



Kuwait urges effective intil response to climate change



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SAUDI KING CALLS FOR SYRIA, YEMEN SOLUTIONS



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RIYADH: (From left) GCC Secretary General Abdullah Al-Zayani, Saudi Crown Prince and Interior Minister Mohammed bin Nayef, Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Al-Thani, HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Omani Deputy Premier Fahd Al-Said, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Bahraini King Hamad Al-Khalifa, United Arab Emirates Vice President, Premier and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed Al-Maktoum and Saudi Deputy Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammed bin Salman pose for a photo during the 136th Gulf Cooperation Council summit in the Saudi capital yesterday. — KUNA

RIYADH: Saudi King Salman called for political solutions to the wars in Syria and Yemen, while condemning "terrorism" at the opening of an annual Gulf summit in Riyadh. Leaders from the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states began two days of talks in the Saudi capital, at the same time as unprecedented discussions by the Syrian opposition at a luxury hotel in another part of the city. Salman voiced "support for a political settlement which guarantees the territorial integrity of Syria," after nearly five years of war.

On behalf of the Gulf states - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - Salman also called for "a peaceful solution" in neighboring Yemen. For more than eight months, Gulf military forces have been fighting in Yemen to support President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi's government alongside an array of local anti-rebel forces. The coalition has been trying to push Iran-backed Shiite Houthi rebels and allied troops from territory they occupied. Jihadists have taken advantage of the chaos to expand their presence in the country.

In his opening address at Diriyah Palace, Salman said all countries have a responsibility to combat terrorism and extremism. "Islam rejects and abhors terrorism, because it is a religion of moderation and tolerance," said the monarch. Saudi Arabia itself has seen an upsurge of attacks claimed by the Islamic State group over the past year, against minority Shiites and members of the security forces.

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani told the summit that recent attacks in several countries prove that this "odious scourge" is a threat to everybody. "The international community must, more than ever, intensify efforts to combat terrorism in all its forms and eliminate its real causes by all means," the emir said.

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Youth and Sports Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah meet the press at the Jaber Stadium yesterday. — KUNA

JABER STADIUM OPENING 'A NEW START FOR SPORTS'

By Athoob A Alshuaibi

KUWAIT: As preparations at Jaber Stadium continue in full swing ahead of its opening on Dec 18, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and Minister of Information and Youth and Sports Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah held a press conference and a tour of the stadium for the media yesterday.

"Everyone is working to prepare for the opening celebrations that match the status of this stadium and the dear name it carries - of late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may God rest his soul. I hail the efforts of the organizing committee and the institutions of the whole country for their unlimited cooperation with the private sector and national companies for providing sup-

port and assistance, as this is considered a national celebration. It is the new start for sport in Kuwait," Sheikh Salman said.

Sheikh Mohammed then took the attendees on a tour around the stadium, giving a detailed explanation of security, regulatory and media preparations. He said trials were held with the help of more than a 1,000 people experimenting with access to avoid problems that may result from overcrowding. He added families and people with disabilities will be kept separate.

Sheikh Mohammed, who is heading the organizing committee for the celebrations, said the opening will be broadcast on several TV channels, and will consist of three parts - a national operetta, a fireworks display and a friendly match between the Kuwait national team and a group of international players.

GULF RETAILER DUMPS TRUMP PRODUCTS

PETITION SEEKS TO BAN TRUMP FROM UK • TRUMP TO MEET BIBI

TIME NAMES MERKEL 'PERSON OF THE YEAR'

NEW YORK: Time magazine yesterday named German Chancellor Angela Merkel as its "Person of the Year 2015," hailing her leadership for navigating debt and refugee crises that threatened to tear the European Union apart. "For asking more of her country than most politicians would dare, for standing firm against tyranny as well as expedience and for providing steadfast moral leadership in a world where it is in short supply, Angela Merkel is Time's Person of the Year," wrote editor Nancy Gibbs.

Time described her as de facto leader of the European Union who this year steered the union through two existential crises - Greek bankruptcy and the migrant crisis. Throughout the eurozone crisis, when a battered continent looked to Berlin, Merkel preached fiscal discipline and kept a tight grip on the nation's purse strings, soothing the angst of a thrifty populace. But it was this summer that the usually cautious leader took the biggest gamble in her decade in power by throwing open Germany's doors to asylum seekers - owning an issue set to define her legacy.

One million asylum seekers are expected in the country by the end of December as conflicts rage in Syria, the Middle East and Afghanistan. Yesterday, Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert, warmly welcomed the accolade, announced by Time on American breakfast television.

Continued on Page 13

DUBAI: A leading Gulf retailer has stopped selling products from the brand owned by US presidential hopeful Donald Trump after his controversial call to bar Muslims from entering the United States. But Trump's prestigious golf club being developed in Dubai appeared to have withstood, so far, calls to boycott the property tycoon, as his UAE partner sought to separate business from his political statements.

Dubai-based Lifestyle said it was pulling Trump-branded products from its chain of home decor stores across the region, because it "values and respects the sentiments of all its customers." "In light of the recent statements made by the presidential candidate in the US media, we have suspended sale of all products from the Trump Home decor range," Lifestyle chief executive Sachin Mundhwa said in a statement yesterday. The chain - which has 160 stores across

the Middle East, Africa and Pakistan - sells a collection of Trump products that reportedly includes room decor, bath accessories, lighting, decorative mirrors, and jewelry boxes.

Trump, the leading candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, made the provocative remarks after last week's shooting that left 14 dead in California by a Muslim couple said to have been radicalized. Dubai's DAMAC Properties, which has partnered with the billionaire to build Trump International Golf Club, distanced itself from his remarks but signalled that the business tie-up was unaffected. "We would like to stress that our agreement is with the Trump Organization as one of the premium golf course operators in the world," senior vice president Niall McLoughlin said in a statement.

Continued on Page 13



HAMOURIA, Syria: Men evacuate the body of a girl from under the rubble yesterday following airstrikes on this town in the eastern Ghouta region, a rebel stronghold east of the capital Damascus. At least 11 civilians, including four children, were killed, but it was unclear if the raids were carried out by Russian or regime aircraft. —AFP

REBELS LEAVING HOMS AREA UNDER TRUCE DEAL

OPPN IN UNITY TALKS IN RIYADH

HOMS, Syria: Syrian rebels began evacuating the last opposition-held district in Homs yesterday, paving the way for President Bashar Al-Assad's regime to take full control of the country's third-largest city. Hundreds of Syrian rebels and civilians were leaving the Waer district under a rare local ceasefire agreed with the

regime at the start of December. Some 2,000 rebels and their families will abandon Waer in Homs - once dubbed the "capital" of Syria's revolution - to travel to other opposition-held areas, after enduring a three-year siege that saw the district heavily shelled.

Continued on Page 13

MP QUESTIONS RELEASE OF 'ABDALY' SUSPECT

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Abdullah Al-Turajji yesterday sent a series of questions to Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah about the arrest and release of an Iranian suspect after intervention from influential people. Turajji asked the minister if Iranian national Abduredha Haider Dahkan was arrest-

ed by security authorities over suspected intelligence activities and released later after the intervention of a former security official who is a member of the ruling family, and a former lawmaker.

The lawmaker said if the answer is positive, he demanded to know the reasons for his release and the names of people who mediated for his release.

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KUWAIT URGES EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO COUNTER CLIMATE CHANGE

KUWAIT CALLS FOR GLOBAL ACTION TO PROTECT MARINE ENVIRONMENT

PARIS: Kuwait has urged all the relevant parties to cooperate for an effective international response to combat the phenomenon of climate change, reiterating its full support to the efforts seeking to conclude a "fair, ambitious and compatible" agreement in line with the principles of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The call was made on Tuesday by Kuwait's Environment Public Authority (EPA) Director General Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah in his address to the ongoing 2015 Paris Climate Conference (COP21), held in the French capital.

The high-profile participation in the conference reflects great interest by the international community in the issue of climate change that has come to form obsession for the planet, Sheikh Abdullah said. He added that the State of Kuwait shares the same concern regarding the harmful impact of the phenomenon, and acknowledges that it requires utmost cooperation among all parties for an international effective response under the UNFCCC umbrella.

Kuwait, like many other countries, is exposed to the harmful effects of climate change, which have been aggravating over the past period, increasing temperature, rise of sea water levels and the submersion of some small Kuwaiti islands, Sheikh Abdullah said. He noted that Kuwait as a major oil producer and exporter will be negatively affected by the measures of a cli-

mate agreement that call for cutting emissions. However, the country is working hard to counter the phenomenon on various levels through voluntary initiatives and activities, he said.



The Third Secretary Bashar Al-Muwaizri

Kuwait is so keen on avoiding any rise of emissions, and in the meantime making much efforts to reduce them through the national development plans and projects to achieve sustainable development, he said. Most of these projects cover energy and transport, sources of about 95 percent of emissions produced by Kuwait. The EPA Director General pointed out that Kuwait is

working persistently to shift to a diversified low-emissions economy to protect its natural resources and realize sustainable development. For the Paris conference to be a success, its outcome has to be in line with the proposals of the involved countries through the negotiation process, as well as the outcomes of the UN Climate Change Conference in Durban.

Sheikh Abdullah concluded by reiterating the necessity of establishing a permanent mechanism for assessing the negative economic and social effects on the developing countries when implementing the measures to counter climate change. The COP 21, this year presided by France, is part of the UNFCCC which seeks to rein in damaging greenhouse gas emissions that are wreaking havoc on international weather systems, causing much suffering in poorest countries hit by drought and flooding. Negotiators expect the conference to yield the most significant international agreement yet to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and impede the effects of climate change.

Protect marine environment

In another development, Kuwait has called on world countries to cooperate and abide by relevant international conventions for protecting marine resources and environment. Speaking at a special UN General Assembly session on "Ocean and Law of the

Sea", the Third Secretary Bashar Al-Muwaizri urged the optimal use of modern technology to make the best use of marine resources and secure the sustainability of marine environment.

He welcomed the UN Secretary General report on Ocean and the Law of Sea which stated that "the core of sustainable development are the strong interlinkages between sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection." Al-Muwaizri noted that the link between sustainable development and marine environment protection had been clearly stated in the recently UN-adopted 17 Sustainable Development goals of 2015-2030.

The fourteenth goal calls for "conserving and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development," he said. Al-Muwaizri stated that the piracy, organized crimes and terrorism are representing a huge threat to the ships, which transport nearly 90 percent of the world trade. He reiterated Kuwait's condemnation of different kinds of attacks on ships and its commitment to the UNSC resolution No 2246 of 2015 which criminalizes piracy and urges all world countries to cooperate to bring those involved in such crimes to justice. He stated that Kuwait signed the UN law of the sea in 1986 and ratified chapter 11 of the law in 2002. —Agencies

News

In brief

Kuwait 'role model for intellectual objectives'

CAIRO: Director General of the Arab Thought Foundation Henry Kuwait said that Kuwait is a role model for intellectual morals and objectives. He was speaking to KUNA after the conclusion of a conference organized by the foundation over "The Arab Integration: Challenges and Horizons." He said the Kuwaiti participants had great contributions to the deliberations of the conference in addition to the research papers introduced. Kuwait said the Arab Thought Foundation was looking forward to further its relations with Kuwait which has a unique democratic experience. He said the youths had great impact on the deliberations of the conference, workshops and dialogue sessions, reflecting their role in construction and development. Asked about ways of confronting extremism and terrorism, Kuwait said they were caused by economic, political, education, intellectual, cultural and social conditions, citing huge number of unemployed in the Arab region.



Kuwaiti Ambassador to Mexico Samih Jawhar Hayat and Mexican Foreign Minister Claudia Massieu pose for a photo.— KUNA

Kuwait and Mexico discuss means of cementing ties

WASHINGTON: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Mexico Samih Jawhar Hayat and Mexican Foreign Minister Claudia Massieu discussed bilateral ties and means of promoting them in all fields. During the meeting held at headquarters of the Foreign Ministry in the Mexican capital, late on Tuesday, the two sides reviewed the relations between the two countries in political, economic, commercial, cultural and investment fields, the Kuwaiti embassy said in a statement to KUNA. They expressed the two countries' keenness on enhancing strategic cooperation in all domains and continuing talks on regional and international issues, the statement added. The two sides dealt with the latest developments in the region, efforts exerted to boost security and stability, endeavors of the international community in this regard, and regional and international issues of mutual interest, it noted. The ambassador conveyed congratulations of First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to the minister on winning the award of "Women of the Year 2015".

Kuwait lifts ban on live birds imports from UK, Germany

KUWAIT: Kuwait has lifted ban on imports of live birds and chicken from Germany and Britain after determining that they are free of bird flu. Faisal Al-Hasawi, Acting General Director of the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fisheries, said in a statement yesterday that poultry imports must meet terms, set by the livestock department at the authority, also according to regulations of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the veterinary laws, adopted by the State of Kuwait and other member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Al-Hasawi affirmed that imports of livestock infected with communicable diseases and epidemics will be turned back to the exporting origin and that expenses for shipping the products back would be covered by the importer. He further explained that lifting the ban on importing birds and poultry from Britain and Germany was based on WHO reports affirming that these livestock in the two countries are free of the bird flu and that no more cases have been recorded.

Third Edition of Gulf Defense Aerospace Exhibition opens

KUWAIT: Deputy Army Chief General Abdullah Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah on Tuesday inaugurated the Third Edition of Gulf Defense Aerospace Exhibition at the International Fairground. Attracting 118 international exhibitors, the two-day event is being held under the official patronage of Kuwait Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. Speaking to KUNA, Abdullah said the aim of the exhibition is to translate the vision of His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to turn Kuwait into a regional economic and commercial hub into reality by means of supporting organizing companies whether inside or outside Kuwait. He voiced thanks and appreciation to the minister of defense for his sponsorship of the event, and hailed the high-level organizing of the two previous editions. He added that such exhibitions would contribute to the sharing of experience and information among the participants. On his part, the Defense Ministry's Armament Chief Major General Lafy Al-Azmi said the exhibition features several activities, mainly an equipment show.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij visits KUNA's office in UK

LONDON: Board Chairman and Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation visited KUNA's office in the British capital where they were briefed on work and necessary needs to facilitate the mission of the staff. Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij urged the office staff to communicate necessarily with the Kuwaiti embassy in London and follow up on news that interests KUNA's activities so as to strengthen the agency's regional and international status. He also advised them to abide by credible, impartial and transparent news. Both KUNA's offices overseas and the Kuwaiti embassies seek to serve the State of Kuwait, he said. Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij called for benefiting from latest technology when dealing with news for speed of news transmission in Kuwait, urging the staff to diversity news in all fields and prepare reports to enrich the agency. On his part, Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UK Khaled Abdulaziz Al-Duwaisan held a dinner banquet in honor of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij in which the delegation, the embassy staff and members of KUNA's office in London took part.



ZAIN ORGANIZES 'CAREER CREATIVITY' SEMINAR FOR EMPLOYEES

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, recently organized a training seminar for its employees entitled 'Career Creativity' at its main headquarters in Shuwaikh. The seminar was delivered by Dr Tariq Al Habib - Professor and Consultant of Psychiatry, and Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab Federation of Psychiatrists. Zain organized this training seminar as part of its Human Resources Development strategy, which mainly focuses on preparing professional and talented leaders by providing them with the necessary tools and motivational programs that will see them exert higher levels of productivity and efficiency.

The training seminar was attended by over 100 employees, where Dr Al Habib touched on several crucial topics on various aspects related to career creativity development, which would eventually help them increase their productivity rates and creativity factors. He also outlined the characteristics and personality features of creative employees and how they can work within a dynamic environment while developing their creativity and boosting their productivity.

As one of the leading economic institutions in Kuwait, Zain is constantly keen to highlight the pivotal role the Human Resources discipline plays in advancing employees' skills. Human Capital is one of Zain's key organizational pillars, and by organizing similar programs, the company is reaffirming its commitment to highlighting staff achievements while providing platforms for them to learn more and grow more successfully within the organization. Zain is constantly looking for the characteristics of an ideal work environment for its employees, while offering similar training and development initiatives to ensure that its human resources receive guidance to discover new areas of creativity within themselves.

KUWAIT HOPES TO EXPAND COOPERATION WITH IACA

VIENNA: Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaacoub Al-Sanaie has stated that Kuwait is interested in establishing strong relations with the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA). In statements to KUNA and the Kuwait TV upon arrival in Vienna to attend the fourth session of IACA's Assembly of Parties, scheduled December 9-11, Al-Sanaie said Kuwait has joined the IACA and is following up the its programs. Kuwait seeks to boost its cooperation and experience exchange with the IACA with a view to helping it fight corruption effectively, he said. Minister Al-Sanaie is heading a Kuwaiti delegation to the IACA fourth assembly. The International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) is an international organization based in Laxenburg, Austria. The Academy provides a new, holistic approach to anti-corruption education and research, delivers and facilitates anti-corruption training for practitioners from all sectors of society, and provides technical support and assistance to a wide variety of stakeholders.

It offers standardized and tailor-made trainings, academic degree programs, opportunities for dialogue and networking, anti-corruption think-tank and benchmarking activities. The fourth session of IACA's Assembly of Parties will start on 9 December will concentrate on the Academy's overall policy as well as key issues regarding the work program, financing, and elections in the Board of Governors. More than 200 delegates from Parties and Observers to the IACA Agreement are expected. Two side events are also on the agenda for 10 December. The first is a panel discussion on the nexus between corruption and security with Sarah Chayes from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace as well as senior representatives from UNODC, the OSCE, and others. It is co-sponsored by the United States' State Department. The second side-event aims to raise awareness on the importance of anti-corruption education and training, particularly in view of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Participants will have a chance to hear from IACA students and faculty about how the organization's programs and activities have impacted them and the communities they serve.—KUNA

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KUWAIT HAS EXCEPTIONAL FISCAL STRENGTH: FITCH

AT 8.3 PERCENT OF GDP, DEBT IS AMONG THE LOWEST

KUWAIT: With an exceptional fiscal strength, Kuwait has one of the lowest breakeven oil prices among Fitch-rated oil-exporting countries, said Fitch Ratings, one of the world's most recognized credit rating agencies. At a forecast 463 percent of GDP, its forecast end-2015 sovereign net foreign asset position is the largest of any Fitch-rated sovereign, noted the New York-based agency in its expanded report on Kuwaiti economy. At 8.3 percent of GDP, debt is among the lowest. Forecast fiscal and external surpluses will continue to add to the country's existing buffers, if at a lower rate than historically, the report added.

Current spending cut

"We forecast that the current account surplus will fall to five billion dollars (4.1 percent of GDP) in 2015, interrupting a history of double-digit surpluses since 1999. We expect the current account balance to edge down further before returning to double digits in 2017, as the domestic economy picks up while oil prices languish. Both the private and public sectors are net external creditors." Terminating the fiscal surpluses as "dented," the agency said: "Under our baseline oil price assumptions, we expect the general government to maintain a surplus of KD 1.8 billion (4.9 percent of GDP) in FY '15, down from KD eight billion in FY '14, including investment income, but before transfers to the sovereign wealth fund. This is driven almost entirely by a

fall in oil-related receipts."

On current spending cut, the report said that in response to the deterioration in revenues, the government is implementing cuts to current expenditure as per its FY '15 budget passed in July. Goods and services expenditure was down 50 percent and subsidy payments have fallen as a result of the lower oil prices in the first six months of the FY; the wage bill has remained roughly unchanged. As for capital spending maintained, the report expected government capital spending to rise to KD2.2 billion in FY15 from KD 1.8 billion in FY '14. "Capital spending is budgeted higher than last year, and implementation has been on an improving trend since FY '11, reflecting a more stable political environment and the government's commitment to its KD 32.4 billion development program," it said.

Rating sensitivities

Addressing structural weaknesses, the report noted that most structural indicators are weaker than for peers. "Doing Business, Human Development and World Bank governance indicators are below the 'AA' and GCC medians. Geopolitical risk affects the whole region." With the economy heavily dependent on oil, which accounts for around 50 percent of GDP, and 60-70 percent of fiscal and external revenues, a limited economic policy toolkit restricts the authorities' ability to respond to severe oil price volatility, it said.

As for rating sensitivities and its relation to structural change, the report pointed out that ratings could benefit from improvements in structural weaknesses, such as a reduction in oil dependence or a strengthening of the business environment, governance and economic policy framework. "A further, sustained fall in oil prices could negatively affect the ratings, although the low breakeven oil price and substantial fiscal and external buffers provide significant flexibility," it said.

Regarding local currency rating, the Long-Term Local-Currency IDR is 'AA', the same as the Foreign-Currency IDR. The bulk of government revenues and a large amount of sovereign assets are denominated in USD. "Kuwait's substantial external financing flexibility means it has little need for domestic finance," it noted, adding that the country ceiling is 'AA+', one notch above Kuwait's Foreign-Currency IDR, reflecting low transfer and convertibility risk, with few restrictions on capital movements.

Fitch expects the Brent oil price to average USD 55/b in 2015 and 2016 and USD 65/b in 2017, down from USD 65/b in 2015 and USD75/b in 2016 at the time of the previous review. Nevertheless, "we still see Kuwait's fiscal and external position as exceptionally strong, with vast accumulated savings, and fiscal and external breakeven Brent prices estimated at USD 48/b and USD 50/b, respectively, for 2015."

It carried on saying that Kuwait is

"ample assets to cover medium-term spending needs." Kuwait's parliament passed the FY15 budget in July 2015 at an oil price assumption of USD 45/b and budget plans for a deficit of KWD 8.2 billion, it said, noting that the budget envisages a "drop in oil and other revenues of 40-50 percent compared with FY14 outturns, and a 10-20 percent reduction in all current spending except wages and salaries (which are planned slightly higher than in FY14, although lower than in the FY14 budget). Budgeted capital spending remains almost unchanged from last year's budget, and is planned 27 percent higher than last year's outturns."

Identical decline

The report continues that in the first six months of 2015, revenues of Kuwait fell by 45 percent yoy relative to last year's outturns, mirroring an identical decline in oil revenues. Expenditures have dropped by more than 20 percent, driven by sharp falls in expenditure on goods and services and in miscellaneous expenditure items. By contrast, it argued, capital spending is increasing and compensation expense is roughly constant. "The drop in non-oil revenues is largely driven by the postponement (with the consent of Kuwait) of Iraq's payments into the UN Compensation Fund until 2017." There are around KD 1.4 billion of payments remaining, which could be settled in 2-3 years. "The government is considering fis-

cal reforms for implementation for the FY16 budget. These include the introduction of VAT and a business profit tax, an expenditure cap below forecast FY15 levels, and a reform that would standardize pay across the public sector and constrain growth of the government wage bill. The authorities are also considering a gasoline subsidy reform for implementation in early 2016, following partial elimination of diesel and kerosene subsidies in early 2015," noted the report.

However, it said, implementation of capital spending has continued to improve in the first six months of FY15, with the share of the FY budget spent in the first six months 5pp higher in FY15 than in the past five years on average. This continues a trend of rising implementation since FY11, "and our forecast implies that spending over the whole of FY15 will be 95 percent of what had been budgeted."

Finally, the report expected non-oil growth to be two percent in 2015 and accelerate to four percent in the years beyond, after an increase of 1.2 percent in 2014. "Capital spending will contribute more than half of overall growth. Consumption will also be a steady contributor. Growth of bank credit to the private sector had moderated to 4.3 percent in September 2015, from an average of six percent in the previous year, and the value of local ATM and POS transactions in 3Q15 was up 10 percent yoy in 3Q15." —KUNA

KUWAIT PROMOTING DIALOGUE AMONG THE ASIAN COUNTRIES

KUWAIT: Kuwait plays a vital role in promoting cooperation and encouraging dialogue among the Asian countries, Head of the Kuwaiti parliament committee MP Faisal Al-Shaye said. Al-Shaye made the remark during the 8th Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) that kicked off yesterday in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. The three-day conference aims to "promote peace, reconciliation and dialogue in Asia" by bringing together parliamentary presidents and representatives of 22 countries to discuss and exchange views on current issues of politics, economics, finance and social affairs.

Al-Shaye said that the 1st Asian Cooperation Dialogue Summit was held in Kuwait in 2012, as directed by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to draw a financial blueprint to face economic challenges in Asian countries. The Kuwait Summit also ended with the establishment of a program that funds developmental projects in non-Arab Asian countries; Kuwait contribu-

tion to that program was \$300 million, he pointed out.

His Highness the Amir, since his ascending the throne in 2006, has



Head of the Kuwaiti parliament committee MP Faisal Al-Shaye

been keen on enhancing ties with the Asian countries; he made a number of visits where he held official talks and signed bilateral agreements on econ-

omy with some Asian countries, Al-Shaye noted. He added that the Asian continent has become a world center for economic revival due to its developmental projects that have become a "true inspiration" to many nations; nonetheless, Asia is still facing religious, ethnic and border security challenges that hinder its progress.

Hence, Al-Shaye stressed the importance of achieving peace and security in the region through solidarity, reconciliation and open dialogue, reiterating the primary interest for Arabs and Muslims worldwide: finding a solution for the Palestinian crisis. In achieving stability in the region, Cambodian Prime minister Hun Sen also emphasized the importance of collaborating international efforts to combat ISIL and establish sustainable development through peaceful co-existence. The Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation to Cambodia includes: Secretary MP Dr Ouda Al-Rowaie, treasurer MP Saleh Ashur, MP Dr Khalil Abdullah, MP Saif Al-Azmi and MP madhi Al-Hajri. — KUNA

EGYPT LAUDS KUWAIT'S ROLE IN PROMOTING MODERATE ISLAM

CAIRO: Egyptian Minister of Awqaf Dr Mohammad Mokhatar Jomaa stated that the Kuwaiti scholarships and financial support to the non-Egyptian Al-Azhar students would have great role in promoting the moderate Islam teachings worldwide. The support offered by the Kuwaiti Office for Charitable Projects in Cairo, a subsidiary to the Kuwaiti Zakat House, to Al-Azhar students aims to foster moderation and counter extremism and terrorism. Jomaa told KUNA on the sidelines of a function to honor graduates and outstanding performing graduates of Al-Azhar University of 2015.

The event is organized by the Kuwaiti Office for Charitable Projects in Cairo under the patronage of Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb and the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Kuwait Salem Al-Zamanan. Jomaa described that Kuwaiti scholarship program for non-

Egyptian Al-Azhar University, Sunni Islam's most prestigious seat of learning, as a remarkable investment in Muslim human resources to spread moderation.

The Egyptian minister also spoke highly about the deeply-rooted and strong Egyptian-Kuwait relations and fruitful cooperation particularly in the culture and science domains. For his part, Ambassador Al-Zamanan reiterated Kuwait's eagerness to spur moderation across the world through the support offered by government and non-government organizations, at the forefront of which the Zakat House. He praised the Kuwaiti Office for Charitable Projects in Cairo's support to the students coming to Egypt from across the Muslim world to study in Al-Azhar University. Al-Zamanan underlined that this help would promote the moderate message of Islam across the globe. —KUNA

CENTER OF LABOR REHABILITATION A 'CORNERSTONE FOR DEVELOPMENT'

KUWAIT: Secretary General of Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) Fawzi Al-Majdali stressed that the center of developing, training and rehabilitating national labor is a cornerstone for economic and social development in Kuwait. Al-Majdali, who celebrated conclusion of the first phase of the program late on Tuesday, said the project, the first of its kind in the Arab world, aims to contribute to attracting national workers in the private sector after rehabilitation of national cadres to start work in all commercial and industrial sectors.

This national achievement has been attained upon directives of His Highness the Amir to support and care for youth as they are the State real wealth, he added, indicating that proportion of recruiting national workers will rise

to restructure Kuwait's labor market and demographic status. On her part, the head of Manpower and Government Restructuring Program's (MGRP) training department, Iman Al-Ansari, said the program concluded its first phase successfully.

The important project aims to develop and train national cadres and pave way for increasing the State Gross national product (GNP), she added. Among its goals are training, changing patterns of work and providing proper jobs to all people through setting up a world-class training center, she noted. There is dire need for an independent center to meet development needs and train national cadres, she said. The center carries out latest training methods, including remote training. — KUNA

STATE BODIES COOPERATE TO CATER FOR STUDENTS

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Subaih said that her ministry is involved in an effective cooperation with all state bodies to serve students and harness the skills of talented youngsters. In press statements on the sidelines of her inauguration of the new premises of the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, Al-Subaih said that the new building would serve students of 36 schools.

She pointed out that the new building, overhauled through cooperation between the ministry and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), includes labs and workshops to provide students with ample opportunities to move beyond the classroom and get hands-on experience. She unveiled that the ministry plans to open new branch for the SACGC in Al-Jahraa soon to get closer to students nationwide.

For his part, Director General of KFAS Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin pointed out that the facility would help enrich the students' learning experience. He noted that highly-qualified teachers would supervise and offer support to the students during their visits to the new center. He wished to expand fruitful cooperation with the ministry of social affairs and labor in the coming period. Meanwhile, SACGC Chairman Barak Al-Sabeeh noted that the new building includes workshops to cater for the talented and creative youngsters, especially inventors who want specialized workshops and labs to develop their ideas and inventions. It also includes a training facility to hone the skills of youth and encourage them to launch their own small enterprises, he said. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Fire broke out in a 10-storey building in Salmiya. The fire started on the seventh floor. Two fire teams rushed to evacuate the residents and to battle the blaze. No injuries were reported.

—By Hanan Al-Saadoun

CONDOLENCES

Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief,
management and staff convey their
deepest condolences to

Muhannad Ameen Hamdan

on the sad demise of his

Mother

May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on her



RIYADH: GCC leaders meet during the 36th Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit, in the Saudi capital Riyadh yesterday. Gulf monarchs began arriving in Saudi Arabia for an annual summit, facing challenges including plunging oil revenues, the war in Yemen, pressure for peace in Syria and signs of regional divisions. — KUNA

MEDIA OFFICIALS UNDERScore SIGNIFICANCE OF PARTICIPATION IN GCC SUMMITS

RIYADH: A number of officials in the external media sectors in the GCC information ministries have asserted the significance of participating in the 36th GCC summit - highlighting the cohesion between the people of the Gulf and achievements made by the GCC states in various fields. In separate statements with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) at the media and exhibition centers agreed on the importance of the role of these exhibitions in the dissemination of culture, knowledge and arts of the Gulf states and highlight the customs, traditions and heritage of the Gulf region.

They stressed keenness of their countries to participate in such events to highlight the achievements made by the GCC states and people during the GCC march. Director of the

Conferences and Events department in the Ministry of Culture and Information Khaled Al-Shamsan told KUNA that the ministry has harnessed all its potentials for the service of the Gulf, Arab and international media men.

He added that the media center will be a meeting point for journalists from news agencies, newspapers and correspondents of radio and television stations and Gulf, Arab and international news outlets a matter which contributes to the strengthening of cooperation between such media bodies in highlighting the events of the summit at the Gulf, Arab and international levels. For his part, Chairman of the conference Committee of the external media sector Yahia Mufarreh expressed the ministry's keenness to take part in such events

and made easy the missions of the journalists to cover the summit.

He explained that the Ministry of Information displayed at this media center a number of books issued by the ministry annually in an effort to provide clear and transparent message about Saudi Arabia reflecting its cultural renaissance. On his part, Head of Media Exchange Department in the Foreign Media Department of the Ministry of Information of Oman Nasser bin Hamad Al Mukhaini said that the participation of the Omani Ministry of Information in the media center of the summit included display of a number of books that talk about the process of documenting the Sultanate's modern achievements.

In turn, Director of media coverage in the UAE news agency WAM Salem Ahmed Al-Nuaimi expressed keenness of the agency to highlight the achievements of the United Arab Emirates to the peoples of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), referring to the issuance of an annual book highlighting accomplishments of the country and its statistics. For his part, director of the research and evaluation department in the Gulf Cooperation Council media sector in Kuwait's Ministry of Information Mohammad Al-Ajmi stressed keenness of the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Sabah on the need that Kuwait be present at a high level in the media center.— KUNA



Essam Al-Hashwy

BANO PROFESSIONAL MIX A HORECA 'SILVER SPONSOR'

KUWAIT: Preparations for the Horeca Kuwait 2016 exhibition are steadily progressing and attracting more companies. The event will provide a golden opportunity to scientifically exchange expertise that would match the local market needs and future expansion plans. The exhibition is being organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Co. It will be held at the Badriya Ballroom, Messilah Jumeriah Hotel from January 18-20, 2016.

In this regard, Bano Professional Mix Company's general manager Tawfiq Essam Al-Hashwi announced the company's intention to take part in the exhibition as a Silver sponsor, especially after the remarkable success Horeca had achieved over the past years. Bano Professional Mix supplies quality raw materials, equipment and machinery for Chocolate, Bakery, Pastry, Ice cream industries. Al-Hashwi said that BANO had over 20 years experience in the Middle East - namely in Kuwait and GCC markets.

"Persistence, confidence and the experience in this industry is our drive for the constant success with our 'Passion for Excellence', which places us on the map of attainment", Al-Hashwi said. Notably, Horeca 2016 has so far attracted over 60 companies due to display their products in the presence of a group of international experts and chefs and a large group of company and hotel owners.

COMMON MARKETS CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASE INTER-GCC TRADE

RIYADH: A recent economic report prepared by the GCC General Secretariat unveiled that the GCC customs union and the Gulf common market have contributed to the rise of inter-trade of the GCC countries from \$15 billion in 2002 to \$124 billion in 2014. The Secretariat reviewed (in the report prepared on the occasion of the 36th summit that kicked off yesterday) the efforts of the GCC countries to remove tariff barriers between them with regard to their products and having them exempt from customs duties and treat them as national goods.

The report said the GCC states have set up in 1983 a free trade area and customs union in 2003, in addition to the adoption of a number of laws, regulations and policies that facilitated the flow of movement of goods, services and means of transport between Member States and have encouraged national products, besides the role of the GCC private sector in the development of exports.

It pointed to the GCC's decision in December 1991 to

allow the institutions and production units in the Member States to open offices for commercial representation in any Member State, in addition to allowing import and export of national products among GCC member states without the need for a local agent. The report pointed to a number of important decisions which contributed to the support of inter-trade including the decision that was issued in 1993 on the establishment of the Commercial Arbitration Centre for the GCC countries and the establishment of another Standardization Organization of the Gulf Cooperation Council in 2003.

Kuwait work-paper

Meanwhile, a Kuwaiti work-paper presented at a forum in Doha on Tuesday urged enforcing legislation to boost the auditing capabilities of government monitoring bodies to ensure a non-recurrence of global financial meltdowns such as the one in 2008. The work-paper was presented at the 5th joint forum between European and Arab Audit

bureaus and institutions by Abdulaziz Al-Rashidi, a Kuwaiti auditor who works for the State Audit Bureau in Kuwait. In it he postulates Kuwait's perception for future roles audit bureaus can assume in bringing attention to potential financial risks and crises that might have devastating global ramifications such as the ones that shook the financial world in 1866 and in 2008.

He reviewed the causes for these crises, making a strong case for firmer global monitoring of financial circles. Due to the financial and economic shake-up in 2008, he noted in his paper, numerous countries, including Kuwait, went back to examine capital markets rules and regulations with emphasis on the banking sector, to enact legislations that hedge against the recurrence of a global economic crisis. Further, he called for closer association among world audit bureaus and institutions and the establishment of early warning mechanisms that could in time prophesy with accuracy the onset of a global economic or financial crisis. — Agencies

CBK TO TAKE PART IN ELITE REAL ESTATE CONFERENCE



Amani Al-Weraa

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced its intention to take part in the Elite Real Estate Conference due December 14-19. The event is organized by Eskin Global Exhibitions Group and will be held at Hall number 8, the International Fair Grounds in Mishrif. CBK said that its participation is meant to introduce its banking services to the exhibition visitors. Commenting on this, CBK's Assistant General Manager for PR and Publicity, Amani Al-Weraa said that the bank's main aim is to support various real estate and economic activities. She explained that the exhibition will be a good opportunity to introduce the bank's services, such as various loans, outstanding finance services and other banking services to the visitors.



KUWAIT: KFAED Deputy Director-General Hesham Al-Waqayan and Rwanda's Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Claver Gatete seen during the signing ceremony. — KUNA

KFAED, RWANDA INK KD 4.5 MILLION LOAN

KUWAIT: A loan agreement was signed yesterday between the Republic of Rwanda and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), whereby the latter will extend a loan of KD 4.5 million (approximately \$15.3 million) to help finance the Nyagatare-Rukomo Road Project. The loan agreement was signed by Rwanda's Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Claver Gatete and KFAED Deputy Director-General Hesham Al-Waqayan, the fund said in a press statement. The aim of the Project is to enhance the economic and social development of the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Rwanda, and to participate in linking Rwanda with the Republic of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it added.

The Project consists of construction works to attain an all-weather asphalted road between Nyagatare and Rukomo with an approximate length of 73 kilometers, and a width of 7 meters (in addition to 1.5 meters for shoulders on each side), and consisting of two lanes (one lane for each direction). The Nyagatare-Rukomo Road Project will be completed by mid-2019, according to the statement. The loan represents the 10th agreement by the KFAED, as the Fund already made nine loans to the Republic of Rwanda with a total amount of KD 25.1 million for the financing projects in transport, irrigation and education sectors. The Fund also provided grants and technical assistance amounting in total to about KD 93,000 to the Republic of Rwanda. — KUNA

60 HEALTHCARE CENTERS IN KUWAIT BUILT ON 'VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP' CONCEPT



Kuwaiti researcher in the field of social responsibility Dr Aroob Al-Sayyed Al-Rifae

AMMAN: Nearly 60 local healthcare centers were built in Kuwait based on the concept of "voluntary partnership" that has been engrained within the society, a Kuwaiti researcher in the field of social responsibility Dr. Aroob Al-Sayyed Al-Rifae said yesterday. Al-Rifae made this remark to KUNA at the conclusion of the 14th Arab Conference for Modern Trends in Hospital Management that was held in Amman from December 6 to 8. The conference focused on the importance of partnerships between public and private sectors in sustaining healthcare services. Al-Rifae presented a worksheet at the event that highlighted voluntary partnership that begun in Kuwait in 1981 between public and pri-

private sectors, away from any commercial gain.

Good doers and some private companies have worked together to support healthcare services in the country by building nearly 60 healthcare centers at a value of KD 150 million. Voluntary partnership, she explained, stems from embedded sense of patriotism and humanity that has a sole purpose of serving the people without getting anything in return. The conference tackled strategic approaches to hospital management between private and public sectors and discussed healthcare funding and expenses for sustainable healthcare services in the Arab world. — KUNA

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of the day



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti folkloric band performing traditional Kuwaiti fishermen's songs. —KUNA



Al-Qabas

THE JOKER MINISTER

By Qais Al-Usta

In the parties system of government, cabinets are formed in which ministers move from one post to another in political changes based on the party's interest. Those ministers normally have gone through many battles and issues until they gained their voters' confidence, then their party's. In Kuwait, for more than 55 years, some ministers went from one ministry to another, and some of them remained in the Cabinet for a full decade, but they carried out their duties well.

Our current Cabinet receives complaints from everyone, even from some of its members, and despite that it is still holding fast and does not resign to be re-formed - rather some of its members are reshuffled in a way that no one understands. A minister is moved from finance to commerce to oil, and another is moved from information to health to electricity. If this Cabinet is one of geniuses, the situation can be acceptable, but all indicators point to it being of humble performance, that moves forward with an issue and stumbles with 10 others.

Maybe our Cabinet knows it will not be held to account and it's comfortable, and it does not suffer a lot in getting creative elements. Our government does not fear high waves, fierce grillings or embarrassing questions because it will remain in place for a long time. This situation is worrisome, and indicates that accountability is missing, the reward and punishment principle is a failed theory and hard work has no effect, and all what we need is the satisfaction of some influential people as this is a blessed satisfaction that will protect you against dark roads.

Our government is beautiful and its ministers are more beautiful, their statements are excellent and creative, most of them repeat the word you misunderstood - maybe we need an interpreter, or I do not know, but the questions remain about the future of the Cabinet and some of its ministers. Safiya is dead, but if she was still around, she would have screamed saying "your Cabinet is impossible, the government of fascinating decisions". Was the message delivered? I hope so.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

EQUATE SPONSORS 8TH AMERICAN SAFETY ENGINEERS CONFERENCE



EQUATE CEO receiving ASSE VIPs at EQUATE booth.

KUWAIT: EQUATE Petrochemical Company, Kuwait's first international joint-venture in this industry, sponsored the 8th International Health, Safety, Security, Environment (HSSE) & Loss Prevention Professional Development Conference & Exhibition 2015 organized by the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) - Kuwait Chapter. With the aim of interacting with top HSSE professionals and exchanging world-class best practices to form a lasting partnership, EQUATE has been the proud sponsor of this conference and an active participant for the past few years.

EQUATE President & CEO Mohammad Husain said, "At EQUATE, we firmly believe that HSSE excellence is not only about adherence to applicable policies and guidelines. Essentially, it is based on having an integrated culture through the innovative capabilities, overall reliability and progressive vision of our qualified human capital. They represent the foundation of growth and development for the benefit of all individuals and communities. Throughout the years, our 'Partners in Success' role in the various activities by ASSE has been a reflection of EQUATE's Mission, Vision & Values in all sectors to achieve overall sustainability." During the conference, EQUATE's contribution included the participation of its President & CEO Mohammad Husain in an Executive Panel Discussion on HSSE with ASSE President Michael Belcher, as well as senior executives from Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) and Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC). In addition, EQUATE Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S) Leader Mohammad Al-Shamary and EH&S experts will be delivering presentations throughout the conference.

Established in 1995 as Kuwait's first international joint-venture in this industry, EQUATE Petrochemical Company (EQUATE) embodies its "Partners in Success" slogan through the partnership between Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), The Dow Chemical Company (Dow), Boubyan

Petrochemical Company (BPC) and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC). Commencing production in 1997, EQUATE is currently the owner and single-operator of several fully integrated world-class petrochemical units, within the Greater EQUATE joint-venture, that annually produce over 5 million tons of the highest quality grades of Ethylene, Polyethylene (PE), Ethylene Glycol (EG), Polypropylene (PP), Styrene Monomer (SM), Paraxylene (PX), Heavy Aromatics (HA) and Benzene (BZ). The products are marketed throughout the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Europe. Alongside with being a leading industrial organization, EQUATE dedicates its utmost commitment and care to overall sustainability wherever it operates in cooperation with public and private bodies, including employees, the society and customers, in all relevant fields, such as human development, environment, education, health and public awareness. www.equate.com

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Crime

Report

'Contractor' employs wife, sister and brother's wife as prostitutes

KUWAIT: Ahmadi detectives arrested a 'contractor' who used his wife, her sister and the wife of his brother for prostitution purposes. Most of those who frequented his "brothel" were adolescents, one of whom was aged 15 years. The suspect told police about a friend who helped him in his illicit activity. A security source said that detectives learned about an Arab contractor who had turned his flat in Fahaheel into a brothel, so detectives placed him under surveillance, until they were sure he was making his wife and sisters-in-law work as prostitutes and made agreements with clients through the Internet. Detectives then asked an undercover agent to contact the contractor, who set a date, and after he went there, he gave detectives a signal and the place was raided. When they searched it, 130 condoms were found, 30 of them used. The contractor, the three women aged 23, 27 and 36, and another man were arrested. The contractor said he makes the clients choose from the women and charged KD 30 per session.

Truck batteries stolen

Detectives arrested an Egyptian who stole truck batteries in Fahaheel and Ahmadi, after police received many complaints. The suspect said he worked with two partners and other persons who bought the stolen goods. A security source said the Egyptian was placed under surveillance until his arrest. He told police he stole truck batteries at night, and told police about a warehouse in Fahaheel that was full of stolen batteries.

Islamic teacher jailed

The Cassation Court sentenced a citizen who works as Islamic education teacher to seven years in jail for torturing his daughter by beating and burning her. The child's father asked the Appeals Court to uphold his daughter's rights, as well as the rest of his children who suffered a lot of torture and negligence from their mother. He said she beat them, broke their bones, bit and burned them out of a grudge against him.

Citizens exchange blows

Salmiya police charged two citizens with exchanging blows in front of a cafe, after one of the motorists blocked the car of the other, and had to wait for an hour. A security source said that a person who left a cafe found his car blocked by another and could not move, and had to wait for the owner of the other car who came after an hour, and matters escalated to an exchange of words and blows. Police went to the scene and took the two to the police station. —Al-Rai



Al-Anbaa

BANKS' HISTORY IN KUWAIT

By Dr Saleh Mohammed Al-Ojairi

In 1942, a group of British investors opened the first bank ever in Kuwait under the name of 'The Shah British Bank', which was opened in the merchants' market before it later built its own small headquarters in Safat Square, then changed its name to 'The Imperial Bank', then changed it a third time to become 'The British Bank in The Middle East'.

In 1952, a group of local merchants proposed to the then Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah suggesting establishing a national bank, provided the bank would be 100 percent Kuwaiti. They got the Amir's approval and a location was allocated for the bank on New Street (Al-Share' Al-Jadeed). The founders requested hiring a manager with a good banking experience to head and run the new bank and asked for providing the bank with hard currency consisting of US dollars and pound sterling. Accordingly, the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem ordered providing the bank with a million US dollars and a million pounds sterling as the capital of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK). Ever since, more and more banks were established in Kuwait and here we are today enjoying various services provided by a large group of good-reputed and prestigious local and international banks.

—Translated by Kuwait Times



GULF BANK CELEBRATES UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank recently celebrated the 26th Anniversary of Universal Children's Day and the Convention on the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The celebration, for the second year, took place at Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH). Children's Day was instituted by the United Nations to promote mutual exchange and understanding among children and to initiate action to benefit and promote the welfare of children.

To mark the day, Gulf Bank organized a day for the children at Bayt Abdullah. The day involved an entertainment program with

activities organized by "Make Meaning Kuwait" of Tamdeen Entertainment. The group conducted a skills workshop with the Gulf Bank team, teaching the children and their parents how to make their own soap and how to color their own pieces of gypsum magnets, with a personal design to commemorate the day. These activities provided the opportunity to spend some quality time together away from the familiar hospital routine.

A number of Bayt Abdullah children along with their families took part in the fun day and enjoyed the workshop. The program

also included a competition between children and Gulf Bank volunteers, creating an exciting and interactive ambience. Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice, is a paediatric palliative facility dedicated to the treatment of children with cancer, it is sponsored by the generous contributions and donations from the community at large. Gulf Bank's support for Bayt Abdullah is part of its corporate social responsibility program of helping those in need. To learn more about Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility program, please visit its website at www.e-gulfbank.com.kw.



Fueled by rage:
Palestinian lone wolf
attacks continue

AFGHAN PRESIDENT ARRIVES IN ISLAMABAD TO TALKS



A combination made with pictures taken on November and December 2015 shows foreign tributes at a makeshift memorial near the Bataclan concert hall in tribute to the victims of November 13 terror attacks in Paris. (From top left) A flag of South Korea, a flag of Portugal, a Romania scarf, a flag of Spain, a child's drawing with the national flag of France (L) and the national flag of United States, a flag of Germany, a flag of Scotland, a placard bearing the Puerto Rico national flag and reading "Puerto Rico with France", and a British Union Jack flag. — AFP

THIRD PARIS BATACLAN GUNMAN IDENTIFIED

MOTHER RECEIVES 'MARTYR' TEXT AFTER ATTACK

PARIS: French police have identified the third gunman from the deadly attack on the Bataclan concert hall in Paris, Prime Minister Manuel Valls said yesterday, with the attacker's father telling AFP he "would have killed him" if he had known. "The last time I saw him was two years ago before he went (to Syria)," Said Mohamed-Aggad said. "I have no words, I only found out this morning. I have to pull myself together."

He said that if he had known "I would have killed him myself beforehand". French national Foued Mohamed-Aggad, 23, had travelled to war-torn Syria with his brother, Karim, and a group of friends from the eastern French city of Strasbourg at the end of 2013, police sources said. The family tipped off police after the Paris attacks when his mother received a text message from Syria saying he had died as "a

martyr", iTele reported.

"He died on the November 13 with his brothers," the text message read, according to the mother's lawyer, Francoise Cotta. "She was terror-struck by the idea that he could have been one of suicide attackers at the Bataclan," Cotta added, and went straight to the police. "If she had not helped like that they might never have been able to identify Foued," the lawyer said.

The two other attackers who killed 90 concert-goers at the Bataclan-Omar Ismail Mostefai, 29, and former Paris bus driver Samy Amimour, 28 — had also been in Syria. Two of the gunmen, including Mohamed-Aggad, blew themselves up with suicide belts packed with explosives after the killing spree, while the third was shot by police who stormed the venue with hundreds of people still inside. All three are now known to have been French nationals.

On police radar

Mohamed-Aggad was identified at the end of last week after his DNA was matched with his family, the police source said. Cotta said his mother offered the sample herself. A neighbor in the small town of Wissembourg, north of Strasbourg, told AFP that Mohamed-Aggad had lived with his mother until his departure for Syria. He had also been on the radar of French security services as a potential extremist, a judicial source said, and had probably travelled to Syria on false papers.

Most of the group from Strasbourg who went to Syria with him were arrested in the Meinau area of the city on their return in May 2014 and are all still in custody on terrorist charges. But Mohamed-Aggad stayed on, according to a source close to the investigation.

His brother Karim Mohamed-Aggad said he was the last of the group to "succeed in getting away" and that "he was worried about his brother who stayed on after his wife arrived", fearing he would be "held to account for the departure of the rest of the group".

Others 'killed fighting'

Investigators believe two brothers from the same group who left Strasbourg in 2013, Mourad and Yassine Boudjellal, were killed fighting for IS in Syria. When questioned on their return, the remaining members claimed they had been horri-



An un-located picture posted in 2014 on his facebook account shows Foued Mohamed Aggad, who has been identified as the third bomber involved in the attacks at Paris's Bataclan music hall, police sources said. — AFP

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ified by what they had witnessed in Syria and had begun returning gradually to France from February 2014. All claimed to have gone to do humanitarian work but prosecutors believe they intended to fight for IS, which claimed responsibility for the carnage in Paris. A huge manhunt is still going on for Belgian Salah Abdeslam, whose brother Brahim blew himself up at the Comptoir Voltaire cafe. Police suspect the Strasbourg group had been recruited by Mourad Fares, 31, considered a key online recruiter for IS. Fares, who France's Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve has described as a "particularly dangerous individual" — was arrested in August 2014 in Turkey before being handed over to the French authorities.—AFP

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PRESS: KHATAMI MEDIA BAN UNCONSTITUTIONAL

TEHRAN: An Iranian newspaper editor who defied a national reporting ban on former president Mohammad Khatami hit back at threats of prosecution yesterday, saying that such restrictions were unconstitutional. Mahmoud Doaei, managing editor of the Ettelaat daily, was indicted on Tuesday by a media court for using a picture of two-time reformist president Khatami in Saturday's edition of the paper. Ettelaat also translated remarks attributed to Khatami in an interview he gave to Lebanon's As-Safir newspaper.

The ruling on Khatami, issued by Tehran's prosecutor, amounts to a domestic media blackout and is linked to Iran's disputed presidential vote in 2009 in which Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was re-elected. Khatami, whose tenure was marked by unsuccessful

attempts to open up Iran to the West, was among prominent figures who said the ballot was fraudulent and refused to recognise Ahmadinejad's victory.

Despite the indictment Doaei used a front page editorial to write an open letter to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani suggesting that officials behind "subjective" directives, rather than editors, should be prosecuted.

"Ettelaat daily won't accept it," Doaei wrote, saying the media ban was not based on law or regulations and calling on Rouhani to tell Iran's judiciary to "stop this unconstitutional procedure." "We will continue our rational process of reporting on the gentle, popular and distinguished character of the revolution," he said of Khatami, calling him an "old friend" of Imam

Ruhollah Khomeini, Iran's first supreme leader.

Publication of the editorial was swiftly followed by the judiciary saying Doaei, an official media representative of current supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, had given a commitment not to breach the order. "The managing director of Ettelaat has been summoned to the special clerics court. He was investigated and a signed pledge has been obtained from him," the judiciary spokesman said in a statement.

The apparent undertaking from Doaei was at odds with the rest of his editorial. He said restrictions on coverage of Khatami breached the ex-president's rights as well as going against freedom of the press. "Any authority or dependent agents who go against the constitution, removes personal freedom or deprives

people of their rights under the constitution should be barred from service for one to five years, or face up to three years in jail," Doaei said.

After the 2009 election, Khatami echoed claims by reformist opposition leaders Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karubi that the vote was rigged. Mousavi and Karroubi, who ran against Ahmadinejad, have been under house arrest since February 2011, and pictures of them are barred while reports describe them as "heads of the sedition", the name given by the regime to deadly protests that erupted after the vote. Khatami repeatedly called for the release of Mousavi and Karroubi but following the media ban on his name and picture he is referred to only as "head of the reformist government". — AFP

IRAQI FORCES SHORE UP GAINS IN RAMADI

BAGHDAD: Iraqi forces cemented their hold on newly gained territory in Ramadi yesterday, after scoring a breakthrough in their fight against the Islamic State group by retaking a large part of the city. The jihadists, who have lost ground in Iraq over the past few months, meanwhile claimed a suicide bombing that killed eight people near a Shiite mosque in eastern Baghdad.

Backed by sustained air strikes from the US-led coalition, elite troops recaptured Ramadi's southwestern neighborhood of Al-Tameem on Tuesday. The advance was hailed as a significant step in efforts to retake Ramadi, a key IS hub 100 kilometers of Baghdad, and fragment the jihadists' self-proclaimed "caliphate".

As the counter-terrorism forces that led the offensive prepared their next move, local forces from Anbar province moved in to hold recaptured territory. Local police "moved from Habbaniyah to hold the land in Al-Tameem following its liberation," a local councillor in the nearby Khaldiyah area, Ali Dawood, said. The force consists of around 500 fighters, a military source said.

One of the main tasks for Iraqi forces is to clear the area of bombs planted by IS, a favored tactic of the jihadists that means they can kill security personnel and civilians long after they have withdrawn from an area. Cars and trucks laden with tons of explosives and driven by suicide attackers were a key weapon in IS's shock capture of Ramadi in mid-May.

The coalition said in a statement that four such car bombs were destroyed in air raids on Tuesday, as well as a plant where they were manufactured. A total of four coalition strikes in the area also destroyed IS positions and weapons and impeded the movements of jihadist fighters, the statement said. Iraqi forces spent months cutting off IS supply lines around Ramadi and slowly closing in on the city by taking suburban areas one after the other. "The liberation of Al-Tameem was very important and... enables other forces to advance toward the centre of the city of Ramadi," said Sabah Al-Noman, the spokesman for Iraq's counter-terrorism

forces. He and other military sources said Iraqi forces had also retaken the Anbar Operations Command, a key facility which lies at a fork of the Euphrates River in the city.

Concern over civilians

Speaking in Baghdad, the top US official in the international anti-IS coalition, Brett McGurk, said the presence of civilians in Ramadi will require a cautious approach as the operation moves forward. "There are still civilians inside Ramadi-Daesh is not allowing any civilians to leave," he told reporters, using an Arabic acronym for IS.

"They're holding civilians as hostages, and as human shields, and so we want to do this in a very careful and deliberate way," he said. An Iraqi brigadier general involved in the Ramadi operation said civilians who are able to move are being urged to head to Humayrah, a staging ground controlled by Iraqi forces on the southern edge of Ramadi. He admitted that it was difficult for those residents still inside the city to leave. "Daesh (IS) does not allow Ramadi residents to move... those who try to leave the city are executed," he said. The spokesman for the counter-terrorism forces however said he had no knowledge of any civilians remaining inside the city. "The information that we have is that there are no civilians inside the city of Ramadi," Noman said. IS overran large parts of Iraq in June 2014, including major territory in Anbar, which stretches from the borders with Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to the western approach to Baghdad.

Shifting parts of Ramadi had been held by anti-government fighters since the beginning of 2014, but IS did not succeed in completely overrunning it until May of this year. There was no reaction to the developments in Ramadi from IS on its usual social media channels but the group claimed a suicide attack that killed eight people in the capital Baghdad yesterday. The blast near a Shiite mosque in the eastern Obeidi area also wounded at least 19 people, security and medical officials said. — AFP



RAMALLAH: In this Nov 29, 2015, file photo, Palestinian protesters throw stones at Israeli troops during clashes following a demonstration to demand the release of bodies of Palestinian attackers being held by Israeli authorities, in the West Bank city. — AP

FUELED BY RAGE: PALESTINIAN LONE WOLF ATTACKS CONTINUE THREE MONTHS ON, VIOLENCE DEFIES DEFINITION

RAMALLAH: On a recent morning, Palestinian taxi driver Shadi Kaseeb dropped off his two oldest children at school before picking up his first passenger - a seemingly routine start to his day. Before noon, the 31-year-old driver was dead, shot by two Israeli civilians after police said he ran toward them with a kitchen knife. Five days later, in the same West Bank spot, Shadi's younger brother Fadi rammed his car into two Israelis at a bus stop near a Jewish settlement before being shot dead.

The brothers were among dozens of Palestinians gunned down by Israeli troops or civilians since September in what Israel says were attempted or actual Palestinian attacks. The attacks, mainly involving cars or knives, have killed 19 Israelis.

Now in its third month, this round of Israeli-Palestinian violence has defied definitions and easy explanations. Almost daily, ordinary Palestinians - many in their teens and without political affiliations - carry out what are essentially suicide missions. Yet most attacks appear to be spontaneous, lacking a guiding hand or clear tactical goal. Political and personal motives appear to overlap.

The violence is playing out in one of the darkest periods of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with Israeli rule over Palestinians well-entrenched. Hopes for a peace deal establishing a Palestinian state are at a low after Israelis this year re-elected their hard-line government, which continues to build Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

The killing of dozens of Palestinians by Israeli fire in recent months, including in stone-throwing clashes, has further stoked popular anger. Some rights activists blame what they say is a "shoot-to-kill" atmosphere in Israel, fueled by incendiary comments by leading Israeli politicians and security officials.

Revenge factor

Militant groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad are further stirring anti-Israeli sentiment among Palestinians, particularly on their widely watched TV stations. Amateur video of perceived incidents of excessive use of force by Israel is shared on social media, ubiquitous among young Palestinians.

Revenge is also a factor - some assailants seek retribution for family members killed by Israeli fire. This mix has helped perpetuate what initially appeared to be just another flare-up, one of many in the century-old conflict.

"This popular uprising has continued longer than observers expected," said political scientist Ahmed Azim at the West Bank's Bir Zeit University. The level of violence remains below that seen in two Palestinian uprisings against Israeli occupation since the late 1980s, but has also shown no sign of slowing down. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has said the attacks are spontaneous outbursts of Palestinian anger. "No one called for it, but it came from the hearts of these young people who saw everything with their own eyes, the injustice and the attacks by (Israeli) settlers," he said last month. At the same time, the internationally backed idea of setting up a Palestinian state next to Israel - roughly in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, lands Israel captured in 1967 - is off the table for now.

Leading figures in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government openly oppose a two-state solution, Abbas has given up hope of independence through negotiations after two decades of failed attempts and US mediators say they see no point in pursuing a deal during the remainder of President Barack Obama's term.

Netanyahu's government says the attacks are the result of incitement by Abbas, as well as the Palestinian leader's main political rival, Hamas, and a recently outlawed branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel, which has ties to Hamas.

Those inciting to violence are driven by hatred of Israelis and opposition to the existence of the state of Israel, and spread their message over social media networks to Palestinian youth, argue Israeli government officials, who rarely mention that Palestinians have been living under Israeli rule for a half-century.

At a recent Cabinet meeting, Netanyahu portrayed the current Palestinian attacks as a continuation of "terrorism that has been with us for almost 100 years," adding that "we have defeated it time and again (and) will defeat it this time as well." Abbas publicly opposes violence as detrimental to Palestinian interests, but hasn't denounced the recent attacks, even on Israeli civilians, for fear of losing Palestinian public opinion. Behind the scenes, his security services have been trying to lower the flames. Plainclothes agents make sure Palestinian stone-throwers don't open fire on Israeli troops. His forces also arrested some alleged would-be attackers.

Social media's role

Israel's Shin Bet security service appears to agree with Abbas to some extent, portraying the attacks as largely spontaneous and carried out by individuals. In comments on its website, the agency also said anti-Israel incitement on social media plays a role. "The young live on the Internet," the agency said of the new generation of Palestinians. Facebook and Twitter are more effective organizers of stone-throwing protests than Hamas and Abbas' Fatah. Those groups played a key role in previous uprisings but now struggle to mobilize large crowds.

However, Hamas and the smaller militant group Islamic Jihad exert influence through their media outlets, including TV stations that play songs in praise of attackers. One of the songs is accompanied by images of a young Palestinian watching Israeli soldiers pushing or beating Palestinian women in Jerusalem. He takes a knife and attacks soldiers, to lyrics exhorting him to "defend your honor, your sisters." Palestinians also post videos of attacks and their aftermath, including the shootings of Palestinians by Israelis. The Israeli human rights group B'Tselem said that in at least five cases, docu-

mented by amateur video or witness testimony, Palestinians were shot after they no longer posed a threat. Four of them, including two teenage girls, were killed, and one was seriously wounded.

The group blamed what it called a "shoot to kill" approach promoted by senior members of the Netanyahu government. Israeli security officials deny such a policy is in place, saying forces are instructed to open fire only in life-threatening situations. Yossi Sedbon, a former police commander in the West Bank, defended the use of force, saying even assailants who appear to have been "neutralized" could still pose a threat. Sedbon said the wave of attacks is unprecedented and poses a challenge to security forces because "we don't have any clue where and when it will happen." Shadi Kaseeb's actions certainly came out of the blue, his family said, insisting the chain of events leading to his death began with a traffic accident. On Nov 22, Shadi drove his two oldest children, 7-year-old Samira and 6-year-old Mohammed, to school in the West Bank town of Ramallah, before taking a passenger to Jericho, about an hour's drive away.

On the way back, near the settlement industrial park of Mishor Adumim, his taxi swerved into an Israeli vehicle in the next lane, according to Israeli police. Shadi got out of his car, wielding a 20-centimeter-long kitchen knife and ran toward a group of Israelis before being shot by two civilians, police said. "I can't believe my husband wanted to stab anyone because he knows we need him," said his wife Athab, 29, speaking in the family's small basement apartment. "We are a very poor family...and have three kids to raise."

Brother-in-law Mohammed Samara, 27, said Kaseeb was deeply affected by what he felt was unrestrained Israeli violence against Palestinians. "Shadi was a very sensitive guy," said Samara. "He used to watch the news on TV and feel sad."

Five days after Shadi's death, 30-year-old Fadi followed in his older brother's footsteps. The supermarket clerk, a father of two with a baby on the way, drove to the Mishor Adumim intersection and rammed his car into two Israelis waiting at a bus stop - the force of impact flinging one of the men over a security barrier. Fadi got out of the car and ran toward the Israelis, but was shot and killed by a civilian at the scene, police said. There was no doubt about his motive. "He was furious when his brother was killed," said Fadi's wife, Sawsan, 24. "He said, 'I cannot live without my brother. I'll kill them all, I'll kill all the settlers.'" — AP



BAGHDAD: Blood stains are seen on the ground after suicide bomber blew himself up near a Shiite mosque in the Obeidi area of the Iraqi capital. — AFP

JORDAN SAYS SYRIAN REFUGEE NUMBERS ARE EXAGGERATED

AMMAN: Jordan described as exaggerated yesterday UN claims that 12,000 Syrian refugees are stuck on the border, but acknowledged that arrivals have been slowed due to security screenings. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees said Tuesday the Syrians are stranded in "deteriorating humanitarian conditions" and urged authorities to allow them into the country.

Information Minister Mohamed Momani told AFP: "The number concerning the stranded refugees is exaggerated," but did not say what the number was. He acknowledged delays in allowing in those fleeing Syria's nearly five-year war, attributing them to "security" considerations.

"It is the sovereign right of the kingdom to be meticulous and to take security measures" when screening refugees arriving from Syria to ensure that no jihadists try to slip in, he said. He

insisted that the border is open and that dozens of refugees are entering the country each day.

"Jordan hosts around 1.4 million Syrian refugees and continues to observe an open-door policy along its borders and (new) refugees are welcomed each day," he said. In its statement, the UNHCR appealed to the government to prioritize entry for the most vulnerable, including the elderly, babies under six months of age and pregnant women.

"If refugees are not admitted to Jordan and substantial assistance not provided, the lives of refugees will be at risk in the coming winter," Amnesty International echoed the UNHCR appeal. A statement said "testimony from Syrian refugees and international aid workers in Jordan... suggests that hundreds of refugees have been arriving on a daily basis in recent weeks but have been denied access to Jordan by the authorities". —AFP



This satellite images taken on Dec 5, 2015, shows the Rukban tent encampment for Syrian refugees at the border with Jordan. Jordan has disputed a UN report that 12,000 Syrian refugees have amassed in a remote desert area on the kingdom's border, waiting to be let in. — AP

OVER 170K FLEE YEMEN WAR, UN BEGS FOR AID

NAIROBI: More than 170,000 people have fled war-torn Yemen for the Horn of Africa and the Gulf, the UN said yesterday, as they appealed for \$94 million in aid.

"Around 170,000 Yemenis, refugees and third country nationals have fled to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and some Gulf countries," the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) said in a statement, after aid meetings in the Kenyan capital.

The UN said it needed over \$94 million to support those fleeing the war in 2016. Thousands have been killed and the impover-

ished nation plunged into profound humanitarian crisis since March, amid battles between pro-government forces supported by Saudi-led air strikes and Iran-backed rebels.

Most of the refugees have made a "perilous crossing" across the Gulf of Aden to the Horn of Africa, said Claire Bourgeois, who heads UN refugee agency operations for those fleeing Yemen.

Inside Yemen, an estimated 80 percent of people need aid, including 2.3 million forced from their homes, the UN said. "The suffering that this conflict is inflicting on people is heart-breaking," Bourgeois said. — AFP



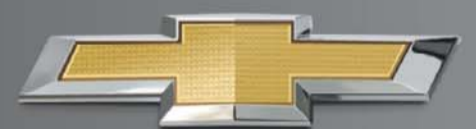
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US ARMY OFFICER DEFENDS USE OF GUANTANAMO'S FEMALE GUARDS

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVAL BASE: A US Army officer on Tuesday defended her decision to use female guards at Guantanamo Bay's top-secret Camp 7, where Muslim prisoners say physical contact with unrelated women is an affront to their religion.

The officer, a former commander of Camp 7 whose name was not disclosed, told a court at the base in Cuba that she started to use women to transport prisoners in 2014 due to a shortage of guards with the proper training and security clearance amid an increased demand to move men about the detention center for legal meetings and hearings before judges.

That move prompted outrage among some of the prisoners in Camp 7, including the five men facing trial by military commission for their alleged roles planning and supporting the Sept 11, 2001, terrorist attack. Lawyers for the men said they began refusing to attend meetings or to cooperate with their defense, making the issue yet another obstacle in frequently stalled legal proceedings against them.

Physical contact

Female guards work regularly in the two main camps of the Guantanamo Bay detention center but have less physical contact with the prisoners. There are a total of 107 prisoners held at the base. The judge overseeing the Sept 11 case issued a temporary order in January halting the use of women in Camp 7, where only male guards had been used until 2014. Military officials are now asking him to reverse the ruling, arguing that it discriminates against female soldiers and impedes camp operations.

The former officer testified by video link from Massachusetts, where she has served with the state National Guard for 33 years and worked as a police officer for 21 years.

She had never run a detention center before being appointed commander of Camp 7, which holds the most significant terrorist suspects in US custody, including Khalid Shaikh Mohammad, the self-proclaimed architect of the Sept. 11 attack.

She said she consulted with a detention center cultural adviser before using women guards to transport prisoners and was told it would be OK because guards were touching male prisoners as part of their duties. She said the military made an effort to accommodate the men's religious beliefs in general. "Any inquiry, especially when it was linked to their religious practices, was reviewed thoroughly," she said. Lawyers for the men argue that being physically handled by women not only violates their deeply held Muslim beliefs but is also traumatic for men who were subjected to what they say were brutal CIA interrogations that amounted to torture. They say it's also relatively easy to find alternatives.

A need for equality of the sexes, "doesn't mean you can't respect their religious rights and work around it," said James Harrington, a lawyer for defendant Ramzi Binalshibh. The judge, Army Col James Pohl, was hearing testimony on the female guard issue on the first of four scheduled days of pretrial hearing the Sept. 11 case. The five prisoners face charges that include terrorism and nearly 3,000 counts of murder in violation of the law of war and could get the death penalty if convicted. No trial date has been set. Testimony on the issue was expected to resume yesterday.

A judge in a separate war-crimes case, against alleged Al-Qaeda commander Hadi Al-Iraqi, previously issued an order prohibiting female guards from handling him in Camp 7. He later rescinded it at the urging of prosecutors and the military. — AP



SAN BERNARDINO: San Bernardino County Sheriff John McMahon, right, comforts dispatcher Michelle Rodriguez during a news conference with the first responders who were at the scene of last week's fatal shooting at the Inland Regional Center. — AP

CALIFORNIA TERROR ATTACK SHOWS DIFFICULTY IDENTIFYING TERRORISTS

'HUNDRED PERCENT PREVENTION IS NOT ACHIEVABLE'

LOS ANGELES: By the time the married couple who carried out the deadly San Bernardino terrorist attack came to the attention of police, it was far too late. Syed Rizwan Farook and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, had gone undetected while planning the massacre that included amassing thousands of rounds of ammunition, high-powered guns and pipe bombs.

The FBI's acknowledgement that the San Bernardino shooters had been radicalized Muslims for "quite some time" points to the difficulty discovering potential terrorists who keep a very low profile and shows the deadly consequences that can occur when identification comes too late.

"It appears these people were very good at hiding their intentions," said David Schanzer, a Duke University public policy professor who runs a center that studies terrorism. "What this situation shows is it's not a fool-proof system. ... A hundred percent prevention is not achievable."

The couple, who lived quietly in a two-bedroom townhouse with their 6-month-old daughter and Farook's mother, had not come to the attention of law enforcement before clothing themselves in black, donning face masks and bursting into an annual festive meeting of Farook's county health department colleagues with guns blazing. They killed 14 people and wounded 21 last Wednesday before dying in a shootout with police about four hours later.

Radical beliefs

David Bowdich, chief of the FBI's Los Angeles office, told reporters the agency was searching for how and where radicalization occurred and who might have led them to those beliefs. Investigators believe Farook, a 28-year-old restaurant inspector born in the US to a Pakistani family, became radicalized before meeting Malik, 29, FBI spokeswoman Laura Eimiller said Tuesday. She did not elaborate on what led the FBI to that conclusion about Malik, who emigrated to the US from Pakistan in July 2014 on a fiancée visa and mar-

ried Farook the next month. Detecting those who hold radical beliefs - and determining who may lash out violently - is a challenge for law enforcement.

America's counterterrorism infrastructure has had success at flagging individuals who try to travel abroad to fight alongside militants, fund operations overseas or who communicate online with overseas terrorists. But it's been far more challenging for law enforcement to flag each and every individual who self-radicalizes online, a process the Islamic State has facilitated with slick Internet propaganda aimed at the disaffected. "They're not communicating with a terrorist organization, they're not doing those other things that we have typically looked for when we're looking for terrorists," said John Cohen, a former Homeland Security Department counterterrorism coordinator.

Behavior that is in isolation isn't likely to put a defendant on law enforcement's radar. But sudden withdrawal from friends or family, for instance, starts hitting trip wires when combined with other actions, such as increased visits to hate-spewing chat rooms or radical change in appearance.

But even then, law enforcement is challenged on a daily basis in separating individuals who hold radical views, which in and of itself is not a crime, from those who are plotting acts of violence or encouraging others in that direction. "It's a highly individualized process, and each person is different," said Seamus Hughes, deputy director of the Program on Extremism at George Washington University's Center for Cyber & Homeland Security, which recently issued a study showing that 56 people had been charged in the U.S. this year in connection with supporting the Islamic State. "The radicalization process could take a few years, it could take a few months."

Terrorist ideology

FBI agents currently have hundreds of open inquiries in all 50 states related to terrorist ideology. When they identify someone they think is predisposed

to violence, they've turned to a range of techniques - including sting operations involving informants and inoperable weapons and placing undercover agents in chat rooms - as part of their investigation.

But they're nonetheless constrained under Justice Department regulations in the investigative steps they may take. That guidance, known as the Domestic Investigations and Operations Manual, permits agents to check out a citizen's suspicion even when there's minimal factual basis for doing so. Actually opening a full-blown investigation, and using tools such as surveillance and phone wiretaps, requires a significantly higher burden of evidence of wrongdoing.

"For law enforcement to take action, their investigation has to reveal that a person has gone beyond simply having extreme thoughts, and is actually moving in the direction of carrying out an act of violence," Cohen said. "They have to be in the process of committing a crime."

So far, the FBI has revealed little of what it's learned about Farook and Malik and their planning, except for details about the weaponry they had, materials they had to make more pipe bombs and that both had been taking target practice. Malik also practiced at Riverside Magnum Range, where Farook shot at targets two days before the attack, Eimiller said.

Investigators also are trying to determine a money trail for funding of the operation. A US official said Tuesday authorities are looking into a deposit made to Farook's bank account prior to the shooting. The official, who had been briefed on the investigation but was not authorized to discuss it by name and spoke on condition of anonymity, would not further characterize the nature of the deposit or what was suspicious about it. Hughes said the FBI surely is looking to see what red flags law enforcement might have been missed - part of a post-mortem analysis that follows every incident of this nature. "What do you learn from this, and how do you mitigate the next attack?" he asked. — AP



CARACAS: Handout photo released by the Venezuelan presidency of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro (center) as he speaks by the tomb of late Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez. — AP

VENEZUELA OPPOSITION WINS SUPER MAJORITY

CARACAS: Venezuela's opposition won a key two-thirds majority in the National Assembly in legislative voting, according to final results released Tuesday, dramatically strengthening its hand in any bid to wrest power from President Nicolas Maduro after 17 years of socialist rule.

More than 48 hours after polls closed, the National Electoral Council published the final tally on its website, confirming that the last two undecided races broke the opposition coalition's way, giving them 112 out of 167 seats in the National Assembly that's sworn in next month. The ruling socialist party and its allies got 55 seats. The publication ends two days of suspense in which Maduro's opponents claimed a much-larger margin of victory than initially announced by electoral authorities, who were slow to tabulate and release results that gave a full picture of the magnitude of the Democratic Unity opposition alliance's landslide. The outcome, better than any of the opposition's most-optimistic forecasts, gives the coalition an unprecedented strength in trying to rein in Maduro as well as the votes needed to sack Supreme Court justices and even remove Maduro from office by convoking an assembly to rewrite Hugo Chavez's 1999 constitution.

Radical course

Although divided government should foster negotiations, Maduro in his first remarks following the results showed little sign of moderating the radical course that voters rejected. Even while recognizing defeat, the former bus driver and union organizer blamed the "circumstantial" loss on a right-

wing "counterrevolution" trying to sabotage Venezuela's oil-dependent economy and destabilize the government.

On Tuesday, Maduro visited Chavez's mausoleum in the 23 of January hillside slum where the government suffered a shock loss in Sunday's vote. Accompanied by members of his top military command, he accused his opponents of sowing discrimination and class hatred, cautioning workers who voted for the opposition that they would regret their decision to abandon support for the government.

"The bad guys won, like the bad guys always do, through lies and fraud," said Maduro. "Workers of the fatherland know that you have a president, a son of Chavez, who will protect you." Hardliners in the notoriously fractious opposition seem similarly inflexible, preferring to talk about ending Maduro's rule before his term ends in 2019 rather than resolving Venezuela's triple-digit inflation, plunging currency and the widespread shortages expected to worsen in January as businesses close for the summer vacation.

Moderates however are calling for dialogue to give Maduro a chance to roll back policies they blame for the unprecedented economic crisis. But with most Venezuelans bracing for more hardship as oil prices, the lifeblood of the economy, hover near a seven-year low, even they recognize the window for change is small and closing fast.

"If Maduro doesn't change we'll have to change the government," Gov. Henrique Capriles, who lost to Maduro in 2013 presidential elections, said. "But the opposition's response to the economic crisis right now can't be more politics." — AP

MORE THAN 9,000 KILLED SINCE START OF UKRAINE CONFLICT: UN

GENEVA: More than 9,000 people have been killed since the conflict in Ukraine began, the United Nations said yesterday, warning that even though fighting had abated, millions were in precarious situations.

The UN human rights office hailed "a sharp de-escalation of hostilities" in the conflict zones in eastern Ukraine since the warring sides signed a new truce on September 1, following a fragile truce agreed in Minsk in February.

"Though the hostilities have not ceased completely ... shelling of populated areas has decreased dramatically," Gianni Magazzeni, head of the office's Americas, Europe and Central Asia branch, told reporters. "The number of civilian casualties, especially those caused by shelling, has also significantly dropped," he said.

In its latest report on Ukraine, the rights office said that between August 16 and

November 15, 47 civilians were killed and 131 injured in the conflict zones of eastern Ukraine, less than half of those registered during the previous three-month period. But nonetheless, at least 9,115 people-including civilians, soldiers and militia members-have perished since the beginning of the conflict in mid-April 2014, with another 20,797 injured, Magazzeni said, describing this as "a conservative estimate."

He said the steep increase from the previous toll of nearly 8,000 deaths reported by his office in September was among other things due to previously unidentified bodies in morgues being added, and many people long considered missing now counted as dead. He warned though that since the cut-off date of the UN report, "there has been an increase in ceasefire violations," including "the renewed employment of artillery systems in the conflict area." —AP

PUTIN'S FOE KHODORKOVSKY: REVOLUTION IS INEVITABLE

MOSCOW: Exiled tycoon and former prisoner Mikhail Khodorkovsky, in a rare public appearance yesterday, threw down the gauntlet to the Kremlin, saying revolution in Russia is inevitable and that he will help to bring it about.

Speaking yesterday at a conference in London, Khodorkovsky accused the Kremlin of pursuing a suicidal foreign policy, introducing unlawful laws and prosecuting citizens with the use of corrupt courts - developments that he described as an "anti-constitutional coup." He said President Vladimir Putin has driven Russia into a position when a revolution is "inevitable and necessary."

The 10 years that Khodorkovsky served in a Russian prison transformed an oligarch into a symbol of anti-government resistance. Once Russia's richest man, the charges of tax evasion and embezzlement against Khodorkovsky have been seen as punishment for challenging the Kremlin and harboring political ambitions. Upon his release, he left the country and has remained in exile. The 52-year-old said he is not interested in politics as a career but he "cannot stand idle and watch what is going on in Russia" and would like to help a peaceful revolution. "I will certainly do my best to ensure that the rule of law is restored through a revolution, so that as a result ... Putin and his entourage will have to be held accountable to society in front of an independent court," Khodorkovsky said.

Khodorkovsky had spent 10 years in prison on two sets of charges when he was pardoned and released in December 2013, shortly before the Winter Games in Sochi. He had been due to be released in August the following year. Khodorkovsky said yesterday that when he was pardoned he gave his word to Putin not to go into politics before his prison term would have ended and while he was taking care of his ailing mother. Since his mother died last August, Khodorkovsky said he felt he "no longer had any obligations."

In an unexpected raising of tensions, Russian investigators this week called Khodorkovsky for questioning in connection with a murder investigation, in a summons delivered to his elderly father's home in Moscow in connection.

Investigators announced in June that they were reopening the probe into the 1998 slaying of Vladimir Petukhov, mayor of Nefteyugansk, the town where Khodorkovsky's company, Yukos, was headquartered at the time. Khodorkovsky and his associates have denied involvement in the killing. Khodorkovsky said yesterday that he had no intention of working with Russian investigators, whom he accused of concocting the charges. —AP



MOSCOW: Mikhail Khodorkovsky, once Russia's richest man, speaks during a webcast conference in London, and is seen on a TV screen in Open Russia movement office in Moscow yesterday. Exiled tycoon and former prisoner Mikhail Khodorkovsky in a rare public appearance threw down the gauntlet at the Kremlin, saying that revolution in Russia is inevitable and that he would help to bring it about. — AP

HIGH-PROFILE NEO-NAZI SUSPECT DENIES MURDER

BERLIN: A German woman accused of involvement in 10 neo-Nazi murders broke her silence for the first time in four years yesterday, telling a court in Munich that she only learned of the slayings after they had taken place.

In a statement read by her lawyer, Beate Zschaepfe said the killings, two bomb attacks and several bank robberies were carried out by her former lovers, Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Boehnhardt, who died in an apparent murder-suicide in 2011. Prosecutors allege that the trio formed the National Socialist Underground, which killed eight Turkish men, a Greek and a policeman between 2000 and 2007.

"I reject the prosecution's charge that I was a member of a terrorist organization called NSU," German news agency dpa quoted Zschaepfe as saying in the statement, which came as the trial neared its 250th day. Zschaepfe described how she met Mundlos during her childhood in East

Germany in the late 1980s, and how she became part of the far-right scene that emerged after the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

The trio went into hiding in 1998. Zschaepfe acknowledged that her alleged accomplices told her about the attacks after they happened, but claims she didn't report them to police because they threatened to commit suicide if she did so.

"I sincerely apologize to all of the victims and relatives of victims," she said in her statement. Zschaepfe was arrested in November 2011, shortly after Mundlos' and Boehnhardt's bodies were found in a burned-out camper van in the town of Eisenach following a botched bank robbery. Her lawyer, Mathias Grasel, has asked the court to allow Zschaepfe's lawyers to answer judges' questions rather than require her to answer them. Zschaepfe's trial and that of four others accused of supporting the group is expected to last until the middle of next year. — AP

TALEBAN ATTACK AT AFGHAN AIRPORT LEAVES 46 DEAD

KANDAHAR: Afghan forces battled yesterday to flush out Taliban militants hours after they stormed Kandahar airport, killing at least 46 people and taking families hostage as President Ashraf Ghani sought to revive peace talks at a regional conference.

Local residents said they had heard soldiers pleading with the insurgents to free women and children, who were screaming during the fighting which erupted shortly after sundown in the southern city on Tuesday. One security official told AFP that insurgents were holding some civilians as "human shields," which was complicating their clearance operation.

The brazen raid on the sprawling compound, which also houses a joint NATO-Afghan base, is the second major Taliban assault in as many days in the city recognized as the birthplace of the Taliban. The militants managed to breach the first gate of the high-security complex and took up position in an old school building, engaging security forces in pitched firefights.

The government claimed yesterday morning that an unknown number of assailants had been killed but residents were still reporting a volley of gunshots and explosions. "Since last night my family is trapped inside the complex, unable to leave because of the intense fighting," 40-year-old airport worker Haji Abdul Qader told AFP, adding that he was in contact with them by telephone. "They have barricaded themselves inside a house."

Samim Khpalwak, a spokesman for the Kandahar provincial governor, told AFP that nine people, including civilians and soldiers, had been killed. Dawood Shah Wafadar, a military commander in Kandahar, gave a higher death toll of 18. "The fighting started around 6:00 pm (Tuesday) and intensified over the night," 30-year-old university student Izatullah,

who lives inside the complex, told AFP.

"Soldiers were calling on Taliban attackers to let women and children go but attackers declined. We could hear children screaming during the fighting." The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, with spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid saying on Twitter that "150 Afghan and foreign soldiers" had been killed in the fierce fighting.

The insurgents are regularly known to exaggerate battlefield claims. The raid coincides with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's high-profile visit to Islamabad yesterday for the Heart of Asia conference aimed at promoting regional ties. Ghani's willingness to visit longtime nemesis Pakistan, which wields considerable influence over the Taliban, has signaled a renewed push to mend badly frayed cross-border ties which in turn could help jumpstart peace talks with the insurgents.

The raid also comes after days of fevered speculation about the fate of Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour following reports that he was critically wounded in a firefight with his own commanders in Pakistan.

'Familiar pattern'

"It has become a familiar pattern. Whenever there is talk about peace talks, the Taliban launch big attacks," Kabul-based military analyst Atiqullah Amarkhil told AFP. "It shows that either they want to scuttle efforts towards talks or want big concessions before they reach the negotiating table."

Pakistan, which has historically supported the Afghan Taliban, hosted a milestone first round of peace negotiations in July. But the talks soon stalled when the Taliban belatedly confirmed the death of longtime leader Mullah Omar, sparking a power struggle within the movement that led to the creation of a rival faction last month.



RAWALPINDI: Afghan President Ashraf Ghani (left) receives bouquet from a Pakistani woman as Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (center) looks on upon his arrival at the military Nur Khan airbase. — AFP photos

AFGHAN PRESIDENT ARRIVES IN ISLAMABAD TO RESTART TALKS

INDIA'S TOP DIPLOMAT ADDS MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE

ISLAMABAD: Afghan president Ashraf Ghani arrived in Islamabad yesterday hoping to revive peace talks with the resurgent Taliban, as he opened a regional conference that has taken on added significance with the attendance of India's top diplomat. Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif personally welcomed Ghani at the airport in a red-carpet reception with a guard of honor and 21 gun salute, with the leaders scheduled to hold bilateral talks later in the day.

Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan had plummeted since July following confirmation that the Taliban's founder Mullah Omar was dead, a revelation that scuppered nascent peace talks between Kabul and the Islamist movement. Ghani subsequently blamed Pakistan for a surge in Taliban attacks inside Afghanistan, accusing Islamabad of sending "messages of war".

Yesterday, both leaders vowed to fight militancy and extremism in the region after they jointly opened a regional conference in Islamabad. Their meeting is seen as a strong signal that both sides are attempting to revive the Taliban talks, brokered by Pakistan's powerful army which has long wielded influence over the insurgent group.

"I strongly reiterate our commit-



ISLAMABAD: Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj attends the first day of the Heart of Asia conference.

ment to a lasting and just peace without in which all movements that resort to arms convert themselves to political parties and participate in the political process legitimately," urged Ghani in his speech.

But Ghani added that Pakistan's military operations in its restive northwest had the "unintended consequences" of causing militant groups to spill over into Afghanistan.

"Terrorism and extremism is the common enemy of all, we need a collective approach to combat this menace," said Sharif, before highlighting the growing threat the Islamic State group poses to both countries. "The enemies of Afghanistan are the enemies of Pakistan," he added.

Mending ties
India's foreign minister Sushma

Swaraj, whose arrival in Pakistan marked the highest-level visit from New Delhi since 2012 and is seen by observers as a sign of improving ties between the two countries, said she had come "with a message for better relations".

"It is important and we want to take the relations further-I will only be able to tell you more when I am leaving," she told reporters after arriving at the airport Tuesday.

Tensions between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan have spiked over the past two years, with cross-border shelling over their disputed border in Kashmir claiming dozens of lives since 2014. But a brief meeting between Sharif and his counterpart Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris on November 30 appeared to have broken the ice.

While talks between India and Pakistan are likely to focus on Kashmir and security issues, observers are also watching keenly for an announcement on whether or not the first cricket series between the two countries in three years will go ahead. The Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process was established in 2011 as an initiative by Afghanistan and Turkey to foster regional cooperation and long-term peace in Afghanistan. — AFP



KANDAHAR: Civilians wait as Afghan security forces guard at the main gate of Kandahar civilian airport during a clash between Taliban fighters and Afghan forces. — AP

BANGLADESH SEIZES \$6M COCAINE HAUL AT AIRPORT

DHAKA: Bangladesh anti-drugs officers seized \$6.2 million of cocaine at Dhaka airport and arrested a Spanish national on suspicion of smuggling, officials said yesterday, the country's second-biggest haul of the substance.

PJ Julian, 47, was arrested at the Bangladeshi capital's airport on Tuesday evening with three kilos of cocaine hidden inside the lid of his suitcase, the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) said. Cocaine is not a popular drug in Bangladesh, but international cartels use it as a "safe route" for smuggling it into Europe and Southeast Asia, seeing the country as less likely to come under suspicion. Julian had travelled to Dhaka from Brazil's Sao Paulo via Dubai, before being arrested by officials acting on a tip-off from

the United States about a suspected trafficker. "The drugs in the suitcase could not be traced in the scanner, but we knew the tag of the suspected luggage," DNC director Towfique Uddin told AFP. Julian is expected to appear in court today and could face the death penalty if found guilty of drug smuggling. "If his involvement is proved with the (drug) trafficking, he may get a death sentence irrespective of his nationality," Nadim Miah, public prosecutor for a special drug crimes court in Dhaka told AFP.

Miah said it was the second-biggest cocaine haul in the Muslim-majority nation after \$14 million of liquid cocaine was found mixed in barrels containing sunflower oil in the port city of Chittagong in June. — AFP

MUMBAI DON POSSESSIONS PUT UP AT GOVT AUCTION

MUMBAI: An Indian government auctioneer will sell farmland, a restaurant and even a car which officials say once belonged to the country's most wanted man, fugitive Mumbai mafia boss Dawood Ibrahim.

Indian police have been unable to trace him for decades, but for as little as 4,000 rupees (\$60), bidders can snap up a car he purportedly owned - a 15-year-old green Hyundai Accent sedan now parked in a working-class Mumbai suburb. The properties, confiscated more than a decade ago, make up only a tiny fraction of Ibrahim's assets. Some have already been put up for sale but remain mostly unwanted, as buyers stay away.

Yesterday, a crowd had gathered outside a down-at-heel south Mumbai hotel where the auction was taking place, kept

outside by tight security. Ibrahim, reported to be hiding in neighboring Pakistan, runs D Company, a crime syndicate Indian authorities accuse of engaging in murder, extortion and weapon-smuggling. He is also accused of financing Islamist militant groups and of masterminding bomb and grenade attacks in Mumbai in March 1993 that killed 257 people and wounded more than 700. Ibrahim fled India in the 1980s and has since eluded the authorities, although the arrest last month of a former partner in Indonesia - Rajendra Nikalje, known as Chhota Rajan - is thought to be part of a strategy to hunt him down. The Indian government has battled for years to confiscate properties held not only by Ibrahim but by his relatives in Mumbai, and has been held up by repeated appeals. — Reuters

UN PRAISES MONGOLIA FOR ABOLISHING DEATH PENALTY

ULAN BATOR: The United Nations' top human rights official praised Mongolia yesterday for abolishing the death penalty, after the sparsely populated Asian country approved a new criminal code eliminating executions. The measure was passed by the State Great Hural, Mongolia's parliament, last week, after extended debate. Justice Minister Khishigdemberel Temuujin told the official news agency Montsame that the law was "long anticipated," adding: "There is no significant increase of crimes where countries have no death penalty".

Mongolia's President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj is an abolitionist and halted executions after he came to power in 2010, using his presidential authority to commute condemned prisoners' sentences. "This development is very

encouraging and a clear example of positive progress in the fight for human rights for all-including people convicted of terrible crimes," UN rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a statement welcoming the abolition.

"We must not allow even the most atrocious acts to strip us of our fundamental humanity," he added. The move made Mongolia the 105th country to abolish the death penalty in law, the statement said. Another 60 states either have moratoriums in place or have not executed anyone in the last 10 years. Mongolia has not carried out an execution since 2008, according to rights group Amnesty International, whose East Asia research director Roseann Rife said: "The death penalty is becoming a thing of the past across the world." — AFP

SUPREME COURT SUSPENDS ROUSSEFF IMPEACHMENT

BRASÍLIA: Brazil's beleaguered President Dilma Rousseff won a respite in her battle to avoid impeachment when the Supreme Court ordered the commission considering her case suspended for a week. At the end of a day of political drama and chaos on Tuesday, the court in Brasilia suspended the special commission that had just been formed to recommend to Congress whether Rousseff should be removed from office.

The suspension, made in response to an appeal from the Communist Party of Brazil, which is allied to the leftist Workers' Party of Rousseff, is in effect until next Wednesday when the court will meet to make a ruling. The appeal claimed irregularities in the way the commission was formed, with Rousseff loyalists complaining that opposition leaders had unfairly managed to force out members who were more sympathetic to the president. "The court understood that the allegations are relevant. There is the risk that everything which has been done would come to nothing. So they suspended all work of the commission until December 16," Ademar Borges, a Communist Party lawyer, told AFP. This gave much needed breathing space to Rousseff, who less than a year into her second term is fighting for her political life. Brazil's first female president, a moderate leftist, is accused of illegal budgeting maneuvers, but says the practices were long accepted by previous governments. She calls the attempt to bring her down a "coup".

Unrest, turmoil

The turmoil is stirring passions across the South American country of 204 million people, where Rousseff's Workers' Party has been in power since 2003 with the help of its often uncomfortable coalition partner, the centrist PMDB.

Nationwide opposition rallies are planned Sunday and on Tuesday Rousseff supporters marched in central Rio de Janeiro, which will host the 2016 Olympics. Political uncertainty is also adding to the economic mess, with GDP down 4.5 percent in the third quarter year-on-year, and the national currency down a third against the dollar this year. A vast corruption scandal centered on state oil giant Petrobras has also put a hole in investor confidence.

With only 10 percent popularity ratings Rousseff has little political muscle, even if sup-



RIO DE JANEIRO: Supporters of Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff demonstrate against her possible impeachment holding a poster of her and former Brazilian President (2003-2011) Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva. — AFP

porters say that the charges against her are far from the level justifying impeachment. On Tuesday, 16 of the country's 27 state governors declared that the impeachment case lacks constitutional foundation.

Rousseff was left reeling by indications in a leaked letter that her vice president Michel Temer, leader of the PMDB, could withdraw his support because he felt she had shown "absolute lack of confidence" in him. If Rousseff is forced from office, Temer would become interim president. Hours later after the letter was released, the architect of the impeachment campaign, PMDB member Eduardo Cunha, oversaw the formation of the impeachment commission, resulting in a body dominated by opponents to Rousseff.

Presidential backers were furious and tried to impede the formation, even reportedly smashing electronic voting machines. Dozens of congressional deputies shouted and shoved each other in chaotic scenes broadcast live on television. The commission's job is to send a recommendation to the full lower house, which will then vote. A two

thirds majority would be required for the house to send the case on to the Senate, where a trial would be convened, again requiring a two thirds majority to convict Rousseff.

Beginning of end?

Michael Mohallen at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, said "it's still early to say this is the beginning of the end for Rousseff." But Rubens Figueiredo, a politics professor at the University of Sao Paulo, said "it was a terrible start for the government." Both sides of the debate have promised to take to the streets in an attempt to pressure Congress during what could potentially turn into months of intrigue if the impeachment procedure goes the full course.

Parallel to the drama over Rousseff is a battle by her chief antagonist, Cunha, to keep his own post as speaker of the lower house. Cunha is one of many politicians and leading executives sucked into the Petrobras corruption probe and has been charged with taking millions of dollars in bribes and holding secret Swiss bank accounts. — AFP

CONTROVERSIAL HONG KONG DEBATE DELAYED AS PROTESTS THREATENED

HONG KONG: Pro-democracy legislators succeeded yesterday in delaying a highly anticipated parliamentary debate over a new copyright bill in Hong Kong, which has been criticized as curbing freedom of speech. Objections to the bill come as fears grow over the erosion of freedoms in the semi-autonomous city, with concerns that Beijing's influence is increasing.

The city remains deeply divided after mass pro-democracy rallies last year failed to force Beijing to back down on political reform, with the copyright bill the latest flashpoint. The government says the bill—already shelved in 2012 after opposition—is necessary to help fight online piracy. But critics slam it as "Internet Article 23" referring to an anti-subver-

sion bill dramatically dropped in 2003 after half a million protesters took to the streets.

Political satire using a pastiche of song lyrics and movie scenes has long been common on the city's Internet forums and social networking websites. Opponents fear the bill would set the stage for harsher government censorship online.

"We are happy to see it happening (the adjournment)," pro-democracy lawmaker Raymond Chan told reporters. "The copyright amendment bill would affect every single Hong Konger. We are not ready," he said. Another pro-democracy lawmaker Albert Chan, said: "The government should withdraw it to allow more time for the public to be consulted." Leading groups from last year's pro-democracy ral-

lies had pledged to gather at the government complex for the debate, with at least 1,000 expected.

Caught off guard

After the adjournment they called off the rally and are expected to gather next Wednesday when the debate is due to take place. The legislature was adjourned before the debate even began after a pro-democracy lawmaker requested a "quorum" call. Legislators were discussing unrelated matters at the time. With just seven democrats present and the pro-Beijing camp seemingly caught off guard, the day's business was successfully pushed back. Thirty-five are needed for quorum in the 70-member chamber—only 29 were there yesterday. Pro-Beijing lawmaker Tam Yiu-

chung said he was disappointed that lawmakers from his camp "carelessly" showed up late. Exemptions for parody, satire and commentary have been introduced since the original bill was shelved, but opponents are still skeptical. Online commentators welcomed the delay yesterday. "It's awesome. Knowing this is an evil bill and will harm Hong Kong, it would make no sense to pass it," said one post on Yahoo News portal. Once a British colony, Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" deal that guaranteed the retention of its civil liberties and capitalist lifestyle for 50 years. But attacks on journalists, court cases against democracy activists and government interference in education have heightened concerns that the cherished freedoms are being lost. — AFP



SEOUL: A Buddhist prays at the Jogye temple as a police standoff de-escalated at a building in the temple compound where a fugitive labor activist has been holed up inside. — AFP

KOREA POLICE TO RAID BUDDHIST TEMPLE FOR WANTED ACTIVIST

SEOUL: Hundreds of South Korean police stood set to storm Seoul's top Buddhist temple yesterday, after a senior monk appealed for more time to resolve a standoff over a wanted labor activist holed up inside.

Han Sang-Gyun, the head of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, sought sanctuary in the Jogye Temple in downtown Seoul following a massive anti-government demonstration on November 14. Police issued an arrest warrant for Han, accusing him of inciting violence during the protest, and had given him an ultimatum to surrender.

If Han failed to comply, the country's top police officer, Kang Sin-Myeong, had said his men would raid the temple and remove him by force. At Han's request, the Jogye Order-South Korea's leading Buddhist organization—has been mediating with the government ever since he took refuge. One monk told AFP that the activist had been on hunger strike for the past 11 days, taking only a little water and some salt. As yesterday's deadline passed and with monks and scores of young Buddhist followers forming a human barricade at the entrance to the temple, the head of the order, the Venerable Jaesung, appealed for calm and an extension to resolve the situation.

'Stop all actions'

"The implementation of the arrest warrant on Han is creating another conflict instead of

solving one," he told reporters inside the temple. "We will resolve the issue of Han's fate by midday tomorrow. So I call on the police and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions to stop all actions and watch our efforts," he said.

The hundreds of uniformed officers ringing the temple complex made no move to leave, but a spokesman for the national police agency said any action had "been postponed." He did not clarify the duration of the postponement. The Jogye Order, which is the largest Buddhist sect in South Korea and has millions of followers, had earlier released a statement warning that any police action would be seen as an act of religious persecution.

"If the police raid the temple, it... will be tantamount to a state clampdown on the Jogye Order and on the whole Buddhist movement in South Korea," the statement said. South Korean religious venues have a long history of providing refuge for political activists, most notably in the 1980s when many young pro-democracy activists who were on the run from police sought sanctuary in Catholic churches.

Although there is no legal reason preventing police entering such venues, they have traditionally opted not to do so for fear of triggering a public backlash. The last time police raided the Jogye Temple to bring out seven labor activists in 2002 — the move sparked widespread criticism. — AFP



Fiske Hanley (right) of Fort Worth, TX, an American World War II veteran who took part in firebombing of Tokyo and was later held captive by the Japanese 70 years ago, and survivor Haruyo Nihei, a museum storytelling volunteer, talk at the Center of the Tokyo Raids and War Damage. — AP

US VETERANS WHO FIREBOMBED JAPAN IN WWII MEET SURVIVOR

TOKYO: Five American veterans who took part in the firebombing of Japan during World War II saw photos of charred bodies and leveled homes yesterday at a museum dedicated to the victims, and said the outcome on the ground of their missions was awful.

Fiske Hanley of Fort Worth, Texas, was an engineer on a B-29 bomber in the March 10, 1945, firebombing of Tokyo that killed about 100,000 people — more than the Aug. 9 atomic bombing of Nagasaki — and destroyed much of the eastern part of the city. On the ground, Haruyo Nihei was a schoolgirl running for her life.

Hanley and Nihei, now 95 and 79, met at the museum yesterday and celebrated their survival. "I was up there," Hanley said, pointing his finger upward as he explained to Nihei that he was flying that night. "Awful." Hanley stopped in front of each photo on exhibit, studying the damage and shaking his head. "Terrible," he repeated.

All five veterans crashed during the final months of the war and were taken prisoner by the Japanese. "You're a survivor, I'm a survivor too," Hanley told Nihei. Nihei, who survived under layers of people who fell on top of her, said she was happy the men had taken the time to see the damage of the firebombing despite their suffering during their captivity.

70 years later

"I wonder if they had thought of the people on the ground when they dropped the bombs," she said. "But I'm more thrilled by the fact that

we, who were witnesses of that moment in history, are reunited at this place 70 years later. They must have had mixed feelings about coming here, so I'm so glad they came."

From January 1944 to August 1945, the US dropped 157,000 tons of bombs on Japanese cities, according to the US Strategic Bombing Survey. The death toll from the bombings is estimated at more than 300,000, while another 15 million were left homeless. The five veterans, who were on separate planes that firebombed different areas of Japan, are visiting Tokyo on a Japanese government reconciliation program for former prisoners of war.

During their weeklong trip, they will visit the sites where they crashed and the prisons where they were held captive. Hanley, who was a second lieutenant at 25 years old, carried out 16 firebombing and combat missions over other major cities too, including Nagoya, Kobe and Fukuoka. His B-29 was shot down over southwestern Japan 17 days after firebombing Tokyo.

Hanley and a dozen other B-29 crew members who had crashed earlier were sent to the regional headquarters of Japan's notorious Kempeitai military police, where he suffered from repeated beatings, harsh interrogations and malnutrition. The trauma, which he wrote about in a book, "Accused War Criminal," gave him nightmares for years. Only 160 of about 250 American fliers captured by the Tokyo military police survived. Hanley was among the first to be liberated two weeks after Japan's surrender. — AP

EX-AUSTRALIA PM SAYS WEST SHOULD 'PROCLAIM SUPERIORITY OVER ISLAM'

REMARKS SLAMMED AS 'ENTIRELY COUNTERPRODUCTIVE'

SYDNEY: Deposed Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott declared yesterday "cultures are not all equal" and the West should proclaim its superiority over Islam which he said has a "massive problem", in comments slammed as divisive.

Abbott, who was ousted by Malcolm Turnbull in a Liberal Party coup in September but remains in politics, urged the West to "be ready to proclaim the clear superiority of our culture to one that justifies killing people in the name of God". The staunch Catholic also urged Australians to stop apologizing for their values.

"We can't remain in denial about the massive problem within Islam," he wrote in an opinion piece for the mass-market Sydney Daily Telegraph. "Islam never had its own version of the Reformation and the Enlightenment or a consequent acceptance of pluralism and the separation of church and state. "Fortunately there are numerous Muslim leaders who think their faith needs to modernize from the kill-or-be-killed milieu of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)." Abbott, who briefly trained as a priest before entering politics and was once dubbed the "Mad Monk", added that Australians should stop being "apologetic about the values that have made our country as free, fair and prosperous as any on Earth". His rhetoric coincided with US Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump sparking global outrage after a call for Muslims to be barred from entering America.

Mutual respect

Labor opposition Leader Bill Shorten slammed the remarks as "entirely counterproductive". "Inflammatory language undermines efforts to build social cohesion, mutual respect and has the potential to harm the efforts of national security agencies to keep Australians safe," he said in a statement. Australian Human Rights Commission chief Gillian Triggs also criticised Abbott's tone.

"We have to be extremely careful before we make blanket assertions about Islam as a religion, or the Muslim people in Australia," she said.



JAKARTA: In this file picture taken on March 10, 2015, Indonesian demonstrators rally in front of a vandalized portrait of Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott during a protest outside the Australian Embassy. — AFP

"Many of those (Muslims) I meet in my job, I know them to be really remarkably peaceable and good family people. So I think we need to work on understanding why that tiny number... has become so radicalized." Prime Minister Turnbull told national radio Abbott was entitled to his opinion but made clear the vast majority of Muslims were appalled by violent extremism.

"The extremism of ISIL or Daesh, these terrorists, is utterly rejected by the leaders of the great majority of Muslim nations," he said, referring to the Islamic State group. "The one thing we need to be very careful not to do, and I'm sure Tony agrees with this, what we must not do is play

into the hands of our enemies and seek to tag all Muslims with responsibility for the crimes of a few." Australia, a key US ally in the fight against Islamic State jihadists, has foiled six attacks on home soil by radicalized Muslims over the past year, according to authorities.

But several have been carried out, including a 17-hour siege at a central Sydney cafe in which Iranian-born self-styled cleric Man Haron Monis and two hostages were killed. Australian Greens leader Richard Di Natale called Abbott "an incredibly divisive, destructive force within the Australian political landscape" who did not speak for most people. — AFP

EU BOOSTS AID TO PHILIPPINES TO SUSTAIN MUSLIM PEACE PROCESS

MANILA: The European Union announced yesterday that it was sharply boosting aid to the Philippines, largely to help sustain a peace process with Muslim rebels in the south. EU ambassador Franz Jessen said the bloc was providing 5.5 million Euros (\$6 million) to five projects for the Muslim-dominated areas covered by the peace process even as the grouping more than doubled aid in general to the Philippines.

His announcement comes as a draft law to create the Muslim self-rule area appeared stalled in the legislature despite lobbying by President Benigno Aquino. Aquino had hoped to have the draft law passed this year as a crucial step in ending decades of Muslim separatist violence that has claimed more than 100,000 lives since the 1970s. "I want to reaffirm the importance the EU attaches to giving life to the (peace process) and to the development of the long-term political, economic and social pillars that will bring the peace dividend to the country as a whole," Jessen told reporters.

The EU ambassador said he would be visiting the southern Philippines to meet with key parties in the peace process including Muslim separatist guerrilla leaders. He also said EU aid to the Philippines had been increased to 325 million Euros in 2014 to 2020, more than double the amount released from 2007 to 2013, largely to help people in the impoverished south.

Although the Philippines is largely Christian, it has a significant Muslim minority who claim the southern region of Mindanao as their ancestral home. The Muslim minority are among the poorest people in the strife-torn south, where economic development has been hampered by violence and criminality, often coming from Muslim armed groups. Jessen said achieving peace would attract European investment and improve living conditions in the south. A Norwegian and an Italian are believed to be among the people being held hostage by Muslim outlaw groups in the south but Jessen said prospective investors were aware of the risk. It is feared that if the law to create a Muslim self-rule area is not in place before Aquino steps down next year, it may founder under his successor.

Policemen sacked over massacre

In other news, the Philippines' police force has sacked 21 officers for being "co-conspirators" in the country's worst massacre six years ago, according to an official statement released yesterday. The officers were dismissed for failing to stop the son of a political warlord and his bodyguards shooting 58 people, including 32 journalists, in the conflict-racked southern province of Maguindanao in November 2009, according to a police statement. All but one of the officers were found guilty of grave misconduct. "The 20



MANILA: European Union (EU) ambassador Franz Jessen speaks during a press briefing. — AFP

respondents were held liable for opting to become silent spectators to a crime unfolding before their very eyes," said the statement. "Their inaction manifests complicity and unity of action to those who committed the abduction, and later the murders, themselves."

The remaining officer, Inspector Saudi Matabalao Mokamad, was found to have ignored gunshots he heard from the crime scene and not

reporting them to his superiors. He was sacked on lesser charges. A lawyer for the victims' families, Harry Roque, told AFP he was "very disappointed" with the pace of the dismissal proceedings. The officers are among more than 100 suspects on trial for murder before a criminal court, a separate proceeding from the dismissal hearing, and involves members of the influential Ampatuan clan, which allegedly ordered the slaughter in an attempt to crush a rival clan's election challenge.

The brutal massacre, one of the world's deadliest attacks against media workers, saw some shot in their genitals before they were buried in a hilltop grave using an excavator. The clan's patriarch, Andal Ampatuan Sr, died in hospital last July. The slow pace of the legal proceedings has angered the families of the victims and frustrated President Benigno Aquino, who took office in 2010 and has promised a verdict before he steps down from office in mid-2016. Supreme Court Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno said in August the murder trial would finish before the year ends. Roque said prosecutors would push for a verdict on one of the main defendants, former autonomous Muslim region Governor Zaldy Ampatuan, one of the patriarch's other sons, in the first quarter of next year. — AFP

CHINA INTERNET CHIEF DEFENDS CENSORSHIP

BEIJING: China's Internet chief fiercely defended his country's strict management of the web yesterday, saying that censorship of content Beijing deems illegal is necessary to protect online freedoms.

The comments come a week before the country convenes its second "World Internet Conference", an event whose version 1.0 last year was greeted with derision by many who questioned China's motives. The conference is part of China's push to sell the idea of "internet sovereignty", a concept that stands at odds with a vision of the Internet as a free and open global commons.

China censors online content it deems to be politically sensitive, while blocking some Western media websites and the services of Internet giants including Facebook, Twitter and Google. The policy is one facet of Beijing's strict limits on freedom of expression, and rights groups say it uses state security as a pretense to crack down on political dissent.

Through its Internet controls, China strives to "manage well the relationship between freedom and order", Lu Wei said during a press briefing in Beijing ahead of the conference.

"Freedom is our goal and order is our means," he said. "Freedom without order doesn't exist." The idea is one China has studied from "developed countries in the West" Lu said, adding that "there isn't a country in the whole world where Internet content isn't managed".

Lu is a powerful figure both at home and abroad, where he has commanded the attention of global technology firms eager for a piece of the Chinese market. An October report by the American pro-democracy think tank Freedom House found that China has the most restrictive Internet policies of 65 countries studied, ranking below Iran and Syria.

Nonetheless companies such as LinkedIn have agreed to censor their content in exchange for access to the country, while Facebook and other banned companies have lined up to offer the hand of friendship to China's top leaders.

When President Xi Jinping visited the US in September Lu appeared along with the head of state in the front row of a "family photo" of America's tech giants, including Amazon's Jeff Bezos and Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg. — AFP

REBELS LEAVING HOMS AREA UNDER TRUCE DEAL

Continued from Page 1

The evacuation comes as a broad range of Syrian opposition groups, including armed factions, hold unprecedented talks in the Saudi capital on forming a united front for talks with Assad. The talks follow a major diplomatic push to resolve Syria's nearly five-year civil war, and intensified foreign military action including Russia's first strikes from a submarine Tuesday.

An AFP journalist in Homs saw women and children boarding white buses as the evacuation began early on Wednesday. Many appeared haggard but some smiled, waved and gave the thumbs-up from inside the buses. More than 100 opposition fighters, some carrying light weapons, boarded five green buses further away. Provincial Governor Talal Barazi told reporters that some 700 people - including 400 women and children and 300 fighters - would be evacuated from the district yesterday.

Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said the buses headed to the north-western province of Idlib. Under the deal, Waer's rebel forces, who range from secular fighters to jihadists including fighters with Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front, are to completely leave the district by the end of January. Once the evacuation is complete, police, but not troops, will reenter the district, where some 75,000 people currently live, down from 300,000 before the conflict began.

Homs saw some of the largest protests of the early uprising against Assad in 2011, and later some of the fiercest fighting after opposition forces took up weapons in response to a government crackdown. Regaining total control of the city is an important symbolic victory for the regime, which has lost large swathes of the surrounding province to rebels and the Islamic State jihadist group. The United Nations has been pushing for such localized ceasefires as broader efforts have failed to end Syria's war, despite the deaths of more than 250,000 people and millions being forced from their homes.

The biggest diplomatic push yet was launched last month in Vienna with top diplomats from 17 countries - including key international backers and opponents of Assad - agreeing on a roadmap to set up a transition government in six months and hold elections within 18 months. The plan calls for negotiations between opposition representatives and the regime by Jan 1. Washington is hoping to host another round of international talks in New York on Dec 18.

The two-day meeting that began yesterday in Riyadh marks the first time a broad range of Syrian political and armed opposition factions have come together. Some 100 delegates aim to form a unified bloc for talks with Assad, though analysts say deep divisions will be difficult to overcome. The fate of Assad is a key question, with some Western- and Arab-backed rebel groups insisting he must step down immediately. Internal opposition groups disagree, as do Assad's key international backers Iran and Russia.

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir, who has repeatedly warned that unless Assad steps down peacefully he could be ousted militarily, attended briefly to welcome the delegates and express hope for a successful conclusion. The talks held at a heavily secured luxury hotel in Riyadh are chaired by Abdulaziz Sager, a Saudi who heads the independent Gulf Research Centre in Geneva. "The meeting saw a broad participation of Syrian opposition groups inside and outside Syria," the Saudi Press Agency reported.

The first day will focus on political questions, including the general contours of a potential settlement, while Thursday would be dedicated to discussing "terrorism, a ceasefire and reconstruction," said a delegate involved in organizing the meeting. The head of the Istanbul-based National Coalition, Khaled Khoja, said in a statement that he was "optimistic" that the attendees would reach an agreement over "forming a negotiating team and on the principles of negotiations" with Assad's regime. Khoja's coalition is the main opposition group, which is represented by about 20 members at the talks. — Agencies

GULF RETAILER DUMPS TRUMP PRODUCTS

Continued from Page 1

"As such we would not comment further on Mr Trump's personal or political agenda, nor comment on the internal American political debate scene," he said. The Trump golf club in Dubai is scheduled for completion next year. The 18-hole course is part of a large project for luxury villas and mansions being developed by DAMAC.

But the latest controversial statement by Trump has fuelled calls in the Gulf to cut business ties with him. "Muslim consumers in the Middle East have absolutely no say in next year's US presidential election - but they can still vote with their wallets," wrote Ed Attwood in Arabian Business magazine. A top Dubai security official, General Dahi Khalfan, said Trump should not be doing business in the UAE. "If he doesn't want Muslims to come to the US, why does he want to do business with the Muslims in the UAE?" he said, speaking to the 7DAYS newspaper.

Dubai's Al Tayer group, which bills itself as the Middle East's biggest luxury retailer, opened two showrooms in Dubai and Abu Dhabi in June to sell "Trump Home by Dorya" furniture made by a firm that licenses Trump's name. Tayer called Trump's comments "unfortunate" in a statement to Arabian Business, but could not be reached for comment on whether it would continue to sell his products. The Gulf News daily likened Trump to the Islamic State group. "His hate sustains the toxic atmosphere of Islamophobia and his extremism is not different from that of Daesh," it wrote on its front page, using an Arabic acronym for IS.

One former Trump business partner in Dubai, construction billionaire Khalaf Al-Habtoor, said Trump had wrecked his prospects for successful future collaborations in the region. "He is really creating war. He's creating hatred between Muslims and Christians," Habtoor, who at one time held the contract to build a later-cancelled Trump International Hotel & Tower in Dubai, told Reuters. "Muslims have invested hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars [in America], creating jobs for Americans. They can go invest it somewhere else."

Habtoor only months ago proclaimed his support for the Republican candidate for president, but that's all changed in the wake of Trump's increasingly incendiary comments about Islam. "If he comes to my office, I will not let him in. I reject him," Habtoor told AP. "Maybe we can meet somewhere where I can debate with him in a very civilized way, not in the way he approaches people."

In the Muslim world, Trump has also leant his name to an office and retail complex in Istanbul and a luxury development in Baku, capital of the former Soviet state of Azerbaijan. Representatives of those developments could not be immediately reached. At Trump Towers in central Istanbul, shoppers appeared to largely shrug off his comments as all-too-familiar Western prejudice against Muslims, who make up the overwhelming majority of the population of constitutionally secular Turkey. "In his own way, I think he is right, because he is trying to promote Christianity," said Arda Ay, a bearded 21-year-old eating a hamburger in the food court with his girlfriend, who was wearing a headscarf. "The media

shows Muslims as the devil, so they don't want us." Nur Ozdemir, a 21-year-old nurse, said: "Today nobody wants Muslims." But Trump's inflammatory comments would not make her change her shopping habits. "I'll stop coming here if they change the prayer room to a chapel," she joked. Trump has made other comments at times praising or ridiculing countries in the Middle East. At a recent campaign rally, Trump applauded Qatar's new, at least \$15 billion airport, while calling US airports "third-world". He traveled to the Qatari capital, Doha, in April 2008 to see developments there. Trump also made comments in 2011, as well as this year, falsely saying that Kuwait paid nothing to the US for driving out occupying Iraqi forces during the 1991 Gulf War. US congressional records show Kuwait contributed \$16.1 billion for the war.

Those Gulf War comments recently drew boos on a comedy talk show in Kuwait, which still holds the US in high regard for coming to its aid in the war. Hamad Al-Ali, the comedian who poked fun at them, was critical of Trump's latest comments on barring Muslims. "He shouldn't promote these types of ideas. These kinds of ideas are from some sort of person who is not educated," he told the AP.

Meanwhile, more than 230,000 people had signed yesterday a petition to ban Trump from Britain following his call to bar Muslims from entering the US. Having topped 100,000 signatures, the petition now has to be considered for debate by parliament and will require a written government response. "The UK has banned entry to many individuals for hate speech. The same principles should apply to everyone who wishes to enter the UK," said the petition.

The petition was part of a social media storm after Trump said that radicalization meant there parts of London where the police feared for their lives. Tweeting under the ironic hashtag #trumpfacts, web users mocked the blustering tycoon. One tweet had a picture of London's telecom tower with the comment: "The world's tallest minaret calls the whole nation to prayer in the UK". Another carried an image of Queen Elizabeth II wearing a headscarf with the inscription: "Even the British monarch is now forced to wear a hijab".

The anti-Trump petition was posted late Tuesday by Scottish resident Suzanne Kelly, a long-time critic of the 69-year-old. Six MPs have also signed a House of Commons motion calling on the government "to refuse a visa allowing Donald Trump to visit the UK until Mr Trump withdraws his comments", saying they were "extremely divisive and will incite discrimination and hatred".

Finance minister George Osborne told parliament that Trump's comments "fly in the face of the founding principle of the United States". He said democratic debate was "the best way to deal with Donald Trump and his views rather than trying to ban presidential candidates". Another MP, Tulip Siddiq, said Trump's remarks were "dangerous". "I would say to him you are not welcome in our country in the same way that you want to ban people like me going into your country," she told BBC radio. "I don't think we need someone poisonous like Donald Trump in our capital city," the niece of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said. — Agencies

TIME NAMES MERKEL 'PERSON OF THE YEAR'

Continued from Page 1

"I am sure that the chancellor will see it as an encouragement to press on with her political work for the good of Germany as well as Europe," he said. She is only the fourth woman to be named Time person of the year, following Wallis Simpson, the American divorcee for whom Britain's King Edward VIII abdicated, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and Corazon Aquino, the first woman president of the Philippines.

Merkel, 61, is today's most powerful woman and leader of Europe's biggest economy. The Lutheran pastor's daughter, who grew up behind the Iron Curtain, was first elected chancellor in 2005. She has been praised by refugees as "Mama Merkel" and derided by others as the eurozone's "austerity priestess." But her stunning ascent from communist East Germany defies political convention. "The prospect of Greek bankruptcy threatened the very existence of the euro zone. The migrant and refugee crisis challenged the principle of open borders."

And finally, the carnage in Paris revealed the reflex to slam doors, build walls and trust no one," Gibbs wrote yesterday. "Each time Merkel stepped in, Germany would

bail Greece out, on her strict terms. It would welcome refugees as casualties of radical Islamist savagery, not carriers of it. And it would deploy troops abroad in the fight against ISIS... You can agree with her or not, but she is not taking the easy road. Leaders are tested only when people don't want to follow."

Seemingly indifferent to the trappings of power and lacking vanity, Merkel lives in a Berlin flat with her rarely seen scientist husband Joachim Sauer. She shops in a neighborhood supermarket and spends holidays hiking in the Alps. Her oratory is often monotonous and she is awkward in front of the cameras, but it is this air of ordinariness that has made Merkel a hit with German voters, who value no-nonsense pragmatism and competence.

A star student at school, she excelled in Russian, which she has put to use in defusing the Ukraine conflict with President Vladimir Putin, who was a KGB officer in East Germany when the Wall fell in 1989. Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic State extremist group, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, America's Black Lives Matter activists campaigning against inequality and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani were named by Time as runners up. — AFP

GULF LEADERS SEEK UNITED FRONT AT ANNUAL...

Continued from Page 1

The kings and emirs passed ceremonial guards on horses as they arrived for their summit at one of Riyadh's main royal palaces, protected by armored vehicles and machineguns.

Across town, about 100 representatives from Syria's fragmented political and armed opposition groups are making an unprecedented bid for unity ahead of potential negotiations with President Bashar Al-Assad's regime. Both Saudi Arabia and Qatar support some rebels in Syria. Assad is backed by Saudi Arabia's predominantly Shiite regional rival Iran, and Russia, which has for more than two months been conducting air strikes in Syria. Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir said in late November that if Assad does not step down peacefully "he could be ousted militarily".

Pressure for peace is also building in Yemen. According to the United Nations envoy to Yemen, another attempt at

peace talks will start on Dec 15, after earlier efforts collapsed. Yemeni rivals are to gather in Switzerland to try to end the costly war that has drawn in Gulf nations. Oman is the only GCC state not part of the coalition in Yemen but has mediated and provided a neutral venue for talks.

Fighting a war in Yemen, the oil and gas-based Gulf states are also battling falling revenues. Crude prices have more than halved since early 2014 and the International Monetary Fund has projected a \$275 billion drop in export revenues this year for the resource-dependent Gulf economies.

Despite the urgency of the challenges they face, analysts say the Gulf monarchs struggle to find common ground. "This summit comes as the Gulf is witnessing one of its most critical years," said Farea Al-Muslimi, a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Middle East Centre. He sees "internal disagreement" among the Gulf states confronting complicated economic and security challenges. — AFP

MP QUESTIONS RELEASE OF 'ABDALY' SUSPECT

Continued from Page 1

Dahkan is the only Iranian in the 26-member 'Abdaly' cell on trial for allegedly plotting attacks against Kuwait in collaboration with Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah militia. He is one of three suspects being tried in absentia.

Turaiji also asked the minister if authorities have a security report indicating that Dahkan was involved in intelligence activities in Kuwait, recruited men and financed their trip to Lebanon to receive military training on the use of weapons. He demanded a copy of the security report. The lawmaker also asked the minister if Dahkan recruited three groups and sent them to Lebanon in 2014 and 2015 to receive training at Hezbollah camps in southern Lebanon and if they received training to use the same weapons seized in Abdullah Al-Mubarak in August.

He inquired if authorities have a security report stating that the aim of training some citizens under the supervision of Dahkan was to make them wait for orders from Iran and Hezbollah. Turaiji demanded the name of the Kuwaiti sponsor of Dahkan and asked if he has fami-

ly relations to a former MP. The lawmaker asked if authorities issued an order to arrest Dahkan after he left Kuwait for Qatar on Aug 11 this year.

He asked the minister if Dahkan's brother Habeeb was also arrested and a firearm and maps of marine sites were found with him, and that a former security official and a former MP intervened to secure his release. Finally, Turaiji asked about the nationality of the wife of Dahkan and if she was still living in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, MP Faisal Al-Kandari criticized the government yesterday for not implementing laws that were passed by the National Assembly in the past two years. He claimed that the government has not issued the bylaws of 17 legislations, thus delaying enforcing and implementing such important laws. The Assembly had already asked its office to discuss this issue with the government. In the meantime, MP Abdullah Al-Tameem proposed an amendment to the election law in which the government is required to add to register as eligible voters all Kuwaitis who turn 21. Under the current system, people who reach the voting age must register themselves with the interior minister to be able to exercise their election rights.



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Focus

SARKOZY DRIVE TO
RIGHT BACKFIRES
IN FRENCH POLLS

By Ingrid Melander and Sophie Louet

This was going to be the landslide win that set Nicolas Sarkozy on a fast-track to regaining the French presidency in 2017. Or at least that was his plan. Instead, Sarkozy's conservative party came behind the far-right in the first round of regional elections on Sunday, and the ex-president finds himself under growing criticism from within his own camp. "There is no official, legitimate leader that represents the whole party," said Eric Woerth, who as a conservative minister was close to Sarkozy during his presidency.

From grassroots lawmakers to party heavyweights the message is: as soon as this Sunday's second round run-off in the elections is over, the party must do some soul-searching. "We need to have a debate on why we've become inaudible," former conservative prime minister Alain Juppe told reporters. Sixty-year-old Sarkozy, a divisive figure both loved and hated among right-wing voters, was president for five years before losing to Socialist Francois Hollande in 2012.

Once nicknamed the "hyper-president" for his energetic style, Sarkozy claims credit for helping France and the euro zone through the global financial crisis. He also dashed off to Tripoli to meet cheering Libyans in 2011 after a NATO bombing campaign, in which France played a leading role, had helped rebels to overthrow Muammar Gaddafi. But Sarkozy disappointed some French by under-achieving on reforms to revive the economy, and he is also dogged by investigations into his campaign financing. Now has come the regional election setback, when the far-right National Front (FN) secured 27.7 percent of the first round vote nationally, boosted by fears over the Islamic State militant attacks that killed 130 people in Paris on Nov 13. Sarkozy's The Republicans and their allies took 26.65 percent. "It's a slap in the face," political analyst Thomas Guenole said. "They're getting the same score as in 2010, when they were in power and were punished for the impact of the global financial crisis. Now they are in the opposition but they're not benefiting at all from voter anger with the ruling Socialists."

Juppe, who is also vying for the conservative ticket for the 2017 presidential elections, and other party heavyweights, said they were closing ranks before Sunday's runoff, but made clear a tough debate would follow immediately. Asked if there was a problem with the party line, he told reporters: "Yes, of course."

'Big Showdown'

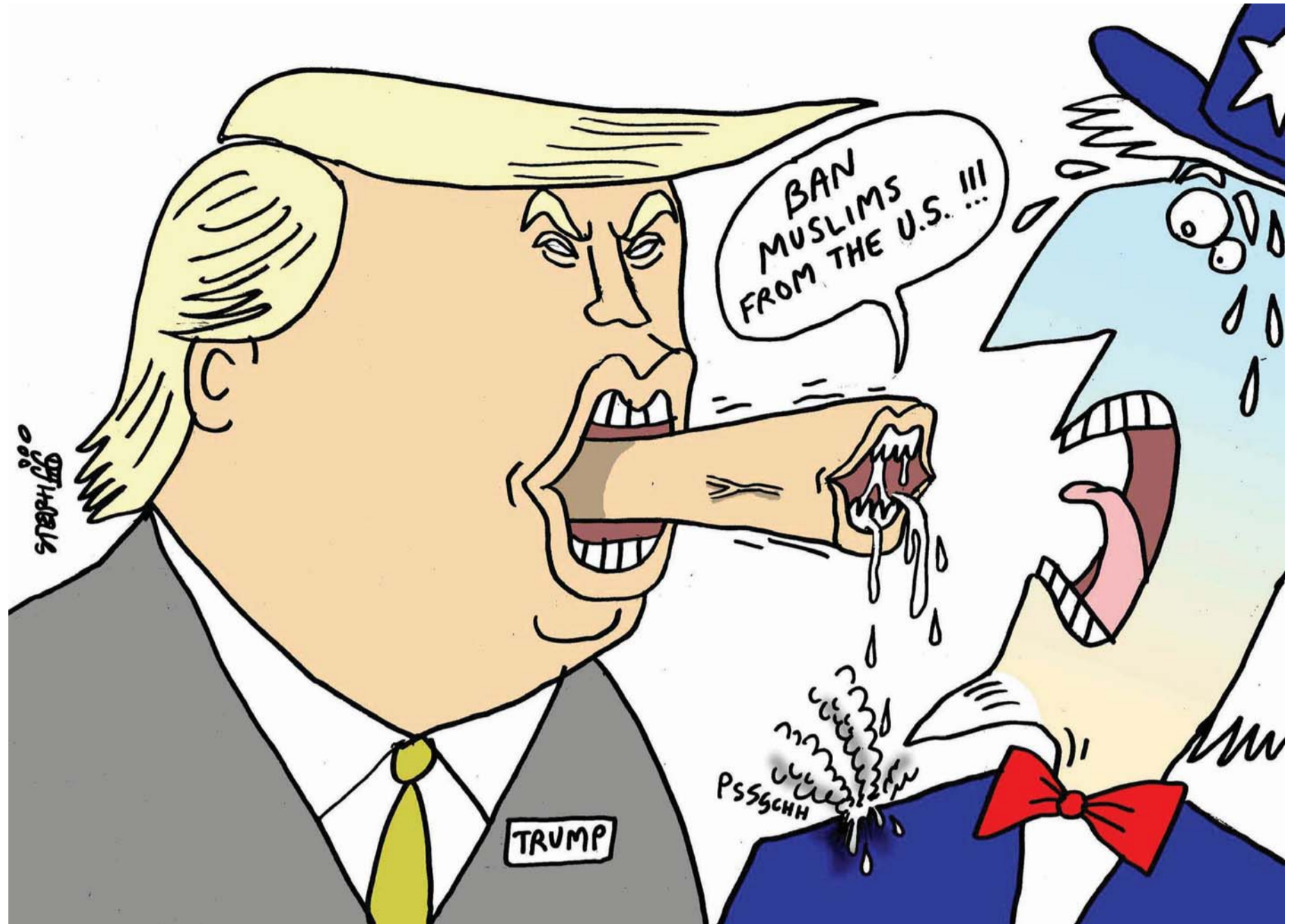
Juppe, who is set to be Sarkozy's main rival in party primaries next year, supports a centrist line. By contrast, Sarkozy has set the party of a right-wing course since coming out of political retirement a year ago. In doing so, he has tried to counter FN leader Marine Le Pen by engaging on the very themes that have boosted her popularity. "The big showdown will be for Monday and it could well be bloody," said a senior lawmaker, who declined to be named because Sarkozy has urged party officials to keep their views to themselves before the runoff. Over the past few months, Sarkozy has promised "war" on Le Pen but has at the same time taken a hard line on immigration and Islam in an attempt to lure back voters from her. Sarkozy has opposed school canteens providing an alternative meal when pork is on the menu, said he favoured banning women from wearing a veil in universities, criticised the Socialist government's decision to take in 24,000 refugees as part of an EU-wide plan and called for immigration to be curbed.

He defended that line in an interview with France 2 television this week. "We need to reinstate firmness and authority in this country," he said. This was the right response to the "exasperation" that he said explained the strong FN showing in the first round, he added. But Sylvain Crepon, a political analyst who specialises on the far-right, said this was precisely what explained why The Republicans had failed to benefit from the Socialists' unpopularity. "Running after the FN's campaign themes, basically campaigning for the FN and then saying you are the barrier against the FN, how can that work?" he said.

The number of regions that the party wins in the run-off will be central to the party's post-mortem. Party insiders say Sarkozy had hoped a few months ago to score landslide victories in about 10 of the 13 regions, and had been planning to use this success to overhaul the party more to his liking. One of the biggest tests will be southeast France, where he backed the candidacy of Christian Estrosi, who in the first round came 14 percentage points behind 25-year-old Marion Marechal-Le Pen, the youngest family member of the FN political dynasty.

"We need to keep a cool head," Sarkozy told a meeting of party lawmakers on Tuesday, according to participants in the closed-doors discussion. "Now is not the time to discuss The Republicans' line. After Sunday, yes, we can have that debate." —Reuters

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PROVOCATION, VITRIOL IS TRUMP STRATEGY

By Michael Mathes

Donald Trump's incendiary new provocation on Muslims plays on American fears about extremists and Syrian refugees, in what analysts said Tuesday was a calculated move by the Republican presidential frontrunner ahead of the first primary votes. The real estate mogul unveiled the most extreme proposal of his rabble-rousing campaign for 2016 on Monday when he called for a "total and complete shutdown" of Muslims entering the United States.

Trump's call, made in response to last week's mass shooting in California by a Muslim couple believed to have been radicalized, drew stern condemnation from both Democrats and Republican rivals, from Muslim leaders around the world and the White House. But it was greeted with cheers from supporters at Trump's rally in South Carolina, many of whom are hostile to President Barack Obama's plans to take in 10,000 Syrian refugees in the coming year, and to immigration in general.

Trump's Muslim ban proposal was not an off-the-cuff remark; it was laid out in a timely press release from his campaign. Analysts argued that he was taking calculated steps to rally support before the first nomination votes in Iowa on Feb 1 and New Hampshire eight days later. "Strategically, what he's doing makes sense," said American University professor of government Jennifer Lawless.

Trump has already galvanized core conservative voters fearful of undocumented workers taking US jobs with his oft-repeated pledge to build a wall along the Mexican border. Lawless said it was unlikely Trump would be able to win the nomination "entirely on immigration." "But if you can link

immigration to terrorism and foreign policy and national security, then you have the potential to cast a much wider net." The question, she said, is whether Trump has overstepped the bounds.

'We're at War'

Widely denounced as "fascist," Trump's comments were seen as so far-fetched in singling out the entire Muslim community that they drove the Philadelphia Daily News to compare him to Adolf Hitler. "The New Furor," the paper blasted on its front page. "This is not conservatism," the Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan told reporters. "What was proposed yesterday is not what this party stands for, and more importantly, it's not what this country stands for."

The billionaire doubled down on his us-versus-them proposal in interviews Tuesday. "We are at war, get it through your head," he told CNN. "We need... a certain toughness in this country or we'll end up like a lot of other places and we're not going to have a country left." Trump has extended his lead in the Republican race amid controversy over his remarks on Muslims, with support from 27 percent of registered voters according to a Quinnipiac University survey last week.

His Muslim ban call could pay short-term political dividends, but in the long run, experts believe his overall voter ceiling remains low. David Siegel, political science professor at Duke University, said the proposal in itself was unlikely to win over the undecided. "I can't imagine many people are never seeing this before, and thinking 'Oh, well that's a fantastic idea,'" he said. But the controversy keeps Trump in the media - standing out from his rivals - which is crucial for a celebrity candidate counting on a fear factor among voters.

"People are risk-averse, terrorism seems like a risky and scary thing, and there's not a clear way of solving the problem," Siegel said. "So when someone comes along and offers these simple proposed solutions, even if they won't actually solve it right, it seems like it's a way out for them from the unnamed fear."

Against the Constitution

There are precedents for barring ethnic groups from entering the United States. Amid heightened anti-Chinese sentiment, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, and early 20th century immigration legislation barred Japanese, Indians and Southeast Asians from entering the country. Trump's call for banning people based on religious beliefs would likely run afoul of the US constitution, which bars discrimination on the basis of faith. But his backers might be turning a blind eye to that, said professor Robert Boatright of Clark University. "Trump's supporters care more about his attitude, and the sense that he can get things done, than they care about whether things he's proposing are legal or practical," Boatright said.

Christopher Arterton, a professor of political management at George Washington University, said Trump is appealing to voter fears that the United States is evolving towards a so-called "minority-majority" nation, in which minorities make up more than half the population. "There is sense of real concern, loss of cultural identity," he said. Trump appeared unmoved by the criticism. Told on CNN that France, which suffered a horrific attack last month that left 130 dead, has no intention of banning Muslims or halting refugee inflows, he responded: "Maybe they're going to have to." —AFP

NAIMI CUTS A LONELY FIGURE IN OIL BATTLE

By Rania El Gamal and Dmitry Zhdannikov

If Ali Al-Naimi were to review his time as Saudi oil minister, he might feel events had turned full circle. Two years after the long-serving technocrat's 1995 promotion to become only the kingdom's fourth oil minister in 40 years, Naimi pushed through an ill-fated Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries deal in Indonesia to lift supply just as Asia went into economic tailspin. Designed to punish Venezuela for flouting its output quota, the decision has gone down in OPEC lore as the most poorly-judged in cartel history. Oil prices halved to \$10 a barrel.

Nearly two decades later, Naimi, 80, is facing another supply crisis, driving oil prices to the lowest in six years - at below \$40 per barrel, more than \$100 below the 2008 pre-financial crisis peak. And as in Jakarta in 1997, today's crash has been orchestrated by Naimi himself with the same aim in mind: to defend Saudi market share against rivals - primarily this time against booming US shale oil supply. Throughout his career, Naimi has worked to avoid a repeat of the error of his legendary predecessor, Sheikh Zaki Yamani, who was dismissed in 1986 as he unsuccessfully tried to fight an oil price collapse by unilaterally reducing Saudi output.

Instead, through three cyclical downturns in oil prices, Naimi has always chosen to use Saudi Arabia's vast oil supply scale - Riyadh produces more than a tenth of global crude - and its financial muscle to drive out higher cost rivals. That survival-of-the-fittest strategy means refusing to cut output unilaterally, waiting to outlast other producers before they beg Riyadh to collaborate in joint supply curbs to rescue prices. "In everything Naimi did, he never wanted to repeat the Yamani mistake," said Gary Ross, a veteran OPEC watcher and the founder of US-based PIRA Energy.

"He was prepared to manage the market and cut only when he had reasonable partners," said Ross, who participated in the first and only successful oil cooperation talks

between OPEC and Russia in early 2000. "Today, from the Saudi perspective, they have no allies."

Recruiting Russia

Oil market watchers pore over Naimi's every word, and his past actions, to try to predict how the veteran tactician will act. He has always found a way to act jointly with other producers, rather than cut supply alone. After the 1997 oil slump, Naimi eventually steered OPEC out of trouble by engineering a series of cuts with arch-rival Iran supporting the strategy amid a thawing of

US shale oil supplies rocket.

That new supply source and China's slowdown have caused the latest downturn. Saudi oil sources say this time around Naimi will stick to his policy of high output levels, even if crude prices fall further, until he finds partners to cooperate. "If the price falls, it falls, you cannot do anything about it. But... others will be harmed greatly before we feel any pain," Naimi told the Middle Eastern Economic Survey last year in the most detailed explanation of his current thinking.

Naimi did not respond to requests to be interviewed for this article. But his track



Saudi Arabia's Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources Ali Al-Naimi speaks to journalists as he attends the 168th Ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries OPEC at the OPEC headquarters in Vienna on Dec 4, 2015. —AFP

political relations. Meanwhile, non-OPEC Mexico helped bring Venezuela on board.

In 2001, Naimi found new allies as, after months of standoff, leading OPEC rival Russia pledged to join cuts, later reneging on its promises. In 2008, all OPEC members quickly supported supply curbs led by Saudi as oil plunged in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. As a result, oil prices bounced back quickly, providing the capital for new investment in the controversial hydraulic fracturing technology that saw

record of holding firm until other countries join Saudi Arabia for joint action speaks volumes. "You can't beat experience, and Naimi has loads of it. He earned his wings in the 70s and 80s at Aramco and has now gone through three iterations of a crude price cycle: Early 1980s, late 1990s, and the current one," said Yasser Elguindi of Medley Global Advisors.

Isolated

The problem for Naimi is that he now appears more isolated than ever before.

Described by admirers and critics alike as a great technician, he has won respect in the industry for driving OPEC policy along business lines and, where possible, avoiding politics. Yet in the Middle East, politics and oil cannot always be kept apart. And when politics come into play, even the most adept negotiator may be prone to miscalculation. OPEC has weathered internal strife and conflict many times before: wars between members-Iran and Iraq in the 1980s, and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in the 1990s, both before Naimi took the helm of the Saudi oil ministry.

But the Sunni-Shia conflicts now setting Saudi Arabia and Iran at each other's throats in places like Syria and Yemen are unprecedented during Naimi's tenure as minister. In addition, predominantly Shia Iraq has become a de facto ally of Iran within OPEC since a US invasion ousted dictator Saddam Hussein, and both countries have enormous potential to increase supply. Outside OPEC, Russia is at odds with Riyadh in Middle Eastern conflicts, joining the war in Syria two months ago on the side of Iranian ally Bashar Al-Assad.

Meanwhile, many Saudis believe the US shale oil boom has prompted Washington to reassess its military commitment in the Middle East that protects Riyadh in return for a sure supply of crude. OPEC tensions spilled into the cartel's meeting last week when the group failed to agree a production target for the first time in decades, with Iran saying it would steeply increase supply after Western sanctions are lifted next year and Iraq saying it would boost exports too. "Some member countries produce as much as they wish," Iranian oil minister Bijan Zangeneh told reporters after the meeting in a clear reference to Saudi Arabia. "Iran will need no one's permission to raise its output."

One executive from a major oil company said that while Naimi's tactics against US shale were working and the low oil price was beginning to depress rivals' output, the Iranian comeback has complicated the picture: "Sometimes it feels that the Saudis have miscalculated how quickly Iran could clinch the nuclear deal and return to the markets." —Reuters

STURRIDGE OUT FOR SEVERAL WEEKS

LONDON: Liverpool's injury-prone striker Daniel Sturridge faces several weeks on the sidelines because of a hamstring problem, according to British media reports on Tuesday.

The England international sustained the injury after being introduced as a second-half substitute during Liverpool's 2-0 defeat at Newcastle United in the Premier League on Sunday. Sturridge, who had been out of action since the beginning of October due to a knee injury, marked his return to the starting lineup by scoring twice in the 6-1 rout of Southampton in the quarter-finals of the League Cup last Wednesday.

The 26-year-old former Chelsea and Manchester City forward was also restricted to just 12 appearances for Liverpool last season.

FIFA SIGNS 8-YEAR DEAL WITH CHINA'S ALIBABA E-AUTO

TOKYO: FIFA has signed an eight-year partnership deal with Alibaba E-Auto for the Club World Cup, reflecting China's vast marketing potential.

FIFA marketing director Thierry Weil announced the deal yesterday with the car manufacturing brand of Chinese e-commerce company Alibaba Group, the world's largest online and mobile commerce company. "China is not a market which FIFA is strong in yet to be honest," Weil said. "FIFA is especially looking into the market to help develop football in the market... China cannot be neglected because it's a huge market." Alibaba E-Auto branding will have a strong presence at both stadiums for this year's tournament which is being held in Japan from Dec. 10-20. The Club World Cup features the top clubs from FIFA's six continental confederations. European champion Barcelona and Copa Libertadores winner River Plate are the favorites to reach the final on Dec 20. The announcement of the deal comes at a time when FIFA was concerned about its capacity to keep and attract sponsors following a wide-ranging bribery scandal. —AP

BATH SIGN WALES NUMBER 8 FALETAU

LONDON: Wales number eight Taulupe Faletau has joined Bath from Newport Gwent Dragons, the English Premiership club announced yesterday after being rebuffed in an earlier attempt to sign him. The 25-year-old, who has played 52 times for Wales and featured in the British and Irish Lions' victorious 2013 tour of Australia, will arrive at the Recreation Ground next season. "The way Bath approach the game suits my style of play, which was a big factor in me wanting to join," Faletau told Bath's official website, citing the draw of working with Bath first-team coach Darren Edwards. "The opportunity to work with Darren again after doing so with Wales Under-20s and the Dragons was also too good to turn down. I would like to thank the Dragons for everything they've done for me in my career." — AFP



KEEPER TOM'S LEXUS RC F WINS ROUND 8 OF 2015 AUTOBACS SUPER GT 500 SERIES

TOCHIGI PREFECTURE: The No. 37 KeePer TOM'S Lexus RC F driven by Andrea Caldarelli and Ryo Hirakawa won the final round in the GT 500 class at the 2015 AUTOBACS SUPER GT series, which was held recently at the Twin Ring Motegi in Tochigi Prefecture, Japan. In tricky conditions with the track wet in the early stages and dry in the latter half, the team managed a creditable win while starting from pole position at the beginning of the race.

Rainfall about 30 minutes before the start of the race meant that the track was completely wet resulting in all the cars starting the race on rain tires. Midway through the race on the 18th lap, the rain stopped and sun came out which led some of the teams to bring their cars back into the pits for a driver change. A few laps later, a collision between two cars resulted in the Safety Car coming onto the track. At the end of the 31st lap, the Safety Car

returned to the pit lane and the race restarted.

In addition to the cars from eighth position downwards, which were effectively one lap behind considering the pit stop time, seven cars led by the No. 37 KeePer TOM'S RC F driven by Ryo Hirakawa and his competitors, were all bunched at the front with less than one second in track time between them. This effectively turned the last 20 laps into a sprint race. The race went down to the wire which thrilled the spectators in the stands. It remained a battle in which no car was able to make a decisive move. Holding strongly onto the lead, Hirakawa brought the No. 37 KeePer TOM'S RC F home to its second victory of the season.

"This was a great victory for the team and a reminder of the outstanding racing capabilities of the Lexus RC F," said Takayuki Yoshitsugu, Chief Representative, Middle East and North Africa Representative Office, TOY-

OTA Motor Corporation. "Motorsports has played a vital role in the evolution of car making at Lexus since our inception, giving us significant insights into our cars and their performance in extreme conditions on the race track. This in turn has helped us build ever better cars like the Lexus RC F. We also appreciate the support of our fans and their constant encouragement for our racing initiatives."

Speaking on the occasion, Andrea Caldarelli, said, "I'm very happy that we got this win. We were able to run very well in today's race. The track was wet at the start, so we had trouble with the tire choice, and when we chose the hard tires, things were a bit tough at first. Despite that, I was able to open up a gap over the rest of the field by pushing as hard as I could. The timing of the pit stop also went very well, and I think that was an important factor."



YOUNG AND ALONSO LEAD DUBAI LADIES MASTERS

DUBAI: Chinese LPGA Tour star Feng Shanshan, the highest ranked player in the field at world number six, started her defence of the Dubai Ladies Masters title in style, firing a bogey-free five-under par 67 yesterday.

The two-time champion was just one shot behind Liz Young of England, who made full use of the perfect morning scoring conditions, and Spain's Carmen Alonso, who was playing her first event since September as she helped her mother recover from lung cancer.

At the Majlis course of Emirates Golf Club, the leaders fired rounds of six-under par 66 each in the 500,000 euros season-ending championship on the Ladies European Tour.

England's 52-year-old Laura Davis rolled back the years to be tied fourth at four-under par 68 along with Spain's Elisa Serrania. Feng, who had three birdies on the front nine and two on the back, said: "I would say today, my ball striking was pretty good, but I didn't really put the balls really close to the holes. Most of my birdie chances were like maybe above 15 feet."

Alonso, who was in the second last group, said she wasn't even sure of playing golf again as her mother battled with lung cancer. Her last tournament was in Sweden in September and she missed the cut in all five events she played this season.

But the 66 was Alonso's way of celebrating after her mother was given the all-clear following a procedure in October. "Your family is the most important thing in your life. I did not know if I would play again or even play this tournament. But now that she is fine, I am happy and I played really well," said Alonso, who will be making the trip to the Qualifying School unless she wins this week.

Young, who is 28th in the Order of Merit, credited her round to her putting. "I just had 25 putts. Considering my Tour average this year is 31, that was pretty good," said Young, who started on the back nine of the golf course and was five-under par at the turn.

In the battle for the Rookie of the Year honours, the Danish duo of Emily Kristine Pedersen and Nanna Koerstz Madsen were neck and neck after 16 holes at four-under when it changed towards the end.

Pedersen, winner of Women's Indian Open, and the leading rookie, managed to stay ahead after making just one bogey on the final hole, while Madsen slipped one shot behind at two-under par after closing with back-to-back bogeys. —AFP



DUBAI: Liz Young of England putts on the eighth green during the round one of the Dubai Ladies Masters golf tournament in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, yesterday. —AFP

ENERGISED BY WINS WATSON, GARCIA HUNTING THAI TITLE

CHONBURI: Two-time Masters champion Bubba Watson and Spanish star Sergio Garcia, both fresh from exhilarating recent wins, are hungry for victory at today's \$1 million Thailand Golf Championship.

World number four Watson played superbly last week to claim the Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas. Meanwhile Garcia held his nerve in a thrilling four-way play-off in the Asian Tour's Ho Tran Open in Vietnam his first win in nearly two years. The Thai tournament offers Watson the chance to break his duck at the Amata Spring Country Club, while Garcia is returning to a course that has been good to him—he won here in 2013.

In a strong field, defending champion Lee Westwood also returns, hunting a third win in his fifth edition of the Asian Tour's flagship event. It is the big-hitting Watson's fourth appearance in the tournament and he is desperate to add the trophy to his impressive haul—which includes taking the celebrated Green Jacket in 2012 and 2014.

"I love playing this course and I love Thailand," said Watson, who last year gave his prize-winnings to a local charity. "The golf course is beautiful and the fans treat us nice." Coming back on statements he made in the Bahamas that if he became took top spot he would quit playing, the affable Watson said he would probably stop playing on the PGA Tour if that happened and just enter occasional tournaments.

But he quickly played down the prospect saying: "let's be honest, I don't think it is very likely that I will become No 1." Garcia who is currently ranked 12th in the world was pleased with his

improved form after a relatively dry spell.

He said the nail-biting win in Vietnam, secured on the second playoff hole, was a big confidence boost going into Thailand.

Formidable line-up

The formidable line-up also includes former US Open champion Martin Kaymer of Germany and England's Ryder Cup star Westwood, who has soaked up the success in Thailand.

"I always seem to play well in Asia," said Westwood. "I love this course which is in great condition again and I am really looking forward to this tournament." Kaymer was runner-up to Westwood last year and plans to go one better this time. "I'm really determined to take the silverware home with me this time," he said.

Also in the field is European Ryder Cup captain Darren Clarke, who won the 2011 Open, and Denmark's most successful golfer Thomas Bjorn. Leading the strong Asian challenge is the ever-green Thai Thongchai Jaidee who at the age of 46 has enjoyed a terrific year during which he won his seventh European title, rising to a career-high 28th in the world rankings.

"This is a great event and it's tremendous to see all the stars here," said the popular Thai. "I would love to win this event in front of my home crowd." Another rapidly-improving Thai, Kiradech Aphibarnrat, who won two European titles this year, will also be a player to watch.

There is also an impressive Indian representation led by veteran star Jeev Singh who captains Asia at the EurAsia Cup next month. —AFP

IOC APPROVES CYCLING VENUES FOR 2020 TOKYO OLYMPICS

LAUSANNE: After months of negotiations, the IOC yesterday approved the cycling venues for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, including the cost-cutting move of indoor track events to a facility located two hours from the host city.

The International Olympic Committee said moving track cycling from Tokyo to an existing velodrome in Izu would save \$100 million in construction costs, bringing to \$1.8 billion the total savings from a series of venue changes for the games.

The international cycling union had resisted the move to Izu, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) from Tokyo, saying it would detract from the Olympic experience for athletes and fans. But the UCI eventually agreed to the change, which was approved by the IOC executive board.

The IOC said the Izu velodrome will undergo

"significant refurbishment" and seating capacity will be increased. Mountain bike events will also take place at an existing course in Izu, adjacent to the velodrome and with Mount Fuji as a backdrop. "The athlete experience will be guaranteed, as all athletes and team officials whose events will be at Izu will have the option to stay in the main Athletes village before and after their competition," the IOC said. "During the competitions, they will stay at a satellite village located close to the event venues."

Road races and time trials will take place in Tokyo, with the start and finish at the Imperial Palace Garden. BMX events will be held at a purpose-built temporary facility at Ariake in the center of Tokyo with 5,000 seats. Track cycling had originally been planned for a temporary venue in Ariake. —AP

PONTING URGES DAY-NIGHT TEST FOR STRUGGLING HOBART

HOBART: Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting yesterday said a day-night match could help secure Hobart's status as a Test host and rounded on "unfair" criticism of the Tasmanian capital. Speculation has risen over Hobart's future as a Test venue amid fears that just 10,000 fans will attend the first four days of the first Test against the West Indies, starting today.

Hobart has hosted 11 Tests since its first against Sri Lanka in 1989, but the city is not on the annual rota of Test venues like the mainland Australian capital cities.

Ponting, who was honoured by the unveiling of a statue at his old Bellerive Oval home ground Wednesday, said that criticism of Hobart as a Test venue was unjust.

"I think some of the criticism has been a little unfair. What I would like to see happen here is that Hobart and Tasmania get a Test match every year,"

Ponting told reporters.

"It's really hard to make assumptions on Tasmanian cricket or people watching Test cricket in Australia when there is no continuity where the games are.

"The Tasmanian public are being judged on Test matches against lower-ranked teams. Let's have an Ashes Test here, let's have Tests against South Africa and India here and then we can start making some judgments and comparisons about other venues around Australia."

After 123,000 fans flocked to the first ever day-night Test in Adelaide last month, Ponting was asked if a Test under floodlights would reinvigorate Hobart.

"If that is what it's going to take down here, then absolutely," he said. "If the attendances are down over the next few days down here, it might be what Hobart needs and it's already got unbelievable world-class facilities and lights."

Ponting, who is a member of the MCC World Cricket committee, said the future of Tests was one of the big questions facing the sport. "I've been talking for the last few weeks with the World Cricket committee about Test match attendances around the world and how they are starting to fall away, which is why we saw a day-night Test match in Adelaide," he said. "Australia is strong, but when we go to places like Sri Lanka, India and the West Indies that's when you start to see those numbers drop off," he added. Ponting said a contributing factor was the recent retirement of some of cricket's leading stars.

"The other thing we have to think about is the real star players that were around the game five or six years ago have all retired at once," he said. "There's no (Jacques) Kallis, there's no (Brian) Lara, there's no (Sachin) Tendulkar. These guys have all left the game in a quite recent period of time." —AFP



HOBART: Former Australian cricket captain Ricky Ponting unveils a statue of himself as Australia prepare for the first cricket Test match against the West Indies in Hobart yesterday. — AFP



Jacob Philip (ex-president CETAA) presenting the man of the match award to Nithin (KEA).



SVK Nair (ex-president CETAA) giving away the man of the match trophy to Mahesh (AECK).

AECK AND KEA TO MEET IN FINAL

KUWAIT: The first semi-final of the 18th Prof Ramachandran Memorial Cricket Tournament (RMC) conducted by College of Engineering Trivandrum Alumni Association (CETAA) saw AECK meeting TKM (both former champions).

Opting to bat first, AECK got off to their usual rousing start but when left-handed Shameer (12) fell with the score at 21, TKM managed to slow down the run rate with their steady and determined attack. Only Mahesh (33 - man of the match) kept the score board ticking. Wickets fell at regular intervals mainly due to some brilliant catches and all out for 85 runs in their 15 overs. Much was expected of the strong AECK batting line up but TKM with their all round bowling and excellent fielding catching restricted AECK to a manageable score. Riju, Rahul, Mukesh (2 wickets each), Sree Kumar, Ajmal (1 wicket each) and Anfar bowled their heart out for TKM.

In reply, TKM lost Ziad early, but Isaac (16) and Rahul (25) put on 28 runs for the 2nd wicket but could not maintain the required run rate. When the 2nd wicket that of Isaac fell in the 10th over the score was only 33 with the required rate climbing to alarming proportions. And with the AECK bowlers not willing to relinquish their stranglehold, the later TKM batsmen lost their wickets cheaply in an attempt to match the required run rate. TKM could reach only 69 for the loss of 8 wickets at the end of their allotted overs leav-

ing AECK deserving winners by 16 runs.

In the second semifinals between last years finalists, KEA won an important toss and elected to bat but lost opener Govind in the 1st over caught behind of Sandeep without a run on bat first. Only 10 runs came by the end of the 3rd over. Thereafter KEA took the initiative with TEC unusually being lax in their bowling and fielding. Nithin (57 - man of the match) and Ajin (36 - dropped early on) took control putting away the loose balls and posted the 1st century partnership (108) of the tournament enabling KEA to reach an imposing 121 for the loss of 4 wickets. TEC conceding 23 extras was an indication of their off color performance in the field.

In reply, TEC was never in the hunt after losing 3 top order batsmen for 8 runs by the 3rd over. Gireesh (30) fought a lone battle but could not break free. TEC were all out for a disappointing 59 runs in the 11th over leaving KEA convincing winners by 62 runs. For KEA, Ajin stood out with 2 magnificent catches in the outfield. And Nasif (3 for 8), Ajin (2 for 8) and Nithin (2 for 1) bowled with purpose spoiling any hopes of TEC making a fight. In the final on 11th Dec at 8:30 am, it remains to be seen if KEA can turn the tables against AECK who had beaten them convincingly in the league stage. Anyway, a keen contest is on the cards with the prize distribution scheduled for 11 am.

INDIA'S DHAWAN HAULED UP FOR SUSPECT ACTION

NEW DELHI: India's Shikhar Dhawan has been reported for a suspect bowling action and will need to undergo tests within 14 days, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said yesterday. Dhawan, 30, an opening batsman who rarely bowls, was reported after the fourth Test against South Africa in New Delhi on Monday when the defiant tourists were attempting to salvage a draw.

As the South Africans stonewalled the Indian bowlers on the final day, frustrated skipper Virat Kohli brought on Dhawan who bowled just three overs for nine runs. India eventually won the match by 337 runs and sealed the four-Test series 3-0.

"Dhawan's bowling action will now be scrutinised further under the ICC process relating to suspected illegal bowling

actions," the ICC said in a statement. Dhawan, who bowls off-spins, will be allowed to play on till the results of the tests are declared, the sport's governing body said. Dhawan has made 1,308 runs in 19 Tests but has never taken a wicket from the nine overs he has bowled in those matches.

The ICC launched a crackdown against suspect actions in June last year, leading to several leading bowlers being reported. Other bowlers who have been up hauled up include Pakistan's Saeed Ajmal and Mohammad Hafeez, Bangladesh's Sohag Gazi, New Zealand's Kane Williamson, Sri Lanka's Sachithra Senanayake and Tharindu Kaushal, and Zimbabwe's Prosper Utseya and Malcolm Waller. —AFP

DOPING, CAIRNS QUESTIONS SHROUD FIRST TEST BUILDUP

DUNEDIN: A positive doping test and questions over a contentious criminal trial in London have threatened to overshadow the first test between New Zealand and Sri Lanka, which begins today. The match in Dunedin was supposed to contain the storyline of a Sri Lanka side in transition and a New Zealand team looking to build on the momentum from their series in Australia before a return clash at home next February.

Instead, news broke on Tuesday that Sri Lankan wicketkeeper Kusal Perera had tested positive earlier this year for a banned substance and was forced to return home. Coach Jerome Jayaratne told reporters that Perera had taken medication for an insect bite on his foot, with the belief that the treatment was not on the banned list of substances.

Then on Wednesday, home captain Brendon McCullum was subjected to questions concerning the recent Chris Cairns criminal trial, where the former all-rounder was acquitted of perjury and perverting the course of justice charges.

McCullum was one of two former team mates, along with self-confessed match-fixer Lou Vincent, who gave evidence against Cairns in the trial, accusing him of twice asking him to fix matches.

The 34-year-old McCullum, who will play

his 98th test at University Oval, did his best to tone down the outcome of the trial and his role as a witness.

NEW ZEALAND FAVOURITES

"It was quite a big deal in New Zealand cricket but I think it's time to move on," McCullum told reporters in Dunedin. "This isn't the time or place to dive into those types of discussions, that was the court room in London and it's time to move on," he repeated. Despite suffering a 2-0 loss to Australia, McCullum's side head into the Sri Lankan fixtures as heavy favourites, having been unlucky not to have snatched a share of the spoils across the Tasman as they improved the longer the series progressed. As well as the dashing strokeplay of Perera at number seven, the visitors have also lost pace bowler Dhammika Prasad to a back injury after their only warm-up match in Queenstown ended in a draw. The side were already in transition after the international retirements in the last 12 months of two of the game's all-time greats in Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara.

Such a blow, of losing the experience gained in accumulating more than 20,000 test runs between the pair, would rip the heart out of most teams and Jayaratne has acknowl-



Brendon McCullum

edged that his side are on a steep learning curve.

Their biggest concern will be the fact that only three of their batsmen, Dimuth Karunaratne, skipper Angelo Mathews and Dinesh Chandimal, have batted in New Zealand in a test before. The inexperienced top seven will also come under fire from new-ball pair Tim Southee and Trent Boult, who were building some rhythm against Australia and are likely to relish the more bowler-friendly conditions at home. — Reuters



HOBART: West Indies player Darren Bravo takes a catch as the team trains ahead of the first cricket Test match against Australia in Hobart yesterday. — AFP

HOLDER SAYS WRITTEN-OFF WINDIES CAN STUN AUSSIES

HOBART: Skipper Jason Holder yesterday said his embattled West Indies players must focus on their individual gameplans if they want to pull off a stunning win against Australia in the first Test in Hobart.

Amid incredulity that the West Indies have a chance against Steve Smith's Australians, after a run of woeful results, Holder challenged his young team to get their heads down and fight.

It looks a tall order for the once-mighty Caribbeans to turn things around when the first of three Tests gets underway today.

The West Indies are ranked above only Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. They have won just four of their last 20 Tests and last won a Test in Australia in 1997.

But Windies pace great and now team bowling consultant Curtly Ambrose has predicted a shock victory, and Holder said that is possible if they execute their plans.

"We are very upbeat about this series. It's a fresh series for us, so we have to be positive going into it," Holder told a match-eve media conference. "If we realistically do what we have to do in terms of executing our roles then any-

thing is possible on any given day.

"The onus has to be upon each player to perform their role and execute their plans. Once we do that we can put together a strong collective effort."

Doubts about the Windies redoubled after they were humiliated by a rookie Cricket Australia XI by 10 wickets in their only warm-up game. Ambrose rebuked the team in the wake of the defeat and Holder said the players have taken his stinging words to heart.

'WE CAN PUT PRESSURE ON'

"Curtly shed a lot of light on where we are at this current time and how we played that warm-up game," Holder said.

"We're in that situation where we have to just put that behind us," Holder also tried to turn the heat back on to the Australians, by highlighting some perceived weaknesses.

"If we can get into their middle order as quickly as possible, that will be better off for us," he said. "Davey Warner is coming off a very good series against New Zealand, and (with) Steve Smith they scored the bulk of the runs in the last

series played.

"So if we can target them in a sense of getting them out as early as possible then we can put pressure on their middle order."

Holder said the reinstatement of Phil Simmons as coach, after he was suspended for the October-November Sri Lanka tour in a row over selection, was also a big plus.

"It makes a significant difference. He is implementing his ways and I think the guys have really bought into what he has brought," Holder said.

"Losing him during the Sri Lanka series was a very big loss especially at that stage as I was practically on my way to the airport when I got the news he was not going to be joining us. "That really shattered the dressing room so it's just very good to have him back and I'm sure he will be on the guys to put things in place and get ready for this game."

West Indies team (from) - Kraigg Brathwaite, Rajendra Chandrika, Darren Bravo, Marlon Samuels, Jermaine Blackwood, Denesh Ramdin, Jason Holder (capt), Carlos Brathwaite, Devendra Bishoo, Kemar Roach, Jerome Taylor, Shannon Gabriel. — AFP

FEDERER PARTS WAYS WITH EDBERG, BRINGS LJUBICIC ON BOARD

LONDON: Roger Federer has rejigged his coaching team for next year by parting company with Stefan Edberg and bringing Ivan Ljubicic on board, the 17-times grand slam champion said yesterday.

Former world number one Edberg had worked as part of a team led by Federer's long-term coach Severin Luthi since January 2014, a period in which the 34-year-old revived his career with-

out adding to his tally of grand slam titles. "After two very successful years, I would like to thank Stefan Edberg, my childhood idol, for agreeing to join my team," Federer said in Facebook post.

"It was a dream come true. Although it was supposed to only be for 2014, Stefan was great and agreed to extend the partnership through this year which I really appreciated.

"He taught me so much and his influ-

ence on my game will remain. He will always be a part of my team.

"Severin Luthi, who I have been working with since 2008, will continue to be my main coach and he will be joined by Ivan Ljubicic," Federer added.

Croatian Ljubicic, who retired in 2012 after a long career which peaked when he reached number three in the world, coached Canadian Milos Raonic for two years until last month.

Swede Edberg released a statement to the ATP thanking Federer for what he described as a "wonderful two years".

"It became very clear from the start that this was going to be a special partnership, working with the greatest ambassador tennis has ever seen," the six-times grand slam champion said.

"It was exciting for me to be back out on tour and to see that the sport has made so much progress.

"After an amazing 2014, I decided to continue on for another year, but with a clear understanding that it would be my last year given the time commitment."

"I believe Roger still has a lot left to give to the sport of tennis and is capable of winning the big events," Federer, who finished 2015 ranked third in the world after winning six titles, will start next season at the Brisbane International in early January. —Reuters

'REPUGNANT' FURY NOT WELCOME AT CEREMONY

LONDON: Newly crowned world heavyweight champion Tyson Fury was in the spotlight again yesterday as Britain's Sports Journalists' Association (SJA) told him to stay away from its annual awards ceremony.



Tyson Fury

Fury has come under fire over his views on women and homosexuality, with over 120,000 people signing a petition calling for him to be removed from the shortlist for the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year award.

He is being investigated by Greater Manchester Police after a member of the public reported him for committing a "hate crime" and the SJA has now withdrawn an invitation for him to attend next week's British Sports Awards.

"The officers of the SJA took the decision reluctantly, since the British Sports Awards seek to recognise the year's great sporting achievements, which include Fury's heavyweight world title win," the SJA said in a statement.

"But the decision was made as a consequence of threats made by Fury against at least one sports journalist, an SJA member, who has written about the boxer's repug-

nant comments on homosexuality and women."

The journalist in question, Oliver Holt, conducted an interview with Fury for the Mail on Sunday in which the boxer likened homosexuality to paedophilia. Fury, who is a born-again Christian, said that three things needed to be accomplished "before the devil comes home."

"One of them is homosexuality being legal in countries, one of them is abortion and the other is paedophilia," he said. "Who would have thought in the 50s and 60s that those first two would be legalised?"

After the article was published, Fury appeared in a video published online in which he suggested Holt would be beaten up by members of his entourage.

Fury has also been accused of sexism, having notably stated that a woman's place was "in the kitchen and on her back". The Manchester-born boxer, who is of traveller heritage and styles himself as the 'Gypsy King', has denied being homophobic or sexist and says that his views merely reflect what is written in the Bible.

Fury stunned long-standing champion Wladimir Klitschko in Duesseldorf at the end of last month to win the WBA, IBF and WBO world heavyweight belts.

But the International Boxing Federation has confirmed that Fury has been stripped of its version of the belt for electing to grant Klitschko a rematch rather than face mandatory IBF challenger Vyacheslav Glazkov.

Fury took to Twitter yesterday, publishing a picture of him celebrating victory over Klitschko that carried the message: "Take my belts, sign your petitions, but you will never take this night from me."

The British Boxing Board of Control was due to hold a meeting on Wednesday when Fury's recent remarks were expected to be discussed. — AFP



PHILADELPHIA: New York Islanders' Kyle Okposo scores a goal against Philadelphia Flyers' Michal Neuvirth in a shootout during an NHL hockey game, Tuesday, in Philadelphia. New York won 4-3 in a shootout. — AP

OKPOSO, HALAK LIFT ISLANDERS PAST FLYERS IN SHOOTOUT

PHILADELPHIA: Kyle Okposo scored the only goal of the shootout, Frans Nielsen scored twice in regulation and the New York Islanders beat the Philadelphia Flyers 4-3 Tuesday night. Jaroslav Halak had 43 saves through overtime and stopped all three Flyers attempts in the tiebreaker, and Brock Nelson also scored to help the Islanders win for the sixth time in eight games (6-0-2). Ryan White, Pierre-Edouard Bellemare and Claude Giroux scored for Philadelphia Steve Mason gave up three goals on 10 shots before he was replaced about midway through the second period, and Michal Neuvirth had 16 saves. Okposo, New York's second skater in the shootout, using a stellar move to pull the puck onto his forehead before roofing it over Neuvirth.

KINGS 3, BLUE JACKETS 2, OT

Alec Martinez had an assist on the tying goal and then scored the winner at 4:33 of overtime to rally Los Angeles past Columbus. Christian Ehrhoff and Jeff Carter also scored and Jonathan Quick had 21 saves for the Kings, who won their fifth straight and improved to 6-0-1 in their last seven games. Scott Hartnell and Matt Calvert scored for Columbus, which lost goalie Sergei Bobrovsky to an apparent injury in the third period. Bobrovsky had 33 saves and Curtis McElhinney stopped five of seven shots he faced. Carter tied it for with 1:27 left in regulation, sliding home his 11th of the season in a scramble near the crease with Quick pulled for an extra skater. In overtime, Dustin Brown passed to Nick Shore on the left side, and he sent it to Martinez at the back door.

CAPITALS 3, RED WINGS 2, SO

T.J. Oshie and Evgeny Kuznetsov scored in the shootout, lifting Washington past Detroit. Alex Ovechkin tied the score at 10:51 of the third period, and the Capitals killed a Red Wings power play in overtime to force the shootout. Oshie began by beating Red Wings goaltender Jimmy Howard, and Gustav Nyquist was denied by Braden Holtby on the other end. Kuznetsov followed by with an easy goal off a deke to his right and Pavel Datsyuk missed to provide the Capitals with the win. Justin Williams also scored for Washington. Howard stopped 38 shots. Despite the loss, the Red Wings earned a point in an 11th straight game (8-0-3), their longest streak since 2010. Henrik Zetterberg and Tomas Jurco scored for Detroit.

MAPLE LEAFS 3, DEVILS 2, SO

Tyler Bozak and Nazem Kadri scored in the shootout, and Garret Sparks made 25 saves to lead Toronto. P.A. Parenteau and James van Riemsdyk scored in regulation for the Maple Leafs. Kadri converted in the fifth round of the tiebreaker for the win. Lee Stempniak and Kyle Palmieri scored for the Devils, and Corey Schneider stopped 36 shots. Mike Cammalleri tallied in the shootout. The Leafs went 1 for 5 on the power play while the Devils scored twice

on five chances with the man advantage.

STARS 6, HURRICANES 5

Patrick Sharp scored on the power play with 19 seconds remaining to lift Dallas. Sharp took a pass from John Klingberg above the right faceoff circle and sent a slap shot off Carolina goalie Eddie Lack and into the net. The Hurricanes had rallied with four third-period goals to tie the score with 6:43 remaining. Dallas' Jamie Benn scored his league-leading 19th goal and added three assists. He combined with linemates Tyler Seguin (goal, 3 assists) and Valeri Nichuskin (goal, 2 assists) for three goals and eight assists. Patrick Eaves and Johnny Oduya also scored, and Klingberg also had three assists. Justin Faulk had two goals, and Jaccob Slavin, Phillip Di Giuseppe and Jeff Skinner also scored for Carolina.

SENATORS 4, PANTHERS 2

Mike Hoffman scored the go-ahead goal to help Ottawa get its third win in four games. Kyle Turris and Zack Smith also scored for the Senators and Mark Stone had three assists. Jean-Gabriel Pageau added a short-handed empty net goal with 2:31 left and Craig Anderson finished with 25 saves.

Reilly Smith and Logan Shaw scored for the Panthers and Roberto Luongo stopped 20 shots. Florida lost its second straight after winning five in a row. Luongo lost his third in a row to the Senators after winning the previous 10.

BLUES 4, COYOTES 1

Vladimir Tarasenko and Alexander Steen scored in the second period to help the St. Louis Blues rally for a 4-1 win over the Arizona Coyotes on Tuesday night. Kevin Shattenkirk and David Backes also scored and Jake Allen made 22 saves as the Blues snapped a three-game losing streak.

Steve Downie scored for the Coyotes and Mike Smith stopped 18 shots.

The Blues had scored just three goals in their previous three games, going 0-2-1. St. Louis was 2-2-3 over the past seven and 4-5-3 over its last 12. They have now won six straight against the Coyotes and are 9-0-1 in the last 10 meetings.

BLACKHAWKS 4, PREDATORS 1

Patrick Kane extended his points streak to 23 games with an empty-net goal with 1:36 left, and Chicago beat Nashville. Teuvo Teravainen and Andrew Shaw each had a goal and an assist for the Blackhawks, and Corey Crawford made 36 saves. Dennis Rasmussen scored in his NHL debut. Kane's 17th goal was his 600th NHL point. The winger, who entered as the NHL's leading scorer, has 14 goals and 23 assists during his franchise-record streak. Eric Nystrom scored for Nashville in its first meeting with Chicago since the Blackhawks won their first-round playoff series in six games last spring. Pekka Rinne blocked 20 shots for the Predators, who were coming off a 3-2 victory at Boston on Monday night.

FLAMES 4, SHARKS 2

Mikael Backlund had a goal and an assist to lead Calgary to its seventh straight home win. Markus Granlund, Sean Monahan and Michael Frolik also scored, and Dennis Wideman and Mark Giordano had two assists for the Flames. Karri Ramo, who has started three straight games and 15 of the past 16, made 31 saves to earn his ninth win of the season. Chris Tierney and Joe Thornton scored for the Sharks, losers of four straight. Logan Couture made his return to the San Jose lineup after missing 23 games with a broken right fibula. He had an assist on Thornton's goal. —AP

NHL Results/Standings

Los Angeles 3, Columbus 2 (OT); NY Islanders 4, Philadelphia 3 (SO); Washington 3, Detroit 2 (SO); Toronto 3, New Jersey 2 (SO); Ottawa 4, Florida 2; St. Louis 4, Arizona 1; Chicago 4, Nashville 1; Dallas 6, Carolina 5; Calgary 4, San Jose 2.

Western Conference						Central Division						Metropolitan Division					
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Dallas	21	5	2	99	75	44	Detroit	15	8	5	73	72	35				
St. Louis	16	8	4	72	68	36	Ottawa	15	8	5	90	83	35				
Chicago	15	9	4	78	70	34	Boston	14	9	3	85	75	31				
Minnesota	14	7	5	70	64	33	Florida	13	11	4	71	70	30				
Nashville	14	9	5	73	75	33	Tampa Bay	13	12	3	66	65	29				
Winnipeg	13	13	2	76	85	28	Buffalo	11	14	3	67	78	25				
Colorado	12	15	1	77	81	25	Toronto	10	13	5	64	76	25				
Pacific Division						Eastern Conference											
Los Angeles	18	8	1	71	57	37	Atlantic Division										
San Jose	14	13	0	72	72	28	Montreal	19	6	3	94	63	41				
Vancouver	10	11	8	77	81	28											
Arizona	13	14	1	75	89	27											
Anaheim	11	12	5	55	68	27											
Calgary	11	14	2	69	96	24											
Edmonton	11	15	2	71	82	24											

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

PARA GAMES

TALES OF INSPIRATION AS CURTAIN FALLS IN SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE: Singapore brought down the curtain on Southeast Asia's biggest ever para sports event yesterday after a week of competition celebrating the achievements and potential of people with disabilities.

Football superstar David Beckham was among the spectators, declaring he was inspired by the 1,200 athletes from 10 countries that competed in 15 sports at the ASEAN Para Games.

Singapore pulled out all the stops, housing the athletes at a luxury hotel in the city centre and hosting the competition at the new, \$1 billion Sports Hub complex. Singapore's Jason Chee, 31, provided one of the many tales of inspiration after he overcame a horrific naval accident to win gold in the men's team table tennis.

Chee's success comes just three years after he lost both legs, his left arm and three fingers on his right hand after being caught between a berthing rope and motorised winch on a navy vessel.

Earlier Thai teenager Anchaya Ketkeaw, who after being born with a deformed right hand was bullied in school and told she would amount to nothing, won seven gold medals.

"In Thailand, people tend to look down on the disabled. But my mother always told me not to be ashamed of my disability," the Straits Times quoted her as saying.

Singaporean swimmer Yip Pin Xiu, 23, broke the world record in the women's 50m backstroke, clocking 1min 1.61sec to lower the mark set by China's Feng Yazhu at the London Paralympics.

Beckham watched Singapore play Thailand at football on Sunday and posted a video on his Instagram with the caption: "The level of skill in this game is incredible." "It is inspiring to see athletes pursue their

passion with such great desire," added the former England captain.

'Nothing is impossible'

The UN's regional development arm ESCAP said on its website that one in six people in the Asia-Pacific region-about 650 million people-has some form of disability and tended to be "unseen, unheard and uncounted". The athletes travelled to the Games venue on Singapore's metro train system to allow them to interact with the public and raise their visibility. Wheelchair-bound hospital administrator Leslie Chia, 48, a spectator, was among those who said the event had shone a light on people with disabilities. "It has created a lot of awareness. Awareness is one thing, I think it's very inspiring. It has really shown people that nothing is impossible," she told AFP.

Singapore chief of mission Raja Singh said the games exceeded his expectations. "Next is to encourage people with disability to come and play the sport and there were a lot of people with disability who came to watch the game. That is very encouraging," he said. Zainal Abu Zarin, president of the ASEAN Para Sports Federation, described the Singapore edition as the "best games ever in the 15-year history of our games".

The games closed late yesterday, with the torch extinguished. Malaysia will host the games in 2017. About 400 performers put on a spectacular musical show at the iconic Marina Bay Sands casino complex for the closing ceremonies. Thailand topped the medals table with 95 golds, ahead of Indonesia (81) and Malaysia (52).

The ASEAN Para Games is now in its eighth edition after starting in 2001 in Malaysia, when about 400 athletes took part. — AFP



SINGAPORE: This photo taken on December 8, 2015 shows Singaporean table tennis para athlete Jason Chee eyeing a shot against Thailand's Natthawut Thinathet during the men's singles table tennis final at the 8th ASEAN Para Games in Singapore. Singapore brings down the curtain on Southeast Asia's biggest ever para sports event yesterday after a week of competition celebrating the achievements and potential of people with disabilities. — AFP

FINAL PLACES UP FOR GRABS IN EUROPA LEAGUE

PARIS: AFP Sports picks out the key ties in Europa League action heading into the sixth and final round of group matches today.

Fenerbahce (TUR) v Celtic (SCO)

Group A is still in the balance as Istanbul side Fenerbahce can both be knocked out or top the group when they take on eliminated Scottish club Celtic in Turkey. Ajax must beat qualified Norwegian club Molde and hope Fenerbahce lose if they want to snatch the second spot in the pool. Fenerbahce midfielder Mehmet Topal explained the importance of the occasion. "The Celtic game is one of the most important of the season for us," he told Uefa.com. "There's a chance we could top the group if we beat them." Molde come into matchday six with 10 points and are safely into the knockout stages while Fenerbahce are on eight, Ajax six and Celtic two.

Slovan Liberec (CZE) v Marseille (FRA)

The Czech Cup holders know they must beat former finalists Marseille in Liberec to join Portuguese side Braga as the two qualified clubs from Group F. The Velodrome side can still pinch top spot in the group if they win in the Czech Republic and Braga lose to already eliminated Groningen but a draw will also take Michel's side through. Liberec coach Jindrich Tрпиšovsky put matters into perspective after the team's troubles last season. "After last season, when Slovan avoided relegation only towards the end of the campaign, a game against Marseille with a chance to qualify for the knockout stages feels like science fiction."

Sporting Lisbon (POR) v Besiktas (TUR)

UEFA Cup runners-up in 2005, Sporting Lisbon have given themselves a chance to go through after winning in Moscow in the last round against Lokomotiv. A win against Besiktas will take them through to the last 32 while the Turks only need a draw. "We achieved what we needed to in Moscow - we had to win to keep fighting and we did," said Sporting coach Jorge Jesus. "Now we face a real final against Besiktas." Lokomotiv are currently second on eight points and one behind Besiktas while Sporting are on seven. The Russian outfit can guarantee their passage with a victory while a draw would also be enough unless Besiktas lose, in which case overall goal difference would determine which of those two teams advances. However, defeat against already eliminated Skenderbeu could seriously damage Lokomotiv's chances.

Tottenham (ENG) v Monaco (FRA)

Ligue 1 side Monaco cannot control their own destiny and need a win at already qualified Tottenham to overtake second-placed Anderlecht who come into Group J action with a one-point advantage. The Belgian side can still go through with a draw at home to newcomers Qarabag but should the Azerbaijani club win and Monaco not, they will snatch second spot having obtained more points in matches among the three teams in question. "We have a chance of qualifying, but, frankly, it is only a slim one," said Qarabag coach Gurban Gurbanov. "It will be very difficult - we don't have enough experience at this level." Spurs need a point to guarantee top spot at White Hart Lane. — AFP

ATLETICO TOP GROUP C AFTER WIN OVER BENFICA

LISBON: Atletico Madrid clinched top spot in Champions League Group C after winning 2-1 at Benfica who only sprung into life in the last 15 minutes of Tuesday's match. Saul Niguez and Luciano Vietto put Diego Simeone's side 2-0 up inside an hour before Kostantinos Mitroglou replied to give hope to Benfica with the Portuguese needing a draw to claim first place in the table.

Both teams had already qualified but victory meant Atletico finished with 13 points from six games, three ahead of Tuesday's opponents. Galatasaray drew 1-1 with Astana of Kazakhstan to end up in third place and progress to the Europa League. Atletico defender Diego Godin had a goal disallowed while Benfica goalkeeper Julio Cesar also had to palm away shots by Niguez and Gabi.

The visitors deservedly went ahead with a well-worked goal in the 33rd

minute as Antoine Griezmann fed Vietto down the right and the Argentine produced a clever reverse pass for Niguez to sidefoot the ball into the net. Benfica brought on Mitroglou at halftime and the Greek made an immediate impact, working an opening in the penalty area and sending a low shot into the side-netting within a minute of the restart.

Atletico struck again when Vietto nipped in at the near post to deflect Yannick Carrasco's low cross between Julio Cesar and his near post in the 55th minute. Mitroglou reduced the arrears, and brought the hosts to life, with a quarter of an hour to play as he controlled Raul Jimenez's pass and beat Jan Oblak with a shot on the turn. Benfica failed to create many more clear-cut openings and only once looked like equalising when a cross found Jimenez who headed wide from six metres. — Reuters

PSV REACH LAST 16 AFTER PROPPER POPS UP WITH GOAL

EINDHOVEN: PSV Eindhoven recovered to beat CSKA Moscow 2-1 and secure a place in the Champions League last 16 after a late winner from midfielder Davy Propper in their Group B clash on Tuesday. Propper struck on the run from the edge of the area in the 86th minute, six minutes after Luuk de Jong had revived home hopes with his 19th goal of the season. They had gone behind to Sergei Ignashevich's penalty in the 76th. The win left PSV in second place on 10 points behind group winners VfL Wolfsburg, who have 12 after winning 3-2 at home to Manchester United.

The English club finished on eight points and have been relegated to the second-tier Europa League. PSV, who knew they would qualify with a win, or a draw if United lost to Wolfsburg, are the first Dutch club to reach the Champions League knockout stage in the last eight years. CSKA finished bottom with four points from their six games. For a brief spell the Dutch champions looked to be headed for last place in the group after conceding a penalty that allowed the Russian army club to go in front. But CSKA's lead lasted two minutes before De Jong showed his predatory instincts, taking the ball down in the penalty box and

turning towards goal before calmly slotting home.

Propper's winner meant PSV were masters of their own destiny although they had some anxious moments before the final whistle. It had taken almost half-an-hour to produce the first real effort of the night despite the home side probing frequently, especially down the left hand side of their attack. De Jong had a close-range header saved in that first dangerous attack when he rose above two defenders to get on to the end of a cross from Hector Moreno. A curling free kick from Jeffrey Bruma sailed just over the bar 10 minutes into the second half before CSKA winger Ahmed Musa brought a sudden silence upon the Philips Stadium as he whistled a stinging effort narrowly wide in the 61st minute. A deflection from the PSV defence provided Musa with a snap effort that was perilously close to the opening goal. The CSKA penalty came after a clumsy attempted clearance from Andres Guardado, who caught the leg of Zorn Totic right in front of Spanish referee David Fernandez Borbalan. It threatened to turn PSV's night on its head but it was not long before the stadium was celebrating a decisive turnaround. — Reuters



Bader al Mutawa



Fahad al-Hajiri



Omar Abdelrahman



Suleiman Abdelghafour

16-MEMBER KUWAIT STAR TEAM NAMES ANNOUNCED

KUWAIT: The organizing committee of Jaber Stadium celebration announced the names of the 16 members of Kuwait stars team who will play against the world legends Dec 18 as part of the celebrations. The stars are: Bader Al-Mutawa, Abdelhadi Khamees, Yousuf Nasser, Fahad Al-Enezi, Mohammad Jragh, Fahad Al-Ansari, Abdelaziz Al-Mashaan, Talal Nayef, Musaed Nada, Fahad Al-Hajiri, Hussein Hakem, Abdallah

Al-Buraiki, Khalid Al-Rashidi and Suleiman Abdelghafour. Kuwait's team will also be joined by Egypt's Mohammad Abutraika and UAE's Omar Abdelrahman "Ammori". Under the leadership of Mohammad Ibrahim "the general".

Renowned UAE soccer commentator Fares Awadh accepted the invitation to commentate on the match, adding that he is honored to receive such an invitation, especially in the pres-

ence of an elite group of world stars.

Kuwait sports club international player Fahad Al-Hajiri said he is proud of the fans' confidence in him to face the legendary world players in Jaber Stadium, adding that the participation will be historic and will never be forgotten. He said seeing such legends inside Jaber Stadium is a big dream, and "we will do our best to perform well as the world's focus will be on Kuwait."



PARIS: PSG's Zlatan Ibrahimovic scores his side's 2nd goal during the Champions League Group A soccer match between PSG and FC Shakhtar at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris, France, Tuesday. — AP

LUCAS, IBRAHIMOVIC STRIKE AS PSG SHAKE SHAKHTAR 2-0

PARIS: Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Lucas set each other up for goals as Paris Saint-Germain beat Shakhtar Donetsk 2-0 in their final Champions League group game on Tuesday.

With Real Madrid having already secured first place in Group A and PSG guaranteed second spot, there was little at stake for home fans on a chilly night at Parc des Princes. "The first half wasn't brilliant, the second was better," said PSG coach Laurent Blanc, who rested several key players. "It was fairly satisfying given the number of changes we made."

Despite heavy investment, Blanc's team has fallen at the quarterfinal stage in the past two seasons and still has a point to prove in Europe. "We know we can challenge strongly when we're at full strength, and we'll need to be in February," Blanc said, adding that he wants to avoid Barcelona and Bayern Munich. "There are two favorites in the competition, and I don't think we're the only ones who want to avoid them in the draw."

The inconsistent Lucas took his chance almost an hour in with a clean strike into the left corner. The Brazilian then headed a long ball

down into the path of Ibrahimovic, who finished with an equally crisp shot near the end to make him PSG's all-time leading scorer in Europe with 17 goals. "It's not something I was thinking of, the only thing I'm thinking of is enjoying my game," said Ibrahimovic, who has 10 goals in his past nine games.

He certainly had an eventful night, clearing one Shakhtar header off the line in the second half, and almost scoring an own goal late in the first only for goalkeeper Kevin Trapp to react in time.

Goal gaping

Shakhtar, which finished third to qualify for the Europa League, had chances but its star midfielder Alex Teixeira was unusually wasteful in front of goal. "We didn't deserve to lose, but the class of PSG's players showed in the way they took chances," Shakhtar coach Mircea Lucescu said. "PSG is among the best four teams in Europe now."

He even rated Blanc's side higher than Madrid. "Real Madrid relies more on individual players. PSG is better at the moment." Still,

Lucescu's side - which scored 34 times in eight games before the match - almost caught PSG napping after five minutes.

Left back Ismaily found space down the flank but striker Eduardo somehow skittered wide with the goal gaping. The next to miss was Teixeira, whose nine goals in six games made him a big threat, but he failed to control a ball that landed invitingly at his feet near the penalty spot. Shakhtar should have punished PSG's occasional profligacy, but Teixeira scooped well over from eight meters out. It was a costly miss as Lucas struck soon after.

Angel Di Maria added some much-needed urgency when he came on and played in Ibrahimovic with a clever pass, but he poked wide with only the goalkeeper to beat. Astonishingly, that miss drew jeers from some sections of the crowd - despite Ibrahimovic being the club's all-time leading scorer with 120 goals.

But the fans were indebted to him at both ends, as he headed Yaroslav Rakitskiy's header off the line when Shakhtar pushed for an equalizer. — AP



EINDHOVEN: PSV's Davy Propper is hugged after scoring 2-1 during the Champions League Group B soccer match between PSV and CSKA Moscow at the Philips stadium in Eindhoven, Netherlands. — AP

BOND WITH VALENCIA FANS KEY FOR NEVILLE

BARCELONA: Valencia coach Gary Neville's determination to build a strong bond with the fans will boost his chances of success at a club with close links to the community, says commercial director Peter Draper.

Neville faces a tough task to win over the notoriously demanding Valencia supporters and was immediately asked by a local journalist during his presentation how he intended to show he deserved the job and was not just another friend of billionaire owner Peter Lim.

His predecessor, Nuno Espirito Santo, also arrived with Lim's backing but little experience, but never managed fully to win over the supporters, despite qualifying for a place in the Champions League.

"The way that (Neville) answered that question and wants to get the fans on board shows he realises the need to integrate," Draper told Reuters.

"He knows what he is doing and he

wasn't joking when he said about getting up at 6 am to learn Spanish. He realises that it will be important to communicate and speak the language."

Draper says he has been taken aback since arriving at the club earlier this year by how closely Valencia are followed, both on and off the pitch.

"I have been amazed at how important the club is to the people here and how political it is - I think more so than Barcelona, even," he said. "In England people are interested in the football but not really in the other issues off the pitch, but I get situations here where people recognise me in the street."

"This is why we are trying so hard to get the local people involved because we realise how important it is to the club." Draper built a reputation as marketing guru at sportswear firm Umbro and then, in 1999, Manchester United, where over a seven-year period he negotiated com-

mercial deals with top brands.

And he recognises Neville's value to the club in that respect, too. "Gary is also a great commercial asset for the club as he will bring with him a big following and provide a bigger audience," said Draper. "You have the big two here in Spain who make a lot of noise and there are other top clubs like United and Bayern, but we will find our place. We are not fighting for every penny any longer."

"We want Valencia to be a challenger in Europe, win a trophy every now and again, and that is the best marketing that you can get."

After leaving United, Draper set up his own consultancy firm and was lured to Valencia last May by Lim, a close friend. "I have known Peter Lim for a long time, for over 15 years. I worked on a company board with him after leaving United," said Draper.

"At first he asked me to do some con-

sultancy work here alongside the old marketing director, but when he left earlier this year I took on the full role.

"Since then it has been a case of putting the pieces in place." Lim rescued Valencia from massive debt, in the region of 320 million euros (\$350 million), when he took over in 2014 and promised to bring success back to the club that won La Liga in 2002 and 2004, and reached the Champions League final in 2000 and 2001.

But the Singaporean has alienated some fans with his distant approach, and the resignation of Nuno after a stuttering start to this season was another setback. Valencia now face a must-win Champions League clash with Olympique Lyonnais in Neville's first game in charge. They need a victory and hope Ghent fail to win at home to Group H winners Zenit St Petersburg in order to qualify for the last 16.

But Draper says the project is still on track. "Valencia has been a strong side in the past, especially in the early 2000s and we want to bring that back. What we have been able to do is steady the ship," said Draper.

"There has been mismanagement, with all due respect to those before, but over the last year the club has been a lot more stable with a good capital base and it is no longer just surviving."

"We are a growing team on and off the pitch and we are reaching out to the people, the businesses here - the local community which has been alienated in recent years. It is a two tier process for us - domestic and international - with Asia an important market."

"Barca and Real are five times bigger than us and we can't just spend a lot of money these days (with the FIFA Financial Fair Play rules) to turn that around." — Reuters

SWANSEA FIRES MANAGER MONK AFTER SLUMP IN FORM

LONDON: Jolted into action with the Premier League's biggest-ever TV deal looming, Swansea fired highly rated manager Garry Monk yesterday following an alarming slump in form that saw the team hurtle toward the relegation zone.

Swansea - the only Welsh club in England's top division - has won just one of its last 11 games, having begun the season unbeaten in its first four matches. The team is one point above the bottom three. "To find ourselves in our current situation from where we were in the first week of September, and considering the drop of performance levels and run of results over the last three months, it has brought us to this unfortunate decision," Swansea chairman Huw Jenkins said.

The fear of relegation from the lucrative Premier League has never been so acute. In February, the league sold TV rights to its games for a record \$8 billion - 71 percent above the previous deal - for the three seasons starting in 2016-17.

Likely relegation contenders Aston Villa and Sunderland have already fired their managers and Swansea has followed suit, three weeks before the January transfer window opens.

Monk was with Swansea for more than 11 years, first as a defender and then manager since February 2014 when he replaced Michael Laudrup. The former center back established himself

as one of the most highly rated coaches in Britain by guiding Swansea to an eighth-place finish - the club's highest ever - last season in his first full campaign in charge.

The team's attractive passing game under Monk was a continuation of the style favored by previous managers Laudrup, Brendan Rodgers and Roberto Martinez, and Swansea's early-season form - including an opening day draw at champion Chelsea and a home win over Manchester United - didn't hint at the problems that would follow in the last three months.

Swansea's only win since the end of August came against last-place Aston Villa, intensifying the pressure on Monk. Jenkins said he made the decision to fire Monk with a "heavy heart."

"Garry took on the job 22 months ago with the backing of everyone at the club," said Jenkins, who has a reputation for showing loyalty to managers. "And when you take into account the excellent campaign we had last season when we broke all club records in the Premier League, nobody foresaw the position we would be in at this moment in time."

Rodgers, fired by Liverpool in October, and ex-Sunderland coach Gus Poyet have been linked with the job in the British media. Swansea has been in the Premier League since 2011, and won the League Cup in 2013. — AP



WOLFSBURG: Manchester United's Jesse Lingard, Anthony Martial and goalkeeper David de Gea, from left, look dejected after Naldo scored Wolfsburg's third goal during the Champions League group B soccer match between VfL Wolfsburg and Manchester United in Wolfsburg, Germany, Tuesday. — AP

TABLE-TOPPING WOLFSBURG OUST UNITED IN THRILLER

WOLFSBURG: VfL Wolfsburg reached the Champions League last 16 and dealt a knockout blow to Manchester United with a 3-2 victory to claim top spot in Group B and condemn their opponents to the Europa League on Tuesday.

In a dramatic end to a pulsating encounter in Germany, United were set to reach the next round when an own goal by Josuha Guilavogui levelled the scores at 2-2 with eight minutes left.

But Wolfsburg's Brazilian centre back Naldo headed his second of the night, after cancelling out Anthony Martial's opener for United, to leave the visitors needing PSV Eindhoven to lose at home to CSKA Moscow in the group's other game.

For a brief moment late in the second half it looked like United would get their wish, but PSV rallied to level and then snatch a late 2-1 win that left them second in the standings on 10 points, two ahead of United and two behind Wolfsburg.

The result was an added blow for United's Dutch manager Louis van Gaal, who has had to fend off heavy criticism for his team's perceived negative approach throughout the season.

"We fought for the win, we couldn't have done more than we have done," Van Gaal told BT Sport. "I'm very disappointed. This is the league (where) we want to show our qualities and we cannot do that anymore."

United had taken the lead through Martial after an incisive break led by Juan Mata.

The Spanish playmaker was allowed space to turn in midfield and produced a superb defence-splitting pass to find the Frenchman racing through on goal. Martial took a touch, opened his body up and slotted into the corner.

The Germans counter-punched almost immediately, however.

Ricardo Rodriguez whipped a free kick into the area and Naldo swung his right boot at the ball to direct a pinpoint low volley past United keeper David De Gea.

GERMANS AHEAD

Wolfsburg went in front with the game's standout goal after 28 minutes when Portuguese Vieirinha put the finishing touch to an astonishing team move, orchestrated by Julian Draxler.

The Germany winger beat two defenders with a drop of the shoulder and a burst of pace before exchanging a quick one-two with Max Kruse and then unselfishly squaring for Vieirinha to sweep home.

United had a goal ruled out at the end of the first half when Jesse Lingard bent a curling shot into the net past keeper Diego Benaglio around the back of Mata.

The Spaniard, however, was offside and deemed to be interfering with play despite not touching the ball. After both keepers showcased their abilities early in the second half, the match took two dramatic turns late on.

United levelled when Wolfsburg's Guilavogui deflected a tame header from Marouane Fellaini over Benaglio to put the visitors on track to qualify with PSV then drawing against CSKA.

But Naldo's late header, combined with another goal in Eindhoven, turned the scenario on its head and left United to drop into the second-tier Europa League competition. — Reuters



SEVILLE: Juventus' Leonardo Bonucci, left, is challenged by Sevilla's Fernando Llorente during the Champions League Group D soccer match between Sevilla and Juventus, Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan stadium in Seville, Spain, Tuesday. — AP

SEVILLA HUNTING EUROPA TREBLE AFTER SINKING JUVE

SEVILLE: Sevilla will be chasing their third straight Europa League title after Fernando Llorente scored against his former club Juventus to secure a 1-0 win for the Spanish side in Champions League Group D on Tuesday.

Juve and Manchester City were already assured of a place in the last 16 and the English club's 4-2 win over Borussia Muenchengladbach meant Sevilla finished third, clinching a spot in Europe's second-tier club competition.

Former Spain striker Llorente, who joined Sevilla from Juve in the close season, headed past goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon in the 65th minute at the Sanchez Pizjuan while the Serie A champions failed to make a host of first-half chances count.

"We knew that for us it was a final and

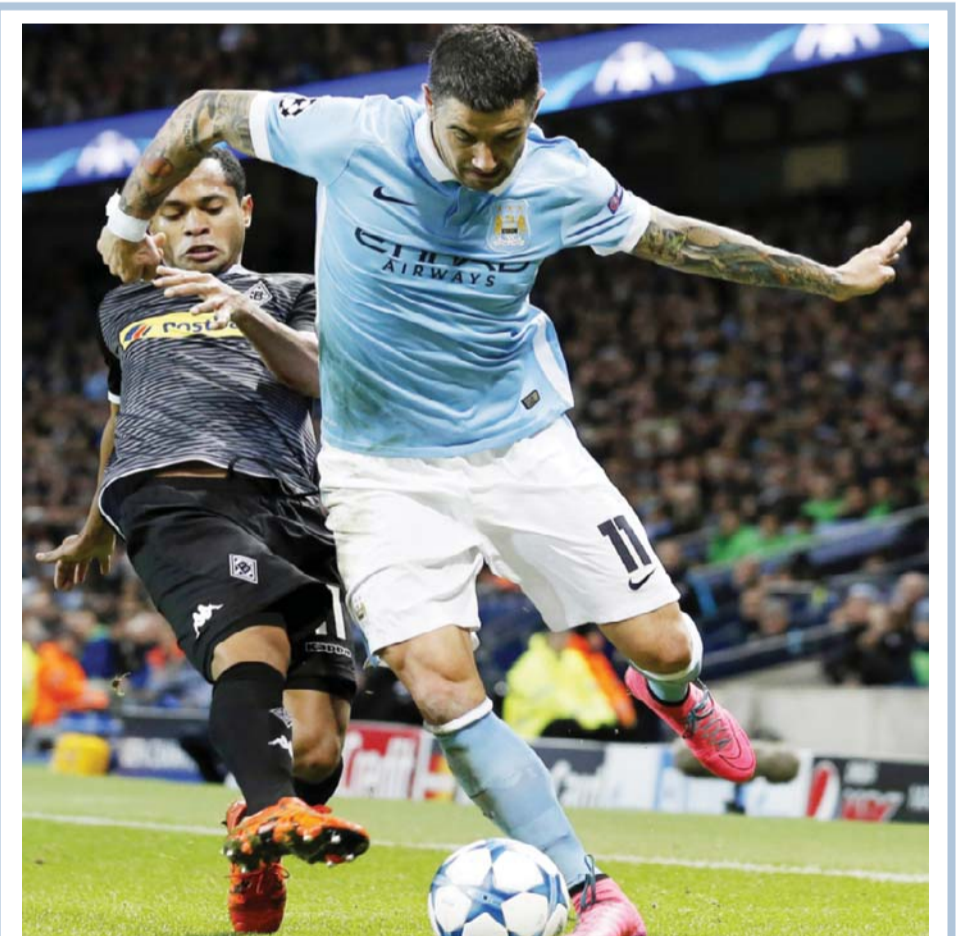
we started the game in a fantastic way," Llorente told Spanish television.

"We have shown the level of this side and we are happy to go into the Europa League." City topped the group with 12 points from six games with Juve in second place on 11.

Sevilla, who qualified for the continent's elite club competition by winning a second consecutive Europa League title last season, ended with six points and Gladbach finished bottom on five.

"Now we no longer have the disappointment of not being able to continue in the Champions League," said Sevilla coach Unai Emery.

"We have the excitement of going into the Europa League which is an environment where the team feels comfortable." — Reuters



MANCHESTER: Muenchengladbach's Raffael, left, challenges Manchester City's Aleksandar Kolarov, right, during the Champions League Group D soccer match between Manchester City and Borussia Muenchengladbach at the Etihad Stadium, Manchester, England, Tuesday. — AP

STERLING HELPS MAN CITY FINISH TOP OF GROUP D

MANCHESTER: Raheem Sterling celebrated his 21st birthday with two goals as Manchester City scored three times in the last 10 minutes to sink Borussia Muenchengladbach 4-2 and finish top of Champions League Group D on Tuesday. City, without several first-team regulars including captain Vincent Kompany and striker Sergio Aguero, took the lead in the 16th minute when Sterling fed David Silva with a clever backheel in the box and the Spain playmaker drove home a bullet shot. Gladbach, in confident mood after inflicting Bayern Munich's first Bundesliga defeat of the season at the weekend, then took command with their slick-passing style and were 2-1 up by halftime.

Julian Korb equalised with a right-foot shot in the 19th minute, after a surging run from Fabian Johnson, before Brazilian Raffael scrambled the ball home from close range in the 42nd following another neat passing move.

City, who had never finished top of a Champions League group before, perked up after the break and it was no surprise when Sterling converted from close range after overlapping right back Gael Clichy pulled the ball back from the byline in the 80th minute.

A minute later substitute Wilfried Bony set Sterling up and the former Liverpool forward provided a delightful curling effort from 16 metres. Bony made it 4-2 from a left-wing cross by Aleksandar Kolarov in the 85th minute as City, who had already clinched their place in the knockout stages, ended the group stage with 12 points from six games.

Juventus, beaten 1-0 at Sevilla on Tuesday, also qualified for the Champions League last 16 on 11 points. Europa League holders Sevilla ended up with six points and again go into Europe's second-tier club competition after finishing in third place. Gladbach were bottom of the group with five points. — Reuters

Sports

'Repugnant' Fury not welcome at awards ceremony



Bond with Valencia fans key for Gary Neville



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INDIANAPOLIS: Paul George #13 of the Indiana Pacers drives to the basket against Draymond Green #23 of the Golden State Warriors in the first half of the game at Bankers Life Fieldhouse on Tuesday in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Warriors defeated the Pacers 131-123 to move to 23-0 on the season. — AFP

WARRIORS UP TO 23-0 AFTER BEATING PACERS

INDIANAPOLIS: Klay Thompson scoring a season-high 39 points, Stephen Curry had 29 points, seven rebounds and 10 assists, and the Golden State Warriors extended their perfect start with a 131-123 victory over the Indiana Pacers on Tuesday night. The Warriors improved to 23-0. They have won 27 straight dating to last season, tying the 2012-13 Heat for the second-longest streak in NBA history. Thompson scored 29 points in the first half. Golden State led by 28 in the fourth quarter before the Pacers pulled within six in the final 25 seconds. The Warriors next play tomorrow night in Boston. Indiana was led by Paul George with 33 points and C.J. Miles with 24. Indiana tied a dubious franchise record in its NBA era by allowing 44 first-quarter points and barely avoided another record-breaking defensive low when it trailed 79-60 at the half.

quarter, including a 3-pointer and a three-point play down the stretch. He shot 14 for 24 from the field. Damian Lillard scored 33 points for Portland, which blew a late lead Monday in Milwaukee and appeared to run out of gas as Cleveland came back in the second half.

NETS 110, ROCKETS 105

Brook Lopez scored 24 points, Joe Johnson had 22, and Brooklyn beat Houston to sweep the season series for the first time in 14 years. Thaddeus Young finished with 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Nets, who have recorded two of their six victories this season against Houston. Bojan Bogdanovic scored 19 points in place of injured rookie Rondae Hollis-Jefferson. Marcus Thornton scored a season-high 32 points for the Rockets, who fell behind by 18 points and got quiet nights from stars James Harden and Dwight Howard. Corey Brewer had 22 in extended minutes after starting forward Trevor Ariza was lost to a bruised lower back after 4 minutes.

THUNDER 125, GRIZZLIES 88

Kevin Durant had 32 points and 10 rebounds for Oklahoma City, and Russell Westbrook added 13 points while matching

his season high with 16 assists. The Thunder built the lead to 35 through three quarters and coasted to their second straight win. Serge Ibaka scored 17 for Oklahoma City, and D.J. Augustin had 13. Dion Waiters finished with 12 points. Mario Chalmers led Memphis with 19 points, and JaMychal Green and Marc Gasol had 11 apiece. It was the most points given up by Memphis this season. The Thunder lead was large enough that the starters, including Westbrook and Durant, sat out the fourth quarter.

KINGS 114, JAZZ 106

Kings star DeMarcus Cousins had 23 points, 12 rebounds and six assists, and Rudy Gay also scored 23 points. The Kings took a 12-point lead after one quarter and never trailed again in ending a three-game losing streak. Omri Casspi scored 19 points and Rajon Rondo had 17 points and 13 assists for the Kings. It was the 13th time this season that Rondo had 10 or more assists. Sacramento shot 55.8 percent. Alec Burks and Gordon Hayward had 18 points apiece for Utah, which had beaten the Kings three straight and five of six times.

MAGIC 85, NUGGETS 74

Nikola Vucevic had 18 points and 13

NBA results/standings

Cleveland 105, Portland 100; Golden State 131, Indiana 123; Brooklyn 110, Houston 105; Oklahoma City 125, Memphis 88; Orlando 85, Denver 74; Sacramento 114, Utah 106.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference					
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division					
W	L	PCT	GB	Oklahoma City	13	8	.619	-	
Toronto	13	9	.591	Utah	9	10	.474	3	
Boston	12	9	.571	0.5	LA Clippers	12	9	.571	10
NY Knicks	10	12	.455	3	Phoenix	9	13	.409	13.5
Brooklyn	6	15	.286	6.5	Sacramento	8	15	.348	15
Philadelphia	1	21	.045	12	LA Lakers	3	18	.143	19
Central Division				Pacific Division					
Cleveland	14	7	.667	-	Golden State	23	0	1.000	-
Chicago	11	7	.611	1.5	LA Clippers	12	9	.571	10
Indiana	12	8	.600	1.5	Phoenix	9	13	.409	13.5
Detroit	12	10	.545	2.5	Sacramento	8	15	.348	15
Milwaukee	9	13	.409	5.5	LA Lakers	3	18	.143	19
Southeast Division				Southwest Division					
Miami	12	7	.632	-	San Antonio	18	4	.818	-
Charlotte	12	8	.600	0.5	Dallas	13	9	.591	5
Atlanta	13	9	.591	0.5	Memphis	12	10	.545	6
Orlando	12	9	.571	1	Houston	10	12	.455	8
Washington	9	10	.474	3	New Orleans	5	16	.238	12.5

CAVALIERS 105, TRAIL BLAZERS 100

LeBron James had 33 points and 10 rebounds, and the Cavaliers rallied from an 18-point first-half deficit to get the win. Kevin Love added 18 points, and a second-half lineup adjustment by coach David Blatt helped Cleveland break a three-game losing streak. James, who didn't play Saturday in Miami to rest, scored 14 points in the fourth

rebounds, Evan Fournier hit a big 3-pointer late and Orlando got the win on the road. Elfrid Payton finished with 18 points as the Magic snapped a five-game skid against the Nuggets. With the Magic up by two with 2:38 remaining, Fournier knocked down a 3 to give them some breathing room. Orlando

has made a 3-pointer in 677 straight games dating to 2007, a streak that was in jeopardy until Fournier's shot. The team finished 1 for 16 from 3-point range. Reserve Will Barton scored 23 points for the Nuggets, who fell to 0-11 this season when scoring less than 100 points. — AP

RONALDO HITS FOUR AS REAL CRUSH MALMO

MADRID: Cristiano Ronaldo hit four goals and Karim Benzema netted a hat-trick as Real Madrid romped to a Champions League record-equalling 8-0 group-stage win at home to Malmo on Tuesday.

Real, who had already reached the last 16 as Group A winners, took the outclassed Swedish side apart at the Bernabeu with a ruthless display that matched the biggest margin of victory in the group stage of Europe's elite club competition.

Real coach Rafa Benitez, accused of being too defensive since taking over in the close season, was in charge of Liverpool when they hammered Besiktas 8-0 in 2007, while Real's ex-Liverpool defender Alvaro Arbeloa played in both matches.

Benzema struck twice early on to put Real 2-0 ahead, following up his La Liga double against Getafe at the weekend. Ronaldo made it 3-0 in the 39th minute with a free kick and netted a quick fire treble at the start of the second half to extend his Champions League record to 88 goals in 121 games. Portugal's FIFA Ballon d'Or holder set a record for goals scored in the group stage of 11 and has reached double figures in the competition for a fifth consecutive campaign.

It was his first four-goal haul in the Champions League, with the overall record of five held by Lionel Messi of Barcelona and Luiz Adriano, who achieved the feat with Shakhtar Donetsk but now plays for AC Milan.

Mateo Kovacic put Real 7-0 ahead in the 70th minute and Benzema completed the rout 16 minutes from time. "We knew it would be a strange match because they had to come out and play to win to finish third," Benitez told a news conference.

"We scored eight but it could have been more," he added. "I have always said that I am not defensive and this demonstrates it."

Real, the record 10-times European champions, finished on 16 points, with Paris St Germain, who had already qualified for the knockout phase in second place, on 13 after winning 2-0 at home to Shakhtar Donetsk.

Shakhtar and Malmo each have three points, with the Ukrainian side securing third place and a Europa League berth thanks to a better head-to-head record.

Malmo, who lost to Nottingham Forest in the 1979 European Cup final, made their Champions League debut last season. — Reuters



MADRID: Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo, right, jumps for the ball next to other players, during a Champions League group A soccer match between Real Madrid and Malmo at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid. — AP



ISTANBUL: A man plays a guitar inside a musical instrument shop near central Istanbul's Istiklal Avenue, the main shopping road of Istanbul. When Turkey's central bank meets on Dec 22 to set policy for the last time this year, something far more important than interest rates will be at stake: the bank's own credibility. (See Page 23) — AP

BIGGEST 2016 RISK MAY STILL BE OIL

'INVESTORS SHOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP GUARD UP IN 2016'

LONDON: The biggest financial risk in 2016 may be the one that's been on stage all year. In Britain's popular Christmas pantomime shows, audiences scream out "He's behind you!" as a warning to the hero whenever the villain appears. That refrain is almost audible as investment strategists scan 2016 for risk events, as the well-known baddie of plummeting oil prices re-emerges from behind the curtain.

It's so familiar now, it's hard to register a further oil price drop as a 'new' risk, however. Financial markets have been living with the consequences of the energy deflation since mid-2014, and the fallout has been pervasive. The idea of another shock of that magnitude is unnerving to say the least. More than a trillion dollars of market capitalization has been wiped off oil stocks worldwide.

Almost \$2 trillion of debt sold by energy and mining companies since 2010, many of them high-yield or 'junk' bonds from small shale gas firms, are facing a wave of credit rating downgrades and defaults are rising. About 2 trillion euros of European government debt is now yielding less than zero percent after oil-seeded deflation scares forced the inflation-targeting European Central Bank to begin a bond-buying spree earlier this year.

The impact on inflation forecasts of yet another sustained drop in oil prices has been alarming as much for central banks about to tighten, such as the Federal Reserve, as for those still easing, like the

ECB. What's more, the scale of the hit to commodity exporting nations from Russia to Brazil and SouthEast Asia has stood out. Their currencies have imploded, and 2015 is set to mark the first year of a net private capital outflow from emerging markets since 1988.

Given the scale of the oil price drop, it's not hard to see why markets have rewritten so many scripts. Since June 2014, Brent crude has plunged 65 percent from \$115 per barrel to \$40. Much of that implosion happened in the last six months of last year, but any hopes of a rebound this year evaporated amid a toxic mix of a swelling supply glut and steep demand slowdowns in China and emerging economies.

The prospect of living with oil prices that just stay around here and don't bounce back to at least \$60 was already going to be a major challenge for many exposed companies and economies - not least as they brace for next week's US interest rate rise. But for all the myriad market risks outlined by banks for the year ahead - ranging from Middle East conflict and geopolitics, central bank policy 'mistakes', market liquidity shocks or even Britain voting to exit the European Union - very few list yet another halving of oil prices.

And yet, after last week's OPEC meeting broke up in disarray with no agreement on supply cuts or even a reference to production caps, crude prices have given up the ghost again. Brent has plumbed new lows below \$40 per barrel this week, while US

crude slumped under \$37. Even the rolling annual average price, at less than \$55, has halved in just 18 months and continues to slide.

'New oil order'

Long-term oil price bears Goldman Sachs reckon that any thought of a rebound or even stabilization in 2016 are way off the mark and that US crude could shed almost 50 percent from here to \$20. "There is a risk that a milder winter, slower EM growth, and the (potential) lifting of international Iranian sanctions will cause inventories to build further," the bank told clients this week. "These factors imply that the near-term risks to the forecast remain skewed to the downside. If oil prices breach logistical and storage capacity, they think oil prices could collapse to production costs as low as \$20/bbl."

If that proved correct, it would pull out another thread in this year's already unraveling market. And the market stress gets amplified in many different ways not least in the drain on world markets from lower central bank reserves and petrodollar savings in big energy exporting nations. The rundown of these savings combined with rising Federal Reserve interest rates could well put upward pressure on long-term interest rates over time as the reversal of the commodities super-cycle twins with its bond market equivalent.

New investments in global equities,

bonds and real estate from oil-fueled sovereign wealth funds are already drying up amid reports of billions of dollars of withdrawals by state institutions from private asset managers. The foreign assets of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency alone are shrinking at an annual rate of more than \$120 billion.

"If the global economic expansion continues, as we expect, then rising investment demand will eventually expose the market consequences of ebbing petrodollar saving flows," Goldman Sachs told clients. The combination of lower-for-longer oil and higher real rates could be toxic for corporate credit and emerging markets. Forecasting a rise in oil and mining sector bond defaults next year and "staggering adverse conditions" for those firms, Moody's credit rating firm said the only things delaying this in 2015 were temporary cushions in hedging programs, fixed-price contracts and the rundown of existing cash balances.

But that could all change next year if oil prices don't recover or even continue to fall. "Diminishing liquidity and restricted access to capital markets are now pushing more firms closer to default," Moody's Managing Director Daniel Gates said last week. And for those itching to return to battered emerging market equity and debt, the message is clear: "Investors should continue to keep their guard up in 2016," Morgan Stanley told clients this week. —Reuters

UAE, QATAR SINK TO MULTI-YEAR LOWS

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Gulf markets saw volatile trading yesterday as falling oil prices and their impact on upcoming state budgets pushed some to multi-year lows, while others edged into positive territory after heavy losses the previous day. Dubai's benchmark dropped 0.3 percent to its lowest close in two years, dipping to 3,001 points. Financial stocks dragged the index with Emirates NBD tumbling 2.9 percent to 7.5 dirhams, its lowest close of 2015. Abu Dhabi's bourse was also weighed down by banks as the market slipped 0.6 percent to 4,084 points, the lowest closing level in 12 months.

First Gulf Bank and National Bank of Abu Dhabi declined 2.1 and 1.7 percent respectively, although heavyweight Etisalat softened the impact by gaining 0.3 percent. Qatar's index was also knocked to a two-year low as it flirted with the 10,000-point mark before ending a shade above it but down 0.8 percent on the day.

Budgets

Investors are concerned about the implications for lower oil prices on local economies as many states prepare to announce their budgets for 2016, and are waiting for confirmation on spending for next year before taking positions in local markets. Economic growth in the United Arab Emirates in 2015 is expected to come in lower than forecast earlier in the year, the country's economy minister said on Tuesday.

Lower oil prices have been negative for the UAE's fiscal and external surpluses, and the trickle down into the real economy is the concern. "We believe the slowdown in growth in the non-oil sector is likely to be moderately supported by continued public sector spending, particularly in Abu Dhabi," according to a report published by Abu Dhabi's ADCB Securities on Tuesday.

Qatar's 2016 budget was in the final stages of preparation and will be presented soon, Qatar's finance minister said yesterday, adding Doha will use a more conservative break-even oil price to base its budget on than the previously-used \$65 a barrel. In Saudi Arabia, the exact date of the budget's publication is still unknown, and much is on hold until there is greater policy clarity from the government.

Al-Khodari, a Saudi builder, said yesterday it had postponed a planned rights issue because it is waiting for the kingdom's budget. It also revealed two construction contracts with the education ministry worth 315 million riyals (\$84 million) had been halted for budgetary reasons. The contractor ended yesterday down 0.6 percent. —Reuters

IN SYRIA, INVESTORS DREAM OF POST-WAR RALLY

DAMASCUS: Mohammed Al-Harki is one of the few investors who bother to show up anymore at the Damascus stock exchange, waiting for a rally in share prices that have withered after nearly five years of war. The 52-year-old bought several million Syrian pounds in shares when the exchange opened in March 2009, just two years before the outbreak of the conflict, hoping to hit the jackpot. But the opposite has happened. "Before, I came here to top up my gains. Now, my losses are significant," he said despondently. "But I'm not going to sell my shares now, because I risk losing even more." "The exchange is my passion, but sometimes I come here just to sleep," he said.

The figures tell the story of the bourse's decline. In 2011, some 17.7 million shares were traded, for a value of 7.8 billion Syrian pounds. By last year, turnover had risen to 25 million shares, but their value was more than halved to just 3.3 billion pounds. At the same time, market capitalization has risen sharply,

from 82 billion pounds to 125 billion in 2014. But that is illusory because of high inflation and a plunge in the value of the currency.

In the past four years, the pound has gone from 60 to the dollar to 250. The trading floor is a comfortable room with 160 black leather seats facing an electronic board showing transactions. But apart from a handful of employees, Harki and fellow investor Amer Toumeah are usually the only ones there for the Monday-Thursday trading week.

'Everyone else has gone'

"I've never missed a single session, even when shells were raining down on the city," Toumeah says. "Before the war, the room would be full of investors and brokers, but nowadays it's just us two and the employees. Everyone else has gone." The exchange was part of an "economic liberalization" plan implemented after President Bashar Al-Assad's ruling Baath party decided that year to adopt a "social market" economy.

Initially, nine companies were listed, with the number growing to 24, including banks and insurance firms. But only six are actively traded. Yet despite the market's dwindling fortunes, director Maamoun Hamdan says it is a "victory" that it "has never closed, despite the war." "For many years, Syrian economists dreamed of having a stock exchange," he told AFP. "Now we're waiting for the end of the conflict to relaunch our economic program."

But economic expert Jihad Yazigi said the bourse is little more than a facade for the regime to "present things as though everything is going well and the economy is progressing." "The exchange gives a sense of modernity and allows the integration of the economy into international markets," he told AFP. "So it's very important for the government to maintain this institution, which it considers to be part of its legitimacy."

Despite his losses, Harki is determined to hang on to his shares until they bounce, and is even continuing to invest. "I might be con-

sidered an old fool, because I'm buying shares five years into a war, and I'm holding on to what I already have," he said.

"I'm even willing to buy more" if new companies are listed, he added. "Prices are low, so one must take advantage of the situation. Tomorrow, when the war ends and prices go up, I'll sell them." "This type of investment requires patience-it's long-term," he added. Other investors seem to have adopted the same strategy. Diaa Hijazi, director general of the Sham (Levant) insurance company, said: "They all want to hold on to their shares in the hope of selling them one day during the reconstruction phase." Despite the stagnation, the exchange's director dreams of the day that new companies will list on the Damascus bourse. "Today, they are mostly in the financial and insurance sector," he explained. "What we're missing are companies in the property and service sector, which will grow when reconstruction starts." —AFP

EGYPT TO BUILD 1M HOMES FOR POOR TO HELP EASE SHORTAGE

CAIRO: Egypt plans to build 1 million homes for poorer people at a cost of almost \$20 billion over the next five years, the housing minister said, to ease a crunch that has seen slums and unlicensed buildings spread since the 2011 revolt. With a population of about 90 million, and projected to exceed 120 million by 2050, and with many Egyptians living in sprawling slums, the country is struggling to build enough houses for the poorest in society. So many people live in a network of tombs in Cairo that the area has become known as the City of the Dead.

Housing Minister Mustafa Madbouly told Reuters Egypt needed to build 500,000-600,000 new homes a year to keep up with demand, 70 percent of which should be aimed at the poor. The social housing project will see 200,000 new homes built each year, meeting over half the annual demand for cheap

housing. Private developers, who have built new suburbs around Cairo, are meeting the needs of middle and higher income Egyptians who can buy homes outright or obtain mortgages.

Egypt is financing its social housing scheme through land sales to developers building higher-end homes, Madbouly said. "This is totally being implemented by the Egyptian government and the ministry of housing with a total investment that exceeds 150 billion Egyptian pounds (\$19.16 billion)," he said on the sidelines of the Egypt Mega Projects conference. "We are making use of the projects we are offering to the private sector to finance and cross-subsidize the social housing program."

Mammoth task

Madbouly said he was also working to upgrade informal settlements, which comprise 40-50 percent

of urban areas, and to bring 24-hour piped water to all homes within three years. Three percent of Egyptian households have no running water at all and in rural areas some homes receive water for only 12 hours a day. Madbouly also plans to bring sewage treatment to 50 percent of rural areas, up from 15 percent now.

"(We are) upgrading slums and unsafe areas. We are talking here about 248 areas ... 150,000 families," Madbouly said. But Madbouly faces a mammoth task. Egypt's population is squeezed into a narrow strip of land along the banks of the Nile, the river delta and the Mediterranean coast. The rest of the country is largely desert. As the population grows, the government is searching for a solution to poorly lit, poorly ventilated rows of unlicensed brick buildings that have mushroomed in the turbulent nearly five years since the overthrow of President

Hosni Mubarak.

Egypt had also planned to build 1 million homes for middle-income Egyptians by 2020 in a \$35-billion joint venture with Dubai-based Arabtec. Announced in March 2014, the project was a pillar of President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi's election campaign.

Madbouly said the latest proposal from Arabtec foresees the construction of just 13,000 units in the first phase. "The company had continuous change of its board and its strategy and its policy. They limited their ambitious program," Madbouly said. "It's not the project we were expecting." That had not, however, dampened enthusiasm for Gulf investment in the most-populous Arab country, he said, adding: "We have offered several projects with a lot of Gulf country investors and we are in negotiations with some of them." —Reuters

CHANGE TAKES ROOT IN INDIA'S FAR NORTHEAST

GUWAHATI: The ancient root bridges spanning the rivers of the remote northeast are some of India's most iconic images, symbolizing a slower pace of life unimaginable in its bustling megacities. But a spate of infrastructure projects designed to improve access to the rest of India and its neighbors is serving as a wake-up call to what has long been a sleepy backwater. An expanded rail network, a massive road project and new border posts to open up trade with Southeast Asia are underway or in the works—a prospect welcomed by local businessmen, who struggle to compete with the rest of the country.

"It's a challenge," said Amit Jain, as he lists the obstacles confronting his bottling business. "Raw materials come from states like Punjab and northern states and that takes a week," he told AFP in his office in Guwahati, capital of the area's largest state, Assam. "And any machinery or spare parts you have to bring in from Delhi or Kolkata so, in terms of commitment on a date, it is difficult." Assam is best known for tea production, but the numbers employed by the industry have declined over the years, so its future prosperity depends on the success of companies such as Jain's Aroma India.

The firm began life producing bottles of massage oils, but has diversified. It recently landed a contract to bottle spirits for a major liquor firm, although such success stories are rare. Experts say the reasons are obvious. "Infrastructure in the northeast is in bad shape and connectivity is poor, especially land connectivity," said Saundaryya Borbor, an Assam-based professor and president of a local economics think-tank. The northeast region includes eight states, which are not only located far from centres of power such as Delhi and Mumbai, but also culturally and linguistically distinct from the rest of India.

Most are sparsely populated and their combined population is around 46 million, a fraction of the nationwide total of 1.25 billion. While lacking in numbers, their importance has grown as successive governments have seen them as a gateway to Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Nepal and Bhutan, which all share a border with at least one of the states.

Signs of change

During his inauguration last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said "infrastructure is the most important factor" in developing the region, making it a government priority. Modi attended the opening of a train line connecting two towns in Meghalaya with Assam, the first time the state has been hooked up to India's vast rail network. There is also a major rail project in Tripura state and Imphal, capital of Manipur. Shillong, Meghalaya's capital, still has no railway station but signs of change are unmistakable even in its villages.

In one of the wettest places on earth, locals and tourists do still cross rivers on twine bridges crafted from the rubber roots of living trees that date back more than two centuries. But some are falling into disrepair as locals use steel rope bridges at more convenient spots.

A more brutal example of modernization is in Mizoram, where around 1,000 workers are constructing a 90-kilometre (55-mile) highway to the Myanmar border. By the time the NH 502A is completed, expected in mid-2016, as many as 3,100 trees will have been felled and 18 million cubic meters of soil shifted, according to the Indian Express.

It is part of a wider program to halve the 1,880 kilometer distance between the border and Haldia port in Kolkata, India's eastern metropolis. Experts say it could knock four days off the journey time for vehicles, which now takes at least a week. If overland is a headache, it is not much better for air travelers, who often have to get connecting flights in more westerly hubs rather than fly directly eastwards.

Hasina Kharbhii, whose Meghalaya-based Impulse Social Enterprises helps thousands of local craftsmen promote their products, wants to branch out into neighboring countries, but says it is struggle. "I still have to fly from Kolkata to Bangkok and Bangkok to Yangon to reach the different villages and activities we have in Myanmar," she said. Kharbhii said many of her clients lacked basic business knowledge and skills compared with countries in Southeast Asia. —AFP



GUWAHATI: In this photograph, Indian laborers work on an under construction bridge across the River Brahmaputra in Guwahati in the north-eastern state of Assam. —AFP

OIL GAIN FAILS TO HALT FRESH SLIDE ON ASIAN MARKETS

EQUITIES FALL ON GLOBAL COMMODITY STORM

LONDON: European stocks fell yesterday with minor Anglo American striking new historic lows as it languished at the centre of a global "commodity storm", dealers said. Markets had opened with slender gains after the previous day's heavy commodity-fuelled losses, but stumbled once more as investors eyed a fresh collapse in Anglo's shares. A modest recovery in oil prices—with Brent crude bobbing back above \$40 per barrel—was shrugged off by markets, which also remain anxious over China's ongoing economic woes.

"This morning's tentative gains look like they were a mere stop-gap, the brief calm before the resumption of the commodity storm," said Spreadex analyst Connor Campbell. He added: "Once again it is Anglo American leading the miners lower. "With little to distract investors, it's hard not to linger on the whopping 85,000 jobs Anglo is set to slash—and, of course, that suspended dividend." Anglo American struck a new all-time low at 277.6 pence. The stock later stood at 296.60 pence, down 8.36 percent from Monday's close, but it still sat atop the FTSE 100 fallers' board.

Anglo had revealed plans Tuesday to slash its workforce from 135,000 staff to 50,000 after 2017, adding that it would suspend dividend payments until the end of next year in response to collapsing commodity demand and prices. In reaction, Europe's major markets sliding by about 1.5 percent on Tuesday. And nearing midday yesterday, London lost another 0.2 percent, Frankfurt fell 0.4 percent and Paris shed 0.8 percent in value. This week's Anglo news has prompted heightened worries about the outlook for mining and metals companies across the world, dealers said.

"Equities (are) on another downer as the commodity sector remains under considerable pressure, the Anglo American dividend cut rippling through and generating uncertainty about income sustainability elsewhere," said Mike van Dulken, head of research at traders Accendo Markets. Steelmakers also faced more share price falls in Europe. ArcelorMittal shed another 2.4 percent in Paris, and ThyssenKrupp lost 0.9 percent in Frankfurt. In Asia meanwhile, China's ongoing economic woes cast a pall over the region's

trading floors after a downturn on Wall Street, but rising oil prices gave some respite for energy firms.

However, the oil market is still struggling around seven-year lows and analysts said the gloom was likely to last for some time. "We believe that the current crude oversupply in the global market will persist over the coming years, reinforcing our flat outlook for oil prices over 2015-2017," BMI Research said in a market commentary. A global supply glut, weak demand and the growth slowdown in China have combined with soaring production to send crude slumping more than 60 percent over the past 18 months.

The Tokyo stock market closed 1.0 percent lower, Sydney fell 0.3 percent and Hong Kong lost 0.5 percent, while Taipei, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur were also in negative territory. However, Shanghai rose 0.07 after a slightly better-than-forecast inflation reading for November, and on hopes of new stimulus measures for the world's number two economy. In foreign exchange activity yesterday, the euro climbed against the dollar. —AFP

GOLD GAINS BUT INVESTORS WARY AS US RATE RISE LOOMS

LONDON: Gold steadied yesterday, supported by softness in the dollar and European shares, but investors remained cautious ahead of an anticipated Federal Reserve rate rise next week. The US central bank is widely expected to raise interest rates for the first time in nearly a decade at its next policy meeting on Dec 15-16. Higher rates should dent demand for non-interest-paying gold, which has already lost 9 percent of its value this year and is on track for its third year of losses.

Spot gold rose 0.4 percent to \$1,078.13 an ounce by 1255 GMT. The metal is about \$30 higher than a near-six-year low reached last week. US gold futures were up 0.2 percent at \$1,077.80 an ounce. "There is not going to be

any surprise at the next Fed policy meeting ... everybody is expecting a rate hike," Citi strategist David Wilson said. "We are expecting continued downward pressure for gold next year depending on whether the market begins to price in more rate hikes or not, as the dollar is going to moderately rise."

The dollar slipped for a second day against other major currencies yesterday, after climbing to a 12-1/2 year high last week. The slide in commodity prices, particularly crude oil, is also capping gold's upside. Crude has fallen to its lowest in nearly seven years as OPEC continues to pump near-record amounts of oil to defend market share. —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.479
Indian Rupees	4.567
Pakistani Rupees	2.891
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.138
Nepali Rupees	2.873
Singapore Dollar	219.600
Hongkong Dollar	39.387
Bangladesh Taka	3.862
Philippine Peso	6.484
Thai Baht	8.520
Malaysian Ringgit	72.852

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.443
Qatari Riyal	83.894
Omani Riyal	793.270
Bahraini Dinar	811.080
UAE Dirham	83.152

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	38.200
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	39.051
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.425
Tunisian Dinar	153.010
Jordanian Dinar	430.260
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.035
Syrian Lira	2.177
Morocco Dirham	31.131

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	305.250
Euro	335.780
Sterling Pound	464.900
Canadian dollar	230.200
Turkish lira	105.530
Swiss Franc	309.110
US Dollar Buying	304.050

GOLD	
20 Gram	222.220
10 Gram	113.805
5 Gram	57.97

UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

COUNTRY	SELL DRAFT	SELL CASH
Australian Dollar	204.08	
Canadian Dollar	231.95	
Swiss Franc	300.84	
Euro	326.66	
US Dollar	305.45	
Sterling Pound	461.91	
Japanese Yen	2.52	
Bangladesh Taka	3.874	
Indian Rupee	4.578	
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.139	
Nepali Rupee	2.859	
Pakistani Rupee	2.893	
UAE Dirhams	0.08312	
Bahraini Dinar	0.8118	
Egyptian Pound	0.03892	
Jordanian Dinar	0.4344	
Omani Riyal	0.7932	
Qatari Riyal	0.08422	
Saudi Riyal	0.08142	

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	305.500
Canadian Dollar	230.865
Sterling Pound	461.645

Euro	324.265
Swiss Frank	314.635
Bahrain Dinar	810.840
UAE Dirhams	83.470
Qatari Riyals	91.520
Saudi Riyals	82.190
Jordanian Dinar	430.480
Egyptian Pound	38.904
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.139
Indian Rupees	4.591
Pakistani Rupees	2.893
Bangladesh Taka	3.861
Philippines Peso	6.480
Cyprus pound	581.885
Japanese Yen	3.480
Syrian Pound	2.615
Nepalese Rupees	3.865
Malaysian Ringgit	72.820
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	48.080
Thai Bhat	9.505
Turkish Lira	105.140

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

COUNTRY	SELL CASH	SELLDRAFT
British Pound	0.452647	0.461647
Czech Korune	0.004210	0.016210
Danish Krone	0.040235	0.045235
Euro	0.325018	0.333018
Norwegian Krone	0.031567	0.036767
Romanian Leu	0.073575	0.073575
Slovakia	0.009104	0.019104
Swedish Krona	0.031753	0.036753
Swiss Franc	0.298226	0.308426
Turkish Lira	0.100424	0.110724

Australasia	
Australian Dollar	0.214655
New Zealand Dollar	0.197364

America	
Canadian Dollar	0.221700
US Dollars	0.300400
US Dollars Mint	0.300900

Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003510
Chinese Yuan	0.046192
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037198
Indian Rupee	0.004325
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018
Japanese Yen	0.002384
Kenyan Shilling	0.002973
Korean Won	0.000250
Malaysian Ringgit	0.068766
Nepalese Rupee	0.002917
Pakistan Rupee	0.002702
Philippine Peso	0.006423
Sierra Leone	0.000071
Singapore Dollar	0.213923
South African Rand	0.015158
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001767
Taiwan	0.009185
Thai Baht	0.008182

Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.808802
Egyptian Pound	0.037152
Iranian Riyal	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000201
Jordanian Dinar	0.425485
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022135
Nigerian Naira	0.001259
Omani Riyal	0.784488
Qatar Riyal	0.082927
Saudi Riyal	0.805633
Syrian Pound	0.001291
Tunisian Dinar	0.147663
Turkish Lira	0.100424
UAE Dirhams	0.081923
Yemeni Riyal	0.001376



KUWAIT: Dr Yousef Mohammed Al-Ali, Minister of Commerce and Industry, officially opened Cityscape Kuwait at the Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref.



KUWAIT: Dr Yousef Mohammed Al-Ali, Minister of Commerce and Industry is pictured at the event with other officials. —By Yasser Al-Zayyat

CITYSCAPE KUWAIT 2016 OPENS

MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY INAUGURATES LEADING REAL ESTATE EVENT

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The second edition of Cityscape Kuwait held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, has been officially inaugurated by Dr Yousef Mohammed Al-Ali, Minister of Commerce and Industry who said "Under the patronage of the Prime Minister, we've opened today Cityscape - the worldwide known exhibition - in its second edition. Cityscape holds under one roof a great number of participants who have different real estate investment opportunities. We support such effort and we congratulate the organizer".

Taking place until December 11 at the Kuwait International Fairgrounds - Mishref, the event is the state's most influential property investment showcase, welcoming more than 70 exhibitors from the domestic, regional and international markets; and spanning 7,000 sqm of exhibition space. Deep Marwaha, Director Cityscape Group, said, "All indications in the run up to the show were pointing towards an incredibly busy, profitable opening day and the turnout from both local and international investors has been impressive."

"Growing the sold exhibition space by 40 percent from last year, we look forward to welcoming more than 4,000 participants, over the next three days as attendees look to foster tighter business

relationships and be updated on the latest developments within the real estate investment sector."

Unique platform

Speaking about their participation at the event, Platinum Sponsor Al-Hamra Real Estate Development's, Benoy Kurien, General Manager, confirmed that Cityscape Kuwait provides a unique platform to meet Kuwaiti investors considering that Kuwait market is a key market for AHRED. He said: "Kuwaiti investors are well versed in the opportunities the UAE real estate market offers, therefore we are committed to ensuring Al-Hamra's portfolio of exceptional quality and value-for-money remains front-of-mind in this important market".

During the exhibition, Al-Hamra Real Estate Development are showcasing three unique properties. These include two categories of villas for the multi-million dollar luxury Falcon Island Development, the five-bedroom beach villas starting and the newly launched spacious six bedroom Bayti Premium as well as the Bab Al-Bahr studio.

Exhibitors at this year's event have noticed strong interest from local investors as highlighted by Gold Sponsor Al-Mazaya Holding who are offering an exclusive a 4% registration fee waiver and 5 percent discount to visitors of Cityscape Kuwait. Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, Assistant Executive Director for Marketing at Al-Mazaya Holding said: "Cityscape Kuwait is the ideal plat-

form to reciprocate information on the Kuwaiti real estate market. It is also a unique opportunity to build business relationships with local, regional and world investors, and contributes to open marketing windows to participants from inside and outside Kuwait, as well as to investors seeking quality investment opportunities."

He added: "Economies of the region enjoy many real estate investment opportunities and are opening new real estate markets to investors despite the current political and economic circumstances most countries of the world experience. Within this momentum, Al-Mazaya is keen to hold up with investors' demands by introducing a variety of investment options simultaneously enhancing the investment preference of its real estate projects, moreover raising the elasticity of prices adjusting to local, world financial and economic changes."

Prime locations

At the exhibition, Al-Mazaya showcases the latest releases of both its investment and residential projects including: "Q Point" in Dubai Land residential buildings, and "Q Line" which is an extension of "Q Point; Istanbul Rhythm" which is built via a joint venture with the Turkish Domankaya Real Estate Co and "Oman Residential" for residential units, distinguished by a prime location close to the new shopping

mall and behind Muscat City Center.

Al-Marjan Island (AMI), the first man-made island real estate project in Ras Al-Khaimah in the UAE, is the Gold Sponsor of Cityscape Kuwait 2015. During the exhibition, the company seeks to showcase the premier waterfront investment opportunities and open communication channels with Kuwaiti investors who are ranked amongst biggest investors in UAE real-estate market.

"We look at Kuwait as a very important and strategic market for us as more than 35 percent of our foreign direct investments come from this country. We ensure to be present in property related events taking place in Kuwait most notably Cityscape Kuwait," says Abdullah Rashed Al-Abdooli, Managing Director of Al-Marjan Island Company. "Ras Al-Khaimah is a perfect investment avenue for local and regional investors as it brings to the table exciting investment products with high ROI."

Property portfolio

According to Al-Abdooli, there is huge potential for growth on AMI, with a developed 100 percent ready infrastructure, 100 percent availability of utility services. "AMI will be the new hub for hotel, commercial and residential complexes in the near future. Through our Gold sponsorship of Cityscape Kuwait we are targeting investment promotion agencies, economic development authorities, city

promotion agencies, location marketing agencies, regional development and investment zones, and inward investment organizations," elaborated Al-Abdooli.

Located south-west of Ras Al-Khaimah city centre, Al-Marjan Island lies 27 km from the city. AMI comprises four coral-shaped islands that include a range of marina homes, floating villas, hotels, resorts, sports facilities and shopping centers. The island lies at a distance of 4.5 km from the beach and extends 2.7 million square meters into the sea.

This year's edition of Cityscape Kuwait features free to attend seminars which have been developed specifically for Kuwaiti based investors and real estate professional. The Cityscape Kuwait Business Forum provides a platform for the regional real estate industry to share knowledge, debate current issues, and form partnerships with policy makers, regional and international investors, business leaders, and real estate professionals.

The Cityscape Kuwait Investment Series has been developed to provide both novice and experienced private investors with tools and techniques to help them build their property portfolio, as well as unique insights on real estate markets from around the world that are offering attractive returns. Cityscape Kuwait 2015 is taking place with support from sponsors: NBK, Al-Hamra Real Estate Development, Al-Mazaya Holding Co and Al-Marjan Island.

TO HIKE OR NOT TO HIKE: TURKEY'S CENTRAL BANK FACES CRUCIAL TEST

ISTANBUL: When Turkey's central bank meets on Dec 22 to set policy for the last time this year, something far more important than interest rates will be at stake: The bank's own credibility. If the central bank follows through on previous hints and raises rates in tandem with the US Federal Reserve, that would bolster investor confidence in both its independence and the new government's economy czar, Mehmet Simsek.

If, however, the bank holds fire, as it has done every month since March, it is likely only to worsen concern about political pressure on monetary policy and accelerate a sell-off that has seen foreign investors dump a net \$6 billion in local bonds this year, after at least three years of inflows. "If there's one thing that's patently clear about Turkey's central bank it's that it will only hike rates when market conditions deteriorate dramatically - and even then it's questionable whether it will act," Nicholas Spiro of Spiro Sovereign Strategy told Reuters.

"Turkey is the most reluctant tightener among the most vulnerable emerging markets - partly because of intense political opposition to rate hikes." Economists have argued that Turkey is long overdue for an interest rate rise to rein in inflation and put a floor under the lira. The bank's refusal to do so has helped send the currency to series of record lows.

President Tayyip Erdogan equates high borrowing costs with treason. But Central Bank Governor Erdem Basci has indicated that Turkey may raise rates once the Fed does. The US Federal Reserve is widely expected to raise its benchmark rates for the first time in a decade at its policy meeting on Dec 15-16. Holding fire after a Fed hike would also be seen as disastrous for Simsek, a former Wall Street banker who investors worry will not be able to stand up to Erdogan as much as his predecessor, Ali Babacan. Simsek was forced to take to Twitter to defend the central bank's independence almost immediately after his appointment, as concerns about government interference sent the lira sliding.

"Politicians' rate"

"In a country ruled by Erdogan, expecting a monetary policy consistent with the global environment and the reality of inflation is impossible," said Atilla Yesilada, an economist with New-York based Global Source Partners. No matter what Fed does, the

central bank will be forced to prioritize growth over fighting inflation, increasing downward risks on the lira, he said.

Some analysts say that Basci developed the unorthodox policy of using an interest-rate "corridor" of multiple rates partly as a way to take the heat off the central bank. The central bank's benchmark repo rate, is set at 7.5 percent. Some market participants refer to the repo rate derisively as the "politicians' rate," as it does not reflect the true cost of borrowing. That is better reflected by the weighted average cost of central bank funding, which hovers at around 8.75 percent. Markets expect that the benchmark repo rate could go as high as 9 percent in coming months.

Basci has said the bank would like to simplify the corridor once the Fed hikes rates. Simsek appeared to back him this week, saying that Turkey needed to improve predictability in monetary and fiscal policy. "We should present a more orthodox monetary policy," he said in a television interview. The bank is also due to release its 2016 monetary and exchange-rate policy outlook on Wednesday, which could give some hints.

Most recently, Erdogan repeated his call for lower interest at a Group of 20 summit last month in the Turkish resort of Antalya. "In Turkey, the interest rates are high. Our rates are not those in the West, where they are low," he said, as Basci and IMF chief Christine Lagarde looked on. But economists say the inflation outlook hardly justifies lower interest rates. In October, the central bank raised its inflation forecast to 7.9 percent for this year, well above the 5 percent target. Annual inflation hit 8.1 percent in November, suggesting it may even overshoot the revised forecast. "If Fed hikes rates as expected, the central bank will also react by increasing the policy rate by 25 basis points," said Finansbank's Deputy General Manager Koksal Coban. "If the central bank does not move, it will have a negative impact on the markets. That's a scenario that the bank won't allow."

Following the central bank's decisions, investors will focus on whether the government will let pragmatism win out over populism, particularly whether it looks to pursue promised structural reforms. "If the country gets these right, investors should have appetite for Turkey by Christmas," Renaissance Capital said in a note to clients. "Otherwise Turkey's goose might be cooked." —Reuters

RISK OF 'BREXIT' DEALS BLOW TO EU DEFENSE HOPES

BRUSSELS: On the same day that Europe's defense ministers rallied behind France's call for military help following the Islamist attacks in Paris, Britain refused to back a tiny increase of 3 million euros in the EU's collective defense budget. Barely noticed as France invoked the EU's mutual assistance clause for the first time on Nov. 17, Britain's resistance to raising the European Defense Agency's budget for a fifth year running underscored how EU defense collaboration continues to unravel just when it is needed most, officials and experts say.

Nearly two decades after France and Britain, the EU's main military powers, launched plans for a common European Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), the continent faces a growing range of security threats, from Islamic State militants to a more assertive, hostile Russia that has seized territory in Ukraine. Yet the

challenges - which also include the arrival on European shores of about a million migrants in 2015 alone fleeing wars and poverty - have failed to reinvigorate the push for greater EU defense cooperation.

"If I look at the common European defense policy, a bunch of chickens would be a more unified combat unit in contrast," European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said when asked about EU defense during a visit to Germany in October. France's surprise invocation of article 42.7 of the European Union's Lisbon Treaty requiring solidarity from other member states following the killing of 130 people in Paris on Nov. 13 by Islamic State militants proved a largely symbolic gesture that did not involve EU defense institutions or missions.

The reasons for the steady waning of EU defense hopes are many: Deep-root-

ed British skepticism about European integration; the impact of global financial crisis and the woes of the euro zone on national budgets; public trauma over the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; and the rise of anti-EU parties across Europe.

Added to that mix now is the risk of "Brexit". Britain's increasingly euro-sceptic Conservative government has promised an in/out referendum by the end of 2017 after renegotiating the terms of the country's membership. "British Prime Minister David Cameron does not want to give any impression of joining a euro-army ahead of the referendum on Britain's EU membership," said Daniel Koehane at the Centre for Security Studies in Zurich. That helps explain why Britain blocked an increase to the European Defense Agency's 2016 budget, which needs unanimity, keeping it at 30.5 million euros and marking a 15 percent fall in real terms since 2010. —Reuters

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EUROPEAN EQUITIES REBOUND, ASIA RETREATS

DETROIT: A year after its exit from a brief but embarrassing bankruptcy, Detroit suddenly has something it long lacked: Money to spend. After paying down debt and other expenses, the city's budget is projected to have a \$35 million surplus for the fiscal year that began July 1. That's a major improvement from a few years earlier when it often struggled to find the money for worker paychecks. Thursday marks the anniversary of the end of Detroit's bankruptcy, and changes are noticeable across the city.

So far, the city has met all the targets it agreed to under the bankruptcy, such as developing a four-year financial plan and reaching a collective bargaining agreement with a major union. As a result, a bond rating service upgraded Detroit one notch this year, citing income tax growth and other improvements. "Looking back, most people would be remarkably surprised at the progress the city's made," state Treasurer Nick Khouri said. "...

These are the best of times right now for the economy. When we're doing long-range budgets we have to understand and try and plan for the bad times, not just the good times."

The city earlier this year submitted its first balanced budget in more than a decade. Residential development near downtown and a new professional hockey arena are coming. However, not everywhere has enjoyed Detroit's post-bankruptcy boom. On Monday, bags of dumped trash and discarded furniture lined a street in an east side neighborhood. The houses were abandoned three years ago and have been falling apart ever since. Ronnie Williams, a resident of the neighborhood since the 1960s, raked leaves in an empty lot and recalled better times, when a family lived in every home on the block. "I don't think the city is digging in hard enough," Williams said. Through bankruptcy savings and leveraging of federal and private funds, Mayor Mike Duggan's

administration since May 2014 has torn down about 7,100 of an estimated 40,000 vacant houses and auctioned off another 500.

'Impressed with mayor's energy'

The city was insolvent in July 2013 when then-state appointed emergency manager Keyvn Orr filed for Detroit's historic bankruptcy. "I've been very impressed with the mayor's energy, creativity and commitment," Judge Stephen Rhodes, who presided over the bankruptcy case, told The Associated Press. "He invites people to judge him on one criteria - and that's if people move back into the city. He is just what the city needs at this moment in its history."

While the city's population of around 680,000 is barely a third of what it was in the 1950s, the exodus seems to be leveling off. The city only has lost about 30,000 residents since the 2010 census. Duggan has said the city needs to become clean-



DETROIT: In this photo, an abandoned home is demolished on Detroit's eastside. The city was insolvent in July 2013 when then-state appointed emergency manager Keyvn Orr filed for Detroit's historic bankruptcy. — AP

er, safer and more efficient to be able to lure new residents and businesses, while convincing others living within Detroit's 139 square miles that better times are coming. "It's up and down with Detroit. It's a beautiful city, though," said Dustin Lynch, who lives in the affluent suburb of Grosse Pointe. Lynch, who cares for a cousin who lives in Williams' neighborhood, said he has seen some progress there - including property owners planting trees and laying sod in some lots.

Private investors are taking a chance again on downtown development. Work has started on a \$45 million, 185-unit apartment complex to the east of downtown. A separate \$65 million development along the city's riverfront will include more than

270 residential units as well as retail space in an area once blighted with old warehouses, crumbling narrow streets and weedy lots. Construction also is underway on a new \$450 million, 20,000 seat hockey arena for the NHL's Detroit Red Wings that will anchor a 45-block entertainment district. JPMorgan Chase has committed \$100 million, boosting the city's economic recovery and neighborhoods with such things as financing for a rehabbed apartment building in Midtown, grants for buyers of restored homes and various loans to encourage businesses to hire minorities. However, despite meeting all the early goals under the bankruptcy, some trickier ones remain. —AP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report						
Wednesday 09 December 2015						
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low	
Price Index	▼ -23.23	5,729.52	5,752.75	5,759.34	5,720.90	
Weighted Index	▼ -0.57	388.96	389.53	389.93	387.82	
KSX 15	▼ -1.40	923.82	925.22	925.82	919.86	

Volume	Value (KWD)	Number of Trades
87,519,864	11,190,927	2,343

Trades						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Change
MARIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	114	▲ 0.0
IKARUS	92	90	123,780	11,160	6	▲ 0.0
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	248	▲ 0.0
NAPESCO	600	600	850	510	1	▲ 0.0
ENERGYH	44.5	44.0	5,400	238	2	▲ 0.5
GPI	59	56	1,758,054	101,408	65	▼ -1.0
ABAR	128	110	10,200	1,224	4	▲ 1.28
Oil & Gas			1,898,284	114,540	78	▲ 7.03
KFOUC	232	230	23,000	5,296	2	▼ -4.0
BPCC	540	530	300,819	161,630	10	▼ -20.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	610	▲ 0.0
ALQURAIN	188	188	117,844	22,155	8	▲ 0.0
Basic Materials			441,663	189,081	20	▼ -18.37
KCEM	390	390	6,939	2,706	1	▼ -5.0
REFRI	0.0	0.0	0	0	315	▲ 0.0
CABLE	380	380	5,052	1,920	4	▲ 0.0
SHIP	148	140	227	33	2	▲ 2.0
PCEM	1,140	1,120	2,795	3,135	3	▲ 0.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	400	▲ 0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	79	▲ 0.0
ACICO	300	285	2,050	612	7	▲ 10.0
GMCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	500	▲ 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	132	▲ 0.0
KPAK	0.0	0.0	0	0	365	▲ 0.0
KBMM	0.0	0.0	0	0	210	▲ 0.0
NICBM	234	230	12,211	2,844	7	▲ 2.0
EQUIPMENT	59	59	23,000	1,357	2	▲ 0.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	84	▲ 0.0
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	102	▲ 0.0
SALBOOKH	82	82	50,000	4,100	1	▲ 0.0
AGLTY	510	500	275,627	139,866	22	▼ -10.0
EDU	216	216	10,990	2,374	2	▲ 0.0
CLEANING	42.5	41.5	135,500	5,654	4	▲ 0.5
CITYGROUP	0.0	0.0	0	0	380	▲ 0.0
KGL	45.0	44.5	20,000	895	2	▲ 0.5
KCCP	0.0	0.0	0	0	222	▲ 0.0
HUMANSOFT	1,180	1,000	2,405	2,454	8	▼ -100.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	194	▲ 0.0
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	325	▲ 0.0
GFC	57	55	35,530	1,966	11	▼ -5.0
MAYADEEN	22.0	21.5	1,679,960	36,949	47	▲ 0.5
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	780	▲ 0.0
MTCC	73	71	1,528,303	109,352	61	▼ -1.0
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	700	▲ 0.0
ALAFCC	214	214	154,708	33,108	4	▲ 0.0
MUBARRAD	80	80	50,000	4,000	1	▲ 0.0
LOGISTICS	58	58	209,147	11,720	24	▼ -1.0
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	86	▲ 0.0
GCEM	80	80	10,840	867	2	▲ 0.0
QCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	80	▲ 0.0
FCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	74	▲ 0.0
RKWC	110	110	200	22	1	▲ 1.0
SPEC	88	88	100	9	1	▲ 6.0
Industrials			4,213,584	365,941	217	▼ -10.27
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	220	▲ 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	62	▲ 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	104	▲ 0.0
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	134	▲ 0.0
DANAH	90	86	522,589	45,769	35	▼ -5.0
POULT	0.0	0.0	0	0	176	▲ 0.0
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	2,180	▲ 0.0
Consumer Goods			522,589	45,769	35	▼ -7.15
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	190	▲ 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	920	▲ 0.0
YIACO	134	128	1,100	147	2	▼ -10
Health Care			1,100	147	2	▼ -7.26
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	960	▲ 0.0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	196	▲ 0.0
SULTAN	74	68	616,818	45,240	20	▼ -3
CABLETV	25.0	25.0	698	17	3	▲ 0.0
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	310	▲ 0.0
IFAH	162	156	13,061	2,041	2	▼ -2
QULAFUEL	112	112	13,442	1,506	15	▼ -2
MUNTAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	97	▲ 0.0
JAZERA	0.0	0.0	0	0	490	▲ 0.0
SOOR	112	110	123,481	13,705	19	▼ -2
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	110	▲ 0.0
ALNAWADI	0.0	0.0	0	0	89	▲ 0.0
ALRA	162	152	163,596	25,426	47	▼ -10
ZIMAH	126	124	173,703	21,543	25	▼ -2
UFIG	0.0	0.0	0	0	120	▲ 0.0
KOUTFOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	800	▲ 0.0
Mezzan	1,140	1,120	216,000	246,080	13	▲ -2
Consumer Services			1,320,787	355,556	144	▼ -12.96
ZAIN	365	360	1,662,814	599,616	53	▼ -5
OOREDOO	1,090	1,040	5,940	6,293	3	▲ 0.40
HITSTELEC	30.5	29.0	4,418,700	129,925	76	▲ 1
VIVA	1,100	1,040	967,885	1,034,551	168	▲ 4.0
Telecommunications			7,055,339	1,770,384	300	▲ 11.17
NBK	820	810	4,685,206	3,795,117	61	▲ 0.0
GBK	275	275	5,000	1,375	1	▲ 5
CBK	0.0	0.0	0	0	510	▲ 0.0
ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	370	▲ 0.0
ALMUTAHED	530	530	1,000	530	1	▲ 0.0
KIB	222	222	10,000	2,220	1	▼ -2
BURG	380	380	51,954	19,746	3	▲ 0.0
KFIN	570	560	454,644	256,204	16	▼ -5
BOUBAYAN	435	435	214,328	93,233	26	▲ 0.0
AUB	210	208	550,200	114,442	11	▲ 4
ITHMR	45.0	44.5	155,252	6,912	13	▲ 0.0
WARBANK	204	202	332,185	67,421	76	▼ -2
Banks			6,459,779	4,357,200	209	▼ 1.09
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	305	▲ 0.0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	750	▲ 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	400	▲ 0.0
WINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	106	▲ 0.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	200	▲ 0.0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	41.5	▲ 0.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0
Insurance			0	0	0	▲ 0.00

Trades						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Change
SOKOUK	45.5	44.0	804,999	36,192	23	▲ -1.5
KRE	59	59	9,054	534	1	▲ 0.0
URC	100	95	32,655	3,253	7	▲ 0.0
NRE	94	92	565,000	52,520	20	▲ 0.0
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	345	▲ 0.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	650	▲ 0.0
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	182	▲ 0.0
MASSALEH	60	60	3,000	180	1	▲ 1.0
ARABREC	30.0	29.5	250,300	7,384	7	▲ 0.0
ERESCO	65	63	8,925	576	4	▲ 0.0
MABANEE	940	930	26,492	24,668	6	▼ -10.0
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0
INVESTORS	27.5	27.0	1,100,788	30,150	22	▼ -0.0
IRC	30.5	29.5	292,717	8,757	17	▲ -1.0
ALTUARIA	84	81	3,468,529	285,290	39	▼ -1.0
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	47.0	▲ 0.0
AYANRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	81	▲ 0.0
ADAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	80	▲ 0.0
ALQADRIA	0.0	0.0	0	0	22.0	▲ 0.0
MAZAYA	108	108	200,000	21,600	4	▲ 0.0
ADNC	32.0	30.5	9,484,500	295,317	91	▼ -0.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0
TJARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	42.5	▲ 0.0
TAAMEER	25.5	24.5	20,100	493	2	▲ 0.5
ARKAN	112	112	68,160	7,634	6	▲ 2.0
ARGAN	182	176	81,000	14,408	6	▲ 0.0
ABYAAH	30.5	29.5	1,840,160	55,280	30	▲ 0.0
MUNSHAAT	81	81	43,340	3,511	6	▲ 1.0
FIRSTDUBAI	49.0	47.5	60,586	2,927	4	▲ 0.0
KBT	43.					

HYUNDAI'S

ALL-NEW TUCSON SETS NEW HIGH STANDARD IN COMPACT SUV CLASS IN KUWAIT

Practical family car offers unbeatable combination of comfort, convenience



KUWAIT: Northern Gulf - Hyundai motor company has officially launched the all-new Tucson, compact SUV, in Kuwait. Offering a bold and athletic design, new technological features and class-leading driving performance, the new model has been designed to set new standards for its sector and provide an enticing alternative that ticks all the boxes for young families looking for a highly versatile car.

By combining competitive pricing with a model that embodies the Hyundai motor company's modern premium brand direction, the third

generation All-New Tucson is perfectly placed to build on the popularity of its predecessor, which was the company's third biggest-selling model across the region and the volume leader in the compact SUV segment in 2014.



generation All-New Tucson is perfectly placed to build on the popularity of its predecessor, which was the company's third biggest-selling model across the region and the volume leader in the compact SUV segment in 2014.

The compact SUV market in Kuwait is highly competitive, but with the all-new Tucson NGT is confident that they have a car that provides everything car buyers in the class look for. It represents a bold new step forward in the history of Tucson, bringing premium levels of quality, tech-

nology and style to the customers. Available with 10 exterior colour options featuring two entirely new variants, the model's sharp lines exude sophistication, from the signature hexagonal grille and sleek headlamps at the front, along the dynamic side profile with its expressive 'Z' character-line and 'square-shaped' wheel arches, to the distinctive rear lamps and wide, sporty bumper at the rear.

The equally stylish and refined interior benefits from the careful attention paid by designers to the ergonomics and use of high quality and soft-touch materials along with passenger power seats offering unbeatable lumbar support. Additional cabin features include a newly designed dashboard featuring an 8" display and extended super vision cluster and new door trims for a sportier feel.

For the first time on a Hyundai motor company compact SUV, the all-new Tucson introduces a smart powered tailgate that opens at the approach of the key-holder, and a Blind Spot Detection system that monitors the side and rear

of the vehicle for approaching vehicles. These cutting-edge technologies are complemented by other useful features such as the smart entry and engine start, an electric parking brake, automatic cruise control and a next-generation navigation system that offers improved convenience and smart driving.

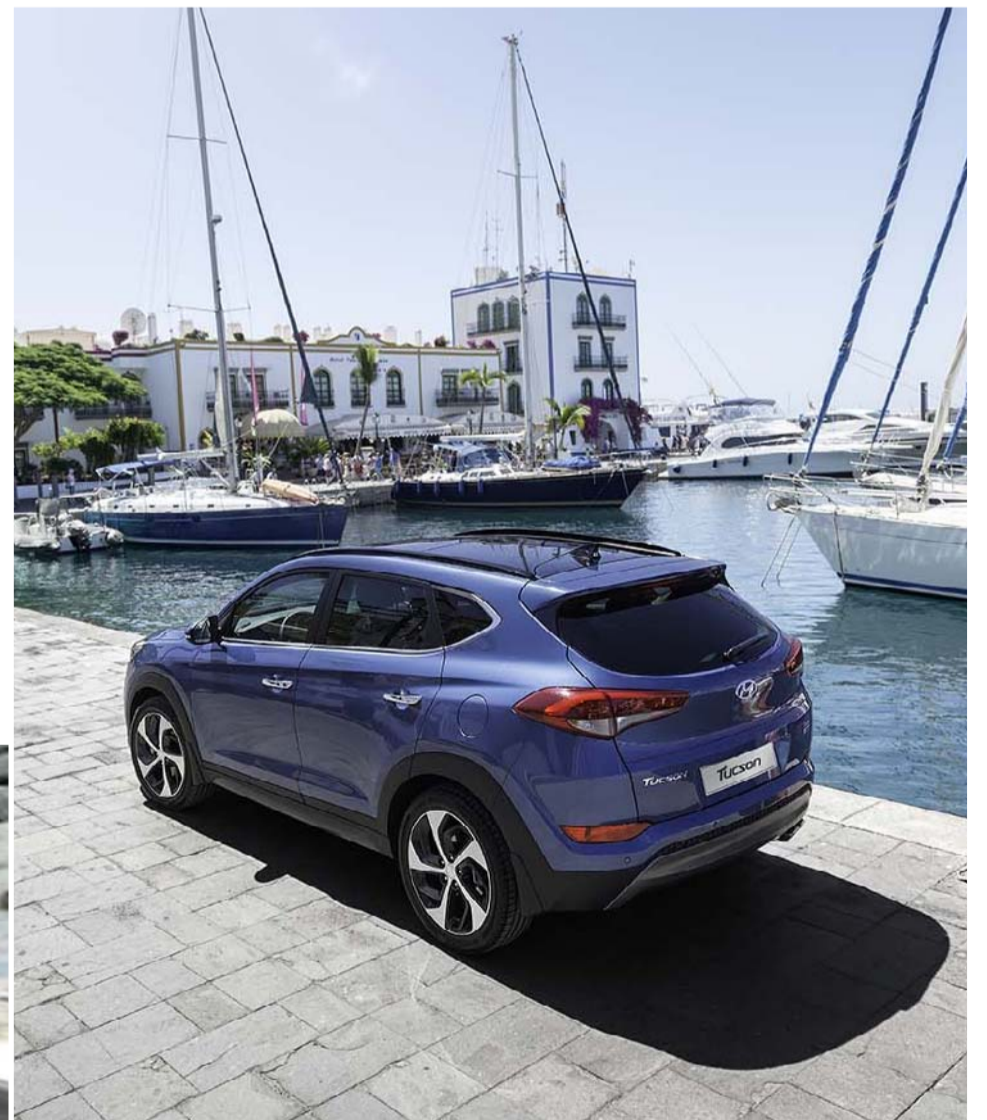
When it comes to protecting occupants the all-new Tucson has been designed to be one of the safest cars in its class, as reflected by the 5-star rating it has received in both the European and North American NCAP crash tests. When it comes to active safety systems, the model can be specified with hi-tech features such as a parking assist, an intelligent tyre pressure monitoring system, Electronic Parking Brake and Hill-start Assist Control. Built on a completely new platform, All-New Tucson delivers ride comfort without compromising driving dynamics. Every element of the chassis has been developed to ensure enhanced high-speed and cornering stability. Best-in-class aerodynamics and structural rigidity combine with an improved front and rear suspension and the integration of enhanced noise reduction techniques to establish the model as truly premium package.

Ensuring that customers can choose from a suitably impressive range of engines to complement the high quality driving experience, the All-New Tucson offers a NU 2.0 MPI petrol engines with a top speed of 182 KPH. The R 2.0 VGT with a top speed of 186 KPH and the manual U2 1.7 liter CRDI with a top speed of 176 KPH, depending on transmission, drive train. All units are mated to 6-speed gearboxes, with both 2WD and 4WD mod-

els dependent on specification and market availability. Always focused on being economical, the fuel consumption of the All-New Tucson has reduced by 13% compared to its predecessor.

With families in mind, Hyundai motor company designers took time to ensure the new compact SUV offers the highest levels of comfort and versatility. The luggage compartment is over 10

percent bigger than in its predecessor, while the larger dimensions deliver more headroom, shoulder room and front row legroom. At the same time, taking the region's climate into account, fans under the seat cushions pump out chilled air on models equipped with air-ventilated front seats, while rear air vents and a panoramic sunroof are also available.





A general view of the audience attending the conference.

INDIAN EPC COMPANIES AWARDED KD1.8BN CONTRACTS IN KUWAIT

CONFERENCE SHEDS LIGHT ON ROLE OF INDIAN EPC COMPANIES

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: Indian EPC companies have been awarded contracts worth over KD 1.8 billion (\$5 billion) over the last two years in Kuwait, said Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain yesterday. Addressing a conference on "Presence of Indian EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) Companies in Kuwait and Their Role in the Developmental Process of Kuwait" organized by the Indian Embassy in Crowne Plaza Hotel yesterday, Jain said the event would provide an overview of the projects being executed by the Indian companies in Kuwait and their areas of specialization to execute further projects in the country.

The embassy organized the conference as a precursor to 'Make in India week' which is scheduled to be held in Mumbai from February 13-18, 2016. "The week-long event will offer access, insights and opportunities to connect and collaborate with India global industry leaders, experts and academicians etc," the ambassador said.

"I urge our Kuwaiti friends among the business fraternity and various stakeholders here to participate in this event that will showcase the 'manufacturing growth story of India,'" Jain said. "It is noteworthy that that notwithstanding the decline in the crude oil prices, Kuwait is going ahead with its planned developmental projects," he stated.

Talking about the bilateral relations, the ambassador said India-Kuwait relations are historically close, warm and friendly. "Our engagement has been multi-faceted and continues to grow. India has consistently been among the top ten trading partners of Kuwait," he said. Total bilateral trade between the two countries stood at \$14.58 billion during the financial year 2014-

2015. India's imports from Kuwait were worth \$13.38 billion while India's exports to Kuwait were \$1.19 billion during the last two years.

KIA investment

"It is heartening to learn that the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) has made substantial investment in India in October 2015 through an IPO floated by Interlobe Aviation that operates



Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain makes his opening remarks during the conference.

IndiGo Airlines. The KIA has also announced last week an investment of \$300 million in GMR Infrastructure that operates the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi. This shows the confidence KIA has in Indian economy," he said.

Talking about Indian economy, the ambassador said, "In an environment where economic growth is modest, India today stands as a bright spot among the global economies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected India's growth for 2015 at 7.3 percent which is forecast to grow to 7.5 percent in 2016," he said.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to India during 2014-15 reached \$44 billion. The Indian government has set an ambitious deadline of 2016 for implementing the goods and services tax (GST). A clear cut roadmap for lowering the corporate tax from 30 percent to 25 percent over the next four years has been laid down.

As a result of these measures, India has moved up in its rankings on a global index of the world's most competitive economies compiled by World Economic Forum underlining the vibrancy of India's economy. Similarly, Ernst & Young ranked India as No 1 attractive investment destination globally and IMF ranked India as No 1 among the world's fastest growing economies. Moody's Ratings revised India's sovereign rating outlook to 'positive' from 'stable'.

The representatives of Indian EPC companies such as TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), Larson and Toubro, Simplex Projects Limited, Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd, ShapoorjiPallonji, Punj Godrej, Afcons Infrastructure Ltd, Dodsal Group and Essar Projects Ltd gave presentations on the projects being executed by them in Kuwait and highlighted their areas of specialization.

About 100 representatives from Kuwaiti EPC companies, senior Kuwaiti officials and businesspersons attended the conference. Indian EPC companies are executing various projects in the areas of oil & gas sector, housing, hospitals, universities, power transmission etc.

LULU HYPERMARKET HONORED WITH SHEIKH KHALIFA EXCELLENCE AWARD

ABU DHABI: The annual Sheikh Khalifa Excellence Award (SKEA) was presented yesterday by Sheikh Hamed Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, chief of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court at a glittering ceremony at Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi. The award is given to both government and private companies and organizations who set and follow the best all round business practices in various fields.

This year's winner included UNB, Emirates Islamic Bank, Mafraq Hospital and Lulu Hypermarkets. Ashraf Ali MA, Executive

Director of Lulu Group received the award on behalf of Lulu Hypermarket. Speaking to the media, Ali said, "We at Lulu have always believed in setting new benchmarks in retailing and always try to do innovative things in all sphere of our business activities." Lulu hypermarket is the only retailer to be selected for this prestigious award. "We are very proud and honored to have been selected by the SKEA jury and would like to take this opportunity to thank all our loyal shoppers and business associates for their continued support," he added.



ABU DHABI: Sheikh Hamed Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, chief of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court presents the SKEA award to Ashraf Ali MA, Executive Director of Lulu Group. Also seen are Mohamed Thani Murshed Ghannam Al-Rumaithi, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Chamber and His Excellency Saeed Abdul Jalil Al-Fahim, Chairman of the Higher Committee of SKEA.

AUB ANNOUNCES WEEKLY DRAW WINNERS IN 'AL-HASSAD ISLAMIC SAVING' PROGRAM

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank held its weekly draw of Al-Hassad Islamic Saving program on December 2, 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 fulfill 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: Faisal Zaid Al-Zaid.

The winners of the KD 1,000 prize each: Abdulla Mohammed Al-Qoud, Al-Fahdah Abdurraheem Al-Zaabibharat Bhusan Singh, Suad S A Abumarzouq, Khaled

Abdulaziz Al-Bahar, Mohammed Ibrahim Mohammed, Maryam Ahmed Abdulah Al Sharqawe, Sarah Mansour Al-Mutairi, Yousef Reza Othman, Al-Mohsen Ismail Kh, Ali Taleb Mohammad fatemah Jamal Basharah, Jassem Mohammed Ashoor, Sahar Ali Shweikeh, Ali Ismaeil Ahmad, Abdulaziz Jaber Galy, Mohammed Abdulhadi Al-Wazan, Georgios Fotiou, Mohsen Ali Mohsen, Eman Ahmed, Samer Mounir Zaky, Karima Abdullhussain Al-Helli, Isa Abduljabbar Isa, Vanessa Maureen Codd, Ahmed Ebrahim A. Latif.

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 four 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.

QALAA'S TOTAL REVENUES CLIMB 31% Y-O-Y IN 9M15

KUWAIT: Qalaa Holdings (CCAP on the Egyptian Exchange, formerly Citadel Capital) released its consolidated financial results for the quarter ending 30 September 2015, reporting revenues of EGP 2,051.2 million, up 19 percent compared to the same quarter last year. On a nine-month basis, revenues climbed 31 percent y-o-y in 9M2015 to EGP 6,085.5 million. Revenue growth in the 9M2015 was driven by both cement manufacturing arm ASEC Cement and energy distribution business TAQA Arabia. TAQA Arabia posted a 36 percent rise in revenues to EGP 1,713.2 million in the period, while ASEC Holding saw its top line grow 30 percent to 2,338.6 million. Together, the energy and cement divisions contributed some 69 percent of total revenues in 9M2015. Qalaa also began the full consolidation of ASCOM in 3Q2015, with latter contributing EGP 162 million to Qalaa's top-line.

EBITDA for the third quarter declined 9 percent y-o-y to EGP 214.5 million compared to 3Q2014, the first decline following its upward progression from 1Q2014 through 2Q2015. The decrease comes on the back of several factors, including Qalaa's exit from Misr Cement Qena - which had been positively contributing to the share of associates account above the EBITDA line; 3Q2015 witnessing two Eid Holidays - Eid El Fitr and Eid El-Adha - leading to less working days during the quarter; and Sudan's Al-Takamol facing temporary fuel shortages during 3Q2015, all of which have consequently affected cement revenues and EBITDA, with the latter coming in lower by EGP 67 million q-o-q. Factoring out the decline in the cement sector's contribution, Qalaa's 3Q2015 EBITDA would stand at EGP 280 million, up 19 percent y-o-y. On a nine-month basis, Qalaa posted EBITDA growth of 71 percent y-o-y to EGP 779.6 million.

Divesting non-core investments

On the restructuring front, Qalaa continues to press forward with its strategy of divesting non-core investments across its footprint, with several exits concluded during the nine-month period and more recently in the fourth quarter of 2015. In 2Q2015 Qalaa concluded the sale of its 27.5 percent stake in Misr Cement Qena, while in 4Q2015 the company further reduced its exposure to the cement industry with its business unit ASEC Cement divesting its stakes in subsidiaries ASEC Minya Cement and ASEC Ready Mix. Meanwhile, the company's Agrifoods business unit Gozour has signed sale and purchase agreements (SPAs) for the sale of 100 percent of confectioner Rashidi El-Mizan as well as for the divestment of RIS assets in Sudan and El-Misrieen in Egypt. Finally, business unit Mashreq has signed an agreement with the General Authority of the Suez Canal Economic Zone for the transfer of a concession contract.

"We are pressing ahead with plans to divest assets that will allow us to deleverage and devote maximum attention to high-growth businesses in sectors that are vital to the development of our region such as refining, energy distribution and transportation & logistics," said Qalaa Holdings Chairman and Founder Ahmed Heikal. "We remain firmly committed to growing our investments in ERC - Egypt's largest in-progress private-sector megaproject due to begin production in 2017 - and TAQA Arabia which is pursuing exciting new opportunities in gas distribution, electricity generation and renewable energy alike. In parallel we are also looking for opportunities to unlock shareholder value at subsidiaries including ASCOM and Rift Valley Railways that have strong growth outlooks," he added.

Substantial deleveraging

"The sale of ASEC Cement's Egyptian assets alongside other transactions will fundamentally re-shape Qalaa's financials, giving more weight on both our income statement and balance sheet to ongoing operations at our energy and mining units and setting the stage for the transformative impact of ERC," said Qalaa Holdings Co-Founder and Managing Director Hisham El-Khazindar. "The near-full impact of the substantial deleveraging that accompanies these transactions will be felt in our 4Q2015 and 1Q2016 financials."

The company reported a net loss after tax and minority interest of EGP 125.5 million in the third quarter of 2015, a two-fold increase compared to 3Q2014's loss of EGP 59.5 million. The widening of losses y-o-y owes primarily to an increase in bank interest expense by EGP 30 million related to ASCOM's consolidation, as well as an increase of EGP 27 million in booked provisions related to ARESCO and ASEC Automation. On a nine month basis, however, bottom-line losses narrowed by 31 percent to EGP 322.4 million compared to 9M2014 figure of EGP 470.1 million. It is worth noting that during 9M2015 the company booked charges totaling EGP 120.5 million in discontinued operations, c. EGP 74 million are related to Agrifoods business units that have either been exited in the fourth quarter or are earmarked for sale.

Key elements

Meanwhile, total debt levels excluding ERC and RVR declined to EGP 6.63 billion on the back of continued deleveraging, with debt reduction to further accelerate in FY15 - by c. EGP 1.2 billion - post the sale of ASEC Minya and Rashidi El-Mizan. ERC's total debt climbed to EGP 8.8 billion as at 30 September, 2015, on the back of draw downs totaling EGP 2.07 billion during the third quarter of 2015. Construction at ERC is well underway with 76 percent progress as of November 2015 and with on-spec production to commence by the second half of 2017.

HSBC'S HOSTS 18TH ME ECONOMIST ROADSHOW IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: More than 125 people gathered in Kuwait yesterday for HSBC's 18th Middle East Economist Roadshow. The event, held at the Marina Hotel saw David Bloom, Global Head of Foreign Exchange Strategy, and Simon Williams, Chief Economist, CEEMEA, discuss the most important global and regional trends shaping the Middle East's economies. Each year, the roadshow visits Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Riyadh, before making stops in Qatar, Kuwait and Oman.

Simon Williams said: "The balance sheets of the Middle East oil producers are strong enough to absorb the terms of trade shock. However large the deficits may get, they are going to be funded. The dollar pegs are going to hold. We fear this is not a cyclical dip in oil prices, but a change in cycle. A structural shift. The boom era may be done, more difficult times lie ahead.

While there is no crisis on the horizon, the terms of trade shock is too large to ignore. Deficits approaching half a trillion dollars over 2015-17 mean that spending will be cut, interest rates will rise and growth will slow markedly. The wealth that Kuwait commands leaves it better placed than many of its peers, but even here the downturn in activity will be marked. Capital and current spending growth will slow, investment in the energy sector will reverse, and the dollar-driven appreciation of the currency will undermine competitiveness. The answer is structural reform, and I can see some changes already being introduced. But it is a long and difficult process. Leadership will be key."

David Bloom said: "The start of a Fed tight-

ening cycle will not be US dollar (USD) positive in our view. Like other countries that have had to quickly reverse their post-crisis rate hikes, the Fed's cycle will likely be shorter than before. If this is due to low inflation, the USD should fall against both Emerging Market and

make a large-scale expansion of the quantitative easing (QE) program difficult. We see EUR-USD at 1.20 by year-end 2016. The consensus in markets is for further Bank of Japan (BoJ) easing, given stubbornly low inflation in Japan. However, we do not share this view, and think that large-scale



Simon Williams

Developed Market FX.

So far, the ECB has successfully managed to weaken the euro (EUR), but fighting any EUR-USD upside may be more difficult, given that it faces several crucial self-imposed constraints that

QE is reaching its limits of effectiveness. This, combined with technical and political difficulties, means we see the BoJ holding off on further easing. We therefore change our USD-JPY forecasts, to 115 in Q4 2016, from 125.

CHINA'S EXPORT TAX CUTS MAY WORSEN GLOBAL STEEL

SHANGHAI/BEIJING: China said yesterday it would cut some import and export taxes next year to boost its ailing trade sector, raising concerns that cheaper Chinese products could exacerbate a global oversupply of basic materials such as steel and chemicals. Trade tensions are already growing with Europe and the United States which have accused China of dumping steel on world markets, and industry experts said the tax breaks on other types of steel, iron and other products could aggravate supply gluts. The intense pressure facing Chinese manufacturers was clear in data early in the day which prompted worries that the world's second-largest economy could be falling into a Japan-style deflation trap. Companies slashed prices for the 45th month in a row in November as they struggled to sell their goods, with the producer price index (PPI)

down 5.9 percent from a year earlier, the fastest since the global financial crisis. The weak price report came on the heels of trade data on Tuesday which showed China's exports fell for the fifth consecutive month in November while imports contracted for the 13th month straight, casting doubt on hopes that the cooling economy would stabilize in the fourth quarter.

Nonetheless, basic material exports were relatively strong, as weak domestic demand spurs firms to redirect cargoes abroad. "We think it's a longer-term dynamic playing out: China exporting its surplus to the Western world," said ANZ analyst Daniel Hynes, referring to a 15 percent surge in unwrought aluminum and product exports to 450,000 tons in November. China's oil refiners shipped a record amount of fuel products in the first 11 months of the

year, aluminum processors sold their second-highest tonnage ever and steelmakers increased exports by 22 percent to a new record.

The export tax cuts will apply to steel billet (bars) and pig iron, lowering them to 20 percent and 10 percent, respectively, from the current 25 percent effective Jan. 1, the Ministry of Finance said yesterday. Export tariffs on phosphoric acid and ammonia also will be eliminated. Taxes also would be adjusted to encourage imports of advanced equipment, energy raw materials, and some components.

Strong deflationary forces

While higher equipment and raw material imports could be a boon for China's trading partners and some Western firms, the policy move raised concerns that China hopes to ease pressure on its embattled heavy

industrial sector by sending more excess production abroad. The price deflation in China's industrial sector is in part a reflection of slumping global commodity prices since 2011, but also highlights weaker demand for basic construction materials at home following an extended downturn in the property market.

And with a large inventory of unsold homes discouraging new construction and investment, much of the heavy industrial build-out in steel, cement and other materials created to serve China's housing boom in the 2000s now has nowhere to go. "Alarmingly, the GDP deflator, a broader measure of price changes in the economy, declined 0.7 percent y/y in Q3, indicating that China has entered a deflationary era," wrote Liu Li-Gang and Louis Lam, economists at ANZ Bank in Hong Kong in a note. —Reuters

EU PLAN TO MAKE NETFLIX, BBC IPLAYER AVAILABLE ABROAD

BRUSSELS: The EU unveiled plans yesterday that would allow travellers to get online streaming services like Netflix or BBC iPlayer when abroad by 2017, something currently blocked by complex copyright rules.

Europeans spend about one billion nights in other EU countries every year but face a frustrating inability to watch films and sports or listen to music on an iPad or laptop when they travel outside their home country. "People who legally buy content—films, books, football matches, TV series—must be able to carry it with them anywhere they go in Europe," said Andrus Ansip, the European Commission's Vice President for the digital single market. "We want to ensure the portability of content across borders." As it stands, subscribers to the Netflix or Amazon streaming service in, for example, Britain, cannot use the service when they travel to another country. The services in different countries also currently have different content.

In another example, digital subscribers to Sky Sports in London are unable to access Premier League football matches when travelling abroad. The com-

mission, the executive body of the 28-country EU, said the ability of Europeans to enjoy subscriptions to these services while still in the bloc was "a new EU right for consumers".

'COMPLEX TECHNICAL ISSUES'

The proposal now goes to the European parliament and EU member states for approval, which the commission hopes will come next year, with final implementation of the rules in 2017. That is the same year that the EU is set to end mobile phone roaming charges. The British Broadcasting Corporation, the largest public broadcaster in the world, welcomed the impact on its iPlayer service, which only people living in Britain are currently able to use. "We are interested in being able to allow UK licence-fee payers to access BBC iPlayer while they are on holiday in the EU, and welcome the European Commission proposing regulation to help make this possible," a BBC statement said.

"There are complex technical issues to resolve and aspects of the Commission's proposal need clarification," EU officials said the BBC service would need to introduce a system that verifies the country of residence of users, which services like Netflix and Amazon already have. Critics argued that the proposal lacked ambition and addressed only the narrow concerns of subscribers who could afford the big fees demanded by the streaming services.

"Overall, the copyright reform proposals are a far cry from commitment by Commission president (Jean-Claude) Juncker to 'break down national silos' in copyright and ignore many demands made by the EU Parliament," said Julia Reda, a leading Greens MEP on the issue.

'JUST AN APPETISER'

But the commission said the so-called "portability" issue is only the first step towards a far more controversial plan by the EU to overhaul the EU's complex copyright rules, part of a scheme to create a single digital market in Europe. "The proposal... is just an appetiser, the main course will come in 2016," said the EU's

Digital Commissioner Guenther Oettinger. The European Union is the world's biggest economy, but despite its 500 million potential consumers, digital services remain confined to national borders, with separate accounts and proof of residency required from one country to another.

In May the EU launched an anti-trust inquiry into the online shopping marketplace over the restrictions it places on people in one country being able to buy goods from another.

It is focused on electronics, clothes, shoes and digital content. But media companies are extremely reluctant to break the status quo especially in France, where protecting French culture is an important government priority.

"In the digital economy, licensing distribution rights by territory remains fundamental to the financing, production and distribution of content not just in the EU, but worldwide," said Benoit Ginsty of the International Federation of Film Producers Association, a lobby in Brussels. — AFP



NEW YORK: In this Tuesday, Sept 28, 2010, file photo, a boy looks at VTech's V.Reader, an interactive e-reader for children ages 3 and older, in New York. Parents around the world have been understandably shaken by the hacking of a VTech database containing information on the more than 6 million children who use the company's toys. — AP

AFTER VTECH HACK, SOME TIPS ON KEEPING YOUR KIDS SAFE

NEW YORK: Parents around the world have been understandably shaken by the hacking of a VTech database containing information on the more than 6 million children who use the company's toys.

But what's a parent to do? Internet-connected toys such as VTech's tablets, which ask parents to create personalized profiles for their children, continue to grow in popularity and are expected on many holiday gift lists this season.

Meanwhile, children have larger digital footprints than ever before, often starting at birth with an announcement on Facebook or other social media. Here are some answers to common questions about VTech's breach and how to protect your kids' information online:

WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION DID HACKERS ACCESS?

The attack compromised the profiles of 6.4 million kids around the world, along with the 4.9 million parent accounts that they were connected to. The parental accounts included names, email addresses, secret questions and answers for password retrieval, numeric Internet Protocol addresses, mailing addresses, download histories and encrypted passwords. But information in the children's accounts was restricted to names, ages and genders, the Hong Kong-based company says.

The breach didn't expose any credit-card or other financial account information, as payments are handled by an outside company on a separate website.

Some reports suggested that photos of children and chats between kids and their parents might also have been accessed, but VTech Holdings Ltd. says it's still investigating and can't confirm that yet.

WHY IS THIS A BIG DEAL?

The worry is that even basic pieces of information could allow nefarious people to start building profiles of children, potentially setting them up for identity theft or worse down the road. David Dewey, director of research for Pindrop Security, says kids have no credit history and their parents generally aren't checking their credit reports, making them easy targets.

"Fraud could go undetected for years, till they try to open what they think is their first credit card account," says Dewey, also a father to a pair of elementary school-aged girls.

While the worst case scenario would be for the information to be used to kidnap a child, the scenario of a "virtual kidnapping" is more likely, he says. In that kind of situation, a person would call a parent and use the information they had

about their child to convince them that they had kidnapped the child and demand a ransom. A voice recording would make such a scam much more convincing, Dewey says. Voice is something that some VTech devices collect, but it's unclear if any got stolen in the breach.

IS IT SAFE TO ENTER INFORMATION ABOUT MY KIDS INTO TOYS LIKE THESE?

Parents have become very accustomed to handing over personal information to companies in order to get a more personalized experience, whether they're setting up a kid's toy or signing up for Netflix. But there's always a chance that the database where it's stored could be hacked. Parents have to weigh the importance of the information they're giving up against the benefits of having it collected.

Mark Nunnikhoven, vice president of cloud research for the IT security company Trend Micro, notes that when it comes to toys like VTech's, there's nothing stopping you from setting up your child's account with a different name, fake picture and other false information. And most of the time, you can refuse to provide it all together.

WHAT ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA?

It's not realistic to expect most parents to stop posting childhood milestones of Facebook. Social media is often the most efficient way to share pictures and videos with friends and family who live far away.

But Nunnikhoven, also a father to two young kids, says it's important that parents monitor their privacy settings and make sure that what their posting is only going to friends and family. Parents also should think twice before posting pictures of events like school outings and concerts where there are other children involved.

And it's generally a good idea to stay away from Twitter, which basically broadcasts your information to the entire world, he says.

WHAT ABOUT TEENS AND TEENS WITH THEIR OWN ACCOUNTS?

Add this to the long list of things that make parenting hard. Dewey, who doesn't have a Facebook account because of security worries, tells his daughters to question whether the world really needs to know what they're about to say online before they say it. Nunnikhoven says that like any other tough issue you talk about with your kids, the important thing is to keep talking about it. "Not only are the children changing faster than we would like, so is the technology," he says. "As a parent, you need to stay on top of those things." — AP

FACEBOOK LIFTS BAN ON CONTENT FROM RIVAL SOCIAL NETWORK TSU

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook has lifted a ban that blocked material from Tsu.co, a small rival challenging the world's largest social network's financial dependence on free content shared by its 1.5 billion users.

The reversal comes a month after The Associated Press published a story airing concerns that Facebook might be abusing its power to thwart competition and stifle the concept advanced by Tsu that people should be paid for the stories and images that they post on social networks.

"We won in the court of public opinion," Tsu CEO Sebastian Sobczak said Tuesday. "When you have something new and novel in the market like what we are doing, this kind of validation is extremely important. It feels like we just got a golden stamp of approval."

The dispute between one of the Internet's most powerful companies and Tsu began in late September when Facebook removed nearly 10 million posts containing links and other references to Tsu (pronounced "soo"). Facebook also blocked attempts to post anything else that sent traffic to Tsu.co, both on the pages of its social network or on its pop-

ular Messenger and Instagram applications.

Tsu's ouster stemmed from its practice of sharing ad revenue with its users. The payments are based on how many people read their posts. Facebook decided Tsu's payments represented a financial incentive for people to share links on its network, something the Menlo Park, California, company says it prohibits because it believes the practice pollutes its service with the digital rubbish known as "spam." Sobczak contends Facebook hoped to destroy an upstart trying to popularize the idea that people should get paid for posts that help sell advertising. Facebook has built a highly profitable company with a market value of \$300 billion, partly because it doesn't pay for the material that keeps people and advertisers coming to its social network.

The two sides resolved their differences with a truce that required New York-based Tsu.co to remove a feature that allowed its users to share content directly to Facebook with one click on an app. Now Tsu.co users will have to go through several extra steps to transfer their posts to Facebook, or just copy and paste a link. — AP

YAHOO SCRAPS ORIGINAL ALIBABA SPIN OFF PLAN

YAHOO'S INTERNET BUSINESS IS WORTH NEXT TO NOTHING

SAN FRANCISCO: Yahoo is scrapping its original plan to spin off its prized stake in China's Alibaba Group and will instead explore breaking off the rest of its business into a new company.

Yahoo shares gained more than 2 percent in premarket trading. The change of heart announced yesterday comes after Yahoo's board met last week to review the proposed Alibaba spin off, as well as CEO Marissa Mayer's stalled attempts to turn around one of the Internet's best-known companies.

Yahoo Inc. said that it now plans to look into how it can spin off all of its other businesses and their liabilities into a new company. That business would be distributed to Yahoo shareholders. Yahoo Chairman Maynard Webb said in a statement that the company became concerned about the original plan to spin off the Alibaba stake in part because of the market's perception of tax risk. The meetings Yahoo held last week included a discussion on whether to heed an activist shareholder's call for Yahoo to sell the websites, mobile applications and ad services that generate most of its revenue and recast itself to a holding company for its holdings in Alibaba, a rapidly growing e-commerce company, and Yahoo Japan. Those Asian investments account for the bulk of Yahoo's current market value of about \$33 billion. Investors have concluded that Yahoo's Internet business is worth next to nothing, largely because its ad revenue has been sinking for years even though marketers have been steadily increasing their spending on digital campaigns. Most of those dollars, though, have been flowing to Google and Facebook. Things were supposed to change when Yahoo lured Mayer, considered a rising Silicon Valley star, away from Google to become its CEO three-and-a-half years ago. But Yahoo has only showed modest signs of progress during her tenure, despite spending billions on acquisitions and product development.

FRUSTRATION

As Wall Street's frustration with the inertia has mounted, Yahoo's stock has fallen by about 30 percent so far this year. Mayer had hoped to buy more time with the Alibaba spinoff, which had



LAS VEGAS: In this Jan. 7, 2014, file photo, Yahoo president and CEO Marissa Mayer speaks during the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. Yahoo announced yesterday, it is scrapping its original plan to spin off its prized stake in China's Alibaba Group and will instead break off the rest of its business into a new company. — AP

been set as tax-free shelter for Yahoo's 384 million shares in the Chinese company. That idea pleased investors until the Internal Revenue Service declined to rule that the Alibaba spinoff would qualify for a tax exemption. That raised the specter of Yahoo being hit with a tax bill of more than \$10 billion on an investment currently worth about \$32 billion. Despite that possibility, Mayer had been planning to complete the Alibaba spinoff by next month in a reflection of her belief the split would gain tax-free status.

Spooked by the potential tax hit, Starboard Value reversed its initial support of the Alibaba spinoff and last month demanded that Yahoo's board sell the Internet business instead. If Yahoo didn't reconsider the Alibaba plan, Starboard

threatened to lead a shareholder mutiny aimed at overthrowing the board next year.

Even before the Alibaba backpedal, Mayer had promised to start off the new year with a reorganization that will jettison Yahoo's least profitable services as part of housecleaning likely to pare Yahoo's payroll from its current size of 10,700 employees.

Despite its financial funk, Yahoo still runs services that attract hundreds of millions of visitors and owns one of the world's best-known brands. If a reverse spin off is successful, it would need to clear a number of hurdles, including third party consents and shareholder approval.

Shares of Yahoo rose 85 cents, or 2.4 percent, to \$35.70 before the market open. — AP

DITCH YOUR PC, IF YOU'RE WILLING TO SUFFER A LITTLE

NEW YORK: Plenty of people do all their Facebooking, YouTubeing, Web surfing and whatnot on mobile devices. But not everyone. Lots of us still rely on personal computers for plenty of tasks. Take writers, for instance, for whom a physical keyboard is often a must. But the tech industry keeps trying to come up with lighter and cheaper alternatives to the traditional laptop. New gadgets from Apple, Microsoft and Google all harbor such ambitions, to varying degrees. Google's Pixel C tablet came out Tuesday. All have their shortcomings, though they offer some surprises as well.

Microsoft's Surface tablets aren't part of this review, basically because including them would be cheating. Surfaces are full-fledged PCs already; they just feature magnetically attached keyboard covers in place of a built-in keyboard. Here, I was more interested in devices that weren't originally designed as PCs. In fact, I avoided PCs for a full week to test out these alternatives.

IPAD PRO

I started with a bus ride from New York to Philadelphia. The seat had little legroom, yet Apple's iPad Pro felt comfortable on my lap, perched on a physical-keyboard cover (\$169) that folds into a kickstand. The tablet ran Microsoft Word for writing and Excel for spreadsheets. All iPads now let you run apps side by side, something you can really only appreciate with the Pro's 12.9-inch screen. But it's still not possible to open multiple Word or Excel documents at once. To copy text from one to another, you still have to close the first document and open the second.

Adobe's Lightroom worked fine for basic photo editing, and the resulting images seemed more vivid on the iPad than on my years-old Mac laptop. But I needed the Mac to get the photos off my camera's memory card in the first place, as the iPad doesn't have an SD card slot. The iPad easily handled much more prosaic tasks. Paying bills and organizing my photos online were also straightforward, although drag-and-drop features are tougher to use without a trackpad. I even scanned some documents via an app for my wireless Canon scanner. Then came the reality check. On the Mac, I organize documents by folder to keep them straight. On the iPad, my options were limited to storing them in the iPad's photo gallery or emailing copies to myself. The iPad is meant to keep things simple. There's no messy folder system, and iPad apps are often limited to a subset of the features you can find on PCs.

But work and life can be complex, and you sometimes need a device that can mirror that complexity. The Pro is a good supplement, but it's no laptop replacement.

LUMIA 950

Microsoft's Lumia 950 is a phone that can turn into a desktop PC of sorts when attached to the company's



NEW YORK: In this Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2015, file photo, Panos Panay, Microsoft vice president for Surface Computing, shows a new Lumia 950 phone during a presentation, in New York. The device will work with an optional dock and users can attach a regular monitor, keyboard and mouse and work with apps on the phone just like you would on a Windows 10 desktop. — AP

PIXEL C

Google's Pixel C tablet has many laptop characteristics, including a high-resolution screen and a keyboard that attaches securely to the screen. You can hold the unit by either the tablet or the keyboard half - even upside down. The magnet is very strong, unlike that of Microsoft's Surface. The screen angle is also adjustable, unlike the iPad Pro. Multiple people can share the Android-based Pixel; it's possible to set up individual profiles and save settings, unlike the iPad. But the Pixel can't display apps side-by-side, which makes copying text between apps tougher.

The Pixel is easier to carry around, with its smaller, 10.2-inch screen. The keyboard is smaller to match. Rather than squeeze keys closer together, the Pixel moves less-used characters, such as brackets, to an on-screen display. The Pixel can run many of the apps that the iPad can, and it faces similar challenges with file management and trackpad-less drag and drop.

Display Dock - a 2.5-inch square box that hooks up to a TV or external monitor. You can connect a keyboard and mouse as well.

The setup is novel, but you have to buy and carry around the dock, along with extra cords and your own keyboard-mouse combo. Using a TV as a monitor presents a distance problem: Either you're too close to the screen if you're working from a nearby desk, or you're too far away on a couch or hotel bed.

A laptop is easier to stow. Using this is like setting up an actual desktop, even if it's running off your phone. The software is clunky, too. Many Windows apps won't work on the phone. Word and Excel can handle one document at a time.

While you can pay bills and organize online photos on the TV, some other apps, such as Adobe's Photoshop Express for photo editing, don't project onto the bigger screen.

This setup might still be useful for people who need to make PowerPoint presentations from their Windows phone. And companies that can't afford to buy employees both a phone and a laptop can, in theory, make do with a single device. — AP

MEN'S SELF-IMAGE PUTS THEM IN DANGER OF DYING FROM AIDS

NAIROBI: Men's self-image as strong, sexually active risk-takers means they are more likely to die from HIV/AIDS than are women, experts said yesterday, calling for more HIV workplace testing to reach men and greater efforts to change gender norms. Although six out of ten Africans with HIV are women, men are 25 percent more likely to die from the disease, according to research by the Africa Centre for Health and Population Studies in South Africa, which has the world's biggest AIDS epidemic.

"A lot has been achieved in the AIDS response, but we will be more successful if we put greater emphasis on engaging men and boys," Dean Peacock, founding director of South African advocacy group Sonke Gender Justice, told the Thomson Reuters

Foundation. "The majority of people who don't access services are men - and that's bad for everyone." Men are less likely to test for HIV, less likely to start or adhere to antiretroviral therapy (ART) to manage the disease and more likely to start treatment late and die, Peacock said in a paper he co-authored and presented to United Nations program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) yesterday.

Men will soon make up almost 70 percent of AIDS-related deaths in some high-prevalence countries, the paper said, even though rates of HIV infection among women aged 15 to 24 are twice as high as those of men the same age. Women are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS because their lower social status, poverty and violence often mean they cannot choose whether to have sex or use a condom.

As a result, health services have focused heavily on ensuring women get tested, usually when they are pregnant, and take ART to prevent transmission of the virus to their babies. To end the HIV pandemic, there needs to be a greater focus on testing and treating men, Peacock said, by offering male-friendly services in the workplace or open on weekends with male staff.

Long distances

When men do not know their HIV status, they are less likely to use a condom to protect their sexual partners, research shows. Similarly, if they do not take ART, their viral load remains high and they are more likely to transmit HIV. The World Health Organization recommends everyone with

HIV should start ART as soon as possible to safeguard their health and reduce the risk of transmission.

"Men are socialized to see health-seeking as a sign of weakness," Peacock said. "Many men feel they can only access health services when something is broken or falling off." Men often avoid HIV tests because they assume they are positive and drive long distances to clinics where they will not be recognized, the paper said, citing research in Malawi.

"We want to make sure that there are education efforts - from the classroom to the television that people watch at night (and) the billboards they drive past - that promote a different set of norms about gender," Peacock said. "Men shouldn't define their manhood by the number of women they have sex with,

by how dominant they are in their relationship (and) by how much alcohol they consume."

Greater efforts also need to be made to reach men who have sex with men (MSM), who are 19 times more likely to be HIV positive than the general population but find it hard to access services due to stigma and discrimination, the paper said. Homosexuality is illegal in most African countries. A recent study found only one in ten HIV positive MSM in some South African provinces was on antiretroviral therapy. "We have to change the laws," said South African judge Edwin Cameron, who is living with HIV and gay. "You impede access to treatment and effective response to the epidemic through these antiquated persecutions." —Reuters



BEIJING: People wearing masks walk past the Turret of the Forbidden City on a heavily polluted day. —AP photos

UNHEALTHY SMOG HOVERS OVER BEIJING ON DAY 2 OF SMOG ALERT

BEIJING: Unhealthy smog hovered over downtown Beijing as limits on cars, factories and construction sites kept pollution from spiking even higher yesterday, on the second of three days of restrictions triggered by the city's first red alert for smog. Cars with even-numbered license plates were kept off roads, and schools and construction sites remained closed. Far fewer than usual pedestrians walked the streets - many of them wearing white masks to filter the air.

Insurance and water purifier saleswoman Zhang Jingtie said she had no choice but to be out despite restrictions through Thursday that have prompted some businesses to close and some others to allow employees to work from home. "I stay outdoors most of the time, so I am very worried that I may have cancer if I continue to live in this kind of air for long time," said Zhang, 25. "So, we really need to do something to protect the environment."

Pollution levels midday in downtown Beijing were mostly between 250 and 300 on the city's air quality index - suggesting the restrictions were having an effect. The city's alert was triggered by a forecast Monday that pollution levels would be above 300 for three days straight. The index is strongly linked to levels of the dangerous tiny particles PM2.5, which at midday ranged from about 200 to 250 micrograms per cubic meter downtown - or 8 to 10 times the safe level recommended by the World Health Organization. Although many other cities in China and elsewhere in the world typically see levels of smog even

worse than yesterday's pollution in Beijing, the Chinese capital's latest bout of smog has triggered its first red alert under a 2-year-old system of alerts and restrictions to deal with persistent contamination.

A grey soupy haze subsumed Beijing's unique landmarks, convenience stores sold air-filtering masks at brisk rates and health-food stores promoted pear juice as a traditional Chinese tonic for the lungs. "And air purifiers at home are a must," Beijing resident Sun Yuanyuan said at a downtown Beijing juice shop. A slew of Beijingers said via social media they planned to escape the gloom. They needed to travel relatively far, because nearly all of China's northeast was affected, and some cities - including nearby Shijiazhuang - were even worse than Beijing. After hearing of the school closings late Monday, Beijing mother Jiang Xia booked tickets for a 3,200 kilometer (2,000-mile) flight to the relatively clean south-western city of Kunming, for herself and her 8-year-old daughter who she said suffers nosebleeds in the smog. She said in an interview from Kunming that they hectically packed before dawn Tuesday for their flight.

"But when we arrived in Kunming and breathed in this clean, fresh air, I was very glad I made this move - a very wise decision," Jiang said. The capital's hazardous smog has persisted despite the Chinese government's stated priority of cleaning up the legacy of pollution left from years of full-tilt economic growth. Most of the smog is blamed on coal-fired power plants, along with vehicle emissions, construction and factory work. —AP

US DEATHS FROM ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RISE SIGNIFICANTLY

'ALZHEIMER'S HAVING A GROWING IMPACT ON AMERICAN SOCIETY'

MIAMI: Nearly 10,000 more people died of Alzheimer's disease in the United States last year than in 2013, a significant rise of 8.1 percent, according to US health data released yesterday. Global health authorities have warned that cases of Alzheimer's - the most common form of dementia - would soar along with the aging population in the coming years. But whether the latest data shows a true rise in Alzheimer's death, or just a more frequent accounting of Alzheimer's as a cause of death, remains a matter of debate.

The 8.1 percent rise was the highest seen among the top 10 causes of death in the United States, the report by the National Center for Health Statistics found. Alzheimer's deaths rose from 84,767 in 2013 to 93,541 in

2014, a NCHS spokesman told AFP. According to Marc Gordon, an Alzheimer's researcher and chief of Neurology at Zucker Hillside Hospital in New York, the data comes from information recorded on death certificates.

"It is unclear to what extent more people are dying from Alzheimer's disease, or whether Alzheimer's disease is increasingly recognized by clinicians as a cause of death," said Gordon, who was not involved in the NCHS study. An uptick in death rates were also seen for unintentional injuries (up 2.8 percent), suicide (up 3.2 percent) and stroke (0.8 percent). The leading cause of death - heart disease - fell 1.6 percent, while cancer deaths dropped 1.2 percent and deaths from influenza and pneumonia fell five percent.

No cure

According to the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's is the only one of the 10 leading causes of death that cannot be prevented, cured, or slowed. One in three seniors will die of Alzheimer's or another form of dementia, experts say. "Alzheimer's is having a rapidly growing impact on American society," said Matthew Baumgart, senior director of public policy at the Alzheimer's Association. "Alzheimer's death rates have been rising steadily over the past 15 years increasing 40 percent since 2000, when the new data are included," he added.

Baumgart said increasing awareness of Alzheimer's disease has meant more people report it as a

cause of death. Another factor in the increase is "large investments by the federal government in research for other diseases have led to decreases in deaths from other causes," he told AFP. "This means more people are living longer and to an age where they are at greater risk of developing Alzheimer's - and dying from it."

About 5.3 million Americans are currently living with Alzheimer's disease. Worldwide, some 46.8 million people currently have dementia, and that number is expected to triple by the year 2050, reaching some 131.5 million, according to Alzheimer's Disease International. The disease carries a heavy cost burden, costing the world \$818 billion in 2015. —AFP

E-CIGARETTES CONTAIN DANGEROUS 'POPCORN LUNG' CHEMICALS

WASHINGTON: Three in four e-cigarettes were found to use a flavored liquid that has been linked to severe respiratory disease, US researchers said Tuesday. Electronic cigarettes are battery-powered devices that heat a nicotine-containing liquid, which is inhaled much like a cigarette. Unlike traditional cigarettes, the

devices are not regulated by US authorities, leading to concern among some experts that they may be harmful to health - and that their candy and fruit flavors may appeal to youths and put them at risk of addiction.

For the study in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*, scientists at Harvard

University tested flavors that may appeal to young people such as Cotton Candy, Fruit Squirrels and Cupcake. They found that 75 percent of tested samples contained diacetyl, which when inhaled has been linked to the respiratory disease bronchiolitis obliterans - sometimes called "popcorn lung" because over 10 years ago it was discovered in workers who inhaled artificial butter flavor in microwave popcorn processing facilities.

Of the 7,000 varieties of flavored e-cigarettes, researchers focused on testing 51 types "sold by leading brands for the presence of diacetyl, acetoin and 2,3-pentanedione, two related flavoring compounds that are listed as 'high priority,' because they may pose a respiratory hazard in the workplace, the study said. In a lab testing environment, each e-cigarette was attached to a device that drew air through the e-cigarette for eight seconds at a time, with a resting period of 15 or 30 seconds, to mimic the action of a human smoker.

The air stream was analyzed, and at least one of the three chemicals was detected in 47 of the 51 flavors tested, according to the report. "Diacetyl was detected above the laboratory limit of detection in 39 of the flavors tested," it said. Acetoin was detected in 46 flavors, and 2,3-pentanedione was found in 23 of the flavors. "Since most of the health concerns about e-cigarettes have focused on nicotine, there is still much we do not know about e-cigarettes," said study co-author David Christiani, a professor of environmental genetics. "In addition to containing varying levels of the addictive substance nicotine, they also contain other cancer-causing chemicals, such as formaldehyde, and as our study shows, flavoring chemicals that can cause lung damage." —AFP



KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia: Promoters smoke electronic cigarettes during the VapeFair in Kuala Lumpur. Vaping is an alternative to smoke by inhaling water vapor through a vaporizer utilized Propylene Glycol or Vegetable Glycerin based liquid, mixed with small amounts of nicotine and food grade flavoring that then get vaporized in a small battery powered atomizer. —AFP



BEIJING: A child puts on a mask as she and her friend visit the Forbidden City on a heavily polluted day.

ONLINE SYMPTOM MONITORING BENEFITS CANCER PATIENTS

NEW YORK: Asking cancer patients to periodically report their symptoms online may improve their quality of life and possibly even their survival, according to a new study. Researchers found that patients who used a website to report their symptoms had better quality of life, were less likely to go to the emergency room, stayed on treatment longer and survived longer than people who were just monitored by their doctors. "We asked people about the most common and impactful symptoms that we would see across advanced cancers," said lead author Dr Ethan Basch. "This would be pain, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, constipation, energy loss, weight loss and sleep disturbances. Things that are highly common, subjective and frequently missed."

Symptom control

The symptoms are also actionable, which means doctors and healthcare providers can likely offer treatments or adjustments for improvement, said Basch, of the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. He and his colleagues write in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* that these so-called patient-reported outcome (PRO) standardized questionnaires had been suggested as a way to improve symptom control, but researchers didn't know whether the benefits outweighed the cost and burden of using them.

For the new study, the researchers asked 539 patients with advanced cancers at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York to report 12 symptoms using tablets that were provided to them or at a computer kiosk. Doctors received printouts of the symptom surveys when the patients came in for their

next visit, and nurses received emails if the patients reported severe or worsening symptoms. "We know from this study that nurses took action 75 percent of the time when they got one of these email alerts," Basch said.

Another 227 patients with advanced cancers received usual care, which included normal symptom monitoring by their doctors. The participants entered the study between September 2007 and January 2011. They spent an average of about four months participating in the study and had an average of 16 doctor visits in that time. Over the study period, people who answered the online surveys were more likely to see improvements in their quality of life than those in the usual care group. Patients who answered the surveys were also less likely to report worsening quality of life.

Standard practice

About a third of patients who answered the survey ended up in the emergency department, compared to about 41 percent of the usual care group. Patients using the symptom reporting tool also stayed on their chemotherapy longer than those who didn't use it. About 75 percent of patients who answered the surveys were alive after one year, compared to 69 percent of those in the usual care group. "I think we take away a couple of things from this study," said Basch. Cancer care providers can improve the quality of their care by having a better understanding of their patients, he said. And even without these types of computer systems, patients can likely benefit from closely following their own symptoms and reporting them to their doctors. —Reuters

US LIFE EXPECTANCY FLAT FOR THIRD STRAIGHT YEAR AT ALMOST 79

NEW YORK: Life expectancy in the United States has stalled for three straight years, the government announced yesterday. A child born last year can expect to make it to 78 years and 91/2 months - the same prediction made for the previous two years. In most of the years since World War II, life expectancy in the US has inched up - thanks largely to medical advances, public health campaigns and better nutrition and education. The last time it was stuck for three years was in the mid-1980s.

It's not clear why life expectancy has been flat lately, but suicides and fatal drug overdoses probably are playing a role, experts believe. Some researchers have wondered if US life expectancy will peak, due to the nation's obesity problem and other factors. But there is no evidence that's happening now, said Robert Anderson of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

S Jay Olshansky, a public health professor at the University of Illinois-Chicago, agreed. "It's too early to tell. Three years does not a trend make," he said. The United States ranks below nearly 40 other countries in life expectancy, according to the World Bank. Japan and Iceland are at the top of that list, at more than 83 years. US health officials come up with the life expectancy figure each year by looking at how old people were when they died and the cause of death. They use statistical modeling to predict how long people born today will live if current trends continue.

The CDC report is based on all the 2014 death certificates. There were about 2.6 million deaths, or about 29,000 more than the previous year. The increase reflects the nation's growing and aging population.

Other findings:

Infant mortality dropped again slightly, to a record low of 5.8 per 1,000 births.

The 10 top causes of death remained the same: heart disease, cancer, respiratory diseases like emphysema and bronchitis, accidents and unintentional injuries, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, flu and pneumonia, kidney disease and suicide.

Death rates fell significantly for five causes, including the top two - heart disease and cancer.

The largest increase was in Alzheimer's disease - 8 percent.

Suicides and unintentional injuries - a category that includes falls, traffic accidents and drug overdoses - each went up by about 3 percent.

Overdoses are driving up those death rates, said Ian Rockett, a West Virginia University researcher who studies overdoses and suicides.

Drug overdose deaths in the U.S. have been rising for more than 20 years - primarily from the abuse of powerful prescription painkillers like Vicodin and OxyContin. Heroin-related deaths - though far less common than painkiller deaths - have also recently spiked. —AP



SAN FRANCISCO: In this July 10, 2013 file photo, Dr Hope Rugo, an oncologist and breast cancer specialist, demonstrates the use of a Dignitana DigniCap system. —AP

FDA CLEARS COLD CAP TO SAVE HAIR DURING BREAST CANCER CHEMO

WASHINGTON: Hair loss is one of the most despised side effects of chemotherapy, and now breast cancer patients are getting a new way to try to save their locks. The Food and Drug Administration said Tuesday it would allow marketing of the DigniCap, a cooling system that chills patients' scalps to reduce the hair loss that is so common during breast cancer treatment. A doctor who led research with the hair-preserving strategy welcomed the FDA's move, saying hair loss has a traumatic effect on patients, and survivors, by revealing an illness that many would prefer to keep private.

"It's such a marker for women - for work, for their families, for their children - that something's wrong with them," said Dr Hope Rugo of the University of California, San Francisco. "You get just a few months of chemotherapy, and it takes more than a year for your hair to recover." Scalp cooling is an idea that's been around for decades. The near-freezing temperatures are supposed to make it harder for cancer-fighting drugs to reach and harm hair follicles by temporarily reducing blood flow and cell metabolism in the scalp.

Chemo sessions

Several versions of cold caps are sold around the world. In the US, breast cancer patients sometimes bring collections of gel-filled caps to chemo sessions in ice chests, or store them in hospital-provided freezers, so that when one cap thaws they can do another. But the DigniCap, made by Sweden's Dignitana AB, is the first version officially cleared by the FDA. The company will lease the device to cancer centers to use as their patients come in for chemotherapy.

How it works: A half-hour before starting a chemo session, patients strap on a tight-fitting cap that's connected to the cooling machine. It gradually chills the scalp, being careful to stay above freezing, until it's numb as the chemo infusion begins. Patients stay hooked to the cooling system during the treatment, and for about an hour and a half later as blood levels of the cancer-fighting drugs drop.

Rugo and oncologists at four other medical centers studied the DigniCap system in 122 women undergoing standard chemo regimens for early-stage breast cancer. More than two-

thirds of the treated women kept more than half their hair. "Looking healthy made me feel healthier," said Deanna King of San Francisco, who participated in the trial in late 2013 and said she retained 80 percent of her hair. She'd been between jobs when she was diagnosed with breast cancer, and keeping her hair made it easier to restart interviews with potential employers as soon as she felt well enough.

Insurance companies

"People are frightened of people that look sick," King said. "It made the experience a little less traumatic." The most common side effects of the DigniCap treatment were cold-induced headaches and neck and shoulder discomfort, chills and pain associated with wearing the cooling cap for an extended period, the FDA

said. Some doctors had long wondered if the cold could prevent chemotherapy from reaching any stray cancer cells lurking in the scalp. The FDA said the risk of that happening "is extremely rare."

"Because women tend to survive early breast cancer for so many years, the FDA should provide the evidence to show if there's any long-term risk," said Dr Len Lichtenfeld of the American Cancer Society. He said women should discuss the option with their doctors. The cost is still being finalized but patients would be charged a fee for each DigniCap use. Depending on how many rounds of chemo a woman undergoes, the total cost could range from \$1,500 to \$3,000, said Dignitana chief operating officer Bill Cronin. The company is negotiating with insurance companies for coverage. —AP



NEW YORK: In this photo chief of oncology Dr Nicole Leibman, left, veterinary assistant Rahkim Carlton, center, and oncologist nurse Malia Mckenna, right, prepare Lola, a 9-year-old Havanese battling pancreatic cancer, for a treatment of chemotherapy, at the new Cancer Institute at Manhattan's Animal Medical Center. —AP



CHICAGO: In this March 8, 2005, file photo, Professor S Jay Olshansky, a researcher on aging, sits in his office on the University of Illinois - Chicago campus. —AP

HIGH-END CANCER TREATMENT FOR PETS

NEW YORK: Lulu had been given a mere three months to live when the shih tzu-poodle mix was diagnosed with lymphoma. That was four years ago. Thanks to about \$30,000 in treatments at New York's Animal Medical Center and its new Cancer Institute, the dog recently marked a 14th birthday. "Look, I don't have kids to put through college, so I can put my dog through chemo," said co-owner Deirdre Aherne of Manhattan. "Lulu is a member of the family."

Experts say there has been a boom in recent years in high-end animal clinics using technologically advanced equipment and medicines that are as good as those in many human hospitals. And it's led to a vigorous ethical debate whether such treatments, costing as much as tens of thousands of dollars per patient, should really go toward keeping pets alive. "Just because we can, doesn't

always mean we should," said Brooke Britton, oncologist at BluePearl Veterinary Partners in Manhattan. "I'm a firm believer of stopping before a time when we've believed we've reached a limit of what we believe we can reasonably do to extend a pet's quality of life and life span."

The Animal Medical Center's Cancer Institute opened in October with a 22-member team that treats about 120 animals each week. Machines include a CT imaging scanner and linear radiation accelerator, which were built for humans and require animals to be anesthetized so they lie perfectly still. In a treatment room with a shimmering view of the East River, a veterinary team was trying to prolong the life of Lola, a 9-year-old Havanese battling pancreatic cancer. She released a shrill whimper as a needle entered her haunch to deliver another dose of chemotherapy. —AP

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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
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إستشاري أطفال
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SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY HOLDS NELSON MANDELA CRICKET CUP

The South African Embassy in Kuwait, in collaboration with Kuwait Cricket, held the second Nelson Mandela Cricket Tournament for Youth Development on Saturday 5 December 2015, at the Sulaibiya Cricket Ground in Kuwait. The tournament featured school teams and top young cricketers. The event aimed at celebrating and honouring the legacy of former President Nelson Mandela in accordance with resolutions of the United Nations as well as the further development of cricket among Kuwait's youth.

The Nelson Mandela Cricket Tournament helped to create awareness on the significance of the values that

Nelson Mandela represents and the power of sports in bringing people from different nationalities and background together. The event also helped to showcase South Africa as a sporting nation and a desirable tourism, trade and investment destination.

Five cricket teams: Future Stars; DPS; Young Stars CC; CCC and Gladiators XI, consisting of 16 year old players and younger, participated in the tournament, with the final match, followed by the award ceremony. The finals were between Future Stars and DPS and the winners were DPS. Many prizes were presented to all the players including the South African Ambassador's Floating Trophy as

well as the Burgan Bank Individual trophies for Man of the Match, Player of the Series, Best Batsman, Best All Rounder, Best Bowler, Best Wicket Keeper and Best Promising Player as well as Merit Awards for Sportsmanship and Teambuilding.

Prominent local companies and sponsors volunteered their valuable support and assistance to ensure the success of the event. These companies included: Mughal Mahal Restaurant, Pro Sports, Bon Voyage Travels, Al Ahli Bank Kuwait, Burgan Bank, Etihad Airways, Agility, The Times Newspaper and Gulf Bank.

Players who excelled received awards as follows: Best

Batsman - Manjot Singh of CCC; Best Bowler - Adnan of CCC; Best Fielder - Hamoud of Future Star; Player of the series - Nomaan Budroo of DPS; Player of the final - Kishore Rao of DPS; Best All rounder - Haseeb Tufail of Future Star and Most promising player - Srinidhi of Gladiators XI.

Some companies that supported the event sent their brochures with information on their products and services for distribution to participants and spectators. The South African stand/booth was decorated in an attractive manner, displaying banners promoting South African tourism, trade and investment promotional material as well as handicrafts.



INDIAN ISLAHI CENTER HOSTS 'PEACE CONFERENCE'

A unique platform in Kuwait organized by Indian Islahi Center (IIC) with a caption of 'Peace Conference' proclaimed to attain world peace by exchanging the doctrine of peace and stability of Vedas.

The conference discussed at large how to attain world peace by influencing the themes and ideology of Vedas. The world as a whole is confronting various atrocities nowadays, which shall be nullified by the influence of Vedas. The conference unanimously demonstrated that the prime ideology of Vedas is one and the same as the creator and sustainer of the universe is one and the same. The followers of Vedas should lead an exemplary life to fan out the real theme of Vedas, then only the sectarian violence, brutalities, aggressions, ter-

rorism, extremism etc shall be obliterated from the society in general.

Swamy Agnivesh (DELHI), a world renowned inter-faith scholar, social worker, peace promoter and an exemplary "Swamiji" in ideal life, who was the chief guest and prime orator of the conference explained that the above theme is inevitable for a peaceful world. The ambassador of India, the delegates of other organizations and dignitaries in Kuwait, unanimously enjoyed the speech of swamiji for a peaceful world and the swamiji also expressed his deep bliss for the innocent efforts of the intellectual team of IIC Kuwait as well as the other organizations for their cooperation to establish peace in the world.

Dr Hussain Madavoor, a prevalent scholar

and all India leader of Islahi Movement, also narrated the role of Vedas especially the last revelation of almighty to solve the issues of human being with a stable, satisfied and peaceful life in the world.

The Ambassador of India, Sunil Jain inaugurated the conference and stressed the necessity of teaching the ideology of Vedas for a peaceful world and also appreciated the Indian Islahi Center for their unique role and apt involvement in the peace conference and also for the overall development of Indian Society in General.

Kuwait Awqaf and Islamic Affairs undersecretary Dr Adil Falah stated in his felicitation speech, that the peace mission of Islam and other Vedas has to be exchanged with a com-

mon manifesto like peace conference is very much necessary in this disturbed world and extended his support and wishes to IIC and admired the Amir of Kuwait for his inevitable intelligence for the world peace and also stability and fraternity among all walks of life in Kuwait.

Reverend Fr Abypaul of Kuwait Syrian Church & Jb Basheer Patelthazham, a scholar in interfaith dialogue, also addressed the audience to work cordially among all walks of life to establish peace and stability and also appreciated the organizers with a request to arrange more platforms.

The respected delegates of different organizations in Kuwait namely, Sharafuddin Kannothe, Apsara Mahmoud, Siddiq Valiyakath,

MT Mohammad, Hamza Payyannur, Rafi Nandi, Joy Mundakath, Suresh Mathur, Shabir Mundoli, Biju Stephan, SAP Azad, Sattar Kunnil, Abdulfatah Tayyil, Munir Ahmad, Mohammad Riyas, N A Munir, Mohammad Ali Matra, Preethimon, Abraham Kunnil, A K Johnson also shared the venue with their support and appreciation to Indian Islahi Center.

IIC President Eng. Anwar Sadat presided the function, IIC Gen Secretary Abdulaziz Salafi conveyed welcome speech, Firoz Chungathara, Sayed Abdurrahman Thangal, Zayed Mohamed Rafeeq and others spoke to the audience. Mohamed Rafeeq Quilandi recited holy Quran verses to open the summit in the name of Almighty God.



KVGCE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HOLDS 'GALA XI 2015'

Gala XI 2015, organized by KVGCE Alumni Association Kuwait was celebrated with classiness and gaiety. The association celebrated its 11th year mega event since its inception and is known for the celebrations and unity as one family. They showcased yet another mega event on November 27 at Kuwait Boy Scouts Association Auditorium, Maidan Hawwaly.

The program started with prayer song by kids, followed by lighting of the lamp by Executive Committee 2015-16 members; President Sreemon KV; Secretary Sooraj CS; Vice President Biju Chacko; Treasurer George Varghese; Program

Convener - Bobby Paul Joy and Chief Guest for the occasion Ex GC KEF (Kuwait Engineers Forum) - Santhosh Kumar Gopala Kurup.

Chief guest Santhosh Kumar G, EX GC (KEF) delivered the inaugural address to the audience, followed by official speeches delivered by the President, the Secretary and the Program Convener. The vote of thanks was delivered by Treasurer George Varghese. The celebrities for the event this year were Reji Pala and Ajeesh Kottayam, both famous for their comedy shows and mimicry in Malayalam television and film industry. The association honored mementos to the

Chief Guest Santhosh Kumar G and the celebrities Reji Pala and Ajeesh. In commemoration of this event, a souvenir has been released during the program which was unraveled by the chief guest Santhosh Kumar G.

The fabulous cultural program began with a unique concept of Aladin and Genie crafted and headed by program convener Bobby Paul Joy treated the audience that was visually spellbinding. This was followed by an array of in house performances and cultural festivities which is known to be the paramount of this association, in the past mega events. This association with multi-talented and versatile members

and their spouses and kids, executed performances with Élan that ranged from Chinese dance, African dance, Circus dance, Indian fusion that kept the audiences dazzled. The celebrities Reji Pala and Ajeesh Kottayam gave an outstanding comedy performance that delighted the audience.

The finale of the event was a famous men's skit that kept the audience elated throughout. The event was managed by Dlights Music Band and her captivating the hearts and minds of the listeners with her upbeat music. The event wound up with delicious dinner that was served after the program.



Ambassador and Mrs Catherine Silliman with guests



Ambassador Silliman on the podium.



Ambassador with Education Minister



US Air Force Band on stage



US AMBASSADOR DOUGLAS SILLIMAN'S REMARKS DURING NATIONAL DAY

Good evening. Your Excellency Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, distinguished guests: Catherine and I want to welcome all of you to this year's National Day celebration here at the American Embassy.

You have probably noticed that for the past couple of years we have held our national day celebrations not on July 4th, but in December. We have done this so you, and we, do not have to suffer the heat of a Kuwaiti summer here in

this garden. Tonight, though, we may have turned up the air conditioning a little bit too much. But the cold weather reminds us that this is a special time in the United States -the winter holiday season. From Thanksgiving at the end of November into the New Year, this is the part of the year when Americans take the time to renew old traditions by decorating their houses, attending religious services, and singing holiday songs. And many, many Americans also travel long distances to visit the people they care about most and renew

the bonds of family and friendship.

And, despite the indignities of modern air and road travel, we know that all the problems of the road or the airport disappear when we see grandma, grandpa, family or old friends standing in the doorway with open arms.

These ties of family and friendship that unite Americans also unite Kuwaitis and give our two nations the special bond that we also celebrate tonight. This year, Catherine and I have chosen the theme "Winter Lights" for our celebration. Holiday lights—draped in trees,

hung on the front of houses or displayed in front yards—are an important American holiday tradition. I remember as a child in Texas climbing with my father up a ladder and onto the roof of our house to nail lights to the eaves. And, as a father, I climbed the big Dogwood tree in our front yard with my two sons to get the lights as high in the tree branches as we could reach. We have tried to capture some of the magic of those lights for youth is evening.

And I want to thank my amazing Embassy

staff for the fabulous, festive decorations they designed for you. I also want to thank all of the sponsors who contributed to our celebration. You will see their names and logos on the big screen throughout the night.

So as we gather together on this winter's night to celebrate US national day, I would simply ask you all to listen to the music provided by our talented US military bands, enjoy the wonderful food and drink provided by our sponsors, and stay warm among good friends. Thank you and have a great evening.



JOY ALUKKAS GIVES RS 3 CRORE AID TO CHIEF MINISTER JAYALALITHAA TO SUPPORT CHENNAI FLOOD REHABILITATION

An estimated 3 million people have been affected by one of the worst natural disasters to ever hit Tamil Nadu. Record-breaking rainfall and the overflowing of several lakes has left thousands homeless and without food or electricity. The region, however, remains undaunted, with various groups and individuals quickly mobilizing to aid the flood victims by providing shelter and basic necessities, as well as helping stranded families get back together.

Joyalukkas Group has been one of the first organizations on ground supporting relief efforts. "Chennai is very close to my heart, people here have supported us greatly through the years," says Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD Joyalukkas Group. "It is our turn to stand

with them and get them through this very difficult time. The Joyalukkas Foundation is stepping up its relief efforts, beginning with this humble cash donation to the Chief Minister's relief fund to provide relief to the victims as soon as possible. Our thoughts and prayers are with the affected families." Joy Alukkas personally offered his support to Honorable Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa on Tuesday, December 8, 2015, along with a check for 3 crores. Aid relief activities continue at the present time.

Joyalukkas Group has pledged to the Chief Minister of their continuous support not only just in monetary terms but also in any other form required. Joyalukkas Group wants Chennai to stand back on its feet at the earliest.



GUST HOSTS 23RD CROSS CULTURAL DIWANIYA

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) hosted the latest Cross Cultural Diwaniya (CCD) on its campus yesterday in which people from various backgrounds get together to exchange views and promote critical thinking on the most pertinent issues of the day. Last night's discussion revolved around the relationship between religion, culture, and spirituality.

The event, which was open to the general public, was held in the presence of HE

Matthew Lodge, UK Ambassador to Kuwait. The discussion, which was divided into two 45-minute rounds, and was moderated by Dr Shafeeq Al Ghabra, Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University.

Faisal Al Fuhaid, Founder of the Cross Cultural Diwaniya, said, "The unique thing about this forum is that everybody is welcome. By opening the doors to different cultures and backgrounds, we are promoting progressive discussion amongst all residents

of Kuwait. At the same time, we are exposing GUST students to ideas and viewpoints that may differ from their own and provide a safe environment in which they can question, debate, and understand them."

The Cross Cultural Diwaniya, occurs monthly, is open to everyone, and is free of charge to attend. Information on upcoming diwanis can be found online at ccdiwan.me, and on Instagram @culturaldiwaniya.

Discovery Channel HD

- 03:40 Auction Hunters
- 04:05 Garage Gold
- 04:30 Storage Hunters UK
- 05:00 Americana
- 05:30 How It's Made
- 06:00 Alaskan Bush People
- 06:50 Desert Car Kings
- 07:40 Fast N' Loud
- 08:30 Auction Hunters
- 08:55 Garage Gold
- 09:20 Storage Hunters UK
- 09:45 Americana
- 10:10 How It's Made
- 10:35 Deadliest Catch
- 11:25 Outback Truckers
- 12:15 Manhunt With Joel Lambert
- 13:05 Auction Hunters
- 13:30 Garage Gold
- 13:55 Storage Hunters UK
- 14:20 Ice Lake Rebels: Winter Is Coming
- 15:10 Desert Car Kings
- 16:00 Fast N' Loud
- 16:50 Americana
- 17:15 How It's Made
- 17:40 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown
- 18:30 Dual Survival
- 19:20 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
- 20:10 Property Wars
- 20:35 Storage Hunters UK
- 21:00 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown
- 21:50 Boy To Man
- 22:40 River Monsters
- 23:30 Desert Car Kings

- 19:05 H2O: Just Add Water
- 19:30 Violetta
- 20:20 The Next Step
- 20:45 Good Luck Charlie
- 21:10 Good Luck Charlie
- 21:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 22:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 22:25 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 22:50 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 23:10 Wolfblood
- 23:35 Wolfblood

Disney Junior

- 03:05 Calimero
- 03:20 Zou
- 03:30 Loopydoo
- 03:45 Art Attack
- 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:20 Calimero
- 04:35 Zou
- 04:45 Loopydoo
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:35 Calimero
- 05:50 Zou
- 06:00 Loopydoo
- 06:15 Art Attack
- 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:50 Calimero
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:20 Loopydoo
- 07:35 Art Attack
- 08:00 Calimero
- 08:10 Zou
- 08:25 Limon And Oli
- 08:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 09:05 Sofia The First
- 09:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 10:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 10:30 Doc McStuffins
- 11:00 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 11:55 Miles From Tomorrow
- 12:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 12:55 Loopydoo
- 13:10 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 13:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 14:00 Sofia The First
- 14:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 14:45 Calimero
- 15:00 Doc McStuffins
- 15:30 Zou
- 15:45 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 16:15 Sofia The First
- 16:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 17:10 Aladdin
- 17:40 Adventures Of The Gummi Bears
- 18:10 Chip n Dale Rescue Rangers
- 18:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 18:55 Cars Toons
- 19:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 19:30 Sofia The First
- 19:55 Doc McStuffins
- 20:15 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 20:45 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 21:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 21:35 Sofia The First
- 22:00 Aladdin
- 22:30 Adventures Of The Gummi Bears
- 23:00 Chip n Dale Rescue Rangers
- 23:30 Lilo & Stitch

- 08:00 Chopped
- 08:30 Guy's Grocery Games
- 10:00 The Kitchen
- 11:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 11:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 12:00 Chopped
- 13:00 Guy's Big Bite
- 13:30 Guy's Big Bite
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 15:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 16:00 Chopped
- 17:00 The Kitchen
- 18:00 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy
- 18:30 Grandma's Secret Cookbook
- 19:00 Chopped
- 20:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 21:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 21:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 22:00 Man Finds Food
- 22:30 Man Finds Food
- 23:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 23:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin

ITV CHOICE

- 03:25 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
- 04:20 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 05:15 Come Date With Me
- Australia
- 05:45 Come Date With Me
- Australia
- 06:10 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
- 06:40 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
- 07:05 Coronation Street
- 07:30 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
- 08:25 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 09:20 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover
- 10:10 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
- 10:40 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
- 11:05 Dancing On Ice
- 12:30 Come Date With Me
- Australia
- 13:00 Come Date With Me
- Australia
- 13:25 Emmerdale
- 13:50 Coach Trip
- 14:20 Coronation Street
- 14:45 Coronation Street
- 15:10 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
- 15:35 Seven Days With A Friend
- 16:30 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
- 17:50 Come Date With Me
- Australia
- 18:20 Come Date With Me
- Australia
- 18:45 Coronation Street
- 19:10 Coronation Street
- 19:35 Seven Days With A Friend
- 20:30 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
- 21:50 Coach Trip
- 22:20 Coronation Street
- 22:50 Coronation Street
- 23:15 Emmerdale
- 23:40 Dancing On Ice

NAT GEO WILD HD

- 03:45 The Monster Project
- 04:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown
- 05:35 World's Deadliest: Jaws & Sins
- 06:30 Dangerous Encounters
- 07:25 The Monster Project
- 08:20 The Incredible Dr. Pol
- 09:15 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 10:10 Expedition Wild
- 11:05 Swamp Men
- 12:00 Shark Men
- 12:55 Ultimate Animal Countdown
- 13:50 Dangerous Encounters
- 14:45 World's Deadliest Animal Apocalypse
- 15:40 The Incredible Dr. Pol
- 16:35 Killer Dragons
- 17:30 Expedition Wild
- 18:25 Swamp Men
- 19:20 World's Deadliest Animal Apocalypse
- 20:10 The Incredible Dr. Pol
- 21:00 Killer Dragons
- 21:50 Expedition Wild
- 22:40 Swamp Men
- 23:30 Shark Men

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

- 03:00 Young & Hungry
- 03:30 2 Broke Girls
- 04:00 The Goldbergs
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 05:30 Last Man Standing
- 06:00 Community
- 06:30 My Name Is Earl
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:00 The Goldbergs
- 08:30 Last Man Standing
- 09:00 Young & Hungry
- 09:30 About A Boy
- 10:00 Last Man On Earth
- 10:30 My Name Is Earl
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
- 12:30 The Goldbergs
- 13:00 Last Man Standing
- 13:30 My Name Is Earl
- 14:00 2 Broke Girls
- 14:30 About A Boy
- 15:00 Last Man On Earth
- 15:30 Melissa & Joey
- 16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 16:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 18:00 Young & Hungry
- 18:30 2 Broke Girls
- 19:00 Modern Family
- 19:30 Modern Family
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:00 Hot In Cleveland
- 21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 22:00 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll
- 22:30 Comedians
- 23:00 Getting On
- 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

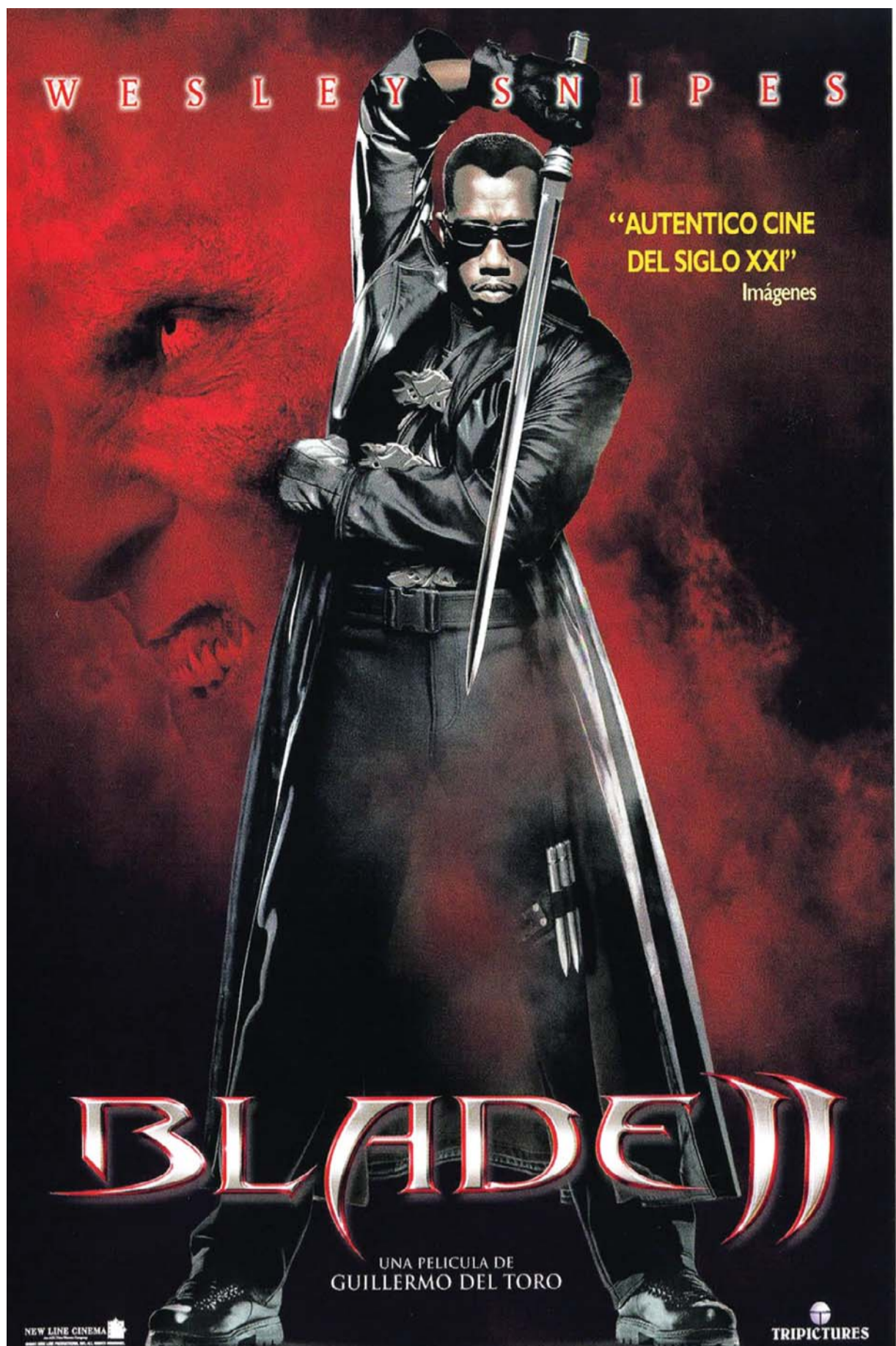
- 03:50 Explorer
- 04:45 Bad Trip
- 05:40 Apocalypse: The Second World War
- 06:35 Wicked Tuna: North vs. South
- 07:30 Monster Fish
- 08:25 Is It Real?
- 09:20 Riding Britain's Railways
- 10:15 Yukon River Run
- 11:10 Air Crash Investigation
- 12:05 Hard Time
- 13:00 Is It Real?
- 14:00 Monster Fish
- 15:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs. South
- 16:00 Yukon River Run
- 17:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 18:00 Drugs Inc: Compilations
- 19:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs. South
- 20:00 Yukon River Run
- 20:50 Air Crash Investigation
- 21:40 Drugs Inc: Compilations
- 22:30 Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey
- 23:20 Apocalypse: The Second World War

NAT GEO people HD

- 03:30 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 03:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 04:20 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 04:45 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 05:10 Warrior Road Trip
- 06:00 Baking Good, Baking Bad
- 06:25 Meat v Veg
- 06:50 Dream Cruises
- 07:40 Baking Good, Baking Bad

OSN FIRST HD

- 03:00 The Leftovers
- 04:00 Suits
- 05:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 06:00 Backstrom
- 07:00 Suits
- 08:00 Criminal Minds
- 09:00 Quantico
- 10:00 Backstrom
- 11:00 Suits
- 12:00 Emmerdale
- 13:00 Coronation Street
- 13:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 14:00 Criminal Minds



BLADE II ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 15:00 Backstrom
- 16:00 Emmerdale
- 16:30 Coronation Street
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 Criminal Minds
- 19:00 The Voice
- 21:00 Blood & Oil
- 22:00 Supergirl
- 23:00 Scream Queens

OSN FIRST MORE

- 03:00 Tyrant
- 04:00 Better Call Saul
- 05:00 Good Morning America
- 07:00 Emmerdale
- 07:30 Coronation Street
- 08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 09:00 Royal Pains
- 10:00 Emmerdale
- 10:30 Coronation Street
- 11:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 12:00 Castle
- 13:00 Bones
- 14:00 Royal Pains
- 15:00 Live Good Morning America
- 17:00 Castle
- 18:00 Bones
- 19:00 Royal Pains
- 20:00 Castle
- 21:00 Bones
- 22:00 Tyrant
- 23:00 Better Call Saul

OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 00:00 Blade
- 02:00 RoboCop
- 04:00 Born To Race: Fast Track
- 06:00 The Aggression Scale

- 08:00 The Assault
- 10:00 Rush Hour
- 12:00 Born To Race: Fast Track
- 14:00 Assassin's Bullet
- 16:00 Transit
- 18:00 Rush Hour
- 20:00 The Courier
- 21:45 Star Trek

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 00:00 RoboCop-PG15
- 02:00 Born To Race: Fast Track-PG15
- 04:00 The Aggression Scale-PG15
- 06:00 The Assault-PG15
- 08:00 Rush Hour-PG15
- 10:00 Born To Race: Fast Track-PG15
- 12:00 Assassin's Bullet-PG15
- 14:00 Transit-PG15
- 16:00 Rush Hour-PG15
- 18:00 The Courier-PG15
- 22:00 Blade II-18

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:00 Svengali
- 02:00 You Again
- 03:45 Renaissance Man
- 06:00 Cuban Fury
- 08:00 Roommates
- 10:00 Renaissance Man
- 12:15 You Again
- 14:00 Major Payne
- 16:00 Roommates
- 18:00 The Nutty Professor (1996)
- 20:00 Every Day
- 22:00 Tim And Eric's Billion Dollar Movie

OSN MOVIES DRAMA

- 03:00 The Wee Man-PG15
- 05:00 My Last Day Without You-PG15
- 07:00 Transcendence-PG15
- 09:00 Kon-Tiki-PG15
- 11:00 My Last Day Without You-PG15
- 13:00 Breathless-PG15
- 15:00 Transcendence-PG15
- 17:00 Kon-Tiki-PG15
- 19:00 Two Men In Town-PG15
- 21:00 Middle Of Nowhere-PG15
- 23:00 Before Midnight-18

OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

- 03:15 Inescapable
- 05:00 The Butler
- 07:15 See Girl Run
- 09:00 Julie And Julia
- 11:00 The Butler
- 13:15 Diana
- 15:15 Next Goal Wins
- 17:00 Julie And Julia
- 19:00 Gattaca
- 21:00 What Dreams May Come
- 23:00 Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life

OSN MOVIES HD

- 03:00 Alexander And The Terrible... Very Bad Day-PG
- 04:45 Great Expectations-PG15
- 07:00 The Boxtrolls-PG
- 09:00 Breathe In-PG15
- 10:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy-PG15

- 13:00 A Christmas Wish-PG15
- 15:00 Automata-PG15
- 17:00 Breathe In-PG15
- 19:00 Dracula Untold-PG15
- 21:00 Stonehearth Asylum-PG15
- 23:00 The Wedding Ringer-18

OSN MOVIES KIDS

- 04:15 Back To The Sea
- 06:00 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 08:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 09:45 Bamse And The City Of Thieves
- 11:15 Ghatotkach - Master Of Magic
- 13:00 Jelly T
- 14:30 Tiny Heroes
- 16:00 Earth To Echo
- 18:00 Bamse And The City Of Thieves
- 20:00 Columbus In The Last Journey
- 22:00 Tiny Heroes
- 23:30 Earth To Echo

OSN MOVIES PREMIERE

- 04:00 Maleficent-PG
- 05:45 Million Dollar Arm-PG15
- 08:00 Captain America: The Winter Soldier-PG15
- 10:30 Hellboy: Sword Of Storms-PG
- 12:00 Godzilla-PG15
- 14:15 Fatal Instinct-PG15
- 16:00 Captain America: The Winter Soldier-PG15
- 18:30 Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit-PG15
- 20:30 Lone Survivor-PG15
- 22:45 Black Rock-18

OSN NEWS

- 07:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 07:25 Supa Strikas
- 08:15 K.C Undercover
- 08:40 Lab Rats
- 09:10 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 09:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 10:00 Androids
- 10:30 Phineas And Ferb
- 10:55 Rocket Monkeys
- 11:20 Boyster
- 11:45 Super Matrak
- 12:40 Mighty Med
- 13:05 Marvel Avengers Assemble
- 13:30 Supa Strikas
- 14:00 Kickin' It
- 14:25 Pokemon: XY
- 14:50 Phineas And Ferb
- 15:15 Rocket Monkeys
- 15:40 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 16:10 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 16:35 Kirby Buckets
- 17:00 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 17:25 K.C Undercover
- 17:55 Supa Strikas
- 18:20 Lab Rats
- 18:45 Mighty Med
- 19:10 Annedroids
- 19:40 Kickin' It
- 20:05 K.C Undercover
- 20:30 Supa Strikas
- 20:55 Lab Rats
- 21:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 21:50 Kickin' It
- 22:15 Mighty Med
- 22:40 Phineas And Ferb
- 23:05 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 23:30 Phineas And Ferb
- 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am KSA

AMC

- 01:40 Duplex
- 03:15 Cannon For Cordoba
- 05:00 Saved!
- 06:30 Apache
- 08:00 One Summer Love
- 09:40 Bound For Glory
- 12:05 Big Screen
- 12:20 Brannigan
- 14:10 The Adventures Of Buckaroo Banzai
- 15:50 American Rhapsody
- 17:35 Apache
- 19:05 Death Rides A Horse
- 21:00 Impromptu
- 22:45 Hurly Burly

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:50 Gator Boys
- 01:45 Call Of The Wildman
- 02:15 Call Of The Wildman
- 02:40 Bondi Vet
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 Ten Deadliest Snakes
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 Treehouse Masters
- 06:49 Gangland Killers
- 07:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:00 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:25 Glory Hounds
- 10:10 Treehouse Masters
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Dog Rescuers
- 12:30 Dog Rescuers
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Bondi Vet
- 14:45 Ten Deadliest Snakes
- 15:40 Treehouse Masters
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 Gangland Killers
- 18:25 Monster Croc Invasion
- 19:20 Biggest And Baddest
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 Shamwari: A Wild Life
- 21:35 Shamwari: A Wild Life
- 22:05 Treehouse Masters
- 23:00 Biggest And Baddest
- 23:55 Whale Wars

BBC entertainment

- 00:25 Eastenders
- 00:55 Upstairs Downstairs
- 01:50 The Paradise
- 02:45 The Paradise
- 03:40 Friday Night Dinner
- 04:05 The Cafe
- 04:30 Only Fools And Horses
- 05:00 Teletubbies
- 05:25 The Green Balloon Club
- 05:45 Gigglebizz
- 06:00 Teletubbies
- 06:25 The Green Balloon Club
- 06:50 Gigglebizz
- 07:05 Woolly & Tig
- 07:10 The Weakest Link
- 07:55 My Hero
- 08:25 Doctors
- 08:55 Eastenders
- 09:25 Upstairs Downstairs
- 10:20 Outcasts
- 11:15 The Weakest Link
- 12:00 Blackadder II
- 12:30 My Hero
- 13:00 Upstairs Downstairs
- 13:55 Outcasts
- 14:50 Blackadder II
- 15:20 My Hero
- 15:50 Doctors
- 16:20 Eastenders
- 16:50 The Weakest Link
- 17:35 Blackadder II

CRIME HAS A NEW ENEMY.



ROBOCOP ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

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



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadisiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khalidiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khalidiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

Afghanistan	0093	Luxembourg	00352
Albania	00355	Lesotho	00266
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Bahamas	001242	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahrain	00973	Martinique	00596
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritania	00222
Barbados	001246	Mauritius	00230
Belarus	00375	Mayotte	00269
Belgium	0032	Mexico	0052
Belize	00501	Micronesia	00691
Benin	00229	Moldova	00373
Bermuda	001441	Monaco	00377
Bhutan	00975	Mongolia	00976
Bolivia	00591	Montserrat	001664
Bosnia	00387	Morocco	00212
Botswana	00267	Mozambique	00258
Brazil	0055	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brunei	00673	Namibia	00264
Bulgaria	00359	Nepal	00977
Burkina	00226	Netherlands	0031
Burundi	00257	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Cambodia	00855	New Caledonia	00687
Cameroon	00237	New Zealand	0064
Canada	001	Nicaragua	00505
Cape Verde	00238	Niger	00227
Cayman Islands	001345	Nigeria	00234
Central African	00236	Niue	00683
Chad	00235	Norfolk Island	00672
Chile	0056	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
China	0086	North Korea	00850
Colombia	0057	Norway	0047
Comoros	00269	Oman	00968
Congo	00242	Pakistan	0092
Cook Islands	00682	Palau	00680
Costa Rica	00506	Panama	00507
Croatia	00385	Papua New Guinea	00675
Cuba	0053	Paraguay	00595
Cyprus	00357	Peru	0051
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Philippines	0063
Czech Republic	00420	Poland	0048
Denmark	0045	Portugal	00351
Diego Garcia	00246	Puerto Rico	001787
Djibouti	00253	Qatar	00974
Dominica	001767	Romania	0040
Dominican Republic	001809	Russian Federation	007
Ecuador	00593	Rwanda	00250
Egypt	0020	Saint Helena	00290
El Salvador	00503	Saint Kitts	001869
England (UK)	0044	Saint Lucia	001758
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Pierre	00508
Eritrea	00291	Saint Vincent	001784
Estonia	00372	Samoa US	00684
Ethiopia	00251	Samoa West	00685
Falkland Islands	00500	San Marino	00378
Faroe Islands	00298	Sao Tome	00239
Fiji	00679	Saudi Arabia	00966
Finland	00358	Scotland (UK)	0044
France	0033	Senegal	00221
French Guiana	00594	Seychelles	00284
French Polynesia	00689	Sierra Leone	00232
Gabon	00241	Singapore	0065
Gambia	00220	Slovakia	00421
Georgia	00995	Slovenia	00386
Germany	0049	Solomon Islands	00677
Ghana	00233	Somalia	00252
Gibraltar	00350	South Africa	0027
Greece	0030	South Korea	0082
Greenland	00299	Spain	0034
Grenada	001473	Sri Lanka	0094
Guadeloupe	00590	Sudan	00249
Guam	001671	Suriname	00597
Guatemala	00502	Swaziland	00268
Guinea	00224	Sweden	0046
Guyana	00592	Switzerland	0041
Haiti	00509	Syria	00963
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Serbia	00381
Honduras	00504	Taiwan	00886
Hong Kong	00852	Tanzania	00255
Hungary	0036	Thailand	0066
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Toga	00228
Iceland	00354	Tonga	00676
India	0091	Tokelau	00690
Indian Ocean	00873	Trinidad	001868
Indonesia	0062	Tunisia	00216
Iran	0098	Turkey	0090
Iraq	00964	Tuvalu	00688
Ireland	00353	Uganda	00256
Italy	0039	Ukraine	00380
Ivory Coast	00225	United Arab Emirates	00976
Jamaica	001876	United Kingdom	0044
Japan	0081	Uruguay	00598
Jordan	00962	USA	001
Kazakhstan	007	Uzbekistan	00998
Kenya	00254	Vanuatu	00678
Kiribati	00686	Venezuela	00582
Kuwait	00965	Vietnam	0084
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Laos	00856	Virgin Islands US	001340
Latvia	00371	Wales (UK)	0044
Lebanon	00961	Yemen	00967
Liberia	00231	Yugoslavia	00381
Libya	00218	Zambia	00260
Lithuania	00370	Zimbabwe	00263

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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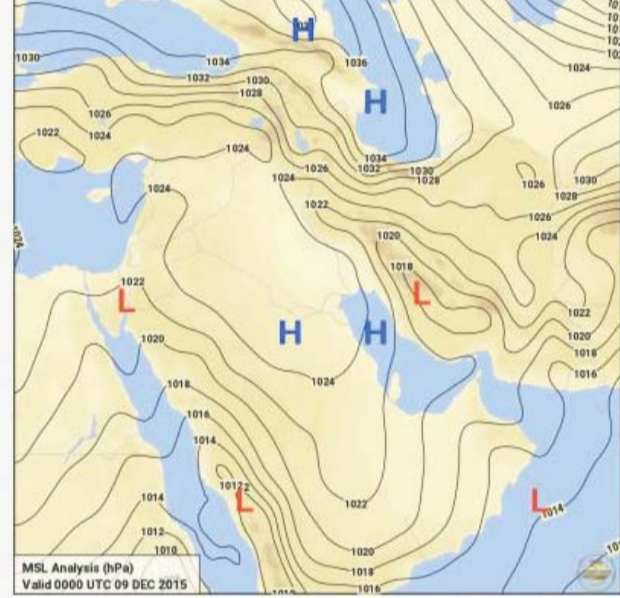
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 09/12/2015-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

MAX Temperature 18 °C

By Day : Sunny and cool with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h
By Night : Very cold with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	sunny	sunny	sunny + scattered clouds later on	partly cloudy+rising dust+sattered light rain
Min Temp °C	04	06	09	10
Max Temp °C	19	20	21	23
Wind Direction	north westerly to light variable later on	variable	variable wind changing to south easterly	south easterly changing to south westerly later on
Wind Speed km/h	06 - 26	06 - 20	08 - 26	12 - 40

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings

NO CURRENT WARNINGS

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	10	17
KUWAIT AIRPORT	04	18
ABDaly	03	17
BUBYAN	05	15
JAHRA	06	17
FAILAKA ISLAND	07	16
SALMIYAH	11	16
AHMADI	09	16
JAL ALIYAH	04	15
QAROH ISLAND	15	16
UMM AL-MARADEM	14	16
NUWASIB	07	18
WAFRA	06	16
MANAGISH	04	15
SALMY	02	14
MUTRIBA	03	16

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	16
Min Temp (°C)	03
Max Rel Hum (%)	92
Min Rel Hum (%)	27
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	43 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm
Sunrise	06:31
Sunset	16:50

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:07
Sunrise	06:31
Zuhr	11:40
Asr	14:31
Sunset	16:50
Isha	18:12



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabaa	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	2455050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	2455050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaeem	22639920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdul-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gupje	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdalateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR. Mohammed Akkad	2455050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid	MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC
Assistant Professor Of Medicine	Head, Division of Cardiology
Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib	MD, PH.D, FACC
2611555-2622555	
Inaya German Medical Center	
Te: 2575077	
Fax: 25723123	



Two of the elderly elephants that are part of the Mondulkiri Project in Mondulkiri Province in eastern Cambodia. — AP photos



Tourists trekking through the jungles of Mondulkiri Province, located in eastern Cambodia.

Elephants get love and care in Cambodia, with tourists' help

The trip to the hills of eastern Cambodia had all the makings of a luxurious getaway: delicious fresh fruit fed by hand, a dip in a refreshingly cold watering hole and a relaxing massage. But I wasn't receiving these amenities. Elderly elephants were. And I was one of several tourists paying for the privilege of doting on them.

At the Mondulkiri Project, it's not the people who call the shots, but the elephants. Visitors from all over the world come here for the chance to interact with the behemoth creatures by washing them, feeding them, playing with them and, of course, getting selfies with them. One thing that doesn't happen: riding on the animals' backs.

Named for Cambodia's most sparsely populated province, the Mondulkiri Project aims to act as a sanctuary for elephants that previously worked for timber companies or as attractions in the tourist hub of Siem Reap, home to the Angkor Wat site. The Mondulkiri Project also seeks to give the local indigenous population, called the Bunong, opportunities for jobs and help in curtailing logging and promoting forest conservation.

The Mondulkiri Project began in 2013, founded by the Tree family, who are not members of the Bunong community but who support the Bunongs with revenue from the Mondulkiri Project. The Tree family offers trekking along with the elephant experiences, and they run Tree Lodge, a bare-bones but

comfortable set of bungalows with magnificent views of the Cambodian countryside.

During my stay, I joined several other tourists, both solo and group travelers, in cleaning and feeding the elephants. We also got an in-depth explanation of the project, its goals and why preserving the area is important. Then came the fun part: getting up close and personal with the gigantic mammals. The elephants spend all their time in a protected area of the forest, with local guides watching over them. The elephants were friendly, hungry and eager to interact with us.

For the humans, there was a lunch of rice, vegetables, meat and iced coffee. Then an English-speaking Bunong guide led

us on an easy trek through the lush jungles as we headed to a chilly watering hole to wash one of the creatures. More photo opportunity than actual cleansing, the elephant seemed to enjoy getting his back scratched and didn't mind the picture-taking. We all had the same post-cleansing goal anyway: a nap. — AP



Contestant Taigen Yokoyama demonstrates his technique in the Japanese martial art of karate by breaking a pile of 10 tiles with his bare right hand. — AFP photos

Japanese monks karate chop, chant in funeral contest

Japanese Buddhist monks strutted their stuff yesterday in a contest highlighting sutra chanting skills, giving funeral sermons and, surprisingly, loud karate chops. The contest, held on the sidelines of Japan's first ever expo on the business of death and dying, was aimed at winning back public interest in funeral services offered by priests and monks as more people seek alternatives to traditional burial customs.

Wearing pale gold, purple, or black and white robes, the eight monks walked calmly onto a stage one by one, bowing to an audience of about 100 people with their palms together. They then proceeded to give short sermons and also chant solemn sutras and Buddhist songs, key requirements for conducting wakes and funerals according to the rites of the ancient religion.

But one of the contestants, Taigen Yokoyama, showed off a different talent, demonstrating his technique in the Japanese martial art of karate by breaking a

pile of 10 tiles with his bare right hand. "Ha!" he shouted, followed by the cacophonous sound of tiles shattering. "I'm sorry to have frightened you," he added calmly. The event was held in conjunction with the Life Ending Industry Expo, which attracted more than 200 companies involved in the business of death and funerals.

Shift from tradition

It followed another unique competition the previous day that highlighted the work of the declining number of specialists who prepare the dead for Buddhist funerals and cremations. Observers say an increasing number of people are cutting ties with traditional Buddhist temples and are not building new tombs in graveyards, citing growing individualism and shortage of younger family members who can take care of graves. "It's getting more and more difficult for monks to maintain their temples as a business as the temple memberships are declining, especially in the countryside," said Mayumi Tominaga, a spokeswoman for the event.

"The number of people who die will peak in 2040 in Japan, but many elderly people are choosing to stop using their ancestral tombs," she said. The winner of the "Beautiful Bozo (monk) Contest" was Shouyo Takiyoshi from a temple in northern Hokkaido, who sang melancholic Buddhist songs. He was selected the winner based on the votes of audience members as well as a five-judge panel of company managers, a monk and a pianist. "It was interesting to see monks in a scene different from funerals" usually filled with a solemn atmosphere, said Sae Igarashi, 24, who works for a company offering ceremonial services.

Yokoyama, who performed the karate chop, said he is also pursuing a parallel career as a nurse. "Priests often meet people for the first time after their death," he said, stressing that he wanted to know and care for people fighting illness or other difficulties. As an example, he mentioned an elderly woman who had forgotten her own name because of dementia but still cared for her children in her mind. "I found the heart of Buddha in her," he said. — AFP



List of SAG nominees

FILM NOMINEES

Outstanding performance by a cast in a motion picture:

"Beasts of No Nation"
"The Big Short"
"Spotlight"
"Straight Outta Compton"
"Trumbo"

Outstanding performance by a male actor in a leading role:

Bryan Cranston, "Trumbo"
Johnny Depp, "Black Mass"
Leonardo DiCaprio, "The Revenant"
Michael Fassbender, "Steve Jobs"
Eddie Redmayne, "The Danish Girl"

Outstanding performance by a female actor in a leading role

Cate Blanchett, "Carol"
Brie Larson, "Room"
Helen Mirren, "Woman in Gold"
Saoirse Ronan, "Brooklyn"
Sarah Silverman, "I Smile Back"

Outstanding performance by a male actor in a supporting role

Christian Bale, "The Big Short"
Idris Elba, "Beasts of No Nation"
Mark Rylance, "Bridge of Spies"
Michael Shannon, "99 Homes"
Jacob Tremblay, "Room"

Outstanding performance by a female actor in a supporting role

Rooney Mara, "Carol"
Rachel McAdams, "Spotlight"
Helen Mirren, "Trumbo"
Alicia Vikander, "The Danish Girl"
Kate Winslet, "Steve Jobs"

TELEVISION NOMINEES

Outstanding performance by an ensemble in a drama series

"Downton Abbey"
"Game of Thrones"
"Homeland"
"House of Cards"
"Mad Men"

Outstanding performance by an ensemble in a comedy series

"The Big Bang Theory"
"Key & Peele"
"Modern Family"
"Orange Is The New Black"
"Transparent"
"Veep"

Outstanding performance by a male actor in a drama series

Peter Dinklage, "Game of Thrones"
Jon Hamm, "Mad Men"
Rami Malek, "Mr. Robot"
Bob Odenkirk, "Better Call Saul"
Kevin Spacey, "House of Cards"

Outstanding performance by a female actor in a drama series

Claire Danes, "Homeland"
Viola Davis, "How to Get Away With Murder"
Julianne Margulies, "The Good Wife"
Maggie Smith, "Downton Abbey"
Robin Wright, "House of Cards"

Outstanding performance by a male actor in a comedy series

Ty Burrell, "Modern Family"
Louis C.K., "Louie"
William H. Macy, "Shameless"
Jim Parsons, "The Big Bang Theory"
Jeffrey Tambor, "Transparent"

Outstanding performance by a female actor in a comedy series

Uzo Aduba, "Orange Is The New Black"
Edie Falco, "Nurse Jackie"
Ellie Kemper, "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt"
Julia Louis-Dreyfus, "Veep"
Amy Poehler, "Parks and Recreation"

Outstanding performance by a male actor in a television movie or miniseries

Idris Elba, "Luther"
Ben Kingsley, "Tut"
Ray Liotta, "Texas Rising"
Bill Murray, "A Very Murray Christmas"
Mark Rylance, "Wolf Hall"

Outstanding performance by a female actor in a television movie or miniseries

Nicole Kidman, "Grace of Monaco"
Queen Latifah, "Bessie"
Christina Ricci, "The Lizzie Borden Chronicles"
Susan Sarandon, "The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe"
Kristen Wiig, "The Spoils Before Dying"



Actors Anna Faris and Anthony Mackie make the 22nd annual Screen Actors Guild awards nominations announcement at SilverScreen Theater at the Pacific Design Center yesterday in West Hollywood, California. — AFP photos



Actress/SAG-AFTRA Executive Vice President Gabrielle Carteris speaks onstage during announcement.

'Trumbo', 'House of Cards' lead SAG award nominations

"Trumbo", a biopic about a blacklisted 1940s screenwriter, scored the most nominations for the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) awards announced yesterday, with nods in three categories including best ensemble cast. On the television side, Netflix's political drama "House of Cards" led the field with three nominations, for best actor (Kevin Spacey), best actress (Robin Wright) and best cast performance in a drama series.

"Trumbo" tells the story of screenwriter Dalton Trumbo, who in 1947 was blacklisted along with other artists for refusing to testify before Congress about alleged Communist propaganda in Hollywood films. The film's star Bryan Cranston is up for an award for his portrayal of Trumbo, and co-star Helen Mirren was also tapped for a

best supporting actress prize for her role as conservative gossip columnist Hedda Hopper. Mirren is a double nominee, also given a nod for best actress for her work on "Woman in Gold".

In the best drama actor category, Cranston is up against Johnny Depp ("Black Mass"), Leonardo DiCaprio ("The Revenant"), Michael Fassbender ("Steve Jobs") and Eddie Redmayne for the transgender tale "The Danish Girl." The 22nd annual SAG awards winners will be announced on January 30 in Los Angeles. The SAG nominations were announced 24 hours before the Golden Globe nominees are set to be revealed, by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA). — AFP



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Understand your skin!



Let's face it, figuring out the right shade of foundation is the least of our problems, with all the new products and techniques available in the market, from loose powders to BB creams, CC creams, tinted moisturizers, and the list goes on, it makes the purchasing decision even harder and more complex. Nothing is more annoying than seeing a girl who is using a foundation or concealer that's so off her shade that you think there's something wrong with her for thinking it's acceptable.

The first and most important thing to do is to figure out what type of skin you have, whether it is oily, dry, normal or combination skin. This is essential because you don't want to damage your skin or use a foundation that would cause you to break out or increase a problem you already have.

Your skin or final look with and without make up shouldn't make such a difference, we all feel and look more glamorous with make up on however make up shouldn't be applied for the intention of changing how you look like, but to enhance your features.

The second step, which is also essential, is to pick your shade. There's a huge variety of foundations that give you

many different results such as a bronze, dewy, matte and natural look. Some come with a corrector, and some are full coverage while others are light-to-build up coverage. You pick your foundation based on what you want to cover or achieve. We all ask for help at a makeup store from the makeup artists working there, but let's be honest, most of them make the matter worse by either giving us the wrong shade or by agreeing with what product we go for when it's wrong. The right thing to do is to swipe the foundation on your jawline, preferably under natural light or in a well-lighted space. You also want to consider the fact that you'll be using a bronzer and blush, so make sure it's exactly the same shade or maybe half a shade to a shade lighter than your natural skin tone. Personally, I always go for a foundation with a yellow undertone because it tends to correct and lighten up the overall base of your makeup.

The right concealer

Another step every girl should take is to purchase the right concealer, it dramatically changes your look. I have to admit, some days I go out with no foundation on and only

concealer. It covers up your dark circles as well as any annoying blue and red veins the show up when you're tired. My job sometimes exhausts me, I work 10-12 hours a day and also involves a lot of travelling, so some mornings I wake up and just not look like myself! Concealer does the job very well, trust me ladies.

Of course, concealers come in all types and colors also depending on what you want to achieve. Your regular concealer should come two-four shades lighter than your skin tone, but some concealers are also used to correct any blemishes or dark circles. Some come in the color green, to color correct any blemishes and red spots, some come in coral/orange and even red to color correct your dark circles or any darker areas on your face, it even covers up any tattoos you have. After you apply your color correctors you apply your concealer. Some come with a yellow undertone to brighten and conceal and some come with a pink undertone for that extra brightness as the "Kardashian's look" which works great with olive skin tones.

Understand your skin as well as educate yourself with what products are in the market to get that final and perfect look.



This image provided by Creative Publishing International shows a needle-felted brown owl from the book 'Wool Pets' by Laurie Sharp. — AP photos



This image provided by Creative Publishing International shows two needle-felted sheep from the book 'Wool Pets' by Laurie Sharp.



This image provided by Creative Publishing International shows a box of washed and combed wool, which can be used for needle felting, from the book 'Wool Pets' by Laurie Sharp.

Easy, needle-felted critters can make cute gifts, ornaments

For holiday decorating and gift-making, fast and easy always win. Adorable doesn't hurt, either. Needle felting hits all three targets. "It's got one of the least bumpy learning curves of anything I've ever seen," says Wynne Reynolds, a mixed-media artist who teaches needle felting at Fancy Tiger Crafts in Denver. "It can pretty quickly resemble something," says Laurie Sharp, of Suquamish, Washington, who has written three needle-felting project books. "A blob with wings becomes an owl. A pink blob and four smaller blobs become a pig."

The craft is forgiving. Make a mistake? Pull the colors apart and start over. With a few instructions gleaned from a good book, YouTube tutorial or teacher such as Reynolds, crafters can fashion cute critters for the Thanksgiving dinner table or to give as gifts. Needle felting is portable, and requires few supplies: wool, a needle and a foam pad.

Getting started is inexpensive. Wool roving costs a few dollars an ounce at craft stores and online, and 1 ounce generally lasts a long time, depending on your project, says Reynolds.

She says it's easy to get sucked into needle felting's simple charms. "It's really soothing," she says. "It gets your mind in such a different space. You can't really be thinking about anything else." Sharp writes about the materials, tools and basic techniques in "Wool Pets" (Creative Publishing International), which includes 20 projects, from an owl to a border collie. The book launched a business: She and her husband, Kevin, sell needle-felting kits via their Wool Pets website and at craft stores nationwide.

Felting has two methods: Needle felting uses a barbed needle that pokes dry wool roving - unspun wool - into a sculptural form atop a foam pad. Wet felting uses hot,

soapy water and agitation - usually in a top-loading washing machine - to tightly enmesh wool fibers that cannot then be separated. Needle felting is not as permanent as wet felting, but a crafter can enmesh the wool fibers tightly to mold solid forms.

"With needle felting you just take a ball of wool and you start poking, and that's all there is to it," says Sharp. "You can do as much or as little as you want. It's instantly gratifying. It's so simple but it has endless possibilities." Poking a sharp needle into a rolled ball of fluffy wool to tangle its fibers into a firmer mass does require some finesse, says Sharp: "People always say to me, 'Oh, what a great way to work out your aggressions,' and I say, 'No, no! That's not the idea - you'll break your needle.'"

"There's an art to the delicacy of it," Sharp adds. "You can't be too aggressive." The foam pad protects the work

surface, anchors the wool and helps keep fingers from being poked by the sharp needle. (Avoid poking your finger by working the needle up and down into the wool but not all the way through it, says Reynolds.) Sharp, a school speech pathologist, takes small needle-felting projects to school meetings; the quiet, gentle work keeps her hands busy so she can listen. She also takes a project in her purse on ferryboat rides and in airplanes. "People stop and stare all the time and they ask, 'Just what are you doing?'" she says. For Reynolds, needle felting helped her envision her other artwork more three-dimensionally. "Before I was needle felting, I would say, 'That's not my thing - I'm not a sculptor.' But now I am," she says. — AP



This photo provided by Kate Jackson Interior Design shows truly luxurious bed linens that can cost upwards of \$1000, but the interior designer Jackson says some clients find the investment worthwhile. — AP photos

Home splurges to treat yourself this season

So many of our home-improvement and design choices are practical ones: Which sofa will stand up over the years? Which paint color matches the furniture? But what about changes that could really elevate our happiness at home? Sometimes the smallest things can make home life easier and more joyful: Interior designer Kate Jackson says that starting each day using her sterling silver spoons makes the morning feel more special for her whole family.

In this season of gift-giving, we've asked Jackson and two other designers - Sarah Fishburne, director of trend and design for the Home Depot, and New York-based Danielle Colding - about home innovations and splurges that you can give yourself.

Warm floors all winter

Colding had a client with a large house that was often filled with friends. The kitchen was the most-used room and "he just wanted the luxury of that room feeling really good," Colding says, but "it just felt cold." So they found a creative solution: Adding a heated floor. The key to these kinds of investments, Colding says, is knowing which ones will really improve your daily life. Although expensive, a heated kitchen floor is a feature you can use every day in the fall and winter. "It's like when people spend \$300 on jeans and it sounds crazy," Colding says, but they wear those jeans constantly and treasure them.

Upgrading your closet

"There's something about a really well organized, decked-out closet," Fishburne says, that improves the start of every day. When you get dressed, she says, "you're not rushing, going 'Where did I put this?'" And you wear more of your clothes because you can actually see them.

Technology has made closet planning simpler and more fun: Home Depot and other companies offer online planning tools that let you sketch out different configurations. And the range of storage solutions and styles of closet interiors has been expanding.

A sound system throughout your home

Jackson, who is based in Rhode Island, says clients who have invested in good sound systems installed in the walls are always glad they did. "Sounds can obviously set a mood and have a really powerful effect on how we feel through the day," she says. Few things impact an entire home so powerfully, she says. And unlike a piece of furniture that you might get tired of, easy access to great sound is "the gift that keeps on giving."



In this photo provided by Kate Jackson Interior Design, painted walls would look perfectly fine in this Rhode Island bathroom.

High-end linens

The holidays often bring overnight guests, Colding says, and that's when we notice the quality of our bed and bath linens. Treating yourself and your guests to soft, crisp sheets and fluffy towels can be expensive, she says. But the difference in quality and comfort can be surprising, and for some people the enjoyment is worth the investment. And on a practical level, "they last forever," she says, and "they wash really well."

Touch faucet

One less expensive treat that Fishburne has "kind of fallen in love with" is a high-tech touch faucet. These switch on with just the lightest pressure - even a quick tap from an elbow or fingertip. So if you're cooking and have your hands full, you can turn on the water without putting down a hot pot or heavy colander.

There is a health benefit: If you're cooking with raw meat or eggs and need to turn on the water, you don't need to risk transferring germs from your hands to the tap. And many models have an ingenious safety feature: A light shows blue or red, depending on the water temperature.

High-end wallpaper

Painting a room is an affordable and easy do-it-yourself choice, Jackson says. But the joy you may get from professionally installed, luxurious wallpaper can last for years.

While decorating the bathrooms in a client's home, Jackson suggested striking wallpaper that "made these 'vanilla' rooms sing." — AP

Travel

Adele's '25,' 'Uptown Funk' top iTunes end of year lists

To no surprise, Adele's "25" is the best-selling album on iTunes for 2015. Apple announced yesterday that Mark Ronson and Bruno Mars' "Uptown Funk" was the year's biggest single, while Adele's "Hello" is sixth on the songs list. Ed Sheeran's "Thinking out Loud," Wiz Khalifa and Charlie Puth's "See You Again," Maroon 5's "Sugar" and "Shut Up and Dance" by Walk the Moon ranked second through fifth, respectively.

Coincidentally, "Uptown Funk" and "Thinking out Loud" earned Grammy nominations for record of the year on Monday, while "Thinking out Loud" and "See You Again" will compete for song of the year. Drake's "If You're Reading This It's Too Late" was second behind "25" on the albums list. Drake's album with fellow rapper Future, "What a Time to Be Alive," ranked sixth. Taylor Swift's "1989," the "Fifth Shades of Grey" soundtrack and Justin Bieber's "Purpose"

rounded out the Top 5. The Weeknd earned three songs in the Top 20 with "Earned It" (No 9), "Can't Feel My Face" (No 11) and "The Hills" (No 15). Swift's "Blank Space" and "Style" came in at Nos 18 and 20, respectively. — AP



Adele



This June 14, 2014 file photo shows British rock band Coldplay on stage during the MTV Video Music Awards Japan 2014 in Urayasu, suburb of Tokyo.

Coldplay to stream album on Spotify after delay

British rockers Coldplay, one of a select number of acts that have shied away from Spotify, will put their latest album on the leading streaming site after a one-week delay. A message on Spotify said that "A Head Full of Dreams," Coldplay's seventh and possibly final album, will be available from Friday, one week after it was released. Coldplay did not offer an explanation but waited four months before the band's last album, "Ghost Stories," went on streaming sites in 2014 — an example of what the industry calls "windowing," to maximize sales in an initial period.

Streaming-which allows unlimited, on-demand music online-has grown rapidly in recent years. But Spotify, which says it has more than 75 million users worldwide, has faced criticism from corners of the music industry by offering free access, although the Swedish company also has 20 million subscribers who pay to listen without advertisements. The Wall Street Journal and the industry news site Music Business Worldwide reported Tuesday that Spotify, faced with growing pressure and competition, would ease its insistence on the free tier.

The reports said that Spotify told music executives in private talks that it would allow some artists to stream albums temporarily only to paying subscribers before releasing them to the free users. Spotify did not comment directly on the report but said it was committed to its free tier. "We are 100 percent committed to our model because we believe that a free, ad-supported tier combined with a more robust premi-

um tier is the best way to deliver music to fans, create value for artists and songwriters, and grow the industry," Jonathan Prince, Spotify's global head of communications and public policy, said in a statement.

Already on Apple Music, Tidal

Coldplay immediately streamed "A Head Full of Dreams" on paid sites such as Apple Music and Tidal, the service led by rap mogul Jay-Z through which the four-member British band has offered exclusive content. The vast majority of leading artists have, reluctantly or enthusiastically, put their works on streaming sites, which have contracts with major record labels. The most prominent holdout is British ballad singer Adele, who is not streaming her blockbuster new album "25."

"25" has posted the strongest sales in decades, proving the theory of Adele's label that such a massively anticipated work can still sell the traditional way when it is not available through streaming. Pop star Taylor Swift last year withdrew her catalog from Spotify, accusing the company of paltry compensation to artists. Spotify rejects her charges, saying it has paid back more than \$3 billion to creators of the music. Swift later agreed to stream only through Apple Music after the tech giant improved compensation conditions. — AFP

Hollywood's Burt Reynolds says his best performance yet to come

In a career spanning over 50 years, Burt Reynolds has played a macho man tackling rapids in a canoe, a driver evading police in a car chase across America's south and a pornography filmmaker. Each part was significant for the Hollywood actor. "Deliverance" was Reynolds' breakout role, "Smokey and the Bandit" a memorable smash hit, "Boogie Nights" earned him an Academy Award nomination. But the 79-year old, known for his real-life romances as well as his work, says his greatest performance is yet to come.

"I think I have a performance in me. It's a good one," Reynolds told Reuters. "I don't know if I'll get that script. I'm hoping." In an interview tied to the promotion of his memoir "But Enough About Me," Reynolds spoke about a career, which saw him leave Broadway for Hollywood as a young actor to take on - and turn down - memorable roles. The moustachioed star started off in television before making dozens of movies - Westerns, action and sports comedies as well as dramas - of which he says he is proud of just a few.

Dressed in black with a red pocket handkerchief and tinted glasses, Reynolds said the 1979 comedy "Starting Over" about a man torn between his girlfriend and ex-wife was among his favorites. "It was kind of like the story of my life ... It was great fun to do," he said. "The worst? There's too many." Having worked with the likes of Dom DeLuise, Clint Eastwood and ex-flame Sally Field, Reynolds was the top US box office draw in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a period he described as "wild and wonderful." "I remember (actor) Lee Marvin said 'save your money and have a good time but remember it's not going to last,'" Reynolds said. "It was a wonderful time for me, and he was right. It doesn't last, eventually it goes away."

Lucky man

In his memoir, Reynolds talks about those who shaped his childhood, his football-playing days, career and personal life. He recounts receiving acting advice from Spencer Tracy, turning down Gretha Garbo's advances, playing poker with Elvis Presley and walking to the Actors Studio with Marilyn Monroe. It was 1972

thriller "Deliverance", in which four friends go on a nightmare canoe trip, which turned him into a star. He was cast after director John Boorman saw him on American television's "The Tonight Show". The movie was filmed along the Chattooga River in the Georgia wilderness.

"That river was not used by adventurers in a canoe ... We ended up breaking apart seven of them," Reynolds said. "Deliverance" was nominated for three Oscars including best picture and best director. Reynolds blames himself for not getting the recognition he says it deserved after he posed nude on a bearskin rug for Cosmopolitan before its release. "I thought it was really the reason none of us were nominated because they probably thought none of us took the film seriously," he said.

The photo however cemented his status as a sex symbol and he soon stormed the box office with several hits. "There were films offered to me that wouldn't have been offered ever before," he said. "Really good directors suddenly were coming out of the woodwork and asking me to work with them. I was thrilled." Reynolds, however, turned down parts in "Star Wars" and "Pretty Woman". His biggest regret was saying no to James Bond when Sean Connery held out for money.

"I thought an American couldn't play (him) ... The other ones were good ... I shouldn't have turned them down either but Bond, I was wrong," he said. "I could have done that role and I could have done it well." Reynolds got his only Oscar nomination for the role of Jack Horner in "Boogie Nights" - a film that revived his career in the late 1990s and which he has not seen because of its pornography subject matter. "I thought (the director) did a wonderful job but ... it wasn't something I wanted to look at for two hours," he said. Asked how he would like to be remembered, Reynolds said as "a good man" and "somebody who loved the business." "I can't stand it when I hear certain actors talk about how horrible their life is when they're working," he said. "I'm lucky to be doing what I'm doing, really lucky." — Reuters

Album inspired by Sandy Hook victim gets Grammy nominations

For saxophonist Jimmy Greene, whose daughter died in the 2012 Sandy Hook shooting, earning Grammy nominations for his album inspired by his late daughter is "bittersweet." Greene earned his first pair of Grammy nominations Monday, including best arrangement, instruments and vocals for "When I Come Home" and best jazz instrumental album for "Beautiful Life," which he created in honor of Ana Marquez-Greene and also features her vocals. "It's amazing, but to be honest with you I wish the album never had to be made," Greene said in a phone interview Monday. "I wish my little girl were here; that I didn't have to pay tribute to her, that I could have her here. It's very bittersweet."

"Beautiful Life," Greene's 10th album as a band leader, was released last year. He started working on the album not long after his 6-year-old daughter was gunned down with 19 other first graders and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, Connecticut. "It was incredibly painful at the time the songs were written. It was a few months after she was killed," he said. "I was at my work station where I compose and my face wet with tears doing a lot of the writing, but I really felt like I wanted the world to hear a little bit about how my daughter lived."

Greene said Ana enjoyed singing and he juxtaposed home video recordings of her voice with his own composition on "Saludos/Come Thou Almighty King," the opening track of his latest album. "It was important for me also to have people hear her own voice. She loved to sing and she had a beautiful singing voice," he said. Greene made the album - which also features his 11-year-old son Isiah - with the help of Norman and David Chesky of Chesky Records, who helped fund and produce the album. "It wouldn't have happened without them, and they sought no profit from this at all. They gave me complete ownership of the masters they paid for," he said. "It's an amazing gift they gave."

A portion of the proceeds from "Beautiful Life" will benefit two organizations: The Artists Collective, where Greene stud-



This Aug 25, 2015 photo provided by Jimmy Greene shows Greene in Central Park in New York.

ied and taught, and The Ana Grace Project, founded by his wife Nelba Marquez-Greene, a marriage and family therapist. "(We're) trying to promote empathy and compassion in young kids to hopefully prevent these instances of gun violence like the one that took my daughter's life," he said of The Ana Grace Project. Greene has appeared as a sideman on roughly 75 albums and is a professor at Western Connecticut State University, where he also coordinates the jazz studies program. He's also working on his doctorate in jazz studies at the Manhattan School of Music. "I'm very thankful I have music as a vocation. It's a language on its own and it has a way of communicating when words just don't cut it," he said. — AP

As awards season takes shape, diversity out of the running

Hollywood's awards season is taking shape, but early indications are anything to go on, the Academy Awards won't be fielding a much more diverse batch of nominees a year after the academy was ridiculed for an Oscars featuring only white actors. It's still early and the season is very much in flux, with some of the top contenders including the journalism drama "Spotlight," the sci-fi adventure "The Martian" and the lesbian romance "Carol." Yesterday, the Screen Actors Guild Awards — an important Oscars predictor — will present their nominees, with the Golden Globe nominations from the Hollywood Foreign Press today.

But the whiteness of the season has already drawn attention. Surveying the 11 white nominees for best actor and best actress at the Gotham Independent Awards last week, co-host and "Broad City" star Ilana Glazer commented: "You guys could open up a Williams Sonoma." Oscar prognosticators are by no means a sure bet, but they offer a realistic gauge of what films and what performers are likely in the Oscar mix. Though several awards contenders have not yet opened in theaters, every film but "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" has been screened for press; for those following closely, much of the field is already established, long before Oscar nominations are announced Jan 14.



This undated file photo provided by Warner Bros shows Michael B Jordan as Adonis Johnson in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures', Warner Bros Pictures' and New Line Cinema's drama "Creed," a Warner Bros Pictures release.

Genuine contention

The latest predictions gathered from Oscar watchers in a regular poll by the movie blog Movie City News — the "Gurus o' Gold" - forecast only one non-white nominee in all four acting categories: Idris Elba in "Beasts of Nation." Outside chances include Will Smith ("Concussion"), Benicio del Toro ("Sicario") and Samuel L. Jackson ("The Hatefule Eight"). When the Hollywood Reporter convened likely actress nominees like Cate Blanchett ("Carol"), Jennifer Lawrence ("Joy") and Brie Larson ("Room") for its magazine cover round table - a regular glossy feature of awards season - it acknowledged a lack of diversity in its choices. Round table host Stephen Galloway faced the issue in a column, writing: "The awful truth is that there are no minority actresses in genuine contention for an Oscar this year."

The only best picture candidate with a non-white

protagonist comes in 10th from the Gurus, on the cusp of making it into the category: "Creed," the acclaimed Rocky sequel starring Michael B. Jordan. Best director, too, seems likely to include only males, with most expecting nods for some combination of Tom McCarthy ("Spotlight"), Ridley Scott ("The Martian"), Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu ("The Revenant"), Todd Haynes ("Carol"), Steven Spielberg ("Bridge of Spies") and George Miller ("Mad Max: Fury Road"). In a way, an Oscars that looks a lot like the previous Academy Awards wouldn't be surprising. Hollywood's deep equality issues, in front and behind the camera, don't get magically solved when Oscar ballots get mailed. The academy can only nominate the films that get made, and criticism might be best directed toward executives with the power to greenlight.

Dramatic setback

Then, when changes do come, they could take years to move through Hollywood's production pipeline to the big screen. But the Academy Awards are the biggest night of the year for the industry and last year's ceremony (when "OscarsSoWhite" trended on Twitter) was a dramatic setback in the efforts by Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences president Cheryl Boone Isaacs, the academy's first black president. Boone Isaacs has been working to diversify the membership of the academy; in November, she launched a new five-year diversity initiative called A2020 that includes pushing the film industry to examine its hiring practices.

Spike Lee, whose gun violence farce "Chi-Raq" has been one of his best reviewed films but has thus far remained outside the awards conversation, joined Boone Isaacs at the time to say she was "trying to do something that needs to be done." Others have tried to shift the awards chatter. On Monday, the African-American Film Critics Association, a group founded in 2003, announced their picks for the best of the year, naming Universal's N.W.A biopic "Straight Outta Compton" the best film of the year, with runner-up going to Ryan Coogler's "Creed," the seventh film in the "Rocky" franchise.

Different background

"I would like to think that we have some influence in maybe getting people to consider a project they wouldn't have otherwise," says Gil Robertson, AAFCA president. "At the end of the day, people respond to those films that most directly reflect their reality and their lifestyle and their sensibility. So these films are going to have to fight a little bit harder, particularly if you're looking to get an Oscar nod, and you're trying to appeal to someone who is probably a little older and has a different background."

Some groups have sought to celebrate more offbeat films usually left out of awards season. The same Gotham Awards that Glazer compared to a Williams Sonoma gave two awards to "Tangerine," the iPhone-shot prostitute tale starring two transgender actresses, Kitana Kiki Rodriguez and Mya Taylor. The path of awards season could very well change in the coming weeks. But if it doesn't, a reckoning may be waiting at the end of the road. Hosting this year's Oscars will be Chris Rock. — AP



In this Aug 22, 1980, file photo, John Lennon, right, and his wife, Yoko Ono, arrive at The Hit Factory, a recording studio in New York City. — AP photos



People gather at the mosaic named for the John Lennon's song 'Imagine' at Strawberry Fields, the Central Park garden dedicated in his honor, in New York. — AP/AFP photos



Flowers are placed on the mosaic named for the John Lennon's song 'Imagine'.

John Lennon was shot 35 years ago

A man who helped define rock and roll, a leader of the peace movement, an icon of the Baby Boom generation, his sudden shooting death at the hands of Mark David Chapman inspired shock and mourning, and for many marked the end of an era. Chapman was sentenced to 20 years to life in prison and was last denied parole in August 2014. "I am sorry for causing that type of pain," Chapman told the parole board then. "I am sorry for being such an idiot and choosing the wrong way for glory." Chapman can try again for parole next year.

At a 2010 hearing, Chapman recalled that he had considered shooting Johnny Carson or Elizabeth Taylor instead, and said that he chose Lennon because the ex-Beatle was more accessible, that his century-old apartment building by Central Park "wasn't quite as cloistered." Thirty-five years after the death of a cultural touchstone, The Associated Press is making a version of its original coverage available with photos.

Nine-story apartment

Former Beatle John Lennon, who catapulted to stardom with the long-haired British rock group in the 1960s, was shot to death late last night outside his luxury apartment building on Manhattan's Upper West Side, police said. Authorities said Lennon, 40, was rushed in a police car to Roosevelt Hospital, where he was pronounced dead shortly after arriving. Doctors said he suffered

seven severe wounds in his chest, back and left arm, but they did not know how many bullets had hit him. Dr Stephen Lynn said, "I am sure he was dead when he was shot."

Police said the shooting occurred outside the Dakota, the century-old luxury apartment house where Lennon and his wife, Yoko Ono, lived. It is across the street from Central Park. Police said they had a suspect and described him as "a screwball" with no apparent motive for shooting Lennon. Lt John Schick said he expected the man, in his mid-20s, to be held through the night. Lennon's wife was not hurt.

Chief of Detectives James Sullivan said Lennon and his wife were walking into the enclosed courtyard of the Dakota about 10:50 pm when five shots rang out. Lennon staggered up a few steps into the building and collapsed, he said. Police Officer Anthony Palma, who was one of the first officers to arrive, said officers found Lennon lying face down in the office of the nine-story apartment building and carried him to a patrol car. Miss Ono was taken to the hospital in another car, he said.

Palma said she became hysterical when doctors told her that Lennon was dead. "Tell me it isn't true," he quoted her as crying. Sullivan said the suspect was a 25-year-old man from Hawaii who had reportedly been hanging around the Dakota for some time. Jack Douglas, Lennon's producer, said he and the Lennons had been at a midtown studio called the Record Plant and that Lennon

left at 10:30 p.m. Lennon said he was going to get something to eat and go home, Douglas said.

Significant damage

A bystander, Sean Strub, said he was walking south near 72nd Street when he heard four shots. He said he came around the corner to Central Park West and saw Lennon being put into the back of a police car. Some people say they heard six shots and said John was hit twice," Strub said. "Police said he was hit in the back." He said others told him the assailant had been "crouching in the archway of the Dakota. ... Lennon arrived in the company of his wife and the assailant fired." At Roosevelt Hospital, Dr Lynn announced that Lennon was dead shortly after midnight. He said Lennon had been brought in shortly before 11 pm. "Extensive resuscitation efforts were made and despite transfusions and other methods he could not be revived," he said. "Significant damage was done to the major vessel in the chest," Dr Lynn said. "There was massive blood loss and he could not be saved. ... I am sure he was dead when he was shot. ... His house is less than a mile away from the hospital and I don't think it was possible to rescue him by any means."

Lennon rocketed to fame in the early 1960s when he and fellow Britons Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr introduced a sound that changed the course of rock 'n' roll. Lennon, who turned 40 on Oct 9, was responsible for writing many of the

group's songs. In an interview earlier this year- his first major interview in five years - Lennon said he had wanted to leave the Beatles as early as 1966 but did not make the move until four years later because he "just didn't have the guts." After the Beatles broke up in 1970, Lennon continued writing songs and recording.

'Double Fantasy'

But in 1975 he dropped out for five years, saying he wanted to be with Yoko Ono and their son, Sean. Lennon also had a son, Julian, by his first wife, Cynthia, whom he left in the late 1960s. In 1976, he won resident status in the United States after a court fight against a deportation order stemming from a British drug conviction. It was not until last summer that he returned to music, and his 14-song album, "Double Fantasy," was released last month. The album, which includes songs by his wife, is based on Lennon's experiences over the five years, during which he kept house, cooked and cared for their son.

The seed for the Beatles band dates to 1955 when Lennon met McCartney at a Liverpool, England, church social. They started performing as a duo called the Quarrymen and were joined three years later by Harrison. Starr did not come into the band until 1962 - a year before the Beatles hit the top of the charts in Britain with "Please Please Me." "Beatlemania" did not cross the ocean to the United States until 1964. — AP



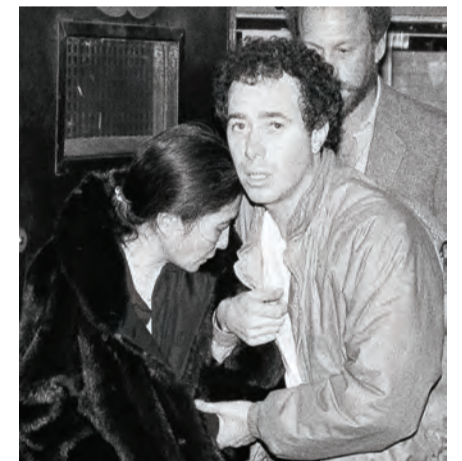
Fans of the late John Lennon gather around the "Strawberry Fields" tile mosaic in Central Park.



Memorabilia sits atop the 'Strawberry Fields' tile mosaic in Central Park.



In this Dec 10, 1980 file photo, a fan of British pop group The Beatles holds a vintage record album Beatles for Sale in a record shop in Stuttgart, Germany.



In this Dec 9, 1980, file photo, Yoko Ono and record producer David Geffen leave Roosevelt Hospital in New York after the death of her husband, John Lennon.

Mark David Chapman used legal handgun to kill Lennon

On a cold night 35 years ago, Mark David Chapman waited for John Lennon outside the New York City apartment building where the former Beatle lived with his wife Yoko Ono and his son. When the singer appeared shortly before 11 pm, Chapman opened fire with a Charter Arms .38-caliber pistol striking Lennon four times. Here's a look at how he easily circumvented New York's restrictive gun laws, and whether it would be possible today.

Where did it come from?

Chapman bought the gun legally six weeks before the shooting from J&S Sales, LTD, a shop in Honolulu, Hawaii, where Chapman had been living. He reportedly paid \$169. Chapman had a permit and no police record and the dealer wouldn't have had any reason to block the sale.

How did it get to New York?

Authorities at Honolulu's airport said Chapman probably got the gun past airport security simply by placing it in his luggage. At the time, baggage checked with an airline was not searched or X-rayed. Chapman flew first to Atlanta, then on to New York City.

Since he had a permit, was the gun legal?

No. New York does not recognize the validity of handgun permits issued in other states. Out-of-towners who bring handguns into the city frequently face criminal charges, even if they have a license elsewhere.

Could Chapman fly with his gun today?

Air travelers are still able to take a gun with them on a flight as long as they declare the weapon, unload

it, lock in a hard case and check it in their luggage. Security experts say there's nothing to prevent someone who follows proper security procedures from collecting the firearm from the baggage carousel at the destination airport, even if the weapon is illegal to possess in the jurisdiction to which they have traveled. "The airline knows the gun is there, the TSA knows, and you're declaring it, but they're not doing the second piece, which is asking whether the firearm is

licensed in the ultimate destination where you're going," said attorney Jeremy Saland, who represents gun owners in airport arrest cases. "It's an extra headache for them."

So, is New York city's ban ever enforced at airports?

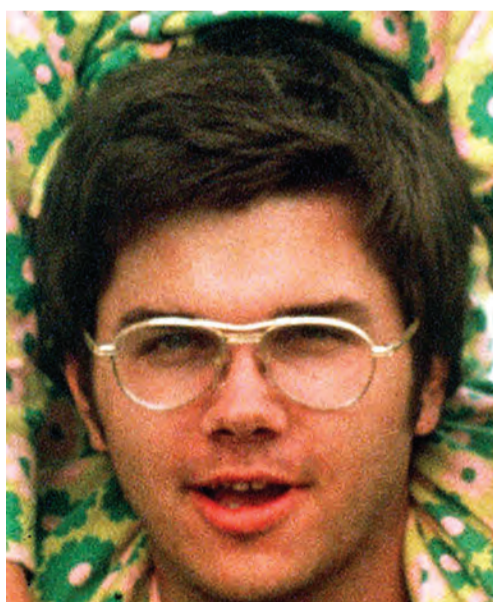
It does get enforced at New York airports, but usually only on outbound flights. Saland said he gets about 15 calls a year from out-of-state gun owners who have been arrested at New York airports trying to leave with the firearm in their checked baggage. The National Rifle Association has been lobbying for a federal law that would require states to honor gun permits issued in other states.

Where's Chapman's gun now?

The revolver is stored behind bullet-resistant glass at the Forensic Investigative Division in Queens, New York, where it has been in police custody for 35 years, stored alongside the gun wielded by "Son of Sam" killer David Berkowitz. The division has about 800 guns, most of which are hung on the walls.

What about Chapman?

Chapman waited for police to arrive and was arrested. He pleaded guilty after initially planning to mount an insanity defense. Chapman is serving a 20 years-to-life sentence at Wende Correctional Facility in western New York. He was denied parole in August 2014. He is eligible again next year. "Your actions have devastated a family and those who loved the victim," the parole board said in denying the application. — AP



In this 1975 file photo, Mark David Chapman is seen at Fort Chaffee near Fort Smith, Ark.



In this Dec 14, 1980, file photo, people jam the street at Central Park West and 72nd Street in New York, just outside the Dakota apartment house where John Lennon lived, after leaving a memorial service held at the bandshell in Central Park, across the street.



A picture shows a statue of British band The Beatles, featuring (from left to right) musicians Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Ringo Starr and John Lennon, created by sculptor Chris Butler and unveiled in Liverpool, north west England, fifty years after their final performance in the city. — AFP

Lennon's sister unveils Beatles statue in Liverpool

John Lennon's sister unveiled a new statue of The Beatles on Liverpool's waterfront on Friday that the sculptor said he hoped would become a landmark where people could "think, meditate and play." The bronze sculpture was donated by the Cavern Club, where the Beatles were discovered, and marks 50 years since their last public performance in their home city on December 5, 1965. "I was present at that event and am proud to be at the unveiling," said Julia Baird, the late Beatle's sister.

The statue was based on photographs of the "Fab Four" - Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Ringo Starr and John Lennon - taken

in 1963 in a nearby spot. The idea for the statue, which was created by sculptor Andy Edwards and weighs 1.2 tons, came from Chris Butler, managing director of Castle Fine Art Foundry. "This is a statue that needs no title, no explanation, no instruments, no gimmicks," Butler said.

"It's a monument to a moment and the moment started in Liverpool." Edwards said that while he was working on the statue on the waterfront "everybody wanted to talk to us - everybody has a Beatles story." "I think the statue will quickly become a place of ritual. It will be a place to come together, have a think, meditate and play." — AFP



In this Dec 9, 1980, file photo, police lead suspect Mark David Chapman, with his head covered, from the 20th Precinct on New York's Upper West Side.



The gun used by Mark David Chapman to kill John Lennon, a Charter Arms .38-caliber pistol, is displayed next to their pictures at a small museum in the Forensic Investigation Division of the New York Police Department in New York. — AP photos

Lifestyle

Mark David Chapman used legal handgun to kill Lennon

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'Moment of Silence' feels like an eternity in music

By Sahar Moussa

Reaching into people's hearts was Hadi and Faisal's only concern when they released their single 'Moment of Silence'. The two vocally-talented musicians released their single with the dream of spreading love around the world through words. The Army of One is from where they first started their music, and the love of music was what kept them together. What is interesting in their single is the mElange of eastern and western melodies and instruments that was translated in the oud, tableh and nai (Arabic version of the flute). Simplicity was the theme of their single from the lyrics that touch your heart to the video that gives you a deep sense of love, melancholy and eternal affection. Kuwait Times interviewed the incredibly talented Hadi and Faisal to know more about their latest single. Some excerpts from the interview.

into each other's eyes, deep enough to hear all that has to be said. That's the moment of silence.

KT: Who wrote the songs and the music?

Hadi: The song Moment of Silence was written by Faisal and me. The beat was originally made by Daff Records and then remade by Saud Al-Saad from the Stylus band.

KT: Where did you shoot the clip?

Hadi: The video was made in the beautiful Arabana warehouse. It was the easiest choice to make. Modern, new, classy and exactly what we wanted.

KT: Why did you and Face made this song? Why you two?

Hadi: Face and I both work great together. We both have the same ideas, have very similar idols and our voices blend smoothly.

KT: What are the challenges working collaboratively?

Hadi: We are both very thankful for not having any problems working collaboratively, but the only challenge working on this project was how we can reach into people's hearts.

KT: The members of Army of One are doing other things now - they have gone off and done individual projects - so why come back and not release a group effort?

Hadi: Army of One completed two major albums with big success. We're now supporting each other individually. Maybe one day we'll work on something together, who knows.

KT: Where do you see Army of One going? It's been around for a long time, but it seems to go through periods of lull or nothing happening and then again back together?

Hadi: The name Army of One isn't going anywhere. We started hip hop and R&B in the Middle East, so the name will be tattooed on every new artist. There are a lot of hidden talents and it's such an honor to give them all a push.

KT: What's your take on the Kuwaiti music scene? Has it evolved since you guys first started? Are there more opportunities now than when you started? Do you think it's easier to get famous and to build a viable career?

Hadi: The Kuwaiti music scene is evolving by the minute. Social media is a huge part of so many successful artists. Back in 2004, it was as easy as it is today for fans to follow up on your everyday activities and projects. Today it's all in your phone.

KT: The clip is a bit daring for Kuwaiti culture - did you have any fears or doubts before releasing it?

Hadi: We both had no fear at all releasing this video. Kuwaiti culture has always been an open-minded culture - it's a fact. It's the human mentality that we should fear. No matter what you do you will always have haters and people that just want to watch you fall. Michael Jackson had haters and he's a legend.

KT: What are your future plans? When can we expect to hear another song from you?

Hadi: Faisal and I both have good plans for the future. We're now taking some time off from all the hard work we've put into the track and will get back to work soon.



KT: It has been a long time since you released a song. Where did you get inspired from to write this song? What is the story that the song tells?

Hadi: 'The Moment of Silence' was inspired by love's built-in existence. The Moment of Silence will take you back to the highest level of love you've ever reached - that moment when you have butterflies whenever he or she is around; that moment when you smile just because he or she smiled; that moment when you have so much to say but you say nothing just because it's OK not to be around that person. So you both smile and look deep

KT: Who are the artists that collaborated with you in the video clip (Music, production, acting, models, dancing)?

Hadi: The collaborating artists in the video were Saud Al-Saad in production, Khalid Al-Bloushi played the oud, the talented Abu Fihan played the nai, Medi from Fight Club Kuwait, Miniature Malikapour was the director with assistance from Tareq Al-Askar from Urban Q8 films, Balqis and Collette were the collaborative artists and a huge part for the success of the video - Ahmad Al-Ghanim from Thouq and Abdulrazzaq Al-Shamali provided us with the artwork.

