC's "This Week" program: "We're hearing that they all want to come here to the United States, and that's not what they want. They want to go back home." Carson also defended comments he made earlier this month in which he compared Americans' attitude toward Syrian refugees to fears of a rabid dog. "The Syrians and the people here completely understood what I was saying," Carson told NBC's "Meet the Press." "It's only the news media in our country that thinks that you're calling Syrians dogs. They

understand here that we're talking about the jihadists, the Islamic terrorists."

Carson and other Republican presidential candidates have criticized President Barack Obama's plan to admit 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next year, citing the risk that militants could slip through. The Obama administration has emphasized the refugee program vetting process. The White House on Sunday declined to comment on Carson's remarks. A retired neurosurgeon who has faced scrutiny over his foreign policy credentials, Carson visited the Zaatari camp for refugees fleeing Syria's civil war, and said he also spoke with medical personnel, humanitarian workers and government officials. In the ABC interview, Carson called for increased US aid for regional refugee efforts such as those in Jordan. "I believe that the right policy is to support the refugee program that is in place, that works extremely well but does not have adequate funding," Carson said. "If you do that, you solve that problem without exposing the American people to a population that could be infiltrated with terrorists who want to destroy us."

Carson said that Islamic State should be defeated quickly and criticized the current US strategy as "piecemeal." "I think we need to work in close conjunction with our Department of Defense, with our Pentagon, with our experts. Ask them what you need in order to accomplish this? And then, let's make a decision," he told NBC. — Reuters



DES MOINES, Iowa: In this Oct 24, 2015 file photo, former President Bill Clinton and his wife, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, wave to supporters after the Iowa Democratic Party's Jefferson-Jackson fundraising dinner. — AP

CLINTON MADE TIME AT STATE FOR SUPPORTERS

CALENDARS REVEAL HIGH-PROFILE MEETINGS

WASHINGTON: As secretary of state, Hillary Clinton opened her office to dozens of influential Democratic party fundraisers, former Clinton administration and campaign loyalists, and corporate donors to her family's global charity, according to State Department calendars obtained by AP.

The woman who would become a 2016 presidential candidate met or spoke by phone with nearly 100 corporate executives, Clinton charity donors and political supporters during her four years at the State Department between 2009 and 2013, records show. Many of those meetings and calls, formally scheduled by her aides, involved heads of companies and organizations that were pursuing business or private interests with the Obama administration at the time, including with the State Department while Clinton was in charge. In addition, at least 60 of those who met with Clinton have donated or pledged program commitments to the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation. A dozen have been among Hillary Clinton's most reliable political fundraisers, bundling more than \$100,000 in donations during her failed 2008 presidential campaign or providing larger amounts to Clinton-allied super political action committees this time. And at least six entities represented in the meetings paid former President Bill Clinton lucrative fees for speeches.

The AP found no evidence of legal or ethical conflicts in Clinton's meetings, in its examination of 1,294 pages from the calendars. Her sit-downs with business leaders were not unique among recent secretaries of state, who sometimes called on corporate executives to aid in international affairs, according to archived documents.

Availability

But the difference with Clinton's meetings was that she was a 2008 presidential contender who was widely expected to try again in 2016. Her availability to luminaries from politics, business and charity shows the extent to which her office became a sounding board for their interests. And her ties with so many familiar faces from those intersecting worlds were complicated by their lucrative financial largess and political support over the years - even during her State Department tenure - for her campaigns and her husband's, and for her family's foundation.

Among those she met with or spoke with by

phone were chief executives such as General Electric Co.'s Jeff Immelt, PepsiCo Inc's Indra Nooyi, FedEx Corp's Fred Smith, former Morgan Stanley chairman John Mack and former Citigroup Inc. chairman Sanford Weill. There were also billionaires: Investors George Soros and Warren Buffett and diet pioneer S. Daniel Abraham. Major Democratic Party fundraisers included entertainment magnate Haim Saban, real estate developer Stephen J. Clobeck and American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten.

In its response to detailed questions from the AP, the Clinton campaign did not address the issue of the candidate's frequent meetings with corporate and political supporters during her State Department tenure. Instead, campaign spokesman Nick Merrill said "Secretary Clinton turned over all of her work emails, 55,000 pages of them, and asked that they be released to the public. Some of that will include her schedules. We look forward to the rest of her emails being released so people can have a greater window into her work at the department."

The State Department turned the Clinton calendars over to the AP earlier this month, documents the AP sought for two years under the Freedom of Information Act. The department censored many meeting entries for privacy reasons or to protect internal deliberations, making it impossible to discern all the identities of those who met Clinton. A State Department spokesman declined to comment on the agency's redactions of the calendars or the arrangements for Secretary of State John Kerry's daily schedules.

The AP has also sought detailed planning schedules that aides sent Clinton before each day's events, but the State Department has declined to search through the files of some of Clinton's close aides at the time. The State Department's release of Clinton emails has so far turned up at least 155 planning schedules, called "minischedules," but they account for only a tiny percentage of Clinton's four-year stint - 7 percent of the 1,159 days covered by those email releases.

Discrepancies

Merrill said Clinton was not sent the planning "minischedules" every day or when she traveled, "which would account for why you see some on

some days and not on others". The AP also found at least a dozen differences between Clinton's planners and calendars involving visits by donors and longtime loyalists. In one example, a June 2010 Clinton planning schedule that the State Department released uncensored shows a 3 p.m. meeting between Clinton and her long-time private lawyer, David Kendall. But Clinton's formal calendar lists the 20-minute session only as "private meeting - secretary's office," omitting Kendall's name.

The Clinton campaign could not explain those discrepancies but said the candidate had made a good faith effort to be transparent by giving her work-related emails to the State Department for public release. The calendars offer hour-by-hour depictions of Clinton's hectic diplomatic schedule in Washington and her foreign tours crammed with meetings with dignitaries. Even so, she found time to meet CEOs, loyalists and donors.

"It shows Hillary Clinton marrying her political interests with the business and policy interests of powerful people," said Lawrence Jacobs, director of the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the University of Minnesota. "These are the people you cultivate to lay the groundwork for running for president."

Clinton favored a select group of visitors - at least two dozen - for repeated meetings. Abraham, the billionaire behind SlimFast diet products and chairman of the S Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace, met with Clinton at least three times and was slated to meet her three other times, according to her calendars and schedules. Clinton's calendars showed they met at her office in May 2009 and Oct 2010. Clinton also spoke at an Abraham Center event in April 2010. Abraham has given \$5 million to \$10 million to the Clinton Foundation and donated \$1.2 million in 2012 to Priorities USA Action, a super PAC supporting Clinton in 2016. Abraham told the AP that he assumed that he and Clinton discussed Mideast policy during their contacts. Teachers' union chief Weingarten met Clinton three times, in 2009, 2010 and 2012. Emails released by the State Department show that Weingarten's policy aide, Tina Flournoy, messaged Clinton at her private account in mid-September 2009 saying that "Randi and would like to visit you re: child labor issues - if that's possible, whom should I contact to schedule?" —AP



AMMAN: US Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson (left) leaves the ABS Network studios in the Jordanian capital on Sunday. — AFP

BURKINA FASO AWAITS RESULTS OF PRESIDENTIAL POLL

OUAGADOUGOU: First results were due yesterday from Burkina Faso's presidential election aimed at setting the country on a fresh path after a year of turmoil which saw people power oust its veteran leader and repel a military coup. Sunday's delayed election was the first time in almost three decades that the west African nation voted for a new leader, following the ouster of president Blaise Compaore in a mass popular uprising in October 2014.

The two favourites, Roch Marc Christian Kabore and Zephirin Diabre, were both top figures in Compaore's regime, but each broke with the former soldier and notably opposed his foiled bid to change the constitution and extend his stay in power.

A confident Kabore promised his followers a "first-round knock-out" but with a total of 14 candidates in the race, Diabre's supporters anticipate a second round in which everything is possible.

The head of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), Barthelemy Kere, said the vote had been "generally satisfactory", despite anomalies such as absent ballot papers and the late

opening of some polling stations.

Kere praised the "patience, tolerance and understanding" of the 5.5 million strong electorate, who were also voting for members of a new parliament for the mainly Muslim nation.

Long queues had formed outside polling stations, forcing some to stay open later than scheduled, and there were no reports of disturbances.

'Sighing with relief'

The election was due to have been held on October 11, but the country was plunged into fresh uncertainty in September when elite army leaders close to Compaore tried to seize power.

Once again angry citizens took to the streets to foil the coup. Its leaders, including Compaore's former guard chief General Gilbert Diendere were thrown behind bars and the elections were rescheduled. People in Burkina, a poor nation of 18 million people that has a history of coups, are hoping the election will usher in a long era of peaceful democracy.

"We're smiling broadly, we're sighing with relief," said Halidou Ouedraogo, chairman of CODEL,

the civil society platform monitoring the election.

"The Burkinabe people rose to the challenge of holding these historic elections in a calmer atmosphere." Turnout was strong in each of the 45 provinces, election chief Kere said, without giving figures.

Observers noted that participation was certainly higher than during elections during the Compaore era, when it stood at around 50 percent.

"This is a victory... for the Burkinabe people," said Michel Kafando, who has presided over the transitional regime put in place after Compaore fled.

It was "the first fully democratic, transparent" election since 1978, when the former French colony was still known as Upper Volta, Kafando said.

'Real change'

Marxist revolutionary soldier Captain Thomas Sankara seized power in a 1983 coup and renamed the country as Burkina Faso ("Land of Upright Men") before being killed in a 1987 coup by his ex-comrade Compaore. Sankara is still widely admired for his pan-African

ideals as well as his fight against corruption and neo-colonialism.

Compaore's ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) was unable to put up any candidate in the presidential poll, under a contested law that barred anybody connected with his plan to change the constitution and cling to power.

However, the well-entrenched CDP had many candidates in the parliamentary election and could score well under the system of proportional representation. "We have had a total rupture with the old system," Kabore said Sunday, pledging to "bring real change to the country". He worked with Compaore for 26 years before falling out of favour and taking up a public stance against the regime and its party.

Diabre, an economist, opted for an international career but also served at home as minister of economy and finance and at one point joined the UN Development Program. The government deployed a 25,000-strong security force to oversee the election in the nation, which has been struck by attacks by jihadists from neighboring Mali this year. — AFP



PARIS: Burkina Faso President Michel Kafando (right) shakes hands with French President Francois Hollande, upon his arrival for the opening of the UN conference on climate change, yesterday at Le Bourget, on the outskirts of the French capital Paris.—AFP



PRISTINA: Tear gas is used by opposition lawmakers disrupting a parliamentary session in the Kosovo capital, Pristina, yesterday.—AP

THREE LAWMAKERS ARRESTED IN KOSOVO IN TEAR GAS PROTEST

KERRY TO BACK KOSOVO REFORMS ON FIRST BALKAN TRIP

PRISTINA: Three opposition lawmakers were arrested in Kosovo yesterday amid chaotic scenes in parliament, filled once more with tear gas in a fresh protest against an accord with former master Serbia.

Opposition MPs have been disrupting the work of parliament for two months by releasing tear gas in the chamber each time it tries to sit. They are demanding the government revoke a deal, brokered by the European Union, to grant minority Serbs greater local powers and the possibility of funding from Belgrade. They also oppose a border demarcation deal with Montenegro.

Opposition supporters have rioted several times on the streets of the capital, Pristina, heightening the sense of a young country in crisis almost eight years since it declared independence from Serbia.

US Secretary of State John Kerry is due to visit Kosovo tomorrow in a gesture of support for its development as an independent state, 16 years after a US-led NATO air war to halt the killing and expulsion of ethnic Albanians by Serbian forces.

Yesterday, opposition lawmakers twice released tear gas in the chamber. Police rushed out Prime Minister Isa Mustafa and other ministers. Local media and opposition parties said the parliament's presidency had suspended all

opposition MPs from yesterday's session, which continued later in the day without them.

"We will protest inside the parliament and outside in the streets," Glauk Konjufca of the opposition Vetevendosje (Self-Determination) party told Reuters. "One of the options is also early elections; let them verify whether the Kosovo people support them".

On Friday, masked police armed with rifles arrested Vetevendosje's founder, lawmaker Albin Kurti, on charges of releasing tear gas in parliament. So far five MPs have been detained and arrest warrants have been issued for two more.

Kerry visit

John Kerry, on his first trip to the Balkans as US secretary of state, visits Kosovo to underscore Western concern over the slow pace of progress 16 years after a US-led air war set it on the road to independence. Kosovo faces a deepening political crisis over relations with former master Serbia, against a backdrop of widespread frustration over a lack of progress on democracy, corruption and Western integration.

The country of 1.8 million people, the majority ethnic Albanians, broke away from Serbia in 1999 when the United States led an 11-week NATO bombing campaign to halt the killing and expulsion of ethnic Albanian civilians by Serbian

security forces fighting a two-year counter-insurgency war.

Kosovo declared independence in 2008. The mainly Muslim but overwhelmingly secular country remains staunchly pro-American, but there are concerns in the West over the risk of radicalization among disaffected and jobless young Kosovars. At least 200 of them are believed to have joined Islamist militants in Syria and Iraq.

Kerry's brief visit, a senior US official told Reuters, aims "to show support for (the) process of democratic state building, strengthening rule of law, and the Kosovo-Serb normalization talks".

Those talks mediated by the European Union aim to improve relations between Serbia and Kosovo. Serbia does not recognize its former southern province as sovereign, complicating its path to full international recognition. Serbia's big-power ally Russia and five of the EU's 28 members also oppose full recognition for Kosovo. For weeks, Kosovo has been rocked by riots and repeated scenes of opposition lawmakers releasing tear gas in parliament.

Huge frustration

The official said Kerry would also raise the issue of Kosovars leaving to fight in Syria before he heads north to Belgrade for a gathering of the 57-nation Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) almost certain to be dominated by the war in Syria and the threat of Islamic State.

Having flown close to one million miles in nearly three years as secretary of state, that Kerry is only now getting to the Balkans is seen in some ways as a sign of success in a region that just two decades ago was at war. Analysts, however, say there is growing disenchantment across the region, notably in Kosovo. Many Kosovars are growing frustrated with the slow pace of progress towards European integration and the freedom of movement, jobs and prosperity they hope this will bring.

"You have this huge frustration growing in Kosovo as it becomes clear that the promises and hopes associated with independence are not being fulfilled," said Gerald Knaus, chairman of the European Stability Initiative think tank. Ardian Arifaj, an adviser to Kosovo Foreign Minister Hashim Thaci, said Kerry's visit would provide a "push for domestic politics to continue our work" and showed "we are clearly on the right track".

The United States continues to commend great support among Kosovars. "If the Americans were not helping us in 1999, today I would be in a grave ... or in a foreign country," said teacher Ymer

Sylejmani, 64. "But sometimes they (make) mistakes because they are supporting some thieves here - our politicians." — Reuters

SEVEN HACKED TO DEATH IN CONGO HOSPITAL, DOZENS KILLED IN CLASHES

KINSHASA: Seven people hacked to death in a hospital were among at least 30 people killed in fighting at the weekend between the army, backed by UN troops, and Islamist Ugandan rebels in northeast Democratic Republic of Congo, local sources said yesterday.

Intelligence gaps, poor coordination and insufficient resources have rendered the Congolese army and the UN peacekeeping force ineffective against the armed ADF group that is estimated to have only a few hundred fighters. Massacres on a similar scale have been a regular occurrence for more than a year. The ADF has operated in the area since the 1990s and funds itself by illicitly trading timber and gold.

Sunday's clashes broke out in the town of Eringeti, 55 km (35 miles) north of the town of Beni near the Ugandan border, when fighters from the ADF - a group led by Islamist radicals - attacked a military headquarters, according to the Center of Study for the Promotion of Peace, Democracy and Human Rights, a group that documents violence in North Kivu province.

At least four Congolese soldiers and 12 Islamist militants were killed in the clashes, while seven civilians were hacked to death with machetes at a hospital, according to a provisional toll, UN DRC mission spokesman, Felix Basse said. Eastern Congo is plagued by dozens of armed groups that prey on the local population and exploit mineral

reserves. Millions died there between 1996 and 2003 as a regional conflict caused hunger and disease.

The government has blamed the ADF for nearly all of the attacks near Beni in the last year, although some analysts argue that other armed groups or criminal gangs are probably involved.

Local activists say at least 500 civilians have been killed near Beni since October 2014, most in overnight raids by rebels carried out with machetes and hatchets.

Alexis Katsurana, a local government administrator in the nearby town of Oicha, said that Eringeti residents had fled in their hundreds northward towards Ituri province on Sunday.

Eight Congolese soldiers and one UN peacekeeper from the Force Intervention Brigade, which has a mandate to conduct offensive operations, died fighting, the local rights group said in a statement.

Basse told Reuters that a UN peacekeeper from the brigade had been killed and a second wounded in the fighting. He declined to give the nationality of the peacekeepers but a UN source said the dead soldier was a Malawian.

He said the town was now once again under the control of Congolese and UN forces. The governor of North Kivu, Julien Paluku, confirmed six civilian and 12 ADF deaths but said he had no information about Congolese army casualties. — Reuters

OBAMA, PUTIN DISCUSS SYRIA, UKRAINE AT SUMMIT

PARIS: US President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the Syria crisis and the situation in Ukraine during a meeting yesterday on the sidelines of the climate summit in Paris, a White House official said.

Obama stressed the importance of targeting Islamic State militants in Syria and not focusing military attacks against rebel groups who oppose Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, the official said on customary condition of anonymity. "The two presidents discussed the imperative of making progress on the Vienna process to bring about a ceasefire and political resolution to the civil war in Syria," the official said, referring to international talks in the Austrian capital on the Syria crisis. Obama told Putin he believes Assad must leave power as part of a transition, and both leaders said their foreign min-

isters will continue to work on the diplomatic process, the official added.

Obama expressed regret over the recent death of a Russian pilot after Turkey shot down a Russian warplane at its border with Syria, the official said. The plane downing triggered Moscow's deployment of an advanced missile system to Syria. Obama encouraged de-escalation between Russia and Turkey, the official said. During the discussion, the American president also emphasized a diplomatic solution to the Ukraine crisis, adding that sanctions against Russia can be rolled back when Moscow honors the Minsk cease-fire accord, according to the White House official, who spoke on background.

The two leaders met for 30 minutes alongside the climate talks in Paris, the Kremlin said separately. — Reuters



PARIS: Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) meets with US President Barack Obama on the sidelines of the UN conference on climate change - COP21, yesterday at Le Bourget, on the outskirts of the French capital Paris. — AFP

BAKU: ARMENIAN FORCES KILL AZERBAIJANI SOLDIER

BAKU: Azerbaijan yesterday accused Armenian forces of killing one of its soldiers in the latest clash between the arch-foes over the disputed territory of Nagorno Karabakh. "As a result of a shootout with Armenian forces, an Azerbaijani soldier died on the (Karabakh) frontline," the defense ministry in Baku said in a statement.

"The response will be harsh," the ministry said, adding that "Armenia's political and military leadership bears full responsibility for this bloody provocation and rising tensions across the frontline."

Yerevan and Baku are locked in a decades-long conflict over breakaway Nagorno Karabakh, a Yerevan-backed ethnic Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan. The two ex-Soviet nations regularly exchange fire along their shared border and across Nagorno Karabakh's volatile frontline.

In a first since the 1994 ceasefire, both sides reportedly used large-calibre artillery in tit-for-tat attacks in September, raising the specter of a new war. International mediators to Karabakh peace talks coordinated by the

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) at the time "condemned in strong terms" the violence that caused civilian casualties, and called on both countries to "accept an OSCE mechanism to investigate ceasefire violations".

US mediator James Warlick said last month that the two countries' presidents had agreed to meet "before the end of the year" and expressed hope that they "will defuse increased tensions".

Ethnic Armenian separatists backed by Yerevan seized control of the territory during a 1990s war that left some 30,000 dead. Despite years of negotiations, the two countries have not signed a final peace deal to cement a tenuous ceasefire.

Energy-rich Azerbaijan, whose military spending exceeds Armenia's entire state budget, has threatened to take back the breakaway region by force if negotiations fail to yield results.

Armenia-backed by Russia, which sells weapons to both Baku and Yerevan says it could crush any offensive. — AFP

SUU KYI TO MEET PRESIDENT, MILITARY CHIEF TOMORROW

YANGON: Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi will meet President Thein Sein and military chief Min Aung Hlaing tomorrow, their first meeting since she won an historic election earlier this month, a senior government official told Reuters.

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) won the vote with a landslide and needs to forge a working relationship with the powerful military for her government to run smoothly.

Suu Kyi, a former political prisoner who is barred from becoming president under the military-drafted constitution, invited the military chief and the president to meet just days after the Nov. 8 election to discuss national reconciliation. The NLD will be the dominant party when Myanmar's new parliament sits in February, while the armed forces will be the largest opposition group. The constitution guarantees unelected members of the military a quarter of seats in both houses. Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing also has three powerful ministries guaranteed under the charter. This gives him a strong hold on Myanmar's sprawling bureaucracy.

Suu Kyi will meet the president at his official residence tomorrow morning and the military chief in his office in the afternoon, Zaw Htay, a senior official from the President's Office, said yesterday.

The meetings will be closed to the media, he said. Win Htein, a senior member of the NLD, also confirmed the meetings but declined to give any details about what would be discussed.

53 recruits release

Meanwhile, Myanmar's military released 53 children and young people from service yesterday as



NAYPYITAW: Police officers stand next to a barricade as factory workers gather to stage a protest close to the capital Naypyitaw yesterday. — AP

part of an effort to rid its ranks of underage soldiers, the United Nations said. Human rights groups have long accused Myanmar's military, known as the Tatmadaw, of abuses such as using child soldiers, forcibly recruiting conscripts and confiscating land.

Since the military handed power to a semi-civilian government in 2011, it has taken some steps to pro-

fessionalise the armed forces, including the release of soldiers recruited while under the age of 18. "Today's release is the result of continued efforts of the Government of Myanmar and the Tatmadaw to put an end to the harmful practice of recruiting and using children," said Renata Lok-Dessallien, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar,

in a statement. "I am delighted to see these children and young people returning to their homes and families. We are hopeful that institutional checks that have been put in place and continued efforts will ensure that recruitment of children will exist no more." The military has released 146 underage recruits this year and 699 since it signed a joint action plan with the U.N. in 2012 to end the use of children in the military. The UN had no estimate for the number of underage soldiers in Myanmar. Experts believe Myanmar's military to be between 300,000 and 350,000 strong, but the military does not release data on its size. Lok-Dessallien also called on armed ethnic groups to stop recruiting child soldiers. The UN Secretary-General has listed seven such groups as being "persistent perpetrators" in the recruitment and use of children in their operations.

They include the powerful Kachin Independence Army, which controls large swathes of Myanmar's northern Kachin State, and the United Wa State Army (UWSA). Operating on the Myanmar-China border, the UWSA is regarded as the largest and best equipped of Myanmar's armed ethnic groups.

The announcement of the release comes amid fighting between the military and ethnic groups in the eastern Shan State, as well as in Kachin. Activists from Shan State last week accused the military of bombing schools and Buddhist temples, firing on civilians and raping women during its recent offensives. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that up to 6,000 people have been displaced by the fighting in Shan and another 1,200, including 500 children, in Kachin. — Reuters



KATHMANDU: Nepalese activists hold up placards and join hands as they take part in a protest in Kathmandu yesterday during an ongoing dispute between Nepal and India. — AFP

NEPAL LEADERS, PROTESTERS RESUME TALKS TO END CRISIS

KATHMANDU: Nepal's top political leaders met yesterday with representatives of the Madhesi ethnic group who are protesting against the country's new constitution to try to end a months-long crisis, but no agreement was reached.

The protesters have imposed a general strike in much of southern Nepal and blocked a key border point with India, causing a shortage of fuel and other goods in the Himalayan nation. They are demanding a bigger state than granted in the new constitution and greater representation in the government.

After Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli and top leaders in the coalition government and the main opposition Nepali Congress party held discussions yesterday with Madhesi leaders, both sides said there was no agreement reached but pledged to continue with talks.

Laxman Lal Karna, a Madhesi leader, said they agreed to meet again tomorrow night to discuss their key demands. "We told the government to stop using force to stop our protests and peace rallies," Karna said. "The government is yet to even implement the two agreements reached in a previous meeting on providing free treatment for wounded protesters and monetary compensation for families of those killed. Our talks today made no progress in resolving anything." The government side, however,

appeared more optimistic about the talks. "The meeting today has helped create a conducive environment between the three sides," said Narayan Kaji Shrestha of the United Communist Party of Nepal Maoists. "Though no agreement was reached today, we have all reached an understanding that there would be continuity to the talks."

Madhesis say the new constitution unfairly divides Nepal into seven states with borders that cut through their ancestral homeland. They want the states to be larger and to be given more autonomy over local matters.

At least 50 people have been killed in the protests since August. The United Nations' children's agency warned yesterday that more than 3 million children under the age of 5 in Nepal "are at risk of death or disease during the harsh winter months due to a severe shortage of fuel, food, medicines and vaccines." UNICEF said in a statement that the Nepalese government's regional medical stores had already run out of vaccines against tuberculosis, and that stocks of other vaccines and antibiotics were critically low. It said the 125,000 newborns expected in Nepal in the next two months are at particular risk, with ambulance services hit by the fuel shortage, resulting in a drop in births in hospitals and health centers. The lack of fuel for heating also increases the risk of hypothermia and death for newborn babies, it said. — AP



MANILA: Davao mayor Rodrigo Duterte (front L) shakes hands with supporters outside a hotel in Manila yesterday. A feared Philippine mayor nicknamed "Dirty Harry" for his ruthless anti-crime stance announced yesterday he would run for president next year, after boasting of killing criminals and even cursing the pope for worsening traffic. — AFP

PHILIPPINE'S COURT TO ISSUE VERDICT IN US MARINE CASE

KILLING OF TRANSGENDER FILIPINO IN HOTEL

OLONGAPO, Philippines: A Philippine court is expected to deliver its verdict today in the emotion-charged case of a US Marine accused of murdering a transgender Filipino after discovering her gender when they checked into a hotel, officials said.

Philippine police were readying heavy security for the ruling in Olongapo City, northwest of Manila, in the case involving US Marine Pfc. Joseph Scott Pemberton. Left-wing activists said they plan to hold protests in the city, where Pemberton is accused of strangling to death Jennifer Laude after they met in a bar in October last year.

The killing sparked anger in the Philippines and reignited calls by left-wing groups and nationalists for an end to America's military presence at a time when the US is reasserting its dominance in Asia, and Manila has turned to Washington for support amid an escalating territorial dispute with China. The murder case also revived a debate over which government should have custody of US military personnel who run afoul of local laws under a Visiting Forces

Agreement they signed in 1998.

Lawyers for the victim's family and Pemberton both predicted victory. Murder is punishable by life in prison while an acquittal is non-appealable. Yesterday, Laude's two sisters and mother, Julita, lit candles, placed a bouquet of flowers and prayed at her tomb in a small Olongapo cemetery. Julita said she prayed to God to give justice to her daughter.

Pemberton, an anti-tank missile operator from New Bedford, Massachusetts, was one of thousands of American and Philippine military personnel who participated in a joint exercise last year. He and a group of other Marines were on leave after the exercise and met Laude and her friends at a bar in Olongapo, a former US city outside Subic Bay freeport, a former US Naval base.

Pemberton and Laude left the bar and checked in at a nearby hotel. About 30 minutes later, Pemberton walked out, leaving the door ajar, according to hotel staff.

Pemberton testified in August that he choked Laude during a fight that erupted when he dis-

covered she was a transgender woman, but insisted she was still alive when he left her in a shower, according to his lawyer, Rowena Garcia Flores. Police, however, said Laude had apparently been drowned in the toilet. The Visiting Forces Agreement, which allows US forces to conduct military exercises in the Philippines, says the Philippines can prosecute American service members, but that the US has custody over them "from the commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings."

However, the Philippine Supreme Court ruled in 2009 that convicted US personnel must serve their sentences in Philippine detention.

In a compromise last year, the US agreed to have Pemberton detained in a compound at Philippine military headquarters in Quezon City guarded by US Marines with an outer ring of Filipino forces.

Left-wing activists and nationalist Filipinos have cited the custody provision as proof that the accord was lopsided in favor of the US and undermines the sovereignty of the Philippines, which was an American colony until 1946. — AP

US EMBASSY IN KABUL WARNS OF IMMINENT ATTACK IN CITY

WASHINGTON: The United States' embassy in Kabul yesterday warned of an imminent attack in the Afghan city, saying it had received credible reports of a threat within the next two days, but had no other details. "US Embassy Kabul has received credible reports of an imminent attack in Kabul city, Kabul province, Afghanistan within the next 48 hours," it said in a post on its website.

"During this period of heightened threat, the US Embassy strongly urges US citizens to exercise extreme caution if moving around the city. There were no further details regarding the targets, timing, or method of the planned attack," it said.

Mending ties

The leaders of Pakistan and Afghanistan met in Paris yesterday to discuss ways to resurrect peace talks with Taliban insurgents and to improve relations between the neighbors that soured earlier in the year after a string of militant attacks in Kabul. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's office released a statement saying he had met Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on the sidelines of the climate change summit in the French capital.

"Discussions were also held on the resumption of the peace and reconciliation process" aimed at ending the 14-year-old Afghan war, the statement said. "Both leaders agreed to work with all those who would enter such a process as legitimate political actors, and act, alongside the Afghan government, against those who refuse to take the path of peace."

Pakistan in July hosted the first official talks between the Afghan government and representatives of Taliban insurgents, who are seeking to re-establish their hardline Islamist rule that ended with the 2001 US-led military intervention. However, a second round of talks was cancelled after it was revealed that the Taliban's founder and reclusive leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, had been dead for two years. Pakistan accused those who were trying to sabotage the talks of leaking the news. Meanwhile, grinding violence in



KUNDUZ: Staff members walk through the damaged Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) hospital in Afghanistan's city of Kunduz. A US investigation into a strike on a charity-run Afghan hospital cited mistakes so "reckless" that observers said they left open the unsettling question of whether those involved had ripped up their own rulebook in a chaotic effort to take out the Taliban. — AFP

Afghanistan kills hundreds of people each month. The Taliban in September briefly seized a provincial capital for the first time since their ouster, in a major setback for Ghani's government.

Newly declared Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour has not publicly endorsed a return to the negotiating table, although hopes were raised when he appointed a new team to the movement's political office in Qatar. The Afghan government had no immediate comment yesterday's meeting. Relations between

Afghanistan and Pakistan improved in the early days of Ghani's presidency, but quickly deteriorated after a series of major bombings in the Afghan capital, Kabul, that some blamed on militants based in Pakistan.

The Pakistani statement said Sharif had briefed Ghani on its ongoing military crackdown on militants on its side of the border, saying that he vowed "Pakistan would take all efforts to tackle the menace of terrorism facing the two countries." — Reuters

NORTHERN IRISH ABORTION LAWS BREACH HUMAN RIGHTS: COURT

BELFAST: Northern Ireland's restrictive abortion laws are in breach of human rights by failing to provide exceptions in the case of fatal foetal abnormality and sexual crime, Belfast's High Court found in a landmark ruling yesterday.

Unlike other parts of the United Kingdom, abortion is banned in Northern Ireland except only where the life or mental health of the mother is in danger. Doctors who perform abortions outside the limitations face up to life in prison. Like in the Irish republic where the

law is just as strict and debate by both sides just as fierce, the restrictions have led to thousands of pregnant women travelling across the Irish Sea to Britain for abortions each year. After four months of deliberation, Judge Mark Horner upheld a challenge by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission that the laws breached the European Convention on Human Rights. He asked the parties to consider whether the ruling can be applied under current legislation.

If not, it would be referred to Northern Ireland's devolved assembly which to date has refused to extend legislation and whom the judge criticized, saying the issue was "unlikely to be grasped by the legislature in the foreseeable future".

Without citing any source, Irish national broadcaster RTE said it understood Northern Ireland's Attorney General would challenge the ruling. Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission welcomed what they called a

landmark ruling. "Today's result is historic, and will be welcomed by many of the vulnerable women and girls who have been faced with these situations," the group's chief commissioner Les Allamby said in a statement.

The ruling is likely to have an impact on the debate south of the border where a complete ban on abortion was only lifted in 2013 when terminations were allowed if a mother's life was in danger.

With abortion law reform gaining momen-

tum, Prime Minister Enda Kenny said last week that if re-elected he would institute a citizens' convention to debate the issue and allow his members of parliament a free vote on any recommended changes.

Kenny's junior coalition partner, Labour, with whom he wishes to return to government, has said it will campaign at elections early next year to allow abortion for cases such as rape, incest and fatal foetal abnormality. — Reuters

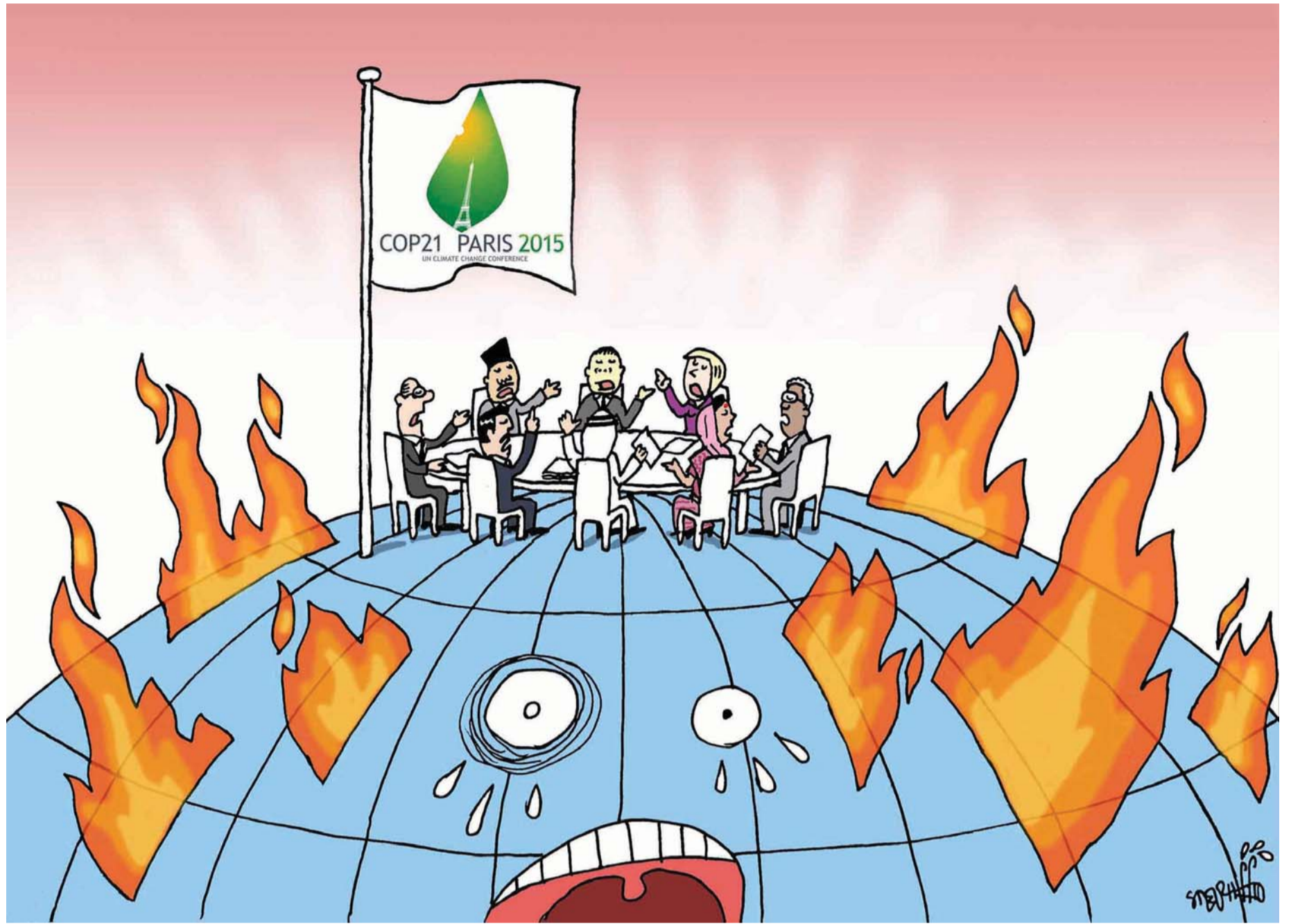
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FINAL UN IRAN REPORT LIKELY INCONCLUSIVE

By George Jahn

The conclusions of a secret UN nuclear agency document leaked six years ago were explosive. Iran, it said, had likely worked on developing an atomic bomb. Two years later the agency went public. It detailed a list of alleged activities based on "credible" evidence that Tehran did work "relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device". This week, the bitter debate that for years pitted Iranian denials against US claims of a cover-up appears set for an anticlimactic ending, with a final report from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency expected to stop short of proving or disproving the claims.

And Washington? It now has opted to let bygones be bygones as it focuses on curbing Tehran's future weapons-making prowess. The US has long urged that Iran not only trim its present nuclear program but also admit to what it says was past nuclear weapons work. Iran's refusal to address those demands led since 2006 to a series of UN Security Council resolutions and sanctions against Tehran - and until recently the latent threat of US, and Israeli military strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities.

Those threats have diminished - and Washington's priorities have shifted - with the signing of a July 14 nuclear deal the US engineered with the Islamic Republic. That deal commits Iran to cutting back for more than a decade on nuclear technologies that could be used for weapons-making in exchange for sanctions relief. But Tehran has warned it might renege if the IAEA report is stacked against it - and Washington now is signaling that it is prepared to shut an eye, even if the threat is no more than bluster.

The long-standing US mantra accused Iran of "deception and deceit" on the weapons issue. As late as mid-June, Secretary of State John Kerry said the IAEA report must "resolve our questions about it with specificity" before any nuclear-related sanctions on Iran are lifted. Just weeks later, however, Kerry said Washington is not "fixated on Iran specifically accounting for what they did at one point in time or another." Instead, he said the US is concerned about "going forward".

The July 14 deal calls on Iran to "fully implement" the plan with the IAEA to wrap up its investigation. But it only commits Tehran to timetables in providing explanations and information of its own choosing to the agency in time to allow the IAEA to draw up its December report. It says nothing about the kind of information required. The IAEA's 35-nation board then is scheduled to approve a resolution drawn up by six nations that signed the deal with Iran - the US, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany - that puts the issue to rest.

Conclusions

IAEA chief Yukiya Amano has been careful to diminish expectations, describing his upcoming report last week as "not black and white". Long before he spoke, Iranian officials used those exact words, suggesting they already know that the agency's conclusions won't be damning. But Iran is not taking chances. With only a day or two remaining before the report's publication, Iranian officials continue to publicly threaten to hold back on commitments to the July 15 deal if the IAEA's assessment is unfavorable to their country.

Two Western diplomats familiar with the issue say those same threats have been made in negotiations with IAEA officials. They demanded anonymity because they are not authorized to discuss the diplomacy. Iran attaches huge importance to closing the books on the allegations in its drive to lift all punitive measures against it and wipe the slate clean over its nuclear program. Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi made his country's strategy clear in comments apparently published inadvertently and withdrawn shortly after publication in August. He said his country's threats "will cause the Westerners themselves to pressure the IAEA to wrap up the case as soon as possible, so that the deal could be implemented". —AP

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DECADES AFTER WAR, NEW BIAFRA MOVEMENT GROWS

By Alexis Akwagiyam

Nearly half a century after a civil war in which a million people died, 27-year-old Okoli Ikedi is part of a new protest movement in southeastern Nigeria calling for an independent state of Biafra. Such calls have become common since the leader of the group Ikedi represents in Enugu, the region's main city, was arrested in October, prompting thousands in the oil-producing southeast to join demonstrations in recent weeks calling for his release. It's another challenge for President Muhammadu Buhari, who is grappling with a sharp slowdown in Africa's biggest economy, the bloody Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast and fears that militancy may resume in the oil-rich southern Delta region when an amnesty ends in December. Like many in the surge of southeastern secessionist sentiment, Ikedi was born long after the war ended.

Displaying nothing that would betray his pro-Biafran leanings such as a flag or campaign T-shirt, to avoid unwanted police attention, the diminutive baker said poverty and high unemployment in the region were symptoms of government neglect. "They want to make us economically poor. They believe the only way to control us is to increase our suffering," said Ikedi in a trembling voice, adding that his group, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), wants a referendum. The group points to basic problems to support its demands for an independent Biafra, on which presidential spokesman Garba Shehu declined to comment, adding that he was not aware that the government was doing anything on the issue.

Potholed Highways

The highways that connect southeastern cities are a source of frustration for business people in the region who say the partially tarmac roads, punctuated by potholes, should be arteries of commerce but are dangerous to navigate. And the refuse strewn by roadsides,

combined with the acrid stench of open sewers, hints at the dilapidation that has fomented discontent in the 45 years since the civil war ended. The 1967-70 conflict followed a secessionist attempt by the eastern Igbo people. Most of the million who lost their lives died from starvation and illness rather than violence. Now, like then, Igbo say they have been marginalized - excluded from key government posts and denied vital funding for infrastructure development, schools and hospitals. IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu - an activist who divides his time between the UK and Nigeria, spreading his ethos on social media and Radio Biafra - was arrested last month on charges of criminal conspiracy and belonging to an illegal society.

Political analyst Okereke Chukwunolye said the decision to arrest Kanu, previously a little known figure whose social media following outweighed actual support on the ground, was a mistake because it "increased his popularity and made him more visible". The sight of the red, black, green and yellow Biafran flag at largely peaceful protests in the southeastern cities of Port Harcourt and Aba, and the capital, Abuja, has prompted secessionist debates in newspapers, on radio and social media. "The issues that brought about the Biafran-Nigerian civil war have remained unresolved," said Chukwunolye. In the 1960s, Enugu - which was the capital of Biafra - became known for its coal production which created jobs, as did steel, cement and gas industries.

'No Victor, No Vanquished'

When the civil war ended, Yakubu Gowon, the general who led the government side to victory over Biafra, declared that there should be "no victor, no vanquished", in a pledge of reconciliation. But the Igboes feel left behind. Local people say the demise of Enugu's industries, a decline that coincided with the oil boom in Africa's top crude producer, led to widespread unemployment and was a consequence of the federal government failing to fund projects in the region.

At a market in Asata, an impoverished city centre district of Enugu, it is hard to find anyone who supports the government. "Why can't you leave a slave to go?" asked vegetable stall holder Victoria Emelue in response to the question of secession, raising her voice above the cacophony of traders, shoppers and blaring music. She said her three children - all graduates in their twenties - had been unable to find work, prompting her to be fearful about the future. "Of course I'm in support of Biafra," said 28-year-old wholesale food trader Uchenna Ede. "If we are freed, the eastern part of Nigeria would have a huge turnaround".

A common complaint is that Nigeria's presidents have tended to come from the north or southwest - areas dominated by Hausa and Yoruba people - which, some say, has led to Igboes not being appointed to influential government positions. The constitution says there must be a minister from each of Nigeria's 36 states, but the presence of a Muslim northerner as president with a Yoruba vice-president, Yemi Osinbajo, has been cited as evidence that the north and southwest remain dominant. It's a reminder of the complex alchemy that brings together 170 million people in Africa's most populous nation, split roughly equally between Christians and Muslims across around 250 ethnic groups, who mostly co-exist peacefully. Tensions are rising. IPOB campaigners say they are committed to peaceful protests, but their demonstrations prompted the military to issue an "unequivocal warning" that efforts to bring about the "dismemberment of the country" would be crushed. Chukwunolye said it was unlikely that Igbo anger would result in bloodshed, in stark contrast to Boko Haram militants who have killed thousands and displaced 2.1 million people since 2009 in an attempt to set up an Islamic state in the northeast. "There is no separatist movement - it is just an agitation by some youth elements," he said. "Those who were involved in the thick of the Biafran struggle will never wish to see war again." —Reuters

NEW START FOR SYRIAN FAMILY IN GERMANY

By Kirsten Grieshaber

Just before dawn, a worker shook the matriarch of the refugee family out of sleep at their asylum center in a depressed German town. "Get up and pack your belongings," the woman said curtly. "A taxi will come in an hour and take you away." The Syrian woman hastily woke her children, stuffed their belongings into plastic bags, and took them out into the cold to wait - worried about what was coming next after weeks of heartbreak being shunted from one squalid refugee center to another. "Will it be better, will it be worse?" Reem Habashieh, the family's eldest daughter, recalled thinking. "Every time we get moved to a new, unknown place we have this twisted pain in our stomachs because we don't know what's going to happen."

The Habashiehs - 44-year-old mother Khawla Kareem; 19-year-old Reem; sons Mohammed, 18, and Yaman, 15; and 11-year-old daughter Raghad - fled the war in Syria in August when fighting hit their neighborhood in Damascus. The journey took them across the Mediterranean in an overcrowded dinghy to Greece, on a grueling trek north across the Balkans with hundreds of thousands of other migrants, and finally a last leg in a trafficker's minibus to the promised land of Germany's capital.

Berlin dazzled them with its cosmopolitan splendor but the elation didn't last: Soon they were sent to the underdeveloped east, where racism and neo-Nazi activity remain rife. The Habashiehs are among an unprecedented wave of asylum seekers - about 950,000 so far which means there will probably be more than 1 million by year's end - who have come to this rich country seeking a fresh start. Cities and towns across Germany are struggling to keep up with the massive demand for accommodation, and officials have been working overtime to handle the huge backlogs of asylum applications. It doesn't always run so smoothly.

Since their initial arrival in Germany, the Habashiehs have been put up in four temporary housing facilities throughout eastern Germany. Far-right thugs have spewed hatred at them. Their days have been filled with squalor in overcrowded asylum centers, and

soul-sapping boredom as days of indolence blend one into the other. The Paris attacks now raise fears of a backlash against Syrian migrants, even though, Reem said, she and other refugees thought of the perpetrators as "sick terrorists using their fake Islam as cover". The family's rushed departure last month from the town of Heidenau did not have an auspicious beginning. The taxi took them to yet another temporary shelter in the gritty eastern city of Chemnitz - it was a former prison. Still, they were happy because they got a room of their own again and didn't have to sleep in a big hall with hundreds of other migrants. Last week, the family was told they would be transferred once more - again with no information.

New Home

The Habashiehs ended up in Zwickau, a small city of 90,000 near the Czech border in eastern Germany, where they were brought to a neighborhood of endless communist-era, prefabricated concrete apartment buildings. It looked grim, but things suddenly got a lot brighter: A friendly social worker gave them the keys to their own apartment, explaining how to separate the garbage into three differ-

ent bins. He cautioned them to keep the sound down between 1 and 3 pm in the afternoon - post-Lunch nap time - and after 10 pm, in line with German noise regulations.

The Habashiehs had a new home. The best news of all was that the two youngest kids would be able to start school, while Khawla Kareem, Reem and Mohammed would enroll in a daily intensive language class at the city's community college. Even Yaman, the 15-year-old boy, who had been withdrawn and quiet since their arrival in Germany, suddenly cheered up. "I'm happy ... We're independent again," the teenager said, as he carefully straightened out blue-checked blankets on the metal beds in the room he shares with his brother.

After less than a week in Zwickau, Yaman and his sister Raghad have already met the principal of Humboldt Oberschule high school. He applauded their basic German skills and said they would attend daily afternoon classes to get them up to speed in German before joining regular classes. One recent afternoon, the mother was busy in the kitchen cooking, while her daughters were sprucing up their still barren three-bedroom apartment with teddy bears and Christmas decorations that a boy neighbor had brought over.



In this photo taken Nov 10, 2015, Syrian refugees Reem Habashieh, Mohammed Habashieh, mother Khawla Kareem, Raghad Habashieh and Yaman Habashieh sit at the table for dinner in their flat in Zwickau, eastern Germany. —AP

Simple Joys

"We're trying to have our own magical touches," Reem said excitedly. "We just started looking for shops to make the place look pretty with all the girly-girly stuff and make it look just like a home." She spoke of the simple joy of sleeping in her own bed again for the first time since they left Syria: "It feels great." In their spare time, the five have been out to discover the city.

Zwickau, a former coal mining city, was famous for the production of the East German Trabant automobile during communist times. These days, Volkswagen is the biggest employer. The car company moved in after the breakdown of Communism in 1989, but hasn't been able to fully absorb the jobs losses after the old regime collapsed. Many residents moved to western Germany looking for work, which explains why there are some 7,000 empty apartments that can be used for asylum seekers.

When the Habashiehs discovered Al Amin, a tiny Middle Eastern grocery store, they were overjoyed. With their new monthly living allowance of around €1,000 (\$1,100) they stocked up on the food they'd been missing for so long - zaatar spice mix from Aleppo, dried jute leaves for moukhhieh stew, as well as sweet dates, stuffed eggplants and halal meat. Back home, Khawla Kareem took off her black overcoat, put on a blue-velvet glittery shirt and cheerfully roamed around the kitchen. Soon aromatic scents filled the whole apartment. As Reem set the table, the call for the evening prayer sounded from her smartphone app.

Then the family sat around the table to share a meal of tabouleh salad, yoghurt with cucumber, garlic and mint as well as a big bowl of rice mixed with minced beef and peas, followed by tea, fruit, Arabic coffee and cake. At night, Yaman lit the shisha, or water pipe, for his mother and oldest sister. Sitting on the balcony, Reem stared dreamily at the shisha charcoal glowing in the dark, listening to the bubbly sound of the pipe, as she took a deep drag of the apple-flavored smoke. Just like she did on rare summer nights back in Damascus, when the war eased for a couple of days and people went out again to enjoy a few peaceful hours. "I'll always be homesick in some way," she said thoughtfully. "But in another way, this starts feeling like home. We all sit together around the table, eating mom's food, talking about the past and what lies ahead for us in the future." —AP

LOYD HEADS SHORTLIST FOR WORLD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

LONDON: Carli Lloyd, captain and hat-trick hero for the United States in their World Cup final triumph, heads the trio of nominees for FIFA Women's World Player of the Year, announced yesterday. Lloyd, whose treble in the 5-2 win against Japan in Vancouver in July featured an extraordinary strike from the halfway line, is joined on the shortlist by Japan's captain Aya Miyama and Germany striker Celia Sasic. The Houston Dash midfielder and double Olympic champion Lloyd will be favourite for the award after her historic World Cup in which she led the US to a record third title and won the Golden Ball as the tournament's best player. Her showpiece treble was the first hat-trick by any player male or female in a World Cup final since Geoff Hurst's 1966 heroics for England against West Germany. Lloyd, though, achieved her feat in just the first 16 minutes of the game. Lloyd's six goals in Canada saw her match Sasic as the tournament's top scorer with the German striker winning the Golden Boot on the basis of having played fewer minutes. — Reuters

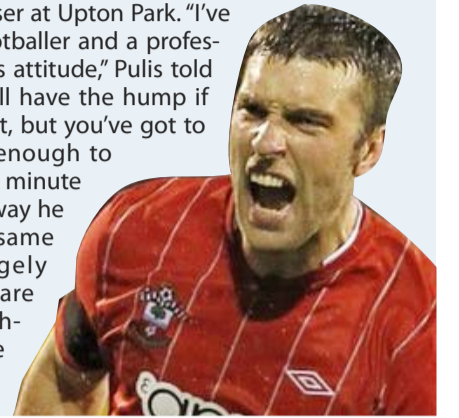


DEMONS BANISHED, SCHWARTZEL BACK

MALELANE: Charl Schwartzel's victory in the Alfred Dunhill Championship marked the end of a two-year drought for the former US Masters champion, and with some radical adjustments to his game starting to pay off, he hopes his demons are well and truly banished. The 31-year-old South African won the opening tournament of the new European Tour season to record a first success in a year and 363 days. His previous victory came in the same event at the Leopard Creek Country Club. A drop in form saw him fall to 50th in the world rankings but Sunday's four-shot triumph suggests Schwartzel's star is on the rise again. "Sometimes I wasn't sure it would ever turn around," he told reporters. "If people realised the amount of work I have put in to the game over the last 18 months, they might understand why it means so much to me. "This time last year my golf swing was probably in the worst place it has been in as a professional," he said, adding that he had discovered some "bad mistakes" with his putting. — Reuters

WEST BROM'S PULIS PRAISES 'PROFESSIONAL' LAMBERT

LONDON: Rickie Lambert's professionalism has been hailed by manager Tony Pulis after the striker forced an equaliser for West Bromwich Albion in Sunday's 1-1 Premier League draw with West Ham United. The 33-year-old has failed to nail down a starting spot since his moving from Liverpool in the close season, but Pulis praised his importance after the substitute's shot deflected off Winston Reid for a 50th minute equaliser at Upton Park. "I've got huge respect for Rickie, both as a footballer and a professional. His ability is first class and so is his attitude," Pulis told the club's website (www.wba.co.uk). "He'll have the hump if I'm not picking him, most of them do that, but you've got to be broad-shouldered enough and big enough to pick what you think is right. "But in every minute of training you cannot fault him and the way he goes about his business. It's been the same throughout his career and he is hugely respected, rightly so." West Brom, who are 13th in the league table, next host fifth-placed Tottenham Hotspur in the league on Saturday. — Reuters



INTERNATIONAL TENNIS COACHES CONFERENCE

KUWAIT: Kuwait tennis coach Hussein Al-Ghareeb represented Kuwait in the 19th International Coaches Conference which was held from November 24-28 in Antalya, Turkey. The conference was organized by the International and Turkish Tennis Federations, where more than 700 coaches representing 99 countries participated. This conference is held once every two years and enjoys high participation of tennis coaches and experts in teaching the game.

DRUGS CHEATS WARNED TO STEER CLEAR OF GOLD COAST 2018

MANIKATA: Commonwealth Games chiefs warned drugs cheats to stay well away from the Gold Coast 2018 event, as they "will be caught", while stressing young athletes needed rigorous education about doping.

International sport has been rocked by allegations of widespread corruption and evidence of state-sponsored doping in Russia, with questions being asked about the integrity of major competitions.

The Commonwealth Games Federation, which controls the second-biggest multi-sport event after the Olympics, said a clear-cut programme of educating athletes about their responsibilities—particularly impressionable youngsters — was vital in keeping competitions clean. And the CGF said coaches and parents also needed to be aware of banned substances, as it warned potential cheats to steer clear of the next Commonwealth Games, in Australia's Gold Coast. "You'll be caught. Don't do it and don't come," said CGF president Louise Martin. "We want clean Games, athletes competing on a level playing field and knowing that whatever they do, they've done their best and they've been beaten by better people," she told AFP at the Commonwealth summit in Malta.

"Within the CGF, we're working with all our 71 associations to ensure that their athletes are educated. They will have an educational session on anti-doping. "What we're trying to get through to the athletes is that they never, ever take anything that they don't know. Because once it goes into their mouth, they're responsible.

"If coaches say, 'you should try this', if they're not happy, they shouldn't take it. "It is very difficult for young athletes who have never been in a situation like that before. "We can only educate, educate, educate," the former Scotland swimmer said.

Sports 'culture' needs examining

The Russia allegations have seen its athletes barred from competing. Meanwhile Commonwealth country Kenya announced Saturday it had banned seven athletes, including two women sprinters sent home from the World Championships in Beijing, for doping offences.

CGF chief executive David Grevenberg said trust needed to be regained in sport. "Integrity is everything. As soon as you lose your integrity, you've pretty much lost everything," he told AFP. "What sport needs to do now is address its culture." He said the Russia scandal was "a necessary reminder that the fight against doping is a constant". "We need to ensure that we're doing everything that we possibly can as an international sporting community to be preventative but also react to the reality."

At the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Nigerian weightlifter Chika Amalaha was stripped of her gold medal and given a two-year doping ban, while Botswana sprinter Amantle Montsho, who finished fourth in the 400 metres, was also banned for two years after failing a routine drugs test.

"International federations need to really adjust their strategies and stay relevant and legitimate," said Grevenberg. "It's absolutely one of our highest priorities. "There's no tolerance. There's no place for anything that is not fair in sport. Fair competition is critical and without that you ruin it for everyone." — AFP

SHIFFRIN WINS SECOND STRAIGHT WORLD CUP SLALOM IN ASPEN

ASPEN: Think Mikaela Shiffrin is fast on race day? Try keeping up with her in training sessions. Then again, maybe not. She's speedy enough once the competition starts. Shiffrin won back-to-back World Cup slalom races in Aspen, overcoming an early mistake in her final run Sunday to still win by a gigantic margin.

The 20-year-old American finished in 1 minute, 40.18 seconds, beating Frida Hansdotter of Sweden by 2.65 seconds. Sarka Strachova of Czech Republic was third, 2.90 back. Those were the only two competitors within three seconds of the reigning Olympic and world slalom champion. "It's just really difficult to catch her," Strachova said. "She's in another class." Shiffrin insisted no one has even seen her best skiing yet. She's faster in training, once she's had a few runs to warm up. "I don't know if you'll ever see my best skiing in a race," said Shiffrin, who's from nearby Eagle-Vail.

Sort of hard to believe, especially considering the margins she's winning by at the moment. Shiffrin got a little wild and was off balance early in her last run Sunday or the gap may have been even more. She won the slalom Saturday by 3.07 seconds, the largest margin of victory in World Cup history for the women's discipline. It was a mark that had stood since 1968.

"There's a little bit of a target painted on my back now," Shiffrin said. "Nobody likes to get beat by three seconds. I'd hate to be in that position. I remember being in (Finland) and two seconds out and thinking, 'I'm so mad.' I'm sure they are probably (mad), too."

Not so much mad as motivated. Hansdotter plans to watch video of Shiffrin's races, just to see if she can spot something she can use. "I really love how she makes it (look) so easy to ski," Hansdotter said. She's skiing so economic. Like, real easy."

Part of Shiffrin's dominance this weekend may have been that she's skiing on such familiar snow - an aggressive surface that suits her well. At least, Hansdotter is hoping that's the case. "I hope it will not be like this in the future," said Hansdotter, who has finished second in 13 World Cup slalom races in her career. "But for sure it's really impressive."

This was Shiffrin's fifth straight World Cup slalom win dating to last season. It's the longest streak in slalom by a female skier

since Marlies Schild of Austria took five in a row in 2011-12. Shiffrin's performance Sunday capped off quite a weekend of racing after a rough start. She crashed near the finish in the giant slalom Friday, but bounced back for an impressive victory.

"Three great races, really," said Shiffrin, who was carried off the slope on the shoulders of her teammates. "The GS was disappointing, but still a great race. Today was awesome. Yesterday was awesome."

But don't hand Shiffrin her fourth straight World Cup slalom title just yet. There are

plenty of races left to close the gap. "I think we will try to catch her, for sure," said Slovakia's Veronika Velez Zuzulova, who finished second Saturday but wiped out in her first run Sunday. "It's just the beginning of the season. We'll see. We will find a way to catch her." Any friendly advice to make that happen? "They're not that far away," Shiffrin said. "There wasn't a lot of time between yesterday's race (and Sunday) to regroup. I had an advantage because yesterday my tactic worked. Everyone else was trying to come up with a new plan."

Her plan was simple: Attack the course. She made a miscalculation up top, but practices for those sorts of situations. When it happened, she was prepared. "I was fired up and ready to go," Shiffrin said. "For the rest of the course, I tried to find a rhythm and keep attacking, keep my pace up."

Next up for Shiffrin is her voyage into speed. She will head to Lake Louise, Alberta, next weekend and compete in a super-G. That's Lindsey Vonn's territory. "I'll be going for it," Shiffrin said. "I just don't know where that will put me." — AP



ASPEN: Mikaela Shiffrin (C) of the United States celebrates her win on the podium along with Frida Hansdotter (L) of Sweden in second place and Sarka Strachova (R) of Czech Republic in third place in slalom during the Audi FIS Women's Alpine Ski World Cup at the Nature Valley Aspen Winter International on Sunday in Aspen, Colorado. — AFP

MOURINHO DENIES RIFT WITH BROODING COSTA

LONDON: Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho denied any rift with Diego Costa despite the striker's unhappy reaction to being dropped to the bench for the scoreless draw at Tottenham Hotspur.

Mourinho admitted the pair had argued at half-time during the mid-week Champions League victory away to Maccabi Tel Aviv and Costa's mood at White Hart Lane on Sunday suggested he had taken his demotion badly.

The Spain international failed to warm up until told to late in the game, generally looked disgruntled and at one point appeared to toss his training bib in the direction of the manager.

But Mourinho said he had no complaints about Costa's behaviour, saying: "When I asked him to warm up, he did. I put him with Ruben (Loftus-Cheek) and Kenedy, warming up. "Diego is very privileged because he was the last one to be on the bench.

Everyone else has been: the captain (John Terry), (Branislav Ivanovic, (Gary Cahill, the vice-captain of England, (Cesc Fabregas, Pedro, (Eden Hazard, player of the season, Oscar, everyone was on the bench. "Diego was privileged because I kept him in the team for all these matches. Today (Sunday) we thought the best strategy was this one." Costa struggled with hamstring problems last season, but Mourinho said there were no issues with his condition.

"Physically, he is fine," said the Portuguese. "No problems. He is working well every day. His mood is positive. He's always a positive guy in the team. "I was not expecting to have a player on the bench jumping and singing because he is not playing, unless you're a kid who has a chance to go on the bench-Ruben, Kenedy, (who) feel that is one more step. But for a top player, they're not happy.

"His behaviour was normal. He was ready to play when he went to warm up. When I decided not to play him, he went. And probably he is eating while waiting

for us in the bus." The Chelsea manager joked: "If he wants to hurt me, it's not with a bib. I have a good relationship with him, no problem."

Chelsea 'a small team'

Mourinho described his side's display as their best performance of the season and believes the club can now start looking up the table after a dismal start.

"If we'd scored a goal, we'd have won," said Mourinho, whose team have now gone three games without defeat. "We still have a result and a performance and the feeling of 'the team'.

"After these three results in a row, we can look to December-when we have three matches at Stamford Bridge and two matches away at Manchester United and Leicester, two of the top teams-with enthusiasm. "I'm convinced that, by the end of December, we'll be in a different position to now and we'll have shortened the difference to the top teams. At the end of the season our feeling will be a different feeling." Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino was left disappointed despite his side extending their unbeaten run to 13 league games, the club's best run since 1985.

"This is a good thing (that we are disappointed)," said the Argentine, whose side remain fifth in the table. "We play the champions. It's good. You got the feeling that Chelsea were a small team, and Tottenham can win every game we play. "It's very difficult, though. Not easy. We're the youngest team in the Premier League and the maturity we showed today we have shown in different games.

"We have to feel happy. It's a good thing that, maybe, we are a bigger club than Chelsea or that we deserve more. "We showed good performances in the last few games, and I'm happy, but we have to keep working hard. We've only had 14 games in the Premier League and it's too early to think about the end (of the season)." — AFP



PALERMO: Juventus' Stefano Sturaro scores a goal, during the Serie A soccer match between Palermo and Juventus, in Palermo, Italy, Sunday. — AP

JUVENTUS SINK PALERMO TO CONFIRM SERIE A FIGHTBACK

MILAN: Mario Mandzukic, Stefano Sturaro and Simone Zaza struck in the second half as champions Juventus moved up to fifth place in Serie A with a convincing 3-0 win at Palermo on Sunday. Juventus had claimed a third consecutive league win for the first time this season only last week and on Wednesday beat Manchester City for the second time in succession to secure passage to the last 16 of the Champions League. Those wins confirmed Massimiliano Allegri's men, who sat only four points above the relegation zone six weeks ago, had finally turned the corner after a disastrous start to their title defence.

And after shading a balanced first half at the Renzo Barbera stadium, Mandzukic finally broke the deadlock when he rose above Aljaz Struna to head Paulo Dybala's curling delivery past a beaten Stefano Sorrentino on 54 minutes. It was a joyous return for Argentina striker Dybala, who quit Palermo last season ahead of a 32 million euros move to the Turin giants, and in the second half he sent a header wide of Sorrentino's upright. But more was to come from the visitors, who put the match beyond all reach a minute from the final whistle when Sturaro ran on to Paul Pogba's perfectly-weighted ball on the edge of the area to sweep it past Sorrentino. Allegri had replaced Dybala with Zaza minutes

earlier and when the striker found himself on a two-on-one alongside Alvaro Morata, he collected the Spaniard's return to feint past Andrea Rispoli and beat Sorrentino down low at his near post in added-on time.

Juventus moved up one place to fifth, one point ahead of AC Milan and now six behind leaders Inter Milan, who meet Napoli away in a top of the table clash. Both Napoli and Fiorentina, who face Sassuolo away on Monday, are just two points off the pace with Roma in fourth at three points adrift following a shock 2-0 home defeat to Atalanta.

'Responsible'

Already shell-shocked by their humiliating 6-1 defeat by Barcelona in the Champions League today, the defeat heaped the pressure on Roma coach Rudi Garcia. Garcia hit back at suggestions the impact of Roma's heavy defeat in Europe — a year after a 7-1 reverse at home to Bayern Munich — had left his side shell-shocked.

"No, I don't think so. We'll prove that by getting the results we need in the future," Garcia told Mediaset. But after seeing Roma fail to respond to Alejandro Gomez's 40th-minute strike and German Denis's spot-kick on 82 minutes, Garcia said he won't look for excuses after a

display for which he said the whole team felt "responsible". "There's not much to say, we didn't have a winning attitude and we made a lot of mistakes. Now, we have to keep quiet and get to work. "It's been a tough week, I know that. But the squad can show its mettle by putting this behind us. We're all disappointed, but we're all responsible." Atalanta coach Edoardo Reja told Rai: "We came here to win and did very well, although the key was being clinical when it came to our chances." Roma's third defeat means they could be six points adrift of Inter if the Nerazzurri upset the form book to beat in-form Napoli on Monday. Inter coach Roberto Mancini, however, admitted: "It's our first big test against a direct rival away from the San Siro, so we have to give it everything."

Crisis-hit Lazio, meanwhile, saw two second-half goals by Miroslav Klose chalked off on their way to a fourth defeat in five consecutive matches away to Empoli.

Stefano Pioli's men never recovered from a fifth-minute opener by Lorenzo Tonelli despite a stirring second-half performance that had Empoli's defence on the ropes. Lazio remain in 10th spot at 11 points behind Inter, with Empoli moving five points clear of the drop zone up to 12th. — AFP



LONDON: Chelsea's Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho (R) talks to his staff before the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea. — AFP

CITY, LIVERPOOL TURN EYES TO LEAGUE CUP

LONDON: Manchester City and Liverpool head the list of teams coveting a berth in the League Cup semi-finals this week as the competition reaches the quarter-final stage without several major names. With Arsenal, Manchester United, Tottenham Hotspur and holders Chelsea having fallen by the wayside, City and Liverpool will already have designs on the February 28 final at Wembley.

City, who host second-tier Hull City today, won 3-1 against Southampton at the weekend and having lost to Liverpool and Juventus in their two previous games, goalkeeper Willy Caballero hopes Saturday's success proves a turning point.

"We need to play like this the next game," he told the club website. "In December, if we play in this way, if the injured players return, like David Silva today (Saturday), I think we will stay in the first positions of the table."

Caballero is in line to deputise again for the injured Joe Hart, while manager Manuel Pellegrini must decide whether to hand a start to influential striker Sergio Aguero, who went off with a knock against Southampton. "We must try to recover the players for today," said Pellegrini. "It's important for us to reach the semi-final of the League Cup." Liverpool face a difficult trip to Southampton tomorrow, but they will go into the game having lost only one of the 10 games they have played since Jurgen Klopp succeeded Brendan Rodgers as manager. Klopp saw his team beat Swansea City 1-0 on Sunday courtesy of a James Milner penalty and was also boosted by the returns from injury of captain Jordan Henderson and striker Daniel Sturridge.

"It's good news. They are very important players and they did well," said Klopp, who revealed that Brazilian playmaker Philippe Coutinho could face

Southampton despite sitting out Sunday's game with a hamstring complaint.

Tighten up

"Philippe had a very intensive session yesterday (Saturday), but we decided two or three days ago that we didn't want to risk (him) for this game," said the German.

"Now I think he's fit. I saw him in the dressing room and he looks good. I'll have to talk with him tomorrow. I think he's ready for Southampton."

Everton will hope to continue their recent attacking form when they travel to second-tier Middlesbrough, who pulled off a stunning penalty-shootout victory away to Manchester United in round four. Everton have scored 14 goals in their four games in November, notably crushing Newcastle United 6-2, overwhelming Aston Villa 4-0 and playing out a gripping 3-3 draw at Bournemouth on Saturday. But Everton led 2-0 and 3-2 at Dean Court, only to twice let Bournemouth back into the game, and Romelu Lukaku says that his side will need to tighten up for the trip to the northeast.

"It's a good learning moment for us as players because we want to evolve and become a better team," said the Belgium striker, whose goal at Bournemouth took his tally for the season to 12 in all competitions. "The result (at Bournemouth) is not easy to take, but we need to move forward and learn from these type of games." The remaining quarter-final, on Tuesday, sees Stoke City host second-tier Sheffield Wednesday, who dumped Arsenal out of the tournament with a rousing 3-0 win at Hillsborough a month ago.

League Cup winners in 1991, Wednesday have not reached the last four since 2002, while Stoke have not gone as far as the semi-finals since they won the tournament in 1972. — AFP

CAEN WIN TO GO SECOND AS MARSEILLE DRAW WITH MONACO

STRASBOURG: Caen climbed to second place in Ligue 1 by thumping Girondins Bordeaux 4-1 away while Olympique de Marseille snatched a 3-3 draw at home to AS Monaco thanks to Georges-Kevin Nkoudou's late equaliser in a thriller on Sunday.

Caen took the lead through Syam Ben Youssef in the sixth minute and went further ahead with second-half efforts from Damien Da Silva, a Cedric Carrasso own goal and Andy Delort. Willy Sagnol's Bordeaux side had Andre Poko sent off in the 81st minute before Enzo Crivelli bagged a late consolation for the home side in the final minute. The win takes Caen to 28 points above Angers (26) and Olympique Lyonnais (25) and 13 points behind Paris Saint-Germain. Bordeaux drop to 14th, with four wins

all season. Ahead of Marseille's match, the fans paid tribute to the victims of the attacks on Paris by Islamist militants on Nov. 13 which killed 130 people and left more than 350 injured.

On the pitch, wretched defending made for a topsy-turvy contest with the hosts taking the lead after 12 minutes when Romain Alessandrini slammed the ball past Danijel Subasic after Wallace cleared Bernard Mendy's dangerous cross into his path.

Marseille enjoyed most possession but it was the visitors who equalised when Alamy Toure evaded the defence to tap home a superb free kick from Fabio Coentrao after 19 minutes.

Toure bagged an unlikely second in the 39th when he profited from Karim Rekik's slip before slotting past Steve Mandanda. Marseille's Michy

Batshuayi equalised in the 51st when Subasic came to claim a cross but missed the ball, allowing the striker to finish from close range although he looked offside.

Coentrao's header from Elderson Echiejile's cross crept in at the far post in the 72nd to make it 3-2 to Monaco but Georges-Kevin Nkoudou levelled when he arrived late to fire home Lucas Ocampos's mis-hit strike 10 minutes later.

The point leaves Marseille in 11th place on 19 points, while Monaco drop to seventh on 24. St-Etienne beat 12th-placed Guingamp 3-0 to move up to fifth on 25 points after second-half goals by Romain Hamouma, Valentin Issyeric and Nolan Roux, although they had Bayal Sall dismissed for a second yellow card in the 90th minute. — Reuters



BORDEAUX: Bordeaux's Uruguayan forward Diego Rolan (R) vies with Caen's French defender Damien Da Silva during the French L1 football match between Bordeaux and Caen on Sunday at the Matmut Atlantique stadium in Bordeaux, southwestern France. — AFP

Sports

Shiffrin wins second straight World Cup slalom in Aspen



Emotional Eden Park memorial for Jonah Lomu



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BRYANT TO RETIRE AT END OF SEASON

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CALIFORNIA: San Francisco 49ers safety Eric Reid (35) breaks up a pass intended for Arizona Cardinals running back David Johnson (31) during the first half of an NFL football game in Santa Clara, California, Sunday. — AP

PALMER LEADS CARDINALS OVER 49ERS

CALIFORNIA: Quarterback Carson Palmer scored on a seven-yard scramble with 2:28 left to play, lifting the Arizona Cardinals to a 19-13 victory over the upset-minded San Francisco 49ers on Sunday at Levi's Stadium. Palmer's touchdown run capped a 14-play, 85-yard drive for the Cardinals (9-2). Palmer completed 24 of 40 passes for 271 yards with no touchdowns or interceptions. Wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald caught 10 passes for 66 yards. Quarterback Blaine Gabbert completed 25 of 36 passes for 318 yards for the 49ers (3-8). He had one touchdown pass and was picked off once. Wide receiver Anquan Boldin caught eight passes for 93 yards, and tight end Vance McDonald had six catches for 71 yards and a touchdown.

Seahawks 39, Steelers 30

Quarterback Russell Wilson passed for a season-high 345 yards and five touchdowns to lead the Seattle Seahawks to a 39-30 win over the Pittsburgh Steelers on Sunday. Wilson's 80-yard touchdown pass to Doug Baldwin, the Seattle receiver's third score of the day, with 2:01 remaining gave Seattle (6-5) a nine-point lead and essentially put the game away. The Seahawks had to overcome 456 passing yards from Pittsburgh quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, who went 36 for 55 with a touchdown and also threw two interceptions. Backup Landry Jones, who took a shotgun snap on a play that started out of field-goal formation and took the field for the Steelers' final drive while Roethlisberger underwent concussion tests, threw two interceptions.

Bengals 31, Rams 7

Andy Dalton passed for 233 yards and three touchdowns including a pair to receiver A.J. Green helping the Cincinnati Bengals get back on the winning track with a 31-7 victory over the St. Louis Rams on Sunday at Paul Brown Stadium. The Bengals (9-2), who had lost two straight for the first time since 2013, left little doubt in this one. Cincinnati's defense held Rams running back Todd Gurley to only 19 yards on nine carries. The Bengals figured to run the ball against the Rams (4-7) and gained 140 yards on the ground led by Jeremy Hill's season-high 86 on 16 carries. Nick Foles, who started at quarterback for the injured Casey Keenum, was under constant pressure and was sacked once and threw three interceptions.

Vikings 20, Falcons 10

Running back Adrian Peterson and an opportunistic Minnesota Vikings defense had

the Georgia Dome showering boos on the struggling Atlanta Falcons on Sunday. Peterson rushed for 158 yards and scored two touchdowns and Minnesota created four turnovers in a 20-10 road win over the Falcons. After another Matt Ryan turnover late in the fourth quarter, Falcons fans headed for the exits while serenading their struggling team with chants of "Let's go Vikings." Peterson scored on a 1-yard plunge to put the Vikings ahead 7-0 in the first quarter and then sealed the win with a 35-yard touchdown run with 4:15 to play. He moved into 19th on the NFL's all-time rushing list, moving past Corey Dillon and O.J. Simpson on Sunday.

Texans 24, Saints 6

Keyed by another stifling defensive per-

formance, the Houston Texans stretched their winning streak to four games with a 24-6 victory over the New Orleans Saints on Sunday. Defensive end J.J. Watt recorded his fifth multi-sack game on the season to lead the Texans (6-5), who kept the Saints (4-7) and their second-ranked offense out of the end zone.

Watt dropped Saints quarterback Drew Brees twice in the second half, increasing his season total to 13.5 sacks and his career total to 70.5 sacks in 75 games. Watt became the second-fastest player in league history to reach 70 sacks (Reggie White, 57 games). Watt added two tackles for lost yardage to his ledger.

Raiders 24, Titans 21

Needing a win desperately to keep their long-shot playoff hopes alive, the Oakland

Raiders found it in a place where every visiting team finds success. Quarterback Derek Carr's 12-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Seth Roberts with 1:21 left lifted Oakland to a 24-21 win Sunday over the Tennessee Titans at Nissan Stadium. Carr, who completed 24 of 37 passes for 330 yards and three scores, led a 90-yard scoring drive after Tennessee (2-9) grabbed a 21-17 lead on a one-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Marcus Mariota to fullback Jalston Fowler at the 4:41 mark.

Mariota completed 17 of 37 passes for 218 yards and three touchdowns, surpassing Vince Young's franchise rookie passing record of 2,199 yards.

Chiefs 30, Bills 22

In a Sunday afternoon battle of AFC teams trying to keep alive hopes of a postseason berth, the Kansas City Chiefs beat the Buffalo Bills 30-22.

Playing in a cold drizzle from the opening kickoff to the final play, the Chiefs came back from a 10-0 early deficit to win their fifth consecutive game. The first half was all about the Buffalo combination of quarterback Tyrod Taylor and wide receiver Sammy Watkins. They combined on six passes for 158 yards and two touchdowns in the first two quarters. Taylor also connected with running back LeSean McCoy for a third-quarter score.

But the second half saw the Chiefs (6-5) handle Watkins, force a Taylor fumble and the Chiefs offense caught fire behind quarterback Alex Smith, wide receiver Jeremy Maclin and running back Spencer Ware.

Colts 25, Buccaneers 12

The Indianapolis Colts called on their 40-and-over tandem to rally past the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 25-12 on Sunday in Lucas Oil Stadium. Backup quarterback Matt Hasselbeck, 40, threw two second-half touchdowns to wide receiver T.Y. Hilton, and kicker Adam Vinatieri, 42, added four field goals in the Colts' third consecutive victory. Hasselbeck is 4-0 this season in place of injured starter Andrew Luck, who has a lacerated kidney and an abdominal injury. The Colts improved to 6-5 and are tied with Houston for first place in the AFC South. The Texans defeated New Orleans on Sunday. Hasselbeck completed 26 of 42 passes for 315 yards and the two TDs. Hilton caught six passes for 95 yards, and wide receiver Donte Moncrief caught eight passes for 114 yards.

Chargers 31, Jaguars 25

Veteran quarterback Philip Rivers carved

up the Jacksonville Jaguars secondary for 300 passing yards and four touchdown passes Sunday in leading the visiting San Diego Chargers to a 31-25 win. Rivers picked apart the Jaguars, completing 29 of 43 passes for a passer rating of 118 in sending the Chargers to a fifth consecutive win over the Jaguars in the last six years. Three of Rivers' scoring tosses came in the second quarter. It was his fourth and final touchdown pass that secured the win for the Chargers (3-8), who ended a six-game losing streak. That pass completed a 14-play march that covered 80 yards and took over six minutes off the clock late in the fourth quarter. The Jaguars made a late push to pull out a win, blocking a San Diego punt with 1:30 left in the game. The Jaguars scored in two plays but San Diego recovered the ensuing onside kick and ran out the clock.

Redskins 20, Giants 14

Quarterback Kirk Cousins passed to wide receiver DeSean Jackson for one touchdown and sneaked in for another, and the Washington Redskins held on to defeat the New York Giants 20-14 on Sunday to pull into a first-place tie atop the NFC East.

The Redskins led 20-0 early in the fourth quarter before Giants quarterback Eli Manning threw two touchdown passes. Cousins completed 20 of 29 passes for 302 yards for the Redskins (5-6), who avenged a Week 3 loss to the Giants (5-6). Cousins wasn't sacked and didn't throw an interception. The Redskins snapped a five-game losing streak to the Giants and won their fifth straight home game.

Jets 38, Dolphins 20

Quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick threw four touchdown passes, including two to wide receiver Brandon Marshall, as the New York Jets solidified their footing in the AFC wildcard race on Sunday afternoon with a 38-20 win over the Miami Dolphins. The Jets (6-5) won for just the second time in six games to ensure they'd at least remain in a tie for the second AFC wild-card spot. New York entered the day in a four-way tie for the second wild card, though the Jets were last among the four teams due to tiebreakers. Fitzpatrick, who trimmed his trademark beard earlier this week in hopes of changing up the Jets' fortunes, finished 22-of-37 for 277 yards as the Jets swept the Dolphins for the first time since 2007.

The Dolphins (4-7) lost for the fourth time in five games as their playoff hopes were all but extinguished. — Reuters



DENVER: New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady (12) is sacked by Denver Broncos outside linebacker Von Miller (58) during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, in Denver. The Broncos defeated the Patriots 30-24. — AP



MERCEDES-BENZ S-CLASS: TECHNOLOGY AHEAD OF THE TIMES



NEW DELHI: Indian media photograph a Ferrari California at the opening of the Ferrari showroom in New Delhi yesterday. The new showroom becomes Ferrari's only official dealership in New Delhi and signals the Italian sport car brand's ambition to expand its sales and service operations in India. —AFP

US PENDING HOME SALES EDGE UP IN OCTOBER

FED MOVES TO BAR BAILOUTS OF FAILING FIRMS

WASHINGTON: Slightly more Americans signed contracts to buy homes in October, a modest rebound after two prior monthly declines. The figures add to evidence that the housing market has lost some of its momentum after rapid sales growth earlier this year.

The National Association of Realtors said yesterday that its seasonally adjusted pending home sales index rose 0.2 percent to 107.7 last month. The index has increased 3.9 percent over the past 12 months. "The data suggest that growth in home sales has slowed significantly," said Jim O'Sullivan, chief US economist at High Frequency Economics.

O'Sullivan added, though, that because the reports are so volatile, it may be early to jump to broader conclusions. Healthy job

gains and low mortgage rates boosted sales for much of the year. But rising home values and limited inventories have limited further growth in the closing months of 2015.

The Realtors reported last week that finalized sales have risen 3.9 percent from a year ago, even as buyers have fewer choices because the number of listings on the market has dropped 4.5 percent. A narrow selection of homes on the market has pushed up sales prices 5.8 percent from a year ago to median of \$219,600.

Pending sales are a barometer of future purchases. A lag of a month or two usually exists between a contract and a completed sale. The housing market had benefited from hiring that has cut unemployment to 5 percent, down from 5.7 percent a year

ago. Average hourly earnings have improved 2.5 percent over the past year - that slight increase enhanced by low inflation. But wage growth has failed to match the rise in home values, forcing more would-be homebuyers to wait and save for a down payment.

Also aiding sales have been lower borrowing rates. Mortgage rates remain well below their historic average of 6 percent. The average, 30-year fixed mortgage rate was 3.95 percent last week, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac. But the market is still recovering more than six years after the end of the Great Recession. Home sales have been uneven in different geographic regions. The number of signed contracts advanced in the Northeast and West, while dipping in the Midwest and South.

Fed moves

Federal Reserve officials have moved to prevent the central bank from bailing out failing companies, a power it exercised during the 2008 financial crisis. The Fed governors voted 5-0 yesterday at a public meeting to downsize the Fed's emergency lending powers.

Only broad lending programs designed to revive frozen markets - not loans to individual firms - will be allowed. The Fed spent about \$2 trillion on such a program to ease a credit crunch during the financial meltdown, aiming to spark lending to consumers and small businesses. The 2010 law enacted by Congress overhauling financial regulation required the Fed to impose the restraints.—Agencies

MSCI, ECONOMY FEARS SINK QATAR; EGYPT DOWN

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Qatar's stock market fell sharply yesterday as funds flowed out because of changes to MSCI's emerging market index and concern about the impact of low energy prices on the economy. Other Gulf markets fared much better, but Egypt's sank on currency fears.

Qatar's main index tumbled 4.4 percent, its biggest daily drop since August, to a two-year low of 10,091 points in the heaviest trading volume for six months. Index compiler MSCI was due to add overseas-listed Chinese companies to its emerging market index after the close on Monday; EFG Hermes calculated in mid-November that by diluting Qatar's weighting in the index, this would suck \$92 million from the Qatari market.

That is not a large amount compared to Qatar's market capitalization of \$155 billion, but selling by passive funds in line with the MSCI rebalancing yesterday "met with limited buyers," said Sebastien Henin, head of asset management at The National Investor in the United Arab Emirates. "Also, the liquidity is not great in Doha." Buying support has weakened because of concern about the impact of low energy prices on Qatari state finances and tightening banking sector liquidity.

The Qatari riyal dropped in the forward foreign exchange market last week as traders cited concern that Qatar might have trouble agreeing with banks on the pricing of a syndicated loan of up to \$10 billion. That could prompt the government to borrow more domestically, further tightening liquidity. The emir has said next year's budget will restrain spending and officials have been talking of privatizing state companies, which could temporarily at least weigh on the stock market.

Qatar Gas Transport Co (Nakilat) rose 1.3 percent because it would be added to MSCI's emerging markets index after the close; Gulf International Services plunged 9.4 percent because it was due to be deleted. Islamic bank Masraf Al Rayan sank 5.9 percent and Industries Qatar lost 4.8 percent.

GULF, EGYPT

UAE stocks were also exposed to the MSCI rebalancing - EFG Hermes anticipated an outflow of \$64 million - but they were much stronger, reflecting better liquidity and the government's more transparent communication of its strategy to cope with cheap oil. Abu Dhabi's index climbed 1.5 percent as Etisalat, which was joining MSCI's emerging index, jumped 10 percent and was the most active stock. Investors had already bought in anticipation, but some passive funds tend to move only on the last day before index changes.—Reuters

MOODY'S UPGRADES GULF BANK'S LONG-TERM DEPOSIT RATING TO A3

GULF BANK'S OUTLOOK STABLE

KUWAIT: Moody's Investors Service, one of the world's leading international credit ratings agency, has upgraded Gulf Bank's long term deposit rating to "A3" from "Ba1" and the standalone baseline credit assessment (BCA) to "ba1" from "ba2". The Bank's short-term deposit ratings were affirmed at Prime-2 and Moody's has revised the outlook on long-term ratings to stable from positive.

The upgrade in ratings is significant as it comes in an era of declining oil prices and a weakening global economy. With this upgrade the bank today has three "A" ratings from all leading rating agencies in the world.

This progress has been recognized not only by Moody's, but also by the other two leading international credit ratings agencies, Standard & Poor's (S&P) and Fitch Ratings over the last several years. In June 2015, S&P raised Gulf Bank's long-term credit rating to "A-", with a stable outlook. The ratings upgrade noted the Bank's long-term growth and rebuilding strategy. Fitch Ratings has Gulf Bank's long-term issuer default rating (IDR) at "A+" and this is reflective of the work completed by the bank in undertaking a wide ranging restructure of its portfolio and working out significant volumes of impaired loans. It also reflects the bank's lower risk appetite.

According to Moody's, the recent rating

upgrade action was driven by the continuing improvements in asset quality and provisioning coverage metrics, the strengthening of the bank's risk management practices, a further reduction of balance sheet risk, the expectation that core profitability will remain resilient and capitalization buffers will remain adequately driven by a conservative implementation of Basel III capital requirements by the Central Bank of Kuwait. They also noted the Bank's improvements in risk-management practices and tightened underwriting standards. The Bank's continued reduction in

credit concentrations and lessened exposure to high-risk segments was also cited, along with its resilient core profitability and adequacy of its capital buffers.

Gulf Bank's management team, with the support and guidance from the Chairman of the Board, and its staff remain committed to continuing our policy of prudence and good governance. The Bank has continued to make steady progress and reach milestones in its growth strategy. It has achieved this by restructuring, focusing on streamlining operations, improving service, and introducing

products that better serve customers.

The Bank has also made significant investments towards enhancing its infrastructure, systems and processes and is also actively recruiting outstanding talent. The products and services enhancement is progressing well and over the last year, the Bank has revamped two of its customer segment proposition and new accounts coming from those segments have grown at double digit rates. The Bank's credit cards business has also continued its strong performance with double digit loan growth. Recently, the Bank also launched its loyalty program Gulf Rewards along with a special technology platform to facilitate redemptions. In terms of wholesale banking, our corporate banking group was reorganized to reflect key market segments and to deliver a broader suite of products and services with faster, more efficient customer service for local needs. Other innovations include new cash management products, a new collections system, and series of process automation initiatives to improve controls in our branches have also been implemented.

Gulf Bank is currently celebrating its 55th anniversary and remains committed to being innovative, raising standards, and setting the benchmark for banking excellence in the region.

GULF BANK IS RATED

<p>Moody's</p> <p>A3</p>	<p>FitchRatings</p> <p>A+</p>	<p>STANDARD & POOR'S</p> <p>A-</p>
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KUALA LUMPUR: A vendor selling pets takes down a caged dove ahead of impending rain in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. —AFP

RUSSIA RISKS HIGHER BUDGET DEFICIT: FM

MOSCOW: Adverse oil prices and plans to save a mammoth state bank threaten Russia with an inflated budget deficit next year and leave little fiscal flexibility before the 2018 presidential election, Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said. With oil windfall revenues drying up rapidly, sanctions making borrowing on Western markets impossible. Meanwhile, foreign investment is shrinking, leaving Russia in line for a tough end of the decade, Siluanov told Reuters in an interview. "Russia is faced with a difficult choice in the medium term: either to drastically cut social spending, spending on education and healthcare, and at the same time leave tax rates unchanged, or follow a path of greater spending but raise some taxes," he said.

"This is a difficult public dilemma - and an answer to these questions should be in the program of the next Russian president," President Vladimir Putin, the country's paramount leader since 2000, has not yet declared whether he will seek another term, but his popularity is at an all-time high after annexing Crimea and engaging in Syria. It is widely expected he will remain Russia's leader until at least 2024.

The 2016 budget, due for its second reading in parliament this week, envisages a deficit of 3 percent of gross domestic product. However, oil prices are likely to come in at the lower end of the \$40-\$50-per-barrel range assumed for next year, and possibly lower, making a huge dent in state revenues, Siluanov said.

"(Oil below \$40) is possible," Siluanov said. A slowdown in global economic growth, ouster of Russian producers from oil markets, and Iran's readiness to supply the world with crude,

do not bode well for prices, he said. Urals, Russia's chief crude blend, traded at \$42.01 per barrel on Monday.

"You cannot live by the Russian faith in serendipity that suddenly everything will change, that oil prices will rise to the level from two years ago," Siluanov said.

"They will not. And on the off-chance the situation improves to a certain extent, you still need to solve structural problems, get rid of imbalances."

NO MONEY, NO OPTIONS

At current oil prices, budget revenues will fall short by some 1.2 trillion roubles (\$18.29 billion) to 1.5 trillion roubles next year compared with what's assumed in the budget, he said.

Plans to save state development bank Vnesheconombank, or VEB, which is facing a gaping hole in its balance sheet, may cost the state some \$20 billion over the next few years, Siluanov had told Reuters previously.

At the same time, federal spending is set to increase by more than 600 billion roubles next year to 16.1 trillion roubles.

"Next year poses huge risks," Siluanov said.

The deficit, now planned at 2.4 trillion roubles, will be almost entirely financed from one of Russia's sovereign wealth funds, the Reserve Fund, which now stands at \$65.7 billion roubles. If the budget deficit widens, the stash may dry up. The ministry is left with few options: try to improve tax collection, push for privatization of the country's many state companies, including selling a stake in the oil major Rosneft, or try to tap foreign debt markets. —Reuters

CHIPS, ELECTRONIC DEVICES BOOST JAPAN FACTORY OUTPUT

RARE BRIGHT SPOT FOR THE RECESSION-HIT ECONOMY

TOKYO: Japan's factory output expanded again in October, data showed yesterday, boosted by production of memory chips and electronic devices, in a rare bright spot for the recession-hit economy. Economists were generally upbeat on the 1.4 percent expansion in activity the second consecutive monthly rise-and said it signalled Japan's second recession in as many years would likely be short lived. "The second straight rise in industrial production indicates that the economy returned to growth this quarter," research house Capital Economics said in a commentary.

Retail sales data were also stronger than expected, offering a glimmer of hope after Tokyo on Friday published a string of mostly weak data-the first major figures since news that the world's number three economy had slipped back into recession.

A key inflation gauge showed prices fell in October from a year ago, while spending by households also dropped in a double blow for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's high-profile growth blitz, dubbed Abenomics.

The weak figures came despite signs of a tight labour market, with the headline unemployment rate at a two-decade low of 3.1 percent. However, the relatively upbeat factory output data published missed market expectations for a 1.8 percent rise and Japan's industry ministry was cautious about the pickup.

A survey released with the figures cautioned that output would likely rise just 0.2 percent in November and then contract 0.9 percent in December. Factory output is making "one step forward and one step back", the ministry said. The pickup was largely driven by demand for semiconductor chips and other electronic devices that Japan ships abroad, analysts said, while manufacturers work down their inventory levels.

Demand for Japanese-made IT and electronic



DRESDEN: Haruhiko Kuroda, Governor of the Bank of Japan (left) talks to Mario Draghi, President of the European Central Bank (right) after a group photo session during the G7 Finance Ministers meeting at the Dresden Castle in Dresden. —AP

parts tends to pick up in the second half of the year, said SMBC Nikko economist Junichi Makino.

"Industrial production as a whole is gradually bottoming out," Makino said. Earlier this month, official figures showed that Japan's gross domestic product (GDP) shrank 0.2 percent in the July-September period, or an annualized contraction of 0.8 percent, marking the second straight quarterly decline. Tokyo is compiling an extra budget to counter the downturn while the Bank

of Japan is expected to unleash further monetary easing over the coming months.

The economy dipped into a brief recession last year after consumers tightened their belts following an increase in Japan's consumption tax, which dealt a blow to signs that Abe's bid to spur the once-stellar economy was working. That downturn spurred the BoJ to sharply increase its already massive bond-buying program-a cornerstone of Abenomics-effectively printing money to boost lending. —AFP

GOLD DOWN ON DOLLAR, EYES BIG MONTHLY FALL

LONDON: Gold edged lower yesterday, heading towards its lowest level in nearly six years as the dollar hit a multi-month high and on track for its steepest monthly slide in 2-1/2 years on prospects of a US interest rate hike this year. Spot gold slipped 0.1 percent to \$1,056.01 an ounce by 1053 GMT, not far off from Friday's \$1,052.46, the lowest since February 2010. A stronger dollar, up to a fresh eight-month high against a basket of major currencies, weighed on gold and made it more expensive for foreign holders.

Bullion has lost 7.5 percent of its value in

November, its biggest monthly dip since June 2013, as investors remained focused on a possibly imminent rate hike in the United States.

Gold, a non-interest-paying asset, could take a hit from higher rates as the dollar gains and the opportunity cost of holding it increases. The US Federal Reserve holds its next policy meeting on Dec. 15-16.

A US payrolls report on Friday will be even more closely watched than usual. A strong number after a surge in job growth in October could cement expectations that the Fed will

deliver its first hike in almost a decade.

"A number close to the 200,000 mark will be sufficient to confirm in Fed's mind that the time is right to act," ICBC Standard Bank analyst Tom Kendall said.

The European Central Bank policy meeting on Thursday will also be eyed for impact on the currency markets. The ECB is widely expected to ease policy. "I thought there was a possibility that the euro had already anticipated everything that was going to be delivered by Draghi this week but it seems not," ICBC StanBank's Kendall said. —Reuters



SHANGHAI: The clothes of a worker hang to dry between trees in the suburbs of Shanghai yesterday. Growth in China's industrial production, a measure of output at factories, workshops and mines, fell to a six-month low in October, official data showed. —AFP

BOE EXTENDS CREDIT SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

LONDON: Britain will slowly phase out a scheme to support small business lending over the next two years rather than halt it at the start of next year, the Bank of England and the finance ministry said yesterday. The news comes a day before the BoE releases a major report, which some analysts expect to usher in tighter rules for other type of lending while the central bank waits for the economy as a whole to be ready for higher interest rates.

The central bank said the Funding for Lending Scheme (FLS), which started in 2012 with a focus on mortgage lending, would be extended for another two years as credit conditions for small businesses had not improved enough. But lenders' access to cheap finance for new lending to small businesses will be steadily restricted from January, in order to remove wholly support for new finance by January 2018.

"The Funding for Lending Scheme will be gradually wound down as the recovery strengthens, delivering a managed exit from the scheme," finance minister George Osborne said.

Support for mortgage lending was withdrawn in early 2014. British banks are lending to consumers at the fastest rate since before the crisis, and large firms have easy access to funds through capital markets, but bank lending to small businesses remains limited.

BoE figures released earlier on Monday showed that in the year to October, small business lending grew by just 0.7 percent compared with 2.4 percent growth in mortgage lending and an 8.2 percent increase in unsecured consumer credit. "Conditions still remain relatively tight. So it is important that the support provided by the FLS is withdrawn gradually," BoE Governor Mark Carney said in a letter to Osborne.

The BoE said its Monetary Policy Committee judged the decision would not affect the timing of a future interest rate rise, and that its Financial Policy Committee-which will issue the half-yearly report on Tuesday-welcomed the move. Banks taking part in the FLS lent a net 1.1 billion pounds (\$1.7 billion) to small and medium-sized businesses in the first six months of 2015, in contrast to a net reduction in lending of nearly 2 billion pounds last year. —Reuters

PAKISTAN AIMS TO RAISE \$379M IN NEW TAXES TO MEET IMF TARGETS

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan must raise an extra \$379 million through new tax measures, the finance minister said yesterday, as the government seeks to qualify for its latest IMF loan tranche. Earlier this month, the IMF approved the release in December of a \$502 million tranche of Pakistan's three-year \$6.68 billion program, even though the government missed targets for tax revenue generation, net domestic assets and the budget deficit. The government will levy an additional 5 to 10 percentage points of tax on 350 items and raise customs duty by 1 percentage point, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said in the capital Islamabad.

The full list of items was not immediately available. The increased levies would target "non-essential luxury items" only, and exemptions on the customs duty have been offered for 25 key industrial sectors, Dar said yesterday.

"We have kept in mind not to increase duties that would make items more expensive for the common man," he said. Separate increased taxes were also announced on imported automobiles - both new and used - and domestically-produced cigarettes. In its last review, the International Monetary Fund had warned that the release of December's approved \$502 million tranche depended on the announcement of new measures to generate an extra 40 billion Pakistan rupees (\$380 million) in revenue.

"This was a deadline in a sense, and if the government didn't do it the next tranche of the program would at least be delayed, if not suspended," Khurram Husain, an economic analyst and journalist, told Reuters. It was unclear if the new measures would meet the target: Dar had earlier told a parliamentary standing committee that the increased duties were meant to restrict Pakistan's import bill, not increase revenue.

TaiwanTrade launches Arabic ICT & Automobile Portals

The Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) recently announced two Arabic-language online portals, the Taiwantrade Arabic ICT Zone and the Taiwantrade Arabic Automobile Zone, on the Taiwantrade website, Taiwan's leading B2B platform.

Featuring over 900 Taiwanese ICT companies, 600 Auto parts companies, and a total of 10,000 selected product catalogs, the Arabic webpages offer a wide range of online services and provide an excellent way for enterprises in the Middle East to explore and find Taiwanese suppliers.

Kuwait is currently Taiwan's 17th largest trading partner. Taiwan and the State Kuwait registered US\$6.8 billion in bilateral trade in 2014. Globally recognized as an economy of innovation, Taiwan not only supplies 85 percent of the world's Windows-based PCs but also provides around 80 percent of the world's data communications equipment. The ICT products and electronic components made by Taiwanese companies are consistently ranked among the best in the world, and Taiwanese chip makers TSMC and UMC are behind nearly 50 percent of the world's semiconductor manufacturing business.

In addition to playing a vital role in the global IT supply chain, Taiwan is also one of the world's most important suppliers of aftermarket auto parts. Taiwan is the home of more than 2,800 auto parts and accessories makers with high production flexibility, low manufacturing costs, and extensive range of products.

To find out more about the Taiwantrade Arabic ICT Zone and the Arabic Automobile Zone, visit <http://ict.ar.taiwantrade.com.tw> and <http://auto.ar.taiwantrade.com.tw/>.

About Taiwantrade

The Taiwantrade Arabic ICT Zone and the Taiwantrade Arabic Automobile Zone are part of the Taiwantrade website, Taiwan's leading B2B platform. Taiwantrade has 70,000 Taiwanese supplier members and 390,000 online product catalogs, and provides a wide range of online services to facilitate the trade and exchange between Taiwanese and worldwide companies.

About TAITRA

Founded in 1970, the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) is the foremost non-profit trade promotion organization in Taiwan. Jointly sponsored by the government, industry associations, and several commercial organizations, TAITRA assists Taiwan businesses and manufacturers in developing their brands and export businesses in overseas markets.

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S-Class LED Headlamps



S-Class Ambient Lighting



S-Class LED taillamps

MERCEDES-BENZ S-CLASS

TECHNOLOGY AHEAD OF THE TIMES

In the history of the automotive industry there are few vehicles that have made an impact quite like the Mercedes-Benz S-Class. Redefining luxury, advancing telematics and setting new benchmarks across all segments, the S-Class extends the boundaries of technology on many levels. It is not just a technological spearhead for Mercedes-Benz, but for automotive development as a whole.

As with every generation before it, customers expect the S-Class to set standards across the board to retain its accolade as "the best automobile in the world". Rather than focusing purely on safety or aesthetics, power or efficiency and comfort or dynamism, the S-class embodies 'the best or nothing' in every respect.

"Within the Mercedes-Benz portfolio, the S-Class is the purest embodiment of our brand promise. It offers the best and latest technology, complete efficiency, pure LED lighting and more functions and features than ever before. It's no wonder it maintains its position at the top of the luxury segment, completely redefining benchmarks at every turn," said Michael Ruehle, Chief Executive Officer, Abdul Rahman Albisher & Zaid Alkazemi Company.

LED technology: The first ever car without a single light bulb

100 years or so after the introduction of electric lighting in motor vehicles, Mercedes-Benz made a complete switch to LED technology with the S-Class as the first vehicle in the world whose interior and exterior do without a single light bulb. The lighting's multi-level functionality is another world first: out of consideration for any road users behind, the intensity of the brake lights is reduced at night or while waiting at traffic lights, for example. Almost 500 LEDs illuminate the road, the vehicle, the interior and the boot. Depending on equipment, these include:

- * Headlamps: Each with up to 56 LEDs
- * Tail lights: Each with up to 35 LEDs (plus 4 for the rear fog lamp)

Interior (including ambience lighting): Approx. 300 LEDs

Visibility is enhanced by two assistance systems that have undergone some key improvements - Adaptive Highbeam Assist Plus and Night View Assist Plus. Thanks to a new stereo camera and multi-stage radar sensors, the S-Class has 360-degree all-round vision and detects potential dangers on the road better.

Suspension: The world's first suspension with "eyes"

The S-Class is the world's first car to be able to detect bumps on the road ahead. If ROAD SURFACE SCAN detects such unevenness by means of the stereo camera, MAGIC BODY CONTROL instantaneously sets up the suspension to deal with the new situation. This innovative suspension system is available as an option for the eight-cylinder models. Standard equipment for the S-Class includes the continuously operating Adaptive Damping System ADS PLUS and an enhanced version of the full air suspension system AIRMATIC.

Control and display concept: Elegant new command centre

Two high-resolution TFT colour displays in 8:3 format with a screen diagonal of 30.7 cm (12.3 inches) form the new information centre in the S-Class. The left-hand display performs the functions of the previous instrument cluster, providing the driver with all relevant information. The right-hand display allows the convenient control of infotainment and comfort functions. For the S-Class, the constantly increasing need to integrate additional functions into the vehicle led to a further development of the entire operating logic. Here ergonomics, operating convenience and safety along with attractiveness and aesthetics were the main considerations.

The aim in designing the control and display features was to group controls and display functions together in a coherent manner in terms of both design and functionality. Apart from the new displays, the metallised switch surfaces and solid aluminium controls are visual highlights of particularly high quality. Thanks to the fine structuring on the metal surfaces, each individual control has the sound, feel and attention to detail that makes a Mercedes-Benz so special.

The new control features include a touch-sensitive telephone keypad and an extended favourites function with twelve freely selectable memory places. The principal control element is the rotary pushbutton, with the usual direct access keys in the centre console for the most important functions and a toolbar for the driving assistance systems.

Voice entry using LINGUATRONIC via the Speech Dialog System allows complete addresses to be spoken in one go, for example (one-shot input). The telephone and audio systems can also be voice-controlled. The option of having text messages (SMS) or emails read out is a new feature.

Multimedia features: Mobile concert hall

A completely new multimedia generation with intuitive operation and particularly tangible functions thanks to visu-



Mercedes-Benz



S-Class LED taillamps



S-Class Command Center



S-Class multimedia surround-system

alisation and animations celebrates its debut in the S-Class. Other innovations include the multi-user system, which allows independent access to the media sources of the entertainment system from any seat.

The innovative Frontbass system developed by Mercedes-Benz and used for the first time in a saloon car is a feature common to all the audio systems: the woofers are housed in the firewall, and use the almost 40-litre space in the cross-member and side member as a resonance chamber. Conventional woofers in the doors are therefore unnecessary. The mid-range speakers in the doors are relocated upwards. This improves the soundscape and allows additional stowage space in the doors.

As alternatives to the standard sound system with ten loudspeakers, two very high-quality audio systems are available which were developed together with the high-end audio specialist Burmester: the Burmester Surround Sound system and the Burmester High-End 3D-Surround Sound system.

The interactive presentation of content is a prominent new feature of the navigation function. The new navigation functions include an animated compass, the "Driveshow" for passenger information as in an aircraft, and

the display of Google Maps on the head unit and in the rear. Information on the traffic situation is shown with hatched lines (rather than with vehicle silhouettes as before). With the new Live Traffic Information service, traffic data are transmitted in real time. As a result, the navigation system is better informed about the situation on the roads. (Depending on service availability).

Customers can visit Abdul Rahman Albisher & Zaid Alkazemi Company's showrooms to book a test drive and experience the innovation of the S-Class. Existing Mercedes-Benz customers can avail 24 hours test drive by appointments.



SHARJAH WATERFRONT CITY MAKES ITS DEBUT AT CITYSCAPE KUWAIT 2015

KUWAIT: Following the huge success achieved at Cityscape Global 2015 in the UAE, Sharjah Oasis Real Estate Development, a rising real estate developer in the region, has announced the participation of its most iconic project, Sharjah Waterfront City, in Cityscape Kuwait 2015. The project will be showcased on stand C20 at Kuwait International Fairgrounds from 9-11 December 2015.

Hayssam El Masri, president of Sharjah Oasis Real Estate, said: "After the huge success of the project and the great response we received from the investors in our first Cityscape participation in Dubai, we decided to expand and take our project to Kuwait market, which is a key market for us as it greatly contributes to the success of our project. Kuwait has always been a key player

in this region and we are delighted to have the opportunity to showcase Sharjah Waterfront City to our Kuwaiti investors. At Sharjah Oasis Real Estate, the team provides tailored investment opportunities to our partners' needs, and as part of our participation at Kuwait Cityscape, we will be providing newly structured investment opportunities in Sharjah Waterfront City's Commercial, Residential and Entertainment Segments."

The developer also announced progress in the completion of the infrastructure for its first phase as per the timeline, and construction is set to begin by beginning of 2016, making a power move for the year to meet the clients' ambitions and expectations.

Keeping in line with Sharjah's robust plans to attract 10 million visitors to its emirate by 2021, Sharjah Oasis Real Estate is



Hayssam El Masri, president of the Sharjah Oasis Real Estate Development.

dedicated and committed in enhancing the quality and presence of Sharjah's Real Estate Economy.

Sharjah Waterfront City is a newly anticipated real estate project that suits its own nature and landscape creating a luxurious and environmental friendly city, in a family oriented experience where residents will run-through the true meaning of a utopian lifestyle combined with the equality of opportunity and possibility.

Sharjah Waterfront City, spread across 36 km of coastline with a total area of 60 million Sq. ft. providing a fully advanced residential, commercial, and tourism development project in the region.

"We believe that Cityscape Kuwait is the right platform to showcase our project to the investors in Kuwait. We are expecting a great turnout at the event and we firmly believe that the investors will find our project appealing," El Masri added.

AUB ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF DRAW IN AL-HASSAD ISLAMIC SAVING PROGRAM

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank held its weekly draw of Al-Hassad Islamic Saving program on November 25, 2015. This program offers the biggest prize amount to the largest number of winners. The prize program succeeded in becoming the first and only prize account in Kuwait compliant with the Islamic Sharia principles. The program has been developed to fulfil the needs of the Bank customers and increase their opportunities in winning sizeable and attractive prizes in addition to enjoying the latest banking advantages that Ahli United Bank provides.

On this occasion, the bank issued the following press release: Al-Hassad Islamic Saving program offers the highest amounts of prizes which amount to KD 3.4 million per year. This Program also offers 26 weekly prizes, with the highest number of weekly winners. The Islamic Hassad Saving Account may be opened by the lowest amount to open an account, which is KD 100.

The winner of the weekly grand prize in the amount of KD 25,000 is: Khalil Ali Abdulla. The winners of the KD 1,000 prize each: Safyah Hasan G. Reda, Ahmad Salem Al Aamerri, Nabeel Mohammad Al Obadi, Sonya Khalid Al Garabali, Mohammad Ahmad Mohammad, Khalil Yousef Jeragh, Mohd Sadeq Al-Rasheed, Ridhima Anand Ravinder, Medhat Bakr hashem, Sayed Mohammad Sayed, Roumi Fahad Al-Dhafeeri, Nawaf Kazem Hasan, Maasouma Abdulrahim Al-Saffar, Abdullah Mahmoud Yousef, Raead Fahad Al-Obaid, Amal Abdulwahab Al Eisa, Haya Mohammad Almarzouq, Mohammed Saeed, Husain Naser Mohamed, Aesha Saleh Ahmed, Feroq Ameen Mohamed, Jaffar Ahmed Ebrahim, Mohamed Jawad Abdulla, Moosa Haider Ali, Mohamedhashim Ezzaldin.

The Prize program of Al-Hassad Islamic Saving from Ahli United Bank offers a weekly grand prize worth KD 25,000 in addition to 25 weekly prizes worth a total of KD 25,000 distributed to 25 prizes, KD 1,000 for each winner.

In addition, prizes of Al-Hassad Islamic saving program from Ahli United Bank offer 4 quarterly grand prizes announced in quarterly draws. Each is a "Salary for Life" prize which is worth KD 25,000.

In general, Ahli United Bank continues to offer innovative tools and means to meet the needs of its customers to match the Bank's long history of distinctive services which extend over 73 years during which the Bank managed to take the lead among local banks.

For further information about Al-Hassad Islamic Saving account, customers may call at any Ahli United Bank branch, or call: "Hayakom" service at Tel.: 181 2000.



KAMCO HOSTS DEBT CAPITAL MARKET CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GULF BOND AND SUKUK ASSOCIATION

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, and winner of the prestigious Kuwait Asset Manager of the Year Award 2015, hosted the debt capital market conference in Kuwait in partnership with The Gulf Bond and Sukuk Association (GBSA). The event coincided with the introduction of new by-laws by Kuwait's Capital Markets Authority (CMA) directed towards enhancing the rate of bonds and sukuk issuance.

Faisal Sarkhou, Chief Executive Officer of KAMCO, said, "Hosting and participating in the 'Debt Capital Market Opportunities for Corporates' conference reflects our role as one of the leading investment companies in the local and regional markets. Shedding the light on important economic issues helps map out the attractive investment opportunities within the local market. It is our duty to support the local market by organizing professional conferences and seminars that bring together an array of perspectives from specialized analysts to international experts." Sarkhou delivered the opening speech at

the conference, emphasizing the importance of debt capital market opportunities and Islamic bonds. He also highlighted the ways of strengthening the local framework and regulations related to the issuance of bonds and sukuk in accordance with the CMA's new by-laws.

The President of the GBSA, Michael Grifferty said, "Only a few companies have taken advantage of bond/sukuk markets to extend their liability profiles and diversify their investor base. These new rules provide considerably more certainty for the process and improve the prospects for companies to fund in the capital market. We salute the hard work of the CMA and its willingness to consult the market in finalizing these regulations. We are proud to have contributed to their development."

Ananthakrishnan Prasad, Deputy Division Chief in the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the International Monetary Fund, commended the discussion with an overview of the economic outlook in the GCC region.

Senior Vice President and Head of



KUWAIT: A group photograph of the debt capital market conference in Kuwait.

Investment Banking at KAMCO, Omar Zaineddine led the panel discussion on bonds and sukuk transactions featuring industry experts. A second lively debate led

by Alex Roussos, partner at Dentons concluded the event. The discussion shed light on current investor preferences and brought about the interesting views of speakers from

Interactive Data Corporation and Euroclear who deliberated the resources available to improve transparency and attract investors to the Kuwaiti market.



ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways employees form a '44' outside the airline's headquarters in Abu Dhabi to celebrate the UAE's 44th National Day.



ABU DHABI: (left to right): Etihad Airways executive team Vice President Corporate Safety and Quality Captain Majed Al-Marzouqi; Senior Vice President of Government and Aero Political Affairs Khaled Al-Mehairbi; Senior Vice President Corporate and International Affairs Hareb Al-Muhamdi; and Vice President Abu Dhabi Hub Ali Al-Shamsi cutting the commemorative UAE National Day cake.

ETIHAD AIRWAYS HONORS UAE'S 44TH NATIONAL DAY WITH PASSION AND PRIDE

ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways participated in the United Arab Emirates' 44th National Day celebrations by hosting more than 2,000 staff and their families at a special marquee event held today at the airline's headquarters in Abu Dhabi.

The cultural activities commenced with the UAE National Anthem performed by the UAE National Symphony Orchestra. This was followed by a Harbiya traditional dance.

Family entertainment included face painting and games, henna hand painting, a falconry show and a UAE themed

photographic exhibition. An Emirati food truck and live traditional Emirati cooking also featured at the event.

Khaled Al-Mehairbi, Etihad Airways' Senior Vice President of Government and Aero Political Affairs, said: "In a few days, we will mark one of the most important dates in the country's annual calendar - the 44th year since the unification of the seven Emirates."

"Today we remember the founders of the UAE, who came together on 2 December 1971 to witness the birth of our

nation. I am delighted to see both Emiratis and expatriate colleagues and friends drawing inspiration from 'the spirit of the Union.'"

Departments based at the airline's headquarters decorated their office spaces to celebrate the UAE National Day throughout the week, embracing the national spirit and participating in the festivities and celebrations.

A number of staff competitions were also arranged as part of the celebration including an Emirati-themed talent

show, best decorated department, and best dressed Emirati. Winners received complimentary brunches and dinners at the capital's finest restaurants and hotels.

"Our national airline and the government of Abu Dhabi work hand-in-hand to develop the Emirate as a hub of hospitality, aviation, culture and commerce between the East and West. Today we celebrate this collaboration and recognise the economic, social and cultural gifts that the UAE have given us," Al-Mehairbi added.



TREG OFFERS A UNIQUE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN BIRMINGHAM

KUWAIT: Mohammed Waleed Al-Qaddoumi, Deputy Managing Director, Marketing and Manager, Canada branch of Top Real Estate Group (TREG) said that the Group is proud to offer its clients in Kuwait and Qatar one of the best real estate residential projects in Birmingham, UK. This project is developed by Seven Capital, a firm specializing in real estate development across central and northern UK. Al-Qaddoumi added that Birmingham is the second largest city in Britain following the Capital City of London and was ranked on the top of Western Europe's top 10 most attractive cities for investments. Many banks and private companies moved their head offices to Birmingham due to its unique location in UK and lower costs of living and accommodation as compared to London. He added that over the past years, above four billion Pound were injected in infrastructure projects in the city to develop the same. Al-Qaddoumi said that the city has five major universities and four colleges with about 73 thousand students, out of them about 10 thousand students come from the Far East and Middle East regions. He pointed out that the city offers many job opportunities and attract staff for various sectors from several regions. These factors help the real estate residential segment in the region prosper and grow demand. On the other hand, private companies execute dozens of residential and commercial developments in the City and its downtown area. Upon completion of such developments, the City is set to become one of the most beautiful emerging cities in Europe.

With respect to the project background, Al-Qaddoumi said that it comprises residential buildings to be executed in several phases. The development is located approximately one mile away from the railway station and shopping center in the City. Al-Qaddoumi indicated that Phase I consists of 291 luxury apartments ranging from studio to three bedrooms with different spaces and the prices start from £ 134 thousand. The acquisition is for renewable leasehold term of 125 years, adding that the project is under construction and handover will take place at the

end of 2017. With respect to payment terms, he said that a client will pay 30 percent advance payment and the outstanding balance has to be paid upon handover. He indicated that the payment and contract procedures will be processed through the client's lawyer or a lawyer recommended by the Group. Al-Qaddoumi explained that the Group's lawyer examined all project related documents before offering it to our clients.

Al-Qaddoumi said that Birmingham is the fastest growing City in UK and significant real estate activities made it the most attractive destination for investors. Good returns on lease can be realized ranging from 5-8 percent per annum while a property under construction realizes about 25 percent upon completion of construction. On the other hand, annual growth rate of property value in the city ranges from 5-10 percent depending on the location, specifications and benefits of the property. Al-Qaddoumi stressed that the Group, given its deep-rooted experience in UK real estate market, advises its clients to invest in this project and in Birmingham, which is set to witness a major shift in increasing values of properties over the next five years. Early investment in the City will achieve a positive return in the future.



Mohammed Waleed Al-Qaddoumi



Mohammed Thabet



Emma Morano

SHALL I SING FOR YOU? HOW EUROPE'S OLDEST WOMAN JOINED THE 116 CLUB

ROME: Emma Morano, Europe's oldest person and the second oldest in the world, marked her 116th birthday by offering to sing her favorite song for visiting well-wishers, Italian media reported yesterday. Morano, one of only two women alive certified to have been born in the 19th Century, reached the milestone on Sunday in her little one-bedroom flat in Verbania, a small town in the northern region of Piedmont. "I'm fine, I'm fine and as long as it stays like that I will

remain with you," she was quoted as saying. "You know I have a beautiful voice, if you like I can sing 'Parlare d'amore Mariu' (Talk to me about love, Mariu)."

In an interview with the New York Times earlier this year, Morano attributed her longevity to having left a violent husband in 1938, shortly after the death of her only child at seven months, and to eating three eggs a day for much of her life. Diagnosed with anaemia at 20, she was advised to

eat two raw and one cooked egg every day, a regime she maintained for 90 years.

Susannah Mushatt Jones, the American who is the only other member of the 116 club, also attributes her longevity to many decades of living on her own, having been married for only five years between 1928 and 1933. The Brooklyn resident is also a regular egg eater-although she prefers hers scrambled and served with four rashers of bacon. —AFP

HONG KONG'S DOLPHINS AT RISK OF DISAPPEARING

HONG KONG: As Hong Kong seeks to expand its international airport and with a major new bridge project under way, campaigners warn that the dwindling number of much-loved pink dolphins in surrounding waters may disappear altogether. Conservationists say their repeated concerns have fallen on deaf ears, with what they describe as a "rapid" decline of the mammal in the past few decades. The Chinese white dolphin-popularly known as the pink dolphin due to its pale pink colouring-

draws scores of tourists daily to the waters north of Hong Kong's Lantau island. It also became Hong Kong's official mascot for the handover ceremony in 1997, when Britain returned the territory to China.

But despite the affection felt towards the dolphin, campaigners say there may soon be none left. The proposed construction of a third runway at Hong Kong's busy Chek Lap Kok airport could be the nail in the coffin, they say. "We think that if that project goes

ahead, then it will probably drive the dolphin away from Hong Kong waters," said Samuel Hung, chairman of the Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society, who has been going out to sea at least twice a week to monitor dolphin activity for almost 20 years. "In some ways it seems like we are pushing them closer and closer to the edge of the cliff and if we're making that final push, they will be gone forever. I think now is the time to get our act together." Hung says there are only around 60 dol-

phins left in Hong Kong waters-a drop from 158 in 2003.

"The dolphin decline is caused by a number of factors, including overfishing and environmental pollution... but I think the major contribution is coming from the increase of high-speed ferry traffic," Hung said. The dolphins have either gone to neighboring Chinese waters or may have died off, says Hung.

Habitats destroyed

Dolphin habitats have also been affected by the ongoing construction of a 50-kilometre (30-mile) bridge connecting Hong Kong to the gambling enclave of Macau. The bridge looms on the horizon behind the village of Tai O, on the western tip of Lantau island, from where dozens of dolphin tours go out daily. "Since the construction of the bridge in 2012 the situation has worsened," says Hung, who blames land reclamation encroaching on dolphin habitats and continuing construction creating disturbance. The WWF recently placed volunteers on the dolphin-spotting boats to tell tourists about the problems the animals are facing.

"Pollution is quite serious in the air and water... We worry about the marine life being affected," said Hong Kong bank worker Yeung Kayan, 30, after taking a short boat trip. "We were a little disappointed," added her boyfriend, a 26-year-old chef from Taiwan, after failing to spot any dolphins-a scenario that could become all too common in the years ahead if conservationists' fears are realized.

'Disaster awaits'

Tourist boat operator Wong Yung-kan, who was born in Tai O and has lived most of his life there, said residents used to dislike the dolphins because they ate catch from fishermen's nets, when fishing was the village's most important trade. "Now the fishing industry has reduced in size, we have had to change our line of work from fishing to taking tourists out on boats to see dolphins," said Wong, 67.

Dolphin-watching accounts for 10 percent of Tai O's tourism business. "Of course we want them to remain here... the tourists will be happier and we'll be happier as well," adds Wong. Unlike conservationists, he says he is optimistic for the dolphins' future but if the worst happens, villagers will adapt as they did before. "These natural things won't disappear... if you are not actively eliminating them, then they won't go away," Wong told AFP. (But) if this species has to go extinct, there's nothing we can do about it. We can find another way to make a living. People know how to cope with change."

The government refused to be interviewed but told AFP in an email that potential impacts the proposed third-runway could have on the pink dolphins had been "properly assessed and addressed". "To compensate for the permanent loss of Chinese white dolphin habitats arising from the land formation works, the designation of a new marine park of approximately 2,400 ha (24 square kilometers) in the waters north of the third-runway project has been proposed," the statement from the agriculture, fisheries and conservation department said. But campaigners criticized the plan, saying the marine park would not be established until at least 2023, when reclamation work for the third runway is expected to finish. "We don't even know whether the dolphin can hang on and survive and wait," Hung said. "We have been following some of them for nearly 20 years so those are our old friends. They don't realize that there is more disaster waiting for them." —AFP



HONG KONG: Yeung Ka-yan (second right) and Josh Lu (right) with other customers on a tour boat trip to see the famous pink dolphins.



HONG KONG: This undated picture released by the Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society shows a pink dolphin in Hong Kong waters. —AFP photos



HONG KONG: Tour boat operator Wong Yung-kan pointing out where the famous pink dolphins are found in the waters around Tai O.



HONG KONG: A tour boat (center) returning after a trip to see the famous pink dolphins in the waters around Tai O.

TUBERCULOSIS FUNDING GAP THREATENS ELIMINATION GOALS

BANGKOK: Funding for tuberculosis research fell \$1.3 billion short of global targets last year, threatening worldwide goals to eliminate the disease between 2030 and 2035, researchers said yesterday. The Treatment Action Group (TAG), an independent think tank, said the \$674 million of total funding in 2014 amounted to just a third of the \$2 billion experts say is needed per year for research and development to rid the world of TB.

The need for better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat TB has never been greater as it is now the leading cause of death from an infectious disease, responsible for more deaths per year than AIDS, according to World Health Organization (WHO) data. "Anything short of a massive and sustained infusion of money into TB research will jeopardize our chances of meeting global goals," Mark Harrington, executive director of TAG, said in a statement. TB death rates have dropped 47 percent since 1990 but the highly infectious, air-borne disease still kills 4,000 people every day.

Progress is threatened by the emergence of drug-resistant strains which are outpacing the development of new drugs and are hard to diagnose and treat. In

2014, 480,000 people developed multidrug-resistant TB, according to WHO data. The WHO has called for achieving a world free of TB by 2035, an aspiration reaffirmed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, agreed by world leaders last September, which include a target to end TB by 2030.

Modest gains in TB research and development funding from 2005 to 2009 have stagnated in the five years since then, according to TAG's research. An exodus of pharmaceutical companies from TB research since 2012 has left the field dependent on public and philanthropic organizations for support, TAG said. TAG said it is particularly alarming that funding for TB drug research fell by \$25 million in 2014 from a year ago. "We won't eliminate TB unless we accelerate research and development," said Lucica Ditiu, executive director of the Stop TB Partnership.

Ditiu urged the BRICS countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa - to lead a financial push for research and development. They accounted for 46 percent of the world's new TB cases and 40 percent of TB-related deaths in 2014, but for only 3.6 percent of public funding, according to TAG. —Reuters

BRITISH LAWMAKERS CALL FOR SUGAR TAX TO TACKLE CHILDHOOD OBESITY

LONDON: British lawmakers urged the government yesterday to introduce tough measures, including a tax on sugary drinks and controls on price promotions for "unhealthy food and drink", to try to tackle childhood obesity. Parliament's Health Committee said there was "clear evidence that measures to improve the food environment" must be used to tackle obesity, treatment of which costs the state-run health service 5.1 billion pounds (\$7.65 billion) every year.

In its report, the committee said there should be strong controls on price promotions of unhealthy food and drink and a sugary drinks tax on full sugar drinks, with all proceeds targeted to help those children at greatest risk of obesity. It also said there should be tougher controls on the marketing and advertising of such food and drink and that labels should show sugar content in teaspoons, among

other measures.

"One third of children leaving primary school are overweight or obese, and the most deprived children are twice as likely to be obese than the least deprived," said Sarah Wollaston, chairman of the Health Committee.

"A full package of bold measures is required and should be implemented as soon as possible." The drinks industry criticized the report's findings, saying the lawmakers had "swallowed" the agenda of lobbyists. "It's disappointing that the committee has missed its chance to add a robustly independent voice to the obesity debate," said Ian Wright, director general of Britain's Food and Drink Federation. "No one seems to have considered hard-pressed consumers in all this," he said in a statement, adding that consumers pay billions in taxes on food and drink. —Reuters

ROCHE PULLS OUT OF 'SUPERBUG' ANTIBIOTIC PROJECT

VIENNA: Swiss drugmaker Roche Holding has dropped out of a high-profile project to develop an antibiotic for treating "superbug" infections, the company said on Sunday.

Roche had agreed in 2013 to pay privately held partner Polyphor up to 500 million Swiss francs (\$485.3 million) for rights to the product, marking a rare foray by a major pharmaceuticals company into the battle against superbug infections in hospitals. The deal included milestone payments of up to 465 million francs.

"Roche has decided to discontinue its involvement in the clinical development of the investigational antibiotic RG7929/POL7080 for the treatment of patients with severe Pseudomonas aeruginosa infections and will return the asset to Polyphor," a company spokesman said by email when asked about a report to this effect by the

NZZ am Sonntag newspaper. The spokesman cited Roche's assessment that "a streamlined development path as originally planned is no longer an option for Roche."

Superbug infections, including multi-drug-resistant typhoid, tuberculosis and gonorrhoea, kill hundreds of thousands of people a year and the rise of antibiotic resistance has been described by the World Health Organization as "one of the biggest health challenges of the 21st century". The Roche spokesman said that antimicrobial resistance remained a major threat to public health and Roche would continue to focus on this unmet medical need as part of its infectious disease research and development strategy. NZZ said that the experimental product, which is in phase II clinical trials, will now be developed alone by Polyphor. —Reuters

STUDY SHOWS THAT OBESE CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE HEART DISEASE

KUWAIT: A team of consultants from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) in London and University College London Institute of Child Health conducted research to see if obese children suffered from stiffer arteries when compared to children of a more ideal weight. Obesity affects 1.4 million adults around the world and is linked to multiple health issues which can lead to an earlier death. 41.4% of girls between the age of 15-18 and 60.4% of boys of the same age were classified as obese or overweight in Kuwait between 2010-2011, making obesity a growing health concern for children. The researchers decided to focus on a common feature in overweight adults - the stiffening of blood vessels - to see if this was a trait that occurred in overweight children, as predicting the future issues of children who are overweight is hard to determine. Stiffer arteries in adults are linked to problems such as strokes and coronary artery disease which can lead to an earlier death.

Researchers conducted a meta-analysis of published research that had used technology to measure pulse wave velocity - which determines how fast blood travels along arteries in



children. The speed of blood depends on the 'elasticity' of arteries with less stiff arteries making blood flow slower, something which pulse wave velocity calculates. The authors compared 14 from around the world, including China, Europe and North America, and

they were able to see that arteries in obese children were stiffer than those who were of a normal weight. Dr Lee Hudson, a GOSH consultant, and one of the authors of the study notes that the study showed that 'the carotid artery (the artery supplying blood to the brain) was the most affected, which is worrying, as problems with this artery are known to be related to strokes.'

Whilst the paper used many different studies from around the world and so the data set and research were not always identical, Dr Lee Hudson concluded that 'there was sufficient evidence to suggest that obese children have higher rates of stiffening of their arteries which provides evidence that these children are at risk right now of heart disease when they grow older.'

Helping children lead active and healthy childhoods is essential to keeping children healthy now and in the future. This research shows that children are increasing their risk as adults for conditions such as strokes, coronary artery disease, hypertension and diabetes, all of which can lead to a shortened life span.

Rare diseases

Dr Lee Hudson is a consultant in general paediatrics at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Dr Hudson specializes in medical complications involved with eating and feeding disorders, obesity, chronic fatigue syndrome and general paediatric conditions in infants, children and young people. Dr Hudson qualified from Sheffield University and undertook specialist training as a general paediatrician in Australia and the UK. He is also an executive member of the International Association of Paediatrics and Child Health and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health's Young People's Health Special Interest Group.

Great Ormond Street Hospital is a world-leading research centre, conducting research into areas including rare diseases, cancer, genetics, neuroscience, immunology and surgical techniques. In partnership with University College London (UCL) Institute of Child Health (ICH) GOSH is one of the top five research institutions for children in the world. GOSH is also the site for one of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Biomedical Research Centres (BRC). GOSH is the only academic Biomedical Research Centre in the UK to be dedicated to children's health and between 2010-2014, GOSH/ICH research papers had the highest citation impact of any of the top five children's hospitals in the world, as reported by Thomson Reuters.



BEIJING AIMS TO REFILL MEDICINE CHEST WITH 'MADE IN CHINA' DRUGS

SHANGHAI: China, already a global powerhouse in high-tech areas from solar panels to bullet trains, is turning its industrial might to the challenge of making more of its own drugs for a vast and aging population. Given the 10 years or more it typically takes to bring a new medicine to market, original "Made in China" treatments won't arrive overnight, but multinationals are already encountering more competition from local generic drugs that look set for a quantum leap in quality. The stakes are high. China is the world's second biggest drugs market behind the United States, and fast food, smoking and pollution have fueled a rise in cancers and chronic heart and lung diseases. The country also has more diabetics than any other in the world, with numbers expected to hit 151 million by 2040 from 110 million today, according to the International Diabetes Federation. That has made China a sweet spot for Denmark's Novo Nordisk; the world's biggest insulin producer has mined a rich seam in the country since opening production facilities here in 1995.

By 2010, it dominated 63 percent of China's insulin market. But it has recently been losing ground to local competitors cheered on by Beijing. "China is going to be tough for us for the next couple of years," said Chief Science Officer Mads Krosgaard Thomsen. "Right now, the country is very focused on building domestic production." Local rivals are selling both cut-price basic insulin and sophisticated modern versions, including a biosimilar copy of Sanofi's Lantus made by Chinese biotech specialist Gan & Lee Pharmaceuticals.

End of branded generics?

Greater local competition is also evident in other areas, helping the top 10 Chinese drugmakers grow sales 12 percent on average this year, according to IMS Consulting - twice the rate of multinationals, which suffered a setback from a bribery scandal at GlaxoSmithKline two years ago.

GSK itself has seen its drug sales slump. Increasing local competition is part of a structural upheaval in China's hospital-dominated prescription drug market. Selling drugs to patients at a hefty mark-up - especially off-patent Western "branded generics" - often accounts for 40-50 percent of Chinese

hospitals' revenues. But the authorities are now pushing a policy of zero mark-ups, initially in smaller county hospitals.

"Branded generics are something that exist today, but the need for them in 10 years time is not going to be there," said Luke Miels, AstraZeneca's global portfolio head. That means foreign firms will be more reliant on new, patented medicines, although the scale of demand for such expensive products is uncertain in a country with only basic health insurance cover.

At the other end of the spectrum, multinationals aim to build up volume, often in partnership with local players, in the big markets outside China's top cities, where distribution costs are high and prices low. "It's the right thing to do, even if profit margins shrink," said the head of one big multinational.

Regulator reform

Pivotal to the transformation of the market is the China Food and Drug Administration, led by reformist boss Bi Jingquan since January. The watchdog has promised to speed up approval of innovative new drugs, which can take 5-7 years, while cracking down on sub-standard local generics. "This creates lots of opportunities for local Chinese companies that have a strong focus on innovation," said a spokesman for China's Fosun Pharma, which sees itself among the winners.

It is not alone. A cluster of drug research labs in eastern Shanghai highlights the promise of China's life sciences sector. The area brings together multinational and local firms, alongside contract research businesses and small biotech operations. Among the latter is Hua Medicine, led by Chinese-born, Western-educated Chief Executive Li Chen, who used to run Roche's China R&D center. Now he is developing a novel diabetes treatment, licensed from Roche, while working on Hua's own promising leads.

Another standard-bearer for Chinese biotech is Beijing-based cancer specialist BeiGene, which last month announced plans for a \$100 million initial public offering on Nasdaq. At a time when China's academic researchers have grabbed headlines by editing the genes of human embryos, such start-ups highlight the commercial potential of China's biotech know-how. —Reuters

WORLD INNOVATION SUMMIT FOR HEALTH TO HOLD THIRD EDITION OF CONFERENCE IN QATAR WITH GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH

DOHA: The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), a global initiative of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), plans to hold the third edition of its health policy summit from 29th to 30 November, 2016 in Doha, Qatar.

WISH brings together thousands of high-level policymakers, academics, and professionals, and has evolved into a significant platform for the dissemination of healthcare innovation and best practices. It is aligned with QF's mission to reinforce Qatar's pioneering role as an emerging center for healthcare innovation while also unlocking human potential.

The upcoming 2016 Summit will feature six groundbreaking research forums that highlight and address some of the world's most pressing healthcare challenges. Chaired by internationally renowned experts, the forums will generate interdisciplinary, evidence-based reports on topics including Autism, Behavioral Insights, Cardiovascular Disease, the Economic Benefits

of Investing in Health, Healthy Populations, and Precision Medicine. For the first time, WISH will also report on its ongoing impact locally and globally on issues previously highlighted at WISH, such as Diabetes, Accountable Care, and Patient Safety.

Engineer Saad Al Muhannadi, President of Qatar Foundation, said: "At Qatar Foundation, all of our efforts are dedicated to promoting innovation and finding solutions that foster productive change regionally and globally. We established the World Innovation Summit for Health for this purpose, and through WISH, we have successfully created a platform that brings together stakeholders from all over the globe to discuss solutions to the world's most urgent healthcare challenges."

"The WISH Summit is just one initiative in our multi-faceted approach. Year-round panel discussions, webinars, and published reports are also all in place to encourage positive and productive change in healthcare policies around the world for the betterment of our

society and the global society as a whole," Engineer Saad concluded.

Professor The Lord Darzi of Denham, Executive Chair of WISH and Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College of London, added: "The world's healthcare systems are facing huge challenges. With persisting health inequalities, ageing populations, and governments grappling with the rising costs of delivering care, the need for innovation in healthcare has never been more pressing. Building on the success of the 2015 summit and the ongoing programs that sprang from it, it is gratifying to see WISH encouraging and supporting policy innovation for the benefit of populations everywhere."

Outlining the summit's development, WISH's Chief Executive Officer Egbert Schillings said: "In the past 18 months, WISH has performed a pivot from conference to community. This is a community of the impatient who seek to accelerate the pace of change in healthcare

and to impact health policy at all levels. In November of next year, we will be proud to present both exciting new research on key topics for healthcare leaders everywhere, as well as showcase the difference this community makes every day."

In addition to new health policy research forums, the summit will also feature Innovation Showcases from around the world that are shaping the design, delivery, and financing of care, as well as a cohort of Young Innovators; emerging health care leaders under the age of 30, whose contributions to global health deserve wider recognition.

The second WISH summit was held in February 2015, bringing together more than 1,200 delegates from 93 countries to discuss and debate practical, lasting, and innovative solutions to global healthcare challenges. WISH remains closely aligned to the vision of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation.

CLINIC PAGE



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MARINA HOTEL HOLDS BEACH CLEANUP DRIVE

Marina Hotel Kuwait recently organized a beach cleanup drive at the Marina Public Beach to create awareness and emphasis on the importance of protecting the environment. Nabil Hammoud, General Manager,

Marina Hotel Kuwait thanked each and every employee who took part in the drive. He said "We take pride in our surroundings and feel a responsibility to keep it clean. This local initiative is our way to preserve the environment and show that we care,

because together we can make a difference. I am very thankful to my team for their commitment towards setting aside a few hours to take part in the beach cleanup. This is a clear demonstration of their personal commitment to environmental

protection." The cleaning campaign began at 02:00 pm with the hotel team distributing gloves, t-shirts, caps and trash bags and concluded around 04:00 pm with a Barbeque dinner for all the participants.

Marina public beach was cleaned as part of the event. This involved the collection and removal of a full container of rubbish and debris including plastic bottles and plates, cans and several other items, leaving the beach cleaner and more beautiful.



BSK CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL DAY

On Thursday 12 November, The British School of Kuwait celebrated International Day, an annual event highlighting the different nationalities represented at the school - over 75 in all. On International Day we aim to provide students with opportunities to better understand and appreciate other cultures. The school was decorated with flags from around the world, and students were invited to wear formal national dress, or another costume associated with their country. Many students brought to school a souvenir from their country of origin to act as a discussion point with their friends and teachers. In addition, around sixty Year 6 students took part in an international quiz organized by Charlotte Harker. We are delighted that International Day proved to be a day of discovery and awareness of the rich multicultural community of which BSK is so proud.



SOORYA FESTIVAL MESMERIZES THE AUDIENCE

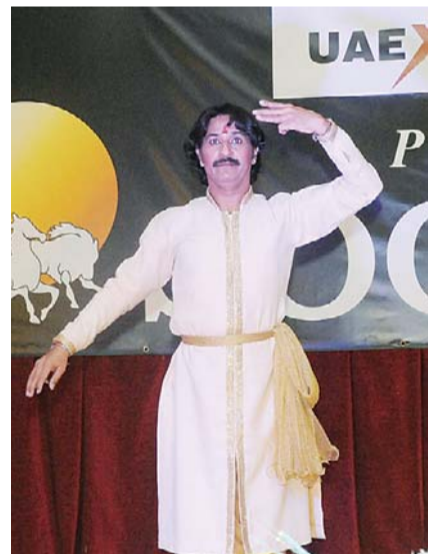


Soorya Kuwait Chapter, in association with UAE Exchange, staged the "Soorya India Festival 2015 on the evening of November 27, 2015, at the Indian Community School Auditorium (Sr), Salmiya, Kuwait.

A K Srivastava, Second Secretary, Indian Embassy, inaugurated the festival, which aims to promote international integration through culture, by lighting the lamp, along with Renjith Pillai, Business Development Manager, UAE Exchange, Vijay Karayil, President, and B.S. Pillai, General Secretary. The Embassy official appreciated Soorya Kuwait Chapter for its excellent efforts in promoting the rich Indian culture. The General Secretary wel-

comed the audience. The program, a mix of three oldest dance forms of India - a Bharatanatyam, a Kathak and an Odissi by recognized artistes from India, mesmerized the audience of all age groups gathered. The first part of the program was a Kathak by Pandit Rajendra Gangani and a Bharatanatyam recital by growing dancer Sreelatha Vinod. Renowned Kathak exponent Pandit Rajendra Gangani presented a scintillating Kathak dance and succeeded in building up an instant rapport with audience. With her beautiful presence and an innate grace, Sreelatha was very strong in rhythm and this aspect came through attractively in her recitals, which was a true

entertainment. The second part of the program was an Odissi Dance (solo) by internationally acknowledged dancer Rahul Acharya, who captivated the audience with his brilliant movements. Later, the artistes were honored with gifts for their outstanding recitals. Renjith Pillai and Vijay Karayil presented the gifts. Soorya has been disseminating Indian art and culture through music and dance with its 19 chapters all over the world. "We are committed to propagate the rich Indian art and culture with the active support of chief patron Dr B R Shetty, Managing Director, NMC Group of Companies", said Soorya Krishnamurthy.



ICSK KHAITAN CELEBRATES CONSTITUTION DAY OF INDIA

The Khaitan Branch of the Indian Community School Kuwait celebrated Constitutional Day on 26th November 2015. A special assembly was conducted by class VIII which gave an idea to the students about the constitution and their rights and duties as citizens. Charts were displayed in the whole

school about information about the constitution. Students read aloud the 'Preamble' of the constitution to all and reaffirmed their commitment towards its ethos. A speech on constitution was followed by a quiz in which all students actively participated. A Power Point presentation based on the 'Indian Constitution' was the highlight of the assembly. It recalled the human rights and freedom of Independent India. A constitution song presented by a group invigorated the students with patriotism. The Principal of ICSK Khaitan K G Shirath addressed the assembly and conveyed his greetings on Constitution Day. He explained to the students about the values they should follow to protect the constitution of their land. Celebrating the constitutional day will inspire students to rejuvenate the feeling of patriotism. An absolute metamorphosis from subject to citizen is the need of the times as we belong to a democratic nation.



KDMCA BIDS FAREWELL TO K K JOSEPH

Kuravilangad Deva Matha College Alumni Association (KDMCA) conducted a gathering to bid farewell to our member K K Joseph, a senior officer of Indian Overseas Bank who is returning to India after his deputation in Kuwait. The meeting was presided over by K J John,

the president of KDMCA. Raju Zacharias-Chairman Advisory Board and Silvy Jose-Josevice president felicitated on the occasion. Jose Mathew- General Secretary welcomed the audience and Shaju Bharathan delivered vote of thanks. During his thanks message, K K Joseph put

to light the sweet memories of the college days and he hailed the activities of KDMCA which continues in the same spirit of Deva Matha and the love we experienced back home. Former presidents of KDMCA George Chelakkamakill and Raju Zacharias jointly presented a memento as a token of Love to Joseph.

WHAT'S ON - SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All photos submitted for What's On should be minimum 200dpi. Articles must be in plain text and should include name and phone numbers. Articles and photos that fail to meet these requirements will not be published.

Please send them to news@kuwaittimes.net



The Ambassador of Albania to Kuwait Kujtim Morina hosted a reception on the occasion of his country's National Day at Regency Hotel recently. Senior officials, diplomats and media personalities attended the event. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



SAFIR HOTEL HOSTS CELEBRATE START OF FAMILY WEEKEND FUN ACTIVITIES

Safir Hotel and Residences Kuwait - Fintas held a media and corporate event celebrating the start of family weekend fun which includes a splendid buffet with live cooking stations starting from Al Roshinah Kuwaiti Traditional food and sweet corner and Moroccan corner to Shawarma station and many more, in addition to kids' corner including Mini Burgers, Cup Cakes decorated by the kids themselves to have more excitement and fun as part of other unique activities that have been selected and

arranged for both kids and parents at the beach garden and the Royal Tent surrounded by wide green spaces and overlooking the Arabian Gulf to entertain whole family members in a relaxed and luxurious environment while enjoying the fun activities including Movie Theatre, Magician Show, Mascot Characters, Hena Painting, Trampoline, Swing Set, Grass Soccer, Beach Volleyball, Table Tennis, Baby Foot, Chess, Playing Cards and many other activities, in addition to the access to temperature controlled swimming

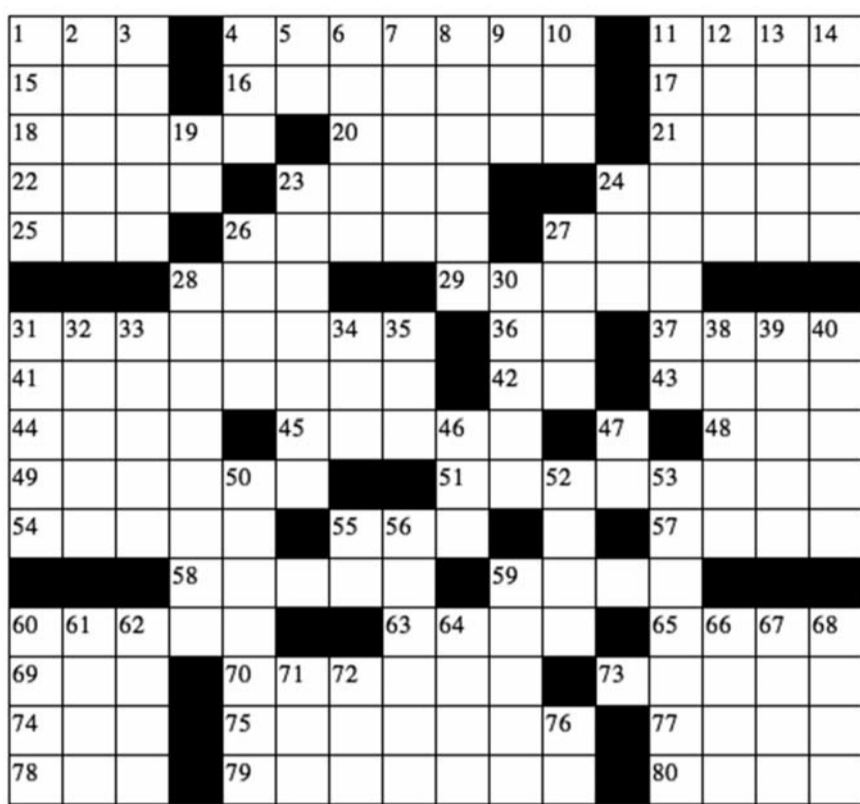
Pool and Beach facilities, and experiencing the selective flavors of traditional Shisha along with the light lavish snacks throughout the afternoon in such lovely seating and view. Valued guests were warmly welcomed by Safir Hotel and Residences Kuwait - Al-Fintas Management's team to share with them the memorable fun moments. The General Manager of Safir Hotel and Residences Kuwait - Fintas, Saif Eddin Mohammed said, "Celebrating the start of Family

Weekend Fun including the brunch and fun activities for the whole family in the hotel is considered one of the ideal venues among the 5 star hotels in Kuwait where family members enjoy the distinctive buffet with full of fun activities in a modern and unique environment" He added, "The recall of this cheerful day will remain in our hearts and mind, and it would have never been so warm and magical without your presence with us at such memorable event."



Prevention is the best way to keep people healthy at all times, and that is why health authorities in cooperation with the private sector are conducting programs to spread awareness among the public on many health concerns. Bayan Medial Center organized a health awareness day last Sunday during which advises were given on how to deal with diabetes, blood pressure, weight control and nutrition. Doctors there answered patrons' questions on various concerns. Several health ministry departments and private medical companies including SebaMed were on hand during the event.

CROSSWORD 1096



ACROSS

- 1. An udder or breast or teat.
4. Civilians trained as soldiers but not part of the regular army.
11. Not agitated.
15. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
16. An inference that if things agree in some respects they probably agree in others.
17. The largest continent with 60% of the earth's population.
18. Of a pale purple color.
20. A compound whose molecules are composed of two identical monomers.
21. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on land.
22. Loose or flaccid body fat.
25. Being one more than nine.
29. Sluggish tailless Australian arboreal marsupial with gray furry ears and coat.
31. White Southerner supporting Reconstruction policies after the Civil War usually for self-interest.
36. A form of address for a man.
37. A branch of the Tai languages.
41. Casserole of eggplant and ground lamb with onion and tomatoes bound with white sauce and beaten eggs.
42. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
43. Being here now.
44. Any tree or shrub of the genus Inga having pinnate leaves and showy usually white flowers.
45. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
48. A castrated tomcat.
49. Grow teeth.
51. An early Christian church designed like a Roman basilica.
54. The lofty nest of a bird of prey (such as a hawk or eagle).
57. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
58. Of or relating to alga.
60. Of or relating to Oman or its people.
63. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
65. Very dark black.
69. A unit of electrical power in an AC circuit equal to the power dissipated when 1 volt produces a current of 1 ampere.
70. Of or like a cecum.
73. An ancient city in northern Portugal.
74. A city in the European part of Russia.
75. One of the three prairie provinces in western Canada.
77. Waterproofed canvas.
78. A member of a Mayan people of southwestern Guatemala.
79. A person who lives and works on land.
80. On or toward the lee.

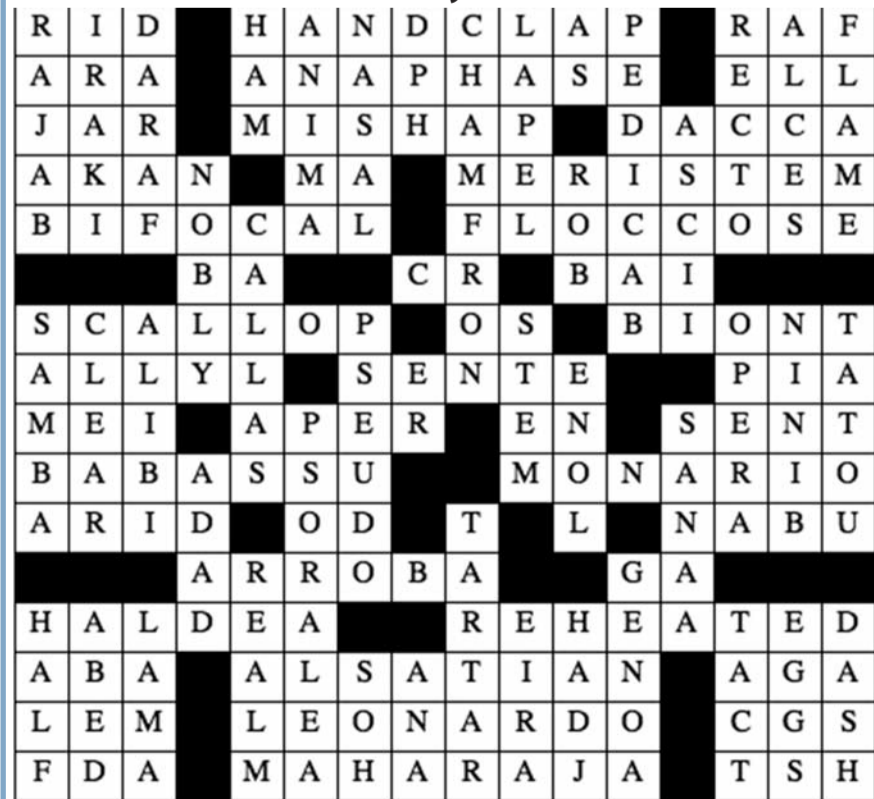
DOWN

- 1. A style of glazed earthenware.
2. Being of use or service.
3. A mountain peak in the Andes in Argentina (21,654 feet high).

ACROSS

- 4. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
5. Not out.
6. A spoon-shaped vessel with a long handle.
7. (anatomy) Of or relating to the ilium.
8. An alloy of copper and zinc (and sometimes arsenic) used to imitate gold in cheap jewelry and for gilding.
9. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
10. A port in southwestern Scotland.
11. Round gourd of the calabash tree.
12. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
13. Ions are accelerated along a linear path by voltage differences on electrodes along the path.
14. In a desperate manner.
19. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
23. Drink made by steeping and boiling and fermenting rather than distilling.
24. Any of various units of capacity.
26. By bad luck.
27. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
28. Of or relating to or characteristic of Alsace or its inhabitants.
30. The ending of a series or sequence.
32. Black-spotted usually dusky-colored fish with reddish fins.
33. A long flexible steel coil for dislodging stoppages in curved pipes.
34. A Kwa language spoken by the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria.
35. United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
38. A high wave (often dangerous) caused by tidal flow (as by colliding tidal currents or in a narrow estuary).
39. Any plant of the genus Erica.
40. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
46. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
47. An expression of greeting.
50. In the shape of a coil.
52. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
53. Type genus of the Lacertidae.
55. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
56. Situated in a particular spot or position.
59. A republic on the island of Malta in the Mediterranean.
61. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
62. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
64. Any physical damage to the body caused by violence or accident or fracture etc..
66. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
67. A cruel wicked and inhuman person.
68. The back side of the neck.
71. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
72. The compass point that is one point north of due east.
76. An associate degree in nursing.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Excitement mounts as you consider every angle of a creative project today. You're eager to get started, but you can't figure out how to organize all your ideas. Your reactions are so swift now that you inadvertently overwhelm others while sharing your plans. Think before you speak because you probably sound more outrageous than you realize. Keep your audience in mind and tailor your delivery accordingly. In fact, it might be smart not to say anything at all. Let your art express your heart.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Rather than spinning your wheels and going nowhere fast, channel your energy into creating a joyful environment, instead. The showy Leo Moon visits your 4th House of Home and Family, inspiring you to redecorate around the house to take your mind off more complicated issues at work. Nevertheless, you can't stop the flow of your thoughts; thankfully, you can exert enough control to shift your focus to more pleasurable pursuits. Oprah Winfrey advises, "The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate."



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Discerning the fine edge between a brilliant thought and a crazy one today is nearly impossible as rational Mercury trines wild Uranus. However, there's really no need to waste too much time worrying about slipping over the edge as long as you maintain your sense of humor. Keep your feet on solid ground; remember, it's not necessary to share every amazing idea that crosses your mind. Knowing when to remain silent now could be your key to gaining more credibility and power in the long run.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Burying your unrealistic thoughts won't make you happy today, but neither will indiscriminately telling them to anyone who will listen. Nevertheless, your outrageous schemes may get the best of you if you cannot come up with a plan to harness the power of your imagination. Instead of allowing your dreams to drift aimlessly, discuss your dilemma with a clever confidant; letting a friend in on your creative process can help you integrate an otherworldly vision into your everyday life.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Big bold action may be necessary for you to find emotional satisfaction today as the Moon dances her way through dramatic Leo. Luckily, you are primed for a stellar performance even if you're concerned about other parts of your life. Instead of pretending that everything is fine now, set aside your defenses and just share your story with someone you trust. Although the show must go on, you can ensure it's of the highest caliber if you take off your mask and act from your heart.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

There are many disparate facets of your life coming together now, and you would be wise to connect the dots between the apparent coincidences. You have a chance to create a special kind of magic simply by focusing on the relationship between separate events. Analytical Mercury is busy filling your head with one idea after another today. But rather than trying to rationally explain every thought, just find a way to weave the strands into a single tapestry.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your best friends remain true to you through thick and thin, and they quietly cheer you on as you express your creativity today. They seem to appreciate your authenticity and admire you even more when you are doing what you love. Thankfully, you enjoy shining for others, so this can be a fantastic win-win situation. Stretch into new territory by using your colorful imagination to create a special memory for everyone; your talent knows no bounds.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Circumstances may necessitate that you publicly display your emotions in ways that normally would make you uncomfortable. Nevertheless, you are willing to stand up for your beliefs today, and being vulnerable is just part of the package. Nevertheless, wait until you are fully ready before making a serious commitment. Remember, it's healthier for your soul to connect your passion with a social cause beyond your individual needs. Carl Sagan wrote, "For small creatures such as we the vastness is bearable only through love."



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You wish you were free of obligations so you could explore new paths into your future. Unfortunately, you might have responsibilities you cannot avoid today. Luckily, falling behind isn't as bad as it sounds, since handling unfinished business doesn't prevent you from also chasing your dreams. Even if you're not prepared to embark on your next great adventure, tying up loose ends now allows you to fly sooner than you expect.



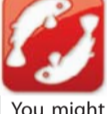
Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Attempting to balance your list of chores with your desire for excitement leads to an unsolvable dilemma today. Even if you're facing a difficult decision now, you're required to play by the existing rules. Thankfully, changing your attitude can change the name of the game, enabling you to maintain your integrity while also breaking out of your shell. Never underestimate the element of surprise. Take a walk on the wild side and let your freak flag fly.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

It may seem as if everyone is having more fun than you today, but this lopsided perception could be a figment of your imagination. You want to be part of the group, yet you also need to maintain your reputation as an outsider. Instead of comparing yourself to anyone else, decide what you want to do now based only on what would make your heart happiest. Then take a few small yet determined steps to set you off in the right direction. Following your dreams is a noble cause which will earn you the admiration of others.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You might come across more rebellious than you actually feel today since you don't realize how intimidating your words sound to your coworkers. Obviously, you are free to say whatever enters your mind without censoring your remarks. Nevertheless, someone may not take your message as lightly as you intend. Happily, you can prevent discord by going out of your way to respect the opinions of others, even if they are vastly different from yours. Diversity can be found in the art of thinking independently together.

WORD SEARCH

DISNEY MOVIES WORD SEARCH PUZZLE



- A BUGS LIFE, ALADDIN, BAMBINO, CHICKEN LITTLE, CINDERELLA, DUMBO, FANTASIA, FINDING NEMO, HERCULES, MULAN, PETER PAN, PETES DRAGON, PINOCCHIO, ROBIN HOOD, SLEEPING BEAUTY, THE ARISTOCATS, THE LION KING, THE LITTLE MERMAID, TOY STORY, WALL E.

Yesterday Solution

SOLUTION TO LAS VEGAS PUZZLE



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Hospitals

Table listing hospitals including Sabah Hospital, Amiri Hospital, Maternity Hospital, Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital, etc.

Clinics

Table listing various clinics such as Kaizen center, Rawda, Adaliya, Khalidiya, etc.

Table listing pharmacies by Governorate, Pharmacy Name, Address, and Phone Number.

Large table listing international calls with country names and phone numbers.

STATE OF KUWAIT METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT. Includes weather forecast, SFC. CHART, and recorded weather at Kuwait Airport.

PRIVATE CLINICS

Table listing various private clinics and their medical services, categorized by specialty like Ophthalmologists, Plastic Surgeons, etc.



Kylie likes Caitlyn 'better' than Bruce

The 18-year-old reality star has a stronger bond with her father following her gender transition earlier this year now that there's no longer a "huge secret" between them. She said: "I like her better than Bruce. We talk about make-up and clothes. We bond a lot more, but not only that. I feel like there's not a huge secret in the family. I feel like there was always this big secret." And the 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star claimed she and her older sister Kendall Jenner, 20, always had suspicions about Bruce after discovering their father wearing women's clothes when they were much younger, though they never talked about it. She said: "And I've honestly known about it for a really long time and we actually caught him then dressing up as a girl. When my sister and I were like six and seven maybe. So we've known for a while that there was something, but it was nev-

er talked about. "Honestly, like I'd be with my girlfriends sometimes and he would come in and be like what are you guys talking about and kind of joke around and I knew there was something, but now I feel like we hang out a lot more there's no secrets. Now Kylie is hopeful her acceptance of the 'I Am Cait' star will help inspire other young people. Speaking in an interview on the 'Ellen DeGeneres Show' which airs today, she said: "She's really living her authentic true self. And I feel like that's awesome and also I want to be someone from my generation to like be an example because I think that's so awesome. I think that other girls and boys my age will maybe see that I'm so accepting and be accepting of other people too."



Dockery is going backpacking now 'Downton Abbey' is over

Michelle Dockery is planning to go backpacking now 'Downton Abbey' is over. The 33-year-old actress has been busy playing Lady Mary Crawley on the hit period drama for the past five years and is now looking forward to taking some time off to travel the world following the conclusion of the sixth and final series. She said: "I never had a year out. I want to go travelling. I've never been to Australia. I'd love to go to India. I want to go backpacking." The brunette beauty also confessed she was shocked by how upset she was when shooting her last scenes. She told Red magazine: "On my last day

of filming, leading up to that final take, I felt sick. I didn't expect to feel so sad. But I think it was a smart move to end the show where we did. At the wrap party, the producer did a speech and said, 'Now let's party like it's 1925!' My feet have only just recovered from all the dancing." Michelle and her co-star Laura Carmichael - who played her on-screen sister Lady Edith Crawley - were so upset that they wandered the grounds of Highclere Castle together before sitting on Lady Mary's late husband Matthew's bench for a quick sob.



Legend sings to Teigen for her 30th birthday

John Legend serenaded Chrissy Teigen at her 30th birthday party on Saturday. The 'FABLife' presenter - who celebrates the milestone age today appeared visibly moved when her husband sang 'Happy Birthday' to her at the bash at the Comedy Cellar in New York City while other guests looked on in a video posted online by her friend Simon Huck. Alongside the footage, Simon wrote: "Happy Birthday to the [queen] of comedy @chrissyteigen. No one funnier, more generous, or salt of the earth than you. FULL STOP.(sic)" As well as a performance from John, guests including comic David LaChapelle were also entertained with a set from DJ D-Nice, and tucked into food from Momofuku, with tasty treats on offer including Korean fried chicken wings, spicy cucumbers and pork buns. And Chrissy - who is expecting her first child with John - was presented with a huge cake made up of miniature cupcakes. The birthday girl had a brilliant time at the party. She tweeted: "I can't imagine a single thing more I wanted out of my twenties. Greatest friends and family ever, ever, ever." However, it seems the 'Lip Sync Battle' star may not be so impressed with the drinks on offer to her now that she isn't drinking alcohol because of her pregnancy. She posted: "I thought rose water would be a delicious water substitute as I am SO BORED but wowiee, that thing belongs on a cotton ball for your face (sic)".

Rousteing was hated at school

Olivier Rousteing had no friends at secondary school. The 30-year-old fashionista, who was born in Bordeaux, France, may be one of the most popular designers on social media but he was really disliked when he was younger. He explained in the December issue of NumEro magazine: "At primary school I was quite popular - I was the 'puppy' everyone liked and thought was cute." In secondary school I was hated by everyone, but at sixth-form college I was a leader." The hunk - who is creative director at Balmain and has dressed stars including Justin Bieber and Kim Kardashian West - believes his love for fashion was the reason he was ignored by the other children at school. He said: "I was into fashion, different because I had particular tastes... I wouldn't go so far as to say I was more feminine than my classmates, but I liked to look after my appearance, and I always wore the latest fashionable brands. I must have come across as a bit of a spoilt child, and the other kids were probably jealous. What's funny is that a number of [my old schoolmates] now send me private messages on Instagram telling me they adore me. Revenge is a dish best served cold..."

Twiggy says modeling is to blame for her 'dodgy' back



The '60s fashion icon, whose real name is Lesley Lawson, believes all those years of strutting down the runway during the height of her career has had a knock-on effect on her health and has now left her bedridden with sore bones. She explained: "My back's a bit dodgy from all those years of modeling - walking around in high heels and sticking your bottom out does terrible things." And, although she would probably quite like a new back because she's fed up of being in pain, one thing she won't be getting rid of any time soon is her wrinkles. The 66-year-old model is adamant she'd never go under the knife or have Botox injections to plump up her face and eliminate her lines because she's proud of her age. She said: "I think people are starting to get sick of their faces not moving. I don't understand why anyone would want to be a 70 year old with a 30 year old face. I'm proud of my wrinkles, I have earned them, after all." Meanwhile, she may have just had her 66th birthday but Twiggy certainly shows no signs of slowing down. Speaking to the Daily Mirror newspaper, she said: "It's funny, because older women are so stylish now. It was so different for my mum's generation, they just weren't into fashion and clothes, they just dressed appropriately."



Rebel Wilson works out five times a week

The 'Bridesmaids' star, who wears a US size 16 to 18, may be proud of her curves but has admitted she still likes to work up a sweat with a personal trainer multiple times a week as well as go hiking and playing tennis on Saturdays. Speaking to Cosmopolitan magazine, she said: "You need to be fit to be able to bring it 16 hours a day on a film set" But, although she likes to keep fit, the 35-year-old actress can't help but scoff calorific treats when she feels stressed. She explained: "I love me some ice cream or dessert, and it comes at times when I'm happy or sad. So when I have an incredibly successful day, I want to celebrate and reward myself with food. If I've had a sad or stressful day, food is also comfort. I bought this hilarious slogan sweater the other day that says, 'Food is my only friend'. I thought it was really cute. "You would probably describe it as emotional or stress-eating. I don't do drugs; I don't really drink... so eating is my one vice. I wouldn't ever want to totally give it up." However, the blonde beauty, who was born and raised in Australia, believes her lifestyle has improved a lot since she moved to Los Angeles, California, five years ago. She said: "Living in LA you learn a lot about health. I now drink green juices and I'm trying to do gluten-free. But I don't do it 100% - I'm not a maniac!"

Coldplay lined up for Super Bowl 50?

Coldplay are reportedly in talks to play the Super Bowl 50 halftime show next year. The English band are being considered as performers at the NFL showpiece game which will be held at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, next February. A source told The Sun on Sunday: "The Super Bowl offer is a no-brainer for the band. "It's the biggest show in the world and they reckon it's finally their time to step up and do it. "Granted you don't get paid a lot to do it, but the exposure you get in return is huge. Nothing has been confirmed as of yet but they're definitely in the running." However, they face some competition as Maroon 5, One Direction and Bruno Mars - who performed in 2014 at Super Bowl XLVIII - are also being considered. Billboard previously reported that the 'Uptown

Funk' singer was being sounded out about curating the concert which would see him personally perform as well as feature appearances from other artists. Bruno's performance with the Red Hot Chili Peppers in 2014 was the most-watched halftime show ever with 115.3 million viewers - until his record was beaten by Katy Perry earlier this year when she achieved a peak audience of 118.5 million for her set, famous for her dancing 'Left Shark' costumed backing dancer.



Zayn ready to commit to Gigi

Zayn Malik is "ready to commit" to Gigi Hadid. The 22-year-old former One Direction star only called off his engagement to Little Mix singer Perrie Edwards a few months ago but is reportedly already getting serious with his new love, Gigi, 20. A source told HollywoodLife.com: "Zayn has had his eye on Gigi for a while, he's absolutely smitten with her good looks. He was just waiting for the right moment, until she was single, to really make his move. But he's been want-

ing to get a chance to date her for quite a while." Gigi recently split from singer Joe Jonas and Zayn, who has been playing the field since his split with Perrie, wants a serious relationship with the lingerie model. The insider added: "Zayn's been dating lots of girls, but he would definitely commit to Gigi, if she wanted the same thing." Meanwhile, Zayn recently revealed he "always" love Perrie - and insisted he didn't break her heart via text message. He said: "I have more respect for Perrie, 22, than to

end anything over text message. I love her a lot, and I always will, and I would never end our relationship over four years like that. "She knows that, I know that, and the public should know as well. I don't want to explain why or what I did, I just want the public to know I didn't do that."



Angelina Jolie's children think she's 'weird'

The 40-year-old actress may come across as professional when it comes to her career, but she has admitted Maddox, 14, Pax, 11, Zahara, 10, Shiloh, nine, and seven-year-old twins Knox and Vivienne, whom she has with her husband Brad Pitt, see a different side to her when she's at home. She explained: "They think I'm weird. Well, alright, they might. Maddox talks to me sometimes about writing as if he doesn't think I'm terrible at it and Vivienne is just happy I'm a tiger in a panda movie. But, ah, she's just a little one - she's all sweet. I mean, there are moments when I can be cool, but they like to mess with me.

They like to make fun of me. I'm just little mommy." Meanwhile, Angelina's globe-trotting career means her children are often forced to up sticks and move with her and Brad but, the couple, who got married last year, try to do all they can to ensure their brood have the best upbringing. She explained to the Observer magazine: "They're participating more in the choices of where we go. "And if we have to go somewhere they're going to miss their friends, we try to get them back for periods of time - or we try to have their friends come out."

Tyler gushes over fiancé

Liv Tyler has posted a gushing tribute to her fiancé David Gardner on Instagram. Just days after finally confirming that she and David - the father of her 10-month-old son Sailor - are engaged, Liv took to Instagram to show off her diamond ring and praise her man. Posting a picture of them together, with her engagement ring clearly visible, Liv wrote: "Crazy about my man!!!! sweet sweet daddy, friend, fiancé thank you!!!! Grateful (sic)." Liv - who also has 10-year-old son Milo from her marriage to musician Royston Langdon - is believed to have gotten engaged to the British sports agent in December 2014. A source previously said: "They have been [engaged] since last Christmas but prefer to be private. She's been wearing the ring." The 38-year-old actress recently admitted she was open to getting married again. She said: "I had this philosophy that you should only get married once. But then, of course, that changes. I definitely believe we have lessons we learn through our relationships. You're meant to work through and mirror each other. It's the thing in someone that drives you the most crazy that is maybe a part of yourself somewhere." Liv and David, who also has another son, Grey, seven, with ex-wife Davinia Taylor, currently divide their time between her home in New York City, his base in London and Austin, Texas, where she films her HBO series, but hope to be more settled in the future. The brunette beauty said: "We're doing everything we can to be together, but right now because of work we're going back and forth."



McAvoy is thinking about death



James McAvoy has been thinking about death a lot. The 36-year-old actor may not have even reached the fourth decade of his life yet but he has admitted he's terrified about passing away and the thought of death has been plaguing him more than he would like it to, recently. Speaking to the Observer magazine, he said: "Recently I have been thinking more about death. Perhaps it's because I'm 36 and I might be halfway through my life. It's not all that unusual for a guy to die before he's 70." However, before his life comes to an end, the handsome star is determined to teach his five-year-old son Brendan, with whom he has with his wife Anne-Marie Duff, about the important things and how he can achieve success. He explained: "My son is going to have loads of money and a better education than I have. But the opportunities should be there for every child as well as my kid. It feels like the educational situation is getting worse and the poles are growing further apart, which doesn't feel fair in a country that's meant to be democratic."

Austin and Ice-T's daughter has her own Twitter and Instagram pages

Coco Austin and Ice-T have set up Twitter and Instagram pages for their newborn baby daughter. Reality TV star Coco, 36, revealed Chanel Nicole's birth on Saturday and by the next day she had her own Twitter account, @BabyChanelworld, with 15,000 followers and an Instagram page, baby-chanelnicole, with almost 44,000 fans. Her bio included the description, "ChanelNicole IceT and Coco's Baby girl! Just arrived! What's happening? Born Nov 28th 5.7 pounds and 18 inch's long (sic)" and both accounts feature pictures of the newborn tot. One adorable snap on Twitter showed Chanel sleeping with the caption: "Ok!!!! Girls I've been here 1 day so it's time to get this 'Fashion Show' started!! Once I take this nap. It's on (sic)." Chanel is Coco and Ice-T's first child

together and the besotted parents clearly want to share their joy with fans. Coco previously revealed the couple have had their baby name picked out for ten years. She shared: "In the end, we are very excited. We had a baby name picked out 10 years ago and we just want a healthy baby. God is on my side and he gave me what I wanted and I'm grateful."



Beckham leads tribute to Paris terror victims in an emotional video



David Beckham has led a host of stars in paying tribute to the Paris terror victims in an emotional video. The former footballer was among 52 sporting legends who all came together in solidarity on the clip following the atrocity in the French capital earlier this month when terrorists killed 130 people. Beckham and the likes of England soccer captain Wayne Rooney, tennis legend Andre Agassi and former England manager Kevin Keegan all exclaimed "Je suis Paris" on the two-minute footage. The short film was played before Beckham's ex club Paris Saint Germain's home game at the Parc de Princes stadium against Troyes last weekend. Beckham - who previously played for Paris Saint Germain - previously paid tribute to the victims before a charity soccer game. He said: "It

was terribly devastating to see the scenes, unfortunately we see it around the world and have seen it recently. Other stars who have paid their respects include Justin Bieber, who advised his fans to "appreciate people" while they can after Universal Music Group executive Thomas Ayad was one of 89 people who lost their lives when gunmen opened fire during an Eagles of Death Metal concert at the Bataclan theatre. He tweeted: "Still thinking about Paris and my friend Thomas that we lost in the tragedy. He was a part of the team for years and I wish I would've had more time to thank him. "Make sure to appreciate people while you have them. Thanks Thomas for everything you did for me. You are appreciated and missed. Thoughts and prayers are with your family & friends #PrayForParis. (sic)"

Mulligan praises Lawrence for speaking against pay-gap

Carey Mulligan has praised Jennifer Lawrence for speaking out against the pay-gap in Hollywood. Jennifer, 25, wrote about making less money than her male co-stars in the op-ed, 'Why Do I Make Less Than My Co-Stars', which she penned for Lena Dunham's newsletter Lenny Letter and Carey, 30, is thrilled that the Oscar winner is using her position to help other women. She told Deadline: "I think it's a good thing for someone like Jennifer to speak out; it means an awful lot to women. Sure, there's been cynicism toward her speaking out and the fact that she makes a lot of money, but she is completely and selflessly rising above that. [The discrepancy] is inherently unfair and she has an enormous platform to speak out against it. "Men in Hollywood look up to her because she is powerful. She's using that platform to correct something that isn't right. It's a long overdue conversation and it's admirable what she has done. This is an age-old issue that's in every part of society." Carey's comments come after Kate Winslet, 40, called discussions about pay "vulgar" and Jennifer's 'American Hustle' co-star Jeremy Renner, 44, insisted "it's not [his] job" to help actresses negotiate their salaries. However, Jennifer's frequent collaborator Bradley Cooper, 40, praised her for speaking out about the gender pay gap in the movie industry and insisted he was more than willing to help resolve the issue. He added: "Usually you don't talk about the financial stuff, you have people. But you know what? It's time to start doing that."



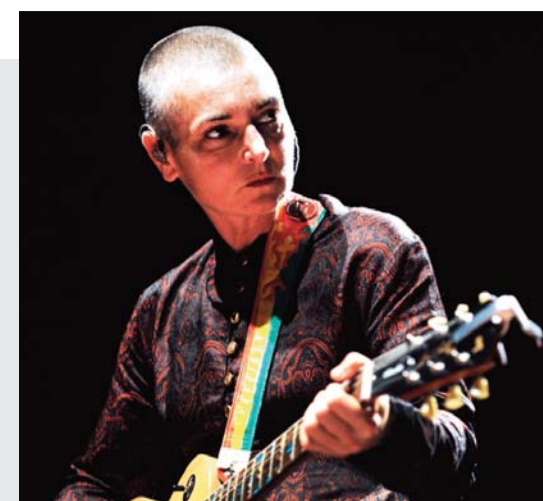
Sinead O'Connor safe after overdose post

Sinead O'Connor is safe and receiving medical treatment, Irish media reported yesterday, after a message about her taking an overdose was posted on the Irish singer's Facebook page. O'Connor, who topped the charts around the world 25 years ago with a cover of Prince's song "Nothing Compares 2 U", posted the message on her officially verified Facebook account while she said she was in a hotel in Ireland under another name. "I have taken an overdose. There is no other way to get respect," the post read.

"If I wasn't posting this, my kids and family wouldn't even find out. I'm such a rotten horrible mother and Person, that I've been alone. Howling crying for weeks. I'm invisible. I don't matter a shred to anyone." A spokeswoman for O'Connor said they had no comment to make at the moment. Quoting Irish police, the Irish Examiner newspapers said O'Connor had been located "safe and sound" and is receiving medical assistance. A spokesman for the Irish police said they cannot comment on individual cases. O'Connor, who once famously tore up a picture

of Pope John Paul II on the "Saturday Night Live" television show, declaring "Fight the real enemy!", cancelled her most recent tour in July due to illness. — Reuters

This August 11, 2013 file photo shows Irish singer Sinead O'Connor as she performs in Lorient, France during the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient. — AFP



In this Nov 18, 2015 photo, Elizabeth Stanley and Andrew Samonsky pose for a photo in New York.

Musical 'The Bridges of Madison County' hits the road

On tour this winter is a Broadway musical about the one that got away, in more ways than one. "The Bridges of Madison County," with a superb score by Jason Robert Brown, starts an eight-month US tour on Saturday that features both a story about a lost soul mate and a chance at musical redemption. The Broadway show that sparked it - starring Kelli O'Hara and Steven Pasquale - closed after just 137 performances in 2014 but the show's staging and Brown's Tony Award-winning songs get another chance to soar.

"I'm very grateful that these audiences around the country will get a much more direct experience of the piece," Brown said. "To be able to really say, 'This is the way we meant the show to be' is really gratifying." The musical is about a four-day love affair in 1965 between a world-weary photographer on assignment to shoot a series of covered bridges in Iowa, and an Italian-American housewife. It's based on the Robert James Waller novel, which was made into a 1995 movie starring Meryl Streep and Clint Eastwood.

The touring version kicks off - appropriately - in Iowa on Saturday at the Des Moines Civic Center and then travels to California, Texas, Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Missouri, Arkansas, Florida, North Carolina, Tennessee, Michigan, Minnesota, South Carolina and Washington, D.C. It stars Elizabeth Stanley, who was last on Broadway as a repressed anthropologist in the revival of "On the Town" and Andrew Samonsky, who was in the recent Broadway revival of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood." "When the auditions came up, it was one of the few times where I allowed myself to want a job," said Samonsky, from Ventura, California. "I think those simple, honest musicals really speak to me. I mean, I love a big, fancy song-and-dance show, too, but when you can do a musical like this, it's really special."

For Stanley, the tour will be a kind of homecoming: She was born and raised in Iowa until moving at age 10. She's also looking forward to seeing friends at stops in Nashville, Tennessee, and Houston, Texas, as well as playing The Fabulous Fox in St. Louis, the closest stop to her parents now in Camp Point, Illinois. Like Samonsky, Stanley saw "The Bridges of Madison County" when it was on Broadway and both were fans of Brown's music after hearing his mid-1990s abstract musical "Songs for a New World." (Says Samonsky: "I can definitely geek out being in this show.")

Brown, who will be conducting the shows in Des Moines, at Los Angeles' Ahmanson Theatre and at the Kennedy Center, said the whole touring cast impressed him with their ability to get genuine and personal. "No one was going to get into this tour who was not able to draw from the ground, pull something from inside of them. It's a really committed cast, which is important. It's a show that asks for a lot of emotional connection." Director Bartlett Sher, who has handed the day-to-day directing duties to Tyne Rafaeli, his frequent collaborator, said "The Bridges of Madison County" may have struggled on Broadway but the road will prove different. "I think this is just the beginning of a really long life for a show which I think will be around and performed pretty consistently for decades to come," he said. — AP

'Call me Francesco': New film recalls pope's darkest moments

The challenges faced by Pope Francis during the dark years of the Argentine military dictatorship (1976-1983) are portrayed in a new film, "Call Me Francesco", which will have its world premiere at the Vatican today. The film tells the story of the life of Jorge Mario Bergoglio, from his youth to his election as head of the Roman Catholic Church in March 2013. During the 98-minute biopic the audience gets a glimpse into Bergoglio's life as a young man in Buenos Aires, surrounded by Peronist friends and with a girlfriend he came close to proposing to before getting his calling to become a priest.

As the military dictatorship's grip tightens on the country, Bergoglio, now provincial superior of the Jesuits in Argentina, must walk the thin line between staying out of the generals' firing line and trying to protect those being persecuted, as friends, colleagues and acquaintances are "disappeared" and tortured around him. "I didn't want to present him as a saint or make a hagiography," said the film's director, Daniele Luchetti. "That was the danger. I wanted to respect the history of Argentina and so I listened to all suggestions without trivialising anything."

Luchetti's film focuses on the character of Bergoglio, depicting

him as an authoritarian but sensitive personality. At the height of the dictatorship's repression, it shows the future pope hiding persecuted students in his seminary, helping people escape to exile and consoling the so-called "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo" whose children were "disappeared" by the dictatorship. Luchetti insists he has produced a realistic and balanced portrayal of the characters and events covered by the film. Those who still believe Bergoglio could have done more to speak out against the regime may not agree as the film largely steers clear of the issue of Church silence in the face of the dictatorship's use of torture and extrajudicial killings to silence dissent.

'Huge responsibility'

In one of the film's key scenes, Bergoglio is portrayed as obeying orders from above when he withdraws Jesuit protection for two priests, Daniel Iorio and Francisco Jalics, after they refuse to stop their work in one of the city's poorest areas. The Jesuits fear the dictatorship will associate the priests with the extreme-left movement. Without protection the men are kidnapped and tortured and, in real life, later accuse the future pope of betraying

them. Pope Francis, 78, is played by two Latin American actors: the Argentine Rodrigo de la Serna, ("The Motorcycle Diaries") in his period as a priest and bishop, and the Chilean Sergio Hernandez ("Gloria") as the pontiff in his more recent years.

"It was a huge responsibility because of the historical and spiritual dimension of the character," said Serna, adding that while playing the role he got in touch with his own spiritual side and "learned how to pray". The Italian production cost \$15 million (14 million euros) and was filmed over 15 weeks in Argentina and Italy. "We want 'Call Me Francesco' to be a film of reference," said producer Pietro Valsecchi, who commented that they did not have the Vatican's blessing to make the film.

"No one gave us advice or read the script," he said. "It was my biggest challenge to date but in the end they watched it in the Vatican and they liked it." "Call me Francesco" is the second film to be made about Francis. "Francisco, el padre Jorge," by Spanish director Beda Docampo Feijoo and starring Argentine actor Dario Grandinetti was released in Argentina in September. — AFP



Italian director Daniele Luchetti poses during the photocall of his movie "Chiamatemi Francesco, il Papa della gente" (Call me Francis, the Pope of the People) in Rome.

— AFP photos



(From left) Producer, Pietro Valsecchi, Argentinian actor Rodrigo de la Serna, Italian director Daniele Luchetti and Chilean actor Sergio Hernandez pose during a photocall of the movie "Chiamatemi Francesco, il Papa della gente" (Call me Francis, the Pope of the People).

Alex Proyas apologizes for white cast

"Gods of Egypt" director Alex Proyas apologized for casting mostly white actors in his upcoming film based on Egyptian mythology. The filmmaker and studio Lionsgate issued separate statements on Friday acknowledging the controversy sparked by the release of the film's first trailer two weeks ago, featuring a cast led by Scottish actor Gerard Butler and Danish actor Nikolaj Coster-Waldau. Australian director Proyas, who was born in Egypt, said it is clear that their casting choices should have been more diverse.

Lionsgate also said they are deeply committed to making films that reflect the diversity of their audiences and pledged to do better. "Gods of Egypt" also stars actor Chadwick Boseman, an African American, and actress Elodie Yung, who is French-Cambodian. "We recognize that it is our responsibility to help ensure that casting decisions reflect the diversity and culture of the time periods portrayed," read Lionsgate's statement, first reported by Forbes. "In this instance we failed to live up to our own standards of sensitivity and diversity." This self-aware response, issued well in advance of the film's Feb. 26

release, comes on the heels of recent white-washing controversies surrounding films like "Exodus: Gods and Kings" and "Aloha."

"Selma" director Ava DuVernay took note of the anomaly on Twitter. "This kind of apology never happens - for something that happens all the time," wrote DuVernay on Friday. "An unusual occurrence worth noting." Ridley Scott's "Exodus: Gods and King," which featured Christian Bale as Moses and Joel Edgerton as Ramses, was criticized last year for its predominantly white cast. Director Ridley Scott brushed off condemnations at the time, blaming the model of financing Hollywood movies for his choices. He told trade publication Variety that he would not be able to get the film financed by casting "Mohammad so-and-so from such-and-such."

"It's always art against economics," Scott told The Associated Press last December. "As soon as you're at the higher levels of budgeting, you've got to get the film made and the only way to support the film is to have actors who can support the budget." Earlier this year, Cameron Crowe's romantic dramedy "Aloha" drew similar public disapprovals for casting Emma Stone as a

character who is supposed to be of Chinese, Hawaiian and Swedish descent. In a June message posted on his website, TheUncool.com, Crowe explained that the character was always intended to be someone frustrated that she lacked outward signs of her ethnicity, while also apologizing to those who felt it was "an odd or misguided" choice.

"So many of us are hungry for stories with more racial diversity, more truth in representation," added Crowe. "I am anxious to help tell those stories in the future." Hollywood has a long tradition of casting white actors as other ethnicities, but lately the practice is not going unchallenged and is often put under scrutiny as soon as castings are announced, as was the case with Joe Wright's "Pan," where Rooney Mara played Tiger Lily. An outright apology prior to a film's release in the case of "Gods of Egypt" is perhaps a sign that currents are changing. As Blacklist founder Franklin Leonard noted on Twitter, Proyas' and Lionsgate's apologies are both "too little, too late" and also "kinda remarkable." — AP



In this March 9, 2009 file photo, director Alex Proyas attends a special screening of his film 'Knowing' in New York. — AP

'Hunger Games' beats 'Good Dinosaur,' 'Creed' at box office

Despite some mighty competition, Katniss and her crew dominated the box office once again. "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2" held on to its first-place spot in its second weekend in theaters, earning \$51.6 million to top "The Good Dinosaur" and "Creed," which both debuted Wednesday, according to Rentrak estimates on Sunday. The fourth and final installment in Lionsgate's highly successful series has grossed \$198.3 million to date.

Audiences had their pick of genres over the crowded Thanksgiving weekend. Disney and Pixar's animated dinosaur movie took second place, bringing in \$39.2 million Friday through Sunday, while "Creed," a new entry into the Rocky Balboa canon, came in third with \$30.1 million. Families accounted for 79 percent of "The Good Dinosaur's" audience. The film, which cost a reported

\$175 million to \$200 million to produce, grossed \$55.6 million in its first five days in theaters. "This Pixar group has just been so consistent with high-quality storytelling that appeals to all audiences. This weekend's result is another testament to the way they do things," said Dave Hollis, executive vice president of distribution for Disney. "We are off and running in a great way and also set up for a very, very long run."

"Creed," meanwhile, came out swinging. The critically acclaimed Ryan Coogler-directed film focuses on the character of Apollo Creed's son, Adonis (Michael B. Jordan) who wants his own shot in the ring with the help of Rocky Balboa (Sylvester Stallone). The film cost \$35 million to make and has earned \$42.6 million over five days. Its audience has been largely male and over age 25, according to exit polls. "This is a movie that played broadly every-

where. You expect it to do well in the big markets and even the medium-size markets, but the small markets were just fantastic," said Jeffrey Goldstein, executive vice president of domestic distribution for Warner Bros. "The boxing element really resonates."

Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Rentrak, said the indie sensibilities, critical response and stellar cast has made "Creed" the movie to see right now. "This is a movie that's going to go the distance," Dergarabedian said. James Bond film "Spectre," with \$12.8 million, and "The Peanuts Movie," with \$9.7 million, rounded out the top five. "Victor Frankenstein" was not so lucky. The \$40 million revival of Mary Shelley's monster classic, starring James McAvoy and Daniel Radcliffe, proved lifeless in theaters, earning just \$2.35 million from Friday to Sunday. Awards hopeful "The Danish Girl," starring Eddie Redmayne as the transgender

artist Lili Elbe, also opened in four theaters with a solid \$185,000.

No records were broken this Thanksgiving weekend, but that's more of a sign of a crowded slate than the health of the box office, Dergarabedian said. "Rankings are not as important this weekend as how these films can play for the long haul," he said. "I haven't seen this crowded of a marketplace in years. ... I don't know how anyone would have time to see everything." Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak. — AP



This photo provided by Lionsgate shows, Liam Hemsworth, left, as Gale Hawthorne, Sam Claflin, back left, as Finnick Odair, Evan Ross, back right, as Messalia, and Jennifer Lawrence, right, as Katniss Everdeen, in the film, "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2."

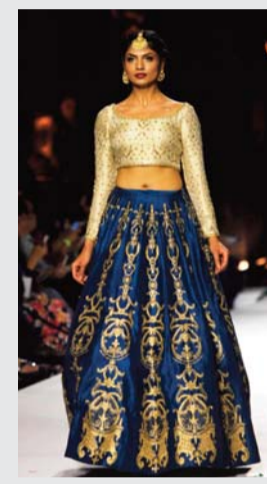
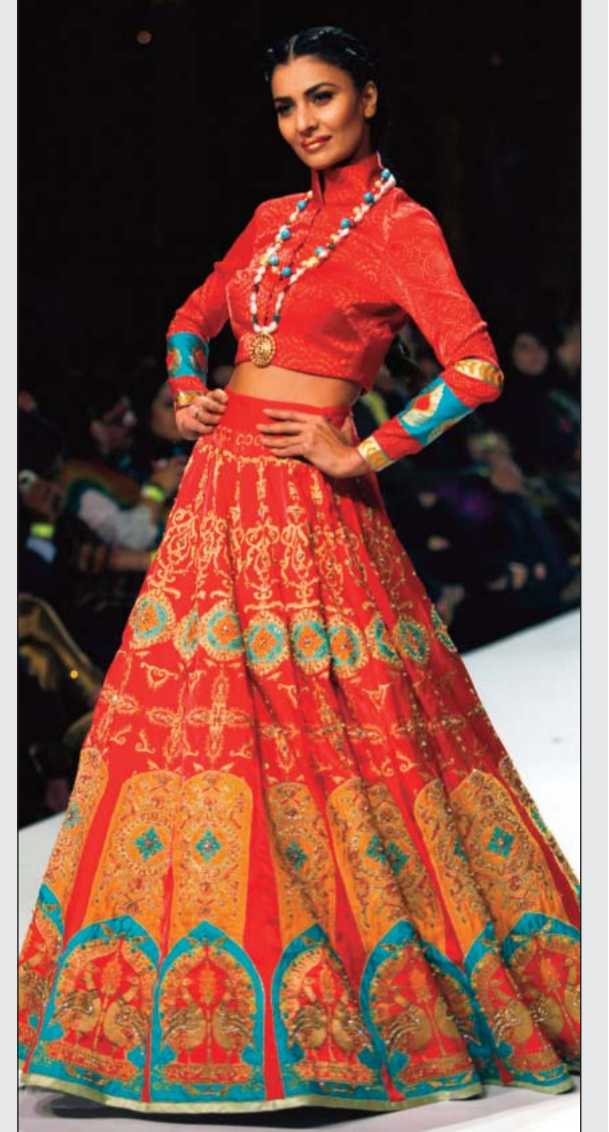


This photo provided by Warner Bros Pictures shows Michael B Jordan, right, as Adonis Johnson and Sylvester Stallone as Rocky Balboa in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures', Warner Bros Pictures' and New Line Cinema's drama "Creed," a Warner Bros Pictures release.



This image released by Pixar-Disney shows a scene from "The Good Dinosaur." — AP photos

Pakistan Fashion Week



Models present creations of designer Wardha Saleem.



Models present creations of designer Shehla Chatoor.



Models present creations of designer Elan during the second day of 'Fashion Pakistan Week Winter Festive 2015', Sunday in Karachi, Pakistan. — AP photos

Baume & Mercier hosts a special pop-up exhibition in Kuwait

As part of the diverse celebrations taking place on the occasion of Baume & Mercier's milestone 185th Anniversary, the elite watchmaker is hosting a pop-up exhibition at Kuwait's popular shopping destination, 360 MALL. Held in collaboration with Baume & Mercier's exclusive retail partners in the country, Morad Yousuf Behbehani Group, the exhibition takes place between the 19th of November and 19th of December. Visitors at the month-long exposition will

get the chance to discover novelties and classic timepieces from Baume & Mercier; exquisite models that have led the brand to amass 185 years of rich legacy and a distinct place in every connoisseur's heart. Baume & Mercier's dedication to values of comfort, elegance, harmony, warmth, and timelessness are set to shine at the exhibition and will have guests spending some special moments as they discover the Universe of Baume & Mercier.



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2015

Sinead O'Connor safe after overdose post

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Runners wearing Santa Claus costumes take part in the second Athens 'Santa Claus Run' in city's center yesterday.— AFP

British Museum to launch exhibit of Egypt's 'sunken cities'

The British Museum is planning its first major exhibition of underwater archaeology with a showing of artifacts from two of Egypt's "sunken cities." Officials said yesterday that the six-month exhibit set to open in May will contain 300 objects from cities that have been submerged at the mouth of the Nile River for more than 1,000 years. The museum said the items have been unearthed off the

coast of Alexandria in Egypt over the past 20 years. Earlier attempts to find articles from the cities of Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus, which were swallowed by the sea, had failed. Officials said the finds at the two cities are transforming the understanding of the relationship between ancient Egypt and ancient Greece. The exhibit will be supplemented with other objects from the river delta.— AP



Royal Garden of Light



People visit the Royal Garden of Light in Warsaw, Poland, Sunday. The Royal Garden of Light, with plants and decorations made of thousands of colorful diodes, is a winter exhibition that brightens up the garden surrounding the Wilanow Palace, seen in the background.— AP

Beloved Russian filmmaker **Ryazanov** dies

Eldar Ryazanov, one of the most popular film directors of the Soviet era whose comedies captured the unique absurdities of life under Communism, died yesterday aged 88, family and colleagues said. Arguably Russia's favourite director, millions know his iconic films from the 1960s and 1970s off by heart. "My grandfather has passed away," Ryazanov's grandson Dmitry Troyanovsky wrote on Facebook. Ryazanov suffered from poor health in recent years, including a stroke this month. His website has been overflowing with fans' tributes.

Born in Samara, a city on the Volga river, Ryazanov landed a spot at Moscow's prestigious Gerasimov film school (VGIK), starting his studies as the country was still deep in World War II fighting. He became an

overnight sensation after his first feature film "Carnival Night", a 1956 comedy in style of American musicals that was an instant box office hit with more than 45 million viewers. Ryazanov's best-known comedy, "Irony of Fate", features a man who wakes up on New Year's eve in another city in a woman's home by mistake—something made possible by Soviet Union's mass housing construction of identical apartment blocks all over the country.

The film is still shown on television every year on New Year's eve and was made into a popular spin-off. Ryazanov continued working long after the Soviet Union fell apart, though his later films never achieved the same cult status. He also taught at the VGIK film school and was one of

the founders of Kinosoyuz, a Russian cinema guild. Along with other guild members, Ryazanov signed a letter in 2014 opposing Russia's military meddling in eastern Ukraine following Moscow's annexation of the Crimean peninsula. "He made life less cruel and hopeless, more spiritual and, last but not least, more funny," film critic Andrei Plakhov wrote, calling Ryazanov "a great artist and citizen." — AFP

A picture taken on December 20, 2006 shows Soviet film director Eldar Ryazanov attending the presentation of his movie 'Andersen. A Life Without Love' in St Petersburg.— AFP

